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# Imperial Hollywood: American Cinematic Representations of Europe, 1948-1964

by  
Anna Cooper Sloan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television Studies

University of Warwick

Department of Film and Television Studies

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# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WORD COUNT.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>MAPPING THE FIELD: HOLLYWOOD AND PROPAGANDA IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND IDEOLOGY .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. POSTCOLONIAL READING STRATEGIES AND THE FILM TEXT .....</b>	<b>47</b>
POSTCOLONIAL LITERARY STUDIES.....	47
COLONIAL VISUAL REPRESENTATION .....	60
GAZE THEORY .....	68
<b>CHAPTER 2. EARLY WIDESCREEN AND THE RETURN OF THE TRAVELOGUE.....</b>	<b>82</b>
THIS IS CINERAMA.....	89
THREE COINS IN THE FOUNTAIN .....	103
<b>CHAPTER 3. RUINS, DYSTOPIAS AND THE DARK TOURIST FILM.....</b>	<b>121</b>
CONFIDENTIAL REPORT .....	131
A FOREIGN AFFAIR.....	151

<b><u>CHAPTER 4. MELODRAMA AND THE AMERICAN WOMAN IN ITALY: <i>SUMMERTIME</i>....</u></b>	<b><u>176</u></b>
<b>FEMINISM AND THE GAZE.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>THE CONSUMING WOMAN .....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>TOURISM AND NOSTALGIA .....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b><u>CHAPTER 5. FASHION AND CONSUMERISM IN THE PARIS MUSICAL .....</u></b>	<b><u>225</u></b>
<b>SILK STOCKINGS .....</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES .....</b>	<b>254</b>
<b><u>CONCLUSION .....</u></b>	<b><u>268</u></b>
<b><u>APPENDIX: THE CORPUS OF FILMS .....</u></b>	<b><u>274</u></b>
<b><u>FILMOGRAPHY .....</u></b>	<b><u>280</u></b>
<b><u>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</u></b>	<b><u>287</u></b>

## Table of Illustrations

Figure 1. Clark Gable, Sophia Loren and Vittorio de Sica in <i>It Started in Naples</i> .	53
Figure 2. Lucia (Loren) performs sexual looseness.	56
Figure 3. Lucia as the 'good Catholic girl' in a religious procession.	56
Figure 4. Lorelei (Monroe) and Dorothy (Russell) enter the ship's dining room and catch all eyes, <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> .	78
Figure 5. The musicians stare at the women and 'collapse on top of one another'.	78
Figure 6: Dorothy and the male beefcake body.	79
Figure 7. Lorelei envisions Piggy's (Charles Coburn) head as an enormous diamond.	79
Figure 8. Lowell Thomas narrates at the beginning of <i>This is Cinerama</i> .	91
Figure 9. A reproduction of the cave painting of a boar.	91
Figure 10. <i>The Great Train Robbery</i> , quoted in <i>This is Cinerama</i> .	93
Figure 11. <i>Son of the Sheik</i> , quoted in <i>Cinerama</i> .	93
Figure 12. The roller coaster.	94
Figure 13. The 'Oriental' ballet.	94
Figure 14. The helicopter ride over Niagara Falls.	95
Figure 15. Aerial view of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.	96
Figure 16. The Venetian gondolier.	98
Figure 17. An American couple step into a gondola.	98
Figure 18. A dreamy, jagged sketch of Edinburgh Castle begins the Scotland sequence.	99
Figure 19. The bagpipe rally.	99
Figure 20. The Vienna Boys' Choir on the Schönbrunn Palace grounds.	99
Figure 21. The bullfight.	100
Figure 22. The flamenco dancers.	100
Figure 23. La Scala opera house, Milan.	101
Figure 24. The triumphal parade from Verdi's <i>Aida</i> .	101
Figure 25. An aerial view of Venice, <i>Three Coins in the Fountain</i> .	105
Figure 26. Frances (McGuire), Maria (MacNamara) and Dino (Jourdan) gazing down from the aeroplane.	105
Figure 27. Swooping low over the canal.	105

Figure 28. Touring the canals by gondola.	105
Figure 29. Dino guides the American women on the gondola tour.	105
Figure 30. Going under a bridge – a near-identical shot to one in <i>This is Cinerama</i> .	105
Figure 31. An ‘impossible’ view of the bells.	106
Figure 32. Pigeons swirling around the Piazza San Marco - a near identical shot to one in <i>This is Cinerama</i> .	106
Figure 33. Dino says, ‘Look!’ and claps his hands.	106
Figure 34. The pigeons take flight en masse.	106
Figure 35. The writer Shadwell (Webb) in a palatial residence with his personal secretary, Frances.	109
Figure 36. Maria in the modern Stazione Termini building.	109
Figure 37. The women's breezy convertible outside their villa.	110
Figure 38. The women tour Rome in their car.	110
Figure 39. The CinemaScope logo announced boldly prior to the fountain sequence.	111
Figure 40. The first shot of the film: a glimmering spout of water against an azure sky.	111
Figure 41. The Fontana delle Naiadi, Piazza della Repubblica.	112
Figure 42. The Fontana del Nettuno, Piazza Navona.	112
Figure 43. The obelisk and fountains in the Piazza del Popolo, with strolling couple.	112
Figure 44. Le Cento Fontane, Villa d’Este, Tivoli, with strolling couple.	112
Figure 45. Fontana dell’Ovato with strollers, Villa d’Este, Tivoli.	112
Figure 46. Water organ, Villa d’Este, Tivoli.	112
Figure 47. Looking out over the fish ponds...	112
Figure 48. ...and panning right to view two pretty young women enjoying the view. Note rainbow in water vapour.	112
Figure 49. Panorama of central Rome.	112
Figure 50. A woman and two boys framed picturesquely at the fish ponds.	112
Figure 51. Maria and Anita (Peters) pause on the Spanish Steps to discuss their poor romantic prospects and the lurking sexual danger of Rome.	116
Figure 52. They stroll into a rough neighbourhood.	116
Figure 53. The women weave between Italian men playing a casual football game. Peasant flower vendor on right.	116
Figure 54. Just after being pinched on the bottom by a stranger.	116

Figure 55. The near bicycle crash.	116
Figure 56. Giorgio (Brazzi) sees that it is Anita and Maria he has nearly hit.	116
Figure 57. The old Jeep 'brakes' to avoid the bus and fruit cart.	117
Figure 58. Anita alone in the Jeep as it careens down the hill.	117
Figure 59. Giorgio rescues Anita from the Jeep.	117
Figure 60. The couple passionately embrace.	117
Figure 61. The empty plane, <i>Confidential Report</i> .	134
Figure 62. The aeroplane over a vast terrain of empty space.	134
Figure 63. Noir metonymy in the credit sequence.	135
Figure 64. Arden framed by a Munich ruin.	135
Figure 65. Van Stratten in Mexico, framed tightly with the ocean behind him.	137
Figure 66. Spinning, blurry shot at start of travel sequence.	138
Figure 67. Aerial shot on the way to Copenhagen.	138
Figure 68. Another aerial shot.	138
Figure 69. Copenhagen from the air.	138
Figure 70. Claustrophobic shot of ferris wheel.	139
Figure 71. An extreme close-up of a flea on the Flea Professor (Auer)'s arm finishes the sequence.	139
Figure 72. Van Stratten trudges purposefully across the Place de la Concorde.	140
Figure 73. Van Stratten's glowing eyes.	142
Figure 74. <i>Ivan the Terrible</i> (played by Nikolai Cherkasov).	143
Figure 75. Gregory Arkadin (Welles).	143
Figure 76. The Goya-themed masked ball at Arkadin's castle.	144
Figure 77. The Christmas party in Munich.	144
Figure 78. The procession of penitents.	144
Figure 79. The penitents.	144
Figure 80. Mily (Medina)'s body washes up on a beach, murdered by Arkadin.	145
Figure 81. The Spanish castle shooting up to the heavens.	145
Figure 82. Raina (Mori) ascends to the tower to speak to her father over the radio.	147
Figure 83. 'It's too late!'	147
Figure 84. Raina hears only silence.	147
Figure 85. The final shot of Arkadin.	147

Figure 86. Aerial shot from the empty plane.	147
Figure 87. The plane spins out of control.	147
Figure 88. The squalid attic at Sebastianplatz 16.	149
Figure 89. A woman (Tamara Shane) hides Zouk (Tamiroff).	149
Figure 90. Zouk's weathered, sad face in close-up.	149
Figure 91. The Munich hotel room – another image of antiquated Europe.	149
Figure 92. Mily, the archetypal floozy.	151
Figure 93. Raina, a European princess.	151
Figure 94. The American aeroplane at the start of <i>A Foreign Affair</i> .	153
Figure 95. The aeroplane's shadow over bombed-out buildings.	153
Figure 96. The Congressmen asleep on the plane.	153
Figure 97. Miss Frost (Arthur) delivers a lecture on their moral mission in Germany.	153
Figure 98. Capt. Pringle (Lund) speaks to Herr Meyer and his son Gerhard.	155
Figure 99. The bombed-out Reichstag.	158
Figure 100. Driving past the Brandenburg Gate.	158
Figure 101. The balcony Hitler used for speeches.	158
Figure 102. The Tiergarten.	158
Figure 103. A soldier with flowers, walking amongst the rubble.	158
Figure 104. Soldiers and a woman cavorting on a balcony.	158
Figure 105. A German woman pushes a baby carriage past a decrepit building.	159
Figure 106. Miss Frost (Arthur)'s shocked reaction.	159
Figure 107. Erika's (Dietrich) first evening gown.	161
Figure 108. Her second evening gown.	161
Figure 109. The third evening gown.	161
Figure 110. Erika brushing her teeth.	163
Figure 111. Pringle on his way to visit Erika, driving his Jeep through the ruins.	164
Figure 112. Erika's stairwell.	164
Figure 113. Her ruined flat, with a black cherub clinging to the wall.	165
Figure 114. The other half of her flat, with fringed lampshade.	165
Figure 115. Pringle greets Miss Frost with silk stockings	167
Figure 116. Miss Frost as she descends the stairs in her newly-acquired evening gown.	170

Figure 117. Pringle wipes the makeup from her face. _____	170
Figure 118. Plummer and Pringle in the office. _____	170
Figure 119. Plummer and the Congressional delegation driving through Berlin just before the final shoot-out. _____	170
Figure 120. Erika reflected in a mirror. _____	172
Figure 121. Erika pulls up her gown to reveal her gorgeous legs. _____	174
Figure 122. Pringle kneels awkwardly before Miss Frost as she recovers from a fainting fit. _____	175
Figure 123. Pringle throws chairs in the way of Miss Frost as she pursues him. _____	175
Figure 124. Jane hands a brochure to a British man on the train, <i>Summertime</i> . _____	184
Figure 125. Jane (Hepburn) meets the McIlhennys (Park and Rose) on a waterbus. _____	185
Figure 126. Jane interrupts the conversation to shoot footage. _____	185
Figure 127. A fire brigade rushes past. _____	185
Figure 128. Jane films the scene excitedly. _____	185
Figure 129. Looking out over the Grand Canal. _____	185
Figure 130. Jane looks wistfully upon the scene. _____	185
Figure 131. Jane's upward gaze, towards the rooftops. _____	188
Figure 132. Another upward-directed view of a beautiful old building. _____	188
Figure 133. Walking through an alley. _____	188
Figure 134. Jane looking up at the windows she cannot see into. _____	188
Figure 135. Signora Fiorini (Miranda) wears dark, sleek clothing. _____	190
Figure 136. Jane's more girlish appearance. _____	190
Figure 137. Jane looks out over the canal, all alone. _____	191
Figure 138. She begins to cry. _____	191
Figure 139. Just before falling into the canal. _____	193
Figure 140. Shivering in her sheer white dress. _____	193
Figure 141. Jane at a café, looking about and filming. _____	195
Figure 142. Two pretty young women walk past, and two men stare at their bottoms. _____	195
Figure 143. Jane looks shocked. _____	195
Figure 144. She films again and Renato takes notice of her. _____	195
Figure 145. Renato looks her up and down, evidently interested. _____	195
Figure 146. Jane's awkwardly posed, though not unattractive leg. _____	195

Figure 147. She notices Renato staring at her. _____	196
Figure 148. She fumbles awkwardly for her sunglasses. _____	196
Figure 149. Getting her hair and nails done. _____	200
Figure 150. The red kitten heels. _____	200
Figure 151. Gazing into a shop window. _____	200
Figure 152. Descending the stairs of the pensione in her new Italian outfit. _____	200
Figure 153. A long row of uniformed Italians, taking their hats off as Jane walks out of the rail station. _____	204
Figure 154. The porter holds his hat out for payment. _____	204
Figure 155. The red goblet in the window. _____	205
Figure 156. They bargain, yet she is unsure what is for sale. _____	205
Figure 157. The McIlhennys' case of six red goblets, direct from the glass factory. _____	205
Figure 158. Jane chooses the gardenia, a symbol of her second chance at love. _____	206
Figure 159. Renato tries to retrieve the gardenia from the canal. _____	206
Figure 160. Renato's final parting gift of another gardenia. _____	207
Figure 161. The McIlhennys in a clamorous regatta of tourists. _____	213
Figure 162. Wooden boats next to the speeding train. _____	215
Figure 163. Gondoliers napping in their boats. _____	215
Figure 164. A dozing flower vendor. _____	215
Figure 165. Laundry hanging from colourful houses. _____	215
Figure 166. Jane nearly strikes Mauro. _____	221
Figure 167. Steve and Nina in front of Cartier, <i>Silk Stockings</i> . _____	238
Figure 168. At a factory. _____	238
Figure 169. In a beauty parlour. _____	238
Figure 170. Viewing an industrial smokestack. _____	238
Figure 171. The back-projected Paris skyline in 'Paris Loves Lovers'. _____	238
Figure 172. Our first view of Nina, in the Commissar's office. _____	241
Figure 173. Peggy's curvy body in 'Satin and Silk'. _____	242
Figure 174. Peggy's parodic excess, once again enacted through her clothing. _____	242
Figure 175. Nina's frumpy old Soviet clothes. _____	243
Figure 176. She dons beautiful pink undergarments. _____	243



Figure 177. Youthful styles in 'Red Blues'.	245
Figure 178. Nina's elegant mustard-coloured clothing has achieved a synthesis.	245
Figure 179. Nina in 'Without Love'.	245
Figure 180. Steve leans in to kiss Nina.	247
Figure 181. Nina stands square in the centre of the screen.	248
Figure 182. Steve framed more weakly from above.	248
Figure 183. 'I love you dearly'.	248
Figure 184. Oriental decoration as Steve sings 'All of You'.	251
Figure 185. Steve dances playfully, using a chair as a prop.	251
Figure 186. Nina begins to inhabit space in a 'white' way, yet simultaneously transforms into a colonial and patriarchal object.	251
Figure 187. Steve and Peggy extend their playful inhabiting of space to world geography.	252
Figure 188. Peggy as the Empress Josephine.	253
Figure 189. Establishing shot of the Eiffel Tower, <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> .	257
Figure 190. Second establishing shot: the Arc de Triomphe.	257
Figure 191. Third establishing shot: the Opéra.	257
Figure 192. Lorelei (Monroe) and Dorothy (Russell) in a Paris taxicab, gazing out at the sights.	258
Figure 193. The first Paris cafe they see.	258
Figure 194. The second Paris cafe.	258
Figure 195. The nightclub exterior as they drive past.	258
Figure 196. The great Parisian fashion houses: Schiaparelli. <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> .	259
Figure 197. Christian Dior.	259
Figure 198. Lucien Lelong.	260
Figure 199. Guerlain.	260
Figure 200. Balenciaga	260
Figure 201. The American women back in the taxicab, surrounded by colourful boxes.	260
Figure 202. 'When Love Goes Wrong'.	262
Figure 203. The streets of Paris.	262
Figure 204. The incriminating photograph.	265
Figure 205. Lorelei asks Piggy very nicely for the tiara.	265

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It has not been published in whole or in part, nor has it been used previously in fulfilment of the requirements of another degree, either at Warwick or any other university.

## **Word Count**

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the tourist films, a cycle of Hollywood films made between 1948 and 1964 in which an American travels abroad to Europe. The films share an experience of Europe that is organised around spectacular visual experiences, encounters with European antiquity – architecture, rituals, foods, older forms of transport – and other classic aspects of tourist experience. While many scholarly approaches to postwar Hollywood and its relationship to Europe have focused on industrial and political issues, this thesis takes a different tack, looking closely at the film text and examining its representations of European space. I find that these films give a complicated picture of America's perceptions of its own rising geopolitical power.

The approach is primarily ideological, investigating how the tourist film texts both embody and repress various aspects of postwar ideology including imperialism, race and gender. It accomplishes these ideological readings through the use of strategies adapted from postcolonial scholarship, including those from literary studies and the visual arts as well as film studies. I investigate how the tourist films mobilise representational traditions in colonial art to position America as the new imperial metropole – and Europe, conversely, as a peripheral space. I thus argue that classical Hollywood cinema, like the 19<sup>th</sup>-century British and French novel, must be read as a primary popular art form generated by a society undergoing a period of expansion and imperial growth.

The tourist films take cues from diverse Hollywood genres. Each chapter is accordingly structured around the question of how a particular genre is altered or expanded when the narrative is moved to European space in the postwar context. The travelogue, film noir, women's melodrama and musical comedy, I find, each depict Europe in a very different light, yet in each case the genre's logic is extended in ways that place Americans in a position of domination over Europe's landscape and inhabitants.

Integral to this work is the question of spatiovisual gendered subjectivity – the differences in how male and female characters (often associated with particular genres) inhabit, traverse and gaze upon cinematic space. I find that patriarchal and colonial hegemonies, rather than functioning monolithically together, often contradict and jostle in complex ways that point to the contradictory, incoherent nature of hegemonic ideologies.

## Introduction

This thesis investigates a group of Hollywood films depicting American travellers in Europe, made during the period 1948 to 1964. I call these films ‘tourist films’, although not all are strictly about tourists; some of the American protagonists have come to Europe as secretaries or soldiers. Yet all of them share an experience of Europe that is organised around spectacular visual experiences, encounters with European antiquity – architecture, rituals, foods, older forms of transport – and other classic aspects of tourist experience. All were made in the context of the Hollywood film industry, or in some cases by people working at the outer fringes of this industry. The films therefore raise questions about how America and Americans imagined the foreign, faraway spaces of Europe, and themselves as travellers there.

The films are all set in the present day; period films are excluded, as they seem to constitute a distinct category structured around particular threads of nostalgia. War films, too, are excluded. The primary interest of this thesis lies in films depicting what happens after the end of the Second World War, during the transition to peace and the rise during the 1950s of American-style consumer capitalism in Europe. The tourist film belongs to a particular moment in American history, a moment of American triumphalism as the US greatly expanded its global economic, political and cultural influence and became an undisputed world power.

The thesis will take a textual analysis approach to these films, examining in some detail their metaphorical and metonymic depictions of the relationship between America and Europe in this period and their implications in terms of geopolitical ideologies. The films’ focus on American tourism in Europe, I will argue, must be viewed as a strategy for dealing with America’s postwar and Cold War geopolitics, a displacement of these politics into a safe, apolitical realm that thereby contains potential threats and wards off the spectre of American tyranny.

But it is not simply that the tourist films constitute a rich ground for understanding the postwar American-European cultural encounter; they also do so largely on American terms. Much like British and French colonial literature that was typically written from the perspective of the white colonist, these films show an America subtly taking on some of the mythologies, rhetoric, symbolisms and power relations, as well as repressions and denials of a colonial literature.

There is, as we will see, nothing simple or monolithic about this process; it was not so in the case of British or French colonial literature either, but is even less so here. This thesis follows and expands on a strand of ideological film criticism which concerns itself particularly with the tensions, contradictions and fissures of the film text. The tourist films, I find, are suffused with richness, complexity and opposition; I devote my chapters to detailed readings of a relatively small number of films in an attempt to unpick these. Although all the films discussed in this thesis are, more or less, typical examples of apparently 'smooth' classical Hollywood texts – none is particularly noteworthy for stylistic innovation, for example – my readings will nevertheless reveal a surprising degree of contradiction and incoherence. The films reveal, then, the extraordinary amount of ideological labour that goes into smoothing over the widening cracks in the surface of postwar ideologies of American national identity, race and gender.

The tourist films, as we will see, negotiate the imperial in various ways. They both emulate and simultaneously disavow the rhetoric and aesthetics of British and French colonialism. They also partake of and negotiate with various aspects of American culture, particularly gender relations – an especially fraught issue in the 1950s that interacts with America's imperial consciousness in complicated and unstable ways. These films thus dramatise the intersections of and contradictions within a range of contested postwar ideologies. The goal of this thesis is to unpick these intersections and contradictions, unravelling the ideologies of imperialism at stake within these narratives of American tourism in Europe.

The present work thus departs significantly from most other work done on Hollywood's relationship with Europe in the postwar period, which has tended to focus on industrial and government-related issues. The first section of this introduction will examine in some detail this previous scholarship on Hollywood's European expansion in the postwar period. In doing so, I will address the fraught concept of American imperialism and the re-theorisations that have been required in order to make an American imperialism stick, as well as the reasons why tourism might serve as an apt metaphor for these issues. The second section will offer a detailed description of and justification for the thesis's textual methodology, defining it in relation to concepts such as ideology and genre and through the lens of previous ideological film criticism.

### **Mapping the field: Hollywood and propaganda in the postwar period**

America's current global media omnipresence is widely regarded as having roots in Hollywood's rising dominance in Europe during the postwar period. As such, this period has been intensively studied as a kind of formative moment which set the American global media empire on a course for triumphant world dominance. Much of this research focuses on the Hollywood film industry, its relationships with both American and European governments and its aggressive distribution practices in this period. A central debate in this area of scholarship focuses on the question of whether Hollywood's involvement in postwar Europe constitutes an imperialist practice, and how Hollywood may have contributed to America's broader political goals of global dominance. As we shall see, opinions are varied and often contradictory, which I argue opens up an opportunity to investigate the question of American imperialism using a textual, ideological approach.

Within this multivalence of views, it is possible to delineate what we might call a strong thesis for the cultural imperialism of Hollywood in postwar Europe. This thesis posits that the Hollywood film industry and the American government colluded to instigate a propaganda campaign in postwar Europe that was pro-American, pro-democracy and

especially pro-consumer culture. It also may claim that Hollywood aggressively undermined localised attempts to cultivate indigenous film cultures. According to such views, Hollywood's postwar presence in Europe amounted to a media imperialism that intentionally Americanized European culture. There are, as we will see, some major problems with this strong thesis, and the reality is more complex and multifaceted. Nevertheless, it is important to understand precisely where accusations of Hollywood media imperialism have come from and their basis in archival research.

The strong thesis is perhaps stated most unequivocally in two separate articles by Gian Piero Brunetta and Reinhold Wagnleitner, both printed in Ellwood and Kroes' collection *Hollywood in Europe*.<sup>1</sup> In an article steeped in metaphors of rape and martial conquest, Brunetta argues that Hollywood 'penetrated' Italy during the fascist years,<sup>2</sup> 'and it was from this time on that they began to think of global operations of cultural colonialism and economic imperialism'.<sup>3</sup> During and after the war, Brunetta argues, Hollywood implemented a campaign that amounted to a 'cultivation of the emotions and hopes of an entire people'. In his view, American film companies and the American government deliberately sought to change 'the Italian collective consciousness' in favour of American ideology.<sup>4</sup> Hollywood did not merely want to turn greater profits by 'reconquering' Italian distribution territory lost at the height of the war: 'the prime task . . . was to put over, in as short a time as possible, a mental picture of America and its values which was entirely and exclusively positive', thus abetting the American attempt to become a superpower.<sup>5</sup> Growing up in postwar Italy, Brunetta recounts how he experienced the constant presence of American films as a hostile cultural invasion.

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<sup>1</sup> Gian Piero Brunetta, 'The Long March of American cinema in Italy: From Fascism to the Cold War', in *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 1994), 139-154; Reinhold Wagnleitner, 'American Cultural Diplomacy, the Cinema, and the Cold War in Central Europe', in the same edited volume, 196-210.

<sup>2</sup> Brunetta, 'American Cinema in Italy', 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 143; 146.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

Wagnleitner's article (which, it should be noted, departs in important ways from his better-known book *Coca-Colonization*, to be discussed later) makes a similar case. His thesis is that 'the so-called Americanization of European culture was *not* a by-product of the political, military and economic successes of the United States in Cold War Europe but was actually at the *centre* of that process'.<sup>6</sup> Hollywood films cannot be thought of as merely another example of the many American products that entered European markets, which in themselves amounted to a cultural juggernaut. They also 'represented *the* premium medium of advertisement, acting as publicity for all other films but also as sales promotion for the U.S. itself and *all* its products'.<sup>7</sup> As such, Wagnleitner argues, Hollywood film was at the ideological centre of the Americanization or consumerisation of Europe.

Both Brunetta and Wagnleitner back up their points with historical arguments about a collusion between the American film industry and government, using somewhat broad strokes. Other authors have also espoused a version of this view while examining quite different, often more detailed material, such as Koppes and Black's *Hollywood Goes to War* and Allan Winkler's *The Politics of Propaganda*.<sup>8</sup> According to these authors, officials of the American Office of War Information (OWI), both during and after the war, sought propagandic means of converting the world to the democracy, freedom, and consumerism of the 'American way of life'.<sup>9</sup> They often saw Hollywood film as a primary means of doing so, precisely because of its value as entertainment and its popularity throughout the world. The film industry was ever eager to reinforce this way of thinking, using publicity and other

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<sup>6</sup> Wagnleitner, 'American Cultural Diplomacy', 197. Italics in original.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.. Italics in original.

<sup>8</sup> Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1987); Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (London: Yale University Press, 1978). Both of these examine the role of the Office of War Information (OWI) in great detail. See also Theodore A. Wilson, 'Selling America via the Silver Screen? Efforts to Manage the Projection of American Culture Abroad, 1942-1947', in *'Here, There and Everywhere': The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture*, ed. Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May (London: University Press of New England, 2000), 83-99.

<sup>9</sup> Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, 1; Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, vii-viii;



means to paint a portrait of itself as both eagerly patriotic and a potentially powerful tool in winning the world over to American ideologies.

Other evidence for the strong thesis has been found in the ways the US government facilitated attempts by the Hollywood film industry to spread the American message to European populations. At the end of the war, an apparent priority of the military was to reinstate distribution of Hollywood movies in newly liberated territories, particularly Germany and Italy.<sup>10</sup> Later, the State Department negotiated with other governments on behalf of the American film industry, particularly in 1948 when, due to the State Department's efforts, the international General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT) included a clause outlawing all types of governmental restrictions on the free trade of film, with the single exception of screen quotas.<sup>11</sup> Also in 1948, as part of the 'Marshall Plan of ideas', the State Department began a system of payments known as the Informational Media Guaranty Program, in which approved media materials containing suitable ideological messages were guaranteed to receive remittances in dollars for their distribution in Europe.<sup>12</sup> 70 percent of these dollar guarantees went to American film companies (with the rest going to other American media such as magazines and newspapers).<sup>13</sup>

Further, the Hollywood industry has been shown to have made aggressive attempts to dominate various European markets through whatever means necessary in the pursuit of profit and market share. The British case offers a prime example of this, as shown exhaustively in Paul Swann's *The Hollywood Feature Film in Postwar Britain* and Ian Jarvie's *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign*. When the British government attempted to impose a system of tariffs and quotas on imported American films, Hollywood responded with an embargo

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<sup>10</sup> John Trumbour, *Selling Hollywood to the World: US and European Struggles for Mastery of the Global Film Industry, 1920-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 101.

<sup>11</sup> Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 251.

<sup>12</sup> The term 'Marshall Plan of ideas' originated Walter F. Wanger's now-canonical 1950 'Donald Duck and Diplomacy', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 14 (1950), 446.

<sup>13</sup> Trumbour, *Selling Hollywood to the World*, 114; Paul Swann, *The Hollywood Feature Film in Postwar Britain* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 122-123.

of the British market in 1947-1948.<sup>14</sup> The British government eventually capitulated in the face of domestic demand for the return of American films – a fact which, Swann reasons, ‘points to the essentially colonial nature of American control of the British film industry and the British film audience – both had conspired against the dictates of their own government’.<sup>15</sup> This capitulation was enshrined in the Anglo-American Film Agreement of 1948, an agreement between the American film cartel and the British government granting Hollywood the right to distribute up to 180 films in Britain and dedicating \$17 million to be guaranteed as unblocked funds, i.e. profits to be returned to the companies in dollars rather than blocked in British pounds sterling.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, between the Hollywood industry and the US government – and especially when they worked together to serve each other’s interests – there was a high degree of success in conquering the European film market and ensuring that European screens showed Hollywood films containing what were seen as positive messages about American culture.

Runaway production is yet another important dimension in understanding Hollywood’s penetration of European markets. This began as a result of blocked funds, i.e. profits from distribution of films which belonged to Hollywood but which by various countries’ laws were unable to be converted to dollars and moved abroad.<sup>17</sup> Thomas Guback’s pioneering 1969 study, *The International Film Industry*, records that Hollywood did two interrelated things with this money that would ultimately prove devastating to film production industries in various European nations. First, the industry began to make films in Europe directly, either on location or in European production facilities, and often using European personnel (especially for lower-level and technical crew; stars and directors were

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<sup>14</sup> Swann, *The Hollywood Feature Film*; Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood’s Overseas Campaign*, 90.

<sup>15</sup> Swann, *The Hollywood Feature Film*, 102.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 101. A similar agreement was made with France in the form of the Blum-Byrnes accord of 1946. For a detailed account of this, see Trumpbour, *Selling Hollywood to the World*, 266-271.

<sup>17</sup> Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood’s Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 8.

typically brought over from Los Angeles).<sup>18</sup> Second, it invested in local film production, buying up shares in local industry and influencing the kinds of films made.<sup>19</sup> In addition to serving as a means of recovering blocked funds when imported back to the US, these films often circumvented quota rules because they counted as European-made.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as Daniel Steinhart records, it was soon discovered that it was cheaper to make films in Europe than in California because of unions and wage differentials.<sup>21</sup>

Geography is a final factor at play in understanding Hollywood's 'colonisation' of European film production, although this argument is more abstract. Aida Hozic argues that Hollywood began to subsume the world into the American imaginary as Hollywood production moved from studio backlot to 'location' shooting – a movement which began in Europe in the 1950s.<sup>22</sup> Cities and localities, Hozic argues, now metamorphose to better suit Hollywood's filming needs in order to attract the extra income to be had when a Hollywood production comes to that locality;<sup>23</sup> eventually the world itself turned into a virtual studio backlot, as reality was molded to suit the needs of representation.<sup>24</sup>

So these are the primary arguments pointing towards what we are calling the strong thesis of American media imperialism. There is, however, also much historical evidence that indicates a more complex picture. Surely among the most important is Heide Fehrenbach's argument that there were frequent miscommunications and cross-purposes between the Hollywood industry and the US government. Fehrenbach records that the Information Control Division (ICD) of the American occupying forces in Germany was far

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Guback, *The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America Since 1945* (London: Indiana University Press, 1969), 72.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Steinhart, 'Iced Coin, Labor, and Background: Debates and Configurations of Hollywood Foreign Productions in the Postwar Era'. Paper delivered at the annual conference of the Society for Cinema And Media Studies, Los Angeles, California, March 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Aida A. Hozic, *Hollyworld: Space, Power and Fantasy in the American Economy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 86-102.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-114.

more concerned with reviving local German filmmaking, especially UFA (the largest German film conglomerate), than with ensuring the distribution of Hollywood films.<sup>25</sup> Only at the very beginning of the occupation, before there was any chance to rebuild local film production, did the ICD attempt to fill screens with American product. However, they asked Hollywood to donate films free of charge for the purpose – a proposal to which Hollywood studios outwardly agreed, yet which they continually delayed carrying out.<sup>26</sup>

An article by Swann argues more broadly that there were almost no attempts by any US government agency to get Hollywood to make a particular type of film or to create a particular message.<sup>27</sup> Even in rare cases where the government did make such a request, Hollywood was as likely as not to ignore it.<sup>28</sup> At the broadest level, Swann points out, ‘The US government has never regulated the content of commercial motion pictures and television programs exported overseas in peacetime in any overt or systematic way’. As Fehrenbach puts a similar point, ‘The US government and Hollywood did not share the same agenda and only rarely presented a united front’.<sup>29</sup> Put simply, Hollywood and the US government were not systematically working together to impose American culture or values on Europeans; instead there were multiple overlaps, gaps and cross-purposes amongst various Hollywood and governmental entities, leading to a far more chaotic picture.

For example, the evidence indicates that OWI may have been more concerned with the far more limited, negative aims of avoiding giving offence to America’s allies and refraining from showing unfavourable views of American culture. Swann reports a large body of official correspondence dealing with complaints about negative stereotypes of

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<sup>25</sup> Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 52.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Swann, ‘The Little State Department: Washington and Hollywood’s Rhetoric of the Postwar Audience’, *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 187.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>29</sup> Swann, ‘The Little State Department’, 186; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 52.

American ‘brutality and materialism’ found in, for example, the gangster film.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, there is virtually no evidence of correspondence concerning the communication of the American way of life to overseas audiences.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, as Wilson demonstrates, OWI was not particularly successful at instituting these negative aims.<sup>32</sup> And content regulation aimed at not giving offence to overseas audiences was something Hollywood was used to doing for itself: self-censorship of this kind, as Ruth Vasey shows, was something the industry had been instituting for itself since at least the 1920s.<sup>33</sup> Viewed from this angle, OWI may have been simply aiding Hollywood, for no recompense, with what Hollywood was already endeavouring to do for itself. It is hard to think of this as a situation of pro-US government propaganda.

Hollywood was and is, as we know, guided by the twin principles of profit maximisation and risk minimisation.<sup>34</sup> Obviously, these goals had motivated Hollywood to attempt domination of foreign markets long before the war.<sup>35</sup> The main factor that changed between pre- and postwar was, as Jarvie puts it,

A shift in industry rhetoric from the nineteen-twenties line that film exports benefited America because trade followed the film . . . to the postwar line that film exports benefited America because the films created good will towards her as a superpower, preaching as they did democracy and anti-communism.<sup>36</sup>

But it must be remembered that all this was, for the most part, just that: rhetoric.

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<sup>30</sup> Swann, ‘The Little State Department’, 186.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>32</sup> Wilson, ‘Selling America via the Silver Screen’, 89.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 158.

<sup>34</sup> Although, as Thomas Doherty points out, the importance of personal patriotism amongst Hollywood personnel should not be discounted completely. Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>35</sup> As shown in, for example, Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Film Market, 1907-34* (London: BFI, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> Ian Jarvie, ‘The Postwar Economic Foreign Policy of the American Film Industry, Europe 1945-1950’, in *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 157.

There is evidence that Hollywood employed this kind of talk to get OWI and the State Department on its side, particularly useful in the face of growing anti-Hollywood sentiment amidst accusations of communism and political disloyalty, which ultimately led to the HUAC hearings of 1947. This rhetorical strategy worked, at least for a time: both bureaucracies did what they could to aid the implementation of the ‘free market’ (i.e. opposing potential trade barriers) as far as film was concerned. It must be highlighted that Hollywood generally got far more out of this arrangement than the US government did. As Swann argues,

[The historical evidence] undermines any easy assumption that the film industry was a tool of the U.S. Government. Indeed, almost the reverse seems to have been true: the motion picture industry profited from Government support and the widely held belief that Hollywood’s every action had been sanctioned by the Government. What is less clear is how much Washington got in return.<sup>37</sup>

Washington was, and is, quite used to acting on behalf of the interests of various industries in relation to foreign nations; it is not clear in what sense the Hollywood film industry is an especially privileged case. This challenges Brunetta’s and Wagnleitner’s sweeping claims that there was a corporate-political conspiracy to impose American ideologies on Europe through cinema.

Wagnleitner’s book *Coca-Colonization*, which departs from his previously discussed article in important ways, contains a further argument that deeply complicates the very claim he makes so resolutely in his article in Ellwood and Kroes. The book shows that European audiences simply *preferred* Hollywood products over others, including products of their own national industries. This argument bears significant parallels to debates around American ‘empire’ more generally and the degree to which it did or did not rely on coercion. Wagnleitner recollects from his own youth how he and his compeers were drawn to American movies and other forms of (teenage) culture of their own accord; it did not, he

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<sup>37</sup> Swann, ‘The Little State Department’, 195.

argues, feel imposed from above.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, an article by Ian Jarvie, 'Free Trade as Cultural Threat', notes that basically all 'challenges [by national industries] fail[ed] to dislodge American dominance', attributing this to Hollywood creating products that Europeans loved to watch.<sup>39</sup> Swann's book goes into some detail on the matter of precisely why this might have been. He argues that in the impoverishment and deprivation of the early postwar years in Britain, Hollywood's gleaming materialism represented a popular fantasy of a better life.<sup>40</sup> This was, so the argument goes, a case of self-motivated cultural change, not a propagandistic imposition from without.

So there are crucial ways in which the propaganda argument about Hollywood after the Second World War does not seem to work. The historical record is too complicated and messy to clearly support the thesis that Hollywood constituted a de facto ideological arm of the US government, helping along the American rise to superpower status through the spreading of America-friendly ideas. Instead the relationship between Hollywood and Europe in the postwar period took the form of a complex cultural encounter, a set of interactions and subtle annexations, which were not uniformly imposed top-down on an oppressed populace (although this no doubt happened at certain moments in certain places), but which nevertheless ultimately led to American global dominance in the economic and political realms.

Discourses of consumer desire were, and are, frequently taken to be a kind of palliative to the spectre of American imperialism, and this association between imperialism and consumerism is in need of unpicking. Debates about the broader American economic and political presence in postwar Europe have long hinged upon the tension between invasion/oppression on the one hand, and some sense of freely undertaken consumer

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<sup>38</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization*, ix-xi.

<sup>39</sup> Ian Jarvie, 'Free Trade as Cultural Threat: American Film and TV Exports in the Postwar Period', in *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-95*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (London: BFI: 1998), 35.

<sup>40</sup> Swann, *The Hollywood Feature Film in Postwar Britain*, 31-50.

desire on the other. The Marshall Plan, the major American strategy for the rebuilding of Europe around the values of free trade and a consumer economy that was implemented from 1948 onwards, is at the centre of these debates. Indisputably, it brought about enormous changes to European society: changes to the nature of work, patterns of consumption and leisure, and the structures of politics, for example.<sup>41</sup> These changes, collectively referred to in Europe under the term ‘Americanization’, clearly cemented American influence in the western half of the continent.<sup>42</sup> It was believed to be ‘essential to the long-term interests of the United States’ as well as good for Europeans,<sup>43</sup> and was motivated by a combination of self-interest and benevolence – though, of course, the notion of American benevolence may in itself be self-interested.

Although some scholars have challenged the Marshall Plan’s apparent benevolence by highlighting the ways in which its programmes came with more forceful stipulations attached,<sup>44</sup> the Plan was for the most part received enthusiastically by western European countries: as we saw from examples in Wagnleitner and Swann, war-torn European populaces found American culture seductive, and eagerly sought out opportunities for its consumption. This has led scholars to re-theorise the traditional notion of empire to accommodate the notions of choice, desire and seduction. In the archetypal or ‘traditional’ colonial model of the British and French empires of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, various military, political and capitalist forces worked closely together to take over a

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<sup>41</sup> Arnold Sywottek, ‘The Americanization of Everyday Life? Early Trends in Consumer and Leisure-Time Behavior’, in *America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945-1955*, ed. Michael Ermarth (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 133. For an excellent account of the cultural changes brought about by the Marshall Plan and subsequent American influence in France, see Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> The debates around Americanization in France have been ably mapped by Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (London: University of California Press, 1993); and in Germany by Ralph Willett, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949* (London: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>43</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 26.

<sup>44</sup> See V. G. Kiernan, *America: The New Imperialism: From White Settlement to World Hegemony* (London: Zed Press, 1978), 338-340 and 363-366; Lloyd C. Gardner, *Imperial America: American Foreign Policy Since 1898* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).



territory, subjugate the native inhabitants and begin exploiting the agricultural, mineral and labour resources there.<sup>45</sup> Geir Lundestad's influential work has given rise to the notion of 'empire by invitation' or 'empire by consensus' to describe the American example.<sup>46</sup> He argues that the US shows several of the key features of empire – most importantly, a relationship of metropole to periphery in terms of influence and buying power. Yet American empire has not rested on the precepts of violence and military domination characteristic of other empires in history; rather, American empire spreads through voluntary economic engagement.<sup>47</sup> Lundestad's argument is that the American empire has benign moral status, but that it is still essentially an empire.

Victoria de Grazia's book *Irresistible Empire* develops a far more critical position of America's spreading of consumerist desire, calling America's twentieth century rise to power 'the rise of a great imperium with the outlook of a great emporium'.<sup>48</sup> De Grazia argues that America's ulterior political aim in promoting consumerism abroad has been to deliver to the world a 'Pax Americana' through the supposedly peaceful means of the global mass marketing and selling of American products.<sup>49</sup> That is, the economic aspects of America's involvement in the world were explicitly a way of controlling world affairs. Moreover, she argues, America's global economic domination 'was built on European territory'. That is,

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<sup>45</sup> John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review* vi, no. 1 (1953), 1; Peter J. Cain and Mark Harrison, *Imperialism: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2001), 1; H. L. Wesseling, 'Imperialism and Empire: An Introduction', in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 3.

<sup>46</sup> Geir Lundestad, 'Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952', *Journal of Peace Research* 23, vol. 3 (1986), 263-277. See also Lundestad's *'Empire' by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From 'Empire' by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>47</sup> Lundestad, *'Empire' by Integration*, 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-Century Europe* (London: Belknap Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

The Old World was where the United States turned its power as the premier consumer society into the dominion that came from being universally recognized as the fountainhead of modern consumer practices. . . . In the process of challenging Europe's bourgeois commercial civilization and overturning its old regime, the United States established its legitimacy as the world's first regime of mass consumption.<sup>50</sup>

This 'overturning' occurred largely in two intervals, corresponding to the wakes of each of the two world wars, when Europe was most in need. According to de Grazia, America thus opportunistically cultivated consumer desire in Europe as an antidote to wartime poverty, in order to place itself at the centre of a consumerist empire.<sup>51</sup>

It is important to note that in the 1950s, the dominating McCarthyist jingoism made accusations of American 'imperialism' nearly unthinkable within American culture; the debates about it have largely (though not entirely) been conducted retrospectively. The effective banning of 'imperialism' from American public debate was linked to Cold War rhetoric about the superiority of the American way of life, with its allegedly defining features of freedom, democracy and choice. In relation to first the Nazis and later the Soviets, America increasingly saw itself as a liberating force, a beacon of liberty against the forces of evil and despotism. Thus, just as America behaved as a conquering imperial force might, the myth of American benevolence became an almost unquestionable belief in American politics and culture: a classic case of the cultural repression of an idea which might threaten the dominant ideology.

I believe these accounts of American imperialism may be read symptomatically, as responses to and ways of theorising this repression of internal challenges to American imperialist practices. As my analysis of the tourist films will show, a textual analysis

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> Other scholars, like Emily S. Rosenberg, broadly agree, but argue that there was a material change from the pre-war to the post-war periods: that American 'cultural relations [with other countries were] a totally private endeavor' before 1938, and that only after the Second World War did these cultural relations become a matter of organized, unilateral government policy. See Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 220.

approach to postwar Hollywood and its depictions of Europe and Europeans will enable us to explore directly how discourses of colonialism and consumer desire are both deeply intertwined and subtly at odds – a fact which is already present in and shapes theoretical discussions of American imperialism. I will investigate the ideological repressions present in postwar American culture surrounding the nation's self-conception as a benevolent world power, investigating this self-conception at the level of dreams and images rather than of stated or executed policies. In short, a textual approach may improve our understanding of a very complex historical picture by disentangling some of the complicated and rich threads of ideology at stake in these historical and theoretical claims.

There are many reasons why tourism, an aesthetic experience of foreign space that organises the films explored in this thesis, might serve as an apt metaphor for the tensions and repressions surrounding imperialism. Tourism is, so the sociological literature tells us, frequently overlaid with power relations, as travelling to and gazing upon a location imply a degree of control over it; Dean MacCannell's classic work on the sociology of tourism argues that it functions smoothly as an aestheticised justification for expansionism. As MacCannell puts it:

For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles. . . . The concern of moderns for 'naturalness,' their nostalgia and their search for authenticity are not merely casual and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs. They are also components of the conquering spirit of modernity.<sup>52</sup>

Tourism is, in MacCannell's reading, central to how modernity defines itself – as benevolently expanding outwards, bringing more and more locations into its fold. This move, he argues, simultaneously destroys traditional cultures and fetishises them nostalgically as satisfying longings (for community, authenticity, leisure, beauty, slowness)

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<sup>52</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, new ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3.

that modernity supposedly cannot fulfil.<sup>53</sup> It is thus inextricably linked to imperialist impulses of expansion and appropriation towards other cultures.

So it seems especially significant that American tourism in Europe enjoyed a rapid and sustained boom in the postwar period.<sup>54</sup> Christopher Endy has documented how American tourism in France was deeply connected to questions of national identity and international relations; tourism was seen by the postwar US government as an economic tool in the rebuilding of western Europe.<sup>55</sup> Tourist dollars, it was hoped, would stabilise European currencies and the trade balance of payments, which European demand for American manufactured goods threatened to throw off balance and hence undermine Europe's miraculous economic recovery.<sup>56</sup> Tourism in Europe was seen by the US as a nearly cost-free way to provide this, and thus the US government worked closely with travel service providers like airlines, cruise lines and hotel chains.<sup>57</sup> It also had the additional benefit of culturally and educationally enriching Americans who travelled, and indeed it forced average Americans to consider 'what it meant to be an American . . . and what kinds of citizens ought to represent the nation abroad'.<sup>58</sup> European tourism became a patriotic activity in America, symbolic of American success in gaining economic and political influence over Europe.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, tourism took on explicitly anti-communist overtones, since American economic influence in Europe stood increasingly opposed to the hostile influence of the Russians in this period. At an ideological level, tourism was seen to promote 'the promise

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<sup>53</sup> See also John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 8.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

of a classless society – therefore safe from the threat of communism’.<sup>60</sup> The US government especially targeted working- and middle-class Americans in its tourism-boosting efforts, trying to make the idea of travel to Europe accessible to all.<sup>61</sup> In 1950s America, consumer spending in Europe was actively promoted through propaganda campaigns and in political rhetoric as a patriotic, anti-communist activity.

As Endy’s analysis shows, American tourism in postwar Europe was laden with ideological significance surrounding American national identity and the developing American dominance in geopolitical affairs. The tourist films serve as a rich illustration of this ideological significance, positioning American tourism in Europe as a key symbolism in America’s understanding of its national identity and rising international power. As these are rich and complex narrative texts, a textual analysis approach to these films will enable an in-depth study of these ideologies and symbolisms.

### **Textual analysis and ideology**

Films are, of course, not a simple consumer item, like a refrigerator or shampoo; they are also texts that contain intricate layers of meaning. The power of Hollywood film, I believe, must be accounted for not solely in terms of industrial practices or official government policies, but rather through examining the film texts themselves in terms of how they construct the relationship between America and Europe. Such textual concerns have long been taken to be at the very centre of understanding other historical colonialisms and other kinds of texts, such as the novel. Yet in the case of Hollywood cinema and its relationship to American imperialism in Europe, scholars have been prone to shy away from such methodologies. The scholarship discussed in the last section has a tendency to take the Hollywood film text as somehow transparent, perhaps as too obviously colonialist

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 47.

in content or goals to merit further study. Brunetta and Vasey each make particularly telling remarks in this respect. Brunetta writes:

The processes of collective identification, of subconscious transfers, the encounter on the imaginary frontier with the Hollywood man or woman happened in such a way as to make the cinema-goer feel that he or she was the explorer, the coloniser.<sup>62</sup>

The investigation of ‘subconscious transfers’ and ‘encounters on the imaginary frontier’ are classic objectives of textual analysis – yet the film text is completely absent from Brunetta’s argument; this is virtually the only sentence in which he addresses the content of Hollywood films shown in Italy. Vasey, too, makes a similar supposition, again without addressing it in any detail:

A motion picture may be set in New York or ancient Rome, but if the movie is a product of Hollywood we know that the fiction will be governed by a set of narrative and representational conventions that will override the social, geographic, and historical characteristics of its nominal locale. The world according to Hollywood is an exotic, sensual cousin of the realm outside the cinema, simultaneously familiar and strange to its worldwide audiences, who are as certain about what is morally right and wrong in this utopia as they are about whether the star or his best friend will get the girl in the final scene.<sup>63</sup>

There is an assumption at work here that Hollywood film texts function appropriatively, converting world geographies into its distinctive and instantly identifiable aesthetics of ‘exoticism’ and ‘sensuality’ – again, a very relevant claim to the present thesis, and certainly not incorrect. However, once again, this conception of Hollywood cinema is not explored, and this assumption is used as the justifying basis for a study of Hollywood’s distribution practices and negotiations with foreign governments. The present study seeks to redress this gap, looking in more detail at the question of how Hollywood depicts and appropriates foreign space, and presenting a more nuanced view of how these dynamics function ideologically within the film text.

My primary tools for textual analysis of the tourist films are taken from postcolonial scholarship. Imperialism is, as we have seen, a deeply contested term; the definitive

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<sup>62</sup> Brunetta, ‘American cinema in Italy’, 143.

<sup>63</sup> Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood*, 3.

examples of imperialism are found in the British and French empires of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereas the American ‘empire’ is often seen as too informal or not malevolent enough to ‘count’. Nevertheless, postcolonial scholarship gives us important tools for understanding power relations between nations and cultures as they are encoded within works of art – novels, the visual arts, and to a less developed degree, cinema. My textual analyses will show how the tourist films appropriate, negotiate with, modify or disavow older forms of Western colonialist aesthetics, appropriating them for an America that has recently greatly expanded its own world power, and translating them to a cinematic context. This thesis thus applies postcolonial strategies of reading to a specifically American art form and cultural context.

Within postcolonial studies, America is typically regarded as part of the larger cultural entity known as ‘the West’. Although the metropole underwent a shift after the Second World War, moving to America from Europe, this is taken to amount to no great difference; the situation of Western metropole to non-Western periphery remained fundamentally the same. Edward Said inserts a section at the end of *Orientalism* about America, discussing America’s present imperial power in the Middle East as the latest phase in a long history of ‘European’ intervention there.<sup>64</sup> Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, in their book *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, incorporate this mindset into the foundations of their argument that the global media are ‘Eurocentric’ in various, conscious and unconscious ways. America, to them, is ‘neo-European’ (along with, for example, Australia). It thereby falls under the rubric of ‘Europe’ as ‘the unique source of meaning, as the world’s center of gravity, as ontological “reality” to the rest of the world’s shadow’.<sup>65</sup>

Although there is clearly a good deal of truth in the notion that America constitutes part of ‘the West’, the shift in power from Europe to America has in reality not been so

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<sup>64</sup> See in particular the chapter titled ‘The Latest Phase’ in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003; originally published in 1978), 284-328.

<sup>65</sup> Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-2.

smooth. Indeed, Said, Shohat and Stam's assumptions here seem especially problematic in a study of Hollywood films about Europe. European space is clearly not treated in these films as simply an extension of America's identification with the Western 'self', but is rather treated as an otherised foreign space, exotic and antique. As I shall argue, in turning an otherising gaze on Europe, America seems to be specifically claiming for itself the status as metropole that Europe once held but has now implicitly lost. Of course Europe is the origin of white American culture, but then according to Said the Orient was long regarded as the origin of European culture, an aspect that contributed to rather than countered the Orientalising process.<sup>66</sup> The fact that Europe is now (even occasionally) object rather than subject of an imperialistic imaginary should indicate that a fundamental shift has occurred, a shift which cannot be so easily contained under the umbrella of 'the West'.

Lumping together America and Europe seems especially ill suited to the complicated, often volatile power dynamics between America and Europe in the period since the Second World War. If Europe and America are essentially the same entity with the same modes of imagining world geography and ethnography, the same hegemonising capacity, then why do Europeans so often have the sense in recent times of being 'colonised' by America and its corporate entities? How are we to explain the fraught relationships between America and many European nations in terms of cultural and economic influence in the past 70 years? This thesis will begin to think through what it might mean for there to be a separate, though clearly related, 'America-centrism': America looking upon the world, *including Europe*, in ways analogous to and sometimes directly borrowing from traditionally European views of the rest of the world. It will be important throughout this study to look at the ways in which the American imperial imaginary *departs* from the European, as well as the ways in which it appropriates it.

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<sup>66</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 1.



Hollywood cinema is a prime case study for investigating the postwar American imaginary of the world, for this art form is possibly the most significant and certainly the most popular in twentieth-century American culture. Like the British and French novel of the nineteenth century, Hollywood cinema stands as a primary cultural output from a society experiencing a period of global dominance.<sup>67</sup> As such we must seek to understand Hollywood cinema's imaginative geographies of the world, looking at how Hollywood film texts represent and codify foreignness and otherness, and locating the ideologically constructed boundaries between these and the 'self' of the American nation. The goal, then, is to import strategies of postcolonial textual reading from literary studies and the visual arts (as well as using those which exist in film studies, although these are considerably less advanced, as the first chapter will discuss), arguing for imaginative geography as a significant and heretofore under-utilised methodology for investigating classical Hollywood.

In undertaking this work, the thesis engages in and builds upon the strand of methodology known as ideological film criticism, which aims broadly at exposing the ideological structures within the film text that make cinema a dominating cultural practice. In recent decades, this methodology has been widely incorporated into film studies. However, as I will be using a particularly pure form of ideological criticism here, I will now spend some time discussing the purposes of and assumptions behind this kind of criticism.

Arising from Marxist criticism, the notion of "ideology" has been helpfully defined by Bill Nichols as a term that refers to 'the elements of [human] production that represent the needs of the dominant class order',<sup>68</sup> helping this dominant class order to justify its continued authority and to structure the beliefs and desires of others to ensure its own continuation. Such elements of human production can be very difficult to see precisely because they are dominant: ideological elements 'propose a way of seeing invested with

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<sup>67</sup> Said claims that the novel is the central art form to understanding Orientalism. See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), xxv.

<sup>68</sup> Bill Nichols, *Ideology and the Image: Social Representation in the Cinema and Other Media* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 2.

meanings that naturalize themselves as timeless, objective, obvious'.<sup>69</sup> Crucially, desire – rather than coercion – is central to this process, allowing individuals to be willingly 'recruited into a social order'.<sup>70</sup> The goal of ideological criticism, then, as Nichols puts it, is to unpick "how various institutions of representation like the cinema relate to the needs of a dominant class, [and] how we can counter or expose the ideological dimension that limits human possibility'.<sup>71</sup>

Theories vary widely as to how exactly ideology becomes embedded in film texts. Relatively few films take an intentionally ideological position, i.e. are consciously made to either support or somehow challenge the needs of the dominant class; the vast majority of Hollywood films, at least, have no such overt goals. So the question comes to be about the mechanisms of unintended or unconscious transfer – and whose answer has been almost universally taken to involve psychoanalytic theory in some capacity. Nichols is among the most overtly Freudian. Borrowing from Lévi-Strauss the notion that all myths involve a contradictory, paradoxical structure, Nichols posits that film narratives must strain to suture the contradictions lying at their core; like Freudian dream-work and joke-work, 'narrative-work' relies on the processes of condensation and displacement to contain contradictions and to 'recast material so that it can withstand the scrutiny of criticism' and thus 'overcome censorship'.<sup>72</sup> Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner's book *Camera Politica* takes a slightly different tack. They conceive of ideology as 'an attempt to placate social tensions and respond to social forces in such a way that they cease to be dangerous to the social system of inequality'.<sup>73</sup> Although they have a clearly Marxist focus here on 'social forces' and the ideological tensions to which they give rise, these authors nevertheless use

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>72</sup> Nichols, *Ideology and the Image*, 100.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 12.

the psychoanalytic theory of object relations to argue for the importance of representation to a subject's internalized conceptions of herself, her desires and her place in society.<sup>74</sup> They locate the major forces of ideological repression in metaphor and metonymy, which function similarly to condensation and displacement in that they convert repressed material, enabling its expression in a different form.<sup>75</sup> Even Robin Wood, who is generally rather hostile to Freud, uses 'Freud's scarcely disputable contention that civilization is built on repression' to 'account for the fundamental dualism in all art: the urge to reaffirm and justify that repression, and the urge of rebellion, the desire to subvert, combat, overthrow'.<sup>76</sup> Classical Hollywood cinema, Wood argues, was particularly repressive in this sense; the Hays Code was central to the conversion of expressive energies into ideologically acceptable forms. Ideological criticism, then, conceives of the text as containing a multitude of subconscious, complex and contradictory energies, simultaneously embodied and disavowed, whose meanings and displacements are in need of untangling in order to disarm the text of its dominating power.

We might notice that this is very close indeed to the central claim of postcolonial reading. Said discusses the way colonial texts operate 'according to a logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections';<sup>77</sup> his goal is similarly to disentangle these energies and thereby defuse the colonial text's force to shape our imaginaries. It might appear, then, that postcolonial reading operates on a Freudian basis - yet in fact just the opposite may be the case. Mary Ann Doane has convincingly argued that Freud's conception of the sexual other draws extensively on colonial imagery:

Psychoanalysis can . . . be seen as a quite elaborate form of ethnography – as a writing of the ethnicity of the white Western psyche. Repression becomes the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>76</sup> Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 47.

<sup>77</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 8.

prerequisite for the construction of a white culture which stipulates that female sexuality act as the trace within of what has been excluded.<sup>78</sup>

This suggests that Freud should be read symptomatically; his theories emulate and reproduce the repressions of Western culture even as they describe them. I too believe that the colonial conception of the other comes prior to or at least simultaneously with the Freudian one. The two theories, I find, cannot be kept separate; conceptions of sexual and colonial difference are intertwined in deep and complex ways which this thesis will seek to unpick. As Chapter 1 will show, the two are particularly inextricable when it comes to Mulveyan gaze theory, which has been prominent in previous attempts to supply postcolonial readings of cinema.

Ideological film criticism has frequently and problematically centred on the notion of the ‘progressive’ text, a trend inaugurated by Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni in their iconic *Cahiers du cinéma* article of 1969. Comolli and Narboni delineate six different ways in which different kinds of cinema can be ‘progressive’, contrasting each to what they call ‘category A’: the ‘largest category, compris[ing] those films which are imbued through and through with the dominant ideology in pure and unadulterated form, and give no indication that their makers were even aware of the fact’.<sup>79</sup> Category A has been, I find, surprisingly absent from subsequent debates about ideological criticism. Instead disputes have centred around the well-known ‘Category E’, which very problematically seems to locate progressiveness in auteur films and stylistic innovation. I certainly follow Barbara Klinger in rejecting this critical preference for complex narrative forms and stylistic self-consciousness,<sup>80</sup> as my film readings find no correlation between a film’s ‘inventional

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<sup>78</sup> Mary Ann Doane. ‘Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and the Cinema’, in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, ed. Mary Ann Doane, (London: Routledge, 1991), 211.

<sup>79</sup> Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni, ‘Cinema/Ideology/Criticism’, in *Movies and Methods*, vol. 1, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 25.

<sup>80</sup> Barbara Klinger, “‘Cinema/Ideology/Criticism’ Revisited: The Progressive Text”, *Screen* 25, vol. 1 (1984), 41.

qualities' and the ideological significance they contain. However even more importantly, my analysis goes beyond the problematic bifurcation between progressive and retrograde texts, instead investigating a broad and complex range of possible positionings in relation to dominant ideologies. As my chapters will show, even the most apparently typical and smooth Hollywood texts may contain a veritable storm of conflicts and fissures lurking just below the surface; none is ever found to be anything like 'imbued...with the dominant ideology in pure and unadulterated form', to the extent that I am led to seriously question whether such a category exists.

This is because, as others have argued and this thesis shall affirm, contradiction and incoherence lie at the heart of ideology. Ryan and Kellner make an especially insightful point here: they expand the traditional Marxist notion of ideology, defining it not only as a means of 'enlist[ing] the oppressed in their own subjugation' but in fact as 'an attempt to placate social tensions and to respond to social forces in such a way that they cease to be dangerous'.<sup>81</sup> In other words,

Rather than conceive of ideology as a simple exercise in domination, we suggest that it be conceived of as a response to forces which, if they were not pacified, would tear the social system asunder from inside. . . . By attempting to pacify, channel, and neutralize the forces that would invert the social system of inequality were they not controlled, ideology testifies to the power of those forces, of the very thing it seeks to deny.<sup>82</sup>

The present study will follow this conception, noting how ideological tension functions in the tourist films as a 'return of the repressed' – in other words, how the most apparently smooth and seamless texts may actually be those working the hardest to contain threats and contradictions.

Taking a somewhat more observational, bottom-up approach, Wood's article 'Ideology/Genre/Auteur' uses a list of examples of the values found within classical Hollywood cinema to demonstrate their irreducibly contradictory nature. For example, the

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<sup>81</sup> Ryan and Kellner, 14.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

list includes not only capitalism, the ‘work ethic’ and the valorisation of success/wealth, but also the apparent opposite of these – the notion that ‘money isn’t everything; money corrupts’.<sup>83</sup> Wood sums up the result of delineating such a list thusly:

The most striking fact about this list is that it presents an ideology that, far from being monolithic, is inherently riddled with hopeless contradictions and unresolvable tensions.<sup>84</sup>

Wood then provisionally redefines genre around this notion of ideological tension: classical Hollywood genres represent, he argues, ‘different strategies for dealing with the same ideological tensions’.<sup>85</sup> The tourist films similarly contain, in different generic forms, a set of irreducible tensions. A primary one is the tension between America as benevolent liberator and America as imperialist despot. Another, clearly related tension revolves around the question of Europe as dangerous and dark versus Europe as pristine or prelapsarian, inscribed by nostalgia. A third tension, also clearly related, revolves around femininity and feminism, revealing a complicated negotiation between the values of the compliant woman and those of the liberated woman. Such contradictions, as Nichols points out, are not resolvable; as the text works to contain or deflect them, it only succeeds in further submerging them.<sup>86</sup>

This thesis finds that ideological contradiction suffuses the tourist films in particularly intense and striking ways. The 1950s have often been noted as a time when the ideological conflicts and strains of classical Hollywood cinema seem to reach a peak: Peter Biskind notes that the films of this era ‘reflect not one but several warring ideologies’, doing so largely ‘without specific political allusions’ at a time when engaging in political thought

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<sup>83</sup> Robin Wood, ‘Ideology/Genre/Auteur’, in *Hitchcock’s Films Revisited*, revised ed., ed. Robin Wood (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 290.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>86</sup> Nichols, 102.

was frequently seen as subversive.<sup>87</sup> Wood, too, identifies the 1950s as a precursor to the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, a time when a storm was brewing that would ultimately lead to the ruptures of these later decades.<sup>88</sup>

Jackie Byars develops this idea further in her examination of how a quiet revolution in women's roles gained expression in women's films of the 1950s. She shows how these films reveal a degree of resistance against patriarchy yet simultaneously buttress traditional institutions, becoming progressively more incoherent as the institutions of patriarchy struggled and strained in the face of change.<sup>89</sup> Byars theorises that points of apparent incoherence within the film text – when a character's actions, say, do not seem to make sense or when an ideological purpose seems imposed from without – correspond to and dramatise incoherences within the ideologies of the broader culture. The 1950s melodrama thus exhibits both women's struggle against patriarchy *and* their continued victimisation, even dramatising this confrontation at contradictory moments within individual films.<sup>90</sup> In this manner, she argues, the 1950s melodrama goes beyond contradiction and into incoherence, producing areas of profound contestation that arise from a culture in flux.

In the present work I broadly adopt Byars's approach, noting moments of contradiction and considering how they aggregate in the text as a whole. Indeed, as we shall see, the tourist films are potentially even more complex in their negotiations with dominant ideology than Byars' corpus. She deals with only one ideological issue, namely patriarchy, while the present thesis follows both patriarchy *and* colonialism. Each of these can be contradictory and incoherent in its own right, but never more so than when these two dominant paradigms jostle with one another.

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<sup>87</sup> Peter Biskind, *Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 4.

<sup>88</sup> Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, 49.

<sup>89</sup> Jackie Byars, *All that Hollywood Allows: Re-reading Gender in 1950s Melodrama* (London: Routledge, 1991), 8.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

Ideological criticism has over the years had an admittedly tense relationship with historical scholarship, although in recent years this tension has settled down somewhat, as this methodology has been integrated into studies combining various methodologies, most notably those related to historiography and to star studies.<sup>91</sup> My approach to the tourist films departs somewhat from the norm here, representing a purer form of ideological criticism than has been typically seen in film studies in recent years. In this I admittedly open myself to the criticism that I take insufficient account of history, yet I see the over-admission of historical data as giving rise to particular problems that I sought to avoid in my own work. Robert R. Shandley's book *Runaway Romances* is in many ways particularly close to the present thesis, investigating a very similar group of films. However, Shandley's production-centred account of these films contains major gaps in terms of his readings. Although he is interested in the film text, he tends to limit his textual analysis to issues that somehow arise from his archival research on production, or which are corroborated by contemporaneous film reviews in newspapers and magazines. Accordingly, his central thesis is to read the films as 'allegories' for their production conditions.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, his interest in runaway production leads him to exclude a significant number of films that were made in California studio backlots rather than on location in Europe – notably those set in Paris, an extremely important tourist hub at the time that is nevertheless nearly absent from his study. Shandley's archival work constitutes a major contribution to our understanding of 1950s Hollywood production history and certainly fleshes out our understanding of Hollywood's interventions in postwar Europe – and like other scholarship in this area, it demonstrates a relationship of domination by focusing on a particular set of economic and political realities. Yet my approach here will take a different tack, relying

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<sup>91</sup> A few examples that are broadly relevant to the present study include: Pauline Small, *Sophia Loren: Moulding the Star* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009); Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It's So French! Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Jennifer Fay, *Theaters of Occupation: Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, xxiii.



instead on the ideological critic's basic tenet that to limit one's textual readings to the stated intentions of those who created the films cannot go far enough in acknowledging a film text's full ideological potential. The film text has the capacity to autonomously encode meanings coming from the broader cultural context, arising more or less independently of filmmakers' conscious intentions or simple economic/industrial conditions. Although such a methodology relies upon a good understanding of the broad strokes of history – the major ideas, movements and events of the time the films were made – being too specific about and focused on history runs the risk of overlooking the creative, generative power of the film text. A text-centred ideological approach, then, can show us a completely different aspect of the issue of Hollywood's collusion in American imperialism, revealing how the text might contribute to the building of discourses rather than simply reflecting them.

The other major point at which I depart from Shandley is that he calls these films a single genre – an argument that I find unsustainable in light of the diversity of generic affiliations within various sub-categories of the tourist film, including those with links to the travelogue, film noir, women's melodrama and musical comedy (as my chapters will show). Calling these films 'romances' appears to be based on the highly problematic assumption that any film containing a heterosexual coupling constitutes a 'romance'. It thereby collapses what are in fact manifest distinctions between different films within the group. I believe that 'cycle' is a more accurate term for these films than 'genre'. Steve Neale defines a cycle as a 'group of films made within a specific and limited time-span, and founded, for the most part, on the characteristics of individual commercial successes'.<sup>93</sup> The tourist films appear to fit this definition. Their period of production spans only sixteen years.<sup>94</sup> The beginning of the tourist film cycle is somewhat more nebulous than Neale's definition might accommodate; there were several early successes that likely contributed to the cycle's

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<sup>93</sup> Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* (London: Routledge, 2000), 9.

<sup>94</sup> A similar group of films made in the 1990s and early 2000s may constitute a second cycle of tourist films, unfortunately outside the scope of this thesis. Many of these are listed in the Filmography.

birth, including *A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1948), *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951) and *This is Cinerama* (Merian C. Cooper, 1952). Nevertheless, the limited time-span and model of early successes leading to the making of similar films clearly fits the present corpus. Conceiving of the group as a cycle gives us more room to incorporate observations about the tourist films' varied generic affiliations and other differences, emphasising their heterogeneity rather than forcing them into uniformity. In doing so, this thesis takes a basically Woodian approach to genre, exploring how the tourist films' wide-ranging generic affiliations 'represent different strategies for dealing with the same ideological tensions'.<sup>95</sup>

My ideological analyses will particularly focus on the tourist films' engagements with space, distance, geography and the perennial dichotomies of self versus other. Several of the most important classical Hollywood genres, I find, are transposed to European space again and again in the 1950s; this indicates, I believe, how American culture was changing the way it viewed world geography, and itself in relation to this geography, in ways that relate to the US's rising global dominance. I will particularly focus, then, on how these different genres reflect and inflect tensions around space and world geography.

Many Hollywood genres are also, of course, associated with masculinity or femininity, both in terms of the protagonists' identities and subjectivities and in terms of spectatorship. As Byars shows, the 1950s were already a time of intense gender upheavals; the tensions and contradictions surrounding gender will need to be particularly interrogated in relation to issues of space and geography. The question of spatiovisual gendered subjectivity – the differences in how male and female characters inhabit, traverse and gaze upon cinematic space – thus becomes important. This thesis will explore what happens when a particular American masculine or feminine subjectivity within the Hollywood framework – in particular the explorer/conqueror, the film noir hero, the old

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<sup>95</sup> Robin Wood, 'Ideology/Genre/Auteur', 292.

maid and the showgirl – travels abroad, and how this modulates or expands the possibilities of these gendered subjectivities.

Given the close and detailed reading that this work will require, I have necessarily chosen a relatively small number of texts as case studies. Each chapter focuses on only one or two films which have been chosen as representative examples of a loose generic grouping: the travelogue, film noir, women's melodrama or musical. Moreover, each chapter (with one exception) begins with a relatively little-discussed film before going on to explore a better-known one; the critical issues surrounding the more canonical film are thus transmuted and reconceptualised through my discussion of the lesser-known work, allowing my arguments in each chapter to catch an initial foothold before gaining full momentum. The exception is Chapter 4, which looks at only one film in great detail; this seemed justifiable on grounds that *none* of the Italy-set women's films have been treated as canonical in the previous literature, as well as the extraordinary richness of the chosen example, *Summertime* (David Lean, 1955).

The thesis begins with a preliminary chapter that lays out in more detail the historical context and methodological interventions of the thesis. It discusses existing methods in postcolonial textual reading that will be utilised in this thesis. The first section is devoted to postcolonial literary methods, primarily from Edward Said's iconic work on Orientalism. The second section looks at colonial visual representation, particularly the sublime and the picturesque, which will serve as key concepts in understanding the tourist films' colonial ideologies. The third section then discusses gaze theory, the major theory from film studies for how texts encode power relations, comparing and connecting it to postcolonial theory in multifaceted ways.

Chapter 2 looks at the development of widescreen cinema in the early 1950s and the attendant revival of travel subjects. The travelogue had been an extremely important genre in the early cinema period; its aesthetics and ideological concerns were seemingly resurrected in the postwar period. *This is Cinerama* (Merian C. Cooper, 1952) evokes many

of the characteristic features of the early travelogue, including the figure of the white male narrator, an emphasis on ethnographic spectacle, and the organisation of foreign space via Western technologies of transportation. *Three Coins in the Fountain* (Jean Negulesco, 1954), an early Fox CinemaScope feature, incorporates many of these strategies into narrative form, however it does so via the subjectivity of the white American woman. The female tourist's traversals of Italian space in this film are reliant on a picturesque aesthetics that simultaneously, and problematically, mobilises both feminism and colonialism.

Chapter 3 looks at the 'dark tourist films', a sub-cycle of films about American men in postwar Europe (often Germany) that are strikingly different in tone and subject matter to the other tourist films, taking visual and thematic cues from the film noir. These films, I argue, mobilise a dualistic conception of postwar masculinity that echoes both Orientalist and Freudian notions of self versus other. They depict a shadowy, frightening and war-torn Europe that references the sublime aesthetic tradition. *Confidential Report* (Orson Welles, 1955) uses such a representation of European space in a way that implicitly justifies American colonial intervention on the continent via a logic of terror and the possibility of its containment through rationality. *A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1948) is a deeply ambivalent film that simultaneously buttresses and undermines the moral righteousness of the American military intervention in Berlin. Interweaving three competing narratives about post-war Berlin, this film confronts head-on whether America's presence there constitutes imperialism or not.

Chapter 4 explores the 1950s women's film, specifically the subset of the genre that takes place in Italy. It examines the generic and ideological transformations wrought by the female protagonist's travel to European space. The chapter builds on previous work on the women's melodrama which understands this genre as exploring women's negotiations with patriarchy. Examining *Summertime* (David Lean, 1955), I argue that Italy serves as a space in which an American woman can behave as though liberated from patriarchy: she is endowed with the ability to gaze, traverse space and consume in ways denied her at home.

This occurs, however, via a mobilisation of racist stereotypes such as that of the ‘Latin lover’ and other colonialist representations of Italy. These tropes turn Italy into a fantasy space for the fulfilment of American women’s desires, forcing patriarchy and colonialism into a complex framework of simultaneous collusion and contradiction.

Chapter 5 investigates the Paris musical as final group within the tourist film corpus. It begins by offering a brief account of the rich history of American film musicals’ representations of Paris, focusing in particular on this city’s associations with women’s fashion. It then looks at *Silk Stockings* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1957), arguing that this film’s studio-constructed depiction of Paris, rather than making a claim to ‘authenticity’ of representation, instead functions as an abstracted space for an ideological debate about capitalism and communism. Since the French capital is also the capital of high fashion – the feminine form of capitalism – women’s bodies and sexuality are caught up in this debate. Like many musicals, the film ultimately enacts a utopian resolution, yet here it is particularly fraught with instabilities that reveal much about the ideologies at stake. In the final section I revisit debates about *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953), exploring the film’s complicated interplay between gendered and racialised/nationalised gazing. I examine Fiona Handyside’s and Maureen Turim’s arguments for a colonial reading of this film before going on to offer my own, more complete reading, examining how the plot hinges on issues surrounding the transfer of colonial assets. Noting previous debates around the film’s exasperating illegibility, I argue that Marilyn Monroe’s performance functions at an ideological level to reconcile contradictions and produce a sense of smoothness.

Finally, in the conclusion I summarise my findings, pointing to the need for further study of the geopolitics of the classical Hollywood film text. Looking at the spatial and geographic tropes within various Hollywood films, genres, gendered stereotypes, I argue, has the capacity to significantly expand our understanding of classical Hollywood.

## **Chapter 1. Postcolonial reading strategies and the film text**

Although the broad aims of this thesis are shared with those of ideological film criticism, this thesis's major methodological intervention within these aims is to extend strategies of postcolonial textual reading from their primary use in literary studies of the British and French empires to a cinematic study of postwar American culture. Chapter 1 surveys the tools and strategies used in previous postcolonial textual analysis that will be of use or interest to this thesis. These come from three distinct though interrelated areas of postcolonial studies: literary studies, history of art and film studies. As I consider the film studies approaches to be in many ways the least developed, I place these at the end, first exploring the relatively robust terrains of the other two disciplines.

### **Postcolonial literary studies**

The postcolonial approach to textual interpretation has been one of the most important paradigms in humanities research of the last forty years. The very term 'postcolonial' is indicative of the centrality of the French and British empires to this scholarship, with its suggestion that colonialism is somehow finished or in the past as well as its emphasis on these empires' formal imperial system known as colonialism. Such research generally sees those colonial systems and their aftermath as the central explanatory fact for much of how the world is today, influencing vast realms of politics, economics and culture. Understanding the ways in which particular European works of art have imagined the task of empire, then – as well as the ways in which works of art from colonies and former colonies have responded to or recuperated from the colonialist imaginary – take on a fundamental importance.

## Said and Orientalism

As Edward Said has played a crucial role in the construction of the postcolonial paradigm, I will begin with an account of his 1970s work, followed by a discussion of some of the most important ways in which his work has later been expanded or challenged. In *Orientalism*, Said studied the way the West's notions of 'the Orient' beginning in the Middle Ages were later encoded in imperial policies and strategies in the late eighteenth through twentieth centuries. His study examines the Orient and its mythological position as the West's other, the object of its knowledge, the imagined shadow to its godliness. For Said, European texts dealing with the Orient, particularly travel accounts, academic treatises and novels, became blueprints for British and French military and political intervention in the Middle East. These texts promulgated a set of images, myths and stereotypes that justified the European imperial presence on the basis of the West's supposed superiority. It was Said who first suggested the deep connection between the way one culture imagines another and the power relations which exist, and develop, between the two. Drawing upon the work of Michel Foucault, Said applied to the realm of nations, cultures and ethnicities the notion that power is, among other things, the power to represent: to choose the words and images through which a less powerful entity is described and hence conceptualised.

The present thesis takes the concept of Orientalism as a central analogy for American-European relations in the postwar period. I will investigate the ways American films imagined Europe: both how they position Europe as the embodiment of difference or otherness to the 'us' of American civilisation, and how they envision the continent according to a rhetoric that ultimately justifies America's military, political and economic presence.

Said develops his position via the notions of representation and consent.

There is very little consent to be found . . . in the fact that Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke for herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, history. *He* spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess

Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was ‘typically Oriental’.<sup>1</sup>

Flaubert, like other European writers about the Orient, had – simply through his identity as a European – the power to describe Kuchuk Hanem, to categorise her according to his own system of classification, and to ascribe to her whatever descriptive metaphors and antinomies he might choose or create. Through being European and male, he had a capacity for knowledge of her which was inherently one-sided and exclusionary;<sup>2</sup> she could have no similar knowledge of him. She was without voice, without the ability to describe or categorise even herself.

The discourses of Orientalism within the West arose, according to Said, from Flaubert’s description acting as only one instance in a whole system of knowledge and classification that arose and developed over time,<sup>3</sup> with each individual text bouncing off the others in productive ways that ultimately built up an entire tradition of description and discourse.<sup>4</sup> This discourse has little to do with what is ‘really’ there in the Orient, or with Kuchuk Hanem’s lived reality and perceptions. It has its own inner logic, and according to Said only the Europeans who participated in it had any voice in it. (Subsequent studies have challenged the supposedly monolithic nature of this inner logic, allowing for complexity and contradiction; more on this later.)

The ability to represent without consent is in itself a form of oppression. Yet even more insidious, according to Said, is the fact that a multitude of such representations ultimately ‘can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe’.<sup>5</sup> This means two related things. First, the European discourse of the Orient was increasingly enacted upon the world in its imperial policies as Europe grew as a world power from the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Italics in original.



sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries. As Said puts it, ‘the Orient...was something to be encountered and dealt with to a certain extent *because* the texts made that Orient possible. Such an Orient was silent, available to Europe for the realization of projects that involved but were never directly responsible to the native inhabitants’.<sup>6</sup> Second, due to Europe’s having the only available system of classification – the only model of knowledge, description or thought about the Orient – in time the Orient itself comes to ‘participate in its own Orientalising’.<sup>7</sup> It receives an understanding of itself from the West, and thus Orientalist discourse becomes reality.

It comes to be of enormous importance, then, to understand the ideological discourses at work within Orientalist texts, for these can ultimately show the imaginaries at work in shaping reality. The present thesis will utilise this Saidian theoretical approach to textual reading. It will seek to tease out the varied and complicated ways the tourist films represent and describe Europe. Said’s work shows that textual discourses can be creative and generative in their own right, not merely responding to historical events but influencing and shaping those events.

In addition to this overarching paradigm for postcolonial textual analysis, the Saidian approach encompasses several other tropes and issues that will be of importance in understanding the tourist films’ Orientalisation of Europe. They are listed and discussed in the following sections.

### Representation, Resistance and Transgression

As indicated above, the notion of representation is central to Said’s thesis. This has been taken up in force in subsequent postcolonial criticism, which has often centred on understanding the complicated ways that a work of Western literature (or other art form) misrepresents a particular group of people, making them stand in as an Other to Western

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 325.

civilisation in order to enforce the dominant voice's position of power. This will constitute one key aspect of my readings of the tourist films: understanding how Europeans – especially Italians – are represented within these films as Others to white American hegemony. In particular, the figure of the 'Latin lover', played more often than not by Rossano Brazzi, is a key stereotype in need of unpacking.

Said more or less assumes that the dominant Western voice functions monolithically in such representations, with little room for negotiation or dissent. Subsequent scholars have challenged this. Sara Suleri, for example, takes a position at the very opposite end of the spectrum:

Colonial facts are vertiginous: they lack a recognizable cultural plot; they frequently fail to cohere around the master-myth that proclaims static lines of demarcation between imperial power and disempowered culture, between colonizer and colonized.<sup>8</sup>

Film, as a collaborative art form, seems to offer especially rich possibilities for resistance, critique and transgression. Never more so than in the tourist films. As Shandley shows, many European personnel – stars, extras, various kinds of technicians, and occasionally directors – participated in the making of these films.<sup>9</sup> We should note that participation is not tantamount to consent. If an Egyptian had helped Gérôme with his paintings, say, this would not be evidence of consent but would in fact be a manifestation of the very same power which Gérôme, as a white male European, wielded in relation to the Egyptians. This leaves open the question of whether any resistance or transgression is possible within the tourist films. What would resistance look like? Is there any room within these films for subaltern negotiation with or critique of the dominant colonial ideology?

The matter of resistance is, it turns out, equally intricate. Said makes clear that violent resistance does not challenge the discourse of Orientalism itself, but rather is itself interpreted and subsumed by Westerners into the familiar racist hierarchies of the

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<sup>8</sup> Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Shandley especially focuses on Cinecittà studios. Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), xvi; 23.

Oriental.<sup>10</sup> A more effective path of resistance to colonialist discourse is for minorities to insist on taking a seat at the table in order to get their voices heard within existing or new modes of communication and culture. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' explores exactly this possibility, arguing that postcolonial scholarship must give up its position of epistemological authority in favour of allowing the subaltern to speak for him/herself.<sup>11</sup>

How would dissent manifest itself in these films? Is there even a need for opposition? After all, Europeans are not generally classed as people whose voices are more in need of being heard. However, in the world of film and film criticism there is a strain of thought that does lean this way to some degree. European intellectuals were and are often quite hostile to Hollywood-style portrayals of their nations/cultures.<sup>12</sup> Colin McArthur's vitriolic criticism of *Brigadoon* (Vincent Minnelli, 1954), which I would class as a tourist film, is a case in point.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, European national cinemas are often explicitly conceived as an alternative to or form of resistance to Hollywood.<sup>14</sup>

Within the tourist films, one major answer for what dissent might look like lies in performance. Sophia Loren's performance in *It Started in Naples* (Melville Shavelson, 1960), for example, presents a fascinating possibility of dissent. Her character defies the hegemonising power of American cultural signifiers, including not just Coca-Cola and rock 'n' roll but also Clark Gable's punctiliousness and sense of order. She lampoons or attacks these repeatedly. Yet we would be on shaky ground in unequivocally asserting Loren's

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<sup>10</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 315.

<sup>11</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

<sup>12</sup> A book that ably explores Europe's hostility for Hollywood, contextualising it historically, is Bill Grantham's *Some Big Bourgeois Brothel: Contexts for France's Culture Wars with Hollywood* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately I lack the space to discuss representations of 'Scotland' in detail in the course of this thesis. Colin McArthur, *Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television* (London: BFI, 1982); and especially McArthur's later work '*Brigadoon*', '*Braveheart*' and *the Scots: Distortions of Scotland in Hollywood Cinema* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 'Introduction', in *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-95*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (London: BFI, 1998), 2.

successful resistance here, as this resistance may or may not be contained by the discourses of ‘Europeanness’ mobilised in the film. In other words, for this Italian woman to resist the film’s stereotyping of her may be simply to play into the stereotype of the charmingly ferocious Italian temper. It is an open question whether the film opens up a space for genuine resistance – a question that we might only hope to resolve on careful investigation of the text. And perhaps not even then: ambiguities are not always resolvable.

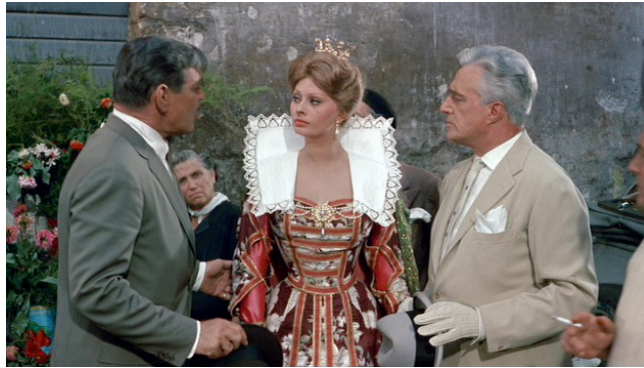


Figure 1. Clark Gable, Sophia Loren and Vittorio de Sica in *It Started in Naples*.

While Europeans clearly did have *some* kind of input in the making of these films, what is at stake is whether this input was truly their own voice or was an aspect of the particular kind of non-voice they were allowed by the dominant discourse. The text, rather than the archival record, is what can tell us whether their voices are present or not. Moments of incoherence within the text, as the above example indicates, may be especially important to notice in this regard, pointing to moments when a subversive voice may – or may not – be heard.

#### Ascribing racial otherness

The patronising aspects of colonial representation have been amply explored both by Said and in subsequent literature. Much work has investigated tropes of the racial inferiority of the native population, which is often viewed as ‘backwards’, uneducated,

uncivilised, unhygienic, hypersexual, irreligious, illogical or stupid.<sup>15</sup> Said calls this ‘positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand’.<sup>16</sup> This current of patronising representation is at work at certain points in the tourist film, although perhaps more subtly than in colonial literature. In Italy especially – but also in France and elsewhere – the locals are often viewed in an overtly racialised way. Tropes of the Italians’ hypersexuality, lack of hygiene, petty dishonesty and inferior intellects are common, and are contrasted with Americans’ relative cleanliness, sexual fastidiousness, trustworthiness and rationality. It may be surprising that white Europeans could be treated in such a racialised way, yet we will notice moments of this type of treatment throughout the thesis.

A closely related tendency is to represent ‘native’ Europeans as though they were in need of being taught democracy or civilisation. Said traces this trope within Orientalist texts, describing it as ‘an idea that will acquire an almost unbearable, next to mindless authority in European writing: the theme of Europe teaching the Orient the meaning of liberty’.<sup>17</sup> This idea of teaching the natives about freedom is widespread within colonialist literature, and it is a powerful one, for it justifies intervention by the West on moral grounds. It smoothes over the ideological cracks inherent to the notion of a supposedly enlightened society dominating another people via acts of atrocious violence. This idea of teaching freedom to the ‘natives’ via military, educational or other imperially-tinged

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<sup>15</sup> Some examples of work which broadly fits into this category, but take other specific historical/geographical moments as case studies, include: Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (London: Duke University Press, 1996); David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (London: Duke University Press, 1993); Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (London: Cornell University Press, 1988); Christopher L. Miller, *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Prem Chowdhry, *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Priya Jaikumar, *Cinema at the End of Empire: A Politics of Transition in Britain and India* (London: Duke University Press, 2006); Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar, eds., *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997); Dina Sherzer, ed., *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone Worlds* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

interventions is omnipresent within the tourist films, but especially in films about Germany. During the war years, Germany had been ruled by an almost Oriental-style despot in the form of Hitler, whose power was absolute and terrifyingly barbaric. Occupied Germany and its citizens are represented as the core of a totally ruined society, barely eking out a living amongst the rubble. They have lost even the basic tokens of civilisation, dependent on constant help from the American occupying force even to feed themselves. Because they can no longer afford to hold moral principles (to paraphrase the Marlene Dietrich character in *A Foreign Affair* [Billy Wilder, 1948]), it belongs to America to sort out what is right and wrong for them, to bestow justice and order and therefore civilisation.

#### Envy and wonder

Receiving less attention in the postcolonial literature is Said's position that there is an element of longing and envy in the West's appropriation of the Orient; it is not always solely condescending or disdainful. Said writes of longing as a crucial aspect of Orientalism. The Orient is viewed as a much older civilisation containing the most unimaginable beauty (in landscapes, cityscapes, women); he argues that this view is an echo of the Orient's mighty cultural and political presence in Europe in the Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup> Europe, says Said, has often longed to appropriate the Orient's cultural richness and great antiquity for itself, both through conquering it and through writing about it.<sup>19</sup> This lends the Orient a kind of imaginative power, for it is positioned as having something the Westerner desires.

We can see a similar dynamic at work in the tourist films. These American representations of Europe betray a desire to gain access to the continent's great cultural richness and long history. Two primary reasons for Americans to travel to Europe in these films were (and to a large extent still are today) to view the great antiquities of Europe – primarily its art and architecture – and to gain direct experience of an older civilisation, a

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 58-62.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 167.

civilisation seen as the origin of American society. This means that within the American hegemonic framework, European culture accrues power as a source of mystique. As we might put it, there are two ways to otherise a culture: to patronise it or to put it on a pedestal. Any thorough reading of an Orientalising discourse must, I believe, account for both possibilities.

Yet this placement on a pedestal can turn into a location of resistance, turning the hegemonic subject's envy into an accrual of power for the other. Thus, to turn again to *It Started in Naples*, Loren's performance seemingly registers an awareness of her character's 'Italianness' as something the Clark Gable character fantasises about and ultimately desires. She constantly enacts a performance for him of various stereotypes of 'Italianness', including at different points both sexual availability and a Catholic cult of virginity. That his picture of 'Italianness' is imaginary makes no difference to her apparent ability to exploit his yearning, using it to her own ends even as she ridicules the falseness of his fantasies. Thus, we must pay attention to moments of European 'mystique' as another potential site for contradiction and dissent.



Figure 2. Lucia (Loren) performs sexual looseness.



Figure 3. Lucia as the 'good Catholic girl' in a religious procession.

## Nostalgia

There is a crucial temporal aspect to the tourist films' representations of Europe – in both patronising and envious permutations. On the one hand, it is deeply patronising to see Europe as an antiquated place, out of touch with the present day and in need of

modernisation of its industries, living standards and political philosophies; this is a tactic borrowed more or less straight from the colonialist playbook, in which the hegemoniser is envisaged as doing the natives a great favour. Yet this very antiquity is also, on the other hand, a primary touristic draw. Going to Europe is a way of temporarily escaping the dreariness of one's modern, urban, American existence, with its alienation, ugliness and loneliness. Indeed, the lure of the pre-modern – as we learn from MacCannell's classic work on the sociology of tourism – forms an essential aspect of the modern motivation to travel.<sup>20</sup> The contrast between America and Europe proffered by these films is a source of pleasure on two fronts: the American viewer can both take pride in America's 'helping' Europe by modernising it, as well as enjoying access to the delights of experiencing an older civilisation. This access, in fact, seems easy and convenient when compared to actual travel there – a proclaimed superiority of cinema over actual travel.

### Manifest destiny

It must be remembered that America has its own separate, though clearly related, tradition of imperialist discourse, known as manifest destiny. American culture has long identified a mission for itself to spread white civilisation across the North American continent, bringing the light of freedom, democracy and religion to the darkest of wild lands. According to Richard Slotkin's rich account of manifest destiny and the American frontier narrative, America long viewed its civilisation as accomplishing its highest achievements at the frontier, which straddled the divide between the east/Europe and the west/wilderness.<sup>21</sup> This divide is, of course, closely related to Orientalism, yet we must notice the particularly intense emphasis in the American context on the notion of a split consciousness, where both civilisation/enlightenment and the dark Other are perceived as aspects of the American self. According to Slotkin, this split consciousness is closely aligned

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<sup>20</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, new ed. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1999; first published in 1976).

<sup>21</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).



with an important branch of heroic American masculinity associated with the frontiersman.<sup>22</sup> In Chapter 3 this strand of imperialist imagery will play an important role in my reading of the European-set film noir. Germany and particularly Berlin, in these films, seem to embody a border area, where the Eastern Bloc is absorbed into these representational tropes as a dark Other threatening to seduce the American male hero away from his domestic role in postwar American life, thus justifying America's military and cultural interventions on the continent in familiar terms.

### Orientalism and femininity

Several scholars have explored the relationship between Orientalist imagery and discourses of femininity in Western texts. As discussed in the Introduction, Mary Ann Doane reads Freud for the colonialist imagery at work in his discussions of women and female sexuality as a 'dark continent'.<sup>23</sup> Caren Kaplan, too, points out how Orientalist discourse often equates the conquering spirit of modernity with masculinity, ascribing to the Orient feminisation, sexualisation and surrender.<sup>24</sup> Meyda Yeğenoğlu similarly investigates the ways gendered discourse is not separable from Orientalist discourse, arguing that 'the discursive constitution of Otherness is achieved simultaneously through sexual as well as cultural modes of differentiation'.<sup>25</sup> Both woman and Oriental, in the hegemonic Western discourse, serve as mysterious and unknowable others to white male hegemonic power, the two allied in complex ways. On the other hand, in early cinematic imagery of empire, white women and children were often used as symbols of colonial security, indicating a space that through colonial conquest or development had been made

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Ann Doane. 'Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and the Cinema', in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, ed. Mary Ann Doane, (London: Routledge, 1991), 211.

<sup>24</sup> Caren Kaplan, "'Getting to Know You": Travel, Gender, and the Politics of Representation in *Anna and the King of Siam* and *The King and I*', in *Late Imperial Culture*, ed. Román de la Campa et al. (London: Verso, 1995), 37.

<sup>25</sup> Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

safe enough for families and pleasure-trips.<sup>26</sup> The white woman, then, is subsumed into a symbolism of masculinist conquest in contradictory and dualistic ways: she is both allied with the dark territory to be conquered, and serves as a symbol of domesticity and safety.<sup>27</sup>

The tourist films draw upon these symbolisms in complex ways. In Chapter 3 we will explore how Marlene Dietrich negotiates her otherised position as a German seductress in *A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1948), embodying one half of a divide in the American male self – the half that is drawn to illicit sex and death – before ultimately showing herself to be a very sympathetic character. In Chapter 4, we will look at how an American ‘old maid’ mediates between her marginalised position within American culture and the power she seemingly accrues as a rich foreigner in Italy. In Chapter 5 we will read Cyd Charisse’s Russian character in *Silk Stockings* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1957) and Marilyn Monroe’s American showgirl in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953) as similarly negotiating with American hegemonic ideologies of gender and race. The female characters in all these films, as we will see, interact with and subtly push against the boundaries of these constructions of femininity, and my readings will be devoted to unpicking their deeply complicated and even incoherent positionings as women within imperial settings.

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In Orientalist discourse, as Said makes clear, the Orient serves as a dream space for Europeans, a place upon which they are free to project their desires and redirect their repressed energies. What can ‘really’ be found there does not matter. It serves as the backdrop for Westerners’ dreams, fantasies, imagination, ‘according to a logic governed

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<sup>26</sup> Jennifer Lynn Peterson, ‘World Pictures: Travelogue Films and the Lure of the Exotic’ (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999; accessed via UMI/Proquest, Microform no. 9934106), 258.

<sup>27</sup> Neither of these symbolisms bears much relation to the complex roles that actual white Western women played in the British and French empires; indeed Said is widely criticised for ignoring the complexity of women’s roles, which many subsequent studies have explored. See, for example: Inderpal Grewal, *‘Home’ and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996); Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture, and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Suleri, *Rhetoric*.

not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections'.<sup>28</sup> For postwar America, Europe plays a similar role: as a space of longing – for sex, glamour, culture, death – which cannot be expressed within the context of the domestic. Europe serves as a space not merely for travel, but for inner journeys – for explorations of the unknown both outside and within the self.

## **Colonial visual representation**

Certain aspects of representation in the visual arts have been linked to the Orientalist imaginary. This section will explore some important strands of thinking here. The first two sections are a discussion of the sublime and the picturesque – two distinct yet related aesthetics that have long been linked by scholars to colonial politics. The third and fourth sections discuss two other important visual tropes, namely the promontory view and decay.

### The sublime

In her innovative book *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference*, Christine Battersby explores the politics of the sublime. The sublime might be defined as an experience of the 'overwhelming, breathtaking, awe-inspiring, tremendous, terrifying, unrepresentable [or] revolutionary' by a rational subject.<sup>29</sup> According to Battersby, in this encounter the infinity of the sublime threatens to overwhelm the understanding or reason, thus 'opening up a kind of split within the subject before consciousness and reason re-establish control'.<sup>30</sup>

We might immediately notice that this 'split' bears significant similarity to the American colonial imaginary of manifest destiny, which situates the American man as standing guard at the border between the light of civilisation and the dark wilderness. Battersby argues that the sublime plays a role in how America continues to conceive of

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<sup>28</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Christine Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

world political and historical events, namely 9/11 and Muslim extremist terrorism. Yet she traces the political nature of the sublime back to Kant, who identified the sublime experience as central to the rationality and therefore superiority of the white male subject. The sublime, in Battersby's reading of Kant, is related to fear, yet differs from fear in that experiencing the sublime requires a prior rationality. For example, an 'Alpine peasant' cannot, in Kant's view, access the sublime because of a lack of education, and is therefore simply *afraid* of the 'icy mountains'.<sup>31</sup> The sublime is therefore 'culturally and historically specific':<sup>32</sup> it is inaccessible to anyone who lacks the right kind of 'moral education', particularly Orientals and savages.<sup>33</sup> It is also inaccessible to white, educated women, although this is conceived not as an inability so much as a 'quasi-moral duty for women not to develop their personality, reason and understanding in the direction of the sublime'<sup>34</sup> – a position which becomes quite important, given that Kant's later writings 'link full personhood and moral autonomy to the sublime'.<sup>35</sup> The experience of the sublime, then, is conceived as belonging to white men, while women and non-whites are conversely placed as potential *objects* of sublime experience. The white Western male must learn, through education and the attainment of reason, to overcome these inscrutable others, converting his innate fear into a rational containment of their incipient threat.

The sublime aesthetic thus becomes an implicit justification for colonial warfare. Discourses of manifest destiny, for example, rely on a conception of the white male self that bears striking resemblance to the sublime. In this and other colonial contexts, the objects of sublime experience are envisioned as a dark, terrifying wilderness to be literally conquered by the rational male self. Indeed, in Battersby's reading of Kant, warfare is practically a

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 31. Quoting Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Erik Matthews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 265.

<sup>32</sup> Battersby, *The Sublime*, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 9.

necessary condition for the creation of rational male subjectivity through the sublime, as ‘a long period of peace “usually debases the mentality of the populace” and prevents it from experiencing the sublime’.<sup>36</sup>

It makes sense, then, that the sublime aesthetic makes an appearance in a subset of tourist films taking place in the period directly following the end of the Second World War. This subset of the tourist films is deeply dystopian in tone, depicting a European (often German) landscape that has been reduced to rubble – a destruction so complete that it seems to defy reason or understanding. As we will see in Chapter 4, landscapes of rubble, often filmed in shadowy black-and-white photography, are associated with narratives of the American man in Europe, with the same fundamentally split subjectivity as the frontier hero. I will read, particularly, the film noir hero as connected to the tropes of manifest destiny and the sublime, noticing the similarities between the noir male consciousness and these colonial aesthetics. Europe, in these dystopian films, functions as a space belonging to the dark untamed Other, given over to criminals and fatal women. The American presence in this dystopian Europe seems tactically shaky and morally liminal, and yet if Battersby’s theorisation of the sublime holds, we might read this very uncertainty and danger as implicitly justifying the continued American presence there, possibly serving a containing function for the perils of Russia’s dark empire.

### The picturesque

On the other hand, the majority of the tourist films ignore the war almost entirely – somewhat bizarrely, when one considers how omnipresent it was as a fact of recent history in Europe, and in American relations with Europe, in the 1950s. Colourful and spectacular in visual style, comic or melodramatic in tone, many of the tourist films are pervasively utopian. The war is, if mentioned at all, seemingly a distant memory. In the visual splendour of these utopian films, the tourist sights of Italy or France are displayed before

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 32. Quoting Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 263.

us, frequently in gorgeous widescreen panoramas, and the narratives equally suggest a safe and delightful experience of Europe.

In these utopian tourist films, the picturesque is the more relevant aesthetic. Battersby defines the picturesque as an aesthetic strategy by which the terror of the sublime is contained, its power abolished. The notion of the picturesque, she argues, first came about in relation to landscaping. A garden would be composed in such a way that it suggested the force of nature, yet simultaneously reassured the viewer that humans were in control. In this way the potentially destructive force of nature became an object of curiosity rather than power, a thing constructed for human delight.<sup>37</sup> The picturesque, Battersby establishes, was a powerful aesthetic strategy in the hands of colonial artists, who visually filtered the wild impenetrable landscapes of newly ‘discovered’ lands through softening hints of the domestic and familiar. In this way the potentially terrifying, sublime virgin landscape was tamed, made reassuring and safe for the viewer.

The sublime performs a similar function to the picturesque in that both constitute aestheticisations of difference. They functioned side-by-side within eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonialist imagery.<sup>38</sup> However, the sublime captures a moment of terror that the picturesque seeks to deny. The latter celebrates wild nature by taming it into an object of amusement or curiosity while the former revels in nature’s unbridled power.<sup>39</sup> Battersby quotes Uvedale Price’s seminal 1810 *Essays on the Picturesque* to explain this difference:

Infinity is one of the most efficient causes of the sublime...to give [an object] picturesqueness, you must destroy the cause of its sublimity; for it is on the shape and disposition of its boundaries, that the picturesque must in greater measure depend.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Battersby, *The Sublime*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>40</sup> Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Mawman, 1810), 84. Quoted in Battersby, *The Sublime*, 11.

The picturesque ultimately tames nature through framing and containment, reassuring the spectator, whereas the sublime is a category for appreciating its overwhelming vastness and terror. As I will discuss in a moment, the picturesque thus opens up a space for feminine viewing, a possibility that was excised from the sublime.

Rosalind Galt situates the development of picturesque aesthetics historically, tracing its relationship with the land conflicts of the English enclosures. As Galt puts it, ‘The concept of “improvement” as a gardening aesthetic often meant wholesale destruction as a striking correlative to the “improvements” of enclosure’.<sup>41</sup> The picturesque aesthetic, as it developed in gardening discourse, was directly related to the gentry’s growing desire to throw peasants off their land. The picturesque thus developed as a glorification of the empty landscape and its capacity for ‘improvement’ by wealthy landowners.

Sara Suleri’s book *The Rhetoric of English India* extends this logic to an explicitly colonial situation, discussing the picturesque in watercolours made by European women in India in the nineteenth century. Suleri argues that the picturesque ‘assumes an ideological urgency through which all subcontinental threats could be temporarily converted into watercolors’.<sup>42</sup> This served to ‘romanticis[e] . . . difficulty into the greater tolerability of mystery’.<sup>43</sup> The picturesque is thus again theorised as a colonialist intervention which functions to contain threat through pleasing visual representation, ‘allow[ing] the colonial gaze a license to convert its ability not to see into studiously visual representations’.<sup>44</sup>

By the twentieth century, as Jennifer Peterson points out, the term ‘picturesque’ itself had become nearly meaningless, denoting ‘almost anything that is pretty and reassuring’.<sup>45</sup> This is because the picturesque was an easily commodified aesthetic that

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<sup>41</sup> Rosalind Galt, ‘On *L’Avventura* and the Picturesque’, in *Antonioni: Centenary Essays*, ed. Laura Rascaroli and John David Rhodes (London: BFI, 2011), 144.

<sup>42</sup> Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 75.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid..

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>45</sup> Peterson, ‘World Pictures’, 217.

became absorbed effortlessly into the visuality of modernity and the rise of mass art.<sup>46</sup> The early cinema travelogue, as Peterson argues, absorbed the aesthetics of the picturesque, utilising it in service of early cinema's claim to 'bring the far near'.<sup>47</sup> We can read the tourist films' resurrection of the early film travelogue's aesthetics of distance as a direct inheritor of this tradition. The tourist films utilise the picturesque to subvert and smooth over the violence of America's conquest and occupation of Europe, justifying it in aestheticizing terms of 'improvement'. In the film readings that follow we will pay close attention both to the tourist films' picturesque aesthetics and to the moments of implicit colonial violence that seep through.

Finally, we must notice how the picturesque is associated with specifically feminine forms of viewing. Giuliana Bruno traces the picturesque to its eighteenth-century origins as a practice for arranging a garden or landscape, arguing that strolling about such a landscape was a quintessentially feminine activity:

The activity of pleasure that picturesque space articulated – its texture of affects – was opened to a body of female spectatorship and was fabricated by women as well. Women strolled the gardens' grounds and participated in the public spectacles of the (pleasure) gardens. They were also involved in both actual and virtual picturesque voyages. Illustrations and paintings, as well as texts, document a female presence and show the extent of its participation in garden life and discourse. In these pictures we can see that a female public was being formed on the garden's grounds, a public that turned into a travelling authorship. . . . By way of garden strolling, the picturesque opened the emotion of travelling cultures to women.<sup>48</sup>

In the tourist films, the picturesque is similarly associated with feminine viewing practices and female tourism. It embodies at once an aesthetic strategy for justifying the subjugation of non-Western peoples, and a way for women to participate in public discourse and free up their experiences of space and travel. The picturesque, then, functions as a major site for the jostling of patriarchal ideologies with colonial ones. I will explore the picturesque in more detail in chapters 2 and 4 as I examine *Three Coins in the Fountain* (Jean Negulesco,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 193-194.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>48</sup> Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (London: Verso, 2002), 200.



1954) and *Summertime* (David Lean, 1955) for the ways they modulate colonial aesthetics through feminine subjectivities.

#### Promontory views and surveillance

In critical work on the sublime and to some degree the picturesque as well, the panoramic view plays a crucial role: a colonialist claim of superiority corresponds to a viewing position which places the subject in a position to gaze out over a landscape, often from above. Mary Louise Pratt's book *Imperial Eyes* explores a trope she calls the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey', in which a passage of dense visual description (in written literature) reports a moment of 'discovery' in a colonial context.<sup>49</sup> Such passages refer to landscape painting traditions, aestheticising their objects by discussing a 'foreground' and a 'background' to the scene, using detailed descriptions of colours and textures.

In so doing, such descriptive passages accomplish two crucial ideological functions. First, they imply a 'relation of mastery . . . between the seer and the seen' by implying that the view is there for no other reason than to be enjoyed and judged by the viewer – that 'the landscape was intended to be viewed from where he has emerged upon it'.<sup>50</sup> It thereby seems to belong to the person viewing, rather than to anybody who might inhabit it. Second, such passages 'depict the civilizing mission as an esthetic [sic] project...a strategy the west has often used for defining others as available for and in need of its benign and beautifying intervention'.<sup>51</sup> In using the aesthetic strategies of the sublime and the picturesque, then, the west secures its own innocence at the very moment it asserts its hegemony.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 204.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>52</sup> For another discussion of the promontory scene in colonial writing, see David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*.

A closely related idea is the notion of surveillance which arises from Edward Dimendberg's work on film noir and urban modernity. Dimendberg recounts how military training films and wartime newsreels often showed scenes of warfare from aeroplanes flying overhead, thus visually reinforcing a sense of mastery over the landscape.<sup>53</sup> Although not identical, there are clear similarities between the promontory view and surveillance: in both cases, a visual standpoint from above implies a degree of mastery over the landscape through the conferral of visual access to the spectator.

Aerial shots of European space feature prominently in the tourist films, as I will discuss in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 explores how early widescreen films, especially *This is Cinerama* (Merian C. Cooper, 1952), redeployed in moving image form the tropes of discovery and mastery, using them to promise the erasure of darkness through visual access and thus promote a sense of American mastery over the landscape. Chapter 3 will discuss the aerial shot in the context of the European-set film noir, with its penetrating ambivalence about European space.

### Decay

In her essay 'The Imaginary Orient', art historian Linda Nochlin discusses how images of architectural decay in Orientalist paintings function to buttress a colonial vision:

Neglected, ill-repaired architecture functions, in nineteenth-century Orientalist art, as a standard topos for commenting on the corruption of contemporary Islamic society. . . . These people – lazy, slothful, and childlike, if colorful – have let their own cultural treasures sink into decay.<sup>54</sup>

The supposed 'realism' of, say, a Gérôme painting, registered through his careful rendering of architectural detail, in fact functions as an '*architecture moralisée*'.<sup>55</sup> The depiction of decay thus reinforces the colonial gaze on two fronts: first, through a claim of moral superiority

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<sup>53</sup> Edward Dimendberg, *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 36-41.

<sup>54</sup> Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 38-39.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

over the ‘natives’ who are supposedly unable to care for the antiquities in their care, and second, through a claim of representing realistically or authentically, which functions similarly to Foucault’s reading of scientific discourse in ascribing authority to the Western observer.

In the tourist films’ depictions of European architecture, decay is a frequent visual trope. Often, as in Nochlin’s reading, it is associated with emphatically ‘realistic’ on-location shooting. The tourist films frequently make both explicit and implicit claims to authenticity, contrasting the cinematic apparatus – and the technological progress it represents – to antiquated, decaying European space. In this manner America is positioned as observer, and European space as object of observation.

On the other hand, some films – especially those about Paris – were not filmed in Europe at all, but in southern California studio backlots. This potentially adds a whole new layer of meaning to Nochlin’s analysis, for these films depend on carefully constructed imitations of European architecture to relay a claim of hyperrealist ‘authenticity’. Chapter 5 will note how the construction of the Parisian cityscape in the studio backlot affects these films’ visions of European space.

## **Gaze theory**

The promontory view may be conceived as a special case of a broader issue, which is the politics of gazing. This is of course a major tradition in film theory, most commonly and successfully applied to issues of gender and patriarchy. Laura Mulvey inaugurated gaze theory with her iconic 1975 article ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’.<sup>56</sup> Gaze theory will be important to this thesis because it was the first, and is probably still the most important way of understanding how film texts have operated at the visual level to render hierarchical relationships between groups of people. Mulvey’s work is still one of the most

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<sup>56</sup> Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’, in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 14-26.

forceful and enduring arguments for why and how filmic representations can be such potent producers and enforcers of ideology.

The basic idea of Mulvey's article that has proven so influential is that visual pleasure – specifically the erotic pleasure to be found in viewing classical Hollywood films – serves the ideological function of enforcing patriarchy. This occurs, Mulvey theorises, through their encoding of a male spectatorial position. The representation of women's bodies is 'cut to the measure of [masculine] desire',<sup>57</sup> seeming to exist solely to give erotic pleasure and fulfilling the role of a 'male other'.<sup>58</sup> In this way, the spectator is positioned as male, and the world of the film is viewed through a controlling male subjectivity. Erotic pleasure is thus the mechanism through which patriarchal ideology is created and endorsed for the viewer, giving an illusion of universality.

Gaze theory clearly shares much in common with theories of colonial visuality. Both constitute theories for understanding how works of art encode power relations through their ability to look upon an other, creating the other as object while the camera, narrator or painter is produced as subject. Yet, as I will discuss later in some detail, previous attempts to apply gaze theory to colonial and postcolonial texts have been notably less-than-successful. I would like, therefore, to devote some space to tracing the substantial similarities between Mulvey's and Said's strategies. I aim to show that no great modification is needed to either theory in order to make them cohere together as, more or less, a single strategy for textual reading. This will lay the groundwork for the textual analyses in the chapters that follow, in which I use both of these theories more or less interchangeably as basic tools for developing my own theoretical framework in relation to the tourist films.

At the core of both gaze theory and Orientalism is the idea of the other as central to the ways texts encode and enforce an ideology. This other – woman for Mulvey, Oriental

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 15.

for Said – is made such by an enforced silence, an absence from the language of the hegemonic order. As Mulvey puts it,

Woman . . . stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of the woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.<sup>59</sup>

Mulvey sees psychoanalytic theory as itself a regime of patriarchy that is nonetheless accurate in its description of patriarchy's enforcement of women's silence, of making woman the other. Woman in patriarchal culture is conceived of by psychoanalytic theory as lacking a phallus, as castrated, and it is this very otherness which 'produces the phallus as a symbolic presence'.<sup>60</sup> That is, the woman's otherness inscribes the boundaries of the patriarchal 'world of law and language' by serving as its object, as the entity which patriarchy dominates.<sup>61</sup>

This strikingly resembles Said's contention that the Orient serves as an imagined other to the West. Because the 'real' Orient is silenced it can be spoken for, and the Orient of the Western imaginary tells us not about the 'real' Orient so much as about how Westerners perceive the geographical and discursive boundaries of their own world.

Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). This vision . . . created and then served the two worlds thus conceived.<sup>62</sup>

The definition of the other is, for both Mulvey and Said, inseparable from the definition of the Self as formulated by the dominant regime; and these definitions themselves *serve* the dominant regime by creating the language of its domination.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 43-44.

Both Said and Mulvey see significance in the eroticisation of the other as an aspect of its domination. Said makes reference to ‘an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex’ and discusses, in particular, Flaubert’s descriptions of the prostitute Kuchuk Hanem as an exemplary case in which the eroticisation of an Oriental amounts to her objectification by a discourse in which she has no voice.<sup>63</sup> However, Mulvey sees the erotics of objectification as central to her theory in a way Said does not. Mulvey theorises the erotic pleasures offered by the cinema as twofold. The first is scopophilia: a function of the sexual instincts which derives pleasure from ‘taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze’.<sup>64</sup> The second is narcissistic identification, defined as the pleasure of recognising an idealised image of oneself on the screen, an echo of the Lacanian mirror stage in which a child comes to the joyous recognition of his own subjectivity upon viewing himself in a mirror. In the classical Hollywood cinema, Mulvey argues, these two pleasures correspond to a sexual division of labour: the spectator identifies with the male protagonist/star while voyeuristically gazing upon the woman. The image of woman, serving this regime, is eroticised, her ‘appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact’.<sup>65</sup> In this way the woman ‘plays to and signifies male desire’,<sup>66</sup> paralysed in her position as object of the gaze, while the male protagonist controls the action and the spectator ‘participat[es] in his power’.<sup>67</sup>

Famously, Mulvey noted that

The woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>64</sup> Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure’, 16.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Moments in which the gazes of the camera and of a (male) character are aligned, then, take on great significance, 'allow[ing] the two looks to be unified technically without any apparent break in the diegesis'.<sup>69</sup> Mulvey cites the showgirl performance, in which the look of the camera is aligned with a diegetic male audience, as a key example, allowing for a smooth elision in which the spectator's gaze is directed by the gaze of the male protagonist, giving the illusion of control of the woman.

Said also devotes a fair amount of space to the notion of identification with the 'self' or protagonist of a text, although stripped of its Freudian signification. He shows how accounts of travels/pilgrimages to the Orient build up a sense of authority via the 'self' of the authorial voice. The self might be either 'dominating and mediating everything we are told about the Orient', filtering experiences for us via its own consciousness; or it might be 'subservient to a voice whose job it is to dispense real knowledge',<sup>70</sup> backing up the author's claim to have direct evidence for his assertions. As the logical conclusion of this, the self might even be excised completely, thus implicitly supporting a claim to total objectivity.<sup>71</sup> In all cases, Said shows, we are given access to the world created within a text via a particular 'point of view' or consciousness with whom we almost unnoticeably identify as a condition of reading.

Said's point here is not new. As Douglas Pye shows, a conception of narrative point of view as structuring our relationship with a text's content is one of the most basic assumptions of literary studies; Said's work is part of the 'wider anxiety about modes of representing reality that runs through all the arts of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.'<sup>72</sup> As Pye puts it,

Point of view matters because language is no longer seen as straightforward; narration is inherently partial, offering not access to truth but to a perspective or

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<sup>69</sup> Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure', 19.

<sup>70</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 168.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>72</sup> Douglas Pye, 'Movies and Point of View', *Movie 36* (2000), 3.

range of perspectives on events, in extreme cases becoming obviously subjective or even systematically unreliable.<sup>73</sup>

*Orientalism* is in some ways the logical conclusion of this tradition, as it reads not merely subjectivity nor even unreliability into Orientalist texts but rather sees an entire system, a discourse, which creates the very reality it appears to describe, becoming the language of domination.<sup>74</sup>

Mulvey and Said clearly do similar work in many ways, although Mulvey's is of course more specific to the medium of film. This may be a prime reason why her article is so celebrated in film studies: not only does it offer a major theory of how texts enforce a dominant ideology but it is (so far as I know) the first to do so in a way that embraces the specificity of the film medium rather than simply seeing films as one type of the broader category of 'narrative'.

Douglas Pye challenges Mulvey's work in this regard, arguing that she misunderstands the ways the film medium constructs narrative. In Pye's view, Mulvey confuses two historically related but separate senses of 'point of view', namely the visual – i.e. a literal point in space from which one views the world – and the cognitive/mental sense in which events are filtered through an individual's consciousness.<sup>75</sup> But this is not necessarily the case. It is true that Mulvey's idea of point of view is less nuanced than Pye's, who delineates five 'axes' along which we are variously aligned or separated from the characters: spatial, temporal, cognitive, evaluative and ideological.<sup>76</sup> However, far from collapsing the visual sense into the narrative senses that apply to written texts, Mulvey consistently discusses a split between 'narrative' and 'spectacle' that function separately to reinforce a text's ideology.<sup>77</sup> Spectacle equates to moments of fetishistic scopophilia, a

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>74</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 94.

<sup>75</sup> Pye, 'Point of View', 2-4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 8-11.

<sup>77</sup> Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure', 19-20.



voyeuristic gaze upon the woman's body which 'freeze[s] the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation' such as a POV shot or a showgirl performance.<sup>78</sup> At such moments, but certainly not at *all* moments in a given film, the spectator's gaze is closely aligned with that of the male protagonist who is also gazing upon the woman. The narrative aspects of the man's dominance occur separately. We identify with him not only through his gaze but also through his investigation, devaluation, punishment and/or saving of the woman.<sup>79</sup> Because the man drives the action while the woman passively receives it, the spectator identifies narratively with his position of power. These two types of pleasure – identification and scopophilia, narrative and spectacle – work in tandem and are mutually reinforcing, but they are not entirely collapsed. Mulvey's idea of narrative identification could be described as a version of literary studies' theorising of the authorial 'self', a theory on which Said draws extensively. Mulvey adds onto this general notion of how narrative works a theory of how identification works specifically in film as a visual medium.

Mulvey's idea of the gaze is thus very close to the work on the visibility of colonialism reviewed in the previous section. The essential points in common are as follows. First is that the spectator identifies more with the gazer than with the gazed-upon. A position of looking is strongly marked as a position of power, and this power often serves ideological purposes. Second, both show how objects of the gaze are given, in art forms produced by a hegemonic order, what Mulvey calls 'to-be-looked-at-ness'<sup>80</sup>. That is, they are reproduced in forms that make them appear to serve in their very essence the dominant order's definition of them.

Third, gaze theory shares with postcolonial theory the notion that the pleasure of the image serves to conceal a threat, to disavow fear. Mulvey argues that the image of woman poses the threat of castration, a threat which 'the look continually circles around

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 19.

but disavows'.<sup>81</sup> Classical Hollywood film form is, in this view, structured around castration anxiety, with the pleasures of identification and scopophilia both serving to redress this fear. Identification works to redress the threat of castration by bringing the woman back under the narrative control of the man and hence of the spectator. Scopophilic pleasure serves to completely disavow castration anxiety by 'turning the represented figure [of the woman] into a fetish object so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous'.<sup>82</sup> Like the picturesque and the sublime, then, the gaze serves a repressive function, aestheticising the object in order to contain its threat.

Suleri's statement that the picturesque 'romanticis[es]. . . difficulty into the greater tolerability of mystery' would, substituting 'eroticise' for 'romanticise', serve just as well to describe the gaze.<sup>83</sup> So we might say of the tourist films that their touristic gaze accomplishes a similar ideological function to the colonial picturesque. These films' emphatic visuality serves a masking function, with the horror of the war and the violence of occupation serving as structuring absences, ever-present yet disavowed.

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To finish this chapter, I will examine two previous attempts to apply gaze theory to issues of race, imperialism and national identity. Although each has some merit, I consider both to be ultimately unsuccessful in terms of their ability to theorise the cinematic colonial gaze in a way that is useful to or works for the tourist films, so each gives us the opportunity to outline important questions and offer key lessons for the present study.

### The cinematic colonial gaze, part 1: Kaplan

The first is E. Ann Kaplan's book *Looking for the Other*. This book grew out of a widespread objection to gaze theory that it ignored race (as well as other markers of difference such as sexual orientation). Theories of the gendered gaze, so the objection went,

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 75.

presumed both male and female whiteness and so failed to account for how race might play into film's hierarchies of looking.<sup>84</sup> Kaplan's work redresses this objection by proposing an 'imperial gaze' – analogous to the 'male gaze' except dealing with racialised looking, in which the camera takes on the position of whiteness, with the hegemonic power implicit to this viewpoint.

Kaplan labels her topic the 'imperial gaze' because she sees it as founded upon notions of 'nation' and 'science' which she locates in discourses of the British and French imperial. Through a detailed analysis of a few Hollywood films, broadly spread out in terms of time and subject matter, she argues that Hollywood is the inheritor of this tradition – of the imperial imaginary as it is inscribed in ways of looking. In this tradition, she argues, non-whites are denied the ability to look, because looking implies that the looker is a subject, a fully constituted human being with the ability to think and judge. She takes as a starting point the fact that black slaves in early America were punished for looking too directly at their masters. Kaplan then contrasts Hollywood films with the work of several women-of-colour filmmakers, whose films are seen as recouping the power of nonwhites to gaze upon their white oppressors, thus regaining the subject position denied to them under the 'imperial gaze'.

Yet Kaplan's 'imperial gaze' is in fact more or less entirely an issue of race, a 'racial gaze'. Discourses of the imperial play a secondary, explanatory role in her analysis. She does not make a distinction between African-Americans and Africans from, say, Cameroon – nor any other peoples who have been 'colonised' in a more typical sense; she collapses colonialism and slavery together in a way that is historically problematic. Nor, indeed, does she discuss any differences between the experiences of individuals of different races: she discusses Arjun Appadurai (an Indian man)'s experience of racial prejudice while living in

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<sup>84</sup> Those making this objection include: Jane Gaines, 'White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory', *Screen* 29, no. 4 (1988), 12-27; bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990); Kobena Mercer, 'Skin-head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary', in *How Do I Look?: Queer Film and Video*, ed. Bad Object Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 169-222.

America as an experience of being 'black'.<sup>85</sup> This is because Kaplan is focused on a particular way of encountering racial oppression that seems to be found most clearly in the African-American experience; imperialist discourses are brought in as a kind of explanatory analogy.

This thesis also uses the notion of the gaze to explore colonial power relations within film texts, but it seems clear that I need to approach this work in a less reductive, more rounded way. The gaze in the tourist films is in fact a complicated array of gazes, only some of which have directly to do with race. There are moments in the tourist films when discourses of race and racism are evidently in play, for example in their derogatory treatment of Italians. However, as films about the American imperial presence in a (mostly) 'white' Europe, their constructions of imperial discourses cannot rely exclusively on racism for imagery and justification. While it is doubtful that any discourse of imperialist oppression could really be exclusively about race, this is even truer in the American context, in which the oppression and enslavement of African-Americans and the imperialist discourses of 'manifest destiny' and spreading American civilisation are historically and rhetorically disparate. The tourist films, then, give us an especially rich opportunity to separate discourses of race and racism from discourses of economic, political and cultural imperialism.

#### The cinematic colonial gaze, part 2: Handyside

Fiona Handyside's 2004 article 'Beyond Hollywood, Into Europe' constitutes an attempt to apply gaze theory to representations of power hierarchies between nations. She does so, fascinatingly, through close analysis of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, which I call a tourist film. Handyside argues that this film's inversions of the 'normal' gender dynamics of the gaze are not only a source of comedy and erotic pleasure but also amount to a repurposing of the gaze for American nationalist ideology.

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<sup>85</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze* (London: Routledge, 1997), 10.

The two main female characters of the film, played by Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe, in many ways embody classic to-be-looked-at femininity, with provocative outfits skimming their gorgeous curves, their hair and faces alluringly composed. However, Handyside argues, they subtly undermine the male gaze, taking ownership of it for themselves. They seem conscious on some level that their to-be-looked-at-ness amounts to an accrual of power. The men of the film have a tendency to ‘collapse on top of one another’ when confronted with these two marvellous beauties, a fact which the women repeatedly use to their own advantage.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, they are shown to gaze upon the male body in ways analogous to how women are usually gazed upon, as projections of desire.<sup>87</sup> Dorothy (Russell)’s number ‘Is There Anyone Here for Love?’ displays the bodies of beefcake male athletes as abstracted objects of sensuality, while Lorelei (Monroe) fantasises that a man’s head is an enormous diamond.



Figure 4. Lorelei (Monroe) and Dorothy (Russell) enter the ship’s dining room and catch all eyes. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.



Figure 5. The musicians stare at the women and ‘collapse on top of one another’.

<sup>86</sup> Fiona Handyside, ‘Beyond Hollywood, Into Europe: The Tourist Gaze in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953) and *Funny Face* (Donen, 1957)’, *Journal of European Popular Culture* 1, vol. 2 (2004), 83.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.



Figure 6: Dorothy and the male beefcake body.

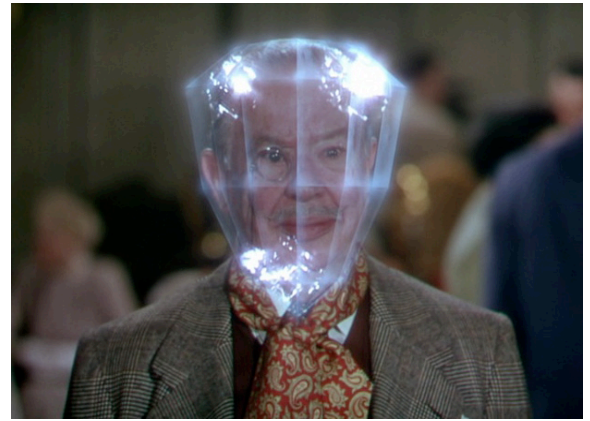


Figure 7. Lorelei envisions Piggy's (Charles Coburn) head as an enormous diamond.

Handyside argues that when the boat arrives in Paris, this sense that the gaze in this film is owned by the women, not the men, begins to serve a new, political purpose. As the two women travel through Paris in taxicabs we get numerous point-of-view shots of the landmarks they see. Handyside argues that the film's inversion of the gaze amounts to its realignment 'along nationalized rather than gendered lines'.<sup>88</sup> Once the women have been established as 'powerful sexual . . . free agents', their visual consumption of the tourist sites of Paris marks them analogously as *economic* free agents, 'symbolic of capitalist modernity'.<sup>89</sup> Using John Urry's argument that tourism is a form of visual consumption, Handyside argues that the two women, enacting a 'tourist gaze' upon the French capital, are thereby marked as representatives of a more powerful nation, America.<sup>90</sup> The tourist gaze, like gendered gazing, 'pays no attention to the original use and meanings of objects that fall into its purview, but rather creates them as idealised objects that have meanings only for the viewer/consumer rather than the user/producer'.<sup>91</sup> It thus has the same structure as the male gaze that 'creates' woman to produce meaning only within and for patriarchy.

In one respect, Handyside formulates a major contention of this thesis: that when Hollywood cinema incorporates patterns of touristic visuality into its *mise en scène*, it

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 81.

‘constructs a European other to be desired, looked at and bought’.<sup>92</sup> The article is intriguing and insightful in making these connections, yet it cannot be considered to be a fully fledged theory of the tourist gaze in cinema. For one thing, the article treats rather schematically what is in fact a very complicated set of issues around the construction of the gaze in the film text. Other than describing the ‘tourist gaze’ of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* as a series of shot-reverse shots in which we are visually aligned with the female protagonists, Handyside does not explore in any greater detail how this gaze is constructed filmically. And indeed as we will see, her choice of sequence – the women’s tour of Paris just after they arrive – is anything but simple in how it constructs the relationship between Paris and the American women. More work is clearly needed in understanding how a film sequence constructs a particular national point of view.

Perhaps even more importantly, she glosses over what is in fact a very complicated dynamic between the nationalist gaze and the gendered subjectivity of the women. As I will argue, it is inaccurate to claim that the American women’s national gaze trumps their gendered gazing, for the two are intertwined in ways that it is potentially quite productive to untangle. Indeed, as I will aim to show throughout this thesis, the American gaze upon Europe cannot be separated from the gendered subjectivities of the tourist films’ protagonists, which must be seen as inflecting American national identity in complicated and deeply gendered ways.

Rather than sidelining gender and patriarchal ideologies, I aim to integrate gendered consciousness and the construction of gendered subjectivities into the fabric of the thesis. I will show how colonialism and patriarchy impact upon each other in both directions, with each both cooperating with and contradicting the other in almost equal measures. Chapter 2 will begin to delineate a split between male and female experiences of European space, before the following chapters go on to each explore in depth a particular

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 88.

gendered subjectivity and how it is affected or altered by contact with a colonial other. Patriarchy and colonialism were both dominant ideologies in postwar America, yet the tourist films show how they jostle with one another, each alternately reinforcing and contradicting the other in complex ways.



## Chapter 2. Early widescreen and the return of the travelogue

This chapter examines the resurrection of early cinema travelogue aesthetics in 1950s Hollywood films about travel and the faraway. Widescreen formats were often seen as comparable to the birth of cinema itself in terms of their expansion of what Anne Friedberg calls the ‘mobilised, virtual gaze’.<sup>1</sup> Early widescreen films, I will argue, were constructed in ways that mobilised colonial strategies of representation familiar from the early cinema travelogue, appropriating these strategies to cultivate an exclusively American – as opposed to simply ‘Western’ – metropolitan viewpoint.

The causes of and early events in Hollywood’s ultimate mass adoption of widescreen formats have been extensively studied. As John Belton, Tino Balio, Peter Lev and others have pointed out, Hollywood faced a series of crises in the late 1940s and early 1950s, one consequence of which was the studios’ adoption of widescreen formats.<sup>2</sup> These included foreign tariffs on film imports, the HUAC hearings and blacklisting of communists, threatened boycotts by conservative organisations, and a huge antitrust suit, all of which contributed to the gathering storm for Hollywood.<sup>3</sup> In addition, as Belton argues, there were enormous demographic and social changes in American life in this period which led audiences away from cinemas.<sup>4</sup> In the period following the war, people moved en masse away from urban centres and into suburbs, meaning they were further away from downtown movie houses. Large numbers of people married and had children, and these young families were less likely to seek diversion by going out and more likely to stay home pursuing domestic or child-centred forms of leisure, including mass forms of

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Peter Lev, *Transforming the Screen: 1950-1959* (London: University of California Press, 2003), 71; Tino Balio, ‘Introduction to Part I’, *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, ed. Tino Balio (London: Unwyn Hyman, 1990); John Belton, *Widescreen Cinema* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992); David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Balio, ‘Introduction’, 3-12.

<sup>4</sup> Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 69-84.

communication such as the radio but also activities like sports and parties.<sup>5</sup> And perhaps the largest change of all was, of course, what Charles Barr calls ‘the Television Menace’.<sup>6</sup> Television was a home-centred entertainment medium which was seen as a direct rival to cinema, growing more and more popular in the early years of the 1950s.

In the face of all these challenges, Hollywood studios had to seriously re-think their commercial strategies, trying out new cost-saving techniques such as runaway production,<sup>7</sup> segmenting and marketing to potential audience groups in new ways,<sup>8</sup> and provoking publicity by broaching taboo subjects like homosexuality and depicting heterosexual sex in increasingly graphic ways.<sup>9</sup>

Another strategy that turned out to have long-lasting consequences for Hollywood production and aesthetics was experimenting with and promoting (relatively) novel forms of the film medium: colour (whose use expanded greatly in this period), 3D (a short-lived trend at the time), and widescreen. These aimed to differentiate film from television in ever more striking ways. As the early television screen was very small, colourless, and of poor image quality, an emphasis on size, colour and clarity would, it was hoped, encourage audiences to attend the cinema rather than staying home to watch television.

The conversion of widescreen technologies from novelty to industry standard happened in several stages. Cinerama was a precursor: it used three projectors to create a very long, large, deeply curved screen.<sup>10</sup> Yet this proved cumbersome, expensive and virtually impossible to adapt to narrative filmmaking, although it briefly enjoyed great success on the fringes of the Hollywood studio system.<sup>11</sup> Then in 1953 Twentieth-Century

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<sup>5</sup> John Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 73.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Barr, ‘CinemaScope: Before and After’, *Film Quarterly* 16.4 (1963), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Lev, *Transforming the Screen*, 148.

<sup>8</sup> Gerald Mast and Bruce F. Kawin, *A Short History of the Movies*, 9th ed. (London: Pearson Longman, 2006), p. 341.

<sup>9</sup> Lev, *Transforming the Screen*, 89.

<sup>10</sup> Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 107-109.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

Fox announced that henceforth it would release only films that were in CinemaScope, a single-camera anamorphic lens format which created an aspect ratio of approximately 2.66 to 1 and which was quickly and widely adopted.<sup>12</sup> Nearly all the other majors soon followed suit, either paying Fox for a license to use CinemaScope technology or, in the case of Paramount, developing their own widescreen format (hence the birth of VistaVision, which had an aspect ratio of 1.85 to 1).<sup>13</sup> Finally, in the late 1950s, wide film formats came into vogue, such as Todd-AO and Panavision. Each widescreen format was also associated with stereophonic sound, greatly increasing sound quality.

According to Belton's authoritative book on the history of widescreen, all these formats and technologies shared several goals: to make the cinema screen huge and striking, thus becoming an attraction in its own right, to emphasise visual spectacle and high production values, to instill the sense that a film constitutes an 'event', and, at least according to the rhetoric found in the advertising for these screen technologies, to create a more participatory, interactive experience by putting the viewer 'inside' the picture, surrounding her with sights and sounds.<sup>14</sup> Belton shows that this brought the cinema into line with the craze for leisure pursuits involving activity rather than 'mere' entertainment.<sup>15</sup>

The 1950s also saw a trend towards films depicting travel and faraway places. Although my study focuses on films set in Europe, these films were also set in other, ever-more-distant places around the globe. For example, there were a number of African safari films, in which white American or British travellers journey through the bush encountering various wild animals and exoticised ethnic groups. This cycle included films like *King Solomon's Mines* (Compton Bennett and Andrew Martin, 1950), *The African Queen* (John Huston, 1951) and *Bwana Devil* (Arch Oboler, 1952). Other adventure stories centred on

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 96-99.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 76-78.

the sea or a tropical island, like *The Crimson Pirate* (Robert Siodmak, 1952), *Beneath the Twelve-Mile Reef* (Robert D. Webb, 1953) or *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (Richard Fleischer, 1954). In each of these films, scenery and landmarks were the star as much as the actors. The faraway in these films was converted to an alluring spectacle, promising adventure, excitement and romance.

These travel themes were often closely allied with the development of new screen media in this period. Many of the films listed above also coincide with developments in screen technology: *The African Queen* was pioneering in its use of Technicolor for outdoor photography – as was *The Quiet Man* (John Ford, 1952), a European-set tourist film. *Bwana Devil*, similarly, was the first film ever released in 3D. Others were early (if not the first) productions in various widescreen formats, including *Beneath the Twelve-Mile Reef* in CinemaScope and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Michael Anderson, 1956) in Todd-AO. And the first several Cinerama films were not actually narrative films at all but rather fully-fledged travelogues, featuring landscape views and other actualities.

Perhaps because of this history, scholars often regard travel subjects as a natural strategy for calling attention to the wondrous new technologies of widescreen in the 1950s. Shandley writes of Cinerama, ‘Because of the technical limitations of this original widescreen process, foremost among them being considerable difficulties in maintaining sharp focus, travelogues became an ideal genre for the new cinematic medium’.<sup>16</sup> This claim – that the travel subject is somehow the only or inevitable choice for Cinerama (and later CinemaScope and others) – raises more questions than it answers. I do not dispute that in Cinerama, long shots were necessary due to lens quality and actuality footage may have been easier and more cost-effective than fiction filmmaking. However, this kind of claim ignores the other paths that were not chosen (or simply chosen in other films). Why

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<sup>16</sup> Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 78.

were travel subjects taken up with such force in Cinerama and other early widescreen formats? And indeed, why does this connection seem so natural to us?

Belton makes a similar claim to Shandley's:

It is no accident that the first five Cinerama features were American-oriented travelogues. The Cinerama medium is ideally suited to the 'nature' documentary and the sightseeing excursion. . . . And even though subsequent Cinerama films . . . turn from the episodic travelogue to the more traditional narrative format of Hollywood films, they never quite rid themselves of Cinerama's Original Sin – its essential affinity for the episodic and the picaresque and its fascination with journeys and various means of locomotion.<sup>17</sup>

Here we see again a kind of technological determinism in claims about the association between early widescreen formats and travel. Similarly to Shandley, Belton claims that widescreen technology is 'ideally suited' – whether through its strengths or its faults – to depict the faraway. Although both Belton and Shandley do much useful work, and I make fairly extensive use in particular of Belton's technological history of widescreen, I also aim to push their arguments slightly further, casting a critical eye on this association between travel subjects and early widescreen. This interrogation will lead, as we will see, into deep currents of imperialist ideology.

In doing so I will also make use of previous scholarship on the early film travelogue. By many accounts, travel subjects constituted one of the primary aesthetic strategies in early cinema.<sup>18</sup> For an indication of the travelogue's ubiquity, Charles Musser reports, 'Approximately half the "features" listed in Vitagraph's 1903 catalogue of headline attractions were travel subjects'.<sup>19</sup> *This is Cinerama* (Merian C. Cooper, 1952), the first Cinerama film, takes this early genre as a major reference point for its own aesthetics; it does this both explicitly (when its narrator makes a direct comparison to early cinema) and implicitly (in its episodic structure and choice of subjects). I am fortunate that so much

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<sup>17</sup> Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 92.

<sup>18</sup> Tom Gunning, "'The Whole World Within Reach': Travel Images Without Borders", in *Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes Us Go*, edited by Carol Traynor Williams (London: Praeger, 1998), 25.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Musser, 'The Travel Genre in 1903-1904: Moving Towards Fictional Narrative' in *Early Cinema: Space Frame Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (London: BFI, 1990), 123.

careful work has been done on the early film travelogue – work that will form the basis for my readings of *This is Cinerama* and *Three Coins in the Fountain* (Jean Negulesco, 1954). The textual analyses that follow will consider how the various discourses of travel and technology found in the early cinema travelogue translate to the 1950s.

The picturesque will serve as an important concept for understanding the travel aesthetic of the early 1950s. As reviewed in Chapter 1, early cinema scholars have located the picturesque as a major aesthetic at play in the early film travelogue. Jennifer Peterson notes that in marketing materials and intertitles of early cinema travelogues, the term ‘picturesque’ was used so often as to be nearly meaningless, denoting ‘almost anything that is pretty and reassuring’.<sup>20</sup> Peterson argues that this shows the extent to which picturesque politics were essential to the commodification of vision in the nineteenth century that gave rise to early cinema practices.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Giuliana Bruno locates the picturesque as essential to the development of female spectatorship and mobility, which in turn is again closely linked to the development of consumerist visual practices including cinema. The film readings to follow will trace the re-appearance of the picturesque aesthetic in 1950s travel cinema, linking it again both to visual consumption and to depictions of feminine mobility and tourist gazing.

Two other strands of thought within early cinema scholarship will also inform my work here. The first is the figure of the travel lecturer. The travel lecture was a frequent (although not the only) mode of exhibition for early travel films. The white male figure of the lecturer, renowned as a world traveller, would bring images back from his travels and present them to a (usually white, middle-class) audience, interspersing the films, photographs and other images with narration about his travels. Charles Musser points out that these men (and they were nearly always men) served as matinee idols for women and

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<sup>20</sup> Jennifer Lynn Peterson, ‘World Pictures: Travelogue Films and the Lure of the Exotic’ (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999; accessed via UMI/Proquest, Microform no. 9934106), 217.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-194.

admirable and authoritative world travellers for men.<sup>22</sup> That is, they offered a ‘strong figure of identification’ to their audiences, a voice through which to understand the world.<sup>23</sup> As Musser puts it:

Offering personal accounts of their adventures, these world travellers were figures with whom audiences could identify and derive vicarious experience and pleasure. Audience identification with a showman like Burton Holmes took place on three levels – with the traveller shown by the camera to be in the narrative as a profilmic element, with the showman as the cameraman . . . and finally as he spoke from the podium.<sup>24</sup>

This figure of identification is important to understanding how the viewpoint of the traveller/conqueror was constructed in the early film travelogue, as a major figure of identification for the audience. As we will see, the narrator in *This is Cinerama*, performed by Lowell Thomas (a well-known filmmaker-explorer from the silent period), borrows this representational strategy to construct a white, male, American point of view. The figure of the travelogue narrator will also serve as the baseline for an analysis of what happens when the primary figure for identification is a (white, American) woman, as we see in *Three Coins in the Fountain*. Anne Friedberg, Giuliana Bruno, Mary Ann Doane and others have compellingly argued that the primary spectator figure around which the visuality of modernity coalesces is female, not male.<sup>25</sup> A comparison of these two films will allow us to investigate how this gendering of the gazes of modernity plays out in the postwar context.

The second strand of thought is the concept of ethnography and how it relates to early cinema. Alison Griffiths argues in her book *Wondrous Difference* that in the decades prior to and coeval with the birth of cinema, world’s fairs and museums of anthropology collected otherised ‘primitive’ cultures into display groups for Western consumption. The

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<sup>22</sup> Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (London: University of California Press, 1990), 41.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>24</sup> Musser, ‘The Travel Genre’, 127.

<sup>25</sup> Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (London: Verso, 2002), 200; Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 37; Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 27.

travelogue film represented a development of this tradition. It was used by anthropologists and ethnographers and incorporated into ethnographic displays in world's fairs and natural history museums.<sup>26</sup> The early film travelogue, then, took on many of the ideological and aesthetic characteristics of the ethnographic tradition, including the actions of collecting and arranging 'specimens', depictions of ethnic dance and ritual, and interest in physiognomy and measurements as well as clothing and decoration.

Fatimah Tobing Rony's exhaustive study *Third Eye* similarly undertakes a discourse analysis of the construction of the 'savage' in Western culture. She regards the early film travelogue as a 'privileged locus for the investigation of the coming together of the nineteenth century obsession with the past, and twentieth century desire to make visibly comprehensible the difference of cultural "others"'.<sup>27</sup> Rony's goal is to investigate the construction of the 'Savage' in the Western consciousness, and she sees silent ethnographic film as a prime case study, exemplifying racist and imperialist ideologies as they merge with nostalgic fantasies for a primitive, prelapsarian era.

Although not always explicitly linked to Said, the work of both Griffiths and Rony clearly draws upon the central thesis of Orientalism. Both these authors follow in the tradition of understanding the objectifying power of Western representations of the other that has underpinned much postcolonial textual study. Given the way widescreen travel films draw upon and refer to early cinema practices, it is particularly useful to be able to consult prior studies of the ethnographic in early cinema.

### **This is Cinerama**

*This is Cinerama* was the first film made using Cinerama technology. The Cinerama format involved three cameras, each taking simultaneous, side-by-side pictures which were joined and aligned to give the impression of a single view. It was projected using three

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<sup>26</sup> Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xxxii.

<sup>27</sup> Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), 9.



corresponding projectors onto an enormous, deeply curved screen with 7-track stereophonic sound.<sup>28</sup> It was, as Shandley is quick to point out, a cumbersome and technically clunky system.<sup>29</sup> It suffered from alignment problems; indeed, performance required four projectionists, one for each projector to pay constant attention to its alignment with the other two, plus a fourth running the sound strip. It was also notorious for focusing problems, meaning it was largely restricted to wide-angle shots.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the camera itself was so heavy that it was difficult to move. It is true that in these conditions, the travelogue format is one potential solution, utilising Cinerama's penchant for panoramic long shots and minimising the audience's sense that the varied angles predominant in classical Hollywood narrative cinema were missing. Yet this explanation neatly sidesteps what is in fact a long tradition of utilising travel subjects to highlight the putative power and beauty of a new screen technology. If the travelogue is especially suitable to Cinerama, it is as much because of its long history as an aesthetic form associated with technological change as its technical limitations.

Cinerama inventor Fred Waller and his investors seemingly set out to take advantage of this association between travel and new screen technologies, as is evident in their choice of directors. They initially contracted with Robert Flaherty, the famous ethnographic filmmaker from the silent era, to direct the first Cinerama feature; when he died just before production began, they instead turned to Merian C. Cooper, another famous ethnographic filmmaker of the silent era who had gone on to direct *King Kong* (1933; co-directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack).<sup>31</sup> Lowell Thomas, the journalist and documentary filmmaker who had risen to fame with his films of 'Lawrence of Arabia' in 1919, was an investor in Cinerama and ultimately became the narrator of the first Cinerama film. These

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<sup>28</sup> For a full description of the Cinerama technology and its flaws, see Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 94-95; 107-112.

<sup>29</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 78.

<sup>30</sup> Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 107.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

choices in personnel may have carried deep resonances for audiences of the time, as they were all men strongly associated with the tradition of ethnographic filmmaking in silent cinema. They were long seen as pioneers of exploration with the camera (even if they are in fact associated with the late 1910s through early 1930s rather than strictly with the period of early cinema when the travelogue arguably had its heyday). This choice of personnel taps into a powerful myth of technology-aided exploration from earlier eras of ethnographic filmmaking, a myth utilised in Cinerama's marketing and aesthetics.

Indeed, if we are to believe Lowell Thomas' narration at the start of *This is Cinerama*, the tradition goes back much further than that, not only through the early cinema period but all the way back to cave painting. The film opens with a black-and-white sequence on a small, supposedly standard-sized screen. The rest of the large Cinerama screen, in the revival theatre where I viewed the film,<sup>32</sup> was hidden from view behind heavy curtains. Thomas appears on screen and begins to narrate:

You are about to see the first public exhibition of an entirely new form of entertainment. We call it Cinerama. It's a novelty – ah, but it's far more than that. It's the latest development in the magic of light and sound. Some twenty thousand years ago, an artist in caveman days drew a picture of a boar on the wall of a cave in Spain, and he wanted the animal to be in motion, so he added eight legs. Eight legs – there was a bold pioneer. A man with ideas!



Figure 8. Lowell Thomas narrates at the beginning of *This is Cinerama*.



Figure 9. A reproduction of the cave painting of a boar.

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<sup>32</sup> This was at the National Media Museum in Bradford, UK, in April 2009. (The museum has a yearly Cinerama convention including viewings and discussions.)

His tone turns sarcastic as he says these last lines, showing us an apparent reproduction of the boar cave painting. From the start, then, he juxtaposes Cinerama, the 'latest development' in the history of representation, with an image of the ethnographic, primitive man making laughably clueless and backwards art. These opening lines neatly set up the self-serving dichotomy of primitive versus modern, savage versus civilised, to which so much of the travelogue genre is devoted.

Thomas then rehearses a standard Eurocentric history of visual representation. The first stop is typically Orientalist, explaining that ancient Egyptian art is inferior due to its 'rigid conventions' that give no representation of movement. Contrasted to this is the 'genius of the Renaissance', as typified by Michaelangelo's Sistine Chapel image of the white male God creating Adam, which is superior because it 'appears to be about to move'. Thomas then covers the invention of the magic lantern, the Daguerreotype, Roget's persistence of vision experiments, the zoetrope, landscape and action photography from the period of the American Civil War, the Muybridge horse photography experiments, and finally on to Thomas Edison and his invention of the cinema. In this traditional way of telling history, progression is conflated with 'progress': each great man who comes along builds upon the inventions of the previous man, in a story of technological development leading to its great zenith in the present invention, Cinerama. This progression of screen technologies thus presents technology as a justification for the supposed superiority of Western civilisation, informing the marketing and aesthetics of the early cinema travelogue. As Griffiths writes:

Presented in the motion picture trade press and elsewhere as the pinnacle of Western technological progress, the cinematic apparatus was itself a potent symbol of the ideological power of Western technology and colonial might. It comes as no surprise, then, that as an "epistemological mediator" between the world of the spectator and that of the subaltern, cinema functioned as a powerful vehicle for the dissemination of racist and colonialist ideology.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, 249.

Thomas is clearly tapping into this rhetoric of technological progress. Orientalist, otherising discourses are mobilised to demonstrate the Cinerama technology's 'power', where power is understood along racist and colonialist lines. The mobilisation of these tropes thus implicitly proclaims Cinerama's position alongside the invention of cinema itself.

Although Thomas claims for Cinerama the inheritance of motion picture history, he also criticises 'old' film technologies of the black and white era, saying it is 'like looking through a keyhole' compared to Cinerama. In the passage that follows, this criticism turns to ridicule, as we see a sequence of shots taken from two silent films and hear his voiceover describe them in scornful, mocking terms. Yet again, the choice of films is telling: *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903), an early Western which capitalised on early film's fascination with the railroad, and *Son of the Sheik* (George Fitzmaurice, 1926), a classic Orientalist picture about a half-Arab, half-English prince and his white lover, starring Rudolph Valentino. Both these films are, in different ways, about Western expansionism; he seems to be making fun of their antiquated Orientalism, which is apparently more contrived and less secure than the Orientalism of Cinerama and the power endowed by its 'superior' screen technology. Thomas thus utilises Orientalist representation paradoxically to distance Cinerama from early cinema, associating early cinema itself with the 'primitive'.



Figure 10. *The Great Train Robbery*, quoted in *This is Cinerama*.



Figure 11. *Son of the Sheik*, quoted in *Cinerama*.

Finally the curtain opens to reveal the full enormity of the screen. We are now taken through a series of short sequences intended to demonstrate the qualities of the new medium. First is a sequence shot from the front of a roller coaster car, giving an intense sense of locomotion; second is a dance sequence in which a group of ballerinas enact an Orientalist dance, costumed in veils and other ‘Oriental’ garb; third is a helicopter view over Niagara Falls. What is striking about this series of short sequences is that each of these connects precisely with three of the most important and well-documented tropes of the early travelogue. Raymond Fielding documents the Hale’s Tour as an important exhibition context for early travel films: a fairground ride in which a viewing box for a small number of spectators, resembling a railway car, was set on a contraption that would shake and rock as viewers watched images taken from the front of a moving train.<sup>34</sup> Griffiths reports on the filming of native and ‘Oriental’ dances as a central trope in early ethnographic cinema<sup>35</sup> – a trope which *This is Cinerama* instead enacts as a ballet performance, indicating a class-inflected claim of superiority as well as creating a further degree of mediation. Finally, Peterson records that the waterfall is a ‘perennial travelogue favourite’, filling the screen ‘with the raw visual attraction of the moving water’.<sup>36</sup> Cinerama once again invites a direct comparison with its addition of brilliant colours (you can glimpse the rainbows in the fall’s mist) and an aerial perspective from the helicopter.



Figure 12. The roller coaster.



Figure 13. The ‘Oriental’ ballet.

<sup>34</sup> Raymond Fielding, ‘Hale’s Tours: Ultrarealism in the Pre-1910 Motion Picture’, in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (London: University of California Press, 1983), 116-130.

<sup>35</sup> Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, 174-184.

<sup>36</sup> Peterson, ‘World Pictures’, 258.



Figure 14. The helicopter ride over Niagara Falls.

Indeed the helicopter sequence, and the extended sequence of aerial views of American landscape that occurs later in the film, both tap into the early travelogue's fascination with various forms of transport. Lynne Kirby's exhaustive work on the railroad in early cinema reads this correlation as an expression of imperialist ideology:

Insofar as the train has always been a physical extension of an imperialist vision, of the hegemonic expansion of an economic and cultural power, a principle of incorporation and arrangement, and of the discipline of heterogeneous territories, its function has been that of coherence, order, and regularity. In general, the train is a vehicle that imposes sense on what modern Western culture sees as irrational: nature and tradition. It enforces a kind of readability or understanding according to the authority of *its* codes and *its* master – the white male entrepreneur.<sup>37</sup>

The railroad, like cinema technology, serves to organise reality according to the viewpoint of the white male entrepreneur – hence their close alliance in the early cinema period. *This is Cinerama*, I would argue, extends this logic with its use of the aeroplane, which comes to stand in for the railroad as the most up-to-the-minute means of exploring the American landscape, literally showing it from above as a space to be conquered and used by Western, white, male technologies of vision. Landscape is discussed, in the American aerial sequence, as something that is above all useful to the project of empire-building. As Thomas narrates when the camera flies over Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: 'Industrial America, creating the sinews of our economy and of our national power'. His use of pronouns is telling here, signalling the effortless way in which the film's narrative voice constructs America as 'self'.

<sup>37</sup> Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 27.



Figure 15. Aerial view of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I am perhaps belabouring the point about Cinerama's mobilisation of imperialist, Orientalist, and expansionist tropes from the early cinema travelogue because it is important to understand just how overdetermined this mobilisation is. Much more than simply being a 'natural fit' for the medium, *This is Cinerama* is precisely tuned to the task of proving the power of widescreen by signalling its inheritance of the early film travelogue's racist, imperialist worldview. Belton moves towards this conclusion when he discusses Cinerama's use as a tool in the Cold War, showing 'the American way of life' to audiences around the world:<sup>38</sup> Cinerama was clearly perceived as, and sold itself as, a format which embodied the American viewpoint upon the world. Yet Belton misses the extent to which the Cinerama film text meticulously constructs this American viewpoint as an imperialist one.

To some degree this is achieved through the figure of Lowell Thomas as narrator. Like the early travel lecturer, it is through his voice and through his eyes that the Cinerama *mise en scène* is mediated, first constructing a narrative of history and then situating the film's text as the latest development within this history. It is a voice of hegemony not only in belonging to a white male, but in the way it constructs its superiority over the views shown to the audience through commentary, tone of voice and even the very act of narration itself.

This white male voice, however, is emphatically *not* European. As we have seen, it can be tempting to lump American culture together with the categories of 'Western' or 'Eurocentric'. Such a move would be problematic here, for the film works hard to

<sup>38</sup> Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 90; quoting the *Beverly Hills Daily News Life*, 12 August 1955.

differentiate itself from a European perspective. It does this, to be sure, through an appropriation of traditionally European tropes of otherness and objectification, yet it specifically appropriates these things for the American white male. This becomes apparent when, after the end of the introductory sequence we have been discussing, the Cinerama apparatus embarks on a 'tour' of Europe. Having constructed itself as an Orientalist text, it then turns its otherising spotlight on some archetypal tourist scenes of Europe, journeying across and through them with its mobile, ethnographic gaze.

The first stop is Venice, which is telling in itself, as this ancient city has of course long been positioned as a kind of midway point between West and East, as almost-Oriental. The city is traversed on a gondola, which, in this and other tourist films, is depicted as a key feature of the Venetian cityscape. In *This is Cinerama*, this charmingly antiquated mode of transport receives a quasi-ethnographic treatment much like the elephants that humans ride in Cooper's silent documentary of Thai culture, *Chang* (1927). The camera lingers on the beautiful, athletic figure of the gondolier in traditional costume, propelling the boat along with a pole. Later, the otherness of the gondola is highlighted through Thomas' verbal comparison of it to the archetypal American 'Main Street' parade. At the beginning of the sequence, we see an American couple stepping gracefully into a gondola as we hear the following voiceover:

Cinerama gives us just about the full scope of vision in which you see so much out of the corner of your eye. That feeling of reality depends on vision off to the side.

The American couple are the audience's proxy here; it is their vision being replicated by the camera. Venice, on the other hand, is an exotic space for the camera to move around and through, an object of demonstration for the camera's power to 'bring the far near'.





Figure 16. The Venetian gondolier.



Figure 17. An American couple step into a gondola.

Yet equally, there is a sense of Orientalist envy at work in this sequence. The city is not purely reduced to a virtualised theme park ride. The pigeons swirling around the Piazza San Marco, a gondola passing under the Ponte dei Sospiri, the sunset glimmering on the water: all invoke the great beauty of a civilisation much older than America's. When Thomas tells us that we are to 'see something of the world' in the Venice sequence, he taps into the tradition of the Grand Tour with its attendant notion that no American (and before that, no Englishman) can be considered to have a complete education without visiting Italy. Venice's magnificent yet decaying architecture and the myth of the Grand Tour are thus harnessed to the Cinerama medium's virtual power, the power to bring faraway, exotic and beautiful sites home to America.

Next we are 'taken' to Scotland for the Rally of the Clans at Edinburgh Castle. This sequence, as with others to follow, begins with a colourful drawing that serves as a postcard for the sequence we are about to see – in this case, a dreamy, jagged sketch of the castle with a thistle, the symbol of Scotland, displayed prominently on the right-hand side of the screen. The sequence that follows is a military-inflected rally of bagpipers and a military band. The musicians, wearing kilts and associated Scottish regalia, march in formations around a large field as a cheering crowd looks on. They play familiar Scottish bagpipe tunes such as 'Scotland the Brave', and when the military band cuts in rather suddenly with 'Rule Britannia', the crowd's cheering reaches a climax. Ironically, given Scotland's status as (arguably) a colonised nation absorbed into the United Kingdom, the pageantry of Scottish culture is used to invoke British militarism as much as Scottish history, a 'stirring scene of the British north with martial reminiscence of the warlike days

of old', as Thomas tells us. Although Scotland is invoked in trite terms of kilts and bagpipes, the sequence also glorifies the British Empire. *This is Cinerama* borrows an imperialist tradition of representation that is largely British in origin, and this sequence seems to serve as a kind of tribute to Britain's erstwhile great empire.

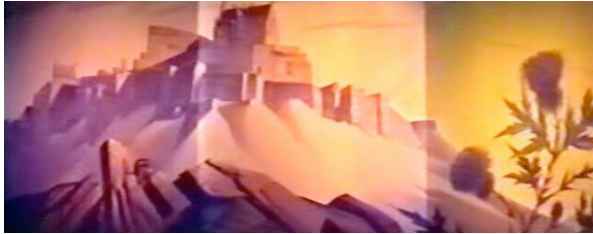


Figure 18. A dreamy, jagged sketch of Edinburgh Castle begins the Scotland sequence.



Figure 19. The bagpipe rally.

The third stop in the Europe sequence is Vienna for a concert of the Vienna Boys' Choir, performed in the grounds of Schönbrunn Palace. Here admiration for a former empire is made all the more explicit: 'Days of imperial glory', Thomas announces, 'are symbolised by Schönbrunn Palace, lordly residence of the emperors of Austria'. Yet in the present, the film seems keen to announce, no such imperial ambitions remain. Thomas narrates, 'These lads have just been rounded up hastily from games in Viennese backyards'. This statement is clearly false; the choir's professionalism is evident from the precision and virtuosity of their performance, the stiffness of their postures and the uniformity of their clothing (even though this is a summery, Lederhosen-like costume). Despite these details, the voiceover strives to disarm the boys of the legendary discipline and ambition of Germanic militarism, portraying the country as a peaceful domestic space of children's play.



Figure 20. The Vienna Boys' Choir on the Schönbrunn Palace grounds.

The fourth stop is Spain for a bullfight and flamenco performance. Here the film returns to the Orientalising treatment we saw in Venice. The brief bullfight scene is used once again to highlight the optical qualities of the Cinerama medium as it is filmed ‘from straight ahead, from the sides, from all those glimpses out of the corner of the eye that bring the height of reality’. The dance sequence is shown in classic ethnographic style. Dancers in colourful costumes give strikingly athletic and very practised performances, yet the voiceover reminds us again that their dancing does not count as ‘work’:

The dancers are country folk from the villages in the surrounding hills. They appear at festivals and celebrations – so skilful, such artists, that you would think they are professionals. But they are villagers come to town for a fiesta.

Thomas is at pains to portray these dancers as yokels and peasants so that their dance can be subsumed into an ethnographic framework: simple brown-skinned people dancing under a hot sun as the camera looks on, observing detachedly an ancient and primitive culture as it celebrates a traditional festival.



Figure 21. The bullfight.



Figure 22. The flamenco dancers.

Taken as a whole, the Europe sequence takes up with great force the tropes of early ethnographic cinema, only in this case the ‘other’ is Europe. In doing so, the film follows a predictable north-south dichotomy. To the south, the regions of Italy and Spain receive an ethnographic, otherising, Orientalist treatment. Indeed to view these sequences one would hardly believe that they belong to what was in fact a rapidly modernising postwar Europe. These spaces are timeless, ancient, primitive, hot and decaying – depicted as the ‘other’ to American culture in a classic imperialist framework, a space for dreaming, traversing and exploring.

On the other hand, to the north are the United Kingdom and Austria – former seats of great and admirable empires. The film worships at the altar of these nations’ former military glories, while simultaneously placing these glories firmly in the past. Having been unseated from their metropole status, America can yet admire them for their past achievements, glorifying their military rituals and discipline even as these rituals are stripped of any real power.

In both north and south, then, America becomes the metropole, and Europe the peripheral space. Through the representational strategies of early cinematic ethnography, *This is Cinerama* claims for America a newfound status as the world’s imperial power. Such a move finds its culmination in the final sequence of the tour of Europe, a stop at La Scala opera house in Milan. On the programme is the triumphal parade scene from Verdi’s *Aida*. This work is, of course, a famous Orientalist work that premiered in 1871, during the height of Europe’s dominance of the globe. It takes place in ancient Egypt, and this performance (like most other performances of the work) revels in an Oriental splendour of costuming, sets and dance styles, with turbaned men and veiled women, splendid fabrics and exotic animals. Just as European culture captures and repurposes Asian cultures for its own art forms, the Cinerama camera captures European culture in the very act of Orientalism. Cinerama thus appropriates the act of appropriation.



Figure 23. La Scala opera house, Milan.



Figure 24. The triumphal parade from Verdi’s *Aida*.

One thing that unifies all these various representations of European space is an overriding emphasis on the past, reworking the past as an ‘eternal’ present. Europeans enact the same age-old rituals and performances since time immemorial, repeating a past that has become hollow as it has lost any real power. They occupy beautiful, decaying

buildings built by their powerful ancestors, yet the hard work and discipline which once went into building these edifices is effaced. Europeans are overwhelmingly shown to play rather than work, reducing them to happy peasants in the south or to proud yet disarmed former military powers in the north.

Rony argues that in the early travelogue, 'primitive' cultures are 'shown as being without history'; they were treated as a prelapsarian form of life that belonged to anthropology and zoology rather than history.<sup>39</sup> In *This is Cinerama*, Southern Europe is thoroughly ethnographised through the film's visual and narrative cues, taking the Spanish and Italians out of the realm of history and into the timelessness of the Oriental. Northern Europe, on the other hand, does have a rich imperial history – yet this history seems to have stopped at the end of the nineteenth century, before the two world wars, before the continent's simultaneous destruction and modernisation. Northern European nations are frozen in a *tableau vivant* of hollow imperial splendour. By implication, twentieth century history belongs to America, and in particular to the white American male.

In subjecting European spaces and peoples to ethnographic treatment, the Europe sequence commodifies European space for American visual consumption. Anne Friedberg, Tom Gunning, Alison Griffiths and Jonathan Crary, among others, have written of the developments in visuality of the nineteenth century which gave rise to the aesthetics of early cinema.<sup>40</sup> Very diverse practices, including the world's fair, diorama, panorama, shopping, flânerie, and the postcard or cabinet card, are all seen as having given rise to the 'mobilised, virtual gaze' in which other spaces and cultures are organised into forms of visual commodity.<sup>41</sup> Cinema was, according to Friedberg, the culmination of this

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<sup>39</sup> Rony, *The Third Eye*, 41-42.

<sup>40</sup> See Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, 79; Tom Gunning, 'From the Kaleidoscope to the X-Ray: Urban Spectatorship, Poe, Benjamin, and *Traffic in Souls* (1913)' *Wide Angle* 19, vol. 4 (1997), 32; Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 3-4; Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (London: MIT Press, 1990), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 2.

commodification of the other, for its gaze is both perfectly mobile and perfectly virtual,<sup>42</sup> traversing geographical space and bringing home moving photographic images of other cultures. Cinerama, too, makes ‘other’ spaces into an attraction to bring home and sell, yet Europe itself, once the seat of the West, has become the attraction.

### **Three Coins in the Fountain**

The Cinerama company existed on the fringes of the Hollywood film industry. Waller had attempted to sell the process to the major studios but none were interested.<sup>43</sup> Many of his eventual investors were sometime Hollywood filmmakers and producers like Mike Todd and Lowell Thomas who, although part of the broader southern California filmmaking industry, had only peripheral connections to the major studios. Nevertheless, when the major studios began to adopt widescreen formats, they took many aesthetic cues from Cinerama, foremost of which was an interest in travel subjects.

*Three Coins in the Fountain*, released in 1954, was an early Fox CinemaScope production. It clearly builds upon the success of Cinerama’s travelogue aesthetic, adapting many of the same aesthetic strategies to classical Hollywood narrative form. As we shall see, this conversion of the travelogue aesthetic to narrative film produces rich veins of similarity and difference with Cinerama and its imperialist ideologies. Certain dynamics within the travelogue aesthetic are brought out while others become submerged. The vast majority of the tourist films are of course traditional Hollywood narrative films like *Three Coins*. Although not all of these are in widescreen or even in colour (and some of them predate Cinerama), *Three Coins* nevertheless serves as a fascinating example of how Cinerama’s imperialist aesthetics is converted to a narrative film that clearly seeks to draw upon its success. Tracing this conversion in some detail will shed light on how the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>43</sup> Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 101-102.

travelogue aesthetic is used in the other tourist films, contributing in both subtle and overt ways to the creation of an imperialist Hollywood aesthetic.

*Three Coins* follows Maria (Maggie MacNamara), a young American secretary, as she arrives in Rome to work for a U.S. government agency called the USDA. Upon arrival she meets two other American women who are to become her housemates and friends: Anita (Jean Peters), whom Maria is to replace at the agency upon Anita's imminent return to America; and Frances (Dorothy McGuire), an older secretary who has lived in Rome for fifteen years, working for famous writer John Frederick Shadwell (Clifton Webb). The film follows their adventures and romances in a somewhat meandering fashion: Maria meets a handsome Italian prince, Dino Dessi (Louis Jourdan), whom she artfully woos; Anita embarks on a love affair with a poor Italian translator, Giorgio (Rossano Brazzi), forbidden by their boss at the agency (Howard St John); and Frances, coming to the realisation that she is at risk of old-maidhood, decides to return home, whereupon Shadwell proposes to her. The film is set in Rome (plus a sequence in Venice), and many shots were emphatically filmed on location; the characters walk and drive through the cityscape in ways that could not have been achieved in post-production.<sup>44</sup>

Certain sequences, and even some shots, precisely replicate *This is Cinerama*, a move that seems intended to show off CinemaScope's equivalence or superiority to the three-strip process. This is clearly the case of the Venice sequence, in which Dino takes Maria and Frances on a day trip to that city in his small aeroplane. The sequence opens as they arrive by air. The aeroplane swoops through the canals as the characters catch panoramic views of the Venetian cityscape, filmed in a shot-reverse shot sequence with Dino pointing out the views and the women reacting with amazement. These aerial moments invite direct comparison with *This is Cinerama*. Combining two *Cinerama* sequences (Venice and aerials) into one, we are seemingly asked to see CinemaScope as equivalent in optical quality. In

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<sup>44</sup> Shandley discusses the film's use of location shooting in detail; see *Runaway Romances*, 80-81.



the following shots an even closer equivalence between the two media is suggested. We cut to the three characters in a gondola, touring the canals from ground level as they are propelled along by a gondolier in traditional costume. Again, Dino points down various side streets and towards different buildings, and the women react with awe and delight. Not only is a direct comparison with Cinerama's optical qualities invited, but the sequence seems to signal CinemaScope's superior ability to situate its panoramic views within narrative stories, as the characters point and react to various views which we share with them.



Figure 25. An aerial view of Venice, *Three Coins in the Fountain*.



Figure 26. Frances (McGuire), Maria (MacNamara) and Dino (Jourdan) gazing down from the aeroplane.



Figure 27. Swooping low over the canal.



Figure 28. Touring the canals by gondola.



Figure 29. Dino guides the American women on the gondola tour.

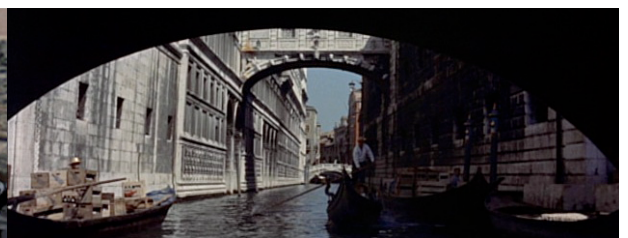


Figure 30. Going under a bridge – a near-identical shot to one in *This is Cinerama*.

This comparison with Cinerama reaches an apex in the final five shots of the Venice travelogue sequence. The characters are in the Piazza San Marco. Dino says,



‘Look!’ and points upward. We see a view of a bell ringing from the top of the cathedral. It is clearly not from their spatial perspective, but rather an idealised view from close up. Next the film cuts to an enormous flock of pigeons landing in the piazza – almost identical in angle and composition to a shot of swirling pigeons in *This is Cinerama*. Then we see the three characters again. Dino repeats, ‘Look!’ and claps his hands. In the final shot the pigeons take flight, swirling in a spectacular living cloud around the piazza. *Three Coins*, as a narrative film, is proclaimed as superior due to its potential for a kind of vicarious interactivity.



Figure 31. An ‘impossible’ view of the bells.



Figure 32. Pigeons swirling around the Piazza San Marco - a near identical shot to one in *This is Cinerama*.



Figure 33. Dino says, ‘Look!’ and claps his hands.



Figure 34. The pigeons take flight en masse.

It seems to matter, too, that our guide here is Dino, a handsome aristocratic Italian, rather than Thomas, an older American man. There may be an implicit claim that having an Italian as a guide offers the audience a more ‘authentic’ experience. However, it would be a mistake to think that this amounts to a relaxation of the travelogue aesthetic’s racist paradigm. The implicit claim to ‘authenticity’ is already a racist one, steeped in hegemonic looking relations. A given medium’s claim to give authentic views is really a claim to show another location or people in a way that is mediated *better*, not to be more honest about or respectful of the natives. In other words, the claim to authenticity is an aesthetic claim of

the same type that Thomas makes again and again. *Three Coins* merely makes a claim to superiority on the same grounds. Dino's presence as a guide functions differently to Thomas', however, in that he fulfils a popular image of feminine spectatorial pleasure: he is young, handsome, and a prince, the perfect answer to a feminine romantic fantasy. While *Cinerama* was implicitly oriented towards the American man, *Three Coins* seems to signal its own superiority as a medium for women.

Another similarity of *Three Coins* to *Cinerama* is its racist, ethnographic coding of Italians. Indeed, this is reinforced by the addition of narrative elements to the travelogue aesthetic. Shandley does an excellent job of examining the film's racist structures, and I need only summarise his work. For one thing, Shandley argues, there are disturbing connotations in the way Americans on a presumably low, clerical salary get to 'live like princesses, marry princes, and bask in Old World luxuries'.<sup>45</sup> This is evidently based on 'the weakness of the local Italian economy'.<sup>46</sup> The women actually discuss the strength of the dollar against the local economy and how this allows them to live in a gorgeous villa overlooking the city. Giorgio, the Italian co-worker with whom Anita falls in love, evidently gets no such advantage, as he lives in poverty. Moreover, Burgoyne, the agency's head, has forbidden the American secretaries from dating Italian employees. When he discovers Anita's liaison with Giorgio, he reacts 'as if they were bound on miscegenation in the Deep South', as one 1954 review puts it.<sup>47</sup> Italian men in general – even aristocratic ones – are 'represented as primitive sexual predators',<sup>48</sup> as Dino's reputation for putting women in sexually compromising situations suggests. In these and other ways, the racist, Orientalist structures we saw at work in *This is Cinerama* are expanded, going from an ethnographic and de-historicised formal treatment to an overtly colonialist positioning of Americans in

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<sup>45</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 87.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 88; quoting a review of *Three Coins in the Fountain*, *Time*, 31 May 1954.

<sup>48</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 88.

Italy. The Italians are either aristocrats who hob-nob with Americans, or they are peasants. Non-aristocratic Italians, where present (and they are very often completely absent), live in crowded slums or decaying farm buildings, ride bicycles or drive dilapidated vehicles, and work as waiters and housekeepers. Their spaces are areas where American women should not go unescorted. This is a colonial society in which the Americans are the colonists. The high culture of Italy – its architecture, its art, its fine food and wine – is only available to Americans and a few aristocratic Italians.

As in *Cinerama*, the Second World War and most of twentieth-century history are effaced from the representation of Italy. Indeed certain details of the film are deeply at odds with its present-day setting. If Frances and Shadwell have been in Italy for fifteen years, how did they survive during the fascist and war years?<sup>49</sup> How did Prince Dino make it through these years with his wealth, and his grand residence, apparently unaffected and intact? This is a space in which women's 'reputations' are all-important, in which the ruling class's modernity is expressed primarily through an affinity for modern art, and in which ageing expatriate American writers live out their years in contented, aristocratic solitude. It thus seems much closer to the Europe of Henry James, or even that of Hemingway or Fitzgerald, than to the postwar present. Like *Cinerama*, *Three Coins* freezes European space into a *tableau vivant* of the past, straining to the point of incoherence in order to keep modern Italy under the curtains of an oppressive and controlling nostalgia that buttresses the film's colonialist hierarchy.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 90.



Figure 35. The writer Shadwell (Webb) in a palatial residence with his personal secretary, Frances.

At the same time – and adding to this incoherence – the film fetishizes certain aspects of 1950s modernity. This is particularly the case of modern forms of transport, which are used primarily by Americans. When Maria arrives in Rome, she walks out of the new, modern Stazione Termini building, completed in 1950. She is met by Anita driving a breezy, modern convertible, a car which becomes their primary form of transport around the city and is filmed numerous times driving past famous sights, an automobile-bound version of *flânerie*. It makes sense, given the film’s colonialist framework, that modernity would be visually emphasised as connected to transport. The aeroplane, the railroad and the automobile, in allowing the American characters both to arrive in Italy and to navigate Italian space quickly and smoothly, functions as an organising principle of the colonised space.



Figure 36. Maria in the modern Stazione Termini building.



Figure 37. The women's breezy convertible outside their villa.



Figure 38. The women tour Rome in their car.

The other way both Americans and Italians traverse Roman space is by walking, or more precisely by strolling – walking's more leisurely and visually-oriented cousin. The stroll, too, functions as an organising principle of the colonised space, although in perhaps a less immediately obvious way. Bruno points to strolling as the fundamental activity in picturesque aesthetics: strolling around a pleasure-garden, she argues, was a fundamental step in modernity's reorganisation of space that led ultimately to cinema's virtual traversals.<sup>50</sup> Yet as Bruno does not do enough to acknowledge,<sup>51</sup> there is also an implicit violence to this picturesque conversion of space, a violence which Galt and Suleri bring out more fully.<sup>52</sup> I have been outlining how the Rome of *Three Coins* follows a colonialist vision. The picturesque participates in this ideological work by rearranging the spaces of Rome to suit an outsider's aesthetic sensibilities.

I would like to take a closer look at two key sequences in the film that revolve around strolling in order to further investigate the role of the picturesque. The first is the opening travelogue-like sequence, occurring before the credits, in which a series of delightful views of Roman fountains unfolds to the tune of Frank Sinatra (uncredited) singing the title song. The film opens with the Twentieth-Century Fox logo and drumroll, followed by a card announcing that the film is in CinemaScope. A magical, descending

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<sup>50</sup> Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion*, 192.

<sup>51</sup> Bruno does discuss cinema's potential to act 'as an agent of imperialist obsession', discussing *Les Carabiniers* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963) as a film which explores cinema and tourism's potential for violence and domination; *Atlas*, 77-81.

<sup>52</sup> Rosalind Galt, 'On *L'Avventura* and the Picturesque', in *Antonioni: Centenary Essays*, ed. Laura Rascaroli and John David Rhodes (London: BFI, 2011), 144; Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 76.

musical theme with bells and harp begins to play, and we see a shot of a glimmering spout of water shooting into the air, framed only by an azure sky. The camera tilts downward to reveal that this is a spout of the Fontana delle Naiadi in the Piazza della Repubblica. We then see a series of angles on the Fontana del Nettuno in the Piazza Navona, followed by a long shot of a couple strolling slowly around the obelisk in the Piazza del Popolo, plus several other angles on this piazza. The rest of the sequence follows a series of strollers in the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, going through Le Cento Fontane (a cool grotto framed by flowers) then standing and contemplating the Water Organ and Fontana dell'Ovato from various angles. In one key moving shot, we see several couples meandering slowly around the fish ponds just below the Water Organ, slowly panning to the right to reveal two pretty young women, sitting and chatting as they gaze upon this magnificent fountain's rainbow-filled mists. The film then cuts to a panoramic aerial view of the Tiber river, the camera continuing to move in the same direction and speed so that the cut is almost seamless. This shot continues for nearly 45 seconds, through an entire turn in the song, before we return to several more shots of the Villa d'Este gardens, again dotted with strolling couples and families. One shot frames a pair of boys and their mother sitting by the fish ponds and Water Organ of the Villa d'Este, framed on all sides by lush greenery.

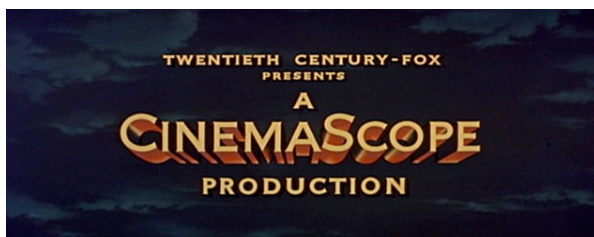


Figure 39. The CinemaScope logo announced boldly prior to the fountain sequence.



Figure 40. The first shot of the film: a glimmering spout of water against an azure sky.





Figure 41. The Fontana delle Naiadi, Piazza della Repubblica.



Figure 42. The Fontana del Nettuno, Piazza Navona.



Figure 43. The obelisk and fountains in the Piazza del Popolo, with strolling couple.



Figure 44. Le Cento Fontane, Villa d'Este, Tivoli, with strolling couple.



Figure 45. Fontana dell'Ovato with strollers, Villa d'Este, Tivoli.



Figure 46. Water organ, Villa d'Este, Tivoli.



Figure 47. Looking out over the fish ponds...



Figure 48. ...and panning right to view two pretty young women enjoying the view. Note rainbow in water vapour.



Figure 49. Panorama of central Rome.



Figure 50. A woman and two boys framed picturesquely at the fish ponds.

Throughout this sequence, we are invited to enjoy not only the pleasures of these beautiful views of Roman fountains sparkling in the sunshine, but also the pleasures of mediation via the CinemaScope apparatus – its ability to frame beautiful, colourful moving images in sensual and visually pleasing ways. The sequence is like a series of postcards, yet the constant locomotion of the water reminds us that these are moving images. The images, with their strolling couples and families, seem to invite the audience into the picture, as the camera becomes itself a disembodied and idealised stroller around these beautiful Roman spaces. The camera invites the viewer to become a participant in the sequence's peripatetic construction of the picturesque: it offers a virtual stroll around the gardens of Rome, allowing the viewer to enjoy, as in the picturesque garden, a sequence of amusing or beautiful views.

Roman space is, moreover, largely depicted as empty. The strollers in the fountain sequence are always comfortably distanced from each other and there is always plenty of empty space. Peterson argues that empty space – that is, space without people, especially without 'natives' – is an essential part of the picturesque.<sup>53</sup> A film entitled *Kuala Lumpur: Capital of the Malay States* (Pathé, 1912), for example, shows a series of well-manicured public spaces like a botanical garden and a 'government building', filled with lushly blooming plants and almost entirely devoid of people.<sup>54</sup> 'The only figures in the film are peripheral, mere window dressing for the larger idea of the city as a picturesque place . . . the overall impression one gets of Kuala Lumpur is of a quiet beauty, of clean, sparsely populated spaces'.<sup>55</sup> The picturesque sites of Rome in *Three Coins* is similarly empty of people. There are no crowds, no tourists, no masses of locals to obstruct the film's tour of the Roman cityscape.

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<sup>53</sup> Peterson, 'World Pictures', 217.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 218.



This picturesque vision is clearly gendered as feminine. Frank Sinatra's mellifluous voice soars throughout the sequence, singing a song about romantic longing in which three hopeful lovers stand at a fountain, hoping to be blessed with love. Sinatra was the archetypal heartthrob of this era, a women's star whose famous blue eyes and honey voice captivated American women. Strolling itself carries connotations as a feminine activity.<sup>56</sup> Unlike the masculine-inflected discourses of ethnography and colonialist exploration, the picturesque landscape is a safe and reassuring space for women to explore.

Bruno argues that the picturesque tradition historically served as an initial step in the eventual delineation of a feminine public sphere.<sup>57</sup> The picturesque, in opening up public space and travel for women, is a kind of proto-feminist tradition, endowing women with a new sense of mobility and freedom. A similar dynamic is at work in *Three Coins*. The American women circulate freely through Italian space, enjoying its picturesque views – an experience of space aligned with the power to gaze and to traverse, as the women also earn a good living through work, pursue romance as they please, and live alone together in their own apartment. The women's economic and sexual liberation is aligned, in other words, with the picturesque aesthetic's possibilities of spatial and visual mobility.

Yet, as we will see time and again in the tourist films, the picturesque's opening up of space for women's freedom, with all its progressive possibilities, relies implicitly on retrogressive ideologies of imperialism. Women's liberation is envisioned through their mobility and economic power in foreign lands. The picturesque serves as the organising aesthetic principle of foreign space as it is re-envisioned for enjoyment by American women.

The second sequence I want to look at closely is the only sequence of the film in which Rome is given a vibrant, busy street life. After leaving the cocktail party given by their boss's wife, Maria and Anita decide to walk home. Mr and Mrs Burgoyne's palatial

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<sup>56</sup> Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion*, 199.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

residence is evidently somewhere in or near the Villa Borghese – at the top of a hill, amid lush parkland, overlooking the slum-like areas below. Soon after they leave his house, the women find themselves meandering down the Spanish Steps and into this more crowded, poorer area where Italians live.

They pause on the steps as Anita lectures Maria about the lack of available men in Rome: ‘Wealthy Italians don’t waste their time on secretaries, and the Italians who work at the agency are too poor’. These secretaries, then, are apparently posed in between the two major classes of people in this deeply stratified society. At the party too, the primary topic of conversation between the women was the sexual danger posed by wealthy Italians – Prince Dino is evidently eager to take sexual advantage of the secretaries, and the women must guard against this. The stroll that follows, then, is framed by conversations about sexual respectability and the danger to American women apparently lurking at every Roman corner.

In the next shot, the women are strolling down a street filled with pedestrians. Some, like the flower vendor on the corner where they pause, are marked clearly as Italian peasants. Maria entreats her friend to turn down an alley which, in Anita’s words, ‘doesn’t look very respectable’; they then proceed to weave through a casual football game played by tanned, sweating Italian men in their undershirts, several of whom whistle at them. Meandering past a café, an Italian man pinches Maria’s bottom. Anita instructs her not to respond to or even look at the man, but, furious, Maria starts to tell him off. The man seems to take this as encouragement and begins to follow the women, talking in fast Italian as Anita leads Maria away. Just then, by coincidence, Giorgio nearly crashes into them on his bicycle. Discerning that the girls are being pestered, he quickly dispatches the man and entreats the women that they ‘shouldn’t be in this section unescorted . . . things can happen that American girls don’t understand’. The three then head off for dinner together, and this treading into ‘dangerous territory’ ultimately enables Anita’s transgressive love affair with Giorgio to begin.



Figure 51. Maria and Anita (Peters) pause on the Spanish Steps to discuss their poor romantic prospects and the lurking sexual danger of Rome.



Figure 52. They stroll into a rough neighbourhood.



Figure 53. The women weave between Italian men playing a casual football game. Peasant flower vendor on right.



Figure 54. Just after being pinched on the bottom by a stranger.



Figure 55. The near bicycle crash.



Figure 56. Giorgio (Brazzi) sees that it is Anita and Maria he has nearly hit.

Their subsequent trip to the country and automobile crash that leads to their first passionate embrace rhymes narratively and visually with this sequence. On their way out of Rome, the crowded Jeep carrying Giorgio and Anita nearly crashes into a bus that has, in turn, just hit a fruit cart. The scene is chaotic, full of shouting Italians. Later, Anita is accidentally sitting in the driver's seat of the Italian family's dilapidated, brakeless Jeep as it rolls down a steep hill. She shouts for help before crashing into some bushes, miraculously unharmed. Giorgio runs after her and they embrace. Anita's sexual transgression is thus enacted as a series of vehicular collisions – first a bicycle, then a bus, then a Jeep. These are moments in which the smoothness of colonial mobility in Italian space is symbolically threatened by her transgression.



Figure 57. The old Jeep 'brakes' to avoid the bus and fruit cart.



Figure 58. Anita alone in the Jeep as it careens down the hill.



Figure 59. Giorgio rescues Anita from the Jeep.



Figure 60. The couple passionately embrace.

The 'danger' of both the second strolling sequence and the later Jeep sequence derives from the women's refusal to stick to the prescribed, 'safe' areas and views of Italy. In both cases, they venture into an area belonging to the subalterns of this colonial society. The area they enter in the second stroll sequence is chaotic and shabby, the buildings showing their years through peeling paint and rough, decaying façades. The people, particularly the men, in this Italian area are dressed shabbily, wearing T-shirts or white vest tops that show their tanned limbs. Rosalind Galt argues that the picturesque is shot through with class conflict.<sup>58</sup> It arose in the era of enclosures, when British peasants were being evicted from the land by wealthy landowners, and the notion of 'improvement' of the landscape was a thinly masked euphemism for wholesale destruction.<sup>59</sup> In a colonial context, this class conflict becomes colonial/racial conflict, with the picturesque functioning similarly to enforce hegemonic looking relations. The picturesque in *Three Coins* serves as a structure for the oppression of poor Italians. It is an aestheticizing strategy that alternately denies their existence, subsumes them into a charming and thereby powerless

<sup>58</sup> Galt, 'On *L'Avventura*', 143.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 144.

peasantry, or treats them as dangerous ruffians who prevent upper-class American women from enjoying full freedom of movement. Like Battersby's gardens and Suleri's watercolours, the picturesque here performs a masking, converting function within a relationship of domination. As Linda Nochlin succinctly puts it, the picturesque functions 'to mask conflict with the appearance of tranquillity'.<sup>60</sup>

The picturesque functions not only to convert danger into reassurance, but also to delineate the 'proper' spaces for American women. The women, however, subtly disobey this colonialist regime of space: they flirt with its boundaries, exploring what is hidden behind the picturesque views of Rome. This exploration is evidently a source of transgressive pleasure, particularly for Anita. Yet even as the film allows them to transgress in certain fairly minor and pleasurable ways, it is at pains never to put them in any real danger. Just as they are being harassed by an Italian man on the street, Giorgio turns up to protect them. Giorgio is clearly a 'gentleman'; nothing bad ultimately happens to Anita in their liaison, her near-death by automobile crash notwithstanding. The same is true of Maria in her dalliance with Prince Dino, who despite his reputation as a sexual predator is ultimately easily manoeuvred into a marriage proposal. The film thereby insists on a framework of 'respectable' representation, even in its pleasurable depictions of transgression.

*Three Coins* and other tourist films map a narrow, shifting and contested space between American women's increasingly strained negotiations with patriarchy and the racist tropes of American imperialism. Maria is the character with whom we are most closely aligned (as well as, to a lesser degree, the other American women). We arrive when she arrives and we explore and learn about Rome along with her. She is the female counterpart to Thomas in *Cinerama*, yet her feminine mode of discovery and exploration is very different from his masculine one. Thomas is engaged primarily in revelation or

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<sup>60</sup> Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 50.

presentation – showing us the spaces of Europe and America in a way that seems almost impossibly smooth and flawless. Maria, conversely, is engaged in a complicated series of negotiations, learning to navigate the rules of her new social world and to eke out a space for her own desires within systems both of colonialism and of patriarchy. While in *Cinérama* the ethnographic tradition was endowed with a masculinist, paternalistic and monolithic viewpoint through the film's narration, in *Three Coins* the picturesque serves as a space of female desire, belonging to feminine fantasies and enabling women's exploration, traversal and transgression.

The American women in *Three Coins* negotiate with both patriarchal and imperialist hegemonies, subtly transgressing against both. The pleasure of transgression, sexual and spatial, is a potent one in melodrama, tapping deeply into feminine desires (as I will discuss further in Chapter 4). *Three Coins* offers feminine spectatorial pleasure in depicting these transgressions. Patriarchy and colonialism are thus made to jostle with each other in complicated ways. The film's positive possibilities for women's economic and sexual liberation – their transgressions against patriarchy – rely on colonial frameworks of space and vision, as the women's relative wealth and mobility depends implicitly on an impoverished and compliant local population. Yet the women's sexual transgressions also involve transgressions against this colonial organisation of space, as Anita and Maria cross the prescribed boundaries of a segregated society.

At the same time, the film engages in seemingly elaborate strategies to contain these transgressions and contradictions. Nothing truly bad happens to the women, and indeed by the ending all three of them are happily mated. Shandley discusses how, when one pauses to consider, the film's ending is deeply troubling, with Maria and Anita both 'marry[ing] into a class and culture for which [they are] in no way prepared' and Frances marrying 'a man who will likely die within a year'.<sup>61</sup> These seem like attempts to recuperate the

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<sup>61</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 91.

ideological incoherence – the contradictions and coded, contained transgressions within the film's events and representations. Yet the attempts fail, and the film's deep ideological fissures remain.

### Chapter 3. Ruins, dystopias and the dark tourist film

This chapter explores a very different aesthetic strategy to the picturesque – an aesthetic of rubble, shadow, darkness and enclosure that, as I will argue, can be related to the sublime. These dark tourist films (as I will call them), far from the widescreen panoramas of the previous chapter, were all filmed in black and white and most in Academy ratio, despite being made at a time when widescreen and colour were rapidly coming to predominate. They embrace an aesthetic dominated by the ruined landscape left in the wake of the Second World War. Rejecting the utopianism and touristic viewing pleasures of most of the other films of this thesis, the films of this chapter dwell on the destruction and collapse engendered by the war, betraying a deep ambivalence about the American presence in Europe. Yet these too, I will argue, ultimately buttress a colonial vision in ways connected to the sublime aesthetic.

The films constituting the corpus of this chapter include: *The Search* (Fred Zinneman, 1948), *Berlin Express* (Jacques Tourneur, 1948), *A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1949), *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949)<sup>1</sup>, *The Big Lift* (George Seaton, 1950), *Beat the Devil* (John Huston, 1953), *Kings Go Forth* (Delmer Daves, 1958), *Fraulein* (Henry Koster, 1958)<sup>2</sup> and *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1962). Broadly, these dark tourist films share enough characteristics that they deserve to be considered in conjunction, although calling them a generic grouping is admittedly more problematic here than in later chapters. All take place in a Europe that is marked everywhere as being postwar and are often, though not exclusively, set in Germany. They are shot, without exception, in black and white – often in

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<sup>1</sup> *The Third Man* is claimed variously as British and as American. I feel justified in including it because it stands at number 57 on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 best American films ever made. (See 'AFI's 100 Years....100 Movies', the website of the American Film Institute, accessed 28 April 2012, <http://www.aifi.com/100years/movies.aspx>.) As Shandley discusses at length, moreover, in the postwar period the categories of national identity for films became more mixed and open to interpretation, as personnel and funding from two or more countries would often be involved in a production. See Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 9-19.

<sup>2</sup> I am spelling *Fraulein* without an umlaut following its (mis)spelling in the American release.



a stylised, shadowy, angular black and white that we might associate with film noir – standing as a significant exception to the trends towards widescreen, colour and visual spectacle we explored in the previous chapter. They are dystopian or even apocalyptic in tone and subject matter, and centre around an American man, often a soldier, as he explores a European space that is utterly destroyed, morally liminal, and full of shady underworld characters of various descriptions.

Yet for all this, the films share enough characteristics with the more typical tourist films to be included in this thesis. For one thing, most of them begin when an American character arrives in Europe and end when he leaves. They contain sequences devoted to gazing upon European landmark views, showing an interest in tourist iconography, although they turn this iconography on its head with their pervading interest in destruction and collapse. As we saw in the previous chapter, decay is a strategy in the tourist films' Orientalising treatment of Europe, so we will need to interrogate further the similarities and differences between architectural decay supposedly associated with a long period of moral or political decline and the ruins left in the wake of war's destruction.

There is some precedent for grouping this corpus together, although previous authors have done so for reasons to which I do not necessarily ascribe. Georg Schmundt-Thomas groups *A Foreign Affair*, *The Big Lift* and *Fraulein* together, reading into them American political allegory in which a young German woman stands in for Germany.<sup>3</sup> Shandley adds to these with *I Was a Male War Bride* (Howard Hawks, 1949), *GI Blues* (Norman Taurog, 1960 – an Elvis Presley vehicle) and *One, Two, Three* (Billy Wilder, 1961), calling them all 'occupation romances'.<sup>4</sup> I must ultimately take issue with both these lines of reasoning. Schmundt-Thomas's depends on a debatable interpretation of the films' ideological content, and indeed I will directly dispute his readings in my discussion of *A Foreign Affair*.

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<sup>3</sup> Georg Schmundt-Thomas, 'Hollywood's Romance of Foreign Policy: American GIs and the conquest of the German Fräulein', *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 19, no. 4 (1992), 187.

<sup>4</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 135.

Shandley's contention that these are 'romances' seems highly problematic from a generic perspective given the films' pervasively dark tone and dystopian themes. It will, I believe, prove more illuminating to read these films for their obvious *contrasts* to the utopian aesthetics and themes of the other tourist films, rather than working to subsume them into the framework of the 'romance'.

Urban rubble, a pervasive visual trope in the dark tourist films, is a principal trope of the sublime aesthetic. Maurizia Natali's discussion of Thomas Cole's series of paintings titled *The Course of Empire* identifies the post-apocalyptic desolation of a destroyed civilisation to be closely tied to the sublime, particularly in American culture.<sup>5</sup> Evoking, like Battersby, the spectre of terrorism and 9/11, she argues that the sublime must be read as the aesthetic tradition through which American cinema understands and absorbs geopolitical violence. This is often registered visually as urban destruction, with piles of wreckage denoting the terrifying overthrow of the creative, generative, expansive impulses of modernity and industrialism.

The sublime, as we saw in Chapter 1, has also long been theorised as a point of rupture within the white, male, Western self. On the one hand is the rational and civilised half, the part of the self that can be trained through moral education to overcome the experience of terror. On the other hand is the inscrutable and terrifying half that, in discourses of manifest destiny, is represented as a dark wilderness. Although disavowed and ultimately overcome, this darker half is also really part of the self. In a sublime experience, the darker side threatens to overwhelm the rational side, thus 'opening up a kind of split within the subject before consciousness and reason re-establish control'.<sup>6</sup> The experience of mass destruction, accordingly, changes the white male viewer, challenging his rational side to contain the irrational darkness which threatens to overwhelm him. This challenge is,

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<sup>5</sup> Maurizia Natali, 'The Course of the Empire: Sublime Landscapes in American Cinema', in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre (New York: Routledge, 2006), 96-98.

<sup>6</sup> Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1.

however, considered by Kant to be an essential part of the white Western man's moral education, ultimately granting him access to full subject-hood.

It is striking then that the films of this chapter draw, on the whole, a persistent association between rubble and masculine crisis. Scenes of the war's vast destruction of European cityscapes serve as a backdrop to all these films. All of them, equally, feature American men, mainly soldiers, amongst the rubble, who embody a psychological split and who must grapple in various ways with their experiences of terror and death in order to contain the dark side's destructive potential. My film readings, then, I take the sublime as a framework for understanding and exploring these films' persistent combining and connecting of these visual themes and narrative tropes. Once again, I find that the sublime aesthetic of these films supports a specifically American white male hegemonic subject that cannot easily be grouped together with 'the West'.

Scholars have traced a broader trend in postwar America in which the white male was increasingly understood as psychologically split along very similar lines. The American man – his desires, his place in American society – was in fact a topic of frequent public debate in this period. Indeed, this form of masculinity was commonly believed to be in a 'crisis'. In *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties*, Steven Cohan shows how in this period, the modern American male was perceived as a deeply unstable and ambivalent subject. Cohan writes:

Demobilisation required restoration of the gender relations that World War II had disturbed both in the home and the workplace, while anxiety about the mental stability of returning veterans exaggerated the danger their ungovernable masculinity posed to the social order. After the war, too, the Kinsey report on men, published in 1948, challenged many traditional assumptions regarding the normality of male sexual practices, revealing the surprising number of American men who had had homosexual encounters or were not monogamous, for example. . . . Cold War politics further complicated the picture by projecting contradictory ideals for American manhood, requiring a 'hard' masculinity as the standard when defending the nation's boundaries, yet insisting upon a 'soft' masculinity as the foundation of an orderly, responsible home life.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), xi-xii. For a similar discussion, see also Brian Baker, *Masculinity in Fiction and Film: Representing Men in Popular Genres 1945-2000* (London: Continuum, 2006), 1-2; Stella

It is striking how the crisis of postwar masculinity is set up, both by Cohan and in the popular culture of the time, as a series of dualities: peace versus wartime, social order versus ‘ungovernability’, marital domesticity versus sexual drives, ‘soft’ versus ‘hard’ masculinities. All these dualities, we might notice, are structured not only around the divide in the male self envisioned by Kant, but also around a symbolic conception of geographical space. ‘Home’/domestic space corresponds to one side of the duality – the side requiring men to be husbands, fathers, peaceful and law-abiding citizens and providers. On the other side, the faraway, conceived as the space of war and violence outside the safety of American borders, is mapped onto the other end of the spectrum as the space of a man’s darker urges, for sex and death.

The ‘healthy’ postwar man was conceived as needing to find appropriate ‘release’ for his darker drives, which may not be permissible in the domestic realm but could not be entirely repressed either. Wives, according to a 1956 *Woman’s Home Companion* article, must help their husbands to achieve this release:

There are certain deep and perfectly normal masculine drives that were ‘permitted’ during the war. . . . They are an inborn attraction to violence and obscenity and polygamy, an inborn love of change, an inborn need to be different from the others and rebel against them. . . . Certainly these drives shouldn’t all be permitted in that clean, green, happy back yard. But if they are always and completely inhibited – the man in the gray flannel suit will stop being a man.<sup>8</sup>

Postwar masculinity utilises a Freudian ‘escape valve’ model, in which the id (the sex drive and death instinct) exerts a pressure that must somehow be released in order for the superego (the rational self) to stay in control. The healthy man, then, must perform a balancing act, achieving enough release to function in society and thus avoiding the

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Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Postwar Hollywood* (London: BFI, 2005), 43; and Mike Chopra-Gant, *Hollywood Genres and Postwar America: Masculinity, Family and Nation in Popular Movies and Film Noir* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 95-107.

<sup>8</sup> Louis Lyndon, ‘Uncertain Hero: The Paradox of the American Male’, *Women’s Home Companion* (November 1956), 107. Quoted in Cohan, *Masked Men*, 34.

pathological extremes of either too much repression (resulting in effeminacy) or too much expression (leading to psychopathic behaviour).

Although they are not identical, it is worth dwelling for a moment on the similarities here to the topos of manifest destiny and the myth of the frontiersman. Manifest destiny relies on a logic of ambivalence or split consciousness for the white metropolitan male. In American culture this is particularly emphasised and is given its own geographical mapping, in which to the west lies wilderness and darkness and to the east civilisation and light.<sup>9</sup> The frontiersman is the archetypal heroic American masculinity, with a foot in each world – able to survive in the wilderness yet capable of carrying with him his reason and his commitment to civilisation, conceived along Enlightenment lines of rationality and democracy.<sup>10</sup> The pop-psychological understanding of the postwar American man echoes this duality, particularly in its notion of balance between the two halves of the self.

Tied up, too, in manifest destiny's conception of heroic white masculinity is the notion of spreading democracy and civilisation, a variant of the Orientalist project of bringing the light of liberty to the natives.<sup>11</sup> This idea of spreading lawfulness and democracy to the dark other as constitutive of American heroic masculinity is a deep-running current in the films of this chapter. A particularly telling instance is *Judgment at Nuremberg*, which takes the form of a courtroom drama in which Spencer Tracy, playing an American judge, brings Nazi horrors to the light of truth and the law. This mission of rationality and democracy is invoked in Cold War terms of a clash with the dark forces, thus functioning, I will argue, to safeguard America from the dreaded possibility that the occupation forces constitute a colonial power.

Fascinatingly, similar tropes of split masculinity are often read into film noir. As I will discuss below, some (though not all) of the films of this chapter could be categorised as

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<sup>9</sup> See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 57-65.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 172.

noir, so aspects of noir criticism dealing with similar issues will be useful here. For example, Frank Krutnik argues that a similar split is central to film noir's logic. Setting it up in Lacanian terms, Krutnik writes:

[In Lacanian theory,] in order to achieve "correct manhood", the male subject is forced to identify with the Law of the Father and at the same time to accept his own subjugation to that law. . . . The Oedipal model operates expressly as a myth of male inheritance – it dramatizes unequivocally the exclusion of women from the realm of Symbolic relations.<sup>12</sup>

'Symbolic relations' and 'the Law of the Father', I wish to suggest, might be read as this self-same commitment to a rational half of the self that, in Kant, also functioned to exclude women and served as a myth of male inheritance (which Kant called moral education). According to Krutnik, this 'phallic regime' of rationality and law 'has to be consolidated and perpetually protected against various forms of deviance and disruption'.<sup>13</sup>

Film noir, Krutnik argues, puts masculinity in similar terms – yet at the same time noir situates this phallic regime as noticeably precarious, both avowing and problematizing it simultaneously. In film noir,

The phallic regime of masculine identity is by no means a secure option that can be taken for granted once it is set in place for the male subject. Rather, it has to be consolidated and perpetually protected against various forms of deviance and disruption.<sup>14</sup>

Populated by masochists and other 'problematic' men with 'eroded or unstable' masculinities,

The "tough" thrillers continually institute a discrepancy between, on the one hand, licit possibilities of masculine identity and desire required by the patriarchal cultural order, and, on the other hand, the psychosexual make-up of the male subject-hero.<sup>15</sup>

Film noir, then, is characterised as much by a *failure* to entirely overcome the dark irrational half as by the struggle itself. Noir is thus characterised by ambiguity and

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<sup>12</sup> Frank Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1991), 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

unresolved or partially resolved endings that often refuse to unequivocally restore heroic masculinity to its protagonists.

Deborah Thomas links noir's ambivalence between hegemonic American masculinity and a darker psychosexual self to questions of space, geography, and selfhood versus otherness in American culture. She points out how the split self of the noir protagonist is mapped onto other characters:

Criminals and women of a certain type, by their aggressiveness and (extramarital) sexuality respectively, represent antisocial (or at least 'anti-normal') aspects of the protagonist himself. Yet at the same time . . . it is quite a common strategy within film noir for a figure representing the law (a district attorney, a policeman, an investigator) to stand for the protagonist's desire to punish such transgression.<sup>16</sup>

The protagonist is ambivalently allied with both types of character, moving between them. This is, Thomas argues, mapped onto the space of the American city. Noting a 'long American intellectual tradition of antipathy towards the city',<sup>17</sup> she argues that, by the twentieth century, the city had come to be seen as a locus of 'antithetical otherness'. As various ethnic groups migrated to American cities, the American city became a space of the foreign, the other, and thus paradoxically 'the place from which civilisation was *absent*'.<sup>18</sup> The city is the space the foreigners and criminals inhabit, a space of night and shadow. The noir protagonist, allied (though always ambivalently) with the side of the law and hegemonic white American masculinity, traverses and surveys these spaces, thereby assuming the power of the controlling gaze that is afforded by law. He thus displays a hegemonic privilege – yet this privilege of 'normality' oppresses him and he does not feel at

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<sup>16</sup>Deborah Thomas, 'How Hollywood Deals with the Deviant Male', in *The Movie Book of Film Noir*, ed. Ian Cameron (London: Studio Vista, 1992), 63-64. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas, 'Deviant', 60.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 61. Italics in original.

home in it, even as he finds it impossible to completely disavow.<sup>19</sup> The city is thus an imagined site of conflict between the two opposed halves of his own psychology.

Although I am not studying the American city, I will nevertheless build on Thomas' spatial mapping of the noir male's anxieties and ambivalences in my analysis of the spatiality of the dark tourist films. Two distinct (though related) issues will need to be investigated. First, we will need to look at whether and how the images of urban ruin and decay present in these films can be compared to the deterioration of American urban space that Thomas, and also Edward Dimendberg, identify as central tropes of noir.<sup>20</sup> Second, we need to look at how European space is mapped in a broader sense: specifically, whether certain countries, cities or movements between them seem connected to the masculine crises and ambivalences present in the dark tourist films. As we shall see, Berlin seems to be a particular locus of this masculine ambivalence, but we need to determine exactly how American anxieties of selfhood and otherness are mapped onto European space.

However, a word of caution is also warranted regarding my use of film noir criticism. Some, though not all, of the films of this chapter could be categorised as films noirs. Two of them, *The Third Man* and *Beat the Devil*, are even included in Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton's list of films noirs.<sup>21</sup> Many of the others, as my analysis will show, have noir elements to varying degrees, including expressionistic visual style, baroque and confusing narrative structures, violence, vulnerable and ambivalent heroes, *femmes fatales*, and a pervasively dark tone or mood.<sup>22</sup> Yet the cohesiveness of these criteria for noir are hotly debated by scholars. How can I justify my application of film noir concepts and criticism when no necessary or sufficient conditions for belonging to this category seem to exist?

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 63-64.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Dimendberg, *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, *A panorama of American Film noir, 1941-1953*, trans. Paul Hammond (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2002), 165-228.

<sup>22</sup> Jim Hillier and Alastair Phillips, *100 Film Noirs* (London: BFI Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3-8.



Recent books by Jonathan Auerbach and by Jennifer Fay and Justus Nieland have shown noir to be a category characterised by hybridity and diffuseness. Fay and Nieland show how noir is spread broadly across genres and national contexts rather than being a purely Hollywood concept.<sup>23</sup> Nor can it be delineated by the usual split between production and criticism; According to Auerbach, noir functions as a conversation between producers and critics, and between Americans and other nationalities.<sup>24</sup> Auerbach, for example, displays a remarkable photograph of Robert Aldrich (director of *Kiss Me Deadly*, 1954) on a studio set, holding a copy of *Panorama du film noir américain*.<sup>25</sup> This, he argues, is evidence of noir as a category of cross-cultural and production-criticism interchanges dating back at least to the 1950s (rather than to the 1970s' neo-noir turn, as others have argued).<sup>26</sup> Following Auerbach, we might approach this hybridity as a characteristic feature and even a potential virtue of noir rather than a problem to be overcome in delineating a corpus.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, rather than claiming that the dark tourist films constitute examples of noir (some of them clearly do not), I use the critical category of noir as one entry point for my own concerns, acknowledging all along the hybridity and generic complexity of the films at hand. The first film I discuss, *Confidential Report*, contains many archetypal noir elements, and although I have not found it listed in any collection of noir titles, it seems fairly clear that the film responds to the noir tradition in many respects. The second film I analyse, *A Foreign Affair*, seems saturated with very complicated and unstable generic affiliations, prompting Jennifer Fay and Justus Nieland to label the film a 'satire-noir'.<sup>28</sup> In

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<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Fay and Justus Nieland, *Film Noir: Hard-boiled Modernity and the Cultures of Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2010), ix.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Auerbach, *Dark Borders: Film Noir and American Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 11-13.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton's 1955 critical study, widely considered to be the first full-length critical work on noir. The photograph can be found in Auerbach, *Dark Borders*, 194.

<sup>26</sup> Auerbach, *Dark Borders*, 193-194.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Fay and Nieland, *Hard-boiled Modernity*, 48.

both *Confidential Report* and *A Foreign Affair*, the Second World War and the rubble left in its wake mobilise, via the sublime aesthetic, a metaphysics of masculine ambivalence that is clearly linked to the concerns of noir.

### **Confidential Report**

*Confidential Report* could serve as a case study in the fluidity of noir as a category crossing international and critical boundaries. Welles made the film entirely in Europe (both on location and in European studios), with the backing of Spanish investors. Indeed it is debatable whether this constitutes a Hollywood or an American film at all, other than the fact that it was written and directed by an American man with clear ties to the Hollywood industry who had exiled himself to Europe – a well-worn route in the 1950s, as Shandley shows.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, it is of course one of Welles' films that, famously, was never completed in a form of which he approved and is thus often treated as a kind of contested or liminal text. The Criterion Collection edition, released in 2006 under the name *Mr Arkadin*, includes three separate versions of the film. First is the 'Corinth' version, edited by Welles before he was fired from the project by producers, but never released commercially until it was rediscovered for a Welles retrospective in America in 1962. The '*Confidential Report*' version, released in Europe in 1955 and 1956, is so called because that was its release title in the UK (the film was called *Mr Arkadin* in France – a title which has gone on to achieve prominence amongst film critics and academics). Finally the Criterion edition includes a newly compiled version considered to obey Welles's wishes. I base my analysis on *Confidential Report*, the version which achieved the broadest worldwide commercial release – and indeed the *only* release at the time the film was made.

The film begins when Guy van Stratten (Robert Arden), an American, arrives at a squalid Munich apartment and begins telling his story to a dying ex-convict, Jakob Zouk

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<sup>29</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, xiii.

(Akim Tamiroff). We flash back to several months before on a pier in Naples, where van Stratten and his girlfriend Mily (Patricia Medina), also American, are docked with van Stratten's small smuggling boat. A man named Bracco (Gregoire Aslan) collapses onto their pier, dying of stab wounds. He whispers two names – Gregory Arkadin and another that is hard to make out – which he cryptically says will make them rich. The police arrive to investigate, and arrest van Stratten for smuggling. When he is released three months later, he seeks out Gregory Arkadin (Orson Welles), a well-known billionaire businessman, hoping to blackmail him even though he does not know the whole story of what the secret might be. He gains access through Arkadin's daughter Raina (Paola Mori), a beautiful young socialite, whom he pursues by begging a lift in her car on the way to Spain. They are attracted to each other and begin a romance. At a masquerade ball thrown by the Arkadins in their Spanish castle, van Stratten meets Arkadin himself. Arkadin commissions van Stratten to write a 'confidential report' on himself, researching Arkadin's own past, which Arkadin claims he cannot remember before 1927.

Van Stratten then embarks on an investigative journey, hopping from European city to European city, talking to 'every crook who had been around in 1927'. Posing as an American journalist, he learns from a retired intelligence chief that Arkadin is 'one of the shrewdest of all adventurers in high finance, and certainly the most unscrupulous. . . . A phenomenon in an age of dissolution and crisis'. This leads him to interview a series of ex-criminals, each more eccentric than the last, as he gets closer and closer to the truth about Arkadin's past. Finally he learns from Oscar (Frederic O'Brady), a heroin addict now living in Mexico, and his wealthy (possible) wife Sophie that Arkadin is really Vasu Athabadzi,<sup>30</sup> a Russian criminal involved in a human trafficking ring in Warsaw in the 1920s. From this point, as van Stratten discovers when he returns to Europe and arrives at Arkadin's wild Christmas party in Munich, the people who have helped him begin dying: Mily, Sophie

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<sup>30</sup> This spelling is my guess based on van Stratten's pronunciation.

and Oscar have all been murdered. He realises he is in danger and runs to Zouk, a former member of the trafficking ring and the only one left alive who remembers. Van Stratten hopes to hide him from Arkadin and thereby save his own life. However this attempt is unsuccessful, for Zouk is soon murdered as well. Desperate, van Stratten realises the only place he is still safe is in Spain with Raina, the only person Arkadin cares about. Indeed Arkadin seems to be killing people off, paradoxically, precisely in order to hide his violent ruthlessness from her. Van Stratten takes the last seat on a commercial aeroplane headed for Spain, despite Arkadin's pleading, bargaining and threats. Arkadin hires an aeroplane to fly himself to Spain, but van Stratten arrives first and convinces Raina to tell Arkadin, when he radios to her, that she already knows the secret of his past (although in fact van Stratten has not yet told her anything). Upon hearing this news, Arkadin never speaks another word, and his aeroplane is later discovered flying empty. Raina, devastated at her father's apparent death, breaks off her romance with van Stratten and drives away.

The baroque qualities of the narrative should already be in evidence from the considerable space required to give a precise account of the plot. This narrative complexity, including flashback structure, and the criminal underworld milieu clearly mark it as responding to the noir tradition. I will interrogate this further as my analysis develops.

The film begins with a shot of an aeroplane in flight. A narrator announces:

On December 25, an aeroplane was sighted off the coast of Barcelona. It was flying empty. Investigation of this case reached into the highest circles, and the scandal was very nearly responsible for the fall of at least one European government. This motion picture is a fictionalised reconstruction of the events leading up to the appearance last Christmas morning of the empty plane.



Figure 61. The empty plane, *Confidential Report*.



Figure 62. The aeroplane over a vast terrain of empty space.

The aerial shots and official, newsreel-like tone of this announcement position the spectator in an implicit position of investigation and traversal. Edward Dimendberg argues that the aerial shot, which begins many films noirs, is borrowed more or less directly from wartime newsreels and training films in which ‘the ability to see becomes synonymous with the ability to destroy’.<sup>31</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, traversal has long been both a symbolic and a literal mechanism of domination over a landscape. Here, the spectator is introduced to the European landscape via a traversing gaze from above, allied with an official narrative of investigation. These elements together seem to place the viewer in an implicit position of control via visual domination, spatial mobility and a dynamic of surveillance/knowledge in which Europe holds secrets that ‘we’ must investigate.

However, this positioning is simultaneously undermined. The aeroplane is revealed to be the site of the mystery itself rather than its investigation or control, for it is flying empty. Bumpy, jostling camera movements further remove any sense of smoothness or order. Just after the announcement, we cut to a panoramic shot that reveals the plane to be flying over a vast terrain of empty space, with distant mountains almost visible through a hazy sky. The plane looks tiny and insignificant against this vast spread, a classic scene of the sublime. This ostensive arrival sequence, so common to film noir, is thus undermined

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<sup>31</sup> Dimendberg, *Spaces of Modernity*, 38.

as an arrival sequence at all, stymying expectations of how an aerial sequence functions. Instead we get an image of vastness, and our own comparative insignificance, that draws upon the sublime tradition, seemingly functioning as a kind of warning against entry into European space.

The credit sequence that follows is again tinged with the macabre and the chaotic rather than functioning as a smooth, orderly transition into the narrative. Each actor's name is superimposed over an image of his or her character. The impression is of a parade of eccentric and strange creatures in equally macabre and decrepit environments. The music, which evokes an energetic Russian dance, gives the impression of a chaotic merry-go-round. This is only broken when we are introduced, at the end of the sequence, to Paola Mori and Robert Arden, who are given a contrasting, melodramatic musical theme, marking their characters as sympathetic and central compared to the others. Robert Arden, in the character of van Stratten, is tellingly shown walking across a crumbling city square, passing a pile of rubble and turning onto a city street. He is thus characterised from the first moment by traversal through ruined urban space, a kind of noir shorthand for the white male protagonist. We do not get a good look at his face here; this simple noir metonymy is apparently sufficient to identify him.



Figure 63. Noir metonymy in the credit sequence.



Figure 64. Arden framed by a Munich ruin.

The initial post-credit shot also features van Stratten walking through the snow-covered rubble of a city that, we soon learn, is Munich. He is framed in this shot by the skeleton of a ruined building whose interior now serves as storage space for old carriages. We have yet to see an automobile or any other sign of postwar modernity – somewhat odd, given that Munich was extensively rebuilt in the years following the war. Instead the effect is one of old-world decrepitude, a space left behind that no one has bothered to modernise or even clean up. This ruined city constitutes our initial entry point into European space, and we are narratively anchored there as van Stratten recounts in flashback his complex and varied encounters with a ruined, hollowed out continent suffused with darkness and evil.

As van Stratten walks towards the camera, we hear in voiceover:

Here I am, at the end of the road. Naples, France, Spain, Mexico, and now Munich: Sebastianplatz 16. In the attic of this house lives Jakob Zouk – a petty racketeer, a jailbird, and the last man alive besides me who knows the whole truth about Gregory Arkadin. My confidential report is complete now.

This narration affirms van Stratten's mobility and position of surveillance – he has criss-crossed Europe in pursuit of knowledge. It also portrays Europe as what Dimendberg calls centrifugal space – the increasingly spread-out nature of postwar suburban sprawl – as distinguished from the centripetal space which characterised traditional urban centres. As Dimendberg sees it, each type of space reveals 'distinct modalities of urban anxiety' that register in films noirs:<sup>32</sup>

If [centripetal space] elicits the agoraphobic sensation of being overwhelmed by space, fears of constriction, or the fear of losing one's way in the metropolis, its fundamental legibility can generally be assumed. . . . By contrast, the anxieties provoked by centrifugal space hinge upon . . . the uncertainty produced by a spatial environment increasingly devoid of landmarks and centers and often likely to seem permanently in motion.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 172.

I wish to argue that European space in this film is represented as centrifugal space on a grand scale: broadly spread out, lacking in centres or identifiable landmarks, and permanently in motion in a chaotic and overwhelming way. It thus co-opts the logic and anxieties of films noirs over whether such a space can be made ‘legible’ to the noir hero, yet transposes these anxieties from urban America to a global geopolitical scale.

This sense of spread-out space lacking in landmarks is accomplished, in part, by the film’s expressionistic style, which has the effect of flattening out differences in location and subsuming them into the psychology of the protagonist. This style seems almost self-consciously opposed to the widescreen/Technicolor aesthetic of the other tourist films, with their panoramic views and long pauses in the plot to take in European vistas. The picturesque aesthetic pays fanatical attention to detail and specificities of location, utilising these to implicitly or explicitly support a claim to ‘authentic’ views of European landmarks. In *Confidential Report*, by contrast, even views that in other films would likely be shot panoramically are subsumed into a claustrophobic, uneasy aesthetic. In the scene at the hotel in Mexico, for example, Van Stratten stands on a beautiful white terrace overlooking the sea – yet he is filmed from below and at a twisted angle so that the colonnades of the terrace loom ominously above him. Thus what might have been treated as a wide open vista, a sea view, framed in a picturesque way to emphasise the vast space of nature, instead becomes enclosed in a claustrophobic, unsettling way.



Figure 65. Van Stratten in Mexico, framed tightly with the ocean behind him.



Another example is in the montage of aerial shots just before van Stratten meets Flea Professor Razinsky (Mischa Auer). A vertiginously spinning shot, impossible to make out any particular form but denoting chaos, dissolves into an aerial over tall, imposing mountains. Like the initial aerial shots, this one has jostling camera movements, denying the smoothness more typical of such shots. The jostling continues in the next shots, over an agricultural plain, a jagged cliff and a domed building; this then dissolves into a tight, enclosed shot of a spinning ferris wheel, which finally dissolves to an extreme close-up on the Professor's fleas as they feed on his arm. Accompanied by the same 'Russian dance' music as the credits, the sequence once again undermines the panoramic view as a source of the calm reassurance of the picturesque. The effect is instead one of chaos, produced by a rapid juxtaposition of shots and repeated imagery of spinning.



Figure 66. Spinning, blurry shot at start of travel sequence.



Figure 67. Aerial shot on the way to Copenhagen.



Figure 68. Another aerial shot.

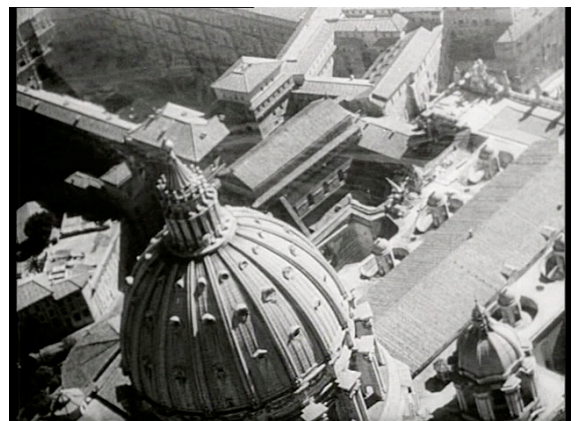


Figure 69. Copenhagen from the air.



Figure 70. Claustrophobic shot of ferris wheel.



Figure 71. An extreme close-up of a flea on the Flea Professor (Auer)'s arm finishes the sequence.

Moreover, the sequence just described is an exception in that we rarely witness van Stratten actually travelling between locations. In *Three Coins in the Fountain*, we saw how a sense of immersion was invoked through extended views of the characters driving, strolling, flying and boating around Rome and Venice. These modalities of transport served as entry points into foreign space, functioning as organising principles in a colonial mapping of otherness. Van Stratten, by contrast, simply shows up in one locale and then the next, often spending only a few minutes of film time in each place while he interviews the macabre character he has come to find. Even in Paris, which is one of the only cities in the film identifiable through its landmarks, van Stratten trudges purposefully across the Place de la Concorde rather than pausing even for a moment to admire the scene.



Figure 72. Van Stratten trudges purposefully across the Place de la Concorde.

Paradoxically, this creates a kind of smoothness. Europe is presented as a collection of outlying points, each characterised by bizarreness and chaos and largely filmed in tight, claustrophobic close-ups. It seems to merge into a single, diffuse location, organised only by van Stratten's traversals and investigations, which themselves threaten to spin out of his control.

Dimendberg refers to the relationship of centripetal to centrifugal space several times as a relationship of centre to periphery.<sup>34</sup> He is referring to the spatial layout of American cities, yet his thinking betrays a logic analogous to postcolonial theory. The traversal of peripheral space raises anxieties about control and 'legibility' for a white male subject accustomed to positions of mastery and observation. *Confidential Report* transposes this topos to the continent of Europe. Anxieties about the white American male's place in 'domestic' American culture, which film noir dramatises as a tension between the law and the criminal and the protagonist's ambivalent identification with both sides,<sup>35</sup> are transposed in *Confidential Report* to colonial anxieties about the place of the white American male in a menacing global environment.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 7; 101.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas, 'Deviant', 63-64.

Van Stratten is in many ways the archetypal noir hero, morally divided in relation to this criminal world. Throughout the film he cannot quite seem to decide whether he is trying to blackmail Arkadin or impress him. The desire to ‘wind up an Arkadin myself someday’, as he puts it, may even keep him from acknowledging the danger he is in, as he dutifully reports back to the magnate again and again until it is nearly too late. He digs into dangerous situations he does not really understand through an ambition and self-assurance that are incompatible with his true abilities and status. He is, like many noir protagonists, ‘in a bit too deep’ – vulnerable because his ambition to become another Arkadin threatens to outstrip his abilities and knowledge. Yet here, the hero’s ambivalence and vulnerability also register another character type, that of the American ‘innocent abroad’. He fails to understand the depth of the danger he faces in a foreign milieu populated by duplicitous criminals and others who mean him harm – ‘the world’s prize sucker’, as he describes himself.

Robert Arden, who was primarily a radio actor, conveys the vulnerability and ambivalence in van Stratten’s character through an intense and hysterical vocal performance. He often raises his voice in both volume and pitch to an incongruous degree for lines that do not quite seem to deserve it. In general these reveal the character as a high-strung, peevish and emotional man who is desperate to prove his importance and intelligence. Yet, more specifically, they often seem to highlight his moments of bravado or self-delusion. One particularly strident instance is the confrontation in the Paris hotel room. ‘I don’t promise to do that! Now I’m gonna see you whenever I can – job or no job!’ he shrieks to Raina when she accuses her father of making him promise to stay away from her. Van Stratten’s tone here is a poor match for his facial expression and stoic posture, with his arms hanging at his sides. The vocal performance seems to highlight, paradoxically, his uncertainty and insecurity at exactly the moment when he is most insistent and confident. Arden’s eyes, too, are a key feature of his performance. They glow with a kind of childlike bewilderment throughout the film, contrasting with the stern set of

his face. He also seemingly cannot help but continue to tell Arkadin his every move – as if to show off his intelligence to the magnate – even after he realises that his life is in danger. For example, in their confrontation in the Munich church, he tells Arkadin of his plan to race to Spain to be with Raina, the only place in which he will be safe. These traits seem to betray an over-eagerness and an innocent blindness towards Arkadin’s menace.



Figure 73. Van Stratten’s glowing eyes.

What exactly is the nature of this menace? We might read into the film a Cold War-style plot of confrontation with evil. Arkadin is, after all, a Russian, a member of the dark empire. With his striking beard and great stature, he physically resembles Ivan the Terrible – in the 1944 Russian film by that name, directed by Sergei Eisenstein, as well as in portraiture and popular culture more generally. He also speaks in stereotypically Russian ways, not only in his accent but also in his colourful storytelling and mysterious aphorisms. And of course he is stereotypically Russian in his propensity for violence, which somehow appears simultaneously shrewd and insane, as well as in his extensive spy network, ‘the greatest private spy system on earth’. We might, then, read into this film the cultural logic of the Cold War, as a flawed but heroic American man tries to outwit the evil Russian oligarch.





Figure 74. *Ivan the Terrible* (played by Nikolai Cherkasov).



Figure 75. Gregory Arkadin (Welles).

Yet this would be to gloss over the breadth of the terrain from which this film draws its iconographies of otherness. Many of Arkadin's traits listed above could be equally understood as Oriental: the full beard, the colourful stories, the shrewd/insane violence, and his status as a kind of despot, attended by hordes of lackeys and beautiful women. He is also associated with fascism. Mily reveals his background as a financier and contractor for both the Vichy regime and Mussolini. Then there are the two parties he hosts, both of which are depicted as orgies of sensuality and almost unimaginable expense. The first, the masquerade ball, takes its aesthetic cues from Goya – particularly from 'The Disasters of War'. Turning Goya's macabre and disturbing sketches of the Spanish Napoleonic wars into a party theme is a horrifically morbid idea. The second party is an enormous Christmas debauch in Munich, accompanied by a gypsy band and dancers, with legions of waiters and crowds of drunken socialites. These are the revelries of a despot, extreme in their decadence – the very opposite of America's Puritan aesthetic of constraint and simplicity long associated with its democracy.



Figure 76. The Goya-themed masked ball at Arkadin's castle.



Figure 77. The Christmas party in Munich.

The uncanny otherness of medieval religious mysticism is also tapped, in the parade of penitents which van Stratten and Mily witness just after arriving in Spain. Beneath Arkadin's towering medieval castle, we see a procession of Catholic penitents wearing dark hoods, walking barefoot through the rough cobbled streets and carrying torches of fire. Although the film does actually pause here to take in the visual spectacle (a rare moment), this once again turns the tourist gaze on its head, for the sight is eerie and dark and suggests an archaic slavishness and religious fervour. This scene seems to represent – for van Stratten, for Mily and for us – an encounter with illegibility, as though functioning as a second warning against entry into Arkadin's world.



Figure 78. The procession of penitents.



Figure 79. The penitents.

Just like the initial aeroplane sequence, a potential moment for colonial gazing is undermined through a partial conversion to the sublime. As we saw in Krutnik's work, film

noir is characterised not only by a struggle between the rational and irrational halves of the self, but also by a sense of the protagonist's *failure* to overcome or contain the irrational or unknowable.<sup>36</sup> In terms of the Kantian sublime, we might say that *Confidential Report* mobilises only the first of the two steps in sublime conversion: it depicts Arkadin's limitless terror without giving any secure sense of containment or a return to the rational.

This film mobilises a chaotic and very widespread array of iconographies of otherness, thrown together in a seemingly incoherent mass. This otherness is represented through uncanniness and terror rather than the calm reassurance of the picturesque. Indeed, as if to emphasise this diffuseness and uncontainability, Arkadin is associated throughout the film with symbolisms of water and air, vastness and formlessness. A secretary says that he is like Neptune, the god of the sea. He owns a famously enormous yacht and tosses Mily into the sea to murder her. His Spanish castle shoots up into the heavens from the earth below, towering over the village. And of course he flies through the air. These symbols suggest Arkadin's nefariousness as a force that seeps to all corners of the earth, omnipresent and uncontainable.



Figure 80. Mily (Medina)'s body washes up on a beach, murdered by Arkadin.



Figure 81. The Spanish castle shooting up to the heavens.

The congruence between Arkadin's depravity and legitimate structures of power is frequently emphasised in the course of the film. The Baroness Nagel (Suzanne Flon)

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<sup>36</sup> Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street*, 85.



exclaims, '[Criminals] are failures! Those who make real money aren't counted as criminals. This is a class distinction, not an ethical problem.' Similarly, the Flea Professor declares, 'Crooks aren't the worst people – they're just the stupidest! The fleas of the world.' Arkadin straddles the boundaries of the criminal and the legitimate, and indeed his presence seems to prove that there is no real difference. Despite his grotesque otherness, he is also an extremely powerful man amongst European governments and banking institutions through his work as a military contractor and financial consultant. The premise for his hiring Van Stratten is that he wants to work in a similar capacity for the US government and needs to make sure he will pass a background check. The evil he represents is so diffuse as to be invisible, absorbed into the world economy.

The final sequence of the film, set in the Spanish airport where van Stratten has just arrived, depicts the final clash with Arkadin as an encounter with the void. Raina, who at Van Stratten's behest cries to her father over the radio that it is 'too late' – that she knows his secret – hears only a deafening silence and stillness in response. This is all the more marked because the film's soundtrack and *mise en scène* throughout the film have been so clamorous and chaotic. Although we glimpse for a moment into Arkadin's plane, the series of shots that follow become increasingly confusing and abstract, using rough and chaotic shots of the interior of the plane and the airspace around it to indicate the moment's unrepresentability, as though in an ultimate encounter with the vast void of the sublime. The last we know of Arkadin is that he has simply disappeared into the heavens, absorbed by the air. No body is ever found, leaving open the possibility of Arkadin's escape rather than death. The film thus refuses a clear resolution in which the rationality and moral education of the hero would vanquish the dark unknowable otherness of Arkadin. The ending is qualified further by the fact that van Stratten's actions constitute a bluff: he does not tell Raina the truth about Arkadin, but rather entreats her into a performance of knowledge. The film's ending, as so often in noir, refuses a 'neat' ending that would restore civilisation and rationality, instead working to leave Arkadin's vast formless evil intact.



Figure 82. Raina (Mori) ascends to the tower to speak to her father over the radio.



Figure 83. 'It's too late!'

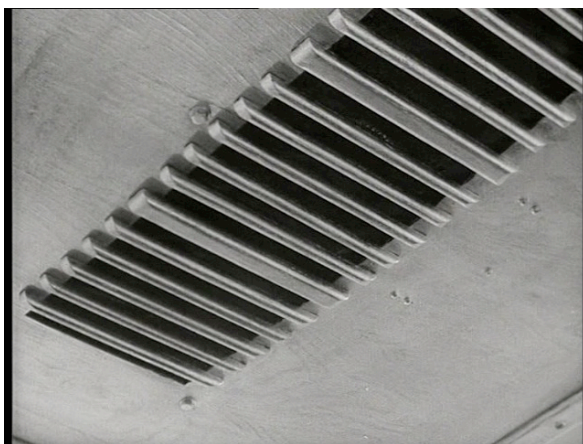


Figure 84. Raina hears only silence.



Figure 85. The final shot of Arkadin.



Figure 86. Aerial shot from the empty plane.



Figure 87. The plane spins out of control.

Often in noir criticism such extremes of otherness as we see in the representation of Arkadin are understood in psychoanalytic terms. Kelly Oliver and Benigno Trigo, for example, argue that all these markers of otherness originate in the maternal; they perceive

‘the force of anxiety over ambiguity’ in film noir as ‘an anxiety over maternal sexuality and maternal borders’.<sup>37</sup> They borrow Julia Kristeva’s notion of maternal abjection to locate the origin of the anxious aesthetics of film noir, reading various forms of racial and sexual difference in these films as functioning in a psychoanalytic economy for the American man.

However, I would like to draw attention to noir’s colonial-inflected representations of anxiety as significant in their own right. As discussed in the Introduction, psychoanalytic language often rests on a foundation of colonial and racial otherness for its symbolisms.<sup>38</sup> It is important to view these symbolisms as themselves aspects of colonial representation rather than filtering them through the psychoanalytic framework. In *Confidential Report*, markers of otherness are piled up into a chaotic mass, portraying European space as overwhelmingly hostile and dangerous. This is a long-running trope in colonial literature, perhaps reaching a pinnacle in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.<sup>39</sup> Although these narratives are about ambivalence and the ostensive parity between good and evil, depictions of this evil require a deeply and violently racist framework of representation. As Said says of another Conrad novel, *Nostromo*,<sup>40</sup> it ‘embodies the same paternalistic arrogance of imperialism that it mocks’.<sup>41</sup> That Europe could even conceivably be portrayed in such a racist framework, usually reserved for Africa and Asia, says a great deal about American culture’s view of its global position and responsibilities in this period.

Not only is European space in *Confidential Report* suffused with evil and darkness, but similarly to *Three Coins* the continent is frozen into a *tableau vivant* of the past, with its images of architectural and moral decay and its religious mysticism. It is, of course, a sordid and

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<sup>37</sup> Kelly Oliver and Benigno Trigo, *Noir Anxiety* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xxxiii.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Ann Doane, ‘Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and the Cinema’, in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, ed. Mary Ann Doane (London: Routledge, 1991), 211.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (London: Penguin, 1963). Originally published in 1904.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Originally published in 1899.

<sup>41</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), xx.



violent past that is remembered. It does not serve to erase the horrors of the Second World War so much as to freeze America into a perpetual position as saviour to Europe's imperilled civilisation. The final sequence at Sebastianplatz 16, where Jakob Zouk lives, subtly evokes the representational language of the Holocaust, with its freezing, squalid attic and narrative of hiding. Zouk's face, emphasised in a lengthy close-up as he lies in the bed of the woman who hides him, evokes the faces of Jewish victims with his small round glasses, black brimmed hat, weathered skin and expression of suffering and sadness. Europe thus becomes a perpetual space of wretchedness and evil that is implicitly in need of colonial intervention.



Figure 88. The squalid attic at Sebastianplatz 16.



Figure 89. A woman (Tamara Shane) hides Zouk (Tamiroff).



Figure 90. Zouk's weathered, sad face in close-up.



Figure 91. The Munich hotel room – another image of antiquated Europe.

Van Stratten, moreover, functions as the structuring consciousness of the film. It is organised as an elaborate flashback of his, and is everywhere tinged with an anxiety or ambivalence that is identified as belonging to him. While a noir critic might read this within a psychoanalytic framework, here it equally serves a colonialist purpose in which the white American male functions as our epistemological access point to European space, his experiences structuring our understanding and views. The very markers of otherness on which the film's mood of anxiety depends rests on a colonialist definition of selfhood.

The film's topos of sexual difference, too, can be understood as subservient to colonial concerns. *Confidential Report* departs from the more typical noir love triangle in which the hero is torn between a 'good girl' and a *femme fatale*, yet it still seems to be particularly telling here. Mily, Van Stratten's erstwhile girlfriend who has been living with him on his boat, is an archetypal floozy, voluptuous and ambitious yet not quite clever enough to be a villain. She is not dissimilar to Van Stratten in this way. Both seek to manipulate their way into Arkadin's circle, but without fully understanding the danger this entails. Raina, the other woman in Van Stratten's life, is an Audrey Hepburn lookalike, a petite and very slim young woman with short dark hair, prominent eyebrows, well-defined facial structure and clean, chic sartorial tastes. Yet for all this, Van Stratten's attraction to Raina is dangerous for him. Raina is a European princess, an elite society girl belonging to a new European generation of prosperity and fun. We might understand her, then, as standing in for the new, postwar Western Europe. She is the prize to be won in the American's encounter with the dark other. Here sexual structures of difference are seemingly subservient to colonial ones.



Figure 92. Mily, the archetypal floozy.



Figure 93. Raina, a European princess.

Auerbach's book *Dark Borders* reads film noir as a postwar political cinema revealing anxieties about 'un-Americanness', national boundaries and infiltration in light of the Cold War and McCarthyism. This work is intriguing and original in many ways, yet I want to emphasise that *Confidential Report* cannot be wholly read as a Cold War narrative. I have shown in this section that whatever Cold War symbolism this film may possess rests on a foundation of colonial traditions of representation, which have been appropriated and adapted in ideological service of the white American male.

### **A Foreign Affair**

Set in occupied Berlin, *A Foreign Affair* begins with the arrival of a Congressional delegation, sent to investigate the 'morale' of U.S. troops stationed in Germany. Among them is Congresswoman Phoebe Frost (Jean Arthur), Republican of Iowa, the most zealous member of the group as well as the only woman. She brings with her a birthday cake for a US Army captain named John Pringle (John Lund) whose family lives in her constituency in Iowa. She takes him to be a most morally upright man, although in fact he is romantically involved with a German nightclub singer by the name of Erika von Schlütow (Marlene Dietrich). During the delegation's official tour of Berlin, she sees evidence of US soldiers 'fraternising' with German women. Shocked, she masquerades as a German woman and is picked up by two GIs, who take her to the nightclub where Erika works. She hears a rumour from them that a high-ranking American officer is protecting the singer, an

ex-Nazi with direct ties to the Führer, who would otherwise likely be sent to a labour camp. Miss Frost enlists the help of Captain Pringle to investigate, unaware that he is in fact the officer protecting Erika. In an attempt to keep her from the truth, Captain Pringle pretends to be in love with Miss Frost, who is not only seduced by his charms but suddenly finds an allure in the seedy black-market side of Berlin that she has spent much of her stay denouncing. Slowly, the captain seems to genuinely fall for Miss Frost, although as I shall argue his sincerity here remains in doubt. After a police raid of the Lorelei nightclub, where Erika works, the singer saves Miss Frost from prison, takes her home and reveals Captain Pringle's deception; Miss Frost is crushed. It comes out that the army has known about Pringle and Erika all along, intending to use Pringle as bait for a high-ranking Nazi, Hans Otto Birgel (Peter von Zerneck), an ex-lover of the singer's, thought to be hiding in Berlin. Birgel does indeed come out of hiding and attempts to kill Pringle in the nightclub, but is instead killed himself by waiting military policemen. Erika is apparently sent off for denazification and Miss Frost and Captain Pringle appear to become a couple. As I will demonstrate later, this ending is in fact highly ambiguous and unstable, following a marked darkening of the film's tone during its second half.

I want to begin my analysis by looking at two key scenes depicting Berlin and Berliners from the American perspective. The first is the very first sequence of the film, in which the delegation flies into Berlin. We view an aeroplane flying through the clouds, accompanied by ominous orchestral music that implies, perhaps, an important or dangerous military mission. We then view the aeroplane's shadow, travelling along the grounds of a bombed-out urban space, reduced to piles of rubble. The beginning of *A Foreign Affair*, like *Confidential Report*, uses an aerial sequence to engender a sense of arrival, investigation and surveillance in viewing a European landscape from above.



Figure 94. The American aeroplane at the start of *A Foreign Affair*.

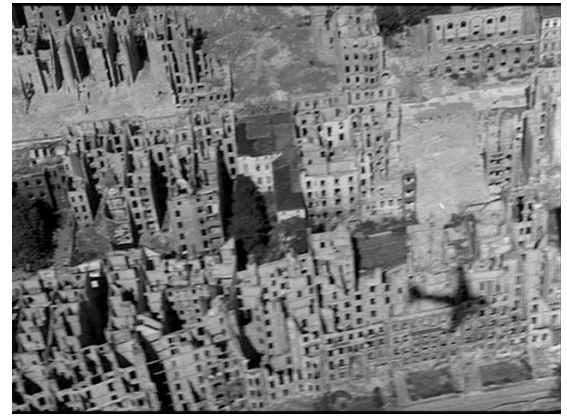


Figure 95. The aeroplane's shadow over bombed-out buildings.



Figure 96. The Congressmen asleep on the plane.



Figure 97. Miss Frost (Arthur) delivers a lecture on their moral mission in Germany.

Yet, just as in *Confidential Report*, our expectations are subtly reversed by the way the aerial sequence is filmed. In the next shot we cut to the interior of the aeroplane. Its passengers all appear to be asleep, snoring loudly. They have to be awoken by an attendant and prompted to look out over ‘the heart of Berlin’ before they begin taking in the aerial views. This is the first signal we get of the comedic tone at the start of the film, a tone that will darken considerably as the plot develops.

Although this Congressional delegation’s subsequent reaction to the view is depicted in parodic terms, it is nevertheless identifiable as a reaction of shock and wonder at the sheer destruction below – an experience of the sublime. Miss Frost, already identifiable as a priggish career woman through her slow and methodical tidying of her papers before she will even look out the aeroplane window, has a telling reaction to the



view. As she moves toward the window, she says matter-of-factly, 'Considering the amount of taxpayers' money that was poured on it, I don't expect it to look like a lace Valentine'. Yet in the next shot, as we see her point of view on the landscape below, she gasps, 'Golly!' and then goes silent. The men, too, are silent at first, with only Texan Congressman Giffin (Boyd Davis) describing the scene below in hyperbolic, very visceral phrases, as 'like packrats been gnawin' at a old mouldy hunk o' Roquefort cheese' and 'like chicken innards at fryin' time' – phrases that colloquially evoke tremendous destruction and decay. The Texan's third pronouncement, that 'they oughtta scrape it plumb clean, put in some grass and move in a herd o' longhorns', is particularly evocative of the sublimity of a ruined civilisation. This statement, however, initiates a conversation about what the US government ought to do for the city, again played out in parodic terms yet clearly standing in for an array of options that would have been familiar to a postwar audience. They spar:

Congressman Kramer (Robert Malcolm): I say build up their industries, get those smokestacks belching again.

Congressman Salvatore (Michael Raffetto): Not without organised labour!

Congressman Yandell (Charles Meredith): First we've gotta feed the people. You can't keep a whole country eating scraps out of garbage pails.

Congressman Giffin: I'm all for sending food, only let 'em know where it's coming from.

Finally Miss Frost interrupts and begins reviewing their real mission, which is to determine the 'morale' of the troops, who have been 'infected by a kind of moral malaria'.

In a way, what is fascinating about this sequence is how very unremarkable it is. From an American perspective, to arrive by aeroplane, to view the landscape below with a combination of awe and breezy superiority, and to casually debate what 'ought to be done' about the economic and political situation of a foreign people, are all completely typical ways to interact with a foreign landscape. This way of interacting with German space, though casually expressed, betrays a very real sense of control and mastery from the air. Ultimately, however, this film, which was directed by a German émigré who had spent

much of his youth in Berlin, problematises and undermines this view, both within this scene via its parodic tone and in the scenes that follow.

The other key scene is a later vignette, extraneous to the film's plot, in the Army office where Captain Pringle works. Pringle confers with a German man, Herr Meyer (uncredited), whose son Gerhard (also uncredited) is in the habit of drawing graffiti swastikas. The man, showing deep embarrassment, offers to inflict a series of increasingly harsh punishments on the boy:

Meyer [slapping Gerhard's hand]: I will break his arm!

Pringle: Herr Meyer, we've dissolved the Gestapo.

Meyer: No food! *Bürschen!* I will lock him into a tight room!

Pringle: Why don't you shove him into a gas chamber?

Meyer: Yes, Herr Kapitän!

Pringle: Listen, bub, we've done away with concentration camps. Now you just take him around to a GYA, one of our German youth clubs. Some baseball and a little less heel-clicking is what he needs.



Figure 98. Capt. Pringle (Lund) speaks to Herr Meyer and his son Gerhard.

Herr Meyer has apparently taken Pringle's sarcastic suggestion that he murder his own son with absolute seriousness – a darkly comic moment highlighting the devastating harshness of the Nazi regime and the utter servility it instilled in the German population. But in the next moment a very striking thing happens. Having received their orders to join a youth

club, Herr Meyer and Gerhard both stand at attention and click their heels as Herr Meyer responds: 'Yes, Herr Kapitän!' Pringle points towards their feet and lets out a series of grunts indicating his dissatisfaction with this gesture. Herr Meyer quickly corrects himself, saying more calmly, 'I mean, uh, thank you, Herr Kapitän', he and the boy both bowing deeply. This obsequious gesture manages in a single blow to challenge the self-serving logic of America's supposed benevolence in its occupation of Germany. Although offered as an act of philanthropy, Pringle's 'suggestion' is exposed to be a thinly disguised order. Is Pringle (along with the rest of the American occupation forces) a 'good' man, bringing the light of democracy to a Europe wracked by horrors, or is he, like Hitler, just another imperialist controlling the German people? Do Germans have a genuine democratic voice now, or simply a new kind of non-voice conferred by the American occupiers?

*A Foreign Affair* is deeply ambivalent on these questions, an ambivalence that runs throughout the narrative. Miss Frost explains to the Congressmen on the aeroplane the purpose of their visit:

We're here to investigate the morale of American occupation troops, nothing else. Twelve thousand of our boys are policing that pest-hole down below and according to our reports, they are being infected by a kind of moral malaria. It is our duty to their wives, their mothers, their sisters, to find the facts. And if these reports are true, to fumigate the place with all the insecticides at our disposal!

Although presented in a parodic tone, Miss Frost's perspective may have been recognisable to postwar audiences as a position espoused by the 'America First' movement. This movement was composed mostly of conservative, Midwestern women (just like Miss Frost, an Iowa Republican) whose central tenet was an intense suspicion of the 'unprecedented opportunities for unregulated, extra-familial sexual activity' presented by the war.<sup>42</sup> Yet the problem is also, importantly, presented here as an 'infection' of the domestic (wives, mothers, sisters) by the foreign, put in terms of the hygiene necessary to ward off the moral

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<sup>42</sup> Laura McEnaney, 'He-Men and Christian Mothers: The America First Movement and the Gendered Meanings of Patriotism and Isolationism', *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1994), 51.

dangers of the ‘pest-hole down below’. Miss Frost’s view is thus subsumed into a familiar Orientalist trope of native filthiness (physical and moral) and the colonialist imposition of hygiene, at the same time that it is positioned in a Freudian framework of a civilisation in conflict with the dangerous aspects of male desire.

The rampant illicit sexuality of the American troops in Berlin is visually and narratively connected with the city’s rubble. On a tour guided by Col. Plummer (Millard Mitchell), the Congressional delegation is shown a series of the most famous sites of Berlin – the burned-out Reichstag and Adlon Hotel, the Brandenburg gate, Unter den Linden and the Tiergarten, all of which have been damaged or destroyed by the war. It seems, in many ways, like a typical tourist POV sequence (to be discussed in Chapter 4), except for the constant signs of recent bombing and the motorcade sirens that accompany the group. In the course of the tour, Miss Frost happens to look away from where Col. Plummer is directing her attention and notices several groups of soldiers fraternising with local women, standing or sitting amongst the ruins. Shocked, she begins to make a list of the evidence she sees: a fat soldier cheerfully bouncing down a ruined street with a bunch of flowers and a dog, before turning in towards the ‘door’ of a bombed-out building; a couple smoking and laughing on a decrepit balcony; a woman pushing a pram decorated with American flags in front of a large derelict building; a pair of soldiers standing next to a pile of rubble, offering a candy bar to two pretty German women in exchange for their company. In each case the rubble serves as backdrop to the American men’s sexual transgressions, the visual correlative of Miss Frost’s ‘pest-hole’ reading in which the architectural ruins facilitate the moral decay of civilised man.

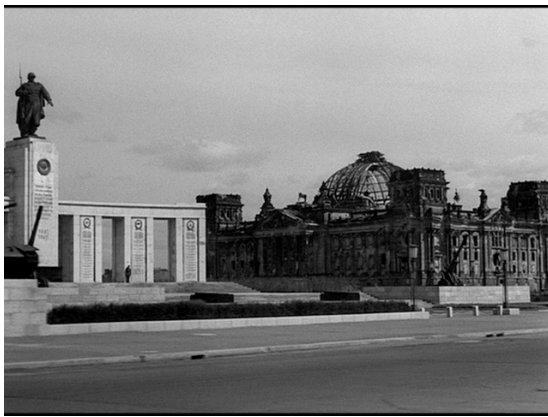


Figure 99. The bombed-out Reichstag.



Figure 100. Driving past the Brandenburg Gate.



Figure 101. The balcony Hitler used for speeches.



Figure 102. The Tiergarten.



Figure 103. A soldier with flowers, walking amongst the rubble.



Figure 104. Soldiers and a woman cavorting on a balcony.



Figure 105. A German woman pushes a baby carriage past a decrepit building.



Figure 106. Miss Frost (Arthur)'s shocked reaction.

However, the sequence also has an overall parodic tone, primarily signalled by the priggishness and unattractiveness of Miss Frost. It must be emphasised that Frost's position is not necessarily espoused within the film more broadly. This is important because critics not uncommonly ascribe to the film an 'isolationist' reading in which her views are taken at face value as statements of the film's political thesis. In two unrelated articles, both Georg Schmundt-Thomas and Emily S. Rosenberg have argued that *A Foreign Affair* contains a political allegory that must ultimately be understood as espousing an isolationist position for America, supporting a withdrawal of troops and a return to domestic concerns.<sup>43</sup> Both read into Pringle's dilemma between the upright, morally pure American woman and the beautiful but shady ex-Nazi an allegory for the choice faced by the United States in the postwar period: withdraw from Germany, or allow American men to be sullied by the dubious political and sexual morality left in the wake of the Nazis. Rosenberg writes:

In the film's frame, an American GI cannot be part of both postwar America and postwar Germany, both represented as female. America's postwar choices are positioned within the discourse of a romantic triangle: one woman (the heartland of America) must be embraced; the other (Europe) abandoned.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Georg Schmundt-Thomas, 'Hollywood's Romance of Foreign Policy'; Emily S. Rosenberg, "'Foreign Affairs' after World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics', *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1994), 59-70.

<sup>44</sup>Rosenberg, 'Foreign Affairs', 62.

However, this argument ignores key details of the film: Miss Frost's unattractiveness and her parodic treatment, as well as the genuine seductive power of Erika von Schlütow, point to the film's deep ambivalence on the matter.

What is important is that this ambivalence is framed as an ambivalence *for the American soldier*. It is tempting to ascribe to Miss Frost the role of the central protagonist in the film – the consciousness through which the events of the film are filtered – given the way we meet her in the first scene and arrive in Berlin alongside her. However the film presents several characters with competing viewpoints and narratives, none of which is clearly singled out for privilege. The competition between these viewpoints runs so deep that, as I will argue, they amount to a competition for the film's generic identity. If one reads Miss Frost as the protagonist, the film is a transformation narrative and a romance about European tourism. If Capt. Pringle is the central protagonist, on the other hand, then the film is a noir-like narrative about a choice between a good girl and a *femme fatale* that is not really a choice. Finally if we look from Erika's viewpoint, then the story is one of poverty and desperation, which clashes with the Americans' vilification of her as a loose and dangerous woman.

The 'isolationist' reading privileges Miss Frost's narrative over the others, yet this reading ignores key aspects of the film. The contrast between the two women is registered in their appearance and costume. Congresswoman Frost has, as Erika not inaccurately puts it, 'a face like a scrubbed kitchen floor'. She wears her blonde hair in a pair of tight plaits atop her head and dresses in drab, uniform-like suits. She is characterised by an excessive sense of orderliness and economy, as well as sexual prudishness. Miss Frost is so unattractive that Andrew Sarris reportedly remarked that the role constituted a 'brutalisation' of Jean Arthur.<sup>45</sup> Wearing very little makeup, the wrinkles around her eyes

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<sup>45</sup> Neil Sinyard and Adrian Turner reference (and attempt to refute) a remark by Andrew Sarris that Wilder's use of Jean Arthur constituted a 'brutalisation'. Neil Sinyard and Adrian Turner, *Journey Down Sunset Boulevard: The Films of Billy Wilder* (Ryde, Isle of Wight: BCW, 1979), 85. (I have not been able to locate Sarris' original remark.)

are visible and her lips look dry and colourless. Her clothing, hair and makeup serve to blight any natural bloom she may have had, and even her name signifies frigidity.

The counterpart to Miss Frost is Erika von Schlütow, a very beautiful and seductive woman whom many men in the film, Pringle included, find irresistible. The German chanteuse wears beautiful if shabby dresses. Two of the gowns in which she sings are sequinned and sleek, skimming her body and constructing her as a glittering fetish object. The third, a dark-coloured strapless gown, has elaborate fabric florals sewn to the bodice. In their initial liaison in the flat, Pringle gives her a pair of sheer and decadent silk stockings.



Figure 107. Erika's (Dietrich) first evening gown.

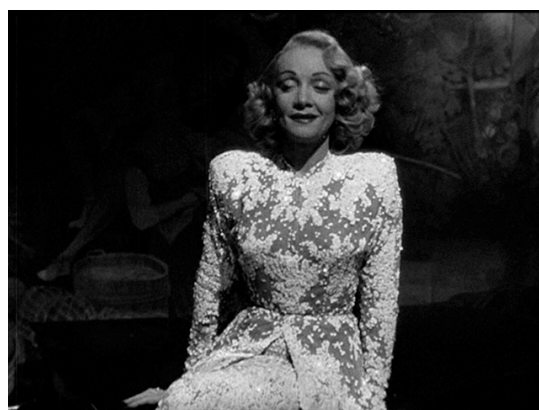


Figure 108. Her second evening gown.



Figure 109. The third evening gown.

Aspects of Erika's character intersect with Dietrich's performance and star image to emphasise her powerful allure. Andrea Slane argues that this role reprises Dietrich's first major screen appearance in *The Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930), as a nightclub



chanteuse and seductress.<sup>46</sup> As in *The Blue Angel*, her character is associated not only with sex, but with sex of the most deeply illicit variety. The scene in which we first meet her in *A Foreign Affair*, in her dilapidated flat, highlights this association. Pringle enters the flat, puts down the mattress he has just bought for her on the black market, and imperiously shouts for her. Finding her in her bathroom brushing her teeth, he peers at her through a large hole in the door, evidently torn by a piece of shrapnel, and demands that she come out immediately. She playfully urges him to be patient, and when he will not leave her alone to finish her toilette, she spits a mouthful of toothpaste in his face. This is shown in a gorgeous close-up point-of-view shot, with the toothpaste spraying directly at the camera, creating for the audience a momentary sense of intimacy while at the same time showing her beauty to stunning effect. Toothpaste was a luxury item at this time. According to one source, most Americans did not begin brushing their teeth regularly until the postwar period, when GIs brought it home after growing accustomed to the tooth-brushing supplies provided by the US military.<sup>47</sup> This implies that Erika's toothpaste and toothbrush have been obtained for her by Pringle. After she spits the toothpaste in his face, Pringle retreats and begins to wipe his face on his hat, but thinks better of it and instead hides in a corner. When she comes out of the bathroom he violently grabs her by her shiny blonde hair, which he uses to sensuously wipe his face. She protests that he is always mean to her, but her demeanour instantly changes to one of obsequiousness when he tells her he has brought her a present, and she eagerly feels in his pockets for it. Two illicit aspects of their relationship are immediately called to attention: first, that it borders on prostitution, and second, that it carries more than a hint of S&M. This is a relationship to which he brings money and luxury goods, while she provides sex – a dynamic of prostitution that appears to increase his pleasure.

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<sup>46</sup> Andrea Slane, *A Not So Foreign Affair: Fascism, Sexuality, and the Cultural Rhetoric of American Democracy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 232.

<sup>47</sup> 'The History of Teeth Cleaning', *H2G2*, last modified 5 December 2011, [http://www.h2g2.com/approved\\_entry/A2818686](http://www.h2g2.com/approved_entry/A2818686).



Figure 110. Erika brushing her teeth.

Marlene Dietrich's star image further positions her along these lines, although it also complicates the picture. Catherine Constable writes of Dietrich's persona in her 1930s roles as variously inhabiting three traditional feminine figures of threat: the torturess, woman as caprice and the seductress.<sup>48</sup> Although she is in a relationship based on prostitution, Erika is not submissive or abject, but rather her performance gives a somewhat intangible, understated sense of her control of the situation. Spitting toothpaste in Pringle's face can be read as a sign of her simultaneous resistance to, manipulation of and fulfilment of Pringle and his sexual desires – an ambiguous dynamic that, like many of Erika's would-be lovers, he finds utterly seductive and irresistible. It also makes her easy to read as a *femme fatale*, although as I will argue later this is a slippery position within *A Foreign Affair*.

We might note that Erika, too, is associated with rubble, although here it veers into a more familiar Orientalist trope of decay, merging the notion of European antiquity and decadence with the rubble of postwar Germany. Her flat appears to be the only habitable dwelling in a tumbledown building whose stairwell is now open to the air, growing over with weeds. The interior, too, has signs of bombing, as in the shrapnel-torn hole through her bathroom door and the broken mirrors hung around the flat. Her grinding poverty is also evident, for example in her disintegrating mattress and her shabby clothing. She is

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<sup>48</sup> Catherine Constable, *Thinking in Images: Film Theory, Feminist Philosophy and Marlene Dietrich* (London: BFI, 2005), 4.

persistently situated as a creature amongst the ruins of Berlin – indeed she also speaks frequently about the rubble and even sings a song about it.



Figure 111. Pringle on his way to visit Erika, driving his Jeep through the ruins.



Figure 112. Erika's stairwell.

Erika's distinctive iconography is also suffused with images of Orientalist decorative detail. Viewed in light of Rosalind Galt's work on 'the pretty', which identifies decorative detail as a marker of the Orientalised and feminised other,<sup>49</sup> Erika's clothing with its enticing, luxurious textures and details evokes a feminised other, darkly alluring to the white Western male. Her flat, too, contains such decorative details: a fringed lampshade and a pair of large black cherubs clinging to the wall above her bed. The texture and decorative detail of her clothing and surroundings suffuse Erika with a shabby, decaying decadence that situates her as an Oriental other, an iconography that is here fused with the aesthetic of rubble.

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<sup>49</sup> Rosalind Galt, *Pretty: Film and the Decorative Image* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 148-153.



Figure 113. Her ruined flat, with a black cherub clinging to the wall.



Figure 114. The other half of her flat, with fringed lampshade.

Pringle's dilemma, his choice between Miss Frost and Erika, is iconographically constructed in ways that resemble the masculine split of the sublime or manifest destiny. On the one hand are Pringle's dark desires for illicit sex and for violent domination, while on the other hand is the law, the domestic and the civilised. Pringle is placed in the middle of this, straddling a divide and confronted with a choice between them. Erika is, moreover, associated with the highest echelons of the Nazi regime – we even see an old newsreel of her chatting with the Führer – suggesting a geopolitical reading of this split in which Nazism is mapped as the dark half of Pringle's self.

We must be clear, though, that in this case – and perhaps a source of the film's comedy – the 'dark' option is much more appealing. At the beginning of the film, at least, it is quite clear that this is the side Pringle prefers. He wears a standard army uniform, yet in the greeting scene on the tarmac the silk stockings destined for Erika are inadvertently left hanging out of his pocket, flapping sensuously in the wind, a blatant sign of that which is supposed to be repressed or at least hidden from view. As Miss Frost delivers the birthday cake to him, she expresses shock that the Captain has not been given leave in four years. Here is a snippet of their dialogue:

Pringle: I don't want any leave!

Frost: You don't?

Pringle: Oh, of course I do, I'm dying to. We're all homesick. But personal feelings don't matter. There's a little unfinished business here, you know. Now that we've won the war, we mustn't lose the peace.

This last statement of Pringle's is delivered as a corrective. Col. Plummer shoots him a threatening look, whereupon he fumbles uncomfortably for some platitude to cover his error in revealing his true desires. All the while the nylon stockings are dangling from his pocket, pointing us further towards his utter insincerity. The dialogue continues:

Frost: It's just that I hate to think of anybody sitting on an army cot in his lonely barracks with a birthday cake on his knees.

Pringle: Oh, I won't have the *cake* on my knees. I won't be alone. Uh, there'll be my buddies! I'll call them in. We'll open up a case of root beer, light the candles. Then there'll be Lt. Frankovich and his ukulele, some old songs – why it'll be like back home, almost.

Here the pattern is repeated. Pringle begins to reveal his desires (the implication being that he will have Erika on his knees) only to realise his mistake and cover for it with banalities of expression which are, through his faltering voice and uncomfortable grin, marked as phony. His preference for Erika and her dark allure is clear. Any allegiance he might have to American values of domesticity and lawful sexuality are clearly marked as a mere performance, a pretence, nearly failing to hide his true desires – almost as though he is out of practice with repression. In any case, Pringle's ambivalence develops only later in the film, as his affection for Miss Frost opens up a split in his desires between the domestic and the illicit. It is as this ambivalence develops that the film undergoes a distinct darkening in its tone and imagery, as we will discuss shortly.



Figure 115. Pringle greets Miss Frost with silk stockings dangling from his pocket.

In a crucial sequence in the filing room with Miss Frost, Captain Pringle attempts quite sincerely to justify his darker desires.

Frost: I expect any man who's over here wearing his country's uniform to...

Pringle: Oh, that one. You expect him to be an ambassador, a salesman of goodwill. You want him to stand there on the blackened rubble of what used to be a corner of what used to be a street with an open sample-case of assorted freedoms, waving the flag and giving out with the Bill of Rights. Well that's not the way it works. Suppose you stop for a second and ask yourself, how come he skidded off the road?

Frost: I'll tell you how: no moral brakes!

Pringle: That's it, going too fast. Only during the war he couldn't go fast enough for you: get on that beachhead, get through those tank traps, get across the Rhine, step on it, step on it, faster, a hundred miles an hour, twenty-four hours a day, through burning towns and down smashed Autobahnen. Then one day the war is over. You expect him to jam on those breaks and stop like that. [snaps] Well everybody can't stop like that! [snaps] Sometimes you skid quite a piece, sometimes you go into a spin and smash into a wall or a tree and bash your fenders and scrape those fine shining ideals that you brought from back home.

The metaphor of speed here taps into the same ambivalent masculine topos of Orientalism. It especially invokes the postwar variant Cohan discussed, in which combat experiences reveal a hitherto unknown world of experience, far away from the expectations of domesticated male citizenship. The speed stands in for violence, ruthlessness and recklessness, opposed to and excluding rationality or Enlightenment-era political freedoms. This is, moreover, what Pringle and other GIs have been *ordered* to do. Doing their military

duty has had unintended consequences for their identity as men, opening a door that cannot easily be closed again.

European geography is mapped onto this transformation, as Pringle's speeding is directed eastward. In many later, Cold War narratives, evil and darkness originate in the east, in Russia. This is true in *Confidential Report*, as well as in countless spy films and war films of this and later eras. In *A Foreign Affair* and other dark tourist films of the immediate postwar period, predating the height of the Cold War, it is Nazism that serves as this darker half. Fascinatingly, Berlin's status as a border city actually seems to predate the Cold War. This city is ground zero for an apparently smooth shift from Nazism to communism as the great other to Western democratic capitalism.<sup>50</sup> In one of the rubble films, *The Big Lift*, this shift is particularly in evidence. Nazism is the evil, secret force which causes the German woman (Cornell Borchers) to swindle and lie to the American soldier (Montgomery Clift) who loves her. Yet Russia also looms as a threat, cutting off supplies to the Allied-controlled sections of Berlin and forcing a massive airlift operation. Perhaps even more fascinating and surprising, though, is the way once again the standard Cold War iconographies of Russia as dark other mobilise a pre-existing Orientalist iconography and predate the Cold War itself. Indeed, as the dark tourist films indicate, Russia in the formative years of the Cold War seems to slip fairly neatly into American Orientalist iconographies.

Pringle's loyalties do indeed undergo a shift in the course of the film, yet this is a much more ambiguous and unstable shift than other critics have represented. It is true that, after spending a day with Miss Frost, Pringle visits Erika and ends up defending the American woman. They have, we are told, just spent the day sitting by a bend in the river, holding hands and whistling 'Shine on Harvest Moon'. This day of innocent fun with Miss Frost supposedly has a transformative effect on the budding couple. However, it is not

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<sup>50</sup> *Torn Curtain* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1966) is a great example of a Hollywood film depicting Berlin as a Cold War borderland.

privileged enough even to be shown within the diegesis. The 'isolationist' reading seems to require that this development be read as a crucial shift in Pringle's desires, yet the moment of this shift is effaced from the narrative.

The isolationist reading also requires that Miss Frost's story be read as a feminine narrative of transformation from ugly spinster to beautiful mate. Yet key details of the film make this reading of Miss Frost's change hard to sustain. As Miss Frost descends the staircase of her billeted house to the awaiting Pringle in her new black-market evening clothes, her hair is braided in the same prim halo as ever; she has added some childish-looking ribbons which Erika later disdainfully likens to shoelaces. Miss Frost is wearing her evening gown wrong, pinned up puritanically around her neck, with the skirt hanging baggily and engulfing her figure, so that when she calls it 'a circus tent in mourning for an elephant that died' we are not inclined to disagree. Even after Pringle straightens the dress out it is still, as Sinyard and Turner describe it, 'the ugliest worn by any actress in a Forties movie',<sup>51</sup> an unforgiving black halter dress with a few rhinestones sewn grimly into the neckline. The cut of the dress highlights the shortness of Jean Arthur's arms and the narrowness of her shoulders. Capt. Pringle wipes the make-up off her face – here and throughout the film the wrinkles around her eyes appear exaggerated and noticeable. Pringle strips a table of its cloth and wraps it around her shoulders as a rather shabby mantle. This is, in sum, a failed transformation. Miss Frost has no more appeal for Pringle, or anyone else, at the end than at the beginning. The isolationist reading, which reads the story as a romance in which she learns to become sexually attractive, is not convincing.

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<sup>51</sup>Sinyard and Turner, *Journey Down Sunset Boulevard*, 81; they are referring to the views of Richard Corliss, whose original piece I have been unable to locate.





Figure 116. Miss Frost as she descends the stairs in her newly-acquired evening gown.



Figure 117. Pringle wipes the makeup from her face.

We begin to notice a distinct darkening in the film's tone just after this failed transformation. Frost and Pringle head to the Lorelei nightclub, where Erika sings a darkly enigmatic song about illusions (to be discussed more in a moment). Pringle is suddenly called back to the base, where, in a shadowy room lit by a single lightbulb, Col. Plummer tells Pringle of his unwitting involvement in the military plot to catch Birgel. Pringle suddenly becomes more like the powerless, vulnerable male we might recognise as a *noir* hero, forced to stand in as a living target for this dangerous Nazi criminal. Miss Frost and Erika are arrested. From this point onward, the film takes place almost exclusively at night, and often in heavy rain, with the gloomy, shadowy ruins coming to resemble a *noir* city.



Figure 118. Plummer and Pringle in the office.



Figure 119. Plummer and the Congressional delegation driving through Berlin just before the final shoot-out.

In *A Foreign Affair*, moral ambivalence is registered as a clash of genres. Miss Frost can be read as a character from a comedy, a feminine transformation narrative about her

defrosting on a trip to Europe. Yet as the film progresses, it moves further and further into the territory of the film noir, a narrative about masculine moral ambivalence, set at nighttime in the shadows of a ruined city. These two genres co-exist uncomfortably, indeed incoherently, within this film, forcing the viewer to live with a deep-running contradiction as to the film's possible interpretation. Even the film's ending, in classic noir style, does little to resolve this ambiguity.

Erika's story, as we learn the details of her life, contradicts both of these readings, constituting a third point in the film's constellation of competing narratives. Both Americans view her as a dangerous, sexualised, Orientalised other, perhaps a *femme fatale*. Both their own stories rely equally on this reading of her, even if Pringle and Frost differ in their moral stance towards this otherness. Yet this reading of Erika is challenged by key details of the text.

In later scenes, the film becomes a sombre exploration of the perspective of a postwar Berliner, offering a sympathetic portrait of her plight. Erika, as she explains to Miss Frost after the nightclub raid, has suffered so much that she no longer cares about political systems or ideologies, considering them all to be equally illusory. In any political system she finds herself in, her only goal is to survive. She does by attaching herself to a powerful man and feigning allegiance to his own political loyalties when necessary (hence her comment in an earlier scene, 'I have a new Führer now. Heil Johnny!'). This is because, she explains, she is too poor for morality, which she considers to be a luxury external to the need for survival.

A particularly dark and poignant moment occurs in the Lorelei nightclub, as Miss Frost and Capt. Pringle drink Champagne at a table and watch her performance. Erika sings a song about illusions:

Want to buy some illusions?  
Slightly used, second hand.  
They were lovely illusions  
Built on castles of sand.  
I'll sell them all for a penny

They make pretty souvenirs  
Want to buy some illusions?  
Some for laughs, some for tears.

The song very beautifully sums up her position with regard to value, positioning her as a woman who has gone through such terrible hardship that she has no values left other than survival. Moreover, as Erika sings, her shimmering image is reflected in the mirror just above Miss Frost's head. This undermines Miss Frost's happiness as empty, 'built on castles of sand'. Miss Frost may consider herself to have learned from the experience of being in Berlin – to have undergone a transformation narrative – yet this is only a solipsistic exercise, confined to her own head.



Figure 120. Erika reflected in a mirror as Miss Frost and Capt. Pringle drink Champagne at the Lorelei.

Despite Erika's previous behaviour as a *femme fatale*-like figure, she is actually treated in the second half of the film in a remarkably sympathetic way. She was, after all, subjected not only to years of privation and bombing but also to an alluded rape ('What do you think it was like to be a woman in this town when the Russians first swept in?' she tells Miss Frost). Constable and Dyer both argue that Dietrich's star image must be read in terms of resistance to the stereotypes which others, especially men, attempt to impose on her.<sup>52</sup> *A Foreign Affair* would constitute a clear example here, one which reveals her usual seductiveness and feminine mystery as the result of horrendous circumstances and need. In

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<sup>52</sup> Constable, *Thinking*, 164; Richard Dyer, *Stars*, new ed. (London: BFI, 1998), 156-158.

the scenes following the 'Illusions' number, she is revealed to be a survivor of horrific violence who has been forced into quasi-prostitution by sheer desperation. Even her connections to Hitler's elite circle are shown in a new light, as an expedient move rather than a signal of her villainy.

As Erika and Miss Frost leave the police station together and walk down the bombed-out street where Erika lives, we realise that this pile of rubble has become the everyday for her. These ruins may be swept into a symbolism of American masculinity by Pringle or vilified by Miss Frost; both Orientalise the ruins within a metaphysics of self versus other. However, this is far away from Erika's experience of them, which is as a backdrop to the privations and degradations of her everyday life.

Through the character of Erika, the other is given a voice. This Orientalised object is given the chance to speak for herself, to explain her story and gain sympathy for her hardships. This works as a moment of ideological rupture, pressing the film into incoherence as three competing narratives vie for supremacy. The parodic tone of the first half of the film, which almost completely disappears by the end, coupled Erika's subaltern voice, throws into doubt the moral standing of America's occupation of Germany and exposing it for its ties to imperialism. Yet no one of the three narratives is sufficiently privileged over the others to amount to a coherent reading. The competing stories are left in place to jostle incoherently.

The ending of the film, too, refuses to resolve the ambiguities it has invoked, leaving them in a seemingly permanent state of instability and uncertainty as it leaves both Erika's punishment as an ex-Nazi and Pringle's romantic allegiances strikingly unresolved. As Erika is sent off for denazification, she effortlessly wraps two American military policemen around her finger in the space of a moment, pulling up her skirt to reveal her gorgeous legs. Col. Plummer, evidently worried that Erika will use her charms to overpower the men, sends several more soldiers along after them, to 'keep an eye' on them – a duty which the soldiers evidently find quite pleasurable and exciting. It seems doubtful, both to him and to

us, that Erika von Schlütow will ever make it to the denazification camp. Her allure gives her too much power.



Figure 121. Erika pulls up her gown to reveal her gorgeous legs.

The film also refuses the clean romantic closure often read into it. As Pringle and Miss Frost reconcile just after Erika's arrest, he seems relieved and tells her, 'With all the headaches ahead, you'll be my aspirin'. This is not exactly the most romantic thing to say, although he does seem to mean it sincerely enough as he kneels awkwardly before her. Yet moments later he does an about-face. She suggests marriage and he balks, physically backing away from her as though terrified of the suggestion, protesting vehemently that he is not the marrying kind. Finally, he is driven to shove chairs about the room to block her, which she throws out of the way in hot pursuit. This scene is closely matched to an earlier file-room sequence in which Pringle pursued Frost. The mirroring of these scenes of pursuit between Pringle and Frost may be a key reason why the ending is read as having romantic closure. Perhaps this, as well as Erika's tenuous sending off to a labour camp, was planned by Wilder as a strategy for avoiding censorship. However the film's ending is, if one looks closely, quite ambivalent and unstable, denying any sense of closure. The film leaves all three characters still involved in their own narratives. Indeed it reinstates Frost's supposed transformation and romance, leaving her believing that she has got her man. Pringle's inability to accept a 'softer' domestic masculinity continues. And Erika continues in her

contradictory and morally unstable position of the self-aware *femme fatale*, driven by desperation to manipulate men with her sexual allure.



Figure 122. Pringle kneels awkwardly before Miss Frost as she recovers from a fainting fit.



Figure 123. Pringle throws chairs in the way of Miss Frost as she pursues him.

*A Foreign Affair* thus subtly refuses the neat ending often read into it. The contradictions and fissures of the text engendered by its three competing versions of the narrative are, at the end of the film, still in play. Through these permanent instabilities, the film calls into question America's self-narrative of spreading the light of democracy to Europe, exposing as fraudulent the colonialist tropes it uses to buttress this self-image.

## Chapter 4. Melodrama and the American woman in Italy: *Summertime*

In one of the first scholarly articles to be written on the Hollywood melodrama, Thomas Elsaesser explores the domestic melodrama's use of space and location, contrasting it with the western. The western is said to be characterised by wide open landscapes and expanding territories – a relationship to space that reflects the dynamics of the plot in that 'the drama moves towards its resolution by having the central conflicts successively externalised and projected into direct action'.<sup>1</sup> The family melodrama, by contrast, is characterised by elaborate and stifling indoor spaces, which is equally a reflection of dramatic movement:

The family melodrama . . . more often records the failure of the protagonist to act in a way that could shape events and influence the emotional environment, let alone change the stifling social milieu. *The world is closed*, and the characters are acted upon. . . . The cathartic violence of a shoot-out or chase becomes an inner violence, often one which the characters turn against themselves.<sup>2</sup>

I emphasise the words 'the world is closed' because this hints at the potential significance in film melodrama not only of indoor versus outdoor spaces but of geographical space, of the contrast between the domestic/familiar and the foreign/unfamiliar. If 'the world is closed' to the melodramatic heroine, then this implies that her escape – the catharsis she is denied – could lie not only outside the repressive home environment but in distant lands.

Tania Modleski similarly posits melodrama's 'hysterical experience of time and place'.<sup>3</sup> Her emphasis is on melodramatic time, which, she argues, is formed by repetitions and reminiscences of past events rather than unfolding, progression, departure or arrival. However this sense of time is intimately related to the experience of place, as the heroine

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, 'Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama', in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI, 1987), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 55-56. Italics added.

<sup>3</sup> Tania Modleski, 'Time and Desire in the Woman's Film', in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI, 1987), 330.

returns again and again to the same spaces, like ‘sitting in a train watching the world move by, and each time you reach a destination, you discover that it is the place you never really left’.<sup>4</sup> Unable to progress – let alone escape – the melodramatic heroine is confined to a few old, familiar spaces which she is doomed to prowl ceaselessly.

Elsaesser and Modleski both suggest that the genre of melodrama bears some significant relationship to geographical space. In their analyses, the faraway constitutes a structuring absence of the woman’s film, its possibility relentlessly denied to the heroine. This idea is borne out in some of the most prominent instances of the genre. In *Stella Dallas* (King Vidor, 1937), Stella pretends to leave for South America so that her daughter can stop feeling ashamed of and guilty towards her and marry the ‘proper’ young man she loves. However, the trip is only a pretence as Stella disappears into poverty and perpetual sacrifice. In both versions of *Back Street* (John M Stahl, 1932; Robert Stevenson, 1941), Rae Smith cannot travel to Europe because she is not Walter’s wife. When she does finally go with him to Paris in old age, it becomes the location of both their deaths. In *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Max Ophuls, 1948), during the one night Lisa spends with Stefan, they sit together in a stationary train – an amusement park ride. They watch painted scenes of the world go by in a simulacrum of tourism. Lisa reminisces about the imaginary journeys she used to take with her father, living vicariously through the pages of his travel brochures.

In some films, this possibility of travel, of the escape it may offer, is not merely hinted at but actually finds fulfilment in some way. In *Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942), Charlotte Vale’s cruise to South America cements her escape from the overbearing weight of her mother’s expectations and rules. Jody Norris in *To Each His Own* (Mitchell Leisen, 1946) moves to London to escape the agony of watching her child be raised by another woman. She waits there numbly until the son, growing up and becoming an Air Force pilot, comes to London and they are reunited. Whether the possibility of travel is achieved

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



or negated within these films' narratives, in the classical melodrama escape from an oppressive domestic sphere is often imagined as travel to distant lands.

In the 1950s, a significant strand of the Hollywood woman's film uproots itself from America and replants its American heroines in Italy. This chapter will focus primarily on one of these films, *Summertime* (David Lean, 1955; UK release title *Summer Madness*), a film about an 'old maid' American secretary who finds love in Venice. For reasons to be discussed later, this film is in many ways representative of the group. The other films include: *September Affair* (William Dieterle, 1950), about two Americans who meet and have a passionate affair in Naples and Florence; *Three Coins in the Fountain* (Jean Negulesco, 1954), an early CinemaScope feature about three women who work as secretaries in Rome; *Interlude* (Douglas Sirk, 1957), in which a young American woman working in Munich must choose between a nice all-American boy and a mysterious, seductive Italian-German musician (which I include despite its southern German setting due to its generic similarities to the others); *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* (José Quintero, 1961), in which a wealthy American widow is romanced by an Italian gigolo; *Rome Adventure* (Delmer Daves, 1962), about a young American woman who goes to Rome quite explicitly to escape from America's oppressive sexual mores; and *Light in the Piazza* (Guy Green, 1962), a maternal melodrama about an affluent American woman and her beautiful but mentally handicapped daughter on a trip to Florence. I also include *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953) in the discussion. Although this film's heroine is a European princess, she behaves so much like an American girl as to constitute a major contribution to the group. The existence of this group of films in the 1950s – all women's films, all (except one) set in Italy – raises questions. Does this relocation, as Elsaesser and Modleski's analyses suggest, necessitate a transformation in the dramatic project of these melodramas? Why does this happen in the 1950s? And what about Italy, or rather the traditions of representation of Italy, makes it so apparently suitable as a location for these narratives?

Melodrama has often been viewed in the scholarly literature as a key genre in understanding the relationship between women and patriarchy, and this chapter will build upon this tradition. Mary Ann Doane's book *The Desire to Desire* posits that while 1940s melodrama appears to give a voice to women, this genre actually functions 'to deny the woman the space of a reading',<sup>5</sup> ultimately rendering her powerless and mute in the face of patriarchal institutions of family and sexuality even as it seems to represent the woman's perspective within these institutions. The heroines of these films, according to Doane, are denied subject-hood,<sup>6</sup> punished for the ability to see, gaze and make choices and pushed back into the object-hood demanded by the male gaze.

However the 1950s were a time of massive upheaval in norms, behaviours and perceptions of women, and as Jackie Byars argues, the women's film underwent dramatic changes in this decade. Although later observers may remember the 1950s as the last moment of peaceful, prosperous domesticity before the explosive changes of the 1960s, in fact there was a gathering storm.<sup>7</sup> Elaine Tyler May has documented how the 1950s marked the sudden and surprising rise of an ideology of domesticity, with corresponding rises in marriage and birth rates, which had little historical precedent and arose from the ideological need to 'contain' threats such as nuclear obliteration, women's economic independence and sexual liberation.<sup>8</sup> All three originated in the aftermath of the Second World War. During the war, women had entered the workforce in large numbers, and contrary to the prevailing norms they for the most part did not leave it when the war ended.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, women's sexuality became less tied to marriage and reproduction. Birth control became more available to women, and as the 1953 Kinsey

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, revised ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Report on women's sexuality made known, more than 50% of women were not waiting until marriage to become sexually active.<sup>10</sup> May thus argues that the suburban domestic tranquillity of the 1950s, according to May, was really a front concealing the reality that women's roles in American society were in the process of changing drastically.<sup>11</sup>

As discussed in the Introduction, Byars explores how the 1950s' quiet revolution in women's roles gained expression in women's films of the decade. 'The female-oriented film melodramas of the 1950s call attention to gendered identity construction during a period when precisely what it was to be a woman – and as a result, what it mean[t] to be a man – were becoming controversial issues'.<sup>12</sup> Byars goes on to argue that the 1950s melodrama exemplifies ideological incoherence as the institutions of patriarchy were straining and ultimately beginning to break down. The Italy melodramas, I will argue, are especially interesting and rich sites for examining the shifting areas between, as Byars puts it, 'the reinforcement of patriarchy' and the 'pleasures of looking *with* women'.<sup>13</sup> These films, like those Byars examines, powerfully dramatise the ongoing 1950s upheaval in gender relations. The American heroines in Italy suddenly find themselves relatively free to do as they like – especially in the realm of sex and romance – which prompts them, in every film in the group, to question the patriarchal order by which they have previously abided, and to envision a life free of these constraints. Italy in these films serves as the location of female emancipation, opposed to the hemmed-in domestic life accorded to women in the US. These films, then, respond to and perhaps even fulfil the promises of the faraway in the women's films of the 1930s and 1940s – although this fulfilment is always shaky and qualified.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>12</sup> Jackie Byars, *All that Hollywood Allows: Re-reading Gender in 1950s Melodrama* (London: Routledge, 1991), 147.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 171. Italics in original.

Yet this sense of an achievement of women's liberation poses other ideological questions. The reason these women find liberation and fulfilment abroad has to do with two related facts: they are American, and they are tourists. The former gives them economic power they lack in the US, as the strength of the 1950s dollar – due to America's status as the primary supplier of manufactured products to Europe – meant that any American who stepped off the plane in Europe was de facto wealthy.<sup>14</sup> Their status as tourists, too, sets a series of power relations between these women and their Italian surroundings, particularly in terms of the ability to gaze. The films of this chapter, we will see, must negotiate additional loci of complexity and friction to those discussed by Byars, because they cannot be understood outside the colonial. The Italy melodramas demonstrate how women's resistance to patriarchy was embedded within other power structures, namely colonialism and American national identity.

Doane and Byars both dwell on the notion of the female gaze as a site of contestation in the woman's film, which often centres on whether and how women are permitted to look. For example, Doane's discusses *Humoresque* (Jean Negulesco, 1946) as a romantic melodrama in which a powerful, wealthy, strong woman (Joan Crawford) is consistently shown to gaze with desire at a male musician (John Garfield). She actively pursues her desire for him and is ultimately punished for this transgression by death. Tourism, however – including female tourism – is inseparable from viewing and gazing upon the world. Women who come to Italy are freed to look in ways that they could never do at home, a fact which often turns out to present challenges to the patriarchal order. Yet this can happen precisely because they are American tourists, a position that carries strong colonial undertones, as the women find themselves endowed with economic power and spatial and visual mobility in relation to Italians and the Italian landscape. So, although it is often (and rightly) regarded as a good thing for a film to attempt a genuine depiction of

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<sup>14</sup> Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 83.

female subject-hood, the Italy melodramas complicate the matter. Women's liberation is inseparable in these films from ideologies of imperialism.

This chapter will explore how, in the Italy melodramas, women's liberation jostles uncomfortably with imperialist ideologies. It will focus on *Summertime*, which depicts Jane Hudson (Katharine Hepburn), an unmarried American career woman who must be nearing 50 – well beyond marriageable age in this era – on her first trip to Venice (and indeed to Europe).<sup>15</sup> Arriving by train, she makes her way to the Pensione Fiorini, run by an impoverished Italian aristocrat, Signora Fiorini (Isa Miranda). Also staying at the hotel are a stereotypical American tourist couple, Lloyd and Edith McIlhenny (MacDonald Parke and Jane Rose), and a somewhat profligate American artist and his wife, Eddie and Phyl Yeager (Darren McGavin and Mari Aldon). Sitting at a cafe in the Piazza San Marco, Jane is noticed by a handsome Italian antiques dealer, Renato de Rossi (Rossano Brazzi). Unnerved by the attention, Jane flees without speaking to him, but by chance she enters his shop the next day, attracted by a red goblet in the window. She buys the goblet, and they strike up a nervous conversation. He finds a pretext to ask where she is staying. Later Renato shows up at the pensione to ask her out to dinner. Jane is clearly attracted to Renato, yet she becomes defensive and suspicious of his advances. Eventually she relents and goes out for coffee with him, ending the evening with a passionate kiss. However, she becomes even more anguished the following evening when she discovers that he is married. In a climactic scene, she confronts him. He tells her that he and his wife are separated, and eventually she relents again. After an idyllic evening of dinner and dancing, he takes her back to her room, and it is strongly implied that they have sex. They spend the following day together, blissfully touring the sights of Venice, before she abruptly breaks it off and, despite his protestations, leaves for home. In the final scene, he runs to catch her train to give her a final parting gift, but he is moments too late, and they wave goodbye.

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<sup>15</sup> Katharine Hepburn was born in 1907, making her around 48 at the time of filming.

I chose *Summertime* as representative of the 1950s Italy melodrama for two main reasons. First, it is placed in the middle of the decade, not just chronologically but also in terms of a discernible progression from (relative) repression to (a measured degree of) liberation. *Summertime* dramatises the torments of a woman caught in the middle of the 1950s' shifts in women's power with extraordinary pathos. Second, *Summertime* is so heavily invested in the gender politics of looking/gazing as to constitute a virtual study on the topic. The issue of gazing constitutes a central aspect of what this film is 'about'.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first explores *Summertime*'s use of the female gaze and its relation to postwar American patriarchy and women's liberation. The second discusses Jane Hudson's consumerism – her complicated relationship to money and purchasing power – and how this connects to broader economic links between America and Europe. And the third section explores the film's representation of time and timelessness, studying how tourist activities are linked to ideologies of imperialism via the representation of time.

### **Feminism and the gaze**

I want to spend some time on the opening sequences of the film, in which Jane arrives in Venice and meets the other Americans at the pensione, in order to have a detailed look at her rather complicated positioning as a female subject. Other than an establishing shot of the train, the first shot of the film is from Jane's point of view (POV): we see a man (uncredited) on the train, quietly reading his book, as Katharine Hepburn's distinctive voice asks him to hold up a travel brochure of Venice which her arm then extends towards him. Hepburn's voice instructs the man: 'In a little closer. Up a little higher.' We hear the whirring of a film camera, and finally we cut to a shot of Hepburn/Jane Hudson peering through the viewfinder. The brochure reads 'Venice: City of Romance' – a description which clearly structures her desires and expectations about

her stay there. In a sense, Jane is directing this movie, as we follow her gaze around Venice and her hope for romance comes to fruition.



Figure 124. Jane hands a brochure to a British man on the train, *Summertime*.

After a chaotic arrival scene in which we visually and aurally follow her through the rail station, Jane finds herself on a waterbus. She is promptly greeted by an American couple, the McIlhennys, a pair bearing the characteristics of stereotypical American tourists: loud, fat, unobservant, bigoted, in a hurry, with cameras hanging around their necks. She speaks to them warmly, yet she is evidently displeased with their tacky ways. She is more interested in the scenery passing by, which does not interest McIlhennys, as their whirlwind tour of Europe has made Venice into just another stop, a 'Luna Park on water'. Jane periodically interrupts their conversation in order to capture footage of the Venice cityscape. The contrast between Jane and the McIlhennys turns out to have some significance, to be discussed later. For now I would like to focus on the moments in which she is filming or otherwise gazing at these initial sights of the city.





Figure 125. Jane (Hepburn) meets the McIlhennys (Park and Rose) on a waterbus.



Figure 126. Jane interrupts the conversation to shoot footage.



Figure 127. A fire brigade rushes past.



Figure 128. Jane films the scene excitedly.



Figure 129. Looking out over the Grand Canal.



Figure 130. Jane looks wistfully upon the scene.

In the first place, they are POV shots, a device of which *Summertime* makes ample use – both through the viewfinder and otherwise. This sequence (as well as many others throughout the film) is an example of what we might call a ‘tourist POV’ sequence, in



which shots of a famous tourist site are alternated with reaction shots of the American protagonist looking awestruck, contemplative or wistful. POV shots have long been taken to be *the* classic, most direct means of establishing the visual subjectivity (and subject-hood) of a film's protagonist.<sup>16</sup> Murray Smith convincingly points out the need to qualify and refine this emphasis on POV shots as somehow granting direct access to a character's subjectivity, showing that POV relies equally on reaction shots of the character's face, as well as other narrative structures.<sup>17</sup> The tourist POV clearly functions in this way, as a sequence of shots alternating between the POV shot and the reaction shot. In this scene it does a highly efficient job of conveying the protagonist's viewpoint and feelings. Jane is shown to interrupt the McIlhennys' chatter in order to focus her attention on filming passing sights, which we then see through her viewfinder. Our attention is focused through hers, and she is granted control over our access to the visual field by the use of her camera. Her reactions – facial expressions, verbal commentary ('Isn't that wonderful?') and the soaring music when she first sets sight on the Grand Canal – all serve to increase our alignment and identification with her (already established in the arrival sequence). We are granted privileged access both to her emotional responses and to her optical viewpoint.

In a sense there is nothing extraordinary about Jane's gaze here. She is a tourist, and tourism is nothing if not a visual activity, a series of sights viewed in a prescribed, ritualised way.<sup>18</sup> Most of the other films discussed in this thesis have such sequences of tourist POV – even frequent and extended ones, like we see in *Summertime*. They are the inscription in film of what Urry calls the tourist gaze, in which famous historical, cultural or aesthetic objects and locations are, via a ritualised form of looking, appropriated into a structure of meanings, emotions and memories that are internal to the logic of tourism.

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<sup>16</sup> Not least by Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 24.

<sup>17</sup> Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 158.

<sup>18</sup> John Urry's book *The Tourist Gaze* explores tourism's visuality in detail (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

Tourist POV within the films of this thesis often replicates this process of meaning-making, inscribing touristic visuality into cinema via a built-in process of focusing our attention on the tourist sight itself (as opposed to all the other things *not* considered suitable as tourist sights, like garbage and billboards) and showing it in terms of wonder, wistfulness or interior contemplation. This tourist visuality, often (though not exclusively) inscribed into film via the tourist POV sequence, is a process so common and so internal to tourism that we might expect anyone who has ever been a tourist to find this kind of visual engagement deeply familiar. This makes it easy to overlook just how unusual Jane's gaze is in the context of classical Hollywood. Jane is that impossible article, a woman who owns the gaze.

It is worth contrasting Jane's gaze to the classic male gaze, however, as they differ in style and technique. *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954) offers an especially interesting comparison, as it is frequently considered to be a paradigmatic example of the voyeuristic male gaze and was released the year before *Summertime*. L.B. Jeffries (James Stewart) is in many ways the archetypal voyeur: from the elevated perch of his apartment, he peers down and across into others' windows, suspicious, curious, investigating the lives of his objects. He works, when not confined to his apartment, as a photojournalist, and this training bears heavily upon his interest in his neighbours. He even uses a camera with a telephoto lens to get a closer view of them. Jane's gaze, by contrast, is directed upwards. She looks up at buildings from the level of the street or canal, gazing with awe at the beauty of the Venice skyline. As a tourist, her motivation is not to investigate but to contemplate, noticing and sentimentalising both the beauty and the otherness of her surroundings and recording these moments for later memories. Her instrument of choice is thus a small portable film camera, not a hefty telephoto lens. As she walks down a narrow alley, peering up at the windows, she cannot see inside, but instead ponders and sentimentalises the superficial, the sights and sounds and smells that signify 'Venice' to her.



Figure 131. Jane's upward gaze, towards the rooftops.



Figure 132. Another upward-directed view of a beautiful old building.



Figure 133. Walking through an alley.



Figure 134. Jane looking up at the windows she cannot see into.

Jane's gaze, then, is feminine not only in literally belonging to a woman, but in its inscription as feminine within the patriarchal scopic regime – centred as it is around memory, repetition and outsider status rather than investigation, voyeurism or penetration into private spaces. Nevertheless, her gaze does empower her in certain ways – she is not only able to direct our vision but also to move freely across space. It is not a straightforward matter whether this gaze, being both touristic and feminised, is rendered 'harmless', or whether, as a sign of female power, it still constitutes a patriarchal transgression. This turns out to be a matter of profound ambivalence in *Summertime*, edging the film into deep incoherence. As I will demonstrate, what might be seen as feminine transgression against patriarchy itself relies on the power structures of Orientalism.

American culture seems to punish Jane relentlessly whenever she comes into contact with it. If her gaze upon the streets of Venice implies a measure of freedom and power, the following sequence, in which she arrives at the hotel, robs her of this power with near-equal force. Once in the hotel, she interacts only with other Americans and Signora Fiorini. (The latter is an Italian aristocrat who is blonde, speaks fluent English and is played by a familiar Italian star, Isa Miranda, meaning she is marked as separate from the other Italians, as almost-American.) Here, we find out just how punishing Jane's position is as an unmarried middle-aged woman in American society. The first sign of this turnaround is when she has a drink with Signora Fiorini.

Fiorini: You don't mind travelling alone?

Jane: No, I'm the independent type, always have been.

Fiorini: You're a writer?

Jane: No, a fancy secretary, really.

This brief exchange neatly introduces Jane's gender positioning within American society. Female writers travelling in Europe are stereotyped as 'the independent type', which could even be a coded substitute for 'lesbian' – in other words a woman who absents herself from patriarchy as far as possible.<sup>19</sup> Jane's position as a 'secretary' signifies that she is within patriarchy, is subject to its laws, as her career is devoted to the kind of peripheral 'helping' work women were allotted.

Moreover, her age has by now forced her to the margins of the patriarchal economy. Jane laughs this off:

Jane: In America any woman under fifty calls herself a girl.

Fiorini: And after?

Jane: After, who cares?

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<sup>19</sup> Other elements of the film also invite a queer reading. Jane has a habit of gazing upon and filming pretty Italian women. Her relationship with Phyl Yeager is based around her admiration of Phyl's beauty and her desire to befriend her away from the men, outside their inscription as commodities – a befriendings which only succeeds at the moment when they have both been hurt by men.

Jane takes a light-hearted tone whenever she alludes to her age, but in fact this belies a particularly violent presumption in American culture that an older woman may as well be dead, so reduced is her value. Fiorini exemplifies the possibility in Italian (as well as French) culture that a woman might be older and remain attractive. It is worth contrasting Jane's appearance and costuming with the signora's: the latter has a dignified, mature beauty, wearing lean, sleek clothing in dark colours, her hair and makeup meticulous and elegant. Jane's clothes, although of high quality and expert tailoring, signify a degree of girlishness. Her outfits are lighter in colour, made of cotton or linen, fastened up to the neck, and tend to have full sleeves and a full skirt – as though attempting to mould Hepburn's lean, boyish, 1930s figure into the 1950s 'mammary woman' shape.<sup>20</sup> Her makeup is sheer, her hair tied back by a ribbon. Beauty, for Jane as an American, seems virtually synonymous with youth – and she is evidently running short on this, clinging more and more desperately to girlishness and virginity as the path to value in the patriarchal world she inhabits.



Figure 135. Signora Fiorini (Miranda) wears dark, sleek clothing.



Figure 136. Jane's more girlish appearance.

Within the social group of the pensione, Jane is subtly but continually undermined. She tries to get each of the guests to have a drink with her, but they are all busy with dinner plans with their respective mates. After each makes a different excuse (in a later scene it becomes quite overt that Eddie Yeager does not want an old maid around), she finds

<sup>20</sup> See Rachel Moseley, *Growing Up with Audrey Hepburn* (Manchester University Press, 2002), 54.



herself all alone on the hotel terrace, watching couples walk past, with no one to talk to but a cat.<sup>21</sup> As Jane looks about herself, the use of POV returns – it had been more or less absent during the ten minutes of conversational exposition with the other guests in the hotel – but this time her reaction shots are tinged with the sadness of marginalisation and powerlessness. Jane’s eyes well up as she looks out over the canal. Katharine Hepburn’s intense crying, showing up only at rare climactic moments in most of her films and famously criticised as ‘excessive’ by Louis B. Mayer,<sup>22</sup> becomes a constant feature of this film. If as a tourist in Italy she is mobile and independent, in moments of contact with Americans she is instantaneously punished for this empowerment, and her eyes cry rather than gaze.



Figure 137. Jane looks out over the canal, all alone.



Figure 138. She begins to cry.

Andrew Britton’s way of describing Hepburn’s crying, especially in the context of her 1950s ‘old maid’ cycle, is that it has everything to do with her troubled relationship to patriarchy, ‘signif[ying] both the emotional cost of a woman’s struggle under patriarchy for a sensibility which hasn’t been brutalised, and a stoical determination to continue to resist’.<sup>23</sup> Her crying is thus a synecdoche of her feminist energy, which comes out in various

<sup>21</sup> Cats are a symbol of ageing female desperation in *Three Coins in the Fountain*, too, in which the older, unmarried Frances takes the gift of a kitten as a revelation that her ‘situation’ has become quite grim.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Britton, *Katharine Hepburn: Star as Feminist*, new ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 226.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

ways in the different stages of her career, each of which is ‘a specific attempt to solve the problems produced by the ideological material organised in the persona’ of the star. In the early stages of her career, she is a ‘son-daughter’ whose ‘sexuality, a once frailly virginal and robustly assertive, is channelled towards the father’.<sup>24</sup> Later, in *The Philadelphia Story* and in her many films with Spencer Tracy, her rebellious energy is shown to be containable within bourgeois marriage. Her late cycle of ‘old maid’ films once again place Hepburn outside the patriarchal marriage economy, redeploying her energy towards melodrama by punishing her with loneliness before offering her a temporary, qualified reprieve. Hepburn’s patriarchal punishment as an ‘old maid’ is perfectly illustrated by a later scene, in which Jane falls into a canal, distracted by her attempt to film the façade of Renato’s shop. Being Hepburn, she effortlessly swims to a nearby step and hoists herself out of the water, but a crowd gathers around her and she is utterly mortified, dripping and shivering pathetically in her sheer white dress as she begs Mauro (a boy who has been guiding her, played by Gaetano Autiero) to get her out of there. She attempts a feeble joke – ‘you should’ve seen me in the Olympics’ – but this is greeted with awkward silence. The moment seems to punish her for her former athleticism and strength – a kind of patriarchal revenge on the 1930s career woman, effected through her old-maidenhood. She does not behave like the stereotypical old maid – she is sociable and likeable, always talking and drinking – yet it seems to be precisely these facts which put her so at odds with patriarchy. She is unable to renounce the patriarchal system in which she lives (which would mean becoming an ‘independent woman’, possibly a lesbian) even as it devalues her.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 213.



Figure 139. Just before falling into the canal.



Figure 140. Shivering in her sheer white dress.

Jane's situation in relation to sex and patriarchal coupling is tellingly dramatised by the scene in which she and Renato first set eyes upon each other. Sitting at a cafe on the first evening, Jane is trying to be upbeat and enjoy herself even in her solitude. Seeing two pretty young women walk past, she picks up her camera and films them. This is shown, as always, in a viewfinder POV shot, with the whirring of the camera audible to us. Panning to follow them, she (and we) catch sight of two men, also staring at the women as they walk past. The men are gazing downward, evidently enthralled by the women's legs and bottoms. Upon seeing this, there is a cut to Jane looking a little shocked and turning off her camera. We cut back to another POV shot, this time of the two men exchanging glances with each other before sauntering off in pursuit of the women. We cut back to Jane, who now looks definitely ruffled and puts her camera down. However, at this very moment, the (non-diegetic) camera pans slightly to reveal a handsome man, who turns out to be Renato, sitting at the table next to her.<sup>25</sup> He is looking down at a newspaper – neither has seen the other yet. She finishes her drink, smiles to herself a little, and picks up her camera again, this time filming upwards at the skyline. Renato glances up from his paper and sees her filming. We cut to another POV shot of what she is filming, this time a flag waving in the

<sup>25</sup> Although we have not yet 'met' Renato, anyone who had seen *Three Coins in the Fountain* or *The Barefoot Contessa* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1954) would instantly recognise Rossano Brazzi as the leading 'Latin lover' figure; he would go on to play similar roles in *Interlude*, *Rome Adventure* and *Light in the Piazza*.



breeze. After a brief close-up on Renato gazing at Jane, the camera shows – for the only time in the film – an extended POV shot belonging to someone other than Jane: we see Renato’s POV as he looks keenly at her well-formed but awkwardly-posed leg. As Renato continues to look at her, Jane happens to glance in Renato’s direction, and seeing his eyes on her, does a double-take. She begins to look downright agitated. Putting on her sunglasses as though to hide, she fumbles in her haste to pay her bill as Renato looks on, charmed.



Figure 141. Jane at a café, looking about and filming.



Figure 142. Two pretty young women walk past, and two men stare at their bottoms.



Figure 143. Jane looks shocked.



Figure 144. She films again and Renato takes notice of her.



Figure 145. Renato looks her up and down, evidently interested.



Figure 146. Jane's awkwardly posed, though not unattractive leg.



Figure 147. She notices Renato staring at her.



Figure 148. She fumbles awkwardly for her sunglasses.

Why is Jane so upset at seeing men (both Renato and the two men in the crowd) gazing upon women with desire? One potential answer is that she is being ‘prudish’ – is, out of an overdeveloped sense of propriety, pretending (even to herself) to be unaware that people have lascivious feelings. This is Shandley’s view of Jane Hudson: she is an awkward, prudish old maid, fearful of sex, her body ‘out of control and underutilised’.<sup>26</sup> Yet surely this is to take patriarchy’s side. It assumes that for a woman to reject the more debasing aspects of male desire – to object to being made into an object – is to reject sexuality completely. Taking patriarchy’s side is precisely what the film *does not* do. As this and the previous sequences show, this film’s project is instead to dramatise the punishing paradox of Jane’s position as a strong and self-assured woman in middle age – paradoxical because it is this very strength which guarantees her loneliness and vulnerability. Nothing is clearer in this film than that Jane is full of desire. She is brimming over with it: writing letters home about it, weeping about it, trying to hide it. Her tearfulness, her physical and social energy, her anxious pacing through the rooms of the hotel and her physical awkwardness can be read as signs of excessive desire. They conform to the Freudian ‘release-valve’ conception of sexuality which, as we saw in the last chapter, was central to 1950s conceptions of

<sup>26</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 62; 68.

sexuality:<sup>27</sup> excess desire may burst forth or leak out if it pent up for too long. A comparison might be made between Jane and another Katharine Hepburn character, Jo in *Little Women* (George Cukor, 1933). Jo has a childish awkwardness which she ultimately grows out of. It is 'solved' by the realisation that she, like her sisters, has adult desires. Hepburn's capacity for clumsiness is deployed differently in the character of Jane. Jane is rendered clumsy at moments when she is overcome by desire – when the strength of her desire seems to overwhelm her. It disappears once her desire is fulfilled. *Summertime* thus constructs 'prudishness', and the problematic relationship to the body that accompanies it, to be not a lack of desire but the result of an overwhelming desire continually frustrated.<sup>28</sup>

It is worth exploring how Jane's awkwardness relates to her gaze. The moments of her most intense awkwardness and anxiety come when she is being gazed upon by a man. If this were, say, Marilyn Monroe, her leg would have been posed and ready for a man to look it up and down, even before she was aware of any particular man gazing at her. Jane is evidently unused to and unready for this kind of attention. Her leg, although not unattractive, is clumsily and unselfconsciously positioned. She is too busy filming – and gazing for herself – to pay attention to herself as an object, let alone to use this status to accrue power for herself as Monroe does in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (to be discussed in the next chapter).

This is the evident source of Jane's transgression: she is unwilling to give up her own, already very modest, sense of herself as a subject. She refuses, or perhaps simply does not know how to subject herself to object-hood. Jane is not unlike Stella Dallas in this respect: both are 'transgressive women', not in the more familiarly threatening *femme fatale* sense but in the melodramatic sense that, although already giving much, they refuse to hand over every last scrap of their identities to the protocols of patriarchy.

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<sup>27</sup> Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 34.

<sup>28</sup> *The Old Maid* (Edmund Goulding, 1939) also sees prudishness as a result of repressed desire.

Unlike Stella, though, Jane actually takes the trip abroad that Stella had only pretended to take, finding in Italy a degree of the empowerment, mobility and freedom she is denied at home. Jane journeyed to Italy for ‘romance’, as the travel brochure showed us. This seems to be more or less explicitly a desire to fulfil a fantasy from the movies, as the constant presence of her film camera suggests. In journeying to Italy, Jane on some level seeks to fulfil for herself the classical Hollywood melodrama’s fantasy of travel, hoping to find (and indeed finding, to a degree) the promised escape from the distress of marginalisation. *Summertime* is a fantasy about the fulfilment of Hollywood fantasies.

*Summertime* and the other Italy melodramas offer, for Hollywood of the 1950s, a mode for expressing, exploring and contesting women’s changing roles and sexuality. We have not yet addressed the question ‘why Italy?’, but the travel motif clearly constitutes a major aspect of Hollywood cinema’s intervention in these issues. Shandley situates the Italy melodramas in terms of the film industry’s financially-motivated sabotage of the production code,<sup>29</sup> yet this gets it the wrong way round. It is not merely that the relaxation of censorship allows Jane’s sexual escapade to be represented on screen, but rather that *not* to show dramas of women’s sexual liberation had begun to seem like a falsehood. To continue in the classical vein of melodrama, which tiptoed uneasily around women’s desire, ever careful to put it in the hushed vocabulary of dreams and memories and sentiments, and to roundly punish any more overt expression of desire, was no longer possible in the 1950s. Women’s sexuality could no longer be hidden.

This is not to say that *Summertime*, or any of the other films of this group, are paragons of women’s emancipation. On the contrary, although their heroines seek and find sexual fulfilment in a much more overt way than in previous melodramas, and although this appears somehow more allowable than in previous decades, the films still deploy various strategies for containing and punishing this as a transgression. First, of course, is the

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<sup>29</sup> See Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 48-56.



fact that their narratives are confined to Europe. Whatever ‘threat’ they present to patriarchy is contained to a faraway space, away from American life. This is what the ideologically recuperative ending of *Summertime* achieves: Jane goes home again, thereby bracketing off her sexual experience from the rest of her life. American patriarchal structures thus remain safe.<sup>30</sup>

Another strategy of containment, as we might call it, is the transformation that Jane’s gaze undergoes once her desire is on its way to fulfilment. After her first kiss with Renato, the next shot shows her scurrying through the Piazza San Marco the following afternoon. She runs into Mauro and it transpires that she forgot to bring her camera. This is the first sign that her way of seeing has changed from the previous day, as she is clearly less interested in touristic spectatorship. This sense intensifies in the following montage, which shows her getting her hair and nails done and then gazing with delight upon an alluring pair of red kitten heels and a sleek black evening dress in a shop window. This is not the first time we have seen Jane window-shopping, but this time it is for the classic accoutrements of seduction. Her gaze is thus brought into line with the one type of gaze consistently allowed to women in American patriarchy: the gaze of the consumer, specifically the consumer of beauty products and clothes (i.e. the tools for commodifying herself). She is thus brought into line, as it were, by participating in her own commodification.<sup>31</sup> Earlier she entered Renato’s shop, attracted by a red goblet in the window. However now, in this beauty montage, she seems to definitively cross over to the other side of the window – and the other side of the camera, becoming herself a commodity for the first time and thus a suitable object for the male gaze.

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<sup>30</sup> The film’s UK release title, *Summer Madness*, seems to insist on this reassurance.

<sup>31</sup> Doane, *Desire*, 23.



Figure 149. Getting her hair and nails done.



Figure 150. The red kitten heels.



Figure 151. Gazing into a shop window.



Figure 152. Descending the stairs of the pensione in her new Italian outfit.

A third ‘strategy’ deployed by the film is to dramatise the struggle as an internal one for Jane. She does not challenge patriarchy so much as she argues with herself. Her encounter with Renato throws her into tortuous self-questioning, as she clings more and more desperately to the notion that if she is ‘good’ – if she remains a virgin – her sexual desire will at last be legitimated within patriarchy, through the lawful coupling a marriage. But in the face of her age this becomes a more and more absurd position, and it soon falls – only to be replaced by a last, final objection taking the form of a condemnation of adultery, as she struggles inwardly about its moral implications. At last she gives in, and she enjoys two blissful days of happiness with Renato, before arguing herself out of it again and heading home.

We need to be a bit careful about calling these ‘strategies’, as though they have been imposed from without by a controlling force. On the contrary, it is to the film’s and particularly to Katharine Hepburn’s great credit that these struggles and conflicts are contained so organically and genuinely within a single character, and a single film, without seeming like an ideological imposition on the story. Many films are less successful in this. Compare Hepburn’s performance to Suzanne Pleshette’s in *Rome Adventure*, a film whose first half is about an American woman on an explicitly sexual mission to Italy and whose second half is a dull, rather masochistic love story between her and a hunky American student with faithfulness problems. Here the second half *feels* phoney, imposed from without by an ideological necessity within the broader culture to punish a sexually active woman. Yet this seems to be at least partly because Pleshette is not enough of an actor to contain these myriad conflicting desires, of sexual liberation versus traditional monogamy, within a single character.

This begins to indicate the importance of star performance to ideological incoherence in Hollywood cinema. Dyer famously formulated that ‘stars frequently speak to dominant contradictions in social life . . . in such a way as to appear to reconcile them’.<sup>32</sup> Star performance and persona are central to the smooth functioning of the text in its utopian aim to reconcile incoherence into apparently coherent and affective narratives. Perhaps ‘badness’ in Hollywood cinema can be defined or partly defined, then, by how well a film makes the ideological reconciliation necessary to the creation of utopia feel organic and necessary: ‘badness’ occurs when the film *feels* as though an ideological recuperation has been imposed from without. This may hinge in some or many cases on star performance. Chapter 5, on the Paris musical, will examine in more detail the connections between incoherence and the utopian thrust of Hollywood ‘entertainment’.

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<sup>32</sup> Richard Dyer, ‘Four Films of Lana Turner’, in *Star Texts*, ed. Jeremy G. Butler (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 225.



In any case, Hepburn's performance here is undoubtedly a factor in the film's success as a melodrama. *Summertime* dramatises the tangled, conflicting emotions that the unexpected fulfilment of a long-held fantasy provokes for a strong, desiring but also dutiful American woman, simultaneously liberated and terrified, with an extraordinary degree of genuineness and pathos. Hepburn's performance registers as simultaneously powerful and vulnerable – as a woman who is made vulnerable precisely by her independence and strength.

*Summertime* can be understood as a drama of 'crossing over', of coming to inhabit the space that had formally belonged only to fantasy. To return for a moment to the comparison with *Rear Window*: Jeffries' temporary immobilisation due to his broken leg confines him to domestic space, disempowering and even feminising him. This circumstance brings to a head his dilemma regarding his sexuality and its expression in society, as he ponders marrying Lisa Fremont (Grace Kelly) and thus submitting permanently to domestic confinement. Jane, on the other hand, is temporarily emancipated from domestic space, given mobility, and this too ultimately challenges her to ponder questions about her unfulfilled sexuality and the possibility of its expression at home. Jeffries is trapped inside, Jane is trapped outside, and both films' plots climax with a moment of crossing over. Jeffries is literally pushed out of a window by Lars Thorwald (Raymond Burr), the murderer he has been scrutinising, thus crossing over from investigator to victim. Jane is pulled into a window, as she enters Renato's shop and partakes of the pleasures on offer rather than gazing in upon them. Both Jane and Jeffries become participants in a spectacle that they had only observed before, coming to express and live out a long-buried desire.

In any case, as *Summertime* shows us, tensions surrounding mobility versus immobility, the faraway versus the domestic, traveling versus staying at home, appear to be matters internal to the shifts in gender relations and subjectivities in America's postwar years. So far, however, we have been looking at the issue from the gender-relations end of

the equation, looking at how travel affects the dynamics of gendered gazing. The other two sections of this chapter will explore in more detail exactly how travel works to empower Jane in the first place, exploring how her empowerment plays into broader issues of American national identity and economic relationships with Europe.

### **The consuming woman**

One way that travel serves to emancipate Jane as an American woman is through her buying power. As mentioned earlier, the strength of the dollar in the 1950s meant that American travellers to Europe became de facto wealthy upon stepping off the aeroplane.<sup>33</sup> So it seems significant that as Jane arrives in Venice, her first interactions with Italians are financial transactions: they are selling and she is buying. As she steps out of the rail station, a long row of Italians in white uniforms are standing there to greet her, barking out their services. They hold their hats towards her obsequiously – whether as a sign of respect or to ask for something is ambiguous. When she gets on the waterbus, her porter repeats the gesture of holding his hat out to receive payment, asking her through facial gestures for a larger sum in payment for his services. Her position in Italy is evidently seen by the locals to be one of relative buying power. Her class standing in relation to American life seems much more modest. She works as a secretary, has ‘saved up such a long time’ to come to Europe, and chooses the waterbus over a private taxi. However, here in Italy Jane is seen primarily in terms of her ability to buy, at least so far as the locals are concerned.

Hepburn’s star persona comes into play again here, as her accent, clothing and general comportment are of course strongly affiliated with the upper classes in America. This does not quite sit right with her evident discomfort at the way the Italians look to her as a source of cash. In any case, although her class standing as far as American society is concerned is somewhat ambiguous, her place in Italian society is quite clear, and indeed is if anything reinforced by her upper-class comportment.

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<sup>33</sup> Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 83.



Figure 153. A long row of uniformed Italians, taking their hats off as Jane walks out of the rail station.



Figure 154. The porter holds his hat out for payment.

Does her relative buying power play into her relationship with Renato? Perhaps not in any overt way, yet the possibility that their romance is in fact a financial transaction is everywhere hinted at, constituting a structuring absence of their encounter. The first time Jane and Renato speak is when she enters what turns out to be his shop. She sees a beautiful red goblet in the window, and eyeing it eagerly, she carefully covers up her eyes with her sunglasses before entering to inquire about buying it (another small gesture of her shame at her own desire). The goblet seems to be a symbol of Jane's yearnings, standing out majestically in its lustrous red against the browns and golds of the shop, dazzling Jane with its beauty. Yet when she sees who is selling it, she is quite perturbed. What follows is a bargaining session, ostensibly about buying the goblet, yet she becomes uneasy about a possible double-entendre, unclear on what is actually for sale here. This understanding is also acknowledged by Renato, although with smooth confidence. Her question about whether he might be able to find a mate for the goblet, moreover, allows their relationship to develop further, serving as a pretext for his finding out the name of her hotel.



Figure 155. The red goblet in the window.



Figure 156. They bargain, yet she is unsure what is for sale.

When Renato comes to the pensione the following day, the goblet and the bargaining around it come into play once again. In the middle of what is quickly becoming a *tête a tête* between Jane and Renato, the McIlhennys arrive with not one, but half a dozen identical red goblets bought directly from the glass factory. Upon seeing this, Jane gives Renato a terrible wounded look. She suspects him of using her for her money. It's curious that this is evidently a real threat in both their minds. The difference in class standing between them effected by their difference in nationality, and his suavely determined pursuit of her, suggests that he pretended to give her a discount on a phoney antique in hopes of receiving more from their liaison. At last, however, he convinces her that the goblet, and his attraction, are genuine.



Figure 157. The McIlhennys' case of six red goblets, direct from the glass factory.

Two of Jane's key early encounters with Renato thus come extraordinarily close to being bargaining sessions – yet this possibility is converted into the language of 'romance'. The white gardenia that Renato buys for Jane serves as a symbolic counterpoint to the red goblet: Jane tells us that as a young woman, her date for a ball was too poor to buy her one. The gardenia is thus a kind of Modleskian repetition.<sup>34</sup> Its presence for a second time in Jane's life ensures that the impending affair will be conceived in terms of an original moment long ago, as a second chance at love. Yet, we might note, this second chance is made possible by the change in economic circumstances effected by her journey to Italy: now the gardenia is affordable.

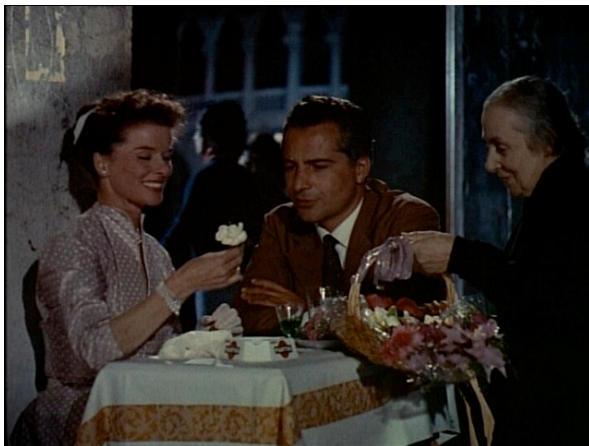


Figure 158. Jane chooses the gardenia, a symbol of her second chance at love.



Figure 159. Renato tries to retrieve the gardenia from the canal.

Both Jane and Renato take the loss of the gardenia, when she accidentally drops it into a canal, as a serious matter. Moreover, Renato's final parting gift to Jane at the rail station, which he fails to get to her in time, is another white gardenia. Both moments confirm the importance of their affair's conceptualisation as a romance rather than a commercial transaction. There are clear allusions to Jane's purchasing power – specifically the supreme horror, in patriarchy, of her buying a man for her pleasure – even as the characters resort to the language of romance to suppress this possibility.

<sup>34</sup> Modleski, 'Time and Desire', 330.





Figure 160. Renato's final parting gift of another gardenia.

Mauro, the little Italian street urchin who accompanies Jane in many of her wanderings, is a further 'safety valve' for the threat of Jane's consumer power. He is constantly asking her for money or cigarettes, offering to sell her all manner of services or trinkets in exchange. He seems to self-consciously behave in a way that she will find endearing, knowing that this will help him to get more money out of her. He washes his face in a fountain, allowing her to pretend momentarily to be his mother, in a financially-motivated affectation of affection, the very thing of which Jane is so frightened in Renato. Yet coming from a little boy, the effect is comic rather than dangerous – another way in which the film subtly yet persistently counteracts the possibility of Jane's buying power.

Why does the film work so hard to suppress Jane's status as a consumer? The answer is complicated and, like the representation of Jane's sexuality, has deep roots in the Hollywood women's film. As in the case of her sexual liberation, the film seems to step up to the edge of a precipice only to step back again. It negotiates a shifting grey area that Jane herself finds frightening.

Doane points out, in her discussion of the classical Hollywood melodrama, that this genre intersects with female consumerism in several related ways. First, because they are intended for a female audience, they constitute the example *par excellence* of what women are believed and expected to desire in a movie. The woman's film, that is, sells itself as an entertainment intended for women, offering to show women what they (purportedly) enjoy

viewing.<sup>35</sup> Second, via the female film star, the woman's film offers women aspirational images of consumption, thus showing female spectators images of what they ought to desire for themselves.<sup>36</sup> And third, they offer women a way of consuming 'the "epic" rhythms of the earth or the great movements of "history"', commodifying history and geopolitics for female consumption and thus positioning women as spectators/recipients rather than actors on the world stage.<sup>37</sup>

*Summertime* and the other Italy melodramas amplify melodrama's role in female consumption, on all these counts. A travel film for women suggests, in an eroticised and visually captivating way, a consumerist relationship between women and the world, offering place where women can find, and buy, their heart's desires. Indeed such films may be positioned as offering a special kind of consumerist gratification for female spectators, given that they are marked with both touristic visual allure and the vicarious fulfilment of women's sexual desires. These films seem to offer a world on display to women, a Europe 'cut to the measure' of women's desire.

For the women of all the Italy melodramas seem to find in Italy whatever it is that they most crave. As Mrs Johnson (Olivia de Havilland) says in *Light in the Piazza*, 'Nobody with a dream should come to Italy. No matter how dead and buried you think it is, in Italy it'll rise and walk again'. For Mrs Johnson, the desire is happiness and normalcy for her mentally handicapped daughter – a desire which is ultimately fulfilled by the daughter's marriage to Fabrizio (George Hamilton). In *Roman Holiday*, although the heroine is a European princess (Audrey Hepburn), it is her experience through which the audience gains touristic access to a wondrous, almost mythically beautiful Rome. It encourages the viewer to envision her own fantasy trip to Italy as one of a princess, prosperous and well-loved but confined, who finds in Italy a temporary respite of freedom. She has a beautiful

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<sup>35</sup> Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 25.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

fling of irresponsibility before, of course, returning to her duties of family life – ensuring that there is no genuine threat to patriarchy to be had in this fling.

The classic woman's films of the thirties and forties left the possibility of travel repressed, pushed to the margins of American women's experience as a kind of distant dream. As we have already seen, travel affords the opportunity for a potentially dangerous level of freedom and empowerment for women, even if it is also possible for it to be 'harmless'. Female consumption itself suggests empowerment. It implies that women's desires matter, and perhaps even more importantly, that women have and control money. Yet this aspect of women's consumerism is precisely what is excised from classic women's films, as their female protagonists are powerless and confined, permitted to do very little *but* consume. The classic melodramas are parables of consumerism without empowerment, envisioning a femininity to which buying the products of the world is imperative yet which is cut off from the spheres of work, decision-making and world-historical action such as might relate to their production. The Italy melodramas of the 1950s, in showing lone women who travel and buy, increasingly acknowledge the 'threat' of women's buying power, no longer possible to ignore by this period.

We can in fact discern this change throughout the development of this cycle of films. The Italy melodramas over the course of the 1950s increasingly acknowledge women's buying power in Europe at the same time as they step up their efforts, in punishing women for this transgression. In the early part of the decade is *Roman Holiday* (1953). The fact that Anne (Audrey Hepburn) is a princess enables two ideologically essential conditions of her fling: first, that sex is totally off the table – her paramount duty is to protect the purity of the royal family's lineage. Second, she is incompetent with money (she has never handled it before), which allows the film to create a fantasy of temporary escape while leaving the question of how it will be paid for in the hands of a man (Gregory Peck). *Roman Holiday* manages to walk a careful line, showing a woman's emancipation in



Europe that is perfectly insulated from the ‘dangers’ to the patriarchal order that such a trip might pose in reality.

By the early 1960s, members of the cycle frankly acknowledge that American women have the power to buy sex in Italy. In the dark Tennessee Williams adaptation *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone*, Karen Stone (Vivien Leigh) embarks on a liaison with an Italian gigolo. Yet as this acknowledgement happens, the woman’s punishment for this transgression is stepped up in equal measure. Mrs Stone’s shoddy pretence that she was having a romance is brutally repudiated and she allows herself to be murdered by another gigolo, this one an unsavoury tramp. The treatment of women’s buying power in these films goes, in nine years, from lighthearted and comic to utterly dark, requiring the revenge of full-blown tragedy to recuperate the necessary ideological terrain.

These films’ elaborate way of both acknowledging and denying women’s consumer power through travel works precisely because of the US dollar’s strength against European currencies. Women’s great yearnings, their emptinesses within, can be satisfied in Europe because their increased economic power affords them a status and mobility that is hard to distinguish from liberation. Strangely enough, this liberation is, in *Summertime* and in many of the films of this thesis, envisioned as freedom from money itself – freedom from the capitalist obsession with wealth, from the familiar binaries of what money can and cannot buy. This is why Jane’s contrast with the McIlhennys is so important. This loud, fat, crudely consumerist couple threaten to make the economic foundation of Americans’ tourist pleasures too obvious, impeding the smooth conversion of buying power into tourist affect. Jane’s disapproval of and contrast with them – her cultured refinement, her interest in the beauty of her surroundings, her desire to take things slowly and to savour each moment – enable the suppression of the economic foundations of her ‘liberation’ there, which ultimately enables the suppression of the threat which her buying power poses to patriarchy.

The film's insistence on the 'romance' of Jane's encounter with Venice – not only her affair with Renato but also her aesthetic appreciation of the city's beauty – serves to submerge the possibility of its basis in the international economics of American women's liberation. The language of romance thus becomes a token of security for patriarchy against women's buying power.

### **Tourism and nostalgia**

In this final section, I want to pay special attention to the 'timeless' aspects of *Summertime*'s vision of Italy. The film's representation of time is an important element of its aesthetics, present even in its title. The ringing of church bells punctuates the film, chiming in the mornings, signalling the end of each workday as Italians bustle through the streets. Many transitions between scenes involve a long shot of a stunning cityscape with ringing bells for a soundtrack. Indeed, the correlation between Venice's picturesque scenery and the chiming of bells is so strong that we only rarely see a panoramic shot that is *not* accompanied by some distant clanging. The bells seem to signify a stillness, as the throngs in the streets below recede into a buzzing mass. They draw Jane's eyes, and the camera, upwards – towards the tops of the buildings, the hovering pigeons and the luminous sky. Jane can be seen to film these bells on several occasions, yet frequently in impossible ways. There is no way that her handheld camera could have achieved the close-ups we see, and equally dubious that a simple tourist could have filmed from the top of a building. The bells thus serve to free Jane's gaze from materiality, giving it a perfect mobility, the unimpeded ability to view the beauty of Venice from every angle, thereby fetishising its architectural relics into images of the eternal. The bells signal a Venice that stays ever the same. Days turn into nights and nights into days, the ancient bells marking this endless and unchanging cycle.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The film is based on a play called *The Time of the Cuckoo* (by Arthur Laurents), also suggesting the centrality of time and clocks.

The bells also have a symbolic significance with reference to Jane. They signify a repetition of time, unmoving and cyclical – and thus Jane’s arrival in a place which can ultimately release her from the bind created by her ageing, by the forward passage of time. It is as though the bells of Venice embody, or indeed take to its logical conclusion, a ‘feminine’, Modleskian sense of time, characterised by repetition and stillness/immobility.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically, it is this city’s sense of timelessness, of changelessness, which allows her to be *freed* from the constraints of American culture, as though in Venice she has finally found a place sympathetic to her experience of time and therefore congenial to her happiness. Via the representation of time, Italy is mapped onto American femininity – a pairing which will turn out to be of great significance in this section.

Not only is ‘feminine’, repetitive time allied with Italy, but its opposite, the rapid pace of modernity, of speed and change and constant movement, is expressly allied with American culture, particularly as represented by the McIlhennys. When Jane first met this American couple on the waterbus, she interrupted their vain chattering to film a beautiful domed church, bells ringing as worshippers spill out through its doors. The McIlhennys take no interest in this scene, instead prattling on about the speed and efficiency of their whirlwind tour of Europe. Later, the couple are shown to be speeding along the Grand Canal in a regatta of boats, Italians clamouring to take photos of them for tips. This is directly contrasted to Jane’s quiet wandering of Venice’s alleys. Jane’s ability to perceive this stillness, this eternity, is an important aspect of her construction as superior to them, her claim to refinement over their bald consumerism.<sup>40</sup> And within the world of the film, it is women, not men, who are capable of appreciating the eternal beauty of Venice: not only Jane but also Edith McIlhenny, who sighs on her last day there, ‘Sometimes I think a

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<sup>39</sup> Modleski, ‘Time and Desire’, 330.

<sup>40</sup> The contrast between the speed of modernity and the slowness of Venice can also be found in *This is Cinerama* and *Three Coins in the Fountain*, both of which use modern forms of transportation – aeroplanes, speedboats and the like – to display the eternal slowness of Venice as opposed to the speed of their own aesthetic intervention in the city.

schedule in Venice is just, well, all wrong!’ The American man, allied with fast-paced American modernity, simply does not understand the women’s attraction to Venice.



Figure 161. The McIlhennys in a clamorous regatta of tourists.

Contemporary Italian history – specifically the Second World War and its political, economic and social aftermath – have little place in this feminised image of eternal Venice, which is always the same, never developing or modernising. The war is mentioned only once, when Signora Fiorini tells Jane she is a war widow – a necessary explanation for both her aristocratic impoverishment and her relative sexual freedom. We have no sense whatsoever of what Renato might have been doing during the war, or of how this might affect his current finances or other motivations. Like so many of the tourist films, it seems strange that in 1955, only ten years after the war ended, and at a time when its aftermath was still ever-present in terms of Italy’s rapid modernisation, the war would be absented from this film’s portrayal of Italy.

Mauro, the little urchin boy who serves as comic relief throughout the film, plays an especially curious role vis-à-vis the war. He is a throwback, bringing to mind the starving, filthy yet endearing orphans, begging GIs for chocolate and bubblegum, who populated the landscape of Europe in films depicting the American invasion and occupation made

five to ten years earlier.<sup>41</sup> By 1955 he is an anachronism: Europe had largely tackled the desperate poverty and homelessness of the immediate postwar period, and any child old enough to fend for itself at the end of the war would by now be nearing adulthood. Mauro has a fetishising function. His presence converts an endearing yet deeply patronising symbol of America's 'rescue' of Europe and freezes it into the eternal, suggesting that Italy will always need Americans – whether as soldiers or as tourists – to come and feed its children.

In *Summertime*, the recent history of American intervention in Europe is not suppressed but rather is ever-present. The timelessness and feminisation of its representation of Venice freezes the postwar American military and economic intervention in Italy into a vision of eternal patronisation and moral superiority, envisioned in gendered terms of America/masculinity/modernity versus Italy/femininity/eternality. This echoes the familiar Orientalist rhetoric that equates the conquering spirit of modernity with masculinity and ascribes to the Orient feminisation, sexualisation and surrender.<sup>42</sup> American dominance is seen in *Summertime* not as the product of some recent historical events but as a necessary and abiding fact, a demonstration of its moral righteousness and its military, social and economic virility. For all *Summertime*'s interest in transgression against gendered inscriptions of behaviour, the film leaves the assumption of America's moral superiority largely unblemished (with one ambiguous exception, to be discussed later). Jane's transgression ultimately gains little purchase against American patriarchal power, isolated as it is to Venice's faraway, romantic otherness.

The racism with which the Italians are portrayed in *Summertime* also supports the assumption of American moral dominance. At the beginning of the film, we see rickety-

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<sup>41</sup> *September Affair* (William Dieterle, 1950) and *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951) are both just about early enough to credibly include such figures, although it is interesting that the urchin boy remains a presence even into the 1960s, with *It Started in Naples* (Melville Shavelson, 1960).

<sup>42</sup> Caren Kaplan points out that 'colonized countries were viewed as "feminine" and "weak"' and the project of controlling them envisioned as a masculine one. Caren Kaplan, "'Getting to Know You': Travel, Gender, and the Politics of Representation in *Anna and the King of Siam* and *The King and I*", in *Late Imperial Culture*, ed. Román de la Campa et al. (London: Verso, 1995), 37.

looking wooden boats with exotically-shaped sails as Jane's train speeds past. As she exits the train station, Italian peddlers obsequiously bow to Jane. Weathered old gondoliers and a flower-vendor woman nap lazily in the hot afternoon sun. Laundry hangs from colourful, sun-battered houses. Italy, a modern European nation, is thus made to fit the mould of the Oriental, with its tropes of manual/unproductive/unalienated labour as the quintessential opposition to, and escape from, the conditions of modernity. The film thus uses these tropes of 'traditional' Orientalist racism, borrowing the model of British and French imperialist justification, in order to claim the language of imperial power for itself. It converts this language to a new set of historical and geographical circumstances, Italy under American influence, claiming the mantle of colonial 'responsibility' towards inferior races and thus both glorifying and justifying the American intervention in Europe.



Figure 162. Wooden boats next to the speeding train.



Figure 163. Gondoliers napping in their boats.



Figure 164. A dozing flower vendor.



Figure 165. Laundry hanging from colourful houses.

Why does this seem to ‘work’ better in Italy than in France or Scotland or Germany? Italy has long served as precisely this kind of a counterpoint to Anglo-American culture. This goes back at least to the Middle Ages,<sup>43</sup> increased greatly in the eighteenth century with the rise of the Grand Tour,<sup>44</sup> and influenced Romantic poetry,<sup>45</sup> with Shelley’s famed elegy to Keats after the young poet’s death in Rome.<sup>46</sup> Henry James’ *Portrait of a Lady* and E.M. Forster’s *A Room with a View*<sup>47</sup> trace a similar logic, insistently contrasting the staid, overdetermined domestic life of modernity to the warmth, freedom and moral danger of Italy – especially for women. Italy, with its hot sunshine, the brown skin of many of the locals and the fabulous antiquity of the architecture, seems to have long inspired Orientalist-style fantasies in Anglo-American writers. Italy, as a European nation, is just about ‘safe’ enough for even young women to be trusted to travel to, but still carries hints of moral danger and freedom from domesticity as an other to Anglo-American culture, occupying a space at the edge of Europeanness – seemingly a border area with the global south. It does not take much, then, for the Italy melodramas to make a similar move, drawing on this tradition. It removes the British from the equation in the process. Jane’s companion on the train is British, has been to Venice several times and gives Jane a little introduction to its delights, before sending her on her own way. The film thus almost explicitly announces the American as the inheritor of the British tradition of travel in Italy.

Another reason why Italy can seemingly be so easily absorbed into the Oriental is due to Renato’s participation in the ‘Latin lover’ stereotype. Tanned, beautiful, sexually assertive, using emphatic hand gestures, and seemingly enraptured by Jane’s (supposedly

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<sup>43</sup> George B. Parks, *The English Traveller to Italy: First Volume: The Middle Ages (to 1525)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1954).

<sup>44</sup> Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>45</sup> Hornsby, Clare, ‘Introduction, or why travel?’, in *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond*, ed. Clare Hornsby (London: The British School at Rome, 2000), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Shelley, Percy Bysshe, ‘Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats’, <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/1879.html>, accessed 9 August 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (London: Penguin, 1984); E.M. Forster, *A Room With a View*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

rather modest) charms, Renato is a close match to the image of the ‘Latin lover’ most famously inhabited by Rudolph Valentino. In fact, Rossano Brazzi’s star image was, according to Jacqueline Reich, specifically positioned in his casting and publicity as Valentino’s successor, ‘the Latin lover of the sound era’.<sup>48</sup> The ‘Latin lover’ figure continues the mapping of femininity and American women’s desires onto Italy, making the Orientalist aspects of this move all the more explicit.

The most salient feature of the Latin lover is his positioning as the object of women’s desire. He is there to be consumed by women, ‘cut to the measure’ of what women (supposedly) *really* want in a lover – as opposed to what they *ought* to want, which is the white American masculinity of the hardworking provider/family man.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, according to Miriam Hansen, the Latin lover is not only positioned as object of desire but also as object of the female gaze: Valentino was often filmed using soft-focus and lighting techniques normally reserved for the fetishised bodies of female stars.<sup>50</sup> Valentino functioned as an object for and symbol of women’s desires. Participation in the cult of Valentino was, for women, a way of declaring oneself to be a New Woman, liberated from patriarchy, free to choose and gratify one’s desires both consumer and sexual.<sup>51</sup>

This was possible in large part because of Valentino’s status as ethnic/racial other. That the Latin lover was often shown to gaze at white women as well as being gazed upon by them carried a hint of taboo without crossing over into full miscegenation, as the Italian (or Hispanic) man was only ambiguously otherised within American society (unlike black or Asian men). The politics of race were, according to Hansen, inseparable from the politics of women’s sexuality: ‘The injunction against casting an ethnically distinct actor in a

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<sup>48</sup> Jacqueline Reich, *Beyond the Latin Lover: Marcello Mastroianni: Masculinity, and Italian Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 30.

<sup>49</sup> Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 259.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.



leading role meant, for a large number of films, the role of a romantic lover', <sup>52</sup> and one of the most important threats supposedly posed by non-whites was the possibility of sex with white women. Women's fetishisation of Valentino thus signalled a repurposing of the rhetoric of American racism to declare their own ability to choose and buy. Paradoxically, Valentino's racial otherness meant that there were both forbidden and permissible aspects to these dynamics. Women were 'allowed' to gaze upon him precisely because of his racial otherness, which deemed this gaze as non-threatening, even as it suggested the equally dangerous threat of miscegenation. Hansen reads the racially-charged vitriol often directed at Valentino by white American men as 'a displacement, a defense against the threat of female sexuality'.<sup>53</sup>

It is not hard to see how the same issues could have cropped up again in the 1950s, the new era of women's liberation. Women's status both as economically powerful consumers and as sexual agents were once again becoming critical issues in national culture, threatening the patriarchal status quo. Rossano Brazzi's star image seems to signal *Summertime* (as well as the numerous other Italy melodramas in which he stars) as made for a female audience, sympathetic to feminine needs and desires, offering a taste of sexual and consumer gratification for white American women. Like Valentino, this is accomplished not only through Brazzi's beauty or his Italian-inflected virility (his hand gesturing, his flaring nostrils just before he kisses Jane, the directness of his seduction of her) but also through the dynamics of gazing. The intensity of his gaze upon her when they first see each other in the cafe may unnerve her precisely because of its hint of miscegenation, even as it evidently excites her (and indeed, it parallels the way Valentino and Agnes Ayres first set eyes upon each other in *The Sheik*). There may also be a nostalgic element to Brazzi's deployment as the 'Latin lover'. It is possible that Brazzi hearkened back specifically enough to Valentino that he could have appealed to middle-aged women who would have

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

been of the right age in the 1920s to be Valentino fans. Brazzi's greying hair may make him almost a literal replacement for Valentino, a Rudolph who lived.<sup>54</sup>

Yet both Valentino's films and Brazzi's embody the need to 'contain' women's desires to a faraway space, away from American domestic life. Many of Valentino's most famous roles created him as not just racially separate but also opposed to modernity: he plays a sheikh, a gaucho, a rajah, 'a fugitive from the modern age', as Giannino Malossi argues.<sup>55</sup> Valentino's racial otherness as an Italian seems to meld almost effortlessly with Orientalist narrative and iconography: this otherness puts him in other times, other spaces – often, in fact, the most characteristically Orientalist ones – the other to the spirit of Western modernity. This would have worked not only as a geographical strategy of containment, placing the ideological conflicts surrounding women's desire in a faraway space, but also could have functioned to isolate and dismiss women's desires, confining them to the 'silly', feminised fantasy space of the matinee. The Italy melodramas mobilise similar strategies of containment. Italy's very faraway-ness, its status as (almost) other, functioning similarly to dismiss and isolate women's desires, an inoculation against its threats to patriarchy. Indeed, the very Technicolor realism of the location shooting in the Italy films may have functioned at once to signify 'the real Italy' and to confirm the sense that these films offer women a visual spectacle, pleasant, faraway and harmless.

The Italy of the 1950s melodramas is a geographical extension of the Latin lover myth: timeless, eternal, a refuge from modernity, full of beautiful men who seem to exist to seduce women. The Orientalism that functions so centrally to the Latin lover myth, making it at once taboo and permissible, is extended to the landscape of Italy. The very beauty, the exoticness, the antiquity of the landscape, in the context of the Latin lover iconography, buttresses the sense that this Italy exists as a ghetto for American women's

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<sup>54</sup> However, it should be pointed out that Valentino was born in 1895 while Brazzi was born in 1916, making them 21 years apart in age.

<sup>55</sup> Giannino Malossi, 'Introduction: The Banality of the Latin Lover', in *Latin Lover: The Passionate South*, ed. Giannino Malossi (Florence: Pitti Immagine, 1996), 24.

pleasure, allowing its expression and increasing its pleasures but simultaneously isolating it within the faraway.

It is Valentino and Brazzi's very opposition to modernity, the essential otherness of these stars, which allows women to claim them as part of *their own* project of modernity, which in the 1920s was known as the New Woman and in the 1950s was known as women's liberation. White American women repurposed the Orientalist dualism of modernity/masculinity versus the Orient/femininity, utilising tropes of the Oriental to claim a sense of power for themselves and hence declaring their own, separate, feminine spirit of modernity.

This feminine repurposing of the Oriental stands on a moral divide. On the one hand, tropes of Orientalism and travel were used, both in the Italy melodramas and (in a more oblique way) in earlier Hollywood women's films, to open up a space for feminine dissent: women's desire and women's subjectivity are both deeply connected in this period of Hollywood history to iconographies of the faraway.<sup>56</sup> This puts feminist film critics in frequent danger, a danger which they to some extent recognise and attempt to redress.<sup>57</sup> But to my knowledge the full historical extent of the intertwining between Western women's defiance against patriarchy and the iconographies of Orientalism and the exotic, both in Hollywood and in other cultures, and indeed in other art forms, have not yet been explored. This thesis can only suggest, in a very specific historical period and art form, how far this intertwining may go.

Nor can we separate American imperialist ideologies from the role of women and their struggle with patriarchy. Said sees sex and sexual fantasy as a corollary of colonial domination – just one in a battery of tropes supporting a wider ideological framework. But as the Italy melodramas show, the sexual fantasies of the American woman are utterly

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<sup>56</sup> And, it seems, outside Hollywood too to some extent, as films like *Chocolat* (Claire Denis, 1988) and *Heading South* (Laurent Cantet, 2005) make clear.

<sup>57</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze* (London: Routledge, 1997); see full discussion in chapter 1.

central to domination, indissoluble from Hollywood's understanding of and intervention in American colonial ideologies. Women's desire is one of the primary lenses through which the narratives and ideological tensions of empire are focused, with patriarchal anxieties standing in for racial/geographical/ national ones and vice versa, the two discourses ever closely intertwined.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that *Summertime* leaves its participation in American imperialism totally uncriticised. Indeed the film displays at least some degree of self-awareness about the problematic nature of its participation in Orientalist rhetoric. After discovering Renato is married, Jane returns to the pensione to glimpse Signora Fiorini and Eddie Yeager in the middle of an adulterous affair. They call Mauro, ordering him to engage a gondola for their furtive sexual encounter. Jane remains unnoticed until they are gone, at which point she attacks Mauro for his participation in their tryst – almost literally, as she comes very close to striking him. She grabs his money from his hand and tosses it violently away, shaking him and crying that the money is 'dirty'. Although we have previously been cued to trust and follow Jane's perspective, here her actions are clearly not benign. Her sense of moral superiority has led her so far as to nearly hit a child, a child who is not at fault for the others' adulterous actions and is simply trying to make a rather pitiful living. Her cleaving to patriarchy via assuming its morally righteous language in relation to Italians is here implicitly critiqued, and she herself eventually retreats from this position in the face of its hypocrisy.



Figure 166. Jane nearly strikes Mauro.

For when Renato arrives and intervenes, this is essentially what he calls her – a hypocrite – and he seems right. It is interesting, however, to note the exact nature of the hypocrisy of which he accuses her, as it turns out to be somewhat complicated. Here is what he says:

You come here and what do you do? You sit in a gondola and sigh, 'Oh Venice, so beautiful, so romantic; oh these Italians, so lyrical, so romantic, such children'. And you dream of meeting someone you want: young, rich, witty, brilliant, and unmarried of course. But me, I am a shopkeeper, not young, not rich, not witty, not brilliant, and married of course. But I am a man, and you are a woman. But you say, 'it's wrong, it's wicked, it's this, it's that'. You are like a hungry child who is given ravioli to eat. 'No', you say, 'I want beefsteak'. My dear girl, you are hungry. Eat the ravioli.

This is the hypocrisy of tourism. Jane (and other Americans) enjoy and sentimentalise the beautiful, romantic otherness of Venice, but this sentimentalisation is a mask for a deep intolerance of Italian ways, ways which she demands be kept hidden, denied, out of sight. Renato thus suggests that American touristic enjoyment of Venice is based on a system of repressions and lies, that it obscures reality at least as much as it absorbs it. He entreats her to let go of these American-inflected fantasies (beefsteak) and embrace a more homely, everyday Italian reality (ravioli), a reality in which her desires can be nourished rather than judged.

However, this speech may also be somewhat disingenuous at an ideological level. One integral part of the 'Latin lover' fantasy is this figure's intense persistence in seducing the white American woman – his power to overcome her moral resistance. In the Italy melodramas, whenever an American woman is shown to want and pursue a foreign man too actively, she is punished. This happens most notably in *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* and *Rome Adventure*, both of which almost sadistically rein in their heroines with, respectively, death and a pairing with a man who gives her a taste of her own medicine. Part of the very fantasy of seduction is, apparently, that the woman must not be asking for it; otherwise she is a 'tramp' and not a sympathetic character in the Hollywood schema.

Moreover, this speech taps into the problematic rhetoric of ‘authenticity’ in relation to the touristic experience of place. As Dean MacCannell puts it in his classic study of tourism,

The touristic critique of tourism is based on a desire to go beyond the other ‘mere’ tourists to a more profound appreciation of society and culture... All tourists desire this deeper involvement with society and culture to some degree; it is a basic component of their motivation to travel.<sup>58</sup>

Renato’s speech positions her sexual transgression as an experience of the ‘real’ Venice, thus bolstering the rhetoric of on-location shooting in which the films give the spectator unadulterated, authentic, and possibly *better* access to the ‘real’ Europe than an actual trip could yield. In essence, then, this scene both challenges Jane’s moral superiority as an American, and undercuts this challenge by converting it to the rhetorics of feminine chastity and of ‘authenticity’.

Jane’s moral disavowal and her eventual ‘giving in’ are thus converted to an Orientalist aestheticisation of Italy, an aspect of its seductions both sexual and touristic. This is an example of the pervasive function of the picturesque in the Italy melodramas, what Suleri would call the picturesque’s ability to freeze the dynamic, shifting power relations of a cultural encounter into an image of beauty and safety. We might extend the notion of the picturesque here to refer not only to the visual qualities of paintings, photographs and film images, but to an entire aestheticised experience of place which encompasses, among other things, the notion of ‘romance’. Thus extended, the picturesque can serve as the model for a whole series of moves made in *Summertime*, including the conversion of economic superiority into tourist affect, the offer to women of a titillating possibility of miscegenation even as this danger is isolated to a faraway fantasy space, the conversion of moral/sexual inhibition into a fantasy of ‘giving in’, and the ability to enjoy a sexual/romantic fantasy with ‘the other’ whilst never failing to maintain American moral

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<sup>58</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, new ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 9.

superiority. All of these moves have in common a reliance on the beauty and pleasure Jane's (and our) experience of Venice to accomplish the ideological work of empire, the repressions and displacements that allow this film to advance the task of empire even as it disavows any knowledge of it. The picturesque, then, serves as a recuperation of the utopian in the face of incoherent and jostling ideologies.

As discussed in previous chapters, the picturesque is inseparable from women's visuality and subjectivity. The picturesque landscape is not only viewed and viewable primarily by women, but is inscribed with feminine characteristics, functioning as an extension of women's desires. These feminine characteristics are, this section has argued, inseparable from the picturesque's functioning simultaneously to diminish and to buttress patriarchal and imperial ideologies.

The other salient feature of the picturesque is, as we saw both here and in Chapter 1, that it is dependent on a notion of timelessness; it is an aesthetics of nostalgia. It freezes time in order to evade change, modernisation, development, which would annihilate the other's status as other. Freezing a space into the eternal is essential to Orientalism, to the justification of empire.

As we have seen, here in *Summertime* the tourist gaze, closely related to the picturesque, is very much a feminine gaze: looking up rather than down, exploring surfaces rather than penetrating inward, sentimentalising rather than investigating. This feminine gaze on the one hand may challenge the patriarchal hierarchy at home in America, for it gives women power to gaze which they are normally denied in Hollywood – but on the other hand it serves to reinforce American imperialist ideology, smoothly justifying imperialist intervention via touristic fantasy and thus cementing America's positioning as a benevolent force for freedom. Women's gazing here plays a central role in the ideological advancement of the American empire.

## Chapter 5. Fashion and consumerism in the Paris musical

The previous chapters have teased out some of the complicated interconnections between gender politics, geography and genre in postwar Hollywood films set in Berlin and in Italy. It is not new to claim a connection between gender and genre in classical Hollywood; what *is* new is the consideration of how geopolitics, geographical imaginaries and colonial tropes inform the gender-genre equation.

The present and final chapter will explore similar issues in relation to the 1950s Paris musical. This generic grouping includes *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), *Lovely to Look At* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1952), *April in Paris* (David Butler, 1952), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953), *The French Line* (Lloyd Bacon, 1953), *Anything Goes* (Robert Lewis, 1956), *Funny Face* (Stanley Donen, 1957), *Les Girls* (George Cukor, 1957) and *Silk Stockings* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1957). There are other films which are set in Paris but are *not* musicals (please see the Appendix for a full list of films including locations), and some of what we say would be applicable to them too. However, the musicals comprise an especially rich and complex set of texts in relation to both gender and, as we shall see, American geographical imaginaries.

The present chapter will take a slightly different tack to the others and begin with a review of Paris as a film location in Hollywood cinema. Paris is such a robustly represented locale in Hollywood cinema that it is often treated in films (and also by some scholars) as though there were something obvious about it – about what is there and what it ‘means’ to audiences.<sup>1</sup> Paris films by and large do not, for example, visually dwell on the city’s most famous tourist sites like the Eiffel Tower or the church of Sacre Coeur; when shown at all,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Rachel Moseley, *Growing Up with Audrey Hepburn: Text, Audience, Resonance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). Discussing Paris on a number of occasions as a city long associated with Hepburn, she tends to describe it in unreconstructed terms as, for example, ‘the city of lovers’ (156) or ‘*the romantic and modern city of the moment*’ (136; italics in original). Charlotte Herzog’s article about fashion sequences in Hollywood also briefly discusses Paris as the most important location for this, but once again does not give it much thought (154); see Charlotte Herzog, ‘“Powder Puff” Promotion: The Fashion Show-in-the-Film’, in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, ed. Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (London: Routledge, 1990), 134-159.



they tend to be treated very briefly and iconically, as though as a kind of shorthand for an already-existing set of meanings. This chapter will take a step back from this supposed obviousness and attempt to unpick some of the complicated meanings of 'Paris'. I will focus in particular on femininity, American democratic capitalism, and the special marriage of the two to be found in the twentieth-century fashion industry, of which Paris was the capital. The films I focus on in detail are *Silk Stockings* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, two films which constitute especially rich, complex and potentially rewarding texts for understanding Paris as an imagined location within American culture.

I use the 'obviousness' of Paris as a theoretical entry point to my analysis. The films of this chapter are musicals, which Richard Dyer identifies as primary texts in the supposed 'obviousness' of the idea of 'entertainment'.<sup>2</sup> In the creation of entertainment's utopian aesthetic, argues Dyer, the Hollywood musical proposes imaginary, feelings-oriented solutions to social problems in the wider culture. It 'works through these contradictions at all levels in such a way as to "manage" them, to make them seem to disappear'.<sup>3</sup> If entertainment is 'obvious' – or to put it another way, 'easy' to watch – then this is because it functions so smoothly to paper over the ideological cracks in American culture. 'Paris', I will argue, functions as the 1950s shorthand for a certain kind of utopian solution.

Dyer writes that the social problems to which the musical imagines a solution are only those 'that capitalism proposes itself to deal with', crucially leaving out the kinds of problems that the dominant American culture disavows: class, race and patriarchy.<sup>4</sup> I would add colonialism to this list (distinguishing it from race). As in previous chapters, I will explore here the ways in which, by the 1950s, these effacements were becoming ever more difficult to sustain, straining to its breaking point the musical's capacity to 'solve' problems via American patriarchal capitalism. The films of this chapter demonstrate this: they

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Dyer, 'Entertainment and Utopia', in *Only Entertainment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: Routledge, 2002). 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

simultaneously admit and deny women's liberation and American imperialism, proposing solutions for (or simply erasing) these problems. In doing so, however, these films threaten to disintegrate into incoherence.

Because the cultural interactions between America and Paris seem especially richly laden with associations and meanings, I will begin by historically situating these in relation to America's various interactions with France in the decades before and during the postwar period. This will, I hope, begin to unpick exactly why Paris is so overdetermined with meanings in American culture.

As American tourism rose in the latter half of the nineteenth century with the advent of ever faster and cheaper forms of transport like the steamship and the railroad, Paris quickly became what Christopher Endy calls the 'hub city for American tourism in Europe'.<sup>5</sup> For example, Paris was the site of the very first American Express office outside American borders, in 1895.<sup>6</sup> It was one of the two primary places, along with London, where Americans landed after the steamship voyage across the Atlantic, thereby forming a gateway to the rest of Europe. France was a longstanding ally of the United States, going back to the American War of Independence. It was also a major colonial power and one of the most technologically advanced nations on earth – three potential reasons why American travellers might regard it with particular affinity.

Yet perhaps an even more important reason for (or result of) Paris tourism was American culture's fascination with French arts and crafts, both 'high' and 'low'. Impressionist paintings and other forms of modern art,<sup>7</sup> Parisian fashion and French performance dance traditions including both ballet and cancan were all objects of

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<sup>5</sup> Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Postwar Hollywood cinema's fascination with impressionism and other French painting traditions would merit study in its own right, but will have to be put aside for present purposes. Examples include *An American in Paris*, *Moulin Rouge* (John Huston, 1952) and *Lust for Life* (Vincente Minnelli, 1956).

American attention beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – and this continued into the postwar era. When one considers it, this is an extraordinary number of different cultural traditions being imported from France to America in a single period. They form a core part of what American culture treated, and still treats in many cases, as the great traditions of high art and/or the foundations of enormous commercial industries. Paris was the capital of them all.

Although American travel to France was necessarily disrupted by the First World War, it resumed at full force in the 1920s. Many of the source materials for the 1950s Paris films originated in this decade. This was when an American expatriate literary movement was formed, with its hub in Paris. Writers like Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald portrayed the French metropolis as a city of glamour, parties and sexuality. A Fitzgerald short story entitled ‘Babylon Revisited’ was eventually made into the 1954 film *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (dir. Richard Brooks). It was also in the 1920s that Anita Loos wrote *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the eventual source material (after undergoing several adaptations) for the 1953 Howard Hawks film that will be the focus of the final section of this chapter.

Also in the 1920s and into the 1930s, Paris became a relatively frequent setting for American stage musicals. Cole Porter, a young American composer who spent much of the 1920s in Paris, returned to New York in 1928 and began writing hit Broadway stage musicals set in Paris, including *Paris* (1928), *Fifty Million Frenchmen* (1929), *Anything Goes* (1934), *Du Barry Was a Lady* (1939) and finally *Can-Can* (1953). Several of these were adapted into Hollywood films at one time or another, including an early Bob Hope short *Paree, Paree* (Roy Mack, 1934; an adaptation of *Fifty Million Frenchmen*); Gene Kelly and Lucille Ball in *Du Barry Was a Lady* (Roy Del Ruth, 1943); *Anything Goes*, which was adapted in 1936 (directed by Lewis Milestone and starring Bing Crosby and Ethel Merman) in addition to the 1956 version; and *Can-Can* (Walter Lang, 1960, starring Shirley Maclaine and Frank Sinatra). The stage musical *Roberta* (Jerome Kern and Otto Harbach, 1933) also

became the source for both a 1935 Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers vehicle by the same title (directed by William A. Seiter) as well as the 1952 *Lovely to Look At*.

One major characteristic of all of these works, many of which were adapted over and over again between the late 1920s and the late 1950s, is that they feature Americans travelling abroad to Paris. Paris is treated in these depictions as the archetypal tourist site for Americans – the place at the other end of the Atlantic voyage. Some of these plays and films are about the voyage itself as much as the arrival, including *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *The French Line* and *Anything Goes*. Another source for a 1950s film about a voyage to Paris includes Charles Lindbergh's pioneering 1927 solo non-stop flight across the Atlantic, the subject of Billy Wilder's 1957 biopic *The Spirit of St Louis* (starring James Stewart). Paris is conceived once again as the city at the other end of the Atlantic voyage, at once closely connected to and yet vitally different and far away from American culture. The voyage to Paris, shortened first via the steamship and then by the aeroplane, seems to have served as the standard by which world travel was measured, so far as America was concerned.<sup>8</sup>

Americans admired and frequently appropriated French culture, frequently travelled there, and treated it as a primary other to America in geographic terms. It is not difficult to see how this could have ripened into an appropriation of the classic tropes of Orientalism. The beginning of America's political and economic domination of the world, according to historians such as de Grazia, lay in the expansion of American corporations in the 1920s and was at its most complete in the postwar period through the mid-1960s, in Europe at least.<sup>9</sup> America's envy of French culture mirrors Said's notion of Orientalist envy.<sup>10</sup> France was seen as a civilisation of great antiquity and cultural wealth, an object of desire.

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<sup>8</sup> The Concorde supersonic jet also ran between New York and Paris between 1976 and 2003 – perhaps proof of the continuing supremacy of Paris as the capital of Europe in the American imagination.

<sup>9</sup> Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-Century Europe* (London: Belknap Press, 2005), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 167.

Tourism, as we saw in previous chapters, often serves as the feminine counterpart to the more masculine activities of domination, the spheres of money and power. From the beginnings of the explosion of tourism in the late 1800s, tourists were predominantly female. Earl Pomeroy writes in his study of early American tourism that ‘by the early 1880s family groups of tourists (with women uniformly exceeding men) were dominating ... whole steamers to Europe.’<sup>11</sup> Although many of the Americans in the Paris films are men, they are by and large not tourists; they either live there or go on business.

The American women in films about Paris, on the other hand, tend to be leisure travellers. They are not, however, focused on sightseeing, as the American women in Italy are, but rather on the acquisition of clothes and other fashion goods. This is a near-universal trope of these films, many of which feature fashion models or designers as characters: Paris is the place where modern fashions, and modern femininities, are created before being imported home to America, and tourist travel to Paris is conceived primarily as an opportunity to buy clothes. Although other iconic French cultural traditions like ballet and erotic dancing (also potentially relevant to discussions of femininity and Orientalism) were taken up in Hollywood cinema of the 1950s, this chapter will focus on representations of Paris as the centre of women’s fashion. Films dealing with ballet, nightclub dancing and/or Expressionist paintings were all made in the 1950s, but many of them took place in the past – typically around the turn of the twentieth century; this includes films like *Gigi* (Vincente Minnelli, 1958), *Can-can* and *Moulin Rouge* (John Huston, 1952).<sup>12</sup> As this thesis set out to study films set in postwar Europe, fashion is the most relevant.

French fashion during the war and postwar years was often taken as having symbolic political significance. During the war, the Nazis had been eager to appropriate

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<sup>11</sup> Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), 6.

<sup>12</sup> These ‘belle époque’ films have been studied in Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It’s So French! Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

the Paris fashion industry for itself, attempting to move it to Berlin. The plan was successfully resisted by a few devoted designers and workers, including Christian Lelong.<sup>13</sup> America regaining access to French fashion was treated as a major symbol of victory, as just after the liberation American women eagerly awaited the arrival of the first Paris fashions in six years.<sup>14</sup>

Fashion was (and is) often associated with a rhetoric of up-to-the-minute modernity. Fashion-oriented Paris films, on the whole, take place in the immediate present. Despite this, fashions of the postwar period beginning with Christian Dior's New Look in 1947 were distinctly oriented towards an earlier time – once again, the *fin de siècle*, as though wanting to reclaim this era's supposed pre-world-war innocence. Claire Wilcox recounts how Dior, defying the long, lean, often austere fashions and uniforms of the war years, created the New Look out of a new aesthetic of abundance. The models he clothed were 'flower-like, with rounded shoulders, full feminine busts, and hand-span waists above enormous, spreading skirts'.<sup>15</sup> The New Look was explicitly nostalgic, hearkening back to an era, before both World Wars, when women wore complex corsetry and dresses were made from dozens of metres of fabric. This perceived era of abundance was also, importantly for the 1950s, an era prior to women winning the franchise or going to work in large numbers.

Dior and other Paris fashion houses were widely seen as the originator of this look, and for ten years, from 1947 to 1957, the city experienced an unprecedented heyday as the centre of the fashion world. This prominence was heavily reliant on the fashion market in America and was intricately connected to the mystique of the 'buying trip' undertaken by wealthy American women to go to the source of the American fashion world. As Jacques Fath, a prominent Parisian designer, wrote in the Fodor's Women's Guide to Paris of 1956,

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<sup>13</sup> Claire Wilcox, *The Golden Age of Couture: Paris and London, 1947-1957* (London: V&A, 2007), 36.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. This is also discussed at length in Maureen Turim's 'Designing Women: The Emergence of the New Sweetheart Line', *Wide Angle* 6(2), 4-11.

Avenue Pierre 1er-de-Serbie is my street in Paris, in the heart of the haute couture quarter. Seventh Avenue is its American translation into wholesale terms. The two get on fabulously well together for very sound reasons. They respect and need each other'.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that this is found in an American travel guide to Paris is telling. American tourism in Paris was intimately bound up with fashion, a sensibility upon which the musicals of this chapter persistently draw.

Viewed in conjunction with the patriotic meanings evoked by American travel and consumption in Europe – reaching an apex in discourses surrounding the fashion industry – it is possible to see how the female body became entangled in a complex array of patriotic meanings in postwar America. Indeed their adornment through fashion (as well as perfume and make-up) came to be seen as a major triumph of capitalist democracy, their beauty a weapon in the Cold War. Laura Mulvey, in her article about *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, calls this a ‘democracy of glamour’ that America was trying to export to Europe.<sup>17</sup> Hollywood, particularly in the form of its female stars, served as the ‘shop window’ that would seduce Europeans to American consumerist democracy.<sup>18</sup> It was not only American women’s beauty that was laden with political symbolisms, but other aspects of femininity as well. Elaine Tyler May recounts that American women’s domestic labour, especially their use of modern appliances, was frequently imbued with a similar symbolic power, a proof of the superiority of the American way of life over communism.<sup>19</sup> Yet even this, according to May, was often linked to their beauty: the ease of their domestic labour set American women free to ‘cultivate their looks, and their physical charms, to become sexually attractive housewives’. Women’s consumption of feminine goods like clothes and make-up, then – the continual transformation of their bodies into beautiful objects – became an

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<sup>16</sup> Wilcox, *The Golden Age*, 51.

<sup>17</sup> Laura Mulvey, ‘*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*: Anita Loos/Howard Hawks/Marilyn Monroe’, in *Howard Hawks: American Artist*, ed. Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen (London: BFI, 1996), 216.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, revised ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 22.

increasingly indispensable aspect of their compliance to the hegemonic American order both patriarchal and political. This compliance was never more pressing than in Europe, where the fate of democracy supposedly hung in the balance.

The success of the American 'way of life' (fighting off both Nazism and communism) and the success of patriarchy (fighting off feminism) were both seen, then, to hang in the balance of American relations with the French capital. Parisian couture functions as a central intersection of these two contested ideological terrains, in which women and their consumer habits could be brought into line with American patriarchal capitalism.

### **Silk Stockings**

Rick Altman fleshes out Dyer's argument about how the utopianism of the musical functions to solve social problems. Altman argues that the musical has a dual-focus narrative: 'instead of focusing all its interest on a single central character...the American film musical has a dual focus, built around parallel stars of opposite sex and radically divergent values'.<sup>20</sup> These opposing values are slowly merged in the course of the musical, the tension finally resolved at the end by the romantic coupling of the pair. Often, argues Altman, these values associated with the male and female leads centre around the principles of something like fun/entertainment/pleasure versus seriousness/business/the 'real world'. He uses *Silk Stockings*, in fact, to demonstrate how the male and female leads stand in for an opposed set of values.<sup>21</sup>

Jane Feuer discusses how these opposed values are mapped between dialogue sequences and numbers, as the 'real' world (within the diegesis) is opposed to a dream-like

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<sup>20</sup> Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (London: British Film Institute, 1989), 19.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.



space of fantasy, magic or play.<sup>22</sup> She focuses on the dream sequence, showing how these sequences function to create a utopian space as an antidote to real-world problems.

The Hollywood musical creates dream sequences within musicals in order to obliterate the differences between dreams in films, dreams in ordinary life, and dreams as the fulfilment in ordinary life of the promises offered by the movies.<sup>23</sup>

In such sequences ‘the movies’ themselves, i.e. the consumption of entertainment, is proposed as a solution. Feuer tantalisingly suggests that in some musicals, such as *Brigadoon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1954), the distance between dream world and real world is envisioned as geographical space. This section focuses on *Silk Stockings* as a dual-focus musical in which the oppositions between values, and the utopian solution offered by the dream world, are given an explicitly geopolitical mapping, proposing values associated with ‘Paris’, the dream world, as a solution to the real-life ‘problems’ of feminism and communism.

Steve Canfield (Fred Astaire), an American movie producer, is in Paris to collaborate on a film with Peter Boroff (Wim Sonneveld), a famous Soviet composer currently on tour there. Suspecting Boroff of disloyalty, the Soviet government sends three Russian commissars, Brankov (Peter Lorre), Bibinski (Jules Munshin) and Ivanov (George Tobias). However, showing the commissars the pleasures of Paris (primarily the beautiful women), Steve persuades them to abandon their investigation and allow Boroff’s case to be tied up in the courts by a spurious lawsuit. The Soviet government then sends after them a more senior commissar, Nina Yoschenko (Cyd Charisse), to censure the others and speed up Boroff’s return. At first rigid in demeanour and staunchly communist, Nina is gradually loosened up by the twin seductions of Steve’s charm and Paris in the springtime. Eventually she is won over to the pleasures of capitalism and romance; they become engaged. Meanwhile, Peggy Dayton (Janis Paige), a garish American actress famous for her swimming routines, arrives to star in the film Steve and Boroff are making. She insists that

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<sup>22</sup> Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: MacMillan, 1993), 75.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

it be made into a musical, and it is soon transformed into a kitschy spectacle about the Empress Josephine. When Nina and Boroff realise this, they are insulted and immediately return to Russia, the engagement broken. However, back in Moscow, she and the other commissars all pine for the West. When Brankoff, Bibinski and Ivanov are sent to Paris again on another mission, they decide to defect and open a Russian-themed nightclub. They devise a plot to have Nina sent back to Paris as well, and she too defects to the West to marry Steve.

This section will begin by unpicking some of the tangled layers of gendered and geographical meanings at work in *Silk Stockings*, focusing particularly on the film's complicated relationship to the feminine transformation narrative, before moving on to discuss this trope's relationship to colonial geographies. It will not, I should state at the outset, argue for a definitive reading of these texts as colonial texts; rather it will note their slipperiness in this regard, suggesting and denying colonial dynamics simultaneously.

*Silk Stockings* is a musical remake of the 1939 Garbo vehicle *Ninotchka* (Ernst Lubitsch). *Ninotchka* was released in October of that year – a month into the Second World War – but was presumably filmed beforehand, so it begins with some text explaining that it takes place ‘in Paris in those wonderful days when a siren was a brunette and not an alarm’, although those days had ended only weeks before. *Ninotchka* already takes a nostalgic tone, then, in its conjuring of Paris, a tone that is to become very common in relation to this city in the 1950s. It does so, moreover, by reference to women's beauty, a beauty that is implicitly now lost. The basic story of a Russian woman official coming to the West and being seduced by its delights was to become a recurrent theme in the mid to late 1950s: *The Iron Petticoat* (Ralph Thomas, 1956) stars Katharine Hepburn and Bob Hope, a farce set in London; and *Jet Pilot* (Josef von Sternberg, 1957) stars Janet Leigh and John Wayne, a thriller which begins on an Air Force base in America before embarking on a spy mission inside Russia. *Silk Stockings* is a musical version, and shows the most fidelity to the first film, even copying some scenes almost line for line. (There are, of course, some

major differences too – in *Ninotchka* the commissars are in Paris to sell jewels; the male love interest is a dandy of ambiguous European origin, not an American and not a film producer.) It is fascinating that on the eve of the war was born a basic story that would become such an important narrative in the postwar period, allowing us to trace a prehistory of some of the stereotypes, narratives and images that eventually came to form the Cold War imaginary. Already in 1939, Russia is referred to, casually and even comically, as a kind of tin-pot dictatorship in which starvation, mass trials and gulags are commonplace. Garbo's *Ninotchka* fires off deadpan one-liner jokes about this: 'The latest mass trials were a great success. There are going to be fewer but better Russians'. Paris, too, long before its invasion by Nazis, is represented as a contested space, a space whose fidelity to American ideologies must be somehow insisted upon as though it is in danger.

It is also a space for the conversion of specifically *women* to consumer capitalism via the delights of dressing and grooming oneself. Each iteration of the *Ninotchka* story (possibly excepting *Jet Pilot*) dwells at length on the Russian woman's increasing fascination with high fashion, ultimately shedding her uniform-like garb for brilliant, beautiful clothes. In this narrative, a woman's commitment to beauty consumption, and her transformation into a suitable mate for a Western man, is mapped as political loyalty to Western consumer capitalist democracy.

In *Silk Stockings*, this conversion is re-imagined through the lens of the musical, rendered as the utopian synthesis promised by entertainment. The dualism is one of communist femininity to patriarchal capitalism, and this contradiction is eventually 'solved' through Nina's donning of new clothing and her beginning to dance (both of which I will discuss in more detail later). In one number, 'Paris Loves Lovers', Steve sings to Nina about the joys of Paris in the springtime. She is characteristically sceptical of such fanciful notions. In one chorus they alternate words as though arguing:

Steve: Paris

Nina: imperialistic

Steve: tells lovers

Nina: I'm pessimistic

Steve: love is supreme, wake up your dream and make love

Nina: That's anti-communistic

Here as throughout the film, Steve and Nina's ideological opposition is caricatured – reduced to a kind of lovers' quarrel. The musical's work of containment begins *before* any utopian synthesis occurs, by reducing problems to manageable size through this kind of caricature.

However at the same time, this song presents the initial possibility of harmony between the pair: although they are arguing, they are also singing together. Paris serves as the primary site for their contestation and eventual union. Steve insistently characterises the city as a site for 'romance', which it turns out quite explicitly hinges on capitalist consumption. Nina, on the other hand, reads the city as a great industrial capital. The tour they take the following morning confirms this, as she wants to look at factories and sewage systems while he tries to show her the joys of shopping and spa treatments.

Strikingly, the city itself is largely absent, represented primarily as a site for an abstract debate rather than as a metropolis. In the tour sequence that follows, Paris is represented through a series of metonymies. First they walk past the exterior of a Cartier jewellery shop, pausing for Steve to enthusiastically point at the beautiful jewels on display while Nina looks on, disinterested and dismissive. There is nothing about this shop exterior that might be taken to represent it as an 'authentic' European location. It is framed in medium shot, with no pedestrians, no other shops, not even a lamppost to denote urban space. In the next shot, they are walking through a factory interior. In the foreground a worker stands curiously motionless as he works with a welding tool, caricaturing industrial labour. This time, of course, the roles are reversed, with Nina looking enthusiastic and Steve looking bored and baffled. The pattern is repeated in the following shots, with an interior of a beauty parlour and a view of an industrial smokestack. The city here is

abstracted as a space for debate rather than an actual urban area. This is the case throughout the film: we see many interiors of hotel rooms and the like, and a few back projections of cityscapes, but no street scenes or famous tourist landmarks, not even of the backlot variety displayed in *An American in Paris* – and certainly not any Parisians. Paris functions, instead, as a dream space for the smooth and utopian resolution of a political debate.



Figure 167. Steve and Nina in front of Cartier. *Silk Stockings*.

Figure 168. At a factory.

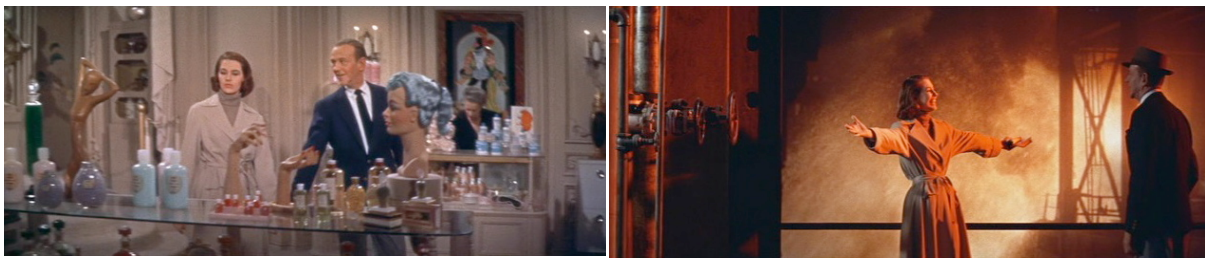


Figure 169. In a beauty parlour.

Figure 170. Viewing an industrial smokestack.



Figure 171. The back-projected Paris skyline in 'Paris Loves Lovers'.

One or two films, like *Funny Face*, are filmed on location in Paris. Yet this does not interfere with the smooth conversion of this cityscape to a Hollywood space of entertainment, as they engage in so much selective shooting and editing out of any real-world disruptions that they could be equally said to constitute a constructed space. Indeed I

hope this thesis has shown by now that films claiming authenticity based on location shooting are just as ideologically laden as any others. The distinction I wish to make here is that the Paris films seem to mobilise an especially abstracted conception of European space, one that for the most part does not even attempt to make a claim to authenticity.

Nina and Steve are not split only in their political ideologies but also, of course, in their gender. This is true of virtually all dual-focus musicals, yet here it seems particularly explicit that gender, and more specifically feminism, is a contested matter in need of a 'solution'. Nina spends the first part of the film more or less constantly arguing, with both American and Russian men, that she deserves equal treatment and should not be patronised. Steve, on the other hand, takes Paris to be the capital of male heterosexual pleasure. Here the 'meaning' of Paris may be divided even more strongly by gender than by nationality. For men, even (or especially) communist Russian men, the pleasures of Paris are quite clear. It takes Steve comically little effort to convince Brankov, Bibinski and Ivanov that staying in Paris will mean constant pleasure, primarily in the form of three good-time girls by the names of Fifi, Gabrielle and Suzette (uncredited). Nina's superior in Moscow, the Commissar of Art, also understands this, waxing lyrical about the 'seductions' of Paris. Steve's initial attempts to convince Nina of the pleasures of Paris revolve around showing her the delights of beauty consumption, of being made into an object of sexual desire for men.

Nina's conversion is an iteration of the Hollywood transformation narrative, in which a woman's capacity for self-improvement is enacted as an overhaul of her looks. Tamar Jeffers McDonald argues in her recent book *Hollywood Catwalk* that the transformation narrative, like the melodrama, is closely involved in the formation and direction of women's consumer desires.<sup>24</sup> Its inscription of moral meaning and worth into clothing and appearance, she argues, enforces the patriarchal status quo: 'focusing

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<sup>24</sup> Tamar Jeffers McDonald, *Hollywood Catwalk: Exploring Costume and Transformation in American Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 32-33.

attention on the woman's need to improve her image can distract her (and us) from wondering about and working on more social problems'.<sup>25</sup> Clothes are at the very centre of this ideological work. According to Rachel Moseley in her work on Audrey Hepburn, it is clothes rather than formal devices like editing or camera angle that often articulate the woman's subjectivity and the changes it undergoes in the course of the transformation narrative.<sup>26</sup>

*Silk Stockings* is clearly a version of this transformation narrative, if a particularly problematic one. Nina is coded both as a communist woman and as a spinster, a form of femininity that was endlessly derided and mocked in 1950s Hollywood, as we saw in Chapter 4. May recounts that this spinster-like image was a prevailing stereotype of the Soviet woman. She was supposed to be a hardworking, unfeminine drudge, desexualising herself to become a worker or political activist.<sup>27</sup> Nina's communism and her spinsterhood are likewise closely tied together. When we first meet Nina, she stands rigidly in front of the newly appointed Commissar of Art, 'maintaining revolutionary discipline' as he attempts to treat her like a lady. He patronisingly suggests, several times, that she may not be fit for her duties or that she may need a man to help her. In response, she coldly recites her credentials, which involve military service and a 'formal rejection of all bourgeois pleasure and indulgence'. Her appearance, in a drab khaki uniform, dull brimmed hat and tidy hair, suggests both frigidity and devotion to the Soviet state. Her solemn appearance, rigid stance and cold, indignant way of speaking code her as an undesirable career woman in the 1950s American framework.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>26</sup> Moseley, *Growing Up*, 66.

<sup>27</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 21-22.



Figure 172. Our first view of Nina, in the Commissar's office.

This is meant to contrast, of course, with her disarmingly beautiful physical features. If she were ugly, her status as career-focused spinster would more likely be the butt of cruel jokes than the phenomenal tease it appears to be for Steve and for the Commissar of Art. This beauty is what marks her as different, as a candidate for transformation. In addition, we recognise Nina as Cyd Charisse, and thus the metamorphosis undergone by the character is her transformation into the beautiful, talented, dancing star we expect to see.

In 1950s Hollywood there was a range of ideological tensions and also profound instabilities surrounding various female body shapes, and Cyd Charisse's body serves as a further marker of both her potential for transformation and her national/political loyalties. The curvy, busty shape of the 'Mammary woman', as exemplified by Marilyn Monroe, is often read in the scholarly literature as being 'all-American'.<sup>28</sup> Mulvey uses Monroe as the example *par excellence* of the American 'sexiness that could counter the colourless asexuality of communism'.<sup>29</sup> Yet this body shape was also perceived as potentially excessive – as so powerful a draw to men that it could become a danger in its own right, seducing them away from all rationality and sense, even if this is usually presented with varying degrees of parody.<sup>30</sup> Monroe's shape was thus perceived dualistically, as both fulfilling male desire and as threatening patriarchy. Peggy Dayton, the American star who shows up in Paris, is

<sup>28</sup> Marjorie Rosen, *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream* (London: Peter Owen, 1973), 285.

<sup>29</sup> Mulvey, 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes', 216.

<sup>30</sup> *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is a good example of this, as are *Monkey Business* (Howard Hawks, 1952) and *The Seven Year Itch* (Billy Wilder, 1955).



a reference to and parody of this body shape. In the ‘Satin and Silk’ number, she gets her way in a debate over the score of the film by teasing Boroff and dancing for him in her underwear. The parodic excess of Peggy’s body, and Boroff’s unawareness of this excess (with its attendant potential for threat) is here a source of comedy.



Figure 173. Peggy’s curvy body in ‘Satin and Silk’.



Figure 174. Peggy’s parodic excess, once again enacted through her clothing.

Charisse’s slim brunette body suggests a different sort of femininity. It is similar in many ways to that of Audrey Hepburn (although there are differences too) – both are very slim, brunette, athletic and graceful in a ballet-dancer way. Hepburn was (and is) often taken as having a ‘feminist’ body that announced itself as free of the patriarchal determinateness of the curvy ‘mammary’ body. For example, Molly Haskell recalls seeing Audrey Hepburn as an alternative to the ‘rising tide of sex symbols’ with which she was bombarded as an adolescent growing up in the 1950s.<sup>31</sup> This body, as shown in Hepburn’s transformation narratives, is often seen as needing to be ‘taught’ proper American patriarchal femininity. It must be cultivated and shaped into the patriarchal logic of domesticity and reproduction. Monroe’s body does not need this kind of ‘education’; its links to reproduction are already clear, and the curvy body is if anything in need of containment, not cultivation. The transformation narrative may coincide with the slim brunette body, then, as a way of reining in women, away from feminist notions of equality and women’s work. The dichotomous stereotyping of Nina/Hepburn versus

<sup>31</sup> Molly Haskell, ‘Our Fair Lady’, *Film Comment* 27, vol. 2 (1991), 10. Elizabeth Wilson says something very similar in ‘Gamine Against the Grain’, *Sight and Sound* (March 1993), 30.

Peggy/Monroe thereby functions to determine Nina as in need of reining in, away from feminism, although as we shall see this is a very complicated and unstable transformation.

The central moment of Nina's transformation, like so many of Hepburn's, revolves around a change in clothes. Alone in her boudoir, she changes her frumpy old Soviet drawers and thick black wool tights for a delicate, shimmering pink corset and slip with ethereal silk stockings. In this beautiful solo ballet sequence, she prowls around the room, sneaking each piece of lingerie from under a cushion or inside a vase where it has been hiding, as though bringing her deep hidden desires out into the light of consciousness.



Figure 175. Nina's frumpy old Soviet clothes.



Figure 176. She dons beautiful pink undergarments.

Silk stockings had become an important symbol in war-torn Europe, a synecdoche of the everyday luxuries foregone during the height of the war's devastation, as we saw in Chapter 3. In the 'Silk Stockings' dance this symbolism is neatly transposed to the logic of the Cold War, becoming an emblem of the pleasures of capitalist society as compared to the dull deprivations of Soviet life for women.

Yet Nina's transformation is in other ways very problematic, itself contested within the film text – far more so than in many other 1950s transformation narratives. Moseley traces Audrey Hepburn's transformation films throughout the course of her career. Earlier such narratives like *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953) and *Sabrina* (Billy Wilder, 1954) are far more joyful and satisfying than later films, like *Funny Face* and *My Fair Lady* (George Cukor, 1964), which 'are more and more limiting...containing [Hepburn's] characters within increasingly traditional femininities' and curtailing the representation of female

subjectivity.<sup>32</sup> Just like the Hepburn character in *Funny Face*, Nina must first be ‘discovered’ and convinced that she is in need of change in the first place, then dragged through its early stages before finally coming to embrace it for herself. It seems that by 1957 (the year of both films’ release), the traditional Cinderella narrative of women’s aspiration and upward mobility via ‘beauty’ had become contested and shaky. In *Silk Stockings* this narrative’s ideological functioning to ‘tame’ a woman who is otherwise rebelling against patriarchy is discussed in explicitly ideological terms. Steve’s teaching Nina the pleasures of feminine consumption is specifically intended to seduce her away from a feminist politics.

Moreover, what exactly she learns or gains in the course of her metamorphosis is contestable. On the one hand she gains freedom – represented throughout the film as the freedom, above all, to dance. ‘Red Blues’, a dance number performed by Nina and a chorus of male Russians, is one of the most spectacular and virtuosic of her career. Her clothing choices have, by now, achieved a synthesis; she wears an unadorned mustard-coloured turtleneck and a matching skirt that, although hanging simply, also exemplifies abundance when she twirls and it spreads around her. The costume is longer the drab browns and greys of a spinster, but elegant and emphasising her skill as a dancer. The number incorporates American youth culture, a swinging blues that Boroff calls ‘real cool’, rolling the R in his thick Russian accent. The chorus line are dressed in simple, youthful styles, with the men in narrow trousers and shirts open at the neck. Some girls do a version of ‘the twist’, while a phalanx of male dancers dressed in grey engage in athletic, powerful acrobatics. As Uta Poiger shows, American youth culture was imbued with a broad array of contradictory meanings in eastern Europe of the 1950s.<sup>33</sup> Here it is used to exemplify the breezy, fun freedom of democratic capitalism. Yet, for Nina and the other Russians, this world is a mere fantasy, a private desire, tucked away in the room they all share as a living

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<sup>32</sup> Moseley, *Growing Up*, 74.

<sup>33</sup> Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 1.

space. It must be hidden from the machinations of the state, as we see when a stern-looking old Soviet official walks through the room and the young people must momentarily pretend they are holding a Party meeting. This moment of synthesis is a powerful utopian vision of the advantages of democratic capitalism over totalitarian communism, of what Nina stands to gain by defecting to the West.



Figure 177. Youthful styles in 'Red Blues'.



Figure 178. Nina's elegant mustard-coloured clothing has achieved a synthesis.

Yet equally, at other points her conversion to the West is signalled to a disturbingly overt degree as her learning proper patriarchal submissiveness. Sitting on the floor at Steve's feet, displayed in the diaphanous evening gown she has donned for their special evening out, she sings:

Without love, what is a woman?  
A pleasure unemployed.  
Without love, what is a woman?  
A zero in the void.

But with love, what is a woman?  
Serene contentment, the perfect wife,  
For a woman to a man is just a woman,  
But a man to a woman is her life.



Figure 179. Nina in 'Without Love'.

She has now learned to see her previous, spinster-like self as empty, lonely and without purpose, 'a zero in the void'. Although she looks alluringly beautiful in this scene, she does not dance; rather she sits still and poses herself into an object of to-be-looked-at-ness, both for the camera and for Steve. Furthermore, she is quite drunk and even passes out a few minutes later. Her state of drunkenness, showing what a good time she is having now that she is 'letting loose', also serves as a disturbing reminder of exactly how comatose she needs to be in order to accept these conditions. I am not reading this sequence 'against the grain' as much as it might look like here. Nina herself expresses ambivalence about it in her comment, 'I feel so much happiness it makes me miserable', and in her mock-execution as she stands blindfolded against a wall. This foreshadows the moment when she realises she cannot forsake her identity and leaves Steve. The film's solution to the problem of feminism is imagined as a synthesis within Nina of how she will satisfy both sides of her identity: the romantic/patriarchal/capitalist side allied with her 'desires', and the independent/communist/Russian side. In the 'Without Love' number she seems to go too far towards the first option.

The synthesis involves a conversion of her career-oriented energies to a subtle dynamic of domination over Steve. In the scene in which they first kiss, on the rug in her hotel room, she is shown to be sexually experienced (in spite of her supposed spinsterhood). Earlier in the scene she told him of how Russian men, rather than engaging in the foolish games of seduction, simply point at their chosen mate and command: 'You – come here'. Steve repeats this line as they sit on the rug, yet she does not move towards him, instead forcing him to lean in towards her as she sits stolidly. After this kiss she orders: 'That was restful – again,' and he obeys and leans in to kiss her again. There is none of the fluster, swooning or embarrassment here that we might expect of a spinster, more typically represented in *Summertime*. Obviously she has enough sexual experience to compare this kiss with others if she can determine that this one is 'restful'. She can also directly and calmly ask for sexual fulfilment from him.



Figure 180. Steve leans in to kiss Nina.

This dynamic is tinged with a sense of Russian otherness. To be direct and bold about sex are stereotypes of Russianness; the fact that Steve finds this so alluring (though also exasperating) is tinged with Orientalist envy about the sexuality of the other. Throughout the film she is repeatedly placed in an almost dominatrix-like position over him, in which he takes it as his role to meet her physical demands – a dynamic that sets her apart as different and evidently drives him wild. This dynamic disappears, briefly, when she sings ‘Without Love’, but that moment, as we saw, is signalled as having ‘gone too far’.

Nina’s dominance returns at the end, however – an apparent signal of the achievement of a utopian synthesis. Steve and Nina meet again in a back room of the commissars’ new nightclub, La Belle Russie, where Steve reveals the plot to get her back to Paris through an ‘anonymous’ complaint to the Russian government about the commissars. He informs her that it was to get her out of Russia so she could marry him. Although she agrees to this and the final coupling takes place, the way the sequence is filmed oddly undermines the sense of connection and warmth we might expect here between them. When he reveals his plan to marry her, she turns away from him, paces for a moment, then turns towards him – now halfway across the room – and tears up her aeroplane ticket. In a medium shot of Ninotchka, she stands square on in the centre of the screen and says in a commanding voice, ‘You: come here’ – a repetition of their first kiss. The next shot shows Steve framed more weakly from above: the camera seems to look down at him as he grins broadly and skulks across the screen towards her, responding to her order. We do not see them embrace or kiss. It appears that certain aspects of her independence and Russianness



– the aspects that Steve finds bewitching – can remain and even be amplified, while others (her career, her ideological commitments) must fall away.



Figure 181. Nina stands square in the centre of the screen.



Figure 182. Steve framed more weakly from above.

Yet this also causes their union to feel particularly forced and unstable – as Dyer puts it (speaking of another film), we can feel the strings of the ending being pulled.<sup>34</sup> Throughout the film – in the spoken parts anyway – there is a physical coldness between them that we might call a lack of chemistry. When Steve first tells Nina he loves her, they are not even touching each other; he is standing with his arms folded across his chest, his back slightly hunched over and his neck craning up towards her face.<sup>35</sup> He then points at her with his index finger and says ‘I love you dearly’ in a distinctly flat, almost campily insincere way. This is also tangible from Nina’s end. Although she is supposed to be an ‘ice queen’, when she tells him, ‘the arrangement of your features is not entirely repulsive to me’, it is difficult to discern much sincerity. Where in *Summertime* the contradictions of the film are held together by Katharine Hepburn’s performance – by her ability to embody and contain those contradictions within her persona – *Silk Stockings*, I would argue, represents a case in which the acting fails to fully achieve this kind of organic smoothness.



Figure 183. ‘I love you dearly’.

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<sup>34</sup> Dyer, ‘Utopia’, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Charisse was supposedly ‘too tall’ for Astaire, or so his character insists in these stars’ earlier collaboration, *The Band Wagon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1953).

The exception is the dance numbers, which is a big exception indeed. When they dance, the opposite is true: Astaire and Charisse move together, respond to each other physically, and are a sheer delight to watch. (We might note, however, that their two final numbers – ‘Red Blues’ and ‘Ritz Roll and Rock’ are performed as solo pieces, leaving the ending all the more unstable.) Moreover, when they dance, Steve enacts a physical dominance over Nina to which she clearly responds. Here is another way, then, in which the dream world of the number sets itself apart from the ‘real’ world of the spoken dialogue. Their dancing achieves an authentic feeling of synthesis even as their spoken parts betray an increasingly uncontainable incoherence.

I do not necessarily think the failure during the spoken dialogues should be regarded as a fault; my goal is not to criticise Astaire and Charisse. On the contrary, in fact I would argue that the disparity between the astonishing beauty of each performer’s dancing and the relative dullness of their spoken parts buttresses the smooth functioning of the numbers as dream spaces in which American patriarchal capitalism solves the world’s problems. This is particularly true of the great male musical leads whose star personae are nearly synonymous with ‘entertainment’ in the postwar period: specifically Astaire, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope.<sup>36</sup> All these stars resolutely refuse seriousness as a mode. They seem uncomfortable with ‘serious’ dialogue, using fun and play to combat attempts to impose solemnity or ‘the real world’ upon them in role after role. This performance style, I submit, is central not only to our notion of what ‘entertainment’ is, but to entertainment’s ability to paper over the cracks and fissures in American ideology, collapsing conflict and contradiction and threats of various kinds into resolvable, pleasant and light-hearted narratives that people love to see. It is, in other words, a style of domination.

This domination has colonial significance. The long series of Hope/Crosby ‘Road to...’ movies, from *Road to Singapore* in 1940 (dir. Victor Scherzinger) to *Road to Hong Kong* in

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<sup>36</sup> Gene Kelly is a less clear case.



1962 (dir. Norman Panama), offer a particularly glaring example. They follow this comic pair around the globe as they turn various caricatured, Orientalised ethnic groups into objects of their play and frivolity. In ‘The Colour of Entertainment’, Dyer argues that the colonial habitation of space is crucial to the project of the musical in that the space of the musical is a quintessential ‘white’ space. Dancing, he writes, is ‘about how bodies relate to other bodies, how they move through space, and how they make use of or submit to the environment around them’.<sup>37</sup> Singing is similar, in that a performer can sing loudly or intimately according to his/her relationship to the surrounding space.<sup>38</sup> Yet it is specifically white people who are allowed to dominate space in the playful ways performed in the musical; African Americans and other non-whites, even when performing in a musical, are confined to ghetto-like roles on the stage, denied existence as characters in the diegetic world. It is precisely the exuberance of the musical performance style, argues Dyer, that serves as ‘the very model of the colonial structure of feeling – expansion into space, control over what’s in that space, incorporation of what’s there into white agendas’.<sup>39</sup> Thus the aesthetic of playfulness and fun so central to the Hollywood musical is a mode of representation structured around racial and colonial domination.

The ‘colonial structure of feeling’, I would add to Dyer’s argument, intersects in complex ways with what we might call a ‘patriarchal structure of feeling’, at least in *Silk Stockings*. In ‘All of You’, Steve refers to the female body as a colonial geography for the American man to conquer:

I love the looks of you, the lure of you  
 I’d love to make a tour of you  
 The eyes, the arms, the mouth of you  
 The east, west, north, and the south of you

I’d love to gain complete control of you  
 And handle even the heart and soul of you

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Dyer, ‘The Colour of Entertainment’, in *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond*, ed. Bill Marshall and Robynn Stillwell (Exeter: Intellect, 2000), 25.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Dyer, ‘Colour’, 27.

So love at least a small percent of me, do  
For I love all of you.



Figure 184. Oriental decoration as Steve sings 'All of You'.

As Steve sings, Nina sits on a sofa; behind them are a Japanese painted screen and an ornate, Indian-looking statue, both Oriental objects of colonial splendour on display. The lyrics and *mise en scène* thus eerily incorporate tropes of classic colonial travel imagery: feeling lured to a place, wanting to travel around it and explore it thoroughly, wanting to control it down to its core, and hoping for 'love' in return. These are mapped onto heterosexual desire, with the white American man as conqueror. When Nina starts to dance (this is the first number in which she does so), she is not only seduced into a patriarchal notion of heterosexual pleasure, but she also begins to join the conquering side of the 'colonial structure of feeling'. The reconciliation of opposites here is represented as her taking on his colonial and patriarchal viewpoint, paradoxically extending this viewpoint to a newfound understanding of herself as a colonial and patriarchal object even as she learns to inhabit space in a 'white' way.



Figure 185. Steve dances playfully, using a chair as a prop.



Figure 186. Nina begins to inhabit space in a 'white' way, yet simultaneously transforms into a colonial and patriarchal object.

Two other numbers are also revealing about the colonial structures of feeling at work in the musical. The 'Glorious Technicolor' number sets up a more or less direct

parallel between the musical's aesthetic of 'fun' and America's domination of the world. Steve and Peggy, speaking to an international audience of reporters about their movie and all it will offer, break out into song and dance about Hollywood's latest techniques for bringing the faraway home to the audience. Technicolor, CinemaScope and stereophonic sound allow them to capture subjects from around the world, from ethnic dances to underwater adventures, and bring them home with ever greater entertainment value. The pair engage in a delightful routine of musical playfulness – climbing on a piano, co-opting a conference table as an impromptu stage, swinging from a chandelier – in a way that parallels the musical's playful appropriation of space. The song thus functions symbolically to appropriate the world into an America-centric aesthetic of fun and pleasure.



Figure 187. Steve and Peggy extend their playful inhabiting of space to world geography in 'Glorious Technicolor, Breathtaking CinemaScope'.

America's domination of Europe is, moreover, essential to its domination of the globe in the 1950s, as the 'Josephine' number shows. In this number, an American starlet is envisioned as an imperial empress, making her way into the European metropole by seducing the French establishment with her charms. This is the number adapted from Boroff's classical masterpiece 'Ode to a Tractor', made into a jazzy tune for the tacky Hollywood musical Peggy wants to make. She is dressed in a garish gold lamé version of an Empire gown, complete with expansive feather shoulders and headdress, and sits on an enormous gold-encrusted throne. She sings, rather off key:

Josephine, commonly called 'Jo',  
 Was a throbbin' robin, poor but chic,  
 Born in ultry-sultry Martinique,  
 Yet she rose to reach the highest peak,  
 And why so?

'Cause she had agitating eyes, titillating thighs,  
 Lubricating lips, undulating hips,  
 A figure simply swell,  
 Plus other good points as well.  
 . . .

Josephine, commonly called 'Jo',  
 Tripped away one day to Paris, France,  
 In her ye-olde Creole fancy pants,  
 Where she rocked Napoleon at a dance. . .

Through its sparkling, high-Hollywood stylisation of the Napoleonic period, this number parodically engenders a parallel between the Empress Josephine, a French colonial subject (member of a plantation-owning family) who came to France and eventually married General Napoléon, and an American starlet in Europe in the 1950s. Most of the details supplied by the song are made up: Josephine had never been poor, was not Creole, and was known in French political circles for her intelligence as well as her beauty. (Hollywood 'entertainment' is frequently accused of ignoring historical facts in order to make a good picture – perhaps further evidence of 'entertainment' as a style of domination.) These made-up details envision the Hollywood starlet as a colonial Caribbean subject who, through the allure of her bawdy sexuality (agitating eyes, titillating thighs), ultimately takes over the European metropole. It thus comes close to acknowledging the central role of African American culture not only in the musical form, as Dyer suggests, but also in the successful 'sale' of democratic capitalism to western Europe in the postwar period, via the popularity jazz and rock-and-roll.



Figure 188. Peggy as the Empress Josephine.

Yet even as race is almost acknowledged here, like so many other discourses of resistance in the film, it is just as quickly swept under the rug again. Peggy's performance is

a raunchy caricature of the Hollywood starlet, a parody that both enables the film to portray a taboo subject and simultaneously to deny that any seriousness can be attached to something that is ‘only entertainment’. Under the aegis of ‘fun’, the Paris musical similarly enacts the American domination of global geopolitics through the smooth dissolving of difference and contradiction by a capitalist utopian vision. It imaginatively enacts a geopolitical consensus in which all are converted to the American ‘way of life’.

### **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes**

For the final section of this chapter, and indeed of the body of this thesis, I want to return to a film of which we asked many questions in Chapter 1. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* has been identified by many scholars as having a slippery illegibility that makes it impossible to ‘decode’. Maureen Turim, Laura Mulvey and Fiona Handyside all begin their analyses of this film by, essentially, throwing up their hands and admitting defeat at the outset. They write that the film’s ‘ideological foundations...escape analysis’,<sup>40</sup> that ‘like the perfect fetish....[it] blocks out all inquiry’,<sup>41</sup> or that it ‘stymies attempts at decoding its glittering surface’.<sup>42</sup> This is such a common refrain that, it seems to me, any analysis of this film must somehow account for the difficulty in reading.

In the previous section I argued that this kind of illegibility is an essential feature of the 1950s Hollywood musical, allowing the genre to delve into the ideological contradictions of the era while simultaneously denying them or reducing them, via fun and play, to manageable problems with capitalist/patriarchal/colonial solutions. This aesthetic of fun is closely linked to colonial ideologies, enabling the ‘management’ of geopolitical

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<sup>40</sup> Maureen Turim, ‘Gentlemen Consume Blondes’, in *Movies and Methods*, vol. 2, ed. Bill Nichols (London: University of California Press, 1985), 370.

<sup>41</sup> Mulvey, ‘*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*’, 214.

<sup>42</sup> Fiona Handyside, ‘Beyond Hollywood, Into Europe: The Tourist Gaze in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953) and *Funny Face* (Donen, 1957)’, *Journal of European Popular Culture* 1, vol. 2 (2004), 82.

conflict and thus functioning, in their capacity as entertainment, to suppress this conflict and convert it to utopia.

The section will be structured around a discussion of Handyside's and Turim's claims that *Gentlemen* espouses a colonial or nationalist mindset. Although both these writers are essentially correct in pointing this out, I believe they get crucial details wrong and gloss over what is in fact a very complex issue. My analysis will link *Gentlemen*'s illegibility to the musical's playful mode of dominance.

Lorelei Lee (Marilyn Monroe), a showgirl, is engaged to a millionaire named Gus Esmond (Tommy Noonan). They plan to elope to Paris together, but Gus's father does not approve of the marriage and threatens to withdraw his inheritance. Gus sends Lorelei to Paris without him, accompanied by her friend and performing partner Dorothy Shaw (Jane Russell) as 'chaperone', while he tries to smooth things over with his father. Gus also clandestinely sends along a detective, Ernie Malone (Elliott Reid), to keep an eye on the girls. Once on the ship, seemingly every man in sight is taken with Lorelei and Dorothy, bribing the headwaiter for a place at their table. Lorelei takes a particular shine to Sir Francis 'Piggy' Beekman (Charles Coburn), the elderly British owner of a South African diamond mine, while Dorothy finds herself falling in love with Malone (unaware that he is a detective). However, Dorothy catches Malone taking clandestine photos of Lorelei flirting with Piggy. Feeling betrayed, she tells Lorelei and the two are able to steal back his negatives by giving him sleeping pills and removing his clothes. Handing the photos over to Piggy, Lorelei convinces him to give her his wife's diamond tiara as a thank-you gift. Once they arrive in Paris, however, the two women discover that Gus has cancelled their letter of credit, believing that Lorelei has betrayed him with Piggy. Never down and out for long, they become a major nightclub act in Paris. However, it turns out that Piggy has explained the loss of the tiara to his wife (Norma Varden) by saying Lorelei stole it. Gus soon arrives in Paris to see Lorelei; on the same night that he comes to their nightclub to see her, the Parisian police arrive, threatening to arrest her for stealing the tiara if she does not give it

back immediately. However, she discovers that the tiara is gone, apparently stolen. Unfazed, the girls devise a plot: Dorothy will dress up as Lorelei and allow herself to be taken into custody so that Lorelei herself can stay and persuade Gus to pay for the tiara. Malone, who comes to court to testify against Lorelei, immediately sees that it is really Dorothy in the dock. However, when Dorothy signals to him that she is still in love with him and will marry him, provided that he not reveal her identity, he immediately resigns from the case. He then realises that he knows who has stolen the tiara: he has seen Piggy at the airport, inexplicably and suddenly headed for 'deepest Africa'. The police catch Piggy, the tiara is returned, and the matter closed. Back at the nightclub, Lorelei uses her charm to win over both Gus and his father, who has just arrived in Paris. Dorothy and Lorelei then hold a double wedding, dressed identically as each marries her respective man.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Handyside applies gaze theory to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, reading the film as a representation of the shifting power hierarchies between America and Europe. She argues that the film reverses the usual gendering of the gaze, as Dorothy and Lorelei use their allure to accrue power for themselves over the men who gaze at them, turning it to their own pleasurable ends. Even a male detective, rather than 'being the authoritative owner of the gaze...is reduced to a grubby Peeping Tom, bundled off in a frilly night-gown as his trousers and photographs are removed from him'.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the film, argues Handyside, the women gaze at men as well as being gazed upon, taking a scopic position of power. Then, when the two women travel around in a taxi just after arriving in Paris, their gaze becomes 'inflected by national difference rather than gender difference',<sup>44</sup> as their scopic power is transferred to their nationally-inflected position as Americans in a foreign country which they gaze upon and hence control.

Handyside's instincts are not wrong, but the sequence to which she refers, in which the women arrive in Paris and take a brief tour in a taxicab, is more complicated than her

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<sup>43</sup> Handyside, 'Beyond Hollywood', 83.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

description acknowledges. After the boat arrives at dock, the next three shots are stock-like footage of, respectively, the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe and the Opéra. Each is shown only for a couple of seconds – just long enough to identify them – and none is marked, through either camera angle or editing, as the point of view of any particular person. This is the kind of brief montage that, in classical Hollywood film language, might be used to establish any new location. It certainly does not constitute in any obvious sense what we have been calling the tourist gaze, the back-and-forth of a character contemplating and sentimentalising a famous tourist site.



Figure 189. Establishing shot of the Eiffel Tower, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.



Figure 190. Second establishing shot: the Arc de Triomphe.



Figure 191. Third establishing shot: the Opéra.

At this point we cut to the two women in the back of a taxicab. At first they are looking straight ahead, not out the window, but then something catches first Dorothy and



then Lorelei's eye, and there is a cut to a moving shot of a Parisian café (which is most likely a set constructed in Hollywood, although it is possible that it is stock footage taken in Paris) spilling out onto a broad sidewalk. This is the first shot that is marked as a POV shot. The film cuts back to the girls looking amused and delighted. Next we see a second sidewalk café. The film then repeats this shot-reverse shot a third time, now viewing what appears to be the exterior of a nightclub, with an old-fashioned looking painted mural of an audience and some dancing girls. The sequence so far has lasted about 25 seconds. This is the sum total of the 'tourist gaze' on which Handyside rests a good deal of her argument, yet it is extremely minimal – hardly more than a few seconds of establishing shots before the action can move forward.



Figure 192. Lorelei (Monroe) and Dorothy (Russell) in a Paris taxicab, gazing out at the sights.



Figure 193. The first Paris cafe they see.



Figure 194. The second Paris cafe.



Figure 195. The nightclub exterior as they drive past.

In the second part of this sequence, we cut back to the women for a final time. Dorothy now asks the French taxi driver to take them shopping for clothes. He speaks only French, yet he smiles knowingly, clearly understanding what they are asking. We then see a luscious montage of the most famous Paris fashion houses: Schiaparelli, Dior, Lelong, Guerlain and Balenciaga. The beautiful goods they display are superimposed over shots of their sparkling exteriors, beckoning us into these lustrous centres of fashion. The second, fashion-oriented half of this arrival sequence is accompanied by soaring, down-tempo, rubato string music that seems to locate fashion as an emotional focal point for the women. Although we do not see the women on their shopping trip, we finally cut back to the interior of the taxi, with the women surrounded by brightly coloured packages, smiling contentedly, having just spent a good deal of money (as Dorothy declares). Shopping, and not sightseeing, is the attraction that got them out wandering Paris before they have even set foot in their hotel.



Figure 196. The great Parisian fashion houses: Schiaparelli.  
*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes.*



Figure 197. Christian Dior.



Figure 198. Lucien Lelong.



Figure 199. Guerlain.



Figure 200. Balenciaga



Figure 201. The American women back in the taxicab, surrounded by colourful boxes.

Handyside's claim that the 'national gaze', as exemplified by Dorothy and Lorelei, is 'freed up' to 'belong to either gender' is clearly not the case.<sup>45</sup> Rather, their interaction with Paris is profoundly gendered. As we noted in the introduction to this chapter, Paris is strongly coded as a place for American women to go shopping – as the place whose fashion industry has historically produced the look, the allure of the modern American woman. Paris is treated as the most important, central locus of the consumer gaze, the place where feminine fantasies can be fulfilled *par excellence*. As women's beauty was, as I have shown, a marker of political/economic power in the 1950s, a buying trip to the fashion houses of Paris is imbued with symbolic significance. Paris becomes the space where American consumer capitalism is converted to world hegemony.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 81.

It seems especially significant that the 1950s saw the rise of an alliance between *haute couture* and Hollywood. This is often taken to have started with Audrey Hepburn and her association with Givenchy as she rose to stardom, beginning in 1954 with *Sabrina*. In fact, however, a slew of narratives about American women – mostly models and showgirls – travelling to Paris to buy clothes precedes Hepburn’s rise to stardom. Writers on *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* often fail to point out that this film does not exist in a generic vacuum. In fact 1952 saw both *Lovely to Look At* (dir. Mervyn LeRoy) and *April in Paris* (dir. David Butler), while in 1953, in addition to *Gentlemen*, we get *The French Line* (dir. Lloyd Bacon). All these films are narratives about models and showgirls making a transatlantic voyage to Paris. Some are centrally focused on the fashion industry, while others merely include a buying sequence or two. I wish to suggest, then, that the rise of high fashion in Hollywood cinema of the 1950s occurred in part because of the geopolitical symbolisms involved in American women buying and bringing home Parisian couture – appropriating the apogee of women’s beauty production for American women.

These developments imply a shifting relationship of metropole to periphery. When American women freely move through and gaze upon Paris, consuming the fruits of the city’s labour through their superior buying power, this creates an implicit claim about America’s newfound status as imperial metropole. The buying trip turns Paris, once the seat of a global empire, into an Oriental bazaar for Americans.

Like *Silk Stockings*, *Gentlemen* shows us very little of Paris. The French capital here is oddly empty of French people, and the ones we do see are taxi drivers or hotel clerks. The one extended sequence in the film in which we see Parisians and glimpse (backlot) Paris street life is in ‘When Love Goes Wrong’. Yet these Frenchman, as Handyside argues, are marked as racialised and otherised, with dark hair and skin, and some are even wearing fezzes.<sup>46</sup> Handyside points out that in this number, ‘Frenchness and racial otherness

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<sup>46</sup> Handyside, ‘Beyond Hollywood’, 85.



are...collapsed into one another. Furthermore, this otherness is young and pliable, non-threatening and easily controlled'.<sup>47</sup> These others are contrasted with Monroe's extreme whiteness/blondeness, which makes her appear both modern and eroticised – a shop window for the American way of life.<sup>48</sup> When the girls sing, 'When love goes wrong, nothing goes right', this may be read as a comment on the superiority of the American empire, based as it (supposedly) is on persuasiveness, charm or 'love' rather than force. The Parisian cityscape of this number is poor, dingy, populated by people coded as 'ethnic' – the result of 'love' having gone wrong for the French in the course of the two world wars and the loss of their empire. Paris is in this film a city whose time has past. It is now relegated to the colonial periphery within a new American hegemonic framework.



Figure 202. 'When Love Goes Wrong'.



Figure 203. The streets of Paris.

Maureen Turim also reads *Gentlemen* in terms of colonial ideology, appended to the end of a now-classic article analysing the use of the film's satire to objectify women.

Pointing to the importance of Piggy's South African diamond mine, she writes:

If golddigging is justified within the film as the female form of capitalist enterprise, what underlies this 'justification' is the assumption that capitalism and thus imperialism are unquestioned, natural. The satire does not touch this assumption.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>48</sup> Mulvey, 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes', 214.

<sup>49</sup> Turim, 'Gentlemen Consume Blondes', 375.

The fact that Piggy owns a diamond mine which is located (as are many diamond mines) in a former British colony – discussed only once in the course of the film – seems like rather a small point on which to hang an entire argument about capitalism and imperialism as the film’s core values.<sup>50</sup> Yet this is also a key insight, and I will build upon it in the following paragraphs.

Lorelei (and to a lesser degree Dorothy too) is marked as upwardly mobile in terms of class. Her fondness for diamonds, the ultimate markers of status, indicates this, and they contrast sharply with the obvious signs of her lower-class roots – perhaps most notably her funny linguistic errors (‘If you’ve nothing more to say, pray, scat!’). Indeed Lorelei’s class mobility is central to our understanding of her as a ‘dumb blonde’ on the prowl for millionaires (although her inhabiting of the ‘dumb blonde’ role also turns out to be quite complicated and unstable, as will be addressed later). In the context of a transatlantic ocean liner full of European ‘old money’, Lorelei and Dorothy stand out as exemplary of the legendary class mobility of American society. They oscillate between following and scorning the British upper-class manners which prevail on the boat. This is an ongoing, and amusing, source of tension between the two of them, as they separately negotiate the unknown and sometimes baffling etiquette around them.

Yet there is also a crucial geopolitical element to this class mobility; these American women are, after all, journeying into old-money Europe. Piggy and Lady Beekman are both stereotypical British upper-class types. He is fat, pink, politically well-connected (as his conversation at dinner before it is disrupted by the girls’ entrance would indicate) and extraordinarily wealthy. She is haughty and matronly, frequently refers to her family’s high station, and demonstrates affected manners that instantly mark her as a member of the British aristocracy (if their titles did not already do that). The plot centres around the transfer of the Beekmans’ wealth, in the form of their diamonds, to a young American

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<sup>50</sup> South Africa was ceded independence from Britain in 1931.

social climber. These upstart Americans are, through their beauty and wiles, charming Lord Beekman out of his colonial assets.

Consider how Lord Beekman ages throughout the course of this narrative's several adaptations. In Anita Loos' original story from 1925, he is a wealthy young dandy. Yet, as Mulvey puts it, 'he ages in the intervening versions [stage play; musical] but becomes the extremely elderly owner of a South African diamond mine...only in the 1953 film'.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the character of Piggy is ageing along with the British imperial aristocracy – still young and vital enough in the 1920s, but decrepit and silly by the 1950s, ripe for takeover by more enterprising, energetic Americans. Turim reads the women's gold-digging as the female iteration of capitalism,<sup>52</sup> yet this cannot be fully understood outside of the geopolitical context of their ambitions: American capitalism is taking over old Europe's assets – and with them, its metropole status.

The plot of the film centres around whether this transfer of assets is legitimate/legal or not: Lorelei is accused of having stolen the diamond tiara and must prove her innocence. We know, of course, that she did not literally steal it because we saw her very nicely ask Piggy for it. And yet whether her relationship with Piggy is one of charming sincerity and innocence, or is based on a cynical, gold-digging desire to get his diamonds, is very much open to debate. Marilyn Monroe's performance of Lorelei is profoundly unstable here. On the one hand, the character seems to be written as the archetypal, gold-digging 'dumb blonde'. Dyer points this out in *Stars*, drawing attention to how she expertly manipulates men.<sup>53</sup> The figure of the 'dumb blonde' is already rife with contradictions, for this figure is supposed to be simultaneously stupid and calculating, lazy and ambitious, clueless and manipulative. Monroe's performance of the role, however, seems to add several more layers of complexity to this confusing set of characteristics, for, as Dyer shows

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<sup>51</sup> Mulvey, 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes', 220.

<sup>52</sup> Turim, 'Gentlemen Consume Blondes', 375.

<sup>53</sup> Richard Dyer, *Stars*, new ed. (London: BFI, 1998), 147.

in *Heavenly Bodies*, her star image is centred around innocence, infantilism, irrationality and guiltlessness, particularly regarding sex.<sup>54</sup> Dyer misses, I think, the fact that this very innocence was in itself a hotly disputed characteristic. As we saw in the figure of Peggy Dayton, the curvy female body of which Monroe was the archetype was often seen as crossing the line into threat because it was *too* alluring, *too* innocent to be true. This is evident in the scene in which Lorelei asks Piggy for the diamond tiara, which takes the contradictions in the Monroe/Lorelei performance to extremes. She shows him the retrieved photographs of him pretending to be a snake to her goat. Then the following dialogue takes place:

Piggy: You little angel. You don't even know that there is a certain kind of girl who would take advantage of a thing like this.

Lorelei: She'd have to be a pretty terrible girl to be mean to a sweet, intelligent, generous man like you, Piggy.



Figure 204. The incriminating photograph.



Figure 205. Lorelei asks Piggy very nicely for the tiara.

She then goes on to ask him for the tiara as a gesture of thanks, sighing sweetly that 'it's only fair if I have [Lady Beekman's] tiara, because after all, she has you'. Her tone of voice throughout is a tender falsetto, and her performance suggests either complete sincerity or an extremely good simulation of complete sincerity. Indeed, the scene is written as if to play up the contradiction between these two possibilities. It is as though it has never

<sup>54</sup> Dyer, *Stars*, 147; Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 31; 36.



occurred to her that there is any moral difference between the two. In any case, as Dyer concludes, the contrast between star and character in *Gentlemen* is so striking that ‘the character of Monroe-as-Lorelei becomes contradictory to the point of incoherence’ – that is, of her being ‘simultaneously polar opposites’, not reconcilable by the application of close analysis because even the close analysis shows the moment-to-moment contradictions in her character with which the narrative constantly flirts.<sup>55</sup>

It is, I believe, the fundamental instability of Monroe’s performance that leads Turim, Mulvey and Handyside all to comment on the film’s inscrutability. We simply cannot know whether Lorelei is a golddigger or not; thus we cannot know whether her capitalistic ambitions in Europe are innocent or illicit, benevolent or threatening. Like *A Foreign Affair*, *Gentlemen* contains multiple possibilities for reading that sit next to each other uncomfortably and are never definitively resolved.

At an ideological level, Monroe’s ambivalent performance functions in two ways. First, it functions to convert both patriarchal and colonial anxieties to play and fun. Via the delightfulness and amusement of her screen persona, she converts these anxieties to a question of one woman’s intentions, metamorphosing them into a joyous spectacle. Although *Gentlemen* is not a dual-focus musical in structure, Monroe’s on-screen persona functions in a similar manner to dancing in *Silk Stockings*, providing a space of fun and play that converts conflict to utopian energy. Like Katharine Hepburn in *Summertime*, Monroe’s performance relies on the reconciliation of contradiction, in this case perhaps across an especially wide terrain (she is, after all, ‘simultaneously polar opposites’). The opposites are not only in her status as golddigger versus innocent but also in her capacity to be threatening versus benevolent as an American abroad.

Second, also like the dancing in *Silk Stockings*, Monroe’s (and Russell’s) performance functions as a playful mode of spatial dominance. We are used to seeing male performers

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<sup>55</sup> Dyer, *Stars*, 148.

inhabit space in this way, as though it belongs to them. It is more surprising to see women doing it. Handyside's argument that they accrue power within a patriarchal scopic system is correct, but I would add that they simultaneously accrue power within a colonial regime, for as I have argued, their behaviour is intimately tied to their being (lower-class) American, even before they arrive in Paris. Their performances of sexiness give them the power to literally dominate a room, as when they walk into the ship's dining room and all eyes turn towards them. When they arrive in Paris, this domination comes to have explicitly colonial implications, as Handyside argues.

When understood in the context of American geopolitical ideologies, just as in *Silk Stockings*, *Gentlemen's* illegibility serves a crucial purpose, converting contradictions and incoherences into 'entertainment' while also denying the possibility of a serious reading through 'fun'. Through Monroe's performance the film envisions Paris, and the globe, as a utopian space for the American woman consumer, a place in which nothing is off limits.

## Conclusion

This thesis has explored how the 1950s tourist films appropriate and aestheticise European space in various ways. Through the colonial longings of the travelogue, the geopolitical anxiety of the film noir, the otherising nostalgia of the melodrama and the playful domination of the musical, I showed how various Hollywood styles and genres function in subtle and overt ways to depict America as metropole and European space as periphery, with the latter used as an illustration and displacement for an array of postwar American anxieties and ideological issues. These films thus function similarly to tourism itself in their colonial appropriation of foreign cultures – an appropriation which, in both the tourist films and in tourism itself, is anything but harmless, even as it everywhere denies its seriousness.

The denial of seriousness – often attributed to Hollywood cinema – is perhaps one reason for the invisibility of colonial ideologies in the Hollywood film text. The films of this thesis are so ‘obviously’ an idealised, abstracted or solipsistic representation of a place that there seems to be no need to take them seriously. However, if we attend to these aspects of Hollywood representation, so common as to be invisible, we can begin to see how American cinema of the postwar period constructs the nation in various ways and various genres as a rising colonial power dominating the former metropole of Europe. Yet even as it does so, this cinema simultaneously disavows American imperial power, employing a rhetoric of American benevolence and subtly constructing Europe as in need of intervention for various reasons – itself a classic colonialist trope. Europe may be represented as a space inhabited by happy though impoverished peasants, as threatened by a communist other or as itself containing dark, lurking dangers from its hidden past, but

always it is subsumed into a colonialist logic in which America's conceptions of the national self are transferred to and shape the depiction of foreign space.

This thesis suggests a need for further study of the geopolitics of classical Hollywood cinema – study which focuses primarily and closely on the film text and related issues like genre rather than on industrial and political histories. Such study of 'encounters on the imaginary frontier' can, indeed, underpin the assumptions of such histories as well as adding more broadly to our understanding of America's imperialist practices in the cultural realm. After all, Hollywood films are complex texts, not simple consumer objects; the significance of their global spread must be investigated at the ideological level, and the film texts themselves must be treated as capable of generating discourse rather than simply reflecting it. To fully understand Hollywood's global reach and its role in the rise of American-style consumer capitalism, we must study Hollywood cinema's construction of the American self in relation to foreign spaces, ideally considering how these constructions might influence and shape history.

Viewed from another angle, textual study of the geopolitics of Hollywood cinema also has the capacity to expand our understanding of the Hollywood film text itself. Like Said's groundbreaking analysis of Jane Austen, this thesis has sought to transform our understanding of certain canonical Hollywood texts and genres by investigating them from a novel postcolonial angle. In doing so, it suggests how various Hollywood genres are in fact underpinned by an almost invisible range of geopolitical assumptions about and anxieties over America and its place in the world.

It also shows how these geopolitical concerns are inextricably intertwined with other hegemonic American ideologies, notably those surrounding gender. One conclusion of this thesis from the perspective of Hollywood studies is that postcolonial imagery should be read as significant in its own right rather than subsumed into the framework of psychoanalysis. Another, broader conclusion is that we must consider various gendered subjectivities in Hollywood cinema in terms of their relationships to space and geography.

This thesis has explored the spatiovisual gendered subjectivities of the explorer/conqueror, the film noir hero, the old maid and the showgirl, but surely there are many other gendered stereotypes, across many periods of Hollywood history, that are in need of postcolonial unpacking.

Postcolonial strategies of reading share many goals in common with ideological film criticism, principally an interest in investigating the ‘battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections’ present in the film text.<sup>1</sup> Extending ideological film criticism to postcolonial concerns can be viewed, then, as a natural step. However, this thesis also reaffirms certain revisions to the goals and assumptions of ideological film criticism as it was originally conceived by Comolli and Narboni, particularly the revisions suggested by Ryan and Kellner, Wood, Nichols and Klinger. Most important are the centrality of contradiction and of incoherence, which I theorise as an array of ideological contradictions that jostle unpredictably within a given text. As my textual analyses have shown, dominant ideologies are very rarely monolithic, even in texts that are seemingly smooth on the surface. Incoherence is in fact central to what ideology is, as Ryan and Kellner and Wood have argued prior to the present work. In the tourist films, colonialism and patriarchy do not function smoothly together, instead jostling uncomfortably at various points. The apparent smoothness of the text is frequently disrupted, revealing the ideological labour involved in the production of smoothness and even threatening to destroy narrative coherence.

Let us briefly review what I have found about each film text I analysed. *This is Cinerama* is one of the smoothest in my corpus, seamlessly subsuming European space into a filmic language of domination. It uses the voice of the white American male narrator to position America as an exploring and conquering nation whose technologies map and control foreign space. Yet even here, key scenes reveal the ideological labour that goes into

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<sup>1</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 8.

the creation of this smooth façade of domination. The narrator claims that the Vienna Boys' Choir are simply a casual band of boys, hastily gathered from the neighbourhoods where they were playing. He makes a similar statement about the Spanish dancers, portraying them as dancing peasants. Both claims are disingenuous and clearly false, inadvertently revealing how the film must work to subsume Europeans into its representational framework. *Three Coins in the Fountain* is a more typical example of classical Hollywood filmmaking, yet this film is utterly fraught with ideological inconsistency and conflict. Its female protagonists simultaneously rely on and transgress against both patriarchal and colonial/racial hierarchies, and the film must work hard to contain the incoherence produced when these hierarchies fail to align.

The other film with somewhat tenuous ties to Hollywood is *Confidential Report*. This film's primary themes are incomprehensibility and chaos, yet I find that it functions powerfully to position America as eternal saviour to Europe's imperilled civilisation through its war-torn landscapes and aesthetic references to the sublime. Meanwhile *A Foreign Affair*, a classical Hollywood production through and through, articulates a strong challenge to the American hegemonic voice through an interweaving of conflicting narratives and an acknowledgement of subaltern perspectives. Rather than 'solving' the conflict through an ideologically recuperative ending, the film allows it to stand unresolved.

*Summertime's* ending more full-heartedly attempts an ideological recuperation, ending Jane's affair with Renato and sending her home again. The film positions her as a woman experiencing liberation from the patriarchal regime, yet works hard to confine this liberation to a faraway fantasy space, made to the measure of women's desires. It begins to allow a subaltern voice, yet this voice is simultaneously contained via racial stereotyping and the depiction of Italy as nostalgic fantasy. Katharine Hepburn's performance as Jane also serves a containing function, reconciling the narrative's contradictions through an intensely emotional performance.

In *Silk Stockings*, by contrast, the performances of Astaire and Charisse are not

sufficient to paper over the film's ideological cracks. The film is torn at the seams by the acute and irreconcilable contrast between the stars' spoken parts and their dance sequences. The film's ending seems especially fraught with contradiction and conflict, uneasily positioning Nina as simultaneously submissive to patriarchy and sexually dominant. And in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the contradiction between an American woman's innocence and shrewdness as she climbs the ladder of global wealth is reconciled through Monroe's complicated and bewildering performance of the 'dumb blonde' role.

My readings suggest a wide range of positionings in relation to dominant ideologies which cannot be contained under a simplistic dichotomy of 'progressive' and 'retrograde' texts. Indeed, some of the tourist films are simultaneously progressive and retrograde, depending on which ideology one is considering – pointing to the contradictory nature of these hegemonic ideologies themselves. They might work very hard to contain ideological contradictions, with varying degrees of 'success'. Or they might embrace ambiguities, particularly those enacted through star performances that suggest non-dominant or against-the-grain readings. Note, too, that none of these have any clear relationship to stylistic innovation, or lack thereof, in relation to Hollywood aesthetics; indeed, *Confidential Report* and *This is Cinerama* were two of the smoothest texts of the thesis despite being the most stylistically innovative.

The art of a nation in a given era – perhaps especially its popular art – can give us a window into its dominant ideologies, and these ideologies' inconsistencies and exclusions. Like the 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel, 1950s Hollywood cinema is a prime case study of the potential for ideological productivity of an art form made by a society undergoing a period of expanding geopolitical power. As Said shows and this thesis has affirmed, discourses build upon themselves; they are not always directly referent to historical events nor reducible to the circumstances of their production. Therefore texts must be considered for their potential not merely to reflect ideology, but rather to create it in powerfully imaginative ways. The tourist films take up the Western colonial imaginaries and rhetorical strategies of

previous eras and cultures, and harness them for a newly productive, generative purpose, building them into a complex series of justifications for imperialist intervention in European space. Yet at the same time, these ideologies contain the very seeds of their own downfall; this too is reflected in the text, showing how dominant ideologies are imbued with contradiction and incoherence at every turn.



## Appendix: The corpus of films

Following is a list of the tourist films, the primary corpus of films for this thesis. They are listed in chronological order by year of release. A full list of all films mentioned in or otherwise relevant to the thesis is provided in the Filmography. Note: Where no screen technology is listed, the film is in black and white, and Academy ratio.

Year	Title	Studio	Director	Stars	Screen technologies	Setting	Location where made
1948	<i>A Foreign Affair</i>	Paramount	Billy Wilder	Jean Arthur, Marlene Dietrich, John Lund		Berlin	Berlin
1948	<i>The Search</i>	MGM	Fred Zinnemann	Montgomery Clift		Germany (unnamed city)	Bavaria (various locations)
1949	<i>I Was a Male War Bride</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	Howard Hawks	Cary Grant, Ann Sheridan		Germany	Baden-Württemberg, Germany (various locations); London studio
1949	<i>The Third Man</i>	London/Selznick	Carol Reed	Orson Welles, Joseph Cotton, Alida Valli, Trevor Howard		Vienna	Vienna; London studio
1950	<i>The Big Lift</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	George Seaton	Montgomery Clift, Paul Douglas, Cornell Borchers		Berlin	Berlin, Hawaii, Portugal

1950	<i>September Affair</i>	Paramount	William Dieterle	Joseph Cotton, Joan Fontaine		Naples, Rome, Florence	Naples, Rome, Florence
1951	<i>An American in Paris</i>	MGM	Vincente Minnelli	Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron	Technicolor	Paris	Hollywood studio
1952	<i>April in Paris</i>	Warner Bros.	David Butler	Doris Day, Ray Bolger	Technicolor	Transatlantic cruise, Paris, New York	Hollywood studio
1952	<i>Lovely to Look At</i>	MGM	Mervyn LeRoy	Kathryn Grayson, Red Skelton, Howard Keel	Technicolor	Paris, New York	Hollywood studio
1952	<i>The Quiet Man</i>	Republic	John Ford	John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara	Technicolor	Ireland	Ireland (various locations); Hollywood
1952	<i>This Is Cinerama</i>	independent	Merian C. Cooper	Lowell Thomas	Cinerama, Eastmancolor, 7-track stereo sound	The US and Europe (various locations)	various
1953	<i>Beat the Devil</i>	United Artists	John Huston	Humphrey Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Gina Lollobrigida, Robert Morley, Peter Lorre		unnamed Italian port town	Amalfi coast, Italy; London studio
1953	<i>The French Line</i>	RKO	Lloyd Bacon	Jane Russell, Gilbert Roland	3D, Technicolor	Transatlantic cruise; Paris	Hollywood studio; Paris
1953	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	Howard Hawks	Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell	Technicolor	Transatlantic cruise, Paris, New York	Hollywood studio
1953	<i>Roman Holiday</i>	Paramount	William Wyler	Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn		Rome	Rome (on location and studio)

1953	<i>Stazione Termini</i> aka <i>Indiscretion of an American Wife</i>	Columbia	Vittorio de Sica	Jennifer Jones, Montgomery Clift		Rome	Rome (on location and studio)
1954	<i>Brigadoon</i>	MGM	Vincente Minnelli	Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse, van Johnson	CinemaScope, Ansicolor, 4-track stereo sound	Scotland, New York	Hollywood studio
1954	<i>The Last Time I Saw Paris</i>	MGM	Richard Brooks	Elizabeth Taylor, van Johnson, Donna Reed	Technicolor	Paris	Cannes, Monte Carlo, Paris
1954	<i>Three Coins in the Fountain</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	Jean Negulesco	Clifton Webb, Dorothy McGuire, Jean Peters, Louis Jourdan, Maggie McNamara, Rossano Brazzi	CinemaScope, Technicolor, 4-track stereo sound	Rome, Venice	Rome, Venice
1955	<i>Confidential Report</i> (aka <i>Mr Arkadin</i> )	Independent	Orson Welles	Robert Arden, Orson Welles		All over Europe, primarily Spain	Spain (location and studio), Bavaria, France, Italy
1955	<i>Summertime</i> (aka <i>Summer Madness</i> )	United Artists	David Lean	Katharine Hepburn, Rossano Brazzi, Isa Miranda	colour	Venice	Venice; London studio
1955	<i>To Catch a Thief</i>	Paramount	Alfred Hitchcock	Cary Grant, Grace Kelly	VistaVision, Technicolor	French Riviera	French Riviera; Hollywood studio
1956	<i>Around the World in 80 Days</i>	independent	Michael Todd	David Niven, Shirley MacLaine, Cantinflas	Todd-AO, Technicolor, 4-track stereo sound	many countries, beginning and ending in London	various (including Hollywood studio)

1957	<i>Boy on a Dolphin</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	Jean Negulesco	Sophia Loren, Alan Ladd, Clifton Webb	CinemaScope, De Luxe color, 4-track stereo sound	rural/coastal Greece	Greece; Rome studio
1957	<i>Funny Face</i>	Paramount	Stanley Donen	Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire	VistaVision, Technicolor	Paris, New York	Paris; Hollywood studio
1957	<i>Interlude</i>	Universal	Douglas Sirk	June Allyson, Rossano Brazzi	CinemaScope, Technicolor	Munich; Salzburg	Munich; Salzburg
1957	<i>Silk Stockings</i>	MGM	Rouben Mamoulian	Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, Peter Lorre, Janis Paige	CinemaScope, colour, 4-track stereo sound	Paris	Hollywood studio
1958	<i>Fraulein</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	Henry Koster	Dana Wynter, Mel Ferrer	CinemaScope, De Luxe color, 4-track stereo sound	Berlin	Hollywood studio
1958	<i>Kings Go Forth</i>	United Artists	Delmer Daves	Frank Sinatra, Tony Curtis, Natalie Wood	VistaVision (black and white)	French Riviera	French Riviera
1958	<i>Paris Holiday</i>	United Artists	Gerd Oswald	Bob Hope, Anita Ekberg, Fernandel	Technirama, Technicolor	Paris	Paris
1960	<i>It Started in Naples</i>	Paramount	Melville Shavelson	Clark Gable, Sophia Loren, Vittorio De Sica	VistaVision, Technicolor	Capri, Naples	Capri, Naples, Rome studio
1961	<i>Come September</i>	Universal	Robert Mulligan	Rock Hudson, Gina Lollobrigida, Sandra Dee, Bobby Darin	CinemaScope, Technicolor	rural Italy, Rome	Rome, Genoa, Cinque Terre
1961	<i>One, Two, Three</i>	United Artists	Billy Wilder	James Cagney, Pamela Tiffin, Arlene Francis	Panavision (black and white)	Berlin	Berlin, Bavaria studio
1961	<i>Paris Blues</i>	United Artists	Martin Ritt	Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Sidney Poitier, Louis		Paris	Paris

				Armstrong			
1961	<i>The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone</i>	Warner Bros.	Jose Quintero	Vivien Leigh, Warren Beatty	Technicolor	Rome	Rome, London studio
1961	<i>Town Without Pity</i>	United Artists	Gottfried Reinhardt	Kirk Douglas		German village	Bavaria, Vienna studio
1962	<i>Bon Voyage!</i>	Disney	James Neilson	Fred McMurray, Jane Wyman	Technicolor	Paris, French Riviera	Paris, French Riviera
1962	<i>Judgment at Nuremberg</i>	United Artists	Stanley Kramer	Spencer Tracy, Marlene Dietrich, Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Judy Garland, Richard Widmark	VistaVision (black and white)	Nuremberg	Nuremberg, Berlin, Hollywood studio
1962	<i>Light in the Piazza</i>	MGM	Guy Green	Olivia de Havilland, Rossano Brazzi, George Hamilton	CinemaScope, Metrocolor	Florence, Rome	Florence, Rome
1962	<i>Rome Adventure</i>	Warner Bros.	Delmer Daves	Suzanne Pleshette	colour	Rome, rural Italy	Rome, Lake Maggiore
1962	<i>Two Weeks in Another Town</i>	MGM	Vincente Minnelli	Kirk Douglas, Edward G. Robinson, Cyd Charisse, George Hamilton	CinemaScope, colour	Rome	Rome (on location and studio)
1963	<i>A New Kind of Love</i>	Paramount	Melville Shavelson	Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Thelma Ritter	VistaVision, Technicolor	Paris	Hollywood studio

1963	<i>In the French Style</i>	Columbia	Robert Parrish	Jean Seberg, Stanley Baker		Paris	Paris
1964	<i>Paris When It Sizzles</i>	Paramount	Richard Quine	William Holden, Audrey Hepburn	VistaVision, Technicolor	Paris	Paris (on location and studio)
1964	<i>The Pleasure Seekers</i>	Twentieth-Century Fox	Jean Negulesco	Ann-Margret, Carol Lynley, Pamela Tiffin	CinemaScope, colour	Madrid	Madrid

## Filmography

\* denotes a film listed in the Appendix with further information.

*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (Richard Fleischer, 1954).

*The African Queen* (John Huston, 1951).

*All That Heaven Allows* (Douglas Sirk, 1955).

*Amelie* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001).

*An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951).\*

*Anything Goes* (Lewis Milestone, 1936).

*Anything Goes* (Robert Lewis, 1956).\*

*April in Paris* (David Butler, 1952).\*

*Around the World in 80 Days* (Michael Todd, 1956).\*

*Avanti!* (Billy Wilder, 1972).

*L'Avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960).

*The Band Wagon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1953).

*The Barefoot Contessa* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1954).

*The Beach* (Danny Boyle, 2000).

*Beat the Devil* (John Huston, 1953).\*

*Before Sunrise* (Richard Linklater, 1995).

*Before Sunset* (Richard Linklater, 2004).

*Beneath the Twelve-Mile Reef* (Robert D. Webb, 1953).

*The Best Years of Our Lives* (William Wyler, 1946).

*The Big Lift* (George Seaton, 1950).\*

*The Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930).

*Bon Voyage!* (James Neilson, 1962).\*

*Bonjour, Tristesse* (Otto Preminger, 1958).

*Boy on a Dolphin* (Jean Negulesco, 1957).\*

*The Bride Wore Red* (Dorothy Arzner, 1937).

*Brigadoon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1954).\*

*Bwana Devil* (Arch Oboler, 1952).

*Can-Can* (Walter Lang, 1960).

*Les carabiniers* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963).

*Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1943).

*Chang* (Merian C. Cooper, 1927).

*Chimes at Midnight* (Orson Welles, 1966).

*Chocolat* (Claire Denis, 1988).

*Come September* (Robert Mulligan, 1961).\*

*Confidential Report* aka *Mr Arkadin* (Orson Welles, 1955).\*

*The Crimson Pirate* (Robert Siodmak, 1952).

*Daddy Long Legs* (Jean Negulesco, 1955).

*Darling* (John Schlesinger, 1965).

*Le Divorce* (James Ivory, 2003).

*Du Barry Was a Lady* (Roy Del Ruth, 1943).

*Eat Pray Love* (Ryan Murphy, 2010).

*The Emperor Waltz* (Billy Wilder, 1948).

*A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1948).\*

*Forget Paris* (Billy Crystal, 1995).

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Sam Wood, 1943).

*Fraulein* (Henry Koster, 1958).\*

*French Kiss* (Lawrence Kasdan, 1995).

*The French Line* (Lloyd Bacon, 1953).\*

*Funny Face* (Stanley Donen, 1957).\*

*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953).\*



*GI Blues* (Norman Taurog, 1960).

*Gigi* (Vincente Minnelli, 1958).

*Les Girls* (George Cukor, 1957).\*

*A Good Year* (Ridley Scott, 2006).

*The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903).

*Green Fire* (Andrew Marton, 1954).

*Heading South* (Laurent Cantet, 2005).

*Heaven Knows, Mr Allison* (John Huston, 1957).

*How to Marry a Millionaire* (Jean Negulesco, 1953).

*Humoresque* (Jean Negulesco, 1946).

*If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium* (Mel Stuart, 1969).

*I Know Where I'm Going!* (Powell & Pressburger, 1945).

*I Was a Male War Bride* (Howard Hawks, 1949).\*

*In the French Style* (Robert Parrish, 1963).\*

*Interlude* (Douglas Sirk, 1957).\*

*Irma La Douce* (Billy Wilder, 1963).

*The Iron Petticoat* (Ralph Thomas, 1956).

*It Started in Naples* (Melville Shavelson, 1960).\*

*Ivan the Terrible* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1944).

*Jet Pilot* (Josef von Sternberg, 1957).

*Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1962).\*

*The King and I* (Walter Lang, 1956).

*King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933).

*King Ralph* (David S. Ward, 1991).

*King Solomon's Mines* (Compton Bennett and Andrew Martin, 1950).

*Kings Go Forth* (Delmer Daves, 1958).\*

*Kiss Me Deadly* (Robert Aldrich, 1955).

*Kuala Lumpur: Capital of the Malay States* (Pathé, 1912).

*The Last Time I Saw Paris* (Richard Brooks, 1954).\*

*Leap Year* (Anand Tucker, 2010).

*Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Max Ophuls, 1948).

*Letters to Juliet* (Gary Winick, 2010).

*Light in the Piazza* (Guy Green, 1962).\*

*Little Women* (George Cukor, 1933).

*Local Hero* (Bill Forsyth, 1983).

*Loch Ness* (John Henderson, 1996).

*Lost Horizon* (Frank Capra, 1937).

*Love, Actually* (Richard Curtis, 2003).

*Lovely to Look At* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1952).\*

*Lust for Life* (Vincente Minnelli, 1956).

*The Maggie* (Alexander MacKendrick, 1954).

*The Man Between* (Carol Reed, 1953).

*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (Nunnally Johnson, 1956).

*The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1956).

*The Matchmaker* (1997).

*Le mépris* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963).

*Mogambo* (John Ford, 1953).

*Monkey Business* (Howard Hawks, 1952).

*Moulin Rouge* (John Huston, 1952).

*My Fair Lady* (George Cukor, 1964).

*The Naked City* (Jules Dassin, 1948).

*A New Kind of Love* (Melville Shavelson, 1963).\*

*Ninotchka* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1939).

*Notting Hill* (Roger Michell, 1999).

*Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942).

*The Old Maid* (Edmund Goulding, 1939).

*On the Riviera* (Walter Lang, 1951).\*

*Once Upon a Honeymoon* (Leo McCarey, 1942).

*One, Two, Three* (Billy Wilder, 1961).\*

*Only You* (Norman Jewison, 1994).

*Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (Albert Lewin, 1950).

*Paree, Paree* (Roy Mack, 1934).

*Paris Blues* (Martin Ritt, 1961).\*

*Paris Holiday* (Gerd Oswald, 1958).\*

*Paris When It Sizzles* (Richard Quine, 1964).\*

*The Passionate Friends* (David Lean, 1949).

*The Pleasure Seekers* (Jean Negulesco, 1964).\*

*Portrait of a Lady* (Jane Campion, 1996).

*P.S. I Love You* (Richard LaGravenese, 2007).

*The Quiet Man* (John Ford, 1952).\*

*Rhapsody* (Charles Vidor, 1952).

*Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954).

*Road to Hong Kong* (Norman Panama, 1962).

*Road to Singapore* (Victor Scherzinger, 1940).

*The Robe* (Henry Koster, 1953).

*Roberta* (William A. Seiter, 1935).

*Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953).\*

*The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (Jose Quintero, 1961).\*

*Rome Adventure* (Delmer Daves, 1962).\*

*A Room With a View* (James Ivory, 1985).

*Sabrina* (Billy Wilder, 1954).

*September Affair* (William Dieterle, 1950).\*

*The Seven Year Itch* (Billy Wilder, 1955).

*The Sheik* (George Melford, 1921).

*Silk Stockings* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1957).\*

*Snowbound* (David MacDonald, 1948).

*Son of the Sheik* (George Fitzmaurice, 1926).

*Song of Norway* (Andrew Stone, 1970).

*South Pacific* (Joshua Logan, 1958).

*Stage Fright* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1950).

*Stalag 17* (Billy Wilder, 1953).

*Stazione Termini* aka *Indiscretion of an American Wife* (Vittorio de Sica, 1953).\*

*Stealing Beauty* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1996).

*The Story of Three Loves* (Vincente Minnelli and Gottfried Reinhardt, 1953).

*Stella Dallas* (King Vidor, 1937).

*Summertime* (David Lean, 1955). \*

*The Search* (Fred Zinnemann, 1948).\*

*The Spirit of St Louis* (Billy Wilder, 1957).

*The Teahouse of the August Moon* (Daniel Mann, 1946).

*Tender is the Night* (Henry King, 1962).

*The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949).\*

*This Is Cinerama* (Merian C. Cooper, 1952).\*

*Three Coins in the Fountain* (Jean Negulesco, 1954).\*

*To Catch a Thief* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1955).\*

*To Each His Own* (Mitchell Leisen, 1946).

*Torn Curtain* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1966).

*Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958).

*Town Without Pity* (Gottfried Reinhardt, 1961).\*

*Two Weeks in Another Town* (Vincente Minnelli, 1962).\*

*Under the Tuscan Sun* (Audrey Wells, 2003).

*Viaggio in Italia* (Roberto Rossellini, 1954).

*Waking Ned Devine* (Kirk Jones, 1998).

*When in Rome* (Mark Steven Johnson, 2010).

*While You Were Sleeping* (Jon Turteltaub, 1995).

*Whisky Galore!* (Alexander MacKendrick, 1949).

*The Wings of the Dove* (Iain Softley, 1997).

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