

INVESTING IN THE DOMESTIC: THE CRISIS OF THE MODERN
CITY IN LATE NEW WAVE CINEMA

by

Kimberley Dawn Bercov

B.A., University of British Columbia , 1997

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Fine Arts; Art History)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September 2001

© Kimberley Dawn Bercov, 2001

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Fine Arts

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Sept 26 2001

Abstract

Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know about Her/Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* (1966) clearly equates the Her/*elle* in the title with both the city of Paris and a young housewife living in a modern apartment on the outskirts of the city. Godard has insisted that this '*elle*' is only Paris and not Juliette—the housewife whose daily activities the film documents. Yet the movements of Juliette within the film are inseparable from the knowledge imparted by the filming of the city's public and domestic spaces. Further, her quotidian route through these sites must constantly negotiate an almost excessive overabundance of consumer images. This film, and much of the work of the so-called French New Wave, attempts to articulate the problems posed by the 'Modern City' and the conditions of post-war capitalism. *Weekend* (1967) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) envision a city in which the status quo delineated by consumer culture sets the pattern for all forms of urban life. *Fahrenheit 451*, a dystopic science fiction film directed by François Truffaut, describes a world in which the very structure of the home is conflated with technologies of mass culture and consumerism. Technology enters the domestic sphere in this film as a 'screen interface' that 'spectacularly' produces gendered and sexualized modes of identification almost exclusively for the suburban housewife.

This thesis explores the gendered spaces of the cinematic city, particularly how architecture, technology, and consumerism are spatialized. In chapter one I address how the spaces of consumerism and the domestic are conflated, leaving it up to the suburban housewife to bear the burden. In chapter two I turn to the formation of female desire as it is reconfigured in the exchanges between the spaces of technology and the domestic. How are these intersecting spheres represented as potential sites of communal transformation? How do they serve to reveal the limits of transformation? The possibility for social change within this cinematic space is ultimately relocated outside of the urban. All three films offer a significant re-appraisal of the 'Modern City,' and in the process reveal its profound links to women's bodies and female desire. I conclude with a discussion of the failures of the post-war 'Modern City' which, in these films, is rejected in favour of a move 'into nature,' a going 'back to zero,' as a possible site for reimagining new patterns of social and sexual relations.

Table of Contents

| | | |
|---|-------|----|
| Abstract | ..... | ii |
| List of Illustrations | ..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements | ..... | v |
| | | |
| INTRODUCTION | | |
| The Post-War Urban Cinemascape | ..... | 1 |
| | | |
| CHAPTER ONE | | |
| The Technologies of Gender and Consumerism | | |
| Privacy and domesticity | ..... | 15 |
| Consumerism and the spaces of desire | ..... | 22 |
| The screen wall and the 'public' enclosure of domesticity | ..... | 30 |
| | | |
| CHAPTER TWO | | |
| Consuming Technology: Between the 'Screen' and the Body | | |
| Women's bodies as 'machines for living' | ..... | 37 |
| Forgetting history | ..... | 41 |
| The pre-Oedipal mother: resisting technology | ..... | 44 |
| | | |
| POSTSCRIPT | | |
| Leaving the city | ..... | 50 |
| | | |
| End Notes | ..... | 59 |
| Bibliography | ..... | 67 |
| Illustrations | ..... | 71 |

List of Illustrations

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1.1: <i>Two or Three Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. Juliette (Marina Vlady) in red white and blue | 71 |
| Figure 1.2: <i>Two or Three Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. 'Constructing' Paris in red, white and blue. | 72 |
| Figure 1.3: <i>Two or Three Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. The brothel/daycare. | 73 |
| Figure 1.4: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , François Truffaut. The screen wall. | 74 |
| Figure 2.1: <i>2 or 3 Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. Juliette in front of modern apartment block. | 75 |
| Figure 2.2: <i>2 or 3 Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. Modern apartment highrises. | 76 |
| Figure 2.3: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , François Truffaut. The 'book women' and the pre-modern home. | 77 |
| Figure 3.1: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , François Truffaut. The 'anti-architecture' shelter of the 'book people.' | 78 |
| Figure 3.2: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , François Truffaut. The community of the 'book people.' | 79 |
| Figure 3.3: <i>2 or 3 Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. The city reimagined as a still-life of consumer goods. | 80 |
| Figure 3.4: <i>2 or 3 Things I Know About Her</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. The commodified body. | 81 |
| Figure 3.5: <i>Weekend</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. The community of the Oise-et-Seine Liberation Front. | 82 |
| Figure 3.6: <i>Weekend</i> , Jean-Luc Godard. The community of the Oise-et-Seine Liberation Front. | 83 |

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank first of all my readers, Rose Marie San Juan and Scott Watson, who have given me invaluable critical input into this project. This thesis would not have been possible without the challenging and stimulating discourse that transpired during the many fruitful meetings preceding my final draft. I would also like to thank all of the UBC Fine Arts Department, particularly Maureen Ryan, for her generosity with book lending and words of encouragement, and Serge Guilbaut for his limitless enthusiasm. Special thanks go to my husband, Joseph Monteyne, for his kindness and emotional support during this project and his adeptness at remedying computer problems. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents who always seem to find encouraging words and a sense of humor even in the most demanding of times.

Introduction

The Post-War Urban Cinemascape

Jean-Luc Godard's film *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her/Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* (1966) follows the quotidian route of Juliette Janson (Marina Vlady), a suburban housewife through the streets of Paris. In her journey throughout the city she encounters various spaces of the 'Modern City.' These ambiguous sites of modernity—the café, the daycare, the modern high rise block, and the spaces of consumer exchange—are continually punctuated by the images of travel posters, pages torn from glossy fashion magazine, and by Juliette's repeated attempts to formulate desires outside of the spaces of consumer culture. As she struggles to define her role in relation to the desires of consumer capitalism and the domestic sphere, the image of the 'Modern City' becomes an ominous and suffocating spatial enclosure. Juliette circles the 'Modern City,' the sprawl of identical vertical housing projects, while revealing her frustration at the inability of images and language to accurately define her desires. Hemming in her vision, the suburban Paris of domestic high rises is filmed as an inescapable panorama. This city is acutely identified with the sense of alienation and anxiety wrought by the spaces of post-war consumerism.

In *Fahrenheit 451* of the same year, François Truffaut presents us with consumer desires and public spaces that are, for the most part, mediated by an

electronic image. A giant screen wall within the home transmits the images of consumer culture and the voices and faces of state authority. Unlike the wandering journey depicted in Godard's film, *Fahrenheit 451* posits a relationship between the spaces of consumerism, technology, and the suburban housewife Linda, played by Julie Christie, that exist almost entirely within the domestic enclosure of modern architecture. Nevertheless, in both films the city appears as a serial and reproducible image characterized by rows of modern housing complexes that seem to multiply themselves within the frame of the camera.

The problems posed by the 'Modern City' are articulated in these films of the so-called New Wave as a journey through conflicting spaces of desire. These cinematic cities of the late sixties appear remarkably different from earlier images of the war torn city produced in the years immediately following World War II. Within these shadowy and unstable spaces of post-war European cinema, the recent memory of the social and physical trauma experienced by communities became manifest through the haunting cinematography of the broken city. These images, most recognizably linked to the genre of French and Italian resistance films and the new aesthetic/thematic category of neo-realism, depicted the urban body as a fractured and endless ruin.¹ Cinematic post-war urban spaces imagined the city as both indefinable and unfixed, linking it both to the memory of internally divided communities as well as the possibility for the social and physical reconstruction of the urban. The city in Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (1945), for example, is depicted as a space stretching off in the distance without enclosure or limit, an urban body without definitive form or structure. In the final shot of the film a raggedy group of boys, the leaders of the Italian youth resistance, appear looking out over the broken city of Rome. These young

boys are identified with the image of the post-war city, its wrecked and weary façade awaiting the transformative possibilities and realities offered by the post-war process of rebuilding. In Vittorio de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), the entire work is filmed in the streets without a single studio shot.² In this film a depiction of the urban body is structured within the movement of the city itself, its markets and neighbourhoods offering unstable and collapsing boundaries within the narrative.

As Gilles Deleuze has argued, the representation of the city within cinema and the process of attaining new structures of thought were intrinsically linked in post-war films. Deleuze has posited that urban space as depicted in post-war film is imbued with potential for the transformation of society. These films have shown us a European city 'demolished or being reconstructed, its waste grounds, its shanty towns... its undifferentiated urban tissue, its vast unused places, docks, warehouses, heaps of girder.'³ Within these spaces of 'pure potential', Deleuze argues that a space for reconceptualizing the city and consequently rupturing the structures of thought—the 'any-space-whatever'—might arise. While this is a useful and compelling argument in relation to images of the city and the historical specificity of the Second World War, the very nature of the 'any-space-whatever' drastically changes in the later part of the sixties within French cinema.

The 'any-space-whatever'—'disconnected' or empty spaces—which, according to Deleuze, 'broke shots open...in favour of a non-totalisable space' appears in French New Wave films of the late sixties by way of a markedly different relation to the urban body.⁴ These moments in which 'the cinema of seeing replaces the cinema of action' are, in these later films, wrought within

very specific historical relations.⁵ The urban post-war ruin was physically and structurally changed by the new economic systems of post-war capitalism. While the characters of neo-realist films struggled to eat, survive and resist the oppressive forces of foreign militarism and ever-present poverty, the families of the 'New Wave' were imaged within the spaces of post-war economic abundance. Characters like Rossellini's Pina, who stages a bread riot in *Rome Open City* to feed her hungry community, is motivated by the most basic drives of survival to enter the spaces of economic exchange. Godard's Juliette, on the other hand, continually enters the realm of consumer exchange in order to fulfill recently manufactured desires that can never be satisfied according to the logic of late capitalism. This shift in relations between urban dwellers and their contexts insists, I argue, on a re-appraisal of cinematic urban space in relation to how the conflicting spaces of the 'Modern City' come to bear on the bodies of women.

As reconstruction entered its second decade, operating to some degree within the discourse of pre-war Utopian modernism, the cinematic city of the late 1960's emerged as something very different from the neo-realist photography of urban spaces. While the *Périphérique* highway encircling Paris came to completion towards the end of the 1960's, the visualization of the rebuilt city's spatial and conceptual limits became a frequent preoccupation in late French New Wave cinema. The 'city of the 60's' was now represented as the locus of the 'society of the spectacle,' and the repression of history.⁶ Masking over the memory of Deleuze's post-war images of rupture, instability and the ruined urban façade, the new city of François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard presents

itself as whole and enclosed. It appears as a clean and ordered utopia of built spaces enmeshed with the technological forms of mediation and replication.

2 or 3 Things I Know About Her and *Fahrenheit 451* are by no means the only New Wave films which deal with issues of gender and urban spaces. Godard's oeuvre is rife with films which address this issue in some way, even if only indirectly. *Masculine Feminine*, *Alphaville*, and *Breathless* broach this terrain on many occasions. Yet, these earlier New Wave films treat the subject with a somewhat more ambiguous and flippant manner.⁷ The remark that 'we are all children of Marx and Coca-Cola', iterated and reiterated in *Masculine Feminine*, becomes much darker and treated with a seriousness not deployed in his earlier films. The contradictions of this statement also become localized in a far more specific way in later New Wave cinema as an exploration of the relationships between women's bodies, technology and public spaces come to the forefront of the films discussed in this thesis.⁸

In *Fahrenheit 451*, the city of modern tract housing and technological comforts sets the stage for the virtually irrepressible intrusion of violent public images and commodity culture into the private sphere.⁹ In this film the body and actions of the suburban housewife are intrinsic to Truffaut's critiques of modern society's architectural and technical spaces. Notably, in Godard's *2 Or 3 Things I Know About Her* and *Weekend* (1967) prostitution, child care and marital infidelity become the subjects of this new critical space of the 'any-space-whatever.'

Further, in *2 Or 3 Things I Know About Her* the city is filmed as an encroaching modernist suburbia ordered by pre-established codes of what is supposed to be progressive city planning. Formations of free standing concrete slab structures dominate the architectural presence of the city, traceable in every

form back to French theorist and architect Le Corbusier's housing project *Unité d'Habitation* at Marseilles (1947-53). In *Fahrenheit 451* the serialized tract housing and vertical blocks of modern housing punctuate the periphery of the city. These structures, while utilizing the pre-war utopian ideals of modernist planning, had, by the later 60's been stripped of all aspects such as rooftop gardens, communal spaces and green areas, which might have allowed such architectural forms to become viable centres for family and communal life.¹⁰

In this thesis my aim is to investigate how the issue of commodity culture is spatialized within film. To do this I find it useful to approach the relationship between architecture and ideology through the work of Manfredo Tafuri. Tafuri argues that the correlation between architecture/design and ideology (utopian values) has been historically troubled by paradoxical and problematic mechanisms of operation. His central claim maintains that at the moment architectural planning or design becomes material, the ideology of utopia enters the "sphere of work" and "ideological production is simultaneously attracted and repelled."¹¹ He also stresses that avant-garde movements, particularly constructivism and Le Corbusier's 'machines for living', versions of which appear in the films I will be analyzing, called for a subordination of all objects including the self to the patterns, uses and spaces of the new modernist conception of space. In this process he argues that the body of revolution (the bend towards political and social agitation in avant-garde movements), is transformed into the body of placation and surrender under the implementation of modernist or avant-garde forms.¹² Significantly, he also states that the impetus for this type of modernist universal planning ironically functioned to 'plan the disappearance of the subject, to cancel the anguish caused by the pathetic (or

ridiculous) resistance of the individual to the structures of domination that close in upon him.¹³ Within the constant search for bodily and spatial perfection of modernism, he argues that man attempts to 'atone for his 'original sin,' the sin of imperfection.¹⁴

Tafuri, however, is less concerned with the spaces of modernist domestic architecture, largely planned for the 'perfection' of domestic living.¹⁵ Moreover, it is striking how the female body bears the burden of this machine-like perfection within domestic architecture, and how crucial this is to the representations of consumer capitalism in late New Wave cinema. In *Fahrenheit 451*, for example, only women are shown to be resolutely engaged with the electronic image of ideological coercion. The space of the domestic in this film appears as a conduit for the ideological message of consumer culture and the voice of the state. In these New Wave films then, it is the body and behaviour of the middle-class housewife that must atone for the 'original sin' posited by Tafuri.¹⁶

Like Tafuri, French philosopher Henri Lefebvre describes the architectural processes that accommodate the spatial representation of the state in terms of an ideological cover. In its various spatial organizations, argues Lefebvre, the modern state

promotes and imposes itself as the stable centre – definitively – of (national) societies and spaces. As both the end and the meaning of history – just as Hegel had forecast – it flattens the social and 'cultural' spheres. It enforces a logic that puts an end to conflicts and contradictions. It neutralizes whatever resists it by castration or crushing.¹⁷

Both Tafuri and Lefebvre assert that the promotion of state/urban spaces attends to the project of concealing the less pleasant contradictions inherent in the social

and economic systems of capitalism. However, Lefebvre's writing is particularly useful for this analysis because, rather than focusing on the placated body, he argues that these oppressive mechanisms in all their forms provoke a violent and subversive confrontation, the body of revolution.¹⁸ This aspect of Lefebvre's work departs from both Tafuri and Deleuze in relation to the site of social transformation. For Deleuze, in his writings on film, the space of cinema and the moments of thinking allowed by the post-war 'any-space-whatever' or the 'direct time image' are the privileged sites for the possibility of rupturing old systems of thought. New spaces of thinking are thus forged in relation to a conceptual filmic terrain where time bears a direct yet indescribable relation to social change.¹⁹ For Tafuri, on the other hand, the only counter to the oppressive forms of utopian ideology lie in the possibility of a unified class struggle. This would put 'the working class as organized in its parties and unions, face to face with the highest levels achieved by the dynamics of capitalist development, and relating particular moments to general designs.'²⁰ Similarly, Lefebvre is directly concerned with the relationship between abstracted spaces of representation and actual spaces of life. What he envisions as the social body of revolution is not part of a dialectical Marxist model of class revolution. It is the force of 'incessant violence' which is always seething just beneath the social body waiting to 'transform themselves through struggle.'²¹

The production of space as theorized by Lefebvre is also a historically specific process. Thus, each terrain or epoch of lived history incorporates specific multivalent social spaces between which a relational nexus is formed. Neo-capitalism he argues is formed within 3 specific spatial realms; biological reproduction (the family), reproduction of labour (the working classes) and the

reproduction of social relations of production.²² Lefebvre asserts that it is 'symbolic representation' that maintains these social relations while simultaneously displacing and concealing them.²³ While Lefebvre creates distinct historical spatial configurations he is just as concerned with the interstices and relations between these boundaries as he is with the physical or conceptual delineation of them. His emphasis on embodied experience, the ever-present subversive element of the social body and the everyday has been of paramount importance to the theorization of the relation of gender to architecture and urban spaces.²⁴ It is the movement of the body and its ability to reject or re-signify certain aspects of spatial arrangement or built spaces that inform Lefebvre's understanding of the production of space.²⁵

The work of Lefebvre brings me back to the importance of the relation between representation and lived space. Cinematic space is a site of representation that is inherently bound to the electronic image. *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* and *Fahrenheit 451* use this cinematic space in order to launch a critique of the mediated image. A seamless identification with the screen of the film is repeatedly denied in these films. The screen within the screen of *Fahrenheit 451*, for instance, presents a critique of the mediated image and of the structures of film itself. The act of viewing and the relation between the screen and the body is represented as a passive and dangerous simulacrum for 'real' embodied experience.

Kaja Silverman works through several models of ideological belief in terms of embodied experience and the relation between a historically specific notion of a 'dominant fiction' and cinema. She argues that it is through the process of ideological belief that a reality is constructed in which a subject lays

claim to a normative identity.²⁶ Her discussion begins with the Althusserian model of ideological interpellation in which belief proceeds from a site exterior to consciousness that is ultimately marked by the naming or identification of a subject.²⁷ Through an analysis of Freud's relationship between fantasy and the unconscious, Silverman is then able to posit the foundational nexus of ideological belief. What is paramount to her notion of the 'dominant fiction'—gendered forms of subject identification within the symbolic—is precisely the level of fantasy that informs these 'symbolic personalities.'²⁸ The 'symbolic personality' as defined by Silverman is not unlike the notion of symbolic representation that Lefebvre posits as the terrain masking over or concealing various 'real' agendas of the engineered 'social spaces' of neo-capitalism. Both are contingent upon a system of belief that is held at the level of the unconscious. Without a doubt, the system of symbolic representation of neo-capitalist spaces referred to by Lefebvre, which are expressed in the films discussed in this thesis, deliver their ideological offerings in the forms of gendered possibilities.

As the New Wave 'broke shots open,' this cinematic technique also implied a drastic reworking of the neo-realist depiction of the city and a critical reappraisal of gender and consumer culture in connection to the 'Modern City.' Andreas Huyssen has argued that one of the founding texts of modernism is Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.²⁹ The petit bourgeois housewife in this novel is positioned in relation to the 'fantasy' of a certain kind of inferior cultural product, a literature of romance novels existing in that particularly nebulous category of 'mass culture.' In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* and *Fahrenheit 451* we also find this same spatialization of gender in relation to the various mediated products of this culture. In Godard's film, Juliette's desires are defined

exclusively in terms of the images of 'mass culture,' for instance, fashion magazines and glossy travel posters. In *Fahrenheit 451* it is primarily women who live within the technological spaces of 'mediated images.'

If modernism has historically positioned women in relation to the 'inferior' sphere of cultural products beginning with Flaubert, how is this relationship defined within the cinema of the New Wave? Flaubert, Huyssen reminds us, described the novels read by Madame Bovary as 'full of love and lovers, persecuted by damsels swooning in deserted pavilions, postillions slaughtered at every turn, horses ridden to death on every page, gloomy forests, romantic intrigue, vows, sobs, embraces and tears[...].'³⁰ Huyssen emphasizes the historical gendering of 'mass culture' in terms of romance and emotion. However, what is striking about the gendered image of 'mass culture' in later New Wave cinema is in fact the complete erasure of this conflation between the feminization of the products of 'mass culture' and the space of 'embraces and tears.' What characterizes the forms of 'mass culture' associated with women in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* and *Fahrenheit 451* is the detachment of emotion from maternal and sexual desires and the 'de-romanticizing' of love and lovers in the face of modern capitalism.

My thesis will focus on two aspects of the gendering of 'mass culture' and images of consumerism in relation to domestic and urban spaces. Firstly, consumerism will be discussed in relation to the formation of erotic and maternal desires in the suburban housewife. These desires will be analyzed in terms of *how* film positions them within the architectural spaces of the city. The representation of public and domestic spaces will be taken into account in this

discussion in order to address the direct relation between the economic and erotic forms of desire posed by the spaces of late capitalism.

Secondly, I will address the role of technology in relation to modern architectural spaces and ideology, and the suppression of maternal and sexual desire in the bodies of women. The relation between technology and maternal desire has long been a concern of the science fiction and dystopic film.³¹ My thesis will investigate this relation while also addressing it as something completely imbricated in the image of the 'Modern City.' Barbara Creed has recently written an exhaustive study of the various faces of what she calls the 'monstrous-feminine,' the various depictions of the female body which horrify in science fiction or horror films. In most cases, she argues, aspects of the female body that horrify all denote a particularly voracious sexual or maternal desire: the possessed monster in *The Exorcist* (1973), woman as monstrous womb in *The Brood* (1979), and woman as vampire in *The Hunger* (1983). However, with all these incarnations Creed neglects to posit their extreme other—the depiction of the female body devoid of nearly all forms of these desires. What is so disconcerting in the depiction of women's bodies in *Fahrenheit 451*, *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* and to some extent *Weekend* is just such an absence.

The second chapter will be concerned mainly with *Fahrenheit 451* because this film forges the connection between women's bodies, architectural forms, maternal desire and the mediated image in a very specific way. The giant screen wall fastened onto the domestic interior of Truffaut's modern pre-fabricated home, for instance, suggests a complete technological colonization of the female body. Technological utopianism and its ultimate failure comes to bear on the body of the suburban housewife as both the repression of maternal desire and a

'fantastic' identification with the mediated image in this film. Godard's *Weekend* offers another contemporary attempt at dealing with gender and the possibility for social reform which takes place almost entirely outside of the urban. I will argue that *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Weekend* pose questions about social space that insist on a complex set of relations between film as a site of thinking about architectural spaces, and the way in which the mediated image, be it fashion magazine or TV screen, produces gendered sites of identification.

The connection between architecture and technology has been aptly described by Paul Virlio as a 'screen interface' that 'becomes a kind of "distance", a depth of field of a new kind of representation, a visibility without any face-to-face encounter in which the vis-à-vis of the ancient streets disappears and is erased.'³² This 'screen interface' is both the television or computer screen and the (glass) screen wall of modernism. These dual aspects of modernity will be addressed in this thesis while situating these sites of the modern within debates about the methods and possibilities for social change or transformation. Obviously, within film itself the problems of the 'screen interface' are necessarily present. The very act of viewing a film insists to some degree on the temporary suppression of any 'face-to-face' encounters. In the cinema of Godard the viewer is forced to address his or her relation to the images on the screen. If the characters on the screen are not asking probing questions, Godard himself demands the repetitive questioning of the images themselves. In the construction of both *Weekend* and *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, the narrative disjuncture and often elliptical montage even interrupts the possibility of a seamless visual experience. While *Fahrenheit 451* retains a closer connection to the narrative

structure of classical cinema, this film also addresses, perhaps even more critically, the 'dangers' of the passive subject within the viewing space of the 'screen interface.'

Chapter 1

The Technologies of Gender and Consumerism

Privacy and domesticity

In the opening scene of *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* Godard explores several effects of modernist utopian planning through its relationship to the domestic and the body of the suburban housewife. Here, and at several points in the film, the camera lingers over the topography of the city while placing Juliette (the Parisian housewife whose daily activities the film portrays) as the only figure in front of a block structure of repetitive modernist high rises. Equating her body with the architectural bodies of the 'new' Paris, the Paris of high rise building complexes and endless traffic streams, Godard makes sure we don't miss the point that the 'her' in the title of the film is both Paris and Juliette. The visual unity of Juliette and Paris is maintained by the continual references to the red, white and blue of the French flag.¹ Juliette's body is repeatedly cloaked in the three colours, as are the building cranes and shots of the city with its collection of cars and other objects (figures 1.1 and 1.2). Deleuze has argued that Godard uses colour as a category or genre in and of itself in which 'the image is reflected.'² This is precisely the effect of the seriality of his associations between colours and Juliette's body as a metaphor of Paris. One image bleeds into the next between the associations of red, white and blue. The city and its various systems of production are inferred in the visualization of these three colours as both reflections and manifestations of Juliette's desire as she navigates her way

through the city. Godard has stated that the 'elle' in the title of the film is meant to refer to Paris and not to Juliette.³ However, the relation depicted in the film between Juliette and images of the city repeatedly questions the autonomy of Juliette in relation to the city. She expresses constant frustration at the limited availability of images and words to define her identity. This frustration and sense of enclosure is also echoed in the visual depiction of Paris as the looming, enveloping, self-perpetuating metropolis that attempts to unify, consolidate and make over the urban fabric in the repetitive signifier of modern architectural forms.

The crisis of modern architecture is described by Tafuri as the moment in which 'Architecture as ideology of the plan is swept away by the *reality of the plan* when, the level of utopia having been superceded, the plan becomes an operative mechanism.'⁴ *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* articulates this crisis as a fate inexorably linked to the domestic and social position of the 1960's suburban housewife. Godard writes that his inspiration for the film came from 'a letter in *Le Nouvel Observateur* from a woman reader replying to an inquiry into part-time prostitution in the new high-rise housing developments.'⁵ The moment in which modern suburban domestic architecture fails as a utopic form (largely in relation to unattainable financial demands) is articulated at this historical moment through the film as a crisis in the relation between women's bodies and modern economic spaces. Indeed, this crisis is directly related to the built spaces of the city in Godard's film.

Such a predicament also emerges in how the film posits a constant slippage between the image and the sound of public and private spaces in relation to the suburban housewife. At several moments in the film Juliette

speaks to the camera while in front of these new architectural enclosures, and the sounds of babies, conversations and laughter are heard in the background. If these are the sounds of families and community life, they seem uncomfortably disconnected to the buildings that Godard represents as Paris. The audio track seems to compete with the visual image rather than emanate from it, questioning the possibility for these urban structures to function as enclosures of home. While apparently indifferent to the function of the home, the soundtrack also seems to interrogate Juliette's relationship to the domestic spaces of the city, for these sounds disrupt rather than meld with the space of Juliette's apartment. The noise that is heard—the sounds of families and babies—seems to rise up from all the apartments in the block, creating a din of familial chatter which has seeped out from the walls of the private interior. This signals a collapse in the boundaries between public and private spaces in the new modern Paris. Likewise, the noises of the city—from construction and motor cars—seem to impinge on the private thoughts of Juliette offered to the audience. A contemporary review of the film described the experience of *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* as that of a 'viewer-listener' who is made aware of the alienating experience of the modern city by being 'systematically covered—and often smothered—by the noise of construction machinery, electric appliances, huge tractor-trailer trucks, etc.'⁶

One is also made a 'viewer listener' in this film through Godard's own musings about life in the 'Modern City.' The whispering voice-over of Godard, while part of the audio intrusion of Juliette's own thoughts, also functions as the 'voice as object' or the '*voix acousmatique*' theorized by Michel Chion.⁷ The '*voix acousmatique*' is a bodiless 'free-floating presence', or a 'voice-object without

support in a subject serving as its source,' and as such constitutes a threat that lurks everywhere because it cannot be visually located.⁸ Chion's notion of the 'voix acousmatique,' and Slavov Zizek's reworking of this theory, is most often discussed in relation to a voice that threatens the physical body (the voice of the mother in *Psycho*, the voice of the murdering stranger in *When a Stranger Calls*). However, in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* the 'voice as object' constitutes a different kind of threat. At several moments Juliette questions her desire for various cultural products, and as a result raises the impossibility for language to express her desires, Godard's disembodied voice is heard hovering within the film. With humor, irony and often deadly serious criticism this voice challenges the narrative primacy of Juliette's voice. Yet Godard's observations are, like Juliette's, also formulated as questions.⁹ As Juliette watches a woman in a café flip through a fashion magazine, Godard voice asks: 'Où est donc la vérité? De face ou de profil?'¹⁰ At this point the viewer is made distinctly aware of the subjective eye and voice of the film. This 'voix acousmatique' threatens not the physical body but rather the subject's (Juliette's) relation to the 'dominant fiction' of the social order and her perception of the relation between herself and the sexualized cultural products of late capitalism, specifically the glossy magazine photos of women's bodies.¹¹ The space of the café, a place where one goes to engage in leisure and social communication with others, becomes a place of private anxiety. Social interchange is spatialized in this scene as a private relation between consumer images and the self. The space of the consumer image—the fashion magazine—takes the place of 'actual' spaces of social exchange and dialogue.

It is not only the bodies of wife and mother that are shown to be compromised by the dissolution of the private, but also the bodies of Juliette's children. When she leaves for her afternoon shopping excursions she deposits the infants at a daycare that also serves as a rent by the hour hotel for housewife prostitutes (Juliette herself is one). Here, the space of *illegitimate* sexual activity also functions as a space of domestic activity and childcare. Juliette's children, like their mother, are forced out of the home into conflicting spaces of illicit sexuality and domestic bodies. Like the audio track of familial chatter heard earlier in the film, the sight of children in such close proximity to the activities of prostitution calls up the threatened conceptual and architectural boundaries of domestic life. As the brothel owner/baby sitter opens a door to tell one of his clients 'Only three more minutes' a small child in his care trails behind him. (figure 1.3) The bodies on the other side of the door are revealed as the child remains in the frame. The door does not close off the space of prostitution to the young girl but rather reveals it to her. This articulation of spatial exchange discloses that both the child and the customers on the other side of the door maintain an economic relation to this space. This is driven home further by the conversation between Juliette and her 'babysitter' as she tells him that she is a little short on cash this week and cannot pay him what she owes. The maternal desires of Juliette are suffused into the spaces of economic exchange. Her daily activities are detached from the domestic spaces of the city and from her role as mother. As she leaves her children behind in this brothel/daycare her concerns become entirely engaged with the images of consumer culture and public/urban spaces.

The issue of privacy and the failure of modern domestic architecture to adequately enclose and protect the spaces of familial retreat is repeatedly represented by Godard as the mediation of the boundaries between illicit sexual activity and the domestic through the drive for consumer goods. In the space of the brothel/daycare the walls are pasted not with fairy tales or erotic images but with travel posters, again emphasizing the unattainable promise of consumer goods and leisure. The film suggests that the promise of modernity, middle class comfort, leisure, and privacy is always illusory to those who do not have it. Because they will always be embroiled in a system of debts and credits, the most cherished features of middle class bourgeois life will be ironically the least attainable. This is doubly displayed by Juliet's part-time work as a prostitute who not only takes up her leisure time, but also transforms her private self into a body for public consumption. The inter-titles which constantly interrupt Godard's images of 'modern Paris,' for example, the title of a Raymond Aron book *Dix-Huit Leçons sur La Société Industrielle*, also reinforce the notion that these 'slices of life' are intended to be understood as the product of a particular economic system that cannot be separated from the patterns of sexual relations that occur within this structure.¹²

The issue of privacy, both visual and audio in domestic architecture was already recognized as somewhat antithetical to the modern city in contemporary architectural theory. In the early 60's Serge Chermayeff concluded that only through the restoration of the notion of privacy would 'health and sanity be brought back to the world of the mass culture.'¹³ He argued that the threat to privacy, and therefore health and sanity, could also be located in specific forms of modern living with its noise and traffic, described by Chermayeff as 'the new

invaders.' For Chermayeff an architectural reassertion of definitive spaces was called for to maintain the distinction between public and private spaces. He wrote that 'an urban anatomy must provide special domains for all degrees of privacy...To separate these domains, and yet allow their interaction, entirely new physical elements must be inserted between them.'¹⁴ But as Godard's film attempts to demonstrate, public and private spaces are necessarily linked together in the society of mass culture and modern capitalism regardless of the intended purposes of plastic barriers.¹⁵

In *2 Or 3 Things I Know About Her*, the audio and visual work together to elucidate the ambiguous notion of spatial boundaries as defined by Lefebvre. The many layers and super-impositions of audio and visual information form 'boundaries, such as walls or enclosures in general,' which 'give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity.'¹⁶ The triad of neo-capitalist spaces suggested by Lefebvre; the family, the working class and the reproduction of the social relations of production, are articulated in the film through various interpenetrating layers of aural and visual spaces. These spaces, as represented by Godard, blur and confuse the distinctions between them, calling attention to the unstable notions of public and private spaces within the modern city. In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* children are confronted with prostitution, traffic noise bleeds through the material surfaces of domestic enclosures and electricity meter readers (city employees) easily enter the most private spaces of the home to intrude upon nude and vulnerable female bodies. Significantly, the various modes of consumer consumption are implicated as the set of relations that necessitates and insists on this collusion of spaces. These are the relations that,

according to Lefebvre, are simultaneously revealed and concealed within modern economic spaces through 'symbolic representations', and they are articulated by Godard through an identification with women's bodies.¹⁷ They form another, or rather the final frontier through which public or economic spaces envelop or usurp the domestic or private domain.

Consumerism and the spaces of desire

In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* Juliette's body and sexual identity is connected both to her position within the domestic unit as wife and mother and to the realm of the public spaces of consumerism. As she struggles to meet her consumer desires, endlessly roaming through Parisian department stores, it is revealed that she must prostitute herself in order to maintain her domestic consumer identity and the promise of class transcendence, an identity sold to her within the mythic spaces of marketing and advertising. The relations of neo-capitalist consumption are described by Jean Baudrillard as a system which 'highlights the disparities' within the social body rather than acting as a cohesive force.¹⁸ Baudrillard goes on to argue that this cultural segregation is what in turn produces the fetishistic logic that is central to the operating belief of consumer culture.¹⁹ It is the desire for the fetish object (in the form of an idea, leisure, sport, or travel destination that often connotes a sexualized form of identification) which carries with it the promise of class transcendence. It is this promise (something which I will refer to as the drive for the 'domestic ideal') that is shown to mobilize various desires within consumer culture in the films.

Images from *L'Express* and other fashion magazines are cut into the narrative movement of the film. Further, the film itself offers glossy images of

fashion magazines and travel posters within the private spaces of the home and within the 'daycare' and café. The power of capitalism to commodify everything including sex, maternal desire and the *private* sphere of the home is revealed through these images of 'mass culture' and their repetitive placement within the narrative.

The film first introduces the fashion magazine *L'Express* in the domestic space of Juliette's apartment. Juliette reads this magazine while her husband and a friend are engaged with the audio transmissions of a home-built radio system. The two men attempt to enter into the sphere of 'real' or authentic communication and news media while Juliette focuses her attention on the latest fashion reports. The space of the domestic is clearly divided along the lines of gender where the 'authentic' spaces of culture are not assimilated into Juliette's concerns or experience. The historical relation suggested by Andreas Huyssen between women and 'mass culture,' defined over against the male sphere of 'authentic culture,' is brought here directly into the spaces of domestic living. However, this scene also problematizes the relation between the male sphere of 'authentic' culture. The news items received by the home made radio are clearly incomprehensible and even false. The notion of any kind of 'authentic' representation or cultural mediation is troubled in this scene for both spaces of cultural representation, the magazine pages of *L'Express* and the audio transmission of historical and news events.

Juliette's body and the spatial realms inhabited by the suburban housewife become a symbolic representation of both the production (area of labour and culture of mass consumption and capital) and the reproduction (status of wife and mother) of social relations.²⁰ Her body is articulated as a

spatial configuration that both maps (in her journey through the city) and conceals these forces. The movements of her body within the economic spaces of the city and the domestic are positioned within the images of consumer culture. The collapse of these boundaries in the film between private and public is ultimately formed for Godard within the relation between the 'domestic ideal' and the urban public spaces of consumerism.

The historically unstable and problematic relationship between spaces of economic exchange and the bodies of women has long been the subject of visual representation. This troubled relation is often expressed by depicting the various ways in which the female body is understood to be sexually compromised by her participation in the economic and hence public sphere. For example, a recent article by Elizabeth Alice Honig argues that Dutch 17th century representations of the market place often depicted an economic transaction which sought to question the sexual availability of women in the realm of economic exchange.²¹ Buying and selling goods in this context often put the question of exchange in Dutch 17th century print and paintings in both economic and sexual terms. Honig argues that the proliferation of this double meaning of economic exchange was largely a method to suffuse and reincorporate the economic desire of women into erotic terms in order to emphasize 'the equivalent irrationality of material desires in the modern market.'²² Honig suggests that 'Locating the position of women's wants between the economic and the erotic is, in the Netherlands, an issue that arose in tandem with the development of a market economy in which women played leading roles.'²³ Similarly, it has been well documented that the post-war era in both the United States and Europe also produced socio-economic relations that both positioned women as the 'ideal consumer' and increased their

autonomy in the professional and economic sphere.²⁴ Not surprisingly, at this moment of crisis over the relation between women and the domestic and economic sphere many of the most compelling critiques of consumer culture were fought over and within the representation of the female body.²⁵

Putting this discussion to work in Godard's *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* raises many issues about representing the desiring subject of the middle class housewife. Her sexual aberrance may be marked out in the form of prostitution, but what are the specifics of the modes of exchange articulated by Godard? Juliette and her friends do not go into the various boutiques and shops of Paris offering their sexual services in exchange for goods. It is not simply the appearance of women in the public spaces of economic exchange that Godard is interested in exploring. The modes of desire shown to be available to Juliette in the film are specific to the condition of modern capitalism. Within the film it is the contradictory spaces of the 'Modern City' such as the café, daycare, brothel, and department store that facilitate this relationship. The relation of equivalence between erotic and economic desires is shown in the film to be enacted through the symbolic representation of a certain middle class lifestyle. This lifestyle is depicted in the form of fashion advertisements, exotic vacation destinations, cars, architectural forms and various manifestations of a 'domestic ideal' or a desired lifestyle wrought within the images of consumer culture. Invariably Godard is not strictly rehearsing a sexist stereotype of displacing the economic desires of women into erotic forms but rather, I would argue, he is attempting to locate the particular formations of these desires under neo-capitalism. Godard himself is also specific in describing the position of *all* citizens of France in relation to sexual-economic exchange:

Although it (*2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*) was sparked off by a newspaper anecdote, what excited me most was that this anecdote linked up with one of my pet theories, that in order to live in society in Paris today, no matter on what level, one is forced to prostitute oneself in one way or another-or to put it another way, to live under conditions resembling those of prostitution.²⁶

However, if we go on to examine Godard's oeuvre with this quote in mind, it is apparent that there is for him at this moment an insistence on only the female gendering of the subject of the prostitute when it is conjured up into a visual form. While he may assert that 'a worker in a factory prostitutes himself in a way three-quarters of the time,' this never comes to bear on the sexualized body of the male worker in visual representation.²⁷

Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki have recently argued that *Weekend* (1967), also by Godard, is entirely structured around the notion of sexual and economic equivalence. *Weekend* relates the story of a scheming bourgeois couple, Corrine and Roland, who take a road trip away from the center of the city in order to murder Corinne's parents for a sum of insurance money. The narrative is initially established by Corrine's recounting of a sexual liaison between herself and a married couple. What is made clear in the retelling of this sexual encounter is the decentering of the phallus as the primary sexual and symbolic signifier. Her erotic story focuses instead on anal intercourse and masturbation, wresting the centrality of the phallus away from the sexual act itself.

In the seduction scene Godard shows the male sexual organ to be only one in a series of three objects capable of being inserted into the anus, a series which also includes an egg and a finger. It seems that as gold exercises its "Lordship" over a larger and larger domain it is stripping other general equivalents of their prerogatives.²⁸

Indeed, the film does stress the equivalence of male and female roles in many ways. Both Corrine and Roland are carrying on adulterous affairs and convey the

same attitude towards their own marriage and material objects. However, as Silverman points out, one shouldn't be too hasty in celebrating the 'dethronement of the phallic signifier' at the expense of the reduction of everything in the social field to that of a commodifiable object.²⁹

Once Corrine and Roland are 'on the road,' a particular form of gender relations reappear which stress the unavoidable asymmetry of sexual relations in heterosexual forms of desire as they are translated into the field of economic exchange. Without the transportation of their car, which has been lost in a fiery roadside crash, Roland offers Corrine's body up for exchange in return for a lift to Oinville, their final destination. He coaxes her into 'showing some leg' and at one point instructs her to lie in the middle of the road with her legs splayed apart to announce her body as a potential object of exchange. While Godard's film in its initial stages seems to suggest the equivalence of male and female within the market place of neo-capitalism, and announce the dethronement of the primacy of the phallus, once desperation raises its head Roland claims Corinne as his sexual property to trade as he sees fit. Terms are again reduced to old forms of heterosexual desire and economic relations. *Weekend* suggests that the heterosexual orientation of the market-place will always insist on a relation between men and women which inevitably puts one at the service of the other, where men simply cannot be offered up in the same form of exchangeable commodity. Likewise, the Oise-et-Seine Liberation Front, a band of cannibal hippies residing on the outskirts of Paris shows no vast reordering of sexual difference in their supposedly revolutionary community. A ritual sacrifice and rape is performed only on female victims and the sexual union of two members of the group initially involves violent verbal commands instructing the woman

to undress. Even under the pretext of revolution, women's bodies are constantly being reformulated in terms of male desire and exchange value. I agree with Silverman and Farocki that Godard's strategy with *Weekend* is to establish a system that puts the question of the equivalence of male and female bodies into play. I believe, nevertheless, that what is more significant and what will inevitably order a system of consumer capitalism structured by heterosexual desire is always the potential inequality of the terms and the potential 'public' or even unsolicited sexual availability of women.

Coming back to the question of desire, it is significant that as Juliette wanders through the spaces of economic exchange in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* she is always aware that she desires something but is never quite sure what. This is the constant condition of consumer capitalism articulated by Godard, that the experience of want can never be fulfilled for there simply is no satisfaction. The 'domestic ideal' and its visual forms of advertising which fuel this desire are constantly reformulating themselves in order to demand more and different kinds of consumption, completely related to fantasies about the self which materialize in the film as sexualized and gendered modes of identification (the images from *L'Express* and other fashion magazines).³⁰ Women in this film become prostitutes not as an expression of excessive or aberrant sexual desire but as an expression of economic desire. They do not sell themselves out of severe financial hardship or want for food. The logic of the film and Juliette's attitude towards her part-time profession reveals the same market-place values of consumer capitalism: a certain number of 'customers' equals so many new dresses from Chez Vogue.

Juliette's journey through the city facilitates both her activities as a prostitute and her wandering through the shopping districts of Paris. In the streets and cafés she is 'available' to the sexual queries of potential customers and pimps while perusing the latest fashions. Urban space in this film is reduced to abstract economic relations between the body of Juliette and the spaces of consumer products. Yet, this relation is also fragmented by the constant doubts Juliette expresses in the face of consumer goods. The city, particularly the department store, is spatialized as an experience of constant dissatisfaction. The spaces of consumer capitalism are fraught with conflicting desires that can never seem to get the desired object quite right.

2 or 3 Things I Know About Her is different from the early modern historical examples I discussed above precisely because Juliette's extra-marital activities are never described in terms of romantic, lustful, or deviant feminine desires. The exchange of sexual relations is equated with the promise of more purchasing power. Juliette engages in extra-marital sex and yet her body is never described either visually or textually as being in excess of sexuality. Whereas, for example, the historical representation of the economic-erotic displacement of feminine desire discussed by Honig usually connoted the visualization of a female body in excess of its own sexuality. In many of Honig's examples female desire (even sexual pleasure in relation to prostitution) could be related to physical sexual satisfaction or a threat to the symbolic power relations of masculinity.³¹ The extra-marital sexual relations in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* places the burden of this exchange on the body of the housewife but simultaneously evacuate it of any relation to female sexual desire. Instead, in the film prostitution is argued to be a condition of 'modern living' that has nothing to do with excessive sexuality

or feminine sexual desire. Rather, it has to do with the various forms of economic exchange which necessitate the constant drive for the 'domestic ideal,' within consumer capitalism and the 'Modern City.' And unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for some, the female body is one more object to put on the economic market.

At one point in the film Juliette and Marianne, also a housewife and prostitute, parade before their potential (American) client while hiding their heads in flight bags bearing the label of the major airline travel companies, TWA and PanAm. The casual attitude towards selling one's body and the coolness associated with the act of sexual economic exchange is stressed in this scene. Engulfed within the system of consumer objects and promises, these forces are shown to mask over self-identity while absorbing it into the market place system of consumable objects. Yet women's bodies and subjectivities maintain an even more precarious relation to this *truth*. This moment in the film necessitates the reading of their bodies as both consumer and commodity. Even in the spaces of supposed erotic seduction Juliette's body displays only her potential for economic desire as commodity and consumer. As viewers, we understand that her activities as a prostitute serve to constitute more buying power. Her body is absorbed into a system of economics that posits a possible equivalence of gender through economic power, yet the exchanges filmed by Godard insist on the inevitable inequality of these relations.

The screen wall and the public enclosure of domesticity

In *Fahrenheit 451* the effects of consumerism as a penetration of both the private and public spheres is also displayed through the activities of a suburban

housewife and the spatial articulation of the domestic. However, it is not leisure time that Linda desires. As she engages with a constant mediation of the image of consumer culture and state authority within the enclosure of domesticity, Truffaut describes a very different relationship between the suburban housewife and the social order in this science fiction film. Here, the spaces of intimacy and domesticity are bombarded not by the noise of other families and domestic groups but by the state. In this scenario the suburban housewife, rather than wandering the streets of the city, is within the constant presence of virtual public spaces, modern media, and state produced imagery without ever needing to leave the 'living room' of her prefabricated home. A giant television screen as wall dominates Truffaut's image of the modernist home. From this screen emanates constant state programming that ironically provides the form of a substitute family or community. This virtual social group reaches out into the spaces of those who watch, shown in the film to be primarily bored, drugged out suburban housewives. In this book-less society where the printed word has been banned, a surrogate family of cousins, aunts and uncles are the faces of both consumer culture and the state.³²

The continual broadcast of this social simulacrum of state programming envisioned in *Fahrenheit 451* merges with the walls of the home, establishing the conflation of domesticity and consumer culture in a much more specific way than in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*. Instead of travelling through the city, as Juliette does in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Linda relates to her consumer desires within the walls of her own home. Although the large screen with its ever-present face calls up the Benefactor of Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* or the ominous stare of 1984's Big Brother, it has been transformed instead into the

gentle faces of well-dressed ladies (figure 1.4). Its presence was described in a contemporary review of the film as that of a 'universal woman's magazine,' suggesting a very different form of coercion than the promise of a unified proletariat.³³ The state family members on the wall screen speak in singsong voices reminiscent of advertisements, demanding from their viewers things like 'Be tolerant today cousins'.³⁴ These figures of her screen 'family', as Linda refers to them in a discussion with Montag, her husband whose day job is to burn books, offer the comforting suggestions of recipes for banal and emotionally detached living.

Indeed, the ubiquitous screen indicated in the very opening scenes of *Fahrenheit 451* shows us a very different representation of the 'Modern City' than in *2 or 3 Things In Know About Her*. Rather than the blank faces of the Le Corbusian concrete slab thrust into our vision, it is the repetitive image of the television antenna that multiplies as a visual signifier. In the opening credits it appears sprouting from the rooftops of city homes while an audio track akin to the arrival of aliens landing on earth in a 1950's science fiction film is heard in the background. Directly embedded in the city's architecture, these nodes of transmission project their information onto a screen that is also fixed within the home. There is no distinction made between the modern home and the presence of the mediated image. Existing simultaneously with the cozy trappings of post-war middle class comforts, images of the city and various manifestations of state and consumer culture invade the home and produce a nexus that attests to the inseparability of the domestic and the public spaces of technological projection. While watching her wall screen at one point, Linda remarks to Montag that 'when the people look at me I have to speak.'³⁵ For Linda and the other

housewives represented in the film the spaces of domesticity and the virtual space of the mediated image exist as the same structure. This conflated area of social, mental and physical space is shown to be experienced by Linda as social participation and lived experience enacted both through the process of viewing and oral response.³⁶

In a review of the film from 1967 in *Film Quarterly*, George Bluestone remarked that 'Montag's home is at once everywhere and nowhere.' Lost in the banality of dull decorating choices, he remarks that Montag's domestic environment 'has the anonymity of tract housing, the sage coziness of the interior decorator-correct, comfortable, and totally undistinguished.'³⁷ Additionally, film historian Don Allen articulated the failure of the film in terms of its lack of consistent futuristic gizmos and sets. He noted a problematic visual continuity between the artificiality of the studio sets and the 'natural decors' and 'natural houses'.³⁸ I would argue that, to a much greater degree than the banal decorating choices in the film, it is the projection of these constantly televised images which instills the feeling of being 'everywhere and nowhere.' For me, this is precisely the spatial paradox that Montag's home conveys. The mediated images claim to represent 'everywhere,' and all possibilities for lived experience, and yet they are 'nowhere' except in the spaces of technological representation. The anxiety over the lack of high tech gloss in the film in contemporary reviews seems to call up precisely the desired impact of utopic/dystopic forms of representation.³⁹ The most horrifying aspects of a fictionalized space in this film are not definitively set apart from contemporary society by excessive displays of technical devices and special effects. If Truffaut's film *fails* in its visual depiction of a new reality for the contemporary reviewer, it does so because it refuses to

offset the implied terror of the film with an unbelievable technological or futuristic space into which contemporary fears could be more easily displaced. Significantly, like the suburban housewife in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, it is Linda who bears the burden of negotiating these fears.

At the moment in the film when Linda verbally responds to the voices and images of the screen wall, the representational modes which technology plays in inventing various forms of fantastic identification are exposed. For example, while watching her 'cousins' on the screen at one point in the film, Linda erroneously believes that her own image is being broadcast to every other domestic screen. Through both her verbal exchange with the images on the screen, and her belief in the possible electronic transmission of her own image, we are led to believe that Linda assumes that there is something there, some kind of social depth which simply doesn't exist behind the screen.⁴⁰ What occurs is a moment indicating the possible mis-recognition between 'actual' and simulated potential for lived experience. To use a Silverman's term, the level of 'dominant fiction' enacted in this film for Linda by the mediated image exists at the level of fantasy, and yet is apparently recognized by Linda as her embodied participation at the level of communal and social structures. Her 'symbolic personality' is shown in the film to be lived at the level of fantasy, to be entirely within the realm of electronic representation.⁴¹ However, what is even more interesting about this exchange is the question it poses in terms of the formation of belief in relation to the 'symbolic personality.' Montag later tells her that she wasn't actually seen by the television screen, or by the millions of viewers watching at that moment. Linda replies: 'You didn't have to tell me, that was mean.' This posits the question that perhaps Linda was not as duped into believing in the

images emanating from the wall screen as the film first suggests. Silverman, in quoting Althusser describes a possible model for understanding belief in terms of a 'moment when an image which the subject consciously knows to be culturally fabricated nevertheless succeeds in being recognized or acknowledged as 'a pure, naked perception of reality.'⁴² Linda's response to her husband is registered as a wounding experience in Truffaut's film precisely because it threatens to puncture the relationship between the self and the 'symbolic personality.' *Fahrenheit 451* suggests that, much like Althusser's model of ideological belief located within the unconscious, the image can be simultaneously recognized as a fabrication and yet be experienced as a 'real' or unmediated form of 'reality.'

This moment of possible mis-recognition facilitated by the space of the technological and consumer image was of paramount importance to cultural critics and writers of the time, particularly Jean Baudrillard and Guy Debord. The character of modern mass media and technological images were seen by Baudrillard in the 60s as representative of what was 'no longer a "culture" of the living body, the actual presence of the group...but that strange corpus of signs and references, of recollections from schooldays and intellectual fashion signals known as "mass culture" [...].'⁴³ Baudrillard argued that the truth of mass media is 'their function to neutralize the lived, unique, eventual character of the world and substitute for it a multiple universe of media which, as such, are homogeneous one with another, signifying each other reciprocally and referring back and forth to each other.'⁴⁴

What is emphasized in the work of Baudrillard, and in the later work of Fredric Jameson who carried these concerns into more contemporary times, is the

level at which the notion of 'culture' as technology is experienced. The transformation from the possibility for embodied action to the necessity of cultural experience as a form of apathetic looking is described as the condition of the late modernist city. Significantly this 'condition' of modernity is represented for the most part in *Fahrenheit 451* through the subject of the suburban housewife. Truffaut, like Godard, explores the effects of consumerism and the drive for the 'domestic ideal' within the sexual and maternal representation of the suburban housewife. What is paramount in both films is the singular reduction and reorientation of sexual and maternal desire into forms of desire for capitalist consumption. With this transformation, the bodies of women come to represent a direct relationship with consumable products and advertising culture. In the case of Godard's *Juliette*, they ultimately become consumable objects that transform sexual desire only into the desire for capital. Patriarchy's historical paranoia of out of control feminine sexual desire (discussed previously in reference to the work of Honig) is reduced in these films to the codification of economic desire. With this radical reworking of the representation of feminine sexuality, the sensuality of flesh, the sexuality promised in advertising images of women's bodies is never fully offered to the viewer (i.e. the sex is either never 'real,' visualized, or satisfying).⁴⁵ This has everything to do with the condition of the body caught between the desire for the 'real' thing, or experience outside of media culture, and the simultaneous drive for the 'domestic ideal' (promised by advertising images) and the complete identification with the fabricated image.⁴⁶

Chapter 2

Consuming Technology: Between the 'Screen' and the Body

Women's bodies as 'machines for living'

The viewers of the screen wall in *Fahrenheit 451*, are, as we have seen, a community of pacified and sedated housewives brought together by the virtual space of the 'screen interface.' Through the various mechanisms of state intervention, predominantly the screen wall, the film also depicts the sterilization of the maternal instinct by the technological devices of the symbolic order. In this film, maternal desire is suppressed by the construction of the housewife as yet another gadget (like the automated toaster and other 'modern' kitchen appliances) of the new modernist home which is altered and 'made better' by the technological advancement of society. The association between both Linda and her home as products of the modernist impulse to create a 'machine for living' becomes apparent when Linda, after taking an overdose of pills is attended to not by a physician but rather a team of technicians on a service call. She is repaired or made 'good as new' by two men in white coats who also alter her libidinal drive and leave the home with a wink and a nod, telling her husband that in the morning she will have an increased appetite. The most private libidinal desires of the self are regulated and attended to by mechanical and technological operations. Her body is organized and disciplined within the system of automated objects that structures the enclosure of the home and the home itself.¹ She is represented like the objects that surround her as just another

'machine for living' destined to be 'perfected' within the parameters of technological utopianism.

Linda is associated with the domestic space of the modernist home, the modern pre-fabricated detached home of the middle class suburbs which is shown to be sterile, like her technologically altered body. Further, her modern home with its encompassing screen wall demands a constant relationship with the mediated image. As a result, her capacity for private memories and desire have been completely colonized by the repetitive onslaught of empty images and chatter projected by the screen. For example, even her attempts at lovemaking are modeled on electronic images teaching self-defense techniques. As she attempts to seduce her husband Montag, the movement of her body seems programmed to mimic the moves of a karate lesson projected by one of the state programs on the screen wall. Even when she is not in front of the living room screen, she is still connected to the constant transmission of the modern state apparatus through audio speakers. It is not only her body but also her mind and most private remembrances that have been filled up or altered by her enclosure within this kind of modern domestic and technological space.² When Montag asks if Linda remembers when they first met (i.e. before she came to inhabit this domestic space) she cannot remember anything and quickly dismisses the question. Thus, it is clear that in the film even her most private memories and desires have been masked over by the mediated visual image and aural presence of the screen interface.

The imaginary relationship between the subject and the 'dominant fiction', or symbolic order, of *Fahrenheit 451*'s domestic television screen is specifically engineered to act as a surrogate family. In doing this, it colonizes memory and

sexual desire, as we have seen, but it must also quell other instinctual desires in women, specifically the maternal instinct. This is reinforced in the film when all the friends of Linda (other suburban housewives) attest to their disgust and incomprehension of the idea of motherhood. It is referred to as 'a strange idea' by one of the other housewives. This negative appraisal of the maternal instinct serves to heighten the masculinization of the technological, state and consumer desire posited in the film. All possibilities for the social desire of women in the film redirect any maternal desires towards the self and the consumer products of self-absorption existing in the spaces of technological projection. The housewives in the film, conversely, become like children, unable to think for themselves while relying totally on the mass mediated voices of the aunts, cousins and uncles of the screen wall who actually function more like the voices of mothers and fathers to the sedated housewives. Further, the harsh *realities* of state control are reproduced on the screen while childish commentaries attempt to nullify the brutality of the visual depiction. For example, while the state screen images the violent assault of an 'unkempt' youth by police, a reassuring voice attests that 'law enforcement can be fun.'

Both Linda's body and the modernist home in which she dwells are represented as the sterile womb/home, without the typical associations of women's bodies as fertile or devouring, and the space of the domestic with reproductive or familial functions. They are both represented as 'machines for living,' subject to technological 'perfections' or alterations in line with Tafuri's pessimistic theorization that the utopian impulse in urban planning and architecture necessitates the nullification of a human population in which 'Salvation lies no longer in "revolt," but in surrender without discretion.'³

However suggestive Tafuri's argument is in this case, it seems bound to a Marxist model of a utopian revolution of the proletariat which does not take into account the production and reproduction of the familial and domestic sphere. Truffaut's film seems to directly confront this problematic of the effects of the 'Modern Plan' on female subjectivity. Linda is associated with the modernist architectural body and yet does not participate in the area of labour. She is articulated as the sterile womb/home that can neither produce children nor nurture knowledge, or vice versa. Yet, rather than relegate her simply to the problems of domestic issues, Truffaut, like Godard, locates her desires within public/state images. Thus, what he describes invariably posits a neutralization of feminine sexual desire by the colluded spaces of technology and consumerism. Linda's body is literally turned into a machine in the service of maintaining the 'ideal citizen' for the technocratic state apparatus. While being less contingent on the articulation of a relationship between the suburban housewife and the market place or economic spheres of exchange as in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, *Fahrenheit 451* goes so far as to suggest the absolute confluence of the home with the economic and public sphere. Significantly, in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, the condition of 'modernity' and the conflation of the domestic and the public spaces of consumerism also comes to bear on the sexual/maternal desires of the suburban housewife.

Forgetting history

In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Godard envisions the 'Modern City' as a suffocating vista produced by the physical dominance of the ubiquitous apartment block within the city. We never see the historical city, the Arc de Triomphe or the Eiffel Tower. The 'Modern City' of Paris literally rises up to block out the historical city. In one of the final scenes, the modern high rise appears as an enclosing panorama, completely encircling Juliette in a slow 360 panning shot. Juliet, while placed within the visual frame of the Corbusian gridlock, remarks 'Suddenly I felt I was the world' (figures 2.1 and 2.2). Here, the ability to differentiate oneself from the effects of modern and consumer culture are made very clear. For Juliette, her level of consciousness need not extend to the realms of the historical or political for everywhere she looks, in mediated images, she sees different versions of herself endlessly reflected in varying degrees of similarity. Within fashion magazines and other images locating consumer desire Juliette can become the world as it looks back at her while history and the less pleasant political conflicts dissolve from view. Whispering in the background of the film, Godard relates the events of war in Vietnam and of Franco-Algerian relations while thrusting images of these violent conflicts into the view of the camera.⁴ Yet, these historical images and whisperings constantly dissolve from the narrative sequence, unable to be integrated into the story of quotidian life in Paris.

As Juliette returns home toward her enclave of apartment blocks, a similar effect is attributed to the modern apartment block that endlessly replicates itself by creating a visually impenetrable form. A view of the historical city is replaced by a constant present of sameness and repetition located within architecture,

within the image of the ever-present apartment block. The emergent visual hegemony of modernist structures in the film do not allow any image of the historical city to seep into view. For Godard's film, this new city appears to encircle Paris while usurping its identity at the same moment.

The argument could be made that, in fact, these new domestic structures are not Paris. They exist within the shadowy and undefined perimeters of suburbia.⁵ However, that is precisely the point. It is these structures and all the trappings of the desire for a certain consumer driven approximation of middle class ideals that have come to stand in for Paris and Parisian identity. The repression of the historical city is replaced with the image of the 'Modern City.'⁶ In this way, the 'Modern City' loses any kind of spatial and historical specificity. The modern apartment block simply repeats a code of redundancy. The only signifier of this new Paris is that it will continually repeat itself. I argued earlier that a significant feature of the later New Wave's modern city was its emphasis on wholeness and enclosure. While this is true, Godard's modern city is also shown to continually remake itself in its own image. Godard includes in the film the many building cranes and devices of modern Paris but they function only to repeat the same code, the same city blocks, the same plan. It is this 'logic' which Godard represents as being replicated within Juliette's experience of events as image. Modern architecture and modern images begin to lose their historical specificity in relation to what has gone before. It is a representation of a 'constant present,' thus emphasizing what Fredric Jameson has referred to as the historical amnesia produced by the constant mediation of the image.⁷ Not only in the spaces of mass media, but also within the city itself, history is masked over and

remade anew in Godard's Paris in relation to the spaces inhabited by the suburban housewife.

The 'forgetting of history' is a prevalent theme of the dystopic science fiction genre. Certainly the slogan of Big Brother from George Orwell's 1984 —'He who controls the past controls the future'—is still a terrifying proposition for contemporary audiences. *Fahrenheit 451* takes up this very theme of the destruction of knowledge and relies on many of the familiar aspects of the science fiction dystopic city. We have state administered soporific drugs (*Brave New World*), the clandestine romantic encounter with a dangerous woman (1984 and *We*), and the control of human emotion by electronic surveillance (*Alphaville*'s central computer, Alpha-60, for example, removes all words that involve emotion). In these representations the 'forgetting of history' is localized to a particular point of origin within a social and governmental apparatus, as we also see with the screen wall in *Fahrenheit 451*. *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, however, is very different in its depiction of the 'forgetting of history.' There is no point of origin for this terrifying prospect, as it appears in the film as the project of culture itself, to remake and alter the historical spaces of history and mediated representation.

The TV screen wall in *Fahrenheit 451* spews continual images and chatter, often filming the city itself, extending the urban public space into the home. These images, however, never really provide a story and never conclude any given situation, one image replaces the next in a system of continuous yet quickly forgotten and disconnected presents. Like the ever present apartment block of *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, the electronic image is the repetitive signifier of the modern. The screen, and the family which it mediates, function as

a space of absence, or Baudrillard's 'multiple universe of media' which signifies nothing but its own repetitive perpetuation.⁸ Again, we are reminded here of Jameson's notion of the 'historical amnesia' caused by the constant mediation of the image. This absence functions to suppress the harsher truths of this society outside of the spaces of electronic mediation, namely the brutal lightening wars which are revealed in the film to be decimating other cities. It is a constant present that again attempts to erase any notion of history. Community in this imagined society is no longer the repository of history or remembrance but its absolute negation. The screen within the wall of the modern home creates a virtual community of pacified viewers. The latter functions in this society without books to assist the forgetting of written language, history and knowledge. It is significantly an entirely female audience which Truffaut visualizes as the passive viewers of this ominous screen. Remarkably, however, the only spaces within the city for possible resistance to the dominant order are also forged within the parameters of specifically feminine spaces.

The pre-Oedipal mother: resisting technology

While my analysis is not entirely rooted in psychoanalytic theory, I am interested in exploring the ways in which *Fahrenheit 451* envisions the symbolic order in relation to architectural and technological formations. This discussion will attempt to address the ways in which technology and architectural spaces are specifically gendered within this film not only in relation to the pacified or 'ideal citizen,' but also in terms of Lefebvre's notion of individuals waiting to 'transform themselves through struggle.'⁹ What is central to this discussion is Truffaut's child-like depiction of almost all of the adults in this film who are the

'ideal subjects' of the symbolic order.¹⁰ For Linda and her friends, who are horrified at the sight of forbidden books, the aversion to motherhood is part of their relation to the state mediated 'family' (cousins, aunts and uncles) as children. All characters in the film who have not 'discovered' the forbidden act of reading, specifically Linda and the other housewives, are shown for the most part only capable of simple childish phrases and observations. For example, when Linda speaks to Montag about his forbidden possession of books, she asks him to 'stop being naughty.' And when Montag reads aloud from one of his 'forbidden books,' another friend of Linda's is moved to tears and anguish at the possibility of human suffering.

Montag later flees the city after 'discovering the act of reading' in search of the community of the 'Book People,' and is shown to come into the possession of knowledge through the figures in the film which reject the mode of paternal authority offered by the screen wall. Thus, the film stages a radical departure from the paternal authority in the film and from the position of paternal authority invested in the symbolic order. It is noteworthy here that Truffaut chose to deviate from Bradbury's novel in depicting Montag's 'discovery' of knowledge. In the novel it is a male professor, Faber, who is Montag's link to the rediscovery of knowledge and the rejection of the state/patriarchal order.¹¹ Yet, in Truffaut's envisioning of the modern city, all of these links to knowledge are placed within the female characters Clarisse and the 'book woman' (Bee Duffell), who appears as a manifestation of the archaic or 'pre-Oedipal mother.'¹²

In contrast to Linda and her circle of friends, a very different type of feminine identity is posited for the 'book woman' whose home is destroyed by Montag's crew of firemen whose mission it is to ferret out and destroy libraries.

The home of the 'book woman' is unlike the modern home of Linda. It is constituted in the film as one of the last possible spaces of resistance that is ultimately destroyed by the state/patriarchal order, the firemen in jackboots. This home is represented as a repository for knowledge, a great library presided over by the pre-Oedipal or archaic mother figure, the 'book woman' (figure 2.3). The 'book woman's' home is the inverse of the modernist dwelling and the sterile womb/home of Linda because it encompasses rather than negates knowledge. The significance of the book woman's home as an antithesis to the modern structure is its existence outside technology through its lack of a state television screen, the transmitter of all symbolic and representational knowledge in the film. Its age, history, and lived in appearance all locate it within the parameters of the 'haunted house' of horror films discussed by Barbara Creed. It is represented as a space of history and origins, 'the symbolic space—the place of beginnings, the womb' presided over by 'the shadowy presence of the mother.'¹³ If the *haunted* house represents the womb, it is the library that is the center of the reproductive space and locus of origins.¹⁴ The, 'book woman' is represented as a force that has the capacity to retain and replicate knowledge because of her position as keeper of a great library in the attic of her home.¹⁵

The connection between knowledge and maternal reproduction is specifically tied to the status of the book as object in the society of *Fahrenheit 451*. Books in this film are the abject, objects that incite horror in the docile citizens of the state. When Linda discovers Montag's hidden stash of books she is shown to be afraid of even touching or opening them. Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject, as summarized by Creed, posits that 'woman is specifically related to polluting objects' due to her bodily functions and fluids (specifically menstrual).¹⁶ In

Fahrenheit 451, this is articulated in the library of the book woman, the site of maternal regeneration and knowledge, where books are social pollutants according to the paternal/state apparatus of *Fahrenheit 451*. 451. Both her body and library of books are burned in a cleansing and purifying fire, then expelled from society as abject and threatening objects.¹⁷

The presence of the pre-Oedipal or archaic mother as the keeper of this realm of knowledge aligns her with a certain kind of reproductive and organic capability. The latter threatens the symbolic structure of the technocratic utopia of *Fahrenheit 451* for the reason that it suggests a to return to a pre-modernist state of origins. The book woman is also threatening to the governmental structure of *Fahrenheit 451* because her relationship to the character of Clarisse, Montag's clandestine love interest also played by Julie Christie, is constituted outside of the limits of patriarchal state control. As the body of the 'book woman' burns with her books, the image of Clarisse is superimposed on the 'book woman's' body. This transposition of images suggests that the bonds of private familial relationships between these two women has not been infiltrated by the public programming of state relations, or manipulated by the threatening presence of modern architecture and gadgetry. Indeed, this form of familial relationship is destroyed as the library is burned, suggesting again that there are no sustainable spaces of resistance available within the modern technological utopia. As a consequence, there is no possibility for a feminine identity outside of the 'choices' offered by the state/consumer images of the television screen. *Fahrenheit 451* repeats a familiar trope of the science fiction dystopia: that the overly masculine and technocratic utopian impulse of modernism will possibly eradicate the spaces of feminine desire.¹⁸

As we move beyond the pre-Oedipal mother, the escape from the city by Montag reveals a different space of possibility, of new beginnings. Here, in the vast expanse of nature the roots of communal life are shown to begin again, nurtured outside of the bounds of urban technological surveillance. Montag, transformed into a fugitive after being 'discovered' as a book reader, flees through the cozy environs of mass-produced modern housing. Through row upon row of detached and block form housing complexes, he makes his way through the city where he meets the final boundary, a meandering river which marks the spatial limits of the city. It is the imposition of a natural topographical boundary, the river, which sets the space of the urban apart from what can not be ordered within its boundaries. This river is, like the fertile womb home of the 'book woman' an intrusion of the natural into the technologically ordered spaces of the 'Modern City.' Indeed, it is these perforations of the urban by natural and maternal spaces that threatens the unity and order of this urban body. Consequently, while Linda is the 'ideal subject' of the state and of consumer capitalism, the very spaces which allow for the radical reversal of the symbolic order within the city are entirely contingent on a specifically feminine articulation of space.

As I have suggested in my introduction, the city no longer provided a place of sustainable transformative possibilities within the cinema of the late New Wave. With the post-war European city so closely associated with newly made patterns of capitalist consumption, I argue that the directors of the New Wave began to seek alternate spaces for imagining the possibility of overturning the dominant social order. In order to locate these alternative spaces, many of these films have to transgress the physical and conceptual boundary of what

delineates the 'Modern City.' Although I have had to narrow my analysis to just three films in this thesis, these are by no means the only New Wave productions that explore this radical departure from post-war cinematic depictions of the city. For example, this shift which seeks to locate the possibility for social reform outside the boundaries of the city can also be found in *Alphaville* (1965). The emotional hold of Alpha-60, the computer brain which rules over Godard's futuristic Alphaville, is only shattered when Natasha Vonbraun (Anna Karina) is able to utter the words 'I love you'. This emotional reclamation of the self and acknowledgement of desire against the technocratic grip of Alpha-60 occurs when Lemmy Caution (Eddie Constantine) physically moves Natasha Vonbraun over the threshold of the city. It is also significant that Caution originates from a space outside Alphaville, named the Outerlands, conjuring up the image of a wilderness or natural space set apart from the limits of the city. In this film, it is the union of the natural and organic in the Outerlands, and the assertion of a 'normative' feminine rekindling of sexual/reproduction desire in the words 'I love you' spoken by Anna Karina which facilitate the move away from the technocratic hold of the city. The suggestion is that somewhere, beyond the boundaries of the city, society has rearticulated the communal and social structures capable of nurturing the human emotions which Alpha-60 in *Alphaville*, consumer culture in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, and the banning of books in *Fahrenheit 451*, sought to neutralize.

Postscript

Leaving the City

This section will examine the final moments in which *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Weekend* leave the 'official' spaces of the city and the home, ultimately offering up an alternative for thinking about the spaces of social organization and relations. This departure from the spaces of order and built civilization necessitates a brief foray into a discussion of the 'natural' in relation to urban architectural spaces and the bodies of women.

In 1923 French architect Le Corbusier conceptualized a modern city centre that existed separately, yet harmoniously, with both a periphery Garden city suburb and a fresh air reserve. He wrote

Our first requirement will be an organ that is compact, rapid, lively and concentrated: this is the City with its well organized centre. Our second requirement will be another organ, supple, extensive and elastic; this is the Garden City on the periphery. Lying between these two zones, we must require the legal establishment of that absolute necessity, a protective zone which allows of extension, a reserved zone of woods and fields, a fresh air reserve.¹

Given this definition of the ideal and utopic aim of such a plan for modern architecture, it may be tempting to identify the potential ascribed to the 'untamed' or natural areas outside the city center with the suburb or Garden city. However, as post-war planning took place, a radical reworking of the relations between the modern city and its Garden city suburb occurred. As Truffaut and Godard film the 'Modern City' in the late 60's, there is no delineation of a suburb protected from the harshness of the city by a fresh air reserve. Far from being an idyllic green space, the planning of many major European suburban areas simply

applied universal standardized block housing without site specific considerations. And the fresh air reserves called for by Le Corbusier were often reduced to 'limited, mathematically-conceived green belts.'² As the reduction in this fresh air reserve served to collapse the distinct spaces of city and suburb, narrowing the distance between the two, it is striking that the image of the modern suburb came to be represented in New Wave cinema as a stand in for the city itself, or as a form capable of usurping its boundaries. In the films discussed here, the spaces outside of the city do not conform to a notion of suburban 'green space' either. They offer the only spaces where community may 'begin again,' but this is a community that does without any habitable built forms of architectural delineation

Images of the 'Modern City' and its architectural forms provided a space from which New Wave critiques of contemporary social forms could be articulated. As I have suggested, the impenetrability and failure of the modern city in all its forms is reasserted through various depictions of technology, architecture, and consumer culture in relation to the bodies of women. Perhaps less gloomy than the condition of modernity and modern architectural forms offered by Tafuri, *Fahrenheit 451*, *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, and *Weekend* do attempt to posit a space outside of the city in which to imagine the possibility of beginning again or going 'back to zero.'³

In *Fahrenheit 451* the marginal society of the 'book people' is represented as a natural community which thrives in the thicket of a forest where primitive shelters built from fallen trees are the only objects providing any spatial demarcations of domesticity (figure 3.1). The first person who greets Montag takes him to a collapsing ruin of a trailer where the 'book people' watch for other

fugitives on the run from governmental authorities. In every case the built structures outside of the limits of the city in this film are represented as differing modes of anti-architecture. Living in a vast expanse of nature the community of the 'book people' are nomadic and rootless, resisting the regimented and ordered spaces of modernity. Here, community is rediscovered in a nature which resists the hegemony of ordered forms of modernist spaces. Instead of being moved through the rigidly defined spaces of urban planning by its streets and sidewalks, the people in this society walk to the rhythm of their own patterns of speech (figure 3.2). The movement of the people in this community take up the meandering and irregular paths of nature, suggesting that the limits imposed on the body by the spatial forms of the city can be reformed and re-patterned outside of the oppressive time and spaces of the urban.

Fahrenheit 451 depicts a narrative structure that is much closer to a notion of classical cinema than either of the Godard films discussed in this text. Truffaut's depiction of going 'back to zero' is thus constructed in terms of a possible historical beginning in which the written culture of books is revived as a patriarchal system of knowledge transmission. The film ends, as Jean-Louis Comolli notes, where 'all other films begin with the union or first meeting of a man and woman, Montag and Clarissa.'⁴ This is their 'first' meeting because it is constructed as the first time they are allowed to be 'within language' and the written word.⁵ Comolli suggests that there are different notions of time within the film that are related to differing modes of communication and culture.⁶ This final scene is the end of one notion of culture and the beginning of another. It is a film constructed within classical notions of plot structure but is markedly different in that it ends just as the characters are unfettered by the state

sanctioned taboo on poetry and the creative expression of the word. In other words the film ends just as Montag and Clarisse are permitted access to the very foundations of fiction, novels, fables and of course film.⁷

The 'book woman' and the authority invested in the 'pre-Oedipal' mother, however, is not present in the society of the 'book people'. As Montag wanders through this community we are confronted with an old dying man reciting the words of a book to a young boy. He in turn recites the passages to 'store' them for future generations. The image of knowledge once again being remembered and passed down through generations is forged in the image of father and son.⁸ The return to nature takes up the theme of the replication and transmission of knowledge, but Truffaut passes this task back from the more radical space of the archaic mother into the form of a father and son relationship. This transference reasserts a patriarchal form of community. Thus, a rather conservative re-ordering of the familial structure is suggested by the ending of the film. This representation of nature moves beyond the space of the archaic mother who needs neither father nor son to function and replicate both familial structures and knowledge. In *Fahrenheit 451* the recovery and reorientation of various forms of feminine desire and maternal drive structure the initial entry into the world of knowledge, and the rejection of technocratic forms and modern architecture itself. Perhaps it is not surprising that the 'entry into language' in the community of the 'book people' ultimately demands a separation from the space of the 'archaic mother,' the initial form of knowledge itself.⁹ Once the knowledge kept by the 'archaic mother' is again aligned with a new symbolic order and the phallus, her presence is no longer required for the functioning of the social body since the archaic mother is 'prior to the knowledge of the phallus.'¹⁰

In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* we are confronted with a very different image of community 'refound' outside of the city which drastically inverts Truffaut's concluding images of hope and possibility. In a final conversation between Juliet and her husband she repeatedly asks about their future. Her husband replies with the banal answer 'we'll get up;' again she asks 'and then what?' 'The same thing' he replies, 'We'll start all over again; 'We'll wake up, work, eat.' Juliet replies again 'And then what?' Robert answers for the last time 'I Dunno...die.' After this final conversation, Godard jumps to a scene in which community is reimagined outside of the limits of his original narrative. In the frame we see a carefully laid out expanse of white cubes representing various commercial products. Even when Godard leaves the narrative and Juliette and Robert behind in their Parisian apartment, he cannot imagine beyond the limits of the 'Modern City'. Like Juliette, who returns to her home in a modern high rise apartment, Godard also revisits the modern city at the end of the film. In this closing moment the urban is redefined and reconfigured as a still life of packaged consumer goods nestled in a patch of grass (figure 3.3). Not only do the characters in the film fail to imagine beyond their physical and conceptual urban terrain, even Godard can only reimagine the city within the spaces of domestic consumer culture. The 'return to nature,' this promising patch of green grass cannot reform the oppressive spaces of the city and consumer capitalism. Unlike *Fahrenheit 451*, the body and even nature in this film is unable to be reclaimed as a space of potential. In the center of this image we find the commodified body revealed as a smiling couple on a glossy Hollywood postcard (figure 3.4). Juliette is transformed and fixed into a still image of her desired self, happy, smiling, glossy and Hollywood.

Accompanying this final image Godard states that he is 'back at zero again'. No violence or pursuits, no escapes from the city; instead, something more dangerous is presented. Even the desire to think outside of the city, much less leave it behind, is ultimately abandoned. The collusion of spaces between the private and the public is visually fused together in this last scene with the grinning couple inhabiting the central image. Here in this reimagining of the 'Modern City' it is eerily quiet. The white cubes pasted with brand names completely muffle the domestic identity of architecture. Even the suburban housewife herself ceases to question the repetitive nature of her life. The forms of spatial separation defined by Lefebvre in relation to late capitalist society have merged into a unity in which all parts are inseparable from the others. All spaces of relations and gaps in which to imagine other possibilities for social interaction are refused in this last image. As we have seen, Truffaut uses the body and spaces of the suburban housewife and the 'book woman' to imagine possible forms for social realities and potential new beginnings. Godard, however, refuses these possibilities and the bodies of this 'new' glossy couple become represented as any number of possible interchangeable commodities: a TV image, a magazine page, a postcard. Juliette is silenced in this final image, inverting the structure of Truffaut's film in which the characters 'come into language' at the very end of *Fahrenheit 451*. If this final scene in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* is imagined as a time outside of the original structure of the film it is just as pessimistic about the possibility for social change as the images of Juliette within the city. If we can call this a Deleuzian moment of the 'any-space-whatever' within film, or a space in which seeing replaces action, Godard reminds us when the film is over that when we no longer wish to 'look' we can get into our cars and—thanks to

Esso—drive far away from the more unpleasant ‘realities’ of contemporary life. The potential for film to rupture the structures of thinking thus remains tenuous according to the logic of this final scene.

In *Weekend*, a new form of community based in the natural environment is also conceived in the final scenes of the film. Described by a contemporary review as the confrontation between the ‘*femme mariee* and the young revolutionaries of *La Chinoise*,’ Godard takes us into the territory of the Oise-et-Seine Liberation Front, a band of cannibal hippies living in the wooded outerlands of Paris (figure 3.5 and 3.6).¹¹ Like the ‘book people,’ this nomadic group is also imagined as a community operating outside of any built architectural boundaries. Wandering through nature, these cannibal hippies take up alternate forms of technology and communication. Using radio transmission to communicate with one another, they nevertheless rely on coded messages in the form of cinematic references. Here, outside of the urban spaces of bourgeois leisure and corruption shown earlier in the film, society is posited without architectural spaces or the virtual spaces of commercial media.

The community of nature, however, is shown to be just as embroiled in class distinctions and the capacity for violence as the bourgeois culture which it claims to revile. James Roy Macbean, in a review for *Film Quarterly*, argues that ‘Weekend presents a view which seems so overwhelmingly negative and destructive that one can hardly come away from the film without a feeling of profound despair at the spectacle of man’s inhumanity to man.’¹² However, it is significant that the bourgeois wife Corinne finds a place within the revolutionary society. Her husband is murdered by the hippies for their evening meal, and she remains to partake in the consumption of his body. The final image of the film

pans away from Corinne as she voraciously consumes his flesh. She remains to take part in a meal that is entirely divested of any sacred or ritual function.¹³ Corrine eats her husband, the dead patriarch, but as Silverman and Farocki point out his flesh is mixed up with that of a few British tourists and a slaughtered pig. His flesh becomes but another component of equivalents that Corrine eats with equal indifference. This final act retains the film's original tension between the possible dethronement of the primacy of the phallus and the 'equality' supposedly offered by the reduction of everything into terms of capital exchange. The move out into nature has not undone the original terms set out by spaces of bourgeois leisure and the city. However, it is the only space in the film in which the reign of the consumer object has been overthrown, and the initial journey prompted by greed hijacked by a new order of social conditions. Technology, consumer products, and the spaces of the city (including the automobile) are no longer represented in relation to the female body. Nevertheless, like all of Godard's films of the later sixties, we are without resolution to the ills of modern society. Nature may be a space for thinking beyond the terms set by the modern city of late capitalism. However, due to the brutal rapes and violent sexual demands of the male members of the 'cannibal hippies,' the viewer is distinctly aware that Corrine may just be trading one form of patriarchy for another.

If distinctions have been drawn between the final vision offered by Truffaut's film as hopeful, and full of possibility in relation to the final images of the two Godard films as hopeless and ultimately nihilistic, one gets the distinctly familiar feeling that *Clarisse* too may be trading one form of patriarchy for another. As outlined in the introduction, the pressures of post-war reconstruction changed the manner in which Deleuze's 'any-space-whatever' could be located

within film. Thus, the move into the realm of nature as a space of pure possibility, a going 'back to zero,' was a possible site for film to suggest new ways of thinking outside the old systems of representation. The question of maternal and sexual desire in relation to the representation of women's bodies within cinema remained problematic even outside of the 'official' spaces of the city. Yet, the possibility for reinventing social space and the movements of the body is suggested by *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Weekend* to be accessible only from this space outside of the urban. It is a jumping point, a place from which to begin to imagine 'real' possibilities. Jean-Louis Comolli, writing in 1966, suggests that this 'new cinema' must also be viewed differently in order to prevent the 'closed circuit' or passive relation to the 'screen interface.'¹⁴ According to Comolli, it is this new form of cinema itself that will activate a critical and involved participation by the viewer. This new kind of spectator, argues Comolli, 'will come to judge the world and acknowledge himself [sic] in the true light in which both will be shown on the screen.'¹⁵

End Notes

Notes to Introduction

¹ André Bazin, 'The Cannes Festival of 1946,' *French Cinema of the Occupation and Resistance: The Birth of a Critical Aesthetic* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1981), 135-141. Bazin writes of the 1946 Cannes festival that 'No less than three of the six films presented by France were on this theme (The Resistance): *La Bataille du Rail*, *Le Père Tranquille*, and *Patrie*. Italy showed *Open City*; Czechoslovakia, *Men Without Wings*; Denmark, *The Earth Will Be Red*; and Russian, *Zoia*.' See also André Bazin, 'An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism,' *What is Cinema? vol. II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 16-40.

² Bazin, *What is Cinema? vol. II*, 50.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 120.

⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, 121.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 9.

⁶ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 12-27. Debord argues that within France in the late sixties the increasing autonomy of the image elevated 'the human sense of sight to the special place once occupied by touch.' He also argues that within 'the spectacle,' which mirrors the post-war processes of manufacture and production 'all that was once directly lived has become mere representation.'

⁷ There are some exceptions to this statement especially in the work of documentary film makers associated with the New Wave, most notably Christ Marker's *La Jetée* and Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*.

⁸ Claire Clouzot, 'Godard and the U.S,' *Sight and Sound* (vol. 37 no. 3 Summer 68), 111. Clouzot argues that Godard's increasing level of political and social critique was also specifically formed in relation to his changing perception and eventual bitter rejection of the 'Americanization of the world.'

⁹ *Fahrenheit 451* was based on a novel of the same name written by Ray Bradbury in 1953. This novel was based on an earlier short story by Bradbury entitled 'The Fireman' (1950).

¹⁰ For a discussion of the failures of modern planning and the suburb see Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander, *Community and Privacy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965). See also Maurice Ash, *The Human Cloud: A Reconsideration of Civic Planning* (London: Town and Country Planning Association, 1962).

¹¹ Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), 67.

¹² Tafuri, 66-67.

¹³ Tafuri, 73.

¹⁴ Tafuri, 74.

¹⁵ Modernism in relation to gender and domestic space was the subject of early pop artists such as Richard Hamilton. In a collage work entitled *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* (1956), Hamilton offers a critique of domestic space as an extension of the images and products of mass culture in which a woman (presumably a middle-class housewife) trails up an endless flight of stairs with a sparkling new vacuum. Sitting on a 'modern' sofa opposite this woman, another image of the female body appears as an over-sexed vixen wearing only a lampshade and a come hither expression.

¹⁶ While Tafuri's discussion neglects a specific analysis of domesticity within modern planning, he does attempt to negotiate the difficult space of the translation from architectural utopianism or ideology to the actual built structure. Thus, he addresses the translation from ideology to lived experience in the modern city. However, he does not propose the methods in which the body may participate in the creation of space and the altering of ideological imperatives inherent in architectonic and other spatial forms.

¹⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 23.

¹⁸ Lefebvre, 23.

¹⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 270-275.

²⁰ Tafuri, 171-172.

²¹ Lefebvre, 23.

²² Lefebvre, 32.

²³ Lefebvre, 32.

²⁴ See Mary McLeod, 'Architecture and "Other" Spaces,' in *Architecture and Feminism: Yale Publications on Architecture* eds. Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze and Carol Henderson (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

²⁵ Lefebvre, 249. In regard to the question of how the 'Oedipal triangle,' which is supposedly found everywhere, 'gives rise to such diverse outcomes,' Lefebvre writes: 'In any event, our present approach to the question is a quite different one, for our aim is to treat social practice as an extension of the body, an extension which comes about as part of space's development in time, and thus too as part of a historicity itself conceived of as *produced*.'

²⁶ Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 15.

²⁷ Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 21-22. Silverman writes that 'ideology's claim on belief is never more prominently on display in *Lenin and Philosophy* than when Althusser attempts to describe the process through which a subject is ideologically sutured, which he imagines "along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' Successful interpellation means taking as the reality of the self what is in fact a discursive construction[...].'

²⁸ Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 18.

²⁹ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44.

³⁰ Huyssen, 44.

³¹ The theme of maternal desire and technology informs Godard's *Alphaville* (1965), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *1984* (1949, film versions appeared in 1956, and 1984), Donald Cammell's *Demon Seed* (1977) and much of the work of David Cronenberg including *The Brood* (1979) and *Dead Ringers* (1988).

³² Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 12-13.

Notes to Chapter One

¹ Lee Hilliker, 'The History of the Future in Paris: Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960's,' *Film Criticism* (Vol. XXIV, No. 3 Spring 2000), 2. Hilliker discusses the relationship between American financial aid and the growth of the French economy which also helped to boost France's indigenous cinema production. Juliette's visual association with red, white and blue, described earlier in the text, is also clearly a reference to the relationship between the American Marshal Plan and the French post-war economic boom which partially facilitated France's fervent participation in 'American style' consumer culture.

² Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 186. Deleuze, in speaking about another Godard film, *The Letter to Freddy Buache*, argues that 'The colours have become almost mathematical categories in which the town reflects its images and makes problems out of them.' In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* as well, the use of red, white and blue problematizes the many faces of the city. Through historical associations with the fractured and problematic notion of a unified France, (the 3 estates of 1789), and the post-war Americanisation of European culture, these three colours work to pose questions about the space of the city and its specific relation to the social and economic position of Juliette.

³ Jan Dawson, 'Deux ou Trois Choses que je sais d'elle,' *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 37 Dec. 1970), 244-5.

⁴ Tafuri, 135.

⁵ Jean-Luc Godard, 'One or two things,' *Sight and Sound* (vol 36 no. 1 Winter 1966-67), 3.

⁶ James Roy Macbean, 'Politics and Poetry in Two Recent Films by Godard,' *Film Quarterly* (vol. 21 no. 4 Summer 68), 14.

⁷ Slavov Zizek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jaques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 126-7. According to Zizek the *voix acousmatique* 'cannot be attributed to any subject and thus hovers in some indefinite interspace.'

⁸ Zizek, 127.

⁹ Vincent Canby, 'Two or Three Things' at the New Yorker,' *The New York Times* (May 1, 1970), 47. In describing Godard's voice-over Canby writes that 'Godard whispers "petites lectures" on everything from politics and the meaning of words to the separation between emotion and thought, between thought and word, and between word and the meaning communicated.'

¹⁰ Dawson, 244.

¹¹ This disembodied voice is also threatening on another level because it disrupts the viewer's relationship with cinematic image as objective and autonomous.

¹² Lefebvre, 86. Lefebvre writes that 'The intertwinement of social spaces is also a law. Considered in isolation, such spaces are mere abstractions. As concrete abstractions, however, they attain 'real' existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships... Thus social space, and especially urban space, emerged in all its diversity—and with a structure far more reminiscent of flaky *mille-feuille* pastry than of the homogenous and isotropic space of classical (Euclidean/Cartesian) mathematics. *Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another.*'

¹³ Chermayeff and Alexander, 37.

¹⁴ Chermayeff and Alexander, 37.

¹⁵ David Sterrit, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 89. Sterrit points out that in Godard's film *Weekend* the modern city is also introduced through 'not the cozy routines of bourgeois living but the cacophony of modern society – the roar of traffic, the hum of conversation, the insistent ringing of a phone.'

¹⁶ Lefebvre, 87.

¹⁷ Lefebvre, 32.

¹⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 58-9. First published 1970.

¹⁹ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, 59.

²⁰ Lefebvre, 32-33. Lefebvre writes that 'representations of the relations of reproduction are sexual symbols' which 'characterize transgressions related not so much to sex *per se* as to sexual pleasure its preconditions and consequences.'

²¹ Elizabeth Alice Honig, 'Desire and Domestic Economy,' *The Art Bulletin* (vol. LXXXIII no. 2 June 2001), 294.

²² Honig, 294.

²³ Honig, 294.

²⁴ Malcolm Cook, ed. *French Culture since 1945* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1993), 242. In 1965, just one year prior to the release of *Fahrenheit 451* and *2 Or 3 Things I Know About Her*, French law accorded a new degree of financial freedom to women. Allaying the remaining vestiges of the Napoleonic code, the de Gaulle government made it legal for a woman to participate in any profession of her choice and to maintain a financial identity separate from that of her husband.

²⁵ Debora Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology and Style* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989). At another historical moment in which woman's participation in the area of labour and economics significantly increased, late nineteenth century France, there was great debate about the new relations created between women and the public economic sector. Anxieties about women's increased participation in the economic market and professional sphere provoked a wrath of publicly circulated images which sought to articulate the economically and professionally active female body as that of a sexually grotesque and hybrid form, the 'hommesse.' This articulation of the female body in terms of sexual difference is also very much related to the process of displacing women's economic power/desire as aberrant erotic desire described by Honig. The 'hommesse' through her interaction with the public sphere was often articulated as capable of displaying the symbolic desires of men, earning, seducing etc. Like the housewife of 17th century Dutch representations, modes of redirecting new found economic female desires were transfigured through the visual into the mode of the erotic. According to Silverman the sexual aberrance of the 'new woman' of late nineteenth century France was often caricatured in journals and publications as the 'gargantuan amazone' or the 'frock-coated hommesse.' While these images often implied the feminization of men as well as the masculinization of women, the images nevertheless relied on the abnormal configuration of the female body.

²⁶ Godard, 4.

²⁷ Godard, 4.

²⁸ Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki, *Speaking About Godard* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 89.

²⁹ Silverman and Farocki, 89.

³⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London: Verso, 1996), 159. Baudrillard writes that 'It is worth pondering the fact that for centuries generations of people succeeded one another in an unchanging décor of objects which were longer-lived than they, whereas now many generations of objects will follow upon one another at an ever-accelerating pace during a single human lifetime. Where once man imposed his rhythm upon objects, now objects impose their disjointed rhythm—their unpredictable and sudden manner of being present, or breaking down or replacing one another without ever aging—upon human beings.' (This book was originally published in French in 1968 as *Le système des objets*)

³¹ Honig, 294-9. In many of the examples of depictions of market-place activities discussed by Honig the female body, when articulated in relation to the economic sphere, was often represented as a grotesque form visually displaying her nude and sexualized body. In one example from the myth of Virgil's Revenge a woman is humiliated by being put on public view in the market place, her exaggerated bare buttocks protruding over a fence into the spaces of economic exchange.

³² In 1966, both France and England had state run television programming, the BBC in England and the ORTF in France. The ORTF was the target of intense criticism during the student uprisings of 68 and the 'sinister' character of television culture as a 'one channel' outlet was increasingly commented on in student protests of the late sixties. Yet television was and still remains a medium of conflicting and unresolved possibilities. Godard himself also made a film (*Le Gai Savoir*) to be broadcast by the ORTF during the student uprisings of 68 which was ultimately not aired.

³³ Penelope Houston, 'Fahrenheit 451,' *Sight and Sound* (vol. 36 no. 1 Winter 66-67), 42.

³⁴ The connection between the screen wall of *Fahrenheit 451* and the critical attitude towards French state programming was made explicit in a well circulated political print poster of 1968 which visually quoted the opening scene of Truffaut's film under which read 'Propaganda Comes Into Your Home.'

³⁵ Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visual World* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 133-5. The moment of being 'recognized' or acknowledged as a subject through the misconception of 'being seen,' is discussed by Silverman in terms of Lacan's model of the field of vision. According to Silverman, Lacan's model argues that "To 'be' is in effect to 'be seen.'" "

³⁶ Obviously this film does not represent the first critique of media images or the effect of the television screen on the domestic environment. The pros and cons of the electronically mediated image were being argued over in the 1950's. Gunther Anders for example, writing in the mid 1950's argued that "When the world (television and radio) comes to us, instead of our going to it, we are no longer "in the world," but only listless, passive consumers of the world." Gunther Anders 'The Phantom World of TV,' *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: The Free Press 1957), 363.

³⁷ George Bluestone, 'The Fire and the Future,' *Film Quarterly* (vol. 20 no.4 Summer 67), 3. This review argues that *Fahrenheit 451* is deeply flawed but nevertheless still an interesting film. Bluestone takes up the attitude of Pauline Kael that 'Fahrenheit 451 is the kind of movie that makes viewers want to revise it.' Bluestone finds Truffaut's undistinguished mode of visualizing a dystopic future more confusing than compelling. But he is missing the point, as it is precisely the vague and temporally unfixed aspects of Truffaut's futuristic city and domestic environment, for example, the bringing together in the *mise-en-scène* of an antique telephone with an automated toaster, which underscore the indeterminate and temporally confusing spaces of his hybrid domestic high tech environments.

³⁸ Don Allen, *Francois Truffaut* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1974), 108.

³⁹ Michel Delahaye, 'The Fall To the Ceiling,' *Cahiers du Cinema in English* (no. 9 March 1967), 58. Delahaye writes that 'Fahrenheit is a film too this, too that. Too burning or too cold; too realist or too unrealist; too distanced or too the contrary; and too English, of course, or too French, it all depends.' See also Judith Crist 'Idle Dreams About Idols,' *The Private Eye, the Cowboy and the Very Naked Girl* (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 194-97. Crist also notes the failure of *Fahrenheit 451* as a science fiction film: 'Fahrenheit 451 is neither science nor fiction nor good

movie making[...]. Truffaut's land is English to the core, with some sort of Council houses, furnished in three little Sachs modern, pre-war dial phones and contemporary clothing.

⁴⁰ Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 133. The screen wall in this film functions as a metaphor for Lacan's concept of the 'gaze,' or the 'agency through which we are socially ratified or negated as spectacle.' The gaze, argues Silverman is 'Lacan's way of stressing that we depend upon the other not only for our meaning and our desires, but also for our very confirmation of self.'

⁴¹ Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 34. The 'symbolic personality' is the subject's relation to paternal law. According to Silverman 'Our relation to the present symbolic order...is lived via those ideological components which are most central to the dominant fiction, albeit always in ways that are significantly inflected by the ideologies of gender, class, race, and ethnicity.'

⁴² Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 17.

⁴³ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 103.

⁴⁴ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 123.

⁴⁵ In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* we never actually see the erotic encounters of Juliette, and in *Weekend* the recounting of a lurid sexual tale involving Corrine and another couple is only depicted as an audio text in which Corinne's body is cast in shadow, barely able to be seen.

⁴⁶ This struggle is perhaps most apparent in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* where Juliette attempts in vain to find a language that will permit her to think outside of her media driven desires while simultaneously shopping for a new dress.

Notes to Chapter Two

¹ Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 113. Baudrillard devotes a section of this text to Gadgets and Robots in which the automated object is described in terms of an 'irrational projection of consciousness.' The desire for technical perfection in the object is also forced upon the body of Linda in the film. She is treated like an object, and the irrational projection of consciousness takes the form of the desires of the paternalistic society of *Fahrenheit 451* which attempts to increase sexual drives while simultaneously decreasing the maternal instinct. It is also interesting to note the immense popularity of Ira Levin's *The Stepford Wives* (1972). This novel (later a film which spawned two sequels) depicts a suburban nightmare in which men's fear of the potential power of women in the public sphere prompts them to create virtually identical passive and submissive robotic versions of their wives. In many ways this novel depicts the ultimate 'irrational projection of consciousness' of man in relation to the object.

² Huyssen, 44-62. Andreas Huyssen has pointed out that images (of mass culture) are made by those who control cultural representation, primarily men. Not only in this film but, as Huyssen argues, the entire bag of cultural products named mass culture has historically been made by men for the consumption of women. Why this has been associated specifically with women and women's sexuality of course has something to do with the nineteenth century bourgeois notion of the idle housewife who is confined to the spaces of the private interior. For this reason, while the housewife may venture out into the spaces of the city (in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*) or remain within the space of the domestic as in Truffaut's film, the issues of domestic space and the mass produced image remain locked together even in our conception of the postmodern today

³ Tafuri, 74.

⁴ This constant offering of horrific still images, for instance of a victim of US gunfire in Vietnam, which seem to intrude upon the narrative flow within the film are introduced not unlike the pages from glossy fashion magazines which also intrude upon the temporal sequence of the film. Each type of still image is offered in equal parts. Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 122, writes that the effect of this *equivalence* of images within the spaces of mass media impose 'upon us, by the systematic succession of messages, of the *equivalence* of history and the minor news item, of the event and the spectacle, of information and advertising *at the level of the sign*...What we consume, then, is not a particular spectacle or image in itself, but the potential succession of all possible spectacles ... there is no danger of anything emerging within them that is not one spectacle or one sign among others.'

⁵ Renata Adler, 'Film Fete: Godard's Paris,' *New York Times* (Sept. 26. 1968), 60. The area Godard films is predominantly a specific area of Paris, the 20th Arrondissement, where new lower middle-class housing is rapidly being built.

⁶ Virilio, 12. Virilio argues that 'If the metropolis is still a place, a geographic site, it no longer has anything to do with the classical oppositions of city / country nor center / periphery... While the suburbs contributed to this dissolution, in fact the intramural-extramural opposition collapsed with the transport revolutions and the development of communication and telecommunications technologies. These promoted the merger of disconnected metropolitan fringes into a single urban mass.'

⁷ Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London: Verso, 1998), 20. Jameson asserts that the constant transformation of reality into the image facilitates the process of historical amnesia. This process of transformation is also, according to Jameson, a process which 'replicates or reproduces – reinforces – the logic of consumer capitalism; the more significant question is whether there is also a way in which it resists that logic.'

⁸ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 123.

⁹ Constance Penley, 'Time Travel, Primal Scene, and the Critical Dystopia,' *The Cultural Politics of "Postmodernism"* (Binghamton: State University of New York, Binghamton, 1989), 42-45. Penley argues that 'it is science fiction film—our hoariest and seemingly most sexless genre—that alone remains capable of supplying the configurations of sexual difference required by classical cinema.' Although Penley is referring primarily to the relations between human and alien or cyborg, in *Fahrenheit 451* the representation of Linda and her circle of friends relies entirely on their relation to technology and the mediated image making them almost more machine than human.

¹⁰ Houston, 42.

¹¹ Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996) First published in 1953. Montag communicates with Faber through an audiocapsule or invisible headphone.

¹² Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous – Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1993). Here, I am using the term pre-Oedipal mother as defined by Barbara Creed in which the pre-Oedipal or archaic mother represents both the fear of generative female power and the interest in and fear of origins.

¹³ Creed, 55.

¹⁴ Creed, 54. Haunted in this context refers to Freud's notion of the uncanny or *unheimlich*. The haunted house is frightening because it refers to the uncanny or that which is 'known of old, and long familiar.' The notion of origins here takes on a double meaning. In this *unheimlich* house of *Fahrenheit 451* the horror stems from both the recognition of the feminine sexual and maternal desire and from the sight of the great library. Both instances refer back to a place of origins or knowledge that the symbolic order of *Fahrenheit 451* seeks to suppress.

¹⁵ Diana Holmes and Robert Ingram, *François Truffaut* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 142. Holmes and Ingram argue that 'Truffaut's films undoubtedly do contain a script of misogyny which both idealises and demonises the mother, fetishising her body as a means to gain control, and employing a repertory of familiar patriarchal images to do so.' The chapter from which the above quote is taken, 'Magic Mothers: The Sexual Politics of Truffaut's Films,' claims to offer an in-depth psychoanalytic discussion of the 'mother figure' in the work of Truffaut, and yet *Fahrenheit 451* is not included in this chapter or in the book itself. The chapter instead focuses on the depiction of 'actual' familial relations (for example, *The 400 Blows*).

¹⁶ Creed, 10.

¹⁷ Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 81. The 'abject' is described by Silverman as that which 'threatens to contaminate the order and system of "proper" speech.' In *Fahrenheit 451*, within the limit of the city, this 'proper' speech can only be understood in terms of non-written speech. The authority of the 'symbolic order' within the limits of the city is thus given over almost entirely to visual and auditory representations.

¹⁸ It is Godard's *Alpha 60* which eliminates all words that are connected to emotional desire in *Alphaville*, and it is Orwell's *Big Brother* in 1984 which attempts to sterilize the sexual and maternal desire of the social body.

Notes to Postscript

¹ Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow* (1924), *Essential Le Corbusier: L'Esprit Nouveau Articles* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 1998), 166.

² Ash, 6, 23. The citation is taken from the introduction by Peter Self. This pamphlet describes particular planning solutions for the city of London. Ash also describes the Green belt as 'an antique concept' and 'a green ditch between subtopias.'

³ Silverman and Farocki, 121-2. The idea of going 'back to zero' or the erasure of all cultural and historical precedents is taken up by these three films in remarkably different ways. This phrase is also specifically linked to Maoist revolutionary thought of the late sixties. In a slightly later film by Godard, *Le Gai Savoir*, (1968) going 'back to zero' also applies to the formal attributes of cinema as a representational form.

⁴ Jean-Louis Comolli, 'The Auteur, the Masks, the Other,' *Cahiers du Cinema in English* (no. 9 March 1967), 57.

⁵ Comolli, 57-8.

⁶ Comolli, 57. Comolli writes that 'Just as the protagonists of *Fahrenheit 451* are outside of the time of language, in the same way the fiction of the film is outside the time of novels. Montag or Linda, the Captain or Clarissa [sic], are "characters" if you will, but coming after the last protagonists of novels or fables; in the same way the fiction of *Fahrenheit* is foreign to, coming after, all fiction, drama, plot or culture.'

⁷ David Robinson, 'Two for the sci-fi,' *Sight and Sound* (vol.35 no.2 Spring 1966), 60. Robinson remarks that Truffaut's ending is remarkably more optimistic than the final pages of Bradbury's novel: 'The ending in Truffaut's adaptation will be more cheerful, if not actually more optimistic than Bradbury's. Bradbury has Clarisse vanish for good within the first fifty pages of the book, and ends with Montag witnessing the atomic annihilation of the City from across the river. Truffaut, it appears will spare both Clarisse and the City.' See also James Pickering ed. *Fiction 100: An Anthology of Short Stories* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), 124-129. It is worth noting that Bradbury's work is often concerned with time and its relationship to place and memory. His characters often behave much like Deleuze's notion of the post-war actor as a 'seer' engaged with seeing or experiencing time rather than 'acting' in a series of causally related events. In *August 2002: Night Meeting* (*The Martian Chronicles* 1950) a colonist from Earth is confronted with the image of a Martian outside of the limits of both the colonist's time and place of origin. In this work Bradbury calls our attention to the radical and different potentials for experiencing time. 'Even my clock acts funny. Even time is crazy up here...sometimes I felt about eight years old, my body squeezed up and everything else tall.' He also creates an entirely cinematic reference in his discussion of the look of time. As the narrator Tomas heads out over the unfamiliar martial terrain he states that 'Time looked like snow dropping silently into a black room or it looked like a silent film in an ancient theatre, one hundred billion faces falling like those New Year balloons, down and down into nothing.' What is also interesting here is that Bradbury, in his evocative description, conflates the sensory experience of film, television and cinema. All three converge on an axis of time where the image of television as snow dropping silently into a black room is compared with a notion of time which calls up the inseparable relationship between cinema and theatre. The meeting between Tomas and the Martian is described as an engagement with a cinematic spectre, a ghost of time and otherness in which communication is impossible. The two bodies are caught in a moment of time when they can no longer 'act.' As their hands attempt to join in a friendly gesture they meet and 'like mist - fell through each other.'

⁸ Paul-Louis Martin, 'The Paradox of Communication,' *Cahiers du Cinema in English* (no. 9 March 1967), 58.

⁹ Creed, 12-15. Creed discusses Julia Kristeva's notion of maternal authority and paternal laws (language). The maternal body is for Kristeva a site of conflicting desires where 'Maternal authority is the trustee of that mapping of the self's clean and proper body; it is distinguished from paternal laws within which, with the phallic phase and acquisition of language, the destiny of man will take shape.' In this moment when the subject recognizes the split between the self and the body of the mother his or her desire to be aligned with the symbolic order necessitates the mother's body to be thrust into the realm of the abject. For a discussion of Lacan and the Mirror Stage in relation to the 'look' of the mother and the entry into language see also Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1989), 52-6.

¹⁰ Creed, 20.

¹¹ Ian Dawson, 'Weekend,' *Sight and Sound* (vol. 37 no. 3 Summer 1968), 151.

¹² James Roy Macbean, 'Godard's Week-end, or the Self Critical Cinema of Cruelty,' *Film Quarterly* (vol. 21 no. 2 Winter 1968-69), 36.

¹³ Silverman and Farocki, *Speaking About Godard* 108. This consumption of human flesh is also a reference to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* in which the founding myth of patriarchy involves the murder of the father and the ritual consumption of his body by the male members of the family / community.

¹⁴ Jean-Louis Comolli, 'Notes on the New Spectator,' *Cahiers du Cinéma 1960-1968: New Wave, New Cinema, Reevaluating Hollywood* ed. Jim Hillier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 214.

¹⁵ Comolli, 'Notes on the New Spectator', 214.

Bibliography

- Adler, Renata 'Film Fete: Godard's Paris.' *New York Times* 26 Sept. 1968, 60.
- Allen, Don *François Truffaut*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1974.
- Anders, Gunther 'The Phantom World of TV.' *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*. Eds. Bernard Rosenberg, and David Manning White New York: The Free Press, 1966. 358-367.
- Ash, Maurice *The Human Cloud: A Reconsideration of Civic Planning*. London: Town and Country Planning Association, 1962.
- Baudrillard, Jean *The System of Objects*. London: Verso, 1996.
- Baudrillard, Jean *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Bazin, André 'The Cannes Festival of 1946.' *French Cinema of the Occupation and Resistance: The Birth of a Critical Aesthetic* New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1981.
- Bazin, André 'An Aesthetic of Reality.' *What is Cinema? vol. II* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Bluestone, George 'The Fire and the Future.' *Film Quarterly* vol. 20 no.4 (Summer 1967): 3-10.
- Bradbury, Ray *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996. (1953)
- Canby, Vincent 'Two or Three Things' at the New Yorker.' *The New York Times* 1 May 1970, 47.
- Chermayeff, Serge and Christopher Alexander *Community and Privacy*. New York: Anchor Books, 1965.
- Crist, Judith 'Idle Dreams About Idols.' *The Private Eye, the Cowboy and the Very Naked Girl*. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, 194-197.
- Comolli, Jean-Louis 'Notes on the New Spectator.' *Cahiers du Cinéma: 1960-1968: New Wave, New Cinema, Evaluating Hollywood*. Ed. Jim Hillier Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986. (1966)
- Comolli, Jean-Louis 'The Auteur, the Masks, the Other.' *Cahiers du Cinema in English* no. 9 (March 1967): 57-58.
- Cook, Malcolm ed. *French Culture since 1945*. London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1993.

- Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow* (1924), *Essential Le Corbusier: L'Esprit Nouveau Articles*. Oxford: Architectural Press, 1998.
- Clouzot, Claire 'Godard and the U.S.' *Sight and Sound* vol. 37 no. 3 (Summer 1968): 110-114.
- Creed, Barbara *The Monstrous—Feminine*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Dawson, Jan 'Deux ou Trois Choses que je sais d'elle.' *Monthly Film Bulletin* vol. 37 (Dec. 1970): 244-245.
- Dawson, Ian 'Weekend.' *Sight and Sound* vol. 37 no. 3 (Summer 1968): 151.
- Debord, Guy *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1994)
- Delahaye, Michel 'The Fall to the Ceiling.' *Cahiers du Cinema in English* no. 9 (March 1967): 58-59.
- Deleuze, Gilles *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Deleuze, Gilles *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Godard, Jean-Luc 'One or two things.' *Sight and Sound* vol. 36 no. 1 (Winter 1966-67): 3-6.
- Hilliker, Lee 'The History of the Future in Paris: Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960's.' *Film Criticism* vol. XXIV, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 1-22.
- Holmes, Diana and Robert Ingram *François Truffaut*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Honig, Elizabeth 'Desire and Domestic Economy.' *The Art Bulletin* vol. LXXIII no. 2 (June 2001): 294-315.
- Houston, Penelope 'Fahrenheit 451.' *Sight and Sound* vol. 36 no. 1 (Winter 1966-67): 42-43.
- Huyssen, Andreas *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Jameson, Fredric *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso, 1998.
- Lefebvre, Henri *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

- Lesage, Julia *Jean-Luc Godard: a guide to references and resources*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1979.
- Lukacher, Brian 'Nature Historicized: Constable, Turner, and Romantic Landscape Painting.' *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History* Ed. Stephen S. Eisenman. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994. 115-143.
- Macbean, James Roy 'Politics and Poetry in Two Recent Films by Godard.' *Films Quarterly* vol. 21 no. 4 (Summer 1968): 14-20.
- Macbean, James Roy 'Godard's *Weekend*, or the Self Critical Cinema of Cruelty.' *Film Quarterly* vol. 21 no. 2 (Winter 68-69): 35-43.
- McLeod, Mary 'Architecture and "Other" Spaces', *Architecture and Feminism: Yale Publications on Architecture* Eds. Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze and Carol Henderson. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
- Martin, Paul-Louis 'The Paradox of Communication.' *Cahiers du Cinema in English*. (no. 9 March 1967), 58.
- Penley, Constance 'Time Travel, Primal Scene, and the Critical Dystopia.' *The Cultural Politics of "Postmodernism."* Ed. John Tagg Binghampton: State University of New York at Binghampton, 1989. 33-49.
- Pickering, James *Fiction 100: An Anthology of Short Stories*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995.
- Robinson, David 'Two for the Sci-fi.' *Sight and Sound* vol. 35 no. 2 (Spring 66): 57-61.
- Rose, Jacqueline *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, 1989.
- Silverman, Debora *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology and Style*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.
- Silverman, Kaja *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Silverman, Kaja *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Silverman, Kaja *The Threshold of the Visible World*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Silverman, Kaja and Harun Farocki *Speaking About Godard*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.
- Sterrit, David *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Tafuri, Manfredo *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976.

Virilio, Paul *The Lost Dimension*. New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.

Walz, Eugene P. *François Truffaut: a guide to references and resources*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982.

Zizek, Slavov *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jaques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997.

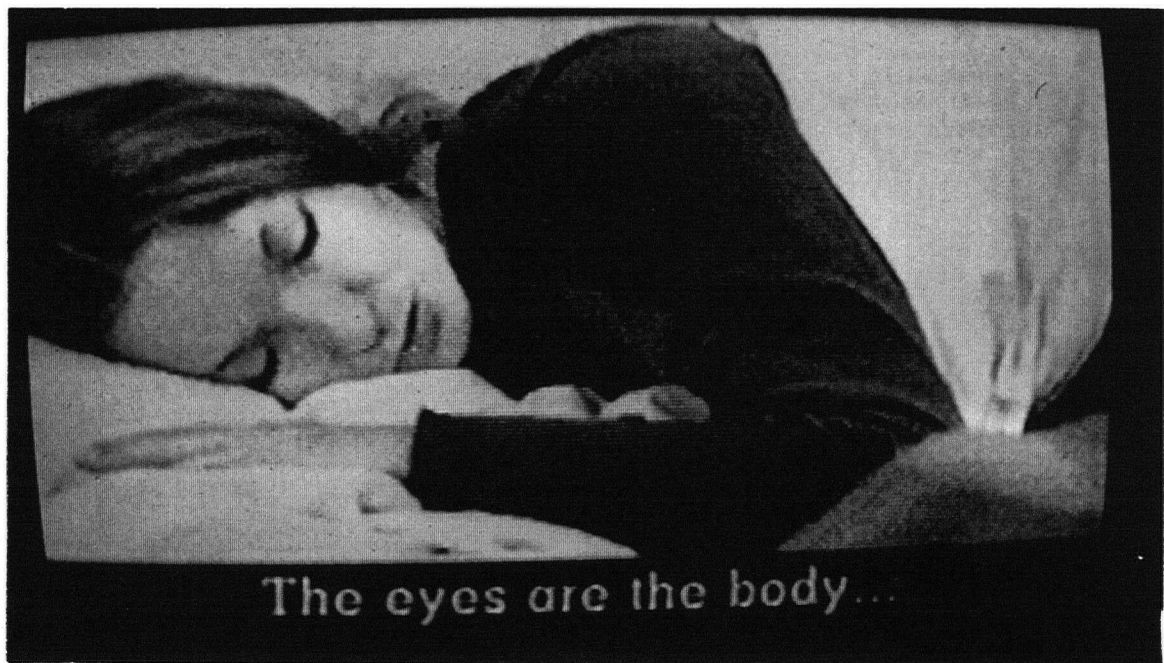


Figure 1.1: *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard. Juliette (Marina Vlady) in red white and blue.

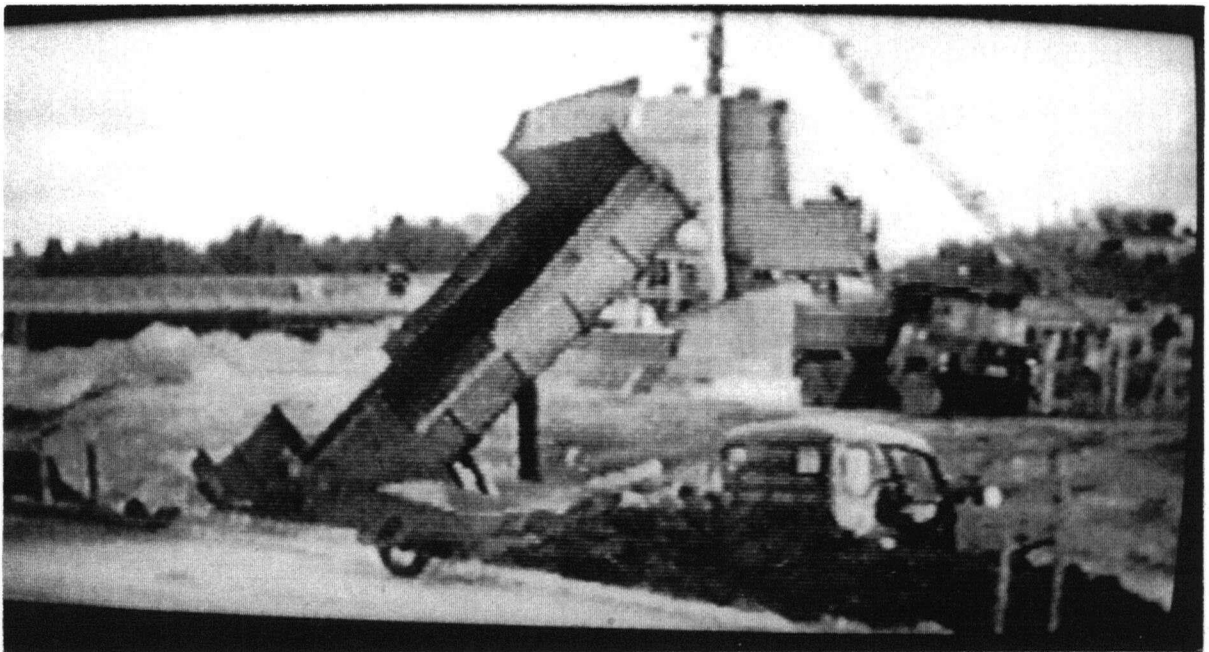


Figure 1.2: *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard.
'Constructing' Paris in red, white and blue.

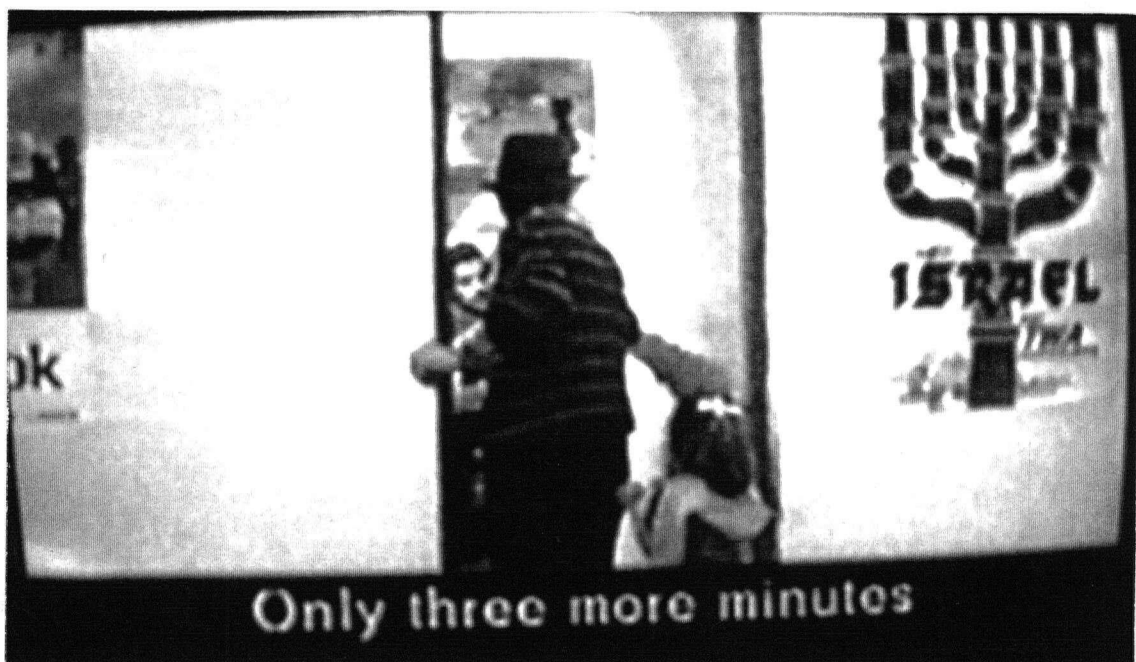


Figure 1.3: *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard. The brothel/daycare.

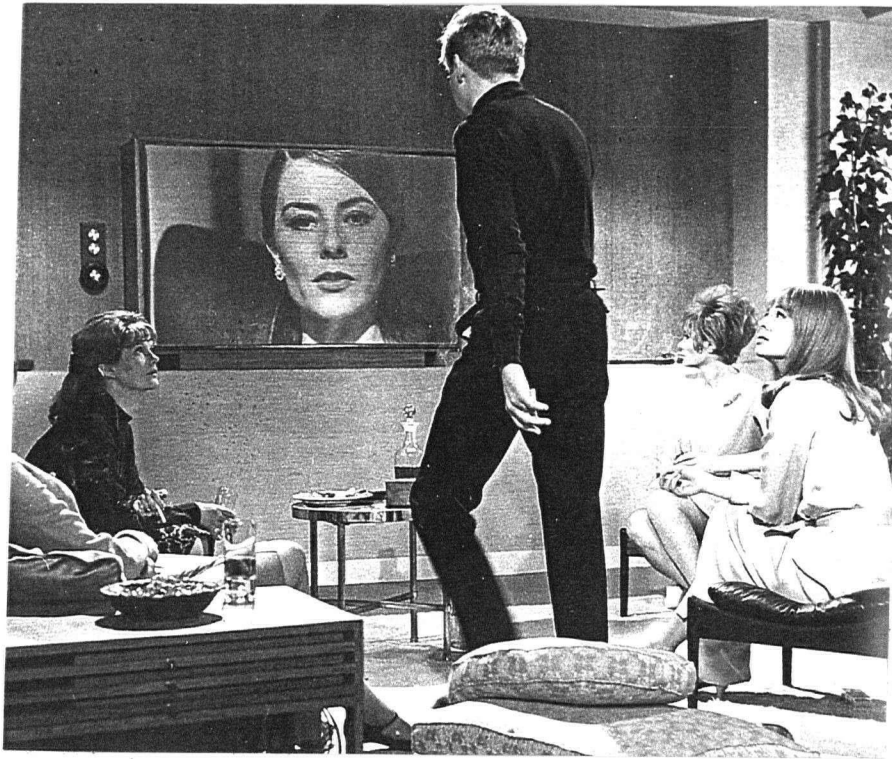


Figure 1.4: *Fahrenheit 451*, François Truffaut. The screen wall.



Figure 2.1: *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard. Juliette in front of modern apartment block.

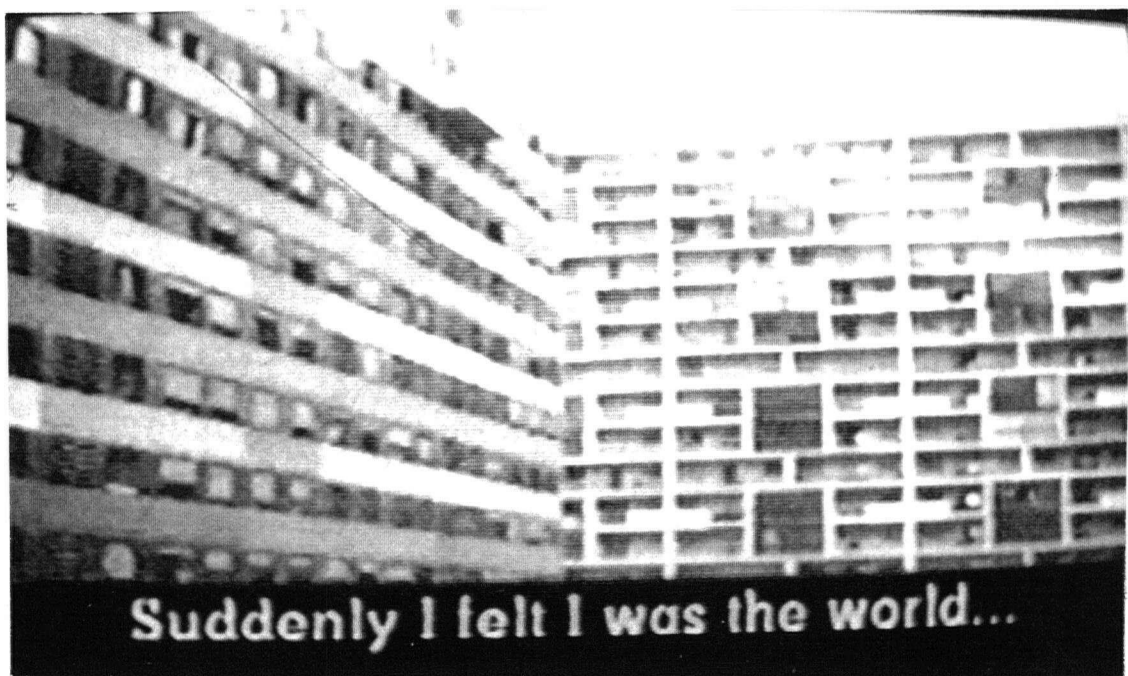


Figure 2.2: *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard. Modern apartment highrises.



Figure 2.3: *Fahrenheit 451*, François Truffaut. The 'book women' and the pre-modern home.

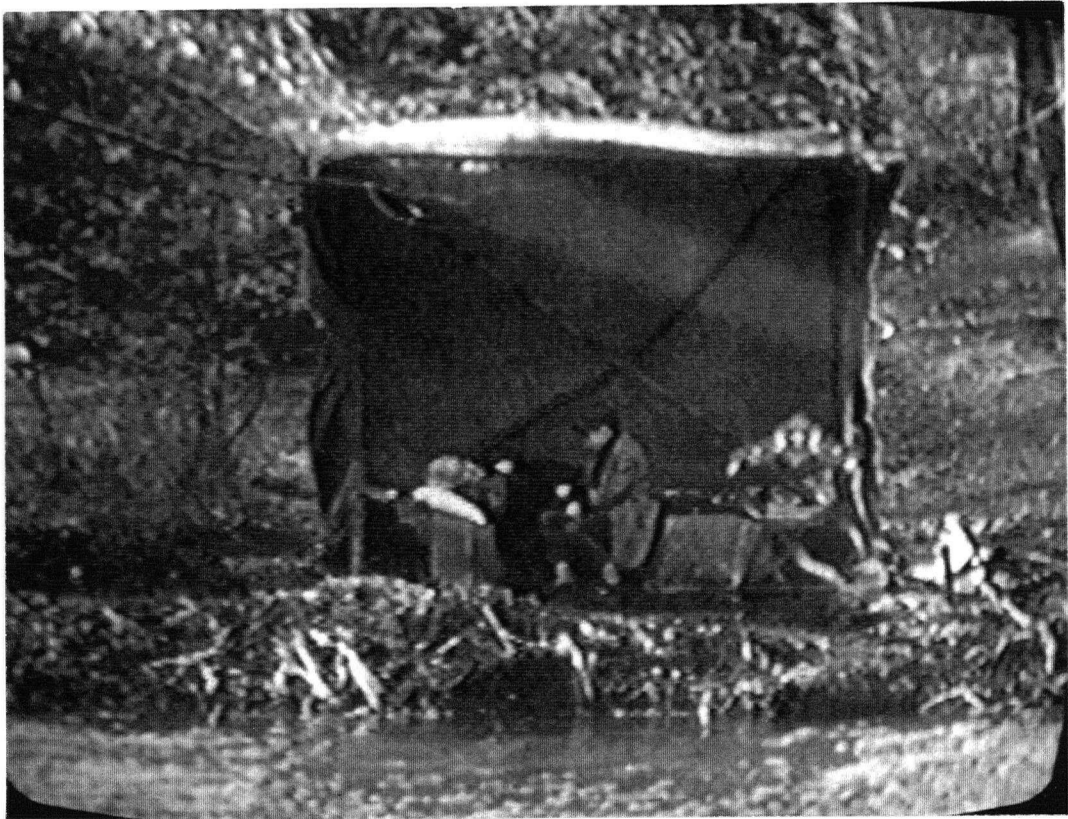


Figure 3.1: *Fahrenheit 451*, François Truffaut. The 'anti-architecture' shelter of the 'book people.'



Figure 3.2: *Fahrenheit 451*, François Truffaut. The community of the 'book people.'

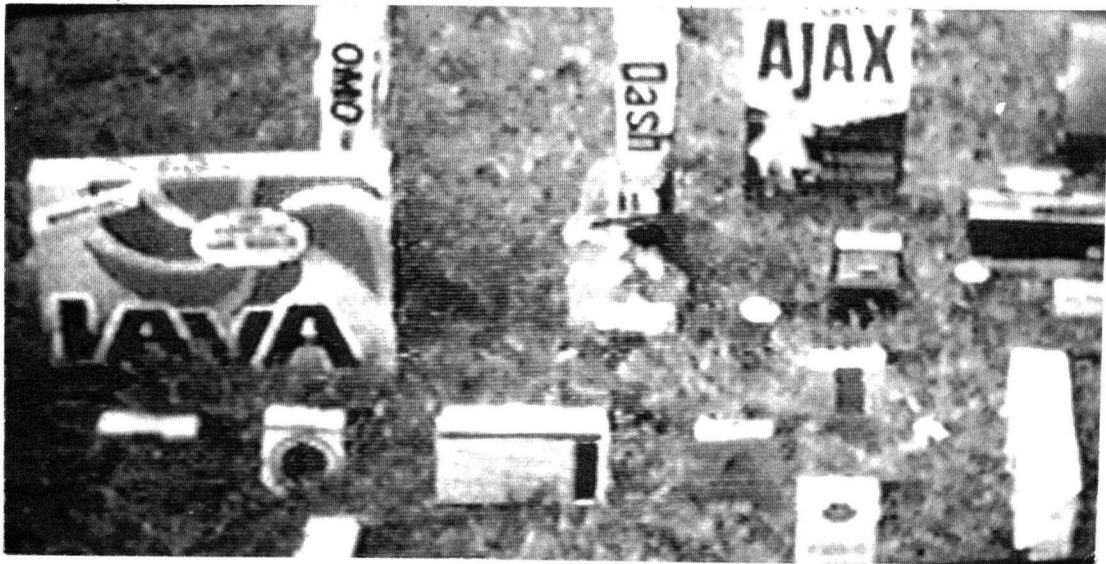


Figure 3.3: *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard. The city reimagined as a still-life of consumer goods.

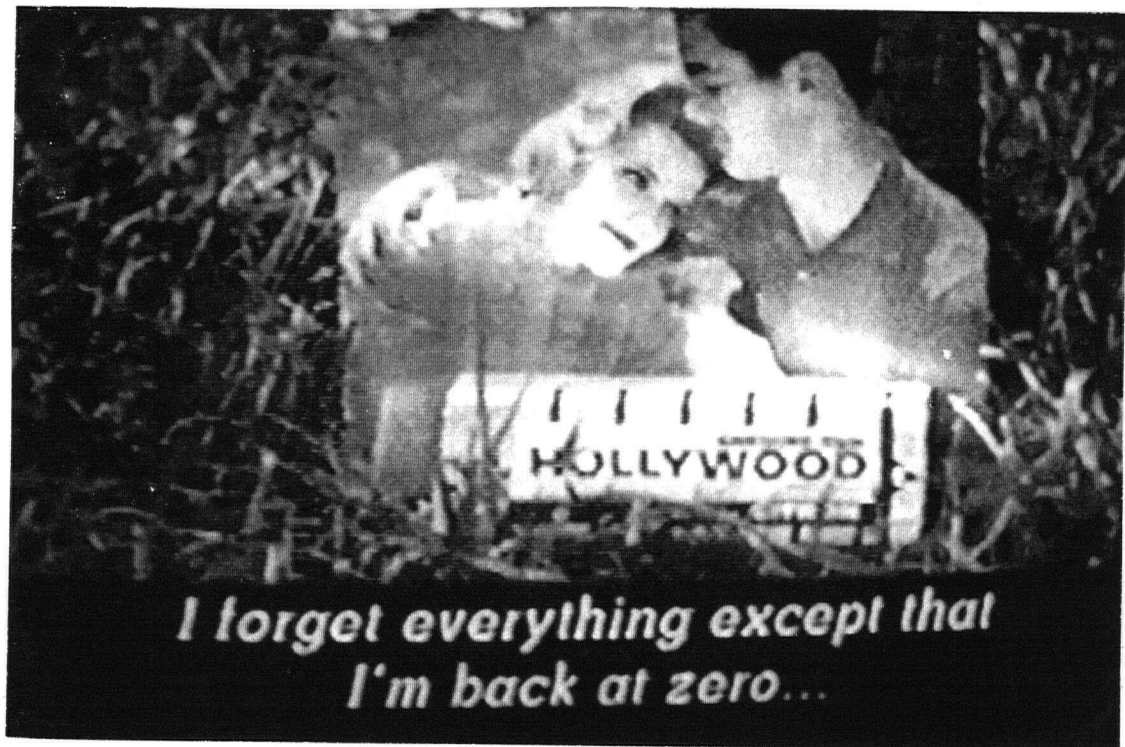


Figure 3.4: *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard. The commodified body.



Figure 3.5: *Weekend*, Jean-Luc Godard. The community of the Oise-et-Seine Liberation Front.



Figure 3.6: *Weekend*, Jean-Luc Godard. The community of the Oise-et-Seine Liberation Front.