

AN ANALYSIS OF *THE GOLD DIGGERS* (1983)
BY SALLY POTTER:
FEMINIST FILM, JULIA KRISTEVA AND REVOLUTIONARY POETICS

VOLUME I

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is
her own and that appropriate credit has been given
where reference has been made to the work of others

**AN ANALYSIS OF *THE GOLD DIGGERS* (1983)
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Sally Potter's film *The Gold Diggers* (1983) occupies an important place in the cultural politics of feminism. It poses the question of female subjectivity through a critical exploration of the structuring linearity of classic narrative film.

Casting Julie Christie and Colette Laffont as co-stars, the film explores the relationship between the female spectator and two cinematic portraits: the over-exposed white female star and the under-represented black woman. Mobilised by their mutual desire for change, the white star escapes her pre-given status of screen goddess and the black woman adopts the role of investigative agent. Bringing together two women who have been divided by constructs of race, class and culture, Sally Potter is disrupting a prohibited story and making it possible within the parameters of feminist intervention in the cinema.

Based on a detailed survey of the text, interviews and pre-production/production material located in hitherto unexamined archives, the thesis reconstructs for the first time an analytical script for *The Gold Diggers*. This enables the spectator to identify the film's episodic structure, montage system and camerawork and explore the innovative possibilities generated in response to the cinematic orchestration of voice, music, ambient sound and image.

Although, at the level of content, *The Gold Diggers* draws on an Irigarayan critique of woman as commodity in patriarchal society, the film can be analysed using Julia Kristeva's models of revolutionary poetics and the analytic relation. With reference to Kristeva's theoretical precepts the thesis focuses on the new meanings generated by two women who are exploring the economic, political, psychic and cultural sources of their oppression.

In Part I of the thesis, I examine the film's context within feminist cultural politics of the 1970s and address its strategic reworking of the conditions and conventions of twentieth century filmmaking; I give an introduction to and overview of the script; and I present an account of Kristeva's theories of subjectivity, signification and change. Part II consists of a succession of sharply focused segmental analyses of the text which demonstrate how the film contributes to and gives voice to the political revolution in female subjectivity and its representation through cultural practices.

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PART I

Chapter One

THE GOLD DIGGERS: FEMINISM, PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE CINEMA

Ruby: I search for the secret of transformations.
 The breath
 The fire
 I search for the secret of my own transformation.¹

Sally Potter's film *The Gold Diggers* is an adventure story with a difference - a cinematic collage of fictitious scenes mobilised by theoretical and political concerns and realised on an epic scale. The film was released in November 1983 at the London Film Festival and was screened at the Rotterdam, Berlin and Florence Film Festivals in the first few months of the following year, winning prizes at the latter two. In May 1984 it was shown at the National Film Theatre as part of a two week season of films chosen by Sally Potter called: '*The Gold Diggers* and *Fellow Travellers*'.²

Taking a stand against the narrative and visual conventions of the classic cinema, *The Gold Diggers* is informed by and contributed to the cultural politics of the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s and, to borrow Claire Johnston's term, the feminist countercinema.³ In the film a black woman named Celeste [Colette Laffont, fig. 1.1.] supports a white woman, Ruby [Julie Christie, fig. 1.2], in her search

for 'the secret of transformations'.⁴ Working as bank clerk, investigator and analyst, Celeste helps Ruby escape her predicament as a Hollywood star. At the start of the film the two heroines are worlds apart but, adopting and interchanging roles they gradually reformulate the traditional figures of the over-exposed white star and the under-represented black woman. In so doing the co-stars are staging Claire Johnston's counsel that '[...] it is possible to use icons (ie conventional configurations) in the face of and against the mythology usually associated with them.'⁵

Where, in the 1930s Musical, the term gold-digging refers to the schemes dreamt up by women to accumulate financial wealth through heterosexual romance, the activity of gold-digging in Sally Potter's film alludes to a specifically feminist search for new structures of knowledge, agency and pleasure. The respective names of the co-stars adds fuel to the transformative potential of their union. According to alchemical texts the celestial-ruby, otherwise known as the philosopher's stone, has the power to change base metals into gold.⁶ Working collaboratively the two women investigate and revise the social, cultural, political and psychic conditions of their existence in patriarchy. In the course of their struggle they realise that the 'secret of transformation' lies in the culturally displaced and unrepresented voice of the

Other.⁷ Reconstructing and sharing their respective histories the two women forge a '[...] friendship of opposites'.⁸ My thesis identifies the innovative possibilities advanced by this challenging link between these two culturally and historically separated subjects, arguing that their new alliance creates a framework to construct a concept of subjectivity that does not coopt the feminine as a negative sign.

In the 1970s Julie Christie epitomised the notion of a modern screen goddess: '[...] an accepted representation of femininity in the cinema, a certain kind of glamour, and blondness and beauty; a certain ideal'.⁹ Interviewed by Pam Cook shortly after the film's release, Sally Potter explained that Ruby's role had been designed for Julie Christie - who not only looked the part, but she was the part, not least because she had her own reasons for wanting to participate in the film.¹⁰ As far as Sally Potter was concerned, the star qualities Julie Christie brought to the film represented:

[...] a] bridgemaking strategy. I think it will be interesting because other people in the film won't be stars, which throws up the reality of the star's face; the functions of repetition, the connections with the icon, and circulation of the female face; and their relation to value and investment.¹¹

In the above mentioned interview, which to this day remains one of the most valuable introductory sources to the film, Sally Potter identifies the important links between personal history and what she

refers to as the collective memory of the cultural archive, suggesting that socio-political and psychic levels of experience are negotiated across culturally maintained frames of reference - such as the cinema.¹²

I see the film as a musical describing a female quest. Making it demanded asking the same questions during the working process as the film endeavours to ask: about the connections between gold, money and women; about the illusion of female powerlessness; about the search for gold and the inner search for gold; about imagery in the unconscious and its relationship to the power of the cinema; looking at childhood and memory and seeing the history of the cinema itself as our collective memory of how we see ourselves and how we as women are seen.¹³

As far as Sally Potter is concerned, remembering and reworking scenes drawn from the history of the cinema can help disrupt and reformulate the internalised structures of our social and political subordination. But, how does *The Gold Diggers* access the memory archive of cultural history? And how does this practice of critical remembrance help the female spectator partake (on her own behalf) in the operations of signification intervention and revision?

Drawing on aspects of vaudeville, operatics and fairy tales and invading the archives of the Early Cinema, the Avant-garde and Art Films as well as the established genres of the classic cinema, *The Gold Diggers* puts into play questions of sexuality, race, empire, colonialism, lesbian romance, inter-racial reciprocity, female spectatorship, memory and representation. This is not to say that the film can be identified as being about any one of these issues,

or that its intertextuality is immediately obvious, rather it draws on a breadth of experience to disrupt the linearity of the classic cinema. In addition, Sally Potter's ardent commitment to filmmaking, performance and the entertainment arts is interwoven at a cool, almost austere level of abstraction. To quote Sally Potter:

For me there's a great passion in austerity and in the desire for a structure that is clean in the deep sense - for a kind of rigour. One of the things the film tries to do is to integrate certain aspects of passionate formalism with feminism.¹⁴

It is thus with surgical precision that *The Gold Diggers* reworks a series of memory pictures drawn from the history of the cinema. Seen together these tableaux amount to a non-chronological arrangement of dramatised scenes interwoven with inserts of real time [long takes], rapidly shifting montage, limited dialogue, experimental music and ambient sound. In addition, *The Gold Diggers* responds to a wide range of theoretical models and political concerns which I return to later in this chapter, however two observations are relevant here. On the one hand, Kaja Silverman's cogent analysis of the film discloses the extent to which Irigaray's critique of woman as commodity in patriarchal society is relevant to the functions of narrative inversion mobilised at certain key moments in the film.¹⁵ On the other, *The Gold Diggers* displaces the familiar structures of the

ready-made story onto an acoustic and visual register thus generating a Kristevan understanding of revolutionary poetics. The semiotic productivity in the film is complemented by a level of reciprocity between the co-stars which invokes the analytic relation and provides the two women with a facilitating space to question the power politics underscoring the exclusion of the different in the construction of meaning. Julia Kristeva's model of semiosis and her understanding of the constitutive function of the analytic relation is outlined in Chapter Three of the thesis.

The Gold Diggers: Cultural Politics of Feminism

Shortly after the release of *The Gold Diggers*, Jonathan Rosenbaum remarked on its diverse contextual anchorage in contemporary music, performance art and dance. Describing the film as a 'proud anomaly' he argued that:

[...] its only recognisable antecedents in the English avant-garde film tradition appears to be Potter's own previous *Thriller* [...].¹⁶

The film's anomalous status is perhaps a measure of its transgressions, its infractions and its transformative potential in relation not only to mainstream cinema, or even the independent cinema, but to the ideologies and desires invested in and

perpetuated by them. Having said this the film's commitment and contribution to feminist filmmaking, film theory and cultural politics should not be underestimated.

The emergence of the second wave of feminist politics in the early 1970s was not only fought in the streets but was advanced from various cultural and theoretical vantage points. The diverse initiatives generated by feminist film theorists and filmmakers during this period demonstrate the very real commitment to the development of an oppositional politics of representation. Heeding Annette Kuhn's discerning reminder that the relationship between film practice and theoretical work is '[...] rarely either one way or direct [...]' but is contingent '[...]' as much from the ways in which films may be read as from the intentions of the filmmakers [...]', it is helpful to begin this analysis of the *Gold Diggers* with a very general overview of the working relations established between feminist theorists and filmmakers during the 1970s.¹⁷

Looking back at the range of approaches generated by women working with film in Britain during the 1970s it is possible to identify two dominant methodologies: the feminist documentary and the anti-realist countercinema. The feminist documentary was developed out of the established socialist-realist tradition of the British Documentary Movement.¹⁸ The use of the

camera to promote a 'sense of social responsibility', involving the production of positive role models of "real" women, was taken up by many women's groups to oppose the "ideological fictions" - stereotypes - circulated by the classic cinema.¹⁹ Many of these film-portraits were structured around the autobiographical voices of the main characters (rather than the voice-over of an outsider-reporter) talking directly to the camera. Not only did this direct voice-of-truth strategy contribute to the consciousness raising impetus of the women's movement, but it found a niche in network television.²⁰ For instance, films such as *Women of the Rhondda* (1972) incorporated a previously repressed historical discourse alongside the autobiographical voices of the participants and using methods of continuous editing, rapid pans, direct camera and mobile framing, the gaze and voice of in-frame subjects are registered as an extension of events in the real world.

Although the feminist documentary had, and still has, a place in feminist filmmaking - most particularly as a historical, social and emotional measure of women's lives, the model of film as evidence/truth was challenged by the need to theorise the ideological pretext of the on-screen image.²¹ The revision of what Laura Mulvey has described as '[...] the endless search for the other self on the screen' was mobilised by the

development of a specifically feminist countercinema which set out to reformulate the relations between the cinema and the spectator.²² From this latter perspective cinematic texts mediate rather than reflect a preferred set of meanings - in other words, meanings are "produced" in the encounter between the screen and the contextual reference points of the spectator.²³ Speaking out against the use of film as a vehicle of truth and making the claim that images of women are not inherently fixed, Claire Johnston argued that:

If we accept that the cinema involves the production of signs, the idea of non-intervention is pure mystification. The sign is always a product. What the camera in fact grasps is the "natural" world of the dominant ideology. Women's cinema cannot afford such idealism; the truth of our oppression cannot be "captured" on celluloid with the "innocence" of the camera; it has to be constructed/manufactured.²⁴

Many feminists committed to the development of a political countercinema found a theoretical prop in: Juliet Mitchell's feminist revision of Freud's polemic;²⁵ the recently translated texts by Althusser and Lacan;²⁶ and *Cahiers du Cinema's* radical policy shift from its original focus on auteurism to a commitment to a politics of representation (a move acknowledged by *Screen*).²⁷ In addition, the strategies developed by exponents of French New Wave films were not without influence - in particular Jean-Luc Godard's retrieval and application of the early Soviet anti-illusionist methods of montage. And of equal importance were Brecht's concepts of distanciation and

episodic structure designed to enhance the critical space between the spectator and the object of representation.²⁸

The appropriation of production methods associated with the "avant-garde" by women working in the countercinema (and time-based work) signals a commitment to the development of a feminist cultural politics of representation.²⁹ Indeed, perhaps the most fundamentally important idea underscoring the feminist countercinema in the 1970s was the assumption that new cinematic forms would enable women to redefine their sexuality and subjectivity. In contrast to the resolutely abstract, anti-narrative films produced by exponents of the new avant-garde based at the London Filmmakers Co-operative such as Malcolm Le Grice, Peter Gidal, Hollis Frampton and Annabel Nicolson, the feminist countercinema set out to renarrativise film language using montage techniques in conjunction with codes drawn from the film genre of Melodrama.³⁰ In other words, where Gidal's structural/materialist films sought to drain the conventions of Hollywood through an undiluted focus on "real-time" and an outright refusal to represent women - thus literally blocking the traditional articulations of fantasy and desire³¹ - theorists and filmmakers such as Claire Johnston, the Mulvey/Wollen team, Sally Potter,³² Yvonne Rainer and Babette Mangolte set out to reclaim and rework

traditional pleasures: 'Ideas derived from entertainment film [...] should inform political film, and political film should inform the entertainment cinema: a two way process.'³³ In addition, rather than banishing the female body from film, the feminist exponents of the countercinema sought to reinscribe film with the temporality of time based work - regarding every performance in front of the camera as a risk taking "rehearsal" engaging real people in real time.³⁴

Despite differing methodological and theoretical commitments, women filmmakers shared the belief that dismantling mainstream film called for more than a re-evaluation of formal conventions and content, but demanded a complete overhaul of the male dominated industry. One of main strategies was a new focus on collective and collaborative working practices to '[...] interrogate and demystify the workings of ideology.'³⁵ For instance, in her article 'On Shows', published during the pre-production work of *The Gold Diggers*, Sally Potter defended a politicised understanding of collaborative work, claiming that new forms of non-hierarchical cooperation between individuals can raise questions about ownership of ideas and the pursuit of originality:³⁶

Working with others made it possible to discuss the implications of the work, of its politics and realisation at

all stages; it forced one to become conscious of what one was doing. It was also a way of combining areas of relative expertise and the lessons brought from them; and on a practical level was a way of sharing tasks.³⁷

Groups such as The London Women's Film Group alongside numerous regional groups provided the necessary space for women to challenge the traditional production methods, content and authorship of the classic cinema.³⁸ Indeed, within the decade of the 1970s, the organising principles of commercial filmmaking were countered by a celebratory profusion of films which had been collectively (or collaboratively) made and were often viewed by an exclusively female audience.³⁹

Feminist filmmaking was given a further boost by the initiative to recoup a women's history of the cinema. Claire Johnston and Pam Cook's published research on women directors and stars, such as Dorothy Arzner, Ida Lupino, Katherine Hepburn and Jane Russell, broke the history of silence surrounding women's work in film and demonstrated that women had and could overcome the formidable prohibitions issued against them - not only had women played strong leads but they had made films and controlled the direction of their careers.⁴⁰

The development of new production and reading strategies and the retrieval of lost histories was accompanied by the desire to debate and exchange ideas.

The Women's Events at the Edinburgh Film Festival in the 1970s (co-organised by Claire Johnston) and the rapid increase of national and international feminist conferences and film festivals throughout Europe and North America provided the initial venues to respond to this need.⁴¹ By the late 1970s the international level of debate between women filmmakers and theorists had become a recognised strategy of mutual empowerment. For instance, the two day conference 'Feminism, Fiction and the Avant-garde' held at the London Filmmakers Co-op in May 1978, and run by three members of the *American Camera Obscura Collective* (Janet Bergstrom, Elisabeth Lyon and Constance Penley), gave women based in Britain the enormously valuable opportunity to discuss films produced by women working in Belgium, France and America. The debates were underpinned by preparatory screenings of films by Chantal Akerman, Marguerite Duras, Babette Mangolte, Yvonne Rainer and Jackie Raynal.⁴²

The publications accompanying these conferences were instrumental in furthering the new found pleasures of critical analysis. For instance, Claire Johnston's essay 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema', included in the BFI publication *Notes on Women's Cinema* (edited by Johnston and on sale during the London rerun of the 1972 programme of the Edinburgh Festival) is still considered a benchmark in feminist perspectives on

cinema.⁴³ With regard to Johnston's influence, the editors of *Camera Obscura* have pointed out that her 'Counter-Cinema' essay was instrumental in the shift, in the mid 1970s, from the heterogeneous writing associated with the journal *Women and Film* to the psychoanalytic focus of its successor *Camera Obscura*.⁴⁴ Indeed the publication in Britain, North America and Germany of journals such as *Screen*, *Women and Film*, *Camera Obscura*, *m/f*, *Jump Cut*, *Wide Angle*, *Diacritics* and *Frauen und Film* ensured the circulation of new ideas and development of critical debate.⁴⁵

The Gold Diggers: Dance, Music and Film

The Gold Diggers was co-written by Sally Potter, Rose English and Lindsay Cooper. Choosing to work in spaces at the edge of conventional art and entertainment venues and interlinking the activities of filmmaking, performance, dance and music the three friends contributed to the upsurge of feminist cultural politics in the 1970s. Their previous collaborative work included: a one-off improvisation at Lumiere and Son (Rose English and Lindsay Cooper, 1974); *Death of a Maiden* (Rose English, Jacky Lansley and Sally Potter, 1975); *Rabies* (Rose English, Jacky Lansley and Sally Potter, 1976); *Berlin* (Rose English and Sally Potter, 1976);⁴⁶ and *Mounting* (1977) written and performed at

MOMA (Oxford) by Rose English, Jacky Lansley and Sally Potter.⁴⁷

In 1974 Sally Potter formed the Limited Dance Company with Jacky Lansley and during this period she worked with various fringe performance and dance groups including X6.⁴⁸ In 1978 she toured in Iceland with the Feminist Improvisation Group - FIG - formed in the previous year by Lindsay Cooper and the singer Maggie Nicols. In the following year Lindsay Cooper produced the soundtrack for Sally Potter's film *Thriller* (1979), starring Rose English and Colette Laffont.⁴⁹

Rose English recalls that the idea for *Thriller* and subsequently *The Gold Diggers* grew out of the 1976 *Berlin* trilogy which inspired the three co-workers to produce an opera but, unable to find a suitable venue, they turned to film [fig. 1.3].⁵⁰ Immediately after the release of *Thriller* the three women began work on the script for *The Gold Diggers*.⁵¹ They decided to structure the film in relation to three discursive registers: the "theatre", the urban (male) environment of the city, and the frozen terrain of Iceland (the repressed). The resolve to return to Iceland was not only based on the challenge presented by a bleak frozen landscape, but was a response to the powerful metaphoric associations of this icelocked terrain.⁵² In relation to the latter point, Potter explains:

In much female literature, landscape has been used as a metaphor of the mind and the unconscious. [...] Iceland seemed rich in metaphor of the kind appropriate to the film - the notion of the frozen self, with the hut as the body. Later the frozen ice melts into water imagery, a more accessible consciousness that we can dive into.⁵³

As a means of exploring their ideas for the film the three co-writers produced a series of small collages which they circulated between one another. Indeed, even after the final version of the screen play was completed they continued to rely on "stills" as a vehicle for discussion and modification. For instance, two months before the shoot in August 1981 Babette Mangolte spent a few weeks with Sally Potter and Rose English producing location shots. These images were then used as a structuring device for rehearsals.⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that although the final version of *The Gold Diggers* departs considerably from the script, the "narratives" invoked by the wonderful collage series and by Babette Mangolte's location shots are clearly visible in the film [figs. 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 1.7].⁵⁵

Sally Potter estimates that the first year of the four year production period was devoted to the script and a further year was taken up with the pre-production concerns of funding, shoot locations, actors, technical support and set design/production; two months were taken up with the shoot and Sally Potter (assisted by Rose English) spent over a year and a half on the edit.⁵⁶ The film was originally planned for 16mm and as such it received a grant from the British Film

Institute.⁵⁷ Subsequent script revisions and the decision to work in 35mm required further financial assistance. With the backing of the BFI the film was awarded a top-up grant from Channel Four.⁵⁸ At the time of production *The Gold Diggers* was one of only a small number of British feature films directed by a woman and it was the first feature film to be produced in Britain by an all-women crew and cast.⁵⁹ Indeed, Sally Potter has commented on the parallels between the problems encountered by the two heroines on screen and the experience of making the film.⁶⁰ For one thing the production team met with considerable resistance from the male dominated film industry. Not only did the ACTT⁶¹ object to the exclusion of male workers, but union members opposed the team-based working practices of the all-women crew.⁶²

Judging from the disparities between the working script and the released version of the film, it would appear that ongoing modifications were made during the shoot. Given Sally Potter's history of collaboration with Rose English and Lindsay Cooper as well with other cast members, in particular Jacky Lansley, Maedée Duprès, Colette Laffont, Siobhan Davies, Juliet Fisher, Marilyn Mazur, Lol Coxhill, George Yiasoumi, Dennis Greenwood and Fergus Early, we can surmise that the on-locations revisions were negotiated rather than imposed.⁶³ In short, not only does the film function

as a register of the joint working practices developed between the co-writers, but it gives voice to the strengths and preoccupations of the main participants. For instance, the decision to work in black and white rather than colour was not only determined by its dream-like properties which appealed to Potter, but because the dramatic possibilities of monochrome were suited to the formal interests of lighting/camera-operator Babette Mangolte.⁶⁴

The cinematic strategies in *The Gold Diggers* such as the use of light, the compositional abstractions, the focus of single objects, the slow/fixed camera and the refusal to colonise the landscape are evident in Mangolte's films and photography, as well as in her work for other exponents of the countercinema, notably Yvonne Rainer and Chantal Akerman.⁶⁵

Similarly Jacky Lansley's dance routines two thirds of the way into the film draw on her past work - in particular *Dance Object* (1977) and *Juliet and Juliet a Duet, Romeo and Romeo a Duel* (with Rose English, 1979).⁶⁶ Adopting the Brechtian stance that new forms '[...] would teach people to think differently',⁶⁷ these pieces set out to investigate and reformulate the conventional relationship between the spectator and the performer.⁶⁸

The active policy to use the script as a general framework and incorporate on-location improvisations

was complemented by the constitutive function of the editing process. Indeed, certain key sequences in the film were created in the edit. For instance there are numerous sequences, such as Celeste's dream or Ruby's "home-coming", that are neither in the script nor were they not discussed during the shoot but were fabricated in their entirety in the editing room.⁶⁹ Sally Potter's resourceful use of the edit is not unlike Babette Mangolte's working methods in *What Maisie Knew* (1975):

In a way the idea was just to make an edited film, a kind of extension of the Kuleshov exercise [...] there was never any script written and, until the last few days of the editing, because I was still shuffling sequences around, there was never any real theme and no chronology.⁷⁰

The interplay in the film between the "imaginary" time/space matrix of the cinema, the "realist" time-impact of performance work and the film's intellectual and political rigour signal the diversity of Sally Potter's commitments as a filmmaker, dancer, choreographer, singer, lyricist, performance artist, entertainer and political activist.⁷¹ Largely self-taught and having immersed herself in film - in particular the Early Cinema, Surrealist and Soviet films, American Art Films and the Musical - she studied performance for one year at St Martin's in the late 1960s. Subsequently she joined the London Filmmakers Co-op and between 1971-1974 was a student at the London School of Contemporary Dance.⁷² As Stephanie Jordan

has pointed out, the LSCD was one of the few dance schools in Britain to attract individuals from differing creative backgrounds, many of whom had no training in classical dance.⁷³ During the 1970s the LSCD was noted for its inventive choreographic practice and for its support of oppositional dance forms and inhouse counter movements.⁷⁴

According to the same source, Sally Potter introduced the self-conscious editing and cutting practices, sequence repetitions and non-chronology used by members of the London Filmmakers' Co-op to the LSCD.⁷⁵ In an attempt to replace the centrality of the man/woman couple with a contemporary feminist focus on psychology and sexuality (Yvonne Rainer's "new content" of radical art) Sally Potter began projecting film footage (2/3/4 cameras) over or alongside live performers.⁷⁶ Her films such as *Play* (1970), *Hors d'oeuvre* (1972), *The Building* (1972) and performances such as *Combines* (1972, directed by Richard Alston with slide/film projections by Potter) all used 2/3/4 screen films in conjunction with time-based action.⁷⁷ The latter piece included:

[...] social dancing, portraits of dancers in the forties street clothes and pedestrian activity next to stylised 'art' dance, popular songs sung by Mildred Bailey, Ella Fitzgerald and Frances Langford next to Schubert and Bach.⁷⁸

These experiments of mixing real time with fictional time by projecting slides or film and

reciting text during a performance had been developed by Yvonne Rainer during the 1960's and augured Sally Potter's move from performance to film.⁷⁹ Indeed, there are numerous shared concerns between the work of Rainer and Potter. Both denaturalise and revise the self-referential world of classic film (and dance) with strategies of: (i) non-expressive acting to obstruct character identification and generate a multiple understanding of "she";⁸⁰ (ii) tightly constructed montage sequences to obstruct spatial and linear coherence and duration; (iii) long camera holds to document an action from start to finish; and (iv) non-directive images, music and verbal tracks. I will return to these production methods in Chapter Two, the remainder of this chapter focuses on the ways in which *The Gold Diggers* introduces its challenge to the masculine principles governing the pursuit of pleasure.

The Prologue Song: *Seeing Red*

In *Seeing Red* (voice-over Sally Potter) the director announces the film's intention to retrieve the innovative pleasures of spectatorship for women.⁸¹ The song is accompanied by a montage featuring: a woman walking into the ahistorical oblivion of a snowscape [the mother; figs. 1.8; 1.9]; a mother/child dyad [fig. 1.10]; and a prospector juggling gold nuggets [the father; fig. 1.11]. As the film progresses it becomes

clear that these three figures are the main players in the repressed story Ruby is attempting to recall and revise.

Seeing Red

(Written and sung by Sally Potter)

Verse One

Went to the pictures
for a break
Thought I'd put my feet up
have a bit of intake
But then a man with a gun
came in through a door
and when he kissed her
I couldn't take it any more

Chorus - accompanied by
scene-setting waltz)

Please, please, please
give me back my pleasure

Please give me back my good night
out

Please give me back my leisure
time

I've got the pleasure time blues
I'm seeing red

Verse Two

Picked up a book
for a read
Thought I'd put my feet up
indulge a relaxation need
But on page two
he wins the war, page three
he's through her door
I just can't take it any more

Chorus

Please, please, please
Give me back my pleasure
Please give me back my good night
out
Please give me back my leisure
time
I've got the pleasure time blues
I'm seeing red

Sound Track: Wind

Shot Chart:

1. Camera scan [1 min] from left to right of snowscape and debris of hut (high angle)

Verse One

2. Path in snow (high angle, long take)

3. Woman walking along path in snow

4. Man's feet entering hut (high angle close-up)

5. Interior of hut, man and woman holding gold nuggets (tight close-up)

Chorus

6. Empty path (forward tracking)

7. Mother/child dyad (high tracking)

8. Empty path (forward tracking)

9. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)

10. Empty path (forward tracking)

11. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)

12. Woman walking away into snowscape (long take)

Verse Two

13. Empty path (high angle, forward tracking)

14. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)

15. Hut in snowscape (medium shot)

16. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)

17. Empty path (forward tracking)

Chorus

18. Woman's feet walking into frame (close-up)

19. Woman picks up toy horse from debris of hut (medium shot)

20. Woman's hands holding toy horse (tight close-up)

21. Frozen landscape (long take, low angle, tracking from left to right)

The song amounts to a recitation of unpleasures experienced by an angry film director and spoken from

the vantage point of a disenchanted feminist spectator.⁸² The textual invocation of the director as looker puns an established convention of mainstream film - Hitchcock's cameo appearances and his well documented interest in voyeurism are perhaps the best known examples of this kind of authorial signature.⁸³ Countering Hitchcock's obsession with masculine gratification, Sally Potter introduces herself as an exasperated iconoclast rebel, who is about to dismantle the burden of the cinematic gaze and retrieve the stolen pleasures of female spectatorship.

Not only does *Seeing Red* disclose the secret link between the cinema and sexed notions of un/pleasure, but the song confirms that, for women, entry into symbolisation entails suffering the double loss of the mother, first as a result of the intrusive presence of the father and second in response to the mother's negative place in symbolisation. The painful recognition of maternal loss is referred to in the concluding line of the first verse: 'And when he kissed her I couldn't take any more'. This verse is accompanied by a shot montage featuring the mother retreating into an icelocked landscape, the father entering a little hut and both parents clasping some gold nuggets [shots 3-5]. If, as Sally Potter suggests, the frozen landscape can be read as a metaphoric reference to the unconscious, then perhaps

the mother's collusion with the father - that is her desire for the promise of his power (the gold) - and her subsequent flight towards the pictorial vanishing-point of the screen indicate that the masculine apparatus is both her only hope of representability and her downfall.⁸⁴ The defeat of the mother is alluded to once again in the second verse: 'But on page two he wins the war and on page three he's through the door'. This line is paired with a shot of the woman struggling in an icy wind [shot 16; fig. 1.12].

The film's political purpose is confirmed in the twice repeated chorus 'please, please, please give me back my pleasure'. Taking her cue from Brecht, Sally Potter aligns the concept of pleasure with the strategy of (re-)making meanings, thus replacing the notion of women as passive consumers with an understanding of women as innovative producers of meaning.⁸⁵ Moreover, the urgent cry for help issued by the disembodied voice of the director signals the film's allegiance to the generally felt need on the political Left to reformulate the conventional discourses of pleasure, desire and subjectivity. The shot of the mother/child dyad juxtaposed with the haunting image of the mother disappearing down the snowbound path is a reminder of Ruby's sense of loss. In contrast, the image of the mother as archaeologist (finding the model horse buried in the icelocked wreckage of the little wooden hut)

evokes a sense of discovery and innovation [shots 6, 7, 20; fig. 1.13]. Visual references to the snowbound mother, the model horse and the little hut reappear sporadically throughout the film. I will return to this discussion in Chapter Four, arguing that the repeated references to the little snowbound hut evoke the primary choric "body" of the mother which, from a Kristevan perspective, sets the scene for the infant's first experiences of loss, substitution and renewal [fig. 1.14].

Two Versions of the Riddle

Seeing Red is followed by two versions of a *Riddle* [spoken in voice-over by Ruby/Julie Christie and Celeste/Colette Laffont, respectively]. In the first version the screen goddess introduces herself as a puzzle and in the second version Celeste identifies herself as Ruby's potential ally. Responding to the voice of the trapped screen goddess, Celeste suggests that the conventions of stardom can be reformulated through collaborative work between women.⁸⁶

The Riddle - Version (i) (Ruby voice-over. Total length of sequence: 04.30 minutes)

Sound track: *Iceland*. Piano waltz underneath a mournful tune (looped eight bar phrases): piano, cello, saxophone, bassoon, electric guitar and the intermittent sound of clinking pickaxes

I am born(e) in a beam of light
 I move continuously yet I am
 still
 I am larger than life
 Yet do not breathe
 Only in the darkness am I visible
 You can see me but never touch me
 I can speak to you but never hear
 you
 You know me intimately, and I
 know you not at all
 We are strangers, and yet you
 take me
 inside of you
 What am I?

The Riddle - Version (ii)

(Celeste voice-over):

Time is short
 we have 90 mins to find each
 other

You are born(e) in a beam of
 light
 You move continuously yet you are
 still
 You are larger than life, yet do
 not breathe
 Only in the darkness are you
 visible
 I can see you but never touch you
 You can speak to me but can never
 listen
 I know you intimately and you
 know me not at all
 We are strangers, yet I take you
 inside of me

Shot chart:

1. Miners trudging across glacier
 (Long shot. Fixed camera held
 for 02.30 minutes before the
 voice-over *Riddle* and retained on
 screen during *Riddle*)

2. Procession of men carrying the
 gold idol is glimpsed through an
 archway at the end of a dark
 alley

3. 180 deg. camera pan (from left
 to right) of a frozen landscape
 overcast by a stormy, cloud
 laden sky

Ruby's *Riddle* and Celeste's response are accompanied by two long-takes of a glacial region - both of which invoke and disrupt the basic rules of classic filmmaking. The first shot in the sequence features a column of miners trudging slowly across a snowfield [shot 1; fig. 1.15]. This seemingly endless take defies the rule of shot transition - it gives the spectator no additional information, it breaks the illusionistic preserve of the cinema and it draws attention to the suturing function of the editing process. The second long-take, again of Iceland, mimics the 180 degree rule of the classic cinema

generally regarded as the guarantor of realism [shot 3; fig. 1.16]. I shall say more about the film's defiant camerawork and editing processes in Chapter Two, but for now I want to focus on relationship between the shots and the verbal track of the *Riddle*.⁸⁷

These two above mentioned shots are separated by a fleeting reference to a mysterious procession of identically dressed, hyperactive men carrying a gold idol - it is in fact Ruby. The idol's *Riddle* can be read as a reformulation of the ancient Theban riddle posed by the sphinx.⁸⁸ Echoing Freud's infamous statement, Ruby presents herself as the "problem" - not, however, as a problem for men, rather her statement '[...] we are strangers, yet you take me inside of you' is addressed to the female spectator, suggesting that female commodification is a problem for women.⁸⁹ Where the conundrum in the classic riddle engages the issue of "man", the two versions of the *Riddle* identify a female quest.

Celeste's response to Ruby's puzzling 'what am I?' is: "you" are woman, "you" are star, "you" are idol, "you" are image - an illusory ephemeral representation, suggesting that women are trapped within an apparatus constructed in the service of a masculine economy. In a deft move Celeste transforms the star's riddle into a statement of fact - 'What am I?' is transform into 'You are'. Celeste's role as knowing subject is confirmed

in her directive to Ruby (and to the spectator): 'time is short, we have ninety minutes to find each other'. Ruby thus makes her debut as confused object and Celeste responds from the vantage point of a knowing magician who can transform the riddles of patriarchy.

In addition, the two versions of the *Riddle* are a classic example of Benveniste's hypothesis that subjectivity and cultural identity are interlinked with the functions of language and discourse:

Language is possible because each speaker sets himself up as a subject by referring to himself as "I" in his discourse. Because of this, "I" posits another person, the one who, being exterior to "me", becomes my echo to whom I say "you" and who says "you" to me. [...] neither of these terms ["I" and "you"] can be conceived without the other; they are complementary, although according to an interior/exterior opposition, and at the same time they are reversible.⁹⁰

Benveniste's model of subjectivity demonstrates the instability and discontinuity of personal pronouns. He argues that the term "I" is only ever temporarily fixed to the speaker, who becomes a "you" in the discourse of the respondent. The signifiers "I" and "you" are uttered in relation to an ideal (and individualised) image constructed in the mind of the speaker. Benveniste explains, it is through internalising a mental picture of the addressee that the speaker:

[...] apprehends himself, confronts himself, and establishes himself as he aspires to be and finally historicizes himself in this incomplete or falsified history'.⁹¹

To activate a more "responsive" reading of the

relationship between the spectator and the screen, Kaja Silverman has added a third category of the *spoken* subject to Benveniste's model.⁹² So, in addition to Benveniste's twin concepts of agent of speech [the individual or apparatus *behind* the text] and subject of speech [the fictive characters who represent the "I" and "you" in discourse] Silverman has identified the subject *in front* of the screen [the projected viewer/ the subject *in front* of the text], whose coincidence with the mental picture of "you" constructed by the agent of speech [the director/ writer/speaker] is by no means pre-determined.⁹³

Indeed, it is possible to read the different positions occupied by the director and by the two co-stars from the vantage point of Silverman's above mentioned model of subjectivity, discourse and the cinema. For example, the director's song *Seeing Red* exemplifies the new political voice *behind* the text, the "I" in *Ruby's Riddle* announces the overdetermined discourse of screen goddess and Celeste is speaking from the position of the new feminist reader *in front* of the text.

Celeste, like the director, is "seeing red" and her pointed recognition of the mobility of personal signifiers offers a way out of the circularity of pre-given stereo-types. In her role as new feminist reader she announces: 'we have ninety minutes to *find each*

other' - referring of course to the average running time of the classic motion picture and to the actual running time of *The Gold Diggers*.⁹⁴ In addition, this promise of a woman-to-woman alliance during the screening of the film intimates that the demystification of women's experience in patriarchy and the retrieval of women's history from the margins of discourse are anchored in a level of collaboration between player and looker. Celeste is thus suggesting that although the classic cinema generates a network of signs responsible for female unpleasure, films can be restructured to speak on behalf of women - the established models of "I" and "you" can be unfixed through women working together - in and with film.

Collaborative work and shared pleasure belong to the fundamental tenets of feminist politics. Not only was the production of *The Gold Diggers* grounded in this understanding of political action, but the two versions of the *Riddle* announce a new cinematic re-presentation of the "I" and "you" of women working on themselves and with each other - in this film pleasure is a prerequisite to learning and learning is enhanced by reciprocity.⁹⁵

In both *Seeing Red* and the two versions of the *Riddle*, the director (the new agent of speech), the screen goddess (the representative of the phallic apparatus) and Celeste (the new subject in front of

discourse) are introduced in the form of voice-over. Although I shall say more in Chapter Two about the voice/body relation in *The Gold Diggers*, a few comments are in order here.⁹⁶ The voice/body ruptures in the film presents a challenge to the classic cinema's projected image of *Woman* as a unified, knowable subject. Women filmmakers (multi-media artists and photographers) working in the 1970s frequently resorted to the voice-over/off strategy to denaturalise the homogeneous immediacy and "realism" of mainstream film and photography.⁹⁷ For example: the use of voice-off and text in Yvonne Rainer's *Film About a woman who ...* (1974) discloses a shifting female "I"; the off-screen voices, off-screen sounds and the off-screen heroine (the camera) in Babette Mangolte's *What Maisie Knew* (1974) explores the structures of looking hinted at in Henry James' novel of the same title; Mary Kelly's own "voice-over" in her *Post-Partum Document* (1973-1976) implicates the spectator thus disrupting the apparent autonomy of traditional autobiographical discourse;⁹⁸ and Barbara Kruger's use of disembodied personal pronouns challenges the traditional vilification of female agency.⁹⁹ However, where Kruger's assaults on masculine authority do not necessarily escape the sexed assumptions underwriting symbolic conventions (in that Kruger's female speakers are addressing a masculine spectator), the "I"/"you" relation in *The Gold Diggers*

creates a space for the collaborative work between female author, female looker and female player.

The Gold Diggers: Women Spectators, Women Players

The focus in *The Gold Diggers* on women spectators and players was informed by and contributed to the ongoing dialogues between feminist filmmakers and film theorists between 1975 and 1985. Early feminist deliberations on the textually invoked relationship between the female spectator and the female star were profoundly indebted to Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytic critique of the Hollywood cinema outlined in her important essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'.¹⁰⁰ According to Mulvey, the classic cinema is structured in relation to the polarised assumptions of, on the one hand, the active look of the masculine subject and, on the other, the passive 'to-be-looked-at-ness' of his feminine counterpart - a combination which exploded the neutrality of previous debates.¹⁰¹ Mulvey argued that the excessive and volatile potential of the female heroine in the classic cinema is repressed by a relay of three looks: the look of the camera at the profilmic scene; the look exchanged between the characters in the film; and the look of the spectator at the screen.¹⁰² In so doing, she established the foundations for a radical cinema based

on the disruption of the complicity of looks which characterise the fetishistic structure of the classic narrative cinema.

It is in response to the feminist challenge to the spectatorial conventions of Hollywood, launched by the 'Visual Pleasures' essay and explicitly elaborated in Laura Mulvey's subsequent writing and films, that *The Gold Diggers* tells its stories. Speaking to Ruby at the end of the film, Celeste announces: 'But, I know that even as I look and even as I see, I am changing what is there.'¹⁰³ Celeste's concluding statement confirms that Ruby's transition from passive to-be-looked-at-ness to active participant in discourse, from silence to speech, is a consequence of her alliance with a feminist co-worker who understands the complex dialectic between the fictive space of the cinema screen and the fictions we construct as part of living.

Invoking the repressed facets of the collective history of the cinema and mobilising contemporary feminist theory, *The Gold Diggers* sets out to redress the balance - to create new stories and generate a space for new forms of female heroism, adventure and pleasure. For instance, in one of the central episodes in the film Ruby walks out of a theatre performance of the psychoanalytic drama starring herself as "daughter". As we shall see in Chapter Eight, her refusal as spectator to accept the limited option of

regressive masculinisation creates a framework for new models of looking. Later, in a revised version of the above mentioned scene (filmed from the vantage point of the star) Ruby refuses to play her part on stage. Turning her back on the conventional family triangle and taking her cue from Judy in Dorothy Arzner's *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940), she shatters the expectations of the male audience.¹⁰⁴

So, not only does *The Gold Diggers* focus on the desire of the female spectator, but the film refuses to privilege the controlling polarity between the "male gaze" and its specular feminine object. Indeed, there is a sense in which the simultaneous evocation of the archive of the classic cinema and Ruby's concomitant refusal to "love" the camera, invokes Constance Penley's suggestion that although the classic cinema may "[...] "aim" to construct a transcendental subject [but] it must necessarily fail, subverted by the presence of desire in vision."¹⁰⁵ Penley's identification of the fallibility of the masculine apparatus is based on her reading of Lacan's figuration of the look. From this perspective the looking subject is invariably caught in the field of vision (and the desire) of the Other - the looker is always implicated in the look of the Other.¹⁰⁶ In *The Gold Diggers* the structuring function of the look of the Other is totally disrupted when in the scene referred to above,

the gaze of Ruby-the-spectator collides with that of Ruby-the-star. For a frozen moment Ruby occupies the impossible position of '[...] the subject of vision and also the object of representation'.¹⁰⁷ Gazing at a re-enactment of the disadvantaged condition of female subjectivity in patriarchy, she leaves her seat and runs out of the theatre.

However, *The Gold Diggers* is not merely about female refusal, but it addresses the formidable task of reconstitution and innovation. With reference to Irigaray's writing, Kaja Silverman suggests that the encounters in *The Gold Diggers* retrieve an erotics of spectatorship founded on the reformulation of the mother/daughter relation in the female negative oedipal phase.¹⁰⁸ In a radical reading of an overlooked Freudian text, Silverman argues that the girl child experiences an oedipal desire as much for the mother as for the father and although this experience remains a crucial element in her subsequent psychic life, it is culturally unsupported. According to Silverman, *The Gold Diggers* turns the tables and acknowledges the negative oedipal love between mother and daughter.

[...] predicated on a *narcissistic* desire for the mother - upon the girl's love for an object which represents both what she was prior to differentiation and what she aspires to become (i.e. the mirror in which she sees an idealised version of herself).¹⁰⁹

In *The Gold Diggers* Ruby is seeking to construct an idealised representation of herself which engages

rather than represses the narcissistic relation with the mother. And, not unlike Teresa de Lauretis' description of *Alice*, the defiant screen goddess refuses to acknowledge the "symmetrical reversal" of the patriarchal mirror - instead she repositions the mirror to construct a reflection to her own liking. Her denial of the fixed place of the traditional "mirror" and her subsequent retrieval of a satisfying field of vision forms the basis of her personally constructed memory-theatres located at the centre of the film and discussed in Chapter Eight.¹¹⁰ After lengthy "journey" into the past, Ruby retrieves a reflected image that pleases her curious gaze.¹¹¹ At her journey's end, in a form of home-coming, Ruby gazes through the window of a little hut and is confronted with the "reflected" gaze of Ruby-the-child looking back through window [fig. 1.17].¹¹²

It is thus in relation to a complex relay of looks that Ruby activates the ongoing permutations of memory, image, camera, mirror and otherness underpinning the processes of subjective renewal and change. Read from a Kristevan perspective, the brilliantly orchestrated scene of the mirrored window invokes a model of subjectivity based on procedures of remembrance and reformulation (as opposed to the accumulative notion of "identity" or the humanist concept of "self"). Dislodging the patriarchal denial of women's history,

Ruby retrieves a distant frosted-over vision from the past. I shall return to this remarkable scene in Chapters Four and Eight, arguing that Ruby's reconstructed "mirror" image, along with the remembered encounters in the garden of the terraced house play a significant part in the reformulation of her "I".

I want to end this chapter with a few summary observations. *The Gold Diggers* is an ambitious, ingenious and an unashamedly demanding film. Where *Thriller* attempts to decolonise the cultural and social topography of female unpleasure, *The Gold Diggers* ventures into an even more challenging terrain. Not only does the film chart the power politics underlying discourses of male pleasure, but *The Gold Diggers* consolidates its work around the retrieval of different forms of looking and making. This is a high risk film with an enormous amount at stake, particularly in relation to the perhaps unreasonable demands of immediate gratification levelled at feminist filmmakers - as if the structuring pleasures of mainstream cinema could, or should, be countered by a fully formed politicised model of "alternative" pleasures. Indeed, although the multiple permutations in *The Gold Diggers* of place, plot and character generate a productive abundance of pleasurable options, these are not all registered on an accessible cinematic level, but are

realised over a period of time in the ongoing process of (re-)reading the film.

Perhaps the most important function of *The Gold Diggers* lies in its identification of a concept of female subjectivity which is culturally specific, discursively framed, unconsciously mediated and open to revision. In many respects the film can be read as an intervention in the transformative flux of meaning production. Rather than attempting to retrieve a set of pre-existing pleasures which have been overlooked or repressed by patriarchy, the collaboration between the co-stars and the film's segmented structure generates a space for the innovative work of signifiatory renewal and change.

In the thesis I shall demonstrate that although the diverse roles of the co-stars are drawn from the collective archive of the classic cinema, the film defuses the structuring linearity of traditional narrative. Organised instead around a multitude of disparately anchored and partially coded reference points, *The Gold Diggers* not only disrupts pre-given stories but challenges the controlling models of the cinema, spectatorship and subjectivity.

In addition, *The Gold Diggers* identifies the retrieval of pleasure as a specifically feminist activity based on investigative looking, critical reading, resourceful action and the collaborative work

between women. However, reading this particular film is a demanding process which takes both time and courage, and necessitates a level of commitment - in that the discursive fields generated by the film are personally as well as politically specific. Not only does *The Gold Diggers* confront the ideologically framed constraints suffered by women, but it pushes the spectator towards the compacted archive of her own repressed histories. The thesis adopts a mediatory role in the task of remembrance, re-evaluation and refiguration initiated by this important film.

Notes to Chapter One

1. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode VIII, Chapter Two, p.79.
2. The credits for *The Gold Diggers* are listed in Appendix 1. See Appendix 2 for an overview of the films screened in '*The Gold Diggers and Fellow Travellers*'.
3. Claire Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Countercinema', *Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed. Claire Johnston (London: Society for Education in Film and Television, (1973), pp.24-31.
4. Colette Laffont starred in Sally Potter's previous film *Thriller* (1979). Julie Christie's main cinema roles between 1963-1993 are listed in Appendix 3.
5. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema and Counter-Cinema', p.25.
6. The references in the thesis to alchemy are drawn from Sally Potter's research notes for the film. The names of the co-stars also function as a reminder of the alchemic subtext of popular tales such as the *The Trojan War* and *The Magic Flute*.
7. Other/other: In Lacan's writing Other refers to the unconscious - it is the repressed locus of the subject's existence and the touchstone of the symbolic order. Other with a small "o" refers to the object in the mirror 'through whom desire is returned to the subject' - the object which is mis-recognised as the self. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp.193-194; Elisabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.80.
8. Pam Cook (Potter interview), '*British Independents: The Gold Diggers*', *Framework*, 24 (1984), 12-25 (p.20).
9. *Ibid.*, p.19.
10. Gillian Swanson and Lucy Moy-Thomas, 'An Interview with Sally Potter', *Undercut*, 1 (1981), 41-44 (p.41). In his influential study on the intertextual context of stardom Richard Dyer suggests that the star image is constructed in relation to a range of social and cultural stereotypes which interlink the star and the film text with production and marketing strategies. He argues that the star persona is never fixed as such, in

so far as the marketed image is inextricably linked with the often contradictory discourses set up by the star's previous screen roles and the actions as the "real" off-screen individual. Julie Christie's role as "star" in *The Gold Diggers* evokes and upends her screen image as: personification of promiscuous sexuality and irreverence in *Billy Liar* (1963) and *Darling* (1965); as scandalous muse in *Dr Zhivago* (1965) and *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1967); and as victim in *Don't Look Now* (1973). The idea of a star investigating the economic, cultural and psychic conditions of her own screen-presence was seen as confirmation of Julie Christie's renowned dissatisfaction with the stereotypic film parts made available for women by the dominant force of Hollywood. In addition, her appearance in an overtly feminist film produced by an all-women cast and crew was in itself enough to herald an era of change. The ideological, cultural, economic, social and political decisions and negotiations underpinning Julie Christie's career warrant a separate study which is outside the remit of this thesis. See my Appendix 3. Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1982); see also Christine Gledhill, *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1991).

11. Swanson and Moy-Thomas, 'An Interview with Sally Potter', p.41.

12. I have recently discovered Patricia Mellencamp's informed and animated reading of *The Gold Diggers*. Based on the parameters specified by the film and the valuable Cook interview Mellencamp has taken up many of the issues pertinent to my analysis and readers will note a confirmatory overlap between our observations. Patricia Mellencamp, *Indiscretions: Avant-Garde Film, Video, and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp.149-172; Cook (Potter interview), 'The Gold Diggers'.

13. Cook (Potter interview), 'The Gold Diggers', p.12.

14. Ibid., p.18.

15. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: the Female Voice in Psychoanalysis* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp.178-186.

16. Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'The Gold Diggers: A Preview', *Camera Obscura*, 12 (1984), 127-129 (p.127).

17. Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p.159.

18. See: Kuhn, *Women's Pictures*, pp.140-155 and Sylvia Paskin and Annette Kuhn, 'British Documentary Movement', *Women's Companion to International Film*, ed. by Annette Kuhn with Susannah Radstone (London: Virago, 1990), pp.55-56.

19. Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: the Treatment of Women in the Movies* (London: New English Library, 1975); Linda Artel and Susan Wengraf, *Positive Images: Non Sexist Films for Young People* (San Francisco: Bootlegger Press, 1976).

20. For example: *Women in Prison* (1965) d. Elaine Grand; *Women in Prison* (1971), d. Jenny Barraclough; *Women at Work: Jobs for the Girls* (1979), d. Sheffield Film Cooperative; *Baby Blues Breakdown* (1978), d. Ruth Jackson; *Her Life in her Hands* (1980), d. Irene Cockcroft.

21. Kuhn, *Women's Pictures*, pp.147-155.

22. Laura Mulvey, 'Feminism, Film and the Avant-Garde', *Framework*, 10 (1979), 1-6 (p.3).

23. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema Notes'; Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, 3 (1975), 6-18; Elizabeth Cowie, 'Women, Representation and Image', *Screen Education*, 23 (1977), 15-24.

24. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema and Counter-Cinema', p.28.

25. Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

26. Nick Browne, 'Introduction', *Cahiers du Cinema, 1969-72: The Politics of Representation*, ed. by Nick Browne (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.1-20.

27. Louis Althusser, *Lenin, Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1970); Jacques Lacan, *The Language of Self*, trans. by Anthony Wilden (London: Delta, 1968); Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Phase as Formative of the Function of the I', trans. by Jean Rousset, *New Left Review*, 51 (1968), 71-77.

28. Claire Johnston and Paul Willemen, 'Brecht in Britain: The Independent Political Film', *Screen*, 16, 4 (1975-76), 105-113; Colin MacCabe with Mick Eaton and Laura Mulvey, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (London: British Film Institute, 1980).

29. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema'.
30. The anti-illusionist practices associated with Structural/Materialist films are outlined in: Peter Gidal, 'Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film' *Structural Film Anthology*, ed. by Peter Gidal (London: British Film Institute, 1978), pp.1-21. See also the statements by Annabel Nicolson, Malcolm Le Grice, Tony Warcus and Alia Syed in: *London Filmmakers' Co-op Catalogue*, ed. by Sarah Turner and John Whiddett (London: London Filmmakers' Co-op, 1993), pp.161-166.
31. See Peter Gidal's discussion in: 'Technology and Ideology in/through/and Avant-Garde Film: An Instance', *The Cinematic Apparatus*, ed. by Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp.151-165 (p.167); Hollis Frampton (interview), *Structural Film Anthology*, 71, quoted in: Constance Penley, 'The Avant-Garde and its Imaginary', *Movies and Methods: Volume II*, ed. by Bill Nichols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp.576-606 (p.583).
32. Sally Potter joined the London Filmmakers' Co-op in the early 1970s. Note that *Thriller* was edited at the Co-op in 1979.
33. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema and Counter-Cinema', p.31.
34. Conjoining an understanding of political activism with the problems of the female representation and taking on the role of beleaguered muse, Sally Potter performed naked at the Sobell Sports Centre Ice Rink in the trilogy *Berlin* (1976). Appendix 4.
35. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema and Counter-Cinema', p.31.
36. Sally Potter, 'On Shows', *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985*, ed. by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (London: Pandora, 1987), pp.290-292.
37. *Ibid.*, p.292.
38. London Women's Film Group 1972-1977. See: Jane Root, 'London Women's Film Group', *Women's Companion to International Film*, pp.246-247; Information on Sheffield Film Co-op in Charlotte Brunsden (ed), *Films for Women* (London: British Film Institute, 1986), pp.229-231.

39. See the film and video listing compiled by Samantha Cook in: *Women's Film List* (London: British Film Institute, 1989). Exhibition and distribution outlets are listed in: Charlotte Brunsden (ed), *Films for Women* (London: British Film 1986), pp.225-231 and Sheila Whitaker, 'Feminism and Exhibition', *ibid.*

40. In their discussion of Raoul Walsh's film *The Revolt of Mamie Stoker*, Pam Cook and Claire Johnston discuss Mamie's/Jane Russell's function in narrative as well as her role as representation: Pam Cook and Claire Johnston, 'The Place of Women in the Cinema of Raoul Walsh', *Raoul Walsh*, ed. by P. Hardy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Film Festival, 1974). Claire Johnston argues that as female aviator in *Christopher Strong*, Katherine Hepburn/Cynthia Darrington violates the discursive principles framing masculinity and femininity. It is noteworthy that in Laura Mulvey's and Peter Wollen's *Amy* and more recently in Sally Potter's *Orlando*, Mary Madox and Tilda Swinton similarly threaten the established power politics underpinning the discourse of sexual difference. Claire Johnston, 'Dorothy Arzner: Critical Strategies', *Feminism and Film Theory*, ed. by Constance Penley (London: British Film Institute, 1988), pp.36-45.

41. There are only two feminist film festivals held at regular intervals: the *Creteil Women's Film Festival* launched in 1979 and the *Montreal International Festival of Film and Videos by Women* founded in 1985. However, the annual festivals in Berlin, Cannes and Montreal are noted for their inclusion of a high number of films directed by women. The move to set up the Women's Film, Television and Video Network [WFTVN] in 1983 contributed to the gradually improving status of women in the media industry.

42. The films screened before and during the conference were: *Hotel Montgomery* (1973) and *News from Home* (1976), d. Chantal Akerman; *India Song* (1975), d. Marguerite Duras; *What Maisie Knew* (1975) and *The Camera: Je/La Camera: I* (1977), d. Babette Mangolte; *Film About a Woman Who...* (1974) d. Yvonne Rainer; *Deux Fois* (1970), d. Jackie Raynal.

43. Johnston, *Notes on Women's Cinema*.

44. Camera Obscura Collective, 'Chronology of the Camera Obscura Collective', *Camera Obscura*, 3-4 (1979), p.5.

45. In addition the unprecedented expansion in the mid to late 1970s of higher level courses in film studies, media studies, cultural studies, photography and women's studies played a part in the dissemination of theorised models of feminist film practice, not to mention the expansion of the publication network supporting this educational enterprise. In addition, The British Film Institute Summer Schools created a forum for newly developed production and reading strategies: *BFI Summer Schools 1971-1979: A Dossier*, ed. by Jim Cook and Nicky North (London: British Film Institute Education Department, 1981).

46. *Berlin* (1976) was funded by an Arts Council grant of £3000 and performed over four consecutive weekends at three different locations in London: 41 Mornington Terrace, Holburn, NW1, the Sobell Sports Centre Ice Rink and the Olympic Pool, Swiss Cottage Swimming Baths. Note: *Thriller* was shot in the attic of Mornington Terrace.

47. Appendices 4, 5, 6, 7 and ns. 63, 66 below. The performance *Mounting* was accompanied by a collaboratively produced booklet: Rose English, Jacky Lansley and Sally Potter, *Mounting* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1977). Note Jacky Lansley was the choreographer and Lindsay Copper performed clarinets and saxophone in Sally Potter's recent film *Orlando* (1993).

48. See n.66.

49. The soundtrack consists of a rearrangement for bassoon of Puccini's *La Bohème* interwoven with strands of music drawn from the original score of *La Bohème* and Bernard Herrmann's music in Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

50. Steve Rogers, 'Interview with Rose English', *Performance*, 42, (1986), 29-31 (p.29). See n.46.

51. Unless otherwise stated, the references in this thesis to the pre-production, production and post-production of *The Gold Diggers* stem from interviews with: Sally Potter, 02.11.92 and 16.03.93; Lindsay Cooper, 22.03.93; Rose English, 09.10.93 and 06.12.93; Jacky Lansley 30.01.94 and Babette Mangolte 04.03.94.

52. In *The Gold Diggers* psychic changes are registered at a visual and aural register - particularly in relation to shots of landscape, editing strategies, non-chronological time and magnified sound. A similar cinematic strategy is evident in Sally Potter's recent film *Orlando* (1993).

53. Cook (Potter interview), *The Gold Diggers*, p.23.
54. Babette Mangolte, interview: 04.03.94.
55. These collages were exhibited in the foyer of the NFT to accompany a short season of films chosen by Sally Potter called: '*The Gold Diggers and Fellow Travellers*'. See my page 1.
56. The film was shot between August and November 1981 and was edited at the British Film Institute.
57. Although the British Film Institute supported feminist filmmakers in the 1970s and early 1980s, since *The Gold Diggers* a large percentage of funds have gone to men. Jane Root, 'British Film Institute', *Women's Companion to International Film*, p.56.
58. The original plan was to shoot the film in 16mm. The BFI agreed to a budget of £100,000 but, after the decision to change to 35mm, a further £150,000 was raised from Channel Four. Sheila Johnston (Potter interview), 'Like Night and Day: Black and White', *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 51, 604 (1984), 141-142 (p.141).
59. Root, *The Women's Companion to International Film*, p.56.
60. Potter and Johnston, 'Like Night and Day', pp.141-142.
61. Association of Cinematography, Television and Allied Technicians.
62. Saskia Barron, 'Celeste and Ruby go Digging', *Stills*, 12 (June/July, 1984), 31-33 (p.31).
63. The collaborative projects undertaken by the following performers are listed in *Striding Out*: Sally Potter, Jacky Lansley, Maedée Duprès, Siobhan Davies, Colette Laffont and Juliet Fisher: Stephanie Jordan, *Striding Out* (London: Dance Books Limited, 1992), pp.208-222. For further cross-references to collaboratively produced work see: Appendix 4: Sally Potter; Appendix 5: Rose English; Appendix 6: Lindsay Cooper; Appendix 7: Jacky Lansley. Note: Jacky Lansley, Lol Coxhill and George Yiasoumi starred in *London Story* (1986). George Yiasoumi and Lol Coxhill appear as first valet and butler respectively in *Orlando* (1993), see n.47.
64. Johnston (Potter interview), 'Like Night and Day', p.141; Swanson and Moy-Thomas, 'An Interview with Sally

Potter', p.44.

65. Incredible as it seems, Babette Mangolte was the only 35mm female camera operator working with feminist film makers in Europe and America in the 1970s (see Appendix 8). For Mangolte's comments on her preoccupation with lighting see: Babette Mangolte (interview), *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp.279-296 (p.292). Babette Mangolte's stunning shots of Iceland capture the changing volatile light in the Northern hemisphere. *The Gold Diggers* was shot shortly after the completion of *The Sky a Location* and according to Mangolte her formal preoccupations in the latter film fed directly into her landscape work in *The Gold Diggers*. Babette Mangolte, interview: 04.03.94. This is not to suggest that Mangolte imposes a stylist uniformity over the work of different directors - far from it - clearly the cinematographic style between say Foreman's films, Akerman's films and *The Gold Diggers* are quite distinctive. However, there is an overlap between the slow and still camera and the focus on single objects in Mangolte's own films, Rainer's work and *The Gold Diggers*.

66. In *Dance Object* performed at the X6 Dance Space, Jacky Lansley took her cue from a passage from Brecht's *Alienation Effects of Chinese Acting* and used costumes, masks and theatre props to "liberate" her dance skills. Jackie Lansley, 'Women Dancing', *New Dance*, 6 (1978), 10-11 (p.10). In 1977 Emilyn Claid, Maedée Duprès, Fergus Early, Jacky Lansley and Mary Prestige formed the X6 Collective. The group worked at the X6 Dance Space at Bermondsey Docklands which was generally regarded as a conducive space for performers and spectators alike (X6 Dance Space closed in 1980). The group were committed to an interdisciplinary and theorised approach to dance. In the same year the collective launched the journal *New Dance* (the last issue of *New Dance* was n.44, 1988). The term *New Dance* was usually applied to the dance forms developed by the group. Jacky Lansley, 'Writing', *New Dance*, 1, 1977, p.3; Jordan, *Striding Out*, pp.58-87.

67. Quoted from *Heresies* in: Jacky Lansley, 'Women Dancing', *New Dance*, 6 (1978), 10-11 (p.10). Note: the Heresies Collective of 22 women was formed in New York in spring 1976 and the *Heresies* art and politics publications commenced in January 1977, Lucy Lippard, *Get the Message: A Decade of Art for Social Change* (New York: Dutton, 1984), pp.340.

68. See also: *Women Dancing* (with Rose English, *Dance Politics, Dance Object* and *Bleeding Fairies* (with Mary Prestige and Emilyn Claid), *Juliet and Juliet a duet, Romeo and Romeo a Duel* (with Rose English). Further listings in Appendix 7. For accounts of the above see: Jacky Lansley, 'Women Dancing', *New Dance*, 6 (1978), 10-11; Nadine Meisner, 'Jacky Lansley and Rose English at the X6 Dance Space, 16th June, 1979. Stephanie Jordan, *Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain*, (London: Dance Books, 1992), p.264. Stephanie Jordan's *Striding Out* is one of the few books to explore the diversity of innovative dance in Britain during the 1970s. The references to contemporary dance in this chapter are indebted to the latter text.

69. Interview Sally Potter: 16.03.93. See my Chapter Nine.

70. 'Camera Obscura Interview with Babette Mangolte', p.201.

71. See Patricia Mellencamp's biographical overview: Mellencamp, *Indiscretions*, pp.150-151.

72. Other women directors who originally trained as dancers or choreographers include: Shirley Clarke (USA); Maja Deren (USA); Amy Greenfield (USA); Sarah Maldoror (Guadaloupe); Yvonne Rainer (USA).

73. Jordan, *Striding Out*, p.15.

74. The appendices in Stephanie Jordan's *Striding Out* confirm the extent to which the independent dance scene in 1970s Britain was populated by ex-LSCD students. Ibid, p.33. Sally Potter and Jacky Lansley's *Limited Dance Company* was one of many such groups formed by LSCD and ex-LSCD students in the early 1970s. See appendices in Jordan, pp.208-238. The cast of *The Gold Diggers* is largely made up of dancers and performers. Appendix 1.

75. Jordan, *Striding Out*, p.29.

76. Yvonne Rainer, *Work 1961-73* (New York: New York University Press (1974), p.238.

77. Appendix 4. The title and method of assemblage used in Alston/Potter *Combines* is derived from Rauschenberg's "Combine" paintings. See Jordan, *Striding Out*, for a detailed account of: the Alston/Potter *Combines*; Alston's involvement with the new dance and performance language being developed in America by Merce Cunningham, the Judson Dance Theatre

(Yvonne Rainer was the most productive choreographer at JDC); the work of individuals who attended classes at the Cunningham studio in the 1960s such as Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, Douglas Dunn, Lucinda Childs and others. Jordan, *Striding Out*, pp.105-107 and 57, 63, 109, 117, 119-120.

78. Ibid., p.106.

79. Yvonne Rainer trained at the Graham Studio in the late 1950s. During the 1960s she danced with and choreographed for the Judson Dance Theatre as well as working independently. Under the influence of Cunningham and Robert Dunn she began to alternate flowing movements with incompatible heavy and awkward moves, repetitions and wild noise gestures, as well as responding to circumstance and chance. As far as Rainer was concerned, dance was '[...] neither perfection of technique nor of expression, but quite something else - the presentation of objects themselves. It is not simply a new kind of dance, but a new meaning and function [...]'. Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Hanover, New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p.49. A useful introduction to Yvonne Rainer's move from time-based work to film can be found in: The Camera Obscura Collective, 'Yvonne Rainer: An Introduction', *Camera Obscura*, 1 (1976), pp.53-70.

80. Jane Weinstock, 'Sexual Difference and the Moving Image', *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), 41-45 (p.41).

81. The key paper referred to by writers and filmmakers alike was Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'.

82. The invocation of the director-as-spectator was used by exponents of the countercinema to generate a female looking space. See Laura Mulvey's prologue in *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977) and from a different perspective Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite* (1978).

83. Raymond Bellour, 'Hitchcock, The Enunciator', *Camera Obscura*, 2 (Fall, 1977), 69-94 (p.73); Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure', p.15.

84. Cook (Potter interview), 'The Gold Diggers', p.21.

85. Note Elizabeth Wright's comments on Brecht's *The Baden Learning to Play* in: Elizabeth Wright, *Postmodern Brecht: A Re-Presentation* (London: Routledge, 1989),

pp.49-67 (p.59). For a discussion of the relationship between feminism, film practice and pleasure see: Dee Dee Glass, Laura Mulvey, Griselda Pollock and Judith Williamson, 'Feminist Film Practice and Pleasure', *Formations of Pleasure* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), pp.156-171.

86. Celeste's (disembodied) voice of inquisitive agency evokes: Maxine in *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), d. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen; Dora in *Dora* (1979), d. Jay Street Collective; Mimi in *Thriller* (1979), d. Sally Potter; Amy in *Amy!* (1980), d. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen.

87. Chapter Two, pp.57-63.

88. The opening reference to the Theban riddle invokes the introductory sequence in Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977).

89. Sigmund Freud. 'Femininity', *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, PFL 2, trans. by James Strachey, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 145-169 (p.146).

90. Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971), quoted in: Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, *Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject* (Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p.113.

91. Benveniste *ibid* quoted in: Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.198.

92. Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, p.198.

93. *Ibid.*, pp.47, 198.

94. Sally Potter made every effort to cut the film to the classic 90 minute running time. See also Potter's desire to use the "mass cinema" as a vehicle of communication. Johnston (Potter interview), 'Like Night and Day', p.142; Cook (Potter interview), 'The Gold Diggers', p.29.

95. Cook (Potter interview), *The Gold Diggers*, p.29.

96. Chapter Two, pp.63-66.

97. Kaja Silverman, 'Dis-Embodying the Female Voice', *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. by Patricia

Ehrens (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp.309-327; Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, pp.141-187.

98. Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).

99. In the same month *The Gold Diggers* was released (November 1983) the ICA hosted the first major retrospective exhibition in Europe of Barbara Kruger's photo/texts. Barbara Kruger, *We Won't Play Nature to Your Culture*, catalogue essays by Craig Owen and Jane Weinstock (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1983).

100. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. The key texts in the shifting model of female spectatorship have been identified by Mary Ann Doane as: Laura Mulvey, 'Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema" Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*', *Framework*, 15/16/17 (1981), pp.12-15; Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), especially the chapter 'Desire in Narrative'; E. Ann Kaplan, *Women and Film* (New York: Methuen, 1983), Chapter.1, 'Is the Gaze Male?'; and Mary Ann Doane 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen*, 23, 3/4 (1982), pp.74-88. Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp.184-185, n.13. More recently the following publications have done much to keep the spectatorship debate alive: *Camera Obscura: Special Issue: Female Spectatorship*, n.20/21 (1989); Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and French Cinema* (Urbana: University of Chicago, 1990).

101. As well as her seminal influence of feminist film theory, Mulvey's essay was informed by and contributed to the macro concerns of apparatus theorist such as Baudry and Metz, and the textually based work of Bellour and Heath. See: Jean-Louis Baudry, 'Ideological Effects on the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus', *Film Quarterly*, 27, 2 (1974-75), 39-47; Christian Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', *Screen*, 16, 2 (1975), 14-76; Raymond Bellour, 'The Unattainable Text', *Screen*, 16, 3 (1975), 19-27; Raymond Bellour 'Cine-Repetitions', *Screen*, 20, 2 (1979); Stephen Heath, 'Film and System: Terms of Analysis', Part 1, *Screen*, 16, 1 (1975), 7-77, Part 2, *Screen*, 16, 2 (1975), 91-113.

102. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', pp.17-18.
103. Chapter Two, Episode XV, pp.86-87.
104. For instance Ruby's laughter in *The Golden Lane Theatre* and her refusal to "recognise" the mirror are two examples of the ways in which *The Gold Diggers* disrupts the conventions of "loving" the camera, both scenes are discussed in Chapter Eight, pp.301-313.
105. Constance Penley, 'Feminism, Film Theory and the Bachelor Machine', *m/f*, 10 (1985), 39-60 (p.44).
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid., p.44. Penley suggests that a psychoanalytic model of fantasy could help defuse the determinism of apparatus theory whilst retaining an understanding of the institutional character of the cinema.
108. Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, pp.178-186.
109. Ibid. p.183.
110. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p.2.
111. Laura Mulvey's concept of the curious gaze is discussed in Chapter Five, pp.201.
112. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene v, Chapter Two, p.83.

Chapter Two

THE MISSING SCRIPT

Writing from the vantage point of the critical spectator, I have re-constructed a "script" for *The Gold Diggers*. Although the original research notes and the early drafts of the screen play are preserved,¹ the on-location changes and constitutive role of the edit means that the final version of the film is linked in theme rather than chronology to pre-production data.² Given the film's significance to both the cultural politics of feminism and the history of the cinema, it is fitting that a detailed summary of the final version of the film be made available.

Retrieving a "script" is a matter of putting the film in question under a microscope and systematically logging its component parts. There are three interrelated reasons why a detailed summation of an exemplar of the feminist countercinema can be of value to the reader. First of all, identifying the relationship between the visual and aural tracks of a film can provide a useful prop to the sometimes confusing experience of watching the unfamiliar orchestration of codes associated with the countercinema.³ Secondly, scanning the pages of a "script" can bring the film's structuring devices to

the attention of the reader. Finally, the endorsement of the constituent layers of a film can open up the possibilities of its textual operations and thus play a part in the challenge issued by filmmakers working outside the classic tradition. Indeed, the innovative strategies developed by feminist filmmakers are not only kept alive in screenings, but are circulated in published critiques, screen plays, production notes and abbreviated accounts of shooting scripts.

For instance, the sketched soundtrack of Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (1983) can help the spectator identify the complexly layered vocal and musical inflections in the film.⁴ From a different perspective, but of equal significance, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis' summation of Agnès Varda's *Vagabond* (1985) provides the reader with a graphic overview of the relationship between the film's fragmented structure and the heroine's inability to respond to the social and emotional discourses she encounters.⁵ Looking back to the inception of the feminist countercinema, it is clear that the shot commentary, shot chart and photogrammes of Jackie Raynal's film *Deux Fois* (1970), reproduced in the first issue of *Camera Obscura*, played a facilitating role for filmmakers and spectators alike.⁶ Similarly, the publication, in *Screen*, of the script of Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977) has

provided a valuable resource for two generations of filmmakers and theorists.⁷

In the early 1970s, studies such as *Cahiers du Cinema's* 'John Ford's *Young Mr Lincoln*' and Stephen Heath's reading of Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958), demonstrated the extent to which a precise, sequence by sequence notation of a cinematic text can activate the critical task of analytic reading.⁸ The viewpoint adopted by these early textual strategists was that the pictures, sounds and stories of Hollywood are, not unlike the topography of a dream, 'impregnated with interpretation'.⁹ From this perspective the task of the textual analyst is to seek out the repressed layers of an already interpreted set of ideas.¹⁰ Where the operations in the classic cinema endeavour to naturalise - to make real - its own fictions through interpellating an *ideal* spectator; the work of the critical reader is to retrieve the discourse of loss underwriting the construction of meanings, thus pointing to the impossibility of an ideologically fixed, unified spectator. It follows that the detailed scrutiny of the anatomy of mainstream film will bring into focus the very contradictions it is endeavouring to disguise.

An interventional film such as *The Gold Diggers* complements the innovative work of the textual analysts of the classic cinema in that it exposes the extent to

which filmmaking can engage in a critique of its own archive. Plotting the ellipses, fractures and accretions underlying the organisational processes in *The Gold Diggers* is like working on a puzzle - revealing, little by little, the extent to which the film is peppered with tongue-in-cheek references to the Hollywood era as well as disclosing numerous references to the pioneer methods of filmmaking, the first wave of the Avant-Garde and the more recent political cinema of Jean-Luc Godard.

Before turning to the "script" I want to comment on what I consider to be the key points relating to the staging, the cinematography and the editing strategies in *The Gold Diggers*. In particular, the co-stars' sporadic acknowledgment of the camera, the juxtaposition of real time [long-shots] with rapid montage, the self-conscious re-enactment of scenes, the decentred voice-tracks and the space allocated to music and ambient sound. These are all concerns to which I will return in subsequent chapters of the thesis, the comments below are thus intended as a preliminary introduction rather than a definitive overview of the structuring procedures in the film.

Let me begin with the strategies of direct address and long takes in *The Gold Diggers*. As is widely recognised, the operations and place of the camera in the classic cinema are obscured by continuous editing

and synchronised sound. Working together the co-stars take it in turn to unmask the traditionally invisible camera through speaking both directly and in voice-over to the spectator - in so doing, they draw attention to the ways in which the classic cinema functions as an apparatus of female entrapment.¹¹ For instance, when Ruby-the-star confronts a rowdy audience of male theatre goers with peals of laughter the camera is fixed on her face. Not only do the shots of Ruby's laughter crash through the regime of masochistic self-denial linked with female subjectivity, but they block the voyeuristic gaze of the masculinised camera.¹²

The illusory world of the classic cinema is further disrupted by the inclusion of uncomfortable passages of "real" time [long takes]. One such instance is the shot of Ruby's "escape" from the first ballroom scene.¹³ Here the spectator is confronted with a slowly decreasing spot at the centre of the screen (the horse and two riders) as the runaway couple disappears over the horizon.¹⁴ As I mentioned in Chapter One, Ruby's *Riddle* is accompanied by a shot of a column of miners trudge slowly across the vast expanse of a snowfield. In a Brechtian sense the spectator is forced to witness real acts performed in real time. Rather than supplying the spectator with further information, the actual length of these shots creates a gap - a space for thought. In instances such

as this the unblinking eye of the camera slows down the intensity of the narrative, signals the illusory nature of reality and, to borrow Annette Kuhn's expression, '[...] unsettles spectators and push[es] them towards an active approach to reading [...].'¹⁵

Shortly after the release of *The Gold Diggers*, Sally Potter described her tendency in the film to document the complete action of characters. Talking about the long shot of the miners traversing the snowfield she explained:

An editor advised me to cut, for example, before the men reached the end of the path. But I didn't want to break the action. Hence every cut has a feeling of completeness, a closed loop [my translation].¹⁶

This practice of charting a entire action in one shot is borrowed from the pioneer filmmakers. Many of the films produced before 1903 give an account of an activity seen from beginning to end, performed by actors who acknowledge the audience and speak to the camera. In his article on the Early Cinema, Tom Gunning argues that early films supplied the viewer with a spectacle, with something to look at - a cinema of attractions.¹⁷ So, where the relation between long takes and cutting strategies in the sound cinema '[...] comment on and reflect dialogue and script action',¹⁸ thus masking the operations of the camera and disregarding the spectator, the early cinematic "shows" were grounded in the artisanal legacy of nineteenth

century theatre.¹⁹ Indeed, in the early days of the cinema, films were often screened as part of an otherwise live performance and relied on a combination of direct address and popular entertainment (including dance, stories, songs and references to current events) to hold the attention of the audience.²⁰

As I mentioned above, filming a total action does not necessarily enhance the narrativity of a sequence. Although directors such as Max Ophuls used the long take as '[...] the ground and field upon which *mise-en-scène* can occur', generally speaking the spectator is sutured into the narrative logic of a film through continuity editing which ensures that each shot holds *just enough additional* information.²¹ As Stephen Heath has reminded us, the '[...] system of suture, be it noted, breaks as soon as the time of the shot hesitates beyond the time of its narrative specifications'.²²

At the advent of the cinema it was not unusual to have an on-stage lecturer, sound effects and music to anchor the film within the ideological framework of traditional stories, thus bridging the gap between spectator and screen.²³ However, instead of an on-site mentor to make sense of the shots, *The Gold Diggers* demands that the spectator adopt the stance of investigative story-teller.²⁴ In addition, the film juxtaposes long shots (which drain the image of additional information) with the rapid flicker of

montage, thus confronting the spectator with a scattered profusion of challenging clues staged in a constellation of hidden pockets - a collection of folded messages, an unmade puzzle.²⁵ However, it must be said that despite the blocking function of the long takes and the disruptive consequences of montage, the individual tableaux in *The Gold Diggers* do "cohere". I am reminded of a comment Babette Mangolte made about the surprising level of narrative coherence in her film *What Maisie Knew*:

When I looked at the footage I had collected, I thought, how can I bring some sense into it? I started with the fact that you do not have to have a complete progression of events to have a narrative line. Even if you have just bits and pieces of narrative elements, things will gel if you give them a certain order.²⁶

This function of constructing imaginary stories around visual clues resembles Boris Eikhenbaum's concept of *internal* speech. Not that internal speech is necessarily verbal - as Paul Willemen has pointed out, the proclivity to build imaginative structures around a conjunction of signs does not mean that every aspect of a film is '[...] totally translatable into verbal language' - this would block the fluid productivity of the text.²⁷ Rather, internal speech can be regarded as pictorial manifestations of verbal metaphors.

To return to the issue of montage mentioned earlier, the generative editing strategies in *The Gold Diggers* are indebted to the anti-realist methods of

film production developed in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and elaborated in France during the 1960s and 1970s, most notably by Jean-Luc Godard. Albeit from different vantage points, Godard and Potter use decontextualised visual fragments to create a *conversational* as opposed to psychologically manipulative link between spectator and screen. However, although both directors use film to address the relationship between male power and the commodification of women, their work reflects a different set of priorities. Where Sally Potter attempts to undercut the patriarchal myths which equate women with sexuality, guilt and shame, Godard's films (as Laura Mulvey has pointed out) tend to naturalise these latter assumptions.²⁸ Moreover, even though Godard's application of montage was designed to combat the naturalising "realism" and "truth" of the classic cinema, his aversion to acting - of filming characters who are speaking another person's words - results in a cinematic account of the lives of alienated individuals, propelled by their desire to find a personal form of self-expression. To quote Wollen: 'It is as if Godard has a lingering hope that if people could find their own words they might find [truth]...'.²⁹

In contrast, the co-stars in *The Gold Diggers* are performers - representations - engaged in the task of

undoing the conventional oppositions between, on the one hand, "real" people and, on the other, the glittering construct of the Hollywood star. Based on the assumption that play-acting *obstructs* any direct emotional identification between spectator and screen, Celeste and Ruby bypass the conscious knowable "I" of the whole subject.³⁰ Sally Potter's liquidation of authentic recognisable "personalities" is clearly indebted to Brecht's twin concepts of *Verfremdung* and interventionist thinking and has much in common with the interchangeable, non-expressive screen roles constructed by Yvonne Rainer.³¹

Elizabeth Wright's observations concerning a Brechtian cinema practice are pertinent to the anti-realist approach to filmmaking developed by Potter in *The Gold Diggers*:

A Brechtian practice in the cinema will be in direct opposition to the founding ideology of the cinema, that of giving the spectator the illusion of an all-perceiving eye, thereby installing, as in Lacan's mirror phase, an Imaginary ego. The aim is rather to show the positions of both subject and object within a process of production.³²

Both Potter and Rainer set out to disturb the illusory mirror-relation between spectator and screen. However, rather than attacking the fictions of patriarchy with documentary "truths" their films are based on the assumption that all "truths", even their own, are constructions. In other words, they are countering fiction with fiction.³³ Although the French Cinema habitually resorted to fictional tales to

denaturalise the status quo this strategy was rare in the British countercinema of the 1970s.³⁴ Apart from Sally Potter's *Thriller* the film that comes closest to *The Gold Diggers* in terms of constructing a politicised understanding of illusion is, perhaps, Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx*. Both films use the camera and editing processes to disrupt the secrecy of the camera's look and thus present the "real" world in terms of a construction.³⁵ However, where the two female protagonists in *Riddles* engage the fables of "real" life from a socially specific vantage point, the new heroines in *The Gold Diggers* are fictional players. There is no real Ruby and no real Celeste, no fixed identity, no proven history - the lesson to be learnt is that the discourses of fiction and reality are cut from the same cloth.

Both *Riddles* and *The Gold Diggers* dislocate the conventional voice/body relation to unsettle the established ideas about the sexed subject, indeed, *The Gold Diggers* is almost totally devoid of synchronised speech.³⁶ Reversing the Hollywood tendency of collapsing the recorded voice within a representation of the body and subordinating music and ambient sound to a central on-screen voice, *The Gold Diggers* ruptures the on-screen marriage between body and voice and pushes the voice to the edge of the diegetic. Although there is a tradition of vocal experimentation in the

history of film which, by the 1970s, had gained respect amongst radical filmmakers³⁷ - see, for instance, Godard's *Vent d'Est* (1970)³⁸ - *The Gold Diggers* belongs to a small number of films made by women directors who had abandoned synchronicity in an attempt to reformulate the status and representability of women.

Not only are the verbal tracks in *The Gold Diggers* disconnected from the image of the speaker, but words are either self-consciously spoken, sung or chanted. It is significant that although Celeste, Ruby, the expert, the banker, the stage manager and the dancer are all apportioned tiny bursts of direct speech, only twice do the heroines engage in a verbal exchange with one another: first in the introductory "analytic" scene and second at the film's end when Celeste shares her "formula" of change with Ruby - and even these verbal exchanges are conducted mainly in voice-off/over. The women's disembodied voices are generally accompanied by shots of one woman or the other, either listening to her own voice or listening to the voice of the other. As I pointed out in Chapter One, these voice/body fissures are crucial to the film's feminist purpose - they liquidate the fantasmatic power of the cinema and disrupt the filmic sense of "now" traditionally held together by the illusion of chronological time and synchronised speech - evoking instead a space for remembering and imagining.

Historically women have been forced into a negative association with language - discourse has belonged to the Law/the Father in relation to which women have been represented as tongue-tied. Whereas the Hollywood version of male subjectivity is structured in response to his capacity for moral abstractions and investigative competence, female subjectivity is framed by the experience of the *body* (even in the form of voice-off).³⁹ Initially in the film it is Celeste who takes on the challenge of masculine discursivity. Her stance as interrogator, her disengagement from the conventions of the autobiographical role of woman's voice and her appropriation of the (masculine) space of the voice-over, all contribute to the denaturalisation of the sexed protocol of the classic cinema. The use of synchronised sound, in for instance Celeste's encounters with the banker and the expert, are complemented by long sequences which block the direct manifestation and expressive force of verbal language. This oscillation between direct speech and disembodied speech does not amount to an outright denial of the spoken word; rather, as Kaja Silverman has noted, it points to the film's unwillingness to conform to the masculine prerogatives underscoring the established relationship between spectator and spectacle.⁴⁰

Defying the cinematic conventions which interlink

the notion of female authenticity (*woman as body*) with either an internalised, compulsively expressive voice or pathological silence, the free floating off-screen voices of the co-stars generate a form of excess which disrupts the sexed "truths" of the classic cinema. The persistent voice/body fissures in *The Gold Diggers* are further intensified by the celebratory "presence" of music and ambient sound. Throughout the film the verbal and visual tracks are permeated by the magnified "drumming" of pattering and tapping footwork, pounding horses hooves and clattering keyboards, pickaxes and spades. These interwoven rhythmic imprints are retrieved and reworked in Lindsay Cooper's musical arrangements and Marilyn Mazur's percussion work (using found objects as well as a wide range of conventional percussion instruments⁴¹). The rhythmic figurations of ambient sound and non/diegetic music are complexly layered - sometimes intertwined, sometimes overlapping and sometimes replacing one another in an ongoing process of confiscation and transformation.⁴² Where many of the drumming patterns are rooted in the stepping, chanting and clapping rhythms of Africa, the montage of ambient clatter is indebted to the sound experiments of the early Avant-Garde,⁴³ the more recent work of John Cage (who, like the early Avant-Garde contended that noise belongs to the repertoire of musical sound), and the outgoing pleasures of tap-

dance.⁴⁴

Let us shift our attention to the music and songs in the film. The overlay of didactic singing, high-brow and popular music, and the commitment to jazz is indebted to the political cabaret associated with Brecht's collaborative work, notably with Kurt Weill and Hanns Eisler.⁴⁵ In a distinctly Brechtian vein, the caricatures of sentimental music (such as the banal waltz in the first ballroom scene or the Golden Lane Theatre music) are juxtaposed with clean vernacular jazz orchestrations. In addition, the three "cabaret" songs *Seeing Red*, the *Bankers' Song* and the *Empire Song* (lyrics by Sally Potter and music by Lindsay Cooper) contain traces of the collectivity and edifying didacticism underlying Brecht's concept of the *Lehrstück*.⁴⁶ Not only do these three songs catalogue the terms of reference Sally Potter wishes to share with the spectator, but they provide the film's key structuring moments.⁴⁷ For instance, *Seeing Red* introduces the spectator to the relationship between cinematic conventions and female unpleasure, *The Bankers' Song* confirms the men's commitment to the power politics of capitalism, and the *Empire Song* exposes the relationship between repressed historical data, cultural codes and racial hierarchies of power.

Where the classic cinema utilises the excesses of music to swamp the specificity of narrative and to

ensure narrative closure, Lindsay Cooper harnesses the material surfeit of the musical sign (Dyer's "non-representational sign") to the feminist purpose of lyrics, montage and new beginnings.⁴⁸ Initially, on first viewing, Cooper's resourceful jazz arrangements belie the film's meticulously structured topography of sound.⁴⁹ However, on closer examination it becomes clear that the polarised worlds of the over-exposed screen goddess and the under-represented black woman are signalled by distinct musical forms. For instance, where Celeste's transgressive acts of looking and her investigative work are associated with jazz-rock, 2/2 time dance-music, the *Empire Song* and improvised percussion; Ruby's conformist roles as idol/star are accompanied by the 3/4 time of the waltz and different adaptations of the *Bankers' Song*. At certain points in the film these two musical families combine to create entirely new arrangements.⁵⁰ For instance, the alliance between the co-stars in Celeste's dream is accompanied by a composition which brings together the melody of the *Bankers' Song* and the instrumentation of the *Empire Song*.⁵¹ And in the revised ballroom scene at the film's end, the *Horse Waltz* associated with Ruby cross-fades into the 2/4 time of a polka associated with Celeste, resulting in what is perhaps the most densely orchestrated arrangement in the whole film.⁵² In addition, the melancholic tune *Perfect Clue* is first

heard in conjunction with Ruby's recollection of three grainy "home-movie" shots of the mother.⁵³ From then on this plaintive little tune repeatedly draws the spectator back to the lost maternal cipher.

Confronting the spectator with a series of seemingly dislocated musical configurations which are nevertheless tied to quite specific signifiers has interesting ramifications which go beyond the instructive aspect of Brechtian cabaret. The generative function of musical sounds in Julia Kristeva's theory of subjectivity and meaning offers a way forward. In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, she argues that music and dance have the capacity to '[...] defy the barrier of meaning [...]', suggesting that the rhythmic pulse of music and the materiality of the body (including the voice) can activate the process of signification.⁵⁴ Writing from a similar perspective Roland Barthes refers to musical excess as the 'grain' of the text which, he suggests, resonates inside the body of the listener - '[...] the apparently abstract, impossible account of an individual thrill that I constantly experience in listening to singing'.⁵⁵ In Kristeva's (and Barthes') writing the activity of "musicating" language - wiping out sense through non-sense and other excessive or uncontained imprints, such as laughter - belongs to the innovatory activity of meaning production. In addition, according to Kristeva

musical sounds and poetic language play a part in retrieving the facets of maternal productivity that patriarchy has rendered unspeakable.⁵⁶

Similarly, the music/ambient soundtracks in *The Gold Diggers* are not a "substitute" for words, but are mobilised in a Kristevan sense as a challenge to the ideological framework of patriarchy. Thus, using every resource of the cinema Sally Potter reactivates the topography of repression generated by women's social and emotional exploitation - music and image frames are presented as innovative tools of meaning production. At a more pragmatic level it is worth noting that while certain sequences were filmed in relation to already composed musical arrangements, much of the montage was edited to Lindsay Cooper's compositions, Marilyn Mazur's improvised drumming and the dance formations of Jacky Lansley, Maedée Duprès, Siobhan Davies and Juliet Fisher.⁵⁷

I have identified fifteen episodes in *The Gold Diggers*, one of which [Episode X] consists of five scenes:⁵⁸

Episodic Structure of *The Gold Diggers*

I	<i>Seeing Red</i>
II	<i>The Riddle</i>
III	Celeste and the Gold Idol
IV	The Ballroom Scene
V	Ruby in Crisis: the Analytic Scene
VI	Celeste and the Banker
VII	Celeste and the Expert
VIII	Ruby's Quest
IX	Celeste's Dream
X	A Film within a Film: Ruby's Analytic
Theatres	
	(i) Ruby the Spectator
	(ii) The Garden
	(iii) The Rehearsal
	(iv) The Theatre: The Oedipal Scene
	(v) Iceland: Reformulating the Story
XI	The Bankers' Procession
XII	The <i>Bankers' Song</i> and the Second Escape
XIII	The <i>Empire Song</i>
XIV	The Revised Ballroom Scene
XV	Celeste and Ruby: Subjects in Process

The following screen-play outlines the complete verbal track of the film. Because of the complex interrelation between word, image and sound, I have notated the major musical/sound shifts at the approximate points at which they occur. The spoken dialogue, the three songs and the two versions of the *Riddle* are cited in full. Detailed shot charts of single episodes are supplied at the point of analysis in the thesis and information pertaining to the shoot locations, theatre sets and performers are listed in the footnotes and appendices.⁵⁹

Episodic Structure of *The Gold Diggers*

I. *Seeing Red*

Music/sound: Wind

Visual track: Long pan of a desolate snowscape.⁶⁰

Music/sound: *Seeing Red* (Sally Potter voice-over), bass-guitar, saxophone, various percussion instruments, keyboard.⁶¹

Seeing Red

Verse One

Went to the pictures
for a break.
Thought I'd put my feet up
have a bit of intake
But then a man with a gun
came in through the door
and when he kissed her
I couldn't take it any more

Chorus - accompanied by
scene-setting waltz)

Please, please, please
Give me back my pleasure

Please give me back my good night
out
Please give me back my leisure
time

I've got the pleasure time blues
I'm seeing red

Verse Two

Picked up a book
for a read
Thought I'd put my feet up
But, on page two
He wins the war page three
he's through her door
I just can't take it any more

Chorus

Please, please, please
Give me back my pleasure
Please give me back my good night
out
Please give me back my leisure
time
I've got the pleasure time blues
I'm seeing red

Sound track: Wind

Visual track:

1. Camera scan (1 min) from left
to right of snowscape and debris
of hut (high angle)

Verse One

2. Path in snow (high angle, long
take)

3. Woman walks along path in
snow⁶²

4. Man's feet entering hut (high
angle close-up)⁶³

5. Interior of hut, man and woman
hold gold nuggets (tight close-
up)

Chorus

6. Empty path (forward tracking)

7. Mother/child dyad. Interior of
hut (high tracking)

8. Empty path (forward tracking)

9. Woman struggling in wind (wide
shot)

10. Empty path (forward tracking)

11. Woman struggling in wind (wide
shot)

12. Woman walking away into
snowscape (long take)

Verse Two

13. Empty path (high angle,
forward tracking)

14. Woman struggling in wind (wide
shot)

15. Hut in snowscape (medium shot)

16. Woman struggling in wind (wide
shot)

17. Empty path (high angle,
forward tracking)

Chorus

18. Woman's feet walking into
frame (close-up)

19. Woman picks up toy horse from
debris of hut (medium shot)

20. Woman's hands holding toy
horse (tight close-up)

21. Frozen landscape (long take,
low angle, tracking from left to
right)

CREDITS

II. *The Riddle* (voice-over)

Music/sound: *Riddle* Tune: *Iceland*⁶⁴ - piano waltz underneath a long lugubrious tune (looped, eight bar phrases). Piano, cello, saxophone, bassoon, electric guitar and an intermittent sound of faintly clinking pickaxes.

Visual track: Long take of men trudging across an ice-locked landscape.⁶⁵

Ruby (voice-over):

I am born(e) in a beam of light
 I move continuously yet I am still
 I am larger than life
 Yet do not breathe
 Only in the darkness am I visible
 You can see me but never touch me
 I can speak to you but never hear you
 You know me intimately, and I know you not at all
 We are strangers, and yet you take me inside of you
 What am I?

Celeste (voice-over): Time is short, we have 90 minutes to find each other. To solve this riddle.

Visual track: A procession of men carrying a gold idol (retroactively identified as Ruby) is glimpsed through an archway.⁶⁶ Celeste's (voice-over) announces a revised version of the *Riddle* from the point of view of the spectator. A panoramic view of a frozen snowscape overcast with dark threatening clouds accompanies Celeste's reformulation of the *Riddle*.

Celeste (voice-over):

You are born(e) in a beam of light
 You move continuously yet you are still
 You are larger than life, yet do not breathe
 Only in the darkness are you visible
 I can see you but never touch you
 You can speak to me but can never listen
 I know you intimately and you know me not at all
 We are strangers, yet I take you inside of me

III. *Celeste, the Gold Idol, the Dancers* (no dialogue)

Music/sound: In-frame trio playing piano, cello, saxophone (tongue in cheek, scene-setting waltz). Musicians: Dave Holland, Georgie Born and Lol Coxhill.

Visual track: Montage of twelve shots taken from three different story lines: Celeste as in-frame spectator/investigator; Ruby as gold idol; and a ballroom scene mimicking the film genre of Melodrama.⁶⁷ The dancing couples are accompanied by the in-frame musical trio.⁶⁸

Shots 1, 4, 9, 11: Couples dance to a banal waltz.

Shots 2, 5, 7, 8, 12: Night shots - two groups of eight men respectively. The first group is carrying a tray stacked with gold bars.⁶⁹ The second group is supporting a gold idol (Ruby) sitting on an elaborate gold throne.⁷⁰ The procession makes its way through the City streets and enters the Royal Exchange.

Shots 3, 6 and 10: Close-up, profile shots of Celeste watching the procession. Her knowing smile in the third shot indicates that

she understands the link between female commodification and male power politics.

IV. The Ballroom Scene (no dialogue)

Music/sound: the *Horse Waltz*: in-frame piano, cello, saxophone [Dave Holland, Georgie Born, Lol Coxhill] plus off-screen sounds of tenor horn, bass guitar, drums, bassoon.

Visual track: Ruby enters ballroom through the revolving door of the bank. She descends down a grand staircase flanked by two men. Ruby and one of the men join the dancing couples. During the dance the men move from one woman to the next.⁷¹

Enter the new hero/ine Celeste disguised as Prince Charming riding a white horse.⁷² Fairy tale rescue. Ruby leaps on the horse behind Celeste and they gallop out of the ballroom. Long take of the horse and riders disappearing over the horizon.

Music/sound: Rhythmic sound of pounding hooves and blustering wind.

V. Ruby in Crisis: Introducing the Analytic Scene (dialogue)

Music/sound: Repetitive rhythmic jazz-rock arrangement derived from the *Empire Song* - bass guitar, piano, various percussion sounds.⁷³

Visual track: Close-up profile shot of Celeste staring out of the frame. Ruby dressed in crinolene is lying, face down, on the floor in Celeste's room.⁷⁴ As the episode progresses Ruby adopts various poses (standing against wall, sitting with her legs slung across a desk).

Celeste (voice-over): I was born a genius, that's a fact. I knew what was what right from the start, then it was taken away.

I am concerned with redressing the balance.

Are you reconciled with your own history?

Ruby! Do you know what it is?

[sync sound] Ruby! Tell me everything you know.

Ruby [sync-sound]: I can remember very little.

Celeste [voice-off]: Why?

Ruby [sync-sound]: I have been kept in the dark.

Celeste [voice-off]: Why?

Ruby [sync-sound]: Those were the conditions.

Celeste [voice-off]: Which conditions.

Ruby [sync-sound]: The necessary conditions of my existence.

Visual track: Various close-up shots of Celeste's listening attentively are edited into the following sequence of shots).

Celeste [voice-over]: Only in the darkness are you visible, I know you intimately and you know me not at all.

Visual track: Slow camera pan over snowscape with path.

Music/sound: whistling wind.

Ruby [voice-over]:
I can remember very little.

Celeste [voice-over]: Why?

I have been kept in the dark.

Celeste [voice-over]: Why?

Ruby [voice-over]: Those were the conditions

Celeste [voice-over]: It is possible to remember everything that has ever happened to you. Perhaps even more.

Visual track: Shots of Ruby in various poses.

Ruby [sync-sound]: In the early days,
I was often seen tied to tracks and hanging from cliffs.
I managed to be feverish yet cool, passionate yet pure, aloof
yet totally available. (silence).
Stranded, we were always stranded.

Celeste [voice-off]: We? Who?

Ruby [sync-sound]: She and I.

Celeste [voice-off]: Who? Your friend? Your sister? Your
mother?

Ruby [sync-sound]: My mother, yes my mother.
My mother, yes my mother.

Visual track: Slow camera pan of snowscape and hut. Close-up
montage: three shots of Ruby's tearful face and three "home-movie"
shots of the mother.

Music/sound: Wind, electronic sounds mimicking the wind - several
guitar tracks [metal rubbed over strings]. *Perfect Clue* with
rhythmic accompaniment [bassoon and glockenspiel] and glissando
wash played on guitar.

Visual track: Montage of hut, Ruby on floor, Celeste sitting in
her room.

VI. Celeste and the Banker (dialogue, sync-sound unless
otherwise indicated)

Night. Celeste leaves her flat and walks to work.

Music/sound: Silence, hollow ring of footsteps, continual high
pitched electronic keyboard glissando [mimics factory siren].

Visual track: Celeste enters the Bank and takes her place in the
typing pool.⁷⁵ Her inquiry into the movement of money is met with
a sharp rebuttal from the office supervisor.⁷⁶

Music/sound: Sharp whirr of electronic office equipment, clatter
of computer keyboards.

Celeste: Sir, I'd like have some more information about these
figures I am typing.

Can you tell me more about these figures I am typing?
 Can you tell me why ... (Celeste's voice is drowned by noise
 of electronic machines and she is interrupted by the Banker).

Supervisor: You know what to do. Transfer these figures to
 the right hand side according to the information.

Celeste: I'd like to know more about it. I'd like to know what
 is underneath it.

Supervisor: Quite frankly, as an employee of this company you
 are not employed to speculate what this information may or may
 not be. All you need to do is transfer these figures to the
 right hand side.

Celeste: Do you think I am stupid? I would like to know what
 this is all about.

Supervisor : Just do your job.

Hollow echo of an anonymous male voice-over: Do your job.

Celeste [voice-over]: I can see you but never touch you.

Music/sound: Extract from the instrumental accompaniment of the
Empire Song [recorded separately rather than extracted from the
 original sound track].⁷⁷

VII. Celeste and the Expert (dialogue, sync-sound unless
 otherwise indicated)

Visual track: Celeste sits in a dilapidated waiting room. A clerk
 sitting behind a small reception window checks a register.⁷⁸

Music/sound: Silence, high pitched electronic keyboard glissando
 [mimics factory siren].

Celeste: I would like to see the expert.

Clerk: The expert. Do you have an appointment?

Celeste: Yes.

Clerk: Ah.

Visual track: The clerk abruptly closes the shutter of reception
 window. In the next shot the clerk's disembodied hand gestures to
 Celeste from another reception window.

Music: High pitched electronic keyboard glissando [mimics factory
 siren], ambient sounds.

Clerk: Can I help you?

Celeste: I've just explained, I'd like to see the expert.

Clerk: Ah - if you just wait over there for a moment.
 (silence). And what is the purpose of ... (voice tails off)?

Celeste: I've been waiting. I want some information.

Clerk: Information!

Visual track: The clerk and Celeste enter an office and walk towards the Expert who is seated at an enormous desk at the far end of the room.⁷⁹

Music: Short instrumentation of the *Bankers' Song* (performed 'a capella' in Episode X). Keyboards and bassoons intermittently overlaid with a high pitched electronic keyboard glissando [mimics factory siren].

Shot of the clerk whispering to the expert.

Expert: Information!

Celeste: Well, the information I am trying to sort out concerns the movement ... [cut]

Expert: Ah - on the one hand, information, on the other, movement. That which moves cannot be outlined other than in terms of hypothesis.

Celeste: I was thinking specifically of ... [cut]

Expert: Ah - specifics. You are opposing the specific to the general. I must warn you that to assume that what you call specificity is anything other than an expression of confidence in certain unnamed generalities is a mistake.

Celeste: I agree.

The expert and the clerk in unison: You agree!
With what?

Celeste: It would be a mistake ... [cut]

Music/sound: High pitched electronic keyboard glissando [mimics factory siren].

Expert: The notion of mistake which implies its opposite - that which is not a mistake - that which is correct, evokes one of the great and as yet unsolved questions of history.

Celeste: Which question?

Expert: The question of essential truth.

Music/sound: Crash.

Visual track: Clerk standing on library ladder drops small money box.

Celeste: I want to talk about the movement of money.

Visual track: During the following monologue the expert moves from behind the desk and strikes up various theatrical poses - thus establishing his control over the office space - he plays with a toy boat, postures against an ionic pillar and gestures up to a small gold statue of Ruby on a display pillar. Meanwhile the clerk busies himself retrieving appropriate texts from the booklined walls to verify the experts statements.

Music/sound: Silence followed by various arrangements of the *Horse Waltz* (played in full in the revised ballroom scene in Episode XIV) are performed throughout most of this episode. Towards the end of the expert's monologue the *Horse Waltz* is thickened with

tenor horn and bassoon and wordless voices.

Expert: I want. I want. How interesting. Which is more important, the possession of fact or the - possession of fact, or the fact of possession? Alright, I'll give you unequivocal facts.

Now, in the beginning a man gave a bank note to another man. This note was taken to a bank and exchanged for a pound of gold. The bank note was a promise (*Horse Waltz* commences here), you see, respected by all those who shared in the wealth of the country. People knew that our money had integrity. They knew that wealth must be pulled out of the ground, buried elsewhere and thereby put to work. They were happy for their resources to be realised and relieved that their wealth was held in a proper store.

Celeste: But it does not live in a store. It keeps moving around.

Expert: Moving around? Moving around what? Do you mean it revolves around some sort of centre, or that it is centred on circulation? Or are we talking about a more metaphorical centre?

Are we dreaming of money permanently at play around the perfection of gold? The perfection which has fathered it but which it cannot attain. Gold, the great ideal, the perfect model. The articulation of beauty which has focused out aspirations down the ages.

It was the golden section which gave us our standards of spatial and architectural beauty, our sense of proportion. It was the golden mean, counselling us to move with virtue between the extremes, which gave us our morals and thus civilisation. It was the legend of the golden age which gave us the vision of an ideal society. How many lives have been lost in the great quest? How many men made heroes?

Visual track: The toy boat overturns and sinks.⁸⁰

Music/sound: Music cuts to silence

Celeste: I know something moves, because I have seen it.

Expert: What you have seen is only a shadow.

Celeste: Tell me what moves then. Do notes move?

Expert: Notes are seasoned travellers, but they leave no traces.

Celeste: Does gold move?

Expert: Gold moves when it shifts. But it has great power when it simply sits.

Celeste: What about the stuff in the ground?

Expert: Well, like any subject it needs to be brought up.

Clerk: Brought up.

Music/sound: Continuous electronic tone.

Celeste: Do promises move?

Expert: Promises are *the* great movers.

Celeste: Where do you fit into all this?

Expert: I get my rewards.

Visual track: Long take of Celeste at her desk followed by a shot of the expert and the clerk sitting on the floor in the office.

Celeste: So, how does gold really function in the world?

Expert: As its blood. Just as blood flows through the body, so is gold the pure bright blood of the earth.

Music/sound: *Riddle Tune: Iceland*

VIII. Ruby's Quest (monologue, voice-over)

Music/sound: Solo saxophone reference to *Riddle Tune: Iceland* is overlaid with fragments from other musical sequences in the film.
Montage of sounds: digging, silence, wind.

Visual track: Montage of single shots and shot-reverse shots of snowscape / men speculating / Ruby dressed in crinolene in grey room / mother's feet walking off frame / path in snow / shattered hut / hut / slow camera pan over snowscape / change of season - spring - heavy clouds / infant Ruby circling hut.

A sequence of four shot-reverse shots of Ruby dressed in her crinolene and the hut. Ruby enters Celeste's room and studies newspaper screen.

Music/sound: Wind, fragments (saxophone) from *Riddle Tune: Iceland*, silence.

Ruby: I search for the secret of transformations.
The breath
The fire.
I search for the secret of my own transformation.

Mother: Ruby, Ruby.

Visual track: Infant Ruby digging. Mother appears at the door of the hut and calls for Ruby.

IX. Celeste's Dream (no dialogue)

Music/sound: Silence, hollow footsteps.

Visual track: Night-time, rain. Ruby is seen leaving Celeste's room. Celeste leaves the bank and makes her way along a dark passage followed by the office supervisor and the expert.

Music/sound: Montage of running footsteps and abruptly fragmented repetitive passage, a long tone [guitar and saxophone in unison] and an improvised insert from the *Empire Song* - piano, guitar, violin. This arrangement brings together the melody of the *Bankers' Song* with the accompaniment of the *Empire Song*

Visual track: Celeste disappears into the back entrance (fire escape) of a large building.⁸¹

Celeste enters her room with a selection of costumes over her arm.

Music/sound: *Tango* - Double bass, viola, bassoon, saxophone.

Old woman opens stage curtains. Stage filled with women with

their backs turned towards the audience (an on-stage audience).⁸²
 Visual track: Montage of single shots and shot-reverse shots of a tight close-up of Celeste's sleeping face / two (three) dancers / Ruby and Celeste sharing a secret / two swimmers⁸³ / a woman welder working on her boat.⁸⁴

Music/sound: Long chords - double bass, viola. A saxophone improvisation floats over the insistent drone of long chords.

Visual track: Tight close-up shots of Celeste's sleeping face. Long take of Ruby carrying the sleeper diagonally across the room. The woman welder.

Music/sound: Marilyn Mazur's drum solo.

Visual track: Montage of the drummer and the dancers. Episode closes with a shot of the elderly attendant closing the stage curtains⁸⁵

X. A Film within a Film: Ruby's Analytic Theatres.

X.i. Ruby the Spectator (no dialogue)

Music/sound: Accumulative hollow clatter of footsteps (out of sync tap-dancing) complements and extends the drumming in the previous episode.

Visual track: night - Ruby (dressed in mackintosh, beret and leather soled boots) runs along a dark street, followed by a stream of men. They disappear into the side entrance of a theatre. We hear the sound of their running feet interwoven with the tuning tones of an orchestra.⁸⁶ Ruby and the men take their place in the upper balcony.

Music/sound: Silence, shuffling, coughing. Piano, viola and saxophone in the theatre-pit band tuning up, followed by *Melodrama* - parodic arrangement of the genre of musical orchestrations written for Victorian Melodrama and the Early Cinema (this tune spills over into Scenes Two and Three and is played in full in Scene Four).

Visual track: The curtain rises on a replica of the interior of the hut and the Icelandic landscape. Sitting in the audience Ruby watches a double of herself on-stage (costumed as silent movie star - black and white striped blouse, calf-length tartan skirt and white petticoat) acting out the oedipal story. Ruby leaves the theatre, once again followed by the men.

X.ii. The Garden (no dialogue)

Music/sound: The tune of *Melodrama* spills over from the last scene; footsteps, silence, digging and other ambient sounds.

Visual track: To escapes her pursuers Ruby enters a boarded up terrace house.⁸⁷ Inside the house she finds herself in a dark overgrown garden. Night-time. Ruby and the mother watches two little girls⁸⁸ (the infant Ruby and her sister) as they dig in the garden. The girls costumes are identical to the one worn by Ruby in the earlier dramatisation of the oedipal story.

Ruby as mother (voice-over): Come on, its getting late.

Visual track: Long take of the girls and the mother, followed by Ruby, re-enter the terrace house and walk down a series of long dark corridors.

Music/sound: Foosteps and piano arrangement of *Melodrama*.

X.iii. The Rehearsal (dialogue, sync-sound unless otherwise indicated)

This episode juxtaposes highly abstracted visual frames with direct camera, experimental dance sequences and dialogue. A dancer (Jacky Lansley) rehearses a collage of contemporary dance steps, tap and walking and running movements accompanied by piano and ambient sounds.

Visual track: Ruby enters a spacious studio.⁸⁹ The area is empty apart from a large rehearsal mirror, a grand piano, few stage props and Ruby's costume [from scene (i)] hanging on the wall. A dancer is rehearsing. Throughout this sequence the camera is fixed on the dancer with only occasional cuts to Ruby in the role of spectator in the frame.

Music/sound: Montage of running footsteps, tap-dance, piano, silence.

Dancer: Hello.
Your things are over there.

Ruby: My things?

Dancer: Yes.
I had to move them earlier. Sorry.

Ruby: Oh. That's OK.

Dancer: How have you been?

Ruby [voice-off]: (Hesitation) Quite well thanks, and you?

Dancer: Alright.

Visual track: The dancer walks through free-standing door (theatre prop) into another space. Two piano notes accompany the dancer's passage through the door. The dancer continues to practice.

Music/sound: Tap and ambient stepping sounds.

Dancer: I'm a little cross with myself.
In fact, I'm furious with myself.
Despite years of research.
I reach a certain point.
When I freeze.
[silence]
It's getting late, aren't you going to get changed?

Music/sound: Two piano chords.

Ruby: Yes. Yes, I suppose so.

Music/sound: Two piano chords.

Dancer: Have you forgotten?

Ruby: What?

Music/sound: Waltz arrangement for piano of *Perfect Clue*.

Dancer: Live in the present my dear.

Don't dwell in the past.

Ruby: I can't remember what I am supposed to remember.
Have I been here before?

Visual track: The dancer demonstrates various difficult steps. Ruby, walking slowly around the dancer, watches intently.
Music/sound: silence, tap and other footsteps.

Ruby: Oh, Nearly!
What is it that goes wrong?

Dancer: It's partly since I decided to go solo.
Some of the lifts are a little tricky.
That's not it!

Ruby: Well, what is it then?

Dancer: Well, for one thing, until that moment in the sequence I hadn't been facing the audience.

Ruby: And what happens when you face them?

Visual track: Ruby and the dancer sit on bench.

Music/sound: Waltz arrangement for piano of *Perfect Clue*

Dancer: When I turn my head and catch their gaze, years of work disappears in an instant. It's as though my feet don't belong to me. I forget - I forget my steps.

Visual track: The stage manager appears on the scene.⁹⁰
Ruby draws up the bench at a right angle to the studio mirror to watch the dancer.

Music/sound: footwork of tap-dance and an arrangement of piano chords from the *Empire Song* (composed retrospectively to the already filmed tap-dance).

Visual track: The camera frames the two women and the mirror within a triadic configuration: Ruby, the dancer and the dancer's mirror image. The triadic union is broken by the appearance (in the mirror reflection) of the stage manager.

Visual track: Grabbing Ruby's costume the stage manager drags her out of the frame.

Stage manager: You're on, You're on.

X.iv. The Theatre: The Oedipal Scene (no dialogue)

Music/sound: Saxophone, violin, cello, piano, tambourine. Most of this episode is accompanied by *Melodrama*. The accumulative build up of rhythmic and melodic patterns and the wild tremolos in this piece function as a tongue-in-cheek support of the oedipal drama played out on stage. The stop/start pattern of the music accentuates the cues being given to Ruby by the stage manager in the wings. At the point when the father juggles with the gold, the theatre music is overlaid with *Perfect Clue* (associated with the mother).

Visual track: Ruby is pushed into the spotlight by the stage manager. Trapped between the audience and the mother sitting in a replica of the hut, Ruby (in the role of little girl) responds to cues from the stage manager and the mother. Reluctantly Ruby sits

on the mother's knee. The all-male audience is moved to tears.

Music/sound: Continuation of a speeded up version of *Melodrama* (amplified strings and piano) accompanied by burst of rhythmic clapping from the audience.

Visual track: Enter the father juggling gold nuggets and laughing (no sound). Father and mother dance. Ruby moves away and watches in horror. The mother is dragged from the set by the father. Ruby attempts to dance in response to the stage manager's instructions, but soon gives up. She refuses to acknowledge the all-male audience.

Visual track: Fast montage of single and repeat shots: the infant Ruby / the men in audience / the men digging / Ruby's face in the audience.

Music/sound: Ruby is hissed at by the men / Men begin slow clapping, booing and shouting.

Visual track: Long take, close-up of Ruby laughing (silent screen image - no sound).

Music/sound: *Perfect Clue* - rhythmic accompaniment (bassoon and glockenspiel) and glissando wash played on guitar.

Visual track: Ruby is both on stage and in the audience. On stage she defies the male audience with her laughter. Off-stage she stares in horror at the image of herself as child-star.

X.v. Iceland: Reformulating the Story (no dialogue)

Music/sound: frenetic, high pitch arrangement of *Seeing Red* accompanies the whole of this scene.

Visual track: Ruby leaves the theatre. Followed by the men she returns to the garden of the magical terraced house. Once again she enters the house and finds herself in the bleak terrain of Iceland. Film cuts to the men looking for Ruby in the garden. Ruby runs into the open landscape towards the hut.

Montage: Ruby alone in landscape / Ruby watches as the mother enters the hut / the infant Ruby running around the hut / the laughing mother / adult Ruby and child Ruby confront each other in the landscape / the mother and father run off into the distance / adult Ruby and the infant Ruby stare at each other through the window of the hut / infant Ruby growing older as she runs around the hut 2x / hut / Ruby looking at hut / stage-set of the hut in the theatre - the curtain drops.

XI. The Procession of Bankers (short monologue and beginning of *Bankers' Song* both in voice-over)

Music/sound: Footsteps, high pitched electronic keyboard glissando (factory siren).

Visual track: Shot 1: Evening panorama of City of London. Shot 2: Celeste in her room looking out over the City. Shot 3: Rpt evening panorama of City of London. Shot 4: Night panorama of City of London.

Music/sound: Silence

Visual Track: A group of men assembles furtively at the far end of a dark passage.⁹¹

Music/sound: Repeated excerpt from the expert's monologue about relationship between gold, the bank note and the promise.

Expert (voice-over): Now, in the beginning a man gave a bank note to another man. This note was taken to a bank and exchanged for a pound of gold. The bank note was a promise, you see,

Music/sound: Accumulative clatter of footsteps. Midnight strikes.

Visual track: The men have assembled into two groups and repeat the procession scene in Episode III. The first group carrying the tray of gold bricks followed by the group carrying the gold icon (Ruby). Again they make their way towards the Royal Exchange. Repeat of shots of Celeste watching Ruby in her role as gold statue (See Episode 111).

XII. *The Bankers' Song* and the Second Escape

Music/sound: Inside the bank the two groups of men begin to chant and their movements are choreographed, three steps forwards, one step back. The following *Bankers' Song* (sung by Phil Minton voice-over) is accompanied by a chorus chanted by the bankers. The chorus introduces and closes this song and is repeated between the two verses. An echo of the chorus can be heard throughout the whole song. The solo voice of the verses was recorded in the studio and subsequently overlaid onto the chorus which was recorded in the Royal Exchange as a wild track.⁹²

The Bankers' Song (voice-over)

(chorus)

Freeze those assets
Cut the Supply
Drastic measures
It's do or die

It makes sense
to go for order
Hand it over boys
willingly
It's a natural law
economically

(repeat chorus)

To the bank
with the beauty
To the bank
with the gold
Both make money
Neither grows old

(repeat chorus)

Ruby [voice-over]: I've been framed.

Visual track: Royal Exchange procession. Ruby smiles as men perform their rituals.⁹³ Ruby escapes with Celeste. Both women can be seen running down the steps of the bank and, laughing, they

disappear into the night - followed by the bewildered men.

Music/sound: Accumulative patter of footsteps and women's laughter.

XIII. The *Empire Song* (song, sync-sound)

Music/sound: Double bass, guitar, drums, saxophone.

Celeste jumps on a small stage and sings the *Empire Song*.⁹⁴ The song is complemented by a montage of images juxtaposing Celeste's face with shots of alluding to the relationship between gold, power and the ideal of feminine beauty.

The *Empire Song*

Earth's crust concealing
Companies dealing
Veins of unfathomable wealth
Silently waiting
Silently waiting
Then taken by cunning and stealth

Robbers and bandits
Builders of nations
Armed with a pick and ill-will
Plunder and digging
Plunder and digging
Impatient till they've got their fill

Natural sources
Nations resources
Bought for a nod and a wink
Claimed by the empire
Not what you'd think
From the way they disguise it
Old School ties
Commonwealth ties
May you crumble and sink

Visual Track: Ruby runs back into the Royal Exchange.

XIV. The Revised Ballroom Scene: Inverting Tradition (monologue)

Music/sound: The *Horse Waltz*, running footsteps.

Visual track: Revised version of Episode III. Ruby masquerades her role as compliant screen goddess.

Ruby (voice-over):
To the bank with the beauty
To the bank with the gold
Both make money
neither grow old

I can project
I am projected
I can repeat
I am repeated
The investors take their place
and I play my part

Visual track: Celeste comes to the rescue on Sheba. She is anticipated by the confidently smiling Ruby.

Music/sound: The *Horse Waltz* played by ballroom trio - piano, viola and bassoon. As the horse enters into the ballroom the music cross-fades from 3/4 time of the waltz to 4/4 time of a polka (played by a full band). The change of timing is accompanied by a shift from the trio to a full band, introduced by Georgie Born playing the viola. This final rendition of the *Horse Waltz* is by far the fullest instrumentation in the film. The tempo of the music (and the visual track) is speeded up as the women ride into the distance. Cross-fade of instrumentation and pounding hooves.

Visual track: Ballroom scene - the women are swapping partners. As they change partners the men fall to the ground. The remaining women dance together and proceed to create disorder (play wild games - slide down the bannister).

Music/sound: Continuation of polka. Full orchestra with clattering percussion.

Visual track: Men lying on the floor. The women leave. The men dance together.

XV. Celeste and Ruby: Subjects in Process (dialogue, ovice-over)

Music/sound: wind and silence.

Visual track: Four long shots: (i) the infant Ruby digging; (ii) a panoramic shot of the landscape with path featured at the beginning of the film. It is spring, the snow has melted and the tip of a rainbow meets the path; (iii) the path is transformed into into forest track; (iv) Riding the white horse, Ruby and Celeste disappear into the forest.⁹⁵

After the horse its two riders have vanished, the camera tracks down the empty forest path and Celeste repeats the first two lines of the riddle.

Celeste [voice-over]
You are born(e) in a beam of light.
You move continuously yet you are still.

Music/sound: The *Riddle Tune: Iceland*

Visual track: The camera continues to track down the forest path.

Celeste [voice-over]: You are searching for a formula Ruby.
Well, I have one that explains a real loss.

Ruby [voice-over]: What is it?

Celeste: In my job money flows through my body. But every day I get less than I give.

Ruby [voice-over]: Who is the richer?

Celeste [voice-over]: What I lose becomes a real surplus and it is this that I am paid to move about each day but do not own. But I know that even as I look and even as I see, I am changing what is there.

Music/sound: The *Riddle Tune: Iceland* is overlaid with the sound of welding.

Visual track: The film ends with a montage of four shots: a tight close-up of the hull of a boat; a repeated shot of the two

swimmers (featured in the dream sequence in Episode IX, gliding through a choppy sea; a long shot of the welder working on her boat (featured in the dream sequence); and a medium shot of the two swimmers. The *Riddle Tune: Iceland* runs over the credits.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. The different versions of the scripts and details of the shoot are stored at: Adventure Pictures, 6 Blackbird Yard, Ravenscroft Street, London E2 7RP. The photographs taken during rehearsal and the shoot are held by Rose English and the BFI.
2. See my comments on the production of the script in Chapter One pp.14-19.
3. My overview of the film is of a general nature. A shot by shot notation of individual sequences is given at appropriate points in the thesis.
4. Trinh T. Minh-ha, 'Reassemblage (Sketch of Sound Track)', *Camera Obscura*, 13/14 (1985), 105-111.
5. Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (Urbano: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp.295-297.
6. Camera Obscura Collective, 'Deux Fois: shot commentary, shot chart and photogrammes', *Camera Obscura*, 1 (1976), 27-51.
7. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, 'Riddles of the Sphinx: A Film by Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen', *Screen*, 23 (1977), 61-77.
8. Editors of *Cahiers du Cinema*, 'John Ford's Young Mr Lincoln', trans. by Helen Lackner and Diana Matias, *Screen Reader (1): Cinema, Ideology and Politics* (London: SEFT, 1977), pp.111-155; Stephen Heath, 'Film System and Terms of Analysis: Part I', *Screen*, 16, 1 (1975), 7-77; Part II, *Screen*, 16, 2 (1975), 91-113.
9. *Ibid.*, p.90.
10. I am reminded of Parveen Adams' observation that even the first remembrance of a dream is in essence an interpretative operation. It falls on the analyst to uncover that which the analysand is repressing - cannot bear to say. Parveen Adams, 'The Art of Mary Kelly's *Interim* and the Discourse of the Analyst', *October*, 58 (1991), 81-96 (p.90).
11. Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, 2 (1975), 6-18.
12. See my Chapter Eight, pp.316-323.

13. See my Chapter Six, pp.232.

14. This shot can be read as a pun on both the magical white horse sequences in Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête* (1946). In addition, this flight from the ballroom invokes Julia Kristeva's concept of the second generation of feminism, that is a feminism of refusal and difference. Julia Kristeva, 'Woman's Time', trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *The Kristeva Reader* ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp.187-213 (p.194).

15. Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p.191.

16. Claudia Hoff, 'Das Schwarze in Weissen: Ein Interview mit Sally Potter zu Ihrem film *The Gold Diggers*, *Frauen und Film*, 37 (1984), 91-94 (p.92).

17. Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', *Early Cinema, Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. by Thomas Elsaesser (London: British Film Institute, 1990), pp.65-62 (p.56).

18. This comment refers to the camera work in Max Ophüls' *Caught* (1948). Brian Henderson, 'The Long Take', *Movies and Methods* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), pp.314-324 (p.319).

19. André Gaudreault, 'Showing and Telling: Image and Word in Early Cinema', *Early Cinema*, ed. by Elsaesser. pp.274-281.

20. An interesting parallel can be drawn between the artisanal qualities of the early cinema and Sally Potter's background in avant-garde show business scene of the 1970s. Penny Florence, 'A Conversation with Sally Potter', *Screen*, 34, 3 (1991), 275-284 (pp.277-278). See my comments in Chapter One, pp.14-21.

21. Henderson, 'The Long Take', p.319.

22. Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p.109. Kaja Silverman makes the point that in contrast to Heath's argument that suture is a consequence of the relation between shot strategies and the editing process, Oudart and Dayan locate the operations of suture as a function of the shot/reverse-shot: Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.201; Stephen Heath, 'Notes on Suture', *Screen* (18, 2 (1977-1978), 48-76 (pp.65-66).

23. Gaudreault, 'Showing and Telling', p.276.
24. It is noteworthy that, in common with the Early Cinema, the exponents of feminist countercinema in the 1970s stressed the importance of audience participation in the form of discussion/debate after the screening.
25. Clearly the history of the cinema concerns the negotiation between long takes and cutting strategies. However, generally speaking camera work and cutting strategies are used to heighten the mood and expressivity of the *mise-en-scène*, in contrast *The Gold Diggers* uses both the long take and the edit cut to put the illusions of the cinema on display and generate new ways of looking and telling.
26. Scott Macdonald, 'Babette Mangolte', *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), pp.279-296 (p.283).
27. Paul Willemen, 'Reflections on Eikhenbaum's Concept of Internal Speech in the Cinema', *Screen*, 15 4 (1974-75), 58-71 (p.62).
28. Laura Mulvey quoted in: Claire Pajaczkowska, 'Liberté! Egalité! Paternité!: Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (1980), *French Film: Texts and Contexts* (London: Routledge, 1990), 241-256 (p.247).
29. Peter Wollen, *Readings and Writings: Semiotic Counter-Strategies* (London: Verso, 1982), p.90).
30. The non-expressive play-acting in the film perhaps accounts for Julie Christie's feeling that she didn't have 'enough to do' - indeed it is noteworthy that, other than in the analytic scene with Celeste and the rehearsal scene with Jacky Lansley (discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight) Christie is never given the opportunity to lose herself in the "character" of Ruby. Hélène Cixous' Brechtian model of the relationship between player and spectator is of interest here. Hélène Cixous, 'The Character of "Character"', *New Literary History*, 5, 4 (1974), 383-402 (p.385). Hoff, 'Das Schwarze im Weissen', p.92.
31. Note the reactions of the members of the *Camera Obscura* collective to the screenings, in 1975, at the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, of Yvonne Rainer's *Lives of Performers* (1972) and *Film about a woman who...* (1974): *Camera Obscura Collective*, 'Yvonne

Rainer: An Introduction', *Camera Obscura*, 1 (1976), 53-70 (p.59).

32. Elisabeth Wright, *Postmodern Brecht: A Re-Presentation* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.19.

33. From a Kristevan perspective the recognition of the constructed nature of truth has ethical connotations. See Chapter Three, pp.126-131.

34. The fictional theatres constructed in *The Gold Diggers* appear to be indebted to Marcel Carné's *Les Enfants du paradis* (1943 & 1945) and Jacques Rivette's *Céline and Julie vent en bateau* (1973). Not unlike the encounters in *The Gold Diggers*, *Les Enfants* explores the art/life dualities through juxtaposing scenes-on-stage with scenes-in-life; with one enhancing and intensifying the other and suggesting that both are constructions performed by actors. The most obvious parallels between *The Gold Diggers* and *Céline and Julie vent en bateau* are: the facilitating friendship between two women; the interchange of roles between the heroines; the focus on magic and memory as a transformative alchemy. See: Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Jacques Rivette', *Sight and Sound*, 43, 4 (1974), 191-194.

35. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, 'Riddles of the Sphinx', *Sight and Sound* (Summer, 1977); Jane Clarke, Sue Clayton, Joanna Clelland, Rosie Elliott and Mandy Merck, 'Women and Representation: A Discussion with Luara Mulvey', *Wedge*, 2 (1978), 46-53.

36. To a certain extent the film invokes the ways in which the "silent" cinema works on its audience through lighting, stage-sets, human gestures, compositional framing, camera movement, montage, ambient sound and music. However, rather than using visual and aural forms to compensate for the spoken word, Sally Potter uses the devices of the silent cinema to generate a space to rethink signifiatory conventions. See Elsaesser's comments on the compensatory strategies developed in the early cinema: Thomas Elsaesser, 'Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama', *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), pp.43-69 (p.51).

37. See: Mulvey and Wollen, 'Riddles of the Spinx', *Sight and Sound* (Summer, 1977). Mary Ann Doane mentions Clair, Vigo, Lang, Godard, Straub and Duras. Mary Ann Doane, 'The Voice in the Cinema: The

Articulations of Body and Space', *Yale French Studies*, 60 (1980), 33-50 (p.35).

38. Discussed in Peter Wollen's 1972 article 'Godard and Counter-Cinema: *Vent d'Est*'. Reprint in: Wollen, *Readings and Writings*, pp.79-91. See Kaja Silverman's account of the sound/image relation in films by Betty Gordan, Patricia Gruben, Yvonne Rainer and Sally Potter in: Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror* (pp.141-186).

39. The criticism of essentialism levelled at the work of Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and other exponents of *écriture féminine* is based on their commitment to the concept of *woman as body*.

40. Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, p.142.

41. Interview Lindsay Cooper: 23.3.93.

42. See Celeste's dream, Episode IX, pp.79-80 and Chapter Nine.

43. Russolo's *Concert for Factory Sirens* was performed in 1920 in the new Soviet Union and his manifesto *The Art of Noise* identifies six main families of noise. Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp.111-119.

44. The potentially disruptive facet of tap and the choreographed control over the large scale routines in the Musical are discussed in Chapter Eight, pp.312-313.

45. John Willett, *The Theatre of Berthold Brecht: A Study from Eight Aspects* (London: Methuen, 1959), p.132, 126-142.

46. *Ibid.*, pp.132, 134-135.

47. Episodes I, XII, XIII, pp.72; 84-85.

48. Richard Dyer, 'Entertainment Utopia', *Movie*, 24 (1977), 2-13.

49. Note: Lindsay Cooper's film score for *The Rat* (1925), d. Graham Cutts and her score for the MOMI video about special effects in the cinema. Appendix 6.

50. Interview Lindsay Cooper: 22.03.93.

51. Episode IX, pp.79-80.

52. Episode XIV, p.85-86.

53. Episode V, pp.74-75.

54. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp.63, 104.

55. Roland Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice', *Image - Music - Text*, ed. and trans. by Stephen Heath (Glasgow: Fontana, 1982), pp.179-189.

56. Julia Kristeva, 'From One Identity to Another', *Desire in Language*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (London: Blackwell, 1984), pp.124-147 (pp.144, 145); Julia Kristeva, 'The Novel as Polylogue', *Desire in Language*, p.191, 205.

57. *The Horse Waltz* and *The Empire Song* were shot to playback and The dream sequence was cut to the music. Interview Lindsay Cooper: 22.03.93.

68. The details of the film's episodic structure have been confirmed by Sally Potter, Lindsay Cooper and Rose English.

59. Further information concerning the pre-production and production work on the film is given in Chapter One, pp.14-21 and Appendix 1.

60. Location: Iceland, the Lang Jokull Glacier. The glacier is c40 miles in length and is located 60 miles to the northeast of Reykjavik. The crew visited Iceland twice during 1981. The first (ill-advised) visit was during the thawing period in early August. Due to flawed film stock, the crew returned to Iceland three months later. All the snow scenes were shot during this second visit and the "spring" scenes are the result of the first visit. Interview Rose English: 09.10.93. The production coordinator (Iceland) was Kristin Olafsdóttir and the location consultants (Iceland) were Jon H. Gardarsson and Thórvaldur Jensson.

61. I am indebted to Lindsay Cooper's help in identifying the tunes and instrumentation in the sound track. Interview: Lindsay Cooper: 22.03.93.

62 The mother is played by Hilary Westlake.

63. The father is played by Trevor Stuart.

64. In 1982 Maédee Duprès commissioned Potter, Lindsay Cooper and Richard Alston to produce various songs and

choreographed dance pieces. These pieces were toured by Duprès in the same year under the working title of *Dance On*. The music for the *Riddles: Iceland* arrangement in *The Gold Diggers* grew out of a song called *They're Moving In* collaboratively produced by Sally Potters and Lindsay Cooper for the latter tour. Lindsay Cooper interview: 23.03.93

65. The fifteen Icelandic extras are listed in the credits. Appendix 1.

66. Location: Change Alley, London EC3 (opposite the Royal Exchange). Shot during September, 1981.

67. The ballroom scene was shot in the Out-patients' Hall in the Old Royal Free Hospital [now demolished], Langton Close, London WC1. In the absence of any available studio space, the production team rented a substantial part of the Old Royal Free Hospital for the duration of pre-production work and the shoot. This site housed the necessary carpentry and electrical workshops, the costume area, storerooms and so forth. The Out-patients' Hall was used for the expert's office and the main ballroom scenes (the staircase came from the set of the *Merry Widow* at the ENO). Other areas of the hospital were transformed into Celeste's apartment and the club scene in Celeste's dream.

68. The night scenes of Celeste watching the procession were shot in the vicinity and inside Royal Exchange building, London EC3, during September and October, 1981.

69. The men in the procession is listed in Appendix 1.

70. The figure of Ruby-as-icon was modelled on the Virgin of El Rocio in Southern Spain, known to Rose English from her childhood - the triangular shape of the dress was designed along Elizabethan lines, Ruby's skirt is embroidered with acanthus leaves which echo the capitals of the Royal Exchange and her cloak is covered with masonic symbols. Rose English interview: 09.10.93.

71. The men following Ruby and dancing with Ruby in this scene and elsewhere in the film are: Phil Minton, Craig Givens, Steve Goodstone, Doug Bather, Fergus Early and Dennis Greenwood.

72. Location: grounds of the University of Middlesex.

73. Interview Lindsay Cooper: 22.03.93.

74. Location: Old Royal Free Hospital, Langton Close, London WC1. Shot 14th-17th September, 1981.
75. Exterior location: Royal Exchange, City of London. Interior location: an office near Putney Bridge.
76. The office supervisor is played by Keith James.
77. Interview Lindsay Cooper: 22.03.93.
78. Location: Old Royal Free Hospital. The clerk is played by Tom Osborn.
79. Location: Out-patients Hall, Old Royal Free Hospital. The expert is played by David Gale.
80. In the film there are numerous allusions to the relationship between an object and its theatrical visualisation. This is evident in the continual re-presentation of objects. I am thinking particularly of the hut, the horse and the boat and the representational "play" at work in the film as a whole.
81. Location: The Old Royal Free Hospital.
82. Celeste's dream is referred to in the original shooting script as the "club" sequence and was shot in the Lecture Theatre of the Old Royal Free Hospital.
83. The two swimmers are Rose English (in place of Julie Christie) and Colette Laffont.
84. Location: the Ipswich Boat Yard. The welder is played by Kassandra Colson.
85. Location: Old Royal Free Hospital.
85. Location: Beech Street (Ruby followed by men) and the Golden Lane Theatre (now demolished), Golden Lane, London EC1. All the theatre scenes were shot in September and October, 1981.
87. The garden scenes were shot in Rugby Street, London WC1 in October, 1981. The buildings in this street have since been demolished.
88. Young Ruby is played by Lucy Bennet, Maria Pétursdottir Ridgewell and Vigdis Hrefna Pálsdottir.
89. Location: Studio 2, Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London W6. Shot 23rd-25th September, 1981.

90. The stage manager is played by George Yiasoumi

91. Location: Change Alley, London EC3.

92. Interview Lindsay Cooper: 22.03.93.

93. The man moving the gold brick is played by George Yiasoumi.

94. Location: Lecture Theatre in the Old Royal Free Hospital.

95. Location: the grounds of the University of Middlesex.

Chapter Three

JULIA KRISTEVA: REVOLUTIONARY POETICS, ANALYTIC DISCOURSE AND THE SPEAKING SUBJECT

Although certain themes in *The Gold Diggers* appear to engage with ideas of Luce Irigaray, I suggest that Julia Kristeva's theoretical models of revolutionary poetics and the analytic relation can be mobilised for a reading of this film that goes beyond the anatomy of women's predicament to propose processes of transformation in women's subjectivity and sociality. As a framework to my analysis of the film in Part II of the thesis, this chapter outlines some of the key concepts developed by Julia Kristeva in her extended mediations on the interrelated dimensions of: the speaking subject, signification and semiotic transgression.

Kristeva arrived in Paris in 1966 on a doctoral fellowship and it is well known that her teacher and future collaborator Roland Barthes immediately acknowledged the value of her theoretical undertaking.¹ Her first collection of essays *Séméiotiké/Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, published with the support of *Tel Quel* in 1969, advanced a sophisticated critical attack on the traditional structuralist and semiological models of thought, replacing the conventional study of

communication and language with a model which engages processes of productivity, agency and change.² She argued that the study of semiotics must go beyond linguistic theory to include a critique of its own formation: 'Semiotic research remains a form of inquiry that ultimately uncovers its own ideological gestures, only in order to record and deny it before starting all over again.'³ According to Philip Lewis, not only does Kristeva's model of intellectual work operate at a self-reflexive level, but the new object of semiotics lies in the identification of the '[...] phenomenon of resistance, an idiosyncratic or iconoclastic factor which is not subsumed by the suspect logic of Western culture [...]' and thus plays a part in revealing the invention of its apparent homogeneity.⁴

From this perspective, the disjunctures and resistances in signifying practice are identified as a register of its transformative potential. The productive work of signification is caught up in the relationship set up between the speaking subject and the processes which precede and exceed the illusion of unity propagated by the socio-symbolic contract.⁵ In her influential doctoral thesis *La Révolution du langage poétique*, published in 1974,⁶ Kristeva provided a detailed theoretical framework to continue her work on the discourse of the speaking subject based on the assumption of a split subject '[...] divided

between unconscious and conscious motivations, that is, between physiological processes and social constraints'.⁷ According to Kristeva, the split subject is always engaged in the process of becoming, always on trial in relation to signification - thus positing a notion of subjectivity in which the desiring, socially constrained body formulates, articulates and revises its needs in relation to language.

Since her arrival in Paris in 1966 (the same year Lacan's *Écrits* was published) psychoanalysis has played an increasingly significant role in Kristeva's theoretical deliberations.⁸ By the mid 1970s she had secured an academic position at the University of Paris and she had also trained and begun to practice as a psychoanalyst. By the late 1970's Kristeva's commitment to a psychoanalytic model of subjectivity was clearly apparent in her writing, in so far as her early Marxist commitment to the productivity of texts had given way to an understanding of subjectivity shaped by the undifferentiated primary processes associated with the maternal function. This more recent work has two facets. On the one hand, she establishes a link between the subject's apparently independent position within the symbolic and the processes of differentiation which frame maternal productivity as abject - this hypothesis is explicated

in *Pouvoirs de l'horreurs*, published in France 1980 and translated in 1982.⁹ On the other, Kristeva addresses the innovative possibilities generated within the analytic relation. This latter model presupposes that the discourse of analysis can help individuals surmount the fear of the different, thus making way for a level of personal fulfilment which is not based on the principle of exclusion. The transformative function of the analytic relation is outlined in her published lecture *In the Beginning was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith* (1987), *Tales of Love* (1983) and *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987).¹⁰

Kristeva's gradual shift from a model of semiotic productivity to a psychoanalytic register is documented in a collection of essays written over a period of ten years and published in 1980 under the title *Desire in Language*.¹¹ As well as signalling her theoretical reorientation, the essays in this anthology testify to her lasting interrogation of the disposition and organisational processes framing the speaking subject.¹²

Rather than offering a sequential account of Kristeva's intellectual undertaking, I begin this chapter with an examination of the key concept informing her more recent concern with productive function of the analytic relation. In the course of the chapter I move back in time to her earlier

preoccupation with the textual location of the subject. Finally, I turn to Kristeva's ongoing inquiry into the ethical facet of maternal productivity in relation to the formation and deformation of meaning.

The Analytic Relation

Although Celeste and Ruby are never named as *analyst* and *analysand*, the discourse they share is generated in a meeting between the co-stars which takes place in a private space [Celeste's room] and bears the hallmark of an analytic encounter.¹³ Subsequently, in a series of analytic theatres, Ruby makes use of the discourse mobilised in this scene to identify and reformulate the repressed encounters from her childhood.¹⁴

To refer to the analytic relation as a form of theatre is hardly original, but can be traced to the founding moment of the psychoanalytic method. Not only did Breuer's patient Bertha Pappenheim [Anna O] introduce Freud to the term "talking cure" to describe the hypnoanalytic procedure, but she habitually retreated into her own "private theatre" of daydreams - a fantasy world which both the analysand and Freud recognised as having profound implications for the understanding of individual subjectivity.¹⁵ Developing this analogy between the analytic space and a

theatrical performance, Stephen Kurtz has likened the consulting room to a shared space '[...] jointly created by analyst and patient - belonging to the realm of play and the theatre'.¹⁶ Similarly Winnicott's scrutiny of the world of pretend-theatres indulged in by children at play, led him to suggest that the privately assembled world of infant-actors replicates the analytic space.¹⁷ Concurring with this line of thought, Julia Kristeva has described the analyst as occupying the focal point of a drama which has been scripted by the analysand.

Together, then, we create a world, which to the objective observer (for objective observation is also part of my role as analyst) is completely unreal and illusory, an amalgam of pretences, games, and masks. We are in a sense actors who take our roles at the beginning of the session.¹⁸

In *The Gold Diggers* the analytic relation fabricated between the two women transforms the conventions of sexuality and "identity" underpinning the humanist model of the unified subject. The main premise underlying the constitutive function of Kristeva's analytic discourse suggests that individual subjectivity is always in process, on trial and in question.¹⁹ Kristeva accounts for the inherently unstable character of individual subjectivity with reference to the Lacanian (and Freudian) axiom of the divided subject - that is a subject torn between unconscious and conscious pressures - and the transformative function of Hegel's dialectic method.

Lacan's concept of the internally divided subject allows Kristeva to distance herself from the humanist notion of a fixed, securely centred core of identity;²⁰ and Hegel's model of the determining function of negativity transforms "no" into an *affirmative* function.²¹ In latter case, the negativity of a text (which should not be confused with symbolic negation) accounts for a level of affirmative expenditure and '[...] is thus precisely what splits and prevents the closing up of Being within an abstract and superstitious understanding'.²² The struggle of the inherently alienated/divided subject, striving to recognise the productive content of the repressed materiality of Otherness, lies at the baseline of both the analytic relation examined below and revolutionary poetics which I will come to later.

The discourse between analyst and analysand is generated by the operations of transference and counter-transference. The analyst is contractually obligated to stand in the place of the perpetrator of the analysand's distress: 'Here and now the omnipotent author of my being or malady (my father or mother) is the analyst.'²³ Speaking of her own practice as an analyst, Kristeva suggests that the discourse of the analyst rests '[...] on the brink of fiction without ever toppling over into it [...].'²⁴

In classic psychoanalytic theory, and from a Kristevan perspective, the transference relation between analyst and analysand re-enacts the child's initial discovery of the (m)other. The retrieval in language of this primary relation paves the way for the acknowledgment and redefinition of the primary separation(s) from the mother. Indeed, the analysand's "cure" lies in his or her recognition that separation and retrieval of loss is indeed possible.²⁵ Not that a cure as such is feasible.²⁶ The task of the analyst is to open up, rather than fix or close the interpretative function. Concurring with Lacan's view, Kristeva argues against the classical notion of the analyst who "holds" the analysand, i.e. who '[...] interprets by virtue of stable meanings'.²⁷ The Kristevan analyst is one who takes note of his or her own counter-transference vis à vis the troubled discourse of the analysand.²⁸ From this point of view, the analytic relation is an outward going dynamic within which the analysand finds an imaginary narcissistic anchor in the presence of the analyst [the stand-in for the lost loved one, the (m)other]. The above description mirrors Celeste's introductory role in *The Gold*

Diggers:

[...] the analyst, constantly tracking his [her] own desire, never stops analysing not only his [her] patient's discourse but his [her] own attitude towards it which is his [her] own counter-transference [my inserted pronouns].²⁹

The continuous procedure of renegotiation within transference raises the question of "interpretation" and "truth". Does the transference relation commit the analyst to a position of endless deferral - thus leaving the '[...] patient faced with the absolute silence of the interpreter [...]'?³⁰ Countering this obvious danger of prevarication, Kristeva insists that provisional truths are a necessary anchor in the process of transference. But, she argues, this "truth" is only ever '[...] specifiable to a particular moment of transference' and subsequent transference ensures that '[...] this meaning must be transformed'.³¹ Thus avoiding the totalising concept of truth - be it political, religious or drawn from personal history - the analyst favours, instead, a temporary closure of meaning which is only valid if it '[...] triggers associations on the part of the analysand'.³²

I will return to the ethical implications of Kristeva's concept of truth towards the end of the chapter, what I want to focus on here is the relevance to the film of her understanding of the analyst as both *anchor* and *agitator* of provisional truths. Adopting the role of the (m)other [Lacan's subject-supposed-to-know] Celeste affords Ruby a temporary refuge from the brutality of men's world and the icy snowscape associated with the lost mother.³³ She provides the analysand with a warm space [the analytic room], an

emotional space [the analytic relation], a level of listening attention [the transference relation] and time [the analytic session/the running time of the film].³⁴

In contrast to Celeste's apparently knowing role, Ruby's predicament concurs with Julia Kristeva's numerous descriptions of the damaged subject. For instance, in her book *In the Beginning was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith* Kristeva claims:

The analytic subject, or the analysand, in substance says the following: 'I am suffering from a deep narcissistic injury, which I relieve by displacing it onto the analyst. Here and now the omnipotent author of my being or malady (be it father or mother) is the analyst. The deep meaning of my words is governed by this hidden drama, which presupposes that I grant considerable power to the analyst.'³⁵

As the film progresses the analytic relation between the two women erodes the disparities between the all-knowing Celeste and the psychically damaged Ruby. Rather than '[...] sinking into dependence (a reduction of the subject to the egoic or imaginary dynamic of the mother-child relation)', the two women turn to each other and alternate roles [fig. 3.1].³⁶ The constant interchange of roles between the heroines cannot be over emphasised - where, at the beginning of the film, Celeste is cast as analyst and Ruby plays the part of the analysand [fig. 3.2]; later on, in the dream sequence, Ruby takes the place of analyst whilst Celeste adopts the role of dreamer.³⁷ Perhaps the most pertinent summation of the shifting roles between the

co-stars is André Green's description of analytic discursivity as a '[...] **potential relationship**, or, more precisely, a **discourse of potential relationships**'.³⁸ From this perspective, the work of the film is neither mirrored in the discourse of Celeste, nor is it located in the discourse of Ruby, but lies instead in the *significatory possibilities* activated between the two women.

In contrast to the non-exclusive relation established between Ruby and Celeste, the classic cinema abounds with "successful" *master-analysts* (a position occupied by both men and women) who refuse to compromise their role as knowing subject - note the analysand's child-like dependence on the analyst in films such as *Now Voyager* (1942), *Spellbound* (1945), *The Three Faces of Eve* (1957) and *Lizzie* (1957). Sidestepping the established practice of replacing one form of mastery with another, *The Gold Diggers* transforms the polarised discourse of knowing/not knowing into a mutually activating and activated space, confirming what Stephen Heath refers to as the constant reimplication of the analyst in the discourse of the Other:

[...] the analyst is not the possessor of a diploma but the site of listening attention in which he or she is constantly surprised, reimplicated.³⁹

Both Julia Kristeva and Jacques Lacan argue that the recognition of the illusory status of the knowing

analyst (in other words, the acknowledgment of the illusory status of the object of love - the mother) has a direct bearing on our perception of the relation between knowledge and authority. The knowing analyst should simultaneously display and relinquish the attributes of "the master", suggesting that the successful analyst, the successful teacher and, indeed, the successful subject remains cautious of being permanently fixed as an object of transference.⁴⁰

**Amorous Transference: Towards an Erotics
of Inter-racial Mutuality**

Although the possibility of lesbian desire is never far from the surface of the film there are only two scenes where this amorous discourse is narrativised - that is in the ballroom rescue scene and in Celeste's dream. In Episode IV, the black woman rides into a crowded ballroom and rescues the screen goddess [fig. 3.3]; later in Episode IX, Ruby, the erstwhile star, carries Celeste into a world of dreams [fig. 3.4]. Not only do these two tableaux function as mirrored reversals - with first one woman and then the other playing the role of "rescuer" - but, in both moments, the relation between the maternal rescuer [the analyst] and the rescued subject [the analysand] is sexualised. For instance, the dramatic horseback escape invokes an

unmistakable scenario of *jouissance* which is heightened by the soundtrack of the pounding horses hooves.⁴¹ Later, when Ruby carries Celeste into the world of dreams, the pulse of the body is registered at an aural level in the slow rhythm of long chords.⁴² This latter scene invokes the space of pre-oedipal intimacy which is eroticised in the prefacing shots of Ruby caressing the nape of the sleeper's neck [fig 3.5].

In view of the history of exploitation and coercion between white women and black women, how can we explain why Celeste rescues and loves Ruby? And of equal importance why does Ruby listen to, love and desire the black woman? What activates these two polarised subjects to construct an amorous discourse which is not based on a hierarchical model of exclusion and subjugation? These questions are addressed in detail in Chapters Five and Six, my main concern at this juncture in the thesis is to establish a theoretical framework which can account for the reciprocity which links these two traditionally divided subjects.

In contrast to the model of desire based on exclusion (portrayed in the film by the men's desire for gold/power) the amorous discourse between the two heroines is framed by a Kristevan model of transference love based on the '[...] logic of *analogy* and *non-exclusive opposition*'.⁴³ The intellectual lineage of

Kristeva's preoccupation with the amorous subtext of psychoanalytic transference can be traced to the writing of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. In a letter to Jung, written in 1906, Freud asserted that psychoanalysis '[...] is essentially a cure through love.'⁴⁴ Indeed, the link between analytic love and processes of transference is central to an understanding of Freud's model of the analytic relation. He argued that the displacement of an early love-trauma onto the figure of the analyst can expose and unbind the analysand's unresolved crises from the past.⁴⁵ In much of her writing in the 1980's, particularly *Tales of Love* and *In the Beginning was Love*, Julia Kristeva followed up Freud's suggestion that the transformative function of the analytic relation is contingent on the development of a discourse of love:⁴⁶

[...] it is through want of love that sends the subject into analysis, which proceeds by first restoring confidence in, and capacity for, love through transference, and then enabling the subject to distance himself or herself from the analyst.⁴⁷

The ego in need of analytic "cure" is, according to Kristeva, in need of love.⁴⁸ Like the boy Narcissus, the subject in need of love cannot separate from the mother. Unable to develop the narcissistic energy necessary to generate his or her imaginary powers, the subject is trapped within an inward looking spiral. From a Kristevan perspective, primary

narcissistic energies play a foundational role in the constitution of individual subjectivity. The pre-oedipal infant blocks the mother's absence with narcissistic energy and attempts to construct an amatory bridge between the internalised image of the mother and a third party. Kristeva argues that this primary narcissistic bridge forms the basis of the child's ego and underpins its subsequent ability to narrativise (imagine) the initial loss of and desire for the retroactively identified mother. The damaged narcissist refers to the subject who is unable to generate and convert narcissistic drive energies into "narrative".

In Kristeva's writing the figuration of a third party in the primary domain is commensurate with Freud's archaic father of individual pre-history - he is '[...] the one who loves us, not the one who judges us'.⁴⁹ The pre-verbal configuration of the father, like that of the mother, is a sexually undifferentiated figure - thus enabling him to act as a stand-in for the absent (m)other. From this perspective the retroactively gendered parent figures represent two maternal/paternal amalgams and the infant's ability to interchange the one for the other informs subsequent patterns of idealisation and love.⁵⁰ In this sense Kristeva's model is more in tune with that of Melanie Klein than a Lacanian point of view, in so far as both

Kristeva and Klein regard the search for non-verbal symbols as a defensive/constitutive activity of substitution (designed to fill the gap between mother and child) instituted in the primary phase of development.⁵¹

As I mentioned earlier, the transference relation between analyst and analysand allows the patient to verbalise her unconscious (repressed) wishes and desire - in effect the analytic relation permits the analysand to remember, dramatise and reinvent the original struggle of the first love-relation. Transference love liquidates the blocking function of the compulsion to repeat and narrativises Otherness as a source for transformation rather than a threat.⁵² The individual subject's ability to absorb and hence defuse externally induced threats leads to a more flexible psychic system. Conversely, resistance to change can lead to a collapse of the psychic space, leaving the person '[...] anaesthetized, as if "dead"'.⁵³

In the film the analytic relation constructed between Celeste and Ruby generates an open learning disposition which resembles the form of love characterised by Kristeva as agape.⁵⁴ Agape is a "gift" which is neither a reward, nor part of an exchange.⁵⁵ With reference to the pre-Cartesian texts of Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas, Kristeva replaces Descartes' **ego cogito ergo sum** with: '[...] I

am to the extent that I am loved, therefore I love in order to be'.⁵⁶ In contrast to "eros" which strives to control (and fetishise) its object, agape is an active, even passionate, identification with an ideal other based on the recognition of difference. Agape love is thus not necessarily removed from sexual love, but posits a '[...] harmonious identification with the Loved One'.⁵⁷

Indeed, when Kristeva reformulated Descartes' aphorism into *I love in order to be*, she was indicating that our sense of subjectivity is created in relation to the discourse of the Other. Rather than being seen as a threat, the Other becomes a participant in the subjectivity of the damaged speaker. Similarly, Ruby discovers that it is only through relinquishing her traditional position of mastery over the black woman (i.e. submitting to the transference implications of analytic love) that she can both recognise and reformulate the pre-given discourse of coercion and subjugation which haunts their relation. As we shall see in the penultimate section of the chapter, this stance has ethical implications for feminism.

The Semiotic Chora, the Symbolic, the Thetic

Where Kristeva's model of the analytic relation concentrates on intra and inter-psychic processes, her

earlier work set out to redefine the links between the speaking subject, the social and textuality. In a bid to challenge the contemporary structuralist and humanist accounts in which the subject is either produced by or transcends socio-cultural formations, Kristeva anchored her concept of subjectivity within the dynamic operations of the text.⁵⁸ In so doing she created a theoretical model within which the subject is at once enunciated and enunciating. This new subject has the capacity for innovative thought - it is to quote Kristeva in process/on trial, constantly redefining itself, its sociality and its history in speech, writing and in art practice.⁵⁹

Kristeva argues that sign systems (and hence subjectivities) are constantly remade in the dialectic encounter between the conflicting dispositions of the semiotic and the symbolic. Once again signalling her distance from formalist linguistic theory, Kristeva's "semiotic" refers to the uncontained, heterogeneous and raw materiality of language - an unformed substance orchestrated into a meaningful framework by the symbolic.⁶⁰ Borrowing a term from Plato, she names this undifferentiated primary universe created and mediated in the shared relationship between mother and child, as the *chora*.⁶¹

Located elsewhere, distant, permissive, always already in the past: such is the *chora* that the mother is called upon

to produce with her child so that a semiotic disposition might exist.⁶²

In Kristeva's writing the chora is described as a domain of corporeal residues, imprints and energies associated with an erotogenic level of polymorphous pleasures and volatile drives preceding the construction of an imaginary unified image of oneness.⁶³ It is:

[...] not yet a position that represents something for someone (i.e., it is not a sign); nor is it a position that represents someone for another position (i.e., it is not a signifier either); it is, however, generated in order to attain to this signifying position. Neither model nor copy, the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularisation, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm.⁶⁴

However, it must be remembered that choric materiality precedes the functions of language and can only be apprehended hypothetically from the vantage point of the symbolic.⁶⁵ The symbolic both initiates and orchestrates '[...] the limits and unity of a signifying practice', thus enabling the subject to translate its own experiences into meaningful signs.⁶⁶ So, although the ordering function of the symbolic represses and sublimates the uncoded pressures of the semiotic, this pre-verbal material is its life blood - the symbolic cannot exist without it. Likewise, although the semiotic both precedes and continually threatens the stability of the symbolic, it nevertheless relies on the symbolic to give voice, form and meaning to its amorphous materiality. In short,

the speaking subject is caught in the encounter between these two modalities and is thus always '[...] both semiotic and symbolic [...]'.⁶⁷

As we have seen Kristeva locates the base-line of object formation and the first experiences of a regulating force [réglementation] in the primary choric phase of life.⁶⁸ However, despite the infant's early encounters with "objects", Kristeva nevertheless concedes that the formal organisation of a meaningful and seemingly individual self-image is a consequence of the work of the *thetic* - which includes the mirror phase and symbolic castration.⁶⁹ The *thetic* provides a threshold between the child's absorption in semiotic motilities and its need to communicate - in other words, the *thetic* creates an opportunity for the choric infant to construct and project a "thesis" about itself.⁷⁰

Replicating the sphere of the unconscious, the semiotic space of the *chora* is a product of repression. An unwillingness to let go of the semiotic signals an inability to narrativise the early experiences of loss and difference - leading to inward looking melancholia, psychosis and the Lacanian real (death).⁷¹ Conversely, the individual who attempts to obliterate the pre-verbal domain of semiotic materiality condemns language to fetishisation and stasis.⁷² In addition, like the unconscious, the semiotic cannot pre-exist the naming

process, but is realised in the process of semiosis - referring to the confrontation and compromise between the motility of semiotic and the symbolic, which begins at birth and continues throughout life.⁷³

Genotext/Phenotext and Revolutionary Poetics

In her theoretical framework of semiosis, Kristeva identifies two further configurations which correspond loosely to the semiotic and symbolic operations discussed above: these are the genotext and the phenotext. The genotext is the material source of language and as such it refers to a productive process rather than identifiable signs. The phenotext is the ordering and communicative function of language. Where the genotext supplies the musicality, pulse and material of a language, the phenotext is an orderly conservative mechanism which frames the corporeality of the genotext within a systematic framework of identifiable signs.⁷⁴

Within textual production, the repressed materiality of the semiotic (the genotext) is visible in the discontinuities of a work - be it in written, visual or musical texts. This might take the form of unprecedented breaks in linear narrative, syntactical elisions, rhythmic juxtapositions, unlikely vocal gestures, challenging interruptions (such as laughter)

and changes in tempo or shifts in time and space - all of which pluralise established meanings.⁷⁵ These breaks (affirmative negativities) in the text are the prerequisite of poetic practice. They signal the work of the genotext, they disrupt the function of the thetic - they "musicalise" and "pulverise" the authority, stability and unity of the symbolic.

Kristeva describes these discontinuities as:

[...] a resumption of the functioning of the characteristic of the semiotic *chora* within the signifying device of language. This is precisely what artistic practices, and notably poetic language, demonstrate.⁷⁶

Kristeva's model of poetic practice challenges the transcendental aims of the thetic - instead of establishing a fixed concept of "identity" it accesses the '[...] place where the signifying process is carried out'.⁷⁷ From this point of view, poetic language denaturalises and unsettles the denotative rationality of language through undoing the work of repression.

The repressive function is of course set in place by denial. However, we must keep in mind that in her interpretation of Hegel's concept of negativity Kristeva distinguishes between the negations (denial/nothingness) associated with the function of logic and the generative work of "negativity" and "rejection" associated with primary facilities of unbound drives.⁷⁸ She argues that the transcendental tendency of the thetic can be undermined by texts which

refuse to conform to the binding logic of Western culture.⁷⁹ These moments of textual transgression signal a decentring of the notion of a fixed ego and are referred to by Kristeva as "practice":

The moment of transgression is the key moment in practice: we can speak of practice wherever there is a transgression of systematicity, i.e. a transgression of the unity proper to the *transcendental* ego.⁸⁰

In *The Gold Diggers* Ruby's outbursts of laughter as she escapes her "roles" as gold idol and daughter, can be read as an example of affirmative negativity. In Chapters Six and Eight I demonstrate the extent to which Ruby's disruptive hilarity negates the masculine principles of the symbolic and evokes a space anterior to the governing work of thethetic. Indeed, her public show of strength (her outright denial of her pre-given "script" and her new found ability to return his gaze) is triggered by her imaginary reconstruction of a series of memory pictures anchored in the pre-verbal space of maternal productivity.

The Maternal Space and Ethical Practice

In Kristeva's writing the history and the processes of the subjectivity and textuality are implicated in the work of maternal productivity. On the one hand, the analyst temporarily occupies the role of the lost mother, thus allowing the analysand to

reinvent the scene of partition; on the other, the agitational textual practice of poetic language provides access to the repressed productivity of *Maternity*.⁸¹ We are however talking here about a process rather than the specificity of the mother. As Elizabeth Grosz has pointed out, the maternal in Kristeva's writing designates:

[...] both a space and a series of functions and processes. But it must not be confused with a *subject*, for the maternal is a process without a subject'.⁸²

According to Kristeva the actual subject of motherhood has been *sacrificed* in the name of the Father.⁸³ Not only have men rendered unspeakable the activities from which they are excluded - such as gestation, birth, lactation and the early post-natal interactions between the infant and its mother - but they have substituted these "alienating" experiences with either a sanitised representation of the mother/child dyad (anchored in the retrospective fantasy of the phallic mother) or they have downgraded the maternal function as irrational, drive laden and psychotic.⁸⁴

Kristeva suggests that the heavily repressed and defiled space of maternity represents a threat to the stability of the status quo, not least because the actuality of childbirth invokes a reunion between the childbearing woman with the body of her own mother. This retroactively identified *homosexual-maternal* facet

of jouissance between the infant and the mother, within which the mother occupies both the position of her own mother and that of the child, is outlined in

'Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini' and 'Stabat Mater':

By giving birth, the woman enters into contact with her mother; she is her own mother; they are the same continuity differentiating itself. She thus actualises the homosexual facet of motherhood, through which a woman is simultaneously closer to her instinctual memory, more open to her own psychosis, and consequently, more negatory of the social, symbolic bond.⁸⁵

This sphere of the woman-mother is described as a '[...] whirl of words, a complete absence of meaning and seeing; it is a feeling of displacement, rhythm, sound flashes and fantasised clinging to the maternal body as a screen against the plunge.'⁸⁶ However, in the same text Kristeva argues that despite the mother's negatory tendencies towards the symbolic, the space of maternity is paradoxically marked by the mother's propensity to collude with men: '[...] if she were not phallic then every speaker would be led to conceive of its Being in relation to void, a nothingness [...]'⁸⁷

Elizabeth Grosz contends that Kristeva's concept of maternity denies women the status of agency, suggesting that if, as Kristeva claims, the maternal is the '[...] unspoken foundation of all social and signifying relations, "origin" of all heterogeneity, source and primal object of archaic jouissance', the principle of maternity is nevertheless repressed by the psychic and

social need for stability and order.⁸⁸ However, through raising the question of maternal productivity as the pre-condition of the symbolic and signification, Kristeva draws attention to the maternal term - stressing that the binary model of eternal icon and psychotic woman is retrospectively put in place. From this perspective the repression of maternal productivity is never complete, the masculine principle is never secure, precisely because it must repress the terms of its existence. In other words, it is not a matter of either accepting or rejecting an idealised image of an omnipotent phallic mother;⁸⁹ but of retrieving and *reinventing* the maternal space in relation to processes of production, reproduction, time and subjectivity.⁹⁰

Kristeva is thus seeking to establish a model of enunciation within which the transactions between the mother/daughter couple and the "symbolic paternal facet" are *openly* in negotiation.⁹¹ The ethical dimension of this model lies in the potential of the maternal function in the interrogation of rule-bound authority of the symbolic contract. Indeed, from a Kristevan perspective, the questioning daughter who refuses to turn her back on the innovative possibilities of the maternal facet is tantamount to a refusal to play at being the master - a refusal to "play God".

The question is: " Who plays God in present day feminism?" Man? or Woman - his substitute? As long as any libertarian movement, feminism included, does not analyse its own relationship to power and does not renounce its belief in its own identity, it is capable of being coopted both by power and an overtly religious or lay spiritualism.⁹²

In her essay 'Stabat Mater' Kristeva challenges women to re-evaluation of the link between women and reproduction. Rather than substituting the reified maternal icon with an "alternative" image of "woman", she suggests that women revise the concept of ethics and create a heretical ethics - a *herethics* - to retrieve the condemned maternal facet from the grip of the socio-symbolic contract.⁹³

[...] real female innovation (in whatever social field) will only come about when maternity, female creation, and the link between them is better understood. But for this to happen we must stop making feminism a new religion, undertaking or sect and begin work on specific detailed analysis which will take us beyond romantic melodrama and beyond complacency [...].⁹⁴

It is perhaps also necessary to be a *woman* to attempt to take up that exorbitant wager of carrying the rational project to the outer borders of the signifying venture of men [...].⁹⁵

If ethics amounts to not avoiding the embarrassing and inevitable problematics of the law but giving it flesh, language and *jouissance* - in that case its reformulation demands the contribution of women.⁹⁶

Kristeva's proposal that women rather than men are more likely to disrupt the rational logic of patriarchy brings up the apparent contradiction between, on the one hand, her insistence that '[...] without the movement, no work of any woman would ever really be possible'⁹⁷ and, on the other, her view that: '[...] the belief that "one is a woman" is almost as absurd and obscurant as the belief that "one is a man"'.⁹⁸ How can the

assertion that woman cannot "be" sustain the declaration that women should challenge the status of masculine logic? The way forward lies in Kristeva's understanding of *truth*.

She argues that although specifiable truths are a necessary anchor for political and ethical action, these truths require *transformation*. Truth is always necessary: '[...] I interpret, the analyst says, because meaning exists' - but this "meaning", this "truth" is transferential, always relative and always provisional.⁹⁹ In other words, as a writer and as a reader I must interrogate the truths lying at the baseline of my own convictions. This line of action avoids both the stance adopted by deconstruction theorists for whom truth does not exist and it defuses the humanist search for an alternative, pre-existing truth. So, in contrast to the conventional understanding of religious and political truths, Kristevan truth has no long term status, it has no history - what was true yesterday is not necessarily true tomorrow.¹⁰⁰ Truth is thus always provisional, constructed in the here and now, in the discourse linking the analyst with the analysand, linking the mother with the child.¹⁰¹

So, when Kristeva argues that 'woman cannot "be"', she is referring to the impossibility, other than on an interim basis, of identifying a pre-existing set of

categories which apply exclusively to women:

[...] we must use "we are women" as an advertisement or slogan for our demands. On a deeper level, however, woman cannot "be" [...] It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we might say "that's not it" and "that's still not it".¹⁰²

The reformulation of rationally abstracted truths into an affirmative negativity of *that's not it* is '[...] inseparable for the Hegelian notion of *Being* [...]', in as much that it '[...] splits and prevents the closing up of Being within an abstract and superstitious understanding'.¹⁰³ In addition, Kristeva's insistence on the provisional nature of truth brings us back to the analyst's ultimate refusal to act as ideal-ego for the damaged other.

Kristeva's identification of the productive facet of the maternal relation, in conjunction with her reluctance to grant woman a permanent form can be read as an attack on Freud's profoundly derisory assumptions concerning women's inability to engage in ethical action.

I cannot evade the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that the level which is ethically normal is different in women from what it is in men [...] they show less sense of justice than men, and they are less ready to submit to the greater exigencies of life than men [...].¹⁰⁴

In the same paragraph Freud maintains that women are '[...] more often influenced in their judgements by feelings of affection and hostility [...]'.¹⁰⁵ This tendency to be swayed by emotion is, according to Freud, a result of an underdeveloped super-ego which,

in women, is '[...] never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it of men.'¹⁰⁶

In the Freudian model, ethics plays a role in the construction of the masculine super-ego at the expense of women - he argues that men's ethical proclivity can save humanity from the moral abyss signalled by woman. In contrast to Freud's misogyny, Kristevan ethics is a frontier activity, practised by an outsider, a dissident, who has adopted '[...] a stance involving otherness, distance, even limitation [...]'.¹⁰⁷ Where the Freudian "man" is threatened by outsidership - the Other [she] must be kept at bay - for Kristeva the ethical act engages rather than represses the discourse of the Other.¹⁰⁸ Where Freud's legacy correlates ethics with the solidification and rationalisation of logic, morality and truth, Kristeva suggests that ethical action dismantles truths, goes against the grain, butts up against the status quo.

Kristeva's model of ethics complements Zygmunt Bauman's identification of the irrational underpinnings of ethical action. According to Bauman, the ethical act puts the agent at risk in that it entails speaking out against the uniformity of the mass and taking responsibility for the Other.¹⁰⁹ This form of moral awakening - 'Through making myself for-the-other, I make myself-for-myself' - creates a framework for my

reading of the reciprocity between the two women in *The Gold Diggers*.¹¹⁰ I shall argue that the provisional truths constructed in the transference relation between the black woman and the white woman replaces the conventional notion of male heroics with the risky business of (her)ethical action committed to the well-being of the Other.

As we have seen, from a Kristeva perspective the analysand's crisis is not only symptomatic of a cry for love, but is both an issue of representation and has ethical implications. We have also established that the psychic realignments in the analytic relation and the textual shifts associated with poetic practice engage the maternal taboo - as Elizabeth Grosz has pointed out: 'Ethics becomes necessary, for Kristeva, insofar as the maternal debt *needs to be spoken*'.¹¹¹ To quote Kristeva:

[...] its [ethical] reformulation demands the contribution of women. Of women who harbour the desire to reproduce (to have stability). Of women who are available so that our speaking species which knows it is mortal, might withstand death. Of mothers. For an heretical ethics separated from morality, an *herethics* is perhaps no more than that which in life makes bonds, thoughts, and therefore the thought of death more bearable: herethics is undeath [*a-mort*], love *Eia mater, fons amoris* ... So let us again listen to the *Stabat Mater*, and the music, all the music ... it swallows up the goddesses and removes their necessity,¹¹²

***The Gold Diggers* and Kristeva's Model of Transgression**

Kristeva's theoretical reflections can help identify the work of meaning production in *The Gold*

Diggers. The emphasis in the film on non-sequential "theatres" alongside the visual and aural segmentation concur with Julia Kristeva's premise that the masculine principles underpinning the socio-symbolic contract are renovated at the intersection between existing symbolic codes and psychic pressures. In addition her model of the analytic relation provides a framework to chart the course steered by the co-stars between the unequal polarities of knowing/not-knowing and the construction of a mutually supportive discourse of change.

Recognising that the retrieval of their respective histories requires the reformulation of meanings the two women turn to each other for help. According to Kristeva, new meanings are generated in relation to the surplus material - the excess - underpinning existing sign systems. In other words, the relation of subject to subject and subject to text is forged within a '[...] structuring and de-structuring *practice*', which can never be reduced to a model of "reproduction".¹¹³ The subject cannot be contained by language, but is always provisionally framed in relation to that which *is* and *is not* spoken - likewise in *The Gold Diggers* *looker* and *speaker* are interlinked in the innovative process of meaning production.

In addition, it is not a matter of categorising the "influences" on the film, but of identifying the intertextual operations at work in the '[...]

transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another'.¹¹⁴ For instance, the strategy in *The Gold Diggers* of introducing female subjectivity in the form of a twice spoken riddle, directed at a female spectator, echoes Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's introductory sequence in *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977). The invocation of the already revised classic riddle signals a contemporary feminist discourse of change which challenges the traditionally legitimated place and space of the male speaker.

When Kristeva talks about the subject in process, she is referring to the constant renegotiation of a level of excess by a speaking subject who is both produced by and a producer of language. Rather than presenting the truth of the subject, the text is constantly reformed in the function of *semanalysis* which '[...] conceives of meaning not as a sign system but a *signifying process*'¹¹⁵ - a process, indeed a *practice* which sets '[...] categories and concepts ablaze - sparing not even the discourse itself'.¹¹⁶ The transgressions at work between the semiotic and symbolic in *The Gold Diggers* engages the spectator at a level of *semanalysis*. Meanings are generated in the moments of fragmentation, confusion and surprise when the logically ordered world of the symbolic is confronted by its own repressed materiality (in the maternal relation), thus giving form and meaning to

stories which have hitherto been trapped within the circularity of hysteria.

The key to subjective renewal and change, both in the film and in Kristeva's writing, lies in the generative possibilities of *Maternity*. In the film maternal productivity is invoked in the uncontained (choric) visual and aural elements of the text and in the transference relation between Celeste and Ruby. Although, as we shall see in Chapters Four, Seven and Nine, the "musicating" functions of maternal productivity are necessarily located outside narrative, the film does generate three new figures of "maternal" productivity: Ruby's rememortion of the mother's smiling face; Celeste dream-image of the maternal card player; and the figure of the industrial welder - the builder of seaworthy vessels [figs. 3.6; 3.7; 3.8].

In line with Kristeva's writing, the film opens up the process of enunciation to include encounters from the pre-verbal phase of life - suggesting that the conventional model of the psychoanalytic drama is a retrospectively constructed script which is open to reformulation. In other words, despite the fact of oedipalisation, despite the autocratic imposition of the masculine principle and despite the abjection (or phallicisation) of the mother by that same principle, the lost relation between the infant and the (m)other is open to revision. Herein lies the heroines'

project. Together they dismantle the representation of the screen goddess - '[...] so let us again listen to the *Stabat Mater*, and the music, all the music ... it swallows up the goddesses and removes their necessity'.¹¹⁷

In addition, the film's focus on a Kristevan concepts of ethical action, the analytic relation and poetic practice defuses the polarised concepts of *have* and *have-not* in the construction of "identity". As we shall see, the reciprocity between the two women attests to their resolve to seek out and revise the repressed Other of the masculine principle. Similarly, Celeste's "revolutionary" intervention in the discourses of philosophy and finance associated with the expert and the office supervisor are framed by her desire to reformulate the discourse of power.¹¹⁸ Read from a Kristevan perspective, the heroines are working on themselves and on each other, re-orchestrating their own sense of subjectivity within the context of the unfamiliar stories of the Other. As spectators we are invited to join them in the work of inventing new object/referent links in order to arrive at new conclusions.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Roland Barthes, 'La Quinzaine', quoted in: Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p.1.
2. Julia Kristeva, *Séméiotiké/Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969). Two essays from this collection 'The Bounded Text' and 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' have been translated and reprinted in: Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984). See n.11.
3. Julia Kristeva, 'Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science', trans. by Seán Hand, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp.74-88 (pp.77-78).
4. Philip Lewis, 'Revolutionary Semiotics', *Diacritics*, 4 (1974), 28-32 (p.29).
5. Julia Kristeva, 'Signifying Practice and the Mode of Production', *Edinburgh '76 Magazine*, 1 (1976), 64-75 (p.64).
6. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller, introduction by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p.209.
7. Leon. S. Roudiez, 'Introduction', *Desire in Language*, p.6.
8. It is usual to discuss Kristeva's writing in relation to two phases, see: Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.168; Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversion* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p.41; John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *Abjection, Melancholia, and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.1. John Lechte has identified three phases to Kristeva's intellectual path: (i) her work during the late 1970s and early 80s which focuses on the "productivity" of texts; (ii) her work in the 1970s which is anchored in her doctoral thesis *La Révolution du langage poétique* and explores the relation of speaking subject to language; and (iii) her increasing commitment to psychoanalysis as an explicatory instrument to account for the nature of

personal experience and change. John Lechte, *Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.4-7.

9. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

10. Julia Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989). See also: Julia Kristeva, 'Place Names', *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon. S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.271-294; Julia Kristeva, 'Preface', *Desire in Language*; Julia Kristeva, 'Psychoanalysis and the Polis', trans. by Margaret Waller, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (London: Blackwell, 1986), pp.301-320; Julia Kristeva, 'Within the Microcosm of "The Talking Cure"', trans. by Thomas Gora and Margaret Waller, *Psychiatry and the Humanities(6): Interpreting Lacan*, ed. by Joseph Smith and William Kerrigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).pp.33-48.

11. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (London: Blackwell, 1981 [first published by Columbia University Press in 1980]). Eight of the ten essays in this text were first published in the collection of seventeen essays in *Polylogue* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1977).

12. Leon S. Roudiez, 'Introduction', *ibid*, pp.1-20.

13. *The Gold Diggers*, Chapter Two, Episode V, pp.74-75 and Chapter Seven.

14. *The Gold Diggers*, Chapter Two, Episode X, pp.80-83 and Chapter Eight.

15. Joseph Breuer, "Fräulein Anna O", trans. by James and Alix Strachey, in Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, PFL 3, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp.73-102 (pp.74, 83); see also: John Forrester, 'Freud's Female Patients/Female Analysts', *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. by Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp.134-139.

16. Stephen A. Kurtz, 'In the Analytic Theatre', *Free Associations*, 6 (1986), 100-123 (p.100).
17. D. W. Winnicott, 'Playing: its Theoretical Status in the Clinical Situation', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 49 (1968), 591-9 (p. 591).
18. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, p.17.
19. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.22, 58, 233.
20. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p.26.
21. Philip Lewis has described Kristeva's relation to '[...] both Hegel and Marx, which are extremely complex and never acquiescent, certainly do not allow cursory characterisation.' Lewis, 'Revolutionary Semiotics', p.29, n.1. See Kristeva's exposition of affirmative negativity in: Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.107-164. Note also: W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.51, 82, 86, 109.
22. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.113.
23. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, p.2.
24. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, p.ix.
25. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, p.26.
26. Kristeva, 'Within the Microcosm of the Talking Cure', p.46.
27. *Ibid.*, p.46.
28. Julia Kristeva, 'Psychoanalysis and the Polis' trans. by Margaret Waller, *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.301-320 (p.310).
29. *Ibid.*, p.310.
30. *Ibid.*, p.311.
31. Kristeva, 'Psychoanalysis and the Polis', pp.309, 311.
32. *Ibid.*, p.309.

33. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp.253-255.
34. At the beginning of the film, between the two versions of the *Riddle*, Celeste announces '[...] time is short, we have 90 minutes to find each other'.
35. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, p.2.
36. Kristeva, 'Within the Microcosm of "The Talking Cure"', p.46.
37. Celeste's alternate roles as analyst and dreamer are addressed in detail in Chapters Seven and Nine.
38. André Green, *On Private Madness* (London: Hogarth, 1986), p.290.
39. Stephen Heath, 'Difference', *Screen*, 19, 3 (1978), 51-112 (p.52).
40. As Constance Penley and Toril Moi have recently demonstrated, men are granted direct access to knowledge whilst women are expected to relate to knowledge through men. Referring to the writing of Shoshona Felman and Michèle Le Doeuff, they argue that the discourse of mastery confines women to the positions of eternal analysand and/or eternal disciple. Toril Moi, 'Transference/Countertransference', *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, edit. by Elisabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) pp.431-435; Constance Penley, *The Future of Illusion: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.166-181.
41. See my analysis of the rescue scene in Chapter Six.
42. See my analysis of the dream sequence in Chapter Nine.
43. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', *Desire in Language*, pp.64-91 (p.72).
44. Peter Gay, *Freud, A Life for our Time* (London: Dent, 1988), p.301.
45. Sigmund Freud, 'The Dynamics of Transference', Standard Edition XII, trans and ed. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1962), pp.97-108); Sigmund Freud, 'Observations on Transference-Love', trans. and ed. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1962), pp.157-171; Sigmund Freud, 'Construction in Analysis', Standard Edition XXIII, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1937), pp. 257-269; Sigmund Freud, 'Analysis

Terminable and Interminable', trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth), pp.216-253.

46. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*; Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*.

47. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, p.3.

48. Ruby's narcissistic injury is discussed in Chapter Seven.

49. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p.313

50. Julia Kristeva in conversation with Rosalind Coward, *ICA Documents: Desire*, ed. by Lisa Appignanesi (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1984), 22-27 (p.23).

51. Melanie Klein, 'The Importance of Symbol Formation in the Development of the Ego', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 11 (1930), pp.24-39.

52. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, 13-16, 379-382; Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, pp.48, 61.

53. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p.82.

54. Kristeva reference to agape love and eros is indebted to Anders Nygren 1926 study: *Eros and Agapè, La Notion chrétienne de l'amour et ses transformations*. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p.393, n.1.

55. Lisa Appignanesi, ed., 'Julia Kristeva in Conversation with Rosalind Coward', *ICA Documents: Desire* (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1984), 22-27.

56. Kristeva's formulation of agape is also outlined in: Lechte, *Julia Kristeva*, pp.172-174. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p.171.

57. *Ibid.*, p.166.

58. Julia Kristeva, 'The System and the Speaking Subject', *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.24-33 (p.25).

59. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.34-61 (p.36); Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.269-270.

60. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.21-24.

61. Julia Kristeva, 'From One Identity to An Other', *Desire in Language*, p.133. The following writers are amongst those who have accused Kristeva of valorising a new form of essentialism within which the chora functions as an apolitical, maternal space: Parveen Adams and Beverley Brown, 'The Feminine Body and Feminist Politics', *m/f*, 3 (1979), 36-50; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.80-90; Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Julia Kristeva on Femininity: the Limits fo the Semiotic Space', *Feminist Review*, 18 (1984), 56-73 (pp.58, 59, 70); Andrea Nye, 'Woman Clothed with the Sun: Julia Kristeva and the Escape from Language', *signs*, 12, 4 (1987), 664-686 (pp.680-681). These criticisms have been countered by numerous theorists including: Claire Pajaczkowska, 'Introduction to Kristeva', *m/f*, 5-6 (1981), 149-157; Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp.165-166; Patricia Elliot, *From Mastery to Analysis: Theories of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp.190-229; Pam Morris, 'Re-routing Kristeva: from pessimism to parody', *Textual Practice*, 6,1 (1992), pp.31-46.

62. Kristeva, 'Place Names', *Desire in Language*, p.286.

63. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.25-30.

64. Ibid., p.26.

65. Ibid., pp.27-30; Kristeva, 'Place Names', pp.283-286.

66. Julia Kristeva, 'Signifying Practice and Mode of Production' *Edinburgh Review*, 1 (1976), 64-75 (p.68).

67. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.24.

68. Ibid., p.26.

69. Ibid., pp.48-63.

70. Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, p.162.

71. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, pp.33-58.

72. Kristeva argues that although fetishism is a compromise with the thetic - it amounts to a displacement of the "thesis" onto the drives which leads to stasis. A thetic "sign" and a fetish can be differentiated through the capacity of the former to signify. In contrast, the latter substitutes a thing which cannot be said for another thing which also

cannot be said. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.62-67.

73. Ibid., pp.22-23, 26.

74. Ibid., pp.86-89.

75. Ibid., pp.217-225.

76. Ibid., p.50.

77. Ibid., p.203.

78. Ibid., pp.109-164.

79. Ibid., p.110.

80. Kristeva, 'The System and the Speaking Subject', p.29.

81. Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', p.161.

82. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p.79.

83. Julia Kristeva, 'Woman's Time', trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.187-213 (p.199).

84. It is thus hardly surprising that the celebrated mother/child icon of Christianity ignores the daughter in favour of the idealised relation between the son and the untainted mother. Indeed, there is no equivalent, historically identifiable discourse which tracks the bond between the daughter and her mother.

85. Kristeva, 'Motherhood According to Bellini', *Desire in Language*, pp.237-270, p.239; see also Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', trans. by Leon S. Roudiez, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (London: Blackwell, 1986), pp.160-185, p.184.

86. Kristeva, 'Motherhood According to Bellini', pp.239-240.

87. Ibid., p.238.

88. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, pp.78-85, 81. In an attempt to counter the criticisms of essentialism and anti-feminism levelled at Kristeva's model of maternity Patricia Elliot has identified three different aspects of maternity in Kristeva's writing: the concept of maternity associated with: (i) the semiotic drives of the body; (ii) the cultural representation of the

mother; (iii) the unconscious (repressed) experience of motherhood. Elliot's argument is constructed in response to Kaja Silverman suggestion that Kristeva condemns women to the pre-lingual babble of infancy. According to Elliot, Silverman not only collapses the concept of maternity with that of femininity, but she pushes this female composite into a drive laden, pre-verbal space. Patricia Elliot's argues that the strength of Kristeva's model lies in her identification of the complex pre-verbal and symbolic anchorage of the maternal, thus facilitating a more detailed critique than would otherwise be possible of the ways in which the maternal is repressed. She presents Kristeva's analyses of Lautréamont's and Mallarmé's writing as a case in point. Patricia Elliot, *From Mastery to Analysis: Theories of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp.209-229.

89. For instance in a early, frequently quoted article 'Signifying Practice and Mode of Production' published in the *Edinburgh '76 Magazine*, Kristeva asserts that where Lautréamont obliterates the maternal position from language, Mallarmé fetishises an idealised virgin/infant monad, '[...] in each case leaving scope for the regeneration of transcendence and the maintenance of the oppositions between structure and the infinite and between sign and drive process'. In other words the provisional truths of gestation, reproduction and separation have, in both instances, been replaced by totalising truths which serve the interests of men. Elliot, *From Mastery to Analysis*, p.215; Julia Kristeva, 'Signifying Practice and Mode of Production', *Edinburgh '76 Magazine*, 1 (1976), p.70.

90. Julia Kristeva, *About Chinese Women* (London: Marion Boyers, 1977); Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater'; Julia Kristeva, 'Woman's Time', trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.187-213.

91. Kristeva, 'Motherhood According to Bellini', p.239.

92. Julia Kristeva, 'Woman can Never be Defined', trans. by Marilyn A. August, *New French Feminism*, ed. by Elaine Marks and Isabelle Courtivron (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp.137-141 (pp.141).

93. *Ibid.*, p.185.

94. Julia Kristeva, 'A New Type of Intellectual: the Dissident', trans. by Seán Hand, *The Kristeva Reader*, (pp.292-300), p.298.

95. Kristeva, 'Desire in Language', p.x.

96. Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', p.185.
97. Kristeva, 'Woman can Never be Defined', p.138.
98. Ibid., p.137.
99. Julia Kristeva, 'Psychoanalysis and Polis', trans. by Margaret Waller, *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.301-321 (p.312).
100. Ibid., pp.312-313.
101. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, pp.18-21. See also my pp.109.
102. Julia Kristeva, 'Woman Can Never Be Defined', p.137.
103. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.113.
104. Sigmund Freud, 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes', trans. by James Strachey, *On Sexuality*, PFL 7, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp.323-343 (p.342).
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, p.ix.
108. Kristeva identifies four groups of dissidents who contribute to the immobilisation of symbolic authority: the intellectual, the psychoanalyst, the writer and women. Julia Kristeva, 'A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident', *The Kristeva Reader*, pp.292-300.
109. Zygmunt Bauman, Lecture Series: Issues of Post-Modernism, Leeds University: 23.01.93.
110. Zygmunt Bauman, *Morality and Immorality and Other Life Strategies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p.202.
111. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p.91.
112. Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', p.185.
113. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.17.
114. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.59-60.

115. Kristeva, 'The System and the Speaking Subject', p.28.
116. Kristeva, 'Preface', *Desire in Language*, pp.vii-xi (p.vii).
117. Kristeva, *Stabat Mater*, p.185.
118. *The Gold Diggers*, Chapter Two, Episodes VI and VII, pp.75-79 and Chapter Five, pp.173-182.

PART II

Chapter Four
THE LITTLE HUT IN ICELAND
(Episode X (i) and (v))

The decision to film in Iceland grew out of the collaborative impetus generated between Sally Potter, Rose English and Lindsay Cooper.¹ In the eyes of the three co-writers, the idea of juxtaposing theatrically constructed studio shots with scenes shot in an ice-locked landscape seemed an appropriate strategy to explore and disrupt the binary principle underlying the twin functions of signification and repression.²

Where, on the one hand, the studio scenes draw attention to the ways in which the classic cinema naturalises culturally constructed stories; on the other, the transition from the glacial freeze at the beginning of the film to the images of stony ground, tundra, water and the ocean at the close of the film, can be read as a coded reference to the generative force of '[...] that frozen sea within us' - the unconscious.³

The central "object" used in the film to liquidate the conventional nature/culture binary is a little wooden hut. The dogged ubiquity of the little hut with its corrugated tin roof, metal chimney, narrow door and tiny window, is matched by its own infrangible history.

It was designed by Rose English to mimic the dwellings in gold-rush movies and Westerns and it also evokes the little huts within which children construct their own world - a world contrived to both assimilate and counter the pressures adults bring to bear on them.

Two versions of the hut were constructed for the film. One was built on site at the edge of the Lang Jokull glacier in Iceland and the other, a smaller cross-section, was assembled in the workshops at the Old Royal Free Hospital, London, for use in the Golden Lane Theatre scenes [figs. 4.1; 4.2].⁴ In August 1981, after the first shoot in Iceland, the team of local extras set the prototype of the hut alight. But, when Sally Potter and her film crew returned to Iceland for the reshoot in November of the same year, the little hut was still intact - it had refused to burn.⁵ However on the first day of the November shoot a violent blizzard completely wrecked the little hut. Indeed, the shots of the scattered wooden laths, half buried in the snow are a testimony to the crew's resolve to exploit the given situation [shot 1 (see shot chart pp.148-9); fig. 4.3].⁶ Subsequently, enough of the hut was retrieved from the snowdrifts to reconstruct the front wall, thus enabling the shoot to continue [figs. 4.4; 4.5].

As I have pointed out the shots of Iceland are used in the film to evoke the frozen layer of the

unconscious. This chapter demonstrates the extent to which the visual references to the snowbound hut generate the "body" of maternal pleasure which has been pushed out of reach - repressed by the mythologising conventions of story telling. In short, where the hut in the Golden Lane Theatre is associated with the centrality (and representability) of masculine principles, the little snowbound hut in Iceland signals the unrepresentable surplus associated with Julia Kristeva's concept of choric *Maternity*.⁷ These two versions of the hut can thus be read as symptomatic of the operational aims of symbolic and semiotic spheres, respectively. Where the former seeks to naturalise the male power politics underpinning the debilitating options of female silence and/or psychosis, the latter attempts to undermine the notion of fixed identity. In the course of the film, the privileged male voice associated with the Golden Lane Theatre is gradually transformed by the actions played out in the vicinity of the isolated little hut on the Lang Jokull glacier, thus allowing Ruby (and the spectator) to mobilise a new range of possibilities and pleasures which do not exclude or debase the actions of women.

Ruby's achievement in the film lies in her recognition that the meanings generated by the two versions of the little hut are interlinked within a *complementary* register of a "poetics" of change.⁸ In

other words, Ruby's search for the lost maternal body associated with the Icelandic hut is conducted within the context of the actions played out in the little hut in The Golden Lane Theatre. For instance, in the psychoanalytic drama played out in the *mise-en-scène* of the hut in Golden Lane Theatre (Episode X, scene (iv)) the mother subordinates her love for the daughter to the needs and pleasure of the father. Where she responds to the daughter in terms of duty, her relation to the father is framed by her overwhelming desire for his power (for his "gold"). Indeed, Ruby's dislocated rememorations of the little snowbound hut are meaningful only when read in the context of her struggle to renegotiate the terms of this family drama - a struggle which is pulled into focus during her meeting with the dancer (Episode X, scene (iii)) and her disquisition on the oedipal drama in the two Golden Lane Theatre scenes in the same episode.⁹

At the risk of over-emphasising this latter point, I must stress that Ruby's efforts to both resist and revise the masculine expectations in the Golden Lane Theatre are not achieved by replacing the conventional oedipal story with a pre-existing story of plenitude staged elsewhere in an archaic Icelandic hut. The link established in the film between the forgotten encounters associated with Ruby's lost history and her ability to transform her situation in the present

suggests that her changing sense of subjectivity is registered in the *negotiations* between symbolic and semiotic levels of existence.¹⁰ We are thus not talking about a rejection of oedipalisation as such, but rather a decentralisation of the conventionally privileged oedipal moment in the constitution of the speaking subject.

In the film, hardly an episode passes in which the snowbound version of the hut is not referred to, be it directly or indirectly. The significance of the little ice-locked hut is initially announced in the shots accompanying the directors prologue song *Seeing Red*. Although, I have already discussed the relationship between the visual and verbal tracks of the song in Chapter One, it is helpful in this more detailed focus on the little hut to duplicate the shot chart.¹¹

Seeing Red

Verse One

Went to the pictures
for a break.
thought I'd put my feet up.
have a bit of intake
But then a man with a gun
came in through the door
and when he kissed her
I couldn't take it any more

Chorus - accompanied by
scene-setting waltz)

Please, please, please
Give me back my pleasure

Sound track: Wind

Shot chart:

1. Camera scan [1 min] from left to right of snowscape and debris of hut (high angle)

Verse One

2. Path in snow (high angle, long take)
3. Woman walking along path in snow
4. Man's feet entering hut (high angle close-up)
5. Interior of hut, man and woman holding gold nuggets (tight close-up)

Chorus

6. Empty path (forward tracking)
7. Mother/child dyad (high

Please give me back my good night out	tracking)
Please give me back my leisure time	8. Empty path (forward tracking)
I've got the pleasure time blues I'm seeing red	9. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)
Verse Two	10. Empty path (forward tracking)
Picked up a book for a read.	11. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)
Thought I'd put my feet up	12. Woman walking away into snowscape (long take)
But, on page two	Verse Two
He wins the war page three	13. Empty path (high angle, forward tracking)
he's through her door	14. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)
I just can't take it any more	15. Hut in snowscape (medium shot)
	16. Woman struggling in wind (wide shot)
Chorus	17. Empty path (high angle, forward tracking)
	Chorus
Please, please, please	18. Woman's feet walking into frame (close-up)
Give me back my pleasure	19. Woman picks up toy horse from debris of hut (medium shot)
Please give me back my good night out	20. Woman's hands holding toy horse (tight close-up)
Please give me back my leisure time	21. Frozen landscape (long take, low angle, tracking from left to right)
I've got the pleasure time blues I'm seeing red	

The first shot in this sequence is a high angle camera pan (accompanied by the sound of a howling gale). Slowly scanning the frozen landscape, the camera eventually fixes on a few barely identifiable wooden laths piercing the hard, smooth surface of the frozen snow. These fragments are retrospectively identified as the scattered remains of the little hut. The shot of the snowscape dotted with the half buried remains of the hut is closely followed by three tiny one-shot dramas staged in the interior space of the magically reconstructed hut. The first "drama" is invoked by the shot of a man's feet walking through the door [shot 4; fig. 4.6]; the second shot is a close-up of the man and woman's hands holding a cluster of gold

nuggets [shot 5; fig. 4.7]; and the third features the mother holding her child [shot 7; fig. 4.8]. The latter shot of the maternal dyad is accompanied by Sally Potter's voice-over singing 'please, please, please give me back my pleasure'. This chorus line is repeated at the end of the song alongside a shot of the mother retrieving a tiny model horse from the ice-locked debris of the hut.

The above mentioned montage of shots suggests that the consequences of oedipalisation (the legitimation of the power/the gold of the father) can be challenged by pre-oedipal levels of experience invoked by the mother/infant dyad, the little hut and the identification of the mother as independent "archaeologist". Although, as I mentioned above, the scattered remains the hut are featured in shot 1, it is not until shot 15 of the second verse that we are presented with a full image of the snowbound hut - and, even then, the connections between it and the dispersed wooden laths in shot 1 are not self-evident, suggesting perhaps that an archaeology is required to uncover the deeply buried meanings associated with this choric signifier.

It is also noteworthy that the first full shot of the hut is bracketed by two shots of the woman struggling in the snow and wind, reminding us of the extent to which the mother is unwillingly banished to an ahistorical topography of silence [shots 14, 15, 16;

figs. 4.9; 4.10]. However, at the close of this sequence, the mother's struggle is replaced by an image of maternal accomplishment. In this latter shot the wind has subsided and once again the camera pans across bleak snowscape, but this time when the mother walks into the frame she bends down and retrieves the toy horse from the wreckage of the little hut [shots 18, 19, 20; fig. 4.11]. What is this shot telling us? Is the mother suggesting that the traditionally conservative role of the fairy tale horse can be reformulated to provide a vehicle of escape for women? I will return to the idea of a feminist revision of the fairy tale horse in Chapter Six, but for now I want to continue my investigation of the signifiatory dynamic generated by the two versions of the hut.

Let me begin with some very general observations about the notion of a hut. How do we respond to a picture of a hut? What is the difference between a hut and a home? The historically established meanings associated with these two signifiers are anchored in handed-down stories such as *Little Red Riding Hood* in which the figure of an archaic, possibly abandoned little hut functions as a polarised counterpoint to the sanctity of the home. Indeed, where the values in the home are usually set in place by the Father, the nature-bound hut is replete with lost secrets associated with women - in this environment anything

can happen. Consider, for instance, the struggle between "nature" and "culture" in Victor Sjöström's film *The Wind* (1927).¹² Here, as elsewhere in the history of the cinema, the interlinked figures of "woman" and "hut" are used as sliding signifiers and, predictably, narrative closure ensures that the traditional boundaries of control are reinstated. After a series of violent encounters ignited by a ferocious prairie wind, Lillian Gish is reunited with her husband. As if confirming the new found harmony between the married couple, their menial hut is transformed into a "home" and can once again function as guardian of the masculine principles underpinning community and family [fig. 4.12].¹³

In addition, it would seem that the notion of "house" is shot through with latent meanings associated with the binary concepts of hut and home. Gaston Bachelard has suggested that representations of houses can evoke a level of intimacy in the looker that transcend the narratives of daily life.¹⁴ Quoting Anne Balif he argues that a picture of a house can generate a psychic state which takes the looker back to the '[...] deepest dream shelter' of a prior happiness.¹⁵ Elsewhere in the same text he writes:

The more simple the engraved house the more it fires my imagination as an inhabitant. It does not remain a mere "representation". [...] The print house awakens a *feeling for the hut in me* and, through it, I re-experience the *penetrating gaze of the little window*.¹⁶

From Bachelard's point of view an image of the exterior of a house can awaken an internal dynamic that extends beyond the parameters of its four walls and invokes a deeply felt longing for something lost, beyond reach. He goes on to argue that this feeling of loss can be temporarily placated by the representation of an archaic hut. Where traditional narratives focus on the threatening subtext evoked by the figure of hut, for Bachelard the archaic hut is a utopian safe-haven.

The extent to which a representation of an isolated hut can generate an emotional response in the spectator - be it either a feeling of loss, or a reassuring aura of warmth and plenitude - is evident in the three shots of a snowbound cabin enclosed in a little glass ball in Orson Welles' enigmatic film *Citizen Kane* (1941). Despite its only fleeting appearance at the beginning, middle and end of the film, the spectator immediately recognises the importance of this glass encased hut [fig. 4.13]. Brilliantly described by Laura Mulvey as '[...] a narrative time bomb awaiting its moment, for the observant spectator to pick it up and take note', the three shots of the hut in the glass ball announce the missing link in our understanding of Kane's past.¹⁷

Similarly, in *The Gold Diggers*, the Icelandic hut functions as a signifier of Ruby's deeply felt need to revise the mise-en-scène of her own subjectivity. Time

and time again she returns to the memory of the little snowbound hut. Turning her back on the masculine principles acted out in the "home" in the Golden Lane Theatre, Ruby pursues this older more distant representation - it touches her - it appears, in Bachelard's words, to have "taken root" in her imaginary.

The poetic image places us at the origin of the speaking being [...] the image offered us by reading a poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given by another, but we begin to have the impression that we created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses [...].¹⁸

For Ruby the image of the snowbound hut becomes a vehicle of transport, it functions as a poetic image, a story telling device which both expresses something lost about herself and simultaneously she expresses it - she imagines and reworks this image. It is, I think, with reference to the level of excess underpinning this complex work of rememoration that Bachelard describes the poetic image as '[...] personally innovating [...]':

When I receive a new poetic image, I experience its quality of inter-subjectivity. I know I am going to repeat it in order to communicate my enthusiasm.¹⁹

Evoking stories triggered by the image of the little snowbound hut, Ruby is "filling" a hitherto painful void. An empty hut like an empty stage is *unimaginable*, it must be filled. Consider, for instance, Mari Mahr's photo-constructions of the free-

floating hut in 'a time in the South Pacific' (1986), or Pam Skelton's painted archaeologies framed by the groundplans of her various childhood homes [figs. 4.14; 4.15].²⁰ Not unlike the little Icelandic hut in *The Gold Diggers*, these dwellings bring with them the repressed and as yet unspoken histories of cultural and personal encounters and in so doing they invite the spectator to construct a narrative and thus play a part in the completion of meaning.

Before discussing the ways in which the Ruby's rememorations of the little hut in Iceland reactivate the lost experience of the mother/daughter bond, let me summarise the ground we have covered so far. I have argued that although the meanings associated with the hut in the Golden Lane Theatre function as the *mise-en-scène* of the traditional family unit, this scene generates a longing in Ruby for the occluded facet of life associated with the pre-verbal function of the mother. In contrast to the containing function of the hut in the Golden Lane Theatre, the little hut in Iceland is "outside" pre-given stories. In short, the crucial distinction between the staged image of the home and the shots of the little snowbound hut is registered at the level of narrative - where the former functions as a framing device for the status quo, the encounters associated with the latter have been

banished as Other.

In addition, it is clear that although Ruby's sense of longing is triggered by the hut in the Golden Lane Theatre, she repeatedly turns her back on this scene. Rather than confirming the psychoanalytic drama underscoring the traditional family scenario, she attempts instead to reimagine the lost fabula associated with the little ice-locked hut. Recalling images from the past she gradually reconstructs the memory puzzle of: the mother/child dyad; Ruby-the-child; the mother and father disappearing over the horizon; Ruby growing up; and finally the memory picture of Ruby looking through the little window of the hut and seeing a "reflection" of her own gaze [figs. 4.16; 4.17; 4.18, 4.19; 4.20; 4.21].²¹ The urgency of this psychic archaeology is confirmed by the shots of Ruby-the-child digging in the back garden of a terraced house, doubled by shots of Ruby-the-child digging in the proximity of the little hut in Iceland.²²

Where Kristeva's concept of poetic practice can help us understand how the narrative in the Golden Lane Theatre can be transformed by the "dazzling splendour" of the little choric hut, Bachelard's writing on the poetic space generated by the concept of a hut suggests that we harbour and indeed reinvent images of fascination.²³ In addition, Boris Eikhenbaum's model

of "internal speech" provides yet another access-route to the lost stories signalled by the archaic little hut. Writing about the Early Cinema, Eikhenbaum maintains that the spectator constructs an internalised story to suture - to fill in - the gaps in the screen story:

For the study of the laws of film (especially montage) it is most important to admit that our perception and understanding of the motion picture is inextricably bound up with the development of internal speech, which makes connections between separate shots. [...] Film viewing is accompanied by a continual process of internal speech. [...] Though the audible word is eliminated from [silent] film, the thought, i.e. internal speech, is nevertheless present.²⁴

As Paul Willemen has pointed out, Eikhenbaum's concept of internal speech should not be confused with external speech.²⁵ Where the spoken word is governed by the rules of language, internal speech refers to the actualisation of a scene which is not framed by established linguistic conventions and can thus play a part in the transformative function of a text. According to Eikhenbaum, internal speech bears a structural relation to both dreamwork and the operations of condensation and displacement associated with the unconscious. However, although internal speech is staged within oneiric operations this does not mean that these figures are either [...] identical to dream thoughts, or that the film text is equivalent to a dream text'.²⁶ Nevertheless, it does signal the existence of a psychic space which, like dream work, is anchored in the processes of the unconscious.

Framing a cinematic text as an adjunct to the structuring work of the unconscious can help us identify the operational dynamic underscoring the shots of the little hut in Iceland. Not unlike a dream image, the latent meaning of a cinematic image is generated in relation to metaphoric and metonymic inscriptions which can upend the naturalised assumptions underpinning daily experience. In 'The Agency of the Letter' Jacques Lacan dwells on the correlation between Freud's model of condensation and displacement and Roman Jakobson's rhetorical concepts of metaphor and metonymy respectively.²⁷ Not that these terms are identical, where Jakobson is referring to the operations of signification within the symbolic, Freud concentrates on the functional activities of material which is not yet contained within symbolisation - material which is in negotiation with the censor of language. As Lacan points out:

Freud shows us in every possible way that the value of the image as a signifier has nothing whatever to do with its signification [...].²⁸

Metaphor, in keeping with Freud's concept of condensation - *verdichtung* - refers to the movement of substitution within which one sign stands in for another. This figuration is more closely linked to the unconscious than metonymy, in so far as the metaphoric substitute always pushes the original figuration (its other half) into the primary realm. In contrast,

metonymic representations tend to be anchored in the function of combination and are often associated with secondary processes, these figures exist in relation to each other - they are contiguously linked within an accumulative process. Lacan describes the dual operations of metaphor and metonymy in terms of *symptom* and *desire*, respectively: 'For symptom is a metaphor whether one likes it or not, as desire is a metonymy, however funny people may find the idea.'²⁹ So, where in the metaphoric duo the one half of the partnership is the symptomatic emblem of the other half, the interlocked movements of metonymic signs could be likened to the fluid actions of an ice-skater speeding across the surface of the text towards its object of desire.

Clearly all texts are organised in relation to metaphoric and metonymic referents. However, generally speaking, the sequences in mainstream film are subordinated to and controlled by the narrative pacing of the text as a whole. In this accumulative process the metaphoric signs tend to be overshadowed by the work of metonymy. *The Gold Diggers*, in contrast, is characterised by textual breaks - discursive holes - gaps in the manifest text which signal the work of the unconscious, activated by the function of metaphor.³⁰

Having said this it is nevertheless erroneous to polarise these two concepts. In his detailed

elaboration of Jakobson's binary model, Christian Metz suggests that the operations of metonymic and metaphoric signs are in fact mutually indebted to one another.³¹ With the intention of identifying the overlaps between Jakobson's 'super-figures', Metz demonstrates that although metonymic signs are characterised by their propensity towards the secondary functions of linearity and despite the inclination of metaphor to bury the figure it is replacing, these movements should not be regarded as discrete.³² Not unlike Kristeva's account of the functional relation between semiotic and symbolic levels or, for that matter, Freud's link between unconscious and conscious formations, neither of these two figurations can exist without the work of the other. In other words, in the process of communication the functions of metaphor and metonymy are fundamentally interdependent.

Metz developed a four part classification to respond to the reciprocal function of metaphoric and metonymic figures in the construction of meaning. This model is outlined in *Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* and can be summarised as follows: (1) Metaphor placed in paradigm: similarity at the level of referent and at the level of discourse; (2) Metaphor placed in syntagm: similarity at the level of referent and contiguity at the level of discourse; (3) Metonymy in paradigm: contiguity at the level of referent and similarity at

the level of discourse; (4) Metonymy in syntagm: contiguity at the level of referent and contiguity at the level of discourse.³³

In her detailed exploration of Surrealist filmmaking Linda Williams demonstrates the extent to which Metz's analytic model of the cinema is usefully applied to the task of unmasking the figures of desire underwriting experimental and independent films.³⁴ Not only does she guide the reader through Metz's theoretical model outlined above, but she explains the extent to which his refined version of Jakobson's concepts can play a part in the reconstruction of meaning systems. Let us apply this model to the first full shot of the little hut in Iceland [shot 15; fig. 4.22]. Looking at the shot chart accompanying *Seeing Red* the notion of female unpleasures is accompanied by shots the mother struggling in an ice-locked glacial terrain [shots 13-17] and the retrieval of pleasure is linked with shots of the mother rescuing a toy horse from the debris of the hut. At the epicentre of this montage is the shot of the little snowbound hut. This introductory shot of the hut can be identified as a *metaphor placed in paradigm*, in that the visible element of the metaphor (the ice-locked hut) can be read as a direct, that is comparative, replacement for the unspeakable (unseen) half of the sign, referring to the heavily repressed maternal "receptacle" of the

Kristevan chora.

The structuring absence (the hidden half) of the hut metaphor can only partake in the construction of meaning in a disguised form. Taken outside the textuality of the film, this metaphoric evocation of the chora is barred from language and remains totally incomprehensible. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the BFI flyer accompanying recent screenings of *The Gold Diggers* features a rehearsal shot of the mother walking away from the hut - the mother's presence near the hut brings into language the hidden underside of the hut metaphor [fig. 4.23]. However, in the film the mother is never actually seen in the same shot as snowbound hut - instead relationship between the maternal facet of the chora and the hut is metonymically evoked through the adjacent shots of the mother struggling in the bleak snowscape and the earlier three shots of the parent figures and the infant inside the hut [shots 4, 5, 7], all of which play a part in the archaeology of the heavily repressed underside of this sign. This applies in particular to shots 18, 19 and 20, featuring various close-up segments of the woman's body as she retrieves the toy horse from the ice-locked remains of the little hut. These fleetingly held shots can be identified as *metonymies in paradigm*, in that the fragmented references to the mother are contiguously linked with shots of the hut and the woman elsewhere in

the sequence.

So, although the introductory shot of the snowbound hut (shot 15) is a predominantly silent metaphoric reference to the pre-verbal experience of the maternal space, the film uses the function of metonymy to pull the invisible half of this metaphor out of hiding. It takes the work of a metonymic figure to invade the blocked half of the archaic hut metaphor, without the work of metonymy this other half cannot be spoken. It thus follows that the glimpsed fragment of the woman's body as she walks into the frame and picks up the miniature horse from the debris of the hut can be identified as the metonymic cue - pulling the repressed work of maternal productivity out of hiding and into discourse. The little horse confirms the generative propensity of the pre-verbal space of the chora in that it evokes the fairy tale horse in the ballroom escape scene which, as we shall see in Chapter Six, transports Ruby and Celeste from the arena of Phallic control - suggesting, perhaps, that the masculine properties of language can be transformed at the point at which the speaking subject confronts the repressed facets of language.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. See Chapter One, pp.14-15.
2. Rose English interview: 09.10.93.
3. Hélène Cixous, Symposium, The University of Liverpool, May 1988. One of the most frequently quoted references to the "frozen" contents of the unconscious is Herman Nunberg's assertion: 'Repetition compulsion tries to fixate, to "freeze", the old psychic reality, hence it becomes a regressive force; transference attempts to re-animate these "frozen" psychic formations, to discharge their energy and satisfy them in a new and present reality, and thus becomes a progressive force.' Herman Nunberg, 'Transference Reality', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 32 (1951), 1-9 (p.5).
4. See Chapter Two, n.60 for a brief overview of the two shoots in Iceland. The conversion of the Old Royal Free Hospital, Langton Street, London WC1 into a film "studio" is described in Chapter Two, n.67.
5. Interview Rose English: 09.10.93.
6. Ibid.
7. Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', trans. Leon S. Roudiez, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp.160-186 (p.161).
8. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller, introduction by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp.57-61.
9. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scenes (iii) and (iv), Chapter Two, pp.81-83 and Chapter Eight, pp.301-320.
10. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.46-51; See also: Julia Kristeva, 'Place Names', *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.271-294.
11. Chapter One, pp.21-25.

12. Lillian Gish appears to have exerted a fair amount of control over the production of this film. She not only chose the story (w. by Dorothy Scarborough) but prepared the synopsis of the story for the script writer Frances Marion, again selected by her. The director Victor Sjöström and the leading man Lars Hanson were also employed on her recommendation.

13. The ending of *The Wind* was reshot on the recommendation of the Board of Directors of MGM. In the first ending (which follows Dorothy Scarborough's novel), Letty [Lillian Gish] commits suicide after stabbing a would-be rapist. In the released version, the prairie wind is transformed from an element of destruction to an agent of truth - the body of the would-be rapist is covered over by a sandstorm ('the wind she buries a rightful killing') and Letty admits to her feelings of love for her estranged husband.

14. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.xxix.

15. Ibid., p.72.

16. Ibid., p.50.

17. Laura Mulvey, *Citizen Kane* (London: British Film Institute, 1983), pp.41-43.

18. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p.xix.

19. Ibid., p.xx.

20. Mari Mahr, *Isolated Incidents*, introduction John Stathatos (London: Photographers' Gallery, 1991); Pam Skelton, *Groundplans*, essays Joan Borsa and Rosemary Betterton (Birmingham and London: Ikon Gallery and Benjamin Rhodes Gallery, 1989).

21. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene (v), Chapter Two, p.83. See my comments Chapters One and Eight, pp.35-37, 320-323.

22. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene (ii), Chapter Two, pp.80-81 and Chapter Eight, pp.298-301.

23. For Bachelard subversive potential of representation is anchored in its "dazzling splendour". Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p.xxix.

24. Boris Eikhenbaum, 'Problems of Film Stylistics', *Screen*, 15 (1974), 7-31 (p.14).

25. Paul Willemen, 'Reflection on Eikhenbaum's Concept of Internal Speech in the Cinema', *Screen*, 15, 4 (1974/75), 59-69 (p.60).
26. Ibid., p.61. Clearly one of the main aims of the Early Hollywood "dream-factory" was to bind the spectator's internal speech within a consciously acceptable imaginary scenario. The various analogies between the cinema and dreaming are outlined in: Charles Altman, 'Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Discourse', *Movies and Methods*, Volume II, ed. by Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp.517-531 (pp.524-527).
27. Jacques Lacan, 'Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious', *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp.146-178.
28. Ibid., p.159.
29. Ibid., p.175.
30. With reference to Freud's definition of consciousness as *lückenhaft*, Laplanche and Leclaire argue that the unconscious dynamic within a text (or in speech) can be interpolated in the lacunae of the manifest text. Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire, 'The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study', *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 118-175 (pp.125-126).
31. Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and the Cinema: the Imaginary Signifier*, trans. by Celia Britton, Annylyn Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.169.
32. Ibid, pp.169, 203-206.
33. Ibid., pp.186-191.
34. Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp.53-105.

Chapter Five

CELESTE: UNPACKING IMPERIALIST NARRATIVES

(Episodes III, VI, VII, XI, XII, XIII)

Celeste's immediate precursor in cinematic history is Mimi, the ghostly black heroine in Sally Potter's film *Thriller* (1979). Not only are both Celeste and Mimi played by Colette Laffont, but the two heroines are engaged in a similar investigative quest - they are attempting to discover the hidden links between the cultural commodification of female "identity" and the psychological processes of subjectivity. The overlap between Colette Laffont's roles in *Thriller* and *The Gold Diggers* is further consolidated by the focus in both films on the possibility of a non-coercive relationship between a black woman and a white woman, alongside the decision to cast a black woman in the role of an investigative agent of change.

Thriller is a rewrite of Puccini's opera *La Bohème*.¹ Peeling back the conventions of classic narrative drama, Sally Potter is using the language of film to uncover and give form to the repressed encounters lying at the core of Western high culture. At the beginning of the film Mimi is trying to remember, to understand:

[...] who killed me? What does it mean? Is this my story?
Is this what really happened to me?²

Later Mimi confides in Musetta [Rose English] the grisette of the piece:

We were set up as opposite and complementary characters. We never got to know each other. Perhaps we could have loved each other.³

However, where *Thriller* ends with the suggestion that new discursive forms can be generated by women working together, *The Gold Diggers* explores and gives voice to this claim. In addition, where Mimi is cast as an alienated worker questioning the narrative conventions of Western culture, Celeste occupies the position of a black woman who not only understands her pre-given fate as negative sign within capitalism, but is working to renovate that discourse. Furthermore the centrality in both films of a knowing black woman can be read as a challenge to the obliteration of black lead roles in the grand narratives of Western culture - including the woman's film in the history of the cinema. As Mary Ann Doane has noted, the woman's film is '[...] more accurately, the white woman's film'⁴:

The women's problems which these films purportedly address are problems which can be specified as white, heterosexual, middle class. When black women are present, they are ground rather than figure; often they are made to merge with the diegesis. They inhabit the textual sidelines, primarily as servants. Black servants haunt the diegesis of films like *The Great Lie* (1949), *Since You Went Away* (1944), and *The Reckless Moment* (1949).⁵

In short, not only does *The Gold Diggers* confront the limited and limiting expectations historically imposed on black women by the conventions of script, camera and editing strategies but, working on the

assumption that female solidarity could have changed the course of Mimi's history, Celeste initiates a discourse of mutuality between herself and Ruby. Seen together the two films form a complementary site of ideological contestation which Sally Potter has again returned to in her recent film *Orlando* (1993).⁶

Cinematic codes can only be understood in relation to their contextual anchorage within a history of meanings. In the light of Aimé Césaire's assertion that history is constructed from a white viewpoint, it is clear that the West uses stereotypic notions of blackness to block the stories and memories of the peoples it has exploited.⁷ In this chapter I argue that the discourse of change generated by Celeste disrupts the pre-given idioms propagated by the classic cinema. But, how can a cinematic representation of a black woman stand up to, respond to and indeed counter the regressive and ultimately racist models of black, female "identity" that haunt the diegetic of mainstream film?⁸ And, how can a film activate what David A. Bailey and Stuart Hall have referred to as a "discourse of opportunity" for black women?⁹ My suggestion is that Celeste's political agency in *The Gold Diggers* is mobilised by a series of intersubjective and intertextual dialogues that concurrently set up and disrupt recognisable frames of reference.

Watching and questioning the white screen goddess,

Celeste disrupts the transcendental claims of the cultural stereotypes that are blocking and devaluing her history. Stuart Hall can help us come to grips with Celeste's investigative impetus. He argues that the heavily repressed displacements in Western texts can be identified - drawn to the surface - through paying attention to the iconographic ambiguities in dominant cultural forms:

Representation is possible only because enunciation is always produced within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time. The displacement of the "centred" discourse of the West entails putting to question its universalist character and its transcendental claims to speak for everyone, while being itself everywhere and nowhere.¹⁰

It is an acknowledged fact that white feminists have been slow to recognise their own status in terms of racial category.¹¹ Indeed, until very recently, the place of white women in the maintenance of the universalist values Stuart Hall is referring to has been brushed under the carpet.¹² The retrieved narratives of eighteenth and nineteenth century enslavement and the concomitant reconstruction of black women's histories by feminist poets, writers, theorists, artists and filmmakers are a stark reminder of the oppressive role of white women in the history of racism.¹³ To quote bell hooks:

Racism is another barrier to solidarity between women. The ideology of sisterhood as expressed by contemporary feminist activists indicates no acknowledgment that racist discrimination, exploitation, and oppression of multi-ethnic women by white women had made it impossible for the two groups to feel that they shared common interests or political concerns [...] This is especially true of black

and white female relationships. Historically, many black women experienced white women as the white supremacist group who most directly exercised power over them [...].¹⁴

Although *The Gold Diggers* does not refer directly to the racist barriers constructed by white women at a social level it does address the crucial role played by the iconography of the white female idol/star in the legitimation and naturalisation of white male power.¹⁵ In addition, any discussion of Celeste's position in *The Gold Diggers* must be prefaced by the acknowledgment that the film was produced before the recent burgeoning of independent and commercial films made by black directors¹⁶ and prior to the publications in which black feminists rightly challenge white feminists to examine the racist assumptions underscoring their privileged position.¹⁷

Celeste's discourse in the film confirms that although black and white women have been debased within colonial and post-colonial patriarchy, their oppression is differently framed. In her roles as investigative observer, office worker, analyst and friend, Celeste demonstrates the extent to which the construct of white femininity - 'the prized object of the Western world' - has been mobilised against black women and has devalued black experience, repressed black history and divided black and white women against one another. Hazel Carby's succinct writing can help us identify the site from which Celeste makes her presence felt in the film:

The black women's critique of *history* has not only involved us in coming to terms with 'absences'; we have also been outraged by the ways in which it has made us visible, when it has chosen to see us. *History* has constructed our sexuality and our femininity as deviating from those qualities with which white women, as the prized objects of the Western world, have been endowed. We have also been defined in less than human terms.¹⁸

**Introducing Celeste: Portrait
of the Black Observer, Intellectual and Worker**

The film introduces Celeste with three close-up portraits [shots: 3, 6, 10 see shots chart below; figs. 5.1; 5.2; 5.3].¹⁹ The calm motionless posture of the black woman, the static camera and the clean edit imprint these images in the mind of the spectator. In all three shots the black woman is staring diagonally out of the frame and the accompanying montage suggests that she is watching two different scenes: (i) a procession of men carrying a gold idol [Ruby] and (ii) a plantation ballroom scene drawn from the film genre of Melodrama.

Episode III:

Shot 1: Ballroom scene
 Shot 2: Men and gold idol
Shot 3: Celeste, 3/4 shot
 Shot 4: Ballroom scene
 Shot 5: Men and gold idol
Shot 6: Celeste, profile
 Shot 7: Men and gold idol
 Shot 8: Men and gold idol
 Shot 9: Ballroom scene
Shot 10: Celeste, 3/4 shot

The shots of Celeste watching the gold idol procession were filmed near Change Alley which is in the City area of London, directly opposite the Royal

Exchange and The Bank of England [fig. 5.4].²⁰ Not only does this location confirm the film's focus on British imperial history - but, as we shall see in the course of this chapter, the sculpture and painting embellishing the Royal Exchange trumpet the national identity of the British elite and mask the crucial role of black enslavement in the creation and maintenance of these controlling values.²¹

In the first shot Celeste is staring diagonally out of the frame. The combination of camera position and strong directional lighting casts a dark, elongated shadow across the luminous white background wall. The second shot is a profile close-up accompanied by a less distorted shadow and in the third shot Celeste's face is framed by a tightly compressed shadow. I want to argue that although the face/shadow dualities in these shots can be read as an oblique reference to the racist discourse of the sexualised Other, the combination of Celeste's investigative look and the surrounding montage totally disrupts the *mise-en-scène* of racial fetishism underpinning the structuring conventions of mainstream photography and film.²² In these three shots the traditionally naturalised operations of the white male gaze are pulled to the surface of the image and uprooted.²³ Where the fetishising operations of Eurocentric aesthetics positions black women as objects of consumption, Celeste is looking back - she is

studying something outside the frame.

Historically black women have been trapped within the racist assumptions^{of} bodily drives.²⁴ Images of strong, nature-bound black women are habitually used to legitimate discourses of racism, sexism and poverty encountered by African-European and African-American women. These notions of Otherness, created by and carried in representation, are used by the colonising group to exert and naturalise its political and economic dominance thus transforming political power into a psychologically felt reality. As Patricia Hill Collins reminds us: 'Maintaining images of Black women as the Other provides the ideological justification for race, gender and class oppression'.²⁵

Let us examine the ways in which the potentially fetishising strategies evoked by these introductory shots are pushed to one side by the trajectory of Celeste's gaze. As I mentioned earlier, the black woman is watching two interrelated narratives: a procession of men carrying a gold idol and a plantation ballroom scene. Both these scenes demonstrate the voyeuristic and fetishising regimes underscoring the objectification of the white female idol in Western culture [figs. 5.5; 5.6]. It is in relation to these two discourses that Celeste takes a stand, not only does she appropriate the masculine right to look but she modifies the trajectory of that gaze.²⁶ Indeed,

read from the vantage point of Laura Mulvey's recently developed model of the curious female look, Celeste's gaze can be identified as investigative rather than voyeuristic; challenging rather than oppressive; analytical rather than authoritarian.²⁷

The structuring relation between the shots of the watching black woman and the discourse of white male power (established by camera and editing strategies) is thus not so much about replacing the controlling images of black women with a new positive stereotype, but engages instead the more complex operation of decentring and transforming the codes of Western supremacy. In other words, rather than replacing the fantasy of unmediated reality with an alternative liberation fantasy, the director is using film language to challenge and revise accepted meanings.

Celeste, the Office Supervisor and the Expert

In Episode VI Celeste relinquishes her role as hidden observer and steps into the shoes of an office worker.²⁸ Retracing the path taken by the gold idol procession, Celeste enters the Royal Exchange and finds herself in the computer centre of a bank. Unable to make sense of the figures she is dealing with, she asks the supervisor for help [fig. 5.7].²⁹ Her questions are met with the abrupt directive:

Quite frankly as an employee of this company you are not employed to speculate what this information may or may not be. All you need to do is transfer these figures to the right hand side [...] Just do your job.³⁰

Persisting in her quest to discover 'the movement of money', Celeste's makes an appointment to interview the expert [fig. 5.8]. Her journey of discovery is relayed through a series of "surreal" tableaux centring on her negotiations with the expert's assistant and the expert. Where the former is engrossed in an inventory, the latter is totally preoccupied with his own "performance". Supercilious to the extreme, the expert is first seen on a platform behind a giant desk, thereafter he adopts numerous poses whilst delivering a soliloquy on the relationship between knowledge, wealth and power [fig. 5.9]. Ignoring both Celeste and the scurrying assistant he constructs his own little drama - he postures next to an ionic pillar, gestures dramatically up to a tiny model of the gold idol, plays with a toy boat and finally sits on the floor with his legs pushed under a doll's house version of his desk [figs. 5.10 - 5.15].

The distorted props and exaggerated acting defy everyday logic and invoke an air of make-believe reminiscent of the looking-glass world experience by *Alice*. In addition, the precisely choreographed movements of the three players, staged on a black and white chequered floor, suggest a parallel between the

discursive manipulation of power and an elaborate game of chess. Here, in this strange world of artifice Celeste investigates the power relations underpinning notions of Englishness, colonial history and national identity - in so doing she reclaims a foothold in the intellectual activities from which she has been excluded as a result of her race, her position as worker and her gender.³¹

This strategy of undoing preferred meanings through forms of theatrical make-believe is complemented by other confrontational discourses of change. For instance, the triangulation between Celeste, the office supervisor and the expert can be read as clash between a politically active black woman and the two groups of intellectuals described by Gramsci as "organic" and "traditional". According to Gramsci the hegemonic control of a society is directly contingent on the relations between these two definitions of the intellectual. The first group refers to the class of workers who are responsive to the immediate social and economic pulse of capitalism, such as entrepreneurs, managers, technicians and radical policy makers (we might place the office supervisor in this category, in that his role is "organically" created by contemporary productive practice). The second group applies more so to the expert and concerns individuals who have a commitment

to previous social conditions, Gramsci refers here to philosophers, writers, artists and the clergy.³²

In addition, there are two further discursive models in evidence here. On the one hand the expert's monologues are peppered with the global pronouncements of the "legislative" discourse of the eighteenth and nineteenth century enlightened elite,³³ on the other, his reasoning is punctuated by a Foucauldian distrust of self-evident truths. In many respects, the expert's focus on the inherent instability of meanings and his acknowledgment of the link between economic control and intellectual imperialism undermine the legitimacy of his own authority. Indeed, the farcical shot of the expert with his legs squeezed under the miniature version of his desk neatly embodies Zygmunt Bauman's observation:

The contemporary world is ill fitted for intellectuals as legislators [...]. One aspect of this crisis is the absence of sites from which authoritative statements of the kind the function of intellectual legislators involves could be made.³⁴

The disjunctures between the expert's traditional role of intellectual-legislator and the self-negatory implications of his argument are apparent from the beginning of the scene. Adopting Foucault's argument that every discourse is based on the identification of apparent truths, he belittles Celeste's search for knowledge:

[...] to assume that what you [Celeste] call specificity is anything other than an expression of confidence in certain

unnamed generalities would be a mistake [...] The notion of mistake, which implies its opposite - that which is not a mistake, that which is correct - evokes one of the great as yet unsolved questions of history [...] The question of essential truth.³⁵

The expert's suggestion that the notion of "mistake" evokes '[...] that which is not a mistake, that which is correct [...]' is again clearly Foucauldian in tone, suggesting that although discursive uniformity is contingent on the repression of contradiction - at a deeper level these discredited contradictions form the basis of the discourse itself: '[...] if it [discourse] gives rise to those [contradictions] that can be seen, it is because it obeys that which it hides'.³⁶ In addition, the expert's account of the circulation of wealth is based on Foucault's history of economic valuation, exchange and accumulation outlined in *The Order of Things*.³⁷ For instance, the expert begins and ends his monologue on gold with the classical hypothesis that money enables gold to function as a sign - a representation - a promise:

Now in the beginning a man gave a bank note to another man. This note was taken to a bank and exchanged for a pound of gold. The bank note was a promise you see, respected by all those who wish to share in the wealth of the country.³⁸

He goes on to argue that the alliance between money and gold is not anchored in the utility of gold or even in its "perfection" - which he nevertheless describes at length - but is based, instead, on its ability to represent a standard measure against which

promises can be tagged. Drawing on Horneck's analogy between gold and blood the expert announces '[...] promises are the great movers', but 'Just as blood flows through the body, so is gold the life blood of the earth'.³⁹ Indeed, his reflections on the promise and perfection of gold are an undisguised celebration of male power:

Are we dreaming of money permanently at play around the perfection of gold. A perfection which has fathered it, but it can't attain. Gold is the great ideal, the perfect model, the articulation of beauty that has focused attention through the ages.⁴⁰

Shortly after the film's release Sally Potter remarked: 'In making the film, I used to go back, over and over again, to a remarkable phrase by Foucault about the metaphysics of money ... The relationship between the contemplation of the cosmos and the knowledge of glittering in metals':⁴¹

The marks of similitude, because they are a guide to knowledge, are addressed to the perfection of heaven; the signs of exchange, because they satisfy desire, are sustained by the dark, dangerous and accursed glitter of metal. An equivocal glitter, for it reproduces in the depths of the earth that other glitter that sings at the far end of the night: it resides there like an inverted promise of happiness and, because metal resembles stars, the knowledge of all these perilous treasures is at the same time knowledge of the world. And thus reflection upon wealth has its pivot in the broadest speculations upon the cosmos, just as, inversely, profound knowledge of the order of the world must lead to the secrets of metals and the possession of wealth.⁴²

There is a sense in which the passage quoted above can be read as the main axis across which Ruby 'the 'life blood of the earth' and Celeste 'that other glitter that sings at the far end of the night', join

forces. Journeying towards one another the two women set out to transgress and reformulate the binary principles that have kept them apart. Confirming Stuart Hall's observation that the contradictions in the dominant culture provide the material basis for change, Celeste addresses the inconsistencies in the expert's discourse.⁴³ However, the sporadic convergence between Celeste's viewpoint and that of the expert does suggest a concurrence between feminism and Foucault, particularly in relation to the discursive character of power, the link between power and knowledge and the understanding that the challenge to hegemonic power is contained within 'marginalised and/or unrecognised discourses'.⁴⁴

Celeste's confidence in her own intellectual ability is announced early on in the film:

I was born a genius
That's a fact
I knew what was what, right from the start
Then it was taken away
I am concerned with redressing the balance
Are you reconciled with your own history Ruby?
Do you know what it is Ruby?
Tell me everything you know⁴⁵

In addition, her investigative focus on the theoretical ponderings of the expert confirms Homi Bhabha's argument that the dismissal of theory is a self-defeating exercise, based on an attempt to replace the Eurocentric myth of otherness with a counter-myth of 'radical purity'.⁴⁶ The black woman's strategy of change is thus at odds with that of her precursor Mimi

in *Thriller*. We no doubt recall how Mimi spurns the work of critical theorists such as the Tel Quel group, which she dismisses with peels of laughter (creating a binarism of theory versus politics); Celeste, in contrast, conducts her war on racism and academic eliticism through '[...] *negotiation* rather than *negation*'.⁴⁷

At the close of the film Celeste shares her theoretical "formula" with Ruby:

In my job money flows through my body. But everyday I get less than I give [...] What I lose becomes a real surplus and it is this that I am paid to move about each day but do not own. But I know that even as I look and even as I see, I am changing what is there.⁴⁸

Combining a Marxist theory of surplus value with a feminist theory of subjectivity, Celeste's concept of change hinges on the capacity of the "outsider" to adopt the position of looker. This model of female agency not only avoids the danger of victim-reification, but announces the black woman's desire to both participate in the social world and advance a specifically feminist theory of knowledge and subjectivity. In so doing Celeste confronts the white male tradition that has excluded her from critical practice⁴⁹ and she joins forces with bell hooks to challenge: '[...] the sexist/racist/classist notion that developing theory is the domain of the white [female] intellectual'.⁵⁰

One final point in relation to the encounter

between Celeste and the expert - although the posturing of the white male provides the focus for this scene, the narrative flow is mediated and orchestrated by Celeste - it was Celeste who set up the interview and her questions punctuate and guide the expert's responses.⁵¹ Read from a Kristevan perspective, Celeste's investigative stance can be indentified as the work of a new type of dissident-intellectual.⁵² According to Kristeva, the new intellectual offers a challenge to the notion of the isolated '[...] guardian of supposedly universal thought'.⁵³ Where the traditional intellectual is caught in the trap of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, the dissident-intellectual contributes to the *discursive* break up of rational authority. Rather than attacking political power directly which, so Kristeva argues, tends to reproduce the master-slave model, the dissident activist (she names psychoanalysts, writers and women) '[...] experiments with the limits of identity and meaning'.⁵⁴

From a Kristevan vantage point, Celeste is engaged in a new form of intellectual practice. Refusing her pre-given role of silenced worker, she puts herself at risk and questions the rational logic patriarchy. Her clash with the office supervisor and her subsequent investigation of the expert's values are crucial to the film, providing the framework for her attack on the

Eurocentric rites of capitalism in the *Empire Song*. These rites are announced by the procession of men chanting the *Bankers' Song*.

The Bankers' Song and the Empire Song

Towards the end of the film at the stroke of midnight the gold idol procession disappears for a second time into the Royal Exchange.⁵⁵ The shot of the bankers carrying their idol into this historic centre of commercial traffic is accompanied by an off-screen ensemble of male voices softly chanting the chorus of the *Bankers' Song*.⁵⁶

The Bankers' Song⁵⁷

[chorus - repeated continuously
between and under the verses]
Freeze those assets
Cut the supply
Drastic measures
It's do or die

It makes sense
to go for order
Hand it over boys
willingly
It's a natural law
economically

[chorus]
Freeze those assets
Cut the supply
Drastic measures
It's do or die

To the bank
with the beauty
To the bank
with the gold
Both make money
Neither grows old

[chorus]
Freeze those assets
Cut the supply
Drastic measures
It's do or die

Shot Chart:

1. Procession with idol disappears into Royal Exchange
2. Procession moves across Royal Exchange [taking two steps forward and one step back]
3. Ritualised transfer of gold brick from one tray to another⁵⁸
4. Close-up of Ruby/idol smiling
5. Procession
6. Close-up of man moving gold brick

Ruby: I've been framed

7. Close-up of Ruby smiling and watching man moving brick
8. Ruby and Celeste escape from Royal Exchange
9. Men streaming out of Royal Exchange
10. R & C running through city (laughing)
11. Men searching
12. R & C running
13. Men searching
14. R & C running
15. Men searching

As I commented earlier the gold idol procession was filmed in the locality of the Royal Exchange [fig. 5.16]. From its inception in 1565 until it ceased to operate as a trading floor in 1939, the Exchange functioned as the main centre for commercial traffic in Britain. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1666 and its replacement was again wrecked by fire in 1838. Modelled on the Pantheon and opened by Queen Victoria in 1844, it is the third Exchange that is featured in *The Gold Diggers*.⁵⁹ Although at the time of the shoot in 1981 the trading floor was still in its original condition, within a few months of filming the central courtyard was leased to the London International Financial Futures Exchange (LIFFE).⁶⁰ Today the new LIFFE offices completely fill the interior courtyard, blocking the access to the thirty two frescoes spanning the circuit of the ambulatory.⁶¹

In the film the procession slowly makes its way across the Victorian trading floor [figs. 5.17; 5.18]. Accompanied by the voice-over chant of the *Bankers' Song* the column of men take one step back to every two

steps forward, resulting in the uniform rocking movement of the procession as a whole. Although this solemn train enters the Exchange through the main West entrance, it cuts a diagonal path across the interior space from Southeast to Northwest. Judging from an eighteenth century floor plan of the building, the procession is moving across the position formerly leased by shipbrokers and the camera is located in the trading space occupied by British merchants with interests in Jamaica and Barbados [fig. 5.19].⁶²

The three frescoes discernible in the background of the procession can be identified, from left to right, as: *Sir Richard Whittington Dispensing his Charities* (c.1900) painted by Henrietta Rae; George Harcourt's portrait of *Pascoe Grenfell* (1926); and E. A. Cox's *Philip the Good Presenting the Charter to the Merchant Adventurers'* (c.1916) [shots 1, 3, 4 and 5].⁶³ These three images form a representative sample of the thirty two wall paintings surrounding the trading floor - all of which consist of late nineteenth and early twentieth century reconstructions of scenes from the authorised version of British history, intermingled with portraits of dignitaries, benefactors and credited citizens.⁶⁴

The theatrical procession of the men with their gold idol and cache of gold bricks, surrounded by the pictorial history of British expansionist rule and

swaying back and forth on the very spot where in the past the shipbrokers struck their deals presents a highly suggestive image. Linking the men's gold - their power - with the hire of trade vessels is a sharp reminder of the centrality of both the slave trade and slave labour to British imperial power, and highlights the generally overlooked history of London as a major slaving port.⁶⁵

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the barter on this trading floor will have included the hire of vessels to export textiles, guns, iron, copper, brass and pewter goods to the West coast of Africa in exchange for people sent to enslavement in the West Indies. On the return journey, these boats were filled with "white gold", tobacco and rum. Moreover, as Peter Fryer has pointed out, the British planters in the Caribbean were totally dependent on commission agents in the City of London to put up long term credit - not only for the purchase of land and slaves, but to sustain new business ventures during the initial years it took to establish a crop.⁶⁶

Read from this historical vantage point the strange procession of bankers, punctuated by the mock adulation of a single tablet of gold, is suggestive of the national rites designed to mask the price paid by generations upon generations of black men and women in the construction and maintenance of British

imperialism. As the procession sways across the trading floor one particular painting is constantly kept in frame - the portrait of the entrepreneurial politician and banker *Pascoe Grenfell* [fig. 5.20].⁶⁷ On closer examination this is a mediocre painting which only comes to life when read within the context of British expansionist rule. I will return to the actual painting in a minute, first let us dip into the history of the sitter.

Pascoe Grenfell (1761-1838) began his career working with his father and uncle as a copper and tin ore merchant in Cornwall and in his early forties he was elected parliamentary representative for Penryn in Cornwall (1820-1826). During his political career he supported Wilberforce's bill for the abolition of slavery⁶⁸ and demanded greater public accountability of the Bank of England.⁶⁹ While serving in parliament, Grenfell became Director of the Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation and from 1829 until his death in 1838 he held office as Governor of the Royal Exchange.⁷⁰

The identification of this agent of British imperial rule situated at the far side of the procession of bankers adds a further voice to the chorus of signs in this already highly charged spectacle. Seen from Celeste's point of view, the triangulation of voices in the procession [(i) trading

position of the West Indies; (ii) the ship brokers, (iii) the parliamentary representative of the abolition of slavery] can be read as a set of complementary discursive moments - each one feeding the interests and filling the pockets of the envoys of Britain's ruling institutions.

Let us look more closely at the significance of the Grenfell portrait in this dramatic scene. As said, his family fortune was built on the proceeds of tin and copper ore. As a result of the triangular trade, copper production increased substantially in the eighteenth century, to the point that by the middle of the nineteenth century Britain was '[...] supplying half the copper needs of the entire world.'⁷¹ Moreover, the British practice of lining slave ships with a sheath of copper created a further boost to the industry.⁷² Along with Pitt and Wilberforce, Grenfell was a disciple of Adam Smith. The latter's critique of colonial mercantilism, outlined in *Wealth of Nations* published in 1776, is based on the hypothesis that the principle of free trade offered advantages over and above production dependent on enslavement.⁷³ Far from threatening the hegemony of the ruling classes, parliamentary defenders of the anti-slave trade such as Grenfell recognised that:

It appears from the experience of all ages and nations [...] that the work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves.⁷⁴

Supported for different reasons by opposing factions in British society, anti-slavery doctrines were used to justify the need for trade unionism by emergent working class movements. In addition, the anti-slavery lobby found an echo in the demands for individual self-sufficiency promoted by artisan workers, it was championed by the middle-class reform movements and it formed the lynch pin of the new capitalist vision of self-certainty based on notions of expansionism and free trade. Quoting from an abolitionist pamphlet published in Liverpool in 1828, Robin Blackburn reminds readers of the extent to which "free trade" in India had overtaken the profitability of slave produced goods. The pamphlet urges the West Indies to follow suit:

The slaves in our West India Islands, by being made free would not only raise more produce, but also consume much more of our manufactures.⁷⁵

The appeal of abolition was thus seen as a sound policy for increased profitability and as far as the ruling elite were concerned it had the added advantage of dignifying and enhancing the status of the British oligarchy. Robin Blackburn's succinct outline of the attitudes of British parliamentarians is illuminating:

Official support for abolition enabled Britain's rulers to identify themselves with a universal goal. The members of the British Parliament were for the most part bluff, hard-hearted men who showed little tenderness for the plight of rack-rented Irish peasants or English paper apprentices, and who had tolerated impressment and merciless floggings in the Royal Navy. But once convinced that abolition did not contradict 'sound policy', and knowing it to be dear to the heart of the middle-class reformers, they showed themselves

to be shocked by the appalling brutalities of the Atlantic slave trade.⁷⁶

Keeping in mind this account of the ruthless operators of British expansionism let us return to Harcourt's portrait of Pascoe Grenfell. In this twentieth century reconstruction, the painter has situated the banker/politician/entrepreneur against an open window overlooking the River Thames, St Paul's Cathedral, the Bank of England and the Royal Exchange. This portrait of the British aristocrat is usefully juxtaposed with montage of shots featuring Celeste standing by the open door of her room and looking out into the night (this sequence introduces the procession scene).⁷⁷ In the montage a shot of Celeste is bracketed between two twilight shots of the same locality of the City featured in Harcourt's painting, but seen from the the Kings Cross area of London rather than a South London vantage point.

I cannot think of a single painting in the history of Western art of either a black or a white woman⁷⁸ featured against the background of the financial centre of a major trading city. Historically, city paintings of black women fall under the rubric of timeless orientalist fantasies of slave markets. The women in these images are already owned as objects, trapped by the artist's controlling gaze which, so Linda Nochlin explains, '[...] brings the Oriental world into

being'.⁷⁹ The pictorially represented relation between white women and the city is equally marred. On the one hand, women have been transformed into desexualised monuments to masculine achievement, empire and nation,⁸⁰ on the other, the glut in the nineteenth century of pictures of fallen women - anonymous flower sellers, laundry workers and prostitutes - testify to a belief in the inherently dark sexuality and lack of moral fibre in white women.⁸¹ For example, in W.J. Webb's intaglio print of flower sellers outside the Royal Exchange, reproduced in *Pictorial World* 4th July, 1874, the female traders are synonymous with the gutter. This illustration makes use of the established aesthetic in which white women of the labouring classes were identified as carriers of internal blackness and seen as a stumbling block in the civilising process.⁸² Webb's flower sellers and Crofts' painting of Queen Elizabeth I (reproduced on adjacent pages in the Royal Exchange booklet) neatly illustrate the polarised options that Celeste and Ruby are working to dismantle [figs. 5.21; 5.22].⁸³

Returning to the procession scene in the Royal Exchange, *The Bankers' Song* concludes with a close-up of Ruby-the-gold-idol whispering: 'I've been framed' [fig. 5.23] followed by a montage of eight shots - four of which feature Ruby and Celeste. Accompanied by the soundtrack of midnight chimes and peels of laughter,

the two women run out of the Exchange and disappear into the night. These shots of the escapees are juxtaposed with four shots of the distraught and confused bankers [shots 7-15]. Confronted by the baffling absence of their phallic idol the ordered procession disintegrates as the chanting bankers spin off target into a negative orbit of self-doubt.

According to the conventions of story telling, the stroke of midnight announces Cinderella's return to the exploitative labour relations of the status quo. However, in this new version of the story, the chimes of midnight and the women's laughter portend a new beginning.⁸⁴ Here, in *The Gold Diggers* a black female dissenter, a working woman who will not be exploited - takes on the double roles of fairy godmother and Prince Charming and helps the white woman relinquish her misguided commitment to patriarchy.

Immediately after their hasty exit from the Royal Exchange, Celeste and Ruby (bonded by laughter) reverse roles - Ruby takes the place of "seer" and Celeste adopts the position of "seen" [figs. 5.24; 5.25]. They are in a tiny theatre. Leaving Ruby in the stalls Celeste jumps into the spotlight and performs the *Empire Song*.

The Empire Song

	Shot Chart:
Earth's crust concealing	1. Celeste leaps on stage
Companies dealing	2. Ruby as spectator
Veins of unfathomable wealth	3. Celeste singing
Silently waiting	4. Iceland
Silently waiting	5. Celeste singing
Then taken by cunning and stealth	6. Iceland, column of men
Robbers and bandits	7. Iceland
Builders of nations	8. Iceland, column of men
Armed with a pick and ill-will	9. Celeste singing
Plunder and digging	10. City. Men search for idol
Plunder and digging	11. Celeste singing
Impatient till they've got their fill	12. City. Men search for idol
Natural sources	13. Celeste singing
Nations resources	14. Expert venerating idol
Bought for a nod and a wink	15. Celeste singing
Claimed by the Empire	16. Expert venerating idol
Not what you'd think	17. Iceland, melting glacier
From the way they disguise it	18. Celeste singing
Old school ties	19. City. Men dig for gold
Commonwealth ties	20. Celeste singing
May you crumble and sink	21. City. Men dig for gold
	22. Celeste singing
	23. Toy boat sinks
	24. Empty stage

Historically, singing has provided a particularly important space for black women to generate a sense of collectivity and self-assertive resistance. As Patricia Collin's has pointed out: 'Traditionally, blues assumed a similar function in African-American oral culture as that played by print media for white, visually based culture'.⁸⁵ Although Celeste's *Empire Song* is an unaccompanied jazz based song, it nevertheless fulfils the didactic function Patricia Collins attributes to blues. In addition, the raw unsentimentality of the scene evokes Brecht's complementary strategies of, first of all, placing the singer in the role of "reporter" and second using the rhythms of the song to underline and punctuate the

meaning of the words.⁸⁶

It is thus on this make-shift Brechtian stage that Celeste springs into action and launches her attack on the exploitative regime celebrated by the bankers in the Royal Exchange. Disclosing the links between the social and artistic conventions of the elite and their political power, she argues that cultural forms have been used to mask the self-serving depravity of the coloniser - plunder and avarice is 'Not what you think, from the way they disguise it [...] natural sources and national resources [are] bought for a nod and a wink'. In short, the commercial traffic, sanctioned by establishments such as the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England was and still is conducted according to deeply rooted customs, flagged by the old school tie and disguised by secret rites of practice.⁸⁷

In addition, the *Empire Song* elicits a powerful call to Ruby to adopt the role of active watcher, witness and listener. So, here we have a black office worker taking the "prized object" of patriarchy on a journey of discovery. Having taken centre stage, Celeste is telling Ruby a story that is anchored in a different attitude towards history, philosophy, politics, feelings, places and things. Celeste is thus challenging her new friend to open her eyes to the far reaching consequences of colonial imperialism. She is telling Ruby that despite the global dismantling of

national empires, the racial despotism underscoring this period of British history is still in evidence - albeit in a disguised form - in cultural signs, social practices and national customs handed down from one generation to the next.

Celeste and Ruby, Laure and Olympia

At the beginning of the chapter I suggested that the potential for reciprocity between Mimi and Musetta in Sally Potter's film *Thriller* creates a provisional framework for the analytic friendship mobilised by Celeste and Ruby. However, attempting to retrieve a more general historical anchor for this concept of inter-racial mutuality is singularly unrewarding. The classic cinema has not only pushed black women to the edge of the diegetic but, with the possible exception of Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (1959), the relations between black women and white women have been compressed within the exploitative hierarchy of the mistress/servant model. Despite the psychological intensity of Sirk's film and the centrality the black woman [Annie], her needs take second place to the white woman's [Lora's] struggle between her desire to succeed both in her career as movie star and as a mother [fig. 5.26].⁸⁸

In contrast, the facilitating mutuality between

the co-stars in *The Gold Diggers* invokes a range of discursive possibilities which not only outflank the racist subtext of Sirk's film,⁸⁹ but generate an opportunity to conceptualise new friendship structures between black and white women - based on dialogue rather than silence, visibility rather than erasure, respect rather than humiliation, innovation rather than patronage.⁹⁰ However, the historically established reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of friendship between black and white women, makes the idea of reciprocity between these two traditionally divided subjects difficult to visualise. Their relationship is not easily carried in a single "new" image, but is perhaps more usefully seen in terms of an accumulative process of intertextual dialogues. I want to end this chapter with an example of just such a dialogue.

Investigating the friendship between Celeste and Ruby, I was drawn to reconsider the meanings evoked by the two figures in Eduoard Manet's painting *Olympia* (1863). The painting depicts a naked white woman, usually referred to as "Olympia", lying on a bed accompanied by a clothed black woman carrying a large bouquet of flowers [fig. 5.27].⁹¹ It seemed to me that there was something to be learnt from an intertextual examination of these two female couples, separated by time, context and media - I felt that the meanings

generated by the painting might clarify the ways in which the film is attempting to politicise Celeste's claim to the right to look.

Olympia ranks as one of the most prolifically written about and reproduced paintings of the modern era. Despite its visibility, both in relation to the written props of modernism and the numerous visual quotations produced by artists keen to anchor their modernity within a common denominator [the female nude],⁹² the frames of reference surrounding its status as 'founding monument of modern art' have, until recently, remained surprisingly blinkered.⁹³ It was not until 1985 that the parameters of the *Olympia* debate were opened up, first by T.J. Clark and in the same year by Sander Gilman.⁹⁴ Where the former addressed the figure of *Olympia* within the context of class, the latter argued that Manet was using the motif of black womanhood to both sexualise and pollute the white woman in the picture.⁹⁵ More recently, feminist writers have examined the two women in Manet's painting in the light of various marginalised pictorial signs. For instance, Heather Dawkins argues that although the lesbian intimations in both the painting and in the accompanying poem by Zacharie Astruc were noted by contemporary caricaturists, albeit in a negative vein, they have been consistently overlooked by art history. Referring to Bertall's caricature she is of the opinion

that the crude masculinisation of both Laure and Olympia, alongside the '[...] massive prostitutionalisation of this picture has merely maintained the logic of the Second Empire censorship of the press, a homophobic and racist denial of the possible relationship between two women'.⁹⁶

Where Heather Dawkins draws our attention to the critical repression of the lesbian discourse in the painting, Griselda Pollock suggests that value of Manet's painting lies in the link established between the two women based on the devaluation of their labour in the market economy of Paris in the 1860s.⁹⁷

According to this latter argument, the "assertive" modernity of the painting is anchored in the carefully staged studio scene which signals the social, racial and historical specificities of black and white female labour. Focusing her discussion on the studio props, as well as the two hired models (two working women, posed as working women) and the uneasy assemblage of European and African codes in Laure's costume, Griselda Pollock identifies a series of important cultural displacements:

The painting's negation of orientalism emerges from its assertive modernity, a here and now-ness of the working woman hired to model as a courtesan attended by another working-class woman, displaced from her African home through colonial slavery and now in wage slavery.⁹⁸

A similar level of constructed artificiality is apparent in the various tableaux in *The Gold Diggers*.

In the film, as in the Manet painting, the key players are registered at a level of performance rather than biology - moreover, Celeste's key roles as new intellectual, office worker, investigative observer and finally a Brechtian reporter (messenger) in the *Empire Song*, opens up a space to re-examine Laure's operational status in the connoted narrative of Manet's painting. We have already established the extent to which Celeste observes and describes the rituals of patriarchy, but can Laure be described as watching Olympia? Can she be regarded as a Brechtian reporter?

In an acid contemporaneous review of Manet's newly exhibited painting, a Paris journalist equated Laure with the much ridiculed black cat at the foot of Olympia's bed.⁹⁹ Describing Laure and the cat as "two black messengers", he succeeded in directing the weight of nineteenth century pseudo-scientific, imperialism against the figure of the black woman.¹⁰⁰ In an instant the dye was cast. Collapsing the burden of racist dogma over the figure of Laure, the journalist framed her as the antithesis of French high culture. From this juncture she has been seen as crude, simple and uncivilised - a colonised, duty bound subject.¹⁰¹

Although the journalist was undoubtedly using the term "messenger" to confirm the notion of black female servitude, this is highly ambiguous signifier. As well as alluding to the concept of paid service, the term

can also be used to describe an itinerant subject who journeys over dangerous and unfamiliar territory, a witness, a reporter, a carrier of secrets and a conveyer of stories. In addition, it is assumed that the information carried by the messenger will rebound on the status quo. The news may challenge conventionally held meanings, hence the potential threat of the messenger. Let us take a fresh look at Laure's "message".

According to the surfeit of contemporary journalists who mentioned the painting in their reviews of the 1865 Salon, Laure's message (her bouquet of flowers) not only confirms her position as a hired servant but also signals Olympia's status as prostitute:

[...] a negress who has nothing about her that recalls the amorous night unless it be a bouquet bought at the florist's on the corner, and paid for by Monsieur Arthur, which tells me a great deal about Olympia. Arthur is certainly in the anti-chamber waiting.¹⁰²

From this perspective, the bouquet functions on a metonymic register evoking the controlling discourse of masculine sexuality and can simultaneously be read as a metaphoric reference to female prostitution. However, read from the context of the repressed meanings identified by Heather Dawkins and Griselda Pollock - in particular the amorous link between the two women, the staged studio set-up and the mismatch between Laure's Western dress and her turban - the flowers can be read

as a pictorial carrier of a very different message to the one inferred by the nineteenth century writer.

My suggestion is that the blue, white and red flowers passed from the black woman to Olympia (and shared with the spectator) can be read as a sign of the repressed facets of French imperial history [figs. 5.28; 5.29]. The cornflowers, the white nemesia and the red dianthus announce the tricolour of France. The point about this deeply embedded metaphor is that, once the colours are seen as an emblem of nation, the bouquet takes on a specifically political resonance. Rather than naturalising the women's respective status as servant and prostitute, Laure's flowers open up the subtext of the labour market of Paris in relation to the repressed underbelly of French expansionism and Empire. In the arms of the black woman, the bouquet functions as an emblem of the unspeakable and degenerate reality of national imperialism which in its turn evokes the silenced histories of human displacements. The message the black woman is passing on to the white woman can thus be identified as the treasured gift of knowledge [fig. 5.30].

Having established Laure's agency in terms of her role as "messenger" let us now turn to her investigative look. I want to suggest that the stories evoked by the figures of Laure and Celeste are framed by their respective claims on the right to look - Laure

watches Olympia, Celeste watches Ruby [fig. 5.31]. It is possible to theorise the two women's appropriation of the right to look with reference to Laura Mulvey's recent formulation of the "curious gaze".¹⁰³ Mulvey describes the curious gaze as '[...] the compulsive desire to see and to know, to investigate what is secret and reveal the contents of a concealed space'.¹⁰⁴ Referring to the Pandora story she argues that where the fetishist is associated with a refusal to see and to know, the curious subject is a potentially self-reflexive cipher of discovery and change.¹⁰⁵

When the desire to look is appropriated by white women, men react in unison, they deride the look of their most "prized object", they name her look as anarchic, outrageous and destructive.¹⁰⁶ Should the white woman persist in her desire to look she will, like Lot's wife, be transformed into a pillar of salt. However, should her discourse be allowed to survive then, like Pandora's, it will be categorised as inherently evil, unspeakable, opening up the gates to hell. In an elegant move, Laura Mulvey salvages the concept of the curious look for feminist analysis. She argues that Pandora's desire to look is mobilised by a desire to solve a mystery which, in this particular story, amounts to a desire to understand the mystery of femininity itself.¹⁰⁷

But, referring to a theoretical model constructed

in response to a myth centred on a notion of white femininity overlooks the specificity of black womanhood. As I pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, the objectification of the white female body is implicated in the crass eviction of black women from all but supporting roles in the history of film. This means that the black female spectator is less likely to be fascinated by the classic cinema - as bell hooks has pointed out, black women are already outside the pleasure of looking based on notions of the active masculine gaze and a passive feminine object.¹⁰⁸ From this point of view it is not enough to understand that black women have been excluded from participating in the dominant culture, but concerns instead the ways in which black women have against all the odds asserted their right to cultural visibility. According to bell hooks, investigative looking is a means of reclaiming control, black women have said *no* to the established matrix of looking relations - black women are not captivated and can thus interrogate the hegemony of white authority from the "outside":

Identifying with neither the phallographic gaze nor the construction of White womanhood as lack, critical black female spectators construct a theory of looking relations where cinematic visual delight is in the pleasure of interrogation.¹⁰⁹

Although the figures of Laure and Celeste are separated by 130 years, they are both active investigative lookers, they are both bearers of

repressed histories and they both share the desire to confront and interrogate the cultural precedents underwriting their own state of disempowerment. Indeed, it is as a result of their respective need to challenge the controlling apparatus of the white male gaze that these two, twice displaced, African-Caribbean subjects infiltrate dominant values. The intertextual play between Manet's painting and *The Gold Diggers* is thus registered at a level of history, providing the two black players with the sense of belonging necessary for communication and politicised action (from a Kristevan perspective the two women are holding onto a provisional truth). Laure's turban and her flowers fulfil this function - these two signifiers identify the mise-en-scène of the repressed history underlying her position in the nineteenth century labour market which in turn defines her relationship with the white woman in the picture. Similarly, in *The Gold Diggers* the introductory shot in Celeste's dream (discussed in Chapter Nine) mobilises the chorus of signifiers which upend the cultural ideologies rehearsed in the Royal Exchange and provide the significatory context for Celeste to reconstruct her own history - I am referring to: the sea trunk, the camp bed, the newspaper screen, the tiny photograph of Colette Laffont with her mother and the figure of the unidentified black woman (another maternal figure) in

traditional West African dress [figs. 5.32; 5.33].¹¹⁰

The different trajectories followed up in this chapter may go some way towards explaining why Sally Potter decided to introduce Celeste as an outsider, looking in. Audre Lorde has suggested that black women have been forced to become watchers in order to survive.¹¹¹ Bearing in mind the troubled history of colonial exploitation, the figure of Celeste could perhaps be read as embodying Stuart Hall's concept of a *politics of articulation* which can arise from looking out of necessity.¹¹² Recently Gilane Tawadros has adopted a similar model of outsidersness to discuss the photographic practices of Maxine Walker and David Lewis. Her introductory quote, taken from the writing of C.L.R. James, casts light on Celeste's introductory position as hidden watcher:

Those people who are in Western civilisation, who have grown up in it but yet are not completely a part, have a unique insight into their society [...] The black man or woman who is born here or grows up here has something special to contribute to Western civilisation. He or she will participate in it, see it from birth, but will never be quite completely in it. What such persons have to say, therefore, will give a new vision, a deeper and stronger insight into both Western civilisation and the black people in it.¹¹³

Read from this perspective Celeste's "distance" from the procession and the ballroom dancers, exemplified in the three introductory shots of the black heroine, is not so much based on an idealised notion of outsidersness but identifies instead a

position from which she can attack the self-evident constructs of race and nation. In other words, Celeste's capacity to step back from the dominant culture creates a space which allows her to investigate, disrupt and renovate the hegemony that disempowers her.

In summary, at the film's introductory stage Celeste and Ruby inhabit different worlds, they are racially and economically polarised strangers caught up in a negative hierarchy of interdependent cinematic regimes - the black woman pushed to the edge of the diegetic and the white woman trapped within the apparatus. Indeed, in the early episodes of the film the co-stars have nothing in common other than their shared (albeit hierarchically differentiated) experience of loss.

As the film progresses the two women turn to one another for help. Working together they loosen the threads of the established history of representation - they invade the textual space of the classic narrative and rearticulate this space in the form of a politics of race and feminism. It is thus against a background of a non-hierarchical acknowledgment (rather than repression) of Otherness that the black woman and the white woman fabricate the new cultural grammar of their alliance. Thus Celeste the looker and Ruby the icon begin to work on themselves and with each other. From

this point of view, the friendship between the black woman and the white woman can be read as an attempt to counter the burden of history which, to quote Hortense Spiller, has: '[...] divided the empire of women against itself'.¹¹⁴

Notes to Chapter Five

1. *La Bohème* was first performed in 1896 at the Teatro Regio, Turin. The libretto is based on Henri Murger's popular novel *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème* set in the 1830s.

2. *Thriller* (1979), d. Sally Potter.

3. Ibid.

4. Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p.232.

5. Ibid., pp.132-233.

6. Walter Donahue, 'Against Crawling Realism: Sally Potter on *Orlando*', *Women in Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, ed. by Pam Cook and Philip Dodd (London: Scarlet Press, 1993), pp.217-223.

7. Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing, History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990) p.119

8. See: bell hooks, 'The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators', *Black American Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.288-302.

9. David A. Bailey and Stuart Hall, 'The Vertigo of Displacement: Shifts Within Black Documentary Practices', *Ten/8: Critical Decade: Black Photography in the 80s*, 2, 3 (1992), 14-23 (p.15).

10. Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities', *ICA Documents: Black Film, British Cinema*, 7 (1988), 27-30 (p.29).

11. Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.18. See also: Richard Dyer, 'White', *Screen*, 29, 4 (1988), 44-65.

12. Even Frantz Fanon's important text on the structural relation of coercion between colonizer and colonized fails to address the power exercised by white women over black women. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask* (London: Archway Press, 1986).

13. For instance: Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Garden*; Mona Hatoum, *Measures of*

Distance (1988); *Perfect Image* (1988), d. Maureen Blackwood; *Dreaming River* (1988), d. Martina Attille.

14. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From the Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), p.49.

15. See Mary Ann Doane's comments on '[...] perhaps the overtly optimistic discourse' between Celeste and Ruby. Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.281, n.39.

16. For example: the films directed by Isaac Julien and Martina Attille (*Sankofa*), the work of the Black Audio Collective and, albeit from different perspectives, the films directed by Hanif Kureishi, Mira Nair, Spike Lee, Leslie Harris and Julie Dash.

17. For example: bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), pp.43-66; Hazel Carby, 'White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood', *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in the Seventies*, ed. by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson, 1982), pp.212-235; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Consciousness, Knowledge and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p.265 (ref: white women); Note the exchange between Coco Fusco, Bernice Reynaud and Yvonne Rainer concerning the 'Sexism, Colonialism, Misrepresentation: A Corrective Film Series' conference held at the Collective for Living Cinema, New York, 1988: Coco Fusco, 'Fantasies of Oppositionality: Reflections on Recent Conferences in Boston and New York', *Screen*, 29, 4 (1988), 80-93 (pp.89-93), Bernice Reynaud and Yvonne Rainer, 'Responses to Coco Fusco's "Fantasies of Oppositionality"', *Screen*, 30, 3 (1989), 79-98, 'Coco Fusco Replies', p.99 of the same edition.

18. Carby, 'White Women Listen', p.212.

19. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode III, Chapter Two, pp.73-74.

20. Celeste is standing on the spot of the now demolished King's Tavern Arms where The Marine Society held its first meeting in 1756. The Marine Society was created to encourage boys and young men to go to sea.

21. Peter Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire: An Introduction* (London: Pluto, 1989), p.4.

22. For an overview of photographic strategies developed during the 1980s to counter the stereotypic and racist images produced by white society see: *ten/8*, 2, 3 (1992).
23. Babette Mangolte's portrait shots in *The Camera: Je* (1977) come to mind.
24. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, p.24.
25. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, p.68.
26. Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, 3 (1975), 6-18.
27. Laura Mulvey, 'Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity', *Sexuality and Space*, ed. by Beatrix Colomina (New York: Princetown Architectural Press, 1992), pp.53-72.
28. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode VI, Chaper Two, pp.75-76.
29. The office supervisor is played by Keith James.
30. *The Gold Diggers*. Episode VI, Chapter Two, op cit.
31. In *Orlando* (1993) Sally Potter has returned to the relation between: sexed "identity", theories of knowledge and British colonial history.
32. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. and ed. by Quintin Hoare and Anthony Powell Smith (London: Lawrence Wishart, 1971), pp.3-23.
33. See Zygmunt Bauman's account of the 'fall of the legislator': Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislator and Interpreters* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), pp.110-126.
34. Ibid., p.122.
35. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode VI, Chapter Two, op cit.
36. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1982), p.151.
37. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1980), pp.166-214.
38. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode VI, Chapter Two, op cit.

39. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp.178-179.
40. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode VI, Chapter Two, op cit.
41. Pam Cook (Potter interview), 'British Independents: *The Gold Diggers*', *Framework*, 24 (1984), 14-30 (pp.14).
42. Ibid., pp.14-15.
43. See my pp.167-168.
44. Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (ed.), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections of Resistance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p.x.
45. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode V, Ch. Two, pp.74-75.
46. Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', *Questions of Third Cinema*, ed. by Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (London: British Film Institute, 1989), pp.111-132 (p.111).
47. Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida et al., *Théorie d'ensemble* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969). pp.7-8; Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', p.117.
48. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode XV, Ch. Two, pp.86-87.
49. Michèle Le Deouff, 'Long Hair, Short Ideas', *The Philosophical Imaginary*, trans. by Colin Gordon (London: Athlone Press, 1989), pp.129-137.
50. hooks, *Feminist Theory*, p.30.
51. Apart from the few lines spoken by the banker in the previous episode, this is the only point in the film featuring an in-frame male voice. The only other male voices in the film are the off-screen voices of the chanting bankers.
52. Julia Kristeva, 'A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident' in *The Kristeva Reader*, edit. by Toril Moi (London: Blackwell, 1986), pp.292-301.
53. Ibid., p.293.
54. Ibid., pp.295-296.
55. *The Gold Diggers*, Episodes XI and XII, Chapter Two, pp.83-85.

56. Throughout the film Celeste's investigative search is accompanied by free jazz instrumentations which are based on (and undermine) the authoritarian rhythmic structure of the *Bankers' Song*.
57. The *Bankers' Song* is sung by Phil Minton.
58. The man moving the brick is played by George Yiasoumi.
59. Ann Saunders, *The Royal Exchange* (London: Guardian Royal Exchange, 1991), pp.17, 29, 31, 33.
60. Ironically the work done today in the LIFFE offices mirrors Celeste's work in the "bank".
61. The first of these frescoes was painted by Frederic Leighton in 1895. See Appendix 10.
62. The third Exchange was built on a substantially enlarged site, taking up the triangular space between Cornhill and Threadneedle Street. It is thus possible that the trading floor is not in the identical spot of the one in the previous building. However, the general significance of this parodic overlay between cultural forms and economic power remains the same.
63. The LIFFE offices block the paintings from view.
64. Appendix 10.
65. See James A Rawley's comments on London's role as a slaving port cited in: Peter Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire*, pp. 7- 8, n.17.
66. *Ibid*, p.6.
67. This youthful version of Pascoe Grenfell was painted by George Harcourt RA in 1926 and appears to be based on a contemporary portrait of the sitter currently hanging in the Board Room of the Royal Exchange, painted by Sir Martin Archer-Shee PRA, 1769-1850. The recently constructed LIFFE offices block the access to the ambulatory, hence the poor quality of the reproduction (fig. 5.20). Note the painting can be seen in the background of figs. 5.17; 5.18.
68. *Dictionary of National Biography*, p.837. Although the Bill to abolish the slave trade was passed by Parliament in 1807, the practice of slavery was not abolished in the British colonies until 1833.

69. It was as a result of Grenfell's parliamentary speeches (two of which were published in 1816) that the accounts of the Bank of England were made public. *Dictionary of National Biography*, p.387.

70. Barry Supple, *The Royal Exchange Assurance: A History of British Insurance 1720-1970* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.352.

71. Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire*, p.8.

72. *Ibid.*, p.8.

73. Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery: 1776-1848* (London: Verso, 1988), p.51.

74. Quoted in: C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Virgin, 1989), p.52, n.21.

75. Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, p.440. The complex details underwriting British slave abolitionism in the 1790s and emancipation between 1823-1838 are outlined in Chapter IV pp.131-160 and Chapter XI, pp.419-472 respectively.

76. Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, pp.214-315.

77. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode XI, Chapter Two, p.83.

78. In terms of the history of the cinema the shot of Judy in Dorothy Arzner's *Dance, Girl, Dance*, looking out across the New York skyline and whispering 'I wish I could be a dancer', is a challenging image. However, the soft focus close-up of her face infantilises her ambition.

79. Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', *Art in America*, May (1993), 119 -189 (p.122).

80. See for example: Ernest Croft, R.A. *The Opening of the first Royal Exchange by Queen Elizabeth I, 23 January, 1571*, presented to the Guardian Royal Exchange by the Mercers Company in 1899; Robert W. Macbeth, *Opening of the Royal Exchange by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, 28th October, 1844*, presented to GRE by Joseph Snowden in 1895. Note also: Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: An Allegory of Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985).

81. W.J. Webb, *Flower Girls*, Guardian Royal Exchange Collection, illustrated in: Saunders, *The Royal*

Exchange, p.34. See also: Lynda Nead, 'Seduction, Prostitution and Suicide: *On the Brink* by Alfred Elmore', *Art History*, 5, 3 (September, 1982), 310-322; and Sander L. Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Sexuality: Towards an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine and Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, 12, 1 (1985), 204-242 (p.231).

82. Timothy J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), pp.79-146.

83. Saunders, *The Royal Exchange*, pp.34-35.

84. The subversive function of laughter is discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, pp.285-291, 320-327.

85. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, p.99.

86. John Willett, *The Theatre of Berthold Brecht: A Study from Eight Aspects* (London: Methuen, 1959), pp.132, 133.

87. Note the reference in the film to masonic rites. Chapter One, p.40, n.6.

88. See Mary Ann Doane's detailed discussion of the relations between the black woman [Annie] and the white woman [Lora] in the two film versions of Fanny Hurst's novel *Imitations of Life* (John Stahl, 1934, and Douglas Sirk, 1959). Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp.132-245.

89. bell hooks talks about the "familiarity" of the hardworking, churchgoing Mama and the '[...] "tragic mulatto" who did not want to be confined by blackness [...]. She was tragic because there was no place in the cinema for her, no loving pictures. She too was an absent image. It was better then, that we were absent [as spectators], for when we were there it was humiliating, strange, sad. We cried all night for you, for the cinema that had no place for you.' bell hooks, 'The Oppositional Gaze', p.294.

90. The model of friendship between a black woman and a white woman, with the black woman occupying the position of analyst is developed in Yvonne Rainer's recent film *Privilege* (1992), starring Novella Nelson as the filmmaker/analyst Yvonne and Alice Spivak in the role of Jenny the analysand/story-teller. See my comments on the analytic relation between Celeste and Ruby in Chapter Seven.

91. The figure of Olympia was modelled by Victorine Meurent and the model for the black woman has been identified by Tabarant as Laure. Theodore Reff, *Manet: Olympia* (London: Allen Lane), p.93, n.21. Eunice Lipton has recently published the life story of Victorine Meurent, Laure's story is yet to be told. Eunice Lipton. *Alias Olympia: A Woman's Search for Manet's Notorious Model and her own Desire* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993).

92. Visual references to Olympia include: Paul Gauguin, copy of Manet's Olympia (1890-91); Gauguin, *Manao Tupapau* (1892); Paul Cezanne, *L'Après Midi à Naples*; Pablo Picasso's drawing, *Parody of Olympia* (1901); Rousseau, *Jadwiga's Dream* (1910); Larry Rivers, *Black Faced Olympia* (1968); Mel Ramos, *Olympia* (1971); Wunderlich, *Olympia after Manet* (1976).

93. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, pp.79-146.

94. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, p.79.

95. Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Sexuality', p.231.

96. Heather Dawkins, *Sexuality, Degas and women's history*, PhD thesis, University of Leeds, Department of Fine Art (1991), p.70.

97. Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Garde Gambits 1888-1893: Gender and the Colour of Art History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), pp.21-25.

98. *Ibid.*, p.21.

99. Postwer, 'La Fraternité Littéraire' quoted in: Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, p.87.

100. *Ibid.*, p.87. The term black messenger refers to the phrase 'gentle black messenger' in Zaccherie Astruc's poem printed in the accompanying Salon catalogue.

101. The naturalisation of the myth of black otherness is outlined in detail by Patrick Brantlinger and Sander L. Gilman. Patrick Brantlinger, 'Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent', *Critical Inquiry*, 12, 1 (1985), 166-203. Sander L. Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies'.

102. Postwer quoted in: Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, p.87.

103. Mulvey, 'Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity'.
104. Ibid., p.70.
105. Ibid., pp.65-66, 70.
106. Carby, 'White Woman Listen', p.212.
107. Mulvey, 'Pandora', p.66.
108. bell hooks, 'The Oppositional Gaze', p.295.
109. Ibid., p.298.
110. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode IX, Chapter Two, pp.79-80 and Chapter Nine.
111. Audre Lorde, 'Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference', *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge*, ed. by Helen Crowley and Susan Himmelweit (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp.47-54 (p.47).
112. Stuart Hall, 'Minimal Selves', *Identity: the Real Me/ICA Documents 6*, ed. by Lisa Appignanesi (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1987), pp.44-46 (p.45).
113. Gilane Tawadros, 'Redrawing the Boundaries', *Ten/8: Critical Decade: Black British Photography in the 80s*, 2, 3 (86-91), p.87.
114. Hortense J. Spillers, 'Interstices: A Drama of Words', *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. by Carole S. Vance (London: Pandora, 1989), pp.73-101 (p.79).

Chapter Six

RUBY: GOLD IDOL AND SOUTHERN BELLE

(Episodes III, IV, XI, XII, XIV)

In contrast to Celeste's name which summons thoughts of an uncontained heavenly expanse of glittering lights - Ruby's name, like the gold in the film's title, is buried in the depths of the earth and evokes deliberations on blood and sacrifice.¹ The signficatory overlay between blood and gold is deeply embedded in the sacrificial rites of patriarchy, to the extent that the archaic meaning of the term "to gild" is 'To smear with blood'.² Where gold has been mythologised in terms of masculine value and presence, blood connotes loss; where gold is hoarded, blood is spilled; where gold is a sign of the father's "yes", blood is evidence of his castrating glance - his "no"; where gold connotes his power, blood is the trace of her undoing, her guilt, her mutilation, her abjection and indeed her "nature". It is thus as a consequence of these historically mythologised meanings that the figure of woman is metonymically linked with the blooded mark, the "ruby wound" and "ruby lips".³

In her double roles as gold idol and screen goddess, Ruby re-enacts the two structuring moments of masculine heterosexual desire: she both *is* and *is not*

castrated, she is at once the sign of his desire and she is the cipher of his displaced terror - she is precious and abject, valued and bartered, pure and corrupt, unblemished and disfigured. For the male spectator her value as idol lies in her ability to give form to the lost imago of the (maternal) phallus [fig. 6.1]. In contrast, her value as screen goddess lies in her capacity to simultaneously replicate man's treasured (phallic) object and present herself as his castrated victim [fig. 6.2].

Ruby makes her first appearance in the film as idol. As such she is a cipher of the pre-oedipal mother onto which the little boy had, in the distant past, attempted to bestow his own likeness.⁴ It is thus as reconstructed imago of an ideal moment that the idol/Ruby gives form to man's fantasy of an all-knowing, all-giving, all-phallic mother who both desires the man/child as object and gives herself to him as phallic object of his desire.⁵ Dressed in gold and raised high on a pedestal she is removed from historical specificity - she is a giant seamless icon, a cult object, a figure of worship, an all-powerful untouchable deity. Elevated shoulder high at the centre of a procession of anonymous and identically costumed men she speaks on behalf of his status, his achievements and above all his mastery. The men's desire to contain Ruby within a phallic mould can be

read as an attempt to concurrently block the terrifying discovery of the mother's castration and repress the equally dreadful realisation of their own lack (and loss). Indeed, the expert's adulation of a tiny replica of the idol confirms the significance of Ruby's iconic status.

There is thus also a level at which Ruby-the-gold-idol evokes the circular discourse of fetishism theorised by Freud as a '[...] token of triumph over castration and a protection against it'.⁶ According to Elizabeth Grosz, the fetish allows the boy to '[...] remain within the intimacy of his pre-Oedipal attachment to the phallic mother [...]', whilst still developing his own sense of masculinity in relation to the father's law and symbolic oedipal relations.⁷ The fetishist's desire to escape the recognition of difference and recreate a world of sameness is achieved through the function of blocking thought (narrative) through the act of self-absorbed looking.

After a brief appearance as idol, Ruby is magically transformed into a cinema star. Julie Christie's participation in the film confers a particular presence to the figure of Ruby as star - here we have an actual screen goddess playing the part of a screen goddess.⁸ Cast in the role of a distressed star struggling against the alienating conventions of the classic cinema, Julie Christie epitomises and

eventually disrupts the model of female castration staged in the opening paragraphs of Laura Mulvey's influential essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'.⁹ Adopting the pose of woman as Other - as lacking - she dramatises the preconditions of symbolisation and is exchanged between men. Her desire to be both desired by men and exchanged between men mirrors Laura Mulvey's account of the image of the female star as '[...] bearer of the bleeding wound [...] ' who '[...] can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it'.¹⁰

Drawing on classic Freudian theory, Mulvey argues that the magic of Hollywood is constructed in relation to the satisfaction of male desire and the management of male fears.¹¹ From this perspective the classic image of feminine beauty is structured in response to the unconscious male desire to fix - to fetishise - woman as an object of scopophilic gratification. Directing his desiring look at the cinematic illusion of the star, the male protagonist (and by implication the male spectator) is granted the space to mobilise two contradictory discourses - one of assertion and the other grounded in anxious displacement. So although the image of screen goddess confirms his own phallic certainty, her display of lack threatens the male looker with the reality of his own castration. In response to this underlying threat, he sets about

distancing himself from the possibility of castration through forms of assertive voyeuristic surveillance or, alternatively, by projecting (displacing) his attention onto a substitute fetish object. Both these looks are used by men to confirm and relive the structuring moments of their own gender specific fantasies of potency and pleasure.

For instance, in the introductory shots of Ruby in the ballroom the camera puns the two ways in which the classic cinema simultaneously identifies and attempts to control the lack that patriarchy has designated as "feminine". On the one hand, the apparatus moves towards the star, it clings to her, it fragments her body, it fetishises and glamorises her hair, her gestures, her smile, her jewellery, her dress. These close-up shots have a double function, they confirm that she is castrated and concurrently transform parts of her body or clothing into the mask that originally preserved the illusion of the maternal phallus. On the other hand, the camera moves back and adopts the investigative and punishing stance of the male voyeuristic eye/I.¹² Thus protected by distance it scans the room, contemplates the scene and attempts to master her every move. While he/the camera looks at Ruby, she desires to be looked at.

As screen goddess Ruby clones the theoretical and cinematic models which equate female subjectivity with

a masochistic willingness to both identify with and invest in the masculine desire to displace his repressed fear of castration onto her body. According to Freud, masochism is an "expression" of feminine nature.¹³ As ballroom belle Ruby dramatises the self-sacrificial regime described by Freud as a part of "normal" feminine development - she submits herself to the ritualised act of exchange thus confirming her lack.¹⁴ Here, on the dance floor she is sexualised, sensualised, surveyed, fetishised and bartered. Projecting their own uncertainties and fears onto an iconic abstraction of woman, the men create a discourse of pleasure out of their own repressed terror.

Ruby's role as screen goddess^{is} simultaneously informed by Laura Mulvey's feminist adaptation of Freudian theory and can also be read from a Lacanian perspective of sexual difference related to either *having* or *being* the phallus: 'On the masculine side, one has it (the phallus) without being it; on the feminine side, one is it, without having it'.¹⁵ To quote Lacan:

[...] it is in order to be the phallus that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that woman will reject the essential part of feminity, namely all her attributes in the masquerade.¹⁶

Framed within the contradictory roles of *being* and yet *not having* the phallus, Ruby is set up as mirror to man's desire. The framework of her "identity" is thus

orchestrated in relation to a fetishised and pre-given cinematic image which is validated through her capacity to exhibit herself as phallus and concurrently display and displace the primary source of masculine repression (the threat of castration). However, although Ruby is initially trapped in the to-be-looked-at-ness of the classic screen goddess, she eventually breaks the circularity of the spell and inverts the men's gaze - she looks back (Ruby's defiant reversal of the male gaze is re-enacted three times in: the Golden Lane Theatre, the Royal Exchange procession scene and towards the end of the film in the revised ballroom scene).¹⁷

In her double roles as idol and screen goddess Ruby re-enacts the ways in which the classic cinema mirrors the operations of psychic repression in patriarchy and, her escape from this framework invokes Laura Mulvey's assertion that psychoanalytic theory can be appropriated as a political weapon to work on behalf of, rather than against, women. In short Ruby's actions are informed by Mulvey's recommendation that feminist analysis and the feminist countercinema should 'examine patriarchy with the tools it provides'.¹⁸

Thus responding to Mulvey's call to arms, *The Gold Diggers* mobilises the inflections and contradictions underlying the classic apparatus and procures Ruby's transformation from passive sign-object to an active

feminist sign-user. This chapter charts her breakthrough.

Ruby: The Gold Idol

[...] female figures lie on the portals of stock exchanges and watch from the entrances of banks [...] the coins we handle in half the countries of Europe bear the heads and sometimes the full figure of imagined ideal states, of Republics and Empires and Victories, real queens who embody in person the pretended unity of the nation; Justice raises her sword over law courts and the White Rock fairy promises the sparkle of the water inside every bottle she identifies.¹⁹

Standing outside the Royal Exchange, on the spot where the gold idol procession was shot, I am reminded of Marina Warner's observation concerning the ubiquity of female monuments designed to celebrate masculine achievement [fig. 6.3]. Predictably, a large number of the statues in this area of the London represent the figure of commerce - women transformed into ideal allegorical embodiments of entrepreneurial wealth and power. Elevated to speak on man's behalf these female figures guard the main entrance of the Bank of England, they encircle the turrets of the nearby Lloyds Shipping Registry and they guard the Institute of Chartered Accountants on Great Swan Alley [figs. 6.4; 6.5; 6.6].²⁰ Similarly enthroned as idol, her gold robes patterned with masonic symbols, Ruby is surrounded by sister-statues who, to paraphrase Marina Warner, are unable to participate in the activities and

achievements they represent.²¹

In keeping with the key scenes in *The Gold Diggers* the gold idol procession is featured twice - once to establish the protocol of the status quo and a second time to signal the changes wrought by the co-stars.²² As she is carried into the Exchange the figure of Ruby-the-gold-idol replicates the central figure of commerce on the pediment of that building [figs. 6.7; 6.8].²³ The latter monument is ten foot high and presides over sixteen life-size male figures arranged hierarchically in relation to class and racial propriety. Holding the charter of the Royal Exchange she is flanked by a trade ship, a beehive, a cornucopia and two groups of dignitaries: on her right is the Lord Mayor, an alderman and a councillor²⁴ and on her left two British merchants negotiating with a Muslim.²⁵ Further down the rung of this graded assembly are Greek, Turkish and Chinese traders and squeezed into the corners of the pediment are diverse exemplars of compliant workers - there is an Arab sailor, a kneeling African, a scribe and a number of white craftsmen and traders.²⁶ In its entirety the sculpted tableau amounts to a clearly coded, monolithic vision of a patriarchal world order, governed by British decision making, British capital investment and British commerce. In the nineteenth century these functions of British imperial rule were underscored by a "free

trade" system and backed by a stringent tariff system which effectively barred the import of any foreign merchandise concurrently manufactured in Britain, such as textiles, ceramics and paper.²⁷

Not only does Ruby replicate the figure of commerce on the Exchange pediment, but she simultaneously evokes the double roles of sovereignty (note the endorsements of Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria²⁸ on the supporting pediment lintel) and plenitude (Prince Albert's pediment verse: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof').²⁹ Seen in conjunction with the sculptures, the verse suggests that global mastery by a Christian God is synonymous with British economic mastery. Read across these intertextual references points it is clear that Ruby-the-gold-idol is designed to naturalise the plunder of nations. Man has moulded her as the key signifier of empire and nation, and thus enthroned she functions as precious emblem of his global self-aggrandisement.

But, how can an idol constructed to speak on man's behalf step down from its plinth and turn against its maker? How can Ruby break free from the historically established weight of idolatry and construct a voice of her own? What options does she have? She knows only too well that figures such as Lilith, Eve, Pandora and Coppélia, all of whom disobeyed their maker, have been mythologised within the punishing discourses of

hysteria, evil and Otherness.

Kristeva's account of productivity of the maternal signifier in conjunction with Lacan's model of the gaze can help us theorise Ruby's escape from her pre-given iconic status as central icon of mastery.³⁰ Drawing on Freud's identification of the link between the fetish object and the disavowal of the maternal castration, Kristeva argues that the phallic mother is both inside and outside the law. On the one hand, the mother's jouissance is experienced at the pre-verbal level of the semiotic and provides the founding material of the Symbolic; on the other, this unacceptable level of excess is immediately repressed by the univocal order of the master discourse.³¹ As we know, the function of repression plays a part in the imaginary unification and deification of the mother's body as sacred monument and positions feminine corporeality as '[...] a male speaking body', who, as I mentioned above, safeguards the bonds between men.³² Thus trapped as ventriloquist's dummy, the phallic mother's custodial role masks her semiotic proclivity in the making of new meanings.

However, although her function as "master-regulator" conceals the phallic mother's links with the deregulatory purpose of the semiotic, it does not negate this function. In contrast, Kristeva argues that the repressed and uncontained materiality of the

semiotic can shatter the conservative function of this sign. From this perspective the phallic mother's jubilatory excesses can work against the status quo and can '[...] enter into language where she enables you to kill the master signifier', thus allowing language to "sing".³³ This explains the liberating consequences of Ruby's laughter prior to her escape with Celeste from the Royal Exchange. Unlike the function of female laughter in the classic cinema which is anchored in the discourse of hysteria, Ruby's smile is accompanied by the activity of looking back.³⁴ Watching the ritualised activities of the bankers, the gold idol whispers 'I've been framed' and comes to life. It would appear that Ruby is profiting from the "outsider" position adopted by her friend Celeste - how else could she create the necessary distance to detach her body from its pre-given significance as either emblem of mastery or sign of her own madness.

In addition, the shock value generated by the two close-up images of the smiling idol returning the gaze can be untangled with reference to Lacan's model of the structure of looking. Lacan argues that the gaze of the Other is the underside of consciousness. For Lacan the look of the Other always precedes the look of the subject - to see means to be seen from the outside, to be 'photo-graphed'.³⁵ For instance, the long shot of Ginger Rogers clad in a body hugging sheath of gold

coins and singing the 'We're in the Money' in *Gold Diggers of 1933*, represses this "look of the Other" Lacan is talking about [fig. 6.9]. Mobilising a discourse of fetishistic scopophilia, the camera sets up a relation between the male viewer and an imagined other based on an assumption of similarity (I am like you - I am the phallus for you). Thus blocking the notion of the repressed Other, the cinematic apparatus offers the male spectator a reassuring a vision of phallic plenitude. In contrast, the image of the laughing idol in *The Gold Diggers* invokes the Lacanian Other of the male unconscious - that is the terror of absence, the realisation of loss, the scene of castration.³⁶ Running off into the night Ruby and Celeste are forcing the men to acknowledge the concept of masculine loss.

The Plantation Ballroom and the Southern Belle

Woman has functioned most often by far as what is at stake in a transaction, usually rivalrous, between two men, her passage from father to husband included. She has functioned as merchandise, a commodity passed from one owner to another from one consumer to another, a possible currency of exchange between one and the other.³⁷

As I explained earlier, the gold idol procession scene is repeated twice in the film. Initially when Ruby passes over the threshold of the Royal Exchange she is magically transformed into a screen goddess; the second time around she retains her status as idol and

is carried across the historical trading floor of the Exchange. The signifiatory possibilities mobilised by the latter scene are outlined in Chapter Five, my focus here is on Ruby's role as cinema star.³⁸

Immediately after entering the Exchange Ruby takes on the role of star in an opulent plantation ballroom borrowed from the cinema genre of Melodrama [figs. 6.10; 6.11].³⁹ This use of a doorway to initiate a shift of time, place and even persona mimics what Bazin has referred to as the "door knob" strategy of the classic cinema.⁴⁰ In addition, Ruby's relocation from the Royal Exchange to a Hollywood ballroom and her concomitant switch from gold idol to movie star is informed by the fairy tale tradition of feminine transmutability. Passing over the threshold of the Exchange she escapes the frozen immobility of the gold idol and enters a fantasy world of rescue and romance.

Let us begin with a brief summary of the episode. Standing at the head of a magnificent flight of steps Ruby displays all the trappings of feminine glamour. Wearing a white crinoline dress and bedecked with glittering diamonds, she turns to the senior of her two escorts and together they make their way down to a spacious ballroom. The dance floor is filled with waltzing couples accompanied by a musical trio playing the saxophone, piano and cello.⁴¹ This fairy tale scenario is initially unsettled when the male dancers

begin to glide from one woman to the next. However, this bizarre rehearsal of the masculine rites of exchange is interrupted when Celeste rides into the ballroom and rescues the star.

The economic structure of this witty scene belies its complexity. On the one hand, the seven shots [02.17 mins] which make up the episode are orchestrated within an immediately recognisable discourse of possession and rescue. On the other, the unexpected appearance of Celeste elicits a surprising diversity of interpretative avenues. What follows is a detailed elucidation of these discursive possibilities.

- Shot 1: Staircase descent towards a fixed camera. Ruby and her partner begin to dance followed closely by the camera. Monotonous waltz [00.25]
- Shot 2: Long take of the ballroom filled with dancing couples. Camera moves slowly from left to right and back again in a 40 degree sweep, taking in the curved double staircase. The men swap partners [01.50]
- Shot 3: Close up of Ruby and her partner [00.03]
- Shot 4: Celeste rides into ballroom. Music stops, clatter of hooves, women dancers gasp [00.04]
- Shot 5: Ruby jumps on horse. Ruby gasps [00.02]
- Shot 6: The couple ride out of the ballroom [00.03]
- Shot 7: The couple disappear over the horizon. Magnified sound of pounding hooves [00.30]

In shot 1 Ruby re-enacts the classic formula of female exhibitionism. Evoking the punishing conventions of masculine voyeurism and fetishism the camera controls the heroine, first from a distance then from nearby. This image of Ruby moving down the staircase towards the relentless camera can thus be viewed alongside clips from the history of the cinema - we are reminded of the ways in which voyeuristic look

of the apparatus mimics the hero's secret fascination [Margaret Lockwood/ Griffith Jones in *The Wicked Lady* (1945)]; or the strategic use of close camerawork to signal the heroine's sexual proclivity and freeze narrative continuity [Fred MacMurray's reaction to Barbara Stanwyck - the close-up shot of Stanwyck's anklet in *Double Indemnity* (1944)]; or, indeed, the possibility that the punitive camera may condemn the heroine as failed spectacle - causing the hero to averts his gaze [Lawrence Olivier's reaction to Joan Fontaine's failed masquerade in *Rebecca* (1940)].⁴²

Having reached the dance floor, Ruby and her partner join the waltzing couples. In the second shot the camera pulls back and alluding to the 180 degree rule of filmmaking it slowly pans the waltzing couples - in so doing it invites the spectator to survey the scene: the pseudo regency decor; the elegant double staircase; the mirrored walls and the white and gold paintwork; the trio of musicians playing a humdrum waltz; the potted palms; the swirling crinolene frocks; the hapless women and the controlling actions of the men as they move from one woman to the next [fig. 6.12]. Thus punning the visual and narrative conventions of filmmaking, the introductory shots of Ruby simultaneously announce and naturalise the processes of substitution and exchange underlying the management of patriarchy - by dint of the secret camera

and the actions of the men Ruby is framed as artifact.

A brief digression will assist our reading of this shot. The spinning couples evoke what is perhaps the most renowned antebellum ballroom scene in the history of the cinema - the Atlanta Soldiers' Benefit Ball in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). Stretching the interlinked discourses of power and propriety to the limit, Rhett Butler wagers one hundred and fifty dollars, paid in gold, to lure the recently widowed "Mrs Charles Hamilton" [Scarlett] onto the dance floor - breaking the conventions of etiquette Scarlett accepts the stake and the couple proceeds to disrupts the previously ordered scene [fig. 6.13].⁴³

Scarlet and Rhett Butler's scandalous behaviour and the outrageous discourse of exchange set in motion by the men in *The Gold Diggers* are framed by the cultural conventions associated with the plantation novel.⁴⁴ However, albeit to different effect, these two ballroom scenes break the rules designed to conceal the barter of women. The idea of Scarlett being goading onto the dance floor in exchange for gold paid into the Southern coffers of the Civil War and the image of Ruby being passed from one man to the next, illustrate the suggestion made by Freud and Lévi-Strauss that socio-symbolic cohesion is contingent upon a gift-exchange of one woman between two men. Freud maintained that from the girl's point of view the

transaction between men is one of substitution - the younger man taking the place of the father. So, where the young girl's first shift of focus from the maternal to the paternal object mobilises a set of autoerotic priorities, the next move from the paternal love-object to her "final" object-choice is based on operations of substitution.⁴⁵ Like Freud, Lévi-Strauss based his assertions on the conjecture that all social groups are structured in relation to an intrinsic heterosexual order, arguing that the polarised nature/culture hierarchy is identified and regulated by men who seek to control nature through the exchange of women.⁴⁶

My suggestion is thus that the intertextual references in this scene to the history of the novel, the classic cinema and psychoanalytic and anthropological theories, are designed to invoke the hierarchy of place underpinning the established concept of sexual difference. Furthermore, the conventions underlying the representation of the white bourgeois milieu of the antebellum ballroom conceal the black labour that made this experience possible. However, the naturalised spell of whiteness and the trappings of heterosexual romance are well and truly shattered in shots 3 and 4 when Celeste rides across the ballroom floor.

**Celeste, the Black House Boy
and Rudolph Valentino.**

Although Celeste has already begun to investigate Ruby's predicament as "prized object" the co-stars have never met.⁴⁷ This first encounter between two women who have been kept apart by cultural, narrative and aesthetic conventions has dramatic consequences, in that it pulverises the binary framework that divides them and generates a space to reconstruct new codes of practice [shots 3-7]. Let us take a closer look at Celeste's dramatic invasion of white propriety. In shot 3 the camera closes in on Ruby's face. Looking beyond the parameters of the frame, her expression is one of shocked anticipation (she can see more than the spectator - she can see Celeste) [fig. 6.14]. In shot 4 the crowd parts to make way for the black hero/ine riding a white mare and masquerading as a latinate hero of the classic cinema [fig. 6.15]. The soundtrack cuts from the waltz to a gasp of incredulity followed by the magnified clatter of hooves.⁴⁸ In shot 5, horse and rider about-turn in front of Ruby [fig. 6.16]. She mounts the horse and accompanied by the rhythmic pounding of hooves the two women ride out of the ballroom and disappear over the horizon [figs. 6.17; 6.18; 6.19].

The unexpected appearance of the dazzling black hero/ine in the white arena of power politics raises

three interlinked issues concerning: the repressed history of coercion underwriting established cultural codes and pleasures; the relation between the lived experience of exploited groups and the official version of history; and the contradictory positions occupied by white women in the maintenance of a racial hierarchy of difference.⁴⁹

At its most obvious level, Celeste's spectacular entrance into the fairy tale ballroom (and into the diegetic) evokes the popular cinematic fanta of the barbarian-lover abducting the woman of his dreams.⁵⁰ However, the familiar (masochistic) narratives associated with this genre of adventure story are instantly scuppered. Not only has the traditional latinate male "rescuer" been replaced by a black woman disguised as a man, thus exploding the racial and sexed conventions of romantic narrative, but Celeste's spectacular presence in the antebellum ballroom subverts a much older iconographic tradition - that of the black houseboy in the history of painting.

In relation to the latter point, Celeste's appearance in the ordered space of white sociality is an abrupt reminder of the exclusion, other than as commodified ciphers of white propriety, of black figures from historical representations of the "civilised" investor classes.⁵¹ Writing about seventeenth and eighteen century paintings produced in

Britain, David Dabydeen has pointed out that the black houseboys included in portraits of the aristocracy were consistently feminised, infantilised and animalised.⁵² Although the transvesticism evoked by these bejewelled boys infers a slippage of the sexed conventions of masculine looking and feminine objectification, this potential disruption of meanings is totally blocked by the authoritarian discourses of ownership, exploitation and oppression at work in these paintings [fig. 6.20].⁵³ Turning our attention back to *The Gold Diggers*, it seems to me that the very idea of a black hero/ine running off with a white screen goddess upends the power politics underwriting the history of controlling images of houseboys. Although this challenge to convention is generated by a multiplicity of factors - in particular by Celeste's visibility, her deregulation of the men's control over women and her influence over the narrative, it is also contingent ^{on} her sexual ambiguity. This level of excess generated by Celeste's invasion into this arena of white male propriety can be further unpacked with reference to the iconographic feminisation of Rudolph Valentino [fig. 6.21].

In her examination of the sexual ambivalence underpinning the figure of Valentino, Miriam Hansen turned to Freud's description of the bisexual and autoerotic components of the scopic drive in early

infantile sexuality.⁵⁴ Identifying the value of the latent instability of primary drive structures, Hansen argues that:

[...] the contradictory constitution of libidinal components may account for the coexistence, in their later fixation as perversion, of diametrically opposed drives within one and the same person, even if one tendency dominates.⁵⁵

Referring to the fantasy reconciliations of masculine and feminine referents at work in the figure of Rudolph Valentino, Hansen suggests that Freud's classification of the ambivalence of the scopic regime can help us account for the often contradictory juxtaposition (within a single image) of masculine looking and feminine display. Valentino is perhaps the most notable example of an ethnic romantic hero whose screen presence was consistently feminised as erotic object. Demonstrating the extent to which his cinematic persona combines the functions of an active desiring look (associated with masculine control) with that of feminine "to-be-looked-at-ness", Hansen argues persuasively:⁵⁶

The feminine connotations of Valentino's "to-be-looked-at-ness" [...] destabilises his own glance in its very origin, makes him vulnerable to temptation, jeopardises the sovereignty of the male subject. [...] The erotic appeal of the Valentinian gaze, staged as a look within the look, is one of reciprocity and ambivalence, rather than mastery and objectification.⁵⁷

It is, I think, significant that Celeste's theatrical transvesticism in the "rescue" scene evokes a notion of Valentinian heroics - combining a level of "to-be-looked-at-ness" with a desire to control the

look and the narrative - suggesting, perhaps, that the destabilisation of sexed and racial assumptions is achieved in the gap between masculine and feminine codes which can be accessed via the agency of a spectacular hero/ine.⁵⁸ Seen from the vantage point of the erotic bisexuality associated with the figure of Rudolph Valentino, we can begin to identify a level at which the combination of "optical intoxication" and action framing Celeste's sensational entrance destabilises the racist and sexed hierarchies of place in seventeenth century portraiture, the plantation novel and the classic cinema.⁵⁹ Instead of black sexuality functioning as a narrative stooge - a negative foil, for the construction and maintenance of white control - Celeste's incursion into the cyclical rituals of male power plays on the erotic ambiguities of Valentinian heroics which, when re-enacted by a woman riding into an elite white ballroom, amounts to an *unfolding* of an as yet uncharted readerly space.

In addition, Celeste's spectacular appearance on the antebellum dance floor raises what is perhaps the most significant and searching question in the film: Why should Celeste rescue Ruby [fig. 6.22]? I shall address this question in the next stage of my reading, arguing that the image of the co-stars fleeing the signficatory conventions of the classic apparatus, mobilises a set of explosive ideas which simultaneously

evoke and reframe the "impossible" relation between Cathy and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*.

Celeste and Heathcliff

In *Wuthering Heights* Brontë uses Heathcliff's physical and emotional "blackness" and his status as foundling to pierce the bigoted self-perpetuating world of the British middle class. Introducing the boy as "it" ('[...] it's as dark as if it came from the devil'⁶⁰), she refers to the slaving port of Liverpool and the child's "blackness" to raise the question of Heathcliff's parentage and establish the discourse of the outcast. I want to suggest a parallel between the reaction of the white middle class family to the foundling and the reaction of the dancers as Celeste rides across the ballroom. In both instances presence of the "black" outsider in the diegetic denaturalises the prevailing constellation of signs. In addition, the unfulfilled promise of reciprocity between Cathy and Heathcliff is perhaps what is worth "rescuing" from the ballroom.

Andrea Dworkin argues that the ground-breaking possibilities in *Wuthering Heights* lie in Emily Brontë's refusal to legitimate the hierarchies of race, sex and class identified at the beginning of the story.

According to Dworkin, rather than succumbing to established ideologies of place Brontë uses the relationship between Cathy and Heathcliff to challenge the racist and sexed polarities within which the two characters are trapped and, albeit unwittingly, implicated [fig. 6.23].⁶¹ Not unlike roles of the co-stars in *The Gold Diggers*, the figures of Cathy and Heathcliff are constructed in relation to social and cultural (rather than biological) difference. Cathy's rejection of Heathcliff is thus not a rejection of Otherness, but is seen instead as a rejection of her own sense of self, her integrity, her mirror image - rejecting Heathcliff amounts to a form of self-annihilation. The two are not opposites, there is a mutuality between them - they are one: 'I am Heathcliff' [...] 'He is in my soul'.⁶² Moreover, their passionate bond is anchored in a profound understanding, on both their parts, of their shared oppression within patriarchal capitalism. On her part Cathy rationalises: '[...] did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I marry we shall become beggars, whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power'.⁶³ Indeed, the generative force of the story lies in the possibility that this debarred love relation might be find a way of surviving the crushing power of the bourgeois establishment [fig. 6.24].

Returning to *The Gold Diggers*, it seems to me that Celeste's commitment to Ruby in conjunction with her infringement of bourgeois protocol, rekindles the promise of reciprocity of the prohibited love between Cathy and Heathcliff. Moreover, in her role of feminised male spectacle, the black heroine's empowering presence can be read as a challenge to Heathcliff's sadistically anchored downfall. Reading between the lines of Brontë's story, Heathcliff's ruin is a consequence of his jealous identification with his exploiter: 'I wish I had light hair and fair skin [...] and had a chance of being as rich as he will be.'⁶⁴ As an antidote to Heathcliff's desperate appropriation of the discourse of white male ownership, Celeste adopts the sexually ambiguous costume of a black hero/ine.

Coming back to my earlier question of why the knowing black woman should rescue the white screen goddess. The film indicates that the history of the novel can be salvaged for a feminist reading, in that the intrepid rescue scene and the subsequent reciprocity between Celeste and Ruby extend the interpretative possibilities mobilised by texts such as *Wuthering Heights* - possibilities which disrupt the binary antagonisms underscoring the management of white patriarchal power. However, despite Emily Brontë's daring attempt to honour difference, the lovers are only granted the mutuality they strive for in death; in

contrast, the image of Celeste rescuing Ruby holds out the promise that a discourse of reciprocity between two traditionally polarised subjects might be achieved in life.

**Ruby Returns to the Ballroom:
Inverting Tradition**

The Gold Diggers uses strategies of delay and repetition to explore new codes for living. Throughout the film, images are pulled back into memory – they are reclaimed, recontextualised and reworked – indeed, structurally the film could be described as a series of looped replays which have been modified by interpretation. Freud has taught us that the compulsive repetition of unmodified material is a symptom of resistance and neurosis: 'We have learnt that the patient repeats instead of remembering, and repeats under conditions of resistance.'⁶⁵ The classic staircase descent and the men's ritualised exchange of women in the first ballroom scene can be read as just such an obsessively reiterated compulsion. Indeed, as we have seen, it is not until Celeste's dramatic appearance that the conventional narrative falters and the scene opens itself up for revision, thus allowing the women to escape the neurotic circularity of compulsive repetition. Like the procession scene, the

ballroom scene is performed twice - at the beginning and end of the film. I want to close this chapter with an analysis of the revised version of this spectacle.⁶⁶

Episode XIV: The Revised Ballroom Scene [04.51 minutes]

Shot 1: Ruby returns to Royal Exchange [00.07]
 Shot 2: Staircase descent with men, rpt [00.25]
 Shot 3: Couples dance to the tune of the *Horse Waltz*. Two men drop to the floor [01.25]

(Ruby's voice over):
 To the bank with the beauty
 To the bank with the gold
 Both make money, neither grow old

I can project, I am projected
 I can repeat, I am repeated
 The investors take their place
 And I play my part

Shot 4: Musical trio [00.04]
 Shot 5: Waltzing couples, one man falls [00.05]
 Shot 6: Celeste rides into ballroom, rpt [00.04]
 Shot 7: Ruby, hands on hips, laughing [00.02]
 Shot 8: Ruby mounts horse, rpt [00.02]
 Soundtrack accelerated
 Shot 9: Couple ride out of ballroom, rpt, acc shot [00.03]
 Shot 10: Couple ride into distance, rpt [00.15]
 Shot 11: Women dance with one another, engage in game-playing and laughter [00.20]

Shots 12-30 are arranged in 2 minute montage

Shot 12: Close-up, high angle, man on floor
 Shot 13: Close-up, high angle, man on floor
 Shot 14: Men standing in a row against the wall. They are joined by a second row of men
 Shot 15: Close-up, high angle, man rising from floor
 Shots 16-18: Laughing women slide down the banister
 Shots 19-20: Men strewn across the floor
 Shot 21: Close-up, mother retrieves toy horse from snow, rpt
 Shot 22: Celeste and Ruby ride off into distance, rpt
 Sound track reverts back to normal speed. Change of music
 Shots 23-24: Men dance with each other
 Shot 25: Male audience, all cough, all look to left, rpt
 Shot 26: Child/Ruby digging, rpt
 Shot 27: Male audience, all cough, look left and right, rpt
 Shot 28: Male audience, all look left and right, move arms
 Shot 29: Iceland, wind, rpt
 Shot 30: Empty path in landscape, rpt

The legibility of the second ballroom scene hangs on three interlinked ideas: first, the women's ability

to parody their conventional role as Woman-object disrupts the masculine principles governing the exchange of women [shots 3 and 5]; second, the women's control over their "self-image" generates new forms of pleasure [shots 11, 16-18]; and third, the women's capacity to self-regulate forces the men to acknowledge their own repressed desire [shots 11, 23-24].

In contrast to the discourse of masculine privilege announced in the first ballroom scene, in the revised scene the men are mesmerised by their female partners - to the extent that, one by one, they stumble helplessly to the ground [shots 3, 5, 19, 20; figs. 6.25; 6.26; 6.27]. While the men topple, Ruby's voice-over confirms the potency and ambiguities underlying her masquerade - she both *is* and *is not* in control:

[Ruby voice-over]
 To the bank with the beauty
 To the bank with the gold
 Both make money, neither grow old

I can project, I am projected
 I can repeat, I am repeated
 The investors take their place.
 I play my part.⁶⁷

Ruby's new found confidence in her ability to defuse the power of her oppressor is endorsed in the repeated escape scene. In the first ballroom scene Ruby was taken aback by the abrupt intrusion of the stranger on horseback; however, in the revised scene she is clearly anticipating the arrival of the dashing Celeste. Standing in centre stage, hands on hips and

laughing, Ruby awaits her new friend [fig. 6.28]. Indeed, the image of the stumbling men coupled with Ruby's gleeful rejection of protocol suggest that she has learnt how to project her self-image to her own advantage.

There is a level at which Ruby's masquerade in shots 2, 3 and 5 follows the path trodden by countless mythologised heroines.⁶⁸ Mimicking the conventions of the femme-fatale, epitomised by figures such as Coppélia (the dancing doll), Ruby puts herself on display and becomes both the central figure of the master's desire and the architect of his downfall.⁶⁹ It is noteworthy that from a Freudian perspective these acts of female revenge are seen as a function of narcissism:⁷⁰

It is only themselves that such women [narcissistic women] love with an intensity comparable to a man's love for them. The importance of this type of woman for the erotic life of mankind is to be rated very high. Such women have the greatest fascination for men, not only for aesthetic reasons, since as a rule they are most beautiful but for a combination of interesting psychological factors.⁷¹

Championing the assumptions of a misogynist society, Freud announces that the allure of "such women" is no more than an attraction to the primary narcissistic drives which men have put behind them.⁷² He argues that men's ability to disentangle themselves in early infancy from the self-gratifying temptation of narcissistic pleasures is a feature of the ethical regulatory function of the super-ego which is highly

developed in men and deficient in women who, according to Freud, are destined to retain their early narcissistic impulses.⁷³

In her acclaimed essay 'Womanliness as Masquerade' first published in 1928, Joan Riviere reopened the debate on the relation between women and narcissistic exhibitionism.⁷⁴ Indeed, her reformulation of Freud's negative assumptions has a bearing on Ruby's masquerade - in that for Riviere femininity can be '[...] assumed and worn like a mask to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert reprisals if she was found to possess it [the phallus]'.⁷⁵ However, although the subtext of Riviere's paper raises the possibility of a model of femininity which can be performed at will to divert and/or disrupt the authority of men, her writing focuses mainly on the pathology of professional women who have resorted to the masquerade to conceal their "failed" femininity.⁷⁶

In 1956 Jacques Lacan reactivated and revised the forgotten terms in Riviere's paper.⁷⁷ However, in contrast to Riviere's proposition that the masquerade denotes a failed feminity, the Lacanian masquerade epitomises femininity precisely because it is structured in response to a male fantasy of the phallus. From this perspective the masquerading woman simultaneously placates man's fear of castration (she is without, thus he is with) and reminds him, indeed

threatens him with castration. In addition, Lacan suggests that woman's pretence of not having the phallus signals her intention keep the phallus for herself. Although the Lacan's model of the masquerade is not grounded in a physiological a priori, it stands in danger of confirming woman's status as mythic outsider, in that for Lacan the act of taking over the phallus amounts to a form of jouissance located outside the naming process in the symbolic.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties with this concept, the value of the masquerade for feminist filmmakers and theorists working in the late 1970s and early 1980s was located, first of all, in the notion of the feminine as an iconographic mask and, second, in the distance this model establishes between the sign of woman and notions of essence. In her essay 'Film and the Masquerade', published at the time the film was being made, Mary Ann Doane contends that the feminine masquerade '[...] confound[s] the masculine structure of the look' and disentangles the sign of the feminine from notions of soma, nature, neurosis and hysteria.⁷⁹ More recently Doane has distanced herself from her earlier optimism and has emphasised the reactive facet of the masquerade, claiming that although this concept dislocates the figure of woman from biology, it nevertheless frames the feminine within a pre-existing model of masculine logic:

[...] it [the masquerade] makes femininity dependent upon masculinity for its very definition. Thus although it does not secure a feminine "essence", it does presuppose a system of logic dictated by a masculine position thus once again subordinating femininity.⁸⁰

Expanding the terms of Doane's critique to include the question of sexual expression, Judith Butler claims that the established model of the masquerade is predicated on the assumption that women's sexual desire has its source in a masculine libido which is mobilised by a simultaneous refusal of female homosexuality and an incorporation of the female Other. From this point of view, the masquerade remains trapped within a '[...] melancholic and negative narcissism that results from the psychic inculcation of compulsory heterosexuality'.⁸¹

In the light of the above mentioned theories and critiques, let us take another look at Ruby's masquerade in the reformulated ballroom scene. Echoing Doane's contemporaneous essay, Ruby and her sisters confound the male gaze by knowingly putting themselves on display. Having taken control over their image the women find themselves in a ballroom magically devoid of men. Here in a world without men, the women throw themselves into the joys and pleasures of girlhood. Frolicking around the ballroom, tearing up and down the stairs and sliding down the balustrades, they exchange to-be-looked-at-ness for the sheer ecstasy of play [fig. 6.29]. The women's unmitigated delight at having

found a collaborative strength of pleasure and purpose is celebratory, dazzling in its immediacy and potentially explosive.

The sense of delight generated in this volatile little scene is clearly not caught up in the pathologising reaction formation and heterosexual circularity of Joan Riviere's thesis, instead the women's gender play-acting is framed by an explicitly anti-phallic jouissance. Rather than admitting to their own lack and submitting respectfully to the paternal embodiment of the phallic limit, the women have turned to one another and filled the concept of lack with the unnamable excess of jouissance. However, from a Lacanian perspective the women's escape into a narcissistic anti-phallic model of sexuality amounts to a flight from meaning.⁸² According to Lacan, this residual anti-phallic sexuality is necessarily outside discourse, to name it would entail reclaiming its pleasures within a masculine rubric. I will return to this notion of excess shortly, but first let us have a look at the men's liberation dance.

Immediately after the women's ecstatic games, the men (now located "elsewhere") pick themselves up from the floor [shots 19-20; fig. 6.30]. More inhibited and altogether less joyful than the women, they turn to one another and perform a frenzied yet strangely ritualised dance [shots 23-24; fig. 6.31]. The caricature of the

bankers' dance is accompanied by shots of the highly embarrassed male spectators who cannot bring themselves to look at the screen [shots 25, 27, 28]. Ignoring the consternation in the audience the dancing bankers explore the possibility of a masculine version of anti-phallic jouissance. Indeed, their determination to construct a homoerotic discourse of pleasure shatters Freud's autocratic notion of male jouissance which he equates with the pre-totemic father's exclusive rights over women.⁸³

In addition, this vision of dancing bankers who are exploring the repressed facets of their own sexuality complements and extends the space occupied by men in Sally Potter's previous work. For instance, the activities of the male cast in the four-part performance *Berlin* (1976, with Rose English) indicate that despite their obvious preoccupation with the unknown terrain of repression, this tearful group have not yet discovered the anti-phallic properties of male jouissance [fig. 6.32]. Sally Potter describes the cast as follows:

The men on the mantelpiece were the chorus: six of them plus a boy. They appeared in the house, on the ice, in the water and then in the house again, here above the fire. The performers included a musician, a writer, a scientist. We fed them but did not pay them for the shows.⁸⁴

Although not named as such, the expressions of anti-phallic jouissance in *The Gold Diggers* has been explored by Kaja Silverman. She argues that the

revised ballroom scene simultaneously activates the possibilities set in place by the female version of the negative oedipus complex (the love relation between mother and daughter) and can '[...] also be read as a disquisition of the male version of the negative oedipus complex'.⁸⁵ With reference to Luce Irigaray's model of sociality, she suggests that the men's dance gives form to the harshly repressed homoerotic desire which historically they have been forced to express covertly through the exchange of women.⁸⁶

I want to devote the final pages of this chapter to Ruby. Where her first appearance as ballroom belle was mobilised by a neurotic compulsion to repeat, her return to and revision of the original site of female persecution amounts to a consciously planned experiment. With the knowledge gained from working on herself in the analytic theatres [discussed in Chapter Eight], Ruby parodies her former role as star and in so doing she incites the other female dancers to relinquish their commitment to the phallic privilege.

However, although the second ballroom scene resonates with self-evident "truths", the co-stars' second "escape" is puzzling. Having revised the scene of their oppression why do the two women ride away? In the first escape Ruby is fleeing the masculine principles of coercion, objectification and exchange but having replaced the discourse of oppression with

the joyful eruptions of female bodily pleasures, why not stay?

The co-star's flight from the newly claimed territory of the ballroom suggests that although changing roles with the men and falling into *jouissance* may highlight the repressed material lying at the baseline of meaning, this is not enough in that the function of binary reversal cannot infiltrate the productivity of signs in the social world. Ruby's joyful anticipation of the arrival of her new friend and the women's rapid migration from the scene intimates that instead of pinning our hopes on the logic of inversion (with its commitment to a hierarchy of difference) there is much productive work to be done based on negotiation, alliance and friendship.

This raises a further question concerning the model of female agency privileged by the film. Although the film dilutes the notion of meaning based on the hierarchical exclusion of the Other, it nevertheless resorts to a binary logic of inversion in the two ballroom scenes. One possible explanation for this oscillation between different theoretical models is that Sally Potter is using the familiar rubric of inversion as a story telling device.⁸⁷ This is indeed an effective strategy, in that the tightly orchestrated mini-dramas in the revised ballroom amount to a series of instantly recognisable and humorous caricatures. It

could be that, as spectators, we value the opportunity to juxtapose the open-ended and amorphous work of semiosis and analytic love [discussed in the following chapter] with parodic images anchored in the provisional "truth" of sexual oppression.⁸⁸ Indeed, seen together the two ballroom scenes highlight the conventionally masked operations of male power politics which, as Celeste and Ruby know only too well, have very real consequences on the ways in which women (re)inscribe their sense of sexuality and subjectivity.⁸⁹

So, despite the disruptive consequences of Ruby's masquerade, her departure from the scene of jouissance suggests that new codes of practice are contingent on her proclivity as sign-user in a wider social sphere. As we shall see in Chapter Nine, the co-stars' journey from the eruptive bodily pleasures in the second ballroom scene leads them to an industrial boatyard where a female welder is busy constructing a seaworthy vessel. Indeed, it is only after Celeste retrieves a dream-image of the welder that the two women are in a position to fabricate a concept of female pleasure, mutuality and desire which combines the exhilarating experience of jouissance with a politicised vision of production, innovation and change.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. Sally Potter interview: 02.11.92.
2. *Collins English Dictionary*, ed. by Patrick Hanks (London: Collins, 1985), p.614.
3. Rosalind Coward, *Female Desire* (London: Paladin, 1984), p.117.
4. Sigmund Freud, 'Analysis of a Phobia of a Five Year Old Boy: Little Hans', *Case Histories: Dora and Little Hans*, PFL 8, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp.167-306 (p.265).
5. Sigmund Freud. 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', trans. by James Strachey, *On Sexuality*, PFL 7, ed. by Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp.33-170 (p.145).
6. Sigmund Freud, 'Fetishism', trans by Joan Riviere, *On Sexuality*, PFL 7, pp.345-358 (p.353).
7. Elizabeth Grosz, 'Fetishization', *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. by Elizabeth Wright (London: Blackwell, 1992), pp.117-118 (p.117).
8. Appendix 3; Chapter One, pp.1-3. See my comments on the relation between Julie Christie's role in *The Gold Diggers* and her actual place in stardom: Chapter One, pp.3, 41, n.10.
9. Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, 3 (1975), 6-18 (pp.6-7).
10. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', p.7.
11. Ibid, pp.6-7.
12. Ibid, pp.8-9.
13. Sigmund Freud, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, PFL 11, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp.411-425 (p.415).
14. Freud, 'Female Sexuality', *On Sexuality*, PFL 7, p.390.

15. Marie Hélène Brouse, 'Sexuality', trans. by Margaret Whitford, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. by Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp.406-409 (p.408).
16. Jacques Lacan, 'The Signification of the Phallus', *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1992), pp.289-290.
17. The concept of the male gaze is reformulated in the "mirrored" look exchanged between Ruby-the-adult and Ruby-the-child in Episode X, scene v; Chapters One, Two and Eight, pp.36-38, 83, 320-323.
18. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, p.7.
19. Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), p.xix.
20. These and other monuments in the City of London are documented in: Benedict Read and Philip Jackson (ed), *Courtauld Institute Illustrated Archive, Late C18 and C19, Part 5, London* (London: Harvey Miller and University of London, 1978).
21. Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, p.xx.
22. *The Gold Diggers*, Episodes III, XI-XII, Chapter Two, pp.73-74, 83-85. See Chapter Five, pp.182-194.
23. The pediment sculptures are by the Royal Academician Richard Westmacott Jr. Other sculptures in London by Westmacott Jr are: *George Canning* (bronze), Parliament Square SW1 and the *Duke of York* (bronze), Waterloo Place, SW1. Accounts of the Royal Exchange pediment can be found in: *The Traveller's Album*, 1861, p.58, Guild Hall Library, Noble Collection, ref: A512/12; and in: Ann Saunders, *The Royal Exchange* (London: Guardian Royal Exchange, 1991), p.37.
24. Peter Fryer describes the British plantation bankers as: '[...] fat spiders at the centre of the whole web: men like the City aldermen Sir John Bawden, Sir John Eyles and Sir Francis Eyles - and Henry Lascelles MP, who sucked so much wealth from the commission system, from sugar, and from outright fraud that his successors became the earls of Harewood. This credit system primed the pump and did so very profitably indeed.' Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire: An Introduction* (London: Pluto, 1989), p.6.

25. The Muslim merchant's prominent position is noteworthy. By 1845 it was generally acknowledged that the free trade system of production was more profitable than slave labour. The import of raw materials from India and the subsequent export to India of British textiles and other goods (and the concomitant throttling of Indian craft industries) was part of the long term plan to de-industrialise India and boost British manufacturing. Needless to say the same class that had exploited the slave trade and the so called free trade system were also exploiting the working class men, women and children trapped in the British textile industry. It is significant that the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834 was countered by the importation to the Caribbean of 500,000 free workers from India who were seeking to escape the poverty of British India. See: Peter Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire: An Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 1988), pp.17-24.

26. *The Traveller's Album*, p.58.

27. See my comments on the British textile industry in note 25. In relation to British paper production Peter Fryer notes '[...] an order of Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, 1859-1866, which obliged the British government in India to use only British-made paper'. Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire*, p.21.

28. These references to female sovereigns are complemented by the frescoes Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria in the ambulatory of the Royal Exchange: Ernest Croft, R.A., *The Opening of the First Royal Exchange by Queen Elizabeth, 23 January, 1570-1*; Robert W. Macbeth, A.R.A., *Opening of the Royal Exchange by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, 28th October, 1944*.

29. The second Royal Exchange which is not mentioned in the inscription and was opened in 1669 during the reign of Charles II.

30. Kristeva's concept of the phallic mother is outlined in: Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller, intro. by Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University press, 1984), pp.47, 63-65, 187, 187, 241 n.22, 243 n.52.; 'The Novel as Polylogue' and 'Motherhood According to Bellini' reprinted in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 191, 193-194, 199-200, 206, 238, 242.

31. Freud, 'Fetishism', p.352.
32. Kristeva, 'Motherhood According to Bellini', p.242.
33. Julia Kristeva, 'The Novel as Polylogue', trans. by Tim Gora and Alice Jardine, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 159-209 (p. 191).
34. See my comments on Laura Mulvey's model of the curious gaze in Chapter Five, pp.205-207.
35. Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Jacques Miller, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p.106.
36. The transformative function of Ruby's laughter in the Royal Exchange and elsewhere in the film is discussed in Chapters Five, Seven and Eight, pp.195, 285-291, 322-328.
37. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.157-158.
38. See my analysis of the procession inside the Royal Exchange in Chapter Five, pp.182-194.
39. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode IV, Chapter Two, p.74.
40. Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p.100.
41. Georgie Born on cello, Dave Holland and Lol Coxhill on piano and saxophone respectively. The in-frame music is accompanied by off-screen tenor horn, bass guitar, drums and bassoon.
42. See: Alison Light, 'Returning to Manderlay', *British Feminist Thought: A Reader*, ed. by Terry Lovell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp.325-344.
43. Scarlett is duly punished for her disregard for convention - she loses her child, her lover, her husband, she forfeits the friendship of women, she is deprived of sexual pleasure and she is never granted the status of "goodness". Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (London: Macmillan, 1936).
44. Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.26-27.
See also: Kathryn L. Seidel, 'The Southern Belle as an

Antebellum Ideal', *The Southern Quarterly*, 15 (1977), 387-401.

45. Sigmund Freud, 'Femininity', *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, PFL 2, ed. by Angela Richards and Albert Dickson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp.145-169 (pp.152-153).

46. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1969).

47. Hazel Carby's term. Hazel Carby, 'White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood', *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in the Seventies*, ed. by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson, 1982), pp.212-235 (p.212).

48. This "gasp" evokes the response in *Gone with the Wind?* to the suggested "slave market" at the Atlanta Soldiers Benefit Ball.

49. Celeste entry into the antebellum ballroom amounts to an heroic "bridging" of the binary concepts of black and white subjectivities. The physical journey from one space to another is a well used device in story telling - I am thinking of Eliza's flight across the broken ice in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

50. This is the fourth shot of Celeste in the film, the preceding three images are the close-ups of the black woman watching the gold idol procession, discussed in Chapter Five, pp.170-173.

51. Note the contemptuous images of crazed black dancing in D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and the depictions of black stable boys in the history of Western painting.

52. David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Manchester: Manchester Press, 1987), pp.17-40.

53 Dabydeen points out that the infantilisation and feminisation of black boys is informed by the hysterical repudiation of black sexuality by white women and forms the basis of romance in the history of the novel and in private fantasy. Joan Riviere's account of the fantasies of a female academic who resorted to compensatory forms of sexual display after a public performance is of interest here. The analysand's need to "masquerade" was apparently

anchored in numerous childhood fantasies, two of which involved the sexual enticement of a black man. The first fantasy is retributory in character, in this scenario the woman entices the man and then has him charged for assault; the second serves as a credibility test of her guise as a "castrated" woman. Mary Ann Doane raises the possibility that the analysand's obsessive reinscription of the sexualised power-relations between white women and black men amount to a confrontation between the charade of sexed power relations and the very real effects and consequences of this relation. Mary Ann Doane, 'Masquerade Reconsidered: Further Thoughts on the Female Spectator', *Discourse*, 11, 1 (1988-89), 42-54; Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10, (1929), 303-313.

55. Miriam Hansen, 'Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification: Valentino and Female Spectatorship', *Cinema Journal*, 25, 4 (1986), 6-32 (p.13).

56. *Ibid.*, p.13.

57. *Ibid.*, p.12.

58. *Ibid.*, p.15.

58. In *Orlando* (1993) Sally Potter returns to the concept of a spectacular hero/ine to challenge the established masculine and feminine roles in the classic cinema.

59. This term is used by Gaylyn Studlar to refer to Valentino's screen presence. Gaylyn Studlar, 'Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinity in Hollywood Cinema', ed. by Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Harks (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.23-45 (p.25).

60. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. by William M. Sale and Richard J. Dunn (New York: Norton, 1991), p.28.

61. Andrea Dworkin, 'Wuthering Heights', *Letters from a War Zone* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1988), pp.68-87.

62. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, pp.64, 124.

63. *Ibid.*, p.63.

64. *Ibid.*, p.44.

65. Sigmund Freud, 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis II)', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XII, trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), pp.145-156 (p.151).

66. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode XIV, Ch. Two, pp.85-86.

67. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode XI, Ch. Two, p.83.

68. The image of the castrated (and castrating) woman as Other is central to the discourses of pornography, popular culture and high culture. Ruby's numerous modern-day sisters include Hermine in Herman Hess' novel *Steppenwolf*, Maria the high priestess of terror in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) and Rachel the replicant escapee in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982).

69. Coppélia is one of E.T. Hoffmann's macabre constructions. Hoffmann was a lawyer, music critic, writer and Director of Dresden State Opera and is noted for his contribution to this particularly alarming taxonomy of femininity. His novels provided the material for the stories for the classic ballets *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*. The libretto of Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* is based on three stories by Hoffmann: *The Sandman*, *The Lost Mirror-Image* and *Counsellor Krespel*. It is noteworthy that a substantial portion of the second section of Freud's well known analytic study on the "Uncanny" is based on Hoffman's *The Sandman*. In his reading of the story Freud suggests that the beautiful doll Olympia (made collaboratively by an itinerant optician Guiseppe Coppola and the Sandman) is a metaphoric representation of the young Nathaniel's entrapment in a regressive narcissistic dynamic. Controlled by this doll (his own inward-looking drives) the hero is unable to relate to an external love-object (his fiancée Clara) and is driven to his death. Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', trans. by Alix Strachey, *Art and Literature*, PFL 14, ed. by Albert Dickson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp.335-376.

70. Freud's circle of academic women including Lou Andreas-Salomé, Helene Deutsche, Joan Riviere, Jeanne Llample-de Groot, Ruth Mack Brunswick, Marie Bonapart and most important of all his daughter Anna Freud. None of these women bore any resemblance to his theoretical model of femininity. See: Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time* (London: Dent, 1988), pp.501-522 (p.503).

71. Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', trans. by C. M. Baines, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis* PFL 11, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp.59-98 (p.82).
72. Kristeva's restitutive function of narcissism in the constitution of subjectivity is discussed in Chapter Seven, pp.271-275.
73. Sigmund Freud, 'Femininity', p.163.
74. Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade'.
75. Ibid, p.303.
76. Stephen Heath argues that the contradictions in Riviere's paper make it unclear as to whether the putting on of the feminine mask works for or against women. Stephen Heath, 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade', *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. by Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan (London: Methuen, 1986), pp.45-61. See also Mary Ann Doane's reconsiderations of the masquerade: Doane, 'Masquerade Reconsidered', pp.42-54.
77. Riviere's thesis remained unacknowledged until Jacques Lacan retrieved the terms of her debate in his paper 'The Signification of the Phallus', presented at the Max Planck Institute in 1958 and published in *Écrits* in 1966. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.281-291 (p.290). Jacqueline Rose, 'Introduction - II', *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, ed. by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. by Jacqueline Rose (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp.27-58 (p.43).
78. Jacques Lacan "God and the Jouissance of [The] Woman", *Feminine Sexuality*, p.145.
79. Mary Ann Doane, 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen*, 23, 3-4 (1982), 74-87 (p.82).
80. Doane, 'Masquerade Reconsidered', p.47.
81. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge), p.53.
82. Jacques Lacan, *Ornicar?*, 20-21 (p.12), quoted in: Jacqueline Rose, 'Introduction - II', *Feminine Sexuality*, p.53.

83. Juliet Flower Maccannell, 'Jouissance', *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, pp.185-188 (pp.185-186).
84. Sally Potter, quoted in: *Body, Space, Image: Notes Towards Improvisation and Performance*, ed. by Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickman (London; Virago, 1990), p.163.
85. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp.178-185 (p.183).
86. In his film *Ray's Heterosexual Dance Hall* (1991), Bryan Gordan puts forward the equally fascinating possibility that patriarchal power exerted through a knowing sublimation of homoerotic drives. See also: Luce Irigaray, 'Women on the Market', *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.171.
87. As a point of interest, both Sally Potter and Jacky Lansley regularly performed in men's suits during the 1970's. According to Jacky Lansley, the pleasure they took in wearing and performing in men's suits was linked to the anonymity of the suit. This strategy of appropriating a cool hard persona through (infatuated) play-acting was an attempt to control the very real politics of coercion which accompany masculine codes of dress. Jacky Lansley interview: 30.01.94.
88. Adrienne Rich, *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (San Francisco: Antelope, 1983).
89. Note Mary Ann Doane comments on the "reality" of the effects of masculinity: Doane, 'Masquerade Reconsidered', p.48.

Chapter Seven

RUBY, THE FAILED NARCISSIST

(Episode V)

I can remember very little, [...] I have been kept in the dark. [...] Stranded, we were always stranded, [...] My mother, yes, my mother. My mother, yes, my mother.¹

Immediately after their dramatic exit from the plantation ballroom, the co-stars find themselves in the "analytic" space of Celeste's room. Here in this private setting Ruby explains her feelings of loss and emptiness to her new friend. The key moment in Ruby's stumbling account concerns her early relationship with her mother. This moment is visualised in a short montage featuring four close-up shots of the star's tear-stained face juxtaposed with three short "home-movie" extracts of the mother struggling against a freezing wind in the snowbound terrain of Iceland [figs. 7.1; 7.2].² The intertextual references mobilised by this montage indicate that Ruby's psychic injury is a consequence of the conventional overvaluation of a fetishised concept of woman as eternal (phallic) essence and the concomitant devaluation of the love relation between mother and daughter.

The mother/daughter montage in Episode V is crucially important to the film, in that it provides the mise-en-scène for a relationship between the co-

stars based on analytic transference. In contrast to Ruby's confident performance as sign-object (gold idol/cinema star) in Episodes III and IV, this episode frames her as an internally damaged subject caught in a trap of melancholia and negative narcissism.

Provisionally occupying the role of analyst (m)other, Celeste encourages Ruby to explore the trajectory of her history as objectified screen goddess [fig. 7.3].

As Ruby reclaims her rightful place as active agent of speech, so her pre-given iconic status gives way to a concept of subjectivity based on the Kristevan logic of '[...] *analogy and non-exclusive opposition*'.³ This scene explores the function of the mother/daughter relation in this process, suggesting that the pre-requisite to language and subjectivity is not solely a consequence of the phallic privilege established during oedipalisation, but is also framed by the pre-verbal narcissistic dynamic constructed between mother and infant prior to the imposition of the Lacanian mirror.⁴

Narcissistic Disorder, Melancholia and Loss

Before examining the mother/daughter montage it is helpful to summarise Kristeva's account of the function of primary narcissism in the constitution of the speaking subject - not least because Ruby's crisis signals a deeply rooted form of narcissistic damage,

resulting from her attempts to counter the experience of maternal absence through attempting to internalise the figure of the mother.

Focusing on Freud's distinction between autoeroticism and infantile narcissism, Julia Kristeva submits that the infant develops a primary narcissistic function whilst still surrounded by the vocal fluidity of the pre-verbal stage of life.⁵ According to Kristeva, this narcissistic supplement motivates the autoerotic infant to construct a fake (ideal) image in reaction to the mother's unpredictable absence. Her account of the function of narcissism bears comparison to that of Jacques Lacan, in so far as both theorists have developed a model of individuation within which the subject narcissistically takes itself as its own object.⁶ But, where Lacan locates the narcissistic encounter as a component of the mirror phase, Kristeva pushes this function back into the primary choric arena.

The importance Freud attached to narcissism (and his inconsistencies on the subject) are well documented and my cursory reference to Lacan's interventions in the conventional readings of Freud are mentioned only to highlight the implications of Kristeva's theoretical model.⁷ In short, the value of Kristeva's account lies in her retention of Freud's insistence on the immediate, post-natal developments of primary

narcissism, combined with her focus on the Lacanian emphasis on the constitutive function of narcissism in the construction of subjectivity.⁸

In Kristeva's writing the mother's face rather than Lacan's mirror is the "wellspring" of the imaginary and lays the foundations for narcissism.⁹ She argues that the drive energy associated with primary narcissism is generated by aural and specular gratifications activated by the exchange of looks between the mother and the child. According to Kristeva, this energy can be harnessed to either *advantageous* or *destructive* ends. From this perspective, narcissistic drives can act as either a protective shield or a regressive blocking agent. At a facilitating level, the raw narcissistic function can block the mother's absence thus providing the infant with the material to construct an "image" of an idealised (m)other.¹⁰ As such, this outward going narcissistic energy can bridge the gap between the internalised figure of the mother and a third party (Freud's archaic father and Kristeva's imaginary father).¹¹ Not only does the early installation of two retroactively gendered "abstract" parent figures open up the process of oedipalisation, but it facilitates a more thorough understanding of the complexities of individuation and signification. Indeed, from a Kristevan perspective, the combination of the mother's

enveloping presence, her periodic absence and the presence of a loving third party in the immediate post-natal phase of life, permits the gradual disengagement of the somatic from the psychic, thus enabling us to become '[...] narcissistic, at any rate [to become] subjects of representation.'¹²

In contrast, as I have indicated above, the dynamic of primary narcissism can also trap the infant within a retrograde passage of self-destruction. According to Kristeva, the damaged narcissist (i.e. the Freudian narcissist) is unable to build a psychic bridge towards the second parental figure. Rather than acknowledge the outward going potential of narcissistic drives, the injured subject strives to internalise this primary source of energy. The retention of narcissistic energy amounts to a frantic attempt to jealously hold onto, hide within, the maternal body. The negative facet of this primary function accounts for Kristeva's description of the boy Narcissus as a failed narcissist. Unable to construct an external object, the proverbial Narcissus attempts instead to regress to the utopian undifferentiated state of plenitude.¹³

Depression is the hidden face of Narcissus: that countenance which - although it will carry him to his death - remains unperceived by him as, marvelling he contemplates himself in a mirage.'¹⁴

Read from this perspective, Ruby's melancholia can

be attributed to a regressive compulsion to fling herself back against the body of the mother. However, helped by Celeste, Ruby reformulates the mise-en-scène of her sense of "self". Creating a space to deliberate Kristeva's intervention in the Lacanian jurisdiction of the mirror-stage, this scene in *The Gold Diggers* fulfils a bridging function interlinking a retrospectively constructed memory of the pre-verbal maternal figure with socially located figures of productivity.¹⁵ Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter Nine, Ruby's retrieval of an image of the mother's smiling face is complemented at the film's end by the encounter between the co-stars, a maternal card player and a female industrial welder.

The Screen Goddess: The Empty Ego, The Weeping Woman

Self in 1958

[...]

What is reality

to this synthetic doll

who should smile, who should shift gears,

should spring the doors open in a wholesome disorder,

and have no evidence of ruin or fears?

But I would cry,

rooted into the wall that

was once my mother,

if I could remember how

and if I had the tears.¹⁶

There is a conspicuous parallel between Anne Sexton's autobiographical description in *Self in 1958* and Ruby's mournful acceptance that the pre-verbal experience of the mother is not only out of reach, but

out of bounds. Ruby's voice, like that of the poet, is framed by the inward looking drives of the negative facet of primary narcissism. At this point in the film Ruby is at her lowest ebb and can be identified as a melancholic-depressive:

I can remember very little, [...] I have been kept in the dark. [...] Stranded, we were always stranded, [...] My mother, yes my mother. My mother, yes my mother.¹⁷

Ruby's despair is confirmed in the visual track. Initially the screen goddess is pictured lying (face down) on the floor with her ballgown heaped around her, creating an ovular frame for her limp body [fig. 7.4]. In the subsequent montage sequence we see her, despondent, head down, leaning against the wall, standing in a corner of the room, and sitting with her legs slung across a table [fig. 7.6]. These shots of Ruby are punctuated by frames of Celeste, who - having assumed the role of analyst - watches, questions and listens to the distraught woman [figs. 7.5; 7.7; 7.8; 7.9].

Celeste's pivotal role in this episode is confirmed in the introductory shot. Deep in thought, hands on her hips and staring obliquely out of the frame, this commanding image of the black woman is accompanied by a repetitive jazz-rock arrangement based on the *Empire Song* [fig. 7.10]. Speaking in voice-off she announces:¹⁸

I was born a genius, that's a fact.
 I knew what was what, right from the start.
 I am concerned with redressing the balance.
 Are you reconciled with your own history, Ruby?
 Do you know what it is, Ruby?¹⁹
 Tell me everything you know.

As we have established in Chapter Five, not only has Celeste reclaimed the right to look and to speak, but she understands the connections between historical specificity, subjective renewal, agency and change. In addition, although her introductory statement suggests that she understand the power politics underpinning the right to look she is not interested in replicating the oppressive looking relations of mastery, choosing instead to replace coercion with dialogue.²⁰

Responding to Ruby's protests: 'I was left in the dark [...] I can remember very little', Celeste counsels the distressed woman to '[...] remember everything that has ever happened to you - perhaps even more'.²¹ The final sequence of her rememoration runs as follows:

Ruby: In the early days, I was often seen tied to tracks and hanging from cliffs. I managed to be feverish yet cool, passionate yet pure, aloof yet totally available [silence]. Stranded, we were always stranded [silence].

Celeste: Who?

Ruby: She and I.

Celeste: Who? Your sister? Your mother?

Ruby: My mother, yes my mother.
 My mother, yes my mother.²²

This is a fascinating interaction. In the space of a few sentences the two women have established a link between the cultural commodification of femininity

and the devalorised the maternal figure. Ruby's tears, her broken speech, her frequent lapses into silence and her refusal to meet the analyst's gaze suggest that she is grieving for the debarred maternal relation.

Clearly, the enforced recognition that the mother is lacking - castrated - has taken its toll. Not only has Ruby been compelled to recognise that the mother is not as perfect as she first seemed, but the screen goddess cannot make the connection between what is expected of her in patriarchy and this unrepresentable mother.

Primary processes of condensation and displacement have taken over the unnameable object of her grief (the devalued mother) and transformed it into a "Thing".²³

The image of Ruby leaning silently against the wall evokes André Green's description of the analysand who has attempted to internalise, devour (keep-for-herself) the unspeakable object of her desire. She appears to be saying: 'All I have got is that which I have not got.'²⁴

Like all depressives, Ruby's despair has found a hiding place in the slippage of speech and patterns of silence. The discourse of depression is a dead language which defies translation and conceals, keeps secret, the analysand's loss.²⁵ The words of one of Kristeva's clients echoes Ruby's predicament:

"I speak" she would often say "as if at the edge of words, and I have the feeling of being at the edge of my skin, but the bottom of my sorrow remains unreachable."²⁶

Let us take a closer look at the four close-up shots of Ruby's tear-stained face [fig. 7.11]. In her essay 'On Weeping', Gert Heilbrunn reminds us that tears '[...] take the weeper under [their] protective cloak [...]'.²⁷ Indeed, she goes so far as to suggest that the feeling of tears on the skin simulates '[...] the warm and wet pre-natal surroundings [...] which are the goal of regression'.²⁸ Read from this perspective Ruby is toppling into an amorphous space of undifferentiated oblivion. In each of the four shots the camera cuts progressively closer to Ruby's face. First we are confronted with a medium take of the weeping star looking down at a small (unidentified) object partially hidden by her nervously moving hands. In the following three cut-in shots of her face, she continues to stare at the now off-screen object.

Donald Winnicott has pointed out that young children often invest in a personally selected (controllable) object.²⁹ This emotional affinity to a special "transitional" thing, such as a piece of cloth, a soft toy or a corner of a blanket is thought to ease the difficult passage from the inner to the outer world. This *not-yet-object* is located on the boundary line between the child's inner reality and the outside world. Sucking or holding these *not-yet/not-me* attachments is often accompanied by the babbling and gurgling sounds of the infant's first "songs" and

"words".³⁰ Indeed, André Green goes so far as to describe language '[...] is the heir to the first transitional objects'.³¹

According to Winnicott these pre-verbal attachments tend to re-emerge in the individual gripped by depression. Thus trapped within her own internalised sense of loss, Ruby is unable to retrieve the (m)other within a social framework which, in its turn, inhibits her capacity to recall, narrativise and reconstruct events of the past.³² Hanging her head and locking her tearful gaze on her *not-yet-object* Ruby repeats (to herself rather than to Celeste) 'We were stranded, always stranded'.³³

Ruby's despair reminds me of two very different accounts of a daughter's grief - one a diary extract, the other a film. The first is H.D.'s description of a harrowing dream which she described to Freud during her analysis in 1933-34. In the dream she remembers calling for her mother: '"My mother, my mother", I cry [...] I sob violently, tears, tears, tears'.³⁴ H.D.'s tragic dream replicates the terrain of Ruby's struggle. In both instances the daughters are struggling to come to terms with the undervalued status of the maternal figure.

The second text elicited by Ruby's tears is the painful conflict between the mother's desire and the daughter's needs in King Vidor's daring film *Stella*

Dallas (1937). Although the single mother [Barbara Stanwyck] is ultimately controlled by expressions of guilt and self-sacrifice demanded of her by patriarchy, the film nevertheless devotes an unprecedented amount of space to the facilitating potential of the love relation between mother and daughter. The shots of the tearful daughter in *The Gold Diggers* evokes the despair expressed by Stella's daughter Laurel when she is led to believe that her mother has abandoned her and that, to survive in the social world, she in turn must abandon the mother. Although the mother/daughter bond is crassly evicted at the film's end, the main body of the text holds onto the irreplaceable passion between Stella and Laurel.³⁵

However, the above mentioned references to the centrality of the mother/daughter relation are the exception rather than the rule. Generally speaking the this relation is determined by the hierarchy of place established in the oedipal drama. The mother's role is thus conventionally one of self-sacrificial support for the male characters in the story, should she take hold of the diegetic at the expense of the hero, she is immediately devalued - she is made abject and shown to be depraved, lacking in maternal instinct and driven by narcissistic self-gratification.

No wonder the screen goddess in *The Gold Diggers* is weeping. She cannot find a grammar to her own

subjectivity, other than in relation to a heavily circumscribed and undervalued construct of maternity. As star, her only memory of the mother is of being stranded - debarred from narrativity and pleasure. It could well be that the impact of the mother/daughter montage is, in part, a consequence of the unequivocal failure of the classic cinema to value the bond between mothers and daughters.³⁶ Or, perhaps Ruby's plight reminds us of an overlooked (repressed) layer in the collective memory of the cinema - an archive of forgotten stories which has implications for the ways in which we might work on our own sense of subjectivity.³⁷ Taking her cue from the signifiatory possibilities in exceptional films such as *Stella Dallas*, Sally Potter intimates that Ruby's sense of agency, her control over speech, her ability to work on herself and her pleasure are not lost forever, but can be retrieved through constructing a model of female subjectivity based on a concept of maternal productivity. Let us take a look at the ways in which *The Gold Diggers* bridges the gap between the conventions of symbolic mastery and the overlooked work of the maternal in the constitution of meaning.

The Home-Movie Extract

The three "home-movie" extracts of the mother are framed by Ruby's tear-stained face [figs. 7.12; 7.13].

These short extracts feature the woman struggling against a bitter wind in a bleak isolated snowscape. Turning to the camera she smiles as if sharing a secret with the stranger behind the apparatus. This fleeting moment of recognition begs numerous questions. Where and when did this encounter take place? Who is holding the camera? Where is the child? Why is Ruby weeping?

The over-exposed grainy surface of these shots and the jolty camera work evoke the diaristic home-movie format associated with the post-war years of the 1950s. At this particular historical juncture, daughters and their mothers were caught in a hype of consumerism which fostered an illusion of self-determination and freedom of choice.³⁸ In hindsight it is clear that the optimism generated by this commodity centred conservatism did nothing for the status of women - confirming instead the authority of the father (the one with the greater earning power/the one holding the camera) both within the household and in a wider socio-economic context.³⁹

These three shots of the mother can thus be read as tiny quotations, contradictory fragments of display and denial wrenched from historical and emotional circumstance. In addition to the cultural specificity of the home-movie, this montage evokes a range of other reading possibilities. On the one hand, the

conflicting emotions mobilised by the weeping daughter and the distant mother summon the "real" relationship between the in-frame players and the woman behind the camera in Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite* (1978).⁴⁰ On the other, if we assume the figure behind the camera to be that of the father, then the mother's retreat into the ice-locked landscape demonstrates her inability to control the space of mastery. Trapped within his frames of reference she is left with little option but to retreat towards the vanishing point of the picture. There is a Kristevan sense of provisional "truth" generated by the relation between the man behind the camera and the disappearing mother - I am talking about the "truth" of her unrepresentability. Indeed, it is telling that the mother/daughter montage closes with a metaphoric rather than an actual reference to the mother's body, that is with a shot of the little hut [fig. 7.14].

Ruby's compulsive return to codes which evoke the mother can be read as an attempt to either preserve the traumatic situation of loss, or re-establish a fantasy of an old, pre-traumatic utopia.⁴¹ Both options are regressive and unpleasurable, in that they elicit the painful site of absence.⁴² Indeed, Ruby's memory of the home-movie sequence momentarily collapses the spectatorial space into that of the analysand. Trapped in the cinema seat/the crib and looking up at the giant

image of the mother's face, the spectator/child knows that the mother's laughter is directed elsewhere. The gaze between the spectator [the child] and the screen [the image of the mother] is spliced by the gaze of the Other [the camera/the father]. If, as the film suggests, the mother's recognition of the man behind the camera is linked with her banishment from the screen, what is Ruby to do? How can Ruby counter the authority of the socio-symbolic contract? How can she retrieve the mother in symbolic form, other than as a consequence of the phallic principle?

The Promise of Laughter: A Perfect Clue

In my discussion so far I have emphasised the seemingly impossible fate of the mother/daughter relation - the mother is banned from signification and the daughter is trapped within an abyss of speechless melancholia. However, although at one level the mother/daughter montage does indeed embody a form of collective loss; at another level this scene is replete with clues, possibilities and the promise of something new. So, although the cinematic invocation of the man behind the camera functions as a reminder of the pre-existing conventions of filmmaking and film reading, this montage activates a level of textual productivity which suggests other ways of thinking and looking.

This generative function is activated by the mother's smiling face, the broken grainy surface of the film, the camerawork and the emphatic presence of the soundtrack - all of which combine to defy the containing work of the apparatus.

Let us begin with the mother's smiling face. In her paper 'Place Names', Kristeva describes the mother's face as a 'light-giving marker [...] the privileged receiver of [the infant's] laughter.'⁴³ She describes the mother's face as a canvas onto which the young infant initially projects its visual and vocal energies. The maternal face and her voice anchors and orchestrates the uncoordinated infant's dispersed sounds and wild gestures within an eroticised, riant exchange - her face is an echo for the undifferentiated child, thus creating the *mise-en-scène* for the subsequent elaboration of its own subjectivity. According to Kristeva, the dynamic constructed between mother and infant activates a reservoir of raw material allowing the (narcissistic) infant to fabricate its first image of the (m)other to fill the gap left by her absence. René Spitz has described this primary "interaction" between the mother and the child as "the first point of psychic organisation".⁴⁴ With reference to the work of Spitz, Kristeva suggests that these early smiles and vocal gestures directed at the mother's face create a "wellspring" for the imaginary

which is 'Chronologically and logically before the mirror stage [...].'⁴⁵

Kristeva's model of primary psychic organisation is also indebted to Donald Winnicott's writing. In his paper 'The Mirror-role of the Mother and the Family in Child Development', Winnicott outlines the facilitating role played by the mother in the early development of the child's ego and argues that the mother's face functions as the precursor of the (Lacanian) mirror.⁴⁶

What does the baby see when he or she looks at the mother's face? I am suggesting that, ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself. In other words the mother is looking at the baby and *what she looks like is related to what she sees there.*⁴⁷

Developing Winnicott's thesis, Kristeva argues that the magnetic hold between the child's laughter and the mother's face binds the two players into an autoerotic symbiosis which lays the foundations for narcissism and introduces the child to the conflicting motility of the choric space.⁴⁸ The chora is a formless container of unmediated sounds which is the unprocessed genotext [the material base/the poetic] of language.⁴⁹ The function of arranging and framing uncontained choric sounds within a meaningful network of signs originates, according to Kristeva, in the "space" of the child's laughter. Indeed, she describes the child's laughter as '[...] evidence that the instance [choric recognition] took place [...].'⁵⁰ The

identification of the unformed materiality of an "archaic laughter space" allows the child not only to sublimate the experience of isolation, but playfully transform the realisation that it is separate.⁵¹ At this primary level, the mother and child are caught in a transactional cascade of looking, listening and feeling - these transformative gestures set the scene for the future production of objects.⁵²

The home-movie sequence in *The Gold Diggers* evokes this early generative exchange between mother and infant. The shots of the mother's laughter are complemented by a level of cinematic excess mobilised by the use of montage and the interwoven sounds of wind and string instruments. Prefaced by an extremely slow 180 degree camera pan of a bleak snowscape and accompanied by a howling gale [fig. 7.15] the juxtaposed shots of the weeping daughter and the smiling mother suggest an answer to the unpleasures described in the director's introductory song. Confirming the centrality of the maternal relation, the crashing sound of the wind is gradually displaced by a guitar track of the haunting melody of *Perfect Clue* (this tune is used to evoke the mother throughout the film). Indeed, it is noteworthy that on the *Rags/The Gold Diggers* compact disc, the *Perfect Clue* melody is accompanied by a short song endorsing the mother's pivotal role in the daughter's quest for historical

specificity [figs. 7.16; 7.17]:

Oh perfect clue
 I long for you
 unlock this mystery
 unravel history
 before my eyes.⁵³

In the classic cinema, music is often used to orchestrate narrative and mask the operations of the camera. However, although music has been allocated this background function of tying the spectator to within the linearity of a pre-given story, it is not easily contained within this secondary role. Julia Kristeva (and Roland Barthes) associate the excessive, uncontained proclivity of music (including ambient sound and laughter) with the pre-verbal productivity of the maternal chora.⁵⁴ The constitutive overlap hypothesised by Kristeva between the seemingly unbound materiality of the chora and the framing operations of the symbolic can help identify the challenging work of the soundtrack accompanying the mother/daughter montage in *The Gold Diggers*. In contrast to the notion of music as a secondary prop to film language, the powerful confrontation of codes in this sequence exposes two levels of experience - the maternal function of the semiotic and the paternal control over the symbolic. In other words this sequence plays a part in the ongoing struggle between the seemingly uncontained facet of the semiotic (the genotext - free floating sounds, visual montage) and the authority of

the symbolic (the phenotext - the man holding the camera).

However, I must stress that the film is not confining the mother to the non-representational moments of the text. In contrast, the mother/daughter montage describes the process whereby the work of maternal productivity can denaturalise and reformulate the operations of the phallic term. In addition, the montage can only be "understood" from the vantage point of language - Ruby's memory of the home-movie is mobilised in the narrative constructed with Celeste in the analytic scene. The film is thus not categorising the maternal as an alternative pre-existing topography - a lost utopia located elsewhere - but is suggesting instead that the operations of signification renewal and change can be activated by the repressed work of the maternal function. Indeed, the loose interweave of sound and fractured images in the mother/daughter montage (and elsewhere in the film) are indicative that a productive "making" of meanings is in process.

Adopting a Kristevan reading position, the extracts of the laughing woman supply the reader with the *perfect clue* to access the moment when the "I" of the child (Ruby/the spectator) was bound to the pulse of the mother [fig. 7.18]. Ruby's efforts to retrieve the repressed/uncoded encounters with the mother are supported by Celeste. Glancing across the screen play,

it is clear that Celeste's questions are anchored in Ruby's previous answers. So, rather than interrogating the sufferer in relation to the naturalised values of the status quo, Celeste adopts the specular position described by Gayatri Spivak as the 'analyst as echo'.⁵⁵

In other words, her questions mirror and explore the framework set in place by the damaged subject.

In this scene Celeste and Ruby are actors in a private play which investigates the unspeakable story of the analysand. This mutually constructed theatre allows the co-stars to withdraw from the stimulus of the external world and engage in forms of innovative play-acting (according to Winnicott silent withdrawal is a pre-condition of innovation).⁵⁶ Working collaboratively they displace the structuring principles of their oppression. From here on Ruby resorts to forms of analytic theatre to retrieve and rework her history, this applies particularly to the five scenes in Episode X discussed in the following chapter and to Celeste's dream analysed in Chapter Nine.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode V, Chapter Two, pp.74-75.
2. *Ibid.*, pp.74-76.
3. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.64-91 (p.72).
4. Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror-phase as formative of the Function of the I', *New Left Review*, 51 (1968), 71-77.
5. Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp.21-56.
6. Lacan, 'The Mirror Phase'.
7. Jean Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth, 1983), pp.255-257; André Green, *On Private Madness* (London: Hogarth, 1986), p.53.
8. Despite Freud's focus on the pathological character of primary narcissism he did recognise the constitutive role of this function. The contradictory capacities of Freudian narcissism are outlined in Green, *On Private Madness*, p.97.
9. Julia Kristeva, 'Place Names', trans. by Tom Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.271-294 (p.283).
10. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p.24.
11. This pre-Symbolic father is not identical to the father of mastery, but is described by Kristeva as '[...] the one who loves us, not the one who judges us'. Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p.313. Although the pre-lingual father should not be confused with the Symbolic father, care must be taken to see these two male figures in overlap - otherwise the construct of an idealised choric father functions as a binary other to the harsh father of the law. Both Freud and Kristeva suggest that these maternal and paternal figures are

only retroactively gendered by the child. In the absence of the mother, the father acts as model for the construction of an ideal image which forms a basis for the child's fabrication of an ideal-ego.

12. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p.42; Julia Kristeva, *Histoire d'Amour - Love Stories*, *ICA Documents: Desire* (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1984), 18-21 (p.19).

13. Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, pp.103-121.

14. Julia Kristeva, 'On the Melancholic Imaginary', *New Formations*, 3 (1987), 5-18 (p.5).

15. In *The Gold Diggers* the status of the theoretical construct of the mirror phase is questioned in Ruby's "analytic theatres" in Episode X, discussed in the following Chapter.

16. Anne Sexton, 'Self in 1958', *The Selected Poems of Anne Sexton*, ed. by Diane Wood Middlebrook (London: Virago, 1991), p.107.

17. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode V, Chapter Two, op cit.

18. It is in this episode that the spectator is able to match the voice-overs in the two introductory versions of the *Riddle* with the characters of Celeste and Ruby.

19. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode V, Chapter Two, op cit.

20. bel hooks, 'The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators', *Black Cinema*, ed. by Manthia Diawara (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.288-302 (p.288).

21. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode V, Chapter Two, op cit.

22. Ibid.

23. The "Thing" refers to a non-representational dynamic which rebuffs signification and lies at the source of the melancholic's distress. Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp.13-15; Marie Cardinal, *The Words to Say It*, trans by Pat Goodman, Preface and Afterword by Bruno Bettelheim (London: Picador, 1975), pp.17-28.

24. Green, *On Private Madness*, p.291.

25. Ibid, p.53; M. Masud R. Khan describes the "space" created by the secret as a strategic hiding place where

an absence can be sustained. M. Masud R. Khan, 'Secret as a Potential Space', *Between Reality and Fantasy*, ed. by Simon A. Grolnick, Leonard Barkin (New York: Jason Aaronson, 1988), pp.259-270.

26. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p.56.

27. Gert Heilbrunn, 'On Weeping', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 24 (1955), 245-255 (p.252).

28. Ibid., p.252. In the same paragraph she makes the point that amniotic fluid and tears are almost identical in their content of sugar, protein and sodium chloride.

29. Donald W. Winnicott, 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena: A Study of the First Not-Me Possession', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34, 2 (1953), pp.89-97.

30. Ibid., pp.90-91.

31. Green, *On Private Madness*, p.47.

32. It is noteworthy that the link between melancholia and the psychic function of repression, evident in both Kristeva's writing and in *The Gold Diggers*, can be traced to Freud. In his paper 'Melancholia and Mourning' Freud asserts that individuals in mourning focus their grieving on the known imago of the lost subject. The melancholic, in contrast, may be aware of the subject of loss but is unable to talk in precise terms about what has been lost. Although depression and melancholia are clinically distinct, Freud and Kristeva recognise both constructs as a symptom of an '[...] impossible mourning of the "maternal" object.' However, where Freud suggests that the depressive's self-abasement is a disguised attempt to murder the lost (maternal) object, Kristeva argues that the damaged subject seeks to block the discourse of mastery through attempting to cherish sorrow as a substitute object. In other words, the melancholic collapses the maternal space within an uncoded space of depression. Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', trans. by Joan Riviere, *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis*, PFL, 11, ed. by James Strachey (London: Penguin Books, 1984), pp.245-268 (p.254); Julia Kristeva, 'On the Melancholic Imaginary', pp.6, 7.

33. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode V, Chapter Two, op cit.

34. Norman Haynes Pearson, *H.D., Tribute to Freud: Writing on the Wall* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1985), p.viii.
35. Linda Williams, 'Something Else Besides as Mother': *Stella Dallas* and the Maternal Melodrama', *Cinema Journal*, 1 (1984), 2-27.
36. The privileged mother/daughter relation in Melodrama has its roots in the domestic settings of the nineteenth century woman's novel such as Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1869). See also: E. Ann Kaplan 'Mothering, the Maternal and Representation: the Maternal in Melodrama and Woman's Film, 1910-1940', *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), pp.113-137.
37. Pam Cook, 'British Independents: *The Gold Diggers* (Potter interview), *Framework* 24 (1984), 12-30 (p.12).
38. It follows that, for the post-war generation of daughters growing up during the late 1940s and 1950s, the three shots of the mother might activate conflicting emotions. Carolyn Steedman's *Landscape for a Good Woman* is set in the social, cultural and emotional parameters evoked by these shots of the mother. This book has contributed enormously to our understanding of how we might theorise the often highly charged and seemingly irrational feelings anchored in the continually renegotiated dynamic between daughters, their mothers and their fathers. Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* (London: Virago, 1986).
39. Hilary Land, 'The Family Wage', *Feminist Review*, 6 (1980).
40. Jane Feuer, 'Daughter Rite: Living with Our Pain and Love', *Jump Cut*, 23 (1980, 12-13).
41. Edward Bribing, 'The Conception of the Repetition Compulsion', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 12 (1943), 486-519 (pp.487-488).
42. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. by C.J.M. Hubback (London: Hogarth Press, 1942), p.20.
43. Kristeva, 'Place Names', p.287-283.
44. *Ibid.*, p.283.

45. Ibid., p.283.

46. Donald W. Winnicott, 'Mirror-role of the Mother and Family in Child Development', *The Predicament of the Family: A Psycho-analytic Symposium*, ed. by Peter Lomas (London: Hogarth Press, 1967), pp.26-33 (p.26).

47. Ibid., p.27. See also: Kristeva, 'Place Names', p.280; Julia Kristeva, 'Within the Microcosm of "The Talking Cure"', trans by Thomas Gora and Margaret Waller, *Psychiatry and the Humanities (6): Interpreting Lacan*, ed. by Joseph Smith and William Kerrigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp.33-48 (p.34).

48. Kristeva, 'Place Names', p.283.

49. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller, introduction by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp.5-6, 86-88.

50. Kristeva, 'Place Names', p.286.

51. Ibid., pp.280-286.

52. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp.27-28.

53. Lindsay Cooper, *Rags/The Gold Diggers*, RER, Megacorp, US Distribution, Cuneiform, PO Box 6517, Wheaton, MD 20906-0917.

54. In *Strains of Utopia*, Caryl Flinn establishes certain parallels between Kristeva's concept of the semiotic chora and Barthes' term of the grain of text, both of which refer to the material basis of language. In addition, she argues that Barthes' third meaning and his concept of signifiacance are not unlike Kristeva's concept of semiotic excess. Caryl Flinn, *Strains of Utopia: Gender, Nostalgia, and Hollywood Film Music* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp.56-69.

55. Gayatri Spivak, 'Asked to Talk About Myself', *Third Text*, 19 (1992), 9-18 (p.16).

56. Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.38-52.

Chapter Eight

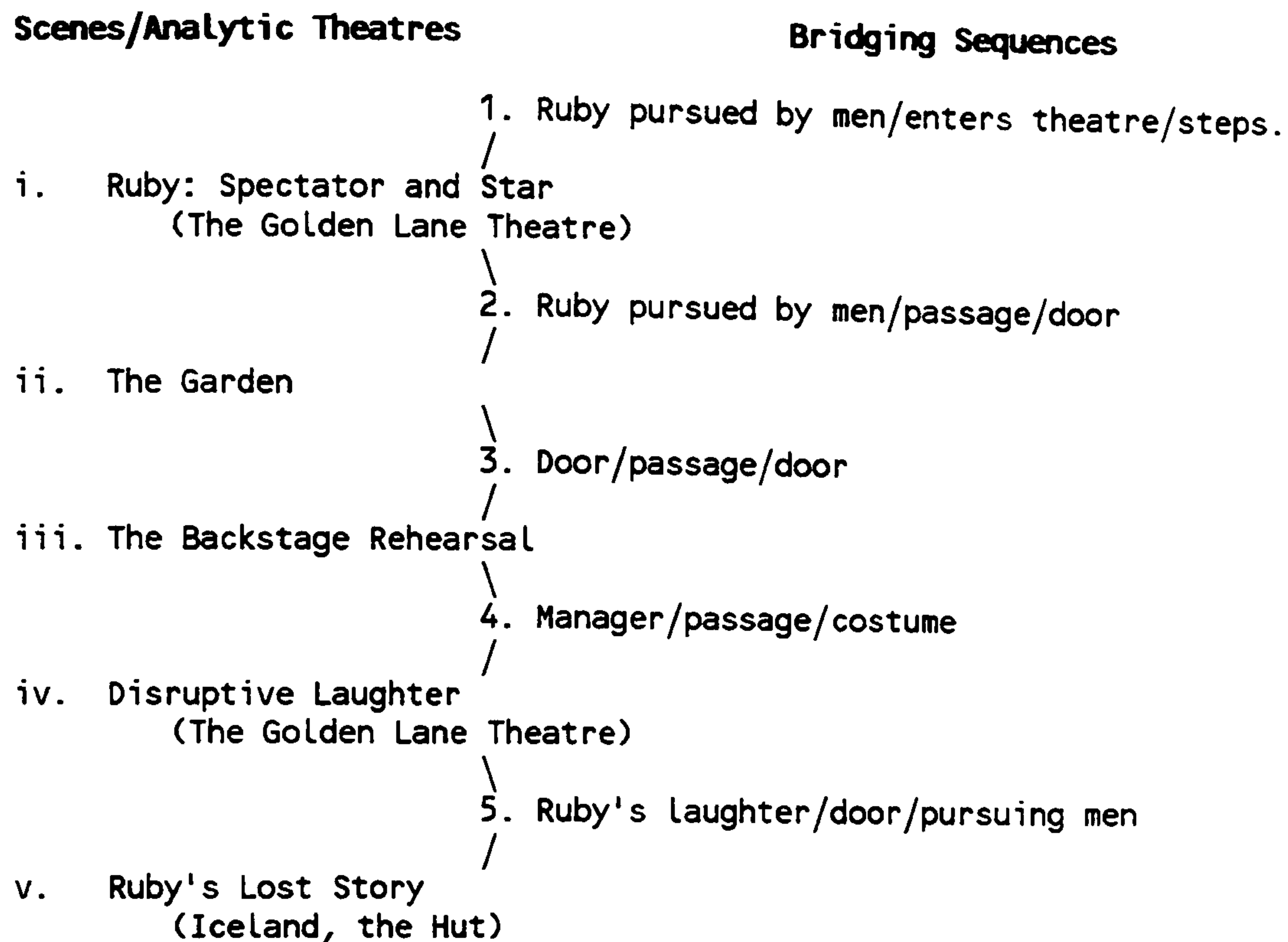
A FILM WITHIN A FILM: RUBY'S ANALYTIC THEATRES

(Episode X)

Episode X is the longest and most complex sequence in *The Gold Diggers*, indeed Sally Potter has described the five scenes in this twenty minute extract as: 'a synopsis of the film as a whole - a film within a film'.¹ In this microcosm Ruby embarks on an investigative journey into the past which she constructs and re-enacts in the interiority of her mind - not only is Ruby the author of these interiorised fictions but she is the central player. Ruby's self-exploratory journey follows up the inquiry into female subjectivity outlined in both the introductory song *Seeing Red* and the analytic scene. At the nerve-centre of the episode, in scene (iii), Ruby and the dancer [Jacky Lansley] disrupt the masculine principles associated with the classic cinema. Working together the two women revise the concept of the masochistically positioned female spectator and reformulate concomitant amnesia of the fetishised screen goddess.

Before addressing the details of Ruby's journey of discovery it is appropriate to say a few words about the construction of the episode as a whole, beginning with a diagrammatic overview:²

Episode X: the Film Within a Film



As can be seen in the above sketch, Ruby's five theatres are interlinked with five short bridging scenes. In contrast to the generative function of the theatres, the transitional shots resemble a compulsively repeated nightmare featuring a pack of men chasing the dreamer as she travels across the city at night. Although the men never achieve their aim, these reiterated allusions to male power politics are an ominous reminder of the masculine investment in the iconic construct of the screen goddess.

Scenes (i) and (iv) refer primarily to the regulatory function of pre-given values the men are trying to conserve; in contrast, scenes (ii), (iii) and (v) foreground the analytic and textual strategies underlying the task of reformulating traditionally

established meaning systems. In addition, the five scenes are arranged in a spiral formation - the overlap occurs in scenes (i) and (iv) featuring Ruby in the Golden Lane Theatre.³ However, where scene (i) is shot from the vantage point of Ruby-^{the-spectator} watching herself perform the role of daughter in a dramatised evocation of the oedipus complex, scene (iv) presents the identical scenario shot from the point of view of Ruby-the-performer. In scenes (ii), (iii) and (iv) Ruby explores the hidden links between two lost worlds - the *mise-en-scène* of her own childhood and the repressed topography of cultural codes. The lost facet of childhood is initially evoked in a little drama played out in an overgrown garden and the repressed underside of the mainstream culture is put on the agenda by a dancer rehearsing in the backstage venue of a theatre. The reconstructed childhood memory and the encounter with the dancer furnish Ruby with the wherewithal to replace the traditionally fetishised image of the screen goddess with a concept of the female subject as an active politicised performer in life.

Confirming my analysis in Chapter Seven, this episode submits that Ruby's ability to distance herself from her role as screen goddess is a consequence of the analytic relation. As we have seen in the discussion of the mother/daughter montage, not only can analytic transference liquidate the blocking function of the

compulsion to repeat, but the reciprocity underlying this relation can generate a more flexible and open psychic system. In her analysis of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), Linda Williams uses Bruce Kawin's term "mindscreen" to refer to '[...] a filmic visual field that presents itself as a product of the mind'.⁴ This description is usefully applied to the use of music and montage, as well as the pictorial references to Ruby's inner world in the 'film-within-a-film' as she proceeds to unravel the psychic, cultural, social and political pressures at work in the constitution of female subjectivity.

Playing the central character(s) in her own fictions, Ruby adopts a series of different positions - she appears as spy, investigator, spectator, analyst, analysand, child, movie-star, feminist activist and mother. However, regardless of "role", Ruby always inhabits the duplicate locations of investigative looker and player, thus appealing to the spectator to join her in the struggle to replace the constraining logic of patriarchy with an innovative space of experimentation and reciprocal friendship.

For instance, in scene (i) Ruby-the-spy watches herself trapped as feminine spectacle on the oedipal stage of the Golden Lane Theatre. Initially these two versions of Ruby are historically and physically separated (Ruby-the-spy is sitting in the upper balcony

and Ruby-the-star is trapped on stage). But, in the course of the episode Ruby-the-looker and Ruby-the-player become mutually implicated in the discourse of the Other. Indeed, it is noticeable that as the episode progresses the gap between looker and player is gradually reduced. For instance, in contrast to the distance in scene (i) between looker and player, in scene (iii) Ruby is standing close to her "object" of fascination. In the latter instance she is watching two children digging in the back garden of a terraced house and in the following rehearsal scene Ruby and a dancer move freely between positions of looking and doing.

Each of Ruby's five theatres warrants special attention. Together these beautifully orchestrated scenes form the nucleus of the film. The 'film within a film' is introduced with a shot of Ruby claiming her rights over the city and the night [bridging sequence (1) above]. We see her hurriedly walking along a dark street. Within seconds she is being pursued by a small group of men. In an attempt to escape her predicament as victim she runs into a side entrance of the Golden Lane Theatre and, still followed by the men, she hastily makes her way to the upper balcony [fig. 8.1].⁵

**Scene (i): Golden Lane Theatre: Ruby-the-Spectator
and Ruby-the-Star**

Entering the dark auditorium Ruby takes her place in the audience of men - conspicuously she is the only woman in the upper balcony. The orchestra strikes up a tongue-in-cheek arrangement of Victorian theatre music and the curtain rises. Looking down at the stage we can see the mother standing in a replica of the familiar little snowbound hut. From the dizzy vantage point of the upper balcony, Ruby-the-spectator watches as Ruby-the-star is pushed from the wings into centre stage. The camera closes in on the confused young woman trapped in the punishing spotlight. She is wearing a boldly striped Edwardian blouse, a calf-length tartan skirt and a slightly longer white lace petticoat - her costume, her pronounced make-up and her exaggerated posture evokes the heroines of the silent cinema.⁶ On the one hand, this deadly combination of costume and pose signals Charcot's inventory of hysterical gestures, on the other, the star's frozen posture evokes the illusory moment of self-recognition in the mirror phase, described by Lacan as a momentary "stagnation" '[...] similar in their strangeness to the faces of actors when a film is stopped in mid action [...]'.⁷

Ruby is thus forced to watch a replica of herself trapped within the masculine economies of culture,

science and "identity" - all of which categorise the active female body as a malfunctioning (hysterical) organism. Confirming the traditional cycle of unpleasure associated with female spectatorship, a tightly framed sequence of shot/reverse-shots juxtaposes the horror struck face of Ruby-the-spectator with the equally aghast face of Ruby-the-star [figs. 8.2; 8.3]. Confronted by this unacceptable cipher of herself as spectacle, Ruby rushes out of auditorium - followed, of course, by the men.

Ruby's hasty exit from the coded system of her oppression signals her refusal to take part in, to use Laura Mulvey's term, the masochistic regime of 'temporary masculinisation' required of the female spectator.⁸ Indeed her reluctance to accept either the injurious mystification of the over-represented star or the under-represented needs of the female spectator disrupts the discourse of looking described in Hans Richter's *The Dream money can Buy* (1946). In the latter film, members of the audience are instructed to mirror the gestures of the hero as they occur on screen. However, although the unified movements of the mindless spectators are a chilling reminder of the ideological subtext of the classic cinema, Richter's caricature does not explain how naturalised ideologies are transformed in the spectator/text encounter.⁹

In short, scene (i) confirms that Ruby-the-

spectator cannot "discover" herself on the stage of patriarchy - she cannot find a satisfactory anchor to: reconstruct her history; account for her present confusion; or generate a dream for the future. As far as Ruby-the-spectator is concerned, the terror struck image of Ruby-the-star inhibits her ability to construct an ideal "I". If, as Freud suggests, the ego-ideal and the super-ego function as the corresponding system of idealisation (love) and prohibition (fear) underpinning the construction and maintenance of the ego; and if the ego-ideal is structured in relation to Freud's predominantly negative function of primary narcissism, what chance does Ruby have?¹⁰ Where the male is granted the opportunity to convert these early narcissistic drives into a positive ideal image based on figures of love, he does so against the '[...] wishful dreams of the parents which they never carried out - the boy shall become the hero in his father's place [...]'.¹¹ In contrast, according to the above model, Ruby is caught in the trap of negative narcissism which impoverishes the female ego, leads to neurotic compulsions and inhibits the development of the ethical functions associated with the super-ego.¹²

Ruby decision to leave the theatre is thus based on her unwillingness to partake in the legitimation of a model of subjectivity which encourages boys to dream

about their social agency, whilst girls are persuaded to dream of '[...] marry[ing] a prince as a tardy compensation for her mother'.¹³ In addition, Ruby's rapid exit could perhaps be read as a revised version of the ballroom escape scene. Instead of waiting to be rescued from her pre-given fate, Ruby recognises the theatre of patriarchy for what it is and is leaving on her own account.

Scene (ii): The Garden

After Ruby's hasty departure from The Golden Lane Theatre the film cuts to a back street ginnel. In a second attempt to foil her male pursuers, Ruby runs down the dark passage (towards the camera) and hides in the overgrown yard of a derelict terraced house. Before the men discover her whereabouts, she pushes open a makeshift door and slips into the house. Having entered the house she is magically relocated to a small overgrown garden.

This scene was shot at night and our own difficulty in decoding the dark screen replicates Ruby's inability to see clearly. Peering through a tangle of branches and leaves, Ruby is watching two little girls (aged about three) digging in the undergrowth. Wearing Edwardian costumes identical to the one worn in the previous scene by Ruby-the-star,

the girls represent miniature versions of the looker. A third figure comes into focus - that of the mother - she too is watching the girls. The silence in this scene is broken only by the sharp clinking of the children's spades on the hard, stony ground.

This rememored tableau is replete with emotional and cultural resonances. Watching the film, even for the first time, I was struck by the familiarity of the boarded-up terraced house with its tiny "internal" garden. I immediately knew (with the surety that comes with dreams) that this abandoned house was Ruby's childhood home, a safe haven - and the garden was the play area, the "hut", within which the infant Ruby and her sister had constructed their imaginary world. In addition, the direct rather than metaphoric reference to the mother takes us back to the compelling impact of the "home movie" sequence discussed in Chapter Seven. And, the tightly packed terraced row, the dark ginnel and the little walled garden evoke the *mise-en-scène* of family photographs taken during the post-war period in Britain.

Furthermore, the three minute garden scene draws on various earlier shots of Ruby-the-adult watching Ruby-the-child digging. For instance, in Episode VIII, shots of Ruby-the-screen-goddess are juxtaposed with shots of Ruby-the-investigator watching the child digging near the hut in Iceland.¹⁴ This montage is

accompanied by Ruby's voice-over expressing her desire to control her own destiny:

I search for the secret of transformations. The breath, the fire. I search for the secret of my own transformation.¹⁵

The film's persistent return to Ruby-the-adult watching a memory image of the infant digging, either in Iceland with its metaphoric associations with psychic repression, or in the uncanny little garden "inside" the house, does indeed suggest that her transformation lies in the rediscovery of a deeply buried secret.¹⁶ In addition, the costumes worn by the little girls announce a link between the archive of film history and the devaluation of women.

Referring to Kristeva's model of the analytic relation, we can argue that the main function of Ruby's personal archaeology is to: '[...] reawaken the imagination and to permit illusions to exist'.¹⁷ The garden scene suggests that Ruby's capacity to generate new meanings in the present is coupled with her ability to reconstruct her past within the context of a collective cultural history. Her liberation from her fate as screen goddess is thus contingent on her analysis of the cross-over between cultural and psychic structures. Disrupting the binary concepts of "inner" and "outer" worlds, she discovers the interconnections between her inability to control the popular narratives and her feelings of loss which are registered at a

psychic level.

Scene (iii): The Backstage Rehearsal

The transition from the "internal" garden to the rehearsal studio is elegantly accomplished. The mother calls the girls into the terraced house. Given that the garden is located "inside" Ruby's childhood home, the group could be described as entering a house within a house. The door slams and adopting the role of pursuer Ruby follows the mother and the two girls down a long, dark corridor illuminated by narrow shafts of light. As in a dream, the three figures disappear and Ruby continues alone. In the following shot we see her entering a rehearsal studio.

The formal cinematic language deployed in this sequence resembles the shooting and editing strategies in Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941). Not unlike the shots of the arterial corridors leading to the epicentre of Kane's psychopathic monument of Xanadu, the garden/studio transition is unashamedly dramatic - beginning with a sharp edit cut, sustained by sound editing and followed by a continuity take of the corridor.¹⁸ To elaborate, the break from the tightly controlled montage of the garden scene to the one minute abstraction of light and shade in the corridor shot is signalled by a resounding crash (a heavy metal

door?) accompanied by a clean edit cut. The corridor shot ends with another spectacular cut to a black screen. Within seconds a vertical band of light splices the black screen and Ruby emerges from the depths of the passage (the composition of this close-up, frontal shot duplicates Ruby's entry in Golden Lane Theatre in scene (i)).

The formal dark/light abstraction of the above mentioned shot cuts to a full-screen mirror image of Ruby entering a light, open rehearsal space [fig. 8.4].¹⁹ The mirror is only marginally smaller than the screen and is easily *misrecognised* as a "direct" rather than a reflected image. It is thus as specular likeness that we see Ruby emerge from the dark transitional tunnel into a spacious and uncluttered location. I will return to the mirror shot in a minute, but first let us briefly identify what we can see in its reflected surface. Judging from the architectural clues and the scattered thespian signs, Ruby has walked into a disused warehouse which has been refurbished as a studio.²⁰ At its most obvious level, the concept of a rehearsal space is a metaphoric reference to the hidden work of the unconscious in the conscious performance of life.²¹ In addition, the theatre costume hanging on the wall draws attention, once again, to the imbrication of psychic and social in the making of meanings. With the help of the dancer,

Ruby is about to rediscover these connections.

Blank screens and mirrors belong to the repertoire of visual conventions used by painters, photographers and filmmakers to overcome the temporal and physical limitations inherent in the task of picture making. Historically, mirrored reflections have been used to naturalise the denigratory (Freudian) model of female narcissism and assert the authority of the male spectator.²² This strategy is apparent in films with a diverse agenda, such as, for instance, the multiple reflections of Joan Crawford's surgically transformed face in Cukor's *A Woman's Face* (1951) or the notorious bathroom shot featuring the director and Marina Vlady in Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I know about Her* (1966) [fig 8.5]. In both instances the female figure is trapped "within" her own mirror-image by the camera/spectator-voyeur.

From a different and more advantageous perspective, the notion of an individual disappearing into his or her mirrored likeness has proved a convenient metaphor to evoke a transition from one temporality to another. Consider, for instance, the facilitating function of the Beast's magic mirror in Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête* (1946), or the figures diving into the watery surface of a Lacanian mirror in *Orphée* (1949) [fig. 8.6]. However, the most pertinent historical endorsement of Ruby's imaginary

world can be found in Germaine Dulac's evocative film *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (1923) [fig. 8.7]. Gazing blankly at her own reflection, Madame Beudet's interiorised look indicates that the *mise-en-scène* of the film is located inside her head.²³ First of all, she constructs the fantasy of the tennis player who leaps from the pages of a journal and disposes of her tyrannical husband. She then recreates this figure in the form of an imaginary lover who merges with the heroine '[...] revealing her ecstatic smile [...] a smile of *jouissance*, of orgasmic ecstasy, of an expressiveness not seen on Madame Beudet's face before or since.'²⁴

Drawing on the possibilities mobilised by *La Souriante Madame Beudet*, *The Gold Diggers* combines the function of the mirror with a level of make-believe. However, this is not to deny the historical weight of the woman/mirror conventions I mentioned earlier. Indeed, Ruby initially turns away from her reflection and there is a sense in which her negative reaction to her own mirror image anticipates the difficulties lying ahead of her.²⁵

Following her reluctant look into the mirror, Ruby recovers her composure and returns the gaze of her reflected likeness. Her appropriation of the right to look is dramatised in a montage of eight shots - comprising of four shots of her reflection juxtaposed

with four shots of a dancer in rehearsal [Jacky Lansley].²⁶ The dancer's repertoire alternates between free flowing movements and frozen gestures [figs. 8.8; 8.9].²⁷ Throughout the montage the two women are speaking to one another - however, rather than standing face to face, they are looking at and appear to be talking to the spectator (the camera). This is in fact the only one of Ruby's five theatres to incorporate dialogue and it is noteworthy that the spoken word is in synchronised sound, as opposed to the strategy of voice-over which predominates elsewhere in the film.²⁸

Introductory Sequence of the Rehearsal Scene [01.00 min].²⁹

Shot 1	Ruby/mirror	: [no dialogue]
Shot 2	Dancer	: Hello, your things are over there.
Shot 3	Ruby/mirror	: My things?
Shot 4	Dancer	: Yes, I had to move them earlier, sorry.
Shot 5	Ruby/mirror	: [uncertain] Oh, that's OK.
Shot 6	Dancer	: How have you been?
Shot 7	Ruby/mirror	: [hesitation] Quite well thanks, and you? [walks out of reflection]
Shot 8	Dancer	: Alright.

The mirror-montage is obviously designed to challenge the '[...] "recipe" of classic cinema that the actor should never look directly at the audience (= the camera)'.³⁰ Not only does the "direct" engagement between player and spectator evoke the theatre strategies associated with the Early Cinema,³¹ but this "look" from the screen shatters the self-contained illusion of the classic cinema, thus revealing film as a *construction* rather than an extension of the "real" world and shattering the

voyeuristic and the fetishising agenda of the male spectator. In the fourth mirror shot [shot 7] Ruby turns on her heels and walks out of the reflected surface. As said, the edge of the mirror is only marginally smaller than the screen consequently, when Ruby walks out of the reflection, she is momentarily glimpsed as a "direct" image before disappearing off-screen. It is tempting to read these references to the masked/unmasked mirror as a further comment on the illusory qualities of classical film.

In his important paper 'The Imaginary Signifier', Metz reminds us that where the live theatre is directly experienced by the audience, the in-frame actor is an absent presence - despite the size and "closeness" of the cinema screen, the projected activity is a replay of a scene which took place elsewhere.³² Describing the cinema screen as that "other mirror" which duplicates and reactivates the "durable" mark of the Lacanian mirror, Metz analyses the relation between an assumed male spectator and the screen.³³ Notwithstanding the value of Metz's contribution to film theory, he nevertheless leaves both the female star and the female spectator to their respective fate of over-exposure and non-existence. We might therefore conclude that Ruby's departure from the reflection not only announces her desire to vacate the apparatus of the Lacanian mirror, but also signals her refusal to

whisper *Love me* to the male spectator.³⁴

Throughout the remainder of this scene Jacky Lansley continues to practise her routines. The physical and verbal interactions between the dancer and Ruby are complemented by fragmented bursts of piano playing and slow sweeping camera movements. These beautifully orchestrated shots are punctuated by limited dialogue, occasional silence and the sporadic crescendo of Jacky Lansley's flying feet as she alternates between tap routines and contemporary dance movements [fig. 8.10]. Gradually the enormous rehearsal space is claimed by the two women. Mulling over the carefully plotted geometry of this scene, I detect a discreet tribute to the cinematic strategies developed by Alain Resnais in *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961). But, where the formal dreamlike abstractions in *Marienbad* leave intact the desiring look of the male protagonist, the interweave in *The Gold Diggers* between voice, sound and sight - alongside the political implications of the dialogue (which I will come to in a minute) - are a forceful reminder that the pleasures guaranteed by the classic cinema are strictly addressed to the masculine voyeur and fetishist.

However if, as I am suggesting, Ruby's departure from the screen-as-mirror and the concomitant appropriation by the dancer of the cinema screen as an innovative rehearsal space signal the women's intention

to follow Laura Mulvey's counsel to dismantle patriarchy using the tools it provides - how are they to proceed?³⁵ How can the dancer communicate the political specificity of her work as performer to Ruby? Will Ruby empathise with the dancer's predicament? These questions lie at the heart of the Rehearsal Scene.

Standing in the open space of the studio with her costume hanging behind her, Ruby has no idea where she is or what is expected of her [fig. 8.11]. Responding to the newcomer's uncertainty, the dancer advises:

Live in the present my dear, don't dwell in the past.³⁶

Then, making use of a free-standing doorway to map the parameters of a new performance space, the two women turn to face one another and stage a circular dance [figs. 8.12; 8.13]. Could this spontaneous dance, conjoining a politicised dancer and the confused analysand, be a veiled reference to the lost mother/daughter dyad? Or, is the dancer occupying the space of the ideal-ego that the distressed woman is struggling to reclaim? Spinning together in slowly articulated circles Ruby-the-analysand confesses:³⁷

I can't remember what I am supposed to remember. Have I been here before?³⁸

In answer to Ruby's dilemma the dancer launches into a description of her own problems as a performer.³⁹

I'm a little cross with myself, In fact I'm furious with myself. Despite years of research, I reach a certain point when I freeze.

[...] Well for one thing, until that moment in the sequence, I hadn't faced the audience.

[...] When I turn my head and catch their gaze, years of work expire in an instance, it's as though my feet didn't belong to me anymore and I forget, I forget my steps.⁴⁰

The dancer's painful exposition is followed by a waltz arrangement (for piano) of the mother's tune *Perfect Clue*. From this juncture the dancer and Ruby work together to identify a new alliance between player and looker. In reply to the dancer's agonising self-doubt, Ruby pulls up a bench at right angles to the mirror and creates a make-shift rehearsal space for the dancer. Accompanied by her own reflection and with Ruby as (maternal) spectator the dancer reclaims her feet and performs an accomplished tap-dance [fig. 8.14;]. The reciprocity, the humour and the inventive skills mobilised by the two women are a direct reference to the facilitating atmosphere generated by women working within the parameters of feminist cultural politics in the 1970s. In addition, this sequence evokes the off-stage female camaraderie in "backstage musicals", such as Le Roy's *Gold Diggers of 1933*.⁴¹ However, in contrast to the traditional use of the '[...] larger mechanical dance of the camera' to reframe these backstage friendships within the established principles of voyeurism, in Sally Potter's film the camera and the dancer are working together.⁴²

In fact, Jackie Lansley celebratory tap-dance is a reminder of the illusion of amateurism, accessibility and fun associated this dance form. For instance, where the 'Petting in the Park' sequence in *Gold Diggers of 1933* reclaims both Ruby Keeler's pivotal backstage role and her on-stage tap-dance within a model of feminine denial, Jacky Lansley's mirror-dance activates new narrative possibilities. Not only does the diagonally positioned mirror guarantee that her reflection is not misrecognised as a seamless extension of reality, but the camerawork ensures that her dance is seen within the context of the social space of the rehearsal studio.

It is thus in the form of a pretend theatre set up against the backdrop of an oblique mirror, that the two women challenge the clearly identified sexed narratives generated by the classic "family romance". In this make-shift "theatre" the fixed oedipal characters are replaced with a concept of subjectivity based on innovation and process. In addition, as a consequence of the double light source, the dancer is accompanied by two shadows. As can be imagined the interweave between the dancer, her twin shadows and the mirrored reflections creates an illusion of flickering, partially formed figures.

Kristeva's account of the semiotic disposition comes close to describing the transformative

possibilities generated by the positions taken up the dancer and Ruby in relation to the mirror:

The semiotic is articulated by flow and marks: facilitation, energy transfers, the cutting up of the corporeal and social continuum as well as that of signifying material.⁴³

In her account of the mirror stage, Kristeva writes:

[...] in order to capture his [her] image in the unified mirror, the child must remain separate from it, his [her] body agitated by the semiotic motility [...] [my emphasis].⁴⁴

Resembling a Kristevan split subject, the dancer in *The Gold Diggers* could be described as continually refigured by the distorted play of mirrored shadows - a subject '[...] divided between unconscious and conscious motivations, that is between psychological and social constraints'.⁴⁵ Thus unsettling the unified "I" in the Lacanian mirror, Ruby sees the dancer in a new light - from a different perspective - the diagonally tilted mirror avoids the closed circularity of a direct reflection, it looks into the past as well as into the future. Not only does it confirm the dancer's sense of agency, but it substantiates Ruby's role as facilitator. Where at the beginning of the scene the dancer was advising Ruby, it is now Ruby's turn to support and assist the dancer. These reciprocal moves between looking and doing generate a new space for performers and spectators.

The struggle to replace the impoverished conventions of female narcissism with a model of

subjectivity which allows women to play a part in public discourse has a long history. For instance, a parallel can be drawn between the mirror-dance in *The Gold Diggers* and the youthful dreams described by Angelica Kauffman in her painting: *The Artist Hesitating Between the Arts of Painting and Music* (c1794) [fig. 8.15].⁴⁶ Not unlike Kauffman's triangulation of self-portraits, the "three" women in the mirror-dance replace the notion of signification based on opposition, with an understanding of subjectivity and meaning based on reciprocity and *wishful becoming*.⁴⁷

In addition, the shifting configurations between the looker, the dancer and the mirrored shadows initiate a sense of distance between the sense of "I" and the over-presence traditionally assigned to woman's bodily presence.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, no sooner established than this space is compressed as the dancer pulls Ruby into the performance area and embraces her - thus establishing a new discourse of closeness which is not based on hysteria. [figs. 8.16; 8.17]. Terrified by the prospect of an affirmative alliance between women, an agitated stage manager rushes into the mirrored reflection and separates them. Snatching Ruby's costume from the wall, he drags the bewildered woman out of the rehearsal space and pushes her back onto the stage of The Golden Lane Theatre.

Scene (iv): Disruptive Laughter

Where Ruby's first appearance in *The Golden Lane Theatre* was shot from the viewpoint of the female spectator, we have now gone full circle and are witnessing the same scene from the vantage point of the star. In the following beautifully controlled montage we learn that the audience of men are once again in place, Ruby is standing alone in centre stage, the mother is in the hut and the stage manager is gesticulating to Ruby from the wings. In response to the manager and the mother's cues, Ruby moves reluctantly towards the interior of the hut and somewhat unwillingly sits on the mother's knee [fig. 8.18]. Enter the father, laughing wildly and juggling three gold nuggets [fig. 8.19]. In the following shot the laughing parents are locked in a frenzied, circular dance [fig. 8.20]. Still relying on the stage manager's prompts [fig 8.21], Ruby adopts the stereotypic pose of a speechless hysteric and backing away from the inward-looking couple she performs a sad little dance of her own. The father tries to pull the mother off-stage but she resists and reaches for the daughter. Eventually she acquiesces and they vacate the scene, leaving Ruby alone in the glaring spotlight.

It is noteworthy that, in this rendering of the psychoanalytic drama, the female version of the

negative oedipus complex is underplayed (the daughter's narcissistic desire for the mother) and the male version of the positive phase of that complex is taken as its orchestrating voice.⁴⁹ Having shed a sentimental tear at the sight of the mother/daughter dyad, the male spectators applaud the entrance of the father and they respond approvingly to the parents primal dance and the ensuing departure of the couple. Narrative closure demands that, following the example of the mother, Ruby should adopt a feminine mask to entice the father - she must put herself on display and dance for the increasingly agitated men..

The manager watches anxiously as Ruby, standing in the spotlight, proceeds to ignore the audience. However, not unlike the heroine Vicky in *Red Shoes* (1948) Ruby refuses to dance. The men's rumblings of displeasure shift to undisguised hostility [fig. 8.22]. Seeking to avoid the tragic option of suicide chosen by Vicky Page, Ruby turns her thoughts to the memory image of the mother. Magically the soundtrack switches to *Perfect Clue* and with the camera fixed on the star's pensive face we are transported into the interiority of her own private world [fig. 8.23]. The visual track cuts to a complex montage of shots featuring the departing parents, Ruby-the-child digging in Iceland, the miners digging in Iceland. These latter invocations of Ruby's fantasy world are juxtaposed with

shots of the baffled stage hand, the aggressive male spectators and Ruby - gripped by laughter [fig. 8.24].

Looking back to scene (i), we will recall that the image of the star was frozen in place by the authority of the male gaze. Now, in the revised version of that scenario, Ruby blocks the conventional discourse of looking with stories constructed in the interiority of her mind's eye. These stories bespeak of her isolation in patriarchy and create a new vantage point for her to examine the relationship between her own sense of subjectivity and the male spectator - Ruby literally sees the men in a new light - and we, in turn, are drawn even further into the "theatre" of her internal archaeology. Understanding for the first time the social, cultural and psychic pre-texts underpinning the behaviour of men and women, the star bursts into peels of laughter.

Before examining the shots of Ruby laughing, I want to dwell a moment on the key intertextual reference mobilised by the star's refusal to masquerade - namely Claire Johnston's reading of Dorothy Arzner's *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940). In the latter film, the single minded heroine [Judy/Maureen O'Hara], dreams of becoming a classical dancer, but in her struggle to find work she plays the stooge in a musical hall act. Tiring of the uncouth reactions of a predominantly male audience, she turns on them and criticises their coarse

behaviour.⁵⁰ In Johnston's opinion the importance of this particular scene lies in Judy's ability to inflict a *decisive* albeit temporary break '[...] between the dominant discourse and the discourse of women'⁵¹ - thus upending the scopophilic matrix of masculine voyeurism and fetishism.⁵²

Following Judy's example, Ruby turns the tables on the male audience and blocks the "male" gaze. But, where Judy's criticism of the men is followed by a catfight between herself and the star - an act which, according to Johnston, recuperates the status quo and sets woman against woman - Ruby laughs at the boorish mob.⁵³ What the men fear is that Ruby's laughter will, to quote Hélène Cixous, '[...] smash up everything, [...] shatter the framework of institutions, [...] blow up the law, [...] break up the "truth"'.⁵⁴

However, although Ruby's laughter is clearly visualised in numerous close-up shots we cannot actually hear her. Unlike the father's audible laughter as he delights in his gold and dances with the mother, Ruby's laughter (like that of both the mother in the "home-movie" extract and the woman welder at the end of the film) lacks a soundtrack and has no place in the symbolic system of mastery. As I mentioned earlier the shots of Ruby's laughter evoke the soundless images of Madame Beudet's spontaneous mirth.⁵⁵ Both Ruby and Madame Beudet are laughing in response to a privately

imagined scenario, an inner drama which engulfs and defuses the authority of men. In both cases, the two women's laughter is linked with their newly discovered capacity to construct a fictive scenario and transform unpleasure into pleasure (however, where Madame Beudet's release from drudgery is only temporary, Ruby is busy reformulating the structuring mechanisms of existing power politics).

In addition, Ruby's laughter evokes the shattering sound of Mimi's (Colette Laffont's) laughter in *Thriller*. As we know, Mimi's glee is initially triggered in the final bars of Puccini's *La Bohème* - but, towards the end of the film she laughs again, this time in response to a collection of essays written by a group of theorists affiliated with the *Tel Quel* group.⁵⁶ Read from the vantage point of Kristeva's writing, these three figures - Beudet, Mimi and Ruby - are all attempting to '[...] wipe out sense through nonsense and laughter'.⁵⁷ Laughter, she argues, creates a foothold, it signals a space of invention where meanings are made and unmade, it signals the work of semiosis - laughter is thus a precondition of socio-symbolic renewal, it can shatter discursively established expectations, it can "tear open" the symbolic:

Every practice which produces something new (a new device) is a practice of laughter: it obeys laughter's logic and provides the subject with laughter's advantages. When

practice is not laughter, there is nothing new; where there is nothing new, practice cannot be provoking: it is at best a repeated empty act.⁵⁸

What does Kristeva mean when she describes laughter as a prototype of new practice? What is this so called "logic" of laughter and what are its "advantages"? Furthermore, how can we differentiate between the exploitative laughter of the autocrat [the father], the regressive laughter of the hysteric and the concept of laughter as innovative practice? In my earlier references to the laughter in Chapter Seven, I refer to Kristeva's idea that the child's laughter evokes the materiality of the chora and confirms that "something" has taken place, elsewhere.⁵⁹ Read from the vantage point of the child's choric laughter, Kristeva's "logic" of laughter can be identified as having an oppositional function to the containing "logic" of patriarchy.

Kristeva's suggestion that confrontational proclivity of laughter is anchored in primary processes can be traced to Freud's writing. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud writes:

Evidence, finally, of the increase in activity which becomes necessary when these primary modes of functioning are inhibited is to be found in the fact that we produce a comic effect, that is, a surplus of energy which has to be discharged in laughter, if we allow these modes of thinking to force their way through into consciousness.⁶⁰

Laughter can thus be read as a matrix of contradictory possibilities. On the one hand, laughter is a successful blocking agent and, on the other, it

promises new forms of expression. So, where both the autocrat and the hysteric might (from totally different vantage points) resort to laughter to either preserve the status quo or block innovation, Kristeva's *subject in process* (Ruby) attempts to frame the surplus materiality of laughter within the agency of desire and semiosis to renovate existing codes.

Ruby's laughter breaks the narrative injunction of mastery in two ways: first of all, it signals her unwillingness to conform to his version of her "script" and, second, her laughter conjures up images of the mother, the hut and the child. From a Kristevan perspective Ruby's explosive laughter illustrates the actual moment of innovative practice when the subject confronts the illusory nature of her own being and exposes the contradictions and instability of the signifying process. Put differently her laughter disrupts the phenomenological, unitary and sexed understanding of "I", "you", "he" and "she", revealing subjectivity as a fictive, deeply fissured configuration.

Having said this, laughter is always compromised by the existing symbolic order: in order to illicit a response '[...] the instigator of laughter, just like the artist, must bind and rebind the charge'.⁶¹ Nevertheless, despite this necessary concession to the status quo, the exchange of laughter between instigator

and respondent (in this case between Ruby and the feminist spectator) retains its pluralising force and provides a framework to create new *place names*.⁶²

Scene (v): Ruby's Lost Story.

Scene (iv) closes with two shots drawn from scene (i): the aghast face of Ruby-the-spectator is juxtaposed with the equally startled face of Ruby-the-star. In the following shot, Ruby-the-investigator runs out of the Golden Lane Theatre and retraces her steps to the familiar terraced house. Foiling her pursuers for the second time she re-enters her childhood home. The camera cuts from the shot of Ruby slipping into the house to a shot of Ruby in Iceland. It is spring, the snow has melted and Ruby is running towards the little hut [fig. 8.25].⁶³ These shots of Ruby in Iceland are a continuation of the imaginary pictures evoked by the star in her outburst of mirth in The Golden Lane Theatre - reminding the spectator that the encounters in the 'film within a film' are part of a fictitious story played out in Ruby's head.

Scene (v): Ruby's Lost Story

- Shot 1: Ruby leaves Theatre followed by men
- Shot 2: Ruby runs down passage and into derelict house
- Shot 3: Ruby in Iceland running towards little hut
- Shot 4: Baffled men near derelict house looking for Ruby
- Shot 5: Ruby in Iceland surveying barren landscape
- Shot 6: Ruby-the-child digging near hut
- Shot 7: Close-up of father's feet entering hut

Shot 8: Ruby-the-adult watches Ruby-the-child circles hut 3x
 Shot 9: Close-up of parents feet leaving hut
 Shot 10: Ruby runs towards the little hut
 Shot 11: "Home-movie" extract of mother's laughing face
 Shot 12: The little hut
 Shot 13: Iceland, panoramic view
 Shot 14: Ruby-the-adult, Ruby-the-child and hut
 Shot 15: Parents runs towards horizon
 Shot 16: "Mirror" image of Ruby-the-adult and Ruby-the-child
 Shot 17: Ruby-the-child circles hut and is transformed into
 Ruby-the-adult
 Shot 18: Curtain drops on empty stage of Golden Lane Theatre

In this tightly controlled montage charting Ruby's "home-coming", imagined pictures of separation are juxtaposed with new experimental versions of the psychoanalytic drama. Having retrieved a memory image of the infant moving in and out of the maternal sphere/the little hut [shot 8; fig 8.26] Ruby-the-adult runs to the hut and looks through the window, only to find Ruby-the-child returning her gaze from the interior space [shots 10, 16; fig. 8.27].

As I mentioned in Chapters One and Four, the window separating the woman and the child functions as an imaginary mirror, thus granting both parties the opportunity to reconstruct the pre-given "self-image" offered to women in the classical version of the oedipus complex.⁶⁴ According to this latter version of individuation, the young girl enters symbolisation on the understanding that, first of all, she accept (as her own "I") an image of her mother's abjection; and, second, following the example of the mother she acquiesce to the dictate of the male. Although Ruby's reconstruction of female individuation includes the

concept of maternal loss - as we have seen, the mother disappears with the father [shot 15] - this new model retrieves a coded image of the mother/daughter relation which is not framed by abjection.⁶⁵ Where the girl in the Golden Lane Theatre was encouraged to masquerade in front of an audience of hostile men, here in Ruby's final analytic theatre, in her mindscreen, Ruby-the-adult reactivates the dynamic associated with the maternal chora - standing in the place of her own mother and looking through the window of the little hut she retrieves an image of Ruby-the-child returning her gaze, thus invoking Kristeva's concept of a continuity between women: '[...] she is her own mother [my italics]'.⁶⁶

Building on the possibilities generated by the narcissistic love relation between the pre-verbal child and the maternal figure, Ruby confirms that the losses experienced by the daughter can be recouped and given symbolic form.⁶⁷ The shot of the reciprocal exchange of looks between Ruby-the-adult and Ruby-the-child is a celebratory image - a new beginning. It is on this optimistic note that Ruby's cycle of theatres are brought to a close. Having worked with the dancer to reclaim a "mirror-image" which is not founded on female degradation, Ruby has reformulated the concept of the "stranded" mother/daughter dyad evoked in the director's introductory song *Seeing Red*. In so doing

she has not only identified a model of female subjectivity which is at once enunciated and enunciating, but she has laid the foundations for new politicised ways of looking and remembering based on dialogue, friendship and shared pleasures between women.⁶⁸

In the last sequence in scene (v) the camera cuts from the "reflection" in the window to a shot of Ruby-the-child circling the hut [shot 17]. On her second circuit the child is magically transformed into Ruby-the-adult. The 'film within a film' closes with a high angle shot of the curtain dropping on the stage-set of the empty little hut in the now redundant venue of the Golden Lane Theatre [shot 18].

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. Sally Potter interview: 2.11.92.
2. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, Chapter Two, pp.80-83.
3. According to Victor Burgin the structuring dynamic of unconscious processes and fantasy can be visualised as a spiral formation. Victor Burgin, 'Diderot, Barthes, Hieroglyph' *Victor Burgin, Mari Mahr, Mitra Tabrizian* (London: The Photographers' Gallery, 1986), pp.2-6 (p.4).
4. Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Bruce Kawin, *Mindscreen: Bergman, Godard and First-Person Film* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1978), pp.3-22.
5. This shot of Ruby running away from the men evokes two moments in the history of film. First of all this scene functions as a corrective to the voyeuristic conventions in the classic cinema. For instance, in the introductory shot of Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964) the heroine Marnie/Tippi Hedren] can be seen walking away from the camera along a deserted railway platform. The "image" of Marnie moving down the deserted platform combined with magnified echo of her heels, confirms her isolation and signals the presence of the hidden voyeur (the "staring" camera = the male spectator). Secondly, the two shots of Ruby being pursued to the upper balcony of the theatre evoke the juxtaposition of high/low angle shots developed by Eisenstein - exemplified in his representation of the Cossack advance on the people of Odessa in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). In addition, the shots of Ruby running into the night and the subsequent staircase shots are accompanied by a magnified jumble of stepping sounds which echo the aural patterns of drumming/tapping elsewhere in the film - the clatter of feet infuses this scene with a level of theatricality which draws attention its construction.
6. Ruby's on-stage character appears to be modelled on the "look" of Mary Pickford.
7. Jacques Lacan, 'Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis', trans. by Alan Sheridan, *Écrits* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.8-29 (p.17).

8. Laura Mulvey, 'Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema inspired by *Duel in the Sun*', *Framework*, 15/16 (1981), 12-15 (p.12).
9. The theoretical models of readership are outlined in Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp.94-116.
10. Jean Laplanche and J-B Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth Press, 1983), pp.144-145 (p.145); Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', trans. by C. M. Baines, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, PFL 11, ed. by Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp.59-97 (p.88-89).
11. Freud, 'On Narcissism', p.85.
12. See my comments on the constitutive function of narcissism in Chapter Seven, pp.264-268.
13. Freud, 'On Narcissism', pp.82-85.
14. Episode VIII also marks Ruby's first appearance in her guise as investigator. In this sequence she exploring the link between her own image as screen goddess and the little hut in Iceland.
15. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode VIII, Chapter Two, p.79.
16. Positioning a house as metaphoric sign of the individual psyche is a well established literary and cinematic convention - the cellar or the attic are generally equated with the space of the repression.
17. Kristeva, *In the Beginning was Love*, p.18.
18. Both Potter and Welles explore the expressive potential of cinematic language before the advent of direct sound, particularly in relation to the Soviet and German Cinema.
19. The move from the garden to the studio (from dark to light) functions as a metaphoric reference to Ruby's transition from silence to speech, from object to subject.
20. This scene was shot in the Riverside Studio, Crisp Road, Hammersmith, London, W6 9RL. Riverside Studio is a refurbished Iron Foundry. The work of rehearsal in this scene is thus underpinned by the history of industrial labour associated with this site. See my comments on the X6 Dance Space at Bermondsey Docks and

The Old Royal Free Hospital converted by The Gold Diggers crew into a temporary film studio.

21. Freud's account of the structuring dynamic between pre-conscious, unconscious and conscious processes is outlined in: Sigmund Freud, 'A Note on the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis', *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, PFL 11, ed. by Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp.45-48; Sigmund Freud, 'The Unconscious', trans. C. M. Baines, *ibid.*, pp.159-216.

22. See ns.12, 13.

23. I am indebted to Sandy Flitterman's analysis of *La Souriante Madame Beudet*: Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp.100-112.

24. *Ibid.*, p.110.

25. Sally Potter's interest in the mirror image is already apparent in *Thriller*. See Jane Weinstock's discussion in: Jane Weinstock, 'She Who Laughs First Laughs Last', *Camera Obscura*, 5 (Spring, 1980), pp.101-110.

26. Appendix 7 and Stephanie Jordan, *Striding Out: Aspects of New and Contemporary Dance in Britain* (London: Dance Books, 1992), p.261, ref. Lansley; Andy Solway, 'Interview with Jacky Lansley', *New Dance*, 39 (1987), pp.18-29.

27. Jacky Lansley's preoccupation with "pose" as symptomatic of femininity reflects a general concern in feminist dance and film in the 1970s. See: Rose English, 'Alas Alack: the Representation of the Ballerina', *New Dance*, 15 (1980), 18-19. Jordan, *Striding Out*, p.77. According to Doane, the parodic recourse to the feminine pose in feminist countercinema (she refers to the work of Babette Mangolte, Sally Potter and Terry Selzer) marks an albeit hysterical refusal to comply with the objectification of the cinematic apparatus. Mary Ann Doane, 'Woman's Stake: Filming the Female Body', *October*, 17 (1981), 22-36 (pp.24-25).

28. There are only two examples in *The Gold Diggers* when all the in-frame characters speak in synchronised sound: (i) the interaction between Celeste, the office supervisor and the expert and (ii) the dialogue between Ruby and the dancer. Note: in the analytic scene

Celeste's speaks mostly in voice-over and voice-off whilst a large percentage of Ruby's verbal track is in synchronised sound.

29. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene (iii), Chapter Two, pp.85-86.

30. Christian Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', *Screen*, 16, 2, (1975), 14-76 (p.63).

31. See my comments on the relation between *The Gold Diggers* and the silent cinema in Chapter Two, pp.58-59.

32. Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', pp. 50, 64-66.

33. *Ibid.*, p.15.

34. Metz describes the "inaudible" voice of the classic cinema whispering *Love me to the* (male) spectator. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

35. Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, 3 (1975), 6-18 (pp.6-7).

36. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene (iii), Chapter Two, pp.81-82.

37. Talking about the shoot of the rehearsal scene Jacky Lansley has noted that Julie Christie's ability to manufacture an intensely close relationship out of "nothing" helped carry the other players through the scenes and provided an emotional intensity which is otherwise absent in the film. Christie's ability to forefront Ruby's psychological and emotional struggle when playing a part which is not framed within a linear narrative should not be underestimated. Jackie Lansley interview: 30.03.94.

38. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene (iii), Chapter Two, op cit.

39. This dance sequence appears to be drawn from Jacky Lansley *Dance Object* (1977) produced while she was working with the *X6 Collective*. Appendix 7.

40. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode X, scene (iii), Chapter Two, op cit.

41. Richard Dyer has categorised the Musical in relation to three broad tendencies: (i) the backstage musicals, such as *le Roy's Gold Diggers* (1933) where the off-stage narrative is divorced from the on-stage numbers; (ii) the films that separate the narrative

from the numbers whilst attempting to conceal the divide - Donen's *Funny Face* (1956); and (iii) those that dissolve the distinction between narrative and numbers - Cukor's *My Fair Lady* (1964) and Reed's *Oliver* (1968). Richard Dyer, 'Entertainment and Utopia', *Movie*, 24 (Spring, 1977), 2-13.

42. Paula Rabinowitz, 'Commodity Fetishism: Women in Gold Diggers of 33', *Film Reader* 5, 141-149 (p.146).

43. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.40.

44. *Ibid.*, p.46.

45. Leon S. Roudiez, 'Introduction' in: Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p.6.

46. Nostell Priory, Wakefield, Yorkshire.

47. See Chapter Three, pp.127-141.

48. See Mary Ann Doane's comments on models of female proximity underpinning a wide range of feminist writing and theory produced in the 1970s: Mary Ann Doane, 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen*, 23, 3-4 (1982), 74-88 (pp.77-80).

49. Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', trans. by Joan Riviere, *On Metapsychology*, pp.339-404 (pp.370-374). My reading of the family scenario is indebted to Kaja Silverman's lucid analysis of the film. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp.178-186 (p.183).

50. Claire Johnston, 'Dorothy Arzner: Critical Strategies', *Feminism and Film Theory*, ed. by Constance Penley (London: British Film Institute, 1988), pp.36-45.

51. *Ibid.*, p.42.

52. In her persuasive reading of *Dance, Girl, Dance* Judith Mayne argues that Arzner dismantles the principles of masculine desire through a series of female looks and female friendships and the resistant function of communities of women. Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp.100-103. See also: Lucy Fischer, *Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp.151-152.

53. Johnston, 'Dorothy Arzner', p.42. Expressing a different viewpoint, Judith Mayne suggests that the catfight on stage '[...]' is less a recuperative move [...] than the claiming by the two women of the stage as an extension of their conflicting friendship, rather than an alienating site of performance'. Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole*, p.102.
54. Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', *Signs*, 1 (1976), 875-893 (p.888).
55. Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, pp.98-140.
56. Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida et al., *Theorie d'ensemble* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968).
57. Julia Kristeva, 'From One Identity to Another', trans by Thomas Gora and Alice Jardine, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), pp.124-147 (p.142).
58. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp.224, 225.
59. Julia Kristeva, 'Place Names', *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984, pp.271-294 (p.286). See my Chapter Seven, pp.271-284.
60. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, PFL 4, trans. by James Strachey, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp.765-766.
61. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p.224.
62. Ibid., p.233 and Kristeva, 'Place Names', p.287
63. This leap from the Golden Lane Theatre to springtime in Iceland evokes the shifts in time and place from the penultimate to the final tableau in *Un Chien andalou* (Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, 1929). This amounts to a move from a scene of sexual inversion, featuring the male in the position of castration and the female as agent of change, to a scene entitled "in the spring..." culminating in a shot of the half buried figures which, according Linda Williams, can be read as '[...] an ironic mockery of rebirth'. Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* (Berkeley and Los

Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), p.99.

64. *The Gold Diggers*, Chapters One and Four, pp.35-37
154.

65. According to Kristeva, the concept of maternity has been framed in terms of: (i) abjection or (ii) the fantasy of an idealised relationship with an archaic maternal figure. She argues that it is not a matter of constructing alternative images of maternal power to replace these pre-given models of maternity, but of constructing a new ethically based relation to the maternal function. See my Chapter Three, pp.119-127.

66. Julia Kristeva, 'Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini', *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (London: Blackwell, 1981), pp.237-270 (p.239).

67. Kaja Silverman's radical revision of the oedipus complex foregrounds the constitutive potential for women of the so called "negative phase". Drawing Llample-de Groot and Irigaray, Silverman suggests that the girl's narcissistic desire for the mother in the early stages of oedipalisation can upend the traditional masculine priority associated with the classical model of individuation. Kristeva, as I have pointed out in Chapter Three, locates the facilitating function of the infant's primary narcissistic relation to the pre-symbolic mother (and subsequently to the pre-symbolic father). The value of Kristeva's model is that it pulls back the process of individuation to include the uncontained visual and sonorous articulations of the pre-verbal phase of life. Silverman critique of Kristeva's model can be found in: Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, pp.118-126.

68. Julia Kristeva, 'Signifying Practice and the Mode of Production' *Edinburgh Magazine*, 1 (1976), 64-75 (p.68); Kristeva, 'Place Names', pp.271-294.

Chapter Nine

CELESTE'S DREAM: THE MATERNAL CARD-PLAYER, THE WELDER AND THE TWO SWIMMERS

(Episodes IX, XV)

Although the dream is played out in the interiority of Celeste's mind, the dreamt encounters are re-enacted in the social space of a women's club, thus disrupting the conventional binary of inner and outer worlds. Choosing the site of a women's club as the *mise-en-scène* of a dream is in itself a suggestive move. Since the 1970s the traditionally male domain of the club has been appropriated by women for the exchange of ideas, dialogue and debate - it is thus against the backdrop of feminist oppositional struggle that we are invited to enter Celeste's dream.

In this scene Celeste casts aside her multiple roles of investigator, romantic hero/ine, analyst and office worker and adopts the position of analysand associated with Ruby. Following suit Ruby discards her previous stance of damaged subject and adopting the role of analyst she carries the sleeping black woman into the world of dreams.¹ There is a sense in which the image of the former analysand conveying Celeste into the interiority of a dream reverses the earlier tableau of Celeste rescuing Ruby from the ballroom. It

is also noteworthy that apart from the ballroom escape scene and the analytic scene, this is the only time that the co-stars are seen together.²

The significance of Celeste's dream world is confirmed by Sally Potter. Describing the film as a distorted palindrome with the dream at its centre, she has identified the close-up shots of Celeste asleep as the dividing point between two asymmetrical reflections.³ The dream can thus be read as a mirrored door. Having crossed its threshold the film returns to and revises certain key moments - such as the ballroom scene, the horseback escape, the gold idol procession, Ruby's relation to the family triangle and the scenes featuring the mother and the little hut in Iceland.

This pivotal episode is structured in relation to three clearly identifiable phases or "scenes".⁴ In scene (i) [shots 1-7, see shot chart, pp.334-336], Celeste and Ruby journey towards one another across the city by night. Their sense of agency and their claim on the right to venture out by night presents a direct challenge to the patriarchal discourses of ownership which extend over women, the city and travel.⁵ Scene (ii) [shots 8-29] signals a shift from the urban world of the metropolis to the psychic world of dreams - this transition is announced, in shots 7 and 8, with the gradual illumination of the central light bulb in Celeste's room [the analytic space], followed by a shot

of a theatre attendant opening the curtains to the "theatre of dreams". The latter shot is accompanied by a shift in the soundtrack from a jazz arrangement to the rhythmic beat of the tango.⁶

The third scene [shots 30-70] refers to Celeste's actual dream and invokes the function of dream-work.⁷ The dream proper is introduced with the close-up shots of Celeste's sleeping face and a shot of a woman welder working on her seaworthy vessel [shots 28 and 29]. At this juncture the tango is replaced by Marilyn Mazur's percussion solo [using the wall and shelves as her drum kit]. Located in the liberating venue of a women's club and dominated by actions of the drummer, three dancers and a group of card players, the discourse of Celeste's dream celebrates the splitting and merging of female subjectivity in relation to social, cultural and psychic frames of reference. At the heart of the dream is a fleeting reference to a black card-player whose costume identifies her African-Caribbean lineage. I shall argue that the initially ambiguous image of the card player represents the structuring absence of blackness underlying the *Bankers' Song* and the gold idol procession in the Royal Exchange and can be read as a register of the collective history Celeste is striving to retrieve.

Placing a dream as a palimpsest of subjective renewal is a familiar move in the history of film. In

the classic cinema the concept of renewal via dreams is generally pictured in relation to the actions of the high-minded expertise of the analyst, who alone can make sense of the bizarre world activated by the dependent dreamer.⁸ *The Gold Diggers*, in contrast, mobilises the operations of dream-work to liquidate the traditionally polarised discourses of the master and the hysteric, knowing and not knowing, control and dependency, outer and inner, awake and asleep, conscious and unconscious.

Shot Chart: Celeste's Dream (07.20 minutes)

Scene (i): The Journey

Music/sound: Siren (guitar and saxophone), silence, pattering footsteps.

- Shot 1: Night. Ruby leaves Celeste's room [the analytic space]
 Shot 2: Night. Celeste leaves the bank.
 Shot 3: Night. Followed by the expert, Celeste walks away from the camera along an unlit street.

Music/sound: Repetitive jazz arrangement, bringing together the melody of the *Bankers' Song* and the accompaniment of the *Empire Song*. Intermittent breaks in the soundtrack.

- Shot 4: Night. Celeste enters building. Walks along corridor followed by two men.
 Shot 5: Night. Celeste runs up fire escape of industrial building. She diverts her pursuers by running up and down the steps and exiting/re-entering the building several times.
 Shot 6: Celeste walks across her room [analytic space] carrying clothes.⁹
 Shot 7: Celeste's room. Half-light. One armchair. A pair of dancing shoes on an otherwise empty floor. A central light bulb is gradually illuminated.

Scene (ii): Introducing the mise-en-scène of Celeste's Dream

Music/sound: tango - double bass, viola, bassoon, saxophone.

- Shot 8: Elderly theatre attendant [woman] opens stage curtains. Stage filled with spectators with their backs turned to the audience.
 Shot 9: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 10: Theatre attendant staring at spectators on stage.
 Shot 11: Two dancers in foreground. Card players in background.
 Shot 12: Theatre attendant staring at spectators on stage.
 Shot 13: Two dancers. Card players in background.

Shot 14: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 15: Ruby and Celeste exchange a look.

Music/sound: Slow, long chords [double bass, viola, bassoon] overlaid with saxophone trills.

Shot 16: Close-up. Celeste asleep, resting her head on a table. Ruby hovers at the edge the frame. She bends over Celeste and touches the nape of her neck.
 Shot 17: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 18: Three dancers [Siobhan Davies, Maedée Duprès and Juliet Fisher]. Card players in background.
 Shot 19: Dark. Low angle shot of two swimmers in the sea.
 Shot 20: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 21: Woman welder working on boat.
 Shot 22: Three dancers in bar. Card players in background.
 Shot 23: Ruby lifts the sleeper [Celeste] from her chair.
 Shot 24: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 25: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 26: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 27: Ruby carries the sleeper [Celeste] across a room.
 Shot 28: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 29: Woman welder working on boat. Turns and smiles at the spectator.

Scene (iii): The Dream

Music/sound: Silence. Two single drum beats. Silence. Drum solo.

Shot 30: Drummer [Marilyn Mazur] using wall and shelves as percussion instrument.
 Shot 31: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 32: Drummer.
 Shot 33: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 34: Drummer.
 Shot 35: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 36: Drummer:
 Shot 37: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 38: Drummer.
 Shot 39: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 40: Drummer.
 Shot 41: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 42: Drummer.
 Shot 43: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 44: Drummer.
 Shot 45: Close-up of one dancer. Card players in background.
 Shot 46: Drummer.
 Shot 47: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 48: Drummer.
 Shot 49: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 50: Drummer.
 Shot 51: Two dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 52: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 53: Drummer.
 Shot 54: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 55: Drummer.
 Shot 56: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 57: Drummer.
 Shot 58: Close-up of one dancer. Bar/mirror.
 Shot 59: Drummer.
 Shot 60: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 61: Drummer.
 Shot 62: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 63: Theatre attendant. Stage curtains closed.

Shot 64: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 65: Theatre attendant. Stage curtains closed.
 Shot 66: Three dancers. Card players in background.
 Shot 67: Theatre attendant. Stage curtains closed.
 Shot 68: Close-up. Celeste's sleeping face on striped pillow.
 Shot 69: Theatre attendant. Stage curtains closed.
 Shot 70: Celeste's room [the analytic space] with chair and shoes. Light is turned off.

Music/sound: The tempo of the drumming slows down between shots 60-70. The final drum stroke coincides with extinguished light.

Scene (i): The Journey

I want to begin this excavation of Celeste's dream with a few comments about the journey undertaken by the co-stars in scene (i). As said earlier, both women are on the move, travelling separately across the city by night. At one side of the city Ruby leaves Celeste's apartment [the analytic space] whilst at the other, Celeste can be seen slipping out of the Royal Exchange. The black woman is being followed by the office manager and the expert and in a highly amusing and brilliantly orchestrated burlesque played out on the fire-escape of an industrial building, Celeste eludes her pursuers [shot 5; fig. 9.1]. On the one hand, this one-shot drama appears to be drawn from an Ealing Comedy scenario and, on the other, the image of the two panic stricken clones in pursuit of the knowing woman evokes the numerous tableaux of mindless bureaucrats in *April in Paris* (1952).

Having dodged the two men, Celeste reappears in her apartment carrying an armful of clothes [fig. 9.2].

The room is furnished with a screen made up of newspaper cuttings, a camp bed with a striped pillow, a hat stand, a sea trunk and hanging on the far wall is a tiny picture [fig. 9.3]. This shot is accompanied by an instrumental adaptation combining the *Bankers' Song* and the *Empire Song* (these two songs are associated with Ruby and Celeste respectively). Glancing at the screen Celeste walks across her room, she hangs the clothes on the hat stand and sits on the trunk near the little picture. The striped pillow on the bed announces the topography of dreams [Celeste will rest her head on this pillow in scene (ii) of the dream episode] and the filing cabinet, the sea-trunk and the random assortment of clothes evoke the stories of exile, deportation and migration that have been repressed by the official version of Western history. But, who is represented in the barely discernible picture on the wall? What might this image tell us about the black woman's investigative journey and about her dream?

Pondering over the function of this ambiguous unseen picture, I decided to "identify" it as a portrait of Celeste and her mother. Subsequently, going through the rehearsal photographs of the shoot I found the original image used in this scene. As it turns out, this enigmatic signifier is a photograph of Colette Laffont's mother holding the young Colette

(aged about three) on her knee. Mother and daughter are sitting on the window ledge of an urban industrial dwelling. Apparently, Colette Laffont helped design Celeste's room and the inclusion of a narrative thread drawn from her own personal history is telling - suggesting a possible overlap between Celeste's archaeological quest in *The Gold Diggers* and the private story of the actress who played her part.¹⁰

So, where the character of Ruby is clearly a spin-off from the very real problems experienced by Julie Christie in her career as star, it would seem that Celeste's role might likewise bear some traces of Colette Laffont's history.¹¹ In addition, this oblique reference to Colette's mother is a pointed reminder that the psychoanalytic drama re-enacted in the Gold Lane Theatre totally excludes the experience of black individuation.¹²

The repressed discourses activated by the collection of signifiers in Celeste's room are immediately displaced by a follow-up shot featuring the same room [shot 7] devoid of objects - bar a pair of centrally placed ballet shoes, a chair and a paraffin heater. This shot duplicates the earlier scene of Ruby's analytic session in Episode V, in that the ballet shoes function as a metonymic reference to the screen goddess who, as we recall, was lying on the floor in a crumpled heap and the chair can be read as a

metaphoric allusion to Celeste in her introductory role of analyst [fig. 9.4]. Then, resorting to a theatrical ruse of musical hall, the central light is switched on, the soundtrack cuts from the *Bankers/Empire Song* adaptation to the incisive rhythm of the tango (played on cello, viola, bassoon and saxophone) and the "show" begins.

In shot 8, an elderly, meticulously dressed theatre attendant carefully draws back the curtains of a tiny stage located in a club [fig. 9.5].¹³ The unveiled stage is filled with women standing with their backs turned on the spectator - refusing to put themselves on display [shots 10 and 12]. Initially this shot evokes the stage in Golden Lane Theatre, however in this revised *mise-en-scène* of classical theatre the inward-looking players disrupt the conventions of story telling - suggesting, perhaps, that new performance strategies and new reading strategies are required to retrieve the repressed stories generated by Celeste's dream.

Moreover, the image of the theatre attendant staring at the strange scenario of inward looking players can be read as a witty reformulation of one of René Magritte's best known spectacles *La Reproduction Interdit* (1937).¹⁴ However, where Magritte counters the Cartesian model of "man's" logically fixed sense of self with an angst ridden notion of heroic self-

annihilation, the inward looking women in *The Gold Diggers* are preparing to become subjects in their own theatres.

**Scene (ii): The Amorous Discourse, the Dreamer
and the Awake Subject**

In a montage consisting of seven shots the inward looking performers are edited between close-ups of Celeste's sleeping face and two female dancers [shots 8-14; figs. 9.6; 9.7]. This sequence of images is accompanied by the sharp duple rhythm of the tango - a sound which evokes a discourse of female display, passion and seduction.¹⁵

Identically dressed, wearing white T-shirts, high waisted black flannels with braces and white shoes the two dancers proceed to upend the sexed narratives associated with this most celebrated of Latin-American dances. The simultaneous appeal to and disruption of the tightly packed, eroticised codes of the tango pushes the women's performance into the slippery domain of trans-sexual make-believe. Catherine Clément's reading of opera is relevant here. Although Clément focuses mainly on the verbal text of opera, her observations on musical discourse cast light on the conventional ties between the harmonic patterns accompanying male roles and the naturalisation of

masculine principles governing psychic and social operations.¹⁶ Clément argues that the attraction and passion in opera is in a part a consequence of the dangerous slippage and deregulation of rhythmic, scalar and harmonic rules. Where closure of traditional musical and dance forms relies on a reinstatement of conventional values, the dream sequence refuses to contain soma and sound within a traditionally seamless orchestration.

The link between the process of dreaming and the renovation of the *mise-en-scène* of female "identity" is confirmed in shots 15-16, featuring Ruby and Celeste exchanging a look and Ruby hovering over the sleeper. These two shots are bracketed by another close-up of Celeste's sleeping face, followed by two shots of Ruby picking up the sleeper and carrying her into the world of dreams [shots 23 and 27]. This pictorial account of the dreamer entering her dream is prefaced by another shift in the soundtrack from the sharp rhythmic structure of the tango to a slow pulse of low, long chords [double bass, viola, bassoon] overlaid with the improvised trills of a soprano saxophone. The physical deceleration of the condition of sleep is thus mirrored in the deep soft pulse of the long chords whilst the light, excitable, free floating trills of the saxophone announce the innovative function of dream-work.¹⁷

The shifting register from the experience of

awakeness to that of dreaming is not, I must emphasise, framed in terms of a move from a rational to an irrational world. In contrast the visual and aural montage disrupts the conventional binaries of conscious and unconscious, ego and repression, awake and asleep. The catalytic image at the heart of this explosive discourse of change is the profile shot of Celeste and Ruby mentioned above. In this shot the black woman and the white woman are looking into one another's eyes - as if sharing a secret [shot 15; fig. 9.8]. Their motionless profiles give nothing away - the spectator is excluded from their secret. Let us stop to consider the significance of this shot which brings together two women who have been separated by social, cultural and representational conventions.

In his paper 'Secret as a Potential Space' M. Masud R. Khan gives an account of a very young girl who: '[...] created a *secret* and used it as a potential space where she could be, quite apart from her inner life or familial existence, in the outside world'.¹⁸ He argues that the act of withdrawal allows the individual to reformulate an originally distressing situation - in secret. In addition, according to Khan, analytic patients use this strategy of creating (and subsequently sharing) a secret to make their claim on the analytic setting. This is achieved through the clandestine rehearsal of certain activities such as

drawing, writing, talking and creating imaginary scenarios which are later shared with the analyst.¹⁹ Khan likens the analytic function of shared secrets to Winnicott's description of the *mutuality* experienced between mother and child which, he argues, is contingent on the mother's willingness to create a holding frame for the infant's needs.²⁰ The act of restaging a secret in a form that can be shared with another subject amounts to an imaginary retrieval of the first lost object. In other words, unless the secret is shared, the imprisoned material becomes ossified and can hinder formative psychic development.

Read from this perspective, the face-to-face shot of Ruby and Celeste activates a discourse of reciprocity grounded in the experience of a shared secret and, as such, the image functions as the lynchpin to the montage of shots introducing the dream. Not only does the reciprocity between the co-stars indicate a successful transference relation between the awake subject and the dreamer but, as I mentioned earlier, Ruby's sheltering presence duplicates Celeste's earlier role as rescuer, thus providing her erstwhile protector with a safe haven.²¹

The shot of the two women sharing a secret fades into a shot of Celeste sleeping [fig. 9.9]. This visual cross-fade is accompanied by a similar musical shift from the gliding phrases and sharp pauses of the

tango to the repetitious pattern of slow chords. No sooner are these visual and aural modifications accomplished than a series of movements at the edge of the frame alert the spectator to the presence of an off-screen figure. Bending into the frame Ruby reaches out and caresses the nape of Celeste's neck and then, carefully lifting the sleeper, she carries her into the world of dreams [shots 16, 23, 27; figs. 9.10; 9.11]. At the point when Ruby opens out her arms to gather up the sleeper, she is not only leaning over Celeste, but she appears to be leaning over the spectator. The analyst's open-armed gesture and the low angle camera collapses the distance between spectator and screen, thus inviting the looker to empathise with the experience of dreamer. This sensation is repeated when, seconds later, the camera cuts to a tight framed, low angle close-up of Ruby looking down at the sleeper and, once again, the spectator is summoned into the space of the dreamer. Not unlike the experience of watching the home movie sequence of the mother discussed in Chapter Seven, the cinema seat is transformed into a protecting maternal embrace and gazing up at the screen the spectator is temporarily positioned as the child/dreamer.²² The combination of the long soft chords, the close camera work and Ruby's encircling gestures make this a decidedly erotic encounter. Not only do Ruby's protective actions

shield the sleeper, but this shot activates a highly charged discourse of lesbian desire, thus mobilising an oppositional challenge to the normative operations of heterosexuality.²³

The sequence also suggests that trouble-free sleep is a consequence of the analyst's '[...] wakeful and embodied presence and functioning'.²⁴ From this perspective Ruby takes on a restitutive role - creating a provisional space for the sleeper to enter (and awaken from) the transitional world of dreams.²⁵ In addition, the two dancers have been joined by a third figure and the juxtaposition of the shots of Ruby carrying the sleeper with the dream-image of three interlinked dancers invokes the multiple female figures generated in Jackie Lansley's mirror-dance discussed in the previous chapter [shots 18, 22, 24, 26; figs. 9.14; 9.15].²⁶

Scene (iii): The Dream, the Three Dancers and the Drummer

Where scene (ii) focuses on the transition from awokeness to dreaming, scene (iii) is shot from the vantage point of the dreamer. Let me begin with a description of the dream:

Two women are dancing the tango in a basement bar. They are joined by a third woman. Two people [possibly Celeste and Ruby] are swimming in the moonlight towards the

dreamer [the shore/the camera]. A woman welder is working on her boat. A drummer performs a long and complex solo using a wall as her percussion instrument. The three dancers begin to improvise. A bartender is watching the dancers and a group of self-absorbed card players is sitting at the far end of the room. The group consist of a black woman in a turban, a theatre attendant, a dancer and a fourth individual who is hidden behind a partition. They pay no attention to the dancers.

I must point out that on the first or even second viewing of the film, the spectator is left "in the dark", to paraphrase Ruby - we remember very little about Celeste's dream. The combination of the accelerated montage and the inclusion of seemingly unrelated image clusters guarantees that certain facets of the dream are pushed to the edge of perception. For instance, the bartender and the mirrored wall are barely discernible; the single shot of the welder and the two shots of the swimmers are easily missed; and although the card players feature in a majority of the twenty four dance shots, they too are likely to be overlooked. In other words, the above description of the dream is already more than an account of its manifest content, but is more properly seen as the initial stage in the constitutive function of dream-work.

As Freud has pointed out, the immediately remembered dream-story is often '[...] brief, meagre and laconic in comparison with the range and wealth of the dream-thoughts'.²⁷ He discovered that although the dreamer is unlikely to recall the dream narrative as a

whole, attention paid to the separate portions of the dream can, eventually, unlock the repressed memory clusters lying at its base.²⁸ Indeed, Freud suggests that the first retelling of the dreamer's story is likely to misdirect the analyst. Put differently, the manifest form of the dream functions as a ruse designed to block, rather than facilitate, a deeper reading.²⁹

It seems to me that the dream sequence in *The Gold Diggers* assigns the spectator to the space of the analyst, in so far as the dream demands our listening attention. Indeed, the initial inaccessibility of the complex visual and aural montage challenges the spectator to replay the episode time and time again. As film readers our task is to create an interpretative space to discover the underlying desire locked in the latent material of Celeste's dream. Needless to say, the most significant encounters in a dream are generally the most heavily disguised. However, to uncover the latent material of the dream we must begin with its most conspicuous elements.

The main text of the dream story consists of forty shots and is 01.40 minutes in length [shots 30-70]. With the camera fixed on the welder's laughing face [shot 29; fig. 9.12] the soundtrack cuts from the long, slow chords to Marilyn Mazur's percussion solo.³⁰ Announcing the main rhythm on the wall directly in front of her, she gradually incorporates the adjoining

shelves and wall in a complex and increasingly frenetic performance [fig. 9.13]. The shots of Mazur's drumming are cross-cut with shots of three dancers [Siobhan Davies, Juliet Fisher and Maedée Duprès: figs. 9.14; 9.15].³¹ All three dancers interlink passages from traditional and popular dance routines with less conventional steps and gestures. The slowly articulated movements of the dancers contrast with the escalating tempo of both the drummer's performance and the visual montage of the film.³²

The experience of a non-hierarchical triangulation of female dancers is in itself unusual. A cursory glance across the repertoire of classical ballet confirms its commitment to the oedipal triangulation with the male hero holding sway over the fate of the female participants.³³ As Rose English has pointed out, the ballerina is activated by the man: '[...] he swoops and plunges with her, before bringing her down to earth so that the narrative can continue [...] he carries and wields her with increasing fervour until finally she expires. Either she evaporates offstage or she dies on stage'.³⁴ Where classical dance narratives find their resolution in either the murder of the third party [the male intruder] or the death of the heroine, the dancers in Celeste's dream disregard this grammar of negation.

Historically female triads have made their

appearance as the three graces, arranged to satisfy the voyeuristic gaze of the male spectator; in contrast, the dancers in Celeste's dream are performing in an anti-phallic venue of the women's club - on a stage without curtains - suggesting that players and spectators are joint participants engaged in the task of producing oppositional meanings. The clearly signalled venue of the club, with its agenda of socialist, feminist and lesbian politics, disrupts the transcendental state of self-expression associated with lead roles in classical ballet. In addition, the combined visual and aural figurations generated by the performers in Celeste's dream respond to Julia Kristeva's model of '[...] the semiotisation of the symbolic [...] the flow of jouissance into language', played out within the productive framework of a politics of change.³⁵

I can best explain the generative space mapped by the dancers and the drummer with reference to Anne Tallentire's performance *Altered Tracks* [fig. 9.16].³⁶ Using charcoal the artist outlined her fate-lines across a 40 x 20 foot floor space and walking along her 'paths of destiny' she talked about the contradictory pressures experienced by women living in Northern Ireland. However, although the increasingly smudged charcoal lines began to take the form of an immense gestural drawing, the socio-political anchorage of this

piece disrupted any affiliation with the humanist discourse of self-expression underpinning modernist abstraction. Not unlike Anne Tallentire's movements, the dancers' gestures are at once anchored in recognisable cultural determinants whilst simultaneously responding to the unseen directives of repressed material. In contrast to the inward looking, a-social discourse of personal expression associated with the work of action painters, the politicised reworking on the body in both Tallentire's performance and the dream sequence could be described as combining '[...] the adult polymorphous pleasure of the body with the adult pleasure of the analysis of the text'.³⁷

The Card Players

Replaying and pondering over a film extract is not unlike puzzling over a dream - little by little unforeseen patterns emerge. Given time an obscure or apparently insignificant facet of the dream can be found to mask a meaningful configuration of signs. So it is with the group of women in the background of the shots of the dancers. Once alerted to the presence of this mysterious group, so it assumes an increasingly central role in the dream [fig. 9.17].

Four women - one black the others white - are sitting at a table. Studying the rehearsal shots it is

possible to identify dominoes, darts and cards lying on the table - my guess is that the women are playing cards.³⁸ In the first retelling of the dream these card players ^{are} registered as inconsequential bystanders - borderline figures - occupying the background space in the dance sequence [figs. 9.14; 9.15]. However, during subsequent screenings of the film, the central figure - a black woman wearing a turban - becomes increasingly prominent and can be identified as the pivotal signifier of the dream story.

Before saying more about the place and function (in the dream and in the film) of the central card player, I want to make a very general observation about the group as whole. They remind me of the figures in Georges de la Tour's painting *Le Tricheur* (c.1630) [fig. 9.18].³⁹ Reflecting on a complementary image can sometimes draw attention to certain overlooked elements in the original object of fascination. Three of the characters in *Le Tricheur* are also playing cards and a fourth character, a maid serving wine, is informing the central figure of the charlatan in their midst. Not unlike the scene in the painting, the (imagined) exchange of cards in Celeste's dream can be read as a metaphoric reference to "playing" the game of sociality. In the painting, the cheat is unmasked by the central card player in collusion with the maid. Taking our cue from *Le Tricheur*, we might argue that -

like the central player in the painting - the black woman in Celeste's dream understands the duplicitous principles underscoring the "game" of mastery.

Freud tells us that dreams are always about the dreamer. Dreams, he asserts, are *completely egoistic*, in so far that the dreamer's sense of "being" may be represented numerous times in the same dream - either directly in a drama of the first person, or indirectly through the second and third person.⁴⁰ The dreamer's subjective feelings are thus allowed to travel along diverse and often contradictory pathways, making contact with unformulated and often unthinkable material. In addition, Freud tells us that "over-valued" personages in dreams tend to represent a parent figure:

We have learnt from their [children's] interpretation that even in later years, if the Emperor and Empress appear in dreams, those exalted personages stand for the dreamer's father and mother.⁴¹

As I mentioned earlier, in the analysis of dream-work it can occur that a marginal figure moves into centre stage.⁴² So it is with the knowing card player in Celeste's dream. Not only does this figure take on a central role in the dream story but her presence functions as an oblique reference to the dreamer. Conjoining the card player with the dreamer complements and confirms the mother/daughter union signalled by the little picture hanging in Celeste's apartment. Here,

at the centre of Celeste's dream (and perhaps the centre of the film) we have uncovered an access point to a set of reading possibilities that simultaneously address the dreamer's cultural history and disrupt the orchestrating function of the white male in the psychoanalytic drama. I am not saying that the image of the card player is a denotative reference to either the dreamer's biological mother or to the specifics of her displaced history; what I am suggesting is that the actions and the context of the encounters in Celeste's dream provoke a new field of interpretative ideas.

In his account of the role of the unconscious in Freud's model of subjectivity, Jacques Lacan writes:

[...] Freud addresses the subject in order to say to him the following, which is new - *Here, in the field of dreams, you are at home. Wo es war, soll Ich werden.*⁴³

Lacan follows the above statement with the assertion that the Freudian *Ich* should not be conflated with the ego - arguing that *Ich in soll Ich werden* refers to the network of primary and secondary signifiers which make up the *Ich*. From this perspective the *Ich* is always where it [the dream] was. This understanding the ego as a provisional entity - which is contingent on the negotiatory dynamic played out between the conservative activities of the secondary censor and the disguises adopted by the primary function - forms the basis of Julia Kristeva's model of the subject-in-process. Likewise, the figures

in Celeste's dream attest to a model of an open psychic system which, in Kristevan terms, implies that these players are receptive to change.

**The Dreamer, the Welder
and the Two Swimmers**

So far I have demonstrated that the objects in Celeste's room and the figures in her dream elicit the repressed histories of migration, displacement and colonisation associated with the sleeper. I want to extend this argument to include the image of the smiling face of the white welder working on her seaworthy vessel. The jubilant welder is featured both at the onset of the dream and repeated in the concluding shots of the film [shots 21 and 29; figs. 9.19; 9.20]. The reappearance of this figure at the film's end confirms her importance both to the dreamer and to the film.

What status can we attribute to a fictive construct of a white female boat builder in a black woman's dream? To what extent is it reasonable to assume that the boat under construction could serve the needs of the black dreamer? The historical agenda of British ships in the triangular trade and the supportive role played by white women in the stakes of colonialism must surely cast doubt over the

applicability of an image of a white female boat builder as a source of liberation for the dreamer.⁴⁴ What follows is an account of how the film positions and implicates this figure.

Raised high off the ground and at work on her boat, the welder immediately disturbs the sexed assumptions underlying the division of labour within a capitalist economy. As such the shot evokes the Marxist theory of a female reserve army of labour which is picked up and discarded, dependent on levels of male employment.⁴⁵ This model of industrial labour relations is invoked in documentary reconstructions such as Connie Field's *Rosie the Rivetter* (1980) - indeed, there is a level at which the heroic image of the welder in *The Gold Diggers* can be read as a tribute to the traditionally unrepresented agency of women's industrial labour featured in the above mentioned film.⁴⁶

The history of the shipbuilding industry (not unlike the more recent history of the film industry) has been dominated by hierarchically structured working practices associated with male labour relations. In its tribute the *Rosie the Rivetter*, the image of the welder is a reminder that previous challenges to the male domination of industrial production have been erased from history. Indeed, the stand taken in *The Gold Diggers* against the production methods of the

Western economy, both in terms of the film's content and in its making, frames our reading of the welder. So, as well as announcing a facet of lost information, the shot of the smiling welder is also synonymous with thoughts of transportation, innovation and change - to paraphrase Sally Potter, this image signals the vision (the dream) at the heart of all political action.⁴⁷

From this latter point of view, the shot of the welder turning to smile at the spectator is a fictive device used to announce the celebratory optimism and pride of a woman who has not only imagined her "escape" from her pre-given role as object of consumption, but has appropriated the tools of mastery to construct her own means of transportation. In so doing, the figure of the welder applauds women's versatility and adaptability. According to Sally Potter, the construction of images plays an important role in the struggle to redefine the cinematic narratives and concepts of heroism available to women.⁴⁸ Talking about the actual and fictive limits of female experience, Potter argues:

It is not that objective circumstances don't block us, but that we have to assume that the external difficulties don't reflect our internal capacities and potential.⁴⁹

Before we discuss the feminist "dream" generated by the shot of the welder, I want to follow up a very different and far more troubling set of questions concerning the history of racial tension within

feminism. At the time the film was being made, feminist theory in Britain and America was dominated by privileged white women. Conceding the unacknowledged ethnic position of white feminism, Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh have pointed out that historically:

'[...] white feminists have simply assumed that whatever they say will apply to all women.'⁵⁰ The deeply engrained racism within the recent history of bourgeois feminism is grounded on two, often unacknowledged assumptions, identified by bell hooks as: on the one hand, a white liberation strategy based on a model of '[...] shared victimization, hence the emphasis on common oppression'; and, on the other, the assumption, made my white women, that black women are so '[...] "strong" they do not need to be in the feminist movement.'⁵¹ Arguing that the anodyne role of victim adopted by white women is used to bypass their responsibility, both to other women and to themselves bell hooks demands a level of accountability from white feminists.

The Gold Diggers avoids the danger of replacing the role of the oppressed screen goddess with a white feminist model of "shared victimization" - in contrast, the film mobilises a *dream* of reciprocity between two women who have been separated by the ideological framework of race, class and value. In the course of the film the two women learn to share the specificities

of their conditions of existence and, in so doing, they liquidate and renovate the stereo-types which frame white women as over-represented victims whilst simultaneously under-representing and devaluing the experience of black women. The reader will recall that the analytic love relation constructed between the co-stars sustains Ruby's transition from her initial role of victim-object to a position of active sign-user. In the course of her own struggle for self-determination she works with the dancer [Jacky Lansley] to redefine the agenda of female self-representation and she shelters and supports Celeste in both the dream sequence and the *Empire Song*. Likewise, although Celeste is introduced as fearless office worker, investigator and analyst, engaged in the productive work of racial and sexual politics, she nevertheless assumes the more vulnerable position of analysand-dreamer. In short, the two women's mutual liberation is not grounded in an attempt to appropriate male status structures, nor are they tormented by a fear of the different or the unknown - but, as the film progresses, they learn to deflect and renovate the pressures of the men's world through a practice of shared experience and knowledge. Working on the assumption that personal pleasure is synonymous with critical inquiry, the co-stars *look at* and *listen to* one another. In the past, black women were forced to

listen to white men, white women and white children. Ruby's listening attention could thus be read as an acknowledgment of the sentiments voiced in Hazel Carby's 1986 essay 'White Women Listen', indicating that it is high time that the tables were turned.⁵²

Let us return to the key position of the welder in this process of change. In the dream sequence and at the end of the film, the image of the white woman welder is juxtaposed with the figure of Celeste. Uniting the black office worker with the figure of the industrial welder, the dream sequence goes some way towards identifying a meeting point between black women and white women in the political space of labour relations [shots 20-21, 28-29; figs. 9.21; 9.22]. Interlinked within an alliance between women's mental and manual labour, the complementary figures of Celeste and the welder generate a model of productivity premised on a concept of inter-cultural collaboration.

Working from this vantage point of reciprocal optimism, Celeste outlines her "formula" of change and the film closes with a montage featuring the dream image of the welder and two swimmers. Rather than extracting Celeste's "formula" from its cinematic context, I outline the final sequence of the film in its entirety:

Episode XV: Subjects in Process

Visual track: Four long shots: (i) the infant Ruby digging; (ii) a panoramic shot of the landscape with path featured at the beginning of the film. It is spring, the snow has melted and the tip of a rainbow meets the path; (iii) the path is transformed into a forest trail; (iv) Riding Sheba, Ruby and Celeste disappear down the wooded path.⁵³ After the horse and its two riders have disappeared the camera tracks down the empty path and Celeste repeats the first two lines of the riddle.

Celeste [voice-over]
You are born(e) in a beam of light.
You move continuously yet you are still.

Music/sound: *The Riddle Tune: Iceland*
 Visual track: The camera continues to track down the empty forest path.

Celeste [voice-over]: You are searching for a formula Ruby. Well, I have one that explains a real loss.

Ruby [voice-over]: What is it?

Celeste: In my job money flows through my body. But every day I get less than I give.

Ruby [voice-over]: Who is the richer?

Celeste [voice-over]: What I lose becomes a real surplus and it is this that I am paid to move about each day but do not own. But I know that even as I look and even as I see, I am changing what is there.

Music/sound: *The Riddle Tune: Iceland* is overlaid with the sound of welding.

Visual track: The film ends with a montage of four shots: a tight close-up of the hull of a boat; a repeated shot of the two swimmers (first glimpsed in the dream sequence in Episode IX) gliding through a choppy sea; a long shot of the welder constructing her boat (also featured in the earlier dream sequence); and a medium shot of the two swimmers. The *Riddle Tune: Iceland* runs over the credits.

Celeste's "formula" of change is introduced with the fourth and final replay of the horseback escape re-enacted in a *mise-en-scène* worthy of Cocteau. It is spring in Iceland and a rainbow spans the previously snowbound path that we have come to associate with the disappearing mother. In the following shot the path

is transformed into a forest track and in place of the mythic crock of gold the white horse is carrying the two women onto the next stage of their voyage of discovery.⁵⁴ This magical sequence is accompanied by the soundtrack of *Iceland* and Celeste's voice-over outlining her "formula". First she invokes the revised version of Ruby's introductory *Riddle*, thus reminding the spectator of the original quest underpinning the fictive encounters in the film, then she announces that women are producers of meaning - innovators rather than objects of consumption, lookers as opposed to objects of the look - from Celeste's point of view women are agents of change, women can change the world.

Celeste's confident optimism demands that we take a closer look at the closing shots of the welder. In both the dream and here in the final moments of the film the welder's smile activates a powerful mnemonic charge which draws together and transforms the elusive maternal signs scattered across the surface of *The Gold Diggers* - including the "home-movie" shots of the mother and the figure of the black maternal card player - demonstrating once again the extent to which the work of montage is used in the film to generate a rubric of preferred meanings [figs. 9.23; 9.24; 9.25].

Conjoining these maternal signifiers the welder's smile and her gaze replaces the concept of

"reproduction" with an understanding of maternal productivity and reformulates the discourse of loss underscoring Ruby's distress at the beginning of the film.⁵⁵ As Kristeva has taught us, the masculine principles governing the socio-symbolic confine women to the function of reproduction. She also argues that the homosexual facet of motherhood, actualised in the experience of childbirth, bypasses the logic of mastery and is more open to the innovative work of meaning production.⁵⁶ Read from a Kristevan vantage point, the culturally under-represented and undervalued facets of maternal productivity mobilised by the heroic figure of the welder undermine the notion of male brotherhood associated with industrial and symbolic production. In addition, the looks and smiles of the welder, the mother and the card player complement the shots of Celeste and Ruby sharing a secret and Ruby retrieving a reflected self-image in the frosted windowpane of the little hut. This focus on reciprocal looking undermines the voyeuristic concepts of the secret looker and trapped object, and initiates a new relation between the female spectator and the screen [fig. 9.26].

Talking about *Thriller* in 1981, Sally Potter suggested that feminist filmmakers should move beyond the strategy of merely raising questions and accept the

responsibility of arriving at 'tentative conclusions'.⁵⁷ In keeping with the Kristevan function of provisional truth, the "conclusion" in the final frames of *The Gold Diggers* generates new points of departure - Celeste reveals her theory of change and the image of the woman welder can be identified as the signifier of female productivity Ruby is striving to reclaim in the symbolic.⁵⁸

In the montage of four shots at the film's end, two shots of the smiling face of the welder are juxtaposed with two high angle shots of Celeste and Ruby swimming towards the camera/the spectator [fig 9.27]. The dark glittering surface of the moonlit water and the choppy, tidal flow suggest that the women are journeying across an ocean.⁵⁹ These latter shots are charged with an undeniable level of mythic optimism, alluding to a "birth" of sorts. The secrecy of the night, the reflective surface of the moon, the cyclical tides and the borderless volume of the ocean are deeply mythologised feminine signifiers, all of which play a structuring role in the narratives of the classic cinema - consider for instance the final shot in *Humoresque* (1946) of Joan Crawford disappearing into the vast oblivion of a moonlit ocean. However, here as elsewhere in *The Gold Diggers*, the cutting and framing strategies simultaneously elicit, disrupt and reframe

the preferred meanings of mainstream narrative. The closing montage of four shots can thus be read as a refiguration of the conventional assumption interlinking the signifiers of night, water and death with the figure of woman. In contrast to the cultural obsession with mythic darkness which underpins the corporal "identity" of the screen goddess, the extended mediations on female subjectivity, collective action and pleasure in *The Gold Diggers* ends on an anticipatory note.

Referring to the underlying optimism informing the discourse of change in the film Sally Potter has commented:

Nothing less than everything will do [...] there aren't any limits for us in the territory that has already been conquered by men. However, we may wish to redefine that territory and we may wish to redefine our heroism. So we come into the area of fiction as it is lived and fiction as fiction. Obviously a film is occupying a fictive space. Nevertheless, that fictive space has formed and shaped our unconscious, and therefore determines and reflects the way we live.⁶⁰

The redefinition in *The Gold Diggers* of the fictive space associated with the classic cinema generates a discourse of reciprocity which has implications on the ways in which we rethink female subjectivity. Not only does the film reformulate patriarchal narratives, but the claims made by Celeste and Ruby on the right to construct a concept of female heroism opens up the traditionally narrow and

stereotypic definitions of women's experience of life. Accompanied by the celebratory shots of the welder and the swimmers, Celeste's theory of change suggests that female subjectivity and female pleasure are linked with processes of production, achievement and innovation - rehearsed in a space where the psychic, the personal, the economic, the political, the cultural and the industrial have got to interact.

Notes to Chapter Nine

1. See Sally Potter's comments on her experience of role-change in co-counselling in: Claudia Hoff, 'Das Schwarz im Weissen: Ein Interview mit Sally Potter zu ihrem Film *The Gold Diggers*', *Frauen und Film*, 37 (1974), 91-94, (p.93).
2. The analytic relation between the co-stars is established in Episode V. The ballroom escape scene is re-enacted four times in the film: (i) the horseback exit from the first ballroom scene; (ii) Celeste and Ruby running from the Royal Exchange; (iii) the revised ballroom escape; (iv) the horseback escape into the forest at the end of the film. *The Gold Diggers*, Episodes IV, XII, XIV and XV Chapter Two, pp.74, 84-85, 85-86, 86-87.
3. Hoff, 'Das Schwarz im Weissen', p.92.
4. *The Gold Diggers*, Episode IX, Chapter Two, pp.79-80.
5. Janet Wolff, 'The Invisible Flaneuse: Women, Literature of Modernity', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2, 3 (1985), 37-48; Janet Wolff, 'On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism', *Cultural Studies*, 7, 2 (1993), 224-239.
6. In keeping with the other episodes, the dream sequence is framed by clearly identifiable opening and closing shots - in this case the opening and closing of the stage curtains - thus denaturalising the realist impact of the cinema. The stage curtains are used to similar effect in Episode X, 'the film within a film', discussed in Chapter Eight.
7. According to Freud, the manifest content of the dream refers to its *form*, whilst its latent content refers to '[...] everything that analysis gradually uncovers'. In contrast to latent dream-thoughts which are anchored in the unconscious, the manifest form of the dream is uncannily and insistently precise. Although the latent form of the dream precedes its manifest appearance in the mind of the sleeper, the essence of the dream is lodged in the function of dream-work. Jean Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth, 1983), p.235-236, 242; Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, PFL

2, trans. by James Strachey, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p.46; Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, PFL 4, trans. by Stanley Hall, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp.649-650, n.2.

8. For instance Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) tells the story of a heroine-analyst [Ingrid Bergman] who finds the clues to the analysand's [Gregory Peck] amnesia in the material of his dreams. Working from the analysand's dreams the resourceful analyst [the good mother] exposes the evil plot hatched by a fraudulent master-analyst [the murderer]. However, the film retains the privileged position of the knowing male hero in that Gregory Peck's dream is: (i) socially and morally restitutive; (ii) instrumental in replacing the configuration of evil mastery with a notion of good mastery.

9. See my Chapter Five, pp.203-204.

10. Rose English, interview: 09.10.93.

11. See my comments on Julie Christie in Chapters One and Six, p.3, 41 n.10, 223; Colette Laffont is currently unavailable for comment.

12. Martina Attille's film *Dreaming Rivers* (1988) redresses this imbalance. To quote Manthia Diawara: 'On the one hand, the presence of mirrors in the film parodies this moment [the Lacanian mirror phase]; on the other, the theory of the "mirror phase" is stretched and challenged by replaying its story of the psychoanalytic drama on the terrain of Blackness.' Manthia Diawara, 'The Nature of the Mother in *Dreaming Rivers*', *Third Text*, 13 (1990/91), 73-84 (p.75).

13. The name of the actress who played the part of the theatre attendant is lost information.

14. Sally Potter, interview: 02.11.92.

15. It is noteworthy that the sound track accompanying Bunuel's/Dali's film *Le Chien Andalou* (1929), consists of a montage of tango music and Wagner's Tristan and Iseult.

16. Catherine Clément, *Opera the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (London: Virago, 1989).

17. In a footnote added to *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1929, Freud stresses the mediatory and indeed constitutive role of dream-work, arguing that without

the operations of dream-work the unconsciously lodged latent form of the dream remains *outside* meaning. In their summation of Freud's outline of dream-work, Laplanche and Pontalis identify four interrelated functions of dreaming: condensation, displacement, representability and secondary revision. They argue that the dream takes on its distinctive form as a result of processes of condensation and displacement. Condensation creates intense images which hinder rather than assist the interpretative process. The function of displacement explains how dream thoughts are diverted along paths of loosely connected associations. Generally speaking, the metonymic properties of the latter function facilitates the representability of the former - in that the shifting currents of displacement gives rise to the visual "ideas" necessary for the work of condensation. In a seemingly regressive move the language of dreams requires that thoughts be represented pictorially - confirming that the function of dreaming is governed by an infantile, pre-verbal scene. However, the work of secondary revision attempts to rationalise and order these unintelligible visual scenes into an at least partially accessible account. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, PFL 4, trans. by James Strachey, ed. by Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp.649-650, n.2; Jean Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth, 1983), 82-83, 122-123, 125, 200, 412. See also Laplanche and Leclaire's meticulous analysis of Politzer's *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology*, in: Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire, 'The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study', *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 118-175.

18. M. Masud R. Khan, 'Secret as a Potential Space', *Between Reality and Fantasy*, ed. by Simon A. Grolnick, Leonard Barkin and Werner Muensterberger (Northvale: Aaronson, 1988), pp.259-270.

19. Writing from a similar vantage point, Simon Grolnick has suggested that the function of dreaming (like that of the transitional object) can play a role in the (re)-structuration of meaning systems surrounding the ossified secret. Simon A. Grolnick, 'Dreams and Dreaming as Transitional Phenomena', *Between Reality and Fantasy*, ed. by Simon A. Grolnick, Leonard Barkin and Werner Muensterberger (Northvale: Aaronson, 1988), pp.213-231.

20. Khan, 'Secret as a Potential Space', p.268.

21. The relation between the "good" dream and the creative use of the analytic space is discussed in: M. Masud R. Khan, *The Privacy of Self* (London: Hogarth, 1974), p.38.
22. Chapter Seven, p.279-283.
23. Chapter Three, pp.208-213.
24. Khan, 'The Privacy of Self', p.33.
25. Khan also reminds us that it was Freud who broke the polarised concept of the hypnotiser/hypnotised model of the analytic relation, arguing although the analyst is committed to guide the analysand, s/he is in the role of psychic awakener as opposed to hypnotiser. Khan, *The Privacy of Self* p.31.
26. Chapter Eight, pp.308-312.
27. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p.381.
28. Ibid., p.178.
29. Freud describes the passage from latent dream-thoughts to the recognisable manifest form of dream-content as a translation of one version of a theme into another version: '[...] two versions of the same subject matter in two different languages' - a translation or transcription which is deformed by the functions of displacement (metonymic displacements can link quite arbitrary signifiers) and condensation (can mask the metonymic passage staked out by displacement), thus hindering interpretation. However this does not imply that the latent dream material is a pre-existing "text". Indeed, in their essay 'The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study, Laplanche and Leclaire have remonstrated against such a reading of Freud's dream model, arguing the notion of an already formed layer of buried meanings overlooks Freud's emphasis on the *uncoded* character of the unconscious. They insist that although the unconscious articulations of latent dream content pre-exists the consciously remembered dream story - these articulations do not exist in the form of a coded text, but are more properly understood in terms of unthinkable, amorphous tensions for which there is no specific, or correct, or singular "translation". In other words, rather than conceptualising latent dream thoughts as an autonomous already existing story lying beneath the deformations in the dream, it is more helpful to consider the initially unspeakable content of the dream as an unformed material pressure subsumed beneath stories that are (always) in the making.

Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, p.235; Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire, 'The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study', *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 118-175 (p.123).

30. Appendix 9.

31. (i) **Siobhan Davies** trained at Hammersmith Art College and the London School of Contemporary Dance. In 1972 she joined Richard Alston and Dancers. Between 1974 and 1983 she worked as Associate Choreographer for the London Contemporary Dance Theatre and from then until the late 1980s she was the resident choreographer at LCDT. During this period she choreographed 38 major works performed mainly by LCDT but also by the Rambert Dance Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company, English National Ballet and her three companies: Siobhan Davies and Dancers, Second Stride (co-directed with Ian Spink with Richard Alston as guest choreographer) and Siobhan Davies Dance Company. Since 1989 she has worked as Associate Choreographer for Richard Alston's Rambert Dance Company.

(ii) **Maedée Duprès** is noted for her interdisciplinary work as dancer, musician, choreographer and performance artist. She trained at LSCD and belonged to Dance Organisation between 1974-1976. In 1973 she joined Richard Alston's Strider and became a member of the X6 Collective when it formed in 1976. In contrast to other X6 members, she continued to perform independently and worked with Rosemary Butcher and Richard Alston and Dancers in the late 1970s. Her work is noted for its improvisational character and its emphasis on audience participation. In the early 1980s she worked as a solo dancer, a teacher and danced with Siobhan Davies and Dancers and Second Stride. Since 1987 she has taught at Oberlin College and Regis College USA.

(iii) In the early 1980s **Juliet Fisher** danced in works produced by Richard Alston and Siobhan Davies for Second Stride. The most noted works are *The Field of Mustard* (1980) and *Silent Partners* (1984). The above information is extracted from: Stephanie Jordan, *Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain* (London: Dance Books, 1992), p.259.

32. See Joan Riviere's comments on the regenerative properties of dance in: Joan Riviere, 'Magical Regeneration by Dancing', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 11 (1932), p.340.

33. Monique Schneider, Christiane Olivier and Luce Irigaray argue, albeit from different vantage points, that Freud's model of oedipalisation impedes relations

between women. Monique Schneider, 'Interview', *Women Analyze Women: in France, England, and the United States*, ed. by Elaine Hoffman Baruch and Lucienne J. Serrano (Hemel Hemstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pp.167-203; Christiane Olivier, *Jocasta's Children: the Imprint of the Mother*, trans. by George Craig (London: Routledge, 1989); Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gilliam C. Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986).

34. Rose English, 'Alas Alack: The Representation of the Ballerina', *New Dance*, 15 (1980), 18-19 (pp.18-19).

35. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p.79.

36. I am referring to the performance of *Altered Tracks* at the Cooper Art Gallery, Barnsley, South Yorkshire in January, 1989. See: Anne Tallentire/Fiona Barber in: Sutapa Biswas, Sarah Edge, Claire Slattery, *Along the Lines of Resistance* (Cooper Art Gallery, Barnsley: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1988), pp.44-45.

37. Sally Banes, 'Happily Ever After: The Postmodern Fairytale and New Dance', quoted in: Sandra Kemp, 'Conflicting Choreographies': Derrida and Dance', *New Formations*, 16 (1992), 91-102 (p.94).

38. A close-up shot of the rehearsal suggests that the four characters are playing dominoes. Note the darts on the table - suggesting that the women are appropriating the leisure activities pursued by men [fig. 9.17].

39. Musée du Louvre, Paris,

40. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p.434.

41. Sigmund Freud, 'Family Romances', trans. by James Strachey, *On Sexuality*, PFL 7, ed. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp.219-225 (p.225).

42. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p.434.

43. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p.44.

44. See Chapter Five, pp.187-189.

45. The reserve army model of female labour is outlined in Veronica Beechey, 'Women and Production', *Feminism*

and *Materialism*, ed. by Annette Kuhn and Anne Marie Wolpe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). For a revised version of this model see: Irene Bruegel, 'Women as a Reserve Army of Labour: A Note on Recent British Experience', *Feminist Review*, 3 (1979), 12-23.

46. The analogy between the welder and *Rosie the Rivetter* is suggested by Sally Potter in: Pam Cook (Sally Potter Interview), 'British Independents: *The Gold Diggers, Framework*', 2 4 (1984), 12-30 (p.26).

47. *Ibid.*, p.26.

48. *Ibid.*, pp.25-26.

49. *Ibid.*, p.26.

50. Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh, 'Ethnocentrism and Socialist-Feminist Theory', *Feminist Review*, 20 (1985), 23-48 (pp.24, 25).

51. bell hooks, 'Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women', *Feminist Review*, 23 (1980), 125-138 (p.128).

52. Hazel Carby, 'White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood', *The Empire Strikes Back* (London: Hutchinson, 1986), pp.212-235.

53. Location: grounds of the University of Middlesex

54. The evocation Cocteau's magical horse from *La Belle et le Bête* could perhaps be read as a tribute to the discourse of homo-erotic love and the non-phallic model of human relationships in his films. See Susan Hayward's analysis of the challenging models of subjectivity in *La Belle et La Bête*. Susan Hayward, 'Gender Politics - Cocteau's Belle is not that Bête: Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête* (1946)', *French Film: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Routledge, 1990), 127-136.

55. Mary O'Brien argues that it is only from an understanding of the cultural processes underpinning human reproduction: 'that women can begin to understand the possibilities of their freedom'. Mary O'Brien, *The Politics of Reproduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p.8.

56. Julia Kristeva, 'Motherhood According to Bellini', *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and*

Literature, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.237-270 (pp.238-239); Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller, introduction by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp.27-28.

57. Swanson and Moy-Thomas, 'An Interview with Sally Potter', p.43.

58. Julia Kristeva, 'Woman can Never Be Defined', trans. by Marilyn A. August, *New French Feminism: An Anthology* ed. by Elaine Marks and Isabelle Courtivron (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp.137-141 (p.141).

59. The swimmers are Rose English [taking the place of Julie Christie] and Colette Laffont. Interview with Rose English: 09.10.93.

60. Cook (Potter interview), '*The Gold Diggers*', pp.25-26.

APPENDIX 1

THE GOLD DIGGERS (1983) DIRECTOR SALLY POTTER**CREDITS**

Cert U. Dist BFI. P.c BFI Production Board in association with Channel 4.
 Prod. supervisor Nita Amy, Donna Grey; prod. co-ordinator (Iceland) Kristin Olafsdóttir; location consultants (Iceland) Jon H Gardarsson, Thórvaldur Jensson.
 Asst. d Deborah Kingsland.
 Script Lindsay Cooper, Rose English, Sally Potter.
 Cinematographer and photographer Babette Mangolte; opticals Arthur Johns.
 Edit. Sally Potter. Asst. ed/a.d Rose English.
 Sets/props Kassandra Colson, Diana Davies; models Carole De Jong.
 Music by Lindsay Cooper. Music performed by Lindsay Cooper (piano, bassoon, saxophones); Georgie Born (guitar, bass guitar, cello); Marilyn Mazur (drums, percussion); Kate Westbrook (tenor horn); Eleanor Sloan (violin); Rosemary Nalden (viola); Linda Houghton (double bass). Lyrics Sally Potter. Songs *Seeing Red* performed by Sally Potter; *Bankers' Song* performed by Phil Minton; *Empire Song* performed by Colette Laffont.
 Choreo Sally Potter.
 Costume Rose English. Wardrobe (sup.) Helen Turner, (asst.) Dempsey Dunkley-Clarke. Make-up Michy Nakao.
 Titles Frameline, Aerial Image Opticals. Sound ed Joann Kaplan. Sd. rec Diana Ruston, Melanie Chait, (m.) Charles Gray, Juliet Bowen. Sd. re-rec Peter Maxwell. Sd. effects (rec.) Ted Swanscott, (artists) Beryl Mortimer, Joan Baker.

List of Players

Julie Christie	Ruby
Colette Laffont	Celeste
Hilary Westlake	Ruby's Mother
David Gale	Expert
Tom Osborn	Expert's Assistant
Jackie Lansley	Tap Dancer
George Yiasoumi	Stage Manager
Trevor Stuart	Man on Stage
Keith James	Office Supervisor
Siobhan Davies)	
Juliet Fisher)	Dancers in Dream
Maedée Duprès)	
Marilyn Mazur	Drummer

Georgie Born)
 Lol Coxhill)
 Dave Holland)
 Kassandra Colson)
 Vigdis Hrefna Pálsdóttir)
 Maria Pétursdóttir Ridgewell))
 Lucy Bennett)
 Phil Minton)
 Craig Givens)
 Steve Goodstone)
 Doug Bather)
 Fergus Early)
 Dennis Greenwood))
 Sheba)

Musicians in Ballroom
 Welder
 Young Ruby
 Men Following and
 Dancing with Ruby
 Horse

Rose Barber, Barbara Bermel, Ursula Bhut, Maxine
 Braham, Honora Burke, Karin Charlesworth, Lisa Clifton,
 Joy Constantinides, Susan Cowling, Sally Cranfield,
 Tracey Eddon, Sadie Eden, Joyce Freeman, Vanessa
 Haines, Maureen Hanscombe, Judith Herbert, Esther
 Hingle, Michèle John, Judith Knight, Bridget Lacey-
 Fisher, Bay Leahy, Buntly Mathias, Beth Millikin, Janice
 Murphy, Vera Murray, Judith Nelmes, Marie Shardlow,
 Suzanne Skey, Corinne Skinner-Carter, Lorraine Smith,
 Joan Thompson, Nicola Wade.

Mark Allington, Peter Cross, Frank Dowling, Noel
 Drennan, Simon English, George Hunt, Alf Hurley, Brian
 Johnston, Johnny Maxim, Dugal Müller, Ralph Oswick,
 Malcolm Ross, Graham Skidmore, Arthur Sweet, Ray Tanva,
 Colin Thomas, Peter Vetter, Sean Walsh, Barry
 Wilkinson, Tommy Winward.

Björn Björnsson, Snórri Borgarsson, Thorvaldur
 Fridriksson, Hjalti Gislason, Petur Gudmundsson, Gudjon
 Gudlaugsson, Steingrímure Gudmundsson, Oskar
 Halldorsson, Sveinbjoren Halldorsson, Hreinn Jonsson,
 Ingi Thor Olafsson, Arni Oskarsson, Volungur Oskarsson,
 Sigurdua Thorisson, Björn Torfe, Torfi H Tulinus.

Film stock Ilford fine grain, low speed and Kodak XX

8022ft. 89 minutes.

APPENDIX 2

**THE GOLD DIGGERS AND FELLOW TRAVELLERS,
NATIONAL FILM THEATRE, MAY 1984**

The twenty-five films in the season were chosen by Sally Potter and accompanied by an exhibition in the National Film Theatre Foyer of a selection of collages produced during the preproduction of *The Gold Diggers* juxtaposed with frames from the film. As Jonathan Rosenbaum has observed, the selection of films is worth citing in full as it reveals certain helpful cross references: *The Gold Rush*; *Way East*; *Kühle Wampe*; *Doctor Zhivago*; *The Lady Vanishes*; *Queen Christina*; *La Souriante Madame Beudet*; *Rat Life and Diet America*; *Alexander Nevsky*; *The Sargossa Manuscript*; *The Red Shoes*; *Dance Girl Dance*; *Darling*; *Lola Montes*; *Study in Choreography for the Camera*; *The Trial*; *Persona*; *The Gold Diggers of 1933*; *Une Femme et Une Femme*; *Madame de ...*; *Julia*; *The Powers of Emotion*; *The State of Things*. Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'The Gold Diggers', *Camera Obscura*, 12 (1984), 127-129 (p.128).

APPENDIX 3

JULIE CHRISTIE: FILMOGRAPHY

Between 1962 and 1983 Julie Christie starred in the following films:

The Fast Lady (1962)
The State of Things (1963)
Billy Liar (1963)
Darling (1965)
Dr Zhivago (1965)
Tonite let's all Make Love in London (1967)
Far for the Madding Crowd (1967)
Petulia (1968)
In Search of Gregory (1969)
Go-Between (1971)
McCabe and Mrs Miller (1971)
Don't Look Now (1973)
Shampoo (1975)
Nashville (1975)
Demon Seed (1977)
Heaven can Wait (1978)
Sophie et le Capitaine (1978)
Memoirs of a Survivor (1981)
Return of the Soldier (1982)
Heat and Dust (1982)
40e Rugissants (1982)
The Gold Diggers (1983)

APPENDIX 4

SALLY POTTER

Films

- 1969 *Jerk*, 8mm., b/w.
 1970 *Play* (double screen), 16mm., b/w.
 1972 *Hors d'Oeuvre*, 16mm., b/w.
 1972 *The Building* (multiple screen), 16mm., b/w.
 1979 *Thriller*, 35 min., 16mm., b/w., p. Arts Council
 1983 *The Gold Diggers*, 90 min., 35mm., b/w., p.
 BFI/Channel 4
 1986 *The London Story*, 15 min., 35mm., colour., p.
 BFI/Film
 Four International.
 1993 *Orlando*, 93 min., colour, p. Adventure Pictures
 1994 In Production: *In the Beginning*, 35mm., script
 Sally Potter

Television

- 1986 *Tears, Fears and Rage*, 1x30 min. Series about
 emotion. P. Triple Vision for Channel Four.
 1988 *I am an Ox, I am a Horse, I am a Man, I am a
 Woman*, 60 min. documentary history of Soviet
 Union through its images of women in cinema. 60
 min. P. Triple Vision for Channel Four

Dance

- 1971-4 Trained London School of Contemporary Dance
 1972-3 Joined Strider as founder member with Richard
 Alston, Siobhan Davies and Dennis Greenwood
 1974 Formed Limited Dance Company with Jacky Lansley
 1970s Choreographed credits include: *Leave; Wings;
 Parry Riposte; Aida; Who is Sylvia; Hurricane;
 Combines*

Theatre/Performance

- 1971-2 Member of Group Events co-op d. Tom Osborne
 1970s Solo shows and collaborative large scale
 theatrical performances include:
 1975 *Wheat* with Dennis Greenwood
 1975 *Death and the Maiden* with Rose English and
 Jacky Lansley
 1976 *Rabies* with Rose English and Jacky Lansley
Berlin with Rose English
 1977 *Mounting* with Rose English and Jacky Lansley

Music

- 1978 onwards lyricist and singer in:
FIG; The Marx Brothers; The Film Music
Orchestra and Oh Moscow. *Oh Moscow* is also a
song cycle with music by Lindsay Cooper,
performed in Russia, Western Europe, Canada and
USA
- 1992 Score for *Orlando* co-composed with David Morton

APPENDIX 5

ROSE ENGLISH

Performances

- 1974 *The Boy Baby ... A mere Glimpse*, Battersea Arts Centre
- 1975 *Quadrill*, Southampton Art Festival
 _____ *Park Cafeteria*, Serpentine Gallery, London
 _____ *Death of a Maiden* (in collaboration with Sally Potter and Jacky Lansley), Birmingham Performance Art Festival and De Lantaren, Rotterdam
- 1976 *Berlin* (in collaboration with Sally Potter), Sobell Sports Centre Ice Rink, Swiss Cottage Swimming Baths and 41 Mornington Terrace, NW1
 _____ *Rabies* (in collaboration with Sally Potter and Jacky Lansley), Roundhouse Theatre, London
- 1978 *Women Dancing* (in collaboration with Jacky Lansley), Acme Gallery, London
- 1979 *Juliet and Juliet - A Duet, Romeo and Romeo - A Duet* (in collaboration with Jacky Lansley), X6 Dance Space, Drill Hall Theatre, London
- 1981 *Adventure or Revenge*, Franklin Furnace, New York and A Space, Toronto
- 1983 *Plato's Chair* presented throughout Canada
- 1985 *Beloved*, Drill Hall Theatre, London; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; De Lantaren, Rotterdam; Edinburgh Festival; Bush Theatre and the Tate Gallery London
- 1986 *Thee Thy Thou Thine* toured Britain, ICA and Bloomsbury Theatres
- 1987 *Moses*, Drill Hall Theatre, London
- 1988 *Walks on Water*, Hackney Empire Theatre, London
- 1991 *The Double Wedding*, Royal Court Theatre, London
- 1992 *My Mathematics*, Lincoln Center, New York; Queen Elizabeth Hall and Sadlers Wells Theatre, London

Theatre

Appearances in:

- 1989 *As You Like It*, Old Vic, d. Tim Albery
 _____ *A Flea in Her Ear*, Old Vic, d. Richard Jones
 _____ *Die Fledermaus*, (Champagne) ENO, d. Richard Jones

Films and Television

Co-wrote and designed:

- 1983 *The Gold Diggers*, d. Sally Potter

Appeared in:

- 1979 *Thriller*, d. Sally Potter
- 1988 *Burning Ambition*, d. Roger Bamford, p. George Faber for BBC with Théâtre de Complicité

- 1989 *The Broochpin and the Sinful Clasp*, d. Joanna Woodward, p. by NFTS
1990 *The Witches*, d. Nic Roeg, p. Mark Shivas

Awards

- 1988 *Time Out/London Dance and Performance Award*

Publications

- 1977 Audio Arts tape slide sequence and booklet:
Mounting, written with Jacky Lansley and Sally Potter (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art)
1992 *Walks on Water*, ed. Deborah Levy (London: Methuen New Theatre Scripts)

APPENDIX 6

LINDSAY COOPER

Musician and Composer
 Bassoon, Sopranino and Alto Saxophones

Rock Groups

1974-1978 Henry Cow
 1982-1985 David Thomas and the Pedestrians

Jazz and Improvised Music

1978-1982 FIG, Feminist Improvisation Group
 1979-1983 Mike Westbrook Orchestra
 1981-1984 Maarten Altena Octet
 1984-1988 Westbrook Rossini
 1988-1989 Concerts and two radio cabarets (BBC) with
 Robyn Archer
 1989-1991 Duo with Ulrike Haage

Current: Duo with Maggie Nicols and Trio with Trabant a
 Roma [with Alfred 23 Harth and Phil Minton]
 Regular appearances throughout Europe and in New York
 with various improvisers
 Solo concerts in London, France, Germany, Switzerland,
 Australia

Composer/Bandleader

1984-1986 The Lindsay Cooper Film Music Group.
 Festival appearances including: Taktlos (Zürich),
 Moers, Le Mans and the Festival of Political Song
 (East Berlin)
 1987 *Oh Moscow*, premiered at Zürich Jazz Festival,
 subsequently performed at various venues in
 Germany, Italy, Finland, Canada and Moscow
 1991 *Sahara Dust*, premiered at the Taktlos Festival
 (Zurich) and subsequently performed at the Alte
 Oper, Frankfurt

Compositions 1979 score for *Song of the Shirt* d. Susan Clayton
 1983 Score for Sally Potter's film *The Gold Diggers*
 1987 *Till Midnight* for Georg Kaiser
 1989 Dance scores for MacLennan Dance and Company's
Edge
 1984-1986 Two albums of songs for the group News From
 Babel

- 1990 Arranger/Musical Director of Melbourne/Sydney Production of *Cafe Fledermaus* by Robyn Archer
- 1991 *The Road is Wider than Long* for Lontano, soloists Phil Minton and Adjoa Andoh
- 1992 Score for the silent movie *The Rat* (1925), d. Graham Cutts
- 1992 *Concerto for Sopranino Saxophone and Strings*, premiered by the Women's Orchestra with Lindsay Cooper as soloist
- 1992 *Songs for Bassoon and Orchestra*, premiered by l'Orchestra del Teatro Communale, Bologna with Lindsay Cooper as soloist

Discs

- 1980 *Rags*
- 1983 *The Gold Diggers*
- 1986 *Music for Other Occasions*
- 1991 *An Angel on the Bridge*
- 1991 *Schrödinger's Cat*
- 1991 *Oh Moscow*
- 1992 *Sahara Dust*
- 1992 *Music for Other Occasions*, re-released with extra tracks

Lindsay Cooper with:

- 1984 *News from Babel: Work Resumed on the Tower*
- 1984 *Maggie Nicols and Joelle Leandre, Live at the Bastille*
- 1986 *News from Babel: Letters Home*
- 1986 *David Thomas and the Pedestrians: More Places for Ever*
- 1987 *Westbrook Rossini: Westbrook Rossini*
- 1992 *Lontano: British Women Composers (volume 1)*

APPENDIX 7

JACKY LANSLEY

- 1973 Founder member of *Strider*
- 1974 Founded *Limited Dance Company* with Sally Potter
 — Production and teaching projects including a
 — residency with Richard de Marco, Edinburgh Arts
 — 74 Summer School.
- 1975-1976 Residencies in the United States including:
 — Rhode Island Art Institute; Kansas City Art
 — Institute; Minneapolis College of Art; Chicago
 — Art Institute
 — Works commissioned by: the Serpentine Gallery,
 — London; The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; The
 — Institute of Contemporary Art, London; The Oval
 — House Theatre, London; the Lanteren Theatre,
 — Rotterdam
 — Arts Council Bursary
- 1976-1980 Founder member of *X6 Dance Space*
 — Founder editor of and contributor to *New Dance*
 — magazine
 — Numerous solo and collaborative productions with
 — members of *X6 Dance Space*
 — Arts Council bursary
 — Founder member of Association of Dance and Mime
 — Artists (ADMA)
 — Director of Helen Jives Theatre Company.
 — Productions include: *The Fast Supper, Bag Wash,*
 — *Edge City*

Commisioned Choreographed/Devised Work, 1980-1994

- Impersonations* for Spiral Dance
Speaking Parts for Extemporary Dance
Mirror, Mirror on the Wall for London School of
 Contemporary Dance (LSCD)
The Queue for English New Dance Theatre (ENDT)
- 1987-1989 Director of ENDT

Theatre, 1980-1994

- For Giselle Enterprises Theatre Company:
- 1981 *I, Giselle*
 1982 *The Impersonators*
 1985 *The Small Chair*
 1986 *A Child's Play*
 1987 *The Breath of Kings*
 1991 *Rules of the Game* (co-written with Terry Diab)

For the Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre Company (as movement director):

1987 *A Doll's House*

1990 *The Crucible*

1990 *The Tempest*

For the Royal Court Theatre (movement director):

1984 *Lucky Chance*

For the Liverpool Playhouse (movement director):

1985 *Miss Julie*

1985 *Beauty and the Beast* (also for Old Vic, London)

For L'Odeon, Paris and the Almeida Theatre, London (movement director):

1985 *The Possessed* (filmed for Channel Four)

For the Bristol Old VIC (director)

1991-1992 *Hiawatha*

Film, 1980-1994

1983 Tap dancer in *The Gold Diggers*, d. Sally Potter

1986 Jack Winger in *London Story*, d. Sally Potter

1992 Choreographer and rehearsal director for *Orlando*
d. Sally Potter

Teaching Residencies and Visiting Lecturer:

Dartington College of Arts

Middlesex University

London School of Contemporary Dance

De Montford University

Northumbria University

Hallam University

English New Dance Theatre

Women's Playhouse Trust

Soho Laundry

Giselle Enterprises

- d. Richard Foreman
 Lenz, d. JoAnne Akailitis
 1988 *The Road to Damascus (Life of St Paul of Tarse)*,
 d. Ludovic Segarra
 1991 *My Crazy Life*, d. Jean Pierre Gorin

Film Documentation

- 1976 Robert Rauschenberg exhibition on show at the
 Smithsonian Institute, Washington
 1978 Robert Rauschenberg exhibition (*Works from
 Captiva*), Vancouver, Canada

Video Documentation

- 1985 *The Making of the Lateral Pass*, choreography
 Trisha Brown, music Peter Zummo, sets Nancy
 Graces, Minneapolis

Collections

- What Maisie Knew*
 Beaubourg Museum, Paris, France
 New York Public Library, Donnell Branch, NYNY,
 USA
 National Library of Australia, Canberra

- The Camera: Je*
 Museum of Modern Art, NYNY, USA
 Insitute National de l'Audio Visuel, Paris,
 France

- The Cold Eye*
 Berlin Cinemathique, Berlin, West Germany
 Bruxelles Royal Cinemathique, Bruxelles, Belgium

APPENDIX 9

MARILYN MAZUR

Percussion player of drums, hand-drums, gongs, bells and other assorted instruments

- 1970-1975 Worked and toured with Danish Creative Dance Theatre, billed together with Abdullah Ibrahim
- 1973 Founder member of all women band Zirenes
- 1977 Worked as percussion player and singer in various groups
- _____ Percussionist and composer for Six Winds with Alex Riel
- _____ Director of the all women music/theatre group Primi Band
- _____ Attended Royal Danish Conservatory of Music. Degree in Percussion
- 1983 Received the Ben Webster Award
- _____ Founded a jazz quartet with saxophonist Uffe Markussen
- 1985-1989 Toured with Miles Davies
- 1986 Toured with Gil Evans Orch
- 1988 Worked with Swiss harp player Andreas Vollenweider
- 1989 Began working with the seven piece orchestra Future Song
- _____ Composed *City Dance* for a 40 piece orchestra at the Copenhagen Jazz Festival
- _____ Participated in the Mathias Ruegg's Vienna Art Special
- _____ Received Jasa Prize (Danish music critics award)
- _____ Featured in Downbeat music journal
- 1990-1994 Performed with saxophonist Hans Ulrike, keyboard player Jon Balke and Sedish group Rena Rama, American singer Jeanne Lee, German bass player Peter Kowald. Worked with Palle Mikkelborg's project *Journey To...* and toured regularly with the Jan Garbarek Group.
- 1994 Founder member of nine piece ensemble Pulse Unit

Albums

- 1977 *Primi* [Rosen] with Primi Band
- 1983 *MM4* [Rosen] with Uffe Markussen
- 1984 *New Jungle Orchestra* [Steeplechase] P Dorge
- 1985 Participated in Palle Mikkelborg's *Aura* [CBS] with Miles Davis Band
- 1986 *Ocean Fables* [Stunts] with Kim Kristensen

- 1986 *Rhythm-a-ning* [Emarcy] with Gil Evans Orch and
Laurent Cugny
- 1988 *Dancing with Lions* [CBS] with Andreas
Vollenweider
- 1990 *Arner* [Olufsen] with Kim Kristensen
- 1990 *Rena Rama with Marilyn Mazur* [Dragon]

APPENDIX 10

**PAINTINGS IN THE AMBULATORY OF THE ROYAL EXCHANGE,
LONDON, EC3V 3LL**

1. Frederic Leighton, P.R.A., *Phoenicians trading with the early Britons on the Coast of Cornwall* (1895)
2. R. Horwitz, *Nathan Mayer Rothschild* (c.1899)
3. Frank O. Salisbury, *Alfred the Great repairing the walls of the City of London* (1912)
4. J. Seymour Lucas, R.A., *William the Conqueror granting a Charter to the Citizens of London* (1895)
5. E. Patry, R.B.A., *Anthony Gibbs* (c.1905)
6. C. Goldsborough Anderson, *William II building the Tower of London* (1911)
7. Lucy Kemp-Welch, *Women's work in the Great War, 1914-1918* (1922)
8. Ernest Normand, *King John sealing Magna Charta* (1900)
9. Frank O. Salisbury, *Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary visiting the Battle Districts in France, 1917* (1917)
10. Frank O. Salisbury, *National Peace Thanksgiving Service on the Steps of St Paul's Cathedral, July 6th, 1919* (1919)
11. A. Chevalier Taylor, *Sir Henry Picard, Master of the Vintners' Company, entertaining the Kings of England, France, Scotland, Denmark and Cyprus* (1903)
12. A.R. Hayward, *Sir John Houblon* (c.1890)
13. Stanhope A. Forbes, R.A., *Destruction of the second Royal Exchange in 1838* (1920)
14. Henrietta Rae, *Sir Richard Whittington dispensing his Charities* (1900)
15. George Harcourt, A.R.A., *Pascoe Grenfell* (1926)
16. E.A. Cox, R.B.A., *Philip the Good presenting the*

Charter to the Merchant Adventurers (1916)

17. J.H. Amschewitz, *Henry VI Battle of Barnet, 1471. The Trained Bands marching to the support of Edward IV (1911)*
18. E. Patry, R.B.A., *Sir Francis Baring, Bart*
19. W.L. Wyllie, R.A., *Blocking of Zeebrugge Waterway, St. George's Day, 23rd April, 1918 (1920)*
20. E.A. Abbey, R.A., *Reconciliation of the Skinners' and Merchant Taylors' Companies by Lord Mayor Billesden, 1484*
21. E. Patry, R.B.A., *Sir Richard Glyn, Bart*
22. Sigismund Goetze, *The Crown offered to Richard III at Baynard's Castle (1898)*
23. W.F. Yeames, R.A., *The Foundation of St. Paul's School, 1509 (1905)*
24. Ernest Crofts, R.A., *The Opening of the first Royal Exchange by Queen Elizabeth, 23rd January, 1571 (1899)*
25. S.J. Solomon, A.R.A., *Charles I demanding the Five Members at the Guildhall, 1642 (1897)*
26. Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A., *The Great Fire of London, 1666 (1899)*
27. George Harcourt, A.R.A., *Founding of the Bank of England, 27th July 1694 (1904)*
28. Madame H. Ruelle, *John Julius Angerstein and Mrs Angerstein*
29. Andrew C. Gow, R.A., *Nelson leaving Portsmouth, 18th May, 1803, to join H.M.S. Victory (1903)*
30. Robert W. Macbeth, A.R.A., *Opening of the Royal Exchange by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, 28th October, 1844 (1895)*
31. George Harcourt, A.R.A., *Abel Smith (c.1820)*
32. Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A., *Modern Commerce (1906)*

FILMOGRAPHY

Amy (1980), d. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen
 April in Paris (1952), d. David Butler
 Baby Blues Breakdown (1978), BBC doc. d. Ruth Jackson
 La Belle et la Bête (1946), d. Jean Cocteau-
 Battleship Potemkin (1925), d. Sergei Eisenstein
 Billy Liar (1963), d. John Schlesinger
 Birth of a Nation (1915), d. D.W. Griffiths
 Bladerunner (1982), d. Ridley Scott
 Building (1972), d. Sally Potter
 The Camera: Je (1977), d. Babette Mangolte
 Céline et Julie vent en bateau (1973), d. J. Rivette
 Un Chien Andalou (1929), d. L. Buñuel and S. Dali
 Christopher Strong (1933), d. Dorothy Arzner
 Citizen Kane (1941), d. Orson Welles
 Dance, Girl, Dance (1946), d. Dorothy Arzner
 Darling (1965), d. John Schlesinger
 Daughter Rite (1978), d. Michelle Citron
 Deux Foix (1970), d. Jackie Raynal
 Don't Look Now (1973), d. Nicolas Roeg
 Double Indemnity (1944), d. Billy Wilder
 Dr Zhivago (1965), d. David Lean
 The Dream that Money can Buy (1947), d. Hans Richter
 Dreaming Rivers (1988) d. Martina Attille
 Les Enfant du Paradis (1943 and 1945), d. Marcel Carné
 Far from the Madding Crowd (1967), d. John Schlesinger
 Film about a woman who ... (1974), d. Yvonne Rainer
 Gold Diggers of 1933 (1933), d. Mervyn Le Roy
 Gone with the Wind (1939), d. Victor Fleming
 Her Life in His Hands (1980, YTV doc. d. I. Cockcroft
 Hors d'Oeuvre (1972), d. Sally Potter
 Hotel Montgomery (1973), d. Chantal Akerman
 Imitation of Life (1959), d. Douglas Sirk
 India Song (1975), d. Marguerite Duras
 Jobs for the Girls (1979), d. Sheffield Film Coop
 Last Year in Marienbad (1961), d. Alain Resnais
 Lives of Performers (1972), d. Yvonne Rainer
 Lizzie (1957), Hugo Haas
 London Story (1986), d. Sally Potter
 Marnie (1966), d. Alfred Hitchcock
 Metropolis (1926), d. Fritz Lang
 News from home (1976), d. Chantal Akerman
 Now Voyager (1942), d. Irving Rapper
 Orlando (1993), d. Sally Potter
 Orphée (1949), d. Jean Cocteau
 Perfect Image (1988), Maureen Blackwood
 Play (1970), d. Sally Potter
 Privilege (1992), d. Yvonne Rainer

Psycho (1960), d. Alfred Hitchcock
Ray's Heterosexual Dance Hall (1991), d. Bryan Gordon
The Red Shoes (1948), d. M. Powell, Emeric Pressburger
Reassemblage (1983) Trinh T. Minh-ha
Rebecca (1940), d. Alfred Hichcock
The Revolt of Mamie Stoker (1956), d. Raoul Walsh
Riddles of the Sphinx (1977), d. Mulvey/Wollen
Rosie the Rivetter (1980), d. Connie Fields
The Sky on Location (1982), d. Babette Mangolte
Son of a Sheik (1926), d. George Fitzmaurice
La Souriant Madame Beudet (1923), d. Germaine Dulac
Spellbound (1945), d. Alfred Hitchcock
Stella Dallas (1937) King Vidor
The Three Faces of Eve (1957), d. Nunally Johnson
Thriller (1979), d. Sally Potter
Touch of Evil 1958), d. Orson Welles
Two or Three Things I Know About Her (1966), d. Godard
Vagabond (1985), d. Agnes Varda
Vent d'Este (1970), d. Jean-Luc Godard
What Maisie Knew (1975), d. Babette Mangolte
The Wicked Lady (1945), d. Leslie Gordon
The Wind (1927), d. Victor Sjostrom
A Woman's Face (1926), d. George Cukor
Women in Prison (1971), BBC doc. d. Jenny Barraclough
Women in Prison (1965), d. Elaine Grand
Wuthering Heights (1937), d. William Wyler

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Bellour, R., 'The Unattainable Text', *Screen*, 16, 3 (1975), 19-27

Bellour, R., 'Hitchcock, The Enunciator', *Camera Obscura*, 2 (Fall, 1977), 69-94

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