INTRODUCTION

Gendering 'Generation Pepsi'

'Ce film pourrait s'appeler…
les enfants de Marx et de Coca-Cola.'

'This film could have been called …
The children of Marx and Coca-Cola.'

This phrase, originally appearing in Jean-Luc Godard's 1966 *Masculin féminin*, became famous not only as an alternative title for the film but also as an aphorism for the prevailing moods of youth culture in 1960s Western Europe. The statement appears towards the end of the film, as one of the typically Godardian intertitles that occur abruptly and unpredictably throughout its duration, disrupting languid sequences of the day-to-day experiences of young Parisians and their meandering flirtations with sexual and political maturity. In the preceding scene, two of the film's secondary characters, Catherine and Robert, talk in a kitchen. More monologue than dialogue, the conversation is dominated by Robert – a vociferous armchair socialist – who oscillates between prying into Catherine's sex life and sermonizing about revolution, labour and the completion of activities, while in back of shot, Catherine quietly completes the washing up.

Godard's film is led by a cast of baffled youth. Along with Robert, the film's protagonist, Paul, talks earnestly about workers' rights, but forgets ongoing strikes; endlessly discusses sex, but shrinks bashfully from the sight of his own semi-naked body; and in his day job as a survey taker, insistently directs at women questions that he is himself hopelessly unprepared to answer. Paul's naivety is often comical, but the interest of Godard's collocation of Marx and Coca-Cola persists in its concise expression of the noise, excitement and contradiction of a generation navigating multiple deluges of change from cultural, political, economic and technological fronts. On the one hand, 'the children of Marx' seemed to indicate the growing political consciousness of the post-war generation and its palpable appetite for social change and new ideas (or at least the expression of new ideas), erupting in the short-lived but seismic student protests of May 1968. On the other, 'the children of Coca-Cola' became symbolic of a very different type of revolution, taking place on the cultural-

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commercial frontier of everyday life. The juggernaut soda brand here represented the increasing influence on Western European youth of Americanization, globalized mass production, popular culture and hyper-commercialism, with its feverish collage of bright advertisements and branded decadence. As is further suggested by the two alternative titles of Godard's film, sexuality and youth permeate the entire equation. After all, though the student movements of 1968 burgeoned to address myriad societal discontents, the tinderbox issue in France was the repression of sexuality through gender segregation in university dormitories. The imaginaries of this decade, moreover, have often been strikingly Oedipal in tone; in reflections on the period in France and Britain, its youth-driven dissent has frequently been characterized as a series of revolts against the father figures of the previous generation, both institutionally – personified in leaders such as General de Gaulle and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan – and culturally, as in Truffaut's famously scathing critique of the 'cinéma de papa' ('dad cinema'). The idea of 'children', therefore, is as significant as that of Marx or Coca-Cola.

Godard's phrase maintains in its construction a more or less triadic understanding of the two-parent nuclear family. However, if the mid-sixties generation have as their parents Karl Marx and Coca-Cola™, then they surely emerge from an immaculate conception. Marx may be a chosen, intellectual father, but the generation is, apparently, motherless. If Coca-Cola was thought to occupy this position, then it is (mass) reproduction itself, not a thinking being, that is at stake: the function of motherhood at its most mechanical level, but absolutely no mothering subject. After all, women in general occupy quite a different space to men within this construction. While the young sons of Marx and Coca-Cola vacillate between solicitous subject positions as militants or consumers, the women of this generation are confronted not only with their own relationship to political agency and consumer subjectivities, but by a mass culture that positions them and their bodies *as* commodity forms. Such duality is reflected in *Masculin féminin* in particular through Madeleine, Paul's love interest, who is developing a promising career as a pop singer and who, shortly after the intertitles meditating on the 'children of Marx and Coca-Cola', becomes iconographically associated with a series of American billboards promoting the 'Pepsi generation'.

Alongside this conflicted relationship to a modern mass culture of images, advertisement and programmed desire, furthermore, the women in the film also reflect dynamic shifts in the construction of female sexuality in the 1960s. Increasingly liberalized sex discourses were accompanied in this period by the development of oral and other forms of contraceptives and by high-profile feminist campaigns in Britain and France demanding greater reproductive autonomy, including adequate sex education and decriminalized abortion. While the

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fixation of young men like Paul and Robert on their sexuality is largely a matter of expression and personal pleasure, that is, for the women it is not only a question of eroticism, but also a navigation of their relationship to motherhood and reproduction in its biological and social forms. However, like the apparent absence of mothers from the political imagination of this revolutionary youth, these gendered and intergenerational dynamics have often been forgotten in considerations of the youth-oriented and New Wave French and English cinemas of this period. Taking its cue from Godard, therefore, this book is also interested in the fissional collision of politics, culture, sexuality and their representation in the young cinemas of the 1960s in England and France. Its focus, however, is on the maligned mothers and daughters on the fringes of Godard's para-holy trinity, shaped not only by Marx and Coca-Cola, but by Pepsi and the pill.

'Think of the Children!': Theorizing the Mothering Subject and the Rhetoric of the Child

In order to appreciate the extent to which the figure of the mother has been subject to multiple cultural erasures, it is necessary to outline some key critical mappings of the mother (or her absence) that inform the theoretical direction of this book. It is a leading contention of *Pepsi and the Pill* that the mother is a figure both ubiquitous and elusive in French and English cinema. Mothers are everywhere in theoretical, cultural, psychological and artistic narratives of the self, yet rarely *as* a self. Like an unconscious, they are beneath the surface, haunting other characters' stories and psyches but without speaking audibly. The mother is both omnipresent and radically absent; the image of the mother, as a relational object and cultural symbol, is deeply embedded across many of the film narratives I discuss, yet the mothering subject breaks through rarely, and often only with a degree of radical intervention. Laura Mulvey famously argues in her seminal essay on the male gaze that the aesthetic and narrative mechanics of classical Hollywood cinema are paradigmatically organized to identify with the male protagonist as a thinking, desiring agent – 'the man's role as the active one of advancing the story, making things happen' – and to objectify the female body – 'women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*' – erecting all manner of obstacles to her interiority.[1] Since the late 1950s, I suggest, popular Western film movements have also tended towards conspiring on the side of youth. Especially in the intensely personal young European cinemas of the 1960s, the typical subject of identification is the child, adolescent or young adult, and is usually male.

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Mothers and motherhood, therefore, become significant predominantly as *functions* of someone else's subjectivity, psychologically indispensable as objects and Others, but widely absent from cultural representation as selves.

There are similarities herein between the objectification of the (m)Other and the ways in which psychoanalytic feminist theorists have identified the objectification of women and femininity in patriarchal discourse in general. Certainly, these issues cannot always be neatly separated; patriarchal ideologies of motherhood are frequently deployed in ways that suppress, erase or demonize the subjectivities of *all* women, regardless of whether or not they would actually consider themselves mothers, or even potential mothers. Thus, even an active decision not to have a child does not constitute an exemption from maternal oppression; women who participate in social or biological mothering and child-free women are all, in different ways, subject to discursive gendered policing *by way of* a maternal idealism that positions the passive, self-less imago of the 'good mother' as the only acceptable telos of feminine identities. As part of a radically liberating feminist politics, therefore, specific attention to discourses and subjectivities of mothering becomes urgent. The point I wish to make here is that mothers – both the Mother as an ideal and mothering subjects as complex, living people – are exposed to particularly intense forms of objectification that are conditioned by the ideological relationship to the Child. Not just the man, but the male child has become the paradigmatic subject and beneficiary of patriarchy, and a highly emotive one at that; by counterweighting contrast, the mother is confined within a double bind of objectification, as both that child's primary object of desire and the (ideally) nurturing environment in which he develops.

The construction of child-as-subject and mother-as-object has significant theoretical resonances. The reduction of the mother to a remote psychic force (affect*ing*, but not affect*ed*) is perhaps shaped most clearly in Freudian psychoanalysis, in which the mother becomes persistently an inhuman and phantasmatic cipher to the inner worlds of her children, while her own interiority is at best a gaping sign of dread. Throughout psychoanalytic theories of the self, the mother has become a relational object par excellence, the measure of Otherness against which the child-citizen defines itself as a coherent cultural subject.[2] Throughout the majority of these theories of subject development and the vast universe of imaginative representations in film and literature that both inform and reproduce them, a mother is not really a person, she is something that *happens to* a person. The child is entitled to the 'authentic' experience and expression of culture, while the mother is expected – and with remarkably little gratitude – to willingly relinquish her subjectivity, her language and her specific relationships in order that the sovereign child might have his in abundance, according to the laws of patriarchal bequest. Reflecting intimately on her own

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experiences of maternal ambivalence, Adrienne Rich expresses poignantly the state of coercive non-being produced by patriarchal psychological discourses of motherhood:

> Most of the literature of infant care and psychology has assumed that the process toward individuation is essentially the *child's* drama, played out and against and with a parent or parents who are, for better or worse, givens. Nothing could have prepared me for the realization that I *was* a mother, one of those givens, when I knew I was still in a state of uncreation myself.[3]

Psychoanalytic tradition constructs the mother as a vital presence in the individual's early, pre-linguistic stages of development, throughout which Freud suggests the infant often experiences the mother as part of itself, and subsequently as a prominent figure in and of the unconscious. Subversively, therefore, rather than as *containing* the child, the mother is symbolized as contained *within* the child. In order to participate satisfyingly in (patriarchal) culture, furthermore, it becomes necessary for the subject to separate from and renounce the 'actual' mother. This model of the self paradigmatically excludes a self-determining maternal voice. It is worth clarifying here, however, that not all feminists see Freudian psychoanalytic traditions as actively complicit in this suppression of women as mothers. Juliet Mitchell in particular has written a detailed and compelling defence of Freud against such claims. She argues that:

> The greater part of the feminist movement has identified Freud as the enemy. It is held that psychoanalysis claims women are inferior and that they can achieve true femininity only as wives and mothers. Psychoanalysis is seen as a justification for the status-quo, bourgeois and patriarchal, and Freud in his own person exemplifies these qualities. I would agree that popularized Freudianism must answer to this description; but the argument of [Mitchell's] book is that a rejection of psychoanalysis and of Freud's works is fatal for feminism. … If we are interested in understanding and challenging the oppression of women, we cannot afford to neglect it.[4]

She argues instead that feminist thinkers should read Freud's work *descriptively*, thereby tapping into its considerable potential as a diagnostic toolkit that can help to analyse the highly cultural – rather than 'natural' – positions of women and mothers within the careful and intricate systemic oppressions of patriarchy. She argues that this 'oppression has not been trivial or historically transitory – to maintain itself so effectively it courses through the mental and emotional bloodstream. To think that this should not be so does not necessitate pretending it is already not so. On the contrary, once again we need pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.'[5] Rather than as an inevitable or desirable situation, Mitchell's symptomatic rereading of Freud sees the installation of Oedipus as the pre-eminent and universal model for subjective social

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development as a 'massive defeat'[6] for women. The relegation of the mother to Otherness and objecthood is therefore not a state of (patriarchal) affairs that must be accepted with motherly good nature – indeed, it should be railed against – but it must be understood.

The sovereignty of the child-as-subject is further elucidated through Lee Edelman's work on the rhetorical invocation of the Child in political discourse. Proposing a distinction between the child (a historical and material individual) and the Child (a phantasmatic and ideological construct), Edelman argues that the Child is seen in Western societies as the ideal model of citizenship, an articulation in the imaginary of the perfected collective and individual self: 'That figural Child alone embodies the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation's good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights "real" citizens are allowed'.[7] This potential omnipotence, needless to say, is always only imminent – 'the Child has come to embody for us the telos of the social order and come to be seen as the one for whom that order is held in perpetual trust'[8] – but its value, and that of the Child, are actively realized in the present. In Edelman's view, this imagined Child is the logic that subtends all political rhetoric. In order to be thinkable (let alone persuasive), any and all public action must be undertaken in the interests of 'the children'; the Child 'remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention'.[9] A succinct facsimile of this attitude of imagined societal futurity appears in that long-running staple of popular transatlantic family programming, *The Simpsons* (1989–), in the minor character of Helen Lovejoy, the sanctimonious wife of the town's reverend, who appears whenever a moral panic strikes the community to deliver her catchphrase, 'Won't somebody please think of the children!' With apposite irony, the character's own neglected and delinquent child is introduced in a single episode and then largely forgotten throughout the rest of the series' gargantuan lifespan. After all, the imagined Child – in whom all cultural value is invested – is rarely in the same place as most actual children. In other words, rather than a sincerely altruistic compassion for the other, or for a collective humanity, reproductive futurity represents a cultural fantasy, and an unapologetically self-interested one at that, promising a version of individual immortality for the speaking subject at the centre of cultural power.

This book follows Edelman's arguments on reproductive futurity, particularly insofar as it illustrates the sovereign subjectivity of the Child imagined within political narratives. Elsewhere, however, I seek to make significant departures from the usages that Edelman makes of this idea. The critique shaped within *No Future* is located within a logic of reproductive futurity that is distinctly and absolutely heteropatriarchal, and while Edelman is very clearly critical of this in a symptomatic sense, he does not offer a thorough exam-

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ination of the radically gendered organization of the construct. Within Edelman's articulation of reproductive futurity, that is, homophobic conservatism is vigorously and tenaciously unsettled, but the *masculinity* of the sovereign Child-subject is taken for granted and left relatively unchallenged on its own terms. While deconstructive examinations of reproductive futurity can offer extremely valuable tools for feminist critiques and reimaginations of family, Edelman's implicit concentration on a Child-subject who enjoys (and, indeed, is constituted by) masculinized privilege, and on the disruptive potential of queer men, marginalizes this opportunity. The engagement with reproductive futurity within this book therefore seeks to reappropriate its critical energies to understand the plurality of ideological forces at work in the reification of the Child, with particular attention to how this figure is both produced by and reproduces patriarchy.

Alongside reproductive futurity, I also use the term 'cultural futurity' to draw attention more closely to the terms by which the future invoked in this logic issues predominantly from existing centres of social power, and is therefore both specific and exclusive. That is, the future imagined by way of the Child is not free to self-determine, but is articulated within the ideological trajectories of existing dominant cultures. Edelman argues that 'the social order exists to preserve for this *universalized* subject, this fantasmatic Child, a notional freedom more highly valued than the actuality of freedom itself, which might, after all, put at risk the Child to whom such a freedom falls due'.[10] However, I emphasize throughout this book that the politicized Child – and the mother both denigrated and cathected into producing him – is never even notionally 'universal', but always already particularized by gender, race and class, as well as sexuality, which is Edelman's dominating interest. Edelman's book goes on to pursue the 'impossible' project of taking 'the side of those *not* "fighting for the children," the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism'.[11] Herein, he emphasizes the 'ethical value [of queerness] insofar as it accedes to that place, accepting its figural status as resistance to the viability of the social while insisting on the inextricability of such resistance from every social structure',[12] focusing predominantly on the disruptive potential of the queerness of male homosexuality. What his argument does not consider, but which can be excavated from it by bringing his thesis into dialogue with second-wave feminist theory from writers such as Luce Irigaray, Adrienne Rich, Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous, and (in a markedly different way) Simone de Beauvoir, are the gendered implications of the privileging of the child, particularly as concerns the impact upon the mother. Initially, by considering Edelman's theory alongside these writers' feminist arguments on the masculinization of citizenship and (phal)logocentrism,[13] the presumption of the masculinity of the figural Child (which Edelman in some respects repli-

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cates uncritically) becomes clearer; the future and its imagined intellectual and material prosperity is held in trust for sons, not daughters. For all of Edelman's radically queer agitation, reproductive futurity remains in his work largely a drama played out between powerful conservative men and non-reproductive queer men, over the cultural capital of the male Child. Women and girls are therefore minimized as objective reproductive material within this conflict, rather than being regarded as complex subjects with real and significant stakes within it. Particularly pertinent herein is the implicit office of mothers. Edelman's theory does little to account for the demands that reproductive futurity makes of mothering women, who are also suppressed by rather than complicit in this ideological formulation. But surely, the cultish veneration of the Child that underpins cultural narratives of being necessitates the subordination of the Mother and demands the sacrifice of her selfhood and access to expression. If the Child she (re)produces embodies progress, agency, even humanity itself, then surely any pretension to desire, selfishness or subjectivity on her part is a cardinal societal sin as well as a personal evil. The son has become our cultural protagonist, leaving the mother a choice of identity between supporting cast or villain.

Moreover, while the Child will always succeed in the imaginary – inexhaustibly symbolizing a horizon of perfection – his mother will always fail, always representing the insurmountable gulf between that horizon and reality. The Mother has become to dystopia what the Child is to utopia, at best an eruption of anxiety when the knowledge of human fragility can no longer be repressed, and at worst held responsible for the inevitable failures of her children – collectively and individually – to reach their potentials. Jacqueline Rose describes mothers as 'the ultimate scapegoat for our personal and political failings, for everything that is wrong with the world, which it becomes the task – unrealisable, of course – of mothers to repair'.[14] She demonstrates this through analysis of the hypocritical buffeting of mothers within contemporary news media and other forms of public discourse, in which they are symbolized as both radically powerless (the vulnerable, suffering mother) and supremely responsible:

> From all sides, in Europe and the US, we are accosted by increasingly shrill voices, telling us that our greatest ethical obligation is to entrench our national and personal borders, to be unfailingly self-regarding and sure of ourselves. It is a perfect atmosphere for picking on mothers, for branding them as uniquely responsible for both securing and jeopardising this impossible future.[15]

What makes this state of affairs even more pernicious is the fact that the Mother described here has almost nothing to do with the rich, complex experiences of mothering and the diverse individuals who engage in them.

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In order to account more fully for the profound and particular effects of reproductive futurity on women and mothers, I draw here on the work of a range of feminist theorists who take a detailed interest in legal, psychoanalytic and cultural representations of motherhood, which are set in tension with lived experiences of mothering. Though distinct in their nuances and angles of approach, feminist theorists such as Irigaray, Kristeva and Rich have all been instrumental in articulating the violent absence of mothers as speaking subjects from dominant cultural discourses. Irigaray writes particularly expressively on the suppression of autonomous mothering identities within patriarchy and the marginalization of women by way of the Mother. A fundamental conviction within her work is that 'any theory of the subject has always been appropriated by the "masculine"'.[16] 'Woman', and to an even greater extent the Mother, as they have come to be expressed in dominant cultural discourses, are not self-declared beings, but a myth told by men, as a constituent part of the male self. The mother acts as an 'origin story',[17] an imago of femininity constructed by and confirming patriarchal fantasy. The imposition of the masculine model, according to Irigaray, further leads to suppression of the rights and expression of the feminine, giving cultural monopoly to the figural father and mastery over the public and private to men. The law of the Father makes all things, all children, all ideas, all desires, belong to him: 'For the patriarchal order is indeed the one that functions as the *organization and monopolization of private property to the benefit of the head of the family*. It is his proper name, the name of the father, that determines ownership for the family, including the wife and children.'[18] Woman, meanwhile, is 'nothing but the receptacle that passively receives his *product*'.[19] Mothers are made absent from the theory; through appropriation of the feminine generative capacity, motherhood is made a raw resource, to be sculpted and hallmarked by the masculine. Although life began in mothers' bodies, then, the Mother herself becomes a square peg as a figure for subjective life, which draws its anthropomorphic and phallocentric model under the insistence of being the only possibility; '[Culture] has blindly venerated the mother-son relationship to the point of religious fetishism, but has given no interpretation to the model of tolerance of the other within and with a self that this relationship manifests.'[20] In her effacement from representation, her exile from subjecthood, Irigaray suggests, borrowing a term from Freud, that the relation to the mother (and with this, the mother-as-subject and any relations belonging to her) has become 'the "dark continent" *par excellence*'.[21] She is made absent, and the law-of-the-father forbids any attempt to find her. All that is left for mothers within patriarchal cultures and their discourses is a lexicon of 'filthy, mutilating words'.[22] Irigaray describes the visceral, denigrating discourse around them:

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> The mother has become a devouring monster as an inverted effect of the blind consumption of the mother. Her belly, sometimes her breasts, are agape with the gestation, the birth and the life that were given there without any reciprocity. Except for a murder, real and cultural, to annul that debt? To forget dependency? To destroy power?[23]

Any physical signs of femaleness and their representation are largely covered over by the self-aggrandizement of the masculine. The father not only 'forbids the bodily encounter with the mother',[24] but imposes his language and law in her place. The 'phallus [is] erected where once there was the umbilical cord',[25] and the proper name (a mark of paternal pedigree) 'replaces the most irreducible mark of birth: the *navel*'.[26] The mother is radically excluded from subjective expression. Irigaray's rereadings of Freud encourage a deconstructive approach to effacing representations of mothers within law, language and cultural representation, and suggest that mothering subjectivities, though lost or hidden, may potentially be rediscovered.

Along similar lines, Adrienne Rich suggests that the 'cathexis between mother and daughter – essential, distorted, misused – is the great unwritten story'.[27] She argues that 'this relationship has been minimized and trivialized in the annals of patriarchy. Whether in theological doctrine or art or sociology or psychoanalytic theory, it is the mother and son who appear as the eternal, determinative dyad', and she sees this effacement as the patriarchal imagination's paranoid anxiety over feminine power and any form of intimate solidarity between women.[28] In the Freudian psychoanalytic formula, boys, in order to develop 'normally', are injuncted by the law of the father to turn away from and denigrate the mother; hereafter, Freud argues, 'One thing that is left over in men from the influence of the Oedipus complex is a certain amount of disparagement in their attitude towards women, whom they regard as being castrated'.[29]

Rich argues, furthermore, that patriarchy not only promotes misogyny in sons, but internalizes it in daughters:

> Thousands of daughters see their mothers as having taught a compromise and self-hatred they are struggling to win free of, the one through whom the restrictions and degradations of a female existence were perforce transmitted. Easier by far to hate and reject a mother outright than to see beyond her to the forces acting upon her.[30]

Since megalomaniacal patriarchal discourse works so hard – and often so effectively – to minimize the presence of the mothering subject, all that appears to remain is an echo of oppressions. Rich calls this 'matrophobia', which is 'the fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of *becoming one's mother*'.[31] Mothering subjects, therefore, are multiply invisibilized and isolated from representa-

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tion. Fundamental to the feminist projects of both Irigaray and Rich is the need to resist this bereavement, to represent individuals who mother as speaking selves and to understand the mothering relation as an intersubjective rather than a one-sided experience. This approach, then, remains radically critical of reproductive futurity and its reification of the Child at the expense of actual living subjects; moreover, Irigaray and Rich's theories are acutely aware that if the Child is primary subject, then the Mother, long before anyone else, is forced into the ideological position of primary object. However, they offer a different way out of this bind to Edelman's school of anti-relational queer theory, moving beyond the (welcome) collapse of ideological machinery to a reconstruction of kinship and gender that imagines new and more fluid forms of relationality.

This branch of maternal feminist theory has been well received within literary studies, and Cixous and Rich especially have been popularized within feminist research interested in motherhood in poetry and literature.[32] However, the potential uses of these theories within film and visual media disciplines remain largely untapped. Major works on motherhood in film studies have tended to follow a valuable but limited canon, which has focused on Hollywood studio-era melodrama, and established a pantheon of extensively discussed 'maternal' films including *Stella Dallas* (1937), *Marnie* (1964), *Now, Voyager* (1942) and much of Douglas Sirk's Hollywood-based output. Critics such as E. Ann Kaplan,[33] Suzanna Danuta Walters,[34] Jackie Byars,[35] Tania Modleski[36] and Annette Kuhn[37] have produced important and influential work in this regard, but in some respects, the psychoanalytic 'motherhood turn' of the late 1980s and early 1990s has cast too long a shadow over the corpus and theoretical parameters of research on motherhood in film. This work is certainly valuable and highly interesting in its own right, but the strength of focus on conversations around mothers in Anglophone melodrama, drawing heavily on Freudian psychoanalysis, has to some degree unintentionally foreclosed other possibilities.

The only major idea of European second-wave feminism that has yet been adopted widely into feminist film theory is Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject. Throughout Kristeva's work, she imagines the maternal body as a site of psychic 'splitting'.[38] The mother and the maternal body described within several of Kristeva's theories are more or less imaginarily dismembered and then exiled away from themselves to occupy various extremes of idealization and denigration. For Kristeva, abjection is a process of denigration that bears particular psychological connections to the body of the mother; maternal excess is that which is cast off, abjected, in order to define the clean and proper self.[39] This develops the psychoanalytic schema of the split from the mother in the Freudian subject-formation process by theorizing what becomes of the maternal debris inevitably (but silently) jettisoned in the process of this imaginative surgery;[40] 'It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the

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latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master. … To each ego its object, to each superego its abject.'[41] The abject is an outside, an absence of reason according to dominant discourse, and profoundly Other – all of which can be understood as maternal characteristics within patriarchal narratives. Elsewhere, Kristeva argues that the horror of the abject is fundamentally a horror of unstable boundaries, or the loss of the clear psychic and social separations between self and Other that are established during the early development of the subject in Freudian psychoanalysis; this horror is therefore conditioned by the capacity of ambiguous substances, bodies or even ideas to suggest a return of the aspects of the maternal of which patriarchal social orders necessitate the repression; Kristeva argues that various religious rituals are then invented to 'ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother'.[42] Writers including Barbara Creed,[43] Sarah Arnold[44] and to a lesser extent Lucy Fischer[45] have tapped into the rich resources offered by Kristeva's abject for understanding certain extreme images of maternal monstrosity, and have produced detailed feminist work on figures of disgust, filth and motherhood in horror film that are closely informed by these aspects of Kristeva's work. These readings of Kristeva function particularly well for horror film, a genre that lends itself extremely readily to psychoanalytic symbolism, and feminist theories of abjection allow film scholars such as Creed, Arnold and Fischer to do valuable work in understanding and deconstructing the impulses of misogyny and mother-hate at work in these images. However, as with the canonization of a small number of classic Hollywood melodramas as a more or less definitive corpus of 'motherhood films', the forcefully psychoanalytic application of Kristevan abjection to horror film marks an approach to analysis of mothering in cinema that remains somewhat inward-looking and ahistorical. Both Kristeva's originating theory and its usages within film scholarship, therefore, risk replicating an idea of 'the mother' or 'the maternal' as a universalized figure untouched by the many and complex contingencies of time and culture – a figure all too familiar from the spectral mother-as-object mapped in the negative spaces of reproductive futurity. The cultural and temporal overextension of Kristeva's psychoanalytic theories is, in fact, a point that is critiqued incisively and persuasively by Imogen Tyler in her fascinating monograph *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain*.[46] While finding substantial value in the structures and effects of Kristeva's abject, Tyler also raises the concern that 'Kristeva's argument that psychoanalysis might effect a radically cosmopolitan form of pan-European subjectivity relies on the primacy of an unchanging psychological origin story in which the abjection of the maternal (matricide) is the root of all violence and hatreds'.[47] Tyler's critical appropriation of abjection allows her to explore not the universal, but the particular processes of 'social abjection' as

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they manifest in legal and cultural forms. Similarly, my approach in this book is to read such universalized figures of motherhood strictly descriptively, as fantasied products of European patriarchal social orders.

There is also another side to the Kristevan coin of maternal symbolization in patriarchy that has been less widely taken up within film scholarship, with the notable exception of Kaja Silverman's theoretically rich monograph *The Acoustic Mirror*, which draws extensively on Kristeva's semiotic 'chora' to investigate the female voice in cinema.[48] Alongside her ideas on maternal abjection, Kristeva also uses images of sacred mothers (particularly the Madonna) to show how a 'purified' maternal body has been appropriated to objectify mothers and make maternal representations respond to various needs of the masculine subject. The type of European religious discourse described by Kristeva has been instrumental in neutralizing and emptying out the mother, and European ideas of maternity are heavily subsumed under Christian ideology.[49] Kristeva argues that this maternal imaginary has been made to serve as 'an adult (male and female) fantasy of a lost continent: what is involved, moreover, is not so much an idealized primitive mother as an idealization of the – unlocalizable – *relationship* between her and us, an idealization of primary narcissism'.[50] The Christian ideal of motherhood is tied to the sublime; it is the clean surface (ready for projection) left after the filth and defilement of the maternal abject has been wiped away. This maternal imaginary is a potent site of projection for much psychic activity, inevitably entailing the silencing of the Mother in favour of the Child. As with her theories of abjection, there is an extent to which Kristeva's ideas on the sacred maternal – if unqualified – may be taken as overdetermining. In 'Motherhood [According to Giovanni Bellini]', for instance, Kristeva offers useful thinking on the processes of becoming-a-mother within European patriarchy, outlining the co-optation of motherhood by the needs of both scientific and Christian discourses, both of which result in an alienation and objectification of mothers' autonomous experiences of themselves.[51] As she progresses through her analysis of Bellini's paintings of the Madonna and Child, however, her argument tends to replicate a somewhat nostalgic image of idealized motherhood universalized within European imaginations of the Madonna. On the other hand, if her arguments on the sacred maternal in 'Stabat Mater' and elsewhere are considered as *descriptive* rather than prescriptive, they offer useful resources for feminist analysis of the politics of ideologies of motherhood, which speak productively to the maternal absences of Edelman's reproductive futurity. After all, the mothering object that this conservative ideology tacitly depends upon is discursively constructed as apolitical and universal, when it is, of course, anything but. Between the abject and the sacred, between her position as the most powerful and powerless person in the world, the mother becomes, in Adrienne Rich's words, 'a field of contradictions:

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a space invested with power, and an acute vulnerability; a numinous figure and the incarnation of evil; a hoard of ambivalences, most of which have worked to disqualify women from the collective act of defining culture.'[52]

Simone de Beauvoir, in her notorious chapter on motherhood in *The Second Sex*, deals with similar issues on the contradictions and outrages of the idealization of motherhood and its effects. Beauvoir's feminist magnum opus was first published in 1949, and translated into English shortly after. Her provocative work on motherhood and the maternal and reproductive subjugation of women in post-war France remained highly influential for European feminists throughout the 1960s, and her thinking provides rich resources for the theoretical direction offered by this book. In line with her much-cited assertion that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman',[53] Beauvoir is throughout her work consistently emphatic that the ideological figure of the mother as ideal, nurturing object exists only as a self-satisfying fiction of patriarchy, and has nothing at all to do with the lives and experiences of actual women who mother. She argues that 'no maternal "instinct" exists: the word hardly applies, in any case, to the human species. The mother's attitude depends on her total situation and her reaction to it [which] is highly variable.'[54] Through her blistering critique of the ideological patriarchal institutionalization of motherhood as 'nature', Beauvoir offers an incisive view of the figure of the mother-as-ideal-object through a deconstructive kaleidoscope. I suggest that Beauvoir's thinking on this point produces further useful feminist dialogues with Edelman's implicitly masculinist reproductive futurity. For Beauvoir, the objectifying cathexis of the Mother is also conditioned by the reification of the male Child as patriarchal protagonist. However, although, as I have suggested, women and mothers tend to retreat all too graciously from Edelman's formulation, Beauvoir describes this drama distinctly from the perspective of the many women (infinitely diverse, radically contextualized and irreversibly subjective) who are interpellated as the Child's placid, universal Mother.

Beauvoir is an early feminist commentator to suggest clearly in her philosophy that the maternal relation is not one of subject and object, but is in fact profoundly *inter*subjective: 'The transcendence of the artisan, of the man of action, contains the element of subjectivity; but in the mother-to-be the antithesis of subject and object ceases to exist; she and the child with which she is swollen make up together an equivocal pair overwhelmed by life.'[55] More than just incidentally or casually intersubjective, then, the maternal body might be seen here as a primary philosophical model for intersubjective understanding within social interactions more broadly. However, once the child is born, and as the relations between mothers and children develop in response to dominant ideological forms, patriarchal cultures, societies and even legal systems (as shall be explored in greater depth in Part II of this book) force this relation to occupy an

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adversarial mode, in which the odds are hopelessly stacked against the mother, and which Beauvoir sees as a violent manoeuvre against women's subjective expression. Working from this foundational critique of the distortions of patriarchal institutionalizations of motherhood, Beauvoir proceeds to explore in often visceral depth the experiences of mothering subjects who are put to ideological and physical work under these conditions. She argues, in the first instance, that patriarchal motherhood is never capable of delivering the satisfactions it promises to women (which are those of a passive object); one of the fundamental and cynically deceptive preconceptions of patriarchy, she argues, 'is that maternity is enough in all cases to crown a woman's life. It is nothing of the kind. There are a great many mothers who are unhappy, embittered, unsatisfied.'[56] And in any case, the ideological machinery that produces the promise of the Child as the 'supreme aim' and pleasure of any woman – a claim that, as Beauvoir insists, has 'precisely the value of an advertising slogan'[57] – is full of contradictions and hypocrisies. She demonstrates this through the example of men's coercion of their partners' abortions, which was not uncommon in Beauvoir's France:

> From infancy woman is told over and over that she is made for childbearing, and the splendors of maternity are forever being sung to her. The drawbacks of her situation – menstruation, illnesses, and the like – and the boredom of household drudgery are all justified by this marvellous privilege she has of bringing children into the world. And now here is man asking woman to relinquish her triumph as female in order to preserve his liberty, so as not to handicap his future, for the benefit of his profession![58]

We see clearly here a manifestation of the narcissistic hypocrisies buried within the mechanisms of reproductive futurity, which may claim that 'children are our future', but only really means those who are ideologically convenient for the patriarchal subject in whose image that future is undoubtedly formed. Furthermore, within a lived relationship to an actual child (who is, after all, *not* just an image or fantasy), Beauvoir describes how the chaos and complexity of maternal subjectivities are pathologized as shameful and must be silenced, repressed or denigrated to a monstrous elsewhere in order for patriarchal futurity to maintain its constitutive interest in the sovereign son-as-subject. In her chapter on motherhood, Beauvoir outlines a few illustrative examples of how women's highly particularized material circumstances, dispositions, preferences and personal histories may all impact on the very different ways in which they experience and practise their motherhoods. Within this infinite difference and heterogeneity within and among mothering subjects, the flattening ideal of the mother-as-object must be no more than an alienated elsewhere (for whose absence 'actual' mothering women are nonetheless held mercilessly responsible). Beauvoir argues that

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> the distortion begins when the religion of Maternity proclaims that all mothers are saintly. For while maternal devotion may be perfectly genuine, this, in fact, is rarely the case. Maternity is usually a strange mixture of narcissism, altruism, idle daydreaming sincerity, bad faith, devotion, and cynicism.[59]

There is a great deal in common here, in fact, with the work of later feminist psychoanalysts such as Rozsika Parker, Wendy Holloway and Brid Featherstone, who directly take to task the masculinist and filial biases of conventional psychoanalytic theory and practice in their work on 'maternal ambivalence' and the complexities not of having or being affected by, but of *being* a mother.[60] Becoming-a-mother in patriarchy takes place in the midst of these contradictions, twisting and contorting impossibly between the Ideal (object) and the experience (subject) of mothering. Beauvoir envisages a number of ways out of this: collective practices of nurture and shared childcare, intersubjective kinships, freely available and destigmatized contraception and the liberation of women's opportunities for fulfilment outside of or alongside childbearing and -rearing, to name a few. However, she never ceases to remind us that becoming-a-mother under the objectifying strictures of patriarchy is an experience that is often physically and psychically painful.

In different ways, the feminist theories offered by Beauvoir, Rich, Irigaray and Kristeva, which focus on the cultural analysis and radical reclamation of mothering, present two key strains of value for investigating the representation and ideologies of motherhood in film. The first of these is diagnostic: these approaches offer a sophisticated toolkit for dissecting the ways in which mothering subjectivities are marginalized and absolutist idealizing and denigrating narratives perpetuated within dominant cultural discourses – a toolkit that can be productively applied to aesthetic and narrative forms in European film. The second is creative, analysing or imagining the ways in which representations of mothering women and experiences may be mobilized as potentially radical and subversive spaces. The liberation of mothering and the texts it may create are, after all, indispensable resources for any feminist project that seeks a holistically radical counternarrative to patriarchal gender relations. Following Rich, Andrea O'Reilly shows how oppressive constructions of motherhood within cultural imagination are damaging not only to women who actively engage in mothering, but to women in general, defining 'two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: the *potential* relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction – and to children; and the *institution* – which aims at ensuring that that potential – and all women – shall remain under male control"'.[61] Rich, in fact, sees the mother–daughter relation – when derepressed – as a prototype for feminist sisterhood:

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> When we can confront and unravel this paradox, this contradiction, face to the utmost in ourselves the groping passion of that little girl lost, we can begin to transmute it, and the blind anger and bitterness that have repetitiously erupted among women trying to build a movement together can be alchemized. Before sisterhood, there was the knowledge – transitory, fragmented, perhaps, but original and crucial – of mother-and-daughterhood.[62]

The type of creative feminine solidarity envisaged here, however, 'gives rise to the daughter's empowerment *if and only if* the mother with whom the daughter is identifying is herself empowered'.[63] For all of these theorists, this is only possible once the patriarchal machinery producing the ideology of motherhood has been sabotaged.

As is always the case when writing on any form of identity marginalized by a dominant culture, it has been necessary in researching this book to grapple with the fitness of existing terminology within a language that has in many ways naturalized the very suppressions we seek to dismantle. I therefore outline here some notes clarifying a few of the terms used in *Pepsi and the Pill*. One of the points of nomenclature most familiar to anyone interested in the topic of feminism and mothering is the fact that almost all words commonly used in the English language to describe a woman who is not a biological mother are disparaging, implying some form of failure, loss or disappointment ('childless', 'spinster' and so on). The most popular feminist counter-terms to these are 'unchilded' and 'child-free'. Where applicable, I have tended towards the latter, as 'child-free' is the furthest from a state defined by negation, but, as Rich among many other feminists has pointed out, none of these terms are completely satisfactory.[64]

As well as adequately describing chosen states of non-mothering, however, I encountered almost immediately difficulty in navigating the perhaps surprisingly delicate decisions over when and how to refer to individuals as mothers. The films and political contexts I discuss encompass a wide and diverse range of relationships to motherhood, and it soon became apparent that this eclectic range of characters both fictional and historical could not be comfortably collected under the single, often rather closed term 'mother'. The inadequacies of this expression became particularly clear when investigating relational nexuses that complicate normative connections between biological and social mothering, such as abortion, queer collectives and chosen families, and the economic exploitation of working-class and migrant women's 'motherwork'. In these cases, not all biological mothers or pregnant women will or want to become mothers, and not all individuals who engage in mothering – either consistently or episodically – have any biological or legally recognized relationship to motherhood. I therefore use throughout this book the term 'mothering subjects' in an

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effort to leave open the concept of mothering to a range of possible interactions. It is also my hope that this term is somewhat freer of normative limitations of 'mothers' by bio-legal determinism, social position and gender (though the vast majority of mothering subjects I discuss here are women, some are not, nor should mothering subjectivities be foreclosed by biological parenthood). This is also occasionally supplemented by the term 'pregnant subjects' in Chapters 3 and 4 when it is necessary to emphasize the active choice to *not* become a mother in questions of abortion and unplanned pregnancy. In conjunction with this, I also follow the distinction between 'motherhood as an institution and a nonpatriarchal experience of mothering', which Andrea O'Reilly sees as a central development of Rich's work.[65] This separation also underscores the important distinction between 'motherhood' as a set of ideological figures and discourses, and 'mothering' as a diversified and fluid experience, and one of a range of activities undertaken by mothering subjects, rather than an all-encompassing definition. Otherwise put, the distinction is between the Mother (a product of repressive ideological discourses incommensurate with any living individual, and acting as the negative space around the Child, an equally phantasmatic figure) and mothering subjects.

It is worth re-emphasizing, furthermore, that at no point in this book do I wish to re-endorse the primacy of biological reproduction, or to promote a biologically deterministic view of either motherhood or gender. Quite the contrary, what drives my interest here is the highly constructed and political nature of any conservative discourse of motherhood that feverishly lays claim to the 'natural'. However, while representing and taking autonomous ownership of mothering and maternal bodies is undoubtedly a significant part of affirming the presence of mothering subjects in culture and society, it is important to be mindful of the capacity of some strains of corporeally focused feminism to cathect, essentialize and reduce female biology in this process. Elizabeth Grosz's 'corporeal feminism',[66] for instance, despite a compelling argument for the cultural-historical contingency of women's bodies and emphasis on the importance of women's bodily self-definition, proceeds to overdetermine women as biologically homogeneous, erasing a great deal of difference in women's lived experiences of anatomy, sexuality and fertility. Some of Irigaray's later work, similarly, is over-literal about the political usage of the 'female body', as in her essay 'So When Are We to Become Women?',[67] in which she identifies reproductive technologies as a mechanical monster of patriarchy for the modern age, continuing to produce women's motherhood rather than empowering reproductive identities. Replicating such limitation as is imposed by patriarchal ideology, only differently transposed, these theoretical distortions should be avoided; mothering bodies must not be idealized, but particularized. There are endless 'bodily encounters' with mothering and

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maternity, and the in*corp*oration of heterogeneous corporeal and affective experiences of motherhood should expand rather than generalize its subjective discourses. This book offers a deconstructionist critique of the vast and impossible distance between ideologically loaded and essentializing discourses of the 'naturalness' of (institutionalized) motherhood, and the diversity and complexity of mothering subjects and maternal or kinship practices.

Central to the theory underlying this book is the conviction that the imaginary properties of the Mother and the Child are two of the most profoundly ideological figures to operate within dominant cultural discourses, and that both work to suppress the autonomous expression and self-realization of mothering subjects. Edelman's work in *No Future* is incisive on the deployment of the Child in political rhetoric and how it engenders revulsion towards non-reproductive sexualities, but it does not consider the multiple oppressions that this obsessive heroization of the Child-citizen-self produces for women and mothers. However, the collected work of the feminist theorists discussed above provides rich resources – from a number of different angles – for understanding how mothering subjects are suppressed by the intellectual and material institutionalization of motherhood, as well as for imagining counter-discursive strategies of resistance, disruption, reconstruction and creation. The aesthetic and narrative forms of film are a particularly vital collective cultural site in which these ideologies can be consolidated or disrupted, and the political and cinematic landscapes of Britain and France are vibrant terrains for playing out collisions between ideology and experience. Marked by swells of youth activism alongside enduringly widespread social conservatism, and seeing the rise of energetic and exciting new waves of cinema in Oedipal revolt against their domestic film industries, the meanings of motherhood, gender and family were widely at stake in both nations in the 1960s. The following section briefly sets out some of the bodies of film central to this book and the key sociopolitical contexts that inform their relationship to motherhood.

Immaculate Births: The Young Cinemas of the Sixties

The Sixties were a period of substantial creativity and novelty for British and French cinema. In cinema, the turn of the decade was particularly marked by a new generation of film-makers' largely premeditated breaks with established modes of film production and style. In both countries, a restless and quasi-Oedipal body of film criticism from young writers and film-makers had grown up over the 1950s, railing against what they saw as an artistic stagnation in their dominant domestic film industries. In France, this call for fresh ideas was famously led by the film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*, in which major figures

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such as Alexandre Astruc and André Bazin had been publishing their theories on auteurism since the post-war years. Manifestos envisaging the face and pulse of a new cinema were also published in the mid-1950s by young directors who would later become leading figures in the new waves of film-making. In France, this took the form of François Truffaut's patricidal invective against the French cinema's 'tradition of quality' in 'A Certain Tendency in French Cinema', in which he criticizes the lack of originality in his national cinema, drawing a stark distinction between 'metteurs-en-scène' – workmanlike, but uninspired directors of derivative pictures – and 'auteurs' capable of producing imaginative, original and *personal* cinematic art.[68] In Britain, the Oedipal revolt was announced by a statement signed by Lindsay Anderson, Lorenza Mazzetti, Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson – all of whom had cut their teeth in documentary production – to accompany a programme of their short and medium-length films. They identified a shared direction in their work, arguing that 'Implicit in this attitude is a belief in freedom, in the importance of people and in the significance of the everyday'.[69] Between the last years of the 1950s and the early 1960s, these critical stirrings burgeoned into a fully fledged period of energetic and innovative new film-making from young directors with strong ideas about the purposes and possibilities of the medium.

These periods and the New Wave movements they anticipated are among the most critically discussed phases of both countries' national cinemas. The French New Wave, indeed, is perhaps one of the single most frequently studied film movements the world over. The British output of this period – variously defined as the British New Wave, Free Cinema, working-class or social realism, or the 'kitchen sink cycle' – cannot claim a similar international pedigree, but is nonetheless a definitive moment within British independent cinema. These movements, and most of their key film-makers, have accrued expansive libraries of high-quality scholarship from film theorists and historians, and the movements have been examined and re-examined from several angles. Youth is consistently recognized as an absolutely central and vitalizing concern throughout these movements. By and large, the New Wave movements at the turn of the decade were characterized by films focused on intimate experiences of contemporary youth, made by driven young directors and largely consumed by young audiences. The theoretical precursors of both movements placed emphasis on the personal and the present. In 1963, Penelope Houston, then editor of *Sight and Sound*, described the changing face of British cinema:

> A few years ago, if the British cinema had an immediately identifiable image, it would have been a shot of Kenneth More, jaw boldly jutting, on the bridge of a destroyer. At the moment, the national cinema would more readily be summed up in a view of a boy and girl wandering mourn-fully through the

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> drizzle and mist of industrial Britain, looking for a place to live or a place to make love.[70]

In the case of France, the shake-up to the established conventions of film style, themes and production was even more restless. As Richard Neupert describes it, the 'rule of thumb was to shoot as quickly as possible with portable equipment, sacrificing the control and glamour of mainstream productions for a lively, modern look and sound'.[71] This stylistic modernity is often seen not only as a novel approach to film-making, but as symptomatic of a new wave of youth culture writ large. As historians of the movement and the 1960s in general frequently point out, the term 'nouvelle vague' was only latterly attached to film-making, having been originally coined by journalist Françoise Giroud in *L'Express* in 1957 to describe the styles and mores of the young generation more broadly.[72] Giroud wrote prolifically on this topic, producing surveys and sociologies of youth culture that took stock of changes in fashion, musical and literary tastes, political attitudes, sexual behaviours, gender roles and more; her work has provided invaluable documents for scholars of youth in 1960s France leading up to the May 1968 protests, and for feminist historians in particular.[73] What she found was 'a new spirit abroad in French cultural life. She found a generation impatient with the attitudes of its elders and eager to throw off many aspects of the legacy of the past.'[74] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's contextually driven account also underscores the importance of Giroud's work and similar insights for historicizing the New Wave, its 'newness' and its impact, as without this textured social background,

> What Giroud saw as a wide-ranging political-cultural movement, with its roots at the time of Dien Bien Phu, the Suez crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary, thus gets reduced to a purely aesthetic and cinematic phenomenon whose origins are found in a critical doctrine rather than in the wider world.[75]

While Giroud in fact makes little mention of New Wave cinema, he argues, this work has a great deal to say about the generation that were about to become its main audience.[76]

The New Waves proper of French and British cinema were ultimately short-lived phenomena; by strict definitions, both lasted only a few years and were all but over not long into the decade.[77] However, the reinvigorations of style and theme they had brought about continued to reverberate throughout the 1960s, and new independent films continued to focus on youth, mobility and swiftly changing social landscapes. Already markedly divergent in how they approached and articulated these themes during the New Waves, British and French cinema took very different paths through the rest of the decade. Growing anti-establishment strains in French youth culture accelerated towards the

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student protests of May 1968, and in step with this trend of increasing political consciousness, many young directors and critics turned their enthusiasm towards Marxist theories and radical practices of film-making. *Cahiers* was once again at the forefront of the charge; the change in direction towards fully fledged Marxist criticism was confirmed in an editorial written by Jean-Louis Comolli and Paul Narboni in response to the 1968 protests. In this article, they called for a re-examination of the aims and interests of the magazine, including 'awareness of its own historical and social situation, a rigorous analysis of the proposed field of study, the conditions which make the work necessary and those which make it possible, and the special function it intends to fulfill'.[78] The article set out an agenda for French film criticism and aesthetics that was far more openly materially and politically engaged than the auteurist theory of Bazin, Astruc and Truffaut. British audiences, meanwhile, were growing frustrated with working-class realism by the early 1960s, and with *Billy Liar* in 1963, British cinema 'took the train south',[79] precipitating a wave of 'Swinging London' films focusing largely on the sexual and romantic lives of young people in the modern capital. This group of films receives a degree of critical disparagement; Nowell-Smith casually dismisses the entire cycle, remarking 'A more general and less happy outcome [was] a host of "swinging London" films later in the decade, about which on the whole the less said the better'.[80] This is a shame, as – whatever their flaws – this group of films is valuable and in fact unique within the period for its privileging of the experiences and stories of young women rather than young men, and gives extensive space to the representation of women-focused issues including unplanned pregnancy. This book therefore gives commensurate attention to films of this cycle alongside New Wave and social realist film-making to give a more complete picture of the diverse ways in which issues of motherhood, reproductive rights, sexuality and national culture were approached in 1960s film.

The entire output of the French and British film industries and the consumption patterns of its audiences were of course far more diverse than this overview suggests.[81] However, it is the French and British New Waves, the 'Swinging London' cycle, British social realism and French and Francophone West African radical film-making in the late 1960s to which the majority of attention is dedicated in this book. Further detail is given in each chapter on the contexts of these movements and their particular and often complex relationships to contemporaneous social and political questions. Despite their stylistic eclecticism, these different movements and cycles are united by an investment in some form of personal or political realism and a driving interest in the experiences of young women and men in their immediate cultural environment. These films were all very much creatures of the moment, coolly rejecting the Hollywood imports, melodramas, big-budget studio epics and period literary adaptations

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that made up much of the British and French popular cinemas in the post-war era. The 'father' cinemas that both New Waves were kicking back against were largely characterized in Britain by the dominance of the duopoly of the Rank Organisation and Associated British, which favoured prestige pictures, heritage literary adaptation and war films, and in France by the Centre national de la cinématographie (CNC)'s eagerness to establish a French cinematic 'tradition of quality', leading to an industrial focus on 'French themes, historical events, and great literature'.[82] In other words, the lion's share of funding and support for film-making in both cases went towards representing the bygone. Exploding onto a scene that was thus characterized by careful, dignified heritage imagery, therefore, there was much that was new about the New Waves: novel modes of funding, quick and mobile location shooting and new sources of material (largely original and sometimes partly improvisational stories for the French New Wave; adaptation of contemporary working-class fiction and drama for Free Cinema). However, what I am particularly interested in here is what was in both contexts a dramatic shift from national cinemas that were institutionally focused on collective representations of a shared national past, to new cinemas that took firm and passionate interests in the here-and-now of the individual.

There are clearly marked differences in the immediate subject matter of the British and French New Waves. The French New Wave was famously contemptuous of the 'message picture', or *film à thèse*, and avoided overt moralism, didactic invocation of political issues or 'narrative for its own sake'.[83] The British New Wave, on the other hand, was set against a backdrop of working-class industrial towns in the North of England, and from its inception was more or less explicitly engaged with the class politics of modernity. Despite these differing orientations towards political commentary, however, all of these films share a passionate interest in representing youth, intimacy, sex and the domestic every-day. This closeness to the home, the family and the passage to sexual maturity, therefore, makes their general lack of attention to mothers and motherhood all the more curious. Though, as discussed above, mothers in cultural representation have tended to be relegated to the 'elsewhere' of the everyday, the domestic here becomes a canvas of masculine experience. Mothers, and the relationships of young pregnant women to motherhood, are by and large sidelined (the 1963 film *A Taste of Honey*, discussed in Chapter 6, is a rare and relatively solitary exception here). Occasional critics have attempted to distance the New Waves from domestic concerns, and the nomenclature of the 'kitchen sink cycle' to describe the British independent films of the early 1960s has proved particular cause for debate. Nowell-Smith exemplifies this attitude in his comment that '"Kitchen-sink realism", a derogatory label originally given to the painting of John Bratby and others in the 1950s, is not even accurate, since, apart from

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Look Back in Anger (1959) and possibly *A Taste of Honey*, the films do not have particularly domestic settings'.[84] The latter claim is difficult to accept, as the family home is without exception a symbolically, aesthetically and narratively important setting throughout this cycle of films; even when the characters and action depart from it, it is a primary site of tension and psychological richness. It is also my conviction here that condescension towards the term 'kitchen sink film' is itself to some degree rooted in a form of misogyny that identifies the most traditionally maternal-feminine space in the home with inferiority, intellectual poverty and smallness (especially relative to the masculine-coded spaces of the workplace and the pub). This book therefore continues to deploy the term 'kitchen sink cycle' in good faith, as an effort to resist the replication of these gendered valuations and underscore the primary importance of the domestic as a political space.

The representations of mothers, mothering and motherhood in these spaces have, all in all, been left largely unexamined as independently significant issues. When mothers are present, their most pressing role seems to be within the unconscious of the usually male protagonist; this is also the role in which mothers have received the greatest degree of critical attention. By far the most discussed of New Wave mothers is Gilberte Doinel of Truffaut's *Les 400 coups* (1959), who – as shall be discussed in Chapter 4 – is almost universally discussed as a Freudian monster whose only purpose is to wreak psychic havoc on her protagonist-son. This tone of discussion begs the question posed by Irigaray of whether 'the feminine *has* an unconscious or whether it *is* the unconscious'.[85] However, while there has been little work on the New Waves or any British or French cinemas of the 1960s dedicated specifically to the figure of the mother or the gendered domestic, issues of gender and sexuality more broadly have been considered across the period. This is relevant firstly in relation to the empirical genderedness of the young cinema movements; both New Wave movements have been widely critically acknowledged as 'boys' clubs'.[86] The *Cahiers* critics and the young film-makers making their debuts during the heyday of the French New Wave were overwhelmingly young men. Agnès Varda is sometimes invoked as a surrogate 'grandmother' of the New Wave – somewhat bizarrely, as she was still only in her early thirties at the beginning of the 1960s. However, by far the best-known women of the French New Wave were in front of rather than behind the camera. The emphasis of these cinemas on auteurism (and its enduring influence) has also meant that in all cases the substantial contributions of women as writers, editors and in other less high-profile roles have been marginalized.[87]

Detailed and convincing criticisms of the patriarchal tendencies of the New Wave cinemas of the 1960s have also been numerous. In their lengthy and influential accounts of British cinema of the 1960s, Robert Murphy and John

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Hill both underscore the unabashed chauvinism of much of the 'angry young men' literature that inspired the films,[88] and Moya Luckett[89] provides a briefer but significant feminist defence of the Swinging London films. Of the many feminist critics of the French New Wave, Geneviève Sellier has perhaps been the most blistering, and provides an extensive and contextualized argument that 'New Wave cinema is in the first person masculine singular at a moment when the first surveys of young people were showing a considerable gap between the aspirations of young men and those of young women'.[90] However, across the spectrum, critical discussions of gender and feminist issues in 1960s cinema have overwhelmingly privileged matters of romance and sexuality, examining the roles and representation of young women within the modern heterosexual dyad, critiquing tendencies towards patriarchal objectification and exploring feminine sexual subjectivities. The relatively novel figure of the sexually liberated young single woman predominates. Melanie Bell discusses this figure specifically as the typified heroine of 1960s British cinema.[91] She argues that '[w]hile the free and liberated young woman was a commercially potent image for advertisers, filmmakers, and others, the figure represents a victory of image over reality'.[92] Not only did these images and their reception smooth over many of the deeper prejudices and structural inequalities that continued to inform women's lived experiences and invest in an easy image of carefree, enfranchised and empowered femininity that had yet to be realized, but, Bell asserts, 'mainstream cinema … was inhospitable to expressions of femininity that questioned the dominant image of the mobile, free young woman'.[93] As I argue in depth in Chapter 3, the films that engage with such narratives – particularly those of the Swinging London cycle – do in fact complicate this figure considerably. However, as Bell's appraisal indicates, to focus on sexual expression only is to draw a limited picture of modern femininities in the 1960s.

Sellier similarly reviews and critiques accounts of 'Mademoiselle New Wave' in France, concluding – much like Bell – that the image of the comprehensively sexually liberated young woman involves no small degree of myth-making, interpreted either as 'the will to invent an "ideal" woman for men, a woman finally liberated from the puritan education that made her off limits until marriage, or as a quite paranoid vision of changes in female behavior – two hypotheses that are not in the least contradictory'.[94] As historians such as Margaret Atack,[95] Sylvie Chaperon,[96] Lisa Greenwald[97] and Alison Smith[98] have pointed out, though feminist organizations – and the family planning campaign in particular – were gaining traction throughout the 1960s, second-wave feminism and reproductive rights did not become a mass movement in France until the years following 1968. In fact, although the May 1968 protests are often considered the origin point of the MLF (Mouvement de Libération des Femmes, or Women's Liberation Movement, one of the leading second-wave feminist orga-

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nizations in France), feminist concerns tended to be marginalized during the protests.[99] Chaperon argues that, despite the considerable presence of women and feminists within the protest movement, they were excluded from positions of power and relegated to gender-stereotyped roles; 'Les étudiants monopolisent la parole, même quand il s'agit de parler des femmes. … Les femmes tapent les tracts et nettoient les salles; les garçons font les discours.'[100] The result of all these factors is that across the decade, the personal and political tended to be articulated from masculinist perspectives; this point has been well made by numerous researchers on the film and culture of the 1960s in both countries, yet between the New Waves' focus on young masculinities at the beginning of the decade and the emphasis on (non-feminist) radical politics and the dismissal of the Swinging London films at its end, discussions of gender in 1960s British and French cinema have tended to take this work to task predominantly on issues of sexuality. What gets buried here, then, is the complexity and diversity of gender politics and feminist issues in this period, the vital ways in which they informed youth culture and intergenerational tensions in a changing political landscape, and how this both influenced and was influenced by film.

This book foregrounds motherhood as an important way into this complexity. A feminist reading of this decade and its film movements should not give special attention only to the position and representation of women within the (potential) heterosexual couple, but should consider women's position within a nexus of existing and potential relations that are shaped by nationalistic ideologies. The young cinemas of the 1960s in France and Britain deal with domestic intimacies and social identities against a backdrop of a rapidly changing cultural landscape influenced by dynamic shifts in pop culture, post-war consumerism, the decline of European imperialism, liberalizing social and legal attitudes to sex and increasingly widespread access to contraception. Motherhood and reproduction are of pre-eminent significance throughout all of these issues, and this book puts forward three pivotal ways in which this perspective sheds new light on important elements of the contexts and aesthetics of this body of films. Firstly, it brings to bear feminist considerations of intergenerational relationships and tensions in these cinemas. The New Waves' revolts against their father figures are widely recognized, but between the apparently immaculate (father-only) conceptions of these movements and the foregrounding of young 'New Wave women' as love objects, the mother of the older generation is all but forgotten. Secondly, it allows ingress into the hugely important but as yet under-examined issue of the relationship between film and reproductive rights discourses; it is here, rather than in the representation of women's attitudes to sex itself, that these films are at their most interesting in relation to the experiences of young women. Finally, motherhood and its wider ideological connections to the politics of nationalism are particularly revealing in relation

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to cultural representations of marginalized identities within Eurocentric politics and cultural representation in this period, particularly Black and migrant experiences and homosexuality (both male and female). Motherhood should therefore not be theoretically packed away and annexed yet again to the private sphere at the edge of discourse. Motherhood, mothering, pregnancy and reproduction are instead deeply and energetically intertwined with the most public of political issues.

This book proceeds in three parts: 'Conception', 'Gestation' and 'Delivery'. Each part responds in detail to one of the perspectives outlined above, beginning with a discussion of the political climates relevant to the issue at stake, in order to embed the film analyses firmly within their sociohistorical contexts. The first part of the book, 'Conception', deals with *concept*ual constructions of the child-as-active-subject and mother-as-domestic-object dominant in cultural and political usages of familial and gendered imagery. Chapters 1 and 2 focus respectively on canonical films from the English social realist or 'kitchen sink' film cycle and films by two important New Wave-associated directors, Jean-Luc Godard and Agnès Varda. Contextually, Part I takes as its focus widespread social concerns over consumerism, mass culture and the mass production of household commodities, which were forcefully expressed as a central thematic issue within both relevant bodies of film throughout the early to mid-1960s. The thriving materialist culture of capitalist mass production in prosperous, post-war consumer economies and the new signs, forms and discourses that accompanied it were cause for ambivalent societal responses in both countries, from excitement and pride to introspective anxieties over the integrity of social organization and the meaning of the human. The young cinema movements of both countries that I discuss responded energetically to these ambivalences, meditating extensively on the effect of these consumer cultures on individual identities and the possibility that these too could be mass produced and replicated. This part argues that motherhood as a symbolic matrix is particularly integral to the films' representations of these concerns. While the thrill and power of modern production had iconographic links to youthful, Americanized masculinity and Hollywood, the mother figure in these films appears overwhelmingly connected to its underside of cultural decline and depersonalization. The films discussed in Part I, in differing ways, use the traditional metonymy of the mother as the static heart of the private and public family to frame mother characters as nerve centres for cultural anxiety, whether as aggressors, victims or both.

Chapter 1, 'Maternal Products and the British Kitchen Sink', takes a selection of key English social realist or 'kitchen sink' films and argues that the mother in the home is produced by the films' masculine identification and patriarchal undertones as a figure particularly heavily invested with the dangers

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of consumer culture. In these films, the 'bad mother', preoccupied with material objects, represents a threat of domestication, objectification and moral enfeeblement that the protagonist must overcome in order to maintain his subjectivity, individuality and masculine agency. Chapter 2, 'The Mass Reproduction of Mothering: *Une Femme Mariée* and *Le Bonheur*', looks at more critical approaches to this idea in works by Varda and Godard. In it, I consider contemporaneous discourses and critiques of consumer culture, Americanization and mass production in France and argue that motherhood and mothering figures are seen to have particularly intimate relationships to anxieties over 'reproducibility'. I show how Varda and Godard use domestic objects, settings and cultural images to explore these issues, converging on the figure of the traditional mother as the foremost symbol of mass reproduction.

The second part, 'Gestation', concentrates on the representation of unplanned pregnancy in film. With a close focus on abortion and reproductive rights, I look at how these issues are represented in English and French cinema, relating this to contemporaneous debates around the decriminalization of abortion in both countries. This part not only looks at moments of ambivalence in experiences of pregnancy, but also considers thinking on abortion as a 'gestational' moment for ideas on motherhood, as the debates that occurred in Britain and France essentially pitted the rights of existing women against those of an as yet imagined child. The significance of political debates over abortion, contraception and reproductive rights for feminist activity and thought in France and Britain during this time frame can hardly be overstated, and there has been a great deal of work documenting the legal histories of these campaigns. However, in bringing to light abortion and unplanned pregnancy as significant themes in contemporaneous cinema, this chapter breaks entirely new critical ground. It also seeks to illustrate how film representations do not merely supplement but offer important new insight to historiographies of reproductive rights, as they move away from the abstracted or polarized precedents of legal-historical literature and towards alternative narratives that instead foreground personalized experience and moral ambivalence and produce complex ethical relationships with victimhood.

Chapter 3, 'The "Permissive" Myth: Conservatism, Change and Contraception in Swinging London', takes films from the kitchen sink and Swinging London cycles and analyses the representation of abortion experiences from the identificatory perspectives of male and female characters, focusing in particular on their construction of guilt and victimhood. It begins by bridging thematically from Part I and setting out attitudes to representing abortion in the kitchen sink cycle, looking in particular detail at the well-known and controversial abortion scene in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960). The main body of the chapter is then devoted to a detailed and wide-ranging analysis of the remarkably prominent thematization of abortion and unplanned

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pregnancy in Swinging London films popular from the mid- to late 1960s. Chapter 4, 'Scene and Unscene: Reimagining Abortion in *La Génération Pepsi*', is similarly wide-ranging in scope, giving an in-depth account of trends in representations of abortion immediately before and during the New Wave. It concentrates on how the idea of the female 'victim' of abortion is presented and relates this closely to the historical context of reproductive rights in France. This is framed initially by a discussion of the solicitation of sympathy through excessive victimhood in earlier French melodramas, before moving on to a discussion of how approaches in the New Wave tended to subvert this trend.

Finally, the third part, 'Delivery', deals with the emergence of films that problematize the homogeny of mainstream motherhood narratives. Focusing on the idea of 'mothering in the margins', this part deals with difference within experiences and representations of mothering practices and kinship structures that are not addressed by mainstream European ideological mothering constructions. The part engages with two particularly urgent expressions of marginalized mothering experiences: the intersection of race, motherhood and family in (neo)colonial Britain and France – including films that deal with both migrant kinships and interracial parenthood – and the presence of queer identities within familial discourse. The aims of this final part are twofold. In the first instance, it works towards highlighting significant erasures in the homogenizing ideologies of motherhood described throughout the book and relates these to discursive anxieties of contemporaneous social politics. Secondly, it considers the potential for deploying filmic representations and film-making practices as political tools in the development of alternative subjective spaces for mothering identities and kinships.

Chapter 5, 'Whose Lineage is it Anyway? Migration and Racist Futurities', concentrates on interactions between discourses of ethnicity and migration and ideologies of motherhood in a selection of films from both countries. In particular, the contribution of this chapter is to analyse the representation of domesticity in these films and to show how mother figures become problematically attached to nationalistic identities. The chapter is closely informed by contextual detail and aims to highlight potent interactions between political rhetoric and film representation. Chapter 6, 'Queer Communities and Queer Failures in British Film', explores the (often relatively tacit) incidence of queer characters in films that feature unplanned pregnancy, mostly concentrating on British social realist and Swinging London films. A complicated trend is developed here in which queer-coded characters are often briefly represented as utopian kinship solutions for female protagonists with difficult or ambivalent relationships to motherhood, before ultimately dissolving into unfeasibility. This chapter puts these trends into the context of changing social and legal attitudes to homosexuality, and theorizes the representation of 'impossible' queer kinships within the context of Edelman's arguments on reproductive futurity.

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