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# Including Ourselves: The Role of Female Spectators in Agnès Varda's *Le Bonheur* and *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*

by Ruth Hottell

*Throughout her career, Agnès Varda has exposed the theory behind her practice and brought previously marginalized groups to the foreground in her films, including spectators in the interpretative, creative process. This article studies the general manifestations of engaged cinematic practices by focusing on two specific films directed by Varda, *Le Bonheur* and *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*.*

**Theoretical Introduction: The Female Spectator as Other.** In recent years, critics, theorists, and some filmmakers have sought to develop alternative configurations of the cinematic apparatus and to liberate it from the constraints of the Order. Among these theorists is bell hooks, who eloquently addresses the reactions of the gendered, racial other when affronted by mainstream cinema. She treats the violent erasure of black womanhood in mainstream film, her feelings as a spectator about that erasure, and the reactions of other black women. hooks also emphasizes the ambivalent reactions of black women to the absence of compelling representations of black femaleness and exposes the concessions they must make to experience spectatorial pleasure in classical narrative. Interviews with black women have confirmed her theoretical hypothesis—that critique and analysis have to be avoided to enjoy narrative pleasure since conscious resistance to identification as the Order provokes tension, even pain, upon realization of the true nature of the images afforded them on the screen.<sup>1</sup>

All spectators feel this complicitous, masochistic pain in front of images in which they find no “*semblable*.” That is, according to the theories of filmic identification, an integral component of pleasure in the cinema, the spectator seeks her/his likeness (*semblable*) on the screen.<sup>2</sup> Since mainstream narrative works on all levels to present the white male perspective as the norm, the implications for any other spectators can only be painful. Psychically, on some level, those “other” spectators know they have no place in the text other than to bolster the homogeneity of his image and to cooperate in convincing him that a merging of self and other is possible. Helping to ease his pain in this way not only denies the psychic pain of those at the margins of this white male trajectory but also augments it through masochistic complicity and denial of their own needs. Not only will desire never

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Figure 1. Agnès Varda filming *Les Daguerrotypes*.

be articulated in their terms and their difference never recognized, but they must also deny their own difference to receive the simulated pleasure from the text.

Are there other options for spectators? hooks says that many black women simply refuse to look—if films ignore them, they will return the favor. Refusing to look becomes a means of protest, of resistance. This might be the answer for the individual, but as an educator and scholar, hooks felt compelled to return to the cinema to learn how to articulate the manipulation she felt and to seek alternative voices that would include class, race, and sex. That is, as a film and cultural studies scholar, she possesses the theoretical tools to expose the abusive power of the apparatus; as an educator, it is her responsibility to translate her knowledge to her students, to teach them to deconstruct the glossy images themselves, thereby working toward mass recognition and consequent refusal by future generations of filmgoers to accept these images. Concurrently, she warns against isolating issues of race from those of class and gender, for decolonizing images cannot be created if we ignore the ways in which sex and class mediate racial identity. She posits that black women and men need to fully engage in the work of liberation but recognizes the impossibility of such collaboration unless black male filmmakers challenge and change sexist thinking.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, coupled with the need for black male filmmakers to treat issues of class and sex is the need for cooperative efforts to alter the traditional hegemonic apparatus. As hooks reminds us, “Any artist whose politics lead him or her to oppose imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, white supremacy, and the everyday racism that abounds in all our lives would endeavor to create images that do not perpetuate and sustain domination and exploitation.”<sup>4</sup>

Throughout her theoretical work, hooks builds on earlier feminist film theory that broke new ground regarding the ideological import of mainstream narrative and its images or screen(ed) memories. This enlightening body of theory provokes deconstructive analysis and engaged inquiry based on several key questions that prove relevant to this study as well. Among these questions are the following: Why return to mainstream films? Why watch films that not only exclude but mutilate the Other?<sup>5</sup> Does the price of the ticket or the video rental contribute to the promulgation of the elision? As if in answer to these questions, Annette Kuhn offers a critical manifesto for feminist thinkers who long to explore gender and representations. She explains that to seek alternatives to repressive representation, one must first understand how mainstream cinema manipulates images. Laying bare the correlation of politics and knowledge in deconstructing texts and detecting their inherent ideology, she reminds us that “theory and practice inform one another. At one level, analyzing and deconstructing dominant representations may be regarded as a strategic practice. It produces understanding, and understanding is necessary to action.”<sup>6</sup>

Another feminist film theorist, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, also speaks to this need to expose the apparatus that erases the lines between the *énoncé* and the *énonciation* in cinema, thus bringing to light what the mainstream obscures. She traverses psychoanalytic theories of identification and the ways in which mainstream texts have exploited the psychic desire for seamless sutures and closure to manipulate images of self and other. That is, in mainstream cinema, the glossiness of the finished text, the attractive trappings of the *énonciation* (how things are presented), mask the *énoncé* (what is actually being said) along with its real, its ideology.<sup>7</sup>

As a scholar, bell hooks utilizes these theories to read films; as an educator, she brings them to her students so they can pierce the protective apparatus surrounding the *énoncé*, the message and its ideology. She watches films with a critical eye, guarding herself from masochistic pleasure as much as possible. Stripping away the images from the protective coverings of the apparatus (i.e., music, soft-focus lens, and the other trappings) protects us as critics from falling prey to participation and identification with the victimization of the Other on the screen. Implicit in Flitterman-Lewis’s discussions of the exposure of the apparatus is the next step for educators and scholars: to share those insights with others, to help them remove their blindfolds and uncover their eyes in front of the violent erasure.

Although feminist theorists such as Flitterman-Lewis, Kuhn, and Laura Mulvey specifically address the gendered image of the Other, their theoretical underpinnings and maps for deconstructing the polished product function for racial, ethnic, and class others equally well; it is this kind of deconstruction that bell hooks uses in stripping the varnish from gentrified texts. When she returns to the cinema, then, it is with a critical eye but also with positive expectations, hopeful she will find films that include her in an active role as a spectator. Her essay “The Oppositional Gaze” ends with a discussion of how a feminist filmmaking practice would/could break apart the trappings of the cinematic process to voice the concerns, lives, and desires of all those who are not white males.

**Theory to Practice: Feminist Filmmakers.** Other theorists who are also filmmakers, such as Trinh T. Minh-ha and Julie Dash, have postulated various progressive filmmaking techniques and have practiced those techniques in their films, creating texts that afford central roles and positive images to gendered, racial, and ethnic others. For example, Dash has detailed her critical agenda in her book that discusses her film *Daughters of the Dust* (1991).<sup>8</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha has written of the residual imperialism inherent in postcolonial situations, discussed the political use of alternative filmmaking, and described her position with regard to theory and its place in her films.<sup>9</sup>

As filmmakers, Dash and Trinh have put their theories to the test by creating filmic worlds in which those marginalized by the Order take up central places of importance and voice. In *Daughters of the Dust*, for example, Dash valorizes the black woman's locus of identification through camera angles and editing as well as through the use of a nonlinear narrative structure that foregrounds traditional African rituals and beliefs. Dash thus assumes the role of *griote*, celebrating the intersections of the black woman's African and American experiences. For her part, Trinh exploits her position as a Vietnamese American in *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (1989) to indict both the neocolonial power exerted by France in Indochina and the othering of Vietnamese refugees in U.S. culture.

For bell hooks, the progression in her journey toward the discovery of alternative texts is useful because she describes very eloquently the trajectory often followed by feminist scholars. That is, as spectators ourselves, at some point we realized that we were uncomfortable when confronted with films that consistently replayed and reconfirmed the white male's search for dominance, coherence, and homogeneity. We found ourselves faced with the same choices hooks encountered: shut down our interpretive faculties in return for traditional narrative pleasure or learn to strip bare the images and blow the whistle on the authorities to anyone who would listen that, in effect, "the emperor has no clothes." As we discover the erasure and requisite complicity and denial of self, as we acquire voice ourselves, we also realize the Order's compulsion to divide and conquer to diffuse the power of the Other's revelations. In other words, pitting various "Others" against each other in competition for a piece of the pie obscures the identity of the master chef who controls the pie itself. Hence, the primordial issue for engaged film and cultural scholars remains that the various camps must learn from each other and build on preceding work rather than rejecting it because of its omissions. The resultant combined body of theory can lead to expression of the Other in all its permutations.

To continue splicing the theoretical work together, one should consider critics such as Judith Mayne and Flitterman-Lewis, who begin by exposing the power of the image and the function of the cinematic apparatus in furthering mainstream ideology and then move to seeking expressions of the Other's discourse in film. These two scholars are particularly important because Mayne began working with French texts and later moved to include American ones, while Flitterman-Lewis initially studied American films and then moved to French cinema. Because of the intellectual rigor of their work and their emphasis on Francophone feminist filmmaking, these two scholars have contributed greatly to the study of feminist film

theory and the search for the return of the repressed in French and American film. Specifically, in her cross-disciplinary study, *The Woman at the Keyhole*, Mayne emphasizes the inseparable ties and the common objectives that connect filmmakers across political and geographical boundaries. Her view of transnational engaged cinema underscores the conscious agenda of contemporary women filmmakers to reinvent film and represent the gendered Other's desire and points of view.<sup>10</sup>

Flitterman-Lewis has written the first book-length study in English on feminism and the French cinema, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema*. The contributions of her work to feminist film theory were treated earlier in this article; a more detailed discussion of her applications of film theory to French feminist film will follow.

For other feminist scholars, such as Laura Mulvey and Trinh T. Minh-ha, their critical discoveries led to films of their own. Among Mulvey's experimental films are *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1976), *Frida and Tina* (1982), and *Crystal Gazing* (1982). Trinh's include *Reassemblage: From the Firelight to the Screen* (1982), *Naked Spaces—Living Is Round* (1985), and *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam*. As they set out to use their artistic talents to answer their own critical voices, they in turn had to make decisions concerning narrative pleasure. Similarly, in an article published in *Female Spectators* in 1988, filmmaker Michelle Citron (*Daughter Rite*, 1978) suggests that feminist filmmakers in the 1970s were convinced that all forms of narrative pleasure had to be rejected as irremediably redolent of phallogentrism, whereas in the 1990s, many have posited that disallowing all forms of narrative pleasure often results in alienation of the very audience feminist filmmakers are trying to reach. Citron feels that engaged filmmakers have the choice of making films for each other or of reinventing narrative pleasure in such a way as to include what the mainstream would exclude.<sup>11</sup>

Some of these as yet unresolved questions remain at the heart of the feminist debate. Is narrative pleasure irrevocably intertwined with a repressive and alienating dichotomy between self and other? Must filmmakers and filmgoers alike renounce all claims to pleasure to break apart the power dyad, or can narrative pleasure be reinvented (as Citron suggests) to formulate an "inclusionary cinema"?

The French author and filmmaker Marguerite Duras opted to reject conventional narrative pleasure altogether, openly expressing her disdain for what she called the "first" spectator (meaning the average or primary viewer), that is, the spectator who attends a film screening because some critic has sanctioned it for its personal draw and its accessibility to the general public. Duras described the position of these spectators as immoral and accused filmmakers who create for them of emanating from a position of similar immorality.<sup>12</sup> She voices her resentment with typical Durasian eloquence, sharpened as always by her irascible wit: "May they drown in it [i.e., the race for ticket sales] together, the filmmakers and these primary spectators. We are separated . . . In what terms would we address them? We don't know their language and they don't know ours. This difference between them and us harks back to the great uncharted lands of history."<sup>13</sup>

Duras unequivocally posits herself, and the *we* of her text (i.e., those practicing a *cinéma d'auteur*), on the opposite side of an unfathomable abyss from the

cinematic language understood by the general public. For Duras and other such feminists, trying to bridge the gap would only mean losing, even betraying, their creative selves in the process.

Conversely, another gifted Francophone filmmaker, Chantal Akerman, would seem to have opted for constructing a flexible connection between the two sides of the chasm by reinventing narrative pleasure while affording voice to those excluded by the mainstream. Additionally, Akerman's style becomes fluid as she experiments with different forms and degrees of narrative pleasure throughout her oeuvre. For example, in *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), we find a classic experiment with reel/real time, including long scenes of peeling potatoes, grinding coffee, washing dishes, and running errands. The monotony of Jeanne's daily activities and Akerman's refusal to condense time in those sequences reinforce our understanding of Jeanne's desperation and allow for comprehension of her seemingly unmotivated violent act in the film's climax (which occurs during the penultimate scene). Although the length of the film (three and a half hours) has been a deterrent for the average moviegoer and difficult even under the best of viewing conditions, it is this very discomfort that underscores Jeanne's routine and uncovers the crescendo building toward her act of violence. The final scene, a long, static shot of Jeanne seated at the dinner table following the murder, provides further clues regarding her mental state. Her expression is the same as she displayed earlier in the kitchen and in the café and, in fact, throughout the film. Consequently, the spectator realizes that Jeanne's demeanor functioned as a mask, revealing nothing of her inner turmoil. As we make the connection between the postmurder and premurder Jeanne, so also do we glimpse the depth of the pent-up emotion that has always been present under her calm exterior and her ordered life. In involving the spectator directly and affording space for individual interpretation, Akerman thwarts traditional narrative expectations and replaces them with a variation on spectatorial participation and pleasure.

Another film by Akerman, *News from Home* (1976), with its static camera and refusal to provide classical narrative, meets with resistance from primary viewers, who voice resentment at the denial of conventional narrative pleasure. Upon reflection and/or with pre-viewing preparation, however, viewers recognize that the very techniques that bore prove to be the founding blocks of Akerman's reformulations of narrative pleasure. That is, rather than leading the spectator as psychically constructed by mainstream cinema to the mirror/screen to passively observe another (fictional) world, Akerman takes us through the looking glass and places us *with* the narrator, a young woman with a foreign accent, as she reads letters from home. (The young woman is Akerman herself during a year spent in New York.) Specifically, many of the scenes were shot on the New York subway system, either from the platform or inside subway cars; the filming technique functions in many ways like the rocking of a subway car, punctuating the letters from the narrator's mother and emphasizing the stark contrast between life in New York and the narrator's tight-knit Old World family. The film's pauses and slow rhythm translate the narrator's angst and the discomfort provoked by her position between the two worlds. Without ever openly articulating the tension or presenting any

acts of violence, the text still eloquently transfers those feelings to the spectators, thus subverting the techniques of mainstream cinema and replacing them with spectatorial participation and reflection.

Akerman's play with narrative expectations has not been limited to these two films; in fact, she has experimented with desire and articulated it in terms that fit the project at hand throughout her career. For example, in her more recent film, *Nuit et jour* (1991), she plays with a structure that appears at first to exemplify a more traditional narrative but that actually breaks apart fixed definitions and categories of desire and pleasure. Using a mobile camera and an easily recognizable narrative structure (with a beginning, middle, and end—of sorts, at least), Akerman follows a young couple's life in Paris in a way that foregrounds the woman's perspective. She sets up a paradigm where a young woman is the pivotal point of a love triangle, but, unlike *Jules et Jim* (1961),<sup>14</sup> the emphasis is on her and her point of view, not the male's. That is, *Nuit et jour* consciously posits itself against traditional New Wave films that purport to be about women but are not. Akerman's character, Julie, becomes a *flâneuse* on the streets of Paris, but one who subverts the traditional Baudelairean *flâneuse* rather than reinforcing it. That is, city wandering as depicted by Baudelaire is a process of anxious, angst-ridden attraction to and repulsion of the city and its crowds. The *flâneuse* suffers a paranoid feeling of engulfment, all the while seeking loss of self within the crowd; he or she masochistically participates in the *fort/da* cycle created by the dark, mysterious city. In other words, the *flâneuse*, as delineated by Baudelaire and emulated throughout classical mainstream literature and cinema, consistently reenacts the psychic scenario described by Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and referred to as the *fort/da* game.<sup>15</sup> In this psychic scenario, the infant (presumably male) watches his mother leave the room and always fears, on some level, that she will not return. When she does return, his fears are allayed until she leaves again, perpetuating the cycle of fear/expectation/rejection. According to Freud, the individual is compelled to replay this scene throughout life with precious objects and people metaphorically representing the mother. He must constantly reject the desired object to relieve the fear that it will leave, but he rejects it always with the hope/need that it will return/be retrieved. Consequently, the subject will masochistically reject/send away an object or person (the *fort* stage) to fulfill the need to witness a return (the *da* stage). In classical narrative terms, the tension inherent in the waiting period is translated by the requisite suspense, always praised by "primary" critics. In the traditional *flâneuse* context, the poet places himself in the waiting phase of the *fort/da* scenario to provoke the tension deemed necessary for the creative spirit.

In opposition to and in outright rejection of the masochistic scene, Akerman's *flâneur* engages in a wandering *émerveillement* (amazement) of the city streets, embracing the boulevards, opening up rather than closing herself off from the city. Her experience is one of joyful sensuality and comfortable exploration of the streets rather than masculinist apprehension of the familiar yet mysterious space (the *unheimlich* [uncanny] space in Freudian terms). Furthermore, Julie acts in accordance with the filmmaker's long-standing views on feminine pleasure in film.

That is, in a 1977 interview in *Camera Obscura*, she discussed what she calls *la jouissance du voir*:

We speak of “women’s rhythm,” but it isn’t necessarily the same for all women. . . . But you know, some theorists say it is because we experience pleasure in another way than men do. . . . I really think that in movies it’s right there. When I saw *Hotel Monterey* again this morning, I really thought it was an erotic film. I felt that way—*la jouissance du voir*.<sup>16</sup>

The difference between Akerman’s earlier work and *Nuit et jour* lies in her fluctuating vision of narrative desire and her constant exploration of its various permutations. Unlike Duras, who disdains spectators who go to films for amusement, those she calls *premier et infantin* (primary and infantile),<sup>17</sup> Akerman joins with the spectator and brings us along on her experimental wanderings. Rather than distancing herself from the “average” spectator, she bridges the gap between the *cinéma d’auteur* as described by Duras and the cinema of amusement as manipulated by mainstream narrative. Akerman’s cinematic oeuvre, as she seeks to include the gendered Other, echoes the theoretical tone espoused by bell hooks as she calls for inclusion of the gendered, racial, and ethnic Other. Concurrently, Akerman answers Trinh’s critical call to decolonize the look.

**Agnès Varda: Inclusive Spectatorship.** An in-depth study of specific works by an engaged cinéaste can provide concrete examples and models and offer strong practical applications of the theoretical concept of inclusive spectatorship—inclusive in that those objectified and excluded in traditional cinema are afforded a position as subject and included as desiring actant. To conduct this experiment, I will examine two works by one of the best-known French filmmakers, Agnès Varda. Her firmly grounded reputation as precursor to the New Wave, with *La Pointe Courte* in 1954, and the critical place she occupies as a member of the Left Bank intellectuals afford her a unique role in French cinema.<sup>18</sup> She is undoubtedly the best-known female French cinéaste both within France and abroad, all the while remaining true to her ideological and philosophical goals. Conversely, the manifestations of her agenda, as well as her subtle irony, have often suffered misinterpretations by critics and cinephiles of all persuasions. To illustrate and uncover the misunderstandings and their implications for theories of spectatorship, we will first consider her body of work in general, then move to a closer scrutiny of two particularly underappreciated films, *Le Bonheur* (1965) and *L’Une chante, l’autre pas* (1977).

Generally speaking, Varda would seem to have maintained a middle ground throughout her career, that of actively changing cinematic practices without alienating spectators, for she has always believed in ensuring a certain degree of “easily recognizable” narrative pleasure in her filmmaking. In a 1974 interview with Jacqueline Levitin, Varda stated: “We shouldn’t forget that film is a popular art; people go to movies to have a good time. They don’t want to be taught all the time. That’s why we have to change the image of women, but we have to be careful not to become such bores that no one wants to listen to anything.”<sup>19</sup> In opposition to Duras, then, Varda wants to keep the average moviegoer in mind and to avoid boring her/him. At a 1991 NEH Summer Institute I attended, Varda discussed the

need to keep the spectator's attention as well as her strategies for overcoming that moment (about an hour into the film) when attention is likely to wane.

Unlike the seemingly objective stance taken in mainstream narrative, Varda's cinema is one of subjective inclusion: she includes herself, her friends, and her family directly and indirectly in her films. She honestly admits, "I am always very precisely implicated in my films, not through narcissism but through honesty in my approach."<sup>20</sup> Varda's honesty in this context reflects her belief that the filmmaker is always implicated in her/his work and should admit that involvement, that subjective stance, rather than perpetuate the myth of artistic objectivity. By exposing the self in this open, nonnarcissistic manner, Varda also opens the text to include the spectatorial Other in a dialogue. That is, for Varda, to admit the presence of self is also to recognize the presence of the spectator/Other rather than relegate it to the role of blank slate to be manipulated by the cinematic apparatus.

The creative result of this inclusive agenda is a body of work blending documentary and fiction—regardless of whether the project was of a documentary or fictional nature at the outset—that often serves to represent a given period. In this respect, her films remain true to the origins of cinema (i.e., moving pictures, photography of real life). Yet as she has progressed through her filmmaking career, Varda never forgets her roots in photography, art, and literature. Each of those professions/loves plays an important role in her films.<sup>21</sup>

An example of how she weaves each into her text occurs during the opening credits of *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*. The credits and the title roll over shots of a shop window; reflected in the window are sights evocative of Paris: cars (among them the distinctive Deux Chevaux), passersby, shops, buildings distinctive of the haussmannisation period. Inside the shop window, the camera foregrounds a photograph of a melancholy woman, her chest half-covered by a draping robe, looking directly at the camera. (This direct look at the camera is further prioritized in later Varda films and plays a central role in her 1985 film *Sans toit ni loi*.) The camera cuts to a Vardian *flâneuse*, a young girl walking lightly along, swinging her school bag and chewing gum as she gazes nonchalantly into shop windows. During this opening, we are introduced to Varda's first direct inclusion of self in the text in the form of a voice-over. The personal, exploratory voice-over is a favored technique for Varda that plays some role in almost all her films beginning with *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1961). In all instances, she uses it to establish a connection between herself and the film, between herself and the spectator, rather than as a distancing device that informs and instructs (as is the case with the omniscient male voice-over of mainstream cinema).<sup>22</sup> In the opening sequence of *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*, Varda's voice joins the visual images to introduce her film: "The film you are about to see is about women, men, work, music, love, marriage or not, children or not, and friendship. It is about, well, life. It could also be subtitled, 'women are made, not born,' as our great Simone says, Simone de Beauvoir."<sup>23</sup>

The young girl (Pauline, Pomme as she will later be known) stops her carefree stroll to stare at the images of women in the photographs in the shop. Intrigued by the sadness she sees displayed there, she enters and recognizes photos of a former neighbor. This discovery supplies the exposition of the main narrative thread, the

renewal of the friendship between Pomme and Suzanne, the young woman in the photos. Through these photos, the spectator is brought into the relationship at the moment it is rekindled; that is, the photos serve as the same visual reminder for the spectator as they do for Pomme. The scene, then, acts as a frame that reminds us of Varda's loves and filmmaking priorities and then blends smoothly into the narrative structure.

I see a pattern emerging in Varda's work that is similar to the critical trajectory experienced by bell hooks. That is, hooks traces her critical evolution by explaining that she learned first to articulate her discomfort/pain when affronted by the violent erasure of black women, then moved to seek texts that expressed something other than the white male perspective—ones that included her body and desire rather than denying them. Whereas hooks seeks manifestations of the gendered, racial Other in texts, Varda visually and narratively reformulates romantic paradigms to insert the elided gendered presence. hooks explains that the white male trajectory was her constant filmgoing diet during her formative years. For her part, Varda received a classical French education, steeped in the study of "great" Western literary classics. She moved from studies in philosophy (a field that, in France, includes literature, languages, and the arts) to a first career as a photographer. In 1954, when she made her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, she had no prior experience behind a film camera and, in fact, had seen few films herself (a detail that must have helped her find an alternative vision since she had virtually no negative spectatorial expectations to overcome). In her personal filmmaking process, Varda utilizes the techniques gleaned from photography, pays homage to her early education, and critiques, from various angles, the classical texts of her intellectual background.

In *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*, Varda implicitly critiques the nineteenth-century romantic hero and posits a reworking of the angst suffered in that tradition. Overlaying the classical, masculine *mal* with the concrete, material suffering of the feminine survivor (the gendered Other elided from the great romantic texts), she explores practical twentieth-century solutions to a notion that venerated narcissistic masochism. Varda draws visual parallels between the suffering poets and the characters in the film, then makes further connections throughout the narrative, for example, in the scene in which Suzanne laments her situation—living in poverty with two children and a married photographer who cannot officially recognize his children. The shot is constructed in a way that brings Suzanne into the frame with a picture of Baudelaire behind her. Baudelaire, the prototype of the angst-ridden romantic figure, is directly represented by Jérôme, Suzanne's convivant and starving photographer, who is paralyzed at the mere idea of going for a walk with Suzanne and their children because he finds the poverty and misery of the streets too oppressive.

Varda's palette is most openly impressionistic in *Le Bonheur*, which she has referred to as a tribute to the impressionists. Here, she uses a cyclical symphony of colors to complicate the implied connection between repetition in nature and the replacement of one woman for another. In *Le Bonheur*, Varda exposes the hypocrisy of bourgeois, romantic ideas of happiness, but her heroines do not reject their own

complicity in the vicious cycle designed to hide the injustices at the edges of the system. Conversely, in *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* (made some twelve years later), Suzanne shakes off the effects of what the French today call existential angst but that is largely the replaying of the nineteenth-century *mal du siècle*. Like the traditional romantic hero, Jérôme cannot function in the world around him, where he is overwhelmed by sadness and alienation—what we could call the “reflective René syndrome.”<sup>24</sup> In an act of desperation, Jérôme hangs himself. But subverting the romantic text, Varda’s film does not dwell on this event; rather, it follows Suzanne’s struggle to overcome the same existential angst as well as her depression at the loss of her mate.

The difference in focus between *Le Bonheur* and *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*—namely, the differences in the women’s reactions to situations presented to them by men—shows us Varda’s development as a filmmaker. In other words, Varda’s critical/creative trajectory first satirizes and exposes the hypocrisy of the system, then moves to create a fictional world in which women, their communities, friendships, problems, and joys become the central points of the narrative.

Varda’s subtle satire and creative explorations have often been misinterpreted or dismissed upon cursory viewing and reflection; however, concurrently, the subversive nature of her films has provoked a wide range of critical response, running from one end to the other of the political spectrum. *Le Bonheur*, for example, was hailed by some as an ironic exposé of the hypocrisy of the middle-class concept of happiness (particularly marital) and of the position of women as interchangeable in the domestic scenario, while others lamented its surface-level acceptance of bourgeois standards of marital bliss and stereotypical male and female roles. Scholars such as Flitterman-Lewis have pinpointed the true nature of the film, explaining that the sometimes exaggerated, sometimes distorted details underscore the subversion of patriarchal ideology. Consequently, the repetition of clichés, heightened through narrative and technical devices to the point of becoming caricatures, forms the basis for a feminist critical evaluation of dominance and the consequences of a certain concept of well-being.<sup>25</sup>

In exposing the strained seams suturing together the traditional concepts of happiness, Varda exposes the marginalized Other excluded from the classical configuration of the happy family. Significantly, she leaves one important narrative thread untied—that of the (supposed) suicide of the first wife. On the surface level, Thérèse seems to remove herself voluntarily from the triangle, thus removing the disruptive element from the male’s psyche and returning cyclical symmetry to the text. She is therefore reduced to a plot function and stripped of subjectivity. However, the dreamlike sequence of her drowning, reminiscent of the surrealistic visions of *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (1923) by Germaine Dulac, reinstates her position as subject and bares the messy seams for scrutiny, thus winking metaphorically at the spectator in an appeal to those who find themselves excluded from traditional texts and at the edges of tidy representations of happiness.

In an interview with Jean Decock, Varda describes the societal tension she transcribes to her film:



Figure 2. A grief-stricken François clutches Thérèse's drowned body in *Le Bonheur*.

In talking about *Le Bonheur*, I have said that it's like prosciutto and cantaloupe, or a beautiful, seemingly perfect fruit with a worm inside, for the concept of happiness is very necessary. . . . We have the cliché of happiness, the image from *Marie-Claire* magazine, but all the while a tragedy has occurred. There is a beautiful fruit but you have to know at what moment the worm appears, or maybe there are lives where the worm remains always just under the apple's skin. Society needs families that function. Each of us is unique and replaceable—unique as a person, as a personality, and replaceable in society, as a social function.<sup>26</sup>

This study would be remiss if it ignored the ambivalent critical reaction to *Le Bonheur*, especially since the variation itself serves as proof of the need for deeper analysis and reflection on the implications for spectatorial expectations. As is often the case with Varda's films, not all the critics grasped her subtlety at the time; many even decried the film's total lack of irony and apparent utter acceptance of the patriarchal model. Yvette Biró delineates one of the details that caused commercial critics to shut down analysis, thus foreclosing the Other's threat to the Order. As Biró explains, "It seemed like a sacrilege to many that Agnès Varda had excluded any kind of self-inflicted punishment that one would rightfully expect from the penitent survivors."<sup>27</sup> The use of the term "sacrilege" is revealing in the psychoanalytic sense of displacement and transference; the actual sacrilege for the system is not the lack of auto-punishment itself but rather what that lack reveals concerning the ideological function of the period of penitence, namely, that after some atonement, the cycle can continue. In erasing the liberating (for the romantic hero) period of self-deprecation, Varda peels back the skin from the fruit and exposes the worm that the Order would keep hidden under the skin.

Although critics did not agree on the underlying ideology of *Le Bonheur*, they demonstrated indirectly a realization that the film was not merely a straightforward

fiction film but aimed instead to elicit reactions leading spectators to enter directly into the cinematic world and use their own experiences and definitions of happiness to color their reception of the movie. As Flitterman-Lewis recognizes, Varda was interested less in provoking critical reactions from professional critics than from spectators.<sup>28</sup> Instead, Varda outlined situations for spectators, exposed the holes behind the sutures, and left them in a productive, subjective position from which to draw their own conclusions, rather than in an objective, passive position in which homogeneous, nondisruptive conclusions were fed to them.

Varda has addressed the issue of her appeal to and inclusion of spectators in a productive process of questioning and has exposed her agenda at play behind the open, ambiguous situations she presents for them. She explains this exploratory journey in the following way:

I try to pose these questions in a way that is both clear and ambiguous, so that the spectator may pose them to himself or herself in turn. Finally, it's a spectacle that demands a certain kind of activity from its spectator. . . . It became a matter of confrontation, of consciousness, of *prise de conscience*. . . . The film exposes a situation. Obviously, each spectator draws his or her own conclusion, judging the characters by personal criteria.<sup>29</sup>

In posing the questions and walking through the text with her spectators, Varda inverts the expected proportions between great human emotions and daily activities—those great emotions are diminished in importance, while daily tasks are punctuated by *Le Bonheur's* distinctive musical score. A precursor, then, to Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, Le Bonheur* foregrounds the daily household routine and valorizes it in an ironic tribute. The result is subtle subversion that, like the worm in the apple, requires some peeling (i.e., deconstructive) techniques to uncover. Biró further details Varda's deconstructive devices, saying:

What makes all these intoxicating, sweet pleasures dubious? The answer lies in this succession of beautiful sights, in this continuation with no apparent rifts, in this seemingly endless happiness. . . . The great human emotions are . . . present in this film by Varda: love, mourning, the quest for beauty, but they all appear on a small scale. And it is precisely these diminished proportions that bring this vagueness to the film, that bless it with a fundamental, ironic tone, which conceals itself at first, then shows itself all the more and calls everything into question.<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, upon conscious reflection, these grand human emotions reveal their function as understatements in the text; that is, in downplaying them, Varda draws attention to them, even to the point of outraging critics/spectators who missed the irony, the invitation to question. Through brilliant colors that explode on the screen, accompanied by a score of Mozart's music, Varda accomplishes what Akerman will ten years later (i.e., *Le Bonheur* was made in 1965, *Jeanne Dielman* in 1975) without the initial tedium for the spectator of reel/real time. The symphony of colors and music reinforces the cyclical nature of housework and indirectly, discretely, critiques what René Prédal has called the "mâle inconscient"<sup>31</sup> and the substitution of one female for another in the interest of furthering the continuum of romantic ideals of family, work, and leisure.

The film's refusal to judge François and his egocentric philosophy of "du bonheur en plus" in a direct manner causes a violent reaction in the spectator. This jolt, this metaphorical wrench thrown in the works of the narrative, displaces traditional expectations slightly, just enough to expose the political import literally behind the scenes or, in Flitterman-Lewis's terms, to highlight the *énoncé* by stripping away the glossy trappings of the *énonciation*, those that obscure the ideological significance of the mainstream text. In Vardian terms, she exposes the *non-dit* of the text by uncovering the worm in the fruit; that is, the *non-dit* of her *cinécriture*—the unspoken message stashed between the lines of her text—is a critique of the concept of happiness from the inside of traditional bourgeois dichotomies.

Never one to remain static in her approach to the spectator, in 1977 Varda made *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*, which was branded by many as the ideological opposite of *Le Bonheur*. The same critics who berated what they saw to be an unproblematic acceptance of the status quo in the earlier film bemoaned the unquestioning idealism they saw directed at the "mauve period" of French feminism in the latter film. On the one hand, these critics did not totally miss the mark in interpreting the text, for women are the subject at every level of this film, and Varda makes no secret of that fact. This prioritization is evident from the first moments since the film begins with a voice-over in the opening scene (characteristically, Varda's own voice) that pays tribute to Simone de Beauvoir and echoes her famous sociological discussions: "Women are made, not born." Throughout the film, and at every level, Varda explores the implications of this maxim and exposes women's lives and communities exclusively in a novel manner.

Consequently, *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* functions on one level as a quasi-documentary of life in France in the 1970s and, specifically, life for women during that period. Women's stories, friendships, and problems permeate this film from its core to its edges. The story of two friends who remain close despite distance and the differences in their personalities, it infuses documentary and actual women's issues into a fictional narrative of women's relations. Throughout the film, their relationships are foregrounded, and men become secondary figures, serving as an excuse for a pun (*fils-père*)<sup>32</sup> of the kind for which Varda is famous and/or as a vehicle through which to have her own son enter the fictional world.<sup>33</sup>

Varda's voice-over informs us that the two women kept in touch through a "quiet dialogue punctuated by postcards." The film follows the flow of the postcards; we are included in the dialogue as the camera switches from one woman to the other, sometimes showing uncanny similarities in their activities. The title itself emphasizes the view of friendship to be shown in the text—one sings, the other doesn't—an odd juxtaposition that highlights the women's differences while showing the lack of importance those differences hold. That is, the punctuation is not the stronger break one might expect (period, dash, or semicolon) but a comma, allowing more flow between the independent clauses. No transition word exists, so neither woman is defined in terms of the other; each stands freely on the other side of the comma. These differences, this contradiction that is not one, represent further the inclusive nature of Varda's *cinécriture*: rather than obscuring difference, her filmic world embraces it and evinces an understanding that celebrates

the supposed psychic split/contradiction between self and other. Rather than foreclosing the Other as mainstream narrative must, since the psychic division represents a danger to the fantasy of a monolithic self and to the quest for regaining an imagined/imaginary plenitude, Varda's cinema embraces contradiction, thus encompassing self and other/Other as a whole, representing an alternative plenitude, one that includes all elements rather than marginalizing and excluding some.

To return to Varda's specific creative agenda, examples of the quiet support and closeness the two "different" women share abound in this film, but particularly indicative is a scene in Suzanne's home in Hyères soon after Pomme has returned from Iran to have her baby near her mother and friends. After spending an afternoon cooking together, Pomme and Suzanne are resting and chatting. Suzanne reveals a secret from her earlier days of poverty in Paris—she admits that she did not use the money Pomme and Jérôme scraped together for her abortion in Switzerland but instead visited an illegal abortionist in Paris and used the rest of the money to pay rent and other urgent bills. Obviously, Pomme is dismayed because Suzanne discloses that she later experienced complications and can no longer bear children, and ends by telling her, "Never mind. We'll have this one together . . . We'll have fun." This touching scene not only foregrounds the closeness between the two friends but also emphasizes the connection between women regarding children and childbirth.<sup>34</sup>

*L'Une chante, l'autre pas* does more than work against the dominant model—it denies it any importance. Varda makes no apologies for foregrounding women; rather, she openly prioritizes women characters and women's communities and includes the female spectator in much the way mainstream narrative never apologizes for male-centered "buddy" movies. The film thus becomes more than just a matter of subversion then, because subversion implies acknowledging the power of the dominant system over the Other. Varda does not just posit another reality; she describes reality in the feminine, shows it, and lives it with her characters. It is not an alternative reality—it is the reality of the film. Masculinist romantic traditions and right-wing definitions of family values are scrutinized in/under the lens of Varda's camera, not just in the scene described above but throughout the film.

The text contains an epilogue—just enough closure to provide a semblance of narrative pleasure, but not so much as to give answers. As Flitterman-Lewis reminds us:

As a director, Varda is interested in questions, not answers. For feminists concerned with meanings and with films, this implies grasping the political power of those questions. It means seeing those questions not as limitations, which is how traditional masculine hierarchies of value understand them . . . but as options that allow the productive engagement in the act of questioning itself.<sup>35</sup>

As with *Le Bonheur*, spectator reaction to *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* was varied but never tepid. Tepid responses are possible only if one can remain outside the film, observing and studying but not participating. The outside observer's role is not an option in Varda's work; even in spite of ourselves, we are always involved and included in the film. The readings may not always be positive, but the last thing they



Figure 3. The power of friendship: Suzanne and Pomme at the end of *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*. Courtesy Robert Picard/Ciné-Tamaris.

can be called is complacent. (This phenomenon even holds true for films in which we are estranged from the main character, for example, Mona in *Sans toit ni loi* [the U.S. title is *Vagabond*]). Here, sympathetic identification is replaced by repulsion/revulsion.) Both female and male spectators are encouraged to interpret the narrative and the images, mulling over the questions the films present but refuse to answer. In contrast to classical Hollywood film, and often uncomfortably so for masculinist viewers, the female characters enjoy a central role in the narrative and the males are relegated to secondary roles, even when the subject purportedly treats a man's happiness. It is the discomfort brought about by this unfamiliar situation that has motivated negative commentaries. That is, the rupture of the homogeneous notion of roles, endings, and interpretations provokes a discomfort among complacent viewers and startles them into a position of questioning; this provocation represents the suggestive, progressive nature of the film. It is the unfamiliar nature of the emphasis that breeds productive, active viewing.

Varda is fully conscious of the ambiguity of her work, and she uses Pomme's song in the penultimate scene of *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* and the interchange regarding it to act as her *porte-parole*—like Pomme, Varda strives to celebrate womanhood through words, deed, and song. The song in question, “La Femme bulle,” celebrates women and motherhood. After the lyrics, “Oh, it's good to be a bubble. It's beautiful to be a balloon, a workshop for molecules, a beautiful ovule, a cell factory, a big fat fish,” a woman in the audience at the women's center interjects: “You know, your song's ambiguous. It also suits the right-to-life movement. To some extent, you make women who don't want to have kids feel guilty.” Pomme's answer clarifies her position: “I'm not saying you have to have kids, I'm saying . . . when you're pregnant, you should feel things yourself and not listen to the State or Church or family value legislation. I express what I am feeling, using women's images . . . showing, singing, and celebrating them.”

The song is interrupted by the exchange, then continued—almost as if Varda interrupts herself to interact directly with the skeptical spectator/listener and then

returns to the song. This is the last bit before the epilogue, so it is meant to remain as one of our final memories of the film. It serves as a kind of documentary of the time and a final reminder of what womanhood and women's communities represent for Varda. Once again, she takes the spectator on a long voyage to a feminine land, emphasizing the historical and sociological aspects of women's lived experiences.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, through Varda's portraits of women, the spectator can reconstruct forty years of French civilization, trace social evolution in the twentieth century, and even recognize her own daily existential preoccupations.

**Conclusion.** As spectators, we recognize these layers of importance in Varda's cinematic agenda. On an individual level, the gendered spectator whose self is elided in mainstream cinema can break through the ideological misrecognition (in Lacanian terms) promulgated by that cinema and realize a position of subject in front of the mirror metaphorically represented by the screen, thus subverting the traditional interpretation of woman's place (or lack thereof) in the mirror stage. On a collective level, gendered communities relegated to the margins of classical narrative take up a position of value at the center. Finally, on a theoretical level, the subversive power behind questioning is exposed, and the spectator learns productive engagement as opposed to passive acceptance of marginalized status.

Varda has coined the term *cinécriture* to represent her cinematic world, her theoretical agenda, her creative process, and, most important perhaps for the spectator, the finished product. As the opening credits of *Sans toit ni loi* roll, we read "Un film cinécrit par Agnès Varda." This simple reminder heralds Varda's personal implication in her film and draws parallels to other theorists treating forms of feminine expression, or *écriture féminine*. Linking herself to "our great Simone" in *L'Une chante, l'autre pas*, as well as to the now twenty-year-old French feminist theoretical tradition, Varda roots herself firmly within that intellectual backdrop and consistently reworks what a questioning, inclusive text might look like. Space here has not allowed us to treat the inclusion in Varda's films of the racial, ethnic Other, although examples abound throughout her career. A study of more general issues present in her cinematic world would prove enlightening and inspiring.

Typically, scholars apply various forms of theory to Varda's films to study the various layers of meaning within, for, like an onion, the more we peel away the surface layers, the more intrigued we become by the questions posed therein. As a result of the richness of her texts and her own published theoretical work, perhaps the ultimate test of the universality of her critical and fictional world would be to apply her theories and her questions to films that pinpoint specifically issues of race, ethnicity, and class. Ultimately, such an inquiry could be a way to meet bell hooks's critical cry for the need to bring together discussion of various kinds of marginalization and thereby unite issues of race, class, and gender in cooperative, engaged practices.

## Notes

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1. bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 119–21.
2. See Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, trans. Ben Brewster (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), and feminist film theorists who treat the psychoanalytic process inherent in identification (e.g., the mirror stage). Particularly relevant here is the introductory chapter in Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). For a general overview and introduction to feminist film theory and the reinterpretation of Lacan's work, the reader is referred to Constance Penley, ed., *Feminism and Film Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988). The earliest work by Laura Mulvey in the 1970s, linking visual pleasure to ideology in mainstream narrative, has led to theories that subsequent film and cultural studies scholars have expanded to account for issues of race, ethnicity, and class.
3. See bell hooks, "back to the avant-garde: the progressive vision," *reel to real: race, sex, and class at the movies* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 98–108.
4. *Ibid.*, 103.
5. For a succinct discussion of the mutilation of female characters and, through identification, the female spectator, see Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks," in Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, and Linda Williams, eds., *Revision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism* (Frederick, Md.: American Film Institute, 1984), 83–99.
6. Annette Kuhn, *The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality* (Boston: Routledge, 1987), 8. See her introduction for a thorough discussion of developments around the concept of ideology and the interdependence of politics and knowledge.
7. See Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 1–23.
8. Julie Dash, *Daughters of the Dust: The Making of an African American Woman's Film* (New York: New Press, 1992).
9. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Post-Coloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), *The Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), and *Framer Framed* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
10. Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
11. See Michelle Citron, "Women's Film Production: Going Mainstream," in Deidre Pribram, ed., *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television* (New York: Verso, 1988), 45–63.
12. Marguerite Duras, *Les Yeux verts* (Paris: Les Cahiers du Cinéma, 1987), 25, 26. This work has appeared in translation, but film scholars should consult the original text in French for the references to psychoanalytic film theory that are implied by the Duras text but lost in translation (i.e., the concept of separation of self and other and the connection—identification in psychoanalytic terms—between filmmaker and spectator).
13. *Ibid.*, 27, my translation.

14. Many critics have overlooked the orientation of this film. Conversely, Flitterman-Lewis has discussed Truffaut's film with an eye toward the female image and the text's treatment of it. She asks: "What is it about this film that makes it so seductively purport to be about female desire when it is, in fact, masculine fantasies of the woman that are put into play? What is it about these questions that makes them all partake, irreducible, of 'the cinematic' par excellence?" Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "Fascination, Friendship, and the 'Eternal Feminine,' or the Discursive Production of (Cinematic) Desire," *French Review* 66, no. 6 (May 1993): 941–46 (quote is from p. 942).
15. See Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), 8–11.
16. Camera Obscura Collective, "Chantal Akerman on *Jeanne Dielman*: Excerpts from an Interview with *Camera Obscura*, November, 1976," *Camera Obscura* 2 (Fall 1977): 118–21.
17. My translation. The main difference between my translation and the published one is the emphasis afforded the words "primary" and "infantile" as well as the etymological similarity to "primal." See Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier* for discussions of the relevance to spectatorial identification and filmgoing motivation of the Lacanian notion of misrecognition, the Imaginary, the mirror stage, as well as Freudian notions of screen memories.
18. See Roy Armes, *French Cinema since 1946* (New York: Barnes, 1970), 97–108.
19. Quoted in Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 236.
20. René Prédal, "Agnès Varda. Une oeuvre en marge du cinéma français," in Michel Estève, ed., *Agnès Varda* (Paris: Minard, 1991), 15.
21. Most recently Varda has published what she calls "une balade parmi quelques uns et quelques unes de ceux qui ont coloré ma vie." Agnès Varda, *Varda par Agnès* (Paris: Editions Cahiers du Cinéma, 1994). As the title indicates, the work is a collection of essays discussing Varda's filmic world by the person who is both Varda the filmmaker and Agnès the person; it is invaluable for scholars studying her origins, sources, agenda, and her *cinécriture* in general. (Quote is from the book cover.)
22. For a detailed discussion of the use of voice-over in Varda's films, see Ruth Hottell, "Flying through Southern France: *Sans toit ni loi* by Agnès Varda," in *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, forthcoming.
23. *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* is available on video in the United States through various companies. The English-subtitled version uses Varda's voice in the voice-over, and she has translated her original script into English. The original French version can be viewed at the Vidéothèque de Paris.
24. The name René is taken from the title character of the Chateaubriand work of 1802. The text is a direct precursor to literary romanticism, and René represents the prototype of the suffering romantic hero.
25. Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 232.
26. Jean Decock, "Entretien avec Agnès Varda sur *Jacquot de Nantes*," *French Review* 66, no. 6 (May 1993): 232, my translation.
27. Yvette Biró, "Les Cariatides du temps ou le traitement du temps dans l'oeuvre d'Agnès Varda," in Estève, ed., *Agnès Varda*, 49, my translation.
28. See Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 233–34.
29. Quoted in *ibid.*, 233–34.
30. Biró, "Les Cariatides du temps," 50–51; my translation.
31. See Prédal, "Agnès Varda," 23.

32. *Fille-mère* was the expression used for a single mother; *fils-père* would be the masculine equivalent but was not in common usage. Varda's pun is humorous while drawing attention to sexism in the culture and language.
33. Her son, Mathieu Demy, plays Zorro, a secondary character in the film. In 1987 he became the central figure in her film *Kung-fu Master* (the U.S. title, *Le Petit Amour*, avoided a misrecognition as a martial arts film). Varda believes that including her children in her films is one way of joining the personal and the professional, thus averting an oppositional pull between the two. See Varda, *Varda par Agnès*, 186–87.
34. See Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 245–64, for discussions of extralinguistic communication between women.
35. Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 314.
36. See Marie-Claude Tigoulet, "Voyage en pays féminin," in Esteva, ed., *Agnès Varda*, 69, my translation.