

**UNSTITCHING THE 1950s *FILM Á COSTUMES*: HIDDEN  
DESIGNERS, HIDDEN MEANINGS**

Volume I of II

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## **Abstract**

*This thesis showcases the work of four costume designers working within the genre of costume drama during the 1950s in France, namely Georges Annenkov, Rosine Delamare, Marcel Escoffier, and Antoine Mayo. In unstitching the cinematic wardrobes of these four designers, the ideological impact of the costumes that underpin this prolific yet undervalued genre are explored. Each designer's costume is undressed through the identification of and subsequent methodological focus on their signature garment and/or design trademark. Thus the sartorial and cinematic significance of the corset, the crinoline, and accessories, is explored in order to determine an ideological pattern (based in each costumier's individual design methodology) from which the fabric of this thesis may then be cut. In so doing, the way in which film costume speaks as an independent producer of cinematic meaning may then be uncovered. By viewing costume design as an autonomous ideological system, rather than a part of mise-en-scène subordinate to narrative, this fabric-centric enquiry consolidates Stella Bruzzi's insightful exploration of film costume in *Undressing Cinema, Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (1997). Where this study diverges from previous work, however, is in its focus on specific costume designers to illustrate the way in which the costume of costume drama may operate as a complex component of cinematic signification in terms of gender, authenticity, status and power.*

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## INTRODUCTION

*'Good heavens!' said I, 'if it be our clothes alone which fit us for society, how highly we should esteem those who make them.'*

(Marie Ebner von Eschenbach, *The Two Countesses* (1893) cited in Breward, 1998: 389)

*Costume dramas, despite their continuing popularity, have rarely elicited anything other than rather derogatory or cursory attention.*

(Bruzzi, 1997: 35)

*The 1950s are, like the 1970s, one of the 'forgotten decades' of academic work on French cinema, caught, for those who like the simplicity of 'important movements', between the 'Golden Age' of the 1930s and the New Wave of the late 1950s and early 1960s [...] When you add to that Truffaut's vitriolic and much publicised rejection of the Quality Tradition in his 1954 article (Truffaut 1976), it is clear that the 1950s never stood a chance.*

(Powrie, 2004: 5)

Despite being a major visual component of cinema, film costume<sup>1</sup> and the personnel responsible for its design and manufacture, have tended to receive scant recognition.

This thesis aims to re-dress this oversight. Pam Cook has remarked that 'The marginalisation of costume design by film theorists is marked enough to be diagnosed as a symptom.' (Cook, 1996: 41) Within the work that does exist on the topic of film costume, several writers cite its close interweaving with fashion as a reason for its undervalued critical status (Cook, 1996: 44), (Church Gibson, 1998: 36), (Moseley, 2005: 1), (Street, 2001: 1). Fashion has frequently been cast as a 'frivolous' enterprise, which in privileging aesthetics becomes accused of ideological vacuousness and vanity by its critics. For example, William Hazlitt has described fashion as 'the abortive issue of vain ostentation and exclusive egotism.' (Hazlitt cited in Breward, 1998: 4)

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<sup>1</sup> I am using 'film costume' here to mean all diegetic sartorial items including accessories.

Christopher Breward suggests that such condemnation arises from a fear of how fashion *does* function ideologically:

We know why they [detractors of fashion] are afraid. Fashion is potent because it is the outward and visible sign of emotions many of us prefer to keep hidden. [...] But fashion has a broader significance than the merely personal. Clothes articulate society in the most direct and revealing of ways. (Breward, 1998: ix)

Fashion's ability to generate discourses on all aspects of society – gender, sexuality, class, politics etc. - renders it a fertile art form for discussion. Such a discussion is particularly revealing when combined with artistic modes of display, for instance cinema. Film costume screens fashion through an incorporation and showcasing of various contemporary trends and designer labels on the star bodies it records. Fashion designers themselves may even be charged with providing and/or designing for film (either in conjunction with costume designers or individually). In the French context this has notably occurred in *Belle de jour* (Buñuel, 1967) and *Le Cinquième élément* (Besson, 1997), which feature costumes designed by Yves Saint-Laurent and Jean-Paul Gaultier respectively. Even in films set in the past, such as the costume drama, fashion finds a way to make an impact, for historical costumes are often subtly updated with trends of the contemporary period of production in mind.

Through its links with fashion, film costume has often been overlooked as a viable area for analysis. Thankfully, not all share this narrow view. Texts such as Sue Harper's discussion of Gainsborough melodramas (1987) and (1994), Pam Cook's work on period film costume (1996), Jane Gaines' and Charlotte Herzog's edited volume *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body* (1990), Stella Bruzzi's *Undressing Cinema, Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (1997), Sarah Street's *Costume and*

*Cinema, Dress Codes in Popular Film* (2001), and Rachel Moseley's edited book *Fashioning Film Stars, Dress, Culture, Identity* (2005) assert positive and insightful discourses on film costume through cinematic, sociological and psychological frameworks. I will not go into further detail here for a full discussion of these key texts will take place in the chapter following this introduction. Using these existing studies on film costume as its theoretical base, this thesis will unstitch the wardrobes of the 1950s French costume drama (*film à costumes*). However, this study will deviate from established approaches to film costume analysis to date via its specific focus on the *costume designers* responsible for this body of film's wardrobes. I have chosen to look at the work of four costume designers, who designed predominantly for *film à costumes* during this decade, namely Georges Annenkov, Rosine Delamare, Marcel Escoffier, and Antoine Mayo.

In disrobing the work of Annenkov, Delamare, Escoffier, and Mayo, the scope of this thesis is to recognise and showcase the hugely important role of these forgotten costume designers, by re-ad-dressing a selection of 1950s costume dramas through a sustained costume-centric textual analysis.<sup>2</sup> To achieve this, I shall identify the signature garment of each individual designer, as a sartorial signifier by which the rest of their wardrobe may then be unstitched across the various texts and star corporealities they have dressed. In so doing I will not only illustrate the rich and varied nature of film costume in relation to diegetic bodies, but consider the costumes themselves as independent producers of meaning, thus presenting an alternative sartorial view of 1950s *costume* drama. In considering costume to be capable of functioning as a separate signifier in its own right, my ideological positioning adopts that set out by Bruzzi (1997). Bruzzi

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<sup>2</sup> The reasoning behind the choice of this selection of films will be outlined in the individual case-studies on the four costume designers in parts two and three of this study.

asserts that items of clothing in film are capable of stitching their own meaning into cinematic fabric by acting as ‘spectacular interventions that interfere with the scenes in which they appear and impose themselves onto the character they adorn.’ (1997: xv) As such, film costume is not just subordinate to narrative, and may create its own alternative discourse, a prospect this thesis will explore in its treatment of costume design.

In the process of deciding which specific costume designers to concentrate on, I initially chose to bring together the four most prolific *film à costumes* designers of the decade: Delamare was first on the list, due to her huge costume output and commitment to the genre in question (costuming thirty-two *film à costumes* during the 1950s alone), making her the most productive of the four designers in question.<sup>3</sup> Escoffier soon followed as the costume designer with the next most extensive filmography, and whose repeated dressing of one of *the* female star bodies of the 1950s, Martine Carol, makes for an interesting coupling (as discussed in part two). Mayo was the third *costumier* to come to my attention, not so much for the size of his filmography (although he is still the fourth most productive costume drama designer of the decade), but because of the sustained political edge with which his costumes are imbued (as I will explore in part three).

Originally, the fourth costume designer I had chosen was Jean Zay, seemingly the third most prolific designer of the 1950s, positioned between Escoffier and Mayo in terms of his output. Unfortunately, extensive research into Zay in French archives produced

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<sup>3</sup> See filmographies at the end of this thesis for full details.

nothing. All that was available were the actual recordings of the films he had dressed.<sup>4</sup> Due to this disappointing lack of material, I turned to another prolific *film à costumes* designer of the 1950s, Georges Annenkov, whose frequent collaboration with the director Max Ophuls provides a clear opportunity to look for patterns of costuming. The mystery surrounding Zay remains, therefore, and may be an interesting line of enquiry for further development and analysis of 1950s costume design if information should be unearthed in the future.

The objectives of showcasing these four costume designers' wardrobes and how the costumes within them may function as independent producers of meaning, will be realised via an answering of the following research question: taking the four designers' signature garments as a catalyst, how do the costumes of each function ideologically? For example, how does each designer's filmic wardrobe specifically operate and generate discussions of gender, historical authenticity, status and power? The treatment of gender by Annenkov, Delamare, Escoffier and Mayo via the mode in which gender is sartorially (re)presented in their on-screen costume designs as worn by star bodies will, therefore, be a significant thread of analysis to follow (particularly given the 'feminine' nature of costume drama, a point I shall return to below). As will historical authenticity, which is always a consideration of the costume drama as a genre that simultaneously speaks to two timeframes - the timeframe it is (re)creating, and the contemporary timeframe in which it is produced – a factor that is always paramount for the costume designer who must tread between historical fashions, contemporary technologies of dress and budgetary limitations. In addition, status and power will be addressed in relation to the standing and position of the star bodies dressed in each *costumiers'*

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<sup>4</sup> Archives consulted were housed at the *Bibliothèque du film* and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris.

designs, but will crucially also consider these designs' power to have status and meaning of their own within the text.

Given the popularity of the costume drama genre with French audiences it is perhaps surprising how little attention has yet been shown to the 1950s *film à costumes* - in fact, as I shall now explain, little attention has yet been shown to the mainstream cinema of this decade as a whole. The paucity of research into the French cinema of the 1950s is due, in large part, as Powrie's earlier quote makes clear, to the dismissal of this period of French cinema as a '*cinéma de papa*' or 'daddy's cinema' by the critics of the *Cahiers du cinéma* journal. This branding of much 1950s film product as bland and obsolete by the *Cahiers* group, (especially Truffaut), has led to an ongoing critical disregard for a whole generation of cinematic production.<sup>5</sup> The *cinéma de papa*, of which *Cahiers* was so contemptuous, was in effect what has come to be known as the Quality Tradition or *tradition de qualité*; a mode of filmmaking marked by expensive studio sets and lavish costumes, polished camerawork and editing, and heavy script-led dialogue (frequently adapted from French literary classics) (Hayward, 1993: 140). As one can infer from this description of the *tradition de qualité*, in terms of its production values, it was a propitious time for the production of costume dramas. The genre was both prolific (one hundred and fourteen costume dramas making up fifteen percent of all films) and popular, with a great majority attracting large audience figures.<sup>6</sup> Small wonder that the 1950s has since been dubbed the 'Golden Age' of costume drama. Yet despite making up such a large proportion of France's total filmic output, featuring

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<sup>5</sup> See Truffaut, François (1954), 'Une Certaine tendance du cinéma français,' *Cahiers du cinéma*, 31, 15-29.

<sup>6</sup> Some of the top-grossing costume dramas of the 1950s were as follows: *Violettes impériables*, Pottier, 1952, 8.125.766 million spectators (2<sup>nd</sup> highest-grossing film of the year); *Fanfan la tulipe*, Christian-Jaque, 1952, 6.712.512 spectators (3<sup>rd</sup> highest-grossing film of the year); *Les Grandes manœuvres*, Clair, 1955, 5.301.504 spectators (5<sup>th</sup> highest-grossing film of the year); *Les Misérables*, Le Chanois, 1958, 9.966.274 spectators (2<sup>nd</sup> highest-grossing film of the year).

exquisitely dressed stars, and being so popular with the cinema-going public, 1950s film production has been remembered with indifference. However, this indifference is not just symptomatic of French costume drama, but the genre as a whole.

The fashionable pairing of historical dress and star bodies in the costume drama has seemingly rendered it a genre intended for female spectators. As Bruzzi notes, ‘principally the costume film is aimed at a largely female spectatorship.’ (1997: 35) To which Hayward has added, ‘Costume dramas, in that they offer fashion on a truly spectacular dimension, typically target the female audience.’ (2000a: 22) The genre’s appeal and gendered nature, then, stems from its costume design. I would suggest this link between female spectatorship and film costume (with its supposed frivolity due to its aforementioned close-knit relationship with fashion), is one of the reasons why the costume drama has been derided as trivial and inauthentic by many critics (Higson, Wollen, Craig *et al*).<sup>7</sup> Given this sartorially based propensity to view the costume drama with suspicion, coupled with the near critical erasure of the 1950s *tradition de qualité*, one can comprehend why the *films à costumes* from this decade have been understandably (yet unjustly) neglected.

Some scholarly roads into the *tradition de qualité* have now been made by academics such as Chapuy, Hayward, Sellier, Tarr, and Vincendeau.<sup>8</sup> Yet to date, this work has

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<sup>7</sup> See Higson, Andrew (1993) ‘Re-presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film’, in Friedman, Lester (ed.), *Fires Were Started, British Cinema and Thatcherism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; London: UCL Press, pp. 91-109; Wollen, Tana (1991) ‘Nostalgic Screen Fictions’, in Corner, John, and Harvey, Sylvia (eds.) *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture*, London: Routledge, pp.163-178; Craig, Cairns (2001) ‘The British Heritage Cinema Debate: Rooms Without a View’ in Vincendeau, Ginette (ed.) *Film/Literature/Heritage: A Sight and Sound Reader*, London: BFI Publishing, pp. 3-6.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapuy, A. (2001) *Martine Carol filmée par Christian-Jaque: un phénomène du cinéma populaire*, Paris: L’Harmattan; Hayward, S. (2004a) ‘Signoret’s star persona and redressing the costume cinema: Jacques Becker’s *Casque d’or* (1952)’, *Studies in French Cinema*, 4:1, pp. 15-28; Tarr, C. (2000) ‘From Stardom to Eclipse: Micheline Presle and Post-War French Cinema’ in: Sieglöhr, Ulrike (ed.) (2000)

concentrated on auteurs, stars, the thriller and social-realist cinema rather than the *film à costumes*. So far, specific research on the 1950s costume drama has applied itself to article-length studies on star bodies, their performances and costumes, such as, Hayward on Signoret, and Tarr on Presle.<sup>9</sup> This thesis aims to build on Hayward's and Tarr's treatment of the French costume drama through a sustained analysis of the cinematic wardrobes of these *films à costumes* as designed by Annenkov, Delamare, Escoffier and Mayo.

In my search for information regarding these costume designers, as expected, I found little data relating specifically to them. Rather, the criticism I unearthed tended to relate to the *film à costumes* as a generic type as opposed to discussing its costume design. Even the contemporary reviews of the films very infrequently mentioned costume design or designer, and if a remark was passed then it was only in relation to the exquisite appearance of the star. I did, however, uncover four publications, two interviews, and numerous sketches directly relevant to the four costume designers, which alongside the films themselves form the weft upon which my analysis is woven. Annenkov himself published two books on his career, *En Habillant les vedettes* (1951) and *Max Ophuls* (1962); Nikita Malliarakis has written on his father, Mayo, in *Mayo, un peintre et le cinéma* (2002); Madeleine Delpierre, Marianne de Fleury, and Dominique Lebrun mention all four designers in the catalogue that accompanied the *Élégance française au cinéma* exhibition in 1988. An interview with Delamare dating

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*Heroines Without Heroes, Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema, 1945-51*, London and New York: Cassell, pp. 65-76; Sellier, G. (2001) 'La Reine Margot au cinéma: Jean Dréville (1954) et Patrice Chéreau (1994)', In Krakovitch, Sellier and Viennot (eds.) *Femmes de pouvoir: myths et fantasmes*, Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 205-218; Vincendeau, G. (2000) *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema*, London and New York: Continuum.

See also, Chirat, R. (1985) *La IVe République et ses films*, Renens: 5 Continents/Paris: Hatier; Gilles, C. (2000) *Le Cinéma des années cinquante par ceux qui l'ont fait: interviews exclusives, Tome V, La qualité française, 1951-1957*, Paris: L'Harmattan; and Passek, J-L. (1988) *D'un cinéma l'autre: notes sur le cinéma français des années cinquante*, Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou.

<sup>9</sup> See note 8.

from 1996 exists in French film periodical *Positif*, and a short dialogue with her in 1979 is available from *L'Institut national de l'audiovisuel's* on-line catalogue. In addition the *Bibliothèque du film* has costume design sketches for all four designers in its archives. However, the book-length studies I found treat costume only in relation to the development of plot and character. They do not consider it to function as a stand-alone ideological product, which whilst touching on narrative and characterisation, can nevertheless create independent sartorial meaning within the *film à costumes*.

Costume drama as a generic type is somewhat woolly in its definition due to the number of different filmic approaches that may all incorporate historical costume (the historical film, the period film etc.). However, following Hayward and Pidduck, I take costume drama to be a film set in a historical period but which may not faithfully reproduce historical events. Rather, costume dramas refer to their historical setting predominantly by means of their costume (Hayward, 2000a: 75; and Pidduck, 2004: 4). Thus in costume drama's historical framing, frequent sidestepping and/or reworking of the past occurs, posing the question of historical fidelity.

As the past that the costume drama recreates often has no recourse to the exact reproduction of actual historical events, history becomes subverted, adapted to suit narrative needs. Adaptation in relation to the costume drama is, therefore, not just limited to that which frequently takes place from novel to screen, for an adaptation of time, space and place also occurs. For example, take *Nana*, a novel by Émile Zola first published in 1880 and adapted by Christian-Jaque as a *film à costumes* in 1955 (and undressed in part two of this thesis). The novel written and based in Zola's present makes it a socio-historical fabulation set in the nineteenth century. This original text is

‘authentic’ in terms of time and space. However, the adaptation, in this case the costume drama, cannot replicate the authenticity of this moment for it is already past/passed. The adaptation must also contend with its own present moment in time and space, that of the 1950s.

Thus one ends up with three different timeframes: history/histoire 1 – Zola; histoire 2 – the adaptation; and histoire 3 – the historical moment of the 1950s. Costume then functions to unite these three histories, bridging the spatio-temporal gaps between them as it refers to all three histories simultaneously – spanning them in the sense of the Latin word *transladare*. This treble positioning of the costume drama in relation to time, space and place has implications for the genre’s mode of address, and subsequently that of the costume designers whose work this thesis examines. As Pidduck has asked, ‘Do these mannered interiors [of costume drama] present a nostalgic flight from the social and political contradictions of the present, or do they offer a retrospective canvas for the working through of contemporary dilemmas?’ (2004: 2-3)

The costume drama certainly purports to address the once authentic past moment, as signalled by historical sets and costumes. Indeed the films belonging to this genre are dressed in the past in much the same way as the protagonists within these films are adorned with it. Yet the fact that this history is reworked and subverted into three different histories must not be overlooked. Costume, *mise-en-scène*, actors’ bodies, film technology and techniques, and dress technology and techniques, are all marked by the contemporary period in which the film is made (in this case the 1950s moment), whilst attempting to appear as though marked by the past time-period in which it is set. This is the path between timeframes that the costume designer of the *film à costumes* must

tread, which reveals ‘historical’ costume to be artifice, an intricate masquerade that filters the present by means of the disguise and displacement of the past.<sup>10</sup> Through historical denotation, costume creates enough distance from contemporary events and issues that these same events and issues may then be reflected back to the spectator from the safety of a ‘historical’ viewpoint.

In answer to Pidduck’s question then, the costume drama can indeed articulate contemporary dilemmas by way of ‘a retrospective canvas.’ (Pidduck, 2004: 3-4) Yet given the large role costume plays in filtering the present through the past, perhaps retrospective *costume* is more accurate. This in turn bears another question - what cultural and political dilemmas contemporary to 1950s France does the apparel of the *film à costumes* address or indeed dis-address? As outlined earlier, the ideological impact of costume is the main focus of this thesis, yet the socio-political context of the 1950s cannot be ignored in this process. A brief overview of the main social, cultural and political discourses that characterised the 1950s will then follow the discussion of costume theory in chapter one. Given costume drama’s focus on the feminine, this overview will make particular reference to 1950s dialogues of gender.

In the links already made between costume, fashion, and femininity in relation to the *film à costumes* one must not forget the star bodies that will be wearing Annenkov’s, Delamare’s, Escoffier’s and Mayo’s designs. An analysis of the complex web of meaning that arises from the pairing of contemporary flesh and historical costume is then needed. The body/garment dyad is a complicated one, in which two seemingly separate entities entwine themselves to the point where it is problematical to determine

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<sup>10</sup> This notion is of course applicable to set design as well.

both corporeal and vestimentary boundaries when the body is dressed. As such, a discussion of this tricky relationship of clothing the star body will also form part of my analysis of costume design.

The thesis falls into three parts, each part composed of several chapters. Thus in part one, following chapter one's discussion of theory and context, chapter two will define each costume designer's signature garment/prominent design feature, and the accompanying methodology by which I will unstitch their wardrobes to reveal the intellectual pattern from which the shape of this thesis will be cut. Parts two and three will comprise two minor and two major costume design case-studies respectively. Each of these case-studies will include a bibliographical analysis preceding the exploration of costume, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the production as well as the wearing of these designers' film costumes. Having set out the measurements of this research project, I will now cut the cloth of part one.

**PART ONE:**  
**SARTORIAL THEORY,**  
**METHODOLOGY AND CONTEXT**



## CHAPTER 1: THEORY AND CONTEXT

### 1.1: Fashionable In-Roads: Unpicking Theory to Date

Publication on fashion has been and continues to be widespread. However, film and fashion theories have mixed less frequently, although a small if noteworthy collection of texts addressing cinema and fashion/costume simultaneously does exist. I will outline these texts here in order to present existing critical theory on film costume, and to illustrate my own methodological position.

Publications concerned specifically with costume design are few and far between, and where found focus mainly on Hollywood costume design and designers during the studio era. For example, Chierichetti's *Hollywood Costume Design* (1976), and *Edith Head: The Life and Times of Hollywood's Celebrated Costume Designer* (2003); La Vine's *In a Glamorous Fashion: The Fabulous Years of Hollywood Costume Design* (1980); and Schreier's *Hollywood Dressed and Undressed: A Century of Cinema Style* (1998). Very little of the role of costume design in the French context has been recorded, but a notable exception is Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun's *L'Élégance française au cinéma* (1988).

Although not directly concerned with cinema, Elizabeth Wilson's book, *Adorned in Dreams* (1985), is one of the first academic challenges to fashion's supposed frivolity. She theorises fashion history from a favourable feminist perspective, presenting it as a possible site/sight of opposition as well as ambiguity. In so doing, she counters the views of other feminist writers, such as de Beauvoir (1949), who have considered

fashion to be a form of female enslavement.<sup>11</sup> Following Wilson, Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog's edited collection, *Fabrications, Costume and the Female Body* (1990), analyses various aspects of fashion and costume in film. It consolidates Wilson's earlier feminist positioning and unpicks cinematic representations of women's dress as a mode of self-representation. In terms of the costume of costume drama, Sue Harper and Pam Cook have used the British Gainsborough melodrama as a means of considering the symbolic value costume may assert, in *Fashioning the Nation, Costume and Identity in British Cinema* (Cook, 1996), *Picturing the Past, the Rise and Fall of the British Costume film* (Harper, 1994) and 'Historical Pleasures, Gainsborough Costume Melodrama' in Gledhill's *Home is Where the Heart Is* (Harper, 1987). In particular, their studies address the sexual symbolism of clothing as a complex signifier, and so begin to move towards a discourse of costume that is not necessarily bound by a film's narrative.

However, in the publications set out above, the predominant focus remains the ability of a garment to reveal the identity of the body of its wearer, granting the body primacy over the clothing that adorns it. Thus cinematic clothing as an ideological system in its own right, and its subsequent effect(s) on the spectator have tended to be sidelined in the studies mentioned above, which view a film's apparel as subordinate to narrative structure.<sup>12</sup> Stella Bruzzi has noted that this has effectively afforded clothing a 'mandatory bridesmaid status' the reason for which being that 'there lurks the assumption that clothes, though evocative and complex signifiers, are a means to

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<sup>11</sup> See for example, de Beauvoir, S. (1953) *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley, New York: Knopf, p.529.

<sup>12</sup> However, Jackie Stacey's 1994 publication, *Stargazing*, is a notable exception here even if her analysis of film costume is rather brief. See *Stargazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*, London and New York: Routledge.

understanding the body and character who wears them not an end unto themselves.’

(Bruzzi, 1997: xiv)

In an attempt to re-dress clothing’s corporeal dependence, Bruzzi has broken new ground. In *Undressing Cinema* (1997), she discusses film costume’s ability to act as an independent producer of meaning through the notion of spectacular clothing as narrative interjection. In addition, in relation to the costume drama in particular, Bruzzi draws an extremely useful distinction between clothes that are looked at and clothes that are looked through:

Films such as *Howards End* or Ang Lee’s *Sense and Sensibility* look through clothes, as the major design effort is to signal the accuracy of the costumes and to submit them to the greater framework of historical and literary authenticity. Costume films that, conversely, choose to look at clothes create an alternative discourse, and one that usually counters or complicates the ostensible strategy of the overriding narrative.’ (Bruzzi, 1997: 36 my emphasis)

Following Bruzzi, Gaines has written on costume in ‘On Wearing the Film, *Madam Satan* (1930),’ in Bruzzi’s and Church Gibson’s *Fashion Cultures* (2000). In order to explore the relationship between costume and the female spectator, Gaines approaches costume through a phenomenological reading to establish how it becomes an independent producer of meaning. And in *Costume and Cinema, Dress Codes in Popular Film* (2001), Street has applied this same notion of costume as an autonomous signifier to an analysis of film costume in conjunction with the concepts of adaptation and intertextuality. Whereas Moseley’s edited book, *Fashioning Film Stars, Dress, Culture and Identity* (2005), examines the relationship between stardom, diegetic clothing, and clothing worn by stars off-screen as constructions of identity.

In Warwick and Cavallaro's *Fashioning the Frame* (1998), a more psychoanalytical approach to dress is taken. Using Lacanian notions of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, as well as Kristeva's thoughts on the abject, this insightful study pushes the borders of current understanding of both the limits of clothing and the boundaries of the body. Pertinently, the authors recognise the existing wealth of critical thought on the corporeal but also the dearth of material covering the dressed body. *Fashioning the Frame* answers this need by exploring how clothing may exhibit the workings of the unconscious of the wearer, asking in the process '*where does the body end and where does dress begin?*' (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: xvii author's emphasis)

The borders of the body are troublesome to discern, being far more fluid in their existence and construction than one may comfortably care to admit. The body, therefore, is not the safely bounded whole it is often assumed to be. Yet such a concept was fairly inconceivable in the 1950s French context, given that it was trying to reconstruct the notion of a unified nation in the light of the trauma it suffered during the war (of which more below in section 1.2). This period attempted to project the ideal body as unified and controllable, when in fact it was in a predominantly unacknowledged state of flux. The dressed body further complicates this tension between corporeal fluidity and unity, for dress frames the body, so containing it, while simultaneously broadcasting the body, uniting it with other bodies (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: xvi). As such, the dressed body is ambiguous. Due to this ambiguity, dress further challenges the indistinct borders of the body, as well as supporting the corporeal ideal of unity. Clothing 'insulates private fantasies from the Other, yet it simultaneously connects the individual self to the collective Other and fashions those fantasies on the model of a public spectacle, thus questioning the myth of a self-

contained identity.’ (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: xvi) A tension between self-preservation and self-dissemination is therefore created: ‘Dress, then both defines and de-individualises us.’ (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: xvi) Thus, the garments one chooses to wear reinforce bodily flux as the limits of the corporeal are further blurred by occupying the material spaces of clothes, spaces of uncertainty that serve to concurrently separate and unite bodies.

In order to reach a further understanding of the involved relationship between body and garment, specifically in costume drama, one must turn to the apparel that lies in direct proximity to the body and dictates its shape according to the fashionable silhouette of the particular era – underwear, or, the foundation garment, i.e. the corset and the crinoline. Foundation garments have greatly influenced the costume drama wardrobe decisions of Annenkov, Delamare, Escoffier and Mayo, for the adoption of an authentic historical silhouette immediately signals the adherence of film costume to a previous era. All four designers have distinctive relationships with the corset and/or crinoline, therefore, which inform their signature garments (the tool by which their costume design will be unpicked in parts two and three).

Following Bruzzi and Warwick and Cavallaro, I consider costume to be equally as important a signifier as the body and a signifier that fabricates its own vestimentary, social, cultural and political codes. Thus the combining of initial research on the 1950s French costume drama along with the pioneering directions of Bruzzi and Warwick and Cavallaro will provide a foundation on which to ground my own research. In effect this academic base will function as a tailor’s mannequin upon which a new ideological

pattern for discussing 1950s French costume drama can be cut and fashioned - moved left-field into a specifically costume-centric space.

## 1.2: Clean Clothes: Clean Country - Tensions in 1950s France

The 1950s in France was a time for prolific change both culturally and politically.

Change centred on three major elements: modernisation, the role of women, and decolonisation. One needs to recall that France's role as a nation during World War II was far from glorious and that by 1945, France was in ruins with 74 of her *départements* devastated from conflict. In such a desperate situation and with a view to regaining power status within Europe, France accepted aid from the USA. This support took the form of military security and economic regeneration under the Marshall plan (Gildea, 1996: 8-9). However, American assistance came with conditions: first, the French budget had to balance and inflation be kept under control so that the dollar held its value, and second, the USA be granted free trade with France and access to resources in her Empire (Gildea, 1996: 8-9).

This accession to free trade with America had a huge impact on French cinema. Under the 1946 Blum-Byrnes agreement, France settled that they would show indigenous films for no more than thirteen weeks a year, allowing a huge influx of dubbed Hollywood products to flood the market. Tellingly, it was the consumerist ideology that these Hollywood films sold that became the gauge for French modernisation. As Ross has noted, post-war progress became 'measured against American standards' (Ross, 1999: 90) and this appraisal continued into the 1950s. And yet this influx of all things bright and beautiful from the USA did not sit easily with all of the French population. Indignant cries about a nation becoming *coca-colonisée* could be heard as revolt against American cultural imperialism began to take hold, resulting in a rather love/hate relationship with America developing by the 1950s (Gildea, 1996: 6-10).

The key signifiers of France's 'coca-colonisation' and subsequent shift to a consumer society were represented in the 1950s by the car, clean white electrical goods for the home, and urbanisation (Ross, 1998: 1-13). Such indicators of modernity were valued as visible markers of progress, allowing France to prove to herself that a post-war diet of mass consumption had left the occupation firmly in the past. Accompanying this ideology was the notion of cleanliness; the drive for modernity with its clean lines, shiny surfaces and glossy appeal would supposedly wipe clean the wartime experience (1-13). However, as Ross explains (1998: 72-77) rather than bleaching out the past, modernity (as with the myth of the Resistance) could only mask the scars left by World War II. Accordingly, the continuing climate of political fear post-1945 went hand in hand with the shift to consumerism. Fear was allayed through consuming and the French woman was placed at the heart of this relationship, located as a figure of perpetual shopping and consumption (Laubier, 1990: 28).

In the 1950s, the home became the prime location for such modernity through the acquisition of goods, which effectively tied women to the household environment. The *métier* of housewife became a scientific arena, food was powdered, domestic tools automated and domestic science textbooks and women's magazines timetabled household tasks for efficiency. The development of a fully mechanised residence came to signify a truly modern woman and home. Whereas the car was '*l'ami de l'homme*,' white goods were '*les amis de la femme*,' 'best friends' which created a new arena of competition between women, and imposed a new set of comportments and behaviours (Ross, 1999: 90).

Although not all women could afford (or rather their husbands could not afford) to equip their homes with the newest domestic technology, the explosion of advertising during the 1950s ensured that nearly all women aspired to a mechanised home. As many domestic appliance adverts boasted, the automated environment these goods were to provide would be the answer to women's freedom.<sup>13</sup> As Duchen notes:

The refrigerator, the vacuum cleaner and the semi-automatic washing machine were signs of the modern woman, who was represented as free from household chores. The *goal* of this freedom was to allow a woman to seek higher things: her own cultural development and increased time with her children in particular. (Duchen, 1994: 72 my emphasis)

However, rather than being a goal to aspire to, I would suggest that such white goods in fact acted as a *gaol* (jail) for women, as the 'time spent on household chores was not actually reduced' and the responsibility of maintaining a technological home just served to keep women within it (Duchen, 1994: 80). When factored with women's general economic dependence on men, the government's pro-natalist position and the building of suburban monumental housing blocks (HLMs) in the 1950s, post-war modernity and politics seemed to conspire to create a culture in which women remained inert<sup>14</sup> mothers and housewives in homes ten floors up and miles from the city centre.<sup>15</sup>

One major outlet for 1950s discourses on women as both mothers and housewives came in the form of women's magazines. Publications such as *Marie-Claire* and *Elle* carried articles on healthy living, women's emancipation through modernity, fashion and

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<sup>13</sup> For examples of such adverts see Ross, K. (1999) *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies, Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press.

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the heavy layers of women's historical costume also served to create inertia and this parallel will be explored in this thesis's subsequent analysis of the 1950s costume drama.

<sup>15</sup> This is not to say that all women colluded in or were unhappy with such a situation. Yet moves towards the militant feminism of the 1970s in France were begun post-war with the publication of de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième sexe* in 1949, and the inauguration of women's groups in the 1950s, such as the *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes*. However, these discourses at this stage remained disparate.

childcare, alongside adverts for the latest household inventions (Duchen, 1994: 73). The effect of such publications, which enjoyed a wide readership, was to ‘normaliz[e] the state-led modernization effort.’ (Ross, 1999: 78) In cooperation with the government’s desire for progress, many articles in women’s magazines had a correlating preoccupation with cleanliness. In 1951, *Elle* magazine published an article entitled ‘*Is the French Woman Clean?*’<sup>16</sup> displaying the figures from a survey on cleanliness. Some of the statistics were rather unappealing, such as the national average for the number of times a garter belt was washed being once every two years. The article provoked a huge scandal. The overall grubby state of the French woman that the article painted contrasted dramatically with the climate of cleanliness that modern France was trying so hard to create. In the wake of the Occupation, *Elle*’s words struck at the heart of what Ross has termed a ‘generalized post-war atmosphere of moral purification, national cleansing, and literary laundering.’ (Ross, 1999: 76) As Ross continues:

The historical record can be expunged, the foreign occupier driven out, the morally diseased or tainted elements of the national body cleansed or surgically removed, but to target a nation’s women? This – as Franz Fanon said around the same time a propos of France’s own campaign to colonize Algeria according to the well-known formula ‘Let’s win over the women and the rest will follow’ – is to target the innermost structure of the society itself. (Ross, 1999: 77)

The link between women and nation has always been particularly visible in France in the figure of *Marianne*.<sup>17</sup> In the national conscious the representation of *Marianne* is interchangeable with the nation of France as a whole. Taking this allegory further, one can then see that France under the Occupation had to endure the metaphorical rape of *Marianne*. In light of this, the post-war purges and obsession with cleaning can be

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<sup>16</sup> ‘*La Française est-elle propre?*’

<sup>17</sup> During the Revolution of 1789, the figure of a woman wearing a Phrygian cap came to symbolise revolutionary ideals. This female figure has become *Marianne*, who now stands as a national emblem of the French Republic, and represents France as State and its values of liberty, equality and fraternity.

viewed as a reaction to the abjection, in the Kristevan sense of the word, that the Occupation produced - an attempt to rid the motherland of filth.<sup>18</sup> This, then, is the reason why the *Elle* article caused such a furore, it exposed precisely what the gloss of modernity tried to hide - France's dirty underwear and scarred underbelly.

Discourses on cleanliness also cover other areas of disputed territory: colonialism, France's reluctance to decolonise post-war, and the ensuing bloody mess it tried to cover up. The French Empire had played a key role for the Allies during the 1939-1945 conflict and was effectively the 'springboard for the liberation of metropolitan France, both strategically and in terms of the colonial troops made available.' (Gildea, 1996: 16) Without its Empire post-war France felt it could not compete with both Europe and the USA (now the dominant superpower) (Gildea, 1996: 16). Therefore, France was reluctant to relinquish its colonies. The jewel in the crown of French colonial territory was Algeria. The Maghrebi country's link to its coloniser was stronger than that of many other nations under French rule, for Algeria was made an overseas *département*. Thus it was technically a part of France itself – indeed the port of Marseilles is as close to Algiers as it is to Paris (Stovall, 2002: 54). Yet it is worth pointing out that although Algeria was regarded as part of France, its indigenous population was not, even if the proximity between colonised and coloniser was reinforced by the presence of nearly one million French settlers in Algeria by 1954. France herself may now have been free, but she wanted to keep her colonies, and in particular Algeria, under French rule.

This thinking was of course inherently problematic for a country that had just fought to liberate itself from being occupied by Germany. Having witnessed and often aided the

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<sup>18</sup> See Kristeva, J. (1982) *Powers of Horror: an essay on Abjection*, trans. Rodiez, Leon, New York: Columbia University Press.

actions of the Resistance effort in France, the countries that comprised France's overseas territories expected their own independence to follow. It did not. Instead France fought two bloody wars in Indochina (1946-1954) and Algeria (1954-1962) respectively, and unsuccessfully attempted to crush uprisings and insurrections within her Empire in Madagascar (1947), Morocco (1956), and Tunisia (1956) (Stovall, 2002: xiii). The eight-year war with Algeria was a conflict of terror and counter-terror, which brought down political careers and cost roughly half a million lives. Yet its existence was continually denied by French authorities, who referred only to "events" or troubles disturbing internal order and requiring "pacification." (Gildea, 1996: 21) By 1961, the violence had spread to mainland France, and the government could no longer deny the existence of a conflict that brought the nation to the brink of civil war.

The censorship exerted over all matters to do with Algeria ties into the notions of cleanliness discussed previously. In large part due to overseas aid in the form of the Marshall plan, mainland France was undergoing intense modernisation, the icons of which became cars and white goods (see page 26). Ross argues that the technologising of housekeeping by means of new white goods "in some sense "replaced" [France's colonies], and the effort that once went into maintaining and disciplining a colonial people and situation becomes instead concentrated on a particular "level" of metropolitan existence: everyday life.' (Ross, 1999: 77) Such colonisation of everyday life targeted women, who, as discussed above, became most associated with managing everyday consumption in the 1950s. Controlling everyday domesticity, then, took the place previously occupied by French colonialism. This gives rise to something of a paradox, illuminated by Ross in the following quotation: 'If the woman is clean, the family is clean, the nation is clean. If the French woman is dirty, then France is dirty

and backward, because that is the role played by the colonies. But there are no more colonies.’ (Ross, 1999: 78)

The quest for cleanliness in France was, therefore, twofold: it functioned to cover up both the truth of the Occupation and its legacy, and acted as an attempt to cleanse away the messy realities of the colonial situation in the 1950s. Of all France’s colonial ‘episodes,’ Algeria’s battle for independence was the bloodiest and marked the French population the most. The highest prized of all colonial acquisitions, Algeria’s struggle to liberate itself was the ultimate signifier of the failure of France’s Empire, and thus the biggest mess to clean up and conceal. This is why such frenzied housekeeping began to take hold in mainland France as her grip on Algeria loosened – ‘If Algeria is becoming an independent nation, then France must become a *modern* nation: some distinction between the two must still prevail.’ (Ross, 1999: 78 author’s emphasis)

Thus Algeria became France’s monstrous and distorted double, the former the site of a ‘dirty war,’ the latter a new, modern, and hygienic nation. Yet Algeria was also to witness some housekeeping of its own. So-called ‘clean’ torture was employed by French troops during the conflict. This consisted of brutal acts that left behind no trace, which were carried out using the very same materials that were being used to modernise life in mainland France. Telephones were electrified, full bathtubs could suddenly loosen tongues, as could a vast array of new household gadgets, whose plugs had been tampered with and now sprouted a mass of electrical wires. Items used to facilitate a fresh, modern life in France were now being used to ‘clean up’ in the colonies (Ross, 1999: 105-122).

Consequently, discourses on cleanliness unite three major elements of 1950s society: modernity, femininity and decolonisation. This triptych forms the main political and cultural dilemmas contemporary to 1950s France. Through such interwoven dialogues, one can begin to build a picture of the 1950s in France as a decade with a wipe-clean veneer of modern living hiding a simmering mix of a shattered national identity and a hangover of guilt from a nation disgraced during World War II. It is the dilemmas of this socio-cultural and socio-political environment that the 1950s *film à costumes* seeks to address and/or dis-address, speaking, therefore to the contemporary moment of the 1950s in favour of the past.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL EXPLORATION AND FOUNDATION (GARMENTS)

### 2.1: Costume Design Signatures

In order to determine the signature garments of the four designers, I viewed each of their 1950s *film à costumes* output in its entirety (or as close to its entirety as I could achieve).<sup>19</sup> In this way I could look for similarities of costume for each designer across the different historical periods they dressed. In watching Annenkov's *films à costumes*, which cover a time-period from Napoléon III's Second Empire (1848-1870) to the *Belle Époque* (1889-1914), what was startling in the costume design of all the films, but particularly in the four films directed by Ophuls (*La Ronde*, 1950, *Le Plaisir*, 1952, *Madame de...*, 1953, and *Lola Montès*, 1955), was the extreme constriction of the female protagonists' waists by corsetry. This repeated screening of tight-lacing makes the corset the signature garment by which I will unlace Annenkov's cinematic wardrobe.

In replicating this same decision-making process for Escoffier's filmography, which ranges from the fifteenth century to the *Belle Époque*, I was again struck by the silhouettes of the women he dressed. However, rather than the reduction of female waists, it was the width of women's crinolined skirt hems that stood out. This focus on the sartorial scaffolding of the lower half of the female body is arguably the overriding feature of Escoffier's *films à costumes* designs. As such, the crinoline is the signature

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<sup>19</sup> Some of the films proved to be unavailable on either DVD or VHS format in the archives of the *Bibliothèque du film* and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris. After subsequent extensive internet searching of other archives and resources some films remained elusive and I was unable to view Delamare's costumes in *Il est minuit*, *Docteur Schweitzer* (Haguët, 1952) and *Les Révoltés de Lomanach* (Pottier, 1953); Escoffier's costumes in *Le Couturier de ces dames* (Boyer, 1956); and Mayo's costumes in *Le Rideau cramoisi* (Astruc, 1952). See filmography for full details.

garment I have chosen from which analysis of the ideological impact of Escoffier's costumes may then expand.

In viewing the *films à costumes* dressed by Mayo, which range from the early nineteenth century to the *Belle Époque*, yet again it was the silhouettes of the women that stood out. However, rather than the expected compression of the female torso, Mayo's women appear to be un-corseted, whereas the men he dresses all tend to sport wide cummerbunds, seemingly in a transfer of interest from the female to the male waist. I was beginning to think that the signature garment for each designer might be predominantly feminine ones and that films set after the French Revolution of 1789 (which the majority of the 1950s *film à costumes* are), would feature dowdier men's clothing if their costume designers were authentically replicating the styles of the time. Following the Revolution, particularly from the 1830s onwards, there was a marked shift away from bright colours and luxurious fabrics in men's dress (Laver, 2002: 168). In describing this fashion phenomenon, John Flügel coined the term 'The Great Masculine Renunciation' (Flügel, 1930). Accordingly, women's dress became the canvas upon which colour, decoration, and extremes of style and silhouette could be more overtly displayed. Such extremes of silhouette were of course facilitated by the signature garments of Annenkov and Escoffier - the corset and crinoline.

Mayo's unexpected treatment of corsetry, however, applies to both genders and so returns focus to male dress at a time when it had been written off as uninteresting by Flügel, Harvey *et al.*<sup>20</sup> This is obviously a very intriguing thread of analysis to follow.

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<sup>20</sup> See Harvey, J. (1995) *Men in Black*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. See also Breward, C. (1999) *The Hidden Consumer*, Manchester: Manchester University Press for a more nuanced view of how men consumed fashion during the nineteenth century in England.

Therefore, it is this apparent lack of female corsetry, and its seeming externalisation on the male body, which I will explore as Mayo's signature design feature in order to unveil his costumes.

The films that Delamare has dressed, which range from the sixteenth century to the *Belle Époque*, feature a synthesis of each of the signature garments I have identified so far. Like Annenkov, she corsets her women (yet not to the same extremes), akin to Escoffier she employs the crinoline in her designs, and similarly to Mayo she uses a cummerbund on her male characters. However, these are not the areas of her costume design with the most visual impact. Rather, it is her abundance of accessories and detailing in both her men's and women's costumes that strikes the viewer – hats, bonnets, ribbons, swords, bags, parasols, jewellery and gloves. Thus rather than the engagement (be it conventional or not) with foundation garments that become the design trademarks by which I shall unstitch the costumes of Annenkov, Escoffier and Mayo, accessories and fine detailing will be the prisms through which I shall approach Delamare's costume design.

Having outlined the signature garments of the four designers in question, I will now turn to an overview of these garments. The aim of this exposure of undergarments and the accoutrements of dress in turn is not to recount established fashion timelines, but to explore and understand their ideological function and impact. By drawing attention to the various discourses surrounding the assembling and wearing of the corset, the crinoline, and accessories, I will be able to create a specifically sartorial framework for analysis that will then be applied to each designer in turn in the four individual case-studies following this chapter.

## 2.2: Unlacing the Pre- and Post-Industrialised Corset

The corset has long been a garment that has provoked reaction, both favourable and unfavourable. It has variously been deemed a vicious controller of the female form and instrument of women's oppression by its detractors, a garment for health and fashion benefit by its manufacturers and supporters, and simultaneously dismissed and feted as a vestimentary tool for fetishism by moralists. As Valerie Steele notes, 'The corset is probably the most controversial garment in the entire history of fashion.' (Steele, 2001:

1) The corset has had a long history and for the last four hundred years has shaped women's dress.<sup>21</sup> In the French context, the corset became part of women's wardrobes by the 1500s.<sup>22</sup> From this point on, it was a wardrobe staple until the latter half of the twentieth century. Its most widespread time of wearing, however, was during the nineteenth century and the *Belle Époque*, as the Industrial Revolution facilitated mass corset manufacture. Coincidentally, this is the time-period in which the majority of Annenkov's tightly-laced film wardrobes are set, and so makes a convenient historical point at which to begin my analysis of the ideologies surrounding his signature garment.

Contemporaneous with the new industrial processes of the nineteenth century was a change in foundation garment terminology. At this juncture in dress history the term 'corset' finally came into being, replacing the previous epithets '*corps*' in France and 'stays' in Britain. As terminology evolved at the point of industrialisation, so too did the materials that the corset was created from. Interestingly, this evolution of names and materials provides a point around which I may pivot my analysis of the corset: As the term that pre-dated 'corset' in France was '*corps*,' the body was explicitly referenced by

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<sup>21</sup> Even though very few women now wear a corset daily, they are still present in twenty-first-century dress in the form of high-end fashion and fetish-wear, and popularised by figures such as Dita von Teese.

<sup>22</sup> During the sixteenth century, bodices in women's dress were stiffened and reinforced to the point where they graduated into separate garments, forming the beginnings of corsetry.

the corset in shape and in name, foregrounding the symbiotic relationship between body and clothing. This corporeal commentary is also inherent in the materials used to fabricate corsets, which changed with industrialisation, moving from organic to artificial.

The majority of materials used in the pre-industrial corset had natural origins, being derived mostly from animals (baleen (*baleine*), horn and silk) and plants (cotton, reed and buckram). In order to begin to examine the ideological impact of this, I will take baleen as an example. Baleen was by far the most universal and popular type of stay used in France, and when its supplies began to be exhausted in the 1800s it became even more desirable and correspondingly expensive in price (Steele, 2001: 27). Baleen is frequently referred to as whalebone. However, this naming is misleading for it is not strictly 'bone' but the stiff yet flexible fibres that the whale uses for sieving its waterborne food. Rather than bone, baleen is literally a corporeal sea-strainer through which desirable substances such as plankton may be separated from undesirable or inedible elements.

This notion of segregation is carried over into the processing of baleen. Through the procedures employed to carve up and cleanse baleen, the taboo of its animality is filtered out. Women may then re-whale themselves as it were without worry, whilst simultaneously re-shaping themselves with a 'whale-boned' corset – filtering their shape in order to conform to a fashionable silhouette. This notion of filtering in relation to the corseted female body is further augmented when one considers the layering of technological practice that both 'whalebone' and woman undergo to filter out animality and sexuality respectively.

If one takes the etymological root of ‘technology,’ the latter half of the word ‘logy’ comes to signify oral or written expression, as it is derived from *logos* – the Greek for ‘word.’ Thus discourse is inherent in technology. Expanding on this one may then posit that the technological processes used to create the ‘whalebone’ corset also create discourses; discourses on and around its original body – the whale - and discourses on and around the female body that it comes to define and sculpt. Also contained in this garment is baleen’s initial function – filtering. The *corps à baleine* is a pseudo-exoskeleton (for it is not really bone) that, referring back to its function in body number one (the whale), filters discourses on corporeality, particularly discourses on the body of the woman. Just as the baleen is stripped of its taboo of animality, the ‘whalebone’ corset filters taboos around femininity. Undesirable discourses seemingly cannot penetrate through the corset and the taboo of desiring female discourses cannot escape. Unruly flesh is tamed. The female body when corseted is consequently strained or drained of taboo discourse and supposedly safely contained. Arguably this is the reason why corsets were laced so tightly in the nineteenth century (particularly during the *Belle Époque*’s fashionable S-bend silhouette) when desiring women were deemed to be dangerous. Desiring women are certainly shown to be dangerous in Ophuls’s costume dramas in which Annenkov’s signature garment is particularly tight-laced. It suggests, in an abstract way, that the filtration process of the corset was recognised and used to uphold strict moral codes in both the *Belle Époque*, and previously. Something Annenkov’s reconstruction and reconstruction of this era in his 1950s costume design recreates, one senses, knowingly – given the restraints placed on the female protagonists in most of Ophuls’s films.

One of the corset's main roles is to 'mediate between the body and outer garments - i.e. between the natural flesh and the encultured image of the body that others will perceive.' (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 61) Yet I would suggest that in addition, the corset was recognised as a garment around which potent (individual and collective) desiring discourses centred, even if the corset's filtration process remained at an unconscious level.<sup>23</sup> Busks, the removable central supports of the corset, were also fabricated from 'whalebone' and were frequently decorated with amorous words and images (Steele, 2001: 100). As the desiring discourses surrounding the corset began to be lexically reproduced on the decorative busks they began to be recognised as such.

If the desiring discourses filtered by the corset are being produced by the body of the wearer alone then they are displaced. Unable to be literally written on the body, discourse and desire are placed at one remove away – the pseudo-body of the corset. However, one must not forget clothing's ability to act as an independent producer of meaning rather than just being a key to understanding the body of the wearer. Dress may in fact 'impose rather than absorb meaning.' (Bruzzi, 1997: xiv) Therefore, desiring discourses can also be instigated and filtered by the corset itself, imposing meaning onto the body of the wearer and the socio-cultural and political situation of the nineteenth century.

Yet one must not forget technology's role, as discourses on the body and corset are also generated by it. *Logos* may be oral or written expression. The desiring discourses featured on corset busks may then be the written expression of technological as well as

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<sup>23</sup> One need only look at the proliferation of pictures of corsetry ranging from the ironical to the pornographic, fashion plates and fetishistic correspondence regarding tight-lacing in nineteenth-century newspapers and magazines as evidence.

social and cultural discourses, in this case discourses on the female body and its position and encoding in the nineteenth-century's socio-cultural and political arenas. The busk and the corset may then disseminate meaning independently and in conjunction with the wearer. The corset not only filters discourses and strains out taboos related to its wearer, and the busk does not just lexically reproduce discourses related to its wearer. By means of the technological practice and process to which and with which they are subjected and imbued, the combination of corset and busk (be it industrially or hand produced) can be viewed as a socio-cultural, political and technological map of the nineteenth century, its stitching and boning tracing spoken and unspoken desires, conscious and unconscious mores. This is one of the ways in which clothing itself may disseminate meaning independently of the wearer, gathering ideological significance as it progresses from raw material to finished product. It will certainly be interesting to see how this meaning may then manifest itself in Annenkov's tightly-laced corsetry of costume drama.

But what happens to the discourses that the corset and body and indeed the corseted body create? Is the corset completely successful in its filtering of taboos or do some forbidden desires seep out or in? In order to answer this one must turn to the corset's lace-holes.

### 2.3: The Lace-Hole as Point of Resistance

Much critical commentary on the corset to date has focused on the lace-hole as the facilitator of tight-lacing and its associated pleasures derived from the body being placed in a state of constriction.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the lacing of the corset is viewed as an erotic action, with the interweaving of lace and lace-holes standing for the act of sexual intercourse. The relationship between the corset-wearer and the corset-lacer is, therefore, an intimate one. It is often assumed that this relationship is heterosexual, comprising of wife and/or mistress as the corset-wearer, and husband and/or lover as the corset-lacer (as seen in *French Cancan* where Jean Gabin aids Maria Félix with the lacing of her corset, (Renoir, 1955)), and that fetishistic pleasure is derived from the replication of intercourse and the compression of the torso:

The erotic value of the lacing-in process, as performed by the lover may also be fixed on a scale according to the degree of his fetishistic commitment. The lacing-in (afterwards) may merely represent the privilege of one who has enjoyed the sexual favours of a woman; but it may also suggest the imposition of a kind of chastity belt, over which only the lover has control; and, to the true fetishist, in addition to the above, it re-enacts and perpetuates, in an extended visual concretization, the violence of his desire to (re-) possess, and the (imagined) desire of the woman to be (re-) possessed. (Kunzle, 1982: 31-32)

Such assumptions of the male/female dyad, as Kunzle makes, leads to a privileging of the heterosexual couple and the masculine, for there is something very male about the restriction of body parts for sexual pleasure. Indeed, tight-lacing is akin to the restriction of the (male) neck by a tie or belt in the practice of erotic or auto-erotic asphyxiation, also known as asphyxiophilia. Such associations between tight-lacing, and the

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<sup>24</sup> See Kunzle, D. (1982) *Fashion and Fetishism: A Social History of the Corset, Tight-lacing and other forms of Body Sculpture in the West*, Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield; Steele, V. (1996) *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Summers, L. (2001) *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*, Oxford and New York: Berg.

predominantly male practice of asphyxiophilia, have resulted in an overlooking of the fact that the relationship between corset-wearer and corset-lacer was often an exclusively feminine relationship, taking place between the lady of the house and her maid, mothers and daughters, or sisters.

It would often be the responsibility of women working as maids to lace and unlace their employer's corsets each day. Consequently, this feminine lacing dynamic also deserves critical attention. Correspondingly, a more feminine way of viewing tight-lacing is needed. Seeing that the lace-hole of the corset is so distinctively feminine in shape and function, I will take it as a starting point from which a feminine and possibly feminist perspective may arise.

Lace-holes have always been the weak points in a corset's design. Before the introduction of metal eyelets in the 1820s, the lace of the corset if pulled too tightly would rip through the fabric surrounding the lace-hole. Returning to the notion of the corset as filter, which keeps taboo discourses within the liminal space between body and fabric, it follows that the lace-hole being the weakest structural point may in fact be the location where discourses and desires leak out or seep in. With the reinforcement provided by metal eyelets the ripping through of lace-holes ceased to be a problem. This industrialising of the corset can be viewed as an attempt to turn the corset from a natural into a man-made garment and, if one follows the well-worn gender associations of the natural and the man-made, from a feminine into a male garment. Subsequently, the man-made metal eyelet is an attempt to masculinise and reduce the liminal space between body and corset by enabling tighter-lacing. In so doing it is also an attempt to

control the taboo discourses produced and filtered by the female body and corset that are situated in and generated by such liminal spaces.

However, I would suggest that this attempt at control backfires. The metal eyelet, in reinforcing the lace-hole so as to provide an opportunity for tighter lacing, in fact serves to reinforce the point of escape for female discourses and desires (and also the point of entry for external discourses and desires). The lacing of women's corsets by other women is sexually charged but in a different way to that described in a heterosexual lacing relationship. Rather than focusing on the constriction of the body and the process of lacing as metaphorical *intercourse*, the feminine lacing relationship centres on the creation of *discourse*. This is achieved through the individual and collective meanings created by the coming together of corset and body, and the subsequent (sexual) release of this discourse (or penetration of external discourse) through the distinctly feminine curves of the lace-hole. Unable to be verbalised in bourgeois nineteenth-century society, the 'dangers' of female discourses and desires were thought to have been contained by the corset. However, these hidden discourses were in fact paradoxically finding release through tightly-laced lace-holes.

Some of the most unspeakable discourses during the nineteenth century were those surrounding pregnancy. It seems strange given the degree to which the mother and child were sentimentalised in society during this century that the pregnant body was viewed as so repugnant it had to be kept hidden (Summers, 2001: 37). Gestation demanded that women retire early from social engagements if they were permitted to attend at all. The ensuing horror associated with the pregnant body resulted in many women concealing their pregnancies for as long as possible. In order to do so they turned to the filtering

function of the corset. ‘For pregnant Victorian women, tightly laced corsetry, whether of maternity or standard design, afforded a few extra weeks or even months of freedom in face of taboos which demanded their invisibility.’ (Summers, 2001: 38) Or if the pregnancy was unwanted, the corset, if laced tightly enough could function as an effective abortifacient.

With the widespread introduction of sprung-steel stays during the nineteenth century, the corset as abortifacient became even more efficient.<sup>25</sup> The tight-lacing of corsets to bring on a miscarriage gave women a degree of agency over their bodies. Therefore, industrialisation’s reinforcing of the corset, which as Summers explains, was instigated by ‘male fears of female sexuality,’ did not completely succeed in its aims of denying women control of their own bodies (Summers, 2001: 27). Instead it provided women with a brutal but effective form of retro-contraception.<sup>26</sup> It will certainly be worth noting how the lace-hole as the facilitator of tight-lacing and simultaneous possible point of resistance is employed in Annenkov’s tightly-laced corsetry explored in part two of this thesis.

I have already shown how the introduction of the metal eyelet augmented the filtering process of the whalebone corset, but how might the filtering of feminine discourses and desires be realised by the steel stays of the industrial corset? I will now look at the

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<sup>25</sup> Metal stays had always been an option in the corset’s design but until the nineteenth century whalebone was favoured for stays. The advent of industrialisation saw a rise in the number of metal stays being used as steel became a mass-manufactured commodity.

<sup>26</sup> Summer’s analysis expands on this point by examining the corset patents lodged during the nineteenth century. The results make interesting if unsurprising reading: ‘Overwhelmingly, patents lodged by men reveal a strong interest in if not an obsession with reinforcing all aspects of the corset. [...] Ideas and indeed methods, of containment and control of female corporeality characterize many of men’s patents.’ (Summers, 2001: 27)

product's process from raw material to finished corset in order to unpick the relationship between female corporeality and the industrial corset.

The steel used in nineteenth-century stays was manufactured via smelting in blast furnaces. Iron ore, coke and limestone would be heated to ferocious temperatures to create the steel alloy. The coke functioned as a hardening agent as well as an energy catalyst, but most importantly the limestone worked to remove impurities by creating slag as a by-product. Akin to whalebone, the filtering of undesirable substances is, therefore, inherent in the processing of steel. Like the *corps à baleine* described above, the sprung-steel corset retains the meaning with which it is imbued during its journey from raw material to finished product. Both the pre-industrial and industrial corset then operate as a palimpsest, with traces of its own past discourses mingling with the discourses created by the female body. As Warwick and Cavallaro succinctly put it 'It is vital to observe that the palimpsest entails an effacement of the anterior text, not its erasure: the coalescence of the old and the new thus delivers a pattern.' (1998: 153) The industrial corset then becomes the pattern from which nineteenth-century femininity can be cut and fashioned.

The mass-production of this pattern, its ability to be endlessly reproduced through industrial processes, links to Baudrillard's thinking around the notion of simulacra. The mass-manufacturing of the corset turns it into an 'industrial simulacrum' (Baudrillard, 1983: 96), it is 'endlessly repeatable, recyclable and reproducible.' (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 148) As such the corset adheres to Baudrillard's second order simulacra:

It [second order simulacra] is a new generation of signs and objects which comes with the industrial revolution. Signs without the tradition of caste, ones that will never have known any binding restrictions. They will no longer have to be counterfeited, since they are going to be produced all at once on a gigantic scale. The problem of their uniqueness, or their origin is technique, and the only sense they possess is in the dimension of simulacrum. (Baudrillard, 1983: 96)

Through industrialisation, the mass-reproduction of the corset becomes caught up in ‘an unending process of mutual definition and redefinition.’ (Connor cited in Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 148) However, even though the sign that the corset becomes knows no binding restrictions, the body on which the corset-as-sign is placed does. Indeed the binding of the body created the optical effect of nineteenth-century femininity, the object of reinforcing the corset by means of industrial processes being to allay male fears surrounding female sexuality. If one follows this ‘logic’ to its conclusion then the objective of the tightening of mass-produced corsets around nineteenth-century waists was to render its women mass-produced. In so doing women would be knowable (always already the same) and ultimately controllable.

However, continuing the trend for finding sartorial points of resistance as outlined in 2.1 and 2.2, women found ways to counter the ultimately patriarchal aim of the industrial corset. Inherent in repetition is the possibility of difference, no matter how small the divergence may be. ‘Because of the incidence of difference, repetition cannot be exploited as a guarantee of stability, permanence or constancy.’ (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 148) Hence there is room for difference within the supposedly uniform femininity created by the industrial corset. This difference manifests itself via the differing discourses created by the corset, the female body and the combination of the two, and these discourses’ subsequent filtering and release through lace-holes. This

points to the multifunctionality of the corset: it is both shielding and sprawling in Warwick and Cavallaro's sense (see 1.1, p.23), absence and presence, clothed and unclothed, protecting but simultaneously pointing to the body within, filter and release mechanism for discourse and desire. The corset is a place of paradox, which during the nineteenth century allowed the garment to be co-opted by women and used as a point of resistance from which to unpick the seams hegemony. Quite how the contradictory nature of the corset is engaged with via Annenkov's signature corsetry in the 1950s *film à costumes*, therefore, becomes a fascinating prospect to unlace. Before turning to this, however, I will continue the exploration of the costume trademarks of the remaining three designers, and so turn to Mayo and his subversion of corsetry.

#### **2.4: Un-corseted Women**

Mayo's approach to corsetry is radically different from that of the other three designers. His women are apparently un-corseted, and the men he dresses frequently sport a wide cummerbund in a seeming externalising of female corsetry. In so doing, Mayo's costume design appears to have some degree of (gender) political motivation. In the history of the corset in France, there is a notable period in which women shunned the garment: the vestimentary drive for neo-classicism, which coincided with the Revolution of 1789. Although this instance does not correspond to the time-periods Mayo dressed in the 1950s *film à costumes*, it is worth exploring the ideological significance of this abandoning of foundation garment, for links to Mayo's design practice may still be made.

The corset had begun to fall from favour amongst the fashion-conscious before 1789; however, fashion at this point in French history became overtly politically motivated as it came to reflect revolutionary ideals. Women came to signify modes of Revolutionary thinking through a proliferation of allegorical female figures, such as Liberty, Reason, Nature and of course *Marianne* the embodiment of the nation. Un-corseted and dressed in neo-classical togas, these virgin soldiers symbolised Revolutionary ideals in motion. Yet here lies a political absurdity, which may unravel the reasons behind the unlacing and subsequent abandonment of corsetry by many women at this time.

Even though women symbolically stood for the Revolution, they were not counted in it. In fact, the Revolution failed to meet women's political demands. Revolutionary rhetoric effectively wrote women out of all official political discourse (McMillan, 2000: 16). Despite this many women seized the opportunity they felt the Revolution could provide to better their situation, and to some women the political struggle became a platform from which to demand more rights. Due to earlier eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment' thinking, French women had been relegated to the domestic sphere under the justification that they were biologically, and, therefore, socially different from men.

However, French women, led by a vocal and militant few, such as Olympe de Gouges and Anne Théroigne de Méricourt, let it be known that limiting opportunities on the pretext of gender would not be tolerated. In Paris, women formed political clubs, rioted over the price of bread, marched on Versailles, published their own revolutionary treatises and even carried out assassinations. Controversy over women exhibiting political agency arose among those who supported the entrenched patriarchal ideology

of the time (including those of both sexes). Women rendering themselves active Revolutionary citizens, despite laws to the contrary, were deeply troubling for both the *Ancien* and Revolutionary regimes. But tellingly, it was not so much the actions of these women lobbying for socio-political change that upset patriarchal ideals the most, it was what these women were wearing while they were doing it – men’s clothing.

The actual number of women involved in the gender play of cross-dressing during the Revolution is impossible to determine, yet there are accounts of several notorious figures who cut a dash in men’s military costume. Therefore, they were numerous enough to cause concern.<sup>27</sup> Women soldiers such as Renée Bordereau and Jeanne Robin made military uniform a militant vestimentary state-ment. Whereas Anne Théroigne de Méricourt clothed herself in a masculine riding habit and Claire Lacombe chose to wear crimson trousers, a red cap and a tri-colour scarf. The adoption of such masculine dress would have afforded these women greater freedom of movement as well as being a bold political state-ment. One may assume then, that this small number of documented cross-dressing women also consciously cast the corset aside along with the rest of their feminine garb. Indeed those women who fought could not have done so had they been corseted due to the restriction of movement the garment imposes.

Clothing became a weapon for these revolutionary women (as Martine Carol’s Caroline demonstrates in Pottier’s *Caroline chérie*, 1951), as it may prove to be for the uncorseted women in the costume dramas dressed by Mayo. Their cross-dressing blurred gender boundaries and their male dress meant they could not be reduced to a stereotypical representation of woman. However, in order to counter such ‘undesirable’

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<sup>27</sup> The Jacobin procurator of the Commune, Pierre Gaspard-Chaumette pronounced such women to be viragos who had sullied the red cap of liberty. He continued his outrage with the cry ‘Since when is it permitted to give up one’s sex?’ (McMillan, 2000: 30)

and unclassifiable revolutionary female bodies, they were replaced with desirable and quantifiable allegorical female bodies. This, then, may be the reason behind the sudden drive for the widespread dissemination of un-corseted neo-classical styles. The thrusting forward of this originally peripheral vestimentary trend can be read as an attempt to contain women within state operated ideology by transforming them into replicas of the state itself – *Marianne*. In effect *Marianne* and co. became the ideological rather than the whalebone corset curtailing women's freedom of movement in political circles.<sup>28</sup> Women were rendered staid in action but were, paradoxically, without their stays.

I would suggest that this is the reason why the neo-classical became the revolutionary style of choice. Women were policed by their own allegorical representations in the eyes of revolutionary ideology. It did not matter that their un-corseted bodies were on display – hence making the body politic erotic – for the exhibition of female flesh reaffirmed difference, rebuilt the gender boundaries blurred by some women's sartorial swapping. Yes, this new fashion revealed the female body to an extent not seen before in public spaces in France but it could never be as shocking as cross-dressed martial women.

Thus, even though physical numbers may not have been that widespread, the disrupting impact of these women was felt right across the spectrum of French society, as subsequently, dress became divided according to sex. Whereas 'for most of the eighteenth century there was a sartorial harmony in the dress of men and women,' men's dress was now plain and sober and women's ultra-feminine (Ribeiro, 1988: 141).

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<sup>28</sup> Other allegorical figures included Liberty, Nature, Reason, Truth, Equality and Modesty. See Gutwirth, M. (1992) *The Twilight of the Goddesses, Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

The first steps towards the Great Masculine Renunciation of men's finery had begun. Colour and lavish detail were now predominantly to belong to women's dress, thus finery and detail in clothing came to be associated with femininity (shades of Delamare).

However, Mayo's treatment of corsetry in relation to both genders may begin to unlace the way in which clothing is divided according to sex. Mayo's focus on the male waist is unusual even if a small number of men did wear corsets. It has been reported, particularly during the 1830s when fashionable men's dress emphasised a cinched in waist, that dandies and military men used corsets to sculpt and support the body, and that more portly men employed corsets as dietary aids and to improve appearance (Steele, 2001: 38). However, the wearing of male-corsetry remained controversial and 'Although belts and corsets for men continued to be advertised throughout the nineteenth century, they were increasingly frowned upon as effeminate vanity.' (Steele, 2001: 38) Quite where Mayo's sartorial emphasis on the male waist lies and the ideological impact this has, therefore, will be key to understanding his costume design. I will now move on to a discussion of the crinoline, Escoffier's signature garment.

## **2.5: The Crinoline and Borders That Matter**

Like the corset, the crinoline's<sup>29</sup> most popular period of usage was during the nineteenth century, in which the Industrial Revolution allowed for a new style of crinoline, the cage-crinoline, to be mass produced. The cage-crinoline became the fashionable-silhouette maker of the Second Empire, as steel production in France facilitated a

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<sup>29</sup> I am using the idiom 'crinoline' as a catch-all term for structural undergarments surrounding the lower half of the female body.

technological reworking of earlier crinoline styles, such as the farthingale and the pannier. Escoffier's use of crinolines ranges from the farthingale, pannier and the pre-industrial crinoline to the post-industrial cage-crinoline and bustle.

The farthingale consisted of cone-shaped hoops of reed or wicker, which were sewn into women's skirts and was fashionable during the seventeenth century. Following the farthingale in the eighteenth century was the pannier. Often constructed from baleen, the pannier attached around the waist to greatly enlarge the hips. Jutting out horizontally the pannier created a plateau on which one could rest one's arms. Its use under court dresses epitomised the extreme nature of this fashion, extending women to widths that made it impossible to walk without support on either side. The sheer expanse of fabric used to cover the huge court panniers turned women into walking advertisements for the wealth of the men who paid to dress them. Drawing on these previous styles of structural undergarment the cage-crinoline was put into mass-production in the 1850s.<sup>30</sup> Hence, although not a new idea, the cage-crinoline was imbued with new technology.

Originally, the pre-industrial crinoline consisted of layers of linen petticoats (*lin*) stiffened with horsehair (*crin*) or cords. Generally a minimum of six crinoline petticoats was layered together to give the desired width of skirt. Not only was this heavy, itchy and uncomfortable but also rather sweaty and unhygienic. Consequently, the arrival of the cage-crinoline, a framework consisting of concentric hoops of whalebone or steel, which required only one or two petticoats (in order to cover up any ridges caused by the hoops showing through the dress) was a welcome development in terms of personal

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<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, a military vein runs through these forerunners of the cage-crinoline: the farthingale reminiscent of army tents and the pannier nodding to epaulettes albeit displaced from the shoulders to the hips. However, I would suggest that these exoskeletons functioned as gender armour rather than war armour for they made access to the female body fraught with difficulty.

hygiene. Interestingly, it is doubtless not a random coincidence that this improvement in hygiene is contemporaneous with Haussmann's 'cleaning up' of Paris during the Second Empire.

Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, prefect of the Seine, was charged by Napoléon III with project managing the rebuilding of Paris from 1852-1870. The aim of this reconfiguration was to turn Paris into a modern city that would enable the fast-rising bourgeoisie the space to enjoy the activities and life-style they aspired to (Saalman, 1971: 12). Whereas earlier transformations of Paris had added to the city's existing urban fabric, Haussmann's vision involved cutting right through the city and starting afresh. His modern vision required vast swathes of Paris to be completely cleared. The tightly packed, narrow streets with their close-knit higgledy-piggledy houses harking back to medieval Paris were swept away in the name of progress. It was city (re)planning on a colossal scale, unprecedented before in Europe and only the great and the good lived to tell the tale. For example, on the *Île de la cité* only *Notre Dame* survived the voracious urban clearance.<sup>31</sup>

In opening up Paris through slum clearance, Haussmann provided women with new arenas in which to promenade and, for the wealthy and/or aspiring fashionista, a place to exhibit the latest sartorial trends.<sup>32</sup> Women came out from the home and indeed the

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<sup>31</sup> Haussmann's plans for Paris centred on four major themes: streets, buildings, parks and services. In terms of streets, key architectural points were linked by *grands boulevards* creating an east-west axis by extending the *rue de Rivoli* and the *rue St. Antoine* and a north-south axis from the *Gare de l'Est* to the *Jardin du Luxembourg*, as well as the radial avenues reaching out from the *place de l'Étoile*. The new buildings that appeared included huge public units such as *Les Halles* and the *Opéra Garnier*; new administration blocks, barracks, fire and police stations, and apartment buildings. To break up these new edifices and façades, parks appeared or were revived throughout the city and the outskirts, notably the *Bois de Boulogne* and the *Bois de Vincennes* (Saalman, 1971: 14-24).

<sup>32</sup> See Steele, V. (1988) *Paris Fashion, a Cultural History*, Oxford and New York: Berg for an in-depth analysis of the fashionable districts and fashion arenas of Paris created and/or augmented by Haussmannisation.

brothel where they had previously been concealed and onto the streets and into the glass arcades and, later, department stores. The female body that had been hidden for so long in the private space of the home/brothel became public. Thus women were at last encroaching on the masculine public space of the city, which had been designed exclusively by men (planners and architects etc.) for men (business men, flâneurs, tradesmen etc.). During the Second Empire the city of Paris came to be identified with this newly public female body, a female body that was adorned with the new technology of the cage-crinoline.

Appearing in the mid-1850s, the cage-crinoline is remembered as *the* sartorial shape of the Second Empire. As fashion acts as a conduit for and produces discourses on gender, power, politics and social mores, one can look to the cage-crinoline as a socio-historical document, which both comments on and creates psychologies of the Second Empire. One primary example of this lies in the redevelopment of Paris. Considering that this redevelopment was primarily concerned with opening up new city spaces, which in turn opened up debates around gender and the gendering of space, it is no surprise that the crinoline also produces and reflects discourses on space and gender. The garment surrounds the unspeakable area of female genitalia suggesting that the cage crinoline is in fact narrating the unspeakable. In order to sustain this reading effectively I must first ascertain how the female body, in particular female genitalia, functions as a site/sight of (male) anxiety. In *The Female Nude, Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (1992), Lynda Nead speaks of why the female body, particularly the unclothed female body, has always been troublesome for western male hegemony. In western structured modes of viewing according to patriarchy, 'the female body has been regarded as unformed, undifferentiated matter.' (Nead, 1992: 2) This implies that the female body is an unruly

body because it possesses unclear corporeal limits, and as such, it is an obscene body (2).

This is of course the case for all bodies, not just female bodies. Warwick and Cavallaro note, the body is simultaneously ‘a boundary and not a boundary, [...] it is ambiguous and [...] this ambiguity produces a complex relationship between the self and non-self.’ (1998: xv) Consider the body’s orifices, pores, waste, secretions, even hair and nails, all these things occupy a position that lies somewhere between the inside and the outside of the body (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: xv). All bodies are thus marked by an ‘unclear boundary.’ (Wilson, 1985: 2)

Consequently, patriarchy has attempted to cast the female body exclusively into a space of unformed flesh. Thus ‘othering’ away all ambiguity to the female body and rendering the male body defined, formed, unambiguous. Yet in order for this binary process to work the ambiguity and ensuing obscenity of the female body must be safely contained. For any pollution to leak out would constitute an *unheimlich*<sup>33</sup> reminder of how ambiguous the human body really is and would also undermine man’s perceived corporeal control of the feminine. Hence containment of the unruly feminine is provided

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<sup>33</sup> Although there is no direct translation to Freud’s notion of the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, the most frequent interpretations in English are as the ‘familiar’ or a sense of ‘homeliness’, and as ‘uncanny’, or ‘unfamiliar’ respectively. For Freud, the ultimate and original *heim/home* is the womb. Prior to Haussmannisation, the equating of Paris with an imagined ideal of femininity such as *Marianne* had functioned as a response to the patriarchal need to cast the city as a female other in order to affirm the male’s sense of self (Hayward, 2000b: 24-25). In so doing, the city was rendered *heimlich*. However, the city can also be *unheimlich*, an uncanny, unfamiliar and threatening place to be and this sense of the unfamiliar arose from the everywoman who now inhabited the Parisian streets. Subsequently, the fear, which lies at the heart of the notion of the *unheimlich* becomes projected as a fear of sexual difference. The ultimate site/sight of female sexual difference is of course the vagina and I would argue that the city of Paris can in fact be viewed as a topography of female genitalia, the elongated curves of the central *Île de la cité* representing the vagina of the capital. Although there were other compelling (political) reasons for policing the city, amongst them it also made patriarchal ‘sense’ that its implicit femininity be controlled. Thus the *Île de la cité* was completely cleared by Haussmann and the original buildings replaced by the authority of the *Palais de justice*. The vagina - dangerous site of sexual difference and so *unheimlich* – of the imagined female body of Paris thus became censored, surveilled, disciplined by (male) law and order.

courtesy of patriarchally structured strategies, which make fast the female body's borders by 'placing it within the securing boundaries of aesthetic discourse.' (Nead, 1992: 2) This is certainly pertinent to the exploration of aesthetic discourse in this thesis: clothing and cinematic costume. And it is especially relevant to the study of undergarments, such as the crinoline, for they come into the most intimate of contact with the corporeal.

Accordingly, structural undergarments are an attempt to make clear the unclear boundaries of the body. As the female body is the one seen to be the obscene body this explains why sartorial signifiers such as the corset and the cage-crinoline have always been much more of a feminine phenomenon. The ideal female body is one that is inviolable, hermetically sealed. Nead has discussed this in relation to art as a securing boundary of aesthetic discourse: 'The forms, conventions and poses of art have worked metaphorically to shore up the female body – to seal orifices and to prevent marginal matter from transgressing the boundary dividing the inside of the body and the outside, the self from the space of the other.' (1992: 6) However, I believe this notion also works if one substitutes the word *art* with *clothing*. Accordingly, I will now expand on this in relation to the cage-crinoline.

## **2.6: Obscene Crinolines: Patriarchal Structure or Point of Feminine Resistance?**

Due to its extreme width, the cage-crinoline seems to be a deeply cumbersome garment. As the weight of the structure is corporeally supported by the hips it appears to function as body scaffolding or an anchor, grounding women and enforcing a premeditated mode of movement. Indeed, the cage-crinoline does look like a container or vessel in which to

house the feminine in stasis. Nead speaks of negating the obscenity of the body with ‘stillness and wholeness.’ (1992: 2) From the cage-crinoline’s form and set of poses it necessitates, one may assume that the enforcing of stillness and wholeness is the garment’s patriarchally infused intent. It imposes borders on the female body, giving it structure so that it would no longer be obscene, indeed, it would be off-scene, obscured, invisible. As Nead posits, although the ‘etymology of “obscene” is disputed [...] it may be a modification of the Latin “*scena*,” so meaning literally what is off, or to one side of the stage, beyond presentation.’ (1992: 25) In this regard, the cage-crinoline seemingly places the obscene, the unclear female orifices of the vagina and anus, ‘beyond presentation,’ literally away behind a carapace of gender armour.

Extending from this imposition of containment, the notion of space and its gendering arises. As a result of wearing such large radial hoops, the physical space cage-crinolined women occupied was dramatically increased. Thus this dome of extra space surrounding the lower half of the body operated as a personal sphere of private feminine space in the public male space of the city. It can then be argued that the cage-crinoline’s increase in silhouette was a two-pronged attempt to keep women contained: to both screen off the obscene, and enclose it within feminine space, thus privatising their bodies. In short, the dome of the crinoline became the travelling home, domesticating the obscene. In patriarchal terms, if women could now inhabit the public city streets day and night thanks to Haussmannisation and the gas lighting he introduced then it would only be tolerated if they did so from their very own moveable domestic spheres.<sup>34</sup> New

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<sup>34</sup> The pioneering of gas flames to light the streets of Paris had begun earlier in the century, but it ‘happened slowly and against much resistance.’ (Schlör, 1998: 59) By 1839 some 12,816 gas flames supported by 6,273 lamp standards lit Paris. It was a figure that Haussmann greatly improved upon and in so doing gave women access to and visibility in the city at night. Whereas it was previously assumed that women in the city at night were there for illegitimate reasons, such as prostitution, gas lighting permitted women to frequent the capital at night *legitimately*, often for the bourgeois pastime of an evening stroll

corporeal limits would have to be drawn and defined to keep bodily ambiguity and its resultant obscenity contained. It would appear that this redefining of the lower half of women's bodily borders would be the responsibility of the cage-crinoline. Woman's threat to patriarchy was apparently neutralised. This diffusing of female danger may then be infused in Escoffier's use of the crinoline.

Crucially, however, the crinoline is a container of the feminine that *moves* and it is in this movement that one may find the cage-crinoline operates as a point of resistance to such western male hegemony. Rather than imposing stillness and wholeness, which following Nead, would negate the obscene, the cage-crinoline is actually concerned with movement through and the division of space. Underneath the structure the legs are quite free, and so the cage-crinoline swayed from side to side when its wearer moved. Due to their extreme diameter, the wearing of crinoline hoops could certainly be an inconvenience but the garment was in fact as much about movement as it was inertia, being lighter and more mobile than the horsehair petticoats it had replaced. This conflict between motion and stasis is paradoxical and it is by means of this paradox that one may find that women were able to skirt around attempts to contain them.

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(even though 'respectable French women almost always did so as part of a family group.') (Steele, 2006: 140) As Schlör notes, the topos of the night has repeatedly been located as female and as such – with the increase in female presence - the fears played out in the feminised city become intensified (Schlör, 1998: 169). As Scholvin continues 'It [the night] is female, as the day is male, and like everything female it brings quiet terror at the same time' (Scholvin cited in Schlör, 1998: 169). Thus in man's eyes, the *unheimlich* everywoman who has already dared to trespass on the city space, which he perceives as his own during the day, becomes a double danger at night. As the ideology of the *unheimlich* operates from a fear of sexual difference, gas-lit night-time becomes a double danger: for woman as the site/sight of sexual difference is intensified two-fold, her difference reflected in and intensified by the feminised city being cloaked in a feminised night. Man fears he may be swallowed up, consumed, overwhelmed by the feminine – both real and imaginary. For as outlined in note 33 with regard to the *Île de la cité*, Paris has shown herself to be both real city and an imagined body – corp/or/real (Hayward, 2000b: 23).

Reading against the grain, the enlarging of women's personal space via the cage-crinoline was surely advantageous, for when the cage-crinoline was worn within the public space of the city it allowed women to further impinge on what had previously been coded as male space. Hence the hefty hemline of the cage-crinoline packed a positive punch, for the garment provided Second Empire women with more presence in the city. Also, given the cage-crinoline's tension between mobility and immobility, despite its confining name, it would not have been the most effective method for keeping female genitalia 'beyond presentation.' (Nead, 1992: 25) For although the cage-crinoline appeared to be a solid scaffolding when attached to the female form, it was rather easy to displace. If a woman sat down without taking care of the positioning of her hoops, or was caught out by a sudden gust of wind, or some form of pressure on one side or other of her skirts, it could, and frequently would, result in the crinoline shooting upwards. Remember that at this time knickers were still crotchless.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the cage-crinoline could just as easily screen (as in expose) what was supposed to be kept off-screen. This disturbing of the delicate balance of the crinoline was perturbing for male hegemony, for it not only explicitly rendered private space public and *vice versa* but staged the obscene ambiguity of women's bodies – the conflict between the corporeal inside and outside inherent in the unclear borders of the vagina and anus.

This blurring of bodily borders and engrained spatial gender boundaries reminds one that the crinolined dome as home was not as *heimlich* as patriarchy would like to imagine. In fact, it could function as the opposite, an *unheimlich* reminder of the threat women posed in the modern city. On the city streets of Paris, women's crinolines, supposed gender armour against the obscene, could not be so easily controlled. In actual

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<sup>35</sup> See Lambert, <[www.localhistories.org/underwear.html](http://www.localhistories.org/underwear.html)> [accessed 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008].

fact, the cage-crinoline troubled corporeal boundaries while simultaneously appearing to reinforce them. The crinolined woman, like the corseted woman is placed in a garment that renders her body a paradox, a place of contradiction. In the case of the crinoline, this paradox centres on the gendering of space. The crinoline is both public and private, inside and outside, clothed and unclothed, mobile and immobile and due to its intimate connection to the body, the woman wearing the crinoline will also be public and private, inside and outside, clothed and unclothed, mobile and immobile. The crinoline creates a space of in-betweenness.

Interestingly, the cage-crinoline's fashionably wide silhouette reappeared in the 1950s but in the new techno fabric of nylon. Both the 1850s and the 1950s are periods in France marked by discourses of modernisation and hygiene. As discussed in section 1.1 in chapter one, the 1950s were a far from peaceful decade, witnessing the aftermath of the Occupation, messy wars of decolonisation, political instability, and the desire to become a modern nation. Ross illustrates how this modernisation was an attempt to wipe clean the stain left behind by the Occupation and divert attention from the wars in Algeria and Indo-China (Ross, 1999: 69-122). She specifically links this modernisation to women, through the technologising of the domestic sphere. The home became the arena in which the macro anxieties of the aftermath of World War II, and new fears emanating from (de)colonisation, were manifest on the micro scale of the domestic. The modernisation, cleansing and consequent mechanisation of the home served to tie women to this domestic sphere of (dis)comfort, charged with the responsibility of maintaining a technological home (Ross, 1999: 102-5). It is no surprise then that the cage-crinolined silhouette reappeared in the 1950s. For similar discourses on the gendering of space, modernisation, and hygiene – discourses that, as outlined earlier,

the crinoline both ad-dresses and dis-ad-dresses through its in-betweeness – are present in the timeframes of the 1850s and the 1950s. Quite how Escoffier's costume design utilises this contradictory piece of clothing, which is contemporaneous to two timeframes (much like the costume drama itself) will, therefore, be very interesting. However, before moving on to this next stage of analysis, the significance of Delamare's use of accessories and detailing must first be considered.

### **2.7: Accessories as Markers of Agency**

As the accoutrements of dress, accessories have tended to receive only cursory attention in fashion histories. However, they are more often than not the elements with which and by which much information may be conveyed and/or imposed onto their wearer. To take but one example, the detailing, and choice of fabric and finish of a handkerchief can indicate much of the class status of the person it belongs to – a plain, cotton square being of lower social rank than a lace or silk monogrammed one. Accordingly, the multi-accessorised persons dressed by Delamare in the *films à costumes* explored in this thesis, tend to have the most visual information of character on display. This is especially true of the women she dresses, who, due in part to the Great Masculine Renunciation, are able to exhibit more sartorial extras than the male characters. However, one must not forget that accessories can also impose meaning of their own onto their wearer rather than just reflecting social standing, profession etc. Accessories can also be (gender) political tools, as I shall now explain, using the *Merveilleuses* women of the First Empire as an example.

The *Merveilleuses* were a group of hedonistic women, including Joséphine de Beauharnais (future wife of Napoléon), who formed a new female elite to rival the pre-revolutionary *Salonnières*. Their ultra-feminine neo-classical dress was erotically charged and centred on bodily display, featuring slits in diaphanous silk from ankle to thigh and plunging necklines, accompanied with lots of fine detail and accessories (McMillan, 2000: 36). Just like many of the women Delamare dresses for costume drama, the *Merveilleuses* abundantly accessorised. Of such ultra-feminine fashion as worn by the *Merveilleuses*, Ribeiro has commented:

I take this [ultra-feminine] to mean costume which enhances the body and shows off the taste and status of the wearer by luxurious fabrics and accessories – dress which indicates a life of pleasure and comparative idleness. It also signals perhaps, the fact that women channelled some of their energy into the arts of fashion, since they were denied a political voice. (Ribeiro, 1988: 141)

There is no doubt that women were denied an official political voice at this time, and so there could be the possibility that women were using fashion, fine detail and accessories as unofficial political tools; carrying on where the cross-dressing revolutionary women (see section 2.4) had left off.

The *Merveilleuses* marked themselves out by their spectacularly feminine dress, cut from sumptuous fabrics and adorned and accessorised with jewels and spangles. Why should these women go to such lengths to signify luxury, taking fashion to a point where neither their clothes nor their bodies could be ignored? One answer presents itself in Hebdige's notion of 'hiding in the light.' (Hebdige, 1998: 35) Hebdige is of course referring to twentieth-century youth culture in his analysis but, if one takes the groups featured in both timeframes to be subcultures, certain parallels can be drawn with the

*Merveilleuses*. A subculture may be defined as a group that shares patterns of behaviour and values distinguishable from mainstream culture. The *Merveilleuses* shared patterns of behaviour centred on their bodily and vestimentary display, and like the *Merveilleuses*, the youth cultures that Hebdige discusses are marked out by their clothing and bodily appearance (Skinheads, Mods, Teddy boys, Punks). For Hebdige, ‘Subculture forms up in the space between surveillance and the evasion of surveillance, it translates the fact of being under scrutiny into the pleasure of being watched. It is a hiding in the light.’ (1998: 35) One can see how this may apply to the *Merveilleuses* and their sartorial and corporeal display. Yet it can also be applied to Delamare’s signature design trademark – accessories. For accessories may be used to divert the eye to a particular part of the body in order that another aspect may remain concealed.

Given the *Merveilleuses*’ choice of overtly feminine clothing, so adorned with jewels and accessories as to be considered in excess, one can forge a link here with the notion of camp. In Sontag’s seminal essay, Notes on Camp, she posits that camp functions as a sensibility by which marginal and/or artificial and/or exaggerated subjects and objects may be prized as camp (2001: 275-277). The *Merveilleuses* women certainly adhere to these factors - marginal due to their sex, and artificial and exaggerated due to their clothing. Although Sontag claims that ‘the Camp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized – or at least apolitical’ (275-277) this is not a view shared by all:

Camp as a term has always had theatrical and performative connotations, deriving from the French expression ‘*camper son role*’, literally to install one’s self in one’s role, to take it on, however temporary or illusory that might be. And this in part is true of camp. But as a term it also has earlier military connotations, which are not divorced from theatricality or performance. (Hayward, 2006: 5)

During the reign of France's royalty, tabs were kept on courtiers and the nobility by means of their mandatory presence at court. Court then became the arena in which surveyed by the monarchy, courtiers and the nobility would compete to impress in a show of 'politics,' which was really 'a politics of play, display, wit and amusement.' (Hayward, 2006: 5) Rather than serious discussion and policy-making they swanked. This continued even during battle, thereby expressing their political impotence through the theatre of war by camping their role.<sup>36</sup> Camp then is both apolitical and male, and is ultimately 'a self-mocking abdication of any pretension to power.' (Booth, 1999: 74)

It is this self-mocking abdication of power that the *Merveilleuses* adopted as an ironical display of opposition to the male hegemony of the First Republic, a Republic that denied them any official political discourse. Just like the courtiers of French royalty before them, appropriating male camp became a way to signify their political impotence.<sup>37</sup>

Yet while they could not invert the First Republic's political ideals through their dress, by adopting the post-revolutionary neo-classical ideal of woman and turning her into a fashion doll in excess, the *Merveilleuses* found a point of resistance, and in so doing partially snapped the stays of patriarchal ideology with ultra-feminine fashion. The official political discourse of First Empire France may have been for and about men, but its unofficial political rival, or point of opposition and resistance, came from the

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<sup>36</sup> During battle, the whole court would be moved and set up temporarily in the form of a camp of tents. However, this was not a drab affair. As Booth notes, 'The idea of tents did not then call to mind the small khaki, utilitarian apologies of today, but great billowy creations of shining fabrics – satins and silks studded with jewels, tapestries and gold banners.' (Booth, 1999: 78) Courtiers thus continued to swank even during conflict.

<sup>37</sup> The *Merveilleuses* literally turned themselves into tents to do it. Wearing silks and satins studded with jewels, they dressed and accessorised themselves in the fabrics of camp in both senses of the word. They used their camp neo-classical fashion to 'hide in the light' and indicate their exclusion from male political discourse (Hebdige, 1998: 35).

discourses created by and surrounding fashion and accessorising to excess. It will be interesting to see how Delamare may apply the possibility for resistance that lies in accessorising in her costume designs for the 1950s.

Having determined some of the ideological discourses that surround the signature garments of each designer, I will now turn to an exploration of each designer's cinematic wardrobe. This will take the form of four case-studies, in which the discourses determined in this chapter may be applied to each designer's costume through their signature garment. This will be done in conjunction with the designers' own personal and professional histories in order to follow how film costume may be imbued with meaning at each stage of its production and wearing – much like the earlier analysis of the corset and crinoline has shown.

**PART TWO:**  
**MINOR CASE-STUDIES –**  
**ANNENKOV AND ESCOFFIER**



## **MINOR CASE-STUDY 1: ANNENKOV'S TIGHTLY-LACED**

### **WOMEN**

#### **CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

This case-study will look specifically at the costumes created by Georges Annenkov, and will unstitch his costume design by means of his signature garment, the corset. In so doing, one can see how his take on the corset may fit (or not), address (or dis-address) the ideological readings of the pre- and post-industrial corset outlined in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 in part one of this thesis.

It is perhaps convenient for this study that Annenkov worked with Ophüls on several 1950s costume dramas, for this allows one to look for patterns of costuming within these films. The specific Ophülsian texts I shall use to illustrate Annenkov's work are *La Ronde* (1950), *Le Plaisir* (1952), *Madame de...* (1953), and *Lola Montès* (1955). Although I mention four texts here, it is *La Ronde* in particular, which I will analyse in-depth to illustrate Annenkov's costume design aesthetic and its ideological implications. However, before coming to an analysis of the designer's apparel for these films, I need first to illustrate the various factors, which had a significant influence on how his costumes were constructed. These factors or 'linings' to the films will be detailed in chapter three. In outlining these underlying layers, a deeper understanding of Annenkov's costume design for the four films named above should then be made possible in chapters four and five, which detail his costuming of *La Ronde* (with *Le Plaisir*, *Madame de...* and *Lola Montès* as counterpoints - complementary or contrasting - of costume reference), and his particular take on the corset, resulting in his costumes being able to be read as a palimpsest.

### 3.1: Annenkov's Constructivist Back-story

Annenkov was born Yurii Pavlovich Annenkov in 1889 in Petropavlovsk-on-Kamtchatka, Russia. He entered the University of St. Petersburg in 1908, where he studied fine art. Annenkov's enthusiasm for painting led him to take private tuition at the studio of Savelii Zeidenberg in the same year. From 1909-1910, he studied under Yan Tsioglinsky before moving to Paris in 1911, where he attended the studios of Denis and Valloton. Returning to St. Petersburg in 1913, Annenkov continued painting but also began to turn his creativity towards the theatre, creating décor for Nikolai Evreinov's *Homo Sapiens* and contributing regularly to the journal *Theatre and Art* (*Teatri I Iskusstvo*).

Annenkov was closely associated with the Russian avant-garde for the next ten years, aligning himself with Constructivism. As well as painting, illustration and collage, Annenkov became increasingly known for innovative theatre designs – both décor, and, most importantly for this study, costume designs – which were ‘concerned with abstract form and raw materials.’ (Barron, 1980: 127)

Constructivism like many so-called ‘movements’ was not a clear-cut collective with a defined beginning, middle and end. Instead it formed part of the greater non-linear development of the Russian avant-garde in the first three decades of the twentieth century. However, out of the multi-dimensionality of the Russian avant-garde certain tenets seen as definitive of Constructivism can be identified. Elements such as simplified forms, a disregard for traditional values of perspective, an interest in non-art materials, and a concern with depth, volume and the reduction of form to lines are viewed as belonging to the Constructivist visual view. As such, Constructivism

‘signified a radical break with aesthetic concepts of the earlier, pictorial stages [in Russian art] and created a new relationship between form – space – material and function.’ (Dabrowski, 1980: 28)

Annenkov’s participation in Constructivism is particularly interesting when viewed alongside the sketches for his costume design work in the 1950s, in which elements of a Constructivist aesthetic as detailed above can be traced.



Figure 1. *Figure* by Stepanova (1921).



Figure 2. Early Annenkov costume sketch.

Having established that Annenkov retains some Constructivist influence in the pre-filmic moment of his sketches, it will be interesting to see if such facets of Constructivism translate into his finished costumes when exploring the 1950s *films à costumes* he worked on.

As the ideas associated with Constructivism progressed, they developed a political edge. The majority of artists working within Constructivism had always been on the side of the 1917 Revolution, ‘their work decrying bourgeois convention and overthrowing its aesthetic preferences’ (Ferrier, 1999: 292) and Annenkov was no different. As Wiazemsky has noted, ‘He [Annenkov] adhered to all the new ideas, he was a chair of the *Maison des arts* run by his friend Maxime Gorki, he took responsibility for different commissions, painted official portraits of Lenin and Trotsky.’ (Wiazemsky cited in Annenkov, 1994: 10)<sup>38</sup>

Almost all Constructivist artists produced artworks in connection with propaganda. ‘With the rise of Bolshevism, the creators [artists such as Annenkov] fully adhered to the program of the Revolution. They viewed themselves as active participants in social movements.’ (Ferrier, 1999: 225) Indeed, Constructivism emphasised its Socialist edge through utilitarianism, for ‘only utility was believed to establish a true dialogue between art and the masses.’ (Dabrowski, 1980: 28) Such utility was emphasised by a focus on mass production and industry. Undeniably, the industrial began to interface itself with Annenkov’s work as he became interested in the mechanisation of movement and the body. As Barron and Tuchman put it, ‘he [Annenkov] shared with Constructivist stage designers a passion for sets and costumes based on mechanical movement.’ (Barron, 1980: 127) This interest in mechanised movement was showcased in two open air mass-spectacles that Annenkov organised in St Petersburg in 1920: *The Storming of the Winter Palace* and *The Hymn of Free Labour* (Wiazemsky cited in Annenkov, 1994: 10).

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Il adhère à toutes les idées nouvelles, siège à la Maison des arts présidée par son ami Maxime Gorki, prend la responsabilité de différentes commissions, peint les portraits officiels de Lénine et Trotski.’ (Wiazemsky cited in Annenkov, 1994: 10) All translations within this thesis are my own.

I read this fascination with automated movement as corresponding to Annenkov's recurrent use of very tightly-laced corsets in the 1950s costume dramas he worked on. His locating of the female form within this garment - particularly the mass-produced post-industrial corset – appears to be tied-up with an interest in mechanising the body that stems from his earlier involvement in Constructivism. As established in chapter two of this thesis, it was advancements in industrial processes that enabled tighter-lacing of corsetry, and further restricted its wearer's range of movement. I would suggest that these industrially imposed, and, by extension, mechanical poses are one of the reasons behind Annenkov's interest in not just the corset, but the extremely tight-laced corset. These are threads that will be explored in the analysis of Annenkov's costume design for *La Ronde* in chapter four. Yet before this can be achieved, I must first complete the back-stories to this films' costumes and so briefly return to Annenkov's time in Russia and Paris.

The Post-Revolutionary period in Russia became a time when any artworks produced had to be State-sanctioned and meet the requirements of newly imposed censorship. If this was not the case then one risked enforced exile. However, Annenkov chose to exile himself after the death of Lenin in 1924, moving first to Germany and then settling in Paris.<sup>39</sup> His career in European cinema began in 1926, when he designed the costumes for Murnau's *Faust*. Annenkov's next filmic project was not until 1934, designing costumes for Granowsky's *Les Nuits Moscovites*. He then worked regularly as a costume designer throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and the 1950s.<sup>40</sup> It was during the 1950s that Annenkov first encountered Max Ophuls, the director with whom he worked more

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<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately I have been unable to discover precisely when Annenkov permanently relocated to France. However, it must have been by 1934 in order for him to design the costumes for Granowsky's *Les Nuits Moscovites*.

<sup>40</sup> See filmography for full details.

than any other, and the director of the four Annenkov costumed films considered in this case study. Bearing this in mind, I will now consider Annenkov's and Ophuls's working relationship and personal friendship.

### 3.2: Annenkov and Ophuls Back-story

In total, Annenkov costumed four films and one theatre piece directed by Ophuls. In addition to the aforementioned film titles, Annenkov and Ophuls collaborated on the stage play *La Folle journée ou le mariage de Figaro* (1957). Annenkov also provided the costume design for one film started by Ophuls, *Montparnasse 19* (1958),<sup>41</sup> as well as completing sketches for several of Ophuls's unrealised projects.<sup>42</sup> According to Annenkov, Ophuls approached him regarding the costumes for *La Ronde* after having seen his work for director Jean Delannoy (Annenkov, 1962: 12).<sup>43</sup>

During the eight years in which they worked together, Annenkov and Ophuls became great friends, united by the fact that Ophuls's father had been a *Belle Époque* military tailor (Ustinov, 1977: 255). This fact certainly goes some way to explain Ophuls's interest in setting his films at the turn of the previous century, and his fascination with the figure of the *Belle Époque* soldier. As Peter Ustinov has acknowledged, 'Max [Ophuls] loved officers of the *Belle Époque*, their utter uselessness, their statutory quick temper over imagined slights, their generous ability to make room for younger men by eliminating each other on the field of honour.' (1977: 255) This observation is realised

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<sup>41</sup> This film was in fact completed by Jacques Becker after the former director's death.

<sup>42</sup> These included *Finale*, *L'Amour des quatre colonels* and *Mam'zelle Nitouche*, the latter was eventually directed by Yves Allégret in 1954.

<sup>43</sup> This work included *Pontcarral, colonel d'empire* (1942), *L'Eternel retour* (1943), *Le Bossu* (1944), and *La Symphonie pastorale* (1946).

in *Madame de...* through the presence of sequences set in army quarters, and through the military figure of the General (Charles Boyer), who shoots his rival (his wife's lover), Donati (Vittorio de Sica). *La Ronde* also features two military men - the soldier (Serge Reggiani) and the Count (Gérard Philipe) - as major protagonists in its narrative, as well as scenes set within military barracks. Such an interest in the armed forces on the part of Ophuls is of course reflected in Annenkov's costume designs for these films, which had to recreate the uniforms of the period. What will be intriguing in the analysis of these costumes is how far one can follow this military thread. I will be curious to see if it runs through the women's costumes as well, and whether such focus on uniforms, and indeed uniformity, returns to Annenkov's earlier involvement with Constructivism and its associated utilitarianism (as I suspect).

By his own admission, Annenkov was hugely influenced by Ophuls (Annenkov, 1962: 15). After the director's death in 1957, Annenkov wrote a book entitled *Max Ophuls* (1962), in which he chronicled the films that they had worked on together. Unwilling to accept his demise, Annenkov refers to the director as if he is still alive throughout his text, describing him as 'an artist, a designer [...] a man of high culture, an authentic intellectual [...] a tireless researcher of innovative methods.' (1962: 15)<sup>44</sup>

### **3.3: Clothing Misogyny: Ophuls and Schnitzler**

Despite being held in such high regard by Annenkov, Ophuls and his *œuvre* are inescapably misogynistic. Ophuls's films repeatedly result in the destruction or containment of women after they have in some way disturbed the patriarchal ideology

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<sup>44</sup> 'un artiste, un créateur [...] un homme de haute culture, un authentique intellectuel [...] un infatigable chercheur de voies novatrices'.

of his texts. Prostitution, repression and death become the fate of the Ophulsian woman. This is certainly the case for the women in the director's four costume dramas of the 1950s. See for example, the cruelty and 'imprisonment' of Lola Montès (Martine Carol) in the film of the same name, the death of Louise (Danièle Darrieux) in *Madame de...*, and the near death and confinement to a wheelchair of the model, Joséphine (Simone Simon), in *Le Plaisir*. In addition, Ophuls compounds such misogyny on-screen by making disparaging comments about his female characters off-screen. According to the director, Louise de Vilmorin's novella *Madame de...* (1951), which he adapted for the cinema under the same title, is a rather 'flimsy' text<sup>45</sup> and the character of Madame de... herself is someone 'who has a lot of charm but is a very empty woman with it.' (Ophuls cited in Annenkov, 1962: 64)<sup>46</sup> Ophuls is even more scathing of Lola: 'Lola Montès? That woman doesn't interest me: a half-prostitute, a mediocre dancer, a pretty little face but what else?' (Ophuls cited in Annenkov, 1962: 100)<sup>47</sup>

Why should Ophuls display such contempt for women, or at least his female characters? Given such an extreme dislike, it is strange he should want to make films in which the central protagonists are frequently female. A clue as to why this should be so presents itself in the following quote, in which he explains what *does* interest him about the figure of Lola: 'What interests me and what I want to show the audience, is the reaction of the *men* that she [Lola] reels in with her charms.' (Ophuls cited in Annenkov, 1962:

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<sup>45</sup> Note that Ophuls does not feel this way about the short stories of Maupassant that he has adapted for the cinema screen, nor the plays of Arthur Schnitzler. In fact Annenkov has noted that Ophuls was made to cut a rather sycophantic scene from *Le Plaisir*, in which Ophuls has a conversation with Maupassant himself at the beginning of the film (Annenkov, 1962: 33). Such respect for the author was not shown with de Vilmorin's text, which Ophuls dismissed as flimsy and as a result dramatically changed, altering both the time-period in which it was set and its ending.

<sup>46</sup> Louise de is someone 'qui a beaucoup de charme, est avec cela, une dame bien vide.'

<sup>47</sup> 'Lola Montès? Cette femme ne m'intéresse pas: une demi-prostituée, une médiocre danseuse, une jolie frimousse et quoi encore?'

100, my emphasis)<sup>48</sup> Thus one can discern that it is the portrait of man as victim of (promiscuous) women's charms, which Ophuls wishes to paint as a cautionary tale. According to the thinking of the director, and the gendered lines for viewing he presents, women who transgress patriarchal ideology will destroy both man and the social order he has established. Therefore, it is better to destroy the woman before she can further upset dominant patriarchal ideology. This destruction of woman as warning is the reason behind Lola's character assassination, which lays bare her soul, as well as the murder of Louise de... by proxy (caused by her 'weak' heart giving up when her husband shoots her lover in a duel).

This reasoning may also explain why Ophuls displayed such affection for the work of Austrian playwright, Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), adapting for the screen *Liebelei* (1931), and *Reigen (La Ronde)* (1950).<sup>49</sup> Schnitzler's work deals with themes of sex and death structured by the patriarchal double-standard that existed between men and women's permissible activities within the writer's epoch (and certainly beyond, still existing to some degree within the 1950s). This double-standard centred on restrictive bourgeois morality on the one hand, and the sexual licence of the street on the other. Within this configuration, as Yates has noted, 'Beneath a surface veneer of virtuous respectability, practical expectations of the two sexes were determined by conventional ideas of their different "drives" and social roles.' (Yates, 1992: 116) He continues:

Young men of good family were permitted and even encouraged to sow their wild oats by indulging in affairs with socially inferior girls who had no expectation of marriage [...] Married men might take mistresses. But the young woman whom such a man might marry, educated for a life of submissive domesticity, was required to remain impeccably chaste. (116)

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<sup>48</sup> 'Ce qui m'intéresse et ce que je veux montrer aux spectateurs, c'est la réaction des *hommes* qu'elle accroche avec ses charmes.'

<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, Roger Vadim was to remake *La Ronde* in 1964, starring amongst others Anna Karina, Jean-Claude Brialy and Jane Fonda.

In view of the fact that Schnitzler's dramas consistently display such inequality between the sexes, and reduce women to the virgin/whore dichotomy, they conform to Ophuls's preference for narratives in which women are repressed and contained within patriarchal structures of power. This is especially true of *Reigen (La Ronde)*, in which the women caught up in the cycle of sex and betrayal, are, to all intents and purposes, interchangeable (as I will illustrate in chapter four).<sup>50</sup>

In order to continue this back-story it is necessary to briefly outline the genesis of Schnitzler's *Reigen*, before linking back to Ophuls's misogyny and Annenkov's costume design. Despite Yates's claim that 'there is no misogyny in Schnitzler' (Yates, 1992: 123), I would argue to the contrary and proffer that the playwright reaches a peak of misogyny in a text such as *Reigen*. Taking the Viennese waltz as the basis for its circular structure, *Reigen* details ten heterosexual encounters, in which one partner always betrays the other by moving on to a new lover, immediately effacing the memory of the previous sexual encounter. Swales describes this narrative process as an amalgamation of the dance of death with a dance of lust. (1971: 234) In this mix of sex and death it is the women who suffer far more than the male characters in the text, for the aforementioned sexual double-standard means that their promiscuity will be punished rather than expected and rewarded, as it is of the male characters. In the play's mechanics of sex, the interchangeable women are discarded at will.

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<sup>50</sup> Coincidentally, for Schnitzler, women were not just interchangeable in his plays but also in his own life. He had a string of mistresses during his lifetime and often these women would overlap with each other in his affections, with the playwright seeing several of them simultaneously. Indeed, mistresses were frequently swapped among the men of the *Jung-Wien* group, a literary circle of impressionist writers who met at the Café Griensteidl in Vienna, to which Schnitzler belonged. Schnitzler chronicled such swapping of women and his sexual conquests in a diary that he kept meticulously from the age of 17 until two days before his death. Running to over eight thousand pages, Schnitzler's detailed diaries even kept a record of his orgasms. From these diaries one can also garner that the author used his numerous mistresses as literary and theatrical muses. For example, his relationship with the actor Adele Sandrock was the inspiration for the encounter between 'The Actress and the Poet' in *Reigen (La Ronde)* (Yates, 1992: 29).

After completing *Reigen*, Schnitzler read the piece to his closest friends but had no intention of publishing it. However, by 1900, it was privately printed and distributed among Schnitzler's circle. A note was added prefacing this private print run in which Schnitzler commented that his text was un-publishable in the current climate of opinion (Yates, 1992: 132). The playwright, therefore, acknowledged the risqué content of his play and its small-scale circulation among his bourgeois literary circle is reminiscent of the way in which pornography was distributed at this time. Indeed on the eventual mainstream publication of *Reigen* in 1903 by Weiner Verlag, its 'pornographic' content led to it being banned in Germany in 1904, and, in 1912, a Hungarian stage production of *Reigen* was also banned. In fact, *Reigen* did not make it to the stage until 1920, when it was produced in Berlin. A year later when it was staged in Vienna, fighting broke out in the theatre and it was banned for a year in the name of 'public order.' A week later, protests against the play began in Berlin. The furore resulted in a six-day obscenity trial, which attempted to (unsuccessfully) prosecute the theatre company and its directors' for inciting public disorder. (Yates, 1992: 37-38)<sup>51</sup> *Reigen* is, therefore, not material one would expect to be adapted as a costume drama – a genre, which is often perceived as being 'family friendly.'

Ophuls's translation of *Reigen* into *La Ronde* for the screen is quite a free adaptation; to which the director added the character of the raconteur (Anton Walbrook). An omnipotent figure, who can control time, content and narrative, the raconteur functions as Ophuls's alter-ego within the film. Thus Ophuls's misogyny takes on a physical shape - for in possessing the powers to manipulate time, content and narrative - the

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<sup>51</sup> *Reigen*'s courting of controversy does not end here, the play was still causing a stir in 1998 when David Hare adapted it for a West End production, directed by Sam Mendes. This time, however, the focus of attention was on Nicole Kidman's nude scene and tickets were rumoured to be changing hands for up to £500.

raconteur ensures that *La Ronde*'s men always win in the film's sexual politics. I will explore this further in the next chapter on the film's costume, for what is specifically important in this investigation is whether Annenkov's costume design supports or undermines the framework of misogyny that structures the directors' texts.

An intimation that Annenkov's designs do indeed fit in with Ophuls's repression of women may lie in the way in which the designer employs the corset, a garment whose constrictive nature provokes a myriad of discourses centred on the oppression of the female form. First, however, I will briefly outline Annenkov's working methods on Ophuls's projects.

### **3.4: Annenkov's Working Methods**

In *Max Ophuls*, Annenkov details how accepting a costume contract for the director would always result in a huge number of sketches having to be made, which Ophuls would then sign if they met his approval. Annenkov used pencil, pen and ink, Indian ink, watercolour, gouache and charcoal to create his pre-filmic designs, which would sometimes be stencilled onto a pre-printed base. He would often pin swatches of material to his sketches and add working notes before refining his ideas into final designs of a higher finish.

Of this process, the designer has commented 'I had complete freedom [...] the choice of time-period was also up to me.'<sup>52</sup> (Annenkov, 1962: 66) As such, Annenkov's costumes for Ophuls become a synthesis of timeframes, particularly in the case of *Le Plaisir*, in

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<sup>52</sup> 'Ma liberté était complète. Le choix de l'époque [...] dépendait aussi de moi.'

which three stories by Maupassant, which take place in three different timeframes are amalgamated into one generalised Third Republic setting. This synthesis by costume designer will be explored further when the seams of Annenkov's costume design are unpicked in the following chapter.

In *En Habillant les vedettes*, Annenkov's explanation of his working process goes even further, as he outlines the ten steps which he went through when preparing for and executing the costume design for a film (1994: 241-268). According to the designer, the first step was always a detailed study of the script and the second a meeting with the director and script-writer. Third, was research into the fashions of the period in which the film is set, after which he would meet with the director and principal actors to discuss the costumes and what they should convey. It was only after these first four steps had been completed that Annenkov would put pen to paper and begin the fifth step, the sketches.

Step six would consist of having the sketches and budget for the costumes approved by the director. Work was then distributed out to couturiers, wig-makers, shoe-makers, milliners and jewellers in order to turn sketches into fully realised costumes. Once this had been completed, the seventh step, which Annenkov would oversee, was the trying on of the costumes by the principal actors. The eighth step was assisting with wigs, hair and make up. After which, the ninth step, was to choose the costumes for the secondary actors and extras. The tenth and final step for Annenkov was to put the finishing touches to the costumes with accessories.

Although, as Annenkov himself notes above, he was afforded a great degree of artistic freedom when working for Ophuls, he was still very much influenced by the director. This is apparent in their almost identical views on costume design. For Ophuls, film costume ‘has no relationship with couture or fashion: it’s imagination, the clear-sightedness of the artist, it’s just art.’ (Ophuls cited in Annenkov, 1962: 17)<sup>53</sup> Similarly, for Annenkov, film costume is a ‘very complex art, which requires a lot of artistic clear-sightedness, imagination and technical expertise.’ (1965: 62)<sup>54</sup> This shared outlook resulted in a harmonious collaboration between the two men. However, working with both Ophuls and Annenkov, if you were a woman, could be rather less than harmonious, as the next two back-stories shall illustrate.

### 3.5: Rosine Delamare

Delamare is the most prolific of the four costume designers whose work is to be unstitched in this thesis. As such I will omit much of the introductory information on the designer here, saving it instead for the later case-study dedicated expressly to her and her costume design. However, it is certainly worth mentioning Delamare at this point, because she did in fact co-costume *Madame de...* with Annenkov - not that the latter would readily admit to this going by what he has written in his book, *Max Ophuls*. Indeed, another hint that Annenkov may share Ophuls’ predilection for women who should be seen and not heard, comes in the knowledge that despite having an equal part in creating the costumes for *Madame de...*, and in fact sharing an Oscar nomination for ‘Best Costume Design for a Black and White Film’ at the Academy Awards in 1954,

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<sup>53</sup> Film costume ‘n’a aucun rapport avec la couture ou avec la mode: c’est l’imagination, la clairvoyance de l’artiste, c’est l’art tout court.’

<sup>54</sup> Film costume is an ‘art très complexe qui exige une grande clairvoyance artistique de l’imagination et une maîtrise technique.’

Delamare is never once mentioned in Annenkov’s written account of making the film! Moreover, when news of the Oscar nomination reached Annenkov, he showed the letter from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to Ophuls with the words ‘In all justice, this prize must be shared between me and you, the director of this film, because in cooperative artworks such as the theatre and cinema, collaboration is always the work of co-inspiration.’(1962: 109)<sup>55</sup>

Even though Annenkov refuses to acknowledge Delamare’s design presence on *Madame de...*, the film is most definitely a synthesis of the two designers’ costume methodologies: Annenkov’s tightly corseted silhouette is juxtaposed with Delamare’s abundance of accessories – gloves, bows, lace trims, hair decorations and chiffon detailing.



Figure 4. Delamare’s accessories and detail.

Figure 3. Annenkov’s geometric lines.

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<sup>55</sup> ‘Ce prix devait être, en toute justice, partagé entre moi et lui, le metteur en scène de ce film, car dans l’art collectif, comme celui du theatre et du cinéma, la co-cr ation est toujours le r sultat d’une co-inspiration.’

Although there is no account of Delamare's opinion of Annenkov, she was certainly not shy in expressing her dislike of Ophuls. In an interview with *Positif* in 1996, she described the director as 'a royal pain in the arse, unbelievably pretentious [...] he [Ophuls] wasn't just a pain with me about the costumes, but with everyone, the set decorators, the set designers.' (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 56)<sup>56</sup> This of course goes against Annenkov's pro-Ophuls description of collaborating with the director on set: 'Ophuls always treated his assistants as co-directors. There lay his great charm, and his artistic enthusiasm reached and adored his "team."' (1962: 15)<sup>57</sup> It seems that Annenkov could not extend the courtesy he believed Ophuls had when working as a team to Delamare. Yet it was not just Delamare who had difficulty circumnavigating Annenkov's and Ophuls' working methods. Martine Carol, to whom I shall now turn, also had trouble.

### 3.6: Martine Carol

Annenkov's contract for the costumes on *Lola Montès*, standing at eleven months, was the longest of his career and by his own acknowledgement had 'a dramatic prologue.' (1962: 79) This 'prologue' arrived in the form of Martine Carol. Carol was to play Lola and be the film's star presence and thus box-office draw; yet on the day she signed her contract, she bluntly informed the producers that there was no way she would be dressed by Annenkov, and was far from happy with him working on the film. The actor cited Annenkov's book *En Habillant les vedettes* as the reason behind this decision, in

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<sup>56</sup> 'Le roi des emmerdeurs, d'une prétention incroyable [...] Il [Ophuls] n'était pas seulement emmerdant avec moi, au sujet des costumes, mais avec tout le monde, les décorateurs, les ensembleurs.'

<sup>57</sup> 'Ophuls traitait ses collaborateurs toujours en tant que co-créeurs. Là, était son grande charme, et ses élans artistiques pénétraient et aimaient son «équipe».'

which she believed he had written incorrect and consequently insulting words about her (Annenkov, 1962: 79).

Hearsay has it that Carol could be a very paranoid person, but it seems that on this occasion she had reason to be upset with Annenkov, and take issue with his words. Over four pages in the *Débuts* chapter of *En Habillant les vedettes*, Annenkov describes how the reciprocal relationship between Carol and the press made her a star. This of course is true, but the language used to describe Carol is disparaging. After flippantly recounting her first suicide attempt, Annenkov refers to the actor as a ‘child’, an ‘adorable child’, a ‘little lady’ and a ‘charming doll.’ (1994: 229-232)<sup>58</sup> Annenkov defends himself in *Max Ophuls*, claiming that what he had written only touched on Carol indirectly, in order to show the methods used by the publicity machine of the press. However, this intention is never stated in the original disputed piece of text.

As a result of this clash between star and costume designer, Ophuls asked Annenkov to either write to Carol, or to go and see her, in an effort to resolve their conflict. Annenkov refused to visit Carol, but in order to appease his friend, agreed to write her a letter. The correspondence received no response but a week later Annenkov was called to a meeting at *Gamma-Film*, the producers of *Lola Montès*. Once there, he was informed that Carol was no longer protesting against his presence on the film but would still not consent to having him dress her for the role. Annenkov agreed to this and signed his contract, but the outcome of this spat with Carol was that Marcel Escoffier was drafted in to create the star’s wardrobe.

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<sup>58</sup> Annenkov refers to the actor as an ‘enfant’, an ‘adorable enfant’, a ‘petite dame’ and a ‘charmante poupée.’

As with *Madame de...* then, *Lola Montès*, showcases a double costume design aesthetic, this time with a juxtaposition of Annenkov and Escoffier's costume methodology. This should be particularly interesting when analysing this film, given Escoffier's preoccupation with the crinoline and showcasing female sexuality (most frequently that of Carol, whom he had dressed prior to *Lola Montès* in three other costume dramas).<sup>59</sup> Of particular note, given this mix of costume designers, will be how the crinoline and its associated ideologies, fit (or not) with Annenkov's tightly corseted mode of addressing the female body.

It is worth remarking here that Annenkov was happy to acknowledge Escoffier's part in creating the costumes for *Lola Montès*, unlike *Madame de...* and his exclusion of Delamare's involvement. This again points to a latent misogyny, which the costume designer shares with Ophuls. Furthering this is the fact that after several weeks of stalemate on set, Carol was the one to break the ice, and extend her apologies to Annenkov in light of their misunderstanding. This points not only to Carol's willingness to yield in such a power-game, but also to her humanity in the face of the costume designer's apparently continued sexism.

These six linings to the costumes that Annenkov designed for Ophuls's four 1950s costume dramas, outlining the pre-filmic conditions of the moments in which the designs were created, should now enable a further unpicking of the (gender) politics of Annenkov's costume design. So, with these meta-textual linings to the films' costumes in mind, I will turn to a textual and textural analysis of Annenkov's wardrobe.

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<sup>59</sup> *Lucrece Borgia* (1953), *Madame du Barry* (1954), *Nana* (1955), all directed by Christian-Jaque.

## CHAPTER 4: ANNENKOV'S WARDROBE FOR *LA RONDE*

The extra-textual linings to Ophuls's 1950s costume dramas above have raised several research questions, which will be addressed in this chapter. First, how, if at all, do the facets of Constructivism present in Annenkov's sketches translate into his finished costumes? And, second, does his interest in the post-industrial corset and extreme tight-lacing tie into his earlier absorption in Constructivist ideas around the mechanisation of the body? Ophuls's interest in uniforms and the *Belle Époque* soldier, as acknowledged earlier, is transferred to at least two of his costume dramas (*La Ronde* and *Madame de...*) via Annenkov's male apparel. Yet what will be interesting to discern, and lead to a third thread of research, is how far this military theme in the designer's costumes can be followed – for example, does it impact upon the women's costumes? If this is the case, then I would proffer that such a focus on uniforms returns to the utility of Constructivism. Staying with Ophuls, another concern the director provokes in relation to Annenkov is whether the latter's costumes, particularly his use of the corset, supports or undermines the former's framework of misogyny.

There is of course Annenkov's synthesis of timeframes, and the inevitable encroachment to some degree of the 1950s moment on the films in question, which must also be considered in this chapter, as must the juxtaposition of Annenkov's costumes with those of his co-costumers (whether acknowledged or not!), Delamare and Escoffier. Having now recapped these research questions, I will move to an analysis of the costumes in *La Ronde*, treating the clothing of the five main female protagonists in order of their appearance on screen. As explained earlier, the exploration of costume focuses on the employment of the signature garment of each of the four designers in question, which in Annenkov's case has previously been established to be the corset.

Therefore, this case-study on Annenkov, in looking predominantly at the corseted figure within the films he has dressed, focuses mainly on the female characters in *La Ronde* (and in *Le Plaisir*, *Madame de...*, and *Lola Montès* as counterpoints to this film).

However, before casting the first stitch in this process, it is worth noting the raconteur's introduction to the fabric of the film.

Initially appearing in 1950s garb, Anton Walbrook's character changes his outfit to that of a *Belle Époque* gentleman, stating 'A change of costume... 1900... we are in the past... I love the past.'<sup>60</sup> With his costume transformation complete and his enunciation of such in the voice-over, the timeframe of the film's narrative also shifts to 1900 Vienna. This costume-centric introduction to the film signifies the active role costume will play throughout the text, as fabric's status as an independent producer of meaning is confirmed visually, orally and aurally. I will now explore this further.

## **WOMEN'S COSTUMES (in order of appearance)**

### **4.1: Léocadie (Simone Signoret)**

Signoret's character, Léocadie, unlike the other women in *La Ronde*, has only one outfit (for when she reappears at the film's close she is naked under a bed sheet – a point to which I shall return in due course). She appears as if by magic on the raconteur's carousel when he deems the narrative should begin. As one can see in the image below, she is dressed in a long-sleeved, puff-shouldered, high-collared, single-breasted and belted bodice-style jacket, which has two small pleats below the belt at the rear of the garment. The lower half of Léocadie's body is covered by an ankle-length skirt, in

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<sup>60</sup> 'Un changement de costume... 1900... nous sommes dans le passé... j'adore le passé.'

which volume is created at the back via soft, full-length pleats, which fall from waist to ankle. Underneath the skirt are several white petticoats with a lace trim, which are only visible in the narrative when Léocadie descends a flight of stairs. Both her jacket and skirt are made from a dark, woollen looking fabric. The jacket is plain, apart from a lighter double stripe appliquéd at the collar and sleeves, and the hem of her skirt is similarly embellished with a lighter single appliquéd stripe in a curling motif. This detailing resembles military insignia in its design, particularly at the sleeve where the two stripes come to a point. As for accessories, flung around Léocadie's neck is a light-coloured and rather straggly looking feather boa, and in her hair a white bird decoration. She also carries a small pouch-style bag, and wears button-fastening, heeled ankle boots. As one can see from the two images below, Annenkov's sharp-edged sketch for Léocadie's costume is almost identical to the finished article, suggesting that one can indeed trace his Constructivist aesthetic from pre-filmic to filmic moment.



Figure 5. Annenkov's sketch.



Figure 6. The finished costume.

In the dimly lit scenes in which Léocadie is present, much of the detail of her clothing is unnoticeable. Only her white accessories really stand out in the gloom. The whiteness of

the bird ornament, and what looks like a chandelle feather boa, is at odds with the rest of her rather drab outfit. It appears that it is via the contrast between these prominent pieces of decoration, and Léocadie's dull jacket and skirt, that Annenkov is marking out her profession as prostitute (despite the suggestion of purity that white has as a colour). The dark woollen fabric of her outfit allows her to blend into the night when she wants to, but equally, the feather boa marks her out when she wishes to be visible. Indeed, the boa is connotative of erotic seduction purposes, given its association with the striptease, in which it is used to cover and reveal body parts.

This contrast between visibility and camouflage is shown most clearly when Léocadie is standing against the wall of the soldiers' barracks, waiting to pick up Serge Reggiani's character, Franz. Her face, highlighted by her white accessories, stands out from the brickwork but the rest of her costume, and, therefore, body is concealed by it. In fact, this distinction between visibility and concealment is reminiscent of military uniforms, which also operate along this dichotomy. This links to Ophuls's interest in military dress, which one can trace through Annenkov's costume for Léocadie. The fabric of her skirt and jacket appear to be cut from the same cloth as that which makes up Franz's uniform, and the detailing on the cuffs of her sleeves as noted earlier, resembles military insignia. I suspect that Annenkov's military thread runs deeper than just this surface detail and that perhaps uniform, in Léocadie's case, also becomes a question of uniformity, and so part of Ophuls's quest for women to be quantifiable, and as such controllable. Yet I will put this query to one side for a moment.

Annenkov has seemingly created an authentic looking *Belle Époque* silhouette. On first glance all the distinctive hallmarks of women's dress of the period, as illustrated below

– high-neck, long sleeves and long skirt; tiny waist; volume at the top of the shoulder and back of the skirt; button-fastening boots – have been recreated in Signoret’s costume.

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 7. A *Belle Époque* dress  
with S-bend silhouette.

However, there is something awry with the overall silhouette that her clothing presents. If it were a truly accurate *Belle Époque* body shape then Léocadie’s corsetry would be disciplining her body into a S-bend, in which the bust is pushed forwards and the bottom backwards. Between such a plentiful bosom and protruding *derrière* would be an incredibly tiny waist. Signoret’s character does indeed have a tiny waist, and the very hard look of her torso and extreme waist to hip ratio indicates that corsetry is certainly present. Nevertheless rather than being bent forwards into a S-bend, Signoret remains very upright and angular. This is where the difference between the reality of the *Belle Époque* silhouette and Annenkov’s imagined silhouette manifests itself.

Annenkov keeps the waist as the central point of his costume, but rather than trying to enforce curves as the S-bend corset attempted, Annenkov creates straight lines and angles. From the central point of the waist, the designer creates two triangles – waist to shoulders and waist to skirt hem – both triangles being of similar width, with the bottom of the lower triangle (skirt hem) being of matching width to the top of the upper triangle (shoulders). Such focus on the waist is not only authentic of the *Belle Époque* but can also be read as a nod to 1950s fashion. Although the ‘New Look’ line was created by Dior in 1947, it carried over into the following decade and the ‘wasp-waist’ characterised what was regarded as a fashionable silhouette for women throughout the 1950s. Akin to Annenkov’s triangular silhouette, the New Look line as embodied in the picture below was also based on a triangular bisection of the body.



Figure 8. *Le Bar* suit, Dior’s New Look line, 1949.

Post-World War II the return to vogue of the extremely tiny waist can be read as an attempt to recast definitive masculine and feminine gender roles, which had been

revised and challenged during the war. The return of the waist reasserted visible femininity, and, in nodding back to a shape achieved by tightly-laced corsetry, it also made historical allusion to a period when predominantly many middle-class women did not work. The tightly-laced corsets of the middle and aristocratic classes prevented women from freedom of movement, let alone working.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, focus on the restrained waist signified a sartorial re-centring of the female body as trapped, trapped within gender binaries and their associated ‘acceptable’ roles for women (yet paradoxically in the case of Léocadie, her tight-corseting becomes a sign of her working status as prostitute). Moreover, the padded shoulders of 1940s women’s wear (one thinks of Joan Crawford here) were re-appropriated post-war by male dress in a re-masculinising of the shoulder.

As well as nodding specifically to the 1950s fashion moment in his costume, and thus the synthesis of timeframes within the costume drama, Annenkov’s rendering of Signoret as triangular also returns one to his Constructivist aesthetic. In simplifying the female form to straight edges he is following Constructivism’s reduction of form to geometric lines. This is of course achieved by disciplining the body beneath its clothing, and this is where Annenkov’s aforementioned fascination with the corset comes into play.

Due to the setting of *La Ronde (Belle Époque)* and its moment of production (1950s) Annenkov uses the post-industrial corset in his costume design. Yet rather than use the *Belle Époque* S-bend, Annenkov creates a Constructivist inspired mechanical-X. Thus he rejects the pretence of plasticity and contours offered by the Art Nouveau inspired S-

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<sup>61</sup> Women who did in fact work often still wore corsets but of a much looser fit to enable them to go about their jobs more easily.

bend in favour of geometry. In fact the forced feminine of the S-bend in his costumes is effaced by Constructivist utility. This then brings one of the initial research questions relating to the mechanisation of the corseted body to the fore. Yet, before pursuing this line of enquiry it is worth investigating whether the other female characters of *La Ronde* are, like Signoret's Léocadie, also mechanical-X corset wearers.

#### **4.2: Marie (Simone Simon)**

When Marie first appears on screen her outfit is indeed of a strikingly similar silhouette to that of Léocadie. Dressed in a high-collared, puff-shouldered, long-sleeved, button-through, single-breasted bodice style jacket with a bow-fastened drawstring at the waist, Marie's torso also looks rigid and compressed, hinting at the presence of corsetry beneath. Underneath the bodice-like jacket is a white shirt that is ruffled at collar and cuff. Like Léocadie, on her lower half Marie is wearing a softly pleated ankle length skirt and button-fastened heeled ankle boots. But unlike Signoret's character, Marie's skirt is cut from patterned fabric. Small diamond shapes, each housing a floral design have been printed onto the skirt material. In terms of accessories, Marie has a wide-brimmed but flat straw hat and a balloon on a string (see below).



Figure 9. Marie's first outfit.



Figure 10. Marie's second outfit.

Again, comparable to *Léocadie*, it is the accessories that Marie is wearing which give the audience most information about her character. Although the balloon is a prop rather than an integral part of her costume, it informs the audience of the childlike aspect of Marie's persona. In truth, Simon's on and off-screen personas conflated to become that of the child-woman (as Bardot's would also do a decade later). This notion of the child-woman is present in Marie's hat too, which looks like a schoolgirl's piece of oversized millinery when compared to the neat, veiled bonnets of Danièle Darrieux's and Odette Joyeux's characters (see below). Interestingly, once Marie has had sex with Reggiani's soldier, Franz, the balloon has gone and the hat is carried in her hand, her childlike accessories gone with her virginity. It is also worth noting here that when Anton Walbrook's character arrives to enable her next sexual encounter to occur with Alfred, played by Daniel Gélin (after Franz has unceremoniously ditched her), the raconteur returns her balloon to her, effectively 'reinstating' her virginity. However, after they have magically travelled through two months worth of time to bring Marie to her new home and job as a housemaid, the raconteur takes the balloon back and releases it. The

subtext being that in order to escape two months of misery pining for Franz and searching for a new job (she is sacked for staying out late with the military man) all she has to do is have sex with the raconteur and let him take her reinstated virginity.

It appears so far, that in adapting Schnitzler's text, Ophuls is creating a *mise-en-scène* of (male) pleasure by putting the playwright's fantasy on screen. Its misogyny lies in the fact that it is a text based in the capitalism of commodity exchange, and in this case, it is women who become the goods to be traded. This interchangeability returns one to Annenkov's costume design. In terms of silhouette, Léocadie and Marie are made the same shape, implying that as there is no outwardly visible difference between them (other than their facial features), as even their hair has been styled in the same manner, they could easily be exchanged for one other, which is of course what Franz does in the narrative.

Marie's second costume in the film (see above) also makes her into an X-shape. As she arrives at the door of her new home, her outfit has magically morphed into a housemaid's uniform. Her shoes remain the same, but her skirt - although its cut and shape are identical to both her previous skirt and that of Léocadie - is made of plain black and not patterned material. On her top half Marie wears a translucent spotted blouse, under which one can just make out her corset. A white apron, which has criss-cross straps at the back, a bow fastening above the bottom, and a lace and ribbon trim largely conceals both Marie's foundation garment and outer garment.

As one can see from the images of Marie above, her costumes structure her body into an X-shape. In fact, the crossed apron straps of her second outfit expressly points to this

Constructivist shape achieved through corsetry. Ideas around mass-production are, therefore, beginning to surface in Annenkov's designs. Although I will investigate the costumes of the remaining three female protagonists in order to see if they too adhere to the mechanical-X before drawing any conclusions.

### **4.3: Emma (Danièle Darrieux)**

Cut from dark satin and trimmed with lace, Darrieux's first costume is the most luxurious of the film so far. However, rather than being a jacket and skirt combination, the main component of her outfit is a dress. This dress has more noticeable embellishment than Léocadie's or Marie's, with three layers of ruffled lace trim at the hem, a white lace ruffle at the neck, and long chiffon pleated cuffs. Such finery marks her out (in terms of the strict class hierarchies of the *Belle Époque*) from the prostitute and housemaid. One is also informed by the raconteur that Emma is a young wife, thus Darrieux's character's finery not only marks out her class difference from the other two women but showcases the wealth of her husband.

Despite this, her dress still shares striking similarities with the previously discussed costumes of Léocadie and Marie. Again the puff-shoulders and long sleeves, high neckline and ankle-length hem, and button-fastening, heeled boots are present. And once more it is via Emma's accessories that most information about her nature is given. She is wearing black elbow-length gloves, a small bonnet with two veils, a ruffled lace cape and carrying a black umbrella. Whilst pointing to her middle-class identity, this cluster of sartorial extras is used primarily for disguise – Darrieux's character does not want her extra-marital affair to be uncovered. However, once she is inside the apartment

that Alfred has rented specifically for their sexual encounter, these accessories are all removed at his request. Once stripped of such trimmings, Emma's costume is taken back to an outfit that is certainly comparable to Léocadie's and Marie's. Most importantly for this enquiry, Emma's silhouette is also an X-shape. Thus, the removal of her finery by Alfred to uncover an X-shape silhouette again implies that all women within *La Ronde* are essentially the same. The commodity exchange occurs once more, Marie is swapped for Emma and as soon as the transaction of intercourse is complete, Alfred will trade Emma in for another model.



Figure 11. Emma's outfit of disguise.



Figure 12. The mechanical-X ball-gown.

One interesting thing that comes to light during this particular sex transaction is that Emma's corset stays on. Although only the straps are glimpsed it is certainly present. Indeed, before more of the corset can be revealed, the camera cuts back to the raconteur on his carousel tutting to himself about censorship while cutting the film negative with a pair of scissors. However, although one does not see the sex scene, one can be fairly

sure that the corset stays on, for reasons of speed, caution and eroticism. In terms of speed and caution, Emma has a limited amount of time to spend with Alfred before suspicions as to her whereabouts are raised. Also, a differently laced corset, once removed and then re-laced by Alfred (as opposed to her maid), would give away her sexual exchange. As for eroticism, in retaining the corset during sex the X-shape also remains and the female torso stays compressed and rigid.

As noted in the exploration of the corset in part one, the constriction of the body is bound up with eroticism and pleasure, and has frequently been seen as a very male thing, due to its association with (auto)erotic asphyxiation in which the neck and throat area are compressed. As one has been following a male *mise-en-scène* of pleasure courtesy of Schnitzler and Ophuls so far in *La Ronde*, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the constriction of the female body in this text also adheres to male fantasies. I am not suggesting that it is impossible for women to experience pleasure from the constriction of the body, just that in such a patriarchally structured film the primary focus of the narrative is to privilege the male sexual experience and the male viewer. As such, the extreme constriction of the female form during the four sexual encounters so far, can be read as a displacement of (auto)erotic asphyxiation from the male to the female body, which is achieved via corsetry. (Due to the haste and predominantly outdoor locations in which the first three encounters occur one can also presume that Léocadie and Marie did not have the time to remove and re-lace their corsets either).

Interestingly, this displacement of erotic constriction from the male to the female body would also appear to be the case in the *Maison Tellier* sequence of *Le Plaisir*. However,

in this text, corsetry is explicitly showcased rather than being hinted at as it is in *La Ronde*. Indeed, a hierarchy of corsetry appears to be on display in the *Maison Tellier*, ranging from Mathilde Casedesus's short, plain black corset at one end of the scale, to Danièle Darrieux's intricately laced, pale satin corset at the other.

Returning then to Darrieux's character in *La Ronde*, there are two other costumes, which she wears that have not yet been mentioned. The first of these is a white satin ball dress (see above), and the second, a white cotton nightgown. The ball dress is cut off the shoulder, and this low neckline is trimmed with chiffon white ruffles. It is accessorised with white elbow-length evening gloves and white feathers in her hair. Once more, this dress is luxurious, signalling Emma's class position and her husband's wealth.

However, yet again it is a dress based on the principle of the X-shape, the degree to which the chiffon ruffles are positioned explicitly pointing to the top half of the X.

It would appear, therefore, that thus far three out of the five female protagonists have a mass-produced silhouette achieved by Constructivist corsetry. What is interesting, given the explanation of the transfer of (auto)erotic asphyxiation to women by means of such corsetry, is that in Emma's final costume, one is initially unsure if she is corseted or not, seeing the long-sleeved, yoke-necked nightgown from the bust up only. One strongly suspects though, that she is not corseted here, as women tended to remove their corsets before bed. The previous clue as to the presence of her corset lay in the exposure of its straps, which one cannot detect here, and should be able to determine through the thin fabric of her nightgown if indeed they were present. As the scene in which Emma wears this apparently un-corseted nightgown takes place in the marital bedroom with her husband, it implies that the displacement of (auto)erotic asphyxiation by the constriction

of the female waist does not become a male fantasy when it involves the known quantity of one's wife. It is worth noting here that although Emma and her husband are in the same room they are in separate beds, much like Darrieux's and Boyer's married characters in *Madame de...*

#### 4.4: Anna (Odette Joyeux)

When Joyeux's character first appears she is dressed in a cloak style coat and sporting a bird's nest style bonnet, complete with bird decoration on her head. As she enters the private dining room where she is to dine (and later have sex) with Fernand Gravey's character, both the bonnet and coat are removed. Again, once stripped of accessories, Anna's costume is comparable to the three previous women, for she is dressed in a white lace, embroidered and puff-sleeved bodice, and a black ankle-length skirt. Although the bodice is v-necked rather than high-necked like all the previous women's costumes (Darrieux's off-the-shoulder ball gown excepted), it nevertheless conforms to the by now expected mechanical-X silhouette.



Figure 13. Anna's first outfit.



Figure 14. The 'erect' torso.

Anna's second outfit, which she wears for her night of passion with the poet (Jean-Louis Barrault), consists of a full-length, fur-trimmed coat, accessorised with a matching fur hat and muff. The fur of the outfit can be linked to female sexuality, for as Steele notes following Freud, it connotes female pubic hair (Steele, 1996). This fur ensemble is seen twice in the narrative. However, come the second view of this fur outfit, its seductive purpose is thwarted as the poet dumps Joyeux's character. Having already seen Anna's corporeal as well as sartorial fur trim he is no longer interested. Yet it is what is underneath this luxurious coat that is of primary concern for this analysis.

Beneath the coat is worn a dark, high-necked, puff-shouldered dress with elbow-length sleeves, the collar and cuffs of which are trimmed with lace (see above). Again, Anna's body is manufactured into a mechanical-X. The extremely corseted bodice of the dress, as one can see from the image above, looks very hard and rigid. And given the earlier detailing of the transfer of (auto)erotic asphyxiation, such stiffening of the female waist could be compared to the penile erection, which results from this practice. Indeed, one is given a point of view shot from the perspective of the poet, looking at Anna and focusing on her stiff torso. The lust that this look then inspires reinforces what one has come to understand as the X-rated nature of the mechanical-X.

Such rigidity of the female waist and torso is most visibly on display during the *Maison Tellier* sequence of *Le Plaisir*, which, as outlined above, explicitly displays its corsetry. Such displacement of the pleasure attainable via (auto)erotic asphyxiation onto the 'erect' corset fetishises the garment. As this middle chapter of *Le Plaisir*, clearly puts its hard corseted bodies on show, so it overtly places clothes fetishism on screen, something that is only ever hinted at in *La Ronde*. Within *La Ronde*, the corset has

somewhat of a paradoxical position (very much in keeping with its status as a garment that produces paradoxical meanings and readings as illustrated in part one of this thesis). Bruzzi has made the distinction between films that look at and films that look through their costumes (1997: 36). She argues how, in films which look through clothes:

The major design effort is to signal the accuracy of the costumes and to submit them to the greater framework of historical and literary authenticity. Costume films that, conversely, choose to look at clothes create an alternative discourse, and one that usually counters or complicates the ostensible strategy of the overriding narrative. (36)

In this way, clothes that are looked at tangibly exhibit their ability to act as an independent producer of meaning, as Annenkov's corsetry appears to be doing. Yet, despite asserting its own discourse (which seemingly supports the misogynistic strategy of the narrative) the corset in *La Ronde* is neither looked at nor through, as it is never explicitly displayed. It is both absence and presence, a garment that is frequently intimated by the stiffness of a torso, a ridge formed in fabric, or an extreme waist to hip differentiation, but never really seen. In *La Ronde* one is not given the chance to look at or even through the corset, but must instead imagine the garment beneath. This desire to see the corsetry beneath the clothes then laces one back into Ophuls's *mise-en-scène* of the male imaginary, the absence and presence of the corset corresponding to the absence, or lack of the phallus as part of the female body and its displacement and thus presence through the aforementioned 'erect' corset. The one instance in which the corset is briefly allowed to be seen is on the last female protagonist in *La Ronde*, the actress, Charlotte, played by Isa Miranda. And so it is to Miranda's character's costume that I shall now turn.

#### 4.5: Charlotte (Isa Miranda)

When one first sees Miranda's character, she is wearing her stage costume as the curtain has just fallen on the play in which she is performing. Interestingly, this play is a historical piece so she is partaking in a *mise-en-abîme* of the costume drama. Her historical garb consists of a corseted and bejewelled dress, which the pannier silhouette and high, feathered headdress marks out as belonging to the 1770s. The dress is accessorised with the aforementioned headdress, black elbow-length gloves and diamond necklace. Although the bottom half of Charlotte's silhouette is certainly wider than all the previous female characters' dresses, the neckline of her dress is cut low off the shoulder and uses chiffon to add extra volume to falsify the top half of her shape so that it balances with the bottom half. Thus even though Charlotte's figure in this first outfit is not exactly the same as the silhouette one has come to expect, it still operates along the X-bend principle, the angles of the waist have just been made more acute.

After a brief interlude in which one sees Joyeux's character, Anna, outside the theatre fruitlessly waiting for the poet, the camera cuts back to Charlotte's dressing room, where one sees the back of her head and shoulders, and a reflection of her face in her dressing table mirror as she removes her stage make up. Just visible on her shoulders are two thin black straps, which look very much like 1950s bra straps rather than corset straps. However, after once more cutting back to the jilted figure of Anna, one again sees Charlotte seated at the same dressing table, except this time she is wearing a black strapless corset, half covered with a bib and tucker white shirtfront and small black bow tie. This appropriation of traditional male dress in the form of the bib and tucker shirtfront to cover the corset by Charlotte reinforces the displacement of the constriction of the male body onto the female body. Yet one must not forget the bra straps of the

previous scene - for they are certainly not corset straps - as the corset that Charlotte is wearing is strapless.



Figure 15. Charlotte's corset.

This glimpse of bra straps is reminiscent of a scene in *Le Plaisir*, during the *Maison Tellier* sequence, when Madame Tellier (Madeleine Renaud) and her charges are in the train carriage bound for Normandy. Flora (Ginette Leclerc) complains of being too hot, and so undoes the back of her dress revealing not the expected corset as seen on all the women so far, but the back of a nylon bra. Two things are inauthentic in this instance. Firstly, the bra in its modern guise did not yet exist, and secondly, the bra appears to be made from nylon, which certainly did not exist in *Belle Époque* clothing.

The presence of this rogue garment momentarily interrupts Annenkov's Constructivist corsetry and flags up elements of inauthenticity in his costume design. Indeed this unexpected bra in *Le Plaisir* is certainly looked at, in Bruzzi's sense of the word, for it disrupts costume continuity and authenticity, signalling its status as an independent producer of meaning. Bruzzi has stated that 'When costumes are looked at rather than

through, the element conventionally prioritised is their eroticism.’ (1997: 36) One would expect this to be the case with Flora’s bra in *Le Plaisir*, due to its proximity to the body, in particular the breasts. Yet in Ophuls’s privileging of male desire, the absence of the corset denies the displacement fantasy of (auto)erotic asphyxiation one has come to expect, and the appearance of a flaccid rather than an erect torso is somewhat of a disappointment. Seeing as Annenkov’s costume design so far has supported Ophuls’s framework of misogyny, by making the women he dresses interchangeable X-shapes, I suspect that the presence of both Charlotte’s and Flora’s bras are due to carelessness rather than intent. However, whether lack of care or calculated, Annenkov’s brief bra appearances momentarily disrupt Ophuls’s discourses of male desire by negating the transfer of (auto)erotic asphyxiation, and also point to the encroachment of the 1950s moment.

These moments of interruption to Ophuls’s ideology of misogyny are conspicuous only by their brevity. For example, when Charlotte appears in her second costume, there is no trace of the earlier bra. She is decked out in a lace-striped, strapless, full-length satin nightgown with a ribbon at her nipped in waist. Her shoulders and arms are covered by an open, frilled chiffon dressing gown in white. It is unclear here whether she is corseted or not but one rather suspects not (despite the still tiny beribboned waist) as it is early morning and she is still in her bedclothes. Her silhouette is essentially still that of an X-shape but her waist and torso are not ‘erect.’ I would suggest, therefore, that this is the reason why the Count (Gérard Philipe) is reluctant to have sex with her until night-time, because he knows that come the evening Charlotte will be corseted and thus his displacement fantasy can be acted out.

Having now determined the way in which Annenkov employs corsetry in order to mass-produce and fetishise the women he dresses, the next chapter will explore the consequences of such tight-lacing.

## **CHAPTER 5: THE CONSTRUCTIVIST CORSET AND MASS-PRODUCED FEMININITY**

In the exploration of the female protagonists' costume for *La Ronde*, the overwhelming outcome has been that Annenkov's women are the same shape. One could suggest that Annenkov is just interpreting a fashionable historical silhouette here and that all late nineteenth-century women would have had a similar silhouette dictated by fashion. Yet Annenkov's costume design is not true to the corsetry of the period – the S-bend – and does not address the differences in foundation garment wearing dictated by class hierarchies. The aim of Annenkov's Constructivist-inspired costume design appears to be concerned purely with rendering women into an identical mechanical-X silhouette.

In answer to the first research question, Annenkov's early involvement with Constructivism can indeed be traced through from his sketches to the finished apparel for *La Ronde* (as the above pictures of Léocadie attest). In fact, a clue to Annenkov's intention of mass-production is evident in the multiple pre-printed bases that the designer used for his sketches. The initial inkling about mass-production proves itself to be true. In employing the mass-produced post-industrial corset with its greater propensity for tight-lacing than its pre-industrial predecessor, Annenkov's costume design for *La Ronde* mass-produces femininity. The aim of rendering these women uniform is that they become knowable and ultimately controllable within the confines of Ophuls's and Schnitzler's dominant patriarchal ideology of displaced (auto)erotic asphyxiation. As suspected then, Ophuls's interest in military uniform extends to include such desire for the uniformity of women.

This point surrounding the knowability and thus controllability of women in Ophuls's narratives functions across the four costume dramas in question. In *La Ronde*, the interchangeable women, with the exception of the naked Signoret at the film's close (a point explored in more detail below), are controlled by the patriarchal merry-go-round of Ophuls's narrative of male desire. They are goods to be exchanged, which once used for sex are knowable and of no interest any more. In the three stories that make up *Le Plaisir*, women are also shown to be tied into phallogocentric structures of desire. As such they are controlled within the confines of patriarchy, and the residents of the Maison Tellier are certainly 'known' to the entire male population of a Norman town. Madame de... however, is partially unknowable. One never knows her surname and thus her married identity is never truly revealed. Yet she is punished by death for her promiscuity and exhibiting of female desire. She too is ultimately controlled by patriarchal ideology, becoming a surnameless victim in order that her husband's name cannot be tainted by her indiscretions.

But what of *Lola Montès*? During the narrative, Lola's soul is laid bare, and the figure of the star is unravelled before one's eyes. All this takes place as a result of questions posed to Lola by the circus audience, which as she answers are illustrated through flashbacks. One's focus here, however, is the genesis of her costume and the questions that the juxtapositioning of Annenkov's methodology with Escoffier's raise. From the appearance of the homogeneously dressed groups of performers in the circus, it is clear that Annenkov's and Ophuls's love of uniform reaches a peak with this film. Take for example, the matching red livery of the acrobats who collect money and questions from the audience, and the identically costumed juggling women. Interestingly, these juggling women all have very similar silhouettes and it seems like Annenkov has

attempted to make them into mass-produced spectacles of femininity in a similar fashion to that witnessed in *La Ronde*. Yet, Lola herself is not dressed by Annenkov at all in this text, being costumed entirely by Escoffier. I will not elaborate on Escoffier as a designer here, for he has a whole case-study of his own following this analysis of Annenkov. However, because Escoffier's role in costuming Carol for this film had significant ideological impact, it is worth mentioning his fascination with the crinoline here.



Figure 16. One of Escoffier's crinolines for Lola.

Escoffier's employment of the cage-crinoline in all of Lola's outfits is startling due to the sheer width of hem he manages to create. As a result, there is no mechanical-X or even constricted silhouette but instead a magnificently impractical crinolined silhouette. With this enormous dome Escoffier manages to achieve two things. First, he negates Annenkov's Constructivist reduction of women's silhouette's to straight edges as seen in *La Ronde*, *Le Plaisir* and *Madame de...* and the notions of mass-production, uniformity and mechanical movement that accompany these costumes, as well as the transfer of (auto)erotic asphyxiation that the aforementioned films exhibit. Second, by

employing the crinoline, all the ideological implications that have been explored in the earlier *mise-en-scène* of this garment in part one come into play. Therefore, discourses surrounding the newly public female body of the Second Empire and the greater visibility of women, as well as the post-industrial crinoline's relation to improved hygiene and mobility all begin to be narrated by this hooped garment. One can see here a clear link to 1950s France producing discourses around the visibility of women, hygiene and modernisation (see sections 1.2, 2.5, and 2.6 in part one). This brief aside on Escoffier over, I shall return to Annenkov's costume design, which, although obscured by Escoffier's vast crinolines in *Lola Montès*, is displayed with military precision by the uniformed women of *La Ronde*. Annenkov's impulse for uniformity can be traced back to the mass-spectacles, in which he participated in the 1920s, where his interest in mechanical movement, and the mechanisation of the body, was sparked. In making women's silhouette's facsimiles of each other through mass-produced corsetry, which obliges a particular set of movements and poses due to its restriction and constriction of the body, Annenkov achieves a certain sense of mechanical movement in *La Ronde*. Indeed, the narrative of the film is determined by the revolutions of the mechanical merry-go-round after which it is named. Yet this impulse for uniformity could also be read as a nod to Annenkov's earlier Bolshevik politics, his rendering of women as identical to each other perhaps a masked desire to deny difference and negate class hierarchies? However, within the confines of Ophüls's film, such a drive for homogeneity takes on a nastier angle – that of the X to be precise. In answer to another initial research question, Annenkov's mass-produced costume design appears to unquestioningly support Ophüls's framework of misogyny and Schnitzler's male fantasy.

Given the entirely sexual content of *La Ronde*, the lack of nudity is surprising. I would like to pick up on this lack of nudity because this absence of flesh in itself is interesting. The most unclothed flesh one sees belongs to Simone Signoret, who exposes her bare arms and shoulders during the film's final coupling of the prostitute and the Count. Signoret is also un-corseted in this scene and, therefore, troubles Annenkov's production line of femininity. True, there are other instances where women are un-corseted within the film (Darrieux and Miranda both appear in un-corseted nightgowns), but Signoret's is the only body in which the X-shape is totally dissolved in favour of a real naked body shape (albeit glimpsed through the veil of a bed sheet). Signoret could, therefore, be considered to be the organic antidote to Annenkov's mass-production at the end of *La Ronde*. As the un-corseted and naked Signoret is the last female body to be displayed in the text, her anti-X-shape becomes a starting point from which one may begin to read against the grain. In order to begin to explore such an alternative reading, it is first necessary to understand why Annenkov's costume design discouraged nudity in the first place.

### **5.1: The Traumatic Body Politic of 1950s France**

There are several reasons why Annenkov's costume design should want to inhibit nakedness. Firstly, costume drama is expected to be about excess and display, for which costume design is a catalyst. The generic conventions of the costume drama demand eroticism, yet this is often achieved via the clothes themselves rather than nudity, for naked flesh takes away from the genre's often spectacular fashions by giving them less screen presence. However, Annenkov's costumes are not necessarily spectacular, being more in keeping with the utilitarianism of Constructivism than the aesthetic of spectacle

that someone like Rosine Delamare employs in her costume designs. Indeed, this comparison brings one to *Madame de...*, which Delamare and Annenkov co-costumed. In the film, one can easily spot the costumes that Annenkov designed, for they are striking in their simplicity, when compared to the dresses decked with frills and furbelows that Delamare has created (see page 82). Yet again, Annenkov's Constructivist aesthetic surrounding the simplicity of line makes its presence felt.

This utilitarianising of historical costume subverts the genre's expectations by negating spectacle. It thus thwarts, to a certain degree, the bourgeois conventions, such as the display of wealth through possessions (clothing and women) that the genre frequently adheres to. Consequently, some of Annenkov's Bolshevik (even Marxist?) ideology lives on in his costume design and so introduces a tension between socialist and bourgeois mores to the French costume drama. This can be witnessed most visibly in *Madame de...*, in which the tension between Annenkov's utility of line and Delamare's fascination with accessories and softening of contours is clear to see.

Annenkov's utility of line also negates nudity in *La Ronde*, for in this film it is very hard to discern where any fixings or fastenings to the garments might be, and all flesh apart from the face is routinely covered by fabric. Certainly *Belle Époque* clothing did cover women from neck to wrist to ankle, and one could assume that Annenkov was just being true to his time-period by keeping the women's costume in *La Ronde* to these proportions. However, as already established in the introduction to this thesis, costume drama also serves to speak to the present moment through the guise of the past. Post-World War II France was a turbulent time and place politically, socially and culturally. The nation was a fragmented one: the scars left by the Occupation, American cultural

imperialism and bloody wars of decolonisation all playing their part (see section 1.2). In order to cast a glossy veneer over the fractured nation it became crucial that the body was seen as a unified whole, despite the truth that both the real and imagined bodies of France and French citizens at this time were bodies in trauma. Due to the links between women and nationhood, which are particularly strong in France and embodied by the figure of *Marianne*, it became vital that women's bodies took on this façade of unity (in a similar yet corseted fashion to the un-corseted neo-classical women discussed in section 2.4 in part one).

Thus Annenkov's tightly corseted women in *La Ronde*, who appear to be invisibly stitched into their costumes, conform to this desire for corporeal unity. The corset in this instance becomes a carapace, protecting the vulnerable area of the body in the wake of the metaphorical rape the nation experienced under the Occupation. It is however, still permissible for French men (despite the Austrian setting of the film) to access this body though, as they repeatedly do in *La Ronde*, demanding the layers of fabric armour to be removed at their (proto-French) will. Yet the corset, as already discovered, stays on during these sexual encounters. Accordingly, the corseted female form is still a unified one, and, as seen earlier, phallic. In psychoanalytical terms, these corseted women are not in lack and castration anxieties can be dispelled. However, Signoret's naked flesh does not adhere to this façade of unity and phallogentric fantasy. Her flesh is troubling. For by the end of the film she is no longer disciplined by the earlier mechanical-X that mass-produced her shape. In effect, by revealing her body, she exposes the packaging of femininity within the confines of the ideal of unity for the artificial patriarchal veneer it really is.



Figure 17. Signoret's anti-X body.

Another interesting point arises from this idea surrounding the unity of the body, when one considers the costume design for the women of *Le Plaisir*. Unlike the women's costumes in *La Ronde*, the clothing in *Le Plaisir* has very visible fastenings in the form of zips. Such visibility of a modern fastening method indicates not only the encroachment of the 1950s production onto the proto-historical text, but also has connotations of fastening and unfastening, dressing and undressing. There is also an implication of the speed at which one may dress or undress when wearing clothes using a zip, particularly in the French name for the fastening, *la fermeture éclair* - lightning closure. Speed may then go some way to explaining why Annenkov uses zips - to facilitate easier costume changes. Yet the speediness of the zip fastening has further connotations. For the wearing of zippered clothes by Madame Tellier and her crew (clothes that can quickly reveal and conceal the body and/or its foundation garments), supports the fact that these women use their body and its exposure to earn money.

It seems somewhat of an anomaly that Annenkov should place such visible fastenings into costumes, which appear to have been designed to cover up the majority of female

flesh. For even when the prostitutes of the Maison Tellier are seen in just their corsets, large French knickers conceal their bottoms and upper thighs, and their legs are covered with stockings. Often their shoulders are also covered with a shawl. Indeed, when the women of the Maison Tellier are outside the brothel, their dresses cover them from neck to wrist to ankle, but the zip is always obvious in the backs of their dresses. Therefore, in the context of the post-war quest for unity of the body, the zip introduces a tension. For the perceived unity of the dressed body can be quickly exposed as a façade by the zip. Perhaps this is the reason why the presence of Flora's aforementioned bra, in place of the expected corset, is such a shock to the viewer. With the carapace and transfer of (auto)erotic asphyxiation denied, the female body has the potential to both exhibit trauma and be unruly. Both the exhibition of trauma and the unruliness of the body, particularly the female body, were discourses that the 1950s in France worked hard to deny, and as seen previously, this was partially achieved through modernisation and the technologising of the domestic sphere (see section 1.2).

In addition, the corset as missing layer of costume could correspond to missing layers of truth. Not just truth in a sartorial sense of authenticity to the historical time-period, but also in a wider sense, corresponding to missing layers of truth surrounding the body and censorship and the encroachment of the 1950s socio-political moment. During the 1950s, censorship was widespread across the French media, who were not free to report objectively on colonial matters, particularly the conflicts arising from decolonisation. A parallel can be drawn here between the (false) insistence on the unity of the body in costume drama, achieved via corsetry and fabric as body armour, and the (false) insistence on the French nation and her colonies as still being a unified whole. The presence of the corset in costume drama, therefore, would appear to reinforce this

corporeal lie of unity, which, due to Annenkov's carelessness, Flora inadvertently undermines. This quest for corporeal unity that Annenkov's mass-produced mechanical-X corset also signifies, points to the nature of the corset as a paradoxical and multiplicitous garment. As a result of such a range of meanings, it should be possible to read Annenkov's mechanical-X corset against the grain. I will now explore this prospect.

## **5.2: The 'Slag' in her Corset, Alternative Readings of Annenkov's Mechanical-X**

Remembering the *mise-en-scène* of the corset in part one, both the pre- and post-industrial corsets filtered female discourses and desires: the pre-industrial via baleen, and the post-industrial via slag as a by-product of smelting. The post-industrial corset's reinforced lace-holes also allowed such discourses and desires produced by the female body, the corset as an independent producer of meaning, and the interweaving of the two, to leak out. If one considers Annenkov's Constructivist corsetry, then one finds that despite being bound up in a merry-go-round of misogyny and male fantasy, the corset nonetheless, provides an opportunity for the women in these four costume dramas to subvert both their sartorial and ideological containment within patriarchy, as I shall now explain.

I have already established that the corset in *La Ronde* has a paradoxical status as being both absence and presence. The corset as a producer of contradictory meanings is continued in all four of the costume dramas in question here, as it showcases the paradox of the female body in a garment, which simultaneously connotes propriety and sexual allure. Unruly female flesh is tamed but the enforced curves, or rather angles in

Annenkov's case, of the female body are explicitly displayed. Thus, as Steele puts it, the corset allows women 'to articulate sexual subjectivity in a socially acceptable way.' (2001: 35) The paradoxical nature of this garment can be linked to Warwick and Cavallaro's notion of dress as both a frame and a screen. The corset can be read as both frame (insulating private fantasies from public spectacle) and screen (a cohesive structure, which becomes a projection surface for discourse) (1998: 47). By extension, this double reading can also be applied to the way in which an audience may read film costume, within the frame and on the screen, as fabric that provokes private fantasies, while also becoming a projection surface for discourse. In the genre of costume drama, such discourse speaks not only to the past but also to the present moment. Thus in the costume films in question, the both/and status of the corset as frame/screen comes into play, and within this ambiguous interrelated duality, a propensity for an alternative female (and possibly feminist) discourse may arise. Returning briefly to the exploration of the corset in part one of this thesis may be of help in this instance.

In the earlier discussion of the corset and its evolution, the eyelet, and particularly the metal eyelet in the post-industrial corset with which I am presently concerned, became the point of escape for female discourses and desires (see 2.3). In addition, the corset-lacing relationship was frequently an exclusively feminine one between the lady of the house and her maid or female members of a family such as sisters. The heterosexual lacing-relationship between husband and wife or heterosexual lovers, (which has often been wrongly assumed to be the dominant lacing-relationship) centred on the replicating of *intercourse* as lace passes through lace-hole. Whereas, importantly for this study, the exclusively feminine lacing-relationship was centred on the creation of *discourse*. For example, a maid might be privy to the fact that her mistress was pregnant long before

anyone else. Indeed, as noted in the analysis of the corset, following Summers, feminine discourses surrounding pregnancy were viewed as the most unspeakable of the Victorian period. Therefore, the corset was frequently used to conceal pregnancy for as long as possible so as to avoid the virtual house arrest that resulted when pregnancy became visible. In cases when the pregnancy was unwanted then the extreme tight-lacing of the corset could be used as a violent but effective abortifacient.<sup>62</sup>

As one can observe, in all four costume dramas in question in this chapter, the lack of the maternal is startling. The five female protagonists in *La Ronde* are all childless and no mention is made of their own mothers. In *Le Plaisir* none of the female characters, from the wife in *Le Masque* through to Joséphine in *Le Modèle*, appear to have children or mothers. Madame de... and Lola Montès are also childless and although one sees Lola's mother within the film, she first abandons and then tries to marry-off Lola against her will.<sup>63</sup> Given the amount of sex that occurs when one adds up all the encounters in these four films, this lack of children is rather surprising. However, these women appear to be childless through choice, even though others within the narratives assume otherwise. For instance in *Madame de...* when Louise's husband forces her to make a gift of the diamond earrings to his niece who has just had a baby, the rest of the family assume that her tears are because she cannot conceive. In fact, this could not be further from the truth, her tears are due to her husband's cruelty in making her give up the earrings, which were first a gift from him on her wedding night in exchange for her virginity, and later (after they had been sold and repurchased), a gift from her lover Donati. The earrings then shift in meaning during the various transactions, and are

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<sup>62</sup> For a more detailed study of the Victorian corset as abortifacient see Summers, L. (2001) *Bound to Please, A History of the Victorian Corset*, Oxford and New York: Berg.

<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, Lola's mother is played by Lise Delamare, sister of costume designer Rosine.

symbolic of Louise's position within the commodity exchange of women and sex within this text.

The principle reason why all these sexual encounters remain childless is because they take place outside of marriage. If pregnancy were to result, then this extra-marital sex would be discovered and once evident would have to be punished. Within the patriarchal and misogynistic frameworks of Ophuls's four costume dramas, and indeed within the same dominant ideology of the *Belle Époque*, it is the women who must be punished for this promiscuity. This is where the corset comes in, for as it can be employed as a brutal form of abortifacient, it aids extra-marital sex without discovery. This hidden female discourse on abortion, therefore, links not only to the *Belle Époque* but also to 1950s France where abortion was illegal, and remained so until 1975.<sup>64</sup>

For the Constructivist post-industrially corseted women, the possibility of using and subverting for their own means the very fabric that renders them as uniform and mass-produced arises. For the corset enables them some degree of agency over their own bodies. In this respect, the corset allows the women of the Maison Tellier and Léocadie in *La Ronde* to continue earning money, the extra-marital affairs of wives, Emma and Louise, to go unnoticed, or at least in Louise's case when she is discovered she at least avoids the further scandal of a child from the wrong side of the blanket. However, in the end, the corset is of little use to Louise as she is punished by death for her promiscuity. For Lola Montès and the remaining three women in *La Ronde*, the corset also provides the possibility of an aggressive form of abortifacient, if needed, that is safer than a backstreet abortion. The paradoxical nature of the corset is thus perpetuated, becoming

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<sup>64</sup> The Veil law was passed in January 1975, legalising abortion in France up until 10 weeks of pregnancy.

a garment that both enables and conceals promiscuity, as well as functioning as an apparel of propriety and sexual allure, frame and screen, absence and presence. Late nineteenth-century women could, therefore, conceal their sexual experiences and still be considered 'pure,' thus outwardly adhering to their society's double-standard and gender bias regarding sex.

This notion of purity is effectively stitched into the corset by means of the garment's steel stays. For the removal of impurities via the addition of limestone that takes place during the smelting process is carried over into the finished corset (see 2.2). Therefore, discourses of desire and sexuality, promiscuity and pregnancy can be filtered by the post-industrial corset, due to the purification process that the garment retains from its moment of production. In its original smelting process, the filtered impurities form slag. Transferring this over into the intra-corset filtering process then, one can perhaps reclaim 'slag' as a positive rather than a derogatory term for women. Regarding the promiscuous women of these costume dramas, their mechanical-X corsets act as filtering devices that via metal eyelets filter sexual detritus away from the female body. The merry-go-round at the centre of *La Ronde* may then be considered to be a mechanical slag-heap, accumulating what patriarchy deems to be the impurities of promiscuous women.

One has seen how the mass-produced ideology of Annenkov's mechanical-X corset does have the potential to be subverted by the women who wear it, as the garment provides women with some degree of agency over their bodies. For it can both conceal and interrupt gestation. In addition, by retaining the filtering process of its production, the post-industrial mechanical-X corset produces and filters female desire and

discourse. It is, therefore, by means of this production and filtering of discourse and desire that the individuality between Annenkov's identical mechanical-X silhouettes may manifest itself. As established in the earlier analysis of the post-industrial corset, inherent in repetition is the idea of difference, no matter how small and no two combinations of woman and corset can be the same. Hence, difference can reveal itself in the diverse discourses created by the corset, the female body, and the juxtaposition of the two, discourses, which escape from the liminal space between body and fabric through the garment's lace-holes.

However, in Signoret's case, at the close of *La Ronde*, she has no lace-holes for these discourses to discreetly slip through. She becomes the one troubling presence to Annenkov's, Ophuls's, and Schnitzler's trio of misogyny. For her nudity negates the mass-production of femininity and the façade of 1950s corporeal unity.<sup>65</sup> Annenkov's costumes then do function as a palimpsest, the extra-textual elements (most notably Constructivism) contributing to and remaining tangible in his finished garments. Although at the close of *La Ronde* it is Signoret's nudity rather than Annenkov's costume design, which becomes the text to be decoded.

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<sup>65</sup> In addition, her un-corseted nature in light of the above exploration of the garment in relation to pregnancy makes perfect sense. Signoret had an illegitimate daughter with Yves Allégret in 1946 (at the time the director was still married). Despite enduring the insults and disapproval that accompanied the still significant stigma attached to being a single mother in the post-war period, Signoret retained her composure throughout. As Hayward has noted, 'Signoret related with humour how she dealt with the prejudices she encountered [...] and by accepting the injunctions with a smile, she was able to show herself how little she cared for their good opinion.' (2004b: 7)

## **MINOR CASE-STUDY 2: ESCOFFIER AND THE CRINOLINE OF THE IN-BETWEEN**

### **CHAPTER 6: INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

This case-study on *costumier* Marcel Escoffier is to be the second of the minor case-studies in this thesis. It stands alongside the preceding minor case-study on Annenkov to complete the second section of this tri-partite study. In keeping with my approach to Annenkov's work, I will unstitch Escoffier's wardrobe for the 1950s *films à costumes* he has dressed through a tight-focus on his signature garment – the crinoline. In so doing, I can cut and fashion my analysis according to the ideological pattern surrounding the crinoline outlined in the first part of this thesis.<sup>66</sup> As in the earlier *mise-en-scène* of this garment, I am using the idiom 'crinoline' as a catch-all term for structural undergarments surrounding the lower half of the female body. As one will see in this case-study, different incarnations of the crinoline will be analysed as the three films I have chosen to examine, in this process of analytical tailoring, are all set in different time-periods. These film texts are *Lucrèce Borgia* (1953), *Madame du Barry* (1954), and *Nana* (1955), and are set at the turn of the sixteenth century, the end of the reign of Louis XV, and the Second Empire respectively. All three films were directed by Christian-Jaque, and position Martine Carol (his partner throughout the majority of the 1950s), in the titular star roles.

Carol's is the body that fleshes out the crinolines with which this case-study is concerned. At the centre of my focus on Escoffier's crinolines is his dressing of Carol in these signature constructions, and most particularly the relationship between the undergarment and Carol's body, which forms a central thread in the fabric of my

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<sup>66</sup> See sections 2.5 and 2.6 in part one.

analysis. Also in accordance with the earlier case-study on Annenkov, this case-study will be subdivided into chapters. In this chapter, I will outline the various factors that shaped Escoffier's costumes, before beginning an exploration of the combination of their fabric with Carol's flesh in three individual chapters each dedicated to one of the costume dramas in question. Again, the aim of drawing attention to the extra-textual back-stories of Escoffier's filmic costumes is to gain a deeper understanding of the circumstances of their production and wearing, in order that these costumes may then be read in the form of a palimpsest.

Unfortunately, unlike Annenkov, Escoffier did not write books about his costume design work. In fact, very little personal information on Escoffier appears to be held in film archives.<sup>67</sup> Aside from his costume design sketches, of which the *Bibliothèque du film* in Paris hold forty three, and the University of Calgary hold ten, Marcel Escoffier is a mysterious figure of a costume designer. This in itself is interesting and raises the question of why it should be so difficult to obtain information on one of French cinema's premier costume designers? Such an air of mystery makes Escoffier's interest in the crinoline even more fascinating because a similar air of mystery marks this garment. This is arguably due to the large amount of critical attention given to the corset rather than its hooped counterpart. The crinoline, therefore, can be viewed as the forgotten garment of costume drama, and as such, has hidden histories to be discovered under its hoops.<sup>68</sup> Thus the connection between signature garment and designer is strengthened by means of their shared enigmatic nature. Over the next few pages, I will outline Escoffier's back-stories with the information that I have gleaned about him and

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<sup>67</sup> During study trips to Paris both the archives at the *Bibliothèque du film* and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* yielded little to no information outside the physical artefacts of Escoffier's sketches and the prints of the films he dressed.

<sup>68</sup> See sections 2.5 and 2.6.

his design practice.<sup>69</sup> This will allow me to illuminate some of the designer's own hidden histories, which will, then, provide a thread to begin pulling on to unravel the hidden histories of the crinoline in relation to the star body of Carol.

### **6.1: Escoffier and Costuming the Past**

Escoffier was born in Monte-Carlo, Monaco on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1910. He studied at the Paris school of *Les Arts décoratif* where he specialised in historical costume. Of the four costume designers whose work this study examines, Escoffier is the only one to have specifically trained in the art of sartorially recreating the past. Such interest in past modes of dress is reflected in the designer's filmography: of the forty-seven films and one television series he costumed, thirty-four are costume dramas.<sup>70</sup> As a percentage of Escoffier's *œuvre*, therefore, the costume drama accounts for seventy-one percent of his sartorial output. Of particular note for this enquiry is that the 1950s was Escoffier's most prolific decade - he costumed twenty-one films, eighteen of which were *films à costumes*.

Escoffier is explicitly connected to the genre of costume drama and is second only to Rosine Delamare in the number of 1950s *films à costumes* he has dressed. However, his career trajectory was not limited to a linear route from studying historical costume to recreating it for the cinema. In fact, Escoffier's love of clothing combined employment in both the cinema and the world of 1940s Parisian couture. In order to understand how

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<sup>69</sup> Much of the information on Escoffier has in fact revealed itself through a process of careful study of film credits. In this manner, information on his connections to the world of couture first came to light.

<sup>70</sup> See filmography for full details of Escoffier's cinematic costume designs.

couture may have had an impact on his cinematic costume designs, I will now turn to Escoffier's life and links with the fashion industry.

## **6.2: Escoffier's *Haute-Couture* Apprenticeship**

After his studies, Escoffier simultaneously found work in the cinema and fashion industries. As a fledgling costume designer he worked on Christian-Jaque's *Carmen* (1943) and Jean Boyer's *Le Diable au collège* (1944). In terms of fashion design, he was employed as a design assistant at the *Maison de couture* of Madame Jeanne Paquin. Although it is unclear precisely when and for how long he was a design assistant at the House, he was certainly there during the immediate post-war period and up until at least the release of Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* in 1946, for which the House of Paquin designed and executed the costumes (more of which in the next back-story).

Despite the fact that Jeanne Paquin herself had died in 1936, her *Maison de couture* remained open. In the period that Escoffier spent at the House he would have been under the direction of Spanish *couturier* Antonio Castillo, who was head designer from 1941 to 1949. Although Castillo brought an element of Spanish elegance to the *atelier*, the House still produced clothes that were consciously very much in keeping with the spirit of Jeanne Paquin's original design methodology.<sup>71</sup>

This original design methodology was a mix of the resolutely modern with a romantic revisiting of the styles of the eighteenth century. The modern manifested itself in

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<sup>71</sup> See Bawa, M.P. <[www.historyofashion.com/historyofashion/paquin.html](http://www.historyofashion.com/historyofashion/paquin.html)>, [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008].

Paquin's day-dress designs, which conformed to her belief that women should be able to move easily. She imagined women using the *métro* when designing such garments, and added innovations such as concealed pleating to hobble skirts, hence giving the illusion of restriction but inconspicuously allowing women freedom of movement in the clothes she designed.<sup>72</sup> Yet overall, the tone of Paquin's collections were nostalgic, her eighteenth-century-inspired evening dresses, in particular, featured historical silhouettes<sup>73</sup> and included fur trims, lavish embroidery, net and lace. Indeed, embellishment and specifically fur was a key component of the House of Paquin's image. 'Year after year, Paquin had a reputation for best selling coats and capes trimmed with collars, cuffs and hems of sable, fox, chinchilla and monkey.'<sup>74</sup> Such privileging of pelts at the House led to Madame Paquin opening a boutique, which exclusively sold fur on Fifth Avenue, New York, in 1912.<sup>75</sup>

A juxtapositioning of the old and the new, as well as embellishing garments with lace, net and embroidery, and the use of fur, were defining elements of Paquin's original design methodology that the House continued to use after her death. This continuation of design methodology is important, for it is the methodology to which Escoffier would have been working when he was at Paquin in the 1940s. Therefore, its degree of

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<sup>72</sup> See Bawa, M.P. <[www.historyofashion.com/historyofashion/paquin.html](http://www.historyofashion.com/historyofashion/paquin.html)>, [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008].

<sup>73</sup> One historical addition to Paquin's collections in 1906 was the revival of the empire line, which, hailed as a new, modern line, would come to dominate women's fashion in the teens and twenties of the last century in Europe (interestingly Paquin's empire line was a year before Poiret's who is now credited with its reintroduction to fashion) (Seeling, 1991: 44-6). Yet the empire line silhouette was not new, it was just new to the twentieth century and made from new materials. It was in fact a reworking of late-1700s styles in France when Rococo modes of dress gave way to neo-classically inspired trends. Paquin's empire line dresses, then, are exemplary of the mix of history and modernity in her design methodology. They are also tailored to her concern about women and flexibility (both of and in the clothes they wear) for empire lines allow the female body much more freedom of movement compared to other historical lines and silhouettes.

<sup>74</sup> See note 73.

<sup>75</sup> See M. and B. <[lescostumesatraverslessiecles.chezalice.fr/grands%20couturiers/paquin.html](http://lescostumesatraverslessiecles.chezalice.fr/grands%20couturiers/paquin.html)> [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008].

influence on Escoffier is of particular concern here. One can certainly identify an accord between the two designer's works when they are viewed side by side. As seen in the images below, an overlap between Paquin's fashion designs and Escoffier's costume designs manifests itself in a shared love of embellishment and use of lace and fur. It is easy from the above to establish that Escoffier's time at Paquin had a substantial influence on his choice of decoration and materials for his cinematic apparel.

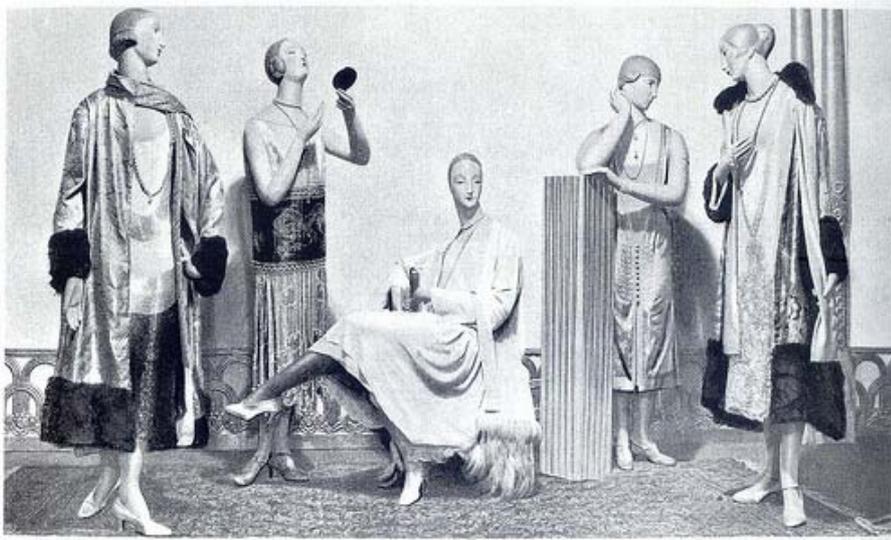


Figure 18. A selection of Paquin's designs from the 1920s.



Figure 19. A selection of Escoffier's costume designs for Martine Carol during the 1950s.

Also of interest to this enquiry is Paquin's preoccupation with women's movement in the clothes they wear, for this too may find a point of intersection with Escoffier's

design methodology – I am thinking here particularly of his interest in the crinoline. With both the hobble skirt, which Paquin modified, and the crinoline, there is a tension between movement and stasis stitched into their natures, as well as an element of façade, which manifests itself via additions such as the hidden pleats in Paquin’s *œuvre* and the addition of width to falsify Martine Carol’s natural silhouette in Escoffier’s crinolined wardrobe. This tension between action and inertia, as well as the falsification of Carol’s body via constructions of costume will of course be explored further in the following analysis of *Lucreèce Borgia*, *Madame du Barry* and *Nana*.

From this confluence of ideas between *couturier* and *costumier*, one can determine that it is very possible that Escoffier’s time at Paquin shaped not only his choice of decoration and fabrics, but also his thinking around movement, the crinoline and fashion as façade. The scale of Paquin’s suspected influence will certainly be a thread that continues throughout this analysis of Escoffier’s costumes for Carol. Therefore, the link between Paris’s first woman *couturière* and Escoffier forms one of the hidden histories that this research can reveal. In so doing, the work of two forgotten figures can be celebrated: Paquin, who rivalled Worth in popularity but whose importance is now largely sidelined, and Escoffier, who’s mystery and sartorial importance is being undressed through deciphering the hieroglyphs of his crinolines.

### **6.3: From Paquin to Cardin**

While Escoffier was at Paquin, he and head designer Castillo were charged with the aforementioned job of designing and executing the costumes for Cocteau’s film *La Belle et la Bête*. From Cocteau’s following note on the wardrobe and make-up

departments, it seems as if Escoffier took the experience of designing and making the costumes for this film very seriously: ‘The make-up men and dressers know their jobs. Lucile and Escoffier carry their tiny mistakes as if they were a cross.’ (Cocteau, 1972: 76) Although Cocteau mentions only Escoffier here, the design team from the House of Paquin was at least three strong. Despite Castillo and Escoffier being the only personnel to receive costume design credits for the creation of the wardrobe for *La Belle et la Bête*, another important fashion player was among them, namely Pierre Cardin.

While sifting through information on Escoffier’s involvement on Cocteau’s film another hidden history emerged. Also working at the House of Paquin under Castillo’s direction at this time was the young Pierre Cardin. Although his work is unaccredited, Cardin was certainly part of the costume and wardrobe team on Cocteau’s film, as his personal website attests.<sup>76</sup> In particular he was charged with the responsibility of making the masks for the character of *la Bête*. Escoffier and Cardin became friends during their time shared at Paquin, and this friendship lasted after Cardin left Paquin for the House of Dior in 1946.<sup>77</sup> In fact, when Cardin subsequently left Dior in 1949 to set up shop on his own, first as a costume designer and later as a fashion designer, Escoffier aided him financially. By 1950, with Escoffier’s help, Cardin had an attic shop on the rue Richepanse, which became the site of his first *couture* collection in 1953.<sup>78</sup>

Despite their very different takes on fashion and dress, since their first foray into film costumes with *La Belle et la Bête*, Escoffier and Cardin continued to work together, joining forces to design and make costumes for both the cinema and the theatre. Their

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<sup>76</sup> See Cardin <[www.pierrecardin.com](http://www.pierrecardin.com)> [accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008].

<sup>77</sup> At Dior, Cardin was part of the design team that created the ‘New Look’ in 1947.

<sup>78</sup> See UXL Newsmakers, <[www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com)> [accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2008].

second cinematic collaboration was on *Ballerina*, directed by Nicholas Orloff and Oleg Briansky (1950), and notably for this enquiry, Cardin is credited as being part of the costume department for *Nana* (1955). Their fourth joint project was costuming Boyer's film *Le Couturier de ces dames* (1956), which was followed by Delannoy's film *La Princesse de Clèves* (1961). For the theatre Escoffier and Cardin have collaborated on Philippe Henriat's *Les Joies de la famille* (1960) and the Broadway production of *The Lady of the Camellias*, directed by Zeffirelli (1963).

True to Escoffier's deep-rooted love of historical dress, all these texts are co-costumed costume dramas. At first, this conscious immersion in the past appears to be at odds with Cardin's resolutely modern and at times futurist fashion direction. However, what makes Cardin's style seem so tied to the contemporary and anticipatory of future fashion moments is his play with proportion - and this is not a new concept in *couture*. Women's silhouettes have continually been inflated and deflated only to be re-inflated in a different corporeal area across the centuries - the crinoline is exemplary of this, functioning as a scaffold for the falsification of the female form. Accordingly, Cardin's play with proportions of silhouette is just the continuation of engrained fashion practices in women's wear. And if one thinks of Cardin's women's collections, from his *Bubble* dress of 1954 through to the three-dimensional hoop dresses he designed in the 1960s, then the influence of the crinoline is clear.

It could just be coincidence that Cardin appears to have been inspired by the crinoline during this period of time; or could it be that, in working with Escoffier, the *costumier's* interests have influenced the *couturier*? Indeed, this flow of ideas and influence is just as likely to work the other way around and Escoffier may well have been influenced by

Cardin's sartorial conceptions. Certainly the following quote from Cardin could easily be describing Escoffier's crinoline constructions for Carol as opposed to his own design practice: 'What comes first is the shape, then the matter that expresses the volumes, fluidity and suppleness.'<sup>79</sup> As with the Escoffier-Paquin connection, this Escoffier-Cardin correlation of crinolined proportions will also be a consideration in the subsequent exploration of Escoffier's costumes for Carol. However, before embarking on this sartorial exploration I will first outline Escoffier's working relationship with the director/star partnership of these films – Christian-Jaque and Martine Carol.

#### **6.4: Christian-Jaque and Martine Carol, a Director-Star Popular Phenomenon (Aided by Escoffier's Crinolines)**

Of all the directors Escoffier worked with, he worked with Christian-Jaque the most. In fact, it was Christian-Jaque who first employed Escoffier as a costume designer on *Carmen* in 1943. In total, Escoffier costumed eight films directed by Christian-Jaque (four of which starred Carol<sup>80</sup>): *Carmen* (1943), *Singoalla* (1949), *Fanfan la tulipe* (1951), *Destinées: Lysistrata\** (1953), *Lucrèce Borgia\** (1953), *Madame du Barry\** (1954), *Nana\** (1955), *Madame sans-gêne* (1961). As a proportion of Escoffier's work for the cinema, his time spent on projects with Christian-Jaque accounts for twenty percent of his total costume output.

As for Carol, aside from dressing her in *Destinées: Lysistrata*, *Lucrèce Borgia*, *Madame du Barry* and *Nana*, Escoffier was also responsible for her wardrobe as Lola Montès in Ophüls's film of the same name. This addition to the Escoffier-Carol wardrobe occurred

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<sup>79</sup> See Cardin, <[www.pierrecardin.com](http://www.pierrecardin.com)> [accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008].

<sup>80</sup> Films starring Carol marked with \*.

after Carol called Escoffier in, following a falling-out with Annenkov.<sup>81</sup> Translated into a statistical representation, Escoffier's dressing of Carol accounts for twelve percent of his *œuvre*, making her the star he dressed the most frequently. This suggests that Escoffier's relationship with Carol was a good one and that he was her costume designer of choice in the mid-1950s.

Martine Carol was undoubtedly the people's choice of the 1950s. After her role in Pottier's *Caroline chérie* made her 'the queen of the box-office' in 1950, she was hugely popular with French audiences as viewing figures, fanzines, and tabloid column inches attest (Chapuy, 2001: 14). According to Lenne, *Caroline chérie* was the film that allowed France to discover its sex symbol for the 1950s (Lenne cited in Chapuy, 2001: 14). Carol's reputation as '*séductrice*' was further cemented by the roles she played in Christian-Jaque's 1950s texts, including the three titles this case-study is concerned with (Chapuy, 2001: 14).<sup>82</sup> As Chapuy succinctly explains in his book on Carol, *Martine Carol filmée par Christian-Jaque, un phénomène du cinéma populaire* (2001), the narrative of these films, the actions of Carol's characters within them, and Christian-Jaque's framing of her, clearly support the identification of Carol as 'seductress' (14).

However, other than illustrating the importance of Carol's 'opulent bosom' as showcased by suitably low-cut necklines, Chapuy makes little mention of the relationship between Carol's body and costume (Chapuy, 2001: 41). Such a relationship is of course key to Carol's status as an icon of filmic seduction, and so Escoffier's costumes were a hugely significant component in the creation of Carol's star persona

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<sup>81</sup> See chapter 3 in previous case-study for more information on Escoffier and *Lola Montès*.

<sup>82</sup> The other text, which I am not looking at here for Escoffier did not costume it, is *Adorables créatures* (1952). This was the film in which Carol and Christian-Jaque met and fell in love, marrying in 1954 and separating in 1958.

during the 1950s. This then brings me once more to the crinoline, which is in turn, a vital component in the creation of Escoffier's costumes. In the previous case-study on Annenkov, I outlined how his interest in the corset as a signature garment, was laced into ideas around mass-produced femininity. Carol, as filmed by Christian-Jaque and dressed by Escoffier, also produces a type of mass-produced femininity, for Carol's star image in these films was and continues to be repeatedly manufactured, viewed and distributed. This idea of mass-production as instigated by the repetition of the Carol-Christian-Jaque-Escoffier collaboration will form another thread with which to weave the fabric of this analysis. In addition, the idea of mass-production also loops into ideas previously explored in relation to the crinoline. I will now briefly recap these ideas, and how they may transpire when coupled with the feminine discourses embodied by Carol and her mythic star persona.

### **6.5: Carol, the Crinoline and 1950s Femininity**

Escoffier's use of the crinoline, like Annenkov's mechanical-X corset, also results in a manufactured silhouette, for the female body is encircled in mass-produced hoops, which then become a scaffold for corporeal falsification/concealment. Thus, historically, the crinoline caged female genitalia. However, as seen in the earlier *mise-en-scène* of the crinoline in part one, particularly the cage-crinoline of the Second Empire, this confining of female sexuality was not entirely successful, due to the cage-crinoline's paradoxical position between movement and stasis. Indeed, this position of the in-between extended to encompass the Second Empire female body wearing the crinoline. Due to the increased visibility and presence of women on the streets of the newly modernised Paris during the Second Empire, the large surface area of these

crinolined women became a projection surface upon which the fears and promises of modernity in the post-Haussmannised city were played out.<sup>83</sup>

Bearing in mind that the post-World War II period in France was a time in which fears and promises of modernity were also connected to the nation's femininity,<sup>84</sup> it is interesting that crinoline style skirts again became fashionable.<sup>85</sup> Following this (re)cycling of fashion, the crinoline as a receptacle for and producer of discourses around femininity becomes a sartorial link between the Second Empire and the 1950s. Thus, I suspect that Carol's body when combined with Escoffier's crinolines may well form a 1950s interweaving of female flesh and fabric, which narrates (through the disguise and displacement of historical garb) similar concerns around modernity and femininity as those circulating in Second Empire France. This will certainly be a thread to follow in the subsequent three chapters that treat Escoffier's costumes.



Figure 20. 1950s crinolines.

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<sup>83</sup> See Crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6.

<sup>84</sup> See section 1.2.

<sup>85</sup> The crinoline style was fashionable both as a reinterpreted everyday item and as a direct historical recreation in the cinema of costume drama.

As explored earlier, the crinoline can be interpreted as a sartorial method of containing women, by enclosing them within their own feminine space and effectively privatising their bodies.<sup>86</sup> One also knows that this is not an entirely effective method of containment due to the crinoline's concern with movement, which can and frequently did result in the display of female flesh, for drawers, if worn, tended to be open at the crotch.<sup>87</sup> Thus the dangerous area of female sexuality is revealed by means of the very garment by which it is supposed to be contained, the façade of corporeal falsification is revealed as corporeal truth. The crinoline is always suggestive of this potential both to screen and expose the female body and female genitalia in particular, if only fleetingly, by the momentary displacement of the façade this garment provides. The crinoline is, therefore, a space of the in-between, and the female body when wearing it is also located in and by this in-between nature.

This idea of the in-between returns one to Carol and her crinolined wardrobe for costume dramas. The idea of the crinoline and containment mentioned above will be important in determining the degree of agency Carol's characters have within their individual texts. As the 'in-between' crinoline is both containing and revealing, one can equate Carol and her crinoline with both a restricted femininity and an unrestricted femininity. This possibility for an unrestricted femininity is particularly interesting given the 1950s drive for prescriptive domestic roles for women. As such, the trajectories of power Carol's characters follow will be of interest to this analysis. Perhaps through the idea of the in-between space of the crinoline, which implies less rigid boundaries than one may first assume, Carol and the characters she embodies may

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<sup>86</sup> See Crinoline section 2.5.

<sup>87</sup> Knickers with a closed crotch did not become commonplace until the twentieth century (Lambert, [www.localhistories.org/underwear.html](http://www.localhistories.org/underwear.html))

negotiate an alternative, less rigidly prescribed place for the feminine. Indeed, the threat inherent in the in-between of the crinoline, (the threat of displacement and thus disruption of engrained binaries of gender and space), may enable Carol to pinpoint the chink in the armour of 1950s patriarchal hegemonies by resisting sameness. The ideological implications of the 'in-between' will certainly be explored further in chapters seven, eight and nine. As will the notion of façade that the crinoline creates in order to understand the degree to which Escoffier falsifies Carol's silhouette via the sartorial to create a feminine ideal. Such a model silhouette, created by structural undergarments is reminiscent of Escoffier's fashion work in which clothes would have been fitted to standardised mannequins. This also reflects Carol's own star image as an identikit femininity, which is assembled, performed and sold. Escoffier's signature garment as a symbol of mass-production, falsification and the in-between, as well as a paradoxical garment with the potential for displacement and disruption will, therefore, be initial threads for the needle in the sartorial analysis of *Lucrece Borgia*, *Madame du Barry* and *Nana*.

## CHAPTER 7: *LUCRÈCE BORGIA* AND THE CRINOLINE OF THE IN-BETWEEN

From the five pre-filmic back-stories to Escoffier's work as a *costumier*, the process of deciphering this designer's costume has begun. By unearthing lost connections to the fashion methodologies of Paquin and Cardin, one can begin to see how various ideological elements regarding materials, movement, and proportion have funnelled into Escoffier's thinking around the crinoline. In outlining his involvement in the creation of the Carol star image, as well as Carol's own position in the in-between location of the crinoline, avenues of research regarding ideas around the displacement of borders and binaries as well as female agency have surfaced. All of these now half-hidden histories have formed the initial stitches in the seam of this analysis of Escoffier and his work by flagging up intersecting spheres of interest, akin to the structure of the crinoline itself, to now be addressed in the subsequent three chapters.

These intersecting spheres will be approached via the in-depth analysis of one particular crinoline-dress combination for each film, in which such overlapping ideas are fabricated. In so doing I will be able to unpick the metonymic value of specific standout ensembles from the trio of Escoffier's film wardrobes I am focusing on. In this way, each metonymic dress becomes a fashion moment into which the ideologies of Carol's other costumes are pooled. Thus through just one dress each filmic wardrobe can be unstitched and the hidden histories of the crinoline revealed. As mentioned above, the term crinoline has been used as a broad term describing any structural undergarment surrounding the lower half of the female body. However, due to the different timeframes in which *Lucrece Borgia*, *Madame du Barry* and *Nana* are set, three different variations of the crinoline, or rather the silhouette they create, are on display.

The particular shapes of the crinolines, which correspond to the different timeframes in which Martine Carol is dressed, will form a crucial part of this exploration. These slices of time and fabric have in fact arranged themselves chronologically in Christian-Jaque's corpus of films. Thus the earliest text relates to the earliest historical setting – 1953's *Lucrece Borgia* is set just prior the turn of the sixteenth century in 1498. Hence it is the farthingale that was the fashionable crinoline structure of the moment. So, I will begin the analysis of Escoffier's crinolines for Carol at this point.

In *Lucrece Borgia*, Christian-Jaque recounts the tale of the real-life Lucrezia Borgia who was born in Rome in 1480 and died in Ferrara in 1519 (Erlanger, 1979: xii).<sup>88</sup> Daughter of Rodrigo Borgia and his mistress Vannozza Dei Cattanei, Lucrezia has repeatedly been cast as a beautiful but monstrous woman of loose or no morals, accused of incest, corruption and murder by poisoning.<sup>89</sup> As Pitman explains, 'popular history has painted Lucrezia Borgia as a fantastically wicked operator, accusing her of colluding in many of the crimes and excesses of the unsavoury Borgia family.' (2003: 72) Yet in recent years, a reappraisal of Lucrezia's reputation has become the subject of historical study, and several works have been published, and even events undertaken, to counter such accusations.<sup>90</sup> Bradford has argued that Lucrezia's status as 'a byword for evil' is a product of the displacement of the misdoings of her father and brother, Cesare (2004: xxiii).<sup>91</sup> Accordingly, two versions of a feminine (stereo)type arise: on the one

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<sup>88</sup> When referring to the historical personage I am going to use the Italian, Lucrezia, but when referring to Christian-Jaque's filmic character I am going to use the French, Lucrece.

<sup>89</sup> Rodrigo later became Pope Alexander VI in 1492, see Erlanger, 1979.

<sup>90</sup> Sarah Bradford's book from 2004, *Lucrezia Borgia: Life, Love and Death in Renaissance Italy*, London: Viking, is the most recent publication to deal with a re-evaluation of Lucrezia and her mythic reputation. In addition, Italy has been keen to re-brand Lucrezia as 'an exemplary mother and wife with a warm heart' by dedicating Rome to a year-long celebration of her life in 2002 (Carroll, [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)).

<sup>91</sup> As with Lucrece and Lucrezia, I am using the Italian, Cesare, to refer to the historical personage and the French, César, to refer to Christian-Jaque's character.

hand, the dangerous, uncontained and murderous sexuality of Lucrezia; and on the other, Lucrezia as innocent victim of patriarchal power. Quite where Christian-Jaque's text positions his French 1950s version of *Lucrèce* will, therefore, be key to this analysis. I will begin exploring Carol's/*Lucrèce*'s<sup>92</sup> wardrobe by examining the dress-crinoline combination Escoffier has designed for the film's climax.

Christian-Jaque's film picks up *Lucrèce*'s story just prior to her second marriage to Alphonse d'Aragon (Massimo Serato) in 1498. The union is politically motivated and has been arranged by *Lucrèce*'s brother, César (Pedro Armendáriz). Despite falling in love with *Lucrèce* during an anonymous encounter the night before their marriage, Alphonse rejects his wife due to her reputation as a 'catin' (strumpet). After persuading him to stay, *Lucrèce* and Alphonse spend a happy year together before César's political allegiance changes and Alphonse is no longer of use to him. At the culmination of the film's narrative, Alphonse suffers serious injuries from an attempt on his life orchestrated by his brother-in-law. As César's troops ambush Alphonse, the latter's adviser intones that *Lucrèce* must have betrayed him (when in fact she has done no such thing). Alphonse just survives the attack and wakes from his injuries to find the supposedly treacherous *Lucrèce* at his bedside, dressed in a spectacular robe. From what one can determine from Carol's silhouette, she appears to be wearing a Spanish farthingale beneath superb purple velvet. Thus Escoffier has not only recreated a historically accurate silhouette in terms of fashion time but also in nationality, for the Borgias are a family of Spanish descent.

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<sup>92</sup> When analysing Escoffier's costumes for Carol/*Lucrèce* I am going to refer to both actor and character for they are as much about [un]dressing Carol's star persona as the creation of a historical character.



Figure 21. Spanish farthingales.

Although three main types of farthingale have been pinpointed by costume historians, it is the earliest incarnation of the garment, the Spanish farthingale that interests me here. This particular manifestation of the crinoline first appeared in Spain circa 1477 and greatly influenced women's dress from the end of the fifteenth century, through to the sixteenth century and beyond.<sup>93</sup> Its arrival marks the beginning of separate structural undergarments for the lower half of women's bodies. It is constructed from concentric hoops of reed sewn into a petticoat to create a cone silhouette. Thus the Spanish farthingale is mid-way between the pre-mechanised French crinoline of stiffened horsehair petticoats and the mechanised cage-crinoline of the Second Empire. Attached

<sup>93</sup> The three main types of farthingale are the Spanish farthingale c. 1477, the French farthingale c. 1570 and the Wheel farthingale c. 1585. As I will explore the Spanish farthingale in this analysis of *Lucrece Borgia* there is no need to outline the specific nature of this garment here, I will, however, briefly outline the other two versions of this structural undergarment.

The French farthingale comprises a large pad either stuffed or boned with reeds that sits around the waist of its wearer to create dome-shaped skirts. Interestingly, this construction has been linked to Margot Queen of Navarre, the Reine Margot of Dréville's 1954 film of the same name.

The Wheel farthingale is composed of a circle of fabric, with a hole for the waist, which is boned in concentric circles again with reeds (Goodman, [www.modehistorique.com](http://www.modehistorique.com)). It was often worn with a supporting pad underneath. For further details on the history of farthingales see Goodman, S. L. (2001), *Mode Historique, Historical Fashion*, [www.modehistorique.com/elizabethan/farthingales.html](http://www.modehistorique.com/elizabethan/farthingales.html).

at the waist, the Spanish farthingale, like the later cage-crinoline freed up women's legs to increase the liminal space between flesh and fabric. Consequently, the Spanish farthingale also possesses the ability to cover and reveal the female body simultaneously. Carol/Lucrèce is, therefore, placed in the space of the in-between that all hooped crinolines inhabit, a position mid-way between concealment and exposure.

This tension between concealment and exposure is repeated via Carol's/Lucrèce's outerwear. Technically, she is screened in fabric from just under her chin down to her wrists and floor-length hem, but choice of material and cut make her appear more exposed. At her bust is a wide satin ribbon; beneath this division is an expanse of purple velvet, which extends from her chest to the floor. This velvet is nipped in at the waist and continues over her farthingale in a cone shape that extends behind her to form a short train.<sup>94</sup> Above the boundary of the satin ribbon, white net embellished with jet beading and mauve cross-hatching covers her shoulders (shades of Paquin), finishing in a stiff high collar, both sides of which are joined with a choker of cut jet jewels. However, her décolletage (key component in Carol's star persona) is left exposed. Her arms are swathed in puffed white satin at the elbows and decorated again with jet, mauve beading and patterning. Both material and decoration then continue to her wrists forming a leg-of-mutton shaped sleeve.

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<sup>94</sup> Although the velvet of her robe is nipped in at the waist there does not appear to be a corset present - there are no signs of tell-tale ridges and the waist to hip ratio seems only to be augmented by the first hoop of Carol/Lucrèce's farthingale rather than additional structural undergarments at her torso. True to Carol's star persona, her breasts are as unrestrained as possible without being on view in their entirety. By not placing Carol/Lucrèce in a corset, Escoffier is being historically accurate. During the Middle-Ages the first steps towards corsetry were made as bodices began to be laced and stiffened but this reinforcement of the torso was integral to the bodice. By the fifteenth century the busk was in use but corsets that were independent from the bodice of a gown did not appear until the sixteenth century.



Figure 22. Carol's/Lucrèce's dress.



Figure 23. The zip.

Although the cut of Carol's/Lucrèce's dress reaches towards the extremities of her person, the wide expanse of flesh at her chest and the transparent net at her shoulders serve to display her body. Her corporeality is simultaneously concealed and exposed. In addition, the anachronistic presence of a zip in the back of her robe supplements this tension between concealment and display, by introducing an element of speed by which the body can be revealed. It also points to the spanning of two timeframes – that of historical (re)production and that of contemporary production. It seems odd given Escoffier's painstaking recreation of historical detail on and in this dress to then add such a modern fastening method. Speed and ease of fastening were obviously the motivation behind this addition, which does in fact serve to enhance the tension between concealment and display in Carol's/Lucrèce's costume. Yet it appears as if efforts are made to conceal its presence on screen, for if Carol/Lucrèce is shot from the back, she is positioned so that the zip in her dress is at the very edge of frame. However, it serves as a reminder that despite attempting to recreate the past, the present, in this instance via fashion technology, can always interject.

By encompassing such tensions of concealment and exposure, Carol's/Lucrèce's apparel conforms to Harvey's view that 'dress, in short, is like a punning language, expert in double meanings, and part of its work is to manage the contradictions surrounding the body.' (2007: 66) The contradictions surrounding the body are many but for the purpose of this analysis, which takes the unclear space of the crinoline as its central thread, I will focus on the corporeal paradox of the body as both a boundary and not a boundary. As Warwick and Cavallaro have indicated:

There is no obvious way of demarcating the body's boundaries. Hair, nails, corporeal waste and secretions, indeed the skin itself, could be seen both as integral to the body's identity and functionings, and as dispensable appendages. Any attempt to establish unequivocally the limits of the physical apparatus is further complicated by multifarious practices of body decoration, such as tattooing, piercing, painting, make-up, scarification, and, of course, *clothing*. (1998: xv author's emphasis)

As such, the borders of the body are ambiguous and this ambiguity is both alleviated and compounded by the presence of dress, which is itself also ambiguous in its boundaries. For 'if the body itself is only uncertainly defined, dress reinforces the fluidity of its frame by raising the somewhat uncomfortable question: *where does the body end and dress begin?*' (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: xvii author's emphasis) Warwick and Cavallaro's take on the ambiguity of the body is also descriptive of the crinoline as an ambiguous garment that straddles an absence and presence of boundaries.<sup>95</sup> How then might Carol's/Lucrèce's farthingale manage and/or reflect the ambiguity of her corporeality? In order to determine this, I will return to the purple velvet dress-farthingale combination described above and work from the outside in.

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<sup>95</sup> See crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6.

### **7.1: Colour and Power/Fabric and Sexuality**

The colour of Carol's/Lucrèce's metonymic dress is key here; during the Renaissance, such a shade of purple would have been known as Tyrian purple. Before the discovery and manufacture of aniline dyes in 1856 by William Perkin, the production of mauve or purple dye for cloth was an extremely lengthy and costly process; in order to make enough dye for a single garment the glandular mucus from thousands of Murex molluscs had to be drained (Garfield, 2000: 39). Subsequently, the wearing of purple prior to 1856 was a marker of status. Thus Carol's/Lucrèce's Tyrian purple dress is symbolic of power, wealth and luxury, and also has royal and religious connotations for monarchs and members of ecclesiastical rank (literally men of the cloth) were the only strata of society who could afford to wear Tyrian purple. Moving into the more contemporary context, one must not forget the significance of Escoffier's choice of fabric here, for velvet had since the late nineteenth century been associated with female sexuality via Freud's belief that velvet symbolised female pubic hair and the subsequent phrase 'tipping the velvet' (a euphemism for performing oral sex on a woman) (Steele, 1996: 146). Through this fabric-sexuality link, created by the doubling up of two timeframes (fifteenth and twentieth centuries), Carol's/Lucrèce's velvet dress is once more shown to simultaneously screen and expose her sexuality. For while the velvet covers and conceals a great deal of her body, and its weight makes it less likely for her farthingale to be displaced (by means of its three-dimensional nature) this same velvet replicates the corporeal velvet covering of her genitalia (which her farthingale, despite being weighed down, still has the power to expose).

Such a display of excessive wealth and power through colour, and display of female sexuality via the material, aligns Carol/Lucrèce with the 'monstrous' side of her

reputedly deviant femininity. Indeed, this reading of her is supported throughout the course of the film, in which she is repeatedly shown to be wearing velvets in various shades of the purple spectrum.<sup>96</sup> There are however, two key moments in which Carol/Lucrèce is taken out of her usual colour palette of powerful purple and placed into the red and black of the Machiavellian César. During the man-hunt sequence and the first attempt on Alphonse's life, Carol/Lucrèce is dressed predominantly in red velvet, accessorised with Paquinesque fur trim and black and gold embellishment, thus matching César's signature colours. And so dressed in César's palette of cruelty, Carol/Lucrèce becomes cruel and dangerous by proxy, a sartorial symbol of treacherous femininity. However, what becomes clear during these scenes in which Carol/Lucrèce and César are sartorially matched is that he is the one with the power. For he is the cause of Carol's/Lucrèce's torment, controlling Carol/Lucrèce for his own ends in these scenes, he sets her up to betray her former lover, Paul (Christian Marquand) during the man-hunt, and implicates her in his attempts to murder her husband, Alphonse. Carol's/Lucrèce's lack of power in these situations is colourfully reinforced by the absence of purple, which in these two instances has been overpowered by César's red. Moreover, one can read this covering of Carol's/Lucrèce's body in César's colours as symbolic of his incestuous desire for her, a point to which I shall return in due course.

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<sup>96</sup> It is possible that in so doing, Escoffier was acknowledging the difficulty in producing a standard pre-aniline purple dye, for Tyrian purple varied in shade in its manufacture according to different dying processes across its region of production. See Garfield, Simon (2000) *Mauve, How One Man Invented a Colour that Changed the World*, London: Faber and Faber, for further information.



Figure 24. Carol's/Lucrèce's first red dress.



Figure 25. Carol's/Lucrèce's second red dress.

So powerful a sartorial symbol of wrongdoing do these two red velvet dresses become that immediately after the wearing of each, Alphonse believes Carol/Lucrèce to be the murderous whore of her reputation, rather than the loving wife she has been to him. Subsequent to Alphonse's first dismissal of her as monstrous, Carol/Lucrèce convinces him not to leave her by recounting all of her past loves and wrong-doings, a process that in a kind of reversal of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*,<sup>97</sup> reveals César to be the catalyst for what Alphonse views as her misdemeanours.<sup>98</sup> Crucially, in this scene, Carol/Lucrèce is in a nightgown and so without her Spanish farthingale.

<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, Escoffier costumed *Senso* directed by Visconti in 1953 (although he was unaccredited), which is also a reworking of Sacher-Masoch's tale ([www.bifi.fr](http://www.bifi.fr)).

<sup>98</sup> Other than lying while under oath in court, the 'misdemeanours' Carol/Lucrèce recounts are all sexual encounters. This narrative trick then allows the spectator to view Carol/Lucrèce naked several times during flashback sequences. Thus a policing of female sexuality and an eroticising of Carol's/Lucrèce's body takes place. In this patriarchally structured device, despite his escapade with a then anonymous woman, Alphonse is not subjected to the same investigation and policing of his body and sexuality.

Yet the tension set up between the concealing and revealing of Carol's/Lucrèce's body continues, for the material of the gown is diaphanous and exposes her décolletage. The exposure of this part of Carol's body is of course a key signifier in her star persona and during the flashback sequence in which the enunciation of her previous sexual encounters takes place, a lot more of Carol's/Lucrèce's flesh is on show when she appears naked in a bath. However, this nudity is fleeting, and it is only her chest that is fully exposed, as a raised leg hides her genitalia. The dichotomy between concealment and exposure is continued at a strictly corporeal level, although it soon incorporates the mixing of flesh with fabric once more, as Carol/Lucrèce is wrapped in a sheet. Following this, Carol/Lucrèce is swiftly put back into her Spanish farthingaled robes, and so this brief flash of female flesh (reminiscent of a momentary displacement of a crinoline) functions, as Chapuy notes, as a platform for the film's publicity above all else (2001: 44).

The fact that Carol/Lucrèce recounts this flashback sequence in which she appears unclothed without wearing a farthingale is significant, for it results in a natural rather than falsified silhouette, which reinforces the truthfulness of her account. However, as such her flesh is doubly undisciplined and unformed (both naked in the flashback and un-crinolined in the present moment of the scene). Such a corporeal state, as established during the exploration of Nead's thinking in relation to the female nude in Western patriarchal modes of viewing in part one,<sup>99</sup> is uncomfortable for the male. For the female body, if not safely contained, serves as an *unheimlich* reminder of how ambiguous the body really is. This explains, therefore, why Alphonse is so horrified at his wife's account of her behaviour, for her unruly body was and still is on display

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<sup>99</sup> See crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6.

rather than being ‘safely’ contained by structure-giving undergarments such as the Spanish farthingale. Despite his horror, Alphonse agrees to stay and the next day, following her confession and absolved of her sins, Carol/Lucrèce displays a notable shift in costume style.

As Carol/Lucrèce and Alphonse stroll through an idyllic garden, proclaiming their love for one another, a more demure Carol/Lucrèce is imposed through her costume. Rather than being covered in velvet, she is dressed in pale mauve taffeta complete with white satin sleeves and white stomacher style insert from chest to waist. At her chest is cross-hatched white net and on her head is a wide-brimmed black hat (her covered head symbolic of modesty) that ties under her chin. The white of her sleeves, stomacher insert and net are picked up in Alphonse’s white shirt and the cross-hatching at Carol’s/Lucrèce’s chest is replicated at his cuffs. This is not the first time that Carol’s/Lucrèce’s and Alphonse’s wardrobes have matched; their wedding outfits and pearl detailing have previously aligned them sartorially. Yet from this point until the wearing of Carol’s/Lucrèce’s second red velvet number, they mirror each other consistently, displaying their synchronised desire for one another. This strategic move in Escoffier’s costume design corresponds to the view that Lucrèce was not the villainous woman popular history has made her out to be, pointing instead to Lucrèce as a political pawn in César’s power games and empire building. Thus Escoffier’s wardrobe for Carol/Lucrèce reflects both the ‘monstrous’ feminine (red velvets and fur trims) and the idea of a more innocent femininity (pale taffeta and white satins). Escoffier’s outer costume design replicates the in-between positioning of the construction under his costumes for Carol/Lucrèce – the Spanish farthingale. Accordingly, Carol/Lucrèce is positioned in-between concealment and exposure as well

as in a space that mediates between two types of femininity. Being neither one thing nor the other, Carol/Lucrèce becomes difficult to read. This explains why Alphonse can never decide whether or not his wife is deceiving him. It also clarifies why Carol's/Lucrèce's wardrobe reflects aspects of both César's and Alphonse's dress, for in doing so it reveals *their* desire to make her readable by projecting their own desires and identities onto her.



Figure 26. Carol's/Lucrèce's taffeta dress.

The aforementioned purple dress is the richest of all Carol's/Lucrèce's robes in elements of sartorial reflection. For example, the deep purple of this dress is midway between the blood red that highlights César's wardrobe and the pale grey-mauve in which Alphonse is frequently dressed. In addition, the jet beadwork reflects that found in César's costumes, and the high white collar and cross-hatching detail mirror Alphonse's apparel. Thus, the dress and its embellishment is recognising the position of its wearer, who is caught between the desires and powers of these two men. On both the

surface and crinolined liminal space beneath Carol's/Lucrèce's clothes, conflicting desires are played out in three-dimensions. This notion of three-dimensionality applies not only spatially but also in terms of the triangulated desires of the three main characters. Taking this into account, the significance of the dominance of velvet in Escoffier's wardrobe for this film makes itself clearer, for velvet is the most three-dimensional of fabrics, and so becomes a sartorial signifier of such triangulated desires.

However, it is the location of Carol's/Lucrèce's desire in the dimension of space created between her farthingale and her body that is of particular interest here, for as seen earlier with the corset, desiring discourses collect in liminal spaces. As an ambiguous garment that both is and is not a boundary, the crinoline (in this case the Spanish farthingale), creates an ambiguous and contested space into which the female wearer enters. Crucially, this liminal space between body and garment, the in-between, is betwixt two lines of control: flesh and fabric. These lines of control are themselves ambiguous for it is near impossible to determine where the body ends and dress begins. However, the positioning of femininity between these two lines of control (despite their ambiguity) is exactly what the crinoline does on both a physical and metaphorical but also an etymological level. And it is to this etymological level that I will now turn.

### **7.2: Women In-between: 'O' Space**

If one breaks down the word 'crinoline' into its component parts one gets crin/o/line, which translates to horsehair/o/linen. The 'o' here is what is interesting. One could argue that this 'o' corresponds to Lacan's little 'o' – i.e. the female 'other.' The 'o' located as it is here in the space of the in-between directly corresponds to the space of

sexual difference, namely the vagina, which so as not to upset patriarchal structures of identity and power must be ‘othered’ away,<sup>100</sup> hence the element of concealment built into the crinoline. Yet despite the apparently impregnable dome of the crinoline, one knows that it also has the potential to expose the *unheimlich* dangers of the ‘o’ as other by revealing the ‘o’ space beneath its hoops.<sup>101</sup> Access to the ‘o’ space beneath the crinoline can of course be gained from underneath its widest point. However, this is not an easy feat if it is the crinoline wearer who wants to access this space, seeing as the wearer functions as an anchor for the structure. In fact, entrance to the ‘o’ space from beneath the crinoline is often achieved by someone other than its wearer. Yet there are ways around this problem, for secret personal ways into this liminal ‘o’ space exist – pockets. In historical dress, pockets were in fact separate pouches of material that could be secured to crinoline hoops and reached through a vertical slit in the skirts of dresses (usually concealed by a well positioned pleat). Thus the ‘o’ space beneath the crinoline became the hiding place for valuables and weapons as well as a liminal space and location and locus of desire.

Importantly, Carol/Lucrèce has a pocket in her purple dress and it is through using the concealing power of the pockets of her farthingale that she uses the ‘o’ space of the in-between to her advantage. Out of a velvet-lined jewel box Carol/Lucrèce takes a knife, which she places into her pocket, thus weaponising her ‘o’ space. Firstly, this makes her femininity doubly dangerous in patriarchal eyes, for beneath her farthingale she is in possession of both an *unheimlich* reminder of sexual difference and a castrating blade. By positioning this blade within her ‘o’ space in such close proximity to her genitalia, it

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<sup>100</sup> See crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6 for an exploration of ‘othering’ in relation to Nead’s analysis of the female nude in patriarchal structures of seeing.

<sup>101</sup> I must give credit here to Prof Susan Hayward for it is through discussion with her in January 2007 that the idea of what I have termed ‘o’ space first arose.

is as if Carol/Lucrèce has externalised the teeth of the *vagina dentata* myth, making the ‘o’ space a place of physical and psychological danger for the male. Yet there is a secondary reading to be developed here too. One must not forget that the dangerous knife came from a box. Like Pandora and her box, Carol/Lucrèce is, therefore, in possession of an object that contains destructive power.<sup>102</sup> As Mulvey has explained, ‘Pandora’s box, and its motif of inside/outside, echoes the motif of Pandora’s exterior beauty/inner duplicity.’ (1989: xi) Pandora and her box then, are somewhat of an enigma, being neither one thing nor another. One can immediately see how this links back to the crinoline and women being placed in its space of the in-between. In taking the knife from a metaphorical Pandora’s box, Carol/Lucrèce also takes on Pandora’s enigmatic status. She then becomes doubly ill-defined as an enigmatic woman who occupies the in-between space of the crinoline and her farthingaled femininity becomes a space of unreadability.

In this unreadable but weaponised state, Carol/Lucrèce attempts to stab her brother, who due to the enigmatic nature of her in-betweenness, does not anticipate her attack.

However, her plan goes awry as she is overpowered once again by César. To make matters worse, as Carol/Lucrèce has left her husband’s bedside, César’s henchman takes this opportunity to finish Alphonse off once and for all. Accordingly, Christian-Jaque’s tale of Lucrèce ends on a tragic note. Her disruptive knife-bearing challenges but cannot defeat her brother’s hold over her life. Thus a first reading of the film’s finale implies that women who attempt to overthrow patriarchal structures of power will be punished.

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<sup>102</sup> According to the myth, Pandora was the first woman. She was fashioned by the gods to be given to man in exchange for fire. ‘Her mythology is embellished by her iconographical attribute, the box from which she released trouble into the world.’ (Mulvey, 1989: x-xi). Accordingly, Pandora has become symbolic of a beautiful but destructive femininity.

Yet I would argue that there is a second, political and perhaps more positive reading of Carol/Lucrèce to be had in this film. The fact that Carol/Lucrèce attempts to overthrow César through the weaponising of her ‘o’ space and the disruptive and unreadable quality this infers her and her crinoline with can be read as a positive, for as unreadable, Carol/Lucrèce cannot be pigeonholed. Indeed, it is possible to link Carol’s/Lucrèce’s accessing of the agency of her crinolined ‘o’ space to women’s wider struggle for agency in situations governed by patriarchal hegemonies. So, as I will now explain, the timeframe of Carol’s/Lucrèce’s farthingale and its hooped layers of discourse, link to the timeframe of the film’s production.

As illustrated in the introduction to this thesis and the exploration of the crinoline in part one, the 1950s was a period in which the crinoline silhouette (in the form of stiff hooped nylon petticoats) re-emerged in fashion, and women struggled to retain some of the agency and freedoms they had gained from the shifting of gender roles during World War II.<sup>103</sup> As explored in part one, post-war French femininity was a disputed space, with patriarchally motivated laws and values attempting to keep and/or return women to the domestic sphere on the one hand, and early feminist agitators such as Simone de Beauvoir proposing alternative feminine trajectories on the other. If one adds to this mix post-war trauma, colonial conflict and the drive for modernity, which I have previously determined as being socially and culturally linked to femininity (see section 1.2), then one can deduce that space and place for women in 1950s France was a hotly contested issue (Duchen, 1994: 3).<sup>104</sup> This notion of contested space loops into the crinoline. To draw a parallel with this garment, one can suggest that 1950s femininity also occupied a space of in-betweenness - just as Carol/Lucrèce finds herself in the ‘o’

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<sup>103</sup> See sections 1.2, 2.5 and 2.6 in part one.

<sup>104</sup> See section 1.2.

space of the in-between in Christian-Jaque's film, femininity in 1950s France was also in a space of in-betweenness. Small wonder then that the crinoline style made a fashionable comeback at this time. Taking this comparison further, one can see how French femininity during the 1950s was interwoven with discourses similar to those inherent in the crinoline. For example, the foundation garment's paradoxical discourses of public and private, movement and stasis, concealment and exposure, inside and outside, can also be seen to apply to France's women in relation to the domestic sphere they were simultaneously being encouraged/discouraged to occupy. Thus, notions of problematised and paradoxical gender boundaries in relation to (re-crinolined) women were paramount when *Lucrece Borgia* was released in 1953.

Once again, the costume drama is ad-dressing the present moment via the guise of the past. Intriguingly, and paradoxically, however, by means of Escoffier's Spanish farthingale silhouette with its politics of the in-between, and Christian-Jaque's presentation of Carol/Lucrece in a generally sympathetic light, one has moved away from the contempt for women that Annenkov and Ophuls displayed in the previous case-study. Crucially, Escoffier and Christian-Jaque have presented the unreadable femininity of the in-between farthingale – a more positive space for it cannot be reduced to or labelled as either one thing or the other. I will now move on to Jeanne du Barry and her panniers to see if this creation of alternative spaces for women continues.

## CHAPTER 8: *MADAME DU BARRY*, PANNIERS AND DRESSING FOR DEFIANCE

As with *Lucrece Borgia*, Christian-Jaque's *Madame du Barry* recounts the tale of a real historical personage - Jeanne du Barry, mistress of King Louis XV from 1768-1774. Jeanne, like Lucrece, also has something of a bad reputation that has outlived her. Jeanne was disliked by members of the aristocracy for her working-class origins, and yet she went on to become, for eighteenth-century French Republicans who despised her upwardly mobility, the symbol of a corrupt royal court. Such strength of Republican contempt is evidenced by the fact that almost twenty years after Louis XV's death, in 1793, Jeanne was guillotined during the Terror, charged with treason by the Revolutionary Tribunal (Mairobert, 1956: 167). Consequently, Jeanne was viewed with contempt by both Royalists and Republicans, and in further similarity to Lucrece, this contempt focused on Jeanne's questionable sexual morals.

Born on the nineteenth of August 1743, Jeanne Bécu was the illegitimate daughter of Anne Bécu, a dressmaker from Vaucouleurs in Lorraine. It is believed that her father was the Capuchin friar, Jean-Jaques Gomard known as frère L'Ange (Cruikshanks cited in Mairobert, 1956: 9-10). Interestingly, during her early life, Jeanne was also involved in the fashion trade, and when she left this profession to begin her time as a courtesan, she went by the name Mademoiselle L'Ange – thus appropriating her father's name in order to begin a process of social climbing that reached its pinnacle at Versailles. Dress, sex and class were key components in the life of the historical Jeanne. It is these same three elements that Christian-Jaque focuses on in his filmic version, in which Martine Carol embodies the infamous Jeanne du Barry, and whose narrative spans the six years Jeanne spent as the King's mistress.

Akin to the analysis of *Lucrèce*, I will begin to unpick the politics of Escoffier's costumes for Carol/Jeanne via metonymic fashion moments. In this particular Escoffier wardrobe I will take two dresses as different but ultimately interrelated metonymies: first, the *robe à la française* (pannied formal court dress for women) which Carol/Jeanne wears as she is formally presented to the King and second, the outfit Carol/Jeanne is wearing when Louis XV dies. As one has come to expect from Escoffier both of these dresses are crinolined. Indeed, as in *Lucrèce Borgia*, Escoffier's women's costumes are structured from beneath in a fashion true to the period they are recreating, in this case the 1760s and 1770s. Accordingly, both dresses are given structure from below by panniers.

As illustrated in the earlier *mise-en-scène* of the crinoline, panniers were oval-hooped constructions that first appeared in French fashion around 1710 and lasted until the 1780s.<sup>105</sup> They consisted of cane, metal or whalebone hoops inserted into a linen petticoat, inside of which tapes were tied to form the garment's distinctive oblong shape. Thus women's silhouettes were extended sideways while remaining relatively flat at the front and back. Accordingly, the 'o' space beneath the panniers is under tension, for the tapes that condition its shape are pulled taught and interior boundaries drawn. As a result, the 'o' space of the pannier is reined in (or perhaps in Jeanne's case reigned in!).

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<sup>105</sup> See crinoline section 2.5



Figure 27. Panniers.

Fastened at the waist, the panniers' swaying hoops, like the farthingale, have the power to both conceal and reveal the female body. (Indeed, due to its extension of the hips, panniers visually reinforce the image of a fecund and womanly shape as well as paradoxically screening off the sight/site of female sexual difference). In further comparison to the farthingale, pockets were used in panniers. The construction of this style of crinoline, then, lives up to its name, for *panier* in French translates as a basket. The huge false-hip style created by panniers is similar to the bags slung either side of a pack animal. Thus one can read the liminal 'o' space created by the panniers as a vessel. This idea of a container/containing vessel has several etymological implications, suggesting that panniers and their 'o' space variously function as an empty utensil to be filled, a construction that floats or something into which a particular quality may be imparted (Allen, 2003: 1567). In turn this points to the multiple discourses the combination of panniers and the female body can create and also highlights the garment's paradoxical nature. If one develops the metaphor of panniers as a sea-faring vessel further, then one finds that they are in fact a vessel of contradiction: given their

horizontal expansion logically they should travel sideways but in fact women steered their weighty panniers forwards.

Such a movement against the tide points to the sense of inertia that the crinoline imposes on the female body as a patriarchally motivated device that cloaks *unheimlich* sexual difference. Yet it also indicates a quality of defiance, signalling that despite being cast as beasts of burden (through both the weight of their clothes and childbirth), women will battle on like the vessels they resemble. Indeed, this navalistic (navelistic) allusion is not gratuitous, for like the farthingale, panniers and their in-built element of concealment grant women the potential to carry lethal weaponry. Such concealment of weaponry is in direct opposition to the rules of historical dress and armoury for men. Any weapons in male possession had to be displayed outside clothing in a show of phallic power. And if one did not adhere to the code, then they were branded a coward. Amazingly, due to the assumption that women were the weaker sex, the in-built ability of their dress to conceal whatever they wished was never challenged. Hence, as with Lucrece, patriarchal hegemonies (in particular patriarchally imposed boundaries) can be disrupted via the concealed weaponising of farthingaled 'o' space. Thus, it was by means of subverting the in-built notion of concealment, (which I have shown to be patriarchally motivated, see sections 2.5 and 2.6), rather than the crinoline's power to expose the female body that Lucrece attempted to skirt around containment. It will be interesting, given the parallels established between Lucrece and Jeanne, to see how Carol/Jeanne uses/weaponises her panniered 'o' space in this particular text. Accordingly, it is to an exploration of Escoffier's wardrobe for *Madame du Barry* to which I will now turn.

### 8.1: Accessing the *Habitus* of Versailles via the ‘O’-Space of Taste

The first dress I will unstitch is worn at the pivotal moment of the film’s narrative in which Carol/Jeanne is formally presented to Louis XV (André Luguet) at Versailles. The formality and pomp of this event is rather absurd for Carol/Jeanne is already the King’s mistress by this point. However, if she is to be able to legitimately engage in life at court such a presentation is necessary. Essential to this procedure is the correct attire and at this point in the fashion history of the palace a panniered *robe à la française* was *de rigueur*. Carol/Jeanne has worn several *robes à la française* prior to this moment but circumstances dictate that this must be the grandest dress she has ever worn. The enemies she has made at Versailles (in the majority women who object to a woman of working-class origins being chosen over them to become the King’s mistress) attempt to foil Carol’s/Jeanne’s presentation by denying her access to a carriage, court hairdressers, and the favoured court dressmaker, Rose Bertin. However, Carol/Jeanne returns to her working-class roots in order to make her official presentation happen as planned. With the help of friends and family an exquisitely crafted *robe à la française* is constructed in lightening quick time.

Made from masses of pale blue and ivory satin, this dress has a low décolletage, a tight fitting bodice complete with pearled triangular stomacher panel, and a skirt that is stretched out over vast panniers. Waterfall layers of ruched lace dotted with large pink roses and pearls traverse this wide panniered skirt, with similar detailing being picked out at the elbows. This elaborate Escoffier gown, which displays elements of Paquin’s design methodology in its fine detailing, is topped off with a small pearled headpiece.



Figure 28. The *robe à la française*.

In this ornate gown, Carol/Jeanne resembles a tiered cake, she is femininity made good enough to eat, a confection. Indeed, ‘confection’ can refer to ‘an elaborately prepared item of sweet food, e.g. a cake or dessert, an elaborately contrived article of dress, e.g. a woman’s hat, and the process of assembling, composing or confecting something.’

(Allen, 2003:286) It is this last meaning of the word that particularly interests me in this instance, for one can link it not only to the process of turning Jeanne into a member of the aristocracy, which Christian-Jaque’s film depicts, but also to the process of creating Carol’s star persona.

The procedure of confecting class and stardom is explicitly referenced in *Madame du Barry*, as one is privy to the ‘backstage’ process Jeanne goes through before arriving at Versailles in her sumptuous cake of a dress. Back at Madame Gourdan’s (Gabrielle Dorziat) brothel, the prostitutes and staff from the *Maison de modes* in which Jeanne used to work set about making the dress described above. As they sew, Carol/Jeanne is

seen in her corset and pannier frame being schooled in etiquette and having her hair powdered. Every detail of Carol's/Jeanne's appearance, behaviour and, above all, dress must conform to the standards set by Versailles. She must conform to what Bourdieu would term the 'taste' of the 'habitus' of the aristocratic and royal classes (Entwistle, 2000: 34).

For Bourdieu, 'habitus is "a system of durable, transposable dispositions" that are produced by the particular conditionings of a class grouping.' (Bourdieu cited in Entwistle, 2000: 36) As such, taste forms an integral part of a particular class group's characteristics that comprise its habitus, and although taste differs across classes, all taste is subject to social conditioning (Rigby, 1991: 107). One can see how Bourdieu's concept of taste is applicable to fashion/dress as a marker of class, status and power, for 'taste forms part of the bodily dispositions of a class grouping [...] and [is] indicative of class position.' (Entwistle, 2000: 36) Returning to Carol's/Jeanne's sartorial preparations for her audience with the King, one can see how this process corresponds first with a confecting, and second, with an inhabiting of the taste of Versailles' habitus. In order that her presence at the royal court be legitimated, Carol/Jeanne must conform to its particular dispositions. Her style of dress as the most visual marker of taste is, therefore, vital to her class trajectory. As such, the *robe à la française*, identified by its enormous panniers, is symbolic of Versailles' sartorial taste. By wearing panniered constructions to the palace, Carol/Jeanne centrally positions herself within a personal sphere of aristocratic and royal taste thus gaining access to its habitus. What is so delightfully funny, therefore, about Carol/Jeanne being forced to make her own panniered *robe à la française* is that she manufactures a working-class (and thus illegitimate) imitation of aristocratic and royal taste in order to be legitimately inducted

into court life. She metaphorically weaponises the ‘o’ space of her panniers for they simultaneously conceal/expose her class roots by being a perfect yet illegitimately sourced space/place of aristocratic and royal taste. Accordingly, in looking the part she becomes the class and in so doing assails class distinctions. This ability to collapse boundaries endows Carol/Jeanne with an unruly femininity and goes a long way to explaining the strength of contempt that both the historical Jeanne and the diegetic Jeanne incited.

Accordingly, Escoffier’s panniers for Carol/Jeanne so far in this film function as a battering ram breaking down the doors of class hierarchy. This metaphor is reinforced by the knowledge that the only time panniers-as-vessels sailed in the right direction was through doorways (spaces of transition), which women had to turn sideways to fit through (Koda, 2001: 117). Carol’s/Jeanne’s process of panniered class advancement is also made evident through the fabric with which Escoffier covers these constructions. And so it is to a brief exploration of this recording through fabric that I will now turn.

When one is first introduced to Carol/Jeanne in the *Maison de modes*, she is wearing a simple striped cotton dress over very modest panniers. Yet by the time she has met Jean du Barry (Daniel Ivernel), married his brother to gain the title of countess, and advanced her class to an aristocratic position, Carol/Jeanne has been introduced to silk and satin court dresses with large panniers – the sartorial fabric of taste by which she then gains access to Versailles. As she makes more and more of an impact on the King, Carol’s/Jeanne’s panniers grow wider, symbolic of his increasing desire for her, as well as her increased (but still unofficial) presence at the royal court. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the *robe à la française* described earlier has the biggest panniers

Carol/Jeanne wears. In so wearing, she inhabits and displays as large an amount of taste as possible. Small wonder then that this dress of extreme taste resembles a cake.

Escoffier's show of class confection results in a confectionary dress that revels in its delicious taste. For Carol/Jeanne it is a particularly sweet taste since it leads to legitimate access to the highest class of all, Louis XV, and in so doing precipitates her final fabric change as she moves from satin to velvet.

This first dress-as-metonym corresponds to Carol's/Jeanne's ascendancy to the peak of her class trajectory, and as such, one is shown how class may be manufactured and accessed through sartorial taste. This trajectory up through the ranks of class is tracked by changes in fabric and pannier size: cotton and modest panniers for working class, silk and satin with large to enormous panniers for the bourgeoisie and aristocracy (the finesse in the finish of each dress successively increasing until reaching its peak with the first metonymic dress), and finally, panniered velvet once she is legitimately linked to royalty as the King's official mistress. This process of fabricating taste by pinning in, puffing out, and exposing key areas of the body in order to conform to an ideal of feminine beauty can also be linked to the creation and rise of Carol's star persona through the Carol-Christian-Jaque-Escoffier triangulation outlined earlier in chapter six's biographical analysis. However, there is an additional analogy with the 1950s timeframe to be explored if one pursues the issue of class further.

The rebuilding and modernisation of France post-World War II implemented widespread economic changes that would resonate across the country's population. The introduction of North American aid in the form of the 1947 Marshall Plan, coupled with Jean Monnet's Five Year Plan put in place between 1947 and 1953, as well as French

entry into the Common Market (the European Economic Community) in 1957, renewed infrastructures and industrialised and revitalised the French economy (McMillan, 1992: 168-9). These fiscal changes transformed the workplace: agriculture mechanised; electricity, oil and car manufacture boomed and assembly line jobs abounded (McMillan, 1992: 170-1). As a result of this modernisation and economic change, class structures also shifted. As Ross has argued, ‘modernisation brought into being a whole new range of middle-men and go-betweens, new social types that dominated and profited from the transformations wrought by the state.’ (Ross, 1999: 8) For example, within the ‘notoriously variegated ranks’ of the bourgeoisie, a new middle-management (*cadres*) class came to prominence (8). However, at around six million people, the ‘workers’ were the most numerous group amongst the active population and changes to their experience of work and the financial system resulted in changes to their experience of class. Key to such change was the widespread introduction of post-war credit systems. By accessing credit, the working class began to buy its way into the space of a new, emergent middle class (Ross, 1997: 137-8). Such changes were also reflected in the French fashion system as designer clothing became more accessible due to the introduction of *prêt-à-porter* ranges. It is not difficult, therefore, to draw parallels between Carol’s/Jeanne’s eighteenth-century class mobility and the changes in class structures occurring in France in the post-war period in which the film was produced.

## **8.2: Dressing for Defiance**

In the earlier analysis of the confected *robe à la française* and its panniers, I charted the symbolic function of Escoffier’s class-conscious wardrobe up until the point when Carol/Jeanne became the official mistress of Louis XV. This next section of analysis

will examine what happens to this wardrobe *after* her official presentation at court. As specified previously, the following analysis will take the form of observing a metonymic fashion moment in the film. In this instance, I will unstitch the dress and cloak combination that Carol/Jeanne is wearing as she is expelled from Versailles.

At the film's close, Carol/Jeanne is seen exiting the King's bed-chamber. As she steps out into the corridor she is greeted by the silent, criticising stares of a great many of the court who have gathered to wait for news of the King's health. Carol/Jeanne is not drawn by the disapproving looks directed at her, in fact, as I will explain below, she need not say anything for her dress answers her critics on her behalf. The gathered crowd do not have to wait long for news of the monarch; Carol/Jeanne is soon followed by the palace priest who announces the death of Louis XV. Returning to her quarters, Carol/Jeanne, who is genuinely upset, takes delivery of a letter from the late King asking her to leave Versailles. He has renounced her so that he may receive religious forgiveness at the moment of his death. And so leave she does, dressed in a resplendent outfit, the significance of which I will now explore.

The dress of this particular Escoffier outfit is cut from purple velvet and has a contrasting white satin stomacher triangle and a white satin inverted triangular insert in the front of the skirt. Across the stomacher the dress is decorated with criss-crossing black ribbon and large silver bows. A trim of jewels runs along both sides of the stomacher panel, continuing on around the shoulders to the back of the garment, which appears to be laced closed with a purple cord. Continuing this thread of Paquinesque embellishment, white lace is ruffled at the cuffs of this garment and a black lace choker

placed around Carol's/Jeanne's neck.<sup>106</sup> Over the top of this beautiful dress is a velvet cloak, cut from the same colour cloth as the dress beneath, trimmed at all its edges with thick fur.



Figure 29. The second metonymic outfit.

As one would expect, panniers are present under the dress but they are smaller than the extreme manifestation of panniers-as-taste Carol/Jeanne wore in her earlier class ascendancy to Versailles' habitus. Now that she is the official mistress of the King, her purple, black and silver dress matches his colour palette. As with Lucrece and Alphonse in *Lucrece Borgia*, this sartorial mirroring in *Madame du Barry* demonstrates the mutual desire felt between Carol/Jeanne and the King. Yet this dress and cloak combination has a further meaning to unstitch, for it is a notable departure in terms of fabric and pannier size from the previously discussed class-conscious wardrobe. What such a departure signifies will now be ad-dressed.

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<sup>106</sup> One could view this black choker as symbolic of Jeanne du Barry's fated trip to the guillotine twenty years later.

As established in chapter seven's exploration of Escoffier's costumes for *Lucrèce*, purple, particularly purple manufactured prior to 1856, is a status symbol of power, wealth, luxury and royalty, whereas velvet is representative of the display of female sexuality. Thus this purple velvet dress is symbolic of Carol's/Jeanne's powerful female sexuality, which along with her verbal wit and dressing to taste, she has agenced in order to advance her position to that of royal mistress. These elements of sex, class and dress are the very qualities that others at the royal court despise her for. One can begin to see, then, how this dress becomes a statement of defiance directed against the ill-feeling she is faced with. In choosing to wear purple velvet (the cloth of royalty) and not satin, as well as less restrictive panniers, Carol/Jeanne has transcended the taste of Versailles. Now that her official mistress status has been granted, Carol/Jeanne will do as she pleases. As a result, this purple dress is of her *own* taste rather than that dictated by the rules of the palace, and as such, it becomes a sartorial statement of defiance. Such insolence of apparel is also signified by the dense fur trim of the cloak, which compounds her already overt display of sexuality. The choice of this defiant design, then, plays up to the stereotype of the monstrous feminine her detractors at court perceive her to be. As a result, she irritates through sartorial brazenness.

In the fine detailing of Carol's/Jeanne's metonymic outfit there is a further disobedience of dress to be found. In this instance, it is a sartorial marker against, rather than in support of, her 'bad' reputation. At the centre of the dress and cloak, in amongst the masses of velvet and fur, lurk the stomacher and skirt inserts of white satin. Even when the cloak is placed over the dress, these white panels are still on view. The positioning of these inserts indicate that Carol's/Jeanne's powerful sexuality, which she uses to

break boundaries of class and gender, is centred in the 'goodness' the colour white connotes.

Throughout the film, Carol/Jeanne is shown to be a 'good,' funny and likeable person. Certainly, she uses her verbal wit and the desire she incites in men to further her social positioning, but she is more concerned with agencing desire and advancing women's place in society than profiting from material and financial wealth. This is evidenced early on in the film when Madame Gourdan asks Carol/Jeanne who her previous lovers have been and how much profit she made, to which she replies she did not make a profit and that she did it because she wanted to. This is further substantiated by the fact that she chooses not to benefit from the King's death, she does not take any of the gifts he has given her as she is expelled from the palace, despite her knowledge that it was Louis XV himself who wished her gone. Thus Christian-Jaque actively disputes the historical Jeanne's reputation as a gold-digger. The greed of Jean du Barry (her brother-in-law), however, is without doubt exposed, for he steals Carol's/Jeanne's jewels before fleeing Versailles. As in *Lucrece Borgia*, Christian-Jaque and Escoffier are once more showing that the reputation of historical women is not necessarily that which their legacy has left behind.

This second dress and cloak fashion moment of Escoffier's is doubly defiant. Through fabric and reduced panniers it defies the dominant taste of Versailles' habitus, and through colour challenges the wicked reputation of the historical Jeanne du Barry. Thus all is not as it first appears, a view that is sartorially reinforced once more by Escoffier if one takes a closer look at the back of this second Carol/Jeanne dress. For on closer inspection, the criss-crossing of the purple cord lacing either side of the dress together

does not match. This cord is in fact just a sartorial subterfuge concealing the presence of another zip! Once again, the present is interjected into the (re)creation of the past in the form of technology. In fact, this is exactly what Christian-Jaque and Escoffier were doing in their 1950s *films à costumes* – injecting the present into the past via the technology of cinema (long before Sophia Coppola did so in *Marie-Antoinette* (2006)). In the case of *Madame du Barry*, the inclusion of a 1950s view on an eighteenth-century woman has gone some way towards rehabilitating a bad reputation. As with *Lucrece Borgia*, *Madame du Barry* offers a more positive view of (crinolined) trajectories of female power in a decade in which renegotiations of femininity in France, as previously explained, were paramount (Duchen, 1994: 3). I will now turn to an exploration of *Nana* and her bustle to see if this more positive view continues.

## CHAPTER 9: NANA AND THE BUSTLE OF MODERNITY

Unlike the two previous women, Nana is not a real historical personage but a literary proto-type of the real. Yet like Lucrece and Jeanne, Nana possesses a reputation for great beauty coupled with a deviant sexuality, which men both desire and fear. As the title character of Zola's novel of the same name (1880), Nana was based on 'several of the most notorious courtesans of the Second Empire' and is exemplary of a (male) fascination with dangerous female sexuality. (Wilson, 1991: 57) The ninth novel in the author's *Rougon-Macquart* series, *Nana* plots the life of Anna Coupeau, known as Nana, a stage performer and courtesan who burns through the fortunes of her suitors before dying from smallpox. Interestingly, she is not a new Zola character; she in fact makes her debut in the author's *œuvre* in *L'Assommoir*, as the daughter of Gervaise Coupeau. I mention this here because the case-study on Antoine Mayo in the next section of this thesis will look at his costumes for René Clément's 1956 adaptation of *L'Assommoir*, *Gervaise*.

In Christian-Jaque's adaptation of Zola's novel, Martine Carol once more steps into the historical shoes of the courtesan to embody a 1950s version of the infamous Nana. In order to do so, she was paid more than any other French female star at the time, receiving a 20 million franc advance and a further 20 million francs during her participation (Faure, 1954: 134). Escoffier designed twenty-four different outfits for Carol's wardrobe as Nana, a statistic that Faure claims makes for the first time that an actor has worn so many different outfits on screen in one film (134). As seen in *Lucrece Borgia* and *Madame du Barry*, Escoffier has again remained faithful to reproducing accurate historical silhouettes in *Nana* via the cage-crinoline and the bustle. Yet Christian-Jaque has not stayed entirely faithful to Zola's novel, changing the way in

which Nana dies – rather than ending the film with Nana/Carol dying of smallpox, he has her lover, Count Muffat (Charles Boyer), strangle her. The crimson dress she is wearing as her benefactor viscerally crushes the life from her will be the dress-as-metonym fashion moment with which I will unpick Escoffier's bustled wardrobe for Nana. However, before turning to this analysis I will first undress the bustle itself.

### **9.1: *Nana* and the Bustling Metropolis**

Both Zola's and Christian-Jaque's versions of *Nana* begin in 1867, the period towards the end of Napoléon III's Second Empire (1852 - 1870) and follow Nana's liaisons with various suitors until her death in 1870. In terms of fashion history, therefore, the cage-crinoline so favoured by Napoléon's wife Eugénie was the dominant trend. Yet Nana, who as an actress and courtesan must be seen to be *à la mode*, relies on her dress as the *mise-en-scène* of her powers of seduction. She does not, therefore, occupy the fashionable space of the cage-crinoline but rather the more modern bustle. This implies several things, first, it illustrates that Nana is fashion savvy, for as Koda points out, the bustle did not make a significant impact on fashion until the 1870s (2001:130).

Consequently, the first thing Escoffier's bustle for Nana/Carol signifies is her modernity. It is interesting that modernity should be a key component of Carol's/Nana's dress when Cardin was employed in the film's costume department. I shall return to this notion of sartorial modernity in due course.

Second, in not wearing the cage-crinoline, Nana does not conform to the taste (in Bourdieu's sense of the word) of Eugénie's court. In so doing, she sartorially outlines her position as different from that of the women at the *Tuilleries* who very much remain

within the official sphere of the court or the domestic sphere of their homes.<sup>107</sup> The spatial restriction of these women is illustrated at the beginning of Christian-Jaque's film by the presence of a caged doll, a miniature of the court's women, who twirls in her cage-crinoline fixed atop a music box, much to the delight of the Emperor and his male friends. While Nana twirls around the stage of the *Théâtre des variétés* as spectacle, she is certainly not static like this cage-crinolined fashion doll. Indeed, unlike Lucrèce and Jeanne who operate within the confines of royal courts, Nana is a public woman - the city of Paris her playground.

If one recalls the discussion of the crinoline in chapter two, which detailed the rise of public women in Paris during the Haussmannisation of the Second Empire, one will recall that such newly public female bodies brought a new set of intricacies to the urban fabric.<sup>108</sup> Following Hayward's explanation of the typification of Paris as female, 'the female body becomes the symbol of both the danger and promise of the modern age' in the city. (2000b: 24) As an erotic public woman, Nana simultaneously embodies this danger and promise of modernity. A high-class prostitute, Nana is the corporeal site/sight where capitalism and sex in Second Empire Paris unite. 'She is a conduit of pleasure but also of filth. She is the potentially diseased body, the underbelly of Paris – the sewers and excrescence of the city.' (Hayward, 2000b: 25)

As a body in which discourses of pleasure, peril and progress meet, it is fitting that Escoffier's crinoline of choice for Carol's Nana is the bustle. The bustle was in fact a pad and/or (stuffed) framework that tied at the waist and extended out and over the

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<sup>107</sup> Count Muffat's wife and daughter in particular are exemplary of this. Unlike Nana they are never shown outside in public city space.

<sup>108</sup> See crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6.

buttocks to form an exaggerated curve. The padding for bustles was frequently made from horsehair and structure provided by tubes of cane, wire, or whalebone. These form giving apparatus were then covered in fabric (usually linen) and were worn over the corset and under at least one petticoat.

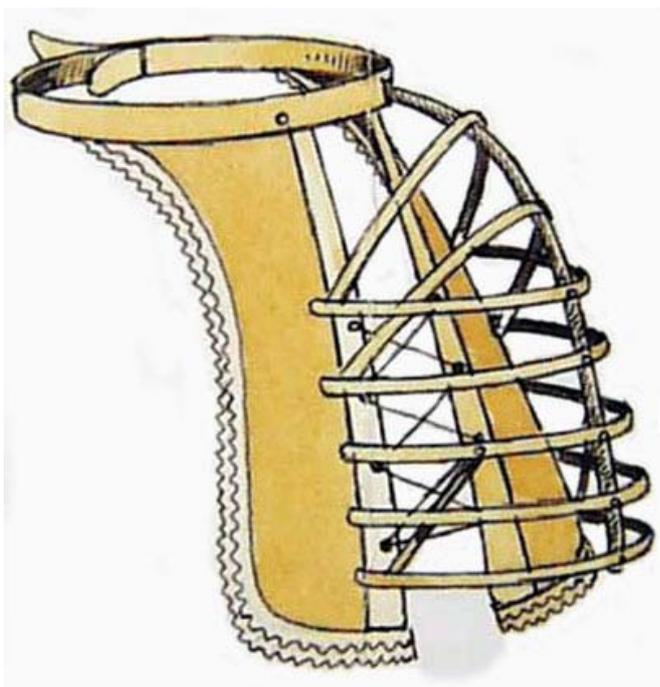


Figure 30. Bustle frame.

Accordingly, unlike the farthingale, which completely encircles the lower half of the female body, and the pannier, which extends the hips sideways, the bustle's point of exaggeration is the bottom. As such, the bustle is concerned with the screening of the anus and discourses of (corporeal) waste and non-reproductive sex, rather than the concealing and revealing of female genitalia as site/sight of sexual difference with which the farthingale and panniers are linked. One can see, therefore, how Nana's status as a conduit of pleasure and filth is replicated by the bustle, which forms a funnel of liminal space around this waste secreting/sexualised orifice. This then links to Hayward's earlier comment in which a parallel between Nana and Parisian sewers is

drawn – in effect, Nana’s bustle is like a personal sartorial sewer, a space of in-betweenness that is not the ‘o’ space but a space of familiarity to men (for the anus is a place of sameness with the male) and yet one which they would use (for contraception purposes) as if it were the ‘o’ space. Thus, this space of the in-between is a counterfeit ‘o’ space, which channels crinolined discourses of femininity in relation to the paradoxical notions of pleasure/unpleasure and modernity, that accompany the erotic public *Parisienne*.

Third, Carol’s/Nana’s wearing of the bustle in this film also connects to the Second Empire’s fascination with exotic femininities. Nana’s story begins in 1867, the year of the *Exposition Universelle* (World Fair) in Paris, in which France (alongside other countries), showed off the treasures of its colonial Empire. During the latter half of the nineteenth-century interest in the colonial and particularly the exotic female other began to soar. As the costume historian Gordon has noted of the period, ‘one becomes more and more aware of a truly obsessional fascination with exoticism, Otherness, and all things African.’ (2004: 277) Accordingly, images of African women proliferated in magazines, at the *Expositions Universelles*, and in the music-hall (277).

The most (in)famous and popularized of these images were those circulated around the so-called Venus Hottentots, South African women who were viewed as sexually intensified due to their steatopygia (protruding buttocks) (Gordon, 2004: 281) and (Kear 1996: 62). As the bustle creates a silhouette with similarly protruding buttocks, one can link this under-garment to such nineteenth-century discourses of racial stereotypes and the allure of the exotic other. Indeed, Carol/Nana is further identified with the racist typecasting of the Venus Hottentot’s ‘savage’ sexuality through her stage act as the

*Vénus Blonde*. However, it is not just to nineteenth-century colonial discourses that Carol's/Nana's bustle speaks, such discourses also have resonance in the 1955 timeframe in which *Nana* was released. In this respect, this film harkens to the other end of the colonial moment – the decolonisation 'process' of the mid-1950s. During this period France was engaged in colonial conflicts in both Indo-China and Algeria. Focus on the colonial other in this period was, therefore, also paramount. I shall return to this point in due course.

As a result of this trio of ideological readings of the bustle, Carol's/Nana's sporting of such a silhouette fashions her as being in possession of a dangerous sexuality to the power of three: she is a modern woman; she is unlike the officially sanctioned women of the Napoleonic court yet still comes into contact with the same men as they do; and she inspires fantasies linked to the exotic other. It is via the bustle, then, that Escoffier shows how Carol/Nana challenges the social (patriarchal) mores of the Second Empire. Her dangerous bustled shape is disruptive, for it becomes the sartorial mark that defines her as a modern erotic public woman. It is, therefore, not just 'the female figure who becomes the symbol of both the danger and promise of the modern age' in this instance, but the bustle too (Hayward, 2000b: 24). Thus beneath the surface swathes of Nana's ruffled silk, satin and velvet dresses, lurks this ambivalent protrusion. I will now turn to the chosen fashion moment of Carol's/Nana's red dress in order to unpick this further.

## **9.2: Diseased Dressing**

As previously mentioned, it is the outfit in which Carol/Nana is murdered that will be the metonymic fashion moment of choice. This outfit consists of a crimson satin bustled

dress that extends to the wrists and the ankles. Over this first outer layer, a rich crimson velvet bodiced section of fabric covers Carol's/Nana's torso, extending down and over the front of the satin skirt beneath like an apron. At the small of her back this velvet portion gathers over the under-layer of satin, further extending her silhouette over the bustle positioned beneath. A proliferation of Paquinesque embellishment decorates this dress: at the wrists, her sleeves are trimmed with black lace and, at the edges of the velvet section of the shoulders of the dress hang a series of small, round, red pompons. At the point where the velvet apron and satin skirt meet below the waist are more pompons, some of which are tasselled. Underneath these pompons and tassels runs a black fringe. Pompons also run down the front of the velvet bodice section of this dress but are partly concealed by a red satin scarf. This scarf has a crimson fringe at its edge and a bronze coloured lining, the attention to detail at the neck prefiguring Muffat's strangling of her.<sup>109</sup>



Figure 31. Carol's/Nana's metonymic dress.

<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, in Clément's *Gervaise* (1956), Nana as a small child is also shown to accentuate her neck with a ribbon.

This dress stands out from the rest of Carol's/Nana's wardrobe through its choice of fabric. Up until this point in the narrative, Escoffier's wardrobe has variously consisted of revealing stage outfits, various combinations of underwear and bustled dresses, all of which have been cut from silks, satins and lace. The presence of velvet in this particular dress is, therefore, a departure in terms of fabric. It is also a departure in terms of colour, for red has not featured in any of Nana's/Carol's other outfits. However, the majority of dresses she wears are cut from or at least trimmed in very bright colours. Other notable shades in Escoffier's wardrobe include acid green, present in the outfit she wears when dining with Steiner (Noël Roquevert); bright orange, which highlights her dress at the day of the races at Longchamp; and mauve, which she wears when returning home to her mansion (paid for by Muffat) to find first her former boss, the theatre manager, Bordenave (Paul Frankeur), and then Muffat's love rival, Vandevres (Jacques Castelot), waiting for her. What is interesting about all these colours is that they would have only just become available to Second Empire society in the form of aniline rather than natural dyes.



Figure 32. Carol's/Nana's aniline dresses.

Perkin facilitated the manufacture of the first aniline dye, mauve, in 1856. By 1859, new aniline colours were being developed, including a crimson red known as

‘fuchsine,’ aniline yellow and aldehyde green (Garfield, 2000: 78-9). Hence by wearing such aniline colours, Carol/Nana becomes associated with modern fashion techniques and new industrial processes. Thus she is shown to be doubly modern in her dress: first she has adopted the bustle in advance of the rest of Paris, and second, the fabric with which she covers this modern silhouette is coloured using the cutting-edge technology of the time (shades of Cardin). Therefore, as doubly modern, she is doubly dangerous, for in this particular text, Carol/Nana weaponises her crinolined counterfeit ‘o’ space by continually modernising it. Yet again, one can begin to see how Escoffier’s wardrobe for Martine Carol in this film is once more stitched into trajectories of female power.

Carol’s/Nana’s power is demonstrated through the relative freedom she enjoys. This freedom is manifest in her positioning of herself outside of the family-unit, for having no father or husband, Carol/Nana uses her sexuality and male suitors for her own financial ends. While she is still fiscally dependent on men, by avoiding being legally bound to them, she occupies a position of far greater autonomy than the other Second Empire women - wives and daughters, who are contained within the patriarchally structured family-unit. This difference in independence is sartorially reinforced by Escoffier’s dressing of these other women in the film in predominantly pastel coloured cage-crinolined dresses as opposed to Carol’s/Nana’s bright bustles. Carol’s/Nana’s public modernity, as symbolised by her dress is defiant, becoming a sartorial metaphor for her transgression of 1860s societal (patriarchal) mores.

In *The Sphinx in the City* (1991) Elizabeth Wilson has outlined how women’s presence within the urban environment is a troubling one, for ‘city culture pertain[s] to men. Consequently, women have become an irruption in the city, a symptom of disorder, and

a problem: the Sphinx in the city.’ (1991: 9) Through her public modernity, her ‘symptom of disorder,’ then, Carol/Nana becomes Wilson’s metaphorical Sphinx in the city. Interestingly, the mythic Sphinx was known as “‘the strangling one,” who was so called because she strangled all those who could not answer her riddle: female sexuality, womanhood out of control, lost nature, loss of identity.’ (Wilson, 1991: 7) Such strangulation returns one to the crimson, or rather ‘fuchsine’ dress in which Carol/Nana as Sphinx is herself asphyxiated. In this instance, the tables are turned on the myth. Muffat strangles Carol/Nana precisely because of her female sexuality and defiant modernity, which renders her as ‘womanhood out of control’ in his (patriarchal) eyes. This ending to the film is the most violent of the three focused on in this case study.<sup>110</sup> It is also a deliberate strategy by the director, who changed Carol’s/Nana’s death from smallpox to the more visceral strangulation. Thus the question of why this should be arises.

A first reading of this ending implies that women who attempt to overthrow patriarchal structures of power will be punished; that due to living her life in relative freedom outside of the patriarchally privileging family unit, Carol’s/Nana’s transgressive modern femininity must be rebuked. However, I would argue that there is a further political reading to be made of this finale if one unpicks the meaning in Escoffier’s fuchsine dress. Through choice of crinoline, fabric, colour and decoration, this dress is modernised and sexualised: the aniline crimson dye and bustle denoting the modern, and the velvet and fringe detailing connoting female sexuality in their similarity to pubic hair. However, it is the pompon decoration that really stands out in this dress. Being found at the edges of the velvet fabric and in conjunction with the black fringe at

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<sup>110</sup> Although Jeanne du Barry is guillotined, her death occurs outside of Christian-Jaque’s filmic timeframe.

Carol's/Nana's waist, I would suggest that they are representative of female genitalia and the threat of venereal disease. Indeed, Wilson has spoken of Nana's death from smallpox in the novel as being 'surely Zola's euphemism for syphilis.' (1991: 57)

I would suggest that this may be one reason why Christian-Jaque changed the film's ending, for it would have been uncomfortable to have his wife, France's sweetheart at this time, die from a disease that would have ravaged her bankable appearance. In fact, by changing Carol's/Nana's death from disease to strangulation he is actually sanitising her demise. Throughout the text, Carol's/Nana's dangerous bustling sexuality, conduit of pleasure but also the filthy underbelly of the modern city, is tempered by scenes of bathing and the fact that Carol's Nana, like her Jeanne du Barry, is portrayed as a woman surviving by her wits and who is very funny and likeable. In addition, although one sees the profits of Carol's/Nana's sexual encounters, the sexual act itself is never shown. As such, Christian-Jaque's text appears to be a cleaned up version of Zola's novel, in which 'nasty' Nana is 'essentially a vicious animal.' (Steele, 1988: 170) By extension, the tension between pleasure and filth, which Carol/Nana embodies in this film, translates to a tension between clean and unclean.

As one knows from part one of this thesis, the post-war period in France was also rife with cultural and social discourses surrounding the subject of cleanliness.<sup>111</sup> As Ross has indicated in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, debates around the clean, the unclean and the modern, were, by the 1950s, being directed at women in particular (1999: 76-8). This was evidenced by the huge promotion of and subsequent rise in sales of white goods; this desire to mechanise and modernise the (female) domestic sphere was of course

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<sup>111</sup> See section 1.2.

directed at women, principally through magazine advertising. In addition, articles such as *Elle's* 1951 piece 'Is the French Woman Clean?' also extolled the virtues of sanitisation, both personal and domestic (Duchen, 1994: 72-80) and (Ross, 1999: 76). The aim of such widely disseminated discourses by the women's press was to regularize France's post-war drive for modernisation (Ross, 1999: 78). In so doing, the stain of the Occupation could begin, metaphorically at least, to be expunged.<sup>112</sup> But there is yet another ideological thread that can be detected in the cleanliness = modernity equation, that of the censorship of the messy colonial situation. During the 1950s France's obsession with modernisation, as Ross argues, became a method of self-colonisation, through the disciplining and maintaining of the clean and modern home, at a time when France was losing control of its former colonies (1999: 77). Such "colonisation of everyday life" targeted women, who were most associated with managing everyday consumption in this decade (Lefebvre cited in Ross, 1999: 77). And so supervising and sanitising quotidian home-life in the mainland took the socio-cultural and political place previously occupied by the regulating of overseas colonial subjects.

The quest for cleanliness in France was twofold: it functioned to conceal both the truth of the Occupation and its legacy, but it was also an attempt to scrub clean, and thus censor, the unpleasant realities of the 1950s colonial situation. Accordingly, one can see how this campaign for cleanliness is reflected in the sanitisation of Christian-Jaque's *Nana*, in which the same debates around the clean, the unclean, and the modern in relation to the feminine are engaged with, similarly resulting in a cleaned up, censored version. Read in this light, the denial of Carol's/Nana's death from smallpox in favour of strangulation is shown to be concerned with this same 1950s desire for cleanliness as

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<sup>112</sup> See section 1.2.

cover up. Mess and disorder, which in Nana's case is signified by disease, must be denied.

However, one must not forget the sartorial significance of the pompons mentioned previously. I would argue that Escoffier's addition of this decoration to Carol's/Nana's dress shuns the desire for the censorship of the 'unclean' detailed earlier. For, in compliance with the original literary ending of smallpox, these pompons round shape is connotative of pox pustules, which are in turn reminiscent of syphilitic pox marks. Thus the filth, the sexual detritus with which Carol/Nana is associated, yet censored, is sartorially reinforced and uncensored by Escoffier's design. It is also orally reinforced by Muffat, as he calls Carol/Nana 'ordures' (refuse/filth) as he strangles her.

Accordingly, the second reading of the film's finale has a wider political implication. Like Escoffier's multi-layered costumes for Carol/Nana, the political implications of this fuchsine dress are also multi-layered. It is possible to read the pompons metonymically as an exposé of the 1950s state-led desire to modernise and cleanse the nation in an attempt to forget both the legacy of World War II and contemporary colonial struggles. But also the containment and displacement of disease (dis-ease), which dress and narrative constitute, hide the truth of a corrupt France. Therefore, one can view the silencing of Carol/Nana, whose uncensored costume speaks the truth, as echoing state censorship and the desire to normalise modernisation and so embrace a position of cultural amnesia in 1950s France.

Subsequently, one can interpret the cutting short of Carol's/Nana's trajectory of female power in this text as having ideological implications in both the crinolined timeframe of

its historical setting and the crinolined timeframe of its production. In the Second Empire Carol's/Nana's trajectory is curtailed by a desire to maintain the patriarchal *status quo*, and in the 1950s, it translates to a censoring of uncomfortable realities: women's freedom, the legacy of the Occupation and the truths of colonial conflict. Again, Christian-Jaque and Escoffier have created a film and a wardrobe that establishes a more positive position for femininity. Yet for a third time, female freedom is tempered by the reinstating of patriarchal hegemonies at the film's close.

### **9.3: Crinolined Conclusions**

In all three films looked at in this case-study, threads linking to the five previously discussed Escoffier back-stories are tangible. The designer's love of historical costume is manifest through the accuracy of silhouette he (re)creates, (despite the presence of zips!). His involvement in the fashion industry is illustrated in the influence of both Paquin's and Cardin's different design methodologies, which translate into the decorative detailing in all three film's wardrobes and the modernity of *Nana's* bustles respectively. Yet above all, it is the last two linings to Escoffier's costume design that really make their ideological presence felt: the Carol-Christian-Jaque-Escoffier triangulation and the relationship between Carol, the crinoline and 1950s femininity.

Escoffier's sartorial significance in creating the Martine Carol star persona during the 1950s has for the most part gone unrecorded. Yet by analysing his crinolined wardrobes for Carol in this trio of Christian-Jaque texts, one can see just how key this enigmatic designer's costumes have been in stylistically confecting Carol's look. This look has been overlooked, perhaps because it has been wrongly interpreted as only dressing

Carol as a mass-produced *séductrice*. However, throughout the analysis of Escoffier's wardrobe for Carol, I have shown that his crinolines do much more. Through their very nature as an in-between garment, the crinoline imposes an 'o' space which women may weaponise. The various manifestations of the crinoline (farthingale, panniers, bustle) undressed in this case-study, have provided each female protagonist with the possibility of becoming disruptive, and, consequently of embodying challenging femininities. For example, Lucrèce's unreadability, Jeanne's blurring of class divisions, and Nana's relative freedom all stem from their accessing of and agency over crinolined 'o' (and even counterfeit 'o') spaces. As such, these films, and their wardrobes in particular, offer a more positive space and place for women. This positivity runs across timeframes but is particularly relevant to that of the films' production, for the 1950s was a decade in which questions around femininity abounded. As a result, Escoffier's politics of costume very much locates itself in terms of gender.

Yet unfortunately the full unruly (gender political) potential of the crinoline is not completely realised in any of the stories, with all three women being punished to varying degrees for their sartorially inspired transgressions: Lucrèce is left broken-hearted, Jeanne is expelled (and subsequently guillotined), and Nana murdered. In conclusion, much like Escoffier's beautifully crafted dresses, which are interrupted by the anachronistic presence of zip fastenings, Carol's trajectories of female power in these films are similarly undone at the last moment.

**PART THREE: MAJOR**  
**COSTUME CASE-STUDIES –**  
**MAYO AND DELAMARE**



## **MAJOR COSTUME CASE-STUDY 1: MAYO, THE POLITICAL THREADS OF MATERIAL MEMORY**

### **CHAPTER 10: INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

“I hired Mayo because for costume dramas he was the best.” (Carné cited in Malliarakis, 2002: 26)

From the above quote one can discern that the director, Marcel Carné, held Mayo in high esteem. Carné was not alone in his admiration for the designer: fellow costume designers, actors and critics have all agreed that he was a gifted *costumier*. Indeed, Annenkov draws a parallel between Mayo’s costume design and the process of painting a fresco (1994: 128); Simone Signoret describes his work as very authentic (1978: 132); and after watching *Gervaise* (Clément, 1956), Siclier commented in *Cahiers du cinéma* that Mayo’s costumes appeared to have stepped straight out of a suitcase packed during the Second Empire (1956: 43).

What becomes clear from this praise for Mayo’s costume design is the appreciation of both his painterly style and his authenticity. These two qualities are explored in depth throughout this major case-study, which is cut and fashioned in three parts. Akin to the earlier explorations of Annenkov’s and Escoffier’s costumes, this first section begins by outlining the ‘linings’ to Mayo’s work. Similarly to these previous case-studies, the aim of delineating such pre-filmic linings is that it enables one to identify the ideological pattern of costume design Mayo uses to create his cinematic apparel. Following the outlining of this pattern, the second and most in-depth part of analysis focuses on Mayo’s costumes for Jacques Becker’s 1952 text, *Casque d’or*. Lastly, in chapter

twelve I offer an exploration of two other costume drama films designed by Mayo, dating from the mid- and late-fifties respectively: *Gervaise* (René Clément, 1956) and *Sans famille* (André Michel, 1958). By looking at these later films, I may determine how the ideological threads unpicked in *Casque d'or*'s costumes are fashioned throughout the course of the 1950s.

I have chosen these three films because they span the majority of the decade in question and, therefore, present the opportunity to explore how Mayo's costume, and its continuities and differences, traverse the 1950s.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, these three texts will allow me to discern where the unity (if any) is stitched into the designer's mid-twentieth century *œuvre*. In correspondence with the case-study on Annenkov, this exploration of fabric will be structured by the knowledge gleaned from the earlier *mise-en-scène* of the corset, and the particular way in which Mayo employs this garment (or not as the case may be) in his costume designs for the films chosen here. I will now begin chapter ten and sketch the pattern of Mayo's back-stories from which I will later cut and assemble the cloth of chapters eleven and twelve with their undressing of *Casque d'or*, and *Gervaise* and *Sans famille* respectively.

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<sup>113</sup> Director Marcel Carné employed Mayo as a costume designer on no less than twelve occasions (counting both finished and unfinished projects) throughout his career, the most renowned of which being the time Mayo spent working on the costumes for *Les Enfants du paradis* (1943 - 1945). Yet although Mayo collaborated most frequently with Marcel Carné, I am not going to focus on their partnership here for two reasons. Firstly because only three of the twelve projects for which Carné employed Mayo took place during the 1950s. Secondly, of these three films – *Juliette ou la clé des songes*, (1950); *Thérèse Raquin* (1953); *Les Tricheurs* (1958) – none are in fact costume dramas. *Les Tricheurs* is set in the 1950s (then present day) and *Thérèse Raquin* was updated from Zola's original 1867 setting to the 1950s. *Juliette ou la clé des songes* could be considered to have elements of the costume drama as its wardrobe is informed by the past. However, this past is hazy with no set timeframe for the costumes to adhere to because they are set in a fantasy space in Gérard Philipe's character's mind. Thus the film is a bit too indistinct a costume drama for my purposes, since this enquiry looks specifically at both the timeframe of a film's particular historical setting as well as its moment of production. In so doing, the aim is to further understand costume drama's process of displacement and containment, as well as its method of using the past as a way to address the present.

### 10.1: Mayo the Painter

Mayo was born Antoine Malliarakis in Port Said, Egypt in 1905 to a French mother and Greek father, and died on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1990 at his home in Seine-Port, France. His childhood was spent between Ismailia and Port Said with summers being spent in Burgundy. Mayo's father wanted his son to become an engineer (he himself being an engineer for the Suez Canal company) but Mayo wanted to become a painter. Indeed, painting was always to be Mayo's primary passion and he viewed his costume design work as nothing more than an easy way of making money to support his painting (Malliarakis, 2002: 10). However, to placate his father, Mayo agreed to study architecture, which was in fact just a pretext to go to Paris and paint. In spite of this, architecture did figure in Mayo's life and work and so becomes a point I return to in due course.

At the age of eighteen, Mayo arrived in the French capital and began a life in Montparnasse. He found the Left Bank of 1923 an intriguing place, and described it at that time as "offering a young man all the freedom and madness that he could wish for." (Mayo cited in Malliarakis, 2002: 18)<sup>114</sup> At this point in Parisian history, artists, sculptors, dancers, writers, and poets flocked to Montparnasse. The catalyst for this creative enclave being the installation of Picasso, Léger and Soutine, who in the early 1900s had relocated there from Montmartre. Other creative personnel soon followed suit. Once immersed in the creative zeitgeist, which came to characterise the city's fourteenth and fifteenth *arrondissements* in the early part of the last century, Mayo's career as a painter really began. He met and counted as friends (among others) Tristan Tzara, André Salmon, Foujita, Man Ray, Picasso and Picabia.

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<sup>114</sup> Paris "à cette époque offrait à un jeune homme toute la liberté et la folie qu'il peut souhaiter."

During this early period as a painter, Mayo's canvasses were driven by a feeling of interiority, and the figures which he represented reveal their souls, their fears and their feelings to the viewer.<sup>115</sup> This theme of interiority was to continue and develop throughout Mayo's painterly career. In relation to this costume-centric enquiry it will be interesting to see if this principle of representing the human interior can also be traced through Mayo's costume design. If one looks at Mayo's costume design sketches one can see how his artistic practice as a painter certainly informs his costumes in the early part of the design process, as his costume sketches are almost exclusively brushed. This technique of outlining his pre-filmic costume ideas in paint renders his preliminary sketches more akin to portraits, especially in the designs which are unaccompanied by annotation.



Figure 33. *Rencontre*, Mayo (1936).



Figure 34. An unannotated Mayo sketch for *Casque d'or*.

<sup>115</sup> See <[www.museedeseineport.fr](http://www.museedeseineport.fr)> [accessed 7<sup>th</sup> January 2007]



Figure 35. An annotated Mayo sketch for *Casque d'or*.



Figure 36. The finished costume.

As with Annenkov's work, Mayo's sketches and the finished costumes are almost identical. However, where Mayo's style differs greatly from Annenkov's is in its softness and fluidity. Mayo's supple brushstrokes and the detail of facial expression he achieves in his sketches impart an extremely human quality and one views them as complete people rather than anonymous mannequins. Therefore, to partly answer the query, much like the way in which Mayo's early paintings are described, his costume sketches too, focus on people and human interiority. Interestingly, in both his paintings and costume sketches such interiority is not concealed, for the emotions of his figures are clearly displayed. Despite the point of Mayo's sketches being to display clothes, one feels that because he knows the narrative of the characters, in the sense of their character development, the figures he dresses are laid bare for the viewer. Somehow,

their ‘interiority’ is (dis)placed to the outside, visible on face and costume, for one to see the soul, the fears and the feelings of these figures when their flesh and his fabric combine.

Having now drawn this parallel between Mayo’s early painterly practice and his costume design sketches, it will be intriguing to see if such a correspondence continues through to the finished apparel for *Casque d’or*, *Gervaise* and *Sans famille*. I suspect that one will see more of the process of displacement described above as the analysis of Mayo’s costumes continues, particularly when it comes to the way in which the designer approaches the corset. Such a suspicion has been aroused by the treatment of corsetry in Mayo’s first foray into the costume drama in *Les Enfants du paradis*, (Carné, 1945). In this text, the main female protagonist, Garance (Arletty), is certainly corseted but not in the fashion that one has come to expect. Flouting the conventions of both historical dress and hegemonic costume drama representations, when Garance undresses one finds that the corset is not where it should be. Instead of being under her clothes it is in fact over her clothes, the intricate and waisted corset-bodice of her dress recalling the designs of early French metal corsets.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, from the very beginnings of his cinematic career, Mayo’s approach to the corset was atypical. This remarkable corseting of Garance also laces the designer’s costumes into a space of practice similar to that of his painting in which the process of rendering the interior exterior is present.

Consequently, one can trace the threads of his early artistic methodology through both his painting and costume design from inception to finished garment. I shall now briefly

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<sup>116</sup> There were occasions when the corset became more akin to outerwear than underclothing but during the nineteenth century (in which *Les Enfants du paradis* is set) the corset would have very much been an undergarment.

outline Mayo's artistic and professional trajectory in order that any further threads for analysis may be discovered.

### **10.2: Raising Social Conscience Through Architecture**

By 1925, disappointed with their son's disinterest in his Parisian architecture studies, Mayo's parents sent their son to Lyons in an attempt to ignite his interest in structural design. For a year, Mayo studied under Tony Garnier, one of the so-called fathers of rational architecture, at the *École des beaux-arts*. During this time Mayo took his architectural studies seriously. One may assume that this was at least in part due to the presence of Garnier, whose passion for architecture sprung from a desire to find a solution to the problems posed by social housing.<sup>117</sup> When studying with Garnier, Mayo was only twenty and the social conscience of the former must surely have found resonance with Mayo – a life-long man of the Left. Indeed, Mayo was to become one of very few costume designers who focussed on the working class and social(ist) and political issues within the genre of costume drama. As such, parallels between Garnier's architecture and Mayo's costumes can be found. Ultimately, Mayo's work as a costume designer with a social conscience is not that far removed from Garnier's role as an architect with a social conscience – one houses bodies in fabric, the other houses them in buildings. And as both clothing and buildings are inhabited, clothing may be considered to be architecture of the body.

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<sup>117</sup> The son of a silk designer and weaver, at an early age, Garnier, was confronted with the awful living conditions that the majority of workers employed by the Lyons silk industry endured. In order to improve the quality of life for those involved in silk manufacturing, architecture and more specifically a new approach to social housing became Garnier's major concern ([www.museurbaintonygarnier.com](http://www.museurbaintonygarnier.com)).

There is certainly a link between corsetry and architecture. One need only think back to the earlier case-study on Annenkov and his corset created mechanical-X silhouette to see how corsetry functions as a scaffold, supporting and disciplining the body (see chapter 4). In fact, the parallel between corsetry and architecture makes itself clear via the term *foundation* garment – physically, sartorially and lexically it becomes something to be built on. And in relation specifically to the corset, as seen during the course of this thesis so far, it is frequently the ideological implications and myths that have merited consideration. Yet whereas Annenkov built his mechanical-X silhouette on the ideological building blocks of asphyxiophilia, I suspect that Mayo's treatment of the corset and the ideologies arising from it will differ greatly from that of his colleague.

As mentioned, Mayo has previously displaced the corset by putting it on the outside in *Les Enfants du paradis*. However, his non-conformity with regards to corsetry does not stop here. Indeed, Hayward has commented on Simone Signoret's lack of corsets as Marie in *Casque d'or* (2004b: 116-118). Also of note is the fact that Mayo seemingly corsets the male waist via wide cummerbunds, thick belts and nipped in waistcoats. It would appear, therefore, that the designer's approach to the 1950s *film à costumes* wardrobe is going to be a radical one. Just as Garnier's answers to the problems of social housing in Lyons were radical, his former student's reaction to the corset question seems to be so too. Accordingly, this radicalness will be reflected in the direction this costume case-study takes. Nevertheless, I must first return to Mayo's youth and continue the investigation of his pre-filmic life. Although admiring the work of Tony Garnier, it was not long before Mayo began to itch for his Parisian life as a

painter. Once the academic year was complete, the designer returned to Montparnasse and discovered the Surrealists. As a result, his parents cut off all financial support.

### **10.3: Mayo's Brush with Surrealism**

Predominantly living off credit and eating mostly at the parties he attended, Mayo sold the occasional painting and decorated the offices of the wealthy among his circle of friends in order to make money. He also began painting signs advertising films in the entrances of cinemas. During this lean period, Mayo met more artists and writers: René Crevel, Robert Desnos, Louis Aragon, Robert Brasillach and the Prévert brothers to name but a few. Indeed, Jacques Prévert was to become one of Mayo's closest friends and would provide him with his initial break in cinema, of which more in a moment.

It was Crevel who introduced Mayo to André Breton and the Surrealists. Mayo was deeply affected by the ideas emanating from the surrealist group and greatly admired the work of Magritte, Ernst and Tanguy. Yet in spite of this resonance with the majority of thinking and images produced by surrealist artists, Mayo never became an official member of the surrealist group. Instead he became an interested and interesting figure on the periphery of the movement. During this time, Mayo contributed to the publications produced by a parallel group with surrealist sympathies called the *Grand jeu*. The designer's work as a painter was certainly influenced by his exposure to the Surrealists and their practice at this time, and in 1929, Mayo exhibited his perceptive work with one of the forerunners of Surrealism, Giorgio de Chirico, who was greatly admired by Breton *et al.*

The terms *surréalisme* and *surréaliste* were first coined by Apollinaire in 1917 after watching the ballet *Parade*. *Parade* combined Cocteau's ideas with Satie's music, Massine's choreography and Picasso's curtain and costume design; the result of this mix was described by Apollinaire as "a kind of *sur-réalisme*" (Apollinaire cited in Gaunt, 1972: 7). As Gaunt has noted, 'By this he [Apollinaire] seems to have wished to give a further stress to Cocteau's description of *Parade* as a *ballet réaliste*, rather than to contradict it.' (1972: 7) Indeed, the English word surrealism is actually a misleading translation of the French word. The prefix *sur-* in French implies that something is more than, or over and above the word it precedes and modifies. In the case of Surrealism then, as Apollinaire intended, the surreal becomes a quality in which reality is heightened, amplified, or even gone beyond.<sup>118</sup>

This notion of a heightened reality is certainly stitched into Mayo's costume design practice. As already established, Mayo was famed for his authenticity of design. However, in order to avoid being drawn into the mess surrounding the precise translation and meaning of the surreal, I would suggest that Mayo is in fact authentic in a hyper-real sense (more real than real). For the etymological root of the prefix hyper, is defined as something 'excessive' or 'higher than normal.' (Allen, 2003: 687) Mayo's film costumes are certainly higher than normal in terms of their accuracy and authenticity, particularly when compared to many other 1950s costume dramas.<sup>119</sup> Yet more than being historically accurate, Mayo's authenticity renders his costume as something more than real, as it becomes an integral part of his style. This quality of becoming more than real is reminiscent of the hyper-real yet stylised sets of the French

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<sup>118</sup> A more correct translation of *surréalisme* in English would be something like hyperrealism.

<sup>119</sup> For example, in the two previous case studies Annenkov and Escoffier have both used zips in the back of dresses, thus making the garments fastening inaccurate.

Poetic Realist films of the 1930s.<sup>120</sup> Mayo manages to achieve a delicate balance between maintaining complete authenticity while also asserting a signature style. As such, he circumnavigates the trap of ostentation in his costumes. As Malliarakis has remarked, ‘Expert in the art of designing a garment, Mayo had the knowledge to recreate an époque: his profession as a painter and his familiarity with balancing images helped him to avoid the ostentation sometimes visible in the work of some of his colleagues.’ (Malliarakis, 2002: 9-10)<sup>121</sup> Once again, Mayo’s painting, and the direct influences on his artistic practice – his brush with surrealism, interest in the hyper-real, and knowledge and understanding of artistic techniques - have come to inform his costume design. This painterly thread of authenticity will certainly be explored further in this costume case-study.

#### 10.4: the Politics of Costume

I have already noted that Mayo was a man of the Left.<sup>122</sup> Also, I have suggested how Mayo’s training in architecture with a social focus may very well have influenced how and why he designs his costumes with a social(ist) political edge (to be explored in chapters eleven and twelve). After returning from Lyons to Paris, Mayo settled once again into his life as a painter. Following a spell in Berlin in 1928, and time spent in Barcelona, Majorca, Egypt and Greece in the early 1930s, Mayo returned to the French

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<sup>120</sup> Interestingly, this returns me to the starting point of this chapter, to the filmmaker Marcel Carné. Carné directed three films grouped under the Poetic Realist umbrella: *Hôtel du nord* (1938), *Le Quai des brumes* (1938) and *Le Jour se lève* (1939). He regularly employed émigré set designer Alexandre Trauner, whose meticulous recreation of the real world (in this case 1930s France) within the studio took his set designs somewhere beyond the real, towards a hyper-reality (Crisp, 1993:372). Similarly, Mayo’s costume design takes authenticity beyond the real, to a hyper-reality.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Expert dans l’art de dessiner un vêtement, Mayo avait les connaissances nécessaires pour recréer une époque: son métier de peintre et sa familiarité avec l’équilibre des images l’aidèrent à éviter l’ostentation parfois visible dans les travaux de certains de ses confrères.’

<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, Mayo’s first son, Jean-Gilles Malliarakis does not share his father’s political viewpoint and has been a right-wing political activist in France since 1970, joining the *Front national* in 1991.

capital in 1933. He found that the city in general was becoming more and more politicised, and this was certainly the case within the artistic circles of Montparnasse within which the painter was moving. The outbreak of the Spanish civil war on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1936 intensified and polarised political feelings across Europe. And in Paris the political climate was becoming stormy. Mayo himself was deeply affected by the conflict in Spain and his work began to reflect this. He painted canvasses of combat scenes and what Malliarakis refers to as ‘sadistic compositions’, which were shown in the exhibition of *Cruel Art* in 1937 (2002: 20).

Yet despite responding to political situations such as the Spanish civil war in his work, Mayo was not a reactionary. As Malliarakis illustrates, Mayo was ‘a sympathizer of the Left but was disgusted by the idea of replacing a “right wing police” with a “left wing police.”’<sup>123</sup> (2002: 20) Others, however, were in reactionary mood and Mayo began to feel less at ease among the Parisian intellectual milieu and so he returned to Egypt, to paint and exhibit in Ismailia. He would not return to France until just prior to the outbreak of World War II in September 1939.

The fact that Mayo chooses to express his feelings towards political situations by means of his artistic practice is particularly worthy of note for this enquiry, for it implies that Mayo’s costume design may very well be more firmly stitched in the political than first realised. Whether Mayo’s costume design is indeed (in part or entirely) based in the designer’s political persona will be a crucial thread of enquiry in the subsequent two chapters. As understood throughout the course of this thesis so far, costume is an independent producer of meaning, which in itself is often political. However, as an

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<sup>123</sup> ‘Sympathisant de gauche, mais repugnant à l’idée de remplacer un “flic de droite” avec un “flic de gauche.”’

atypical figure within the genre of costume drama, who overthrows bourgeois conventions in favour of a representation of the working class (see chapters eleven and twelve), it would make sense for Mayo's costume designs to also possess a distinct political edge. From what one has already learnt of Mayo, one can speculate that his costumes could very well exhibit a political interface that includes sexual politics (corseting men and uncorseting women) and what might be termed a politics of the real (his authenticity). I have already acknowledged Mayo's subversion of the conservative expectations of costume drama but what I have not yet outlined is the way in which his costumes achieve their own subversive status. In order to do this I must once again turn to the corset, which I will do in chapter eleven. Yet before so doing I must first detail how Mayo initially came to be a costume designer.

### **10.5: Mayo's Way Into *le Septième art***

On the day the day that France and Britain declared war on Germany (the third of September 1939) and World War II commenced, Mayo arrived in Pau. He was soon to be joined there by Jacques Prévert, Kosma, Brassai, Lacan and Sylvie Bataille. After a short while Mayo and Prévert relocated to Cannes and the former found a studio. However, it was during his time on the *Côte d'Azur* that the painter Mayo also became the designer Mayo. He was offered the role of designing the costumes and sets for Marcel Duhamel's play, *Les Hauts de hurlevent*. Following the success of his designs for Duhamel, Mayo was asked to design the costumes and sets for a theatrical revue by Agnès Capri. On his return to Paris, Mayo was invited by the actor, Marcel Herrand, to design the costumes and sets for another play, *Deidre des douleurs*. As Malliarakis

notes, ‘this was the beginning of a long and amicable collaboration between Mayo and Herrand.’<sup>124</sup> (2002: 21)

Over the course of a decade, Mayo became one of the principle costume and set designers at the *Théâtre des Mathurins*, which Herrand co-ran with Jean Marchat. Mayo worked on over twenty plays, ranging from Tchekov to Shakespeare. Mayo’s theatre work continued on into the 1950s and according to Malliarakis, Albert Camus intended to employ Mayo as a full-time costume designer at the theatre he was about to buy (21). However, the author’s death in a car accident on the fourth of January 1960 meant that this never happened. Yet the primary concern here is Mayo’s entrance into the realm of cinematic costume design, which occurred in 1943, only a few years after his introduction to theatrical design.

Mayo’s close friend, Jacques Prévert, was a long-time collaborator of director Marcel Carné, having most notably co-scripted *Le Quai de brumes* (1938) and *Le Jour se lève* (1939). By 1943, Prévert was engaged in scripting *Les Enfants du paradis* with Carné and he recommended Mayo for the role of costume designer to the director. Short on personnel due to the war, Carné offered Mayo the job, which he gratefully accepted. However, had France not been engaged in conflict, Mayo’s career in cinema may not have begun at this point in his life if at all. As he later said of Carné’s proposal, “I accepted even though I wouldn’t have done so before the war. One needed to have proof of work vis-à-vis the police.”<sup>125</sup> (Mayo cited in Malliarakis, 2002: 21)

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<sup>124</sup> ‘Une longue et amicable collaboration entre Mayo et Herrand commence alors.’

<sup>125</sup> “J’acceptais alors que je ne l’aurais pas fait avant la guerre. Il falloir avoir une justification de travail vis à vis de la police.”

*Les Enfants du paradis* was a great success as were Mayo's costumes, and the designer soon found that he was in demand as a *costumier* for the cinema. Following this first collaboration with Carné, a second swiftly followed with *Les Portes de la nuit* in 1946, and in 1949, Mayo costumed *La Beauté du diable* by René Clair. However, the 1950s became the decade in which Mayo's reputation as a costume designer for the cinema really took off, and as a result he worked almost non-stop during this period.

Occasionally, Mayo would also be employed as a set designer but he was predominantly a costume designer. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction to this case-study, Mayo saw himself first and foremost as a painter. His costume and set design work for both the theatre and the cinema, was only ever to supplement his income so that he could continue to paint.

Accordingly, as such a creative polymath, Mayo's costume design exhibits traces of his other forms of creative practice. For example, his painterly costume design sketches and hyper-real and architecturally informed design practice. Therefore, the juxtaposition of clothing and set design, as well as Mayo's aforementioned painting, politics and training in architecture must all be taken into consideration. So far, Mayo's cinematic and extra-cinematic 'linings' have been harmonious and have formed the image of a socially and politically aware man with a huge artistic talent. Significantly, however, at first glance, one piece of the Mayo puzzle does not quite fit flush to the others – his work in advertising.

### 10.6: “Because he’s worth it!” Mayo and *L’Oréal*

Amongst other contractual work, Mayo worked on André Michel’s advertisements for *L’Oréal*, between 1949 and 1960, as an art director in charge of costumes, sets and colours.<sup>126</sup> The campaigns for hair-care product *Biodop* in particular made Mayo a lot of money. According to the sample picture taken from this campaign below, one can see that the image accompanying this hair product is one of stereotypical feminine beauty. These colour adverts are glossy and glamorous and aim to inspire the product’s target market – women – to aspire to the unattainable photo finish perfection of the ‘ideal’ woman they feature. Therefore, throughout the 1950s, in parallel with his film work, Mayo was also engaged off-screen in selling an ideal of conventional feminine beauty. Yet although both film and advertising images trade on aesthetic beauty and costume design is frequently used to enhance appearance, Mayo’s filmic approach to femininity and that presented and sold by the *Biodop* advertisements appear to differ dramatically.

From the pictures below, one can see that the woman in the *Biodop* adverts is very different from *Casque d’or*’s Marie, or Gervaise from the film of the same name. Whereas Marie and Gervaise are certainly beautiful women, their beauty appears to be real rather than the extreme artifice of the woman presented in the *Biodop* commercials. It is almost as if the *Biodop* adverts possess the gloss, colour and extreme spectacle associated with the costume drama that Mayo chooses to ignore in his film costumes. Thus in keeping with his paintings, which displace human interiority and relocate it to a visual exterior level, it is as if the genre conventions of costume drama become displaced (by Mayo’s drive for authenticity) and relocated into the realm of advertising. This is not to say that the women of costume drama Mayo dresses are not glamorous,

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<sup>126</sup> Interestingly, Michel was the director of *Sans famille*.

Signoret's Marie in *Casque d'or* and Arletty's Garance in *Les Enfants du paradis* are certainly glamorous women. Yet they are grounded in the reality of their environs and their socio-political situations, which Mayo's costumes reflect and mirror via their political edge (as I will show in the following two chapters). The *Biodop* woman, unlike Mayo's filmic women is static and inert much like Annenkov's tightly corseted women, lacking the agency of a character such as Marie.

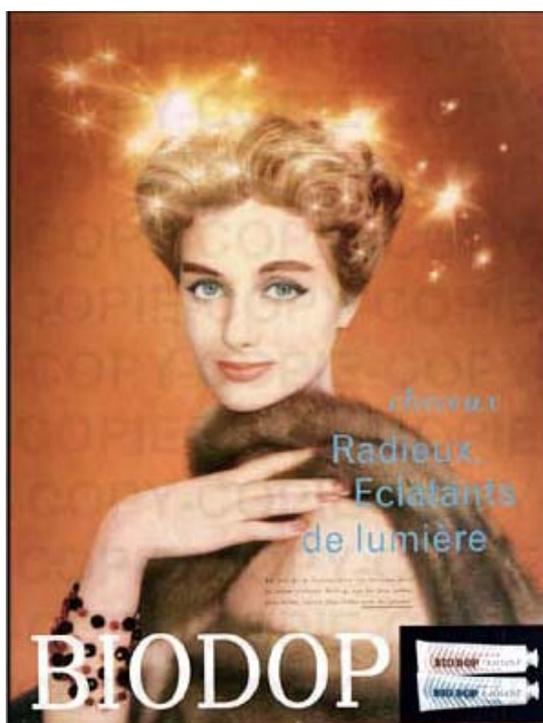


Figure 37. Michel's and Mayo's Biodop advert.



Figure 38. Simone Signoret as Marie.

Yet Mayo's advertising work must have had some influence on his costume design as already seen with his other lines of artistic practice and employment. I would suggest that in correspondence with his advertising knowledge, Mayo must have been clued up on how to 'sell' his costumes and effectively the bodies within them. It will be interesting to see how both Mayo and his costumes negotiate the similarities and differences conveyed by the two images of femininity he presents in his work. Of

particular interest will be the representation of women in *Sans famille*, given that this film and the *Biodop* advertisements were both directed by André Michel.

Keeping these six back-stories to Mayo's cinematic costume in mind, I will now explore Mayo's costume *œuvre* in more detail. Once again, it is the corset and its political, social and cultural ideologies, which are of primary interest. For this reason, it is Mayo's treatment of (male and female) corsetry in *Casque d'or*, which shall be the main thread of enquiry.

## CHAPTER 11: *CASQUE D'OR'S* CORSET EXPOSÉ

The six linings to Mayo's work as a costume designer, outlined above, have of course raised several research questions pertinent to this costume-centric enquiry. As an artist first and foremost, Mayo's primary passion for painting has clearly influenced his costume design sketches. His early canvasses, which reveal the feelings of his subjects, take internal emotions and reposition them at a tangible, exterior level. As seen earlier, this process of displacement appears to be repeated in Mayo's costume designs with undergarments such as the corset being placed on top of outer garments. Mayo's interest in architecture, authenticity/hyper-realism and politics, have also produced overlaps with his costume design. Again, in terms of costume drama, they resonate with the corset as a foundation garment that is made to occupy a position over rather than under clothes, a position that is stitched into ideological and political discourses. One such discourse is of course the representation of the corseted body, which raises the question of how Mayo's costuming relates to gender, as he 'corsets' both men and women. The representation of women in particular links to the final back-story of Mayo's costume design – advertising. In the *Biodop* campaign, for which Mayo was art director, the representation of women differs greatly from the women he dresses for costume drama. How two such different images of femininity are negotiated in Mayo's *œuvre*, as well as the other research questions flagged above, will be addressed in the corsetry case-study on *Casque d'or* below.

### 11.1: *Casque d'or*: An Atypical Costume Drama

A life-long man of the Left, Becker chose to set his particular take on the costume drama among the social strata least associated with the genre – the working and criminal classes. In so doing, he moves away from the expected generic conservatism connected to costume drama's usual focus: the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. As I will illustrate in due course, this move has political ramifications, particularly at a sartorial level. By means of *Casque d'or's* setting in what Leahy terms the genuine 'milieu' of working class Paris, and via an unruly heroine who troubles patriarchal structures of power, the film differs from the norms of 1950s French costume cinema (2007: 1). As authentic, *Casque d'or* immediately strikes one to be an atypical costume drama. By 1950s standards of the genre, the film is atypical in both its focus on the working class and its inclusion of a female protagonist with agency, and as such, remains unusual within its depictions of class and gender. This of course resonates with Mayo and his atypical yet meticulously authentic approach to costume design. Thus Becker and Mayo appear to share an ideological stance, for they both address the costume drama from a generically unexpected direction, which is politically marked by the Left. This shared stance manifests itself in *Casque d'or's* costume, which becomes imbued with a two-fold political sensibility. The film not only addresses the socio-political in its setting and narrative but also dresses the subjects placed within this socio-political context in designs that are socio-politically aware. As such, Mayo's costumes function as clothes with a political edge, particularly through his radical take on corsetry. However, before beginning to explore *Casque d'or's* costumes, more of the film's production contexts, in particular its budget and historical precedent must be detailed.

Critical analyses of *Casque d'or* to date have placed the film as having a low to medium budget, when in fact its budget was much higher.<sup>127</sup> This budget anomaly was brought to my attention by Professor Susan Hayward during a discussion of the film. On her recommendation I consulted Laurent Creton's work *Histoire économique du cinéma français* (2004), which contains a breakdown of the figures for *Casque d'or*. A normative budget for the film's period of production would have been around 47 million old francs. *Casque d'or's* actual budget was in fact 84 million old francs, which does not make it a low to medium budget film. In Creton's division of the figures, the money spent on 'personnel technique' stands at 18,601,750 old francs (2004: 208). This translates as twenty-two percent of the overall budget and is second only to the twenty-nine percent of the total, which was used to cover studio and laboratory fees (208). Although one cannot be sure of the exact amount of money Mayo would have had to spend on his costumes, he would certainly have had a reasonable budget to work within. In addition, it would appear that Mayo was quite canny at finding beautiful fabrics on the cheap when such resources were hard to come by. His costumes for *Les Enfants du paradis* are testament to this, for despite being made under the constraints of the Occupation when resources would have been so scarce, the quality and quantity of the fabrics he used are astounding.

A possible reason for the miscalculation of *Casque d'or's* budget may lie in the desire to place the film as a counter-text. Becker's reworking and revision of the tropes of the costume drama genre, for example, his setting of the film in a working-class district and his rejection of literary adaptation and script-led production, positions *Casque d'or* as a text which breaks with the dominant trends for 1950s *films à costumes*. Indeed, as

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<sup>127</sup> See Hayward, S. (2004) *Simone Signoret: the Star as Cultural Sign*, London and New York: Continuum; Leahy, S. (2007) *Casque d'or*, London and New York: IB Tauris.

touched on above, Becker's focus on the working class lends the film a political edge, threads of which are picked up in Mayo's costumes. This political edge is what has given *Casque d'or* its quality of resistance, which of course would have been all the more remarkable if it had been made on a small budget. However, one now knows that in monetary terms this was not the case. Thus, due on the one hand to the film's higher than expected production values, use of popular stars and melodrama genre, and, on the other, to its authentic embedded working-class narrative, the text begins to adopt a position somewhere between the *tradition de qualité* and a cinema of resistance.

The narrative of *Casque d'or* unfolds in the Parisian suburb of Belleville and is loosely based on the true story of Amélie Hélie, a prostitute, and Manda, her lover/pimp. In 1901, Hélie left Manda for Leca, the head of a rival band of *apaches*.<sup>128</sup> It was an action that inflamed tensions between the two gangs and resulted in Leca being seriously wounded and Manda facing trial for attempted murder. Hélie was called as a prosecution witness but remained faithful to her ex-lover during her testimony. The sensationalist press at the time seized on the 'disreputable' Hélie, crowning her 'Queen of the Apaches' and her notoriety grew. The courtroom grew crowded with onlookers keen to catch a glimpse of the famous Casque d'or, so-called because of her 'helmet' of golden hair.

Leahy has noted that interest in Hélie centred on what was deemed to be her scandalous behaviour – prostitution, betrayal and audacity in the face of authority. As a result of her conduct, in the eyes of *Belle Époque* society, which privileged the patriarchal, she was seen as 'a threatening character, seen as transgressing the boundary between "honest"

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<sup>128</sup> Leahy notes that the word *apache* was 'imported from the USA by journalists inspired by the adventure novels of Gustave Aimard' and comes to mean gangster.' (2007: 10)

women and those of her station.’ (Leahy, 2007: 11) Such a view was taken since ‘prostitution was seen by many nineteenth-century moralists as a necessity to protect the virtue of bourgeois women.’ (11) Yet despite what was expected from a woman of her status (i.e. very little), Hélié managed to turn the curiosity caused by both her and her scandal to her advantage, using the press interest to publish her memoirs.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, Hélié’s story, told in her own words, becomes a rare female voice among the established discourses on nineteenth-century prostitution, which as Corbin has noted are “mediated through male eyes: those of the policeman, the doctor, the judge and the administrator.” (Corbin cited in Leahy, 2007: 11) As such, Hélié managed to assert a certain degree of agency over her situation and put forward a counter-dialogue in a social framework governed by patriarchal imperatives.

Although one cannot be certain if Becker used Hélié’s memoirs themselves as direct inspiration for his version of *Casque d’or*, the similarities which exist between his film and the *Belle Époque* account suggest that he must have been familiar with Hélié’s story to a certain extent. As such, one can speculate that his choice of female star may have been influenced by what he knew about the original *Casque d’or* and her self-empowerment. For despite modifying Hélié into Marie and making her a much softer character in his film, Becker builds on the earlier *Casque d’or*’s agency. Becker’s need for an actor to play a woman of agency would explain why Simone Signoret was the director’s first choice to play Marie.

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<sup>129</sup> Her memoirs were entitled *Mes jours et mes nuits/My Days and Nights*, by *Casque d’or*, the Queen of the *Apaches*, and were published by the twice-weekly magazine, *Fin de siècle*. Her literacy, therefore, makes Hélié a more complex character and she becomes difficult to assign a class to. This matter is muddied further when one takes into account the fact that she later married into a bourgeois family. See Hayward (2004) and Leahy (2007) for further background information on Hélié.

Hayward has explained that during the early part of her film career, 1946-1957, out of a total of sixteen films, Signoret played a prostitute or 'woman on the make' in twelve of them. This in itself is not extraordinary given the roles that were available to women in the French cinema during this period of Signoret's career. Indeed, the passing of the *loi Marthe Richard*, which closed all brothels in April 1946, and which was passed 'under the guise of cleaning up France [but in fact] was part of a concerted effort to legislate the female body, restrict women's earning power, and force them back into the domestic sphere' was reflected both in and by the numerous prostitution narratives in French cinema (Hayward, 2004b: 37). In such narratives, fallen women were consistently punished. Hayward has explained that the moral reasoning behind such retribution was that 'the audiences may feel sorry for these women, or, conversely, disdain. But they will also feel comforted that they are not part of a degenerate society of fallen women and that their own values are entirely secure.' (37) However, what is remarkable about Signoret's prostitute/women-on-the-make films is that 'in these roles as in all her films of this period, Signoret embodies female agency and empowerment, economic or otherwise.' (Hayward, 2004b: 38) Therefore, prior to embodying Marie, Signoret had set a precedent (both on-screen and off) as a woman of agency. Who better, then, to play Becker's Casque d'or in a film, which focuses on the renegotiation of women's place in society, particularly via its costume designer's politically edged corsetry.

Leahy has posited that the traditional gender divisions of dress as hierarchical (male clothes as a function to his relation to society) and seductive (female clothes as a function of her relation to men), as outlined by James Laver (1969), are inadequate when examining the costumes in *Casque d'or*:

These principles are complicated in Becker's film: firstly by the collapsing of the female erotic and social functions (as a prostitute Marie's job is to seduce); secondly by the eroticising of the

male body (Manda) [Serge Reggiani]; and thirdly by the narcissistic preening of Leca [Claude Dauphin] and his gang members, for whom clothes are much more than purely functional.

(2007: 49)

In identifying these three characters (and Leca's *apaches*) through their relationships to clothing, Leahy has pinpointed the three most prominent wardrobes of the film. It is this triptych of wardrobes, which will be unstitched in this case-study. Particular focus being the corset: how it is fashioned, whom it fashions and what this may mean, becoming the foundation of this garment enquiry.

Mayo's restructuring of corsetry and its subsequent ideology takes place on several levels and across genders. *Casque d'or*'s central protagonist, Marie, does not appear to be corseted and this surprising omission will be the starting point for my costume analysis. Marie is not alone in being one of Mayo's 'un-corseted' women, as noted earlier, Garance in *Les Enfants du paradis* also goes without a foundation garment. Thus between these two costume dramas, which are almost a decade apart, continuity in Mayo's thinking around corsetry is present. Yet, what is crucial to comprehend in these two films is that even though the corset does not appear to be present it is not entirely absent either. I have already shown that Garance's corset is not missing, it just no longer functions as a *foundation* garment, repositioned as it is over her clothes. Yet what of Marie's corset? I will now turn to *Casque d'or* and Mayo's (re)location of Marie's corsetry.

## 11.2: Radical Corsetry: Marie's Belt of Resistance

Hayward has read Marie's apparent lack of foundation garment as a transference rather than removal of the corset. That 'In effect that desired object [the corset] (as far as the male is concerned), that fetishistic object is not just missing. Marie has put it elsewhere. It is worn outside in the reduced form of her belt, and not on the inside [...] The belt becomes an ironic commentary on masculine desire and power: she first exteriorises it and then diminishes it.' (2004a: 26) In so doing, Mayo's costume has a double meaning. It is continuing the theme of dislocation present in his paintings (that of representing the human interior by displacing it and relocating it on the outside), but also commenting on women's position within patriarchal structures of desire and power. Thinking back to the *mise-en-scène* of the corset in part one, one will remember the multiple but hidden discourses of desire and power generated by the union of the corset and the body. By placing the corset - the catalyst for such discourses of desire and power - on the outside of the body, it seems that Mayo is consciously making such (feminine) discourses visible and thus breaking patriarchal taboos. Consequently, none of Annenkov's previously discussed misogyny is present in Marie's corsetry. Sexual politics are certainly brought into play here, but in a very different way to Annenkov's transfer of (male) desire. Indeed, the sexual politics Marie's costume engages with in *Casque d'or* are particularly interesting and unsurprisingly centre on her corsetlessness. With this in mind then, I will look at Marie's costume in more detail.

Marie first appears on screen rowing to the *guinguette*, as she does so her costume is revealed piece by piece. First, one notices her tightly swept up platinum blonde hair, the *casque d'or* of the film's title. Second, one sees her bodice style blouse, fabricated from a silk or satin material as it has a delicate lustre. It is fully buttoned at the back and is

decorated with three buttons at the bust. It is cut to sit just on the shoulders and has a frilled v-neck and matching frilled sleeves. Initially this light-coloured item of apparel appears to be a plain, but as Marie stands up in the boat and the camera closes in on her, one realises that it is patterned with small white polka dots. Next one sees that at her waist, Marie has the aforementioned black belt, which is slim at the back and the sides but much fuller across the front. It is reminiscent of a corset in both style and shape, in fact, at its widest point it even has three thin vertical stripes of a lighter colour that resemble corset boning.



Figure 39. Marie and her corset-belt.

On her bottom half, Marie is wearing an ankle-length skirt, decorated with two lines of black embroidery at the hem. Heavily pleated from the bottom of the hips, the fabric (possibly crêpe) follows the movement of the body easily despite being worn over petticoats. Completing the outfit are a pair of dainty button fastening ankle boots and a small, fringed black beaded bag. Mayo's reproduction of the *Belle Époque* in Marie's

dress is hard to distinguish from the genuine article. The hemline, emphasis at the natural waistline, button and hook and eye fastenings are all carefully reproduced and executed in natural fabrics.<sup>130</sup> However, there is one detail, which separates Mayo's outfit from the original, the neckline. *Belle Époque* daytime outfits, in the majority, featured high-necked collars, a lower neckline usually being reserved for the evening.

However, this is not a mistake on the designer's part, rather, it is an initial opportunity for Mayo to display elements of Marie's character, including her disregard for what is expected of her. The other women dancing in the *guinguette* are all in high-necked day dresses. It is only Marie, her friend Julie (Dominique Davray) and the woman with *apache* Billy (Émile Genevois), who are displaying low necklines (of which Marie's is the most revealing). This can be read in three ways. First, it can be interpreted as Mayo acknowledging Marie's status as a prostitute: by placing her in a night-time neckline in the day, Marie's costume hints at illicit nocturnal activities. And yet a second reading of Marie's open neckline when compared to nearly all the other women's concealed décolletages implies that she is not bound by their constraints, that like Signoret herself, Marie is a woman of agency (Hayward, 2004a: 19). The third interpretation also links us to Signoret's star persona and how stars reach us through their bodies. Vincendeau has noted that, in Jean Gabin's films, actors of lesser physical beauty tended to flank the star in order to magnify his attractiveness (Vincendeau, 1998: 44 and 47) This appears to be the case with Signoret in *Casque d'or* during the scene in the *guinguette* with Julie

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<sup>130</sup> Having now established that Mayo had a decent costume budget to play with it is unsurprising that his costumes are cut from natural fabrics; he had the necessary money to achieve the level of authenticity he wanted.

and Billy's girlfriend: the other women share the same neckline as Signoret but cannot match her good looks in wearing it.<sup>131</sup>

Nevertheless, it is the second reading of Marie's neckline, which centres on her status as a woman of agency, which interests me here. This question of Marie's agency is magnified if one further uncovers her relationship with corsetry in *Casque d'or*. In her outfit, described above, the corset is alluded to in a reduced form via Marie's belt. Of this, Hayward has commented, this 'outer corset-like belt hints at what might be underneath in the form of further corseting.' (2004a: 25) But as already established and as Hayward goes on to undress in her analysis of Marie's costume, there is no corset to be found. This absence is evidenced by the lack of telltale ridges in her blouse and the omission of an unnatural waist to hip ratio, both of which would confirm the presence of corsetry. Indeed, unlike Signoret's Léocadie in *La Ronde*, here the actor does not have a rigid torso. The corset-like belt looks firm, emphasises the waist and bisects the body but it does not discipline it. The flesh underneath the polka dot blouse is not hard to the touch as it is in Annenkov's mechanically corseted women, hinting instead that there is supple naked skin to be discovered beneath Marie's clothes. Given this fact, before the scene in the *guinguette* comes to a close, one is directly aware that in terms of corsetry, Mayo is stitching a very different seam of costume drama to the one previously explored.

Yet although this seam is different, unexpected even, it is far from inauthentic. In reality, it is quite the opposite, as seen when Marie and her friends race to the dancehall.

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<sup>131</sup> A similar effect is also created in the *Ange Gabriel* when Marie and Julie arrive together, Signoret's beauty enhanced by and eclipsing the appearance of her friend.

If extreme tight-lacing of corsets had been involved here, then these women would not be able to run with such ease (or row a boat in Marie's case). Mayo's recreation of the *Belle Époque* is meticulous and this includes corsetry, which he uses as a device to show class divisions within late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century Parisian society. As learnt from the earlier *mise-en-scène* of the corset, it was generally thought that the smaller the waist the more aristocratic the face.<sup>132</sup> The patriarchal reasoning behind this generally being that aristocratic and bourgeois women, who were financially supported by their husbands and/or fathers, did not need to (and were actively prevented) from going out to work. Since they did not participate in manual labour, the waists of these women could be constricted, rendering them further inert. Mayo illustrates this point in the film via the bourgeois group who dare to cross the tracks to enjoy a night out at the *Ange Gabriel*. The women in this group are dressed in sumptuous satins and decked out with jewels to distinguish them from the regular female clientele of the bar, but it is their obviously nipped-in waists, which one first notices and reads as a signifier of their class credentials. Consequently, corsetry in *Casque d'or* is expressly associated with the display of class divisions.

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<sup>132</sup> See sections 2.2 – 2.4 in part one.



Figures 40 and 41. The tightly-laced bourgeois women.

This is not to say that working-class women went entirely un-corseted. However, women who worked, particularly those whose jobs were physically demanding, needed to be able to move easily in order to carry out their jobs without the danger of puncturing internal organs. Therefore, *if* they wore corsets to work they tended to slacken off their stays. Steele has noted that between 1850 and 1874, thirty-three percent of working-class French wives owned a corset. This figure rose to forty-four percent between 1875 and 1909 and includes both Paris and the provinces (Steele, 2001: 49). This figure is rather less than one might expect, and even if one factored in the unmarried women that these statistics ignore, I suspect that it would still result in a lower number than the myths around corset-wearing have led one to believe. Bearing in mind that fifty-six percent of all working-class married women and an additional

unknown percentage of unmarried women during the *Belle Époque* were without foundation garments, the fact that Marie is un-corseted should not be such a surprise.

Nevertheless, it is still unexpected in the realm of the costume drama, which one anticipates as revelling in spectacular costumes and the erotically charged female body through corsetry. This is not to say that Marie/Signoret's body is not erotic (as I will show in due course it is) just that this eroticism is not achieved by a corsetry of discipline. Furthermore, given that Marie is also a prostitute, her lack of a corset is even more startling. Images of the prostitute in her corset became widespread as 'underwear increasingly became a focus for sexual interest in the nineteenth century.' (Steele, 2001: 114) Edouard Manet's painting, *Nana*, dating from 1877, which depicts actress Henrietta Hauser in a pale blue satin corset, was probably the most famous of all. As a painter himself, Mayo would have been aware of this proliferation of paintings showing corseted prostitutes. He would also have been aware of how quickly these images became copied, reproduced and descended into parody. In *Casque d'or*, then, Mayo actively avoids the *cliché* of the tightly-laced prostitute, for when one sees Marie in her underclothes, she is wearing a chemise but crucially, no corset. Therefore, the fetishistically constricted corseted woman as a sight/site of (male) pleasure is denied as Marie has agency over her silhouette. Yet one must further determine what impact the externalising of Marie's corset has within the context of 1950s costume cinema and French culture and society. In order to discuss this I must return to what Marie rejects.

The corset is a focal point for varying discourses on gender, sexuality, eroticism, trade and exchange. As a concealed garment located underneath the outer clothes, the corset and its associated sociological, sexual, political, cultural, economic (but interestingly

not class) discourses lay hidden. Thinking back to the earlier ideological exploration of the corset, one will remember that the desires and discourses produced by the combination of the female body and the corset were 'filtered' by the garment. The materials used in the construction of corsets such as baleen and steel retain properties from their original function and/or creation (filtering plankton in the case of baleen, and filtering slag as a by-product in the case of steel manufacture). Such inherent properties of sieving and separation initially appear to cleanse the female body of (patriarchally) taboo desiring discourses, keeping them safely contained within the boundaries of the corset. However, one must not underestimate the lace-hole! As determined previously, the lace-holes of a corset become a place of escape for discourses and desires located within the liminal space between the corset and the body. As such, they become a point of resistance. Therefore, transposing this reading onto Marie's clothing, one finds that she does not just endorse a point but a whole belt of resistance.

In putting Marie's corset on the outside, Mayo avoids the nineteenth-century *cliché* of the tightly-laced prostitute as representative of the underbelly of urban life, the seamy receptacle of trash, filth and disease *à la* Nana. Instead, by situating the corset at an external level, Mayo destabilises the distinctions between taboo and acceptability, clean and unclean, by making the desiring dialogues surrounding the corset visible. In placing the corset on the outside of her clothes, as Hayward has noted, Marie makes plain what is usually concealed and kept within the liminal space between body and undergarment (2004a: 27). In fact, she is putting liminal space outside, and with the liminal exteriorised, the discursivity of the body is on view. She disrupts the function of dress as a boundary, which mediates between these private and public bodies (Warwick, 1998: 61).

In putting the corset outside of her clothes, Marie is troubling the shell that prevents one from seeing sexuality by putting her corseted carapace into the public arena.

Negotiations between the forbidden, desiring body and the social body that is insulated from private fantasies are disrupted. For underwear, in particular corsetry is the site of the body's unwrapping, a point of titillation and a gateway to naked flesh. In collapsing the boundaries of dress, which mediate between the individual body and the social body, Marie's corset-belt becomes an uncomfortable confrontation with desire. Her body is not disciplined by the corset and her desire is not mediated by it. In short, she is an undisciplined and thus unruly body. As a result of being an unruly body of undisciplined desire, Marie negates the passivity and conformity that a patriarchally dominated socio-political system demands of her and so this is how her agency specifically manifests itself through her radical reworking of corsetry. The political message is clear, Marie disrupts (Hayward, 2004a: 27).

And yet there is one occasion when Marie's corset-belt is notably missing. Hayward has remarked that Marie does not possess the large number of costumes that one would usually expect to accompany a star of costume drama – a genre in which the sartorial is aligned with spectacle (2004a: 24). Marie's costumes are frequently recycled within the narrative, her costumes from the first half of the film being mixed and matched again in the second part, but importantly, her corset-belt is a constant component of her wardrobe (24). Consequently, when Marie arrives for the evening at the *Ange Gabriel*, without her corset-belt one becomes immediately aware of its absence. Clothed in black striped taffeta over white satin, her dress is tightly bodiced but crucially not belted. Her gown is accessorised instead with a black onyx necklace and black feather boa. The fact that this dress is a very different affair from her rather ordinary day clothes, and that her

corset-belt is missing, is significant and in order to understand this significance one needs to consider what has happened in the narrative immediately prior to this evening out: Marie has been made aware of Manda's fiancée and as a result accepts Leca's offer to become his mistress.



Figure 42. Marie minus her corset-belt.

The disappearance of the corset-belt results in the disappearance of Marie's display of desire in this scene, and, therefore, becomes symbolic of her selling of herself to Leca. The overwhelming power of his desire for her and her new status as his fetish (shortly after this scene she is referred to as '*l'objet*') coupled with her loss of Manda is all stitched into this dress. As Hayward has noted, 'Marie has worn this dress as a sign of mourning.' (2004a: 24) On this one occasion, Marie sartorially marks her disempowerment by concealing her desire. The loss of Manda is mirrored by the loss of

her corset-belt and the visible manifestation of her agency. Yet this absence of the corset-belt does not last long, for Marie's desire for Manda is greater than her regret in selling herself to Leca. Accordingly, the corset-belt soon returns as Marie and Manda manage to spend two idyllic days together in Joinville, both the accessory of agency and her desire once more on display.

This making visible of the 'corset' and its associated liminal discourses equates to a quality of truthfulness. There is no deceit in Marie's desire for Manda for her individual and social bodily boundaries have been dissolved, resulting in one true corporeality. There is no social filter for desire in place. In addition, there is no deceit in the appearance of her body for it is not falsified or disciplined by foundation garments in any way. As Hayward puts it, 'Where Marie is concerned, the body within and without is the same body; the roundness and fullness of her body as well as its firmness (filling the dress and underclothes) is a constant, whether clothed or not.' (2004a: 26) Therefore, Mayo's search for truth via the authenticity of his costume design asserts Marie's corporeal truth (albeit unruly in the eyes of patriarchy).

In terms of the 1950s context - for one now knows well that costume drama addresses the present moment from the perceived safety of the past – such a seeking of the truth could translate to a commentary on state censorship. I have already outlined in part one of this thesis that censorship during the 1950s was tightening its grip on France's visual media, the cinema included.<sup>133</sup> In fact, such heavy censorship can be compared to a tightly-laced corset keeping taboo discourses within the safety of its fabric. Yet akin to the corset's lace-holes, prohibited dialogues can and do slip through. In the case of

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<sup>133</sup> See section 1.2.

*Casque d'or*, Mayo's authenticity becomes a bid for truth in a heavily censored space. He uses fabrics, fastenings and cuts faithful to the past so that their truth may resonate in the present. In so doing, he lends his costumes a hyper-real quality, which signals that there is something more, above and beyond the confines of the *Belle Époque* narrative to comprehend in terms of reality and truth. In giving Marie 'un-corseted' silhouettes, her clothing reveals authentic, unmediated movement of the body. As such, the fabric she wears traces both unimpeded time and motion, in this instance, the time and motion of both the *Belle Époque* and the 1950s (the time in which the film is set and the time in which the film is produced). As a result, these two timeframes are documented simultaneously by a process of recording through fabric.

The significance of simultaneously recording the events of two specific timeframes in fabric becomes clear when one considers how each timeframe can resonate within the other. I have already established that costume drama frequently speaks to the present from the perceived safety of the past, and that this method of documentation by costume is inextricably linked to the process of distancing through the historicising of narrative. For if timeframes become synchronised, the recreations of period costume can mirror back through this link not only a nation's (imagined) past but a nation's present and future as well. In summary, this process becomes a kind of material memory. Socio-political situations are revisited by the recreation of historical costume, and the (imagined) truths of the past resonate in the present due to the costumes' joining of two timeframes. In this respect, truths about the present can also be revealed as the material memories of a nation's past reverberate in the present by means of retrospection.

The *Belle Époque* Belleville of *Casque d'or* then, comes to stand not just for France's (imagined) past, but also its present, in this case the 1950s, and anticipate its future. Read in this light, the material memory stitched into Marie's costume resonates with the position of France's past, present and future women. Such movement between timeframes corresponds with Marie being the character who is seen to move the most during the course of *Casque d'or's* narrative. She does not belong to any particular space and is the character 'most associated with forms of transport: particularly carriages and boats.' (Leahy, 2007: 38) Therefore, she embodies a fluid positioning, which marks her as a woman of action who refuses to occupy the fixed space allocated to her, as well as paradoxically due to her status as a prostitute, being an object of exchange. This mutable situation, when coupled with the material memory of her costume, allows her position to resonate across and comment on the condition of women in different periods of French history. For example, in the 1950s timeframe, Marie's ability to move freely – symbolised by the fact she is not tightly-laced into a conventional corset - can be read as corresponding to women's recent enfranchisement, winning the power to vote in 1944. However, it is via Marie's profession as a prostitute that even further reverberations across timeframes can occur through the material memory of her costume.

As already mentioned, prostitution during the *Belle Époque* was deemed necessary to protect bourgeois women's virtue. Prostitutes at this time were either independent (yet still under the control of a pimp) or attached to a brothel. Leahy has pointed out that the independent prostitute was seen as more of a threatening figure to the authorities of the day, because she was not so easy to regulate (2007: 11). Hélié worked as an independent prostitute, soliciting on the street in the summer but spending the winter in

a brothel, although not as an inmate (11). Consequently, Marie's earlier referent (Hélie) possessed a sexuality that was difficult to regulate, a quality that is tapped into by Marie in Becker's version of the story. This is achieved via Marie's ability to free herself from commodification. As Leahy has described, Marie resists her situation as an 'object' to be bought and sold, 'we never see her taking money, or expressing any interest in material wealth.' (2007: 64) In so doing, she not only refuses the commodification of her body but also raises questions around female dependence on men. In acknowledging her corporeal transactions but never visibly receiving monetary confirmation of them, Marie 'highlights the hypocrisy of the double standard that denies the parallels between the sexual economies of marriage and prostitution.' (64) In fact, by acknowledging and acting on her own desire, Marie provides the missing link that exposes patriarchal structures of desire and power as deeply unrepresentative of women's experiences. For example, it is she who initiates the mutual exchange of gazes between herself and Manda at the *guinguette*, and she is the one who takes a cab to see him the following day. Such desires would normally be kept laced-in by the corset, but as Marie has disrupted the boundaries between the individual and social body by wearing her corset over her clothes she is effectively wearing her heart, not on her sleeve, but around her waist. Such confrontational desire allows her to stop being another man's commodity to sell (Hayward, 2004b: 37-38). As Hayward has posited, this allows a Marxist 'reading against the grain' to take place as Marie regulates her sexuality outside of patriarchal structures just as Mayo regulates her corsetry outside of patriarchal structures (37-38). Once again, Marie's unruly corsetry imposes status as an unruly body.

Indeed, such unruliness returns one to the 1950s timeframe of Marie's material memory, a material memory that in this instance sees the agency of Hélie and Signoret

unite across timeframes. Undeniably, Signoret embodies a complex representation of femininity (both in *Casque d'or* and off-screen) and is much more than just the sum of her beauty. Her corporeality is a mixture of masculine and feminine – long, slim legs but broad shoulders. As Leahy remarks, ‘her face too is a mixture of feminine and masculine traits: her wide eyes, rounded cheeks and full lips contrast with her strong jaw-line and determined chin.’ (2007: 55) Such gender complexity has led to difficulty in pigeonholing Signoret into one of the typecast roles available to women in the 1950s.

As Leahy continues:

Signoret does not fit easily into any of the typical female stereotypes of the time: erotic *femme-objet*, ‘*garce*’ in the tradition of Viviane Romance; sophisticate *à la* Michèle Morgan, Daniëlle Darrieux or Edwige Feuillère; or *femme-enfant* (Daniële Delorme, Françoise Arnoul and, of course, Brigitte Bardot). There are contradictions at the heart of Signoret’s star appeal: she plays prostitutes but she is not easily ‘available;’ she is equally convincing as conniving bitch or great lover. (2007: 55)

Hayward has argued that it is due to Signoret’s ability to perform that she can resist being labelled as a *femme-objet*, *garce*, sophisticate or *femme-enfant* and that this was the heart of Signoret’s lack of fixity. As Hayward explains:

Unlike many stars, then, she felt substantial; she had matter and could be touched. Yet she still kept her star aura, undiminished in her ordinariness, an ordinariness counterpointed by an aura that allowed her to continue to star in films years after she stopped being a beauty – because being a beauty was not the issue; being able to perform was. Therein also lies her specialness: she was never commodified, thus never fixed. She created a freedom for herself that allowed her to go through the three ages of womanhood in spectacular form. (2004b: 33)

In *Casque d'or*, Signoret’s lack of fixity manifests itself not just in her refusal to be commodified, as her belt of resistance and its material memory attests, but also via the

equality between herself and Manda. An equality that does not commodify her as Leca's desire for her does, hence Marie/Signoret is again creating the freedom for herself that Hayward refers to above. Of course, this equality and the freedom it brings is reflected by Marie's sexuality being literally and figuratively un-corseted. Her desire is not rigid and contained as it would be in an Annenkov costume drama. Instead it is soft and free flowing like Mayo's brushstrokes. Here Mayo is tapping into Signoret's authenticity and agency as a performer by recreating this authenticity and agency in her dress. Signoret's Marie's lack of corset is, therefore, perfectly logical, as was Becker's choice of Signoret to play Marie in the first place. With *Casque d'or*, Becker is recognising women's new enfranchisement and their fight for equal opportunities. Yet it is through the material memory of Marie's clothing, or rather materiality of politics in this case, which Mayo stitches into her costumes that this fight is most keenly felt. In terms of roles for women in the French cinema of the 1950s, Becker's film and its sartorial ideologies were remarkable.

Staying with the 1950s timeframe, I will now further unstitch the relevance of Marie's costume and its material memory in this particular period. In terms of the mid-twentieth century relevance of Marie's material memory, *Casque d'or's* discourse on unregulated prostitution is mirrored by Marie's lack of corset, which renders her body unregulated by foundation garments as well as the authorities. This recreation or memory of *Belle Époque* discourses on prostitution and sexuality can be seen to have a wider resonance with 1950s French femininity in several ways. First, it comments on the increase in the visibility of prostitution in the wake of the *loi Marthe Richard*, for, once the brothels were closed, illicit prostitution continued on the street and so had a greater visual presence. Thus Marie's corset-belt as a signifier of liminality sartorially exposes these

usually concealed economies of desire. Second, the question of female dependence - to which, as outlined above, Marie's corset-belt also speaks directly - chimes with the condition of France's women post-war. Having experienced increased freedoms and economic independence in some cases during the war, women were struggling to renegotiate their place in society. Yet women were now being urged to return to the passivity of the domestic sphere. Leahy has commented that 'women were being persuaded by government initiatives, the mainstream and women's press and at school or at church that their role was to stand aside and let the men take over once more; that their duty lay in the domestic sphere and especially in motherhood, since France was in desperate need of repopulation.' (2007: 25-26)

In mirroring the struggle for autonomy and exposing patriarchal tactics to constrain women, the belt of resistance that Mayo has designed for Marie becomes further imbued with material memories of women's continuing struggle for equality. As such, memories from France's much more recent past also impact upon its present but can only be addressed from the distance of the *Belle Époque*. Marie's/Signoret's corset-belt is laced into this material memory of the global fight for independence experienced by women, a struggle which in this instance touches the timeframes of France's past, present and future. Via fabric as a recording device Marie simultaneously stands for the *Belle Époque* woman who dares to challenge patriarchal order and the 1950s woman who is battling to assert her place post-World War II, as well as anticipating widespread feminist activism post-May 1968. Marie is stitched into the fight for sexual equality and this fight is represented by her costume, which functions as a fabric signifier and testimony spanning the history of French women's experience.

### 11.3: Radical Fabric: Manda's Bruised Masculinity

Marie is not alone in her challenge to hegemonic practices. Her demand for sexual equality is met and reciprocated by Manda, whose masculinity is contrasted starkly with that of Leca and the *apaches* within the text. Serge Reggiani's character is both softly named and softly attired in *Casque d'or*. His gentle name, Manda, differs from the strong and virile sounding Leca. Rather than the flashy dress of the *apaches*, Manda's garb is a much more simple affair, however, this is not to say that his dress is less complex a signifier of meaning, for Manda is undoubtedly sartorially complex. The *apaches* attire generally consists of three-piece suits marked with patterns (stripes, polka dots, checks), their shirts and waistcoats cut from fabrics with a sheen (silks and satins). They are clothes that conceal the body by deflecting attention away from the corporeal, their patterns and lusted surfaces draw attention to themselves by flagging up their fine tailoring rather than the flesh beneath. Manda, on the other hand, is clothed in soft, open fabrics, which reveal his body. His sleeves are frequently rolled up and his shirt unbuttoned at the neck, unlike the *apaches* who are always buttoned up and tucked in. As Leahy has noted, 'even when Leca is shaving, his body is fully covered.' (2007: 51)

From this accessibility of the body one can read Manda as being unbound by the rigid constraints and codes of masculinity that the *apaches* adhere to.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, as I will illustrate, Manda is much more fluid in his embodiment of gender. However, Leca and his gang are less rigid than Manda in terms of their class identity. In correspondence with the American gangster, the *apaches* use their dandified attire to mark themselves out from the milieu, but in doing so they also wear their class aspirations on their

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<sup>134</sup> This is similar to Marie whose open necklines also connote that she is unbound by the constraints that keep the other *Belle Époque* women in the text buttoned up at the neck.

collective sleeve by (parodically?) mirroring the fashions of the middle classes. This is a point I shall elaborate in the next section on Leca, but for now I will return to Manda and the issue of class. Unlike the *apaches*, Manda does not exhibit class aspirations by means of his clothing, for his costume roots him. His attire confirms working-class identity instead of speaking of middle-class ambition. In authentically replicating the working-class fashions of flat cap, cotton shirt, loose trousers and wide cummerbund-like band at the waist, Mayo indicates both Manda's profession as a carpenter and his working-class credentials. His appearance honours the traditions of the older working-class generation and their artisan way of working. Such an association with the working class is strengthened via the presence of the renowned cinematic icon of French working-class masculinity, Gaston Modot as his *patron*.<sup>135</sup>

This emphasis on and intertextuality with working-class icons and iconography lends Reggiani's already sartorially authentic depiction of Manda further weight. Indeed, Manda becomes the embodiment of the working class laid bare in *Casque d'or*, both literally and figuratively, for Reggiani's wiry corporeality is the only body to be seen unclothed during the film's narrative. I have already detailed how Hayward views both Marie and Manda as exhibiting gender fluidity and equality. One such instance of how this non-fixity of gender manifests itself can be found in Manda's nakedness compared

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<sup>135</sup> Gaston Modot was a very well renowned actor by the time he played the role of Danard in *Casque d'or*. After the First World War, he worked with Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac and Abel Gance. In 1930 he starred in Buñuel's surrealist piece, *L'Age d'or*. During the latter half of the 1930s, Modot began a fruitful collaboration with Jean Renoir, with roles in films such as *La Grande illusion* (1937), *La Vie est à nous* (1937) and *Le Grand jeu* (1939). Renoir's Left-wing politics were well known and he was a member of the French Communist Party. Fittingly, therefore, the majority of Renoir's films focus on the working classes and Gaston Modot was to become a cinematic icon of French working-class masculinity via the Renoir texts he starred in. It makes sense then, that the only other male to be 'corseted' in the same way as Manda in *Casque d'or* is Danard, Gaston Modot's character. Consequently, Modot comes to stand for an earlier generation of working class masculinity, which Becker is nostalgically paying tribute to in *Casque d'or*. For his status as an icon of Left wing French cinema from the first half of the twentieth century makes him an intertextual pre-cursor of Manda's progressive politics in *Casque d'or*.

to Marie's cotton nightdress on the morning after their night of lovemaking. For here it is Manda's body and not Marie's, which is offered up to the viewer for contemplation and also Manda's body that is put in a position of vulnerability. In this respect, Manda can be seen to inhabit a space normally reserved for the female star body, a position of 'feminine' to-be-looked-at-ness (Leahy, 2007: 51). To paraphrase Hayward, this yielding of gender binary allows Manda to wear the aforementioned soft fabrics and also to be in more solo shots than Marie (another position which would usually be reserved for the female star) (2004a: 17). As seen with Marie, Becker makes the representation of women a complex one. Given the information on Manda so far, one can begin to see how Becker is making the men within his text complex representations too.

As with the authenticity of Marie's dress and character discussed above, Manda's authenticity of appearance can also be linked to a quest for the truth on Mayo's part. This search for truth manifests itself in Mayo's meticulously authentic, near hyper-real recreation of historical costume. For, in being faithful to the past, the truth of his costumes can resonate in the present. Having already established the authenticity of Manda's appearance, it follows that his costume is also stitched into the concept of material memory. The material memory of Marie's costume focused on the ideologies and discourses generated by her corset-belt, and Manda's costume in some ways shares in this external corsetry via the wide band of cloth at his waist. Although it appears less like a traditional women's foundation garment than Marie's corset-belt, Manda's cummerbund style cloth could be read as alluding to the lesser-worn male corset.



Figure 43. Manda's cummerbund-corset.

Male corset-wearing has always been considered controversial, and it seems only to have been practiced by small numbers of certain groups. For example, in the nineteenth century, male corset-wearing was associated with a few military men, dandy's, corset-enthusiasts and cross-dressers but certainly not the mainstream (Steele, 2001:36-39). None of these social groupings seem to be a natural fit for Manda and his cummerbund-corset, but then again, he is not putting the corset where it is supposed to be for it is positioned over his clothes. As with Marie's corset-belt, Manda's pseudo-corset becomes a site/sight of information, exchange and economies of desire. For example, it is where he places Marie's letter to him, tucking it into the centre of the cloth. In this respect, Manda's cummerbund-corset is similar in function to whalebone and/or wooden busks where love notes would be carved and then slotted into the corset to keep

its structure – desire kept next to the body.<sup>136</sup> Yet Manda places this desire at one remove away from the body for his cummerbund-corset is over his clothing. Like Marie, he exteriorises what is usually kept within the liminal space between body and undergarment. In so doing, Manda mirrors Marie in his external locating of desire, and the thread of Mayo's painterly practice, which locates the internal at an external level is continued in Manda's costume.

Of Marie and Manda's mutual desire, Hayward has commented that 'what is suggested [...] is sexuality as flowing both within and between bodies, rather than something rigid and contained and measurable only against the phallus.' (2004a: 19) This flow between the bodies of Marie and Manda is enabled via their repositioning of the 'corset' over outer-clothing, the desire the garment becomes imbued with radiates out rather than being tightly laced away. Thus there is equality of power between them in terms of their desire. However, this desire is not on a constant keel, rather it see-saws between them as I will now explore.

It is Marie who instigates the gaze between them at the *guinguette*, which Manda then reciprocates, and Marie who asks him to dance. It is she, therefore, who begins with the eyes and voice as agents of desire. Marie continues to take the lead in the balance of power as she takes a cab to see Manda the following day. They kiss and then their clinch is cut short by the appearance of Manda's betrothed, Léonie (Loleh Bellon). Marie's power is then unbalanced by this knowledge of Manda's other life that she had not expected to have to engage with, and so dejected by this she rejects him with a slap to the face. Accordingly, this complicates the power relations and explains why Marie

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<sup>136</sup> See corset sections 2.2 and 2.3 in chapter 2.

accepts Leca's offer to become his mistress and almost welcomes the ensuing fight between Manda and Roland. After he has duelled to 'win' her, Manda expects that he will see Marie. However, as she has given herself to Leca prior to the duel she quickly leaves in order to avoid having to spend the night with him when it is Manda whom she wants. Ultimately, both parties are disappointed and the balance of power is tipped in neither of their favours. Yet Marie takes the initiative and, therefore, the power once more, by sending Manda a note in order to meet with him. Consequently, it is her power of desire, which dominates the first half of *Casque d'or* even though Manda reciprocates this desire.

However, by the Joinville sequence (mid-way into the film) they are presented as equal subjects, 'their bodies are constructed as both desiring and desired.' (Leahy, 2007: 42) This equality is manifested through the gaze, which alternates between Marie's and Manda's point of view and desiring positions. As Marie wakes the sleeping Manda on the riverbank, the camera cuts to a close up of her face gazing happily down at Manda. This is followed by a fade to black and then, in a reversal of the earlier shot, one sees Manda in bed gazing at the sleeping Marie. Equilibrium is achieved. But the balance is again shifted, this time putting Manda into the more powerful position. When they enter the church to watch the wedding, it is clear that Marie feels that she has found her man and would be willing to commit to marrying him, whereas Manda, despite being in love with Marie, feels uncomfortable and wants to leave. Arguably, Manda's unease stems from the fact that he is witnessing a bourgeois marriage, the ideals of which clash with his own working-class anti-clerical socialist positioning (a stance that both Becker and Mayo share with Manda). Marie must accept Manda's different evaluation of marriage

and so the shifting of power between them continues, or would do were Manda not sentenced to death.

Of the process of power relations within the film, Leahy has commented that ‘while *Casque d’or* offers a rare representation of female desire, it also recognises that there is little point in being a desiring subject if one is not desired in return [...]. Thus the look implies seduction as well as desire and demands a returning look.’ (2007: 68) This is certainly true but the power relations here are more than just equal for, as gathered above, they are not as straightforward as they might first seem. Like Marie and Manda’s gender positioning, their approach to desire and power is appropriately fluid. Such fluidity of gender, desire and power, results in the film screening a far more enlightened vision of the heterosexual couple, and Manda does not become a stereotype of masculinity for (unlike Leca) negotiates with the other sex. In view of this less stereotyped representation of desire and power one can trace an image of gender relations well in advance of its time.

While Marie and Manda may mirror each other in aspects of costume (open necklines and softness of silhouette and fabric in particular) and the equality between them, there are also differences and it is these differences, which are as interesting as their similarities. For example, whereas there are similarities between Marie’s and Manda’s clothes, Marie also mirrors some sartorial aspects of Leca, especially in terms of patterning. Although she is in love with Manda she can never totally free herself from Leca and his desire for her.<sup>137</sup> She ultimately becomes a cipher between these two very different masculinities. Furthermore, Manda differs from Marie in an aspect of his

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<sup>137</sup> See Hayward, S. (2004b) *Simone Signoret: the Star as Cultural Sign*, New York and London: Continuum, pp 110-120 for further analysis of this process of clothing echoes.

material memory. I have detailed above how Manda's cummerbund-corset, in a similar fashion to Marie's corset-belt becomes a location for the externalising of desiring discourses, yet Reggiani's character's material memory goes deeper. As with Marie's 'un-corseted' silhouette, Manda's loose fitting shirt and trousers allow unimpeded movement. This results in the movement of the body being able to be traced by Manda's clothing and consequently, this movement spans two timeframes – the *Belle Époque* and the 1950s. Crucially, however, Manda's trousers are cut from velvet. This fabric holds the key to understanding the significance of the material memory of his clothes and their function as a fabric of resistance, since due to its three-dimensional surface velvet is a dynamic cloth that bruises. Velvet physically as well as figuratively records the progress of the body it clothes through time and space. In short, one can see the process of material memory as a recording device at work more keenly in velvet than in other fabrics because velvet visibly shows the bruises of the past. I will now explore this protean fabric further.

Warwick and Cavallaro have noted that it is velvet's three-dimensionality that increases the multiplicity of its readings: 'Indeed, this cloth's obvious three-dimensionality – and hence its ability to interact with the body of the wearer as a bodily substance itself in more overt ways than flimsier materials – is a property of velvet that fashions have been intent on maximising at least since the Renaissance.' (1998: 72) Continuing this thread, Warwick and Cavallaro further comment on velvet's three-dimensional status rendering it an incredibly opulent fabric, which lends itself to the world of the senses. However, due to the cloth's involvement in religious, imperial and military clothing through the ages a purely sensuous reading of its properties is not possible (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 70).

Mayo too recognises the importance of velvet's three-dimensionality and historical links. In acknowledging that velvet marks with the movement and actions of its wearer, the designer has spied an opportunity to again use material memory to reflect on 1950s politics. For in choosing velvet as a fabric for Manda, he is consciously engaging with the fabric's connection to bodies of authority, in order that the bruises created by Manda's movements are able to comment on matters of State in the wake of conflict. The cross-timeframe resonances of material memory then, are shown to operate at both an individual and national scale through bruising.



Figure 44. Manda's bruised velvet.

At a local individual level, these velvet bruises represent Manda's actions and their consequences. They are bruises caused by his desire for Marie, Roland's death, his carpentry work etc. All of his actions and/or states of mind are recorded in fabric via the movement they produce. At a national level, Manda's velvet bruises function metonymically to become a material memory that resonates with the 1950s unwillingness to accept the crisis within France's masculinity. In this instance, the present which Manda's velvet bruises are addressing bears witness to a France scarred by its recent past. The memory imbued in the velvet he wears, when considered in the

1950s period, is the recollection of the bruises of World War II – caused by the actions and thus movements of France’s occupation, defeat and collaboration. Manda’s material memory also addresses the bruising effect that these actions and movements had on the nation’s masculinity. Battered by the loss of just under one and a half million people (mostly men) and facing changes in society and traditional gender roles, France’s post-war masculinity was in crisis. A crisis the government endeavoured to resolve by implementing misogynistic measures to encourage women to stay in the domestic sphere and reproduce. This drive for the domestic was coupled with kick-starting the nation’s rebuilding and modernisation on both a social and economic scale. In order to begin this dual process of reconstruction and adopt the new, the legacy of the Occupation and France’s metaphorical rape became a scar to be covered over, camouflaged by the strict legislation of women (the metaphorical embodiment of the nation) and encouraging an acceptably conservative masculinity.

However, before this cover-up process could begin, the nation first had to be cleansed. This was the ideology behind the post-war purges, in which male collaborators were shot and women who were accused of ‘horizontal collaboration’ were publicly shorn and paraded naked through the streets. Once this clean up process was underway, the procedure of forgetting and fabricating could begin.<sup>138</sup> The myth of the Resistance in particular became heavily embroidered. In short, in an attempt to revert to a system that privileged and rehabilitated France’s bruised masculinity, misogyny and cultural

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<sup>138</sup> Ross has detailed how this cleansing procedure continued throughout the 1950s in France via the domestic forum. The home came to stand for the nation in miniature and maintaining a spotless modern home became vital if one were to scrub clean the stains of the Occupation, collaboration, defeat and latterly the bloody mess of decolonisation. See Ross, K. (1999) *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonisation and the Reordering of French Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press. See also section 1.2 in part one of this thesis.

amnesia were embraced. Above all, forgetting the past and denying the horrors of war were paramount. The bruises should not show.

Yet the material memory of Manda's velvet bruises will not collude in this process of cultural amnesia and myth-making. Neither will it tolerate men's unwillingness to accept the truth of their situation in post-war France, which was inevitably going to have changed since the war commenced. Tied into this resistance is Manda's conduct throughout the film. He is willing and able to negotiate with the other sex, making him an authentic rather than stereotyped masculinity. It is also in his authenticity that Manda is unyielding in his defence of and fight for the truth in *Casque d'or*. He is authentic and truthful in his dealings in love and life, and this is why he cannot let Raymond take the blame for Roland's murder even though he knows it will lead to his own demise. The film's narrative, therefore, mirrors in miniature, the significance of the material memory Mayo has stitched into Manda's clothing. Manda stands for resistance, he resists the collaboration and cultural amnesia embodied by Leca and his double dealings and denunciations. Manda stands for the truth and is punished for it. As such, he also stands as an icon against the post-war *status quo* of memory loss.

It is Manda's particular take on masculinity, which is most troubling for the hegemony of the 1950s, for his masculinity would be regarded as errant by standards of the decade. In the same way that Marie represents a way forward for women, Manda points to a new masculinity, which acknowledges and welcomes women on an equal footing through a renegotiation of power relations. The masculinity he points to would of course be considered dysfunctional by patriarchal values. In both the 1950s and *Belle Époque* timeframes to which his costume speaks, such a masculinity would be

considered unacceptable as it contravenes the patriarchally structured societal hegemonies at work. However, Manda is particularly troubling for the 1950s because he actively resists the misogyny and denial upon which the nation was being rebuilt. As such, his death in *Casque d'or* reflects the decade's unwillingness to listen to a true male voice in a climate of cultural amnesia. This is why Manda's progressive politics must be cut off (he is guillotined) for there is no space for fresh ideology in this restrictive post-war context.

Yet what is so clever about the political edge to Mayo's costumes is that the material memory of Manda's velvet bruises anticipates and exposes this unwillingness of the nation to accept change and political progression. This is evidenced in the 1950s timeframe by Antoine Pinay's return to government post-war. The former Vichy minister initially lost office at the Liberation due to his collaboration. However, Pinay's ineligibility was soon lifted and he became Prime Minister of France on the eighth of March 1952, serving until the eighth of January 1953; he was also to return to government in 1957 as Finance Minister (Larkin, 1997: 172-3 and 269). Given this willingness by the French government to forget Pinay's collaborationist positioning during World War II and reinstate him soon after, it is unsurprising that progressive political views such as those held by Manda would not have been tolerated.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Unfortunately, it therefore makes sense that after playing Manda, Serge Reggiani was ostracised by the French cinema for some time, unlike Pinay who remained in a political post until 1960. The sparse dialogue of Manda resulted in Reggiani being seen as too feminine and not action-packed enough for lead male roles.

#### 11.4: Radical Sartorial Suppression: Leca's Apparel of Amnesia

Unlike Manda and his progressive politics and new masculinity, Leca is symbolic of the old tradition of patriarchy within *Casque d'or*. As the head of the 'family' of *apaches* he stands for the patriarch, the father who ultimately has power over his boys. Leca monitors his *apaches* finances (only he has the key to the safe), clothing (he chastises Raymond and Billy for wearing caps rather than hats), time (he frequently checks his watch and organises the gang's routine), discipline (he punishes Fredo for taking the money) and women (he takes Marie from Roland). In contrast, Manda does not engage in relationships where such discrepancies in power occur (as seen above via his equality with Marie and through his camaraderie with Raymond). In further contrast to Manda comes Leca's dress. Contrary to Manda's soft, open silhouette, which reveals the movements of his body, Leca is attired in such a way that the corporeal is concealed. As Leahy has commented, 'Unlike Manda, where what you see is what you get, Leca's appearance hides what lies beneath: the bourgeois wine merchant hides the gangster, the jovial boss hides the violent disciplinarian, the dapper and suave exterior hides the cowardly and treacherous nature within.' (2007: 60-61) Therefore, I will unstitch the seams of Leca and his costume in order to understand how this duality between clothing and character manifests itself, as well as unpicking what the ideological resonances of this may be.

When one first encounters Leca at his house, he is dressed in a white shirt shot through with a two-colour pinstripe tucked into dark, extremely high-waisted single pinstripe trousers. Over this combination he sports an expensive looking satin waistcoat, which is dark in colour and patterned with a star motif. He is accessorised with a gold pocket watch and a geometrically patterned silk tie complete with tiepin. It is clear that Leca

takes pride in his appearance (and that of his gang). Such a preoccupation with the sartorial links Leca to a long tradition of narcissistic Franco-American gangsters, for whom clothing is directly equated with status, money and style. Bruzzi has identified such narcissism as being an element that distinguishes the gangster from other masculine archetypes, and that such vanity is demonstrated by the gangster via both ‘a preoccupation with the appearance of others and a self-conscious regard for his own.’ (1997: 67) Leca is certainly a vain character, as one can infer from the frequent checks of his reflection that he makes. He is also shown to be fixated on personal grooming, one sees him shaving and Marie knowingly flatters Leca by remarking on his change of hair parting. Such vanity and grooming ties into Bruzzi’s reading of the gangster but in the case of *Casque d’or*, it would appear that there is something extra going on behind Leca’s façade.



Figure 45. Leca’s multi-layering.

The heavy patterning of Leca's costume is undoubtedly a symbol of wealth and status. His adoption of clothes worn by the bourgeoisie illustrates his class ambitions.<sup>140</sup> Yet this extreme patterning deflects attention away from the body, away from corporeal truth, by drawing attention to itself and its surface rather than the body that it attires. In addition, the sheen of Leca's silk garments also deflect attention away from the flesh that wears them. Furthermore, they are not easy to read in terms of their material memory for they never appear to crease and their lustre makes them seem to be almost wipe-clean. Therefore, the actions of Leca and the movement they produce go unrecorded, unlike Manda whose velvet trousers show his every move. In short, Leca's clothes display themselves rather than his body and in so doing function as a cover-up. Nothing sticks. To unpick this further, I need to return to the 1950s timeframe.

In the earlier section on Manda one saw how France became engaged in a process of cultural amnesia post World War II in order to forget the horrors of the Occupation, collaboration and defeat. I then explained how the velvet bruises of Manda's trousers refused to collude with this process of erasing the past. Consequently, if Leca is the opposite of everything Manda represents, it should come as no surprise that his costume *does* collaborate in the process of cultural amnesia. Indeed, collaboration is key, for as Leahy notes, *Casque d'or* explicitly refers to 'France's recent history through Leca's double dealings and denunciations.' (2007: 16) In opposition to Manda's materiality of truth, Leca has threads of collaboration and cover-up stitched into his costume.

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<sup>140</sup> Leca's apaches too (with the exception of Raymond) are dressed in a style that mimics the bourgeoisie. However, their adoption of middle-class clothing appears to be parodic for Mayo exposes it to be artifice. For example, he reveals Roland's flashy silk tie to be only a clip on, as it hangs down from where it was tucked into his waistband rather than from his neck after the duel with Manda.

Read in this light, the wipe-clean appearance of Leca's clothing sartorially translates as the nation's desire to wipe clean the stain of collaboration from the collective conscience. Leca's preoccupation with grooming can also be interpreted as maintaining this façade of cleanliness, which in fact hides a bloody and uncomfortable truth. As unstitched above, Leca's costume deflects attention away from corporeal truth. Expanding on this analysis, one can observe that the layering of patterns in Leca's clothing translates as layer upon layer of fabricated 'truth' covering up reality. Therefore, Leca's costume replicates the way in which the French national psyche wanted to conceal the murky truth of collaboration.

Maintaining this state of cultural amnesia was paramount for 1950s France and one can read Leca's upholding of personal appearance and reputation as emblematic of this. Leca does not want his shady deals (his collaboration) to be discovered and so he fixes and controls events so that he can either erase or rewrite them. For example, Leca takes charge of the impending duel between Manda and Roland, insisting that they use his knife even though Roland has several on his person. He also tells Raymond to keep the dead Roland's watch to remember his friend by, knowing that he will later use this object of transference to set Raymond up. This then resonates with the 1950s timeframe by illustrating how dangerous memory, remembering and being in possession of the truth can be, for it goes directly against the prevailing climate of cultural amnesia. For example, Leca has Anatole killed for having witnessed the duel and thus being privy to the reality of the situation. Leca is, therefore, the controller of history, amending events through accessories and adornments, in particular watches and weapons.

However, one must not forget that the foundation of enquiry in this chapter is the corset. Unlike his *apaches* who have various pseudo-corsets in the form of cummerbunds and wide belts, Leca does not appear to be corseted. Yet his waist is still a focal point for his costume, due to the extremely high-waisted trousers he wears. In fact, his waist becomes the point where at least three layers of fabric overlap at any one time: his shirt being tucked into his trousers and his waistcoat covering both of these layers. The excessive height of Leca's trousers and the layering of fabric functions to protect this vulnerable area of the body; it is as reinforced as possible without a corset. Again, one may interpret these multiple fabric layers as referring to Leca's manipulated and multi-layered versions of the truth, yet there is something else going on here. In order to divine what this may be, I need to understand why Leca does not wear a pseudo-corset.

I have already discovered that Mayo does not discriminate in terms of gender with regards to 'corset'-wearing for he makes both the male and the female waist sites/sights of equal importance within *Casque d'or*. Yet none of these garments are corsets in the traditional sense, for they do not function as undergarments. Instead, in a fashion faithful to his paintings, Mayo takes the interior and externalises it. As such, liminality is put into the public arena along with other sociological, sexual, political, cultural, and economic discourses. In summary, the externalised corset becomes a junction for the material memories one's clothing may have. Yet Leca deliberately suppresses memory and so his costume and character are programmed to function to forget. This then, is the reason why Leca does not wear an exterior pseudo-corset but chooses to triply strap himself into multiple layers of shiny fabric, for he wishes to silence any discourses of truth generated by material memory that might expose his double-dealings and denunciations. Thus once more Leca can be linked to the process of covering up traces

of collaboration. The denial of material memory implicit in his costume ultimately speaks volumes about the difficulty that France as a nation was having in facing up to the realities of World War II and its consequences.

### **11.5: Corset Conclusions**

The above analysis has shown how through various manifestations, presences and absences of the corset and types of fabric, Mayo engages with the process of material memory in order that its political resonances chime across timeframes. From these competing discourses the question of whose story *Casque d'or* really recounts arises. For although the text both begins and ends with Marie (she rows the boat to the *guinguette* at the film's opening and the bowing of her helmet of golden hair at Manda's execution signals the film's end), *Casque d'or* in fact presents a complex interweaving of three points of view: that of Marie, Manda and Leca. In different ways all three characters and their wardrobes move the narrative forward. For example, Marie asking Manda to dance, Leca taking control of the fight sequence, and Manda avenging Raymond's death and his loss of Marie at the end of the film are crucial narrative catalysts, each marked by the sartorial.

Yet vitally for this investigation, it is via these three characters' wardrobes that space is made for these different points of view, politics and desires to co-exist. In conclusion, Mayo braids the three sartorial strands of Marie, Manda and Leca and their associated material memories into the narrative through his radical approach to corsetry and fabric as a recording device. By interweaving these disparate threads the designer creates a fabric from the politics of costume, which is what gives this film's remarkable costumes

such an edge. This political edge is what enables Mayo to refashion the 1950s *film à costumes*. Through material memory he is able to see through the guise of the past and directly reposition and address the uncomfortable truths that France as a nation was trying to conceal in the early 1950s. In order to see whether Mayo's political edge continued to be so sharp throughout the 1950s, I will now turn to the last chapter of this case-study, which will be a summary of the use of corsetry, fabric and material memory in two texts from Mayo's costume drama *œuvre* during the remainder of the fifties: *Gervaise* and *Sans famille*.

## CHAPTER 12: MAYO'S MID- TO LATE- 1950s *FILMS À*

### *COSTUMES*

#### 12.1: *Gervaise*

Similarly to *Casque d'or*, *Gervaise* is a film that (atypically for costume drama) chooses to focus on the working class. *Gervaise* is an adaptation of a novel: Émile Zola's text, *L'Assommoir* (part of the Rougon-Macquart series). Although it was first published in 1877, *L'Assommoir* begins in 1850 and ends in 1869. Therefore, it charts almost the entirety of the Second Empire. It begins when Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was President of the Second Republic, just before he was to seize power in December 1851 installing himself as Emperor Napoléon III, and ends just before his defeat in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. Against this political backdrop, both novel and Clément's film chart the life and loves of Gervaise Macquart and the awful conditions faced by France's urban working classes.

In this film, as with *Casque d'or*, Mayo is once again faced with the task of dressing the working-class. One can assume, therefore, that Mayo's concern with clothing the working class will again have political ramifications that extend across timeframes. Yet, I suspect that the political resonances that the designer engages with in this text will differ from the earlier political discourses unpicked in *Casque d'or*, for in *Gervaise*, Mayo is dealing with very different periods: the Second Empire and the mid-1950s. Although there are only four years separating *Casque d'or* from *Gervaise*, the France of 1956 was very different from the France of 1952. Rather than being a country in transition and gripped by psychological repression as *Casque d'or's* 1952 production date attests, the mid-1950s were marked by new traumas, in particular the suffering instigated by decolonisation. Exactly how Mayo weaves these new political threads

through his costume design to create the political fabric of *Gervaise* will be the subject of this supporting enquiry.

In order to look at the costuming of this film in relation to that of *Casque d'or*, I will unlace the use of corsetry in *Gervaise*. When first introduced to the character of Gervaise (Maria Schell) one cannot detect the presence of a corset, there is no rigidity in her torso and no unnatural waist to hip ratio. As she waits for her lover, Lantier (Armand Mestral), to come home, one notices that her silhouette is very soft, rounded and weighed down by the pleats of her cotton petticoats, chemise and woollen shawl. Further layers of costume are added as Gervaise gets dressed for the day – a dark cotton pleated skirt and bodice style blouse in patterned cotton. One soon realises why there is no corset, for Gervaise works at the washhouse, laundering clothes. As a working-woman, therefore, ease of movement takes precedence over disciplining the body into a fashionable shape. Supporting this are the other women who work within the film, who also go un-corseted. For example, Clémence (Micheline Luccioni) whom Gervaise later employs at her *blanchisserie* is often shown working in only her under-chemise. However, the one character who is noticeably corseted is Virginie (Suzie Delaire), who even when she is at work in the washhouse has her waist nipped in with corsetry. Virginie is a character with bourgeois aspirations of whom it is commented by Coupeau (François Périer), that she has ‘up-town manners.’<sup>141</sup> As a result, one gathers that Mayo is again using corsetry as a means to illustrate class difference and class aspirations. Accordingly, it makes sense that Virginie marries Monsieur Poisson (Lucien Hubert), the symbol of Bonapartiste ideology in the film, for money and status.

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<sup>141</sup> She has ‘l’air de la ville.’



Figure 46. Maria Schell as the un-corseted Gervaise.

Gervaise also marries during the course of the narrative and, akin to Virginie, it is not for love but neither is it for money. Instead, one gets the feeling that Gervaise marries Coupeau in order to legitimise herself and her children.<sup>142</sup> However, in doing so, she enters into a contract, which expressly privileges the husband due to the strictly patriarchal *Code Napoléon*, which governed Second Empire society.<sup>143</sup> Consequently, her marriage to Coupeau would legally make her a minor. How interesting then that Gervaise's wedding day is the one and only occasion when she is corseted, the foundation garment disciplining her body reflecting her entry into a patriarchally biased bond in which she becomes the property of her new husband.

It would seem that Mayo acknowledges and engages with this unfair agreement by conceding to the tradition of the bride's body being a delicious parcel to be unwrapped by its new 'owner,' the unlacing of the corset being the last barrier to the corporeal and so a point of titillation. One expects Coupeau to profit from Gervaise's corset as the gateway to her naked flesh on their wedding night. Yet, true to form, Mayo does not let

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<sup>142</sup> She has two children, Etienne and Claude, from her previous relationship (but importantly not marriage) with the character Lantier.

<sup>143</sup> I should point out here that the Code covered all areas of society, not just marriage.

his costume become marked by either *cliché* or expectation. For when they return from their honeymoon trip to the Louvre, it is Gervaise, not Coupeau, who takes control of the undoing of her garments. She insists on untying both her boots and stockings despite Coupeau trying several times to unlace them himself. Initially, one may think that this is due to embarrassment on Gervaise's part for one knows that she is lame in one leg. However, as this scene visually unfolds further, the camera follows Coupeau to the other side of the room for several frames and when it returns to Gervaise, one finds her in a cotton chemise, having already removed her dress and corset while her husband's back was turned. Thus, there is something more complex than embarrassment governing this situation, for in unlacing herself, Gervaise demonstrates that it is she who is in control of the relations of power in this scene. She exercises this control sartorially, for in removing herself from the corset and the garment's associated discourses of desire she is clearly making a statement about her lack of desire for Coupeau.

As a result she metaphorically unlaces herself from the gendered constraints of the *Code Napoléon's* rules on marriage, she will not be a submissive wife in this instance.

However, although Gervaise can be seen to contradict the Code's rules on this occasion, both herself and Coupeau are bound by it. As the film's narrative attests, Gervaise's entry into legitimacy ends up costing her both Coupeau and her boutique, leaving her dispossessed. Furthermore, Coupeau's fall from the roof of the hospital he is working on is precipitated by his having to sign a contract on Gervaise's behalf – for under the laws of the Code she is unable to do it for herself.<sup>144</sup> Once again, the corset is proving itself to be fertile ground for material memory, for the lacing of Gervaise into the

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<sup>144</sup> This situation is made even more ridiculous when one considers that it is Gervaise who is the literate one of the pair. This is illustrated in the scene in which they sign their marriage certificate – Gervaise neatly pens her signature whereas Coupeau signs with an X.

constricting laws of matrimony under the patriarchal Napoleonic Code also resonates with the previously discussed pro-patriarchal laws introduced in the France of post-World War II designed to lace women into the domestic sphere once more.

Akin to *Casque d'or*, corsetry in *Gervaise* also expressly deals with the situation of France's women during the 1950s. Mayo again treats the corset as a garment that is charged with material memories of relations of desire and power as well as class hierarchies. However, there is a marked difference in the way that both *Gervaise* and *Marie* have agency over their desire or bodies. Whereas *Marie's* externalised corset-belt invites a confrontation with desire, *Gervaise's* corset centres on hidden desire. In fact, her corset is never seen, one only knows that it is present due to the change in her silhouette and it is removed before even Coupeau can see it. Thus *Gervaise's* desires are neither for the spectator nor for her husband. Indeed, relations of desire are complicated in *Gervaise* for three men compete for her affections. In fact, the vying gazes of Coupeau, Lantier and Goujet (Jacques Harden), effectively lace *Gervaise* into another metaphorical corset, a corset of looks, which she has rather more trouble unlacing than her actual fabric foundation garment. Indeed, her inability to extricate herself from the desire of Coupeau and in particular Lantier, leads to unhappiness as she cannot free herself in order to be with Goujet, the man she really loves. Therefore, although *Gervaise* is sartorially un-corseted on all but one occasion, her metaphorical corset stays tightly-laced, immobilising her.

Also weighing her down and impeding her movement are her petticoats. In fact, what she appears to be wearing is the early horsehair and linen version of the crinoline.

Thinking back to the *mise-en-scène* of the crinoline in part one, one will remember that

the Second Empire became synonymous with the cage-crinoline and thus one cannot discuss the costume of this period without making mention of the garment.

Consequently, I shall briefly discuss Mayo's use of the crinoline here.<sup>145</sup> With the horsehair and linen crinoline usually a minimum of six stiffened petticoats would be layered to give the fashionable width of skirt. As one can imagine this was heavy, itchy, uncomfortable, sweaty and unhygienic. The arrival of the cage-crinoline was, therefore, also an advancement in personal hygiene. Pertinently, this links fashion to Haussmann's redevelopment of Paris, which was also in part driven by discourses of cleanliness (a point which I shall consider in more detail below). However, Gervaise wears the older crinoline style. This points to her socio-economic situation – she is unable to afford a cage-crinoline and the sheer weight of her petticoats drags her down. As a result, her economic and social impediment is marked by both her undergarments and her aforementioned limp. Furthermore, her crinoline places her in a position of the in-between - she is in-between lovers, laced into all of their gazes of desire.<sup>146</sup> As one will

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<sup>145</sup> The only cage-crinolines to appear during the course of the narrative are found during the wedding party's visit to the Louvre. The aristocratic and fashionable ladies who are glimpsed in the galleries are all widely cage-crinolined. Yet the most notable crinoline is the one belonging to a woman positioned on a step-ladder who is carefully reproducing part of a painting. If one thinks back to the exploration of the garment in part one, one will remember that the cage-crinoline eliminated the need for many layers of petticoats beneath the dress. As a result, the raised position of this woman is an erotic one for those beneath her in the gallery would have been privy to what was under her skirt, which at this time would most likely have been a pair of split crotch drawers. What is then put on display alongside France's famous collection of artworks then are the unclear borders of the female body, via the display of female genitalia. This site/sight of female corporeality and sexuality thinly veiled by the crinoline would have been disturbing for patriarchy - If one remembers the analysis of the crinoline in the previous exploration of the garment, one will remember Nead's discussion of how patriarchal cultural practice results in the female body being made 'other' and safe by hermetically sealing it in the poses and presentation of art. Translating this to clothing, anything that revealed the unclear borders of the female body is troubling for patriarchy. As with Marie's corset-belt, Mayo is again making the liminal visible as the discursivity of the body is explicitly displayed. The film's narrative calls attention to this fact when Gervaise, looking at the picture but no doubt also being able to see up the woman's hoops, asks 'who is that woman?' The woman herself and Goujet simultaneously reply 'Liberty!' Further adding to this semi-comic scene Goujet asks Gervaise if she likes what she sees. She replies that she does indeed because unlike the previous painting this one tells a story. It is a comment that could apply to both the painting and the corporeal discursivity emanating from under the woman's crinoline!

<sup>146</sup> See crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6 outlining the *mise-en-scène* of the garment and its in-between positioning.

see when the analysis turns to material memory below, she is also placed in-between timeframes.

In terms of male-corsetry, both Coupeau and Lantier, like Reggiani's Manda, sport the cummerbund style band at their waist. However, the wearing of this garment is intermittent and not used, as is Manda's, to retain information and exhibit desire. Rather, the sporadic wearing of the cummerbund-corset seems to be an indicator of changes taking place in working-class identity. The cummerbund-corset in *Casque d'or* functions as both a nostalgic symbol of authentic working-class traditions and *artisan* practice, as well as reflecting the changes starting to take place in France during the early 1950s as the identity of the working classes begins to change due to post-war credit systems and new industrial infrastructure. Accordingly, one can read the discontinuous wearing of the cummerbund-corset in *Gervaise* as alluding to the discontinuities, breaks, and even collapse of working-class identity, which would have been visibly appearing in French society during the mid-1950s. As such, one can garner that the use of male corsets in *Gervaise* is also tied into the practice of material memory, in particular its resonances with class. But one must not forget that the earlier analysis of *Casque d'or* yielded some unanticipated readings of the politics of costume due to particular fabrics' associations with material memory. I will now see if this concept is applicable to the analysis of *Gervaise*.

Similarly to *Casque d'or*, Mayo makes the presence of velvet felt in *Gervaise*.

However, in the latter film it is corduroy - a derivative of velvet – that exhibits material memory. Akin to Manda's velvet trousers, the corduroy trousers, jacket and waistcoat that Coupeau wears also bruise, and so too the process of recording memory through

fabric is stitched into Coupeau's clothing. More than just exhibiting bruising, Coupeau's clothes become ripped and littered with holes. In narrative terms this breakdown of cloth is synonymous with his decline into alcoholism, and the consequent breakdown of his body, which results in his death. Yet in and across the two timeframes that *Gervaise* addresses, Coupeau's tattered corduroy has further implications. In the context of the Second Empire, his dishevelled fabric evidences the harsh economic situation the urban working class faced. Poverty is sartorially reinforced. However, in terms of class, a preoccupation of Mayo's costume design, a further reading can be unstitched. In order to do this I need to look at Coupeau's accident in more detail.



Figure 47. Coupeau's corduroy becomes more dishevelled as the narrative progresses.

Coupeau's fall was from the roof of a new hospital under construction. Such construction of new buildings during the Second Empire would have been a reasonably common occurrence under Haussmannisation. If one thinks back to the earlier section on crinolines one will remember that in June 1852, Haussmann was hired to administrate the rebuilding and modernisation of the French capital.<sup>147</sup> However, such rebuilding was unlike any previous modifications of the city. Rather than working with the city's existing urban fabric as previous planners and architects had done, Haussmann's plans centred around completely clearing large sections of Paris and rebuilding them from scratch. Such a radical plan involved many areas of the city and most classes but it was the working classes who were to suffer the most from Haussmann's reordering of the city.<sup>148</sup> At this point in Paris's history, the Industrial Revolution was changing the urban landscape and attracting vast numbers of migrant workers who settled wherever the cheapest rents could be found. Consequently, large areas of the city became impoverished. Such areas were feared by the bourgeoisie because of their perceived potential for revolt - the memory of revolution still tangible. As a result, the displacement of these working-class areas, which were uprooted as expropriation under Haussmann swung into effect, also functioned as a security measure. The 'dangerous' classes were dispersed, forced to Paris's outer reaches as city centre renovations pushed up rents and priced the working classes out (Saalman, 1971: 46).

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<sup>147</sup> See crinolines sections 2.5 and 2.6 in part one.

<sup>148</sup> This is not to say that other classes did not suffer from the changes to the city that Haussmann instigated. Indeed, many critics and writers spoke of the class-wide sense of rootlessness that this radical city planning had caused. Interestingly, Zola was one of these critical voices and articulated his feelings in *La Curée* (1871-2), a novel, which details the lives of the extremely wealthy against a backdrop of corruption and Haussmannisation.

Returning to *Gervaise*, Coupeau's job as a *zingueur* fitting out the city's new buildings with zinc roofs is caught up in this process of Haussmannisation. His injuries are a direct consequence of his need to work. Haussmann buildings with their greater height brought greater danger to men with his skills. Thus, his tumble from the roof speaks not only to the problematic of his gender, it also enunciates the harm caused to working-class identity arising from Haussmann's reconfiguration of the city, which clearly had far-reaching social implications. Thus the rips in his corduroy correspond with the ripping up of the city's urban fabric and the social changes it precipitated.

This articulation of social change via fabric also resonates in the 1950s period. I have already detailed in relation to *Casque d'or* how changes in working-class identity were being instigated by post-war credit systems and new industrial infrastructure. In addition, I have noted above how the intermittent wearing of the cummerbund-corset - the symbol of working-class *artisan* tradition - by *Gervaise*'s male characters can be read as representing the discontinuities in working-class identity brought about by these post-war changes. Again, the rips in Coupeau's corduroy are significant. On this occasion, the material memory they are imbued with finds resonance with the shearing apart of class hierarchies during the 1950s (Ross, 1999: 8). Staying with this mid-twentieth century timeframe, the reading around the shearing apart of fabric can be taken further if placed against France's imperial politics of the time. In terms of material memory resonating in the present, Mayo seems to be addressing a highly contentious issue that was governed by severe censorship: decolonisation (Larkin, 1997: 259).

It is odd to think that from 1940 to 1962, France was almost continually at war.

Ironically, after having been oppressed by the German Occupation, France quickly

became an oppressor too, desperately trying to hang on to its colonial territories. By 1956, the year in which *Gervaise* was released, bloody wars of decolonisation were in full swing. The French defeat and surrender at Dien Bien Phu on the seventh of May 1954 saw the final and complete collapse of French control in Indo-China. Following this military disaster came the declaration several months later of the Algerian war for independence. This announced the beginning of a war that was to be the bloodiest of all France's colonial conflicts. It was also the one that cut the deepest.

As Ross has outlined in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 'French national consciousness for 130 years had [...] developed according to a simple principle: Algeria is France.' (1999: 123) Whereas French West Africa, Equatorial Africa, Madagascar, and Indo-China were territories under the colonial ministry and thus colonies under a Governor-General; and Tunisia, Morocco, Syria and Lebanon were protectorates and mandated states attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Algeria was the only colony to be under the direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior (Larkin, 1997: 28-29). Consequently, 'in Algeria, from the outset, France affirmed a relation of identity.' (Ross, 1999: 123) Algeria's status as an integral part of France resulted in its war for and subsequent independence creating the biggest wound in the nation's psyche as far as decolonisation was concerned. In fact, it brought the country to the brink of civil war as rival terrorist activity (from both sides) escalated and spilled over into mainland France.

Due to the intensity of feeling surrounding decolonisation, state censorship repressed the bloody and torturous events that resulted as countries extricated themselves from French rule. Accordingly, censorship over proceedings in Algeria was particularly stringent, functioning as what Ross has termed a 'cosmetic discursive blanket thrown

over Algerian affairs.’ (1999: 114) One can speculate that Mayo would have been aware of such a blanket, for those who wanted to know what was occurring in Algeria could, albeit with difficulty, find out. Reports discrediting the activities of the French army in Algeria did appear in national newspapers but were couched in a language that upheld the demands of censorship. Reading between the lines was, therefore, possible but any article deemed to be too close to the truth could still result in entire issues of reputable papers being confiscated (Larkin, 1997: 259). In light of such reporting (albeit stifled) it follows that Mayo as a politically aware figure would have had a certain degree of knowledge of the real events taking place in Algeria.

Arguably, in this film, Mayo addresses issues of decolonisation by ripping into the very fabric of its cover up. By showing signs of distress in real fabric (his costumes) he creates metaphorical rips in censorship’s blanket or corset (to use my allegory). By using the concept of material memory to refract taboo discourses through the prism of the past, such discourses could slip through the lace-holes of cinematic censorship undetected. Subsequently, the rips in Coupeau’s corduroy exhibit how France’s censorship dis-addressed colonial matters during the 1950s. The tearing of his costume’s fabric mirrors the painful process of decolonisation, as the fabric of France’s Empire also began to rip apart, their frayed edges symbolic of the severed links between the nation and her colonies. That these tears in Coupeau’s clothes only worsen during the course of *Gervaise* reflects the widening rifts between France and what was once her Empire as well as the rifts within her psyche.

Coupeau is not alone in expressing material memories that chime with decolonisation. Gervaise’s costume can also be read as alluding to colonial matters. For example, the

link between the timeframe of the Second Empire and that of 1950s France along the plane of colonialism is forged in the knowledge that in terms of the Second Empire's imperial politics, Algeria would already have been under French control.<sup>149</sup> It was invaded in 1830 and over the following 17 years French rule was established despite intense resistance. Feelings of resentment towards French rule and questions of colonialism, therefore, span both timeframes. Yet it is to Gervaise's occupation to which one must turn in order to explore how the earlier material memory of discourses of colonisation makes itself felt in the 1950s.

Gervaise wants more than anything to own her own boutique and it is revealing that her chosen profession is that of a *blanchisseuse* – she washes clean other people's stains. There is clearly a parallel here with France's cover up of the truths of the conflicts of decolonisation. As already covered in part one of this thesis, the 1950s was marked by discourses on cleanliness functioning as a disguise for both the truth of the Occupation and the messy reality of decolonisation.<sup>150</sup> Ross argues compellingly in her study of the 1950s period of decolonisation in France for this idea of 'cleanliness' as an over-riding obsession of the national psyche (1999). Such desire for cleanliness was linked to a need to wipe clean the metaphorical stains left behind by the events of World War II but also extended to the mess that was now being created by decolonisation. This compulsion for cleanliness went hand in hand with France's post-war modernisation and the domestic became the feminine arena in which such discourses were played out. Women were encouraged to vacuum, launder, mop and polish using the very latest appliances - for a clean home equated to a clean nation. One aim of having such a

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<sup>149</sup> During the reign of Napoléon III, the French Empire continued to expand. Although an attempt at establishing Mexico as a French protectorate failed, control was established in Southern Vietnam and Cambodia (both of which were to become part of French Indochina during the Third Republic).

<sup>150</sup> See section 1.2 in part one.

spotless and modern nation was to maintain the distance between France and her (former) colonies, particularly Algeria. As Ross summarises, 'France had to maintain a distinction between herself and her (former) colonies at all costs - if Algeria was to become independent then France must become modern.' (1999: 78)

This sanitised image of France was covering up the bloody truths of colonial conflict, and the war in Algeria became notably embroiled in France's cleansing imperative. Tension between what came to be known as 'la sale guerre' and 'clean torture' was enflamed. Clean torture was to be Algeria's very own form of France's desire for cleanliness. It was known as clean because it left no trace and because it was executed using the very fabric of France's own drive for modernity and sanitation – electrified telephones and bathtubs were used in interrogations, as were reworked household gadgets that had been wired to inflict pain. Above all no stain should be left by which such barbaric practice could be identified. Hence the need for bleaching out via stringent censorship as mentioned above.

Returning then to the character of Gervaise, the stains on her person and her laundry can be viewed as more than just a record of her economic decline as conditions worsen in the household (for example Coupeau stealing her money). For when viewed through the 1950s colonial context, Gervaise's laundry boutique mirrors in miniature the attempts at bleaching out the stains of colonial conflicts. Indeed, the war in Algeria was never referred to as a war but as 'events' – a euphemism whose intention was deliberately not to acknowledge that a war was in fact taking place. However, the truths of situations can always find a weak point (such as a corset's lace-hole) to slip through. This is the reason why towards the end of the film, Gervaise cannot get rid of the stains on either her own

clothes or those of her customers. This corresponds with moments in the 1950s timeframe when uncomfortable truths about decolonisation did seep through and could not be bleached out. Gervaise's material memory, therefore, tallies with such moments when censorship was breached.

One can see how, in *Gervaise*, Mayo charts the socio-political changes taking place in 1950s France. On this occasion, however, the readings of corsetry and the material memories imbued in fabrics differ from those unpicked in *Casque d'or*. In keeping with the transformations the nation was experiencing in the mid-1950s, the political ramifications of Mayo's costume designs for *Gervaise* sartorially mirror the new trauma of the colonial and loss of Empire. In 1956, therefore, Mayo's political edge was as sharp as ever.

## **12.2: *Sans famille***

*Sans famille*, was written by Hector Malot and first published by Dentu in 1878. It is a children's book in two parts, which charts the progress of a young orphan called Rémi.<sup>151</sup> When his adoptive parents sell him into the care of a nomadic Italian performer, Rémi finds that people are not who or what they first seem. He learns that his real family may not be dead, and armed with this knowledge he becomes preoccupied with finding his birth mother. Malot was a prolific writer but this story is his most famous, having been adapted for cinema, television and theatre on numerous

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<sup>151</sup> This quest is in keeping with Malot's *œuvre*, which places a great importance on the family.

occasions.<sup>152</sup> One can speculate that *Sans famille*'s popularity is perhaps due to its orphan narrative. Indeed, the orphan is a powerful symbol, which can feed into the feelings a nation expresses when it has experienced a loss, particularly a loss of its matriarch/patriarch (for example, after World War I and its extreme death toll, stories of orphans abounded) (Hayward, 1993: 99). The orphan narrative can, therefore, tap into a nation's psyche at a time of vulnerability provoked by loss. At the time Malot was writing, France was certainly experiencing loss and subsequent upheaval. The country was in transition from Napoléon III's Second Empire to the Third Republic, it had also just witnessed both the Franco-Prussian war (19<sup>th</sup> July 1870 – 10<sup>th</sup> May 1871, which it lost) and the second Commune (26<sup>th</sup> March 1871-28<sup>th</sup> May 1871). Consequently, one can see why an orphan narrative would have been significant in 1878.

By 1958, when Michel adapted *Sans famille* for the cinema, France was still experiencing the effects of colonial upheaval and post-war modernisation, touched upon in the analysis of *Gervaise*. In the two years between *Gervaise* and *Sans famille*, interior and exterior French politics continued to be in a state of flux and a few months prior to the release of Michel's film, this instability deepened. This was precipitated by the May 1958 crisis in Algeria, which led to Général de Gaulle returning to power.<sup>153</sup> However, by 1958, such political changes were accompanied by a background of economic transformation as the acme of the first post-war consumer boom bought its way into the nation's pockets.

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<sup>152</sup> Other adaptations include Georges Monca's film (1913); Georges Monca's and Maurice Kéroul's film (1925); Marc Allégret's film (1934); Jacques Ertaud's television adaptation (1981); and Jean-Daniel Verhaeghe's television adaptation (2000).

<sup>153</sup> The May 1958 crisis was a putsch attempt by the right-wing so-called 'Group of Seven', which was made up of Pierre Lagayette, Raoul Salan, Edmond Jouhaud, Jean Gracieux, and Admiral Auboyneau, supported by Massu's 10<sup>th</sup> Airborne division and Jacques Soustelle's activist allies. Its aim was to prevent the constitution of Pierre Pflimlin's government. See Larkin, M. (1997) *France Since the Popular Front, Government and People, 1936-1996*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Accordingly, *Sans famille*, which was released on the tenth of September 1958, was screened to a country marked by Gaullist and colonial transition as well as consumerist zeal. The film was a French, Italian and West German co-production financed by Francinex, Rizzoli film and SPCE. Shot on Eastmancolor stock it is the third and last colour film that Mayo costumed during the 1950s.<sup>154</sup> Of the eleven films he dressed during this decade then, black and white film stock dominated at a ratio of around three to one. This is an interesting statistic when one considers costume drama's long-standing link to the spectacular. But given that 1950s costume dramas in France were predominantly filmed on black and white film stock, Mayo's colour to black and white film stock ratio reflects this trend. With regard to the copy I saw, as one knows, Eastmancolor stock is susceptible to fading over time and this unfortunately was the fate of the print of *Sans famille* to which I had access. As colour film stock deteriorates the cyan is the first layer to go, followed by the yellow layer. This initially causes shadows to go maroon and blue skies to turn white, resulting in the magenta layer dominating the colour scheme. This bleaching out of colour, particularly the lightening of skies, is sadly present in the copy of *Sans famille* I am working with. Consequently, the analysis of how Mayo's costumes respond to colour will be slightly hampered by the imperfect condition of the print.<sup>155</sup>

*Sans famille* was the second film of Michel's that Mayo worked on, the first being *Trois femmes* (1952). In both texts Mayo was responsible for the costumes and the set design. Yet Mayo's and Michel's collaboration extended beyond the cinema. Mayo was employed as Michel's advertising art director between 1949 and 1960. As noted earlier,

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<sup>154</sup> The other two films being Howard Hawkes *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955) and Alexandre Astruc's *Une vie* (1958). Although this second film was made before *Sans famille* it was in fact released two weeks after Michel's film in France on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1958.

<sup>155</sup> Due to the poor quality of the recording I have been unable to attain diegetic images of the costumes to reproduce here.

the particular account that they collaborated on belonged to *L'Oréal* and the series of adverts for hair-care product *Biodop* made Mayo a lot of money. Given *L'Oréal's* unscrupulous money making practices during the Occupation it seems surprising that such a politically aware man as Mayo would involve himself with an organisation that contravened his socialist concerns.<sup>156</sup> In fact, Mayo's involvement with *L'Oréal* is made even more surprising when one considers that Jacques Corrèze would have been the company's chief executive for Spain and Latin America at this point. Imprisoned at the liberation, Corrèze faced trial for charges of collaboration twice.<sup>157</sup> Consequently, there must have been some degree of public knowledge or at least suspicion of *L'Oréal's* dealings during the war and immediately after as it (re)employed Nazi collaborators.

A political tension then appears to have been introduced into Mayo's *œuvre*. His advertising work for *L'Oréal* does not sit comfortably with the ideologies seen previously stitched into his work. In addition, the women that he styles for the *Biodop* adverts are very different from the cinematic women of Marie and Gervaise explored so far. The women these advertisements present are artificial ideals of femininity rather than authentic women marked by their socio-political context. As a result, the way in which femininity is represented in this film will certainly be of interest, for it seems that

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<sup>156</sup> The company *L'Oréal* was set up by Eugène Schueller in 1907. It is believed that he had close ties to the Nazi regime. During the 1930s he is said to have provided financial support and held meetings for *La Cagoule*, a fascist group with Nazi sympathies at *L'Oréal's* headquarters on the rue Royale, Paris. During WWII, Schueller founded the *Mouvement social révolutionnaire* (MSR), which conducted various pro-Nazi raids in Occupied France, including the October 1941 bombing of seven synagogues in Paris. After World War II *L'Oréal* hired several previous members of *La Cagoule* and the MSR as executives including Jacques Corrèze. Schueller also unlawfully acquired Jewish land from the Nazi's, which he turned into *L'Oréal's* German headquarters. In 1991 this land was sold to a German governmental agency for \$3.8 million. As with Pinay's return to government, one can again see cultural amnesia in practice. See Hoppough, S. (2005) 'Father's Past Haunts French Billionaire', *Forbes*, [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com). Morais, R. C. (2000) 'Cosmopolitan Genius', *Forbes*. [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com); and Duraud, B. (1991) 'Le Parcours d'un cagoulard', *L'Humanité*. [www.humanite.fr](http://www.humanite.fr).

<sup>157</sup> Corrèze was imprisoned at the liberation and faced trial as an individual charged with providing the German army with intelligence and as part of the *La Cagoule* group trial. He was sentenced to 10 years forced labour in his individual trial and 10 years in prison for his involvement with *La Cagoule*, thus twice escaping the death penalty. He served 5 years and was granted amnesty in 1959 (Duraud, [www.humanite.com](http://www.humanite.com)).

the coupling of Mayo and Michel produces a very different type of femininity to that which the coupling of Mayo and Becker or Mayo and Clément does. Previous explorations of Mayo's costumes have begun with tracing the lacing (or unlacing) of Mayo's corsetry, and so I will now turn to his use of this garment within *Sans famille*.

With regard to male corsetry in *Sans famille*, Mayo once again employs the cummerbund-corset. In keeping with male corsetry in *Casque d'or* and *Gervaise* the cummerbund-corset is located on the outside of clothing and once more it functions as a symbol of the working class. This time it is Raymond Bussièrès who one first sees wearing it - two symbols of the *ouvrier* meeting in this combination of flesh and fabric. Yet unlike Manda, and Danard, Bussièrès character, Barberin, no longer has a trade. After an accident he is unable to work (shades of Coupeau), and this is what causes him to sell Rémi (Joël Flateau) to nomadic performer Vitalis (Gino Cervi), for he cannot afford to keep him any longer. This dire economic situation authentically replicates the difficult life faced by France's rural and urban poor in 1878, who during the years of Louis Napoléon's Second Empire had been savagely repressed due to his fear that the working classes may revolt and cause his downfall (Pinkey, 1972: 9). Notably, the advent of the Third Republic in 1871, brought no change to this situation. It is out of such repression and economic hardship in 1878 that the narrative trajectory of Rémi, who also sports a cummerbund-corset, begins. He is forced by economic pressure to become nomadic until finally settling down into the financial security his wealthy mother provides. Thus Rémi's trajectory is one of class transition. Of note is the fact that Rémi only wears the cummerbund-corset in the first half of the film, by the time he has reached London and found his mother it has disappeared along with his working-class identity. As seen in both *Casque d'or* and *Gervaise*, Mayo is continuing

to follow the changes taking place in working-class identity throughout the course of the 1950s via the sartorial. For Rémi's trajectory (and wardrobe) resonate with that of the working classes in both timeframes and his cummerbund-corset comes to possess material memory.

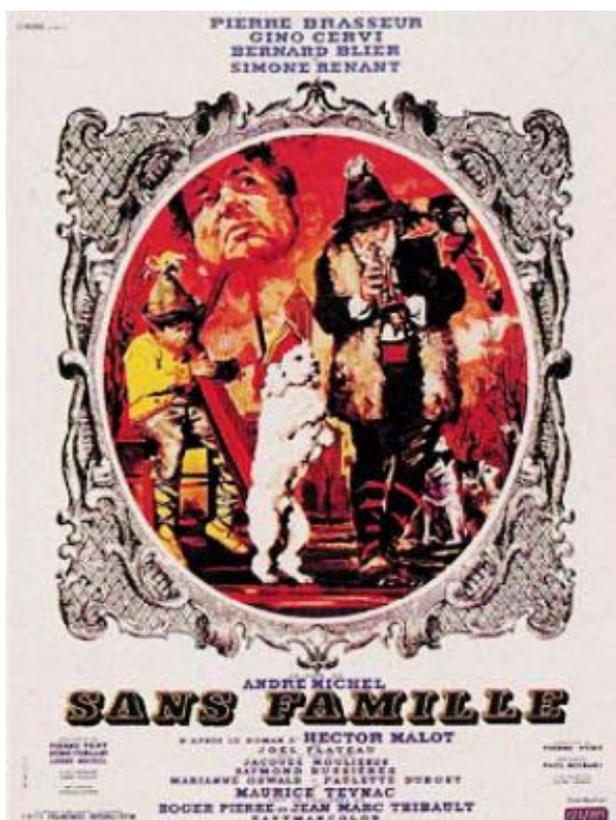


Figure 48. *Sans famille* poster showing cummerbund-corset.

It is also worth mentioning here that Vitalis too wears the cummerbund-corset. In fact, his dress is mirrored exactly by that of Rémi, who finds a temporary patriarch in Cervi's character. Their matching outfits are also what they wear when performing and so the cummerbund-corset becomes imbued with notions of clothing as performance, as well as being symbolic of the working classes. Taking this idea of performance further and combining it with the display of hierarchies of class that are consistent in Mayo's costume *œuvre*, one arrives at the notion of performing class. Throughout the course of this study on Mayo characters have been keen to prove their class credentials through

the performance of dress, for example, the *apaches* and their appropriation of middle-class clothing in *Casque d'or*. In the case of *Sans famille*, however, the performance of class appears to work in reverse to that of the *apaches*, since both Rémi and Vitalis, who are from bourgeois backgrounds, masquerade as working class rather than acknowledging their true identity or aspiring to be at the top of the hierarchical class structure. For Rémi this performance is unconscious for he does not know of his real background, but for Vitalis it is a conscious decision, having given up fame and fortune as a hugely successful singer in Rome.<sup>158</sup>

Despite the knowledge that Rémi is in fact performing his working-class identity, his trajectory still has resonance with the fate of the working classes in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century timeframes. In terms of 1878, Rémi's movement from rural to urban mirrors that of many working-class people who moved to cities in the hope of gaining employment as the Industrial Revolution began to take off. With regard to 1958, Rémi's nomadic status also reflects the dispersal of working-class identity in France during the 1950s due to post-war credit systems and new industrial infrastructure, which shifted the working class towards an emergent type of new middle class. The movement of the rural working classes to urban centres thus functions as a material memory of Rémi's cummerbund-corset that resonates in the 1950s, reflecting the movement of classes into a new space. Indeed, Rémi's progress from rural poor to newfound wealth reflects, through the guise of the 1878 timeframe, the aforementioned consolidation of a new middle class implemented by capitalist modernisation in the 1950s. Rémi's desire to find his nurturing (m)other is driven by a desire to belong. Yet his moneyed mother

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<sup>158</sup> Indeed, when Vitalis does make mention of the aristocracy it is humorous. For example, he recreates an up-market dinner and ball for Rémi in the barn they are camping out in, with M. Jolicœur the monkey playing the role of a marquise.

represents the consumer body, and his locating of her is, therefore, also representative of France's desire to engage with the consumer boom (of which women were the figureheads) and the renegotiations of class that accompanied this newfound prosperity.

Barberin's cummerbund-corset also addresses this issue of class transition and consolidation in the 1950s but from a different viewpoint. This divergence is sartorially acknowledged by Mayo, who places Rémi and Vitalis in bright red cummerbund-corsets of working-class performance, whereas Barberin's is true blue.<sup>159</sup> As part of France's rural working class, Barberin represents the agricultural class, which was reluctant to embrace new systems of credit, and, which consequently declined the most in the face of the late 1950s consumer boom, a fact which Ross has called 'a palpable social phenomena' of the 1950s (1999: 138). This is evidenced in the physical and sartorial decline that his character displays: he has only one arm and thus cannot engage in the agricultural trade he once had and his attire is old, scruffy and dull in colour (only his blue cummerbund-corset stands out). However, read against the grain, Barberin's rural working-class status provides him with a point of resistance. For in belonging to the class which 'subsist [...] in a temporality completely alien to that of modernisation' he also possesses the ability to exist in a space outside the hegemony of the 1950s drive for capitalist progress through modernisation (Ross, 1999: 138). His cummerbund-corset anticipates the changes in working-class identities brought about in the post-war era and can be read as a belt of resistance, defying the clinch of capitalism. Again Mayo makes the cummerbund-corset function as a symbol of working-class identity/solidarity, which as a thread of resistance runs the entirety of his mid-twentieth century *œuvre* - I

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<sup>159</sup> I imagine that Barberin's cummerbund-corset would also have been bright in colour but due to the fading of the print his is somewhat washed out.

will now turn to the corseting of women within *Sans famille* in order to unlace the film's costume further.

Only one figure is notably corseted in the traditional fashion in *Sans famille*, Mme Milligan (Simone Renant) but one has to wait until the very end of the text to get a full view of her. For Mme Milligan, who is revealed to be Rémi's mother, is only fleetingly shown twice before the end of the text when her true identity is divulged. In both of these earlier occasions one briefly sees her dressed all in white, tending her sick (second) son (connotations of angel/nurse). Although one cannot see all of her costume, one is aware that her waist is nipped in and her skirt has a bustle giving her an extreme hour-glass silhouette. When she is found to be Rémi's mother at the text's close she is attired differently, decked out in a burgundy, frilled and bustled velvet dress accessorised with a matching burgundy velvet muff, lace bonnet and a fur and silk shoulder wrap. Crucially though, in terms of material memory, Mme Milligan's velvet, unlike Manda's or Coupeau's is unmarked. Indeed, its perfection is what makes this dress stand out.



Figure 49. Edition of *Cinémonde* from 1958 showing Simone Renant dressed as Mme Milligan.

Due to the degradation of the Eastmancolor print in which the magenta layer is now dominant, the colour of Mme Milligan's burgundy dress stands out clearly, as does her waist, which is tightly nipped in (there is even a hint of a corset induced ridge across the back of her bodice). Compared to the other women in the text, Renant's character is certainly the most tightly corseted. Mère Barberin (Paulette Dubost) is clothed in rural peasant garb and is aproned rather than corseted. Mme Driscoll (Marianne Oswald) is almost always shown sitting down and so it is tricky to ascertain how small her waist is, but her daughter Nancy does have a small, probably corseted waist (although she is not as tiny as Mme Milligan). Once again one can see that Mayo is using the corset as a sartorial distinguisher of class hierarchies. The un-corseted Mère Barberin belongs to the rural working class, the Driscoll women are of a criminal class with bourgeois aspirations and Mme Milligan is from a wealthy and aristocratic family, hence she is the most tightly-laced.

Mme Milligan's diminutive waist is accentuated by the large tiered bustle placed at the back of her dress, which amplifies the curves of her hips and bottom. As with *Gervaise* and its reference to the Second Empire crinoline, one cannot recreate 1870s feminine dress without a bustle. Again Mayo's is stitching his costumes in the authentic. Thus Mme Milligan's waist appears even smaller in comparison to the other women. For being the most aristocratic her bustle is naturally the biggest (Nancy has a large bow at the back of her dress but it is not a full bustle, several other women in the London streets are also shown wearing modest bustles). This disciplining of flesh by corset and bustle creates an exaggeratedly feminine silhouette. Indeed, everything about Mme Milligan signals an excess of femininity: she is perfectly made up, her hair is curled into ringlets, and the velvet, lace, fur and silk fabrics she wears are all sensual materials

connotative of female sexuality. When taken together these signifier's create a façade of extreme femininity, and as such, Mme Milligan seems to be engaging with Joan Rivière's notion of the female masquerade (Rivière cited in Doane, 2000: 427). Her femininity functions as a mask or a disguise. Indeed, nineteenth-century hairstyle aside, Mme Milligan looks very similar to the woman in Michel's and Mayo's *Biodop* adverts.



Figures 50, 51, and 52. Mme Milligan and the Biodop advertisements.

Advertisements targeting women frequently tapped into the previously discussed discourses of hygiene, which marked the 1950s.<sup>160</sup> Michel and Mayo's *Biodop* adverts are no exception to this. In particular, one full colour advert from 1957 claims that *Biodop* can give you 'the shiniest hair in the world.' Paradoxically, then, the *naturalising* of consumption in the 1950s was centred on making women *artificial*, inert in their clean and shiny perfection, frozen on advertising billboards.<sup>161</sup> This idea of the inert image links back to Mme Milligan and her masquerade of femininity, which centres on the falsification and exaggeration of her figure. The tightly-laced corset and full bustle that she wears stifle and impede her natural corporeal movements. Such inactivity is also encouraged by the fleeting glimpses of her earlier in the film, when she

<sup>160</sup> See section 1.2 in chapter one

<sup>161</sup> Yet this paradox is lessened when one considers the already contradictory spaces of nature and culture (which evoke both the natural and the artificial) that women in patriarchal ideology already occupy.

is seen framed through windows. Similarly to the *Biodop* adverts, the camera wants to pin her femininity down and display it in a perfect snapshot.

This sense of inertia is also underlined by Mme Milligan's transportation by boat and carriage in the narrative; she seldom walks anywhere.<sup>162</sup> This then is the reason why Mayo leaves her burgundy velvet outfit unmarked for she does not make much movement to be recorded as material memory via fabric. This also ties into the predominant advertising image of women in the 1950s as petrified glossy perfection (like the *Biodop* campaign). Unmarked by the hardships and dirt hung over from World War II and refusing to acknowledge bloody truths of colonial conflict, these images look forward to a modern, clean and hygienic France. The female masquerade thus functions as a further cover up, concealing uncomfortable national truths. In the case of *Biodop*, this is certainly accurate, for the carapace of feminine artifice works to cover up *L'Oréal's* shady deals as a collaborationist company with extreme right-wing sympathies.

Linked to this issue of femininity as a cover up is the additional similarity between Mme Milligan and the *Biodop* woman in terms of colour. Their airbrushed fantasy visions of femininity can be read against early theories on colour. Following Ed Buscombe, Steve Neale has noted how when colour was first introduced to film it 'tended to connote, not reality, but fantasy.' (1985: 145) As such, it became linked to mechanisms of creating viewing pleasure rather than verisimilitude, and hence became bound up in the visual presentation of the female star as a fantasy figure. 'The female body both bridges the ideological gap between nature and cultural artifice while

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<sup>162</sup> Mme Milligan's association with transport thus works in opposition to that of Marie's in *Casque d'or*, whose links with boats and carriages function to further underline her non-fixity.

simultaneously marking and focusing the scopophilic pleasures involved in and engaged by the use of colour in film.’ (Neale, 1985: 152) Like the poster women of the 1950s consumer boom, therefore, Mme Milligan and her red dress negotiate women’s place of paradox in patriarchal ideology. As representative of both nature and culture, Renant’s character is in a both/and position, a position mirrored by her tightly-laced corset – the ultimate paradoxical sartorial signifier. This is also why Mme Milligan can wear velvet with no visible marks on it, for material memory is erased by an advertising gloss of inertia.

This is how Mayo’s advertising work finds a parallel in the film costume for *Sans famille*. Rather than the painter Mayo, as seen in both *Casque d’or* and *Gervaise*, through the externalising of interior desires, in this text one is presented with the advertiser Mayo. Using his knowledge of publicity and translating it into clothing, Mayo markets Mme Milligan as a full colour symbol of France’s consumer boom: her material wealth and the nature of her inertia inducing foundation garments become indicative of the ideologies found in 1950s advertising. However, the theme of displacement, which stems from Mayo’s painting practice is still at work here, albeit in reverse. In *Casque d’or* and *Gervaise*, the element of the spectacular usually associated with costume drama is not present. It is undermined by the grounding of the texts’ costumes in the realities of their socio-economic situation, particularly in *Gervaise* in which the costumes gradually become more and more filthy. I would speculate, therefore, that the gloss of the spectacular becomes displaced from these texts by Mayo who moves it into the realm of his concurrent 1950s advertising work. However, in the case of *Sans famille*, the link to advertising is forged in the film via its director. Consequently, the usually displaced gloss has nowhere to go because the film and the

advertisements Mayo works on are united by the presence of Michel. Thus *Sans famille's* glossy image of publicity-styled femininity is forced to combine with Mayo's authenticity, creating a tension in the design aesthetic.

Yet true to the form one has come to expect from Mayo, his clothing of Renant in the femininity of advertisements does not go unpoliticised. Once more, the designer turns to the corset as a means to express the political interface of his costume design. In using the corset in its traditional fashion, Mayo is able to lace Mme Milligan into a relationship of sartorial inertia and a position that speaks volumes about the position of women in France's economic boom as powerless figureheads. Therefore, it is once again through engaging with the multi-faceted sartorial signifier of the corset that Mayo's advertising knowledge gains a political edge, seeping through the lace-holes of Mme Milligan's foundation garment and lacing her into the late 1950s consumerist moment.

### **12.3: Political Conclusions**

Throughout the exploration of Mayo's 1950s costume design I have found that of the six biographical linings to his work, two have been consistently transposed into his cinematic *œuvre*: his drive for authenticity and his political awareness. Others, such as his profession as a painter and his involvement with advertising, have also made their presence sartorially felt in the course of this analysis. Yet it is by combining the two major traits of the authentic and the political with fabric that Mayo has been able to produce what I have termed 'material memory.' Through this process of sartorial

recollection, events in the timeframe that a film's narrative is recreating can find resonance with and in some instances uncover truths in a film's moment of production.

This is achieved by means of Mayo's radical reworking of the corset, which he displaces in order to make visible the multiple sociological, sexual, political, cultural, and economic discourses that are usually kept concealed within the liminal. In addition, by engaging with the specific properties of fabrics such as velvet, the recording of material memory is deepened. By combining the sartorial stories of both foundation garment and fabric, Mayo is exposing the interconnected discourses and complex continuities of the (re)cycling of histories. These links, which are usually kept hidden, can then slip through the lace-holes of censorship to comment on taboo subjects such as collaboration, colonial conflict, and renegotiations of gender (hence the corseting of both men and women).

Therefore, in *Casque d'or*, the designer presents three different subjects clothed in material memories: Marie's externalised corset-belt, which functions as a garment of resistance, negotiating new approaches to gender, desire and women's agency; Manda's bruised masculinity and political call for change through velvet as well as the working-class identity of his cummerbund-corset; and Leca's collaborationist cover up in lusted fabrics. In *Gervaise*, Mayo portrays discourses on France's post-war negotiations of Empire, which as I have argued are cleverly woven into the fabric of his costumes for Gervaise and Coupeau and their ever increasing degradation and staining as a metaphorical resistance to contemporary political censorship. Lastly, in *Sans famille*, I have unpicked how Mayo continues to plot the progressive demise of the working class throughout the 1950s by means of the cummerbund-corset as well as engaging with

advertising and the position of women at the heart of the consumer boom through the feminine façade of Mme Milligan's dress.

In this way, Mayo's costumes and their political threads of material memory chart the turbulent years of France's mid-twentieth century, taking a slice of time from 1952, 1956 and 1958. Thus one moves from *Casque d'or's* costumes, which reflect a nation in post-war transition marked by psychological repression, through to *Gervaise* and its clothing of the new trauma of the colonial, up to *Sans famille* and its costumes' relationship with the acme of the first post-war consumer boom. As such, Mayo's costumes can indeed be read as a palimpsest, as I first indicated may be a possibility in the biographical introductory chapter. The designer's work for the cinema is, therefore, hugely important, for he ad-dresses and indeed in some cases dis-ad-dresses the complex political situations of 1950s France by layering meaning into his costumes through threads of resistance (both material and ideological). His costume design is a multi-dimensional fabric map through which censored dialogues and taboo discourses can be detected.

Mayo and his costumes are not what one might expect from a genre that was dismissed as a *cinéma de papa*. Certainly the designer's work goes against what one has come to expect from the *film à costumes* genre. He does not dress the bourgeoisie but instead clothes the working class, and his costumes are grounded in the authentic rather than conspicuous spectacle. But this is not to say that the spectacular is not present within Mayo's work. In fact, the spectacular nature of his work resides in his ability to take film costume to a new level of authenticity and in imbuing his fabric with a sharp and sometimes cutting political edge.

## **MAJOR COSTUME CASE-STUDY 2: DELAMARE, THE**

### **IDEOLOGY OF ACCESSORIES**

#### **CHAPTER 13: INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL**

##### **ANALYSIS**

‘Certain costume designers only occasionally occupy themselves with historical films, but others, such as Rosine Delamare, make it their genuine speciality.’ (Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 26)

Rosine Delamare had both the passion and necessary expertise to repeatedly tackle and create cinematic wardrobes for costume dramas. In a career that spanned almost six decades (from the late-1930s to the mid-1980s), Delamare costumed one hundred and eleven films, the majority of which belonged to the *film à costumes* genre.<sup>163</sup>

Delamare’s most prolific decade was the 1950s, in which she costumed fifty-three films, of which thirty-one were costume dramas. Thus Delamare had a significant design presence, costuming almost a quarter of all French costume dramas during the 1950s, greatly influencing the ‘look’ of the genre during this decade.<sup>164</sup>

The sizeable achievement of Delamare’s 1950s wardrobe is made more remarkable considering that despite costume drama’s frequent alliance with the feminine through its focus on fashion and costume, the bulk of costume designers during the 1950s were

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<sup>163</sup> See filmography for full details, however, the actual number of Delamare costumed films may be higher. In an interview with *Positif*, Delamare claims to have costumed close to 150 films (Niogret, 1996) making a difference of 41 films between Delamare’s own reckoning and the official tally given by the *Bibliothèque du film*. Therefore, there may be some unaccounted/unaccredited films for which Delamare has designed the costumes

<sup>164</sup> Delamare’s most prolific decade in terms of clothing costume dramas also coincides with France’s own peak period of post-war costume dramas, known as the ‘Golden Age’ of costume drama, in which France produced one hundred and fourteen *film à costumes*. In statistical terms, this translates to twelve percent of all films during this timeframe falling under the category of costume drama, with twenty-four percent of these one hundred and fourteen films being costumed by Delamare.

men.<sup>165</sup> A detail that is evidenced by the designers examined in this thesis so far – Annenkov, Escoffier and Mayo – who are all male. Yet Delamare out-costumes these three designers, with an average of three *film à costumes* completed a year during the 1950s. Therefore, the only woman designer whose work this thesis explores is the most prolific.<sup>166</sup> Despite such popularity I have found surprisingly little information on Delamare. Unlike Annenkov, she has not written any books on her costume career, and in contrast to Mayo, she has not (yet) had a book written about her. Akin to Escoffier (the second most prolific costume designer of *film à costumes* in the 1950s), Delamare remains a partial mystery.

Nevertheless, I have found two interviews with Delamare, one with the French film periodical *Positif* (1996), and the other, a short dialogue from *L'Institut national de l'audiovisuel's* on-line catalogue (1979). In addition, many of Delamare's sketches are available at the *Bibliothèque du film* in Paris, and she was part of the *L'Élégance française au cinéma* exhibition curated by the Musée Galliera in Paris, and is featured in its catalogue (1988). As with Escoffier, such a lack of information is in itself intriguing, and again raises the question of why it should be so difficult to obtain information on France's premier *film à costumes* designer? However, being so involved with the genre of costume drama, which Pidduck tells one is a 'mode of film-making [that] has been routinely dismissed by critics' (2004: 4), and particularly the costume of costume drama, Delamare is doubly sidelined. For it is through the genre's links to fashion and clothing on a spectacular scale that costume drama tends to be written off as feminine

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<sup>165</sup> This is also a position replicated within *haute-couture* and fashion design in which the majority of designers are also male.

<sup>166</sup> Of course other women costume designers were employed during the 1950s, such as Paulette Coquatrix, Georgette Fillon, and Monique Plotin, but none were as prolific as Delamare (who herself remains relatively unknown). Unfortunately, none of these other women are explored in this thesis because of such a paucity of information on them and their work. For a more detailed explanation of the process of choosing which costume designers to focus on in this study see the introduction to this thesis.

and frivolous. Add into this mix the fact that Delamare is a woman, and one suspects that this may have contributed somewhat to her undervalued status (as well as that of costume designers in general regardless of gender). Having outlined Delamare's considerable contribution to cinematic costume design, I will now explain how I will unstitch and analyse a selection of her 1950s *film à costumes* wardrobes.

Whereas I have approached Annenkov's and Escoffier's costume design through their metonymic signature-garments of the corset and crinoline respectively, Delamare's designs, although employing both these undergarments, are not solely marked by silhouette. It is not the extremes of shape that one first perceives in Delamare's costumes, but rather the abundance of accessories, flounces and furbelows. It is the attention to detail in her costumes that one first senses rather than a single signature-garment. As a result, this case-study will explore this design methodology of detail and ornamentation in Delamare's costume product through a variety of texts and star bodies.

This analysis of Delamare's historical costumes will form the second of the major case-studies in this thesis, and will be divided into four chapters. Akin to the approach used in both the analysis of Mayo in the previous major case-study, and the earlier explorations in the minor case-studies on Annenkov's and Escoffier's costumes, this first chapter on Delamare will detail the back-stories to her work. Similarly to the three previous studies, the aim of delineating such pre-filmic linings is that it will enable Delamare's costumes to be read as a palimpsest, thus sketching out the ideological pattern she uses.

This chapter provides a biographical analysis exploring Delamare's pre-filmic methodology, before turning to a filmic investigation of her costumes in action. This investigation will be split into three further chapters, each looking at a different but nevertheless interrelated aspect of Delamare's costume designs. So in chapter fourteen, I will unstitch the costumes for the two films she clothed for Renoir, *French Cancan* (1955) and *Eléna et les hommes* (1956). I have chosen to look at her designs for Renoir because Delamare described the director as 'the man who was the most charming to work with.' (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 57) Her experience on these two films was, therefore, an enjoyable one and her working relationship with Renoir was far more harmonious than the one she shared with Ophuls (covered in the case-study on Annenkov).<sup>167</sup> The focus of this chapter will be to discover how the ideologies tied up in Delamare's bows and ribbons function. In other words, her preoccupation with wrapping and unwrapping the body will be explored.

In chapter fifteen, I will offer a detailed analysis of the heavily accessorised costumes in Dréville's 1954 film *La Reine Margot*, starring Jeanne Moreau. In this chapter, I will focus specifically on the flesh and fabric interface of Moreau's body with Delamare's accessories. In so doing, I will be able to unpick the historical costumes of an actor who was to become very much linked to the French '*Nouvelle Vague*' of the late-1950s and 1960s, which in many respects killed off the production of spectacular costume films such as those discussed here.<sup>168</sup> Notably, Moreau appeared in *L'Ascenseur pour*

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<sup>167</sup> See Annenkov case-study chapter 3.

<sup>168</sup> Of course the New-Wave was not the only reason for the decline of the costume drama within the French film industry, rising studio costs were also a significant factor.

*l'échafaud* (1957, Malle), *Les Amants* (1958, Malle) and *Jules et Jim* (1961, Truffaut), which all fall under the umbrella of the New-Wave.<sup>169</sup>

It will be interesting to see how an actor, who's reputation in French cinema (despite acting with the *Comédie française* in her twenties) is predominantly built on her involvement in 'modern' New-Wave films, comes across in Dréville's costume drama set in the sixteenth century. Of particular note will be the agency of her character, Margot. For Moreau's New-Wave women are often agents of their own desire who articulate the complexities and myths surrounding the notion of the newly liberated woman (Hayward, 1993: 262-3).<sup>170</sup> Given that many 1950s costume drama narratives are located in myth, often historico-mythic representations of women such as *La Reine Margot*, it will be worthy of note to see how Moreau is positioned in relation to myth, and of course costume, in Dréville's film.<sup>171</sup>

Finally, chapter sixteen will examine how Delamare's design methodology and costume product juxtapose with the male body, in this case the corporeality of Gérard Philipe. In so doing I will be able to see how Delamare's design methodology interacts with the male body, and subsequently, if there is any gendered difference between her costume designs. Dressing him on five separate occasions during the 1950s, Philipe's is *the* star body that Delamare costumed the most during this decade. The five films in question

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<sup>169</sup> In terms of New-Wave films, Moreau also had bit parts in Truffaut's *Les Quatres-cents coups* (1959), and Godard's *Une Femme est une femme* (1961).

<sup>170</sup> In *French National Cinema*, Hayward describes Moreau's central performance in *Les Amants* as 'the refusal of a female protagonist to conform to bourgeois values.' Hayward continues that in this way, via Moreau's performance, Malle 'is addressing the middle-class belief in the "reality" of the newly liberated woman and exposing it for the partial myth that it is.' (1993: 263)

<sup>171</sup> For example, many of the films investigated in this thesis so far: *Casque d'or*, Becker (1952); *Lucrece Borgia*, Christian-Jaque (1953); *Madame du Barry*, Christian-Jaque (1954); *Lola Montès*, Ophüls (1955). It is also worth pointing out here that whilst the historico-mythic figure of costume drama is mostly female the occasional historico-mythic male also makes an appearance. For example, Gérard Philipe in *Fanfan la tulipe*, Christian-Jaque (1951) and *Les Aventures de Till l'espiègle*, Philipe (1956); and Jean Marais in *Nez de cuir*, Allégret (1951).

are *Les Belles de nuit*, Clair (1952); *Le Rouge et le noir*, Autant-Lara (1954), *Les Grandes manœuvres*, Clair (1955); *Les Aventures de Till l’Espiegle*, Philippe (1956); and *Le Joueur*, Autant-Lara (1958). Of these five, I will investigate Delamare’s costumes for Philippe in *Le Rouge et le noir*, and *Les Grandes manœuvres*.<sup>172</sup> However, before coming to this tri-partite analysis of Delamare’s historical apparel I will begin by outlining the pre-filmic back-stories to her prolific career.

### 13.1: Illustration

Delamare was born on the eleventh of June, 1911, in Colombes-sur-Seine, the daughter of a journalist and an *homme du théâtre*. Her younger sister was the actor Lise Delamare (1913 - 2006) who starred in several films that Rosine also worked on (Niogret, 1996: 53).<sup>173</sup> According to the very brief write up Delamare receives in the *FIAF International Dictionary of Cinematographers, Set and Costume Designers in Film*, from 1928 to 1932, Delamare studied painting and graphic art (however, the location and institution are unspecified) (Krautz, 1983: 146-7). Following this four-year period, Delamare found work as an illustrator for fashion papers and posters, an occupation that would pave her way into the fashion industry and subsequently the cinema.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> I had also hoped to be able to include an analysis of Delamare’s costumes for Philippe’s directorial debut, *Les Aventures de Till l’Espiegle*, here but I have unfortunately been unable to locate a copy of this particular film.

<sup>173</sup> Rosine and Lise Delamare both worked on *Le Symphonie fantastique*, Christian-Jaque, 1942; *Le Comte de Monte Christo*, Vernay, 1943; *Monsieur Vincent*, Cloche, 1947; *Les Grandes manœuvres*, Clair, 1955; *Lola Montès*, Ophüls, 1955 and *Vive Henri IV... vive l’amour!* Autant-Lara, 1961.

<sup>174</sup> See < [www.ina.fr/archivesportous](http://www.ina.fr/archivesportous) > [accessed 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008]

Indeed, this graphic process would become the bedrock for both vocations. In terms of Delamare's cinematic costume design her sketches are always the starting point in the process of realising the finished costumes. Unlike many other costume designers' sketches, including those of Annenkov, Escoffier and Mayo, Delamare does not begin by drawing the individual principal characters and their costumes. Instead, she outlines groups of characters, including extras, and their outfits (Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 186). As one can see in the sketch below for *French Cancan*, this combining of extras with the main characters results in the overall atmosphere, or tone of the costumes being uniformly conveyed. Perhaps this harks back to her time spent as a designer at the House of Patou, where one presumes that her designs would have been based around one or two principal themes making up a collection for either a spring/summer or autumn/winter season. This possibility of fashion influencing film costume links to the next back-story: Delamare's involvement in *haute-couture*, in which this theme will be explored further.



Figure 53. One of Delamare's sketches for *French Cancan*.

### 13.2: Delamare and Patou

As with Escoffier's experience of *haute-couture* at Paquin, in joining Patou, Delamare became part of a well-established French fashion House. I have not been able to ascertain precisely when Delamare was a designer at Patou but it was certainly in the period between the end of her studies in 1932 and her first job designing for the cinema in 1939 on Duvivier's *Untel père et fils*. This seven-year period was one of great transition at the House of Patou, for Patou himself died in 1936. It is unclear, however, whether Delamare came to work at Patou prior to or after the designer's death.

What is known is that on the death of Patou every effort to adhere to the designer's original signature style was made. Control of the House passed to his sister and her husband, Madeleine and Raymond Barbas, who were keen that the designer's fashion methodology lived on. As fashion historian, Meredith Etherington-Smith, has commented 'Raymond Barbas has maintained a remarkable consistency of style over the years. Every designer who has worked for Patou has produced clothes which in some sense echo Patou in his great days.' (1983: 139) Therefore, whenever Delamare was working at Patou (somewhere between 1932 and 1939) the fashion methodology to which she worked would have been resolutely Patouesque.

Despite some earlier forays in fashion,<sup>175</sup> it was during the 1920s that Patou really began to make his mark on the French couture industry. His direction was a sporting

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<sup>175</sup> After working as an independent dressmaker, Patou opened Maison Parry in Paris, his first 'demicouture' establishment in 1912. Following the success of this venture, in 1914, Patou decided to open a larger couture house which could rival the likes of Worth and Doucet. Buying up an *hôtel particulier* on rue St Florentin, Patou opened the fashion House that was to bear his name until 1987, when couture production under his trademark monogrammed initials ceased. (The Patou name has continued, however, through its perfume business, which continues to trade, creating bespoke scents rather than garments). Yet before his new House could begin to ply its trade, Patou volunteered for active

one, employing lightweight jersey fabrics cut in clean lines and dyed in bright colours, often featuring Cubist-inspired graphics and pleats. His clothes were frequently straight in cut so as to ‘make possible athletic dashing movement.’ (Etherington-Smith, 1983:37) Quite different, therefore, from the restricted set of poses inherent in multi-layered historical dress, whose recreation/reinterpretation Delamare would later become so involved with.

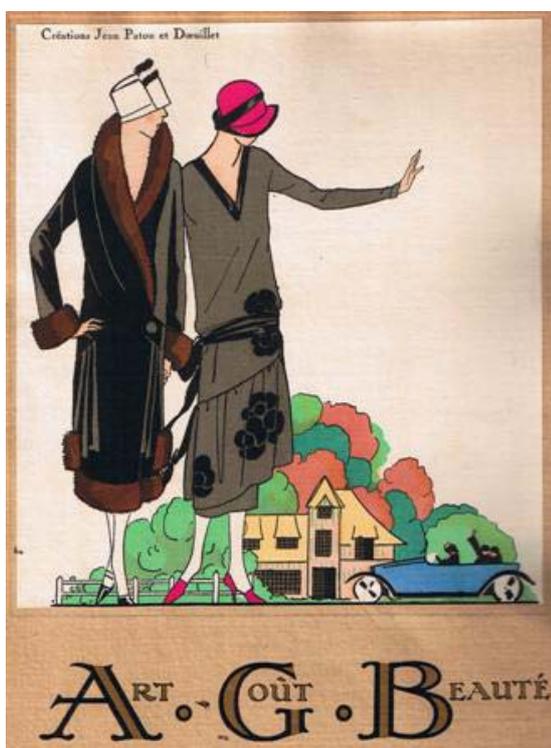


Figure 54. Patou designs.

Nevertheless, in order to arrive at a modern, *sportif* mode of dressing, Patou would begin with an exploration of historical styles and fabrics, in what he referred to as his design ‘laboratory’ (Patou cited in Etherington-Smith, 1983: 39). In this laboratory, designers would sketch for Patou according to his brief (he never drew),<sup>176</sup> the results

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service during World War One and so did not return to Paris until 1919. See Etherington-Smith (1983) *Patou*, London, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg: Hutchinson.

<sup>176</sup> Although the notion that a fashion designer never drew appears extraordinary today, it was certainly not unusual before the 1950s for a couturier not to sketch. Rather, designers would cut and drape on models from drawings executed by an in-house design team or from freelance fashion sketchers. This was

of which he would then edit until the look he had in his mind had been successfully transferred to paper by proxy. As Etherington-Smith notes, ‘months before he started a collection, Patou gave his designers antique textiles, [and] bits of embroideries.’ (1983: 39) Patou continues, ‘in fact [I gave the design team] precious documents to derive inspiration from, with special indications of styles and colourings I wish them to develop.’ (Patou cited in Etherington-Smith, 1983: 39) Once Patou was satisfied with his designers’ work, their sketches would be passed on to the *modélistes* (the cutting floor personnel) with instructions for their fabrication.

Patou’s modern end products with their neat, straight silhouettes appear to share little in style terms with Delamare’s accessorised and curved historical shapes. Yet perhaps an overlap occurs between the two in terms of their design process. As illustrated above, Patou began with aspects of research into historical fashion, a starting point that Delamare also employed in her costume design work. Even if Patou’s style did not influence Delamare to a great extent (unlike Paquin’s influence on Escoffier), the expertise gained from working in such a fashionable environment must have been invaluable. In the information gleaned about Delamare’s time at Patou, she has been described as both a *dessinatrice* (Niogret, 1996: 53) and a *modéliste* (Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 26). This implies that she was involved at both the design and cutting stages of production at the House. Such dual status would have provided important transferable skills for her later costume design, a career that was for the most part concerned with costume dramas. This predominance of (re)creating historical dress and the questions of authenticity arising from such a process will now be explored in the next back-story.

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the norm until Dior set up his own couture house and started a trend for couturiers sketching their own designs themselves.

### 13.3: Delamare and Authentically (Re)dressing the Past

In the interview with *Positif*, Delamare has spoken of her preference for working on historical costumes. The reasons she cites for this are that she prefers to recreate an atmosphere, and that historical costume allows one to fashion a more complete and coherent look.<sup>177</sup> In fabricating her favoured historical costumes, questions of authenticity are paramount. As such, Delamare's silhouettes are always true to those of the period she is recreating. Consequently, the women she dresses for costume drama are always corseted and crinolined according to the style of the period, for as Delamare herself states, 'underwear also counts in costumes.' (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 56)<sup>178</sup>

In addition, the men she clothes are styled in a manner that directly correlates to the historical period structuring the given film she is working on. Attention to detail is everything, and 'braces, shirts and collars that match well for men count as much as the suits themselves.' (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 56)<sup>179</sup> Delamare also avoids artificial fabrics, which she feels do not come across on screen as well as natural fabrics, because they fall badly (and of course artificial fabrics would not have been available in

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<sup>177</sup> This too is why she prefers working in film studios, because the lighting and resulting look of the costumes can be more carefully controlled. Also, a costume drama is less likely to employ an additional *couturier* to dress certain star roles, which is often the case in films set in the present, particularly when a star has an allegiance to a couture house, for example Cathérine Deneuve and Yves Saint-Laurent, and Audrey Hepburn and Hubert de Givenchy. This process of co-costuming with a fashion designer leaves the costume designer with less to do, a situation that the hands-on Delamare does not much care for, preferring instead the involved and often painstaking task of historic recreation (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 53). This is not to say, however, that Delamare is averse to the idea of collaboration, one glance of her filmography reveals several co-costumed films. During the fifties Delamare frequently worked with Georgette Fillon. She also co-costumed films with Paulette Coquatrix, Frédéric Junker, and Jean Zay among others. In addition, one knows that she had an unhappy collaboration on Ophüls' *Madame de...* with Annenkov. See filmography for full details.

<sup>178</sup> 'Les dessous comptent aussi dans les costumes.'

<sup>179</sup> 'Les bretelles, les chemises, les cols qui vont bien pour les hommes comptent autant que les costumes.'

the actual historical time-period being recreated). Although occasionally, one presumes due to budgetary constraints, Delamare had to use nylons and rayons.

As discovered in the previous case-study on Mayo, the quest for authenticity of costume was a dominant factor in his costume design methodology. Delamare's drive for genuine looking costumes applies itself differently to that of Mayo and his authentic class-conscious corsetry and material memory. Delamare's costumes are concerned with authenticity but authenticity as bricolage, for she is very much a realist in her design practice, knowing sacrifices must be made in order to adhere to budgetary and narrative constraints. In this respect, Delamare has developed certain strategies to make the most of her costume resources. She often used a double approach in her costumes, creating first and second-order clothing for the principle cast members. For instance, when an actor was to be filmed in a full body shot in which their costume could be closely scrutinised then they would be dressed as authentically as possible, even if this meant that the cut of their clothing was restrictive. However, when an actor was filmed in an action sequence in which they were not stood still long enough for any lack of costume detailing to be detected, such as a scene on horseback, then the cut of their clothes would be more generous to enable unimpeded movement as well as possibly being fabricated from a cheaper cloth.<sup>180</sup> This two-tier arrangement of costume can be likened to the distinction between *haute-couture* and *prêt-à-porter*, in which clothing is bespoke and off-the-peg respectively. In this regard, Delamare marries the

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<sup>180</sup> In Bonal's biography of Gérard Philipe, Delamare recounts that during the filming of *Les Grandes manœuvres* she had made two pairs of breeches for Philipe, one tailored and cut to fit him perfectly for the scenes when he was on foot, and another, roomier pair for when he was on horseback. One day on set, Philipe accepted to pose in the saddle for a group of journalists. As soon as he put one foot in the first stirrup, the fabric of his breeches ripped at the knee for he had forgotten that he was not wearing his 'action' breeches. Unfortunately, the tailor who had made the breeches had run out of the fabric used to make them and had not kept the off-cuts of material he had initially used, meaning that there was no way to remake them. Instead, a time consuming 'stoppage' (invisible mend) had to be done. See Bonal, G. (1994) *Gérard Philipe*, Paris, Éditions de Seuil.

organisational structure of the fashion industry with film wardrobe.<sup>181</sup> Although *prêt-à-porter* had been available since the end of the nineteenth century, it was considered to be the poor relation of *haute-couture* well into the 1960s.<sup>182</sup>

It was only after *prêt-à-porter* designers began twice-yearly shows in Paris from 1973 onwards that off-the-peg apparel gained respect and popularity (Koga, 2005: 502). Hence, Delamare's 1950s mixing of '*haute-couture*' and '*prêt-à-porter*' in her costume practice was an avant-garde move, which anticipated the widespread acceptability of *prêt-à-porter* in France by twenty years. Thus Delamare has proven herself to be a flexible and imaginative designer. This first and second ordering of costume will be an interesting thread to follow in the subsequent chapters.

As well as being very conscious of correct materials and silhouettes in her costume design, and being canny when it comes to budget, Delamare has also spoken of the compromise one has to strike in terms of (re)creating the true weight of historical costume:

One cannot live the parts like people [in the past] truly lived. Running down flights of stairs wearing dresses that they normally could not walk in is impossible. For a Renaissance dress a woman had a man at each side to hold her arm: they [the dresses] were so heavy [...] that they couldn't walk otherwise. That's why one always sees a man at each side [of a woman], they are

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<sup>181</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, this merging of fashion house sensibilities with film is what *couturier* Jean-Paul Gaultier also achieves in his costume design for the cinema. Particularly in *Le Cinquième élément* in which the catwalk show becomes an intertextual reference. Interestingly, during Gaultier's early career he too worked for Patou. See Cousins, Jennie (2008) 'Flesh and Fabric: the five elements of Jean-Paul Gaultier's costume design in Luc Besson's *Le Cinquième élément* (1997)', in Hayward, Susan and Powrie, Phil, *Studies in French Cinema*, vol. 8.1, Bristol: Intellect, pp 75-88.

<sup>182</sup> The French *couturier*, Balmain, set up his own ready-to-wear branches in the USA in 1951, pre-dating *prêt-à-porter* in France by five years. Yet it was department store, *Bon Marché*, who first introduced ready-to-wear designs in France in the fifties, from *couturière* Marcelle Chaumont. However, as Hayward indicates, 'such was the prestige in which *haute-couture* was held, that the *Chambre de Commerce* insisted that Chaumont change her name. So she worked for *Bon Marché* under the pseudonym Juliette Verneuil.' (2004b: 14 and 259)

not only being gracious, they [women] would fall flat on their faces otherwise. Now one makes them run at speed, jump on a horse, and one is obliged to cheat. One cannot add the true weight of the costumes. (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 53-4)<sup>183</sup>

This discrepancy between costume and its true historical weight provides another thread of analysis to follow. The factor of weight must also have been a consideration in Delamare's working method, the shape of which I will now turn to.

#### **13.4: Delamare's Working Method**

According to Delamare, the best part of a costume designer's day is receiving a phone call from a producer regarding a new project. Usually following this initial conversation, a copy of the film's script will be sent for Delamare to read.

Conversations with the set designer will then take place to ascertain the overall look of the film. Once this is completed archival research into exact fashions of the time-period in which the film is set begins, followed by the sketching of ideas (Delamare cited in Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 182).

The sketching stage is vital, and, one imagines, one of the most enjoyable aspects of the job for Delamare, given her background as an illustrator. From her comments on the process of designing for *French Cancan*, one can discern that Delamare was hardworking and quick at transferring her costume ideas to paper: 'It wasn't me that was expected for *French Cancan* but someone that he [Renoir] had known in

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<sup>183</sup> 'On ne fait pas vivre les roles comme vivaient vraiment les gens. Descendre les escaliers en courant et porter des robes avec lesquelles elles ne pouvaient pas marcher normalement, c'est impossible. Pour une robe Renaissance, une femme avait un homme de chaque côté qui lui tenait les bras: c'était tellement lourd, avec leurs espèces de socques, qu'elles ne pouvaient pas marcher autrement. C'est pourquoi on voit toujours un homme de chaque côté, pas seulement pour faire gracieux, sinon elles se casseraient la figure. Maintenant on les fait courir à toute allure, sauter sur un cheval, et on est obligé de tricher pas mal. On ne peut pas mètre le poids des costumes.'

Hollywood, but it didn't happen with her. Then I arrived. He explained two or three things and asked me to do some sketches. The next day I took him some sketches, I had worked all night.' (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 57)<sup>184</sup> Pleased with her efforts, Renoir instantly approved Delamare's designs.

Once Delamare had directorial approval on her sketches she would take them to a *couturier* or tailor to be executed. However, Delamare's role certainly did not stop at this point, for in her quest for authenticity she would take the freshly made costumes and make them look worn. This was achieved by patinating fabric, aging it by grating it with a cheese grater or glass paper and greasing it with black soap in order to shine up lapels and collars. Delamare would also use diluted ink to impregnate the material of a garment under the arms if it needed to look dirty. She also liked actors to wear their costumes as much as possible before filming started. If this was not feasible then it was occasionally the job of her husband. For example, for *Porte des Lilas* (Clair, 1957) Delamare made her husband wear Pierre Brasseur's jacket with two bottles of red wine in the pockets so that they would look careworn (Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 193). As this back-story has illustrated, Delamare went to great lengths to ensure the quality of her costumes at both the design and execution stages. One suspects that she was rewarded for such efforts by her popularity among directors.

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<sup>184</sup> 'Ce n'était pas moi qui était prévue pour *French Cancan*, mais quelqu'un qu'il avait connu à Hollywood; cela ne s'est pas fait avec elle. Puis, je suis arrivée. Il m'a expliqué deux ou trois trucs et m'a demandé de faire quelques croquis. Le lendemain, je lui ai apporté des maquettes; j'avais travaillé toute la nuit'

### 13.5: Delamare and Colour

Alongside Georges Wakévitch and Jean Zay who costumed France's first colour film (Gevacolor), *Barbe-bleue* (Christian-Jaque, 1951), Delamare was one of few costume designers who dealt with the new challenges colour film processing posed in its tricky introductory phase.<sup>185</sup> Delamare's first experience of colour filmmaking was in 1953, with Raymond Bernard's adaptation of Dumas fils' *La Dame aux camélias*. It was filmed in Gevacolor, which Delamare notes was a film stock that turned reds to brown and beiges blackish (Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 186). It was a difficult task and quite a change from how one would approach the costumes for a black and white film, as Delamare explains:

During the time of black and white, one made superb costumes in bright colours because a vermillion red, for example, gave a grey that was much prettier than a real grey. But one couldn't use black, because black made a "hole" in the screen, therefore, it was navy blue. When we went to colour it was a catastrophe because all the costume stocks were bluish. (Delpierre, De Fleury and Lebrun, 1988: 186)<sup>186</sup>

As a result, the range of colours used in costumes for black and white films did not translate well to colour film stock. However, costuming a colour film was not just a case of dying cloth to the exact hue one wished to see on screen. For as noted above with the example of Gevacolor, early colour film stocks did not give true representations of the colours of the costumes they filmed.

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<sup>185</sup> Escoffier was also involved in costuming early French colour films, designing for Pottier's *Violettes Impériales* in 1952, before moving on to France's first Technicolor film, *Lucrece Borgia* (Christian-Jaque, 1953). See Escoffier case-study, chapter seven

<sup>186</sup> 'A l'époque du noir et blanc on faisait des costumes superbes aux couleurs éclatantes parce qu'un rouge vermillon, par exemple, donnait un gris beaucoup plus joli qu'un vrai gris. Mais on ne se servait pas du noir, parce que le noir faisait un «trou» à l'écran, il était donc bleu marine. Le blanc lui, sautait aux yeux, on le teintait donc en bleu. Lorsqu'on est passé à la couleur ce fut une catastrophe car tous les stocks étaient bleutés.'

Costume designers working with early colour film, therefore, had to be quick thinking, adapting their methods to accommodate the testing nature of this new technology. As seen previously, Delamare has already proved herself to be a canny and hardworking designer, a fact that her two-tier system of costume and prolific filmography attests. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Delamare was often the costume designer of choice for a director approaching colour for the first time, for example, Claude Autant-Lara, Raymond Bernard, René Clair, Jean Dréville and Gérard Philipe all entrusted Delamare with costuming their colour debuts.<sup>187</sup>

As well as Gevacolor's colour distortions, Eastmancolor did not reproduce colours in their true shades either, instead it tended to over-saturate the blue tones in the image. As set designer, Léon Barsacq, explains:

The superiority of Eastmancolor over other one-strip colour processes certainly lay in its great sensitivity. It required less light, the backgrounds were sharper; on the other hand, the colours were brought out too violently, especially the blues. This fault has since practically disappeared, but in the beginning, we avoided blue like the plague! (1985: 144)<sup>188</sup>

In Delamare's experience of early Eastmancolor with *La Reine Margot*, *Le Rouge et le noir* and *Les Grandes manœuvres*, the film stock's tendency to pull towards blue was also difficult. For example, in *Les Grandes manœuvres*, the soldiers' tunics, which should have been navy blue, were confected from a black fabric to avoid the blue from becoming overpowering once the Eastmancolor stock was developed. In addition, due

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<sup>187</sup> These colour debuts were *Le Rouge et le noir*, Autant-Lara, 1954; *La Dame aux camélias*, Bernard, 1953; *Les Grandes manœuvres*, Clair, 1955; *La Reine Margot*, Dréville, 1954 and *Les Aventures de Till l'Espiègle*, Philipe, 1956.

<sup>188</sup> 'La supériorité d'Eastmancolor sur les autres procédés monopacks, résidait surtout dans sa grande sensibilité. Il exigeait moins de lumière, les lointains étaient plus nets; par contre les couleurs ressortaient avec trop de violence, surtout les bleus. Depuis, ce défaut a pratiquement disparu, mais au début, on se méfiait du bleu comme de la peste!'

to the dominant blue, the women's costumes and that of the male civilian characters in this film were limited to a choice of colours, ranging from white to beige to brown through to black (Barsacq, 1985: 145). Consequently, where bright colours do feature in the costumes for this film, such as the red trousers of the soldiers then they really pop out from the screen.

Occasionally, the issue with colour fidelity resulted in unwelcome surprises for Delamare despite being aware of the problem, as happened several times on *Le Rouge et le noir*. For the character of the Bishop, she had made a violet robe in moiré silk with matching gloves. However, on screen, the gloves appeared to be almost blue because they had been made from nylon. One imagines this must have further fuelled Delamare's dislike of artificial fabrics. Yet even with costumes constructed from all natural fabrics then colour matching could still prove to be unpredictable, as Delamare explains:

In *Le Rouge et le noir* I had another horrible problem, but Max Douy [the set designer] had the same. Happily for me! Jean Martinelli, who played Monsieur de Rênal had a silver-grey frock-coat with velvet lapels in a darker shade, which he wore in a garden for the famous scene, 'Prendrais-je sa main?' At the projection it was terribly ugly. He was dressed almost in turquoise with green lapels. The décor was hideous with little flowers that cried out... a horror. It had to be redone. (Delamare cited in Niogret, 1996: 54)<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> 'Dans *Le Rouge et le noir*, j'ai eu un autre problème horrible, mais Max Douy a eu le même. Heureusement pour moi! Jean Martinelli, qui jouait M. de Rênal, avait une redingote gris argent avec des revers de velours d'un ton un peu plus foncé. Cela se passait dans un jardin, pour la fameuse scène «Prendrais-je sa main?». A la projection c'était d'une laideur terrible. Il était habillé presque en turquoise avec des revers vert. Le décor était hideux avec des petites fleurs qui gueulaient... une horreur. Il fallait le refaire.'



Figure 55. The Bishop's clashing gloves.

It will certainly be interesting to see how the Eastmancolor film stock which was used in *Le Rouge et le noir* and *Les Grandes manœuvres* has altered the costumes and their ideological impact, either by imposing restrictions at the design stage or mismatching colours during the processing of the film. From the above exploration of Delamare's experiences with early colour processes, one can see that she was not resistant to the changes this new technology imposed, for she costumed more colour costume dramas than any other designer during the 1950s. Thus, despite challenges, Delamare would adapt her methodology in order to continue working.

### **13.6: Delamare and Continental, Collaboration and Resistance**

There is one final part of Delamare's profile to unpick – arguably the most contentious one. During the conflict and subsequent Occupation of France during World War II, Delamare began and remained working as a costume designer. Her filmography for the 1939 – 1945 period encompasses seven films: *Untel père et fils* (Duvivier, 1939), *La*

*Symphonie fantastique* (Christian-Jaque, 1942), *Le Voile bleu* (Stelli, 1942),<sup>190</sup> *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* (Vernay, 1943), *Au Bonheur des dames* (Cayatte, 1943), *Pierre et Jean* (Cayatte, 1943), and *Boule de suif*, (Christian-Jaque, 1945).

Three of these films - *La Symphonie fantastique*, *Au Bonheur des dames* and *Pierre et Jean* – were produced by Continental films, a German studio and production company established in France in September 1940. Set up by the Nazi Minister for Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, the company's aim was to assert a degree of German control over the French film industry. Former soldier, and previous head of Universum Film AG, Alfred Greven, became the company's director, and under his management Continental produced thirty films between 1941 and 1944.<sup>191</sup>

As Tavernier has noted, there has been a tendency to attach the label of “collaborator” to Continental's French personnel (Tavernier cited in Porton and Flitterman-Lewis, 2003: 4). As such, immediately after the Liberation, when the company folded, the *Comité d'épuration du cinéma français* black-listed former Continental employees and doled out punishments to certain film personnel who had worked with the company. Most famously, Clouzot was banned from filmmaking for three years as a consequence of having accepted a job as the executive in charge of screenplays, and having directed *Le Corbeau* at Continental; the stars of the film, Pierre Fresnay and Ginette Leclerc, were imprisoned for six months and a year respectively. Delamare was also arrested and blacklisted in October 1945, yet she was released without charge (Bertin-Maghit, 1989: appendix D).

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<sup>190</sup> Although *Le Voile bleu* was not produced by Continental its ideology is very much in line with that of the Vichy regime. See Hayward, S. (1993) *French National Cinema*, London and New York: Routledge, p.202.

<sup>191</sup> See <[www.filmsdefrance.com/Continental\\_Films.html](http://www.filmsdefrance.com/Continental_Films.html)> [accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008].

Over recent years, the opinion that all workers at Continental were automatically collaborators has begun to be revised. Evelyn Ehrlich's study, *Cinema of Paradox: French Filmmaking Under the German Occupation* (1985), explored the contradictory nature of Continental, a theme that Porton and Flitterman-Lewis pick up on in their 2003 interview for *Cinéaste* with Bertrand Tavernier, following the release of the director's film *Laissez-passer* (2003), which details the workings (and indeed not-workings) of the film industry during the Occupation. One such part of Continental's contradictory nature manifests itself in the fact that Greven had Jewish employees. Also, one would imagine that being a company instigated by Goebbels, Continental would have pedalled Nazi propaganda, and that the content of its films would be monitored closely in order to assure no nationalistic messages were to sneak through the censor. Yet as Porton and Flitterman-Lewis outline:

The actual films produced by the studio were almost completely untainted by propaganda. Some of Continental's output amounted to little more than mere froth, but [...] certain key films were subtly subversive challenges to the values of both the German occupiers and the Vichy government. (Porton and Flitterman-Lewis, 2003: 4)

One such film was Cayatte's *Au Bonheur des dames*, which Delamare costumed. Tavernier has pointed out that the fact that a Nazi company produced an adaptation of Zola, a bastion of French literary culture, and an author very much disliked by the occupying regime is surprising (Tavernier cited in Porton and Flitterman-Lewis, 2003: 5). Things at the company, therefore, were not clear-cut. Despite her involvement and subsequent blacklisting, Delamare certainly does not consider herself to be a collaborator by default of having had a German employer. Instead, she insists, via Bertrand Tavernier, that she was in fact active in the Resistance. Let me explain this

point further. In the *Cinéaste* interview with Tavernier, the director speaks of a telephone call he received from Delamare after she had seen his film, *Laissez-passer*:

She [Delamare] told me that she worked at Continental [...] We started talking and I asked her, ‘Did you feel that you were a collaborator?’ She replied, ‘No, we had to work. After 1942, if you found any work it was German. I was working with directors I had known before the war on films with very decent, interesting screenplays. And I was active in the Resistance. Like Devaivre [an assistant director at Continental], I rode one hundred miles on a bicycle to report to my superior. When I started my first film, it was only at the end of the shoot that I discovered that I was in a German production company.’ (Tavernier and Delamare cited in Porton and Flitterman-Lewis, 2003: 7)

There is of course the possibility that this phone call from Delamare had the aim of a retrospective justification for her employment at Continental, but given what I have come to understand as some of the paradoxes of the company, her story may very well be true. As Tavernier has said of his conversation with Delamare, ‘That means the reality was much more complex than people realise [...] At least half of the people involved just wanted to survive. Most of them acted very decently, a few were genuine collaborators, and a few were trying to resist.’ (Tavernier cited in Porton and Flitterman-Lewis, 2003: 7)

Whether Delamare was active in the Resistance or not, the ideas of both ‘collaboration’ and ‘resistance,’ when removed from the socio-political context of occupied France and transposed to the field of costume design, become interesting possibilities to explore. The collaboration of fabrics and costumes in relation to other fabrics, costumes, and characters, as well as the possibility of qualities of resistance in fabrics, costumes, and characters become interwoven threads to research. Perhaps, like Escoffier, and what I have come to know of his ‘o’ space that resists the pigeonholing of women, Delamare’s

bows and ruffles may also have a distinct ideological edge that resists the containment of women that characterises much 1950s French cinema. Less likely is that Delamare's designs be akin to Annenkov and collude in making women inert objects of commodity exchange. This tension, between clothes that collaborate and clothes that resist, will be a key component in the analysis of Delamare's costume design, to which I shall now turn.

## CHAPTER 14: *FRENCH CANCAN AND ELÉNA ET LES HOMMES*

From the previous chapter, which details Delamare's time as a fashion illustrator and designer at Patou, her cinematic working method, questions of costume authenticity, and colour and politics, two main strands of research have presented themselves. First, her reinterpreted historical costumes are a bricolage of authenticity and inventive modern techniques. For example, Delamare uses historically correct corseting while simultaneously skirting around the true weight of historical costume so that actors may move more easily. Questions of how this bricolage effect is embedded into the texts and costumes this case-study examines will be a first thread of investigation. The second, interrelated thread will be Delamare's love of accessories and what the (gender) political and ideological significance this supplementing and adorning of the body may be. These interwoven strands will then form the fabric of this study, in which I will look for points of collaboration and resistance in her costumes. Bearing this in mind, I will now move on to the Renoir texts to be undressed: *French Cancan* and *Eléna et les hommes*.

### 14.1: *French Cancan*: History and Costume as Bricolage One

*French Cancan* was released in Paris on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1955. It marked the return of Renoir to France after a number of years spent in Hollywood, India and Europe (1940 - 1954). Filmed in Technicolor, *French Cancan* is a fictionalised account of the grand opening of the famous *Moulin Rouge* dancehall in 1889. This narrative, therefore, positions the film in the *Belle Époque*, a period that Delamare has frequently dressed throughout her career.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> See filmography for full details.

In Renoir's script, the opening of the *Moulin Rouge* is precipitated by the impresario character, Danglard (Jean Gabin), visiting a shabby Pigalle dancehall, *La Reine blanche*. Already the owner of an entertainment establishment, which stars amongst others, his lover, the belly-dancer La Belle abbess (Maria Félix), Danglard is looking for a way out of financial difficulty. He believes he has found it at *La Reine blanche* in the form of the *le chahut* and Nini (Françoise Arnoul): the *chahut* being a version of the Second Empire *can-can* dance that the predominantly working-class clientele of *La Reine blanche* still practice, and Nini being a member of the dancehall's clientele that Danglard takes a fancy to. He decides that he can re-launch the *can-can* with Nini as his star dancer at a new establishment, the *Moulin Rouge*, which once he has secured financial backing for he will build on the site of *La Reine blanche*. Despite several setbacks, Danglard succeeds in his venture. The *Moulin Rouge* opens and Nini becomes both his mistress and star; that is until Danglard finds a new talented woman who supersedes Nini in his affections.

Despite the disclaimer during the film's opening credits that the situation and characters in the text are imaginary, and that the events represented should not be considered to pertain to previously existing persons, it is certainly worth briefly illustrating the true story of the opening of the *Moulin Rouge*, for there are points of overlap between Renoir's fictionalised account and the historical reality. The *Moulin Rouge* was in fact opened on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1889 by impresario, Charles Zidler. In the early 1880s, Zidler realised that Montmartre would become the centre of the Parisian entertainment industry and recognised the possibilities that rehabilitating the *can-can* could bring (Rudorff, 1973: 50). He went into business with the Oller brothers, a business partnership that resulted in both the *Hippodrome* and the *Jardin de Paris*. However,

Zidler still dreamt of a new dancehall where they performed the *can-can* as the main attraction, and so in 1889 he and the Oller brothers transformed a disused dancehall, the *Reine blanche*, in Pigalle resulting in the *Moulin Rouge*. Zidler recruited a whole company of dancers, including the infamous La Goulue, Grille d'égout and Nini Patte-en-l'air<sup>193</sup> and the revived *can-can* became an international phenomenon (Rudorff, 1973: 50-51).

Several points of convergence, therefore, exist between Renoir's fictionalised script and the historical account of the *Moulin Rouge's* inception. The timeframe and location are identical, and Danglard becomes Zidler's filmic double, for they both take on the same challenge of rehabilitating the *chahut* and re-branding it as a new and improved *can-can*. There is also a link between Danglard's star and one of Zidler's dance troupe through the name of Nini. Consequently, Renoir has taken several historical elements and reinterpreted them in his script. In this respect, he has done to his narrative what Delamare does to her costumes, for both Renoir's story and Delamare's designs are grounded in historical authenticity but are affected by and executed using modern technology. As such, the narrative of *French Cancan* can also be considered as bricolage. It is worth briefly expanding on one particular element of overlap in Renoir's narrative bricolage here, for the locating of the *Moulin Rouge*, in both script and reality, on the site of *La Reine blanche* yields some interesting topographical results.

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<sup>193</sup> Nini Patte-en-l'air was an older dancer who had previously worked at the Elysée-Montmartre. Rudorff describes her as 'a short, thin, wiry little woman with haggard features and dark, glittering eyes, she taught the *chahut* to others and danced with a kind of controlled frenzy, her foot quivering as she held it high in the *port d'armes* as though charged with a surplus of electric tension.' (1973: 51). It was Nini who would teach any new *Moulin Rouge* dancers the *can-can* and so another point of overlap exist between the historical reality and Renoir's text via the figure of the old *can-can* star who runs the dance school.

## 14.2: A Topography of Corsetry

Montmartre and its surrounding environs of Pigalle and Clichy, became (in)famous during the *Belle Époque* pleasure industry boom for evening entertainment, which was not necessarily ‘respectable’. As Rearick comments, ‘the 1890s saw the quarter [Montmartre] become notorious for flagrant prostitution (of both sexes) in brightly lighted pleasure spots like the *Moulin Rouge*; a violent and brutal criminality also became commonplace. To be sure, the excitements of sex and danger – the fascinating “terrible odour” of the lower classes there – lured many of higher social standing in quest of private pleasures.’ (1985: 74)

Montmartre has long been a site/sight of pleasure and death, witnessing both the city’s highest concentration of cabarets, taverns and dancehalls, but also its fair share of battles, martyrdom and rebellion.<sup>194</sup> Until 1860, when annexed by Napoléon III, Montmartre was a separate entity from Paris, falling outside the city walls. It is due to its position on the city limits, its very liminality that such a reputation for pleasure has come to characterise the area. Before 1790, when only lower-Montmartre was incorporated into the city, wine merchants passing through barriers into the capital had to pay a toll on their wares. Keen to avoid this financial pitfall, a great number of wine shops and *guinguettes* sprang up on the upper-Montmartre side of the barrier, where drinks could be sold at a cheaper price (Rudorff, 1973: 45). And so Montmartre’s reputation for seedy entertainment began, for ‘with the wine shops there came a floating population of prostitutes, thieves, and smugglers, tricksters, conjurers, pimps and singers, gypsies and dancers.’ (45) Long before the ‘pleasure-boom’ of the *Belle*

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<sup>194</sup> Montmartre is the site of Saint Denis’ martyrdom (hence its name), Henri of Navarre bombarded the city from Montmartre in 1589, and in 1871, the area became a symbol for the rebellious Commune (51).

*Époque*, with which Montmartre and its surrounding areas have become synonymous, an established reputation for entertainment entwined with criminality already existed.

There was another reason why Montmartre prospered over other areas of Paris in its provision of entertainment. Its location on the city outskirts meant it was not really affected by Haussmannisation.<sup>195</sup> However, Montmartre was not the only district of Paris where such a potent mix of pleasure, sex and death could be found. Prior to the Emperor's colossal city (re)planning from the 1860s onwards, the Parisian theatre district was concentrated around the Boulevard du Temple, which stretched from the Place de la République towards the city's eastern edge of Belleville. Although more central than Montmartre, the Boulevard du Temple reached towards the then city limits (as they stood during the first half of the nineteenth century). The district's theatres flourished during the 1820s, showing a mix of melodrama and fairground entertainment to all classes (Brown, 2001: 321). The Boulevard du Temple soon became nicknamed the Boulevard du Crime,<sup>196</sup> thus its mixture of entertainment and danger was metonymically reproduced, which only added to the thrill the bourgeoisie sought in proximity to the socially marginal who populated the area.

This frisson of entertainment and crime was curtailed when, in 1864, the theatres of the Boulevard du Temple were demolished to make way for the construction of Haussmann's *grands boulevards*. This carving up of the urban fabric by Haussmann's remodelling squeezed previously liminal entertainment spaces, such as the theatres, towards the centre of the city, away from the working-classes who were being pushed in

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<sup>195</sup> See crinoline sections 2.5 and 2.6 in chapter two for information on Haussmannisation.

<sup>196</sup> The Boulevard du crime is referenced in Carné's *Les Enfants du paradis* (1945), which details a love affair set amongst the nineteenth-century world of the Parisian theatre district. As one will remember from the earlier major case-study, it was Mayo who designed the costumes for this film. See Mayo case-study chapter 10 for further details.

the other direction, towards the city limits.<sup>197</sup> In effect, a metaphorical corset was placed around the boundary of the city walls. The new *grands boulevards* functioned as its stays, constricting the city and pushing its amenities towards its centre and correspondingly filtering out ‘undesirable elements,’ such as the aforementioned working classes who were displaced by Haussmann’s disciplining of the city’s silhouette.<sup>198</sup>

Taking this metaphor of topographic corsetry further, it is interesting that Zidler chose to place his new *Moulin Rouge* dancehall in Pigalle, bringing it just within the city walls, and so just inside this metaphorical corset. Originally, the district’s famous dancehalls such as the *Moulin de la galette* were positioned on top of the hill that comprises Montmartre, placing them outside the city limits and thus outside of Haussmann’s city corsetry. In bringing the *Moulin Rouge* to the very edge of Pigalle, Zidler placed his establishment on a border, an entry and exit point, a hinterland space of liminality. This description of Pigalle’s location corresponds to that of the corset’s lace-hole. As explained in the *mise-en-scène* of the corset’s ideological and fashionable functionings, the lace-hole represents the site/sight of escape for taboo discourses surrounding the corseted female body, and as such, can act as a point of resistance.<sup>199</sup> It is fitting, therefore, that Zidler’s dancehall, which displays the corseted female body, should find itself within the lace-hole of Pigalle – an urban equivalent point of exit and entry, a point of access to the body of the city. Akin to the lace-hole, Pigalle’s night-time world is also a site/sight where sexualised (feminine) discourses can seep through,

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<sup>197</sup> As noted in the case-study on Mayo, particularly in the analysis of *Gervaise*, one of the outcomes of Haussmannisation was that the working classes were pushed to the outskirts of the city due to rising rents as inner city areas became gentrified. See Mayo case-study, chapter twelve for more information on this point.

<sup>198</sup> This notion of filtering returns to the earlier exploration of the corset and the filtering function inherent in this garment. See chapter two sections 2.2 and 2.3 for elaboration on this.

<sup>199</sup> See corset analysis section 2.4 for a further exploration of the lace-hole as a point of resistance.

escaping from Haussmann's urban corset of attempted propriety. Whether this lace-hole of city fabric can also function as a point of feminine resistance is to be determined in the analysis of Delamare's costumes below.

### **14.3: Nini and Lola: the Materiality of Stardom**

In this unstitching of Delamare's costumes I am focussing on the two main female characters within *French Cancan*, Nini (Arnoul) and Lola (Félix). I have chosen to analyse the fabric worn by these two women because they are pitted against one another during the narrative, both competing for stardom and the affections of Danglard (Gabin). As one might expect, the style in which these two rival characters are dressed appears to be completely different from one another, particularly at the beginning of the film, illustrating their opposing positions. However, as the film progresses and their situations change, interesting points of overlap in their dress develop. In fact, the comparison of these two women seems to have been a conscious decision for Delamare when designing their costumes, for Nini and Lola have twelve different outfits each, (despite their initially different socio-economic situations) and so the audience is invited to evaluate these two women and their equal division of costume changes against one another. Despite this numerical parity of apparel, important differences remain between Nini and Lola on a sartorial plane, particularly at the level of accessories (Delamare's speciality) and material type. I will explore both the differences and similarities in a selection of their costumes, in order to ascertain the ideological implications arising from such points of resistance and collaboration in fabric.

Nini's first two outfits consist of plain cotton blouse and skirt combinations, worn with white petticoats and black ankle boots. In the first outfit, worn to the *Reine blanche* dancehall, the blouse is high-necked and white with small front fastening buttons and a black stripe at the collar and cuffs, and the skirt is dark blue with an embroidered hemline. At her neck, Nini has a choker with a flower as her only accessory. In the second outfit, worn to work at the laundry, her blouse is pale pink with a white collar, and she wears a white apron over another lighter blue skirt. Through her costume, therefore, Nini's working-class status is conveyed. Furthermore, the flower, the pink of her blouse and her lack of sophisticated accessories have girlish connotations, thus her costume at this point supports her character's status as the *petite ingénue* that Danglard is so keen to take under his wing.



Figure 56. Nini's first outfit.



Figure 57. Nini's second outfit.

In comparison, Lola's first two outfits are completely different from Nini's and completely different from one another. The first time Lola appears, she is on stage, performing in a bejewelled gold bra and red silk skirt, decorated with plentiful gold beading. Wearing gold slippers, and with her midriff on view, she is accessorised with a gold headdress and earrings and a blue chiffon shawl. Her belly-dance performance is advertised as an 'Oriental dance.' This labelling coupled with her sartorial appearance conflates to form the stereotype of the exotic female other.<sup>200</sup> This exotically choreographed act would have been concurrent with French dancehall trends during the *Belle Époque*, which favoured exotic dances, particularly from the Orient and Africa, in which 'savage' female sexuality was showcased (Gordon, 2004: 268-269). Initially, Lola's exotic femininity appears to differ greatly from Nini's working-class French femininity, which is displayed through the latter's costume and location in the populous of the *Reine blanche*, her nationality emphasised by her dancing of the *chahut*. However, the image of the *can-can* dancer was frequently linked with that of the savage too, as Gordon notes '[the savage] was in fact the *predominant* figure of the sexually desirable woman in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth.' (2004: 268 author's emphasis) Despite such apparently different identities and apparel, therefore, Nini's and Lola's femininities are linked through the 'savage' dances they perform.

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<sup>200</sup> Such a stereotype is not unfamiliar to the Mexican-born Félix, who played the 'exotic star' of the Parisian music-hall, La Belle Otéro, in Pottier's 1954 film of the same name.



Figure 58. Lola's first outfit.



Figure 59. Lola's second outfit.

It is at the *Reine blanche* that Lola's second outfit is worn. She cuts an elegant figure in a navy high-necked silk dress, disciplined into an S-bend via corsetry.<sup>201</sup> She is accessorised with pearls, white silk gloves trimmed with black lace, diamond earrings and a veiled bonnet, featuring a macabre dead bird with a sharp beak. Lola looks every inch the fashionable *Belle Époque Parisienne*, but the elegance of her appearance is underpinned by danger, as the bird stretched across her bonnet with its piercing beak

<sup>201</sup> As outlined in the back-stories to Delamare's costume design career and working method, one knows that she uses historically correct corsetry in order to convey an accurate silhouette on screen (see chapter 13). In *French Cancan* this is reinforced in the scene in which Lola asks Danglard to lace her corset for her. The foundation garment in question is a pink satin strapless corset, decorated with black lace, which laces up the back. Its cut and form discipline Lola's body into an S-shape, the silhouette that we know to be the fashionable and desirable shape of the *Belle Époque*.

It is interesting that Delamare chooses to put the corset on display in *French Cancan*, for as seen in the analysis of Annenkov and Escoffier, the corset, for them, remains mostly hidden. Like Mayo, Delamare has been bold enough to put this paradoxical garment on show. In so doing, she advertises her desire for authenticity via a correctness of historical silhouette but also flags up the multifarious nature of the corset and its possibility for discourses that resist women's containment. As one will see in due course, this is a quality, which her abundant accessories also tie into.

attests. This danger is concurrent with her sexualised portrayal of the exotic female ‘other’ on stage, which as noted above was part of a widespread trend in entertainment at this time, a trend that also filtered into fashion.

As Gordon has noted, Paris fashions during the *Belle Époque* often mirrored dancehall sartorial trends, which ‘included an ostentatious display of jewellery, feathers, a daring décolleté, and a very prominent derrière.’ (2004: 267)<sup>202</sup> Lola’s S-bend silhouette, jewellery and feathered bonnet, therefore, follow the trend for dancehall inspired fashions. As such, they carry with them connotations of the dangerous female other, with which the *Belle Époque* stage was so concerned, particularly Lola’s feathered bonnet due to the animality it imparts upon its wearer. Sartorially weaponised as the plumed female, Lola does not just pose a threat to men, but also women, such as Nini, who has dared to tread on Lola’s toes by dancing with her man, Danglard. As a result, in a birdlike swoop, Lola forcefully breaks Nini’s hold on Danglard’s arm as their dance at the *Reine blanche* comes to a close. This action signals the beginning of Nini’s and Lola’s rivalry for Danglard, and their fates become intertwined. This rivalry is mirrored in their costumes, which despite appearing to be poles apart in terms of fabric and finish (silk versus cotton and one accessory versus many) are nevertheless linked by their shared navy, white and black colour scheme.

Following this evening at the *Reine blanche*, Danglard persuades Nini to work for him as a dancer, and this signals the first shift in Nini’s costume. Once placed under the tutelage of Danglard’s trusted dance instructor, Nini wears three different outfits of undress as she learns the *can-can*. The first comprises black stockings (essential *can-*

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<sup>202</sup> See case-studies on Mayo and Escoffier for further instances of the mixing of dancehall wear and high fashion in relation to *Casque d’or* and *Nana*.

*can* dancer apparel), white cotton bloomers, a waist-cinching corset and a white cotton chemise; in the second, the black stockings, bloomers, corset, and chemise are repeated and teamed with the previously described pink blouse (worn unbuttoned) and a red ribbon in her hair; in the third outfit, Nini again sports black stockings with white cotton undergarments and a blue corset. The introduction of black and red to the previously pastel-based colour palette of her costumes indicates Nini's increasing awareness of her sexuality. This is also simultaneously reinforced by the narrative, in which she seduces her *boulangier* boyfriend Paulo (Franco Pastorino) and loses her virginity.

Following this sequence, when Nini next appears on screen, it is within the public space of the building site of the *Moulin Rouge*. She is dressed in a cotton floral print dress, with white ruffles at the chest and cuffs, worn with white shoes. She is accessorised with a pink silk corset-like belt and matching bag, blue gloves and a neat bonnet trimmed with flowers. This is the most sophisticated outfit that Nini has worn so far; signifying her improving financial situation (Danglard pays more than the *blanchisserie*) and the beginning of her trajectory towards stardom, engineered by Danglard, but also motivated by Nini's increasing desire for Gabin's character.

Lola is also present in this scene, dressed in an ornate cream chiffon and lace dress with white shoes. Her accessories include a huge cream bonnet trimmed in matching chiffon and feathers (once more the plumed female stereotype) with a veil, a cream chiffon umbrella, a rose at her bust, a diamond necklace and earrings, cream leather gloves and a lace bag. Angered by Nini's presence, Lola demands to know what she is doing there. When Nini replies that at Danglard's request she is a *Moulin Rouge* dancer in training, Lola starts a fight, which escalates into a riot. Nini's jealous boyfriend then makes an

appearance, and as Danglard is trying to end the fight between Nini and Lola, Paulo pushes him into a hole, breaking his leg.<sup>203</sup>



Figure 60. Nini versus Lola.

Despite Nini's and Lola's escalating animosity, their costumes are becoming increasingly alike, or rather Nini's costumes are beginning to resemble those of Lola's. Delamare achieves this via an increase in the number of Nini's accessories, and introducing a more fashionable cut to her clothing. However, a difference in fabric is still maintained, with Lola being dressed exclusively in silks and satins and Nini in cotton. Yet Danglard's leg-break precipitates a further shift in Nini's costumes, which

<sup>203</sup> As Modleski has argued in her analysis of *Rear Window* (Hitchcock, 1954), the breaking of the male limb becomes a feminising action symbolic of dephallusation. In *French Cancan*, Danglard's leg-break causes a hiatus in the narrative, as his progress on the creation of the *Moulin Rouge* is interrupted. This gap allows for a momentary reversal in Danglard's consumption and manufacture of women as spectacle. Representative of this change in pattern is the fact that on his return from hospital, Nini seduces Danglard. However, once he has recovered, his pattern of behaviour returns unchanged and his Pygmalion antics continue. See Modleski, T., (2005), 'The Master's Dollhouse, *Rear Window*', in Modleski, In *The Women who knew too much, Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 69-88

moves them closer again to those of Lola. Nini, wearing a blue cotton cropped jacket and frilled skirt accessorised with a pink satin floral bonnet and bag, accompanies Danglard on his return from the hospital to his hotel suite. She orders champagne and then kisses Danglard, and her advance on him results in them having sex. When Nini next appears on screen, she is dressed in a pink *satin* dress with a pink corset style belt, which is decorated with white lace and pink ribbon at the collar and cuffs, and accessorised with a lace and flower bonnet.



Figure 61. Nini in satin.

Nini's final costume shift is, therefore, one of fabric, from cotton to satin. It is significant that, now that she has acted on her desire for Danglard, she has chosen to dress in satin, a far more sensual fabric than cotton, which until this point in the film has

been her fabric of choice. This shift in material is not just significant of Nini's agencing of her own desire, for in dressing in satin her costume is again rendered closer to that of Lola's. In this respect, Nini's costume becomes not only a bricolage of historical authenticity but also a bricolage of Lola's signature style. Her costume, therefore, becomes a comment on the process of creating star identity, for Danglard has already manufactured Lola into a star performer and is now repeating the process with Nini. Later on in the narrative, Danglard will also discover a young singer (played by Anna Amendola and voiced by Cora Vaucaire) whom he also wishes to make into a star, and the process begins again. The idea of manufacturing women-as-spectacle arises, in which each of Danglard's protégées first become his lover and then a star performer, creating an industrial production line of sex and spectacle. This notion of production lines of femininity is concurrent with new technologies being developed in accordance with the Industrial Revolution, and as such, is reminiscent of the mass-production of women's silhouettes ad-dressed in the first part of this thesis, as corsetry became industrially produced.<sup>204</sup>

It is interesting that such a notion should arise in a Technicolor film, because as learnt, following Neale, in the case study on Mayo, Technicolor (and other colour-film processes) became linked to mechanisms of creating viewing pleasure rather than verisimilitude and hence became bound up in the visual presentation of the female star as a fantasy figure.<sup>205</sup> At its inception in the industry, colour-film stock was in and of itself a spectacle, yet it was carefully managed and controlled, particularly at the Technicolor corporation, who through the use of colour consultant Nathalie Kalmus, subjected films using Technicolor stock to a strict aesthetic code of colour usage (Neale,

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<sup>204</sup> See corset sections 2.2 and 2.3.

<sup>205</sup> See Mayo case-study chapter 12.

1985: 150). The way in which Technicolor was composed and controlled can be compared to the way in which the female star was similarly composed and controlled through the manufacture of her appearance, a sentiment that Renoir makes one aware of in *French Cancan* via Nini's trajectory towards stardom, which is, to a large extent, composed and controlled by Danglard.

Potentially, Danglard's patriarchal power over Nini's career is a very limiting position for her to be in. However, Renoir's narrative of bricolage is geographically located in a metaphorical topographical lace-hole (see page 305). So it is possible that this might provide a point of resistance against such a patriarchally structured platform for female performance and stardom. In order to explore this prospect further, I will now examine the role of accessories in Delamare's designs.

#### **14.4: Accessorising to Excess**

Of all the characters within *French Cancan*, it is Lola who is adorned with the most accessories. She is never seen without an extravagant bonnet, diamond jewellery, set of gloves and matching bag when in public. Such bountiful bodily adornment marks Lola out as Danglard's most established star performer and a woman of fashion. And her conflation of dancehall dress with high-fashion brings with it an undercurrent of dangerous sexuality. Thus, Lola's abundance of accessories overloads and over-signifies her as a consumer 'durable.'

Throughout the narrative Lola is unafraid to use her sexuality to advance her career and socio-economic position. She has several lovers (apart from Danglard), whose financial

power she uses to make a bid for control of the *Moulin Rouge* and thwart Nini's *can-can* aspirations while Danglard is incapacitated with a broken leg. As well as wearing accessories on her body, she uses her body to make accessories of various other men who may be of advantage to her. As established, Nini takes to wearing more accessories as the narrative of the film progresses, and in another point of collaboration with Lola, has more and more interested male parties at various levels of attachment as the story unfolds.

I have already established that fine detailing and accessories are Delamare's signature design marks, but have not yet explored what the ideological implications of such prolific extra bodily adornment might be beyond the initial character information they convey. The noun 'accessory' is defined as 'an inessential object or device that adds to the attractiveness, convenience, or effectiveness of something else' and as an adjective, an accessory 'aids or contributes in a secondary way.' (Allen, 2003: 7) Whereas Lola's and Nini's accessories certainly add to the attractiveness of their costumes by providing a richness of detail, I would argue that they are far from inessential. In fact, I believe that it is via these two women's accessories that a defiance of costume, and thus point of resistance, or 'second way' against their commodification as spectacle as Danglard's stars may be realised.

That an accessory, a bodily adornment, which encourages display in relation to the body, may function as a point of resistance to the commodification as spectacle of this same body seems paradoxical. Yet one can argue that accessories, while simultaneously adorning the body, can also function as an interruption, for they interrupt and break the lines of the body's silhouette. For example, a belt cuts across the centre of the body,

breaking up its vertical shape, and a bonnet adds height and presence to the body, changing its proportions. As such, by flagging up one particular area of the body, an accessory can disguise another. In this way, accessories can play with the concept of fetishisation through the overinvestment in one particular area of the body, which as one knows from psychoanalytical theory has been regarded as a male strategy for disavowing dangerous sexual difference. Woman, in being fetishised, becomes invested with the missing phallus (Hayward, 2000a: 448).

Undoubtedly, the opportunity for the fetishisation of the female body exists in Delamare's designs. However, her abundantly accessorised women in *French Cancan* are, in the final analysis, not rendered phallic due to the very proliferation of accessories with which they are adorned. For as discussed in section 2.7 in part one, the eye is confused as to where and to which particular accessory it should concentrate on. As such, the female body is not safely contained, for its lines are interrupted by accessories. As such, in a similar fashion to the *Merveilleuses* (see 2.7), Nini and Lola turn accessorising into a gender political statement. This is achieved by accessories becoming points of corporeal and sartorial rupture that create a gaps, which correspondingly form spaces in which things may happen. As seen in the analysis of the lace-holes in corsetry, the creation of such a gap may function as a point of escape and/or defiance. I have, therefore, come full circle and returned to the ring of resistance mentioned in the topography of corsetry above, the lace-hole.

How interesting then that in a text of bricolage, which situates itself historically and geographically in an urban lace-hole, accessories may also function as a point of resistance akin to the corset's lace-hole. Nini's and Lola's abundance of accessories

direct the eye to the breaks in their silhouettes, turning attention away from their bodies beneath. This occurs even in their stage outfits, in which a greater degree of the body is on display, for both are adorned with sartorial extras such as head-dresses/bonnets, bows, ribbons and jewellery. Consequently, their excess of accessories grants them a degree of agency in the composition and control of their appearance both on and off the stage. Accordingly, the two strands of enquiry into Delamare's methodology, her use of bricolage and her love of accessories, entwine in Nini's and Lola's costumes to weave a filmic fabric of resistance, which is imbued with gender political significance.

#### **14.5: *Eléna et les hommes*: History Repeating Itself – Costume and Narrative**

##### **Bricolage Two**

*Eléna et les hommes* was released in France in 1956. Scripted by Renoir, the part of Eléna was written specifically for Ingrid Bergman, an actor whom the director greatly admired.<sup>206</sup> Akin to *French Cancan*, *Eléna et les hommes* was filmed in Technicolor, and shares the same disclaimer as the earlier film, stating that the persons and narrative of the text are entirely fictional. And as with *French Cancan*, in which the true and fictionalised accounts of the creation of the *Moulin Rouge* conflate, *Eléna et les hommes* also exhibits points of overlap between the director's narrative and historical reality. *Eléna et les hommes*' *Belle Époque* script has two major threads: first, the love story between Eléna and Henri de Chevincourt (Mel Ferrer), and second, a political story in which Eléna aids Général Rollan (Jean Marais) in his political career. The historical

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<sup>206</sup> Renoir's offer of the part of Eléna coincided with a difficult time in Bergman's career, for she was still suffering from the scandal caused by her affair with the Italian film director, Roberto Rossellini. The original script by Renoir was a move away from literary adaptations so popular within the 1950s genre of costume drama to a more personal text with Bergman in mind. In 1956 this would have been an unusual and modern move, and prescient of the way in which productions would move towards the end of the decade.

model for this second narrative thread appears to be the so-called Boulanger affair, which unfolded in France between 1886 and 1889.

First to explore the historical thread, following the consolidation of the Third Republic (1871 – 1940) Général Georges Boulanger appeared to embrace a republican stance in the 1880s, a position that, as Irvine notes, was ‘then relatively rare in the officer corps.’ (Irvine, 1989: 3) Boulanger’s political leanings attracted the attention of left-wing republicans such as Georges Clemenceau, who obtained the position of war minister for the Général in 1886 (3). Boulanger took office at a time when tensions between France and Germany were escalating once more. Keen to win the favour of the public, who, as Seager has commented, were exhibiting growing militancy in view of Germany at this time, Boulanger enhanced his position by calling for military readiness in case conflict between the two countries were to ignite (1969: 48-49). Such an anti-German stance worried Conservative Republicans and Royalists alike and so in 1887, Boulanger was removed from office and confined to barracks (Irvine, 1989: 3).

However, the Général decided to run for office again and mounted a personal plebiscite. As Irvine observes, his manifesto was vague but consisted of the ‘restoration of French national grandeur, cleansing of French political life, and defence of the “exploited” against the “exploiters.”’ (1989: 4) Via such proposals, Boulanger won votes from across the political spectrum, but once elected to a position, he would resign only to run again elsewhere (4). In January 1889, Boulanger won the Paris by-election with a tremendous majority and fears of a Boulangist *coup d’état* were raised (Seager, 1969: 202-203). The French government responded by leaking rumours of the Général’s

impending arrest, and Boulanger fled abroad, ending his political career (Irvine, 1989: 4).

For the duration of his time in office, Boulanger became a hot topic of debate.<sup>207</sup>

According to Irvine, ‘his phenomenal popularity owed something to his striking good looks and dashing manner, rather more to his considerable gift for self-advertising, and a great deal indeed to his belligerent anti-German nationalism.’ (Irvine, 1989: 3) In Renoir’s text, Jean Marais’ Général Rollan shares the first two of these characteristics, evidenced by Marais’ physical attractiveness and the character’s propensity for public parades. However, the anti-German element of Boulanger’s persona is toned down in the figure of Rollan, with Renoir choosing to illustrate political tensions via newspaper headlines rather than the Général himself.<sup>208</sup> Therefore, initial points of historical overlap lie in Marais’ appearance and the embodiment of similar character traits to those of Boulanger. In addition, further points of convergence between Renoir’s tale and historical events exist in the director’s script, the majority of which will be evident in the following brief synopsis of the film.

The text commences at Eléna’s home, one learns that she is a widowed Polish princess with many suitors but she is penniless. As a result, she pre-empts an offer of marriage from Martin-Michaud (Pierre Bertin), a rich shoe producer, thus securing a safe financial future for her family by offering herself to him in marriage. Following this, Eléna and Martin-Michaud go out to watch the fourteenth of July parade, which features Général Rollan. However, the Parisian streets are so crowded that they become

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<sup>207</sup> The Général became something of a heroic figure among much of the Parisian public, and, as such, many music-hall tunes were dedicated to Boulanger (Irvine, 1989: 3) In terms of the two Renoir films, therefore, there is a historical overlap between the music-hall environment of *French Cancan* and the narrative bricolage of Boulanger in *Eléna et les hommes*.

<sup>208</sup> Interestingly, this is similar to the way Renoir treats war and the enemy in *La Grande illusion* (1937).

separated. In the crowd Eléna meets first Henri de Chevincourt, a friend of the Général, and secondly Rollan himself. Eléna gives Rollan a daisy as a good luck charm, at which point he is immediately offered the position of war minister. Rollan seems greatly taken with Eléna but leaves the scene with his lady friend Paulette (Elina Labourdette), who sensing Eléna's effect on the Général, removes the daisy talisman. Eléna leaves the scene with Henri, to share a boozy evening partying with the Parisian crowds and toasting Rollan's success. The pair then share a kiss before Eléna disappears into the masses of revellers.

Following this night, Henri pursues Eléna but is thwarted in his efforts to woo her, for she has taken it upon herself to aid Rollan in his political career. On the recommendation of the Général's advisors, Eléna uses her feminine charms, and another lucky daisy, to persuade the Général of certain actions he must take, regarding escalating tensions with Germany and homeland affairs. This plan is successful and Rollan's popularity soars. The narrative climax then follows. Rollan is removed from office by a cautious government, and confined to barracks. Eléna is once more dispatched, another daisy is given, and this time she must persuade Rollan to march on Paris and use his popularity to seize control of the country. Interwoven with this political drama is Eléna's love for Henri, which triumphs in the end. Breaking off her engagement to the shoe baron and breaking Rollan's heart and his political career, Eléna marries Henri, leaving the baron lonely and leading Rollan back into the arms of the ever-waiting Paulette.

One can clearly see how elements in Renoir's script blend with certain episodes of the Boulanger affair. Points of convergence between the film's narrative and historical

events exist in the aforementioned appearance and nature of the Général, but also in Rollan's subsequent appointment as war minister, his popularity with the public of the French capital and his political success in Paris. Such points of overlap result in another narrative of bricolage, as seen previously with the shared historical and filmic moments of *French Cancan*. Again Renoir and Delamare share a methodology of assembling textures, historical moments, styles and technology to create both the film in question and the costumes it features. One can speculate that this mutual practice of bricolage may be one of the reasons why they worked together so harmoniously.

#### **14.6: A Topography of Painting**

As outlined in *French Cancan*, the positioning of Renoir's tale of the creation of the *Moulin Rouge* and its actual positioning in Pigalle on the fringe of Montmartre was significant. In so doing, a parallel between corsetry and city topography was drawn and the lace-hole once more proved itself to be an important site/sight of feminine resistance. This metaphor of foundation garment, and its corresponding geographical urban equivalent, can also be applied to *Eléna et les hommes*. This is achieved through the recreation of Renoir's father's Montmartre based canvases in his son's celluloid, a process that I shall now explain.

Following Eléna's initial meeting with both Henri and Rollan during the military cavalcade, she accompanies Henri to a post-parade party where they drink, dance and sing. Trees are strung with lanterns, hat covered heads bob in time to the music of the band, and there is a general atmosphere of frivolity. This scene is evocative of one of Auguste Renoir's most famous paintings, the *Bal du Moulin de la galette* (1876). As

established earlier, Montmartre became synonymous with music and dancehalls and their associated evening delights during the *Belle Époque*. The *Moulin de la galette* was a dancehall situated near the summit of Montmartre. A successor to the Second Empire *bals musettes*, the *Moulin de la galette* was one of the first places where the *chahut* was danced, pre-dating the *Moulin Rouge* in both years and choreography (Rudorff, 1973: 45-6).



Figure 62. Auguste Renoir's *Bal du Moulin de la galette* (1876).



Figure 63. Jean Renoir's version (1956).

From the following description of the venue by Rudorff, one can see further parallels between the atmosphere of the *Moulin de la galette* and the aforementioned jubilant evening depicted in *Eléna et les hommes*, when the title character and Henri fall in love:

A wooden barrier separated the dance floor from rough wooden tables where customers drank the speciality of the house: pitchers of mulled wine. It was certainly not a “respectable” establishment, being an authentic working-class haunt with a public largely composed of working girls and working men on a spree together with an assortment of pimps, prostitutes, petty thieves and local toughs. On week-days it was particularly raffish [...] On Sundays, however, the *Moulin de la galette* had a more innocent air of festivity as young apprentices, white-collar employees and their sweethearts came up to the Butte for a sample of popular pleasures and a pleasurable suggestion of low life. (1973: 46)

In Renoir’s film, Eléna and Henri consume copious amounts of wine, and dance in a predominantly working-class establishment, but which (thanks to Rollan’s parade) is filled with a mixture of social groupings and different classes. The framing of Eléna’s and Henri’s dance sequence, is reminiscent of Auguste Renoir’s *La Danse à la ville* (1883) and *La Danse à la campagne* (1883), and the festivity of the crowd that surrounds them similarly translates the scene to the experience of the *Moulin de la galette* on a Sunday, as described above. In addition, the physical similarities between this scene and Renoir père’s painting, illustrated in the images above, further tie this filmic space of Renoir fils’ creation to the *Moulin de la galette* and its Montmartre location.

Thus via a bricolage of topographical painting, one returns to the significance of Montmartre’s geography. In correspondence with the metaphor of urban fabric as corsetry, outlined previously, the Butte de Montmartre falls just outside Haussmann’s city corsetry (see page 305). Accordingly, the *Moulin de la galette* in *Eléna et les*

*hommes*, referenced by Renoir via his father Auguste's painterly practice, is in a metaphorical space of geographical, topographical and sartorial freedom – the latter of which shall be of particular note when it comes to the analysis of Delamare's costumes for Eléna. Indeed, what is so interesting about this space (and that of the crowd) is what happens to Eléna's dress, particularly her accessories, when she is in it. It is to an investigation of her costume to which I will now turn, and in which I will use a detailed analysis of Eléna's first outfit in order to subsequently unpick the ideology of her wardrobe as a whole.

#### **14.7: Wrapping and Unwrapping the Body: Delamare's Accessorising of Eléna**

When the viewer first encounters Eléna in this film, she is clothed in an oyster coloured silk dress with chiffon sleeves embellished with white lace. The bodice of the dress is fastened with small pearl-like buttons at the front and trimmed with a white floral decoration at the bust, which meets the white lace of the dress' collar. The skirt of the dress flares out at its floor-length hem to create a small train at the rear, giving a silhouette typical of the late-nineteenth century. Both the front and back of the skirt are adorned with a V-shape of floral lace, and red ribbon, which pierces the fabric and ties in an individual bow on each side. In terms of accessories, initially Eléna wears a gold set of jewellery comprising necklace, brooch and earrings.



Figure 64. Eléna's dress.



Figure 65. Eléna accessorising.

However, this is added to as Eléna moves around her apartment prior to her departure for Rollan's parade. Seated in front of a dressing table in her bedroom, Eléna dons a white-veiled bonnet trimmed with white feathers and silver flowers. Leaving this room she picks up a small white lace and cloth bag, and on entering the main space of the apartment picks up a daisy (her lucky talisman) and while fixing it to her brooch, pre-empting Martin-Michaud's proposal. Following this she puts on black suede elbow-length gloves, and just as she is walking through the door, her maid, Lolotte (Magali Noël), hands her a white lace umbrella. This process of clothing oneself as Eléna moves through space, makes the flow more interesting to follow, as well as punctuating the scene.

As with Nini and Lola in *French Cancan*, Eléna too is abundantly accessorised. Therefore, ideas surrounding accessories as interruption and their subsequent negation of the containment of the female body, as discussed above, also surface in Eléna's Delamare-designed dress. As interruptions to the lines of the body, accessories can disguise the corporeal, and, as in the case of Nini and Lola, defy the commodification of the female body as spectacle. Initially, it seems possible to apply this same reading to Eléna, yet there is something further to explore here, in terms of *access* to her accessorised body. Indeed, questions around accessing the body arise due to the presence of a zip, which runs the length of the back of Eléna's dress. One is dealing here with both the commodification of the corporeal, and gendered access to the body: Eléna proves herself to be a political commodity in her dealings with Rollan, and, the presence of a visible zip fastening in a *Belle Époque* dress introduces an anachronistic moment and sartorial gateway to both the dressed and undressed body. As such, I will now explore the ideology of Eléna's accessories and fastenings further, beginning with the zip.



Figure 66. Eléna's zip.

The vast majority of Eléna's accessories and sartorial decoration are located at the front of her body, and, therefore, amplify her existing gender attributes (breasts and genitalia), which are also located on this corporeal side. Accordingly, Eléna's accessories function as accoutrements to femininity, which in conjunction with the gendered markers of the body, signify her frontal corporeal plane as overtly feminine. Yet while this occurs at the front of the body, something quite different is taking place at the back – the location of the zip fastening. The back of the human body is less gendered than the front, for it is not adorned with the appendages of gender difference. It is interesting that it is over this initially more gender-neutral corporeal plane that Delamare has chosen to insert a zip in Eléna's dress.

As learnt in previous case-studies in which the zip has made a surprise appearance, its presence is frequently anachronistic, at least in women's costumes; first because it is traditionally associated with male dress, and second because it actually dates from 1908 – so was not even in use at the time of this narrative, 1889. As such, the zip can tip the costumes it pulls together into a temporally troubling space, (such as that which Escoffier's costumes inhabit),<sup>209</sup> as well as raising the issue of sartorial gender politics. In the *Belle Époque* time-period in which *Eléna et les hommes* is set, zippers were only just beginning to be patented.<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, once the technology of this new style of fastening was available, it was initially only used in menswear (and later children's clothing), for the zip was deemed to be too racy for womenswear, due to the speed at which the body could be accessed.<sup>211</sup> The zip in Eléna's costume thus introduces

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<sup>209</sup> See Escoffier case-study chapter 7.

<sup>210</sup> In 1893, W.L. Judson made a patent application for the zip and it was first mass-produced in 1908. See zip manufacturer Coats Industry's 'History of the Zip', <[www.industrie.coats.de/company/history/opti/?lng=eng](http://www.industrie.coats.de/company/history/opti/?lng=eng)>.

<sup>211</sup> See Annenkov case-study chapter 4.

questions of historical authenticity, gender politics and women's relationship to technology.

In terms of historical authenticity, one knows that attention to detail is everything in Delamare's design practice. Therefore, budgetary constraints were the primary catalyst for any compromise on the level of historical authenticity that Delamare might have to make. One might assume that the presence of the zip in Eléna's costume was due to financial reasons. Yet *Eléna et les hommes* is a Technicolor production, a fact that during the 1950s - France's first decade of colour cinema - usually indicated a production of significant budget. Another understandable motive for the presence of a zip might be for reasons of speed and ease for Bergman when dressing and undressing. Yet Delamare authentically corseted the women she dressed, which is an even more time-consuming process than buttoning a dress. Also, one would imagine that Delamare's couture-trained skill, as well as her desire for authenticity wherever possible, would have lead her to conceal such an incongruous fastening if she did not want it to be seen. This implies that Delamare's use of a zip in Eléna's costume is deliberate.<sup>212</sup> Hence, I will turn to the ideological reading this conscious placing of new technologies of dress on screen may have.

By inserting a zip into Eléna's dress, Delamare is inserting a strip of modernity, for the zip was at the cutting edge of clothing technology towards the end of the *Belle Époque*. Thus Delamare's costume picks up on and reinforces the modern streak within Eléna's own actions. For example, in this zipped outfit, Eléna has refuted one proposal of

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<sup>212</sup> Indeed, as seen in the next section of this case-study on *La Reine Margot* (1954), Jeanne Moreau's Margot has lace-fastening dresses whereas other women within the text have zips in their robes. Following the logic of this earlier film, it would appear that Delamare always tries to make her 'star' costumes as authentic as possible. Consequently, this supports the reading of the zip in Bergman's Eléna's 'star' costume as an ideological choice by the designer.

marriage from Lionel (Jean Claudio), the musician, and pre-empted a second from Martin-Michaud, cutting short and obstructing these men's words and actions respectively. Like the action of the zip itself, Eléna slashes through their speech. Accordingly, just as her accessories interrupt the lines of the front of her body, the zip at the back of her body interrupts gendered mechanisms of clothing – disputing by whom and how (male) fastening technology should be worn - and mirroring Eléna own interruption of male discourse. This zipped costume raises interesting gendered issues of access to the body. Questions of gender are further highlighted when one considers the relationship between the aforementioned feminine and accessorised front of the dressed-body, and the zipped, less immediately gendered back of the dressed-body.

However, the back of Eléna's body certainly becomes increasingly gendered when one considers that the zip was an adjunct exclusive to male clothing for several decades after its first production.<sup>213</sup> Consequently, Eléna inhabits a space of in-betweenness, for she is sandwiched between the feminine front of her accessorised dressed-body and the masculine back of her zipped dressed-body. Such in-betweenness is reminiscent of Martine Carol's crinolined 'o' space of the in-between in Escoffier's costumes, which functioned as a sartorial point of feminine resistance.<sup>214</sup> In Eléna's configuration of in-betweenness then, a similar point of resistance may also be found. Indeed, in Eléna's positioning between female/male, her body becomes the metaphorical slash between this restrictive binary. As such, the position of her body is a liminal one, but one that is not without power for it allows her to simultaneously encompass and shift between both genders. This is a point I shall return to specifically in relation to how Eléna's

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<sup>213</sup> In fact, it was the *couturière* Elsa Schiaparelli who first introduced zips to women's clothing during the 1930s, and the fastening then trickled down from *haute-couture* to women's clothing in general (Koga, 2005: 478).

<sup>214</sup> See Escoffier case-study chapter 7.

accessories, body and gender identity shifts when she is in the crowd gathered for Rollan's parade. Firstly, however, one cannot ignore the addition of a further temporal paradox that Delamare also introduces to Eléna's costume by way of the aforementioned zip.

Beyond the anachronistic and gender troubling qualities that the zip in Eléna's dress presents, Delamare has inserted a further inconsistency into her costume in terms of accessing the body: this time the temporality of wrapping and unwrapping both the dress and its accompanying accessories. Cited in Warwick and Cavallaro, Prudence Glynn has observed the relationship between gift-wrapping and clothing. She states that 'To many people the fact that the contents of a package may be a saucepan or a diamond necklace seems to matter much less than the tremendous fun and stimulation of undoing things.'<sup>215</sup> (Glynn cited in Warwick, 1998: 50) Applying this notion to the sartorial, Glynn continues, 'Similarly, the most obviously exciting adjuncts to clothing are the fastenings.' (50)

This reading implies that the longer a package or indeed body takes to unwrap, the more exciting its contents will appear when they are finally revealed. In this respect, the array of accessories with which Eléna is layered, metaphorically act like knots in the string with which the parcel of her body is fastened, particularly the ribbons and bows at the hem of her dress. Thus in delaying access to her corporeality, and increasing the anticipation and expectation of what lies beneath her clothes, Eléna's dress is titillating. Yet the zip (another fastening) positioned at the back of her dress, with its inherent qualities of speed and ease of access to this same superficially parcelled-up body,

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<sup>215</sup> This is reminiscent of the pleasure often derived from the unlacing of corsetry mentioned in part one of this thesis. See corset sections 2.2 and 2.3 in chapter two.

complicates the ideology of her accessories. Herein lies the additional temporal paradox. On the one hand, the zip grants swift access to the body, as well as implying that Eléna's female body is just as accessible as the male body, through the use of this traditionally 'masculine' method of sartorial (dis)closure. On the other, the profusion of accessories, with which Eléna is adorned, delays such corporeal contact. A space of ideological bricolage, therefore, is again created within Delamare's design, a space in which a tension between the wrapping and unwrapping of the body is introduced. I will now explore how this sartorial tension is managed alongside the shifts in Eléna's identity, which occur in both the space of the crowd and the recreation of Auguste Renoir's Montmartre.

As mentioned, Eléna is accompanied to Rollan's victory parade with her now fiancé, Martin-Michaud. They attempt to reach it by carriage but the strength of the gathering crowd is so great that they abandon their transport in favour of going on foot. Swept up in the movement of Rollan's audience, Eléna is quite happy to be carried away from Martin-Michaud, and once fully immersed in the crowd, her accessories begin to be shed and different identities assumed.

First, she is given a child to hold, as his mother searches for a piece of cake. Once the woman has retrieved the cake, she gives it to the man stood next to her in order to retrieve her child from Eléna. The man in the crowd then gives the cake to Eléna, who gives him her lace parasol in exchange. Jostled by the crowd, Eléna bumps into Henri for the first time, before she is carried away as the crowd surges forward to see Rollan. She then encounters the mother once more, who again gives her child to Eléna. Eléna then swaps the child with a different man who is now stood next to her, in exchange for

his periscope. Eléna then eventually gives the periscope to the mother, who swaps it again to retrieve her child from the original periscope owner. Eléna is then moved on again by the force of the crowd and encounters Henri for a second time, and as they cheer on Rollan, Eléna's bag is stolen. Finally she leaves the throng with Henri to meet Rollan in person and bestows upon him her daisy.

In the crowd's mass of bodies, Eléna's accessories function as objects of commodity exchange, foreshadowing how she herself will become a political commodity for Rollan and his advisors. Yet the crowd is also a location of shifting identities for Eléna, who, for example, twice takes on a maternal role. Interestingly, she also occupies the position of voyeur as she swaps the child for the periscope in order to catch a glimpse of Rollan. The role of the voyeur is typically codified as male, and as such, Eléna can be seen to be appropriating the 'male' gaze (Hayward, 2000a: 158). In this 'male' position Eléna turns her back to the camera in order to use the viewing technology correctly. In so doing, she shows the audience the side of her dressed-body that is sartorially marked as masculine due to the presence of the zip - her shift in gender identity is reinforced through her clothing. In addition, this moment makes the point about women's access to technology, which increased during the *Belle Époque* through activities such as cycling, which became acceptable and accessible for women (Reynolds, 2006: 84-7).<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> This was of course only after women's dress had been modified to permit women to do so and preserve their modesty at the same time by means of the bloomer!



Figure 67. Eléna using the periscope.

Ideologically, the crowd becomes a space of freedom that allows Eléna to shift between different identities and assume different roles. Her accessories (and those of others) function as a catalyst in this process of transferable identities, which results in a difficulty in pinning Eléna down. In addition, the shedding of her accessories as objects of exchange (voluntarily and involuntarily) implies that she is both bound up in the process of commodity exchange and simultaneously free to unwrap her body at will. Such corporeal unwrapping continues in the painterly Montmartrean space, where Eléna removes one glove and throws her bonnet to the drummer of the band, as she and Henri enjoy the festivities. By the end of the evening, she is left with only one glove and her set of gold jewellery remaining from the array of accessories with which she began the day. Accordingly, the second of the temporal paradoxes is lessened as Eléna sheds her accessories, for in so doing, she makes her body more accessible. This is visually

reinforced by the zip, which is now more obvious than ever for there are fewer accessories to distract the eye to other parts of her body.



Figure 68. Eléna in the process of casting off her accessories.

It is interesting that Eléna should choose to unwrap her body and make it more accessible both in the space of the crowd and the recreation of Montmartre. I have already explained the latter to be a space of freedom, located outside of the metaphorical topographical corset. It is small wonder then that in this unconstrained space Eléna feels free to fall in love with Henri because of her genuine affection for him. In this unbound space she can follow her feelings, rather than being guided by the constraints of trying to protect her impoverished family – the reason why she engineers her engagement to the shoe baron.

The unbound nature of this space is mirrored by the sartorial positioning of Eléna's body as the liminal slash between male/female as described above. Just as the Montmartrean space, created by Renoir in this film, is open rather than constricted by the metaphorical urban corset, Eléna's in-betweenness allows her identity to be fluid and open to change in the form of role-reversal (such as that seen earlier in the crowd). Such in-betweenness and the role-reversal it facilitates is a continual narrative theme. For example, it allows Eléna to easily shift between prescribed gender roles, particularly in relation to Jean Marais' character, Rollan. As I will now go on to explain, this process is bound up with the giving and receiving of Eléna's daisy.

#### **14.8: The Daisy: Eléna's Accessory of Reversal**

As an accessory that Delamare initially has no control over in one respect, for its presence is dictated by the film's narrative, the daisy nevertheless becomes loaded with meaning in the final analysis of her sartorial methodology, since this plucked accessory triggers behaviour. Akin to British popular culture, the daisy within French popular culture is connected with the feelings of a lover, which can be determined by the picking off each of the flower's petals in a pattern (for example: s/he loves me a bit... a lot... passionately...not at all...a bit...a lot...etc). It is also representative of innocence, loyalty, confidence and simplicity.<sup>217</sup>

In Renoir's text, the daisy becomes a token symbolic of Eléna herself, her loyalty and confidence in her cause; in this case the advancement of Rollan's political career, but it is also (despite Eléna's denial) suggestive of her sexuality. In addition, it becomes a

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<sup>217</sup> See <<http://agora.qc.ca/mot.nsf/Dossiers/Marguerite>> [accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008].

marker of the promise of role-reversal, for Eléna uses the daisy to empower men when traditionally women are the receivers of floral gifts. However, the men Eléna bestows with a daisy misread it as a love token as opposed to a tool of empowerment, hence Lionel's surprise that Eléna does not wish to marry him and Rollan's pursuit of her. As noted above, Eléna gives Rollan three daisies over the course of the narrative. The first of Eléna's daisies, given to Rollan at the parade, prompts his promotion to war minister. However, it is quickly destroyed by Paulette in an act of rivalry, for she identifies the flower's sexual subtext ("She loves me a bit, a lot, passionately" etc.) and also (as does Rollan) wrongly reads the daisy as a love token. The second daisy, which Eléna bestows upon Rollan as he is practising manoeuvres, ensures his role in the resolution of the Vidaubon affair. Later, as he speaks at the *Chambre des députés*, Rollan has the daisy pressed between two sheets of his dossier in a symbolic meeting of sex and politics, which he quickly represses by forcefully shutting the file. And thirdly, in Bourbon-Salins, Eléna passes a daisy to Rollan, via Lolotte, so that he may break free from his barracks and rejoin Eléna and regroup with his advisors in order to then seize power.



Figure 69. Rollan with the daisy in his dossier.

Interestingly, in three of her four encounters with Rollan, Eléna definitely has a visible zip in the back of her dress, (the one possible exception is her second meeting with Rollan when she is dressed in a riding habit that covers a possibly zipped dress beneath). Thus although Eléna's costumes are decorated with feathers, ribbon, lace and jewellery in these three instances, due to the zips, her body is much more readily available than that of Rollan's. Indeed, in his meetings with Eléna, the Général is decked out in three variations of uniform, decorated with hats, medals, and weaponry, with no visible way out apart from a double breasted row of brass buttons (even at the crotch there is no visible fly or flap). His body is more contained than Eléna's, and his masculine role as politician and Général is somewhat weakened, as his costume constrains his body in a manner usually associated with the female body. In so doing,

Delamare's costume for Rollan becomes a bricolage of gender in parallel with that of Eléna's male/female in-betweenness. Accordingly, Rollan's masculine role is diminished, for his phallus is kept very much under wraps, and the feminine elements of his dress (accessories and containment) are brought to the fore. Rollan's dressed body enters a space of gender in-betweenness akin to Eléna's. So Eléna's lucky talisman, the daisy, becomes symbolic (if not always understood as such by Rollan) of Rollan's and Eléna's ability to inhabit fluid spaces of gender and so reverse roles.

Yet such role-reversal is not just limited to Eléna and Rollan. In order to escape from the waiting police, Rollan must swap clothes with Henri (who has adopted the dress of the gypsies he is temporarily living with). As they reluctantly swap clothes and the roles associated with them, the daisy becomes transferred to Henri. Until this point in the narrative, Henri's dress has been far less restrictive than that of Rollan's, to the point of being moth-eaten in one instance. But now, in Rollan's restrictive uniform, Henri appears at the window of Rosa la Rose's (Dora Doll) guesthouse with Eléna. In order to facilitate Rollan's escape, in the light of the lamp they pretend to kiss to distract the attention of the crowd, which has gathered below. Predictably, however, soon they are no longer pretending to kiss. Satisfied in the belief that he has finally won Eléna from Rollan, Henri removes the daisy from the Général's jacket and drops it on the floor. Metaphorically, however, as he is still dressed as Rollan, at this point Eléna effectively ends up with both men.



Figure 70. Henri dresses as Rollan.

This mixing of the more free-spirited character of Henri, whose body has been shown to be quite readily accessible via undone buttons and moth-holes, in the restrictive and feminising clothes of the Général, also mirrors Eléna's mix of genders through her accessories and fastenings. Indeed, Delamare's use of masculine and feminine accessories in Eléna's costume raises issues of gender and access to the dressed and undressed body. As such, Delamare's employment of sartorial extras can be viewed as promoting an ideology of access/ories, in which access to the body and questions of gender identity become ideologically and politically charged. Thus the designer's signature costume-detailing advocates the adoption of different roles and identities facilitated through accessories: dressed in Delamare's designs, Ingrid Bergman's Eléna, easily shifts between male and female roles of dress, technologies, discourse and social types. Through advocating such corporeal and sartorial in-betweeness, Delamare renders Eléna a bricolaged body of contradictions, fitting for Renoir's bricolaged narrative, both of which ultimately combine to illustrate the futility of gender binaries.

## CHAPTER 15: *LA REINE MARGOT*

Dréville's *La Reine Margot*, an adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' 1844 novel of the same name, was released in France in November 1954.<sup>218</sup> A Franco-Italian production, it was filmed in Eastmancolor and stars Jeanne Moreau in the title role. Set in Paris in 1572, the narrative of both the novel and film recount a fictionalised version of the events surrounding the marriage of Marguerite de Valois to Henri, King of Navarre, during the reign of Charles IX. Historical sources record that Marguerite's marriage to the Huguenot Henri was supposed to bring an end to France's religious conflict between Catholics and Huguenots. However, the nuptials did little to reduce tensions between the two factions, as some of the worst sectarian violence ever committed in France erupted, in what became known as the Saint-Barthélémy massacre (Sellier, 2001: 207). The bloodletting began in the Louvre as several dozen Huguenot leaders were assassinated, and subsequently, the violence spread to the city streets (Pidduck, 2005: 4-8).

Dréville's film follows Dumas' novel, and so follows a fictionalised account rather than a historical source. Dumas' retelling of history has added a love story between Marguerite de Valois, whom he reduces to 'Margot,' and the dashing knight, La Môle (Sellier, 2001: 206-7).<sup>219</sup> Both Dumas, and Dréville, elevate this fictional romance to a key narrative component, creating what Pidduck has described as a 'boudoir' rather than a political account of the past (2005: 15). As such, Dréville's film, like the Renoir texts described above, functions as a bricolaged narrative that mixes historical and

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<sup>218</sup> Dumas' novel has been adapted by French directors' on four other occasions: Camille de Morlhon, 1910 (short); Henri Desfontaines 1914 (short); René Lucot, 1961 (television drama); and most recently Patrice Chéreau's 1994 feature starring Isabelle Adjani. Interestingly, Delamare has denounced the inaccuracies of costume exhibited in Chéreau's text. See Niogret (1996) "Je n'ai que de bons souvenirs' Entretien avec Rosine Delamare", *Positif*. 425/6, pp.53-58.

<sup>219</sup> When referring to the historical figure, I shall use 'Marguerite,' and when making reference to Dumas' and Dréville's character, I shall use 'Margot.'

fictionalised elements. Indeed, Dréville focuses more on Margot's and La Môle's relationship than he does on political events in the film's narrative, a brief synopsis of which I shall now give.

The film begins with the Huguenot, La Môle, and the Catholic, Coconnas, (Armando Francioli and Henri Génès respectively) arriving at an inn en route to the Louvre. Upon their arrival, the two men quarrel and then duel. During their swordplay, Coconnas lands a blow on La Môle's torso but the latter is saved from injury, for the blade strikes a miniature portrait around his neck. At this moment, the royal wedding of Margot and Henri de Navarre (André Versini) is announced, signalling a truce between the two religious groups, and so La Môle and Coconnas lay down their arms. La Môle then confesses his love for Margot, despite having never met her. Revealing the miniature around his neck to be a portrait of Margot, La Môle describes her as 'the most beautiful, the most pure, most intelligent creature that man has ever seen.' Coconnas responds by describing Margot as 'a whore who makes Lucrezia Borgia look like a virgin in comparison.' Consequently, two very different versions of Margot are set out at the film's opening exposition (a point I shall return to below).

Dréville's narrative then cuts to the wedding festivities at the Louvre. La Môle and Coconnas arrive at the palace, where Coconnas joins his fellow Catholics and La Môle seeks out Henri. In his endeavours to deliver his message, La Môle meets Margot for the first time. Come nightfall, the massacre begins as Huguenot leaders are killed. During the bloodshed, Margot rescues a wounded La Môle as he stumbles into her chambers after scuffling once more with Coconnas. Margot then saves Henri from a plot to kill him hatched by the queen mother (i.e. Margot's mother), Cathérine de

Médicis (Françoise Rosay), and the king of Navarre converts to Catholicism in order to preserve his life. Following the massacre, La Môle becomes Margot's lover.

A second Médicis plot to kill Henri goes awry, resulting in the death of Charles IX. Keen to stay alive, Henri, with the help of La Môle and his now friend Coconnas, rallies troops from Navarre and an escape plan is formulated. Yet the plot is compromised and La Môle's and Coconnas' involvement discovered. Both are jailed and sentenced to death. Margot bargains with the governor of the Bastille and a plan is made for the captives to escape. However, La Môle's injuries, sustained during his torturous spell in prison, are too great for him to be able to flee. Coconnas remains loyal to his friend and they face the executioner together. Henri and his troops attempt to rescue La Môle and Coconnas but are too late. Distraught at the sight of her lover being beheaded, a screaming Margot faints in front of the executioner's platform. At the film's close she is taken by carriage to Navarre along with the bodies of La Môle and Coconnas.

In following Dumas' story, Dréville compounds and further contributes to the mythical status of Marguerite de Valois in French cultural memory. As Sellier points out, Dumas' portrait of 'Margot' is 'a relatively recent strata of myth' in a complex layering of discourses surrounding this sixteenth-century woman, which date from the Renaissance to the present day (2001: 205). It is the more sensationalist of the various characterisations of Marguerite, such as the 'incendiary tract' *Le Réveil-Matin des Français*, which detailed Marguerite's sexual habits including her alleged incestuous relationship with her brother that have been remembered (Pidduck, 2005: 18). The effect has been to cast her as a woman connected primarily with sex. Akin to Lucrezia Borgia (with whom the character of Coconnas compares her), Marguerite has repeatedly

been stereotyped as a beautiful but monstrous woman, who like her earlier Italian counterpart was also accused of having loose or no morals, indulging in incest, corruption and possessing a dangerous, voracious sexuality (Pidduck, 2005: 18-23).<sup>220</sup> Accordingly, alongside her mother, Cathérine, Marguerite has become a legendary and vilified figure in French cultural memory. As Pidduck explains:

The images of Médicis as a predatory, controlling mother and of her daughter Marguerite as a nymphomaniac have held throughout the centuries. Within French popular memory, these two figures have long been associated with inflammatory fantasy and a deep ambivalence towards powerful women. (2005: 19)

Yet Marguerite has also been a fascinating figure for feminist historians, who have presented a very different version of this French Renaissance woman. As Pidduck has remarked, ‘Valois’ political interventions [such as campaigning for religious tolerance], support for the arts, and brilliance as a scholar and writer tend to be forgotten.’ (2005: 19)

Thus, one is presented with two different versions of one woman’s femininity, the feminine (stereo)type of Marguerite’s dangerous and uncontained sexuality on the one hand, and her undervalued status as a political, cultural and intellectual force on the other. This is mirrored in Dréville’s film by the aforementioned different descriptions of Margot given by La Môle and Coconnas. Following Burch and Sellier’s analysis of women in post-World War II French cinema, which illustrates that for the vast majority, women were relegated to limited positions as patriarchy reasserted itself, one might expect Moreau’s Margot to be reduced to conform to type (2000: 61). However, as seen in the case-study on Escoffier, supposedly wicked women have been unexpectedly

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<sup>220</sup> See also Escoffier case-study chapter 7 re Borgia.

rehabilitated in certain instances during this cinematic era, a repositioning that has been greatly facilitated by the politics of their costumes.<sup>221</sup> Quite where Dréville's film positions his 1950s interpretation of Moreau's Delamare-clad Margot will, therefore, be key to this analysis. It will certainly be interesting to examine the degree of agency Moreau is granted, given that later on in her career she appeared in films, such as *Les Amants*, which defiantly challenged prescribed sexuality where women are concerned and thereby countered the fixity of gender.<sup>222</sup>

In terms of approaching Delamare's costume design in *La Reine Margot*, the ideology of accessories will once more be the focus of analysis. Yet again, the female form has become the canvas upon which Delamare foists many sartorial extras, with Margot exhibiting more accessories than any other character in the text. As with Nini, Lola and Eléna, therefore, such adorning of the surface of Margot's costumes will be fundamental. As with these other cinematic women, I suspect Margot's 'superficial' accessories will once more reveal a depth of political sartorial readings.

### **15.1: Accessories of Prediction: Concealing and Revealing the Fate of the Body**

In *La Reine Margot*, Margot herself has eight complete outfits. For a costume spectacular with a running time of just over one hour and forty minutes, Margot has fewer costume changes than one might expect, particularly when compared with other costume dramas examined in this thesis, which exhibit a higher frequency of costume changes. For example, the female stars of *French Cancan* have twelve costume changes each. One imagines that a reason for this lower frequency of costume changes in *La*

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<sup>221</sup> See Escoffier case-study chapters 7, 8 and 9.

<sup>222</sup> See chapter 13 of present case-study for more details on this film and Moreau's career.

*Reine Margot* was budgetary.<sup>223</sup> Indeed, Delamare's fabric economy of scale, her two-tier costuming method used to stretch her budget further, as described in the first part of this case-study, is evident in this film. It is most notable in the arrangement of the women's costumes, in which Margot's dresses lace up at the back, whereas the other women of the court have visible zips in their dresses. This is particularly noticeable in the two costumes of Patrizia Lari's character, Carlotta. Such a division of fastening makes Margot's body less easily accessible, which is paradoxical given that there are two nude scenes in the film involving Margot. In addition to having less polished costumes, the other female characters within the text also have fewer costumes than Margot, including Rosay's Cathérine de Médicis, who does not appear to have any costume changes at all, remaining in her menacing black mourning gown throughout the film. As the production's major female star, therefore, Moreau's eight costumes occupy the first, most historically accurate and subsequently most expensive rank of Delamare's two-tier '*haute-couture*' and '*prêt-à-porter*' system.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> I have been unable to ascertain a budgetary figure for *La Reine Margot* at either the *Bibliothèque du film* or the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. Being an Eastmancolor production, with large studio sets and comprehensive cast, one would imagine that the budget would have been quite significant. How such an amount would have been distributed though remains unclear, although Delamare's incorporation of zips and two-tier level of costuming suggests that it was not as much as she might have liked!

<sup>224</sup> Due to the mediocre quality of the VHS recording of *La Reine Margot* to which I have access (it remains unavailable on DVD) I have had difficulty in attaining images of the films costumes to be reproduced here. Consequently, figures 71 and 74 have been taken from the VHS cover, and figures 72 and 73, which feature a ruff and a pomander akin to Margot's are approximations rather than the actual diegetic accessories.



Figure 71. One of Margot's eight outfits.

Three of Margot's eight outfits appear more than once. As with Mayo's designs for Marie in *Casque d'or*, the recycling of costume adds authenticity, for it replicates the way in which clothes are actually worn.<sup>225</sup> Delamare adds further authenticity to her costumes for Margot in terms of their cut and embellishment. In keeping with the major tropes of sixteenth-century clothing, Delamare uses stiff-bodiced kirtles, gowns and puffed, occasionally slashed, and hanging sleeves. Of Margot's eight outfits, five are court dresses, and the remaining three comprise a wedding dress, a riding habit, and a nightgown. Despite the different occasions, which determine the wearing of such sartorial combinations, every one of them is accessorised, even the nightgown. I have identified four sartorial extras that repeatedly appear in Delamare's designs for Margot, which are ruffs, pomanders, hats and jewellery. In addition, two accessories, which appear only once but have a significant ideological impact, are Margot's mask and her

<sup>225</sup> See Mayo case-study chapter 11.

embroidered handkerchief. I will now undress the ideological significance of these six accessories, beginning with the ruff.

The ruff has become symbolic of an aristocratic item of bodily decoration, due to the expense of its fabrication and ostentatious appearance (Koda, 2001: 20). Originally the ruff was an integral part of men's and women's chemises. Worn as underwear and to protect richer fabrics from sweat, and the body from friction, the chemise employed strengthening collars. As these collars became visible, they began to be decorated (20). Such decorative collars soon increased in size and became detachable in order that they might be cleaned. In graduating from the chemise to a separate item, the ruff lost its reinforcing and protective function and became a purely decorative item for both sexes. Aesthetically, it framed the face of the wearer and served to visually detach the head from the body.

In five of Margot's eight outfits she is accessorised with a small figure of eight starched linen ruff. Such a style was considered the height of fashion during the Renaissance (Koda, 2001: 25). The ruff Delamare has designed for Margot is, therefore, exemplary of Margot's status as a fashionable woman - Margot was considered to be amongst France's fashion leaders during the sixteenth century.<sup>226</sup> The ruff's constriction of the neck also nods to the eroticism derived from compressing body parts, as discussed in the case-study on Annenkov and his use of tightly laced corsetry.<sup>227</sup> In terms of this particular film, such a focus on the neck also prefigures the beheadings of La Môle and Coconnas. Yet there is a further ideological reading that the ruff engages with, stemming from its origin as an undergarment.

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<sup>226</sup> See <Goodman, [www.modehistorique.com](http://www.modehistorique.com)> [accessed 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008].

<sup>227</sup> See Annenkov case-study chapter 4.



Figure 72. An example of a figure of eight ruff.

Due to the ruff's beginnings as an undergarment, it retains an aspect of underwear's proximity to genitalia. As the ruff later became a detachable garment for ease of washing, it is also imbued with discourses of cleanliness. Such dialogues of sexuality and cleanliness, therefore, echo across both the sixteenth-century and 1950s timeframes bridged by Dréville's film. As seen in the case-study on Mayo, which draws on Ross' clear analysis of French post-war culture, the 1950s was awash with discourses of cleanliness, particularly in connection with French femininities.<sup>228</sup> The ruff worn by Margot, therefore, can be read in conjunction with such dialogues of cleansing and sexuality that were prevalent during the decade of the film's production.

Also linked to such a discussion of cleanliness is the pomander, another of Margot's accessories and the only one to actively engage the sense of smell. The pomander is a small metal chamber containing a mix of sweet smelling herbs and spices, which hangs

<sup>228</sup> See Ross, K. (1999), *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press.

on a chain, and is usually worn around the waist. As well as giving off a pleasant aroma, the pomander was believed to protect the wearer from infection in times of pestilence (Allen, 2003: 1081). One presumes that this was achieved through the pomander's supposed purification of the air. Worthy of note is the fact that Margot only appears to wear her pomander when she knows she will be in the company of her mother.<sup>229</sup> Accordingly, Margot's pomander can be read as a sartorial extra that wards off the malevolence and infectious evil of Cathérine de Médicis, who is cast as a spiteful manipulator and orchestrator of death in Dréville's narrative. The pomander becomes symbolic of Margot's countering and cleansing of Cathérine's unpleasant plans through her repeated un-weaving of her mother's plots. Thus this particular accessory's shrouding of the body in an attractive scent is also bound up with discourses of cleanliness as well as that of protection and the unweaving of plot.



Figure 73. Example of a pomander on a chain akin to Margot's.

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<sup>229</sup> There are occasions when Margot finds herself unexpectedly in her mother's company and during such instances is without her pomander.

How interesting, then, that when Margot disguises herself as the courtesan, Sylvia, in order to seduce La Môle, she does not wear her ruff or carry a pomander. By removing such accessories, Margot shuns the sartorial items, symbolic of sexualised and politicised discourses on cleanliness and protection, in order to engage in extra-marital sex. Just as then, so too in the contemporary 1950s such an illicit act was perceived as 'dirty' and 'dangerous' within patriarchal discourses. Essentially it did not fit with the decade's heavily promoted façade of cleanliness (Ross, 1999: 74).<sup>230</sup>

However, during Margot's sexual encounter with La Môle, while her ruff and pomander are never worn and her garments removed, other accessories remain. These comprise jewellery and the mask. I will return to the mask in due course, after considering the role of Margot's jewellery. As with the ruff, Margot's jewellery, in particular her crown, are indicative of her royal status. What is so intriguing, however, about Margot's jewellery, and indeed jewellery adorned with her image, is how it functions in relation to her lover.

From the earlier synopsis, one knows that La Môle is saved from injury by means of the miniature portrait of Margot. Akin to the ruff, which anticipates the execution of La Môle, the necklace, with its image of Margot foretells how she herself will later protect her lover. In this respect, the necklace becomes akin to a lucky charm. Shades of Eléna's daisy are, therefore, detectable (Margot's full name, Marguerite, is also the French name shared by Eléna's talisman). However, whereas Eléna's daisy functions as a catalyst for role reversal, the miniature of Margot acts as a prefiguring device and

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<sup>230</sup> One could interpret the removal of the ruff as an attempt by Margot to disguise her aristocratic identity, for she also dons a mask when she visits La Môle. However, the dresses that she and her companion Henriette are both wearing are cut from expensive silks and ostentatiously decorated, thus negating such an interpretation.

fetishistic object for the love-struck La Môle. Yet it seems that both the necklace and Margot herself can only work their magic once, for in the latter section of the film in which La Môle has been imprisoned, Margot's attempts to use her jewellery to bribe the prison governor into freeing her lover fail. He refuses such an offer of material wealth and Margot is forced to offer him her body instead. This corporeal deal is indicated by Margot's ripping of her bodice in order to reveal a breast, the trauma to the fabric representative of the trauma she is about to subject her body to. (In a further instance of foreshadowing between the lovers, Margot's ripped fabric mirrors La Môle's tattered hose, which subsequently result from his torture). Unlike Nini's, Lola's and Eléna's accessories, which ultimately empower them in processes of corporeal agency and role reversal, Margot's accessories in this scene cannot prevent the sacrificing of the body they adorn.

Yet whereas this use of the body as protection for another is an uncomfortable one, an earlier nude scene, again involving Margot's body being used for protection, is not so troubling. On uncovering her mother's plot to dispatch Henri, (Catherine de Médicis' plan is to entice Henri to sleep with Carlotta on his wedding night, only for them to be interrupted by the palace guards, who would then be entitled to kill Henri in order to defend Margot's honour), Margot summons Henri to her bedchamber. While explaining the plot to Henri, Margot learns that Catherine is approaching in order to inform her daughter of Henri's expected infidelity. Hastily undressing, Margot orders the fully-clothed Henri into her four-poster bed before drawing the bed's curtains and making a naked leap under the covers, in order to trick her mother into thinking that they have consummated their marriage, thus foiling her plot. Margot's body is again used for

protection, but the circumstances are not as unpleasant as her corporeal bargaining with the Bastille's governor.

In this earlier display of the body, a full view of the back of the naked Margot is seen. However, it is not Moreau's! Instead a body-double was used, the reason for which is unclear. Vincendeau has speculated that 'the much-publicised use of a body double for a nude scene could have been a way of distancing herself [Moreau], literally, from this kind of film [*Tradition de qualité*], since later she claimed the right to nudity in *Les Amants*.' (2000: 122) Given that Moreau later exposes a breast to both the camera and prison governor, I am not sure that this reasoning holds. What is intriguing though, is how this extra body becomes another layer in the physical appearance of Margot in Dréville's film. In this respect, the body-double can be viewed as another accessory in the corporeally, sartorially and mythically layered network of Margot.

Both the body-double and Moreau are accessorised in this scene of corporeal simulacrum with jewellery and a large gold hair decoration. As with Eléna, even when all other accessories have been shed, some jewellery remains, implying that bodies dressed by Delamare are never totally unadorned. Indeed, Margot's head is never without some form of decoration or covering. This observation leads to the third category of accessory, the hat. Used as fashionable status symbols and further opportunities for decoration, Margot has two main types of headwear: a variety of hair decorations such as the one described above, and a feathered toque style hat that at the film's close has a white veil attached to it. This veil is intriguing, for it links Margot's appearance at the film's conclusion, as La Môle is executed, to that of her veiled wedding dress at the text's beginning. Thus cyclically and sartorially linking her

marriage to Henri with violence, and contributing to her mythical status of dangerous femininity. In addition, the veil connects Margot's accessories to a discussion of surface and depth, a point to which I will now turn.

### **15.2: Veils, Masks and Accessories of Double Discourse**

Warwick and Cavallaro have discussed veils and masks as sartorial tropes that explicitly present 'the complimentary dynamics of concealment and revelation that, arguably, characterize all forms of dress.' (1998: 128) Sixteenth-century clothing graphically engages with ambiguities of concealment and revelation, and depth and surface, through mechanisms such as the puffing, slashing and complex layering at work in Margot's outfits. In terms of Margot's accessories, as with Nini's and Lola's accessories, her veil and mask are exemplary of how Delamare uses sartorial extras to simultaneously conceal and reveal body parts – in this instance, the face.

Warwick and Cavallaro have noted that the 'removal of the face releases the body, but also suggests that the person covered is not negligibly anonymous but on the contrary is important enough to require protection.' (1998: 130) In the case of Margot's mask, she certainly wears it to protect her royal identity, in order that she may visit La Môle inconspicuously as Sylvia. However, while concealing a strip of her face, Margot's mask leaves her eyes visible, lending the accessory a 'double message of look-at-me-I-don't-want-to-be-looked-at.' (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 131) This doubling of discourses links back to the double versions of Margot's femininity as enunciated by Coconnas and La Môle at the start of this text. It also connects to the two different versions of the historical Marguerite as incestuous whore and undervalued politician

and scholar painted by French popular memory and feminist historians respectively (of which more in a moment).



Figure 74. Margot's mask.

However, to return briefly to the tricky double face of the mask, its double discourse in relation to Margot's identity is seemingly undermined (either deliberately or not this is unclear) by another accessory - her handkerchief. Attached to her hand via a loop at one corner, Margot accidentally(?) drops her monogrammed handkerchief when she is trying to seduce La Môle disguised as Sylvia. Initially he refuses. Not recognising Margot, he tells her that he is faithful to another. However, upon glimpsing the monogrammed initials on the dropped accessory, the handkerchief unequivocally reveals Margot's true identity and so La Môle allows himself to be seduced by his lover. Even though Margot has attempted to adopt another persona via the ambiguous mask, her true identity is projected through the fabric of another accessory, the handkerchief.

So the tiny veil of the handkerchief reveals (either intentionally or unintentionally) the truth that her mask ambiguously attempts to conceal. Margot uses the mask in order to get to La Môle, therefore, but it is apparently the ‘truth’ (the handkerchief) in this accessorised process of simultaneous concealment and revelation that ensnares him.

The oblique nature of these accessories (which when worn together, as evidenced above), are both revealing and obscuring, and return one to the unclear presentation of Margot herself within this film. In setting out the historical, mythical, literary and filmic circumstances of Marguerite de Valois, I have discovered different versions of her femininity, notably echoed in this text via La Môle and Coconnas, who view her as pure and intelligent, and promiscuous and wicked respectively. Other characters within the film also describe Margot as belonging to one or other of these restrictive dichotomous points of view. For example, her mother indicates Margot’s appetite for lovers by letting the audience know that Guise (Guy Kerner) is her daughter’s lover, and expresses outrage at Margot’s apparent consummation of her marriage to Henri by questioning when it has ever been known for a Valois woman to sleep with whom they are supposed to! In addition, Margot’s brother, Charles, has a pet magpie that he has named after his sister, which he chastises Guise for touching with the words ‘just because it has my sister’s name does not mean that everyone can touch it.’ This of course implies that many, including Guise, have indeed been free to touch Margot herself. Furthermore, Henri refers to Margot as an unfaithful wife. It appears as if the views of many of the other characters in the text tie into the popular myth of Margot as a woman of easy virtue and loose morals.

However, in the same sentence with which Henri describes Margot as a faithless spouse, he also calls her a faithful ally. Margot herself responds to this by telling Henri that he is guaranteed of her loyalty. Margot certainly proves her allegiance to Henri on several occasions, either by personally saving him from attempts on his life or by informing him of trouble headed in his direction. She also saves the life of La Môle once and attempts to save it once more. In continually thwarting the plans of her mother and brothers, in order to save two protestant men, Margot becomes a dissenting figure of resistance amongst her family, the catalyst for which appears to be her disgust at the Saint-Barthélémy massacre. Thus she exhibits a surprising amount of moral fibre for a woman who has been deemed to have none. Consequently, like Margot's accessories, her persona is polysemous.

In this mix of identities, I would suggest that a kinder view of Margot comes to the fore, as she is generally presented in a sympathetic light, despite a hellish reputation. The loyal and in some cases self-sacrificing actions of Moreau's Margot in Dréville's film certainly go some way towards rehabilitating an apparently wicked woman. Moreover, Margot does have a certain degree of agency, for she both instigates and prevents events as well as acting on her own desire in taking La Môle as her lover. Yet her political (and sexual) intervention is often for the benefit of others, in particular Henri and La Môle, rather than herself, and one could read the execution of the latter as Margot's punishment for attempting to interfere in the predominantly male world of politics.<sup>231</sup>

Although Margot is portrayed in a more compassionate fashion, ultimately her role in the narrative benefits Henri, the future king of France. In so doing, Margot's actions

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<sup>231</sup> Cathérine de Médicis' powerful political role in this film is obviously an exception to the usually male dominated world of royal politics. However, Médicis is punished for her involvement in court affairs in this text, and has been vilified throughout history for her apparent unhealthy influence over her son, Charles IX. See Pidduck (2005) *La Reine Margot*, London and New York: IB Tauris for further information.

ensure the continuation of France's patriarchally weighted royal lineage. In this respect, in keeping with Burch and Sellier's aforementioned analysis, despite a kinder portrayal than one might have expected, Margot herself is ultimately reduced to an accessory, in this case a feminine accessory to the continuation of patriarchal power.

However, despite being placed in a position of diminished power Margot gets off much more lightly than her mother. Françoise Rosay's Cathérine de Médicis is presented as a venomous, manipulative and murderous woman. And unlike Margot, the dark characterisation of Médicis is relentless; she is given none of her daughter's redeeming qualities, and is pinpointed as the organisational source of the Saint-Barthélémy massacre. Of course, such female agency of violence and political ambition do not go unpunished, and Cathérine is made to suffer horribly for her political interference via the death of her son. Pidduck has read Dréville's interpretation of Margot and her mother as 'consonant with a problematic framing of powerful historical women within 1950s French costume film.' (2005: 32) For Sellier, Dréville's treatment of the feminine in this text is '[An] inflection [...] typical of the genre of the period [...]. The devalorisation of the feminine in the 1950s, a period marked by a "return to the patriarchal order," is often achieved through a reduction of young women to sexual objects and the derisory treatment of older women.' (2001: 211) I would counter Sellier's view that Moreau's Margot is reduced solely to the status of sex object, for as argued above she does exhibit a degree of agency.<sup>232</sup> However, Rosay's treatment in *La Reine Margot* is certainly derisory. In fact, the English language title of the film, *A Woman of Evil*, is a label that seems far more fitting of Cathérine de Médicis than Margot in this particular text.

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<sup>232</sup> Interestingly, akin to her accessories, this has the function of foreshadowing the agency of some of Moreau's New-Wave women.

In conclusion, both Margot's and Cathérine de Médicis' portrayal is seemingly limited by Dréville's recourse to the damning myths surrounding these two historical women. However, Margot's kinder than expected characterisation and the occasional glimpses of her agency, provide a more positive reading. This reading is partly undone nonetheless. For Margot's loyalty and thwarting of her murderous mother's plans mostly benefits her husband, Henri. For her lover, La Môle, perishes. However, Margot herself, although heartbroken, manages to escape with her life intact. Margot's ability to defy her mother and other forms of authority is carried over into Delamare's accessories for her, which as seen above, often seem to undercut her own intentions, by working in opposition to their wearer's expectations. Delamare's ideology of accessories in this film underlines Bruzzi's point that clothing and its adjuncts are able to act as independent producers of meaning. Even if they are an integral part of the dress-body nexus they can nevertheless act autonomously of its wearer (1997: xv). In *La Reine Margot*, therefore, Delamare's accessories are enabled with such independent power by means of their oblique nature. Margot's mask and handkerchief, which are bound up with both concealing and revealing functions, are exemplary of such ambiguity. Indeed, Margot's ruffs, pomanders, hats, and jewellery, as well as the aforementioned mask and handkerchief become accessories of contradiction in this text – acting as both independent producer of meaning and as a way of underlining their own and Margot's ambiguity. In so doing, as well as functioning under their own independent will, they collude in the contradictions inherent in the film's contradictory portrayal of Margot herself.

## CHAPTER 16: *LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR* AND *LES GRANDES MANŒUVRES*

This chapter will examine Delamare's adornment of the male body in Claude Autant-Lara's *Le Rouge et le noir*, and René Clair's *Les Grandes manœuvres*. Dating from 1954 and 1955 respectively, the former is a literary adaptation of Stendhal's 1830 novel, and the latter an original script by Clair set towards the end of the *Belle Époque*. These two films marked each director's debut in colour and were shot using Eastmancolor stock. Both films also feature Gérard Philipe, who as Delamare's most frequently dressed star becomes the male body in question in this analysis. The aim of which is to see how her use of accessories may apply itself to the male body. As such, any gendered differences occurring in Delamare's practice may be identified and interpreted. I will treat these films chronologically and so begin with an exploration of how Delamare adorns Philipe in *Le Rouge et le noir*. However, before turning to such an analysis, I will briefly outline the synopsis of Autant-Lara's film.

Following the structure of the novel, *Le Rouge et le noir* is a film in two parts.<sup>233</sup> The first begins with the trial of Philipe's character, Julien Sorel, from which the events leading up to his crime are charted in flashback. This flashback consists of following Julien's upwardly mobile trajectory through the social ranks from rural working class to aristocrat. Julien leaves his rural working-class origins to become an acolyte to a Catholic priest (André Brunot), who subsequently secures him a post as a tutor to the children of provincial bourgeois, Monsieur and Madame de Rênal (Jean Martinelli and Daniëlle Darrieux). Julien becomes the lover of Madame de Rênal, Louise, but their liaison is discovered by the jealous chambermaid, Eliza (Anna Maria Sandri). Eliza

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<sup>233</sup> Between them these two sections amount to over three hours of film, making *Le Rouge et le noir* a much longer production than average for 1950s French costume drama.

exposes their affair by means of an anonymous letter addressed to Monsieur de Rênal, though Louise manages to convince her husband that its contents is just hearsay. However, when her child falls ill Louise believes that she is being punished for her unfaithfulness and makes Julien swear that if her son makes a full recovery he will leave. Her son does indeed recover and Julien leaves for the seminary in Besançon, where he is befriended by the Abbé Pirade (Antoine Balpêtré). After a miserable few months as a priest in training, Julien learns that Pirade is leaving the seminary for Paris. The Abbé, knowing Julien to be unhappy, asks his friend to accompany him, and secures him a post as the private secretary of Parisian diplomat, the Marquis de la Môle (Jean Mercure).<sup>234</sup>

The second part of Autant-Lara's adaptation, therefore, takes place in the aristocratic world of high-society Paris. Julien is treated well by his employer but is looked down upon for his working-class origins by many of the other aristocrats he encounters. The daughter of La Môle, Mathilde (Antonella Lualdi) seduces and then rejects Julien before he finally wins her over. Their relationship is uncovered by a displeased La Môle but in light of his daughter's genuine love for his employee, he agrees for them to be married, ennobling Julien and bestowing upon him the military title of lieutenant of the elite Hussars. Yet on receiving a reply to his letter enquiring as to the character of Julien from previous employers, the Rênals, La Môle is shocked to learn of his prospective son-in-law's affair and refuses to bless the marriage. Julien rushes to Verrières, where he shoots his former lover as she is praying in church. Julien is arrested and put on trial for his crime and the narrative flashback returns to its starting point. Consequently,

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<sup>234</sup> Interestingly, the Marquis de la Môle explains to Julien at one point in the narrative that he is related to the earlier la Môle who was la Reine Margot's lover – the same la Môle whose fate is detailed in the previous chapter of this case-study.

Julien is sentenced to death and a distraught Louise, who survived Julien's attack leaves her family in order to be reunited with her lover in his final days. Three days after his death by firing squad she dies from grief.

### **16.1: Choosing One's Cloth: Uniform and Julien's Sartorial Trajectory**

Throughout the narrative, Julien's dress is repeatedly modified as his social role and position changes. As with Nini's trajectory in *French Cancan*, Delamare again uses changes in cut, finish and fabric, as well as the addition of accessories, to signify Julien's class mobility. How such accessories interface with Philippe's body and Julien's positioning within the text will be the main thread of this analysis. This analysis will take the form of an exploration of uniforms in *Le Rouge et le noir*, for it is via uniforms that Delamare introduces Julien's accessories. Indeed, Julien displays a fascination with uniforms, both militaristic and ecclesiastical, as well as the 'uniform' of the aristocracy throughout the film. In fact, the *rouge* and the *noir* of the film's title are to be interpreted as referring to the distinctive red of the French army's trousers during the nineteenth century and the black of Catholic priests' robes. Thus lexically and visually reinforcing Julien's interest in uniform, and the path between the different cloths of the army and the church that he follows. Interestingly, of the five films in which Delamare has dressed Philippe, four of the films feature him in uniform (only *Le Joueur* sees Philippe dressed entirely in civilian clothing). Bearing this predominance of uniform in mind then, I will now turn to an exploration of how such attire is employed in *Le Rouge et le noir*.

When Julien first appears on screen he is in court, and appears every inch the aristocratic, fashionable gentleman, dressed in a black frock-coated suit, and a white ruffled shirt with a heavily starched collar and bowtie. Yet this is not the point at which his social and sartorial trajectory starts, rather it is when his flashback begins as he arrives at the Rênals' house. On this occasion, he is dressed in a mismatched brown jacket, which is unfashionably short for 1830, and black cotton trousers, which also appear to be on the short side. Beneath the jacket is a white cotton shirt with a pale blue and brown stripe running through it, which one discovers to be patched at the sleeves. In terms of accessories, Julien has a brown necktie, belt and a battered looking black hat, which he holds in his hands. This careworn outfit with its well-used accessories is indicative of his rural working-class status and is deeply unfashionable in the eyes of the bourgeois Rênals. Yet more than signifying Julien's class and (un)fashionable status, this piecemeal ensemble, particularly the patching on Julien's shirt, could be read as symbolic of the 'patching' that his identity will undergo via the adoption of various other bits of cloth (those of the church, the army and the aristocracy) as the film's narrative progresses.



Figure 75. Julien when he first arrives at the Rênal's.



Figure 76. Julien at his trial.

On his arrival at the house, Julien is informed that as the clothes that Monsieur de Rênal has ordered for him are not yet ready, he will have to wear one of his new employer's old frockcoats. The subtext of this enforced sartorial change being that Julien's appearance at his new place of work and residence will be controlled and made in the image of Monsieur de Rênal – small wonder then that Julien will soon begin sleeping with his wife! Indeed, when it arrives, Julien's attire is identical in cut to Monsieur de Rênal's, comprising a frockcoat, with a waistcoat and shirt beneath, trousers, shiny shoes and a lone silk bowtie as accessory. This single sartorial extra does several things: first, in its isolation it is in keeping with the stripping back of accessories that accompanied the 'Great Masculine Renunciation' of the nineteenth century.<sup>235</sup> Second, it focuses attention onto an area of the male body, the neck, which as illustrated in the

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<sup>235</sup> See section 2.1 in chapter 2 for an explanation of the Great Masculine Renunciation.

case-study on Annenkov is erotically charged.<sup>236</sup> Third, it upgrades and updates Julien's original slim and tatty brown cotton necktie, signalling his entry into the class of the provincial bourgeois.

This ideologically loaded accessory is worn everyday, along with the sombre suit that accompanies it. Unlike the Rênals, Julien wears the same thing daily. As such, his dress functions as a uniform, and although much finer than the attire he arrived in, it is still reminiscent of his original working-class status, for it places him on the same sartorial level as the maid, Eliza, who's domestic uniform is also unchanging. Uniform is a technology of dress that aims to control the body and its behaviour. It tends to belong to those involved with a particular institution/organisation or employment, for example, the military, schools, and emergency services all frequently wear uniforms as a controlling symbol of rank, identity and expected behaviour. Yet as Jennifer Craik has noted, 'Although we think of the public face of uniforms as coterminous with order, control, confidence and conformity, we also know about the *other face* of uniforms as subversion, transgression, punishment and shame.' (2005: 4 author's emphasis)

This 'other face' of uniform is made possible by understanding the often complex sets of rules that accompany the wearing of such regimented apparel, for inherent in the setting out of any rule is the ability to bend or break it. As uniforms can be worn correctly or incorrectly, they invite both points of collaboration and resistance in the expected practice of their wearing. Thus uniforms send out mixed messages, and it is this duality that Craik suggests makes uniforms so intriguing (2005: 4). They are certainly intriguing to Julien, who courtesy of Delamare, is treated to four official

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<sup>236</sup> See Annenkov case-study chapter 4.

uniforms (two military and two ecclesiastical), and two civilian, unofficial 'class uniforms' of bourgeois and aristocratic dress, which allow him to operate within the Rênal and La Môle households he is employed in. I will now explore how these uniforms, and the accessories they are adorned with perform.

The double ideological reading of uniforms as simultaneously controlling and transgressive apparel is certainly applicable to Julien's experience of uniforms in this film. One has already seen how his first uniform, worn at the Rênals', simultaneously points to the working and bourgeois classes. Thus allowing Julien to transgress class boundaries to a certain extent while still seemingly remaining under the control of his employer and the social hierarchy of the house. He is engaged as a tutor, and so is responsible for the moral well being of his charges. In this regard he is responsible for his charges pastoral care in much the same way that a cleric is responsible for a charge's spiritual welfare. Yet he transgresses this role by seducing the mother of his charges – usurping the place of the patriarch (Monsieur de Rênal). In a further exhibition of the duality between control and transgression, Julien's almost exclusively black attire, which is distinguished only by a flash of white at his collar, is reminiscent of ecclesiastical robes and by extension a uniform that further represents the priestly duty of control of morals of the self and others. Yet, of course it is while wearing such clothing that Julien actively seduces Louise, transgressing the spiritual and sexual purity connoted by religious clothing.

Craik has commented that, due to their double discourse, religious uniforms 'bec[o]me the symbol not just of the intended attributes of religious values but of their opposite: immorality, licence, depravity, excess and disorder.' (2005: 205-6) This is apparent in

both Julien's pseudo-religious uniform and the black and white robes of his real religious uniform at the seminary. While wearing real religious dress, at Pirard's request, Julien must burn all of the letters Louise has sent him. However, he rescues one when the Abbé's back is turned and slips it into the arm of his robe. Pirard believes that by obeying his request to destroy all evidence of his previous sinful behaviour, Julien's uniform has rendered him a docile body. Yet all the time Julien has transgression up his sleeve! The audience is made explicitly aware of the juxtaposition of control and transgression that Julien's uniformed body is undergoing at this point in the narrative. Furthermore, this is reflected in the accessory with which his uniform is worn – the black and white collar – its colour-scheme indicative of both 'good' and 'bad' behaviour.

The other occasion in which Julien adopts priestly raiment is also an opportunity to display a transgressive use of uniform. Chronologically, it occurs before his time at the seminary, occurring on the day that he begins dressed as a soldier in Monsieur de Rênal's Guard of Honour parade, which ends with Julien in church dressed as a priest. The scarlet military dress uniform is solely for show, trimmed with braiding, frogging and accessorised with white gloves and a feathered red helmet, it is by far the most decorative costume Julien has worn so far. Historically, the French soldier has been notoriously colourful, and it is such 'chromatic brilliance' that gave the soldier his prestige (Matthews David, 2003: 4 and 7). Accordingly, Julien's prestigious military attire in this scene renders him both a decorated and decorative man, and Julien's wide smile is testament to his enjoyment of wearing such a peacock uniform of display, a

military career being something that he has always dreamt of.<sup>237</sup> In wearing *dress* uniform, Julien is rendered ornamental, for his clothing is intended solely for show rather than function. As such, gender ambiguity is inherent in his military garb, for such style over function aligns Julien with the decorative role traditionally reserved for the fashionable woman (Matthews David, 2003: 7).



Figure 77. Julien's dress uniform.

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<sup>237</sup> Throughout the film, Julien is shown to be fascinated by Napoléon, reading his war memoirs and keeping his clothes in a military trunk belonging to his uncle – a former soldier in Napoléon's army. At one point in the narrative he complains to Louise, claiming that under Napoléon's rule a *paysan* such as he could already be an officer but that such a feat is impossible under the Restoration which reserves high-flying military careers to those of noble birth. This illustrates both Julien's Republican politics and desire for a place in the army.

In this instance, the fashionable woman is embodied by Louise, whose white gloves and feathered bonnet match Julien's military accessories. Such correspondence between the lovers' accessories may well be one of the reasons, alongside his class origins, why Julien's dashing, accessorised and colourful outfit causes outrage amongst the well-to-do populous of Verrières, who resent this 'arriviste' display. Gossip surrounding his affair with Mme de Rênal is escalating and such obvious sartorial similarities between Julien and Louise act to confirm suspicions. However, it is the town priest who is particularly angry at his charge's adoption of military uniform, and orders Julien to don ecclesiastical robes before being allowed to enter the church to which the Guard of Honour is headed. Rushing, Julien removes his gloves and helmet but pulls his robes on over the top of his remaining military regalia, thus creating a mix of two very different uniforms. In this moment of incorrect and therefore transgressive wearing of uniform, Julien becomes doubly institutionalised, simultaneously marked as the property of both the Church and the Military – the two institutions that continually vie for his attention during the narrative (*le rouge et le noir* of the title). This transgressive sartorial blurring of these two institutions also foreshadows Julien's crime – the shooting of Louise at mass - thus the actions of the army take place in church.

In the examples of Julien's wearing of uniform outlined above, both its faces of control and transgression have been on display. This tension between control and transgression is key to understanding Julien's costume in *Le Rouge et le noir*, for it is through the control of his appearance that he can transgress class boundaries (reminiscent of Martine Carol's Madame du Barry). This is achieved via the adoption of uniforms, both official and unofficial. In so doing, Julien himself becomes an *accessory* of the institution to which his uniform belongs. Accordingly, although there are fewer

individual accessories than expected in Delamare's designs for Philippe in this film, her focus has instead been channelled into rendering his whole body as an accessory of various households, institutions and classes.

Yet Julien extends the discourse surrounding accessories beyond this notion of the body-as-accessory, for he is fascinated by the accessories of others. For example, the Bishop's gloves and mitre, Napoléon's slippers in the Parisian shoe shop, and La Môle's medal. For Julien, these accessories become symbolic of the heights of ecclesiastical, military and diplomatic careers, and are thus symbolic of the position of power he too could wield if he continues his social climbing. Julien is seduced by clothes of power and the sartorial - particularly in the form of accessories - holds a fetishistic value for him. Of these four accessories, it is principally the Bishop's gloves that one as viewer notices, due to their unusual colour, a vibrant turquoise blue, that does not match the rest of his violet outfit. One will recall that it is this particular pair of gloves that Delamare dreads seeing on screen, as their unusual hue is the result of a colour malfunction (see page 294).

However, in this instance, although the colour may appear to be jarring, the gloves' over-conspicuous appearance is contiguous with Julien's fetishistic appreciation of accessories. Accordingly, rather than being viewed as just an anomaly of Eastmancolor's unpredictability, these turquoise gloves reinforce the visual importance of Delamare's signature accessories in a text in which accessories are made of the corporeal. Although sartorial extras have perhaps been fewer than expected in *Le Rouge et le noir* (for they have predominantly been adjuncts to uniform), Delamare's ideology of accessories for Philippe's character has extended to the accessories of others, and to

the male body-as-accessory itself in the respect that Julien becomes an accessory to institutions of both Church and State. However, before drawing any conclusions about possible gendered differences of costume design practice, I will move on to *Les Grandes manœuvres*, another film that features an accessorised male body through uniform.

### **16.2: *Les Grandes manœuvres***

Clair's film is set just prior to World War I, its action unfolding in a provincial French town where a troop of cavalry soldiers are stationed. Gérard Philipe plays the role of Armand de la Verne, a cavalry lieutenant and expert seducer of women. Armand's reputation as a ladies' man is legendary amongst the town's population, and as such, it is wagered that he cannot seduce Michèle Morgan's character, Marie-Louise, before the cavalry troop leaves town on exercise (the *Grandes manœuvres* of the film's title).

Marie-Louise has recently moved to the town from Paris and has set up shop as a milliner. Newly-divorced, and wary of her reputation, she proves harder to win over than Armand first anticipated, due also in part to one of the town's civilians, Monsieur Duverger (Jean Desailly), who is also attempting to gain Marie-Louise's heart.

Armand does not give up on the task in hand and continues to pursue Marie-Louise, yet during his games of seduction he finds himself forgetting about the bet and falling in love. Marie-Louise in turn falls for Armand, who is promptly sent away from barracks for two weeks of advance manoeuvres. During this time apart, letters are exchanged and Armand believes that Marie-Louise will be waiting for him on his return. However, during his absence, Marie-Louise is distressed to learn of Armand's reputation for

lovers and begins to doubt his intentions towards her. Sensing this, Duverger makes his move, and on his return, Armand is disappointed to learn that Marie-Louise is to marry Duverger.

In a further twist of fate, Armand and his friend Félix (Yves Robert) fall out and subsequently duel. Although neither is hurt, the rumour in the town is that one of them has perished. On hearing the gossip, Marie-Louise heads straight to the barracks where she is reunited with Armand. She returns to her hat shop in order to break off her engagement to Duverger, who hurt by her declaration of love for Armand, angrily informs her that she is the subject of a cruel bet. Devastated, Marie-Louise sees Armand for one last time in order to ascertain the truth. Although for the first time in his life Armand is being sincere, his affirmations of love cannot sway Marie-Louise. In a final desperate plea, Armand begs Marie-Louise to open her bedroom window, as the troops ride out of town the following morning, as a signal of her forgiveness and sign of her continued affection. The film ends as a heart-broken Armand rides passed a closed bedroom window and a tearstained Marie-Louise watches him leave from behind her net curtains.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> There was also another ending to the film shot, which Clair decided not to use. In this second ending, Marie-Louise gasses herself to death during the night and as Armand rides out of town Marie-Louise's maid throws open the windows. And so Armand believes himself to have been forgiven when in fact the maid is just trying to disperse the gas.

### 16.3: Throwing Down the Gauntlet: Gloves and Uniform in *Les Grandes*

#### *manœuvres*

Throughout Clair's tale of romance and regret, Armand is dressed in military uniform on all but one occasion (the duel). This uniform, following standard military sartorial practice, comprises a barracks uniform, an active service uniform and a dress uniform. All three are built around black leather boots, red trousers with a navy stripe and a black button-down tunic<sup>239</sup> but are distinguished by their accessories: brown leather gloves, sabre and red and gold trimmed kepi for the barracks; brown leather gloves, epaulette fringing, sabre and metal helmet for active service; and white leather gloves, epaulette fringing, sabre with a fringed handle and red and gold trimmed kepi for dress uniform. For dress occasions, the trousers are also worn over the boots rather than tucked in. The details of such uniforms and their accompanying accessories, as replicated here by Delamare, were what made French military apparel 'the envy of Europe.' (McDowell cited in Craik, 2005: 36) Indeed, as Craik following McDowell has suggested, this French 'love affair with the spectacle of the uniform and display of masculine attributes stemmed from the heady alignment of heroism, muscularity, sexual prowess and titillation: men in uniform became sex objects.' (2005: 36)

This notion of spectacular uniform and masculinity on display is certainly apparent in *Les Grandes manœuvres*. At the beginning of the film, the soldiers are shown parading on horseback, and the women of the town are shown peering out of windows to catch a glimpse of these uniformed men. Later, at a dinner shared by a handful of the town's soldiers and male civilians, when Armand is challenged to accept the fateful wager by

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<sup>239</sup> One will remember from the biographical section on Delamare that the tunics of the soldiers should have been navy blue, but because of Eastmancolor's tendency to bring out the blues too violently, black cloth was used instead.

Rodolphe (Jacques François), the latter intones of their uniforms ‘Messieurs, it is not you who they love: it’s a costume!’ In both these instances, the appeal of the uniform and its ability to impose meaning is visually and verbally reinforced. Craik, Matthews David and Steele have spoken of such appeal as a fetishistic value of uniform, achieved via its ability to show off the male form through tailoring and the addition of phallic accessories (swords, boots, gloves) (Craik, 2005: 36), (Matthews David, 2003: 19) and (Steele, 1996: 182).



Figure 78. Armand’s dress uniform.



Figure 79. Armand’s barracks uniform.



Figure 80. Armand's active service uniform.

Whereas Julien's uniforms in *Le Rouge et le noir* spoke predominantly to social positions and their transgression, Armand's uniform in this film speaks mostly of its own spectacular nature. Certainly it is Philippe's uniform that grants him his seductive status and further fetishises his star body. In fact, Armand's uniform is notably better tailored than many of his colleagues, who concurrently have a lesser degree of success with the town's female population. This simultaneously results in a showcasing of the allure of uniform, (which increases with expert tailoring), and Delamare's two-tier costume system. However, it is via the *accessories* with which Armand's three uniforms are adorned that a dialogue of seduction is articulated between himself and Marie-Louise. It is to an exploration of this sartorial discourse that I will now turn.

The particular accessory with which Armand and Marie-Louise communicate their feelings for one another is the glove. Historically, gloves have had many purposes.

Aside from the obvious functions of protection and decoration, gloves have had ceremonial uses, been exchanged as gifts, given as a token of favours received, and in the seventeenth century could even represent a legal contract (Cumming, 1982: 21). As Regine and Peter Engelmeier have commented, glove wearing is ‘a fashionable and dramatic ten-finger system that has so many functions to fulfil.’ (1990: 7-8) However, of its many functions, it is primarily as an erotic signifier that the glove operates in *Les Grandes manœuvres*. As Philippe Perrot has noted, ‘Covering the organs of touch [...] gloves [...] emphasise sexual insinuations by simultaneously reining in and stimulating desire.’ (Perrot cited in Steele, 1996: 133) As one will see, such reining in and stimulating of desire occurs in both the wearing and calculated removal of the gloves of Armand and Marie-Louise.

In the narrative, the audience is made aware of Armand’s fondness for gloves early on. One discovers that as evidence of his sexual conquests, he keeps a hatbox full of single gloves from a myriad of different women. Akin to Julien’s fascination with accessories as symbols of power described earlier, Armand too is an accessory fetishist. The fetishism lies in the glove’s status as souvenirs of seduction. One could also argue, along psychoanalytical lines that the glove has phallic value – that it functions much like the other practices of the male fetishising gaze. This male fetishising gaze overinvests in a fragmented part of the female body, or object (in this case the glove) in order to deny sexual difference (Hayward, 2000a: 448). Thus, for Armand, the glove becomes a phallic site/sight of overinvestment symbolic of the female body’s missing phallus and in so doing, he renders the women he seduces as safe objects of desire.



Figure 81. Armand and his hatbox of gloves.

Once Armand accepts the wager to woo Marie-Louise, his initial aim is to procure one of her gloves, as a symbol of (sexual) favours received, and add it to his collection. The glove-dialogue between Armand and Marie-Louise begins on the evening of the Red Cross fund-raising ball, when Marie-Louise's number comes up on the tombola. In so doing, unbeknown to her, she becomes the object of Armand and Rodolphe's bet. Searching for the owner of ticket number thirty-four, Armand encounters Marie-Louise for the first time. Just as she is about to give up her hunt for her ticket, Armand takes Marie-Louise's hand and asks if she has put it in her glove. Marie Louise, who is wearing three-quarter length mousquetaire white leather gloves, undoes the pearl buttons at her wrist to retrieve the ticket. The camera then cuts to a shot of Rodolphe, who is watching the couple, before returning to them once more in medium close-up. Tellingly, Marie-Louise is now wearing a single glove as Armand holds the other in his

own gloved-hands. The fact that the removal of this accessory occurred off-screen reinforces its sexual subtext, for the removal of a glove in public at this time was considered to be improperly alluring.<sup>240</sup> With Marie-Louise's glove in hand, Armand secretly signs the wager, leaving Marie-Louise both shocked and excited to find that her glove has disappeared, worried that her one-gloved status will compound the disdain with which she is regarded by many for being a divorcée.



Figure 82. Armand retrieves Marie-Louise's ticket from her glove.

On his return from signing the bet, Armand is disappointed to find Duverger at Marie-Louise's side, and so tries several tactics in order to keep her attention but is thwarted by her other suitor. Looking pensive, Armand removes Marie-Louise's glove from his pocket, realising that if he is to start another conversation with her he must relinquish his souvenir. Accordingly, the next time they appear on screen, Marie-Louise is wearing

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<sup>240</sup> See <[www.operagloves.com/history.html](http://www.operagloves.com/history.html)> [accessed 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008].

both gloves again and they are dancing, white gloved hand in white gloved hand. However, this sartorial union, with its sexual undercurrent, does not last as Marie-Louise leaves the ball alone. Recounting the evening's encounter with Armand to her maid, Marie-Louise happily removes her gloves with a flourish, their removal repeating Armand's earlier seductive action as he undressed her arm. It is no coincidence then, that at this moment of reminiscence, Armand's charge rings the doorbell to deliver her tombola prize.

As she answers the door, Armand sneaks into her house and makes his way upstairs, followed by an unsuspecting Marie-Louise. Spying her gloves on the table, Armand quickly tucks one into his pocket. He then starts a conversation with an understandably surprised Marie-Louise, during which, he has his own glove tops folded down in a titillating fashion, revealing a small window of wrist flesh in an otherwise completely covered body. As such, *his* gloves become a seductive gesture. However, before anything can come of this sartorial signal, the doorbell rings again - this time it is Duverger. Marie-Louise pretends to have already gone to bed, and from the window tells Duverger to leave. Once he has gone, Armand himself leaves in a fit of mock-rage at her lies, and returns to barracks, where he show off his fine Parisian mousquetaire glove to Félix, smelling it with relish! Yet the interplay between Armand's and Marie-Louise's gloves does not stop here. As Armand has not yet secured Marie-Louise's 'favours,' and indeed because he has pinched her glove rather than being freely given it in acknowledgement of such favours, he continues to act through deceit and instigate flirting by means of gloves.



Figure 83. Armand's turned-down glove tops.

In this process, whereas Armand uses gloves to stimulate desire (folding down the tops of his own gloves, removing those of Marie-Louise etc.), for Michèle Morgan's character, gloves seem to be more about reining in desire. Her icy cautiousness when dealing with Armand means that she keeps to correct glove etiquette at all times, never removing more than one glove at once in public, and certainly not being fooled into taking off a dress glove again. Such an ability to hold onto her wits, and consequently her gloves, when in Armand's presence, only further ignites his desire for her, to the point where he relinquishes all other gloves in the quest for hers (he orders his collection to be burnt). Realising that he truly loves Marie-Louise, at their last meeting, Armand does not wear any gloves at all. The shedding of this accessory, which was previously so bound up in his games of seduction (of Marie-Louise and countless others), illustrates his desire to be truthful at last. However, like the proverbial boy who

cried wolf, Marie-Louise does not believe Armand's declaration of love and leaves broken-hearted but still in possession of a full compliment of gloves.

In both *Le Rouge et le noir* and *Les Grandes manœuvres*, Philippe's characters have exhibited a tendency to overvalue accessories in the way they view and use them. For Julien, accessories are a fetishistic symbol of power and status that may be adopted to change one's identity and social standing. Whereas Armand also views accessories as fetishistic items, but rather than use them to transgress boundaries of class, he employs them to incite desire - both his own and that of others. Interestingly, Julien's and Armand's accessories have all belonged to uniforms, and as such, are socially sanctioned 'male' accessories. Since the Great Masculine Renunciation in the nineteenth century, the adornment of the body with accessories became a more exclusively feminine outlet for sartorial expression, thus limiting acceptable spaces for the peacock male to exhibit himself. Yet one such space, which has continued to be a socially acceptable male location for display, is the space of uniform (as seen so clearly with Julien's parade uniform).

It is this space of uniform where the difference between Delamare's male and female accessorised bodies manifests itself. For Delamare has followed socially sanctioned gendered spaces of accessories in her adornment of Philippe, a profusion of feminising accessories only being socially acceptable if they accompany a uniform. However, this institutionalised space of uniform is paradoxical, addressing both social control and transgression simultaneously. Taking these dual faces of uniform into account, therefore, Philippe's body becomes placed into an uncertain sartorial space in-between acceptability and misbehaviour, and also masculine and feminine genders. Such a

sartorial space becomes uncertain in terms of gender, for as explained earlier, uniform and its accessories have a feminising effect. Delamare's placing of Philippe in feminising uniform, and the associated uncertain position mid-way between control and transgression echoes French masculinity's uncertain footing during the 1950s.

Perhaps this notion of uncertainty explains the popularity of the costume dramas that flagged men in uniform.<sup>241</sup> For as explored in the case-study on Mayo via the figure of Manda in *Casque d'or*, masculinity in post-war France was deemed to be in crisis. This was due, in large part, to masculinity's uncertainty of its position in the wake of revised gender roles during World War II, which as I have explained previously, resulted in an attempt to return to patriarchal order.<sup>242</sup> As illustrated in both chapter eleven and section 1.2 in part one, this desire to return to established patterns of gender behaviour post-war resulted in the misogynistic drive for women to return to the domestic sphere. This was bound up with the modernisation that occurred on both a national and a domestic level via the mechanisation of the home (Ross, 1997) and (Duchen: 1994). The aim being that if women became reacquainted with their specific space and place within society, then men as the opposite half of the gender binary, would subsequently find theirs. Thus it was presumed that the uncertainties surrounding male identity post-war, the very same uncertainties which Philippe's uniforms address, would be alleviated. However, as Delamare's costume attests, it was not going to be as simple as all that for France's men during this turbulent decade, certainly in cinematic terms at least.

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<sup>241</sup> For examples starring Philippe, see *Fanfan la tulipe*, Christian-Jaque, 1952, 6.712.512 spectators (3<sup>rd</sup> highest-grossing film of the year), and *Les Grandes manœuvres*, Clair, 1955, 5.301.504 spectators (5<sup>th</sup> highest-grossing film of the year).

<sup>242</sup> See Mayo case-study chapter 11.

#### 16.4: Accessorised Conclusions

Throughout this exploration of Delamare's work, I have followed two threads of analytical enquiry: firstly the notion of bricolage, and secondly the ideological implications of her signature profusion of accessories. In pursuit of the first thread, I discovered that as a piecemeal costume product, simultaneously marked by the timeframes of production and historical reproduction, Delamare's bricolaged costumes find resonance in bricolaged narratives. For example, the mixing of timeframes and conflation of real and fictionalised events in the narratives of *French Cancan* and *Eléna et les hommes* finds an echo in Delamare's own temporal sartorial mixture. Obviously, a costume drama will always exhibit some degree of bricolage between the moment of its production and that which it is trying to recreate. Yet I would suggest that Delamare's bricolage of costume works far better in a film that acknowledges its own bricolaged identity, such as the two Renoir texts unstitched above.

Indeed, it is in these two films that the accessories of the female characters explored function the most positively. In *French Cancan*, Nini's and Lola's profusion of accessories ideologically manifests itself as an ability to take back control over the female image as spectacle. And sartorial extras in *Eléna et les hommes* impose questions around the accessibility of the body and questions of gender, as well as functioning as a catalyst for the adoption of different identities over reductive stereotyping. In both of these texts, accessories have been the fashionable mechanism through which these female characters have expressed agency. Yet, in a more complex way in *La Reine Margot*, accessories both collaborated and resisted with Margot's actions and intended course of actions, resulting in her decorative items of apparel embodying Bruzzi's definition of costume as an independent producer of meaning. The

effect here is that her accessories are ultimately more unruly than she, giving a less positive outcome for the central female protagonist. Lastly, in undressing Philippe's accessorised body in *Le Rouge et le noir* and *Les Grandes manœuvres*, I discovered that Delamare's multiple-accessorising of the male body only occurred within the socially acceptable space of uniform as opposed to civilian dress, creating a notable gender difference in her costume design practice. As such, Delamare's opportunities for decorating the male body are sadly reduced. Yet as I have suggested this suppression of the peacock male has much to do with the reality of the Great Masculine Renunciation and a subsequent desire for authenticity of costume on Delamare's part rather than an intentional ignoring of masculine accessorising.

As one can see, therefore, during the course of this case-study Delamare's profusion of accessories has translated into a profusion of ideological readings, which have differed with each film. Accordingly, this suitably translates into Delamare's particular politics of costume being a politics of bricolage, thus returning one to the initial line of enquiry – Delamare's status as a *bricoleure* of costume design. Yet above all else, throughout each example of her design practice, Delamare has proved her adaptability and flexibility in a supposedly rigid genre. This ability, coupled with her design flair, realistic approach to historical accuracy and fearlessness in the face of new cinematic technologies such as colour, is surely why Delamare was the most popular of the *films à costumes* designers during the 1950s in France, stamping her signature *froufrou* onto so much of this genre.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to re-dress the fact that costume designers (especially those working outside of Hollywood) have received scant recognition. In the context of French cinema, with the exception of some New-Wave films right towards the end of the decade, the 1950s has also been critically overlooked, in particular, the genre of the *film à costumes*. Through case-studies on four *film à costumes* costume designers - Annenkov, Delamare, Escoffier and Mayo – this thesis unites undervalued film personnel with an underrated corpus of films. In so doing, this study has recognised and showcased the role of costume design within the *film à costumes* through a sustained costume-centric analysis. This has allowed one to understand how costume design functions ideologically, by showing how film wardrobes operate in relation to the diegetic bodies they are worn by, as well as how costumes themselves can function as independent producers of meaning, generating their own discourses on gender, (historical) authenticity, status and power. In considering clothing to be able to produce its own independent ideological significance, this methodological position has built on that outlined by Stella Bruzzi in *Undressing Cinema, Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (1997). However, this study has taken the methodological framework of sartorial independence in a different direction through its specific focus on the figure of the costume designer, who, as seen in parts two and three, becomes a decisive factor in both the appearance and ideologies of film costume. This does not mean that the *costumier* has complete authorial control over their designs, for the costumes themselves may of course impose meaning, a process that frequently takes place through a particular choice of fabric, such as velvet, and/or due to the layering of meaning a garment is imbued with during its processing from raw material to finished product, as seen in this study with both the corset and the crinoline. Factor in directorial

wishes, budgetary constraints, new film technologies (chiefly new colour film stocks during the 1950s), actors bodies and star personas and one can clearly see how the ideologies both presented by and generated by film costume are multiple and interwoven.

These multiple and interwoven ideologies are identified in this thesis in two ways. First, in part one, I approached each of the four costume designers' 1950s output through the initial identification and subsequent methodological exploration of a signature garment/design trademark. Once identified, the overriding feature of each designers sartorial methodology became a yard stick against which I could measure their wardrobes across the texts and star bodies they had individually dressed, but also against each other. In this respect, the corset (and instances of its wearing and not wearing), the crinoline, and accessories became the design elements discussed in order to move towards an alternative view of the 1950s *film à costumes* in parts two and three.

With the exception of Delamare, the signature garments of the other costume designers were all predominantly feminine foundation garments: Annenkov repeatedly used the very tightly-laced post-industrial corset, Mayo 'corseted' both genders at an external level, and Escoffier turned his attention to the lower half of the female body via the various incarnations of the crinoline. This focus is unsurprising given that it is by using such items of structural apparel that historical silhouettes are immediately visually alluded to, and the female form's status (particularly if one follows the theory of the Great Masculine Renunciation) as the principal, though not exclusive, canvas for sartorial exaggeration suggested.

In undressing Annenkov's design signature, the tightly-laced corset, I discovered how the process of creating a corset became imbued with meaning through all phases of its production, be it pre- or post-industrial. For example, baleen, which was frequently used to make corset stays, possesses a filtering function that applies to both its job within the body of the whale it is derived from, and the predominantly female body it comes to sculpt in its corseted form. This filtering function then becomes laced into discourses around femininity, animality and desire, as discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3. Such discourses (produced independently by the corset, the female body, and also by means of their conjunction) collect in the liminal spaces between the flesh and the fabric of the corset, from which they may subsequently find release through the lace-hole, which as shown in section 2.3 may act as a point of resistance.

Staying with the corset, the reasons behind the un-lacing of this garment in relation to Mayo's design trademark of corset removal, reappropriation and externalisation, were then explored. Many women, just prior to and following the French Revolution of 1789, began to abandon corsetry as neo-classicism became fashionable. This historical un-lacing allowed me to draw a historical parallel with Mayo's radical approach to corsetry. The historical casting-off of restrictive stays in the latter-part of the eighteenth century was co-opted by some women during the Revolution as a challenge to patriarchally privileging gender divisions, which denied France's women a political voice (which sadly would continue until 1944). Although not directly relevant to the time-periods of the films which Mayo dressed during the 1950s, the exploration of the gender politics associated with the slackening off of corsetry in the late-eighteenth century became applicable to his costume design in which the (un)corseting of both

genders is invested with political meaning, in terms of both gender and the socio-political environment of both the late nineteenth century and the 1950s.

Exploration of Escoffier's signature garment, the crinoline, also led to a gender and socio-political reading. The widespread manufacture and popularisation of the cage-crinoline during the Second Empire, and its reappearance during the 1950s, as seen in section 2.5 and 2.6, can be read against discourses of modernity and cleanliness, and the renegotiation of women's place in society in both timeframes. As with the corset, the crinoline was discovered to be a multiplicitous garment, which in all its various incarnations speaks of confinement and display, movement and stasis simultaneously. In so doing, it places its female wearer into a space of in-betweenness, which is difficult to define, and a position that finds resonance with Escoffier's own design approach.

Finally, Delamare's signature design trademark of detail and embellishment resulted in accessories being investigated as a fetishistic means of directing the eye and breaking up the ambiguous lines of the body. This extended to an exploration of the *Merveilleuses* women of the First Empire who adorned themselves to spectacular effect in an appropriation of male camp, as explained in section 2.7, to signify their political impotence. A point that was to prove significant in the study of Delamare's work, in which one can see how ambiguous this representation of power and its lack can be.

The multiple ideological readings arising from the *mise-en-scène* of each of these costume design trademarks (corsets, crinolines, accessories) were then applied in various stages of the case-studies on the four designers in parts two and three. These case-studies then became the second stage in which the multiple and interwoven

ideologies of the *film à costumes*' costumes were identified. Through a consideration of the sartorial interpretations set out in part one, alongside biographical information on each designer that informed their filmic practice, the star bodies they dressed and the particular texts in which their designs were worn, each designers' finished costumes were read as a fabric palimpsest incorporating many aspects of variously imposed or absorbed meaning and significance.

Thus part two's minor case-studies began with an exploration of Annenkov's costumes for the four *film à costumes* he dressed for Ophuls during the 1950s – *La Ronde*, *Le Plaisir*, *Madame de...*, and *Lola Montès*. After reflecting on Annenkov's own pre-cinematic artistic practice, particularly his involvement with Constructivism, as well as his willingness to collude with Ophuls's apparent misogyny towards women, it was determined that the designer's repeated tight-lacing of corsetry was bound up in ideas around the containment and mechanisation of the female form. This was achieved through Annenkov's creation of the mechanical-X, a silhouette that resulted from Constructivist-inspired fetishistically employed corsetry. However, this proved to be the first ideological reading. An application of the filtering function of the corset and the lace-hole as a point of resistance, as outlined in part one of this thesis, was employed at this point. The result was a second way of reading Annenkov's costumes being presented, for the tightly-laced corsetry was found to impose its own meaning onto and against the misogynistic narratives of the four films in question. Such reading against the grain of Annenkov's intended costume methodology illustrated how costume may indeed function as an independent producer of meaning, countering the overriding strategy of film narrative and directorial and costume design intent. In terms of gender significance in this case-study, the filtering function of corsetry provided Annenkov's

tightly-laced women with a way to extricate themselves from their perceived containment, even reclaiming the term ‘slag’ as a positive in the process!

The second of the minor case-studies in part two took the form of an exploration of Escoffier’s costume design in three texts directed by Christian-Jaque, all starring Martine Carol – *Lucrece Borgia*, *Madame du Barry* and *Nana*. From the investigation of his biographical information, hidden histories on this enigmatic designer were revealed. Most notably, in terms of Escoffier’s costume design practice were the unearthing of links to *haute-couture* through the figures of Jeanne Paquin and Pierre Cardin, links which subsequently filtered into Escoffier’s design methodology for the three films under discussion. Through a detailed analysis of his crinolined costumes and these fashion industry connections, a deeper understanding of Martine Carol’s star persona was achieved. By means of the alternative readings that Escoffier’s costumes imposed, Carol was shown to be more than just a ‘*séductrice*’ in Christian-Jaque’s films. Through a symbiotic engagement with the ‘in-between’ nature of Escoffier’s crinolines, Carol was placed into an ‘o’ space of unreadability that could, in turn, be read against 1950s spaces of femininity. This space of unreadability offered possibilities for unruliness, by which curtailment of women created by gender stereotypes could be skirted around. Thus the Carol-Christian-Jaque-Escoffier triangulation offered a more positive space for 1950s cinematic women. However, this positive space is never fully realised as all Carol’s characters’ in the end are punished in some form for their sartorially-inspired transgressions.

Part three’s major case-studies began with an analysis of Mayo’s costume design. In a reflection on three *film à costumes* he dressed that span the 1950s – *Casque d’or*,

*Gervaise*, and *Sans famille* – his radical approach to corsetry was un-laced. In the films considered, corsetry for Mayo applied to both genders. For example, the women were not corseted in the traditional sense, with Mayo choosing instead to place the corset at a visible level, over outer-clothing, often in the reduced form of a belt. The male characters too, were ‘corseted’ by means of wide fabric cummerbunds. Yet as discovered, this treatment of corsetry, although radical in the predominantly bourgeois world of costume drama, was authentic in terms of Mayo’s representation of the working class. In addition, the external location of the corset not only reflected the designer’s painterly practice (characterised by the externalising of the feelings and interiority of his subjects), but imbued his costume design with a political edge. In putting the corset over clothing, the multiple and usually liminal discourses the garment creates in terms of sociological, sexual, political, cultural and economic commentaries are made visible and so confrontational. When read in conjunction with the actions and personas of the star bodies Mayo externally ‘corsets,’ alongside the double address of the costume drama (the timeframes of its recreation and production), his costume design comes to create ‘material memory.’ Through the recording in fabric of actions that may have resonance in both of the costume drama’s timeframes, material memory is the tool Mayo uses to politicise his costumes. This process may be augmented by the meanings that particular fabrics impose, for example, velvet, which due to its three-dimensionality, bruises. These bruises visually reflect, therefore, fabric’s ability to record the actions of its wearer.

Through this conjunction of radical corsetry, material memory and the materiality of fabrics, Mayo’s costume designs point to new approaches to gender, desire, women’s agency and class in *Casque d’or*; to negotiations of Empire in *Gervaise*; and to

renegotiations of the working classes and femininity in relation to consumerism in *Sans famille*. In this respect, Mayo's 1950s output has a clear political edge, charting the nation's post-war psychological repression in 1952 (*Casque d'or*), the new trauma of the colonial in 1956 (*Gervaise*), and the acme of the first post-war consumer boom in 1958 (*Sans famille*). Consequently, Mayo has proved himself to be the most politically aware of the four designers discussed in this thesis.

The final major case-study looked at Delamare's costume design for the 1950s *film à costumes*. In particular, the ideological implications of her signature accessories and detailing were looked at across various star bodies and texts: Françoise Arnoul and Maria Félix in *French Cancan*, Ingrid Bergman in *Eléna et les hommes*, Jeanne Moreau in *La Reine Margot* and Gérard Philipe in *Le Rouge et le noir* and *Les Grandes manœuvres*. Unsurprisingly, Delamare's multiple accessories and ways of adorning the body translated into multiple ideologies of costume (both absorbed and imposed).

Through an approach to costume design from the point of view of the *bricoleuse*, Delamare build up blocks of costume accessories that are reconfigured differently in each of the texts and on each of the bodies she dresses. Thus in *French Cancan*, the overload of accessories ideologically manifests itself as an ability to take back control over the female image as spectacle. In *Eléna et les hommes* accessories present questions around access to the body and gender, and become a catalyst for the adoption of fluid identities over reductive stereotyping. Eléna's loss of accessories in the opening of the film frees her to acknowledge her feelings for Henri; her endowing men with her token daisy, meanwhile, empowered men. In *La Reine Margot*, the title character's accessories also exude ambiguity in relation to access to power - while Margot's

ambiguous presentation allows her to escape with her life intact, she is seemingly reduced to the status of a feminine accessory contributing to the continuation of patriarchal power. Whereas her sartorial accessories become independent producers of meaning, asserting their own power by means of their oblique concealing/revealing nature. In this way, Delamare's accessories for Margot act as autonomous objects as well as underlining their own and Margot's ambiguity. In terms of accessorising the male body, Delamare's dressing of Philippe sees accessories and fine detailing manifest itself within the sanctioned space of safe sartorial male display – the uniform. Yet the desire Philippe's characters' display for the accessories of others invests Delamare's design trademark with a fetishistic value.

Such a profusion of accessories and the ensuing ideologies generated by Delamare's designs proves that the accessory should not be written off as an extra to dress but as an integral part of a complex process of vestimentary signification. In a similar way, neither should the costume drama be written off as a solely feminine and frivolous genre. The investigation of costume design and designers working in 1950s *film à costumes* in this thesis has proven what fertile ground for analysis the genre really is through the very fabric by which it is often dismissed. Important hidden histories on gender, (historical) authenticity, status and power, alongside the socio-political conditions in which these films have been produced, and the double timeframe address of the costume drama have all been unearthed. In this way, the discursive veil covering the genre has, to some extent, been drawn back, allowing the work of forgotten costume designers to be celebrated and contextualised.

## FILMOGRAPHIES:

### ANNENKOV FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled from the *Bibliothèque du film on-line database* (www.bifi.fr), the *Internet Movie database* (www.imdb.com) and Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun (1988) *L'Élégance française au cinéma*, Paris: Éditions Paris musées et société de l'histoire du costume

\* Year of release

Costume dramas marked in bold type

FILM TITLE	DIRECTOR	YEAR*
<b>Faust</b>	<b>Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau</b>	<b>1926</b>
<i>Nuits Moscovites</i>	Alexis Granowsky	1934
<b>La Mascotte</b>	<b>Leon Mathot</b>	<b>1935</b>
<b>Tarass Boulba</b>	<b>Alexis Granowsky</b>	<b>1936</b>
<b>Mayerling</b>	<b>Anatole Litvak</b>	<b>1936</b>
<i>Mademoiselle Docteur/Salonique, nid d'espions</i>	Georg-Wilhelm Pabst	1936
<i>Nuits de feu</i>	Marcel L'Herbier	1937
<i>Le Monsonge de Nina Petrovna</i>	Viktor Tourjansky	1937
<b>Louise</b>	<b>Abel Gance</b>	<b>1938</b>
<b>Tarakanowa</b>	<b>Fedor Ozep</b>	<b>1938</b>
<i>Le Drame de Shanghai</i>	Georg-Wilhelm Pabst	1938
<b>Cavalcade d'amour</b>	<b>Raymond Bernard</b>	<b>1939</b>
<b>La Duchesse de Langeais</b>	<b>Jacques de Baroncelli</b>	<b>1941</b>
<b>Pontcarrel, colonel de l'Empire</b>	<b>Jean Delannoy</b>	<b>1942</b>
<i>L'Eternel retour</i>	Jean Delannoy	1943
<b>Le Bossu</b>	<b>Jean Delannoy</b>	<b>1944</b>
<b>Patrie</b>	<b>Louis Daquin</b>	<b>1945</b>
<i>Le Père Serge</i>	Lucien Gasnier-Raymond	1945
<b>L'Affaire du collier de la reine</b>	<b>L'Herbier</b>	<b>1945</b>
<i>La Symphonie pastorale</i>	Jean Delannoy	1946
<i>La Colère des dieux</i>	Karel Lamac	1946
<b>La Chartreuse de Parme</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1947</b>
<i>Valse Brillante</i>	Jean Boyer	1949
<b>Lady Paname</b>	<b>Henri Jeanson</b>	<b>1949</b>
<b>La Ronde</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1950</b>
<b>Le Plaisir</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1951</b>
<b>Raspoutine</b>	<b>Combret</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Madame de...</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1953</b>
<i>Le Grand jeu</i>	Robert Siodmak	1953
<b>La Castiglione</b>	<b>Georges Combret</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>Lola Montès</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1955</b>
<i>Montparnasse 19</i>	Jacques Becker	1957

**ANNENKOV COSTUMED FILMS DISCUSSED:**

*LA RONDE* (1950, black and white).

Director: Max Ophuls

Production company: Films Sacha Gordine

Producers: Ralph Baum and Sacha Gordine

Script: Louis Ducreux, Kurt Feltz, Jacques Natanson, and Max Ophuls, based on Arthur Schnitzler's play *Reigen*

Cinematography: Christian Matras

Editor: Léonide Azar

Production design: Jean d'Eaubonne

Costume design: Georges Annenkov

Make-up: Carmen Brel

Assistant directors: Paul Feyder and Marc Frédérix

Art department: Charles Merangel and Vergne

Sound department: Pierre-Louis Calvet

Assistant editor: S. Rondeau

Assistant camera: Ernest Bourreaud

Camera operator: Alain Douarinou

Music: Joe Hajos

Principal actors: Anton Walbrook (the raconteur), Simone Signoret (Léocadie, the prostitute), Serge Reggiani (Franz, the soldier), Simone Simon (Marie, the housemaid), Daniel Gélin (Alfred), Daniëlle Darrieux (Emma Breitkopf), Fernand Gravey (Charles Breitkopf), Odette Joyeux (Anna, the grisette), Jean-Louis Barrault (Robert Kuhlenkamp, the poet), Isa Miranda (Charlotte, the actress), Gérard Philipe (the Count).

*LE PLAISIR* (1952, black and white).

Director: Max Ophuls

Production companies: Compagnie commerciale française cinématographique (C.C.F.C) and Stera Films

Producers: Édouard Harispuru, M. Kiefer and Max Ophuls

Script: Jacques Natanson and Max Ophuls, based on Guy de Maupassant's short stories.

Cinematography: Philippe Agostini and Christian Matras

Editor: Léonide Azar

Production design: Jean d'Eaubonne

Costume design: Georges Annenkov

Make-up: Carmen Brel, Roger Chanteau, Jules Chanteau, Monique Isnard, Simone Knapp

Assistant directors: Tony Abogante and Jean Valère

Art department: Jacques Gruth, Jean Charpentier, Raymond Gabutti, François Sune, Nicolas Wilké

Sound department: Pierre-Louis Calvet, Jean Rieul, Marcel Corvaisier, Louis Haller

Assistant editor: Suzanne Rondeau

Assistant camera: Changlesy and Roland Paillais

Camera operator: Alain Douarinou and Walter Wottitz

Music: Joe Hajos

Principal actors: Claude Dauphin (the doctor), Gaby Morlay (Denise), Madeleine Renaud (Julia Tellier), Mila Parély (Madame Raphaële), Daniëlle Darrieux (Madame

Rosa), Pierre Brasseur (Julien Ledentu), Jean Gabin (Joseph Rivet), Daniel Gélin (Jean, the painter), Simone Simon (Joséphine, the model), Mathilde Cassadesus (Madame Louise), Paulette Goddard (Madame Fernande), Jean Galland (Ambroise, the mask).

*MADAME DE...* (1953, black and white).

Director: Max Ophuls

Production companies: Franco London Films, Indusfilms, Rizzoli films

Producer: Ralph Baum

Script: Marcel Archand, Max Ophuls, Annette Wademant, based on Louise de Vilmorin's novella.

Cinematography: Christian Matras

Editor: Borys Lewin

Production design: Jean d'Eaubonne

Costume design: Georges Annenkov and Rosine Delamare

Wardrobe department: Georgette Fillon

Make-up: Carmen Brel

Assistant directors: Marc Maurette, Willy Pickard

Art department: Maurice Barnathan

Sound department: Antoine Petitjean

Camera operator: Alain Douarinou

Music: Georges van Parys

Principal actors: Charles Boyer (General André de...), Danièle Darrieux (Countess Louise de...), Vittorio de Sica (Baron Fabrizio Donati), Jean Deboncourt (M. Rémy), Jean Galland (M. de Bernac), Mireille Perrey (the nurse), Hubert Noël (Henri de Melville), Lia Di Leo (Lola).

*LOLA MONTÈS* (1955, Technicolor).

Director: Max Ophuls

Production companies: Florida Films, Gamma Film, Oska-Film GmbH, Union Film GmbH

Producers: Albert Caraco, André Haguët, Anton Schelkopf

Script: Jacques Natanson, Max Ophuls, Annette Wademant, based on the novel, *La Vie extraordinaire de Lola Montès*, by Cécil Saint-Laurent

Cinematography: Christian Matras

Editors: Madeleine Gug, Jacqueline Sadoul, Adolf Schlyssleder

Production design: Jean d'Eaubonne

Set decoration: Robert Christidès

Costume design: Georges Annenkov and Marcel Escoffier (costumes for Martine Carol)

Wardrobe department: Gromtseff and Karinska (costume execution), Madeleine Rabusson, Jean Zay, Monique Plotin (costumers)

Make-up: Jean Lalaurette, Maguy Vernadet

Assistant directors: Tony Abogante, Marcel Ophuls, Ulrich Picard, Claude Pinoteau

Art department: Pierre Duquesne, Jacques Gruth, Willy Schatz

Sound department: Hans Endrulat, Jean Némy, Antoine Petitjean

Assistant editor: Etienne Muse, Hannes Nikel, Rosa Ring

Assistant camera: Ernest Bourreaud, Luc Mirot

Camera operator: Alain Douarinou

Music: Georges Auric, Jacques Métchen

Principal actors: Martine Carol (Lola Montès), Peter Ustinov (Circus master), Anton Walbrook (Ludwig I, King of Bavaria), Henri Guisol (Horseman Maurice), Lise Delamare (Mrs Craigie, Lola's mother), Paulette Goddard (Joséphine, the maid), Oskar Werner (Student), Jean Galland (Private Secretary), Will Quadflieg (Franz Liszt), Helena Manson (Lieutenant James' sister), Germaine Delbat (Stewardess), Carl Esmond (Doctor), Jacques Fey (Steward), Werner Fink (Wisböck, the artist), Ivan Desny (Lieutenant Thomas James).

## ESCOFFIER FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled from the *Bibliothèque du film on-line database* (www.bifi.fr), the *Internet Movie database* (www.imdb.com) and Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun (1988)  
*L'Élégance française au cinéma*, Paris: Éditions Paris musées et société de l'histoire du costume

\* Year of release

Costume dramas marked in bold type

FILM TITLE	DIRECTOR	YEAR*
<b>Carmen</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1943</b>
<i>Il Diavolo va in collegio</i>	Jean Boyer	1944
<b>La Belle et la bête</b>	<b>Jean Cocteau</b>	<b>1946</b>
<b>L'Idiot</b>	<b>Georges Lampin</b>	<b>1946</b>
<b>Ruy Blas</b>	<b>Pierre Billon</b>	<b>1947</b>
<b>Rocomble</b>	<b>Jacques de Baroncelli</b>	<b>1948</b>
<b>La Revanche de Baccarat</b>	<b>Jacques de Baroncelli</b>	<b>1948</b>
<b>L'Aigle à deux têtes</b>	<b>Jean Cocteau</b>	<b>1948</b>
<i>Les Parents terribles</i>	Jean Cocteau	1948
<b>Le Secret de Mayerling</b>	<b>Jean Delannoy</b>	<b>1948</b>
<b>Singoalla</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1949</b>
<i>Orphée</i>	Jean Cocteau	1949
<i>Ballerina</i>	Ludwig Berger	1950
<b>Dieu a besoin des hommes</b>	<b>Jean Delannoy</b>	<b>1950</b>
<b>La Ronde</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1950</b>
<b>Nez de cuir</b>	<b>Yves Allégret</b>	<b>1951</b>
<b>Fanfan la Tulipe</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1951</b>
<i>Le Garçon sauvage</i>	Jean Delannoy	1951
<b>Violettes impériables</b>	<b>Richard Pottier</b>	<b>1952</b>
<b>La Belle de Cadix</b>	<b>Raymond Bernard</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Destinées</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Lucrece Borgia</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Madame du Barry</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>La Belle Otéro</b>	<b>Richard Pottier</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>Senso</b>	<b>Luchino Visconti</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>Nana</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1955</b>
<b>Lola Montès</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1955</b>
<b>Le Couturier de ces dames</b>	<b>Jean Boyer</b>	<b>1956</b>
<b>Michel Strogoff</b>	<b>Carmine Gallon</b>	<b>1956</b>
<b>Pot-Bouille</b>	<b>Julien Duvivier</b>	<b>1957</b>
<b>La Tour prends garde!</b>	<b>Georges Lampin</b>	<b>1957</b>
<b>Les Misérables</b>	<b>Jean-Paul Le Chanois</b>	<b>1957</b>
<i>La Notte brava</i>	Mauro Bolognini	1959
<i>Et mourir de plaisir</i>	Roger Vadim	1960
<b>Madame sans gêne</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>La princesse de Clèves</b>	<b>Jean Delannoy</b>	<b>1961</b>
<i>Gli Idifferenti</i>	Francesco Maselli	1964
<b>La Bohème</b>	<b>Wilhelm Semmelroth</b>	<b>1965</b>
<i>Lady L</i>	Peter Ustinov	1965
<i>La Mujer perdida</i>	Tulio Demicheli	1966
<i>Woman Times Seven</i>	Vittorio de Sica	1967

<b>Mayerling</b>	<b>Terence Young</b>	<b>1968</b>
<b>Phèdre</b>	<b>Pierre Jourdan</b>	<b>1968</b>
<i>La Donna a una dimensione</i>	Bruno Baratti	1969
<i>Il Padre di famiglia</i>	Nanni Loy	1969
<b>Les mariés de l'an II</b>	<b>Rappeneau</b>	<b>1971</b>
<i>Il viaggio</i>	Vittorio de Sica	1974
<b>Jesus of Nazareth (TV)</b>	<b>Franco Zeffirelli</b>	<b>1977</b>

#### ESCOFFIER COSTUMED FILMS DISCUSSED:

*LUCRÈCE BORGIA* (1953, Eastmancolor).

Director: Christian-Jaque

Production companies: Filmsonor, Francinex, Les Films Ariane, Rizzoli Film

Producers: Francis Cosne, Georges Dancigers, Alexandre Mnouchkine, Angelo Rizzoli

Script: Christian-Jaque, Cécil Saint-Laurent, Jacques Sigurd

Cinematography: Christian Matras

Editor: Jacques Desagneaux

Production design: Robert Gys

Costume design: Marcel Escoffier

Wardrobe department: Jean Zay, Monique Plotin

Make-up: Carmen Brel, Lina Gallet, Jean Lalaurette

Assistant directors: Roland Bernard, André Smagghe, Raymond Vilette

Art department: Jacques Chalvet, Pierre Charron, Pierre Duquesne

Sound department: Jacques Carrère, Lucien Lacharmoise

Assistant camera: Ernest Bourreaud, Luc Mirot

Camera operator: Alain Douarinou

Music: Maurice Thieret

Special effects: Nicolas Wilké

Principal actors: Martine Carol (Lucrece Borgia), Pedro Armendáriz (César Borgia),

Valentine Tessier (Julie Farnasse), Arnolda Foà (Michelotto), Piéral (the jester),

Christian Marquand (Paulo), Jean d'Yd (the doctor), Maurice Ronet (Pierotto), Raphaël

Patorni (Envoy of the East), Olivier Mathot (the sculptor), Gilles Quéant (Sforza),

Massimo Serato (Alphonse d'Aragon), Howard Vernon (the chaplain), Georges Lannes

(the ambassador), Louis Seigner (the magician).

*MADAME DU BARRY* (1954, Eastmancolor).

Director: Christian-Jaque

Production companies: Filmsonor, Francinex, Les Films Ariane, Rizzoli Film

Producers: Francis Cosne, Georges Dancigers, Georges Lourau, Alexandre Mnouchkine

Script: Christian-Jaque, Henri Jeanson, Albert Valentin

Cinematography: Christian Matras

Editor: Jacques Desagneaux

Production design: Robert Gys

Costume design: Marcel Escoffier

Wardrobe: Monique Plotin and Jean Zay

Make-up: Jean Lalaurette, Maguy Vernadet

Assistant directors: Roland Bernard, Belisario L. Randone, Raymond Vilette

Art department: Jacques Chalvet, Pierre Charron, Pierre Duquesne  
 Sound department: Joseph de Bretagne  
 Camera operator: Alain Douarinou  
 Music: Georges van Parys  
 Special effects: Nicolas Wilké  
 Principal actors: Martine Carol (Jeanne du Barry), Daniel Ivernel (Jean du Barry),  
 Gianna Maria Carnale (the Duchess of Grammont), Jean Parédès (Lebel), Denis d'Inès  
 (Cardinal Richelieu), Isabelle Pia (Marie-Antoinette), Gabrielle Dorziat (Mme  
 Gourdan), Massimo Serato (Choiseul), Noël Roquevert (Guillaume du Barry), André  
 Luget (King Louis XV).

*NANA* (1955, Eastmancolor).

Director: Christian-Jaque  
 Production companies: Cigno Films, Les Productions Jacques Roitfeld  
 Producers: Jacques Roitfeld  
 Script: Christian-Jaque, Jean Ferry, Henri Jeanson, Albert Valentin, based on the novel  
 by Émile Zola  
 Cinematography: Christian Matras  
 Editor: Jacques Desagneaux  
 Production design: Robert Gys  
 Costume design: Marcel Escoffier  
 Wardrobe department: Pierre Cardin  
 Make-up: Jules Chanteau, Jean Lalaurette, Maguy Vernadet  
 Assistant directors: Raymond Vilette  
 Art department: Pierre Duquesne, Olivier Girard  
 Camera operator: Alain Douarinou  
 Music: Georges van Parys  
 Principal actors: Martine Carol (Nana), Charles Boyer (Count Muffat), Walter Chiari  
 (Fontan), Paul Frankeur (Bordenave), Elisa Cegani (Countess Muffat), Jean Debucourt  
 (Napoléon III), Marguerite Pierry (Zoé), Dario Michaelis (Fauchery), Dora Doll (Rose  
 Mignon), Palau (Venot), Louisella Boni (Estelle), Jacqueline Plessis (Eugénie),  
 Germaine Kerjean (La Tricon), Nerio Bernardi (the Prince of Sardinia), Jacques Tarride  
 (Mignon), Nicole Riche (Marguerite Bellanger), Fernand Gilbert (the butcher), Jacques  
 Castelot (Duke de Vandevvres), Noël Roquevert (Steiner).

## MAYO FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled from the *Bibliothèque du film on-line database* (www.bifi.fr), the *Internet Movie database* (www.imdb.com), Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun (1988) *L'Élégance française au cinéma*, Paris: Éditions Paris musées et société de l'histoire du costume, and Malliarakis (2002) *Mayo, un peintre et le cinéma*, Paris: L'Harmattan.

\* Year of release

Costume dramas marked in bold type

FILM TITLE	DIRECTOR	YEAR*
<b>Les Enfants du paradis</b>	<b>Marcel Carné (costumes)</b>	<b>1945</b>
<i>Les Portes de la nuit</i>	Marcel Carné (costumes)	1946
<b>Rêves d'amour</b>	<b>Christian Stengel (costumes)</b>	<b>1946</b>
<i>La Fleur de l'âge</i>	Marcel Carné (costumes)	1947
<b>La Beauté du diable</b>	<b>René Clair (costumes)</b>	<b>1949</b>
<b>Barry</b>	<b>Richard Pottier (costumes)</b>	<b>1950</b>
<i>L'Homme</i>	Gilles Margaritis (set design)	1950
<i>Juliette ou la clef des songes</i>	Marcel Carné (costumes)	1950
<i>Au Coeur de la casbah</i>	Pierre Cardinal (set design)	1951
<b>Casque d'or</b>	<b>Jacques Becker (costumes)</b>	<b>1952</b>
<b>Le Rideau cramoisi</b>	<b>Alexandre Astruc (set design and costumes)</b>	<b>1952</b>
	<b>Maurice Clavel et Maurice Barry (set design and costumes)</b>	
<b>Mina de vanghel</b>	<b>André Michel (set design and costumes)</b>	<b>1952</b>
<b>Trois femmes</b>	<b>André Michel (set design and costumes)</b>	<b>1952</b>
<i>Thérèse Raquin</i>	Marcel Carné (costumes)	1953
<b>Les Quatres mousquetaires</b>	<b>Gilles Margaritis (set design)</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Land of the Pharaohs</b>	<b>Howard Hawkes (costumes)</b>	<b>1955</b>
<b>Gervaise</b>	<b>René Clément (costumes)</b>	<b>1956</b>
	<b>Alexandre Astruc (costumes with Lucilla Mussini)</b>	
<b>Une vie</b>	<b>André Michel (set design and costumes)</b>	<b>1957</b>
<b>Sans famille</b>	<b>Renato Castellani (costumes, film abandoned)</b>	<b>1958</b>
<b>Vénus impériale</b>	<b>Renato Castellani (costumes, film abandoned)</b>	<b>1958</b>
<i>Les Tricheurs</i>	Marcel Carné (costumes)	1958
<i>Hiroshima mon amour</i>	Alain Resnais (French set design)	1959
<b>The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll</b>	<b>Terence Fisher (costumes)</b>	<b>1960</b>
<i>Amélie ou le temps d'aimer</i>	Michel Drach (set design)	1960
<i>Leviathan</i>	Leonard Keigel (set design)	1961
	André Michel (set design and costumes)	1962
<i>Comme un poisson dans l'eau</i>	André Michel (set design and costumes)	1962
<b>Germinal</b>	<b>Marcel Carné (costumes, film abandoned)</b>	<b>1963</b>

**MAYO COSTUMED FILMS DISCUSSED:**

*CASQUE D'OR* (1952, black and white).

Director: Jacques Becker

Production companies: Robert and Raymond Hakim Company

Producers: Robert and Raymond Hakim

Script: Jacques Becker, Jacques Companeez, Annette Wadenant

Cinematography: Robert Lefebvre

Editor: Marguerite Renoir

Production design: Jean d'Eaubonne

Set design: Maurice Barnathan

Costume design: Antoine Mayo

Wardrobe: Marcelle Desvignes, Georgette Fillon, Marie-Rose Lebigot

Make-up: Alex Archambault, Boris Karabanoff, Maguy Vernadet

Assistant directors: Marcel Camus, Michel Clément

Art department: Émile Dechelle, Marc Frédérix, Alfred Marpoux, Maurice Terrasse

Sound department: Gaston Ancessi, Auboiroux, Antoine Petitjean

Assistant editor: Geneviève Vaury

Assistant camera: Jean-Marie Maillols, Gaston Muller, Gilbert Sarthre

Camera operator: Alain Douarinou

Music: Georges van Parys

Principal actors: Simone Signoret (Marie), Serge Reggiani (Manda), Raymond Bussières (Raymond), Odette Barncy (Eugene's mother), Loleh Bellon (Léonie Danard), Dominique Davray (Julie), Paul Barge (Inspector Juliani), Paul Azaïs (Ponsard), Claude Castaing (Fredo), Jean Clarieux (Paul), Tony Casteggiani (the commissioner), Émile Genevois (Billy), Gaston Modot (Danard), Wilhaim Sabatier (Roland Dupuis), Roland Lesaffre (Anatole).

*GERVAISE* (1956, black and white).

Director: René Clément

Production companies: Agnès Delahaie Productions, Cino del Duca, Compagnie Industrielle et Commerciale Cinématographique (CICC), Silver Films

Producers: Agnès Delahaie

Script: Jean Auranche, Pierre Bost, based on the novel by Émile Zola

Cinematography: Robert Juillard

Editor: Henri Rust

Production design: Paul Bertrand

Costume design: Antoine Mayo

Wardrobe: Lucilla

Assistant directors: Claude Clément, Léonide Kiegel

Sound department: Antoine Archambaud

Assistant editor: Geneviève Vaury

Camera operator: Jacques Robin

Music: Georges Auric

Special effects: Gérard Cogan

Principal actors: Maria Schell (Gervaise), François Périer (Henri Coupeau), Jany Holt (Mme Lorilleaux), Mathilde Cassadesus (Mme Boche), Florelle (Coupeau's mother), Micheline Luccioni (Clémence), Lucien Herbert (M Poisson), Jacques Harden (Goujet), Jacques Hiling (M Boche), Amédée (Mes Bottes), Hubert de Lapparent (M Lorilleaux),

Hélène Tossy (Mme Bijard), Rachel Devirys (Mme Fauconnier), Jacqueline Morane (Mme Gaudron), Yvonne Claudie (Mme Putois), Gérard Darrieux (Charles), Pierre Duverger (M Gaudron), Marcelle Féry (laundry boss), Armand Mestral (Lantier), Suzy Delaire (Virginie).

*SANS FAMILLE* (1958, Eastmancolor).

Director: André Michel

Production companies: SPCE, Francinex, Rizzoli Films

Producers: Robert Amon, Robert Chambert

Script: Rémo Forlani, André Michel, Pierre Véry, based on the novel by Hector Malot

Cinematography: Robert Juillard

Editor: Borys Lewin

Production design: Raymond Babutti, Antoine Mayo

Costume design: Antoine Mayo

Assistant directors: Jean Léon, Fernand Marzelle

Art department: François de Lamothe, G Paris, André Piltant, Albert Volper

Sound department: Antoine Archambaud, Jean Rieul

Camera operator: Jacques Robin

Music: Paul Misraki

Principal actors: Gino Cervi (Vitalis), Joël Flatteau (Rémi), Simone Renant (Lady Marie Milligan), Paulette Dubost (Mme Barberin), Maurice Teynac (James Milligan), Bernard Blier (Renato Garofoli), Pierre Brasseur (Jerobaum Driscoll), Marianne Oswald (Mrs Emily Driscoll), Raymond Bussièrès (Barberin), Roger Pierre (Bib the clown), Amédée (the policeman), Christian Fourcade (Jimmy Driscoll), Jacques Moulières (Matthias), Jean-Marc Thibault (Bob the clown).

## DELAMARE FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled from the *Bibliothèque du film on-line database* (www.bifi.fr), the *Internet Movie database* (www.imdb.com) and Delpierre, de Fleury and Lebrun (1988) *L'Élégance française au cinéma*, Paris: Éditions Paris musées et société de l'histoire du costume

\* Year of release

Costume dramas marked in bold type

FILM TITLE	DIRECTOR	YEAR*
<b><i>Untel père et fils</i></b>	<b>Julien Duvivier</b>	<b>1943</b>
<b><i>La Symphonie fantastique</i></b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1942</b>
<i>Le Voile bleu</i>	Jean Stelli	1942
<b><i>Le Compte de Monte-Cristo 1ère époque</i></b>	<b>Robert Vernay</b>	<b>1943</b>
<b><i>Le Compte de Monte-Cristo 2ème époque</i></b>	<b>Robert Vernay</b>	<b>1943</b>
<b><i>Au bonheur des dames</i></b>	<b>André Cayatte</b>	<b>1943</b>
<i>Pierre et Jean</i>	André Cayatte	1943
<b><i>Boule de suif</i></b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1945</b>
<b><i>Etrange destin</i></b>	<b>Louis Cuny</b>	<b>1945</b>
<i>La Revanche de Roger la honte</i>	André Cayatte	1946
<b><i>Monsieur Vincent</i></b>	<b>Maurice Cloche</b>	<b>1947</b>
<b><i>Capitaine Blomet</i></b>	<b>Andrée Feix</b>	<b>1947</b>
<b><i>Le Destin exécration de Guillemette Babin</i></b>	<b>Guillaume Radot</b>	<b>1947</b>
<b><i>Les Amants de Verone</i></b>	<b>André Cayatte</b>	<b>1948</b>
<b><i>Docteur Laennec</i></b>	<b>Maurice Cloche</b>	<b>1949</b>
<b><i>Cartouche, roi de Paris</i></b>	<b>Guillaume Radot</b>	<b>1949</b>
<b><i>Le Jugement de Dieu</i></b>	<b>Raymond Bernard</b>	<b>1949</b>
<i>Mon ami Sainfoin</i>	Marc-Gilbert Sauvajon	1949
<b><i>Le Roi</i></b>	<b>Marc-Gilbert Sauvajon</b>	<b>1949</b>
<b><i>Fusillé à l'aube</i></b>	<b>André Haguët</b>	<b>1950</b>
<i>Knock</i>	Guy Lefranc	1950
<i>Ma pomme</i>	Marc-Gilbert Sauvajon	1950
<b><i>La Maison Bonnadieu</i></b>	<b>Carlo Rim</b>	<b>1951</b>
<i>Adorables creatures</i>	Christian-Jaque	1951
<b><i>Monsieur Fabre</i></b>	<b>Henri Diamant-Berger</b>	<b>1951</b>
<i>The Green Glove</i>	Rudolph Maté	1951
<b><i>Le Capitaine Ardent</i></b>	<b>André Zwoboda</b>	<b>1951</b>
<i>Les Plaisirs de Paris</i>	Ralph Baum	1952
<b><i>La Dame aux camélias</i></b>	<b>Raymond Bernard</b>	<b>1952</b>
<i>Coiffeur pour dames</i>	Jean Boyer	1952
<b><i>Les Belles de nuit</i></b>	<b>René Clair</b>	<b>1952</b>
<b><i>Il est minuit, Docteur Schweitzer</i></b>	<b>André Haguët</b>	<b>1952</b>
<b><i>Le Jugement de Dieu</i></b>	<b>Raymond Bernard</b>	<b>1952</b>
<i>Tourbillon</i>	Alfred Rode	1952
<i>L'Esclave</i>	Yves Ciampi	1953
<b><i>Le Chevalier de la nuit</i></b>	<b>Robert Darène</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b><i>Le Chasseur de chez Maxim's</i></b>	<b>Henri Diamant-</b>	<b>1953</b>

<i>L'Affaire Maurizius</i>	<b>Berger</b>	1953
<i>Dortoir des grandes</i>	Julien Duvivier	1953
<b>Par ordre du Tsar</b>	Henri Decoin	1953
<b>Madame de...</b>	<b>André Haguët</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Les Révoltés de Lomanach</b>	<b>Max Ophuls</b>	<b>1953</b>
<i>L'Ennemi public no.1</i>	<b>Richard Pottier</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Le Rouge et le noir</b>	Henri Verneuil	1953
<b>Scènes de ménage</b>	<b>Claude Autant-Lara</b>	<b>1954</b>
<i>Du rififi chez les hommes</i>	<b>Berthomieu</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>Secrets d'alcove (Le Billet de logement)</b>	Jules Dassin	1954
<i>Obsession</i>	<b>Henri Decoin</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>Le Fils de Caroline chérie</b>	Jean Delannoy	1954
<b>La Reine Margot</b>	<b>Devaivre</b>	<b>1954</b>
<b>French Cancan</b>	<b>Jean Dréville</b>	<b>1954</b>
<i>Marguerite de la nuit</i>	<b>Jean Renoir</b>	<b>1954</b>
<i>Le Dossier noir</i>	Claude Autant-Lara	1955
<b>Les Grandes manœuvres</b>	André Cayatte	1955
<b>Milord l'arsouille</b>	<b>René Clair</b>	<b>1955</b>
<b>Les Hussards</b>	<b>André Haguët</b>	<b>1955</b>
<i>Bonsoir Paris, bonjour amour</i>	<b>Alex Joffe</b>	<b>1955</b>
<b>C'est arrivé à Aden</b>	Ralph Baum	1956
<i>L'homme à l'imperméable</i>	<b>Michel Boisrand</b>	<b>1956</b>
<i>Thérèse Etienne</i>	Julien Duvivier	1956
<b>Les Aventures de Till l'espigle</b>	Denys de la Patellière	1956
<b>Eléna et les hommes</b>	<b>Gérard Philipe</b>	<b>1956</b>
<i>Porte des Lilas</i>	<b>Jean Renoir</b>	<b>1956</b>
<b>La Belle et la tzigane</b>	René Clair	1957
<i>La Bonne tisane</i>	<b>Jean Dréville et Keleti</b>	<b>1957</b>
<b>Le Joueur</b>	Hervé Bromberger	1958
<b>Christine</b>	<b>Claude Autant-Lara</b>	<b>1958</b>
<b>The Roots of Heaven</b>	<b>Pierre Gaspard-Huit</b>	<b>1958</b>
<b>Maxime</b>	<b>John Huston</b>	<b>1958</b>
<b>Le Secret du chevalier d'Eon</b>	<b>Henri Verneuil</b>	<b>1958</b>
<b>La Jument verte</b>	<b>Jacqueline Audry</b>	<b>1959</b>
<i>Voulez-vous danser avec moi?</i>	<b>Claude Autant-Lara</b>	<b>1959</b>
<b>Les Trois etc. du colonel</b>	Michel Boisrand	1959
<b>Katia</b>	<b>Claude Boissol</b>	<b>1960</b>
<b>Le Compte de Monte-Cristo</b>	<b>Robert Siodmak</b>	<b>1960</b>
<b>Vive Henri IV, vive l'amour</b>	<b>Claude Autant-Lara</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Cartouche</b>	<b>Claude Autant-Lara</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Les Trois mousquetaires: les ferrets de la reine</b>	<b>Phillipe de Broca</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Les Trois mouquetaires: La vengeance de Milady</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Le Meraviglie di Aladino</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Le Chevalier de Pardailon</b>	<b>Mario Brava and Henri Levin</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Mandrin, brandit gentilhomme</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1962</b>
<i>Le Théâtre de la jeunesse: la fille du capitaine</i>	<b>Jean-Paul le Chanois</b>	<b>1962</b>
<i>Tout ceux qui tombent</i>	Alain Boudet	1962
	Michel Mitrani	1963

<b>Angelique, marquise des anges</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1964</b>
<b>Merveilleuse Angelique</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1964</b>
<b>Angelique et le roi</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1965</b>
<i>Un idiot à Paris</i>	Serge Korber	1966
<i>The Night of the Generals</i>	Anatole Litvak	1966
<i>La vingt-cinquieme heure</i>	Henri Verneuil	1966
<b>Angelique et le sultan</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1967</b>
<b>Indomptable Angelique</b>	<b>Bernard Borderie</b>	<b>1967</b>
<i>Cathérine il suffit d'un amour</i>	Bernard Borderie	1968
<b>Les Amours de Lady Hamilton</b>	<b>Christian-Jaque</b>	<b>1968</b>
<i>Le Passager de la pluie</i>	René Clément	1969
<b>The Madwoman of Chaillot</b>	<b>Bryan Forbes</b>	<b>1969</b>
<i>Hello Goodbye</i>	Jean Negulesco	1970
<i>A Time for Loving</i>	Christopher Miles	1971
<i>The Day of the Jackal</i>	Fred Zinnermann	1973
<i>Piaf</i>	Guy Casaril	1974
<i>Une femme fidèle</i>	Roger Vadim	1976
<i>Gloria</i>	Claude Autant-Lara	1977
<i>Jean-Christophe</i>	François Villiers	1978
<b>L'avare</b>	<b>Louis de Funes et</b>	<b>1979</b>
<i>A Little Romance</i>	<b>Jean Girault</b>	<b>1979</b>
<b>Les Mystères de Paris</b>	George Roy Hill	1979
<b>Gauguin the Savage (TV)</b>	<b>André Michel</b>	<b>1980</b>
<i>Chanel Solitaire</i>	<b>Fielder Cook</b>	<b>1980</b>
<b>Fort Saganne</b>	George Kaczender	1981
<i>Benvenuta</i>	<b>Alain Corneau</b>	<b>1983</b>
<b>Camille (TV)</b>	Andre Delvaux	1983
	<b>Desmond Davis</b>	<b>1984</b>

#### DELAMRE COSTUMED FILMS DISCUSSED:

*FRENCH CANCAN* (1954, Technicolor).

Director: Jean Renoir

Production companies: Franco London Films, Jolly Film

Producers: Louis Wipf

Script: Jean Renoir, André-Paul Antoine

Cinematography: Michel Kelber

Editor: Borys Lewin

Production design: Max Douy

Set design: Jean André, Jacques Douy

Costume design: Rosine Delamare

Make-up: Yvonne Fortuna, Huguette Lalaurette

Assistant directors: Pierre Kast, Serge Vallin

Art department: François de Lamothe, G Paris, André Piltant, Albert Volper

Sound department: Antoine Petitjean

Music: Georges van Parys

Principal actors: Jean Gabin (Henri Danglard), Françoise Arnoul (Nini), María Félix (Lola de Castro), Anna Amendola (Arlette Vilbert), Jean-Roger Causimmon (Baron Walter), Dora Doll (La Genisse), Giani Esposito (Prince Alexandre), Gaston Gabaroché (Oscar), Jacques Jouanneau (Bidon), Jean Parédès (Coudrier), Franco Pastorino (Paulo),

Michèle Philippe (Eléonore), Michel Piccoli (Captain Valorgueil), Valentine Tessier (Mme Olympe), Philippe Clay (Casimir le Serpentin).

*ELÉNA ET LES HOMMES* (1956, Technicolor).

Director: Jean Renoir

Production companies: Franco London Films, Les Films Gibé, Electra Compagnia Cinematografica

Producers: Louis Wipf

Script: Jean Renoir, Jean Serge

Cinematography: Claude Renoir

Editor: Borys Lewin

Production design: Jean André

Costume design: Rosine Delamare

Wardrobe: Maurice Breslave, Gromtzeff, Karinska (costume execution), Roland Meyer (furs), Noella Riotteau (Jewellery), Monique Plotin, Jean Zay (costumers)

Make-up: Alex Archambault, Ulysse

Assistant directors: Serge Vallin, Serge Witta

Art department: Robert André, Jacques Saulnier

Sound department: William Robert Sivel, Arthur van der Meeren, Pierre Zan

Assistant editor: Armand Ridel

Music: Georges van Parys

Principal actors: Ingrid Bergman (Eléna Sorokowska), Jean Marais (General François Rollan), Mel Ferrer (Henri de Chevincourt), Jean Richard (Hector), Juliette Greco (Miarka), Pierre Bertin (Martin-Michaud), Dora Doll (Rosa la Rose), Jean Claudio (Lionel), Elina Labourdette (Paulette), Magali Noël (Lolotte), Jacques Jouanneau (Eugène Godin), Michèle Nadal (Denise Godin).

*LA REINE MARGOT* (1954, Eastmancolor).

Director: Jean Dréville

Production companies: Lux Compagnie, Cinématographique de France, Films Vendôme, Lux Film

Producers: Pierre Gurgo-Salice, Adolphe Osso, Claude Pessis

Script: Abel Gance, based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas (père)

Cinematography: Henri Alekan, Roger Hubert

Editor: Gabriel Rongler

Production design: Maurice Colasson, Henri Schmitt

Costume design: Rosine Delamare

Wardrobe: Georgette Fillon

Make-up: Georges Bouban, Janine Jarreau

Assistant directors: Louis Pascal

Sound department: Émile Lagarde

Camera operator: Jean-Marie Maillols, Gustave Raulet

Music: Paul Misraki

Principal actors: Jeanne Moreau (Margot), Armando Francioli (La Môle), Robert Porte (Charles IX), Henri Génès (Coconas), Françoise Rosay (Catherine de Médicis), André Versini (Henri de Navarre), Fiorella Mari (Henriette), Daniel Ceccaldi (Henri d'Anjou), Patrizia Lari (Carlotta), Nicole Riche (Gilonne), Louis Arbessier (Admiral Coligny), Guy Kerner (Duc de Guise), Jean-Roger Causimmon (Prison Governor).

*LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR* (1954, Eastmancolor).

Director: Claude Autant-Lara

Production companies: Documento Films

Producers: Henri Deutschmeister, Gianni Hecht Lucari

Script: Jean Auranche, Pierre Bost, Claude Autant-Lara, based on the novel by Stendhal

Cinematography: Michel Kelber

Editor: Madeleine Gug

Production design: Max Douy

Costume design: Rosine Delamare

Sound department: Antoine Petitjean

Camera operator: Tonino Delli Colli

Music: René Cloërec

Principal actors: Gérard Philipe (Julien Sorel), Danièle Darrieux (Mme de Rênal),

Antonella Lualdi (Mathilde de la Môle), Jean Mercure (Marquis de la Môle), Jean

Martinelli (M de Rênal), Antoine Balpêtré (Abbot Pirard), Anna-Maria Sandri (Elisa),

André Brunot (Abbot Chélan), Mirko Ellis (Norbert de la Môle), Suzanne Nivette

(Marquise de la Môle), Pierre Jourdan (Count Altimara), Jacques Varennes (the Judge).

*LES GRANDES MANŒUVRES* (1955, Eastmancolor).

Director: René Clair

Production companies: Film Sonor, Rizzoli Films, SECA, Cinérel

Producers: René Clair, André Daven

Script: René Clair, Jérôme Geronimo, Jean Marsan

Cinematography: Robert Lefebvre

Editor: Louisette Hautecoeur, Denise Natot

Production design: Léon Barsacq

Set design: Maurice Barnathan

Costume design: Rosine Delamare

Wardrobe department: Georgette Fillon

Assistant directors: Michel Boisrand, Serge Vallin

Sound department: Antoine Petitjean

Assistant camera: Roger Delpuech, Daniel Diot, Robert Juillard, Jacques Robin, Gilbert Sarthre

Music: Georges van Parys

Principal actors: Michèle Morgan (Marie-Louise Rivière), Gérard Philipe (Lieutenant

Armand de la Verne), Jean Desailly (Victor Duverger), Pierre Dux (the colonel),

Jacques Fabbri (Armand's assistant), Jacques François (Rodolphe), Yves Robert

(Lieutenant Félix Leroy), Brigitte Bardot (Lucie), Lise Delamare (Juliette Duverger),

Magali Noël (Thérèse), Simone Valère (Gisèle Monnet), Dany Carrel (Rose-Mousse),

Vivianne Gosset (the colonel's wife), Arlette Thomas (Amélie, the maid).

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- L'Age d'or*, dir. Louis Buñuel, 1930
- Les Amants*, dir. Louis Malle, 1958
- L'Ascenseur pour l'échaffaud*, dir. Louis Malle, 1957
- Belle de jour*, dir. Louis Buñuel, 1967
- Caroline chérie*, dir. Richard Pottier, 1951
- Le Cinquième élément*, dir. Luc Besson, 1997
- Le Courbeau*, dir. Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1943
- Une Femme est une femme*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 1961
- Le Grand jeu*, dir. Jean Renoir, 1939
- La Grande illusion*, dir. Jean Renoir, 1937
- Marie-Antoinette*, dir. Sophia Coppola, 2006
- Hôtel du nord*, dir. Marcel Carné, 1938
- Howard's End*, dir. Merchant/Ivory, 1992
- Le Jour se lève*, dir. Marcel Carné, 1939
- Jules et Jim*, dir. François Truffaut, 1961
- Laissez-passer*, dir. Bertrand Tavernier, 2003
- Liebelei*, dir. Max Ophuls, 1933
- Le Quai des brumes*, dir. Marcel Carné, 1938
- Les Quatres-cent coups*, dir. François Truffaut, 1959
- Rear Window*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1954
- La Reine Margot*, dir. Camille de Morlhon, 1910
- La Reine Margot*, dir. Henri Desfontaines, 1914
- La Reine Margot*, dir. René Lucot, 1961
- La Reine Margot*, dir. Patrice Chéreau, 1994
- La Ronde*, dir. Roger Vadim, 1964
- Sans famille*, dir. Georges Monca, 1913
- Sans famille*, dir. Georges Monca and Maurice Kéroul, 1925
- Sans famille*, dir. Marc Allégret, 1934
- Sans famille*, dir. Jacques Ertaud, 1981 (TV)
- Sans famille*, dir. Jean-Daniel Verhaeghe, 2000 (TV)
- Sense and Sensibility*, dir. Ang Lee, 1997
- La Vie est à nous*, dir. Jean Renoir, 1937

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