

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Pagnier, 67, my translation.
2. Much like Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet, who studied the sewers and prostitutes of the nineteenth century (Bernheimer), Pagnier demonstrated a penchant for the Parisian underworld and endeavored to describe all aspects of “social refuse” in order to better control it.
3. “Zero focalization (or nonfocalization) is characteristic of ‘traditional’ or ‘classical’ narrative and associated with omniscient narrators” (Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology* 103).
4. In this book, the vague term, “narrator,” will be avoided. Instead, when referring to narration that emanates from a character in the work, I will use the term “narrative agent”; when unable to associate narration with a character, I will employ “narrative voice.” See chapter 1 for further explanation.

1 AN INTRODUCTION TO NARRATIVE DRIFT

1. Alain and Odette Virmaux categorize certain novels by Marguerite Duras and Alain Robbe-Grillet as “ciné-romans.” It should be duly noted, however, that despite the label of “new,” fiction from the thirties and forties—by Malraux, Dos Passos, and Sartre, for example—was also described as having cinematic qualities. Conversely, many early filmmakers were considered “auteurs.” That said, the New Novel and New Wave movements both reexamined and consequently reinvented the identities of their respective art forms in such ways that allowed them to highlight their mutual commonalities and distinctions.
2. See Alexandre Astruc’s, “The Birth of a New Avant Garde: La Caméra-Style.”
3. In this study, “narrative agent” designates what is commonly referred to as a “character-based narrative agent,” while “narrative voice” refers to narratives that are not focalized in a character.

4. Miller explains narrative “doubling” both in terms of Derrida’s *différance* and Genette’s study of diegesis. Accordingly, the complexities of narrative derive from the fact that “every diegesis is secondary and presupposes in one way or another the absence of what it relates” (48). He further explains, “A diegesis retraces a track already made, follows it through from beginning to end and so makes a story of it. Every telling is already a retelling. Even the most straightforward narrative is a repetition. *It claims to repeat a journey already made*” (my emphasis, 48).
5. In this context, Barthes’s “death of the author” is, I would argue, far less problematic or controversial than the “death of the narrator.”
6. What difference is commonly made between “mimesis” and “diegesis” in cinema studies? Given the highly visual status of film, *mimesis* most frequently refers to “the imitation of reality or of human perception in photographic processes” (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 104). *Diegesis* is most frequently defined in ways similar to Prince’s second definition above and includes all aspects—visual and spoken—that aid in the telling of the film’s plot:

Diegetic approaches to filmic narration emphasize the discursive aspects of film, and analogize film to a type of rhetoric, discourse, or a quasi-linguistic form of enunciation. Proceeding from a concept of film as a form of “telling,” shot composition, editing, lighting and so on are analogized to linguistic activities. (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 104)
7. The names for the narrative categories presented in this book were initially inspired by Susan Lanser’s three categories of narrative voice: “authorial,” “personal,” and “communal” as presented in her *Fictions of Authority*. However, although “personal” does fit the narrative voice of chapter 4 perfectly, “authorial” and “communal” do not aptly describe what occurs in the works studied in chapters 3 and 5.
8. As explained above, works in which the wanderer character is also a narrative agent who tells her own story—works that would have assumedly satisfied Sarraute’s call to dispel “reader mistrust”—do not fit the category of “personal” narratives for this current study. Instead, the term “personal” describes texts in which a character-based narrative agent narrates the drifter’s story and reveals how the wanderer affects his life *personally*. What I examine has been described by Lanser as an “intermediate form” in which “the narrator is reconstructing the life of another woman but is also in

- some sense a protagonist herself [or for our study, ‘himself’], not simply an eyewitness or biographer” (*Fictions of Authority* 21).
9. My use of “personal” as a category differs significantly from Susan Lanser’s use of the term in *Fictions of Authority*. For Lanser, “personal” refers to “narrators who are self-consciously telling their own histories” (*Fictions of Authority* 18). Lanser uses this term to describe what happens when women tell their own stories in what she loosely terms the “first-person.”
 10. The title for this section of chapter 1 is inspired by Susan Lanser’s seminal article, “Toward a Feminist Narratology.”
 11. For literary examples of this trend, see my “Introduction” in which I discuss Mérimée’s *Carmen* and Zola’s *Nana*. In classical film, the case of narrative voice-overs provide a good example of male narrative domination. Although female characters or voices have long had access to telling stories within films, in Hollywood films of the 1940s and 1950s they were often refused access to the voice-over, or status of “frame narrator”: “If the disembodied male voice-over is unusual, however, and limited to 1940’s and early 1950’s films, the disembodied female voice-over or frame narrator is all but non-existent [...] the third-person frame narrator seems to have been assigned strictly to male voices in narrative film” (Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 100).
 12. The narrative agent describes his work in Spain in less than modest terms: “A paper I shall be publishing shortly, will, I hope, dispel any last vestiges of doubt from the minds of all serious archaeologists. While waiting for my dissertation to resolve once and for all the geographical problem which is holding all learned Europe in suspense, I want to tell you a little story” (trans. Jotcham, *Carmen* 1–2).

2 “QUI SUIS-JE?”

1. Breton revises *Nadja* in 1963. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own and the page numbers reference the Pléiade edition of Breton’s complete works, *Œuvres complètes* (1988)—henceforth, identified as *OC*. Richard Howard has translated *Nadja* (Grove Press: New York, 1960) into English, however, he translates the 1928 original and not Breton’s 1963 rewriting of the text, which is the subject of the current analysis.
2. Although some critics have described Breton’s work as a novel (1517–1518), given his “impératifs ‘anti-littéraires’” (645), he refers to his work as “un livre” (a book) and “un récit” (a story) (645–646).

3. Unless otherwise stated, my use of the name “André Breton” will refer to the narrative agent and not the author. Although Marguerite Bonnet in her notes to the *OC* describes *Nadja* as “incontestably an autobiographical story” (1496), the current analysis—given its narratological objectives—will read this book as a work of fiction.
4. Different from Renée Riese Hubert’s opinion that the photos “serve as adjuncts to the written word” (257), I interpret them as integral to our understanding of the novel, and at times, as presenters of ideas or concepts *not* stated outright in the written text.
5. Breton explains his use of photos in the *Avant-dire* to *Nadja*: “The abundant photographic illustration has as its object to eliminate any description” (6). Similarly, in his *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, Breton elaborates his disdain for realist authors and their prose: “The circumstantial, needlessly specific nature of each of their notations leads me to believe that they are perpetuating a joke at my expense [. . .] And the descriptions! There is nothing to which their vacuity can be compared” (trans. Seaver and Lane, 7).
6. Translation by Nicholas Jotcham.
7. Surrealists deny the importance of structure—*écriture automatique* (automatic writing) is their proverbial bread and butter, after all. However, whether intentional or not, *Nadja*, or any work for that matter that chooses to label different sections of text (such as Breton’s *Avant-dire*, etc.), creates large blank spaces to indicate considerable pause, or inserts photos at particular moments in a text, is creating an inherent narrative structure and thus permits a structural or modified structural analysis. Even Roger Cardinal who goes to great lengths to avoid “orthodox modes of understanding” (10) in his analysis of *Nadja* falls prey to the inherent structure of the book when he refers to undeniable textual divisions: “The central two-fifths of the text dealing with *Nadja* is divided into dated entries covering the period 4 to 12 October 1926, and is couched in the typical diary-keeper’s tense, the present” (66).
8. See Normand Lalonde, Misao Harada, Jean Gaudon, Judith Preckshot, and Jean Arrouye for other interpretations of the importance and significance of these photos. The present study differs from the respective work of these aforementioned critics due to the parallel it finds between the patterns of confinement in the written text and in the order of photos presented.

9. OC 1532, n.1.
10. For more on the significance of this photo, see Normand Lalonde's "L'Iconographie photographique de Nadja" 56.
11. As Bonnet notes, "It is the only book Breton altered" (1495).
12. Bonnet states that Breton originally began writing the text as a compensatory homage to Nadja: "One could think that he is largely driven by the desire to pay Nadja—who, at this moment, has not yet become for Breton the heralding sign—a somehow compensatory homage" (1502).
13. This statement of narrative impetus will be echoed in Chapter 4 when the primary male character and narrative agent of Duras's *The Ravishing of Lol V. Stein*, Jacques Hold, justifies his narrative choices: "I do not wish to [recount Lol's past] because the presence of her adolescence in this story would risk reducing some, in the eyes of the reader, the overwhelming relevance of this woman *in my life*" (my emphasis, 14).
14. Certainly in cinema we find surrealist filmmakers visually assaulting viewers in order to encourage them to question how they see, love, and live their lives—take Buñuel's eye-slitting scene in *Un Chien andalou*, for example. Indeed, in their quest to communicate new versions of viewing the world around them, surrealist artists of all mediums question traditions of seeing and viewing, as in Paul Eluard's book *Donner à voir*. Similarly, Paule Plouvier describes the differences between realism and surrealism as originating in surrealism's desire to question not necessarily *what* one sees, but *how* one sees:

But if realism has long been based on the evidence of perception in order to create a standard measure of the real, is it not in questioning the perception on the side of the viewing subject and not from the side of the thing seen that it will be possible to defeat realism's certainties? (24)
15. Albouy describes Nadja as a *signal* who can announce love, but is not actually the *femme aimée* (beloved woman) in whom "the signifier and the signified are one: this is why, again, she is confused with poetry, in other words with a language that only refers to itself [. . .] a succession of women may follow, each one bringing the same revelation, perhaps more or less complete or intense; each one revealing, not by her nature but by her style of living that is love" (129). Interestingly enough, although both Albouy and Bonnet describe Breton's book as "incontestably an autobiographical

narrative”—therefore referring to Breton as a real man—these same theorists do not bestow upon Nadja a comparable status and consequently relegate her to a position of mythical being or simply a “signal” to be replaced by a series of interchangeable women. These theorists accentuate her status as “female muse” and downplay her existence as an individual. In actuality, she was a real woman who loved Breton. More important to our analysis of the text, Albouy never mentions how Nadja chooses her own signifier—her own name—based on what it signifies; a fact that should be important since it demonstrates a sense of freedom that she possesses over her own identity and that is customarily unknown to other marginal female characters to whom family members or narrative agents/voices assign names.

16. The choice of origin for the name is also of interest. Her name’s significance is not necessarily evident—one must speak Russian in order to “get” its meaning. Similarly, her identity, representation, and significance as a female wanderer in this book require *translation* or interpretation. Not everyone, in particular certain feminist theorists, necessarily reads this work as a positive “beginning” to *anything*. However, her life story, as told by Breton, questions in many ways the traditional narrative roles for wandering women. Similar to the stance taken by Katharine Conley in *Automatic Woman*, I wish to argue that although Breton’s representation of Nadja is far from feminist, it is not “unremittingly misogynist” (Conley 3) either.
17. Although unspecified in the text, the notes in the Pléiade edition refer readers to an actual accident involving the niece of President Wilson (1563).

3 “IMPERSONAL” NARRATIVE: FADE TO LACK— DETACHMENT AND DISCONTINUITY

1. Joel Block, 120, my translation.
2. Coincidentally, my use of the terms “impersonal” and “personal” preceded my reading of Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis’s book or the article by Marie-Laure Ryan that greatly inspired their definitions. My definition elaborates the terms for specific use in my study of narrative drift in works about female wanderers.
3. There are two basic categories of screenplays: *scénario-programme* and *scénario-dispositif*. The former is the traditional screenplay in which all words, action, set, and so on are planned out and specified. The latter consists of a basic outline of plot elements that

leaves much room for improvisation and was the style preferred by many New Wave directors.

4. Godard, "The Scenario of *Vivre sa vie*" 77. Obviously, the main character's name here, "Nana S.," was later changed to "Nana Kleinfrankenheim."
5. For example, Bordwell describes film narrative as a set of cues: "Narration is better understood as the organization of a set of cues for the construction of a story [...] A text's narration may emit cues that suggest a narrator, or a 'narratee,' or it may not" (Bordwell 62).
6. "Extradiegetic" is a term used in cinema studies meaning that the title cards are not part of the "diegetic universe."
7. Godard's approach to *Vivre sa vie* is said to have been most strongly influenced by Bertolt Brecht's philosophy on drama. According to the German playwright, the spectator should be purposefully "alienated" from what he or she is viewing. David Sterritt describes Brecht's philosophy as the opposite of "passive emotionalism, leading the audience to think *about* the drama instead of sinking *into* it" (Sterritt 64).
8. Some critics have interpreted this opening credit sequence as belonging to both the world of reality and fiction: "Insofar as the three credit shots represent a documentary of a face, they tilt the film in the direction of Karina [the actress who plays Nana] rather than of Nana. It is the mystery of the actress rather than the mystery of the character which is being plumbed" (Silverman and Faoucki 2). Although the current analysis does acknowledge the relationship between the actress and the director and, in fact, will return to it in discussion of the final tableau, I would argue that a documentary style of filming characterizes many scenes of the film. Therefore, taken as part of the film that it announces, the style of the credit sequence does not indicate that the woman should be seen as Anna Karina and not the character she plays, Nana. In fact, according to Godard in an interview with Tom Milne, the entire film is about confronting characters "head-on": "I was thinking, in a way, as a painter, of confronting my characters head on as in the paintings of Matisse or Braque, so the camera is always upright" (Milne 84).
9. The title to this tableau has curiously been translated into English as "A café. Nana wants to leave Paul. The pin-table." However, on the original title screen there is a hyphen between "abandonner" and "Paul," suggesting that what Nana wants to abandon is left unclear. In the original French text, Paul seems to be an "object"

- in the list with “a café” and “pin-table.” However, in critical articles, this chapter title is understood to concern Nana’s wanting to leave Paul, which is odd given that according to what we glean from their conversation in this tableau, she has *already* left him. In fact, the “abandonner” of the title most likely refers to Paul eventually telling Nana *not* to abandon her dreams of becoming an actress the way she gave up on English lessons: “*Où, il faut pas abandonner... comme avec les leçons d’anglais. Ça t’intéressait pas vraiment.*” (“You shouldn’t give up... like you did with your English lessons. They really didn’t interest you.”)
10. A “shot/reverse-shot” sequence consists of “two or more shots edited together that alternate characters, typically in a conversation situation. In continuity editing, characters in one framing usually look left, in the other framing, look right” (Bordwell and Thompson 433).
 11. Kaja Silverman, in conversation with Harun Farocki, so aptly remarks how this choice of camera positioning allows us to see every physical side of Nana: “We thus now see her head from the only side not depicted in the credit sequence, and so complete our tour of that part of her body” (Silverman and Farocki 4).
 12. My own translation to make up for lacunae in the translated subtitles.
 13. The gendered dichotomy between store clerk and customer seems to announce Nana’s future career as prostitute where Nana will once again serve male clients.
 14. We will return to this intertextual reference in the conclusion to our analysis of *Vivre sa vie*.
 15. Wipe: “A transition between shots in which a line passes across the screen, eliminating the first shot as it goes and replacing it with the next one” (Bordwell and Thompson 434).
 16. A jump-cut is “an elliptical cut that appears to be an interruption of a single shot. Either the figures seem to change instantly against a constant background, or the background changes instantly while the figures remain constant” (Bordwell and Thompson 431).
 17. For a detailed analysis of the multiple levels of significance (both textual and paratextual) that the intertextual reference to Dreyer’s film represents, see David Sterritt’s analysis of this scene in *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard: Seeing the Invisible*, 71–74.
 18. Poe, “The Oval Portrait” 248. One cannot help but be reminded of Breton’s envy of those who can lock themselves in museums

to contemplate a woman's portrait in order better to know her (Breton, *Œuvres complètes* 716).

19. As Breton named his main male character after himself and incorporated autobiographical information into his retelling of Nadja's life, Nana Kleinfrankenheim is played by Godard's real-life wife, Anna Karina—whose name could be read as an anagram of Nana K. (Anna K.). However, unlike Breton, Godard does not create a character in his image. Instead, as stated above, Godard allows the presence of the external narrative voice to permeate his work.

4 “PERSONAL” NARRATIVE: TAKING IT PERSONALLY—MEN TELLING THE STORIES OF WANDERING WOMEN

1. “I am [following] France Robert. I am [following] France Robert. She pursues/haunts me. I am [following] her.”
2. “One cannot be closer to another human being than I am to her, closer to her than she is to herself.”
3. In this chapter, the term “narrative agent” will be used to describe Jacques and Luigi, who are not only the primary narrative voices in these works, but characters in them as well.
4. Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 117.
5. The first quotation on impersonal narrators comes from Marie-Laure Ryan's “The Pragmatics of Personal and Impersonal Narration,” and the quotation on personal narrators is taken from Lubomir Dolezel's “Truth and Authenticity in Narrative.”
6. Erwan Higuinen and Pierre-Olivier Toulza wrote negative reviews in *Cahiers du Cinéma* of both *Love me* (1999) and *En avoir (ou pas)* (1995), respectively. Toulza described Masson's 1995 debut film as one that “leaves the bitter aftertaste of a film that abandoned its subject in the middle of the road” (79). As well, Higuinen critiqued Masson's ability to tell a story: “Laetitia Masson is no storyteller, not even a twisted one, despite her obvious ambitions in the matter” (“On connaît la chanson: *Love Me*” 58).
7. Unless otherwise specified, all quotations in this portion of the chapter are from *RLVS* and are my own translations of the original as found in Duras's *Œuvres complètes*.
8. At this point in the novel, Jacques has yet to reveal himself as the narrative agent of the novel. For nearly the first half of the novel, the narrative agent remains unknown, only to reveal his dual role of narrator and character 75 pages into the novel.

9. This is a peculiar fact to repeat. It seems that Jacques is either charmed or taken aback by this woman who determines the time and place of their rendezvous. Conversely, by emphasizing her initiative in their relationship, he is able to clear his conscience of any guilt he may feel in having lured a presumably mentally unstable woman away from her husband and family since she seems to call the shots.
10. The DVD-created chapter titles—which are provided in English as an insert in the packaging and are not announced visually to the viewer during the film—and although they are somewhat artificial and not inherent to the original film, they can serve to help orient the following presentation of France’s wanderings.
11. The filmic image is inherently in the present unless otherwise indicated by the narrative. Lynn Higgins explains this phenomenon in her analysis of Resnais’s *Last Year at Marienbad*: “The film does not tell (indeed, film cannot tell, according to Robbe-Grillet and other film theorists) what ‘really’ happened in the past, but it does show how discourses about the past are constructed, suppressed, and rewritten [...] filmic images are always experienced as present and [...] the past can only be evoked through the use of narrative conventions” (Higgins 305). In the case of *À vendre*, Luigi’s search for France is seen played out in the present tense, and this understanding of the images viewed is reinforced by Luigi’s present-tense voice-overs.
12. According to Edward Branigan, when a character is viewed falling asleep, waking up, or in deep thought before or after a scene, we can assume that he or she dreamt or thought up the image we have just seen or will see (*Narrative Comprehension and Film* 103–104.).
13. Continuity editing refers to a system of cutting that maintains continuous narrative action and a clear relationship between cause and effect (Bordwell and Thompson 434). Traditional Hollywood films are characterized by their use of such techniques. Elements of continuity editing include respecting the 180° line (or axis of action), the use of shot/reverse-shot camera work, establishing shots, and crosscutting.
14. Gerald Prince: “Zero focalization (or nonfocalization) is characteristic of ‘traditional’ or ‘classical’ narrative and associated with omniscient narrators” (*Dictionary of Narratology* 103).
15. Steven Winspur has remarked that certain male narrative agents in Durassien works render female characters mentally ill because they lack the ability to understand them: “Claire Lannes, Elisabeth

- Allione, and Lola Stein are characterized as crazy because the narrators in these books do not find a definitive response to the questions that they ask about the three women” (my translation, 75).
16. As for the content of the opening line to the novel, interestingly enough, a few pages earlier we find the following paratextual biographical notes on the author: “Marguerite Duras was born in Cochin where her father was a math professor and her mother a teacher.” Given that this description resembles—both in style and content—that of Lol, a fictional character, one wonders if Duras is not trying to rewrite her own life’s story, or perhaps is intentionally putting into question what the reader knows about *her*. From the beginning then, fact and fiction are put into question, perhaps further encouraging the reader to question the narrative coherence of the novel.
 17. According to Leslie Hill, for Duras, “God” is a great unknown that cannot be represented—much like the “mot-trou” (*RLVS* 48) that would describe Lol but that, according to Jacques, does not exist:

Like the Biblical text [...] writing, for Duras, bears witness, in the manner of a prophecy or illumination, to the presence at the heart of language and textuality of something, an object or an experience, which cannot be described except as an interruption, as a cessation of discourse, as a moment of transgression or transcendence. The name God serves as a possible name for that which cannot be preserved or retained within a stable frame except as a disappearing trace, and thus cannot be represented. God, in Duras, is a name for this impossibility of naming, and functions as a sign of the fundamental confusion and precariousness that exists at all boundaries and margins. (3)

In light of Hill’s argument, Jacques’s comment that Lol “is not God, she is no one” (47) seems to be a feeble attempt at discounting her authority before she gets a chance to do the same to him later in the novel.

Similarly, it is not surprising to find a Durassien character openly questioning narrative authority and conventions. According to Schuster, in *Le Marin de Gibraltar*, Duras questions the masculine-centered conventions of modern American novel writing—above all, the work of Hemingway: “*The Sailor from Gibraltar* undermines the American novel by retelling a Hemingway story [*The Snows of Kilimanjaro*] [...] The woman reader may feel like a voyeur in the Hemingway tale [...] In the Duras novel the woman reader must accede to the male narrator’s incomplete story of Anna [...] *To unveil the gender of the conventional narrative*

- undoes the terms that allow it to function*" (my emphasis, Schuster 28–32). Similarly in *RLVS*, Duras questions the superiority of the male gaze and voice in narrative and reveals it for all of its vulnerabilities and shortcomings.
18. Interestingly enough in studying the "neuter," Ropars also finds a credible link between the narrative traits of *RLVS* and *À vendre*. In *Lol*, she finds "a feminine persona with a declinable first name, who ceaselessly acts as a double of the narrator, making his attempt at telling superfluous" (125).
 19. Branigan discusses Robert Montgomery's 1946 film *Lady in the Lake*, which was shot almost entirely from the point of view of the main male character—and was a theatrical flop. The camera shakes when the character walks, the image blacks out when he kisses a girl, and so on. Essentially, the film is a series of very long point of view shots that render the camera's presence too obvious and failed to make audience members "believe" in the subjectivity of the narration.
 20. See David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art* for complete definitions of various categories of sounds and their uses in cinema (429–434). It is important to note how the term "diegetic" has a slightly different significance in film studies than in literary studies. "Diegetic" refers to "the world of the film's story." In other words, not just *how* the story is told, but all elements—visual and aural—that comprise the story and its telling. Sound can be categorized as nondiegetic (such as music that is heard by the audience but not by the characters of the film) or diegetic (e.g., music coming from a radio in a character's room), further specified by subcategories of external or internal diegetic sound. External diegetic sound refers to sound coming from the space of the story that can presumably be heard by the characters. Internal diegetic sound comes from the mind of a character within the story space but cannot be heard by other characters.
 21. "The scene's action [...] is assumed to take place along a discernable, predictable line. The axis of action determines a half-circle, or 180° area, where the camera can be placed to present the action. Consequently, the filmmaker will plan, film, and edit the shots so as to respect this center line" (Bordwell and Thompson 263).
 22. This scene happens to be the favorite scene of *Cahiers du Cinéma's* Erwan Higuinen: "It is, in the most beautiful scene of the film, that Sergio Castellitto (the actor who plays Luigi) goes to his ex-wife's house, observes her from outside the baywindow, then enters, a bottle of vodka in hand, makes himself at home and

pathetically asks for a Miko ice cream bar, then tries to kiss her; she hesitantly resists, reticent but motionless, like a spectator to her own past” (my translation, “La beauté gît dans les détails,” 75). Perhaps, as a male (re)viewer who failed to attach any great value to the film, he preferred this scene over others because it is the only one in which the male protagonist has any semblance of control over a woman. He fails to mention in his description that Luigi, the same Luigi who “pathetically asks for a Miko ice cream bar,” also pulls a gun on his ex-wife and forces her to kiss him. It is not clearly evident that she is a “spectator” in this “blast from the past” scene. On the contrary, she appears more unnerved and scared than passively observant.

23. My translation, <http://www.fluctuat.net/cinema/paris99/chroniq/avendre.htm>.
24. Another Jacques, Jacques Lacan, has tried to ascribe a psychoanalytic significance to the *mot-trow*: “[Lol] cannot find the word, this word which, shutting the doors on the three of them, would have joined her to them at the moment when her lover would have removed the dress, the woman’s black dress, to reveal her nudity” (my translation, 10). Not so different from what Jacques Hold has attempted, Lacan wants to “fill in the blanks,” so to speak, and name the source of Lol’s trauma and mental instability as an unspeakable “*mot-trow*.” For Lacan, the inability to verbalize this “*mot-trow*” resides in Lol. His reading of the text—that analyses Lol and virtually ignores the text that contains her story—fails to realize that the burden of verbalization does not rest with Lol. It is the narrative agent, Jacques Hold, who is responsible for telling her story, and consequently, explaining this aspect of Lol’s life.

5 “PLURALIZED” NARRATIVE: MORE IS LESS? THE PARADOX OF PLURALIZED PERSPECTIVES

1. “C’est le contraire d’une enquête policière qui va d’une question au départ jusqu’à sa réponse à l’arrivée. J’aime bien faire un film où il y a un mystère, et à la fin du film toujours ce même mystère” (Carbonnier and Revault d’Allonnes 11).
2. Varda 8; as cited in Flitterman-Lewis 315.
3. *Random House College Dictionary*, Revised Ed., 1988.
4. Numerous English-language examples (beyond the scope of this current study) exist: *As I Lay Dying*, *A Gathering of Old Men*, *The Golden Bowl*, *The Lighthouse*, and so on. However, the interest of this current study is to examine how Varda’s French film

- that features a pluralized narrative responds to French narrative traditions and conventions.
5. Although events in Mona's life play out roughly in the order they are assumed to have occurred and the various stories told by narrative agents appear in an order determined by the narrative line, this film differentiates itself narratively from conventional cinema. Traditionally, clear verbal or visual cues transition one scene to the next and gaps are normally explained: "If time is skipped over, a montage sequence or a bit of character dialogue informs us; if a cause is missing, we will typically be informed that something isn't there. And gaps will seldom be permanent" (Bordwell 160). Here, on the contrary, Mona's story jumps from episode to episode most frequently without clear transitions, and many gaps are blatantly permanent.
 6. As Varda states in an interview—a concept to which we will return in this current analysis—"It's the exact opposite of a detective film [...] Here, the idea is that the film is conducting an anti-detective investigation of a girl that passed by here" (Decock 379).
 7. We refer to Varda's voice as "extradiegetic" because characters in the story do not hear it. In other words, it comes from "outside" the fictional universe of the film. As the voice speaks, Mona (who is seen coming out of the ocean) cannot hear the voice-over.
 8. Smith also proposes that the voice-over could be that of Professor Landier—the professor who picks Mona up in her car. We will refrain from making any such claim. Despite the scholar's physical similarities with Varda and her sincere interest in Mona, narratively speaking, there is not sufficient evidence in the film that such a privileging of her voice can be assumed.
 9. See chapter 1 concerning Mulvey and her seminal article on the scopophilic gaze in traditional cinema.
 10. There is a thirteenth tracking shot (actually fifth in order of presentation) that is often overlooked and that occurs when Mona and David are "squatting" in the château. However, this tracking shot is very different from the other 12. First and foremost, Mona is not alone but accompanied by David, a fellow vagabond. Second, they walk to the right of the screen while diegetic music (different from the extradiegetic music that plays during most of her tracking shots) from their transistor radio plays instead of "Mona's score." For a complete charting of the other 12 tracking shots and their placement in the film, see Sandy Flitterman-Lewis's chapter on *STL* in *To Desire Differently* (295–297).

11. As cited in chapter 3, her right to left movement is important for it reminds us that she is dead and no longer “moving forward.” Susan Hayward has described this movement as “a metaphor for both the flashback and, even more significantly, death” (273).
12. Only at the end of the film does the camera track behind her instead of alongside her in a manner that announces her imminent death and thus inability to walk in and, more importantly, out of our field of vision.
13. Coincidentally, the sign to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians has been bent and knocked upside-down—perhaps announcing the equivocal reaction of local inhabitants to people like Mona who choose to wander the streets of their town.
14. For instance, an older woman is interviewed who had a positive reaction to Mona: “I liked that hippie.”
15. The inclusion of the song “Baby Jane” by the Doors is probably not coincidental given that Jim Morrison was Varda’s friend and even attended her daughter’s birthday party shortly before his untimely death in Paris in 1971. Coincidentally, when Morrison died, Parisian police declared his death of natural causes.
16. In her outline of the film, Flitterman-Lewis categorizes the goat-herd’s interview as an example of direct address. However, I will argue here that because his wife is in the foreground with her back to the camera (as if she could be his interlocutor and not the camera), his interview is an example of modified direct address, and therefore not as direct as Yolande’s address.
17. Undeniably reminiscent of the first wanderer studied in this book, Nadja, who tells Breton, “If you wanted, for you I would be nothing, or nothing but a trace” (Cardinal 719).
18. Thus, I disagree with Ross Chambers’s assessment of *STL* in which he states that the film is “sympathetic toward the rather pathetic if far from likable personage of Mona, while, through its adoption of a pseudodocumentary mode of portrayal, through interviews and conversations about her, it distances itself from her and sides with the culture that excludes her” (42). On the contrary, though an analysis of moments of narrative drift in the film, a viewer is forced to question *how* characters who come into contact with her treat her and/or narrate her story. In other words, *STL* does not “take sides” but instead forces viewer to analyze critically the culture that Chambers states “excludes [Mona].”
19. In addition, Chambers describes Mona as subhuman, a categorization this current study rejects: “She is like some animal

- prowl[ing] the outskirts of a human community that it fears and which in any case will not let her in” (43).
20. Could this rite trace its origins back to the drunken Greek mad-women, the Maenads (or Bacchantes) and their horrible bloody feasts? Edith Hamilton describes their rites as “frenzied with wine. They rushed through woods and over mountains uttering sharp cries, waving pine-cone-tipped wands, swept away in a fierce ecstasy. They would tear to pieces the wild creatures they met and devour the bloody shreds of flesh” (58). If so, then Varda has modified the gender roles, making men the frenzied worshippers of Dionysus and, conversely, Mona the innocent caught in their grasp. In addition, alcohol—which until now acted as a life force for Mona that was shared with her fellow companions from David to Professor Landier to the crowd in the train station—has become threatening. It will no longer sustain her, but instead, it will hasten her imminent death.

CONCLUSION

1. Trans. McLeod 223.
2. According to the February 13, 2003, *Le Monde* article, “Racolage, outrage au drapeau, regroupement dans les halls d’immeuble . . . : un catalogue d’infractions,” “sandwicheries” could be fined or closed down if they were considered a “to-go” establishment that troubles public order or peace (“*un établissement de ‘vente à emporter’, qui trouble l’ordre ou la tranquillité public*”).
3. *Le Parisien*, “Immigration: Valls veut détricoter les mesures Guéant.”
4. *Terraeco.net*. “Migrants de Calais: la repression continue.”

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