**Déjà Viewed: Cultural Translation in Postwar Hollywood Remakes of
French Films of the 1930s**

by

Nicholas Thai Hoang Nguyen, B.Sc.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Carleton University

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Déjà Viewed: Cultural Translation in Postwar Hollywood
Remakes of French Films of the 1930s

submitted by Nicholas Thai Hoang Nguyen (Queens)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

The remake is an institutionalized feature of film production in Hollywood that has been in practice since the days of the studio system. When Hollywood chooses to remake films originating from a different culture, there is an implied assumption that the topicality of these films can address similar problems that need to be negotiated for American audiences. These issues of transnational similarities, however, are also marked with important differences, as the Hollywood remakes usually retell the basic narrative of the source film with several key elements dramatically modified in the recontextualization for the American audience. A comparative analysis between a selection of French films produced in the 1930s and their associated Hollywood remakes will highlight these similarities and differences in an effort to understand the cultural and social significance of these adaptations to an American context. The differences between French original and American remake suggest how these changes can serve as an historically specific interpretation of the French films themselves. The analysis of the Hollywood remakes of French films of the 1930s is thus used as an arena to raise questions about the interpretive function of the cinema as an historical and cultural document.

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Introduction

“The Hollywood remake is something different. It is not a question here of the faithful translation of a foreign work, nor even the transposition of a subject that has been already treated. No, the remake is something else: it is a commercial affair, a speculation, and nothing more.”

- Claude Bower¹

The remake is an institutionalized feature of film production in Hollywood that has been in practice since the days of the studio system. In spite of this longevity - which implies its popularity and profitability as an industrial practice - the remake has accumulated a fair share of negative press. Claude Bower's comments above serve as an example of the negative attitudes surrounding Hollywood remakes, as his veiled contempt is reserved for the very practice of the remake itself. (It should be noted that the original context of Bower's comments is his review of The Long Night [Anatole Litvak, 1947], a Hollywood remake of a French film that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II.) Indeed, the issues that he raises, such as the fidelity of the translation and the blatant commercialism of the enterprise, inform much of the rhetoric about remakes in the journalistic discourse, where value judgements denigrate the remake in favor of the film that it is based on. This discourse is epitomized by Molly Haskell, who attributed the practice of the remake as indicative of the “poverty of ideas in

¹ My abridged translation of a passage by Claude Bower that originally appeared in “Un abus de confiance: le ‘remake’” in L'Écran Français, no. 123 (Nov 4, 1947), reprinted in L'Avant-scène du cinéma, #53 (November, 1965). “Mais le “remake” hollywoodien est quelque chose de bien différent. Il ne s'agit ici ni de la traduction fidèle d'une oeuvre étrangère, ni même de la transposition d'un sujet déjà traité. Non, le ‘remake’ est autre chose: c'est une affaire commerciale, une speculation et rien de plus.”

Hollywood”, which results in films that are “invariably inferior” to their original versions².

Observations of this nature are so entrenched in the popular discourse about remakes that they have become sterile and trivial. I open this introduction with Claude Bower’s comments about remakes because they represent a discursive position that I want to steer clear from. Assessing Hollywood remakes in relation to their source films to arrive at value judgements about their artistic merit does not interest me. Indeed, this type of discussion shuts down options for further inquiry rather than opening them up. My interests for the purposes of this thesis project lie in a more thorough investigation of the remake as a cinematic practice that is anchored within historical, cultural, and institutional contexts. By approaching the remake in this manner, I wish to engage in a discussion that raises questions about the remake as a process of cultural translation. To situate this investigation within a wider context of film studies, my ultimate goal for this thesis project is to attain a greater understanding of the interpretive function of cinema as an historical and cultural document.

A brief digression into the ways that the remake has been defined is in order so that I can locate my critical interests for this project. In his essay titled “What is a remake?” Daniel Protopopoff turned to a dictionary to provide the following definition: “a film that reproduces, with new actors, a previous version of a successful film.”³ Though notions of reproduction, novelty, and commerce are forwarded, what is particularly noteworthy about this definition is its exclusivity to film practice, positioning

² Haskell also proclaimed that “I don’t think there was ever a case where the remake was better.” Taken from Josh Young, “The Best French Films that you’ll never see”, *The New York Times*, section H, p1, (October 30, 1994).

the remake as a specific form of adaptation within the cinema. Much of the scholarship pertaining to remakes expands this basic definition to construct a system of classification based on the distinguishing factor of source material acknowledgement⁴. The titles of the category headings point to the manner in which these systems of classification are structured: “direct remake”, “disguised remake”, “acknowledged transformed remake”, “acknowledged disguised remake”, and so on. Acknowledgement in the context of these taxonomies takes the form of production credits and promotional materials, ultimately limiting these discussions to industrial and institutional determinism. Another limitation of these taxonomies, especially in the context of this project, is the resolute focus on Hollywood remakes of Hollywood films; there is a conspicuous absence of a consideration of remakes whose source material originates from different national cultures. The classification of remakes may be useful as an initial way of organizing films that are based on other films but, ultimately, this framework does not offer much of an understanding about the relationship between the remake and the source material beyond an acknowledgement of sources.

In his review of M (Joseph Losey, 1951), the American remake of the German film classic directed by Fritz Lang in 1931, French film critic and theorist André Bazin capitalizes on the opportunity to identify a kind of cross-cultural remake that escapes the

³ My translation from the original French: “Film reproduisant, avec de nouveaux acteurs, la première version d’un film à succès.” Protopopoff does not provide the information about which dictionary he is using in his article, titled “Qu’est-ce qu’un remake?” in CinémaAction. No. 53 (Oct. 1989).

⁴ Scholarship that presents these taxonomies of remakes are: Michael B. Druxman, Make It Again, Sam: A Survey of Movie Remakes. (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co. 1975), Harvey Roy Greenberg, “Raiders of the Lost Text: Remaking as Contested Homage in Always.” Reprinted in Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal (eds) Play it Again Sam: Retakes on Remakes. (Los Angeles: University of California Press); Thomas M. Leitch, “Twice-told tales: The Rhetoric of the Remake” in Literature/Film Quarterly. Vol 18, no. 3 (1990), and Constantine Verevis, “Re-Viewing Remakes”, in Film Criticism vol. XXI, no. 3 (Spring 1997).

limitations that typologies with an intra-Hollywood focus fail to account for⁵. Though Bazin is not beyond offering his own taxonomy of remakes, his system differs from the previous models by making its distinctions through the formal qualities and the textual characteristics of the remake and its source. Bazin presents two categories: the “temporal remake”, which updates a previous film with contemporary film techniques and technologies (such as sound and color); and, the “geographic remake”, a commercial practice that he sees as specific to Hollywood which provides an “Americanized” translation of a contemporary foreign film⁶. Bazin sees “Americanized” translation as a process that incorporates changes to the source film at the formal and narrative level based on popular modes of representation circulating in Hollywood. In the case of M (the remake), Bazin considers the explicit Americanizing elements as the transposition of the narrative to Los Angeles, the *noir*-ish cinematography of the location shooting, and the absence of an establishing social context that allows the use of psychoanalysis as a *deus ex machina* to explain the criminal’s murderous behavior. What bothers Bazin most in the end is not so much the Americanizing elements themselves, but rather the “absurd mechanism” of combining these Americanizing elements in the remake alongside the tendency to adhere slavishly to the principal narrative and visual elements of the source film, ultimately resulting in what he considers a cinematic anachronism.

Bazin’s discussion of the cross-cultural remake in relation to Hollywood provides a useful point of entry to begin my own query into the subject. Indeed, it is my intention to extend his observations of the remake as an “Americanized” translation by analyzing pairs of remake/source films within their respective historical, cultural, and institutional

⁵ Andre Bazin, “Remade in USA” in Cahiers du Cinéma, No. 11 (April 1952), p54.

contexts. For this project, I have decided to draw from a pool of films that have been either critically or industrially acknowledged as remakes of previous films, focusing specifically on the postwar Hollywood remakes of French films originally produced in the 1930s. The reasons for choosing this particular set of films are twofold. Firstly, these films offer several manageable parameters to situate my analysis: both sets of films were produced within specific institutional conditions that are firmly situated within their respective historical and cultural contexts. Both sets of films also bookend the Second World War, a period characterized by dramatically shifting socio-historical conditions. The differences between pre-war and post-war contexts of production/reception provide an opportunity to explore and compare an array of social and ideological considerations that the films negotiate. As a result, this project will necessarily involve industrial, socio-cultural and historical research of these periods to provide a sufficient contextualization for the comparative analysis of the films.

The second reason for choosing to analyze this group of films is simply a selfish one: I am fascinated by these periods of French and American cinema and this thesis project affords me the chance to indulge in the study of both through the mediating factor of the remake. An exhaustive, though by no means complete, list of American remakes of French films is presented in Appendix I, and it is clear that Hollywood remade a number of French films of the 1930s, which should theoretically provide a wealth of films to choose from. However, the availability and accessibility of most of these films realistically limit me to focus on a group of renowned French films and their less-than-renowned Hollywood remakes. This project will be divided into four separate chapters

⁶ Bazin's examples of the "temporal remake" are films based on popular literary texts (eg. *Quo Vadis*, *Les Misérables*) that are periodically updated for contemporary audiences.

that will treat each source film and its accompanying remake as an individual case study. In regard to the organization of the chapters within the project, I have given primacy to the Hollywood remakes since they - and not the source films - form the main subject of inquiry for this study. The chapters are thus structured according to the release dates of the Hollywood remakes so that when taken together, these four case studies can also be seen as a chronology of these specific remakes within the postwar Hollywood studio system.

Chapter I will focus on La Chienne (Jean Renoir, 1931) and Scarlet Street (Fritz Lang, 1945). The available literature that deals with these two films in the context of the remake will be reviewed to outline the larger issues at stake when comparing remakes with their source films. The different methodologies that have been used to discuss La Chienne and Scarlet Street in this context will also be surveyed in order to situate the critical methodology that will be used over the following chapters.

Chapter II begins the comparative analyses with Le Jour se lève (Marcel Carné, 1939) and The Long Night (Anatole Litvak, 1947). The changes to character and narrative in the remake will be discussed in relation to the reorganization of the ideological concerns of the source film. The transformation of the main character from an emasculated factory worker in the French film to a returning veteran in the remake will be explored as discursive formations associated with these character types that ultimately determine the ideological resolution of each film.

Chapter III deals with Pépé le Moko (Julien Duvivier, 1937) and Casbah (John Berry, 1948) within an institutional framework of Hollywood genre definition and production. Since Casbah incorporates a variety of musical elements, the process of

shifting from a French thriller to a Hollywood musical will be examined to see the effect of genre transformation on the transposition of the characters and the social contexts of the source film.

Finally, Chapter IV will deal with another Lang remake of a Renoir film, this time La Bête humaine (Jean Renoir, 1938) and Human Desire (Fritz Lang, 1954). This analysis will focus on the manner in which the ideological discourses that circulate in the French film are reworked for a postwar American context. The role that the representation of gender and the discourse of modern technology play in the cultural contexts of each film will be shown as key factors to understanding this ideological shift.

As each of these four case studies will show, the similarities and differences between remakes and their source films illustrate a form of cultural translation wherein the alterations can underline shifts in historical and cultural contexts. While the American remake can certainly be understood as a purely commercial endeavor, its practice however implies an interpretation and negotiation with the French film in order for it to conform to the boundaries and limits permitted in the postwar Hollywood and American landscape. As such, the remake will be treated as a site through which shifting cultural, economic and ideological forces are negotiated.

Chapter I

La Chienne (1931) and *Scarlet Street* (1945)

“By principle I am against remaking the film, particularly when it has been a successful film, but *La Chienne* is a strange enterprise.”

Jean Renoir¹

When Jean Renoir wrote the above passage to acclaimed Hollywood screenwriter Dudley Nichols, it had been almost ten years since his seminal film *La Chienne* was previewed at the Palais-Rochecrouart in Paris². According to Renoir, *La Chienne* had a resonant impact on the French cinema of the day where, for “two or three years, producers, in spite of its financial success, bitterly criticized *La Chienne*, and then they started working on the same line³.” It was perhaps ironic for Renoir that *La Chienne* would not only serve as a model to inspire French producers of the 1930s but that it would also interest producers in Hollywood fifteen years later as the subject of a remake directed by Fritz Lang under the title *Scarlet Street*.

Both *La Chienne* and *Scarlet Street* are celebrated films that have received a fair amount of critical attention, resulting in a substantial body of literature about the two films and their relationship with each other. Much of this critical writing has focused on the manner in which each film is identified as possessing characteristics and elements that are specific to either its respective director or to the contexts from which each film emerges. For this opening chapter, I do not wish to add yet another reading of the two

¹ From a letter to Dudley Nichols dated 27 September 1941, as presented in Lorraine LoBianco and David Thompson (eds). *Jean Renoir, Letters*. (London: Faber and Faber 1994) p122.

² A successful preview premiere of *La Chienne* took place on 17 September 1931 at the Palais-Rochecrouart in Paris. It was later given a general premiere to Parisians on 19 November 1931 at the Colisée. Recounted in Christopher Faulkner, *Jean Renoir: a guide to references and resources*. (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co. 1979) p79.

³ Renoir quoted again in Lobianco and Thompson, p122.

films to this existing collection of analyses. Rather, I plan to consider the pertinent literature that treats La Chienne and Scarlet Street in the context of remakes as a window to understanding the larger issues involved in the consideration of remakes in general. Analyzing the various methodologies that have been used to examine the relationship between the two films will highlight the discourses around which knowledge about the remake has been organized. In assessing the individual contributions of these distinct approaches, I would like to open the possibility of understanding the remake as an interpretation of its source film at the particular moment of its production. In this approach, I would consider the narrative, stylistic, and ideological changes that appear in the remake a result of a cultural translation that mediates the translocation of the source film into a Hollywood studio context. It is in the context of this approach that the films being considered for this thesis project will be addressed in the chapters that follow. The objective here is not just to illuminate the specific contexts of the source film and the remake through their comparison, but to obtain a greater understanding of the cinema's ability to negotiate cultural difference between the historical moments bridging these films.

Before I begin the examination of the available literature, a brief digression into the production history surrounding the remaking of La Chienne as Scarlet Street is appropriate. This outline, which will be prefaced by a brief synopsis of La Chienne, provides an institutional context to understand the difficulties that were encountered in transposing the sordid story of La Chienne into a Hollywood studio context. What arises out of this struggle is the sense that Renoir's film, with all its overt sexual content and blunt cynicism towards authority, was not palatable for American consumption in its

original incarnation and thus required a cultural mediation in the form of a Hollywood remake. Establishing this context will set a foundation for introducing the issues at stake in the literature concerning the relationship between the two films, which can then be extended as a consideration of the major issues involved in the overall discussion of remakes.

La Chienne was based on the 1930 novel of the same name penned by Georges de la Fouchardière, a writer who enjoyed a popular reputation in France for his comic works. The “strange enterprise” that Renoir mentions in the opening excerpt presumably refers to the struggles with his producer Roger Richebé over his adaptation of the novel, which displayed a dark cynicism that completely overshadowed any hint of the light comedy that may have been expected of the endeavor⁴. The savage irony of Renoir’s La Chienne enabled the film to stand out amongst other productions of the French cinema of the time, where Christopher Faulkner observes that it was “quite different from the plethora of rude farces or romantic comedies that monopolized French screens during the period.”⁵

La Chienne tells the tale of Maurice Legrand (Michel Simon), a hen-pecked cashier for a hosiery company who falls in love with Lulu Pelletier (Janie Marèze), a prostitute whom he rescues one night in Montmartre from a beating by her pimp, Dédé (Georges Flamant). Legrand’s amorous feelings for Lulu, coupled with disenchantment with his job and the discomfort that he experiences at home with his shrewish wife Adèle (Magdaleine Bérubet), lead him to arrange a posh flat for Lulu to live where he can visit her to carry on his affair. A talented Sunday painter, Legrand decorates the flat with some of his paintings, which helps support Lulu’s illusion that he is a painter by vocation

⁴ As related in Jean Renoir, My Life and My Films. (New York: Da Capo Press 1974), p111.

rather than the cashier that he is in reality. Dédé, always in need of money, decides to sell Legrand's paintings to a Paris art gallery, claiming that they are the work of a Miss Clara Wood, an American artist who is to be impersonated by Lulu. Meanwhile, Legrand meets Alexis Godard (Gaillard), the former husband of Adèle believed killed in action during the war in 1914, and takes the opportunity to reunite the couple, thereby allowing him the freedom to escape from his marriage and take up with Lulu. When Legrand goes to Lulu to inform her of the good news, he learns of her duplicity as he catches her in bed with Dédé. Heartbroken, Legrand leaves the flat to wander in self-pity, while Dédé furiously reprimands Lulu for what he perceives as the loss of a good scam. When Legrand eventually returns to Lulu in forgiveness, hoping to release her from Dédé's hold, she scorns him and her laughter drives him to murder her. Through a chain of circumstantial events and evidence, Dédé is wrongly arrested, accused, convicted and ultimately executed for the murder of Lulu. While he escapes the law of the courts, Legrand is nonetheless fired from the hosiery company as a result of the discovery of his embezzlements to finance his affair. The film's epilogue shows Legrand happily reunited with Alexis Godard in the streets of Paris several years later. Both of them are now anarchic tramps scuttling for loose change and cigarette butts, and the final shot shows them walking off arm-in-arm in the distance and laughing.

Georges de la Fouchardière's novel was a success in France, prompting a stage version by André Mouézy-Eon that played at the Théâtre de la Renaissance shortly after its publication in 1930⁶. La Chienne appeared shortly afterwards in late 1931, but the film version had a disastrous test screening in Nancy where it earned the wrath of public

⁵ Christopher Faulkner, The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1986), p17.

morality groups⁷. However, this reaction did not result in any alterations to the film and La Chienne had a successful test run later in Biarritz before moving to Paris for its premiere at the Colisée on November 19, 1931. Contemporary reaction to the film by the French critical press was by most accounts favorable, with one commentator even going so far as to proclaim it “the most important French film we have seen since... Sous les toits de Paris (René Clair, 1930)⁸. A review written by the Paris correspondent for the Hollywood trade magazine *Variety* in 1932 provides a telling corrective from an American perspective to the film’s more lewd characteristics. La Chienne was lauded for its technical qualities but this praise was tempered with harsher comments about the seedier elements of the narrative, proclaiming that the “excellent direction has not missed one repellent detail of a disgusting story⁹.” *Variety* also noted that the title of the film was “unfit to print” and the film’s dialogue could not be translated into English, due most likely to the use of Parisian slang and accents throughout the film¹⁰. The review noted that in the absence of screen regulations such as the one in place in Hollywood, French film producers were warned by the trade press that motion pictures “counting for a draw on vice and spice are harmful to the business”, and La Chienne was identified as unquestionably belonging to this classification. It is noteworthy that these cautionary comments appear a full two years before the Code of Motion Picture Production as

⁶ As mentioned in L’Avant-scène du cinéma, #162 (October 1975),p4.

⁷ Christopher Faulkner, Jean Renoir: a guide to references and resources. p79.

⁸ From Georges Aurion, “La Chienne”, La Revue du cinéma, 28 (November, 1931), reprinted in Richard Abel (ed). French Film Theory and Criticism: A history/anthology 1907-1939. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1988),p86-89.

⁹ Review of La Chienne in *Variety*, January 12, 1932.

¹⁰ As Michel Marie as astutely observed, La Chienne employs a variety of accents and diction for its characters, presenting “a typology of voices according to social class and function.” This is noticeably audible in Dédé and Lulu, who speak strongly accented Parisian slang in accordance with their criminal-class milieu. In Michel Marie. “The Poacher’s Aged Mother: On Speech in La Chienne by Jean Renoir,” Yale French Studies, No. 60 (1980), pp219-232.

administered by Joseph Breen's office became a rigorous industry standard in Hollywood, suggesting that La Chienne was considered much racier than some of the more notorious films from Hollywood's "Pre-Code" years¹¹. Indeed, *Variety*'s quasi-puritanical reaction against La Chienne articulates the industry's reservations against the film that would hinder its chances for exhibition in America. It thus comes as no surprise to learn that La Chienne was never imported to the United States during its initial run in the 1930s despite its popularity in France.¹²

The decision to withhold the film from a domestic screening (let alone a screening that would be comprehensible for a predominantly Anglophone audience) suggests a lasting resistance to La Chienne, despite Renoir's later reputation as a world-class filmmaker. It is only with Scarlet Street in late 1945 that Hollywood was able to accept an adapted version of La Chienne. Previous efforts to adapt the story for American audiences were in vain. De la Fouchardière's novel had quickly found its way into America where it was translated and published in late 1930 under the title *Poor Sap*¹³. The notoriety of both the novel and the film did not go unnoticed by Hollywood, as Ernst Lubitsch, the famed German emigré director, tried to sponsor his own adaptation of La Chienne titled "The Poor Sap". Lubitsch apparently abandoned his plans for La Chienne when he found it impossible to adapt the story of adultery with a cast of prostitutes and

¹¹ For more details of the interregnum "Pre-Code" years in Hollywood, see Thomas Doherty, Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, immortality and insurrection in American cinema 1930-1934. (New York: Columbia University Press 1999).

¹² La Chienne was first screened without subtitles in the U.S. on February 2, 1954 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. A subtitled version did not appear on American screens until April 30, 1976 at the D.W. Griffith cinema in New York! From Christopher Faulkner, Jean Renoir: a guide to references and resources, p79. The absence of La Chienne on American screens in the 1930s is confirmed by the volumes of Film Daily Yearbook of the 1930s, where Renoir's film does not appear in any of the lists of foreign films imported.

¹³ *Poor Sap* was published by Albert A. Knopf, the American book publisher founded in 1915 that often translated popular non-English books for American consumption.

pimps to American contexts¹⁴. The rights to La Chienne eventually drifted to producer Harry Eddington at R.K.O. Studios, who approached none other than Jean Renoir with the hope that he would consider remaking his own film at the end of 1941¹⁵. Eager to continue his filmmaking career in Hollywood after fleeing France following the Armistice, Renoir discussed the possibility of this project with acclaimed screenwriter and personal friend Dudley Nichols¹⁶. In a letter to Nichols written in late September of 1941, Renoir explained the significance of La Chienne within the context of both his career and the French film industry, and even included a detailed synopsis of the film and its characters¹⁷. However, this proposed remake of La Chienne never reached fruition either, and the project returned into limbo.

After several years in stasis, the rights to La Chienne drifted into the hands of producer Walter Wanger, who was looking for a suitable project to inaugurate his new semi-independent production unit Diana Productions under the aegis of Universal Studios¹⁸. Formed in early 1945 with his actor-wife Joan Bennett and German director Fritz Lang, Diana Productions (initially “New World Productions”) wished to distinguish itself in the new postwar Hollywood climate by producing prestige product designed to appeal to mature audiences, pushing Lang’s European mystique and authorship as

¹⁴ Matthew Bernstein, “A Tale of Three Cities: The Banning of Scarlet Street.” In Cinema Journal 35 (1) (1995): p27-52. Other stories involving adultery and crimes of passion were purchased by Hollywood studios at this time but did not make it onto screens until the mid-1940s (eg. James M. Cain’s Double Indemnity and The Postman Always Rings Twice).

¹⁵ Lobianco and Thompson, p122.

¹⁶ This proposed remake of La Chienne would have been Renoir’s second American film, following Swamp Water (1941), also scripted by Dudley Nichols.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p122. Renoir recounted to Nichols that La Chienne was his “first important talkie and it was also the first French *naturaliste* talking picture, [a] style so often copied since.”

¹⁸ Wanger was a producer of some renown in Hollywood and, as I will elaborate in Chapter 3, he already had some experience remaking French films for Hollywood, transforming Pépé le Moko (Julien Duvivier, 1937) into Algiers (John Cromwell, 1938). Patrick McGilligan suggests that it was Wanger, not Lang, who plucked the rights to La Chienne and initiated the project. In Patrick McGilligan, Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast. (New York: St. Martin’s Press 1997), p 317.

drawing points¹⁹. La Chienne seemed to be a fitting property to revive under Diana Production's mandate, falling in line with the success of recent films that shared similar sordid narratives of sexual obsession and murder in a Hollywood environment that had changed over the war years²⁰. Dudley Nichols was approached by Diana Productions to write the screenplay, and though Lang apparently sent him a reference copy of *Poor Sap* as primary source material, the resulting adaptation that he produced under the title Scarlet Street bore more resemblance to Renoir's film than to the novel²¹. Lang admitted in later interviews to seeing Renoir's version during its original run in Paris, but repeatedly claimed that neither he nor Nichols viewed the film prior to their work on Scarlet Street, relying instead on their collective memories to liberally rewrite the scenario²². This denial of the remake's cinematic lineage was cemented with the premiere of Scarlet Street in the U.S. on December 28, 1945, where the opening credits omitted any relationship with Renoir's film and declared instead that the film was "based

¹⁹ Bernstein provides notes from a Diana publicity meeting stating that "Diana officers do not share the contemptuous opinion that American movie audiences are composed of 14-year-old mentalities. Mr. Lang believes his direction reflects this respect for audiences, for he depends on audience collaboration to a very large extent to give full meaning to his work." In Matthew Bernstein, Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent. (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press 1994), p201.

²⁰ Films such as Double Indemnity (Billy Wilder, 1944), Laura (Otto Preminger, 1944), and Mildred Pierce (Michael Curtiz, 1945) serve as cogent examples suggesting a trend towards crime films with darker, more sexual themes that were coincidentally helmed by Eastern European directors in Hollywood.

²¹ The narrative structure of Scarlet Street follows Renoir's La Chienne. The most telling instance can be observed in how Scarlet Street repeats the same narrative departure as La Chienne from de la Fouchardière's novel concerning the chronological placement of the killing and the revelation of the killer's identity. La Chienne and Scarlet Street both show the murder in chronological order within the narrative, allowing a spectator awareness of the killer's identity, whereas de la Fouchardière delayed the revelation of the killer's identity until the very end. Scarlet Street also repeats a crucial detail in the end sequence of Renoir's La Chienne with regard to the "self-portrait" painting, a detail that is not part of the novel.

²² Lang's claim is actually a half-truth, since production records indicate that he and Nichols tried hard to locate a print of La Chienne, though there is no mention whether or not they were successful. In McGilligan, p321. "Nous ne sommes absolument pas préoccupés de l'original, car la situation de la censure en Amérique ne permet pas d'insister sur certains aspects érotiques comme en France. Nous avons simplement récrit le sujet très librement d'après nos souvenirs." Lang quoted in Alfred Eibel (ed). Fritz Lang: Trois Lumières. (France: Flammarion 1989) p110.

upon the novel and play *La Chienne* by G. de la Fouchardière in collaboration with Mouézy-Eon.”

As envisioned by the Nichols/Lang team, Scarlet Street sticks closely to Renoir’s La Chienne in terms of the plot, with many of the key scenes remaining more or less intact, though now transposed into an American context. In Scarlet Street, it is Christopher “Chris” Cross (Edward G. Robinson) who is the Sunday painter and hen-pecked cashier at J.J Hogarth’s company, living in a domestic hell with his relentlessly negative wife Adele (Rosalind Ivan). After leaving an office party thrown in his honour, Chris becomes completely enamored with Katherine “Kitty” March (Joan Bennett), whom he saves from a beating on the street in Greenwich Village by Johnny Prince (Dan Duryea). Both Kitty and Chris lie to each other about their occupational identities, he believing she is an actress while she believes him to be a wealthy painter. This mutual deception is but the first set of lies that plunge Chris into a web of deceit and fraud involving his paintings as perpetrated by the scheming Kitty and Johnny. The realization of the truth about the whole operation and Kitty’s utter disdain for him cause Chris to snap and murder her in cold blood. The murder is pinned on Johnny, thanks to some circumstantial evidence and false testimony provided by Chris. As a result, it is the innocent Johnny who is executed by electric chair rather than the guilty Chris. Like Legrand, Chris gets away with murder but he doesn’t escape punishment as his conscience is tormented by guilt and loss as the voices of Kitty and Johnny whisper endlessly in his head, declaring their love for one another and mocking him from beyond the grave. The film concludes with Chris a lonely and broken tramp walking down an empty street, a victim of his own passions and guilt, forever haunted by the spectre of the

two lowlife hustlers whose disembodied voices forever coo their lovelorn promises in his mind.

The process of adapting La Chienne to Scarlet Street is highlighted by the difficulties in handling the very nature of the story itself within the institutional context of the Hollywood studio system. Presenting La Chienne and Scarlet Street in this manner establishes a solid platform for the consideration of the various methodologies in the critical writing about the two films as the majority of the analyses are mindful of this context. Much of the critical writing about La Chienne and Scarlet Street focuses on their differences, and these differences are used to speak to issues that emerge from the comparison of the two films to support a discussion that focuses on the specificity of each film to its respective context. As there is a substantial amount of critical attention devoted to La Chienne and Scarlet Street, this literature will be treated as a microcosm whereby the issues raised in the individual comparisons of the two films will be extended to represent the major issues that shape the general discourse about remakes.

As I have already established, the problems encountered in remaking La Chienne into Scarlet Street provide an initial framework for considering the two films within their respective institutional contexts. Edward Benson extended this approach in his comparison of La Chienne and Scarlet Street to a discussion of the diverging industrial conditions of production as between Hollywood and France²³. Benson treats each of Scarlet Street and La Chienne as reflective of the financial structure of their respective national film industries, which he individuates by their differing economic tendencies towards the treatment of capital. With reference to accounts of film trade during the

²³ In Edward Benson. "Décor and Decorum from La Chienne to Scarlet Street: Franco-US Trade in Film during the Thirties." Film and History, vol 12 no.3, Sept 1982. p57-65.

1930s, Hollywood is characterized by its “concentration of access to finance capital and distribution” whereas the French film industry, which had experienced the collapse of its two vertically integrated companies, was conversely characterized by its “unusual diversification of access to capital and distribution” that allowed “up to seventy independent producers each making one or two films a year”²⁴. From these different industrial conditions, Benson argues that different codes of censorship emerge to regulate and reinforce their respective financial structures, which thereby determined the kind of films that were made by each film industry. Benson considered the differing treatments of the story material of La Chienne and Scarlet Street (pointing to the sexual politics between the characters and the conclusions of each film as examples) as effects of these conditions, which underlined the specificity of the industrial structures in Hollywood and France.

Benson’s examination of the differences between La Chienne and Scarlet Street is useful in serving as an initial example that explicitly compares the two films as a way of discussing larger issues. However, it is severely limited by its treatment of the industrial contexts from which the two films emerge, which reads as generalized and simplistic in light of similar scholarship about the same topic²⁵. It does not help Benson’s cause that some of the information that he uses to support his argument is questionable. This is highlighted in his discussion about the French film industry, in which he states that the economic tendency of its financial structure was to accord “primacy to the director and

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p57. Though he does not mention them by name in his article, Benson is referring to Pathé and Gaumont as the two vertically integrated companies in France.

²⁵ For example, a more concise and detailed exploration of the industrial structure of the French film industry in the 1930s can be found in Colin Crisp, The Classic French Cinema, 1930-1960. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1993) pp1-42.

secondary protection to the other artistic workers on a film.”²⁶ While this statement is generally true of the French film industry during the 1930s, Benson contextualizes this economic tendency historically within Popular Front France, a reference to the historical period of the broad Left coalition government that held office from 1936-1938. The relationship that Benson tries to build between this period and the industrial context of La Chienne is suspect (seeing as the film was produced and exhibited in 1931), though his intention is understood. It is more appropriate to consider the industrial context of the French film industry at the time of La Chienne in relation to the Depression, whose consequences France began to experience in 1931²⁷. Benson does eventually touch upon this subject when he states that the bitter cynicism of La Chienne was informed by its historical and cultural moment, “in the midst of the ‘*génération creuse*’ after the Great War, a decade that saw the division between rich and poor grow more sharp than ever.”²⁸ To ascribe the effects of the Popular Front to the production and reception of La Chienne, though, is simply erroneous.

The historical and cultural contexts from which the films emerge form the basis for another comparison of the two films, where the differences between La Chienne and Scarlet Street have primarily been used to highlight the different ideological and social discourses that circulate in the films. E. Ann Kaplan argues that the different cinematic devices in each film express the ideology of its particular historical and cultural context, structuring her discussion of the differences between La Chienne and Scarlet Street around what she perceives to be the dominant issues in the consideration of the two films:

²⁶ Benson, p57.

²⁷ The information about the Popular Front and the Depression in France is taken from William Fortescue, The Third Republic in France 1870-1940. (New York: Routledge 2000). pp172-207.

²⁸ In Benson, p63.

the treatment of issues pertaining to social class, and the treatment of gender roles through the construction of sexual difference in the narrative²⁹. For Kaplan, these issues are intertwined, and their relation to the historical and cultural contexts of their respective films is of paramount interest.

Kaplan understands the narrative concern of La Chienne as being grounded in its historical and cultural context, where issues of “class were being foregrounded³⁰”. While her point about the discursive prevalence of social class in France during the 1930s is understood, Kaplan unfortunately repeats Benson’s error in contextualizing this historical moment as Popular Front France! Throughout La Chienne a hierarchical social class system is clearly on display, from the bottom-feeding working class/criminal class pimps and prostitutes through the petit bourgeoisie of Maurice Legrand, to the upper class bourgeoisie as represented by the jury members that sentence Dédé to his death. This hierarchy of social class is not foregrounded in Scarlet Street, as Kaplan suggests that class interests in postwar America were “ideologically mystified” since they had been subordinated to wartime patriotism³¹. Instead, Kaplan sees an ignorance of class issues in Scarlet Street, pointing out that “everyone is leveled to a comfortable middle-class mean, and the narrative avoids inserting class as a cause for anything that happens.”³² For example, Kitty and Johnny’s social situation, alluded to in the film but never explicitly enunciated as a prostitute/pimp dynamic, is not a result of a class system but rather

²⁹ E. Ann Kaplan, “Ideology and Cinematic Practice in Lang’s Scarlet Street and Renoir’s La Chienne.” In Wide Angle vol.5 no.3 1983, p32-43.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p43.

³¹ The idea that the narrative of La Chienne is inextricably tied to the social concerns of its historical setting and period is alluded to by Jean Renoir, who admitted his displeasure with ‘the American version of La Chienne’ in an interview in 1962. “La vérité, je le crois, est que La Chienne est un film essentiellement français, don’t l’intrigue n’est pas transposable, en dehors de Paris.” Reprinted in Premier Plan, no 22-23-24 (May 1962). Edited by Bernard Chardère.

³² *Ibid.*, p41.

attributed to their individual laziness and greed (the former visually suggested by the pile of dirty dishes and the general disarray of Kitty's apartment).

Kaplan sees these "foregrounded" issues of class visualized in La Chienne through the use of cinematic techniques such as the long take and deep focus shots that emphasize the placement of Legrand and his domestic space within a larger community context. These techniques are understood to suggest "a view of reality where actions of the moment are seen not as happening to isolated individuals but to people in a very specific cultural, social and institutional context"³³. Tricia Welsh follows Kaplan by also highlighting how the sound techniques practiced in both films foreground issues of class³⁴. Welsh notes that sound in La Chienne is seen as a way to enrich the overall texture of scenes, providing insight into the social relations between character and environment such as in the scenes of Dédé 'at home' in the noisy working-class bar. Welsh also reads Renoir's use of sound as an exploration into the social dimension of speech, where class divisions are expressed through speech patterns, again using Dédé as an example³⁵. The densely textured sonic environments of La Chienne stand in stark contrast to Lang's use of sound in Scarlet Street, where every sound has a specific and deliberate function. Scarlet Street is described as a narrative of transgression and punishment, and Welsh sees that the most important environment for Lang for this kind of narrative treatment is the interior mental landscape. Not only is there a system of sound that focuses on repetition and reverberation that favors Lang's strategy of delayed payoff with sound and dialogue, but there are also "subjective-internal sounds to

³³ *Ibid.*, p37.

³⁴ Tricia Welsh, "Sound Strategies: Lang's Rearticulation of Renoir" in Cinema Journal 39 (3) (Spring 2000).

emphasize the protagonist's mental confusion.”³⁶ Specific sounds are now completely interiorized to reflect his tortured mind, as when the voices that plague Christopher Cross at the end of Scarlet Street are voices that are only audible to him.

Similarly, Christopher Faulkner's discussion of the murder of Lulu extends this notion about the organization of cinematic practice around the social aspects of La Chienne and Scarlet Street. The key to Faulkner's social reading of La Chienne is the fact that Legrand's murder of Lulu is never presented onscreen: the sequence cuts just before the impending violence in Lulu's bedroom to street musicians below her flat before tracking back up the building to peer through the window at the results of Legrand's crime of passion. Presenting the murder in this manner “despectacularizes the act of murder itself and permits an ironic awareness of the tensions at work in the scene”, tensions that are extended to include the wider community as implied by the crosscutting to the street musicians³⁷. Faulkner notes that the corresponding murder sequence in Scarlet Street does not follow a similar editing pattern to link it to the social community, as Lang holds his camera on Cross' actions and reactions right up to the first four stabs that he inflicts on Kitty as she hides under a blanket in her bed³⁸. Faulkner sees the murder sequence in Scarlet Street as a sensationalized spectacle of violence working in the opposite direction of its equivalent scene in La Chienne. The focus in Lang's film rests on the actions of an isolated individual within a private space, as Kaplan notes when

³⁵ Welsh's point here follows Michel Marie's observation about the social dimensions of sound and speech in La Chienne as outlined in footnote 20.

³⁶ Welsh, p59.

³⁷ Faulkner, The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir, p25.

³⁸ Some cuts of the film show one stab, others show four. According to Bernstein, the original release of the film showed Cross stabbing Kitty *seven* times with the ice pick before cutting to the next scene. These seven stabs were reduced to one stab at the insistence of New York State Censor Dr. Irwin Conroe prior to the New York premiere of Scarlet Street on the 14 February 1946. In Bernstein's “A Tale of Three Cities: The Banning of Scarlet Street.”

she describes Scarlet Street as “an individual tragedy rather than a result of the problems of a social organization or cultural demands.”³⁹

Faulkner compares another pair of sequences from La Chienne and Scarlet Street (the final sequence with Legrand/Cross as bums) to address this shift from the social to the individual. At the end of their respective films, both Legrand and Cross end up as tramps having lost everything from their previous life yet fortunate enough to have escaped the clutches of the Law. Legrand wanders the streets picking up cigarette butts and loose change, completely oblivious to his *own* “Self-Portrait” that he had painted years before and which, ironically, has now been purchased from the art gallery for a hefty sum. Legrand as ‘clochard’ is presented as a man free of the shackles of the bourgeois ideology that he upheld in his past, happily walking down the road to an uncertain future. On the other hand, though Cross does not end up in jail either, Scarlet Street assigns him the biblical punishment of wandering the streets confessing his guilt to unbelieving onlookers. His recognition of the “Self-Portrait” of Kitty that he himself painted is just an extra dagger to his heart to assure him not only of his complicity in the deaths of three people (Kitty, Johnny, and in a metaphorical sense, himself), but also of his own personal loss. Faulkner sees the ending of Scarlet Street as indicative that the entire thrust of the film is “individual and moral, not social”, where everyone’s troubles were of their own making, and everyone who has transgressed their personal boundaries is punished accordingly⁴⁰. Scarlet Street is thus the more conservative film in this context as “guilt and responsibility are apportioned according to the ethics of bourgeois

³⁹ Kaplan, p36.

⁴⁰ Faulkner, The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir. p29.

society”, resolving any potential threats to the social order⁴¹. Conversely, Faulkner sees the ending of La Chienne as a challenge to the accepted ideological protocols of bourgeois society exposed in the film. The final image of the unconvicted murderer-turned tramp Legrand walking down the street offers no clear resolution to the social problems exposed in the film; rather, it represents an alternative to them⁴².

The discussion of the differences between Legrand and Cross goes beyond the social aspects of their narrative treatment; it also provides an avenue to talk about the construction of their gender roles, in particular their masculinity. Kaplan sees La Chienne as a subversive critique of French bourgeois culture and the hypocrisy of the society that it produces, whereas Scarlet Street does not question bourgeois culture but rather it “exposes the assumptions about sexuality that underlie bourgeois capitalism.”⁴³ This is staged in Scarlet Street through the contrast between the hen-pecked Cross and the three representations of male power (J.J. Hogarth, Johnny Prince, and Homer Higgins) that highlight his deficiency. Scarlet Street explicitly shows that it is Cross’ lack of masculinity that generates the disturbance in the narrative and eventually leads to his destruction. Kaplan further entrenches Scarlet Street in this context by pointing out that its narrative offers “a series of warnings around sexuality in a period when sex roles were in a confused state as a result of the upheaval [World War II] entailed⁴⁴.” Kaplan evokes the postwar moment as the historical context for Scarlet Street, where issues of sex and gender roles were causing dis-ease. Rather than presenting a hierarchy of social class,

⁴¹ Faulkner, p29.

⁴² The image of the tramp walking down the road shows up at the end of Rene Clair’s A nous la liberté (1931) and Renoir’s Boudu sauvé des eaux (1932). This image has a particular currency in French cinema of this time, particularly in films that question the bourgeois mentality and ideology. It is suggestive of an attitude that resigns any resolution to these class problems and finds a better way of life through the freedom of the clochard.

⁴³ Kaplan, p43.

Scarlet Street constructs a hierarchy based on patriarchal ideals of manliness, masking the discourse on social class to focus on a drama where “capitalist structures like the family and the corporation depend on a certain form of masculinity, and that disaster follows from its lack⁴⁵.”

When taken together, the subject of the crisis of masculinity in the historical context of postwar America is reminiscent of the discourse surrounding the genre of film noir⁴⁶. Indeed, film noir can be seen as another platform to discuss both La Chienne and Scarlet Street in relation to genre. Raymond Durnat provides a narrow description of the term ‘film noir’ as “a crime thriller with a pessimistic, cynical, sardonic approach and mood” to consider Scarlet Street and La Chienne together in a narrative and stylistic context⁴⁷. A comparison of the original film to the remake in this context, though, leads to a questioning of the generic origins of film noir when the idea of cross-cultural exchange and influence is taken into account. This was Janice Morgan’s objective when she undertook a detailed comparison of La Chienne and Scarlet Street in this context to establish a lineage of noir thematics and visual elements that extends the boundaries of the genre across different cultural and temporal origins⁴⁸. Ginette Vincendeau also

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p43.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*. The discourse of masculinity that circulates in Scarlet Street has been the subject of several critical analyses, most notably by Florence Jacobowitz, “The Man’s Melodrama: ‘The Woman in the Window’ and Scarlet Street” in CineAction! (vol 13-14, Summer 1988); and Peter Lehman, “Another Nothing Man: Edward G. Robinson and ‘Scarlet Street’” in Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1992). James Morrison has also written a fascinating analysis within this context where he relates the crisis of masculinity in Scarlet Street to the discourse of the feminization of mass culture that circulates in the film. James Morrison, Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors. (New York: State University of New York Press 1998), pp109-145.

⁴⁶ Frank Krutnik discusses film noir as a genre using the crisis of masculinity and the historical period of postwar America as two of his major structuring elements. In Frank Krutnik. In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity. (New York: Routledge 1991).

⁴⁷ Durnat goes so far to say that Renoir “pioneers the French film noir of the 1930s.” In Raymond Durnat, Jean Renoir. (Los Angeles, University of California Press 1974) p183.

⁴⁸ In Janice Morgan, “Scarlet Streets: Noir Realism from Berlin to Paris to Hollywood” in iris vol 21 (Spring 1996) p31-53.

considers La Chienne and Scarlet Street in this context of noir as a way to argue her assertion that the French poetic realist films serve as the “missing link” between German Expressionist films and American film noir⁴⁹. For Vincendeau, this discussion was a reaction against Raymonde Borde and Étienne Chaumeton, who discredited the influence of the French poetic realist films of the 1930s on the American cycle of postwar noir thrillers in their seminal work on film noir⁵⁰. Stylistic similarities such as the use of urban iconography and fatalistic narratives that underline the violent relationship between character and environment are key points that Vincendeau sees as bridging the French and American films. Despite these stylistic and narrative points of convergence, Vincendeau also recognizes that the noir films that are remakes of French films, such as Scarlet Street, de-emphasize the social contexts of their source films and, as a consequence, their conclusions do not carry the same resonance as social critiques. In the case of La Chienne and Scarlet Street, Vincendeau sees the conclusion of the remake as greatly attenuating the cynical force of the source film, suggesting that “the French Poetic Realist films were more *noir* than *film noir*”⁵¹.

If the noir context has led a discussion based on the generic similarities between La Chienne and Scarlet Street, then an inquiry of each film’s treatment of the narrative at the level of film style would encourage an analysis based on their differences. The comparison of the differences between La Chienne and Scarlet Street then becomes a way of talking about the individual filmmakers through the stylistic or thematic patterns

⁴⁹ See Ginette Vincendeau, “Noir is also a French word: The French Antecedents of Film Noir” in Ian Cameron(ed), The Book of Film Noir. (New York: Continuum Publishing Company 1992).

⁵⁰ “...Duvivier et surtout Renoir et Carné avaient créé un certain réalisme noir. Pépé le Moko, Quai des brumes, La Bête humaine n’annonçaient-ils pas le film noir américain? Nous ne pensons pas.” In Raymonde Borde and Étienne Chaumeton, Panorama du film noir américain 1941-1953. (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1955), p34.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p57.

within the films that are ultimately seen to be consistent with the rest of their work. In his brief discussion about La Chienne and Scarlet Street, Gunning relies on this auteurist discourse to discuss and individuate the visual styles of Jean Renoir and Fritz Lang. Comparing the final scenes of both films, Gunning points to Renoir's use of daylight location shooting at an actual Parisian boulevard compared to Lang's darkly arranged and fabricated sound stage as a sign of the "different registers of vision" that characterize Renoir's and Lang's contrasting treatments of their respective films. The open visual style in La Chienne is understood by Gunning to suggest that Renoir is opening "the sequences to the centripetal energies of a larger environment", where they can "bask in the bits of contingent reality that location shooting can provide."⁵² In contrast Lang's approach to Scarlet Street denies this outreach to the larger environment, choosing instead to represent an enframed paranoid world through the use of a closed sound stage that represents a world "where everything has been determined" and "there exists no sense of an atmosphere, nature or reality outside of that of the character's obsession."⁵³ In this sense, Gunning sees Renoir responding to "a visual world which is continuous, varied and all-encompassing, larger than the human drama which takes place within it", whereas Lang's approach to space is obsessed with diegetic detail and significance where "metaphors, riddles, and emblems... demand to be read and decoded" in relation to the psychology of the characters within the film⁵⁴.

Pierre Eisenreich uses a similar dichotomy in his auteurist comparison of the two films, though his method differs from Gunning's in that it is thematic instead of

⁵² Tom Gunning, The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity. (London: BFI Publishing 2000), p309.

⁵³ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p311.

stylistic⁵⁵. Eisenreich uses La Chienne and Scarlet Street to distinguish between Renoir and Lang on the basis of their thematic treatment of the protagonist in their respective films, which is extended and subsequently taken to be their world-view. Using this method, Lang's world-view is perceived to be one of pessimism based on a "fundamentally dark and inescapable human condition" since an individual's fate is pre-determined⁵⁶. For Renoir, this view of humanity is not conceivable unless it is aggravated by "a social conflict that represses the expression of an individual autonomy"⁵⁷. The auteurist approaches used by Eisenreich and Gunning to discuss La Chienne and Scarlet Street thus recall a similar dichotomy raised earlier by Faulkner and Kaplan, where the differences between the two films were understood in terms of the social and the individual/psychological. Though the social and historical contexts from which the films emerge are not considered (as is typical of auteurism), Gunning and Eisenreich's discussion of the differences between Scarlet Street and La Chienne as representative of the differences between Jean Renoir and Fritz Lang themselves can be seen to support the conclusions of these earlier approaches, thus bringing this methodological inquiry full circle.

When considered collectively, the body of literature on La Chienne and Scarlet Street demonstrates how the two films are used as vehicles to identify the separate historical and cultural zeitgeists in which to temporally locate and understand each film. Once situated within their contexts, the ideological, generic, social, gender, auteurist and industrial particulars of each film can be recognized and understood in relation to these particular conditions. As useful as this approach is for understanding the two films in

⁵⁵ Pierre Eisenreich, "Renoir-Lang: Aller-retour de la destruction" in Positif. No. 459 (mai 1999), pp89-92.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p92.

relation to the time and space of their enunciation, the question that evades this line of inquiry is the relationship between the periods of enunciation bridging the films, and how the narrative and stylistic differences speak to this relationship. The changes in narrative, style, character and theme that were undertaken in the translocation of the story of La Chienne to Scarlet Street suggest that there must have been some act of interpretation involved for adapting a version that would help to make sense for an American audience. The contexts from which these films were enunciated have already been well established, what remains is to understand the changes in the remake as evidence of an act of interpretation of the previous film at that historical moment of production.

The model that I plan to use to accomplish this task is one that approaches the remake as a specific reading of the original film at the moment of its production. This particular definition of the remake that I am using actually originates from Maryla Hopfinger's definition of "intersemiotic translation": "The adaptation of a literary work for film is a specific reading, ie *interpretation* of a literary original."⁵⁸ Since the remake can be understood as a specific form of adaptation within the context of the cinema, I have reworked this definition in a very basic sense to apply to the context of the cinematic remake, which itself can be considered as a specific form of adaptation. The comparative analysis of the remake to its source film that follows from this approach will be grounded in the historical, cultural, and institutional contexts of the films in a similar manner as presented by the existing literature discussed in this chapter. Where I will deviate from the previous methodologies, though, is in the consideration of the changes

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁸ As translated and quoted in Alicja Helman and Wacław M. Osadnik, "Film and Literature: Historical Models of Film Adaptation and a Proposal for a (Poly)System Approach", Canadian Review of

to the source film for the remake as a form of cultural translation that mediates the narratives across the different historical and cultural contexts.

In the case of La Chienne and Scarlet Street, a key to understanding the French film's successful cultural translation to Hollywood lies in the way the remake stresses the importance of Catholicism within the narrative as a way to handle the delicate matter of the story's conclusion. The Nichols screenplay for Scarlet Street was submitted to the Breen Office prior to principal photography, and the only alterations that were advised were the minimization of the prostitute-pimp relationship between Kitty and Johnny, which were accomplished by playing down her masochistic tendencies and also by reducing the scenes in her bedroom⁵⁹. This information highlights the notion that the film's sexual themes were significant enough to warrant mild changes to its treatment but ultimately did not represent a major transgression against the regulations of the Production Code. The notion of Chris Cross roaming freely as a vagabond in the same manner as his French counterpart represents the key discursive transgression that needed to be addressed. If Legrand's *clochard* suggests an alternative lifestyle to the social structure presented in La Chienne (which underlines the film's cynicism towards French society and its institutions), Chris Cross' fate as a homeless tramp could not hope to replicate this critique, since the screen regulations of the Production Code Administration emphatically forbade the ridicule or the questioning of social institutions. Therefore, Cross's status as a bum at the end of Scarlet Street needed to be recontextualized as a form of punishment to underline the idea that, while he may have escaped the courts, Cross is still subject to a higher authority.

Comparative Literature. Vol 23, No. 3 (September 1996),p647. Hopfinger's literature is actually in Polish, which has been translated into English by the authors of the article.

In Lang's eyes, the most crucial detail that enabled him to adapt La Chienne successfully for American audiences was the translocation of the narrative from France to America, specifically the substitution of Greenwich Village for Montmartre⁶⁰. While this change in locale is meant to play off the similar identity of the two spaces as a bohemian home to artists, the relevance of this change makes its mark in the remake's title, which shifts La Chienne's metaphorical description of the story's social vision to a specific—though imaginary—urban setting in Greenwich Village whose name teased immorality through its associations with the color scarlet. Lang recalled that the title “Scarlet Street” came to him during a brainstorming session with Wanger and Bennett as they were trying to find a suitable title for their remake since a literal translation of La Chienne was not acceptable⁶¹. Lang associated “scarlet” with the image of the whore of Babylon as described in the Apocalypse of St. John, who is described as ‘a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet,’ and this biblical reference is particularly noteworthy in light of the film's treatment of its narrative. Short scenes and narrative details that refer to this motif sustain the sub-theme of biblical sin and punishment in Scarlet Street. For instance, Christopher Cross' name is a pun that associates him with the crucified Christ, the ultimate symbol for Catholic guilt. Chris's first painting of Kitty represents her standing at the El station next to a coiled snake in a visual parody of the Genesis story about Eve and the serpent. As a function of the narrative, this motif finds its strongest expression in

⁵⁹ In Matthew Bernstein, Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent, p203.

⁶⁰ Eibel, p110. Based on the literature and research that has been made available to me, this translocation of locale in Scarlet Street may represent the first instance that an American remake of a French film has recontextualized the geography of its predecessor, which may account for the emphasis that Lang places on the statement.

⁶¹ The literal translation of La Chienne in English is “The Bitch”, a term that transgressed Section V of the Motion Picture Production Code on the grounds of profanity. As reprinted in Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s, (New York: Doubleday 1990), p283-292.

the scene after Chris has discovered the true relationship between Kitty and Johnny. Chris is drowning his sorrows in a bar over this discovery, but the voice of a preacher pontificating about the Lord's mercy on sinners outside reaches Chris and gives him the motivation to confront Kitty about her duplicity. These scenes provide a discursive parameter on the narrative that eventually shifts the story's conclusion away from the dark satire of La Chienne towards a resolution that emphasizes a Catholic sense of punishment for Chris Cross that is literally explained within the narrative when Cross gets lectured by a reporter about the internalization of guilt and punishment. Indeed, Lang stressed this issue in a meeting with Joseph Breen, the chief assistant at the Production Code Administration that regulated screen morality in Hollywood, when explaining the context in which Scarlet Street was to treat its conclusion:

“Listen, you and I are both Catholic. By allowing him to live, Edward G. Robinson's character in Scarlet Street suffers a great deal. It's a much greater punishment than being imprisoned for homicide... The greatest punishment, without a doubt, is to set him free in a legal sense, his soul burdened with the knowledge of his act, his spirit continually echoing the words of the woman he loved proclaiming her love to the man that he falsely sent to death in his place.”⁶²

By emphasizing the conclusion of the story in this manner, Scarlet Street is able to deflect the social cynicism that informs the conclusion of La Chienne while simultaneously

⁶² My translation of an excerpt of an interview with Fritz Lang : “Ecoutez, nous sommes catholiques tous les deux. En le laissant en vie, le personnage de Robinson dans Scarlet Street souffre beaucoup. C'est un punishment bien plus grande que d'être emprisonné pour homicide. [...] La plus grande punition est sans aucune doute de le laisser libre en toute légalité, l'âme chargée de la conscience de son acte, l'esprit retentissant continuellement des mots prononcés par la femme qu'il aimait proclamant son amour pour l'homme qu'il a envoyé fausement à la mort à sa place...” Reprinted in Georges Sturm (ed). Fritz Lang: films/textes/références. (Nancy, France: Presses Universitaires de Nancy 1990),p121.

preserving the action in a context that ensures its discursive suitability in an American studio context.

While censorship codes may well have provided an overarching framework for this interpretation of La Chienne, it is also important to recognize that the changes in Scarlet Street serve as evidence for readings of the French film that are relevant to the production of meaning at that particular historical moment of production. What I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter is that the literature on these two films has provided a methodological lead into understanding the historical contexts from which these films emerged. What must follow, then, is a comprehension of how the changes in narrative, style and character can be seen as an act of interpretation of the source film that serve to make meaning for audiences across different nations and different historical periods. The following chapters will try to understand some of the other American remakes of this postwar period in order to see how the French source films become interpreted and translated for their newer contexts.

Chapter II

Le Jour se lève (1939) and *The Long Night* (1947)

“A remake of a film is always a difficult enterprise, especially if the original film was a success. You can’t help but compare scenes; the director and actors unconsciously compete with the original film.”

Eugène Lourié¹

In August 1945, a news item in the industry trade magazine *The Hollywood Reporter* noted that the production team of Robert and Raymond Hakim had recently purchased the rights to *Le Jour se lève* (1939), the internationally popular French film directed by Marcel Carné. Working as independent producers under the aegis of RKO Studios, the Hakim brothers announced that their third Hollywood picture would be a remake of Carné’s film, to be co-produced and directed by Anatole Litvak. This American version of *Le Jour se lève*, which had an original working title of “A Time to Kill”, would eventually be released in 1947 as *The Long Night*².

Wishing to avoid any immediate comparisons with *Le Jour se lève*, which had already been theatrically released in New York City in July 1940 under the translated title *Daybreak*, some drastic preventive measures were taken. Once the Hakims and RKO

¹ Eugene Lourié. *My work in films*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1985), p139.

² *The Hollywood Reporter* announcement about the procurement of the rights to *Le jour se lève* by the Hakims is reported in the entry for *The Long Night* in Hanson, Patricia King and Gevinson, Alan (eds). *The American Film Institute Catalog: Feature Films 1941-1950*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1993) p1405. Prior to their relocation to Hollywood from France as a result of the Second World War, the Hakim brothers had established successful producing credits with the French pre-war successes *Pépé le Moko* (Julien Duviver, 1937) and *La Bête humaine* (Jean Renoir, 1938). The first two Hollywood films that the brothers produced were Jean Renoir’s *The Southerner* (1945) and *Heartbeat* (1946), an American version of the French film *Battements de coeur* (Henri Decoin, 1939). Raymond Hakim would also later serve as associate producer for the RKO weepie *The Blue Veil* (Curtis Bernhardt, 1951), a remake of the French film *Le Voile Bleu* (Jean Stelli, 1942). Anatole Litvak was a European emigré filmmaker who had made several successful films in France during the 1930s before moving to Hollywood at the end of that decade. Litvak was also familiar with the remake process, having remade his French film *L’Équipage* (1935) into *The Woman I love* (1937) as his first feature film upon arriving in Hollywood. The remake of *Le Jour se lève* would be Litvak’s first postwar film in Hollywood after returning from years of overseas Army service, as reported in *The Hollywood Reporter* Vol. 88 no. 39 (May 22, 1946), p1.

secured the rights to the film in the spring of 1945, almost every sub-titled print in circulation of Le Jour se lève was collected and held under strict instructions that it would not be shown unless permission was granted³.

The withdrawal of Le Jour se lève from American screens allowed the filmmakers to stick as closely as possible to Carné's film for the remake. Despite liberties in retelling the narrative of Le Jour se lève, seen mainly in the transposition of the setting to postwar America and in the alteration of the film's end with regard to the fate of the main male character, The Long Night bears striking similarities to its French predecessor in terms of its visual look (especially the set design), and to its adapted screenplay, which in many instances contained direct transcriptions of whole sequences⁴. These points of convergence between the two films did not sit comfortably with contemporary overseas critics, who responded with undisguised hostility to what they saw as the outright cinematic plagiarism of The Long Night. These reactions to the Long Night as a symbol of institutional disrespect and commercial threat overshadowed any analysis of the film itself. Instead, the film was used as a stepladder to a larger platform that served as the expression of distaste for the economic practice of the Hollywood remake by the native film industries whose films were being pirated⁵. The fact that The Long Night was

³ There is an irony to these actions in that the Hakims were repeating the same mercenary actions that producer Walter Wanger pulled on them in 1937, when he purchased the rights to Pépé le Moko (1937) and sat on the film to hold off competition for his remake Algiers (1938). Pépé le Moko was eventually released in North America in 1941, well after Algiers had finished its run. This incident is discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

⁴ The production designer for The Long Night was Eugène Lourié, a French expatriate now working in Hollywood who had worked extensively in the French film industry during the 1930s. Lourié was familiar with Le Jour se lève and the aesthetics of Poetic Realism in relation to set design, having been responsible for the set design of La Bête humaine (1938), the one film directed by Jean Renoir that could be considered in this populist vein.

⁵ For examples of British and French reaction to the remake of Le Jour se lève, see Roger Manvell. " 'The long night' and 'Le jour se lève'" Sight and Sound vol 16 no.63 (Autumn 1947), and Claude Bower. "Un abus de confiance: le 'remake'" in L'Écran Français, no. 123 (Nov 4, 1947), reprinted in L'Avant-scène du cinéma, #53 (November, 1965). Bower sees the filmmakers of The Long Night as guilty of not only

produced at a time when French and British theaters were deluged with Hollywood films while these countries were struggling to re-establish their film industries in the postwar era only strengthened this discourse of resistance against remakes⁶.

Le Jour se lève had also been a victim of extra-cinematic forces resulting from the specific historical context of its production and exhibition. Le Jour se lève was theatrically released in France on June 17, 1939, less than three months before war was officially declared on Germany and Europe plummeted into what was to become the Second World War. The relationship between the film's original date of exhibition and its proximity to the opening salvos of a war where the French suffered their most humiliating capitulation has played a major role in informing the reception of the film. The story of a doomed working-class character appearing at a historical moment of mounting national tension has led to the common consideration of Le Jour se lève as the epitome of these films within the canon of French poetic realism that were seen as reflective expressions of the mood of despair that prevailed with the collapse of the Popular Front government in October 1938. Critics such as Edward Baron Turk support this type of reading, interpreting the pessimism and fatalism of Le Jour se lève as the

plagiarism, but also, as the title of his article implies, of an abuse of confidence. Though he never mentions any of them by name, it's clear by the tone of his piece that he holds the French 'collaborators' of this American practice in disdain.

⁶ The release of The Long Night in 1947 coincided with the continuing postwar reparation processes of Britain and France, who both tried to contain the overwhelming deluge of American products that came in under the auspices of aid to these reopened markets. Hollywood cinema was also part of this program, and the backlog of films dating from the war was more than enough to dominate the domestic screens in France and Britain. To combat this 'threat' to their native film industries, France and Britain tried to impose measures to curtail this invasion through the use of import taxes and quotas that were meant to stimulate domestic production. In the specific case of France, this led to the Blum-Byrnes Agreements, a commercial treaty signed in 1946 and amended in 1948 between the French and American governments that fixed a minimum quota of French films to be shown on French screens against non-French (though predominantly American) films. For more detailed information on the French situation, refer to Irwin M. Wall. The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954. (New York: Cambridge University Press 1991) and Patricia Hubert-Lacombe. Le cinéma français dans la guerre froide: 1946-1956. (Paris: éditions l'Harmattan 1996).

primary meaning of the film⁷. This particular reading is probably given further credence in view of the fact that France's military censor board banned Carné's film in September 1939 for its 'demoralizing' tone⁸. Indeed, some commentators hold Le Jour se lève and other films from the canon of French poetic realist cinema to be indirectly responsible for the Fall of France in 1940⁹.

The emphasis on the impact of World War II on the production of meaning is carried over from Le Jour se lève to The Long Night, though this emphasis shifts temporally and spatially from a French pre-war context to an American post-war context. While Le Jour se lève contains no direct references to the war (a war that had not yet been declared at the time of production), The Long Night makes explicit use of the war experience as an integral part of its narrative. What is most particular about the way the war figures into the narrative of The Long Night is how these references overlap with the representation of American working-class masculinity in the film. The explicit presence of the war and its meaning both to the narrative and the characters presents a significant difference between the films that provides clues as to how the American version makes sense of the French version.

⁷ See Edward Baron Turk, Child of Paradise: Marcel Carné and the Golden Age of French Cinema. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1989), p152-176

⁸ As related in the entry for Le Jour se lève in Gérard Guillot. Les Préverts (Paris: Éditions Seghers 1966), p60, 166.

⁹ The fatalistic overtones of Le Jour se lève and other similar films (such as the earlier Carné/Prévert/Gabin collaboration Le Quai des brumes (1937)) sparked heated debate within the contemporary French critical press about the aesthetics and ideology of poetic realist films. Poetic realist films were singled out for their pessimistic treatment of social conditions that spectacularized "failures, loafers, deserters, suicides, young unwed mothers and prostitutes, shady proprietors, and degenerate petit-bourgeois". Georges Altman's contemporaneous review of Le Jour se lève encapsulates the fascination with the fatalistic spectacle of poetic realism when he remarks that "crime, suicide, and suffering take on a naked simplicity which... seems completely, fatally, integral to the black despair of a hopeless life." In Richard Abel, French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology Volume II 1929-1939. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1988) p160. Georges Altman's review of Le Jour se lève, titled "Le Jour se lève, une oeuvre noire et pure", originally appeared in the magazine La Lumière on June 16, 1939. The review appears in an English translation in Abel, pp266-269.

A comparison of Le Jour se lève and The Long Night will draw out these differences with respect to the war referents and emphasizes their relevance in the American film to the situation of the working-class male in a postwar environment. If Le Jour se lève foregrounds the importance of the working-class identity of its main character to the overall meaning of the film, then The Long Night also foregrounds this working-class identity in the same fashion towards a similar purpose. However, an extra layer is added to the construction of the working-class character by making him a recently discharged war veteran. Such a change at the level of characterization certainly transforms the framework within which to understand the unfolding drama, and in the case of The Long Night, this alteration to the character's make-up also drastically affects the conclusion of the narrative. Updating the story of Le Jour se lève to include direct references to the war experience can then be seen as a major framework within which the filmmakers interpreted the French film to an American audience of 1947.

Le Jour se lève depicts the last night in the life of François (Jean Gabin), a sandblaster who lives on the top floor of a tenement building in an unnamed suburb of Paris¹⁰. At the opening of the film, François has just killed Valentin (Jules Berry) and as a result he sequesters himself inside his room as the police arrive on the scene to investigate. Alone with his thoughts and scant possessions, François begins to contemplate his life, as objects within his room trigger his memories. Three subjective flashbacks provide the bulk of the film, presenting the backstory for François of the major episodes in his life that led him to his current situation. Each of these flashbacks is framed by scenes showing the buildup of curious onlookers gathering at the foot of the

¹⁰ The shot-by-shot screenplay of Le Jour se lève published in *L'Avant-scène du cinéma*, no. 53, November 1965, describes the setting of the film as a 'banlieue industrielle' along the lines of Boulogne-Billancourt.

building and the increasing mobilization of the police that besiege him over the entire evening.

The first flashback shows François at work in the factory where he first meets and falls for the young Françoise (Jacqueline Laurent) who has accidentally stumbled into his work area while delivering flowers. A happy courtship begins when the two find that beyond the similarity in their names, both are also orphans who were raised at the same orphanage. Three weeks later, while François is visiting the home of the horticulturists where Françoise stays, his happiness is momentarily jostled when she leaves him late in the evening for a previously arranged rendezvous with the slick vaudevillian Valentin at a *café-concert*. While clandestinely tailing Françoise to the bar, François eventually meets Clara (Arletty), the assistant of Valentin who has just abandoned him on stage in the middle of their act. Sitting next to François at the bar, Clara wins his sympathies through a slow flirtation punctuated by her acerbic commentary about her former boss. Valentin leaves the bar with Françoise, but re-enters to reprimand Clara for her on-stage desertion. François, already perturbed with feelings of jealousy, speaks out in her defense, threatening the older showman if he continues his manhandling.

The second flashback has François visiting Clara in her hotel room that is opposite the street of his own apartment building. The ease and comfort displayed in the interaction between François and Clara suggest that they have been intimate, though neither has explicitly expressed any deep emotions for the other. Their reverie is interrupted by the arrival of Valentin, who takes François away for a drink to talk about their mutual interest in Françoise. When François reveals his intentions to marry her, Valentin in turn reveals that he is actually her father and casts doubt that the sandblaster

could offer her any viable future. Confused, François leaves the scene to confront Françoise about this revelation, which she quickly debunks. Françoise explains the reasons for her attraction to the older man (he was nice to her) and in turn questions François about his relationship with Clara. François denies any seriousness in that relationship since it is Françoise with whom he is in love, a sentiment that she reciprocates by declaring her love for him and offering as a token a brooch that she claims has great significance in her life. The second flashback ends with François returning to Clara's room to break off their affair, only to discover that she has the same brooch that Françoise gave him, a brooch that Valentin gives to all the women that he sleeps with.

The third flashback recounts the moments just before the murder, with Valentin entering François' room to confront him once again about Françoise. François at this point is completely disillusioned and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Valentin's continuous taunting and prodding about the status of Françoise's chastity cause him to explode in rage, grabbing the smug vaudevillian to dangle him outside his window. It is not until Valentin begins to insinuate that his desire for Françoise was reciprocated and he begins to tease out a description of their sexual tryst that François finally shoots him.

When we return to the 'present' temporality of the film, time has run out for François who is alone in his room, rejecting all aid and support from those below, including both Clara and Françoise, who still reiterates her love for him. Just before the police ready themselves to throw tear gas into his apartment in order to flush him out, François commits suicide, shooting himself with the revolver that he used to kill Valentin. The film ends with the image of François' prone corpse on the floor, greeting

the light of the dawn breaking in through window alongside the noxious clouds of tear gas.

The Long Night shares many similarities with Le Jour se lève with regard to the adapted screenplay, and the above synopsis serves as a sufficient outline of the plot structure and the key sequences that are repeated in the American version. Many of the details surrounding the characters remain faithful to their previous incarnations in the French version. For instance, the names of the four principal characters can be matched to their corresponding counterparts from Le Jour se lève without much effort: Joe Adams (Henry Fonda), Jo Ann (Barbara Bel Geddes), Maximillian the Great a.k.a. Max (Vincent Price) and Charlie (Ann Dvorak). The occupational identities of these characters also find their matching correspondents in Le Jour se lève, as Joe too is a factory sandblaster, Jo Ann is a horticulturist's assistant, and Charlie is the recently liberated assistant of Max the magician¹¹.

The reiteration of Joe Adams as a factory sandblaster in The Long Night brings into question how the filmmakers of the remake approached the issue of class difference and the working class that were alluded to in Le Jour se lève. This approach is announced at the beginning of The Long Night with an odd pseudo-documentary exposition that establishes the social setting of the film, suggesting its intentions not only to adapt the story of its French predecessor, but also to explain the notion of class difference in an American context.

¹¹ Max's working identity as a travelling magician is a slight extension of Valentin's slick *café-concert* vaudevillian, updated to cash in on the metaphoric associations between his ability to conjure tricks of illusion for mass consumption and his penchant for conjuring illusory stories of deception. This occupational update serves as a slight example of how the filmmakers of the remake may have read the dishonesty of Valentin as an extension of his *métier* and adjusted their representation of the corresponding character accordingly.

The Long Night opens with a succession of scenes showing long shots of industrial areas, accompanied by a non-diegetic voiceover narration providing the names of the cities associated with each shot¹². The progression of the three opening shots puts the spotlight on the industrial nature of these small towns with its images of factories and smokestacks littering the skyline. A final extreme long shot of a railyard with industrial housing in the background is shown, though the voiceover hesitates to provide a precise identification for the image: "This is... well, it actually doesn't matter very much, since our story might occur anywhere. Since it's a story about some average human beings living in an average American town such as this. Somewhere near the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line." Accompanying this anonymous "Everytown, U.S.A." description are shots of a small town highlighted by open spaces that are bustling with clean-cut pedestrians, neatly trimmed park squares with small monuments, and completely devoid of skyscrapers or any other signs of metropolitan architecture.

From these opening shots, it is clear through the images and the narration that the film imagines an 'average American town' as most likely an industrial one. The anonymity of a town that lies 'somewhere near the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line' perpetuates the film's insistence that the story may not be particular to a specific region but that it could take place anywhere. The focus on the shots of factories and railyards in this opening implies that the 'average human beings' of these towns are to be represented as the old-fashioned blue collar hardworking American laborer.

The focus on the idea of the working class in these industrial towns is cemented in the following two scenes, where the differentiation between the working force and the

¹² The towns identified by the voiceover are Youngstown, Ohio; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; and Gary, Indiana.

upper-classes is specifically commented upon in terms of how living space is demarcated and laid out in this 'average American town'. An extreme long shot of a residential area containing large separated houses on a hill is accompanied by the narrator explaining: "On that high ground over there is the better residential area, where you'll probably find everyone who really counts." This shot is contrasted with a shot of tightly packed industrial housing with laundry lines extending into the foreground and omnipresent factory smokestacks in the background, and a narration explaining: "while over here in the older part of town is where the census taker has to do most of the counting." Class difference in these two scenes is geographically represented by separated living spaces within the boundaries of the town. The separation of "those who really count" from those 'who make up most of the counting' is neatly encapsulated in the shot of the 'better residential area', which is represented as a segregated zone that is on "high" ground and separated by a bridge. The narration's comment about the census taker also suggests that the majority of the population in this industrial town is most likely to be part of this working class.

Finally, the last part of the introductory sequence focuses on Allegheny Square where the main action of the film is to take place. A monument of a soldier stands in the center of the square, placed there, as the narration explains, "by the Grand Army of the Republic in commemoration of the G.I.'s of 1865." "But that was long ago," the narration concludes, "almost as long ago as World War II", at which point a prominent banner hanging over the square is shown that reads "Welcome home, servicemen and servicewomen". The last shot of the sequence tracks in on a blind man (Elisha Cook Jr.) walking beneath the banner towards a tall tenement building. The narration identifies the

blind man as “Frank Dunlop, ex-staff sergeant U.S. Marine Corps, who knows every inch of the old square he played in as a boy.”¹³ It is this blind war veteran, whose recent distance from the Second World War is duly noted by the narrator, who will walk up the stairs of the tenement building where Joe Adams lives to find the freshly wounded body of Max and thus initiate the narrative.

What is evident in the opening sequence of The Long Night is its concerted effort to promote a conception of a social space in small town America as a working class space in the same manner as Le Jour se lève. There is a clear attempt to establish a sense of class-consciousness through the opening images and narration, with the working class being foregrounded as a context for the upcoming narrative. This entire opening sequence in The Long Night can be understood not so much as a recontextualization of Le Jour se lève but rather as an interpretation of the role of the social setting in the French film and its relationship to the narrative.

However, the establishment of the proletarian character of the setting in The Long Night is given an added dimension in the last part of the introduction that focuses on Allegheny Square. The narration explains that the square was once the centre of the older part of town, charging it as a zone with working class connotations that were earlier alluded to. The placement of the G.I. monument inside the square adds an extra dimension to the meaning of this imaginary space, imbuing it as a space with the dual connotations of the worker and the soldier. The concept of the veteran ground soldier intersects with the idea of the working man within the space of Allegheny Square, and this link is reinforced with the banner welcoming the servicemen and servicewomen

¹³ The banners that welcome home servicemen and women, coupled with the narrator’s comments about World War II being “not so long ago” for Frank Dunlop, are textual clues that confirm the temporal

home from the war. The whole trajectory of the introductory sequence works to establish this connection, as it began with a larger consideration of the working class spaces of industrial towns and finished with a narrowing of its scope to an example of one of its denizens, the blind war veteran¹⁴. The pseudo-documentary exposition of the The Long Night thus provides an explanation of the relationship between setting and narrative within a larger framework that binds working class masculinity with the experience of World War II and the returning veteran.

The ideas of the working class and the war veteran in The Long Night conflate through its representation of the male lead character, Joe Adams. Joe is visually constructed as a figure of the working class in a similar fashion to François, mainly through a long sequence during the first flashback that shows him sandblasting in the factory wearing a protected outfit that covers his entire body except for a glass window in the helmet. His wardrobe outside the factory is again a direct mirror of the clothes that François wears, nondescript casual attire that borders on work wear. However, the key element of Joe's wardrobe that could be considered most iconic of his working class stature is the cloth cap that he always wears. While this cloth cap certainly recalls the one that François also wore (and which generated André Bazin's famous quote describing the working class image of Jean Gabin as "Oedipus with a cloth cap"), another intertextual reference can be inferred. The image of the cloth-capped Joe Adams as played by Henry Fonda recalls an earlier role in which he played a character of similar background and class whose visual construction was also dominated by a cloth cap,

moment of the film as more or less contemporaneous with its date of production.

¹⁴ A later sequence in the film links the working class and the war veterans again in the scene where Joe lashes out at the crowd from his window. There is a significant shot that isolates and holds on Joe's friend,

namely Tom Joad in The Grapes of Wrath (John Ford, 1940). While I do not want to get distracted by a lengthy discussion about the system of intertextuality in the roles of Jean Gabin and Henry Fonda, the point that I am trying to make is that the casting of Fonda himself can be taken as an interpretive act. While Fonda is made to dress like Gabin in Le Jour se lève to connote an image of a working class male, his star image and the memory of his celebrated turn as Tom Joad may also have been called upon to achieve this goal¹⁵.

The character of Joe Adams differs most importantly from François in his identity as a war veteran. Throughout The Long Night we are intermittently reminded that Joe is a discharged soldier who has just been 'welcomed home' with the other servicemen like the blind Frank Dunlop. The redefinition of the blind man in Le Jour se lève (a character who is unnamed and undeveloped) into Frank Dunlop in The Long Night is a good example of how the American remake mobilized minor elements of the French film to develop the theme of the cost of war on the returning veteran. Introducing Frank Dunlop through his military background and his disability imply his great sacrifice for his country and sets the stage for a consideration of Joe Adams. Joe is visually cued as a veteran mainly through implicit association either with objects such as his army jacket that falls out of his wardrobe closet, or with people such as fellow veteran Frank Dunlop who recognizes him by his voice and testifies that "he's no killer".

Joe's most explicit reference to his identity as a vet is verbalized in his outburst to the crowd that takes place after the second flashback. Leaning out his window, Joe

neighbor and fellow factory worker Bill Pulanski as he leaps up onto the G.I. monument to reiterate the solidarity of the crowd, urging him to believe that "we're all with you!"

¹⁵ Another intertextual reference that informs the casting of Henry Fonda for The Long Night is the fact that Fonda himself was also a recently discharged veteran of World War II. Fonda had left Hollywood in 1943

lashes out at what he reads as the morbid fascination of the gathering crowd below in the square. His rant is like a primal scream that acts as an outlet for his internalized self-loathing:

“Pretty exciting, huh? A murderer! A killer! Thought I was through with killing. Had no use for it. Hated it! Maybe even more than you. Well here I am. You never see a killer before? I seen plenty, and plenty killed. Lots of murderers around, all kinds of ‘em. And lots of ways of getting killed. Everybody kills a little bit quiet like, and nobody knows it!”

Joe’s outburst to the crowd brings into the narrative of the film a discourse about the possible psychological effects on Joe of his wartime exposure to violence, revealing a repressed torment regarding his wartime actions that apparently forced him to spill blood out of necessity. It is the only time in the film that his previous identity as a sanctioned killer is referenced with such directness. This segment of Joe’s speech is important in the consideration of The Long Night because it is his first articulation of the trauma that he represses stemming from his prolonged exposure to the unspoken horrors of war. The revelation that Joe suffers from ‘shell shock’ is a significant element of his identity as it places his actions within a particular psychological context and tries to make them understandable on those terms. The discourse of the mental stability of war veterans had already been foreshadowed at the start of The Long Night with comments made by the curious onlookers who have gathered outside the tenement building upon news that someone had been killed inside. Mistakenly thinking that Frank Dunlop was involved, one of the bystanders misinforms the crowd by telling them that “Mr. Tully the janitor

to join the U.S. Navy and returned to acting three years later in My Darling Clementine (John Ford, 1946).

said that the blind vet went and killed somebody! He went crazy berserk!” The following response from an elderly gentleman is quite telling as an example of the presumptions surrounding the discourse of returning servicemen: “Yes, a lot of vets go crazy you know, for no reason at all.” This comment about the public perception of the borderline sanity of returning war veterans (situated near the opening of the film before Joe’s identity as a war veteran is even established) sets up the context to consider his later breakdown.

It is Joe’s murder of Max at the opening of the film that initiates a series of expositions that slowly unravel his internalized state. The flashbacks that structure the film represent the first indications of this internalization, and his gradual breakdown is expressed by his repeated requests to be left alone, his incessant inner monologues, and the cacophony of familiar voices that swirl in his head. Joe’s declining state of mind and its relation to his psychological war trauma are visually suggested in a scene near the end of the film. As Jo Ann pleads outside his door to be let in before the police throw the tear gas into his apartment, Joe is shown sitting on his bed in what could best be described as a trance-like state. Tight close-ups reveal the inner turmoil and anguish that surface on his tortured face as he fondles the revolver, as if toying with the possibility of shooting himself. The soundtrack is layered in this sequence with Dimitri Tiomkin’s overbearing score, Jo Ann’s non-stop pleading, and a pair of subjective voiceovers, all of which cumulatively point to the steady decline of Joe’s state of mind. The first voiceover is Joe’s own resigned commentary, triggered in response to Jo Ann’s mention of her plea bargaining with the sheriff: “I told the sheriff there was nothin’ to answer for. Nothin’ to explain. I’m tired. Tired.” The second voiceover is a cacophony of several strains of dialogue that were enunciated earlier in the film that collapse around the subject of love,

The Long Night was the fourth film that he made after his discharge.

again triggered by Jo Ann's insistent declarations of her own love for him. As the voices of Charlie, Max and Jo Ann swell inside his head to a deafening crescendo, a shot of the door that is meant to simulate Joe's point-of-view slowly goes out of focus, softening the image to a misty blur that becomes a backdrop for a series of individual swirling light patterns. This odd kaleidoscopic sequence represents the nadir of Joe's breakdown, and it is clearly the film's way of visually articulating Joe's worsening psychological grip on reality as his blurred vision and hallucinations suggest his disorientation and loss of perspective. At this point, sound and vision in the film are completely subjugated to represent Joe's internal state, which renders him in a delirium. The crescendo of this trance is reached when the voices in his head become louder and he responds to them in the same manner as he had done with the police, yelling at them to 'Shut up! Leave me alone!' When he cannot bear them anymore, he lashes out at the bodiless voices with a spontaneous act of violence towards what he perceives as their source, shooting at the blockaded door oblivious to the fact that Jo Ann is on the other side. Once the shots have been fired there is a momentary silence on the soundtrack and Joe's facial expression changes from a defensive vengeance to a panicked desperation. The sudden realization and possible consequences of his action break him out of his trance, and the film makes it clear through his dialogue that he recognizes the fact that he was not in a stable psychological state of mind. When Joe checks to see if Jo Ann was wounded by his shot, he tries to understand his actions with reference to his unconscious state: "I didn't know it was you, but somehow I did", and "I shot at you, and then something happened to me." These comments complete the psychological framework of Joe's seclusion that is co-extensive with his identity as a war veteran to help account for his actions and his

subsequent breakdown. It is the film's way of marrying a social identity with a psychological state, of interpreting the malaise of the working class and its possibility for violence as the trauma of a returning working class soldier who has already been marked by the violence of war. In contrast to Max, who admits to having every intention of killing his amorous rival only to realize that "It's not so easy to kill a man," Joe's identity as a veteran soldier implies that his wartime experiences make him capable of such an act. The revelation of his weakening psychological condition is used in The Long Night to posit the combination of postwar malaise, trauma, and disillusion as the potential reasons for the disgruntled veteran's actions, thus working in response to the comment that 'vets go crazy, for no reason at all.'

Anchored within this social anxiety about the returning veteran, The Long Night emerges as a cultural artifact informed by the context of its historical moment. The enunciation of the discourse linking the mental instability of war veterans with a potential for violence and criminality in The Long Night can be located squarely within the sociological concerns about returning soldiers that circulated within the cultural context of postwar America. As early as 1944, concerns about returning veterans were being voiced in the public forum through literature such as Williard Waller's *The Veteran Comes Back* which examined the transformation of an average citizen into a soldier, and the subsequent problems that arose when this soldier-turned-veteran eventually re-entered society. In Waller's terms, the vet represented "a threat to society" since it was understood that he was trained to be a "connoisseur of death" and that he might fail to override his 'education' in a civilian context¹⁶. With chapter headings such as "The Soldier-turned-Veteran Comes Back to an Alien Homeland" and "Helping the Veteran to

Adjust to Peacetime Living”, it is clear that the returning veteran is addressed as a social problem that requires close attention. In this context, a major concern was the consideration of psychological residue from the war experience that found expression through “mental shocks” suffered by soldiers, leaving them with “a form of psychoneurosis characterized by an inclination toward explosions of aggressive behavior.”¹⁷ Psychoneurosis and the returning veteran was the main theme examined in Let There Be Light (John Huston, 1946), a documentary that showed the unstaged treatment of various war-related nervous disorders on field soldiers. A far cry from the Hollywood representation of the GI as a conquering hero, Let There Be Light assumed a medical gaze that underscored the delicate mental fragility of the American soldier affected by the frontline conditions of war. The key to the rehabilitation of psychoneurotic veterans offered by Let There Be Light was vigorous psychoanalysis, and accompanying footage showed the depths that doctors probed their patients through intense introspection and inquisition about their past¹⁸. This rhetoric certainly contextualizes the manner in which The Long Night treats the discourse of the returning veteran. Indeed, Joe’s many flashbacks can be seen to work in the same therapeutic

¹⁶ In Williard Waller, The Veteran Comes Back. (New York: Dryden Press 1944) p13, 247.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p124. Another example of contemporaneous literature surrounding the problem of the returning vet is *Out of Uniform* by Benjamin Bowker. Published in 1946 with full access to War Department Data and the cooperation of the U.S. Navy, *Out of Uniform* provided observations about psychoneurotic case studies, the problems created by the admission of women to the services, the Negro veteran, sexually transmitted diseases, and “many other important factors that families, friends, employers, and civil authorities should be aware of.” *Out of Uniform* represents just one of the attempts to present to the general public a factual account of the American armed forces in every aspect of the theater of war. Bowker himself acknowledged his intended audience in his preface, where he describes *Out of Uniform* as “a book about American war veterans of World War II written for those who remained civilians in the war years.”

¹⁸ It should be noted that the Army declassified Let There Be Light before it had a chance to be widely seen by the public. Though many condemned the film’s “dignified and realistic portrayal of black soldiers who had been damaged in combat”, director John Huston felt the reason his film was banned was that officers “did not want to alter the ‘warrior myth’ that men returned healthy from combat.” From Lary May, The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2000), p234. What should be stressed here is not the question of whether audiences did see Let There Be

fashion as the treatment presented in Let There Be Light, where psychoanalysis brings to light events of the subjective past in order to understand and rehabilitate the present situation. Within this context, we can see how The Long Night uses the prevalent discourses about the returning veteran to translate the intricate flashback structure of Le Jour se lève for an American context that addresses the concerns of its historical moment.

In Le Jour se lève, while shell shock could not be a component of the characterization of François, his capability for violence is articulated in a similar manner based on assumptions about the working class. An older woman coded as bourgeois provides the commentary in a scene that is situated not at the opening of the film, but rather during François' outburst to the crowd. It is when a group of factory workers led by François' neighbor and fellow sandblaster Gaston gather at the tenement building to show their solidarity for their fallen comrade that the woman makes some disparaging remarks towards workers at this critical moment in the standoff: "These workers, now, they believe that everything is permitted... And so they drink, they drink and then they commit crimes..."¹⁹ These comments recall the tendency in popular French discourse of this era to conflate notions of the working class with criminality, and in this case the uncontrolled consumption of alcohol is seen to have a causal effect that leads one to the other²⁰. Crime in Le Jour se lève is thus contextualized along class lines, where the logic within the film dictates that François's capacity for murder is co-extensive with his working class identity.

Light during this historical moment, but an understanding of the discursive contexts surrounding the question of the returning veteran circulating in the culture during this moment.

¹⁹ My translation: "Ces ouvriers, maintenant, ils se croient tout permis... Alors, ils boivent, ils boivent et puis ils font des crimes..." as presented on p36 of L'Avant-scène du cinéma #53.

²⁰ The blurring of the worker and the criminal in French cinema of the 1930s has been described as a holdover from nineteenth century bourgeois class anxiety expressed in the fiction of that century. In Claude Gauthier and Ginette Vincendeau, Jean Gabin, anatomie d'un mythe. (Paris: Nathan 1993).

In The Long Night, Joe's working class identity is not as directly associated with criminality as in Le Jour se lève. The addition of the military dimension to Joe's identity provides a different context to contemplate his actions and reactions, especially with respect to making sense of his reaction to the momentary collapse of his own idealized romance with Jo Ann. Indeed, Joe's momentary disillusion with Jo Ann feeds into a larger sense of his postwar malaise as a way of punctuating his perceived failure to achieve social reintegration. Joe's identity as a war veteran plays a greater role than his working class identity with regard to the loneliness and alienation that he experiences in the fallout of his romance with Jo Ann. In this manner, The Long Night modifies the narrative of Le Jour se lève to reinterpret the deadlock of the working class tragedy as a drama about the hardships of postwar readjustment in the milieu of working class America.

The subject of postwar readjustment in middle-class America had already been dramatized a year earlier in The Best Years of Our Lives (William Wyler, 1946). Released by RKO, The Best Years of Our Lives was a popular success (according to *The Hollywood Reporter*, it finished with a box office take of \$11,300,000 for 1946, second only to Walt Disney's Song of the South)²¹. The Long Night can be seen as an attempt by RKO to follow-up on the popular success of The Best Years of Our Lives by revisiting the discourse of postwar readjustment and enlarging the scope of this theme to focus on a working-class environment.

²¹ As well, the film's merits were recognized by the industry with several Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, and Best Screenplay. Best Supporting Actor Harold Russell, a first time actor and an actual veteran who had lost both of his hands during the war, was even presented with a special Academy Award "for bringing hope and courage to his fellow veterans." In Susan Sackett, The Hollywood Reporter Book of Box Office Hits. (New York: Billboard Books 1996), p62.

While the factory sequence that shows him sandblasting serves as a visual confirmation of Joe's working class identity, it is further defined in The Long Night in opposition to the character of Max, who bills himself as Maximillian the Great. Max's stage name certainly carries a convoluted pretension which is totally consistent with his character. Like his French counterpart Valentin, Max is neither of the working class or the bourgeois class. True to his flamboyant showmanship (the detail that he is a magician truly milks the association with his illusion-making), Max presents his persona as being disassociated from the lower classes through his exaggerated performance of upper-class sensibilities. Turk's description of Valentin can easily be used to describe Max: "[He] appears not so much a bourgeois per se as a demagogue who flaunts magnified bourgeois values in himself in order to seduce the masses."²²

Though this interpretation of Valentin's character seems perfectly sensible in hindsight, Le Jour se lève does not contain any explicit scenes that provide visual evidence of this behavior. The Long Night takes this interpretation and exposes it in a sequence that represents a significant deviation from Le Jour se lève. This deviation is a structural one in that an additional flashback has been added to the narrative of The Long Night. This additional flashback pertains to the character of Jo Ann, providing her with a sense of individuation that was not given to her French counterpart Françoise. The ambiguity that surrounds Françoise, who is much worldlier than François' subjectivity will allow, is lessened in the character of Jo Ann, whose innocence and naivete are brought forward through her flashback. However, as much as this flashback provides information about Jo Ann, it also extends the characterization of Max in order to show

how he “flaunted his magnified bourgeois values” for the purposes of seduction, in this case the seduction of Jo Ann.

While the relationship between Valentin and Françoise in Le Jour se lève remained mostly offscreen and was hinted at through snippets of dialogue, The Long Night devotes a considerable amount of screen time to flesh out the details of Jo Ann’s previous relationship with Max. Jo Ann herself provides the narration for her flashback, providing a running commentary for her account of the details of her first meeting with Max, his relentless courtship, and her own confusion about her dormant sexual desires prior to meeting Joe. However, Jo Ann’s story is ultimately contained by its situation within the narrative because it is embedded within Joe’s second flashback, occurring just after he demands an explanation from her about Max’s claims of paternity, and ending before the scene where the brooch is exchanged. This flashback-within-a-flashback structure offers the character of Jo Ann her own voice in the film, yet it is eventually compromised in the end by its subjugation to Joe’s subjectivity. Her memories are thus mediated through Joe’s own memories, and it is through this filter that Max is ultimately considered.

At the start of Jo Ann’s flashback, Max is presented as a suave cultured gentleman speaking with a refined mid-Atlantic accent, a characterization greatly boosted by the fact that the part is played by Vincent Price. Price was a character actor who developed a star persona that was synonymous with these characteristics, leading him to steady roles playing an effete upper-class villain²³. Jo Ann’s regard for Max’s

²³ Indeed, Price’s performance as Max can be situated within the institutional context of his Hollywood career during the mid-1940s, where the role of the fine-mannered but sleazy magician was in tune with his similar character roles in previous thrillers such as Laura (Otto Preminger, 1944) and Leave Her to Heaven (John M. Stahl, 1945).

sophistication and high culture tastes are underlined by her narration when she describes their first date together to listen to classical music played by the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. The musical piece being played is Tchaikovsky's "Theme from Romeo and Juliet", and her narration to Joe explains that it is a famous play, "you know, by Shakespeare." Jo Ann's enraptured reaction to being at the symphony and listening to classical music while having the story of Shakespeare's popular romantic tragedy recited to her by Max can be seen as the epitome of a lifestyle that Joe cannot provide because of his working class stature and tastes. This is a key scene in defining not only the pretentious pseudo-upper-class character of Max, but also in indirectly defining the working class identity of Joe. Joe's own thoughts about his working class identity and class difference are expressed in frank terms to Jo Ann in a later sequence after her flashback has been completed: "You know people are funny. They don't take you for what you are, but where you come from, what your name is, 'til you get so you're always looking in. So you try to buck it, y'know, get an education, go to night school, keep on the ball. [I] couldn't lick it." Though the mechanisms are available to upgrade his social status, Joe nonetheless sees himself as contained within his social class, much like his French counterpart François.

Some of the negative connotations associated with the discourse of the working class in Le Jour se lève carry over in The Long Night, but they are not given the same social weight in the narrative. While the superficial representation of the workplace in The Long Night bears a visual continuity with Le Jour se lève, the commentary about the relationship between this environment and the workers is absent. This is most obvious in the scene at the factory where Joe and Jo Ann first meet. The budding romance between

Joe and Jo Ann follows the same narrative trajectory as that of François and Françoise, with the establishment of the idea of their compatibility through the recognition of the similarities in their names and past history at the orphanage. Both Jo Ann and Françoise are delivering flowers to the factory manager, though at the end of their respective sequences, Françoise's flowers have wilted whereas Jo Ann's flowers are never given any such attention, probably on the assumption that nothing has happened that would have altered them. The wilting of Françoise's flowers can be read as a foreshadowing of the gloom that is to come between the two orphans, but they also serve as a commentary about the working conditions of the factory. Along with the shots of the workers in their identical outfits protecting them from the sand spray and the deafening noise of the machinery, the wilted flowers present the factory as a dehumanizing space of congestion, literally and metaphorically suffocating the life and hope out of everything inside. This scene is crucial to the comment made by Valentin in a later scene where the older vaudevillian falsely informs François about his paternal claims and concerns about Françoise. In trying to dissuade François from pursuing marriage with the young flower girl, Valentin invokes the futility of that possibility by reminding the sandblaster of his class status:

“Come now... what do you count on doing? Listen... my dear friend... You cannot imagine... Finally, Françoise... I'm responsible for her... I can't tolerate this... Think about it a little..., you don't have a situation... or a future... And no health... Finally, it has to be said..., you work in an unhealthy trade.”²⁴

²⁴ My translation: “Mais voyons..., qu'est-ce que vous comptez faire? Écoutez..., tout de même..., mon cher ami... Vous ne pouvez pas songer... Enfin, Françoise..., je suis responsable, moi... Je ne peux pas tolérer... Réfléchissez un peu..., vous n'avez pas de situation..., pas d'avenir... Et pas de santé... Enfin, il faut tout de même le dire..., vous faites un métier malsain.” As presented on p31 of L'Avant-scène du cinéma #53.

Valentin's comments confirm what the wilted flowers had earlier suggested about the factory: that it represents a dead-end for the working class. In the corresponding sequence in The Long Night, Max makes an almost identical comment to Joe about his factory work:

“You work in the plant! You hardly make enough to live on. No future at all. A common worker. An orphan. A foundling. I don't even know the family you're from or their health. Or yours...”

Since The Long Night did not contain the scene showing Jo Ann's wilted flowers resulting from the exposure to the contaminated air of the factory, Max's comments about Joe's trade do not carry the same resonance. Without the previous scene suggesting the slow death caused by working in the factory, Max's comments ring hollow as an indictment of the working class conditions and instead come off as a futile attempt to intimidate Joe with his paternalistic performance.

Another important aspect of Max's comments above focuses on Joe's identity as an orphan, which does not get mentioned by Valentin at all in his own speech. The reference to Joe's orphaned state works as a cruel reiteration of his lack of a family, which in turn emphasizes his own larger sense of loneliness which feeds into his desperate need for a family of his own. His loneliness and need for a family attains a different resonance within the context of a returning war vet, implying an added urgency for the facilitation of re-entry into normative society after the interim of combat.

One of the ways Joe is shown to fill this lack is by the genial familiarity that he shares with other characters in the film, who extend their ideas of family to include him.

Mrs. Simpson, the horticulturist whom Jo Ann stays with, is actually given screen time (unlike her unseen French counterpart) to show her approval of Joe as a suitor for her young assistant, offering him an open invitation of acceptance into the household²⁵. If the welcome offered by Mrs. Simpson suggests his acceptance into a familial setting by the older generation, then it is book-ended by a similar acceptance with a younger generation through his quasi-parental relationship with the little girl who inhabits one of the lower apartments of the tenement building. While the little girl may or may not have parents (the film does not provide any clear indication), her link to Joe is shown to exude a strong sense of loyalty that surpasses the bonds of friendship and is instead suggestive of filial duty. Though she is the first person to confront Joe right after he shoots Max, she does not condemn him but rather sorrowfully asks him "Why did you do it, Joe?" The little girl later helps him to avoid the police on the roof of the building by quickly informing him of their whereabouts, allowing her sympathy for him to seal her complicity with his evasion. The patch that she proudly wears on her jacket, which Joe has passed along to her, suggests a symbolic lineage, marking not only her affiliation with him but also representative of the special bond that they share.

This quasi-parental relationship between the young girl and Joe serves as a counterpoint to Max's relationship with Jo Ann, which is predicated on his borderline pedophilic desires²⁶. Jo Ann's flashback shows the scene where Max first articulates his desires, and then after announcing that he intends to kiss her, he literally forces himself on her despite her repeated protests. Jo Ann is able to fight him off by scratching his

²⁵ The setting of this sequence inside the kitchen of the Simpson residence certainly projects an appropriate familial atmosphere of domesticity, and it also doubles as a platform to foreground Jo Ann's domestic skills and traditional upbringing.

hand, to which he responds “You have sharp nails like a little lamb. Maybe that’s why I like you.” In a later sequence that closes Joe’s second flashback, Charlene has just finished explaining the story of the brooch that Jo Ann gave him, which was a token from Max given “to all the girls that have fallen for him.” After recognizing the identity of Joe’s intended fiancée as having been the source of Max’s obsession, Charlene explains the reasons why the magician was so struck with the young Jo Ann, because she was “so different, so young, so fresh. Like a white rosebud in the morning dew, untouched, unspoiled.” This of course collapses Joe’s notions of his idealized romance with Jo Ann, spoiling his illusions of her untainted love and leading him to his grim confrontation with Max in his apartment²⁷. It is Max’s persistent taunting about his earlier relationship with Jo Ann that sets Joe off in a jealous rage, eventually leading him to shoot cold-bloodedly the magician with a revolver that was originally meant for him. The taunts that get under Joe’s skin revolve around Max’s claim of ‘deflowering’ the virginal Jo. Indeed, Max’s last words that led Joe to fire on him are an insinuation of the details of his conquest.

The confrontation between Joe and Max over Jo Ann’s virginity is a direct repetition of the same conflict that embroiled François and Valentin over Françoise in Le Jour se lève. In both films, ‘ownership’ of the virginal state plays a necessary role in their duel to reinforce their masculine identity. Indeed, François’ mania with regard to this subject is such that he asks Françoise for privileged access to her body²⁸. His brief

²⁶ The stage for their first meeting, where Max’s interest for Jo Ann first surfaces, is in the orphanage where he is giving a show.

²⁷ Max’s occupation as an illusionist adds a layer of irony to his character, serving as an example of how The Long Night reads the extension of his *métier* as an ironic comment about his attitudes about sexual relationships vis-à-vis Joe Adams. In this context, Max can be considered as more of a realist in terms of his attitudes towards the nature of his relationships with women in the film than Joe, who is paralyzed by his illusions of a romantic and chaste love.

²⁸ The screenplay has Françoise asking with timid anxiety “Alors, vous voulez me garder pour vous tout seul?” to which François replies (ignorant of what she may be thinking), “Bien sûr...”

fantasy about winning her love and, by proxy, her virginity, is completely shattered by Clara's testimony about Françoise's brooch, which serves as a signifier of Valentin's sexual conquests. (Clara herself owns the very same brooch and ironically gives it to François as a souvenir as well.) What François' masculinity cannot accept, and what his subjectivity has tried to deny, is that Françoise may indeed be worldlier than he first suspected. The loss of her virginity to another man, albeit an effete pseudo-bourgeois such as Valentin, is a crushing blow to François' masculine ego.

It is clear that Joe is equally obsessed with Jo Ann's virginity, and this preoccupation can be situated within the larger discourse of the crisis of masculinity associated with the returning veteran. The Long Night had already established two of the main problems that characterized the fears surrounding the returning veteran: the possibility of inordinate violence and psychological/psychoneurotic trauma. Both of these fears can be understood in the cultural context of the crisis of masculinity of returning servicemen: the former suggesting an excess of masculinity while the latter can be pointing to its paucity. Max's claim on Jo Ann's virginity may be presented as an intrusion on Joe's idealization of romantic purity, but it more importantly places into question his sexual prowess, thereby doubling as an additional threat to his masculinity in the context of the returning serviceman²⁹. The murder of Max can be seen as having an added dimension in this recontextualization, represented not only as a crime of passion but also as the traumatic climax of a returning war veteran's attempt to reclaim his

²⁹ The problem of sexual anxiety was a major topic in the advice literature surrounding the postwar readjustment of veterans. Both Waller and Bowker dedicate sections of their book discussing the veteran's attitudes and perceptions around private issues such as sexuality and love caused by wartime exposure. This passage from Waller addresses the tension that Joe Adams experiences in The Long Night: "The soldier understands lust. The deprivations of army life intensify it. The soldier also understands idealized love, and that, too, is probably intensified by war." p134.

wounded masculinity and thus resolve his alienation from the society into which he is trying to reintegrate.

The consideration of the returning veteran's crisis of masculinity is enough to provide the greatest difference between the two films. The ending of Le Jour se lève concludes in a nihilistic fashion with the suicide of François at the dawn's early light as a result of his inability to cope with his social and masculine inferiority. At the end of The Long Night, Joe does not end up killing himself since he is brought back from the brink of disaster by the timely intervention of Jo Ann, who has snuck up to his barricaded apartment moments before the police unleash the tear gas. Jo Ann's long-winded pleas to Joe for a peaceful surrender consist of her reiterations of her love and a desperate plea for him not to quit, not only on himself but on the community outside who want to help him through this situation. The final resolution to Joe's alienation is her appeal to his longing for his inclusion into a family structure at a personal level with her and in a larger sense with the community. Jo Ann wards off Joe's loneliness by stating he is not really alone, that he must believe in himself as she and his friends do. Apparently, his reintegration into society is based on this system of reciprocity, and by the end Joe has let go of his doubts and tells Jo Ann that he does indeed believe her when she assures him of a fair trial and, most importantly, that she will wait for him. The anxiety that Joe exhibited about his social reintegration is now replaced by acceptance, not only of himself but of others. Joe's survival provides a sense of optimism for his character that was surely absent from the ending of Le Jour se lève, yet completely necessary for The Long Night, where hope was required to be displayed through the establishment of social harmony during the process of postwar readjustment.

This end sequence imbues the character of Jo Ann with a much more important narrative function in The Long Night than that played by her French counterpart in Le Jour se lève. Jo Ann had already been elevated in The Long Night through the sequence of her flashback within Joe's flashback, providing her with individuation and a narrative voice that had been denied Françoise. Through her ability to pull Joe away from the edge of his suicidal abyss, Jo Ann can now be seen to serve a redemptive function in the crisis of masculinity that paralyzes Joe (and, by extension, all returning veterans during this period.) With the threat of Max now out of the way and the promise of a restoration of domestic harmony on private terms (her promise to wait for him) and public terms (reintegration into the community), Jo Ann breaks Joe's alienating invalidism and helps him to recover his masculinity. The use of Jo Ann as the narrative agent in The Long Night that helps resolve this crisis of masculinity is grounded in a body of contemporaneous advice literature surrounding the "veterans problem" that was aimed at women. Much of this literature shared the traditional assumption that women bore singular responsibility in the family and in caring for men and promoted the view that "the restoration of peace in the postwar environment must lead to the restoration of the *status quo antebellum* in gender relations."³⁰ The rehabilitating function of Jo Ann in The Long Night emerges from this dependence on gendered prescriptions to resolve the reintegration struggles of the veteran where women were encouraged to reestablish

³⁰ In David A. Gerber, "Heroes and Misfits: The Troubled Social Reintegration of Disabled Veterans in The Best Years of Our Lives" in Disabled Veterans in History. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2000) p74. Gerber also recounts how this literature told women to use "the full repertoire of traditional female strategies (mothering, crying, sexual playfulness, etc.) for manipulating men to make the veteran feel at home and to want to reclaim his dominance."

gender barriers by assisting returning servicemen to “reclaim the obligations and prerogatives of manhood.”³¹

In the end, Joe’s victory is his inclusion into the larger family of the community, though he actually surrenders himself back into the community. When Joe is escorted outside the tenement building, he is greeted by the relieved stares of the crowd, with a shot that singles out the surrogate family of Charlene, Bill Pulanski, and the little girl who wears his patch. Just before he is led away, he asks Freddie, a black man who is wearing a similar style of dress as Joe did in the earlier scenes (cloth cap and working clothes) to light his cigarette. In response to Freddie’s question “How ya doin’ Joe?” he answers not in the singular but in the plural: “Think we’ll make it Freddie. Just about make it.” This odd exchange represents the final words of the film, shifting attention away from the newly strengthened romance between Joe and Jo Ann towards a different pairing between Joe and Freddie. The film lumps together blue-collar war vets and black workers as examples of marginalized people who are perceived differently from the “average human beings in the average American town”, whether these differences are perceived to be psychological or physical. A racial discourse intersects with a class/veterans discourse in The Long Night through the friendship of Joe and Freddie, although these are Freddie’s only lines in the film. When Joe says, “we’ll make it” to Freddie, he is including him in his struggle for reintegration into society. It is certainly an allusion to the changing status of African-Americans due to the war, who had increased access to work in the factory due to the lack of personnel and who were forced to leave when the vets came home to reclaim what had previously been theirs. The friendship between Joe and Freddie suggests a metaphoric union between these two

³¹ *Ibid.* p75.

groups that must fight together so that they can 'make it' together. It is perhaps a naïve gesture, but it is entirely consistent with the hope and optimism that conclude The Long Night with its rising music soundtrack and reversing crane shot suggesting that 'justice' will exonerate Joe and provide him the chance to re-enter the community.

Thus, the pessimistic working class drama of Le Jour se lève in pre-war France becomes transformed by The Long Night into an optimistic tale of postwar readjustment for the working class war vet in America. The impact of World War II in The Long Night may not figure prominently onscreen, but its lingering effects permeate the subtext, providing a new context that privileges different readings to modify and update the story of Le Jour se lève. Key to this recontextualization is the manner in which The Long Night translates the psychological breakdown of the working-class François in Le Jour se lève by presenting it as a postwar trauma suffered by Joe Adams, the working-class returning veteran. The complicated flashback structure of Le Jour se lève serves as a ready-made vehicle to use as a narrative device of introspection that matches the popularized psychoanalytic treatment prescribed to shell-shocked veterans in the postwar period. Adding the layer of the returning veteran to the characterization of the main protagonist can thus be seen as the mediating factor in the re-representation of Le Jour se lève as The Long Night. The incorporation of the discourse of the problem of the returning veteran deeply roots The Long Night in its historical moment of production. In this context, The Long Night can be considered along the lines of a social problem film, serving as a dramatic agent for representing the problems and anxieties about

readjustment and reintegration that many veterans and civilians were struggling to understand³².

The case of remaking Le Jour se lève into The Long Night provides an interesting comparison in that the films are so alike yet completely dissimilar at the same time. The significant alterations to the narrative of Le Jour se lève as seen in The Long Night can be taken as elaborations and explanations of certain scenes. Claude Bower alludes to this practice in his contemporary review of The Long Night, where he complains that “all that Carné and Prévert had suggested with gestures, a phrase, a look, Anatole Litvak sprawled out with grand discursive reinforcements and blundering explanations³³.” However, this reading tends to place too much attention on textual fidelity between the source film and the remake, thereby drawing attention away from a consideration of the historical contexts that inform the two films. As I have tried to show in this chapter, by recognizing the shift in socio-historical and cultural contexts in the translation of the Le Jour se lève to The Long Night, it is possible to recognize the manner in which the remake can organize cultural and ideological relations.

³² The Long Night is anchored in an institutional context with other Hollywood films that dramatized the plight of veterans and postwar readjustment. Examples of earlier films that dealt with this theme were The Blue Dahlia (George Marshall, 1946) and The Best Years of Our Lives (William Wyler, 1946). The Long Night also falls into a group of *noir* films of this postwar period that exploited the postwar reintegration of returning servicemen with crime narratives for maximum dramatic effect, such as The High Wall (Curtis Bernhardt, 1947), The Crooked Way (Robert Florey, 1949), and The Clay Pigeon (Richard Fleischer, 1949).

³³ My translation. “tout ce que Carné et Prévert suggéraient avec un geste, une phrase, un regard, Anatole Litvak l’étale à grand renfort de discours et d’explications maladroites.” Bower, p44.

Chapter III

Pépé le Moko (1937) and *Casbah* (1948)

“At the end of my suspension [from Paramount Studios] Billy Wilder spoke of me to Erik Charell, the producer of the famous operetta *The White Horse Inn*. Charell telephoned me to see if I wanted to make *Pépé le Moko*. I read the scenario and found it ridiculous but since I was in a precarious situation, I met with Charell. We redid the scenario and I agreed to direct the film. Charell believed that he had bought the rights from the Hakim brothers, but in fact he had just purchased the right to use the name of *Pépé le Moko*. We therefore had to redo the story.”

- John Berry¹

If we read this opening quotation at face value, legalistic constraints and claims of authorship seem to be the overriding conditions accounting for the changes made to *Pépé le Moko* (Julien Duvivier, 1937) for the production of its Hollywood remake *Casbah* (John Berry, 1948). As Berry's account suggests, a combination of copyright law and a personal discomfort with the source material provided enough impetus to call for significant alterations to the scenario of the French film, alterations that apparently were made at his and Charell's discretion. Without wishing to deny or belittle the contributions of Charell and Berry to this process of cultural translation, the comments above lack consideration of the historical and institutional forces that shape and inform the changes appearing in the remake. An elaboration of some of these forces may provide insight into the nature of those changes occurring in the intercultural adaptation of a specific text.

¹ My translation of an excerpt from an interview with Christian Viviani titled “J’ai eu une vie magnifique” originally published in the French film magazine *Positif* #436 (June 1997). Erik Charell was the associate producer of *Casbah* and is credited for its ‘musical story’. Charell's earlier film credits consisted of several musical-comedies made in Germany and France in the early 1930s before he emigrated to the United States. *The White Horse Inn* was a popular Broadway musical directed by Charell which debuted on Oct 1, 1936 and played for 223 performances. (Online. Entries for ‘Erik Charell’ at the Internet Movie Data Base [<http://www.imdb.com>.] and the Internet Broadway Data Base [<http://www.ibdb.com>.])

The aim of this chapter will be to consider the differences between Casbah and Pépé le Moko as evidence of a cultural translation that allows the remake to be understood as an interpretation of the source film that is determined by the historical and industrial conditions of its moment of production. A brief genealogy tracing the reception of Pépé le Moko in America will introduce the institutional context of the film's relationship with Hollywood leading up to the production of Casbah. A comparison of the two films will examine the alterations to the narrative by identifying the multiple generic elements that circulate in Casbah. It is through the fusion of these generic elements that differences at the level of character, narrative, and visual style will be considered. Ultimately, it is through the examination of this transgeneric identity that Casbah can be seen as a specific interpretation of Pépé le Moko for the moment of its release in the postwar Hollywood landscape.

Pépé le Moko is arguably Julien Duvivier's best-known film and is considered a classic from the "Golden Age of French cinema" of the 1930s. The quick synopsis that follows should suffice as a reminder of its basic narrative trajectory, which in turn will also serve as an easy reference when discussion turns to the analysis of its similarities and differences with Casbah.

Pépé le Moko (Jean Gabin) is a notorious thief who has eluded the French police by hiding out in the Casbah, the native quarter in the city of Algiers where he is safe so long as he stays within its confines. With his small gang, comprised principally of Carlos (Gabriel Gabrio), Jimmy (Gaston Modot), Grand-Père (Saturnin Fabre) and his young protégé Pierrot (Gilbert-Gil), Pépé has been able to continue his criminal activities under the watchful and patient eye of Inspector Slimane (Lucas Gridoux). Described as "le

caïd des caïds”, Pp is well loved by the women in the Casbah, most notably by his gypsy live-in partner Ins (Line Noro). During a botched police raid that fails once again to arrest him, Pp meets the beautiful Parisian tourist Gaby (Mireille Balin), who is vacationing in Algiers with her ‘sugar daddy’ Maxime (Charles Granval) and a group of friends in search of exotic thrills. The instant mutual attraction between Pp and Gaby is further strengthened by their common Parisian working-class backgrounds, which intensifies Pp’s longing to return to France and his loathing of the virtual prison that is the Casbah. Pp’s desire to leave the Casbah is heightened when Pierrot dies after falling into an ambush set up by the informant Rgis (Charpin). Unable to attend Pierrot’s funeral, Pp erupts into a rage and threatens to leave the Casbah in disgust, only to be stopped by Ins who reluctantly informs him that Gaby has returned to the Casbah and is waiting to see him. After making love with Gaby, Pp becomes determined to leave the Casbah and arranges another meeting with her the next day. Slimane deduces Pp’s desires and sets a trap to capture him by informing Gaby that her new lover has been killed. A distraught Pp, unaware of Slimane’s machinations, waits for news of Gaby at the house of the matronly Tania (Frhel), who performs a melancholic ballad whose lyrics punctuate his nostalgia for Paris. After violently questioning another police informant about Gaby’s whereabouts, Pp learns that she is set to sail for France momentarily and he rushes off to the harbor to intercept her. Before Pp is able to find Gaby on the ship, Slimane arrests him, tipped off about his whereabouts by a jealous Ins. The ship leaves with Gaby on the upper deck looking out at the Casbah, unaware that Pp is at the harbor gates futilely calling her name over the shriek of the ship’s whistle. Distraught at this final loss, Pp commits suicide under the

noses of the arresting policemen by plunging a knife into his belly. The film concludes with a point of view shot that rises from Pp's dead body to linger on the departing ship sailing back towards France.

As a Hollywood remake of a French film, Casbah occupies a unique position amongst the films discussed so far in this study. Casbah initially positions itself as a faithful adaptation of Pp le Moko by retaining the main narrative thrust of the source film and leaving many of its diegetic details intact. For instance, the principal characters in Casbah retain their original names from Pp le Moko, and the main settings are not significantly altered by its American studio context. In this way, Casbah foregoes the process of 'Americanization' of these diegetic elements evident in previous remakes such as Scarlet Street and The Long Night. While this strictly superficial sense of continuity may be observed at a diegetic level, it is at the generic level that Casbah differs most visibly from Pp le Moko. This difference is most noticeably signaled by the increased presence of musical spectacle in Casbah. The incorporation of these additional musical sequences has led to the common observation that Casbah remakes Pp le Moko in the generic tradition of the Hollywood musical, where a narrative of romantic courtship is intermittently interrupted (and ultimately supported) by spectacles of song and dance². Indeed, Casbah can be seen as a generic reconfiguration of its source material, as the core elements of the main narrative are retained but are repackaged and represented to conform to the conventions of the Hollywood musical. In doing so, Casbah consequently places greater emphasis on the courtship of Pp and Gaby to the extent that secondary

² For example, in their recent books discussing Pp le Moko both Ginette Vincendeau and Lucy Mazdon are unhesitant in identifying Casbah as a musical using this criterion. In Ginette Vincendeau, Pp le Moko. (London: BFI 1998), p70; and Lucy Mazdon, Encore Hollywood: Rethinking French Cinema. (London: BFI 2000), p31.

plot threads, themes and supporting characters that infused Pépé le Moko with layers of contextual meaning are eliminated from the remake. As I shall detail later in this chapter, the elimination of these secondary elements in Casbah eliminates a network of interconnected cultural references that enriched the discursive dimensions of the relationship between Pépé and Gaby in Pépé le Moko beyond that of a straightforward romantic courtship.

Casbah also retains a distinguished position amongst the other films being discussed due to the fact that it represents the *second* instance in which Hollywood had revisited the story of Pépé le Moko. Preceding Casbah by ten years was Algiers (John Cromwell, 1938), the first Hollywood remake of Pépé le Moko that was produced in the wake of the French film's success. The initial positive reception to Pépé le Moko was favorable enough to draw the notice of M.G.M. Studios, who immediately tried to capitalize on the film's success and prestige by purchasing the rights to Duvivier's film³. However, M.G.M studio chief Louis B. Mayer apparently gave up on trying to redistribute Pépé le Moko in North America after screening the film, concluding that the audience was meant to "sympathize with a criminal who is made out to be a hero by virtue of his love affairs in a North African ghetto"⁴. (Mayer's comments are noteworthy in the sense that they serve as an interpretation of Pépé le Moko that, as we shall see, exerts a considerable influence in shaping the production of both remakes.) The rights to Pépé le Moko were eventually sold to maverick producer Walter Wanger, who had already seen the Duvivier film during his search for possible vehicles for Charles Boyer,

³ The *Variety* review for Pépé le Moko dated March 12, 1937 by its Paris correspondent proclaimed it "one of the best films produced in France this year", predicting "certain box office" success and "a much better chance abroad than most."

his new star under contract recently returned to Hollywood from his native France⁵. To star opposite Boyer's *Pépé*, Wanger also arranged to borrow the exotic Hollywood newcomer Hedy Lamarr from M.G.M. to play the role of Gaby⁶. Along with the domestic rights to *Pépé le Moko*, Wanger had also purchased all the prints of the Duvivier film in order to quash its theatrical exhibition in North America, thus ensuring that any competition with the production of *Algiers* would be prevented. This cutthroat strategy cleared the way for *Algiers* to appear to the American public and the majority of the popular press reviewers unchallenged by its source film during its initial release in the summer of 1938⁷. It was not until four years later that *Pépé le Moko* was finally screened in New York City on March 3, 1941, but even then its potential success was still limited by the regulations of the Production Code Administration (P.C.A.)⁸.

⁴ Recounted in Hedy Lamarr, *Ecstasy and Me: My Life as a Woman*, (New York: Fawcett World Library 1966), p48.

⁵ Wanger's purchase of the rights to *Pépé le Moko* is recounted in Matthew Bernstein, *Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent*. (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press 1994) p143. Charles Boyer was a theatrically trained French actor who made a successful transition to Hollywood in the mid-1930s following his leading roles in French films such as the romantic tragedy *Mayerling* (Anatole Litvak, 1936). Boyer's acting style, characterized by a cool debonair suaveness that was punctuated by his refined Gallic accent (all understood as signifiers of "Frenchness"), played an integral role in the construction of his Hollywood screen persona as an exotic romantic leading man. Boyer played exactly that role in *The Garden of Allah* (Richard Boleslawsky, 1936), a romantic melodrama made two years prior to *Algiers* that paired him opposite the equally exotic and alluring Marlene Dietrich in the Algerian desert. While I am not suggesting that Boyer's role in *The Garden of Allah* be taken as a direct precursor to his later role as *Pépé*, I do want to emphasize that it was this type of role that reinforced and perpetuated his screen persona to the extent that his casting in *Algiers* would be perceived by contemporaneous audiences as a logical extension of his star image.

⁶ *Algiers* was the American film debut of Hedy Lamarr, recently arrived in Hollywood from Czechoslovakia with a notorious screen reputation due to her brief nude scenes and orgiastic close-ups in *Ecstasy* (Gustav Machaty, 1933). *Variety* made reference to Hedy Lamaar and her scandalous background in its review of *Algiers*, dated June 28, 1938, describing her as "the alluring natatorial star of the much censored 'Ecstasy'."

⁷ *Algiers* received favorable critical notice and box-office success which helped to secure industry recognition with four Academy Award nominations for 1938: Best Actor for Charles Boyer, Best Supporting Actor for Gene Lockhart, Best Art Direction for Alexander Toluboff, and Best Cinematography for James Wong Howe.

⁸ Bosley Crowther's review of *Pépé le Moko* in *The New York Times* dated March 4, 1941, states that the film had just "skipped past the New York censors but has failed to get a Hays office seal by a long shot." Although the New York State censors accepted *Pépé le Moko* for regional exhibition, without a Hays office seal (officially a certification granted by the Production Code Administration that marked a film's

The case of Algiers as an earlier remake of the same source material represents an interesting model for the consideration of Casbah, and thus deserves a certain amount of attention. The closeness of Algiers to Pépé le Moko on almost all surface levels (visual, stylistic, casting, costume, soundtrack, and narrative) is such that one is tempted to concur with several critics who considered the Hollywood film a shot-for-shot remake⁹. Indeed, Algiers adhered so closely to Duvivier's film in all these aspects that it is reminiscent of the multi-lingual productions that proliferated at the Paramount studio in Paris during 1930-1933, an observation indirectly raised by Paul-Auguste Harlé, the director of the French film magazine La Cinématographie Française¹⁰. The similarities between the two films were so striking to Harlé that he expressed anxiety about the

adherence to the guidelines of the Production Code), it is doubtful that it would have been exhibited on a wider national basis. Pépé le Moko's problems with the Hays Office stem mainly from its sexual references pertaining to prostitution (the status of the two leading female characters as 'kept women'), Pépé's 'sex appeal' and promiscuity. These references represent a violation of the guidelines of the Production Code, specifically sections II (Sex – where "pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing") and XI.6 (Repellent subjects – forbidding "the sale of women, or a woman selling her virtue). Taken from Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s, (New York: Doubleday 1990), p283-292.

⁹ For example, Otis Ferguson, critic for the *New Republic*, noted the closeness in script and background between the two films, 'even to camera angles'. See Robert Wilson (ed), The Film Criticism of Otis Ferguson, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1971), p342. Algiers also recycled the original score by Vincent Scotto and Mohammed Iqorouchen, and even went so far as to reuse entire footage from Pépé le Moko (seen in the opening 'documentary' sequence about the Casbah). Cinematographer James Wong Howe mimicked the soft-focus, low-key lighting style of Pépé le Moko. Ginette Vincendeau recounts the report that director John Cromwell used a copy of Duvivier's film on the moviola during the shoot. Vincendeau, p67.

¹⁰ Harlé in *La Cinématographie Française* #1038, (September 23 1938) p11. Though the article begins with a discussion of the Hollywood remake as exemplified by Algiers, Harlé decries in much harder terms the practice of multi-lingual versions of films, which involved the successive filming of the same film in two or more languages, using the same production elements but using different actors for a specific spoken language. This practice dated back to the early 1930s as an export strategy to compensate for the transition to sound cinema. Although it is never explicitly stated, the striking resemblance of Algiers to Pépé le Moko in terms of narrative, characterization, and visual style may have led Harlé to link the Cromwell remake to the example of the multi-language production process.

viability of national cinematic productions in the face of the Hollywood remake as exemplified by Algiers¹¹.

However, a closer inspection of the two films reveals that they are not so completely identical as previous commentators like Harlé have alleged. A quick sampling of the critical reception of Algiers in North America shows that some popular press reviewers did recognize and discuss the differences between the remake and its source film. *Variety*'s review of Algiers plainly acknowledged its identity as a remake version of Pépé le Moko and even recounted Walter Wanger's suppression of the source film for domestic exhibition¹². Otis Ferguson of *The New Republic* responded to Algiers as "a nice action picture which Hollywood made out of Pépé le Moko", pointing out the degree to which the action sequences in the remake showcased a heightened physicality in comparison to the source film (this is most noticeable at the outset during the first raid by the French police to arrest Pépé while he is at Grand-Père's house. While this raid sequence in Pépé le Moko comprises short scenes showing Pépé and his gang crawling through the labyrinthine streets of the Casbah while the police fire a few ineffectual shots, the equivalent scene in Algiers steps up the action opportunities by having the police ram through doors and engage in a longer gunfight that culminates in a rooftop chase.¹³) Though Frank S. Nugent of *The New York Times* originally gave Algiers a

¹¹Harlé considered the remake "a danger" to the French film industry as it effectively cut short the career and prestige of a "national production" abroad since the American remake was now being shown (apparently even in French-speaking countries) in place of the French film version. Little did he realize that the practice of the Hollywood remake usurping the place of the French originals on international screens would continue to the present. Fuelling Harlé's caution against this practice is a concern for the preservation of France's projected national image on the international stage as seen through the export of French cinema, a concern that has carried a resonant echo over the years amongst the French critical press in reaction to Hollywood remakes of French films.

¹²"Algiers" *Variety*, June 28, 1938.

¹³See Wilson, p342. Ferguson actually admits to preferring Algiers over Pépé le Moko on the basis of the action sequences, describing the action in the French film as "a little sluggish", displaying "a certain lack of intensity" in comparison to the remake.

glowingly positive review in 1938 (without mentioning its debt to the Duvivier film), his colleague Bosley Crowther dismissed the remake in his later review of Pépé le Moko in 1941. Referring to the films as the “French original” and its “Hollywood-made imitation”, Crowther considered Pépé le Moko “a raw-edged, realistic and utterly frank exposition of a basically evil story” whereas Algiers was simply “a romantic and necessarily cautious retelling of the same.”¹⁴ Crowther goes on to describe Pépé le Moko as a “plain-spoken and *honestly factual account* of a Parisian crook’s exile in the Casbah”, which tells the same story as Algiers but “more trenchantly and with decidedly *more true flavor*”, evidenced by “... the manner in which Mr. Duvivier directed it for *sharp and unadorned reality* [imbuing] it with a firmness to be found only in films which call spades by their names.” (My emphasis.) The manner in which Crowther uses the term ‘reality’ in the context of his review implies a valorization of a narrative and aesthetic treatment of the material that does not shy away from the more sordid and sensational details of the characters, setting, and events of Pépé le Moko. Crowther’s veiled denigration of Algiers as a “romantic” and “cautious” retelling of Pépé le Moko within this context of “realism” denotes a shift in the narrative treatment of the “basically evil” story of the source material towards the generic security of a Hollywood romance for the remake. A closer analysis of the differences between the two films offers a clearer understanding of how Algiers was shaped by these changes to become a “romantic” and “cautious” retelling of Pépé le Moko. Furthermore, this shift in narrative focus in Algiers also extends to Casbah where the decision to emphasize the romantic aspect of the story is reinforced with musical elements that ultimately imposes a generic identity on the source material.

¹⁴ Crowther, Bosley. “Pépé le Moko” *The New York Times*, March 4, 1941.

Crowther's characterization of Algiers as a "necessarily cautious retelling" is an indirect reference to the fact that the remake was forced to 'clean up' some of the more sordid aspects of Pépé le Moko in order to qualify for a Production Code seal. Film historian Matthew Bernstein notes that the first script of Algiers was submitted to the P.C.A in January 1938 as a direct translation of the script of the Duvivier film. This initial draft was deemed "not acceptable" by the P.C.A. due to the narrative aspects pertaining to sexuality, namely the references to prostitution, Pépé's promiscuity and his 'sex appeal'¹⁵. As a result, the primary male-female relationships in Pépé le Moko that were originally defined by their licentious nature were downplayed in Algiers. The relationship between Gaby and her companion Maxime was changed from that of a mistress/bourgeois businessman in Pépé le Moko to those of fiancés in Algiers. Also falling victim to the P.C.A.'s regulation of screen sexuality were references to Pépé's status as a pimp and Inés' identity as his 'kept woman', both of which were excised in the remake. On top of the alterations for sexual content, Algiers was also required to revise the ending of Pépé le Moko to ensure that the final fate of Pépé would not elude the "crime does not pay" morality of the Production Code¹⁶. The American filmmakers were instructed to change the ending of the film so that Pépé did not commit suicide but rather was shot by Slimane's policemen as he chased after the departing boat screaming after

¹⁵ See the entry for "Algiers" in Patricia King and Alan Gevinson, (eds), The American Film Institute Catalog: Feature Films 1931-1940, (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1993), p30, and Matthew Bernstein, Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent. (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press 1994), p143.

¹⁶ A memo from PCA Director Joseph Breen to Walter Wanger dated February 18, 1938 requested a change pertaining to Pépé's suicide at the end "to *escape punishment*" (My italics). See King and Gevinson, p30. Breen's request seems to be in response to Section I of the "Reasons underlying the General Principles" of the Production Code which states that "No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin." Section I.2 elaborates: "Sympathy with a person who sins is not the same as sympathy with the sin or crime of which he is guilty. We may feel sorry for the plight of

Gaby, thereby ensuring his death could not be construed as an escape from lawful punishment. The last scene in Algiers has Slimane kneeling beside a dying Pp, explaining that he was shot because one of his men thought he was trying to escape. Pp's response, before exhaling his last breath, is an affirmative "And so I have, my friend." The final shot is a direct repeat from the same scene in Pp le Moko, tilting up from Pp's corpse to show the departing ship heading out to sea, allowing the spectator to share Pp's last point of view. The ending of Algiers is therefore able to retain some of the poetic resonance that surrounds Pp's death without jeopardizing the authority of the forces of the law to mete out criminal punishment.

If the regulations of the Production Code account for the "cautious" nature of Algiers, then the shift towards romance provides a sense of causality to account for Pp's twin desires for Gaby and Paris. This can be observed in Algiers in its rearrangement of scenes in Pp le Moko from their original narrative context, most notably in the placement of the scene where Pp wistfully looks out at the ships in the harbor and vocalizes his dual weariness with his confinement in the Casbah and his relationship with Ins. In Pp le Moko, this sequence takes place just before the scene where Pp and Ins quarrel over his desire to leave the Casbah, which then leads to the scene where Pp and Slimane have their first conversation about Gaby while walking through the Casbah, wherein Slimane teases Pp with the information of her interest in him. In Algiers, this sequence is situated later in the film after the scene in the hotel where Slimane offers to take Gaby and her friends inside the Casbah to meet Pp, well after the initial conversation between Pp and Slimane about Gaby. Thus Pp in the

the murderer or even understand the circumstances which led him to his crime. We may not feel sympathy with the wrong which he has done." As quoted in Leff and Simmons, p283-292.

French film is already tiring of the Casbah and yearns to return to Paris before he is fully aware of Gaby's interest in him, whereas Pp in Algiers feels the Paris bug only after being given the knowledge of Gaby's desire. The implication of this re-ordered sequence in Algiers is to explain Pp's nostalgia for Paris as explicitly caused by his encounter with Gaby, whereas Pp le Moko reveals that Pp's melancholy about his situation in the Casbah predates his meeting with Gaby, suggesting a deeper malaise and sense of alienation within his character that may not be tied to romantic love.

While this sequential reordering may effectively provide Algiers with the causality needed to strengthen the romance between Pp and Gaby, it shifts attention away from the underlying theme of nostalgia for Paris that informs Pp's relationship with Gaby and reinforces his sense of alienation. This theme is most strongly emphasized in Pp le Moko in the sequence where Tania sings her melancholic ballad for the Paris of her youth to Pp. Ginette Vincendeau points out that Tania's ballad to Pp is titled 'O est-il donc?', a nostalgic song whose lyrics lament a specific conception of a bygone Paris of caf-crmes, bistrots, and the 'moulin de la Place Blanche'¹⁷. The specific references to Paris in Tania's ballad echo Pp's own nostalgia for his home city that found expression in earlier scenes with Gaby (such as his declaration that she reminds him of the caf terrace and the mtro, and most memorably when Gaby and Pp reminisce about Paris by exchanging the names of different mtro stations according to their class trajectories, ending with their simultaneous exchange of 'Place Blanche.'¹⁸) The song's performance in the film is used visually to link this theme of nostalgia as

¹⁷ See Vincendeau, p24-25.

¹⁸ 'Place Blanche' is a topographical reference with social resonance as it represented the meeting place in Paris between working class/criminal Montmartre and the nightclub district of Pigalle. That Pp and

expressed by Tania to Pp at a narrative level, using a long take that starts with a medium shot of Tania singing and tracking up to a faded picture of a young woman before panning left towards a melancholic Pp. This nostalgia acquires an added currency at a self-referential level since Tania is played by Frhel, an actor whose cultural identity was primarily as a celebrated Parisian *chanteuse* during the years prior to World War I and who had since fallen on hard times (the faded picture of the young woman in this scene is of a younger Frhel, thus doubling the nostalgia with its stark contrast to her present corpulence). Indeed, the entire sequence of Tania's ballad can be seen as the final punctuation of the theme of nostalgia in Pp le Moko through its rhyming with previous references in the film as well as falling back on itself.

The theme of nostalgia embedded in the scene of Tania's ballad also addresses the references to social class in the French film evoked by the specificity of the references to Paris. Throughout Pp le Moko, Pp is directly identified with specific references to Parisian social topography that are culturally coded as working class. For example, all the metro stations that Pp names in the exchange with Gaby metaphorically suggest his working class background (just as her stations metaphorically suggest her leisured consumer class). A later conversation with Gaby also reveals that both of them grew up in the working-class neighborhood of 'les Gobelins', and that she can clearly understand his accented *argot*, a form of French slang commonly associated with the working and criminal classes. (Indeed, elements such as vernacular accents played a large part in Jean Gabin's star image, which was based on the projected authenticity of his working-class background, and his later film roles were certainly informed by this extra-cinematic

Gaby would end their exchange at the Place Blanche serves to punctuate the intersection of their class identities. See Vincendeau, p22.

marker.) All these culturally specific references in Pépé le Moko, which reinforce Pépé's alienation in the Casbah in a narrative sense, would undoubtedly be perceived as inaccessible to an American audience. Though Algiers does retain the sequence of the metro exchange described earlier, this scene in the remake loses much of its social dimension for an American audience whose unfamiliarity with Parisian social topography would probably lead to a consideration of these locations as part of a larger homogenized version of Paris. This homogenizing effect also extends to the accents used by the characters in Algiers, which do not carry any social weight in the same context as their equivalents in Pépé le Moko¹⁹. Though he speaks English throughout Algiers, Boyer's French accent sounds more tonally refined than Gabin's in Pépé le Moko, infusing the character with his own star image that thrived off his background as "a highbrow actor in the bourgeois theatrical tradition."²⁰ In this context, Boyer's turn as Pépé offers a simple, generalized conception of his "Frenchness" that strips away the added social dimension that Gabin brought to the character. This generalizing process is also mirrored in a larger degree by the way that Algiers presents Paris as a generic homogeneous construction as opposed to a socially and culturally specific space.

The theme of nostalgia that pervades Pépé le Moko is associated with culturally specific references that may not have been accessible to a general American audience. Algiers resolves the question of cultural specificity in the theme of nostalgia by shifting attention away from this theme as a driving force in the narrative and reemphasizing the romantic aspects of the story. This is most strongly punctuated by the complete absence

¹⁹ Well-known Hollywood character actors such as Alan Hale (Grandpère), Gene Lockhart (Régis), and Stanley Field (Carlos) were chosen to play members of Pépé's gang in Algiers. While they may conform to the physical models of their French counterparts, their use of 'tough' American accents and vernacular hinders their illusion.

in Algiers of the scene containing Tania's ballad. The additional scenes and alterations discussed above also demonstrate how Algiers subtly reshaped the source material of Pépé le Moko so that it not only conformed to the regulations surrounding sexual content, but also to the generic conventions of classical Hollywood cinema. That is, Algiers rewrites Pépé le Moko as a film in the Hollywood tradition by emphasizing a sense of narrative causality to provide necessary motivation for the romance between Pépé and Gaby. This narrative shift in Algiers thus strengthens the romantic elements of the story by simultaneously weakening the focus on Pépé's sense of alienation that found support in the theme of nostalgia for Paris. The changes from Pépé le Moko to Algiers serve as a good example of how the source material was appropriated towards the familiar generic conventions of Hollywood cinema, as well as acting as a sort of historical barometer that highlights the limits of how this specific narrative can be presented across cultural boundaries at a particular historical moment. Algiers thus serves as a useful example of how the remake acted in this instance as an institutionally sanctioned and sanitized adaptation of its source film.

The popularity of Pépé le Moko was sustained ten years after the release of Algiers when Hollywood revisited the story a second time with the production of Casbah²¹. This new version of the by now familiar story retained the diegetic alterations that Algiers had made to Pépé le Moko (such as the redefined relationships between Gaby and her fiancé, and the 'shot-down-by-the-law' ending) and pushed the emphasis on the

²⁰ See Vincendeau, p68 for her description of Charles Boyer and his acting background.

²¹ Though Pépé le Moko finally made its American theatrical debut in March 1941, the popularity of the story and the character in America was most likely sustained by the *Lux Radio Theatre* broadcast of Algiers on July 7, 1941, with Charles Boyer and Hedy Lamarr reprising their cinematic roles. The success of this radio broadcast led Charles Boyer to repeat his *Lux Radio Theatre* performance on December 14, 1941, this time with Loretta Young co-starring as Gaby. In King and Gevinson, The American Film Institute Catalog: Feature Films 1931-1940, p31.

romantic aspect of the story even further, resulting in a much looser approach to the re-presentation of the source film. Though Casbah does stick to the basic skeleton of the main plot by repeating several key scenes from Pépé le Moko, it also places an extra layer of musicality on the film that effectively introduces an added generic element. Indeed, a close consideration of Casbah highlights the convergence of several generic elements that circulate in the film. Examining how the discourses of these generic elements function in Casbah within the context of its lineage could thus offer a greater understanding of the remake's interpretive possibilities.

Casbah was produced in 1948 by the independent production company Marston Pictures Incorporated and distributed by the larger studio Universal-International Pictures²². Records indicate that the principal shareholders in Marston Pictures were Hollywood agent Nat C. Goldstone and popular crooner/actor Tony Martin, each of whom had a vested interest in Casbah since they served as the film's producer and lead male actor respectively²³. The generic identity of Casbah as a musical is strongly tied to Martin's star image at the time of production, which in turn affects the film's identity as a remake of Pépé le Moko. To understand the effect of Martin's star image on the film, it is worthwhile to take a look at the development of his career leading up to Casbah.

²² In terms of a production context, Casbah is historically situated within the Hollywood studio system's "in-house independent productions" that saw a boom in the immediate postwar years. Tough industry conditions and an unstable marketplace nudged studios such as Universal-International Pictures to employ "more defensive market strategies", relying on in-house independent producers and outside talent for "high-volume, low-cost formula films." Reissues also became a veritable programming staple in the late 1940s: studios reissued 20 films in 1946, forty in 1947, 105 in 1948, and 136 in 1949. As a remake (albeit a *second* remake of a popular story), Casbah can be situated within these two institutional practices. In Thomas Schatz in his Boom and Bust: The American Cinema in the 1940s. (New York: Scriber 1997) p292, 329-352.

²³ As noted in the entry for "Casbah" in Patricia King and Alan Gevinson, (eds), The American Film Institute Catalog: Feature Films 1941-1950, (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1993), p389-390.

The collaboration between Goldstone and Martin on Casbah was the culmination of a long partnership that originated in 1935 when Goldstone began acting as Martin's agent for the singer's transition to Hollywood. At that time, Martin was performing under his given name of 'Alvin Morris' where his caressing vocal style, personable stage presence, and smooth good looks shaped his star image as a romantic crooner on radio broadcasts and the California nightclub circuit. After an unsuccessful screen test at M.G.M. studios, Goldstone eventually arranged for Martin to sign a contract with R.K.O. studios in 1935, where he changed his name to 'Tony Martin' at the studio's insistence. Martin's stint at R.K.O. amounted to nothing more than uncredited bit parts in two-reel shorts, so when the studio released him he quickly landed at 20th Century Fox in 1936, where he had minor roles in 'B' films such as Banjo on my Knee (John Cromwell, 1936) and Ali Baba Goes to Town (David Butler, 1937). The early 1940s saw Martin elevated to leading role status in 'B' films such as Music in My Heart (Joseph Santley, 1940), starring opposite Rita Hayworth, and in several 'A' films such as M.G.M.'s lavish Ziegfeld Girl (Robert Z. Leonard, 1941) where he was paired with Hedy Lamarr. In all of these films, Martin was limited to playing lightweight roles that hinged on his primary star image as a crooner (he sang in all of them), a persona that he continued to sustain and nurture with his nightclub acts, his constant recording with labels such as Mercury and R.C.A. Victor, and his regular appearances on radio shows such as "Tune-up Time"²⁴.

Though Martin's career was certainly on the rise during the 1940s, he was not the only popular singer who enjoyed onscreen success in Hollywood. Martin's dual success in the recording industry and the film industry during this period can be contextualized

²⁴ The information about Tony Martin's early career, including the anecdote about the origins of his stage name, is taken from Laura Wagner, "Tony Martin – Hollywood's singing Romeo". 1998. Online.

with the early Hollywood career of Frank Sinatra, another famous crooner who was concurrently making inroads into the movies. At the start of the 1940s, Sinatra was fronting for the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, with whom he made his first onscreen appearance in a minor role in Las Vegas Nights (Ralph Murphy, 1941). During this early stage of his career, Sinatra's star image was considered highly feminized due to his popularity and appeal to a pre-dominantly female audience of bobbysoxers who mobbed him at any chance. His physique also contributed to this effete image: he was referred to as a "skinny weakling" and "half a man", and was routinely the butt of jokes and caricatures centering on his body²⁵. Sinatra's Hollywood career really took off after he began his solo career in 1942 with his starring roles in R.K.O.'s Higher and Higher (Tim Whelan, 1943) and M.G.M.'s Anchors Aweigh (George Sidney, 1945). By 1946, Sinatra was already co-starring with Martin in M.G.M.'s musical extravaganza Till the Clouds Roll By (Richard Whorf, 1946) and was vying with him for roles in films designed as vehicles to showcase their vocal talents²⁶. Sinatra's effete star image began to change in 1947 when stories about his physically aggressive encounters with the press and his relationships with Mafia-connected figures like Charles "Lucky" Luciano were heavily circulated and publicized. Though these incidents had a temporary negative effect on Sinatra's career, they mainly served to shift the public perception of his star image away

<http://www.classicimages.com/1998/february98/tonymartin.html>

²⁵The references to Frank Sinatra's career and star image during the 1940s are taken from Keir Keightley, "Singing, Suffering, Sinatra: Articulations of Masculinity and Femininity in the career of Frank Sinatra, 1953-1962", unpublished paper presented to the Society of Cinema Studies, March 1994. Keightley observes that Sinatra's star image underwent a transformation away from the feminized "dandy with boyish sex appeal" of the 1940s towards a more complex screen persona that alternated between processes of masculinization and feminization in the films of the 1950s.

²⁶In a recent interview, Tony Martin recounted that he was originally cast as the lead in the Western musical The Kissing Bandit (Laslo Benedek, 1948) but a row with producer Joe Pasternak cost him the part. The title role eventually was taken up by Frank Sinatra. From Laura Wagner, "A Conversation with Tony Martin". 1998. Online. <http://www.classicimages.com/1998/january98/martin.html>.

from his persona as a “softly crooning femme-man” towards a public identity that constructed him as a “thug” and a “dangerous, mobster-connected figure.”²⁷ The association with criminality that surrounded Sinatra in the late 1940s can be seen to play an important role in the (re)construction of his star image, lessening the stigma of femininity attached to his “dandy”/crooner persona in order to confirm his “toughness” and thus articulate a more conventional representation of masculinity to his public identity.

The consideration of Frank Sinatra’s evolving star image alongside Tony Martin’s provides an opportunity to understand how Martin’s star image evolved within an institutional context. Though Tony Martin’s persona never suffered from the same associations with crime as Frank Sinatra, it is noteworthy that his star image also incorporated references to criminality as a way of supplementing his crooner persona by capitalizing on similar connotations surrounding conventional representations of masculinity. Martin’s anecdote about the origins of his stage name is particularly relevant in this context. The contract that Martin signed with R.K.O. in 1936 required that he adopt a new stage name for promotional purposes since ‘Alvin Morris’ was seen to lack star presence. Martin recounts that he chose the surname ‘Martin’ at the behest of a young woman that he was involved with who happened to be a fan of the Freddy Martin Orchestra, whereas his first name was taken from a pulp magazine that he was reading that serialized the story of ‘Tony’, an “interesting character” who was “a gambler from

²⁷ The description of Sinatra as a “femme-man” is taken from Albert Goldman, whom Keightley quotes in his paper. Keightley also recounts that press accounts of the day portrayed Sinatra as a thug and a hoodlum, as well as branding him with an aura of danger due to his connections with the mob.

Maryland”²⁸. Alvin Morris was thus transformed into “Tony Martin”, a public identity that fused popular notions of feminine appeal, show business musicality, and tabloid criminality. The publicity discourse surrounding Martin also helped popularize the masculine side of his star image as the Hollywood press machine played up his matinee idol good looks and heightened his romantic persona by ensuring that he was seen escorting Lana Turner, Rita Hayworth, and other glamorous Hollywood starlets to lavish social engagements. All these points taken together suggest a conscious effort to repackage Tony Martin as a cultural production whose star image was able to straddle the masculinized and feminized aspects of his crooner persona.

Though Martin’s choice of playing Pp le Moko in Casbah may initially seem to be a case of casting against type, the role does not seem to be too drastic a departure from his star image as a crooner. Algiers had already demonstrated that the role of Pp could be used successfully to exploit the combination of feminine appeal, glamorous romance, and criminality²⁹. The decision to remake Pp le Moko in Martin’s image may have taken inspiration from M.G.M.’s Yolanda and the Thief (Vincente Minelli, 1945), a lavishly produced musical that had fellow song-and-dance man Fred Astaire playing against type as a con man involved in a romantic courtship that took place in an exotic setting. Indeed, Astaire’s success with Yolanda and the Thief introduces an institutional context that anchors Casbah in the postwar Hollywood vogue for fantastical generic productions set in exotic locales, such as Kismet (William Dieterle, 1944), Tangier

²⁸ Martin’s anecdote about the origins of his stage name is taken from the aforementioned “A Conversation with Tony Martin”.

²⁹ The use of the role of Pp as an agent for stardom for Tony Martin is reminiscent of the publicity discourse surrounding Charles Boyer and the use of Algiers as a star vehicle. Clearly, Martin wished to repeat the success that the role of Pp le Moko gave to Charles Boyer in Algiers. Indeed, Boyer’s success with the role of Pp led him to extend his cross-media celebrity with the *Lux Radio Theatre* broadcasts.

(George Waggoner, 1946) and A Night in Casablanca (Archie Mayo, 1946). As well, Martin's Hollywood career had reached a stage that allowed him the freedom to choose his next role since he had finished his contractual obligations with M.G.M. in 1946 and was not attached to any studio. In this context, Casbah can be understood as Martin's self-financed bid for a vehicle that would fully exploit his vocal talents and elevate him to leading man status on a production that would refashion the familiar story of a popular character in his image.

The burden of Martin's star image thus forces an increased dimension of self-referential musicality to Casbah. A dimension of self-referential musicality is certainly present in Pépé le Moko in the form of two extended sequences of musical spectacle highlighted by a singing performance. The first is the already mentioned scene featuring Tania's ballad, and the second is an earlier scene where Pépé sings gaily atop the rooftop terraces in celebration of his first intimate rendezvous with Gaby. Tania's musical sequence has been previously noted as retaining an aura of self-referentiality (and self-reflexivity) to Fréhel's own career as a *chanteuse*, and a similar claim can be extended to the consideration of Pépé's singing sequence as a reference to Jean Gabin's own formative years as a music-hall performer³⁰. The casting of Tony Martin for the role of Pépé follows this conscious interplay between actor, star persona, and narrative role that was on display in the musical sequences of Pépé le Moko³¹. However, Casbah takes the

Martin, of course, wished to follow the path left by Boyer, albeit in the opposite direction, that is, from radio to the screen.

³⁰ Gabin's early film career in the 1930s was highlighted by roles that exploited his music hall and vaudeville background in films such as Coeur de Lilas (Anatole Litvak, 1932) and Zou Zou (Marc Allégret, 1934). Indeed, Gabin started his cinema career by starring in Chacun sa chance (Hans Steinhoff/René Pujol, 1930), the film version of the comic vaudeville play of the same name.

³¹ In an article analyzing the musicals of Fred Astaire, Steven Cohan notes the manner in which Astaire's characters in these films are completely shaped by his star persona and extrapolates this phenomenon as endemic across the musical genre. "In no other Hollywood genre does the star persona of a performer so

musical self-referentiality of Gabin's star persona found in this one sequence from Pépé le Moko and translocates it to Tony Martin on a scale that encompasses and dominates the entire film.

The domination of Tony Martin's star persona over the production of Casbah is given its most audible representation in the film's soundtrack. Unlike Algiers, which reused whole portions of Pépé le Moko's musical soundtrack, an entirely different musical score was composed for Casbah. Highlighting this revised score were four original songs written specifically to suit Martin's singing style: "For Every Man There's a Woman", "Hooray for Love", "It Was Written in the Stars", and "What's Good about Goodbye"³². The nature of the songs and the manner in which they are integrated into the narrative of Casbah demonstrates the degree to which Martin's star image shaped this retelling of Pépé le Moko. Whether it be an initial declaration of desire, a celebration of camaraderie, an assertion of the role of destiny in the romance, or a ballad for the apparent failure of the romance, a song's performance by Martin in Casbah is always linked to, motivated by, and supportive of the needs of a courtship narrative (a narrative which Pépé le Moko is not.)

Since the songs in Casbah are dedicated to the themes of romantic courtship, there is no need for the remake to carry over Tania's lament for the past in Pépé le Moko.

overwhelm and thus overdetermine characterization because it is primarily through the spectacle of its stars, rather than through the course of its stories, that the musical makes most sense to audiences." In Steven Cohan. "Feminizing the Song-And-Dance Man" in Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (eds), Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema, (New York: Routledge 1993), p 61. Similarly, Vincendeau also writes that the role of Pépé was a 'perfect match' for Jean Gabin, a near perfect conflation of star image and character, going so far as to assign Gabin authorial status on the same level as the director, Julien Duvivier. p27-30.

³² The four original songs for Casbah were written by celebrated Hollywood songwriters Harold Arlen and Leo Robin. Robin served as the lyricist for the songs in Casbah, and Arlen had worked on several renowned tunes in Hollywood, winning an Oscar for "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from The Wizard of Oz (1939). The two songwriters were rewarded for their work on Casbah with a nomination for an

Consequently, Casbah follows the example of Algiers by also eliminating the musical sequence that spotlighted Tania's ballad. The character of Tania and her musical sequence have already been singled out for their importance to the narrative of Pépé le Moko in relation to the theme of nostalgia for Paris that ultimately fuels Pépé's alienation and desires. The absence of a parallel scene in Casbah points to the elimination of this theme as a driving force in the narrative. (Indeed, Casbah eliminates the character of Tania altogether!) Since the theme of nostalgia has no real narrative power in Casbah, the tension between the alienation that Pépé feels in the Casbah and his doubled desires for Gaby and Paris is completely lost. Instead, dramatic tension in Casbah is shifted toward the narrative conflict that arises between Pépé's criminal identity and its effect upon the romantic courtship with Gaby (now played by Swedish newcomer Marta Toren). Casbah deals with this narrative conflict in the film within a generic framework that uses the combined discourses of the crime film and the Hollywood musical to represent the story of Pépé le Moko in an institutional context compliant with Tony Martin's star image.

A comparison of how each film treats Pépé's first onscreen appearance illustrates how the remake mobilizes the discourses of romance and criminality to play up their conflict within the narrative. The openings of Casbah and Pépé le Moko are similar in that both films begin with sequences designed to establish Pépé's reputation as a notorious thief. In Pépé le Moko, this sequence consists of a briefing held in the police headquarters of Algiers where Parisian police officers argue the importance of capturing Pépé, who has eluded them for the past two years at the cost of five of their colleagues.

Academy Award for Best Song in 1948 for their composition "For Every Man there's a Woman". See King and Gevinson, p389.

After establishing the objective of the police to capture the Casbah's most notorious gangster, the scene fades into a shot of Pp's hands as he admires some recently stolen pearls that he is trying to pawn to Grand-Pre. Here, Pp is explicitly associated with criminality when he is first introduced both offscreen and onscreen. It is only later in the film during the initial police raid that his amorous qualities are foregrounded when a young Arab woman confides to Gaby his reputation as "le *cad des cads*" (the chief of all chiefs) and Slimane confirms his sexual prowess by stating that "when Pp dies, there will be 3000 widows at his funeral."

Casbah opens along similar lines as its predecessor with a scene inside the office of the *prfet de police* Louvain (Thomas Gomez), who is trying to organize a plan with Inspector Slimane (Peter Lorre) to capture the Casbah's most famous resident. The conversation between Louvain and Slimane establishes Pp as a high profile criminal who is disrupting the tourism industry in Algiers due to his "128 cases of theft from rich tourists in the past two months". Once Pp/Martin's identity as a criminal threat is set up offscreen, the sequence that introduces him onscreen effectively reverses the order in which Pp's dual nature is revealed, introducing him as a lover first, a criminal second. Significantly, Pp/Martin's onscreen introduction in Casbah is a repeat of the same musical sequence in Pp le Moko where Pp/Gabin is singing and dancing in elation over his first intimate encounter with Gaby. Casbah re-stages the sequence in a similar fashion to Pp le Moko, relying on similar staging, shots, and mise-en-scne. However, its placement within the narrative chronology is now shifted to the start of the film in order to introduce Pp/Martin through his solo performance of "For Every Man There's a Woman". Not surprisingly, Pp/Martin is audible before he is visible, introduced here

first by his voice on the soundtrack (a nod to his star image as a crooner) before he actually appears onscreen as a spectacle for an adoring audience of native female onlookers on the rooftop terraces of the Casbah. In a narrative context, this sequence establishes Pp/Martin primarily as both an object of desire and a desiring object. Here he is on display as a spectacle for his audience (both diegetic and extra-diegetic), while his singing voice enunciates his desire to search for his ideal mate (“Where is she? Where is she? Where is the/ woman for me?”). Pp’s bodyguard Maurice (Curt Conway) stands sentry to ensure that no one can interrupt this articulation of desire, not even the arrival of fellow gang member Max (Barry Bernard) with information pertinent to their criminal operations³³. Only when Pp/Martin has completed his song can he resume his role as the leader of his gang of thieves and the business of crime be discussed. This opening sequence in Casbah accomplishes two overlapping objectives that help set the film up to be understood under the generic conventions of the Hollywood musical: a) introducing Pp’s conflicting identities as a lover and a criminal in a manner that prioritizes his amorous inclinations over his role as the notorious thief wanted by the police, and b) privileging the arrest of narrative progression in favor of musical spectacle.

In a narrative sense, Casbah focuses all of its energies on the romance between Pp and Gaby. Pp’s serenades and overtures to Gaby are completely consistent within the context of a musical, where the courtship of the lovers is predestined (or to quote Pp in Casbah, “it was written in the stars”). By privileging the romantic element of the narrative, Casbah has no need to retain the minor characters and subplots that fuelled the

³³ Maurice seems to be Casbah’s version of Jimmy (Gaston Modot) in Pp le Moko in that both characters are members of Pp’s gang who are mute throughout the entire film. However, Maurice’s muteness is used advantageously in Casbah, placed alongside Pp/Martin as a silent counterpart to accentuate the vocal presence of the crooner.

secondary themes of alienation, isolation and nostalgia in Pépé le Moko. For example, Casbah reduces the presence of Pp's gang (Vincendeau refers to them as Pp's 'male family') so that any narrative energy reserved for developing these homosocial relationships would be fully redirected to the romantic relationship with Gaby. An important casualty of this reduction is the elimination of Pierrot, the young proteg of Pp who plays an integral role in the development of his mentor's ongoing alienation in the Casbah. Pierrot's death in Pp le Moko (and Algiers) acts as one of the main catalysts for Pp's heightened desire to get out of the Casbah. The important paternal role that Pp enjoys with Pierrot could not even be completely fulfilled since his imprisonment denies his attendance at his proteg's funeral. This failure finds its explosive expression in the scene in the bar where a drunk and distraught Pp erupts in an outburst of rage against the Casbah and his predicament. The elimination of Pierrot in Casbah significantly reduces the impact of Pp's isolation and alienation within the Casbah in order to present the romance with Gaby as the sole reason for his discontent. In this way, Casbah is able to maintain the importance and integrity of its core narrative of romantic courtship by discarding narrative elements that could possibly take attention away from it.

The narrative integration of the musical numbers to handle spectacles of courtship certainly adds weight to the romantic elements of the story, shifting the overall tone of Casbah away from the darker undertones of Pp le Moko recalled by Bosley Crowther in his earlier review and towards what Lucy Mazdon characterizes as a "gentler, more sentimental approach to the narrative"³⁴. This gentler tone certainly informs some of the ways in which crime is represented in Casbah, which plays a larger role in this remake

than in Pépé le Moko. Indeed, Casbah offers the discourse of crime an added narrative weight by including more scenes showing Pépé involved with criminal activity than was previously seen in either of its predecessors. Some of these scenes are played in a manner that is consistent with the light tone dictated by the musical numbers and Martin's star persona. For example, a short sequence shows Pépé's thievery reduced to sleight-of-hand pickpocketing, stealing the pearl earrings right off the ears of an unsuspecting tourist. Another prolonged scene following the introductory sequence shows Pépé at his most persuasive when he charmingly strong-arms Anton Duval aka "George the Fence" (Houseley Stevenson) into purchasing silverware stolen from the American embassy by his gang. This scene is treated almost in a comic manner and Pépé is presented without a hint of threat or menace (he even releases George the Fence with a slap on the back and a laugh after reminding him of a previous debt dating back to their time in Paris.)

Though crime is initially presented in a lighthearted manner in Casbah, its tone takes a darker turn later in the film when Pépé is shown to be directly responsible for the murder of Carlo, giving the order to Maurice to execute the offscreen strangulation. Though this execution could be seen as justified from Pépé's point of view (Casbah redefines Carlo as an informant for Louvain who has now betrayed Pépé), this act of murder would of course not go unpunished in a narrative sense, especially in the context of the Production Code-enforced Hollywood cinema. Along with all the previous scenes described above, Carlo's execution scene reinforces Pépé's criminal identity to support the film's need to show him in *the act of committing crime* in order to reach a conclusion that satisfies the conventions of the generic crime film.

³⁴ Mazdon p35.

Casbah ends with Pp/Martin being held by Slimane, who has arrested him trying to catch up with Gaby at an airport (presumably in Algiers) where she is catching a flight back to Paris. As her airplane takes off, Pp breaks free from Slimane's men and runs to the tarmac, only to be shot by his captors in a scene mirroring the narrative conclusion of Algiers (again, Pp is not allowed to commit suicide). The sequence ends with Slimane cradling the wounded Pp in his arms and passing a cigarette in the mouth of his captive, who concedes "You win, Slimane"³⁵, thereby fulfilling the prerogative of the generic crime film that dictates that no crime will go unpunished by the forces of the law. Yet this ending also guarantees that the musical's generic promise of the (heterosexual) couple's reunion³⁶ will not be fulfilled. As Pp's criminal identity provides the necessary blockage against the fulfillment of his romantic endeavors, so too do the conventions of the crime film block the imperatives of the generic musical film. The generic conventions in Casbah are thus structurally organized in a hierarchy that asserts the dominance of an ideological discourse favoring the re-establishment of a lawful order over the consummation of individual desire. In doing so, Casbah is able to preserve the ideological agenda of Algiers against the generic expectations of the Hollywood musical. Neither fully a musical nor fully a crime film, Casbah can best be understood as a hybrid of the two generic forms, which therefore suggests an

³⁵ It is worthwhile to note that although *Casbah* shows Pp having been shot, the film is not clear as to whether it is a mortal wound. As he lies in Slimane's arms in a mock post-coital repose (replete with lit cigarette), Pp's verbal concession does not end with an onscreen death. Martin does not go through the same acting motions as Gabin or Boyer for this scene: the closing of the eyes, the limpness of the neck, the turning of the head, or any other actions that are coded as death throes. If Martin/Pp is denied death at the end of *Casbah*, then it suggests that Pp still lives to receive corporal punishment (incarceration) and emotional punishment (knowledge that his romance with Gaby did not really fail as opposed to being sabotaged). Of course, this is a minor detail since the outcome is the same in the context of the conventions of the crime film: the police still got their man.

³⁶ I parenthesize the word 'heterosexual' to describe the reunion of the couple at the end of *Casbah* in this sentence because I do not want to close the possibility of reading Slimane's capture of Pp as a reunion with a homosexual subtext.

interpretation of the source film on purely generic terms. Breaking down *Pépé le Moko* into generic units can then be understood in relation to the Americanization of its source film as a way for *Casbah* to situate the remake of the French film in the institutional context of standardized Hollywood genre production.

Previous discussions concerning the generic identity of *Casbah* have tended to focus on the prominence of the musical numbers, thus limiting discussion to the mere recognition of the added presence of songs and music emanating from the diegesis to emphasize the narrative of romantic courtship between Pépé and Gaby³⁷. As a result, *Casbah* is simply referred to as a musical without any further discussion of other generic possibilities. This is simply not the case with respect to *Variety*'s review of *Casbah* during its initial theatrical release, where the film was described as a "romantic melodrama" with a "musical story"³⁸. Steve Neale notes the term 'romantic melodrama' is "a hybrid term used to indicate a hybrid film, a film which mixes elements of the thriller with an element of romance"³⁹. Neale adds: "what motivates the use of the term 'melodrama' here may not be the element of romance itself but a particular – perhaps feminine - version of the tensions and thrills putatively offered men by thrillers and action films"⁴⁰. Taking this designation of 'melodrama' under consideration tantalizingly suggests that *Casbah* contained elements that were seen to address the female segment of the audience, a notion that Vincendeau touches upon when she remarked that contemporary reviews of *Casbah* (and *Algiers*) made note of the films' special appeal to

³⁷ As seen in both Mazdon and Vincendeau's discussions of *Casbah* as a musical. Neither of them elaborates in any detail exactly what this generic designation implies, nor how this generic element transforms the source material.

³⁸ As described in *Variety*'s review of *Casbah* dated March 5, 1948.

³⁹ In Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, (New York: Routledge 2000), p105.

⁴⁰ Neale, p187.

women⁴¹. Though Vincendeau does not provide citations for this claim, there is sufficient evidence in Casbah that would support it. Certainly, the sentimental approach to the romantic aspects of the story and the fashionable glamour that accompanies Marta Toren's portrayal of Gaby could be taken as having appeal to a female audience. There is, however, one glaring instance in Casbah that undoubtedly offers the spectator a female point of identification within the narrative. This instance takes place at the very last shot of the movie, just after the shot with Slimane holding the wounded Pp on the tarmac. The shot in question is an aerial shot looking down at the Casbah. That is, a shot taken from the point of view of the same airplane that took off moments before, carrying the saddened Gaby who believed Slimane's lie that her Pp had been killed by a jealous lover. Giving this final image of the film back to Gaby allows the spectator to see what she sees, sharing her last look at the city where her love affair with a famous rogue ended in tragedy. The special appeal to women seen in Casbah finds its greatest expression in the assignment of this last shot to Gaby's point of view. Sharing Gaby's gaze thus provides spectator identification with her sorrow over the loss of her romantic dreams and her lover. This ending is significantly different from the endings of Pp le Moko and Algiers whose final shots were from Pp's point of view showing the ship leaving the harbor to go back to Paris, thereby allowing the spectator the identification with his losses. Focusing on Gaby's last glimpses of the Casbah (and by extension, Pp) punctuates the end of the romantic story arc of the film along with the film itself, providing the necessary closure for the generic elements of the musical story to be resolved.

⁴¹ Vincendeau, p71.

The description of Casbah as a “romantic melodrama” with a “musical story” by an industry trade magazine such as *Variety* suggests the degree to which the generic hybridity of the film was acknowledged during its initial theatrical presentation. *Variety*'s consideration of Casbah as a combination of discrete generic units leads to the discussion of the film's production values, where the “atmospheric art direction and set decorations, and costumes” were singled out for their excellence and their ability to add “color to the melodramatics⁴².” Though the review does not develop this train of thought much further, it is noteworthy that an implicit link is made here between the visual representation of the Casbah and the role that it plays within the film's narrative. Since the narrative of Casbah is heavily influenced by the generic itineraries of the musical and the crime film, the setting of the Casbah effectively provides a space where these two generic discourses can co-exist as a site for both romance and danger. The exoticized space of the Casbah can then be seen as a common narrative element that provides the necessary mediation for the combined generic discourses of the musical and the crime film in Casbah.

The manner in which Casbah constructs its exoticized locale to inform the two generic discourses is relevant here as it points to different cultural approaches to orientalist discourse. Following Edward Said, the invocation of the discourse of Orientalism here is meant to be understood as “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in (European) Western experience⁴³.” In this context, the French colonial experience plays a large role in informing the representation of the Casbah in Pépé le Moko, visually constructing this space through the reproduction

⁴² Again, taken from *Variety*'s review of Casbah.

⁴³ As clarified in the introduction of Edward Said, Orientalism. (New York: Vintage, 1979) pp1-2.

of iconographic motifs circulating in the French public imagination, most notably gleaned from the literature and postcard images from the edge of Empire⁴⁴. As a Hollywood film, Casbah does not (and cannot) draw upon a similar colonial experience for its representation of the exotic, mainly due to the absence of an institutionalized colonial experience in American culture⁴⁵. As a result, Casbah approaches the representation of its exotic locale from a distanced perspective, using a touristic discourse at a narrative level to mediate the exoticism by presenting the Casbah as a leisured space where the action of the film is to take place while also falling back on previous motifs and conventions used in earlier Hollywood films to engage the exotic at a visual level.

Set in the native quarter of the French colony of Algiers, the visual construction of the Casbah in Casbah is heavily weighted with undertones of tourism, which form a “discreet sub-text to Pépé le Moko” according to Vincendeau. This tourism sub-text in Pépé le Moko is retained to provide the native quarter an even larger spatial role in Casbah. The Casbah of Casbah is presented as a sanitized environment of open spaces where large groups of tourists with small children in tow can be guided by the portly tour guide Omar (Hugo Haas) to visit “a typical Moorish café” or gather at the Place de la Girafe where “the most wonderful dancers and musicians will play for you” during the festival of Ramadan. As well, Odette’s Café becomes a centralized resort space within the native quarter where tourists can gather to dine, dance, or gamble the evening away before returning to their glamorous suites at the Hotel Oasis in Algiers. These spaces function as tourist landmarks within the narrative, highlighting the allure and exotic

⁴⁴ Vincendeau, p53-59.

⁴⁵ In his introduction to Orientalism, Edward Said remarked that the American understanding of the Orient would be “considerably less dense” in comparison with a European perspective due to the lack of colonial experience. Edward Said, Orientalism. (New York: Vintage, 1979), pp1-2.

appeal of the locale as a space of leisure that offers the possibilities for narratives of romantic adventure. This touristic discourse also extends to the way Paris is referenced in Casbah. In an exchange of dialogue that is supposed to mirror the famous recital of Parisian metro stations in Pépé le Moko, Pépé and Gaby's shared memories of Paris are limited only to the popular landmarks of Montmartre, the Latin Quarter, and Montparnasse. Since Casbah is a film about romance and not a film about class, Pépé and Gaby no longer need to project their class origins by referring to the social geography of Paris. Their connection to Paris is represented by areas that would be most familiar to American audiences in a tourism context. The doubled use of the Casbah and Paris in this touristic context suggests the manner in which Casbah treats these locales as doubly exotic, presented in a fashion that reduces the specificity of their social and cultural dimensions in order to construct effectively an appealing and familiar locale for American consumption.

Vincendeau and Mazdon both consider the construction of location in Casbah as a devolution towards a "generalized exoticism", especially when compared to the representation of the Casbah in Pépé le Moko⁴⁶. If the visual representation of the Casbah in Casbah is not informed by the colonial experience to the extent demonstrated in Pépé le Moko, then the "generalized exoticism" of the remake arises from the cinematic references to familiar Hollywood films that exhibited similar exotic trappings, such as Kismet (William Dieterle, 1944). This referentiality reaches its apogee in Casbah in the form of direct references in the film to Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942), one of the more famous Hollywood films that showcased a similar exotic North African setting as an arena for romance and danger. Starting with the posters along the walls of

the Casbah that display “Vichy” and ending with the spectacularly reminiscent climax at an airport (replacing the harbor in the previous versions), the visual construction of location in Casbah clearly owes more than a slight debt to the Curtiz film⁴⁷. Indeed, the references to Casablanca suggest that the orientalist discourse in Casbah compensated for its lack of colonial context by modeling itself after popular conceptions of the exotic that were conventionally represented in the Hollywood cinema of the day.

This notion of relying on previous forms of representation to visualize the exotic can also be observed in the way that Casbah characterizes the space of the Casbah as having feminine and sexual connotations. This characterization follows the precedent set in a montage that concludes the opening documentary sequence in Pépé le Moko, where the native quarter’s erotic allure was punctuated by various shots of prostitutes over a voiceover referring to them as “women of all countries, of all shapes and sizes.” Though Casbah does not contain a similar documentary sequence that explicitly characterizes the Casbah in this negatively feminized and sexualized manner, the characters of Inès (Yvonne DeCarlo) and Odette (Katherine Dunham) serve an equivalent function in the visualization and conception of the Casbah. As the two main female representatives of the Casbah that have close relationships with Pépé, Inès and Odette embody the sexual allure of the exotic locale. Both are highly sexualized through the Hollywood motifs of the exoticized ‘Oriental’ dancer, dressed in midriff baring form-fitting costumes that

⁴⁶ Vincendeau, p71, and Mazdon, p33-35.

⁴⁷ Vincendeau and Mazdon also point out what they view as direct allusions to Casablanca in Casbah: namely the fresh Vichy posters that adorn some of the walls of the Casbah, the presence and star persona of Peter Lorre (who played Ugarte in Casablanca), and the changed ending of the film where the action takes place at an airport rather than the harbor. See Vincendeau, p71, and Mazdon, p39. Casbah’s allusions to Casablanca bring the intertextual relationship shared between these two films and Pépé le Moko full circle. This circular process of reproduction and recitation surfaces in the retrospective You Must Remember This: A Tribute to Casablanca (Scott Benson, 1992) where film historian Rudy Belmer recounts the story of how

accentuate their bodies when they dance, though neither character is designated within the narrative as a prostitute (following the same line of self-censorship as Algiers). Instead, Casbah displaces the negative connotations attached to their sexualized characters by making both women proprietors of their own businesses in the Casbah: Inès with her tobacco and wine shop, and Odette with her bar. This agency provides them with a sense of individuation and independence within the Casbah as well as allowing their overt sexuality to be free of any link to prostitution. However, their very individuation and independence mark them as suspect within the ideological discourse of the roles and representation of women in the historical and cultural context of the postwar period in America. As independent women operating within the unregulated zone of the Casbah as purveyors of a different kind of vice than the sex trade (alcohol, tobacco) neither Inès or Odette connotes the ideals of domesticated femininity that are suggested by the women in Pèpé's introductory sequence, who listen to him while they happily go about their domestic chores. In this sense, neither female character can be seen as conforming to the idealized representation of the "happy housewife" and hence their fate within the narrative is to remain alone and unmarried⁴⁸.

The star personas of the female actors cast to play Inès and Odette play a large part in informing their ideological roles in Casbah. Though the role of Inès is essentially relegated in the narrative to a secondary status behind Marta Toren's Gaby, Yvonne DeCarlo is given top billing over Tony Martin on the marquee and the credits, suggesting the extent that her star persona contributed to the production and reception of Casbah. At

producer Hal Wallis at Warner Brothers Studio renamed the original screenplay "Everybody Goes to Rick's" to Casablanca in order to emulate the connotations of romance, intrigue, and exoticism of Algiers.

⁴⁸The notion of these independent women of questionable status in Casbah being punished within the narrative by ending up alone at the film's conclusion can be expanded to also include Gaby, who is initially

the time of the production of Casbah, DeCarlo was considered to be one of the female actors in the 1940s who “conformed to Hollywood’s ideal of an Arabian beauty”, thanks in large part to her breakthrough performance as a Mata Hari-type dancer in the title role of Salome, Where She Danced (Charles Lamont, 1945)⁴⁹. Subsequent roles in Song of Scheherazade (Walter Reisch, 1947) and Slave Girl (Charles Lamont, 1947) cemented her persona as an exotic temptress and her casting as Inès can certainly be taken as a direct allusion to, if not an outright continuation of, this popular persona.

The casting of Katherine Dunham as Odette is noteworthy in the sense that she plays a role that has no antecedent in either of the previous versions of the story. Though Odette serves as a maternal figure for Pp in the same vein as Tania in Pp le Moko (as shown in scenes where she watches his back during the police raid and later consoles him when Gaby fails to show up at their arranged rendezvous), the character is expanded in Casbah to the proprietor of Odette's Caf, a tourist destination that is associated with different forms of vice (sex, alcohol, gambling). As the owner of this type of establishment, the character of Odette is meant to be an embodiment of the discourse surrounding these vices, which in turn contributes to the overall characterization of the Casbah. In this context, the casting of Dunham as Odette can then be seen as a marriage between the discourse of exoticism of the film with the discourses of exoticism that were associated with her star image. Dunham was not so much a popular actor in Hollywood as she was a celebrated dancer who helped modernize American dance in the 1930s and 1940s by incorporating African and Caribbean dance into her choreography. Touring with her troupe of African American dancers, known as “The Dunham Dancers”,

characterized as “a gold-digger” who abandons her black-marketeering companion Claude for Pp and whose loss and loneliness is summarized in the final shot of Casbah.

Dunham's popularity was sustained by theatre productions that exploited the exoticism associated with black dance such as *Le Jazz Hot – From Haiti to Harlem* (1940), *Carib Song* (1945), and *Bal Nègre* (1947)⁵⁰. As choreographer of the dance sequences in Casbah, Dunham and her dancers connoted exotic sexuality through dance performances that highlighted scantily dressed bodies gyrating and pulsating to a rhythmic drum beat, imbuing their scenes with an eroticism that functions within the narrative as a metaphor for seduction and the consummation of sexual desire. This is best illustrated in the scene where Pp and Gaby are alone atop the terraces of the Casbah during the Festival. The scene cuts to the frenzied dancing of the Dunham dancers in the Place de la Girafe with the music reaching a climax before the scene cuts back to the two lovers. Gaby is shown putting her coat back on and Pp is now jacketless, signaling that they have just consummated their love. The use and tone of Dunham's dance choreography in this manner, coupled with the extra-cinematic discourse about its anthropological roots, recalls similar dance numbers in the tradition of Hollywood films such as Blonde Venus (Josef von Sternberg, 1933) where the association of sexual desire and 'primitivism' was staged as a musical spectacle. Thus, the cumulative use of the exotic aspects of the star personas of De Carlo and Dunham illustrate the different discourses that amalgamate in Casbah to construct a feminized and sexualized space suitable for its retelling of Pp le Moko in the absence of a colonial context.

⁴⁹ As described in Ephraim Katz, The Film Encyclopedia, First Edition (New York: Harper Collins 1979)

⁵⁰ The information about Katherine Dunham was culled from two Internet sources. Online. Kim Gaines, "Spotlight on Katherine Dunham" (<http://www.black-collegian.com/african/dunham9.shtml>) and the profile on Katherine Dunham as an Honoree of the Kennedy Center in 1983 (<http://kennedy-center.org/programs/specialevents/honors/history/honoree/dunham.html>). Dunham also wrote an autobiography titled *A Touch of Innocence* (1959) which may have offered more insight into her career and persona but unfortunately a copy could not be located.

What this chapter has tried to demonstrate is the manner in which Casbah makes sense of Pépé le Moko within an institutional context. Considering the remake as a vehicle for popular crooner and musical star Tony Martin that falls in line with generic production in postwar Hollywood, Casbah can be approached as an institutionally specific interpretation of Pépé le Moko through an examination of the breakdown of the film's narrative elements into discrete generic units. In the context of Hollywood generic productions, Casbah can be seen as a generic hybrid that combines the crime film and the musical by using the trappings of Hollywood's orientalist discourse to mediate between the two genres. In this way, Casbah can turn to the generic rules of the crime film in order to reassert its identity as a remake of the French film despite the generic imperatives of the Hollywood musical and the overwhelming influence of Martin's star image on the material.

Since this remake foregoes the “Americanization” of its diegetic elements as seen in previous remakes such as The Long Night, Casbah serves as an interesting example of how Hollywood and Hollywood audiences understood the concept of “Frenchness” at this historical moment. The concept of interpretation as a process of reducing specific elements to generic ones can be seen to mirror the development of the concept of “Frenchness” that is forwarded by Casbah. As I have shown, the removal of the colonial context from the orientalist discourse evident in the French film leaves a “generalized exoticism” in Casbah that is informed by the generic conventions of Hollywood cinema. Removing the culturally specific references to Paris and its social topography (especially the working-class elements) reduces the narrative theme of Casbah to one of lost romance. Indeed, all that is left to connote “Frenchness” in Casbah is the identity of Pépé

as a romantic rogue “who is made out to be a hero by virtue of his love affairs”. This concept of romance as a defining feature in the construction of a French masculine identity is a long-standing tradition in Hollywood which was sustained by Charles Boyer in Algiers and Tony Martin ten years later in Casbah, demonstrating the power and longevity of this stereotype⁵¹. The process of developing this Hollywood concept of “Frenchness” into a stereotype is thus supported by Casbah in the reconfiguration of its source material for alignment as generic production, where formula and convention become the dominant form of representation.

⁵¹Maurice Chevalier helped to promote this image of the romantic Frenchman during the early 1930s in his musicals with Jeanette MacDonald in films such as Love Me Tonight (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932), and One Hour With You (Ernst Lubitsch, 1931).

Chapter IV

La Bête humaine (1938) and *Human Desire* (1954)

"[Producer] Jerry Wald very much loved Renoir's picture, *La Bête humaine*. Its "hero" was played by Jean Gabin, and he was a sex psychopath: he could only make love to a woman by killing her. Naturally, in an American movie, you cannot make the hero a sex killer. Impossible. So Glenn Ford has to play it, you know, like L'il Abner coming back from Korea - 100 percent red-blooded American with very natural sex feelings - if such a thing exists."

"One day, Jerry Wald called [scriptwriter Alfred Hayes and I] and said, 'You are both wrong... This is called *La Bête humaine*, the human beast. But *everybody* is bad in your picture' 'Naturally,' I said, 'because Zola wanted to show that in every human being is a beast.' He said, 'You both don't understand it. The *woman* is the human beast.' What can you do against the producer? Hayes and I looked at each other and tried to convince him, and then we made a compromise and again it became a triangle story."

- Fritz Lang¹

Nine years after successfully remaking *La Chienne* (Jean Renoir, 1931) as *Scarlet Street* (Fritz Lang, 1945) for American audiences, Fritz Lang found himself in a familiar situation with respect to another film directed by Jean Renoir from the 1930s. Working as a contract director at Columbia Studios between the years 1953-54, Lang was assigned to remake the French film *La Bête humaine* (Jean Renoir, 1938), a project that had been in development prior to his arrival at the studio². *La Bête humaine* was a successful film for Renoir, judging by the popular and critical acclaim that it received during its initial domestic and American theatrical runs³. The Lang remake was originally given a

¹ Both of these anecdotes are taken from an interview with Fritz Lang collected in Peter Bogdonovich. *Who the Devil Made It: Conversations with Legendary Film Directors*. (New York: Ballantine 1997) pp221-223

² In his biography of Lang, Patrick McGilligan writes that a first draft of the projected remake of "The Human Beast" was penned by screenwriter Maxwell Shane at the end of 1952. In Patrick McGilligan. *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1997) p407.

³ In his discussion on *La Bête humaine*, Dudley Andrew terms the critical appraisal of Renoir's film along with its combined national and export showing as "exceptional". From Dudley Andrew. *Mists of Regret: Culture and Sensibility in Classic French Film*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1995) p304. Contemporary reviews of *La Bête humaine* that I have been able to locate support Andrew's assessment.

working title that was simply a direct translation into English of the French title (“The Human Beast”) but by the time the film was completed and released in the fall of 1954, the title had been changed to Human Desire.

According to the opening excerpts, Lang was familiar with both Renoir’s La Bête humaine and the book of the same name written by the renowned French author Emile Zola in 1890. Zola was considered one of France’s greatest novelists in the naturalist tradition, and his book *La Bête humaine* certainly attained a high degree of cultural recognition (Alexander Sesonske states that much of the French audience of 1938 was already familiar with the novel prior to the film⁴.) La Bête humaine’s literary lineage was certainly played up in the publicity discourse surrounding Renoir’s film version, advertised as “a passionate tale of love and murder from France’s greatest novelist by way of its most respected director⁵.” While I do not want to dwell too heavily on the subject of the novel (in fear that it may lead to a discussion of the fidelity of its adaptation to film, a topic that is outside of the scope of this thesis), I do think it is noteworthy to acknowledge the cultural familiarity of the novel and its relationship to Renoir’s film in an historical context⁶.

Refer to the reviews by François Vinneuil. “L’Ecran de la semaine: *La Bête humaine*,” Action française (30 December 1938) and Georges Sadoul. “Un Chef-d’oeuvre du cinéma: *La Bête humaine*,” Regards, 260 (5 January 1939). Both are translated and reprinted in Richard Abel (ed). French Film Theory and Criticism, 1907-1939 vol 2: 1929-1939. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1988) pp256-262. Examples of the film’s positive American reception are Frank S. Nugent. “The Human Beast”. New York Times Feb 20, 1940; and Otis Ferguson. “*Doldrum Weather*” in Robert Wilson (ed). The film criticism of Otis Ferguson. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971) p290.

⁴ Alexander Sesonske, Jean Renoir: The French films 1924-1939. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), p361.

⁵ Andrew, p304.

⁶ The contemporary reviews of La Bête humaine in France that are mentioned in footnote 3 all make reference to its literary source to the extent that the relationship between Zola and Renoir is treated along the lines of a cultural lineage following artistic and political principles. Christopher Faulkner has discussed this relationship between the two artists within the context of the politicization of French culture during the 1930s, where Emile Zola came to be a politically loaded signifier “around which the Left and the Right

What is of primary interest for this chapter is the consideration of Renoir's film version as a key referent for Human Desire. The Cinémathèque Française reportedly sent Lang a copy of Renoir's film during pre-production at his request, and as I will elaborate during this chapter, Human Desire certainly exhibits some textual characteristics that recall the French film⁷. However, I want to go beyond a discussion of the visual and stylistic qualities shared between the two films and look instead at the way Human Desire engages some of the ideological discourses that circulate in La Bête humaine in order to rework them for an American studio context. To export the story of La Bête humaine for an American audience of 1954, alterations were necessary to negotiate the culturally specific discourses of the French film. The goal of this analysis, then, is to examine the key deviations to La Bête humaine incorporated by Human Desire in this context as an avenue for illuminating the way the remake interprets the French film for its transplanted cultural context.

In his critical study of La Bête humaine, Alexander Sesonske approaches the film as a "tragedy" shrouded in "an air of hopelessness" and a "dark atmosphere", effectively contextualizing Renoir's film "snugly into the mold of the most popular French films of the day⁸". The French films that Sesonske is making reference to are the Poetic Realist films of the 1930s, the populist dramas that conventionalized the discourse surrounding the working-class character through the portrayal of fatalistic "heroes" who were trapped in circumstances that were inescapable. Based on its narrative trajectory, La Bête humaine certainly draws upon this popular mode of representation for its working class

argued their competing claims for the ideological representation of the nation." See Christopher Faulkner. "Renoir, Technology, and Affect in *La Bête humaine*", in Persistence of Vision. 12/13 (1996), pp82-101.

hero. A quick synopsis of La Bête humaine is useful at this point, as it will focus on the key moments and figures of Renoir's film version while also serving as a reminder of the film's narrative.

La Bête humaine is, to borrow Christopher Faulkner's description, "a powerful and disturbing narrative about sexual impotence, sexual jealousy, and sexual crime"⁹. Jacques Lantier (Jean Gabin) is a locomotive engineer who, along with his fireman Pecqueux (Carette), commandeers a steam train that he lovingly nicknames "La Lison" along the Paris-Le Havre line. Stopping at Le Havre, Lantier realizes that La Lison suffers from an overheated bearing and while the train is being serviced, he takes advantage of this time to visit his godmother in the nearby countryside of Bréauté. She inquires about his atavistic 'attacks' that he suffers from and he reassures her that all is well before going off to find her daughter Flore (Blanchette Brunoy) down by the river. During a passionate embrace, Lantier suddenly has a strange compulsive fit and begins to strangle Flore, only to loosen his grip when he hears the whistle of a train. Realizing that his hereditary *fêlure* impedes his ability to fully consummate a relationship with Flore, Lantier spurns her despite her insistence to help him through his struggle. Back at Le Havre, Roubaud (Fernand Ledoux) is the deputy stationmaster who sets the wheels of the plot into motion when he accepts a complaint about the presumption of class privilege of a well-to-do passenger. When he realizes that the passenger that he has just crossed is a man with a considerable amount of power and influence, Roubaud worries for his job and asks his wife Séverine (Simone Simon) to intervene with her godfather Grandmorin

⁷ Lang's request from the Cinémathèque Française is recounted in Lotte H. Eisner. Fritz Lang. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) p338; and Georges Sturm (ed). Fritz Lang: films/textes/références. (Nancy, France: Presses Universitaires de Nancy 1990),p146.

⁸ Sesonske, p354, 357.

(Berlioz), who also has influential ties with the railway. After Séverine returns successfully from her appointment with Grandmorin, Roubaud's suspicions about the true nature of his wife's relationship with her godfather are confirmed when she admits to having slept with him. In a jealous rage, Roubaud forces his wife to write a letter to Grandmorin asking him to meet her on the train going back to Paris later that evening. It is this same train that Lantier and his poacher friend Cabuche (Jean Renoir) board at Bréauté. Aboard the train, Roubaud kills Grandmorin in his compartment with Séverine at his side, but as they try to leave the car they see Lantier in the hallway. Unsure if Lantier saw them enter Grandmorin's compartment, Roubaud sends Séverine to intercept the engineer, who hardly bats an eyelash at her since he is wiping some soot away from his eyes. When Grandmorin's body is discovered later in the evening, Lantier is asked whether he saw anyone leaving the murdered man's compartment. Before he answers, Lantier's look meets Séverine's pleading eyes and he answers her silent appeal by subsequently denying seeing anyone near the compartment. Instead, Cabuche, who expressed his hatred of Grandmorin when hearing of the old man's death, is arrested and sentenced for the murder (even though Lantier knows that he is innocent of the crime). Determined to keep Lantier silent after the informal inquiry, Roubaud and Séverine decide to befriend him, a situation that quickly leads to Lantier and Séverine becoming lovers. The two lovers plan to kill Roubaud, who is now repulsed by his wife and spends all his time drinking and gambling in the night. Waiting in the dark corners of the railyard while Roubaud is on his nightwatch, the lovers ready themselves for the murder, but in the end Lantier cannot bring himself to strike the fatal blow and Séverine consequently leaves him. Later, at *le bal des cheminots*, Lantier tries to win Séverine

⁹ Faulkner, p90.

back but she tells him that since he cannot free her from Roubaud, their affair must end. Accompanying her home, Lantier tries to convince Séverine that he is ready to kill her husband and readies a knife when he hears footsteps that he assumes to be Roubaud's in the front hallway. Séverine kisses him in encouragement, but it triggers Lantier's compulsive fits and he ends up killing her instead. Lantier flees the crime scene moments before Roubaud returns home to find Séverine's body. After wandering the railyard the entire evening, Lantier boards La Lison for her trip back to Paris and tells Pecqueux what he has done. While the train is traveling at full speed, Lantier screams to Pecqueux that he cannot live with himself anymore and throws himself to his death. The film ends with Pecqueux at the side of Lantier's corpse, closing the eyes of his dead comrade before walking back to the train as the conductor clears the tracks so that service can resume.

Human Desire follows the example of previous Hollywood remakes of French films such as Scarlet Street (1945) and The Long Night (1947) by transposing the action of La Bête humaine to an American setting and updating many of the narrative details for an American cultural context. The Paris-Le Havre line has been relocated in Human Desire to run between Chicago and an unnamed American town in the Midwest, and the triangle relationship between Jacques Lantier, Roubaud, and Séverine finds its Hollywood parallel in the relationship between Jeff Warren (Glenn Ford), Carl Buckley (Broderick Crawford), and Vicki Buckley (Gloria Grahame). Human Desire also retains the key moments of the plot of La Bête humaine for its own narrative: the intervention of Vicki on her husband's behalf with the older, influential Owens (Grandon Rhodes), the revelation of Vicki's past with Owens that motivates Carl to murder him on the train, and the subsequent affair between Jeff and Vicki after he has helped cover up the Buckley's

involvement with the murder. As Lang remarks in the opening quotations, a key obstacle in the re-telling of La Bête humaine for Human Desire was the resolution of the thorny issue of the characterization of the 'hero' as 'a sex psychopath'. The decision to re-present the 'hero' of the story with the additional identity of a returning veteran from the Korean War offers Human Desire an avenue to negotiate the discursive limits of Hollywood cinema that restricted the characterization of a film's hero as a 'sex killer'¹⁰. This important alteration to the lead character has a substantial effect on the remake's treatment of La Bête humaine that is readily apparent when one considers the differing representations of masculinity between the two films. These representations of masculinity are also tied to the manner in which each film deals with the discourses of femininity and modern technology (as represented by the train and the world of the railway). These discourses are culturally and generically specific within their own historical contexts, and the manner in which they are handled in Human Desire and La Bête humaine ultimately affects the ideological resolutions of their respective narratives.

From the start, La Bête humaine declares that its working class protagonist suffers a wounded sense of masculinity that pre-destines his fate. Renoir's film opens with scrolling text that announces the story of Jacques Lantier of the Rougon-Macquart family, a reference to the Rougon-Macquart series of novels that traces "the social history of a family during the Second Empire" written by Emile Zola (of which the novel *La Bête humaine* is a part)¹¹. As a member of the Rougon-Macquart family, Lantier suffers from a hereditary *fêlure* caused by the alcoholism of his ancestors that causes him to have fits

¹⁰ The Korean War was fought during 1950-1953, a scant five years after the conclusion of the Second World War. Human Desire premiered in New York on the 6th of August 1954, pointing to the topicality of the film's reference of Jeff Warren as a Korean War vet.

¹¹ This description of Zola's novel is taken from Sesonkske, p355-356.

of compulsion, leading him to kill. As played by Jean Gabin, the doomed locomotive engineer Jacques Lantier in La Bête humaine shares similarities with his roles in other popular films of the period such as Pépé le Moko (Julien Duvivier, 1937) and Le Jour se lève (Marcel Carné, 1939) in that the narrative options for these working class characters are closed to the degree that the only resolution available at the end is suicide¹². In this sense, the characters that Gabin portrays in these films are “victims” who “struggle vainly to maintain control over life and events”, and their failure to control their fate within their respective narratives flies in the face of the portrayal of the traditional male hero, whose masculinity is primarily founded upon this sense of control¹³. Taken within this context, Faulkner’s description of La Bête humaine as a “narrative of sexual impotence” can be understood as a direct reference to the weak masculinity represented by Gabin’s Lantier. “Sexual impotence” here is not to be taken in the literal/physical sense (La Bête humaine implies that Lantier and Séverine have physically consummated their affair at least twice in the film, once in the shed at the railyard in Le Havre and another time in the apartment in Paris) but rather in a metaphoric sense. Gabin’s Lantier (as with his Pépé and François) is “sexually impotent” in that his masculinity is rendered ineffectual because it lacks power against the elements of authority within the narrative that work to contain him. By representing this failure as a spectacle of the lack of power on a social scale, the narrative options for the working class Gabin result in nothing more than a literal dead-end. It is through this notion of impotence that narratives of emasculation like La Bête

¹² For specific analyses of Gabin’s working-class screen persona (“the proletarian hero”) in France during the 1930s, refer to Ginette Vincendeau in “Community, Nostalgia and the Spectacle of Masculinity”, Screen, 26,6 (Nov.-Dec. 1985); and “From Proletarian Hero to Godfather: Jean Gabin and ‘Paradigmatic’ French Masculinity”, in Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumin (eds). Me Jane: masculinity, movies, and women. (Trowbridge, Wiltshire: Redwood Books 1995), pp249-262.

¹³ Vincendeau, p254.

humaine support the conventionalized discourse of the working class prevalent in the Poetic Realist films of the 1930s.

As I discussed in Chapter II, Le Jour se lève was remade in Hollywood as The Long Night, and although the remake adhered closely to the narrative of the French film, the key difference in its translation to an American context was the reconfiguration of the working-class character François played by Jean Gabin to include an identity as a returning veteran. This change in characterization was situated within an institutionalized discourse of the returning veteran that dealt with the cultural fears and concerns surrounding this figure. The remake therefore capitalized on the ultimate ideological goal of this discourse, which was to reintegrate the returning soldier successfully into society.

Human Desire follows the model of The Long Night as a remake by reinterpreting the tragedy of the working-class character as a noir thriller in the context of the returning veteran in the milieu of working class America. Like his French counterpart Jacques Lantier, Jeff Warren is also a locomotive engineer, and his working class identity is supplemented at the outset of Human Desire by the information that he has just returned to the American Midwest after three years of military service in Korea. Presenting this knowledge at the start of the film serves two narrative functions. Firstly, the fact that Jeff Warren is a returning veteran establishes a discursive parameter to the film that removes the possibility of his being “a sex killer” who could “only make love to a woman by killing her.” As in The Long Night, Human Desire also sticks with the main narrative of the French film version until the last reel, where a revised ending denies the protagonist a death at his own hands and instead presents an open conclusion that offers him the

possibility of a harmonious reintegration¹⁴. Secondly, this information also speaks to a discursive convention in the relationship between Jeff's psychological state and his identity as a returning veteran. As I pointed out in Chapter II, one of the cultural concerns about returning soldiers that was generically exploited in Hollywood was the fear of their potential for violence. This convention emerges in the narrative of Human Desire through Vicki Buckley's underlying assumption that, given the proper motivation, Jeff's wartime experiences would not prevent him from killing Carl. (In a conversation with Vicki about the subject of killing, Jeff describes the act as "being the easiest thing in the world" and as "that's what they give you medals for.") Human Desire climactically exploits this convention at the point in the film where Jeff stalks Carl in the railyard with a large wrench in his hand, intent on killing him. In long shot from a high angle, Jeff's final approach behind Carl with the wrench raised in the air is blocked from view by a docking train that enters the frame. The music on the soundtrack swells in a frantic climax of brass horns alongside the screech of the trains before dissolving to the interior of Buckley house, where Jeff returns to Vicki to report his actions. Though Jeff eventually tells Vicki that he could not kill Carl in his drunken state, the function of the previous scene (with its denial of its onscreen conclusion) is the momentary generation of suspense that Jeff did indeed realize his potential for violence. Narratively, Jeff's self-implication into the whole sordid affair with Vicki also contributes to the belief that he could have killed Carl at this moment, but the point to be emphasized here is how the film uses his identity as a returning vet to exploit a psychological state conducive to

¹⁴ Lindsay Anderson's review of Human Desire was critical of this about face in the last reel. Up to that point in the film, Anderson found the film "quite acceptable" and "excellent" in some aspects, but complained later that the film "collapses" when the "inevitable pressures of commercialism and production codes" inevitably intervene. In *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Spring 1955), p198.

murder. This threat for potential violence can be seen as the remake's translation of Lantier's hereditary *félure* as a psychological mark of difference. By adding the dimension of the returning soldier to the character of Jeff Warren, the remake is allowed to account for his capacity to kill without explicitly linking the reason to his working class occupation.

Andrew Sarris described Human Desire as “the nightmare of an innocent man enmeshed in the tangled strands of fate”, but I would question his characterization of Jeff Warren as “innocent”¹⁵. The more interesting line of inquiry in my opinion is not the question of Jeff's innocence, but rather the extent of his guilt. Indeed, Human Desire is explicit about the extent of Jeff's involvement in the affair with Vicki right from the beginning when he meets her for the first time in the train after the murder of Owens. Unlike Lantier, who is shown to be more concerned with the soot from his eye than Séverine, Jeff is instantly attracted to Vicki without realizing that she is married to Carl, whom he knows from a previous assignment at the railway. Though Carl sends Vicki to lure Jeff away from the vestibule after the murder of Owens, it is Jeff who comes on to Vicki first by offering her a drink in the club car and then making physical contact with her by wiping away soot in her eyes (an inversion of the same scene in La Bête humaine!) Jeff also initiates the shared smoke with Vicki inside the compartment that eventually leads to him kissing her voluntarily. The next morning, Jeff discovers Vicki's relationship to Carl and at the inquiry he suppresses the information that he saw her coming from the car of Owens' compartment, thereby voluntarily implicating himself in the whole affair. Over and over again in Human Desire, Jeff knowingly digs himself deeper into the affair with Vicki despite friendly warnings from his old friend Alec about

the immorality of adultery. It is clear that Jeff Warren suffers from a severe case of *l'amour fou* that blinds him to his actions, though the film makes it clear throughout the duration of the affair that Vicki has been manipulating him the entire way.

Jeff's relationship with Vicki over these sequences points to his attraction to the lure of carnal sexuality that she represents, thus exposing an aggressive sexual dimension to his characterization. References early in the film to the women in Tokyo that Jeff was involved with during his time overseas also contribute to the construction of his sexual prowess. Lang's characterization of Jeff Warren as "L'il Abner coming back from Korea - a 100 percent red blooded American with very natural sex feelings" points to the way that Human Desire treats Jeff's sexual desires as an effect of his identity as a returning soldier. This particular mode of representation can itself be contextualized within the contemporary advice literature that circulated in postwar American culture warning about the deprivations of army life that led to the intensification of the soldier's attitudes towards sexual relations, whether it be lust or idealized love¹⁶. Indeed, it is through this rhetoric of the intensified sexual attitudes of the returning soldier that Human Desire is able to engage the sexual themes of La Bête humaine and recontextualize them for American audiences.

Human Desire presents Jeff Warren's story as a drama of reintegration that places him in a position where he must make a choice between satiating his lust or submitting to a safer idealized love. This decision recalls a staple of the film noir narrative that locates this narrative dilemma between two women who embody the values corresponding to each choice (this is an aspect of "the triangle film" that Lang refers to in

¹⁵ Andrew Sarris. "Films", *The Village Voice*, Dec. 7 1967. Quoted in Eisner, p338-339.

his opening quotation). In this context, Human Desire resorts to noir archetypes of femininity to portray the women of Jeff's split desires: the *femme fatale* Vicki Buckley and the "good girl" Ellen Simmons (Kathleen Case), the daughter of Jeff's older assistant Alec Simmons (Edgar Buchanan).

Following the visual tropes of the *femme fatale* in noir, Vicki is coded by her overt sexuality throughout the film. Her first onscreen appearance has her lying in bed with her long exposed legs while she eats candy, and she is costumed on several occasions in the film in slinky negligees and dresses that accentuate her body. As well, the narrative detail that Vicki is originally from the city plays into this negative characterization, emphasizing her difference from the working people of the small town. Vicki's sexually aggressive woman is doubled in a narrative context through the character of Jean (Peggy Maley), whom the film presents as her doppelganger by association (she was Vicki's former roommate in the city before she married Carl). Though Jean is given a very small role in Human Desire, brief bits of cynical dialogue, such as "All women are alike, they just have different faces so that the men can tell them apart" provide a self-referential commentary on this negative representation of femininity. Jean also vocalizes the avaricious aspect of the *femme fatale* characterization when she speaks with Carl while he waits at her apartment for Vicki to return from her meeting with Owens: "I met another guy, a real doll though I'm much younger than he is, it all evens out... he's got more money." These words linger throughout the film as they spark Carl's suspicions about Vicki and Owens, which are confirmed shortly after when he catches her lie about having slept with the older man to get his job back. By the end

¹⁶ The issue of sexual anxiety in the returning veteran is discussed by Willard Walker, The Veteran Comes Back. (New York: Dryden Press 1944), p134.

of the film, these words resurface but in a much harsher and damning context as Vicki reveals herself to Carl in a speech that exposes her character's complete conformity to producer Jerry Wald's interpretation of "the woman as the human beast". In revealing to Carl how Jeff spurned her in the end after failing to kill him, she provides a systematic list of her husband's material losses ("you haven't got me, your job, the letter, anything"). She then goes on to admit her total complicity in her affairs with Owens, which began when she was 16 living in his household where her mother worked. To spite her husband one last time, she elevates Owens as a model of her idealized masculinity ("if I had been a man, I would have behaved exactly as [Owens] did.") It is this final transgression of his masculinity that triggers Carl's violent reaction to strangle her in her train compartment. The last shot of the married couple has Carl standing over his wife's corpse, an image of mutual self-destruction that resolves the conventionalized narrative role of the *femme fatale*.

If Vicki represents an outlet for Jeff's carnal desires, then Ellen Simmons can be considered the embodiment of his humble desires for a domestic life, which for him consists of "fishing, trains, and for excitement, a big night at the movies." Sticking again to noir tropes of femininity, Ellen is presented as the narrative antithesis of Vicki. Along with her mother Vera Simmons (Diane DeLaire), Ellen is portrayed as a model of domestic support whose role as a nurturing woman is solidified by her place in the Simmons household where Jeff Warren stays upon his homecoming. She is alternately shown serving Jeff breakfast, preparing meals in the kitchen, and arranging preparations for her father to go to work. Despite this domestic characterization, the portrayal of Ellen is sexualized in Human Desire to a certain degree in order to make her a palpable option

for Jeff's desires. When Ellen first appears onscreen, Jeff can't help but notice how the buxom young woman in front of him is no longer the child that he remembered before shipping off to Korea ("no more pigtails", she reminds him.) The film also uses the silk kimono that Jeff brought her as a souvenir from Japan to add an extra layer of sexuality to her character. Ellen telegraphs the discourse of sexuality represented by the kimono with her question to Jeff about whether the women in Tokyo were beautiful and if he dated any of them. This reference to Tokyo and its "beautiful women" plays off general orientalist notions of exoticized sexuality, and since it also refers to Jeff's intimate experiences overseas, the kimono is charged with a sexual meaning that Ellen capitalizes upon when she begins to wear it around the home while serving Jeff. Positioned as "the right girl" in Human Desire, Ellen Simmons seems to represent everything that "a 100 percent red-blooded American with very natural sex feelings" would desire. That Jeff Warren continually chooses Vicki over Ellen in the narrative suggests that his overseas experiences, perhaps with "the beautiful women in Tokyo", have made him desire an alternative to normative middle-class domesticity that "the right girl" represents.

Jeff's choice between Vicki and Ellen essentially becomes the second triangle relationship in the film. That Jeff is even offered a choice between the two destinies represented by these two women is a major deviation from the narrative of La Bête humaine, which locked Lantier in his pre-destined path of self-destruction. Part of the aspect of the fatalism that pervades the working class character of Jacques Lantier is the breaking down of options for escape or marital peace, leaving no alternative for genuine bliss for its working class character. When chided by his fireman Pecqueux about marriage, Jacques responds that he is already married to his train, La Lison. During his

sojourn at Bréauté Jacques refuses the idea of marriage to Flore and renounces women altogether since he realizes his hereditary *fêlure* is an obstacle to any sense of fulfillment. Jacques has forsaken any notions of a meaningful relationship with a woman until he meets Séverine, but even this is a spurious love that is surrounded by death. By the end of the film, Lantier has turned his back on all three of these women in his life: he rejects Flore, he kills Séverine, and his suicide frees him from La Lison. What is also implicit in Lantier's rejection of these women is the rejection of the spaces that they are associated with. Hence, Lantier can find no social fulfillment in a pastoral space, an urban space, or an industrial space, respectively. Even Lantier's dreams of a future with Séverine in "a house in the woods... far, far away" (an attempt to reconcile the urban and the pastoral) are ultimately denied, and it seems that the best that he can do is to offer his body to this pastoral space with his suicide.

Human Desire does not portray such a claustrophobic world for its working-class character. As mentioned earlier, the identity of Jeff Warren as a returning veteran offers a way out of this bind, presenting a space for Jeff that was unavailable to Lantier as an alternative refuge from the darker elements of society represented by Vicki and Carl Buckley. The Simmons house provides such a refuge, and it is presented as a prototypical suburban space far from the industrial sights and sounds of the railyard. Shown from the exterior as a neighborhood where children ride their bicycles on the sidewalk and mothers take their babies for a stroll, it suggests a space of harmonious normality in American culture where the myth of family values is perpetuated. Indeed, the narrative detail that Jeff boards with the Simmons upon his return (and has boarded with them prior to his departure to Korea), coupled with the age difference between Alec

and Vera with Jeff, positions the Simmons as surrogate parents. Neither the city nor the country, the suburbia of Human Desire appropriates the best and safest of both. The presence of this idealized suburban space removes any sense of fatalism for Jeff since it offers relief from the human depravity that he has been involved with, both in the war and in the affair with Vicki. In this context, the portrayal of Ellen Simmons represents the ideals of the suburban space in a similar manner that Flore represented the simpler ideals of the pastoral for Lantier. Unlike his French counterpart's spurning of Flore, Jeff does not reject Ellen outright. She remains an available option for him after he has walked away from his nightmare with Vicki, as the end of Human Desire suggests in the final scene that shows Jeff contemplating the tickets that Ellen has given him for the "Annual Dance and Frolic for the Railroad Employees Association". The final shot of the film showing a view from the front of the train's cab repeats the film's opening shot, suggesting a new beginning for Jeff. The suburban space of the Simmons home thus offers a discourse of recuperation and promise for the returning veteran, an option that was not viable for Jacques Lantier because such a solution and space was not conceivable in the discourse provided for him.

This notion of a space of refuge from the depravity of society is also on display in La Bête humaine, though it lies in the film's representation of the environment and activities of the railroad. It is in this "world of work and achievement" that "a sane and hopeful worker's milieu" provides "a counterpoint to the dark and fate-filled life-space" in La Bête humaine¹⁷. Indeed, warmth and camaraderie are abundant in the scenes set in

¹⁷ Sesonske, p356. Both Frank S. Nugent and Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* offer an interpretation of the railroad environment of La Bête humaine that does not consider it as a refuge for the railway worker, but rather as the main contributor to Lantier's madness! Crowther observed that the "pounding railroad wheels and the shriek of the whistles credibly drove [Lantier] insane", whereas Nugent

the milieu of the railway workers, as seen when Pecqueux mixes his ham with Lantier's eggs, and in the social gathering of the *bal des cheminots* for the railroad employees. The importance of this worker's world and its relationship to the railroad, though, lies in the recognition of the fact that these positive representations are, according to Faulkner, "effects of the film's display of the confidence in the power of technology and the machine as a means of transforming social relations"¹⁸. This positive discourse of modern technology as represented by the railroad is on display from the outset of La Bête humaine. The film opens with a shot of a burning furnace in the front cab of a train, pulling back to reveal Jacques Lantier and his fireman Pecqueux working in unison to conduct La Lison towards its destination of Le Havre. The camaraderie between the two men in this milieu is established by their wordless communication with each other using their bodies and their continual interaction to maintain the functionality of the train by either feeding it coal or replenishing its water tanks. The film cuts between several shots of the train in operation with its wheels turning and its gears shifting as the scenery races by. The intercutting between the hard work of the engineers in the cab and the results of their labor expressed as the speeding momentum of the train concludes with the docking of the train in the station at Le Havre accompanied by a fanfare of non-diegetic music. This moment in La Bête humaine indicates what Faulkner refers to as "a representation of the triumph of modern technology", an articulation of a discourse surrounding trains that emphasizes a socially liberating context for the working class¹⁹. This notion is reinforced moments later in the scene where Roubaud reprimands Turlot, the sugar king, at the

similarly attributed the sound of the train's wheels to Lantier's psychological state, highlighting "the rhythmic beat of train-wheels drumming on their tracks and on a madman's brain." In Frank S. Nugent. "The Human Beast", The New York Times, Feb 20, 1940, and Bosley Crowther. "Human Desire", The New York Times, Aug 7, 1954.

behest of a female bourgeois passenger for his presumption of class privilege concerning his dog. As Faulkner again points out, “the spirit of democratization that the railway promises” is again on display, this time inscribed in the regulations of railway travel²⁰. When Roubaud blandly informs Turlot that he makes no distinction between the passengers, this representative of the *haute* bourgeoisie becomes inflamed, vowing to teach the stationmaster about “making a distinction”. Since the tragedy of La Bête humaine is set into motion by this transgression of class recognition at the railway station, the scene suggests that modern technology alone is not enough for a transformation of the social structure if social attitudes continue to remain divisive.

Human Desire does not carry a similar emphasis upon the train as a socially liberalizing technology. The opening sequence begins with several shots from the front of the train looking forward as the railroad and the countryside speed past. Inserted between these shots of the train’s forward motion are interior shots of the huge front cab where Jeff Warren and Alec Simmons sit in quasi-immobility at the controls. Fifteen years after 1938, the coal train of La Lison has now been upgraded to an electric diesel-powered train. Hence there is no burning furnace inside the front cab, and Jeff and Alec are shown to have minimal interaction amongst themselves and with the train itself. The sequence is edited in a manner that reflects an almost mechanical relationship between conductor and train, as Jeff is shown to react to the exterior conditions of the track with a corresponding shot that shows him turning a dial or flipping a lever. The hard physical labor and interaction that was demonstrated by Lantier and Pecqueux to operate the train does not exist for Jeff and Alec. Technology has allowed them greater control over the

¹⁸ Faulkner, p86.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

machine with less labor expended, but at the expense of the social interaction between the workers. When the train docks at the station in Human Desire, it does so with only the diegetic noises of the railway on the soundtrack; there is no triumphant music to herald its arrival. The front cab then detaches from the rest of the cars and the film follows it towards its eventual parking inside the yard. The documentary approach to the train's arrival and its docking procedure, which serves no real narrative function, emphasizes a cool detached approach that privileges the mechanized functionality associated with the railroad over its social aspects.

The absence of sequences in Human Desire showing the interaction of the railyard workers within their milieu supports this notion of the de-emphasis of the social aspect of railway life. Even the dismissal of Carl from his job at the railroad removes the social emphasis that was associated with Roubaud's anxiety over his possible job loss. Instead of a transgression of class, Carl is dismissed because of his temper over an argument that involved the loss of ten carloads of perishables that spoiled in the railyard due to negligence. The problem of class distinction that set the plot of La Bête humaine in motion is now recontextualized into a matter of industrial and commercial loss. By 1954, the discourse for trains and modern technology as a potential force for social transformation no longer carries with it the optimism that it may once have contained in the France of 1938; rather it is recontextualized in postwar America to focus on its relationship with corporatized industry.

Two other minor scenes in Human Desire reinforce this prioritization of corporate concern as the prevailing discourse that encompasses the railroad. When Jeff signs in at the head office for the first time since returning for Korea, the film offers a quick glimpse

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p89.

of John Thurston, the Yard Master (a character who has no equivalent in La Bête humaine). Thurston is portrayed as a cold efficient bookkeeper who barely acknowledges Jeff's presence other than to correct him on the exact number of days he has been absent from his job due to military service ("three years and forty five days" correcting Jeff's initial assertion of three years). This cool characterization of the head of the railyard who lacks social grace and warmth extends to the representation of the railyard itself. The other scene supporting this notion takes place right after the inquiry (where Jeff denies seeing Vicki in Owens' compartment car) in the offices of a man visually coded to be the president of the railroad (judging by the décor, his demeanor, and the cigar that he smokes). He is having a conversation with the company lawyer about the murder, though they are not talking about the tragic death of their colleague Owens, rather they are complaining about the damage that the murder will wreak on the business of the railroad! The lawyer verbalizes the cold, harsh cynicism that surrounds the discourse of the railroad: "We've got a responsibility to the public. If the guy has to get himself murdered, why doesn't he pick one of the airlines?" This conversation is especially distressing as it represents the last word from any authority figure about the murder of Owens. Human Desire does not even dedicate any more scenes to deal with a further inquiry about the murder of Owens, unlike La Bête humaine, which at the very least doled out institutional punishment to the innocent Cabuche in order to close that aspect of the narrative. The absence of a similar sequence in Human Desire suggests that a corporate discourse ultimately transcends social responsibility, where business must not suffer on account of human tragedy. At a social level, the discourse of the railroad and modern technology in Human Desire is dominated by this negative aura of cold corporate

attitudes, providing a fitting frame for the sordid events that eventually transpire as a result of a transgression of these values²¹.

In a narrative sense, all of the actions that deal with the main storyline of murder and deceit in Human Desire take place on or near trains and the railyard (Carl's dismissal, the murder of Owens, Jeff's first encounter with Vicki, Jeff and Vicki's late-night rendezvous, Jeff's aborted attempt to kill Carl, and Carl's strangulation of Vicki). Indeed, Human Desire makes it quite clear that all of the nastiness of the plot derives from the railroad. These negative connotations of the railroad environment in Human Desire also reinforce the representation of domestic space in the film. It is therefore unsurprising that the Buckley house, the site of marital strife and dysfunction, is situated at the fringe of the railyard, where all of these destructive actions take place. The soundtrack intensifies the proximity of the Buckley house to the railyard, where the sights and sounds of trains are always present through the night-lights of the passing trains and their shrieking whistles. The film even goes so far as to associate these sounds with Vicki, as train whistles are always audible in the background whenever the plot requires her to manipulate Jeff (such as in the railyard shed when Jeff agrees to meet with her at Jean's apartment in the city, marking the start of their affair.) In contrast, the Simmons

²¹ The negative representation of the railroad in Human Desire may be the film's way of getting even with the American railroad companies that refused to cooperate with the shooting of the film. Lotte Eisner recounts the story of how the Santa Fe company withdrew their support from the project when they learned that the original novel contained a murder in a compartment car. The company seemed to have passed along its warning to all the other American railroad companies as well. In the end, the studio found a small company in Canada to agree. In Eisner, p342. Contrast this story and its subsequent negative representation of the railroad with the production context of La Bête humaine, which had the complete cooperation of the national railroad, the Société Nationale des Chemins de fer (SNCF), and the railroad workers' Fédération. The SNCF provided Renoir with a locomotive and ten kilometers of track where the film crew could work as they pleased. The "authentic" portrayal of the milieu of the railyard and the engineers was so successful that it would be referenced in the celebrations for the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, where a life-sized wooden replica of La Lison was the final exhibit in a three hour parade down the Champs-Élysées. Ginette Vincendeau, "The Beauty of the Beast" in Sight and Sound. Vol 1, No. 3 (July 1991), p11.

household escapes these negative connotations, situated as it is in the suburban milieu, far from the railyard and the sights and sounds of trains. The Simmons home is accordingly represented as a different domestic space from the Buckley home, one of warm and harmonious marital relations where traditional gender roles are firmly in place. Its physical and conceptual distance from the railyard in this context thus reinforces the identity of the suburban space as a refuge from the morbidity of the railroad environment.

Taken together, the narrative elements of the suburban space, the “good girl”/*femme fatale* dichotomy, and the identity of Jeff Warren as a returning soldier allow Human Desire to re-present La Bête humaine in a fashion that would be ideologically consistent within an institutional and historical context. As its title indicates, Human Desire is a film that focuses on desire, and in this sense it serves as a cautionary thriller that avoids the tragedy of La Bête humaine by allowing the protagonist to re-exert control over his desires and hence save himself from destruction. This exertion of control over desire is a key characteristic that differentiates the discourse of masculinity surrounding the returning American soldier from the French working class character. These differing representations of masculinity are culturally and generically specific within their own historical contexts, and as such they each are loaded with their own corresponding narrative conventions and ideological resolutions. The transformation of La Bête humaine into “a triangle story” with a “regulation Hollywood *femme fatale* manipulating the love triangle” suggests the interpretive limitations of Human Desire from a social and ideological perspective. Indeed, the treatment of the discourse of trains and the railroad in Human Desire as a suffocating environment characterized by its neat and cool mechanical functionality lends itself to readings that emphasize the fatality of the

narrative. Since Human Desire lacks the social dimension of this discourse that is evident in La Bête humaine, the remake presents itself as an interpretation of the French film that focuses on the fatalistic elements that much of the criticism of La Bête humaine has tended to highlight²². This theme of fatality is reinforced and restaged in Human Desire as a noir motif alongside narrative elements such as the returning soldier and the *femme fatale*/nurturing woman representations of femininity in order to standardize the re-presentation of La Bête humaine with similar films of the period (such as The Long Night). In this manner, Human Desire can be understood as a process of interpretation of La Bête humaine that negotiates the transposition of the narrative in order to rewrite the ideological resolution of the French film to recuperative one that is more suited to its cultural and institutional context in America.

²² Faulkner's contention that the train represents a positive discourse in a social sense, especially in the opening scene, flies in face of the majority of the writing about the La Bête humaine, which links the train to the fatality of the narrative. For example, Sesonske describes the shot of the firebox as "a visual expression of that consuming inner flame which drives each character towards his fate." Sesonske, p358. Dudley Andrew refers to La Bête humaine as "destiny incarnate". Andrew, p314. Vincendeau calls the train in La Bête humaine "the embodiment of the death drive". Ginette Vincendeau, "The Beauty of the Beast" in Sight and Sound. Vol 1, No. 3. (July, 1991).

Conclusion

“As quickly as they are manufactured, none of these remakes actually work.... Films incarnate and reflect the mentality of their country. What’s at stake is a cultural problem, that of the consubstantiality of cinema with a culture...”

- Daniel Protopopoff and Michel Serceau¹

The above statement was presented in the context of an article that specifically addressed the topic of American remakes of European films, which was written by the editors of a special issue of *CinémAction* focusing on remakes and adaptations. What is immediately apparent upon a closer reading of this statement is its resistant and reductive tone, which ultimately concedes futility to the very practice of the remake itself. The idea of the specificity of cinema within a national and cultural context is invoked to support their claims of the untranslatable nature of cinema across national and cultural borders. Taken in this manner, the success of a remake is thus judged according to its fidelity to the cultural contexts of the source film. Protopopoff and Serceau suggest that the primary failure of American remakes of European films is that the transposition of the source film effectively decontextualizes it from its native culture, thus losing the “essential” connection to the socio-cultural roots that energized the original film. As a result, Hollywood remakes of European films (and especially of French films, which is the focus of Protopopoff and Serceau’s article) are deemed nothing more than “a sterile graft”.

¹ Daniel Protopopoff and Michel Serceau, “Les remakes américains de film européens: une greffe stérile”, in *CinémAction* no. 53 (October 1989): p106. My abridged translation of a longer paragraph that reads: “Reste que, aussi vite confectionné qu’il soit, aucun de ces remakes fonctionne réellement. Le terreau, qui reste visible, ne féconde pas la terre sur laquelle il est transplanté. Outre leur codification propre, les genres américain fonctionnaient sur un typage des acteurs, une distribution des rôles. Ce n’est peut-être pas le moindre obstacle à la greffe (elle ne s’est pas faite non plus en France, en dépit de quelques tentatives

This thesis project contests the reductive conclusions about American remakes of French films that are expressed by Protopopoff and Serceau by approaching the Hollywood remake not as a process of the decontextualization of culture, but rather as a process of the recontextualization of culture. The notion of fidelity concerning cultural contexts comes across as disingenuous since it seems fairly self-evident that the Hollywood remake is a popularized version of the source film for American audiences. As such, cultural specificity, as expressed through the examples of character types and narrative details, is necessarily adjusted to conform to the cultural conditions of reception within the historical contexts of these audiences. Denigrating remakes on the basis of their fidelity to cultural contexts masks the consideration of how the remake transforms and reworks the source film to produce meaning within its transposed cultural context as well as stifling a consideration of the relationship between these cultural contexts.

Over the course of this project, I have argued a position whereby the remake can be understood as a cultural translation that mediates the translocation of source films across national, cultural, and linguistic borders towards a form that is understandable in relation to the historical and cultural contexts of its destination. The alterations to the source film that appear in the remake serve as indications of this process of cultural translation, as they represent the moments of cultural specificity that need to be negotiated. This approach with respect to Hollywood remakes was established in the first chapter, where a review of the literature pertaining to the comparisons between La Chienne and Scarlet Street was used to survey the different methodologies that compared remakes with their source films. By identifying the main issues that drove each of these

tardives, avec la comédie à l'italienne). Les types en question incarnent et reflètent la mentalité du pays. C'est le problème des cultures qui est ici en jeu, de la consubstantialité du cinéma avec une culture..."

methodologies, the analytical model to be used for this project was situated and refined for its application to the three following case studies.

The second chapter examined the differences between Le Jour se lève and The Long Night from the perspective of the temporality of the narratives that situated each film in relation to the historical contexts surrounding the Second World War. The addition of the identity of a returning veteran to the main character of the narrative was seen as a key alteration that introduced a recuperative discourse to the remake's treatment of the source film. In this way, The Long Night reworked the pessimistic narrative of Le Jour se lève into a dramatization of social concerns rooted in the historical and cultural context of its moment of production.

Chapter III compared the different remakes of Pépé le Moko within an institutional framework. Casbah was analyzed in the shadow of Algiers, the previous remake of the French film that set the moral guidelines in terms of the representation of the transgressive narrative elements that the musical was to adopt. Casbah was seen to interpret Pépé le Moko by breaking down the source material into the discrete generic units of the Hollywood musical and the crime film, and treating them according to their appropriate representational and ideological strategies within the studio system.

The comparative analysis of La Bête humaine and Human Desire in the fourth chapter used aspects of the previous chapters to understand how specific discourses in the French film were engaged by the remake in order that the narrative conform to its cultural and institutional context in America. Specifically, the representation of gender and the discourse of modern technology as represented by trains were seen as the primary aspects

of La Bête humaine that were modified for Human Desire, enabling the remake to significantly alter the ideological resolution of the transposed narrative.

Each of the case studies in this thesis project has focused on how the alterations in the remakes rework specific elements of the source film to address issues specific to the historical and cultural contexts of their moment of production. Since the alterations work to mediate the transposition of the French film into an American context, they indicate a process of interpretation that eschews a strict fidelity to the source material in favor of suitability and comprehensibility to the contexts of the destination culture. In this way, the remake can be seen as an agent that negotiates cultural differences that are inscribed in the films themselves.

The interpretive possibilities of the remake can thus serve as a vehicle for not only understanding how the source film is understood at a particular historical moment, but also providing a greater understanding of the role that contextual forces play in the production and reception of the films themselves. Though I have focused on case studies that concern Hollywood remakes of French films, the mode of inquiry presented in this project can be of potential use to treat other cross-cultural remakes, such as Time of the Gypsies (Emir Kusturica, 1989) and The Godfather (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972), Yojimbo (Akira Kurasawa, 1961) and A Fistful of Dollars (Sergio Leone, 1964), and The Killer (John Woo, 1991) and Le Samourai (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1967). Treating the remake as a site through which shifting cultural, social, and ideological forces are negotiated provides an opportunity to engage with these discourses in a manner that can ultimately lead to a greater understanding of the role that cinema plays as a historical and cultural document.

APPENDIX I

AMERICAN REMAKES OF FRENCH FILMS 1930-2000

<u>French Title</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>American Title</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Director</u>
L'Énigmatique Monsieur Parkes	1930	Louis Gasnier	Slightly Scarlet	1956	Allan Dwan
La Chienne	1931	Jean Renoir	Scarlet Street	1945	Fritz Lang
Bodu sauvé des eaux	1932	Jean Renoir	Down and out in Beverly Hills	1986	Paul Mazursky
Fanny	1932	Marc Allégret	Port of Seven Seas	1938	James Whale
Fanny	1932	Marc Allégret	Fanny	1962	Joshua Logan
Les Croix de bois	1932	Raymond Bernard	The Road to Glory	1936	Howard Hawks
L'Équipage	1935	Anatole Litvak	The Woman I Love	1937	Anatole Litvak
Mayerling	1936	Anatole Litvak	Mayerling	1968	Terence Young
Pépé le Moko	1936	Julien Duvivier	Algiers	1938	John Cromwell
Pépé le Moko	1936	Julien Duvivier	Casbah	1948	John Berry
L'Île des Veuves	1936	Claude Heymann	Lost on the Western Front	1937	Maurice Elvey
La Bête humaine	1938	Jean Renoir	Human Desire	1954	Fritz Lang
J'étais une aventurière	1938	Raymond Bernard	I was an Adventuress	1940	Gregory Ratoff
Carrefour	1938	K. Bernhardt	Crossroads	1942	Jack Conway
Pièges	1939	Robert Siodmak	Lured/Personal Column	1947	Douglas Sirk
Le Dernier tournant	1939	Pierre Chenal	The Postman always rings twice	1946	Tay Garnett
Le Jour se lève	1939	Marcel Carné	The Long Night	1947	Anatole Litvak
Le Voile bleu	1942	Jean Stelli	The Blue Veil	1951	Curtis Bernhardt
Le Corbeau	1943	Henri-Georges Clouzot	The Thirteenth Letter	1950	Otto Preminger
La Ronde	1950	Max Ophüls	Chain of Desire	1992	Temistocles Lopez
Le Salaire de la peur	1952	Henri-Georges Clouzot	Sorcerer	1979	William Friedkin
La Fête à Henriette	1955	Julien Duvivier	Paris - when it sizzles	1964	Richard Quine
Les Diaboliques	1955	Henri-Georges Clouzot	Diabolique	1996	Jeremiah Chechik
À bout de souffle	1959	Jean Luc Godard	Breathless	1983	Jim McBride
Les Liaisons dangereuses	1959	Roger Vadim	Dangerous liaisons	1988	Stephen Frears
Plein Soliel	1960	René Clement	The Talented Mr. Ripley	1999	Anthony Minghella
Jules et Jim	1961	Francois Truffaut	Willie and Phil	1980	Paul Mazursky
Le Grand Blond avec le chaussure noire	1972	Yves Robert	The Man with One Red Shoe	1985	Stan Dragoti
L'emmerdeur	1974	Edouard Molinaro	Buddy Buddy	1981	Billy Wilder
Cousin, Cousine	1975	Jean-Charles Tachella	Cousins	1989	Joel Schumacher
Le Jouet	1976	Francis Veber	The Toy	1982	Richard Donner
Pardon mon affaire	1977	Yves Robert	The Woman in Red	1984	Gene Wilder
Un Moment d'égarement	1977	Claude Berri	Blame it on Rio	1984	Stanley Donan
L'Homme qui aimait les femmes	1977	Francois Truffaut	The Man who loved women	1983	Blake Edwards
La Cage au Folles	1978	Edouard Molinaro	The Birdcage	1997	Mike Nichols
Retour de Martin Guerre	1982	Daniel Vigne	Somersby	1993	Jon Amiel
La Chèvre	1982	Francis Veber	Pure Luck	1991	Nadia Tass
La Vie continue	1982	Moshe Mizrahi	Men don't leave	1990	Paul Brickman

Trois hommes et un couffin	1985	Coline Serreau	Three men and a baby	1987	Leonard Nimoy
Le Grand Chemin	1987	Jean-Loup Hubert	Paradise	1991	Mary Agnes Donoghue
Nikita	1990	Luc Besson	Point of No Return	1993	John Badham
Les Visiteurs	1993	Jean-Marie Poiré	Just Visiting	2000	Jean-Marie Poiré

Filmography

Algiers. Starring Charles Boyer, Hedy Lamaar, and Joseph Calleia. Dir. by John Cromwell, 1938. U.S.A.

La Bête humaine. Starring Jean Gabin, Simone Simon, Fernand Ledoux, and Julien Carette. Dir. Jean Renoir, 1938. France.

Casbah. Starring Tony Martin, Yvonne de Carlo, Marta Toren, and Peter Lorre. Dir. John Berry, 1948. U.S.A.

La Chienne. Starring Michel Simon, Janie Marèze, and Georges Flamant. Dir. Jean Renoir, 1931. France.

Human Desire. Starring Glenn Ford, Gloria Grahame, and Broderick Crawford. Dir. Fritz Lang, 1954. U.S.A.

Le Jour se lève. Starring Jean Gabin, Arletty, and Jules Berry. Dir. Marcel Carne, 1939. France.

The Long Night. Starring Henry Fonda, Barbara Bel Geddes, Ann Dvorak, and Vincent Price. Dir. Anatole Litvak, 1947. U.S.A.

Pépe le Moko. Starring Jean Gabin, Mireille Balin, and Lucas Gridoux. Dir. Julien Duvivier, 1937. France.

Scarlet Street. Starring Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, and Dan Duryea. Dir. Fritz Lang, 1944. U.S.A.

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