COMPUTING CINEMATIC STYLE
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF STARS AND PERFORMANCE IN THE FILMS OF ERNST LUBITSCH

by

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Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
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Abstract:

From the very beginning of Ernst Lubitsch's career in Hollywood, critics praised him for successfully blending his expertise in silent films with the new sound technology. This thesis examines how recent research into cinema technology might illuminate how Lubitsch's use of technology conditioned actors' performance in his films. First, I focus on Lubitsch's German films, analyzing how the main stars of his films were formed in relation to the star system developed in Weimar Germany. After establishing this background for Lubitsch's view of film acting, I go on to examine how he approached the task of directing actors in his later films in Hollywood. To this end, by using cinemetrics website, I employ a statistical method to examine the distribution of character-shots in Lubitsch's early Hollywood musicals. Moreover, I compare/contrast the singing performances of the two main stars of Lubitsch's musical comedies with regard to how conceptions of gender inform the star's performance in Hollywood. Finally, I explain how Lubitsch's use of sound technology had an impact on MacDonald's extra-fictional relationship with her audience.

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Introduction

CineMetrics is the name given to a software program developed in the recent years by which one can collect data while viewing a film for the purpose of analyzing movies on a statistical basis. The software is publically accessible on the cinemetrics website (www.cinemetrics.lv). Although the software has only been recently developed, calculating the shots as a tool for analyzing movies has been used from the very early days of cinema studies. The software, however, improves on the methods of the past by allowing us to create categories of analysis more precise and fine-grain than simple average shot length, and it allows us to be more accurate in producing the count. Although the viewer creates and sets up her categories and pushes the keys simultaneously while watching the movie, the result comes up automatically. In this research project, cinemetrics is used in an analysis of the films of Ernst Lubitsch. The analysis proves that we can discover stylistic patterns in Lubitsch's films that are not obvious to the naked eye. Moreover, putting the collected data alongside the result of additional socio-historical research on specific films clarifies some significant moments in the films' narratives. Before explaining my use of cinemetrics software in relation to the films of Ernst Lubitsch, I will say a few words about earlier theories concerning the relation between film technology and acting performance. I will also explain how such theories can illuminate aspects of the movie industry star system as it functioned in the first decades of Lubitsch's film career.

From the very beginning, film theorists have paid special attention to the effects of technology on cinema as a new art form, yet critical commentary on film acting has rarely attended to technology's effects on acting style. The Russian formalists theorized acting with reference to the specificity of the film medium but, as James Naremore points out, this aspect of the writings of the formalists has been overlooked in recent re-examinations of their theories by

film studies scholars. Naremore himself discusses the so-called Kuleshov experiment, “in which an actor’s inexpressive offscreen glance was intercut with various objects, thus creating the illusion that he was emoting.”¹ Comparing the implications of this experiment with Walter Benjamin’s discussion of painting in the age of photography, Naremore concludes that “[m]echanical reproduction deprives performance of authority and ‘aura,’ even as it greatly enhances the possibility of stardom.”² He goes on to say that “Kuleshov’s ‘experiments’ had involved the creation of a synthetic person out of fragmentary details of different bodies—a technique that undermines the humanist conception of acting, turning every movie editor into a potential Dr. Frankenstein.”³

In short, early film theories, such as those articulated by the Russian formalists, Benjamin, Balázs and others, set out to define and prescribe the fundamental quality of film acting as it may be distinguished from the staged performance. This project was continued in the years after WWII by Siegfried Kracauer and Andre Bazin. However, later film theories rarely emphasize the role of the actor. In the 1970s, for instance, auteur theory focused on the director’s acts of creativity and disregarded the role of actors. Indeed, most of today’s academic film critics discuss movie performers in terms of their body movements, performing skills, acting styles, and persona, and thus approach film acting in a manner that omits the specificity of the film medium. Dominating the literature on film acting are references to writers such as Stanislavski and Brecht who are more concerned with theatre than film. In the following pages, I intend to discuss how recent research into cinema technology might illuminate the history of film acting. An example of such research is the analysis of new technology and its relation to social change and development in Paul Young’s book, *The Cinema Dreams Its Rivals: Media Fantasy Films from Radio to the Internet*. Young’s discussion of how film’s identity as a medium has been affected

by technological change is relevant to questions of acting, although Young himself does not pursue this relevance. I make it the objective of this project then to overcome the apparent incompatibility between two longstanding but separate film theoretical discourses, namely, the one that takes in the major theories of film acting and the one that takes in technological changes. First, however, I will consider some of the early film theorists' writings on movie performances.

Both Siegfried Kracauer and Rudolph Arnheim, who detested Lubitsch's musicals, offered reflections on acting that help illuminate Lubitsch's films. Before the transition to sound, the American silent film comedy, for Kracauer, was the "preferred genre for reflecting on the convergence of the human body and the machine, and for pointing to the growing separation between individual and society."⁴ Accordingly, he admired Chaplin and Keaton for their ability to transform the experience of alienation into the physical humour of anarchistic comedy, and thereby reveal the hidden mechanism of the former. After the introduction of sound, Kracauer insisted that the addition of dialogue should have as its sole purpose the intensification of a character's physical and psychological appearance. It is in this context that he went on to criticize Lubitsch's early musicals for lacking substance.

In his article, "In Praise of Character Actors," Rudolf Arnheim distinguishes between what he calls the character actor and the heroic actor. The former shows the performer as he is, the latter as he yearns him or is yearned by others to be.⁵ He refers to the character actor by the title of Robert Musil's literary novel, the "man without qualities".⁶ The reluctance of Ulrich, the protagonist of the novel, to define himself and his tendency to wait for the outside world to form his character may be extended to Arnheim's description of the character actor. The character actor is not general but particular in the widest sense and therefore is not limited to one method. Cynthia Baron claims that, "[i]n the 1930s and 1940s, studio publicity focused the public's

attention on the stars' personality rather than their craftsmanship."⁷ In this regard, the stars of the 1930s bear the marks of the character actor.

One of the stars from the 1930s, discussed in the following pages of this thesis, is Jeanette MacDonald. Having background in staged musicals, MacDonald belongs to the group of New York performers who, because of the advancement in the talky, replace the great stars of the silent-era such as Pola Negri. In Chapter Two I will analyze how the marital status of Jeanette MacDonald informed the fictional persona of the lead female character in the *Love Parade*. Rather than submitting herself to the stereotype of the idealized heterosexual romance, MacDonald offered a contradictory character that "projects the freshness and earnestness of a modern American woman."⁸ The anxiety that MacDonald experiences as she tries to reconcile the social convention and her sexuality is realized in the details of her performance. For example, in capturing Jeanette MacDonald's close-up shots, Lubitsch, by his use of sound editing techniques, interrupts the diegetic world of the film and therefore introduces a pervasive and distinctive quality for her character.

Kristin Thompson argues that unlike the standard pantomime acting style of the classical Hollywood cinema (1913-1917), Lubitsch's German films bring into play the performance style of character actors. She cites the following statement by Jan-Christopher Horak on Lubitsch's approach to acting: "By using actors whose comic personae were established on the screen, Lubitsch's characters remain thoroughly human in their madness."⁹ But Thompson argues that, from 1919 on, Lubitsch began to move towards the use of more facial expression, and hence toward a different sort of acting. "The emphasis on facial expression would be further encouraged by his move to Hollywood and his increased focus on sophisticated romantic comedy."¹⁰ James Naremore claims that "[t]he movement from Stanislavski to Brecht ...

involves a shift in emphasis from psychoanalysis to semiotics, from inner contemplation to social praxis.”¹¹ Indeed, the increased reliance on facial expression stimulated Lubitsch’s interest in sound editing as a tool for constructing character. The physiognomic aspect of the close-up conveys the attitude of the filmmaker while the sound montage remains only a function of narrative.

In his article, “Ritual, Realism, and Abstraction: Performance in the Musical,” Jerome Delamater claims that just as film acting is an essential part of a film text, it has a significant relationship to the pro-filmic world. This situation is more complex when we study acting within the musical, which often draws attention to the gap between performer and role. In musical comedy, Delamater argues, “the characters are no longer just characters whose existence is restricted to the text, but they are performers *as* characters who frequently invite the audience to participate in the ritual with them.”¹² In *One Hour with You* (1932), for instance, the majority of songs are played within realistic space of the film, yet Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald constantly acknowledge the camera and thus signal their awareness of the extra-diegetic presence of the movie audience. In contrast to the revue musicals in the 1930s, the function of the numbers in this film is not distinct from the narrative; rather, the numbers demand that the audience actively participate in the court-ship rituals of the romantic couple. Edward Baron Turk, in *Hollywood Diva: A Biography of Jeannette MacDonald*, introduces her as a proto-feminist figure. Based on his access to Macdonald’s unpublished memoirs and private correspondence, Turk concludes that, in her relationships, she had a very unique “desire to get even.”¹³ For instance, MacDonald was constantly redefining her friendship with her manager and fiancé, Robert George Ritchie, rejecting his marriage proposals and playing a game of “hardball

sexual politics.”¹⁴ The development of the character of MacDonald in *One Hour with You* parallels her desire in real life to overturn the male prerogative.

Before entering into a discussion of changes in editing technique after the transition to sound and its effects on acting, it should be noted how the bodily movement of the actor can be discussed under a broader notion of technological innovation. We can begin with Béla Balázs’s theory of physiognomy and his analysis of the function of close-up. Sabine Hake, a famous scholar of the Weimar cinema, claims that Balázs was one of the early film critics to use specific scenes from a film in order to comment on technical details.¹⁵ She states that “[t]he reflection on great actors in the early reviews gives rise to the notion of physiognomy as the true language of the body. Predisposed to physiognomics through his familiarity with phenomenological ideas, Balázs first introduces the term as a function of the close-up and elaborates on its implications in a comment on the filmic representation of the masses.”¹⁶ By theorizing an aesthetic category that is developed naturally out of the body, he holds that the universal language of silent film is superior to the “invented” language of sound film. Consequently, his ideas about the unifying characteristic of the language of the body that functions against the division introduced by spoken language, identifies him as essentialist in the eyes of recent critics of Weimar cinema such as Sabine Hake. In other words, his metaphysical terminology in describing bodily gestures contradicts the materialistic assumptions of his Marxist ideology. “In contrast to theatre, Balázs argues, the actor in a film creates meaning; his or her facial expressions do not merely add form, but are its very content.”¹⁷ Bearing in mind Balázs’s concerns for physiognomy, for the idea of physiognomy, the universality of the language of cinema as an ideal was virtually destroyed for him by the introduction of sound technology in spite of the salvaging attempt that was made by producing multi-lingual versions of the same films. Since Balázs states that the language of

cinema should be expressed through facial expression, he views sound film as working against its inherent possibility. His distrust in sound together with his apparently essentialist understanding of physiognomy has often caused film critics to overlook the relevance of his theory to question of sound-era film acting. My concern in this section is how synch sound, in accordance with the notion of physiognomy raised by Balázs, functions in sound-era films. How did sound facilitate Balázs's tendency to anthropomorphize the technical material of films? Balázs himself tries to theorize sound within his assumptions of physiognomy. Commenting on the idea of acoustic close-up, he says:

Only when the sound film will have resolved noise into its elements, segregated individual, intimate voices, and made them speak to us separately in vocal, acoustic close-ups; when these isolated detail sounds will be collated again in purposeful order by sound montage, will the sound film have become a new art. When the director will be able to lead our ear as [our eyes]. He could once already lead our eye in the silent film and by means of such guidance along a series of closeups will be able to emphasize, separate, and bring into relation with each other the sounds of life as he has done with its sights, then the rattle and clatter of life will no longer overwhelm us in a lifeless chaos of sound. The sound camera will intervene in this chaos of sound, form it and interpret it, and then it will again be man himself who speaks to us from the sound screen.¹⁸

In order to examine the changes in editing pattern of Lubitsch's early musicals I will consider how close-up shots of the female lead, Jeanette MacDonald, are inserted in his films.

Jeanette MacDonald's biographer, Edward Baron Turk, notes that, when the *Love Parade* came out, one New York critic argued that her facial features and contours are abnormally long.¹⁹ According to Balázs, "[n]ot only the microdramatics expressed in the microphysiognomy of the face can be made intelligible by the sound which causes it. Such a *closeupplussound* can have the inverse effect."²⁰ In Chapter Two of this thesis, for instance, I will discuss my studies on the average shot length of Jeanette MacDonald's close-up shots in comparison with the

close-up shots of the other characters. The objective of this study for me is to discover how statistical data on the formal parameters of these films, in this case the ASL of close-up shots, can illuminate how the film star has been characterized by the director.

The transition to sound, according to Charles O'Brien, corresponds with a reduction in the amount of cutting done in Europe and the United States. Although Hollywood producers were still relying on the editing-based narrational style of classical cinema, the average shot length increased about 50 percent in the early years after the transition to sound. This is to say that, the ASL of American film increased from a norm of 4.8 seconds for the period of 1924-1929 to 10.8 seconds for the period of 1928-1933.²¹ In order to discover the effect of sound-era editing on viewers, we need to examine its effect on the performance of the actors. Don Fairservice argues that, unlike the flexibility of the editing patterns in silent films, "[s]ynchronized sound demanded a continuity bound to dialogue and action played out in real time. At the start, it put both shooting and editing into a straitjacket."²² He goes on to say that "[o]nce a method had been found to cut and join the soundtrack, it opened up the possibility of inserting close-ups carrying spoken lines into master scenes, not just reaction shots; and very soon scenes were being assembled from individual shots which had their own sound."²³ In the case of Lubitsch, his creativity in using sound editing lies in the flexibility of inserting close-up caused by the advancement in sound-editing which increases the possibility of adding sound to pre-filmic silent pictures.

In order to draw a profile of a film's editing pattern, I have used cinematics tools. Kristin Thompson in her book, *Herr Lubitsch Goes to Hollywood: German and American Film after World War I*, analyses the ASL and mise-en-scene-shots of Lubitsch's German film in order to establish his role as the author of these films. According to another theorist of cinematics,

Warren Buckland, just as a writer's style can "be measured in terms of a constant use of language features, or a combination of features,"²⁴ so can a filmmaker's style. Cinemetrics' users apply different methods of statistical style analysis in order to discover how the form of films differ from one to another based on either the concept of the national cinema or authorship. However, in my project, I have taken a slightly different direction. By increasing my parameters I have allowed my statistical data to go further than the customary comparison of one film with another. By applying a range of parameters, I compare a specific film with itself. In chapter three of this project, for example, I will study *Monte Carlo* in relation to the five different statistical graphs of this film that I have done in cinemetrics website in relation to the character-shots.

In order to acquire some insight on the specific of a film style, I try to investigate it by applying a range of new parameters to my studies. A scientific study of a text should be repeatable and variable to place a group of hypotheses for contextualization of specific phenomena. This method is similar to the process of mathematical formulation whereby what is known is distinguished from what is unknown at each stage of discovery. Pre-twentieth century paintings represent horse galloping without acknowledging the moment when the horse has no hoof on the ground. Eadweard Muybridge's study contradicts the observer's biased hypothesis through repeatable and variable testing of that specific experience. In my studies at cinemetrics website I have identified new practical and distinguishing features in relation to the distribution of character-shots. For example, my statistical study of Lubitsch's *Trouble in Paradise* (1933) was based on shots featuring Miriam Hopkins plus number of people in the frame with her. It was only after finishing this study that I realized that my four categories out of eight were not filled. That means in no scene Hopkins has been framed with more than two people. And in only two scenes is she with two people. Therefore, for most of the film's running time she appears in

singles or two shots. That means Hopkins is always isolated even in scenes that take place in social gatherings. This does not mean that the scientific study of a film does not have anything in common with the intellectual conception or the psychological perception of a film. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty argues that, “in developing the concept of the thing, scientific knowledge was not aware that it was working on a presupposition. Precisely because perception, in its vital implications and prior to any theoretical thought, is presented as perception of a being,” seeing that it is clear in my previous remarks on Balázs, Kracauer, Naremore and other theorists.²⁵ I do not reject the importance of the theoretical works in film studies for my analysis, but I do not use theoretical thoughts as pre-supposition of my analysis. Using methods of statistical analysis allows us to apply a theory not as a presupposition but in a critically intentional experience of watching a movie.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1, “From Ossi Oswalda to Jeanette MacDonald: Lubitsch’s actors in Close-up,” focuses on Lubitsch’s German films, analyzing how the main stars of his films are formed in relation to the star system that had developed in Weimar era. This chapter provides the background for Lubitsch’s view of the star system and its effect on his later films in Hollywood. Chapter 2, “Happy Ending and Pragmatic Resolution: The Distribution of Character Shots in Lubitsch’s Early Musicals,” examines the distribution of character-shots in Lubitsch early Hollywood musicals. Moreover, I compare and contrast the singing performances of the two main stars of Lubitsch’s musical comedies with regard to the paradoxical gendered conception of the star’s performance in Hollywood. Chapter 3, “*Monte Carlo*: sound technology and its effects on boundaries of gender and culture,” focuses on *Monte Carlo* in relation to MacDonald’s performance that steps out of the diegetic world of the film.

What I have principally in mind is how Lubitsch's use of sound technology has an impact on how MacDonald develops her extra-fictional relationship with her audience.

¹ James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988. 24.

² Ibid. 25.

³ Ibid. 25.

⁴ Hake, 254.

⁵ Arnheim, 205

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Baron, 83.

⁸ Edward Baron Turk, *Hollywood Diva: A Biography of Jeanette MacDonald* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1998. 79.

⁹ Kristine Thompson, *Herr Lubitsch Goes to Hollywood: German and American film after World War I* Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2005. 93.

¹⁰ Ibid. 94.

¹¹ James Naremore, *Acting in the cinema* University of California Press, Berkeley. 1988. 3.

¹² Jerome Delamater, "Ritual, Realism, and Abstraction: Performance in the Musical" in Carole Zucker, *Making Visible the Invisible: an Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting* The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Metuchen, New Jersey, 1990. 45.

¹³ Edward Baron Turk, *Hollywood Diva: A Biography of Jeanette MacDonald* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1998. 61.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sabine Hake, *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907-1933* University of Nebraska Press, London. 1993. 224.

¹⁶ Ibid. 225.

¹⁷ Ibid. 229.

¹⁸ Béla Balázs, "Theory of the Film: Sound" in Elisabeth Weis and John Belton, *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* Columbia University Press, New York, 1985.

¹⁹ Edward Baron Turk, 97.

²⁰ Balazs, "Theory of the Film: Sound"

²¹ Charles O'Brien, *Cinema's Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film style in France and the U.S.* Indiana University Press, Bloomington. 2005. 88-89.

²² Fairservice, 228.

²³ Ibid. 235.

²⁴ Warren Buckland, *Studying Contemporary American Film: A Guide to Movie Analysis*, by Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland, available at <http://www.cinemetrics.lv/buckland.php>, viewed 2009.

²⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945. translated from the French by Colin Smith, London; New York: Routledge. Published in 2006. 64.

Chapter One

From Ossi Oswalda to Jeanette MacDonald: Lubitsch's Actors in Close-Up

Sabine Hake identifies *Die Austernprinzessin* (1919, *The Oyster Princess*), *Die Puppe* (1919, *The Doll*), and *Die Bergkatze* (1921, *The Mountain Cat*) as representing the *Girllkultur* that had developed with the shift in the social and economic status of women in the early twentieth century.¹ Marsha Meskimmon defines the concept *Girllkultur* as a “popular culture centered upon the commodified spectacle of young, lean, androgynous and successful women, developed in the press.”² Hake goes on to say that “[b]y celebrating the aesthetic and erotic pleasures of androgyny, the Lubitsch’s comedies provided an imaginary space in which female desire could find expression and, at the same time, attach itself to the accoutrements of modern femininity.”³ Some aspects of this phenomenon, that is, the blurring of genders in visual culture, may be applicable to certain female stars of the Weimar era, namely, Ossi Oswalda and Pola Negri, both of whom appeared in films directed by Lubitsch. In this chapter, I will analyse how the formation of these two stars can be related to the escapist desires of female employees in society and their participation in modern day consumerism. Balazs, according to Linda Williams, “defines the close-up of the human face as a kind of unwilling confession of interiority otherwise inaccessible through language.”⁴ By focusing on the distribution of close-up shots of the stars I examine the effects that these films have on spectators regardless of the narrative or causal logic of the plot.

It is the case, however, that, with respect to the number of close-ups of Ossi Oswalda in *The Oyster Princess* – and, no less important the average shot length of these close-ups – the female lead proves not to be the centre of cinematic attention. In short, the

close-ups with Oswalda are cut much faster than the close-ups with both her fiancé (Harry Liedtke) and her father (Victor Janson). Of course, with her rough naturalness, Oswalda does not fit the stereotype of a pretty-faced female star. Although she gets almost the same number of medium shots as her male counterpart, she is not the object of the gaze. This is because Prince Nicki, who is not much more than the passive object of her desire, receives longer close-ups than she does. On this sort of statistical or technical basis, one might say that Prince Nicki is the dominant character. However, from the view point of being not the instigator but the recipient of the gaze, he is subordinate.

“Appropriating elements from an overwhelmingly male tradition in slapstick acting, Oswalda takes the possibilities of the female body beyond the limitations of her role and aims at something beyond characterization.”⁵ Even in the sequence where Oswalda is taking a bath, the rapid cuts undercut any possibility that she is traditionally genteel female. And this despite the fact that the opulent decor lends itself to rendering her appearance seductive and sensual. Instead the fast editing in this scene undermines the conventional portrayal of the eroticism. The periods of romance and eroticism customary in romantic comedy are in *The Oyster Princess* replaced by short moments that Hake links to the Bakhtinian notion of the Carnavalesque.⁶ In comparison to the actresses of Lubitsch’s musicals films who did not have comic persona in advance and were made into comedians by Lubitsch himself, Oswalda’s star persona had been already “perfected over a series of specially written short film comedies, collectively known as *Ossi’s Diary* [*Ossis Tagebuch*] (1917).”⁷ Her natural comic persona, and its elements of cheerful disorderliness, work against the generic syntax of the film, which seeks to contain her disruptive energy and reposition her as a proper figure within the institution of marriage.

For example, in *The Oyster Princess*, before becoming a legal wife of Prince Nicki, Oswalda engages in adultery and bigamy. The star here invokes a female archetype that elicits sympathy from the female audience. I will later argue that stars of Lubitsch's American films embody a different archetype and therefore their disruptive sexual energy cannot be easily restrained by the syntax of genre.

Graph 1: Close-up Shots in *The Oyster Princess*

Name:	CU-Oswalda	CU-Janson	CU-Liedtke	MS-Oswalda	M-Janson and Liedtke	None	Intertitles
Number of shots:	16	24	6	146	92	154	172
Length(min):	0.83	1.95	0.63	16.07	12.14	15.79	12.49
ASL(sec):	3.1	4.9	6.3	6.6	7.9	6.2	4.4
Color

1- *The Oyster Princess* (1919), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-06-14, I divided the close-ups into close-ups of Ossi Oswalda, Victor Janson and Harry Liedtke, In addition to medium shots that capture Oswalda and medium shots that capture Janson or Liedtke or both and shots that feature none of the main characters (None) and finally the intertitles.

In contrast to the rapid close-ups of Oswalda in *The Oyster Prince*, the close-ups of Pola Negri in *The Mountain Cat* are both longer and more numerous than those of her male counterpart. For instance, the ASL of Pola Negri in close-up is 4.3 seconds whereas,

for Paul Heidemann, it is 3.8 seconds. Hake argues that “love in *The Mountain Cat* fails to pacify the woman and ends in a proud affirmation of her otherness.”⁸ Because of its formal quality, *The Mountain Cat* is sometimes considered to be part of the canon of German expressionist films.⁹ However, when the average shot length between *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920) is compared with that of *The Mountain Cat*, we discover that the latter is cut twice as fast. Hake claims that the concept of expressionist cinema needs to be redefined in regard to the question of gender. Moreover, she argues that *The Mountain Cat* has strong resemblance to surrealist and futuristic cinema.¹⁰ I agree that the film’s acting style, together with the rapid editing pattern that should not be labeled expressionistic, emphasizes the motion and the mobility of futuristic cinema rather than the nightmarish quality of German expressionism. Hake mixes this issue with the question of gender by characterizing *The Mountain Cat* a reaction against the sexual politics of the Expressionist cinema.¹¹ She goes on to say that “the desiring woman in the film activates the same transgressive qualities that characterize the fantastic as a critical concept.”¹² Negri’s star persona is in conflict with that of Oswald. Her persona entails a combination of innocence and female sexuality in a way that defines her as a femme fatale who can complicate spectators’ control of the look.

Graph 2: Close-up Shots in *The Mountain Cat* 2- *The Mountain Cat* (1921), submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-06-17.

In *Ich mochte kein Mann sein* (*I Don't Want to be a Man*, 1918) androgyny is a key theme. In this film, Oswald plays a young lady who has a very unladylike desires for alcohol, cigarette and gambling. In order to avoid the social dictates upon her behavior, she dresses as a man. This film has 32 close-ups and 30 of them belong to Ossi Oswald, thus making it quite clear that her male counterpart gets far less of the camera's attention. However, the distribution of these close-ups is unusual. Graph 3, which is limited to her close-ups, illustrates the unusual nature of Lubitsch's approach in this film. In this three-act comedy, Oswald does not have many close-ups in the first act where she

is being forced to play out a conventional role. However, the few close-ups focused on her frustration and unhappiness over this state of affairs are longer than the ones of her in the remaining part of the film. The number of close-ups of Oswalda increases in the second act where Oswalda escapes the confines of the home, and turns herself into a transvestite. Lubitsch seems to be more interested in Oswalda's facial expressions mainly when she acts unfeminine. An example of this is the extreme close-up of her smoking a cigar. This logic applies also to the film's last act, which contains fewer close-ups until the last few minutes when many short close-ups of Oswalda are inserted in a series of shot-reverse-shots. Indeed, about 15 close-ups (that, is nearly half of all the close-ups of her in the film) come in the last minute.

Although one might argue that the gender confusion essential to this film is contained at the end, my statistical analysis shows that the emphasis on actors' faces occurs only in act two where the confusion occurs and the male lead kisses what he believes to be a young man. In short, it is only in act two that close-ups are distributed continuously. This shows that the sexual dynamics of this romantic comedy cannot be analyzed exclusively based on the film's ending but must instead take into account how techniques, such as the use of close-up, play out across the film as a whole. The process of getting to the establishment of the heterosexual romantic couple happens in the second act where sexual premises are mocked by slightly lingering queer kisses that will be remembered by both romantic partners even after their reunion.

Graph 3: Osso Oswald's Close-Up shots in *I don't Want to be a Man*

Name:	Oswalda-CU	Other-CU	Oswalda Medium	Other	Intertitles
Number of shots:	30	2	142	116	107
Length(min):	3.31	0.11	23.38	10.94	6.45
ASL(sec):	6.6	3.3	9.9	5.7	3.6
Color

3(A)- *I Don't Want to be a Man* (1918), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 08/05/2008.

3(B)- *I Don't Want to be a Man* (1918), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 08/05/2008. This is the same graph showing only the close-ups of Oswald

In general, the average shot length in *I Don't Want to be a Man* (6.6) is higher than in Lubitsch's other silent films such as *The Oyster Princess*, whose ASL is 5.7. Although the runtime for *The Oyster Princess* is longer (58 minutes or 15 minutes more than *I Don't Want to be a Man*), Oswalda has only 15 close-ups, which amount to about half of her male counterpart. Furthermore, she gets most of them in the first five minutes of the film. In *I Don't Want to be a Man*, however, the number of close-ups that Oswalda gets is double and, as already mentioned, most of them are in the last minute of the film. Similarly, if we look at the opera scenes in *Monte Carlo*, one of Lubitsch's early Hollywood sound films, we discover that, there too, the close-ups of the female lead are most numerous near the end of the film. The study of the ASL of the films' endings has been conducted by the users of cinematics. David Bordwell in his entry on the cinematics database states that "a German writer proposed an early version of ASL analysis. In 1926 Georg Otto Stindt compared the number of shots per reel in German films and in US films and commented that American films tended to increase the ASL as the film approached its climax, while German films didn't."¹³ Indeed, the clustering of close-ups at the film endings is noteworthy because it may suggest a different conclusion. The high number of close-ups with a low ASL at the ending of *I Don't Want to be a Man* subverts Stindt's observation that German films are slower after their climaxes. This once again suggests that the scientific study of a text should be repeatable so that hypotheses can be tested by more than one scholar.

Graph 4: Opera-house sequence in *Monte Carlo*

Name:	MacDonald- CU	Buchanan- CU	MacDonald- Medium	MacDonald +Buchanan	Claude Allister CU	Opera Scenes	Other
Number of shots:	11	5	6	7	2	30	1
Length(min):	0.86	0.28	2.88	2.39	0.14	3.38	0.06
ASL(sec):	4.7	3.4	28.8	20.5	4.2	6.8	3.5
Color

4- *Monte Carlo* (1930) (The Opera Scenes), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-06-17.

Similar questions arise with respect to *Die Puppe* (*The Doll*, 1919), another Lubitsch film which has been compared with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* as a classic example of German expressionism. Both *The Doll* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* are set in an imaginary world with a peculiar non-naturalist setting. Moreover, there is a mad

scientist figure at centre of the narrative in both films. Despite their correspondence with one another at the level of the semantics of the genre of the fantastic, the two films are in polar opposition to one another at the level of syntax. If we follow Rick Altman's notion that genre's semantics encompass its setting and characters while its syntax refers to the overall structure by which setting and characters are arranged,¹⁴ in view of that, *The Doll* offers the possibility of disrupting the social order that prevents the characters from fulfilling their desires. On the other hand, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* confronts us with the horror that comes out of such attempts at fulfillment. The film begins with a man (Lanzelot) who proclaims that he would never marry a woman. However, his rich uncle warned him that if he does not get married, he will not receive his inheritance. The greedy monks tell him that instead of marrying a woman he should marry a doll, thereby allowing them to get the money from the uncle. Lanzelot is won over to this idea and visits Hilarius, the doll-maker, who, as it happens, has just finished creating a humanoid doll, modeled based on his own daughter Ossi (played by Ossi Oswalda). After a series of accidents, Ossi decides to take the doll's place and fool both her father and Lanzelot. At the wedding she tries to act in accord with the mechanical character of a doll. On occasions when she is not being observed, however, she reverts to her natural self and enjoys flirting and dancing.

Modern feminist critics, such as Mary Ann Doane, pay special attention to the notion of masquerade. Masquerade in Joan Riviere's theory is womanliness that "could be assumed and worn like a mask."¹⁵ In commenting on the fantastic expressionistic set

design, Hake claims that “masquerade means the masquerading of reality as artifice; but applied to the problem of femininity, it also refers to the artificiality inherent in all gender categories.”¹⁶ What has traditionally been considered natural—female passivity—is unmasked in *I Don't Want to be a Man* by Ossi Oswalda's performance—here turn out to be artificial. Oswalda reveals that traditional femininity is something worn as a mask when she has to act as a doll at the wedding party. In *I Don't Want to be a Man*, this mask is removed by the effect of her unfeminine performance, whereas here she reveals its artificiality.

As my statistical analysis of *I Don't Want to be a Man* suggests, Oswalda has most of her close-ups in Act Two when she performs a cross gender role. In *The Doll*, she gets 17 close-ups, that is, twice as many as her male counterpart; however, in terms of their average length these shots are half of what he gets. The ASL of Ossi Oswalda's close-ups is 2.5 seconds, whereas, the ASL of Hermann Thimig's close-ups is 4.9 seconds. The longest close up of Oswalda is 6.2 seconds while for Thimig it is 16 seconds. In short, Oswalda's close-ups in this film are very rapid and emotionless because of her mechanical character. So the idea of having a star with a pretty face is challenged by Lubitsch's focusing more on the male character having to confront his own fear of women.

Graph 5: Distribution of Character Shots in *The Doll*

Name:	Oswalda	Thimig	Oswalda + Thimig	Other	Oswalda CU	Thimig CU	Other CU	Interitles
Number of shots:	74	79	72	208	17	7	34	117
Length(min):	7.46	12.63	12.42	20.57	0.7	0.57	1.64	10.64
ASL(sec):	6	9.6	10.4	5.9	2.5	4.9	2.9	5.5
Display?	☒	☒	☒	☐	☒	☒	☐	☐
Color

5- *The Doll* (1918), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-07-02.

In contrast to the films discussed above, Pola Negri, as a stereotypical figure of the attractive woman, is central to *Passion* (1919) and *The Eyes of the Mummy* (1918). In *Passion*, the female star's action defies the narrative, although she is distanced from the historical consequences central to the genre of the period film. To bring into better view this first point, I used different methods of categorizing the film shots, based on the

number of people (i.e., that is from one to five and more) who share a frame with Negri.

In this rapidly cut film, Negri dominates both in close-ups and in ensemble compositions.

Graph6: Average shot Density in *Passion* (1919)

Name:	P-Cu	P-M	P+1	P+2	P+3	P+4	P+5.>	Other
Number of shots:	30	29	118	32	23	10	51	568
Length(min):	1.11	1.56	17.37	4.33	2.57	1.8	8.52	50.63
ASL(sec):	2.2	3.2	8.8	8.1	6.7	10.8	10	5.3
Color

6-*Passion* (1918), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-07-05, "Other" stands for shots without Pola Negri. And there are 7 categories for shots having Negri in them. Her close-up shots, plus her medium shots plus number of characters in the frame. For example, P+3 stands for shots where Negri and 3 other characters are in the frame.

In short, where Ossi Oswalda comes to represent the rejection of artificial femininity, the mysterious Pola Negri incarnates the stereotype of the destructive seductress. Scott Eyman says "[s]ensing the picture's [*Passion*] importance, Negri had thrown herself into research, reading books, studying portraits, trying to extract the essence of the character."¹⁷ When she is guillotined by revolutionaries in *Passion* and

stabbed by her former master/lover in *The Eyes of the Mummy*, the seductress seems to meet the conventional fate of death or destruction. However, she is able to gaze at her own passivity by looking in the mirrors and looking at photographs in both films, she gains the perspective of the third person. For example, in the climax of *The Eyes of the Mummy*, Negri looks into the mirror and sees her former master staring at her. This moment of her recognizing that she is the object of voyeurism separates the viewer from participating in the experience. Later on, during Negri's exotically erotic performance for London society, she is encouraged to become a vaudeville performer. The irony here is that, Negri, upon the introduction of the sound, found her career threatened. Lubitsch's female stars, after the transition to sound, exhibit the cheerfulness of Ossi Oswalda while lacking her sexual ambiguity and her transgressive physical presence. Instead, like Pola Negri, they represent the commodified spectacle of the young woman but without embodying the fatal association between desire and death. Oswalda's career ended with the silent film era. After playing in two talkies, Negri's contract was declined by Paramount, which led her to return to Germany.

I would argue, in sum, that, in Lubitsch's German films, Oswalda and Negri represented two female archetypes. Emphasizing this point implies that female characters prepare the way for the contradictory female figures in the early sound films such as Jeanette MacDonald. These new personae, combining aspects of both Negri and Oswalda, became Lubitsch's vehicle for expression of the contradictory traits of romantic desire in modern times. Commenting on MacDonald, in *The Merry Widow*, Turk says that "she is the embodiment of that fragile, gentler era the gallant Lubitsch longed to preserve, whose passing he mourned, and whose beauty he celebrated not through

nostalgia but through irony and sly wit.”¹⁸ Hollywood star system was different from that of Germany, however, and the difference conditioned Lubitsch’s depiction of MacDonald. In the next two chapters I will discuss how Lubitsch extends and modifies the view of stars he developed in Germany in the early years of Hollywood’s sound films.

¹ Sabine Hake, *Passions and Deceptions: the Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch* Princeton University Press, Princeton. 1992. 82.

² Marsha Meskimmon, *We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism* Berkeley, University of California Press. 1999. 166.

³ Hake. 83.

⁴ Linda Williams, *Porn Studies* Duke University Press. 2004. 446.

⁵ Ibid. 93.

⁶ Ibid. 91.

⁷ Janet McCabe, “Regulating Hidden Pleasures and ‘Modern’ Identities: Imagined Female Spectators, Early German Popular Cinema, and *The Oyster Princess* (1919),” in Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy, *Light Motives: German Popular Films in Perspective*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit. 2003. 30.

⁸ Hake, 103.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. 109.

¹¹ Ibid. 110.

¹² Ibid. 111.

¹³ David Bordwell, <http://www.cinematics.lv/bordwell.php>, viewed October, 2008.

¹⁴ Rick Altman, “A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre,” *Cinema Journal* 23 (1984) 10.

¹⁵ Joan Riviere, “Womanliness as a Masquerade” originally published in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929). Available online at <http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ijp.010.0303a> viewed October 2008.

¹⁶ Hake. 96.

¹⁷ Scott Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*, Simon & Schuster, New York. 1993. 60.

¹⁸ Turk, 145.

Chapter Two

Happy Ending and Pragmatic Resolution: The Distribution of Character Shots in Lubitsch's Early Musicals

In the last chapter, I argued that the notion of masquerade is a useful concept for understanding how the stars of Lubitsch's silent films deal with the tension between moral codes and subversion. I also argued that it is important to address the question of gender with regard to genre and stylistic choices. When examining *The Doll*, for example, I pointed out that the question of gender can be discussed in relation to the techniques used in expressionist cinema. In this chapter, I argue that, in contrast to the stereotypical characters of his silent films, Lubitsch's stars in the early sound films are best understood not as caricatures of feminine seduction (Negri) or rebelliousness (Oswalda), but that these stars require a more historical and sociological approach focused on contemporaneous technological changes in American society. The film audience at the time can be assumed to have had a sufficient knowledge about the star's persona in advance of the films, which allowed the audience to accept the peculiarities of films' narration. Thus studying the distribution of character shots based on the dual-gendered star system and studio politics discloses how film narration can function independently of the narrative itself. The main characters of Lubitsch's early sound films embody both reactionary and progressive tendencies. In addition, each film features a turning point in the drama for at least one character, whereby the character suddenly decides to conform to conventional gender expectation. In this chapter, I will discuss how this turning-point relates to the function of narrative in the film's narration and, moreover, how it corresponds to the formation of the new star system in Hollywood. What I have in mind is how the apparent contrast between the singing performances of the two main stars of Lubitsch's musical comedies can be explained with regard to the paradoxical gendered conception of the star's performance in Hollywood. Finally, I intend

to analyze *Monte Carlo* as an outstanding film in Lubitsch's oeuvre mainly because of the casting of the male character. Indeed, instead of a stereotypical male counterpart, MacDonald plays against Jack Buchanan, a more adaptable figure who lacks the sexual self-confidence of Chevalier, and thus makes possible a new assertiveness in McDonald's performance.

Sabine Hake argues that Lubitsch's musicals deviated from Broadway musicals in ways that made them more like European operettas to thereby define a sub-genre of the musical known as the fairy-tale musical.¹ In another article, "Provocation of the Disembodied Voice: Song and the Transition to Sound in Berger's *Day and Night*," Hake examines how the transition to sound is self-referentially thematized in the Ufa film *Ich bei Tag und du bei Nacht* (Ludwig Berger, 1932), translated in her article as *Day and Night*. Hake discusses Berger's fascination with the kinship between cinema and fairy tale, showing how, in Berger's films, this kinship transforms the experience of viewing a movie into a fantasy that the viewer is not literally taken in by. In other words, instead of the standard opposition of realism and escapism, Hake argues that Berger's *Day and Night* represents a "third possibility: a cinema based on the reality of desire."² The same point applies to some of the Lubitsch's musical films which end in an opera house where the audience self-consciously recognizes her/his emotional interest in the characters. Hake cites the famous film theorist Siegfried Kracauer, who condemns Berger's earlier films for yielding to the escapist nature of filmgoing in the late Weimar regime. In order to counter this criticism, Hake argues that *Day and Night*, in fact, subverts Kracauer's distrust of the mass audience, specifically what he characterizes as one of its worst aspects, the passivity of female spectators. Hake points out that Berger addresses these spectators in a way that allows them to become conscious of their participation in reproducing the means of mass entertainment³. According to one critic, Brian Currid, the popular song or *Schlager*, "Wenn ich Sonntags in mein

Kino geh [When I go to the movie on Sunday],” which plays numerous times in this film, “depicts spectatorship in sound films” and thus parodies the genre itself.⁴ Another contemporary critic, Thomas Elsaesser, notes the relationship between consumerism and the female audience when he refers to the scene in which one female character, commenting on her romantic adventures, exclaims that her experience is “wie im Kino [just like in the movie].”⁵ Elsaesser then goes on to comment that this character is referring not only to “the luxury of the movies, but also to certain lifestyle that these films are advertising.”⁶ Referring to Berger’s self-mockery of the fantastical elements of cinema, Hake, in a similar way, argues that in *Ich bei Tag und du bei Nacht* the pleasure of filmgoing is shown to be not mere escapism but rather a more self-conscious form of entertainment which gives reality and credibility to the dream world of the fairy tale.⁷ Similarly, Hake argues that “[f]ollowing in the tradition of the operetta, songs in Lubitsch musicals function as an outlet for hidden or suppressed emotions. ... Thus in privileged moments the musicals are able—as films—to overcome their generic limitation and focus on the effects of cinema rather than on the problem of morality.”⁸ In contrast to Lubitsch’s German films, issues such as class difference and family rivalry in his musicals are no longer the main impediment for establishing a romantic relationship. Therefore, in his musicals, “the male-female relationship itself becomes a problem.”⁹ However, Hake’s overview of what she takes to be classlessness of Lubitsch’s early musicals is challenged implicitly by Rick Altman, specifically in his book, *The American Film Musical*. Referring to the film *Love me Tonight* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932), he points out that Maurice Chevalier’s working class clothes contrast sharply with Jeanette MacDonald’s aristocratic dress. Moreover, Altman argues that Macdonald as a trained singer has a smooth operatic voice which makes her opponent of Chevalier, a singer of indigenous popular songs.¹⁰ He points out that “[t]his opposition constantly presents the potential

lovers' differing background to our ears."¹¹ I would argue, on the other hand, that the resolution to the plot in these films is not a question of cultural mores. Since the male lead is never explicitly identified as a member of the penniless working class, the conflict in the relationship between the two stars of the film does not imply that the source of this conflict is social or cultural in nature. Therefore, the audience bears witness to the situation in which the relationship itself is problematic. In films such as *The Love Parade* or *Monte Carlo*, Lubitsch presents strong, independent women who reject marriage up to the point where they submit themselves to a conventional heterosexual romance. These turning points in their lives are accompanied by a certain amount of acting up and emotional turbulence indicating a self-recriminating nature. For instance, at the end of *The Love Parade*, Queen Louise says in tears: "I am going with you. Wherever you go, I'll follow. You can't get rid of me." Or at the end of Opera scene in *Monte Carlo*, Helen tells Rudolph that she feels that she was as foolish as the woman in the opera. In Chapter One, I discussed the turning point in *I Don't Want To Be A Man*. It is the character played by Ossi Oswalda who in a turning point accepts the heterosexual relationship without expressing a guilty conscious (something that is apparently evident in Lubitsch's musical film). But I would argue that like what is going on in *I Don't Want To Be A Man*, happy-endings of Lubitsch's early musicals are complicated by the fact that what leads up to these endings involves finding a solution that is more pragmatic than moral in nature, which thus takes both parties toward a romance grounded in reason more than passion. (I will discuss this point later on in this chapter.)

In *The Smiling Lieutenant*, Lieutenant Niki, played by Chevalier, is torn between an aristocratic princess, Anna, played by Miriam Hopkins, and a working class violinist Franzi, played by Claudette Colbert. To study the distribution of the character shots in this film, I

depicted categories based on the three main characters: Colbert, Hopkins, and Chevalier. Three categories consist of shots featuring just one of the three main characters. Three categories consist of shots where two of the three characters are together. One category consists of shots where all three characters are together. And, finally, there is one category consisting of shots where none of the main characters appear in them. The results of this shot-distribution study show that Chevalier is clearly the dominant character in terms of screen time. The total amount of film-time featuring Chevalier alone works out to twenty-three percent of the film's total running time, whereas, the time allotted to each of the two female stars is ten percent.

Furthermore, the amount of screen time featuring Chevalier with either one of the female leads (eight minutes with Hopkins which represents 8.9% of the total running time and fifteen minutes with Colbert which represents 16.85% of the total running time) is more than the time for shots featuring Colbert and Hopkins together (which accounts to only six minutes of the film which represents 6.7% of the total running time). The situation becomes complicated, however, when we take into account that the turning point in the development of Anna's character takes place when Colbert and Hopkins are together. Here, Anna, confronted by Franzi, learns to overcome some of her outdated moral assumptions, and as a consequence, becomes less socially and sexually inhibited. In other words, Franzi convinces Anna to subvert her own view on how she should conduct herself in the presence of Niki. The fifteen shots of them together dominate an important stretch of the film, the six-and-a-half minute passage that begins at 71.43. The ASL of Colbert-Hopkins shots is greater than the ASL of the Chevalier-Hopkins shots, suggesting that as the film approaches its climax the two female stars are becoming the center of the cinematic attention. Moreover, as in most of the Lubitsch's silent films, frequent close-ups of the established

romantic couple come after the turning point. This point is illustrated by my second graph, which reflects on the close-up shots of each character.

Graph1: Distribution of Character-Shots in *The Smiling Lieutenant*

Name:	Chevalier	Colbert	Colbert + Hopkins	All3	Hopkins	Chevalier + Hopkins	Chevalier + Colbert	None
Number of shots:	136	69	15	1	78	27	33	150
Length(min):	21.73	9.74	6.27	0.02	9.3	8.11	15.56	16.52
ASL(sec):	9.6	8.5	25.1	1.4	7.2	18	28.3	6.6
Color								Not displayed

1-*The Smiling Lieutenant* (1931), submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-07-02. My categories here are based on the three main characters: shots with Colbert, Hopkins, Chevalier, each two of them, all three of them and none of them.

Graph2: Distribution of Close-up Shots in *The Smiling Lieutenant*

Name:	Colbert Close-up	Hopkins Close-up	Chevalier Close-up	Other Close-up	Not Close-up
Number of shots:	21	34	41	22	387
Length(min):	1.98	2.81	4.8	2.55	75.12
ASL(sec):	5.7	5	7	6.9	11.6
Color				Not Displayed	Not Displayed

2-*The Smiling Lieutenant* (1931) (close-ups), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-07-10. Here I only counted the close-up shots of the three main characters + one category for close-up shots of the other characters.

The first graph shows the overall domination of Colbert over Hopkins in terms of overall screen time, although Hopkins has more close-ups (thirty-four compared to Colbert's twenty-one). Some scholars have taken *The Smiling Lieutenant* to be a remake of *The Mountain Cat* discussed in the previous chapter. With this in mind Colbert may be thought to be the star of the

film or even a new Pola Negri. However, I would argue that the higher number of close-up shots of Hopkins in *The Smiling Lieutenant* suggests that it is her destiny in the film that is most prominent. Richard Barrios in his book, "A Song in the Dark", claims that the performances of the two leading female actresses are both equally outstanding. He further comments that "[t]he performances of Colbert and Hopkins are so good, in fact, as to undercut their likely intentions; both characters deserve better than they get from Niki or Lubitsch."¹² Going one step further than Barrios, my contention is that the real female lead of this film is Miriam Hopkins who, as I already noted, dominates the camera's attention by having the majority of close-ups when the film reaches its turning point. Rick Altman categorizes *the Smiling Lieutenant* as a fairy-tale musical. Mick LaSalle, in his book, "Dangerous Men: Pre-code Hollywood and the Birth of the Modern Man", points to this turning point, which alters her desires, transforms the princess's personality and thus subverts the syntactic function of the musical fairy-tale.¹³ Indeed, the male hero's act of neglecting the beloved is something immoral in fairy-tale musicals and typically involves this character's ultimate return to her former faithful self. The fact "[t]hat Chevalier can be desolate at losing his lover and then, minutes later, be delighted to see his wife in a negligee is in itself a wonderful commentary on the nature of the Chevalier hero and of male sexuality in general."¹⁴ Similarly, in another Lubitsch film, *Angel* (1937), the Marlene Dietrich character, who is torn between two men, returns to her husband at the end. In all three films, *The Mountain Cat*, *Angel* and *The Smiling Lieutenant*, the character who is torn between two lovers ends up going back to her/his spouse. But the important fact is that there is a change in attitude of the other party that makes this reunion possible. More precisely, the character who goes back to her/his spouse should not necessarily be considered conformist, since her/his initial spouse has undergone a turning point, and therefore offers the possibility of continuing the marriage without

submitting her to its codes. In films that feature three main characters involved in a romantic courtship, the appearance of all three characters in one frame rarely occurs. However, an interesting exception occurs in Lubitsch's 1941 film, *That Uncertain Feeling*. In this film there are high number of two-shots and three-shots of the main characters. This is also evident in Lubitsch's pre-code film *Design for Living* (1933). In this film the thirty-two single shots of Hopkins cover only 2.9% of the film's running-time while her fifty-four two-shots cover 29.4% of the film's running-time and her twenty-eight three-shots cover 13.45% of the film's running-time. Similar to her appearances in *Trouble in Paradise*, Hopkins in *Design for Living* is rarely shown with more than two people in the frame. Lubitsch rarely isolates Hopkins in singles, yet he also rarely shows her in overfilled composition, thus allowing her to be dominant in the frame.

Another of Lubitsch's romantic comedies that features Chevalier torn between two women is *One Hour With You*. The conventional story line is about a happily married couple whose romantic relationship is threatened temporarily by the wandering sexual desires of both parties. However, the couple seeks a pragmatic solution to the ensuing complication rather than a moral or theoretical one.¹⁵ Therefore, the happy ending suggests not a moralistic preservation of the marriage institution but rather it is a pragmatic overcoming of the critical moments of distraction caused by the temptation of the married couple to fulfill their desires outside the bounds of marriage.

In this film, Chevalier often steps out of the diegetic world and speaks directly to the viewer. My studies based on the distribution of the character-shots shows that Chevalier is dominant in the film. And MacDonald gets more of the camera's attention than Tobin. According to the graph below, Chevalier alone has eighty-four shots with the ASL of 11.1

(19.4% of the film's total running time) where Macdonald has seventy-six shots with the ASL of 8.6 (13.6% of the running time). Finally, Tobin has twenty-eight shots with the ASL of 7.4 (4.3% of the running time). Moreover, Chevalier has thirty-five shots with MacDonald (25.4% the running time) and twenty-six shots with Tobin (11.3% of the running time), where MacDonald-Tobin shots are sixteen in total and constitute only four minutes (5% of the film-time).

Consequently, Chevalier is framed in majority of the two-shots of the main characters. This study suggests the overall domination of Chevalier, although by changing the parameters a different picture emerges.

Graph3: Distribution of Character-Shots in *One Hour with You*

Name:	Chevalier	Tobin	MacDonald	Chevalier + Tobin	Chevalier + MacDonald	MacDonald + Tobin	All3	Other
Number of shots:	84	28	76	26	35	16	5	107
Length(min):	15.55	3.44	10.94	9.07	20.35	3.98	1.78	10.48
ASL(sec):	11.1	7.4	8.6	20.9	34.9	14.9	21.3	5.9
Color								Not displayed

3- *One Hour with You* (1932), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-06-27.

Furthermore, when we study the graph that I made for the close-ups, it is clear that Chevalier is the dominant figure in the amount of both close-ups and film-time. But we should note that Chevalier, in many instances, talks for a long time into the camera and asks the audience for advice sometimes in prose, and sometimes in song. These incidents of direct and charming contact with the audience take place mainly at the beginning and the end of the film. However, if we exclude these opening and closing moments and examine all the action shots that fall in between, we discover that MacDonald gets more close-up shots than does Chevalier. Turk claims that, in order to “pacify Lubitsch, the studio ordered that all advertising for *One Hour with You* include his [Lubitsch’s] name in print ‘as large as Chevalier’s and at least two thirds as large as the title.’ MacDonald’s name was to appear in type no more than ‘three-fourth as large as Chevalier’s.’”¹⁶ Nonetheless, the reception of the film suggests that many viewers regarded MacDonald as the principal actor. *One Hour with You* is among one of the few Hollywood musicals to be entirely made in French.¹⁷ Commenting on the reception of *Une heure pres de toi*, Turk writes that “[t]o Chevalier’s chagrin, the French distributors gave MacDonald equal-size billing with his own, and the Paris critics praised her acting over his.”¹⁸ In the United States, film and music critics did not favor the studio’s decision either. Both *the New York American* and *Photoplay* identified MacDonald as one of the best performers of the month.¹⁹

Graph4: Distribution of Close-up Shots in *One Hour with You*

Name:	Chevalier Close-up	MacDonald Close-up	Tobin Close-up	Other Close-up	Not Close-up
Number of shots:	41	28	7	31	267
Length(min):	8.59	3.89	0.32	3.68	59.08
ASL(sec):	12.6	8.3	2.7	7.1	13.3
Color				Not displayed	Not Displayed

4- *One Hour with You* (1932), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-08-20.

The Love Parade is the film that established Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald as one of the world's most popular musical comedy teams of the early 1930s. Although, generally speaking, the dominant figure in the whole film is Chevalier, the close ups of

MacDonald in the musical scenes are twice as long and numerous as his. Moreover, MacDonald stands out in terms of the reception of the film's sound. Turk notes that "[a]udio engineers were not yet certain how best to handle the higher frequencies of the soprano voice. Still, Paramount's sound department predicted that MacDonald, perhaps because of the lightness of her singing, would be extremely 'microphonic.'"²⁰ When Macdonald sings in the privacy of her room or some other secluded places we witness the public responding to her with great sympathy and concern. Correspondingly, our identification with her character increases. In the story shots, however, the audience's identification shifts to Chevalier presumably because the reversal of conventional duties causes him suffering and so increases our sympathy with his character. In what could be called a cross-gendered performance involving the two characters, MacDonald conducts a military procession, while Lubitsch cuts away to Prince Alfred (Chevalier) in a bad mood and wearing pajamas, moving restlessly about his palace. Despite Chevalier's being given higher billing and a greater amount of screen time in *The Love Parade*, the majority of the filmic technical innovations involve MacDonald singing. One scene that bears witness to this particular focus on MacDonald's performance is the "Dream Lover"'s reprise that occurs just after the count kisses the queen. This scene is viewed by Turk as "a superlative instance of Lubitsch inventing fluid and harmonious sound pictures."²¹ He goes on to say that "[w]hile she sings, Lubitsch's camera gracefully pans the palace garden to disclose sweethearts who dreamily overhear the queen's vocalizing. A complete Chorus follows, with MacDonald's soprano alternating and then combining with the courtiers' voices.—all accompanied by full orchestra and climaxing in vigorous, resounding chords."²² My statistical analysis of this scene shows that when MacDonald sings she is rarely on camera. In one scene (occurring about 30 seconds into her song and lasts for 6.9 seconds) we see her as the public sings in respond to her situation.

Therefore, except these seven seconds, we hear the rest of the song from outside; either she or the public sings.

Graph5: Distribution of Singing-Shots in The Dream Lover Sequence (*The Love Parade*)

5- *The Love Parade* (1929)- The Dream Lover, Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-08-25. "The Dream Lover" scene in *The Love Parade* (Ernst Lubitsch) is very innovative. I made three categories: MacDonald's shot while public sings, Public's shot while MacDonald sing and Public shot while Public sing.

MacDonald's ambiguous relationship with her manager, Robert Ritchie, during the production of *The Love Parade* can be paralleled with Louise's uncertain feelings towards conventional marital relationships in *The Love Parade*. Not a great deal is known about MacDonald's relationship with Ritchie. There are number of indications that MacDonald, in her

personal life, basically resisted a traditional marital set-up. Turk notes that “[w]hen *Variety* trumpeted that the two were ‘engaged,’ MacDonald issued a flat denial.”²³ As I mentioned earlier the marriage of Louise and Renard subverts the conventional roles of husband and wife, Renard threatens to walk out the situation. Indeed, the narration suggests that disharmony in their personal relations, effecting as it does the public image of the queen as a model of propriety, poses a serious threat to the social order. Louise commands Renard to come with her to the opera “in full gala uniform, all medals and decoration, and in the very best humour.” So Renard (because of his patriotic duties) really has no choice in this matter because if he refuses to play the game according to the rules set by his wife, the country will collapse and his authority would be lost. In his book, *The Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch*, Leland A. Poague offers that the Queen’s refusal to observe the social “[c]onvention[s] thus once again threatens disaster, for the royal treasury as well as the royal marriage.”²⁴ But the film does not raise the possibility that the character might break or redefine the conventions. Rather, the solution, as Poague puts it, involves “employing convention in the service of self awareness.”²⁵

Graph6: Distribution of Character-Shots in *The Love Parade*

Name:	Story/ MacDonald	Story/ Chevalier	Musical/ MacDonald	Musical/ Chevalier	Story/ Macdonald+Chevalier	Story/ Other	Musical/ MacDonald+Chevalier	Musical/Other
<i>Number of shots:</i>	85	111	26	8	48	164	9	48
<i>Length(min):</i>	12.24	17.85	8.45	4.18	25.73	21.54	5.86	9.22
<i>ASL(sec):</i>	8.6	9.6	19.5	31.3	32.2	7.9	39	11.5
<i>Color</i>

6- *The Love Parade* (1929), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-07-02. Here there are the two main categories of musical (m) and story (s) scenes. Each one is divided into four based on the characters: shots that have MacDonald, Chevalier, both of them or none of them.

Earlier on in *The Love Parade* the queen has a dream, and unlike what happens in some of Lubitsch's silent films such as *The Mountain Cat*, where via point-of-view cutting we ourselves experience the lead actress's dream, this time we get a verbal report of it from her. When she exclaims how beautiful her dream was, her ladies-in-waiting make some conventional comments to the effect that when a woman has a wonderful dream, it must be one of getting married. She rejects the idea right away and claims that because everyone in her kingdom assumes that she has no stronger desire than to get married, no one truly understands her. In short, we never find out what there was in the dream that made her so happy. In *The Mountain*

Cat, there is this indefinable moment of pleasure, coming into view from her facial expressions, that remains only within the boundaries of imagination. In *The Love Parade*, however, if we assume that the dream, though not about marriage, is nonetheless about some romantic encounter, then we may go on to say that it can only come true by conforming to the limitation of the real social world. In *One Hour with You*, the situation is reversed. Colette's desire to get even with her husband becomes an unpleasant experience when she has a dream about what took place the night before, when being kissed by her husband's rival. She, more or less, views the emotional and sexual relationship with her husband as a game that she thinks that she plays well. However, she proves not to be as adapt as she imagines, because she mistakes appearances for reality. In the next scene, André tries to manipulate "appearances in order to bring us to our comic senses."²⁶ He allows Colette to take revenge on him by kissing his rival in his very presence. Poague does not talk about the Colette's dream sequence which induces a certain amount of guilt in her, but in viewing the final scene, he concludes that the point is to show that "[s]ex is no sin, but neither is it an excuse for irresponsible behavior."²⁷ In short, the dream in *One Hour with You* is situated in the film's reality and thus is more materialistic than the dream sequences in *The Love Parade* and *The Mountain Cat* where the character's dream comes out of an absolute narcissism that creates problems in the social relation.

Dennis Bingham suggests that the gendered conception of the star's performance in Hollywood is paradoxical. On the one hand, "in patriarchy men *act*—they do things—while women *are*."²⁸ On the other hand, on the screen, male identity is somehow considered as natural while femininity is constructed as a "series of roles and of women herself as 'actress.'"²⁹ The paradox is that, in Hollywood films a female star's performance is played against what is considered to be natural, whereas the performances of the male star tend to repress the

constructedness of his masculine role. Although Bingham focuses on stars such as Jack Nicholson and Humphrey Bogart, his analysis is equally valid when it comes to the stars of musical comedies. Earlier I referred to the apparent contrast between the singing performances of the two main stars of Lubitsch's musical comedies. MacDonald was a trained operetta singer while Chevalier was what might be called a "natural" vocalist, that is someone who developed his voice without any special schooling, so that he exhibits the rough voice of a working class man. So, up to this point, Bingham is right; the perfectionism of MacDonald's performance is something that she had to gain via outside help, whereas Chevalier's singing ability is treated by public as a "natural" gift. Indeed, presumably, the masculinity of Chevalier is something natural like his singing. But the narration of Lubitsch's films reveals that this seemingly natural role is in fact worn like a costume or mask. In *One Hour with You*, Chevalier periodically addresses the audience either through dialogue or singing. These instances of direct address remind the audience of the "unnaturalness" of the actor which maintaining the illusion of certain traits as being naturally or essentially masculine. One might characterize Chevalier's manner at such moments as Brechtian. However, I think the performance of Chevalier is Brechtian only to the extent that he refuses to "naturalize" his given masculine identity. In the final scene of *One Hour with You*, he arranges the evidence in order to solve the problem. When Colette takes revenge on André by kissing his rival, Chevalier is not angry or dismayed but rather goes so far as to encourage Adolph to participate in this act. But when Colette turns towards him, he acts as if his honour were being offended. Indeed, it becomes clear for the audience that Chevalier's character only pretends to be jealous in order to put their marriage on a new footing by allowing Colette to get even with him. This action contradicts the idea that sex outside marriage is a disastrous experience. Presumably, for the audience, what results from the charming facial expressions of

Chevalier at such moments is a challenge to the “naturalness” of the male star’s performance in Hollywood.

Chevalier’s star persona singles him out as a leading man. In *One Hour with You* and certain of his other films such as *The Smiling Lieutenant*, he is the one who continuously steps out of the diegetic to address the audience. His screen persona is associated with his extensively vivacious, energetic, and playful character. Off-screen, however, he did not always radiate his onscreen joviality. Scott Eyman claims that “there [was] never any particular affection between Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald” during their working relationship.³⁰ It seems that MacDonald had to refute Chevalier’s domination and ended up thinking of him as someone who tries to interfere with her personal life. By contrast, MacDonald and Jack Buchanan stayed friends for years after the production of *Monte Carlo*. In the first chapter, I argued that, in *Monte Carlo*, MacDonald is the dominant figure and she is the one who steps out of the diegetic world of the film as a comedian. I would argue that it is for this reason that Lubitsch decides to use Jack Buchanan as MacDonald’s male counterpart instead of a celebrity figure like Chevalier. I pointed out how Chevalier’s voice suggests a working class identity. However, Andrew Spicer says that Buchanan is both “a modernized [and] attractively liminal figure who can move effortlessly between classes, suggesting that class barriers were not insuperable and that society was becoming less rigid, more permeable.”³¹ In contrast to the self confidence of Chevalier, Buchanan is sometimes nervous and uncertain. Sometimes his desperation as a lover shows through his flirtatiousness. In *The Smiling Lieutenant*, for example, Niki’s friend asks him to come to the music performance so he can help him to impress Franz. Niki, who is very competent in seducing, cruelly betrays his friend and ends up with Franz. However, in the first encounter of the romantic couple in *Monte Carlo*, Buchanan, to seduce MacDonald, uses his

friend in order to trick her. Buchanan does not always have the self-confidence of Chevalier and that is why he does not go to MacDonald directly, and therefore, needs to send someone. Indeed, he regularly has to change his identity in order to gain MacDonald's love. Scott Eyman says that the leading man in *Monte Carlo* lacks sexuality. "There is, after all, never any doubt that Chevalier knows what to do with a woman in bed; [however,] Jack Buchanan is thin, reedy, not uncharming, but essentially asexual."³² Turk claims that, during the production of *Monte Carlo*, Lubitsch proposed marriage to MacDonald and was rejected, which raises the possibility that Lubitsch in directing the actors was projecting his insecurities over this situation onto Buchanan.³³ Unlike Chevalier, Buchanan was susceptible to making his already insecure masculine persona even more insecure. This insecurity appears to inform the near rape sequence in this film, when Buchanan comes into MacDonald's room the day after the night that formed their companionship, would come across as ludicrous, as if Lubitsch had denied Buchanan the cynicism that this scene rightfully requires. In terms of singing ability, Buchanan stands between Chevalier and MacDonald; he did not train to be a professional operetta singer but he did study casually and developed sufficient talent to star in British musical reviews.³⁴ His singing, therefore, can appeal both to a working-class audience for its lack of polish and a middle-class audience for its trained quality. In short, his star persona, like his singing, does not fit the standard features of the romantic male lead. Once he confessed: "I was frequently challenged to prove my manhood in my own country, particularly as a trembling youth."³⁵ Like MacDonald, he has a contradictory persona. He is a male hero whose gendered behavior does not have customary fixity, which thereby allows him to shift at anytime from being innocently flirtatious to displaying the nastiness of a spurned lover.

I have argued in this chapter that the distribution of character shots in Lubitsch's films discloses moments in the narrative that are the turning points insofar as they involve one of the principal characters altering her/his desire. I have also examined the distribution of character-shots in these films and how it corresponds to the constraints and possibilities of Hollywood's star system. Indeed, the apparent contrast between the singing performances of the two main stars in Lubitsch's musical comedies can be explained by the paradoxical gendered conception of the performance of these stars in Hollywood. Nonetheless, my statistical analysis suggests that *Monte Carlo* deviates from Lubitsch's other musicals both in terms of average shot length and the distribution of character shots. In the next chapter, I intend to examine the main reason for this departure.

Among Lubitsch's musicals, *Monte Carlo* is the most rapidly cut. Charles O'Brien relates this fast cutting to the casting of the male character, "as if Lubitsch had decided that the long-take approach that worked well with Chevalier were less viable with Buchanan."³⁶ Likewise, my study of *Monte Carlo* on the Cinemetrics website shows that the ASL of Buchanan's medium shots is lower than the ASL of MacDonald medium shots.³⁷ Hence, Buchanan's insecurity over his unrestrained sexual desires is exposed by Lubitsch's fast cutting approach. In the next chapter I will pay close attention to *Monte Carlo* and the distribution of character shots in this film, specifically in relation to the effects of new technology and early modernity on MacDonald's acting style. I think *Monte Carlo* is a ground breaking film, in that it is the female lead who most of the time steps out of the diegetic world of the film and, therefore, takes control of the narrative. This is possible by virtue of the fact that, instead of a stereotypical male counterpart, she plays against more adaptable figure.

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- ¹ Sabine Hake, *Passions and Deceptions: the Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch* Princeton University Press, Princeton. 1992. 70-71.
- ² Sabine Hake, "Provocation of the Disembodied Voice: Song and the Transition to Sound in Berger's *Day and Night*," in Kenneth S. Calhoon, *Peripheral Visions: the Hidden Stages of Weimar Cinema*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit. 2001. 61.
- ³ Ibid. 62.
- ⁴ Brian Currid, "The Schlager and the Singer Film: Organs of Experience and the History of Subjectivity" in *A National Acoustic: Music and Mass Publicity in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, University of Minnesota. 65-115.
- ⁵ Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema And After*, Routledge: New York. 2000. 408.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Sabine Hake, "Provocation of the Disembodied Voice: Song and the Transition to Sound in Berger's *Day and Night*," in Kenneth S. Calhoon, *Peripheral Visions: the Hidden Stages of Weimar Cinema*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit. 2001. 61.
- ⁸ Hake, 72.
- ⁹ Ibid. 73.
- ¹⁰ Rick Altman *The American Film Musical*, University of Indiana, Bloomington. 1987. 153.
- ¹¹ Altman, 44.
- ¹² Richard Barrios, *A Song in the Dark: The Birth of the Musical Film*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1995. 374.
- ¹³ Mick LaSalle, *Complicated Women: Sex and Power in Pre-code Hollywood*, St. Martin's Press, New York. 2000. 144.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Edward Baron Turk, *Hollywood Diva: A Biography of Jeanette MacDonald* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1998. 116.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 117.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid. 78.
- ²¹ Ibid. 79.
- ²² Ibid. 80.
- ²³ Ibid, 81.
- ²⁴ Leland A. Poague. *The Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch*, A.S.Barnes, New Jersey. 1978. 111.
- ²⁵ Ibid. 111.
- ²⁶ Ibid. 77.
- ²⁷ Ibid. 76.
- ²⁸ Dennis Bingham, "A Staging of the Father: Nicholson and Oedipal Narrative in *The last Detail* and *Chinatown*" in *Acting Male: Masculinity in the Films of James Stewart, Jack Nicholson, and Clint Eastwood*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey. 1994. 115.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Scott Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch: laughter in paradise*, Simon & Schuster, New York. 1993. 155.
- ³¹ Andrew Spicer. "Jack Buchanan and British Musical Comedy of the 1930s" in Ian Conrich and Estella Thinknell, *Film's Musical Moments*, Edinburg University Press, Edinburg. 2006. 77.
- ³² Eyman, 167.
- ³³ Turk, 82.
- ³⁴ Spicer, 79.
- ³⁵ Turk, 101.
- ³⁶ Look at Charles O'Brien's study of *Monte Carlo* on the Cinemetrics website submitted in 2006-07-03.
- ³⁷ Look at my study of *Monte Carlo* on the Cinemetrics website submitted in 2006-07-21

Chapter Three

***Monte Carlo*: Sound Technology and its Effects on Boundaries of Gender and Culture**

In Chapter Two, I discussed how the casting of the lead male character in *Monte Carlo* makes this film exceptional in Lubitsch's oeuvre, mainly because it provides MacDonald a new opportunity to step out of the diegetic world of the film. In contrast to films such as *One Hour with You* and *The Love Parade* where the majority of talking to the camera is done by the male star (Maurice Chevalier), in *Monte Carlo*, it is MacDonald's performance that transcends the confinements of the diegetic world of the film. Moreover, unlike Chevalier, MacDonald's relationship with the audience in *Monte Carlo* is more complicated than what is involved in simply speaking or singing to the camera. In fact, Lubitsch's use of sound technology has an impact on MacDonald's extra-fictional relationship with the audience.

From the very beginning of Ernst Lubitsch's career in Hollywood, critics praised him for successfully adapting his expertise in silent films to the new sound technology. For example, the *New York Times* review of *Monte Carlo* by Mordaunt Hall immediately launches into an explanation of how Lubitsch's mastery of visual techniques has been enhanced rather than diminished through his use of sound technology:

Wit with a Parisian flair, keen imagination, tuneful melodies and clever performances are linked in Ernst Lubitsch's latest screen contribution, *Monte Carlo*, which came to the Rivoli last night. The merriment in this film is like the bubbles in champagne, and many a genuine wave of laughter is stirred up from those in the brilliant audience. This production is Mr. Lubitsch at his best after he has had experience with the microphone and now learned to manipulate it as he has done a camera for several years.¹

As a silent era filmmaker, Lubitsch had been highly praised by many critics for his mastery of film form together with his innovative use of the camera to address the audience. Leo Braudy

claims that continuously Lubitsch's use of the sound technology goes together with his camera technique.

[W]hen the coming of sound threatened a re-nationalization through language [Lubitsch] succeeded again in showing how the new technology [of cinema] might enhance the movement and fluidity of film instead of becoming a sensational. He made some early sound musicals, especially *The Love Parade*, *Monte Carlo*, and *The Smiling Lieutenant*, that broke the early musical away from its footlights format and demonstrated how sound could complement and even replace sight, instead of merely tagging along in tandem.²

Moreover, Braudy goes on to explain how the commercial elements of Lubitsch's films were perceived by European critics.

From the European left, Lubitsch is usually seen as a kind of high level Hollywood time-server-a 'good servant' (bon serviteur) says Roger Boussinot who satisfied the Hollywood taste for a dream world peopled by elegant myths and ephemeral bubbles of wit. Siegfried Kracauer, writing in 1947 with WWII still closely in mind, is more severe.³

Likewise, American critics and reviewers consistently praised Lubitsch for his remarkable efforts to work beyond the boundaries of *realism* in his films.⁴ Specifically, an enormous amount of attention was paid by early reviewers to his use of sound-montage in such films as *Monte Carlo* (especially his use of sound supporting visual patterns.) In the 1931 review in *Hound and Horn*, Kenneth White states that:

Sound and music, in *Monte Carlo*, performs the same function for the ear that the camera does for the eyes; an auditory breadth and inclusiveness is achieved that could not possibly be obtained in any other representational art ... Lubitsch knows the simple canon that sound in the movie cannot hope to be realistic, and, accordingly, he does not strive for realism.⁵

In these reviews in trade journals and newspapers and literary magazines (as well as newspaper ads,) we can find references to the Lubitsch's awareness of the technological innovations, both for stylistic purpose and for making social commentary. For example, the fact that the private

and public spheres become blurred in Lubitsch's films is somehow being indicated in the majority of these reviews. In other words, all these reviews examine Lubitsch's *Monte Carlo* in relation to the audience. In a chapter of her book entitled "Exploring the Boundaries of Sound: *Monte Carlo*," Sabine Hake focuses on how in this film the externalization of the normally mute feelings of the central female character—feelings connected with sexual desire, infatuation and wanderlust—is enhanced through his use of sound-montage and songs.⁶ Scott Eyman states that "[e]very song in *Monte Carlo* either delineates character or advances the plot; songs not only arise naturally from the action, they are the action."⁷ My objective in this chapter is to explain how Lubitsch, by his use of technologically mediated sound and non-diegetic silence, allows the heroine to step out of the diegetic world of the film and convey a good part of her excitement about traveling freely directly to the audience. First, I will examine the social disturbance before the first appearance of the heroine to discuss the powerlessness of patriarchal authority to reach a character who is rapidly distancing herself from where the family institution is located. Secondly, I will explain how Lubitsch, in the scene that includes the heroine-conductor exchange over the unpaid ticket, imposes non-diegetic silence in a manner that allows the heroine to step out of the diegetic world of the film. Thirdly, I intend to analyze the well-known train scene in *Monte Carlo* where the mechanical sound of the train turns into music and becomes part of a public or popular celebration of a woman's newly found freedom. I will discuss this scene in relation to certain fantasies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, namely, those that envision the possibility that train travel will do away with all class division and social inequity. Fourthly, I will discuss how another scene, where the heroine and her lover sing a duet number over the telephone, enacts the transition from the heroine's private space to a public one through the use of new electrical forms of communication. Finally, to examine the relation between aural

and visual space in this film, I will examine the other duet-scenes, played by the romantic couple, Countess Helene Mara and Count Rudolph Falliere (known by Helene as Rudy, the hairdresser).

The credit sequence of *Monte Carlo* incorporates an image of an unseen gambler at the gaming table. A woman's hand puts down cards on a table and, in the next instance, the name of the director flashes across the cards. It seems that Lubitsch wants to announce in this film by erotic texture and intimations of immorality that he is gambling with his own image as an immigrant in Hollywood community and, more so, with his ongoing formation as a filmmaker. *Monte Carlo* begins without any dialogue with the opening of a jewelry box with two wedding rings. In the next shot, an outdoor exterior, we hear the wedding song "Day of Days" accompanied ironically by the sound of a storm. Close-up of a sign "Hail the Groom," written on it, is followed by a shot of the groom himself looking up at the sky as he hear the sound of storm approaching. Then the camera pans from left to right, following the groom while he walks through a garden. A servant runs up to him to whispers the alarming news that his bride has run off, and the camera suddenly repeats its movement in reverse to follow the groom's mad-dash back into the house with the accompaniment of the storm growing even louder and more threatening. The groom's name is Count Otto von Leibenheim and his first reaction to this startling turn of events is to call frantically for his father. ("Papa! Papa!") Then, after these first spoken words in the film, the scene cross cuts to capture the wheels of a locomotive and running feet of a young woman who jumps onto the train. The camera then rapidly returns to the groom, who now with his father, expresses his ambivalent feelings over his bride's strange flight (this is the first dialogue scene in this film). Lubitsch immediately follows the old yet child-like groom's call for paternal authority with the image of the running feet of a woman in rain, thereby

suggesting the train's capability to rapidly distance the character from the town. Lubitsch, in other words, makes the new technology the cause of the failure of established patriarchal power to control space. Shortly after, a servant enters the room and, with his opening and closing of the door, now we hear grumbling of the wedding guests in the big hall. The father orders his son to go into the hall and come up with an explanation as to why the wedding ceremony will not proceed as scheduled. With surprising ease, he manages to mollify all the guests and make them sympathetic to his situation. "Now you are surprised to see me standing alone. To tell you the truth I am surprised myself." Ooh's and aah's that follows his explanation generate a flowing rhythm that slowly turns into a song. The latter has two refrains running throughout, one is sung by the groom and goes "I am a simple-hearted soul" the other is the song by the wedding guests and goes "He is a simp- He is a simp- He is a simple-hearted soul." These scenes include 45 shots which cover 5.2% of the film-time (4.5 minutes) and yet the leading characters have not been introduced.

The next sequence begins with two women entering the train. This is the first time that we see the face of the bride, Countess Helene Mara, played by Jeanette MacDonald. She expresses joy over her new found freedom. "Five more minutes and I'd have been married." Lubitsch's play with sound effects in this scene is fascinating. In a series of shot/reverse-shots Helene argues with the conductor who has entered her cabin to confront her over having jumped on the train without buying a ticket. Close-up shots of the conductor have as aural background the diegetic sound of the train, while close-up counter shots of Helene are accompanied by non-diegetic silence. Because the audience perceives the conductor, a minor character, as part of the diegetic world of the film (i.e., a part of the backdrop which should complement but not overshadow the heroine), his voice is integrated with the sound of the train. However, I would say

that in capturing Jeanette MacDonald's face in close-up, Lubitsch, by imposing silence, interrupts the diegetic world of the film in order to allow the star to step out of the film's fictional universe and convey her enthusiasm about traveling freely to the audience directly. In effect, what Lubitsch does is have the heroine not only stand out as singular with respect to the film's visual dimension but also with respect to its auditory dimension. Unlike the conductor, what she says is kept free from the distractive elements of naturalistic sounds.

According to Steve Seidman, performers in the comedian-comedy genre appear aware of the presence of the spectator and often use self-referential techniques to break the fictional universe of the film, thereby giving the viewers the sense that "it's only a movie."⁸ In Lubitsch's films, actors establish close-contact with the audience by looking directly at the camera, though the self-referentiality in play here differs from the performance-based approach that Seidman describes. A 1930 review of *Monte Carlo* by Alexander Bakshy illustrates this point. Comparing *Animal Crackers* (Victor Heerman, 1930) with *Monte Carlo*, Bakshy argues that the problem posed to sound film by the stage and its conventions is solved in *Monte Carlo* through what Bakshy characterizes as the director's direct contact with the audience.⁹ On the one hand, Bakshy claims that the performance of the Marx Brothers in *Animal Crackers* is limited to imitation of stage conventions. The idea "[t]hat a character supposed to be merely a freak should be stamped as a stage comedian is an incongruity to be explained only by the inability of the actors and director to shake off their memories of the stage."¹⁰ On the other hand, Bakshy argues that "every time [Lubitsch] introduces singing (in solos, duets, and even choruses) he feels obliged to disguise the procedures by some device, at which he is often extremely ingenious."¹¹ For Bakshy, the self-referentiality evident in comedian-comedy genre falls short of exploiting the range of cinematic possibilities.

The artistic justification of musical comedy on the theatre stage lies in its frank emphasis of its staginess. But no actor on the screen can make the audience accept him as an actor. He is and will always remain a character. On the screen the power of direct contact with the audience can be wielded only by one person, the man who pulls the strings between the scenes, the director. For this, however, he must stress the arrangement, the graphic pattern of his images on the screen in their relation with sound.¹²

This scene from *Monte Carlo* discussed above—in which sound differentiable heroine from the conductor as they argue over the unpaid ticket, seems to have been neglected by reviewers and critics. Nonetheless, I will argue that what Bakshy has to say in the above citation concerning directorial control is applicable to it. Furthermore, it raises some points that Seidman does not address with respect to his theory that comedian-based comedy films are engendered by two seemingly contradictory tendencies: the maintenance of the comedian's extrafictional identity and the characterization of him/her as a comic figure in the fictional universe of the film.¹³ This seemingly irresolvable contradiction is treated by Lubitsch in a manner different from what Seidman has in mind. In *Monte Carlo*, for example, the heroine's battle against social norms is externalized by the director's use of off-screen sound or silence. In other words, it is not only the heroine herself who, as a performer, has to violate the naturalistic conventions of the film, but also the director who predetermines and celebrates the expression of the character's outside-narrative personality. In comedian-comedy films, an actor, rather than staying in character, exceeds the unity and wholeness of diegetic world of the film. In *Monte Carlo* by contrast, the director provides the cinematic space for the star, Jeanette MacDonald, to interrupt the narrative and directly express to the audience her exhilaration over breaking certain moral codes such as those pertaining to sexual and financial irresponsibility. In this scene specifically, the use of non-diegetic silence provides the opportunity for the female lead to externalize her inner feelings for the audience. This is also evident in the later scene where peasants respond to her singing and

appear in total communion with her emotions and sentiments. A reviewer in a 1930 edition of *Photoplay* claims that it is Lubitsch who “turned a conventional prima donna into one of the best comediennes on the American screen.”¹⁴ In short, Jeanette Macdonald, before the release of *Monte Carlo*, was recognized not as a comedian but as a singer. With respect to Bakshy’s similar observation, it is the director, Lubitsch, who gave Macdonald her new status as a comic performer. The link between the star’s comic dimension and Lubitsch’s role as director was evident in commercial advertisements of the time that announced the coming of the film to the screen. For example, a *Toronto Sun* advertisement for the film’s premier includes this line: “Lubitsch humor plus a quartet of brilliant stars!”¹⁵ Seidman, by contrast, instead of director-based arguments, claims that the materiality of the sound is enhanced only by the comedian.¹⁶ Moreover, he notes that “[t]he comedian’s role as enunciator, then, extends to the ways in which he can stop the narrative. ... By manipulating standard visual and aural filmic codes, this role also permits the comedian to point to the status of these codes as codes ...”¹⁷ However, this scene in *Monte Carlo* implies that it is the director who controls everything and uses filmic devices, arranges graphic patterns on the screen and, most importantly, uses off-screen sound to provide the opportunity for the star to transcend the diegetic world of the movie. The non-diegetic space provided for MacDonald does not extend to any secondary characters, who the audience does not account as extra-fictional persona. For this reason, the train conductor’s voice is not set apart from the diegetic sound of the train.

When the conductor exits the room, the heroine, Helene, instead of looking at her friend, looks at the camera and states “Monte Carlo... my happiness, my freedom.” The sound of the train suggests its growing speed, as if even the train itself is celebrating what Sabine Hake interprets as a “woman’s newly gained freedom.”¹⁸ The next scene shows three ticket collectors having a

conversation on the moving train. One says to the other two: "Listen, here is a puzzle and believe me it's hot. She comes from a wedding, she has nothing on, she has left her husband, she has no tickets, she has no idea where she wants to go and she goes to Monte Carlo. Well, how old is her husband? Too old." The conversation ends with the train whistle which seems to confirm this observation as a joyous moment. At the same time, the mechanical sound of the train becomes part of the music score. A similar technique was used two years later by director Jean Vigo and the composer Maurice Jaubert in *Zero de conduit* (1933). Claudia Gorbman who highly praises the music of *Zero de conduit*, explains how in the opening scene, the rhythm of the bass ostinato denotes the speed of the train.¹⁹ As well she argues that since the kids' surreal rebel against the repressive educational institution is manifested by exploring all cinematic possibilities to the full, "*Zero de conduit* exemplifies that the stylistic choices are also moral and aesthetic decisions."²⁰ Nevertheless, this technique as it is employed in *Monte Carlo* has a more political register than in *Zero de conduit*. Hake suggests that the sound of the train has been feminized in this scene as it responds to the star's singing voice.²¹ Lubitsch's editing pattern is focused upon the rhythm of the music, so that the latter, in effect, appropriates the sound of train as much as the imagery. Kenneth White, in his review of *Monte Carlo* describes the train moving through the countryside as "the instrument of musical and amusing comments."²² About this episode, he states that "the engine's flying wheels introduce the dramatic mood of a song Jeanette MacDonald is on the point of singing and musically sustain the visual auditory effect of sound direction."²³ Bringing the spectator into his review, he goes on to say that "[i]n a sense, the episode can be called one of 'sound montage,' a stylistic method which leaves no effect unsupplied to the spectator."²⁴ Helene turns to the open window and sings "Beyond the Blue Horizon", as her voice becomes part of the locomotive's joyful stamping beat and the whistle sound. Hake argues that the

“antiphony between female voice and mechanical noise” is undone by the editing that associates the singer’s face with the engine’s wheels, and thereby deconstructs the typical dissociation of woman’s nature from the machine world.²⁵ While the train passes by splendid farms, the peasants in the fields respond to Helene’s joyfully singing and join her in celebrating the birth of her new life.²⁶ The forty shots that take place on the train cover 6.1% of the film-time (5.4 min) where MacDonald’s Close-up shots cover 22.1% of this sequence and her four fairly long singing-shot cover 32.8% of this sequence. Therefore, 55% of this sequence consists of shots that had Macdonald as the only character in the frame. In Chapter Two I discussed the usual domination of Chevalier in relation to the distribution of the character shots in Lubitsch’s early musical films such as *One Hour with You*. Here the statistical information suggests MacDonald’s domination in terms of screen time and close-ups. More to the point, in all of these shots the sound transcends the diegesis in ways that foreground MacDonald’s presence as a performer.

Graph 1 : *Monte Carlo* (1930)-Train Séquence

Name:	Conduct	Jeanett	Jean+Ma	Peasant	train	Jeanett	Maid	Other
Number of shots:	8	9	3	3	9	4	2	2
Length(min):	0.88	1.2	0.88	0.45	0.57	1.71	0.09	0.09
ASL(sec):	6.6	8	17.5	9	3.8	25.7	2.8	2.8
Color

1-Monte Carlo (1930), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin. 28/06/2008. I divided this sequence to shots of the conductor, Jeanette MacDonald, MacDonald and her Maid, MacDonald's singing-shots, Peasants, and Train.

In his book, "The Cinema Dreams Its Rivals," Paul Young states that the "ideal of technologically induced democracy has its root in popular discourse concerning the railroad engine."²⁷ He goes on to claim that even before the introduction of moving pictures in the late nineteenth century, "the train's uncanny transformation of space had attracted utopian wishes that technology contained the needs of social transformation."²⁸ He cites some writers of the mid-nineteenth century who spoke about the growth of the railroad in terms of their democratic visions. Specifically, they argued that the fact that on the railroad all classes of society can travel

together, could very well bring to an end all forms of class inequality (and also cultural and racial ones).²⁹ I would argue, however that, these writers as bourgeois male intellectuals failed to notice that their theory should logically take in and be as applicable to gender inequality as well. One of the important points that Young raises in his book is that passengers on a train “are equal in their desire to move.”³⁰ In *Monte Carlo*, it is precisely a woman’s desire to move and distance herself from the social conditions imposed on her that is being actualized by what Young calls, “the most fetishized technology that progress had to offer.”³¹ In addition, the train is personalized when it responds to the heroine by speeding up as she sings in celebrating of her new found freedom and by accompanying her singing with the sound of its engine and whistles. As Hake argues, the symbol of technological progress and innovation actually possesses a feminine voice³² something usually associated with nature. The conductor’s encounter with the partially clad heroine experiencing her liberation by way of train technology is indicative, I think, of the male fear of forms of technological progress that make social progress inevitable. This can be evidenced further by the fact that when the conductor specifically notices the heroine’s dress, he shows surprise and possibly fear. Here, I think, his reaction accounts to a symptom or indication of some anxiety or uneasiness on his part as a representative of patriarchal authority, who, though heavily invested in technological progress, is nonetheless not quite prepared for some of its social (and specifically sexual) ramifications. Young cites an 1839 comment, written on democratic vision of train traveling, which points at the coming of the “fraternal social relations.”³³ So, the fact that the heroine has neglected to dress properly in her public appearance, indeed pushes even further this notion that train travel encourages closeness to the extent that it also takes women into account. As with today’s digital media, the technology of the internet stimulates the anxiety of transforming a private fantasy into a public one. For example, internet

sites such as social networking groups can make private conversations between users publicly available. Moreover, Helene's looking out the window and seeing farms with peasants working incorporates the moment of her private fantasy into a collective one.

Just as Young recognizes the train's capability to close the distance between cities and thereby stimulate the daydream of the democratic utopia that will triumph over class difference, he sees that this daydream implied other sorts of technological progress. As he states, "[f]antasies about media like the telephone were continually swallowed up by the same ideology of social transformation."³⁴ In a subsequent scene of *Monte Carlo*, Lubitsch plays around the communicative potential of the telephone, and as Young describes it, the fantasy of television-like forms of communication.³⁵ Hake argues that, "[i]n *Monte Carlo*, and in all other Lubitsch musicals as well, singing is more or less synonymous with the expression of sexual desire and love."³⁶ MacDonald's close-up shots in musical scenes cover 5.4% of the film-time where Buchanan's close-up shots in musical scenes only cover 1.9% of the film-time. (graph 1) "Give Me a Moment, Please," the first song that Helene and Count Rudolph Farriere (who is played by Jack Buchanan) sing in duet starts off as a night-time phone call after they first meet at a gambling table. After hanging up on him a few times, Helene finally decides to listen to Rudolph's voice while he is singing this song (i.e. "Give Me a Moment, Please,") that soon receives an off-screen orchestral accompaniment. In this sequence, Jeanette MacDonald is listening to the voice of Rudolph exuberantly, mainly in close-up. She does not say anything on the phone, but later, while laying in bed, she sings the song to herself. "I never knew that someone like you..." After she turns off the light and falls sleep, the orchestra, after a pause, restarts again the same melody in a lullaby fashion. Although the scene is structured as a duet and, what is more, is experienced as such by the heroine and the audience, Rudolph's awareness

of his participation in the duet is open to question, especially in view of the fact that when he sings a love song over the telephone, the heroine does not respond to it until the electronic communication between them is broken. Moreover, one could argue, Rudolph is not even aware that his voice is accompanied by the background orchestra since the latter does not pause after he is disconnected. The orchestra thus functions mainly to extend Rudolph's singing even after he is no longer directly in contact with Helen. Young argues that the telephone, in contrast to other electrical devices such as the telegraph, allowed or encouraged a much more private or personal form of discourse.³⁷ However, in this scene, the non-diegetic music that accompanies the singing of the romantic couple gives us a sense that their private conversation is being transformed into a public event. What we see is less a person-to-person conversation than a performance for the film's audience. On the one hand, Rudolph is usually shown from the side looking into the telephone's mouthpiece. It seems that he is trying to see Helene through it. On the other hand, the camera captures Helene from the front, thereby presenting her as being fully receptive of Rudolph's vocal presence. In addition, her facial expression in these close-ups suggests that she actually feels that she can be imagined by her lover. Therefore, it confirms the point that I have already raised with regard to Lubitsch's conscious observation of early fantasies about an electronic device—labeled at the time as the “videophone”, in which one could view the other party during the interaction. Young states that “fantasies about television-like communication devices circulated as early as the invention of the telephone in 1875”.³⁸ He also notes that, by 1889, there was a general expectation that Edison would come a television-like device called the telectroscope.³⁹ He also cites an interview with Alexander Graham Bell who states that in near future “couples conversing by telephone can at the same time see each other's faces.”⁴⁰ Lubitsch, in this scene from *Monte Carlo*, is working at conveying to the film audience this promise of a

“technological utopia” with regard to tele-visual devices. A 1930’s *New York Times* review of this scene demonstrates how the mediation of Rudolph’s voice through telephone was perceived at the time: “Fallieres calls up the Countess on the telephone at night and sings to her. She will not listen, but one hears the song pouring out of the telephone. Finally the Countess is tempted to reply in song.”⁴¹ Before the above passage, the reviewer states that “Mr. Lubitsch [is] at his best after he has had experience with the microphone and learned to manipulate it as he has done a camera for several years.”⁴² Specifically, Rudolph’s voice is somehow mediated through telephone, while Helene’s voice is purely clear and natural as her off-the-telephone response to Rudolph. Rudolph’s voice is electronically distorted while Helene enjoys a live mediated relation with the audience, as is the case during her conversation on the train with the conductor, where the vocal and sound effects are such that the heroine’s role and position are privileged.

Graph2: *Monte Carlo* (1930) - Character-distribution of singing shots

Graph 1- *Monte Carlo* (1930), submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, Yellow belongs to MacDonald’s close-up shots in musical scenes and Orange to those of Buchanan. Red represent shots that consist of both romantic couple in the frame.

To get close to Helene, Rudolph hides his true identity and becomes Helene's new hairdresser, her chauffeur, and private secretary. As a hairdresser, instead of doing the job professionally, he does it with emotional and sexual overtones; he cuts a little curl and mostly massages her hair. Her responses are also sexually tinged. Helene says in response to Rudolph: "I have a headache and it is your fault ... No, no, no, don't do that! ... You must have electricity in your hand." Rudolph's use of spray also is modified by the sound accompaniment as that it acquires an animated-like tone in a manner familiar to what became known in Hollywood as "Mickey Mousing". The scene finally turns into their second duet. When the music starts, Rudolph takes a curl of her hair in his hand and brushes it to the rhythm of the harp playing in the background. As the musical rhythm continues the two characters express their feelings through the song. Helene sings: "Do something new to me. It is hard to understand." As the music becomes less rhythmic and more melodramatic, she sings about her joy over the miraculous loss of her headache under the hand of her hair dresser. At this point, it might be interesting to compare the above scene with the barbershop sequences in *Great Dictator* (Charles Chaplin, 1940). Haircutting to the rhythm of music (together with added Mickey-Mouse effects) occurs in one scene where Chaplin cuts the hair of one of his regular male customers. In contrast, in a more dramatic scene where he cuts the hair of the girl that he loves, the rhythmic movements and comic elements are highly reduced. Here, Chaplin, working as hair stylist, does something truly professional since the appearance of the girl is magically transformed in the course of his working on her hair. It seems that Chaplin is incapable of declaring love in a comic vein. However, in *Monte Carlo*, Rudolph, as Helene's hair dresser, does nothing to change her

appearance and so Helene's hair-style remains the same. In *Great Dictator*, the remarkable appearance of the girl is the result of something that is produced through hard work. However, in *Monte Carlo*, without any significant effort by the male character, the expression of love is carried out just by some sexual gags and lighthearted dialogue.

Lubitsch's willingness to allow his characters to declare their love for one another in a truly comic vein was regarded in advertisements for his films. For example, a *Toronto Star* film advertisement (November, 1932) for his film, *Trouble in Paradise* featured the following text: "A Modern Paradise. One Adam ... One Apple ... Two Eves! That Makes Two Hours of Love and Laughter."⁴³ In the case of *Monte Carlo*, the advertisement that announces its coming to the screen reads "Ernest Lubitsch's charming, witty, roguish production of *Monte Carlo*."⁴⁴ And for its starting-day: "As intimate as Lady's Boudoir! As exciting as a caress!"⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that, in the advertisement, although a well-known star was playing in *Monte Carlo*, it is Lubitsch who receives the most attention.

In the scene where Helene's fiancé comes looking for her, she tells him that she does not love him and so marrying him would be a shallow and mercenary act. At the same time, all of this is spoken in the most light-hearted way without resentment or hurt in either side. And in fact, their discussion turns into a short duet. Even Helen's fiancé is impressed with her honesty. Then in the following scene, Rudolph enters her room and tells her about his method of gambling. "I have a system that can't miss. If I happen to be standing beside a brunette I bet on red, if I'm standing next to a redhead I bet on black." She asked him "how about a blond?" Rudolph answers "I always win." Hake interprets these lines in such a way that "[a] single element [i.e.,

hair color and its relation to luck at the gambling table] is taken from one framework of inscriptions to another [i.e., the courtship ritual] and changes their meanings in turn.”⁴⁶ Before they go gambling, we listen to MacDonald’s and Buchanan’s third duet, “Always in All Ways.” Commenting on the singings of accompanying songs, as well as others, Hake says:

The songs in *Monte Carlo*, and the “Always in All Ways” sequence in particular, are masterpieces of sound direction. They stand out through the ease with which sound and image, different location and events, are brought together to produce a truly cinematic effect. The presentation of the song is relatively free of the theatricality that characterizes so many early musicals, as a result of the technical difficulties in sound recording. Precisely because of its dynamic style Lubitsch’s sound direction also establishes the body politics of the sound film.⁴⁷

The main difference between the third and the first two duets is that, after singing antistrophically, they sing together at the end of their duet. Hake also contrasts this duet with the two earlier ones in which, in the first two duets, the couple are physically separated but vocally united. In the third duet, however, there is a far greater physical intimacy between them.⁴⁸ After they come back from gambling, the lovers embrace each other for the first time.

Rudolph starts the final duet between them when they are separated by a locked door. According to Hake, the locked door is a good example of what film theorist Mary Ann Doane’s calls voice-off.⁴⁹ Hake states that “[unlike] the disembodied voice of the voice-over, the voice-off remains part of the mise-en-scene.”⁵⁰ At this point in the movie, Lubitsch tries to achieve a more naturalistic sound by his use of scale matching, a technique that was mainly used in order “to ensure a match of the voice’s reverberation to the image’s visual expanse”⁵¹. This is to say, when we see Rudolph outside Helene’s room, his voice is loud and distinct. When the camera goes into Helene’s room, his voice becomes lower and less distinct. In emphasizing Rudolph’s seductive power, this technique encounters the audience’s sympathy for Helene. Since Helene does not see but only hears Rudolph, the audience witnesses her uneasy effort when to hide the

key in order to resist giving herself to him so quickly. Moreover, Hake goes on to claim that, “[b]ecause of its presence-to-itself, the voice-off represents a trace of the displaced body and, by conforming to the notion of the ‘just over there,’ negates the boundaries of the frame.”⁵²

Although the sound does not really come from off-screen, the auditory mise-en-scene is, as Hake describes, more expanded than the visual one.⁵³

Of the four musicals that Lubitsch made in Hollywood in the early sound-era (i.e. *The Love Parade*, *The Smiling Lieutenant*, *Monte Carlo* and *One Hour with You*), *Monte Carlo* distinguishes itself. According to studies that Charles O’Brien has undertaken in the CineMetrics website, the ASL of the singing shots in comparison to the ASL of dialogue and action shots are much longer. For example, the average singing shot in *Love Parade* is about 37.1 seconds while the average action shot is 6.7 and the average dialogue shot is about 17.8. Likewise, in *One Hour with You*, the average singing shot is 17.8 while the average story shot is 12.4. The difference between the two is that in *One Hour with You*, the ASL is more equally distributed throughout the movie. In *The Smiling Lieutenant* the average singing shot is 16.9 and average story shot is 10.3. However, in *Monte Carlo*, the gap between ASL of story shots and singing shots is significantly closed. Indeed, the average singing shot in *Monte Carlo* is reduced to 13.1, while the average story shot remains relatively unchanged at 10.5 seconds. In order to discover an explanation for the unusual fast cutting of the singing shots in *Monte Carlo*, I vary the variables of shot categories that I used.

Graph 3: Monte Carlo-Average Shot Length

Name:	story	song	exp.tit
Number of shots:	302	161	1
Length(min):	52.75	35.2	0.08
ASL(sec):	10.5	13.1	5
Color

1- *Monte Carlo* (1930), Submitted by Charles O'Brien, 2006-07-2.

However, using CineMetrics website, I recounted the shots in *Monte Carlo* in a more complicated way. In doing so, I distinguished musical scenes that show Jeanette MacDonald in close-up from those that show Jack Buchanan in close-up. In addition I classify musical scenes that features one or both of the romantic couple and scenes that shows none of them. In the same manner I categorized story shots. I realized that although the ASL of musical scenes is 13.1, ASL of MacDonald in close-up shots (9 shots in total) is 32.2. Moreover the maximum shot length of MacDonald in close-up (musical scenes) is 85 seconds. Buchanan has less close-up (3 shots in total) but with more or less similar length. However, there are 39 shots in musical scenes that feature none of the main romantic protagonists with ASL of 4.7. Similar logic can be applied with story shots. The main difference between the two is that many short close-ups of MacDonald are inserted near the end of the film, thus giving her character a special emphasis at the privileged moment in the narrative's unfolding. In short, in terms of close-up, Macdonald dominates *Monte Carlo*.

Graph 4: Distribution of Character-Shots in *Monte Carlo*

Name:	M-M-CU	M-B-CU	M-M/B	M-N	S-M-CU	S-B-CU	S-M/B	S-N
Number of shots:	9	3	30	39	78	44	144	136
Length(min):	4.83	1.71	11.09	3.07	9.22	4.12	39.03	15.07
ASL(sec):	32.2	34.3	22.2	4.7	7.1	5.6	16.3	6.6
Color

2- *Monte Carlo* (1930), Submitted by Mohsen Nasrin, 2008-06-12, M-M-CU stands for musical scenes featuring Jeanette MacDonald. M-B-CU stands for musical scenes featuring Jack Buchanan, M-M/B are musical scenes with one or both romantic lovers, M-N stands for musical scenes where none of the romantic couple appear, S-M-CU story shots with MacDonald in close-up, S-B-CU stands for story shot with Buchanan in close-up, S-M/N story shots that one or both main romantic couple appear, S-N stands for story shots without the main romantic characters.

If we look at the graph that only features close-up scenes, the superiority of MacDonald over Buchanan is even more obvious. Specifically in story-shots MacDonald close-ups are evenly distributed throughout the film and her domination is even increased in the last twenty minutes.

Graph5: Close-Up Shots in *Monte Carlo*

3- *Monte Carlo* (1930) – Graph (2) is reduced to the close-ups of the characters.

Two factors might explain this deviation in terms of increased number of close-up shots at the last minutes of the film. First, *Monte Carlo* does not feature Maurice Chevalier and therefore allows Jeanette MacDonald to be the only character able to transcend the diegetic space of the film. In order to provide that space for MacDonald, Lubitsch frequently inserts close-up shots of her. The absence of a strong male co-star brought MacDonald strong notices. Turk cites an acknowledgment of the quality of her career written in a review in *Variety*: “If it were not for Jeanette MacDonald, there would have been no picture.”⁵⁴ Unlike *Monte Carlo*, all advertisings for *One Hour with You* were ordered by the studio to include MacDonald’s name three-fourth as large as Maurice Chevalier.⁵⁵ Although French critics praised MacDonald’s acting over Chevalier, the film’s ending re-establishes “the old double standard: men can be Don Juan, by proper wives wander only in dream.”⁵⁶ A further explanation of the unusual rapid cuts in *Monte Carlo* could be Lubitsch’s ability of using sound montage in this film. Moreover, sound in *Monte Carlo* does not aim for realism at all.

Graph 6: Singing Shots in *Monte Carlo*

Name:	M-J-CU	M-B-CU	M-J-M	M-B-M	M-Both-	M-N-CU	M-N-CU/	Story
Number of shots:	3	1	14	3	11	6	34	401
Length(min):	2.34	1.12	4.61	0.82	6.52	0.95	4.67	67.09
ASL(sec):	46.8	67.2	19.7	16.4	35.5	9.5	8.2	10
Color

6- *Monte Carlo* (1930), submitted by Mohsen Nasrin 2008-06-15. There is one blank category for story shots. And seven for Musical shots: Jeanette MacDonald in close-up, Jack Buchanan in Close-up, Medium shots of Jeanette MacDonald, Medium shots of Jack Buchanan, Medium shots of both, Close-up shots of other character, Medium or long shots without the romantic couple.

The climax of *Monte Carlo* happens in the opera-house during a performance of the eightieth-century opera, *Monsiuer Beaucaire*. When Helene arrives, she encounters Count Otto, and asks him to explain the story. He answers her: “It’s a silly story, only possible with music. Imagine a lady falling in love with her hairdresser.” Helene reacts to the heroine of this piece by calling her foolish because she failed to pursue her real desire. She even denigrates her appearance. Having herself rejected Rudolph, when they come together in the opera-house she says to him that she was as foolish as the woman in the opera. Nonetheless, Rudolph says “I like happy endings.” The two kiss, thus suggesting that the romantic couples has at last become united. The opera ends and the audiences loudly applaud. Lubitsch manages the scene, however, so that at this very moment the applause seems intended for the romantic couple themselves. Here the off-screen sound of clapping, supposed to celebrate the stage performance (which

happens to be tragic,) actually functions to celebrate the union of the on-screen characters. Moreover, the sound of the clapping dissolves into the sound of the train. Further on, in the film's epilogue, we hear once again the melody of "Beyond the Blue Horizon." This time, however, it forms the melodic background to a scene with the couple sitting at a train window and happily heading off to an unknown place.

Hake argues that because the sound film was inclined to make the spectators perceive the transition between shots in dialogue scenes as continuously and logically arranged, the shot-reverse-shot served as an effective technique to draw the audience into the world of the film, and thus became more and more common.⁵⁷ Throughout this chapter, I have been discussing a few scenes in *Monte Carlo*, one of which employs a series of shot-reverse-shots to depict the heroine's argument with the train conductor after he enters her cabin. In this scene, Lubitsch's use of non-diegetic silence reverses the fictional coherency and unity that classical Hollywood tries to maintain through the use of shot-reverse-shot. When Jeanette MacDonald glories in her escape from a possibly constrictive situation with Count Otto von Leibenheim, the audience hears silence in the background and thus encounters the star's film presence free from the burden of naturalistic sounds. Moreover, in discussing the first singing that MacDonald does, which takes place in the train, this paper was concerned with Hake's argument that the sound of the train has been feminized as it responds to the star's singing voice. Indeed, I argued that the heroine's private fantasies turn into collective ones in the duet-scenes. On the basis of Young's observation about new forms of communication such as the telephone, I argue that Lubitsch has his eye on the fantasies of the future technological utopia (e.g., accessing the tele-visual devices) that, as we come into contact with them in the film, foster a relationship between the sexes that escapes patriarchal control.

The findings in this chapter take on significance in light of my analysis in the first two chapters, which concerned certain consistent patterns evident in Lubitsch's German films and operettas. These chapters provided a background for my examination of *Monte Carlo* as a ground-breaking film where the unusual casting of the male character made it possible for Lubitsch to provide a new space for Jeanette MacDonald to develop her persona outside the film's diegetic world. A question may now arise: is it possible to obtain the above mentioned result without the uses of statistical methods? In other words, could we come to the same sort of conclusion through a historical and contextual study of *Monte Carlo*? The answer to this question is neither strictly yes nor no. What we know about the use of sound, the different singing style of the main characters, and Lubitsch's use of mise-en-scene and montage gives us a good sense of what Lubitsch was trying to achieve. But we still can question to what degree there is a correlation between the distribution of character-shots and the subject matter of the narrative events. If a certain film does not follow the patterns discovered in other films, then we can further the experiment by creating further categories for discovering patterns specific to the film in question. For example, in the final chapter, I have observed that the change in cutting rate in *Monte Carlo* corresponds with the change in the appearances of the stars. I am not stating that this correspondence reveals the operation of a general film-industry rule but it can help us to demonstrate a balance between purely theoretical studies of films and statistically significant data.

¹ Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen; A Sparkling Comedy," the *New York Times*, August 29, 1930.

² Leo Braudy, "The Double Detachment of Ernst Lubitsch," *Modern Language Notes*, v98, n5, Dec 1983. 1071.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sabine Hake, *Passions and Deceptions: The Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch*, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1992. 5.

⁵ Kenneth White, "The Style of Ernst Lubitsch" *Hound and Horn*, January-March 1931. 274.

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- ⁶ Hake, 162-166.
- ⁷ Scot Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*, New York : Simon & Schuster, 1993. 166.
- ⁸ Steven Seidman, *Performance, Enunciation and Self-reference in Hollywood Comedy*, in Frank Krutnick, *Hollywood comedians, the Film Reader*, London, New York , Routledge. 2003. 21-43.
- ⁹ Alexander Bakshy, "Monte Carlo and *Animal Crackers*" *The Nation* October 1, 1930. in *American Film Criticism: From the beginning to Citizen Kane*, ed Stanely Kauffmann and Bruce Henstell, New York, Liverright. 1972. 237.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Seidman, 3.
- ¹⁴ Cited in James Harvey, *Romantic Comedy in Hollywood from Lubitsch to Sturges*, New York : Knopf, 1987. 17.
- ¹⁵ See images in p.22-23.
- ¹⁶ Seidman. 33
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Hake, 182.
- ¹⁹ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press. 1987. 132.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Hake, 162.
- ²² White, 274.
- ²³ Ibid. Moreover White states that the purpose of Lubitsch's sound-montage is to "blend sound with visual pattern ... Lubitsch knows the simple canon that sound in the movie cannot hope to be realistic, and, accordingly, he does not strive for realism."
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Hake, 163. She also wrote the lyrics of this song: "Blow whistle (*toot toot*) blow away/ blow away the past/ Go engine (*toot toot*) anywhere/ ... what matters where I go if I am free."
- ²⁶ "Beyond the blue horizon/ There lies a beautiful day/ Goodbye to things that bore me/ My life has just begun/ Beyond the blue horizon/ lies a rising sun."
- ²⁷ Paul Young, *The Cinema Dreams Its Rivals: Media Fantasy Films from Radio to the Internet*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. 2006. 11.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Hake, 166.
- ³³ Young, 11. "Fraternal social relation" is gender specific term that does not really include women. This can also demonstrate my earlier point that these articles failed to discuss the possible intimacy between both sexes in the new technological era.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 12.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 16.: "[F]antasies about television-like communication devices circulated as early as the invention of the telephone in 1875.
- ³⁶ Hake, 168.
- ³⁷ Young, p.18.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 16.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Mordaunt Hall, "THE SCREEN; A Sparkling Comedy," the *New York Times*, August 29, 1930.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ *Toronto Star* is available <http://pagesofthepast.ca/>, look at Entertainment Announcements and Movie Time Table columns of November 1932 issues.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Hake, 166.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid, 168.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Charles O'Brien, *Cinema's Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film Style in France and the U.S.*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press. 2005. 100.

⁵² Hake, 168.

⁵³ Ibid. 170.

⁵⁴ Turk, 101.

⁵⁵ Turk, 116.

⁵⁶ Turk, 116.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 160.

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