Heterotopic Spaces and Nomadic Gazes in Varda: From *Cléo de 5 à 7* to *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*

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In 1986, at the time of *Sans toit ni loi*, Agnès Varda made a revealing comment about space in films: “I’m tired of the fact that French films never have space, as if the entire universe of the French cinema were psychological, internal and enclosed.”ⁱ Her comment is predicated on a familiar binary, the exterior versus the interior. Critical work on Varda’s films has itself often relied on this and other binaries; and yet, I would like to argue that in many of Varda’s films the gaze is nomadic, not least because several of them are road movies, and that the nomadic gaze undermines the binary rather than confirming it. As Rosi Braidotti explains, nomadic thought helps to deconstruct binary representations, especially those of women. The nomad, she suggests, “expresses the desire for an identity made of transitions, successive shifts, and coordinated changes, without and against an essential unity.”ⁱⁱⁱ Consequently, the nomad is a “form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity” (Braidotti 23).

Varda’s cinema is a nomadic cinema; by a traveler, about travelers, and often using iconic traveling shots, which, I shall show, are key to understanding how Varda’s use of space functions. Her cinema is a cinema that crosses the boundaries between the object and the subject to create the space of the imaginary. Objects, like *le hasard objectif* of the surrealists, reveal traces of hidden subjectivities. In that respect, the real world, if taken at face value, at topographical value, lies; hence Varda’s pun combining the word documentary and lies, “documenteur,” the title of one her films (1981). The real can only be apprehended through subjectivity. But equally, the subject can only be apprehended through objects. As the artist Macha Makeïeff in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse: deux ans après* (2002) says, to Varda’s surprise, “les objets nous contiennent.” And Jean Laplanche says in the same film, reflecting on what he said in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000), that he wishes that in the first film he had pointed out something which seems retrospectively self-evident to him: that he as a psychoanalyst gleans objects from the unconscious mind so as to construct a narrative of identity. Space, and the objects and the people within that space, are as fluid and as fragmented as the structure of *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*, as mobile as the tracking shots of lorries pursued by Varda’s camera; what matters is not where you are, nor where you are going, but movement, transformation, becoming, of the object and of the subject.

Figure 1: “Je ne vois pas ... cachée dans la forêt” (Photomontage in *La Révolution surréaliste*, 12, December 15th 1929)

The subject of Varda’s films is often a woman, gazing or gazed upon, and a second major point I shall be making about Varda’s films is that the woman at their center is an avatar of Varda herself. I mentioned the surrealists above. Referring to the image published in *La Révolution surréaliste* of the surrealist group, all men, their eyes closed, surrounding a painting by Magritte of a naked woman, her eyes also closed, with the caption “je ne vois pas

[la femme] cachée dans la forêt,” Varda comments that she could talk about it endlessly,ⁱⁱⁱ indeed, she returns to it in her film *Les Plages d’Agnès* (2008). The image is emblematic of three interlocking issues, which I shall pursue in this article. First, it is emblematic of Varda’s position as a female director often associated with a group of male directors, the New Wave, and yet slightly outside, marginal to that group, as she points out in her comment; and it is emblematic as well of the autobiographical strand of her work, most obvious in some of the documentaries, but implicit, I shall be suggesting, in the fiction films. The second issue is, in philosophical terms, the relationship between seeing and not seeing, being awake and being asleep; in other words consciousness. The third point brings the first two together: Varda’s films try to bring about an awareness of who we are, through an awareness of who she is, focused on spatial relations. What matters in the films is not the centrality of the subject, but the subject’s eccentricity, in both senses of the word. What is central is, paradoxically, always already what is off-center, marginal, centrifugal, ectopic; in a word I shall return to, heterotopic.

I shall do so by focusing on a quartet of films, one from each decade more or less, in which a woman is central, as well as off-center. In chronological order, these are: *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1961), *Daguerréotypes* (1978), *Sans toit ni loi* (1985), and *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000). These films echo each other in a variety of ways. Three of them are generically road movies (the exception being *Daguerréotypes*). Two of them—*Daguerréotypes* and *Sans toit ni loi*—use the same formal procedure of static shots of interviewees. *Cléo de 5 à 7* and *Sans toit ni loi* have parallel scenes, such as the art students pawing at the windows of Cléo’s taxi, a scene reprised in *Sans toit ni loi* when Mona is attacked in the phone booth by the tree men. And, finally, three of the films have outsiders as their main narrative focus: Mystag the magician in *Daguerréotypes*, Mona the traveler in *Sans toit ni loi*, and Varda herself in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*.

The films do not only cross-refer to each other thematically and generically, but they all focus on a woman. In *Cléo de 5 à 7*, it is Cléo and her struggle to come to terms with her cancer, her voyage of self-discovery from fetishized and self-fetishizing object, rather like the woman in the surrealist forest, to subject; from appearance to being. In *Sans toit ni loi*, Mona is the subject of inquiry, again much like the woman in the surrealist image, seen without really being seen by a variety of people who comment on her, but who in so doing reveal more about themselves than about her. In the two documentaries, it is Varda herself who is the off-center focus. She may not be on the image-track in *Daguerréotypes*, but she is very present on the sound-track, integrating herself within the film when she describes herself as a “daguerréotypesse;” and in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*, she is the gleaner of the title, appearing frequently on the image-track as well as on the sound-track, gleaned images, including those of her own body, to create the film.

In the next section, I shall briefly consider critical appraisals of Varda’s work, with an emphasis on the way most rely on binary structures, before passing on to the alternative heterotopic structures and their relationship to the nexus I have just identified.

Space and heterotopia

Sandy Flitterman-Lewis’s 1990 account of Varda’s work is canonical, and has heavily influenced those who followed her. Where *Cléo de 5 à 7* is concerned, Flitterman-Lewis emphasizes the developmental through time. The film is in two halves, the song sung by Cléo signaling a moment of self-awareness after which she turns away from the inauthentic self-fetishizing masquerade of womanhood to a voyage of discovery of herself in relation to others; Alison Smith usefully summarizes this view of the film as being a shift from “woman seen to woman seeing,”^{iv} underlining the binary structure of the film. Raynalle Udris, in a collection on space and European cinema, contrasts enclosed and open spaces in *Sans toit ni*

loi,^v and Peter Wagstaff, in another collection on space and European cinema, has explored *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*, focusing on the contrast between still and moving images.^{vi} Woman seen to woman seeing, enclosed and open spaces, still and moving images: all of these approaches establish stark binaries.

Jill Forbes refreshingly explores Cléo as *flâneuse*, and her article constitutes a rare attempt to dispense with the binaries that bedevil Varda criticism.^{vii} She rejects the chiasmic structure articulated around the song, established by Flitterman-Lewis, and argues that space matters as much as time in the film. She maps Cléo's identity onto the places and spaces she visits, Cléo's identity becoming that of the city itself. For Forbes, the key moment of the film is not the song, as it is for so many since Flitterman-Lewis's analysis, but the Parc Montsouris.^{viii} This is because Cléo changes direction at this point of her journey, and the turning point is emphasized by the fact that she acknowledges her real name, Florence. However, I shall reject Forbes's view that the park is the key moment, the literal and figurative turning point, and return to an earlier moment of her itinerary, the cinema Cléo and her friend Dorothée visit. The cinema activates what I would like to call the heterotopic moment, subverting binaries and creating a moment of radical (self-)questioning for the spectator. Each of the four films I am considering has a device of this type, which is not so much central as eccentric.

Before exploring these moments in more detail, let us consider briefly the theoretical paradigm I shall be using, the notion of heterotopic space. I have shown elsewhere how we can use Foucault's notion of heterotopic spaces to model non-binaristic spectator positions.^{ix} These spaces are for Foucault real spaces, functioning, as he puts it, as "contre-emplacements, sortes d'utopies effectivement réalisées dans lesquelles les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l'on peut trouver à l'intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés."^x Amongst Foucault's examples are spaces where deviants are located, such as psychiatric hospitals and prisons; spaces of juxtaposed spaces (cinemas, gardens); sacred spaces (cemeteries); spaces of transitory time (festivals, fairgrounds); spaces of illusion, which critique quotidian space (brothels). The marginal, the imaginary, the sacred, the festive: all of these categories are essential to Varda's films. These spaces, inhabited by marginal people in her films, lead to privileged moments where the spectator is positioned both within the spaces of the film as well as eccentrically in relation to them. So, for example, the famous multiple tracking shot of *Sans toit ni loi*, to which I shall return, punctures the film repeatedly, and is presented as different from the film's other spaces, while still being clearly part of the same level of representation. We should therefore ask ourselves how that tracking shot functions to reposition us in relation to Mona; how, because of its association with a marginal and deviant figure, the space the tracking shot establishes is, to recall what Foucault says, a utopian space which contests and inverts other spaces.

It is important to acknowledge that heterotopic space is outside of the binary system. Such spaces are not in opposition to the other spaces represented in a film; there is not a "normal" space and a heterotopic space, which somehow contests it. So, for example, in the case of Mystag and his magic show in *Daguerréotypes*, it is not a question of contrasting profane spaces and temporalities as the inhabitants of the Rue Daguerre go about their daily business, with a Bakhtinian moment of carnival, a sacred space where the imaginary and illusion reign. Rather, heterotopic space is "in" normal space, as well as eccentric to it. Nor is it a question of dialectical development, whereby the utopian enters into a productive conflict with dystopia, thus engendering, in an Hegelian *Aufhebung*, a transcendental and somehow ethically superior heterotopia.

Let us now explore the heterotopic moments of the four films, which, I would suggest, are all connected with a simple cinematographic device, the tracking shot, and/or with a familiar narrative device, the *mise en abyme*.

Sans toit ni loi

Varda explains how the inspiration for *Sans toit ni loi* was her meeting with a drifter called Settina, and that this led to what became the focus of the film for her: a young girl walking through the countryside of the Gard region (Varda 174).

The film appears to contrast two types of sequence. In the first type, a variety of characters talk about Mona. These sequences strike us as static, partly because the camera is static, partly because the characters themselves are stationary, as they are “interviewed” addressing the camera directly. In the second type, we see Mona walking in the long tracking shots already mentioned. As is well known, these tracking shots are in fact closely tied to each other. Varda explains in her comments on the narrative structure of the film that she wished to invert what might be considered to be the standard structure of a road movie, a series of meetings with people punctuated by shots of the journey. Rather, she wanted the film to focus on Mona’s journey, and that the journey should be punctuated by meetings. In other words, social interaction had to be subordinate to a relentless drift. She therefore imagined the sequences representing Mona’s journey as a single sequence (Varda 174). An object at the end of one of these tracking shots reappears at the beginning of the next one some ten minutes later, establishing a sense of continuity in Mona’s journey towards her death.

The homogeneity of these tracking shots is achieved in other ways as well: there are twelve of them, suggesting the twelve stations of the cross, we might argue, establishing a paradoxical spiritual feel to Mona’s journey, at odds with the documentary realism of much of the rest of the film. Indeed, the sequences are meditative in character; no words are spoken in any of them, and the soundtrack consists of the sound of Mona’s footsteps overlaid with modernist music by the Polish composer Joanna Bruzdowicz. Homogeneity is also achieved because Mona is always seen walking towards the left of the screen. Varda did this, she says, to stress Mona’s counter-cultural status, given the connotations of leftward movement in Western culture (Varda 174). The film crew eventually termed these shots the *grande série* (Varda 175).

The *grande série* might be seen as marginal and eccentric in relation to a central focus on community; but in fact it is in many ways the central focus of the film. This is not a simple reversal of a binary, however, in which the *grande série*, as emblem of Mona’s marginality, turns the community commenting on Mona’s misfittedness into its exact opposite. Community space and the mobile space of the *grande série* have a different relationship to each other than the binary. One way in which this can be demonstrated is the fact that both types of sequence are flashbacks, even if the *grande série* is further back in time. That location further back in time gives chronological precedence to Mona’s journey and the spaces of the *grande série*, but it does not mean that other spaces are in direct opposition to it, however static they may appear by contrast. What it does do, however, is make the central focus of the film eccentric. This paradox of an eccentric center parallels the way in which the *grande série* is a continuity woven discontinuously through the narrative. The *grande série* is therefore a good example of what I mean by the heterotopic moment: a mobile space founded in paradox. It is both continuous and discontinuous. It is oppositional only in appearance; but even if it is not fully oppositional, it is nonetheless marginal, both in terms of its grammar and in terms of its ideology of erratic misfittedness. And yet, despite being marginal, it is the film’s central focus, its inspiration. But at the same time that it is the central focus, it is also fragmented and off-center, an expiration in more senses than one, given that it signals Mona’s

leftward journey towards her death. And, finally, it is both a moment, in the sense that it articulates what appears to be a single event and a single type of space, while at the same time scattering that moment across the film narrative as a series of moments and spaces. The heterotopic moment, therefore, is not containable within the normal temporal and spatial categories.

Daguerréotypes

Tracking shots have an equally important part to play in *Daguerréotypes*, since there are only two of them, camera movement being largely confined to panning shots, as Smith has observed (Smith 76, 78). One of the two tracking shots precedes Mystag's magic show, destabilizing the cinematographic grammar, just as Mystag's show will destabilize the film in various ways. The tracking shot, which follows a Maghrebi grocer, then a woman who enters a butcher's shop, runs from right to left, just as Mona's leftward journey a few years later.

The tracking shot in *Daguerréotypes* functions partly as a transition to the Mystag sequence, after a sequence where the inhabitants have told us where they came from before arriving in Paris. Varda comments on the voice-over: "L'air tremble un peu quand chacun nomme son lieu de naissance, son village à l'heure enfantine. Ainsi voici une vérité sur Paris 14^e: son trottoir sent la campagne." This statement, which brings together the rural and the urban, transforming city space, is a fitting introduction to the transformation of objects in the Mystag sequence. As an announcer says: "Nous voici transportés dans le domaine du mystère et de l'illusion," a point underlined by shots of Mystag in a forest, then perched on the parapet of a Paris bridge. Varda's subsequent voice-over underlines the transition from reality to reality transformed, in statements that recall the surrealists' interest in mediums and hypnosis, saying that Mystag "va balayer les idées logiques et les certitudes rassurantes, il va réveiller les mediums qui sommeillent, il va endormir un monde déjà immobile." In what follows, we see shots of magic tricks using objects intercut with the same objects (rice, wine, fire, knives) used by the inhabitants in their everyday lives.

There is a second point to be made about this sequence: Mystag can be seen as an avatar of Varda herself, as Smith has shown (Smith 172-77), since each is a master of ceremonies associated with films. Shot against the Eiffel Tower, Mystag announces the film prior to the credits sequence in a voice-over, rather like Varda's own commentaries on activities in the rue Daguerre; but more importantly, both he and Varda, as Smith has said, transform the familiar (Smith 176). Mystag, therefore, is a *mise en abyme* of what the director herself is trying to achieve. That *mise en abyme* is associated with a leftward-moving tracking shot, the same tracking shot we find a few years later in the *grande série* of *Sans toit ni loi*. I concluded when discussing that film that the heterotopic is not containable within the normal temporal and spatial categories. To this we can now add a further layer: the heterotopic moment constituted by Mystag in *Daguerréotypes* is also a *mise en abyme* of the process of making a film as a vehicle for transforming the everyday, for revealing what the surrealists called the marvelous. Further, we could infer from the fact that Mystag is an avatar of Varda, that Mona is also potentially an avatar of Varda.

Cléo de 5 à 7

A real film, rather than Mystag's references to films, punctuates the narrative of *Cléo de 5 à 7*. It occurs when Cléo and her friend Dorothée go to the cinema in Rue Delambre, and are invited by Dorothée's projectionist boyfriend Raoul into the projection booth to watch a short silent film that pastiches Harry Langdon comedies. The film occurs approximately one hour into *Cléo de 5 à 7*, and lasts about three minutes. A couple, played by Jean-Luc Godard and his then partner, Anna Karina, kiss each other goodbye on the Pont Macdonald near the Porte de la Villette. He puts his dark sunglasses on, and Karina's white dress becomes black as she

runs down the steps. At the bottom, she trips over a hosepipe; a hearse arrives and carries her off. The Godard character buys a handkerchief to mop up his tears, and takes his glasses off to dry them. Karina is still running down the steps, this time in her original white dress, and Godard exclaims via intertitle: “Je voyais tout en noir à cause de mes lunettes!” Karina trips over a hosepipe again, and a white ambulance draws up, the paramedic dragging Karina into it. But Godard runs down, knocks out the paramedic, and the lovers return to the bridge to kiss each other, after Godard has thrown his glasses into the Canal de l’Ourcq.

Oddly, none of the scholarly analyses of *Cléo de 5 à 7* address the issue of this film within a film, beyond occasionally noting its presence.^{xi} And yet Varda herself gives the film two full pages in her *Varda par Agnès* (Varda 56-57), suggesting its importance. We can see how it functions as a *mise en abyme* of the whole film. It is structured in two halves, the same action being repeated in each half, once in black, once in white. This echoes *Cléo de 5 à 7* as a whole: the first half emphasizes Cléo’s white costumes—her white hat, her negligee, her dressing gown—which she then exchanges for a black dress, black hat and dark glasses after her song. The theme of the gaze, suggested by the glasses, is clearly linked to Cléo’s worldview, as she sees everything figuratively in black as a result of her cancer, and starts seeing others rather than just herself once she wears the dark glasses. Even the vehicles seem linked to the black and white theme of the film; Cléo travels in a black taxi at the start of the film, and in Dorothée’s white sports car in the second half.

The short film is a heterotopic moment, not just because it functions as a *mise en abyme*, but because it is eccentric spatially. Cléo’s itinerary traces an incomplete circle, the geographical turning point being, as Forbes points out, the Parc Montsouris. While it is true that in general the itinerary is circular, there is a tight ectopic loop, an additional circle, around the Montparnasse district as Cléo goes from her apartment in rue Huygens, to the café in rue Vavin, to the studio, via the Place Edgar Quinet, before leaving for the cinema in Rue Delambre in Dorothée’s car. This additional loop displaces us geographically from a central Paris location to one that is close to the edge of Paris.^{xii} And, finally, its importance is not just that it acts as the generator of displacement geographically; it takes us from the present of the film to an unlocatable temporality, given its silent film form with recognizably modern actors; and it takes us into a different type of film in generic terms, a slapstick sentimental comedy.

heterotopic space represents, contests, and inverts everyday space. Equally interesting, and related to the strategy of including a film within a film in *Cléo de 5 à 7*, is the section on Étienne-Jules Marey in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*, which follows the “dance of the lens cap,” when Varda left her digital camera on by mistake, capturing the mobility of the camera as it swung from her wrist and the gyrations of the lens cap. These two types of self-reflexive moment come together in a section occurring just before the mid-point of the film (situated at 30-42 minutes), when Varda switches from gleanings as a concrete activity to gleanings as a figurative activity. I shall briefly detail this sequence, before pointing out how it relates to my key theme of the nomadic and eccentric gaze.

Immediately after the lawyer’s explanation of the legal position of gleanings, as he stands in a field of cabbages, Varda says she will film some vegetables. She drifts from some colorful cabbages to a close-up of a lily, and then a close-up of what turns out to be a sunflower. The camera pulls back to reveal a field of sunflowers, a clear reference to Van Gogh’s paintings. The painterly theme carries on as she frames mildew on the ceiling of her home, comparing it to abstract paintings by the Spanish Antoni Tàpies (who began as a surrealist painter at the end of the 1940s), the Chinese Guo Qiang, and the French painter Borderie, turning her domestic space into an international imaginary art gallery. She then equates her body with the bodies of Rembrandt and Saskia, introducing an autobiographical element. As she sifts through images and objects brought back from Japan, she pulls out postcards of paintings by Rembrandt that had been hanging in a Japanese department store. She places her hand across a detail of Saskia, commenting as follows: “Saskia, en détail. Et puis, et puis ma main en détail. C’est-à-dire c’est ça mon projet: filmer d’une main mon autre main. Entrer dans l’horreur. Je trouve ça extraordinaire. J’ai l’impression que je suis une bête. C’est pire: je suis une bête que je ne connais pas.” She then lifts her hand away to reveal Rembrandt’s self-portrait, commenting further: “Et voilà l’autoportrait de Rembrandt; mais c’est la même chose en fait, c’est toujours un auto-portrait.”

The painterly theme continues as she transitions to the next sequence using a portrait of Maurice Utrillo by Suzanne Valadon, ushering in several artists who have in common the use of *objets trouvés*: the unknown Hervé, followed by Bodan Litanski and Louis Pons. Between Hervé and the other two, she stops off in an antique warehouse to discover an amateur painting of gleaners which combines the tropes of Jean-François Millet and Jules Breton, emphasizing the dominant theme of painting as an act of gleanings images. All three of the painters concerned are presented in ways that recall strongly the surrealists or those that the surrealists admired. Hervé, for example, shows us how he uses his own cigarette papers, as well as other *objets trouvés*, to create his paintings, recalling Braque’s *papiers collés*. Litanski’s ideal palace is built of all kinds of *objets trouvés* and junk, recalling Fata Morgana Cheval’s *Palais idéal* beloved of the surrealists; but Varda’s camera focuses almost entirely on dolls, in what seems to be a clear reference to surrealist Hans Bellmer’s preoccupation with them. Louis Pons explains his paintings, which echo those of George Braque and Pablo Picasso in formal terms, as well as the *poèmes-objets* of André Breton, as making statements with objects, and Varda comments that his paintings “composent avec le hasard,” echoing the surrealists’ preoccupation with *le hasard objectif* in the early 1930s.

This extraordinary, and extraordinarily dense sequence combines a number of strands, weaving them together carefully. For some twelve minutes, Varda drifts nomadically in thematic terms, bringing together travel, painting, the artistic recycling of objects, the past, autobiography and the body in a way that serves to articulate most clearly her project: the mobilization of herself as a gleaned image, a marvelous and yet terrifying object located in mobile and transitory spaces. Varda’s journey is as much a journey of self-discovery as that of the hidden underbelly of France. She is trying to transform the woman hidden in the

surrealist forest from imaginary fairy and muse, and object of surrealist fantasy, to an eccentric but focal gazing subject.

Anamorphosis, heterospection and the nomadic gaze

Varda's gaze transforms space and time heterotopically in the sense that her films create spaces out of synch with the narrative of the film. They are clearly part of the film, yet feel displaced spatially and temporally. They are informed by the imaginary and the marvelous in the surrealist sense of the term, and, generally, as was the case with the surrealists, they are linked with the primacy and transformation of objects: the sunglasses that change the way the world looks in *Cléo de 5 à 7*; the everyday objects of the inhabitants of the Rue Daguerre transformed by *Mystag*; the objects placed iconically at the end of each segment of the *grande série*; and, finally, in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*, the many objects gleaned and transformed by painters, or by nature itself in the case of the potato in the form of a heart. Objects are distorted, and in so doing they distort the space of the films in which they occur, rather like anamorphic objects.

Varda links anamorphosis directly with the power of cinema to create unlikely images. As she puts it punningly in her meditation on the word in *Varda par Agnès*, "L'anamorphose métamorphose le cinéma en cinémascope et nous télescope dans des espaces horizontaux" (Varda 10). She is using the term here in a concrete sense to suggest how special effects can transform images; indeed, the example she gives is from one of the iconic films of the surrealists, the transformation of a group of archbishops into skeletons in Buñuel's *L'Âge d'or* (1930). However, anamorphosis is an apt metaphor for the processes I have been identifying in her films, with their use of tracking shots to usher in key moments, and even more so the use of *mise en abyme* with its distortion of the narrative surface. This is partly because her punning statement shows how transformation can affect the spectator's sense of space. It is also partly because anamorphosis is one of Lacan's favourite metaphors for subjectivity. In this final section, then, I would like to contrast her anamorphically informed heterotopic gaze with that of Lacan.

Lacan's comments on Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, a painting famous for its anamorphosis of a death's head lying at the base of the painting. For Lacan, the death's head is associated with the phallic: "Comment se fait-il que personne n'ait jamais songé à y évoquer...l'effet d'une érection?", and he labels it "le fantôme phallique."^{xiii} It expresses for him the death of the subject, "le sujet comme néantisé" (Lacan 102): "Nous voyons ce que signifie l'objet flottant magique. Il nous reflète notre propre néant, dans la figure de la tête de mort" (Lacan 107). This is a particularly bleak, and masculinist vision of the transformative power of an object.

By contrast, I would suggest, Varda's anamorphic moments and her "magic objects" re-establish the primacy of her gaze, not just as a woman, but as Varda. The woman in the mobile and eccentric center is Varda herself, or versions of her, and each of these films is structured around the gaze of a woman, and the roaming of that woman as she gazes. The films we have explored have gradually constructed, over a period of forty years, a gaze in which space and time are mobilized and transformed, where objects are reinvested, as they were in the surrealists' view of objective chance and the marvelous, with life-transforming power, of which the heart-shaped potato in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* is perhaps the best, and best-known example. Those objects happen on the margins of her narratives, we see them at the edge of rational vision, rather like the anamorphic object in Holbein's painting. But in opposition to Lacan's postmodern view of the centerless and destructed subject, whose core is an empty signifier, Varda constructs a post-postmodern subjectivity that reconnects with modernist ethics. The subject and the object are reunited, and like God in Pascal's definition—an infinite sphere of which the center is everywhere and the circumference

nowhere—they travel centrifugally like a center always already at its own circumference towards a space that is heterotopic: neither in nor out, but both in and out, as well as neither in nor out.

We began with Varda's complaint: "I'm tired of the fact that French films never have space, as if the entire universe of the French cinema were psychological, internal and enclosed" (Insdorf 1986). Her films have space; that space is open, transformative, nomadic, heterotopic, anamorphic. At the center of that space is the woman she dreams herself to be on screen, confronting and constructing her body in time and space as a gazing body (the woman behind the camera), as well as a body gazed upon (the women in front of the camera, whether Varda herself or her avatars). And that gaze transforms the world around us: subjects become objects, objects become subjects, and, crucially, both are othered, nomadized, and heterotopic. To return to Foucault, Varda as subject inverted and contested is the effectively enacted utopia of a non-binariad embodied gaze. She is the surrealists' woman in the forest, but with a major difference: her eyes are open.

ⁱ Annette Insdorf, "Agnès Varda: She Aims to Unsettle," *The New York Times*, 25 May 1986, pagination unavailable.

ⁱⁱ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), 22.

ⁱⁱⁱ Agnès Varda, *Varda par Agnès* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1994), 31.

^{iv} Alison Smith, *Agnès Varda* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998), 100.

^v Raynalle Udris, "Countryside/Cityscape and Homelessness in Agnès Varda's *Sans toit ni loi* and Leos Carax's *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf*," in *Spaces in European Cinema*, edited by Myrto Konstantarakos (Exeter: Intellect, 2000), 42-51.

^{vi} Peter Wagstaff, "Traces of Places: Agnès Varda's mobile space in *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*," in *Revisiting Space: Space and Place in European Cinema*, edited by Wendy Everett and Axel Goodbody (Berne and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), 273-87.

^{vii} Jean-Yves Bloch tries to circumvent binaries with a dialectical structure. He explains how life and death are brought together in the film's dialogue in a kind of synthesis, echoed by visual markers of multiple or zooming perspectives. An example of this is when Cléo looks at herself in the mirror on leaving the tarot reader, feeling both anguish and serenity at the same time; a second example is right at the end of the film, when a rapid track-back shot from the Professor's car, giving a sense of vertigo and anxiety, is combined with Cléo's statement that she feels happy despite finding out that she does indeed have cancer. See Jean-Yves Bloch, "*Cléo de 5 à 7*: 'le violon et le métronome'", *Études cinématographiques*, 179-186 (1991), 119-40.

^{viii} Jill Forbes, "Gender and Space in *Cléo de 5 à 7*," *Studies in French Cinema*, 2:2 (2002), 88.

^{ix} Phil Powrie, "'Unfamiliar Places: 'Heterospection' and Recent French Films on Children,'" *Screen*, 46:3 (2005), 341-52.

^x Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres," published at <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>, accessed 19 April 2010. Originally published in *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, 5 (1984), 46-49.

^{xi} This includes the most recent extended study of the film: Valerie Orpen, *Cléo de 5 à 7* (London/New York: I.B.Tauris, 2007), 8-9.

^{xii} Varda chose this location partly because she has always been attracted to the edges of Paris (personal conversation with Varda, 26 October 2006).

^{xiii} Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre XI, Les Quatre Concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), 101.