WOMEN'S STUDIES / FILM STUDIES

As celebrities sporting "baby bumps," politicians, Olympic athletes, and talk show guests, mothers are ubiquitous throughout U.S. media and popular culture. Like lightning rods, these high-profile mothers attract accolades and judgments associated with ideals of female sexuality, gender roles, and constructions of contemporary families. *Motherhood Misconceived* explores this widespread cultural fascination with motherhood through analyses of mothers in contemporary U.S. film, including both mainstream and independent cinematic representations. The contributors draw on a variety of critical approaches to consider the spectacle of pregnancy; mother-daughter relationships; mothers as predators, narcissists, and absent victims; and the ways in which cultural anxieties are displaced and projected onto marginalized mothers in films such as *Fargo*, *Transamerica*, *Gas, Food, Lodging*, *Ordinary People*, and *Scream*. Ideal for women's studies or film studies classes, *Motherhood Misconceived* will help students contextualize current debates about motherhood as they play out in popular and independent film.

"This collection focuses on Hollywood's portrayal of motherhood in a clear, coherent fashion and addresses a variety of subtopics, including the mother-to-be, the single mother, the aging mother, the transsexual mother, and the mother in various genres."

— Lucy Fischer, author of *Designing Women: Cinema, Art Deco, and the Female Form*

HEATHER ADDISON is Associate Professor of Film Studies at Western Michigan University and author of *Hollywood and the Rise of Physical Culture*. MARY KATE GOODWIN-KELLY is an independent scholar living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. ELAINE ROTH is Associate Professor of Film Studies at Indiana University South Bend.

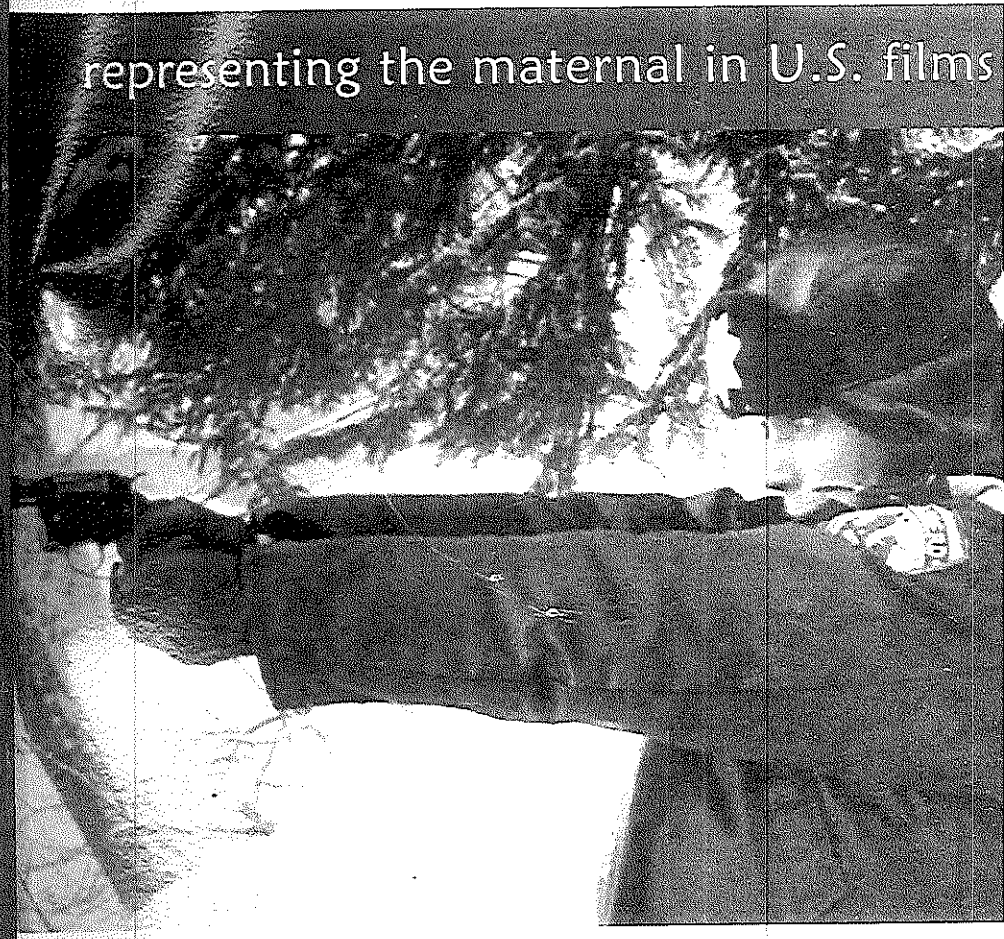
SUNY PRESS
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS
www.sunypress.edu

ISBN: 978-1-4384-2812-3

Addison, Goodwin-Kelly, Roth **motherhood misconceived**

motherhood misconceived

representing the maternal in U.S. films



Edited by
Heather Addison, Mary Kate Goodwin-Kelly, Elaine Roth

TWO

MOTHER'S DAY

Taking the Mother Out of Motherhood in *The Thrill of It All*

Tamar Jeffers McDonald

The Thrill of It All (1963) is not a much-seen film now, although I will be arguing that it remains of value—but not for being one of the series of Doris Day "sex comedies,"[1] or as a witty parody of early television advertising,[2] as it is occasionally called. Neither of these accounts is strictly accurate: Beverly Boyer, the character played by Day, is married in this film and therefore not subject to being chased by urbane wolves as in her similar comedies, *Pillow Talk* (1959), *Lover, Come Back* (1961), and *That Touch of Mink* (1962). Further, the advertising parody is not at the story's heart; the spoof of live television advertisements has as much to do with Day's then-contemporary star persona as the realities of sponsored television. What fascinates about *Thrill* is how nakedly and ambivalently it presents a range of problems perceived as urgent in 1963: the role of stay-at-home wives; the pros and cons of employment for mothers outside the home; contraception and birth control. In its portrayal of a housewife whose coping with home chores, children, and being a wife is not enough to occupy her mind, *Thrill* uncannily anticipates the findings of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, published the same year. Due to the lead-in times of production and distribution, *Thrill* must have been under way before Friedan's book hit the stores on February 19, 1963, and the review columns of newspapers and magazines a month later. Yet this

film, the first feature written by comedian Carl Reiner, undeniably portrays the hollowness at the heart of the supposedly "happy housewife heroine,"[3] which was Friedan's subject, and represents, in its determined returning of Beverly to the home at the end of the film, a counterattack on Friedan's feminist cry for freedom. The excessive plot exigencies needed to get her back in the home illustrate just how shaky the arguments in support of the feminine mystique were. In its portrayal of a marriage in which the wife fights for equality but the husband battles for supremacy, *Thrill* accurately depicts the very disparities it hopes to discount. Building intricate metaphors around polarities of dirt/cleanliness, public/private, amateur/professional, male/female, the film seems now not so much a light comedy as a depressing snapshot of "ordinary" American life in the white suburbs of the early 1960s, exposing the frustration felt by many women before the rise of the feminist movement later in the decade.

Interestingly, the few filmographies that mention *Thrill* often portray it as a breezy comedy.[4] The synopses they present are significant in omitting many narrative elements that contribute to the film's misogynistic stance. Just as women's lives and women's history have often been untold, left in the interstices of events considered important, Beverly's story languishes unremarked in the interstices of accounts of the film. While offering a similarly brief plot outline here, I will also give prominence to events that seem to symbolize Beverly's oppression in her own home.

Dr. Gerald Boyer (James Garner) is an obstetrician; his wife, Beverly, looks after their two small children, Andy and Maggie, and the family home, with the aid of a live-in maid. Gerald and his wife are invited to dinner by the late-middle-aged Fraleighs in gratitude for helping them conceive. There they meet the elder Mr. Fraleigh, a wealthy, eccentric businessman whose product, Happy Soap, sponsors a live weekly television commercial. Beverly exclaims that her children love Happy Soap, and Mr. Fraleigh is so charmed that he demands she repeat this on television. She declines until she is told her one-time salary: $332. The resultant commercial seems a disaster because of Beverly's amateurishness, but the public recognizes that she is genuine, call the studio in support, and buy the product. As a result, Beverly is offered $80,000 a year to be the Happy Soap spokeswoman. Her home life, however, suffers, since her new busy schedule always clashes with her husband's. He insists she give up the job, but she refuses. He decides to get her pregnant, but the couple are never alone long enough for him to try. Finally he resorts to subterfuge, pretending to have an affair, murmuring "Gloria" while pretending to be drunk. Beverly's resultant misery causes her to forget the product's name on air. At a studio party after this debacle, Mrs. Fraleigh goes into labor and Beverly heads to the hospital with her. They get stuck in traffic; with the help of her husband's advice by phone, Beverly manages to prepare for the birth until he can arrive. Beverly helps Gerald deliver the child, then bursts into tears. Without recrimination about the affair, Beverly tells her husband she wants to "go back to just being a doctor's wife." They go home and find their children excited to hear how they spent their evening: they want Mommy to have a baby too. Beverly and Gerald agree euphemistically to "discuss" the matter.

This brief account hints at the distasteful lengths the film will go to in order to get its heroine back in the nursery. What I study here in detail are three specific incidents that fully illuminate the parameters of the dispute between Beverly and her husband, making *Thrill* a fascinatingly overt document of the sex wars of the early 1960s. Before turning to these incidents, a short account of the contemporary context of the film is necessary, in order to highlight some of the significances of the terrain the Boyers are fighting over.

SEX AND THE SINGLE (AND MARRIED) GIRL[5]

While woman's sexuality and agency can hardly be said to be easy or unvexed issues at any time, the years from 1953 to 1963 provoked huge successive waves of anxiety in the popular media around the figure of the sexualized woman. The period I am considering here begins with the publication of Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* and ends with the release date of *Thrill*, as well as Betty Friedan's best seller, *The Feminine Mystique*. During this time frame, popular attention became fixated on the potential transgressions of the single, desirous girl who might be prepared to flout the double standard, before shifting to the even-more-troubling potential rebellion of the married woman, a figure previously held to be safe and secure because of her constrained and familiar place within a domestic context.

Kinsey published his report[6] to enormous media attention in August 1953; its main revelation was that fifty percent of Kinsey's sample of unmarried females were not virgins. If his group were representative of the American populace in general, this would then mean that half the nation's single women had become "experienced." The popular media began obsessing over this perceived "new" woman and her troublesome sexuality, prompting a wave of articles and investigations. By 1959, Nora Johnson, writing an article on "Sex and the College Girl" for the highbrow magazine *Atlantic Monthly*, noted, "The modern American woman is one of the most discussed, written-about, sore subjects to come along in ages. She has been said to be domineering, frigid, neurotic, repressed, and unfeminine. She tries to do everything at once and doesn't succeed in doing anything very well" (57). Around this time, Hollywood films also caught on to this figure, with the new woman provoking a mixture of anxiety, desire, and prurience by being prepared to flout the double standard, and such texts as *The Best of Everything*, *A Summer Place* (both 1959), *Where the Boys Are* (1960), *State Fair* (1962),

Sunday in New York, and *Under the Yum Yum Tree* (both 1963) brought the troubling, actively sexual, single young woman to the nation's screens. Yet perhaps the challenge presented to the status quo by the rebellious married young woman was even more potentially troubling.

By September 1962, when *Esquire* published Gloria Steinem's first piece of writing, "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Co-Ed," the author felt she could claim that sexual matters were now being handled far more maturely than in previous years because of advances in birth control. Steinem's article contradicts the traditional view of the decade under investigation here (1953–1963) as a time of female sexual timidness, asserting that the spirit of boldness with regards to sexual experimentation is not new. She writes, "Constant fear was hardly the condition prior to the pill in this country, but removing the last remnants of fear of social consequences seems sure to speed American women, especially single women, toward the view that their sex practices are none of society's business" (155). Though stressing a continuum of active female sexuality, Steinem here celebrates the recent advances in birth control. Specifically praising the increased responsibility for her own sexuality given a woman by the pill, Steinem also mentions the diaphragm as a viable birth control method. Significantly, both forms of contraception place the mechanisms of pregnancy prevention in the control of the woman, unlike the male condom. The idea of the woman safely indulging her passion is a very potent one as it negates the threat of inevitable punishment for sex that society had previously wielded at its female members. Without a child, the physical evidence of sexual relations, the woman's sexual status remains invisible, unreadable—and thus threatening.

Contemporary questionings and accounts of the new desirous female thus appeared during this period in texts as diverse as scientific reports, mainstream films, and popular periodicals both low- and highbrow. These various sources bring to the surface many of the contemporary anxieties and assumptions about normative sexual relations, including, fundamentally, that sex is something men want and women grant or withhold. Significantly, both issues are also central to *The Thrill of It All*, which intriguingly incorporates this traditional viewpoint within its narrative, but also subscribes to the contrary new idea that women want sex too.

The film thus adopts both the traditional view of the sexes' contrasting attitudes to sex, in showing Gerald Boyer trying to initiate intimacy with his wife while she evades his attentions, alongside the newer notion that women were as libidinous as men: on other occasions, Beverly is interested in sex as well. This clash between traditional assumptions and current assertions is crystallized on the film's promotional poster. In the photograph of the couple, the Boyers are seen reclining, facing each other as they prepare to kiss.[7] Both have one hand in full view, showing the first two

fingers crossed, in the traditional sign of making a wish. The tagline over their heads reads:

> She's hoping He's ready . . .
> He's wishing She's willing . . .

While Gerald's wish is the traditional one of a man for an acquiescent woman, her hope is portrayed in harmony with the contemporary figure of the desirous woman, seeking a partner prepared for action. This suggests the potential for his sexual failure as much as her sexual refusal: he hopes she *will* do it, she hopes he *can*. While the film does not pursue the possibility of sexual impotence in Gerald, at which the poster might seem to be hinting, it does devote time to tracing his feelings of emotional inadequacy once his wife begins not only to work outside the home, but to earn more than he does. Returning to the three incidents that reveal the terms of the Boyers' marriage, I now explore these feelings of inadequacy that prompt the actions Gerald takes in order to return to his accustomed state of mastery. Notably, these feelings revolve around, and set up parallels between, concerns over money, food, babies, and dirt.

THRILL'S IMAGERY SYSTEMS

The first of the incidents illuminating the dialectics of the relationship between Beverly and her husband occurs toward the beginning of the film, on the day when, having been told she is at last pregnant, Mrs. Fraleigh invites Gerald and his wife to dinner in gratitude. Gerald telephones to tell Beverly not to prepare dinner, but Andy, their son, does not deliver the message, and thus when Gerald arrives home to change into evening dress, he finds her in houseclothes rather than evening wear, putting the finishing touches on a large roast. Gerald nevertheless announces that they will go to the Fraleighs. Though Beverly protests, not wanting to waste "a six dollar and thirty-four cent standing rib roast," her husband insists. Beverly again mentions money as a reason not to go: she has given their live-in maid the evening off, and "paying a sitter a dollar an hour when we already have a housekeeper just seems a sin!" Gerald's response to this is significant: leaning seductively close to his wife, he tells her: "Bev, even the best of us sin every once in a while. Tonight's your night." The camera fastens on Beverly's facial expression: she absorbs this rejoinder, showing she has got the underlying message by winking. Simultaneously, the musical score underlines with a flourish the salacious nature of Gerald's line. He has offered a trade: if she gives up her annoyance at the wasted food, her nagging about money, he will give her sex. That Beverly is seen happily

agreeing to this deal demonstrates the film's displaying the new awareness of female sexual desires.

This connection between finance and autonomy recurs several times. For example, it is made very obvious that Beverly accepts the Happy Soap jobs so as to earn her own money and contribute to the family's finances. As the couple argue over her job, Gerald offers his definition of "our money": "*Our money* is what I earn by being a doctor. What you earn is yours." Beverly is not allowed to contribute to the family welfare with her earnings, but only with her labor within the household.[8] Cooking and childcare are made her career: a career that, in complete contrast to the advertising contract, has no salary attached to it. Beverly is thus meant to labor for her own keep. Although the film does not investigate her motives in wanting the money from the Happy Soap job, we can perhaps posit that it is not merely increasing the family's wealth that drives Beverly. As her husband notes, "It's not as if we needed the money." Beverly needs the money herself ("she" versus "we"), in order to feel that she has some control over her own life. When Gerald makes the decision to abandon the dinner Beverly has cooked, he assumes he has the right to do so because that "six dollar and thirty-four cent standing rib roast" has been purchased with *his* six dollars and thirty-four cents. Beverly has labored to turn the meat into a roast dinner, but she did not earn the money that paid for it. Her desire for a salary then seems not so much predicated on increasing the household coffers as giving herself the right to make decisions over what is eaten and what is left untasted.

This idea carries through into the second major incident that lays bare the relationship between Beverly and her husband. Again, themes of money, children, marriage, career, food, and dirt are intricately woven into a scene that at first appears merely to further the narrative and provide slapstick humor, but on closer examination reveals the very terms and terrain of the marriage being fought over by the Boyers.

In this scene, Beverly is visited by Mike, the Happy Soap executive, who has come to offer her a year's promotional contract. He finds Beverly in the cellar surrounded by baskets of tomatoes: she is bottling her own ketchup. Like the beef that she cooked and Gerald decided would go uneaten, the ketchup points up Beverly's position of inferiority in the marriage. This labor is decidedly unnecessary, since ketchup is an inexpensive product and could easily be bought ready-made. Furthermore, the shots of the Boyers' garden reveal no tomato plants; Beverly has therefore presumably had to purchase the tomatoes. Unlike the thrifty housewife of earlier times who bottled and preserved all possible crops to eke out the family's rations, to whom making ketchup was therefore just another instance of "waste not, want not," affluent Beverly is engaged in this task for mere "busy work." It is an invented task designed to fill the empty hours. This point is further highlighted when Gerald calls the ketchup-making one of Beverly's "hobbies." Not only does Beverly have no job outside the home that contributes a salary to the family, she also has no significant labor within the home that necessitates her presence there. Her time should therefore be free for hobbies, but Beverly has only the PTA and ketchup. In this she very much resembles the resentful and confused women that Betty Friedan wrote about, and for, in *The Feminine Mystique*, women whom it was assumed belonged in the home, even if it was supplied with so many labor-saving devices and assistants that they had nothing to do there:

> I've tried everything women are supposed to do—hobbies, gardening, pickling, canning, being very social with my neighbours, joining committees, running PTA teas. I can do it all, and I like it, but it doesn't leave you anything to think about—any feeling of who you are. . . . There's no problem you can even put a name to. But I'm desperate . . . I begin to feel I have no personality. (qtd. in Friedan 19)

The film rather overstates the case for the frustrated housewife by giving her nothing to occupy herself with but ketchup and the PTA. Faced with a choice of staying home to look after these matters, or going out to a job that puts her on television, on billboards, and in magazines, why would Beverly hesitate? Yet the film's conclusion returns her to the sterility of the former situation and can only suggest more sex and babies as a solution to her emptiness.

The film's ambivalence about Beverly's position in the marriage, whether she has the right to expect more, or whether Gerald rightly manipulates her back into her "proper" place in the home, is marked through the recurrence of symbolism around notions of dirtiness and cleanliness. To a certain intriguing extent, this imagery system might be contingent with Doris Day's star persona, as her being soaked—in water or mud—is a recurrent motif in her films.[9] As a *Life* magazine article published at the time of the film's release partly appreciated: "The formula: drench her in pools, tubs or suds" ("Tomato on Top" 106). This tendency becomes complicated by *Thrill*'s other imagery systems, however, when dirtiness is linked with money. It is significant that the tomatoes all over the Boyers' cellar may seem, from the scene's beginning, to be rife with possibilities for slapstick and messy humor, but Beverly only succumbs to the inevitable pratfall into a basketful at the moment when Mike mentions the huge salary Happy Soap would pay her. The implication seems clear: money makes Mommy dirty. The film continues this theme by showing Beverly increasingly unfit for her motherhood responsibilities through contact with commerce: as she gets better at delivering the live television spots, she gets worse at being at home during crises, which concomitantly multiply because of her absence.

If money makes Mommy dirty, then science makes Daddy clean, even though he delivers babies for a living and thus must be covered in afterbirth and blood on a daily basis. While *Thrill* is ambivalent about the constrictions of Beverly's life and whether or not she has any rights, it ultimately weights the case against these rights—to work, to make decisions, to an active sexuality—by making her husband not merely a professional, versus her amateur status, but in making his specialty obstetrics. She works to sell; he works to give life. Gerald Boyer's role as a baby doctor is vital to the film's paradoxical project of valorizing pregnancy and childbirth, while simultaneously downgrading motherhood. In *Thrill* it is male Dr. Boyer, not his wife, who produces babies. Woman's biological input has been demoted. Not only does the man deliver the babies, but he also seems to be in charge of when they come. From the first scene in which the couple argue over the uneaten beef, where Gerald boasts to Beverly how he "helped a woman become pregnant today," to the final moment when they have made up their quarrel because Beverly has resigned, it is Dr. Boyer who controls female reproduction in the film. Indeed, as another look at the beef scene confirms, Gerald seems to have the power not only to make other women pregnant through his professional advice, but also to keep Beverly from becoming so if he chooses. When he cajoles her to forget her annoyance over the wasted food, he promises her sex: "Tonight's your night." There is no implication here that a baby will result from this act, however. Gerald is not seeking to reward or punish Beverly to that extent at this point. However, in a later scene, when Gerald finds himself contrasting Mrs. Fraleigh's reverential attitude to children—"There's nothing more fulfilling in life than having a baby"—to his wife's careerist desires, he decides to put Beverly in the position of appreciating this. He gets his assistant to send Beverly flowers and make dinner reservations, in order to set up an evening of seduction. When the assistant queries, "Is it Mrs. Boyer's birthday?" the scheming doctor replies, "No, but it may be *somebody's*." Gerald can clearly be seen plotting to get his wife pregnant in order to return her to the home. He must therefore be able to control his own fertility, by which we can assume he would generally use a condom for contraceptive purposes. Remembering that *Thrill* appeared at a time when discussions about the increased availability of the pill and diaphragm were rife throughout the media, the film's insistence on Beverly's reproductive system being subject to Gerald's control appears as an act of almost hysterical nostalgia.

The Thrill of It All can thus be seen to emphasize the importance of male control both of motherhood (Gerald determines how many children his wife will have, and when) and of female sexual agency, using Gerald's status as an obstetrician to disguise the fact that it is his gender, not his professionalism, that gives him the right to decide when Beverly will conceive and, as another incident when he turns down her advances shows,

even have sex. Beverly can be reactive but not proactive sexually, as evinced in a scene in which, one rare evening when she is at home without commitments, she propositions Gerald: "What are you doing this evening? I'm baking you something special—with r-r-rum in it." Day's voice as she performs this line gives a sexy growl to the beginning of the word "rum," with Beverly offering to prepare a special meal to get her husband in the mood for sex. Here the film steps away again from traditional assumptions in the direction of then-new assertions about women's desires for sex, but the outcome of the scene suggests it does not endorse the woman openly suggesting intimacy: though Beverly suggests sex, Gerald rejects her, saying he is too busy. While within the narrative this rejection is depicted as part of Gerald's plan to imply he is having an affair, the scene still demonstrates the woman asking for, and the man denying her, sex, reversing the traditional trajectory of such conversations.

The final moment of key significance comes at the end of the film, when the Boyers return home after delivering Mrs. Fraleigh's baby together. Previously Gerald had told his children he could only keep babies when, as in their cases, Mommy had helped him bring them. His choice of wording—when Mommy *helps*—again underlines Gerald's perception of his own instrumental, and the woman's incidental, status to the birth. When Beverly and Gerald arrive home after their *rapprochement*, they find their own children waiting up, ready to insist they should have brought the child home: "When Mommy helps we get to keep the baby." At this point the film has Beverly embrace her own fate: although she was not present at the scene in which Andy, Maggie, and their father discussed keeping a new baby the next time their mother helped, she now joins in with the children's demands: "Yes, dear, a promise is a promise." Packing the children off to bed, she assures them that she and Daddy will discuss the matter, "tonight, if Daddy's not too tired." Beverly here signals to her husband her acceptance of male dominance within the sex act: her possible fatigue, having delivered a commercial and helped with the baby, is not of importance, since he will be doing all the hard work in their coupling while she remains passive below him. Furthermore, she is complicit in her husband's control of her sexuality and fertility when she asks for sex in a coded manner she can deem approved, since it will result in children rather than mere pleasure.

This rather distasteful ending, the children unwittingly cheering as their mother asks to be impregnated again, is augmented by the fact that the adultery plot has not been exploded. In previous Doris Day comedies, such as *Pillow Talk* and *Lover, Come Back*, much of the humor is derived from the male lead's plots against the dignity or chastity of the Day character, and from Day's reaction when she realizes she has been fooled. Her vengeance and his realization that he needs her then make up the final reel of the films. In *Thrill*, however, though the invention of "Gloria" seems to follow

Figure 3. The happy ending of *The Thrill of It All* (1963) mandates that Beverly (Doris Day) become pregnant again.

the same pattern—a subterfuge to which the audience is party while the Day character is not—there is a lack of resolution. "Gloria" is never mentioned again: Beverly does not recriminate the supposed affair, and Gerald does not confess she was merely a pretense to get her to resign. The stakes for which the couple are playing are too high to have an easy resolution; if Gerald were to explain that "Gloria" was a ruse to get Beverly back home long enough to impregnate her and thus ensure her television career was over, his wife would be so furious that there could be no simple closure for the film. Instead, a sacrifice has to be made, and it is Beverly who is making it even while she believes she is saving her marriage. The film ends as it began, with multicolored cartoon rockets exploding over the characters as the couple go upstairs to bed. At the beginning of the film, these rockets burst over Mr. and Mrs. Fraleigh as she announces her pregnancy, signifying joyful celebrations over the announcement of the baby; at the end, however, they underline again the importance of masculinist intervention in the home. Appearing this time before the pregnancy has been accomplished, the phallic rockets seem to evoke the ejaculation of sperm, thus stressing again the significance only of the male's contribution to conception.

CONCLUSION: BEING DADDY, DOING MOMMY

Thrill presents a tangled yet fascinating account of then-current views on a range of topics including the battle of the sexes, career wives versus careerist wives, female sexual agency and control, and backlash desires for male mastery.

While the film seems to close down Beverly's options, returning her to the home in the final scenes, it cannot erase, especially with this ending, the sense of emptiness and sterility in Beverly's life that it has evoked for most of its running time. *Thrill* thus can be seen endorsing Friedan's notions of the "problem that has no name"[10] at the same time as it attempts to deliver a comedy undermining the dissatisfaction of the housewives who suffered it.

The film weights the case against Beverly's career ambitions, even as it shows she only wants the money in order to have control of her own life, by making that career as inane and meretricious as advertising. Beverly's contact with the cleaning product makes her dirty, because she takes money for it, while her husband's career as a baby doctor is sanitized, the taint of dirtiness involved in dwelling in a world of blood and afterbirth erased because he brings new life into the world. As a doctor, Gerald is more than a man, he is a god, bringing life; Beverly's job, by contrast, involves her merely being what she is at home: a woman, subject to, and useful as an example of, her gender. The film becomes confused, however, when it tries condemning Beverly for being a mommy on television instead of at home, implying she is wrong to be talking about, instead of being at home doing, the housework. Scenes in the home have already shown there is little for her to do there: apart from cooking the roast and shampooing Maggie's hair, all of Beverly's chores are accomplished by the housekeeper, leaving her plenty of empty time to make ketchup. The film tries to combat this incoherent stance by insisting that there is a difference between the roles of each parent, that while the male's depends on ontology—*being* Daddy—the female's depends on praxis—*doing* the Mommy chores. This is made clear in several of the exchanges between the Boyers over her career, when he repeatedly demands she give up the job and "go back to being" the dutiful homebody. At one point the argument runs thus:

GERALD: Will you give up this asinine career and go back to being a wife?

BEVERLY: Go *back* to being a wife?

Her intonation implies that she has never left off being a wife; but wifehood, like motherhood, is seemingly more than ontology for the woman, it is a state of doing more than a state of being, so that if she is not there to cook, wash, shampoo kids, and be available for sex, she is no longer a mother and wife. At the conclusion of one of their endless job arguments, Beverly avers, "I won't let anything interfere with my wifely duties, I promise." Yet the film implies this is exactly what occurs; her presence in the studio removes her from the home where it is her wifely duty to linger, even if idle, in case someone in the family needs her.

Beverly is seen breaking this promise on the occasions when Gerald comes home amorous and cannot have sex with her because she is too busy, too surrounded by other people, or absent. Delivering the Fraleighs' baby supposedly helps Beverly appreciate her errors, and acknowledge that giving up her job is right: "I want to be a doctor's wife again." Yet what the film has shown us in the delivery scene is a woman who enjoys assisting at a birth: surely instead of "closeness" to her husband, a realization that she needs to rely on him for money, control, and decisions, Beverly could simply be happier with a career as a midwife. By setting up Beverly as a television seller of soap, the film intends to contrast her with her husband, pitting dirty commerce against sanctified new life, but the very excessiveness of this career ends up undercutting the intended impact of the polarization. Of course Beverly would become disenchanted with television advertising: her popularity rests on the fickle public and remains out of her control. A real career that she had trained for, instead of merely repeating on screen a role she performs off it, would give her much more satisfaction. As a television spokeswoman for Happy Soap—paradoxically a job that increasingly makes her unhappy—Beverly is enacting on-screen the roles she is supposed to perform in the home: being well-dressed, sunny, and looking after the family's clean clothes and bodies. That this is not sufficient employment for an adult woman is indicated at several key points in the film, even as it attempts to recruit audience support for returning Beverly to this employment. At one moment, Andy and Maggie come upon their mother in her bedroom, saying over and over, "Hello, I'm Beverly Boyer, and I'm a housewife." Her children quiz her, asking if she really needs to practice her name. This hints at the emptiness in the housewife role that erodes a woman's sense of identity.

Further, when the couple argue over whether making ketchup is a sufficient hobby, a small detail of stage business hints at the film's awareness of the contemporary hoopla about the unhappy, dissatisfied housewife. Countering Beverly's pro-job arguments, Gerald asserts, "Our bank balance is healthy. There's no reason for you to work." This evokes a sarcastic response from Beverly, who picks up a magazine triumphantly: "Dr. Boyer, you are a fraud!" Day then seems to ad lib as she turns the pages of the magazine until she finds the section she wants. "Oohh! I've got you now, dear! I've got you now—right here. And I quote: 'In some cases, household duties—important as they are—are not sufficient to gratify a woman's desire for expression. Mrs. America might do well to start early in her marriage a planned cultivation of outside interests and hobbies.' " Before *The Feminine Mystique*'s full publication, Betty Friedan had pre-published two sections as magazine articles, in *Mademoiselle* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. Here the film shows its awareness of this contemporary media milieu by having Gerald write a similar piece. It seems both ironic that he should be declaring in favor of the "planned cultivation of outside interests" that the film shows him trying to prevent, and somewhat unlikely that a magazine would ask an obstetrician to comment on the then-perceived Woman Problem. Perhaps the film, in making Gerald the author of the article, is attempting to confirm again his status as a professional, a medical man whose opinion is significant, even while his specialty lies elsewhere than psychology and his real reason for being granted supremacy is his gender. By acknowledging the contemporary debate about unfulfilled housewives, but then, finally, suggesting that fulfillment could only come by being fully filled with babies, *Thrill* both contributes to and contests then-current debates over female reproductive and sexual autonomy.

NOTES

1. "In [this], as usual, Doris is a slightly nutty, refreshing-to-look-at girl, stunningly turned out and relentlessly pursued by wolf packs of panting males through decidedly risqué dialogue and situations" ("The Tomato on Top" 104).

2. *Thrill* "was at its merriest when it was spoofing television" ("*Move Over, Darling*").

3. "Happy housewife heroine" refers to the title and subject of Friedan's second chapter.

4. For example: "The major part of the film . . . is an exhilarating and hilarious gallop" (Clark and Simmons 68).

5. This subtitle alludes to Helen Gurley Brown's 1962 best-selling book, *Sex and the Single Girl*, which celebrated the unmarried woman. The book did not criticize wives (seeing, in fact, marriage as the ultimate goal of the single girl), but instructed the unmarried on how both to have a good time and become irresistible, while waiting for "Him" to come along.

6. This detailed the sexual attitudes and practices of his sample, which was made up of 5,431 unmarried white thirty-year-old females.

7. A spatial arrangement implies that they are on a double bed, although neither this bed nor the scene actually features in the film itself.

8. I find an interesting parallel with this notion in Kathleen McHugh's *American Domesticity*, where she discusses several maternal melodramas; in films such as *Imitation of Life* (1934) and *Mildred Pierce* (1945), "housework becomes 'not work' in relation to the 'work' that earns a living." This seems to be the case even if the work that earns a living is the performance of housework, or the talking about it, on television (132).

9. For example, Day falls full-length in mud in *Calamity Jane* (1953) and *Jumbo* (1962) and appears in water in *Pillow Talk*, and *Move Over, Darling* (1963) as well as *Thrill*.

10. This refers to the title of the first chapter in *The Feminine Mystique* (see Friedan 13).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clark, Jane, and Diane Simmons. *Move Over Misconceptions: Doris Day Reappraised.* BFI Dossier No. 4. London: British Film Institute, 1980.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique.* 1963. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

Gurley Brown, Helen. *Sex and the Single Girl.* New York: Bernard Geis, 1962.

Johnson, Nora. "Sex and the College Girl." *Atlantic Monthly* (November 1959): 56–60.

Kinsey, Alfred C., et al. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female.* Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders, 1953.

McHugh, Kathleen Anne. *American Domesticity: From How-to Manual to Melodrama.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Meyerowitz, Joanne, ed. *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Post-War America, 1945–1960.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

Morris, George. *Doris Day. Pyramid Illustrated History of the Movies.* New York: Pyramid, 1976.

"*Move Over, Darling.*" *Motion Picture Herald* (25 December 1963): 953.

Steinem, Gloria. "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Co-Ed." *Esquire* (September 1962): 97, 153–157.

The Thrill of It All. Dir. Norman Jewison. Universal, 1963.

The Thrill of It All Press Book. Consulted in the British Film Institute Library, London, UK.

The Thrill of It All Script. Consulted in the British Film Institute Library, London, UK.

"The Tomato on Top Is Doris." *Life* (27 September 1963): 104–106.

THREE

NOT EXACTLY ACCORDING TO THE RULES

Pregnancy and Motherhood in *Sugar & Spice*

MADONNE M. MINER

These are the best days of your life—so far.

—Diane, *Sugar & Spice*

For many white, middle-class, teenage girls, marriage and motherhood constitute major components in dreams for the future. Diane Weston (Marley Shelton), heroine of Francine McDougall's 2001 film, *Sugar & Spice*, captain of the A-squad cheerleaders and "a poster child for high school" (as described by the character Lisa), agrees, but gets the components out of order; not long into the film we learn that Diane intends to marry her boyfriend Jack Bartlett (James Marsden), quarterback for the Lincoln High football team and homecoming king, but not until after she bears their baby. Interestingly, it is the "taking" or heist of Diane's body by pregnancy (Diane cannot control her morning sickness, mood swings, expanding waistline, and gas outbursts) that prompts a more conventional heist narrative in *Sugar & Spice*. Recognizing that love alone is not going to provide a future for her family, Diane determines that to realize her version of the American Dream she needs far more money than she can make working part-time at a branch bank located in the local supermarket. Taking a cue from *Point Break* (1991), a heist film in which Bodhi (Patrick Swayze) and his surfing