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**Hollywood Undead:  
The Posthumous Star as Commercial and  
Consumer Product**

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*Please don't make me look like a joke*

Marilyn Monroe in a taped recording for *Life*, 1962 –

Her final interview.

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## **Abstract**

Posthumous star theory today, following scholar Gilbert B. Rodman (1996), continues a focus on a singular star's continued presence within a fan culture and/or a star's political resonance. This thesis, however, analyses the commercial exploitation of a posthumous star and exposes a hierarchical structure in the "after-market". Specifically, I examine the tropes and changes of four posthumous stars within advertising. I have chosen Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, and Audrey Hepburn to be the focus of this work due to their proven longevity in a consumer market.

Advertising is a rich site for exploring star brands and consumer messaging, and is particularly important in reference to the preferred reading of a posthumous star as dictated and approved by a star's estate. Consumer behaviour and interests are identifiable through the highly controlled renditions of a posthumous star, and thus, further exposes stardom as a way in which to guide and encourage the construction of identity through consumer goods.

Expanding on recent work on star brands, I analyse reoccurring methods which pervade these stars' images and which attempt to heighten relevancy and relatability. Comparison between these posthumous stars affords insight into what enables both continued legacy and marketability. The thesis also sheds light on the Fifties' prevalence in consumer culture and the nostalgia market, suggesting the success of these case study stars is in part due to a modern conception of a past era.

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## **Chapter 1: Literature Review, Parameters, and Terminology**

## 1.1 Introduction

In 2017, I delivered a lecture on digital cinema for a first year undergraduate course. In an attempt to explore the abilities of the medium, I concluded the lecture with an example of the regenerative possibilities of CGI for an ageing or dead actor. Using a Snickers commercial from 2016 (Figure 1), I asked the eighty students in attendance whether they had previously heard of, or could recognise, the star on the screen. All of the students raised a hand, confirming an overwhelming consensus in the recognition of Marilyn Monroe. Interested in the students' engagement and understanding of the star, I asked all students whom had watched a Monroe film to keep a hand raised. Only five hands remained. Of those five students I then asked if any of those films were *The Seven Year Itch* (Billy Wilder, 1955). Surprisingly, the answer was no. The students had not seen the film with the iconic white dress, nor could the cohort identify the source of the image. The students, therefore, knew the image of Marilyn Monroe, but not the work of the star. They recognised the image from *The Seven Year Itch*, but not the film itself.



Figure 1: Snickers, 2016<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the 'List of Illustrations' for all relevant copyright information. All images in this thesis are property of the film studios or advertising companies. No breach is intended by their

Similarly, a newsagent's shop in Kent, also in 2017, sold Audrey Hepburn socks and calendars. The socks in particular garnered attention from a customer, but despite the consumer's interest it was unclear if *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Blake Edwards, 1961), the famous image featured on the sock, played a role in the desire for the item. The increased presence of posthumous star advertisements and products in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, such as Hepburn's continued role in a Galaxy commercial (2013-2017), or Marilyn Monroe inspired knitwear by Gerard Dorel in 2010, suggests there is value<sup>2</sup> and marketability in Hollywood's dead famous. However, the plethora of merchandise and advertising which feature the aforementioned stars are not necessarily made or targeted to fans. Instead, these star images have become ubiquitous and are applied to even the most mundane and unrelated objects. Audrey Hepburn's image on socks, or Marilyn Monroe's image on an ironing board cover (Figure 2), logically, do not correspond with our knowledge of these stars' image or persona. Marilyn Monroe, for example, is not known for domesticity, nor Hepburn for wearing long socks under her ballet shoes (pumps) or kitten heels. The appropriations detailed above are exploitative and seemingly strains the relationship between object and star image, and yet, in many cases the commercial use of an image is approved by a star's estate.

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reproduction, which is conducted in the spirit of the Fair Use policy of the Society of Cinema and Media Studies:

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<sup>2</sup> The thesis, which analyses posthumous advertising in detail, will provide more examples of marketing campaigns throughout the research. However, there are more examples of famous products which feature the four case study stars. Marilyn Monroe alone, for example, has four shades of Marilyn Monroe Lipstick by Max Factor (2016), a Dolce & Gabbana line (2009-2010), a Macy's collection (2013), the Three Olives' Marilyn Monroe Strawberry Vodka (2013), Will Rich shoes (2013), and a Bed and Bath towel line (2013). Additionally, the star has had her own spa franchise since 2016, and a children's television show entitled *Mini Marilyn* (Arlen Konopaki, 2017). This of course does not include the unofficial appropriations of her image on commodity products, nor the frequent biopics or references to her in popular culture. Posthumous star research is therefore larger than this thesis alone, and will be discussed within the further research section of this thesis.



Figure 2: an iron board cover sold on Amazon.co.uk

A star estate's willingness to mould and adapt to a product or consumer brand, however, does not sufficiently explain how a star resonates in popular culture, nor how a star can encourage consumerism long after death. Instead, I pose that there are inherent qualities in the narrative and/or persona of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Audrey Hepburn, and James Dean, which enable a multitude of consumerist messaging, both throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but more notably in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As the aforementioned examples suggest, this thesis focuses on the appropriation of the case study stars in a consumer market. Specifically, it analyses advertising campaigns throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century which contain explicit reference and/or the indexical image of the case study stars. The originality of this work, therefore, is the exploration of posthumous stardom as commerce and the methods in which a large corporation can achieve relevancy and relatability through the use of a posthumous star image and brand.

To further enhance the originality of this work, I pose a new methodology in which to categorise and explore the complexity of posthumous stardom. Firstly, the posthumous star hierarchy explores the commercial presence of dead Hollywood stars in today's consumer market to acknowledge that not all posthumous stars are revered equally, or more importantly, are not as commercially viable or attractive in today's consumer market. Secondly, I suggest a method in which to analyse the two top tiers

of the aforementioned hierarchy. Each case study star, I argue, has an openness in which to generate associations and meaning, and whilst nuanced and changeable over time, these associations are nevertheless available to be mined for meaning for a multitude of commercial ventures. Lastly, I pose four categories in which all of the case study stars can be rendered and given a narrative in both popular and consumer culture. These categories are separated by two fundamental theories impacting the construction of meaning. Authenticity and nostalgia theory aid the analysis and provide a method in which to understand the prevalence of the case study stars, but more importantly, these theories enhance the understanding of how large companies use a variety of methods in which to “sell” a posthumous star to a consumer.

The rise of nostalgia in Western culture since the 1970s (a topic discussed in chapter three), and Western society’s captivation with celebrity culture, has allowed posthumous stars further prominence both in the consumer market and in popular culture. For example, in season one of HBO’s *Big Little Lies* (David E. Kelley, 2017 - ), the residents of Monterey, California attend a fundraiser for a local school. The announcement of the year’s theme by Principal Nippal (P.J. Byrne) serves as an illumination, albeit fictional, of the prevalence of posthumous stars in contemporary culture. Nippal states:

Now, given the unprecedented success of last year’s Trivia Night with the theme “Dead Celebrities”, we’ve decided to come back again with yet another costume gala – this year titled “Elvis and Audrey night.” (*Big Little Lies*, episode three)

The dialogue delivered by the Principal elucidates two fundamental elements of posthumous stardom. Firstly, “Dead Celebrities” are popular and can even be used as a theme for an event, suggesting a multitude of functions and fascinations with the dead famous based on repeatable iconography, characters (or in this case personas),

and implicit ideology. A Western theme, for example, would repeat certain iconography (gun, hat, etc.), include characters such as the cowboy or saloon singer, and deliver a coherent message using the implicit ideology of the film genre such as American exploration and “manliness”. The ability to use “Dead Celebrities” as a theme suggests an image/persona is able to anchor communication in a similarly accessible way.

Secondly, Nippal’s choice to re-focus the event to only include two posthumous stars indicates a hierarchy of success. Elvis and Audrey, as suggested by this show, are important/interesting enough to be the sole stars of the event. The stars’ images are seemingly perceived by Nippal to be both vast and identifiable, and thus, are adaptable for a large event. In the final episode of season one, Nippal is shown to be correct as the residents of Monterey, when styled after Elvis Presley, choose key iconic “looks” such as the *'68 Comeback Special* (Steve Binder, 1968) leather jumpsuit, the *Blue Hawaii* (Norman Taurog, 1961) shirt, the *Jailhouse Rock* (Richard Thorpe, 1957) striped top, and a 1970’s jumpsuit.<sup>3</sup> “Dead Celebrities”, as shown by *Big Little Lies*, are popular, but more importantly, the show suggests a certain echelon of stars are appropriated and manipulated with greater ease.

The way in which the case study stars are both exploited and contained<sup>4</sup> is of fundamental importance to this thesis. By viewing posthumous stars as brands, this research embraces the strain of star studies which attempts to expose the commerce

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<sup>3</sup> There are an array of famous white jumpsuits, but perhaps the most famous is the ‘1973 American Eagle’ worn by Elvis in *Aloha From Hawaii* (Marty Pasetta, 1973). The event and jumpsuit is significant to Presley’s career due to the show’s use of live broadcasting. The new use of satellite transmission allowed Presley to be viewed simultaneously in 40 countries, and thus, furthered Presley’s association with innovation and gave Presley a new way to reach audiences, particularly as a star that did not tour internationally.

<sup>4</sup> The use of the word ‘contained’ refers to an estate’s desire to maintain a certain narrative regarding a star.

of stardom. In *Hollywood Stardom* (2013), for example, Paul McDonald discusses the business function of stardom, and it is this type of analysis which this thesis is most closely aligned. In contrast, star studies as an area of research has previously preferred symbolic star analysis, focusing on what a star ‘means’ rather than how a star functions as both a consumer brand and as a method in which to imbue value across numerous commercial markets.

Additionally, posthumous stardom, an area of star studies which is gaining traction within the field, has yet to have a full analysis regarding the commercial use of a star brand. Instead, posthumous star studies has adhered to a sociological and fan studies approach to understanding the continued legacy of dead Hollywood stars. For example, *Lasting Screen Stars* (2016), an edited collection which contains chapters on the perseverance of some posthumous stars, focuses on the longevity and/or cultural resonance of individual stars within a fan community and/or popular culture. Within the work there is no acknowledgement of the varying degrees of cultural presence, and more importantly to this thesis, very little on commercial exploitation.

Equally, posthumous star theory, such as Gilbert B. Rodman’s *Elvis After Elvis* (1996) or Lucy Bolton’s ‘#Marilyneveryday: The Persistence of Marilyn Monroe as a Cultural Icon’ (2015), focus on a star’s continued presence/myth within a fan and/or popular culture, and thus does not fully explore the business function of posthumous stardom, nor the various methods in which a star image can be manipulated for commercial profit. Additionally, S. Paige Baty’s *American Monroe* (1995) analyses Marilyn Monroe’s political resonance and thus does not interrogate the central business function of Monroe’s star image and persona. Like much star theory, posthumous star studies often attempts to discern what a singular star ‘means’ by attempting to deconstruct myth, the importance of youth, and the role of tragedy to

theorise how a posthumous star can have a seemingly ever-lasting presence. This thesis, however, adds to the existing literature by exposing the commercial exploitation of posthumous stardom. Secondly, by analysing the methods in which a star is sold as a commodity, the work also further expands knowledge regarding the business function of stardom. Lastly, by refusing to focus on a singular case study, this work draws conclusions previously unavailable to posthumous star theory due to its ability to contrast and track tropes, and thus the thesis offers some key definitions and examples of how posthumous stardom, rather than an individual star, functions within today's consumer culture.

As suggested above, the singular case study approach lends itself to the symbolic study of a star. Therefore, this thesis aims to correlate tropes and changes by using four stars of equal "calibre" to identify both the methods in which a consumer is "sold" a star, and the principal areas which allow the case study stars to be more successful than other posthumous stars. Additionally, due to the interest in commerce over fandom, this thesis will not consider the way in which each case study star is discussed by various communities, but instead, much like the first example from this introduction, is interested how the case study stars function in an advertisement and resonate beyond an interest in the stars' work.

Legally, stars of any kind cannot be shown to endorse a product without consent, therefore, advertising for commercial products are sanctioned and represent a constructed image free of fandom and are strictly aligned with commerce. Posthumous stars in advertising, of course, is not the only example of commercial use. Holograms at concerts and Marilyn Monroe Spas<sup>TM</sup> etc. are estate sanctioned, and thus, the approach in the thesis can be applied to any posthumous star that is used for commercial gain or influence, or indeed as a method to correlate other commercial



depictions of the chosen case study stars (for example, by comparing Marilyn Monroe advertisements with Mini Marilyn™).

Advertising, although strictly aligned to commerce and thus the best source to draw conclusions regarding the business function of stardom, was not without careful consideration, particularly due to the historical nature of this work. Paper sources have been chosen to analyse tropes throughout each decade due to the continued presence of this type of advertising. However, advertising is often disregarded and not saved, and thus 1970s adverts were difficult to access. Despite some difficulty obtaining or clarifying the presence of the case study stars in 1970s advertising, the thesis does present every decade from the 1980s in its findings. The sources have been verified through databases and any adverts which could not be found through databases or magazines have not been included. As a result, I have produced a piece which may not include every advert in existence, but does attempt to draw conclusions from official advertising. In addition to paper sources, the thesis also analyses video commercials to present a full scope of the different types of advertising present in today's consumer culture.

To conclude this section of the thesis, the study of stardom's function in the commercial market exposes, much like in living stardom, a hierarchical structure of financial success and cultural presence. The four case study stars featured in this thesis often appear in advertisements and frequent Forbes' list of posthumous earners, and thus, continue to both operate within consumer culture and create new content and associations. My analysis and construction of a hierarchy within posthumous stardom, therefore, attempts to stratify the stars' cultural relevancy using the frequency with which the stars appear in commercial advertising campaigns. As stated previously, it is the ability to be recognised/identifiable to a diverse consumer base which

differentiates the case study stars from many beloved posthumous contemporaries, and thus, posthumous fame is far more complex than formerly theorised.

## 1.2 Outline of Chapters

The remainder of *Chapter One* begins by exploring scholarly research that has been influential to the thinking within the fields of stardom, authenticity, and nostalgia. Firstly, the star theory used in this thesis centres on the analysis of the business function of stardom, however, the literature review does acknowledge the importance of theory regarding star-as-text and a star's cultural function in society. This method has been chosen due to the clear cultural impact made during each star's lifetime, and to ignore this element of star theory entirely would restrict the comprehension of each star's construction. Secondly, the analysis of authenticity and nostalgia is integral to understanding the methods 21<sup>st</sup> Century advertisers employ to "sell" the case study stars. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as shown in *Chapter Three's* exploration of tropes and trends, contains the largest amount of posthumous advertising, and thus, the aforementioned theoretical concepts require some deconstruction to accurately show the methods of manipulation used by contemporary brands.

*Chapter One* continues by defining the thesis' parameters, and in particular, outlines the restrictions applied to the project to aid the manageability of the research. Placed in this portion of the chapter (rather than the introduction), the parameters attempt to remind the reader of the thesis' goals before the analysis begins, and thus, endeavours to provide a clear transition between previous scholarly research and the argument of this thesis. Furthermore, it is here that a small glossary resides, a space in which I define my own use of previous star studies lexicon and introduce my own contribution to the field's terminology. All of my own additions will be in italics in an attempt to be academically transparent and accessible, but also as an anticipatory aid for the work and its conclusion.

The analysis of posthumous stardom cannot commence without acknowledgement of each star's original construction. *Chapter Two*, therefore, begins by exploring the decade in which the case study stars originate. Knowledge of 1950s American society is integral to the understanding of each star's importance (both to the 1950s and today), and thus the position of this chapter serves as a base for the remainder of the thesis. Contentious 1950s concerns regarding sexuality, gender, and race, were explored through the case study stars during this decade, and thus, I argue the stars' unconventional approach during this time period has led to the stars' significance in popular culture. Contradictorily, then, the case study stars are important to today's conception of the Fifties because they did not fit with 1950s' ideals. To enable this argument, the thesis continues by deconstructing key film performances from the beginning of each star's career. This method has been chosen to show a direct correlation between early star construction, and the formation of contradiction.

Of course, scholars such as Richard Dyer<sup>5</sup> have commented on the impact which popular culture has on a star's contradiction<sup>6</sup>. However, in this chapter I expose multiple areas in which each star became a type of rebellious figure, and as a result, posed a threat to 1950s conventions. This is an important and interesting facet to cover in this thesis as I posit the case study stars, despite becoming figureheads of the "safe" and "pure" past, remain relevant because the issues the stars exposed in the 1950s have still not been resolved today. Therefore, the original star construction forms a base in which we understand a star's importance during the 1950s, but more

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<sup>5</sup> For Richard Dyer's argument on a star's contradiction and popular culture see *Heavenly Bodies* (2004).

<sup>6</sup> Contradiction refers to the conflicting values a star might represent. For example, the smart-dumb blonde or the sweet-tough guy.

importantly, it aids the analysis of how a star is appropriated in the decades following a star's death.

To conclude *Chapter Two*, the thesis dedicates a sub-chapter to the examination of each star's estate. The inclusion of this information, again, is for academic transparency<sup>7</sup> and an acknowledgement that all commercial use of the case study stars has been legally approved. It is a reminder that the thesis does not analyse fandom, and thus, the version of the stars that are exhibited in this research are controlled and manipulated by corporations and brands. Finally, it recognises the estates' "preferred" rendering of the case study stars, and thus partially explains the repeated narratives and the lack of unsavoury star representations in advertising.

An understanding of the original star construction enables the comprehension of *Chapter Three*. This section of the thesis, which focuses on the tropes, trends, and alterations made to a star image/persona throughout multiple decades, aims to show how a star is adapted to "fit" the concerns of the time period in which an advertisement appears. However, each decade, despite alterations to the star image, do also have similarities in star representation, and thus the chapter illuminates which elements of a star can be made adaptable, and which components must remain present for a posthumous star to function successfully in advertising.

Starting in the 1950s, the chapter assesses the methods used in star advertising during this decade to further the knowledge gained in *Chapter Two*. It is in this first section that the thesis acknowledges the change to the advertising medium more

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<sup>7</sup> Academic transparency in this case refers to my awareness that it is not simply the time period (80s, 90s, 2000s +) which impacts the construction of a posthumous image and persona. The estate sub-section has been added to this chapter because the estates seem to prefer the earlier star representations, and thus, are aiding the remembrance (albeit an often "cleaner" version) of rebellion and contradiction.

generally to ensure the reader that stylistic changes to the medium (the fading presence of copy, for example), while noted, are not read as a direct alteration to a star's representation. Instead, the thesis is interested in the type of pictures, slogans, or signatures which are used to convey a message about a star to the consumer. Again, this will, in part, be informed by design tastes of a particular decade. However, by beginning with star advertising of the 1950s, the thesis aims track the evolution of the posthumous star not through the quantity of copy (for example), but through the lexicon which is used in association with the posthumous star, starting with how each star was perceived and "sold" during a star's lifetime.

The subsequent sub-sections (1980s, 1990s, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) build upon each other to enable a clear trajectory, and as a result, exposes both the alterations to the star image/persona and the increase in posthumous advertising over time. The chapter concludes with the graphical representation of the trends discussed in the preceding sub-sections to show which techniques were used consistently in posthumous marketing, and which methods were decade specific. More precisely, and through the conclusion's graphs, this section reveals the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's fascination with posthumous star advertising and the two stars which dominate the posthumous star market.

The analysis of *Chapter Three* highlights the heightened interest in posthumous stardom in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Therefore, *Chapter Four and Five* continues the interrogation into the methods employed by advertisers to fully comprehend how and why posthumous stars are successfully appropriated for today's most popular consumer brands. Through a close analysis of the video commercials produced in the past two decades, the thesis deconstructs the two main modes which pervade

posthumous star commercials and aid the manipulation of the contemporary consumer.

*Chapter Four* focuses on the use of authenticity in contemporary advertising. The research analyses star history and star narrative in particular to deconstruct advertisers' attempt to show the "real" star. I use my own theory on the reconstruction of star narrative in biopics to assist the argument, and as a result, highlight a potential underlining theory on posthumous representation beyond advertising. Therefore, as well as deconstructing how a star and brand is made "real", the work hopes to show an avenue for future research.

*Chapter Five* expands upon the work of the previous chapter, exploring how both the authentic and inauthentic can be rendered nostalgic as a method to influence a consumer. Using my reconstruction theory, I analyse the role of the idealistic Fifties and its influence on posthumous star representation, arguing that idealism and key iconic images "soften" and make "safe" the rebellion the stars represented in the 1950s, and thus, ensure that the stars represent a "simpler" version of discourses that still continue today.

### **1.3 Stardom as a Business and Cultural Product**

The literature review, divided into three key areas of research, will begin by exploring scholarly research that has been influential to the field of star studies. In particular, the first sub-section will centre on the function of stardom by exploring the term “star” and its conflation with the definition of a “celebrity”. Focusing on previous work regarding commerce, the literature review continues by deconstructing concepts which are connected to bankability and popularity to show both scholarly insight and the complexity of star research. The conclusion of the sub-section correlates previous star studies inquiry with academic work on posthumous stardom, and therefore, identifies key gaps in the literature of posthumous stardom.

To begin, the sub-section will explore how members of the film industry measure success and attribute levels of stardom.<sup>8</sup> This is necessary due to the inconsistent use of the term “star” and “celebrity” in the media and within public discourse. As Paul McDonald correctly asserts when discussing the Internet Movie Database: ‘potentially accommodating everyone in a film as a star, [...] does not provide ground for understanding Hollywood stardom’ (McDonald 2013: 19). Through analysing both industry practice and scholarly star theory, this thesis will illuminate the requirement for a star hierarchy to establish the differing cultural significances of famous performers. Equally, it will show that posthumous stardom does not adhere to the definitions of stardom that have been provided by scholars, and nor can posthumous stardom be defined through the current star hierarchies or “Legends” lists compiled by film institutions such as the American Film Institute.

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<sup>8</sup> There are multiple methods in which to attribute levels of stardom. A scholar or industry member could use The Ulmer Scale, the Quigley Poll, or the Forbes Celebrity 100.



Paul McDonald's *Hollywood Stardom* (2013) postulates that there is an intermixture of terminology between "star" and "celebrity", and aims to rectify this through the use of a star hierarchy. For instance, the word "star" has been used for both Paris Hilton (my example) as a reality TV star/socialite/entrepreneur, and Emma Stone (my example) as an Oscar-winning movie star. McDonald posits that there is a difference in terms of quality and labour within the entertainment industry, and thus, using the term "star" in both cases does not adequately separate the two people, inaccurately portraying their cultural status and worth<sup>9</sup> in the entertainment business. Reality TV personalities are, of course, beneficial to media businesses and audiences' interpretation of society. It is imperative that scholars, therefore, are careful in defining the importance of individuals based on the conception of low and high brow culture. The term "celebrity" should not be a derogatory term (and McDonald certainly does not use it in this way), but a method in which to aid a hierarchical understanding of labour, talent, and resulting profit.

*Hollywood Stardom* comments on both the method used by Hollywood casting directors (Janet Hirshenson and Jane Jenkins) and the Ulmer scale to assess star categorisation, a method used in the film industry to rank actors based on bankability.<sup>10</sup> Upon analysing the categories presented in *Hollywood Stardom*, it is clear that the term "celebrity" is similar to Hirshenson and Jenkin's 'Name' (McDonald 2013:21-22). 'Names' are well-known, but are not the sole marketable entities of a film, for example, Kirsten Dunst (my example). Often in a secondary role in a big feature film, Kirsten Dunst is instead most likely to be the lead of an independent or art film. Her presence in an independent film may secure funding, but

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<sup>9</sup> Worth here relates to the financial investment and return a star may symbolise.

<sup>10</sup> Bankability refers to whether a star can raise the financing of a film based on the star's name.

does not have the level of box office success that could help sell a pitch and secure funding for a blockbuster.

It should be noted that celebrities also have varying degrees of fame,<sup>11</sup> and those at the height of a career, such as Kim Kardashian, can secure funding for a variety of television ventures. It is questionable, however, whether fictional film productions would finance Kardashian in the same way as television, and thus, it is not that she is not known (arguably, she is the most famous woman in the Western world), but whether there would be a question of labour and talent that would hinder potential appeal and bankability. The term ‘Name’, therefore, could be replaced with “celebrity”: a person of appeal that can generate some finance and exhibits talent and/or appears within gossip sites.

The levels of casting are extensive, and thus, this literature review is only going to further analyse “stars”, as defined by the Ulmer scale.<sup>12</sup> In the middle of this hierarchy is the ‘B+ List’, such as Drew Barrymore, these actors are deemed as marketable entities because of audience interest combined with a moderate box-office success. This category is topped by the ‘A-List’, such as George Clooney, where a star’s confirmation to play a role in a film could guarantee funding. Lastly, at the top of the Ulmer scale is the ‘A-Plus List’, such as Tom Cruise, a star that can almost guarantee a profit. Women, according to the Ulmer Scale, rarely rise above the A-List<sup>13</sup> and the placement of any actor on a list could fluctuate, meaning that even this

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<sup>11</sup> To further improve terminology, a categorisation system should be developed by a celebrity scholar to mirror that of the Ulmer scale.

<sup>12</sup> The Ulmer scale assesses 200 actors and is completed by industry professionals. This is achieved by comparing actors’ bankability. The list is as follows: C, B, B+, A, and A+.

<sup>13</sup> Women in Hollywood have often been paid less than their male counterparts and also rarely have the opportunity to play a leading role. Women’s main star restrictions, according to James Ulmer is due to factors such as, women are more bankable as ensemble casts, not as leads; value lies in domestic, rather than overseas markets, and finally, ageism (Ulmer 2000: 22).

categorisation is imperfect. However, it does begin to align stardom with a method of categorisation, albeit aligned with the notion of bankability.<sup>14</sup>

Bankability, however, becomes problematic when we consider an actor that no longer works, yet was, and is still referred to as a star. For instance, Elizabeth Taylor was considered a star a year before her death,<sup>15</sup> and arguably, continues to be thought of as one today. The transformation to the word “legend”<sup>16</sup> during her retirement complicates our terminology, but shows that popularity via film sales is only one factor in a list of various, but debatable, proofs of star status. Martin Shingler aligns stardom as ‘proven popularity with large numbers of moviegoers and the extent to which that sizeable audience can be predicted’ (Shingler 2012: 95). However, a star has to become popular to begin with, and thus, does not accurately define which qualities enable one to become a star. Stardom is a process that culminates in popularity, and therefore cannot be the only determinant of stardom. This is the case with stars such as Elizabeth Taylor, for example, without a product (in this case a movie) or an audience, popularity cannot be predicted. Posthumous stardom, therefore, requires a new set of determiners if we are to accept the premise that a “star” equals proven box-office success.<sup>17</sup>

Posthumous stardom is an area of star theory that proves a star can be successful and popular without recent box-office success. This thesis, therefore, will

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<sup>14</sup> The Ulmer Scale does use additional categories to aid with assessment, for example, a willingness to travel & promote, career management, professionalism, and talent.

<sup>15</sup> Media outlets in particular refer to Taylor as a ‘star’, for example, *The Telegraph’s* discussion of Taylor’s Twitter presence (Merry 2011: online).

<sup>16</sup> Media outlets often refer to Taylor as a ‘legend’, for example, *The Guardian’s* discussion of Taylor’s potential ninth marriage (Shoard 2010: online).

<sup>17</sup> A scholar could argue that a posthumous star did have proven success, and thus, does still sit in the “star” category. This, however, would also be a problematic argument. The Ulmer scale is fluid, and thus, should a star lose bankability, they would move down the scale. Once they retire, a question arises: would our definition of a “star” rely on what the star became, or at the star’s highest point? If the latter, it would suggest definitions are also retroactive.

extend McDonald's use of the Ulmer scale (e.g. the understanding that stars operate in a hierarchy) by forming my own for stars that are no longer living (to be found in 1.6). McDonald's proposed category for dead stars, "star legend", is classified as a group of stars that have/had an 'enduring longevity of film fame' (McDonald 2013: 33), but this does not accurately represent the plethora of dead actors from Classic Hollywood and the stars' varying degrees of film fame and/or continued cultural presence. For example, Bette Davis is still revered as a great actress and her estate is active on social media. In contrast, Marilyn Monroe is present on merchandise, advertising, social media, as well as being subject of multiple biopics. Both stars have 'enduring longevity of film fame', but how each star operates as a popular text in contemporary culture is very different, and thus, deserves its own hierarchal deconstruction and extensive analysis.<sup>18</sup>

A posthumous star is a popular text, a term defined by cultural theorists as something that can penetrate the masses consciousness. In *Understanding Popular Culture* (1991) and *Reading Popular Culture* (1995), John Fiske suggests one of the most important features of a popular text is contradiction. A successful text, for Fiske, must have a 'polysemic openness' (Fiske 1991: 30). He suggests that an audience/society prefers a text that he/she can construct meaning from or add additional meaning to. The openness of a text means that the subject is not clearly defined and that these 'contradictions require the productivity of the reader to make his or her sense out of them' (Fiske 1995: 6). Often, this seemingly unstable meaning works in favour of the status quo and serves the economic interest of the dominant. To use my own example, Marilyn Monroe's innocent-sexiness, as exemplified by the still from *The Seven Year Itch* (Billy Wilder, 1955), enables a reader to generate a

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<sup>18</sup> For my posthumous scale see 1.6.

preferred interpretation to match with the reader's own inherent sensibilities/personality.



Figure 3: Monroe's innocent-sexiness.

The popular text, according to Fiske, can avoid rejection by the reader if the text seems like a renewable source. Renewable, then, suggests a continued relevancy is achieved through the creation of new meaning on behalf of a reader. Fiske comments that relevancy is '*central to popular culture (my emphasis)*' (Fiske 1995: 6), but problematically, Fiske does not define a method in which to measure and examine relevance. Instead, he explains that a popular text, or for this thesis' consideration, a posthumous star

exposes however reluctantly, the vulnerabilities, limitations and weaknesses of its preferred meanings; it contains, while attempting to repress them, voices that contradict the ones it prefers; it has loose ends that escape its control, its meanings exceed its own power to discipline them, its gaps are wide enough for whole new texts to be produced in them – it is, in a very real sense, beyond its own control (Fiske 1991:104).

Relevancy is enabled, at least according to Fiske, by contradiction, and most interestingly, by a lack of power (by the popular text) to control meaning. To expand Fiske's reasoning: if the popular text is truly beyond its own control and has a continued presence beyond its own lifetime, then the text becomes more than a popular text, it becomes a meta-text. This thesis, therefore, will expand Fiske's notion of the 'popular text', arguing posthumous stars, with even less personal control than in life, become a meta-text and a prism in which a reader can construct and compare new popular texts. For example, living stars<sup>19</sup> that use the associations of posthumous stars to aid the construction of an image/persona further the likability and relevancy<sup>20</sup> of the posthumous stars they embody.

Martin Shingler's *Star Studies* (2012) is one of the few books that directly attempts to explain what makes a star likeable. Shingler proposes four components: 'Glamour' (linked to consumerism and excess), 'Photogeny' (beauty), 'Phonogeny' (a pleasing voice), and 'Expressivity and Acting Talent' (Shingler 2012: 68-90). The difficulty of discerning these as accurate components, however, is due to the lack of expansion. Before the key components are semi-deconstructed, Shingler muses that 'stars [can] rise to the very pinnacle of stardom without possessing one or even a number of these' (Shingler 2012: 66) traits, and thus, suggests there is no method in which one can become successful and popular. Shingler, in this part of the chapter, seems to insist that versatility is the key to stardom and that these components are a consideration of the main important features. Despite Shingler's good intentions, and indeed some useful factors that feature predominantly within Hollywood stardom, the

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<sup>19</sup> Madonna is an example of a star that has used associations of a posthumous star. In her music video for 'Material Girl' (1984), Madonna dresses in a replica of Monroe's pink dress and acts out the 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend' scene from the film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953).

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Five for how consumers learn an idealised past and how the meta-text is a way to understand the star persona of famous actors such as Natalie Portman.

definition of stardom and how it is made elude the reader. If a star does not need any of these components, then there is still no clear rule for success, and instead suggests fame gained through chance and luck.

The reason for stardom, therefore, is difficult to identify. Shingler, however, does suggest that ‘the loss of such qualities as looks, voice and glamour [...] may account for a loss of popularity’ (Shingler 2012: 91). However, if Shingler’s statement is correct then a star relies on youth and beauty far more than any other component. For Shingler, acting talent is not a guarantee of longevity and popularity, and problematically, questions a film star’s supposed purpose: being an actor who also exhibits talent. Instead, if a star’s popularity can dwindle due to the loss of youth, the star’s purpose is to be an extraordinarily beautiful representational being. Potential anomalies also arise with ageing stars such as Meryl Streep or Jessica Lange (my example), but they are arguably “prestige stars” (McDonald 2013: 33), and thus, find continued success due to their fame being attributed to the fourth component above all else, in addition to frequent award nominations that re-emphasise this component. However, the extent of youth and beauty’s effect on stardom is a factor that can surely hold some weight, particularly in consideration of women.

Heather Addison, like Shingler, considers youth an important factor in a star’s living and posthumous success.<sup>21</sup> In her work, ‘Transcending Time: Jean Harlow and Hollywood’s Narrative of Decline’ (2005), Addison links the power of the dead star (Jean Harlow) to the star’s ability to remain young forever. The work, as a sociological interrogation on star theory, posits that a star’s early death is the main reason he/she becomes continually visible. The purpose of her work, therefore, is not how Jean

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<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that Addison’s analysis relies on an earlier period of film history and the scholar does not attempt to extrapolate her findings to draw parallels with Harlow’s contemporaries.

Harlow is posthumously marketed or exploited on commodity, but an attempt to explain youth as a reason for a continued interest in a posthumous star.<sup>22</sup>

Addison begins by comparing the changing attitudes of society at the dawn of modernity where ‘ageing was associated with a loss of productivity’ (Addison 2005: 33). She suggests that age deems a person less useful or admirable in a modern Western society. Instead, youth is favoured by Western society due to the conception that the younger generation will have vitality, energy, and able bodies to produce profit, and thus, continue a capitalist society’s success. Translated for stardom: the star that dies early in life never leaves the realm of productivity because society does not see them age or decay. The star that died young represents a continuous connection to youth and vitality because ‘dead stars [have] the advantage of an unchanging appearance that did not inconveniently contradict more youthful images of themselves’ (Addison 2005: 35). The United States of America, with its emphasis on the young<sup>23</sup>, Addison suggests, prefers the image of a star that can be represented as continuously beautiful and healthy as it represents the ideal bodily state of the main working population.

Addison’s central argument insists that ‘resurrections of youthful stars exist to deny death’ (Addison 2005: 38), and thus, serve a societal purpose whereby death does not appear as the end. Whilst we can agree that the youthful presence of a posthumous star helps idealise the ‘perfect’ time of life, attract core consumers (the

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<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that Jean Harlow, under my definition of representation beyond the grave, does not function in the same way as Marilyn Monroe. The lack of ageing has not benefitted large companies, instead, Harlow finds an after-life in Classic Hollywood communities, and thus, would be more suited to a fan studies analysis.

<sup>23</sup> The ‘emphasis on the young’ refers to the images of young people in most advertising, cinema, music, and in the promotion of leisure activities. It therefore appears, much like Addison suggests, that the youthful bodily state is desirable in American culture.



youthful population), and continue to push the idea of youth as central to the productivity of society, it does raise some problems. The star's death, despite its earliness is nonetheless present in the star's narrative, in fact, due to the often tragic circumstances of the death, it forms one of the most prominent factors in the re-telling of a star's life. Therefore, to expand on Addison's work, an early death does not deny death, but rather, denies decay. The tragic death of a young star can form a part of the formula for success<sup>24</sup> within the pantheon of posthumous stars, not only because (as Addison suggests) of the presence of youth, but because the star's death seems to replicate the melodramatic moments we crave on-screen. Further research (that is beyond this thesis' remit) should examine an array of tragic star deaths to determine tropes that form in biographical representation after death. For example, what is the focus, tone, and career-personal life ratio in each re-telling?

Youthfulness cannot be the defining factor of lasting stardom or success. Instead, many scholars have attributed stardom to consumption and audience interaction with types of personality. Richard Dyer's second sub-chapter in *Stars* (1979) illuminates how a star is a phenomenon of consumption. In this argument, the success of a star is in the hands of the public/audience/fans. Dyer claims that 'people's favourite stars tend to be of the same sex as themselves' (Dyer 1979: 17), and unlike Shingler and Addison, Dyer posits that star success is based on an audience member finding similarity and emotional resonance with a star. Dyer postulates that there are four categories. Firstly, 'emotional affinity' (Dyer 1979: 18) is not a sexual interest, but a loose attachment caused by a protagonist on screen. Secondly, 'self-identification' (Dyer 1979: 18) is a mode in which a person places themselves in the

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<sup>24</sup> An early (20-50) star death is certainly not a rule to posthumous success. Audrey Hepburn, one of the biggest posthumous stars and a case study of this thesis, died aged 63 of natural causes.

situation of the star and experiences similar emotions to those exhibited on the screen. Thirdly, 'imitation' (Dyer 1979: 18) is when a star acts as a model for the person and occurs most often in the young, and as a result, the fandom will extend beyond cinema-going. Lastly, 'projection' (Dyer 1979: 18) is a term Dyer uses to describe a fan that mediates their life experiences in line with their favoured star.

Extending Dyer's theory to encompass posthumous stardom and consumer demand, this thesis does not underestimate the importance of same sex identification (an important function in the marketing of a star). However, I am not convinced that it is only within the categories of 'imitation' and 'projection' that a demand for a posthumous star on advertising, or the ability to replicate a star's style, could exist. These classifications suggest that 'emotional affinity' is a loose attachment to the star on-screen, however, I would argue that in posthumous star advertising even this does not need to exist, for example, the Snickers scenario from the introduction would suggest a personal attachment is not required at all to be successful and generate consumer interest. If posthumous stardom was based on fan-demand, all successful Classic Hollywood stars, such as Bette Davis, would have a marketable quality to the same extent of Audrey Hepburn. Therefore, this suggests, at least posthumously, that stardom is not based on identification, but based on a more rudimentary understanding of an individual star meaning, such as a clear star brand and/or what a star can suggest about the past.

In the most important and influential section of *Stars*, Dyer offers another four distinct categories to define star construction. Firstly, he names 'promotion' as the 'deliberate creation/manufacture' (Dyer 1979: 60) of a star through things such as press hand-outs. Secondly, the term 'publicity' is used to describe the image in the media which 'does not *appear* (my emphasis) to be deliberate image-making' (Dyer

1979: 61), such as gossip columns. Thirdly, ‘films’ is a category simply because a star’s fame ‘is defined by the fact of their appearing in films’ (Dyer 1979: 61). Lastly, ‘criticism and commentaries’ is defined by Dyer to be pieces that are written by critics and writers, and these could include a range of materials from film reviews to biographies.

To extend Dyer’s work, then, the ‘promotion’ of a star is still very much at the forefront of the posthumous star’s use. This thesis will show that without a living star to contort our view, the commercial manipulation of a star is almost completely dictated by large corporations, and thus, the ‘promotion’ of a star is a deliberate and manufactured image which attempts to present a desirable representation of a star to fulfil optimum brand engagement. ‘Publicity’ also exists for the posthumous star, but not in the same way as the theory posited by Dyer. For the posthumous star ‘publicity’ and ‘criticism and commentaries’ mould to form a new area of media manipulation. Publicity is no longer needed for a new film, and thus, the image-creation is used to continually revitalise a brand and not the work. Similarly, in criticism and commentaries we no longer review a new film, but try to find a new revelation in a star’s performance or life.

However, ‘films’ are not necessarily only a part of the past for the posthumous star, as box-sets function as a revitalisation of the star’s work. The posthumous star also appears in films after death, too. This may come in the form of a biopic, or if interesting enough, in the form of a character within a film, and thus alters our previous conceptions of Dyer’s categories. This thesis aims to extend Dyer’s concepts, and as suggested here, attempts to re-categorise the elements for a clearer analysis of the functions within posthumous stardom. This last category, however, is outside the

remit of this work,<sup>25</sup> but a posthumous star's appearance in biopics, fictional film, and literature is a rich area of study for future research.

Dyer's *Stars*, published before major changes to the consumer market and globalisation, does not explore concepts such as star brands or the varied methods of star marketization. Dyer, however, does note that in the post-studio era a film star aids the organisation of the market, a topic expanded by Paul McDonald in *Hollywood Stardom*. Dyer's theory of stardom as a system to generate expected profit has been furthered by McDonald's theory of 'horizontal' and 'vertical differentiation' (McDonald 2013: 46-47) as it proposes a method in which stardom acts a way to convey the value of film products, and thus by extension, all products associated with a star (my addition).

According to McDonald, vertical differentiation determines our interest in a film through a hierarchy of 'quality'. This theory works on the principle that should a consumer see two film posters at a Cineplex, one with Meryl Streep and the other Jennifer Love Hewitt (my examples), the consumer would make an assessment about the performance and film budget. The quality of the picture, therefore, is discerned through associations with a star's work. Horizontal differentiation is more complex, as the 'quality' of the star is similar, and thus, differentiation relies on a star brand. Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman (McDonald's example), with their sudden rise in Oscar winning pictures<sup>26</sup> and their past in poorly rated or comedic films, would hold

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<sup>25</sup> A biopic or use in fiction, due to their position as 'art', does not legally need approval from the estate and thus is not the 'official' image of the star. However, biopics do often seek approval to ensure accuracy of a star's life and/or permissions to use music etc.

<sup>26</sup> From 2002, Nicole Kidman has continued to gather a vast array of award nominations for her work. Previously, Kidman's Hollywood work had focused on action films, for example, *Batman Forever* (Joel Schumacher, 1995) and *The Peacemaker* (Mimi Leder, 1997). Additionally, Kidman did perform in some comedic roles in films such as *Practical Magic* (Griffin Dunne, 1998). Interestingly, Kidman has begun to return to action films with *Aquaman* (James Wan, 2018), which appears as a stark contrast to her recent and various dramatic work.

a similar placement on the star hierarchy. The posters would therefore rely on individual aspects of Kidman that would separate her from Bullock. McDonald does then offer an insight into how star construction operates within a consumer market when audiences are faced with stars of equal “calibre”. McDonald posits that a ‘star is a person-as-brand’ (McDonald 2013:41) and the common traits which are individual to the star, whether it is Nicole Kidman’s steely gaze or Sandra Bullock’s relatable charm, separate one star from another, and as a result, play a role in audience identification and preference.

Additionally, McDonald notes that a star’s name is one way a star brand is made possible. For McDonald, a name is ‘a marker of uniqueness’ (McDonald 2013: 49) as a star’s name is owned<sup>27</sup> by the star. For example, there is only one star called Tom Cruise and it is this individuality that enables the business function<sup>28</sup> of a star, much like there is only one brand with the name Coca-Cola. McDonald also states that one of the key functions of the name ‘is to anchor the dispersal and repetition of the star’s presence’ (McDonald 2013: 53). The star name, therefore, functions not only as a clear way to differentiate between other stars, but as an easy and clear way to disperse knowledge about an individual star.

McDonald’s exploration of a star-as-brand has furthered understanding of stardom as intrinsic to commercial and capitalist culture. *Hollywood Stardom* and this thesis, therefore, are closely aligned in its belief that stars impart meaning for the profit

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From 2009, Sandra Bullock gained critical success with her performances in *The Blind Side* (John Lee Hancock, 2009) and *Gravity* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2013). Previously, Bullock had largely been known for romantic comedies, often playing the tom-boyish girl-next-door type. As a result, both Kidman and Bullock carry knowledge of previous roles and typecasting, but now feature in more dramatic roles with critical acclaim.

<sup>27</sup> Actors, according to the Actor’s Union, cannot have two members with the exact same name.

<sup>28</sup> The business function of a singular name in a consumer market ensures there is a lack of confusion, secures brand loyalty, and aims to maintain quality assurance.

of large companies. *Hollywood Stardom* highlights this function in its analysis of the endorsement deal and suggest that when advertising a commodity, the star partakes in a ‘meaning-transfer process’ (McDonald 2013: 61). McDonald uses an example of George Clooney’s advertisement for Nespresso, a sophisticated coffee-making machine, to elaborate on the star’s function in the profit-making for other companies. In this method, the suave Clooney imparts his style onto the object, e.g. the object becomes personified as it is endowed with Clooney’s qualities. Despite the book’s excellent analysis, the examples provided by McDonald are of both contemporary and living stars, and thus, the theory requires further development using posthumous stardom to expand the knowledge of a star-as-brand and its function in advertising.

*Hollywood Stardom* does, however, begin to link large company interest and exploitation with success after-death. McDonald notes that

the legend can be a revenue source. Elizabeth Taylor, seventh of the AFI’s female legends, died on 23 March 2011, and within two days of the star’s passing, British tabloid newspaper the *Daily Mirror* had published its Elizabeth Taylor: Hollywood Legend (McDonald 2013:34).<sup>29</sup>

The book does not, however, attempt to deconstruct why certain stars are given more economic value after-death. McDonald’s ‘star legend’ is commercially exploitable, but is not as exploitable as the ‘posthumous star’, a term McDonald uses to describe a dead star with a larger presence in the commercial market. McDonald is therefore suggesting the use of a hierarchy, even if it is not fully explored in his own work. He posits:

legendary stardom feeds posthumous stardom. With posthumous stars, the cultural historical value of legendary status finds an “after-life,” or more appropriately an “after-market”, as the dead star becomes the subject, or correctly the object, of enduring merchandising lines and other commercial opportunities (McDonald 2013:36).

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<sup>29</sup> ‘Elizabeth Taylor: Hollywood Legend’ was an 84-page glossy magazine. Sold for £4.99 at local retailers, it chronicled her life and career.

For McDonald, then, both legendary *and* posthumous stardom are about ‘cultural historical valorization’ (McDonald 2013: 38) and seems to suggest that some dead stars are chosen to be revered and exploited. Yet, it is important to note that both ‘legends’ and ‘posthumous stars’ have an ‘after-market’. The difference, therefore, is what kind of ‘after-market’ they have and how that might be distinguished. McDonald is correct when he uses the word ‘object’, and it seems (to expand McDonald’s theory, but using my own examples) we can say: Joan Crawford has an ‘after-market’; for example, we can, note how her name is exploited in the song ‘Joan Crawford’ by Blue Oyster Cult (1981). Joan Crawford also appears in biopics, such as *Feud* (Ryan Murphy, 2017) and multiple documentaries about her life. Joan Crawford, therefore, is valued both through film institutions such as the American Film Institute<sup>30</sup> and is of biographical interest.

In comparison, Marilyn Monroe: Monroe has an ‘after-market’, her image is used on wallpaper as an object, used to convey a stream of associations regarding glamour and beauty, but most importantly, her image can sell a standard, mundane item and turn it into something else. Thus, whilst I would disagree with McDonald and state that legends also have an ‘after-market’, it is the way in which that market is exploited, and how that image is distorted that makes McDonald’s ‘posthumous star’ different from the ‘legend’. As suggested previously, this thesis will build a more specific posthumous hierarchy, which, whilst inspired by McDonald, differs from the two-tier structure posed in his book.

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<sup>30</sup>Joan Crawford is number 10 in the American Film Institute’s list of greatest American Screen Legends (female).

McDonald additionally notes that ‘posthumous stars attain greater cultural and commercial significance than when they were alive’ (McDonald 2013: 36). Here, McDonald alludes to two of the case studies in this thesis, Monroe and Dean. Using the Quigley poll as the success determiner, McDonald suggests that ‘Monroe has overwhelmingly outstripped that of her more commercially successful peers’ (McDonald 2013: 37), such as Doris Day. Using Day as an example, both Day and Monroe have various DVD box-sets, but Monroe’s wealth stems not from her work, like Day, but her image. McDonald notes that Audrey Hepburn and Elvis Presley have also arrived at the same fate, but does not muse as to why this has occurred. Presley, however, does not fit with McDonald’s previous point about commercial success in life. Whilst Day may have been more commercially successful than Monroe and Hepburn, Presley was extremely financially successful, albeit in music more than film. Taylor, too, who is on her way to McDonald’s version of posthumous stardom (the after-market) does not fit this theory of life vs. death success.

McDonald, of course, is not the only scholar to analyse posthumous careers. Other cultural theorists have attempted to discuss posthumous success with individual case studies. S. Paige Baty, believes a large popular text (in this case, Marilyn Monroe) is constructed of ‘mass-mediated rememberings’ (Baty 1995:37). These rememberings are defined as ways in which we view our culture through Monroe (and thus, by extension, posthumous stars). Monroe is used as a means via which we can construct our present knowledge through the past. For Baty, ‘Marilyn Monroe, icon, is a sign of the times. The 1950s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s are filtered through her form’ (Baty 1995:57). Unlike Fiske, to Baty the openness of Monroe is not due to popular culture, but what she deems the media ‘matrix’ (Baty 1995: 59), a place in which a star is born and transformed to become an ‘icon’. It is through the iconic image that



the star has political resonance (mode of organization through the remembrance of a time and/or place) and becomes a ‘cultural type’ (Baty 1995: 71) in which the ‘icon’ becomes the blueprint for all future “Marilyn-types” to be compared and filtered against.

Baty, like Addison, suggests that part of Monroe’s success is because ‘Marilyn’s death at an early age kept her body from ageing and decaying while she remained a public figure: unlike Elizabeth Taylor or Elvis, Marilyn did not outlive her iconic body’ (Baty 1995: 161). However, in this statement (like in Addison) there is a problematic reasoning regarding the death of a star. Some stars do remain a public figure despite an ageing/unhealthy body and it does not impact the star’s cultural resonance, for example, Elvis Presley’s 1970s body is the most replicated ‘look’ amongst Elvis impersonators. Youth and tragic death, therefore, should not be considered a necessary condition, but a sufficient condition to achieve posthumous fame.

Elvis Presley is one of the biggest posthumous stars (shown throughout this thesis, but apparent in Chapter Three), and unlike the suggestion above, Elvis’ iconic body is still very present, and is often the main focus of interest in the commercial market. During Presley’s rock-a-billy days he was youthful and imbued a raw masculine sexuality, later, Elvis gained weight and this version became iconised through Elvis impersonators. “Fat Elvis”,<sup>31</sup> as this version of Presley is often called, is not his “supreme sexy look”, but it is still very much an iconic body.<sup>32</sup> It seems also important to note that Hepburn outlived her iconic body (*Breakfast at Tiffany’s* era)

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<sup>31</sup> Firstly, sites such as Pinterest have boards dedicated to ‘Fat Elvis’. Sadly, this phrase has also entered the Urban Dictionary and has an unsavoury meaning. Secondly, magazines such as *Maxim* (Wilson 2016: online) also use this term to describe Elvis Presley in the 1970s.

<sup>32</sup> As stated previously, 1970s Elvis is one of the most known ‘looks’ due to Elvis Presley impersonators.

and is yet still an important figure in posthumous advertising. Therefore, whilst Monroe is a valid case study for Baty's work on culture, the statement above fails to appreciate the larger scope of posthumous stardom and Monroe's important role within the small group of commercially successful posthumous stars.

One book by a cultural theorist which has come close to debating the commercial power of posthumous stardom, however, is *Elvis After Elvis* (1996) by Gilbert B. Rodman. When discussing the marketability of Presley, he comments that the star's career is unique because of

the fact that Elvis is dead and should thus have ceased to be valuable as a merchandisable figure long ago (...) why does a dead Elvis still sell so well after twenty years? Even the most successful efforts to market other dead stars (e.g. James Dean, Marilyn Monroe) are largely limited to T-shirts, posters, and have home video releases of their movies (Rodman 1996:11).

Rodman realises there is something about Presley that makes him a useful commodity, however, he does not attempt to explain how or why Presley is used in commercial ventures. Conversely, he is mistaken in the assertion that Monroe and Dean have been less successful in their individual posthumous careers.<sup>33</sup> Like Baty, who only analyses Monroe, Rodman misses the significance of posthumous stardom as a cultural phenomenon. Rodman, like the aforementioned star and cultural scholars, does not recognise a complex hierarchy within posthumous stardom, nor does he fully explore the 'official' image presented by large corporations and brands. The thesis, therefore, attempts to expose the concerns which Baty and Rodman do not. Advertising and commodity, or the lack of it (see Bette Davis etc.), shows which posthumous stars resonate in today's culture. Posthumous star studies is integral to the

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<sup>33</sup> 'Career' is used to suggest the economic success of an individual. Whilst the star may not be living, a type of career occurs due to the pay check and continued appearance of the star in popular and consumer culture.

understanding of cultural nostalgia, and thus, an in-depth analysis of large advertising campaigns can explore the core values and inherent personal qualities Western culture valorises and aspires to promote.

The success of posthumous stars in advertising, as suggested previously, is the ability to be an open text. Contradiction is one way in which an image becomes open as it already has conflicting and diverse messaging. The conflicts inherent in the image allow space for further meaning construction on behalf of the audience, but it is this same openness that also allows for gossip to be generated. In a popular text a vast majority of narratives can form, sometimes to a star's detriment if scandalous enough, but as shown in this thesis, gossip can be advantageous and is to the benefit of advertising campaigns and narratives.<sup>34</sup>

Both Richard deCordova and Martin Shingler analyse scandal and gossip, but unfortunately neither discuss the implications of gossip that occurs when a star is not available to refute the claims. Shingler is correct in *Star Studies* (2012: 143-147) when he implies human nature enjoys and thrives on secrets, and that by gossiping about stars the consequence is fairly harmless.<sup>35</sup> To take Shingler's musings further, consider the many divorces of Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. Instead of causing havoc, this type of gossip allowed them to stay current. Divorce is scandalous, but it is not as vile as murder, and thus, becomes titillating rather than horrifying.

However, considerations should be made with regards to the studio system's impact on what could and could not be released about a star, and how far a studio helped and re-built a star's image after the potentially damaging gossip. For instance,

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<sup>34</sup> See the Chapter Four for how advertising appears authentic through the use of gossip.

<sup>35</sup> Gossiping about friends may have a negative impact on your life, whereas film stars are removed from your social circumstance, and thus, act as a replacement, maybe even as therapeutic release.

it is hard to prove how much “sweet-talk” was made between the studio and a journalist to paint a better picture of a star’s divorce. In contemporary stardom we can still see the same tropes, and it seems that there is still a type of gossip from which there is no return. For example, Lindsay Lohan arguably sunk her career and popularity after multiple arrests, yet Brad Pitt’s and Angelina Jolie’s fame skyrocketed after their affair.<sup>36</sup> On the surface, it may appear gossip’s function is to alter careers and/or form a method in which we fulfil social evolution models, such as community bonding.<sup>37</sup> Star and celebrity gossip, however, also promotes a hierarchy of values through star and celebrity behaviour whereby society is reminded about acceptable behaviour.

Gossip as a way to promote ways of societal thinking is not new and has been discussed by celebrity scholars. P. David Marshall, in his article ‘The Promotion and Presentation of the Self: Celebrity as Marker of Presentational Media’, suggests that celebrity gossip has multiple functions in today’s culture. Marshall posits that a celebrity acts as a ‘pedagogical aid in the discourse of the self’ (Marshall 2010: 36) and that gossip acts a tool to explain personality and continue a discourse around the production of self. Celebrity culture, for Marshall, has ‘taught generations how to engage and use consumer culture to “make” oneself’ (Marshall 2010: 36). Equally, argues Sternheimer, celebrity culture has fooled us into believing our society is based

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<sup>36</sup> Lindsay Lohan also potentially aided the damage by her lack of commitment to work (damage here means respectability and box-office potential), and her scandals are discussed by various outlets such as news.com.au (Bond 2018: online) and Fox News (Earl 2018: online). Tabloids have still not lost complete interest in her because, simply, scandal sells. However, we could muse on a fall from the hierarchy. *Mean Girls* (Mark Waters, 2004), for instance rocketed her to economic success and star status, but lack of continuing box-office potential caused by panned films such as the Elizabeth Taylor biopic, *Liz & Dick* (Christopher Monger, 2012), and a stream of negative press, could have resulted in Lohan entering the “Name” category. For more details on the “Name” category please see the McDonald section of this literature review.

<sup>37</sup> For an anthropologist’s perspective on gossip, see Robin Dunbar’s *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*.

on a meritocracy, rather than a stratified society, through ‘ignoring the roles power and privilege play in achieving wealth’ (Sternheimer 2011: 9).

Knowledge about the “real” and “authentic” star is promised by gossip. As Richard deCordova notes, much of the writing on stars focuses on ‘how the stars spent their enormous salaries and how they spent their leisure time’ (deCordova 1990: 108). The behind-closed-doors gossip serves a dual purpose: firstly, it aims to show that happiness is achieved not through work, but how one chooses to spend their leisure time. It suggests, therefore, it is consumption and material possessions that enable satisfaction with life. Furthermore, it encourages the belief in social mobility, since many stars, even today, are depicted as originating from ordinary backgrounds,<sup>38</sup> and act as proof that anyone can achieve success and can begin to emulate that success through material goods.

As suggested above, authenticity has an important role in a star’s relationship to gossip and consumer culture and this will be explained further in the thesis proper. However, it is not enough to understand authenticity in stardom, but how this concept operates within other structures such as advertising. As a theoretical concept, authenticity has its own contradictory facets, and thus, the next section of the literature review will explore how authenticity in cultural and business studies can aid this thesis’ understanding of consumer manipulation in relation to the posthumous star.

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<sup>38</sup> The Cinderella trope, which uses the rags to riches narrative, depicts a star as coming from a disadvantaged background whom, through hard work and talent, achieves extreme wealth. This, as stated above, becomes a public example of social mobility and helps fabricate and hide inequalities through a false idea of society as based purely on meritocracy.

## 1.4 Authenticity in Marketing and Culture

Authenticity, a word derived from the Greek word ‘authenteo’, which means to have full power, is defined as something which is of undisputed origin and/or trustworthy. The thesis is not a philosophical one, and thus, will not dwell on authenticity literature which relies heavily on what it means to be and feel authentic in one’s own self. However, to begin a review of authenticity, and to illustrate the distinctions and complexities of branding authentically, it is useful to briefly ruminate on what is means to be authentic. The reasoning behind this method is threefold. Firstly, to show the history of the philosophical thought to draw parallels with authentic branding theory. Secondly, to show a distinct difference between authenticity of the self and an authentic company message/brand, and thirdly, to align some of the philosophical thought with a consumer and their conception of self when partaking in a brand narrative.

There are, of course, varied distinctions and debate between philosophers concerning authenticity. After examination, there are seven scholars that are particularly useful for this thesis’ purpose to further understand branding, the consumer and the posthumous star. However, that is not to say that the scholars’ theories align with this researcher’s conception of authenticity in consumer culture, and it is for this reason that the theories will be explored in conjunction with branding and business scholars. It is through all of these writings on authenticity that I will expose a gap concerning posthumous stardom and branding, and thus, pose a hypothesis that will be analysed throughout the thesis, and in particular, through close analysis in the chapter pertaining to authenticity.

The definition of authenticity in today's cultural studies scholarship differs from the previous work by philosophers and members of the Frankfurt School. Previously, it was thought that to be an authentic human being a person had to be aware of society's impositions and his/her own possibilities. For Heidegger, the third facet of being human meant to have existential awareness and be critically engaged in the constructions that inform a person's life and behaviour (see Heidegger's *Being and Time*, 1987). To be authentic, therefore, meant he/she would realise who he/she was without pre-determined constructs or expectations, or, was not defined based on a job title or a role that he/she plays in society. Counter-culture movements,<sup>39</sup> as suggested by the name, are, at least theoretically on this spectrum of authenticity as it attempts to be outside of popular culture's constructs. However, I would argue even a group which is defined as counter-culture has rules and an aesthetic. Whilst a counter-culture group may not be part of the popular culture, it is no less associating itself with a construct of self, and thus arguably, is not as authentic as it may seem, especially in relation to recent work on authenticity and brands found below.

Recent brand scholarship, instead, suggests that constructs and expectations are essential to becoming authentic in contemporary society. Descriptors and categorisations aid our understanding. However, for philosophers like Heidegger, defining one's self as a "good singer" or "pretty" does not tell someone else who you are, as even without those qualities you would still be a human being. More than that, "good" and "pretty" are defined only by contrasting those qualities with descriptors you have been taught or seen previously, and thus, are constructed ideas based on society's ideals and agreed perceptions. Thus, those descriptors are used for a

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<sup>39</sup> Counter-culture movements refer to cultural shifts such as the hippy culture of the 1960s, but may also include sub-culture movements such as Mods or Goths.

definition to present a self that is understandable and relatable to society, but is not necessarily your authentic self. Cultural scholar, Sarah Banet-Weiser, disagrees with this argument and posits that without construction and comparison we cannot know how we fit within our society. Therefore, she suggests, it is through labels that we feel meaningful and different.

Banet-Weiser's research found that 'individuals position themselves as the central character in the narrative of [a] brand' (Banet-Weiser 2012: 4). This is achieved by using the attributes that the brand imbues, such as the youthful elegance of the perfume "Miss Dior" to reflect a consumer's personality. This notion of using products to show a personality type returns me to counter-cultures. Using Banet-Weiser's research, it is clear that counter-culture movements choose an aesthetic to represent a value system, therefore, are still using products to alert others of the group's personality type(s) and interests. Interestingly, even in this case, meaning is still portrayed through which type of consumer a person represents, and therefore shows the importance of consumerism in self-definition.

In her work, Banet-Weiser makes this very clear difference by using a contemporary and relatable example: "I'm a Mac user," many of us say smugly, or, "I drink Coke, not Pepsi" (Banet-Weiser 2012: 4). On the surface, Microsoft and Apple make computer systems that fundamentally allow users to do similar things. Coke and Pepsi are both dark coloured sodas that allow consumers to quench their thirst. There are differentiations in taste, of course, but the outcome is the same. A consumer, therefore, may purchase a Coke because they prefer the taste, but they are also aligning their values with the brand's image: family-friendly and nostalgic. Pepsi, on the other hand, use advertising to try to engage the upcoming generation, using social issues and youthful celebrities to suggest that the brand's consumers live and care about the



now. Banet-Weiser suggests, then, that when a consumer chooses to drink either soda, the consumer reveals a value system to other members of society or to a friendship group. Brands and products, therefore, are a shorthand method which consumers employ (mostly subconsciously) to convey an ideal and personal image to any observers.

Brand narratives can make a person understandable, but according to recent theorists, it can also make them authentic. As suggested previously, the authentic has often been considered to be the rejection of society's values, and this is why hippies, mods, punks and goths seem to be authentic. However, as suggested, if a group forms its own rules it is operating as a smaller society with its own spectrum that may or may not be any more authentic than popular culture (if we view Heidegger's model of the three facets of authenticity). Charles Lindholm and Banet-Weiser instead posit that it is through any purchase of brand products that we form a self. Cultural theorist Lindholm suggests: 'the main way for people in the United States to distinguish themselves has always been through purchase, accumulation, and display of possessions' (Lindholm 2008: 53). Products, and the brands that represent them, therefore, are again suggested to be a quick code to help guide the view of potential friends and help establish a consumer's personality.

On her work on brand culture, Banet-Weiser agrees with the idea that consumerism is a way to distinguish the self: 'brands are the cultural spaces in which individuals feel safe, secure, relevant and authentic' (Banet Weiser 2012: 9). Authentic, for Banet-Weiser, is not being completely separate from society's values, but having a variety of consumer goods, designs and brands that an individual can pick as most suitable. The choice shows differentiation and similarity to other members of society to remind the individual of an interconnectedness between all

members of their community. The community itself, she seems to argue, is not fully realised until a group establishes codes and norms through the purchase of commodity goods. Goth is a sub-culture that someone can be a part of through ideals, but to show they are a part of that community they have to buy products, for example, stereotypically we would assume black clothing, perhaps even particular brands of boots like Dr. Martens. Through fashion and music, a group can form, but that identity is dependent on consumer goods. Banet-Weiser recognises this when she writes that ‘identities take on meaning at the precise moment they are recognised as market categories’ (Banet-Weiser 2012: 43). Cultural authenticity theory, therefore, is not about escaping the norm and being true to self. To be authentic, a commonality must be found between others and this is made possible through consumer products.

Banet-Weiser’s apparent contrast with Heidegger is of little surprise. Authenticity and what it means to be an authentic person or own an authentic object, is not fixed. Charles Guignon in his book, *On Being Authentic* (2004), suggests that the definition surrounding the concept of self is fluid and adapts with society. Upon reading the classics, such as Plato, Socrates and St. Augustine, Guignon suggests that to know yourself is to ‘know above all your place (...) in the scheme of things’ (Guignon, 2004: 13). It is this self-knowledge that will make you better at whichever task you have been set in life, as Guignon notes: ‘that it is right for someone who is a shoemaker to make shoes and nothing else’ (Guignon, 2004: 14). In this instance, Guignon suggests that authenticity was found in conforming to the life into which you were born. This theory of authenticity no longer applies as it seemingly defies

elements regarding social mobility; this is particularly the case in regards to the role of celebrity as the promotor of possibilities.<sup>40</sup>

The definition of authenticity is fluid, and this is made clear in Guignon's work. In the past, Guignon explains, the self was understood through the conception of an "extended self" whose 'identity is tied into the wider context of the world' (Guignon 2004: 18). For Guignon, authenticity in the past (before the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD) was based on: (a) realising and being the best in the lot that you were given and (b) that identity was linked with everything that inhabits the world in the past, present and the future. The premodern view of authenticity, therefore, was defined as a way to link identity with others through differing roles. Despite Guignon's protestation of the premodern's definition, the following note about the premodern period does not seem far removed from brand conception today.<sup>41</sup> He writes: 'the self carries with it a strong sense of *belongingness*, a feeling that one is part of a larger whole' (Guignon, 2004:18). This furthers my own alliance with Banet-Weiser's theory that a brand can make someone feel as if they belong, and how today, brands are the method consumers use to self-identify and feel authentic. It is through similarity and understanding that a consumer feels authentic because they are part of a larger whole. Yet, because there are often many brands for a similar product there is enough differentiation to feel different from some of the community and even closer to those that purchase the same brands.

To expand upon the previous points, it is important to further emphasise scholars' conclusions regarding the changing definition of authenticity. In the last two

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<sup>40</sup> For a reminder of the star/celebrity as the promotor of possibilities, please see the previous section on the Cinderella trope, social mobility and leisure.

<sup>41</sup> 'Brand' is a modern term, but the notion of linking identity through roles is present both in premodern society and today's modern society. The singular difference is present day creates identity through consumerism.

centuries, authenticity, or at least the branding of products as authentic, has increased and altered the conception of the term authenticity. The rise in the industrial and the resulting separation of natural and man-made objects and pursuits have created a discourse that is focused on binary oppositions. Guignon uses the examples: ‘deep vs. superficial, spiritual vs. materialistic, organic vs. mechanical, genuine vs. fake, true vs. illusory, and original vs. simulation’ (Guignon, 2004: 81). The clear opposition between the natural and synthetic in products and the condensing of space through the digital sphere has not only caused an anxiety about the ‘realness’ of a product, but has arguably shifted our understanding of space and time.

Interestingly, the era of interest in this thesis<sup>42</sup> favoured and promoted mass produced goods, simulation and television. As a result, the posthumous stars that hail from this time period, by definition, should be connected to an inauthentic era according to those binaries that Guignon suggests. However, the fifties era, whilst often seen as conservative and complete with fake civility, are also rendered as the “good old days”. Additionally, it is in my opinion, that to purchase a “retro” product is to purchase a “fake” product under Guignon’s binaries. However, the rise of nostalgia goods suggest the desire to re-claim a time deemed more authentic. Therefore, whilst Guignon’s acknowledgement of these binaries is useful in our understanding of some commodities, the position of retro goods, or brands/products that use a posthumous star, is far more complex than the binaries of real vs. fake.

Authenticity theory informs the thinking of this thesis, but will be expanded to consider key questions relating to posthumous stardom. Combined with nostalgia

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<sup>42</sup> The Fifties are further explored in Chapter Two, and in part, in the following sub-section.

theory, the thesis will analyse how posthumous stars are used as method to enhance the authenticity of brands in a society dominated by cultural anxiety. Nostalgia informs the perception of an authentic star, but much like this sub-section, has diverse scholarship pertaining to the function of nostalgia in today's culture. In the next segment, therefore, key nostalgia theorists will be discussed to aid the understanding of the thesis' last chapter, and ultimately, the research's conclusion.

## 1.5 Nostalgia in Products and Culture

Nostalgia, a term coined by Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer in 1688, means a “longing to return home”. In the seventeenth century, Swiss mercenaries began to show signs of nausea and loss of appetite, and in some cases, mercenaries would report that they heard voices or commit suicide (Routledge 2016: 4). As a remedy, Hofer suggested that they send the men home to the Alps to improve their spirits. In the past, nostalgia was directly related to a removal from a location, rather than our contemporary understanding of nostalgia as a longing for a past time. Theorists on nostalgia credit this change in understanding to modernity and its effect on an individual’s perception of time. The railroad, for example, condensed space through its ability to get passengers to new places in a shorter amount of time, or at least shorter than horseback and/or horseback and cart. As a result, the railroad made the ability to travel and see beyond close communities more accessible, and thus, altered a nation’s understanding of time, space and other communities. Additionally, new methods of communication, such as the electric telegraph, made communication easier, and again, seemingly condensed distance between communities. Today, this change in understanding continues to increase with faster public transport and the internet,<sup>43</sup> the latter as a piece of technology that not only condenses time and space, but also information.

Gary Cross, in his book, *Consumed Nostalgia* (2015), notes that a desire to capture the past heightened in the mid-twentieth century. He found that ‘95 percent of existing museums date from after World War II’ (Cross 2015: 9), indicating that the ravages of war and an increasingly technological world pushed society to look upon

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<sup>43</sup> The internet condenses both time and space. It condenses time through its ability to access a variety of articles from different periods of time, and space through its ability to connect people from around the World quickly and with ease.

itself and its past. Unlike many nostalgia and cultural theorists, Cross analyses “consumed nostalgia” (Cross 2015:10), a topic that focuses on commodities enabling an experience of the past. Cross suggests that nostalgia is liberating for an individual as the collection of objects is part of consumer culture and deemed personally rewarding. He posits that through the commercial culture of the past and fast capitalism of today, individuals can regain their childhood through commodity whilst still partaking in promoted behaviour, e.g. the purchase of items in a capitalist society.

Cross’ understanding of nostalgia through commodity and individualisation is partially aligned to this thesis’ conception of experienced history and authenticity. For Cross, personal connections to a product allow a re-lived experience of a moment, but more importantly, can aid the remembrance of the past. Commodities may seem ephemeral, but it is these products that have become imbued with meaning, and more importantly, allow an individual to ‘put on multiplicities of identities across the movement through life’ (Cross, 2015:15). Nostalgia, then, is constructed around things rather than places or events, and it is these consumer goods that enable individuals to form alliances with some other members of their generation. The different collected commodities, according to Cross, gives a consumer multiplicity of fragmented identities, where our personality and memory is formed by our relationship to different products throughout life. To extend this theory, we are then able to bond with those with a similar interest in previous products and/or brands.

Authenticity and nostalgia, in connection to commodity, do pose conflicting problems for nostalgia scholars such as Cross. Harsh critics of nostalgia deem it sentimental, ephemeral, and lacking in accuracy or authenticity. Often romanticised, a nostalgic version of an era does not reflect how it was experienced, instead negative traits are removed in favour of a positive version of a time period. Even more complex

in those preservations of the past are reenactors or retro goods, none of which are authentic but replications of a style. Cross suggests that ‘we have substituted the “authentic” for the symbolic’ (Cross, 2015: 15) and that the past without heirlooms cannot be passed down to our children. It is here, however, that this thesis diverges from Cross’ conception of nostalgia, individualisation and experience. Whilst he is correct that often images and/or practices have become symbolic, it is incorrect to assume that a consumer cannot have an authentic experience from a symbolic image or from a retro product. The thesis will show how nostalgia for a time can feel authentic through posthumous stardom, and why these case study stars play an important role in an accessible experience of the past.

Nostalgia, for Cross, is related to an individual’s formative years, but there are some complexities that are not explored. Often, Cross refers to Baby Boomers and their nostalgia for the 1950s. In the book, the scholar posits that it is this generation which caused the 1950s revival. In my opinion, however, the interest in the 1950s is not a direct result of the Baby Boomer generation. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five, but it is worthy of a brief discussion here to aid the rest of the literature review. According to cultural studies, the Baby Boomer generation roughly began in the mid-1940s and ended in 1964. Thus, those born from 1956-1964 barely experienced the 1950s or even the era of the Fifties.<sup>44</sup> Those born in 1946, did experience the 1950s and enter adolescence by 1959, but again would experience prime consumer autonomy in 1962. It is my estimation, therefore, that although the 1950s would play a large part in a Baby Boomer’s childhood, it would not play a role in their adolescence, known as the formative years in nostalgia theory. Baby Boomers

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<sup>44</sup> There is, of course, a distinction between the 1950s as a decade (1950-1959) and the era of the Fifties (1954-1964). This distinction will become clearer throughout this sub-section and in Chapter Two.



are interesting and arguably play a vital role in free love and the Sixties revolution, but I argue it is the latter part of the Silent generation (or the Lucky Few) that scholars should be assessing in regards to Fifties nostalgia, and more importantly, as the source of *intergenerational nostalgia*.

Arguably, the individuals that experienced the 1950s are cross-generational to begin with. The Silent generation is summarised as those born between 1929 and 1945,<sup>45</sup> born in-between and during war this generation is comparably smaller to the Baby Boomers due to financial, and perhaps social concerns regarding raising children.<sup>46</sup> Those born between 1925 and 1937 would have come of age by 1943-1955, and thus, would not have had their formative years during the Fifties. However, those born between 1938 and 1945 would experience both rationing in their childhood and the liberation of rock ‘n’ roll in their adolescence. Sweeping statements about generational nostalgia, therefore, is difficult and is far more complex than nostalgia theorists currently suggest. This thesis will extend and question the origins of Fifties nostalgia by placing those that experienced their formative years in the Fifties not as the Baby Boomers, but those born between 1938 and 1945. In addition, it will explore intergenerational nostalgia and the eras that followed the Fifties as an explanation as to why the Baby Boomer generation, and as a result, the Baby Boomer’s children, may inherit the Fifties as a nostalgic period.

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<sup>45</sup> Dates of generations are often contested. This date derives from *The Population Bulletin* (2009) which focuses specifically on 20<sup>th</sup>-Century U.S. Generations. The speculations I make on the experience of the Fifties are based both on the dates from this bulletin and nostalgia theorists’ identification of a person’s formative years. For example, if a person is nostalgic for their formative years, a person would have to be between the ages of 14-27 during the Fifties.

<sup>46</sup> The low consumer population was the main drive toward consistent ‘new’ products and the surplus of commodity goods in the Fifties. This will be explored in the second chapter to prove the importance of the Silent generation in the creation of the Fifties and is an idea that is also explored in Alan Petigny’s *The Permissive Society* (2009).

Research has also been completed by psychologists and cultural scholars on the particular periods individuals are nostalgic for. According to Holbrook and Schindler (1994), the years in which individuals are most interested in ‘movie stars peak at around age 14 and preferences for movies peak around age 27’ (quoted in Routledge 2016: 39). Music too was studied by Holbrook and Schindler (1989) and in this research the scholars found that ‘people prefer music that was released in their late teens and early twenties’ (quoted in Routledge 2016: 40). Therefore, our media interest is at its peak in our formative years, a conclusion that was also confirmed in Goran Bolin’s research of generational nostalgia.

Bolin furthers our understanding of formative nostalgia by discussing the ability to inherit the nostalgia of past generations. Bolin found the formative years to be between 17-25 years, a number that is closely aligned to Holbrook’s and Schindler’s study of music and nostalgia. His study, however, showed that the recent generation (for this study, millennials) have ‘nostalgia envy’ (Bolin 2016: 257), which is prevalent due to the lack of ownership of music through digital downloads. He notes that children discover old mixtapes and want to inherit these commodities due to the products’ tangible existence. Bolin found that younger generations are ‘mourning (...) the ability to pass on media practices (...) as they now are close to leaving their formative years’ (Bolin 2016: 260). Cross similarly suggests millennials are experiencing a sense of anxiety over the inability to share with their own future/current children. Generation Y is not commented upon, but using this theory, the same would apply to them. However, in my opinion, millennials may suffer more from nostalgia envy due to the switch from CDs and mixtapes to digital formats in

their lifetime. This particular hypothesis is too large for this thesis, but should be encouraged as a viable psychology-media studies project in entertainment and nostalgia. Nostalgia, is an imagined space, connecting younger generations to the temporal locations of their parents and even grandparents. As this thesis will show, the combination of the aforementioned psychological and cultural studies in nostalgia will allow the thesis to interrogate how the 1950s can speak to two generations that did not experience the time period.

The study of nostalgia is prevalent in psychology, cultural studies, and film and media studies, each field offering an insight into how nostalgia can be affective, and in the case of marketing, effective. Whilst media studies focuses on how something can be rendered nostalgic for emotive and persuasive responses on behalf of an audience, psychology has been interested in researching how and why people are nostalgic for their past. This thesis is more closely aligned with the film and media studies methodology, however, psychology presents a useful knowledge base from which to extend the way film and media studies analyses nostalgic representation on page and screen.

Psychologist, Clay Routledge, notes that nostalgia is not the cause of negative feeling, but the effect. In his recent work from 2016, Routledge outlines the various causes of nostalgia which are loneliness, existential void and boredom, and self-discontinuity. Each of these four sub-chapters contain interesting experiments on the relation to sad emotional states and the return to nostalgic memories to help an individual's overall mood. The work, however, could also be re-developed in line with cultural, film, and media studies by using

the psychological causes of nostalgia to assess society's interest in past products, popular stars, and culture.

Routledge's first category, loneliness, was found to be the most prevalent 'nostalgia instigator' (Routledge 2016: 28). Whilst this alone is of interest, the work does not discuss why or if loneliness is more likely in the internet age. As this thesis will show, posthumous stardom in advertising peaks after the millennium. Therefore, using psychological research, nostalgia theory in film and media studies can be extended by connecting the patterns of posthumous interest and the correlation with the digital age. This thesis, therefore, will use this knowledge base to enter a dialogue with proven studies on nostalgia to show that a consumer may be more susceptible to posthumous stars not just due to individual loneliness, but because of isolation caused by the changing media and social landscape.

Routledge's second category, existential void and boredom, focuses on the individual's awareness of their own mortality and perceived meaninglessness. Again, like his third category, self-discontinuity (a sub category that focuses on the ability to adjust to life changes), all of these anxieties are located in the individual. Therefore, these causes need to be re-evaluated through a cultural lens to assess how society could experience these same causes and the resulting proliferation in the media. As suggested previously, the changing cultural and media landscape has adjusted our social behaviours, but so too has the use of automation in industry and the continued geographical separation from the family unit. The combination of these

elements is just one of the potential causes of nostalgic interest in our leisure time and on the screen.

In addition, the rise of the digital age could be the cause of the nostalgia for a pre-digital past, an imagined space and time where it appeared individuals were less lonely. The 1950s as a pre-digital age could explain the interest in nostalgia, but there are many decades that precede this era, and thus, this does not sufficiently explain the interest and relevancy of the 1950s or the case study stars as representatives of that time. Cultural theorists have tried to explain returning nostalgia through generational sharing of commodities, but they have not assessed why there is a strong pull toward the 1950s.<sup>47</sup> This is a gap in the explanation of generational nostalgia as parents and grandparents may have had their formative years in any number of decades, for instance, the 1930s. Therefore, why is it that the 1950s has been accepted by generation X and Y? In the thesis, I will attempt to fill in these gaps, and more importantly, answer why only certain stars of the 1950s are chosen as nostalgic representations of the decade, and how they too have continued relevance in contemporary society.

Film and media scholars have also discussed nostalgia, but have often focused on the aesthetic of nostalgia rather than affect and reasons for feeling nostalgic. The mass media is often referred to as an influencer of nostalgia and a creator of a society's conception of its past through iconography and repeated narratives. The media inform society's collective memory through stylistic choices, a topic Paul Grainge outlines in *Monochrome Memories, Nostalgia and Style in Retro America*. In his study of the use of black and white in the media,

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<sup>47</sup> It should also be noted that 1980s and 1990s nostalgia is gaining currency in today's popular culture.

Grainge found that 'by the early 1990s the saturation of colour within a crowded visual marketplace had given black and white a new life' (Grainge 2002: 3). Black and white media images punctuated the visual landscape and thus allowed these representations both to stand out and connote a certain pastness. This pastness in turn connoted a sense of authenticity, but also made the past and the present align, resulting in 'perpetual presents' (Grainge 2002: 31).

Nostalgia, therefore, was evoked by what Grainge deems a 'nostalgia mode' (Grainge 2002: 21), a stylised version of a past that becomes a 'commodified style' (21). He noted that in *Time* magazine in 1989, the cover articles were in black and white to connote their importance, and thus, this styling was a mode through which the magazine drew a reader's attention. The monochrome print, due to its past use in magazines, made the pieces seem as if it were history in the making. The historicity added to these texts through black and white shows the importance of aesthetic design to convey a perceived importance. Whilst this is certainly true, and is the case with some of the video commercials in this thesis, it cannot be said to be the rule. The 1950s, as a time of progress, saw colour magazines, cinemascope and heightened colour on cinema screens through filmmakers such as Douglas Sirk. The 1950s in filmic representations is often a time of colour and commodity, and thus, has other modes to evoke authenticity and nostalgia.

Media scholars have shown some interest in the nostalgic representation of the 1950s, and this knowledge, although not directly aiding our understanding of posthumous stardom, does help our understanding of the era in which the stars studied in this thesis originate. Cinema scholars, such as Christine

Sprengler, note the use of Fifties' aesthetic and culture in cinema, but again does not pose why this still continues to be an interest in our society. In my opinion, *intergenerational media-nostalgia* (my own term which will be defined in the next sub-section) occurs due to financial prosperity and/or during an apparent cultural shift in the United States of America. The posthumous case study stars function in cultural nostalgia-waves (a term coined by sociologist Fred Davis in 1979), I argue, because the stars represent social mobility, progress and a previous economic boom in the United States of America. The posthumous star, therefore, is rendered a signifier of American success and longevity.

The concepts generated by nostalgia theorists, and illustrated in this sub-section, are important to the understanding of posthumous stardom. In addition to the work by previous scholars, however, this thesis includes a segment in which to disclose new terminology generated by this research. Academic transparency regarding my contributions to the field, and those which have been expanded, are paramount to the clarity of this work, and therefore, this sub-section has been placed before the argument proper. In addition to the terminology, the next sub-section clearly defines the parameters of this research, identifying which areas of posthumous stardom will be the focus of this thesis.

## 1.6 Defining Parameters and Terminology

The thesis is interested in commercial representations of posthumous stars and the methods and tropes that are used to generate interest and maintain cultural relevancy. More specifically, the thesis is interested in posing a method in which to evaluate posthumous stardom through the use of a hierarchy and completing an analysis of the top two tiers of posthumous stardom.<sup>48</sup> These top tiers are exclusively designated for posthumous stars that have infiltrated the popular consumer market through large advertising campaigns. Secondly, the thesis is interested in analysing how posthumous stars are used as a method to enhance the authenticity of brands within advertising, particularly through connotations of time period, rumour, and the self-identification a star brand can instil in a consumer. Additionally, some analysis will focus on how posthumous stars are used as methods to convey the nostalgic Fifties, an era in which is of significant importance to the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century's cultural shift.

However, it is important to note that posthumous stardom is a multifaceted phenomenon and expands beyond advertising. There is an array of materials<sup>49</sup> which use a posthumous star image, but these materials are unfortunately too vast for this study. Further research, as discussed in the conclusion, would benefit from an analysis of fan-made products, fan-based

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<sup>48</sup> The thesis, despite not focusing on a singular star, is still dominated by the presence of Marilyn Monroe (from the top tier of the posthumous hierarchy). As Chapter Three will show, Monroe is the star which has been used most often in advertising, and thus is analysed the most in this research. In addition, her consistent use throughout each decade in print advertisements and also commercials from the 1990s (some posthumous stars do not appear in each decade or the advertisement could not be verified) is the most helpful in establishing tropes and changes over time, and thus Monroe will appear in every section of this research.

<sup>49</sup> The word 'materials' alludes to objects such as commodities, biopics, biographies, fictional film and literature, hologram performances at a concert, spas, and any television shows.



activities,<sup>50</sup> film and television documentaries, film biopics, fictional narratives, and celebrity life-writing.<sup>51</sup> Research in these key areas, could, when contrasted and correlated with the findings in this work, provide an even larger theoretical analysis of the posthumous star.

The thesis, concerned with the commercial representation of a star, is interested in the appropriation of a star by large corporations and brands. Advertising that pertains to a posthumous star's work, such as a commercial for an Elvis Presley CD, will not be analysed. Instead, the research will focus on how the posthumous star brand is constructed in order to sell an unrelated product. For example, the thesis will analyse products such as Chanel perfume, a product which Monroe had no part in making, and will not analyse an advertisement for the re-release of *The Seven Year Itch* (Billy Wilder, 1955), a product which is a direct result of Monroe's work. These parameters hope to restrict the plethora of advertising related to a posthumous star, and draw clearer conclusions regarding brand exploitation in the consumer market.

The thesis will seek to explore its subject material predominantly from a media and cultural studies perspective, rather than from a business studies perspective. The work does not analyse finances<sup>52</sup> in detail, but instead draws upon business and marketing literature to gain understanding of emotional manipulations and strategies that are conducive to economic profit. The thesis aims to build and further the analysis of star brands and posthumous stardom,

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<sup>50</sup> The word 'activities' refers to things such as a discussion on an internet forum, or arranging a trip to a location associated with a star.

<sup>51</sup> Fictional narratives refer to stories that are entirely fictionalised, such as *The Marilyn Monroe Tapes* by E.J. Gorman and fictional accounts of a star's life, such as *Blonde* by Joyce Carol Oates. Life-writing refers to both biographies and autobiographies.

<sup>52</sup> Lack of estate transparency makes it difficult to obtain accurate financial information.

but also aims to connect nostalgia and authenticity theory to explore the United States of America's idealised past, and the continuance of Fifties' ideology regarding prosperity (consumerism and the power of the United States of America), technology (from rockets and plastics in the Fifties to smart appliances today) and individualism (the move to the suburbs and an interest in forming a self and a family away from previous communities, and/or the increasing influence of psychology).

The work, due to its large task, will only analyse Western advertisements which are in the English language. The concluding results, therefore, reflect an anglicised consumer base and is not representative of Western society. The advertisements are predominantly of American origin (and often international campaigns by American firms), and thus, furthers the requirement to trace the changes in American culture. Arguably, however, the United States of America, as the dominant power (certainly the biggest in media production) in the Western world, does attempt to mould the interests of other countries, and certainly Great Britain. Therefore, whilst it may not analyse various commercials from the Netherlands (a country which has some very interesting posthumous commercials using the likes of Marilyn Monroe) and the rest of Europe, it does reveal the American stars which continue to be propagated in Western culture by the largest media-makers of this hemisphere and the English-speaking world.

Further complexity is added to this work in the form of collecting advertising, a type of media that is often relegated as ephemeral and disposable. Although discussed in more detail inside the thesis, advertising is unlike film and music, for example, many advertisements, once used, are lost or hidden in obscure collections.

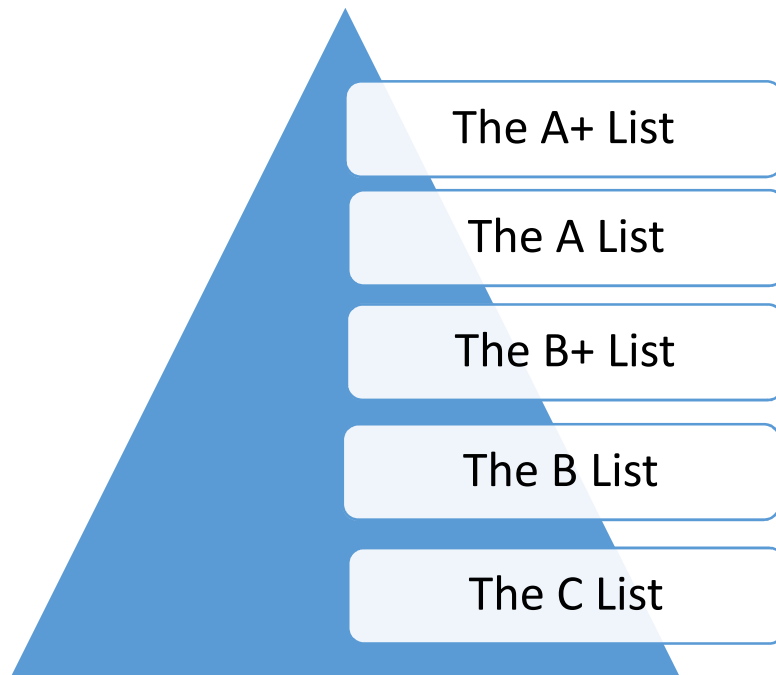
The necessity to save and document the history of peripheral film culture (such as magazines and advertisements) is improving, but it is not complete, and thus many paper advertisements are invariably lost. The advertising which has been found, however, has only been used in this thesis once it has been thoroughly checked for authenticity<sup>53</sup>. For example, sites such as Adsoftheworld.com, or the databases provided by welovesad.com and the International Advertising & Design Database (IADDB), were used for consultation purposes on any dubious advertisement. Paper advertisements in particular can be fan/student made, and thus, any that could not be verified either through dedicated sites or through magazines in The Digital Media Library have not been included. As a result, the following thesis may not contain every advertisement available, but does endeavour to draw conclusions from authenticated commercials to illuminate how a posthumous star can become a successful posthumous brand.

The parameters discussed will aid the understanding of an official posthumous star brand, but star theory itself has many conflicting definitions, that without explanation of use, can cloud the clarity of an argument. As a result, the remainder of this sub-section aims to define my own use of star terminology to ensure comprehension. Throughout this segment, italics will also be used to identify my own terminology to emphasise the context in which the terminology should be used and to highlight new contributions to the field. Firstly, I will

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<sup>53</sup> The verification process was, in some cases, difficult. For example, I found Coca-Cola print advertisements featuring Marilyn Monroe that were supposedly from the 1950s. However, no database or reliable source had any information on this advertisement. That is not to say that it is not real, it may well exist in an obscure magazine. Regardless of its potential existence, I could not in good faith include the advertisement in my analysis of tropes and changes. Conversely, there are some excellent-looking print advertisements, for example, Beats Headphones with Elvis Presley, and another Coca-Cola advertisement with Marilyn Monroe as the Coke bottle. These were not included because after further investigation I discovered these were student-made for an advertising class. Therefore, any potentially dubious advertisements were treated as student or fan-made and made exempt from the analysis in Chapter Three.

provide an example of the Ulmer Scale<sup>54</sup> to show a previous method in which to clarify star power and cultural presence through a star's bankability.



Graph 1: The Ulmer Scale

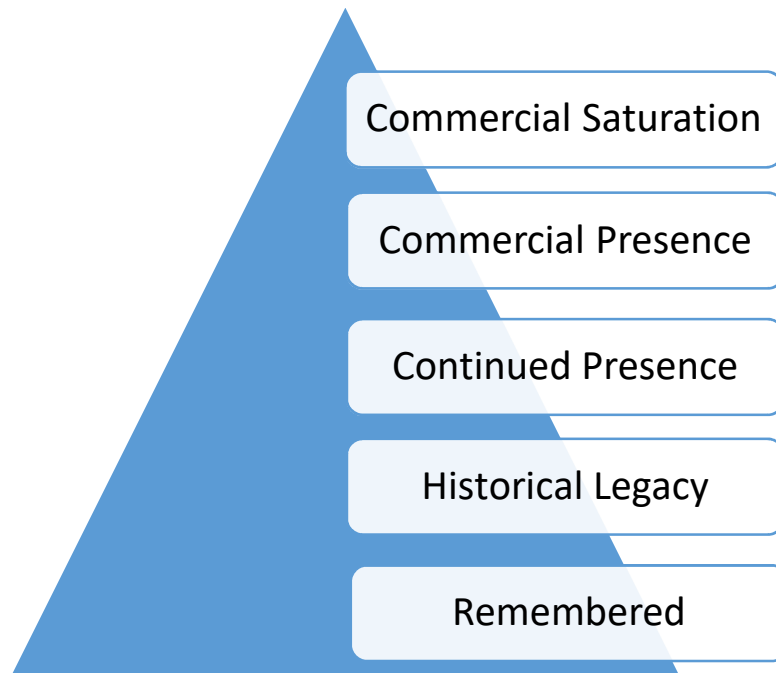
Equally, posthumous stardom requires a scale, and thus, I have generated a graph based on my findings. This graph is to reduce confusion, contribute to the field, and avoid previous misgivings in this area of study in which scholars use terms such as 'deleb' 'dead star', 'posthumous star' and 'legend' inconsistently. These categorisations posited below will continue throughout my work, and thus are presented here with definitions to aid understanding. It is important to note that I consider all dead stars<sup>55</sup> that are remembered (in either large fan communities or as the face featured on advertisements) as posthumous stars. However, that one term does not sufficiently describe the varying degrees

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<sup>54</sup> The Ulmer Scale is a way to measure stardom through the bankability of a star. For more information see 1.3.

<sup>55</sup> Any type of performer that was at one point in their life considered a 'star', such as a musician or actor.

of influence after-death in popular culture. The hierarchy below assesses a posthumous star, and like the Ulmer Scale, it evaluates a posthumous star's commercial and financial success. This is achieved by analysing the frequency in which the posthumous star appears in the consumer market. This method is used due to the restrictions on information by many posthumous star estates.



Graph 2: The Posthumous Scale

My graph (above) shows the various categorisations I have attributed to posthumous stardom. Although this thesis will focus on the top two tiers, I will first define each of the categories in some detail. Firstly, *commercial saturation*, as the top tier of the posthumous scale, is used to define a posthumous film or music star with a career after-death and has both proven commercial and popular culture longevity. To be a posthumous star from the top tier, the star's estate should have used the star image since death. The star should have a high profile and have regularly been used by large corporations on advertising and

commodity (not including advertising for their own products, such as film). Additionally, the star's image, persona and history should have been used in literature, fictional film, biopics, documentaries, popular music, and fan-based products and activities. Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe are examples of posthumous stars in this category.

The second category, *commercial presence*, pertains to a dead film or music star with a commercial career after-death. The image should have been used since death, but may have been applied throughout time to varying degrees. This posthumous star, therefore, is highly commercialised and matches the definition above except the posthumous star is or has not always been as prevalent. James Dean and Audrey Hepburn are examples of posthumous stars in this category.

The third category, *continued presence*, is summarised as a posthumous film or music star with a small commercial career in comparison with the category above. I use the term to define a posthumous star that is used in advertising and commodity, but is considerably less exposed to the market. Examples of this category are vast, for example, Fred Astaire, Elizabeth Taylor, Michael Jackson, Gene Kelly, Grace Kelly, Judy Garland, and Lucille Ball. Elizabeth Taylor and Michael Jackson, despite recent success, have died too recently to prove longevity, and thus, their position within the hierarchy may change with time.

The fourth category, *historical legacy*, differs considerably from the categories before it. In this tier of posthumous stardom the star's estate may license the use of the star's image or likeness for some commercial use in

commodities, but the dead star's image will mainly continue through multiple biographies, documentaries and biopics. These posthumous stars may have also been used in fictional film and television or as popular culture references. Examples of this tier are James Cagney, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Rudolph Valentino, and Charlie Chaplin.

Lastly, the *remembered* category is the largest category of the hierarchy. In this tier the dead star may have an estate, but most merchandise is made available through fan communities. The star may also have a biography and/or biopic about their life and career, but will appear in popular culture less often as the categories above it. Examples of this are the likes of Buster Keaton, Lillian Gish, Joan Bennett, Jane Russell, and Gregory Peck.

To continue this section, I have included my own use of terminology previously used by other scholars. The definitions below, therefore, are included for clarification purposes, and not as new terminology. Firstly, "star" is used in this thesis to pertain to a person of talent that is a commercial success in their respective field and considered to have bankability. In contrast, "celebrity" refers to any famous person that is not a star. For example, all stars are celebrities, but not all celebrities are stars. Therefore, "celebrity" includes a person that is famous, but has not used a performative or sports talent to become acknowledged by the media, for example, a person that is famous due to the media's emphasis on the person's appearance, looks or societal position. Additionally, "celebrity" includes actors with less commercial success, starring roles or popularity. "Celebrity", therefore, is a term connected to a famous person of merit and popularity, but those whose fame is generated from small

consistent roles and/or as being themselves. This should, therefore, explain the absence of the term in this thesis.

The term “persona” will be used in this thesis to define a personality that is presented to the public through the star (interviews, for example) and the star’s work. This definition acknowledges the star as a performer, even when away from the set. The persona, therefore, is a constructed self for publicity purposes. A persona, of course, can alter throughout time. However, regardless of alteration, I posit in this thesis that there is a *foundational narrative* which even the updated persona adheres to. For example, a “new” version of a persona is not original, but modified for further publicity using some of the traits or discussion that appeared early in a star’s career. Often, scholars use the term “star image” as another way to say “star persona”. The conflation of these terms is also problematic, and thus, this thesis will use “persona” in connection to the overall impression of a star that is presented to the public through the media, and “star image” will be applied to discussions of literal images, such as photographs, stills, and graphic representations of a star.

The persona is partially enabled by the audience’s ability to make new meaning. In this research, the concept of a star as polysemic has been adjusted to consider the *strands of openness* during the construction of the *foundational narrative*. Whilst I agree that the case study stars are a producerly text (to borrow John Fiske’s term used previously in 1.3), I argue that the ability to appropriate the stars of this thesis is due to the multiple discourses and rebellion these stars represented during the Fifties. *Strands of openness*, therefore, means various contentious threads of discourse which have not been rectified and in which



these stars play a role as an example in heated debates both in the 1950s and today. It is the continuance (or openness) of these debates, such as gender, race, and sexuality, that makes these stars both relevant and accessible for use in popular culture.

Furthermore, the term “star history” will be used as an adjunct of star image, focusing more on the media’s writing about a star, either as performance analysis or gossip. The star’s history is not the “true” life of a star, but an attempt to construct a story around the persona through rumour and personal accounts. For example, star history can be found in both gossip magazines and biographies.

In addition to the new terminology regarding the posthumous hierarchy and the clarification of star studies lexicon, I also posit a method in which to deconstruct the presentation of posthumous star personas, images, and history. Analysed in detail in Chapter Four, I suggest there are four distinct ways to present a posthumous star in commercial advertisements (or indeed in any art form). The first is by dramatizing life or using a narrative that is based on actuality. Borrowing Dennis Bingham’s concept that biopics are an “uncovered” life of an historical person,<sup>56</sup> this categorisation covers any advertising which re-tells a life, and as a result, is named *uncovered reconstructions*. The second category, *authentic re-presentation*, investigates a star’s life by using video footage or tangible evidence to present an argument about a star’s cultural importance or history. The third, *nostalgic reconstructions*, adapts a star to fit a fictional narrative, often reinforcing certain qualities and creating a caricature

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<sup>56</sup> For more on the biopic and an “uncovered” life, see Dennis Bingham’s book *Whose Lives Are These Anyway?: The Biopic as Contemporary Film Genre* (2010).

of a posthumous star. Lastly, the fourth category, *mediated memory*,<sup>57</sup> does not use the star directly, but instead uses star-iconography as motifs or themes. This category is therefore reliant on intertextual references which reinforce visual images and narratives, and thus, as suggested by the borrowed term, alters the memory of the posthumous star in mass culture.

The last two definitions, which condenses a star's persona and star history in favour of select and iconographic images, is most often applied to advertisements that employ an overtly nostalgic aesthetic. These adaptable images are useful in understanding what I deem to be *intergenerational media-nostalgia*. In the re-telling of a narrative (whether that be literature, film, or from life), it is easier to summarise, repeat, and emphasise key moments to enable audience recollection. The media, I suggest, have a similar method in reconstructing media from the past. Younger audiences, therefore, learn the iconic white dress of Marilyn Monroe from the repetition of that image in popular culture. The media historicises its own past through its own recurrent imagery, and the reverence in which the media places on certain iconography is passed to a younger generation. The Fifties or posthumous stardom, therefore, is experienced as nostalgic because some images have been esteemed by the media and taught as a memorable and significant event in media's history.

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<sup>57</sup> The term 'mediated memory' is currently used by scholars to describe representations of the past by the media which alters collective memory. A clear example of this term can be found in José van Dijck's *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (2007).

## 1.7 Conclusion

The literature review and parameters have shown three key areas in the study of the commercial construction of posthumous stardom. Firstly, the components of stardom have been shown to be complex, and many of the components that are used to define a famous person have been shown to be insufficient (i.e. not all stars have a pleasing voice). More importantly, many of these factors no longer stand for a posthumous star, and thus, do not adequately explain the continued success or after-career of a dead actor. Although rules and stardom are difficult to solidify and test, once stars do become successful a hierarchy can and should be put in place to distinguish star influence and cultural presence. Posthumous stardom has yet to have a hierarchy, and thus, this chapter has defined and stratified this area of stardom to aid the understanding of posthumous star presence. The posthumous stars, however, as shown in the definition sub-section of this thesis, are placed on a scale based upon varying degrees of commercial use, and thus, the view of continued economic success is aligned with the notion of bankability in hierarchies such as the Ulmer scale.

I have suggested that the more accessible or available for meaning production, the likeliness for relevancy and high levels of posthumous fame rises. No studies of posthumous stars, however, have generated theories or analysis regarding how this openness has been manipulated in the commercial market. Using my own theory regarding *strands of openness* and the *formative narrative*, the thesis will expose this gap, and with it expand knowledge on the nature of contradiction, gossip, and star construction.

Gossip, in part, forms the understanding of societal behaviours, but it also informs and further fragments the perception of the star's individual meaning. This

fragmentation reveals the existence of a person outside of a film performance, lending them authenticity in an industry that depends upon artificiality. This “real” life leads this conclusion to the summarisation of the second sub-chapter: consumer purchase as a method to ‘belongingness’. Authenticity theory suggested a consumer learns from consumerism by both using a product as a method of self-identification and to feel as if they belong to a community. I posited, therefore, that the star is a way through which a company can produce further affiliation, aid self-identification and quell cultural anxiety resulting from the digital.

The loss of some tangible products, combined with a changing and isolating culture, has altered the conception of time and caused temporal longing.<sup>58</sup> According to nostalgia theory, loneliness is the main cause of nostalgia in the individual. This theory, applied to culture, would suggest technology as the cause for a longing of a pre-digital past, a past which is located in the formative years of the Silent Generation and the era of the Fifties.

The next chapter, ‘Origins and History’, begins with an historical analysis and summarisation of the Fifties and the Silent Generation. After establishing the Fifties’ ideology and mythology, the chapter continues to analyse the formation of the case study stars during this time. The chapter will show how these stars’ contradictions were established and how gossip and rumour began to inform and further the contradictions of the stars’ persona and image. As a result, this chapter aims to show the importance of the Fifties and the era’s role in four of the most successful posthumous stars.

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<sup>58</sup> A topic covered in Goran Bolin’s article ‘Passion and Nostalgia in Generational Media Experiences’ (2016), an article which was referred to in the literature review and will re-appear in Chapter Five.

## **Chapter 2: Origins and History**

## 2.1 Introduction

The commercially saturated star, along with the commercially present star, exemplifies the star-as-contradiction model posed by theorists such as Richard Dyer and Richard deCordova. Arguably, all stars have inherent and explicit contradictions which are used as a method to maintain cultural relevancy and as a way to promote new material. However, contradictions are far more pronounced in the higher tiers of the posthumous stardom hierarchy. This chapter will show how it is the many dualities formed during the preliminary construction of a persona that enable these stars to be polysemic, and thus most suitable for appropriation in a contemporary consumer market.

The power of the posthumous contradiction is one of the various arguments that the thesis uses to explore the posthumous stars' continued presence in the public sphere. However, as noted above, contradictions are not singular to the contemporary *posthumous reconstruction*,<sup>59</sup> but instead form at a star's rise to fame. The origin of an audience's understanding, or a star's *foundational narrative*, is additionally not created in a vacuum, but is instead tightly connected to the era in which the star achieved fame.

This chapter will therefore analyse two key topics to aid the understanding of posthumous relevancy and hierarchical dominance. Firstly, it will examine the importance of 1950s<sup>60</sup> America and the role of the case study stars within it. The

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<sup>59</sup> As a reminder, any terms in italics are my own.

<sup>60</sup> For clarification, I will use the term 1950s to discuss moments which pertain to the decade in which these stars became famous. For example, the case study stars' personas were formed during 1953-1956, and thus, it was the 1950s and not the "Fifties" that these stars came to cultural prominence. I will use the term "Fifties" to talk about a concept of a time. For example, the look which is re-created by contemporary media is not an accurate depiction of a time, but uses stereotypical images to connote Mid-Century America, usually aesthetically based on media depictions from 1954-1964. The

1950s play both an important role in the creation of contradictions and in an individual star's persona, and equally, the success<sup>61</sup> of the Fifties in popular culture enables the continued dominance of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, James Dean, and Audrey Hepburn in the 'after-market' (McDonald 2013: 36).

Secondly, the chapter will conclude with the individual star's estate. Although separate from the Fifties, two of the four case study stars died on or before 1962, and thus, as the thesis moves into tropes and changes throughout the decades an awareness of how an estate could manipulate the posthumous image/persona (particularly in regard to the *foundational narrative*) is required. Each case is complex and the same rules and treatment do not apply for every posthumous star. It is therefore integral to acknowledge, although not legally dissect in this case, how an image is constrained or freed from some of the original construction and how this can change a posthumous star's representation throughout time.

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"Fifties", of course, also applies to the media-makers of 1954-1964 whom attempted to present a desirable representation of the time period.

<sup>61</sup> 'Success' refers to the dominance and presence of Fifties' iconography in today's cultural landscape and the nostalgia consumer market.

## 2.2 Invasion of the Populuxe Snatcher: 1950s America

In this sub-chapter the thesis will explore the importance of 1950s' America in popular culture. Firstly, the section will identify which values were promoted by the nation and why. Secondly, it will look extensively at the Populuxe style and consumer behaviour of the "Silent Generation" to show the importance of consumer behaviour in this period. Lastly, it will interrogate the power of the media in its depiction of the "Fifties" to suggest how engrained and pervasive the Fifties' aesthetic is in Western culture.

The literature review alluded to Christine Sprengler's work on Fifties' nostalgia in contemporary media, but will elaborate here. Sprengler posits that the 1950s was a decade, but the "Fifties" was an era which began in 1954 and ended in 1964.<sup>62</sup> Although not noted in Sprengler's work, this ten year period is historically significant for a multitude of reasons. It was during this time that the United States of America had a post-war boom, and for the country it was a time of prosperity. The new wealth of the period also attributed to a degree of self-confidence, a confidence fully realised through the victory of World War II, an economic boom, and increasing technological advances. The confidence of the nation, however, was not impenetrable. Cold War tensions, McCarthyism, increasing racial discontent, and shifts in attitudes regarding sex and youth culture disrupted the ideal image of the country.<sup>63</sup> Although the 1960s and early 1970s would be a period of time for protests and revolution, 1950s' and early 1960s' America was contradictory, seemingly a shiny beacon of hope on the

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<sup>62</sup> Sprengler uses these dates due to Thomas Hine's book, *Populuxe* (1986), thus, links the era's ideology with consumerism.

<sup>63</sup> These topics are covered in a vast array of American history and culture books, most notably in David Reynolds' *America, Empire of Liberty* (2009), David Halberstam's *The Fifties* (1993), Grace Pallandino's *Teenagers* (1996), Andrew Hurley's *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks* (2001), and Michael D. Dwyer's *Back to the Fifties* (2015).



surface, but actually a bubbling pot of discontent that was expressed and given definition through the stars that make up this thesis' research.

Firstly, it is worth noting here that the Fifties ended in 1964, the year after John F. Kennedy's assassination. Unlike many Presidents before him, Kennedy appeared youthful and glamorous, much like the handsome men that appeared on the new television sets in the new affordable suburban homes. Kennedy represented the Fifties' aesthetic through his willingness to spend on commodity and the American home (Jackie Kennedy's White House restoration in 1961) whilst many Americans were moving into the new suburbs and also investing in interior design.

The Kennedy family also coveted and invited entertainers to perform at the White House during a time of new entertainment mediums, such as television. The penchant for stars and glamour, therefore, was endorsed by the President. Lastly, Kennedy promoted the space race and Project Apollo was the result of Kennedy's first appeal to Congress, aligning the President with new technology, progress, and American ideals regarding the (next) frontier and exploration. Interestingly, only a third of Kennedy's legislative programme would be successful, and overall Kennedy struggled to make a difference to domestic affairs. With little impact on the American public's life, then, much of his posthumous notoriety has been generated by his assassination. American historian, David Reynolds suggests that it was Kennedy's assassination that made him 'a symbol of his age' (Reynolds 2009: 435) and with his death, so too, did the untouchable notion of American prosperity and success alter.

The Fifties, as solidified in figures such as John F. Kennedy, are rendered glamorous, technologically innovative and materialistic. Re-imagined as conservative and safe, the Fifties appear as a simplistic and commodified age. Whilst

clear commodification and wealth is not inaccurate, the Fifties were not as definable as it may first appear, and certainly not as innocent and wholesome as depicted in post 1970s, (and especially 1980s) renditions. In part, this clean image is due to the decade of the 1950s itself and its own attempt to create an American myth. The 1950s success in creating a standardised and positive image of itself now haunts modern media and dominates the nostalgia market, only now competing with the American Eighties, itself an attempt to re-claim the lost Fifties through Reaganomics and continued (until 1985) confrontation with Russia.<sup>64</sup>

The United States of America was a prosperous nation after World War II and cultivated this position as leader of the free world through the positive depictions on the now various media outlets such as radio, newspapers/magazines, advertising, film, and the new suburban must-have: television. It was the media of the 1950s that cultivated the aesthetic and ideology of the era and disseminated this message to its own nation foremost, but ultimately, to the Western world. Sprengler presents the idea that the 1950s created the conception of the Fifties to promote its own success and progress. Filmmakers, she argues, did not/do not present the 1950s, but the era of the Fifties, which is, simply, an idealised version of the time as conceived by the media makers of the 1950s. Tail fins, the space race and the all-new suburban home with modern convenience and Populuxe design were, and still are, symbols of the aesthetic design of the era. Therefore, this thesis adopts Sprengler's conception of the decade vs. the era, and thus, the 'Fifties' will be attributed to the conception of time, aesthetic, and societal values as idealised by the 1950s, and consequently, today.

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<sup>64</sup> 1980s American history is discussed in some detail in Doug Rossinow's *The Reagan Era, A History of the 1980s* (2015), Steven F. Hayward's *The Age of Reagan*, John M. Logsdon's *Ronald Reagan and the Space Frontier* (2019), and again in David Reynold's *America Empire of Liberty* (2009).

The Fifties is an inauthentic representation of the era, but it is one that dominates the nostalgia market, and thus should be properly understood to analyse how contemporary media, through aesthetics and stardom, continue an idealised self-conception through yet another layer of idealised nostalgia. The dominant aesthetic in Fifties representation (in the 1950s) and re-representation (from the 1970s) is through the visual design of Populuxe, a look that reflects the 1950s self-conception most accurately. The synthetic word, “Populuxe”, combines popular and luxury to connote the change in living standards where social mobility was accessible through mass produced and convenient products. Populuxe’s message was that technology and appliances were no longer only available to the elite, but to everyone, and thus falsely equated equality with consumer goods.

Equality, or a perceived sense of prosperity within the family unit, was not the sole drive behind mass production. The manufacturers had an ulterior motive due to the low population rate in the upcoming consumer market. The depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s had produced the lowest American birth-rate,<sup>65</sup> and it was this age group that were now seen as the key consumers. Cars and appliances only needed to be purchased once, and thus, the predicted sales seemed limited. As a technique to avoid this, design and colour were updated often to encourage frequent replacement, and thus, household and family commodities were not only accessible, but replaceable and fashionable. Marketers relied on magazines and television to promote the new ‘look’ and colours to the new consumers, now seen as even more susceptible, as they had moved away from their extended family and into the suburbs.

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<sup>65</sup> According to Elwood Carlson’s research in *The Population Bulletin* (2009), there are seven U.S. generations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Lucky Few, a.k.a. The Silent Generation, was the first generation in U.S history to be smaller than the generation preceding it.



Figure 4: New colour choices in 1950s products

According to 2009's Population Bulletin, this generation, born from 1929-1945, and with a median birth date of 1937, would be 17 at the start of the Fifties' era (1954). The elder of the generation are marrying early and starting the high birth rate of the baby boomers, mere small children at this stage of the Fifties. The median age, however, are entering their formative years. This period of life (17-25), according to nostalgia theory,<sup>66</sup> is where we formulate our most fundamental likes and dislikes that

<sup>66</sup> See the nostalgia section of the literature review for Bolin's work on formative years.

will continue to inform our opinions and taste for the rest of our life. The youngest will continue to have their formative years during the latter part of the era, perhaps heavily influenced by things such as the Cold War, John F. Kennedy and rock 'n' roll. It is the Silent Generation, therefore, that is at the crux of this era, both as suburban home owners<sup>67</sup> and as the teenage youth. It is not the Baby Boomers that have altered consumption and heightened interest in the media, but the preceding generation.

To further the complexity of Fifties' nostalgia, cultural critics suggest it is Millennials which have the largest demand for retro products.<sup>68</sup> These products, however, if it were to fit with nostalgia theory, should be from the Millennials formative years (median year of birth: 1992. Median formative year: 2009). Therefore, if Millennials do influence the nostalgia market (dominated by the Fifties and Eighties) it is not for their own time, but for a combination of their parents', and more importantly for this thesis, their grandparents' formative years.

The transference of Fifties' nostalgia, I argue is in part due to the Silent Generation's nostalgia for the Fifties during the Baby Boomers' formative years. As a result, the Fifties informed 1970s and 1980s media<sup>69</sup> allowing the Silent Generation's formative years to be absorbed into the cultural understanding and

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<sup>67</sup> This generation married early and contributed heavily to the population, in what would become the Baby Boomer generation – the largest of all generations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 1946 alone 'saw a record 3.4 million births; by the mid-1950's the birth rate was running at 4 million a year' (Reynolds 2009: 388).

<sup>68</sup> Millennials are the generation with the most interest in retro products according to the Forbes' article 'Why Nostalgia Marketing Works So Well With Millennials And How Your Brand Can Benefit' (Friedman 2016: online).

<sup>69</sup> The 1950s were reliant on the media to convey ideology, and thus, there are many signs/icons/designs/previous television shows and films to copy and replicate with ease. As an example of 1970s and 1980s media as nostalgic for the Fifties consider the following examples: *Happy Days* (Garry Marshall, 1974-1984), *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973), *Grease* (Randal Kleiser, 1978), *Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985). In music: Don McLean's 'American Pie' (1971), Madonna's video to 'Material Girl' (1985), or bands such as Sha Na Na. For more excellent analysis on the 1970s and 1980s Fifties appropriation in film and music see Michael D. Dwyer's *Back to the Fifties* (2015) and Simon Reynold's *Retromania* (2011).

nostalgia of the Baby Boomers. Additionally, the 1980s mirrored some of the success of the 1950s. For example, there was a financial boom, combined with the Presidency of Ronald Reagan<sup>70</sup> whom reflected the success and glamour of the Fifties.<sup>71</sup> In the 1980s, Cold War tensions did finally conclude (1985) and the Berlin wall was dismantled (1989), ushering in a sense of security. Space travel is also revitalised in this period, with frequent missions to space, including space shuttles. Therefore, I suggest the power of Fifties' nostalgia centres on mass production in the 1950s (many goods to find and/or replicate), the growing dominance of media culture in the Silent Generation's lives (various shows in syndication, or again, vast materials to replicate), and the seemingly identical cultural and political issues which occur in the 1980s. Now, as the Baby Boomers age, Eighties nostalgia has begun to rise, but the Fifties have not disappeared because it played an integral role in 1980s media and political and cultural understanding. As a result, Fifties nostalgia is presented and absorbed by today's new consumer – the Millennial.

To continue the sub-section, the thesis will further interrogate not how the Fifties have returned, but how the era is represented by further examining its relation to the media and consumerism. The nature of consumerism changed to manipulate the Silent Generation and ensure the sale of mass produced commodities.<sup>72</sup> According to Thomas Hine, the author of one of the few books dedicated to Populuxe products, 1954-1964 was the era for the USA's 'great shopping sprees' (Hine 1986: 3), but it

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<sup>70</sup> President of the United States of America from 1981-1989. Ronald Reagan, as a former Hollywood actor from the 1940s and 1950s, connoted an element of glamour from war-time and post-war USA.

<sup>71</sup> It is of little coincidence, therefore, that during the Millennials (1983 – 2001) formative years/early twenties that popular culture should be recycling the Fifties and the Eighties simultaneously. For the Eighties consider television shows such as *Stranger Things* (2016 -) and *The Goldbergs* (2013-).

<sup>72</sup> In the Fifties brand names gained further importance. In 1959, Brand Names Foundation Inc. began with a mission to ensure consumers were buying quality products. This resulted in advertising campaigns encouraging the purchase of brand products. Therefore, this era saw not only a rise in the purchase of items, but increased persuasion to buy quality brand products.

was the space race and technology, (particularly important after Sputnik in 1957), that informed the visual design of a home and consumer products. Advertisers encouraged homes to be adorned with futuristic kitchens filled with the latest appliances, ensuring that larger American values surrounding technological progress were exhibited even in the domestic sphere. Cars also had tailfins to represent the space age, and in the case of cars such as the 1957 Chevrolet, had a visual resemblance to rockets.

Living quarters (front rooms), however, were not always as futuristic in their representation. In actual homes, e.g. non-media representations, there would be remnants of previous decades throughout the household. However, if a home was depicted as un-futuristic in the media, a frontier aesthetic would be used to link with America's explorative past.<sup>73</sup> Both of these depictions, however, could also be in the same home as both were a 'manifestation of the same spirit' (Hine 1986: 8): American exploration and power.

American ideology was shown through the products in the home. A consumer was encouraged to buy products with the newest plastics and colours, whilst equally encouraged to adorn the house with classic wood panelling in the family room. American people became connected through new products that gave them a sense of belonging in a changing world in which many were distanced by their move to the suburbs and new communities. These new objects were manufactured on an assembly line, and products were differentiated by colour and shape, thus, although a sense of belonging could be established, the choice of design placed importance on individual style and fantasy and kept the notion of American individuality. Therefore, the fifties

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<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that this frontier rhetoric could be found outside the home, such as John F. Kennedy's 1960 acceptance speech that included the term the 'New Frontier' and is associated with space, again, tapping into the futuristic Fifties aesthetic and technological ideals.

became a highly commodified culture because of two fundamental reasons: economic concerns regarding fewer potential consumers from the Silent Generation, and the desire to promote American values and power.

American power during this period is essential to understanding why this era exudes confidence in its media portrayal. The West was fragile after the destruction of World War II, and President Truman, upon witnessing the increase of communism in the East, pushed the development of the hydrogen bomb in 1950. The Cold War ushered in a sense of insecurity through the threat of nuclear war, but the consistent push of technology and the military, combined with increased prosperity, gave the illusion of the USA's ability to succeed against any foe of freedom and democracy. Americans, even the poorest, 'were rich by global standards' (Reynolds 2009:391), and the increased ability to own technology, such as cars and television sets, aided the impression of American dominance when contrasted with the East, and in particular its current enemy, Russia.

The push toward technology, as a result of the Cold War, also had an impact on the understanding of the individual. The move from the family unit is one reason that we could argue that members of society became more introspective. However, that reason alone does not suffice. Instead, the rise of science and technology had a growing influence on psychology and the understanding of man. For example, the Kinsey reports of 1948 and 1953, which shed light on sexual behaviours, found its way into popular culture, and performance and Hollywood seemed particularly interested in psychology,<sup>74</sup> most notably in the cinema of Alfred Hitchcock and Fritz Lang.

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<sup>74</sup> The interest in psychology, however, began in the 1930s and accelerated during the 1940s. The effect of psychoanalysis in film is best shown in film noir movies from the 1940s.



To paraphrase Alan Petigny's *The Permissive Society* (2009), in Post-War America there was a move away from the concept of Original Sin to an understanding of human beings as inherently good, and thus, American society placed more importance on psychology and the individual drive of man. As a result of the Cold War and economic prosperity, therefore, American society saw a rise in technology and science, and by proxy, a psychological revolution which furthered interest in self-understanding and reliance. Ultimately, the turn inward made 'authenticity [...] a popular buzzword' (Petigny 2009: 225) in a vast consumer culture that mass produced similar synthetic products.

Whilst contradictory on the surface, the variation of colour on each car/home product, aids distinctness, and thus, the individuality of the consumer. Despite the economic reasons for the constant re-design (small population), the variants, following Banet-Weiser's concept of today's branding, aids both the appearance of community (they have this product too, thus they are like me) and difference (they chose this design, thus, I have a distinct personality from that of my neighbour). In hindsight, the Fifties look exciting in regards to technology, consumerism, and introspection, but I argue it is our recognition of own societal behaviour<sup>75</sup> that further aligns Western society with its older version of itself.

The media, as the largest influencer in regards to society's perception of the Fifties, reassured and taught the American public of its power through the idea of continued technological and global progress. Walt Disney, as one of the largest media

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<sup>75</sup> Technology for instance, the sudden rise in smart phones and virtual reality. Additionally, other technological discourse such as nuclear war with North Korea and Trump's space force. Consumerism has increased with large shopping centres such as malls and supermarkets, which began in the 1950s. Additionally, technology and consumerism combine in the internet age with online shopping. Lastly, this decade has seen a growing interest in mental health, especially those that inhibit learning.

influencers of the decade, and whose company reached a new height of cultural power in the 1950s, offers a valuable insight into 1950s media-makers' construction of the era's aesthetic and ideology.<sup>76</sup> Disneyland opened in California on the 17th July, 1955. A frozen example of the Fifties idealisation of America, it still presents three key lands for Fifties nostalgia theorists and historians. Firstly, it contains an idealised version of small town America (Main Street USA), depicting the USA as wholesome, simplistic and safe. Secondly, its mythological Frontierland exhibits American exploration and taming of the land, idealising American power and encouraging self-belief in the nation. Thirdly, Tomorrowland presents a utopian future propelled by American technological design; albeit now rendered a retro-future, it still suggests that technology is progress.<sup>77</sup> These three areas are key to understanding the ideal 1950s American community that should be exhibited in the new suburbs, whose houses as previously discussed, should exhibit both the USA's ideological past and its exemplary modern convenience.

In 1957, 'The Monsanto House of the Future' opened<sup>78</sup> and was a highly attended attraction until its closure in 1967. It is one of the best example of the Fifties Populuxe period as presented by the media-makers of the period and worthy of comment here. The house was made to be set in 1986 and was constructed entirely of fibreglass, completely white, and comprised of four wings that shot out from the centre. The sides of each wing were made of glass, the interior counter tops and

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<sup>76</sup> For more on Disney as an influencer of culture see John Wills' *Disney Culture* (2017).

<sup>77</sup> Technology is still important to Disney theme parks, particularly in Walt Disney World, Florida. Magic Kingdom's Tomorrowland still operates the 'Carousel of Progress' and Epcot has consistently promoted space and technology since its opening in 1982, most notably in the area named 'Future World'.

<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, in 2008 the 'House of Innovation' opened in Epcot, Florida. The attraction has a similar conception to Disneyland's original attraction, but for today's consumer. The house is stylised in the past (nostalgic), but with modern appliances. The push toward consumerism and the future is not too dissimilar, nor is it a surprise that an attraction like this would re-appear during a Fifties nostalgia revival.

furniture were extremely bright, walls, ceilings and floors were made of plastic, and it featured new appliances, such as a compact microwave and a wall-mounted television. These houses did not actually exist, and yet, our visual conception of a fully modern home in the Space Age is not too dissimilar to the aesthetics presented in this home.



Figure 5: The Monsanto House of the Future, Disneyland California, 1957-1967. The house is elevated, circular with soft edges, and has large windows.



Figure 6: General Motors' *American Look* (W.F. Banes & John Thiele, 1958). A film made to promote new products for the All-American family. It is this conception of self that was featured in 1950s television and advertisements. Note the elevated and coloured chairs which resemble the designs of Charles and Ray Eames. The chair's seat is plastic and sharp edges are minimalised. The TV set in the corner of the room is also elevated, its corners are smooth and the screen itself is circular.

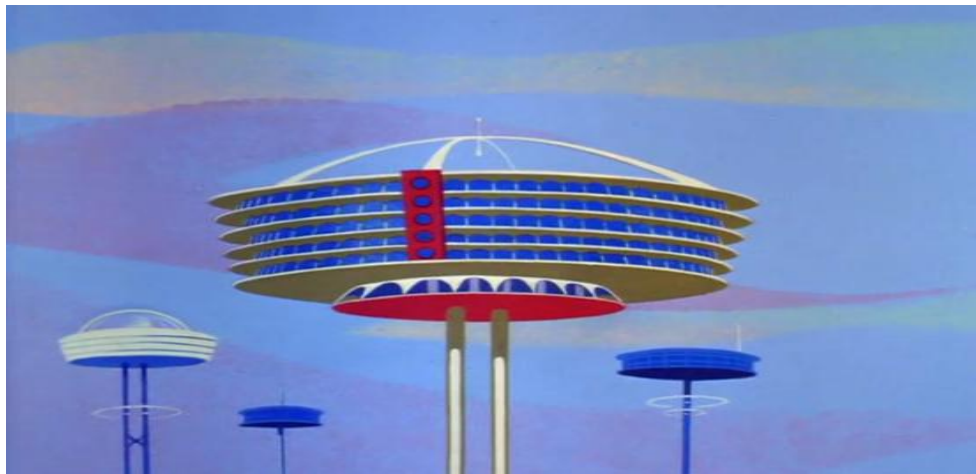


Figure 7: *The Jetsons* (Joseph Barbera & William Hanna, 1962-1963) was re-booted during the first wave of Fifties nostalgia in 1985-1987. Here the building is elevated, circular and largely made of glass.



Figure 8: This century at Universal Studios, Florida. Mel's Drive-In is a restaurant located in a theme park which sells burgers and milkshakes. A reference to *American Graffiti*, the diner is aqua, circular, has neon lights, and displays an array of stylish 1950s transportation, complete with tail fins. Additionally, this diner references other Fifties' pastimes, such as hot rods and the drive-in.

Consumed by the Space Race and the ideals of progress, Post-War America's aesthetic, as promoted by the mass media and Disneyland, should be defined as futuristic. Now considered Populuxe, the Fifties was forward-looking in its visual design and promised the American Dream through the purchase of commodity. The pictures above illustrate both how the 1950s saw its future and its own self-conception (the Fifties), but ultimately, how a 'look' shown through multiple medias and locales/sites (television, magazines and even theme park designs and attractions) taught preceding eras to replicate not the 'truth', but an aesthetic ideal. An imperfect decade, complete with Cold War fears and McCarthyism, the 1950s hid their concerns under a bolstered ideal of the American nation, an ideal that became the Fifties.

In this section, the thesis aimed to show the importance of the aesthetic push toward plastics; frequent re-purchasing of commodities by consumers; the fluidity and elevation of the Populuxe design, and the Fifties general interest in American progress. It is during this time of newness and the future and commodity that the four case study stars rose to stardom. Therefore, the stars, through their own success

(discussed further below) and their connection to the Fifties, became representatives of prosperity, success, and consumerism.

The posthumous stars' connection to the Fifties expands further than the aesthetic. Conceiving a new way to sell products was not the only way in which Post-War America would be forward-looking. 1950s' television may have been conservative, but this thesis' film stars, arguably idealised in contemporary media, were deemed a menace to good morals in the 1950s. How the moral threat is subsumed into conservative nostalgia will be discussed further in Chapter Five. Instead, this section now explores the *foundational narrative* in a Post-War America that would begin to both embrace and fear ideas surrounding the self. In particular, identity, individuality, and a fight against the "parent culture" would present the world with the teenager, and most importantly, for James Dean's and Elvis Presley's existing success - the teenage rebel.

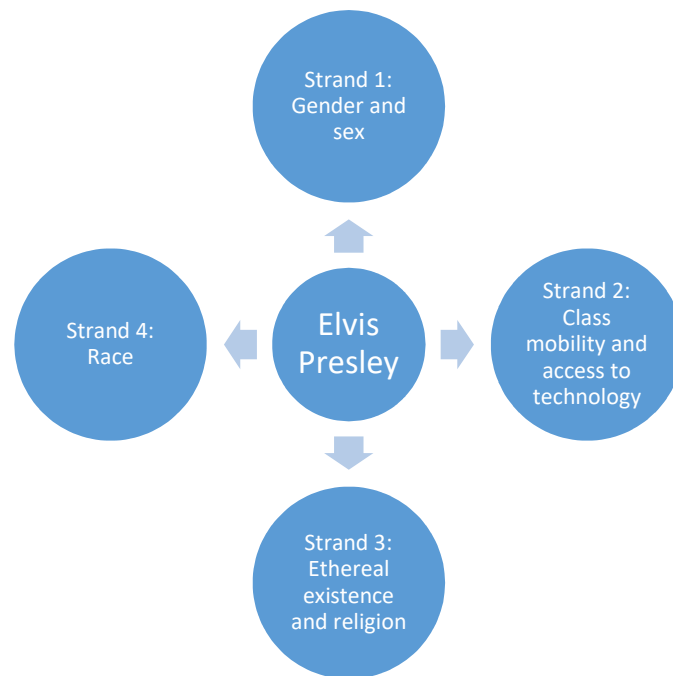
## 2.3 Flaming Stars: Movie Star Representation in the 1950s

This sub-chapter will explore the star construction of each of the case study stars in 1950s American popular culture to illuminate the role contradictions play in our continued understanding of a posthumous star. Additionally, it aims to illuminate how 1950s self-mythologization is still pertinent to our understanding of the posthumous star and his/her profitability today. To begin, the section will deconstruct the varied contradictions and complex persona of Elvis Presley.

Elvis Presley's contradictions are not simply condensed into a good boy/bad boy dichotomy. Televisual documentaries often reinforce the Elvis Presley that was both a rock star and a 'momma's boy', or a hip-shaking youth and a polite young man. A star's contradiction, in most cases, refers to a star's inherent qualities, e.g. looks vs. personality, for example, the not-so-dumb-blonde or the polite rebel. Contradictions such as these are exploited as a method to maintain relevancy and economic gain (a technique that will be investigated in detail further in this work). Whilst this type of contradiction is present in Elvis Presley's construction, it is limiting to analyse this contradiction alone. Instead, the higher echelons of posthumous stardom have both a star dichotomy, such as the polite rebel and *strands of openness*. "Strands" refer to controversial or image-defining concepts that relate not to personality traits (polite rebel), but to larger societal concerns which a star straddles or invigorates with their presence in popular culture.

Each case study star is given a graph which will show four societal concerns which impacts each individual star's ambiguity and 'openness'. The controversial debates which each star has been involved in, although aids a star's relevancy in popular culture (as discussed below), alters in frequency over time and is also

dependant on the type of media that engages with a star's image and persona. For example, Elvis Presley's relationship to black culture is not presented in official merchandise or advertising, but does appear in fictional literature and popular music.



Graph 3: Elvis Presley's four strands of openness.

I have named these elements “strands of openness” as each topic, although problematic in the 1950s, is still debated today. For example, race relations are still a significant problem in the USA, and it is therefore not only a 1950s' concern. However, Presley's relation to the issue in the 1950s still allows his name cultural relevancy in the many debates and controversies faced today. The remainder of the Presley section, therefore, will explore the four strands pictured above to assess how it is not just Presley's own contradictions that maintain posthumous relevancy, but his connection to both 1950s' and consequently today's societal concerns. Each open strand - open in that they have not been resolved - equally allows Presley to be open for interpretation within each debate, and it is this, I argue that makes Presley polysemic and an image that can be manipulated.



Elvis Presley does contain a good boy/bad boy contradiction, but equally Presley represents far more complex societal contradictions that are deemed problematic and polarising. The case study stars of this thesis have remained prominent and hold cultural currency throughout the decades due to their own inherent contradictions. However, inherent contradictions can be found at all levels of the posthumous hierarchy. More importantly, then, the case study stars at the top of the hierarchy represent values that threatened multiple facets of 1950s' society, and arguably, continue to have relevance because those same fears tap into the societal anxieties of today.

Elvis Presley has undergone frequent transformations during his lifetime, and these alterations to his image have only furthered Presley's complex relationship with popular culture, society and the star image. However, Presley's 1950s construction, which I deem the *foundational text*, serves as a framework for both living and posthumous manipulations. Since his death, some of the foundational material has been embellished and ingrained in popular memory, whilst other subsidiary and even primary moments in his star history have disappeared. As this thesis will show, however, even subsidiary or other "iconic" moments from Presley's life are filtered through the foundational narrative. Therefore, it is for this reason that the 1950s play a vital role in the understanding of Presley and his various incarnations.

The two male case study stars of this thesis, Elvis Presley and James Dean, both caused a type of moral panic regarding the burgeoning teenage culture and its clear revolt against the values of the past. Rock 'n' roll was both anti-authority and celebratory of teenage independence, for example, lyrics from 'Yakety Yak' (1958) by The Coasters exemplify the new music's defiance of parental rulings. Elvis Presley,

despite being in this new musical trend, released music with the same beat but rarely<sup>79</sup> did his lyrics promote anti-authoritarian thinking. His rebellion, instead, was through his suggestive moves and the resulting effect on women. The raw sexuality was further controversial due to Presley's ambivalent style, particularly the feminisation of his clothing. The following paragraphs will suggest how Presley altered conventional conceptions of performance, sex, and gender, and why raw sexual desire is so integral to Presley's foundational narrative.

Presley's fashion choices, in particular a willingness to wear pink shirts, eyeliner, duck tails (stylised hair), and suits like the 1957 gold lamé, appeared eccentric, moulding stereotypical female interests with a male star. The androgynous star risked altering the conception of youth by portraying a new fashion conscious male, but more importantly, Presley's style altered the sexualisation and feminisation of the male body in a way that allowed the female audience to become voyeuristic.

The right to look at Presley's body, however, was only the first layer of the sexualisation of the white,<sup>80</sup> male body on stage. The encouragement of female sexual desire was exemplified by his on-stage persona and performance. Presley's seemingly involuntary movements of his pelvis were seen to cause female fan hysteria, which included screaming and fainting. However, as Presley's fame and sexual notoriety increased it was not just the pelvis that could illicit such a response. Presley would often punctuate his lyrics with evocative sighs, animalistic grunts, or lingering looks

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<sup>79</sup> Famous songs such as 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' (1956), 'Baby, Let's Play House' (1955), and 'I Got a Woman' (1956) are more sexually defiant than parentally defiant, for example. These sexual songs, however, are predominantly covers. In Presley originals there is neither parental nor sexual defiance in the lyrics, and instead the songs take a more romantic or tragic approach to male-female relations. For example, 'I was the One' (1956), 'Heartbreak Hotel' (1956), and 'Don't Be Cruel' (1956).

<sup>80</sup> The style Presley used on stage was inspired by the black musicians of Beale Street, and thus, sexualisation of the male body may have been present in these clubs prior to Presley's fame.

and in one famous performance,<sup>81</sup> made the audience frantic with just the movement of a little finger. His body, as an object of female desire, allowed young women to respond in a way only previously seen evoked by stars such as Rudolph Valentino.<sup>82</sup> The visceral reaction exhibited by the female fans, however, was troubling to the patriarchy. A 1950s woman, after experiencing an element of freedom from the domestic sphere, and arguably, gaining an element of autonomy, was expected to behave as she did before the war. “Raucous” and sexual behaviour, therefore, upset the status quo of how women should think and behave, and thus, Presley presented a threat to gender boundaries both through his clothing and through soliciting female desire.

The media and religious groups were particularly dismissive and resentful of Presley’s influence on predominantly young women. Famously, the state of Florida, in a move to protect its impressionable women from Presley’s wild movements, made the star appear in court in 1956, a moment that was highly publicised and fed the rhetoric espoused by famous Presley critics, such as Ed Sullivan and Frank Sinatra.<sup>83</sup> During the appearance in court, Presley was warned to tone down his act and restrain his body movements to a minimum. Previously in 1955, the same state found Presley

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<sup>81</sup> An audience at Florida Theatre, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1956 screamed at a Presley performance where he was forbidden to move his hips, and thus, the wiggle of his finger was seen as suggestive and playful. For more information on this period of Presley’s life read Ray Connolly’s *Being Elvis* (2016, pp: 64-82).

<sup>82</sup> Rudolph Valentino and Elvis Presley, as Marjorie Garber notes, are both androgynous stars that expose the superficiality of gender. Interestingly, both of these stars ‘seemed to take the world by erotic surprise’ (Garber 1993: 366), and thus, male androgyny and female desire may be an interesting area for further research. For example, David Bowie, Prince, and Kurt Cobain have also remained musical icons in popular culture and have been figures of intense female desire. The appeal of androgyny, perhaps, cannot be said for male desire of women (Marilyn Monroe, Brigitte Bardot etc. are very feminine), but could be said for female homoerotic desire, such as Marlene Dietrich.

<sup>83</sup> *The Ed Sullivan Show* famously shot Elvis from the waist-up (in 1957) after the reaction to the *Milton Berle Show* (second appearance in 1956) and the previous two performances of *The Ed Sullivan Show* (both in 1956). In *Western World*, Frank Sinatra said of Elvis: ‘His kind of music is deplorable, a rancid smelling aphrodisiac. It fosters almost totally negative and destructive reactions in young people’ Quoted in *The Elvis Movies* (Neibaur 2014:7)

controversial. This time Baptist preacher Robert Gray denounced<sup>84</sup> Presley after Jacksonville teenage girls had attempted to strip the star of his clothes. It was this event that led to the 1956 warning by Judge Marion Gooding, which reprimanded Presley for impairing the morals of minors. This example is a publicised attempt to control Presley's performances to maintain the status-quo of female behaviour.

Presley's exposure of female desire was contentious to 1950's American society. Yet, arguably, this conflict about women's roles and female desire has not evaporated from contemporary society. In 2018, discussions swirl regarding #MeToo, #TimesUp, and rape culture. Victim blaming is still prevalent, whereby a woman is told that it is her short skirt that invited harassment, rather than focusing on the action of the harasser. Today, then, women are still expected to behave in a certain way. The message seems to be that a demure woman's boundaries are respected. This of course is not true, but the societal narrative attempts to suggest that female behaviour needs to be controlled, lest it provoke the desire of strangers. Elvis Presley, as a star that gave a space for female expression, therefore, is maintained as a relevant image. Although the period and discussions around women are very different, for example the 1950s were concerned about female desire, whereas 2018 centres on the objectification of women and rape culture, the central concern in both is female autonomy and the right to self-expression. In both cases, there is a denial to allow women to behave and/or dress as they see fit.

Elvis Presley's foundational narrative promotes and celebrates female fan behaviour. In this case, Presley's relation to female desire is two-fold. Firstly, it exposes concerns regarding "new" behaviour that promises autonomy, expressivity

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<sup>84</sup> Documented in *Life*, August 1956 (p.108).

and an acknowledgement of the need to escape societal dictations of female behaviour, which is a societal argument that continues today<sup>85</sup> regarding both rape culture and women's access and rights at work. Secondly, his own style and feminisation pushes the boundaries of gender, again, a topic that has not been resolved in contemporary culture where being a "man" is promoted as tough and aggressive, and where pink (a colour Elvis wore in this period) is still labelled as feminine. The patriarchy and the binaries of gender are made explicit in the attempt to control and demonise Presley in the 1950s. As the decade before the protest culture, Presley and female fans together represent a bubbling discontent that is still not resolved, and thus, still allows Presley some prominence in regard to the debate on gender. Presley's first *strand of openness*, therefore, is through the ability to use his 1950s image in posthumous advertising relating to gender and female desire (discussed in detail in the thesis regarding the Pizza Hut advertisement in Chapter Five).

Early rock performances are important to our understanding of Presley, but it is the star's early films that solidify his image and persona. To be a performer before MTV meant that many fans would not see their idol in motion. Records, magazines and commodities could be purchased, but all of the products would feature still photographs. Magazines may contain pictures of the star relaxing, but it does not rectify the lack of movement. Presley was known for gesticulations of the body, and although the star would appear on television, his body was partly maintained by the restriction of the camera angle.<sup>86</sup> Film, however, was less restricting on Presley's

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<sup>85</sup> Donald Trump's election is perhaps the most glaring example of issues surrounding women. For example, Trump was still elected after the infamous "Grab 'em" *Access Hollywood* tape, invading Presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's personal space during the third debate, and the Electoral College's decision to choose a political novice over an experienced woman.

<sup>86</sup> Censors demanded Presley be filmed from the waist-up on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, 6<sup>th</sup> January, 1957.

movements. Fans could now see all of Presley, and he was now multiple feet high.<sup>87</sup> More importantly, Presley's persona was re-emphasised in the movies' narratives, and thus, movies were democratic with the moving image (everyone can see the real Elvis Presley performance) and re-learn Presley's star history (what is repeated is remembered).

Movie presence is integral to the remembrance<sup>88</sup> of the physical image, and partly responsible for Presley's posthumous success in video commercials (see Chapters Four and Five). The image of Buddy Holly, despite an infamous and tragic death, for example, cannot be disseminated with the same ferocity because of the lack of moving image. Presley's films, combined with the latter 1970s recordings such as *Aloha From Hawaii* (Marty Pasetta, 1973), have enabled a continued physical presence through the moving image that has not been afforded to many of the rock 'n' roll artists of Presley's time.

Presley's performance in his early films, such as *Love Me Tender* (Robert D. Webb, 1956) and *Loving You* (Hal Kanter, 1957) reinforced the contradictions that were formed around Presley. In particular, *Loving You* reinforced Presley's rise to fame and controversy through a fictional character, Deke Rivers. The film opens on a small town fair, a recurring setting in Presley films. Deke Rivers, dressed in blue jeans and blue jean shirt,<sup>89</sup> is identified, like Presley, to be a working class boy from an

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<sup>87</sup> In another instance of several feet high, Presley was promoted in Times Square via a large cut out, similar to Marilyn Monroe's *The Seven Year Itch*. This similarity between the stars did not go unnoticed in the press and shows that during the height of each of these stars' fame, they were connected to each other. *Motion Picture Herald* states the cut out was 'two stories taller than Marilyn Monroe' (Anon 1956: 43).

<sup>88</sup> It is important to note here that before Presley's second film, Elvis Presley had brown hair. However, in order to be more striking on colour film, Presley dyed his hair black. Part of the Presley look, therefore, was dictated by his screen image.

<sup>89</sup> Throughout the movie Rivers' clothing changes due to his fame and the star starts to wear silk shirts and neckties. It is important to note that by the end of the film he returns to jeans, linking with the idea that fame won't change him, a concept not too dissimilar to Presley's announcement that fame 'won't change me none' (Connolly 2016: 118).

ordinary town, literally pulled off of a street and onto a stage with a country band. Rivers, unlike the other musicians, performs to a boogie-woogie beat. Deke Rivers, therefore, is simultaneously an average Southern boy and unlike anyone around him.

From the first performance, the film shows reaction shots of the crowd. This is significant as the women react with excitement at Rivers and his new music. The men, however, look on with a certain disdain. This becomes a trope within the film, suggesting some parallels with Presley's own reception as a star that is favoured by women. Throughout the film, each performance contains multiple reaction shots to an ecstatic female crowd, and ever-increasing hostility from the boyfriends of the women. Like the broken guitar string, which Rivers breaks after each performance, Rivers is portrayed as an uncaged animal that is a threat to normal modes of female spectatorship and musical performance.

Described in the film as 'a whirlwind', Rivers reinforces Presley's own controversial performances on stage. *Presley-isms* are expressions and performance techniques which occur frequently on-stage, and later, on-screen. Presley-isms include: frantic leg swivelling and gyration; limp rising hands; almost constant shaking caused by the movement of his legs (often messing up the neat pompadour which furthers the connection to sexual exertion); gliding along the floor through a dance-walk; shimmy in moments of heavy drums; pauses to punctuate rapid movements, often with head bent; intense forward facing head with sneer, punctuated by elastic and humorous expressions involving the eye area; lastly, a sultry tilted head, often toward the floor. The clearest example can be found in 'Mean Woman Blues' in *Loving You*. In this film the playful eyes are less prevalent, but are shown in the 'Let Me Be Your Teddy Bear' sequence. Other early movies in particular will feature most

of these techniques, but the 1970s concert years will replace elements such as gliding for squatting combined with ferocious arm movements and karate.

The performances in *Loving You*, however, which increase in Presley-isms as the narrative and his character's fame progresses, are shot to incorporate his whole body. Often starting in the centre of the frame, Presley moves around the stage/aisles/juke joint to dominate any area in which he is in, most noticeable when his body aligns with the antlers on the wall and furthers his connection to male dominance (Figure 9). The fluid movements of his body, described as "jumpin' beans in his jeans" in this movie, in combination with the movement and incorporation of all the space, increases perception of masculinity through domination, virility through exertion, and feminisation through provocation of the body. As a result, Presley is androgynous because he can be everywhere and everything and is posed as a threat to traditional gender and spectatorship. Most importantly, he represents a sexual awakening by penetrating the spaces which have been open to women and allowing the gaze to be not only returned, but playfully revelled in.



Figure 9: Antlers show the dominant male in the room in *Loving You*.

During the course of the film sex is the central cause of conflict and narrative progression. Once in a Texan city, a fan sneaks into Rivers' room and calls him a



'phony' for asking her to leave. Although not explicitly stated, this phoniness refers to the promise of sex in his performance but not seeing it through in person. Rivers does get caught kissing the woman moments later, proving his virility,<sup>90</sup> but it is the fan that instigates this. In *Loving You*, much like *Love Me Tender*, Presley proves his romantic possibilities, but he is not in control of these dalliances. Presley's early movies, like his early rock performances, give the autonomy of love-making, chasing and the refusal of love to the female characters.

*Loving You* culminates in an attempt to restrict Deke Rivers' movements. In a glaring connection to Elvis Presley's own life, the audience learn this is restriction is a result of an elder generation's fear of Deke Rivers' effect on young women. In the final song ('Got a Lot o' Livin' to Do!'), however, Presley is not subdued, but provides the most sexually aggressive performance of the whole film. This is an interesting scene, as throughout the film audience is cognitively meant to see the similarity between Presley and Rivers, and thus this denial of restriction and return to wearing jeans is a form of rebellion. The film tells fans (in particular female fans), therefore, that Presley's performance will not be controlled and nor will your experience of it.

Sexuality and gender is just one factor in Presley's foundational narrative. The combination of newness, social mobility and technology is another. The large technological change that occurred in the 1950s, particularly to the home, is arguably the start of a consumer culture driven by technology as an aid for everyday living.

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<sup>90</sup> Manliness/virility, despite Presley's flamboyant dress and feminisation, is important to the early persona. In *Love Me Tender*, Clint (Presley) is called 'dangerous' due to his jealousy. Convinced his wife is running away with his brother, Clint is willing to fight and kill his brother. In *Loving You*, Deke (Presley) fights a patron of a restaurant that calls him 'yella'. The motivation for these fights is to protect his honour and value as a husband/man. This is not too dissimilar to *Rebel Without a Cause*, in which Jim (Dean) is called 'chicken', and suggests 1950s' rebels are aggravated by the question of worth and bravery. Manliness is therefore linked to the ability to fight or control a situation. This trope continues in representations of male teenagers in cinema, most notably in the 1980s films such as *Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985), a film that is itself nostalgic for the Fifties.

Today, with growing social anxiety rates and insular communities, the technology of the past is familiar (it functions to ease chores and provide entertainment), but seems quaint and optimistic. It is in this strand about the future and technology that Presley fits because of his own consumption and a growing nostalgia for ‘a simpler time’ (to be explored further in Chapter Five).

As suggested previously, the 1950s were interested in the future, as shown through the visual design of cars and kitchens. Rock ‘n’ roll was no exception; consider band names such as Bill Haley and the Comets. Elvis Presley too was named the ‘atomic’ singer in various promotional posters and souvenir products in 1956. New artists, then, were defined in terms of progressive and futuristic technologies. Words like ‘atomic’ aid the extraordinary discussion of a star, a rich contrast to Presley’s ordinary working class background. The association of technology is furthered by Presley’s film performances. Presley’s star entrance often sees him arriving in a scene via a mode of transport, a style which, through Presley’s extensive commodity consumption in life, promotes social mobility through the purchase and use of products. This relation to products and the future, therefore, was promoted by the screen image and the ability to watch Presley move both physically and metaphorically through a social hierarchy.

Presley’s connection to commodity is the second strand of openness that is available to the star via his foundational narrative. Individualism, as noted in the 1950s sub-section, was given further prominence in this era due to the increased interest in psychology. Furthering the notion that society is meritocratic, the 1950s promoted technology and materialism as a method to show individual success. Elvis Presley, therefore, as a poor boy from the South promotes, like many stars do, leisure and consumption as ultimate goals achieved through hard work and talent. However,

Presley's link to technology (often transport) and space vocabulary during his rise to fame, places him as a star connected to progressive manufacturing and explorative ideals. Equally, as a star that is always moving (in cars etc.) or pitched literally as out-of-this-world (Figure 10), Presley exists in a liminal space. Through the combination of consumption, social mobility, technology, and space lexicon, Presley does not seem out of place within advertisements, either because of the vast connections to his own consumerism or through the constant movement and displacement afforded to him by his connection to technology.



Figure 10: The 'atomic' singer.

Presley's ethereal properties generate a third strand to his foundational narrative which traverses religious territory, in particular an interest in celestial beings. Like James Dean, Presley belongs to everything and nothing. In both *Love Me Tender*

and *Loving You*, for example, Presley is shown in a liminal space (Figure 11). Translucent and almost filling the frame, Presley sings directly to the audience. The all-knowing and saintly presentation of Presley in these moments, give the star an ethereal quality, and a potential to live outside of time and space. Presley's first two feature films, therefore, both use superimposition to generate an Elvis that lingers in a timeless space that is not confined by the primary frame. As the two previous strands have shown, lack of confinement and constant movement are staples of Presley's foundational narrative. Presley carries connotations of transmutability and this particular strand has gained traction through conspiracy theories and gossip, and as a result, has also found success in "playful" advertisements for Energizer Batteries and Pizza Hut (further discussed in Chapter Five).



Figure 11: Liminal space in *Love Me Tender*.

Conspiracy theories involving Presley in particular are easy to make because of the elements of spiritualism or other-worldliness that has been promoted in three key career stages. Firstly, the other-worldliness created through liminal spaces in the foundational narrative as I have illuminated here. Secondly, the religious connotations which have formed through the re-telling of Presley's childhood in fan magazines, documentaries, and biopics, for example, Presley's belief that he had the power of two after his brother, Jesse Garon, was stillborn. Lastly, further religious associations were

formed due to the intense study of world religions Presley began near the end of his life. In regards to fandom, I believe it is this strand that has enabled rumours surrounding Presley's death, and more importantly, has given credence to the spiritual renditions of Presley as documented by Gilbert B. Rodman's in *Elvis After Elvis: The Posthumous Career of a Living Legend* (1996) and John Strausbaugh's *E: Reflections on the Birth of the Elvis Faith* (1995).

The fourth and final strand of openness is far more polarising than the topics before it. The star's popularization of black music in the white market is often seen as an example of white appropriation of black culture. Famously, it is reported the Sam Philips (the producer at Sun Records) wanted a white boy that sounded black to sell rock 'n' roll records. The debate in regards to Presley's use of black culture is complex. In one argument, Presley's use of black style allowed black musicians to enter the white market as it slowly made the sound and type of expression acceptable to middle class America.<sup>91</sup> This argument suggests that Presley's influence gave permission to white audiences to purchase material by black artists.

However, although often interpreted by Presley fans as musical integration, Presley detractors render this piece of foundational narrative as the theft of black music for profit. This narrative is most evident in popular culture after Presley's death, especially in 1990s and 2000s hip hop. Songs by Public Enemy, Living Colour and Eminem, for example, make explicit reference to Presley's use of black style for economic gain. In these songs, such as, *Fight the Power*, the rapper Chuck D raps:

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<sup>91</sup> Elvis Presley was certainly not the first rock 'n' roll performer, nor was he solely responsible for its popularity. Rock 'n' roll and the integration of white and black musicians arguably began when Alan Freed famously mixed black and white performers in his rock movies. Freed, as the man that promoted rock 'n' roll movies and showed juvenile delinquency on-screen, is often left out of important discussions such as this and deserves a detailed study in regard to both the promotion of black music and the rise in movies for a teenage demographic.

Elvis was a hero to most but he  
Elvis was a hero to most  
Elvis was a hero to most  
But he never meant shit to me you see  
Straight up racist that sucker was  
Simple and plain  
Mother fuck him and John Wayne (Public Enemy, *Fight the Power*: 1990).

Similarly, in Living Colour's *Elvis is Dead*:

Elvis was a hero to most  
But that's beside the point  
A Black man taught him how to sing  
And then he was crowned king (Living Colour, *Elvis is Dead*: 1990).

In Eminem's *Without Me*:

Little hellions kids feeling rebellious  
Embarrassed, their parents still listen to Elvis

(...)

Though I'm not the first king of controversy  
I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley  
To do black music so selfishly  
And use it to get myself wealthy (Eminem, *Without Me*: 2002).

Significantly, Presley himself would reference black music and culture as his inspiration, often commenting: 'Here's a song by my friend, Little Richard' (for example, in noted performances such as the Hays Ride in 1957), therefore promoting rather than denying his culpability. The clearly contentious debate over integration vs. theft, is yet another topic that allows Presley to be topical, particularly in the continuing difficult race relations<sup>92</sup> in the United States of America.

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<sup>92</sup>One example of continued racism in the United States of America can be found in the failure to understand how the veneration of slave-owners is increasingly problematic. In 2017, a decision to remove a Confederate statue in Charlottesville, Virginia resulted in violent protest by the alt-right, a march called Unite the Right seemingly wanted to maintain the statutes without truly considering what these monuments represent to the African American population.

Troubling, of course, is the rendering that Presley himself was racist. There is currently no evidence for this, instead, in recent television shows, such as *Joanna Lumley: Elvis & Me* (Ian Denyer, 2015), Joanna Lumley meets Presley's friends from Beale Street that adamantly refute the rumours. The foundational narrative e.g. Presley used black music, has been transferred to a much wider and damning interpretation. Equally, because of his Southern roots this rendering has had further traction, particularly due to the assumption that most Presley fans are white and working class.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the appropriation of Presley on the Confederate flag by Southern fans and country music's veneration<sup>94</sup> of Presley as a mythical symbol (country music being often, again, associated with white working class culture) has increased contentions over Presley's image and use of black culture.

Country music, or more accurately, the hillbilly root, is central to the understanding of Presley's music. For example, as noted by Richard Middleton, the song *Heartbreak Hotel* was country in origin, but had a blues sound. In Middleton's analysis, it is Presley's vocalisation and merging of 'romantic lyricism and (...) boogification' (Middleton 1983: 157) that is his contribution to rock 'n' roll. He states that it is the two musical techniques, 'in *different* song-types' (Middleton 1983: 165), alongside Presley's own early rebellious image that makes him unique. However, he suggests that it is his status as a poor Southern boy rendered Presley enough of an outsider to enable him to cross musical boundaries. In this case, the foundational text is discussed again, but is reconfigured. Presley did use black music, but not

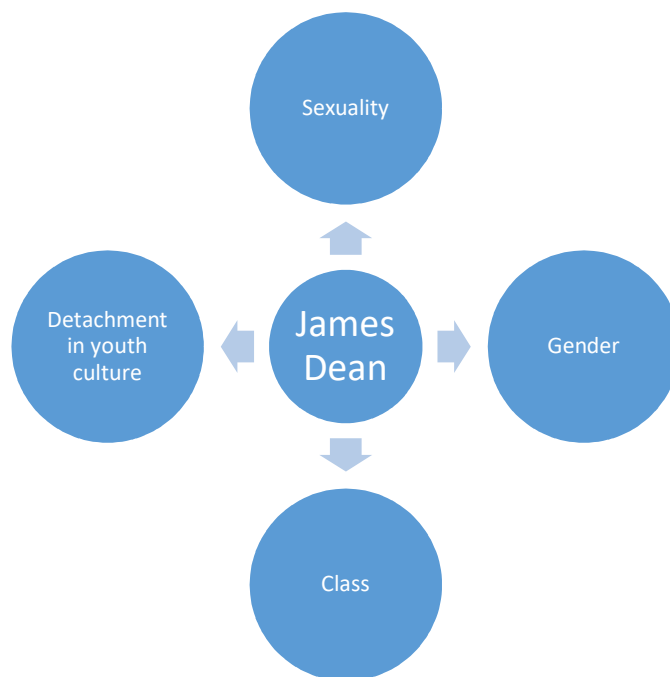
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<sup>93</sup> The assumption that Presley's fans are white and working is not necessarily true and troublingly equates country music listeners as "white trash". For more on race relations and Presley fandom see Erika Doss' *Elvis Culture* (1999: 163-211).

<sup>94</sup> To name a few of the most famous country songs which use Elvis in the lyrics: Paul Simon, *Graceland* (1986); Mark Cohn, *Walking in Memphis* (1991); Faith Hill, *Bringing Out the Elvis* (1999); Patty Loveless, *I Try to Think About Elvis* (1994); Billy Ray Cyrus, *Hey Elvis* (2000).

exclusively, and this is an attempt to absolve Presley from exclusively appropriating for profit.

Race relations have been difficult for the estate to monitor, particularly in popular music. The estate has disassociated itself with any Presley fan clubs that exhibit negative behaviour (e.g. white supremacists and racism), but topics relating to black culture are often all but absent from Presley exhibits.<sup>95</sup> In biographies and documentaries approved by the estate, black culture only appears regularly in relation to Sam Philips' comment at Sun Studios. However, despite the estate's attempt to distance itself from negative publicity, one statement remains: Presley *used* black music. The issue will perhaps forever cause a contradictory and debateable topic in popular culture, and thus, maintains his presence in a culture that has yet to resolve its racial tensions.



Graph 4: James Dean's strands of openness

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<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, black influence on Presley was completely absent from the British exhibit 'Elvis at the O2' (12 December 2014 – 10 January 2016).



In comparison, James Dean's foundational narrative similarly relies on the feminisation of the star. Dean's rebel<sup>96</sup> is not "traditionally" masculine; like Presley, Dean represents a fluid character that is interested in the presentation of the self. In James Dean's first film, *East of Eden* (Elia Kazan, 1955), Dean's character Cal is described as a 'pretty boy', a 'young squirt', 'tough', 'thoughtless' and 'high strung'. The first two quotes from the movie are insults, a man that is 'pretty' is feminised and a young man described as a 'boy' is infantilised. The second quote, 'young squirt' performs a similar function. Dean is portrayed as weak by his elders, suggesting he has too many emotions and is an outcast because of this. In contrast, the three remaining quotes imply the opposite, suggesting Cal is too narcissistic and self-involved. This is again depicted as a negative, and thus show the unrealistic expectations placed upon gender and the constriction of the self. Cal is portrayed as both sensitive and antagonistic, two supposedly contradictory things.

In *Rebel Without a Cause* Judy (Natalie Wood) wants a non-traditional lover, one that is gentle and sweet, but does not run away. Similar to the description made about Cal in *East of Eden*, Jim is both sensitive and volatile. Judy's expectation of the sensitive type, however, is that they will not stay, either because of hedonism, or perhaps a suggestion of homosexuality (a 'sensitive' man would not want her). The sexual relationships between Jim, Judy and Plato (Sal Mineo) are also ambiguous, but at the very least the film codes Plato as queer and Jim as accepting and nurturing. Jim, then, is not judgemental of either sexual preferences or an individual's mode of expression and suggests Dean is a model for the new man. The fluid sexuality represented in *Rebel Without a Cause*, the descriptors that suggest narcissism and

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<sup>96</sup> Richard Dyer notes that James Dean is a 'generation gap' (Dyer 1979: 52) rebel, however, I believe his rebellion is far more than a simple divide between father and son (although it certainly is that, too). Dean's rebellion is far more complex and includes a rejection of gender and sexual norms.

hedonism, and the feminised male, all render Dean as non-conformist and individualistic.

In addition to crossing gender boundaries, James Dean's characters also mix working class signifiers with a middle class life. Jeans, as pre-industrial clothing of the lower classes, are appropriated by Dean in film. This appears against tradition as the appropriation of working class signifiers suggest an element of disenfranchisement, in Dean's case it is a visual rebellion against the middle class expectation. Jeans in the 1950s became synonymous with youth, and combined with greased hair and a white t-shirt, became the "cool" look of the era.

Products and fashion identify social groups and are used as methods of self-identification. Pountain and Robbins contend that 'cool elevates personal taste into a complete ethos in which you are what you like, and what you therefore buy' (Pountain & Robbins 2000: 168). The scholars do not offer further commentary on this link to consumerism and cool, but it does highlight my own reservations with counter-culture/rebellion and anti-consumerism. The rebellions expressed in the fashion of the 1950s, and exemplified by Dean, relied on consumer purchases to express their rejection of society. The rejection of their parents' structures is still codified, it is just new and is enabled by quick identification through consumerism. Today, unlike, the tie-dye of the Sixties or the flares of the Seventies, the classic Levi 501 and white t-shirt has not aged in the same way. A classic design, much like Hepburn's little black dress, this rebel look has permanence because of its simplicity, and again, allows Dean adaptability in the contemporary market.

Unlike Presley, whose "cool" factor altered considerably throughout his popularity, Dean's cool persona was maintained during his short career, and as a

result, his posthumous career. “Cool” as a concept alters throughout time (compare Bobby Soxers with 60s counter-culture), but there are key factors which remain consistently part of the concept of cool. According to Dick Pountain and David Robbins, cool is a ‘permanent state of private rebellion’ (Pountain & Robbins 2000: 26) found in the young (formative years). The cool kids, then, each hold a form of resentment toward the ideological structures of society and seek to push boundaries of behaviour and feelings. Feelings, despite the ‘narcissism, ironic detachment and hedonism’ (Pountain & Robbins 2000: 26) of the cool personality, are key to the methods of interaction.

The “cool personality”, according to Pountain and Robbins, find sentimentality phony or self-righteous. Instead, the “cool personality” chooses to react in moments of passion or unconventionality. Maturity in political cynicism and sex are also elements of the cool personality, and combined with the fear of ageing, suggests that the cool personality views age as the cause of fixed ideological constraint. This in part, is not so much ‘cool’, but the changing perception of conformity within each generation. Cool, then, is associated with youth as it is each generation that tests the boundaries or attempts to alter the conventions of the one before it. Elvis Presley is not cool in the 1960s, for example, because as a gun-toting mega-patriotic star he does not “fit” with the burgeoning hippy culture.

Evaluating James Dean’s persona it is possible to discern how and why he was “cool”. Firstly, Dean’s performance displays detachment from the parental figures in movies such as *East of Eden* (Elia Kazan, 1955), where keeping his hands in his pockets, mumbling, and rare smiles all indicate a resistance and resentment to his position within the family, and his father’s esteem. During one scene, in which Dean meets his mother (whom his father told him was dead), he sees in her the “bad”

elements of himself. Despite craving his father's approval, Cal (Dean) despises the self-righteous and godly manner in which his father runs the household.

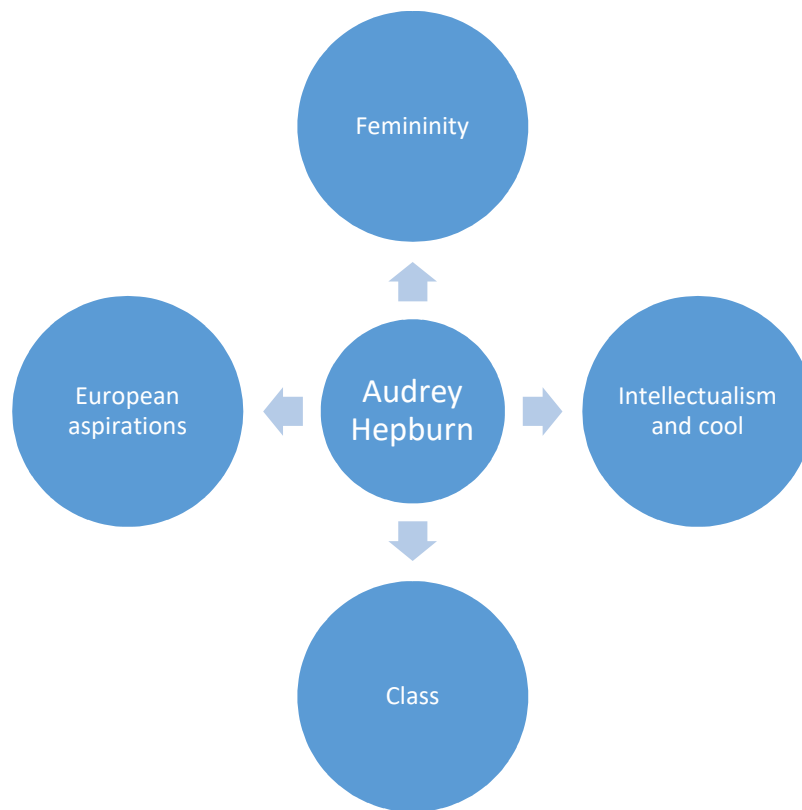
Feeling less-than and further rejected after his father refuses Cal's gift of money, the film releases Cal from his emotional restraints or "cool" personality. On a backyard swing, Cal soars toward his father. The audience, from the perspective of Adam (Massey) witness Dean's contorted body penetrate the available space (Figure 12). In addition to his over-whelming physical space on the screen, the camera now presents a tilted image. The result of the framing and Dean's body suggest a dislocated man – from location, family, and mind. The dislocation of Dean forms a dual purpose for the reading of Dean. Firstly, he does not belong, and thus, represents the rebel that cannot conform to ideological structures. More importantly, the fluid performance of Dean, which includes both his physical movements such as the draping and bending over objects, in combination with infantile moments (man-child) which appear to harbour a longing for maternal and paternal acceptance, render him so displaced that he becomes a persona which could be adapted to exist anywhere. Simply, the dislocation allows for temporary re-locations posthumously. Dean can be both nowhere and everywhere because he was never fixed or belonged in the first place.



Figure 12: Dean penetrates all the available space.

Furthered by Dean's connection to the Actor's Studio, in which 'elusive and antagonistic actors are drawn to and enriched by the inscrutable body of knowledge otherwise regarded as publicly inaccessible' (Rawlins 2013: 34), Dean appears in connection with multiple levels of the psyche. His knowingness in a displaced world, then, expands his authority as a rebel as it appears he has knowledge about society and its various systems. The watchful silence he presents in all three of his movies, or the cold disassociated stare from *Rebel Without a Cause* or Dennis Stock's New York picture, suggests a melancholy knowing of the state of man, a sentiment that can be replicated for any time.

Dean's knowing disappointment combined with the factors of youth, ambiguous sexuality, elements of androgyny, individualism, working class aesthetics, detachment, and dislocation, have enabled him to become representative not just of the youth of the 1950s, but of every generation after it. It is because of the openness of meaning, and the continued cultural struggles (toxic masculinity, homophobia etc.) that allow the ever-present Dean to have cultural currency. Together, Dean and Presley represent a new type of individualistic rebellion, and equally, represent new readings of male identity and self-presentation. During this period the youth market expanded and teenagers were recognised as individuals separate from their parents in both interests and consumerism. Dean's rebellious teenage performance helped set a precedent for the 'teenage' film as an acceptable film subject, resulting in his solidification as the "cool" rebel in Fifties' iconography.



Graph 5: Audrey Hepburn’s strands of openness

Audrey Hepburn, like Dean, could be described as “cool”. In the 1950s, intellectualism, and in particular existentialism, rose in prominence through artistic and literary movements such as the Beats.<sup>97</sup> Pountain and Robbins note that Europe’s version of “cool” was the corner coffee shop or radical bookstore where discussions about politics, life, and art could take place (Pountain and Robbins 2000: 60-69). European countries, most notably France and Italy, produced resistance movements after WWII through art and expression and it is this counter-culture sensibility which on the surface appears anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist that is rendered “cool”, much like the rebel in American cinema with James Dean.

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<sup>97</sup> The Beats will be further explored in relation to Audrey Hepburn’s Gap advertisement in Chapter Five.

These countries, rooted in tradition but displaying the ravages of WWII, were somewhat exotic and more sophisticated to the American audience, as covered in great detail by Vanessa R. Schwartz in her book, *It's So French* (2007). As a result, travelogues became a popular trend in Hollywood cinema, particularly in the romantic and musical genres. Both of Hepburn's two early leading roles, *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953) and *Sabrina* (Billy Wilder, 1954) feature the star in European locations (the two in which had resistance movements) and connect the location to Hepburn's own sophistication, and by association render Hepburn cool and stylish.

No film featuring Hepburn uses the beatnik association more than *Funny Face* (Stanley Donen, 1957), however, in her early leading roles in 1953 and 1954, Hepburn is portrayed as desiring of a new education which is provided by the art, heritage and class afforded by Europe. This is perhaps most notable in *Sabrina* where Hepburn's character is taught how to act and look around high society. Previously, Sabrina has been an outsider, literally hiding in the shadows and bushes to watch the upper-middle class. Unglamorous and poor, Sabrina cannot garner the attention of her object of desire (David Larabee). Instead, the audience infers she has no romantic appeal, at least not until she returns from her education in Paris. It is her time in Europe that alters Sabrina significantly. She returns with knowledge, style, perceived class and determination. The change in perceived class, at least superficially, is due to her new look, and suggests social mobility is at least in part achieved through consumerism and understanding the correct brands in which to impart certain meaning. Her education and style has made her more desirable to members of David's class and fits with the frequent early trope in Hepburn movies.

The transformation narrative, where an audience witnesses Hepburn change from dowdy to elegant, frequently renders Hepburn more desirable once she acquires

consumer goods. These transformations often take place in a European city, for example, Rome (*Roman Holiday*), Paris (*Sabrina* and *Funny Face*) and London (*My Fair Lady*). Europe, therefore, is the place for transition and acquirement of class,<sup>98</sup> but problematically desirability is achieved by consumerism.<sup>99</sup> In each narrative, Hepburn's transformation makes her more appealing to the opposite sex, implying style and beauty is not for the self, but to ensure the attraction of another.

Conversely, despite becoming more glamorous, Hepburn's characters also reject stereotypical femininity. Returning to *Sabrina*, Hepburn's short hair, much like in *Roman Holiday* is a rejection of beauty ideals. Preferring functionality, Hepburn's characters acquire class, education and style, but not at the complete expense of autonomy. Sabrina, for example, does not rely on David Larabee (William Holden) to instigate romance. Instead, she asks him to kiss her, she recites his moves, and it is she that instructs him to dance. The moments of control Hepburn exhibits in small moments of the film in regards to this romance is telling, particularly because of dialogue. In the first third of the film Sabrina utters 'I hate girls that giggle all the time'. Her response to David's early conquests subtly suggests, much like Sabrina's small moments of control and short hairstyle, that Sabrina, and by extension Hepburn, represent a new shift in female behaviour.

The shift in some attitudes, of course, does not negate the traditional and consumerist methods in which Hepburn becomes desirable. In this way, Hepburn is displaced, much like Sabrina's displacement regrading class.<sup>100</sup> Hepburn is caught

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<sup>98</sup> Class in this thesis is being associated with couture and the acquirement of the French language which is exhibited when Hepburn sings 'La Vie En Rose' in *Sabrina*.

<sup>99</sup> Hepburn's connection to consumerism through the transformation narrative will play a large role in her suitability for posthumous stardom as discussed in Chapter Five.

<sup>100</sup> Interestingly, Sabrina does refer to herself as displaced, and thus, there is an acknowledgement that change does not mean a person can 'fit'. Conversely, it also reiterates Hepburn's position within traditional and modern expressions of femininity.



between tradition and modernity, both through her association with Europe as a site of heritage and American movies as a site for new and popular art. Hepburn, of course, is also further placed in a complex dichotomy based on gender and tradition. Hepburn's combination of beauty consumerism (for social mobility) and assertiveness (degree of autonomy) shows her as both adhering to female stereotype and rebuking facets of female life which seems constrictive.

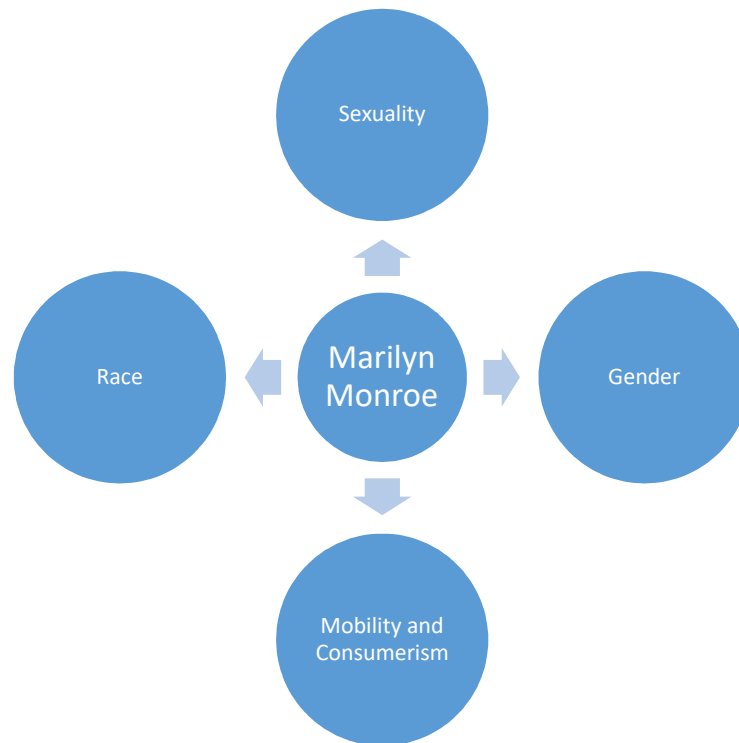
The strands of openness exhibited in Hepburn's first roles as leading lady are also reemphasised in the magazines of the time. In *Screenland* magazine Hepburn's intellectual, independent, and European associations are often relayed to the reader as cool and exotic. In 1956, *Screenland* goes behind-the-scenes of the film *Funny Face* (Stanley Donen, 1957). Containing pictures of Paris and referencing famous landmarks in the text, the magazine both promotes the glamour of the film whilst simultaneously reminding readers of the otherness (non-American in this case) of Hepburn. In this particular article Paris dominates, however, references are made to the stars enjoying a 'Roman Holiday' (Anon 1956: 40), lest the readers forget previous Hepburn roles or her connection to the heritage and glamour of Europe as a whole. Interestingly, it is Hepburn's movies, roles, and locations that frequent the text of the article, suggesting Fred Astaire is out-of-place. The dominance of the new female star, however, symbolises more than Hepburn's importance to American culture. Simply, the old stars of Hollywood are being replaced by women (and men) which are breaking with conservative ideals of gender.

The article, 'Pixie in Paris', locates Hepburn (and not her co-star Fred Astaire) in the city. Astaire does, of course, appear in pictures. However, he is photographed with her and does not occupy his own space. The magazine suggests, through its use of Hepburn above all else, that *Funny Face* is her picture. The word 'pixie' in the title

relates to a short hairstyle worn by some women (famously by Hepburn in *Roman Holiday*) in the 1950s and 1960s. The short hairstyle, a rejection of a traditionally feminine look in favour of a “boyish” style represents a new type of femininity. The apparent rejection of feminine signifiers in favour of male associations, such as control and independence, is further suggested through the text of the magazine. Hepburn is described as ‘WAITING for cue to begin dance rehearsal, Audrey seems to be straining at the leash’ (Anon 1956: 40). In the article, therefore, Hepburn is portrayed as a woman eager to work. Yet, the association of the word ‘leash’ renders Hepburn like a wild animal that cannot be tamed. Perhaps worse still, the association with the word ‘leash’ evokes associations with a dog, more precisely a ‘bitch’, a term today that is still used to describe women in power. The article, therefore, has two readings. Firstly, the reverence for her passion to work, but problematically, also a subtle negative judgement on the new type of woman.

Similarly, *Screenland* portrays Audrey Hepburn’s and Mel Ferrer’s (her husband) trip to Rome as a method to show Hepburn’s and not Ferrer’s dominance and comfortability with the ancient landscape. ‘Roamin’ through Rome’ shows Hepburn ‘bewitched by every column and cobblestone’ (Anon 1958: 25) connecting the star with history and knowledge. Other pictures from the magazine show Ferrer backed against a wall with Hepburn displaying a dominating pose through her leaning position and hand against the wall. Hepburn, in both magazine presentation and in film, therefore, seems to be of both the past and the future. The frequent association with historical sites and educational activities makes Hepburn seem reflective and connected to a cultural legacy which Americans may feel to be missing (due to the comparative newness of the country). Equally, her intellectualism, desire to work (compared to the professionalism exhibited by Monroe in the same era), and the ‘new’

look (pants, ballet flats and pixie hair cut) give a blueprint to an alternative woman which would appear over the coming decades. Hepburn, like Dean once more, does not seem to exist in time. Instead, these two diametrically opposed concepts, tradition vs. modernity, allow Hepburn to transverse into multiple cultural epochs.



Graph 6: Marilyn Monroe's strands of openness

Marilyn Monroe's contradictions, as discussed by televisual documentaries and books, largely rely on exploring her persona via the not-so-dumb-blonde trope. Examples such as her marriage to Arthur Miller, her time at the Actor's Studio, and the continued commentary<sup>101</sup> regarding Monroe's penchant for reading and collecting

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<sup>101</sup> The internet memes, tweets and articles that show surprise at Monroe's interest in reading suggest an insidious misogyny at the root of popular culture's reading of the star. This particular line of argument is outside of the foundational narrative covered here and beyond the remit of advertising

books are used to show an inner Monroe that is contrary to her dumb persona and performance style. Documentaries, such as *Love, Marilyn* (Liz Garbus, 2012) go further by attempting to use Monroe's poetry to show a deeper, darker and more intellectual Monroe in an attempt to dispel the dumb surface. However, the not-so-dumb-blonde stereotype, although a dominant contradiction, is not what keeps Monroe relevant, nor is it central to her foundational narrative. In film, for example, Monroe's characters and performances are far more complex than many appear to realise, even when she is "playing dumb".

To begin Monroe's analysis it is important to note that in film Monroe portrayed either a mentally unwell woman in films such as *Don't Bother to Knock* (Roy Baker, 1952), or a sexpot in films such as *How to Marry a Millionaire* (Jean Negulesco, 1953). From 1953, when Monroe would move from supporting cast to a lead Hollywood actress, Monroe's screen characters would remain firmly in the dumb sexpot category, and thus, these roles have cemented that particular rendition of her in popular consciousness. Prior to 1953, however, Monroe's roles were diverse, including the femme fatale in *Niagara* (Henry Hathaway, 1953), the feisty girlfriend in *Clash By Night* (Fritz Lang, 1952), and the psychopath babysitter in the aforementioned, *Don't Bother to Knock*. 1953, therefore, is an important year in the understanding of Monroe's image and persona. Prior to 1953 Monroe had neither solidified the Monroe look,<sup>102</sup> nor consistently played the dumb blonde. Therefore,

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and commodity, however, an analysis of Monroe reading in popular culture's articles/memes/tweets and the following audience reaction would be an interesting gender study.

<sup>102</sup> Monroe's look can be described as having peroxide blonde hair rather than a more natural shade, a ruby red lipstick rather than more muted shades of pink, a beauty spot on the left cheek, and lastly, a double cat eye accented with white eye liner and often muted or champagne tones for the eyeshadow to allow the eyeliner to be striking.

the thesis will analyse this year as the period in which the foundational narrative was born, rather than through the amalgamation of bit parts.

1953 is a significant year for women, and Monroe's rise to monumental fame during this historical moment allows a new insight into her cultural significance. The Kinsey reports, which were controversial publications that publicised data about sexual activity, exposed taboo subjects during a time in which women were expected to return to the home and fulfil domestic duties. *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* was published in 1953, five years after its male counterpart and exposed female desires and extra marital activities. The acknowledgement of non-virginal or "loose" women whom enjoy sex arguably disrupted the perception of the sensitive or homely ideal of the 1950s' domestic goddess. The virgin-whore dichotomy, therefore, was disrupted by the knowledge that a good and seemingly wholesome wife could secretly enjoy sadomasochism or biting (two areas which are reported on in the 1953 publication).

The magazine *Playboy*, a man's magazine which focused on topics such as sex, was also part of this new and revolutionary way to tackle sexual taboos. The first issue, also published in 1953, used Marilyn Monroe's famous Red Velvet calendar shoot<sup>103</sup> as its first centrefold. The Red Velvet photographs, taken when Monroe was at a low ebb in 1948, were used beyond Monroe's control in *Playboy* and is another example of the exploitation of Monroe's body and image. However, regardless of Hefner's uncouth behaviour, *Playboy*, the Kinsey report, and the sexpot film roles all

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<sup>103</sup> The Red Velvet calendar shoot, however, did not damage Monroe's career. Despite being advised to deny her role in a nude shoot, Monroe admitted the photographs were her. Monroe's honesty and openness about sex, I argue, would aid her connection to female sexuality and a perceived authenticity.

occur in this one year. I argue, therefore, that it is the combination of these three things that is, in part, responsible for Monroe's connection to female sexuality.

1950s' America had large fears about women, in particular in regard to work and desire. Elvis Presley, as discussed previously, caused concern not because he enjoyed making sexual gyrations, but because women reacted to it. Marilyn Monroe, as the sex symbol of the 1950s, equally exposes various concerns about sex and female enjoyment during a sexually repressed society which is reeling from publications such as *Playboy* and the Kinsey reports. On the surface, Monroe's breathy voice, curved figure with glimpses of exposed flesh, and half-open mouth, render her a sex object. Yet, Monroe's sexualisation of her own body, whilst in part for the male audience, often seems to be for her own pleasure and knowledge of her own control.

In an interesting contrast to Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley too suggests sex through his performance. Both employ an open mouth technique that suggests breathlessness, as if gripped by some sort of pleasure. Monroe in pictures or movie moments will often tilt her head back and smile with an open mouth. Through this pose she connotes a certain vulnerability due to her exposed neck and gaze upwards, but equally, it is a look of burgeoning ecstasy in which the viewer is restricted access. Elvis Presley, in contrast, tilts his head down, and fiercely looks up from beneath his eyebrows. Like Monroe, the open mouth breathlessness connotes a visceral enjoyment, a pose in which they know illicit desire, but which they have control.<sup>104</sup> The wide-open mouth often used to depict Monroe, for example in *The Seven Year Itch*, occurs less frequently in Monroe photography, instead, it is the slightly parted

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<sup>104</sup> This particular performance also uses other methods to show domination, for example, striking the air with an open hand and wide spread legs to occupy all available space.

lips and head tilt (Figure 13) that exemplifies the early sexualised look, a look that says ‘come hither, if you dare’.



Figure 13: Marilyn Monroe’s sexual gaze.



Figure 14: Elvis Presley’s sexual gaze.

Despite the overtly sexual image, such as on the poster for *Niagara*, in which Monroe is posed next to a rushing waterfall and whose curves matches the fluidity of the water, Marilyn Monroe cannot be condensed into a purely sexual or disparaging

narrative. Monroe is there to be looked at for male pleasure, but she is far more complex in regards to the sexual interpretation of her image, particularly during and after 1953. Firstly, and a facet that is not new to the analysis of Monroe, is her perceived vulnerability. Child-like glee and innocence permeates a Monroe performance, particularly in starring roles. As mentioned previously, supporting roles allowed a range for the actress, but leading roles often were formulaic and profited from the dumb blonde character.

In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Monroe is rendered “dumb” by her ecstatic behaviour, for example, Lorelei Lee (Monroe) bounces on a bed in pure excitement when on an expensive cruise liner, is distracted when shiny diamonds pass by her, and is fooled into thinking a python tutorial from Piggy has no ulterior motive. Similarly, in *How to Marry a Millionaire* Pola (Monroe) fails to recognise a house intruder and makes a variety of mistakes not because she is dumb, but by the refusal to wear glasses to appeal to a wealthy suitor. In both cases, her character does not necessarily lack intelligence, but is shown to have a fixation on wealth. In the former example Lorelei Lee is fixated on obtaining money, and thus, appears to have a one-track mind and lack of depth. In the latter, her character is too vain, and thus, goes through life in an apparent haze and appears to be unable to function on her own. Superficiality, therefore, her characters seem to need guidance, and thus, renders her character as “dumb”.

The dumb persona is reinforced by the frequency in which fellow characters comment on Lorelei’s/Pola’s lack of intelligence, a trope most notable in *How to Marry a Millionaire* in which Schatze (Lauren Bacall) often verbally degrades Pola and Loco (Betty Grable). However, this is once again explicit information fed to the audience that is not reflective of Pola, and by extension, any of Monroe’s characters.



I argue that Monroe's performances represent surface vulnerability to enable psychological manipulation. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, for example, Monroe's voice is at a higher pitch in moments of want. The higher pitch, most closely associated with young women endear her to the elder male characters as it clearly plays into gender norms. When discussing difficult issues with Dorothy (Jane Russell), the pitch is lower and Monroe's voice loses an element of breathlessness. Interestingly, at the end of the film this lower pitch is also used on Gus (Tommy Noonan) when chastising him for abandoning her in Paris. This change in pitch and register dependant on her character's situation hints at an inner awareness of behaviour that removes the superficiality of the dumb blonde caricature and highlights femininity as a performance. A performance which renders those around her, especially men who are conforming to gender stereotypical roles, to underestimate her intentions and desires. Monroe's vulnerability, therefore, is an artificial tool that exposes the performance of gender and makes a mockery of the perception of power between the two sexes.

Secondly, Monroe's relation to sexuality and gender is far more complex than her perceived vulnerability. Monroe's control of sexual desire is paramount to her early leading lady roles and furthers the argument that her characters are only superficially vulnerable. The male leads in Monroe pictures are often sexless, neurotic and anxious.<sup>105</sup> In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, for example, Gus answers to his father and is shown to be consistently worried about handsome men around Lorelei. On the cruise ship Lorelei's husband-to-be, a slender and neurotic man, is contrasted with the muscular and charming Olympic swim team. Visually Lorelei does not seem to

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<sup>105</sup> Rare exceptions are found in *River of No Return* (Otto Preminger, 1954), *Let's Make Love* (George Cukor, 1960) and *The Misfits* (John Huston, 1961).

correlate with Gus, and thus, this awareness increases his neurotic behaviour. To subdue Gus, Lorelei kisses him and sends him into a stupor. These 'seductive powers', or more accurately the power of Lorelei's touch, modifies Gus' behaviour and suggests that control is maintained through the promise of physical affection.

The affection in the films of Monroe, however, are offered and controlled by her actions. In the sequence for 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend' from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* Monroe is in full control of her body and romantic pursuits. As the song begins Monroe is surrounded by eligible young bachelors, but with each advance Monroe bats their hands away with a fan. Consistently in the centre of the frame, Monroe dominates the space with arms outstretched, pushing and pulling men out of her way. The men are rendered faceless and in the periphery of Lorelei's ambitions and wants. In this scene Monroe is sexy, but she is not available to the men that surround her. Instead, she directs the attention in much the same way as Presley does in *Loving You*. The shimmies, shakes and quivers show her own pleasure in desire and sex, but through the dominance suggested in the performance she is rendered unreachable.

As the sequence of 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend' concludes, Monroe clasps her arms to her chest, covering her heart. The closed stance at the conclusion of the dominant and sexually suggestive performance should remind the audience that Monroe's heart and inner sexual desires are impenetrable to the onlooker, in this case, both the fellow dancers and the movie's audience. Monroe's body and actions are suggestive and they do attempt to influence the onlookers to desire her, but that yearning is not without its restrictions. It is important to note, therefore, that despite Monroe's performance of overt sexuality, Monroe's filmography lacks any love-making. Returning to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the film concludes with a wedding

in which Dorothy reminds Lorelei that ‘on your wedding day it’s alright to say yes.’ Again, in latter films such as *The Seven Year Itch*, *The Girl* (Monroe) does not have sex nor even kiss Richard (Tom Ewell) except in his fantasies. Monroe, therefore, is sexy but not sexual in her screen representation.<sup>106</sup> She is the constant promise of bliss, an illusion that is never ruined or tainted by sex itself.

Previous work on Monroe, however, has problematically posited that the star is an ‘angelic whore’ (Woodward 2002: 27). Woodward’s chapter, entitled ‘Iconmania: Sex, Death, Photography, and the Myth of Marilyn Monroe’ insinuates Monroe is vulnerable, but sexually available and willing. Equally, the collection of articles in Yona Zeldis McDonough’s book often propagate that Monroe has no sexual needs, but enhances a man’s needs. However, as I have argued above, if she is an ‘angelic whore’ it is because she promises sex through the manipulation of her performance, but is not willing to release her sexual control or autonomy to another.<sup>107</sup> Marilyn Monroe’s sex is artificial, just as her identity is staged and her femininity a construction.

Monroe’s construction of femininity and sexuality is partly achieved by her performance style, but is also achieved by a display of material exuberance. *How to*

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<sup>106</sup> Contrast Monroe’s lack of screen sex with other sex symbols during this same era. Elizabeth Taylor’s character, for example, alludes to actually having sex in *Giant* (George Stevens, 1956), and of course, bears children and thus confirms her character as sexual and accessible. Audrey Hepburn, again, is shown to desire a man not for money but for romance and intimacy in films such as *Sabrina*. Additionally, Doris Day, often wrongly labelled as virginal, is shown to be fantasising in *Pillow Talk* (Michael Gordon, 1959) and shown in bed after sex in *Lover Come Back* (Delbert Mann, 1961). For further deconstruction of the sexual depiction of Doris Day and how she became associated with virginal innocence see Tamar Jeffers McDonald’s *Doris Day Confidential* (2013). Bizarrely, using the latter example, Doris Day is depicted as someone that has sex in film but is rendered wholesome, and Monroe whom is rarely shown to have relations on film has been rendered as sexual. The discrepancy is partly, I believe, due to Monroe’s penchant for finding apparent breathless ecstasy in her performance and the aforementioned affiliation with sex in 1953.

<sup>107</sup> Magazines such as *Confidential* did report on Marilyn Monroe’s real-life lovers. Again, however, Monroe was also married to playwright Arthur Miller whom she honourably stuck by during the McCarthy trial and resembled the bookish men she was often depicted with in film. Therefore, Monroe’s romantic trysts were also mirrored with elements of domesticity, and thus, claims cannot be made to magazines entirely promoting a promiscuous Monroe.

*Marry a Millionaire* (released in the USA on the 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1953) and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (released in the USA on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1953) both present a Monroe that promotes wealth as a link to happiness and social mobility. Both these films were released in close proximity, and thus, reinforces Monroe's money-oriented character type in quick succession to the audience of 1953. As a reminder, it is during the month of December in which *Playboy* is released,<sup>108</sup> and thus, there is also a dense saturation of Monroe related media during this latter part of the year and could therefore aid a deeper involvement with Monroe's persona.

Released during a commodified period (the Christmas holidays) both films encourage the lavish spending of the season. Monroe, therefore, becomes a highly publicised promotor of femininity and beauty as a mode in which to achieve further success. In *How to Marry a Millionaire*, for example, each female lead has a dream sequence in which the audience is shown each character's desire. In Pola's sequence the audience is shown a flight to an exotic destination in which Pola is given a vast array of jewels as a gift. Pola relishes in the sparkling reflection of the jewels, and much like in the performance of 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend',<sup>109</sup> Monroe seeks societal and personal improvement through the accumulation of wealth and commodities.

The husband is secondary in both Pola's and Lorelei Lee's ambitions, instead, a husband is a method in which to achieve wealth. There is a pleasure in consumerism rather than sexual relations, and it is her beauty that the sexless men receive as a reward. The urgency with which her characters attempt to secure wealth does suggest

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<sup>108</sup> *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* by Alfred C. Kinsey was published in September, and thus, even the topic of sex and women is closely aligned with Monroe's cultural saturation later that year.

<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, the song's title is also mentioned in reference to Pola in *How to Marry a Millionaire* during the fashion segment.

the importance of youth to the female form and its ability to gain social mobility. However, more importantly, it is Monroe's determination, depicted through her constant movement and dominance of the frame, which renders her continually present and mobile. Even when sat down, as in *How to Marry a Millionaire*'s plotting scene on the balcony, Monroe is spread horizontally at the forefront of the frame. Depicted as the only woman eating during this scene, Monroe is not only the dominant presence, but is the only character to be shown physically doing something in the moment, proving very much that she is in the now through her requirement for sustenance.

Monroe's frame dominance in each of these first leading roles and the contrast of movement and on-screen presence between herself and her co-stars (both male and female) render Monroe as the central figure which is depicted as living in the now. The nowness which Monroe conveys through movement and dominance is only heightened in relation to the new technologies with which she is associated. Much like Presley's relation to transport (as mentioned previously), Monroe is also aligned with new cinematic innovation in 1953. Cinemascope,<sup>110</sup> created in 1953 by Spyros P. Skouras whom coincidentally was the president of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox (Monroe's studio), enabled film to be shot and consequently projected in a widescreen format. *How to Marry a Millionaire*, a film featuring Marilyn Monroe, and which she was positioned horizontally in the forefront of the screen, was one of the first movies to use Cinemascope.<sup>111</sup> The star, therefore, is associated with both new sexual attitudes

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<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, Cinemascope has been posthumously connected to Monroe, most notably in NBC's *Smash* (Theresa Rebeck, 2012-2013) in which Monroe (Katherine McPhee) playfully alludes to the allure of her image in Cinemascope. In the line she sings: 'Make the light just write for Cinemascope' a clear nod to the connection to Monroe's naughty association with sex due to the line at first seemingly referring to "sin". The Monroe estate's use of Monroe in this way is not rare, often giving permission to films such as *Calendar Girl* (John Whitesell, 1993) to connect Monroe to sex and desire in occasionally and surprisingly negative ways.

<sup>111</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox's *The Robe* (Henry Koster, 1953) was the first to use Cinemascope.

and new technology, making Monroe an example of progression during a time in which the future was of increasing importance.

In this sub-chapter I have shown the various reasons as to why the stars' foundational narratives are of integral importance. These stars do have contradictions that are fundamental to their image, such as Elvis Presley's good boy-bad boy dichotomy, but more importantly, these stars exposed the very tensions of their time. These large topics, such as sexuality, gender, and race are topics that are still debated today, and thus, these figures are transferable to modern representations. In the next chapter, I will explore the strands of openness when controlled by an estate. The sub-chapter will endeavour to explore why Presley and Monroe should be considered as part of the *commercial saturation* tier, and will show that strands of openness are only one factor in the accessibility and prominence of these star personas and images.

## **2.4 Dial M for Money: Intellectual Property**

The 1950s, the decade in which this chapter is interested, is of vital importance to the understanding of the case study stars and the resulting representation in the Fifties media revival. The 1950s, as shown in the first section of this sub-chapter, is far more instrumental to conceptions of the celebrity-as-individualised-product than previously suggested in this chapter. The decade enabled the case study stars to have various strands of openness and contradictions that are achieved not through individual personality traits, but through the decade's societal unrest and attempt to self-mythologise.

Interestingly, the decade achieved far more than a platform for the stars' foundational narrative, it also furthered the law concerning the right to publicity, and thus, became an era which altered the ability to control and own a star image. These stars, therefore, rose to fame during a time of changing definitions, both societally and legally. The alteration to publicity rights, I argue, enable a subconscious connection to the stars of this period as intrinsically linked to individually owned and marketable properties. A star's image in 1950s' America is no longer deemed as readily available, but an entity for profit and control on a star's own terms. A star, therefore, begins to further represent the epitome of individuality and difference during a period in time in which psychology and individuality is gaining traction. More importantly, a star in the 1950s is arguably closer aligned to the changing consumer culture due to the recognition that a star's image can be used as a commodity.

The first important legal change occurred in 1953, and as previously stated, this was already a year which was significantly important to Monroe and Hepburn. In this year, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals of the Second Circuit, found that

Topps Chewing Gum, Inc. had infringed upon right to the image of leading baseball-players, a right that had already been acquired by Haelen Laboratories Inc. It was this seminal case in 1953 in which Judge Frank found that the baseball players should have the ability to grant a singular company the exclusive right to their image(s). He further noted that to allow the baseball players' image to be used by any company would hinder potential earnings on behalf of the team, and consequently, the individual players.

The altered perception of publicity rights enabled a new way to determine and manage the star image, and this re-emphasised the 1950s penchant for self-identity and an individual's right to continued prosperity. The thesis will not interrogate legality in detail, largely due to its interest in official representation, rather than fan-produced or unofficial merchandise that attempts to dilute the star brand's messaging. However, the use of the image outside of sanctioned merchandise, as stated previously and further elaborated at the conclusion of this work, should be explored in a research project of its own to correlate and compare with the findings in this thesis.

A posthumous image is sanctified and improper use threatens the economic value by potential damage to the marketability of the brand. Managing this posthumous enterprise, however, is not simple. For example, a Hollywood star's work on film is under the copyright of the studio and the photograph of a star, as found in the long battle of Shaw Family Archives LTD v. CMG Worldwide, Inc., does not always favour the star, but the photographer's artistry.<sup>112</sup> In the case of film and

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<sup>112</sup> The Shaw Family Archives reproduced pictures taken of Marilyn Monroe on merchandise. CMG sued, arguing they had the sole rights to Marilyn Monroe's likeness. This particular case did a lot of damage, as it became more than a question of artistry and image rights. The court found that Monroe's domicile at the time of her death was New York, a state that does not recognise publicity rights. In this case, the question of the photographs were no longer the larger talking point, but whether Monroe could even pass on publicity rights to Lee Strasberg. CMG, whom purchased these rights from Anna



professional photography the copyright often lies outside of the star. Claims over unfair use, then, are determined upon the way the star is presented. Simply, will the use by an unofficial party or the estate of the photographer use the image in such a way as to alter the conception of the brand? Today, a star is not granted privacy rights by law due to their exposed public life, and thus, during life a star may sue for improper use of publicity that may dilute or tarnish their image/persona. In some cases, a star may also claim that the use of their image on a product or as an animatronic at a bar,<sup>113</sup> may cause a likelihood of confusion, e.g. that a consumer may think this represents/was endorsed by the star and/or is representative of the star's brand.

Publicity rights are further complicated by death. In states such as California,<sup>114</sup> publicity rights after death are acknowledged, and thus, an estate could claim image dilution. However, in the United Kingdom and the state of New York, publicity rights after death are not recognised.<sup>115</sup> Thus Marilyn Monroe, a star that was a registered citizen in New York, despite dying in California, has no publicity rights. The estate, despite a ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2012 that Marilyn Monroe's image could not be owned by the estate, has still retained a method in which to officiate her posthumous star brand. It is this method that is used by each of the stars of this thesis, despite the retention of their own publicity rights.

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Strasberg, then, were placed in a much more troubling position. Marilyn Monroe cases continue, and will be briefly discussed in this sub-chapter.

<sup>113</sup> In 1993, Norm and Cliff from NBC's *Cheers*, were reproduced as animatronics at Host bars. The two actors, George Wendt and John D. Ratzenberger, countered this use under the impression that patrons would assume the actors endorsed the products for sale at the bar.

<sup>114</sup> Celebrity Rights Acts of 1985 and the California Civil Code section 3344.1 (amended in 2007 to include any star that died after 1935). This amendment was a reaction to *Shaw Family Archives v. CMG Worldwide*, but a similar law was not passed in New York, and thus, still did not protect Marilyn Monroe.

<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that the United Kingdom relies on the tort of defamation.

The trademark is a method in which to escape publicity law and instead work within the rules of a business, further commodifying a star and enabling a stronger case for branding and the protection of an image. Star names, and in particular, signatures, are distinguishable, precise, and can be represented graphically. These elements are essential in a consumer market as it allows continued legal protections as long as it is used in commerce.

A trademark should be renewed every ten years, but can be denied. An estate must ensure the sale of goods or a star's use in advertising to keep legal privileges. As part of that agreement, quality control is required on all products with the licensed mark, and thus, aids the protection of the brand, and most importantly, protects the consumers from counterfeit and poor quality goods. Only official products can/should have the official signature as it is a guarantee of that brand, products that attempt to blur those official and unofficial lines, are therefore subject to legal action. For example, a business cannot use Marilyn Monroe's name on the sign to their gym. The consumer will not be confused, knowing this has little to do with Monroe, but it does detract from the main Monroe business – for instance, Marilyn Monroe™ Spas. The fictional example would dilute the brand by lessening its power to mean something specific,<sup>116</sup> in this case, beauty-as-fitness not beauty-as-glamour.

Additionally, a business cannot, for example, use Marilyn Monroe's name on the sign to their adult cinema. The consumer will not be confused, knowing this has little to do with Monroe, but it does link her name with unsavoury associations. These negative associations tarnish a brand, despite the lack of consumer confusion and may

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<sup>116</sup> This point links to the thesis' reasoning for not writing about legality throughout the research. Dilution attempts (business or fan) deserve its own distinct analysis that cannot be sufficiently covered in the word limit of this thesis.

cause a lack of consumer involvement with the actual brand. Lastly, a business cannot use Marilyn Monroe's name on a beauty product as this is predominantly the type of business for which the brand is used. The likelihood-of-confusion is thus infringement, and is equally not allowed as it may restrict potential profit, and if poor quality, weaken the official brand's reputation.

Furthermore, in advertising it is illegal to suggest a celebrity is associated with a product when they are not, and thus, all print advertisements in magazines and commercials are approved by the estate, and thus, are the clearest examples of the official rendering of a posthumous star. It is for this reason that advertising, above all else, is favoured by this thesis in its examination of the commercial construction and exploitation of the posthumous star.

The remainder of this thesis will focus on the official posthumous brand of each star and its evolution in contemporary advertising. However, before preceding to the analysis, it is important to establish an understanding of the four estates and the interests and restrictions each estate has on its individual property. This approach will enable a full appreciation of the importance of a star signature, or how Marilyn Monroe is disseminated more widely than her posthumous contemporary, Audrey Hepburn. It is this base knowledge of estate ownership that will aid the analysis, particularly in relation to the dominance of Marilyn Monroe in the thesis' analysis of the posthumous star.

The four case study stars have varied, and in some instances, complex histories regarding ownership. The sub-chapter, as stated previously, will give a brief overview regarding complications and how that might have an impact on the stars' commercial use and the reliance of the aforementioned foundational narrative. Elvis Presley is the

easiest to evaluate due to considerable press coverage regarding his personal affairs since his death. It should be noted that not all of the posthumous case study stars have readily available data and transparency, and this is one of the difficulties of analysing an individual posthumous star's financial success.

In life, Presley's image and likeness was first orchestrated and controlled through a Presley-Parker relationship which began in 1956, whereby Parker would oversee merchandising and the exploitation of Presley's image. A new arrangement, which led to further mismanagement on behalf of Parker, began through Boxcar Enterprises in January, 1974. Presley's fortune was ciphered by Parker both through the sale of Presley's RCA recordings and through Presley's 15%, and finally, 22% share of the profits generated by the licensing of his image on merchandise.<sup>117</sup> The licensing entanglements continued upon Presley's death. A mere two days after his passing, Boxcar Enterprises, Inc. formed with Factors Etc Inc. to aid with Presley's posthumous merchandising. Factors Etc Inc., as a larger company, had the capacity to further hinder the reproduction of Presley's image by various businesses. However, the mismanagement of Parker, and later Factors Etc Inc., resulted in Priscilla Presley's desire for the control of her ex-husband's estate.

Elvis Presley's house, personal objects and money had been left entirely to his young daughter, Lisa Marie Presley. Priscilla Presley, as Lisa Marie's mother, would manage the trust, alongside the National Bank of Commerce in Memphis, in 1979. After Presley's death, Priscilla Presley witnessed the poor execution of merchandising and the vast expense of Presley's home, Graceland. Through legal battles,<sup>118</sup> Priscilla

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<sup>117</sup> More on the mismanagement of Parker can be located in *Elvis Inc.* (1996), by Sean O'Neil.

<sup>118</sup> Factors Etc Inc. were found to have defrauded the estate and banned from further merchandising. Colonel Parker's contract was bought out to stop his involvement.

Presley achieved control of Presley's image and estate, and thus, gave Priscilla the ultimate decision making power for her company, Elvis Presley Enterprises (EPE), formed in 1981.

After finding inspiration from the Disney Company, Priscilla Presley established three divisions within the company: flagship, licensing and music publishing. Deals with Turner Broadcasting followed, as did worldwide licensing. Graceland Inc., a subsidiary of EPE, then opened in 1982, allowing EPE to be involved with the tourism industry, ensuring a legacy for Presley's daughter.

EPE, to ensure profits, began an intense search for any merchant that were not licensing Elvis Presley products with the estate. The competition were either sued, asked to desist, or had their products approved and licensed by the estate. Any products the Presley estate deemed inappropriate were denied licensing deals to ensure EPE's version of the Presley image was maintained. This is a particularly important piece of information for the analysis of official representation in the 1980s and 1990s as all items would have been approved by Presley's ex-wife, and not a large group of businessmen as they are today.

By 2005, EPE was owned by Lisa Marie Presley, but she sold all but 15% of her ownership to CORE Media Group (previously CKX, Inc.) for an estimated \$100 million. Priscilla and Lisa Marie, however, retained Graceland and Elvis Presley's personal effects, but merchandising and advertising decisions were no longer made by those with emotional investment. However, the image of Presley had been largely successful for EPE, and thus, would not warrant much manipulation on behalf of the large media group. The use of Presley from 2005-2013, therefore, was through the

CORE Media Group for licensing, and Lisa-Marie, Priscilla and employed associates for the tourism sector and exhibition spaces.

In 2013, Authentic Brands Group purchased Presley from CORE Media Group for an undisclosed amount. Further changes were made to the estate, with the new deal calling for a change in management of Graceland Inc. ABG, as of 2013, work alongside Joel Weinshanker (chairman of National Entertainment Collectibles Association) to oversee Graceland operations and the expansion of the entertainment complex. Lisa-Marie still retains the ownership of the building and the personal effects, but ABG have greater control than the CORE Media Group once had. ABG, for example, control the global rights to Presley's image, which includes photos and video archives; events and operations, such as Elvis Week,<sup>119</sup> and finally, Presley's name and likeness. Despite the larger control of ABG, the estate has lost money in recent years, moving from a steady \$55 million annually to the most recent, \$40 million in 2018 (a table can be found in this sub-chapter's conclusion).

Marilyn Monroe's<sup>120</sup> estate is arguably even less fortunate than Presley's estate. After her death, 75% of the residue went to Lee Strasberg, her acting coach. The remainder 25% went to her psychiatrist, Dr. Marianne Kris, to donate to a psychiatric institution of her choice. Monroe did provide money for her mother and half-sister, but her personal effects and decisions regarding her image were in the control of Lee, and on his passing, Anna Strasberg. Despite only meeting Monroe once, Anna Strasberg was the decision maker.

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<sup>119</sup> Elvis Week is a celebration of Presley's life and legacy, held during the week of his death. Graceland also celebrates his birthday week, but it is Elvis Week that includes the famous midnight vigil and attracts a greater number of tourists.

<sup>120</sup> For more discussion on legal issues and Marilyn Monroe, see Ana Salzberg's 'How Long Does it Take?: The Resurrection of Marilyn Monroe and Something's Got to Give (1962)' (2015).

In 1996, Strasberg made a licensing deal with CMG Worldwide and official Monroe merchandise began to be sold. However, the estate, as mentioned in a note above, have faced complications due to Monroe's domicile at the time of her death. New York, did not and still does not recognise publicity rights after death. Domiciled at the time of her death in New York, the judge denied the Monroe estate's attempt at suing the Shaw Family Archives for their use of the star.

Furthermore, in 2012 a federal court ruled that anyone could use Monroe's likeness and that the Monroe estate could no longer charge for image use. Monroe, however, was purchased by the Authentic Brands Group for an estimated \$20-30 million despite this ruling. As shown previously, although her likeness can be used on any product, her trademarks cannot, which means official Monroe products could exist. The trademark lends authenticity to a product or advertisement, a concept that will be discussed in Chapter Four and is arguably increasingly important to posthumous commodities.

The battle for Monroe, however, continues and in 2015 a court case began regarding Monroe's trademark and whether it is too generic. If found to be generic the estate will no longer be able to control the use of Monroe and her trademark on commodities. Should this happen, there may be a steep rise in Monroe goods, but even less of a financial record. Additionally, should there be a rise in Monroe goods there is a risk of dilution (star meaning) and the further meaninglessness (over-use) of her star image. Scholars and cultural critics, therefore, should be astute and wary of the changing nature to posthumous stardom and a star's legacy in these cases.

Audrey Hepburn, in comparison to Monroe, is a very closely guarded property, and as of yet, is not directly or solely owned by an external company. Her two sons

own equal shares of her estate and have only recently made some significant changes regarding the ownership of her personal effects. Hepburn died on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1993, aged 63, and is the longest living posthumous star in this thesis. The estate rarely gives permission for the use of Hepburn's image and are very selective regarding the presentation of their mother. Hepburn is extremely present in the commodity market, but not always legally. Like the estates mentioned previously, the Hepburn estate has sued companies such as Caleffi for using a related image without the estate's approval.

Commercials such as the Galaxy advertisement, referred to throughout this thesis, was directly approved not only by an estate but by her two sons. Unlike Monroe, the Hepburn estate will have brand considerations, but more importantly, have personal reasoning for a particular image construction of their mother. The restricted image rights of the Hepburn estate is in direct contrast with the Monroe estate: personally and entirely owned by the family; is entitled to posthumous publicity and moral rights that cannot be contested due to her death in Switzerland, and lastly, has not been used beyond commodities and advertising for profit, in contrast to Monroe Spas and animations such as *Mini Marilyn* (Arlen Konopaki, 2017).

If there is a similarity between these two female posthumous stars it is the sale of memorabilia. Monroe's personal effects have been on sale at various auction houses since her death, most recently at Julien's on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2016. Famously, this auction sold the "Happy Birthday" dress for \$4.8 million. However, this is not the extent of Monroe fervour, Nate D. Sanders Auctions in that same month sold an old Monroe grave marker that had been oxidised due to fans touching the bronze plate over the years, and itself was a replacement of an earlier one that had sold at Julien's in 2015. Previously, autopsy reports and the crypt next to Monroe's was auctioned for



\$4.6 million. Again, despite Hepburn property and related items being auctioned off, it cannot be said to be as dark and all-consuming as her blonde contemporary. In contrast, Hepburn's Christie's auction sold scripts from famous films, clothing, and famous photographs. Again, Monroe's exposure to a dark market is intrinsically connected to the lack of original image protection after her death and the willingness to sell everything, something the Hepburn estate is not willing to do.

The interest in Hepburn as a posthumous star, like Monroe, is made clear not only by their presence in contemporary media and commodity, but by the sheer interest in these auctions. Monroe's 2016 auction at Julien's raised nearly \$11 million and was filmed for Channel 4's documentary, *Marilyn Monroe: Auction of a Lifetime* (Patrick Reams, 2017). Hepburn's 2017 Christie's auction realised £4,635,500, 'seven times the original estimate' (Jones 2017: online). From Hepburn's estate, it is clear that these two female posthumous stars hold cultural currency, but the treatment and exposure, whilst both high, varies significantly. The knowledge provided by estates and auctions, therefore, begin to explain how Monroe seems more malleable and why it is more likely to see the posthumous star in strange, and sometimes dark reproductions.

James Dean's estate, like Hepburn, was passed to family members, in this case to his cousin, Marcus Winslow. However, CMG Worldwide is the licensing agency through which Dean's image and name is sold, and thus, some choices are made on behalf/with the estate. CMG is the biggest dead celebrity licensing firm and has a host of 'delebs' to its name, including: Errol Flynn, Humphrey Bogart, Marlon Brando, and Bette Davis. Previously, Marilyn Monroe was also part of their roster, but as mentioned previously, Monroe has since been sold to the Authentic Brand Group.

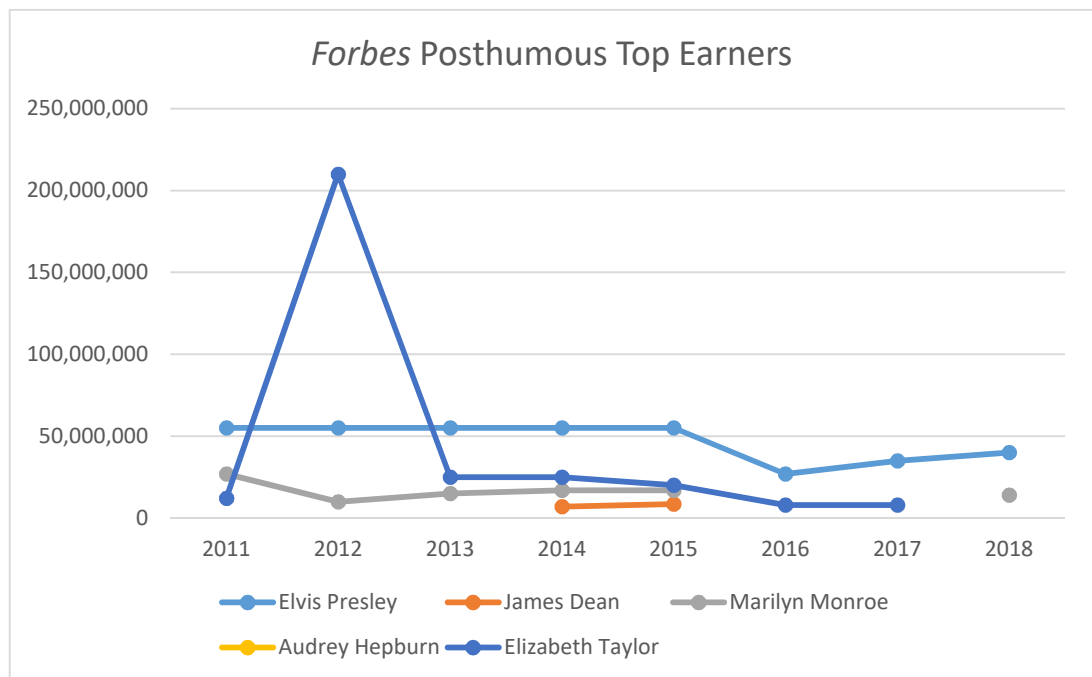
James Dean has always been a large earner for businesses looking to make economic profit off of posthumous stars. In September 1956, only a year after his death, *Time* reported on four magazines dedicated to the star that were selling quickly. James Dean's posthumous success, at least through magazines, was seemingly immediate. However, he too would follow the posthumous advertising trends throughout the decades. CMG, in recent years, have seemingly used James Dean as one of their main earners as his endorsements are plentiful. On CMG's website, for example, his advertising endorsements are highly promoted by the group as an example of CMG's success.

Dean's estate are also protective of their brand, especially of Dean's name. In 2014, the estate sued a Twitter account that used Dean's name and likeness. Dean is, of course, trademarked, and a Twitter account that appears to speak on behalf of Dean and/or the estate is an impingement on the estate's publicity rights. Social media, most importantly, is a way to advertise your brand, and thus, it was important for the estate (or any star's estate) to control what is said to ensure positive values and brand consistency. The estate's quick action regarding the Twitter account shows that even a non-profitable appropriation of a star name is a potential threat to an official brand, and thus is curtailed to maintain a consistent official image.

Statistics and the intricacies of a posthumous star's earnings are extremely well-guarded, but *The Telegraph* and *Forbes* do offer an insight to how much is generated, even if that information is not fully deconstructed to show which sectors generate the most profit for a posthumous star. *The Telegraph* reported that 'US revenue generated by dead celebrities is today estimated at an annual \$2.5 billion, which does not include revenue from TV or online commercials and their advertising' (Kirsta 2012: online). Like much of the financial information on posthumous stars,

much is estimated. However, this annual revenue, before advertising, shows the impact of posthumous stars in the contemporary market.

The magazine *Forbes* does shows a slightly more accurate representation of each posthumous star. However, they rarely breakdown the earnings in detail, nor, if a star has fallen from the top 15 earners of that year do the readers receive information on that posthumous star’s earnings. As a result, information that is released is sporadic at best. Below is a graph and table made from the collection of *Forbes* financial results:



Graph 7: *Forbes*' Posthumous Earners.

	Elvis Presley	James Dean	Marilyn Monroe	Audrey Hepburn	Elizabeth Taylor
2011	\$55 million	N/A	\$27 million	N/A	\$12 million
2012	\$55 million	N/A	\$10 million	N/A	\$210 million
2013	\$55 million	N/A	\$15 million	N/A	\$25 million
2014	\$55 million	\$7 million	\$17 million	N/A	\$25 million
2015	\$55 million	\$8.5 million	\$17 million	N/A	\$20 million
2016	\$27 million	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$8million
2017	\$35 million	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$8 million
2018	\$40 million	N/A	\$14 million	N/A	N/A

Table 1: *Forbes'* Posthumous Earners.

The *Forbes* list includes musicians, actors, sportsman, authors and scientists. As a result, it is not an accurate depiction of the top-earning Hollywood stars. The list only contains 15 “delebs”, and thus, Audrey Hepburn, whilst earning money, is not earning more than Michael Jackson, David Bowie, Prince, Dr. Seuss, or Einstein. Unfortunately, due to this her exact earnings are not as accessible to the public and it is difficult to ascertain her particular earning trends. In addition, Elizabeth Taylor, as another actress from the 1950s and 1960s has been included in this table and graph. From this graph, it is clear that Taylor has had the most successful eight years within

the posthumous Hollywood market. However, she has not been included in this thesis as her death was within this century. Despite heralding from the decades of most interest to this thesis, her posthumous popularity does not yet exhibit longevity. The Taylor estate, as shown by this graph, piqued in 2012 through the auction of her jewellery, and the remaining years reflect sales of her fragrance. Taylor would be an interesting case study, but deaths in the last decade are too soon to discover trends or to evaluate if her posthumous star has remained a large part of the contemporary media landscape, and thus, Taylor still resides in the third tier of posthumous stardom.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Nostalgia scholars such as Sprengler, as illustrated at the start of this chapter, posit that the era of the Fifties began in 1954 and ended in 1964. However, no scholars (Sprengler included) note the importance of two key areas. Firstly, that 1953 is a year of newness. I argued that 1953 is a watershed year for the United States conception of its self and consequently is the year in which enables the era to begin. I am in agreement with Sprengler that the Fifties begin in 1954, but it is 1953's rapid progression that sets the tone for the following year. In addition, the self-mythologizing that occurs in this period, I believe, is directly resulted from the need to contain ideological values of America to combat the complex tensions that have formed as a result of technological and societal change in 1953.

The rapid changes that form a complex rift between progression and tradition can be found in various areas of American life. For example, in film CinemaScope changes the look and appeal of the cinema, arguably altering the reception and expectation of the cinematic experience whilst also furthering the medium. Equally TV dinners, the latest convenience, was altering the modes in which families spent time together and consumed entertainment in the home, arguably changing the focus from conversation and sense of community to the individual and media-driven experience. This experience, therefore, further centres media consumption as a key mode to the understanding of self (e.g. learning about the social interactions and ideology from the screen) and exposes stars as models of behaviour. Simultaneously, the new saturation of new modes of entertainment (larger-than-life CinemaScope and television) arguably further the veneration of stars. Unlike the stars of 1930s, for example, the stars of this era appear physically bigger, and thus are more prominent

or over-whelming on screen.<sup>121</sup> 1953, therefore, ushers in new ways of experiencing stars through technology and an individual's relationship to leisure time.

However, media format and consumption is not the only change in 1953. Car design also altered with the Chevrolet Corvette (the same manufacturer which would present the tail fin in the 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air) a design which moved toward a sports car aesthetic and would continue to expand in 1955 with a V8 engine. Whilst the design of leisure was changing, the hydrogen bomb was a technological threat in this same year, portraying technology as both progressive and damaging. Technology in 1953, therefore, promised to make life more enjoyable whilst threatening to obliterate life itself. During the Cold War the potential for technology to destroy was a continued possibility, however, the Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower, sworn into office in 1953, equally may have afforded a sense of false security. The President, as the former Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces and the figure over-seeing the end of the Korean War, suggests an element of safety-by-association and reminds the American public of previous victories allowing for a sense of self-worth for the nation, a self-worth evident in the era's television and patriotic discourse.

The self-worth evident in America's growing technological prowess and its self-belief derived from previous warfare, I argue, make 1953 significant in the shaping of ideology and the framework for the era. 1953 set a foundation on which to build a new brand for the leader of the free world. This vision of a strong America is open to nostalgia, most notably because of the apparent rejection to conform by the burgeoning youth once the era begins. The promise seemingly made in 1953 of a

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<sup>121</sup> It is important to note that scholars such as P. David Marshall have also noticed a significance in stardom in this era. Marshall writes that 'since the 1950s, [the film industry] has worked to construct its celebrities to maintain this "larger-than-life" persona, [...] The film star's appearance in other settings, either in person or on television, is constructed as a significant event' (Marshall 2010: 189).

perfect and safe America is proven to be false frequently throughout the era by James Dean's rebel (whom first presented a rebel in 1953's 'Glory in the Flower'), Elvis Presley's 'race' music (first recording in 1953) and both men's undermining of conservative masculinity. Dean and Presley, therefore, fracture the promise made by 1953 and expose its superficiality throughout an era which attempts to maintain its grasp on white, straight, middle class America.

Societal discourse regarding women, sex, and sexuality, however, was far more complex. Alfred Kinsey et al. and their release of *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* is integral to understanding the small shifts made before the sexual revolution of the 1960s, opening discourse around women and sexual pleasure during a period of increased female oppression. Monroe's rise to leading lady during the same historical moment further aligns her with the concept of sex and gender, suggesting that Monroe's significance to the 1950s is in part due to the friction that is caused between the "ideal" woman and the social and economic desires of women. This need for sexual exploration and bodily autonomy posed in Monroe's films align Monroe with the difficult tensions surrounding women of the 1950s, just like Hepburn's apparent independence and "kooky" characters align Hepburn with an alternative femininity which can live counter to gender expectations of the time.

1953, as a year which sees opposing constructions of femininity during a time of intense speculation regarding female enjoyment (and further objectification of the female form through *Playboy*) and the continued speculation regarding the return to the domestic sphere, is the base in which the era's gender tensions are built. 1953 is a seminal year in its attempt to understand women and sex (Kinsey) and exploit women and sex (*Playboy*). For female stardom, it is a year in which two new leading ladies



uncover these two tensions, one as independent and sexual, and the other as vulnerable and superficially sexual. Interestingly, in the early films in which the stars play the lead the “lady” (Hepburn) has sex and the “whore” (Monroe) does not, tearing at expectations and exposing the problematic discourse society continues to have regarding female appearance and behaviour. Femininity and its construction during 1953, therefore, is one reason why Hepburn and Monroe are synonymous with the era. Simply, they are seemingly opposed constructions that came to the fore as discussion of female expression and further objectification of the female body became even more culturally significant and set a gender-discourse for the following decade.

The era, according to Spengler begins in 1954, but no other scholar has credited 1953 as so instrumental to the Fifties’ contradictions and tensions. Equally, no other scholar has noted how integral 1953 is to the construction of these four stars, or at least, have not connected that each of these stars all have this year in common for the burgeoning of fame and/or star construction. The stars’ *foundational narrative* forms at the crucial moment in which the era is born, thus, they become representative not because they were “big” stars or the most popular, but because they are “born” with the era.

The chapter also showed that Monroe’s *strands of openness* are almost identical to that of Presley. This is an interesting discovery as it suggests that although the 1950s is integral to all the stars of this thesis and is integral to understanding of Fifties’ nostalgia, it does not completely explain why Monroe and Presley occur more frequently in popular culture. Monroe’s and Presley’s dominance, however, can be partly explained by the similarity of the *strands of openness* and the knowledge gathered through the research of the stars’ estates.

The notion of controlling a person that is no longer alive is a troubling one, but through the control of an estate the image is at least semi-consistent and selective. Equally, however, the lack of family involvement has led to an arguably less discerning approach to Presley and Monroe. ABG, of course, do not select detrimental portrayals of Monroe and Presley, but despite the protection of each brand, Presley and Monroe are treated as products for continued use, and therefore, is a consideration which should be made when assessing the prominence of the stars' image and persona. Most importantly, it illuminates a reason as to why Presley and Monroe function as *commercially saturated* stars at the top of the Hollywood posthumous hierarchy.

### **Chapter 3: Changes and Tropes in Posthumous Star Representation**

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter, with its focus on advertising, cannot assess the tropes and changes in star representation without first acknowledging the change in designs within advertising itself.<sup>122</sup> Advertising, as a method of communication, has transformed greatly over the past sixty years, and thus, it is important to discern how the medium has changed separately, and then to assess the specific revisions which have occurred regarding the case study stars. For example, Marilyn Monroe, the case study with the greatest presence on paper advertising,<sup>123</sup> has had her image transformed by the changing dominance of illustration and copy within advertisements. However, Monroe's persona and image has also been manipulated over time to generate consumer interest, most notably to "fit" with each decade's political and social concerns. Therefore, both changes to advertising style and societal alterations will be considered in the analysis of posthumous advertising.

As stated in the parameters of this thesis, the chapter will not include any advertisements which could not be verified. As a result, for example, there is not an analysis of a James Dean product endorsement in the 1950s.<sup>124</sup> Additionally, in some decades there is a higher presence of posthumous advertisements, and thus, not all

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<sup>122</sup> Tropes and changes shall be tracked through paper advertisements as they were the dominant advertising method of the past and still continues today. Commercials, however, will be included in the final tally in the chapter's conclusion to show the frequency in which a posthumous star appears in advertising. Additionally, commercials are analysed in detail in Chapter Four and Five, and thus, this exclusion was to also avoid repetitiveness.

<sup>123</sup> As a reminder from the parameters sub-section, Marilyn Monroe's presence dominates this thesis due to her posthumous popularity, and therefore whilst not a singular case study, Monroe will appear with a greater frequency. This is not to eschew analysis, but to reflect how often Monroe is used in advertising.

<sup>124</sup> There is a Kist Cola advertisement which appears frequently on the internet as a tin sign, but some sites have added the words 'retro' style sign to the description of the item and made me doubt its authenticity. I could also not locate the "original" advertisement in databases or in 1950s resources, and therefore I did not include this sign in my analysis. I also did not include advertisements made before Dean was famous, nor the speeding commercial in which he appeared as this was a Public Service Announcement and not a paper advertisement.

decades are weighted equally in regards to analysis. In some cases, not every single advertisement from that decade has been analysed due to the similarity that an advertisement may bear to another advertisement from that time period.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, although all advertisements are included in the chapter's final graph to identify the frequency with which the posthumous stars appear, only paper advertisements are tracked throughout the decades for tropes and changes. This decision has been made due to the presence of paper advertising throughout the decades, rather than attempt to track variations through the sporadic televisual advertisements of the mid-1950s to the late-1980s.

To begin, advertising, according to Edward F. McQuarrie and Barbara J. Phillips, has altered over time. Fundamentally, the scholars posit that every advertisement has two audiences, the involved or the 'failed to approach' (McQuarrie & Phillips 2012: 229). To avoid minimal engagement the advertisement cannot be demanding on a consumer's time or attention, and instead should convey the message in a simple but engaging way. Since the 1950s, for example, there has been a sharp decrease in the dominance of copy, and this is largely due to the growing media landscape which has made it increasingly important to convey a message quickly.

McQuarrie's and Phillips' study of the persuasive form has more importantly found that

(a) Consumers will favour pictures over words in print ads, (b) the number of words in print ads will decrease over time, and (c) non-argumentative uses of words (e.g., phatic, poetic, narrative) will be favoured over time (McQuarrie and Phillips 2012: 238).

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<sup>125</sup> If this is the case, I have often opted to use a Monroe advertisement to enable a clear contrast between each decade.

The scholars' suggest, therefore, that consumers have become desensitized to the argumentative/persuasive text that appears in the advertisements from the 1900s - 1950s. This shift in consumer manipulation is noticeable in this thesis, particularly as the 1980s conclude and the 1990s appear to reject the modes of the past.

In early advertisements (until the 1960s), the text is dominant and depends upon statistics, personal testimony, hyperbole, and repetition to persuade a consumer. It is these persuasive methods, McQuarrie and Phillips suggest, that are now seen as artifice by the modern consumer. A contemporary marketer, therefore, must attempt to persuade in a way that a consumer has not become desensitized to and explains the sudden rise in illustration over text. Copy that is present from the 1990s, particularly in the advertisements analysed in this thesis, are narrative and poetic and verify the scholars' speculation. Other technical alterations regarding phonological, graphological, and typographical manipulations and design will be covered in detail with each close analysis, but it is worth noting that these visual designs are often also related to the decade rather than the star.

Additionally, another change occurring in present advertising regarding illustration is the 'modern grotesque ad, whose imagery is strange, unusual and even bizarre' (McQuarrie & Phillips 2012: 238). This new method of advertising aims to shock or subvert expectations to gain attention. I posit, much like the grotesque advertisement aims to shock, the posthumous advertisement aims to subvert expectations to gain attention, but for the desired goal of comfort. Through the advertisements in this chapter, it is clear that there has been a sharp rise in nostalgia at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, suggesting nostalgia has become both a way to mask anxiety about the present and an efficient way to gain engagement in a dense advertising world.

### 3.2 Some Like it Textual: The 1950s

Advertising, according to Judith Williamson, does not give information, but uses information that is already readily available to the consumer. For example, all colours have connotations and it is through the use of a colour that an advertisement creates a correlation between that colour's meaning and the product. Therefore, she views advertising as a currency of signs: the signifier and the signified. In the seminal work, *Decoding Advertisements* (1978), Williamson posits that

The product, which initially has no 'meaning', must be given value by a person or object which already has value to us (...) Therefore (...) something about the product is being signified and the correlating thing or person is the signifier (Williamson 1978: 31).

Unsurprisingly, the ubiquitous use of a posthumous star as a signifier begins to dissolve some of the star's complex persona, and instead relies almost solely on the strands of openness to convey meaning to a consumer. Arguably, the dilution of complexity forces the posthumous star to merely become a technique, just like a colour complete with fixed meaning and stylistic properties. For example, James Dean, due in part to the strands of openness discussed previously, is used to connote rebelliousness. Dean, when used in an advertisement, suggests a product is against the grain with little or no translation required due to the ubiquitous presence of *Rebel Without a Cause*. As suggested in the thesis' introduction, a posthumous star can anchor communication like a film genre. The red jacket and jeans are Dean's iconography, the angst-ridden teenage rebel his character, and "fight convention" is arguably Dean's ideology.

However, as the thesis continues and illustrates how a star becomes truly ubiquitous it is important to note that advertisers are no longer signifying with a living thing. To establish these differences, therefore, it is important to understand how

values are imparted by each star (through each star's strands of openness and foundational narrative) and the methods in which this is achieved in the 1950s' American advertisement.

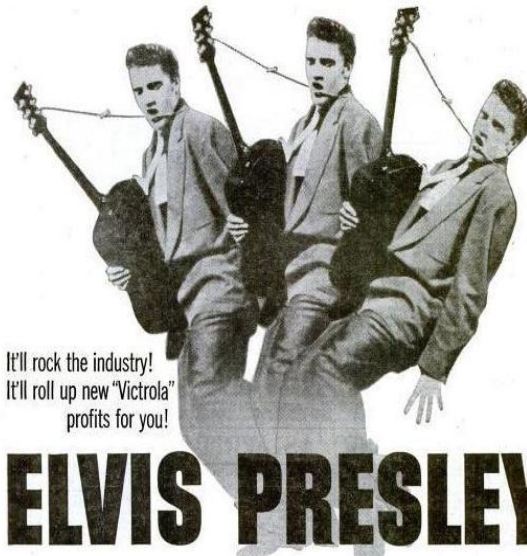
The commodity culture of America in this period encouraged spending for further economic growth, but more importantly, encouraged the desire to keep up with neighbours (Keeping up with the Jones' mentality) and be like everybody else. The new middle class security, in part due to a reduced income gap<sup>126</sup> between the rich and poor, was encouraged by magazines of the period. Celebrity and magazine scholar, Karen Sternheimer, suggests that fan magazines of this period used stardom as a method to promote the 'American Dream as a decidedly middle-class, suburban experience' (Sternheimer 2011: 120). Domesticity and the home were positioned as distinctly American ideals, according to Sternheimer, and the resulting celebrity coverage on the home, children, and leisure promoted commodity sales to improve the domestic sphere through the fantasy of the suburban.

The overall consumer message in this period was of conformity, and thus, aids the myth of the Fifties as predominantly conservative rather than an era which built a reactionary momentum for the counter-culture of the 1960s (Monroe and Presley's influence on sex, for example). Advertising and television in particular were modes in which to promote ideology regarding traditional values, consumerism, and a collective and similar society. Interestingly, the four stars, through advertising, are used to promote consumerism and conformity despite the stars' contradictory personas regarding topics such as gender and sex.

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<sup>126</sup> As Karen Sternheimer notes, in 1945 'the bottom 90 percent held nearly 70 percent of the nation's wealth' (Sternheimer 2011:115).





It'll rock the industry!  
It'll roll up new "Victrola"  
profits for you!

# ELVIS PRESLEY

## AUTOGRAPH "VICTROLA" BY RCA VICTOR

Give your customers a record album of top Presley hits — when they buy one of these new

### "VICTROLAS"

**AUTOGRAPH**  
Now Elvis Presley helps you sell more RCA Victor record players than ever before! Give his fans what they want — one of these "Victrolas" bearing Elvis's signature stamped in gold. When they buy the 4-speed model you can give them an album of 4 sensational Presley hits. Or give them an album of 12 songs with the Fabulous "45" model. These are songs that have been proved successful! Some have even sold over a million copies! Included are "Blue Suede Shoes," "Hound Dog," "Don't Be Cruel," "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You."  
Both models are light weight and portable. Each has superb "Golden Thread" tone. Each is finished in rugged simulated blue denim. Not hurry! Supplies are limited. Contact your RCA Victor distributor immediately.



CANTON & NEW JERSEY • RCA is a registered trademark of RCA Victor Company, Inc. • RCA is a registered trademark of RCA Victor Company, Inc. • RCA is a registered trademark of RCA Victor Company, Inc.

**AUTOGRAPH SPECIAL NO. 1**  
Portable 4-Speed "Victrola" — Rich, resonant "Golden Thread" tone. The 45 RPM pickup; variable tone control. Logarithmic ease to rugged simulated blue denim. Model TEPP.



\$32<sup>95</sup>

**AUTOGRAPH SPECIAL NO. 2**  
Portable Automatic 45 "Victrola" — Plays about 2 hours of music with one loading of "45" EP's. Easy to operate, trouble-free. Logarithmic ease to rugged simulated blue denim. Model TEPP.



\$44<sup>95</sup>

Figure 15: The Victrola campaign, 1956. Four different advertisements were used for this campaign. The picture above is an example of a trade advertisement.

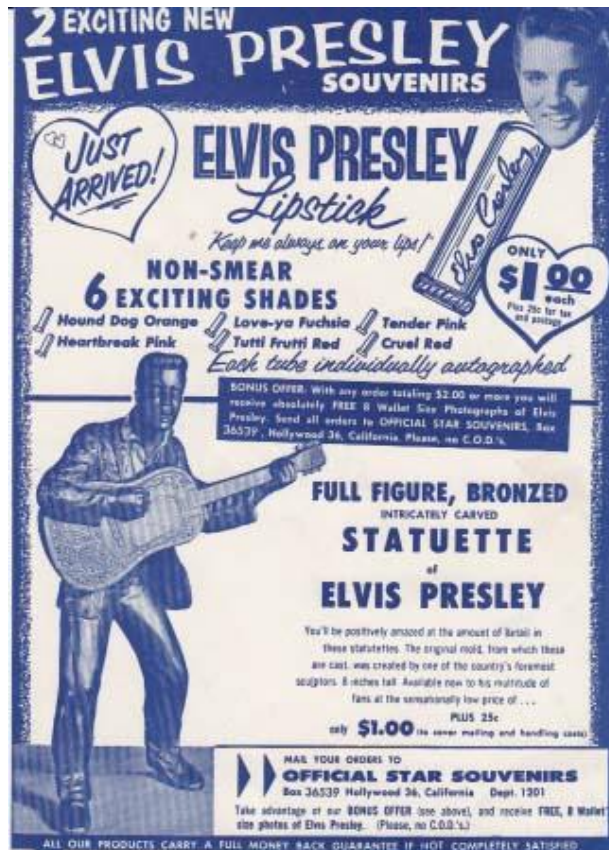


Figure 16: Presley products.

Elvis Presley functioned in a distinct and novel way in star advertisements of the 1950s. Unlike Monroe and Hepburn, Presley had a plethora of advertisements that promoted Presley-only merchandise, for example, Elvis Presley lipstick (as above). These products were advertised in magazines in addition to other advertisements for his records and films. Presley, in combination with newspaper and fan magazine articles, was heavily featured in paper format, and is thus arguably one of the most publicised and commodified stars of the 1950s. Advertisements for unrelated products, however, were few, and thus, a comparison between star endorsed advertisements shall be made with a Presley-specific advertisement.

Firstly, the endorsed advertisements shown here by the Victrola campaign (which consisted of four separate advertisements), sell a product through

manufactured intimacy. The use of personal pronouns and direct address in this campaign creates an almost literal promise of profit for the shopkeeper. This is significant due to the lack of intimacy in the copy of the Presley-commodity advertisement, suggesting that the requirement for a connection between star and potential buyer is lessened when only appealing to fans. On the surface, the lack of connection in the copy for fan merchandise may appear oxymoronic. However, since personal feeling is already established through the very nature of fandom, alternative techniques are employed to ensure the fan feels valued. Conversely, an endorsement attempts to reach beyond Presley fandom, and it is the average consumer that must be appealed to in the advertisement. The everyday consumer, therefore, must learn to trust the star. This is achieved through the personal pronouns which function to connect on a formal level through a “safe” degree of intimacy. Additionally, the personal pronouns aid the perception that the star really believes in the product, and thus, lends authority to the legitimacy of the campaign, and ultimately, the brand.

The RCA Victrola is a significant choice for a Presley endorsement. RCA, as Presley’s second record company, provide an early example of successful synergy between brands (Presley and the Victrola). Presley’s connotations as a high energy singer, shown by the multiplication of Presley mid-pelvis thrust on the advertisement, aids Victrola’s brand meaning by suggesting that a Victrola record player is powerful and sturdy enough to play a Presley record. RCA benefits significantly from this campaign due to the management of both products. Through both Presley (singer) and the Victrola (technology) the company cements their importance in the music industry, reminding consumers through one campaign that they not only hold one of the nation’s favourite artists, but have a superior way for the consumer to hear that musician.

Insidiously, however, RCA's synergy has two effects on a consumer. Firstly, it promotes the consumption and engagement with the rock 'n' roll industry through one company, using Presley not as a rebel that loves to perform, but as a musician that should be listened to in the comfort of one's safe and conservative home. Presley is partially stripped of the energy and rebelliousness he connotes and is instead rendered a capitalist figurehead for the music industry. Secondly, it encourages those that already love Presley to further support the record company for which he works. Loyalty to Presley, therefore, results in a loyalty to RCA and the additional consumerism of RCA product.

Thrilling Beauty News for users of Liquid Shampoos!

LUSTRE-CREME is the favorite beauty shampoo of 4 out of 5 top Hollywood stars... and you'll love it in its new Lotion Form, too!

Marilyn Monroe  
starring in  
"GENTLEMEN PREFER  
BLONDES"  
A 20th Century-Fox Production  
Color by Technicolor

MARILYN MONROE says, "Yes, I use Lustre-Creme Shampoo." When America's most glamorous women use Lustre-Creme Shampoo, shouldn't it be your choice above all others, too?

Now! Lustre-Creme Shampoo  
also in New Lotion Form!

NEVER BEFORE—a liquid shampoo like this! Lustre-Creme Shampoo in new Lotion Form is much more than just another shampoo that pours. It's a new creamy lotion, a fragrant, satiny, easier-to-use lotion, that brings Lustre-Creme glosses to your hair with every heavenly shampoo!

VOTED "BEST" IN DRAMATIC USE-TESTS! Lustre-Creme Shampoo in new Lotion Form was tested against 4 leading liquid and lotion shampoos... all unlabeled. And 3 out of every 5 women preferred Lustre-Creme in new Lotion Form over each competing shampoo tested—for these important reasons:

- \* Lather foams more quickly!
- \* Easier to rinse away!
- \* Cleans hair and scalp better!
- \* Leaves hair more shining!
- \* Does not dry or dull the hair!
- \* Leaves hair easier to manage!
- \* Hair has better fragrance!
- \* More economical to use!

Prove it to Yourself...  
Lustre-Creme in new Lotion Form is the best liquid shampoo yet!

Yes! Now take your choice  
Famous Cream Form... or new Lotion Form

Famous Cream Form in jars or tubes, 27¢ to \$1. (Big economy size, \$2.)  
New Lotion Form in handy bottles, 30¢ to \$1.

POUR IT ON — OR CREAM IT ON! In Cream Form, Lustre-Creme is America's favorite cream shampoo. And all its beauty-bringing qualities are in the new Lotion Form. Whichever form you prefer, lanolin-blessed Lustre-Creme leaves your hair shining-clean, eager to wave, never dull or dry.

Figure 17: Lustre-Crème and Marilyn Monroe

1950s' advertisements, however, do not try to convince the reader of a brand's authenticity, and thus it could be argued that the exploitation of Presley's image and persona to sell RCA's record player is not as exploitative as it first appears. The use of the multiplied photographs, much like the drawn illustration of Figure 17 (above), seem to prefer artifice and general artistic manipulation to garner attention, especially in comparison to the singular and pensive photographs of contemporary beauty advertisements. Furthermore, there is a large contrast between the 1950s' use of a signature and today's requirement to use a signature for authenticity. For example, Marilyn Monroe's Lustre Crème signature is stylized and swirling, and the repetitive

typography throughout the advertisement is used not to suggest this is her actual handwriting, and thus a “true” endorsement, but instead is used to be personable and feminine. The typeface which occurs again at the bottom of the page, for example in the words ‘Prove it to Yourself...’, provides aesthetic consistency, and much like the personal pronouns in the Victrola campaign, offers a false sense of intimacy whereby the consumer is typographically led to believe Monroe is speaking to the consumer.

Personal pronouns are used for artificial intimacy in this 1950s’ advertisement, but it is the “scientific” use of statistics (which attempt to have a directive and objective function) that is used as the main persuasive feature. The statistics, which claim ‘4 out of 5’ Hollywood stars use Lustre Crème, promotes a collective image of society through its encouragement to be like the majority. Of course, the “majority” in this case are Hollywood stars, and thus the advertisement is additionally endorsing a particular beauty standard. The alignment with Monroe (and Hollywood stars) as a beauty template reinforces the narrative of the film it also promotes. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, as shown by the previous chapter, Monroe’s character is interested in social mobility through the accumulation of wealth. Lustre Crème, through Monroe’s film and endorsement, suggest beauty is the way the female population can achieve their goals.

Beauty, and not sex, is sold in this advertisement. Aside from her apparent nudity, which merely suggests the nature of washing and cleansing, Lustre Crème do not position Monroe as “sexy”. Instead, the star looks relaxed and fresh with only the partially opened mouth operating as a presentational Monroe trope. The advertisement, then, which shows Monroe’s bottle cap pointing to the copy rather than her “nude” body, places far more emphasis on the text than it does the stereotypical and overtly sexual depictions of Monroe, a trait which would occur in the following

decades. 1950s' advertisements using Monroe, then, do portray beauty as a construction and method to gain wealth, but Monroe as a sex symbol is arguably not present in these representations and suggests a suppression of her persona when appealing to the female population, preferring instead to make her appear more conservative and relatable to middle-class consumers.

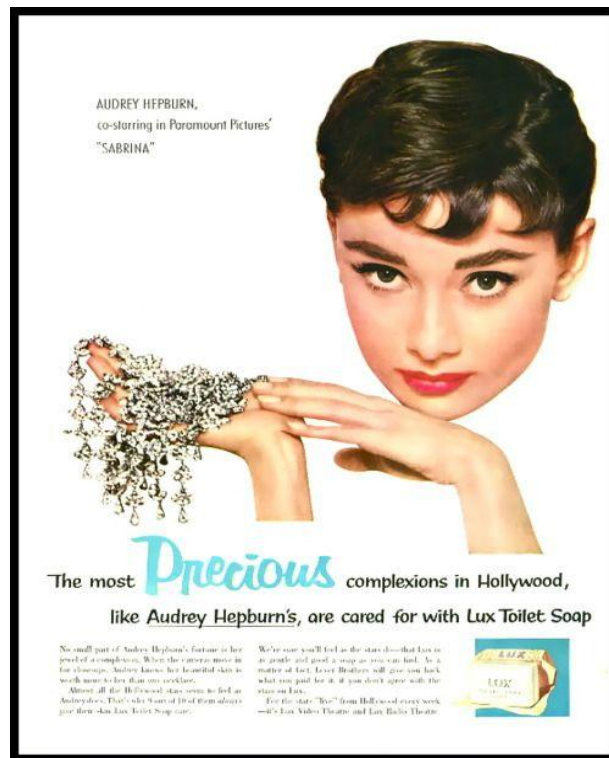


Figure 18: 1954 Lux Toilet Soap and Audrey Hepburn

Audrey Hepburn's advertisement for Lux Soap is also unlike her posthumous advertisements. The odd graphological style of the illustration, complete with floating head and hands, depicts Hepburn in a pure and seemingly liminal space. Like an angelic presence that can belong or exist anywhere, the advertisement at first glance is aligned with the empty space trope which follows Hepburn into the 1980s and early 2000s. However, Hepburn does not appear to "own" the space and appears far more placid than her both her film and posthumous representations. The advertisement, rather than present Hepburn as outspoken or breaking with gender conventions,

attempts to exploit envy in the female consumer. Her hands, shown to be holding jewels, is unlike the relatable and grounded woman on film. Although often (during this period) seen playing a princess or dating rich men, Hepburn's filmic appeal was her on-screen resistance of 'giggly girls'. Even when Hepburn's characters were rich, they seemingly acknowledged the restrictions of wealth, or in the latter case of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* would revel in the façade, but her characters would not let wealth dictate or encroach on her freedom. Arguably, the jewels could represent sophistication, a connection to her European roots (discussed in Chapter Five), but the flaunting of wealth still does not relate to her on-screen representation.

Lux Soap, like Lustre Crème, link Hepburn's latest film with the product endorsement. *Sabrina*, a film in which Hepburn is seen to gain material wealth after the transformation from girl to woman, does serve the message of the soap advertisement. Again, female stardom is used to promote beauty as a method in which to gain social mobility and promote a beauty consensus for female consumers to aspire toward. In this particular advertisement, Hepburn is described as having a 'precious complexion' due to her use of Lux soap. The word 'precious', meaning expensive or rare, is thematically consistent with the message proposed by the advertisement. Wealth is achieved by using Lux Soap and a rare beauty is what the consumer will become. Both Lux and Lustre Crème suggest a product can change a person's life, but integrally the brands propose it is their products which have accentuated Hepburn's and Monroe's beauty. Through denying discourse on work in favour of beauty (a beauty which is provided by products), the brands problematically suggest good looks are the foundation of a woman's happiness and success, and ultimately deny the more headstrong characteristics of Hepburn to mould with the gender expectations of the 1950s.



The advertisements of the 1950s are far more generic than expected, but more interestingly, the advertisements attempt to contain the stars' personas and restrict any potential discourse which is unfavourable. The strands of openness play little to no role in the marketization of the case study stars. Elvis Presley and his constant movement (although depicted through multiple pictures), according to the RCA campaign, can be contained by a Victrola. There is also no reference to female fandom or the exciting new sound inspired by black artists. Of course, scandal and discourse on race would arguably not sell a product in the 1950s. Yet, the absence of overt sexuality or the rejection of gender norms (although arguably still present implicitly) by any of the three case study stars featured in this sub-section is a shocking contrast to both 1950s film/magazine representation and contemporary advertisements.

### **3.3 Products are a Girl's Best Friend: The 1980s**

Scholars such as Michael D. Dwyer and Simon Reynolds both posit that Fifties nostalgia began in 1970s popular music and film. According to Dwyer, 1973 was a significant year due to 'the end of the Vietnam War and the beginning of the Watergate scandal, but also [because] it marked the arrival of Ronald Reagan' (Dwyer 2015: 5). The political upheaval of the 1970s rendered the 1950s, or more importantly, the fabricated and idealised Fifties, as a 'pre-political Eden' (Dwyer 2015: 284). Despite this, however, advertising did not appear to follow the nostalgia trend of this decade. As a result, the 1970s do not appear in this thesis. The research will continue, therefore, to analyse posthumous representation in advertising from the 1980s, a time period in which Ronald Reagan would not just arrive, but would alter the social and political landscape of the United States of America.

The conservative counter-revolution and its impact on the 1980s is arguably summarised by Reaganomics, Yuppies, and new technology. Although each decade is complex, Ronald Reagan's cuts to welfare impacted the country by further marginalising the poor during a decade which flaunted wealth in the business sector and seemed to morally support social mobility through consumerism. Whilst the poor became poorer, the suspension of regulations placed less "burden" on businesses and attempted to encourage consumer behaviour by promoting more choice. The 1980s in the USA, therefore, endorsed spending on consumer products through enabling an increasingly competitive market, and as a result, increased the necessity for interesting marketing campaigns.

Concurrently, new technology was evolving concerning personal computers, mobile phones, the VCR, and CDs. The time-shifting (pause etc.) abilities of home

entertainment, and more importantly, the surge of classic entertainment on cable television allowed Americans the chance to regain and re-watch the past. Looking back to the Fifties, in combination with mobile phones and computers, arguably enabled individuals to become more insular, self-interested, and self-reliant. The young professionals, nicknamed ‘Yuppies’, were a cultural phenomenon made up of what were deemed to be self-absorbed young people, and it is this mentality of the decade which furthers the 1980s’ connection with ‘individual material fulfilment’ (Dwyer 2015: 152) over community-driven values.

However the 1980s, through Reagan’s rhetoric, did emphasise “traditional” family values (for example, in Reagan’s radio address on December 20, 1986). The American family as “under attack” and a desire to return to the suburban-sitcom dream propagated by 1950s entertainment, crystalized the depictions which were being presented to the public through the aforementioned renewed syndication on cable television and nostalgia revivals in music and film. Some scholars would argue the conservatism that rose to political and social prominence was a reaction to the perceived detrimental liberal policy from the 1960s. Steven F. Hayward is one such scholar and suggests that limited government and “traditional” values were a direct result of the preceding decades. In his book, *The Age of Reagan* (2009), Hayward writes that ‘Reagan came to office at a time when the nation’s self-doubt and pessimism about the future were at an all-time high’ (Hayward 2009: 13). He posits, therefore, that it was the vast social change of the 1960s and the political corruption in the 1970s which adhered white middle-class America to conservative promises. Reagan, then, represented a type of return to a period in time in which these emotions

were seemingly felt and where the words self-confidence, technological progress, and prosperity were used to describe the nation – the Fifties.<sup>127</sup>

Reagan’s past as a 1950s Hollywood actor only further served the association between the President and the “glamorous” and “safe” Fifties. Interestingly, however, I believe the former “glamour” of the President enabled connections to be made between Reagan and Kennedy, despite each President serving opposing political parties. This sentiment is echoed in Maldwyn A. Jones’ analysis of Reaganite America. Reagan’s charm, posits Jones, ‘boosted [American] morale and gave them a pride in themselves and their country they had not had since the Kennedy era’ (Jones 1995: 610). The frequent scholarly reference to Kennedy in connection to the 1980s and Reagan should come as little surprise, both are charismatic, presided over a prosperous country, saw large progress made in the entertainment and leisure industry, and finally, were both vocal about America’s involvement with space and the future.

In John M. Logsdon insightful book, *Ronald Reagan and the Space Frontier* (2019), Logsdon frequently notes the lexicon used by Reagan’s administration in relation to space. Like Kennedy, the interest in the future and space was evident in Reagan’s agenda, but it is the description of space as the “last frontier” which more importantly reflects the attitude of 1950s’ America. Significantly, ‘Ronald Reagan’s two terms as president saw the United States undertake more new, and larger, space initiatives than any previous administration since that of John Kennedy’ (Andrew J. Butrica as quoted in Logsdon 2019: 379). Ambition and exploration, as discussed in Chapter Two were fundamental concepts in 1950s design. The space-age kitchen and

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<sup>127</sup> I use the term “Fifties” here instead of “1950s” due to the perception of that time period. Whilst there was prosperity and technological progress in the 1950s, a return to a “better” way of life is not true. For the black population, women, and homosexuals, the 1950s did not represent a period in time in which one should return. Reagan was not promising the 1950s, but an idealised and unproblematic fabrication, complete with soda shops and poodle skirts.

ranch living quarters, for example, were manifestations of American spirit in the 1950s. As a result, the former actor, using the discourse of progress as disseminated by 1950s' media and political speakers, increases the similarity between the two decades. As shown by the previous paragraphs, the 1980s is consistent with 1950s ideals and political rhetoric, therefore, a proliferation of Fifties' iconography in the media is partially expected and is certainly compatible with 1980s' American society.

The 1980s, in hindsight, appears to have a "me" mentality where material goods and individualism reign supreme. Consumer culture and material excess meant that more money (as a result of high competition between businesses) was spent on advertising. Production values increased, and in some cases, computer graphics were used. Thus, the appearance of high-quality advertising, and in this decade, increased media tie-ins 'typified and expressed [the] surrounding culture' (Davidson 1992: 62). However, the increased competition and the "more, more, more" mentality enabled an equally enlarged prevalence of advertising. The crowded market meant that the content of advertisements needed to be bigger and work harder to gain a consumer's attention. The technique which became prominent as a result of these changes was named "puffery", a term which can be summarised as a way to manipulate consumers into believing a brand's product is unmatched.

Puffery, a word used to describe copy that uses superlatives to claim its superiority, was used in the decades preceding the 1980s. However, it was in this decade that advertising scholars, such as Ivan L. Preston, noticed a distinct rise in the trend. The superlatives found by Preston to be most prevalent in 1980s' advertisements, such as 'best, most, finest, greatest, biggest, nobody (e.g. nobody else), and nothing' (Preston 1996: 13-15) are not deceptive under U.S. law as it is considered non-factual. Whilst this may be the case legally, superlatives and

comparative language are both persuasive and hyperbolic. It is also questionable whether in some cases, particularly due to a comparative technique, that puffery may be believed. Regardless, due to puffery's remote legal position, hyperbolic language can be used (especially in a dense market) to claim a brand's/product's worth over its competitors.



Figures 19 and 20: Maxell campaign circa 1986.

The advertisements shown above have a directive function (to persuade/advise/recommend) which promotes the individuality and importance of each star through the advertisement's copy and use of puffery. In Dean's version, the copy concludes with this emotional statement: 'So as long as there are rebels without causes there will always be the great movies of James Dean to reflect the struggles and light their ways.' Solidifying Dean with rebelliousness, Maxell suggests that Dean serves as a blueprint for 1980s men that may feel oppressed or unsatisfied with society. The idea that Dean is a type of blueprint for future generations signifies his individuality

as it posits him as the original rebel, and thus Dean is given cultural gravitas by positing that the star should guide the behaviour and style of the future.

Dean's copy is less hyperbolic than Monroe's advertisement for Maxell, but the sentiment of both advertisements are the same: Monroe and Dean are originals, individuals, and the best of their time. For example, the alliterative language used to describe Monroe as a 'delicious dessert' or the 'magic of Marilyn Monroe' has a phonological resonance which makes Monroe seem extraordinary. Combined with 'every man's fantasy' and 'even after 500 plays her sensual beauty will light up your consciousness', the lexicon used in this advertisement suggests her beauty makes Monroe special. This is in stark contrast with the advertisement's treatment of Dean whose unique acting talent is illustrated by descriptions such as 'surly manners and sensitive speech.' Monroe is not positioned as talented, and it is this difference in copy which highlights the gendered way the media speaks about women. Maxell, as a media-recording product, encourages the preservation of the past through the taping of old movies, but the suggested reason for doing so is problematic. Dean, Maxell suggest, should be preserved to teach younger generations about rebellion and acting. Monroe, however, should be preserved because of how good she looks on-screen.

The desire to preserve the past is reflective of the nostalgia revival that was occurring in the mainstream media. Yet unlike some media forms, advertisements are synchronic and do not represent a "real" time. For example, a testimonial from Elvis Presley in the 21st century cannot physically occur, but marketers use posthumous stars (from the past) in present day advertisements to suggest a happier consumer future. How the manipulation of temporality occurs in posthumous advertisements, however, differs slightly from previous scholars' work on the use of time in advertisements. Judith Williamson, in her chapter on temporality, suggests that paper

advertisements use a ‘spatial structure [to perform] a temporal structuring’ (Williamson 1978: 154). To illustrate her argument, Williamson analyses the painting of *St. George and the Dragon* and comments that the extreme foreground represents the past and the background the future. The painting’s depiction of time, she posits, does not allow a viewer to find the present in the picture as time has been constructed as one continuous event. It is this depiction of time, she suggests, that is used in advertising. She notes there is ‘no real present in advertising. You are either pushed back into the past, or urged forward in the future’ (Williamson 1978: 154-155).

The present is experienced only as a position between what was and what could be. Advertising uses a fake time where the viewer is in a state of constant anticipation and where closure can only be achieved through the purchase of the item. However, the use of spatial structuring to suggest temporality is not always as simple as the clear definitions suggested by Williamson. I argue that the past is often vague in posthumous advertisements to ensure full immersion and identification with the contemporary consumer. In some cases, as in the paper advertisements above, the posthumous star does stand-in for the past, but not in the foreground or through spatial design as posited by Williamson.

Posthumous stars contribute to temporal dislocation in advertisements by becoming a part of the decade in which they have been situated. In the illustration for Monroe’s Maxell endorsement, a classic Monroe pose (for photo shoots) has been altered by the 1980s aesthetic. Additional artifice is employed to situate this advertisement in the present, for example, the use of high yellow eye shadow and matching large earrings. The graphical design allows Monroe to have a visual similarity to the equally typical 1980s background, complete with swirling lines that match the colourful lines on the side of the Maxell product. Monroe and Dean,



therefore, have been given a ‘MTV treatment’ and resonate due to the aesthetic similarity each star has with the pop stars of the 1980s, such as Madonna. The lines that swirl above her head, particularly the outline of her head, gives Monroe an ethereal quality which reiterates the message of longevity described in the headline. Monroe is presented as ever-present, both representing the Fifties and a type of timelessness.

The 1980s use of Monroe and Dean suggests the stars, and by extension the Fifties, are originators and standards to which consumers should aspire, or more accurately for the Maxell advertisement, to preserve. The Maxell advertisement is an example of the 1980s desire to subsume Fifties iconography and ideology. Presenting the stars as timeless and worth preserving suggests the Fifties is an important era in which to learn adequate behaviour and values. For example, in conservative America, the consumer should record Dean’s movies to learn how to be a “real” rebel, before the counter-culture of the 1960s altered society. Likewise, the advertisement’s reduction of Monroe to just a beautiful woman attempts to suppress the female empowerment of the 1970s by avoiding Monroe’s impact on the sexual revolution. Like the advertisements from the 1950s, Monroe’s work is largely forgotten in favour of her beauty and suggests a woman’s worth is based on her looks. However, this would change in the following decade through the 1990s exploration of topical debates which featured in the stars’ foundational narrative.

### 3.4 Rebel with a Cause: The 1990s

In the 1990s, America altered both demographically and ideologically. This is due, in part, to a series of political events which enabled the return of counter-culture ideals, whilst maintaining the materialistic benefits propagated by the previous decade. The inauguration of Bill Clinton, arguably, was responsible for providing 1990s American culture with a particularly centrist agenda. The previous decade's "yuppie" culture was replaced by the new "bourgeois bohemians" (to borrow David Brooks' term, sometimes referred to as bobo), a group which both spent a vast amount of money on material goods and purportedly cared about diverse groups and ideological issues.

The materialistic culture of the 1990s was somewhat due to America's increased 'disposable income and (...) leisure time, [which made] shopping the new pastime' (Troy 2015: 50). Arguably, of course, both the 1950s and the 1980s were a time of mass consumerism for the country. However, the continuous spending and increased presence of nationally franchised restaurants during the 1990s created an apparent absence of individualism, and seemed to promote uniformity through consumer activity. Additionally, the digital revolution which occurred in this decade further distanced (like the suburbs did for the 1950s) individuals from family communities through the new ease of long distance communication. However, the sharing of information, or more accurately, 'a new knowledge-based economy' (Troy 2015: 7), did conversely enable increased discussion of gender and sexuality, and thus, also promoted equality and diversity.

On the surface, the Fifties aesthetic and ideology appears politically aligned with 1980s conservatism, and thus, the case study stars would seemingly not resonate with the new bourgeois bohemian. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, the

1950s did make some considerable advances regarding the discussion of sex. In particular, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley were crucial to the 1950s engagement with female sexuality and form. Therefore, by re-focusing on the stars' rebellion, 1990s advertising<sup>128</sup> associates Monroe (in particular) with the rejection of Fifties' values. It is the stars' subversive and progressive connotations, combined with the material associations of the Fifties, therefore, which enabled the posthumous stars to be aligned with a centrist political climate.

A liberal-consumer tactic can be seen in advertising more generally in this period through the use of social engagement. This method makes potential customers feel like a caring consumer, and thus, alleviates the guilt of materialism. For example, 1990s consumers became more interested in ecological and social issues. Davidson notes that there was a rise in "green consumers", a term he uses to describe customers with 'a preoccupation with quality, not just in the product, but in the values associated with the product' (Davidson 1992: 90). Paradoxically, then, the 1990s consumer is both 'anti-consumerism and (...) [invested in] quality consumerism' (Davidson 1992: 92). By wanting both the best product, but one that is ethically sourced or has a clear progressive message, it is argued that the 1990s consumer justifies any capitalist activity by believing a company cares about the improvement of society.

An example of the caring-consumer can be found in an advertisement featuring Marilyn Monroe. In a Nike advertisement from 1991, Monroe's body is claimed to no longer be the subject of objectification, and instead, her body's measurements are to

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<sup>128</sup> Only one Monroe advertisement will be analysed in this chapter. Presley and Dean are both used in advertising during this period, but both feature in commercials rather than print. However, when Presley is used in commercials, for example, he is seen flirting with female fans in Pizza Hut, and thus the advertisement should remind the audience of his impact on female sexuality. As discussed previously, these commercials will be included in the chapter's conclusion.

be viewed as a statistic that does not matter. In the advertisement, Monroe's famous measurements (36-24-36)<sup>129</sup> are used as an example to show how society judges the physical appearance of women over intelligence and accomplishments. To begin the analysis of the advertisement, I will briefly summarise Monroe's relationship to female sexuality, focusing on her own views rather than the often misogynistic articles of her contemporary commentators. This approach has been used here to illustrate how the 1990s use Monroe's conception of sex, in order to align and re-claim Monroe as a feminist figure.



A WOMAN IS OFTEN MEASURED BY THE THINGS SHE CANNOT CONTROL. SHE IS MEASURED BY THE WAY HER BODY CURVES OR DOESN'T CURVE, BY WHERE SHE IS FLAT OR STRAIGHT OR ROUND. SHE IS MEASURED BY 36-24-36 AND INCHES AND AGES AND NUMBERS, BY ALL THE OUTSIDE THINGS THAT DON'T EVER ADD UP TO WHO SHE IS ON THE INSIDE. AND SO IF A WOMAN IS TO BE MEASURED, LET HER BE MEASURED BY THE THINGS SHE CAN CONTROL, BY WHO SHE IS AND WHO SHE IS TRYING TO BECOME. BECAUSE AS EVERY WOMAN KNOWS, MEASUREMENTS ARE ONLY STATISTICS. AND STATISTICS LIE.

Figure 21: Nike, 1991.

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<sup>129</sup> Closer examination of Monroe's clothing size reveals this measurement to be inaccurate, which may be part of the advertisement's 'statistics lie' message. For a more accurate listing of Monroe's measurements, the website 'The Marilyn Monroe Collection' uses modelling contracts and documents to assess Monroe's actual size from 1945 until her death.

Monroe, in her last interview for *Life*,<sup>130</sup> commented that if she had to be a ‘thing’ she would be a sex symbol. On closer inspection of the recorded interview, however, her disdain for the word ‘thing’ is evident, seemingly acknowledging that to be a sex symbol her work would not be taken seriously. The 1990s appropriation of Monroe echoes the sentiments she expressed in 1962, not to deny her sex symbol status, but to add dimension to Monroe’s persona through the acknowledgment of her accomplishments. As previously mentioned, Monroe’s attitude to sex, best exemplified by the ‘Golden Dreams’ calendar and her openness in the aforementioned *Life* interview,<sup>131</sup> enable Monroe’s liberal attitude to be incorporated into 1990s discourse about gender and sexuality.

The 1990s, according to Gil Troy, began ‘normalizing the profane’ (Troy 2015: 57) through increased access to knowledge about sexuality and gender on the internet. Books such as Madonna’s *Sex* (1992) continued discussion on the importance of women to find enjoyment and ownership of the female body, whilst films such as *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1992) faced protests (Dara 1992: online) over the film’s contents which contained objectification of women, misogyny, and homophobia. In a decade which began to celebrate “girl power”,<sup>132</sup> Marilyn Monroe’s measurements mattered less. Instead, the patriarchal oppression she suffered at the

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<sup>130</sup> The article, a feature on fame, was recorded three weeks before her death and published on the 3rd August, 1962 (two days before her death). In this thesis, I use the original recording of Monroe instead of the article as it illuminates Monroe’s opinions on gender, stardom, sexuality, and Hollywood. The painful interview, despite Monroe’s intermittent and nervous laugh, reveals a progressively dismayed woman, whom, throughout the interview becomes dark and cynical (although arguably truthful) about the view of women in Hollywood.

<sup>131</sup> ‘Golden Dreams’ was a calendar released in 1955 which used Tom Kelley’s 1949 nude photograph of Marilyn Monroe. The ‘Red Velvet’ photograph was previously released by *Playboy*’s first issue in December, 1953. Monroe did not deny her participation in a nude shoot, honestly asserting that she was an out of work actress with little money at the time. Many actresses would have denied involvement, but Monroe’s frankness about nudity enabled her to care very little about the perception of others. The openness Monroe had regarding sex, shown by her reaction to the photograph, is also evident in the recording for *Life* in 1962. In the recording she announces: ‘We are all born sexual creatures, thank God. It’s a pity so many people despise and crush this natural gift.’

<sup>132</sup> “Girl power” was a slogan that was connected to the Spice Girls, a popular girl band of the 1990s.

hands of the American film industry, and the sexual rebellion she exhibited in the 1950s, became far more important in the reading of her star image and star history.

At first, Nike, a sportswear brand, may seem an odd choice for Monroe. Not known for sports, and often mistakenly referred to as plus-sized, Monroe has few connections to the brand. Additionally, sportswear, as a body conscious commodity, does not immediately appear to connect to Nike's message in this advertisement. However, through using the associations of Monroe, the advertisement presents two positive interpretations for the reader. Firstly, that a woman is more than her body. The feminist message of the advertisement mirrors the liberal policies of the decade, as Troy notes, 'in the 1980s women were first entering executive office suites, [but] the 1990s focused on the breaking of the glass ceiling, the barriers to women becoming CEO' (Troy 2015: 273). Secondly, the advertisement posits a body's size does not matter, thus encouraging body positivity and engagement with female consumers that do not "fit" with the conventional sportswear model. If accomplishments mean more, then importance is placed on how far a person runs in Nike clothing, rather than whether the individual looks appealing in shorts (for example). In this case, Nike expands the potential consumer base by claiming both anyone can wear Nike and that any achievement is possible.

The advertisement achieves this message by various techniques in both its form and layout. Firstly, the illustration, matched with the feminist idea of more beneath the skin, suggests a deeper Monroe. In the illustration Monroe looks thoughtful, perhaps hopeful, and is not in the stereotypical pose of the half-open mouth and half-closed eyes. The illustration, unlike the previous decades does not present Monroe as sexy, but relaxed. The picture, taken on a balcony of a New York hotel, shows Monroe dressed in a bathrobe during a period in her life in which she studied acting and dated

New York intelligentsia. It is possible that most of the audience will not have this knowledge, but what is certain is that they will recognise this as a different depiction of the star.

Monroe is the optical centre of the advertisement, but the illustration itself is off-centre. Combined with the copy, which suggests a new way to view women, Monroe's placement on the advertisement itself seems to re-establish the message by placing her in a new position on the page. Additionally, it seems important to note that Monroe is depicted as resting on the ledge of a high storey window. Metaphorically, then, if doors are closed to women, a woman can and should persist to those same heights by using a different avenue (the metaphorical window) or viewpoint.

However, the advertisement goes further than altering the position of the illustration to aid its message about new viewpoints. Traditionally, the copy and the logo are placed at the bottom of the advertisement (for example, Maxell), but this is not the case here. Often, a logo appears at the bottom of the page on the right-hand side so it is the last thing a reader sees. The displacement of the logo, therefore, alters the sensory experience of the advertisement. "Nike", placed on the top right-hand side, is largely forgettable, and instead, it is the disjunctive syntax, 'STATISTICS LIE', which remains with the reader. On the surface, this may seem like a brave choice for Nike, but I believe it increases engagement through the unexpected, and as a result, remains thematically consistent with its overall message.

A trope that reoccurs, despite the newness of the advertisement, is the attempt to convey the "real" Monroe. The word 'measured' is a focal element within the copy, and with each repetition of the word the intonation becomes more pronounced. By the conclusion of the advertisement, therefore, the words 'measured' and 'thing' become

synonymous with oppression. Monroe's objection to the word 'thing', as previously discussed in relation to the *Life* interview, is mirrored explicitly here and suggests that the Nike advertisement is using Monroe's own opinions to authenticate the message. The authentication of Monroe in this advertisement, however, is far more explicit than the acknowledgment of her opinions, a technique which would seemingly only resonate with fans of the star.

The use of her official signature furthers the attempt to align the message with Monroe as, much like the 1950s signature, it appears as if Monroe herself has endorsed the copy, and by extension, has associated herself with Nike and the brand's products. This differs from the 1980s, which neither used photographs nor Monroe's signature. The 1990s, therefore, alter the way the case study stars are authenticated, a method which is still continued in the following decade, albeit with the obligatory trademark after the signature.



### 3.5 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Itch: 2000-2018

America began the new century in a considerable state of unrest due to the terror attacks which occurred on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and the events of that day arguably altered the consciousness of American society and the political rhetoric of its leaders. Firstly, David Reynolds notes that the American people seemingly ‘wanted to hear that America’s attackers would soon be getting [an act of violence] back’ (Reynolds 2009: 558). The desire for retribution and a show of military might, however, led a type of political rhetoric to form that was unkind and antagonistic toward some foreign nations. In 2003, for example, Senator Robert Byrd condemned Post-9/11 foreign policy. In his speech the Senator declared that ‘this administration has called into question the traditional worldwide perception of the United States as well-intentioned, peacekeeper’ (as quoted in Cobbs Hoffman & Gjerde 2007: 414). I would argue, therefore, that politically and culturally America became conceptually divided, at least in regards to America’s role as a superpower.

In contrast to America’s past, the attack on 9/11 was a shocking violation on American soil. The vulnerability that was exposed on that day, arguably, was the cause for the alteration and division in American rhetoric. America, simply, was rarely attacked as a nation,<sup>133</sup> nor saw the ravages of technology and bombs on an American city. The United States, as a generally patriotic nation, boasts of its military strength and its leadership status. This mentality is evident after the 1940s, a time in which America had helped defeat the Nazi regime and aided the restoration of Europe. Therefore, I would argue the 1950s, despite the Cold War and McCarthyism, revelled

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<sup>133</sup> The military strike by the Japanese Navy Air Service against America at Pearl Harbor on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1941 would be another rare example of an attack on American soil.

in both America's military power to defeat extremists and in its role as the peace-keeping leader of the Free World. It is the 1950s, then, in combination with prosperity and the rise in technology, which generates a positive and idealistic version of America as the Western World's father figure. In the early 2000s, however, it appeared as if the two concepts (peace-keeper and military might) no longer could coincide happily and left a fracture in America's conception of self. As a result, individuals became more introspective, turning to the internet to vent or find communities which shared the same vision of America's future, as Jeffery Melnick notes: 'the birth of the blog coincided with 9/11' (Melnick 2009: 13).

The internet and the continued rise in digital technology is also integral to the understanding of these two decades. Gil Troy suggests that 'the pace of producing space-age innovations intensified in 2000' (Troy 2015: 277), impacting everyday life in significant ways. For example, in 'the formation of personal beliefs, social isolation, [and] reduction in the family ties between the family and society members' (Younes & Al-Zoubi 2015: 82). Digital technology, then, although a potential purveyor of knowledge, is detrimental to personal interaction. The distancing effect of family and friends, however, does make an individual more susceptible to the media and consumer behaviour, either through replacing a personal void by the purchase of a product which is sold through advertising and television, or, gathering information through news outlets which often serve as echo chambers.

The division of modern America, I argue, is based on two these two fundamental moments. Firstly, the need for the United States of America to question its self-made definition or role in the Free World, and secondly, through the distancing effect of technology and the continued reliance on the media for information, guidance, and entertainment. The resulting impact on posthumous representation is a desire to find

authentic Americana, simply, looking back to ideals and “truth” during a time of social isolation and political divisiveness (a discontent that has increased in Trump’s America and Brexit Britain). This century has not only altered the rendering of posthumous star representation, but contains the most English-language posthumous advertisements, most of which are of American origin. In particular, there is a steep increase of advertisements using Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley, and it is this sharp rise which warrants the aforementioned stars a position in the commercially saturated category on the posthumous hierarchy.

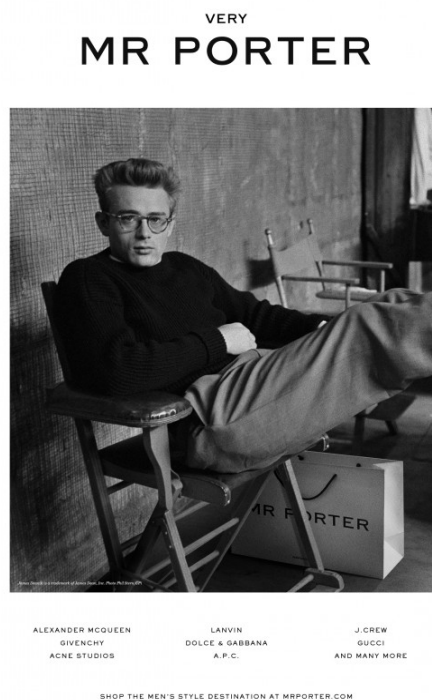
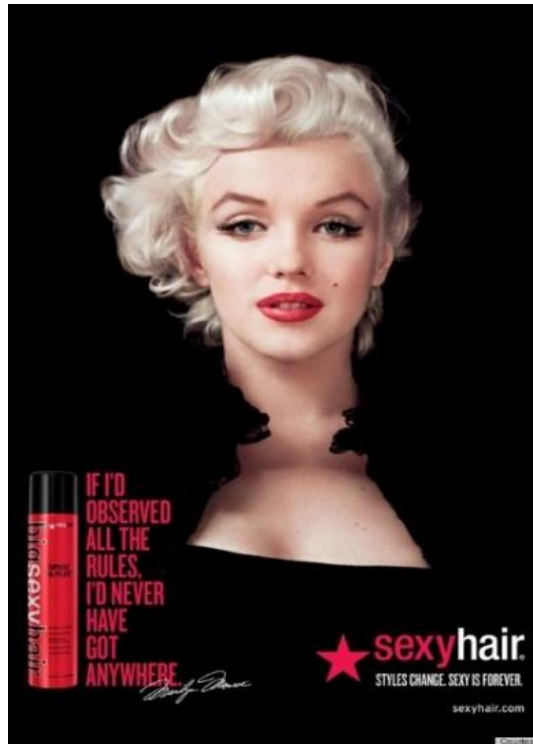


Figure 22: Mr Porter campaign, 2014.

As suggested above, in posthumous advertising the move into the next century saw an emphasis on “authentic” products and a glorification of cultural history (“true” America) as a means to achieve brand loyalty. As shown by the paper advertisements

from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, contemporary advertisements use the case study stars' history as a way to render a brand/product authentic. The Mr. Porter campaign, for example, uses a black and white photo as way to convey the past by imparting a nostalgic feeling through the connotations of monochrome. The "classic" colour scheme, with its suggestion of class and gravitas, enables the past to look dignified and important. The reverence in which a consumer is meant to view the advertisement ultimately imparts a clear message: this is our history, this is who we are. Additionally, the relaxed Dean is revealed to be on-set during his "down time" to showcase a "real", and therefore "authentic", James Dean. Unlike the advertisements from the 1980s, a modern aesthetic or an attempt to subsume Dean into this decade does not occur. Additionally, the advertisement does not attempt to use copy for either puffery, or like in the 1990s, for political and social messaging. Instead, the past is sufficient enough to generate consumer engagement through the longevity of Dean as an American icon. As a result, Dean's status is imparted onto the brand, suggesting it too has longevity, "classic" style, and shares the passion for American culture and tradition.



Figures 23: Sexy Hair campaign, 2013. Part of a three poster campaign.

The Californian company, Sexy Hair, similarly present Monroe as a key figure of the past, but instead of authenticating Monroe through her behaviour on-set, Sexy Hair use two strands of openness, sex and gender, to expose her rebellion during the 1950s. The advertisement takes an expressive function (the addresser's assertions) and requires some knowledge of Monroe to appreciate the quote. The sexist descriptions found about Monroe in newspapers, such as the 'hot whore' (Lyttle 1996, online) or the various memes which reduce Monroe's worth by shaming her sexual promiscuity, are unfortunately very frequent on the internet. Monroe's sexual liberation, therefore, has not escaped the double standard placed upon a woman's sexual life. Arguably, then, there are two concurrent interpretations of Monroe. Firstly, that she had numerous lovers and should be judged harshly, or secondly, Monroe's rejection of "normal" sexual behaviour enabled her fame to be furthered,

and also consequently alter some modern conceptions of female sexuality. Sexy Hair takes the latter view, suggesting her longevity and importance to American culture is through her refusal to be constrained by gender and sexual norms.

The advertisement itself, exposes no new information about the hair product Monroe endorses, and instead, Monroe's quote is used to entice fellow/wannabe rule-breakers. Through the entailment (what one can logically conclude from the statement) of the slogan and quote, a reader can decipher a clear message: use Sexy Hair shampoo and be beyond the norm. However, the quote is more multifaceted than it first appears, appearing both to be said by Monroe in the past, but also conveyed in a way as if Monroe is saying this to a consumer today. The relay (a reciprocal relation between text and picture) leads a reader to believe that not only has Monroe said it, but she is saying it. This is achieved due to the combination of her official quotes and the look at the camera into the eyes of the consumer. This ever-present Monroe that seems of both present and past tense makes the advertisement even more effective if we consider the black background.

Often placed against a white or blue background, the use of a black backdrop is a first for a Monroe advertisement. The stylistic illustration enables Monroe to appear as if she is appearing from a type of nothingness, like a dark abyss or from the darkest areas of time and space. The liminal presence of Monroe in this advertisement is aided by the black clothing which moulds the star into the very fabric of the advertisement, almost as if she were an ever-present entity from the very fabric of time. This use of graphological space is as important as the space in which she occupies at the optical centre of the advertisement. Monroe, according to the design, is the centre of this timeless space, an area in which she occupies because she was not afraid to be overtly sexy during her lifetime.

Monroe's endorsement is positioned as authentic, of course, through the visual similarity between the product and the general colour scheme. The synergy between the product and Monroe persuades the reader to identify a consistent message and enables the transference of Monroe's connotations to the brand. More importantly, however, the affirmation of "truth" is located in the use of the official signature. *Sexy Hair* used three different posters for this campaign, all with different pictures and quotes, but one element which remained consistent was the placement of the star's signature. The location of the signature at the end of each quote reaffirms the voice as Monroe's and acts 'as the "logo" of a famous person' (Pringle 2004: 146) as it carries 'symbolic value' (146).

However, Monroe's words are eschewed by the authentication of the signature to suit the brand's purpose. The Monroeisms (quick-witted jokes about sex and gender which she would often give in interviews) present in this campaign were not meant as advice, but as a cynical joke. Read as advice, she is propagating a woman's body and beauty as the key to success, but read as a joke we understand her knowledge of gender restraints and the frustration which Monroe felt at the hands of the Hollywood Studio System. The company, however, appear to be using "The Core Structure" trope that is used in advertising where the first person narrator confesses the secrets to success, in this case, beauty. Viewed in this way, Monroe's signature is authorising a re-interpretation of the star's words, stripping her of her own wit in favour of promoting style as a type of rebellion, rather than an annoyance at gender constraints.

Additionally, *Sexy Hair* relies on sex and Monroe's sex symbol status to sell the product and garner brand loyalty. For example, the optical centre of the illustrations are often the lips or breasts to emphasise Monroe's sexiness. Troublingly, although the quotes may promote a degree of autonomy, Monroe's sexiness is promoted as the

reason for her success. Much like the Maxell advertisement, work and talent is absent from the narrative and suggests that Monroe's re-evaluation from the 1990s has become less important. Of course, the brand is entitled "Sexy Hair", so perhaps the centrality of Monroe's relation to sex should be paramount. However, this is not the case with James Dean and suggests the gender of a posthumous star greatly impacts representation.



Figure 24: Sexy Hair campaign, 2015. Part of a three poster campaign.

In Dean's advertisement, as shown above, the star's multifaceted persona is exposed in the quote. 'Only the gentle are ever really strong' does not rely on macho rebellion, or the surly and mumbled performance of his adolescent characters. Instead, the effeminate characteristics of Dean are exposed to seemingly encourage the reader to see Dean as more than a blueprint for stereotypical masculinity. In comparison to the Maxell advertisement, for example, the softer side of Dean is given some traction. Representing the new metrosexual, then, Dean's "gentle" side allows the star to care



about style and self-presentation. In this campaign, Dean is not famous because he is sexy (like Monroe), he is famous because he is deep and interesting. Arguably, both present a new type of rebellion regarding sex and gender, but Dean's representation seems far more invested in his personality, even moving Dean's position on the advertisement itself to ensure the optical centre is not his lips.

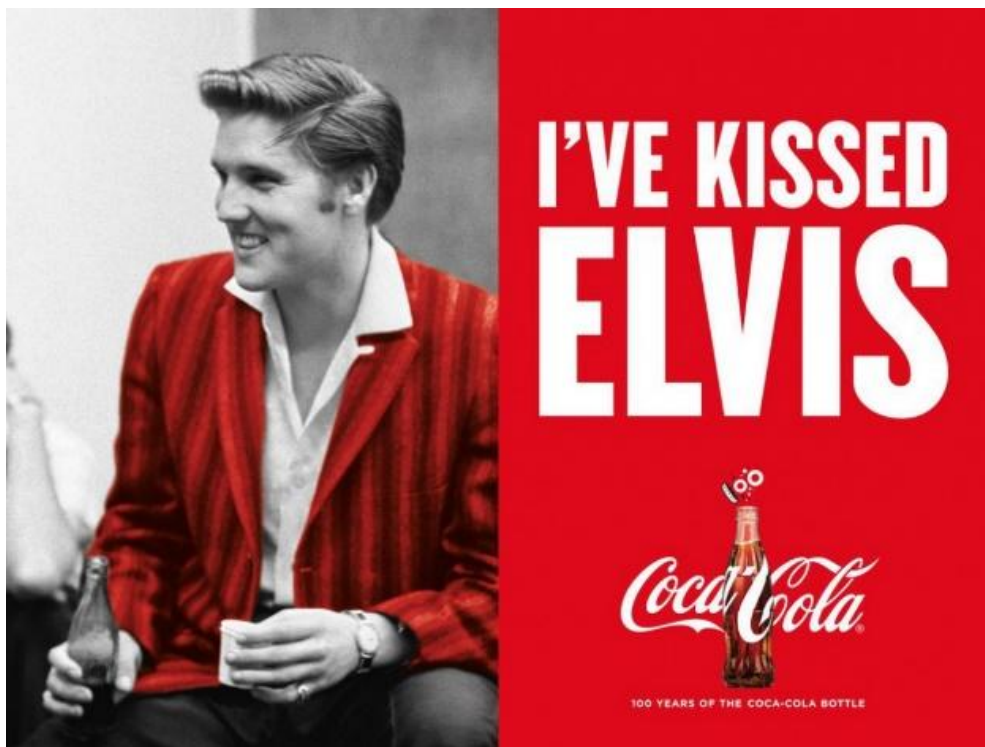


Figure 25: Coca-Cola campaign, 2015 (the campaign also included Marilyn Monroe).

In 2015, Coca-Cola also reduced aspects of Monroe's and Presley's personality as a method to sell soda.<sup>134</sup> Coca-Cola, as a largely traditional and nostalgic brand

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<sup>134</sup> Presley and Marilyn have also been used for Coca-Cola's 2018 campaign entitled: 'They don't make 'em like they used to. We do.' The campaign, although not analysed in detail here, is included in the conclusion of this chapter.

(see the discussion of Coca-Cola vs. Pepsi in 1.4), conform to expectation with the use of an earlier time period. The simplistic design, which shows the stars taking a break from work, is comparable to the aforementioned Mr. Porter advertisement. Both Presley (pictured above) and Monroe are shown to be drinking a Coca-Cola to relax and the illustration depicts a “real” moment from the stars’ life. Both stars are shown to be looking away from both the camera and the headline, and thus, the stars are further authenticated through the feeling that the consumer and brand are sharing a secret about the stars’ romantic life.

The commercially saturated stars are both known for sexual magnetism, but the pastness of these stars enable sex to seem “safe”. The suggestive nature of the headline, however, reduces both Presley and Monroe to a sex object. The phrase ‘I’ve Kissed Elvis’ or ‘I’ve Kissed Marilyn’ arguably detracts from images of the stars on-set or in the recording studio, and makes the reader picture the lips of both stars. Furthermore, the suggestive statement suggests that if a consumer were to drink from a Coke bottle, the consumer would, through the act of touching the same place as Monroe and Presley, be kissing these stars. This advertisement, therefore, is not too dissimilar to the Elvis Presley lipstick mentioned in Chapter Three. The promise of the advertisement is to gain a closeness to the stars from the past, simply, a chance to share in an act of consumption with Presley and Monroe. The connection to sex, a purchase of a product, and Fifties’ stars is illuminating. Problematically, the safe distance of the past strips these stars of the raw sexuality and danger they presented to a 1950s society. Instead, Monroe’s and Presley’s sexiness can be falsely experienced through the purchase of a carbonated drink.

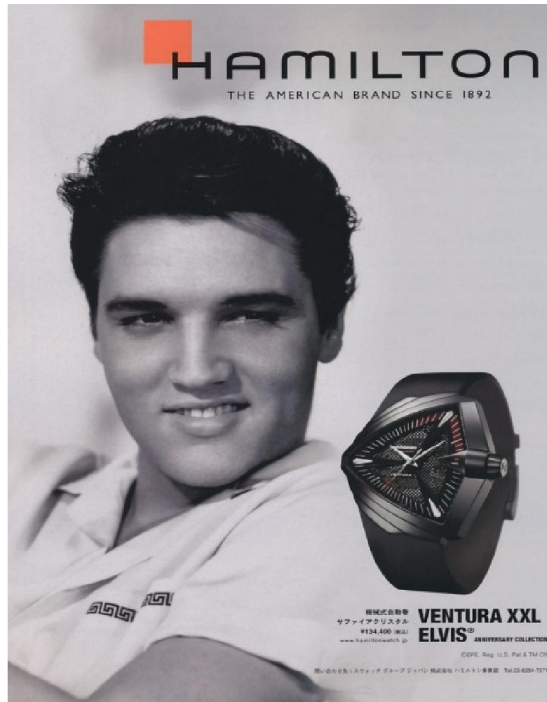


Figure 26: Hamilton, 2015.



Figure 27: Longines, 2001.

The past, presented in black and white, is a frequent feature of posthumous representation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The colour schematic, as suggested above, adds a feeling of historicity, style, and class. Additionally, as shown by Sexy Hair and Maxell, liminal space is also often a trope in posthumous advertising. The flaunting of time, however, is most evident in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century due to the frequent posthumous endorsement of watches. Elvis Presley and Audrey Hepburn,<sup>135</sup> as shown above, were both used in campaigns to sell the accessory.

Elvis Presley's advertisement, much like the Mr. Porter campaign, suggests there is a classic American style that can be gained through fashion and commodity. The slogan, 'The American Brand Since 1892', uses the association of Presley as an all-American star to reinforce the Americanness of the brand and its products. Using Presley as a staple of American stardom, then, the brand positions the star as another example of an American legacy. However, I would also argue his short life is exploited by the brand. The slogan, by stating the brand began<sup>136</sup> before Presley (Since 1892), implies the company was culturally and stylistically shaping America before Presley's role in the Cultural Revolution. Equally, a consumer's knowledge of Presley's death (combined with the monochrome to suggest the past) aids the consumer to interpret that the brand has outlasted the star. This is significant because the brand identifies itself as an original American item which can inspire (Presley wore a Ventura watch during his lifetime) and outlive an American icon. Insidiously, the brand is presented

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<sup>135</sup> James Dean has also been used for Candino Watches (2012) and this statistic will be included in the chapter's conclusion.

<sup>136</sup> An advertisement for a watch which makes references to the past, I would argue, is even more significant than a contemporary star in a similar campaign. Thoughts about the keeping of time, or the awareness of time passing, could potentially enable a consumer to reflect on the concept of time itself.

as timeless, whereas Presley is a relic of the past and an example of what has been lost to time.

Audrey Hepburn's advertisement, however, relies less on Americanness or longevity and more on a "type" of femininity. 'Elegance is an attitude', the headline of the advertisement, is an attempt to align Hepburn with her characters on-screen, or more specifically in this case, with Holly Golightly. The illustration of Hepburn,<sup>137</sup> from the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, is used to remind viewers of a sleek black dress and the sophistication of New York, but more importantly, at least to this campaign, is the knowledge of the film itself. Holly Golightly is not rich, nor from a lucrative economic background or social class. Instead, her character could be described as "acting the part". This is essential to the campaign as it suggests one does not need to be wealthy to be elegant. Rather, elegance is the way in which one holds oneself. Linking Hepburn to an 'attitude', of course, also connects Hepburn to her more outspoken or "kooky" roles, such as *Funny Face* or *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. As the "new" type of woman in the Fifties, or the apparent antithesis of Marilyn Monroe, slim and elegant Hepburn does not rely on beauty, but instead enhances her personality to alter her social standing.

Hepburn is positioned as authentic not because she used the product (like Presley and Hamilton), nor because a picture was captured in her leisure time (like Presley and Coca-Cola), but due to the reminder of her on-screen characters. Unlike the other case study stars, Hepburn's characters play a key role in her interpretation during this period, a feature that is not often present in the advertisements of Elvis Presley, for example. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century does, however, begin to appropriate all of the

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<sup>137</sup> The pose used in this photograph was also how Audrey Hepburn was posed in Madame Tussauds™ London (still in this position in 2019).

case study stars, and thus it this period in time which is most significant to the rest of the analysis. Chapters Four and Five, therefore, will use commercials to analyse some of the features which began to occur in print, such as authenticity (signatures, quotes, leisure time) and nostalgia (fascination with the past and monochrome design). To conclude this chapter, however, I will present all the available data on the frequency in which posthumous stars have appeared in advertising and summarise the findings regarding any trends and alterations which have occurred over time in posthumous advertising.

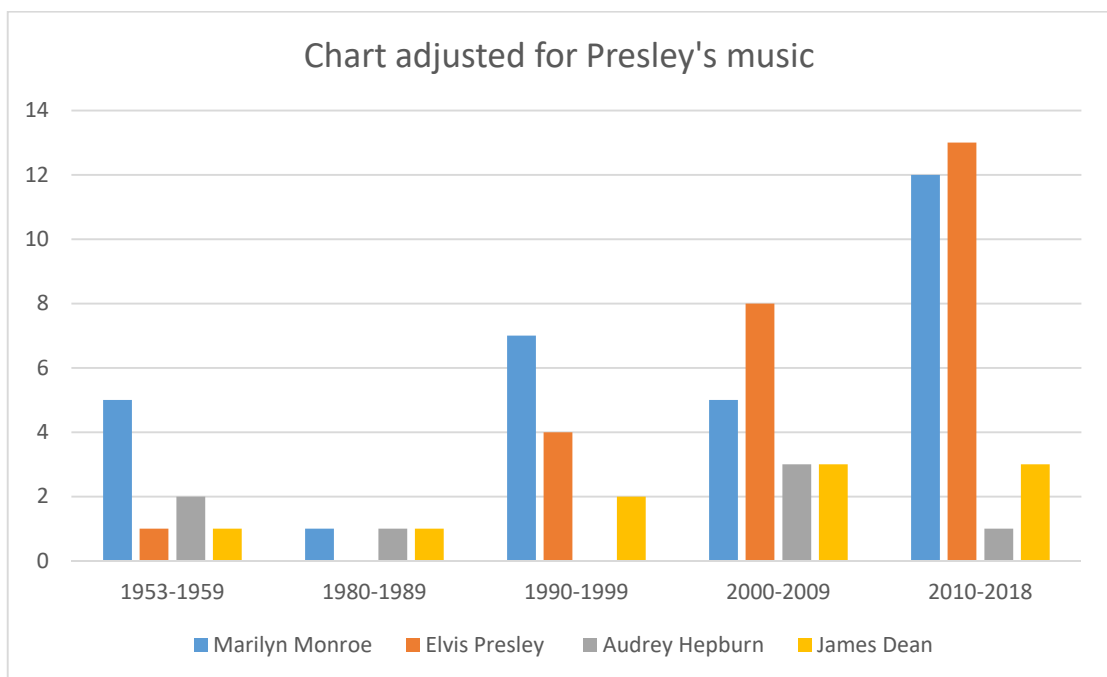
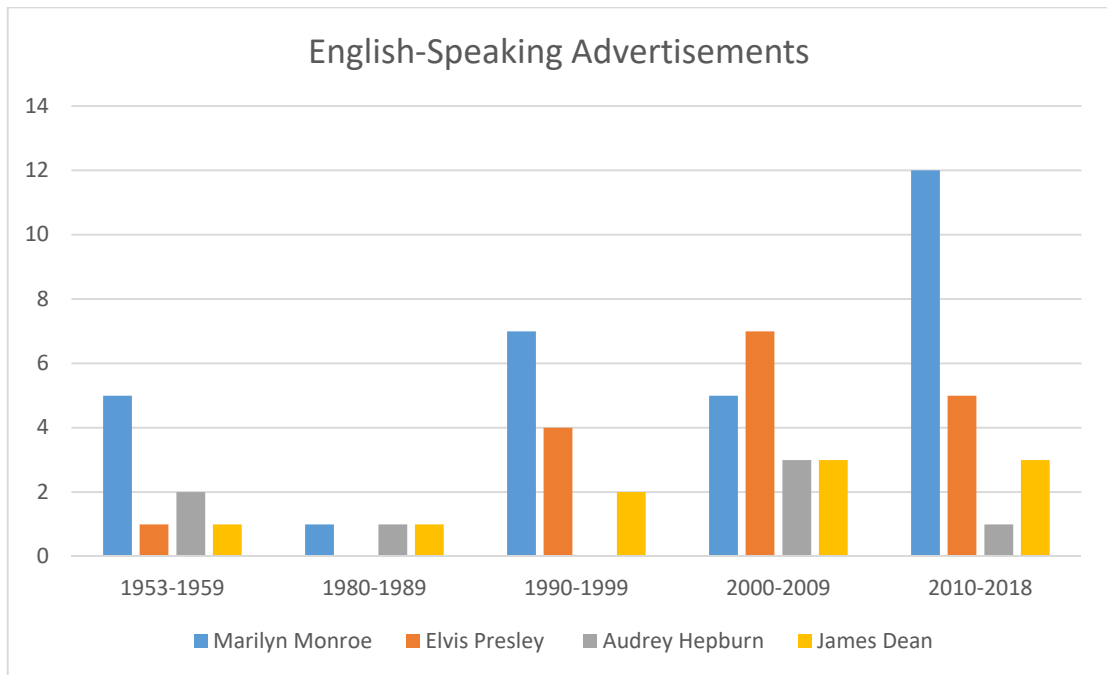
### 3.6 Conclusion

The chapter has chosen to focus on paper advertisements due to the persistence of this type of media. It has not, however, analysed every advertisement that appears in each decade due to the likeness of appearing repetitive or increasingly reductive. Equally, it has not contrasted commercials with paper advertisements due to the clear difference in format. Despite these parameters, the chapter has illuminated how the case study stars have been manipulated over time. Marilyn Monroe, due to her heavy presence in posthumous advertising, has appeared most frequently throughout the chapter and served as the best method in which to account for alterations in both posthumous star treatment and the design of advertising.

To summarise the findings, I will begin with two charts which include the numbers to all posthumous advertising acquired in this research, including commercials. Therefore, even if a paper advertisement has not been included in the analysis from the previous sub-sections, that does not mean the materials are not of use. Instead, they highlight the patterns of posthumous frequency within advertising, and more importantly, illustrate the posthumous hierarchy at work. As a reminder, any advertisements that could not be verified, were for a star-specific commodity (re-release of a film, for example), or were not English-speaking, have not been included in this graph.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, please note that the second graph is a replication of the first, but includes the use of Presley's music within advertisements.

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<sup>138</sup> It should also be noted that if there are many posters from the same campaign the advertisements have been counted as one. *Sexy Hair*, for example, released three simultaneous advertisements featuring Monroe in the same year, and thus *Sexy Hair* has only been counted once for the year 2013. Found and verified through databases, the estate, and Google, materials found to be used in large campaigns, despite a heavy presence, are presenting the same version of Monroe, and thus are not counted singularly as it would skew the results in favour of a large campaign's image of Monroe.



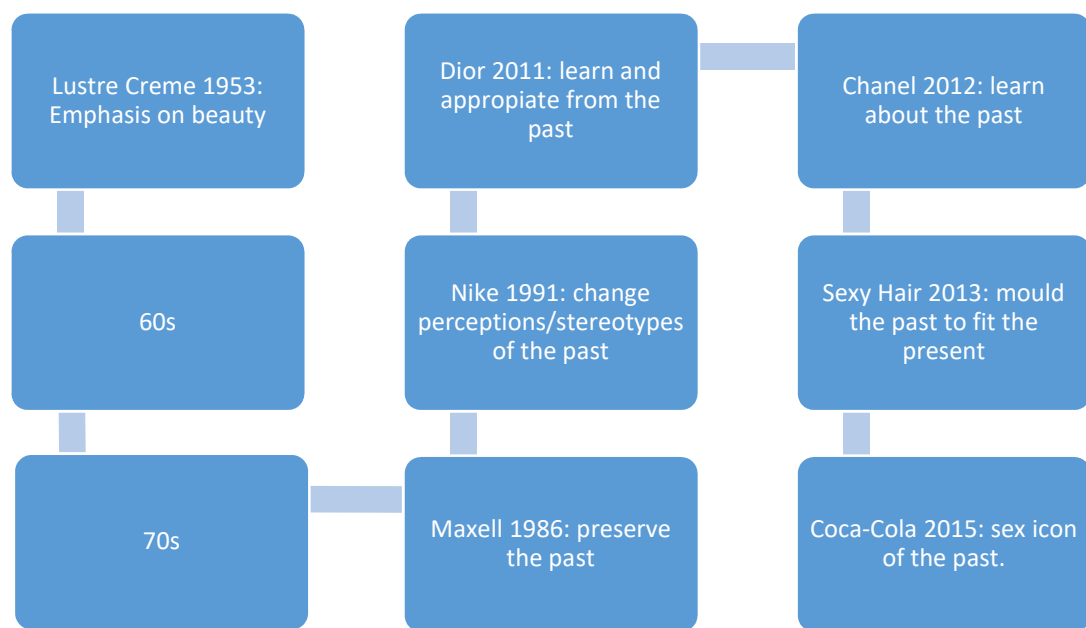
Graph 6: The stars' appearance in advertising throughout the decades.

As shown by the graphs, Marilyn Monroe is the star which appears most frequently and consistently in posthumous advertisements. Monroe, then, is a commercially saturated star because she is appropriated by large corporations for profit. Likewise, Elvis Presley appears malleable, perhaps even more so if the research



accounts for Presley’s voice alone. These two stars, according to these findings, are more adaptable or amenable than Dean and Hepburn. That is not to say, however, that Dean and Hepburn are not exploitable. Certainly, both these stars have commercial presence, and thus, one conclude that like the Ulmer Scale, there are stars which appear more “bankable” to large consumer brands.

Marilyn Monroe, as stated above, is an excellent example to track integral changes to posthumous star treatment in advertising. Below is a graph which summarises key advertisements (some of which will be explored further in the next two chapters) and the alterations made to her star persona or her cultural legacy.



Graph 7: Monroe in paper advertisements.

Using the graph and the chapter’s previous sub-sections, there are clear methods which have been used in conjunction with posthumous star advertising. Firstly, the 1980s used very similar methods to the 1950s, simply, the decade attempted to confine the star personas and reduce the stars to a stereotype. Maintaining Dean or Monroe as

the blueprint for beauty or masculinity, the 1980s used puffery and hyperbole to bolster star importance and consumer interest. During a period in time in which the Fifties appeared as a wholesome and “safer” place, 1980s advertisements appeared regressive by reducing the complexity surrounding both Dean and Monroe. Conversely, the 1990s re-valued or re-exposed the stars’ controversies and/or attempted to deconstruct the way in which the consumer thought about a star. The “new” spatial design, and more importantly, the monochrome aesthetic and official signature of the estate, began to shift the focus from pure glamour and artifice to a “real” person in history.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century hurtled toward more and more digital technologies, and as a result, saw a resurgence in the dead from a “purer” time. Seeking now to learn what made the pre-digital and seemingly<sup>139</sup> less politically divided America so special and powerful, the Fifties continues to thrive in popular culture and commodity because it represents a key moment in American culture and economic success. The Hollywood case study stars, therefore, represent something distinctly American (Hepburn less so) through this association of a nation steeped in power and wealth. It is a nostalgic rendering, but one that makes the stars appear “classic” and reliable to a consumer society. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the case study stars, and in particular the commercially saturated tier, have become “authentic” Americana just like apple pie or the Route 66 sign. I argue, then, that Monroe and Presley are used to reassert American values and cultural ethos. Internationally, it reminds the world of America’s cultural legacy and continued importance on the world stage, using commercially saturated stars as proof of longevity, success, and “real” American fun.

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<sup>139</sup> Please note the researcher does not believe it was easier/simpler/better, but merely uses this word because the past is often presented as an idealised moment in time.

**Chapter 4: The Posthumous Star and Consumer Manipulation:  
Authenticity**

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter, by focusing on 21<sup>st</sup> Century commercials, will further deconstruct a method which dominates posthumous advertising in the present day. Using categorisations I have established through viewings of biopics and television (film/television made after death and about the star), the thesis will show that there are correlations and distinct ways in which the moving image authenticates a posthumous star.<sup>140</sup> Film biopics, fictional films, and a multitude of literary genres<sup>141</sup> seek to expose a star's personality or the essential "truth" of a posthumous star's life. Biopics, museum exhibits, and documentaries<sup>142</sup> in particular all construct a posthumous star out of the remnants of information that is available to researchers through artefacts, footage, and personal testimony. It is these same techniques which advertisers use to manipulate consumer behaviour by attempting to generate intrigue, relevancy, and empathy. Fascinatingly, advertising traverses every one of the categories whereas fictional literature, for example, does not. This suggests that advertising fully exploits all the possible posthumous narrative constructions. Found below are the categorisations<sup>143</sup> I have developed upon watching the media's depiction of posthumous stars in film and television.

Firstly, *uncovered reconstructions* explore the star persona through a narrative that is based on a semblance of actuality, but is also a formation of dramatized events that may or may not have happened. The term 'uncovered' is inspired by Dennis

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<sup>140</sup> The thesis pertains to advertising and a thorough investigation of film and television is beyond the scope of the thesis. However, my research of this topic, at least in terms of categorisation, does show a similarity between media, and thus, aids the analysis of video commercials and authenticity.

<sup>141</sup> Literary depictions are beyond the parameters of this thesis, but will be discussed in the further research section of this work.

<sup>142</sup> Documentaries and exhibits are beyond the parameters of this thesis, but will be discussed in the further research section of this work.

<sup>143</sup> These categorisations also appeared in the terminology section of this thesis.

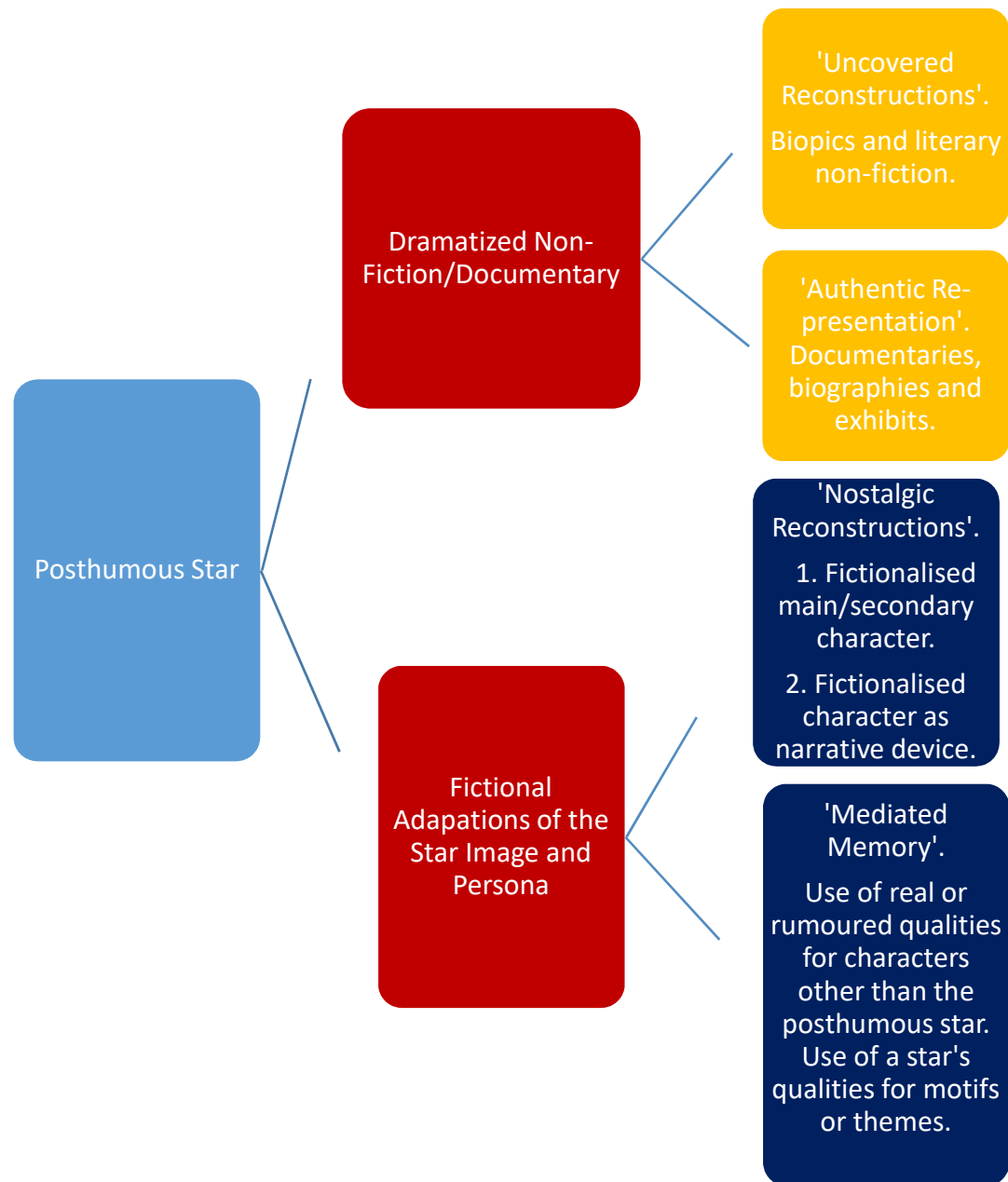
Bingham's conception of biopics as a genre which exposes secrets. Like Bingham's theory, this category's purpose is to uncover the private life of a public star. Secondly, *authentic re-presentation* investigates a star's life, often analysing details surrounding a star's popularity or death. Documentaries and multimedia exhibits, for example, use evidence such as video footage and artefacts as tangible evidence. This category may also use experts or personal testimony to help create a narrative, but this will largely be proving an argument that may explain why a star is of cultural importance. However, the argument may also be more specific, such as a close interrogation of one moment from a star's life.

The next two categories will feature in Chapter Five, but will be detailed here to show the divide between the methods used by film, and consequently advertising. *Nostalgic reconstructions* adapt a star's persona or star history to formulate a new fictional narrative. Certain star qualities are reinforced, and at times, the star becomes a caricature. This category uses favourable, iconographic or humorous traits to exploit a viewer's fondness for the past, and by doing so reinforces a star's cultural importance, particularly when the narrative seems to explicitly suggest the star is missed. Films of this category often use one of two narratives, either the star did not die, or their ghostly apparitions warn and/or guide the living. Lastly, *mediated memory*<sup>144</sup> is not too dissimilar to the previous term, but does not use the posthumous star as a character. Instead, "real" or rumoured qualities are subsumed by other fictional characters. Iconography or moments from a star's history (particularly famous scenes from films) are used as motifs, themes or comic relief. The use of small suggestions or intertextual references reinforce certain visual images, consequently

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<sup>144</sup> As a reminder, this is already a term used by scholars to describe a representation of the past that is transmitted to society through the media and alters collective memory.

reducing and limiting the star image to key moments that distort our complete view of the star, and potentially, the past.



Graph 10: A posthumous star image used in narrative film, television and literature.

Authenticity and nostalgia function as the two main methods in which to “sell” a posthumous star in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As detailed above, the four categories can be divided into two. The first section, dramatized non-fiction or documentary, attempts to authenticate a posthumous star, either through investigation or exposing a “real”

life. The second section, however, takes an alternative approach by fictionalising a star or appropriating individualistic aspects of a star's image or history. Presenting a star in this way restricts the complexity of a star persona and relies on quick iconographic signs to convey meaning. I argue, therefore, that this section uses nostalgia as a method of manipulation as it tries to convey feeling quickly through repeatable moments and also often relies on a Fifties aesthetic (soda shops, poodle skirts, futuristic). This chapter, however, will analyse the first two categories in relation to advertising to expose how authenticity can function as a method to entice consumers and garner brand loyalty.

## 4.2 Uncovered Reconstructions

To begin, the chapter will analyse how video commercials use *uncovered reconstructions*. A biopic, according to George F. Custen, will contain stylistic devices such as flashbacks and montage to condense a life into an easy and understandable format. Custen comments that biopics start in media res ‘past the age where [the protagonist’s] values can be influenced by the family’ (Custen 1992:149), and instead, the genre focuses on self-invention. However, in the close analysis of self-invention using the chosen case study stars, the protagonist must face a personal sacrifice, a concept that is not discussed by Custen or many works on biopics. The star biopic is, however, an illustration of social mobility as it displays how hard work alters a star’s position on social and economic scale. Despite this, it should also be noted that biopics often represent a certain type of person, simply, a misfit that resists conformity, and ultimately pays the price for that difference.

*Uncovered reconstruction* as a category was inspired by Dennis Bingham’s observation on biopics as a contemporary genre. He comments that a biopic is not a re-telling of a life, but an uncovering of what made that star important and ‘to illuminate the fine points of personality’ (Bingham 2012: 10). A biopic should not be viewed as a real portrayal of a life, but rather an attempt to discover how a star persona or image could become part of our cultural consciousness. Uncovered, therefore, relates to the mystery of the personality that is explored, and reconstruction illuminates how the advertisers’ interpretations are not an objective presentation of a star’s persona or history.

Custen and Bingham both acknowledge that biopics treat female protagonists in a very different way from their male counterparts. This is certainly discernible



between Monroe and Presley, whom despite both struggling with prescription drug addiction, it is Monroe that suffers and is victimised. To watch a Monroe biopic is to feel emotionally drained as the screen fades to the credits. To watch a Presley biopic, in contrast, is to feel celebratory and invigorated. As shown below, I believe, this gendered difference is largely due to the framing devices applied to a star biopic. Below are my own findings from the Hollywood posthumous biopic which I divulge here to enable the analysis of advertisements that rely on a biopic style.

	Marilyn Monroe	Elvis Presley	Audrey Hepburn	James Dean
A Week in a Life	<i>My Week With Marilyn</i> (2011).	<i>Elvis &amp; Nixon</i> (2016).		
Mockumentary	<i>Blonde</i> (2001).	<i>Elvis Meets Nixon</i> (1997).		
Flashbacks	<i>Norma Jean &amp; Marilyn</i> (1996). Continual flashbacks.  <i>The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe</i> (2015). Continual flashbacks.	<i>Elvis</i> (1979). Framed flashback.  <i>Elvis – The Early Years</i> (2005). Framed flashback.	<i>The Audrey Hepburn Story</i> (2000). Continual flashbacks.	<i>James Dean</i> (1976). Varied flashbacks.  <i>James Dean</i> (2001). One primary flashback.  <i>Joshua Tree, 1951: A Portrait of James Dean</i> (2012). Focuses on one trip with continual flashbacks and shifts in time.  <i>Life</i> (2015). Varied flashbacks.
Chronological		<i>Elvis</i> (1990)		

Table 11: The four narrative devices within a Hollywood posthumous biopic.

As shown in this table, the case study stars have various ways in which their life can be constructed and re-told. However, the flashback method in regards to Presley is very illuminating. Arguably, one feels invigorated after a Presley biopic due to the use of a framed flashback. For example, in *Elvis* (John Carpenter, 1979) the film begins with Presley in 1972. The film then chronologically tracks his fame until reaching the same moment from the start of the film. It is here that the film ends, and thus, the audience never see the demise of Elvis Presley and are only reminded of all his success and the hardship he went through to get to that level of stardom. In comparison, *Norma Jean and Marilyn* (Tim Fywell, 1996) begins with Monroe's death, and moves from tragedy to tragedy (not necessarily in order) until the conclusion of the film, which is again, her death (albeit an incorrect depiction). Monroe is portrayed as a vulnerable and isolated victim, but Presley is shown as a man that just unfortunately became addicted to drugs. Monroe dies for the audience to mourn her and to reflect throughout the film about a beauty that was lost. Presley, however, never dies to show how his powerful legacy can live on.

The biopic, therefore, illuminates three key questions for the analysis of advertisements. Firstly, how are secrets exposed through a condensed narrative and why does this authenticate a star and a company brand? Secondly, how is the narrative framed or constructed and how does this impact a consumer's interpretation of the posthumous star? Thirdly, which aspects of a star's life does it attempt to re-tell and is there a discernible pattern?

To begin, I will analyse Marilyn Monroe in the 2016 Snickers' advertisement.<sup>145</sup> The 'You're Not You When You're Hungry' campaign has featured

a variety of stars previous to the use of Marilyn Monroe, including stars such as Rowan Atkinson and Joan Collins. Using the aforementioned stars, Snickers constructs a simple and repeatable narrative. Simply, the celebrity is causing some type of havoc or discontent until a friend offers Atkinson/Collins a Snickers chocolate bar. Once the product is consumed, the celebrity is replaced by the person they should be (martial arts expert/football player) and can finally complete a task. Interestingly, this mocks the worship of celebrity culture by presenting both Atkinson (as Mr. Bean) and Joan Collins as useless/problematic/a diva, and instead posits that the everyday man is far greater. However, there is a significant difference in the posthumous advertisement using Marilyn Monroe.

In this Monroe advertisement, Willem Dafoe is the original star causing havoc on-set and only becomes Monroe once he has eaten a Snickers bar. The campaign attempts to provide humour throughout all of its commercials, but this anomaly in the formula seems particularly striking. Following the logic of the previous advertisements, i.e. the replacement of celebrity for “real” people, the commercial would appear to suggest (at least subconsciously) that Monroe is better. Arguably, the advertisement could be a comment on sexiness (Monroe is sexier than Dafoe), and yet the mere alteration in formula suggests it is more than that. Instead, I would argue it posits that a “classic” star is a “real” star.

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<sup>145</sup> Synopsis: The audience are situated behind some filming apparatus, a clapperboard covers the star’s face. A shot of shoes on a grate and a dress revealing muscular legs are followed by Willem Dafoe’s face. A classical score is heard in the background until a voice interrupts. The skirt goes up again and Dafoe struggles comically. Dafoe complains and is met by an assistant that offers him a Snickers bar because he is ‘cranky when he is hungry.’ Dafoe takes an aggressive bite. The assistant smiles and we are then shown Marilyn Monroe. She now poses well and the classic music returns. Eugene Levy is then shown to be operating the fan under the grate and the commercial concludes with the tagline and a picture of the chocolate.

To aid the interpretation of the “real” Monroe, Snickers reconstruct the set from *The Seven Year Itch*. As a backstage view, the audience are given insight into the working conditions and behaviour of a star on-set. The reproduction of the famous grate scene is used to make it seem as if Snickers are exposing a secret, especially by portraying a type of struggle with the dress and fan. The authentic star, then, is an imperfect human being that has to work for a living and struggle to get an iconic and polished scene. It is a reminder, therefore, that moments in film do not just happen, but there is considerable amount of labour involved.

The slow reveal of Monroe is additionally integral to formulating a certain experience with the commercial and the “real” star. Snickers begin the commercial with a false promise. Dafoe’s legs tease the audience through the iconographic association with Monroe. The dress and the city grate promise a Monroe-type figure, but Dafoe’s face, although comical, momentarily breaks the anticipation of a star reveal. Paul McDonald notes that in Hollywood cinema the star entrance is a game of ‘anticipation/fulfilment’ (McDonald 2013: 184), and arguably an audience has learnt the process in which a protagonist in Hollywood is shown. McDonald suggests that Hollywood has a star-reveal formula which fragments all other body parts into different shots before ‘the face (...) authenticates the star’s presence’ (McDonald 2013: 189). The star’s face, according to this theory, is the feature of the star. Due to the earlier body fragmentation and Dafoe’s face, the final reveal of Monroe acts as a wish-fulfilment, showing the audience that they were correct in their earlier assumptions. The acknowledgement of the star’s face not only authenticates Monroe, but more importantly, proves the audiences’ knowledge as “true”.

Engagement with the commercial is paramount and the combination of humour and the star reveal enables full audience participation. Interestingly, the engagement

with the advertisement could also lead to observations regarding sex and beauty, and thus, using Dafoe as the cranky actor serves a dual purpose. Firstly, Dafoe is comedic and generates audience engagement, however, as suggested above, the “real” Hollywood star is not shown on a luxury yacht, but working at a craft. In this case, the scene calls for someone to act and look sexy. The complaints made by the male star highlight the unrealistic expectations placed upon female performance and the blatant sexualisation and objectification of the female body. Dafoe is first presented to the audience as more than mildly annoyed through his stiff body and tightened jaw. The dress flies in Dafoe’s face on the second attempt at the grate scene and proclaims: ‘This is a disaster! Who’s the genius that puts a girl in heels on a subway grate?’ The male star’s anger at the working conditions and the requirement to pose sexily illustrate the different expectations filmmakers have for female stars, and in this case, of Marilyn Monroe.

The audience are shown that it is not easy to be sexy and nor is it easy to be a woman on-set. Consider the comment made by the director when Dafoe begins to look annoyed by the shoot: ‘Don’t look at me like that, sweetheart. It’s going to be amazing!’ The use of the word ‘sweetheart’ is patronising and is used to convey an order of dominance. Rendering Dafoe/Monroe sweet and soft is to suggest she has little dominance or autonomy in this situation and establishes power dynamics through gendered terms. Additionally, it creates a false sense of intimacy which attempts to lessen the poor working conditions with flattery and not by genuinely listening. *Snickers*, therefore, exposes the struggles of being a sex symbol by showing how difficult and unfair the job can be.

Secrets are exposed, then, through re-creating the filming of a famous scene and revealing difficulties that may have been experienced on-set. The behind-the-

scenes trope has previously been seen in the Mr. Porter and Coca-Cola campaign from the previous chapter, and thus, is not original to Snickers. However, this commercial further illustrates how this century attempts to “sell” a star. Simply, it authenticates the star through showing an actor at work. The film set, which is arguably glamour adjacent, reveals the tricks of the trade (hilariously Snickers posit their product is the reason for success) and humanises the icon. The star is rendered authentic by revealing an element of a star’s life which is rarely seen, and thus, makes the commercial both “scandalous” (i.e. it is revealing secrets) and seemingly “truthful”. Snickers, therefore, benefit from Monroe because the brand appears honest, even if an audience reasonably knows this commercial is artifice.

Of all the aforementioned categories this is the least frequent<sup>146</sup> to appear in commercials. As stated previously, however, a moment in the “real” life of a star does exist in paper advertisements during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, for example, Mr. Porter and Coca-Cola. Paper advertisements authenticate the past and the star through the use of monochrome, but in commercials this behind-the-scenes trope is authenticated through the belief that a brand is uncovering a star. Executed through a slow star reveal and/or the struggles of star’s life, this category re-frames a star’s history to generate a deeper understanding. Brands such as Snickers use empathy and humour to generate consumer interest using a star’s image, persona and history. However, in the next

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<sup>146</sup> There is, however, an earlier campaign for McDonalds (1992) which uses James Dean walking through the streets of New York. This commercial attempts to re-create a moment from Dennis Stock’s 1955 photographs. The advertisement was included in Chapter Three’s conclusion, but has not been included here due to the focus of this chapter on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. However, it should be noted that despite uncovering a moment from Dean’s life, the 1990s advertisement does not attempt to show struggle or sacrifice. Instead, the audience watches an ordinary moment (walking and eating a hamburger) from a distance. The authentication process, I would argue, is very different from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’s posthumous depictions.

category, although also uncovering the life of a star, humour and narrative are replaced for an investigative tone and documentary style.

### 4.3 Authentic Re-Presentation

In this next section, the thesis will deconstruct how a star is made authentic in advertisements through presenting a star's life as mystery that a brand has decided to solve. This section will use Monroe once again to show how Chanel No.5<sup>147</sup> reconstruct Monroe's death. The commercial, of course, is attempting to track Monroe's love for the perfume. However, the stylistic elements detailed below mimic the tone and images of a crime documentary (of which there are many featuring Monroe), and thus, uses the connotations of Monroe's death as a marketing ploy.

In the past three decades, Monroe has featured in two Chanel No.5<sup>148</sup> commercials and print campaigns.<sup>149</sup> In this analysis, however, the section will only focus on the advertisement from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Chanel No.5's documentary-style commercial, 'Marilyn & No.5',<sup>150</sup> is a cleverly designed advertisement that first appeared on Chanel's website and YouTube channel before expanding to a shorter

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<sup>147</sup> My analysis of Chanel No.5's 'Marilyn & No.5', also known as 'Inside Chanel, Chapter Two', is also due for publication this year (2019) in *Celebrity Studies*. Although there are differences between this version and the journal (such as more stills), my work on this topic will soon appear in a place other than this thesis.

<sup>148</sup> In 1921 the fragrance Chanel No.5 was added to the established Couture House. Ten years later, Gabrielle Chanel created outfits for the stars in Hollywood. 1954 saw Chanel inspire a second revolution in fashion, however, not one sported by Monroe whom tended to dress in Dior's "New Look". 1960 continued to see famous stars wear Chanel's products, particularly French stars such as Brigitte Bardot. Throughout Chanel's career there have been many celebrity connections in both the Continent and Hollywood. The blurring of Paris and Hollywood will be discussed further in the analysis of Dior's commercial in Chapter Five.

<sup>149</sup> Additionally, Monroe appeared in a Dior commercial in 2011 and this will be analysed in the following sub-chapter.

<sup>150</sup> Synopsis: "Chapter 2" is a journey through Monroe's affiliation with the Chanel No.5 brand using archival sources acquired by Chanel. It begins with various pictures of Monroe in bed, a sexually provocative exploitation of the Monroe legend. Text appears to ask the viewer the infamous question: What does Marilyn Monroe wear to bed? A musical beat begins and the magazine cover of *LIFE* from 1952 multiplies on-screen before the commercial reveals highlighted text (from the same issue) about Monroe's affiliation with the brand. As the commercial progresses distorted pictures of a building, said to be the place of an unpublished photo shoot by *Motion Picture Magazine*, appears. After the sense of place is established the commercial continues with a display of the unpublished photos, but with an emphasis on the placement of a bottle of No.5. Lastly, a tape recording of Monroe's voice is heard as she discusses a previously unheard confirmation about her use of No.5.



televisual spot on UK television. International news reports<sup>151</sup> date the release of the video as the 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 and the UK's *Daily Mail* followed the subsequent year.<sup>152</sup> Despite the spread-out coverage it seems remarkable that any advert would garner so much attention that it would generate international news coverage. I argue, therefore, it is the style and content of this commercial that lends itself to further intrigue and enquiry. At its most essential, the advertisement appears as investigative celebrity journalism which relies on the techniques of scandal, star history, and rumour.

The commercial itself forms an informative function, whereby it focuses on the meaning of the product rather than the addressee, or as in many star adverts, on the addresser. Returning to McDonald's example first presented in the literature review, the average narrative in a star advertisement relies on the star. In the many commercials made for the George Clooney-*Nespresso* brand (the example from the literature review), the crux of the plot depends on women failing to recognise him, or contributing words such as 'intense (...) unique (...) rich very rich (...) deep and sensual' to the coffee and not Clooney. The commercials are humorous, but despite the coffee's large role it is Clooney and our knowledge of him that makes this advertisement about the addresser, and thus has an expressive function. The *Nespresso* commercial is not informative, any knowledge the audience receives are re-establishments of Clooney's persona, and as a result, also the coffee brand through the meaning-transfer process.

'Marilyn & No.5' does, like *Nespresso*, depend on knowledge of the star, but it does not seek how they are alike. Instead it attempts to establish why Monroe liked

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<sup>151</sup> Australia's *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Luxury Daily* (a news site dedicated to marketing).

<sup>152</sup> This is the year in which the advertisement came to UK television screens.

Chanel No.5, or to be more precise, when an affiliation with product began.<sup>153</sup> The commercial begins with simple white text on a black background, the words ‘Marilyn & No.5’ appear. No surname is provided, and it is assumed by the mere mention of the name “Marilyn” the audience will know the star (arguably evidence of her cultural presence). The noise of a flashbulb and a quick light flash dominates the screen before a still bedroom shot of Monroe is exposed. Monroe, nude under white sheets, gazes up at the now moving camera as it begins to violate her personal space. More text then appears asking the now infamous question: what does Marilyn Monroe wear to bed? Throughout the opening an ominous noise rings, punctuated by flash bulbs and the background hum of quiet voices. It is as if the audience are privy to the night Monroe died, complete with nudity, a white sheet, and continuous hushed mumbling. The crime motifs (explored further below), conspiracy documentary tropes, and film star glamour combine to remind the viewer of an untimely death. To fans, and perhaps those with knowledge of Monroe’s death, the ominous noise and quick edits suggest the onset of another investigation/conspiracy theory documentary, and they would be partly correct.

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<sup>153</sup> The twelve different commercials for this campaign are all informative mock-documentaries about how the Chanel brand became famous. Monroe’s advertisement is very popular at 3,843,644 views on the official CHANEL channel. This is very closely followed by Chapter 12 “Paris”, but these views do not count television exposure nor does it count other YouTube channels also using the commercial. (Figures taken: 23/01/2019)



Figure 28: Monroe as alive

Monroe's death plays a large part of what I deem her *posthumous narrative reconstruction*. Used as a source of conspiracy or as a narrative centre in documentaries and biopics, her untimely death is a reminder that a star's life is not perfect, they too face hardship, and ultimately, die. In documentaries and biopics her star history conveys *a type of truth*, however, one that serves the final tragic interpretation of her life. These *types of truth* are enhanced because large sections of Monroe's fame was (and still is) subjected to rumour and scandal. Monroe's divorces, love affairs and chronic lateness was tabloid fodder generated by new scandal-based journalistic discourse.<sup>154</sup> As a star that seems surrounded by mystery and scandal (even the cause of her death is still contested) the notion of the "truth" becomes blurred. Interestingly, the Chanel commercial attempts to use the very medium that started Monroe rumours as tangible evidence of the star's existence. Fan magazines, the gossip generator of the past, is used instead for its positive connotations - the ultimate secret exposé. Therefore, through historical objects, Chanel reproduce the

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<sup>154</sup> *Confidential* is one example that will be returned to later in this chapter.

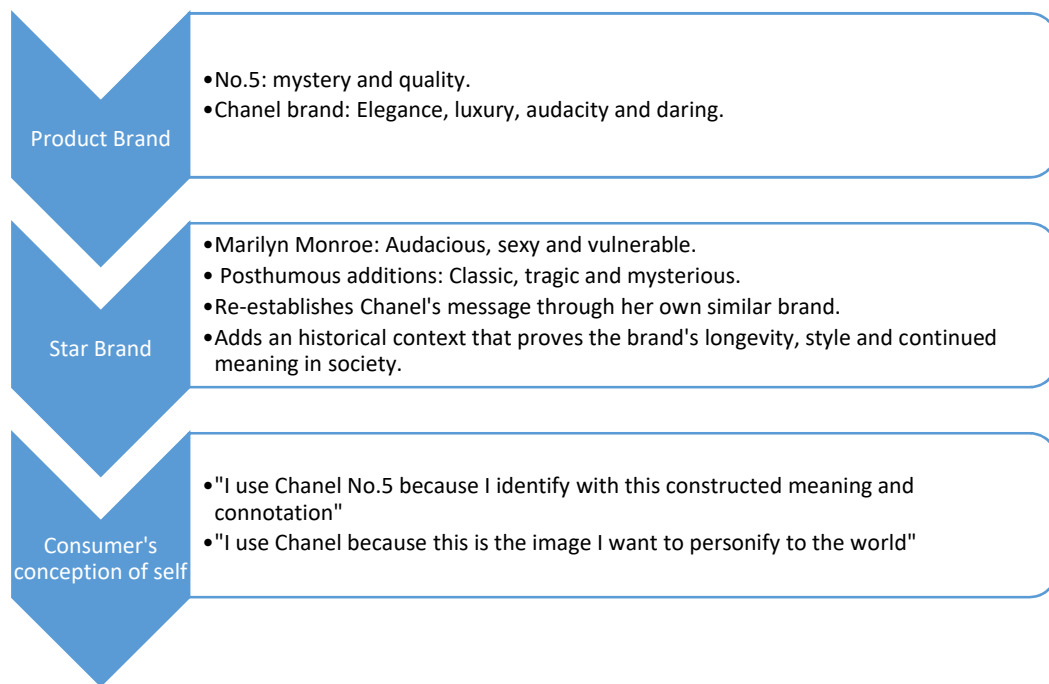
methods in which Monroe was exposed in her lifetime and continue the sinister undertone of the tragedy that, like Monroe's ghost, haunts the pages of scripts and magazines to this day.

Despite this one famous statement by Monroe, it may seem odd that Chanel would choose to use Monroe at all. Coco Chanel's conception of feminine beauty was 'a firm, fairly thin but athletic body' (Bott 2007:7), and thus, is the antithesis of Monroe's curvaceous form. However, when we begin to deconstruct the brand's objectives and No.5's keywords, the use of Marilyn Monroe is no longer puzzling. According to *Chanel, Collections and Creations*, "mystery" and "quality" (Bott 2007: 153) are the basic principles of the classic perfume. As suggested above, Monroe is a mystery, surrounded by conspiracy theory and rumour, and thus, her individual meaning matches the first keyword used by No.5. Additionally, "quality" is suggested through Monroe's Hollywood connections. Whilst not connected to high fashion or continental high-brow culture, enough time has passed to allow the Golden Age of Hollywood to have its own connotations of class and glamour. Furthermore, Monroe, as one of the most dispersed images of Classic Hollywood, has arguably become a metonym for Hollywood.

Breaking down Chanel's objectives: 'elegance, luxury, audacity and daring' (7), we can again find at least some reasoning for using Monroe. Monroe allowed the public to have knowledge about a nude calendar; was the second woman to head her own production company (after Mary Pickford), and was responsible for Ella Fitzgerald's performances in a Los Angeles nightclub during a time when racial bigotry was a barrier for some of the greatest black performers. These biographical moments, therefore, show Monroe to be an audacious and daring woman of the 1950s. Combined again with the connotations of Hollywood and stardom, Monroe matches

the first two of Chanel's objectives: elegance and luxury. Brand matching, stylistic choices and stereotypical narrative tropes allow Monroe to represent Chanel's objectives and No.5's additional product keywords. In 'Marilyn & No.5' we see a complex and ambitious advertisement that uses history to establish its affiliation, and in turn, solidifies Monroe as a piece of Chanel's brand rather than just relying on Chanel's and Monroe's mutual brand type.

Contemporary work on authenticity and branding (also found in the literature review) has suggested that 'individuals position themselves as the central character in the narrative of the brand: "I'm a Mac user" many of us say smugly, or, "I drink Coke, not Pepsi" (Banet-Weiser 2012:4). A brand's meaning and historical positioning, therefore, allows consumers to place themselves within the brand's narrative and feel 'safe, secure, relevant, and authentic' (Banet-Weiser 2012:9). Using Banet-Weiser's above example, we can say, "I use Chanel, not Tommy Hilfiger" because Chanel has a greater historical connection to glamour. Thus, what a consumer is actually saying is: "I am glamorous and classic, not young and active". It is through brand connotations, then, that we shape our own narrative. Below is a graph I have generated using Banet-Weiser's theory, but enhancing the scholarship using stardom. Simply, the star has connotations and shares those with the brand, and a consumer identifies with the star and brand to construct an identity they want to convey to society.



Graph 11: How Monroe's connotations transfer to the brand and consumer.

To assist with the validation of Marilyn Monroe, the commercial uses investigatory tropes and magazine sources. The premise of the investigation is simple: when did Marilyn Monroe first mention Chanel No.5? The company admits that they may never know, but instead uses unseen documentation from magazine archives, two of which had not been published. The first source is a *LIFE* (April 1952) article, claimed to be the moment in which the 'legend' of No.5 was born. Chanel's assertion legitimises their use of Monroe whilst acknowledging her stardom (a 'legend' herself), but it is this use of unseen documentation that gives No.5 historical and cultural valorisation. The evidence presented to the audience comes in three formats: the written word (magazine), a photo (from a magazine) and a voice recording (from an interview with a magazine).

As suggested previously, magazines are of great relevance to Monroe's star history. However, before a close analysis of the function of magazines in this commercial, it is important to discuss how magazines make any star authentic. Tamar

Jeffers-McDonald comments that magazines, ‘unlike the films, (...) lasted [and] were available to be poured over again and again’ (Jeffers-McDonald 2013: 35). The function of a magazine was to allow the movie fan to be reminded and gain knowledge of the star so that the star remained present in a fan’s life. The presentation of a star predominantly came in two forms: information about an upcoming feature, or more importantly the “real” star. Often magazine articles would be recycled, and this can be found even in British magazines from the 1980s that featured the star Goldie Hawn (thus is not just pertinent to the 1950s). Arguably then, we can extend Jeffers McDonald’s theory and posit that readers gain knowledge through a *repetitive reconstruction of preferable personality traits*.

Personality traits, according to Richard deCordova, would ‘amplify (...) the representation for sale in the movies’ (deCordova 1990: 88). Monroe was certainly presented as sexy in journalistic discourse, however, due to this extraordinary beauty, Monroe may have seemed distant to both men and women. Magazines, therefore, seemed to be interested in presenting an ordinary/scandalised Monroe. The early 1950s saw a rapid rise in the proliferation of her image, and she achieved a *LIFE* front cover in 1952; was on the first cover of *Playboy* magazine in 1953, and was the main attraction in a new scandal magazine, *Confidential*, also in 1953.<sup>155</sup>

*Confidential* changed journalism,<sup>156</sup> particularly star coverage, and was the predecessor of magazines such as *The National Enquirer*. Prior to *Confidential*, fan magazines had often been controlled/in affiliation with the studios, but as the end of the studio system loomed so did the change in celebrity journalism, and Monroe was

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<sup>155</sup> It should be noted that *Confidential* began in December, 1952. The third issue featured Monroe and changed the magazine’s focus from that point forward.

<sup>156</sup> Magazines *Inside Story* and *Hush Hush* began in January, 1955 and May, 1955 respectively.

one of the first stars to be made into scandal fodder within the pages of the new tabloid-style magazine. The reports on Monroe and its emphasis on “real” secrets gained the magazine economic success and would pursue Monroe for subsequent issues.<sup>157</sup> Although we cannot assume all viewers of the commercial will have this knowledge, the advert nonetheless appropriates modes of discovery that seem authentic, and in particular a mode that is distinctly important to Monroe’s star history.

In the commercial, the final interview with the reporter is arguably the most important feature of the authentication process. Monroe’s voice at the final juncture of the advertisement is very important, as it veils the lack of actual endorsement, yet establishes both Monroe and Chanel as truthful. Like a signature on print advertisements, Monroe’s voice is a tangible confirmation for the quality of the product. When we sign or vocally agree to a contract we affirm to the terms and conditions, this advertisement is using that same structure and connotation to appear legitimate in their use of Monroe. Pictures can be doctored, but the voice or signature is a physical trace of a being outside of a picture.

A statement, according to Adorno, is a semiotic trick made by the very implication that a direct statement ‘is to be the sign of truth’ (Adorno 2003:10). Adorno cites words such as ‘valid’ and ‘true’ as words that when connected to the statement imply that a man could not be untrue, and thus, these words are jargon that ‘defames the objectivity of truth as thingly’ (Adorno 2003:11). Monroe, therefore, claims Chanel’s worth and qualifies her own statement. ‘It’s the truth’ rather than ‘I was being truthful’ suggests that Chanel itself is the truth and allows for a multi-

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<sup>157</sup> Before August, 1953 a press run for *Confidential* was estimated at 150,000. According to Henry E. Scott the Monroe issue would reach 800,000 runs, ‘far surpassing tame movie industry favourites such as *Photoplay*’ (Scott 2010: 6).



layered reading of the statement. Firstly, that this is the “real” Monroe and her “real” thoughts. Secondly, that the perfume can be your truth and help you find your authentic self.

The suggestion of the direct and seemingly unmediated feeling plays a major role in persuasion due to its veil as authentic. For a brand, the authentic is found by situating itself in an understandable narrative that is easily read and understood. In stardom, however, the authentic is the “real” something that is uncovered. It is the secret and the confession, briefly discussed in regards to deCordova’s work, which reveals the “true” person behind the star. However, if the secret is the “real”, then it requires language to be exposed. Richard Dyer notes that adjectives such as ‘sincere, immediate, spontaneous, real, direct, genuine’ (Dyer 1991:133) are the markers that persuade a reader that there is more than artifice to a celebrity. Spontaneity in performance may be key to garner a sense of depth, but we can expand Dyer’s theory and suggest it is crucial in star journalism. It is through secrets and seemingly authentic diction that we conceive of a star as “real”. Monroe adds legitimacy through markers that make her appear like a person and not a myth, and thus, Chanel No. 5 combines two uses of the authentic: the brand’s ability to create a brand narrative for a consumer to use in society, and secondly, the star as “real” to help further create loyalty in a consumer.



Graph 12: Masking consumerism with authenticity using a posthumous star.

As previously discussed, the archival choice of magazine related sources rather than film clips is a grasp at authenticity through a tangible source and brand. In this one commercial, for example, there are five brands (*LIFE*, *Modern Screen*, *Marie Claire*, *Chanel* and *Monroe*) that ground Chanel No.5's brand into a tangible time and space, as well as an international one (*Marie Claire* was the French version of the magazine, additionally where Chanel began). However, something far more important is going on within the advertisement in regards to the presentation of Monroe. The advertisement, due to its style, recreates a space in which we re-evaluate the drama around her death and the glamour of her life. Chanel blends myth and fact to present Monroe as a tragic, mysterious and sexual figure.

Firstly, the black and white colour scheme places the commercial within a historical context, as well as a glamorous one. It suggests the past, and of course,

reaffirms the knowledge of Monroe's black and white films and photo shoots. Of course, a large percentage of Monroe's filmography is in colour, but colour, for the most part, is avoided during the moving clips. This not only gives the commercial an "authentic" feel (contextual) but it also increases the mysterious tone of the commercial (colour affects mood). The visual similarity between the images, white screen and black text reinforces the colour schematic, but also offers an added depth to the theme of the commercial itself. The white flashbulbs, white bed, and indeed the "whiteness" of Monroe suggests a kind of purity, a cleansing and renewal signalling Chanel's continued renewable relevance. Perhaps more importantly, it re-emphasises Monroe's power as a sex symbol which ultimately helps gain viewer engagement.

According to Richard Dyer the desirability of Monroe is the very fact that she is both white and blonde, he states, 'blonde hair is frequently associated with wealth (...) And bloneness is racially unambiguous' (Dyer 2004:40). In this case, the question becomes: is this a historical perspective highlighting the 1950s ideal of beauty, or are we still using Monroe as our cookie-cutter ideal of a white woman? 'Idealised white women are bathed in and permeated by light' (Dyer 1997: 122) and Monroe's clear glow in the footage for this commercial gives her the 'translucent whiteness' (Dyer 1997: 122) that beauty advertisements claim was, and still is, the ideal texture for skin. Therefore, Monroe and the white colour schematic re-emphasise her desirable position both historically and culturally.

"Lux Girls are Daintier!"



"A Lux Soap Beauty Bath makes you sure of skin that's sweet!"

**BARBARA STANWYCK**  
star of  
Enterprise Studios'  
"THE OTHER LOVE"

"There's thrill in skin that's fragrantly smooth and soft," says lovely Barbara Stanwyck. "You'll love the delicate, clinging perfume a Lux Soap beauty bath leaves on your skin. It's foolish to take chances—daintiness is the most important charm of all. Lux Soap's Active Lather makes you sure—leaves skin fresh and sweet."

Use this fine white beauty soap as a daily bath soap, too. You'll agree—Lux Girls are daintier!

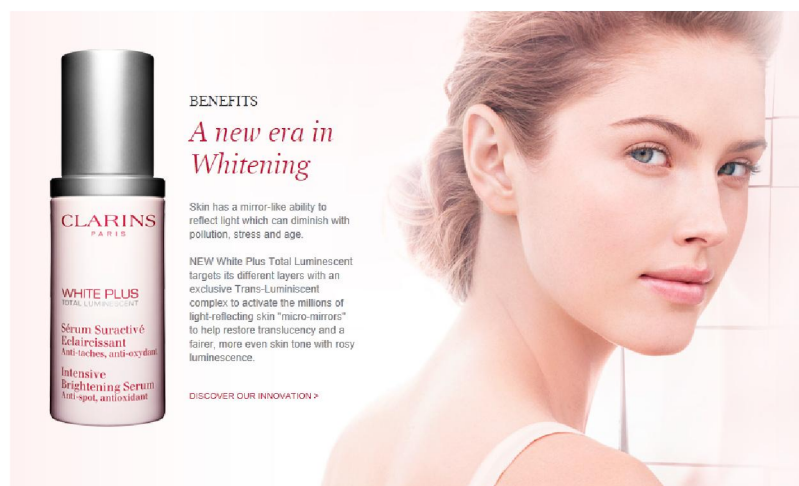


**YOU** (whisper) when he whispers "You're sweet?" There's appeal in skin that's fragrant with Lux Toilet Soap's delicate perfume.

A product of Lever Brothers Company

**9 out of 10 Screen Stars use Lux Toilet Soap — Lux Girls are Lovelier!**

Figure 29: Lux 1947: 'Use this fine white beauty soap'. Translucent skin before Monroe.



**CLARINS**  
PARIS

**WHITE PLUS**  
TOTAL LUMINESCENT

Sérum Suractivé  
Éclaircissant  
Anti-taches, anti-oxydant

Intensive  
Brightening Serum  
Anti-spot, antioxidant

**BENEFITS**

*A new era in  
Whitening*

Skin has a mirror-like ability to reflect light which can diminish with pollution, stress and age.

NEW White Plus Total Luminescent targets its different layers with an exclusive Trans-Luminescent complex to activate the millions of light-reflecting skin "micro-mirrors" to help restore translucency and a fairer, more even skin tone with rosy luminescence.

DISCOVER OUR INNOVATION >

Figure 30: Campaign 2012- 2015: the still present image of translucent skin.

However, the use of white also introduces another, deeper theme. Monroe, in one shot, fades into white, completely immersed into nothingness. It is almost as if she is sucked into her own beauty or her own stereotype of whiteness. However, what is the Monroe brand if she can be reduced to nothingness? Monroe's brand is so ubiquitous she is both everything and nothing. A contradiction in both life and death, Chanel use her tragic beauty and allow her to be consumed into everythingness. Monroe fades into white, consumed into our ideal of what whiteness is, however, she also fades into whiteness to connote a death of something special through the association of heaven. Or perhaps, she fades into the clear air to permeate our culture – every social and cultural sphere.



Figure 31: Monroe as escaping us



Figure 32: Monroe as dead



Figure 33: Into nothingness and becoming everything.

The fading picture, besides the colour schematic, suggests authenticity through the indexical still image. Marilyn in her bed in the opening sequence, or on the front cover of the magazine is a photograph of a specific moment in time. The camera, with its recording possibilities that are detached from the human eye, mummifies the moment, preserving the 'now-ness' (Mulvey 2006:9). Therefore, the image is ever-present as the person or object does not age, and yet, it is still of the past. The photograph blurs the boundaries of time so that the photographed seems ever-living. However, this ever-living presence also has darker connotations, despite not ageing, the historical mummification also reinforces the knowledge of death. Mulvey notes that the cinema and the moving image

combines (...) two human fascinations: one with the boundary between life and death and the other with the mechanical animation of the inanimate, particularly the human figure. (Mulvey 2006:11).

The advertisement, with its use of still images, shows a historical moment whilst simultaneously, through both the nature of the indexical image and the audiences' knowledge, remind the viewer of death. An image of youth lasts longer than youth itself, and it is through photography that Monroe can be eternally alive.

Monroe, a star that died aged 36, provides a double fascination with preserved youth and a sense of foreboding. Sadly, the viewers not only know this young woman will die, but that she will die in bed, naked. This is emphasised, as suggested previously, by the image of her in a bed of white, the same colour of her sheets in her empty room, and uncannily similar to the pictures of her own death. The photograph then is not just a fragment of time, but a prediction. However, the advertisement does more than present us the image – it moves over it. The dead Monroe becomes animate, or perhaps, it is the viewer that hovers over her with the omniscient knowledge of her death. Is the viewer waiting for her to die? Or are the audience moving closer so that she does not escape them? Despite the camera's best attempt, the indexical image fades into nothingness, reminding us it is nothing more than a moment in time that has already passed. Through the fading indexical image the commercial advises that the audience could never hope to capture Marilyn, instead, the commercial seems to ask that a consumer use No.5 so that it can connect them to the star. The consumer, then, can be a part of Monroe's legacy by using the only other thing in the now – Chanel No.5.

The mysterious death of Monroe has continued to fascinate the public, and, as a result, so has her life. The regular exposé books, documentaries, and TV biopics all use particular aspects of what is now Monroe mythology. Of all of these, as previously suggested, Chanel pay particular attention to the white sheet. Monroe died in the nude, under a white sheet with a phone by her side, and despite the continuous use of her living image, this commercial does not want us to forget the image of her death. Monroe has joined the pantheon of “iconic corpses” (...) lives [that] are defined by death, their stories inseparable from their endings’ (Schwartz 2015: 6). Commercials and television, such as *The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe* (Laurie Collyer, 2015), or

the TV series *Dead Famous DNA* (Rob Davis, 2014), either refer to Monroe's living picture in past tense or attempt to tell her story through reference to her death. Her mysterious ending has become the focus of her story, and as such, it is a trope in Monroe's uncovered re-presentation. It is important to note that although her death is a focal issue, her dead body is not. The Chanel commercial, although purporting to be exposing new evidence, present a traditional narrative that adheres to audience expectation.

Monroe, however, is always cut or faded behind the "evidence" and the words of Chanel. Like in many documentaries featuring the star, Monroe's work takes a backstage to her mystery, and ultimately, her death. We are denied pictures of her dead body, for despite the focus on her death she must seem ever-present. Archival footage, therefore, becomes a 'living assemblage' (Schwartz 2015: 85). Like Frankenstein's monster, bits of Monroe's past are formulated to give the impression of a whole person. A glance at *The National Enquirer's* 2012 special issue, printed to align itself 50 years after Monroe's death, shows a 'living assemblage' at work. Pictures include childhood, early modelling, romances, a movie still, and her covered dead body leaving her Hollywood home. Monroe's whole life is displayed for us to access her as a person, again and again. It is as if we have known her for her whole life. Like a family friend, we are allowed to watch her progression, one that continues like a tornado through popular media. She continues to live through a depiction of her living body. Yet we cannot view the body without being reminded of death, further proving how her voice serves an important purpose in this advertisement. Her words, featured in this advert, echo through time as a reminder of a life that existed.

Monroe is, of course, alive in the pictures, yet it is the combination of our knowledge of her death and the steady drum beat that gives the first image an uneasy



quality. The beat, mixed with Monroe's laugh suggests a type of countdown, a foreboding that the audience is already aware of. The audience find themselves enthralled by the anticipation of her end, even though it has already occurred and live simultaneously in a world where Monroe is always living and yet always dead. The reminder of her death, however, occurs not only through the opening image and sound but through various pieces of evidence. The evidence presented to the viewer from the archives, often in monochrome, reminds the audience that this is a timeless investigation. The combination of age and timelessness, of course, is a paradox, but what the commercial hopes to do is locate Monroe and Chanel in the past, whilst simultaneously suggest that the impact of Monroe and the product is endless.

The crime tropes and the editing employed in this advertisement suggest darkness despite the use of lighting and white colour schematics. Crime/conspiracy tropes used in this advertisement include stakeout photography, highlighted text, the consistent murmuring of hushed voices (including Monroe's laugh), slow motion video clips, and the documentation of linear time (through textual markers). The crime scene motif increases as Chanel cuts to a close-up of a No.5 bottle and creates dashed lines around the image, again, and again, and again. Each photo is from a slightly different angle within the same still shot and is similar to the procedure of a crime scene investigation where evidence must be documented from different angles to ensure no clues are missed. Arguably, the bottle is also used to stand-in for Monroe's faded-into-nothingness-body. Monroe may disappear, but this bottle remains tangible.



Figure 34: Body replacement and a reminder of Monroe's death.

Monroe's body, or more accurately, her nudity, is paramount to the advertisement; after all, the quote is famous because she went to bed naked wearing only Chanel No.5. However, the objectification of her naked body, despite the rationale, is still selling product via Monroe's sexuality. The naked body, the front cover of *LIFE*, and the video footage of Monroe at a premiere all use fast cuts and flashbulbs to create a sense of urgency and drama, something that should remind the viewer of both celebrity culture and a crime scene. However, in these still shots any multiple close-ups of Monroe tend to be of her body and lips. The final shot, (that became the poster for the print advertisements) focuses on Monroe's breasts. I would argue, however, that the sexualisation of Monroe and the crime motifs overshadow the product itself. The pictures of a building seem obscured; the red marker of the pen highlighting the magazine becomes an object of study; the lines around the evidence and the extreme-close up of the voice recorder seem like a detective's evidence. These images, placed alongside the sexual cutting of the still shots, are selling sex and crime and ultimately allow for a dark interpretation of the past.

Any sinister undertones, however, are hidden by any associated glamour of the past and the “seriousness” of the investigation of Monroe. The commercial is multifaceted and shows Monroe to be simultaneously: classic (to show longevity); glamorous (to help promote a luxury brand); tragic (to ensure viewer interest and full brand communication); sexy (to generate wishful thinking on behalf of the consumer); vulnerable (to make her relatable and ordinary); audacious (to inspire strength and aspiration, including the ability to do so with the purchase of a product), and most importantly, mysterious (to create intrigue and continued relevance through investigation). Chanel takes advantage of all these qualities, using them in combination with monochrome footage, fast editing and ethereal music to connote other-worldliness, ensuring Monroe’s troubled star history reaches its full impact for the benefit of Chanel’s product.

## 4.4 Conclusion

The Chanel advertisement detailed in the section above is an example of an authentic re-presentation. The investigation into a star's life is one way in which a brand can gain consumer attention, but more importantly, appear honest and reliable. The brand as-truth-teller, therefore, suggests to a potential customer that Chanel products are of good quality. Using a posthumous star, then, enables a brand to discover a private life of a public star and allows a brand to at least seem interested in the truth behind the glamour. For example, Chanel analyse connections to Monroe and Chanel, rather than how a sprinkling of a perfume can endow a person with beauty and love.

The documentary-style of 'Marilyn & No.5', through its use of crime motifs and tense music, frames Monroe's life as a puzzle to be solved. The secret to expose, although itself not scandalous, borrows the methods of other media to remind viewers of Monroe's personal mystery. The star's death, as perhaps the most titillating scandal related to the star, is a topic of continued gossip. Chanel's appropriation of investigative techniques, therefore, exploit an audience's knowledge on a common method used to discuss Monroe (on television and in mass market non-fiction books). However, using stylistic choices such as these further authenticates Monroe and Chanel because it matches other media renditions of the star.

The investigation into the mystery of Monroe, as stated previously, relies on the enjoyment of gossip. Rumour, scandal, and gossip serves a way for human beings to partake in social bonding, a practice that according to Robin Dunbar, has replaced social grooming (seen in primates) as a way to form groups. In fact, seemingly inconsequential topics of discussion are so important for social bonding that 'around two thirds of (...) conversation is taken up with matters of social import' (Dunbar

1996: 4). Stardom and celebrity, of course, already functions a way in which to partake in social bonding with very little negative consequence (as discussed in the literature review). A posthumous star, therefore, without the potential to hear any of the gossip or discussions, is so removed from a consumer that almost any negative consequence is lessened. The commercial, therefore, appears as publicity to make it seem as if it is not ‘deliberate image-making’ (Dyer 1979: 61), and hides the consumer messaging and artifice behind gossip and revelation.

The desired impact of the commercial is for the consumer to feel bonded to the brand through the exchange of gossip and scandal. Consumer loyalty, or in this case fabricated bonding through gossip, is a manipulative way to encourage imitative behaviour. Gossip is a method in which human beings learn how to behave in society, therefore, using a successful and glamorous star and combining that star with a gossip-based narrative is a way to show a consumer that they should purchase Chanel to “fit” in with the group. Due to the commercials “truthfulness”, and more importantly, Monroe’s assertion that she was telling the truth, the gossip is authenticated and further promotes the assimilation into Chanel’s social contract.

In comparison, uncovered reconstructions, whilst also using authenticity and truthfulness as a method to manipulate consumers, use a behind-the-scenes technique to show the star at work. The dramatized events, which often start in media res, are framed in a way to make it feel as if an audience has stumbled upon a moment in a star’s life. In the Snickers commercial, for example, the audience are reminded of Monroe’s work life and alerted to the struggles of making a film.

The difficulty on-set is paramount to this advertisement’s authenticity. Although the feeling of secretly watching a “real” event is in itself seemingly

authentic, it is the exposure of one of Monroe's strands of openness which makes this commercial so successful. The poor treatment by male directors and the strain on Monroe's body and clothing re-exposes the debate about Monroe's relationship with female sexuality and autonomy. The struggle, I argue, enables female audiences in particular to self-identify with the star. The understanding of unrealistic beauty standards and the cases of misogyny in places of work, still resonates today and enables Monroe to be relevant and seem as if she is "like one of us". The relatability of Monroe in this moment, therefore, makes her "real" to an audience.

Authenticity, however, is only one way in which a brand can manipulate the modern consumer. In the next chapter, I will explore how nostalgia plays a large role in the construction of posthumous advertisements, and more importantly, how the idealisation (rather than the "real") alters the persona of the case study stars.

**Chapter 5: The Posthumous Star and Consumer Manipulation:  
Nostalgia**

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore how nostalgia and the idealisation of a time and its stars can manipulate a consumer. To begin, I will illustrate how modern consumers continue to be nostalgic, or more accurately, why nostalgia scholars believe all generations can long for a past they may not have even experienced. The chapter will then continue to explore nostalgic reconstructions and mediated memory to assess the different forms nostalgia advertisements take and how that alters the conception of the posthumous case study stars.

In a study by Goran Bolin, nostalgia was found to be most prevalent when looking back to a person's 'formative years' (Bolin 2015:253), and would be heavily influenced by the media that people were exposed to during that time. According to this research, the formative years (17-25 years of age) impacts how a person interprets the world, and as a result, generational differences can be considered to be dictated by societal and technological events which occur in the short time span of a group's formative years. The media, as a cultural force that is run by technology and reports on societal changes, has a large role in the interpretation and construction of values, and thus, any decade which attempts to mythologise its own importance (such as the media-makers of the 1950s) will considerably alter the perspective of the young, particularly when looking back to this media in later years.

In the same study, Bolin researched nostalgia for a time not experienced and found that the youngest generation in Sweden (where the study took place) enjoyed the 'indexical quality' (Bolin 2015: 257) of LPs and cassettes because the product fades and decays. The Silent Generation may be nostalgic for the time as experienced by them, but Generation Y (only stated as focus groups in the original text) were found



to have '*nostalgic envy*' (Bolin 2015: 257) of products that could be owned and personal and appeared to find digital copies of music as lacking something. The study found that in the younger generations nostalgia can have an 'intergenerational transfer' (Bolin 2015: 259) and because of the materiality of LPs, future generations have the opportunity to 'inherit' (Bolin 2015: 257) a time and taste by exploring their parents or grandparents records and films. The study mainly focuses on Generation Y inheriting their parents' taste. However, I would argue it is more complex than that and suggest that Generation Y could be multi-intergenerational, potentially inheriting the Fifties from grandparents (or a parents' intergenerational taste), and then inheriting the Eighties directly from their parents.

The posthumous stars, whom often appear in advertisements for brands as diverse as Galaxy Chocolate, Coca-Cola, or Dior, are not being marketed at the older demographic. Instead, the diversity of brands and varied target audience suggests intergenerational nostalgia for the Fifties is a reason for the continued presence of the four case study stars. The next sub-chapter will begin the analysis by examining the nostalgic reconstruction category and will additionally deconstruct how these new interpretations of the past could be appealing to a younger generation.

## 5.2 Nostalgic Reconstructions

A nostalgic reconstruction, as a category that describes the fictionalisation or idealisation of a posthumous star, allows a younger audience to engage with a star from the past with little prior knowledge of a star's life or work. The new fictionalised scenario is a method to make the posthumous star relevant by moulding the past with present. Equally, it still can make a consumer nostalgic for the past, either due to the connotations of old Hollywood glamour or rock 'n' roll energy. Dior, in their commercial<sup>158</sup> featuring a range of posthumous stars, attempt to bring Classic Hollywood to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to inspire modern, ambitious, and glamorous women.

Gold is the colour of money, or at least in the case of this “J’Adore Dior” commercial from 2011. Shot in Versailles, it is the pinnacle of decadence and like Chanel, Dior use history to give their product renewed, yet consistent meaning. Charlize Theron is representative of the modern woman, but it is through the past that she gains meaning. Theron appropriates the traits of three famous Hollywood blondes as she passes through a strange blend of the past and the present. The women signify three different types of blonde stars: Grace Kelly is the princess of not just Monaco, but like Audrey Hepburn of sophisticated glamour. Marlene Dietrich<sup>159</sup> is seen in her classic gender ambiguous costume, complete with top hat, as a stand-in for the contemporary business woman that has appropriated “male” traits. Lastly, Theron

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<sup>158</sup> Brief synopsis: Charlize Theron is seen passing through a great hall, a red carpet and a backstage area as she makes her way through the world of fashion and celebrity. On her way she also passes by three great Hollywood blondes: Grace Kelly, Marlene Dietrich and Marilyn Monroe. Finally, Theron, as the fourth blonde, storms the catwalk in gold light.

<sup>159</sup> Interestingly Dietrich and Kelly have one other advertisement to their name. Dietrich has a brief affiliation with *Max Factor* through their “I am Intrigue” look and Kelly in the recent “Excellence Blonde Legends” by *L’Oreal Paris*, a blonde hair dye inspired by the tones in Kelly’s hair. These features are look-inspired, but their use in both advertising and commodity, whilst not extensive, does place them in the ‘continued presence’ category.

passes Marilyn Monroe as the glamorous yet image-conscious beauty that has additional, and different, class connotations to Grace Kelly. Through these women Dior suggests that their perfume offers the chance to be a culmination of all these women, or more accurately, be any woman the consumer chooses to be.

The commercial functions similarly to the George Clooney piece discussed previously. It has an expressive function in that it uses Theron's meaning to generate associative connotations about the brand, but the commercial is not expressive about Monroe, Kelly, or Dietrich. Instead, these stars are used to signify something about Charlize Theron. However, for an audience to understand the posthumous stars' meaning-transference a consumer must have at least an awareness of Monroe. The commercial does not provide knowledge about the stars, nor does it provide any real context.

However, due to the commercial's lack of context, the advertisement appears timeless. For example, Monroe's and Kelly's image derives from 1950s Hollywood, Dietrich, however, is pictured as her 1930's Hollywood self (the top hat suggests *Blonde Venus*), and Theron is from current Hollywood. All four women inhabit the same fashion show in Paris, placing them outside any context or time period which would make sense to an audience. The commercial's dependence, then, is on celebrity life in general, one that is ambiguous and timeless.

Visually, the advertisement is consistent in its schematic, but is significantly different from other posthumous perfume commercials (such as Chanel). The colour gold permeates each scene, either with lighting, filters or costume, and shows that a commercial, like a print advertisement, can become 'an aesthetic object in itself' (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985: 9) through its use of excessive visual stimulation.

Most importantly, the colour schematic matches that of the leading ladies, each star has blonde hair and translucent skin, and thus does have a striking comparison to Chanel in regards to Dyer's theory that the camera, and indeed advertising culture, believes that the whiteness and the blonde hair of a woman is favourable.

Theron is a stereotypical star at the start of the advertisement, she is a skinny blonde dressed in black with shades, pushing through the crowd. A star with little space and time, Theron is depicted as being overwhelmed by fans and/or an entourage. Theron, however, transforms throughout the commercial by gliding past each of the aforementioned blonde stars, appropriating their glamour as she passes. Slowly, she exposes skin and swaps the black ensemble for a gold dress. In the final scene the transformation is complete. Her steps are determined, her silhouette wiggles, and the music heightens. Theron, the audience are led to believe, has become knowingly desirable.

The *mise-en-scène* in the final sequence is rich with a gold colour that matches Theron's dress. A gold light, which by the commercial's conclusion, fully consumes the star. Immersed by the light, Theron disappears into a new world, or perhaps, blends into the light like the women that came before her (Monroe et al). Interestingly, this is much like Chanel's use of Monroe, but instead of fading to nothingness, Theron is absorbed into the promise of Dior. Her silhouette is finally replaced by yet another gold image, that of the Dior bottle. The bottle, then, becomes a replacement for the posthumous stars (much like the No.5 bottle in the Chanel advertisement). The bottle is a promise of transcendence to the world of wealth and star history, like Theron, the commercial promises, the consumer too can become a part of history.



Figure 35: Visual stimulation and the blonde as a symbol of cultural wealth.

This commercial centres on Classic Hollywood glamour as a lifestyle that a consumer should long for. The usual inaccessibility to the public of an elite fashion show is now, through this commercial, no longer a fantasy. However, the glimpses of the past are not given willingly, instead, the camera moves in such a way that the audience is led to believe they are sharing a secret with Dior. For example, Theron approaches a blonde woman on a red carpet, but the audience cannot see the woman's face. The camera pans up as the body turns, teasing the audience slowly with the image of clear, smooth skin before revealing the face of Grace Kelly in a middle close-up. Marlene Dietrich is revealed to the audience in a similar manner. The camera must move past photographers, and it is the legs that are viewed first. Again, the reveal of Dietrich's face is slow, and when allowed, is brief. Interestingly, in these moments Theron looks almost dismissive of Dietrich, and it is Kelly that looks star struck, not the present-day star. Interestingly, it is only Monroe that is given a hierarchical position, or an equal position to Theron.



Figure 36: Slow reveal of Grace Kelly.



Figure 37: The sexualised and gender ambiguous Marlene Dietrich.

Of all the dead women on display it is Monroe that is hidden the most, and consequently, given the most screen time and only dialogue, suggesting that there is something about her star persona that is more meaningful for a company. Monroe may have been given this exposure due to her recognisability, but it could also be for the connotations that she can carry to the product. In Monroe's sequence the music slows much like it did in Chanel's moment of significance (Monroe's voice on the recording). Women are seen rushing and the camera is caught within the lack of space.

Legs pass the camera and through them the audience can catch glimpses of Monroe. This tantalizing glimpse is much like the world of celebrity where the star is both removed and available to us, however, it is also showing a glimpse of the star preparing her image, a secret area kept away from the public. Dior, in this sense, are attempting to unveil a “real” Monroe through a Peeping Tom style of framing.

The concept of the “real” Monroe in this commercial is a difficult one as it is both a fictionalised space and one in which she is clearly a CGI production. There is something uncanny about this Monroe, and as a result, would seem to remove the notion of the authentic. However, despite her clear distortion, Dior linger on Monroe as she reaches for the bottle of perfume. A medium close-up reveals her holding the bottle against herself as she declares the name of the brand. Theron as result of the exclamation looks over, a final acknowledgment by the present-day star before heading to the catwalk. In this commercial, then, Monroe acts as the final say on Dior’s and Theron’s worthiness.



Figure 38: Hidden Monroe



Figure 39: The third shot of Monroe.

The new fictionalised narrative, therefore, uses associations of the star only. It does not attempt to investigate or dramatize the life of star. Intricate details are not required for a nostalgia advertisement, instead, the image/persona becomes simplified and used for the star's glamorous connotations only. In some early cases, such as the 1990s, fictionalised commercials relied on rumour to generate humour and nostalgia. To elucidate on the stark contrast between these fictional narratives, I will briefly analyse an Elvis Presley advertisement for Pizza Hut in 1998.

First featured during that year's Super Bowl,<sup>160</sup> the commercial saw Elvis Presley do the twist surrounded by adoring women. No men are featured with Elvis within the establishment, and thus, it aims to reinforce Presley's sexual magnetism

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<sup>160</sup> An annual competition by the NFL (National Football League).



and impact on female sexuality, and ultimately, reinforces the notion that all women want him and all men want to be him.<sup>161</sup>

The Pizza Hut advertisement begins with a group of young men in a parking lot. It is misty and dark and one amongst them begins the conspiracy theory that Elvis is back from the dead. The foggy and drab condition is reminiscent of the start of a B-movie and is consciously adhering to contemporary rumours of Elvis spread by tabloids and scandal magazines.<sup>162</sup> Only one man believes the rumours: “Elvis, the King himself has come back”. The believer and his car are relegated to the edge of the frame (an additional nod to the name of ‘The Edge’ pizza) and like in any supernatural movie, the non-believers mock the original speaker. The humour of the commercial is found in the cut between the non-believers mocking the likeliness of Presley being at Pizza Hut and then the “reality” that Presley is indeed doing what the non-believers mock.

The mocking of the non-believers and all the pseudo religious connotations it holds (particularly important in reference to Presley’s posthumous career and the cult fandom that has persisted beneath the official estate) re-emphasises Elvis as mythic. The mythic quality, a King amongst men, creates an ideal of masculinity that is re-emphasised by the hordes of women adoring and worshiping his body. Most interesting about this advertisement, however, is the use of the Presley image and persona itself. Whilst the religious connotations are important to contemporary fandom, and in part, to popular conception of the Elvis Presley myth, it is the *type* of Presley that is of most interest to this researcher. The image of Presley in the

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<sup>161</sup> The advertisement is similar to a recent *C&A* commercial from Brazil in 2011. This advertisement is beyond the parameters of this thesis but it is worth noting that it re-creates Presley from *Spinout* (Norman Taurog, 1966) to sing and flirt with women.

<sup>162</sup> An example of the type of tabloid gossip that has pervaded after his death: *Globe Magazine*, 10 August 1982.

commercial is partly a CGI construction, but interestingly one that has borrowed Presley from *Girls! Girls! Girls!* (Norman Taurog, 1962). For fans, the girls in the commercial is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the film title, to non-fans the song title 'I Don't Want to be Tied' is suggestive of a masculine dream where a lover has his choice of women with no further consequences. The concept of the commercial is itself gender normative and places large generalisations on the "type" of audience which would be watching the commercial during the Super Bowl. Presley, as a result, is in a form of stasis: modern and fresh through CGI, but also used for a past ideal of masculinity.

The identified clip from *Girls! Girls! Girls!* has a few distinct changes. The physical movements of Presley are identical throughout both clips, and thus we can surmise that there has been a deliberate attempt to re-create this moment from the film, complete with the original soundtrack. Despite these similarities, the scene itself has been updated to "fit" with 1998. Firstly, the most noticeable difference is found in the use of costume. The light coloured coarse-looking material has been replaced by a dark blue, shiny and svelte jacket and black shirt. The smoothness of the new costume connotes a modern Elvis, and ultimately allows him to be representative of the "modern" man of the 1990s. The dark colours chosen, however, suggest a far more mysterious Elvis than the 1962 counterpart and re-establishes the supernatural narrative.



Figure 40: CGI Elvis in *Pizza Hut's* 1998 commercial



Figure 41: The indexical image, from *Girls! Girls! Girls!*

The Elvis is alive and well trope does, however, re-occur again in another nostalgic reconstruction in 2006. The commercial, which encourages tourists to visit

Tennessee, stars Dolly Parton (another figure associated with the state) talking to an unseen driver. As the camera pans to the right, Elvis Presley is revealed. Timed to seem as if Presley responds to Parton, this commercial also combines the old and the new to increase Presley's relevance and his connection to Tennessee's cultural and musical heritage.



Figure 42: Dolly Parton and Elvis Presley advertise Tennessee.

As shown by Dior, Pizza Hut, and briefly in Tennessee's tourist commercial, nostalgic reconstructions take a star from the 1950s/1960s and place them in the present day. The fictionalised space, whether it uses rumour or not, is manipulating the past in a very interesting way. Paul Grainge, in his work, *Monochrome Memories, Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (2002), suggests there are two different types of nostalgia: the mode and the mood. The mood is 'defined in relation to a concept of loss' (Grainge 2002: 21) and the mode is a 'commodified style' (Grainge 2002: 21). Due to the stylistic use of the posthumous stars, the type of nostalgia which appears in these commercials apply to the *mode* of nostalgia. The continuous present suggested by a posthumous star in the contemporary world has replaced 'temporal depth [and has been] replaced by spatial surface' (Grainge 2002: 31). The need to push the past

and present together suggests a contemporary cultural anxiety that is trying to find consolidation through its past and is further exemplified by Gap's commercial with Audrey Hepburn.

Audrey Hepburn, unlike the other posthumous stars, is almost always directly borrowed from film rather than life. As a posthumous star she is an anomaly. There is never any mention in advertisements of scandal or reference to her star history, she is her work and her work is her. It is the iconicity of her many haute couture looks and her demure everyday-ness that makes her relatable yet glamorous on film, and thus, an ideal package to be transferred to idealised advertisements. Hepburn is in stark contrast with her 1950s posthumous contemporary, Marilyn Monroe. Unlike Monroe, whose work fades behind her persona, Hepburn's "real" self is indistinguishable. Hepburn, unlike Monroe, Presley and Dean is nostalgic because she *remains* in the idealized Fifties comedies.

To begin the complex analysis of the Hepburn image, I will start with the 2006 Gap commercial for black skinny fit jeans which poses an interesting depth to posthumous advertisements, particularly in terms of nostalgia. The premise of the commercial is simple: Hepburn dances from the film *Funny Face* (Stanley Donen, 1957) onto a blank backdrop and then continues to dance. Throughout her dance her voice can be heard as she declares her need for release. The advertisement ends with Hepburn re-entering the filmic world and the tagline 'It's Back'.

Gap's choice for Hepburn as a muse for a fashion label is no surprise considering Hepburn's living and posthumous connection to fashion.<sup>163</sup> Rachel Moseley, in her work *Growing up with Audrey Hepburn* (2002), comments that much

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<sup>163</sup> According to the *Guardian's* business section, Gap named its new line of black skinny fit 'The Audrey Hepburn pant' and this will be discussed more within the commodity chapter.

of our reading of Hepburn centres on her connection with fashion. Couturier Hubert de Givenchy adorned her throughout life with high fashion and finery, and her films too connote fashion either through the location (Paris, Rome, New York) and/or the transformation narrative. Moseley suggests that Hepburn, through the transformation narrative, is always caught between being a girl and a woman. Helped by her physical frame, Hepburn is the antithesis of Monroe and the conception of the 1950s woman. However, as suggested by Moseley's interviews, it was as a representation of the less voluptuous woman that appealed to the British fans of the 1950s and 1960s. Hepburn was European, thin, and "kookie", and represented all the women that felt they too were closer to this type.

The "kookie" look however, should not be confused with bohemian. Moseley suggests that when the magazines refer to Hepburn as "kookie", what they really mean is striking and different. She is not incredibly glamorous, but she is elegantly coiffed. She may wear jeans (like in this advertisement), but the product is fitted to her body. She may wear make-up, but it is understated. "Kookie" is against the feminine ideal of the shapely 1950s and represents the "alternative" woman with elegance. However, "kookie" centres on the conceptions of fashion and shape, not womanhood itself. Hepburn's alternative image, despite not being bohemian, does connote a European intellectualism that renders Hepburn as a type of Beatnik, and thus, appears to reject not just fashion, but the norms of the decade.

The Beat generation is associated with intellectualism and the rejection of 1950s norms. Best known through writers such as Jack Kerouac, the movement found itself commercialised and stereotyped through Hepburn. Hepburn's body image, alternative fashion choices (such as pants), combined with French/European intellectualism characterized Hepburn as a Beatnik-type. The Beatniks were a media

stereotype that displayed the superficial aspects of the literary movement throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The tropes consisted of alternative fashion, drug use, and pseudo-intellectualism. It is seemingly ironic, however, that the anti-fashion movement should find assimilation into the mainstream with a popular Hollywood star. As Moseley notes, the ‘incorporation/recuperation of the identity “Beatnik” within a cleaned-up notion of “kookie” femininity is widely discernible in women’s and film-fan magazines’ (Moseley 2002: 44) of the 1950s. Therefore, “kookie” was a way to normalize this type of femininity to render Hepburn as non-threatening and glamorous enough to separate her star image from any negative connotations.

It should be noted that like Monroe, Hepburn is connected to magazine culture, albeit with some differences. The film *Funny Face* pivots on Jo’s (Hepburn) reluctance and then transformation by a fashion magazine, aptly named ‘Quality’. The magazine’s editor claims ‘a woman can be beautiful as well as intellectual’ and that the ‘Quality’ woman has ‘character, spirit and intelligence’. The film constructs the character, and ultimately Hepburn, as elevated and aspirational. The new woman is not the fodder of tabloids, but wants to actively engage with high culture. Her character Jo, although at first reluctant, becomes a willing participant in print and fashion culture. Her ability to transcend all those “types” of femininity whilst still maintaining her kookiness, or her ‘funny face’, furthers the notion that Hepburn is the every-woman, or at least the non-Monroe.

Despite changes in western society’s interpretation of women the Gap advertisement appears to use Hepburn in her original *Funny Face* context: classic and alternative. These two words are of course paradoxical, and suggests that Hepburn’s unique selling point (USP) is modernity’s evolution and the development of female agency. The costume from *Funny Face* is rebellious, and although now seen as

“classic”, the alternative connotations are still present through the depiction of literature-types in the media. The black ensemble is now considered timeless and this is furthered by Hepburn’s visual and contextual escape from conformity, time, and space in the Gap advertisement. She both escapes the idealised image in the 1950s (body, clothing, interests) and the film itself through her entrance into the blank space. AC/DC’s song ‘Back in Black’ serves as another displacement from time, being neither of this generation or hers, but the gap in-between. This furthers the contextlessness of the advertisement, but it is AC/DC’s rock music and rebellious connotations which adds a layer of non-conformity.

In *Funny Face*, Hepburn challenges Fred Astaire’s patriarchal and fixed stance to womanhood and art. In the scene used by Gap, Hepburn uses her body in a flexible and non-conformist fashion to push against the system that Astaire adheres to. The movement and music is of the intellectuals, and like her costume she is not bound by society’s pressures. Her star image may now be “classic”, but she is also still representative of the “new woman” through her resistance to female stereotypes. Jo moves because she feels like ‘expressing’ herself as she is, not how she should be. The image, then, even when removed from the film’s immediate mise-en-scene, is still followed by her feminist speech to Astaire. The viewers follow her body and hear her voice proclaiming she ‘can certainly use the release’. These quotes re-emphasise her proximity to the “new” woman because she represents the struggle to break tradition and release herself from expectation. Audrey Hepburn, according to the use of her image in this advertisement, dresses for her own self-expression.

The transformation trope that is seen in *Funny Face* and illustrated earlier by Rachel Moseley, is present within the advertisement, but it is dance that is transformative rather than fashion (perplexing considering Gap is a fashion company).



Hepburn finds womanhood by moving her body based on feeling and not sexual appeal. It is Hepburn's sexual ambiguity that is conveyed to the viewer through her alternative approach to dance. Gap encourage this reading by multiplying Hepburn on the screen, thus suggesting that she is has a plethora of meaning. Her image is fractured and is symbiotic of the expectations of womanhood. Hepburn's multiplicity ends as she jumps back into the scene, consolidating all the different types of femininity and suggesting not only that Hepburn is all of these things, but that all women are.

Hepburn may be representative, but for a brand such as Gap she should also be aspirational. It is not enough that women can see themselves in her, they must also feel the need to buy the brand's designs. The company does not want you to think her ordinary, and to resolve this they use small tactics to remind you of her status as a star. In the liminal space light coloured stars appear as she dances, sometimes they appear around her, and at another time the star appears to be kicked by her foot. The stars seem to be drawn to her and she seemingly accepts and repels them to further the 'stars-as-ordinary and the stars-as-special' (Dyer 1979/2011: 43) dichotomy. The reminder of her star status elevates the company's status itself and connotes a longevity not only because she is a classic star, but as an ordinary/extraordinary woman that can exist outside of time. The company suggests that Hepburn was an ordinary woman that fought a conventional system to become extraordinary. Women, the commercial suggests, should buy the jeans to be a part of fashion history, and with Gap clothing the consumer can become part of that unconventional legacy.



Figure 43: Hepburn in a liminal space.

All of the posthumous stars have an iconic look, but Hepburn and Presley have multiple. Each Hepburn posthumous commercial uses a different Hepburn look, but somehow still connotes the same amount of glamour. Arguably, Hepburn as Holly Golightly is the look, and yet Hepburn as a beatnik does not defer our conception of her. Through couture or French intellectualism Hepburn always presents the alternative to femininity. Her small frame, pants, and gender ambiguous name in *Funny Face* illustrate that to be feminine one does not have to fit into a mould. Gap, through the clip from *Funny Face*, present a nostalgic past through a stylish and alternative star. Most prevalent, however, is the nostalgia present in Hepburn's image. Monroe and Presley are used to present something "real" through the depiction of their life and rumour. Hepburn, however, seems to be a thingly concept of the past.

A thing is both an instrument or device (used by businesses) and an entity that cannot be precisely named. Hepburn, is therefore thingly because it is her image rather than her star history that is replicated or relied upon. She is frozen or stolen from film

moments and supplanted into a new or a contextless space for the use of a business. The ability to mould her without additional context or rumour suggests that as a commercial export she is most successful through film images. Hepburn, much like in many instances in *Funny Face*, is frozen in various moments of fashion and film iconicity. To begin analysing the various layers of iconicity and how it renders her thingly, I shall begin by deconstructing the importance of fashion and place in Hepburn films and how this is reproduced in the posthumous advertisements.

Paul Grainge comments that ‘the past is almost always judged through layers of fashion iconicity’ (Grainge 2002: 54). The flapper dress reminds the public of the 1920s, for example. Hepburn has many iconic images, but none more than the little black dress and the bohemian sweater, pants and ballet shoes.<sup>164</sup> The reason that these two Hepburn looks have been successful both in the past and present is due to attainability and reproducibility. The black dress in particular has not dated due to its elegant simplicity. The design has never gone out of fashion and has allowed Hepburn to partake in a meaning-transfer process. The poster-child for the timeless design she in turn is also timeless, and ultimately makes her a fashionista that set the trend and proves its glamour and longevity.

Hepburn’s timelessness is elevated by the combination of the indexical image, location of her films, and the transformation narrative. Paris features in two of Hepburn’s iconic films: *Sabrina* (Billy Wilder, 1954) and *Funny Face*. The Gap advertisement, using a clip from *Funny Face*, trades on Hepburn’s Parisian connection. Paris, historically considered both fashionable and intellectual provides a

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<sup>164</sup> Arguably Hepburn has many more, but the dress from *Roman Holiday* would rarely be seen outside collectors of retro-clothing. The two aforementioned pieces can be seen in different decades, for example, ballet shoes can still be worn with black skinny fits.

meaning-transfer to Hepburn, and as a result, to Gap. Throughout *Funny Face*, Hepburn is shown next to monuments, small streets in bohemia, and on balconies like Juliet (furthering a connection to high-brow culture). The majestic famous monuments that have stood the test of time transfer the same meaning to Hepburn herself. The small streets and bohemian bars suggest that she is an intellectual new woman that can converse with men and women alike. The romantic balconies, impressionistic countryside and moonlit dances present an idealised Paris, a city made for fairy tales and transforming your life. Paris has arguably never looked as good as in the often impressionistic nostalgia<sup>165</sup> represented in *Funny Face*, and as a result Hepburn is layered with nostalgia and high-culture.

Paris is constructed as a timeless beauty, but it is through the medium of photography that it can be documented. The film is about the art of photography: the opening sequence, the dark room, the snapshots of Paris and Jo's photoshoots all centre on freezing time.<sup>166</sup> Nowhere is this more prevalent than during the main photoshoots in Paris. Here Jo is asked to pose and literally freeze her own motion for the benefit of the camera. Her paused motion, captured on the diegetic camera is then again frozen by the film itself as it pauses on the image. The photograph is a frozen moment within another medium that also freezes time. Jo is supplanted, layered and moved both within the diegetic and non-diegetic world, and it is this pattern that is present in Gap's use of the *Funny Face* image. Hepburn's multiple images are pasted again and again so that Hepburn is everywhere and constantly young. Her film image

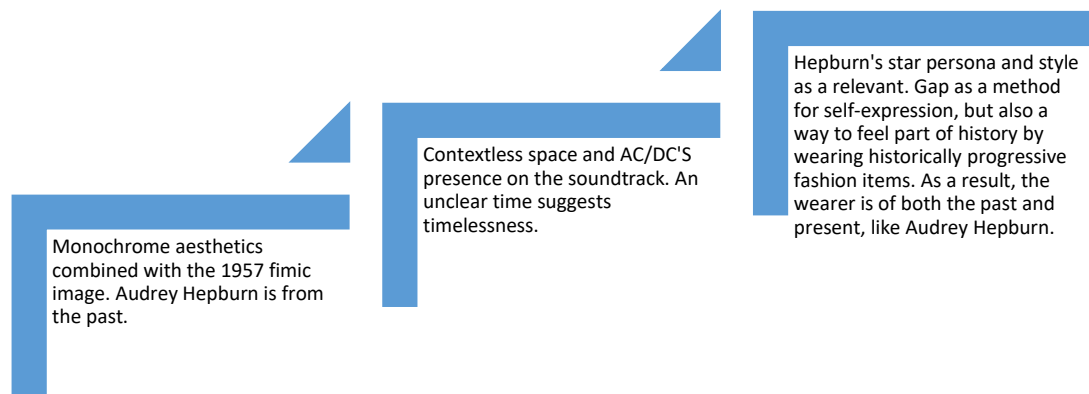
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<sup>165</sup> Painters such as Alfred Sisley often painted idealistic rivers and churches in a French countryside. Images like this can be seen in *Funny Face*, most of all at the end of the film.

<sup>166</sup> Paris is also known for Dior and Chanel, and this furthers Hepburn's connection with fashion.

is treated as a frozen thing that can be moved into a variety of spaces and carry the same filmic and societal connotations of the new woman.

The commercial does also use techniques to evoke timelessness. Unlike the coloured film, this advertisement is in monochrome. Gap seem to be making a conscious decision to aesthetically age the image, and thus, the sequence seems to be as follows:



Graph 16: Audrey Hepburn and the past.

The knowledge of the past must be established so that Gap can show Hepburn's continued presence in popular culture, thus, the nostalgic monochrome aesthetic is contrasted with a contextless space to remind the consumer that she has been timeless ever since she began to be progressive in fashion. Gap, therefore, use nostalgia and social change to encourage women to believe that they can continue what a timeless icon started.

The flexible nationality and the ability to appear in many glamorous locations is a trait that Hepburn's contemporaries, such as Monroe, Dean, and Presley do not have. Despite Presley starring in films that are set in Germany and Mexico, most of his other films and performances are located in the United States of America. Monroe, Dean, and Presley are American stars, but Hepburn does not belong to one country, instead her multi-national persona (Belgian/English/Hollywood star) is exemplified in her films and posthumous commercials. As shown previously, *Funny Face* takes the audience on a journey past famous monuments and idealised locations in Paris. *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953) follows this same pattern, with additional nods to a variety of countries as the Princess begins her tour.

The Galaxy commercial (2013) uses an alternative Italian setting to that of *Roman Holiday*, but its use of high-saturated colour and idealistic location convey a nostalgic rendering of 1950s Europe as portrayed in the 'American in Europe' films that were popular in Post-War Hollywood. Vanessa R. Schwartz, in her work, *It's So French* (2007), discusses the word "cosmopolitan" (Schwartz 2007:7) and how it emerged through the blending of French and American culture in the 1950s and 1960s. Through 'a series of visual clichés' (Schwartz 2007: 7) a nation was condensed by its stereotypical images and customs to encourage multiculturalism and globalisation in the Post-War years. Using saturated colours and the Impressionistic painters as inspiration for the mise-en-scene, films set in France helped to encourage American interest in Europe for potential travel. However, the 'feminization' (Schwartz 2007: 20) of France, and arguably Europe in *Roman Holiday*, re-establishes America's own self-importance. As a result, American values are transferred onto a sophisticated landscape to render Europe America's cultural playground. Audrey Hepburn is used in a similar manner, and arguably, this film set the trend for the transformation films

in Europe that Hollywood would continue to make. However, it is important to note that *Roman Holiday*, although in keeping with the travelogue nature of these films, was not in colour itself. The commercial, therefore, is a blend of nostalgia: one for technicolour travelogues, another for a physical time (1950s) and lastly, for the Fifties Populuxe presentation that has been repeated in film and television since the 1970s.

The popularity for a Hollywood star and a European location was prevalent during the 1950s as American presence in Paris increased due to the deployment of an American workforce after WWII.<sup>167</sup> The presence of American men in particular and Paris' artistic connotations from the modernist period allowed Paris to thrive on Hollywood screens. Due to America's affiliation both economically and artistically with Paris, and also the rising affluence of America, it could be suggested that Paris became synonymous with successful Americans during the 1950s. Portrayals of European cities from that period connote a new frontier for wealthy Americans. Therefore, in a contemporary commercial, the combination of Hollywood and Europe suggests a longing for a certain type of affluence and glamour.

However, the Europe presented in this commercial is not representative of Italy in the 1950s, but the conception of Italy in 1950s Hollywood. As a reminder, Christine Sprengler in her book, *Screening Nostalgia* (2009), writes that the 1950s created a construct called the Fifties. Simply, through 'self-mythologizing' (Sprengler 2009:39) the 1950s created a culture where the media would grant 'narrative importance' (Sprengler 2009: 49) to commodities and represent itself to the masses. The representation of new commodities created a look of newness that was

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<sup>167</sup> There are also financial reasons for co-productions at this time. For more on this topic see Tim Bergfelder's *International Adventures, German Popular Cinema and European Co-productions* (2005).

disproportionate to the 1950s that was experienced, but that did create a materialistic culture, or at least what she deems ‘a materialistic golden age’ (Sprengler 2009: 42) from 1959-1963. The widespread prosperity promoted by Hollywood and television during this era is transferable to our contemporary commodity culture, but is more effective due to our unconscious understanding of its importance as the beginning of the culture we experience today. Therefore, the Fifties (the self-made myth) provide a nostalgic safety for it is both familiar and distant from our contemporary conception of material goods.

The Fifties aesthetic, Europe, and Hepburn’s transformation trope all play a large role within the Galaxy commercial.<sup>168</sup> As mentioned previously, the setting for this commercial is Italy and not Rome, but it is an idealised coast that treats its opening and closing like a postcard from the past. Noticeably, the Vespa and the Italian setting are references to the film *Roman Holiday*, but it is Hepburn’s clothing that is most reminiscent of the film as it replicates the costume where she attempts to fit into everyday life. The dress, which is wide at the bottom, but fitted like a shirt at the top with a belt that accentuates the waist, is similar to the circle skirt that is cinched at the midsection with a belt from the aforementioned film. Also like the film, the ensemble is completed with a small scarf tied around the neck.

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<sup>168</sup> The commercial begins with a long shot of a convertible car cruising along the Amalfi coast toward a small village nestled by the sea. Violins are heard as the camera enters a village that is filled with people sat on tables outside of restaurants, vegetables being sold to locals, and a man on a moped. A vegetable cart is overturned, a moped glides past a 1950s bus, and the audience sees Audrey Hepburn gazing out of the window. She is anxious and awaiting the moment where she can eat her Galaxy chocolate bar, and it is here where the song ‘Moon River’ begins. A convertible pulls up by her side and the man in the car offers her a lift. She agrees, takes the bus driver’s hat and gives it to the man driving the convertible. She then takes the opportunity to enjoy the chocolate in the back seat of his car as she is whisked through Italy’s Amalfi coast.



This particular choice of costume is important as it is in this outfit that she wants to experience life like an “ordinary” person. The dichotomy between ordinary/extraordinary is present again in the commercial, but she leaves the ordinary bus for a chauffeur and chocolate that is out of this world (Galaxy). The commercial’s narrative relies on our knowledge of Hepburn’s filmic tropes (transformation/change) and Hepburn, in the film’s original context, as a relatable princess. The commercial, however, employs reverse tactics from the film due to the nature of advertising and its promise of transformation and social mobility. All commercials seek to portray you not as you are, but as you want/could/should be, and thus, advertising is thus suited to the use of a celebrity, as they too, promote an elevated lifestyle, materialism and social mobility through the portrayal of premieres, awards show et al. Hepburn is doubly suited to advertising because she already suggests transformation through her film roles, perhaps more so than in “real” life.

The commercials analysed thus far in this section of the thesis all use CGI or image manipulation to create a posthumous star. However, a nostalgic reconstruction does not need to rely on a digital reproduction to fictionalise the case study stars. In the Mercedes GLK SUV advertisement, a couple are seen driving through the woods. During the journey the female character sees James Dean through the trees and asks her male partner if that really was James Dean. Once the car has disappeared, the audience see Marilyn Monroe approach James Dean and ask if that was really was a Mercedes. The commercial is similar to the Dior advertisements from the start of this chapter, and like Dior’s depiction of Monroe, the reveal of Dean is slow and fragmented due to the star’s position behind a dense thicket. The close, but not too close aesthetic plays on the notion of the hidden/secret celebrity as the “real” whilst also evoking the conspiracy and supernatural connotations of these stars after death.



Figures 44-45: Dean and Monroe in the Mercedes GLK advertisement.

The commercial's supernatural sensibility is perhaps the most interesting trope in posthumous fictionalisation, and is present in many of the advertisements in this thesis, for example, Dior (contextless Paris fashion show) and Pizza Hut (conspiracy).

Most of these fictionalisations occur outside of present time and use CGI or image-manipulation to evoke a strange uncanny moment in time. Audrey Hepburn, arguably, is used the least regarding the supernatural/ethereal plot.<sup>169</sup> In many advertisements, however, the “haunting” of a posthumous star on popular culture is not made explicit. However, in this Mercedes commercial the supernatural is rendered bizarre and not readily accepted (unlike in Dior’s commercial). The eerie music and haunting voice at the close of the advertisement situates this commercial in a fairy-tale context, particularly when a gold orb permeates the top right hand corner of the screen to reveal the Mercedes logo. The gold light, often used in Monroe commercials, connotes wealth and stardom, but its sweeping motion from the middle of the screen to the far corner gives the commercial an ethereal quality, as if the gold light was representative of Dean’s and Monroe’s ghostly orbs.

It is nostalgia for an idyllic American past, however, that dominates this commercial. In the Mercedes advertisement, the American wilderness is presented as a place where anything could be possible. Like the 1950s, which championed technology and the Frontier aesthetic in homes, this commercial promotes the raw nature and taming of the land, whilst also showing the audience the new car of the future. The unconquered wilderness, new technology, and Fifties costume, therefore, blends “traditional” America (nature associated with ancestors and political conservatism associated with the Fifties), and progressive America (new technology represented by the car’s dominance on the landscape). Historically, however, car commercials have always combined traditional depictions with the future, particularly in 1950s advertisements. For example, cars such as the 1959 Cadillac boasted

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<sup>169</sup> It should also be noted that stardom itself seems other-worldly, particularly in connection to star adulation, and thus the connection to the supernatural is a fitting narrative.

American tradition through its connotations of elegance, and yet the tail fins, which simulated a rocket, hinted at a bright new future.

You are cordially invited to visit a dramatic presentation of  
**MOTORING MAJESTY**  
by  
*Cadillac*



*See and inspect the new 1959 Cadillac today!*

Highlighting this year's automobile show are the majestic new Cadillac motor car creations for 1959.

At the Cadillac exhibit, you will have every opportunity to inspect and appraise the dramatic new concepts of design and engineering presented in the latest "car of cars". And we feel certain you will agree that only from the great traditions of Cadillac could there come a motor car so surpassingly fine in every way.

You will find exquisitely crafted appointments and motoring conveniences—all created to make every journey a memorable and enjoyable one.

And you will discover an impressive new measure of Fleetwood craftsmanship, styling and engineering progress—advancements that will provide a new sense of mastery over time and distance.

We sincerely hope you will visit the Cadillac display . . . and that you will see your Cadillac dealer at an early date—to drive your favorite 1959 Cadillac.

VISIT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORIZED CADILLAC DEALER

Every Window of Every Cadillac is Safety Plate Glass

Figure 46: Cadillac advertisement.

To conclude this section, therefore, nostalgic reconstructions are unlike the commercials from Chapter Four. This category of advertisements do not try to re-discover or reveal a star during their life. Instead, this category blends the past and the present by placing the star in a contextless time and space. Often relying on rumour or the supernatural, the fictionalised narratives hide the cultural anxiety of the present by proclaiming the dead are still with us. The idyllic locations that accompany the

stars, for example, the American wilderness, a Hollywood travelogue, or a Paris fashion show, continue to glamorise the stars, and as a result, the past. The last section, mediated memory, however, is perhaps the most nostalgic for the Fifties and Hollywood glamour. Using only iconography, moments, and themes, this category condenses posthumous stars to the bare minimum for “easy digestion” or a quick method to convey a Fifties-ness without using the posthumous stars themselves. It should be noted that the commercials deconstructed below were not included in Chapter Three’s graphs, and this is due to the lack of the posthumous personas in the advertisements. However, that is not to say it is not a worthy or interesting category, and thus, has been included in this thesis.

### 5.3 Mediated Memory

I will begin this analysis again, briefly, with an earlier 1990s example to enable another Presley commercial to be included in this analysis. Interestingly, I also noted how in the 1990s Presley would frequently appear fragmented or subtly referenced in television through iconography or character types. For example, in the children's shows *Johnny Bravo* (Van Partible, 1997-2004) and *Quack Pack* (Toby Shelton, 1996-1997). I believe, therefore, that it would be a worthwhile future endeavour to analyse the ways in which Presley is appropriated and fragmented in modern entertainment, and perhaps contrast the choices made in the entertainment industry with modern marketing.

In the *Energizer* (1998) advertisement there are no digital reconstructions, instead, an actor and footage is used to construct a narrative. In the commercial a fan works at a gas station and thinks he sees Elvis Presley. The audience first sees multiple medium close-ups of Presley memorabilia as the fan searches for a camera. Finally, a medium shot of a man in a white jumpsuit is shown filling his car. The advertisement cuts to the fan holding the camera to his face. Presley turns, and the footage has a warning battery sign superimposed on it and then turns off. The fan, as a result of his batteries, could not capture proof that Elvis Presley was alive.

Thematically, this advertisement is similar to *Pizza Hut* as it uses the conspiracy theory narrative. Unlike *Pizza Hut*, however, the commercial uses neither CGI nor women as a trope to suggest his youthful sexual prowess. Instead, this version of Presley is from the concert years and is closer to how he would look if he had come back after death. Elvis is still wearing the jumpsuit, the costume of choice by impersonators, and thus this image is heavily present in the everyday conception of

Elvis Presley. However, Presley is barely present in the commercial. Instead, there are reminders, or what I will call motifs, that recall the image of Presley.

Cadillacs, scandal magazines, gas stations, statues, sunglasses, pictures and dime store merchandise fill the first few shots of the advertisement. These images work together to confirm the star persona through merchandise, star history, and rumour. The ominous music that alters to country re-establishes Presley's geographical location and history to further the association. Some of the images, of course, are suggestive of Elvis Presley's history, for example, the pink Cadillac. Presley would often buy Cadillacs for family and friends and his association with transportation in his movies has been previously noted by Douglas Brode. Brode comments that 'Elvis and American car culture are (...) signifiers of energy in movement' (Brode 2006:190). It is not surprising then that a "sighting" would involve transportation or materialism as Presley represents social mobility and the excess of materials. Other symbols, however, such as the gas station require some fan knowledge of either Presley's past or 1980s-1990s rumours.

Gas stations, as a symbol of retro Americana, have both a historical and a fantasy element within Presley's star persona. The first association that would seemingly only be known by fans is from Presley's fight in a gas station forecourt in 1956. The event led to Elvis attending a court hearing in Memphis County Court and is a site of scandal in the Presley narrative (despite the judge absolving Presley of any guilt). In popular culture, gas stations take on the place of multiple posthumous sightings or are referenced in songs and literature. Some examples include: a report from San Diego in 1992 that was reported in the *LA Times*, or the song "Elvis Saves" by the Hancock Band. It is unclear why gas stations and shopping malls have become popular sights for Elvis, and the origins of this as a place of sighting needs further

investigation within fan and media studies. However, it could be that during life Elvis Presley had a scandalous event at a gas station, and thus, Presley's star history is making that location an authentic place for Presley to transverse to the after-life.

Additionally, scandal magazines are one of the main sources of conspiracy theory. The fan in the advertisement is shown to be reading one of these magazines and shows the importance of magazine culture as a means of rumour dissemination in the past. Elvis during life appeared on the cover of *Confidential* magazine and would later be on other scandal magazines, tell-all exposes, and even mock-scandal magazines that would reveal posthumous sightings.

Elvis can be suggested, therefore, through cultural artefacts without his actual image being present. Presley and Monroe, in this way have much in common. Gossip, or key moments from life are given extra importance, and as a result, just that motif (the white dress or a pink Cadillac) becomes representative of the star. It is a condensed persona that alters the collective memory of a star through the repetition of "stock" images, and arguably reduces them of any interesting characteristics, history, or contradiction, in favour of being memorable. This use of a persona/image, therefore, makes a star no more interesting than a brand logo, and is arguably like a retro product.

In contrast, to this commercial, there are also cases where contemporary stars subsume or borrow traits from Classic stars. Miss Dior's commercial (2013) featuring Natalie Portman, for example, seems to be evoking Hepburn through Portman's body shape, couture, and fluid nationality. In this advertisement, a Hollywood star is seen enjoying the idealised Post-War WWII glamour and romance in Paris. The commercial's narrative is simple in that it shows three distinct images of Portman



and ends with her finding her man to the sound of ‘La Vie en Rose’ sung in French and English.

Natalie Portman’s similarities with Hepburn are abound. Like Hepburn, Portman has a fluid nationality. Born in Israel, Portman’s dual citizenship makes her exotic by conventional Hollywood standards. The “other” that Portman represents allows her to slip into these European narratives as her nationality is seemingly not fixed. Parallels are thus drawn between herself and Hepburn and this is aided by further knowledge of Portman’s educational history at Harvard,<sup>170</sup> her small frame, pixie features, and defiant-quirky female characters.<sup>171</sup> It should come as no surprise that this commercial attempts to further this connotation to show Portman as part of Hepburn’s legacy.



Figure 47: Natalie Portman in Miss Dior’s *La Vie En Rose*

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<sup>170</sup> Hepburn did not attend a university, but her intellectualism was suggested by her film roles and “kookie” image.

<sup>171</sup> Untraditional roles of Natalie Portman: *Garden State* (Zach Braff, 2004), *Closer* (Mike Nichols, 2004) and *V for Vendetta* (James McTeigue, 2005). Portman has also voiced her dislike for traditional female roles: ‘the girls are always in fashion, and it’s always about their clothes. They always want to get married at the end. There’s some kind of makeover scene. That stuff offends me.’ (Markovitz 2011: online). Her endorsement of a perfume and connection to a high fashion brand, however, does create tension between what she does in advertising and what she wants to do with her film career.



Figure 48: Natalie Portman and pink flowers in *La Vie En Rose*



Figure 49: Audrey Hepburn in a photograph by Norman Parkinson, 1955

The commercial's song, entitled 'La Vie en Rose', is chosen to further our understanding that the TV spot is set in France, reminding the viewer that this product combines Hollywood and European glamour. However, it is the key sequence that shows Portman swimming in the pool with a silver necklace and similar sunglasses to the Ray-Ban design used in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Blake Edwards, 1961) that evokes Hepburn the most. Although the glasses are smaller, it is this slow movement as she eyes her desired object that is reminiscent of the scene from the film. Hepburn, although often not a seductress, did represent an alternative to femininity, and it is in this sequence that Portman breaks from the innocent portrayal of girlhood. However, the version of femininity presented by Miss Dior is not the same "kookie" variant performed by Hepburn, instead it uses this connotation in a rudimentary and un-explorative way.

However, the commercial does show Miss Dior becoming a woman by using the transformation narrative that was popular in Hepburn's films. The transformation narrative shows three distinct changes in Miss Dior's behaviour. Firstly, she is shown on the natural grass, holding a flower as she dreams about romance. The dream is intercut with her seductress self, and it is unclear if this is a memory or an imagined self. Regardless, Portman is seen to take control of her own desires and not wait for a man to find her. Up until now Portman has been seen in the grass and in water, suggesting a natural and pure state. The image is aided by the flowing hair that becomes tied up when she meets her man. In the last stage, she is shown as a sleek and refined woman and has moved into an interior, and thus, domesticated space.

The commercial does again briefly show Portman with her free-flowing hair and ultra-feminine dress, but the single rose has now become a bed of roses that she lies on in ecstasy. The Miss Dior perfume seemingly allows Portman to mature into

womanhood through the connotations of romance, and ultimately, sex. In the classic comedies such as *Funny Face* and *Roman Holiday*, transformation was a blossoming that occurred through age and the discovery of a different culture (Paris, Rome) which heightened Hepburn's characters' knowledge. Therefore, Portman's Miss Dior is seemingly less progressive and seems reliant on the collective memory of Hepburn as a princess<sup>172</sup> and not a feminist icon.

Although different to Hepburn's films, this commercial also uses fashion to connote the change into womanhood. The same tactics were a substantial motif in Hepburn's comedies and has a continued presence in contemporary film. Best referred to as a Cinderella story, Hollywood has continued to make successful films using a similar narrative design that changes "ugly" or "unfavourable" women to "glamazon" that can win a person's heart by changing the way she looks. This trope can be found in films such as, *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall, 1990), *She's All That* (R. Lee Fleming Jr., 1999), *The Princess Diaries* (Garry Marshal, 2001) and *The Devil Wears Prada* (David Frankel, 2006). Cinderella films did of course exist prior to Hepburn, and can be found in films such as *Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942), but it is Hepburn's many transformation films that seem to have made her the poster-child for the ordinary girl that can be made special. *Sabrina*, *Funny Face*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *My Fair Lady* (George Cukor, 1964), and the reverse for *Roman Holiday* have one similar pattern, simply, Audrey Hepburn becomes something new.

Her consistent use in this way, despite the differences in character, have rendered Hepburn the aspirational style-star. The feminist undertones of *Funny Face*

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<sup>172</sup> Recent book titles (on Audrey Hepburn) have used words such as: enchantment, lovely, fair and grace. These words connote a fairy-tale element to her stardom that is arguably reforming her star persona and image.

et al. are removed by the collective memory through the emphasis on the “thingly”, i.e. a Hepburn that is easily “digestible”. Although I have alluded to this in a note, it is worth mentioning that products are pre-occupied by Hepburn’s style and a fictional fairy-tale element of her persona. It is this that is promoted and sold to the masses, and as a result, the memory of Hepburn’s transformation from *Funny Face* is not, ‘Jo’s intellect is superior to Dick’s and she tries to fight commercialism and ideals of womanhood’, but instead becomes: ‘she looked just like us, until she wore those fabulous clothes and fell in love.’ Contemporary society, then, mis-remembers Hepburn due to the still frames of her haute couture looks; books that tout adjectives that remind the consumer of a princess, and finally, fashion and beauty products that promise that you can transform into a beautiful woman.

Through material culture and the nostalgia for an idea that did not exist, Audrey Hepburn seems unthreatening and simplistic. New films that use the Cinderella format without a feminist subtext further our mis-remembering when paired with the allusions to Hepburn’s style. The image that we perceive of Hepburn is not part of her star history, but a memory that has been formulated posthumously by companies that select attributes that suit contemporary cultures’ perception of femininity and nostalgic idealism. Collective memory is arguably chosen by the producers of culture and material goods, however memory is also

in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived (Nora 1989:8).

Thus, Hepburn is defined in contemporary culture by transformation and high fashion, but how an advertiser manipulates that image/persona is highly dependent on the

needs of the society, business, or both. In this case, perhaps the fairy-tale trope will one day be replaced by an array of Hepburn commercials like those produced by Gap.

In conclusion, the transformation trope that appears in Hepburn's popular comedies; Portman's star persona; the removal of the Ray-Ban glasses; the Hollywood star with fluid nationality; Europe, and haute couture, all work together to depict not Hepburn, but a type that is devised from a mis-remembering of the star. The collective memory of society, therefore, has seemingly forgotten the hungover walk in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* as she sips her coffee cup, and instead replaces that memory with diamonds and a well-placed cigarette.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The Miss Dior advertisement detailed in the section above is an example of mediated memory. Using Natalie Portman, the commercial recalls Hepburn through the mutual associations the stars have with each other. Body shape, couture, nationality, are just three of the many ways Portman can be used to suggest a Hepburn-type. Scarlett Johansson, for example, evoked Marilyn Monroe for Dolce & Gabbana in 2009. In this case, it was Johansson's blonde bombshell-look which aided the comparison. Contemporary stars in advertising, therefore, can use a posthumous star as a type of meta-text in which to imbue their own star connotations. These stars, then, become part of the Hollywood legacy, but also cause a mis-remembering of the star they evoke in print and video.

The collective memory is impacted by the repetition of repeated motifs which become like a logo to convey static information about a star. For example, Monroe's white dress signals a sex symbol, or James Dean's red jacket immediately suggests teenage rebellion. Conversely, the pink dress from *Niagara* would hold no relevance to a mass audience as it warrants knowledge of the 'Kiss' sequence from the 1953 film. This is due, I argue, because of the lack of repetition of that film in popular culture. Western culture's memory of Monroe, therefore, is arguably damaged by the type of posthumous representation that relies on iconography as it reduces her persona to a few key images. Unfortunately, those select images connote very little and reduce her cultural worth, and arguably, make the star less interesting. It is this category, I believe, which causes the critical memes and ignorance surrounding Monroe. For example, the astonished reaction when Twitter users or bloggers see a picture of Monroe reading, a past-time that she really enjoyed. It is the dumb sex

symbol iconography, therefore, that detrimentally restricts the cultural memory of Monroe.

In comparison, nostalgic reconstructions, whilst also attempting to generate a nostalgia for a past time, rely on more than iconography and a type-of-star. In this type of posthumous rendering, a commercial blends the past and present to create a timeless and fictional space in which to mould the posthumous star to fit its own nostalgic needs. In this chapter, for example, Hepburn was transported to a liminal space and then later to the idealised American travelogue of the 1950s. The existence of the posthumous stars outside of time and space, however, is often achieved through a supernatural narrative. This is an interesting technique as it appears to soothe cultural anxiety about the present by finding a type of consolidation in the past. If the stars of the Fifties never died, then perhaps, nor did America's values and unchallenged power.

Additionally, the supernatural trope, through its extraordinary narrative, aids the belief that the classic stars of the past were just as extraordinary. Traversing through time and space, the star is contextless but also no longer inaccessible. The star, then, still operates within the ordinary/extraordinary dichotomy. However, that is not to say that this category does not also detrimentally impact a posthumous star's persona and image. The narrative framing and structure of these commercials is very different from Chapter Four. Arguably, both do use authenticity, for example, by exposing secrets (even if in this section they are fictional), but in a nostalgic reconstruction the moments spent with the posthumous star is limited. There are glimpses between legs and trees, or the star is in constant movement and dancing away from the audience. The lack of "real" secrets, or "quality" time, therefore, makes the posthumous star one-dimensional and relies on how an audience feels



about a time in Hollywood. Therefore, nostalgic reconstructions and mediated memory are categories which do not explore the complex strands of openness, and instead manipulate conceptions of time and nurture a longing for Fifties' Hollywood.

## Conclusion and Further Research

The thesis began by introducing two key aims of the research. Firstly, how and when posthumous stars are appropriated by large brands and corporations within advertising, and secondly, to identify how and why some posthumous stars are more “bankable” than others in contemporary society. Using advertising only, the research acknowledged the vastness of the topic in the parameters, choosing instead to align with an area of commerce that requires the permission of a star’s estate. This choice, then, was made to ensure the research was examining the commercialisation of stardom for profit and not fan-centred reproductions.

Commodities, as another commerce-based strain of posthumous representation, would be an avenue in which could be explored and traced alongside this research. Official products such as Marilyn Monroe’s Macy’s collection (2013) or Marilyn Monroe™ Spas, as estate-sanctioned for profit, would be an interesting comparison to advertising. For example, is Monroe still the most prevalent posthumous star on commodity items, are most of the depictions of *The Seven Year Itch*, or do any of these products attempt to use scandal and mystery as a method to sell the item?

Scandal, mystery, and an early death, whilst not a necessary condition of posthumous fame, does play a role in some commercials. The fictionalisation of a star’s after-life, despite its apparent morbidity, is the most popular way in which a posthumous star is presented in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The attempt to re-capture the past and/or give a star supernatural abilities suggests a desire for Fifties’ personas which, through a nostalgia for the pre-digital, seem more glamorous and “authentic”. The focus on death, or the supernatural after-life of the stars is not limited to one type of video commercial. As stated in Chapter Four, there are four methods in which to

reconstruct a posthumous star. The third category, nostalgic reconstruction, can also be attributed to film and literature. A further study, therefore, would be beneficial to understanding the tropes used in this type of representation. Books and films, which do not need the approval of an estate, for example, could arguably present the case study stars in a very different way to a commercial which seeks preferable readings to enhance profit. Equally, any similarities between the fictionalisation-for-art representation and the fictionalisation-for-marketing depiction, may illuminate the most fundamental aspects of the stars' persona and offer additional insight into why these stars are still so transferable and beloved in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Furthermore, the study of the tragic death, or more importantly, the posthumous star biopic as a way to discuss female tragedy, needs further exploration. Focusing on tropes, tone, framing devices, and a career-personal life ratio, further research on the posthumous biopic and/or documentary will expose gender divisions within posthumous representation. I would argue that this research would also be suited to an emotional response study. Richard Dyer's four theories (from the literature review) on an audience's response to a star on-screen, and the combination of a stylistic close analysis, could provide some psychological and sociological reactions to posthumous stardom. This study, therefore, could prove that certain narratives are favoured based on audience identification, and more importantly, that the films that feature female stars are inherently more tragic and garner a different emotional response.

As shown by this thesis' research, some strands of openness are preferred by advertisers and brands. For example, Presley and Monroe are often depicted as sexual and/or the advertising is used in a way to remind the consumer of the stars' impact on female sexuality and gender. Outside of advertising, such as posthumous fictional film, Presley is often depicted on the move and/or as a spiritual guide. Therefore, in

this format, the posthumous star is explored through another strand of openness available to him. Marilyn Monroe, too, could be explored beyond gender and sex. However, even in popular music and fiction, her gender and sexuality is integral to the depictions of her. Despite this, more work should still be completed on the star, particularly in reference to memes, tweets, and articles which denounce Monroe as a “slut”. Although this analysis would push the posthumous star research beyond commerce, an interrogation into why and how these negative depictions circulate would be interesting to understand a posthumous star’s presence in popular culture more generally.

Expanding the research further, then, could be through fandom and non-commercial culture. However, I would also suggest an interrogation into an estate’s legal power and an accurate study into the financial takings of each case study star since death. Arguably, this would be a difficult project due to access restrictions. Yet, a full documentation of trials, approvals, and cease and desist letters would alert a researcher to exactly what could and could not sell a posthumous star, or more accurately, illuminate how an estate attempts to control and sanctify a persona and image.

The control of a star image and persona, of course, also extends beyond the Western, English-speaking world. Asia, South America, Africa, and Europe are all continents which have released posthumous advertisements featuring these Fifties stars. This research, then, should not only be completed to compare the tropes, trends, and methods employed by a vast amount of different countries, but should also attempt to interrogate why American stars could have such prominence globally.

As suggested above, posthumous stardom is a vast topic which could not be explored in its totality in this research. However, the findings and categorisations, I hope, will serve as a starting place for future posthumous star research. To begin, the thesis interrogated 1950s America and the role the case study stars played in it. Through the analysis of each star, I exposed four strands of openness which fed into the large topical debates of the day. For example, Elvis Presley's raw sexuality raised concerns about female sexual expression and fandom. This particular debate, due to the continued controversy of female ecstasy and enjoyment (see the shaming of stars who express bodily autonomy, such as Nicki Minaj, or the judgement cast on screaming female fans during boy band concerts), continues to allow Presley relevancy. The Pizza Hut commercial, for example, had Presley performing as an object for desire. The reminder that Presley caused an "atypical" reaction in "respectable" middle class white women, therefore, makes him appear "modern" even when he equally connotes the past.

Each strand of openness, however, does not re-occur in posthumous advertisements. This suggests that at least in advertising, there are threads of discourse which are more amenable and persuasive. In the case of Monroe and Presley, the posthumous advertisements used gender and sex as the main methods of persuasion, which perhaps serves to prove the old adage: sex sells. James Dean's detached masculinity and Audrey Hepburn's femininity also became the dominant topical issues in their posthumous advertisements, and whilst not "sexy", does illustrate how gender plays an important role in all of the case study stars' commercial reproductions.

The foundational narrative of the case study stars also illuminated how important timing was to the construction of their star personas. Showing 1953 to be a pivotal year for Hepburn and Monroe, I posited that both stars are integral to the topic

of gender because they seemed to come to fruition during a time when conceptions relating to female sexuality and objectification were being re-adjusted. 1953, also as the year preceding the mythical Fifties, allows both Hepburn and Monroe to appear to be “born” into the era itself, thus, the stars are irrevocably linked to future representations of the time period.

The thesis then continued to explore how each decade (starting with the 1980s) used the case study stars in advertising. Looking chiefly at how the star personas were manipulated to “fit” with a certain time, the thesis showed how the 1980s reduced Dean and Monroe to a stereotype, and in particular, used gender norms as a method to sell a product. Attempting to preserve the past, the 1980s appeared to want America to return to an idyllic era, a trait which can also be seen in the movies of that period, for example, *Back to the Future*. I posited, therefore, that the 1980s used a posthumous star as a way to promote a conservative agenda and a wish to return to “traditional” roles and values.

The 1990s, in comparison, re-valued or re-exposed certain strands of openness. Generating debate about what it means to be a woman, or through Presley’s impact on female expression, the 1990s attempted to deconstruct the past and see value in the topical issues it generated. The 1990s, complexly, wanted to use posthumous stars with a clear connection to prosperity (the Fifties), but also promote the liberal attitudes which began after the likes of Monroe and Dean. However, as suggested previously, it is the connection to these early topical debates (such as female autonomy) that enable these particular stars to be transferable to today’s modern culture.

Lastly, I exposed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’s shift toward authenticity and nostalgia. In this section, I posited that after 9/11 the country became increasingly divided and

unsure of its place as a superpower. As a result, a return to the Fifties (the height of American cultural, economic, and military dominance), provided comfort and reasserted America's legacy, values, and ethos. The past, which is often illustrated through monochrome design in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, generates a longing for a pre-digital past, and in combination with the removal of artifice and the increased presence of official signatures, this new design continues to make the Fifties appear as the "real" America.

Monroe and Presley as two of the key icons of the Fifties (due to their impact on culture), and despite both being a type of rebellious figure in the 1950s, are sanctified and made "safe" by Fifties nostalgia. As a result, these two stars are rendered as symbols of Americana. Presley and Monroe, as condensed and repeatable signs, are therefore able to be supplanted around the globe to be representatives of American longevity and success. As shown by Chapter Three's conclusion, these two stars dominate advertising throughout the chosen decades, and most notably in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The findings of the chapter, therefore, is the reason for the posthumous hierarchy from the parameters section of this thesis. There is, as shown in the chapter's graphs, more print and video commercials of certain posthumous stars. Presley and Monroe, operate as commercially saturated stars because they are more popular (at least in marketing) than Dean and Hepburn. Posthumous stardom, therefore, is shown to have echelons and provides clear evidence that some stars are more "marketable" and "bankable", even amongst dead Hollywood.

Of course, as suggested in this thesis, popularity may not be the only factor in posthumous fame. Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe, as commercially saturated stars, are managed by ABG. It is possible that this corporation is more willing to promote or "sell" a star image to potential brands for an endorsement. Audrey Hepburn and

James Dean, as commercially present stars, arguably appear less due to the restrictions placed on the star image and persona by the stars' family members. This question, as stated previously, requires an investigation into how star estates operate and a clear assessment of not just what appears in advertising, but perhaps how often a brand was refused by an estate.

The past two decades, regardless of questions of posthumous control, has shown a rise in posthumous advertisements. The thesis, then, attempted to deconstruct the exact methods and narratives used to convey meaning to consumers. Authenticity and nostalgia, broadly, are ways in which a star is made likeable. Simply, these techniques make a posthumous star appear relatable or uses emotion to make a consumer miss Classic Hollywood/the Fifties, even if a consumer has not experienced the time period or watched one of the case study stars in film. Intergenerational media-nostalgia, a longing for an idealised time as propagated by the media, enables the continued appearance of posthumous stars. However, I argue, the way in which the posthumous star personas are condensed can cause a misremembering of what these stars were and detrimentally alters collective memory.

Although authenticity and nostalgia are usually theoretically heavy concepts, this thesis attempted to assess the methods pragmatically and established four categories to analyse how a star functions within the moving image and narrative of commercials. The first two categories, uncovered reconstructions and authentic representation, attempted to use secrets and behind-the-scenes tropes to reveal the "truth" behind the glamour. By hiding the consumer messaging and intention through gossip and revelation, the commercials make a star seem "real" to the audience. Once authenticated in this way, the star becomes relatable and enables self-identification through a meaning-transfer process. In contrast, nostalgic reconstruction and mediated



memory use fictional secrets to appear authentic, but in actuality relies on fictionalisation, stock images, and motifs to convey meaning. The repeated iconography/motifs/images, however, do anchor communication. Thus, whilst it reduces the complexity of a star persona, or more accurately, makes the past and the star seem “safe”, it does also function as a method to convey quick and understandable information to a consumer, in much the same way that the movie Western uses key props and characters to aid audience expectation and understanding.

To conclude, certain echelons within the posthumous stardom hierarchy are appropriated by contemporary brands for commercial profit. The methods in which persona/image manipulation can occur alters with the political and social climate, but will often rely on elements of a foundational narrative which can be moulded to illuminate a star’s relationship with sex and gender. However, it is the Fifties’ relationship with these intense topical debates, combined with previous American prosperity, which have allowed the case study stars to be associated with both power and controversy, two enticing and tantalising concepts which advertising can, and will, exploit. Some posthumous stars, therefore, are not just stars of the past, but a commercial and consumer product.

## List of Illustrations

Please note: the list of illustrations below have been referenced according to the format of the media.

Figure 1: Snickers (2016). *You're Not You When You're Hungry* [Advertising]

Figure 2: Anon (unknown). *Marilyn Monroe Iron Board Cover* [Photograph/Amazon Listing]. Available: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Replacement-Board-Cover-Marilyn-Monroe/dp/B000L2Z6HO> [Accessed: 07/01/2019]

Figure 3: *The Seven Year Itch* (Billy Wilder, Twentieth Century Fox, 1955) [Film]

Figure 4: Harvester Refrigerators (1955?) *Colours and the New Look* [Advertising]

Figure 5: Anon (unknown). *The Monsato House of the Future* [Photograph]. Available: <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/tourists-at-disneyland-tour-a-plastic-house-of-the-future-news-photo/640467551> [Accessed: 07/01/2019].

Figure 6: *American Look* (W.F. Banes & John Thiele, Jam Handy Organization, 1958). [Film]

Figure 7: *The Jetsons* (Joseph Barbera & William Hanna, Hanna-Barbera Productions, 1962-1963) [Television].

Figure 8: Universal Studios (unknown). *Mel's Drive-In* [Marketing Photograph]. Available: <https://www.universalorlando.com/web/en/us/things-to-do/dining/mels-drive-in/index.html> [Accessed: 07/01/2019].

Figure 9: *Loving You* (Hal Kanter, Hal Wallis Productions, 1957) [Film]

Figure 10: The Milton Berle Show (1956). *Elvis Presley* [Advertising/Leaflet].

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## Filmography

*'68 Comeback Special* (1968). Directed by Steve Binder. USA: Teram Company & Binder/Howe Productions.

*Aloha From Hawaii* (1973). Directed by Marty Pasetta. USA: Pasetta Productions, RCA Record Tours.

*American Graffiti* (1973). Directed by George Lucas. USA: Universal Pictures, Lucasfilm, The Coppola Company.

*American Look* (1958). Directed by W.F. Banes & John Thiele. USA: Jam Handy Organization.

*Aquaman* (2018). Directed by James Wan. USA: DC Comics, DC Entertainment, Panoramic Pictures, Rodeo FX, The Safran Company, Warner Bros.

*Back to the Future* (1985). Directed by Robert Zemeckis. USA: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, U-Drive Productions.

*Basic Instinct* (1992). Directed by Paul Verhoeven. USA/France/UK: Carolco & Le Studio Canal +.

*Batman Forever* (1995). Directed by Joel Schumacher. USA: Warner Bros., PolyGram Pictures.

*Big Little Lies* (2017-). Created by David E. Kelley. USA: Blossom Films, David E. Kelley Productions, Pacific Standard.

*Blonde* (2001). Directed by Joyce Chopra. Australia/Canada/USA: Fireworks Entertainment; Robert Greenwald Productions.

*Blonde Venus* (1932). Directed by Josef von Sternberg. USA: Paramount Pictures.

*Blue Hawaii* (1961). Directed by Norman Taurog. USA: Hal Wallis Productions.

*Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). Directed by Blake Edwards. USA: A Jurow-Shepherd Production.

*Calendar Girl* (1993). Directed by John Whitesell. USA: Parkway Productions.

*Clash by Night* (1952). Directed by Fritz Lang. USA: RKO Radio Pictures; Wald/Krasna Productions.

*Closer* (2004). Directed by Mike Nichols. USA/UK: Columbia TriStar, Sony Pictures.

*Dead Famous DNA* (2014). Directed by Rob Davis. UK: Double Act Productions.

*Don't Bother to Knock* (1952). Directed by Roy Baker. USA: Twentieth Century Fox.

*East of Eden* (1955). Directed by Elia Kazan. USA: Warner Bros.

*Elvis*. (1979). Directed by John Carpenter. USA: Dick Clark Productions.

*Elvis*. (2005). Directed by James Steven Sadwith, USA/Germany: ApolloProScreen Filmproduktion; Greenblatt Janolari Studio; Jaffe/Braunstein Films.

*Elvis & Nixon*. (2016). Directed by Liza Johnson. USA: Amazon Studios; Autumn Productions.

*Elvis Meets Nixon*. (1997). Directed by Allan Arkush. USA/Canada: Dufferin Gate Productions; Elvis Meets Nixon Productions; Osiris Films; Showtime Networks.

*Elvis Presley: The Searcher* (2018). Directed by Thom Zimny. USA: HBO.

*Feud* (2017-). Created by Jaffe Cohen, Ryan Murphy, Michael Zam. USA: Plan B, Ryan Murphy Productions, Fox 21 Television Studios.

*Follow That Dream* (1962). Directed by Gordon Douglas. USA: The Mirisch Corporation.

*Fun in Acapulco* (1963). Directed by Richard Thorpe. USA: Wallis-Hazen.

*Funny Face* (1957). Directed by Stanley Donen. USA: Paramount Pictures.

*Garden State* (2004). Directed by Zach Braff. USA: Camelot Pictures, Jersey Films, Double Feature Films, Large's Ark Productions.

*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953). Directed by Howard Hawks. USA: Twentieth Century Fox.

*Giant* (1956). Directed by George Stevens. USA: George Stevens Production.

*Girls! Girls! Girls!* (1962). Directed by Norman Taurog. USA: Hal Wallis Productions.

*Girl Happy* (1965). Directed by Boris Sagal. USA: Euterpe.

*Gravity* (2013). Directed by Alfonso Cuarón. USA: Warner Bros., Esperanto Filmoj, Heyday Films.

*Grease* (1978). Directed by Randal Kleiser. USA: Paramount Pictures, Robert Stigwood Organization, Allan Carr Production.

*Happy Days* (1974-1984). Created by Garry Marshall. USA: Henderson Productions, Miller-Milkis-Boyett Productions, Paramount Television.



*How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953). Directed by Jean Negulesco. USA: Twentieth Century Fox.

*Jailhouse Rock* (1957). Directed by Richard Thorpe. USA: Avon Productions.

*James Dean* (1976). Directed by Robert Butler. USA: The Jozak Company; William Blast Productions.

*James Dean* (2001). Directed by Mark Rydell. USA: Gerber Pictures; Marvin Worth Productions.

*James Dean: Live Fast, Die Young* (1997). Directed by Mohammed Rustam. USA: Cheeni Productions; Mars Productions Corporation.

*Joanna Lumley: Elvis and Me* (2015). Directed by Ian Denyer. UK: Sony Music.

*Johnny Bravo* (1997-2004). Created by Van Partible. USA: Hanna-Barbera Productions, Cartoon Network Studios, Frederator Studios.

*Joshua Tree, 1951: A Portrait of James Dean* (2012). Directed by Matthew Mishory. USA: Iconoclastic.

*Life* (2015). Directed by Anton Corbijn. UK/Germany/Canada/Australia/USA: See-Saw Films; Barry Films; Film 4; First Generation Films; Screen Australia; Telefilm Canada.

*Live a Little, Love a Little* (1968). Directed by Norman Taurog. USA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

*Liz & Dick* (2012). Directed by Lloyd Kramer. USA: Larry A. Thompson Productions, Lasky Productions, Silver Screen Pictures.

*Love, Marilyn* (2012). Directed by Liz Garbus. USA/France: Diamond Girl Productions; Sol's Luncheonette; StudioCanal.

*Love Me Tender* (1956). Directed by Robert D. Webb. USA: Twentieth Century Fox.

*Loving You* (1957). Directed by Hal Kanter. USA: Hal Wallis Productions.

*Marilyn Monroe: Auction of a Lifetime*. Directed by Patrick Reams. UK: Oxford Films.

*Mean Girls* (2004). Directed by Mark Waters. USA: Paramount Pictures, M.G. Films, Broadway Video.

*Mini Marilyn* (2017). Directed by Arlen Konopaki. USA: OBB Pictures.

*My Fair Lady* (1964). Directed by George Cukor. USA: Warner Bros.

*My Week with Marilyn* (2011). Directed by Simon Curtis, UK/USA: Trademark Films.

*Niagara* (1953). Directed by Henry Hathaway. USA: Twentieth Century Fox.

*Norma Jean & Marilyn* (1996). Directed by Tim Fywell, UK/USA: Home Box Office.

*Now, Voyager* (1942). Directed by Irving Rapper. USA: Warner Bros.

*Practical Magic* (1998). Directed by Griffin Dunne. USA: Warner Bros.

*Pretty Woman* (1990). Directed by Garry Marshall. USA: Silver Screen Partners IV.

*Quack Pack* (1996-1997). Created by Toby Shelton. USA: Walt Disney Television Animation.

*Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Directed by Nicholas Ray. USA: Warner Bros.

*Roman Holiday* (1953). Directed by William Wyler. USA: Paramount Pictures.

*The Peacemaker* (1997). Directed by Mimi Leder. USA: DreamWorks.

*Sabrina* (1954). Directed by Billy Wilder. USA: Paramount Pictures.

*Smash* (2012-2013). Created by Theresa Rebeck. USA: Madwoman in the Attic, DreamWorks Television, Universal Television.

*Stranger Things* (2016-). Created by Matt Duffer and Ross Duffer. USA: Netflix.

*The Audrey Hepburn Story* (2000). Directed by Steven Robman. USA/Canada: Endemol Entertainment; Robert Greenwald Productions.

*The Blind Side* (2009). Directed by John Lee Hancock. USA: Alcon Entertainment, 3 Arts Entertainment, Left Tackle Pictures, Netter Productions, Zucker/Netter Productions.

*The Devil Wears Prada* (2006). Directed by David Frankel. USA: Fox 2000 Pictures.

*The Ed Sullivan Show* (1948-1971). USA: CBS, Sullivan Productions.

*The Goldbergs* (2013-). Created by Adam F. Goldberg. USA: Adam F. Goldberg Productions, Happy Madison Productions, Sony Pictures Television.

*The James Dean Story* (1957). Directed by Robert Altman & George W. George. USA: Warner Bros., 1957.

*The Jetsons* (1962-1963). Directed by Joseph Barbera & William Hanna. USA: Hanna-Barbera Productions/Screen Gems.

*The King* (2017). Directed by Eugene Jareki. Germany/USA: Charlotte Street Films, Ghost in the Machine Films, Backup Media.

*The Legend of Marilyn Monroe* (1965). Directed by Terry Sanders, USA: Wolper Productions.

*The Milton Berle Show* (1966-1967). USA: American Broadcasting Company, United Artists Television.

*The Princess Diaries* (2001). Directed by Garry Marshall. USA: BrownHouse Productions, Bottom of the Ninth Productions.

*The Robe* (1953). Directed by Henry Koster. USA: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox.

*The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe* (2015). Directed by Laurie Collyer. USA: Asylum Entertainment; Don Carmody Television.

*The Seven Year Itch* (1955). Directed by Billy Wilder. USA: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

*Sin City* (2005). Directed by Frank Miller. USA: Dimension Films, Troublemaker Studios.

*She's All That* (1999). Directed by Robert Iscove. USA: Tapestry Films, FilmColony, All That Productions.

*V For Vendetta* (2005). Directed by James McTeigue. USA/UK/Germany: Silver Pictures.

*Viva Las Vegas* (1964). Directed by George Sidney. USA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.