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Module C: dissertation

**TRANSFORMATIONS OF CINEMATIC SIGNIFIERS
OF THE MYTH OF GENIUS**

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INTRODUCTION

In films about artists, realistic representation, facts, actual works of art, statements of artists and the like, are commonly thought as evidence of a truth that reflects the artist's life. This dissertation examines these predetermined concepts as they are reflected in films (biopics) about artists.

Biopics and fictional films about artists provide a junction between what has been defined as 'high art' and 'popular' or 'mass culture'.¹ My investigation of the *Myth of the Artist* scrutinizes the cinematic signifiers of the myth of genius and examines its correspondence with those developed in Art-history and theory. By focusing on two prominent films, *The Agony and the Ecstasy* and *Camille Claudel*, contrasting phases of cinematic development will be analyzed. *The Agony and the Ecstasy* clearly concurs with both the description of genius in writing and the popular image of the artist whereas *Camille Claudel* presents a collision between the definitions of genius and being a woman sculptor. I will examine how the film succeeds, nevertheless, in establishing her as a genius by utilizing traditional and new cinematic signifiers. Throughout the dissertation other films will be used as references to paint a broader picture and pose questions regarding whether cinematic signifiers are merely variations of the written signifiers, or if this visual media suggests or even compels alterations².

The influences of the encounter between cinema and writing on the cinematic representation of artists and the concept of Genius will be discussed placing a focus on the historical/cultural context of the artists represented and the content of the films created. Finally, I will examine whether new cinematic signifiers reveal a break-through in defining the concept of genius when applying a feminist perspective

¹ The different approaches towards mass culture compared to "high art" will be considered only when specifically relevant to the main focus of this work, which is the myth of the artist.

² A truly comprehensive answer requires a scope broader than that defined for this research.

Striving to be recognized as an art form, mainstream cinema developed a narrative character.³ Films on artists try to meet these narrative demands and present their artist/protagonist like any other movie hero. Hence, the representation of the historic figure of the actual artist might be summed up as what Parker Tyler calls - the cinema's 'lust for lifelikeness', or the striving to be as close as possible to what the artist is thought to have looked like (physically).⁴

In the field of art-history, features on artists are usually not considered as 'documents' or as having equal value to works of art, artists' statements, letters or even documentary films. Other representations of the artist are taken more seriously, such as in literature, for example.⁵ Art historians tend to look for factual accuracy whereas cinema goers look for the drama,⁶ and general cinema reference books rarely mention films on artist at all. .

It is important to note that films about artists tend to be somewhat longer than the ninety-minute standard of feature films and reach two hours, or longer.⁷

1. Written image vis-a-vis cinematic drama

Two main factors constitute the cinematic image of the artist, which differentiate it from other representations (even those of other historic figures). The first is the visuality of the subject, which compels both creators and audience to a higher awareness of the visual

³ J. Aumont, A. Bergala, M. Marie and M. Vernet, *Aesthetics of Film* (trans. by R. Neupert), Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983, p. 70.

⁴ Tyler derives this definition from the film *Lust For Life*, in which Vincent Van Gogh is portrayed by Kirk Douglas.
P. Tyler, "Lust for Lifelikeness", in part three: "The Artist in Crisis", *Sex, Psyche, Etcetera in The Film*, New York: Horizon Press, 1969, p. 152

⁵ For example, Emile Zola's *L'oeuvre*, or Balzac's story *Le Chef d'oeuvre unconnu* (The Unknown Masterpiece).

⁶ I.A. Walker, *Art and Artists on Screen*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 57.

⁷ The two main films discussed in the next chapters: *The Agony and The Ecstasy* takes approximately 131 minutes, *Camille Claudel* takes approximately three hours.

representations, practices and means the film uses. Usually it takes the shape of *lifelikeness*. The second relates to the drama inherent in the nature of film, which requires an anchoring in specific (either 'real' or fictional) time, place, characters etc. At history, in contrast, can deal with the image of the artist as if isolated in a lab. Steven Gartside argues⁸ that the focus of cinema on the creative process in fact might downplay the high culture status of artwork itself.

Films on artists might support existing art-history concepts or they might suggest alternatives, either as an interpretation to the 'life story' of an artist or to its visual representations (i.e. becoming a visual piece in itself).

Contemporary directors of films on artists tend to be related to the practice of art, such as cinematographers (e.g. Bruno Nuytten), or visual artists (e.g. Peter Greenaway or Derek Jarman). To resemble the 'artist at work', actors have had to become acquainted with the physical and technical sides of the artistic practice. In preparation for *The Agony and The Ecstasy*, Charlton Heston tried to paint in the two ways historians suggest that Michelangelo had frescoed the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, i.e. standing and lying on his back⁹. Charles Laughton (for *Rembrandt*) and Kirk Douglas (for *Lust for Life*) took painting lessons¹⁰ and Isabelle Adjani (for *Camille Claudel*) diligently studied sculpture¹¹

An iconic image can be created in either what is accepted as documentary films, as was Pollock's image by Namuth's film¹²; or in a feature films, as was Van Gogh's image by Douglas's portrayal in Minnelli's *Lust for Life*. The latter influenced the image of the artist

⁸ S. Gartside, "Disturbing The Surface: William Green and Filmic Fascination in the 1950s", *Art and Design*, Profile no. 49 Art and Film, London: Academy Group Ltd., 1996, p. 11.

⁹ J.A. Walker, *Art and Artists On Screen*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 55.

¹⁰ Walker, p. 22 and 41, respectively.

¹¹ S. Jhirad, "Camille Claudel", *Cineaste*, Vol. XVII no. 4, 1990, p. 43.

¹² F. Orton and G. Pollock, Chapter 8, "Jackson Pollock, Painting and the Myth of Photography", in F. Orton and G. Pollock, *Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996, p.172.

and concept of art from art students to art dealers¹³. It became the most cited reference representative of the category 'artist' and was eventually questioned in another touching portrayal of Van Gogh by Tim Roth in Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo* (1990).

2. Signifiers of the Myth

The myth of the artist in western culture is so familiar that it commonly seen as the image of an artist stereotype. At the same time it has been the subject for extensive research and professional literature. Such investigations have related to the artist theoretically, (e.g. W. Duff¹⁴, Penelope Murray¹⁵), historically (e.g. Giorgio Vasari,¹⁶ the founder of the biographical paradigm; or Wöllflin,¹⁷ who detached the history of art from the artist's biography), psychologically, analyzing both the personality of specific artists (e.g. Freud¹⁸) and the creative psyche (e.g.. Anthony Storr¹⁹) and sociologically (e.g. George Becker²⁰).

The primary approach discussed throughout this dissertation is that of mythical story telling, as established by Vasari in his *Lives of the Artists*. Vasari is not only presented as *the* representative of the written myth of the artist, but as the one who actually sought to establish it. Later writers, such as Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz²¹ or Christine Battersby²² reflect

¹³ P. Taylor, "Lights! Camera! Easel!", *New York Times*, 21.2.88, p. 1.

¹⁴ D. William, *An Essay on Original Genius*, (London, 1767) London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1994

¹⁵ P. Murray (ed.), *Genius: The History of an Idea*, Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989.

¹⁶ G. Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, (1550/1568) Vol. I (A selection) trans. George Bull, (first published as *Lives of The Artists*, 1965), London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1987.

¹⁷ H. Wöllflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, (1915) Hebrew edition, trans. Nachman Ben-Ami, Jerusalem: the Bialik Institute, 1962.

¹⁸ Freud, Zigmund, "Vorlesungen Zur Einführung in Die Psychoanalyse" vol. I of *Zigmund Freud's Writings*, Hebrew edition. Trans. Haim Izak, Tel-Aviv: Dvir Ltd., 1966.

¹⁹ A. Storr, *The Dynamics of Creation* (1972), Hebrew edition, trans. Judith Cafri and Shoshana Shwartz, Tel-Aviv: Sifriat Poalim Publishing House Ltd., 1983.

²⁰ G. Becker, *The Mad Genius Controversy: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*, Beverly Hills, California and London: Sage Publications Inc., 1978.

²¹ E. Kris and O. Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979 (Vienna: Krystall Verlag, 1934).

²² C. Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a feminist aesthetics*, London: The Women's Press, Ltd, 1989,

this in their referral to Vasari. Moreover, I find it significant that Vasari was himself an artist, which elucidates the comparison between the approaches of Art History and Cinema to the myth of the artist throughout this dissertation.²³

Since I am dealing with the transformation of *signifiers*, I find it more appropriate to base my approach to myths using semiotic definitions and disregarding definitions of psychoanalytical or strictly art-historical derivation. Therefore, myth is referred to as giving meaning to events or occurrences and being related through anecdotes or legends. This approach concurs with Roland Barthes's approach to myth as *a type of speech*, which does not refer to the definition of the word 'myth' (to which other meanings could be cited against his), but rather, to the definition of things.²⁴

Barthes, refers to myths as a semiologic system that provides the opportunity to analyze its components²⁵ and reveal its ideological grounds. The uniqueness of the myth, he argues, is the transformation of meaning into form. Myth transforms history into nature and, in the eyes of the beholder or reader the image appears as natural and is therefore innocently read.²⁶ Christine Belsey attributes this acceptance of ideologically constructed things that are experienced as natural – to 'Common Sense'.²⁷

From a structuralist perspective, the myth is not taken as a holy story but as a field or domain of beliefs that create values²⁸. Thus analysis and questioning may eventually lead to

(paperback edition 1994).

²³ His obligation as a representative of his fellow-artists, is emphasized in the letter "To the Artists of Design". See chapter IV, p. ?? and note 10.

²⁴ R. Barthes, extracts from "Myth Today", in C. Harrison and P. Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 687 and 693, note 1, respectively.

²⁵ That is the numerous recurring forms referring to a limited number of defined concepts

²⁶ R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957), Hebrew edition, trans. Ido Basok, Tel-Aviv: Babel Publishers, 1998, pp. 258-261.

²⁷ C. Belsey, *Critical Practice*, London and New York: Routledge, 1980, p. 3.

²⁸ A. Bullock and O. Stallybrass (eds.), *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (1977), Hebrew edition editor: E. Shealtiel, Tel-Aviv: Am Oved Publishers Ltd, 1987, p. 255.

ideological transformations and even the establishment of new myths.²⁹

I am referring to the visual signifiers that are derived from point of encounter of cinematic representations of the myth and their written texts. I define and discuss the following categories as signifiers of the artist myth: GESTURE, CREDO, SEXUALITY AND ART and ARTIST AS GOD.

GESTURE refers to images related to the process of creation, ascribed to an artist and defining him³⁰ as Genius.

CREDO refers to a repeating motive in movies about artists, a speech or other kinds of declarations given by the artist, usually to an ignorant philistine or nonunderstanding audience and is through which the *credo* statement gives validity to the artistic work. This signifier actually represents the essence of the encounter/ confrontation/ antagonism between artist and society.

SEXUALITY AND ART refers to diverse personal and intimate relationships (in the studio and art world as well as in private life) that are driven, reflected by or effected by sexuality or, to be more precise: masculinity. Two main aspects referred here are: the act of creation as having masculine gender bias, and the work of art as the child or child-substitute giving the artist special powers of procreation. Artist-model and other intimate relationships are discussed when relevant.³¹

ARTIST AS GOD refers actually to the most common attribution, identification or concept of genius. The artist is portrayed as a free spirit, an individual blessed with unusual talents and an authoritarian in matters of his art and art in general.

Chapter I lays the thematic and theoretical ground of these definitions. The following

²⁹ The question then would be whether this new combination can still operate as a myth, or even more basically, if an alternative myth is needed at all, once the older one is destroyed or subverted. . Due to the limited scope of this work, this theoretical and philosophical route will not be developed.

³⁰ Since most of the films do portray male artists, the artist will be referred to as 'he', unless the case of a woman artist (in general or in particular) is under discussion. The emphasis on gender definitions reflects the undeclared fact that the myth itself was given the shapes and characters of the male artist. This conclusion was noted mainly by feminist writers such as G. Pollack.

³¹ This aspect does appear in the main films discussed here, but not as the central definitive factor of "artist".

chapters present variations of the signifiers defined above. Each will be represented by one of the films with additional references from relevant examples in other films. The chapters are arranged according to the historical development of the myth of the artist, however, due to the limited scope of this dissertation, I chose to focus on key points, changes and shifts.

3. State of research.

The screen presentation of artists, and specifically those signifiers representing the artists, is an issue that is dealt with quite sporadically within the broader discussion of art history and criticism.³² It is rarely mentioned in critical writing, reviews, critiques, and the professional literature on films: the films themselves had not yet become a separate genre, and the term ‘biopic’ refers only to films about actual artists. As a result, they are discussed primarily as drama and are rarely mentioned in cinema reference books.

The issue of photographic representation of the artist has been discussed quite extensively from various aspects: art history (portrait, self-portrait, ‘artist in studio’³³ etc.), psychology, psychoanalysis, and semiotics. Still, the specific photographic representation of the artist in a film (i.e. as image) has been rarely discussed. This might be due to historic hierarchies between ‘high art’ and ‘popular culture’/‘mass culture’, rendering movies a subject unworthy of regard within the disciplines of art history, theory and criticism.

Exceptions can be found when the disciplines intersect, as seen in the works of particular scholars and writers and sporadically in newspaper articles and reviews. (e.g. Griselda Pollock,³⁴ Lynda Need³⁵).

³² An exception is found in some of Parker Tyler’s writings, for example “The Artist Portrayed and Betrayed”, in *The Three Faces of The Film*, New York, London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960.

³³ The most well-known is Alexander Liberman’s *The Artist in His Studio*, containing photographs of contemporary artists (mostly men, with exception of few of their wives who are also artists) in their surrounding.
A. Liberman, *The Artist in his Studio*, New York: Viking

³⁴ G. Pollock, “Artists mythologies and media genius, madness and art history”, in P. Hayward, *Picture This: Media Representation of Visual Art and Artists* (second, revised edition), Luton, Bedfordshire: University of Luton Press, 1998.

³⁵ L. Need, “Seductive Canvases: Visual Mythologies of the Artist and Artistic Creativity”, *The Oxford Art*

4. Approaches to the image of artist on screen.

Cinematic biographies of actual artists are classified as “biopics”, among other biographies of famous people. This classification was valid mainly during the studio era - i.e. from the 1930’s till late 1950’s Hollywood biopics of visual artists of that time adopted the characteristics and requirements of Hollywood biopics, the most salient of which was the main protagonist’s involvement in a romance or love affair. In the case of a visual artist, the outcome of this dictum were ‘bed-room’ films (such as the first feature made on artist, *Affairs of Cellini*, 1934) or relationships hinting at the artist’s love life, the relationships with his models and the influence on his artistic work.

This manner of interpreting artwork corresponds to a common tendency of the psycho-biographical branch of art history interpretation. In her article “In the Name of Picasso”,³⁶ Rosalind Krauss argues against this approach, as does Griselda Pollock in her discussion of what is probably the best-known biopic of an artist, *Lust for Life*, on Van Gogh.³⁷

Few biopics were made during the 1960’s and 1970’s, the most notable being *The Agony and The Ecstasy* (1965), which reveals a more serious approach. (This film will be extensively discussed in Chapter II). Yet, even here, lip service is paid to Hollywood’s demand for romance. Contrary to the ‘planted’ romance, the film *Camille Claudel* (1988), discussed in chapter III, confronts intimate relationships in a more dignified way. In this film the plot itself is based on the relationships between two artists who happen to be also man and woman (Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel).

The 1980’s saw an outburst of films dealing with various aspects of the art world; the artist’s biography was only one.³⁸ Biopics were not only made mainly outside Hollywood, but also against what it represented. The films acquired new dimensions, both thematically

Journal, Vol. 18 No. 2, 1995, pp. 59-69.

³⁶ R. E., Krauss, “In the Name of Picasso”, in: *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985, pp. 23-40.

³⁷ G. Pollock, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

³⁸ P. Taylor, *op.cit.*

and visually – which related to the trends from the 1960's and were eventually to be labeled 'postmodernism'.³⁹

The conventional representation of an artist's life is still quite common, however, even in movies made during the 1980's, 1990's, and into the new millenium.⁴⁰

Unlike this tendency, a handful of films treat the artist representation critically and/or ironically, for instance *The Rebel* (1961) or *Life Lessons* (1989)⁴¹ or even make it the conspicuous center of the film's as in *La Belle Noiseuse* (1991). Inasmuch as these three films portray fictional artists, their plot was less obligated from the outset than plots of biopics. There are films about fictional artists, however, that are compatible with biopic requirements, such as *The Fountainhead* (1949), or *The Sandpiper* (1965), one of the earliest images of a woman artist, albeit here it just provided another opportunity for a cinematic encounter between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

The artist on screen may become a metaphor for artist in general or function as an extension of the creators of the film (see chapter I, p. 22). This usually occurs in films that go beyond the 'bedroom drama' or costume-movie and confront the visual and thematic aspects related to their protagonists.⁴² Then the self-reflectivity embodied in biopics in

³⁹ The most eminent examples of the shift towards postmodernism are Peter Greenaway's films, from *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982), *The Belly of an Architect* (1986) and *The Pillow Book* (1996) – which portraying fictional artists and are rooted in art history.

Additional examples: Derek Jarman's alternative biopic *Caravaggio* (1986); Alan Rudolf's *The Moderns* (1988); Julian Schnabel's *Basquiat* (1996).

Also worth mentioning are films that do not challenge the visual but are thematically critical, such as Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo* (1990) or in some respect James Ivory's *Surviving Picasso* (1996). [The former film is based on the letters of Vincent and Theo, emphasizing Vincent's part in creating of his own myth and taking the liberty to be an 'outsider', in contrast to Theo's bourgeois way of life, which enabled Vincent to live as he wanted. Altman's opening scene, a current day auction of Van Gogh's paintings presents a critical view of the art world – similar to his closing scenes of *Pret à Porter* (1994) which views the fashion world.] [The latter film's story, told from the point of view of Francoise Gilot, is based on Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington's book *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer*. A. S. Huffington, *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer*, New York: Avon Books, 1989.]

⁴⁰ Such as *Goya en Burdeos* (1999), *Love is the Devil* (1998), *Surviving Picasso* (1996) *Frida naturaleza viva* (1984), *Carrington* (1995), *Artemisia* (1997), *The Wolf at the Door* (1988), *Sirens* (1994), or *Pollock* (2000).

⁴¹ One of three short films in *New York Stories*.

⁴² Visual artists' biopics of the studio era are few: four Hollywood films mentioned by Custen: *Affairs of Cellini* (1934), *Moulin Rouge* (1952), *Lust for Life* (1956), *The Naked Maja* (1959). Custen, G. F., *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed Public History*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992, appendix table D. 1: Biopics by Profession, 1927-1960, p. 248.

general, enables the emphasis of the fundamental questions of the creative process... the 'riddle' of the artist.

5. Terminology.

Many of the terms used in this text differ in their function within the discussion. The differentiations are crucial when discussing this kind of films, characterized by what Walker defines as 'faction', which is a fusion of fact and fiction, found also in other kinds of dramatized biographies.⁴³

- a. **Fact:** refers to historically documented or known occurrences, works, biographical details and so on.
- b. **Real:** something taken as existing; thus, an image can be real too, although existing within the imaginary. As a consequence, any artist on screen is real.
- c. **Truth:** what is valued as being true, which can be undermined through other values and definitions (referring to the motto at the beginning).
- d. **Actual:** a historic artist portrayed in film; thus, when referring to historic figure like Michelangelo I will use the term 'the actual artist' or 'historic artist'.

Among the few European, the most notable is *Rembrandt* (1936).

⁴³ Walker, *Op.Cit*, p. 13.

CHAPTER I: SIGNIFIERS OF THE MYTH.

Written biographies, art-history and narrative cinema find a common denominator in the anecdote. All three use anecdotes as a kind of 'primitive cell', or cornerstone. Catherine Sousloff even argues that it is the most eminent content in Vasari's biographies⁴⁴, who represents typical images of artists, regardless of whether they are 'true' or not. Furthermore, Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz argue that the anecdotes a historian chooses from the life of an artist reveal the image that the historian had of that artist.⁴⁵ They conclude their book defining the mythical stories or legends surrounding an artist as an "enacted biography".⁴⁶ Although written before most of the biopics were produced, this definition is well adapted to cinema, which visualizes the arena or living space in which images or models of artists are being enacted.

Like any other filmed object (the actual sets, objects, people, locations etc.), the image of the artist in the film is an object that becomes representative of the category to which it belongs⁴⁷, in this case the referent category - *artist*. Different images of different artists, whether actual or fictional, melt, into a vague but generalized image of 'artist'; or they exist in the spectator's mind, all together, as components of the term 'artist' and elements of its myth.⁴⁸

The fact that biopics, like fiction films in general, construct their plots around

⁴⁴ C. M. Sousloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept*, Minneapolis and London: University Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 155.

⁴⁵ E. Kris and O. Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979 (Vienna: Krystall Verlag, 1934), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 132 (last words of the book).

⁴⁷ J. Aumont, A. Bergala, M. Marie and M. Vernet, *op.cit*, p. 79.

⁴⁸ This is similar to the way Liam Hudson describes the significance of the artist's model, who to the viewer of the painting is "recruited to the cast of actors and actresses who people his daydreams, reveries and sexual fantasies". L. Hudson, chapter 9 "The Still Image" in *Bodies of Knowledge: The Psychological Significance of the Nude in Art*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982, p. 143

historical eras and familiar stories that actually occurred, merely create the illusion of ‘reality’ while trying to make it look realistic (see above, p. 2). Aumont, Bergala, Marie and Vernet (1983), argue that “the fiction film transforms itself into an ideological vehicle.”⁴⁹ The referents of the ‘artist’ category are valid for documentary films of actual artists also. A few such films influenced, if not created, some of the visual signifiers and the myth of artist in general [e.g. Namuth’s film of Pollock (1951)⁵⁰, or Clouzot’s film of Picasso painting in front of the camera (1955)⁵¹]. The aura around these films may not be derived from the greatness ascribed to the artist, but from the film itself which incarnates the ‘*artist*’ category – namely: the myth of *the* artist.

Consequently, that which is not included in the category ‘artist’ will not be referred as such, unless the category itself is changed. Accepting the images constructing the myth also means accepting the possibility of shifting, changing, or inverting them, hence transforming the myth. These kinds of changes might even be seen as an unavoidable course, as Johannes A. Gaertner suggested in 1970.⁵²

Yet, Gaertner – who obviously referred to male artists, does not foresee a change of course stemming from feminist criticism. Griselda Pollock, on the other hand, reevaluates the place of women artists like Helen Frankenthaler and Lee Krasner in contrast to the myth of Jackson Pollock. She argues that the formal, seemingly

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁵⁰ *Jackson Pollock*, prod. Paul Falkenberg and Hans Namuth, Music by Morton Feldman, 1950. This question echoes in Ed Harris’s feature *Pollock* (2000), above all during the scenes showing Namuth (Norbert Weisser) staging Pollock (Harris) for painting ‘for’ the camera. When the camera focuses close-up on Harris, you wonder through which camera he is seen – Namuth’s or in Harris’s film. Obviously, through both, yet both are seen ‘through’ the actual Namuth’s film.

⁵¹ *Le Mystère Picasso*, dir. Henri-Georges Clouzot, perf. Henri-Georges Clouzot, Pablo Picasso, Claude Renoir, Filmsonor, 1955.

⁵² For example: instead of the familiar images (the mad, the young death, the ‘sick genius’ etc.) there might rise the image of the artist as business man or as being ‘engaged’ with one’s society. J. A. Gaertner, “Myth and Pattern in the Lives of Artists”, *Art Journal*, XXX (1), Fall 1970, p. 30.

impartial examination of Pollock through such as aspects as movement or brush strokes, are not neutral but gender-related, that is: signifying maleness.⁵³

Barthes defines myth as: history becoming nature and sense transformed into shape (whose repetition and variations are the key for deciphering the myth).⁵⁴ When referring to women artists, I would like to argue that the process of deciphering the myth of the artist through the variations of its visual signs, seems to be inverted. That is: accumulating the variations of a new motif and giving it the same status and definition as *myth*.

1. Gesture: signifying the category 'artist' through gestures.

Portraying any character on screen is composed of words, a series of gestures and expressions as seen through different camera angles. They are primarily emphasized using medium and close-up camera shots. As Bazin argues, painting developed to provide illusion, while photography and cinema are aimed at satisfying our obsession for realism.⁵⁵ Moreover: Aumont, Bergala, Marie and Vernet argue that although seemingly realistic, the characteristics of cinematic apparatus — in which both the representer and the represented are fictional — causes every film (even documentary, for example) to be illusionistic, a spectacle of effigies, and thus, fiction.⁵⁶

Hence, an artist on screen could exist *only* through the gestures, expressions and words the actor's dramatic portrayal, the angles through which the director chooses to show them and through the cinematographer's eye. These visual means may beg the question - what makes the person being called an artist an artist: is it the *gesture* or

⁵³ G. Pollock, Chapter 11, "Killing Men and Dying Women", in: F. Orton, and G. Pollock, *Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 248-253.

⁵⁴ R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (Hebrew translation), Tel-Aviv: Babel, p. 246-7, 250, 258.

⁵⁵ A. Bazin, "The Anthology of the Photographic Image", (Hebrew edition) in H. Keller (ed.), *An Anthology of the Cinema*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990, pp. 251-252.

⁵⁶ J. Aumont, A. Bergala, M. Marie and M. Vernet, *op. cit.* pp. 77-79.

the *artwork* he creates? The persona called *artist* actually is established in both worlds. The artworks are given serious treatment in art magazines, academic art-history analysis and criticism; the gesture might seem the territory of literature or newspaper or magazine feature profiles. Yet, it is through the gesture that one simulates himself/herself as an artist – as *The Rebel* brings into extreme through parody.⁵⁷

The sections referring to gesture in following chapters present variations and alterations of the meaning of gesture (that is: how the physical doing of art is represented) within different contexts.

2. Credo

In almost every film about an artist (biopics and fictional), a kind of *credo* appears in the film's narrative to provide a key for the character's behavior and stand point. This corresponds to one of the distinctive characteristics of a biopic in general: the hero's statement at his/ her trial – revealing also the director's own *credo*.⁵⁸

Following are some well-known examples of artists' *credo* statements, representing conventional and alternative approaches.

Pablo Picasso: "...to search means nothing in painting. To find, is the thing."⁵⁹

Jackson Pollock: "...new needs new techniques"; "...The modern artist, it seems to me, is working and expressing ... the energy, the motion, and other inner forces."⁶⁰

Marcel Duchamp: "...the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act."⁶¹

⁵⁷ *The Rebel*, dir. Robert Day, perf. Tony Hancock, prod. W. H. Whittaker, 1961.

⁵⁸ G. F. Custen, *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood constructed Public History*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992, p. 186.

⁵⁹ C. Harrison and P. Wood, *op.cit.*, p. 210.

⁶⁰ Jackson Pollock, Interview with William Wright, in C. Harrison and P. Wood, *op.cit.*, p. 575-576.

⁶¹ K. Stiles and P. Selz, Part 9, "Language and Concepts", *op. cit.* p. 819.

The most representative (and stereotypical) statement found in film is from *The Fountainhead* (1949), based on Ayn Rand's book of the same name. When the architect Howard Roark⁶² stands trial, his defense-speech is his *credo*: "The great creators ...[each of them] held his truth above all things and against all men... It is an ancient conflict. It has another name: the individual against the collective."⁶³

Artists lecture their statements usually before a crowd or a group of people, sometimes to one close character. For example, in *Rembrandt*, the artist states his concept that one woman can embody all images of women ("I call mine Saskia")⁶⁴; in *La Belle Noiseuse* the old painter Frenhofer says: "It's not me who wants... It's the line... the stroke..."⁶⁵

3. Sexuality and art

Two cardinal aspects defining life—art relationships are embodied in the myth of genius. The first sees the work of art as the child of the (male) artist — a substitute for children (that he might or might not have) through which he gains a place of honor in the patriarchal society. In this respect it actually alludes to the meaning of the term *genius* in the Roman sense, which connects it to male procreation, as shown by Christine Battersby.⁶⁶ Kris and Kurz define references to the work of art as the artists child as a traditional characteristic, exemplifying what writers do throughout history to display the connection between life experiences of the artist and his works of art⁶⁷

⁶² Gary Cooper, perf., *The Fountainhead*, dir. King Vidor, Henry Blanke, 1949.

⁶³ Michel Piccoli, perf., *La Belle Noiseuse*, dir. Jacques Rivette, Pierre Grise, Martine Marignac, Maurice Tinchant (associate), 1991.

⁶⁴ Charles Laughton, perf., *Rembrandt*, dir. Alexander Korda, Alexander Korda, 1936.

⁶⁵ Reminding statements of Picasso, as brought in *Surviving Picasso*: "Painting is stronger than me. It makes me do what it wants."
Anthony Hopkins, perf., *Surviving Picasso*, dir. James Ivory, Merchant-Ivory Productions, Warner Bros. (US), 1996.

⁶⁶ Throughout her book, *op. cit.*, eg. p. 38.

⁶⁷ Kris and Kurz, *op. cit.*, p. 115. The book was written in 1934, but the tradition is still living, as Battersby (1989) emphasizes and exemplifies.

The second refers to the artistic act as expression of maleness, by comparing artistic and sexual acts. Hence, the artist's relations with his (woman) model and with her image created by him – become substitutes for woman/wife. Kris and Kurz attest to Freud's assertion concerning the *sublimation* of love into artistic creativity, and present it as the counterpart to the ancient myth of Pygmalion. They claim this relationship actually recurs in every artist (male)–model (female) relationship and that it became a fixed feature of the image of artist's character from an isolated element in Renaissance fiction ⁶⁸.

Male creativity was also differentiated from female creativity (whenever acknowledged) by signifying different territories: 'high art' vs. 'craft', even if 'feminine' characteristics were ascribed to male creators. Hence, argues Battersby, "in these modes of *territorial* apartheid, 'feminine' and 'masculine' are synonymous with 'female' and 'male', and 'genius' becomes [...] a secondary sexual characteristic of mature (European) males."⁶⁹

This kind of gendering, which Battersby calls the "Virility School" is much more common in the fine arts than in literature. Its peak was at the middle of twentieth century, embodied in artists like Picasso and Pollock.⁷⁰ Amelia Jones points to the connection between the image of masculinity – in culture (such as James Dean or Marlon Brando) and as it is adopted by artists – and the artistic authority of the image of western male modern artist as worker, from Van Gogh to Pollock as depicted by Namuth.⁷¹

The two formulas mentioned above collapse when a woman is placed as the

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 116-117.

⁶⁹ Battersby, *op.cit*, p. 56-7

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

⁷¹ A. Jones, "'Clothes Make the Man': The Male Artist as a Performative Function", *The Oxford Art Journal*, 18:2, 1995, p. 22.

artist. Before these equations could actually collapse, however, the woman artist herself would be expelled from that composite imagined territory of image and myth of the artist. Nowadays, when women artists ceased to be a rare sight, this statement might seem too simplified and even stereotypical. Even so, when examining the established texts generated throughout Western history, as Christine Battersby does in *Gender and Genius*, the impression of this conflict is only reinforced. She claims that for a woman it was not just choosing a career but in fact “choosing what to *be*: a woman or a sexual pervert.” (Italics in original – R.M.)⁷²

These formulas are demonstrated in Chapters II and III by contrasting the fate of Michelangelo, *the* artist paradigm (as portrayed by Charlton Heston in *The Agony and The Ecstasy*), with a modern reflection – Rodin (Gérard Depardieu in *Camille Claudel*). And both can be seen in contrast with the woman artist – Camille Claudel (portrayed by Isabelle Adjani in *Camille Claudel*).

4. Artist as god

Michelangelo Buonarroti is considered the paradigmatic Genius, artist-god persona, as created by Vasari. Battersby argues that Vasari’s *Lives* reveals the direction towards which art criticism and theory would move. Since Vasari presented both Michelangelo and Raphael as sublime heroes, it is tempting “to read into Vasari our modern understanding of genius.”⁷³

The ‘modern understanding’ Battersby refers to are actually Romantic characteristics of Genius such as a raging and/or melancholic temper,⁷⁴ which are more applicable in our time than the original Renaissance notion primarily relating to a perfection of skills.

The patterns defining the genius are mainly drawn from artists’ biographies,

⁷² C. Battersby, *op.cit*, p. 64.

⁷³ *Ibid* pp. 39-40; see also chapter II.

⁷⁴ That corresponds to the required drama for cinematic purposes.

scholarly, as well as those “as existing in the mind of the public, critics and artists.”⁷⁵ Undermining the concept of artist as god, and presenting both the artist and the concept of his image as products of specific cultural atmosphere suggests a relative concept that binds aesthetic values with the social circumstances that determine those values.

The issue of women artists and the art made by women is a representative example for this shift. Linda Nochlin’s inaugurating article “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”⁷⁶ opened the feminist discourse in the visual art field (in the United States) — not considering Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, which stood quite isolated for 22 years.⁷⁷

Griselda Pollock advances the discussion regarding genius and the relationship between feminism and art history by taking it some steps further. In *Vision and Difference* she argues that greatness itself was a gender-biased criteria, hence, Nochlin’s ideas regarding “great” women artists seem irrelevant.⁷⁸

In the early 1990s, the context of feminist perspective and women’s issues merged with contemporary tendencies in post-modern research. Anne Higonnet provides an example with her claim that *the concept of genius*, which is the most pervasive and persuasive factor specific to the arts, is exclusively masculine. Moreover, she asserts that it has been hidden in the development of the concept of genius since the Renaissance, in tandem to a hierarchy of art forms and as an

⁷⁵ J. A. Gaertner, *op.cit.* p.30.

⁷⁶ L. Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (1971), in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1989, pp. 145-178.

⁷⁷ S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (*Le Deuxième Sexe*1949), trans. and edited H. M. Parshley, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972.

⁷⁸ G Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, London and New York: Routledge, 1988, p. 35.

explanation of art's creation and its quality.⁷⁹

CHAPTER II: INTRODUCING/FOLLOWING THE MYTH.

⁷⁹ A Higonnet, "Images — Appearances, Leisure, and Subsistence", in G. Fraisse and M. Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women in the West*, Vol. IV, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 249.

A critical review published when *The Agony and the Ecstasy* was shown in England in 1965, may provide a key to the ongoing debate concerning representation of artists on screen. It was accompanied by an excuse for the exceptional placement of a movie review in the exhibition section of *The Burlington Magazine* (an art magazine) due to its unique subject: Michelangelo Buonarroti. Keith Roberts states that quite a lot of people would probably feel “that the whole subject is too sacrosanct to be filmed at all.”⁸¹

1. Sanctity of the Myth.

This film provides a link between art history and cinema, as a representative example of the myth of genius.⁸² As mentioned in chapter 1, Michelangelo was *the* model for the Genius from the time that Vasari portrayed him as such. He is the earliest artist protagonist of a feature film.⁸³

Aiming to respect to the actual artist, Michelangelo and his work, the movie strives to imitate the works as accurately as possible and to revive the creative process as it was thought to have occurred, both mentally and materially. For

⁸⁰ *The Agony and The Ecstasy*, dir. Carol Reed, screenplay Philip Dunne, perf. Charlton Heston, Rex Harrison, Diane Cilento, Twentieth Century-Fox, Carol Reed (prod.) 1965.

⁸¹ To those he advised to avoid it altogether. K. Roberts, “Current and Forthcoming Exhibitions, London”, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 107, November 1965, pp. 589-590.

⁸² I chose this film as representative despite its cinematic faults and its very ambition to ‘take us back’ to the moment (years) of creation of the frescoed masterpiece on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Roberts states that it is even considered a decline in Reed’s career. K. Roberts, *ibid.*

⁸³ Earlier biopics of artists were *Affairs of Cellini* (see introduction, p. 8?? and note 42), Alexander Korda’s *Rembrandt* (1936), John Huston’s *Moulin Rouge* (1952) and Vincent Minnelli’s *Lust for Life* (1956).

An earlier film, *Michelangelo* (Switzerland 1940, Directed by Kurt Oertel) and its English-language version *The Titan* (Reedited and re-released by Richard Lyford, 1950), are considered documentaries. These films screen dramatic shots of Michelangelo’s works as intervals between shots of various historic, Italian locations as characteristics or representations of the artist’s historic environment.

example, the set was a full-size replica of the chapel⁸⁴ and the frescos were shown in vivid colors, without cracks, as if they were just created.⁸⁵ The outcome is that the visual accuracy works breaks the drama. Yet, it is precisely these ‘breaks’ that assists in illuminating aspects of the way the film portrays Michelangelo’s image.

2. Gestures of Genius.

The film starts with a thirteen minute prologue⁸⁶ showing Michelangelo’s sculptural and architectural work, accompanied by a documentary-style narration. A simple explanation for the prologue could be that it was done in order to announce the fabricated character portrayed by Charlton Heston and differentiate it from the actual Michelangelo. The audience now can consider the extent to which the figure portrayed is ‘real’.

Throughout the film Michelangelo is presented as a workingman in contrast to Bramante, Raphael and to the Pope in his white gowns. This image of the artist links the meaning of the term *genius* during the Renaissance to the perfection of skills as opposed to imagination or even ‘inspiration’ as added in later centuries.⁸⁷ However, the tendency seen in art history and criticism to read our modern notion of *genius* into

⁸⁴ Using special color photographic processes for transferring the images from the chapel to the set. J. Walker, *op. cit.* p. 50.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Pictures from the restoration of the Sistine Chapel’s ceiling show scaffolds similar to those used in the film (we first see another kind of scaffold, hanging through holes in the ceiling, designed by Bramante which was replaced by Michelangelo). Research for the restoration revealed brighter and more intense colors of the fresco than commonly assumed. Thus, the film represents somewhat false visual ‘reality’. (pl. 1).

⁸⁶ Vincenzo Labella, writer and dir. and Piero Portalupi A.S.C., photography, “The artist who did not want to paint”, prologue to *The Agony and The Ecstasy*, Twentieth Century-Fox, 1965.

⁸⁷ Battersby emphasizes the twist in the term ‘genius’ during the centuries, with its translation from Latin to English. Vasari, credited for inventing this modern concept, did not use the Italian term ‘genio’. English term ‘genius’ actually refers to another close Italian term, ‘ingegno’, which, in English is translated as ‘ingeniousness’. The Italian ‘genio’ had the same meaning as the Latin ‘genius’, referring to divine forces of male procreativity. ‘Ingenio’ was associated, the Latin ‘ingenium’, to good judgement and knowledge, as well as with talent and skills of great artists in mimetic traditions. The meaning of ‘genius’ and ‘ingenium’ in English merged during the seventeenth century, and is present in all European languages since, thus constructing the Romantic notion *genius*. Battersby, *op.cit.* pp. 38-9 and 103.

Vasari concept (as aforementioned by Battersby) applies to Heston's personification of Michelangelo as well (see below).

The film also evinces the crucial shift that occurred during the Renaissance in patron-artist relationships: from the artist who glorified his patron through his creative work, to the patron, who attains fame through the glorification of the artist.⁸⁸ The film progresses through the clashes, debates, discussions, agreements and disagreements between Michelangelo and Pope Julius II (Rex Harrison), concentrating on the peak of their historic encounter. The original purpose – the Pope's wish of merely decorating the ceiling with an "appropriate design" and Michelangelo's lack of desire to commit to the ceiling - arguing he was not a painter- are juxtaposed to forms actually created, due to the artist's ambition.

Cinema's need of a hero for its dramatic purpose finds its ally in the historic development of nurturing individualism throughout the Renaissance. Even if Reed (or Stone, who wrote the script with Philip Dunne) did not consciously or deliberately aim at the myth of genius, the authority gained during the Renaissance by artists regarding the superiority of their artistic judgment is reflected, revealed and even incarnated in Heston's fabrication of Michelangelo.⁸⁹ Hence, the authority of the Pope and the authority of the artist are presented one against the other, as equals – as pointed by Rudolph and Margot Wittkower concerning the actual historic figures⁹⁰. Furthermore, the Sacred Duties of the Pope are compared to the artist's creative work: whenever Julius holds a mass, Michelangelo and his team were working above their

⁸⁸ A. Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Volume One, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1951, p. 325.

⁸⁹ Hauser places this development within the social-cultural-economic shift of dominance from the Christian Church to the emerging secular intellectuals and humanists; and the artists' shift of loyalty towards them (hence, yet again –cultural/intellectual/social/economic dependency). *Ibid.*, pp. 319-320.

⁹⁰ R. and M. Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn*, New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963, p. 40.

heads.⁹¹

Already at the beginning of the movie Michelangelo is shown beside a new giant stone. The camera shows, intermittently, the Pope and Michelangelo, his hand on the stone (**video extract 1**), as if to signify his ownership — not of the stone but of the figure inside it which he will uncover, reminiscent of the actual Michelangelo's sonnets.⁹²

A significant dramatic point that establishes the artist's authority over that of the Pope is represented by a shift in gestures. Inspired by an accident in a bar, Michelangelo returns to the chapel and ruins one of the frescos using a scraper and another by throwing red paint on it. (**video extract 2**). Up until this point Michelangelo's gestures were precise, relatively slow, and small-scale (**video extract 3**). The gestural shift is an expression of dissatisfaction on the narrative level, but from the perspective of art-history, it is reminiscent of the large-scale gestures characterizing abstract-expressionist painters, which Peter Selz defines as "Gestural Abstraction".⁹³

The association of this kind of gesture to Abstract Expressionism, and in particular to Pollock, suggests its meaning as expression of the artist's inner world (see Pollock's quotation in Chapter 1, p. 17). In this way the character

⁹¹ Thus, both are presented as working under God's inspiration and by His authority.

⁹² Earlier he said to Bramante: "(Moses)...here, alive, sleeping inside the stone. God sets him in there. The sculptor only cuts them loose". (**video extract 1a**).

From the Sonnet:

"The best of artists hath no thought to show

Which the rough stone in its superfluous shell

Doth not include..."

From, G. Vasari, "Michelangelo", *Lives of The Artists, Vol. I* (A selection trans. by G. Bull; first published as *Lives of the Artists*, 1965), London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1987, p. 422.

That saying is alluded in Camille Claudel through Claudel's young neighbour. When he sees her marble version of Maturity, he asks her "how did you know that there are people inside there?" (**video ext.18**) Thus, the greatness of revealing the sculpture hidden in the stone, is attributed to Claudel, not to Rodin.

⁹³ Selz denotes characterizations such as intense personality, relation to romantic subjectivity and expressive meaning of the gesture. In: P. Selz, "Gestural Abstraction", in K. Stiles and P. Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a sourcebook of artists' writings*, pp. 11-12.

“Michelangelo” is conceived of as both Romantic and Modern artist.⁹⁴

Although Reed’s intention for such a reference is not evident, the iconic image of Jackson Pollock creating his dripping paintings (**video extract 4**)⁹⁵, had already existed in American culture for more than a decade, as noted by Amelia Jones .⁹⁶ Furthermore, in a parodical manner, *The Rebel* commemorates gestures similar to those in *The Agony and The Ecstasy*, by adding bursts of music to accompany the movements (**video extract 5**). Although this image of Michelangelo in itself is fiction, it embodies the reality of myth, which validly represents both actual and fictitious artists, such as Mr. Hancock in *The Rebel* , Saul Kaplan (Alan Bates) in *An Unmarried Woman*⁹⁷ (**video extract 6**) or Lionel Dobey in *Life Lessons*⁹⁸ (**video extract 7**). In fact, the prologue of the latter immediately enhances the fabrication of the image. It paraphrases the attributes identified with Pollock in Namuth’s film, introduced through circular frames on objects that open to a normal frame expanse: the stained shoes and cloths, the cigarette, the booze, the piles of thick color, the nervous/neurotic gestures and walking back and forth, the cans with brushes (**video extract 7a**). The prologue ends with a long-shot and pan of the loft. The question of representing reality is echoed in *Pollack, 2000*⁹⁹ (acted and directed by Ed Harris) when Ed Harris follows the way Namouth created Pollack’s image on the screen.

⁹⁴ Characteristics of Romantic artist, given, for example, by Battersby: *op. cit.* pp. 109-110 (the actions of artistic producer) or pp. 84-85 (the *logos spermatikos*).

Description of Modern artist as defined by Jackson Pollock in an interview with William Wright, in: C. Harrison and P. Wood, *op. cit.* p. 576.

⁹⁵ Seen in the Hans Namuth/Paul Falkenberg documentary film - 1950.

⁹⁶ A. Jones, ““Clothes Make the Man”: The Male Artist as a Performative Function”, *The Oxford Art Journal*, 18:2, 1995, pp. 18 and 22.

⁹⁷ *An Unmarried Woman*, dir. Paul Mazurski, perf. Jill Clayburgh, Alan Bates, Michale Murphy, Cliff Gorman, prod. Paul Mazurski and Anthony Ray, USA, 1978.

⁹⁸ *Life Lessons* (in *New York Stories*), dir. Martin Scorsese, perf. Nick Nolte, Rosanna Arquette, prod. Barbara De Fina, USA, 1989.

⁹⁹ *Pollack*, dir. Ed Harris, perf. Ed Harris, Marcia Gay Harden, Amy Madigan, Jeffrey Tambor, prod. Brant-Allen (II) (executive), Fred Berner, Peter Brant (executive), Ed Harris, John Kilik (II), Zeke Productions, USA, 2000. The extracts are taken from a preview of the film in a BBC cinema program, 23.12.00.

(video extract 8).

The mixture of modern images with the attempt to historically personify Michelangelo, exemplifies Battersby's assertion suggesting that the film 'spoils' the sanctity of the myth that had been created since Vasari. It does not undermine the myth itself, however. The cinematic realization of incidents, works of art and characters are able to reveal what the discipline of art-history considered ineffable. J.Harris claims that these ineffable qualities serve as signs of greatness and genius.¹⁰⁰

The layering, or superimposition of the images of two icons of genius and novelty in their times, i.e. Pollock and Heston's Michelangelo, create a fabricated image in the viewer's mind (see Chapter I, p. 12).¹⁰¹

3. Challenging concepts.

In the middle of the movie, a crucial scene substantiating Michelangelo's authority offers the viewers his point of view — visually and conceptually. The Pope brings his cardinals to observe the on-going work. In response to their criticism, Michelangelo gives a speech, which undermines his patron's authority (**video extract 9**).¹⁰² Visually, Reed presents us with two complementary views: over Michelangelo's shoulders downward to the Cardinals, and behind the Pope's shoulders upward showing Michelangelo on the scaffold, surrounded by the figures his hands had created.

This artist's *credo* — stating his point of view as the sole, new and

¹⁰⁰ J. Harris, "Introduction to Volume II", in A. Hauser, *The Social History of Art* (1951), Volume 2: Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, London and New York: Routledge, an imprint of Taylor & Francis Books Ltd Paperback, 1999, p.xlii.

¹⁰¹ This is similar to the way Liam Hudson describes the meaning of the artist's model for the spectator of the painting. She is "recruited to the cast of actors and actresses who people his daydreams, reveries and sexual fantasies".
L. Hudson, chapter 9 "The Still Image" in *Bodies of Knowledge: The Psychological Significance of the Nude in Art*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982, p. 143

¹⁰² Of the nude figures, of the time it takes him, of his conception, of the liberties he takes that exceed what they find appropriate for an artist, for a Christian artist, and so forth.

incomprehensible truth — shifts the source of authority totally to his hands, until eventually, even the servants of God would recognize his greatness and glory. (**video extract 10**).

4. **Artist, not man.**

Imagining Michelangelo as a man in daily life seems profane, contrary to the preservation of the myth, and challenges its ‘sanctity’ .

As described in chapter 1 (section 3), since the Renaissance, biographies of artists emphasize the connections between sexual energy and artistic creation. They even attempt to interpret the work of art according to the artist’s sexuality or sexual expressions. Vasari presented this characteristic of genius in regard to Michelangelo.¹⁰³ In *The Agony and The Ecstasy* this issue is established through several encounters between Michelangelo and Contessina de Medici (Diane Cilento).

At a scene close to the middle of the movie (**video extract 11**) Michelangelo finds her waiting for him at his home. She expresses her feelings, both in words and by kissing him — a gesture that he does not respond to. She wonders whether it is because of another woman. No, he says, embroiling himself in a muddled explanation of love, sex, and their meaning in connection to his creation. Yet, his words do reflect the concept ascribed to the male genius in general: “To other men it’s warm houses, women, children...to me it’s...” focusing on his stretched out palms.

It must be said that these scenes seem somewhat planted, since the movie does not engage in Michelangelo’s intimate or sexual relationships of any kind. The presence of the character of Contessina de Medici in the narrative seems to pay lip service to the requirements of commercial cinema, and of biopics in general, for some kind of heterosexual romance with the male protagonist.¹⁰⁴ This, as well as the

¹⁰³ Vasari, p. 428

¹⁰⁴ G. F. Custen, *op.cit.*, pp. 158-9.

clumsy way it deals with Michelangelo's sexuality, and his personality as a whole, serve as poor explanations for the interrelationships of life and art. Thus, the film creates the impression that the artistic process is detached from life events and occurrences.

5. God on the Scaffold.

Michelangelo finds shelter from Julius's soldiers in a cave in the mountains near Carrara. There, presented in a scene of extreme pathos, he experiences a revelation at dawn, that is reminiscent of the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (**video extract 12**). Reciting verses from *Genesis*, he sees shapes in the clouds that presumably inspire him for the panel *Creation of Adam* and motivate the whole plan of the ceiling. The image of the artist alone at the height of the mountains is echoed by the height of the Chapel and the artist all alone in his artistic endeavor,¹⁰⁵ thus becoming a metaphor of the artist as the Creator, as God.

As Battersby notes, the Romantic genius becomes god, ruler of the world of art; he imposes order on chaos, an order "derived from the depths of the personality of the 'I AM'."¹⁰⁶ This 'I Am' also establishes Heston's 'Michelangelo' as a **modern artist**; indeed, the actual artist was crowned by Hauser as its first representative.¹⁰⁷ With Michelangelo, he claims, "The legend of the artist is complete."¹⁰⁸ Now, Hauser argues, full emancipation of the artist exists for the first time as the quality genius **takes on the meaning appropriate to this day.**¹⁰⁹ Hauser exemplifies the formation of this legend through a series of anecdotes from the lives of great artists of the period, who reflect the changes in the status and image of the artist: Leonardo da

¹⁰⁵ Although the film shows him working with assistants, Florentine masters of fresco technique, and later with only few assistants.

¹⁰⁶ Battersby, *op. cit.* p.110.

¹⁰⁷ A. Hauser, *op.cit.*, p. 313.

¹⁰⁸ A. Hauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-326.

¹⁰⁹ See above, note 8.

Vinci, Raphael, Titian and finally Michelangelo.¹¹⁰

The implication of divine inspiration goes back to Vasari himself,¹¹¹ from the very beginning of his discussion on Michelangelo, which is the most extensive of all the artists he biographed.¹¹² According to Vasari, Michelangelo was named after the archangel and was blessed by the stars. All these were signs pointed to his future greatness.¹¹³ Kris and Kurz argue that this astrological context is a description of birth circumstances typical to hero of myth.

At this point, they also argue, “the biographer becomes a prophet”.¹¹⁴ As previously mentioned, anecdotes from lives of artists had been used in establishing their image. Therefore, it is not only Vasari who created Michelangelo as a mythical figure, but also Hauser himself, who Harris argues, adheres to this adoration.¹¹⁵ And through the anecdote, the myth finds its way to screen — where it can be magnified by adjoining it to the mystic figure of the actor that personifies him.¹¹⁶

Hauser’s acceptance of Michelangelo’s genius and the greatness of his works as an unquestionable given — as well as Stone’s and Reed’s acceptance — can be related to Vasari’s initial characterization. It is, as Harris argues, rooted in a parallel he finds between Hauser’s approach and the notion of genius itself. This is also the condition of modern art at that time, where both art and aesthetic judgment have

¹¹⁰ A. Hauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-32

¹¹¹ Vasari, *op.cit.*, pp. 418-9, 428, 431.

¹¹² For example, in this edition, Leonardo de Vinci’s biography takes 16 pages; on Raphael — 40; on Titian — 19; whereas on Michelangelo — 117 pages.

¹¹³ Vasari, *Op.Cit.*, p. 326.

Soussloff connects the meaning of Michelangelo’s name to that of the fictional artist in Scorsese’s film *Life Lessons*.

C. M. Soussloff, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

¹¹⁴ E. Kris and O. Kurz, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

¹¹⁵ J. Harris, “Introduction to Volume IV”, in A. Hauser, *The Social History of Art* (1951), Volume IV: Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age, London and New York: Routledge, an imprint of Taylor & Francis Books Ltd Paperback, 1999, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

¹¹⁶ The most salient example for this kind passage is “Van Gogh” portrayed by Kirk Douglas in *Lust for Life*. (As Griselda Pollock suggests in P. Hayward, *op. cit.* pp. 133-136.)

inexplicable nature.¹¹⁷

This was also much the context in which the movie was created, and it might therefore explain Roberts's observations and assertion regarding the 'sanctity' of the subject and the difficulty facing the audience to embrace a film on this issue at all. Moreover this is apparently the source of Reed's need to add the documentary prologue (created by another director).

*

The film as a whole gives the impression of historical accuracy and respect. Neither the concept of Michelangelo as genius, *the Genius* — nor cinematic conventions are challenged. As such it adheres to the visual conventions, although contemporary ones, of portraying a great artist at work.

In the next chapter we will see how this equation, great artist = great temperament, continues in the portrayal of Auguste Rodin in *Camille Claudel*, and is challenged by the woman artist protagonist, Camille Claudel.

CHAPTER III: CHALLENGING THE MYTH.

¹¹⁷ J. Harris (Hauser), Vol. II, p. xliii

Genius, as discussed in previous chapters, defines the exalted male creative persona. The issue of a woman genius questions two main aspects of the definition of genius: the social and the aesthetic. In her analysis of the connections between social and aesthetic factors in defining the marginality of an artist, Battersby differentiates between an *outsider* and the *other*.¹¹⁹ I refer to these differentiations in order to clarify the complicated position of Camille Claudel (the actual artist and as represented in the film), as a woman artist who adopted male conventions and simultaneously undermined them. For being the *outsider* as an artist, she will eventually pay by being the *other* as a woman. Battersby argues that art history maintains the dichotomy Outsider/Other in the way it describes male and female artists: the first is the norm for male artists, the second is for women artists.¹²⁰

An intriguing example of this double standard in modern times is the artists-couple Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin. In one sense, both represent the extreme of all that Michelangelo represents. In addition, their meeting presents the emerging issues concerning women artists in modern times. The film juxtaposes the benefits and the sad and tragic outcomes of the confusion of art and life and art and love, with respect to its female protagonist; and of artistic creation of two powerful personas

¹¹⁸ *Camille Claudel*, dir. Bruno Nuytten, perf. Isabelle Adjani, Gérard Depardieu, Madeleine Robinson, Laurent Gréville, Philippe Clévenot, Katrine Boorman, Alain Cuny, produc. Isabelle Adjani, Bernard Artigues (delegate) and Christian Fechner, 1988. Nominated for Academy Awards in 1990, and other festivals, won the Berlin Film Festival (1989) for best actress and 6 César prizes (1989).

¹¹⁹ *Others* - those who, because of our racist and sexist paradigms of normal humanity, get viewed as not-quite-human
Outsiders - those who are viewed as fully human but not-quite-normal. Under this category come 'feminine' males, genius males, crazy males, degenerate males, shamanistic males... even pseudo-males (cf. Lombroso's 'the women of genius are men'). Battersby, *op.cit.*, p. 199.

¹²⁰ Battersby, *op.cit.*, p. 203.

working at the same field.¹²¹ Nevertheless, concerning the components representing of the myth of the genius, each individual can be traced separately. I will concentrate on Claudel, and refer to Rodin on for comparisons.

1. Sensibility of clay, master of carving marble.

Our first view of Camille Claudel, portrayed by Isabelle Adjani,¹²² is of her digging for mud in the outskirts of Paris and carrying it in a suitcase through the streets of Paris to the studio she shares with Jessy Lipscomb, an English sculptress. These beginning four minutes (approximately) of the film are almost completely wordless, presenting her as a sensuous, tempestuous and stubborn person, striving to pursue with her art against both artistic and bourgeois conventions (**video extract 13**). This portrayal identifies her with the Romantic male image, which of course collides with her being a woman (see section 3 below) and thus becomes a signifier of Claudel as *outsider*.

We first encounter Auguste Rodin (Gérard Depardieu) on his first visit to Claudel and Lipscomb's studio. This is also the first meeting on screen between the two protagonists. The film establishes Claudel's professional reputation similar to the way *The Agony and The Ecstasy* presents Michelangelo — as a worker. Claudel wears a stained buttoned-down work-dress, over a white fancy blouse, in contrast to Lipscomb's neat outfit (**video extract 14**).¹²³ A similar contrast will be established

¹²¹ Whitney Chadwick compares his relationship with Claudel to one Rodin had with the English painter Gwen John, arguing that although the latter was as intense as the former, it did not involve a shared medium.
W. Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1990, pp. 278-9.

¹²² She was one of the producers of the movie, who, at the time, shared her life and a son with the film's director, Bruno Nuyten.

¹²³ Photographs of the actual Claudel and Lipscomb reveal that Lipscomb seemed less 'fair' than both Claudel and the cinematic Lipscomb (Katrine Boorman) and both look a bit 'rounder' than the actresses do. (**pl. ...**).

even towards Rodin.¹²⁴

*

a. The Marble Foot.

A marble statue of a foot serves as a visual signifier of Claudel's genius. At first she says to her brother Paul¹²⁵ that she wants to make a sculpture so good that Rodin would sign it. Paul adds that it would be like Michelangelo with his pupils.

Rodin provides her a piece of marble, out of which she carves a foot (**video extract 15**) which she leaves at his workshop. The subsequent succession of scenes, hint that this demonstration of skill became her entry ticket into the master's workshop as his assistant.¹²⁶ Eventually he will sign it. Later it will be seen in Claudel's studio-residency, alongside two other signifiers of her artistic independence: the box containing her money and jewelry (financial equity) and the album of her works and reviews arranged by her father. (**video extract 16**). Finally, after her one-woman exhibition, we see her at night standing on a bridge, her hand caresses the sculpture then throwing it into the Seine. (**video extract 17**).

Although the marble foot sculpture signifies Claudel's passage from an apprentice to a recognized artist, it also bears the residue of her 15-year relationship with Rodin.

It is important to state that although this statue probably did not exist, some parallels can be found among the actual works of both artists. For example: Claudel's bronze sculpture of a hand, dated 1885 (**pl. 2**), one of Rodin's plaster sculptures (dated after 1900) of Claudel's head, a hand of one of the Citizens of Calais that has same gesture as Claudel's bronze (**pl. 3**). Indeed, she worked with him on this group

¹²⁴ Echoed in Claudel's words to him on their last meeting: "Socializing, never dirtying your hands."

¹²⁵ the film shows Paul Claudel developing into a successful poet and diplomat parallel to Camille's decline.

¹²⁶ With Lipscomb joining her.

of figures and modeled mainly their hands and feet.¹²⁷

b. Childhood as a precursor of genius.

Kris and Kurz define episodes from an artist's childhood as evidence of talent and as a *mythological motif*. The discovery of talent, they argue, became the most common theme in biographical 'childhood histories' of artists.¹²⁸

A second typical motif is that of the young prodigy triumphing over obstacles often put in his way by those nearest him. This age-old motif is also conforms to the popular notions of artistic creation. It is thus "immensely potent" when found in other fields (such as plays).¹²⁹ ¹³⁰ Although full-length feature films about artists were not yet created when they wrote their book, this idea is valid for cinema.

Claudel's first supporter was her father. As the film puts it, he stood beside her (and in opposition to her mother) since childhood, providing the emotional and financial means to nurture her talent. His support is revealed in several scenes, either verbally¹³¹ or by his updating of the album containing photos of her works and newspaper comments.

His most significant statement is given at a gathering of the family and guests, including Rodin. His description of her as uncompromising (and not arrogant as her

¹²⁷ A. Higonnet, "Myths of Creation: Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin" in: W. Chadwick and I. De Courivron (eds.), *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1993, p. 18.

And also in: A. Rivière, "Le mouvement de la vie", in: M. Laurent and B. Gaudichon (Commissaires), *Camille Claudel (1864-1943)*, Musée Rodin, Paris; Musée Sainte-Croix, Poitiers, 1984, p. 17.

¹²⁸ Kris and Kurz, op.cit. p. 28.

¹²⁹ Ibid p. 30-8.

¹³⁰ Several films establish their narrative either by approving or confronting the artist's path from childhood to adulthood: Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio* (1986) established the genius of the artist-to-be alongside his *outsiderness* as a potential criminal. *Mina Tannenbaum* (1993), written and directed by Martine Dugowson establishes the eminence and tragic fate of its protagonist (from childhood to her death when she commits suicide) by comparing her to her more superficial and bourgeois friend Ethel (from the 60s to early 90s, within the Jewish-Parisian milieu).

¹³¹ "Mr. Boucher always said you can't gain recognition if you don't exhibit."; "Your future belongs to you"; or "My daughter existed long before she met Rodin".

mother describes her), he says – as the camera shows Rodin – that Camille used to model clay into bones of a human skeleton and baked them in the oven, forgetting to eat and drink.

c. Men recognizing Claudel's genius.

Michelangelo, described by Vasari as a child prodigy, is mentioned by Claudel and Rodin as the paradigm for *genius* and is compared to them both as a role model. A climax of this identification is found towards the 'beginning of the end': Claudel exhausted, surrounded by the stone chips and dust, finishes carving a marble version of *Maturity (L'Age Mûr)* (Pl. 4) when her young neighbor, Robert enchantedly asks her: "How did you know there were people inside the white rock?", (video extract 18) echoing Michelangelo's motto. Her response is a smile.

In Rodin and Claudel's most delicate, first intimate dialogue, Rodin, speaks of Michelangelo's slaves and compares her ideas to his "pure genius." (Video extract 19).¹³² Further statements by Rodin assuring Claudel's greatness will be mentioned to others' ears, the most significant of which occurs when he reveals her sculpture of his portrait made in his absence. He announces, "Mlle. Claudel has become a master".¹³³ As Higonet states, Rodin fully acknowledged Claudel's talent, encouraged her career and even supported her right to sculpt nude (see also p. 45).¹³⁴

Paul Claudel's most significant comment is stated out loud at the opening of her exhibition: "Camille Claudel is the first to sculpt from within."¹³⁵ The text also echoes

¹³² He says: "You know things which took me years to understand. Things I saw in Italy... Michelangelo's slaves... It's that overwhelming feeling when faced with pure genius."

¹³³ At first the observers, Limet and Rodin's assistants, fail to see it as a self portrait. While this is going on, Claudel is seen sneaking into the house to confront Rodin and announce her decision to leave him.

¹³⁴ Higonet, p. 24

¹³⁵ Taken from his article 'Camille Claudel statuary', published in 1905, and reprinted in the book that was the basis for the script of the film: R-M. Paris, *Camille: the Life of Camille Claudel, Rodin's Muse and Mistress*, London: Aurum Press 1988, pp. xv-xix. Cited by A. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

the formula of revealing the artist's talents in early childhood.¹³⁶

Blot, Claudel's main gallery support, is also presented in the film as her rescuer. He pulls her works, her cats and her out of the flooded studio-residence. This very dark scene (visually and in meaning) seeming to be the film's lowest point (though there will be a lower one at the end) is highly contrasted by the brightness and tidiness of her sculptures being exhibited in the scenes following **(video extract 20)**. When he first visits her studio¹³⁷ he attributes her with the two characteristics of *genius* attributed to Michelangelo in *The Agony and The Ecstasy*: *skill* and *a rich imagination*, i.e. combining the Renaissance and Romantic notions.

Blot offers Claudel the real rescue she desires: an exhibition. His excitement regarding her new works is strengthened by visual means: the camera scans the onyx sculptures lying on the floor, emphasizing the intensity embodied in their small scale **(video extract 21)**, and the white highlights of the marble and plaster sculptures within the darkness and the gloomy atmosphere.

And finally, with the ultimate words of recognition, Blot honors her after the opening of her exhibition. Although she sells nothing, he says: "You're the most authentic sculptor alive ... Genius always terrifies at first." Claudel, in return — wearing the flamboyant dress she made for the occasion — expresses her love, asking him to keep the bronze and marble sculptures and return her only the plasters (which she will soon break, only to bury them at the same location where she dug up the clay).

Although the loneliness, in which Claudel worked and lived, is presented as emanating from her 'unbalanced' character and her family's alienation, it actually

¹³⁶ "Even before he can see, an infant stretches out his eager hands
He can now feel at his fingertips the art of shaping and possessing..."
The translation is taken from sub-titles of the film.

¹³⁷ After being impressed by her sculpture *Sakuntala* at the "Salon" — which signed her independence after leaving Rodin.

corresponds to the definition of *genius* at that time.¹³⁸

2. “*Camille Claudel, Je suis Camille Claudel!*”

The first half of the movie is titled *Rodin*, and only the second half is named after its main protagonist — *Camille*.¹³⁹ The names reflect art-history’s double standard: he is usually referred to by his family name while she is referred to by her first name.¹⁴⁰ Claudel is still discussed much in connection to Rodin, but vice versa is not as common. Her works are still exhibited in a room in Musée Rodin¹⁴¹ in Paris. Anne Higonnet maintains that this is the result of both historic and personal circumstances. First, Claudel’s provincial and feminine upbringing deprived her of the understanding of the need for socializing. (see note. 7 in this chapter). Second, there was a preconception causing the men who controlled the public art world, to not see her professionally as separated from Rodin.¹⁴²

The film slowly establishes the clash of artistic beliefs between Rodin and Claudel. There are scenes showing Rodin jotting down sentences that encompass his artistic *credo* and then as Claudel establishes herself as a noticeable artist, her own *credo* begins to be heard, until finally, there is the inevitable clash between the two. Claudel’s *credo* in the movie is revealed less in words and more by showing her working among her sculptures,¹⁴³ or objecting Rodin’s statements, although several of her affirmative statements do reveal the different approaches of the two. For example,

¹³⁸ Higonnet, *Chadwick*, p. 18.

¹³⁹ This division appears in the full-length film version and does not appear in the English translation videocassette version.

¹⁴⁰ In the film, Claudel herself refers to her mate by his family name, except once when she adds his first — when referring to his *Balzac*, at the outset of their final meeting.

¹⁴¹ This was the studio they shared and their love-nest.

¹⁴² Higonnet, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁴³ This might be seen as cinematic establishing of *female* signifiers, instead of the verbal male ones.

(**video extract 22**), she emphasizes what would be later defined by Paul Claudel as sculpting ‘from within’, while trying to convince Giganti to sit for her (see p. 42); or when she answers Rodin on his first visit to her studio (**video extract 23**), she expresses confidence in her own point of view. And of course, there is also the very bold act of sculpting male nude.¹⁴⁴

After Claudel and Rodin’s final confrontation, we hear her voice as if answering him, referring to the initial version of *maturity* (also referred as *trinity*) that aroused his temper (**video extracts 24a, 24**) She identifies herself with each of the three figures, whereas Rodin sees them as one-to-one representations of himself, Camille and Rose (his long-life companion).¹⁴⁵

Throughout the film Camille Claudel demonstrates her skill in various materials — plaster, clay, marble (**video extracts 25, 26, 27** respectively). These scenes establish her as inheriting the male tradition of visual signifiers - the ‘artist at work’ that strengthens and supports male concepts alongside comparisons and contradictions to her verbal statements.

The climax of her statements is given at Morhardt’s office, in response to Morhardt’s rage at her slandering Rodin.¹⁴⁶ The exchange of words escalates — and is shown through intermediate shots of them and a long-shot of both at opposite sides of the frame. Morhardt calls her ‘mad’ and she, in response, finally announces herself as a celebrated artist: “Camille Claudel, I’m Camille Claudel!” (**Video extract 28**).

¹⁴⁴ Bearing in mind that the Academy des Beaux Arts was open to women only from 1886, and before that they were deprived of the studying the human nude, not to mention male nude.

¹⁴⁵ Higonnet claims that on the basis of Claudel’s drawings depicting the relationship of Rodin and Rose Beuret’s, his interpretation of the sculpture is adequate. Higonnet, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁶ At the Universal Exposition of 1900 she states what will be given to her later by Blot: “I need to be recognized, not defended“. Mathias Morhardt, gallery owner wrote a large article about her work in 1898. M. Morhardt, *Mademoiselle Camille Claudel*, Mercure de France, mars 1898, p. 710-730.
From: A. Rivière, “Le mouvement de la vie”, (references) in: M. Laurent and B. Gaudichon (Commissaires), *Camille Claudel (1864-1943)*, Musée Rodin, Paris; Musée Sainte-Croix, Poitiers; 1984.

By making the connection between ‘madness’ and pronouncing one’s self-esteem in opposition of another’s’ opinion, she establishes herself and is visually emphasized in a close up, standing against Van Gogh’s painting *Crows over the Wheatfields* (July 1890).

Since there are almost no references in the movie to works by other artists of the time, this reference to Van Gogh becomes highly significant. I view it as a key for the discussion establishing Claudel as *genius* and adding the paradigm of the modern genius represented by Van Gogh (suffering from mental illness)¹⁴⁷ to the more classic paradigm represented by Michelangelo. One can contrast her unacceptable ‘madness’ to Van Gogh’s more approved one.¹⁴⁸

3. Clothes or marble: the inevitable conflict between art and womanhood/femininity.

The film is edited in intermittent sequences of scenes, portraying Claudel in her artistic surroundings and amongst her family surrounding. She confronts the obstacles of convention in both with respect to her behaviour as a woman, irrespective of her achievements as a sculptress. This conflict is shown primarily by her 15 years relationship with Rodin. However minor or even marginal, the scenes offer a more general and even complex representation of the conflict. Moreover, they establish the signifiers of *a woman artist*, as differentiated from the familiar ones of male genius, which in itself represents the breaking point of the *myth*.

At the family level, the film intensifies the character of Claudel’s mother, in complete opposition to her supportive father, and who, at the same time is *the* guardian of bourgeoisie and patriarchal values. Within the French society of the 19th

¹⁴⁷ G. Pollock, “Artists mythologies and media genius, madness and art history”, in P. Hayward, *Picture This: Media Representation of Visual Art and Artists* (second, revised edition), Luton, Bedfordshire: University of Luton Press, 1998, p. 105.

¹⁴⁸ Although Van Gogh’s ‘madness’ was not a cause for his discard as in Claudel’s case.

century, male and female roles were completely differentiated¹⁴⁹: men in the public space, women in the domestic one. Despite the greater intimacy shared by mothers and daughters due to this differentiation, a male baby was more welcomed than a female one.¹⁵⁰ Even Walker, despite his simplistic conclusions of the film and his over-simplified conception of feminism,¹⁵¹ refers to the fact that being the eldest child, she would have been the first to inherit the family's property¹⁵² which then becomes a key reason for Claudel's "removal".

The art world was no exception to this gender-biased division. Women were allowed to be 'educated amateurs' at home and/or restricted to what we now identify as 'low' art, 'crafts' and the like, whereas men were able to take on professional careers. As already mentioned by Higonnet, the concept of genius and the hierarchy of art forms had been linked since the Renaissance.¹⁵³ Any attempt for a woman to step beyond the domestic and amateur sphere into the professional and public sphere would place her at risk and cost a stiff price, either in artistic conformity or personal sacrifices, or both.¹⁵⁴ Still, the late nineteenth century was also a time of break-

¹⁴⁹ Y. Knibiehler, "Bodies and Hearts", in G. Fraisse and M. Perrot, eds., *A History of Women in the West*, Vol. IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 355.

¹⁵⁰ Knibiehler, *op.cit.*, p. 355.

At the end of the film we see this emphasized as Camille's mother hands over the power to her younger child, Paul.

¹⁵¹ That it "can be considered a feminist health warning to female art students" not to get emotionally and sexually involved with their male tutors.
Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

¹⁵² Walker, *ibid*, p. 86.

¹⁵³ A. Higonnet, "Images — Appearances, Leisure, and Subsistence", in G. Fraisse and M. Perrot, eds., *A History of Women in the West*, Vol. IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 249.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 249.

throughs for women, in general and women artists, in particular.¹⁵⁵ The instability of the new climate provided women with unprecedented opportunities to enter the art world,¹⁵⁶ while the rejection of Camille Claudel by her mother, as seen on this background, illuminates the conflict she herself represents even further.¹⁵⁷

We see Camille Claudel as embodying *all* the social ‘faults’ of a woman juxtaposed to her eminent artistic uniqueness. She became what Higonnet defines as “the mythic archetype of the cursed woman genius.” Regrettably, she had to endure art history’s oblivion when she was barely alive and her artistic heritage was kept in the void for three-quarters of a century after her death.¹⁵⁸

We see her tragic, yet probably unavoidable fate in the scene of her parents leaving Paris, which signifies Claudel’s alienation from her family.¹⁵⁹ The three are seen in long shot, each at other side of the frame (of the room), then gathering around the table at the center (**video extract 29**). Her father gives her what is left of her dowry after her art expenses. Her mother says - “If you can’t manage, you can always come to Villeneuve. There’s no shame in it; all girls who haven’t found a husband do it.” - demonstrating the low esteem she has for Camille, being a young unmarried woman, alone at the city, hence disrupting the proper place allotted a woman of the bourgeoisie.¹⁶⁰

Claudel and her like, argues Higonnet, had no female role model of a sculptress.

. Thus, on one hand, Claudel’s association with Rodin was based upon a model

¹⁵⁵ The avant-guard, both socially, with the first generation of Suffragettes and artistically, with the emerging pattern of Modernism - allowed competing criteria of artistic values.

¹⁵⁶ Higonnet, in Fraisse and Perrot, *op.cit*, p. 248.

¹⁵⁷ And not merely as a personal antagonism as comes out of the film that presents her as ultimate Xanthippe.

¹⁵⁸ Higonnet, in Fraisse and Perrot, *op. cit*, p. 261.

¹⁵⁹ At this point we might remember that we were told it was Camille who first convinced them to move to Paris in support of for her professional education.

¹⁶⁰ “If you can’t manage, you can always come to Villeneuve...There’s no shame in it; all girls who haven’t found a husband do it.”

common to the time, of recognition of an eminent senior artist as a sign for one's own future. But on the other hand, she also followed the feminine convention of success: as being desired by a famous and successful man.¹⁶¹

4. The female artist as mad.

Insanity became associated with genius during the nineteenth century.

Michelangelo's *pazzo*, his enthusiasm and temper – as shown in *The Agony and The Ecstasy* – had nothing to do with mental health.¹⁶² Yet, the image of 'mad artist' did arise in the Renaissance in connection to the newly gained status of artists.¹⁶³ Rudolf and Margot Wittcower list characteristics (derived from the Romantic notion of genius) such as inspiration, rebelliousness, dedication, obsession, alienation and neurosis as thought to be the popular notions of this mythical image.¹⁶⁴

Melancholy as signifier of genius shifts in the case of a woman artist to the negative *hysteria* or *madness*, which are terms sometimes used to explain the delusions of witches and even those of lovesick women.¹⁶⁵ Hence, a woman artist becomes a mad *other* whereas, if she was a man she would be considered a melancholic *outsider*. The use of Van Gogh's painting (previously mentioned) also raises the issue of the confusion of social definitions and aesthetic values. This is a concern that Pollock discusses regarding art history's interpretations of the art of Van Gogh as well as the cinematic representation of him.¹⁶⁶ (Further elaboration of this intriguing topic is beyond the limitations of this dissertation.)

¹⁶¹ Higonnet, in: Chadwick, *op.cit*, p. 16-17.

¹⁶² His was probably Vasari's preferred image of the artist, although he also defined a complementary image of the moral, intellectual genius, as embodied in Raphael.

¹⁶³ Wittcower, *op.cit*, pp. 102-3

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 101

¹⁶⁵ Battersby, *op.cit*, p. 44- 45.

¹⁶⁶ G. Pollock, in Hayward, *op.cit*, mainly pp. 118-120.

5. Changing signifiers.

Several motifs that appear in cinematic representations of women artists accumulate to establish new *signifiers*. I will refer only to those appearing in *Camille Claudel*, to remain within the scope of this dissertation.

- a. Woman in atelier = model; woman artist in atelier = disturbance Two short incidents involving one of Rodin's assistants demonstrate Claudel's as a misfit with regard to conventions.¹⁶⁷ The former occurs the first time she comes to the studio to get a piece of marble and the latter during her work on Rodin's *Adam* sculptures for *The Gates of Hell* (**video extracts 25, 30**, respectively). In the context of film, these not-unusual harassments and sexist references become the signifiers of the conflict women artists probably would face within a male dominated field. The first is repeated in *Artemisia*¹⁶⁸ (**video extract 31**) and in *Hua Hun* (**video extract 32**).¹⁶⁹

b. Feministic Hubris.

From the mythological *Prometheus* (see above), a general image was raised of the ridiculed artist punished for his presumptuousness – becoming a foil to the artist hero.¹⁷⁰ A woman artist embodying this image (i.e. *outsider*) experiences the twist into the image of *mad woman artist* (i.e. *other*). Her madness would be a punishment not only for artistic arrogance, but for what might be called *Feministic Hubris*. Hence,

¹⁶⁷ Since these short scenes were omitted from the version with English translation, the following extracts are from the full film version with Hebrew translation.

¹⁶⁸ Narrowly portraying the great and long-forgotten seventeenth century Italian painter Artemisia Gentilleschi. (c.1593-1652) *Artemisia*, dir. Agnès Merlet, perf. Valentina Cervi, Michel Serrault, Miki Manojlovic, Première Heure (fr), 1997.

¹⁶⁹ *Haunted Soul of a Woman Painter*, presents the life of the twentieth century Chinese painter Pan Yuliang. *Hua Hun*, dir. Huang Shuqin, perf. Gong Li, Zhang Qiuqi, Da Shichang, prod. Zhang Yimou, 1994.

¹⁷⁰ Kris and Kurz, *op.cit*, p. 86.

Claudel's 'madness' and relative artistic failure were used as excuses for her punishment for being a threat to patriarchal values.

Yet, this is exactly where hope lies for transforming the myth to include other qualities. Anne Middleton Wagner refers to two different formal expressions in Claudel's work — canonical ('male') as in the marble *Count Christian de Maigret in the Costume of Henri II* which demonstrates her skills as *sculptor* (**pl. 5**), opposed to innovative, revisionism ('female') of the onyx and bronze *Les Causeuses* (**pl. 6**).¹⁷¹ The latter not only demonstrate her mastery of unusual, delicate, hard-to-handle materials such as onyx but her mastery of canonical techniques (bronze cast) as well. *New images* from of everyday life were also introduced taken from women whom she observed through her window (as shown in the film— **video extract 33**). Wagner points to this artistic approach as having a more powerful suggestion than merely criticizing the male-history apparatus,¹⁷² since it is based on canonical knowledge and at the same time stretches towards new aesthetic frontiers,

c. Love versus art.

Claudel and Rodin's last meeting at Claudel's studio-residency is a complete contrast to their first intimate discussion. Of all that is said and shown, one wordless scene seems to be a signifier of what had once connected them and now stands between them (**video extracts 34, 34 a**). They are seen arguing, standing on both sides of the statue of the little girl – which we saw Claudel carving just prior to this last meeting (**video extract 27**). This small marble embodies the consequences of the mix-up of art and life: the yet-unspoken pregnancy of Claudel that drove her to ask Rodin to marry her, and her miscarriage after his recurrent refusals. It signifies art as substitute

¹⁷¹ A. Middleton Wagner, *Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keeffe*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996, pp. 18-19.

¹⁷² Wagner sees even the feminist work *The Dinner Party*, the milestone work of Judy Chicago et al. as an example of this approach in art. *Ibid*, p. 20

to children and creating life as well.¹⁷³ Both Claudel and Rodin played out mythic roles. But, as Higonnet argues, Rodin's role nurtured his talent, in support of his gender, which meant gender wasn't an issue at all. Whereas Claudel's role overwhelmed her, and her gender was held against her talent, even by her most sympathetic critics.¹⁷⁴

*

The film *Camille Claudel* was the product of changing perspective influenced by the feminist enterprise of the last two decades for rediscovering forgotten women artists. This included Claudel and her work.¹⁷⁵ It was the film itself that made the artist well known in the United States as well as in Europe.¹⁷⁶

CHAPTER IV: LOOKING FORWARD – CONCLUSIONS

John Berger describes the hierarchies of the gaze. “Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at” and internalize this concept about themselves as a

¹⁷³ As was discussed regarding Michelangelo (see chapter II. Below).

¹⁷⁴ Higonnet, in Chadwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁷⁵ That was exhibited from time to time during the century.

¹⁷⁶ Higonnet, in Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

sight.¹⁷⁷ Liam Hudson's argument, further implies that "the whole enterprise of the figurative arts depends"¹⁷⁸ on women as a sight for men, as the basis of the relationship between the (disappearing) model and the (unknown) spectator – two unfamiliar and each being fantasy for the other. He describes the meaning of the model for the spectator as "recruited to the cast of actors and actresses" of his daydreams, reveries and sexual fantasies.¹⁷⁹

Narrative film conventions supply the demand for scopophilic pleasure¹⁸⁰ when they present the characters on screen as fantasies for consumption by their spectators. Laura Mulvey's central article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* reveals the nature of spectator-orientation as essentially taking the male perspective. She argues that cinema aims at an image of woman on screen as an erotic object for male pleasure — both for the on screen character or the spectator in the audience.¹⁸¹ Belsey claims in concordance, that not only the labor involved in production (the material or 'spiritual' objects), but also, the process itself "is either mystified or ignored."¹⁸²

This mystification is represented in most movies about artists, as discussed throughout previous chapters. In *The Agony and The Ecstasy*, it apparently reveals that which is hidden or unspoken and in fact, usually reinforces the myth. Deviation from this course, as shown in *Camille Claudel*, only strengthens the existence of the myth and confirms it with the failure of woman artist either to submit to it or to

¹⁷⁷ J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972, p. 47.

¹⁷⁸ L. Hudson, chapter 9 "The Still Image" in *Bodies of Knowledge: The Psychological Significance of the Nude in Art*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982, p. 143 .

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ L. Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, in: B. Wallis (ed.), *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, pp. 366-7.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 363.

¹⁸² Belsey refers mainly to novel, but mentions cinema as another media still dominated by illusionism.

C. Belsey, *Critical Practice*, London and New York: Routledge, 1980, pp. 125-6.

change it. Challenging the myth might also bear some fruits, as Wagner mentions concerning Claudel's daring aesthetics.

Vasari, in an autobiographical chapter, describes the circumstances of writing the "Lives"¹⁸³ and its merits in the third person. His non-spoken aesthetic theory and ideology is revealed¹⁸⁴ by emphasizing qualities from the perspective of hands-on contact with materials, in contrast to the 'dry and insipid' conversation of the learned. In a letter 'To the Artists in Design',¹⁸⁵ he states that his book is designated for lovers of art, who are not artists, although it was also meant to contribute to the improvement of artists aiming towards 'the glory of art' and the 'honor of artists'.¹⁸⁶

Although Vasari is recognized as the founder of our common image of the Genius, it seems that the above has been forgotten; that is, the image of the artist had been discussed theoretically, psychologically or philosophically, but it was confiscated from the artist's voice. Films on artists seem to aim at restoring the living tissue involved in the creative process. Although they are supposedly interested in *the* process of *creation* per-se, they mystify the process nourished by the concept of artist as brand name.¹⁸⁷ The well-known works of art might be reconstructed in the film as accurately as possible,¹⁸⁸ but it still will be a mystified creation process that will be constructed on the screen.

¹⁸³ Cardinal Farnese, a patron of arts, requested that art be written from a perspective of a professional and not just by humanists or writers.

¹⁸⁴ Moshe Barash argues that a theoretical approach can be deduced from Vasari's story telling. M. Barash, Introduction to G. Vasari, *Le Vitte De' Piu Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori Ed Architettori* (M. Shusterman, translation to Hebrew from Italian), Jerusalem: the Bialik Institute, 1985, p. H.

¹⁸⁵ Published at the beginning of the second edition of *Lives*.

¹⁸⁶ G. Vasari, "To the Artists in Design", in G. Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, E. H. and E. W. Blashfield and A. A. Hopkins (eds. and annotations), Vol. I, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897 (mdcccxcvii), pp.. xxvii and lxvii-lxx, respectively.

¹⁸⁷ As it had already been fixated in the audience's consciousness, reinforcing it through emphasizing the artist's own 'truth' reflected through his art works.

¹⁸⁸ As seen in *Lust for Life* or *The Agony and The Ecstasy*, for example.

Throughout this dissertation I have exemplified how the meaning of creating art is viewed, how it is translated into aspects of gesture and visual cinema. The result demonstrates how the myth of genius is embodied in the characters of specific artists, who also represent the general category ‘artist’. We can see this demonstrated in the cinematic characters of Michelangelo, Lionel Doby, Tony Hancock, and Jackson Pollock (actual and portrayed). As discussed in Chapter I (p. 14), the category ‘artist’ is clearly defined in the public consciousness. Consequently, the fact that whenever the definition of genius changed, women were still left outside is salient. And, as Battersby argues, this continues to the present.¹⁸⁹ As a result, the category ‘woman artist’, which is quite new in art-history, is still cinematically vague.¹⁹⁰ In *Camille Claudel*, the new signifiers I depicted were extracted from the narrative.

Battersby points to a shift from the image (signifier) of *Prometheus* to the establishment of tradition of female authorship that utters the voice of a modern *Pandora*. She argues that there is a continuum of women creators discovering themselves within ancient and modern myths that “bind together the concepts of male sexuality and of creativity”, establishing another otherness by subverting “the notion that artistic production is a *male* task.”¹⁹¹

Since having no defined signifiers, character of a woman artist on screen seems

¹⁸⁹ Lacan’s notion of *language* as systems of symbolic representation uses the term feminine at the cost of *woman*. She also criticizes Graselda Pollock and R Parker for confusing the categories of “female and feminine “ in their book *Old Mistresses* (1981). pp.195-6 and pp 12-13, respectively.

¹⁹⁰ It might be seen in the recent film about one of twentieth century’s icons: Jackson Pollock, in Ed Harris’s film (starring Ed Harris; 2000; nominated Academy Awards 2001 for best actor; won best supporting female actress). Pollock’s character is based on clear visual signs — as described in chapter I, (**video extracts 4 and 7**). Whereas Krasner’s character as woman artist had no specific signifiers - whether of the actual artist or of a woman artist in general (besides that of the wife/lover/muse etc.). Various reviews on the film (via the internet site www.rottentomatoes.com) reveal the two contrasting approaches: on one hand, those who applaud it for its dramatic values, take it as a true representation of the actual artist. Those who don’t, however claimed to be lead astray by the spectacular acting and dramatization of the ‘good stuff’ – the temper, violence, alcoholism etc. that composed Pollock’s life, arguing that the film fails to deal with that age old mystery of artist drive.

¹⁹¹ Battersby, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

somewhat fictitious, unfamiliar.¹⁹² But precisely this brings about new opportunities for defining not only the new category ‘woman artist’ but also alternative signifiers of an artist in general.¹⁹³

The absence of a concisely expressed set of signifiers means they have to be assembled from pieces: images of women artists — actual and fictional ones — as supporting roles, most of them from the last fifteen years.¹⁹⁴ In addition, a few quite recent films having women artists as leading character. Each contributes other aspects or nuances and suggests new signifiers.¹⁹⁵ I will give two short illustrations that delineate two significant signifiers, each worthy of serious individual attention.

1. The Model-Artist in the Mirror.

As argued in reference to *Camille Claudel*, a signifier establishing the woman artist might well be visual, in contrast to the verbal male credo. Of these, the most significant is a ‘self revelation’ in the mirror. Deprived of artistically supportive surroundings the woman discovers that she can be both the model and the creator. This signifier marks the turning point of woman artist from the matter to modeler, giving her the benefit of following male traditions while avoiding social resistance or restrictions.

¹⁹² Mulvey refers to female protagonists, mentioning Pam Cook and Claire Johnston’s argument that their strength is more apparent than real. Mulvey, *op.cit.*, p. 367 note 2.

¹⁹³ At its best, it would be done through new aesthetics and concepts of visual/cinematic representation, as done by Peter Greenaway or Alan Rudolf (in *The Moderns*).

¹⁹⁴ Eg. Lee Krasner (Marcia Gay Harden) in *Pollock* (2000), Suzanne Valadon (Elsa Zylberstein) in *Lautrec* (1998), Françoise Gilot (Natascha McElhone) and Dora Maar (Julianne Moore) in *Picasso* (1996), Paulette (Rosanna Arquette) in *Life Lessons* (1989 - fictional character), Flavia, a fictional character of a photographer (Stefania Casini) in *Belly of an Architect* (1987), or Midge (Barbara Bel Geddes) in *Vertigo* (1958). *Vertigo*’s Midge expressly mirrors the male fantasies of women when she is shown as a painter. She paints herself as those fantasies, but even then, Johnny, the hero refuses to accept her, since she is not his real fantasy.

¹⁹⁵ For instance: *Hua Hun* (also called: *Haunted Soul of a Woman Artist*). (Dir. (woman): Huang Shukin, China 1993) based on the life of the Chinese woman painter Pan Yuliang (China, 1902-Paris, 1977); *The Pillow Book* (Dir.: Peter Greenaway, 1996); *La Belle Noiseuse* (Dir.: Jacques Rivette, France, 1991), based on Balzac’s novel *Le Chef d’oeuvre inconnu* (The Unknown Masterpiece) and visually alludes Picasso’s drawings and the Vollard etchings of the old master and his young model, offering an inversion to this situation. An exception in former decades is *Girlfriends* (1977), portraying a young (Jewish) woman photographer.

This gesture¹⁹⁶ shifts the essence of nude drawing itself: from someone else's (usually male) gaze, it becomes a *self-portrait* that turns disadvantage to advantage. In *Artemisia*, it appears as an exposition to the film (**video extract 35**).¹⁹⁷ In *The Pillow Book* (**video extracts 36 , 36a**)— first an unsuccessful trial to write on her forehead, and later writing with ink and brush on her body, wherever she reaches.¹⁹⁸ This scene in *Hua Hun* occurs after several objections to nude painting (**video extract 37**).¹⁹⁹

Although appearing in different contexts of narrative (Western, Chinese, Japanese)²⁰⁰ the fact that this motif recurs, suggests the images not merely as individual cases but as referring to the not-yet-defined category *woman-artist*.

2. Artist, Woman, Mother.

The concept of works of art as children (or substitute to them) – as discussed in chapter I (section 3, note 24 see p. 17) and exemplified in chapters II (section 4, see p. 27) and III (section 1b, see p. 44) – is transformed in the image of woman artist towards coexistence of life and art.

Camille Claudel represents the tragic consequences of woman artist who desires to

¹⁹⁶ As I demonstrated throughout the text, 'gesture' refers to a whole range of expressions, embodying sense or meaning in form (i.e. gestures, actions, ways of producing art etc.).

¹⁹⁷ Valentina Cervi, perf., *Artemisia*, dir. Agnès Merlet, 1997.

¹⁹⁸ Following a bath scene, in which the woman-writer Nagiko (Vivian Wu), writes in the steam (English sub-title in calligraphic letter), over the reflection of her naked body: "Treat me like the page of a book". Vivian Wu, perf., *The Pillow Book*, dir. Peter Greenaway, Channel Four Films [uk], Eurimages fund of the Council of Europe, Le Studio Canal+ [fr], Nederlands Fonds voor de Film, Woodline Films, Delux Productions [lu] , Alpha Films , Kasander & Wigman Productions, 1996.

¹⁹⁹ Gong Li, perf., *Hua Hun*, dir. Huang Shuqin, 1994. First by attack of raging crowd on the Shanghai Academy nude class, then personal attack of women at bath whom she tries to draw.

²⁰⁰ The directors of both *Artemisia* and *The Pillow Book* are Western whereas *Hua Hun* was directed by Chinese woman director.

combine both. In *Hua Hun*, it is shifted to the real pregnancy of one woman and the creative pregnancy and giving birth to art, by another woman, the protagonist.²⁰¹

The Pillow Book suggests an utopian or ideal possibility of being both artist and mother, while shifting the identification of *artist as God*²⁰² (**video extract 38, 38a**).

*

Battersby argues that only a pragmatic sense of ‘genius’, which compares personal achievements against culture can be useful for a feminist at present. Yet, it will be only through letting the matrilineal tradition of art to slide into the history books through collective enterprise of feminist critics sharing values and ends, that a transformation of *general understanding* of what is possible for women might be achieved.²⁰³

Beginning a possible course of defining feminist or at least identifying and particularizing women, is what has been suggested here, starting from the cinematic signifiers identified in *Camille Claudel* and including the illustrations discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, they suggest not only transformations, but also new modifications of the concept of ‘genius’ itself. The scope of this dissertation made it possible merely to point to this direction. Further and deeper research is needed in order to widen the scope and suggest an alternative route.

²⁰¹ The pregnant woman is the first wife of Yuliang’s Husband, Zanhua. Yuliang urges Zanhua to have a child (preferably a boy) with his first (unloved wife), since she, herself is unable to bare children due to a mysterious drag procedure forced on her in her youth when she was inaugurated as a prostitute.

²⁰²This analogy as discussed in chapter II, encounters a variation in the film of a story of God the artist – creating human figures, haunting Nagiko from childhood to adulthood. Each birthday her father wrote the story on her face, imitating God as creator when signing his name on her nape.

²⁰³ These four representations of Genius related to different terms of reference:

1. in terms of a personality-type, derived from Romanticism.
2. a specific mode of consciousness, derived from pre-Romantics.
3. in terms of energy (i.e. usually sexual).

These three senses, Battersby states, are “utterly contaminated by past usage”, and male is still their model.

4. treated as a kind of ‘potential for eminence’, defined through skills and talent.

Battersby, *op.cit*, pp. 225-7.

LIST OF VIDEO EXTRACTS

Video extract 1 *The Agony and The Ecstasy*
The Pope (Rex Harrison) and Michelangelo (Charlton Heston).

Video extract 1a *The Agony and The Ecstasy*
Michelangelo and Bramante (Harry Andrews).

Video extract 2 *The Agony and The Ecstasy*,
Michelangelo ruins one of the frescos using a scraper and another by throwing red paint on it.

Video extract 3 *The Agony and The Ecstasy*
Michelangelo paints.

Video extract 4 *Jackson Pollock*
Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg documentary film - 1950.
Jackson Pollock paints in front of the camera - Hans Namuth, 1951

Video extract 5 *The Rebel*
Hancock paints on the floor and cycles on the painting.

Video extract 6 *An Unmarried Woman*
Saul Kaplan (Alan Bates) throws colors on canvas.

Video extract 7 *Life Lessons (in New York Stories)*
Lionel Dobey (Nick Nolte) paints.

Video extract 7a *Jackson Pollock*
Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg documentary film - 1950.
Pollock's 'attributes'

Video extract 7b *Life Lessons (in New York Stories)*.
Prologue attributes of Lionel Dobey.

Video extract 8 *Pollock*
Ed Harris as Jackson Pollock.

Video extract 9 *The Agony and The Ecstasy*
Michelangelo gives a speech to the cardinals.

- Video extract 10** *The Agony and The Ecstasy.*
The Pope inaugurates the Sistine Chapel's ceiling during a mass.
- Video extract 11** *The Agony and The Ecstasy.*
Contessina de Medici (Diane Cilento) and Michelangelo.
- Video extract 12** *The Agony and The Ecstasy*
Michelangelo experiences revelation at dawn.
- Video extract 13** *Camille Claudel*
Camille Claudel (Isabelle Adjani) digs clay at night and carries it through the streets to her studio.
- Video extract 14** *Camille Claudel,*
Camille Claudel and Jessie Lipscomb (Katrine Boorman) in their studio.
- Video extract 15** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel carves a marble foot.
- Video extract 16** *Camille Claudel*
Signifiers of Claudel's artistic independence.
- Video extract 17** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel throws the marble foot into the Seine.
- Video extract 18** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel and her young neighbor Robert (Martin BerLÈand).
- Video extract 19** *Camille Claudel*
Rodin and Claudel speaking in his carriage.
- Video extract 20** *Camille Claudel*
Blot (Philippe ClÈvenot) and Claudel in her flooded studio-residence, and at her one-woman exhibition.
- Video extract 21** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel's onyx sculptures on the floor of her studio-residence.
- Video extract 22** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel tries to convince Giganti to sit for her .
- Video extract 23** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel and Rodin on his first visit to her studio.
- V Video extract 24a** *Camille Claudel*
Rodin beside Claudel's sculpture 'Trinity/Maturity'.
- Video extract 24** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel's voice answering Rodin after his leave.
- Video extract 25** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel works with plaster; One of Rodin's assistants harassing Claudel (i)

- Video extract 26** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel sculpts with clay.
- Video extract 27** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel carves marble.
- Video extract 28** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel states her credo in the meeting with Morhardt (Roger Planchon).
- Video extract 29** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel and her parents, preparing to leave Paris.
- Video extract 30** *Camille Claudel*
One of Rodin's assistants harassing Claudel (ii)
- Video extract 31** *Artemisia*
Artemisia Gentileschi encounters harassments.
- Video extract 32** *Hua Hun*
Pan Yuliang encounters sexist references.
- Video extract 33** *Camille Claudel*
Claudel watches women through her window, as inspiration to *Les Causeuse*.
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Claudel and Rodin's last meeting at Claudel's studio-residency.(i)
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Exposition of the film: Artemisia draws herself naked reflected in the mirror.
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Nagiko tries to write on her forehead in front of a mirror.
- Video extract 36a** *The Pillow Book*
Nagiko writes with ink and brush on her body.
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National Geographic, Vol. 176, No. 6, December 1989.

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Pl. 2 William Green cycles over the canvas.

Pl. 3 Camille Claudel, *The Hand*, Bronze, 10 x 4 x 4.5 cm, c. 1885, private collection.

Pl. 4 Assemblage: Head of Camille Claudel and hand of Bourgeois de Calais, Plaster, after 1900, Paris, Musée Rodin.

http://www.dia.org/exhibitions/claudel_rodin/images/comps/CC_RFE10.jpg

Pl. 5. Camille Claudel, *Maturity* (The Trinity), first version 1895, Plaster, 87x99.5x52.5 cm, Musée Rodin, Paris.

http://www.dia.org/exhibitions/claudel_rodin/images/comps/CC_RFE03.jpg

Pl. 6. Camille Claudel *Count Christian de Maigret in the Costume of Henri II*, 1899, marble, 66x65x43 cm, Private collection.

Pl. 7. Camille Claudel, *Les Causeuses*, first version 1894, Bronze and marble, 33x33x27 cm, Private collection.

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Pl. 8. Camille Claudel, *Les Causeuses*, first version 1897, Onyx and bronze,
45x42.2x39 cm, Musée Rodin, Paris.

http://www.dia.org/exhibitions/claudel_rodin/images/comps/CC_RFE06.jpg

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<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0123385/>
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<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0094828/>
51. *Hua Hun (Hounded Soul of a Woman Artist)*, dir. Juang Shukin, perf. Li Gong, Er Dongsheng, Shen Hairong, Fang Cen, prod. Benzhen Yu and Tu Yuling, China, 1993.
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52. *Life Lessons (in New York Stories)*, dir. Martin Scorsese, perf. Nick Nolte, Rosanna Arquette, prod. Barbara De Fina, USA, 1989.
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57. *An Unmarried Woman*, dir. Paul Mazursky, perf. Jill Clayburgh, Alan Bates, Michale Murphy, Cliff Gorman, prod. Paul Mazursky and Anthony Ray, USA, 1978.

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