

The Aesthetic Pleasures of Girl Teen Film



Samantha Colling

March 2014

Thesis submitted to Manchester Metropolitan University in partial fulfilment for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

MIRIAD, Manchester Metropolitan University

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Abstract

What is 'fun' about the Hollywood version of girlhood? What kinds of pleasure does this version of girlhood invite us to enjoy? Through re-evaluating notions of pleasure and fun, this thesis forms a study of Hollywood girl teen films between 2000-2010. The aesthetic dimensions of commercial girl teen films are particularly underexplored. This study identifies the key aesthetics of girl teen film and articulates the specific types of tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures they are designed to create.

Working outside of gendered hierarchies of pleasure and aesthetics, the thesis focuses on 'look and feel'. The study draws on recent literature that prioritises the relationship between film, the body, and affect, in conjunction with Susanne Langer's (1953, 1957) concept and Richard Dyer's (2002) application of 'embodiments of feeling', to present a new way of understanding the 'fun' in girl teen films.

After situating the thesis in a film studies context, the five core chapters each examine recurrent moments of 'fun' and fundamental aesthetic pleasures found in these films. The opening chapter explores the influence of 'Cinderella's Pleasures' on girl teen film as a fairy tale framework in which pleasure is the main concern and character visibility is the central reward. I suggest that the

Cinderella character-icon is adorned in ways that invite audiences to enjoy the tactile pleasures of accessories and clothing. In the second chapter tactility is also central to the 'Celebrity Glamour' that surrounds the girls in these films and, defining glamour, I consider the ways that visibility, space, and place are constructed as appealing. In 'Sporting Pleasures' I analyse the ways that the body of the Cinderella character-icon is itself a surface, rendered to generate kinaesthetic pleasures grounded in physical work, perfection, and collective synchrony. This interest in the potential to generate kinaesthetic pleasures continues in the chapter on 'Musical Address', which examines how the musical numbers in these films draw on the pleasures and capacities of the body in relation to music and dance. The final chapter brings all of the key moments of 'fun' together and I analyse the relationship between music, dance, image, and the body in more detail: exploring how 'Music Video Aesthetics' generate the feelings of music and dance to make a spectacle of 'everyday', 'feminine' activities.

This research develops a new way of exploring 'feminine' forms of popular culture. It questions the gendered hierarchies of pleasure that scholarship often maintains, articulates the 'fun' version of girlhood that Hollywood presents, and offers an understanding of the kinds of physical and affective pleasures that these films invite us to enjoy.

Acknowledgments

Thanks go to ... my supervisors Felicity Colman, Joan Ormrod, and Emily Brick. Jim Aulich and MIRIAD for providing me with a studentship that made this research possible. Hermionie Blake for teaching me how to study.

My office buddies, Amber Roberts, Leanne Green, Gary Bratchford, and Laura Guy, for your friendship and support.

Friends and family: Mum, Mark, Rosie, Lenny, Hobie, Geraldine, Andy, and Dad. Jenny lady and Mark. Jeff Fox, Adrian Baker, Iain Fox, Linda B, and Keith Moulton for teaching me stuff along the way. Heather Lupton for your time and musical knowledge. The Arcadia Roller Derby team for letting me shout and hit you. Finally, thanks to Hannah Davies for making it all fun.

Introduction



Figure 0.1, *13 Going on 30*, Hollywood's version of girlhood.

This research has arisen, in part, as a response to my own pleasure in girl teen films. This pleasure has come with a confused sense that although these films are, for the most part, ideologically conservative, more often do not include characters with whom I consciously identify, nor involve events, scenarios, or people with which I am especially fascinated, I still find them appealing.

Teaching the film *Mean Girls* (Waters, 2004) — a quintessential millennial girl teen film — to A level film studies students I found that neither I nor the students could satisfactorily explain what we enjoyed about the film. At the same time,

with the same group, I was also teaching a unit on British Cinema, and the crime film *Bullet Boy* (Dibb, 2004). Set in East London, *Bullet Boy* is a moody and claustrophobic tragedy about a young man's entanglement in a culture of crime. The differences in the ways that students engaged with these films are indicative of broader critical approaches to film. They found it difficult to discuss or explain the comedy, bright and polished mise-en-scène, or light-hearted tone of *Mean Girls*, where, in comparison, the simmering violence, aggression, and bleached out urban landscape of *Bullet Boy* was much easier to address. The students felt that in analysing *Bullet Boy* there was more to discuss, to explicate, and understand. *Mean Girls* seemed too 'obvious', but also difficult to explain in its very obviousness.

Teen film, and more especially girl teen film in the Hollywood mode is generally critically dismissed as silly and trivial (as I will explore in more detail in the literature review that comprises the following chapter), the implication being that girl culture is generally silly and trivial, and in turn that girls are silly and trivial. The intentions of this thesis have developed in response to a desire to gain a practical hold of girl teen films, to be able to articulate joy or fun in the same ways that violence or aggression seems comprehensible. With these thoughts in mind this thesis does not describe why I, nor my former students, like girl teen films but explores the pleasures that these films are designed to provoke. The key questions this thesis asks are:

- How are girl teen films designed to generate specific pleasures and what kinds of pleasure do they offer?
- What types of experiences do they create?
- What do they produce as pleasurable?

Consequently the aims of the thesis are:

- To produce a better understanding of the version of girlhood that these films create.
- To understand what these films create as 'girl fun'.
- To approach girl teen films from a position that does not reinforce the kinds of aesthetic hierarchies that perpetuate the 'silliness' of girls and girl culture.

This introduction provides an overview of the types of film with which the study is concerned and defines girl teen film as it is used in this study. The introduction then explains the methodology and approach taken throughout the thesis and how and why girl teen film is explored here in the particular way that it is. The chapter then provides definitions of pleasure and aesthetics that support the basis for arguments that run throughout the thesis. These introductory chapter

sections also create a framework for the literature review that follows, where some issues raised here will be examined in more detail.

Defining girl teen film

Teen films can be defined by their thematic focus: coming of age narratives, rites of passage, and maturity as a narrative obstacle (Driscoll, 2011b: 66). However as Robert Stam's (2000: 14) discussion of genre illustrates, analyses also need to take into account how a subject is treated. The objective of this thesis is to focus on the how of teen film, not as a means of defining the genre but with the aim of understanding how it 'works'. What needs to be addressed is not the issue of fixing distinct borders for girl teen film, but the ways that these films are constructed as pleasurable. Such a task necessarily starts with the parameters that situate the study.

The thesis forms a study of girl teen films between 2000 and 2010. The time specific parameters of the study is in response to literature that already exists on the genre, which has often fixed on teen films in the 1950s — the decade to which the genre is often cited as being created; 1980s — especially the John Hughes films of that period; and/or the plethora of teen films of the late 1990s

that followed the financial success of *Clueless* (Heckerling, 1995).¹ (See for example: Doherty, 2002; Lee, 2010; Lewis, 1992; Kaveney, 2006; Shary, 2002, 2003, 2011). Rather than spreading the analysis thinly across decades and situating films historically, or ‘explaining’ them according to period specificities (though these do exist and are sketched out throughout the thesis) the intention of keeping to a fixed, very recent past is to maintain the emphasis on what the films do: on how they are designed to make us feel, instead of how they represent a particular time.

The types of teen film that I refer to here follow a Hollywood paradigm: these are mainstream, explicitly commercial films in which girls are the protagonists. This is not to suggest that the films’ appeals are limited to teenagers or girls, or even that the characters explored are actually between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. Because I am dealing with an *idea* of what adolescence is — the Hollywood version of the teenager — it is not essential to demarcate strict temporal boundaries around who is in, or who watches these films. Catherine Driscoll (2011b: 2) and Adrian Martin (1994: 66) suggest that the teen in teen film really refers to a mode of behaviour, which can be characterised as a contradiction between maturity and immaturity. I propose that teen film works through contradictory qualities that define ideas of adolescence: immaturity and

¹ *Clueless* was an unexpected success: made for approximately \$12 million, the film’s domestic box office gross was \$56, 631, 572, (boxofficemojo.com).

maturity, independence and belonging, innocence and knowingness, rebellion and conformity, expansion and confinement. In the context of this thesis the teen is a figure that embodies contradictory qualities. The Hollywood version of adolescence is structured by interlinking antinomies that, in their relationship create tensions, energies, and frictions specific to the commercial idea of the teen. The teen figure holds two extremes in balance and at the hinge of their meeting defines the idea of adolescence. The appeal of this idea of adolescence can be understood in Joseph Roach's (2007: 8) description of the balance between mutually exclusive extremes in the dance term 'contraposto': "a pose in which the performer turns in different directions simultaneously at the knees, the hips, the shoulders, and the head, making an interesting line of the body." The fusion and friction of opposites creates intensity: their combination is what makes them interesting. Applied conceptually, contraposto explains the residual energies created by the combination of and resistance between contradictions. The antiphonal friction held in the idea of adolescence is what makes the teen a powerful and intriguing figure, generating feelings of promise, potential, expectation, and possibility. The oppositional foundations of the teen figure are illustrated in Francois Truffaut's (1982: 299) description of James Dean, who Truffaut depicts as representing young people completely in "a simultaneous desire and refusal to be integrated into society" and in an "acceptance and rejection of the world, such as it is." The contradictory qualities embodied by

Dean are echoed in a number of accounts of the themes and characters of teen film: independence and belonging, permanence and impermanence (Lev: 90); passionate consumption and rejection of conformity, emotional intensity and fashion-consciousness, both rebellion and gullibility (Driscoll, 2011b: 4); hedonistic craziness and innocence (Martin, 1994: 68). Driscoll (2011b: 112) and Martin (1994: 68) describe teen film as fashioned by the notion of liminality. The characters of teen film, they suggest, are recognisable in Victor Turner's description of the liminal position: "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between [...] in the realm of pure possibility" (1967: 95, 96). Generically, teen films can be described by their focus on transformations, transitions, boundaries, and crossing thresholds from childhood into adulthood. I propose however that according to the Hollywood version of the teen, these spaces and times in between are more static than the term liminality suggests. Teen films often create characters and situations that feel like the shift and transition of liminality but fix the teen figure to prescribed sets of contradictory qualities. Therefore, rather than being in the "realm of pure possibility" the teen figure is defined by specified, regulated and uniform combinations of contradictory qualities. Where boys must learn to balance their hedonistic desires and sense of responsibility for example, girls are required to create the 'appropriate' combination of innocence and experience: not between, but both.

‘Girl teen film’, as I use it here, is a sub-genre label that consciously identifies the genealogy and embedded relationship with the broader category of teen film and also provides the distinction that recognises the girl-centred narratives that these films provide. The label does not imply that the appeal of these films is only to girls but stresses that the films are structured by notions of girlhood. The girlhood that I refer to here is a concept. The girl is not an actual young woman but is an idea of female adolescence. The girl is a figure created by a set of discourses, as Catherine Grant and Lori Waxman (2011: 2) suggest: “girlhood is not meant simply as an age but as an allegorical state.” Girl teen films give us images and ideas of girls, they create a version of girlhood, rather than represent actual female desires, memories, or fantasies. Instead, they aim to create experiences that feel as though they express desires, memories, or fantasies that girls supposedly share in common. This idea will be taken up further below but in this thesis the girl that I refer to is the Hollywood version of girlhood: a fictional figure foremost structured by the contradictory qualities of innocence and experience, expansion and confinement.

Millennial girl teen films exist in a number of modes that can be understood based on how the subject of female adolescence is treated on screen. In the romantic mode narratives are tragic and handled earnestly.² ‘Indie’ girl teen

² For example: *A Walk to Remember* (2002) or *Twilight* (2008).

films deal with female adolescence in an overtly political or experimental form.³ In films structured around performance (dance, musicals, and sports) and comedies (that often include moments of dance, singing, or sports performance) girlhood is given a lighter touch. As will be examined throughout the thesis, girl teen comedies and performance films are connected by an emphasis on pleasure and 'fun' and can be described as working in the fun mode. These films are structured around requisite moments of visibility that make the girl figure the centre of attention. These moments of visibility are presented as key forms of fun for the girl figure (as I will explore in detail throughout the thesis).



³ For example: *Thirteen* (2003) or *Water Lilies* (2007).



Figures 0.2, 0.3, 0.4 & 0.5, *13 Going on 30*, girl teen film images in a non-girl teen film.

13 Going on 30 (Winick, 2004), provides a distinct example through which to map out girl teen film's moments of visibility and the millennial Hollywood version of girlhood. The film follows Jenna (Jennifer Garner) who makes a wish on her thirteenth birthday and wakes to find herself trapped in her thirty-year-old body, seventeen years in the future. Consequently the film highlights the Hollywood version of girlhood in extreme. Like other body-swap film scenarios, stereotypes are played out to their zenith because it is the supposed contradictions between the mind and body (old mind in young body, man in woman's body and so forth)

from which comedy is derived. Performed by an adult woman therefore, the Hollywood idea of what a thirteen-year-old girl is supposed to be is made stark. *13 Going on 30* is not exactly a girl teen film, the protagonist's narrative quest is fixed more heavily to the success of heterosexual romance, rather than the moments of triumphant recognition that organise girl teen film. The film is more accurately described as a romantic comedy that utilises significant girl teen film conventions. Nonetheless, the film provides a useful illustration of girl teen film's moments of 'fun' because it derives its comedy from the discrepancies between the ostensible sophistication of the adult Jenna and the innocence of her thirteen-year-old self, and the kinds of things the thirteen-year-old takes pleasure in. Because the film shows the adult Jenna having fun doing things that are at odds with her adulthood those events and actions classed as 'girl fun' are made clear. In this film 'girl fun' includes: a makeover and reveal, a dance number, and a sleepover that also becomes a musical performance. Jenna is impressed by the kinds of glamour associated with naïve enchantment (for example the bright lights of Times Square) and the film also evokes other rites of passage moments and teen film imagery. When Jenna employs her love interest to carry out a photo-shoot the images he captures include a football game (fig. 0.3), prom (fig. 0.4), and graduation (fig. 0.5). *13 Going on 30* presents a Hollywood version of American girlhood that we see time and again in girl teen films in the fun mode: this girlhood is white and wealthy, it includes specific backdrops and spaces,

events and locations, a bright and sunny mise-en-scène, and the glamour of the prom.

In girl teen films in the fun mode, 'fun' has a distinct character. The kinds of fun that the girl figure is shown to enjoy lead up to or are fundamentally moments of visibility: the catwalk, girls' sports, or musical performances. It is in these moments that girl teen films are designed to generate their greatest affective force. These moments of fun are often rites of passage: the girl figure's ability in being able to present herself (her body) successfully mark her out as having achieved 'appropriate' levels of maturity. Essentially whether these moments reflect a narrative rite of passage or not, it is here that the girl figure is shown having fun and it is these moments that are designed to be the most affectively loaded. These moments are specifically prescribed as 'girl fun' as opposed to 'boy fun'. To illustrate this point I would like to compare the boy teen film *Superbad* (Mottola, 2009) to the girl teen film *Sleepover* (Nussbaum, 2004). *Superbad* follows three male friends over the course of twenty-four hours. Moving between high school, parties and the boys' attempts to buy alcohol, the film charts their misguided quest to have sex with girls for the first time before the two key characters are separated to attend University. *Sleepover* follows four female friends who celebrate their graduation from junior high with a sleepover party, before one of them moves away. Over the course of the night the friends compete against another group of girls in a 'scavenger hunt', for which they must

be the first to complete a number of set tasks. As a sex comedy *Superbad* has a UK 15 certificate, compared to *Sleepover*'s PG rating. Appropriate to its certificate and assumed tween-teen target audience, *Sleepover*'s romance is presented without any reference to sex or sexuality. In relation to both films what is set forth as 'fun' therefore is restricted based on the ages of the characters and the age of the audiences as defined by certification. Nonetheless the very similar plot devices and narrative time frames make these films' comparison illustrative of what is deemed fitting as 'boy fun' in juxtaposition to 'girl fun'.

As a sex comedy *Superbad*'s humour revolves around a number of embarrassing and humiliating scenarios but the film does show the boys having fun. 'Boy fun' involves: drinking at a bar, shooting a gun, being praised for bringing alcohol to a party, doing shots and getting drunk, having sex, orchestrating a scene that shows one of the boys getting arrested and therefore giving him notoriety, and setting a police car on fire. In *Sleepover* the main character Julie (Alexa Vega) describes the events as "my Cinderella night". 'Girl fun' is: painting toenails, putting make-up on, dancing in wigs, using a computer to manipulate photos, a makeover, putting clothes on mannequins at the mall, skateboarding (and consequently being noticed by a boy), strutting into a school dance, dancing with each other and with boys, and kissing a boy. Where 'boy fun' centres around rites of passage that are age restricted by law, explicitly aggressive, or fundamentally based around male bonding, 'girl fun' (even where it includes

female bonding) pivots around visibility. Even amongst girl teen films that reach a higher certification and include sexual references, fun still includes the same moments of visibility. Like *Superbad*, *Easy A* (Gluck, 2010), for example, is a UK certificate 15, but Olive's (Emma Stone) fun revolves around a catwalk moment, a musical number, and finally kissing a boy. There are no girl teen film equivalents to *Superbad* because, regardless of character age or certification, what is created as 'appropriate' as 'girl fun' (and 'boy fun') is restricted.

Contemporary girl teen films in the fun mode have a lineage that connects them to the "clean teen" (Doherty, 2002: 145-186) films of the 1950s and 1960s.

Driscoll (2011b: 38-44) describes clean teen films as exemplary of 'youth as party', epitomised by the *Gidget* franchise (films: 1959, 1961, 1963, TV: 1965-66) and the AIP beach party series (1963-66).⁴ Clean teen films focus on white, affluent, middle-class teens. These teens are well-behaved, comic but predictable and trustworthy consumers, the films include elements of romantic-comedy, humour is based around mild innuendo and slapstick, and the premise and characters are carefree (Doherty, 2002: 159; Morris, 1998; Ormrod, 2002). Clean teen films are branded as escapist, conventional, and conformist. They

⁴ *Beach Party* (1963), *Muscle Beach Party* (1963), *Bikini Beach* (1964), *Pajama Party* (1964), *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965), *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* (1965), *Ghost in the Invisible Bikini* (1966), as well as multiple knock-offs including 'Ski Party' films such as *Wild Wild Winter* (Wienrib, 1966). Driscoll (2011a: 14-25) illustrates that many of the traits found in the clean teen films are foreshadowed in earlier cinema, including films starring Lillian Gish such as *Broken Blossoms* (D.W. Griffith, 1919) and the early Andy Hardy films (circa. 1938-1946).

reflect a light-hearted version of youth in comparison to those films that depict 'youth as problem' (Driscoll, 2011b: 29-38). Millennial girl teen films in the fun mode, like the clean teens, maintain a white, middle class perspective and stress 'fun'.

Another significant genealogical building block in the life of girl teen films in the fun mode has been the increasing development of self-consciousness in teen films in general during the late 1980s (Doherty, 2002: 190; Driscoll, 2011b: 56-61; Shary, 2005: 76). The 1988 girl teen film *Heathers* (Lehmann) parodies the earnest treatment of adolescence found in the John Hughes films of the earlier 1980s.⁵ *Heathers* pokes fun at the sentimental attitude of the earlier films, to create an ironic take on depictions of American high school culture. The film follows Veronica Sawyer (Winona Ryder) as she attempts to end the tyranny of the 'Heathers' clique at Westburg High. After Veronica meets J.D. (Christian Slater) they 'accidentally' kill the top Heather and cover the murder up as a suicide. Veronica soon realises that J.D. is a psychopath, when he arranges further 'suicides' at the school. With grotesque teen characters and adults alike, and music such as 'Teenage Suicide (don't do it)' the film marks a distinct shift in tone and reflects the increasing knowingness of girl teen films during this period.

⁵ For example: *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Pretty in Pink* (1986), *Some Kind of Wonderful* (1987).



Figure 0.6 & 0.7, *Clueless* creates a pastiche of images of youth and American wealth.

As a film that is overtly, self-consciously knowing, *Clueless* — an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) — represents another recognisable point of genealogical development in girl teen film. In its opening montage, for example, the film creates a pastiche of the affluent America often depicted in teen culture: cutting between shots of shopping, lounging pool-side, and driving expensive cars. Towards the end of this opening montage Cher's (Alicia Silverstone) narration emphasises the film's knowing attitude: "So OK, you're probably

going...is this like an Oxema commercial or what?" The film then cuts to Cher in the 'present' and she continues: "But actually I have a way normal life for a teenage girl." Having pointed out the knowing hyperbole of the opening montage the film makes fun with Cher's idea of a 'normal' life, cutting to her opulent bedroom and racks of designer clothing. *Clueless* is not a parody but a pastiche that double codes its use of teen culture conventions (as well as its Jane Austen origins). Double coding is a form of pastiche that works to revisit the "already said" (Krutnik, 1998: 28). Umberto Eco (1992: 227) describes double coding in reference to a man declaring his love to a woman in an age of lost innocence:

[...] he cannot say to her, 'I love you madly', because he knows that she knows (and she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still there is a solution. He can say, 'As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly.' At this point, having avoided false innocence, having said clearly that it is no longer possible to speak innocently, he will nevertheless have said what he wanted to say to the woman [...] If the woman goes along with this, she will have received a declaration of love all the same.

For Eco double coding offers a means of enjoyment that is not escapist: literature that both disturbs and delights (Brooker, 1992: 229). In contemporary girl teen films however double coding techniques do not eschew 'escapist' pleasures. Pleasure is found in the hyper-imitation of girl teen film conventions, in combination with the films' original affective sentiments. This is pastiche in Richard Dyer's (2007) sense of the word: imitation that signals itself as imitation

and in doing so makes this self-consciousness central to its affects and pleasures. In this context self-consciousness and affect, feeling, and emotion are not mutually exclusive, as Dyer (ibid: 180) describes: pastiche “imitates formal means that are themselves ways of evoking, moulding and eliciting feeling, and thus in the process is able to mobilise feelings even while signalling that it is doing so.”

Pastiche is the aesthetic imitation of other art, not of life or reality (ibid: 2). It is distinct from parody in that parody makes fun *of* that which it imitates, where pastiche makes fun *with* its imitation. Pastiche, unlike parody, does not question the mode that is being mimicked (ibid: 40). Pastiche makes a point of its being a copy but still uses the techniques of that which is being imitated. As a consequence it “facilitates an experience of the imitated work” (ibid: 100).

Clueless makes fun with conventional depictions of American teen culture but retains the affective pleasures of presentations of youth and wealth all the same.⁶

As suggested above, the surprise success of *Clueless* had a noticeable impact on the number of girl teen films produced in the late 1990s, and 1999 saw the release of a number of films that followed the cheerfully affective attitude and

⁶ Dyer (2007) explores pastiche, not as necessarily negative as Frederic Jameson (1985) describes it, as “blank parody”, but as an affective form that potentially articulates a “sense of living permanently, ruefully but without distress, within the limits and potentialities of the cultural construction of thought and feeling.” (Dyer, 2007: 180). Likewise, I suggest that pastiche and double coding techniques are neither necessarily innately ‘positive’ or ‘negative’, instead I explore double coding as a means to facilitate pleasures that can either be taken up or rejected.

double coding techniques used by the film.⁷ Girl teen films made between 2000 and 2010 have further conventionalised double coding, which is now an essential element of the subgenre in its fun mode.

This thesis focuses specifically on girl teen films in the fun mode: a focus, which is explained in the next section and explored further in the literature review, that follows. In accord with David Bordwell (2006: 17-18), although I have referenced the Hollywood paradigm, the films to which I refer are not all Hollywood products. The British films that I include, however, employ or use features of the Hollywood model: the version of girlhood that they present, the 'fun' way with which girlhood is handled, and the 'moments' that they include, ascribe to the Hollywood paradigm. The study does not cover every girl teen film in the fun mode made in the specified time period: some films proved difficult to acquire and despite constant searching there were some films that I came across too late in the research process to incorporate. Nonetheless, the number of examples included is sizable, and substantial enough to reflect that the recurrent patterns identified in the thesis, play out across a large number of films.

Each chapter references two or more films in detail and, as a film that influenced the study, *Mean Girls* is used as a reference point throughout. The case studies

⁷ For example, all from 1999: *She's All That*, *Never Been Kissed*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Drive Me Crazy*. In the same year *Drop Dead Gorgeous* and *Jawbreaker* took a slightly more acerbic tone and *Jawbreaker* can be seen as a direct descendent of *Heathers*.

in each chapter were selected from the comprehensive filmography, as illustrative of the techniques discussed. Throughout the thesis I have highlighted examples of other girl teen films, beyond the case studies, that use the specific techniques and include the same moments explored. The titles of these films are cited in footnote and the full reference is provided in the filmography.

Approach and methodology

This thesis focuses on girl teen films in the fun mode because the aesthetic dimensions of popular entertainment have been systematically ignored and the aesthetics of 'feminine' forms of popular entertainment are even more underexplored. Audiences and producers predominantly consider girl teen films in the fun mode, as conformist, unoriginal, commodity entertainment. As a consequence, the comparatively scarce academic analysis of the subgenre that does exist tends to focus on the ideological implications of the films as industrial products — an approach that points away from their aesthetic dimensions. Bill Nichols (2000: 45) describes attitudes to art as symptomatic of "the symbolic economy of culture":

The ultimate commodity fetish is then one that frees the object of its commodity status entirely as 'pure' art or beauty. A law of inverse value pertains: the more a thing is valued as art, the less it is acknowledged as a commodity; the more we value a film aesthetically, the less we want to treat it as an industrial product like any other.

The inverse of this argument is that the more explicitly commercial a film is, the less it is aesthetically valued, the less we want to treat it as an aesthetic product. The more we acknowledge a thing as a commodity, the less it is valued as art. We bind the object to its commodity status and forget that it is designed with aesthetic intent. We forget that producers know that the more appealing something is, the likelier it will be to make money. Pierre Bourdieu (2000 [1986]: 1) makes clear that this aesthetic hierarchy is class based: the socially recognised hierarchy of the arts corresponds to the social hierarchy of consumers. Art and cultural consumption “fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences.” (Ibid: 7). Aesthetic hierarchies are tied inseparably to pleasure hierarchies. The kinds of pleasure an object offers distinguish it as valuable (or not), and the kinds of pleasures a consumer enjoys distinguishes them as superior (or not). These distinctions are class based, whereby the rejection of popular, ‘vulgar’, ‘easy’, ‘trivial’, and ‘silly’ pleasures, and the affirmation of disinterested pleasures, confirms the consumer’s superiority (ibid: 7, 35). A further hierarchical entanglement that ostensibly distinguishes one film from another, one consumer from another, and one pleasure from another, is the hierarchy of affects, feelings, and emotions. Where the appreciation of ‘pure’ art supposedly calls for distance and consequently induces responses that are detached or dissonant, industrial products are often regarded as seductive,

producing vulgar or trivial emotions that are sentimental or fun. Just as these hierarchies are class based, notions of gender also support them: the ‘masculine’ mind appreciates ‘pure’ art, whilst industrial products are enjoyed through ‘feminine’ over-investment. These ideas play out in film studies. In her study of ‘pretty’ as an aesthetic field, Rosalind Galt (2011) explains a mode of thought in film studies (inherited from philosophy and art history) that takes as an axiom the idea that pretty aesthetics are seductive and shallow. Prettiness, she demonstrates, is only evoked to point out how reprehensible it is (ibid: 7).

These aesthetic hierarchies will be explored in more detail below and in the literature review that follows. The table below (fig. 0.8) provides a visual representation of the interconnected aesthetic, pleasure, and emotion hierarchies that explain why ‘feminine’ forms of popular culture, including girl teen films, are often disregarded in reference to their aesthetic dimensions.

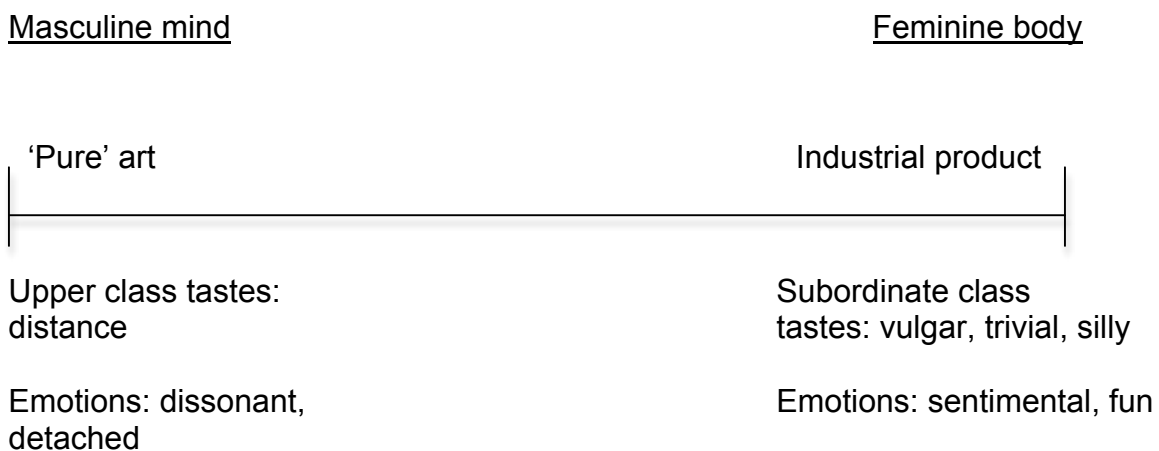


Figure 0.8, hierarchies of aesthetics, pleasure, and emotion.

This study aims to rectify the aesthetic neglect of girl teen films and work outside of these hierarchies so as not to reproduce gender and class based value systems. The research examines girl teen film from a perspective that does not justify its focus on pleasure by reclaiming specified pleasures as ideologically resistant, empowering, or conversely oppressive. The thesis asks instead what girl teen films do that offers particular types of pleasurable experience? These films are ideological but I suggest ideologies alone do not explain how and why these films are enjoyed. Galt's (2011) exploration of pretty examines the gender politics and geopolitics of the critical rejection of pretty images, as well as mapping political uses of pretty. As Galt (2011: 37) makes clear, her analysis begins where others often end: "For film studies, the pretty exerts a demand that images be read precisely at the point of their aesthetic exclusion, a practice that might reveal different shapes for the global cinematic body." This thesis begins from a similar basis: beginning at the point of a triple aesthetic exclusion based on the commercialism of Hollywood teen film; the supposed triviality of girl culture; and the connection of fun to 'subordinate' class tastes and 'feminine' pleasures. Whilst Galt examines the transgressive possibilities of the pretty, this thesis sets out to examine (as Galt suggests we should, 2011: 19) the aesthetics of fun with as much subtlety, care and detail as one would any other formal strategy. Where Galt explores the radical in pretty aesthetics in an art cinema context, I set out to understand the construction of fun and the creation of

pleasure in a popular 'feminine' subgenre. Approaching girl teen film from this angle we can understand what (gendered) versions of fun these films create, what pleasures they offer and how they are designed to feel good.

Laura Mulvey's (1986 [1975]) seminal essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' brings pleasure to the fore to argue that the pleasures of mainstream Hollywood films reaffirm patriarchal ideologies already present in the spectator. Mulvey appropriates psychoanalytic theory as a political weapon to illustrate how "the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form." (Ibid: 198). Her argument posits that the cinematic apparatus constructs woman as object of the male gaze and in doing so draws on and reinforces specific primal pleasures in looking. Voyeuristic pleasures in classical Hollywood cinema, Mulvey suggests, subject women to "a controlling and curious gaze." (Ibid: 200). In this case scopophilic pleasures arise from sadistic impulses that use another person as sexual object. The second mode of looking — fetishistic — which, Mulvey argues, the cinema rearticulates, works to alleviate male fears of castration, to provide "avenues of escape" from this anxiety (ibid: 205).

Mulvey's application of psychoanalytic theory to film makes pleasure its focus but this approach takes universal, monolithic structures of looking and pleasure and fits cinema to the theory. Along with Christian Metz's work Mulvey's essay is representative of apparatus theory, an approach that performs from the outside

in: starting with theory and fixing it to film. Metz's (1986 [1975]) opening question in 'The Imaginary Signifier' establishes this approach neatly when he asks: "What contribution can Freudian psychoanalysis make to the study of the cinematic signifier?" This thesis starts with films and through textual analysis explores the pleasures they aim to create.

Apparatus/classic film theory seeks to apply laws "that help underpin all signifiatory work" (Metz, 1986: 247) and in doing so takes for granted the notion of finite pleasures that are structured by repressed and unconscious desires. Critiqued extensively in film and media studies (for example: Evans & Gamman, 1995; Plantinga, 2009; Rushton, 2013; Shaviro, 1993; Stacey, 1994) such an approach does not account for the diversity of pleasures but seeks to explain psychological and ideological effects that pacify an unidentified audience. As Steven Shaviro (1993: 11) proposes of psychoanalytic and poststructuralist apparatus theory, it is founded on a basis of "suspicion, disavowal, and phobic rejection." Metz and Mulvey take an approach to cinema that sees it as a kind of ruse, a plot to trick us into believing in what we perceive. Metz's (1986: 250) comparison of literature and cinema relates this suspicion: describing cinema as a replica in a new kind of mirror, he suggests that literature is similarly made up of replicas (words that stand in for objects), "But at least it does not present them to us with all the really perceived detail that the screen does". Both Metz and Mulvey object to the expert ability of Hollywood cinema to fully engage its

audience, and in this context feeling becomes complicity with ideological and psychological structures. This thesis seeks to understand pleasure from a perspective that does not disregard, or is not nervous about engagement and emotion. I suggest that films create experiences that we do not have to *believe* but which, to be enjoyed, we do 'go along with'.

A further, fundamental problem that apparatus theory sets up which hinders explorations of pleasure and maintains aesthetic hierarchies, is the logic of representation whereby film is positioned as a reflection of preexisting forces and structures of subjectivity. This approach, as Mulvey (2006: 145) describes it, finds “the film behind the film”. As Richard Rushton (2011) suggests, the logic of representation relies on a distinction between ‘reality’ and a film’s re-presentation of ‘reality’. Film is explained as a secondary mode, examined for how or what ideas or social issues are reflected by it (ibid: 8). As Rushton (ibid) points out, from this perspective films are not considered as important in themselves and as a result questions focus on what a film is evidence of, instead of what a film does. The consequences of solely ‘exposing’ girl teen films in regards to their representations of girlhood in relation to ‘real’ world totalities, sees that pleasures and aesthetic experiences are guiltily reclaimed, rejected or ignored and what the films *do* is overlooked. If a genre like girl teen film is only ever explored in respect of its relation to ‘reality’ — its faithfulness to real world ‘truth’ (Rushton: 16) — if it is constantly exposed as ideologically conservative or

secretly subversive it will only ever be understood as a form that either reflects girlhood accurately or inaccurately, perpetuating the idea that accurate representations of girlhood are worth more. This approach maintains aesthetic and pleasure hierarchies: rearticulating the idea that some pleasures have more value than others. Pleasures that subvert mainstream ideologies that are 'behind' the film are praised as valuable and those that conform to those same ideologies (patriarchal, capitalist, neoliberal, postfeminist) are attacked. To counter these hierarchies I follow Rushton (ibid: 10) and take an attitude towards films that sees them as part of reality, instead of (only) representations of it. From this perspective we can ask, not what is behind film, but what does film do? Rushton (ibid: 2) suggests that films are not abstracted from reality: films create realities in their own right, rather than simply reflecting the 'real' thing. He proposes that films create experiences that help us to flesh out our understanding of and place in the world. Taking this attitude to film creates a position from which we can begin to ask what kinds of experiences, affects, feelings, and pleasures, do girl teen films make available? For Rushton (ibid: 4) films "do not re-present anything. Instead they create things; they create realities, they create possibilities, situations and events that have not had a previous existence". I suggest that films can do more than one thing at once: they can re-present and they can create. Focusing on what girl teen films create gives us an opportunity to understand the types of pleasure they offer. Rushton

(ibid: 13) proposes that “films are exhibitions of the world; they offer experiences that are as much a part of reality as any other experience”. I want to add that the experiences and possibilities that films offer are gendered. Girl teen films create embodiments of feeling, possibilities, and experiences but the pleasures and affects that they invite the audio-viewer to enjoy are restricted. The experiences offered by these films are limited and some experiences are only offered to some: constricted by race, class, gender, and physical (dis)ability. What kinds of experiences and what kinds of pleasure do girl teen films offer?

This thesis is structured by the moments of visibility that constitute girl teen films. These moments are made up of pleasurable surfaces that aim to appeal to our senses. Framed at the beginning by the Cinderella fairy tale context, the study explores the makeover and catwalk moments and the tactile and kinaesthetic appeals of Cinderella’s costume. The following chapter investigates notions of celebrity glamour in the worlds of girl teen film, with a focus on how being looked at is designed as pleasurable. The thesis goes on to examine the phenomenal body as an appealing surface, and the pleasures of music that aim to work on the bodies of audience members. Finally the thesis explores how spectacles are made of all these things, that is, how music and image lend affective force to the moments of visibility (and other moments of ‘fun’) around which these films are structured. This work is not in opposition to traditional Film Theory but explores

similar questions from a different perspective.⁸ Shaviro (1993:33) suggests that we cannot reduce the agitation of the senses and fascinations experienced by the cinema viewer to “lack, disavowal, and ideological or Imaginary misrecognition.” We have to take the body and the senses into account. This thesis pulls its approach and methodology from a number of theoretical locations in order to focus on the possible tactile and physical pleasures that girl teen films conventionally offer.

The research is influenced by recent Film Phenomenology and Affect Theory (Barker, 2009; Bukatman, 2003; Chamarette, 2012; Marks, 2000; Plantinga, 2009; Shaviro, 1993; 2010; Sobchack, 2004) in that it is concerned with the materiality of the film experience, the role of the senses and pre-cognitive sensation. This thesis draws on these approaches in the ways that they treat film as an encounter or event. In this context film is understood to create affective and embodied experiences. As Dee Reynolds (2012: 124) describes, affect is embodied in that “it refers to that point at which the body is activated, ‘excited’, in the process of responding”. Cinematic Affect Theory and Film Phenomenology

⁸ It is worth pointing out that I also ask very similar questions to those raised by Ien Ang (1985) in her influential study of the soap *Dallas* (1978-1991). Ang (ibid: 10) asks “How [...] does *Dallas* present itself as pleasurable?” in accord with this thesis Ang (ibid: 12) describes the emergence of her research as a consequence of her own pleasure in the soap and a desire to understand it “without having to pass judgements on whether *Dallas* is good or bad”. However, Ang (ibid: 10) answers her questions about pleasure from a different perspective to the one taken in this thesis, undertaking audience research to find out “what happens in the process of watching *Dallas*?”

foreground the senses and consequently the body: the ways in which film is perceived and transmits affects between film-body and lived-body (Barker, 2009; Sobchack, 2004). Where Film Phenomenology often focuses on how the film and viewer act together (see Barker, 2009: 18) this thesis concentrates on how films are designed to appeal affectively and physically. With the aim of maintaining a practical focus, rather than a philosophical one, I place attention on the aesthetics of girl teen film. Instead of exploring the 'film's body' I concentrate on what the films' aesthetics can tell us about the kinds of pleasure they aim to generate: not what the films *will* do but the kinds of experience on offer and what they invite us to feel. In her introduction to the modes of tactility that filmgoers experience, Jennifer Barker (2009: 11) quotes philosopher and aesthetician Mikel Dufrenne: "aesthetic objects [...] call for a certain attitude and use on the part of the body — witness again the cathedral that regulates the step and gait, the painting that guides the eye, that poem that disciplines the voice." Where Barker explores what, she suggests, filmgoers experience, this thesis focuses on the kind of affective and physical attitude that films call for: the attitude that girl teen film invites in the body, how it aims to regulate posture, and guide the eye and ear. Following Carl Plantinga (2009: 11), I propose that by examining films' aesthetic features we can reasonably determine the intended affective response. The central question therefore is: what pleasures do these films aim to elicit? Asking this question we can explore the ways that films are put together in order

to generate physical pleasures, without assuming that these intentions will be successful.

Studies in cinema and sensation also offer constructive frameworks from which to explore film in ways that 'equalise' sensorial aspects of the film experience.

Vivian Sobchack (2004: 65) stresses a cross-modal approach to cinematic experience, whereby the sensory exchange of perception means that seeing and hearing a film also entails feeling, touching, tasting, and smelling it. From this starting point hearing and sound are brought to the fore to displace the hierarchical emphasis that film analysis often places on sight (Sobchack, 2012: 25). Consequently we can explore, for example, the ways in which music is designed in film to intensify our experience of visual textures, and visual textures can equally reinforce our experience of music. In this thesis I place particular emphasis on the relationship between music and image and chapters four and five detail the physical impact of this relationship. For this reason the term 'spectator' seems inadequate to describe the individuals addressed by film. Instead I use Michel Chion's (1990) term 'audio-viewer' throughout the thesis as a means to highlight and more accurately convey the kinds of sensorial experiences that these films aim to achieve.

A gap in Film Phenomenology and Affect Film Theory is a neglect of the aesthetic dimensions of films that seem to be 'ordinary', mainstream and 'unremarkable'. Studies mainly (almost exclusively) focus on marginal films, or

Hollywood 'masculine' genres that stress discomfort, and perceptual and physical disorientation. Citing Laura Marks' (1999) work on documentary film and Sobchack's (2004; 2012) writing on Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993) and Derek Jarman's *Blue* (1993), Jenny Chamarette (2012: 10) argues for the specific relevance of marginal, peripheral and avant-garde cinema to phenomenological analysis: "In displacing and contesting dominant, hegemonic and/or phallogocentric modes of representation, of narrative and editing technique," she suggests, "such works provide precisely the spaces of betweenness that enable a much more subtle, plural and phenomenologically attentive analysis". This neglect of the mainstream maintains hierarchical notions of what is worthy of aesthetic analysis. Marks' (2000: 151) notion of tactile visuality — looking that lingers on the surface — responds, in part, to Shaviro's (1993) emphasis on cinematic experience as aggressive and shattering. Nonetheless her focus remains with marginal film. Barker (2009) includes a broader scope of analysis to include Hollywood films such as *Toy Story* (Lasseter, 1995) and *Bullitt* (Yates, 1968) but generally, beyond the marginal, studies that focus on film, affect and sensation often favour 'masculine' genres that are aggressively spectacular or stress less sentimental affects and emotions such as fear or anger (for example: Bukatman, 2003; Purse, 2011; Shaviro, 1993; 2010). As a means to unsettle traditional aesthetic hierarchies, this study prioritises 'fun' pleasures that are corroborative, implicitly categorised as trivial and 'feminine': such as joy, delight, excitement, and

amusement. I do not intend to suggest that hidden depths or avant-garde aesthetics in these films have gone unnoticed. Instead I aim to move away from the assumption that 'feminine' popular culture needs to be defended through ideological feminist critique or reclamation, to explore the physical pleasures of the 'unremarkable'. I am interested in how the 'ordinary' use of film form and style in girl teen films produce affectively charged experiences.

The study analyses the technical composition of girl teen films to understand the kinds of physical appeal these films make to the body. The body is understood as material, rather than as an abstract notion and in Chris Shilling's (2013: iii) sense, as "an irreducibly physical phenomenon engaged in a dynamic and permeable relationship with its social surroundings." The human body, onscreen and off, is the focus: understood in relation to its potential to create and enjoy pleasure. As Shilling (2013: 256) describes: "People's attraction to or repulsion from different elements of their environment is often a deeply sensual, visceral matter". These responses "and not just apparently 'disembodied' intellectual evaluations" (ibid) determine how we turn towards or away from things. Film does of course involve cognitive engagement but the study of how 'feminine' forms of popular culture appeal affectively is lacking in current literature and is thus brought to the fore here.

Susanne Langer's (1953) framework for a philosophical study of art, *Feeling and Form*, offers a way of exploring the kinds of 'fun' that girl teen films create. Langer seeks a means of examining the ways that abstract forms embody feeling. Forms are used, she suggests, "to act as symbols, to become expressive of human feeling." (Ibid: 51). Despite being entirely abstract, structures of music, for example, can express vital experiences that verbal language is unsuited to convey: "Feeling, life, motion and emotion constitute its import." (Ibid: 32). Art, Langer proposes, expresses not actual feeling (those of the artist for example) but ideas of feeling — expressions that are felt as a quality, rather than logically recognised as function (ibid: 32), making cogent the verbally ineffable (ibid: 39). In *Problems of Art* (1957: 25) Langer describes the creation of art as:

congruent with the dynamic forms of our direct sensuous, mental, and emotional life: works of art are projections of 'felt life', as Henry James called it, into spatial, temporal, and poetic structures. They are images of feeling, that formulate it for our cognition.

As Richard Dyer (2002: 21) explains, a problem with Langer's philosophy, is the presumption that feeling or emotion is universal — "is not coded, is simply 'human feeling'." Dyer suggests that emotion is 'coded' to the same extent as the 'non-representational' signs that express them, in ways that explain "how entertainment forms come to have the emotional signification they do", specific to

the social, cultural, historical circumstances in which they are produced (ibid). To apply this reinterpretation of Langer's work here: films are sounds and images of feeling, affect and emotion, formulated for our experience. Girl teen films embody feelings that lend affective force to specific, gendered ideas of fun. As well as staging representational ideas of fun (for example, showing people dancing, laughing, kissing) these films create feelings around particular events that make them feel fun. Approaching these films from a position informed by Langer and Dyer allows us to consider the felt qualities that make up fun as it relates to girl teen films. This thesis follows Dyer's (2002) approach in *Only Entertainment* (2002) in a number of other ways. Where Dyer (2002: 3) asks of his films "what do these entertainments say entertainment is?" I ask, what do girl teen films say fun is? What pleasures do they offer? And what versions of fun and pleasure do they suggest as appropriate for girls? Exploring the aesthetics (what Dyer calls non-representational signs) of girl teen films, this thesis examines some of the ways that postfeminist and neoliberal ideologies are made to feel good. It does not suppose that these ideologies are 'slipped in' behind the aesthetic surface, nor does it imagine that audiences necessarily subscribe or submit to these ideologies. Similar to Dyer, I explore how these films aim to provide pleasure and how they define fun. As a means to develop Langer's and Dyer's approach further, after examining the embodiments of feeling girl teen films are designed to create I go on to explore the kinds of affects they offer.

Combining these methodologies the thesis not only suggests how the films are designed to create affect but also details the specificity of those affects as a thorough account of the kinds of pleasure on offer.

Pleasure and aesthetics

This thesis will use pleasure as a means of exploring girl teen film. To this end it starts from the premise that pleasure is material and connected to the body.

Pleasure as something biological, psychological, philosophical and experiential involves a substantial body of work, but it is also an idea that is taken for granted.

Overviews of pleasure generally take a similar course to one another (see for example: Connor, 1992; Kerr et al, 2006; Maguire, 2011; Modleski, 2000; O'Connor & Klaus, 2000; Rutsky and Wyatt, 1990; Trilling, 1980). Though they are approached from various perspectives and to different ends they commonly begin with reference to classical models whereby 'higher' forms of pleasure are linked to the mind and 'lower' forms to the body (in reference, for example, to Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes).⁹ Different types of pleasure are then referenced — again, often in allusion to the way that pleasure is evaluated dichotomously — some pleasures are considered to be seductive, others enlightening:

⁹ The parentheses in this paragraph are examples of those theorists that summaries of pleasure usually make reference to in considering the various ways that pleasure has been thought.

beauty/sublime (Kant), pleasure/jouissance (Barthes, Lacan), false/real (Adorno). A synopsis then moves on to the idea of pleasure as rebellious or transgressive (Bakhtin, Barthes – depending on the author's position). As R.L. Rutsky and Justin Wyatt suggest (1990: 15) analyses aim to claim one version or another as the 'other' of bourgeois ideology and pleasure. Rather than repeat a similar synopsis and get caught amongst arguments that claim various versions of pleasure as the most valuable, I would like to put these arguments to one side, focus on pleasure as a physical experience and see how this enables us to rethink film pleasures. This approach is necessary because, as Steven Connor (1992) makes clear, discussions of pleasure are caught in an infinite reproduction of either/or arguments. When evaluating art, pleasure is a problem because of the notion of value: "pleasure and value endlessly produce and reproduce each other." (Ibid: 219). Separating different forms of pleasure is the most common way pleasure is distinguished from value: "pleasure can only be valuable, or lead to value as a result of being concentrated, purified, sublimated or otherwise transformed from itself." (Ibid: 205). Approaches to pleasure most often try to attribute a level of seriousness to the concept, distance the author from 'lower' pleasures, justify the study of it, or even the existence of pleasure itself. The attitude taken here aims to avoid these 'problems' of pleasure.

To circumvent the key problem of pleasure and value — constantly connected and coordinated in interlocking spirals of reproduction — the notion of value

needs to be clarified. For the purposes of this thesis the idea that some pleasures have more merit than others (a position that can be traced from Plato, through Descartes, Spinoza and Kant: ‘pure’ pleasures take the subject beyond the limits of all possible experience and knowledge) is rejected. The relationship between pleasure and value is understood here in terms of capital. Pleasure can add exchange-value to films. Pleasure is valuable as a commodity — we invest our time and attention in entertainment as a means of experiencing pleasure. In turn we are also paid in pleasure — looking and listening is labour, the audience are given a wage of pleasure in return for their attention (Beller, 2006a; 2006b). I do not intend to justify or condemn pleasure but accept it — this is not a philosophy of pleasure but a way of thinking about it as a means of exploring film and understanding the pleasures films offer.

Further to avoiding the problems of pleasure, pleasure is taken to be autotelic, as “related to itself and not to something else that it expresses, either truly or falsely.” (Davidson, 2001). Plato’s hedonic value scale, for example, sees ‘impure’ pleasures as part of a unidirectional process — pleasure only exists here in reference to pain, it always involves filling a lack (Erginel, 2011). In connection, Catherine Malabou (2009: 42) explains how Freud’s pleasure principle can be regarded as “a tendency towards death. To avoid unpleasure amounts to seeking the quietest state, the lowest degree of energy, the deepest rest.” The pleasure principle inextricably links pleasure to unpleasure. Similarly

in psychoanalysis pleasure is connected to sadism and masochism, pleasure is “lived as unpleasure” (Malabou, 2009: 41). I do not wish to deny that pleasure can be derived from pain or suggest that all pleasure can only be understood as connected to positive affect, feeling or emotion. However, in a way that is appropriate to the attitude of girl teen films’ rhetoric of fun, and as something that is missing in current literature, it is positive pleasures that I would like to focus on here. The central concern is pleasure as just itself, pleasure for pleasure’s sake, rather than as pointing to something else. With this purpose in mind it would be understandable to avoid the word desire in this work. However, in this respect I would like to follow Plantinga (2009: 8-9) in extricating pleasure and desire from their technical usage in psychoanalytic film theory. As Plantinga (2009: 42) points out, ‘desire’ is referenced as though it refers to a distinct, univocal human drive or instinct. Pleasure is understood as originating in repressed and unconscious desires. From this perspective pleasure points to regressive and infantile psychological states: originary fantasies or sadism and masochism for example. Instead of avoiding the concept of desire or deny its significance, in combination with pleasure, I would like to remove the baggage that goes along with these words. Desire is used referring to its everyday usage — wants, wishes, to crave something. For the purposes of this project pleasure is positioned in positive terms, rather than within a negative equation that sees it as part of filling a lack.

To this end the pleasures I explore in this thesis are defined as positive affects, feelings and emotions: pleasures to which we generally have positive attitudes. I want to stress that I am not suggesting that these pleasures are positive in the sense that they necessarily have a favourable impact on the world but nor do I propose that they have a negative consequence (though they could do either). By positive I mean that they are corroborative and that they aim to feel good and they do feel good.

Pleasurable sensations are one aspect of how we experience popular culture (and the world) but positive pleasures are relatively underexplored. Sara Ahmed (2010: 13) suggests, feminist cultural studies often takes “bad feeling” as its starting point. In *The Promise of Happiness* Ahmed (2010: 14) starts with “good feeling”, though she does not assume that a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ feeling will hold. Similarly, it is with the ways that films aim to generate “good feeling” that this thesis begins. Having a better understanding of the kinds of pleasure that girl teen films invite their audiences to enjoy can give us greater insight into the Hollywood version of girlhood, the types of ‘fun’ she is offered and, fundamentally, *some* possible explanations for why we might choose to go along with these pleasures.

To pursue this approach it is necessary to distinguish between affects, feelings and emotions. Affect is produced through encounters — it does not reside in the

subject or object (Ahmed, 2010: 14, 21-22; Massumi, 1987: xvi; Shouse, 2005; Skeggs, 2010: 40). It is prepersonal (Massumi, 1987: xvi), “a non-conscious experience of intensity” (Shouse, 2005) — an autonomic experiential state of the body. Feelings are personal and self-referential (Massumi, 2002: 13) — “sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled” (Shouse, 2005). Emotion is social — the display of labelled feeling. However, the above descriptions could be misleading in that they suggest a knowable, linear process in the relationship between affect, feeling and emotion. Instead of conceiving these elements as distinct realms, Ahmed (2004: 6) describes the interconnection of bodily sensation, emotion and thought as “a form of company”. In *The Promise of Happiness* (2010: 44) Ahmed describes this form of company in the relationship between subjects and objects as ‘impressions’: “Happiness is precarious and even perverted because it does not reside within objects or subjects (as a form of positive residence) but is a matter of how things make an impression.” In the context of this thesis pleasure is the intended physical consequence of positive, feel good, impressions. It is not one type of feeling, affect or emotion; it can be experienced in many forms — joy, satisfaction, enjoyment, arousal, and excitement, for example — the connection between them being that these pleasures are positive (they feel good) and inextricable from the body.

Pleasure, Ahmed (2010: 231-232) suggests, is a sensation caused by objects, but it is also how we turn toward certain things. Sensation, she proposes, involves evaluation: “To be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things.” (2010: 23) Films do not just cause pleasurable affects, feelings and emotions in some kind of hermetically sealed experience — pleasures cause evaluations and anticipations. We can describe these evaluations and anticipations as ‘fun’: fun is the evaluation of pleasure, where pleasure moves into an abstract idea, fun is the understanding that to get pleasure from something makes something good. In turn fun is performative: by finding fun in certain places generates those places as fun (see Ahmed, 2010: 6). This approach also helps us to understand how particular objects of fun (for example girl teen films) continue to circulate socially: “Certain objects are attributed as the cause of happiness, which means they already circulate as social goods before we “happen” upon them, which is why we might happen upon them in the first place.” (Ahmed, 2010: 28). Fun is socially and culturally determined and made ‘normative’, specific to particular historical moments.

Rather than take pleasure as an axiom, or get lost in arguing against varied notions of pleasure, my focus here is on aesthetic pleasures. Historically, pleasure has been linked to the body and this connection has often been employed as a means of creating hierarchies of pleasure. For example

Aristotle's pleasures of the body were 'lower': those shared with animals (Katz, 2009). Pleasure is tacitly thought of as corporeal, generally associated with 'sensations' and 'feelings'. A body-centred approach to pleasure is logical in an analysis that foregrounds aesthetics. If aesthetics is originally "anything that has to do with perception by the senses" (Regan, 1992: 5), then aesthetic pleasures are those that connect with the body. Virginia Postrel (2003: 6) explains aesthetic pleasures thus:

Aesthetics is the way we communicate through the senses. It is the art of creating reactions without words, through the look and feel of people, places, and things. Hence, aesthetics differs from entertainment that requires cognitive engagement with narrative, word play, or complex, intellectual allusion [...] Aesthetics shows rather than tells, delights rather than instructs. The effects are immediate, perceptual, and emotional.

Girl teen films, of course, include pleasures connected to narrative or cognitive engagement. One obvious potential pleasure of girl teen films, for example, is their use of language and word play that engages with (or creates) contemporaneous adolescent vernacular.¹⁰ Nonetheless focusing on aesthetic pleasures creates an opportunity to consider how girl teen films work on the body, or more precisely how they aim to work on the body of the audio-viewer. Aesthetic pleasures are not ideological traps that make their audience impotent

¹⁰ See for example '40 'Mean Girls' Quotes That Make Everyday Life Worth Living' (Lang, 2013)

and pliable, nor are they a counterfeit of 'real' pleasures (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997 [1944]). Empirical studies have shown time and again that popular culture does not have the 'brainwashing' capacities that studies following the Frankfurt school take as read. Neither is my aim to argue that the pleasures of girl teen films can be found in the 'cracks' of the texts — in the non-conformist moments that are read against the grain of ideological imperatives. The pleasures of girl teen films are one aesthetically charged encounter among a myriad of others in an age where style is a part of everyday life (Postrel, 2003: xiv; Thrift, 2008: 13). My interest is in understanding the immediate experiences that girl teen films invite us to enjoy, rather than pinpointing how they are part of totalising systems. These films do make ideological meaning and the ways that aesthetics are employed do have ideological implications but ideologies are not the reason behind the appeal of these Hollywood versions of girlhood.

In girl teen film "every surface communicates" (Thrift, 2008: 13), some more forcefully and pleasurably than others. This thesis investigates the pleasurable surfaces of girl teen film. Examining those moments that Hollywood constitutes as 'girl fun' I explore what and how surfaces generate pleasure. Roach (2007: 43) works from Postrel's positioning of aesthetics to offer a case study of surfaces that explain the appeal of particular people throughout history who have been described as having 'It'. Roach breaks the surfaces of 'It' into: accessories, clothes, hair, skin, flesh, and bone. I examine similar surfaces in the chapters

that follow — though of course, the types of surface that I stress have their own kinds of girl teen film inflections.

The surfaces that I identify and explore in relation to these films are: accessories, clothes, hair, skin; glamorous spaces and places; techniques of visibility; flesh — the phenomenal body; and music. These surfaces lend affective force to particular ideas of fun by embodying pleasurable feelings and appealing to tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures. Drawing on the idea of a “caressing touch rather than a penetrating gaze” (Barker, 2009: 24; also see Marks, 2000) the thesis explores the kinds of tactile pleasures these film surfaces offer. As Sobchack (2004: 65) describes, we can be “touched by the substance and texture of images; to feel a visual atmosphere envelop us; to experience weight, suffocation, and the need for air [...] to sometimes even smell and taste the world we see on screen.” Cross-modal sensory exchange of perception (ibid) means that seeing and hearing a film also entails feeling, touching, tasting, and smelling it. Though I may not, for example, fully taste the food on screen I do have a partially fulfilled sensory experience, the pleasures of which are related to gastronomy (ibid: 76). Girl teen films’ surfaces make appeals to our enjoyment in varied and glamorous textures. These surfaces also create pleasures connected to kinaesthesia: sensations of movement and position “embedded in a network of sensory modalities” (Reason & Reynolds, 2012: 18). Utilising Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds (2010) framework of plural kinaesthetic pleasures, I examine

how these film surfaces create feelings of physical expansion, control, and freedom. These pleasures will be detailed and explored throughout the thesis.

The chapter that follows is a companion to this introduction and situates the study in relation to current literature, focusing on four key areas: teen film, Girls Studies, pleasure, and Feminist Film Theory. It also further positions the methodological approach applied in relation to other theoretical and practical frameworks, and provides a summary outline of the core chapters.

Literature Review

This chapter outlines the key concepts and approaches relevant to a study of girl teen film and pleasure, with reference to four core areas: Teen Film Studies, Girls Studies, Pleasure, and Feminist Film Theory. Finally, it situates the methodological approach employed and provides a summary outline of the core chapters that follow.

As I examine the aesthetic dimensions of girl teen films, with particular focus on fun and pleasure, my research aims to expand and complicate how teen film is usually approached. This study also suggests a new perspective from which Girls Studies may consider the 'girl' as a postfeminist and neoliberal figure. This chapter begins by situating the research in a Teen Film Studies context to examine why I feel it necessary to stress the aesthetics of girl teen film. The chapter then positions the thesis in relation to Girls Studies to consider how the research contributes to this field by considering what these films create, rather than what they re-present. The section on pleasure here adds to the definition and outline of pleasure provided in the introduction and establishes in more detail the pleasure hierarchies that have been reinforced in academic discourse. It then considers in more detail the relationship between pleasure and Feminist

Film Theory and argues further for an aesthetic approach to 'feminine' forms of popular culture.

Teen Film: approaches and presumptions

In *Teen Film: A Critical Introduction*, Driscoll (2011b: 4) pinpoints common academic presumptions about teen film. She identifies that studies often assess films based on their ability to represent an accurate reflection of adolescence. They also, she suggests, take a moral approach that assesses films based on whether adolescence is represented in ways that will “be *good for* adolescents” (ibid, italics in original). Driscoll's observations highlight the questionable premise from which studies in teen film commonly start. As one of the earliest analyses of the genre, David Considine's (1985) *The Cinema of Adolescence* is organised by the assumption that teen film plays a pedagogic role in the lives of young people. He makes this expectation clear in his introduction:

his [sic] very immaturity renders him susceptible to its influence and manipulation. Unlike the adult, the adolescent is still in a stage of identity development, still formulating basic values and attitudes. Thus film must be regarded as one in a range of forces potentially capable of shaping either positively or negatively the young person's visions of himself and his society. (Ibid: 3)

Timothy Shary's (2002, 2003, 2005, 2011) work on teen film explicitly follows on from Considine, analysing teen films in regards to how realistically he sees them to represent young people and concurrently creating value judgements based on whether films pertain to 'appropriate' moral standards. Shary's concluding comments in 'Teen Films: The Cinematic Image of Youth' (2003: 511), provide an illustration of this approach as he considers the future of the genre:

The question remains if the new teen films of the twenty-first century will continue the problematic yet popular tradition of pushing their characters to the extreme limits of moral and social acceptability, or if they will continue the project of certain recent films in thoughtfully and effectively examining the realistic conditions and positive energies of teenagers.

Assessing teen film based on its accuracy to depict youth raises the question: What is and how do we begin to assess or describe a 'realistic' version of youth? To propose that this is possible suggests, problematically, that there exists a singular experience of adolescence. The consequence of this focus on representation and what teen films 'mean' to young people, neglects the aesthetic and affective dimensions of film experience. As V.F. Perkins (1972: 155) describes: "Too great a concentration on what a film 'has to say' implies that the significance of a movie is reducible to the verbal concepts which its action suggests." Taking representation and meaning as the principle interaction between film and audio-viewer neglects that most Hollywood film viewing is

essentially approached as a pleasurable experience, “suffused with affect” (Plantinga, 2009: 2).

Teen Film Studies also commonly set out to define the genre. Considine (1985) and Shary (2002) set their parameters around character age. ‘Youth film’ Shary (2002: 17) proposes, is about characters between the ages of 12 and 20. These films he sub-divides into the categories of horror, science film, sex and romance, juvenile delinquent drama, and the school picture, to examine the extent to which he considers them to depict successfully “the conditions of youth” (2002: 4).

Thomas Doherty (2002: 6-7) defines the ‘teenpic’ around its purpose and attitude. The teenpic, he suggests, is a type of exploitation film that reflects teenage tastes, meets the teen audience’s expectations but also represents an adult version of youth, imbued with adult values. Doherty also categorises the teenpic into subgenres: rock ‘n’ roll, dangerous youth, horror, and the clean teen. Driscoll (2011b: 154) proposes that teen film “requires an expansive definition” based on “a film’s relations to ideas about youth and youth culture”. For Driscoll the key narrative obstacle in teen film is maturity: “the expectation, difficulty and social organization of growing up.” (Ibid: 66). By redefining teen film based on this narrative and thematic thrust, Driscoll broadens the genre to include critically acclaimed, auteur films such as *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971) and *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, 1996). Adrian Martin (1989: 12) correspondingly explores the ‘teen movie’ as “any film which deals with the drama or comedy of

growing up in a specific social environment". Martin's polemic disputes the separation of 'critical' films about youth such as *My Life As a Dog* (Lasse Hallstrom, 1985) from films like *Sixteen Candles* (John Hughes, 1984) that are branded, he suggests, as a "hideous, amorphous 'mass' of objects" under the label teen movie (ibid). Where Martin uses this expansive definition to argue the case for the study of mainstream teen movies, Driscoll uses it to reorient the ways in which teen film is defined. Resetting the boundaries of teen film opens the genre up for greater consideration. Nonetheless, setting out to define the genre through theme and narrative, these studies leave the aesthetic dimensions of teen film unexplored and consequently the focus remains on what teen films mean and their relation to broader ideas about adolescence, rather than their appeals. As Driscoll (2011b: 2) states: "Teen film is generally thought more interesting for what it says about youth than for any aesthetic innovations".

Analyses often reject the aesthetics of teen film quite explicitly. Joseph Reed's (1989) criticism of the genre offers an extreme example but his evident disdain for teen film is indicative of the way that the genre is often treated in academic and popular discourse. Reed (1989: 132) compares the 'High School Picture' to the teenager: "flat-footed, forward, kind of dumb". He goes on to propose, "if we are to locate any force in these pictures, we will find it in their content. It is an appalling statement, but a sad fact, that form has failed to make a significant contribution to this untidy group" (ibid). Similarly, those films that Reed does rate,

he proposes as anomalies, untypical, he suggests, of a genre that is “the kind of thing kids will like” (ibid). In reference to *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955) he declares: “*Rebel* is high, the genre low” (157). Although most analyses lack the aggression with which Reed rejects the aesthetic dimensions of teen film, they continue to take the aesthetics of the popular mainstream for granted. In doing so they preserve hierarchies that determine what is or is not ‘worthy’ of study from an aesthetic perspective and the affective and physical appeals of teen film are left unexplored.

Studies of teen film also often contextualise particular films in their historical moment: linking social concerns of the period to the ways in which those concerns are dealt with (overtly or implicitly) in specific films. In his chapter ‘The Way of the Beautiful’, for example, Jon Lewis (1992) connects the burgeoning sexual revolution, to the teen film *Where the Boys Are* (Henry Levin, 1960). Lewis ties the film to sexual politics of the period and proposes that *Where the Boys Are* takes a stance against pre-marital sex: revealing the horrors of young female promiscuity as a backlash to the Kinsey Report. In his final analysis Lewis (ibid: 62) suggests that “the real message at the end of the movie” is that the teens in the film need their parents to tell them what to do — that they can’t be left to their own devices (ibid). This ‘historical’ methodology again emphasises the assumed pedagogical role of teen film: asking what adult producers are trying to teach the young target audience and assessing the

ideological implications of the messages conveyed. Doherty (2002: 198-201) cites the AIDS epidemic as having a 'neutering' effect on the teenpic and Shary (2002: 248, 254, 261) similarly focuses on how narratives reflect social mores and concerns, connecting a lack of sexual freedom and promiscuity in teen films of the late 1980s-90s to the growing awareness of AIDS in the same period. The prevalence of this approach assumes that the content of teen films is dictated by period specific values and ideologies alone, overlooking producers' intentions to entertain.

A number of the studies of teen film explored thus far consider a particularly male version of the genre. Considine (1985), Reed (1989), Lewis (1992), and Doherty's (2002) work essentially assumes teen or youth as male, unless otherwise specifically stated, tacitly sanctifying 'boy culture' and dismissing 'girl culture' (Douglas, 1994: 5; Kleinhans, 2002: 88). The greater consideration that boy teen films receive should not be overstated, there are of course boy teen films that are dismissed as 'typical' Hollywood fare. Nonetheless adding the girl to teen film includes another aspect that implicitly labels these films as aesthetically discreditable. Girl culture, which Driscoll (2002: 214) describes as culture that is directed to, about, and for girls, is implicitly and explicitly classified in academic and popular discourse as irredeemably commercial and consequently conformist. Girl culture is generally considered to lack the rebellion

of male youth culture (Driscoll, 2002; Cain, 2004: 135) and therefore even more unworthy of aesthetic analysis.¹¹

It is not only 'girlness' that leaves the aesthetics of girl teen film underexplored in its fun modes. The fun of these films automatically relegates them in academic terms. Fun is thought of critically as frivolous, trivial, apolitical, and generally not serious enough to warrant academic consideration (Podilchak, 1991; Rutsky and Wyatt, 1990). Yet another reason the aesthetics of these films have been neglected is their comic mode. Comedy lacks critical standing, as Katheleen Rowe (1995: 43) suggests:

Despite (and probably because of) its enormous and enduring popularity, comedy has never enjoyed the critical prestige of tragedy and its descendents. Like melodrama, comedy is more often confined to the realm of amusement than art because of its popular accessibility and its connections with gossip, intrigue and the everyday, areas of culture tied to the feminine.

Similarly the types of affect that girl teen films aim for are relegated because of their ties to the 'feminine'. As Plantinga (2009: 4) proposes, in the past the lack of focus on emotion in film studies can perhaps be explained by an implicit sexism that devalues emotion as feminine. This is especially true, Plantinga

¹¹ Riot Grrrl is one anomaly amongst other DIY subcultures but the very need for the Riot Grrrl movement to exist, to push forward and support women in 'alternative' music expresses the general disregard of girl culture and girls in culture.

(ibid) suggests, of ‘sentimental’ emotions compared to ostensibly ‘masculine’ anger and vengefulness: “when one hears the emotions denigrated, it is usually the sentimental or sympathetic emotions that bear the brunt of the criticism.” Emotion and affect connected to fun are not only denigrated but also practically ignored. Consequently the aesthetics and affective appeal of fun modes of popular culture enjoy little attention. When Driscoll (2011b: 139-144), for example, compares teen film Shakespeare adaptations *Romeo + Juliet* (Luhrmann, 1996) and *10 Things I Hate About You* (Junger, 1999), she details some of the ‘music video’ stylistic aspects of the tragedy. As an adaptation of the comedy *The Taming of the Shrew*, *10 Things* is a girl teen film in the fun mode and despite being similarly influenced by music video stylistics (as all girl teen films are — see chapter five) the aesthetics in this film go unmentioned.

Girl teen film

Studies that specifically focus on girl teen film often maintain the pedagogical presumption of teen film analysis, with a gendered slant. In *Pictures of Girlhood* (2006) Sarah Hentges explores “girls’ film” with a particular focus on the ways that race and sexuality are constructed. Considering mainstream films she suggests: “many empowering films for girls are empowering only for a certain kind of empowerment — that which is traditional or familiar” (69). Hentges’ book

is representative of studies in girl teen film that use a methodology of “critique” (Gubar, 1998: 882). Susan Gubar (1998) uses this term to characterise what she calls the first stage of feminist literary criticism. The methodology stresses “the manner in which the work of art participate[s] in the construction of debilitating or liberating sexual ideologies” (ibid: 882). Gubar suggests that critique is a method that is so ubiquitous in academia and the classroom that the approach is taken for granted. Her overview of literary feminist methodologies emphasises that critique remains a vital aspect of feminist criticism but she also proposes that the methodologies’ results can seem somewhat predictable: “one expects the interpreter to find the text either feminist or misogynist” (885, fn 12). Hentges’ focus in *Pictures of Girlhood* emphasises those facets she deems ‘empowering’ or ‘disturbing’ for the presumed young female audience, to reconfirm generalisations about girl teen film’s sexist, racist and classist stereotypes. This approach again leaves aesthetic and affective dimensions unexplored, through its focus on what films ‘have to say’.

In the collection *Sugar and Spice* (2002), a number of essays go beyond a ‘critique’ approach to examine girl teen films from the 1990s. Gayle Wald (2002) presents a detailed examination of the ways in which the narrative of *Clueless* constructs gender, race and class ‘cluelessness’ as an ideological ‘loop-hole’. Unaware of her class and race privilege, the protagonist Cher, is able to ignore the “First World-Third World relations” (120) that her privilege relies on. Wald

(2002: 103) cites *Clueless* as a “self-consciously, light-weight” film that distracts its audience, whilst covertly feeding it reactionary ideologies (2002: 110). For Wald (2002: 121) *Clueless* is “tethered to the embrace of conventional gender and class narratives cloaked in the rhetoric of the charming, the cute, or the clueless.”

In comparison, Mary Celeste Kearney (2002) examines girl teen films from the 1990s in the ‘indie’ mode. In her analysis of *The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love* (Marie Maggenti, 1995), *Foxfire* (Annette Haywood-Carter, 1996), *Girls Town* (Jim McKay, 1996) and *All Over Me* (Alex Sichel, 1997), Kearney explores the ways in which these independent films express coming of age as a homosocial process. She contrasts the positive same sex relationships depicted in these films to contemporaneous studio teen films that “typically pit friends against each other” (ibid: 133). The independent films explored, Kearney (ibid: 139) points out, “subvert the traditional feminine mise-en-scène of female teenpics” and in doing so, stand in contrast to those ‘lightweight’ studio productions of the same period that deal with girls and girl culture. In the *Sugar and Spice* anthology, and similar to much of the analysis of girl teen film, the pleasures found in the independent films analysed are adopted as ideologically positive and progressive. In contrast, pleasure in the ‘lightweight’ girl teen film is admonished. There exists a gap in the literature on girl teen film: to consider the

subgenre in its fun mode without conflating pleasure and ideology, or presuming that pleasure is an ideological ruse.

Chuck Kleinhans' (2002: 73) 'Girls on the Edge of the Reagan Era' is a unique analysis of girl teen film in his particular attention to "cinematic expression".

Kleinhans seeks to validate three films from 1980: *Foxes* (Adrian Lyne), *Little Darlings* (Roland F. Maxwell), and *Times Square* (Allan Moyle). Kleinhans finds that *Foxes* in particular achieves an "accomplished visual mise-en-scène" (ibid: 83) with its use of diffused light and claustrophobic visuals. It is significant that in contrast to a more extensive analysis of the visual style of *Foxes*, Kleinhans simply describes *Little Darlings* as "a typical high-key, comedic mise-en-scène" (ibid: 79). 'Typical' aesthetics are taken for granted and go unexplored.

Kleinhans' analysis is distinctive in its attention to the aesthetics of these girl teen films, however his interest here is in films that represent examples of a "quirky off beat style" (ibid: 88). A notion of what is 'typical' and ostensibly unsuitable for aesthetic analysis is implicit throughout literature on teen film.

Girls Studies

Over the last twenty years explorations of girlhood and girl culture have increasingly come into focus in cultural studies, after being sidelined in discussions of adolescence and youth for most of the twentieth century. What

has emerged as 'girls studies' combines the academic traditions of feminist criticism and critical youth studies, to explore "what it means to be a girl." (Aapola, Gonick, & Harris, 2005: 1). Girls studies takes a gendered approach to the field of youth studies, with a particular focus on girls and girlhood in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Inquiries generally aim to explore the construction of girls' subjectivities in specific social, cultural and historical contexts and locations (Aapola et al., 2005; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001). This thesis does not explore girls' subjectivities as such, but it is important to contextualise the relationship between this research and the Girls Studies field.

In *American Sweethearts*, Ilana Nash (2006) examines the depiction of teenage girls in American media from 1930 to 1965. Nash (ibid: 3) finds that contradictory images of female adolescence figured in mainstream culture as "objects of intense pleasure, curiosity, and anxiety." Representations co-exist, she suggests, whereby girls are both exalted and abject (ibid: 2). Susan Douglas (1994) also finds these contradictions of representation in teen girl texts in her analysis of the same period, suggesting that this inconsistency had a confusing impact on the subjectivities of baby-boomer girls. Similarly, Aapola, Gonick & Harris (2004) and Gonick (2006) find a paradox in culture and discourse surrounding girls in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Aapola et al (2004) find that girls are contradictorily presented as either self-assured or victim. 'Girl Power' discourses position girls at the centre of popular culture, policy and

debate — as “feisty, sassy, attractive and assertive (ibid: 8). In contrast ‘Reviving Ophelia’ discourses focus on the idea of girls in trouble — circulating ideas around “increasing incidents of girls violence, self-esteem problems, and a propensity for self-harm.” (Ibid: 9). Girls Studies has articulated the contrary depictions of girlhood present in popular culture and as I will return to below in relation to postfeminism, these contradictions are also explored for their impact on girls. The version of girlhood created in millennial girl teen films is similarly constructed by contradictory qualities, but rather than focus on what this version of girlhood ‘means’, on how it impacts on girls’ subjectivities, or how it re-presents period specific patriarchy, I examine how these contradictions are designed to feel good.

Before moving on to consider the interconnections of Girls Studies, postfeminism, girl culture, and girl teen film I would like to briefly outline other methodologies applied to girl culture (and girls’ culture) that highlight why a new approach to girl teen film is necessary. The supposed impact of girl culture on girls has been a significant focus for sociological examinations that attempt to analyse the effect of film messages on audiences of girl teen film. Behm-Morawitz and Mastro’s (2008) study applies a social cognitive theory framework. The study firstly documents gender portrayals in teen film and secondly, using hypotheses derived from this content analysis, construct and interpret questionnaires that aim to discover the consequences of ‘exposure’ to teen film. Their study: ‘Mean

girls? The influence of gender portrayals in teen movies on emerging adults' gender-based attitudes and beliefs', charts the behaviour of characters across twenty teen films from 1995-2005. This coded content analysis proves the writers' hypothesis that female characters in teen film are more likely to engage in socially aggressive behaviours. Behm-Marowitz and Mastro (136) secondly hypothesize that exposure to the messages of teen film "would potentially result in the development of unfavourable beliefs [...] and negative attitudes toward women in general." Their questionnaire findings are interpreted as proving this theory. Annika Hylmö (2006) takes a similar approach in 'Girls on Film: An examination of gendered vocational socialization messages found in motion pictures targeting teenage girls.' Hylmö (2006: 180) finds that "The films targeting teenage girls present troubling messages that socialize [sic] girls into becoming dependent on men and having little ambition of their own." These studies deal with girl teen film as if it were a transparent medium and paint girls as passive victims of the 'false consciousness' of the culture industries (also see Cook & Kaiser, 2004; Hill, 2011; Quart, 2004).

Alternatively a number of girls' studies have focused on how girls use culture as active participants. Amongst his considerable body of work Henry Jenkins (2006), for example, reflects on the ways in which fan participation encourages creativity and expands literacy skills. In 'Why Heather can write: media literacy and the Harry Potter Wars', Jenkins (ibid: 169) considers ways that convergence

culture gives girls (amongst other fans) the opportunity to participate in their own culture on their own terms. He celebrates fans' "ability to extend beyond what is represented on the screen" (ibid: 175). A core of Jenkins' work (1992, 2006a, 2006b) focuses on fan-based cultures and subsidiary texts. A number of girls' studies have followed this example, incorporating audience studies and ethnography into their research (for example: Kearney, 2006; Reid-Walsh & Mitchell, 2004). In 'Pushing at the margins: teenage angst in teen TV and audience response', Louisa Ellen Stein (2008) explores creative fan works generated from the source material of teen TV. Analysing the specific examples (original programming and fan created texts) of *Gilmore Girls* (2000-2007), *Veronica Mars* (2004-2007) and *Supernatural* (2005-), Stein suggests that Teen TV's structural focus on themes of constraint make the genre available and attractive for creative fan reinterpretation. This type of research has developed Girls Studies in new directions but, for my purposes, focusing on fandom and what fans do with media, side steps the kinds of aesthetic pleasures audio-viewers are invited to enjoy. Although this kind of research often examines those forms of popular culture that have traditionally been disregarded as too 'low brow' to warrant investigation, fan studies generally focus on responses of intense enthusiasm, rather than 'ordinary' pleasures.

Postfeminisms

Postfeminisms have been a key structuring discourse of Girls Studies and analyses of recent girl teen films. Sarah Projansky (2007: 44) suggests that “postfeminist discourse has produced the conditions for the emergence of girl discourse and *girl discourse contributes to and sustains postfeminism.*” (Italics in original). The relationship between the two manifests in a number of ways. Firstly, in attempts to reclaim elements of girl culture, scholarship in Girls Studies frequently engages notions of postfeminism or the ‘Third Wave’. In *The Aftermath of Feminism*, Angela McRobbie (2009: 4) suggests that the tradition of socialist-feminist cultural studies (for example: Ang, 1985; Lewis, 1990; Modleski, 1982; McRobbie, 1991; Radway, 1984) originally sought to create a cultural anthropology “of how women participated in everyday life”, based on the impetus to “understand dynamics of power and constraint” (McRobbie, 2009: 3). Socialist-feminist cultural studies often focused on women’s subversive practices in engaging with consumer culture but the work, underpinned by left-wing politics, gave way to a celebratory approach that took for granted an implicit resistance in pleasure. On the other hand postfeminism has also been described as “feminism without women” (Cheu, 2007; Modleski, 1991), a retrogression that declares feminism has won so that women feel they no longer need to engage in it — the “subversion of feminism in the name of feminism” (Cheu: 6). McRobbie (2009: 11) calls for a complexification of backlash theory (Faludi, 1991), describing

postfeminism as practice through which the “feminist gains of the 1970s and 1980s are actively and relentlessly undermined.” (McRobbie, 2009: 11). This process of destabilisation is tied to postfeminist discourse, which draws on feminism in order to disabuse it as unnecessary.

In ‘Feminism and Femininity: Or how we learned to stop worrying and learned to love the thong’, for example, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (2004) discuss the intersection of feminism and feminine culture. Baumgardner and Richards describe the combination of feminism and the feminine as ‘girlie’ third wave feminism. Girls and ‘girlies’ (older than girls, younger than second wave feminists), they suggest, have appropriated the word girl along with facets of girl culture (including Barbie, the colour pink and *Sex and the City*) in opposition to the rejection of femininity by second wave feminists. In this polemic against the second wave (construed by Baumgardner and Richards as an homogenous clump) the notion of the ‘girlie’ is presented as empowering:

When we’re feeling girlie”, they suggest, “it’s because we feel independent, irreverent, and free from judgment [sic]—and this could happen at nine or ninety. When little girls sing Spice girls songs and adult women throw parties to celebrate this season’s premier of *Sex in the City* [sic] [...] it’s this fierce, fun independence they are tapping into. (Ibid: 61)

This white, middle-class version of postfeminism takes the resistance of pleasure as an axiom. Showing that you are having fun with girl culture, Baumgardner and

Richards suggest, is in itself a political act, and notions of fun and pleasure go unquestioned. Similar presumptions are found in studies of girl teen film. For example, in her analysis of *Legally Blonde* (Luketic, 2001), Carole M. Dole (2007: 61) suggests that 'chick-flicks' "offer a superabundance of dresses (often pink and sparkly), hairstyles, manicures, designer shoes, clever bags and precious jewels as a celebration of femininity" and "a way to take pride in being female."

In 'The Feminist in the Kitchen: Martha, Martha and Nigella', Charlotte Brunsdon (2006: 44) distinguishes cultural criticism from the 1970s and 1980s that sought a defence of the feminine pleasures found in 'women's genres' of the period, from what she describes as the "Ur feminist" article. The Ur article, a genre of feminist analysis of popular culture, implicitly incorporates the preposition that pleasure works as a function of patriarchal ideology: "The structure of the article usually involves setting up what is proposed as an obvious feminist reading of the text in which the text — and the heroine — fail the test." (Ibid) The Ur article then draws on critical studies conceptions of pleasure as a means of resistance to redeem the text as complex and contradictory. Brunsdon's focus in 'The Feminist in the Kitchen' is on the ways in which this approach evokes the idea of the supposedly singular second-wave feminist as the dour enemy of the pleasures to be found in contemporary popular culture. However her analysis also makes clear the taken for granted appropriation of the notion of pleasure in much feminist popular culture criticism. Tania Modleski similarly criticises this

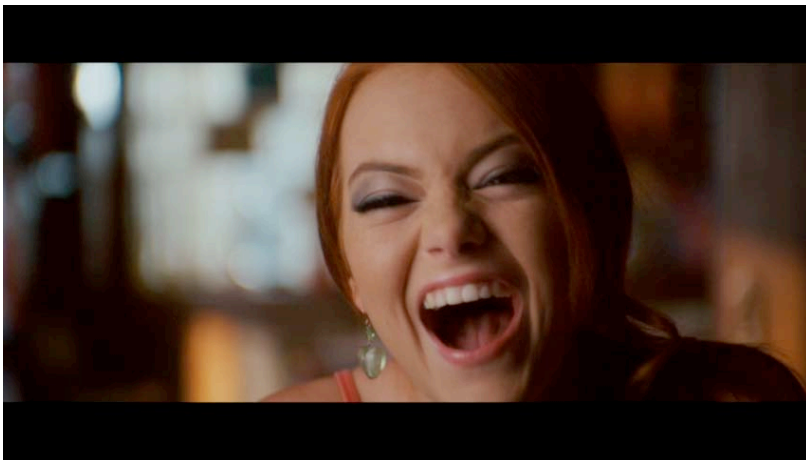
approach in an interview with the 'Lazy Scholar' (Vider, 2010): "There is often a faulty syllogism at work in cultural criticism that goes something like this: I enjoy *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*; I am a feminist; therefore the program must be feminist". This thesis suggests a new methodological approach to forms of 'feminine' popular culture that considers pleasure without fixing it to (post)feminist resistance or patriarchal conformity.

Projansky (2007: 67-69) finds in Girls Studies an inversion of the Ur article approach, which she calls the "disruption-containment" model. Instead of finding feminism where there seemed to be none, the disruption-containment model outlines the feminist potential in examples of girl culture and then illustrates the ways that this potential is contained. Studies in girl teen film commonly employ variations of these approaches. Sarah Gilligan (2011), for example, weighs up, what she describes as the subversive possibilities of costume in *She's All That* (Iscoe, 1999) against the film's otherwise patriarchal narrative. Costume, Gilligan (2011: 169) proposes, gives girl characters "access to a multiplicity of interchangeable feminine identities that are characterized by play, experimentation, transformation, and performance." Again, the pleasures found in girl teen film are explained ideologically — read in the 'right' way, the pleasures in the film are explained through gender subversion, in opposition to the conformist *Pygmalion* narrative — and the notion of pleasure goes unquestioned. Exploring the teenage femme fatale in *Cruel Intentions* (Kumble, 1999) and

Pretty Persuasion (Siega, 2005), Katherine Farrimond (2011) similarly weighs up the potential for feminist agency against patriarchal recuperation in the films' narratives and characters. These teen femme fatales, she suggests, "cannot be interpreted straightforwardly as evil Lolitas, but nor are they postfeminist heroines" (ibid: 86), instead, Farrimond proposes, they walk a tightrope between these two positions. This notion of a balancing act, again, highlights the contradictory position of the girl figure in popular culture but this approach maintains an overinvestment in narrative and meaning at the expense of aesthetic analysis.

In its cultural and academic manifestations, notions of millennial girlhood are considered to personify postfeminism and postfeminism is seen to describe ideas of millennial girlhood (Projansky, 2007; Tasker and Negra, 2005). The millennial girl's position as always in process (Driscoll, 2002), her simultaneous reliance on and disregard of feminist gains, her personification of the marked sexualisation of culture, her constant body work, self-surveillance, transformation, and her associations with consumer culture: all of these things tie her to definitions of postfeminism (Attwood, 2011; Gill, 2011; Harvey & Gill, 2011; McRobbie, 2004, 2009; Projansky, 2007; Radner, 1999; Tasker & Negra, 2007). Girls Studies also explicitly connects postfeminism, and consequently girlhood, to neoliberal ideals. As Rosalind Gill (2011: 147) proposes: "the autonomous, calculating, self-

regulating subject of neoliberalism bears a strong resemblance to the active, freely choosing, self-reinventing subject of postfeminism.”



Figures 0.9 & 0.10, *The House Bunny*, second wave feminist to postfeminist makeover.

As a result, a number of studies in girl teen film focus on how these films are representative of postfeminist culture and neoliberal ideals. Joel Gwynne’s (2013) analysis of *The House Bunny* (Wolf, 2008) for example, explores the ways

in which the film creates postfeminist contradictions. *The House Bunny* follows Shelley (Anna Farris) in her attempts to makeover a 'dowdy' sorority (figs 0.9 & 0.10). The film not only draws on feminism to disregard it but also creates complex patterns whereby feminist and antifeminist ideas sit side-by-side. As Gill (2011: 146) suggests, contradictory patterns are the essence of a postfeminist sensibility in media culture. The film, Gwynne (2013) illustrates, constructs desirable femininity as existing between asexual and hypersexual extremes: embodied in character representations of asexual second wave feminism and postfeminist hypersexuality. As caricatures of these two stereotypes, the girls in *The House Bunny* neatly personify the ways that postfeminism entangles feminist and antifeminist discourses.

Girls Studies have also placed a greater emphasis on the impact for girls living in a postfeminist, neoliberal moment. Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose (2011), for example, explore teen girls' negotiations of living in increasingly sex-saturated societies and cultures. Again, Renold and Ringrose articulate the consequences of postfeminism (and neoliberalism) for girls, as manifest in a kind of paradox. Drawing on Deleuzian concepts to articulate the contradictory performances of young femininity they find in their ethnographic research, Renold and Ringrose (2011: 389) propose that postfeminism and neoliberalism create 'schizoid subjectivities' for girls: "where girls negotiate discourses of sexual knowingness and innocence, often simultaneously". In 'The Slut that Wasn't', Farrimond

(2013) examines the representations of virginity and how characters negotiate sexuality in the film *Easy A*. The film, Farrimond (2013: 45) suggests, functions as an example of “(post)feminist political duality”. In *Easy A*, Olive starts a false rumour that she has lost her virginity. As the rumour spreads, Olive performs a hypersexual self-presentation whilst the film’s narrative makes her ‘genuine’ sexual naivety clear. Like *The House Bunny*, in narrative terms *Easy A* reflects conditions of girlhood described variously (with shifting implications) as a duality, paradoxical, double entanglement, schizoid, or contradictory. In my introduction to this thesis I described girl teen film as structured foremost by the contradictory qualities of innocence and experience. In this study I will not restate how these contradictions are part of totalising systems, instead my research aims to add to previous examinations of girl teen film and postfeminism, to explore how antinomies play out aesthetically to generate pleasures. Rather than focus on how these films re-present or reflect totalities, my approach concerns how girl teen films create facets of postfeminism and neoliberalism as pleasurable.

Pleasure and fun

As I outlined in the introduction theoretical discourse on pleasure has always been hierarchical and gendered. In ‘Serious Pleasures: Cinematic Pleasure and the Notion of Fun’, Rutsky and Wyatt (1990: 17) present a polemic that calls for a

theoretical discourse of fun. Fun is presented here as opposed to 'serious pleasures' and Rutsky and Wyatt set up their analysis of pleasure as a series of dichotomies. In figuring the ways that pleasure has been constituted they conclude that 'serious' pleasures are based on an oppositional sado-masochistic structure: pleasure in a position of mastery or being mastered (ibid: 9). These pleasures based on positions of power are, in turn, compared to the non-serious pleasure of fun: a pleasure that does not "take itself too seriously" (ibid: 10-11). Rutsky and Wyatt offer an overview of the hierarchical binaries central to discourses of pleasure that exclude fun (non-serious pleasure) as a negative term and ask for a theoretical model that takes into account the 'trivial' pleasures of fun. This set up of pleasure as bound to a binary framework has been fundamental to academic discourses on the subject from its inception (for example as is evident in Plato's hedonic value scale [Erginel, 2011]). These binaries are conditioned on the supposition of 'good' versus 'bad' pleasures. Pleasure is defined in the pejorative sense or in ways that seek to validate only certain kinds of pleasure. These include: reason Vs pleasure; masculine Vs feminine; trivial Vs serious; beauty Vs the sublime; pleasure Vs jouissance; easy gratification Vs dissonance; culture industry Vs Art.

The suspicion against pleasure, or more specifically, certain kinds of pleasure has had a fundamental influence on culture and how pleasure is discussed and critiqued (Trilling, 1980 [1965]). Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, for

example, are often painted as the misers of pleasure (Connor, 1992). Central to Adorno and Horkheimer's (1997 [1944]) critique of the culture industry is a dressing-down of pleasure. The 'easy' pleasures of "candy-floss entertainment", they suggest, "stultifies mankind." (ibid: xv). In his analysis of Adorno's relationship to pleasure, Ross Wilson (2009: 271) proposes that Adorno positions fun as a "dummy of real pleasure and as a diversion from sustained conceptual engagement with artworks." Wilson (2009: 274) suggests that Adorno's intention is a defence of pleasure: the objection for Adorno is not in pleasure per se but in what is offered as pleasure by the culture industry. Adorno and Horkheimer (1997, 125-127) are suspicious of instant gratification, pleasure from the familiar and that which offers a "sensuous façade". For Adorno 'real' pleasure is comparatively intense and found in deferral and dissonance (Wilson, 2009: 271, 276). Although Wilson makes clear that Adorno's aesthetic theory is not based on a puritan abhorrence of pleasure, there remains a strict dichotomy at the heart of Adorno's work, between 'good' and 'bad' pleasure, between 'serious' pleasure and 'fun'.

Cultural criticism has often sought battle with the dichotomies created by theories of pleasure, with a particular emphasis that claims value in popular culture. In 'The Terror of Pleasure: The contemporary horror film and postmodern theory' Tania Modleski (2000 [1986]: 292) interrogates the binaries of pleasure and the theorisation of mass culture as "the realm of cheap and easy pleasure".

Analysing the horror genre from a Marxist perspective, Modleski (ibid: 285) questions the assumption that popular culture is a means of “keeping [the masses] unaware of their desperate vacuity” through the mechanised consumption of “easy, false pleasure”. Modleski presents postmodern exploitation and slasher films as counter-examples of forms of popular culture that do not provide the comfort and spurious harmony proposed by critics of mass culture. For Modleski (2000: 288-291) the films present a postmodern assault on bourgeois culture via ‘schizophrenic’ characters, ruptured bodies, and open-endings that thwart audience expectations in ways that distance horror film from the realm of pleasure and reclaim it as an experience of *jouissance*.

Modleski’s analysis finds the pleasure of terror in dissonance and in doing so reaffirms the opposition of serious pleasure versus fun, to redeem horror film as part of the ‘good’ pleasure category. Rather than disturbing the dichotomy itself, this reclamation seeks to redeem the status of the postmodern horror genre for its ‘serious’ pleasures.

From a feminist perspective Modleski (ibid) holds less optimism in her analysis of horror and pleasure. She identifies the subversive potential of some forms of mass culture and recognises this as a means of recalculating the opposition of high art versus mass culture. However, she also suggests, as apocalyptic and nihilistic as postmodern horror can be, its hostility is often directed at women. Modleski (ibid: 291-292) takes issue with the adversarial position enacted or

taken out on pleasure incarnated as woman who represents sexual pleasure and the specious good. In postmodern horror, Modleski recognises, the opposition of femininity Vs masculinity/pleasure Vs reason still holds. Aesthetic discourse has continually sought to separate pleasure and value and, as Elizabeth Boa (2009: 345) suggests “hierarchical standards and [...] judgements frequently fall harshly on women.” In this respect femininity represents that which is wanton, licentious, wild, animalistic and hysterical — qualities derived from the body (Rutsky and Wyatt, 1990; Boa, 2009). As such women are incapable of experiencing (‘serious’) pleasure in the ‘correct’ way that requires distanced contemplation (Boa, 2009: 345). In conjunction to this ‘low’ feminine experience of pleasure, those cultural texts and genres defined as ‘bad’ art are demarcated as feminine. Feminine pleasure is identified as indiscriminate and easy, based on the body and affect rather than reason: “a warm glow, sentimental tears, gruesome excitement (to say nothing of sexual arousal)” (Boa, 2009: 346). As Rutsky and Wyatt (1990: 7) elaborate, these pleasures are characterised as deceptively attractive: “from Plato’s representation of Poetry as a seductress to Nietzsche’s opposition of women and (rational) truth – [these pleasures have] frequently been figured as feminine.”

Pleasure and Feminist Film Theory

In a special issue of *Signs*, Kathleen McHugh and Vivian Sobchak (2004: 1205) ask if feminist film theory still exists? In the issue, Linda Williams (2004: 1265) responds to this question to propose that feminist approaches have been so incorporated into the fields of film and media studies that it would be counterproductive to set them apart. The rise of film studies during the 1970s and 1980s alongside second wave feminism has meant that feminism has existed as more than just an aspect of film studies, as a fundamental part of the discipline. Laleen Jayamanne (2004: 1248) suggests that, as a consequence, film studies can often work under a feminist 'common sense': "received ideas that are in the air, circulating as clichés such as, for example, the 'male gaze'." Pleasure has similarly become part of a feminist 'common sense' in film and cultural studies.

There is no straightforward chronology of feminist film theory and culture/media studies as, of course, ideas and methodologies are integrated and applied in various, inter-linking, overlapping and complex ways. However, as I explored in the introduction, Mulvey's (1975) formative 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', initiated a focus that brought pleasure to the forefront. Mulvey's manifesto warned against the patriarchal construction of pleasure: using psychoanalysis to focus on the ways in which the apparatus of classical narrative

film created visual pleasure for the male spectator via a voyeuristic, scopophilic gaze and narcissistic identification. As a result feminist film theory has often focused on pleasure as a reaction to Mulvey's work, considering, for example, the possibilities for female pleasure in the psychoanalytic context (For example, Koch, 1980; Mayne, 1990; Stacey, 1988; 1994). Mulvey's manifesto set out to disrupt visual pleasure for feminist purposes and in doing so she established, what Anneke Smelik (1995: 66) has described as "a tension which is characteristic for feminist film theory: the friction between pleasure and politics."

This friction between pleasure and politics has also been a driving force in feminist cultural studies. Psychoanalysis presents universalising structures and a limiting dichotomy whereby pleasure is understood in relation to sexual difference. The restrictions of psychoanalysis encouraged scholars, in reaction, to expand the purview of what was considered to be "a narrowly conceived and ethnocentric inquiry into Western heterosexual subjectivity" (Doane, 2004: 1229, also see Erhart, 1999; hooks, 1992). This brought to the fore, analyses of racial, ethnic and class difference, alongside that of gender, to consider subjectivities that had previously been marginalised. This re-focus forced feminist film theory to open up to post-structuralist and post-colonial models and disciplines beyond the essentialist and universalising parameters of semiotics and psychoanalysis. Cultural studies is often painted as the "instant remedy" required for film theory's blind spots (Spigel, 2004: 1211). In common though, both disciplines took

pleasure and identification as fundamental to understanding film and media. Feminist cultural studies considered ways of accounting for female pleasure — with a particular focus on popular culture. Feminist cultural studies has used a number of discursive modes with the aim of exploring the appeals and pleasures of female-targeted genres. In basic terms cultural studies focused on ideas of pleasure as an ideological tool. Studies alternately took pleasure to be a means of pacifying the audience and maintaining structures of power, or a consequence of active participation with a media text — as resisting its preferred meanings. Early feminist cultural studies explored the gender specific permutations of these arguments and in particular questioned why genres targeted at women were found to be meaningful to so many members of the female audience (for example Ang, 1985; Coward, 1984; Modleski, 1982; Radway, 1987). The study of gender, media culture and everyday life has broadened and developed since the work of the mid-1980s to explore the relationship between gendered, racial, ethnic and class identities through a variety of methodologies, including textual analysis, ethnographic audience research, as well as historical studies. Throughout this varied history of research the notion of pleasure has maintained its position as a core concept in understanding media culture. Despite (or perhaps because of) the long-standing position of pleasure in this context, the notion of pleasure has generally been left unquestioned. In its frequent use in film, media and cultural studies the concept of pleasure has become a taken for granted notion — too

common-sensical to warrant further exploration (Dyer, 2002: 1, 3; Kerr, Kucklich, & Brereton, 2006: 64; O'Connor & Klaus, 2000: 370) In feminist film and media studies alike, pleasure has become a part of the feminist 'common sense'. When pleasure is explicitly considered the oppositions through which it is explored seem to create a stalemate: a continual re-hash of either/or arguments.

Consequently pleasure needs to be re-thought and re-introduced if we are to understand the pleasures of 'feminine' forms of popular culture.

In 'Aesthetics and Politics' Mary Ann Doane (2004: 1231) suggests that the tendency of anti-essentialist feminist film theory to divide and subdivide subjectivities with the aim of avoiding the overgeneralisations or totalisations that surrounded the concept of 'woman' in the past, "risks an aphasia of theory in which nothing can be said." Gubar (1998: 901) makes a similar point: whilst recognising the intellectual achievements of post-structuralist and post-colonial academics, she suggests that a consequence of work in these areas has been a "critical anorexia" that has left feminist academics languishing, no longer able to engage with the concept 'woman' (ibid: 901). Williams (2004: 1266) proposes: "Feminist scholarship [...] can no longer stand alone. It should not be the only optic through which we view moving images. If it is, we stagnate." Shifting the focus of theory, to consider not just what girl teen films mean but also what they 'do' will avoid critical stagnation and side-step gendered hierarchies that position 'feminine' popular culture as unworthy of study from an aesthetic perspective. In

a 1995 essay 'What meets the eye: feminist film studies', Smelik (79) proposes that "The issues of the female spectator and her viewing pleasure continue to dominate most of the agenda of feminist film theory. Nearly fifteen years later, Smelik's (2009) chapter 'Lara Croft, *Kill Bill*, and the battle for theory in feminist film studies', reflects significant shifts in the theoretical paradigms associated with the discipline. The 1995 title 'What meets the eye' itself reveals a fundamental move that has taken place in (feminist) film theory over this period. Where structuralist approaches privileged the visual components of film, in her 2009 chapter, Smelik (179-187) questions the applicability of psychoanalysis and semiotics to contemporary film and examines a shift in theory to explorations of "rhythm, energy, emotion, fragmentation and rhizomatic connections" influenced by Deleuzian bodies of thought (ibid: 190). Smelik analyses *Kill Bill: Vol 1&2* (Quentin Tarentino, 2003 & 2004) from this perspective and, shifting focus to sensation and affect, asks different questions to those posed by structuralist/post-structuralist feminist film analysis. If rhythm, energy and emotion are more important than meaning and signification, Smelik (2009: 190) suggests, analyses can move beyond narrative and representation, and "rather than asking 'what does it mean?' the question becomes 'what does a film do?'"

Focusing on the aesthetic dimensions of girl teen films gives us a starting point from which to consider what these films 'do'. Malcolm Bowie (2009: 253)

suggests it is not enough for critics to simply say “ ‘look at me, I’m enjoying’.” But neither does it take the concept of pleasure, feminist criticism or popular culture anywhere, continuing to battle with value versus pleasure oppositions. Moving beyond this binary, perhaps there are, as Bowie proposes, “new ways to be found of letting aesthetic enjoyment speak one or other of its many names.”

(Ibid). To ‘let aesthetic enjoyment speak’, aesthetics are explored in this thesis as material phenomena. This approach is influenced by Postrel (2003) who, as explored in the thesis introduction, defines aesthetics as the way we communicate through the senses, through the look and feel of people, places, and things. Thrift (2008: 21) suggests that aesthetic pleasures “tug” at us, they draw us towards certain objects but they do not necessarily enslave. It is the aesthetic ‘tug’ of surfaces in girl teen films that I am interested in.

Summary Outline

Chapter one, ‘Cinderella’s Pleasures’ frames the rest of the thesis and situates the fun mode of girl teen film in its fairy tale context. The chapter begins by examining the aesthetic legacy of Cinderella, as a fairy tale that places particular emphasis on pleasure. Cinderella’s pleasures, I suggest, are created by moments of ‘transformation’ and visibility and the surfaces that make and surround the character: these moments and surfaces structure the rest of the thesis. This chapter also introduces the notion that, like fairy tale, girl teen films

encourage an enchanted mode of engagement. The techniques used to create this enchantment are also explored in each chapter. From this position the second half of chapter one focuses on the materials that adorn the Cinderella character-icon. Costume is considered as an element of 'magic' conjured by the commercial sphere, and using *A Cinderella Story* (Rosman, 2004) and *The House Bunny* as key examples, I consider the tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures that Cinderella's costumes invite us to enjoy.

Chapter two, 'Celebrity Glamour' continues the focus on tactile pleasures and glamorous surfaces, to consider the generation of glamour around the Cinderella character-icon that renders her as a celebrity figure. The chapter begins by compartmentalising the different types of moments of visibility in which the protagonists of these films is made the centre of attention. After defining celebrity glamour, I explore how its characteristics are used to construct celebrity as a pleasurable experience in the worlds of girl teen film. Using a number of case studies, including *Easy A* and *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* (Sugarman, 2004), I examine the pleasures produced by glamorous spaces and places in these films, and how visibility is itself constructed as an aesthetic pleasure.

Chapter three, 'Sporting Pleasures', introduces and places emphasis on the various types of kinaesthetic pleasure that girl teen films exploit, which are also explored in further detail in chapters four and five. This chapter focuses on the pleasures offered by the active body on screen as itself an aesthetic surface. Sports performances in girl teen film provide the Cinderella character-icon with another moment of visibility and recognition. These moments are often at odds with the physical inhibitions girls are usually conditioned and restrained by, creating feelings of expansion and freedom. Using the case studies of *Blue Crush* (Stockwell, 2002), *Stick It* (Bendinger, 2006) and the *Bring it On* franchise (2000-2009) this chapter examines the kinds of kinaesthetic pleasure encouraged by sequences that create: the ideal, perfectly composed sporting body; the effortful body in training; and compositions in which girls move together in synchrony, creating an experience of muscular bonding for the audio-viewer.

In chapter four, 'Musical Address' refers to the structural and stylistic techniques that further encourage an enchanted mode of engagement. Supra-diegetic spaces and musical logic lend girl teen film a sense of freedom in its musical numbers and cultivate intense kinaesthetic pleasures derived from the relationship between music and the body. Musical address gives characters opportunities to use their full bodily capacities in ways usually unavailable to girls. Using *Hairspray* (2007) and *Mean Girls* as case studies this chapter sets out to

understand the physical dimensions of the utopian foundations of Hollywood musical numbers. The chapter also examines the especially cheerful affective attitude of millennial girl teen musicals by comparing the music and dance 'obscenity' of the original 1988 *Hairspray* to the sanitised 'fun' of the 2007 version.

Chapter five incorporates all the moments discussed so far, to examine the ways that 'Music Video Aesthetics' make a spectacle of specific, gendered ideas of fun. This chapter explores the ways that girl teen films are part of an intimate public of girlhood (Berlant, 2008) that aims to feel as though it expresses what is supposedly common amongst girls. Music video aesthetics lend affective force to those events, scenarios, and ideas of fun that are part of this intimate public. The chapter introduces the notion of intermedia aesthetics to explain how music video sequences in girl teen films create spectacle through a convergence of music and image. The chapter identifies different modes of spectacle and compares the post-continuity stylistics employed in action cinema and boy teen film to those in the films studied: where music video aesthetics render the feelings of music and dance. Beginning with a case study of *Make It Happen* (Grant, 2008) the chapter explores how music video aesthetics present the ideal dancing body to create a type of kinaesthetic 'contagion' that feels like dance. A girl teen film moment from the romantic comedy *13 Going on 30* then offers an

illustrative comparison to *Make It Happen*, in which music video aesthetics make a spectacle of 'everyday' practices of femininity — rendering the feelings of music and dance without showing dancing bodies.

The thesis conclusion draws together the findings of the research and outlines the contributions it has made to Teen Film Studies, Girls Studies, Feminist Film Theory, and notions of pleasure and film. It also raises questions and possibilities for future research.

This thesis explores the aesthetic pleasures of girl teen films between 2000-2010 as a means of understanding how the version of girlhood that they create is presented as pleasurable. It proposes that girl teen films invite us to enjoy a limited version of girlhood that feels like potential and promise but is restricted within prescribed parameters. Nonetheless the pleasures on offer explain how these films are potentially appealing, and how they create 'feel good' experiences.

Chapter One: Cinderella's Pleasures



Figure 1.1, *A Cinderella Story* (2004), Cinderella's moment.

Introduction

In the introduction to the thesis I pointed out that most writing on teen films ignore or even reject the importance of aesthetics as unworthy of consideration, especially in relation to girl teen films in the commercial, Hollywood format. I suggested that by examining how these films are composed at an aesthetic level — communicating through the senses, through look and feel — we can

understand their potentially affective pleasures and the kinds of experiences that girl teen films offer.

This chapter explores how the aesthetic pleasures of the Cinderella fairy tale play out affectively in twenty-first century girl teen films. The first known literary version of Cinderella, 'Yeh-hsien', comes from ninth-century China. Socio-historical permutations of the tale abound but the essential structure of Cinderella has become a "gendered script" (Ahmed, 2010: 59, Gill, 2007: 180) used and reused most especially in products aimed at girls. Girl teen films in the fun mode are essentially Cinderella stories: they follow a rags-to-riches trajectory in which a degraded heroine, who suffers at the hands of other women, manages to climb the social ladder through grace and good looks. Dependent on canons of virtue and standards of beauty, the qualities and capacities of the Cinderella character change according to the time and place of the story's telling. Yeh-hsien was valued for her pottery skills and intelligence. In twenty-first century girl teen films the Cinderella character-icon is valued for her ability to sing, dance, and wear clothes well.¹² In 1977 Jane Yolen (297) proposed that the shrew, active, resourceful Cinderellas from earlier versions of the tale, have been replaced by a coy "nice" girl who awaits her rescue [by Prince Charming] with patience and a

¹² The term character-icon is used here to reflect that although the girl teen films discussed are not all direct re-tellings of Cinderella, their heroines are a type. The Cinderella character-icon enjoys an iconic status, she signals narrative trajectory, plot features, character traits, and a particular version of girlhood.

song.” The Cinderella character-icon quite neatly indicates the kinds of girls deemed entitled to happiness and pleasure in any given time and culture. In contemporary Hollywood cinema she is white, able-bodied, and slim. She embodies middle-class propriety and heterosexist assumptions.

The versions of Cinderella commonly taken to be the most influential are those of Charles Perrault (1697), The Grimm Brothers (1812) and Walt Disney (1950), (Haase, 2004; Preston, 2004). Girl teen films however often use the Cinderella story in ways that are not necessarily straightforward: evoking the memory or idea of the tale, rather than any one version. Some girl teen films use the “exoskeleton” (Tiffin, 2009: 26) of Cinderella — the infallible structure — to produce versions of the tale that conform to its formal “functions” (Propp 1968), whilst others adopt elements of the story more loosely. History has variously revised Cinderella, articulating and creating diverging expectations of appropriate feminine behaviours, but the story’s pleasures have remained consistent.

Although the tale involves fear and despair, the character’s joy and the pleasures that she delights in are what is stressed. Cinderella must deal with the jealousy of other women and her mother’s death but these elements work to make her particular pleasures all the more intense and triumphant. Analyses of Cinderella have stressed the despair wrought in the tale by sibling rivalries (Bettelheim, 1976), evil women (Warner, 1995), and incestuous fathers (Tatar, 1999) but the story also emphasises pleasure. Fairy tales that include a female protagonist

often focus on fear, and rites of passage that involve risk and violence (for example 'Little Red Riding Hood'). Other stories emphasise fears that are a part of coming of age, sex, and marriage (for example 'Bluebeard'), or girls embracing the animalistic elements in their nature (for example 'Donkeyskin'). The legacies of these fairy tales are evident in contemporary horror films (see Short, 2006) such as *Black Swan* (Aronofsky, 2010), or *Ginger Snaps* (Fawcett, 2000).¹³ In common with the Cinderella fairy tale, girl teen films in the fun mode emphasise coming of age through glamour. Where 'Little Red Riding Hood', 'Bluebeard', and 'Donkeyskin' foreground fright, anxiety, and unease, Cinderella highlights joy, delight, and triumph. The nature of Cinderella's pleasures, both those that the character enjoys and those that aim to appeal to audiences, are indicative of the types of pleasure regarded as 'appropriate' for girls. As Yolen's (1977) description above suggests, Cinderella's pleasures are often tied to Prince Charming and heterosexual romance. Simone de Beauvoir (1953: 56) proposes that the Cinderella myth "encourages the young girl to expect fortune and happiness from some Prince Charming rather than to attempt by herself their difficult and uncertain conquest." As I will explore, Prince Charming is increasingly less important (if he was ever really that important at all?) in the current neoliberal, postfeminist context where consumer products, self-

¹³ Also see Lury (2010), who explores the ways that nightmarish fairy tale worlds are employed in film to represent the child's point of view.

management/presentation, and visibility are the primary focus. I also ask what else is going on in these films? What makes Cinderella so successful — told, re-told, appropriated and manipulated for more than 1200 years? What can we learn from contemporary girl teen film that explains the aesthetic appeals of Cinderella? And in turn, how do these pleasures play out in girl teen films? Cinderella's pleasures do not somehow recuperate or cancel out the conservative ideologies of the 'Disney-fied' version of the character but they do explain her success.

I begin to answer the questions above by highlighting the generic compatibility of fairy tale and girl teen film, to consider what makes the two forms obvious bedfellows. I examine the ways that Cinderella is still presented as an exemplary figure of girlhood, structured by a particular type of becoming based on moments of 'transformation' and the combination of innocence and experience.

For Cinderella's pleasures to work on the audience they must embrace the enchantment of the fairy tale genre. In this chapter I introduce the notion of enchantment in the girl teen film context, which will be explored in further detail throughout the thesis. I suggest here that the pleasures of enchantment are created through aesthetics that appeal to tactile and kinaesthetic modes of engagement as well as double coding techniques. The Cinderella character-icon's trajectory from rags-to-riches makes her ascent into the spotlight central to

its pleasures. Her transformation is a particular type of coming of age moment designed to highlight the pleasures of moving from a state of innocence and invisibility into awareness and prominence. Cinderella's pleasures are found in the tools of glamorous transformation — costume, accessories, and hair — and the attention and recognition that the magic of these materials gives her. As a means of illustration, the power and pleasures of Cinderella's costume are explored in reference to comparable but divergent girl teen films. *Mean Girls* provides an overview and reference point that I return to throughout the thesis; *A Cinderella Story* (Rosman, 2004) is a direct 'Cinderella' retelling that deals with the pleasures of Cinderella's costume earnestly; whilst *The House Bunny* (Wolf, 2008) offers a useful comparison that makes fun of Cinderella aesthetics but draws on their pleasures all the same.

Generic compatibility and the pleasures of enchantment

Fairy tale is a pliable genre. Its lack of history or geography — 'Once upon a time...In a land far away' — without a fixed author or text, make it infinitely adaptable. The genre is nonetheless repetitive, episodic, and formulaic: its narrative certainty and familiarity also make it durable. Fairy tale is both flexible and robust (Benson, 2003; Propp, 2000 [1928]; Tiffin, 2009), it is a mouldable form that essentially stays the same. Fairy tale's flexibility leave its stories open

to exploitation and a number of the genre's durable elements are evident in girl teen films.

Like teen film, fairy tales work through the simultaneous contradictions that create ideas of adolescence: immaturity and maturity, independence and belonging, innocence and knowingness, rebellion and gullibility, expansion and confinement. In teen film and fairy tale the protagonist is "young and inexperienced and, at the opening of the tale, often in a position of apparent weakness" (Brewer, 2003: 5). Fairy tales chronicle the emergence of young people from dependence into maturity and as Neil Philip (2003: 41) describes: "the characters, by means of a series of transformations, discover their true selves."

Fairy tale and girl teen film are constructed using a similar modality. Like fairy tale, the worlds of girl teen film are uncomplicated. Although these forms deal with fundamental 'truths' their modality is relatively straightforward, there is a distinct delineation of good and bad, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong. Characters are easily identifiable as Prince Charming, Wicked Stepsister, or Cinderella equivalents, with little psychological depth. Like fairy tales, girl teen films stay at the surface. But these are complex, intricate and pleasurable surfaces that require a particular mode of engagement to be enjoyed. The fairy tale setting is particular in its relationship to 'reality'. The producer/consumer

“contract” (Livingstone, 1994: 252) requires consumer complicity with a world that is deliberately constructed as ‘nonreality’. Fairy tales are set in “a fictional world where preternatural events and supernatural invention are taken wholly for granted.” (Tatar, 1987: 33) No attempt is made at a claim for truth, instead with the line ‘Once upon a time’, a world of wonder is evoked (Davidson and Chaudhri, 2003: 4-5). Fairy tale magic is delivered flatly, without explanation or internal logic. By employing a mode of delivery that is authoritative, its magic is implicit and unquestioned (Tiffin, 2009: 7, 18-19).

Girl teen films invoke the magical spirit of fairy tale by conjuring the enchanted tenor of ‘happily ever after’. Supernatural magic can be a narrative device. In *16 Wishes* (DeLuise, 2010) Abby’s (Debby Ryan) fairy godmother gives her the opportunity to attain her desires through magical wishes and in *Freaky Friday* (Waters, 2003), Anna (Lindsay Lohan) makes a mystical body swap with her mother (Jamie Lee Curtis).¹⁴ However, in millennial girl teen films magic is more often conjured by the commercial sphere. Instead of relying on the enchantment of the supernatural, the magic of girl teen films is found in the promise and glamour of the commercial realm. In this context glamour (explored in more detail in chapter two) refers to attractive surfaces: constructed appearances that help to create “enchantment without supernaturalism” (Thrift, 2009: 9). The

¹⁴ Also see *13 Going on 30*, *Aquamarine* (2006), *Ella Enchanted* (2004), *Life-Size* (2000).

magic in these films is a kind of fairy tale realism that evokes the pleasures of magic within a modern-day context.

Enchantment is the attitude that these films invite the audience to adopt. For girl teen films (and fairy tales) to successfully entertain, for audiences to enjoy the form's intended pleasures, the audio-viewer must be enchanted. By this I do not mean a mystification that dupes or pacifies (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997; Barthes, 1993), but a suspension of disbelief and willingness to go along with the illusion. A cognitive and bodily attitude that is open to the kinds of pleasures that are conjured by the commercial realm. Girl teen films are set in a world where the glamour and promise of commercial magic are taken wholly for granted.

Enchantment is a feeling that girl teen films aim to generate: released from the limitations of the 'everyday', enchantment creates a greater sense of possibility. Enchantment is not a passive state found in the audio-viewer and nor is it simply a style that girl teen films possess. It is a mode of engagement, which the films encourage, that goes along with the fantasy of the worlds created.

Girl teen films use cinematic markers of enchantment: film equivalents to 'Once Upon a Time' that act as "an invitation to enter another world" (Tiffin, 2009: 16) that will end 'happily ever after'. However fairy tale enchantment and the realm of magic cannot be delivered earnestly in the contemporary context. Girl teen film's enchantment, therefore, is double coded: a mode that invites the audio-

viewer to laugh at the excesses of enchantment whilst simultaneously preserving its affective charge.

Double coding the fairy tale

In girl teen films released between 2000-2010 Cinderella themes and fairy tale enchantment are no longer delivered with the flat authoritative tone where 'Once Upon a Time' begins a statement of events, conventional to the traditional fairy tale (Tiffin, 2009: 19). The traditional fairy tale is boundless, though specific tellings are historically and socially restricted, the genre is constructed to invite the audience's unquestioning acceptance of the worlds conjured and events that often seem to have little logical cause and effect. Consequently a girl can hide from her incestuous father in the skin of a donkey ('Donkeyskin') or retrieve her grandmother whole and alive from the belly of a wolf ('Little Red Riding Hood'). In the fairy tale context the flat delivery of the supernatural provokes no surprise. Girl teen films use double coding techniques as a means of expressing those sentiments and affects drawn from Cinderella and the fairy tale genre that can no longer be expressed earnestly. To paraphrase Tiffin (2009: 223), "[i]n the same way that Eco's lover cannot say 'I love you'", girl teen film cannot say 'happily ever after'.

Girl teen films' fairy tale realism is more generically restricted than traditional fairy tale. These films are excessively self-conscious (Doherty, 2002; Driscoll, 2011; Shary, 2002), and bound by conventional Hollywood cause and effect: magic has to be explained. The films do not evoke the same unquestioning mode of engagement enjoyed by traditional fairy tale. Even direct versions of the Cinderella story created in the girl teen film mould rely on double coding mechanisms as a means to encourage its audience to accept its enchantment. The opening of *A Cinderella Story* for example begins by double coding its fairy tale status, the voice over declares:

Once upon a time in a far away kingdom lived a beautiful little girl and her widowed father ... OK it wasn't that long ago and it wasn't really a far away kingdom, it was the San Fernando Valley and it only looked far away because you could barely see it through all the smog.





Figures 1.2 & 1.3, *A Cinderella Story*'s double coding.

Similarly this opening makes a visual and aural juxtaposition between the idea of the fairy tale kingdom and the modern urban location of the film's setting: cutting from the opening shot of blue skies, mountainous landscape and turreted castle of a fairy tale kingdom to a long shot of the smog filled San Fernando Valley. In conjunction, the sounds of traffic and aggressive beeping horns cut sharply across ascending orchestral strings. This opening evokes the idea of the fairy tale, using the conventions of the fairy tale genre, only to disregard the notion of referencing its enchantment in earnest. The film presents a 'put on' of Cinderella but nonetheless, in using fairy tale conventions the film facilitates an experience of the Cinderella fairy tale all the same. The opening of *A Cinderella Story* evokes the magic of the traditional fairy tale but frames it as a greater fiction than the narrative of the film: as the camera zooms out, away from the fairy tale castle (fig. 1.2) we see that it is part of a snow globe scene — another layer of fiction within the film's narrative. The discrepancy between the idea of the fairy tale

kingdom evoked and the San Fernando Valley, in which this Cinderella character lives, highlights the impossibility of asking a contemporary audience to accept fairy tale magic flatly. Fairy tale enchantment has been conjured nevertheless. By using double coding mechanisms girl teen films refute their thematic and aesthetic connections to traditional fairy tale but still become Cinderella stories. Despite double coding those elements that are drawn from fairy tale, girl teen films still create the affects, feelings and emotions that are part of Cinderella.

Cinderella's legacy

All fairy tales are about transformation, as Marina Warner (1995: xv-xvi) proposes:

More so than the presence of fairies, the moral function, the imagined antiquity and oral anonymity of the ultimate source, and the happy ending (though all of these factors help towards a definition of the genre), metamorphosis defines the fairy tale.

What is particular about Cinderella's transformation is the glamour that surrounds her and, as Roach (2007: 182) describes, the social ascent that she makes in the passage from invisible maid to high profile princess. In its traditional form Cinderella's transformation is expressed through the makeover that reveals the

‘grace’ and ‘beauty’ dormant in the character, waiting to be uncovered.¹⁵ In millennial girl teen films Cinderella can also experience a ‘glitzy’ makeover whereby the ‘authentic’ version of femininity that the Cinderella figure represents is momentarily concealed and corrupted by a makeover that is ‘excessive’.¹⁶ This type of makeover is eventually ameliorated (McDonald, 2010: 95): the level of glitz is found to be unsustainable and corrupting. Girl teen films can also include a ‘make-under’ whereby characters’ excesses are toned down or stripped away to reveal the Cinderella character-icon underneath.¹⁷ Cinderella’s transformation personifies in the familiar and easily identifiable tropes of the makeover and reveal, the idea of the adolescent girl as a figure in process.

Contemporary notions of girlhood have seen its boundaries stretched. Girlhood is increasingly an indeterminate state — a moment of transition, suspended and made ever flexible (Driscoll, 2002; Schor, 2004; Waxman & Grant, 2011). The idea of the girl as always in process, always becoming, makes her an ideal postfeminist and neoliberal figure (Driscoll, 2002; Grant & Waxman, 2011;

¹⁵ Earlier examples of the traditional Cinderella character-icon in girl teen films include characters in John Hughes films such as *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty in Pink* to more recent films such as *She’s All That*. Films that include this type between 2000-10 include: *The Princess Diaries* (2001), *A Cinderella Story*, *Another Cinderella Story* (2008), *Princess Protection Programme* (2009), *The Prince and Me* (2004), *Hairspray* (2007), *Bring it On: fight to the finish* (2009), *Ice Princess* (2005), *Picture This* (2008), *Freaky Friday* (2003), *What A Girl Wants* (2003), *Bratz* (2007), *She’s the Man* (2006).

¹⁶ *Clueless* and *Jawbreaker* include makeovers that are the forerunner to this glitzy type that we also see in: *Mean Girls*, *The House Bunny*, *Easy A*, *The Clique* (2008), *16 Wishes* (2010), *Josie and the Pussycats* (2001).

¹⁷ See: *Wild Child* (2008), *Slap Her She’s French* (2002), *Material Girls* (2006), *Legally Blonde* (2001), *Cadet Kelly* (2002), *Hannah Montana: the movie* (2009).

McRobbie, 2004; Projansky, 2007; Tasker & Negra, 2005). In the twenty-first century context Cinderella's transformation is brought about through self-governance and product consumption: crafted by the magic of the commercial sphere (rather than the power of maternal love, as was the case in earlier versions). Gill (2007: 187) points out the escalating emphasis on physical improvement and the ceaseless pursuit of beauty in millennial media: "Increasingly, femininity is presented as a bodily characteristic, requiring constant work — and, crucially, constant expenditure on beauty products." Cinderella is the girl with the prettiest dress, most sparkling accessories, coiffed hair, and streamlined figure. Her value is played out upon, around, and manifest in the body: what she wears, how she wears it, and how she is presented.

Classed and raced ideas of femininity are attached to the makeover. Regulation of the girl body is based on mythic notions of aristocratic imperialism compared with the idea of the 'excessive' 'Other' (McRobbie, 2005; Palmer, 2004; Weber, 2009; Weber, 2011). As Brenda Weber (2011: 138) suggests, makeovers contain and contribute to a variety of discourses — imperialism, neoliberalism, postfeminism — that articulate normative iterations of femininity. Cinderella maintains class-based ideas about taste and distinction that regulate bodies and behaviours. The 'right' products will let Cinderella's value become physically apparent. Wearing the clothes 'correctly', she exhibits the 'right' corporeal dispositions (Bourdieu, 1989). For the Cinderella character-icon in girl teen films

the spectacle of the self is the only way to access power. Her only exchange value is her body.

Traditionally, Cinderella's value shifts through transformation, from maid to wife, or from slavery to prostitution. In the twenty-first century setting, where notions of girlhood have stretched to include younger girls and young adults, Cinderella's transformation in girl teen films has become less about marriage. The visibility that her change offers has itself become the reward. In the neoliberal context, transformation is sold as self-empowerment. Exploring the rhetoric of wedding media, for example, Alison Winch and Anna Webster (2012: 54) suggest that the bride is encouraged to invest in the correct brands as a means of producing the appropriate branded spectacle of the self. Transformation is brought about through self-management and product consumption and consequently "the bride can shed her inadequate bodily chrysalis and emerge as the perfect bride." (Ibid: 54). Importantly they suggest that this transformation is not about becoming the perfect spectacle for the groom but about profiling one's successful self-management for the approval of other women. In her influential study of *Jackie* magazine, McRobbie (1991) identifies the codes of romance that act as key structures of teen girl magazines. In *Jackie*'s picture stories, she suggests, romance is made up of "moments of bliss": 'the clinch', 'the proposal', 'the wedding day' (ibid: 96). As Gill (2007: 185) suggests of millennial teen girl magazines, that version of femininity is rarely prevalent any longer, giving way to

a focus on pop, fashion, beauty, and celebrity. Similarly, girl teen films are now structured by moments of visibility, instead of moments of romance.¹⁸

Although Cinderella is often conflated with the idea of romantic love, her quest — and the theme that holds girl teen films in the fun mode in common — is to be recognised as important. In girl teen films the male love interest is often an obligatory but superficially outlined character. This is best illustrated by a moment in *Mean Girls*. Adapted into fiction from the parental self-help guide, *Queen Bees and Wannabees: helping your daughter survive cliques, gossip, boyfriends, and other realities of adolescence* (Wiseman, 2002), *Mean Girls'* Cinderella character is Cady who, after being home-schooled throughout her childhood, must navigate the social hierarchies of American high school. Having successfully renewed her Cinderella status at the school prom, Cady (Lindsay Lohan) stands talking to her friends. As her love interest Aaron (Jonathan Bennett) approaches, her friend announces: “Man candy stage right.” As with many Cinderella stories, Prince Charming is an accessory or prop that exists only as a romantic figure, rather than as a fully formed character. In Disney’s (Geronimi, Jackson, & Luske, 1950) version of the tale, he is barely defined at all. He is the outline of a man, lacking any real definition. The prince charming role is left formless because it is not his quest, not his ‘happily ever after’, that we are

¹⁸ ‘The Kiss’ is still an important moment in millennial girl teen films but a great deal of its affective force has been placed elsewhere and it is often tagged on at the end, rather than given the weight it received in the past.

interested in. He is, instead, just a bonus to the other riches that Cinderella achieves.



Figure 1.2, *Cinderella* (1950) Prince Charming drawn in outline.

That Cinderella's transformation gives her visibility and recognition works in accord with neoliberal discourse surrounding the 'successful girl' (Ringrose, 2007). Corresponding with neoliberal invention, success in the guise of fame and fortune have replaced fantasies of romance in girl-centred texts (Hopkins, 2002). Performance is a recurrent trope of Cinderella. In Perrault's 1697 (2002: 38) version of the tale, her ability to dance validates her character: "She [Cinderella] danced with such grace that everyone admired her even more". However, more so than ever, performance is now a central component of girl teen films and Cinderella derivatives. This focus on performance is symbiotic with the increase of demotic celebrity (Turner, 2010) and the commercial, synergistic, influence of

popular television programmes such as *American Idol* (Fox, 2002-) and *The X Factor* (ITV, 2004-). Shows that compulsively frame contestants' participation through a rags-to-riches rhetoric. In girl teen films, celebrity has become the key reward. In 'Prom-Coms: reliving the dreams and nightmares of high-school romance' (Abbott, 2009: 57), Stacey Abbott describes the conventional crowning of the prom queen in *Never Been Kissed* (Gosnell, 1999) as the central character's "Cinderella moment". The Cinderella moment is not about meeting Prince Charming but about achieving visibility. Narratives build-up to and centre on moments of triumphant recognition.

Pleasures

The pleasures that Cinderella invites us to enjoy are the embodiments of feeling of potential and excitement that she generates, the tactility of glamorous surfaces that surround her, and kinaesthetic empathy with her physical happiness. Not everyone buys into or goes along with these Cinderella pleasures, but these are the pleasures she is designed to offer. What is exciting about the teen figure in general, female or male, is its embodiment of feelings of potential, promise, and possibility, generated by combinations of analogous oppositions. In Hollywood versions of adolescence these oppositions are played out in stereotypically gendered terms. The Cinderella character embodies the antinomies of

innocence and experience, expansion and confinement. As Roach (2007: 182) suggests of the Galatea-Cinderella type: her drama is “not in her being, but in her becoming.” Cinderella’s transformation is not static. Though in its folk tale forms or girl teen film versions Cinderella’s metamorphosis includes a narrative end point, feelings of potential, movement, and change are created through the combination of contradictory qualities. The Cinderella character-icon’s transformation does not complete her, it intensifies her “poignant antiphony” (ibid: 181): she is both maid and princess, innocent and knowing, set free and confined. Anne Higonnet (1998) explores the idea of childhood innocence as a Romantic invention, one that has recognisably perpetuated into the twenty-first century. The Romantic version of childhood, attributes innocence to the child’s mind — understood as a ‘blank slate’ — and to the child’s body — innocent of adult sexuality (ibid: 8). Romantic representations of childhood diminish the child’s corporeality (ibid: 33), because experience or knowingness is placed on the full, sexed body (ibid: 24). Innocence is especially attributed to and prized in girls, as Higonnet (ibid: 27) describes of Romantic imagery: “Boys apparently, quickly become men, while girls remain girls.” Women and the idea of femininity are often infantilised and contradictorily: “it becomes plausible to flip the equation and consider infants to be like adult women.” (ibid: 194) The Cinderella character-icon embodies a balance of innocence and experience that defines the Hollywood notion of ‘appropriate’ female adolescence. Because the wicked

stepsister defines Cinderella's 'appropriate' character by contrast she has remained an essential part of these stories (I am not aware of any twenty-first century girl teen film that does not include at least one wicked stepsister type). The wicked stepsister is fundamentally 'too experienced' — a state that she embodies as a physical and narrative contrast to Cinderella. The 'correct' balance of antinomies that Cinderella embodies gives the character-icon the tension required to make her potentially interesting.¹⁹ In particular the combination of innocence and experience creates residual energies that feel like potential and promise.



Figures 1.5 & 1.6, Disney's *Cinderella* arrives at the ball.

¹⁹ Of course many viewers find the 'wicked stepsister' character much more interesting than Cinderella, nonetheless the Cinderella character-icon has prevailed for centuries and so it is worth exploring what is appealing about her.

The pleasures that Cinderella offers are also created by spectacles of glamour and the body. Space and mise-en-scène, cinematography, clothes, hair, sound, and character bodies are designed to create abundant surfaces that appeal to tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures. Disney's *Cinderella* is a paradigmatic example of how Cinderella's pleasures are conjured. Despite being more than sixty years old, this version of the tale offers a reference point for the ways that Cinderella's legacy has weaved its way through time in cultural products aimed at girls.

The scene in which she arrives at the ball is characteristic of how Cinderella's aesthetic pleasures are created. Cinderella stands distantly in the centre of a long shot that emphasises the spectacle of the Palace's grand entrance (fig. 1.5). Sumptuous and variously textured materials make apparent the glamour of the space: wrought iron gates, red carpet, and tall columns. A mid-shot foregrounds the magic of Cinderella's dress as it glitters and sparkles (fig.1.6). Her costume and accessories have transformed her into a graceful 'princess' — giving material shape to the idea of the Cinderella character-icon. Her blonde hair is neatly styled and effortlessly controlled. Her skin is white and pale — everything on Cinderella is light and dazzling, including her hair and skin. As she steps into the palace and moves towards the opulent staircase she is flanked on both sides by a row of guards and fundamental to the enchantment, she has been made visible: a close-up shows that they are watching her admiringly. The music plays out an ascending scale, rendering the rising excitement of the scene. Her

physicality embodies innocence and experience in a balance that defines popular versions of girlhood: her body moves both hesitantly and gracefully, projecting a 'natural' elegance and simultaneous unsure and unaware physicality.

Nonetheless, she enjoys a positive bodily attitude in her new costume: she projects unaffected effortlessness and joy in what she is wearing. Her costume and accessories also give her access to the ball and provide her with opportunity and possibility: the necessary tools to expand out into the world. This expansion is within strict confines however — not only in the narrative device that restricts her enchantment temporally (the spell ends at midnight) — but also in the limitations that her costume puts upon her: she is physically restricted and only suited to specific and defined roles in these clothes. The scene embodies the interplay of innocence and experience, expansion and confinement that both limits notions of girlhood and lends the Cinderella character-icon the frictions that create a sense of promise and possibility.

Like the moment that Cinderella arrives at the ball in Disney's version of the tale, girl teen films make a spectacle of abundant and tactile surfaces. Cinderella is surrounded by especially glamorous (commercial) magic. Staying at the surface these films invite us to enjoy, what Barker (2009: 24) describes as "a caressing rather than a penetrating gaze". The abundant surfaces in girl teen films encourage a sensuous encounter with the array of textures on display. As a character-icon, Cinderella is found in her outline: in the dress, glass slipper,

glossy hair, and smooth skin. These elements are not just component parts, they are constitutional facets that create the character and generate her pleasures. Describing the power of the Cinderella type, Roach (2007: 182) suggests that part of her appeal is that she has two bodies (before and after): “one of common clay, the other of pure magic.” Technologies of glamour, like clothing, accessories, and hair, are the pure magic that constructs Cinderella as an enculturated body. They are also the things in which we are invited to take tactile pleasure.

Cinderella’s bodily attitude also invites us to enjoy kinaesthetic pleasures. Kinaesthetic empathy is an embodied experience of physical processes on display. Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds (2012: 18) describe kinaesthesia as referring to “sensations of movement and position [...] informed by senses such as vision and hearing as well as internal sensations of muscle tension and body position”. Empathy, they suggest, can mean “projecting one’s self into the object of contemplation” (ibid: 19). At its most intense “empathy involves embodied simulation and imagined substitution of one agent for another” (Reynolds, 2012). In its more diffuse sense kinaesthetic empathy is a mode of perception whereby another person or object’s action is experienced in one’s own body. I would like to take an approach to kinaesthetic empathy that focuses on how the audio-viewer is *invited* to respond to bodies on display rather than make claims to how they *will* respond.

Reason and Reynolds (2010: 50) emphasise that kinaesthetic empathy has been implicated in cultural and sociological discussions of the 'mirror neuron' system as a means for understanding responses to watching physical activity. Rather than being caught-up in arguments that stress what can and cannot be proved in respect of human mirror neurons Reason and Reynolds' (2010) exploration of live dance and its consequent kinaesthetic pleasures offers a framework from which we can explore the kinaesthetic pleasures of film: these pleasures will be explored throughout the thesis. Through kinaesthetic empathy we are invited to enjoy Cinderella's pleasures in her costume in our own bodies.

The powers and pleasures of costume

The Cinderella character-icon's magical body is constructed by various technologies of glamour but clothing is particularly powerful in its enchantment. Clothing can be explored as a tactile surface but the pleasures of costume in film have often been explained in reference to notions of excess. Psychoanalytic approaches have deconstructed the high-heeled figure of the femme fatale, for example, as adorned fetish, whose clothing is over-invested with meaning to alleviate male fears of castration (Bruzzi, 1997; Doane, 1992). The pleasures of costume have also been found in spectacular interventions that work against the grain of the conventional narrative (Bruzzi, 1997; Gaines, 1990, 2000). The idea

of clothing as spectacular has, further, connected with the notion of clothing as a force of agency. Developing Elizabeth Wilson's (1985) feminist re-appropriation of fashion as a site of opposition, film theorists have found fashion in film to offer a means of agency: a way to define the self rather than marketing another aspect of passive consumption (Berry, 2000; Bruzzi, 1997; Gilligan, 2011; McDonald, 2010; Stacey, 1994). Employing Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) concept of identity as an embodied performative practice, film scholars have found in clothing an important vehicle for performing identity and a means of subversion to traditional gender roles. From this perspective, costume can highlight gender performance and in doing so question the idea of fixed feminine or masculine identities (Bruzzi, 1997). These arguments suggest that when characters play with costume they can present fluid rather than homogenous accounts of gender (Dole, 2007; Ferris, 2008; Gilligan, 2011). Construed from a psychoanalytic or cognitive perspective the pleasures of costume are found in the 'cracks' of texts. In this interpretation pleasure exists in those elements of costume that work against the flow of conventional narrative or traditional notions of gender and identity. Transformation, in this context, is often taken to be 'progressive' as a matter of course because of the possibilities it offers for "framing the self" (Entwistle, 2000: 139). I will explore the powers and pleasures of clothes from a different perspective that does not presuppose a change of costume as necessarily radical nor deny the possible pleasures of clothing.

Finding pleasure in the agency of individuality and radical notions of transformation is questionable because transformation is not necessarily revolutionary but functions as a pre-requisite of neoliberal modernity. As Zygmunt Bauman (2005: 3) illustrates, life in a modern society always involves the expectation of identity reinvention. Bauman describes this condition as 'liquid life': people in modern societies exist with the presumption that they will constantly shed, strip, and change — a ceaseless exploration for individuality and a neoliberal requirement to present adaptability. As McRobbie (2004: 261) suggests in reference to Bauman, choice is a modality of constraint, individuals are expected to manage to make the 'right' choices. Similarly, modulation describes a shift within parameters. Shaviro (2010: 13-14) applies Deleuze's (1995) term modulation as a means to explain how particular cultural texts articulate a 'control society', whereby flexibility is the only fixed requirement (Shaviro, 2010: 14). Unlike metamorphosis, which Shaviro describes as expansive and open-ended, modulation is shift and change controlled within a fixed set of criteria. Where metamorphosis or transformation offers the idea of unrestricted alternatives and possibilities, modulation involves an underlying fixity — change that continually shifts but goes nowhere. Becoming in the Cinderella girl teen film context is not escape or resistance from identities that imprison. The 'transformations' that girl teen films create seem more appropriately described as modulations: they "imply that no matter what happens, it can always

be contained in advance within a predetermined set of possibilities” (Shaviro, 2010: 13). Liquid life requires the constant struggle for individuality through consumption. Liquid life demands the ability to adapt and change and individuality is a set task answered by consumption but never concluded: “a permanently impermanent self, completely incomplete, definitely indefinite – and authentically inauthentic” (Bauman, 2005: 33). The condition of liquid life and the modulations of girl teen film bring us to the aporia of individuality, where: “[i]n a society of individuals everyone *must* be individual” (ibid: 15, italics in original). The more we try to construct ourselves as individuals the more we are like everyone else (Smelik, 2011: 82). The modulations that girl teen films create still *feel* like change but these films maintain the feelings of potential and promise, contained within a predetermined set of possibilities.



Figure 1.7, *Mean Girls* catwalk pastiche.

One way that these feelings of potential and promise are created is through costume. In *Mean Girls* there is an attempt to create comedy through a pastiche of the 'catwalk' moment (a trope in which the Cinderella character-icon reveals her transformation/modulation). At home and for the approval of Gretchen (Lacey Chabert) and Karen (Amanda Seyfried), — members of the clique known as 'The Plastics' — Cady descends the stairs in a new dress, as the camera tilts up her body. Cady's makeover is exaggerated in its 'inauthenticity': she is over accessorised, with big hair, and a dress of synthetic fabrics and colours. The use of stairs and the body tilt are key conventions of the catwalk moment but they are both employed here with an underplayed tone that indicates this scene as a pastiche of girl teen film conventions rather than an earnest coming of age moment. Nonetheless, the pastiche falls short because of the aesthetic power of clothes. As director Mark Waters explains: "We tried to have this ridiculous costume joke, but she ended up just looking kind of really good in this outfit" (2004, DVD). Despite the attempt to derive comedy from the moment, the tactile pleasures of clothing maintain the 'magical' charge that the scene attempts to undermine.

In narrative terms the power of clothes has a legacy from fairy tale to girl teen film. What remains in girl teen films is the idea that the right clothes, worn properly, have the power to shatter class boundaries and allow characters to climb social ladders (Berry, 2000; McDonald, 2010; Moseley, 2005a; Scott,

1996). In *Mean Girls*, for example, clothes give Cady the necessary armour to become 'Queen Bee'. Clothes also have the power to signify and express characters' emotional developments (Moseley, 2005b). As Rachel Moseley (ibid: 112) makes clear, clothes in film can articulate the transition from immaturity to womanhood in ways that are addressed to a "competent feminine gaze." At the end of *Mean Girls*, Cady describes the narrative journey her character has taken: "I'd gone from home-schooled jungle freak, to shiny plastic, to most hated person in the world, to actual human being." This journey is also expressed through costume.





Figures 1.8, 1.9 & 1.10, *Mean Girls*, Cady's costume progress.

Cady's first costume (fig.1.8) uses warm earth tones and durable materials like denim and corduroy. She keeps her hair tied back and wears little make-up. This costume highlights her 'natural' femininity, her liberal middle-class status, and covers her body in a way that makes reference to her lack of awareness — her innocence — at the opening of the film. Further into the narrative (fig.1.9) her clothing becomes bright and ostentatious. Synthetic materials and garish colours signify her transition from Cinderella figure to 'artificial' 'mean girl'. This type of costume accentuates Cady's body, and 'meanness', 'artificiality', and knowingness (adult sexuality) are conflated. Finally, at the end of the film (fig.1.10) Cady's costume finds an 'appropriate' balance and she returns to a more 'natural' appearance. At this end point her hair is down and her costume highlights the 'appropriate' balance between innocence and experience.

As well as signify costume can also have affective impact. Clothes can be magical, not only in what they represent but also in what they feel like. As

Postrel (2003: 77) suggests, clothes attract us as visual, tactile creatures not just “because they are ‘rich in meaning’ but because they are rich in pleasure.”

Clothes on screen can enchant by way of look and feel, through appeal to our visceral understandings of shape, form, texture, and heft. In girl teen films the glamour of clothing — of particular types of dress — is showcased in ways that aim to appeal to tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures. In its materiality costume can encourage tactile empathy: the audio-viewer is invited to enjoy a sensory encounter with the textures and physicality on display. Eugenie Shinkle’s (2013) analysis of fashion photography that focuses on biological registers of image perception, provides an approach that can help us understand the pleasures of costume in film. Images, Shinkle proposes, do signify but their communications are not limited to rationalisation, they also involve feeling. To address the relationship between the perception of fashion photography and the body Shinkle employs theories of affect and embodied perception. The fashion image is “understood as an actor that is ‘irreducibly bound up with the activity of the body’ and possessed of the capacity to *affect* the viewer in ways that resist interpretation” (Shinkle, 2013: 79, italics in original). The fashion image can encourage a visceral response: “a ‘feeling’ about the image that is bound up with interpretation, but which is not easily teased apart from it or expressed in language” (ibid: 84-85). The ‘feeling’ that Shinkle explores is connected to an empathetic response of unease to the uncomfortable body expressed in the

collaborative fashion photography of Kristin McMenemy and Jurgen Teller (2005). For Shinkle the affective charge of an image is in its 'excess'. Teller's and McMenemy's images belie the ostensible superficiality of the fashioned body by running "counter to fashion's alleged obsession with spectacle" (Shinkle, 2013: 84). For Shinkle the intensity of the images is in their lack of spectacle and disturbance of the order of traditional fashion photography: in place of beauty, sensuality, and luxury, the images present clothing and the model body as unsightly, uncomfortable, and unappealing (ibid: 80). Shinkle suggests that spectacle is an attention to surface, a superficiality that rejects depth and affect. Affect, according to Shinkle, is a consequence of "those moments of semantic disruption, ambiguity and unqualifiable sensation within representation that signal the presence of the intentional body" (ibid: 79). Firstly, Shinkle's application of affect suggests that appeals to the senses are excessive as a matter of course. I would argue that affect, feeling and emotion can be thought of as elements of communication that are not necessarily always excessive. As Nichols (2000: 46) suggests, those facets in film that aim to move us bodily are often described as 'excess' but from the perspective of aesthetic engagement they are central. From the point of view of pleasure, how the audio-viewer is invited to feel is not in excess of communication but the main point of it. Secondly, Shinkle's analysis implies that spectacle, by the nature of its superficiality lacks affective charge. The spectacle of traditional fashion photography, however, is constructed with

the aim of creating affects, feelings, and emotions that are appealing, based on conventional beauty, sensuality, and luxury. Affects that make us feel good are no more superficial than those that make us feel disturbed. It is only the hierarchy of emotions (explored in my thesis introduction and literature review) that means that little attention is given to positively appealing feelings. The academic distinction between pleasure and *jouissance*, real and false pleasures, has seen the analysis of pleasures that are comfortable, and those that sit in accord with the producers' intentions, sidelined. Girl teen films invite us to enjoy pleasures that are connected to positive affects. These are not disturbances or 'excesses' but familiar corroborative pleasures. These are 'feel good movies' that aim to do this job affectively. By addressing these 'feel good' pleasures, we can more fully understand the workings and successes of popular entertainment and the kinds of experiences that they offer.

One way that girl teen films aim to feel good is through costume, and what Shinkle does provide is a means of exploring the ways that clothing is worn to invite the audio-viewer to enjoy specific pleasures. Shinkle's consideration of embodied empathy can be applied to costume in girl teen film: "We don't simply read postures and gestures we translate our external perspective on the body into our own personal body perspective, incorporating its attitudes in our own skin and bodies, muscles and viscera." (Shinkle, 2013: 81). In girl teen films costume can enchant. The ways that costume is presented encourages a positive bodily

attitude towards the films: open to enjoy the 'magic' of clothes, and go along with the fairy tale idea that clothes can change lives. In *A Cinderella Story*, for example, Cinderella's costume is made into a spectacle that invites the audio-viewer to enjoy an embodied experience of the textures and physical processes on display.

Cinderella's costume: A Cinderella Story

Girl teen films are created with finite types of pleasure in mind. The types of pleasure that we are invited to enjoy are limited and defined by the version of girlhood that the Cinderella character-icon embodies. *A Cinderella Story* makes explicit reference to the Cinderella lexicon: we are encouraged to understand the dress and how Sam (Hilary Duff) wears it, in its fairy tale context, but it also *feels* like fairy tale. Not through supernatural magic but by material enchantment. This enchantment does not 'enslave' its audience but it does explain some of the film's aesthetic pull. The makeover and reveal in *A Cinderella Story* offers a key example of how costume in girl teen film is constructed as richly enchanting. The film is a relatively straightforward version of Cinderella that uses all of the familiar characters and scenarios from the fairy tale, though it is set in present-day Los Angeles. Sam's 'transformative' dress is a classic ball gown silhouette (fig.1.1). A design that Turim (1984) calls 'the sweetheart line', the look of which

“depended on bras that were molded to a point and often strapless, corsets or girdles, and crinolines, layered, ruffled slips made of stiffened organza and net that supported the bell-shaped skirts to their great width at the hemline” (Turim, 1984: 7). In *A Cinderella Story* Sam’s transformation/modulation is illustrated most powerfully in her dress and the ‘princess’, ‘debutante’, ‘true-woman’, and ‘bride’ (ibid) are all signified by it. The gown’s shape moulds her into the Cinderella character-icon: its outline — two heart shapes that meet synched in at the waist over the bell-shaped skirt — embody, create, and overstate idealised notions of adolescent femininity. The dress holds in balance innocence and experience: at once exaggerating feminine curves *and* obscuring the female form amongst the lengths and layers of skirt.

Sam’s Cinderella dress is constructed as ‘special’ not just in its meanings but also in its pleasures and the feelings it aims to embody. The dress is presented to invite the audio-viewer to enjoy a sensory encounter with the Cinderella costume — pleasures that are made more evident by the way that the film displays other types of clothing. Sam’s makeover is illustrated through montage. In a rush to find a costume for the school Halloween dance, the makeover sequence presents a series of possible costumes: a matador, witch, porky pig, ‘hula girl’, nun, and knight in armour.



Figures 1.11, 1.12 & 1.13, *A Cinderella Story*, contrasting costumes.

These costume changes police the borders of appropriate femininity — making clear which versions of femininity are and are not acceptable (see Moseley,

2002: 47) and they create comparisons that highlight the glamour of the Cinderella dress, revealed at the dance that follows. The contrasting look and feel of the various costumes emphasises the pleasures that the sweetheart line has to offer. The costumes in the makeover montage are presented within a cluttered and unspectacular straight-angle mid-shot. For the most part the costumes are made up of heavy, thick, dark, and cumbersome materials. The cut of the clothes is concealing, with straight bulky lines. The relationship between Sam's body and this clothing is presented uncomfortably: a feeling with which we are physically invited to share. She wears the costumes with hunched shoulders and a lack of grace that accentuates their awkward fit and feel. In contrast the 'hula girl' costume (fig. 1.12) is constructed of light and revealing materials but it is nonetheless presented as 'inappropriate': 'Othered' and overtly sexualised, this costume reveals flesh and skin in a way that embodies notions of excessive experience, 'unfitting' for the traditional Cinderella character-icon.

In comparison the Cinderella dress is displayed with a low-angle shot that jibs up Sam's body as she stands at the top of a flight of stairs. The drape and sweep of the bell-shaped skirt is smooth. The textured layers create a billowing flow. The lace of the corset is delicate and intricate and the beadwork catches the light, giving the dress its sparkle. The dress is glamorous in its varied and rich textures, inviting the audio-viewer to enjoy a pleasurable sensory encounter in its abundance and luxuriance. The shape and proportions of the dress exaggerate

feminine form in a way that appears effortless. Similarly, the relationship between body and clothing is presented as effortless. Sam wears the costume with apparent ease (ignoring the reality of discomfort in this kind of costume) and we are invited to enjoy an empathetic response with her positive physicality: her own joy in the dress. Her postures and gestures are graceful and controlled but also hesitant. As a spotlight illuminates the dress, she holds onto her necklace nervously. Similar to the Disney Cinderella of the 1950s this is a traditional expression of how Cinderellas feel in their costume. The moment personifies the Cinderella character-icon's embodiment of innocence and experience, creating a feeling of possibility that is restricted by the Hollywood version of girlhood but potentially feels pleasurable anyway.

Double coded enchantment: The House Bunny

A Cinderella Story is a double coded pastiche but the Cinderella costume is one element that is treated as sacrosanct and the film's presentation of the dress is done in earnest. *The House Bunny* is exemplary of how double coding mechanisms in millennial girl teen films manage and maintain fairy tale affects in conjunction with comedy that seems to laugh at the fairy tale conventions it utilises. The first film from Adam Sandler's Happy Madison productions to focus on a female protagonist, the film uses slapstick, sight gags and body humour as

part of its comic pleasures.²⁰ The opening sequence of the film provides a characteristic instance in which the Cinderella fairy tale is concurrently cited as a source of comic pleasure and affective sentiment.



Figure 1.14, *The House Bunny's* despair.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, fairy tales are full of despair (Warner, 1995: 217) and part of their wonder is to relieve that despair with magic and enchantment. Magic is made all the more enchanting through its comparison with desperation. *The House Bunny* begins with a scrapbook image: a dour colour scheme highlights the desperate position of the protagonist, Shelley (Anna Farris), left on the steps of an orphanage. The camera zooms in gently and soft dissolves are accompanied by light, lilting, sombre music to highlight the character's pitiful position. The use of verbal irony in this moment

²⁰ Other Happy Madison productions include *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo* (1999), *Little Nicky* (2000), and *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry* (2007) for example.

however, sets up a discrepancy, as Shelley's voice over explains: "I guess somebody didn't want me. I hear they did want the basket back though." The protagonist's voice over is delivered in a tone that is excessively sincere and innocent. Humour is derived from the incongruity between style and content — between despair and the flippant way with which it is handled, and the exaggeration of the Cinderella figure's innocence. Disparity and exaggeration signal the film's double coded mode.

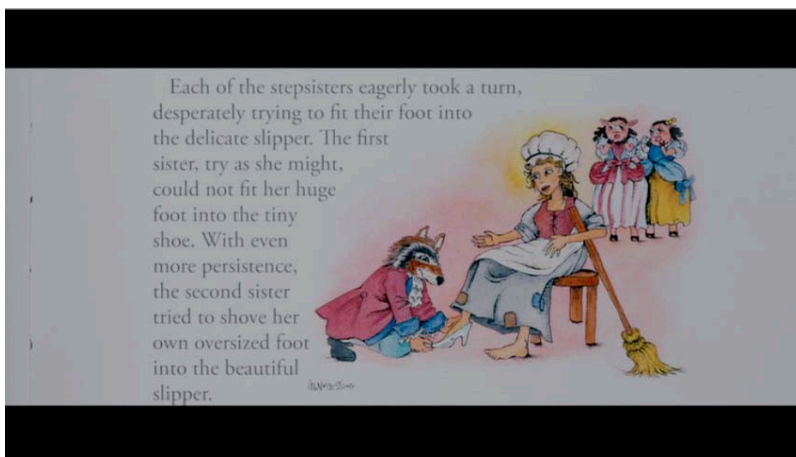


Figure 1.15 & 1.16, *The House Bunny* revisits the fairy tale genre.

Once the protagonist's degraded position is established the film then explicitly revisits the fairy tale genre. The music score alludes to fairy tale magic with a repeated light-tinkling chime, reminiscent of Disney fairy tale musical scores. The use of soft water colours and traditional children's illustration makes reference to the organic textures of the ostensibly authentic, traditional fairy tale. There is, however, a discrepancy between this use of mise-en-scène and sound, and a simultaneous playful evocation of the fairy tale genre. Shelley's voice over begins by using the traditional language of fairy tale, but she and the visuals become confused and the sequence self-consciously highlights fairy tale conventions as conventions. As Shelley describes:

Then one day something magical happened, just like out of a fairytale. Remember the one where the wolf huffed and puffed and blew the piggy's house down and he was wearing a glass slipper I think and he had a pumpkin plus there was that other thing? Well the same thing happened to me, only vastly different.

The confusion of Shelley's fairy tale imagery — the wolf as 'prince' turns out to be Playboy magnate Hugh Hefner — highlights fairy tale sentiments as laughable.

Finally Shelley explains, with a continued tone of sincerity and innocence that she transformed into a beautiful young woman and eventually found the family she had always wanted. Here is the central gag of the sequence as Shelley reveals: "Now I live in the Playboy mansion and this is where I want to live, happily ever after."



Figures 1.17 & 1.18, *The House Bunny*'s visual double coding and smooth flatness.

As the Playboy mansion and Shelley's occupation are revealed a cosy, homely image is juxtaposed with a zoom out reveal of the mansion. The classical strings that have underscored the sequence mix into a highly energetic, samba beat. As Shelley delivers her 'happily ever after' the camera tilts up into a brilliant blue sky and beach balls fly through the air to reveal the opening film credits.

This intense use of colour contrasts significantly with the soft water colours of the earlier fairy tale images. The use of colour in this final shot accentuates synthetic, artificial, digital qualities and emphasises a smooth flatness: alluding to the disparity between the idea of the 'earthy' fairy tale — its 'authentic' magic — and the plastic pleasures of the Playboy mansion that are to follow.

The classical notion of the pure and virtuous Cinderella protagonist is set in contrast to the hedonism, narcissism and ostentation associated with the Playboy bunny and the crude cynicism of the Playboy brand. The structure of this sequence creates narrative irony: withholding until the last moment *how* Shelley has found her happy ever after emphasises the discontinuity in speaking of Playboy as a fairytale dream. Fundamentally *The House Bunny* double codes the Cinderella character-icon and the Hollywood version of girlhood. Shelley is both exaggeratedly innocent and exaggeratedly experienced: presented as though her life from orphanage to Playboy mansion has left her as a 'blank slate' (she is an extreme version of the 'dumb blonde' stereotype) but simultaneously 'overly' experienced.

The sequence, nonetheless, draws on fairy tale aesthetics and affects: the soft water colours, the texture and sound of the storybook pages as they turn, the fairy tale castle, all conjure aesthetic enchantment and draw on feelings of wonder. Despite the use of double coding mechanisms, techniques of

enchantment are still in play. Although Shelley's voice over is excessively sincere, innocent and optimistic, she *does* express the humble integrity of a Cinderella heroine. In its final moments the sequence becomes euphoric: in less than two minutes Shelley's dreams *have* come true, she *has* 'transformed' and her humble character *is* triumphant. The sequence, for example, economically renders Shelley's transformation/modulation: taking place over the course of a single ten second shot.



Figure 1.19, *The House Bunny*, Shelley's transformation.

The speed with which the makeover trope is employed emphasises the playful way that Cinderella is referenced but an experience of the fairy tale is created all the same. Aesthetically the pan across Shelley's makeover creates enchantment conjured by the material realm: light and assorted colours, various textures (felt, card, photo paper, silk ribbon), the sparkle of her dress and tiara, and camera flashes call on aesthetics of glamour and visibility. Though the power of the makeover is downplayed through double coding, its pleasurable affects remain.

Those Cinderella sentiments that would be risible if expressed in a tone of sincerity are successfully rendered nonetheless.

Double coded costume

The House Bunny includes various moments of modulation, beginning with Shelley's change from orphan into Playboy Bunny. Shelley is tricked into leaving the Playboy mansion by a jealous rival and finds herself as 'housemother' to a local university sorority. Her role is to remodel the Zeta girls so that they will attract boys, make the sorority popular and save their home from closure. Shelley increases the girls' exchange value by refashioning their bodies as the only commodity that is available to them. The kind of makeover that Shelley performs on the girls is 'glitzy'. Instead of revealing their 'authentic' femininity, as the makeover in *A Cinderella Story* presents itself to be, the glitzy makeover is diegetically constructed as excessive and shallow. Much is made of the Zeta's makeover but they eventually reject the Playboy model look as 'too superficial' and ameliorate their provocative costumes and tone down their new looks to a type of attractiveness that is less overtly sexual (McDonald, 2010, 96). In narrative terms amelioration of the glitzy makeover is essential to answering the anxieties raised by 'inauthentic' versions of femininity (Radner, 2010; Marston, 2012). The girl that is made over finds that excessive femininity obscures her

'authentic' self. With this type of makeover the films take the opportunity to make the most of the sensory pleasures of consumption and the tactility of clothes but deny this overtly constructed and sexualised version of femininity. Regardless of the narrative endings however, the affective force of these films is given to moments of visibility. When the films try to retract the pleasures of the makeover and catwalk the affective force given to the moments of visibility outweighs these scenes.

In *The House Bunny*'s glitzy makeover there are no sweetheart lines: on the surface the transformation appears to be quite different to that of *A Cinderella Story*. Nonetheless the powers and pleasures of clothes work in the same way: creating the same version of girlhood and offering the same affects. The key catwalk moment in *The House Bunny* is aggressively double coded: the Zeta girls reveal their new looks and in reverse shot the approbation of male onlookers is expressed by their slack jaws and inability to walk. In the makeover montage, previous to the reveal, the idea of the traditional Cinderella transformation is continuously undermined. Giving the girls a makeup lesson, for example, Shelley announces: "First we must highlight your eyes. The eyes are the nipples of the face."



Figures 1.20 & 1.21, *The House Bunny*, feeling textures.

Despite this double coding the same Cinderella powers and pleasures of clothes are maintained. Clothes are everywhere and in the central makeover montage clothes of a variety of textures and colours surround the girls. Clothing hangs from racks and lines of shoes fill the screen. Encouraging an empathetic tactility in the audio-viewer, the girls constantly touch and feel the fabrics, literally rubbing them on their faces: the sequence engulfs them in textures.



Figures 1.22 & 1.23, *The House Bunny*, sensory encounters with clothes.

As the makeover moment moves towards its climax, the intensity of the sensory encounter with clothes escalates. The camera tracks through an array of colourful shirts into a swirl of vibrantly coloured skirts. Cutting to a high angle shot, the girls throw silk scarves towards the camera. The shot becomes a swirl

wipe that transitions into the reveal. This transition embodies the power of clothes with the aim of feeling like material magic. This is an intensely tactile sequence and the fervent flow of materials invite the audio-viewer to enjoy the pleasures of a tactile richness and the enchantment of the commercial sphere.



Figure 1.24, *The House Bunny*'s catwalk moment.

As in *A Cinderella Story* the relationship between body and clothing is presented as affirmative in *The House Bunny*'s catwalk moment. Clothes are worn confidently — this moment does not involve Cinderella's physical hesitance — the girls strut, and we are invited to enjoy kinaesthetic empathy with the pleasure the characters take in their clothing and their catwalk moment. However, in the glitzy makeover the emphasis is on highlighting the female form conspicuously: flesh and skin are the main textures on display and the power of clothes is to

mould and highlight the body.²¹ However in the shot before the reveal, Shelley and the Zetas run around playfully. The aesthetic mode is gleeful and childish before shifting into the hypersexuality of the catwalk moment. In the *House Bunny* the narrative particularly emphasises the sorority girls' innocence, whilst costume highlights their adult bodies as embodiments of experience.²² Despite the differences between the classical and glitzy modulations in *A Cinderella Story* and *The House Bunny* the powers and pleasures of clothes remain consistent — still in touch with their Cinderella legacy.

Conclusion

The kinds of experiences that girl teen films offer are organised by a limited version of girlhood, embodied by the Cinderella character-icon. Clothes are a central part of Cinderella's fairy tale heritage to girl teen films, making material the modulations that organise Hollywood versions of girlhood. In both *A Cinderella Story* and *The House Bunny* clothes also embody the key contradictory qualities of expansion and confinement. Clothes lend the

²¹ Flesh is another tactile surface that these films employ examined in more detail in chapter three.

²² Even the fact that one of the sorority members is pregnant is glossed over. Her large belly is continuously referenced for comic effect but beyond the fact of having a big stomach any other details of pregnancy are left out of the film. After the character has the baby it is conspicuously absent.

Cinderellas the ability and confidence required to move out into the world — to expand beyond the parameters that had previously restricted them. In common with Disney's Cinderella, the clothes also confine the characters. Sam in *A Cinderella Story*, for example, is hemmed in by her dress: as she moves down the stairs into the party, the awkwardness of such a cumbersome design is unintentionally apparent as she lifts its many layers out of her way. The dress defines how and who she can be.

Some of the success of the Cinderella fairy tale can be attributed to the affective attitude of the story and character that stresses pleasure above fear. Cinderella's pleasures are founded on glamorous and tactile surfaces, of which costume presents an illustrative example, as well as the feelings of potential and possibility that that character embodies. Cinderella's enchantment invites us to go along with the powers and pleasures of the commercial realm: the idea and feeling that clothes, hair, and accessories can change lives. An enchantment without which the pleasures described above would be difficult to enjoy. As I suggested above, we do not have to believe this enchantment but we do have to temporarily collaborate with it.

Clothing is a key technology of modulation and Cinderella is defined by the glamorous materials that adorn her but she is also made glamorous by the spectacles that surround her. Central to the pleasures of Cinderella is the

experience of visibility: Cinderella's transformation/modulation gives her the opportunity to enjoy celebrity. Cinderellas enjoy the glamour of being looked at and admired. Perrault's (2002: 37) description of Cinderella as she enters the ball sums up this key element of the tale's legacy: "Suddenly everyone fell silent. No one was dancing, and the violins stopped playing, because everyone was so absorbed in contemplating the great beauty of the unknown lady who had just entered." In current neoliberal, postfeminist, and networked societies the promise of celebrity has intensified. Celebrity has become an increasingly fundamental trope and pleasure of girl teen films. In the following chapter I examine how celebrity is constructed in the worlds of girl teen films as a type of glamour that creates spectacles of the self.

Chapter Two: Celebrity Glamour



Figure 2.1, *Bratz's* red carpet glamour.

Introduction

In the last chapter I outlined the influence of fairy tale enchantment on girl teen films and examined the aesthetic legacy of the Cinderella story. I explored clothing as a key technology of modulation, and a textured pleasure that the audio-viewer is invited to enjoy. Cinderella's transformation makes her visible. In *The House Bunny* when the Zetas reveal their makeover, Natalie (Emma Stone) becomes aware of the number of people looking her way. She declares: "So this

is what it feels like not to be invisible.” In girl teen film (following its Cinderella legacy) visibility, manifest as popularity and celebrity, is a key trope and aesthetic pleasure.

In narrative terms celebrity and the labour of popularity are often employed as a site of pleasure, tension, and contest in these films. In the 1980s girl teen film *Heathers* (a film that can be seen as a forerunner to those of the 2000s) the protagonist Veronica Sawyer (Winona Ryder) makes the labour of local celebrity explicit. Of her friends she declares: “Well it’s just like they’re people I work with, and our job is being popular and shit.” The narrative of *Heathers*, as is typical of girl teen films, contradictorily struggles with the hazards and pleasures of popularity. Although Veronica is disdainful of the ways in which she must maintain her image, she is also compelled by the powers of celebrity that come with being a ‘Heather’. Similarly, in *Mean Girls*, Cady is equally enamoured and repelled by the idea of her own celebrity. Although she admits her dislike for the clique of which she is a member, she also recognises its appeals: “Because being with the Plastics was like being famous ... people looked at you all the time and everybody just knew stuff about you.” Though the notion of celebrity as desirable is not specific to girl teen films of the twenty-first century, its narrative importance has intensified and its aesthetic pleasures are increasingly employed. As I explored in the previous chapter, for the Cinderella character-icon, visibility

has come to replace or be contiguous with romance as the core character quest and reward.

Girl teen films often include actors that function as stars outside of the diegesis. For example between 2000-2010 (though their stardom waned and changed mid-decade) Hilary Duff and Lindsay Lohan variously operated as economic entities that existed in ancillary markets and other parts of the cultural economy. Duff and Lohan served as signs across the media, making abstract images, ideas, and ideals appear tangible — lending their specific brands of girlhood to various products. In the Hollywood film industry stars have often been exploited as key to gaining audiences for teen film (music and film stars like Elvis or Pat Boone for example [Doherty, 2002; Mundy, 2006]) and audience research reflects the importance of star presence to box office success in general (Stacey, 1994). However, the star as sign across the media and its economic function is not the motivation of this chapter (see Beller, 2006; Marshall, 1997; Rojek, 2001). The focus here is on how celebrity is designed diegetically. Through techniques of visibility and the generation of glamorous spaces and places, girl teen films create experiences that feel like glamour and make visibility pleasurable. This chapter asks how these films create celebrity glamour? What does celebrity glamour feel like? What pleasures does celebrity glamour aim to create, and what kinds of experience does celebrity glamour offer?

To answer these questions the chapter begins by outlining the ways in which celebrity is classified as a 'normal' desire in the twenty-first century and how visibility is understood as a key means to power for girls. I create a framework from the component parts of celebrity in girl teen films, from which we can delineate what kinds of celebrity are played out. The glamour that surrounds celebrity makes visibility pleasurable. I define celebrity glamour, explore the construction of glamorous spaces and places, and the practical creation of visibility: techniques that offer experiences of being looked at as pleasurable.

The powers of visibility

In girl teen film (as in our culture at large) visibility, and the intensified visibility of celebrity, as a 'normal' desire is an axiom. As Jo Littler (2003: 13) proposes, the desire for fame is constructed in popular media texts as desirable and 'ordinary': "the idea that 'to be ordinary' in our culture will probably entail 'wanting to be a celebrity' [...] gets reproduced and naturalised". In its twenty-first century manifestation, public visibility has taken a 'demotic turn' (Turner, 2010) whereby being in view works as a central point of identity validation in the cultural sphere. The idea of visibility as glamorous, of being looked at as appealing, is nothing new but in the network of mediated spectacles of the twenty-first century, visibility is more available and more intensely endorsed.

Culturally, visibility and celebrity are constructed as a key means of substantiating social identity, whereby “the self is validated by performing for the gaze of others” (Holmes & Redmond, 2006: 10). Celebrity is presented as a significant means to acquiring symbolic capital (Couldry, 2001, 2004): “a way to ‘really’ exist, to mean something in public and private” (Littler, 2003: 11). Being visible means being included — taken into account — talked about, looked at, considered. We grant celebrities time (Marshall, 1997: x) and cultural and social space. In conjunction, for those who can achieve it, visibility and celebrity can give access to new, powerful, social networks (Allen, 2011): what Holmes & Redmond (2006: 2) describe as the “centre of meaning generation”. In girl teen films, where few other means of power are made apparent for girls, the spectacle of the self is *the* singular way of taking up time and space and accessing power.

Popularity has long been a key narrative element in the sub-genre but has become increasingly important or taken-for-granted as a central thematic. The focus on visibility and celebrity in these films has increased in parallel with a general proliferation of synthetic experience as part of ‘everyday’ life. This is what Kellner (2005) describes, in reference to Debord (1967), as ‘the culture of the spectacle’, whereby spectacle has entered all domains of life: economy, politics, society, and the ‘everyday’ (Kellner, 2005: 26). In the millennial, hypermediated, networked society (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, Couldry & McCarthy, 2004; Marshall, 2010) the spectacle of personas that defines celebrity has

extended to become a 'norm' — visibility and the mediated presentation of the self is part of the 'everyday'. It makes sense then that these films create experiences that draw on and develop the powers and pleasures of visibility, not just as a narrative means to successful romance but as a reward in and of itself.

Celebrity, in its 'feminine' form — focused on private lives and lifestyles (Geraghty, 2000: 196; Holmes and Negra, 2011: 13) — is identified in academia, like the girl figure herself, as a culture that neatly personifies postfeminist and neoliberal discourse. Postfeminism and neoliberalism share de-classed and de-raced ideals of individualisation. In the spectacle of contemporary celebrity the notion that freedom and choice gives everyone equal opportunity for success through self-management (Ringrose, 2007: 480) is markedly apparent.

Discourses of body-work, self-reinvention, adaptability and individual attainment that surround celebrity, express neoliberal and postfeminist ideologies (Allen & Mendick, 2013; Allen, 2011; Attwood, 2011; Cronin, 2000; Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2004, 2009; Projansky, 2007; Ringrose, 2007; Tasker & Negra, 2005). Girl teen films do not just express these ideologies: they create experiences of celebrity that aim to make the spectacle of the self feel fun. The girl figure's visibility is given affective force as well as narrative significance and through techniques of enchantment the audio-viewer is asked to go along with the idea that being looked at is important.

The structures of celebrity in girl teen films

The experience of celebrity is played out in these films in generic and recurring formats. Visibility provides the Cinderella character-icon with a particular type of coming of age moment: celebrity makes her important. How visibility and celebrity is constructed in girl teen films can be unpacked into three component parts: narrative events, modes, and degrees of visibility. The first building block is celebrity *narrative events*: these are recurring narrative conventions through which visibility and celebrity are enacted. The most commonly recurring narrative events of visibility in girl teen films are: the catwalk, sports performance, and the musical number. In the catwalk, visibility is valued in and of itself — it is the task and the reward. The catwalk can take on different formats: the ‘big reveal’ that follows a character’s makeover modulation; the ‘strut’ that signifies an individual’s or group’s visibility and dominance of space; and (less commonly) the ‘mediated catwalk’, whereby characters are presented at ‘red carpet’ events, garnering media attention. Tamar Jeffers McDonald (2010: 103-104) uses the term ‘catwalk moment’ to describe a facet within the big reveal — an instance of stasis that follows the makeover where the recipient pauses to show off her changes and receive admiration from onlookers. McDonald (ibid: 104) describes the catwalk moment in its big reveal context: “The catwalk moment grants the transformed the attention of the camera, the other characters, and the audience, isolating the moment not of change but of the appreciation of its magnitude in

order to stress its importance". I am using the term a little differently, as a moment understood by its design: one that is not tied to the tropes that surround the makeover, nor restricted to an instance of stasis. The catwalk, as I use it, references the idea of motion and display that the fashion show origins of the word imply. The second narrative trope of visibility in girl teen films is the sports performance. These narrative moments follow a very similar format to that of dance numbers in girl teen dance films: visibility and celebrity is achieved through hard work and made most intensely manifest in a final performance that displays characters' skills and bodies, to which their success is attributed. Similarly the singing and/or dancing musical number is a trope that emphasises visibility and can give girl teen film characters their Cinderella moment. The musical number can take place as part of a school concert, a television show, nightclub performance, arena concert, or as part of a competition or audition. In common with the sports performance, visibility is most often achieved through an industrious attitude that culminates in a final performance. In narrative terms the sports and dance contexts provide a framework for the coming of age narrative whereby making 'mature' decisions give the Cinderella character-icon her opportunity for celebrity and respect.²³

²³ Sports performance is explored in detail in chapter three and the musical number in chapter four.

The second building block of celebrity in girl teen films is its *modes*: that is the type of celebrity enacted. The modes of celebrity performed in the narrative events outlined are identifiable using Rojek's (2001: 18-19) categories of celebrity: attributed — those that gain celebrity through exposure; achieved — those that gain celebrity through a professional 'talent'; ascribed — celebrity is assigned through ancestry and royal lineage. The final component part of celebrity is the *degree of visibility*. Characters achieve visibility and fame in the diegesis of girl teen films to varying levels. Characters may enjoy localised visibility, concentrated in the public sphere of the school environment. Or they can experience levels of media exposure, from minor celebrity to international stardom. At first glance it appears that modes and degrees of celebrity would correspond quite naturally and categorically with the narrative events in which celebrity and visibility are enacted. For example we might assume that a catwalk moment will most likely include attributed and local celebrity. However, single girl teen films can include more than one type of celebrity enacted through a variety of narrative events, incorporating differing degrees of exposure variously. The diagram below (fig.2.2) illustrates that the component parts of visibility and celebrity in girl teen films overlap and play out in various formations. There are no definite generic arrangements of celebrity in girl teen films but a common aesthetic mode that encourages enchantment and creates glamour. Regardless

of celebrity mode or degree, girl teen films create the same experiences of celebrity based on the pleasures of glamour.

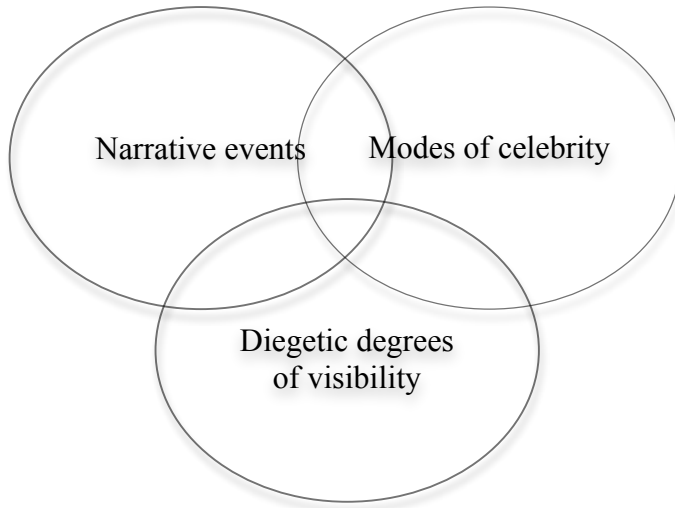


Figure 2.2, structures of celebrity in girl teen film.

Celebrity and glamour

Celebrity is an abstract notion. The personas celebrities present feel material but can never be fully grasped. The concept of celebrity is both obvious and elusive.

As Roach (2007: 48) illustrates, celebrity is a:

mediatized conception of a person [...] not reducible to any one of the many icons that publicize [sic] it, but rather disseminated pervasively as a ghostly semblance, specific yet intangible, seen by not two people in exactly the same way, yet intelligible to nearly everyone.

Celebrities generate an illusion of presence: they appear both available and unbiddable at once. They encourage intimacy — what Roach (2007) and Thrift (2008) call public intimacy — whereby the object displays particular qualities which can be comprehended but at the same time suggests hidden depths beyond what we can see (also see Shaviro, 2010: 8-9). Celebrities are singular and typical (Roach, 2007: 8), ordinary and extraordinary (Dyer, 1979; Geraghty, 2000; Holmes & Redmond, 2006; P. D. Marshall, 1997; Roach, 2007; Thrift, 2008), nowhere and everywhere (Shaviro, 2010: 8; Thrift, 2008: 18). As Roach (2007: 22) explains it: “the most charismatic celebrities are the ones we can only imagine, even if we see them naked everywhere.” It is in the combination of the abstract and the material — the possibility that fantasies and ideas can be housed in the material body — that the glamour of celebrity is conjured.

Glamour is “ a form of *nonverbal rhetoric*, which moves and persuades” (Postrel, 2013: 6, italics on original). It does not consist of a list of markers, nor exist as an object, but as sensation: glamour is perceived rather than possessed (Postrel, 2013: 12; Roach, 2007: 91; Thrift, 2008: 14). Glamour is fleeting and transient, it is a moment rather than an entire narrative. Glamour creates the promise of specific pleasures. It can tap into preexisting desires, obscure the mundane, and it has the potential to take us away from the ‘everyday’ (Postrel, 2013: 36).

Glamour gives us an experience of imagined ideals. In girl teen films, for example, celebrity glamour draws on and creates the longing to be admired and

the desire to count as important, and momentarily answers that desire with an experience of admiration. Glamour feels like promise and possibility because it furnishes us with enough to project our desires and fantasies into it but not so much to disillusion. Glamour also performs: it has the potential to turn people (and objects) into events.²⁴ For glamour to work, it requires an enchanted mode of engagement. As Postrel (2013: 8) describes, glamour is “an illusion known to be false but felt to be true.” To enjoy its glamorous pleasures the audio-viewer of girl teen films must be complicit with the illusion.

In girl teen films glamour makes celebrity and visibility affectively pleasurable. Through practical inutility glamour creates feelings of abundance and invites us to enjoy a tactile engagement with the textures on display. Glamour is also pleasurable because it feels like promise: it appears as though it were tangible but it can never be fully grasped and consequently its promise never dissipates. Shaviro (2010: 10) describes the stars as ideal commodities: “they always offer us more than they deliver, enticing us with a ‘promise of happiness’ that is never fulfilled, and therefore never exhausted or disappointed.” The promise that glamour generates is one of its key pleasures. Glamour also obscures the mundane and therefore can make the ‘ordinary’ seem changed, creating the excitement of the unfamiliar. The seeming effortlessness of glamour also creates the pleasure of ease, the feeling of moving through the world without resistance.

²⁴ Roach (2007: 87) describes clothes as potentially having this quality.

Glamour is a form of enchantment that invites us to suspend our disbelief of public intimacy, effortlessness, practical inutility, and the embodiment of contradictory qualities, in order to enjoy these pleasures.

Glamour takes many forms and is different to different people, though some versions are more widespread and enduring than others (Postrel, 2013: 19).

Nonetheless celebrity glamour holds distinctive characteristics that make the experience of glamour possible. The characteristics of celebrity glamour have been explored variously in academia but like celebrity itself it can be difficult to fully grasp the components that make up its features. The table below brings these characteristics together to define what celebrity glamour is. The first section cites where the characteristic has been referenced, the second section lists the characteristics of celebrity glamour, section three gives a preliminary outline of how each characteristic is achieved, and section four summarises the kind of pleasure each characteristic creates.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CELEBRITY GLAMOUR

1. References	2. Characteristics	3. How	4. Pleasures
Currid-Halkett & Scott, 2013; Dyer, 1979; Holmes & Redmond, 2006; P. D. Marshall, 1997; Roach, 2007; Rojek, 2001; Stacey, 1994; Thrift, 2008	The illusion of availability and proximity — public intimacy	Creates platforms and opportunities for visibility: e.g. a podium, an audience, media attention, but also restricts access. Glamour creates a sense of mystery that illuminates as it conceals — it highlights as well as veils	Feelings of promise
Dyer, 1979; Postrel, 2013; Roach, 2007; Thrift, 2008	The appearance of effortlessness	A veneer of unconsciousness, effort is concealed, organised to disappear, traces of work are disguised	Ease, experience of moving through the world unrestricted
P. D. Marshall, 1997; Roach, 2007; Veblen, 1925	Practical inutility	Textural variety, luxury, and impracticality create a sense of opulence, use is to generate glamour only	Abundance, tactility
Dyer, 1979; Geraghty, 2000; Holmes & Redmond, 2006; P. D. Marshall, 1997; Roach, 2007; Thrift, 2008	The embodiment of contradictory qualities	For example innocence and experience, expansion and confinement	Energies, feelings of potential and promise

The end credits of *Bratz: the movie* (McNamara, 2007) (fig. 2.1) provides an ideal illustration of how celebrity is constructed as glamorous in girl teen film. *Bratz: the movie* is a live-action film based on MGA ‘fashion dolls’ that the company describe “are all about rockin’ the hottest fashion trendz with their friends and some serious attitude. With tons of confidence and style to match, the Bratz® make heads turn wherever they go!” (MGA, accessed 14/02/2014). The film follows the ‘Bratz’ as they start High School, through to their graduation. As their final narrative reward the ‘Bratz’ are invited to perform on the red carpet of a movie premiere. The space makes visibility possible: the ‘Bratz’ are lit-up, on stage, in a roped-off area. Diegetically this glamorous backdrop is a mediated event surrounded by press and camera crews. On display, The ‘Bratz’ are there to be seen but at a distance — highlighting the illusion of availability that is central to celebrity glamour. The stage also embodies contradictory qualities, creating unresolved intensities: the space makes the ‘Bratz’ the focal point of the scene but conversely they are also confined, physically and metaphorically roped in to a specific kind of space and performance. As a night-time event the ‘Bratz’s’ performance space stands out in the darkness as a spectacle of the night-time economy. The red carpet, dry ice, circular stage, velvet curtains, decks, and clusters of people create textural variety. In combination the array of light sources — footlights, fairy, neon, spotlights, and flash bulbs — shimmer upon a water fountain to create effervescent shadows across the scene. Like the

eighteenth-century pleasure gardens, the play of light and shadow is central to creating a sense of excitement and mystery, and to hiding imperfections. The space is also unproductive, or more accurately, it is a space that only produces glamour. It is excessive in that its only utility is visibility. The scene is also effortless: the space appears, we do not witness its construction or workings. Cables, scaffold, and power sources are kept from view. The 'Bratz' also fit into the space effortlessly: the satin and diamante on their costumes and accessories match the glittering backdrop, and like the space itself, the girls just appear and perform without expressions of force or effort. This final scene in the film makes no real contribution to the narrative but it aims to leave the audience with an experience of glamour.

In girl teen films celebrity glamour is played across, upon and around the body. In these films celebrity is designed using: accessories, clothes, hair, skin; flesh; music; the techniques of practical visibility — the ways in which characters are looked at and look back; and specific spaces and places. In this chapter I examine the construction of spaces and places as glamorous and the techniques of practical visibility designed to make the experience of being looked at pleasurable.²⁵

²⁵ The pleasures of clothes have been covered in chapter one. Flesh is explored in chapter three. Music is explored in detail in chapters four and five.

Glamorous spaces and places

Space and place can produce glamour. Exploring the geography of celebrity Currid-Halkett & Scott (2013: 2) propose that “[t]he stars themselves are often quite ephemeral but the system of stardom is maintained through the continual social reproduction of cultural and symbolic capital and the physical settings, or scenes, in which the system takes shape.” In girl teen films, space and place can surround the Cinderella character-icon with glamour. Space and place are examined in this chapter, not in relation to the complexities of how filmic space-time is constructed or perceived (see for example: Fox, 2001), instead, I am exploring the production of glamorous spaces and places *in* the worlds of girl teen film: how they contribute to the sense of celebrity that surrounds the Cinderella character, and the pleasures that they offer.

Space and place are simple *and* complicated concepts, with multiple meanings and implications. For the purposes of this chapter a working definition of these terms will help us to understand how space and place are designed to invite us to enjoy the pleasures of glamour. Place is understood here as a fixed location. A form of space with definite coordinates, created through acts of naming (Cresswell, 2004: 7). Space, as Tim Cresswell (2004: 8) suggests, is a more abstract concept: space is unfixed, mobile, and fluid.

The features of glamorous spaces



Figures 2.3 & 2.4, *Starstruck* (Grossman, 2010), glamorous spaces.

Currid-Halkett & Scott (2013: 4) describe the ‘backdrops’ to stardom as “an economy of scenes”. These ‘scenes’ include: mediatised award ceremonies, parties, or gallery openings. Star ‘scenes’ are the spaces of celebrity. Space is not a defined locality but “a framing device in the creation of cultural imaginaries” (Kitchin & Hubbard, 2010: 2). The spaces of girl teen film that are designed as glamorous are not specific locations but are dressed to create glamour. Like the

'transformations' that these films offer, the spaces dressed as glamorous are contained within a predetermined set of possibilities. The typologies of glamorous celebrity space in girl teen films are: the dance (prom, homecoming etc), the red carpet, music concert, nightclub, aristocratic manor, and mediated event. These glamorous spaces are designed to create visibility. Like the eighteenth-century pleasure gardens, glamorous spaces are constructed to offer a variety of spectacles, the most important one being the crowd itself (Conlin, 2013). Nightclubs for example are designed to create a "synoptic frenzy" (Rigakos, 2008): the space (and nightclub culture itself) is designed to make its patrons objects of aesthetic consumption those looking are also looked at, in a cycle of observation (ibid: 23). In girl teen films glamorous spaces are all similarly designed to generate optimal visibility but here the Cinderella character-icon is the main spectacle, the most watched. In these films celebrity glamour is also brought into 'everyday' spaces, lending glamour to high school for example, in the space of the prom. Girl teen films surround the Cinderella character-icon in spaces that maintain her visibility as the central pleasure and emphasise the girl figure's visibility as her main value. This is achieved by glamorous spaces that create a sense of public intimacy, textural abundance and tactility, effortlessness, and embodiments of contradictory qualities.



Figure 2.5, *The Princess Diaries*, glamorous space.

Whether constructed around the idea of a high degree of stardom or surrounding local celebrity at a high school event, the celebrity glamour of space in girl teen films is designed around the same principles and tropes. Glamorous spaces are loaded with all kinds of materials that range from glitzy textures that play with light (see fig.2.4), integrated surfaces of information technology, including LED screens (see fig.2.3), to the ornate and plush surfaces that surround ‘princess’ characters in films such as *The Princess Diaries* (G. Marshall, 2001) as above, or *What A Girl Wants* (see figs. 2.28, 2.29). These texturally loaded spaces position the Cinderella character-icon at the centre of the spectacle and invite the audio-viewer to enjoy a sensorial experience of glamour.

The prom (fig. 2.4), for example, is loaded with glitzy materials that play with light. This textural abundance invites a caressing gaze, like the Cinderella costume,

that engages physically with the textures on display. Materials that play with light create mysterious glamour, not just by their association with precious metals and stones but also by permeating the scene with a distorting array of colour, light and shadow, perceived through a colourful veil. As Postrel (2013: 120) describes: “glittering objects distort perception.” The glitter and sparkle of the prom, for example, not only illuminates the scene, it also aims to create the appropriate sense of mystique that glamour requires, simultaneously highlighting and enshrouding the space. This colourful veil creates feelings of promise: illuminating just enough, without revealing too much. The play of light and dark also conceals effort, and the ‘ordinary’ that exists behind the veneer. The glamorous spaces of girl teen film often work to utilise the semi-darkness of spaces that make up the night-time economy. As Conlin (2013: 8) describes, the play of light and shadow in eighteenth-century pleasure gardens was dangerous but exciting, covering “a manifold of sins, it also revealed a “fairy-land”.” By highlighting some aspects and obscuring others the play of light distorts the scene, creating a stylised space.

The ornate, royal spaces in *The Princess Diaries* (see fig. 2.5) are pleasurable because of the glamour of complex materials that are layered and dense with history. Materials like marble or lapis lazuli, for example, are densely layered with the “rich residue” of the past (Postrel, 2013: 121). This type of glamour embodies the notion of ascribed celebrity. Glamour, in this context, is built over

time, over generations and through ancestry. The sense of history embodied in the materials that surround her, lend the 'princess' character a type of glamour that feels denser and more tangible though it relies on the very same characteristics that make up the glitzier version found in, for example, the prom. *The Princess Diaries* follows Mia (Anne Hathaway), who is made-over from awkward teenager to 'graceful princess' when she discovers that she is the heir to a small European country. In Mia's final 'big reveal' she stands at the centre of a grand ballroom. The space is texturally loaded with fixtures that bare the glamorous weight of practical inutility. The sumptuous materials of Mia's costume allow her to fit into the space effortlessly: as she moves into the space a smooth tracking shot follows her, emphasising the appearance of ease and creating an experience of moving through the world unrestricted. Of course Mia is restricted by her role as 'princess', by the dress that she wears, and the type of femininity that she is constructed by, nonetheless glamour makes the moment feel unrestricted.



Figure 2.6, *Sydney White's* glamorous staircase (also see figures 2.28 & 2.29).

Whether glitzy or ornate glamorous spaces hold the same characteristics and often include specific features. In glamorous spaces staged staircases are a prominent feature. Staircases have a Hollywood history, in particular associated with “the specularization of the woman”, where “she is displayed as spectacle for the male gaze” (Doane, 1987: 136). Stairs act as a staging space and a visual trope that is particularly aligned with the makeover, as a setting for displaying the transformation (McDonald, 2010: 98). McDonald (ibid: 99) suggests that stairs are “emblematic of *motion*, as a liminal place symbolising progress from one place or state to another and, therefore symbolising change.” (Italics in original). The staircase offers characters the opportunity to make a glamorous entrance as

though, McDonald (ibid) proposes, descending from heaven.²⁶ It is not only through association that the staircase can make space and characters glamorous. Staged staircases are excessive, unproductive spaces (Thrift, 2008: 17) personifying the practical inutility of glamour. The glamorous staircases of girl teen film seem to be used in the spirit of the flamboyant, 1950s, staged staircases of Morris Lapidus. Influenced by the pleasure garden at Coney Island, Lapidus' designs were gaudy and glitzy ("Morris Lapidus," 2013). One design at the Fontainebleu Hotel, Miami, described as 'a staircase to nowhere', led to a cloakroom from which guests could emerge to parade for the people in the hotel lobby below. Similarly in girl teen films, glamorous staircases are lavish and superfluous: designed for visibility and pomp rather than practicality. Acting as another facet of modulation, they create feelings of change and motion but effectively go nowhere.

²⁶ Also see Stacey (1994: 98) on the glamorous associations and materiality of the Hollywood staircase.



Figures 2.7 & 2.8, *Freaky Fridays*' (1979 & 2003) denouement.

Stages similarly play a prominent part in the construction of glamorous spaces, and like staged staircases, create a platform for the Cinderella character-icon. In both versions of *Freaky Friday* (Nelson, 1979; Waters, 2003), mother and daughter undergo a body swap and each must perform as the other. In the original, trapped in the body of her daughter, Mrs Andrews (Barbara Harris) must perform a variety of tasks that she is ill equipped for, including playing hockey and executing a water skiing routine. In the remake these sporting activities are

replaced with the daughter Anna's (Lindsay Lohan) role in a rock band. The original denouement that takes place at a water park is replaced with a music competition and Anna's/her mother's (Jamie Lee Cutis) moment on stage. The visibility of the stage and the scenario of the music competition lends the scene its comic tension: with everyone watching Anna's mother, in her daughter's body, finds it difficult to perform. Nonetheless, the stage also contributes to the glamorous pleasures that the film offers. Performing here meets a desire for admiration and the stage presents us with a synthetic space that highlights the pleasures of performance and adulation but keeps its difficulties and stresses in shadow. The glamour of the concert space relies on a busy lighting design. Lighting literally provides a source of visibility and it also (again like the pleasure garden) supplies "light entertainment" (Conlin, 2013: 8). The concert in *Freaky Friday* (2003) is illuminated using spotlights, follow-spots, coloured gels, and gobos (an outline projection of shapes). Lighting animates the space, creates shimmering and layered surfaces, and imbues it with phosphorescent textures. All of which contribute to a texturally varied, abundant space that aims to create pleasurable tactile impressions. Stages also personify the illusion of proximity that is central to celebrity glamour, creating intense visibility but restricting access, and utilising the feelings of promise that this generates.

Finally, mediation is also a tool that creates glamorous spaces. Many of the glamorous spaces in girl teen film articulate the basic media notion that “mediated reality is somehow ‘higher’ or more significant than nonmediated reality” (Couldry, 2004: 61). The diegetically-mediated spaces in these films utilise the energy of greater visibility: more eyes, and excessive focus on the Cinderella character-icon at the centre of a ‘synoptic frenzy’. Mediated spaces often draw on the pleasures of effortlessness: as ‘the media’ scramble, push and shove, shout and yell, the Cinderella character-icon stands or walks through them relatively gracefully, and seemingly unhindered by comparison.



Figures 2.9 & 2.10, *The Lizzie McGuire Movie*, mediated space and place.

When Lizzie McGuire (Hilary Duff) has her moment on the red carpet, this mediated space makes her visibility central, surrounded on all sides by the media and screaming fans. This is also a texturally loaded space: flash bulbs add to the play of light and shadow across the scene, it incorporates the glitz of products of conspicuous consumption such as limousines, in combination with the dense layers and rich residue of the Colosseum in Rome. This Cinderella moment uses techniques to create a glamorous space but it also draws on the glamour of the specific, exotic location of Rome.

The features of glamorous places





Figures 2.11 & 2.12, *Starstruck*, urban glamour and domestic suburbia.

Celebrity has a distinct geography that plays out in urban places (Currid-Halkett & Scott, 2013: 5). The glamour in girl teen film is markedly located as metropolitan and the city itself is an object of glamour (though as I will discuss urban glamour is often brought into the suburbs). In girl teen film the typologies of glamorous places are specific cities, for example: New York, Los Angeles, or London. Urban locations are set in contrast to suburban or mid-west America. The glamour of the city is made stark by its comparison to the rural mid-west or residential suburbs. Even where places are not specifically named in the films, 'the city' is set-up as a fixed place, glamorous by its comparison to 'small town' America. It is no wonder therefore that so many girl teen film protagonists leave

small-town America to find success and visibility in major urban locations.²⁷ 'The City' is not just a backdrop but acts as a framework for organising and generating glamour. As Postrel (2013: 152) suggests, seen or imagined from afar, the city shimmers. Like the play of light that makes up many glamorous spaces, the city skyline (especially at night) offers a place of promise: made translucent by the flash of lights that highlight its attractive elements and obscure 'everyday' reality. Cities like New York as they are imagined, on screen and off, are the geographical embodiment of mystery and possibility. The city is not only mysterious at a distance; it is too big to be fully known even by its inhabitants (Postrel, 2013: 153). Because it is unknowable, the glamorous city offers feelings of promise: it gives enough to create an impression but is obscure enough not to disillusion.

The city skyline plays a prominent role in girl teen films. In *Starstruck* (figs. 2.11 & 2.12) for example the film opens with a series of sweeping helicopter shots of the Los Angeles skyline, set in contrast to the domestic suburban spaces and places inhabited by the female protagonist. In *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* (Sugarman, 2004: hereafter *Confessions*) Lola (Lindsay Lohan) moves from Manhattan; New York, to the suburbs of New Jersey. Like the opening of

²⁷ See for example: *13 Going on 30*, *Centre Stage* (2000), *Centre stage: turn it up* (2008), *Fame* (2009), *Josie and the Pussycats*, *The Lizzie McGuire Movie* (2003), *Make it Happen* (2008), *Save the Last Dance* (2001), *Starstruck* (2010).

Starstruck the connection between New York and glamour is made explicitly. Grand helicopter shots sweep across the New York landscape in contrast to static, and boxed in shots that introduce residential suburbia.



Figures 2.13 & 2.14, *Confessions*, New York glamour and New Jersey suburbia.

The city itself is a character in this film. New York is central to narrative development and defines Lola's attitude and actions. This New York character is a glamorous version that focuses on the city as the epicentre of synthetic

experiences, spectacle, and promises of excitement. The film double codes this glamorous version of New York. At the opening of the film, following a typical helicopter view of the city, the camera moves in to present what we initially perceive as a 'real' place. Hyperstylised and, ultimately we realise, a two-dimensional pop-up of the city, Lola's imagined version of New York is a cardboard model. Like the snow globe scene in *A Cinderella Story*, *Confessions'* opening evokes the glamour of New York but frames it as a greater fiction than the narrative of the film. The differences between the 'real' New York in the film's narrative and Lola's pop-up version allow the glamour of the filmic New York to seem 'real' in comparison. The film highlights the artifice of Lola's New York, stressing its illusion, without destroying the city's glamour.



Figures 2.15 & 2.16, *Confessions*, Lola's New York and the high school production that brings the city to the suburbs.

Consequently the New York skyline can be used to bring glamour into the suburbs. In the film's high school production of *Pygmalion*, the New York skyline provides a glamorous backdrop. At the after show party, held in a suburban home, Lola dances with a celebrity, delighted at being the centre of attention.

Her voice over declares: “when you’re happy the whole world’s New York.” The party cross dissolves into an imagined space framed by the city skyline and glamour is brought into the ‘ordinary’ space of the suburban home, surrounding Lola with the shimmer and promise of the urban landscape.



Figures 2.17 & 2.18, *Confessions*, bringing the city into the suburbs.

Confessions brings the affective pleasures of urban glamour into the domestic and institutional spaces and places of the suburbs. Consequently the conventional domestic spaces and places of girlhood can feel like the promise and potential of glamour. The film creates pleasures that feel like promise and change, contained within a predetermined set of possibilities. The glamour of space and place offers another form of modulation. Both create feelings of excitement, possibility, and potential but they essentially restrict the girl figure to spectacles of the self and the domesticity of the suburbs.

The pleasures of visibility in the catwalk

In girl teen films visibility is produced around the girl body. Through reference to Walter Bagehot, Roach (2007: 77) demonstrates how visibility and its surfaces are fundamental to the creation of celebrity. Quoting Bagehot, Roach illustrates the glamour that was essential to the relationship between the “mass of English people” and their rulers of the seventeenth century that is still a crucial element of conjuring celebrity in the twenty-first:

They [the ‘mass’] defer to what we may call the *theatrical show* of society. A certain state passes before them; a certain pomp of great men; a certain spectacle of beautiful women; a wonderful scene of wealth and enjoyment is displayed [...] Courts and aristocracies have the great quality which rules the multitude, though philosophers can see nothing in it — visibility. (Italics in original)

Bagehot's description is still entirely accurate in summing up the key elements of glamorous visibility. It is a "show", a performance that only exists as an event; it must be experienced to be at all. It is fleeting, a surface that cannot be probed too deeply, and it mostly consists of the female body.

In narrative terms the visibility that the catwalk moment creates is both task and reward in and of itself. In the catwalk, girls achieve visibility by means congruent with notions of 'feminine', attributed celebrity, where fame is valued in and of itself — ostensibly void of hard work and talent (Allen & Mendick, 2013: 1; Holmes & Negra, 2011: 2). In aesthetic terms visibility creates pleasure. In the catwalk, in its various versions, the practical techniques of visibility are commonly made up of three basic components of editing, cinematography, and performance that cultivate glamour: slow motion, the body tilt, and the effortless look back. These techniques make visibility a tactile and glamorous surface. In Hollywood cinema, slow motion is used in a variety of contexts with the intention of generating a range of effects. It is a gesture of display (Gunning, 1996: 77) that draws attention to the surface. The technique emphasises the act of presentation itself. Slow motion can express dream or fantasy-like qualities, surreal states, or highlight impressive bodily feats. The technique does not imply looking as a matter of course but it does often (and increasingly) provide emphasis and the opportunity to dwell on the moment (Bordwell & Thompson,

2004: 235). David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (ibid) describe “the slow motion scene of violence” as “a cliché of modern cinema”, with particular reference to the ways it is used to emphasise bodily power in action sequences. Similarly, slow motion in girl teen film is used to interrogate the moment of spectacle — the difference is that this is a spectacle of glamour that surrounds the feminine body.²⁸ Another cliché of Hollywood cinema is the slow motion scene of visibility. In this context slow motion implies a lingering look. Not necessarily because it is part of a classical point-of-view sequence (though it can be) but because slow motion gives its object time, it takes in intricacies and dwells on detail. In the context of the catwalk, slow motion creates fluid movement and in doing so generates glamour and the feel of ease, of moving through the world unhindered. It also adds to this feel of glamour through its practical inutility. Slow motion takes up time. It goes beyond the necessary in terms of classical continuity and is a means of expression that exceeds what is essential. Slow motion is an excessive abstraction — it draws attention to the surface to ‘prop up’ the feeling of glamour being expressed.

The body tilt and the effortless look back are component parts of the slow motion scene of visibility. In the body tilt, as the name suggests, the camera tilts or jibs smoothly up the body, sometimes (but not always) reproducing the point of view

²⁸ As I explore in chapter three girl teen films can also use slow motion to emphasise the power of the active power of the body in motion.

of onlookers. In combination with slow motion the body tilt works to intensify the feel of a lingering look. In girl teen films the body tilt may not be from any one characters' point of view but as a Hollywood cliché it maintains the signification and feel of looking nonetheless. When the point of view is made obvious, unlike the classical male approbation (McDonald, 2010: 70) that is part of the traditional makeover reveal, it can be from either male or female character points of view. The attention to surface that the slow motion creates and the gaze of the body tilt work to add glamour to this type of visibility. Generating the illusion of availability central to celebrity, they linger upon the details of the characters' bodies, contributing to the idea of access that this interrogation of detail suggests. As technologies of display they draw attention to the surface and make a point of visibility. However the very notion of technologies of display, this scrutiny of the *surface*, suggests that there is something else, something more concrete that the onlooker cannot quite grasp. This idea that there is something more is a key element of celebrity, embodied by the techniques that construct it. The techniques of visibility create the impression of public intimacy and consequently invite us to enjoy the feelings of promise that come with it.

The performance of the effortless look back exaggerates a cool nonchalance that implies a casual indifference to being the focus of attention. Celebrity must appear effortless though, contrarily, we are all too aware of the labour it requires. As Roach (2007: 21) suggests, celebrity always involves an element of the

suspension of disbelief. Its success relies on the enchanted mode of engagement of its audience — their readiness to entertain the illusion. In the classical Cinderella mode this effortlessness is coupled with innocence. The traditional Cinderella's effortlessness is rendered by her unaware, seemingly uncontrived, grace. In contrast, other versions of celebrity glamour combine effortlessness with a knowing awareness: a look infused with confident sexuality. Within the narrative this appearance of ease can be feigned. Films often contradict the effortless look back with earlier scenes of the intense labour of the makeover, or double coded moments where, for example, at the end of their 'runway' characters fall over. Nonetheless the effortless look back maintains the *appearance* of composure and indifference essential to the construction of celebrity glamour. Although, in narrative terms, we are aware of the effort that goes into the catwalk, it is a passing moment that offers an instance of glamour. As Postrel (2013: 84) suggests, "glamour is less narrative", it captures an instance rather than an entire background. The makeover for example is itself Romantic; it removes the mundane, tedious and potentially painful elements of beauty regimens but enhances the enjoyment of success by playing out the effort that produces the 'transformation'. The catwalk, in contrast, is the moment of glamour, an instance that creates an experience of admiration, effortlessness, public intimacy, and sensations of promise and possibility. Both the appearance of effortlessness and the contradictory qualities of the look back contribute the

necessary glamour required. In working at the surface, slow motion, the body tilt, and the effortless look back perform: the glamour of these techniques creates the moment as an event and through these techniques we are invited to enjoy visibility as a material and glamorous experience.



Figures 2.19 & 2.20, *Not Another Teen Movie*, parodies the techniques of visibility.

So overused are the techniques of visibility in moments that seek to emphasise the glamour of being looked at that these tropes are parodied in *Not Another*

Teen Movie (Gallen, 2001). Each time Amanda Becker (Lacey Chabert) enters a room the moment is constructed through slow motion, the camera tilts slowly up her body and she glances from side to side with overplayed nonchalance. To play up the excess of the moment she is surrounded by a halo of golden light. This parody alludes to the ways in which the slow motion scene of visibility is used more especially in teen films of the 1980s and 1990s whereby the glamour of visibility highlights the male point of view in reference to his object of desire. In millennial girl teen films the techniques of visibility make being looked at pleasurable in and of itself.

Visibility in the 'big reveal': Easy A and Mean Girls





Figures 2.21 & 2.22, *Easy A*, Olive's slow motion scene of visibility.

In girl teen films of the 2000s the glamour of visibility is itself constructed as *the* key pleasure. The catwalk in *Easy A* is a typical example of the slow motion scene of visibility in girl teen films. After generating a rumour that she has lost her virginity, the film sees Olive (Emma Stone) cultivate her new reputation found in her “slutty alter-ego” (Olive, *Easy A*). This is a reputation that makes her notoriously visible to the student population. The catwalk moment here is a ‘big reveal’ that follows Olive’s self-modulation: a glitzy makeover she undertakes as a means to accentuating her supposed aggressive sexuality.²⁹ The catwalk begins with a slow motion long shot of Olive making her way through a densely populated area of school. The scene then cuts to a close-up of her bustier and performs a smooth body tilt up to her face. The camera lingers, taking in the details of Olive and her costume. Close-ups accentuate the sense of proximity here, contributing to the feeling of public intimacy that this moment embodies.

²⁹ For other slow motion big reveals see: *The Princess Protection Program*, *The House Bunny*, *Picture This*, *Bratz: The Movie*.

Olive's visibility is both known and felt through the use of slow motion and the body tilt. These techniques draw attention to the surface and generate fluid, sensuous motion, making visibility seemingly effortless and tangible. This attention to surface also perfectly enacts the illusion of availability central to notions of glamorous visibility: the techniques encourage observation of detail but stay at the surface, they do not allow us to go any further. The moment invites scrutiny but not enough to break the illusion. In combination, Olive's sunglasses maintain a distance that is essential to feelings of public intimacy. Sunglasses are a classic signifier and embodiment of glamour (Postrel, 2013: 109-110). They implicitly enlarge the eyes whilst simultaneously creating mystery, they draw attention and concurrently conceal. Olive's look back is both confident and veiled, with an air of seeming indifference. Although she is aware of the reactions that her catwalk moment elicits from her fellow students, the look back maintains her requisite cool nonchalance. The scene that directly precedes this big reveal, shows Olive frustrated and angry, rummaging through clothes and sewing bits and pieces together to make her new costume. Her makeover explicitly requires effortful construction. As an instance of glamour however the catwalk moment itself is successful in the *appearance* of effortlessness, necessary to generating glamorous visibility.

In *Easy A* exaggeration double codes the catwalk moment: playing up her role, Olive ostentatiously puckers her lips and kisses the air. At the end of the catwalk

she greets a fellow student with “Hey handsome”, in sultry tones. She at once performs a surface knowingness and betrays her innocence through the exaggeration of that performance. The film makes clear its knowledge of the cliché of the slow motion scene of visibility but the glamorous pleasures remain.

In *Mean Girls* the glamour of visibility is employed on a number of occasions, including Cady’s catwalk moment with the Plastics. This is a makeover reveal to some extent but Cady’s modulation is incremental rather than revealed in a single spectacle. This catwalk is also a ‘strut’ that works to embody the Plastics attributed celebrity and dominance. In slow motion, the camera smoothly tracks across the four girls’ feet as they walk down the school corridor towards camera. The Plastics’ theme, ‘Pass That Dutch’ (Elliott, 2003) accompanies the scene with a pulsating bass and syncopated hand clap that emphasises the strut of the girls walk and the moment’s rising intensity. From a distance the camera track halts at Cady and then jibs up her body to her smiling face. Cut into the moment at this point is a volley of shots straight to camera in which characters gossip about Cady and Regina (Amy McAdams) as figures of local attributed celebrity. The techniques that make visibility, contribute a feeling of glamour — their presence as an event — in concert with the explicit construction of the ‘Plastics’ as school celebrities, played out in the accompanying straight to camera shots. Finally the scene cuts back to the catwalk moment and the slow motion resumes. Though students cross the corridor, obscuring full view of the ‘Plastics’, the girls

dominate the space and their facial expressions exude the requisite confident, effortless nonchalance vital to celebrity (though in this case the look of indifference can also be attributed to character vacuity).



Figure 2.23, *Mean Girls* effortless look back.



Figure 2.24, *Mean Girls*, double coded glamour.

Still in long shot Cady looks across to witness Regina sharing an intimate gaze with Aaron (Cady's love-interest). Cutting from a two-shot of Aaron and Regina, a mid-shot of Cady shifts back to 24 frames per second. When the slow motion stops the glamour is gone and distracted, Cady falls into a bin. The techniques of visibility contribute to the confident sexuality expressed but this confidence is double coded and undermined. Cady's assertive strut down the corridor is compromised by the ridiculousness of the cut-ins that describe her, followed by her own slapstick humiliation. Nonetheless as a glamorous instance, the pleasures of the moment remain.

The 'strut': St Trinians





Figure 2.25 & 2.26, *St Trinians* strut.

St Trinians (Parker & Thompson, 2007) presents an unequivocal strut.³⁰ The film is a reboot of the British franchise of films based on Ronald Searle's (circa.1941) cartoons that depict the anarchic girls' boarding school. The *St Trinians* reboot provides a useful example because, being British, the film's mise-en-scène is conspicuously more grey and subdued in comparison to its Hollywood counterparts. However the film still employs the same techniques that make visibility a glamorous surface. The strut displays the *St Trinians*' girls as they walk through Trafalgar square. The scene is not a 'big reveal': we have already seen the consequences of new girl Annabelle's (Talulah Riley) makeover, but like Cady's catwalk in *Mean Girls*, it consolidates Annabelle's inclusion in the school group. The girls dominate the space of the square unquestionably, not just by their numbers but also by their unity, visibility, and their effortless look back. The glamour of the *St Trinians* strut embodies feelings of unity: the girls strut in

³⁰ For other struts also see: *The Clique*, *A Cinderella Story*, *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*, *13 Going on 30*, *Sugar and Spice* (2001), *High School Musical* (2006).

synchrony together, creating a sense of fellowship whilst simultaneously drawing attention to themselves individually. They stand out as special and fit into a group.³¹ The strut here taps into and creates a desire for the glamour of camaraderie and answers that desire with an instance of it.

This slow motion scene of visibility is exemplary in the sense that the use of slow motion is entirely aesthetic. There is nothing new in shot that the audio-viewer needs time to appreciate or understand, nor is it shot from any one character's point of view. Slow motion is employed to make glamour only: it has no practical utility beyond generating the girls' visibility as an event. The girls perform the effortless look back — but not in reference to anyone in particular because there is no one else in the scene — but more generally to create the indifference required for glamorous appeal.

The 'mediated catwalk': What a Girl Wants

In the mediated catwalk, slow motion is replaced with the glimmer and sparkle of flash photography to generate spectacle around the Cinderella character-icon. The flicker and click of flash bulbs signifies mediation — visibility on a grand scale — and creates visibility as a physical, tangible event. Instead of the fluidity

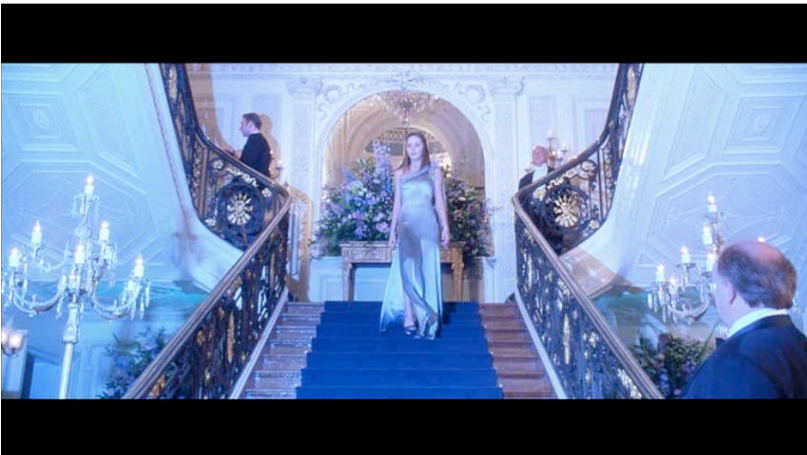
³¹ Postrel (2013: 41) suggests that camaraderie is a desire that glamour often draws upon. This togetherness will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

of slow motion and the body tilt, the flash bulb aesthetic is intended to create jerky rhythmic impact. Accompanied by the diegetic sounds of calls and shouts from photographers the technique creates a flurry of attention around the Cinderella character and invites the audio-viewer to enjoy a tempo shift — a fitful pulse that is both a visual and physical spectacle of glamour. The flash bulb technique, like the slow motion scene of visibility, generates celebrity glamour by conjuring the illusion of availability and making visibility a visceral event. Again, the technique draws attention to the surface, generating a momentary overexposure that hints at accessibility. The technique also resembles the glamour of supernatural magic — the twinkle and glow of mystical enchantment. This is an overt example of the spells cast by the commercial (media) sphere. The glimmering punctuations of flash bulbs are a commercial rendition of the magic that accompanies Cinderella's transformation/modulation, where, as Warner (1995: 361) describes: "Her perfections find themselves materialized in the immaterial dazzlement of light." In girl teen films, the technique creates feelings of promise, highlights perfections and simultaneously obscures faults.

In *What a Girl Wants* (Gordon, 2003)³² New Yorker Daphne (Amanda Bynes) goes in search of her long lost father and discovers that he is a British Lord. The film follows Daphne as she experiences her ascribed celebrity and becomes a

³² Also see *Another Cinderella Story*, *Bratz*, *The House Bunny*, *The Lizzie McGuire Movie*, *Starstruck*.

'Lady', including a number of coming of age catwalk moments that become progressively more 'graceful'.





Figures 2.27, 2.28 & 2.29, *What a Girl Wants*, the glamour of flash photography.

Firstly Daphne mistakenly interrupts a fashion show and takes to the catwalk runway (fig. 2.27). She is not elaborately dressed or made-up (aspects that would conventionally bring glamour to the moment) and the scene is performed for comic effect. The flash bulb technique nonetheless creates her visibility as glamorous and the punctuations of the camera flash make a visceral spectacle of the scene. Daphne's second catwalk moment (fig. 2.28) is both a 'big reveal' and mediated. Attending her first aristocratic function, Daphne has made herself over and attempts to impress her father. In this instance the flash bulb technique signifies her makeover as a success and renders her presence as an event.

In terms of its narrative, *What a Girl Wants* presents Daphne's visibility in the 'princess' role as restricting. She is physically and emotionally constrained: her previous freedom, associated with her 'Americanness', is restricted by an

imagined British austerity that the film positions her against. In her final catwalk moment (fig. 2.29) Daphne has achieved the outline of the Cinderella character-icon. In the narrative this is set-up as a hindrance to her individuality. However, as she descends the stairs at this final event, sound, performance, cinematography, mise-en-scène, accessories, clothes, hair, and skin, all perform to generate the glamour of the moment. Orchestral strings work towards a crescendo as she descends the ornate, excessive and unproductive staircase. Her costume is a classic sweetheart line silhouette that incorporates the glamour and sparkle of rich silk textures and a bejewelled bodice. Her hair is elaborately but neatly styled: embodying effortless control. Flash bulbs punctuate, overexpose, and distort the character's visibility, whilst she maintains the required effortless look back. Despite the narrative's emphasis on the restrictions of celebrity it is still constructed as an aesthetic pleasure.

Conclusion

Celebrity glamour is designed in the worlds of girl teen films using the particular techniques examined above, to conjure the characteristics that make glamour: public intimacy, effortlessness, practical inutility, and the embodiment of contradictory qualities. In these films glamour is used to create celebrity and visibility as a material and affective experience consisting of specific pleasures:

feelings of potential and promise, of moving out into the world unrestricted, and of textural abundance. To enjoy these pleasures, celebrity glamour invites us to take up a mode of enchantment that goes along with the illusion of availability, or the appearance of effortlessness, for example, without questioning the 'magic' too deeply. In these films celebrity glamour fundamentally acts as another form of modulation. Its characteristics create feelings of potential and promise, movement and change, but it restricts the girl figure to specific (institutional, domestic, or commercial) spaces and places with little room for actual manoeuvre, and perpetuates the notion that her visibility is her only recourse to power and pleasure by making visibility pleasurable and giving it affective weight.

In the next chapter I explore sports performances as another moment of visibility and flesh as another pleasurable surface.

Chapter three: Sporting Pleasures



Figure 3.1, *Ice Princess*, the ideal body.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I gave an overview of the place and pleasures of celebrity in girl teen films. I pointed out that the Cinderella character-icon's quest is to gain visibility and celebrity. Celebrity is constructed in these films as a key means to substantiate social identity, a way of acquiring symbolic capital, and fundamentally as *the* primary position for girls. I explored the tactile and affective pleasures offered by the construction and presentation of celebrity glamour that

surrounds the girl body in film. The Cinderella character-icon's celebrity is constructed, and made pleasurable, by glamorous surfaces: the clothes, accessories and hair that adorn her, the spaces and places that surround her, and techniques of visibility. The phenomenal body can also be a glamorous surface and a source of aesthetic pleasure in girl teen films. Through presentations of physicality, sports performances in girl teen films provide another framework from which Cinderella enjoys a moment of celebrity, visibility and recognition. Typically ignored or analysed for what it represents, the body on screen is explored here as a surface. In the sporting context it is the body itself that singles the Cinderella character-icon out as special. This chapter examines the aesthetic pleasures of the sporting body.

Ideologically, women doing sports on and off screen, is potentially empowering. As Judith Butler (1998) describes: "women's sports [...] call into question what we take for granted as idealized feminine morphologies." At an aesthetic level the active girl body also encourages particular pleasures grounded in physical work and physical perfection. This chapter asks what role sports play in girl teen films? What kinds of experience do sports create in these films and what kinds of pleasures do they offer?

After presenting an overview of the place of sports in girl teen films I examine the strategies employed to present the athletic girl body, with a particular focus on

how the films render what it feels like to train and what it feels like to achieve moments of physical success. The chapter will introduce the plurality of kinaesthetic pleasures that girl teen films draw on in their framing of the athletic body, pleasures that will be explored in further detail in chapters four and five. Finally I examine the spatial compositions of collectivity evident in girl teen film's sporting moments and the potential pleasures of girls moving together in synchrony.

The girl body

The sporting contexts in girl teen films raise questions about the depictions and pleasures of the athletic girl body. Iris Marion Young (2005 [1980]) argues that girls and women's experiences of their bodies in patriarchal societies is different to that of boys and men. Girls are conditioned to be physically inhibited, restricted, and restrained. In her phenomenological examination of the basic modalities of feminine comportment, manner of moving, and relation to space, Young (2005: 42) suggests that "[a]s lived bodies we [women] are not open and unambiguous transcendences that move out to master a world that belongs to us, a world constituted by our own intentions and projections." She proposes that despite individual differences, geographical contexts, experiences, opportunities and possibilities, or anecdotal evidence of particular women that do not comply

with normative modalities of bodily comportment, “[t]he situation of women within a given sociohistorical set of circumstances [...] has a unity that can be described and made intelligible.” (Ibid: 29). How we experience our bodies is, to some extent, learned. As Dee Reynolds (2012: 126) describes with reference to theatre director and theorist Eugenio Barba: “‘Each one of us is an *inculturated* body’ ... This means that even if responses feel spontaneous or are automatic, they are to some degree learned.” (Italics in original) Consequently girls’ physicality is experienced in specific modes.

Young (2005: 43) describes the forms that the phenomenal inculturation of girls’ bodies take. Girls, she suggests, are not given opportunities to use their full bodily capacities in the same ways that boys are. Girls are taught that they are fragile and as a consequence learn to hamper their movements. Due to objectification a girl cannot live herself as mere bodily object and so is distanced from her body — a body that exists dialectically as both subject and object (ibid: 44).

As a consequence, Young explains — rooted in their understanding of their body as a mere thing — women experience their bodies as disconnected, as separate limbs and body parts that lack unity. Simultaneously experiencing herself as subject and object engenders hesitancy and repression of bodily energy. The feminine body is also constricted by imagined space — the space available is

usually bigger than the space the feminine body inhabits — she makes herself smaller (ibid: 40). Finally the feminine body is experienced as rooted and closed (ibid: 41): rather than experiencing herself as a body that constitutes space, feminine existence positions itself *in* space (ibid: 39). Dyer (2002c [1994]: 67) describes this succinctly: “To feel that it is OK to be unrestrained, to kick against what surrounds you, to thrust out into the world is what boys learn, not girls.” Girls in sport create pleasures connected to mastering the body, physical confidence, coherency, and power. Athletic activities in girl teen films offer ways of experiencing the girl body differently.

Katharina Lindner’s (2011a) overview of female athleticism in film offers a context from which a detailed examination of the aesthetic pleasures of women in sports films can be undertaken. Her content analysis provides a survey of depictions of female athleticism in films, with a particular focus on gender (as well as race, class, and sexuality) representations. Lindner (2011a) highlights the contradictory implications of how women’s sporting bodies are represented. First, she suggests, there is a sense that women’s participation in sport is empowering, offering alternative depictions of female bodies that are capable and confident (ibid: 321). Leslie Howe’s (2003: 93) description of sports practice as an experience “of reaching the self out beyond its apparent boundaries”, sums up why sport is understood to counter the ways that, as Young (1980) describes, girls experiences of their own bodies is limited and hindered. The depictions of

the female athletic body that women doing sports provide, also push at the boundaries of feminine gender ideals and contest gender norms.

Despite the empowering possibilities of female athleticism, the gendered body presented in the sports context also reinforces traditional gender boundaries.

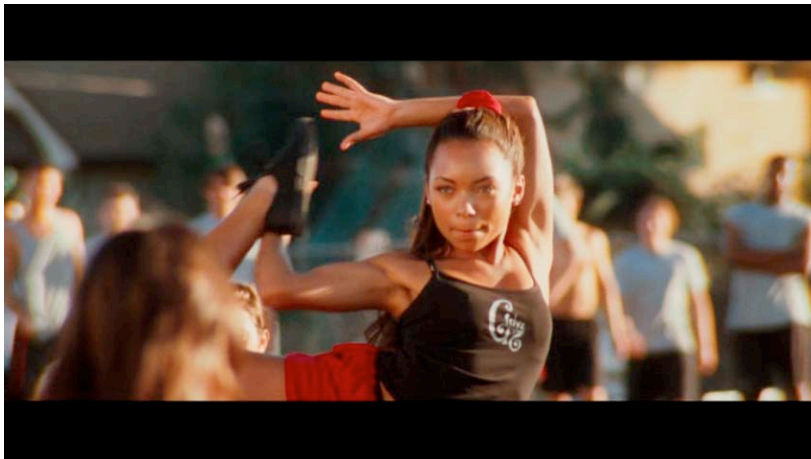
Particular athletic activities, Lindner (2011a: 322) illustrates, remain tied to traditional gender ideals. Activities that include physical contact and aggression such as rugby or boxing are commonly considered to be 'masculine' or male appropriate, whilst non-contact activities that emphasise grace and form such as figure skating or synchronised swimming are customarily regarded as 'feminine' or female appropriate (ibid). The types of body form associated/required for these types of sport further reaffirm gender boundaries: with 'masculine' activities perpetuating an ideal that is muscular and strong, and 'feminine' activities encouraging a tight and toned figure (ibid). Media coverage and media representations of women in sport also compulsively re-frame the female athletic body by focusing on athletes' sex appeal (Carty, 2005) rather than their performance. Nonetheless the pleasures offered by depictions of sports in girl teen films are connected to versions of the active and athletic girl body.

Defining sports and sports films

Sports film has proved difficult to define because sport itself is a contested category. Lindner (2011a: 323) offers a broad definition of sport to include those that are competitive and non competitive: “spectator sports, and those pursued privately [...], skateboarding and running, football and dance, mountain climbing and cycling, boxing and bowling, cheerleading and tennis.” In creating an inclusive definition of sport, Lindner integrates a wide range of athletic activities that are often left out of overviews of sports in film, such as cheerleading (see: Cummins, 2006; Jones, 2008). Creating a broader definition of what we can consider as sport makes it easier to identify and connect the ways that the athletic body is displayed and the potential pleasures derived from athletic activity in film.

How the body is composed and created on screen invites us to enjoy particular pleasures in our own bodies. Connecting the look and feel of the girl body in action across girl teen films will provide a reference point for understanding the pleasures, not only of sport but also of musical numbers, singing, dancing and any other physical activity that is constructed using similar cinematic techniques. These connections will be explored further in chapters four and five. Sports performances and dance ‘numbers’ share a reliance on the body of the performer and her potential for action. The girl’s body as it moves is presented as powerful

and ideal. Dance in film places greater emphasis on the relationship between music and the body, however if we consider athletic activities in film such as cheerleading, the lines that separate dance film and sports film become blurred. Rather than arguing around the borders and parameters of defining sports and dance film as separate, I will explore the pleasures they share that pivot around how the performer's body is presented.



Figures 3.2 & 3.3, *Bratz*'s sporting moments.

Sports performances take place in girl teen sports films and films that include sports segments. Girl teen sports films are distinct from those girl teen films that only include 'sporting moments'. As a sporting equivalent to the "musical moment" (Conrich, 2000), sporting moments are passages of athletic presentation in films that are otherwise not sports films. *Bratz* for example, includes sports performances that display characters' expertise in both soccer and cheerleading. The characters' abilities to perform these athletic tasks define them but sports play no other part in the film.

In sports films, narratives centre around sporting events, athletes, and the sporting experience (Kennedy & Hills, 2009: 34). The protagonist's quest for success is directly linked to sporting achievement and the final game or competition is the route to prosperity and character validation. The sports context in film, in general, often provides a framework for coming of age narratives and Garry Whannel (2008) suggests, a common narrative goal in sports film is the attainment of respect. The films are often less about sporting victory but about winning the recognition and admiration of others. In girl teen films, sports can provide the catalyst for showing character 'worth', determination, and fair play and sporting conditions provide a narrative structure in which the transition from immaturity into maturity is easily played out — characters have to 'make the right decisions' to be successful. Sports also provide another

framework in which the Cinderella character-icon is the centre of attention, and her visibility is brought to the fore.

The sports film context and girl's sports



Figure 3.4, *Blue Crush*, Anne Marie's 'feminine' body.

Girl teen sports films perpetuate gender, race, and class stereotypes. They also emphasise heterosexual romance, often as a means to counter possible anxieties raised by the gender transgressions that female protagonists make by their involvement in athletic activity (Lindner, 2011: 329). The Prince Charming figure in *Blue Crush*, for example, highlights the Cinderella character-icon's sex appeal. When Anne Marie (Kate Bosworth) is with her love interest, her physical softness is stressed, in contrast to the strength depicted in her sports performances (see fig.3.6).

Because the types of girl teen film that I explore here are mainstream Hollywood productions, the majority of films marginalise non-white characters, offering up white, middle-class notions of girlhood.³³ Whiteness and middle-class femininity are conflated and stereotypically associated with athletic activities that emphasise “(f)rigid control over the body” (Lindner, 2011: 335, italics in original): activities such as figure skating, gymnastics, and drill. In contrast working-class femininity and (predominantly) female blackness are also conflated in these films and stereotypically defined by the myth of the ‘natural’ black body (Anderson, 1997; Lindner, 2011a; L. Young, 1996). In girl teen films, stereotypical associations of non-whiteness with ‘natural’ rhythm and particular types of dance that emphasise an assertive or sensual body are reinforced. *Bring it On*, for example, makes an implicit association between black, working-class girls and dance ability. The film takes the point-of-view of a white, middle-class cheerleading team who steal moves from black, working-class competitors. The protagonists’ white ‘frigidity’ is a narrative detail set in opposition to their black counterparts’ ‘natural’ abilities. Accordingly competitive black and working-class

³³ I recognise that in using the term ‘non-white’ I am colluding with the notion these films perpetuate of whiteness as the common denominator of race, by which all other ethnicities are ‘Othered’ but I am restricted by language, which itself maintains racial hierarchies. Few teen films include black girls as the Cinderella character-icon and those that do are rarely mainstream productions in the fun mode. One example is the MTV dance film *How She Move* (Rashid, 2007). The film employs a number of girl teen film conventions and focuses on moments of visibility and performance. But the film, in common with boy teen films that follow black male characters, is best described in the romantic mode: focusing on tragedy and loss, rather than the ‘fun’ that organises the films that I explore here.

characters are usually absent from films that involve sports or types of dance that prioritise a particular kind of body control that “foregrounds the mind in the body-mind relationship” (Lindner, 2011: 335): ballet, gymnastics or figure skating. Instead non-white, and particularly black and working-class female characters are presented to excel in athletic activities that emphasise rhythm: in the main this consists of street styles of dance and cheerleading. Even here, in films that include street dance and cheerleading, black characters are usually secondary to the white Cinderella character-icon and narratives foreground a white, middle-class point-of-view.³⁴

In girl teen sports films and sporting moments, non-contact athletic activities predominate. Films include cheerleading³⁵, figure skating³⁶, gymnastics³⁷, and drill³⁸, for example (as well as dance). Accordingly the body forms in these films are, predominantly, tight and toned, rather than muscular and strong, though as I will explore, there are films that complicate this. Sports that involve contact and aggression are also part of the girl teen film landscape, including, football

³⁴ The only 2000-2010 Hollywood girl teen film in the mainstream mode that bucks this trend, that I am aware of, is *Bring it On: Fight to the Finish*.

³⁵ *Bring it On*, *Bring it on Again*, *Bring it On: All or Nothing*, *Bring it on: In it to win it*, *Bring it on: Fight to the finish*, *Slap Her She's French*, *Bratz*, *John Tucker Must Die*, *Sugar and Spice*

³⁶ *Ice Princess*, *Ice Castles* (a girl teen film in the romantic mode that uses a lot of conventions from the fun mode).

³⁷ *Stick It*

³⁸ *Cadet Kelly*

(soccer)³⁹, lacrosse⁴⁰, and hockey⁴¹. In comparison to an athletic activity such as cheerleading, which is the most commonly exploited sport in girl teen film other than dance, field hockey and lacrosse are relatively aggressive sports. They are, all the same, considered as both female appropriate and middle/upper-class sports. Involving the use of sticks, both of these games require players to be able to use equipment as an extension of their limbs. In the female versions of hockey and lacrosse, the use of sticks detaches these sports from the force and domination associated with body contact sports. In women's lacrosse, for example, players are permitted to check opponents' sticks but unlike men's lacrosse cannot barge or shoulder other players. A relatively recent affiliation between soccer and female athleticism has played out in girl teen films in the 2000s, with an increased number of films involving girls' soccer. Soccer is also a relatively aggressive activity and in Europe in particular is a male dominated sport. However, in the 1990s the US women's national soccer team gained increased media coverage after winning the 1996 Olympic gold medal and in 1999 the Women's World Cup. The success of the team in the 1990s made women's soccer in the US more visible. As mid-fielder Julie Foudy (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003: viii) suggests: the "World Cup was about more than soccer". It

³⁹ *Bratz, Her Best Move* (2007), *She's the Man*, *Bend it Like Beckham*

⁴⁰ *Wild Child*, *Mean Girls*

⁴¹ *St Trinians*

created a cultural shift in the US and increased the association between soccer and female athleticism.

This overview of sports in girl teen films creates a position from which we can explore the question of how the sporting girl body is created and framed as a means to invite the audio-viewer to enjoy particular pleasures? Sports set up a platform for the presentation of the body in process: the body being trained, controlled, and given the opportunity to reach out beyond its limits but also constrained within the limits of training regimes and sports regulations. Girls doing sports embody the contradictory qualities of expansion and confinement quite neatly: pushing out beyond their physical limits and contained within regulatory perimeters.

Drawing on their Cinderella legacy, girl teen sports films and sporting moments create two kinds of bodies (before and after): the (less frequently shown) body of “common clay” (Roach, 2007: 182), with which films aim to create the feelings of effort in training; and the body of “pure magic” (ibid), which is designed to create the feeling of effortless accomplishment: the magical body rendered as momentarily complete. Lisa Purse (2009:215-216) describes how the spectacles of bodies in motion, from the multi-camera experiments of Eadweard Muybridge through to fight sequences in contemporary action film, seem to “speak to a fundamental human desire to exceed the bounds of everyday corporeality. The

impulse to master our bodies and (through our bodies) master space, time and the bodies of others.” (Ibid: 216). One of the pleasures of action film, Purse suggests, is to witness fantasies of empowerment, in which the hero or heroine shows off their physical prowess, whereby the body is “mastered” (ibid: 214, 215). Action films and girl teen sports films alike, construct a “visual ‘narrative of becoming’” (216). The presentation techniques and pleasures of the body in process are distinct from those of the body mastered and exhibited as complete. Girl teen sports films vary in the degrees to which they engage with the ‘muscle and sinew’ of the body in process but they all aim to render both: what it feels like to train and what it feels like to achieve moments of physical success. The audio-viewer is encouraged to be narratively and kinaesthetically invested in the exertion, endurance and pain involved in the body’s becoming and in the uplifting delight of the body momentarily perfected. In either case the body itself becomes a surface, designed to generate kinaesthetic pleasures and experiences of the girl body reaching out beyond its apparent boundaries.

Sporting pleasures and kinaesthetics

The sports performances in both sports films and sporting moments present the athletic body using shared presentational strategies. The focus of sports performances is on the spectacle of the moving human body — on physical

energy, ability and exertion, rather than specific character motivation or inner thoughts (though these facets do of course play a role). Being so focused on the body and what the body can do, sports performances promote an embodied engagement with the body's potential for action. As a means of exploiting the possible pleasures of the spectacle of the moving body, sports performances encourage a range of kinaesthetic pleasures.

Reason and Reynolds (2010) conceptualise kinaesthetic responses in plural, rather than singular terms. Their categories of kinaesthetic pleasure are identified through ethnographic research with audiences of live dance. Through analysing the audiences' responses Reason and Reynolds articulate different types of kinaesthetic pleasures that explain the kinds of enjoyment that the audience members describe. The pleasures that they identify can be applied to the filmic context.

Reason and Reynolds (2010) break kinaesthetic empathy down into three core and connecting pleasures: sympathy, empathy, and contagion. First, kinaesthetic *sympathy* involves the admiration of virtuosity. Spectators enjoy the spectacle of what bodies can do, with a particular emphasis on "perfectly executed movements and sheer athleticism" (ibid: 58), rather than on the work and effort behind it. This type of pleasure can be produced by what Susan Foster (1997) calls the ideal body. In training, the ideal body is what the dancer

aims to achieve and for brief moments the dancer — or, I suggest, sports woman — may feel that they have done so through “mastery of the body” or “feeling at one with the body” (ibid: 237). In reference to dance training, Foster (ibid: 237) describes how the dancer has two bodies. One is the self-fantasised, imaginary, ideal body constructed from other dancers’, cinematic, or video images of dancing bodies. The ideal body is a “perspective *on* the body as object” (Lindner, 2011b: 5), a body that is imagined as complete and perfected (Butler, 1998). For the Cinderella character-icon of girl teen film this body is “pure magic”. Instead of adorning the body in consumer goods that render the glamour, magic, and enchantment of the Cinderella character-icon (as explored in chapter one) the body itself is presented as enchanting: a spectacle of perfection.

In girl teen film an example of a sports performance that encourages kinaesthetic sympathy is the final performance in *Ice Princess* (Fywell, 2005). Having reached a regional final figure skating competition, the protagonist Casey (Michelle Trachtenberg) successfully executes her most accomplished manoeuvre (fig. 3.1). To render the spectacle of the move, Casey’s body is composed using symmetrical lines and synchronous movements. A slow motion long shot is accompanied by music that uses an ascending scale. These techniques encourage the audio-viewer to appreciate the perfect composition of the body as it achieves the action. The following shot shows Casey’s coach in

close-up, her reaction shot expresses surprised delight, accompanied by the sounds of the cheering crowd that accentuate the triumph of the flawless landing.

The second mode of kinaesthetic pleasure that Reason and Reynolds (2010) provide is a more specific definition of kinaesthetic *empathy* than their initial broader category. Kinaesthetic empathy is identified with “experiences of embodied and imaginative connection between the self and other” (ibid: 71). Kinaesthetic empathy can take the form of inner mimicry whereby the audio-viewer is able to do things in the imagination “as if possessed with the skills, the strength, and the muscle knowledge” required (ibid: 61). Despite remaining still and seated the audio-viewer imagines that they are the performer or imagines themselves performing, creating a feeling that the experience of perception is “taking place through the object or person perceived” (ibid: 60). The audio-viewer of *Ice Princess*, for example, can appreciate Casey’s performance and perhaps imagine themselves in her position and feel in their own body a version of what it would be like to have her capabilities.

Thirdly Reason and Reynolds describe kinaesthetic *contagion*. Contagion is a form of engagement in which the audio-viewer takes pleasure in an awareness of their closeness to the performer (ibid: 66) whereby heartbeats and breathing move “in synchrony with their perception of the movement” (ibid: 71). This is an embodied response or anticipation that impacts upon the “postural condition of

the muscles without actual movement taking place” (ibid: 66) — a visceral awareness of “effort, muscle and sinew” (ibid: 73). Its intense focus on the ideal body means that the *Ice Princess* does not invite this type of pleasure. The camera remains distant from the body and even when Casey falls there is no real sense of gravity, or of the push and pull of her body.





Figures 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7 *Blue Crush*, the perceived body.

The opening training sequence in *Blue Crush* (Stockwell, 2002) presents an example of a sports performance that aims to encourage kinaesthetic contagion. This sports performance emphasises what Foster (1997: 237) calls the perceived body: that which is tangible and understood from sensory information — visual, aural, haptic, olfactory, kinaesthetic. The perceived body “implies a perspective *from* the body and an emphasis on its materiality as *perceived*” by the character that performs (Lindner, 2011b: 5, italics in original). In comparison to the ideal body of ‘pure magic’ presented in moments that encourage kinaesthetic sympathy, kinaesthetic contagion is a response to the perceived body of ‘common clay’. To render the body of ‘common clay’ there is an emphasis on what it feels like to train. The *Blue Crush* sequence begins with a long-shot of Anne Marie (Kate Bosworth) who is training for the Pipe Masters surfing competition. Despite the distance of the shot, Anne Marie’s effortful corporeality

is aurally stressed by her heavy breathing. The scene moves into a medium close-up (fig.3.5) and slow motion makes a spectacle of the effort depicted on her face. The following shot tracks in behind Anne Marie as she performs pull-ups (fig.3.6). The shot moves in to a tighter close-up that draws attention to the movement of the muscles in her back and shoulders. The next shot is at a high-angle (fig.3.7). Anne Marie pulls herself up into shot, accentuating the labour of the action and bringing the audio-viewer into close contact with the character's powerful corporeality.

As Reason and Reynolds (2010: 66-67) describe it kinaesthetic contagion takes two forms. The second form is an uplifting embodied response to the general movement of the performance. This type of contagion will be explored in more detail in chapters four and five. Importantly Reason and Reynolds (2010: 72) point out: "whether sympathetic, empathetic, or contagious, *the kinesthetic experience can be described as an affect.*" (Italics in original) These potential pleasures are embodied, reactive responses. Girl teen sports films and sporting moments use set techniques that depict various sports as a means to invite specific physical pleasures.

Sporting pleasures: the body becoming and flow in *Blue Crush*

The sports performances in *Blue Crush* exemplify depictions of both the perceived body in training and the ideal body in girl teen sports films and sporting moments. The film pivots around surf numbers and sequences of physical training that lead to a climactic competition. Anne Marie's quest is directly linked to this final surf performance, which will give her a financial reward, visibility, recognition, and win her the respect of her family, friends, and the local and global surfing communities. The sports context of this film provides a framework for a coming of age narrative. Anne Marie must 'make the right decisions': discard a distracting romance and overcome her fears of failure. The sports context sets the character a challenge in which, like the dual-focus narrative of the musical (Altman, 2002 [1987]), a successful performance on the waves will also equate with success in 'real' life.

Despite the increasing number of female participants in surfing and representations of the female surf body as ideally feminine, surfing is still considered to be a masculine/male appropriate sport (Evers, 2009; Waitt, 2008). As Gordon Waitt (2008: 76) suggests of surfing culture: "Unchallenged are the normative ideas of masculinity associated with gruelling physical training, vanquishing fears of death, and expressing a competitive, aggressive edge through an ongoing desire to surf larger, never-ridden waves." This normative

gendered framework is made explicit in *Blue Crush* through the tense relationship Anne Marie shares with the male surfers in her circle. Nonetheless surfing does not involve the body contact aggression of other 'masculine' sports such as rugby or boxing and the sport has a legacy in girl teen film, going back to the *Gidget* franchise.⁴²



Figure 3.8, *Blue Crush's* male gaze.

Blue Crush's representations of class, race, and gender are stereotypical. The film highlights heterosexual romance to counter Anne Marie's involvement in gruelling physical training and puts the white Cinderella character-icon at the centre of the narrative. As is commonplace in sports films, working-class Anne

⁴² *Gidget* (1959), *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* (1961), *Gidget Goes to Rome* (1963), *Gidget* (TV Series, 1965-66), *Gidget Grows Up* (1969), *Gidget Gets Married* (1972), *Gidget's Summer Reunion* (1985).

Marie's involvement in Hawaiian surf culture is authenticated through her relationships with non-white characters. The film also makes conventional appeals to the male gaze: an unnecessary shower scene represents a typical example (though considering the young female target audience, this raises questions about the looking relations in girl teen film?). Nonetheless this is not the only way that the girl body is made a spectacle of in *Blue Crush*. The sports performances also offer kinaesthetic pleasures connected to the active and athletic body: the pleasures of the body as muscle and sinew — the feelings of training, stretching out and becoming powerful — and as perfect surface — feelings of achievement and flow.

Blue Crush: the becoming body



Figure 3.9, *Blue Crush*, bodily injury.

As the description of *Blue Crush*'s opening training sequence makes clear, Anne Marie is presented using her full bodily capacities. Her body is depicted, not as hampered or fragile but as powerful and strong. In a number of its training sequences leading up to the final competition and the 'glory' of the final wave, *Blue Crush* highlights the perceived body. Lindner (2011b: 6) outlines the ways that the perceived body is brought into focus in dance film through particular attention to the preparation required to train the body, bodily injury, and the weight of corporeality. The training sequences in *Blue Crush* emphasise blood and sweat, muscle and sinew, possible dangers to the body, and vocal signs of effort. The perceived body of the sporting girl is presented in accord with Purse's (2011: 76-93) description of the action heroine, who (unlike the 'action babe') exerts a physical presence "rooted in real-world physics and physiology" (ibid: 89). *Blue Crush* uses techniques that create an experience of what it feels like to train. These techniques encourage the audio-viewer to enjoy kinaesthetic contagion with the effort on display. Close-ups pick out indicators of labour and the mobile camera maintains intimate proximity to the physical action.

The film begins with a motif that runs intermittently throughout the film, showing Anne Marie's memory/nightmare in which she is injured (fig. 3.9). Despite the nightmarish mode of the sequence it maintains a focus on fleshy corporeality and the potential pain inflicted on the body by the ocean. Close-ups frame the effort extended as Anne Marie attempts to fight the ocean's currents. A punchy edit

rhythm moves between various perspectives to highlight the chaos of being under the water and point of view shots emphasise the weight of the roiling waves above. As her head hits coral there is a loud 'whack' that stresses the force of the impact and blood seeps from the wound. The film aims to encourage an embodied mode of engagement in the audio-viewer, making appeals to kinaesthetic contagion and the flesh and blood of the body.



Figure 3.10, *Blue Crush*, muscularity and the gaze.

The first surf performance in the film is made up of two distinct sections. The first section creates an experience of the ideal body. As Anne Marie and her friends surf, the pop song 'Cruel Summer' (Blestenation [remix], 2002) is to the fore and dictates the rhythm of the edit. It is worth noting that at the beginning of this performance the camera does get in close to the action and makes a momentary

spectacle of the muscularity of Anne Marie and her friends as they rise up, out of the water, looking for their first wave. These shots employ typical conventions of the male gaze, again raising questions around looking relations and the Queering of traditional feminine ideals.⁴³ However the use of music video aesthetics in this sequence underplays the impact of the girls' physicality. This surf performance is expressive and explicitly choreographed and the music video aesthetics (explored in more detail in chapter five) distance the audio-viewer from the work of the sports body in this instance. Each separate surfing move is held together through the use of music rather than by the effort required, moment-to-moment, between paddling to riding a wave. In the second section of this surf number, in contrast, the upbeat pop track has faded out and as Anne Marie enters more dangerous territory, the sounds of crashing waves are prominent. The camera moves in close as she paddles, emphasising the movement of her back muscles.

⁴³ Girl teen films raise interesting questions about looking relations. Unfortunately this is not the place to explore these questions but it is certainly an area that could be examined in relation to the pleasures of these films and something I will address in the conclusion.

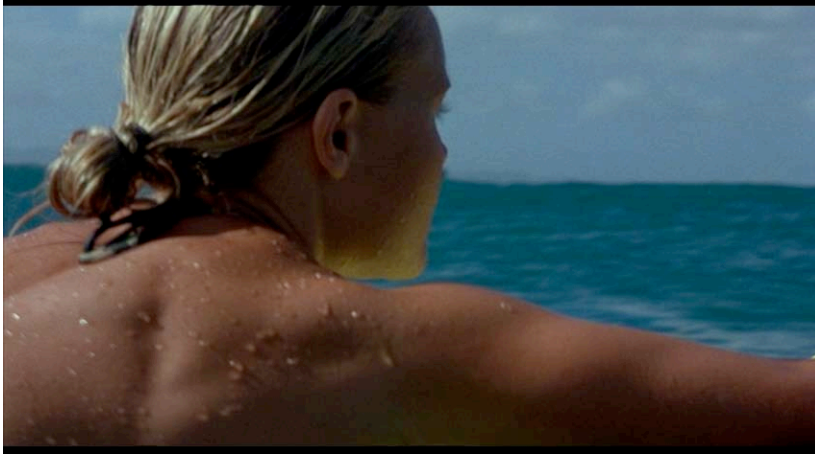


Figure 3.11, *Blue Crush*, muscle and sinew.

The following shot is under water and the sounds of her paddling motion are pronounced. Long shots stress the enormity of the waves and the potential danger to the body. Close-ups emphasise the harsh consistency of water, rather than its fluidity. Stressing the demand that the ocean puts on the surfing body presents an invitation to enjoy kinaesthetic contagion with Anne Marie, rather than simply admiring the character's ability to surf. The harsh environment and the spectacle of Anne Marie's labouring body encourage embodied pleasure in an experience of the materiality of the girl body as powerful, as well as the physical investment derived from the anticipation of her failure or success. When Anne Marie falls — the wipe out is a common trope of surf films — the camera moves with her under the water. Again the camera is mobile, moving and twisting with the body and the wave. Shots from Anne Marie's point-of-view are

cut with close-ups of the effort on the character's face as she struggles under the weight of the wave.



Figures 3.12 & 3.13, dangerous territory.



Figures 3.14 & 3.15, the camera, in close, renders the perceived body.

We can usefully compare this representation of the perceived body and creation of the body in training, to those in the gymnastics film *Stick It* (Bendinger, 2006). The film follows Haley (Missy Peregrym) as she trains for a national gymnastics competition. Like *Blue Crush*, *Stick It*'s training sequences sometimes

emphasise the perceived body: close-ups highlight facial and vocal grimaces of pain and effort, the body being pushed, pulled, falling, tensing, and stretching.





Figures 3.16, 3.17 & 3.18, *Stick It*, body in the making.

Both films focus on the body's capacity for pain and the constant failure that makes up training as the body is pushed and pulled. Despite this focus on pain and failure, the emphasis on the perceived body encourages an embodied reaction in the audio-viewer that takes pleasure in the thrill of the girl body's potential becoming: the ways in which it stretches out and exerts force as it is made powerful (Manning, 2007). In this way, girl teen films sometimes create experiences of expansion and power not usually expressed through girls.

Blue Crush: *flow and the mastered body*

More common to girl teen sports films and sporting moments are techniques that create the ideal body and fantasies of empowerment that emphasise seemingly effortless perfection, rather than grueling visceral effort. Depictions of the

sporting body in girl teen films more frequently aim to create the feelings that come with sporting success. This success can be described as unity (Howe, 2003) or flow (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999): for brief moments the sports woman can close the distance between self and body (Howe, 2003: 99). As Butler (1998) describes, the imaginary ideal of the athletic body is envisioned as momentarily complete. Sequences that render sporting success aim to create the feeling of flow, whereby the mind and body seem to work together effortlessly. Movements are executed as faultless and the body appears as optimal, creating a feeling that something special has occurred (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999: 5). Flow is rendered with an emphasis on the composition of perfect bodylines. The audio-viewer is detached from the work of the body, which is framed at a distance. The camera is usually employed in grand sweeping crane shots or frontal framing. As Lindner (2011b: 15) points out, the ideal body is conjured as ephemeral and transient. Depictions are comparatively removed from the muscle and sinew presented in performances that emphasise the perceived body.

In *Blue Crush*, when Anne Marie meets her last wave in the final competition of the film, slow motion executes her efforts as fluid and weightless. The tactility of the water is presented as smooth and the soundtrack accentuates a consistent flow and light trickle, rather than the intense crashing waves of previous training sequences. Long shots show the body in perfect composition and close-ups

inside the tube lack gravity or weight. There is a sense of effortless flow and the sea takes on an evanescent and ethereal quality.



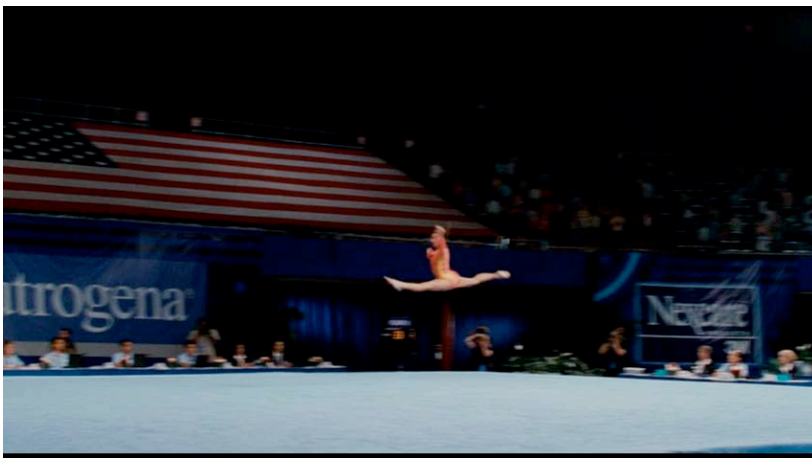
Figures 3.19 & 3.20, *Blue Crush*, effortless flow.

Finally, as the wave breaks, Anne Marie gracefully glides through the surf and at the centre of a frontal frame punches the air in delight. Aiming to produce an experience of flow this surf number invites us to admire the virtuosity of the perfectly executed movement that Anne Marie achieves and encourages

kinaesthetic empathy with the feeling of perfect unity, of moving through the world without resistance.



Figure 3.21, *Blue Crush*.

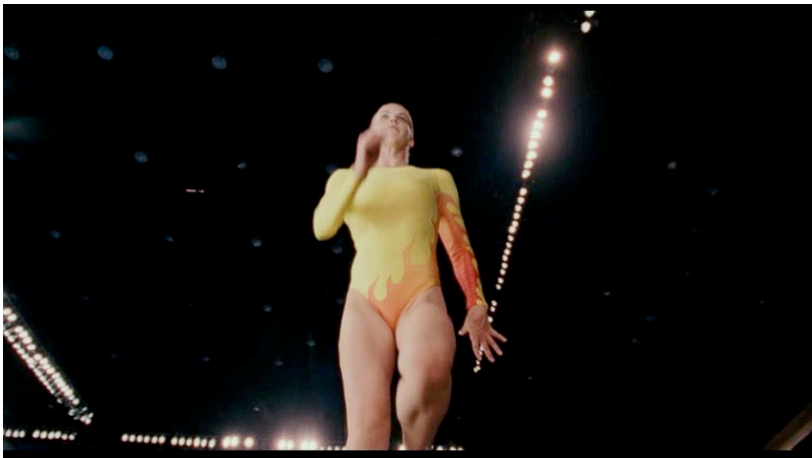


Figures 3.22 & 3.23, *Stick It's* ideal body.

Stick It similarly creates a final performance that aims to generate, for the audio-viewer, an experience of flow. Haley's floor routine emphasises the ideal body. Music and the sounds of the cheering crowd are to the fore, there is no sense of the corporeal effort required to achieve the successful manoeuvres. The camera remains at a distance from the action to frame the body's faultless composition. Sweeping tracking shots heighten the sense of speed and agility presented in the routine, and the feeling of moving through space without resistance.

In both its ideal and perceived creations, the body is a source of aesthetic pleasure. In her analysis of how the ideal and perceived body is framed in the dance film *Centre Stage* (Hytner, 2000), Lindner (2011b) explores the gradual shifts in the film that increasingly frame the body as abstract and stylised. The dance numbers, she explains, eventually lack the subjective experience of the dancers, becoming increasingly utopian and impossible (ibid: 11). As Lindner (2009) stresses, in reference to the boxing film *Girlfight* (Kusama, 2000), where films render the body as abstract they remove the subjective experience that the perceived body provides. In doing so, she suggests, they undermine character agency and the empowering possibilities of the athletic female body. Framed as they are by fairy tale realism, Hollywood girl teen films are always already stylised and abstract, utopian and impossible. Where sports numbers accentuate the perceived body, flesh and blood, muscle and sinew are just another surface manipulated as part of the films' enchantment. Sports films and sporting

moments in girl teen films in the fun mode offer potentially empowering experiences of the girl body but they are also restricted by the Cinderella version of girlhood that these films create. Just as Cinderella is made-over through costume, her maid body of common clay sculpted, refined, and dressed to become pure magic, the sports body of common clay is pounded, pushed and pulled to create the ideal body of pure magic, revealed in the final performance.

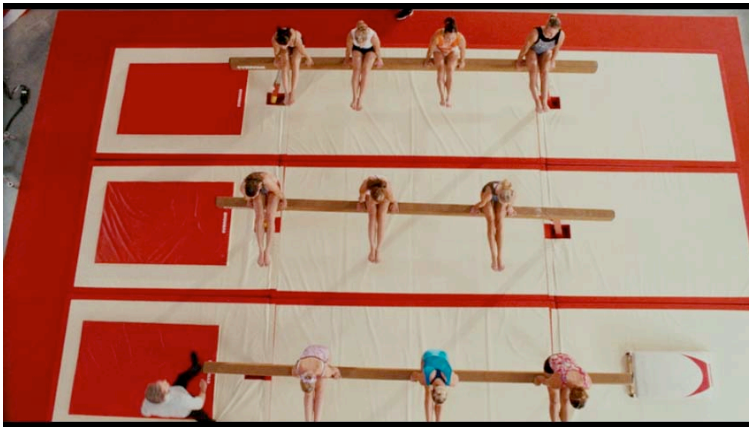


Figures 3.24, 3.25 & 3.26 *Stick It*, aesthetic bodies.

The final competition in *Stick It*, the National Gymnastics Championships, provides an interesting and unusual example. Haley's teammate Mina (Maddy Carley) performs a vault manoeuvre. The gymnastics number creates both the ideal *and* the perceived body. It begins with a smooth tracking shot as Mina runs towards the vault and then moves into an extreme low angle shot. The actress performing the role is also a gymnast, removing the necessity for a body double that would keep the camera at a distance. The crowd is completely silent and the only sound is the tread of Mina's footfalls, rendered with an eerie echo. The performance moves to twenty-four frames per second as Mina reaches the vault. She executes the move, which is shown twice at twenty-four frames from different angles and then finally in slow motion before she hits the mat for a faultless landing. The emphasis on the silence of the crowd and the use of slow motion classically builds anticipation. These techniques are used here to generate suspense but slow motion in this example also performs a number of roles. The fluidity of the slow motion tracking shot adds to the ethereal feel of Mina's performance, creating a sense that this is a moment of flow. However it also, as Sobchack (2006: 340) describes slow motion, interrogates the "movement of movement itself". Slowing the movement down amplifies the feeling of flow but simultaneously makes visible the power of Mina's body: its weight, gravity, and muscle control. In combination the extreme low angle shot is oddly abstract but accentuates the movement of her muscles as she pounds

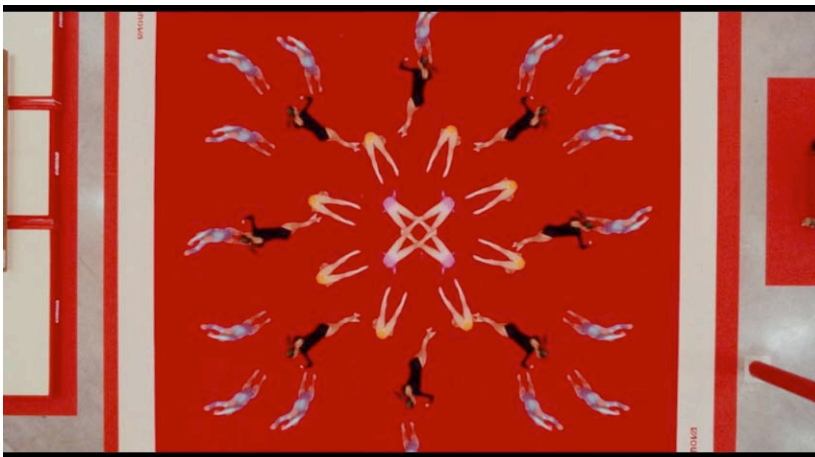
towards the vault. Techniques that render both the perceived and the ideal body are used here to encourage a variety of kinaesthetic pleasures: contagion with the power and muscle of Mina's movements, admiration of the perfect body composition that she achieves, and empathy with both. The body is a pleasurable spectacle in both its perceived and ideal manifestations.

Moving together



Figures 3.27 & 3.28, *Stick It*, compositions of collectivity.

I would like to consider a third and final way that sports films and sporting moments exploit the possibilities of kinaesthetic pleasure. Compositions of collective formations are recurrent in these sports performances: girls move together in unison, creating a visceral sense of togetherness unusual in twenty-first century Hollywood versions of girlhood (and womanhood). Gymnastics is an individual sport, yet some of the sports routines in *Stick It* are choreographed to include collective performances in which gymnasts move in time together, or formations that create an allied unit. Training sequences for example reflect Haley's gradual integration into the gymnastics group and become increasingly collective.



Figures 3.29, 3.30 & 3.31, *Stick It's* 'Berkleyesque' numbers.

The gymnasts are rivals but in the first competition in which they participate the performance is edited to create collective compositions: each gymnast is superimposed to frame layers of moving bodies. These *Stick It* routines are identifiably 'Berkeleyesque': abstract formations of "indissoluble girl clusters" (Kracauer, 1995: 75) that create kaleidoscopic organisations of bodies and colour. Amy Herzog (2010: 165) suggests that the Berkeley spectacle uses the body in an abstract way: "The body here is less an interpretive instrument than a vessel or decorative surface." Lucy Fischer's (1981, 2000) feminist critiques of the Berkeley style have stressed the ways in which the spectacle reduces women to endlessly exchangeable, vacuous doubles: flattened into an indeterminate mass. The *Stick It* routines can certainly be regarded in this way, nonetheless these numbers not *only* create kaleidoscopic organisations of bodies and colour, they also embody group unity. We are invited to engage with the physical performance as the Cinderella character-icon's moment, and encouraged to enjoy the spectacle of girls moving in synchrony.

In *Keeping Together In Time*, William McNeill (1995) explores the visceral fellow feeling generated by prolonged and rhythmic synchronous muscular movement found in dance or military drill. The connection created between people that move together in time, "moving big muscles together and chanting, singing, or shouting rhythmically" (1995: 2), he calls muscular bonding. Muscular bonding, McNeill (ibid: 6) explains, is something felt rather than talked about: "our words

fumble when we seek to describe what it feels like to dance or march.” Despite the difficulty of explaining the pleasures of collective movement, McNeill suggests that ‘boundary loss’ offers a means of explanation (ibid: 8-10). Boundary loss, he suggests, creates the feeling of becoming bigger, giving the individual the opportunity to stretch out beyond their isolated capacities. In combination it produces a feeling of being one with the group: a merger and “heightening of fellow-feeling with all who share in the dance.” (Ibid: 8). Muscular bonding creates community cohesion, arouses shared feelings and consolidates groups. McNeill describes this as kinaesthetic undergirding: “Ideas and ideals are not enough. Feelings matter too, and feelings are inseparable from their gestural and muscular expression.” (Ibid: 152). Sports in girl teen films provide a space to take advantage of the pleasures of muscular bonding through kinaesthetic empathy. Part of the pleasure of many sports are the possibilities of shared fun and the coordination of one’s own movements with those of others (Whitson, 2002: 232). Muscular bonding is essential to the requirements of many sports: teams win or lose based on their ability to synchronise their bodily movements. Butler (1998) describes the coordination of bodies in sport thus: “The bodies that begin the game are not the same bodies that end the game. As they are made, established, sculpted, contoured, in relation to one another, they are established in a space that is neither fully or exclusively individual or fully or exclusively

collective.” Through kinaesthetic empathy we are invited to experience a sense of muscular bonding with girls that move together.

Sports performances often present muscular bonding amongst girls, creating a physical sense of belonging and collectivity. Hollywood genre films commonly struggle with experiences of female friendship. Because women are traditionally the objects of a sexualised gaze, intensity between women on screen carries a potential homoerotic charge (Boyle & Berridge, 2012; Hollinger, 1998; Stacey, 1988). Consequently, in narrative terms, female friendships are often shown as a stage in life, marginalised after marriage (Boyle & Berridge, 2012; Hollinger, 1998; Winch, 2012a). There are few stories about female friendship, Karen Boyle and Susan Berridge (2012: 3) suggest, told in Hollywood film that are not also centrally about heterosexuality.

When films do engage with women’s sociality, as many girl teen films do, relationships are often complicated by aggressive and scrutinizing interactions. In the neoliberal, postfeminist context, the ‘girlfriend’ is a woman who privileges female relationships as important to her subjectivity (Winch, 2011: 360). Winch (ibid) suggests that popular culture that exploits the notion of the ‘girlfriend’ does so to celebrate “women networking in the service of postfeminist lifestyle industries which sell the allure of girliness, particularly through the mechanics of the makeover”, rather than as a means to frustrate patriarchal systems. In this

context the “girlfriend gaze” (Winch, 2012b) is analytical and policing. Girls relationships in ‘girlfriend’ texts are marked by competition and antagonism (Boyle & Berridge: 2), love, envy, and shame (Winch, 2012a: 80).



Figures 3.32, 3.33, 3.34, 3.35 & 3.36, *Bring It On*, *Bring It On Again*, *Bring It On: All or Nothing*, *Bring It On: In it to Win it*, *Bring It On: Fight to the Finish*.

In contrast the collective sports performances in girl teen film offer an experience of muscular bonding amongst girls: moments of felt partnership, affiliation, and alliance. For example, the *Bring It On* (Reed, 2000; Santostefano, 2004; Rash, 2006, 2007; Woodruff, 2009) franchise of films are organised by a set formula in which rival cheerleading squads compete against each other. The films are structured around cheerleading numbers and training sequences that lead up to a final competition piece. The teams often include male participants but the female team members are the focus, including the Cinderella character-icon. The films all include verbal aggression and physical competition amongst its female characters, within and between teams. Nonetheless the nature of cheerleading means that a team can only win if their members harmonise their movements in synchrony with one another. All five *Bring It On* films emphasise the ideal body, lacking any sense of real effort. Even when the films make a point of bodily injury (including broken bones, bloody noses and vomiting) this is produced for comic effect rather than for a feel of the materiality of the body. Numbers are choreographed to encourage the admiration of virtuosity with a spectacle of perfectly rendered moves and shapes.



Figure 3.37, *Bring It On*, tight units.

Despite creating kaleidoscopic organisations of multiple girl bodies that can be described as indissoluble girl clusters, the films also emphasise a potentially pleasurable unity amongst the teams. Close-ups and mid-shots pick out primary characters, reminding the audio-viewer that the performance is not only made up of ‘faceless’ girls. The films also often frame the girls as a tight unit — despite their narrative animosities, in competition they are collective. I do not wish to claim that the kinaesthetic pleasure of muscular bonding somehow cancels out the neoliberal and postfeminist versions of female friendship found in the narrative. Rather, I simply want to understand the pleasures that exist, ‘as well as’, at an aesthetic level.

The pleasure of muscular bonding is key to girl teen films in general. The composition of collectivity is also found in sporting moments in films that are

otherwise not sports films. In *Wild Child* (Moore, 2008), for example, (a British film that employs the Hollywood paradigm, though its mise-en-scène is distinctly different) sports provide a context in which girls are shown allied with one another through moments that embody muscular bonding. The film follows Poppy's (Emma Roberts) progress as she moves from America to be 'made-under' at a British boarding school. The film includes a number of Cinderella moments (a makeover reveal, a catwalk moment, a dance) the last of which is a sports performance at the film's resolution. In the final of a schools lacrosse competition Poppy rallies her team together and in a bid to scare the opposition they perform a version of the 'haka'. Chanting, shouting rhythmically, and moving together in time, creates the camaraderie of the team that Poppy has become a part of and aesthetically this moment embodies fellow feeling and the boundary loss engendered by muscular bonding.⁴⁴



Figures 3.38, 3.39 & 3.40, *Wild Child's* haka.

⁴⁴ For other sporting moments in hybrid girl teen films that draw on the pleasures of muscular bonding see *Mean Girls* and *St Trinians*.



Figure 3.41, *Wild Child*'s collective strut.

Pleasure in unity and moving together in time is evident not only in sports performances but in other key moments across girl teen films. When girls perform the strut it is often in groups. Performed together the strut is a physical embodiment of groups' attributed celebrity and power in the social hierarchy of the high school. The strut creates celebrity as it conjures glamour for those who perform it, but its pleasures are also connected to the unity generated by the girls' moving in time together. In *Wild Child* for example, Poppy and her friends perform the strut together. They have made themselves over, ready for a school dance. However their catwalk moment is performed for the camera only. No one in the film's diegesis is watching. In narrative terms this moment is not for the affirmation of other characters, instead it performs the job of creating a sense of fellow feeling amongst the group of girls.

Conclusion

At the end of *Mean Girls*, being run over by a bus chastens Queen Bee (meanest girl) Regina. Following her recovery she joins the school lacrosse team and Cady's voice over tells us she, "channels all her rage into sports". The film makes fun of Regina's aggression but it also uses the pleasures of sports performance to ensure the film's ending feels positive, and in the final montage of the film we see Regina's team mates cheering and jumping on top of her in celebration. In girl teen films, sports provide another kind of Cinderella moment that shifts emphasis onto the flesh of the girl body. Sports performances create experiences of the girl body in action and generate kinaesthetic pleasures attached to feelings of power, flow, and fellow feeling.



Figures 3.42 *Save the Last Dance*, Cinderella's ideal dance body.

Girl teen dance films and musicals encourage similar pleasures to those evident in sports films. Like sports performances, the body is another surface and the centre of spectacles that single out the Cinderella character-icon as special. These films' pleasures are drawn from the active girl body: its stretching out and taking up space. In the following chapter I explore the pleasures of musical numbers. Drawing further on the potential for kinaesthetic pleasures, I examine how girl teen films employ conventional Hollywood film musical techniques as a form of enchantment.

Chapter Four: Musical Address



Figure 4.1, *Hairspray's* (2007) joyfully affective attitude.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored how the spectacle of the body in sports performances invite particular kinaesthetic pleasures. The musical numbers in girl teen films rely on similar pleasures that bring the body in action to the fore. Distinctive to the musical number, however, it is the body and its capacities in relation to music and dance that are central to these pleasures.



Figure 4.2, *Step Up 2: the streets* heterosexual compatibility.

Surprisingly dance films make less of the possible pleasures of muscular bonding between girls than one would expect. Instead, in accord with the traditional musical genre, dance numbers are more commonly focused on the development of the heterosexual romance. Traditional forms of dance are about heterosexual courtship and this is expressed in these films regardless of the types of dance performed. The dance embodies the couple's compatibility — their back-and-forth creates their fit as a couple. Even in *Step Up 2: the streets* (Chu, 2008), where the success of the dance crew centres around their ability to synchronise their moves, the girls' relationships with one another are marginalised. The film does include one dance section that draws on the pleasures of girls' collectivity but the real focus remains on the individual success of the Cinderella character-icon and the heterosexual couple.

In contrast, “musical moments” (Conrich, 2000: 47) — passages of musical performance in films that are non-musicals — in girl teen films often make use of the pleasures of muscular bonding between women. In *Legally Blonde* for example, Elle (Reese Witherspoon) encounters a great deal of animosity from other women on her arrival to Harvard University. This tension is countered in the narrative by her friendly interactions with women at the local beauty parlour, and is embedded by a musical moment that choreographs the women moving in time together.⁴⁵ Demonstrating how to lure male attention, Elle performs the ‘bend and snap’ and eventually the customers and workers of the beauty parlour join in, making a collective musical moment.



Figure 4.3, *Legally Blonde*, ‘bend and snap’, unity in the musical moment.

⁴⁵ For other musical moments that do this see: *Bratz*, *The House Bunny*, *Mean Girls*.

Musical numbers also aim to create other kinds of pleasures. Girl teen musicals and dance films employ the conventions of the Hollywood film musical as a form of enchantment: these structural and stylistic techniques that are used to engage the audience of musicals and dance films I call 'musical address'. Musical address cues a world captivated by music and dance to create a familiar, in-between space — a no place, no time similar to the 'Once upon a time...In a land far away' of fairy tale — where the confines of expression and sensory experience are temporarily unbound. Musical address invites the audio-viewer to enjoy this sense of boundless freedom through an enchanted mode of engagement that is responsive to the pleasures of music and dance. Like sports performances musical numbers feel like freedom and expansion but the experiences that they create are also restricted by gender 'norms'.

This chapter delineates the component parts of musical address and explores how musical numbers invite enchantment. It asks what kinds of experience musical address creates in girl teen films and considers the pleasures on offer. To answer these questions the chapter begins by exploring the conventional organisations of music and dance in girl teen musicals, dance films and musical moments. Beyond structural conventions, the spectacles of performance in these films share in common an intended affective impact that draws on the embodied pleasures of music and dance, and on the spaces of possibility created by musical address. The chapter outlines the way that the pleasures of the

musical have been identified as utopian and builds on this formulation of pleasure, to understand its physical dimensions. Comparing the original (J. Waters, 1988) and remake (Shankman, 2007) versions of the girl teen musical *Hairspray*, I establish the sanitised aesthetic mode of millennial girl teen musicals: films that consequently offer experiences that are less based on affective transgressions and instead founded on aseptic 'fun'. The chapter then weaves an analysis of the conventional remake of *Hairspray*, alongside a musical moment in *Mean Girls* to explain the component parts that make up musical address. Finally I explore the experiences of expansion and confinement that these films offer and the kinaesthetic pleasures they encourage.

Organisations of music and dance

Conventional girl teen musicals and dance films are recognisably defined by the ways that sound and the spectacle of performance are distinguishable from other uses of music and dance in film. These arrangements are conventional in the sense that they draw on techniques that are a familiar part of the Hollywood

musical films of the 1940s and 1950s.⁴⁶ In accord with these Hollywood musical films, conventional girl teen musicals and dance films position singing and dancing as the primary focus. Musical narratives are constructed around choreographed ‘numbers’: sequences designed to showcase singing and/or dancing. Girl teen musicals and dance films usually include integrated numbers whereby the performances of singing and dancing support or develop the narrative. The integration musical sits in contrast to standalone revues in which the numbers appear as essentially disconnected from the story. Revue musicals use the platform of the musical to showcase the talents of the performers in individual routines. In contrast girl teen musicals use music and dance as a means of expressing narrative and character. *Hairspray* (2007), for example, is an adaptation of the stage musical (2002) of the same name, itself a reworking of the original John Waters film. The film follows Tracy Turnblad (Nikki Blonsky) as she pursues fame on a local television dance show. The opening song ‘Good Morning Baltimore’ introduces Tracy as she sings about her dreams for future stardom. Her tone is optimistic and impassioned, characteristics that are central to the character and narrative that follows. In fully integrated musicals, musical

⁴⁶ For example: *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Minnelli, 1944), *Yolanda and the Thief* (Minnelli, 1945), *Easter Parade* (Walters, 1948), *On the Town* (Donen & Kelly, 1949), *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952, Donen & Kelly), *Funny Face* (1957, Donen). Millennial girl teen films employ a variety of scoring techniques: from creating original soundtracks (traditional musicals like *Hairspray* [2007]) to compilation scores that use pre-recorded popular music. Regardless of how the score is composed, these films employ the same techniques of musical address in their musical numbers.

numbers are fundamental to narrative progression and character motivation, as well as aesthetic mode and tone.

The level of integration between number and narrative in some girl teen dance films is minimal. Numbers are often situated in nightclubs or theatres in which characters watch the performance along with the audience, or performances are explained through rehearsal or competitive events. *Step Up 2: The Streets* (Chu, 2008), for example, represents a typical example of girl teen dance film that makes use of backstage musical techniques. Numbers are mostly explained as rehearsals, competition performances, or flash mobs in which dancers prove their worth. Dance performances do not come from characters' needs to directly express their feelings and emotions (although they can also do this) as in conventional musicals. These numbers appear to function as disparate units of spectacle, rather than as sequences that drive the narrative forward. Narrative and the spectacle of music and dance, however, are not mutually exclusive.

Narrative can develop *through* spectacle (Smith, 1998: 13). The numbers in *Step Up 2* for example establish the skill and 'authenticity' of the performer(s), set up antagonisms, accentuate characters' developing maturity and effect character relationships. In both girl teen musicals and dance films emphasis is placed on the numbers as structural components that are part of a larger narrative whole, which can *also* be enjoyed as discrete units. Importantly, the performance

numbers of girl teen film retain an affective attitude that is congruous with the films' emphasis on 'fun'.



Figure 4.4, *Mean Girls*' musical moment.

Together with these more conventional teen musicals and dance films, comic girl teen films have redrawn and revised performance numbers as part of their repertoire of elements. Musical moments are a constituent part of comedy girl teen films, rather than of primary focus. *Mean Girls* offers a typical example of a musical moment. Integrated as part of a High school 'Winter Talent Show' this musical moment is a standalone performance sequence. The school's group of popular girls, the 'Plastics', perform a dance routine to 'Jingle Bell Rock' (Beal & Boothe, 1957). Initially they perform a 'raunch' routine to a pre-recorded version of the song but part way through their performance the CD player from which the

diegetic music emits (visible at the front of the stage) is accidentally kicked out into the audience and, unsure of how to proceed the girls are frozen mid-performance. The protagonist, Cady, begins to sing in place of the pre-recorded track and the other 'Plastics' follow her lead and continue the routine. In turn members of the school auditorium audience sing and clap along with the performance and finally the tune is taken up on the school hall piano and the number ends with the diegetic audience in full chorus. Musical performance is not something new to teen films of the 2000s, clean teen films of the 1950s and 1960s for example generally contained at least one musical number. During the 1980s musical numbers in teen film mostly became integrated and contextualised as part of scenarios that could 'explain' these performances using 'real' world logic.⁴⁷ As outlined in the previous chapters, performance and visibility have become increasingly prominent in cultural products aimed at girls: in line with neoliberal discourse, celebrity has replaced heterosexual romance as the key reward. The idea that singing and dancing are key forms of fun for teenagers and central to notions of self-worth is generated in various forms of popular culture aimed at an adolescent audience. In the reality television programme *My Super Sweet Sixteen* (MTV, 2005-) the 'Sweet 16' performs a routine for their

⁴⁷ For example, *Flashdance* (Lyne, 1983), *Footloose* (Ross, 1984), *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* (Metter, 1985), *Dirty Dancing* (Ardolino, 1987), *Hairspray* (1988).

party guests as a component of the 'perfect' birthday party.⁴⁸ Singing and dancing have increasingly re-entered cultural products aimed at the teen market, and accordingly have become a core component of girl teen film's repertoire of elements.

The pleasures of the musical are explained in academic discourse as stemming from the genre's utopian foundations. Discussions of the Hollywood film musical have been heavily influenced by three key texts: Dyer's 'Entertainment and Utopia' (2002 [1977]), Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical* (1993 [1982]), and Altman's *The American Film Musical* (1989 [1987]), which have by and large set the parameters of discourse on the subject. Dyer's instrumental essay suggests that entertainment (for which he takes the musical as his example here) "offers the image of 'something better'" (ibid: 20), something that our day-to-day lives do not provide; alternatives, hopes, and wishes. Dyer (ibid) proposes that what the musical presents in its non-representational signs (colour, texture, movement, rhythm, melody, camerawork) is what utopia would feel like. The non-representational signs of the film musical embody utopian feelings. These feelings are: energy, abundance, intensity, transparency, and community (ibid: 23). Feuer and Altman also reference the 'utopian sensibility' of the musical, directly and implicitly, as a means of explaining the pleasures of the genre. To

⁴⁸ A handful of other television examples include: *American Idol* (2002-), *Dancelife* (2007-), *So you think you can dance* (2005-), *Glee* (2009-), *Hannah Montana* (2006-2011), *Made* (2002-).

illustrate the ways in which this idea of pleasure is used, the musical moment in *Mean Girls* can be analysed with regards to the numbers' utopian pleasures.

The musical moment in *Mean Girls* retains the division between narrative and number: the 'Winter Talent Show' provides a context within which the performance is integrated. In narrative terms the number is not essential to the film; although it does contribute to various plot details, the sequence is not strictly necessary. However, as director Mark Waters describes it in the DVD commentary of the film: "you end up kind of really needing, like, a breath in the movie with some music..." The musical moment offers a 'breath' of energy, of human activity in contrast to the series of conversations that make up the majority of the narrative.

The first half of the performance that the sequence begins with sets the number up as 'artificial' (fig. 4.4). The synthetic costumes and 'inauthentic' dance moves, in combination with the use of the CD player propped at the edge of the stage, all suggest a lack of 'liveness' and 'authenticity' customary to the musical. The second half however, offers feelings of intensity and transparency. When Cady begins to sing the number becomes 'spontaneous'. A quality on which, Feuer (1993: 3-13) proposes, musical films place a premium as a means of bridging the gap between folk art and mass entertainment. The girls sing acapella and in accord their dance moves become coordinated with the melody of their own

voices, rather than with the beat of the pre-recorded song. The look of non-choreography lends the moment feelings of sincerity and 'authenticity'. It is in this spontaneous turn that the moment generates a sense of togetherness — amongst the 'Plastics' and particularly between them and the school auditorium audience. As the audience joins in and sings out together for the duration of the song the sense of a spontaneously conjured community is created. This feeling of community is extended out to the audio-viewer. Feuer (1993: 31, 34) suggests that the cinema audience is encouraged to identify with the diegetic audience of musical numbers (as well as the performers) and consequently this mode of identification involves them in the number. The *Mean Girls* musical moment briefly offers the feeling of community as a solution to the fragmentation presented in the narrative, and as a presumed problem in the 'real' world lives of the audience.

The utopian pleasures of the musical provide a useful foundation from which to consider the pleasures of musical numbers and moments in girl teen film.

However, it is possible to develop this formulation of pleasure by considering the aesthetic mode of contemporary musical numbers and their appeals to kinaesthetic pleasures.

Musical address and aesthetic modes



Figure 4.5, *Hairspray* (1988), Edna Turnblad.



Figure 4.6, *Hairspray* (2007), Edna Turnblad.

Girl teen films made in the 2000s have played with integration devices in various ways but what holds these millennial films and their musical moments together in common is their cheerfully affective attitude. A comparison between the original 1988 version of *Hairspray* (J. Waters) and its 2007 remake, offers an illustrative

example. The original *Hairspray* does not contain diegetic singing but includes dance numbers that are incorporated as part of the 'Corny Collins Show'.

Although the film uses elements of musical address it is fundamentally different to its remake in 2007. *Hairspray* (1988) renders "a life pervaded by music" (Dyer, 2002a: 179) in comparison to the traditional musical structure which sets up problems in the narrative and offers escape and solution in the numbers.

Hairspray (1988) is a highly stylised film but there is little difference between the spaces of the numbers and those of the rest of the film — all maintain a similar affective tone.

In comparison to the 2007 version, *Hairspray* (1988) is visually and affectively less 'polished'. John Waters' film draws on musical obscenity and the grotesque. Although the mise-en-scène of the 1988 film makes use of the vibrant colours of 1960s décor, this is an altogether tatty version. John Waters is a 'trash art' filmmaker who aggressively exploits "bad taste" (Benson-Allott, 2009). His work reveals a fixation with vulgarity and the 'improper', and *Hairspray* (1988) reflects these preoccupations in its narrative and numbers. In Waters' film, for example, hair is 'ratted' up to extreme proportions and close-ups reveal the sweat and grease of teen hair and skin. In the original film Divine performs the role of Edna Turnblad as a "grotesque" drag persona (Cunningham, 2003). The discrepancy between sex and gender ideals is constructed as a significant pleasure of the Queer performance. In the 2007 version, John Travolta plays the role made up

as a woman. Travolta's masculine form is obscured underneath padding and prosthetics, obfuscating his real fleshiness beneath a cleaner synthetic version of the character. Travolta's performance maintains traditional gender boundaries, where Divine's drag makes fun of them. Both films draw attention to surfaces, as teen films generally do, but where the surface of the Waters' film is sticky and carnal the 2007 film feels like a smooth, simulated fabrication. I do not mean to suggest that all 1980s teen musicals are affectively transgressive but the contrast between the two versions of *Hairspray* makes stark the sanitised aesthetic mode of contemporary girl teen musicals and musical moments.

The numbers in Waters' *Hairspray* use an aesthetic mode that affectively draws on musical obscenity and the grotesque. As Robin James (2013) proposes, *Hairspray* (1988) reflects that "music was a gateway to racially transgressive corporeal practices and affective states." The transgression of the original and the different aesthetic modes of the two versions of the film can be seen through comparison of equivalent scenes at the 'Record Hop'.



Figure 4.7, *Hairspray* 1988, The Record Hop.



Figure 4.8, *Hairspray* 2007, The Record Hop.

In the Record Hop number from 1988 the teens from the ‘Corny Collins Show’ dance the ‘Madison Time’ (Bryant, 1959) by jazz musician Ray Bryant — a song with specified dance steps. ‘Madison Time’ uses a jazz swing beat and the dance manifests the shape of the music. The dance is fundamentally constructed around ‘buck’ and ‘wing’ moves: these are black social dances that

developed during the nineteenth century. Thomas DeFrantz (2004: 102)

describes “black popular music and movements” as:

unified in their approach through a shared percussive attack, allowance for individual expression within the group, repetition and intensification, strong reliance on breaks or abrupt ruptures of the underlying beat, and a highly complex rhythmic structure.

‘Madison Time’ relies on complex rhythms and a strong percussive beat, including repetition and intensification. In her movements Tracy (Ricki Lake) reveals her competence and comfort with the dance. Although the number is a line dance that the dancers perform in unison, it is Tracy’s ability to respond with loose, improvised moves to the basic, regulated steps that gets her noticed. In response to the music, Tracy’s body affectively transgresses racial, sexual, and physical boundaries.

The Record Hop number in the 2007 film of *Hairspray* is recognisable as the same scene but its aesthetic mode is distinctly different. The music, ‘Ladies’ Choice’, uses elements that stem from black musical aesthetics, such as call and response, percussive attack, and breaks in the underlying beat. However, Sung by Link Larkin (Zac Effron) the song is an intensely upbeat ‘Broadway number’. The dance that responds to the music here is a jazz routine in its contemporary sense: a controlled and commodified version of jazz dance. It does not involve the looser, spontaneous inventions associated with black social dances but the

codified techniques, angular bodylines and flamboyant technical virtuosity that DeFrantz (ibid: 102) describes as prevalent on Broadway stages and Hollywood screens. These codified dance techniques that embody the brighter, upbeat music, lift the number away from affective states that are a possible consequence of musical and dance 'obscenity' and into sanitised 'fun'.



Figure 4.8, *Step Up 2: the streets*, dance films combine polish and obscenity.

Dance films such as *Save the Last Dance* or *Step Up: 2 the streets*, combine aesthetic modes of sanitised fun and music and dance obscenity.⁴⁹ Structured around street dance and hip-hop routines these films exploit black aesthetics by focusing on the dynamics of breakdance choreography (rather than the political dimensions of hip-hop culture). In accord with musicals and musical moments

⁴⁹ Also see *Centre stage: Turn it up, Make it Happen, StreetDance*.

dance films employ the techniques of musical address. However, these films' musical numbers are grounded in an aesthetic mode that emphasises sexuality. In dance films, sexual identity and dance ability are conflated. The exploitation of hip-hop forms draws semiotically and aesthetically on racial stereotypes of the "untamed, natural and raw sexuality" of black dance culture (Monteyne, 2013: 193). The aesthetic mode of the dance numbers in girl teen dance films bring in to play an aggressive sexuality that is not usually found in the conventional musical. The dance numbers of *Step Up 2* draw on the same music and dance obscenity that we see and hear in the original *Hairspray*. The dance provides a supra-diegetic space for the white Cinderella character-icon to create an aggressive sexuality. However, these classed, raced and gendered music and dance aesthetics are safely contained in the numbers. Beyond the music and dance, the films maintain the smooth polish and sterilisation of contemporary musicals, despite their urban and working class settings.

Contemporary girl teen musicals and musical moments share in common a core aesthetic mode that seeks to invite the audio-viewer to enjoy pleasures that are grounded in especially 'clean' and appealing affective states. In Waters' *Hairspray* (1988) the pleasures of the film are in part a residual component of the disgust that its aesthetic mode engenders as well as an affective response to music and dance obscenity. In comparison the 2007 version of the film appeals

to pleasures connected to the openness, energy, and happy promises that the enchantment of musical address offers.

Musical Address and its kinaesthetic pleasures

Like Cinderella's modulations, her celebrity glamour, and sporting successes, girl teen films' musical numbers often feel like promise, potential, and expansion. Like the moments explored in the previous chapters these feelings meet with contradictory qualities and where the Cinderella character-icon expands out into the world through music and dance, she is also contained.

The techniques of musical address are particular to musicals, dance films, and musical moments and need to be outlined as a means to understand how musical pleasures work and the kinds of experiences they offer. Musical address is a form of enchantment cued by various techniques, including, and most obviously, a physical shift in character/actor mode of performance and expression: from walking and talking to singing and dancing. Raising a stage curtain, characters moving onto stage, or into a space as though it were a stage, can also create the necessary shift. Musical address will also make use of 'everyday' spaces and props in a way that they too become part of the enchantment: in *High School Musical*, for example, the 'ordinary' school corridor becomes alive with music and dance, and basketballs become the source of the

beat. The diegetic audience signifies how the audio-viewer should respond and how they should feel about the performance — showing their own delight and/or joining in with the number. Musical address also means that people's movements become coordinated or synchronous, with each other or with the music.

Another component of musical address is the use of 'audio' and 'video dissolve' techniques (Altman, 1989, 62-74) that help to smooth the transition from narrative to number. These techniques are used to allow characters to move almost imperceptibly from talking to singing, and walking to dancing. Tactics such as humming or rhythmical walking are employed to bridge the shift from narrative to musical performance. As a means of integration, film musicals also merge diegetic and non-diegetic music — mixing the two in ways that transform the image and sound hierarchy. This merger is what Altman (1989: 71) calls supra-diegetic music. *Hairspray* provides an illustrative example: when Tracy walks into auditions for the 'Corny Collins Show', Velma Von Tussle (Michelle Pfeiffer) leads the show dancers in rehearsal. Diegetic music plays underneath their footfalls. As Velma assesses the inadequacies of auditionees her vocals become increasingly rhythmic until she moves from conversation to singing, with a shift that lifts her voice in accompaniment to non-diegetic orchestration. In the supra-diegetic space of the musical the sound and image relationship is fundamentally changed. Music is to the fore and dictates the image. "The music and its rhythm

now initiate movement” (Altman, 1989: 69). Altman (ibid: 71) argues that supra-diegetic music transforms the ‘real’ world of film into an ideal world of pure music. The supra-diegetic space of the musical opens the diegetic world up, putting perceptual and expressive limitations aside for the duration of the number. The video dissolve, as Altman describes it, similarly enables the scene to bridge “two separate places, times, or levels of reality” (ibid: 74). This is an ideal space in which “rhythm becomes contagious” (ibid: 69). Musical contagion means that bystanders cannot help but tap their feet or sing along (1989: 68). Singing and dancing enchant the diegetic world with the possibilities and potential afforded by music and dance. The diegetic world responds to this enchantment by joining in, providing accompaniment or the necessary audience.



Figures 4.9 & 4.10, *Hairspray*, disparate times and locations cohere through a single note.

Girl teen musicals such as *Hairspray* also rely on ‘musical logic’ whereby space and time can be made to cohere through musical consistency rather than classical Hollywood continuity. Dyer (2002b [1976-77]: 51) describes the way that musical logic works: “The action is telescoped to fit the song, the logic of the real world gives way to the logic of the song, of music.” Musical logic conveys the feeling that music takes over the world — “or feels as if it does to the singers.” (Ibid: 154). In *Hairspray*’s (2007) ‘Good Morning Baltimore’ for example

the disparate times and locations between Tracy missing her bus to school and riding atop a garbage truck are held together by an extended single note of the song. In combination the edit here is dictated by the beat of the music and the graphic match between shots emphasises Tracy's continuous note. Although the cut elides significant movement in space and time, the transition between locations is held together through musical logic. Musical logic adds to the feelings of freedom and unrestrained expression offered by the supra-diegetic space of the musical. Musical logic further lifts the restraints of classical continuity — giving musical films and musical moments a greater sense of flexibility and movement.

Part of the pleasure of musicals is the ability of music and dance to shift the parameters and lend a sense of freedom to otherwise restrictive spaces. In line with Altman's (1989: 65) description of the supra-diegetic space as utopian, in the sense that the real and ideal are merged, Feuer (1993: 71) sees in the musical a resolution of dichotomies in the fusion of two value systems: the reality principle and the pleasure principle. Usually represented in the lead couple, rational, cognitive Puritanism stands in contrast to imagination, freedom, impulse and spontaneity. In musical film "a world of music transforms a repressed world of silence" (Feuer: 72). The musical moment in *Mean Girls* for example, briefly, sees the world of the film taken over by music. When the diegetic audience is compelled to join in with the number, the 'repressed silence' — the tight

restrictive hold of the hierarchical system of the school — is momentarily freed by the musical logic that overtakes the auditorium.

Girl teen musicals and dance films can also make use of a dual-focus narrative. A structure that is built around parallel characters of opposite sex and divergent values (Altman, 2002 [1987]: 42). *High School Musical* (Ortega, 2006)

represents a generic example whereby the contradictory values of the two main character stereotypes of 'jock' and 'geek' are resolved and merged through musical performance.⁵⁰ Similarly the girl teen dance film *Save the Last Dance* sees the duality of masculine/feminine, black/white, street/ballet resolved in the protagonist's final performance in which black aesthetics are appropriated and the two dance styles are merged.⁵¹ Through the creation of supra-diegetic spaces and the use of musical logic, difficulties, dichotomies, and contradictions can be played out or overcome with seeming ease. It is in the numbers of these musicals and dance films that the characters find happiness (Dyer, 2012: 101). The narratives set up problems to which the numbers offer solutions, or at least respite (ibid). For example, through the climactic number of *Hairspray*, 'You Can't Stop the Beat', Tracy's mother Edna (John Travolta) finds the confidence to perform that has so far eluded her. Her confident performance reflects that she is finally happy with herself. In the same number, the central and supporting

⁵⁰ See also: *Another Cinderella Story*, *Hannah Montana: the movie*, *Hairspray* (2007), *Burlesque*, *Bring it On: in it to win it*, *Bratz*, *Starstruck*.

⁵¹ See also: *Step Up 2: the streets*, *StreetDance*, *Centre Stage 2: Turn it Up*.

couples confirm that they are in love, and the performance resolves national race segregation.

Millennial girl teen musicals also rely on pastiche to encourage an enchanted mode of engagement that goes along with the fantasy that musical address offers. To greater and lesser degrees, musicals and musical moments in girl teen films make use of double coding techniques. Double coding is not new to girl teen musicals or musical moments. As Feuer (1993) has made clear the musical is a self-reflexive genre. Films like *A Star is Born* (Cukor, 1954), for example, (in particular the 'Someone at Last' number) use double coding techniques that pastiche musical convention whilst making use of the pleasures of these conventions all the same. What is unique to millennial girl teen films and their musical address is that double coding is fundamental. In contrast dance films are usually not double coded. The contexts in which performance takes place — rehearsals, nightclubs, and competitions — require less of an affective gateway than that which is necessary in musicals and musical numbers. The settings are similar to those in sports films and provide a framework from which performance is more easily integrated and accepted.

Mean Girls uses double coding techniques throughout and its musical moment is no exception. As a pastiche the moment imitates the idea of musical film and in doing so makes this self-consciousness central to its humour. Firstly the scene

parodies what Ariel Levy (2006: 21) refers to as a “raunch aesthetic” and sets this up as at odds with the ‘innocence’ of the Christmas song to which the ‘Plastics’ perform and the idea of the musical number as a sincere line to genuine emotion. ‘Raunch’, as Levy (ibid: 5) describes it, is a “cartoon-like version of female sexuality”, an aggressive projection of “kitschy, slutty stereotypes” (ibid: 34) that has been particularly noticeable since the mid-to-late 1990s. The PVC costumes worn by the ‘Plastics’ in combination with their self-choreographed ‘raunch’ dance moves, creates a discrepancy between the idea of musical numbers and this performance of one. Their costumes and dance moves, in the context of the school auditorium, parodies both ‘raunch’ culture and the idea of the sincere and ‘wholesome’ musical.

Mean Girls musical moment also makes a pastiche of the supra-diegetic space of the musical, a space in which the ‘real’ and ideal are merged — where characters and onlookers are overcome by the spirit and intensity of music and dance.

Mean Girls draws attention to, mocks and exaggerates the idea of musical contagion— the idea that the dream-like magic of music and dance infects the ‘real’ world of the film. Once the ‘Plastics’ CD backing track has been kicked from the stage the performance is momentarily halted. When Cady begins to sing, the number becomes a spontaneous one and in doing so signals a further supra-diegetic shift. As Cady continues to sing, the other Plastics accompany her and, as if consumed by the power of music and dance, members of the

school auditorium audience do so as well. Cutaways to the audience and their exaggerated facial expressions suggest they cannot help but join in with the number. This pastiche suggests that the use of musical techniques and sentiments is all done in jest: no longer really meant or accepted. The musical moment makes fun of the idea of the musical but still uses its techniques, and as such the moment facilitates the affects of musical address all the same.

Despite the cynical edge that *Mean Girls'* musical moment portrays and its light mockery of musical address, the scene still explicitly presents singing and dancing as fun in ways that are typical to girl teen film in narrative terms. Despite the momentary embarrassment caused by the CD player being kicked from the stage, the performance is successful in the sense that the diegetic audience responds enthusiastically with loud applause and cheers; the performance makes the 'Plastics' centre of attention and provides Cady with a Cinderella moment that increases her position in the group and school hierarchy; it also provides a sense of togetherness that is lacking elsewhere in the narrative. The techniques of musical address also aesthetically create fantasy spaces in which the world is momentarily experienced as unrestricting and expansive. Like sports performances that create flow, musical address creates a world in which girls can move through it without meeting resistance.

Kinaesthetic pleasures

We can extend Altman's (1989) concept of musical contagion, where rhythm becomes contagious and the musical world becomes infected by the possibilities offered by musical address, to include the audio-viewer. The techniques of musical address invite the audience outside of the diegesis to take up a specific physical watching position. The idea of generic expectation as a physical experience (Thomas, 2000: 9) works out not only across genres but also across individual film moments. Thomas (ibid) proposes that our bodies attend to specific films in particular ways based on "broad anticipation of the kinds of pleasure to be offered." Some films and film moments invite our bodies to tense up, close-in and brace, whilst others invite a more relaxed or freer state. The techniques of musical address encourage a physical openness, attentiveness and sensitivity to the potential pleasures of music and dance.

This is a type of kinaesthetic contagion. In the previous chapter I explored kinaesthetic contagion as a visceral awareness of the effort, muscle and sinew of the sporting body. In this respect pleasure was connected to the feelings of physical power created by the effortful body of the sports performer. Reason and Reynolds (2010: 66-67) describe another type of kinaesthetic contagion, in their analysis of the pleasures of live dance performance, that provides a framework for understanding the pleasures of musical address. This second type of

kinaesthetic contagion is a physically uplifting response to the general movement of the dance number. This category of kinaesthetic contagion can be connected to Barker's (2009: 74-75) notion of muscular empathy. Barker extends Linda Williams (1991) body genre categories to suggest that the audio-viewer's response is a type of embodied mimicry, not just of the characters but of the film itself. Williams' body genres catch the audio-viewer in mimicry of what they see characters perform on screen: pornography creates arousal; horror creates fear; melodrama creates tears. Barker broadens this idea to propose that audiences' responses can be triggered by the 'film's body'. In a similar vein Reynolds (2012) draws on Sobchack's (2004) work as a means to explore the affects of live dance and the audience's experience of the 'dance's body'. Reynolds (2012: 129) suggests that the movement of the dance as a whole can affect us. That we may internalise movement and sense its processes in our own bodies, not just the movement of one dancer or single component of the dance but the movement of the whole piece. This form of kinaesthetic contagion is a pleasure that musical numbers in girl teen films invite us to enjoy. The rhythm, energy, and sense of freedom of the musical number does not only work on the diegetic audience. Musical address is designed to infect the audio-viewer, to invite a physical response to the positive aesthetic mode of the number as a whole.

Mean Girls' musical moment is neither particularly impressive in its use of dance, nor does it showcase singing talent that is exceptionally remarkable.

Nonetheless, despite its pastiche of the musical, it provokes an uplifting, energised, physically free and relaxed mode of embodied engagement. The number cues a kinaesthetic contagion that responds to the general positive impulse of the number. When Cady, the Plastics, and the audience sing, the expressive freedom and intrinsic pleasure of singing in general, lends the moment a quality of enchantment. As Dyer (2012: 3-4) explains, pleasure in other people's singing comes from one's own knowledge of what it is like to sing. Pleasure is inherent in singing, he suggests, because of what it physiologically involves: to sing requires relaxation of the vocal chords and muscles and so it implies a physically relaxed state. Moving together, the Plastics' dance also draws on feelings of muscular bonding that extend out into the diegetic audience: one member of the auditorium (a 'Plastic' mother) stands and mimics the girls routine. Although this is clearly a comic parody of an over involved "hip parent" (Wiseman, 2002: 51) it embodies the feelings of kinaesthetic contagion encouraged in the audio-viewer and a physical sense of togetherness and community.



Figures 4.11 & 4.12, *Mean Girls*, mimicry in the audience.

In combination, music is a powerful element of kinaesthetic contagion. In bringing music to the fore musical address invites the audio-viewer to adopt specific physical and emotional modalities. In *Music in Everyday Life*, Tia DeNora (2000) provides a way of thinking about the affective dimensions of music that seems particularly relevant to the embodied shift that musical address

invites. DeNora's (ibid: 88-108) study examines the ways in which music is overtly employed as a means of state regularisation in aerobics classes. In the context of aerobics, she explores the ways that specific musical materials work upon the body. The stylistic aspects of musical forms and genres, she demonstrates, have the potential to entrain the human body in slight, sometimes "imperceptible micro-movements, such as how one holds one's eyebrows, cheekbones or shoulders, the tensions of one's muscles" (ibid: 78). However, as DeNora (ibid: 96) makes clear, music does not just act on the body, its effects cannot be strictly predetermined — it must be appropriated. That is to say, in the context of watching and listening to girl teen film the experience of the audio-viewer cannot be programmed. To have the impact the devices of musical address aim for, the audio-viewer must be appropriately engaged. What can be determined is that music does have affective and emotional possibilities. As DeNora (ibid: 106) examines, specific to the aerobics class, music helps to set up a series of shifts in embodied engagement for the participant, who (if the class is successful) is encouraged to move between states throughout the class, from: "person-in-the-street, to aerobically enlisted and motivated [...] to non-conscious, powerful moving being, to sentimental and reimbued with consciousness, to cognitively engaged in precision toning moves."

Music has the capability to create affective and emotional shifts. It can invite the body to take up specific modes of engagement. The musical address of girl teen

film encourages a state that is 'musically enlisted'; a body that is on board to enjoy the positive possibilities of the musical number. The ways that music is employed in girl teen films suggests what pleasures the audio-viewer is invited to experience from it. As the body literally moves with the music in an aerobics class, the embodied engagement of its participants is more obviously recognisable. Nonetheless, as DeNora (ibid: 107) points out, music has affective and emotional power over bodily states even whilst the listeners remain seated. Music can rouse the bodies it encounters because of the movement it implies (for example DeNora (ibid: 107) suggests marching music may put listeners in mind of bodily states), but also because "it is doing movement in a similar manner, because the materiality of how notes are attacked and released, sustained and projected partakes of similar physical movements and gestures." The kind of movement music 'does' in girl teen film tends to encourage an open and positive embodied engagement.

The musical moment in *Mean Girls* for example invites a relaxed and uplifting physical mode of engagement. As a ubiquitous Christmas song 'Jingle Bell Rock' potentially provides the number with a comfortable familiarity, however previous awareness of the song is not an essential factor of its affective possibilities. The song uses a common 4/4 beat signature and the tempo remains at a consistent 140 beats per minute throughout, with a standard popular music structure: verse, chorus, bridge. These typical pop song elements give the

song and sequence an easy approachability. The body of the audio-viewer is easily oriented to feel the beat and rhythm of the number. The song is also in a major key and the guitar accents further add to its bright timbre. The use of female vocals (in both the recorded and 'live' versions) also contributes a light pitch. The song also uses a swung rhythm (rather than straight) — a 'looser' music formation that implies similarly swinging motion. This is not to suggest that we will literally sway in our seats as we watch and listen (although we could), but that the music and its movements encourage a relaxed, free and easy muscle tension.

The pleasurable simplicity of the number is furthermore evident when the backing track is cut and the characters are forced to sing acapella. The jaunty rhythm of the song is easily discernible in the vocal rendition — the regular beat is easily picked up — as expressed by the diegetic audience's accompaniment. This is a song that we are invited to clap or sing along with. Similarly when the auditorium piano is used to supplement the vocals it is done with ease. The accompanying piano adds to the feelings of spontaneity and a folksy 'authenticity' (Feuer, 1993: 3-13) that the opening of the number lacked, but it also adds further spring to the swing of the song — increasing the implied energy and momentum of the number.

The focus of musical numbers is on the spectacle of the human body and its relationship to music — on physical energy, ability and exertion, rather than specific character motivation or inner thoughts. Being so focused on the body and what the body can do with music, musical address promotes an embodied engagement with the pleasures of energy, tension and release, control, freedom and mobility connected to music and dance.



Figure 4.13, *Stick It's* mall number.

In musical numbers the body is generally constructed as ideal: seemingly complete and perfected in its organic capacity to create and respond to music. Like the ideal sports body this is a body of “pure magic” (Roach, 2007: 182): the body’s capacities to sing and dance are what make it special here. In accord with the ideal sports body the compositions of the body encourage an admiration

of virtuosity but what is particular to the musical number in comparison to sports performances is the spectacle of what bodies can do with music. Returning to the sports film *Stick It*, we can make the connections between sports performance and musical numbers explicit. *Stick It* includes both types of performance and although both rely on spectacles of the body in coordination, the film's musical number uses musical address techniques to place emphasis on the relationship between music and the body: music is fundamental to its pleasures.

Stick It's musical moment sees the protagonists of the film (a group of female gymnasts and two male friends) make a visit to a shopping mall. Unlike the *Mean Girls* musical moment (but common to girl teen film) the musical number in *Stick It* does not involve 'live' singing but makes use of pre-recorded, popular music to structure the scene. Musical address techniques integrate the number and the performance appears as though it is entirely 'spontaneous', it seems to emerge impulsively from the excitement of the characters. The shopping mall number is somewhat abstract: cut into brief dialogue the routine uses 'Berkelyesque' formations as a means of signifying 'fun'. Where in *Mean Girls* the pleasures of singing and dancing are connected quite clearly to being looked at and the positive responses of the diegetic audience, the performance of gymnastics/dance in *Stick It*'s mall number is used, in and for itself. That is to say, in combination with close-ups of smiling faces, giggles, and high-fives,

dance is used to connote fun. Where the *Mean Girls* sequence shows girls in control of a 'raunch aesthetic' the spectacle of bodies in the *Stick It* number, like those in *Hairspray* (2007), presents those bodies as moving out and taking up space through sheer exuberance.



Figure 4.14, *Hairspray* (2007), moving with music and pushing out into the world.

In the musical numbers of girl teen films, girls can use their full bodily energies and capabilities. Through dance and music girls can make themselves bigger, extend their bodies outwards and take up space. Like the fantasies of empowerment and mastery of the body that we see in sports films, girls' bodies are presented in musical and dance numbers as agile, skilled and controlled. Music and dance create moments of expansion and power.

Musical address works as a prosthetic technology of the body. DeNora (2000: 103) describes how music functions as a prosthetic technology in 'everyday' life: as a material that extends what the body can do. In her ethnographic analysis DeNora explains that music can work upon the body, not just as a mere accompaniment but also as constitutive of agency. For example in aerobics classes, music can push the body beyond what it can usually do. Music is similarly used in working life: on the high seas for example the sea shanty was used for hauling sails or lifting anchor (ibid: 104-105). In "doing movement" (ibid: 107), music encourages similar movement in the body. Through music, DeNora (ibid) suggests, bodies are enabled and empowered. In the aerobics class we can see how music literally extends bodily capacities beyond the 'everyday': music can afford "capacity, motivation, co-ordination, energy and endurance." (Ibid: 102). Musical address similarly acts as a prosthetic in film, lifting the confines of expression and sensory experience, girls' bodies are constructed beyond the usual bounds, extending what the girl body can do and how it can be experienced. Cuing a world captivated by music and dance musical address enables young female characters to use their bodies' full capacities, to stretch out and beyond themselves.

Through music, singing, and dancing, female characters can stretch out, fill space, and occupy time. Dyer (2002: 2) proposes that "the musical is unusual in assigning the experience of expansion to female characters". Dyer (2002: 2)

describes 'expansion' in *The Sound of Music* as "the celebration of female energy and mastery of the world". In his study *In the Space of a Song* (Dyer, 2012) he explores the motif of expansion in the musical further: the musical number, Dyer (ibid: 101) argues, "develops outwards from its moment in the narrative, opening up spatially and temporally." The feelings of expansion, Dyer (ibid: 113) suggests, are blissful: "to throw one's arms in the air, to rush out into the space around one". The feelings of expansion are pleasurable, he proposes, but not innocent. Expansion is assumed to be an entitlement for some and not for others. Claiming space and time also involves "the feeling forms of geographical expansion, of male going out into the world, of imperialism and ecological depredation." (Ibid: 101). Expansion is assumed as a white male privilege, rarely experienced by 'Others'. Singing and dancing in girl teen films offer a means of expansion, a way of inhabiting space and time, usually unavailable to girls.



Figure 4.15, *Step Up 2*, feeling forms of power.

The feeling forms of power in dance provide the female characters of girl teen film access to feelings of expansion, appearances of influence over space, and an ability to take control of the environment. Dance, Langer (1953: 187) proposes, “is a play of Powers made visible”. Dance expresses ideas of specific emotion and initiates symbolic gestures, which articulate these ideas (ibid: 186). The gestures of dance primarily, Langer (ibid: 175-176) argues, express ideas of power:

not actual, physically exerted power, but appearances of influence [...] the subjective experience of volition and free agency, and of reluctance to alien, compelling wills. The consciousness of life, the sense of vital power, even the power to receive impressions, apprehend the environment, and meet changes.

The fantasies of empowerment in the musical numbers of girl teen film do not just *show* bodies that are capable. Through kinaesthetic empathy the audio-viewer is invited to experience these feelings of dance — of power and expansion — in their own bodies. An experience not often expressed through girls. In these films’ musical numbers girls’ bodies are potentially experienced as unhesitant, in control and unified. Musical address emphasises this unity: bodies on display appear organic, as one with, the music. As if spontaneously, bodies are able to respond to music in the supra-diegetic space of the number, capable of organic

movement that unhesitatingly responds to the movement of the music. In this response, numbers show bodies that are in control, certain and cohesive.

Showing bodies that respond as 'one with' the music, the numbers in girl teen films present girls bodies, not as the disconnected and uncontrollable limbs that Young (2005) describes, but bodies that are capable of unified, organic movement.

In *Step Up 2* (fig. 4.15), numbers are choreographed to be mimicked, as well as designed to display the protagonists' special abilities. For the audio-viewer music works on the body and in combination so do the dance moves. Routines are shot straight to camera and although the camera is mobile, there is an emphasis on showing the choreographed moves. The actors in the film are dancers foremost and consequently the camera can keep in close and let the performances unfold. These are ideal bodies and their abilities encourage kinaesthetic sympathy — admiration of the prowess demonstrated — but the skill of what the body can do with music also invites kinaesthetic empathy. The dance moves are shown in a way that the audio-viewer can experience the dance in their own body. The audio-viewer can feel in their own body, an experience of the power, capabilities, and sense of expansion that the girls display. Similarly, in *Hairspray* (2007), when Tracy sings and dances she responds unhesitatingly to the music that surrounds her. She throws her body and voice out into the world to take up space and time.



Figure 4.16, *Stick It*'s mastery of the body in the mall: expansion and confinement.

Singing and dancing in girl teen films create the contradictory qualities of expansion and confinement. Expansion in girl teen films is physically freeing *and* claustrophobic. As Skeggs (2004a: 22) explains: "The embodied entitlement to space (physical and aural) is often a statement of social entitlement." The musical numbers in girl teen films invite the kinaesthetic pleasures of physical expansion, unhindered movement and mastery of the body in space. The entitlement to space suggested by these pleasures however has its limits and girls' expansion is bound to commercial, domestic and institutional spaces.

In the mall sequence from *Stick It*, for example, musical address cues a number in which the young female characters expand out into the space of the mall.

Using controlled and adept gymnastic manoeuvres the characters occupy space with a physical dominance that is unusual for girls. This sequence is clearly a fantasy of empowerment, a celebration of female energy and mastery of the body. Nonetheless these expressions of expansion and possibility are contained within parameters. Singing and dancing in these films feel like moving out into the world but they are confined to specific privatised public spaces (the mall, nightclub, or beauty parlour), controlling institutional spaces (school or 'camp'), or the domestic sphere (home). Unlike the expansion and celebration of female energy that can take place in traditional musicals (for example in the famous opening of *The Sound of Music* Maria lifts her voice and throws out her arms to fill the hills with the sound of music) in girl teen films expansion is contained and numbers rarely leave domestic, institutional or consumer spaces. Even amongst those girl teen films that are conventional musicals, *Hairspray* (2007) is unusual in the ways that the protagonist is given freedom of movement and expansion into the public sphere. In girl teen dance films city streets are a generic backdrop and numbers often take place within an urban landscape. Narratives usually involve a containment of this public expansion however and girls (and boys for that matter) become institutionalised into dance schools or ballet companies.⁵²

⁵² See for example *Save the Last Dance*, *Step Up 2: the streets*, *Make it Happen* (2008), *StreetDance*, *Centre Stage 2: Turn it Up*.

Conclusion

Millennial girl teen films aim to create pleasurable affects based on a sterilised version of girlhood or a contained sense of sexuality. Obscenity of any kind is left implicit in forms of dance and music but the films' surfaces remain lustrous and polished. Musical address aims to create a form of enchantment that leaves the audience open to the kinaesthetic pleasures of expansion and power that musical numbers encourage. The kinds of experiences that music and dance sequences offer feel like expansion but are also fundamentally restrictive.

The mall moment in *Stick It* is a musical number but it is more accurately described as a music video sequence. Non-diegetic, pre-recorded music is brought to the fore and works in combination with the image to embody the energy and movement of dance. Appropriate to the spectacle of gymnastics/dance that the number is built around, the music implies regulated, deliberate and exact movements. Structured around a pop-rap, neo-electro cover, 'Nu Nu (yeah yeah)' by FannyPack (2005), as the girls flip through the air, their movements work in synchrony with each other and with the music. The song uses rap and syncopation which gives the number a sense of speed; half a beat behind the vocals the drum beat creates the feeling that it is trying to 'catch-up', lending the music a greater sense of momentum. This feeling of energy and pace is also expressed through the visuals, with constant movement that keeps

up with the sound. The particular combination of music and image, the use of music video aesthetics, in girl teen films lends spectacle to prescribed moments and creates distinctive pleasures that I will explore in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Music Video Aesthetics

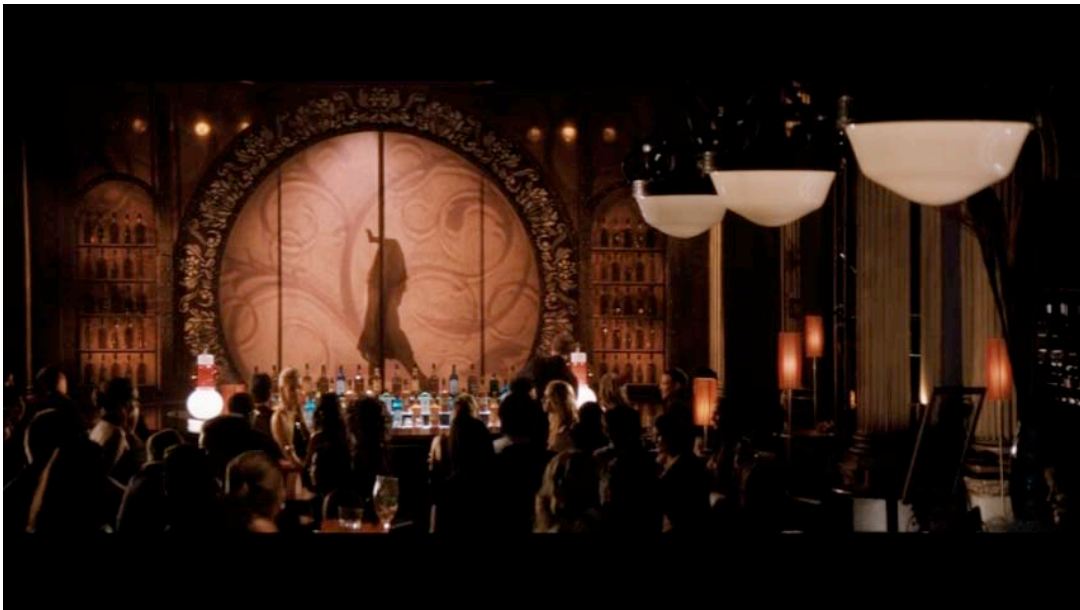


Figure 5.1, *Make It Happen*, Lauryn's first performance at 'Ruby's'.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored the ways that musical address offers a unique form of enchantment. Unbound by the confines of expression and perception found in classical continuity, musical address draws on the affective, physical pleasures of music and dance. I outlined the pleasures of kinaesthetic contagion, whereby the audio-viewer is invited to enjoy the movement of the musical number as a whole. Through kinaesthetic contagion we can internalise and feel

in our own bodies the rhythm, energy, and sense of freedom of the entire piece, rather than just the movements of a particular performer. Music video aesthetics create another form of musical address. A shift in the sound-image relationship that similarly creates a 'supra-diegetic' space where the perceptual and expressive limitations of the classical Hollywood continuity system are put aside for the duration of the number. Music video aesthetics encourage an intense form of kinaesthetic contagion that feels like music and dance.

In the romantic comedy/girl teen film *13 Going on 30*, Jenna (Jennifer Garner) takes a shower, puts make-up on, looks through her wardrobe, and walks down a corridor. Though this does not sound like the stuff of spectacle, music video aesthetics are used to present these 'everyday' activities in a mode that lends them excitement, creating intense experiences around a normative model of 'girl fun'. This chapter explores how music video aesthetics create spectacle and the kinds of pleasure they aim to invite.

As I have suggested throughout this thesis, the kinds of experiences that girl teen films offer are limited. That is not to say that the audio-viewer cannot enjoy experiences that I have not considered here, but those that we are invited to encounter are constrained by the Hollywood (Cinderella character-icon) version of girlhood. Girl teen films are a Hollywood version of girl culture, which starts from the premise that girls already have something in common. As Lauren

Berlant (2008: viii) proposes, cultural products aimed at a particular minority work from a presumption that consumers of particular “stuff” share qualities or experiences that are held in common. Girl teen films aim to feel as though they express what is common among girls, especially in the form of desires, fantasies, and pleasures. Following Berlant (2008), we can describe these films as part of the intimate public of girlhood. As Berlant (ibid: 5) describes: “An intimate public operates when a market opens up to a bloc of consumers, claiming to circulate texts and things that express those people’s particular core interests and desires.” The intimate public of girlhood aims to feel as though it expresses what is common among girls and in doing so it sustains the association of specific desires, fantasies, affects, and pleasures with girlhood.

These films can feel like change, action, development, promise, potential, energy, possibility, choice, transformation, flexibility, and freedom. What they create is a shift within parameters, a static movement. Berlant (ibid: 13) describes the intimate public as a set of “porous constraints”, a term that brings us back to girl teen film’s modulations. Berlant (ibid: 3) suggests that the “motivating engine” of scenes within a “women’s intimate public” is: “the desire to be *somebody* in a world where the default is being nobody”. The kinds of experiences that girl teen films create are about the spectacle of the self. Being *somebody* in these worlds always involves the girl body and its visibility at the centre. So far in this thesis I have examined how girl teen films create

pleasurable experiences around the spectacle of the self through: the aesthetic appeals of consumer products that create the outline of the Cinderella character-icon; the celebrity glamour that surrounds her; the sports body as surface; and singing and dancing as forms of physical expansion and confinement. Music video aesthetics lend further affective impact to all of these things, giving them a heightened sense of significance.

Making and repeating fixed fantasies and pleasures as though they are common among girls, the intimate public of girlhood that these films are a part of gives force to a restricted version of girlhood. As Berlant (ibid: 3, italics in original) describes:

the intimate public legitimates qualities, ways of being, and entire lives that have otherwise been deemed puny or discarded. It creates *situations* where these qualities can appear as luminous.

The impact of music video aesthetics gives intensity to situations, trivialised by their connection to private, commercial or institutional realms. The pleasures of music video aesthetics lend impact to these 'puny' and 'discarded' aspects of femininity. By contributing the physical impact of music and dance, music video aesthetics make actions and activities seem fun and more significant than they may otherwise appear. This brings us back to the fairy tale enchantment explored at the beginning of this thesis. Both, fairy tales and girl teen films are

simple in the sense that characters are clearly drawn and “details, unless very important, are eliminated” (Bettelheim, 1976: 8). As Tiffin (2009: 14) points out, because fairy tale lacks embellishment, where details are given they gain a heightened symbolic force. The mirror, spinning wheel, or slipper become meaningful, significant and compelling beyond their basic shapes. J.R.R Tolkien (1966: 59) describes fairy tales in a way that is similar to Berlant’s description of the intimate public: “fairy stories”, he suggests, “deal largely [...] with simple or fundamental things [...] made luminous by their setting”. In girl teen films the simple or fundamental things that make up the normative Hollywood version of girlhood are made ‘fun’ and pleasurable through ‘look and feel’. The modulations and moments of ‘girl fun’ in these films can be intense, powerful, and exciting in the feelings they embody and in their use of techniques that encourage tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures. Music video aesthetics are, similarly, an ideal example of how the basic shapes that make up this intimate public of girlhood gain affective force. In these films a limited version of girlhood is designed to feel significant and through the magic conjured by the commercial realm, girl teen films create experiences from which girls can “live small but feel large” (Berlant, 2008: 3).

Music video aesthetics aim to lend another level of intensity to the Hollywood version of ‘girl fun’. Music video aesthetics are used to make a spectacle of stereotypically gender specific scenarios, moments and spaces. The spaces in

which these spectacles take place are often sites of domesticity, regulation or consumption: the home, school, mall, nightclub or beauty parlour. As well as the catwalk, dancing and girls' sports, the things that they make a spectacle of are 'everyday' practices of femininity: shopping, trying on clothes or cleaning for example, creating spectacles of specific gendered ideas of fun.

Music video sequences in film are associated with the direct address of spectacle and overt narration. Unlike the traditional score, composed after completion of the image track, this kind of sequence is identified with the use of pre-recorded, popular, self-contained songs. Teen film has developed with a distinct relationship to popular music and the music industry. The use of popular music in teen film is industrially recognised as both a selling point for movies themselves and a key to lucrative ancillary markets (Doherty, 2002; Mundy, 2006).⁵³ Rather than focus on the economic rationale behind the use of popular music and music video aesthetics in these films (obviously in this context aesthetic appeals have economic imperatives at their basis), this chapter asks what kinds of appeal does this type of sequence aim for? What are music video aesthetics and what do they do? What kinds of pleasure do they aim to conjure, what kinds of experience do they create and in what ways do these pleasures and experiences describe the intimate public of girlhood?

⁵³ For an analysis of the economic influence of popular music in teen film see: Caine, 2004; Dickinson, 2001; Doherty, 2002; Mundy, 1999, 2006.

Music video aesthetics

Music video aesthetics give the basic shapes of girl teen film greater affective force. Traditional Hollywood scoring fits image and music together in a way that aims to make the music “unheard” (Gorbman, 1987). In music video sequences in film, music makes the image and the image makes the music: both media are reliant upon and transform each other. In this particular way of combining music and visuals the differences between elements are not made visible but converge to create a general, coherent, and intense impression. Music video stylistics are made by an intermedia process that creates this distinct relationship between music and visuals. Yvonne Spielmann (2001: 57) uses the term intermedia to describe a convergence of separate art forms. She proposes that where multimedia forms cross borders and compare different media, each remains distinct. Intermedia, however, refers to an interaction and integration between different media that results in transformation — in their combination elements change to create a third aesthetic dimension — that can be described as an *intermedia* aesthetic. Music video aesthetics create an audiovisual interaction in which music and image fuse and exchange. These sequences bring music to the fore to create an intense aural presence but the music does not work alone to generate impact, it is the combination of image and music that produces an audiovisual spectacle. The intermedia fusion of music and image, where both

seem to respond and correspond to each other, creates distinct moments of spectacle.

Modes of spectacle

In film all spectacles are not the same but sequences that create spectacle are often considered to be more striking or intense — displays occupying distinct spaces that aim to directly arouse the audience (Buckland, 1998: 170; Gunning, 1990: 59). Within and between specific films and genres spectacles come in different forms. Usually associated with action and blockbuster cinema, the 'impact spectacle' is an aggressive mode designed to encourage visceral reactions from its audience (Bordwell, 2006: 158; King, 2000: 95). To create spectacles that aim for impact, action and blockbuster films employ particular presentational strategies. These stylistic devices render specific moments as especially intense. For example, through the use of rapid editing and movement towards camera, explosions in action films build in intensity to create moments with increasing affective force (see King, 2000: 114). In girl teen films very similar presentational strategies are employed but the things that these films make a spectacle of and the kinds of experiences that they create are restricted by traditional gender 'norms'.

The presentational strategies that make impact spectacles can be described as “post-continuity” techniques (Shaviro, 2010: 118-126). In *Post-Cinematic Affect* (2010) Shaviro introduces the concept of post-continuity to make explicit the connections between contemporary cinematic presentational strategies, affect, and the body. Through reference to action and exploitation films Shaviro (2010: 118-126) suggests that cinema has now relegated continuity in favour of impact, with the aim of stimulating autonomic responses in the audio-viewer. Post-continuity techniques are used, he suggests, “not towards the production of meanings (or ideologies), but directly towards a moment-by-moment manipulation of the spectator’s affective state.” (Ibid: 118). Films, Shaviro proposes, are “*machines for generating affect*” (ibid: 3: italics in original). In the contemporary world, he suggests, the stylistics of image-based modes of presentation are used to engage full somatic participation (ibid: 38). Action films, Shaviro proposes, aim to create the same visceral involvement as that of a computer game (ibid: 104). Like computer games the stylistics of post-continuity are used to generate “user excitement” (ibid: 120).



Figure 5.2, *Never Back Down*, Close-Up POV shots.

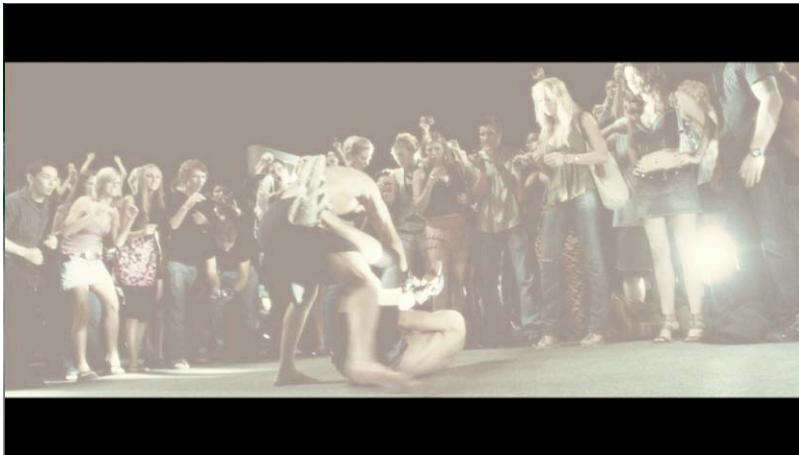


Figure 5.3, *Never Back Down*, flash frame white outs.

The 'computer game' mode of post-continuity aesthetics is evident in the boy teen film, *Never Back Down* (2008, Wadlow). In common with the girl teen films analysed here, *Never Back Down* is an exploitation film. Targeted at a male teenage audience, it was made with a relatively substandard budget and capitalises on the increasing popularity of mixed martial arts in the twenty-first

century. When Jake (Sean Faris) joins a new high school he becomes involved in an underground fight club. The kinds of physical experiences that boy teen films offer and those moments that gain affective charge through the use of post-continuity stylistics are determined by gender 'norms'. 'Boy fun' is created as different to 'girl fun'. Like all traditional male Cinderellas his quest for maturity is explicitly tied to a set of physically aggressive challenges and its attainment is achieved through physical prowess and emotional stoicism (see Schafer, 2003). The final fight sequence in the film uses a highly mobile camera and intense rapid editing with the aim of maintaining a constant sense of momentum. The camera is constantly in the thick of the action. Close-up point-of-view shots work to create proximal intensity and flash frame white outs are used to generate the jar and clash of the fight. The exaggerated use of sound effects, of fists hitting bodies and bones breaking, adds to the overall rendering of the visceral impact of the fight. Used in this boy teen film context, where action and physical force are the main spectacle, post-continuity techniques are used to generate kinaesthetic empathy of a kind that responds to the aggression, force, and momentum of the fight.

In girl teen film the use of music video aesthetics — the specific combination of music and image — shifts the mode in which post-continuity techniques are employed. Music video sequences use the same post-continuity presentational strategies as those used in the impact spectacles of action cinema. However

these techniques are employed in girl teen films, not to generate the same user excitement as a computer game but stylistically and affectively to render the feelings created by music and dance.

The table provided below offers a basic breakdown of how the impact mode of spectacle works in girl teen films. As a means of illustration the table compares (in a rudimentary way) the spectacles of action cinema to those of girl teen film. The comparison is made to demonstrate the generic and gendered construction of spectacle.

The table breaks the modes of spectacle down into three key areas: 1) *the pro-filmic spectacle*: what is presented for the camera as spectacle. 2) *Presentational strategies*: the stylistic devices used to present spectacle. And 3) *Intended response*: the desired effect that the combination of the first two categories encourages — by this I do not mean to suggest what these spectacles *will* do, but what they *aim* to do.

Impact spectacles			
1. <i>Pro-filmic spectacle</i>	2. <i>Presentational strategies</i>		
			3. <i>Intended response</i>
Action cinema <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Explosions › Car chases › Fighting › Running › Shooting › Parkour › Destruction › Elemental forces › Fetish objects (e.g. guns) › The body › Loud noises › Forceful music › Public sphere 	Girl Teen Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Shopping › Trying on clothes › Singing › Dancing › Laughing › Strutting › Applying make-up › Cleaning › 'Girls' sports' › Parties › The body › Audience › Stage › Pop/hip-hop/r'n'b › Private/privatised-public space 	Action cinema <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Rapid editing › Movement towards camera › Cut on movement › Quick fire series of shots showing same action from varied angles › Highly mobile camera › Reliance on CUs › Shallow lateral space › Saturated colours › Strong backlighting › Intense sound › Intense special effects › Hasty cuts from falling to rising action (little use of establishing shots) › Rapid use of crosscutting › Bipolar extremes of lens length 	Girl Teen Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Rapid editing › Movement towards camera › Quick fire series of shots showing same action from varied angles › Highly mobile camera › Reliance on CUs › Shallow lateral space › Saturated colours › Strong backlighting › Intermedia aesthetics: music & visuals › Hasty cuts from falling to rising action (little use of establishing shots)
		Action cinema <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Shock › Surprise › Excitement › Exhilaration › Agitation › Astonishment › Desire › Tension › Tactile pleasure › Kinaesthetic empathy › Kinaesthetic sympathy › Kinaesthetic contagion 	Girl Teen Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Exhilaration › Excitement › Amusement › Astonishment › Admiration › Desire › Tactile pleasure › Kinaesthetic empathy › Kinaesthetic sympathy › Kinaesthetic contagion

Intended response: pleasure

Academic discourse on music video has approached pleasure from two key perspectives. The pleasures of music video are explained by the ideological implications of the work: they suggest that audiences enjoy or dislike music videos based on the works' 'transgressive' or 'reactionary' potential (Frith, 1988; Grossberg, 1993; Holdstein, 1984; Kaplan, 1987; Lewis, 1990). Secondly pleasures are explained as a consequence of music video's sensual properties (Austerlitz, 2007; Billman, 2002; Dickinson, 2008; Frith, 1988; Goodwin, 1993; Mundy, 1999; Vernallis, 2008; Williams, 2003). Similarly, considerations of popular music in film (L. Anderson, 2003; Carey & Hannan, 2003; Donnelly, 1998; Sergi, 1998) or specifically music video aesthetics in teen film (Dickinson, 2001; Henderson, 2006; Ross, 2011) compare classical Hollywood scoring and compilation scores to assess whether the use of popular music in films creates 'disrupting excesses', or performs the same role as classical Hollywood scoring.

A number of these analyses share in common, to greater and lesser degrees, the use of language that hints at the affective qualities of music video. To describe the construction of music video, studies use words like energy, drive and movement (Billman, 2002; Ross, 2011; Vernallis, 2008; Williams, 2003), speed (Dickinson, 2001; Vernallis, 2008), or rhythms and pulses (Billman, 2002; Goodwin, 1992; Williams, 2003). Similarly, descriptions of the consequent

pleasures of music video use language that is connected to affect. Music videos are variously described as; exciting (Austerlitz, 2007), stimulating, tactile and sensuous (Frith, 1988; Mundy, 1999; Williams, 2003). The kinaesthetic, affective pleasures of music video are often named but not always explicated.

The pleasures derived from the impact spectacles created by music video aesthetics in girl teen films are affectively linked to the unique pleasures of music and dance. Music video sequences render the experience of music and dance as much as display it. Michel Chion (1994) provides a way of thinking about sound that can be extended to the musical-visual relationship of music video aesthetics. Chion characterises the verisimilitude of the film soundscape as a rendering of sensation, rather than as a reproduction of sound. In place of committing to straightforward representations of sound, the film soundscape aims to embody 'real' world, multisensory experiences (107, 109). As Chion (1994: 113) explains: "The thing is that sound [...] must tell the story of a whole rush of composite sensations, and not just the auditory reality of the event." Music video aesthetics create a specific rush of sensations that is mutually constructed by music *and* visuals. Together music and image create an audiovisual spectacle that renders the feelings and sensations of music and dance. From this premise we can consider the particular pleasures of music video aesthetics in girl teen film and explore how these pleasures theoretically maintain a culture of restricted affect around the intimate public of girlhood.

As I described in the previous chapter, music has the capability to create affective and emotional shifts. It can invite the body to take up specific modes of engagement (DeNora, 2000). Music and image together can similarly work on our bodies but their combination is potentially more intense. In girl teen film, music video aesthetics aim to create the physicality of dance. They promote an embodied engagement with the pleasures of energy, tension and release, control, freedom and mobility connected to music and dance. Like traditional musical numbers, music video sequences create experiences of expansion alongside the contradictory quality of confinement. Experiences of movement and change are fixed within a set of parameters, but they potentially feel good all the same.

In girl teen dance films the audio-viewer is invited to share in the joys of what bodies can do with music and dance. With a focus on rendering how the ideal body feels as it moves with music, music video sequences encourage kinaesthetic contagion. The pleasures of this type of kinaesthetic contagion, the feelings of music and dance, are encouraged, not only with the body on display but also with how the dancing body is rendered by the fusion of music and image. These spectacles do not necessarily focus on the specific moves that the body makes but on generating the impact of how it feels to move to music. This is significantly different to the musical numbers explored in the previous chapter (except the number from *Stick It*, which also uses music video aesthetics). The

musical moment in *Mean Girls* or the Record Hop in *Hairspray* (2007), for example, present routines that can be imitated by audio-viewers, and consequently frequently are.⁵⁴ Music video sequences in girl teen films are often less concerned with the pleasures of imitation and instead are constructed with a focus on the pleasures of muscular mimicry and kinaesthetic contagion. Though of course, many dance films aim to do both, in the girl teen film context, music video aesthetics are not just about presenting dance moves but concentrate on creating the feelings of dance and the pleasures of expansion, movement, control, and power, as well as admiration of the performance.

Make It Happen

As a means of illustration *Make It Happen* (Grant, 2008) offers a standard example of girl teen dance film and the music video sequence. Structured around set pieces of dance or burlesque, *Make It Happen* provides a narrative framework as motivation for each dance routine: having failed her audition to get into dance school, Lauryn (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) takes a job at burlesque club 'Ruby's'. The dance routines are integrated as club numbers or rehearsals, with each consciously employing a music video aesthetic, as director Darren

⁵⁴ See for example, a video tutorial of the *Mean Girls* 'Jingle Bell Rock' dance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8pyRFXxVTs>. Or a fan video of the 2007 Record Hop number at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My6oI2tYro0>.

Grant states: “each little dance routine was going to be like its own little music video” (‘The art of original filmmaking: Make It Happen,’ accessed, 2013).

Lauryn’s first performance at ‘Ruby’s’ provides a typical example. The pro-filmic elements of this spectacle include the space of the nightclub, the stage in particular, and the body of the Cinderella character-icon. The mise-en-scène of the sequence includes a highly stylised proscenium arch, strong back lighting and saturated colours (fig. 5.1). This is a texturally loaded, glamorous space. The scene is perceived through a colourful veil with the use of materials that play with light, and lighting schemes that involve pronounced uses of light and shadow.

Initially Lauryn struggles to perform successfully. The diegetic music is a smooth jazz number, too slow for the character’s form of dance. During this initial part of the scene mid to long shots dominate to let the character’s failure unfold. When the club DJ realises Lauryn’s predicament he switches the diegetic track to the hip-hop/r’n’b based ‘Shawty Get Loose’ (2008) by Lil Mama. The contrast between the two songs is central to the narrative of the scene. The use of music underscores the juxtaposition between maturity and youth. The jazz track has a swing beat that maintains a slow tempo, its lyrical flow emphasises a mature sophistication. ‘Shawty’ uses louder dynamics, the tempo is faster, the use of syncopation adds to the sense of speed, and the rap in the song stresses beat rather than lyrics. When the music changes the sequence shifts to create music

video aesthetics and at this point Lauryn manages to present a successful routine. Music video aesthetics create the spectacle and pleasures of a successful performance.

From the moment that 'Shawty' kicks in, the sequence is cut around the beat of the music. The intense sense of speed and immediacy emphasised by the tempo and syncopation of the track is met by the use of rapid cutting and close-ups. At points the scene is cut around a series of seemingly disconnected close-ups — not revealing the flow from one move to another but accentuating the general pulse of music and dance.



Figures 5.4 & 5.5, *Make it Happen*, moves are shown twice. Once at 24 frames per second and then in slow motion.

In places, the sequence abandons continuity to stress the rhythms of the music and make a further spectacle of specific dance tableaux. Similar to displays of spectacular physical feats in action cinema, consecutive shots show the same move twice: firstly at twenty-four frames per second and then in slow motion and from differing angles. The sequence also aims to generate feelings of movement and alternation, echoing the configurations of tension and release central to music and dance. Dirty long shots (in which heads and shoulders obscure parts of the shot) from the diegetic audiences' perspective act as counter shots to those close-ups on stage in conjunction with the counterpoint between melodies and beat in the song.

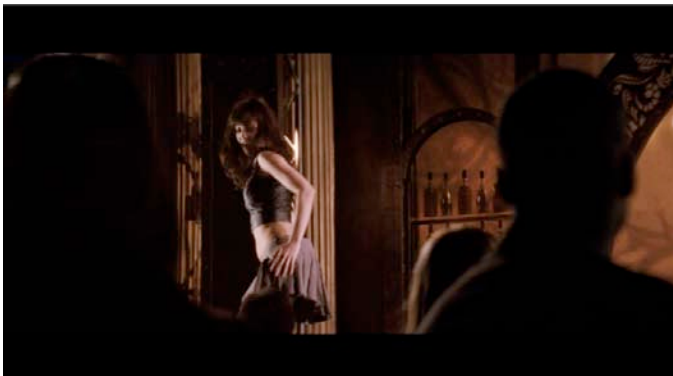


Figure 5.6 & 5.7, *Make it Happen*, close-ups and dirty long shots.

In *Make It Happen* music video aesthetics render an ideal body in control and generate the impact of a successful dance routine. The number is constructed with a focus on generating what it feels like to dance rather than displaying the specific choreography of the routine. Music and visuals work to generate kinaesthetic contagion, not with specific moves, but with the back-and-forth, tension and release, shift and swing of dance in general. The experience of pleasure in relation to music video aesthetics thus has less to do with the dance itself than with the intermedia relationship that creates an encounter with music and dance.

This dance number creates another form of modulation. The initial part of the scene sets up a contrast between maturity and youth, innocence and experience. The scene feels like 'becoming' but it is another expression of the combination of 'appropriate' contradictory qualities. Lauren is incapable of dancing to the 'overly' sophisticated jazz music that opens the scene, which requires movement that is too overtly sexual for a Cinderella character-icon, especially in a film that is certified as a PG in the UK. Befitting of the certification and the Cinderella character, Lauren's hip-hop dance is relatively tame. The use of the hip-hop track and music video aesthetics aim to give the routine a hint of sexuality, but not too much, and consequently create an 'appropriate' balance between innocence and experience. As I explained in the previous chapter, music and dance embody an affective tone and hip-hop is imbued with musical and dance

obscenity, not only (or necessarily) in lyrical content but also in the raced and gendered aesthetics of music and movement. Lauren's sexuality is expressed, not explicitly as we may expect in a burlesque context, but implicitly through the use of music. The combination of antinomies creates friction, the scene is dressed for glamour, and in combination the use of music video aesthetics create the feelings of music and dance: the scene aims to feel like change but is essentially another form of modulation.

13 Going on 30

Fundamentally music video aesthetics can be applied to any sort of action to create spectacular impact. Music video aesthetics can make even the most 'ordinary' activities feel like music and dance without including dancing bodies at all. Music video sequences that do not involve dance routines can still create kinaesthetic pleasures. In the context of girl teen films these techniques are often used to create a spectacle around 'unremarkable' practices of femininity.

13 Going on 30 provides an illustrative example of a music video sequence that utilises music video aesthetics to make a spectacle of the 'everyday'. The film follows Jenna who makes a wish on her thirteenth birthday and wakes up the next morning as a thirty year old. As I suggested in the thesis introduction the film is not strictly a girl teen film, its romantic comedy elements are of greater

central importance: Jenna's quest and 'happily ever after' pivot around her romance. More accurately the film can be described as a romantic comedy that includes many girl teen film elements. Two of which are the makeover and catwalk moments, structured around music video aesthetics.



Figure 5.8, *13 Going on 30*, music video cliché.

The sequence begins when Jenna — thirteen in the body of a thirty year old — gets ready for a party. This music video sequence is constructed to render the affects of music and dance but does not show dancing bodies. The loud dynamics of Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" (1987) signal that the spectacle has begun. The pro-filmic aspects of the spectacle in this sequence include, the domestic space of the flat, the body of the protagonist, and 'everyday' commodity fetishes: clothes, accessories, and make-up. The use of

music video aesthetics in this example lends impact to otherwise relatively 'ordinary' activities and objects. The scene is a makeover and catwalk moment that, without music video aesthetics, would simply show a character getting dressed and putting make-up on — lacking any of the necessary enchantment essential to Cinderella moments. In this example music video aesthetics are the magic conjured by the commercial sphere — taking the place of the fairy godmother's magic. With the use of music video aesthetics the commercial products that adorn the Cinderella character-icon and her moment of visibility become enchanted and her makeover leaves a physical impression on the body of the audio-viewer.

The music video sequence in *13 Going on 30* generates a sense of constant forward and upward movement. The movement of the music itself is uplifting but because the music does not work alone the movement that the music is "doing" (DeNora, 2000: 107) is intensified by its relationship with the image on screen. Despite the lack of dancing bodies in this sequence the combination of image and music invites the audio-viewer to enjoy the kind of kinaesthetic contagion that is experienced in response to the rhythm, energy and movement of the scene as a whole. Kinaesthetic contagion is in reaction to the pulse of the entire sequence, rather than just the character's individual movements.

The scene begins by inviting the audio-viewer to adopt a familiar embodied watching position: a responsiveness to music and images that is similar to that offered by conventional music video. The music begins in combination with a graphic match between the front door of Jenna's apartment and the frame of the open bathroom door (fig 5.8). The character emerges from billowing steam, reminiscent of the dry ice often used in music videos, making reference to a music video cliché. In combination the music introduction has a staggered entry of instruments — a build-up that gradually thickens the texture of the song. This visual and musical build-up acts as a transition point from classical continuity into the supra-diegetic space of the music video sequence, that aims to lead the audio-viewer into a mode of engagement that attends to the composite sensations of music and dance.

The sequence places a real emphasis on rhythm, with the aim of impacting upon the body of the audio-viewer. The synthesized handclap that opens "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" is layered with the cross-rhythm of a synth drum and piano that uses a repetitive, syncopated rhythm based on one note. This lack of melody at the beginning of the sequence places full weight on beat and rhythm. Composer Howard Goodall (2006) explains that rhythm is the element of music that reacts most immediately with our bodies — it is the component of music that most directly impels us to move. In this sequence beats explicitly hit on the cut or

in reference to movement in shot and the audio-viewer is invited to enjoy the kinaesthetic contagion of the musical and visual beat that the aesthetics create.



Figure 5.9, 13 *Going on 30*, onomatopoeic visuals.

A little further into the sequence synth horns join in with an emphatic glissando (a slide up in pitch), which is echoed in Houston's vocals, ('Woo!'). The accompanying image works as an onomatopoeic imitation of the exhilaration and upward movement of the song. The aural and visual movement on screen implies movement beyond what we see — in combination music and image suggest an exhilarated 'jump'. All of the synthesized instruments and visuals have a high and bright colour tone — even the bass is bright. The elements work together to generate an *upbeat*, creating energy infused, ascendant movement.

The flow of musical and visual movement invites the audio-viewer to experience the immediate pleasures of this energised, upward motion.

Finally, the construction of the sequence mirrors the configurations of tension and release fundamental to music and dance by emphasising call and response and creating an ascending/descending/ascending pattern. Houston's vocals and synthesizer use call and response throughout the verse, and the visuals correspond to the motion of the synthesizer to answer the vocals. This call and response maintains a sense of momentum, echoing the back and forth of dance.



Figures 5.10 & 5.11, 13 *Going on 30*, aural and visual build-up.

Visually and aurally the sequence also uses an ascending/descending/ascending pattern. As the song moves into its first verse and the visuals shift to a new location the dynamics become quieter and the pitch lower. In combination the camera tracks smoothly and the protagonist's body movements become relatively more fluid. At the end of the sequence the chorus kicks in with a horn slide. In combination the front door of the apartment opens and the camera

tracks back and jibs up the protagonist's body as she struts down the corridor towards the camera. The quieter dynamics in the verse and visuals previous to this moment provide the necessary contrast that highlights the spectacle of the chorus and strut down the corridor. The build-up between verse and chorus / makeover and catwalk, invite the audio-viewer to experience the patterns of tension and release key to music and dance.

Jenna's makeover and catwalk moment is double coded. Her excessively colourful costume and make-up is used for comic effect and consequently there is a discrepancy between the traditional makeover and this version of one. Jenna makes herself over in ways that makes fun with the idea of the sort of makeover a thirteen year old from the 1980s might perform. Nonetheless the affective impact of music video aesthetics maintains the enchantment of the catwalk moment. Where the magic of other Cinderella moments is rendered by clothes, accessories, make-up, and hair; the aesthetics of visibility or the spaces and places that surround her; performances of sports, singing, or dancing; music video aesthetics can make a spectacle and lend impact to any and all of these things.

Adding spectacle to spectacles



Figure 5.12, *Wild Child*, 'pop star line up'.

The makeover and catwalk moment in *Wild Child* makes appeals to its audience using all of the tactility, glamour and techniques of address common to girl teen films. The scene cuts in with a dance song, “Let me think about it’ by Ida Corr Vs Fedde Le Grand (2007). The sequence is cut to the beat of the track and movements in shot maintain and accentuate its fast tempo, syncopated rhythm and staccato beats. Music and image work together to emphasise a series of close-ups of commodity fetishes associated with femininity: lipstick, mascara, hair gel, and hair spray. These close-ups work in combination with the music by cutting in with the divisible offbeat — in the spaces of the song in which the beat does not fall where it should — consequently these images lend spectacle to the song and the music lends the images impact.



Figures 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 & 5.16, *Wild Child*, commodity fetishes.

The group of friends move in time together to the music (not exactly a dance): they strut and sway to the music like a pop group ready to perform, standing in formation at the top of a flight of stairs (fig.5.12). The staged staircase makes use of shimmering and layered surfaces and the play of light and shadow of glamorous spaces. The girls have undergone a self-devised glitzy makeover and the varied and abundant textures and colours add to the pleasurable tactility of the space that surrounds them. Similarly the quasi-magical material of hair (Warner, 1995: 372) is copiously present in different styles, colours and textures. Bringing with it its own particular type of uncanny and glamorous pleasures. As they strut down the stairs the scene uses a number of body tilts and the girls perform the effortless look back. Like the catwalk in *13 Going on 30* this moment is not actually witnessed by any diegetic characters, but the techniques of visibility render the experience as pleasurable all the same.

The basic shapes of girl teen films are given affective force through appeals to aesthetic pleasure. Music video aesthetics create encounters with impact and give further significance to these elements that contribute to the intimate public of girlhood, creating girl versions of 'fun'.



Figures 5.17 & 5.18, *Another Cinderella Story*, the cleaning number.

In *Another Cinderella Story* (Santostefano, 2008) the Cinderella character, Mary, is told to clean the house by her Wicked Stepmother. The film is a musical and consequently musical address introduces this as a 'cleaning number'. The opening bars of a non-diegetic pop song begin the shift into the musical's supra-diegetic space and the characters' movements become increasingly rhythmical. The space is eventually infected by the rhythms and freedoms of musical

address and everyday household items become part of the routine, lending the scene a sense of spontaneity (see Feuer, 1993: 3-7). The scene also uses music video aesthetics, making a further spectacle of the cleaning in the number. The scene is cut around the beat of the music and movements are coordinated with rhythm and melody. Some shots do not abide by classical continuity but are cut to emphasise the rhythm of the song. Music and image work together to make the cleaning 'fun'.



Figure 5.19, *Blue Crush*, music video aesthetics on the 'fun' surf.

Rendering the feelings of music and dance, the impact of music video aesthetics is physical. Its pleasures are kinaesthetic but in the context of girl teen film these aesthetics do not make appeals to the 'real' fleshiness of our muscle and sinew in the way that kinaesthetic contagion with the perceived body does (explored in chapter three). The kinaesthetic contagion that music video aesthetics invite

remains at the level of the ideal body. In *Blue Crush*, for example, music video aesthetics render the ideal surfing body. The 'Cruel Summer' sequence begins with a crash of waves in synchrony with the opening chords of the song: these techniques act as a curtain raise that leads the audio-viewer into the supra-diegetic space of the number. The scene is held together by the intermedia relationship of music and image. Structured by musical logic the scene is consistent, not through classical continuity, but through the music that weaves each shot together and makes post-continuity techniques such as speed ramping (a technique that shifts frame speed within a single shot) and sharp telescopic zooms, feel appropriate. These post-continuity techniques, combined with the beats and melody of the music, create an invitation to enjoy the high energy of the ideal, fun surf. The sequence makes appeals to the pleasures of sports flow as well as the movement of the dance on the waves that the characters perform, and the kinaesthetic contagion of the uplift and back and forth of the movement of music and image together. The scene lacks the weight of the perceived sports body but music video aesthetics give the sequence the impact of music and dance instead.



Figure 5.20, *Mean Girls*' house party.

Similarly in *Mean Girls*, when Cady holds a house party, music video aesthetics lend spectacle to a scene that would otherwise seem 'domestic'. The song 'Fire' by Joe Budden and Busta Rhymes structures the sequence. The front door of Cady's house opens on the hook of the song and a steadicam shot tracks in, through the party with the use of speed ramping. Edits hit on the beat and, as Cady walks through the party her movements work with the rhythm of the song whilst dancing bodies litter the frame. Mirroring the circularity of popular music, Cady and the camera come back to the front door and it opens again on the hook of the song. Without this intermedia relationship between music and visuals the scene would lack the necessary impact required to create the affective energy and attitude of the party.

It is significant that this music video sequence uses a Joe Budden/Busta Rhymes hip-hop track. The use of hip-hop lends the scene a sense of danger, transgression, and sexuality that it would otherwise lack. Through music black, masculine aesthetics are brought into the domestic, feminised, white, middle-class space of the suburbs. Part of the scene's pleasure is derived from the transgressive affective states that are contained within the safe space of the white suburban home and the subgenre of the girl teen film. It is worth noting here that all the music video sequences explored in this chapter, except the cleaning number in *Another Cinderella Story*, use hip-hop influenced music. The use of hip-hop is yet another way that girl teen films embody feelings of excitement, contained within a set of predetermined possibilities.

Conclusion

Girl teen films use post-continuity techniques that are usually associated with blockbusters and action cinema as a means of creating impact. These music video aesthetics invite the audio-viewer to experience the specific kinaesthetic pleasures of music and dance. Without necessarily presenting human bodies dancing these sequences themselves dance: rendering the sensations and pleasures of movement, tension and release fundamental to music and dance. Music video aesthetics are an intense example of the magic conjured by the

commercial sphere, through which the dress, the strut, the move, the dance, the look, the lipstick, and so forth, become meaningful, significant and compelling beyond their basic shapes. 'Girl fun' is limited, not only around the specific moments and "stuff" that creates the intimate public of girlhood but also around the kinds of pleasures and affects that it aims to generate. The kinds of pleasure that girl teen films offer are grounded in modulations that constantly play out feelings of innocence and experience, expansion and confinement. Music video aesthetics are another aesthetic dimension that explains how these modulations potentially feel good.

Conclusions

This thesis has explored the aesthetic pleasures of girl teen film in order to understand what kinds of pleasures, experiences, and versions of fun these films make available. The findings of this research demonstrate that the kinds of events and encounters created as 'appropriately' fun for girls are generally part of a normative model that stresses femininity as a bodily characteristic (Gill, 2007: 187) and visibility as the girl figures' only access to power and pleasure. My research into aspects of pleasure: textural abundance; a physical positive bodily attitude; feelings of promise, and ease; admiration, and experiences of flow; the power of the body; muscular bonding; energy, mobility, freedom, and expansion, also shows that these films make appeals to tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures and further affects that draw on embodiments of feelings of potential and possibility. These pleasures, I suggest, lend affective force to scenarios, activities, and actions that are restricted by gender 'norms'. In the most part girl teen films abide by traditional gender scripts. The films and their 'moments' are also generally organised by implicit exclusions and stereotypes connected to race, class, sexuality, and (dis)ability. Ideological implications are fundamental to understanding film but ideologies alone do not explain pleasure. By focusing on what pleasure is and how it is created this thesis has sought to understand what these films do, not in spite of or because of ideology but as well as.

Many scholars looking at teen film have argued against the aesthetic value of the genre and/or have simply ignored its aesthetic dimensions (for example Doherty, 2002; Driscoll, 2011; Shary, 2002, 2005). This thesis has sought to affirm the importance of aesthetics in relation to any film genre or form. I have argued that the aesthetics of girl teen films in the fun mode are ignored because the films are dismissed as 'ordinary', 'unremarkable', 'typical', 'feel good' comedy. These films are often considered more important for what they 'say' to and/or about youth, to and/or about girls. The aesthetics of these industrial Hollywood products that are organised by comedy and entertainment are overlooked as though comedy and a cheerful attitude or tone require no design. The less a film is considered to be art, the less it is treated as an aesthetic object. This academic disregard is also based on (and maintains) gender and class based pleasure hierarchies.

Historically, value is placed with discordant pleasures: those that disturb and subvert expectations. As I explored in the introduction and literature review these pleasure hierarchies are linked to scales of emotion by which pleasures, especially those placed at the 'fun' end of the continuum are disregarded as frivolous, trivial, immature, 'feminine', and associated with the 'subordinate classes'. In accord, similarly existing pleasure hierarchies dismiss certain types of pleasure, or pleasure itself entirely. This thesis has sought to understand pleasure from a different perspective. I do not claim that the aesthetics of girl teen films in the fun mode are secretly avant-garde or subversive, instead I argue

that 'ordinary' pleasures are worth looking at in their own right. Not to find feminism where there seems to be none (or little) but to shift focus and point out that girl teen films are doing more than just re-presenting patriarchal, postfeminist, and neoliberal ideologies. If we understand what these films create, we can understand their appeals, and explore 'feminine' forms of popular culture from an academic position that does not reinforce pleasure, aesthetic, and emotion hierarchies, but works outside of these gender and class based rankings as a means to undermine them. We can also understand *how* notions of fun that sit in accord with postfeminist and neoliberal ideologies potentially *feel* pleasurable.

Prioritising the sensory experiences that films are designed to generate, and the kinds of feelings that they aim to embody, this thesis has set out to examine how these films are composed to work as pleasurable entertainment. Taking this approach is a way of understanding how the version of girlhood that these films create is produced as pleasurable and how the films set parameters around the kinds of pleasure and fun deemed appropriate for girls. Chapter one therefore begins by exploring what version of girlhood these films create. It suggests that girl teen films produce a model of girlhood based on the Cinderella character-icon. This girl figure is organised by 'appropriately' balanced contradictory qualities of innocence and experience, expansion and confinement. Cinderella stories also emphasise visibility: the kinds of fun that the Cinderella character-

icon enjoys are about being seen. The films, as such, were analysed in relation to the kinds of activities and events around which visibility is created. In turn the kinds of surfaces that give these moments affective force were examined. The core chapters of the thesis were consequently structured by moments of visibility (catwalk, sports, singing and dancing) and the surfaces that make up these moments. The final chapter then examined in more detail how and why these moments are given affective force. The conclusions drawn from these chapters will be developed below.

This thesis is intended to contribute to disciplinary discussions in: Teen Film Studies, Girls Studies, and Feminist Film Theory. In addition, it provides research and methodological tools for analyses of film, pleasure and fun. Considerations of teen film aesthetics and interventions in how pleasure is assessed have been infrequent, and it is at the intersection between these that this thesis situates itself. Although the study of teen film is a growing field, the genre remains relatively underexplored. Where studies do take teen film on it tends to be from a generic film studies approach that aims to set boundaries around what teen film is; or from a sociological perspective that focuses on what the films say about youth. Scholarship in girl teen film has also suffered from a general disregard of girl culture as commercial and consequently trivial. On the other hand, Girls Studies that explore girl teen films are generally more concerned with how the girl figure represents postfeminist and neoliberal qualities. Furthermore aesthetic

analysis has gone underexplored because girl teen films have been approached as more important for what they say — how they reflect inequalities or ‘progressions’, how they are empowering or disempowering — rather than what they do. This thesis has attempted to enter the conversation from a different viewpoint.

The research contributes a study of the aesthetics of Hollywood teen film. It proposes a methodology that unpicks the construction of pleasure as a physical experience to understand the kinds of appeal these films aim to create around the girl figure on screen. The purpose of the combination of approaches and methods in the thesis is to keep the focus of the work on what films do, and how they are designed to generate pleasure. These approaches and methods are: Rushton’s (2013) proposed attitude that works from the premise that films create realities; Shaviro’s (2010) focus on the affective states that films aim to illicit; the various cross-modal approaches to cinema and sensation; Reason’s and Reynolds’ (2010) framework for exploring the plurality of kinaesthetic pleasures; Langer’s (1953) concept and Dyer’s (2002) interpretation of embodiments of feeling; Postrel’s (2003), Roach’s (2007), and Thrift’s (2008) emphasis on the ‘tug’ of aesthetic pleasures. Combined, these methods and approaches create a framework from which I have argued that ideologies do not explain pleasures but pleasures can explain why we are potentially drawn towards certain objects and the kinds of experiences these objects present. Taking this approach towards

girl teen film the thesis draws attention to the aesthetics of the subgenre to demonstrate that 'ordinary' Hollywood films are designed for affective force. Art cinema and big scale, aggressive action films are not the only types of film worth looking at from a sensory perspective.

Although this thesis has not focused on prescribing strict generic boundaries around girl teen film, it does identify elements that these films have in common and consequently contributes to studies of teen film as a genre. The commonalities across the films that I describe are: the version of girlhood created; the ways in which recurrent moments of visibility are constructed; the types of fun deemed appropriate for girls; and the kinds of pleasure on offer. With these points, I argue for the inclusion of the aesthetic dimensions of Hollywood girl teen films as a critical point of study.

Girls Studies have tended to focus on how the girl figure represents postfeminist and neoliberal qualities. Inverting this approach, the thesis has demonstrated how encounters with girlhood create postfeminist and neoliberal conditions and values as pleasurable. It has also suggested ways in which commercial girl culture creates experiences that ostensibly express what is common amongst girls. Engaging with the work of Berlant (2008), the thesis proposes that popular culture aimed at girls is often designed to give affective force to gender specific

notions of fun and in this way these products contribute to the intimate public of girlhood, appearing to cater to girls' supposedly shared interests and fantasies.

Feminist Film Theory has generally worked within the parameters of gender and aesthetic hierarchies. In opposition to mainstream Hollywood, Mulvey (1986: 209) championed art cinema to destroy the "pleasure and privilege of the 'invisible guest'". Feminist Film Theory has continued (from various positions) to recuperate some pleasures as subversive of patriarchal structures or denounce those that conform. The impetus of this thesis was to readdress pleasure from a position outside of patriarchal value versus pleasure oppositions, to disrupt notions of pleasure as part of a feminist 'common sense' and consequently let "aesthetic enjoyment speak" (Bowie, 2009: 253). In doing so I hoped to be able to understand the construction of this form of 'feminine' popular culture, the kinds of pleasures on offer and as such the kinds of pleasures Hollywood invites girls to enjoy. By this I do not mean to suggest that girls or even teens are the only or actual audience of these films. It seems safe nonetheless to suggest that these films are directed to an imagined girl who is invited to enjoy specific pleasures. Anyone, regardless of age or gender can take up or reject these pleasures. Boy teen films offer different moments of 'fun' and different kinds of pleasure but again these pleasures can be accepted or refused by anyone irrespective of age or gender.

Moments of 'girl fun' are made up of surfaces that appeal to tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures. These surfaces are: accessories, clothes, hair and skin; glamorous spaces and places; techniques of visibility; flesh — the phenomenal body; music; and intermedia aesthetics. These surfaces work together in various combinations but they were explored separately in the thesis as a means to draw out their specific pleasures. Examining each surface for the kinds of pleasure they encourage the thesis offers a way of understanding the pleasures of girl teen film. These pleasures are created by especially glamorous commercial magic and consequently Cinderella's surfaces invite a caressing gaze and a sensuous encounter with the abundance of textures on display in ways that appeal to our sensory understandings of shape, form, texture, and heft. The ways that Cinderella wears her costume also offers pleasures of kinaesthetic empathy: feeling in our own bodies an experience of her positive bodily attitude. Similarly, the spaces and places and techniques of visibility that surround Cinderella are texturally loaded and draw on pleasurable feelings generated by public intimacy, effortlessness, and practical inutility. Cinderella's phenomenal body is also a surface that invites kinaesthetic pleasures, and through kinaesthetic sympathy these films invite us to enjoy the admiration of virtuosity and a physical encounter with the ideal, perfectly composed body and its experience of flow. We can also take pleasure in the muscle and sinew of the body and the feelings of power it offers as it strains and pulls out into the world.

The body can also be experienced as part of a unit in girl teen films, and through kinaesthetic empathy the audio-viewer can enjoy an experience of muscular bonding and the pleasures of fellow feeling that come with it. Music also works on the body and girls singing and dancing solicits kinaesthetic contagion with the tension and release, energy, control, freedom, mobility, and expansion that the combination of music and the body creates. Similarly, the specific fusion of music and image in girl teen films' music video sequences offers up the pleasures of kinaesthetic contagion with what it feels like to dance.

These surfaces also create pleasurable embodiments of feeling. The Cinderella character-icon is a version of girlhood constructed primarily by the contradictory qualities of innocence and experience, expansion and confinement. The character and the surfaces that make her, embody these qualities, creating in their combination feelings of promise and possibility. In its design the traditional Cinderella costume, for example, holds these antinomies in a seemingly perfect balance to create this sense of promise. A characteristic of celebrity glamour is also the embodiment of antinomies. Celebrity glamour presents just enough for us to project our desires and fantasies into, but it veils or holds back just enough to also embody contradictory qualities and stave off disillusionment, again creating feelings of possibility. Similarly, the ways that the body is created as surface in these films, in sports, singing, and dancing, creates feelings of freedom: of moving through the world unhindered, of expansion, stretching the

body out and filling up space. In their moments of 'fun', girl teen films embody feelings of movement and change.

These feelings suggest more than they offer. The girl figure in these films is presented as though she expresses boundless transformation. As cited in chapter one, fairy tale is defined by metamorphosis but despite their fairy tale influences, girl teen films are defined by modulation. Where metamorphosis gives the impression that anything could happen (Shaviro, 2010: 13), that the possibilities of girlhood are limitless, modulation in comparison, as Deleuze (1992: 4) describes, presents forms of free-floating control. Modulation is an incessantly shifting grid that creates states of steady metastability: "like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point." (Ibid). Girl teen films create forms of modulation: allowing for feelings of variety, difference, movement, and change, whilst maintaining an underlying fixity. Shaviro's (2010: 13) description of the modulations in a Grace Jones music video conveys perfectly what girl teen film does: it "resists the very transformations that it also expresses."

Where, in traditional fairy tale anything really can happen, girl teen films feel like metamorphosis but are fixed to a grid that creates a very specific version of

girlhood.⁵⁵ The frictions and fusions of innocence and experience create intensities but the Cinderella character-icon has to get the balance 'right'. Cinderella shifts between the body of common clay and the body of pure magic, between innocence and experience but she does not really move, she is restricted by her balancing act. Consequently, although Cinderella's costume may feel like transformation it is really a uniform of femininity. Similarly, despite feeling like potential, glamour in this context surrounds a fixed version of girlhood. Glamour makes visibility feel pleasurable, maintaining the importance of the spectacle of the self for girls, and lends excitement to the institutional spaces and private sphere that help to create this version of girlhood. As I have suggested, the body as a surface in these films can feel like expansion but this stretching out is within gender specific boundaries. Music acts as a prosthetic, pushing the body beyond its everyday limits but the girl figure's expansion is contained within 'feminine', 'everyday' spaces. Likewise, girl teen films intermedia aesthetic lends affective force to the Cinderella character-icon, but those things given weight are spectacles of the self and/or contained within the private sphere.

As I have made clear throughout the thesis I do not suppose that the pleasures presented by girl teen films are necessarily taken up. Like fairy tales, these films require enchantment: complicity from the audience that goes along with the

⁵⁵ I am not suggesting that fairy tales are necessarily radical, but the genre's unquestioned magic and matter of fact delivery mean that it has freedoms that girl teen films do not.

illusion put forward. Girl teen films' surfaces create pleasures and they also invite us to take up the attitude of enchantment. Enchantment is an attitude cultivated by specific techniques — a comportment that we are invited to adopt. Like the 'Once Upon a Time' of fairy tale, girl teen films use its surfaces as markers of enchantment that call forth this attitude. Through the presentation of accessories, clothes, hair, and skin these films ask us to go along with the promise of commercial magic. They aim to elicit an attitude that unquestioningly accepts that these things offer a new and better life in the worlds of girl teen film: that the right clothes or hair can create change. For enchantment to work the audio-viewer does not have to *believe* these things, nor do they have to want to wear Cinderella's gown or look like her (though they could), but they do need to go along, temporarily, with the promise that commercial magic presents. Glamour is a form of enchantment that these films rely on. Through the techniques that create glamour the audio-viewer is asked to go along with, for example, the impression that being looked at means something, that it is important, or the illusion that shadow obscures the less salubrious elements of a space or place. In the sports performance the body as surface invites us to indulge the compositions of perfection that these moments create: to go along, momentarily, with the illusion of the body as pure magic that performances of the ideal body produce. The musical number and music video sequences thrive on and invite us to go along with, the miracle of freedom that music and musical

address seems to create. As I have suggested throughout, where these sentiments may seem too mawkish or 'already said', double coding makes enchantment easier. The audio-viewer of girl teen films does not have to necessarily subscribe to the worldview that these films produce but they do have to adopt an attitude of enchantment to enjoy the pleasures that they offer.

Future research

Having re-positioned the Cinderella story and character-icon as essentially about pleasure, this thesis has presented a practical model for exploring how pleasure is designed. Focusing on tactility and kinaesthetics, 'Cinderella's Pleasures' offers a way to take account of the physical pleasures that costume on screen invites the audio-viewer to enjoy. This approach provides an example that could be employed in future research in relation to film surfaces. The aesthetic pleasures of hair, for example, offer an intriguing topic. Like clothes, hair has distinct social significance but as Postrel (2002: 98) points out, our reactions to it are foremost visceral (also see Warner, 1995: 372). Girl teen films often present hair in ways that make the most of its variations. In *Mean Girls* it is no coincidence that the Plastics have different hair colours: it does not just signify their differences it also makes of them, together, a scene of textural, colourful abundance. As Roach (2007: 117) suggests, hair has magical power greater

than clothes or accessories, because it is both. Hair is an uncanny material that grows but can be cut, it survives decay, and it is a surface but also an intimate part of a person (see Roach 2007, Thrift, 2008, Warner, 1995). Hair also embodies contradictory qualities: it is animalistic but grooming it is social, it is fragile but also strong (Warner, 1995: 373). Hair can also have other glamorous qualities: when the Cinderella character-icon presents a seeming effortless aptitude to control her hair (for example, as it seems to respond gracefully to its own, isolated wind machine as she struts down corridors), her hair adds to her glamour. It should be no surprise then that when Regina in *Mean Girls* by increments loses her power, her hair is gradually pulled back into tighter hairstyles. Regina's hair signifies her power, sexuality, and eventual containment but it also creates a physical impression of the character's glamour and her diminution. As we can see the aesthetic pleasures of hair have a lot to offer in regards to future research, not to mention the permutations of hair colour, the power of blonde hair, and the relationships between hair, race, class, and sexuality in the girl teen film context. Likewise an exploration of the presentation of skin as a glamorous surface could yield an interesting study.

'Celebrity glamour' deconstructs the component parts of celebrity in the worlds of girl teen film: a model that establishes the kinds of fun deemed appropriate for girls in the Hollywood version of girlhood. This chapter also describes a profile of celebrity glamour, identifies the typologies of glamorous space and place, and

defines the slow motion scene of visibility. In doing so this chapter provides a way of understanding how glamour is constructed and the kinds of pleasure it is used to produce. The models provided in 'celebrity glamour' can be utilised for future research to explore other glamorous surfaces in these films. A potentially interesting comparison would be to examine if and how celebrity glamour is created in the worlds of boy teen film? How and why are the typologies of glamorous space and place different? What is the boy equivalent of the slow motion scene of visibility? The framework also presents a way of examining the component parts of celebrity in other forms of popular culture aimed at girls. Combining elements of celebrity studies and film studies instigates questions that straddle the two disciplines. Do other media aimed at girls rely on structures of celebrity in the same way?

In 'Sporting Pleasures', I provide an overview of the strategies employed in the films to present the active, sporting girl body and the range of kinaesthetic pleasures that these strategies invite the audio-viewer to enjoy. It also offers an examination of how girl teen films create experiences of muscular bonding between girls. As I suggested, this muscular bonding is not at odds with the animosities apparent between female characters: it exists in addition, as something else to enjoy. Regarding girl teen films from these perspectives puts forward possible avenues of research that ask whether similar strategies are employed to present the active boy body in boy teen films? What are the

implications of the ways that the boy body is utilised as a surface? Is muscular bonding employed as an experience in boy teen films? Where else (if at all) do we get an experience of muscular bonding in girls or women's culture? What do these experiences contribute to these other media?

Girl teen films involve lots of physical comedy. Reason and Reynolds' (2010) kinaesthetic pleasures, explored here in relation to the surfaces of girl teen film, provide a framework for exploring and understanding the pleasures of other forms of activity in film. One particularly relevant area of further exploration would be the kinaesthetic pleasures of comedy and its development by different actors and filmic bodies. How is physical comedy designed to work on the body of the audio-viewer and what impact does this have on the kinds of pleasure on offer? In *House Bunny*, for example, Anna Farris' performance of Shelley engages with what Lori Landay (2002) calls a "ludic kinaesthetic": a playful embodiment of femininities, expressed and experienced in the body of the audio-viewer. In a scene in which Shelley goes on her first date outside of the Playboy mansion, she attempts to impress her love interest by mimicking Marilyn Monroe in *The Seven Year Itch* (Wilder, 1955). Tottering on high heels, Shelley steps on top of a manhole and steam pushes her dress up, but it also burns her legs and consequently she hollers, swears, and grimaces.



Figures 8.1 & 8.2, *The House Bunny*, kinaesthetic comedy.

The disparity between her intention and its failure creates humour, but her movements also invite us to experience the comedy physically. We can potentially enjoy a visceral awareness of the physical play that Shelley/Anna enacts. Her bodily comportment, facial expressions, and gestures are over exaggerated. The switch between her excessive physical performance of femininity and her sudden awkward movements and unwieldy body, offers an

embodied experience of the physical comedy on display. Girl teen films provide a potential site for exploring the pleasures of physical comedy in 'feminine' forms of popular culture, and comedy presents another place from which to approach girl teen film.

Examining how music and dance are used in the films studied, the chapter on 'Musical Address' detailed the sanitised aesthetic mode of millennial girl teen films that, in part, explains their cheerfully affective attitude. I suggested that any sense of sexuality that the films create is often achieved through musical and dance obscenity, whilst the films still retain a highly polished finish. The chapter also pointed to the ways that music works on the body of the audio-viewer and acts as a prosthetic that, through kinaesthetic empathy, allows us to enjoy physical expansion beyond everyday limits. The research in this chapter points towards a number of questions that could be developed from here: is music and dance obscenity always related to race, and how else is it employed in girls' culture? Is musical obscenity exploited in boy teen films and what does this tell us about gender and race dynamics in teen film? How is music used in boy teen films to work on the body of the audio-viewer? Is it utilised to offer different kinds of pleasure? How do boy teen films use musical numbers, and to what narrative and pleasurable purposes?

'Music video aesthetics' offers a practical account of the intermedia relationship between music and image employed in the films studied. This chapter provides a breakdown of spectacle that illustrates the genre and gender specific construction of spectacle and utilisation of post-continuity techniques. This chapter established the different ways that post-continuity stylistics are brought into play: comparing the gaming aesthetic of a boy teen film fight sequence to that of the dance aesthetic in girl teen films. These findings again raise some questions. In what other ways are post-continuity techniques used in boy teen films? What else do they aim to make a spectacle of? What else do they lend affective force? Are music video aesthetics used in other 'feminine' forms of popular culture and to what purpose? In these other contexts to what do they lend affective force? This chapter also establishes the idea of the intimate public of girlhood and raises a number of questions from this perspective: how do other modes of girl teen film contribute to the intimate public of girlhood? What do the modes share in common and in what ways do they diverge in their expressions of what is ostensibly common to girls? The romantic mode shares with its fun cousin the pleasures of visibility. In the first *Twilight* (Harwicke, 2008) film, for example, the denouement centres on a dress, a prom, and a dance. It is the romance however, with which affective force is placed. What other crossovers are there, and how does mode impact upon the inflections of pleasure and affect?

This thesis has identified a number of commonalities across girl teen films in the ways that cinematography is employed. Exploring music video aesthetics, for example, identified specific post-continuity techniques designed to generate impact. A further potential avenue for future research could develop this focus on cinematography. It is interesting to note that a number of cinematographers that work on the films explored here are predominantly employed to shoot other forms of exploitation film. Generic positioning and an industrial blueprint for how exploitation films of this kind are shot influence the look and feel of girl teen films. Exploitation films are made on a substandard budget, exploit fads, and are made with clear promotional tie-ins in mind. Daryn Okada, for example, who is director of photography for both *Mean Girls* and *Stick It* is also DoP for the horror-comedy *Lake Placid* (Miner, 1999) as well as *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Hurwitz & Schlossberg, 2008), amongst other exploitation films. What are the connections in the cinematography of these related exploitation films and girl teen film, what they aim to 'do', and the kinds of pleasures they invite?

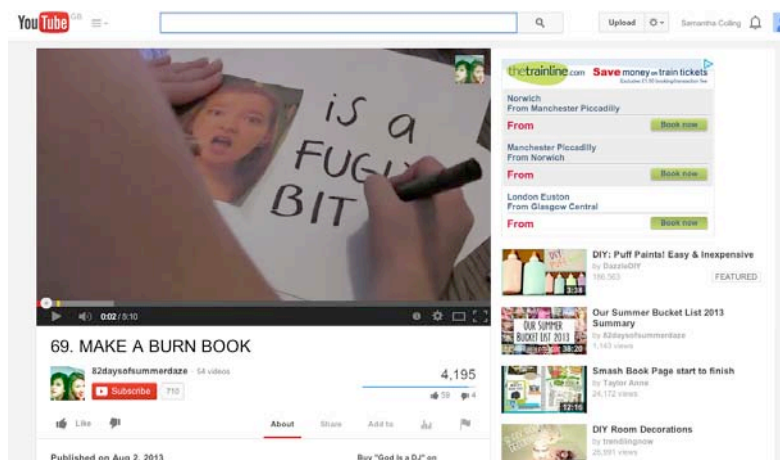
As the thesis is structured by moments of 'fun' and their surfaces, it offers a potential model for other studies of pleasure and fun in 'feminine' film genres in the fun mode. In what ways does a makeover film such as *The Devil Wears Prada* (Frankel, 2006), for example, offer similar experiences? Is the Cinderella character-icon any different to her teen film counterpart, or do these older

characters embody the same kinds of antinomies, simply situated within an adult landscape? What is representative of 'woman fun' in this kind of mainstream, Hollywood context and do these films utilise similar strategies to generate pleasure? Essentially, what kinds of pleasure do they invite us to enjoy? Likewise it would be interesting to consider whether a film such as *The Devil Wears Prada* relies on the same mode of enchantment and creates the same forms of modulation as girl teen films? Some films sit on the borderlands of teen film, asking of these films the same questions that the thesis has put would tell us more about how Hollywood constructs fun and creates pleasure.

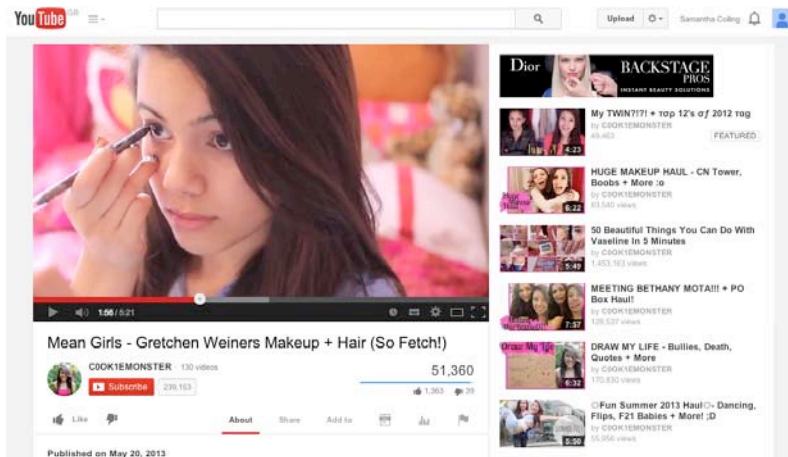
Amy Heckerling is turning *Clueless* into a stage 'jukebox' musical set in the original *Clueless* time period of the mid-1990s (Jones, 2009; Vineyard, 2012). As a 1990s predecessor to the films studied here it is significant that *Clueless* is recognisable as a film that 'feels' like a musical. Opening on Broadway in 2007 'Legally Blonde: the musical' is still on tour. 'Bring it on: the musical' (2011-) has also enjoyed a Broadway run, and *Mean Girls* creator Tina Fey is currently writing a stage musical version of the film (Vineyard, 2013). The mode of enchantment described in this thesis and the utilisation of musical address techniques explains why girl teen films often 'feel' like a musical, even when they do not generically fit into the musical category. The number of girl teen films that have been adapted for the musical stage opens up another set of questions relevant to this thesis: in what ways do the stage versions emulate or prolong the

pleasures that the films offer? What is the relationship between the film pleasures and those of stage performance? What other connections are there between girl teen films and musicals? Do they engage with a similar audience?

These stage musicals also point towards other ways in which audiences engage with girl teen films as part of extra-textual practices. Girl teen films in the fun mode do not seem to lend themselves especially to extensive fan practices in the same ways that films such as *Twilight* do. However, films like *Bring it On* and *Mean Girls* have garnered a good deal of fan video tributes. Fans of *Mean Girls* have been especially prolific, creating, for example, online video tutorials that describe how to make a 'burn book', how to copy Gretchen Weiners makeup, and mock-up trailers for 'Mean Girls 3'.⁵⁶



⁵⁶ See for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZ2w5kLawww>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Xlx9op84CE>,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3FFxeD3o_k



Figures 8.3 & 8.4, *Mean Girls* and extra-textual practice.

Mean Girls, *Bring It On*, *Legally Blonde*, (and *Clueless*) have also been presented in cinemas in recent years as part of ‘quote a long’ screenings.⁵⁷ These events indicate language as another key pleasure of these films and demonstrate some of the ways that pleasures are prolonged and enjoyed collectively. An examination of extra-textual practices in relation to girl teen films could help to address another set of questions relevant to this thesis: what pleasures, evident in the films, do extra-textual practices aim to draw out or build on? What do they tell us about pleasures beyond film surfaces?

⁵⁷ See for example:

<http://www.princecharlescinema.com/events/events.php?seasonanchor=meangirls>,

<http://www.princecharlescinema.com/events/events.php?seasonanchor=bringiton>,

<http://drafhhouse.com/movies/bring-it-on-cheer-along/austin>,

<http://www.princecharlescinema.com/events/events.php?seasonanchor=legallyblonde>

The sports film *Whip It* (Barrymore, 2009) complicates the subgenre boundaries I have set up around girl teen film and consequently raises some interesting questions. It is a girl teen film that works in the fun mode, and produced by Drew Barrymore's Flower Films and distributed by Fox, it is a Hollywood production. The film includes a Cinderella character-icon, moments of visibility, and sports performance. All the same the film does not sit neatly with those explored in the thesis. Although it is a comic, 'feel good' film, it does not enact the same cheerfully affective attitude or tone. The film creates a post-punk stylistic and highlights a different kind of glamour; its surfaces are a little grimmer and less polished. In practical terms the genre boundaries that I have set up were intended to act as markers that limit the study and highlight the kinds of pleasures Hollywood offers girls. *Whip It* points out that genres are fluid, but rather than argue around what those boundaries are I suggest that it would be more useful to ask whether the kinds of experience this film (and any like it) makes available are the same? Does a film like *Whip It* ask us to go along with the same kinds of enchantment? Does the film maintain the same version of girlhood in a different guise, or does it create transformations?

Looking at girl teen films from this perspective alludes to other questions and areas of possible research for which this thesis offers a potential starting point. Girl teen films in the 'indie' mode often invite us to enjoy different kinds of pleasure but 'indie' is a relatively arbitrary label. Is it possible to ask of these

films the same kinds of questions? If 'fun' is not the central concern of girl teen films in the 'indie' mode, what is? Do these films present a consistent version of girlhood? What kinds of experience do they offer? What kinds of pleasure? How do the surfaces that make up the 'indie' mode compare and to what do they lend affective force? I do not expect that there are any easy answers to these questions. Moving outside of Hollywood models means that direct parallels will not necessarily work in this context. Nonetheless, in raising questions about genre and gender specific pleasures in ways that do not compound aesthetic and pleasure hierarchies the thesis offers a point of reference for exploring how girlhood is created elsewhere.

In 'Sporting Pleasures' I made passing reference to the questions around looking relations that girl teen films raise. In a 2012 thesis, Katherine Hughes explores the dynamics of looking relations between teens in film and the queer possibilities that teen friendships present. Hughes' work details the representational strategies that position teen friendships in a liminal and queer space. Focusing on dyadic teen friendships in film, Hughes demonstrates how the boundaries between homosociality and homosexuality are maintained and transgressed "under the heteronormative surface" (2012: 237). This work, which provides a model for studies of friendships in film, could also be built on to explore the aesthetic dimensions of teen film friendships and relationships. What could the notion of muscular bonding, for example, add to Hughes' analysis of the ways

that girl teen characters often mirror their friends/frenemies in attempts to gain admiration? How and what do tactile and kinaesthetic pleasures add to the queer possibilities that teen films present?

In a similar vein it would be interesting to come at girl teen films from an alternative character perspective. In 'Breaking the Disney Spell', Jack Zipes (1999: 349) criticises Disney fairy tale heroines, suggesting that "despite their beauty and charm, these figures are pale and pathetic compared to the more active and demonic [female] characters." These 'demonic' characters, he proposes, represent erotic and subversive forces that are more appealing to audiences (ibid). The characters that Zipes describes that sit in opposition to the Disney 'princess', his witches and wicked stepsisters, are reincarnated in girl teen films as "bitches" (Wood, 2003: 314). The 'bitch' can be an actual wicked stepsister character or the most popular girl in high school, but her powers always stem from her appearance: a masquerade of excessive femininity that, in narrative terms, positions the character as 'inauthentic', manufactured, hyperfeminine, villainous, and power hungry: a position that is ultimately punished (see Gwynne, 2013; Marston, 2012; Wood, 2003). Significantly millennial girl teen films have sometimes combined Cinderella and the 'bitch', or try to redeem the 'bitch' character. In *Mean Girls*, Cady gets to be both, although it is obviously to her Cinderella role that she has to return at the end. In what ways is the 'bitch' character potentially more appealing than the Cinderella

character-icon in aesthetic terms? In what ways is she interesting, not just for what she means but also in terms of what she creates? What kinds of aesthetic pleasure does this girl offer and what types of experience?

This conclusion has raised a lot of questions because the thesis has pursued a line of enquiry that has tried to see pleasure in a new light. Understanding how girl teen films are designed with specific pleasures in mind introduces a way of looking at film that explains some of the reasons why we may be drawn towards certain objects, and how they are designed to 'tug' at us, but does not insist that what we like is tied to what we are like. This thesis offers a practical model for a new methodological approach and a new attitude to girl teen films.

Filmography

10 Things I Hate About You (1999), Gil Junger, USA, Buena Vista

13 Going on 30 (2004), Gary Winick, USA, Sony Pictures

16 Wishes (2010), Peter DeLuise, USA, Disney Channel

A Cinderella Story (2004), Mark Rosman, USA, Warner Brothers

A Clockwork Orange (1971), Stanley Kubrick, UK, Warner Bothers

A Star is Born (1954), George Cukor, USA, Warner Brothers

A Walk To Remember (2002), Adam Shankman, USA, Warner Brothers

All Over Me (1997), Alex Sichel, USA, Fine Line

Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging (2008), Gurinda Chadha, UK, Paramount

Another Cinderella Story (2008), Damon Santostefano, USA, Warner Brothers

Aquamarine (2006), Elizabeth Allen, USA/AU, Twentieth-Century Fox

Beach Blanket Bingo (1965), William Asher, USA, American International Pictures

Beach Party (1963), William Asher, USA, American International Pictures

Bend it Like Beckham (2002), Gurinda Chandha, UK, Helkon SK

Bikini Beach (1964), William Asher, USA, American International Pictures

Blackboard Jungle (1955), Richard Brooks, USA, Warner Bothers

Blue (1993), Derek Jarman, USA, Zeitgeist Films

Blue Crush (2002), John Stockwell, USA, Universal

Bratz: the movie (2007), Sean McNamara, USA, Lionsgate/Momentum

The Breakfast Club (1985), John Hughes, USA, Universal Pictures

Bring it On: all or nothing (2006), Steve Rash, USA Universal

Bring it On (2000), Peyton Reed, USA, Universal

Bring it on Again (2004), Damon Santostefano, USA, Universal

Bring it On: fight to the finish (2009), Billie Woodruff, USA, Universal

Bring it On: in it to win it (2007), Steve Rash, USA, Universal

Black Swan (2010), Darren Aronofsky, USA, Twentieth-Century Fox

Burlesque (2010), Steve Antin, USA, Screen Gems/Sony Pictures

Bullet Boy (2004), Saul Dibb, UK, Verve Pictures

Bullit, (1968), Peter Yates, USA, Warner Brothers

Cadet Kelly (2002), Larry Shaw, USA, Disney Channel

Camp Rock (2008), Matthew Diamond, USA, Disney Channel

Centre Stage (2000), Nicholas Hytner, USA, Columbia Pictures

Centre Stage: Turn It Up (2008), Steven Jacobson, USA, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Cinderella (1950), Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

The Clique (2008), Michael Lembeck, USA, Warner Bothers

Clueless (1995), Amy Heckerling, USA, Paramount

Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen (2004), Sara Sugarman, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Cruel Intentions (1999), Roger Kumble, USA, Columbia Pictures

Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo (1999), Mike Mitchell, USA, Buena Vista Pictures

Dirty Dancing (1987), Emile Ardolino, USA, Vestron Pictures

Drive Me Crazy (1999), John Shultz, USA, Twentieth-Century Fox

Drop Dead Gorgeous (1999), Michael Patrick Jann, USA, New Line Cinema

Easter Parade (1948), Charles Walters, USA, MGM

Easy A (2010), Will Gluck, USA, Sony Pictures

Ella Enchanted (2004), Tommy O'Haver, USA, Miramax

Fame (2009), Kevin Tanchareon, USA, MGM

Freaky Friday (1979), Gary Nelson, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Freak Friday (2003), Mark Waters, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Flashdance (1983), Adrian Lyne, USA, Paramount

Footloose (1984), Herbert Ross, USA, Paramount

Foxes (1980), Adrian Lyne, USA, United Artists

Foxfire (1996), Annette Haywood-Carter, USA, The Samuel Goldwyn Company

Funny Face (1957), Stanley Donen, USA, Paramount

Gidget (1959), Paul Wendkos, USA, Columbia Pictures

Gidget Goes Hawaii (1961), Paul Wendkos, USA, Columbia Pictures

Gidget Goes to Rome (1963), Paul Wendkos, USA, Columbia Pictures

Gidget Grows Up (1969), James Sheldon, USA, ABC

Gidget Gets Married (1972), E.W. Shwackhamer, USA, ABC

Gidget's Summer Reunion (1985), Bruce Bilson, USA, Columbia Television

Ginger Snaps (2000), John Fawcett, CAN, Motion International

Girls Just Want to Have Fun (1985), Alan Metter, USA, New world Pictures

Girls Town (1996), Jim McKay, USA, October Films

Ghost in the Invisible Bikini (1966), Don Weis, USA, American International Pictures

Hairspray (1988), John Waters, USA, New Line Cinema

Hairspray (2007), Adam Shankman, USA, New Line Cinema

Hannah Montana: the movie (2009), Peter Chelsom, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay (2008), Jon Hurwitz & Hayden Schlossberg, USA, New Line Cinema

Heathers (1988), Michael Lehmann, USA, New world Pictures

Her Best Move (2007), Norm Hunter, USA, Disney Channel

Herbie: Fully Loaded (2005), Angela Robinson, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

High School Musical (2006), Kenny Ortega, USA, Disney Channel

High School Musical 2 (2007), Kenny Ortega, USA, Disney Channel

High School Musical 3: senior year (2008), Kenny Ortega, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

The House Bunny (2008), Fred Wolf, USA, Columbia Pictures

How She Move (2007), Ian Iqbal Rashid, USA/CAN, Paramount Vantage

How to Stuff a Wild Bikini (1965), William Asher, USA, American International Pictures

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry (2007), Dennis Dugan, USA, Universal Pictures

Ice Princess (2005), Tim Fywell, USA, Buena Vista

Ice Castles (2010), Donald Wrye, USA, Sony Pictures

The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love (1995), USA, Fine Line

Jawbreaker (1999), Darren Stein, USA, Columbia TriStar

John Tucker Must Die (2006), Betty Thomas, USA, Twentieth-Century Fox

Josie and the Pussycats (2001), Harry Elfont, USA, Universal Pictures

Kill Bill, Vol. 1 (2003), Quentin Tarantino, USA, Miramax

Kill Bill, Vol. 2 (2004), Quentin Tarantino, USA, Miramax

Lake Placid (1999), Steve Miner, USA, Twentieth-Century Fox

Legally Blonde (2001), Robert Luketic, USA, MGM

Life-Size (2000), Mark Rosman, USA, ABC

Little Darlings (1980), Roland Maxwell, USA, Paramount

Little Nicky (2000), Steven Brill, USA, New Line Cinema

The Lizzie McGuire Movie (2003), Jim Fall, USA, Buena Vista

Make It Happen (2008), Darren Grant, USA, The Mayhem Project

Material Girls (2006), Martha Coolidge, USA, MGM

Mean Girls (2004), Mark Waters, USA, Paramount

Meet Me in St. Louis (1944), Vincent Minnelli, USA, MGM

Muscle Beach Party (1964), William Asher, USA, American International Pictures

My Life As a Dog (1985), Lasse Hallstrom, SWE, Svensk Filmindustri

Never Back Down (2008), Jeff Wadlow, USA, Summit Entertainment

Never Been Kissed (1999), Roja Gosnell, USA, Fox

Not Another Teen Movie (2001), Joel Gallen, USA, Columbia Pictures

On the Town (1949), Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly, USA, MGM

Pajama Party (1964), Don Weis, USA, American International Pictures

The Piano (1993), Jane Campion, AUS, Miramax

Picture This (2008), Stephen Herek, USA, MGM

Pretty in Pink (1986), Howard Deutch, USA, Paramount

Pretty Persuasion (2005), Marcos Siega, USA, Samuel Goldwyn Films

The Prince and Me (2004), Martha Coolidge, USA, Paramount

The Princess Diaries (2001), Garry Marshall, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Princess Diaries 2 (2004), Garry Marshall, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Princess Protection Programme (2009), Allison Liddi, USA, Disney Channel

Raise Your Voice (2004), Sean McNamara, USA, New Line Cinema

Rebel Without A Cause (1955), Nicholas Ray, USA, Warner Brothers

Save the Last Dance (2001), Thomas Carter, USA, MTV Films/Paramount Pictures

Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet (1996), Baz Luhrmann, USA, Twentieth-century Fox

She's All That (1999), Robert Iscove, USA, Miramax Films

She's the Man (2006), Andy Fickman, USA, Dreamworks

Singin' in the Rain (1952), Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly, USA, MGM

Sixteen Candles (1984), John Hughes, USA, Universal

Slap Her She's French (2002), Melanie Mayron, USA, ContentFilm

Sleepover (2004), Joe Nussbaum, USA, MGM

Some Kind of Wonderful (1987), Howard Deutch, USA, UIP

The Sound of Music (1965), Robert Wise, USA, Twentieth-Century Fox

Step Up 2: the streets (2008), Jon Chu, USA, Summit Entertainment

StreetDance (2010), Max Giwa, UK, BBC Films

Superbad (2007), Greg Mottola, Columbia Pictures

St Trinians (2007), Oliver Parker & Barnaby Thompson, UK, Entertainment Film Distributors

St Trinians 2: the legend of Fritton's gold (2009), Oliver Parker & Barnaby Thompson, UK, Entertainment Film Distributors

Starstruck (2010), Michael Grossman, USA, Walt Disney Pictures

Stick It (2006), Jessica Bendinger, USA, Spyglass Entertainment/Touchstone Pictures

Sugar and Spice (2001), Francine McDougall, USA, New Line Cinema

Sydney White (2007), Joe Nussbaum, USA, Morgan Creek/Universal

Thirteen (2003), Catherine Hardwicke, USA, Fox Searchlight

Times Square (1980), Allan Moyle, USA, Associated Films

Toy Story (1995), John Lasseter, USA, Buena Vista Pictures

Trainspotting (1996), Danny Boyle, UK, Channel Four Films

Twilight (2008), Catherine Hardwicke, USA, Summit Entertainment
Water Lilies (2007) Celine Sciamma, FR, Haut et Court
What a Girl Wants (2003), Dennie Gordon, USA, Warner Brothers
Where the Boys Are (1960), Henry Levin, USA, MGM
Wild Child (2008), Nick Moore, UK, Universal Pictures
Wild Wild Winter (1966), Lennie Weinrib, USA, Universal Pictures
Yolanda and the Thief (1945), Vincent Minnelli, USA, MGM

Television

American Idol (2002-), USA, Fox Network
Dancelife (2007-), USA, MTV Networks
Gidget (1965-1966), USA, ABC
Gilmore Girls (2000-2007), USA, WB Television Network
Hannah Montanna (2006-2011), USA, Disney Channel
Made (2002-), USA, MTV Networks
So You Think You Can Dance (2005-), USA, Fox Network
Supernatural (2005-), USA, Warner Brothers Television
Veronica Mars (2004-2007), USA, UPN
X Factor (2004-), UK, ITV

Music

Cruel Summer (remix) (2002), Blestination/Bananarama, Warner
Fire (2003), Joe Budden, Def Jam
Good Morning Baltimore (2007), Nikki Blonsky, New Line
I Wanna Dance With Somebody (1987), Whitney Houston, Arista

Jingle Bell Rock (1957) Joe Beal & Jim Boothe, Decca Records

Ladies' Choice (2007), Zac Efron, New Line

Let Me Think About It (2007), Ida Corr Vs Fedde Le Grand, Lifted House, Ministry of sound, Flamingo Records

Madison Time (1959), Ray Bryant, Columbia Records

Nu Nu (Yeah Yeah) (2005), FannyPack, Tommy Boy Records

Pass That Dutch (2003), Missy Elliott, Goldmind, Atlantic

Shawty Get Loose (2008), Lil Mama, Jive Records

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