

6-26-2015

Blue Desire: Narrative Structure, Desire, and Intertextuality in Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue Is the Warmest Color*

Kathryn Chaffee

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/fl_etds

Recommended Citation

Chaffee, Kathryn. "Blue Desire: Narrative Structure, Desire, and Intertextuality in Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue Is the Warmest Color*." (2015). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/fl_etds/7

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Foreign Languages & Literatures ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

Kathryn Chaffee

Candidate

Foreign Languages and Literatures

Department

This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Thesis Committee:

Walter Putnam, Chairperson

Pamela Cheek

Katrin Schröter

**BLUE DESIRE: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE, GAZE AND
INTERTEXTUALITY IN ABDELLATIF KECHICHE'S *BLUE
IS THE WARMEST COLOR***

by

KATHRYN CHAFFEE

B.A., FRENCH STUDIES, WAGNER COLLEGE, 2010

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts
French**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May 2015

DEDICATION

To Genna

Parce que c'était lui, parce que c'était moi. - Montaigne

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Walter Putman, my advisor and thesis chair, who foresees problems with my work well in advance but gives me the time and freedom to work through problems on my own terms.

I thank Pamela Cheek for helping me to address difficult theoretical questions without losing my own voice in my work and for her commitment to fixing bad habits in my writing.

I would also like to thank Katrin Schröter for her observations about the film, for her very careful reading of my thesis and for bringing her knowledge of film studies to my committee.

To my teachers, friends and family who have supported me, *merci mille fois*.

To my mom, thank you, thank you, thank you.

**BLUE DESIRE: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE, GAZE AND INTERTEXTUALITY
IN ABDELLATIF KECHICHE'S *BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR***

by

Kathryn Chaffee

B.A., French Studies, Wagner College, 2010

M.A., French, University of New Mexico, 2015

ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the ways in which desire becomes a *fil conducteur* throughout Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue is the Warmest Color* (2013). My first chapter presents Kechiche's use of narrative structure in the film in order to illustrate Adèle's alternation between active and passive drives characteristic of young girls before Freudian repression. In my next chapter, I discuss the joint and multiple gazes presented in *Blue* through Bracha Ettinger's conception of the matrixial and John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. My final chapter suggests that Adèle experiences Hegelian recognition both in her relationship with Emma and in two texts presented in her French class: Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne* and Anouilh's *Antigone*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| CHAPTER 1: Narrative Structure and Adèle as Subject in Pursuit and Object Pursued | 6 |
| CHAPTER 2: Matrixial Gazing and Adèle as Muse | 22 |
| CHAPTER 3: Intertextuality and Adèle’s Recognition in an Other | 43 |
| CONCLUSION | 60 |
| WORKS CITED: | 66 |

INTRODUCTION

Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue Is the Warmest Color* narrates Adèle's sexual coming of age, her first love, and her first heartbreak. Based on Julie Maroh's cult graphic novel, *Le bleu est une couleur chaude*, *Blue Is the Warmest Color* has received excellent reviews from critics and is the winner of the 2013 Palme d'Or, with the award going to the director as well as the two lead actresses Léa Seydoux and Adèle Exarchopoulos. Although the film has been called voyeuristic and pornographic due to the now infamous seven-minute sex scene and has received negative publicity due to Seydoux's comments about Tunisian-French director Kechiche's treatment of his lead actresses, what struck me most after seeing the film was the contrast between the negative comments I read from feminist critics and my own opinion. I was interested in how *Blue* responded to the critical theory I was reading at the time when the film was released, and, although in retrospect I would have planned this project differently, I still believe that the film is a unique portrayal of female desire. The film challenges previous work on narrative structure and gazing and illustrates the relationship between intertextuality and subject formation.

In my first chapter, I argue that the narrative structure presented in *Blue Is the Warmest Color* circumvents identification with a male protagonist that would reinforce patterns of male dominance present in society. Furthermore, the traditional narrative structure of a love story is disrupted not only through the absence of men, but also through the plot, as the relationship between Adèle and Emma ends in the middle of the film, leaving the second half of the narration to focus on the destabilization of identity

that Adèle feels as a result of the breakup. The unsettling ending of *Blue Is the Warmest Color* also resists the type of narrative resolution (such as a marriage) that Mulvey sees as being the ultimate affirmation of passive femininity, allowing Adèle to more easily alternate between the pre-Oedipal active masculinity and passive femininity described by Laura Mulvey in “Afterthoughts on ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’.”

This chapter also focuses on the way that Adèle is represented as both a subject in pursuit and object pursued, presenting a return to the alternation between active and passive drives that Freud sees in young girls who have not yet been repressed into femininity. Throughout the film, the camera objectifies Adèle in the way that Mulvey establishes is characteristic of narrative Hollywood cinema. However, Adèle is also positioned as an Oedipal protagonist through Kechiche’s emphasis on desire-inducing lack presented in the opening sequence of the film, and the film presents Adèle’s search for recognition in her relationship with Emma through the structuring of diegetic gazes.

In my second chapter, I discuss the different gazes presented in the film in more detail. Instead of a representation of women who are nothing more than passive and eroticized objects for a male protagonist, Kechiche illustrates the ways in which Adèle and Emma look at each other. In contrast with the singular male gaze that is suggested by Mulvey, Kechiche presents a film where multiple gazes occur simultaneously. In the opening section of the chapter, I analyze the film within the context of Bracha Ettinger’s work on the matrixial gaze as an alternative to the phallogentrism present in Freudian and Lacanian traditions of psychoanalysis and her concept of transsubjectivity. In her conception of the matrixial, Ettinger asserts that multiple subjectivities form simultaneously through joint gaze created through the communal experience of viewing a

work of art. I suggest that film also unites a joint gaze, and that Kechiche creates spaces of encounter in *Blue* that allow for multiple and subjectivizing gazes.

In the second half of the chapter, I examine the use of art in the film. In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger asserts that the visual is our primary connection to the world, and Kechiche's film explores how sight becomes a way in which Adèle forms her sexual identity through her visual connection with Emma and how Emma's paintings of Adèle mark transitions in their relationship. I address Berger's assertion that paintings of women have been produced almost exclusively for men and his observation that renaissance oil paintings frequently depict a woman looking away, but watching in a mirror as she is admired by a male spectator. In contrast, Adèle is shown confidently gazing back at the spectator of Emma's paintings. Through Adèle's direct gaze towards the spectator, Emma's paintings become part of a larger discourse on gazing in the French odalisque tradition shaped by women including Madame de Pompadour.

In my final chapter, I suggest that Adèle's relationship with Emma represents Adèle's desire for a Hegelian recognition in an other that will ultimately shape her own self-consciousness. Kechiche's intention for the film to portray an ek-static self-consciousness is illustrated in his use of intertextuality throughout the film. I argue that, like her relationship with Emma, two specific intertexts, *La vie de Marianne* and *Antigone* allow Adèle to move outside of herself. Kechiche uses these two *Bildungsroman* texts in the film because of the way in which they illustrate the process of psychological development for the main characters.

In *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*, Judith Butler suggests that it is the lure of mimesis that draws the subject outside of itself and

towards the other. Prompted by desire, the process of moving outside of one's self creates self-consciousness. Or, as Hegel writes: "self-consciousness is *Desire* in general," meaning that desire is not only a movement into an other, but also a desire for a reflection of the self (105).

Adèle's desire for mimetic reflection is evident in the parallel between Marianne's connection to M. Climal and Adèle's first view of Emma. As Adèle sees Emma for the first time, she sees the potential to move outside of herself in a way that would engender self-consciousness. Next, Kechiche's use of *Antigone* in the film is a reference to Adèle's death at the end of Maroh's graphic novel, as well as the feeling of catharsis he incorporates at the end of his film. Kechiche's use of a tragedy in this scene illustrates the connection between Adèle's own process of maturation and a work of literature.

In the final section of this chapter, I suggest that Kechiche encourages the spectator to establish the same type of connection to his film that Adèle experiences when reading *La vie de Marianne* and *Antigone*. While the film is not a tragedy according to the formal elements established by Aristotle, Kechiche's presentation of the extreme pain felt by Adèle at the end of the film has an emotional effect on the spectator. In *Poetics*, Aristotle writes: "we delight in looking at the most detailed images of things which in themselves we see with pain... The cause of this is that learning is most pleasant, not only for philosophers but for others likewise" (90). Adèle's traumatic breakup presents "a change from ignorance to knowledge" for Adèle as protagonist and also for the spectator who learns from a representation of pain in art (96).

In conclusion, although my project draws heavily on feminist theory, I spend

relatively little time discussing homosexuality in my project, or whether or not Kechiche as a man is adequately qualified to make a film about lesbians. This is because *Blue* is not intended as a political statement about homosexuality, but rather a story about why we desire a connection with the other in order to learn something about ourselves. In this way, Kechiche privileges individual connection over preconceived notions of sexual identity. What Kechiche has created in the *Blue is the Warmest Color* is not simply a film about lesbians, but rather the story of Adele who feels intense chemistry with a woman and falls in love without defining herself as either gay or straight. This centers the film on an overwhelming immediate connection rather than on a performative construction of sexual orientation. However, the most productive aspect of the film is the way in which Kechiche has brought representations of female sexuality back into a discourse. Although this is a flawed representation, the film opens the conversation for how we represent women and female desire on screen.

Narrative Structure and Adèle as Subject in Pursuit and Object Pursued

Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue is the Warmest Color* (2013) dialogues with feminist film theory and provides the type of "working through of desire" that Claire Johnston establishes as essential to the project of women's cinema (32). Throughout the film, Kechiche subtly plays with narrative structure in order to capitalize on the insights into desire provided by psychoanalysis, while also subverting the traditional Oedipal narrative that reinforces heteronormativity. Through Adèle and her relationship with Emma, Kechiche creates a protagonist who is able to alternate between the masculine and feminine drives that Freud establishes as characteristic of the bisexual nature of women prior to the repression which inaugurates femininity and heterosexuality. Finally, *Blue is the Warmest Color* resists narrative resolution as characterized by marriage or another symbolic possession of the woman, allowing Adèle to oscillate between positions of subjectivity and objectivity and to accomplish what Teresa de Lauretis describes as working "with and against narrative."

In the film, Adèle is represented as both a subject in pursuit and an object pursued. Through Adèle's position as both an active subject and a passive object, Kechiche circumvents the traditional identification with a male protagonist that Laura Mulvey established as characteristic of narrative cinema. In her seminal paper, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mulvey first explores the ways that filmic narrative structures reaffirm sexual difference through a "skilled and satisfying manipulation of visual pleasure" (36). Mulvey suggests that narrative structures typically follow the

traditional Oedipal story in which the possession/objectification/repression of the woman functions in order to lead to male subjectivity. The male protagonist seeks possession of a woman in order to fill the lack created through an awareness of his own symbolic castration. In this model, Mulvey uses Freudian psychoanalysis to show how male subjectivity is always dependent on the lack that is symbolized by the woman in order to create meaning.

In “Afterthoughts on ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ inspired by *Duel in the Sun*,” Mulvey creates a second model for feminist psychoanalytical film analysis through a return to the pre-Oedipal bisexuality that Freud describes in his lecture on femininity in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933). Mulvey illustrates how a central female protagonist in a film reveals earlier bisexual tendencies repressed during childhood, and how women are never fully able to achieve a stable sexual identity as they alternate between active male desire and a passive feminine role. However, the masculine and feminine drives of the female protagonist in *Duel in the Sun* are only revealed in relationship to her two male love interests. In this way, Mulvey’s argument states that a return to a repressed female bisexuality is triggered by relationships with men.

Therefore, the question that remains is how to present a new narrative structure in which a woman is more than, in Mulvey’s words, “a lynchpin” in the development of a man as a subject, and a model where a female protagonist’s active and passive drives are not simply revealed through relationships to male characters. I would like to suggest that a bisexual narrative structure is presented in *Blue Is the Warmest Color*, as the viewer connects with the main character of Adèle who never becomes a “love object” for man in

the traditional sense as represented through narrative closure, and the film circumvents the typical identification with a male protagonist that occurs in classical Hollywood cinema as described by Mulvey in “Visual Pleasure”.

The film begins with the camera following Adèle from behind in a way that overtly objectifies Adèle as she leaves her house and creates “visual pleasure” as defined by Mulvey. In the very first minute of the film, Adèle adjusts her pants. This is one of the many shots in the film calling attention to her *derrière*, suggesting that these types of shots will become a reoccurring theme. However, immediately after presenting a sexualized view of Adèle, Kechiche establishes Adèle as an Oedipal protagonist through the way in which the opening sequence of the film emphasizes Adèle’s feeling of lack. The emphasis on lack illustrated in the first classroom scene of the film presents a link to Mulvey’s assertion that desire for possession of the woman is created by a lack felt by the male protagonist, but in Kechiche’s film, it is a woman who experiences a lack that propels the narration forward.

The importance of lack as a guiding narrative feature of the film is established through the parallel between the class discussion of *La vie de Marianne* and the French title of the film, *La vie d’Adèle*, suggesting that the concepts presented in this scene will be a reflection of Adèle’s own feelings. This idea is reinforced through the progression of shots in the scene as well as in the disconnect between the narration and the transition between shots. The narration begins as Adèle enters the lycée. As she walks down the hall towards her classroom, a disembodied female voice begins to read: “Mais, je m’écarterais toujours? Je crois que oui.” At this moment in the film, the fact that the narrator remains anonymous while the camera remains focused on Adèle presents a link

between Adèle and the content of the narration. Because the spectator has not yet heard Adèle speak, the female voice of the narrator is quite possibly Adèle's.

After establishing the link between Adèle and the film's narration, Kechiche further reinforces this connection through a series of shot/reverse shot transitions as Kechiche reveals the scene's actual narrator. In shot 1 of the scene in the classroom, we understand that the voice belongs to a girl in Adèle's French class as she reads a passage from *La vie de Marianne*. She reads: "Je ne saurais m'en empêcher. Les idées me gagnent. Je suis femme et je conte mon histoire..." Although the camera remains on the girl reading the passage, the voice of the teacher instructs: "Ok, stop [...] d'abord vous le dites dans votre tête." As the teacher begins to speak, the spectator anticipates that shot 2 of this shot/reverse shot sequence will be of the teacher, who is also presumably the person the student looks at while being corrected. Instead, shot 2 is of Adèle's reaction as the teacher continues: "'Je suis femme.' C'est une vérité [...] et on part de là... et vous contez votre histoire." The camera briefly cuts back to the girl who continues to read, then jumps to another student following along in his own copy of the novel. In this shot, we see that the title of the novel is *La Vie de Marianne*, again reinforcing the connection between the passage analyzed in this scene and Adèle, a woman, telling her story throughout the film.

After linking the story analyzed in the French class to Adèle and suggesting that lack is inherently implicated in the process of becoming a woman and telling her story, Kechiche suggests that there is a type of predestination in the way that desire operates. In this way, Kechiche presents a link to Freud's Oedipal complex as established in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). Freud suggests that desire is inevitably created through

lack, either through the castration complex or penis envy, which leads to the desire for recognition through (an)other. This is shown in the context of the film in the next passage analyzed from *La Vie de Marianne* through the lack experienced by Marianne as she meets someone who can potentially help her realize herself as a subject.

In the passage read out loud by the class, Marianne describes how she attracts the attention of many different men, but there is a specific suitor who she distinguishes for herself, and on whom her eyes “tombaient plus volontiers que sur les autres.” Various students in the class read:

J'ai mal le voir sans me douter du plaisir que j'ai trouvé. Je ne songeais qu'à le regarder. Ce jeune homme m'examinait d'une façon toute différente de celle des autres... elle était plus modeste et pourtant plus attentive. Il y avait quelque chose de plus sérieux qui se passait entre lui et moi [...] Enfin, on est sorti de l'église, et je me souviens que j'en sortie lentement, que je retardais mes pas, que je regrettais la place que je quittais, et que je m'en allais avec un cœur à qui il manquait quelque chose, et qui ne savait pas ce que c'était. Je dis qu'il ne savait pas. C'est peut-être trop dire, car en m'en allant, je retournais souvent la tête pour revoir encore le jeune homme que je laissais derrière moi.

In this passage, there is a moment of recognition that happens between Marianne and M. de Climal as she experiences an overwhelming desire to see him, a feeling reflected and reciprocated by Climal. Climal examines her in a way that is “absolutely different from the others,” and it is this feeling of recognition that separates Marianne’s relationship with Climal from her previous experiences with other men. This desire for recognition in

(an)other – and to be recognized by another individual – is what allows Adèle (represented through Marianne in this passage) to begin her journey towards subjectivity.

The search for recognition is also what leads Marianne/Adèle to become aware of a lack and the feeling that “her heart was missing something.” Kechiche highlights the idea of lack as the most important element of the passage discussed in the classroom as the teacher asks: “Comment comprenez-vous le fait qu’il manque quelque chose au cœur?” From this moment until the end of the scene, the teacher orients the discussion around how experiencing a moment of recognition creates a feeling of lack. This is illustrated in the following series of questions asked by the teacher and in the response given by one of the students:

« Quand vous êtes chargé du regard de quelqu’un quand vous croisez quelqu’un... vous êtes chargé du regard de quelqu’un... une rencontre comme ça spontanée... Un coup de foudre on va dire par exemple. Est-ce que vous partez avec quelque chose en moins dans le cœur ou quelque chose en plus? »

« Un regret. »

« Un regret? »

« Un regret de pas avoir ... retourner vers lui pour lui parler des choses ... comme ça? »

« Pour toi ça serait un regret. Donc un regret c’est quelque chose en moins dans le cœur ? »

« Le regret de ne pas avoir fait le premier pas justement pour combler ce vide dans son cœur. »

In this section of the passage analyzed in the classroom, Kechiche presents a link to the Lacanian notion of lack as an integral part of desire. In *Le Séminaire, livre VIII : le transfert*, lack is essentially the lack of being (manque à être), and what is desired is to become a subject. Therefore, desire is the link between lack and being.

From this opening sequence, Kechiche orients the rest of the film around the principal theme of lack as experienced by Adèle as she becomes aware of her own metaphorical castration and her desire to become a subject. Towards the end of the scene, Kechiche reinforces an element of predestination or inevitability in the way that lack operates. The teacher asks the class: “D’autre part j’aimerais beaucoup que vous réfléchissiez à cette impression de prédestination dans le rencontre... Comme ça arrive quelque fois.” This objective seems to be specifically oriented towards Adèle; in the next shot of this shot/reverse shot series, Adèle reacts to this announcement and verbally responds “d’accord.” In this moment, Adèle is forced to reflect on her own lack that is revealed in the parallel created between herself and Marianne. But, there is also, to use Teresa de Lauretis’ term, a “narrative promise” made to Adèle in this scene. As Kechiche reveals the importance of “prédestination” in a first meeting, Kechiche prefigures Adèle’s search for recognition throughout the film, and the spectator anticipates that Adèle is predestined to experience a feeling of recognition in an encounter with another person that will guide her along the path towards subjectivity.

It is important to note that the narrative promise given to Adèle is usually a privilege reserved for the Oedipal male protagonist. As established by de Lauretis, the narrative promise made to little boys is that they will have the potential to realize themselves as subjects through a transformative interaction with a woman who will be

objectified. This promise is dependent not only on “an *image of woman* but [also on] the image of her narrative position.” De Lauretis defines the narrative image of woman as follows:

Narrative image of woman – a felicitous phrase suggestive of the join of image and story, the interlocking of visual and narrative registers effected by the cinematic apparatus of the look. In cinema as well, then, woman properly represents the fulfillment of the narrative promise (made, as we know, to the little boy), and that representation works to support the male status of the mythical subject. (*Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* 140).

The fact that Adèle is made this type of narrative promise and given a masculine role as the Oedipal protagonist is one of the key elements that reveal the bisexual narrative structure of the film, and from this moment, the film becomes Adèle’s search for recognition and subjectivity.

After the classroom scene in which Kechiche highlights the ideas of predestination and recognition in an encounter, the next scene is of Adèle and her school friends as they overtly objectify men. One of the girls begins: “S’il y a un moyen de niquer, je nique tu vois? Mais je vais pas mettre trois mois tu vois. Normalement... quatre jours c’est fait quoi.” The sex talk is interrupted by the arrival of Thomas, and the girl changes the subject of the conversation. She alerts Adèle: “Attends... deux secondes... Il y a Thomas qui est derrière, il n’arrête pas de te regarder.” “Derrière moi?” asks Adèle. “En même temps il voit pas là... Il n’arrête pas de te mater quand même.” According to the narrative parallel created between Adèle and Marianne, the

spectator anticipates that this encounter with Thomas holds the potential for the same type of recognition that is presented in *La Vie de Marianne*. Furthermore, Thomas also appears to be searching for recognition through the anticipatory and longing way in which he watches Adèle. However, for the girls he is nothing more than a sex object, evaluated solely on his physical merits: “T’en penses quoi, toi? ... Physiquement?” At this moment in the scene, Thomas is positioned as an object and fills the role of “narrative image” which is usually occupied by a woman.

Through this narrative position, Thomas holds the potential to fulfill the narrative promise made to Adèle in the opening scene of the film, and to be the object through which she constitutes herself as a subject. However, Adèle’s lack of interest is revealed in her response: “Oui, il est mignon... c’est pas Brad Pitt non plus.” At this moment in the film, the viewer suspects that Thomas is unable to fill the desired role according to the rules of narrative structure as outlined by de Lauretis because a moment of recognition between Thomas and Adèle as exemplified by *La vie de Marianne* is missing from this scene. Adèle must now search for another “narrative image” who/that would represent the “join of image and story, the interlocking of visual and narrative registers effected by the cinematic apparatus of the look” (140). What is now needed in the film is a specific image that will propel the narration forward.

Although Kechiche establishes Adèle’s narrative position as a female version of an Oedipal protagonist in the opening of the film, the camera is relentless in its objectification of Adèle. From the first scene when Adèle adjusts her pants, various shots draw attention to Adèle’s sumptuous lips and curved behind. As she eats dinner with her family, the camera frames her lips and the bizarre way that she eats, presenting a close-up

of Adèle's face and highlighting her parted lips covered in spaghetti sauce that rarely completely close as she chews. Adèle is insatiable as she licks her fingers and the knife, asks for more spaghetti and wipes her lips on her hand; in contrast, her parents chew discretely. The camera's objectification of Adèle continues in the next scene, as her breasts are centered in the shot while she writes in her journal, and the most blatant objectification happens while Adèle sleeps and the camera strategically places her *derrière* in the foreground of the shot. This idea that Adèle becomes an objectified Oedipal protagonist illustrates the bisexual narrative structure of *Blue*, as a film in which a woman simply replaces a man who works to establish his position as a subject would not exemplify the mix of active and passive drives that Freud states is characteristic of the bisexual nature of young girls in his lecture on femininity.

After these two scenes that work solely to objectify Adèle, the spectator is alerted that a key narrative moment is about to occur through a parallel created between the next scene and the very first shot of the film. Just as in the opening sequence, the camera is positioned on Adèle as she walks out her front gate and down the street towards the bus stop. Adèle even adjusts her pants in the same way as the camera follows her from behind. The setting changes, and the first shot in the shot/reverse shot formation is of Adèle as she notices something on the other side of the city center. The viewer suspects that the next shot will reveal the object of Adèle's attention, and as predicted, we see Emma for the first time in the film. Emma is squarely centered in the shot, with almost heavenly beams of sunlight reflecting off her hair. Through Adèle's reaction to seeing Emma in the following shot, the viewer understands that something changes for Adèle in this moment. Adèle, made aware of her own lack in the opening sequence of the film, is

presented with someone who can potentially serve as an object through which she will be able to constitute herself as a subject.

The next shot is of Emma, this time laughing with her girlfriend. This shot reinforces the viewer's suspicion that Emma is positioned to fulfill the narrative promise made to Adèle in the film's opening. Adèle, unsettled, looks up and continues walking, and the music builds intensity as Adèle and Emma pass each other while crossing the street, making eye contact. In this shot, Emma becomes more than a correlative object to Adèle as subject, as she returns Adèle's objectifying gaze with a powerful and inquisitive gaze of her own, suggesting that this relationship has the potential to be more than a simple representation of the subject/object dynamic traditionally seen in narrative cinema. In this scene, Kechiche establishes that it is not only Adèle looking at Emma but also the way the two women look at and objectify each other that reveals the bisexual narrative structure of the film.

This first interaction between Adèle and Emma also illustrates the narrative codes established by Roland Barthes in which desire operates as a quest for an enigma. In Barthes' structural analysis of plot presented in *S/Z*, desire becomes the basis for a "hermeneutic code" in which "we list the variations (formal) terms by which an enigma can be distinguished, suggested, formulated, held in suspense and finally disclosed" (19). The enigma, which can be codified according to structuralist principles, is most frequently represented as Woman, and delays and obstacles are necessary in order to maintain the suspense of the narration. In this scene where Adèle sees Emma for the first time, Emma becomes the enigma/woman who is desired by Adèle, driving the narration forward and presenting a series of obstacles for Adèle to overcome. The primary

obstacle created in this scene is Adèle's sexual identity (and the resulting homophobic comments from her friends), as seeing Emma for the first time allows Adèle to understand that she is attracted to women. Through this realization, Adèle learns more about what she desires, both sexually and from a relationship, which intensifies her feeling of lack: the greater the desire, the greater the lack and vice versa. This is illustrated through Adèle's sex dream the following evening, which more clearly reveals her desire for Emma and intensifies her feeling that she is missing something in her relationship with Thomas.

The contrast between Adèle's desire for Emma and the feeling of lack she experiences in her current relationship is reinforced through her awkward sexual encounter with Thomas. In this scene, both Adèle and the spectator are left uncomfortable and unsatisfied with the sexual experience. The idea that this encounter with Thomas only deepens her feeling of lack is further illustrated the following day in her conversation with a friend at school the following afternoon. Adèle confesses: "J'ai l'impression de faire semblant... Faire semblant en tout [...] C'est moi, lui, il a tout pour lui, c'est pas le problème. C'est moi... il me manque un truc. J'sais pas j'suis tordue." This active recognition of her own lack is what drives the narration forward, and leads Adèle towards the typically masculine pursuit of the enigma represented by Emma.

As her relationship with Emma progresses, the relationship does not simply recreate a power structure in which Adèle plays the active and masculine role established through her narrative position as the Oedipal protagonist. Instead, Adèle experiences a twofold identification as both subject and object. Although the story presents her masculine pursuit of Emma, she is constantly objectified by the camera's gaze while also

becoming the object represented in Emma's paintings. Coincidentally, Adèle's bisexual alternation between active/male and passive/female roles parallels the bisexual viewing experience of the female spectator described by Mulvey in "Afterthoughts." The female spectator identifies with the active gaze of the camera and the diegetic control represented by Adèle as the Oedipal protagonist as well as the passive images controlled by the camera's gaze, which present Adèle as an object.

After Adèle's active and passive roles in her relationship with Emma are well established in the beginning of the film, Emma teaches Adèle about art and philosophy, and gives her the tools to help her discover herself and her sexuality through participation in the gay rights movement and being open about their relationship, freeing Adèle from the stigma about being queer created by her high school peers. However, as the film progresses, Adèle begins to fill the role of sexualized object given to women in narrative Hollywood cinema. She is literally objectified as Emma's paintings of Adèle become larger and more numerous, and as the relationship between the two women deteriorates, and Adèle is primarily shown in the domestic roles of cooking and serving others. The shift in the dynamic between the two women is most evident at the party for Emma's student art exposition. The scene begins as Adèle prepares food and pours champagne; although it would seem like Emma should help set up for the party, Emma only arrives later along with the rest of the guests. When the guests arrive, they recognize Adèle as the object represented in Emma's paintings, and even after meeting Adèle, she remains an object, only now, as one party guest notes, she is in flesh and blood instead of on canvas.

Throughout the party, Adèle is primarily concerned with serving appetizers and

ensuring everyone is fed and content, while few of the guests engage her in conversation. One of the few exceptions occurs as Emma introduces Adèle to Joachim, who finds Adèle to be a uniquely active object, saying “C’est beau ce que tu fais...franchement.” In this comment, Joachim implies that posing for Emma is an active role for Adèle, while Adèle sees herself as a passive object in this context: posing for Emma is not the way that she wants to define herself as a subject. Adèle responds: “Qu’est-ce que je fais?” and insists that she is not an active participant in Emma’s work saying: “C’est surtout Emma qui a réussi à faire tout ça... j’ai pas vraiment...” This conversation with Joachim also reinforces Emma’s vision for Adèle, establishing Emma as the active agent in the relationship, and forming Adèle into a suitable object through which Emma can define herself. For example, instead of presenting Adèle as a teacher, Emma suggests that Adèle is a writer saying: “Elle a une très belle plume,” even though she knows that Adèle’s real passion is teaching. Joachim then reinforces this image of Adèle as desired by Emma, responding: “et on peut lire ce que tu écris? Tu dois avoir des textes magnifiques, j’ai envie de les lire, moi.” In her response, it is obvious that this is not the way that Adèle sees herself, putting Adèle in the uncomfortable position of explaining: “J’ai fait que quelques journaux personnels.”

Through this scene, Adèle begins to feel limited to a position of objectivity in her relationship with Emma, and begins to search for a relationship that will again represent a bisexual alternation between active and passive roles. Kechiche alludes to this possibility as one of the men at the party notices that Adèle, who has served everyone else, has not yet eaten anything herself, saying: “Adèle! Adèle poses-toi avec nous. Tu sers tout le monde c’est bon. Tiens... je vais te servir. Pose-toi deux secondes, toi qui as fait les

pâtes pour tout le monde.” The unhappiness felt by Adèle that is first established in this scene is further illustrated in Adèle’s affair, which ultimately ends the relationship. Because her relationship with Emma is no longer an oscillation between active and passive roles, Adèle again experiences a lack that is created through her fixity as an object for Emma, leading Adèle to search for a new source of recognition, which she temporarily finds in a colleague.

The party for Emma’s art exhibition also effectively ends the Oedipal narrative created by Kechiche at the beginning of the film. At first, Adèle is positioned within a typical narrative structure with the potential to realize herself as a subject, searching for love with Emma and overcoming the series of obstacles required by Hollywood cinema. However, in this scene, Adèle is fixed into the passive roles of housewife and object in Emma’s paintings, and she is positioned towards repression through traditional narrative closure (Adèle is now living with Emma and is responsible for all of the cooking). Although Adèle now seems to represent what Freud describes as being seduced into or consenting to femininity, Adèle resists repression through infidelity. After Adèle’s heartbreak, Adèle is single, and the majority of the scenes in the last half of the film take place in the classroom, suggesting that teaching is now the primary way in which Adèle defines herself, and that it is possible to desire something other than the possession of an(other) in a romantic relationship.

Because Kechiche begins the film with a traditional Oedipal narrative which subsequently ends in the middle of the film and is never resolved through narrative closure, Kechiche uses narrative structure in a way that firmly positions Adèle as narrative protagonist without creating a story where gender roles are simply reversed. In

this way, Kechiche works with and against narrative, creating a film that is, to use Teresa de Lauretis' term, "Oedipal with a vengeance." Although my reading of the film would have been better supported if Kechiche contrasted the objectifying shots of Adèle and the numerous close-ups of her face with point of view shots, and my interpretation of what the narrative structure of the film accomplishes may be too generous, Kechiche's film is important because of its depiction of desire. Even though the project of representing female desire has been well established by Mulvey and Johnston, few recent films actively depict a woman who both desires and is desired. In contrast, *Blue* opens up new avenues for desire to be played out through narration without ultimately leading to the repression and possession of female characters. While the film may not represent a new language for desire as called for by Mulvey, *Blue* brings female desire back into film discourse.

Matrixial Gazing and Adèle as Muse

In my first chapter, I briefly touched on the idea of gazing in the context of *Blue Is the Warmest Color* in my initial suggestion that Adèle is represented as both subject in pursuit and an object pursued. I would now like to more closely analyze the various gazes created by Kechiche in *Blue*, as well as to ask how the film responds to Laura Mulvey's original presentation of the male gaze. One of the main problems with Mulvey's argument in "Visual Pleasure" and my own argument about the narrative structure of *Blue* is the way that the active role of protagonist and the passive role of the woman pursued are organized around the phallus. I have suggested that Adèle is positioned as an Oedipal protagonist motivated by desire for Emma, but is this actually a new model for analysis or simply the substitution of a woman into a male role?

In the initial work on Lacanian gazing done by Christian Metz and later reinterpreted by Mulvey, the subject's desire for possession of the Other through the gaze is the result of a metaphorical castration. As the subject enters the symbolic order, the image of the lost phallus is projected onto the woman: desire for the woman is also desire for the lost unity and self-mastery of the mirror stage. For Mulvey, desire for possession of the woman/phallus results in an active male gaze; women are styled within narrative Hollywood cinema as sexualized objects, creating pleasure for a film's active male protagonist as well as for the spectator. If Adèle is indeed presented by Kechiche as an active protagonist, is her desire for Emma nothing more than a desire for the unity of the mirror stage, resulting in a sexualized gaze that recreates the infamous male gaze

described by Mulvey?

I would like to suggest that Kechiche presents different ways of gazing in *Blue*, as Adèle and Emma are not simply passive and eroticized objects. Instead of female characters who function primarily to create visual pleasure for both a central male protagonist and the spectator, Kechiche emphasizes the ways in which the two women look at each other. In the first section of this chapter, I will argue that Kechiche creates physical locations that facilitate gazing between Adèle and Emma outside of a male gaze characterized by presence/absence of a phallus. In the second half of my chapter, I would like to explore the use of art within the film in the context of earlier work on gazing done by John Berger.

Some of the most interesting work on gazing is presented in Bracha Ettinger's feminist theoretical text, *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Ettinger uses the image of the matrixial as a space invested with symbolic meaning placed outside of a relationship to the phallus. In the matrixial, represented by the feminine womb and the connection between the mother and developing fetus, multiple and fragmentary subjectivities are originary and predate the stark divide between subject and object created through the presence/absence dichotomy of the phallus. The matrixial is also characterized by what Ettinger refers to as a borderspace, a shared site which is nonfinite, porous and always transgressed by a slippage between the *I* and the *non-I*. Works of art illustrate Ettinger's conception of matrixial borderspace, as art allows for simultaneous, multiple gazes and *co-emergence*: a process of mutual transformation and metamorphosis between incomplete subjects.

Throughout the film, Kechiche explores the central theme of encounter, creating

matrixial spaces for subjectivizing interactions between characters. In this way, Kechiche illustrates how physical locations become sites of co-emergence which transgress the finite limits of subject and object/other.

The first example of borderspace as described by Ettinger is presented in the film when Adèle and Emma see each other for the first time. Rather than gazes motivated by a desire for possession of the woman as other, the Lille town square is a place of random and inevitable encounter between strangers. In this location, strangers must visually interact while crossing the street, allowing for many different gazes to occur simultaneously and working in contrast to the active male gaze/objectified woman binary as presented in narrative Hollywood cinema. One of the ways in which Kechiche allows for multiple gazes in this scene is through his use of unconventional transitions between shots. Instead of traditional shot/reverse shot transitions that clearly illustrate to the spectator who is looking at whom, Kechiche presents different shots that represent multiple gazes.

Ettinger suggests that works of art unite different gazes through a shared viewing experience. While cinema is not included within Ettinger's concept of the matrixial, the same process occurs in cinema; Kechiche creates joint gazes throughout *La vie d'Adèle*. In the opening shot of the scene when Adèle first sees Emma, the camera follows Adèle from behind, showing a sexualized view of Adèle. However, this image of Adèle is not linked to the possessive gaze of a male character who has already been established in the film. Rather, this shot only shows the way that Kechiche would like the spectator to perceive Adèle. Adèle, who is centered in the shot, becomes the focal point around which the gazes of various spectators are united.

In the next shot, we see a street performer playing the steel drum music that begins in the opening of the scene. At first, it is unclear if this shot represents Adèle's view of the musician or the perspective of one of the many pedestrians crossing through the town center. As the camera shifts to Adèle's face, we see the crowd of strangers around her, and the street becomes a place of encounter: strangers come into contact, crossing the street and crossing paths. In this encounter created through a common location, strangers are thrown into a pattern, their physical actions are shaped as they cross the street, and they are unified through the shared experience of hearing the street music and traffic noise. Instead of a simple presentation of what Adèle experiences just before seeing Emma, Kechiche illustrates the common experience shared by the pedestrians in this moment.

Although Ettinger's original definition of the matrixial – a place of encounter between strangers that holds the potential for multiple and subjectivizing gazes – describes the relationship between a viewer and a work of art, I would like to suggest that Kechiche unifies spaces of multiple gazes through music. While Ettinger's various gazes are joined through a common focal point (a work of art), Kechiche creates “womb-like” spaces in which strangers are linked together through the collective experience of hearing music where multiple, fragmentary subjectivities can develop simultaneously.

In *The Acoustic Mirror*, Kaja Silverman already suggested a connection between the sounds heard in a film and the corporeal feminine, stating that representations of female voice in cinema are “thick with body,” and harken back to an infantile stage characterized by yelling, screaming, crying, etc. (62). This corporal female voice, while providing a link back to an earlier connection with the mother, holds little influence over

the film's diegesis. In contrast, the matrixial spaces created by Kechiche in *Blue* (such as the scene analyzed above) lead to what Ettinger describes as transsubjectivity: multiple subjectivities form simultaneously through a shared gaze.

When Adèle sees Emma for the first time in the town square, she experiences not only a desire inducing revelation of her own "lack" as I have analyzed in the first chapter, but also a moment of *co-emergence* (Ettinger's term) – a process of mutual transformation and metamorphosis between incomplete subjects. Instead of a singular gaze in which a male protagonist seeks to possess a woman as object visually, Kechiche creates a moment of fragmentary self-identity that is felt by both women. As Adèle and Emma lock eyes, the spectator understands that both women feel a connection and curiosity towards each other, which eventually develops into a relationship.

Adèle's next interaction with Emma also occurs in a space where strangers share a common experience and are united by music. The scene begins as Adèle leaves her friend Valentin with his other friends in the gay bar – a space where community is formed and characterized through an openness of sexual identity, and through communal participation in watching, looking, and dancing. After watching Valentin experience a strong sense of community in the bar, Adèle is compelled to find her own place of belonging.

Adèle enters the lesbian bar, the music and lighting change, and Kechiche creates another matrix as described by Ettinger – a womb-like space that leads to subject formation through encounter. In this scene, Kechiche uses both lighting and music in order to unify the space of the bar, and, as in the scene where Adèle first sees Emma, music is used to alert the spectator that this is a place of multiple and shared gazes. In

contrast with the gay bar which is characterized through dark, overwhelming blue lighting and typical discotheque music, the lesbian bar is bathed in warm gold, red, yellow, and orange lights reminiscent of the lighting used to show a fetus in the womb, an illumination of natural, corporeal colors. The lesbian bar is also a completely feminine space – this scene will not recreate a male gaze, but rather illustrate shared gazes between women.

As Adèle approaches the bar, the music changes drastically: in contrast to the pounding techno music of the gay bar, there is a feeling of anticipation created through the evolution of the music. The tempo quickens when Adèle enters the bar, and the music becomes gradually more complex as more instruments are added to the song. Adèle looks around, and the music heard by all of the women in the bar becomes a linking membrane that both fills and unifies the space. Next, as the camera follows Adèle, Kechiche highlights the multiple gazes of the different bar patrons, suggesting that Adèle enters the bar in order to both see and to be seen, hoping that the communal and transsubjective experience represented in a bar will provide some keys to an understanding of her own sexuality. Adèle watches the women around her interact, touch, and kiss, while the spectator is privy to the glances of the other women who observe Adèle in return. Adèle becomes intertwined in the network of feminine gazes in the bar.

Through an eyeline match, the camera shows how Adèle views the social situations around her, while the next shot follows Adèle from behind, both trailing her movements, and revealing how she is perceived by others. Suddenly, the camera angle changes, and the camera pans from Adèle's thighs up her back and towards her face. In

the next shot, we see that this perception of Adèle is actually Emma's gaze as she watches Adèle from the bar's upper level. Through the curiosity shown by Emma towards Adèle in the bar, the spectator understands that their previous encounter in the street was a transformative experience for both women. Emma's interest in approaching Adèle shows that the gaze shared between the two women during their first encounter was a moment of transsubjectivity; in this moment, multiple subjectivities form as Adèle not only begins to question her sexuality because of seeing Emma, but Emma also sees the transformative potential in this encounter, evidenced by her eagerness to approach Adèle in the bar and foreshadowing Adèle's later influence as Emma's source of artistic inspiration.

In the bar scene, Kechiche shows how subjectivity unfolds on multiple levels in a space that facilitates encounter. Firstly, this scene illustrates typical bar interactions between women who hope to meet someone who could potentially become a romantic partner. Next, as the camera follows Adèle, Kechiche presents subject formation on an individual level as Adèle goes to the bar because she begins to question her sexuality. However, Adèle's quest for subjectivity is also directly implicated in her interaction with Emma, who sees the potential for a new artistic muse in her interest in Adèle. In this way, Kechiche presents a site of co-emergence that can be characterized through Ettinger's symbolic interpretation of the feminine womb, as different subjectivities are formed simultaneously through multiple gazes.

While Ettinger suggests that works of art can engender encounter and assemble joint gazes, John Berger provides an alternative account of aesthetics and gazing. In his collection of essays, *Ways of Seeing*, Berger explores the ways in which we as spectators

perceive art and foregrounds our visual connection to the world. Berger writes: “Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.” From this opening, Berger immediately begins to play with how sight influences understanding as the quotation is placed in a separate paragraph several inches above the rest of the text on the page. Berger goes on to explain that: “It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it” (7).

Like Berger, Kechiche privileges sight over Adèle’s other senses as her initial view of Emma is what leads her to question her sexuality. Furthermore, Emma encourages Adèle to explore her visual connection to the world as a facet of her developing sexual identity. This becomes evident during one of their first dates at the Lille art museum. In this scene, we see how Adèle perceives other female bodies, and looking becomes a way of identifying her sexual attraction towards women. As the scene begins, the camera follows an odalisque statue down her back towards her *derrière* and legs, before panning to show other sexualized views of various sculptures. In the following reverse shot, we see that the opening shot is in fact Adèle’s own view of the naked female bodies. This shot not only shows Adèle’s own attraction to the female forms, but also the way in which Adèle watches Emma observe the statues.

Through the camera angles used in this scene, Kechiche highlights the complex and formative nature of gazing, illustrating Adèle’s active and sexualized view of the statues, her perception of how Emma sees the statues, and possibly Adèle’s own exploration of how she is viewed in a sexual way by Emma – the scene shows how gazing forms Adèle’s relationship with her surroundings and her sexuality. As Berger

suggests:

We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.

Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen. The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are a part of this visible world. (9)

In this statement, Berger illustrates that through the conscious decision we make to see – to choose what we look at – we are also influencing our own bearing in the world and our relationships with others. In this way, Berger presents a link to Ettinger who insists on the visual as our primary contact with those around us. This idea is exemplified in *Blue* through the shared gaze at the beginning of the film that compels the women to begin a relationship.

Berger establishes that images become a type of reproducible sight, a way of seeing which is “detached from time and place” (9). In this assertion, Berger suggests that, in contrast to our ever-changing and subjective perception of the world around us, images remain static, and control over how we see an image is given to the artist (however, Berger also concedes that how we view images is subjective). For Berger, images are intended to outlast the things that they represent, as images “were first made to conjure up the appearances of something that was absent” (10). This specific use of the word absent instantly suggests images of Lacan’s forever unattainable *objet a*. In Ettinger’s text, the gaze *is* the *objet a* – “the cause of desire in the scopic field” linked to

the lost trace created through “originary repression” (42).

The idea that art is a desire to represent that which is absent – and that which is desired – also applies to *Blue*, as Adèle becomes Emma’s artistic muse. From one of their first encounters, Emma is compelled to draw Adèle although she mentions she rarely does portraits. In this scene, Adèle inspires Emma to represent her own desire through her gaze as an artist, and in return Adèle becomes more aware of how she is viewed by others, thanking Emma as she finishes the sketch. Adèle begins: “Merci. Pourquoi tu dis merci? Bah, j’sais pas... comme ça. T’es gênée? Ouais, un peu. C’est vrai? Ouais...C’est pas toujours je me fais dessiner.” As Emma hands her the finished portrait, Adèle responds: “c’est étrange parce que ça me ressemble et en même temps ça me ressemble pas.” Seeing an image of herself as she is perceived by Emma perhaps reveals the trace of Adèle’s desire for a reflection of that which is absent in her own self-perception.

In the next section of his first essay, Berger explores the uniqueness of a painting: it cannot be in two places at the same time. Although Berger explains how this idea is not always relevant, as paintings can now be photographed and reproduced, within the context of the film, Emma’s paintings remain unique and unduplicated through her status as a student and a not yet widely known artist. Berger also shows that the unique status of a painting dictates that the meaning of the painting changes when it is displayed in a different location. Kechiche draws on this connection between a painting’s meaning and its location in *Blue*, as Emma first draws a quick sketch of Adèle in the park, and, as the relationship becomes more serious, the paintings of Adèle change location.

Furthermore, the unique nature of Emma’s paintings also dictates the ways in

which the paintings assemble a joint gaze as described by Ettinger. For example, the first sketch drawn by Emma allows Adèle to view how she is seen by Emma, creating a joint gaze through the way in which the sketch allows both women to see Adèle through Emma's perception. However, the distinctiveness of a work of art as described by Berger is also challenged through the medium of film. Although the sketch represents a private gaze shared between the two women, the film's spectator is also privy to this intimate gaze, allowing the spectator to see an early moment of connection between Adèle and Emma.

The theme of joint gazing created through art is illustrated throughout the film in Emma's paintings. Emma paints Adèle in her studio, paintings of Adèle are displayed in their shared apartment, and after the relationship ends, the paintings are shown in a prestigious Lille gallery. As the locations of the paintings change, so does the audience: the quick sketch of Adèle is for Emma alone, paintings of Adèle constitute the majority of Emma's student art exhibition (the first time the paintings are explicitly shown for others), and some paintings remain in the private space of their shared apartment. Finally, years after the traumatic breakup, paintings of Adèle are exhibited for a public audience. Through these transitions, Kechiche presents a connection between the evolution of the paintings as shown for the pleasure of others and the decline of the relationship, as the art opening which marks the end of Emma's career as a student is also the scene which foreshadows the end of the relationship between the two women. Finally, Adèle remains present in the paintings years after the relationship deteriorates, illustrating Berger's argument about a painting's ability to transcend time – a point subtly referenced by Kechiche in the final scene of the film as Emma's new girlfriend states:

“T’as vu? T’es toujours là.” The paintings remain permanent imprints of the intimacy shared between the two women.

Berger also specifically discusses the use of painting in film in his first essay. He writes:

When a painting is reproduced by a film camera it inevitably becomes material for the film-maker’s argument. A film which reproduces images of a painting leads the spectator, through the painting, to the film-maker’s own conclusions. The painting lends authority to the film-maker. This is because the film unfolds in time and a painting does not. In a film, the way that one image follows another, their succession, constructs an argument which becomes irreversible. (26)

In this paragraph, Berger illustrates a double control over the way that paintings are presented in film, an idea which is also represented in *Blue*. On the one hand, the paintings of Adèle represent how Emma sees her at a specific moment frozen in time. On the other hand, Kechiche’s control over how the paintings are viewed by the film’s audience illustrates how art is used throughout the film in order to mark transitions in the relationship between the two women. The medium of film adds another dimension to the paintings as Kechiche also shows the evolution of Adèle as a model. Adèle is at first a self-conscious muse, unused to being represented in art, but as she later appears nude in Emma’s art studio, she confidently watches Emma as she paints and gazes directly back at the future viewer of the painting.

The idea of Adèle as subject and muse in Emma’s paintings is also interesting to analyze in the context of Berger’s second essay on the representation of nude women in

renaissance paintings. The beginning of this essay is both thought provoking and problematic, as Berger asserts that women are represented differently than men in art. While “a man’s presence is dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies,” a woman presents herself in accordance with how she is perceived by others, defined by “what can and cannot be done to her” (45-46). Women, born “into the keeping of men,” are constantly engaged in a process of watching themselves as men would watch them. Berger summarizes this opening argument through this next frequently cited paragraph:

Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (47)

In this statement, Berger asserts that women are able to understand objectively how others perceive them physically. Berger also suggests that a woman’s view of herself as an object is a masculinized vision, an idea also expressed by Laura Mulvey.

Berger emphasizes that while a woman is privy to a masculine and objective view of herself as an object, in the western conception of art, a woman’s self-perception is also conditioned by shame, an idea illustrated in nude representations of women. Shame, created through the original sin of Adam and Eve and the resulting Biblical interdiction against nudity, is present in Renaissance paintings of nudes, as the model does not stare directly back at the spectator of the painting, but typically watches herself in a mirror, indirectly looking back at the spectator who is “a stranger – with his clothes still on”

(54). This assertion dictates that the artist is also male, as women were restricted from painting naked models.¹

In *Blue*, Kechiche subtly subverts Berger's observations about Renaissance art in several ways. Firstly, Emma is a classically trained painter from a school of *beaux-arts* who specializes in painting nudes. The fact that she is a woman creates the possibility that her paintings do not simply recreate a male gaze, but rather the female gaze of a woman who desires women, illustrating that what has been considered an objectifying male gaze may actually be the sexualized gaze of a desiring woman regardless of the sex of the spectator.²

Emma's classical training in the French *beaux-arts* tradition also presents the possibility that Emma has been taught to view women through a male gaze. This possibility would also maintain that there is nothing subversive about Emma as an artist, rather, her paintings of Adèle only recreate a masculine, sexualized, and culturally dominant presentation of a woman as an object. However, this suggestion, as well as Berger's argument in the context of *les beaux-arts* fail to take into consideration the ways in which French women have shaped a discourse on visual pleasure and gazing through the French odalisque tradition.

In the 18th century, Madame de Pompadour was not only responsible for commissioning odalisque paintings, but was also frequently a muse herself, never refusing "to pose for the greatest artists of her time" (Lever 172-3). Acting as the official

¹ Linda Nochlin also discusses the unavailability of nude models for women artists in

² In "Eroticism and Female Imagery in Nineteenth-Century Art," Nochlin notes that only male homosexuals have been included in artistic representation "from Antiquity to Andy Warhol," and that even paintings with explicit lesbian content (such as Gustave Courbet's *Sleep*) were intended for a male audience (137).

mistress of Louis XV, she was described by the Marquis d'Argenson as “a well trained odalisque who skillfully managed the superintendence of His Majesty’s pleasures” (104). Not only was Pompadour compared to an odalisque herself, but she also specifically commissioned odalisque paintings in order to solidify her powerful position at court. At the château de Bellevue, Madame de Pompadour dedicated her own bedroom as a *chambre à la turque*, decorated in the popular orientalist fashion. The bedroom also displayed several odalisque paintings commissioned from Carle Van Loo in which Pompadour herself is depicted as the Sultana presiding over her servant odalisques. Perrin Stein writes:

The iconography of the program and its role in delineating and strengthening Pompadour’s position at court depended in its legibility on a certain knowledge of Ottoman society available to the French upper classes at the time which provided, in this case, an analogy quite suitable for Madame de Pompadour’s purposes. (33)

Through her bedroom, Madame de Pompadour positions herself in various ways as both subject and object. She, herself, becomes an odalisque positioned in her sumptuous bedroom filled with ornate oriental rugs and a sofa *à la turque*, while her own image is used as model for the Sultana represented in Van Loo’s paintings, providing a thinly-veiled metaphor for her supremacy over Louis XV’s other mistresses. Furthermore, in her choice to commission Van Loo, a rising star and court favorite, as well as the subject matter represented in paintings, Pompadour positions herself as an active subject, skillfully illustrating and solidifying her powerful social position.

Madame de Pompadour’s roles as model, patron, and tastemaker work to situate

Adèle as muse and Emma as artist within a French art historical tradition in which women are not only represented as passive objects who facilitate a pleasurable male gaze, but also as active participants in their own representation and the representation of other women in art. Instead of a woman who simply watches herself being looked at, Adèle is portrayed actively gazing back at the spectator, unashamed of her nudity. The powerful way in which she stares back at both the spectator of her paintings and indirectly back at the spectator of the film is reminiscent of Cixous' laughing medusa whose power lies in her ability to gaze directly at the men who objectify her. Although Adèle is an initially hesitant model, illustrating the shame of a woman who has been driven away from her body as described by Cixous, Adèle becomes a relaxed and confident muse, taking back possession of her body, shameless, in Emma's later paintings.

Adèle's direct gaze towards the painting's spectator is also reminiscent of Ingres's *Grande Odalisque* (see Fig. 1). While many of Ingres's other odalisque paintings, including *The Sleeper of Naples*, which was done as a companion piece to the *Grande Odalisque*, show women looking down or away from the spectator, the model in the *Grande Odalisque* gazes directly back towards the viewer of the painting. One conceivable explanation for the exceptional nature of this painting is the fact that it was a woman, Caroline Bonaparte Murat, who not only commissioned the painting, but was also potentially the model for the *Grande Odalisque*. It is possible that the powerful gaze of the odalisque in the painting was partly the result of Murat's influence as patron and probable model (Ockman).

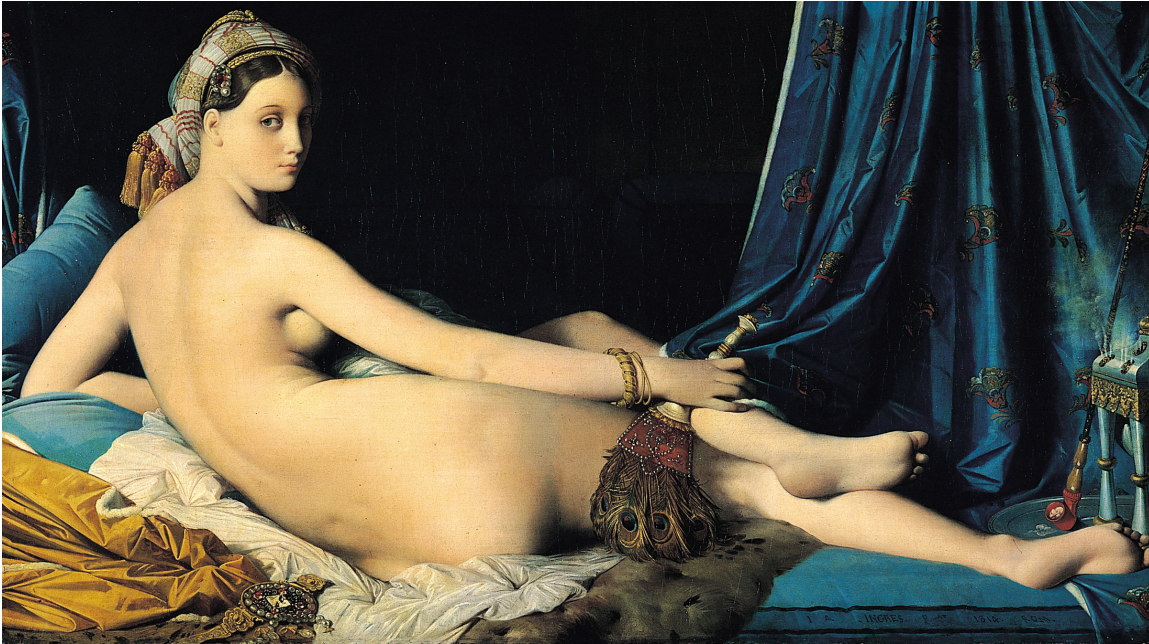


Fig.1. Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique. *Grande Odalisque*. 1814. Louvre, Paris.

In contrast with the assumption that 19th-century paintings depict nothing more than *femmes-objets*, Carol Ockman suggests that women like Caroline Bonaparte Murat showed “a taste for highly sensualized imagery” (38) and that “there was a pictorial language during this period that was created in large part by women” (39). This alternate historical account of the French odalisque tradition shows that women including Madame de Pompadour and Caroline Bonaparte Murat were not only objects represented in paintings which pander to a male gaze, but were also active patrons and collectors who appreciated art and the female form and used art to solidify social positions. Adèle’s depiction as model in Kechiche’s film does not simply reproduce a tradition of nude paintings created for male pleasure, but rather an art history in which women who posed as models also had significant influence over artistic trends and representations of women.

Even more contemporary representations of female nudes fail to present women

with adequate character development who are able to confidently gaze back at the spectator. In Jacques Rivette's 1991 film, *La Belle noiseuse*, an older and well-established artist seeks inspiration in a young female nude model. Although Frenhofer, who seeks to represent "blood" and "fire and ice" on his canvas, becomes obsessed with Marianne as a model, seeing Marianne as she actually is and painting her face leads to an allusion to demonic possession. Eventually, the painting depicting Marianne's face is buried within a wall of Frenhofer's studio. Although the film presents Frenhofer's desire to depict Marianne, Marianne shows virtually no character development throughout the film despite the film's four-hour length. The little insight into Marianne's character development that is provided in the film is only shown in context of her ability to inspire Frenhofer's painting.

In contrast, Adèle is not limited to the role of model and object, as Emma's paintings also become a reflection of the relationship between the two women. Although Emma's friends compliment Adèle on her talent as a nude model, she repeatedly states that her presence and poise in the paintings are the result of her relationship with Emma, and that she couldn't imagine posing for anyone else. Adèle is more than an object represented in the paintings because Emma's art allows her to see herself through Emma's eyes, not only as an object of sexual desire, but also as a woman who is loved by Emma. The multiplicity represented by Adèle as muse for many different paintings also presents the multiple facets of her search for subjectivity, as the images create the possibility for different selves, different and coexistent versions of Adèle which are fixed in a specific moment in time, but also coexistent with other paintings that represent different aspects of their relationship.

While Kechiche clearly illustrates the connection between their relationship and Emma as artist and Adèle as muse, what is missing in the film is a more nuanced presentation of the relationship between the film, itself a work of art, and the film's spectator. While Kechiche works to show Adèle's view of Emma as well as how Adèle's perception of herself changes as a result of Emma's art, Adèle is never able to gaze back at the spectator of the film in the powerful way that she gazes back towards the spectator of the paintings that she poses for.

In the majority of the scenes I analyze in this chapter, Kechiche very effectively uses shots from Adèle's point-of-view, but point of view shots are noticeably missing from the majority of the film. In this way, the character of Adèle fails to present the necessary interiority to show adequate character development and to thwart the allegations of voyeurism lodged against the film. Finally, there is a difference between socially and economically powerful women like Madame de Pompadour posing and nude and Adèle posing for Emma. In contrast to Emma, who comes from a wealthy and well-educated family, Adèle is lower-middle class, and this economic disparity prevents Adèle from having a sufficient control over how she is represented in Emma's artwork.

Although Adèle lacks agency in the way that she is portrayed in Emma's canvases, Kechiche clearly illustrates how the many paintings of Adèle illustrate the joint and subjectivizing gaze shared between the two women initially established by Kechiche when the women see each other for the first time. Emma's art also assembles other multiple gazes: the gazes of those viewing the paintings throughout the film as well as the gaze of the film's spectator. Through these multiple but joint gazes unified by Kechiche throughout the film, Kechiche works against a singular male gaze which is dependent of

the subject/object dichotomy between the active male viewer and passive female object. Instead, the film presents a different model of subjectivity: a subjectivity that is constantly in flux, transgressing the finite limits between self and other and representing Ettinger's concept of the matrixial.

As the artist forms a work of art, so is the artist formed as a spectator, and the artist dictates future interactions between spectators and the image. A work of art becomes an areola around which gazes are conducted and assembled, a point of contact between different gazes, a subjectivizing point of encounter. This place of encounter and multiple gazes is what Kechiche has created in *Blue*, a point best illustrated through his use of the color blue throughout the film. The blue floral scarf Adèle wears when she sees Emma for the first time, the touches of blue throughout Emma's paintings, and Adèle's blue dress in the last scene of the film: all of these moments represent a joint gaze and illustrate the porous nature of Adèle as a subject and object, a subject formed through her relationship with Emma and object represented in Emma's painting.

Although the film presents Adèle's journey towards subjectivity and her role as object and muse for Emma, Adèle never becomes an artist forming a work of art and formed as a spectator as she gazes out from Emma's tableaux. However, the film does demonstrate how Adèle is formed as a teacher through her time as a literature student. Adèle as student/teacher and subject/object illustrates Barthes' idea of transference. In "Lecturing and Transference: The Undercover Work of Pedagogy," Arthur W Frank writes: "For Barthes, 'the teacher is the person analyzed' (194), and the students are 'the Other [who] is always there, *puncturing* his discourse' (195)" (31).

Throughout the film, Kechiche focuses on what Adèle takes from her teachers:

she is influenced by the way in which her first teacher highlights the notion of lack in *La vie de Marianne*, and the way that the second teacher presents Anouilh's *Antigone* as a story of emotional development. Adèle begins to insert herself into the discourse created by her teachers as her relationship with Emma begins to reflect the themes presented in these two works of literature, and after the end of the relationship, Adèle impersonates her former teachers when she guides her own students through a reading of an Alan Bosquet poem. Instead of an object lacking control over her own representation as she is depicted in Emma's paintings, Adèle as a teacher and an object analyzed by her students has the potential to actively guide her tiny pupils in the same way that she was inspired by her own teachers.

Intertextuality and Adèle's Recognition in an Other

In the first two chapters, I looked at the ways in which desire conditions the narrative structure of *Blue*, as well as the way that Kechiche portrays a desiring gaze between the principal female characters. In my final chapter, I would like to explore more closely the connection between desire and subject formation in the film. I will suggest that Adèle desires a Hegelian recognition in an Other that ultimately conditions her own self-consciousness. The recognition felt by Adèle in her relationship with Emma allows Adèle to “move outside of herself” in the way described by Hegel in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. For Hegel, self-consciousness is always ek-static and precludes a return to an independent self. The ek-static movement engenders self-consciousness for the subject through the relationship with the other. Once Adèle, prompted by desire, has become implicated in her relationship with Emma, she develops a new awareness of her own being.

Throughout the film, an ek-static self-consciousness is also realized through Kechiche's use of intertextuality. Adèle's quest for self-consciousness as presented in the film is not only formed through her relationship with Emma, but also through two significant texts she reads in her French class: *La vie de Marianne* and *Antigone*. I will suggest that these two texts allow Adèle to move outside of herself in a process similar to Hegelian recognition. Although Hegel's account of subject formation is dependent on distinct individuals who move towards each other and outside of themselves, I believe that both literature and film allow the reader or spectator to move outside of herself in the

way that Hegel establishes as the crux of self-consciousness. The process of recognition that is triggered by a text is especially effective when a reader or a spectator engages with a *Bildungsroman*. In the context of the *Bildungsroman*, desire is still the root of ek-stasis, but instead of desire for the other, desire manifests itself as a desire for the knowledge gained by the text's protagonist.

Kechiche's deliberate use of the *Bildungsroman* genre is especially evident in the contrast between the film and the graphic novel on which the story is based, as Kechiche adds and emphasizes classroom scenes that do not occur in Julie Maroh's original text. Furthermore, Kechiche's desire for *Blue* itself to be read as a *Bildungsroman* is illustrated through the French title of the film, *La vie d'Adèle: Chapitres 1 et 2*, as well as the significant changes made by Kechiche to the graphic novel's central plot. In Maroh's original conception of the story, Adèle is unable to continue living without Emma: she becomes addicted to painkillers and dies in what appears to be a very literal actualization of Hegelian negation. In contrast, Kechiche's reinterpretation of the story leaves Adèle, although heartbroken, older, wiser, and self-possessed in the concluding scene.

Coincidentally, in *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*, Judith Butler reads Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a *Bildungsroman*. Towards the opening of the text, Butler argues that Hegel's dense prose forces the reader to engage with the text differently: the reader must take time to ponder and reflect on Hegel's intentions. Instead of offering a concrete philosophy for living, Butler suggests that Hegel guides his readers along their own path towards subject formation. I believe that Butler's interpretation of *Phenomenology* as a *Bildungsroman* provides an alternate account of how we connect to a text and provides a useful way of understanding *Blue*.

The film is long, dense and polarizing, and Kechiche's deliberate choice to make the film in this way shapes the connection between the spectator and Adèle as protagonist.

In her article on desire in Frank Lentricchia's *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, Butler writes that it is “the lure of reflexivity, of mimetic reflection” that propels the Hegelian subject. Desiring its own narcissistic reflection, the subject moves outside of itself and towards the other, seeking reciprocal recognition (*Anerkennung*) (379). A lure of reflexivity is also what causes a reader or spectator to engage with a *Bildungsroman*. The hero of a *Bildungsroman* undergoes a period of moral and psychological growth.³ Perhaps the promise of psychological growth that is made to the protagonist is also what lures a reader or spectator into a story, explaining the prolific nature of the *Bildungsroman* genre in high school literary curricula and the specific texts chosen by Kechiche to depict in Adèle's classroom scenes.

In the first classroom scene at the beginning of the film, Kechiche emphasizes Adèle's connection to *La vie de Marianne* through the series of shot/reverse shot transitions analyzed in my first chapter. Furthermore, the scene describing the first interaction between Marianne and M. Climal is a moment of psychological maturation for Marianne, as she describes M. Climal as completely different from other men: M. Climal represents the possibility for a relationship that is more than superficial flattery and attraction. The direct parallel between this classroom scene and Adèle's first encounter with Emma illustrates “a lure of reflexivity” that first begins to draw Adèle outside of herself then towards and into Emma as other in a process of recognition. Because of Adèle's intense connection with *La vie de Marianne* (she states: “j'ai dévoré

³ According to Merriam-Webster

le livre”), Adèle is more psychologically prepared for a relationship of her own. As Adèle is drawn out of herself and into the text, she begins to search for a relationship that becomes a “mimetic reflection” of the psychological development experienced by Marianne.

The process of moving outside of one’s self, whether it be through literature or in a relationship (or both, as in the context of *Blue*) always has a desire inducing effect, and self-consciousness is a result of desire. Hegel writes that “self-consciousness is *Desire* in general,” referring to the reflexive nature of desire as not only a movement *outside* of the self and into an other, but also as a *reflection* of the self – a desire for self-consciousness (105). Or, as Butler writes in *Undoing Gender*, “In *The Phenomenology*, desire (paragraph 168) is essential to self-reflection” (240).

In *Blue*, reading *La Vie de Marianne* influences what Adèle looks for in a relationship. In the passage from the text read aloud in class, Marianne finds in M. Climal someone who looks at her “d’une façon toute différente des celle des autres ... modeste et pourtant plus attentive.” Through the deliberate choice made by Kechiche to analyze this scene in Adèle’s French class and in the parallel created between this passage of the text and Adèle’s first encounters with Emma, Kechiche illustrates that this specific passage of *La Vie de Marianne* affects the way that Adèle views potential relationships. When Adèle sees Emma for the first time, Kechiche emphasizes that the way in which Emma looks at Adèle is different than what she has experienced in her other romantic encounters. This idea is reinforced when Adèle meets Emma again at the lesbian bar. In this scene, Kechiche specifically contrasts how other women in the bar watch Adèle and the way that Adèle is viewed by Emma in a series of shot/reverse shot

transitions. Through these two scenes, Kechiche shows how *La Vie de Marianne* has altered what Adèle looks for in potential relationships; Adèle desires an immediate and visual connection to an other similar to the one experienced by Marianne.

The effect of a literary text on how we interact with others is not only suspected by literature students everywhere, but is also supported by a 2013 article published in *Science*. In the article, “Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind,” the authors report a connection between reading literature and an individual’s ability to understand and empathize with the emotional state of others. The researchers concluded that those who read the literary canon performed better on tests measuring self-reported empathy, suggesting a direct relationship between what we read and our interpersonal relationships. The authors write:

Features of the modern literary novel set it apart from most best-selling thrillers or romances. Miall and Kuiken (15–17) emphasize that through the systematic use of phonological, grammatical, and semantic stylistic devices, literary fiction defamiliarizes its readers. The capacity of literary fiction to unsettle readers’ expectations and challenge their thinking is also reflected in Roland Barthes’s (18) distinction between writerly and readerly texts.

In the article, the authors give an account of how certain structural and rhetorical features of literary texts allow the reader to analyze their own relationships differently. This also seems to be Kechiche’s interpretation of the relationship between a reader and a text, as scenes from Adèle’s French class are positioned at key moments that propel the narration forward. This idea is not only incorporated into the film through Kechiche’s use of *La*

Vie de Marianne, but also through a later scene in which Adèle and her classmates analyze a passage from *Antigone*.

In this scene, Kechiche presents another link between a passage analyzed in the classroom and Adèle's own process of emotional development. The scene also foreshadows the tragic ending of the film, and illustrates the connection that is created between a reader and a text. The teacher explains:

Petit...petite est un mot qui va revenir d'une manière très récurrente dans l'œuvre ; quelque chose qui est là pour justement stigmatiser l'enfance, mais aussi l'impuissance. Puisque l'enfance c'est ça, c'est là où... vous en sortez j'espère. C'est là où... on peut pas. On n'est pas encore assez grand on n'est pas encore assez mure, on n'est pas assez fort. Et bien Antigone est encore à cet âge là, elle est encore petite, "trop petite" dit elle-même. Mais elle ne veut plus être petite, elle ne peut pas être petite ce jour là, parce que ce jour là, c'est le jour où elle va dire non, c'est le jour où elle dit non, et c'est le jour où elle va mourir. Nous sommes ici sur quelque chose qui nous rapproche encore une fois des caractéristiques de la tragédie. La tragédie c'est l'inéluctable, c'est la chose à laquelle on ne peut échapper, quoi que l'on fasse. Ça touche à l'éternité de l'être, ça touche à l'intemporelle, ça touche à la fonction même, à l'essence même de l'être humain.

Through the way in which the instructor interprets *Antigone*, she highlights the process of psychological development that occurs for Antigone in Anouilh's text. In this passage, the teacher also explicitly states that there is an inherent connection between the process

of psychological maturity and the tragedy genre, as she interprets Antigone's death as the result of her becoming an adult.

In a more nuanced way, Kechiche uses this scene to reference Adèle's death at the end of Maroh's graphic novel, as well as the feeling of catharsis he incorporates at the end of his film. This is a deliberate choice made by Kechiche and not simply a matter of coincidence: Maroh's original text does not show Adèle in her classroom, while in contrast, Kechiche specifically uses *Antigone* as an intertext. I interpret Kechiche's use of a tragedy in this scene as another way in which he illustrates the connection between Adèle's own process of maturation and a work of literature. In this classroom scene, the teacher suggests that tragedy is an inherent part of what make us human: "La tragédie c'est l'inéluctable ... Ça touche à l'éternité de l'être, ça touche à l'intemporelle, ça touche à la fonction même, à l'essence même de l'être humain." What a tragedy has to say about what it means to be human is why Kechiche incorporates *Antigone* into his film. *Blue* itself is a tragedy because of the range and the intensity of emotion it offers to the spectator who, like Adèle reading "Antigone" is forced out of herself.

In the opening of the film, Kechiche presents two different intertexts, which he then uses to parallel Adèle's own emotional development as she begins her relationship with Emma. In the last half of the film, the film offers both the emotional intensity and catharsis of a tragedy. Kechiche deliberately works to make the spectator uncomfortable: first through intense and graphic sex scenes, and then through a detailed presentation of Adèle's devastation after her relationship with Emma ends, characterized by close-ups of Adèle, who produces large amounts of both tears and snot. After almost an hour of closely documented emotional wreckage, Kechiche offers catharsis to the spectator in the

film's final scene. At the end of the film, Adèle is shown put-together, no longer potentially suicidal and wearing a new dress; no longer dependent on or destroyed by Emma, Adèle for the first time appears mature and comfortable in herself.

In contrast to the opening section of the film in which Kechiche illustrates Adèle's connection to *La Vie de Marianne* and *Antigone*, in the last half of the film, Kechiche encourages the spectator to form the same kind of connection to his film as Adèle feels towards the literature she reads in her French class. Kechiche's desire to connect his audience to his work is evident through the way in which he evokes both pity and fear from his viewer. Pity is aroused through the detailed portrayal of Adèle's heartbreak and fear through the very tangible problems that arise in the relationship. Kechiche not only presents the destructive power of infidelity but also the social, cultural and economic differences between the two women that lead to Adèle's decision to cheat. Adèle feels excluded from Emma's well-educated and bourgeois social milieu, and her intense feeling of alienation from Emma leads Adèle to seek companionship in a male colleague. Kechiche's portrayal of the relationship problems between the two women are not exclusively lesbian problems, and Kechiche takes the time in his film to document the destructive effect of social disparity in a way that Maroh's graphic novel does not. Through Kechiche's attention to not only infidelity, but to why infidelity occurs, the film illustrates how relationship complications arise as a result of differences in social class.

In the pity evoked through the sympathetic portrayal of Adèle and through the cautionary effect of the way in which he presents the failure of the relationship between the two women, Kechiche creates a film that illustrates catharsis as established by Aristotle in *Poetics*. For Aristotle, catharsis is achieved through the arousal of both pity

and fear in tragedy. Although the word catharsis is used only once by Aristotle in *Poetics*, it is deliberately used in order to describe the effect of a tragedy on a spectator. Aristotle is interested in how a tragedy not only results in an intense release of emotion, but also allows the spectator to work through the outpouring of emotion as created through a tragedy. Furthermore, his use of the word catharsis is not simply defined through the English definition of catharsis as cleansing, but rather as the pleasure that is created *through* cleansing, the particular sensation of being washed or cleansed that is achieved through tragedy.

In *Blue*, Adèle is given metaphorical catharsis. The scenes documenting Adèle's depression after the breakup are long and painful to watch. These scenes are without dialogue, and Adèle is shown alone and silent, chain-smoking, hands trembling. The first time Adèle appears no longer crippled by depression and self-pity after the breakup is on a school trip to the beach. In this scene, Adèle is primarily concerned with preventing the children from burying each other alive with sand. Perhaps realizing that she is no longer focused on herself, she leaves the children with another instructor and heads to the water. She first washes her face and neck, and then swims out to float on her back, face up towards the sun, experiencing pleasure as a result of her metaphorical catharsis. The connection between Adèle's emotional recovery and water established in this scene is reinforced at the end of the film. Before Emma's art exhibition, Adèle showers, mechanically wrings out her hair, carefully paints her nails, and puts in earrings without smudging her fresh nail polish. The ritual way in which she prepares herself physically for Emma's art exhibition elicits a feeling of absolution and purification, a preparation before a new stage of her life.

Although the film does not follow the formal elements of tragedy established by Aristotle in *Poetics*, the range of emotions displayed by Adèle throughout the film have an effect on the spectator. Aristotle explains: “we delight in looking at the most detailed images of things which in themselves we see with pain... The cause of this is that learning is most pleasant, not only for philosophers but for others likewise” (90). In the detailed presentation of Adèle’s pain at the end of the film, Kechiche alludes to Aristotle’s assertion that tragedy presents “a change from ignorance to knowledge,” not only for the protagonist of a tragedy but also for the spectator who learns something from artistic representation of pain (96).

Right before Adèle’s metaphorical catharsis, Kechiche integrates one last intertext into the film. In contrast to the early classroom scenes in which Kechiche illustrates Adèle’s connection to texts chosen by her teachers, Adèle is herself the teacher, and she guides her young pupils in a reading a poem by Alain Bosquet. While the actual title of the poem is “La trompe de l’éléphant,” a student reads the title as “Pas besoin.” In this subtle change made to the poem, Kechiche illustrates the writerly way in which he himself read the poem, shifting the emphasis of the poem from the adaptations of each animal to what is unnecessary or no longer needed. Adèle’s tiny students read:

La trompe de l'éléphant
 c'est pour ramasser les pistaches
 pas besoin de se baisser.

Le cou de la girafe
 c'est pour brouter les astres
 pas besoin de voler.

La peau du caméléon
 verte, bleue, mauve, blanche
 selon sa volonté pas besoin de fuir

Le poème du poète
 c'est pour dire cela
 et mille et mille et mille autres choses :
 pas besoin de comprendre.

Through his descriptions of animals, Bosquet's poem illustrates that poetry/art is a way of working through human problems. Each animal's adaptation allows the animal to work around his limitations in a distinctive way. While the chameleon cannot evolve to run faster to escape predators, he develops his own protection that is uniquely his. Similarly, while Adèle is unable to fix her failed relationship, she becomes more confident in herself and gains a sense of self-assurance and maturity she doesn't have before meeting Emma. In his use of Bosquet's poem, Kechiche also alludes to Maroh's graphic novel, which is told through Adèle/Clémentine's diary. Understanding why the relationship ended becomes less important than how her relationship with Emma inspires her writing.

Through the poem, Kechiche also indicates the meaning that he wishes for the spectator to take away from his work. Kechiche suggests that the work of the poet is not to create meaning for the reader, but rather to present observations about life. Perhaps poetry is our own human adaptation that allows us to work through the things we do not understand. In the final line of the poem, "pas besoin de comprendre," Bosquet suggests that there is no fixed understanding that a reader should take away from a poem because

art functions very differently from cognition. In this openness of interpretation provided by Bosquet, he emphasizes the writerly (*scriptible*) over the readerly (*lisible*) as established by Barthes.

In his preface to Barthes' *S/Z*, Richard Howard states that writerly texts are difficult because the reader is faced with an uncomfortable multiplicity of signification. While the experience of reading a *texte lisible* is predictable, Barthes writes: "the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" (4). In this assertion that a reader should not only passively consume, but also actively produce literature, Barthes' work establishes that there should be a difficult relationship between the reader and a text. Throughout the film, Kechiche demonstrates a writerly interaction with literature, first through Adèle's connection to *La Vie de Marianne* and *Antigone*, and the way in which these two texts, both stories of emotional development, influence Adèle's own relationship with Emma. Or, as Richard Howard writes: "For literature is like love in La Rochefoucauld: no one would ever have experienced it if he had not first read about it in books" (ix).

Kechiche also emphasizes the writerly over the readerly in his own recreation of Maroh's graphic novel in his film. While the graphic novel emphasizes almost exclusively the connection between the two women (Maroh tells the story as Emma reads Adèle's diary after her death), Kechiche incorporates his own writerly interpretation of Maroh's graphic novel through his use of intertexts throughout the film, and the many scenes filmed in the classroom where Adèle is first a student, then a teacher. The writerly way in which Kechiche reinterprets Maroh's original story is evident through the changes made by Kechiche to both the name of the main character and the French title of the film.

While Maroh's protagonist is Clémentine, Kechiche renames the central character of the film after his lead actress. Through this significant change, Kechiche illustrates the liberty he took when recreating the original story, making changes in order to reflect his own feeling of inspiration while working with Adèle Exarchopoulos.

The film's French title, *La Vie d'Adèle: Chapitres 1 et 2*, also explicitly demonstrates the shift in emphasis away from the love story as presented by Maroh, to what I interpret as a film which acts as a *Bildungsroman*. While Maroh's original title, *Le bleu est une couleur chaude*, emphasizes the tragic and passionate nature of the story as presented in the graphic novel, Kechiche's title not only establishes a link to one of the intertexts he includes in the film, but also shifts the emphasis of the film squarely onto Adèle. In contrast, Emma is a more central character in the graphic novel, and the story reflects her own emotional journey while she reads Adèle's diary. Kechiche's title choice also establishes Adèle as the protagonist of the film, and asserts that this is a story about her life. In this way, Kechiche suggests that the film is not simply an account of Adèle's relationship with Emma, but rather a presentation of an event that will guide and shape Adèle's identity in a significant way. Kechiche's inclusion of the *Chapitres 1 et 2* in his title also provides a clue as to how he would like the spectator to interpret his film. The film is to be read like the first few chapters of a book, enough information to establish characters and significant elements of the plot, but there is still more to be read: Adèle will have other chapters yet to come.

The way in which Kechiche presents the film as a *Bildungsroman* as well as the structure of the film itself presents another link to Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and more specifically, a connection to Butler's interpretation of Hegel in *Subjects of Desire*. Butler

writes:

After all, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a *Bildungsroman*, an optimistic narrative of adventure and edification, a pilgrimage of the spirit, and upon immediate scrutiny, it is unclear how Hegel's narrative structure argues the metaphysical case he wants to make. Moreover, Hegel's sentence structure seems to defy the laws of grammar and to test the ontological imagination beyond its usual bounds. (17)

In this passage, Butler suggests that Hegel's text is not pure philosophy, but rather a journey of self-discovery that reveals itself to the reader only through a careful navigation of Hegel's grammar. Butler goes on to suggest the narrative structure of *Phenomenology* as a whole also works to directly implicate the reader within the text, for phenomenology calls to be "reread, read with different intonations and grammatical emphases" (18).

And, because the meaning of the text is not immediately understood, "Hegel's narrative is designed to seduce the reader, to exploit his need to find himself in the text he is reading" (20). Through Butler's suggestion that Hegel's reader becomes involved in the text in a way that is different from a reader's interaction with other philosophical works, recognition and reflexivity not only condition the subject's relationship with the other, but also shape the reader's relationship to *Phenomenology* itself. Hegel's text panders to the very human need for identity and an understanding of self.

Similar to Hegel's grammar, Kechiche's story is presented in a way that is not immediately accessible to spectator. The film is long, perhaps excessively so, and there are many scenes with very little dialogue, which instead document the more mundane events of everyday life. Much of the film is presented through uncomfortable close-ups

of Adèle, eating, crying, and smoking. In many of the scenes after the breakup, Adèle appears inconsolable, her desperation evident as she interacts with her young students. Kechiche's decision to present the film in this way encourages the viewer to find herself in Adèle's story; the spectator is invited to experience the range of emotions felt by Adèle throughout the film. In his review in the *New Yorker*, Anthony Lane writes:

So much of this film is absorbed in closeups that, in regard to Adèle, it all but lays down a law: watch her lips. We see her asleep and breathing steadily, like a gentle wave, before falling in love; asleep but whimpering when deprived of passion; and awake but softly gasping as she lies back in the sea, on a trip to the beach, with her face to the sky. The film is, to a compelling degree, the history of that face – tearful, sniffing, puffed with dismay, spotted and blotchy on a cold day, suddenly ravishing, and reddening in embarrassment or lust. Now I understand what it means to be in the full flush of youth.

Like Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Kechiche's film calls to be read and reread. Moments shared between the two women ask questions and call for reinterpretation. What is it about Adèle's first view of Emma that captures her imagination and asks her to question her sexuality? When does their relationship first begin to deteriorate? The narrative structure of the film also creates a parallel framework that implicates the viewer in Adèle's story. At first, Kechiche illustrates the feeling of recognition that Adèle experiences while reading novels in her French class, which she later seeks and works to recreate in her relationship with Emma. Towards the end of the film, Adèle has now become the teacher, and Kechiche draws the spectator into his story in the same way that

Adèle was initially drawn to *La Vie de Marianne*. Through the close-ups of Adèle, which are often uncomfortable but powerfully human, the spectator seeks recognition in Adèle's story: an understanding perhaps of her own failed relationships, or how our relationships with others condition our own subjectivities.

Finally, I suggest that the narrative created by Kechiche works to reveal the reflexive nature of Desire itself. When Hegel states that "self-consciousness is *Desire* in general," (105) he is, as Butler suggests, referring to "the *reflexivity* of consciousness, the necessity that it become other to itself in order to know itself" (7). The idea that our desire for the other is ultimately the desire for our own self-consciousness is the most salient theme presented in *Blue*. But, if Adèle has desired the other, becoming other to herself and therefore emerging with a new understanding of her own self-consciousness, what happens to desire? In Hegel's account of subjectivity, the recognition the subject experiences in the Other culminates in a desire for the Other's destruction: "the Other...will reflect back the subject's own duplicability...and with this very power of reflection, threaten the singularity of the subject" ("Desire" 379).

In *Phenomenology*, Hegel's negation is a very literal desire for the death of the other; death is the ultimate negation. In Maroh's graphic novel, Adèle/Clémentine does not survive her confrontation with the Other and dies as a result of her addiction to painkillers. In contrast, Kechiche's film presents a relationship to the Other which is more akin to Sartre's reading of Hegel in *L'Être et le néant*. Sartre writes: "the For-itself dreams of an object which may be entirely assimilated by me, which would be *me*, without dissolving into me..." (739). In this assertion, the other retains its essential character while also being incorporated into the self. At the end of *Blue*, Emma as the

other is essentially unchanged. She is still a lesbian from an artsy bourgeois milieu and finally shows her artwork at a notable Lille gallery, the project that she establishes for herself throughout the film. Adèle, on the other hand, incorporates her experience with Emma into her own construction of self. At the end of the film, Adèle has a different identity and experiences catharsis.

While Kechiche's intention to present the film as a *Bildungsroman* is clear through his use of intertextuality in the film as well as in the changes made to Maroh's original graphic novel, what is missing from the film are more point of view shots. Adèle's extreme pain at the end of the breakup is well documented by Kechiche, but the viewer never sees how this pain is experienced through Adèle's own eyes. Although the spectator watches Adèle's extreme pain unfold throughout the ending sequences of the film, the lack of point of view shots prevents the spectator from fully experiencing Adèle's emotional development in the way that Adèle connects to *La Vie de Marianne* and *Antigone*. Finally, a female teacher who teaches small children is certainly not what Hegel had in mind when writing *Phenomenology*, but chapters three and four of Hegel's text represent a dramatic shift away from the more conventional philosophy presented in the other chapters. In these chapters, Hegel establishes the intersubjective nature of self-consciousness, and Kechiche's film demonstrates the way in which her relationship with Emma presents a shift in Adèle's own self-awareness.

CONCLUSION

When this project began, so much of my thinking on the film began as a result of Manohla Dargis's scathing review of the film in the New York Times. After reading her review, I was prepared to hate the film she refers to as "self-indulgent" and a better representation of Kechiche's own desire than Adèle's. I conceived of this project as an impassioned defense of Kechiche and the film, which I loved despite my initial intentions of branding the film as anti-feminist. In retrospect, I realize that many things about the film that were controversial in the United States are actually standard in European art cinema, and that my reaction to *Blue* was conditioned by my own limited knowledge of film and as someone grounded in a very Anglophone tradition of feminist film criticism.

My first chapter relies heavily on the early work of Laura Mulvey and Teresa de Lauretis and is more or less a contrast between *Blue* and the formal elements of narrative Hollywood cinema. I still believe that the theory used in this chapter is relevant within the context of Adèle as both as subject in pursuit and object pursued. Adèle's desire created by Oedipal drives is well illustrated through Kechiche's emphasis on lack presented in the opening sequence of the film. The film highlights the way in which Adèle as protagonist looks at Emma as an object through which she can realize herself as a subject, while at the same time she is an object of the active gazes of others. However, this chapter does not take into consideration that many of the things I highlight as inventions in the film are actually formal elements of European art cinema, and my argument about Adèle's diegetic gaze would have been better supported if Kechiche

incorporated more point of view shots into the film.

My second chapter examines the film within the context of Bracha Ettinger's conception of the matrixial as a place of multiple, joint and subjectivizing gazes. The scenes I analyze in this chapter present the few scenes in which Kechiche uses shots from Adèle's point-of-view in order to illustrate her subjective experience, while these types of shots are notably missing from the majority of the three-hour film. The lack of point of view shots is potentially explained through Kechiche's desire for the film itself to become a part of the French odalisque tradition. This idea is evident in the film's sex scenes, which I deliberately chose not to analyze because of their problematic nature. In these scenes, Adèle and Emma are shown blissfully entwined, well lit in warm gold lighting on a sea of blue sheets.

Although the shots ruin or contradict much of Adèle's interiority established as she sees Emma for the first time and in her experience at the gay bar, the shots bring to mind Gustave Courbet's *Le Sommeil*, a painting with homoerotic imagery painted by a man and for a man, but arguably a tableau that would create visual pleasure for lesbians. Kechiche's own interest in art is also illustrated during the opening for Emma's student exhibition when two young gay women discuss the merits of the work of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, two notable artists known for their paintings of nudes. A discussion of the way in which the women perceive the work of these two painters as well as a more in-depth consideration of Kechiche's use of art are missing from my second chapter.

While I firmly believe that lesbians view women in the same way that heterosexual men view women, this argument requires more research and an analysis of different films in order to make a substantial argument. In retrospect, the chapter would

have been a comparative study of the representation of art and female nudity in film. I would draw more extensively from the work of Linda Nochlin and her suggestion that there are no great women artists not because “women watch themselves being looked at” as suggested by John Berger and the pervasive nature of the male gaze, but rather because women historically lacked the conditions and resources necessary to become great artists. The same argument could be made about the absence of women filmmakers. There is a lack of representation of female desire in cinema, with a notable exception being the work of Chantal Akerman. Akerman’s *Je, tu, il, elle* (1974) features a realistic sex scene and a more accurate portrayal of sexual desire between two women (Akerman herself stars in the film), but more films would be necessary to contrast with *Blue* in order to make an argument about how lesbians view each other versus how female desire is portrayed by Kechiche.

In my final chapter, I discuss the recognition experienced by Adèle in her relationship with Emma and Kechiche’s use of intertextuality. While I present the ways in which Adèle’s connection to *La Vie de Marianne* and *Antigone* influence her relationship with Emma, more could be said about the intertexts themselves. Marivaux begins his *La Vie de Marianne* as the presumably male narrator buys a country house in Rennes and finds an old manuscript tucked away in an armoire. The narrator states: “on y a trouvé un manuscrit en plusieurs cahiers contenant l’histoire qu’on va lire, et le tout une écriture de femme” (7). Although it is a man who finds and narrates her story, the manuscript is written in Marianne’s own handwriting. He begins the narration with “je ne suis point auteur,” instead placing the emphasis on Marianne who tells her story: “cette une femme qui raconte sa vie” (7-8). The narrator also emphasizes not only the

way in which Marianne tells her own story, but also her internal process of emotional development as she describes the events of her life in her manuscript. The narrator states: “Elle ne s’est refusée aucune des réflexions qui lui sont venues sur les accidents de sa vie” (5).

The idea of a story written by a woman and narrated by a man is also shown in the film as Kechiche retells the story presented in Maroh’s graphic novel and through the change made to the title of the story. In the title of the film, *La Vie d’Adèle*, Kechiche demonstrates his inspiration from his lead actress and his desire to narrate the story she creates through her performance in the film. The use of *La Vie de Marianne* can also be interpreted as a reference to Marianne as the symbol of the French Republic. Goddess of liberty, Marianne has come to represent freedom and democracy after the end of the French monarchy. The reference to *La Vie de Marianne* in the film can also be interpreted as an allusion to Kechiche’s presentation of values and liberty in *Blue*, a theme also reflected in the interpretation of *Antigone* presented in Adèle’s French class. As Simone Fraisse argues in *Le Mythe d’Antigone*: “for the French in particular Antigone will always be the daughter of the revolution.” (Fraisse quoted in Freeman xxxvi).

It is unclear which version of *Antigone* is used in the film, which is unusual for Kechiche who very deliberately draws on intertextuality throughout his other films including *La Faute à Voltaire* and *L’Esquive*. From a brief glance of the play’s cover, the version of *Antigone* used in *Blue* appears to be Jean Anouilh’s version, first performed in 1944 during Nazi occupation. The performance of the play was a statement about resisting or conforming to authority, and Kechiche’s decision to use this version of the play in the film is a reference to Adèle’s emotional maturation that comes through her

choice to begin a relationship with Emma even after she is ridiculed by her classmates.

Personal values are also a theme presented in Anouilh's play, which begins as Antigone contemplates rising up against her uncle Creon. She will no longer be a thin and inconspicuous young girl. Anouilh's *Antigone* places an emphasis on emotional development and the trauma of leaving behind the innocence and security of childhood. Her decision to bury her brother with a small toy spade is a politically defiant act that also marks her transition into adulthood.

One of the most significant changes that Anouilh makes to Sophocles' original text is through the elaboration of the relationship between Antigone and Haemon. Instead of a betrothal as portrayed by Sophocles, Anouilh depicts a more contemporary romantic relationship. Anouilh's Antigone chooses death not only through loyalty to her brother but also is because she fears that her relationship with Haemon will become a static and unhappy marriage characterized by "a conventional spouse" who learns "to say yes like the rest" (Freeman xli). Antigone longs for an exceptional and passionate relationship. Antigone rejects political authority through her decision to bury her brother and Anouilh's text, like Kechiche's film, suggests that choosing a certain type of relationship is an affirmation of personal values.

Kechiche also represents the connection between a personal decision and a political message through the brief reference made by Emma to Sartre's existentialism. Emma explains how existence precedes essence and states "ça me faisait du bien, surtout dans l'affirmation de ma liberté et de mes propres valeurs." In this statement, Kechiche reveals his intention for the film to be read as an affirmation of Adèle's liberty and her own values, a theme also reflected in Kechiche's acceptance speech at Cannes. Kechiche

explains:

Je voudrais dédier ce prix et ce film à cette belle jeunesse de France qui m'a beaucoup appris sur l'esprit de liberté, de tolérance et du vivre ensemble, et je voudrais les dédier également à une autre jeunesse, celle de la révolution tunisienne, pour leur aspiration à vivre librement, s'exprimer librement, et s'aimer librement.

In his speech Kechiche suggests that *Blue* is an affirmation of living and loving freely. Although the film is problematic, perhaps what Kechiche ultimately accomplishes in *Blue* is a representation of how desire for and a relationship with the other becomes a reflection of personal values. Female desire is a political statement.

Finally, I recently reread Manohla Dargis's New York Times review of *Blue*, and after nearly a year working on this project, I find myself agreeing with many of Dargis's objections to the film. As Dargis notes, the film is missing point of view shots that would work alongside the many close-ups of Adèle, and if more point of view shots were included in the film, the arguments that I make in all three of my chapters would be stronger. Although Dargis is highly critical of the film, she does acknowledge that Kechiche presents a very rare attempt at representing female desire. Dargis writes: "It's a three-hour movie about women, a rare object of critical inquiry perhaps especially for American men working in the male-dominated field of movie critics. The truth is we need more women on screen, naked and not, hungry and not, to get this conversation really started."

WORKS CITED

- Akerman, Chantal, dir. *Je, tu, il, elle*. Perf. Chantal Akerman, Niels Arestrup, and Claire Wauthion. 1976. DVD.
- Anouilh, Jean, Barbara Bray, and E. Freeman. *Antigone*. London: Methuen, 2000. Print.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller, and Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974. Print.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting, 1973. Print.
- Butler, Judith. "Desire." *Critical Terms For Literary Study*. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1995. CREDO. Web.
- . *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*. New York: Columbia UP, 2012. Print.
- . *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Cixous, Helene, Keith Cohen, and Paula Cohen. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1.4 (1976): 875. Web.
- Courbet, Gustave. *Le Sommeil*. 1866. Petit Palais, Paris.
- Dargis, Manohla. "The Trouble With 'Blue Is the Warmest Color'" Rev. of *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. *New York Times* 25 Oct. 2013. Web.
- Ettinger, Bracha. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2006. Print.
- Frank, Arthur W. "Lecturing and Transference: The Undercover Work of Pedagogy."

- Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. 28-35. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Femininity." *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton, 1965. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund, and Joyce Crick. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.
- Johnston, Claire. "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema." *Feminism and Film*. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 22-33. Print.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, Arnold V. Miller, and J. N. Findlay. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977. Print.
- Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique. *Grande Odalisque*. 1814. Louvre, Paris.
- Kechiche, Abdellatif, dir. *Blue is the Warmest Color*. Perf. Adèle Exarchopoulos, and Léa Seydoux. 2013. DVD.
- Kidd, D. C., and E. Castano. "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind." *Science* 342.6156 (2013): 377-80. Web.
- Lacan, Jacques, and Jacques-Alain Miller. *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*. Paris: Seuil, 2001. Print.
- . *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960*. New York: Norton, 1997. Print.
- Lane, Anthony. "New Love." Rev. of *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. *New Yorker* 28 Oct. 2013. Web.
- Lauretis, Teresa de. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984. Print.
- Lever, Evelyne. *Madame de Pompadour: A Life*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,

2002. Print.
- Marivaux, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de. *La Vie de Marianne: Ou, Les Aventures de Madame La Comtesse de ...* Paris: Garnier Frères, 1963. Print.
- Maroh, Julie. *Le bleu est une couleur chaude*. Grenoble: Glénat, 2010.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by *Duel in the Sun*." *Psychoanalysis & Cinema*. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- . "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Feminism and Film*. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 34-47. Print.
- Nochlin, Linda. *Women, Art, and Power, and Other Essays*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1988. Print.
- Ockman, Carol. *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies: Retracing the Serpentine Line*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. Print
- Rivette, Jacques, dir. *La belle noiseuse*. Perf. Michel Piccoli, Jane Birkin, and Emmanuelle Béart. 1991. Web.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, and Hazel Estella. Barnes. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York: Washington Square, 1992. Print.
- Silverman. Kaja. *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988. Print.
- Stein, Perrin. "Madame de Pompadour and the Harem Imagery at Bellevue." *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* 123.6 (1994): 29-44. Web.