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AUTHOR FILM, NEW WAVE AND FEMINISM: THE FILM
RESEARCH OF AGNÈS VARDÀ



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in European Studies
Inter-Department of European Studies
GRADUATE SCHOOL
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สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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Independent Study Title	AUTHOR FILM, NEW WAVE AND FEMINISM: THE FILM RESEARCH OF AGNÈS VARDÀ
By	Miss Xinxin Liu
Field of Study	European Studies
Thesis Advisor	Assistant Professor TUL ISRANGURA NA AYUDHYA, Ph.D.

Accepted by the GRADUATE SCHOOL, Chulalongkorn University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts

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จิน ชิน หลู่ : . (AUTHOR FILM, NEW WAVE AND FEMINISM: THE
 FILM RESEARCH OF AGNÈS VARDÀ) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ตุลย์ อิศรางกูร ณ อยุธยา

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ISRANGURA NA AYUDHYA, Ph.D.

Agnès Varda, a famous French female director, is honoured as the mother of the French new wave movie. As a pioneer director, she created a lot of Documentaries and Feature Movies. Her movies have their unique style and research value, particularly in the areas of feminist research. In her films, she presents women's real-life situations and difficulties in social life, their performance of self-seeking, and their process of growth of them. She not only gives women deep, objective humane care but also constantly thinks about how women get freedom and happiness in themselves, society, marriage and love through her unique Feminist thought.

This paper intends to adopt critical methods of feminist research and the research method of Movie Ontology to research Agnes Varda's Feature Movies, especially in her four representative movies. The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is the introduction; the second chapter which is based on the film text, explores her Feminism thought in Feature Movies; the third chapter is the conclusion and prospect. Through the above study, this paper attempts to enrich the study of Agnes Varda's films, saluting the outstanding filmmaker, Agnes Varda.



Field of Study: European Studies

Student's Signature

Academic Year: 2021

Advisor's Signature

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Gradually I perceive that life is a slow hammering process and that ordinary is not something to be regretted. Don't be numb, don't be silent, and then go on, live a little clumsily.

Xinxin Liu

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and significance of the study

Agnes Varda, the famous French woman director, is not only known as the "mother of the New Wave", but also as an important member of the Left Bank creative community. As the French critic Fourdon said, "Varda is an early bird who starts singing before anyone else wakes up".¹ Her films are unique in style, profound in connotation and research value, especially in terms of their feminist character, which has been her films are unique, insightful and valuable, especially in terms of their feminist character, which has been repeatedly debated and studied by foreign academics.

In a time of great change and a fierce clash of ideas, she has explored and interpreted feminism in her films in a valuable way. Feminist film theorist Clare Johnston argues that "the imagery of women can be analysed and understood as a structure, a code, a tradition, which represents an ideological 'meaning' that can only be produced in relation to men. It is meaningless in relation to its own reference: although women are heavily emphasized as a landscape in the film, they are only negatively represented as 'unmanly'. And women as women are largely absent from the text of the film." In this regard, it is significant to study the work of Varda, who has stated that she, as a feminist, knows some of the suffering women in the world and therefore wants women to be more empowered through the camera. In her films, she presents the real

¹ Chick, K. R. (2011). Re-framing French culture: Transformation and renewal in the films of Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda and Jacques Tati (1954-1968). In.

situation and difficulties of women in social life, showing women's journey of self-finding and growth, and has thus developed her own unique feminist characteristics.² However, academic research on Varda's feminist characteristics is rather fragmented. Therefore, a systematic study of the feminist characteristics of Varda's drama films in the context of her personality and experiences is a small effort to This is a small effort to do so.

1.2 Background to the French New Wave

The New Wave period was characterised by the political turmoil, economic prosperity and cultural dynamism that dominated the French current situation.

The French New Wave was much more than a tally of titles or an encyclopaedic list of directors. The New Wave was first and foremost a cultural phenomenon, resulting from economic, political, aesthetic, and social trends that developed in the 1950s.³

The political context is set out in *French Cinema - From Birth to Present* by Rémy Fournier-Lanzoni: the 1950s in France was a decade of contradictions, witnessing the birth of a new period after the end of the Second World War. With the advent of the 1960s, the old value system was also facing disintegration, in a period of constant conflict between old and new institutions, and politics, like the film industry, needed to change with the atmosphere of the times and the changing needs and aspirations of the people's daily lives. unformed in the 1950s, the 1960s were turbulent, with

² Bourseiller, A., Bruzdowicz, J., Davray, D., Legrand, M., Marchand, C., Varda, A. s., & Wertheimer, F. o. (2017). *The Agnès Varda collection*, Curzon Artificial Eye.

³ Shambu, G. (2019). For a New Cinephilia. *Film Quarterly*, 72.

colonial rivalries everywhere in France and deep socio-political divisions, coupled with a series of inefficient coalition governments.

In 1946 France had a Fourth Republic and a bicameral parliamentary system, the powers of the President of the Republic were severely limited, there was a constant change of government, and cabinet changes were frequent, making the political situation exceptionally unstable. Following the outbreak of the Algerian War, the country's unrest was in desperate need of a stable and effective regime. It was not until 1 June 1958 that Charles de Gaulle was elected by the French National assembly to form a cabinet, giving the new government the power to amend the constitution, and in December he promulgated a new constitution, proclaiming the Fifth French Republic, and then became the first French president to serve a seven-year term, creating another new era, which historians call the "Golden Age of Charles de Gaulle".⁴ This was called by historians "De Gaulle's Golden Age".⁴

In the aftermath of the war, national liberation movements took place in Asia and the France colonies. In Algeria, the National Liberation Front (FLN), a national independence group, emerged in 1954 to fight the French colonial government on a guerrilla basis.

They fought against the French colonial government's military apparatus and police, communications and public facilities. "In March 1962, the French government and the FLN signed the Treaty of Evian. "In March 1962 the French government signed the Treaty of Evian with the National Liberation Front and a referendum was held to

⁴ King, H. (2015). Virtual Memory: Time-Based Art and the Dream of Digitality. Duke University Press.

decide whether or not Algeria would become independent, with an overwhelming majority of votes in favour of independence.⁵

After the Second World War, France went through a period of economic recovery and reconstruction, with the government actively promoting economic development, enacting various policies and formulating economic recovery plans. As a result, the French economy became one of the world's leading economies after the 1950s, with a growth in national production second only to that of the United States and Japan. In January 1959, the European Economic Community (EEC) was set up by France, the United Kingdom and Italy. With the cooperation of several countries, France entered a period of economic prosperity. National incomes and consumption levels increased by a factor of two to three on average, and the introduction of advanced appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines into ordinary homes led to a dramatic change in the way people lived.

Art and culture, with political stability, economic prosperity and changes in the content of people's lives, became the basis for cultural and artistic change and development, and the film movement was transformed by the preconditions of changes in other arts and the direct influence of national film policy. According to Zhu Hong's *A History of Contemporary French Cinema*, the French cultural scene was, at the same time, a scene of prosperity in intellectual, cultural and social life. With its cultural foundation, France made significant contributions to sociology and the humanities, especially literature, philosophy, anthropology and psychoanalysis,

⁵ Margulies, I., & Szaniawski, J. (2019). *On women's films : across worlds and generations* [still image]. Bloomsbury Academic.

and many outstanding progressive intellectuals emerged, such as Sartre, Camus, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes, who advocated new ideas and new thinking through their books, words and deeds, leading to the emergence of new phenomena in literature and the arts, such as the birth of the "new novel" and the rapid development of the theatre of the absurd in France were other forms of art that provided a good basis for the revival of the cinema.

It is also important to note the support given to cinema in France during this period.

The government's support for the stagnant film industry, on the one hand, and the need for greater ideological, moral and ethical regulation in a newly stabilised country, and on the other hand, the newly stabilised country needed to strengthen its ideological, moral and ethical regulation.

The New Wave movement was accompanied by a period of contradictory coexistence between the old and new modes of cinema. Before the New Wave was born, the film industry was self-contained and worked according to a certain model, which Truffaut, the new directors of the New Wave movement were making changes in terms of what they shot, how they shot it and how they produced it. ⁶The new directors of the New Wave movement were making changes in all aspects of content, filmmaking, production, etc., and the two types of film were competing for theatrical and social reception. The older generation of filmmakers were affected by the older generation of filmmakers are being impacted by the variety and individuality of the new directors, while the new ones are struggling to innovate. The older generation of filmmakers has been affected by the changing and personalised forms of the new

⁶ Conway, K. (2019). Visages Villages: Documenting Creative Collaboration. *Studies in French Cinema*, 19.

directors, while the new ones have had to face several practical difficulties in their efforts to innovate. However, as the new directors continued to practice their craft, the new directors' efforts are slowly gaining traction in the industry, as the richness of the French people's lives and the demands on the arts have changed dramatically. The efforts of the new directors are slowly being recognised by the industry.

1.3 Innovations of the study

In China, apart from the article "An Analysis of the Feminine Consciousness in the Films of Agnès Varda" by Li Quizi, which briefly analyses the feminine consciousness in Varda's films with the examples of *Sans toit ni loi* and *Le bonhe*, there is no systematic and in-depth study on the feminist characteristics in Varda's drama films. This paper is an attempt to do just that, and with this immature and imperfect work in terms of methodology and content, I hope to pay contribution to the outstanding filmmaker Agnès Varda and to seek the professor's advice with an open mind.

CHAPTER 2

AGNÈS VARDA AND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

At the end of the eighteenth century, under the influence of the bourgeois revolution, women opened the curtain on their quest for equal and free rights, and thus began their own journey to defend their rights, which continues to this day.⁷ In what was then the first feminist movement of the eighteenth century, most feminists, through their tireless efforts and struggles, finally freed half of the world's population from their domestic and disadvantaged position and gained the crucial right to vote.

Although the first feminist movement did not have a large worldwide impact, feminism began to develop and grow as a separate theoretical and critical approach after this movement. The main figures of this movement included the British writer Virginia Woolf and the French feminist Simone de Beauvoir.

The main issues and theoretical perspectives they raised were the main issues and theoretical points they raised were as follows: firstly, that both men and women were equal; secondly, that the oppression and discrimination against women in a patriarchal society was very unjust; thirdly, that women were subordinate to men in a patriarchal society, and that this status was a subordinate one.

Thirdly, women are subordinate to men in a patriarchal society and this status should be changed, and so on. The development of feminist theory was underpinned by these issues and the development of feminist theory was firmly grounded in these issues.

⁷ Kline, T. J. (2014). *Agnès Varda: Interviews*. University of Mississippi Press.

The second feminist movement emerged in the 1960s.⁸ The famous feminist book *The Second Sex* by Beauvoir was the precursor of this movement and set the direction for its research and thinking; *The Feminist Mysteries* concentrated on the aims and demands of this feminist movement; *The Politics of Sex* by Kate Millett, a PhD from Columbia University, marked the maturation of feminist theory, in which she used the female perspective to attack the male perspective in literature. In her book, she uses a female perspective to attack the 'tyranny' of men in literature. She argued that gender was also political and that all current values were the work of a patriarchal society, a system of standards that belonged to vested interests.⁹ This movement combined the various academic and philosophical trends of the twentieth century in the West and not only took the issues and theories of feminism that had been raised before to a new level, but also formed its own unique theoretical construct. This feminist emancipation movement had a worldwide impact unmatched by the first feminist movement, and it set off a wave of feminist movements in the twentieth century. This feminist movement was no longer simply about gaining specific benefits, but began to target the entire patriarchal society, the value systems and standards of judgement under which it operates, and not to improve it or change itself, but to eliminate them and rebuild a fair system of its own.¹⁰ In other words, its aim is to fight for women's identity and value, to find their own position and goal in this society, to stop being the subordinate of men, but to have their own thoughts and

⁸ Varda, A. s., Varda, A., & Ciné, T. (2011). *The Gleaners and I*, Artificial Eye.

⁹ Staiger, J. (2003). Authorship Approaches. In D. A. Gerstner & J. Staiger (Eds.), *Authorship and Film*. Routledge.

¹⁰ DeRoo, R. J. (2018). *Agnès Varda: Between Film, Photography, and Art*. University of California Press.

values, to have their complete pursuit, to attack and crusade against the patriarchal system of the whole society, to fight and fight tirelessly for their rights and interests. Since the advent of cinema, men have been dominant in the world of cinema. Varda's efforts and work as a female director can be compared to those of women writers such as Virginia Woolf and Marguerite Duras, who explored the issue of female identity in the literary world and overthrew the male language system. Varda, on the other hand, innovated in the world of cinema. In Varda's filmmaking, she has remained self-conscious in her quest to create an innovative and liberating film language that is different from both the masculine language in New Wave cinema and mainstream Hollywood commercial cinema. The female subject and female agency have always been paramount issues throughout her career.

In her speech at the Women's Forum series, the first collaboration between Cannes Film Festival and the French luxury brand Kering, Varda had this to say when she was asked if she was still a feminist. Her answer was firm, saying that she never had been. Although she sometimes complains about feminists, for example, she is disturbed by the prevalence of feminism, which she believes has not only become more and more beneficial in the last five years but has also become very popular. The popularity is the worst part of it because we are in the middle of discussing women. She is also fed up with the over-interpretation of herself by feminists, saying that she is surrounded by feminists who sometimes use her, sometimes push her away and sometimes manipulate her work, whether it has anything to do with feminism or not. She has been pushed around like a polo ball Despite these concerns and grievances, for her part, Varda as she says has always been a feminist. Whether in her

film work or in life, she is a rational, intelligent fighter, with the courage to fight, the sensitivity to feel, and the depth to think.

She is not an extreme feminist. She does not become an extreme feminist, but rather an intelligent intellectual in her approach to the struggle for women's equal and free rights.

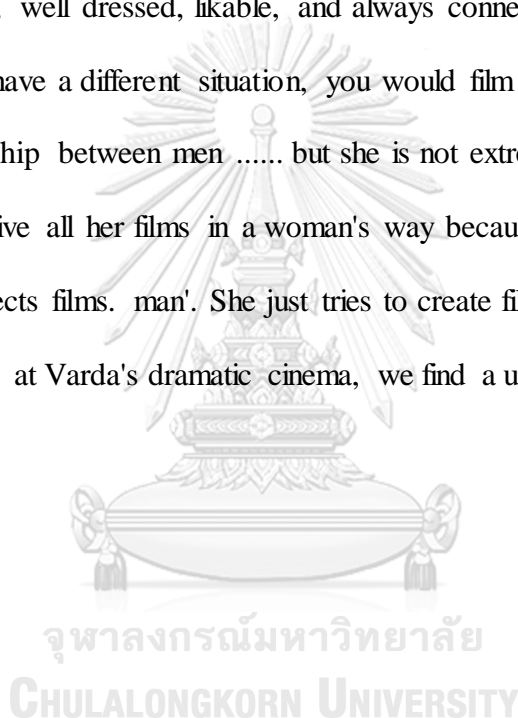
Varda's relationship with feminism began in her youth. She was active in the struggle for equal pay and the right to legal contraception, secretly renting out her house to help perform abortions and secretly signing the sensational "We have abortions, judge us" manifesto, which at the time was described in the French press as "the manifesto of 343 bitches". 343 bitches' manifesto". The feminist movement that followed not only gave her a greater understanding of feminism, but also inspired her to think deeply about her cinematography, and she has said that she is now able to see her films in a new light, because of what has happened, because of the books she has read, and because of her feminist self-education. She learned a lot, a whole lot, about herself and feminism over fourteen years.

These relevant realizations and reflections eventually became the nourishment for her filmmaking, and she responded to the call of this great feminist wave on her with her practice, trying to bring her identity as a female director to her work, and in her filmography, Varda has already dealt with topics of feminist cinema such as the body, desire, pregnancy, and watching, which are now considered feminist masterpieces.

Although, in Varda's view, being a woman director does not necessarily mean making so-called 'feminist films', she belongs to the larger community of humanity above all else, and expressing her feminist views through film should never be the only goal of

a woman director. It should not be the only goal of a female director to express her feminist views through film. But she also believed that the existing system of male-dominated cinema should be changed. In an interview with Jacqueline Levitin in 1974, Varda spoke of her dissatisfaction with the current mainstream cinema. She argued that the image of women in cinema was created by men and accepted by them, and of course by women, so that as women we also had to accept the fact that women should be beautiful, well dressed, likable, and always connected to the issue of love.

¹¹Men in the film have a different situation, you would film his connection to his work, to the friendship between men but she is not extreme, she emphasizes that she wants to conceive all her films in a woman's way because she doesn't want to be a 'fake man' who directs films. man'. She just tries to create films about what she knows. So, looking at Varda's dramatic cinema, we find a unique feminist - Varda.¹²



¹¹ Kennedy-Karpat, C., & Çiçekoğlu, F. (2022). *The sustainable legacy of Agnès Varda : feminist practice and pedagogy*. Bloomsbury Academic.

¹² Smith, A., & Manchester University, P. (2019). Agnès Varda. Manchester University Press.

CHAPTER 3

FOUR ICONIC FILMS

Varda's filmography focuses on documentaries and short and long feature films.

During her career from 1954 to the present, Varda has directed fourteen feature films, and she has written all of them as part of her 'film writing' philosophy: *La Pointe Courte* [*la pwẽ t kuʁt*] (*Short Point Village*) (1955), *les Fiances du pont mac Donald* (*The New Man on the McDonald Bridge*) (1961), *Cléo de 5 à 7* ("*Cleo from 5 to 7*") (1962), *Le bonheur* ("*Happiness*") (1964), *Les Créatures* ("*Creation*") (1966), *lion's love* (1969), *l'autre pas* ("*One Sings, the Other Doesn't*"), *Docementeur* (1981), *7 P., cuis., s.de b...* (*Landscape at Home*) (1984), *Sans toit ni loi* (*Wandering Woman*) (1985), *Master of Kung Fu* (1987), *Jacquôt de Nantes* (*Jacques of Nantes*) (1991), *Les cent et une nuits de Simon Cinéma* ("*101 Nights at Simon's Cinema*") (1995), *Le lion volatil* (*The Flying Lion*) (2003). The four main representative ones are the following.

3.1 Cléo de 5 à 7 ("*Cleo from 5 to 7*")

Nominated for the Palme d'Or in the main competition at the 1962 Cannes

International Film Festival, 1962 Varda made *Cleo from Five to Seven*, a film exploring women's emancipation and the quest for their true selves, which was admired and celebrated by feminists and progressives in general. One is reminded all over again of just what a vital period the Sixties in France were in the history of filmmaking. With almost every movie that comes out these days edited in the same style, there is, for instance, something immensely refreshing about the rhythmic jump cuts that get the film's singer-heroine, played by real-life vocalist Corinne Marchand,

out of the card reader's apartment and onto the streets of Paris at the beginning of the film. But Varda's filmmaking is about a good deal more than simply breaking the pseudo-mimetic rules of Hollywood film or the cinema de papa in France. Trained as a photographer, Varda, of all the revolutionary French cineastes who began to make narrative films at the end of the Fifties, has throughout her career remained the most solidly grounded in the aesthetics and the politics of the documentary.¹³ The film chronicles the journey of a woman as she waits two hours for the results of her cancer test. Cleo is a beautiful singer who cares immensely about her beauty, which is her great attraction to others and a source of confidence and strength for herself. The film focuses on this in great detail, as she tries on every hat in the coat shop, trying to still look beautiful and impeccable in every way. She even looks in the mirror to reassure herself when her ominous premonition of the results of her medical examination is "confirmed" by a fortune-teller. The problem is that this self-hypnosis doesn't last long. Fear becomes the driving force of the film, and beauty and death become the themes. A painting of a skeleton death standing next to a naked woman is used as the film's spiritual symbol, and a colourful tarot card symbolizing fate opens the film, followed by ominous and mournful moments. At the end of the film, Cleo is no longer a doll to be loved, but a woman who returns to herself and her subjectivity. Varda explains that Cleo is a model, and she steps out of it, presenting a distinctly feminist stance in the film - "Cleo has been treated as a toy, defined by the gaze of people. It is only when she takes off her wig and her glamorous clothes that she sees the existence

¹³ Ungar, S., Varda, A. s., & British Film, I. (2008). *Cléo de 5 à 7*. Palgrave Macmillan on behalf of the British Film Institute.

of others and begins to make friends and share". ¹⁴For Varda, it is also a feminist step, to step out of the mirror of yourself or the image society asks you to play with, to get out of her house, to go outside, to see other people, to try to choose with difficulty and contradiction, to choose and to build.

3.2 Le bonheur ("Happiness")

Winner of the Silver Bear - Special Jury Prize at the 1965 Berlin International Film Festival, in 1964 Varda made his film *Happiness*. This is Varda's most direct exploration of the truth about the happiness of men and women in marriage. The film tells the story of an otherwise happy and perfect family, a husband who wants more happiness and cheats on his wife, then the wife commits suicide and the husband and his lover form a new family and live happily ever after. Because of this presentation of the film, Varda has been subjected to some criticism.

The film has been criticised for its presentation. The narrative of the husband's attempts to build a happy trio with his wife and lover drew criticism from radical feminists. Fassbinder was one of those critics who argued that the idea that "happiness is interchangeable" as shown in *Happiness* was simply unbelievable. However, the author argues that it is true that happiness is interchangeable for the men in the film, and that Varda does show this phenomenon and must accept it as a reality to a certain extent, as it seems to be an act of nature.¹⁵ But Varda does not seem to agree with this

¹⁴ Varda, A. s. (1962). *Cleo de 5 à 7*. Gallimard.

¹⁵ Orpen, V. (2006). *Cléo de 5 à 7*. I.B. Tauris. Ungar, S., Varda, A. s., & British Film, I. (2008). *Cléo de 5 à 7*. Palgrave Macmillan on behalf of the British Film Institute.

view of love, and even questions it to a certain extent, ironically. She tells a real tragedy in a light-hearted and cheerful style.

3.3 l'autre pas ("One Sings, the Other Doesn't")

In 1977, Varda founded her own company and created the film *One Sings, One Doesn't*. This is one of Varda's most feminist works and is revered by feminists. The film, which chronicles the friendship of two women over fifteen years, has been dismissed by some as a feminist propaganda film and by others as a glass of sentimental boredom filled with juice. But Varda doesn't let external judgments change her perspective when she narrates the film and writes the lyrics for it. She says she wanted to describe her happiness as a woman.¹⁶ The film constructs a feminist history through the lives of two women, Suzanne and Pauline, from the 1960s to the 1970s. The story depicts the 15-year relationship between two very different women. Pauline, a girl from an average city family, very different from her family's traditional conservatism, leaves home at the age of 17 with the ambition of becoming a singer. Suzanne was a little older, a country girl whose live-in photographer lover committed suicide because he couldn't take too much gloom. She already had two children and is still pregnant. Even though the two women had little in common, they got on well. Later, when Suzanne returns to her rural home, they are forced to separate.¹⁷ The film is an expression of individual freedom in the French sense. In their view, freedom is

¹⁶ Coca-Cola Company Collection (Library of Congress). (1977). *One sings, the other doesn't* S.I.United States, Almi Distribution Corp.RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video.

¹⁷ Varda, A., Bodard, M., Rabier, J., Beausoleil, C., Vandamme, C., Aviv, N., Wertheimer, F., Drouot, J.-C., Drouot, C., Boyer, M.-F., Mairesse, V., Liotard, T., Dadiès, R., Orchidée, Arte, E., & Ciné, T. (2012). *Le bonheur : L'une chante l'autre pas* France, Arte editions : Ciné-Tamaris.

unquestionable, it is what one is born with, no one interferes with it, but at the same time one must bear it. Suzanne returns to the countryside, is disliked by her parents, struggles to live a difficult life with her children, eventually gains the respect of villagers and friends by learning to type, pulls herself together, goes to the south of France, sets up a family planning center and finds love. Pauline, on the other hand, eventually leaves her husband and follows her heart as a singer, organizing a female minstrel band to prompt an awakening with their songs. In this film, Varda contemplates the reconstruction of the female self, not wanting to leave men aside, trying to focus more on the building of the female spiritual self and the commitment to her destiny in a relationship where equality with men is not an issue, and the spiritual support between women in the reconstruction of themselves. Suzanne is helped by women whose smiles and words bring confidence and effort to her life. Varda's camera is luminous and fluid. This is an affirmation and celebration of the woman herself, which has nothing to do with anything other than her own existence.

3.4 Sans toit ni loi (“Wandering Woman”)

In 1985, Varda made the highly acclaimed film *The Wandering Woman*. This is a film that has won numerous awards. In this film, Mona leaves all social conventions and life behind in her quest for absolute freedom. She chooses to live on her own, but ends up freezing to death on the streets, unclaimed. At the beginning of the film, Mona dies. Then, by interviewing those who encountered Mona, Varda slowly gives us a glimpse of Mona's experiences before her death. Mona was taken in by many kind people on her wanderings and given many opportunities to start again, but she was stubbornly attached to her life, feeling numb to her physical presence and more

interested in cigarettes than food. The change given by well-wishers was not used to buy bread but was thrown into the jukebox. This indifferent attitude is a major disappointment to those who take her in, and she is on her way once again. Among them are all kinds of people: female professors, shepherds, drug addicts, immigrants and, of course, she is bullied and humiliated, unable to defend herself.¹ Mona is given absolute freedom, but that freedom leads her to destruction, but even that destruction is a choice she makes for herself.¹⁸

In the film's narrative, Mona's story is simply her own; the director does not try to present her as a microcosm of a larger social picture, nor does he try to add political or social connotations. The narrative unfolds with a surprising calmness, cold throughout, with the camera remaining distinctly detached from the subject, and no attempt is made to use the effects of photography or editing to intensify the viewer's feelings. Leaving society and going on the streets.

The reactions and comments of the people she touches vary: some have nothing and treat her with great contempt; others sympathize and try to help her; there are even some who are jealous: she is free, she can go wherever she wants to go. On a deeper level, *The Wandering Woman* speaks of the necessity for women to be completely free from the shackles of society and to pursue their freedom.¹⁹

The Wandering Woman speaks on a deeper level about the hardships that women must face when they are completely freed from the shackles of society and seek freedom.

¹⁸ Prédal, R. (2003). *Sanstoit ni loi*, d'Agnès Varda. Atlande.

¹⁹ Varda, A. s. (2003). *Sans toit ni loi : un film de Agnès Varda*. L'Avant-Scène.

CHAPTER 4

AN EXPLORATION OF FEMINISM IN VARDA'S DRAMATIC FILMS

4.1 Varda's view of women

To explore feminism in Varda's dramatic cinema, we first look at Varda's view of women as conveyed in his work.

4.1.1 The realistic representation and acknowledgement of women's flaws.

Apart from *Le bonheur* ("Happiness"), which Varda crafted with romanticism, in many of her works the heroines are not perfect when measured against traditional notions of masculinity; Varda does not glorify them, but shows them truthfully and acknowledges their flaws. This honesty is more like a confidence that I am this, but this is me.

Whether it is Cleo in *Cléo de 5 à 7* ("Cleo from 5 to 7"), Pauline and Susanna in *One Sings, One Doesn't*, or Mona in *The Wandering Woman*, they all have their flaws.

Almost everyone around Cleo described her as "a spoilt child". At first, Cleo is an empty woman without a self, who is only interested in appearances, who is capricious, smokes, loses her temper, throws things around, complains, says she is ill at every turn, is ingratiating to her boyfriend, behaves like a beautiful, pitiful, docile rag doll in front of him, and is afraid to say what she really thinks of him; Pauline, who Varda herself says in the film, starts to become eccentric.²⁰ Indeed, in the eyes of others, Pauline is disrespectful to her parents, bold and unbridled, supportive and physically active in abortion. Suzanne, on the other hand, is a jobless, unmarried, pregnant

²⁰ Orpen, V. (2007). *Cléo de 5 à 7*: (Agnès Varda, 1961). University of Illinois Press.

woman who is completely dependent on her boyfriend for support; Mona is portrayed as simply topping the list of the most flawed of Varda's characters. Mona is dirty, crude, selfish, lazy, ill-mannered and smelly. She has been taken in by many kind people on her wanderings and has had many opportunities to make a fresh start, but she is stubbornly attached to her life, feeling numb to her physical presence and more interested in cigarettes than food. Instead of buying bread, the change given to her by kind people is thrown into the jukebox. This "degenerate" attitude is a major disappointment to those who take her in, and she takes to the road once again, eventually dying a horrible death in the wilderness.

This is also true of many of the women in the supporting cast, in addition to the heroine. In *Cleo from 5 to 7*, there appears the cold female fortune-teller, who impatiently stops Cleo from crying in her own place even when she is terrified by death, lest the outside guests get ideas. There is also the maid who takes good care of her upbringing but never really cares or understands her inner pain; the philosophy teacher who coldly refuses Pauline's help in *One Sings, One Doesn't*, the mother who treats her distressed daughter Susanna with indifference; the convent sisters who close the door while saying that our door is always open for you in *The Wandering Woman*, the agronomist's lover who resents the agronomist's lack of a good house and his cruel wife, and so on.

Moreover, Varda has spoken of the faults of women through the mouth of Antoine, the soldier in *Cleo from Five to Seven*.

No, I have been loved many times. But, because of women, I have never been truly loved. You know women. Women love to be loved. They are afraid of everything, of giving everything, even of losing a hair or two, of being noticed. They are

double-minded and very stingy. Their bodies are like playthings, not their lives. '

Cleo, for his part, admits with a smile.

But even so, the women in Varda's camera carry themselves with pride. Cleo, beautiful and empty but still with the courage to break all false bonds, to throw away her beautiful wig and wear a strange winter hat, to step out of her large room to find herself and recognize life; Teresa, the betrayed wife in *Happiness*, who eventually expresses her resignation with her own death; Pauline, who appears in the film with an unruly, critical gaze, always Susanna, even as an unwed mother who dislikes even her own parents, never loses the courage to fight for happiness, and the confident, brilliant self she eventually creates across the many hardships is her greatest beauty. So, for Varda, it is always the woman's inner self and courage that she wants to express and cares most about.²¹

4.1.2 The absence of worldly temptations such as material things, money and status, and the greatest concern for one's inner happiness

In Varda's world of female protagonists, there is hardly a woman who cares about the temptation of material money. The women here, except for Cleo at the beginning, Cleo later, the wife and lover in *Happiness*, Pauline and Suzanne, Mona, the divorced mother Jane in *Kung Fu Master* and so on, each seeks and cares not for worldly material things, money or vanity, but for true love, happiness and the life they want. This commonality of values is highly relevant to Varda's own values. Varda herself is a woman who is always seeking herself and doing what she wants to do, even though she can be stuck and worried about money. She is not worldly, she is not vain, and she

²¹ Wiegand, C., & Wiegand, C. (2007). *French new wave* (New ed.). Harpenden, Herts England : Pocket Essentials.

believes in freedom and self-reliance. When she made her first film, *Short Point Village*, she had no idea about film technology and knew nothing about the equipment on set, and it was usually years or even a decade before a director's assistant got the chance to shoot a film alone. But with courage and enthusiasm, with her desire for a new way of presenting herself, she bravely set out to make her own film. And she didn't have much money at the time; not only did she use up her father's inheritance to make the film, but she also mortgaged her mother's house, and even then she couldn't afford to pay her crew until she was able to pay it all off thirteen years later.

When she was with her husband, Jacques Demy, their home was once an abandoned plot of land in Paris that Varda's father had called a stable. But Varda did not think anything of it, and with her heart of gold she made the dilapidated the small courtyard is beautiful. This is a clear reflection of Varda's values. Varda also follows her own to her own heart and uses it to express her own thoughts to her protagonist.

4.1.3 Confidence and generosity in the presentation of the body

Nude scenes of women are commonplace in Varda's films. The image of the female nude, which is very private in a patriarchal society, becomes natural and normal here. The nude female figure, which is very private in a male-dominated society, becomes natural and normal here. Like the photographer who takes nude pictures of women in *One Sings, One Doesn't* says that he was faithful to the reality of the nude. The female nude. As a real being, it should not have been labelled as private or shameful. Under Varda's lens, the naked female bodies of all kinds are shown, from the youngest baby girl to the oldest, white-haired the smallest baby girl, the oldest old man with grey hair, and even the slender, the bloated, the proportionate, the old and so on. Here we are no longer measured by the beauty of a patriarchal society, but are struck by a real

strength and frankness of attitude. Women We openly declare that our bodies are not
 the release of male desire, but that they are our own. This This self-assured stance
 favorably rebuffs the aesthetic standards that have been imposed on women by men.
 Not only that, but the female body, especially the pregnant female body, is also the
 vehicle of life. Here not only carries the life of the woman herself, but also reproduces
 and nurtures the life of the entire human race, a primal life force and the great
 significance of human reproduction, the female body should not only be confident,
 but should also be praised. As Pauline and her friends sing in *One Sings, One Doesn't*.
 How beautiful is a big belly?
 How beautiful is a big belly?

 Making beautiful eggs

 Through women I want to say and sing how I feel
 How wonderful it is to dream big
 How beautiful a big belly is
 Green trees full of life
 Calling the cute kids
 How exquisite the female body is
 A body forged in flame Body and soul²²

²² Bogart, B. A. (2001). Music and narrative in the French new wave : the films of Agnès Varda and Jacques Demy. In (pp. ix, 283 leaves : music).

4.2 Varda's view of masculinity

The view of masculinity is an important aspect of feminist inquiry. Attitudes to masculinity characterize the different features of feminism.

Agnès Varda once said: 'Plus je vieillis plus on me recompense, mais tant de réalisatrices ont du talent.'

The question of similarity and difference with men is one of the most controversial and important concepts in feminist inquiry. The debate over equality and difference in gender relations is a central issue in feminist theory. Should women strive to be equal to men or to remain different? The question of sameness and difference has thus been the issue that has attracted the most attention in feminist theoretical debates.

On this issue, Varda certainly does not advocate the difference between men and women and the superiority of men over women, as traditional gender concepts do; nor does she go to the more extreme end of the spectrum of female superiority over men; nor does she emphasize male differences, arguing that 'men and women are the same' and criticizing stereotypes of masculinity and femininity; nor does she tend to weaken the boundaries between the sexes, replacing the qualitative dichotomy with quantitative differences. Nor does it tend to weaken the boundaries between the two sexes, replacing the qualitative dichotomy with quantitative differences in postmodern feminism.

On the point of the similarities and differences between men and women, Varda seems to have automatically ignored the issue, arguing that it is a matter of biological mechanisms and that there is nothing to talk about. What we need to be concerned with is the question of the equality of men and women, the question of the value of female capabilities.

At an interview, a journalist asked Varda about the differences between men and women: "I think there is a lot of debate about gender equality, but the fight for gender equality presupposes first of all the recognition of the differences between men and women" but Varda's answer was. "Why should we talk about men and women being different? This difference between men and women speaks about biological mechanisms, whereas we are talking about equality between men and women at work, and it makes sense to fight for equal pay, equal responsibility, equal ability for men and women, and I believe in the ability of women."

The journalist then asked, "Given your years of directing experience, does being a female director in this industry require certain specific qualities relative to men?"

Varda replied, "No, not at all, you know there are women directors who are very gentle and don't shout on set. Don't think they have to yell to make a film."

The journalist also asked Varda's opinion on the categorization of women's films and men's films: "You mentioned earlier in the forum that some women directors have a very subtle perspective, do you agree with the categorization of women's films and men's films?" Varda replied: "I don't know, I just try to look at films where we can find intelligence, subtlety and sensitivity that people can draw inspiration from and learn something. There are always films by male or female directors that are fantastic, and others that aren't worth seeing. I don't want to categorize them first as female or male films. It is true that there are women directors whose work is particularly interesting - Naomi Kawase in Japan, for example, or Claire Denis in France - because they have made worthwhile films, and there are men whose work on women is also very good, and Bergman has tried to understand women. So, we can't define them in rigid boundaries, I'm sure some female directors may have a slightly different

sensitivity than men and succeed in expressing that on film, but we can't simply define, but we should take up the tools of cinema: camera, lighting, sound effects, etc. and use them to express what is wanted, that's what's important."

From the above interview we can see that Varda does not emphasize the differences between men and women, or even has no interest in this issue at all; the differences and similarities between men and women are relegated to the issue of biological research, and she is more concerned with the struggle for equality in women's political rights. Varda does not think in terms of feminist differences between men and women, but rather in terms of the primitive meaning of life itself, of cinema itself. In life, women and men are not equal, and this is wrong and needs to be improved, so Varda fights for it; in cinema, whether directed by men or women, this is not the point of the film, the only criterion of value is whether it is intelligent, subtle and sensitive, a film from which people can draw inspiration and learn something, and, more importantly, whether it is made to express what is wanted. Something, which brings us back to the meaning of cinema itself, where the differences between men and women, between male and female directors, are in a state of dissolution. So, as mentioned above, Varda respects women and femininity, although some feminists argue that women are not born that way but are shaped, but it is as if this is not one of Varda's priorities, she also respects men and masculinity or, on a higher level, she respects the natural law qualities of human nature. Varda is more respectful of the natural laws of human nature, as in the attack on the *Happiness* when Varda states thus, "*Happiness* may be in the compromise to the laws of nature." In addition to this,

the wretchedness of the incestuous relationship in *The Master of Kung Fu* is dissipated by the natural law of the word, "Love is the greatest mystery".

So, throughout Varda's films, the women in Varda's films are very respectful of their femininity, open and confident about it, and their greatest compliance is with the light and power of their own selves. Not only that, but they, including those that flow from Varda's films, are also objective and respectful of men. She is not hostile or discriminatory towards men, but instead gives them the respect they deserve from the standpoint of humanity and human society. She appreciates their virtues and shows their shortcomings, but always from an objective standpoint, just as she shows the shortcomings of women.

Men are shown as reliable friends, intimate lovers, eager helpers, lustful, hypocritical egoists, hurtful, weak men in the same way that she shows women of all kinds, without any inequality, but from the objective point of view of human nature and human society. Varda Vardar prefers a man and a woman who are independent and beautiful, and who love each other, build a marriage and a family, have a true love and a home, to work together, to support each other, to appreciate and enjoy each other's bodies and sexuality, and to achieve personal and family fulfilment together.

In his work *One Sings, One Doesn't*, which expresses his own distinctive feminist ideas, Varda says in her feminist work, this is love,

complementing each other, never to be without each other again

As long as he is there, there is love and now

.....

As long as there is love, the happy two in love

.....

Marriage is a joint venture

.....

People who love each other don't change

.....

Such language is full of recognition and desire for a good love and a happy family.

Moreover, sex between a man and a woman is not rejected by Varda, but is something as real, natural, beautiful and full of life as a woman's. The body is as real, natural,

beautiful and full of life. In *Happiness*, the sexuality of men and women is in

Happiness, the sexuality between the man and the woman is an obvious point, and the

husband's cheating, which we will set aside for the moment, is a remark that in a way

illuminates the male. The husband's cheating we will set aside, but his words are

somehow indicative of the nature of male and female sexuality: it is beautiful when

people in love sleep together. In *One Sings, One Doesn't*, Susanna, as a lonely

woman, 'how she misses the love of men and women'. In *The Wandering Woman*, the

maid Yolande, who sees Mona sleeping with another wanderer on the estate, is also

very envious, and she speaks.

How I wish Paul could sleep with me in the same bed, like the couple on the estate, in

each other's arms. Similarly, in *The Village at Short Point*, *Happiness*, and *The*

Wandering Woman, there are tastings and talks about women. The presence of men

with a certain eroticism reflects, to some extent, Varda's understanding and tolerance

of male and female. The presence of men who comment on and talk about women

with a certain amount of eroticism reflects, to some extent, Varda's understanding and

tolerance of male and female matters.

But Varda is not in favor of cheating and promiscuity without regard for basic moral principles, and in *One Sings, One Doesn't*, Susanna firmly rejects married men, insisting that "a family man won't do." Thus, Varda's view of masculinity is respectful and equal, true and sound. There are many men who appear under her lens. men.

First, there are the men who play the rescuers. The most important figure here is the soldier Antoine in *Cleo from Five to Seven*. The most important character here is the soldier Antoine in *Cleo from Five to Seven*. During Cleo's fear-filled wait, her trusted maid, her lover, her long-time friend, etc., are all absent. No one understands her enough to make a real connection with her. Only this stranger only this strange young man, who gives her genuine and warm companionship, with whom Cleo gradually finds true In his company, Cleo gradually finds the courage and happiness to live. Here, the great figure of the rescuer is set up as a male by Varda.

In *One Singing, one doesn't*, Susanna's doctor husband plays a similar role, rescuing Susanna from her boundless loneliness and giving her once again a beautiful happiness and family. Then there is the helper. Of all the people around Cleo when she sees the maid crying in the coffee shop out of fear, only a middle-aged male and a young male waiter come over to care for her, comfort her and show friendly action.

As Cleo went to the park to ask the driver to drive straight in, this driver, in order to look after Cleo's mood, also did as she said and let it go for a while, the big deal being a fine. And during Mona's wandering journey, the men who helped her, she was also helped by many more men than women during her wanderings, such as the man who offered to buy her a sandwich, and the generous shepherd who was even willing to buy her a sandwich in order to make sure she had one.

The generous shepherd was even willing to give her a piece of his own land in order to fulfil her wish to have a plot of land to grow potatoes like a powerful man. Cleo's boyfriend, for example. Cleo behaves beautifully and well with him, afraid that he will leave her because of her illness and is afraid to tell her about it. For example, the husband in Happiness, to whom the wife is all too considerate and even promised to love him more by letting him stay with his lover.

The person who aspires to cheat. For example, one of the husband's workmates in Happiness clearly states that he has had one woman in his life man is unbelievable, and that with one woman, he will want another.

The hypocritical betrayer. As in the case of the husband in Happiness. This husband cites wanting more happiness and a lover to help himself find the reason to cheat on his ego. He claims that he would never lie, but after telling his workmates that he is "not a rebellious if I fall in love, I can't stop", he can't wait to run to his lover's place during his lunch break. He is not a liar. To his lover and his wife, he speaks with conflicting sweetness, saying to his lover.

"I like you like that, and so do I. I'm not the same since I met you, on the contrary, I'm more in search of my true self. You know I met my wife when I was in the service, it was love at first sight, as soon as I got out of the service we got married, if I had met you first then it would have been you who would have been my wife.

.....

There's a big difference, I love you a bit more, I have more fun with you, you're like a new bottle of wine to me, my head starts spinning, and it's a pleasure to make love with you, and with Teresa too, she likes to make love too, only she's calmer and I play the dominant role, and she likes to have sexual pleasure with me.

She was gentle, always that way, and our children look like her. You, however, taught me some other games and we are both more alike."

But at the same time say to his wife.

"It's for more happiness, and it hurts you to say it, I'm sure I can understand, I'm not stupid, an apple orchard, more flowers, more apples, yes, things just happen, and I enjoy it. Do I treat you any differently? I love you. That didn't cost you anything. If it hurts you, I'll do anything you tell me to do, you want me to leave her, I will. I want you to be happy. You come first.

.....

You can even love me more if you want to."

But when, after he could not find his wife, he heard the news that someone had fallen into the water, he immediately ran over to her in a panic, and could see that in his heart he was not ignorant of the fact that his wife might be in great pain and even commit suicide, yet he was still at that time self-righteously.

He was still talking about wanting his wife to be happy. This really creates an irony.

There are the vile. For example, the agronomist in *The Wandering Woman*. He is asked by his teacher to find Mona, but when he does, he chooses to do so out of his own disgust. He chooses not to tell the teacher because of his own disgust, and by this act he pushes Mona directly closer to death. He has been unfaithful to his wife, and has his own personal problems. He is unfaithful to his wife and has a lover of his own. He hypocritically greeted his aunt with flowers, but in his heart he wanted. He is a man who is not only a woman, but also a man who wants her to die early so that he can get her property, and who eventually sacks the maid and sends her to an old age home.

Then there are the dreamers. For example, the photographer's boyfriend who kills himself when Suzanne can't bear the grief, and the shepherd with a master's degree in philosophy whom Mona meets.

And then there are the cowards. Like the kind but cowardly Tunisian pruner who promises to look after Mona and is ultimately unable to keep the promise he once made under pressure from his workmates. Then there is Pauline's husband. When he returns to Iran, he is no longer willing to live in freedom, but insists on going back to the old Iranian way of life, and Pauline has no choice but to separate. And of course, there are the hurters. Like the man who raped Mona in the woods. And so on.

So many male figures, and Varda gives them the respect and objectivity they deserve. In a feminist, this is rare. Varda's feminism is more about caring for women than it is about bashing men. Of course, the formation of this feminist concept is also closely related to Varda's own experience. As far as I know, Varda's family consisted of four siblings in addition to her parents, and she grew up in love with her male family, and experienced the Second World War together. Later, whether working as a photographer or in the Left Bank or New Wave circles, Varda encountered many male friends and was respected. The way Varda made his films, for example, invited his friends and ordinary people around him to take part.²³

The way Varda made his films, inviting his friends and ordinary people around him to take part, regardless of gender. For example, Varda once said that, between professional and fanatical filmmakers like Truffaut, Godard and Humet, she was able to make her own films.

²³ Flitterman-Lewis, S. (1996). *To desire differently : feminism and the French cinema*. In (Version Expanded) Columbia University Press.

But she was never marginalized because she was a woman. From her first film, no one criticized it because it was made by a woman. Moreover, her childhood experiences of war, her close encounters with death, her difficult life during the war and her extensive exposure to people's livelihoods have also given her understanding of people's livelihoods also gave her the ability to think more about life and humanity, and thus to see men from a larger perspective.

In addition, we must also talk about Jacques Demy, Valda's loving husband for the rest of her life. After their marriage, Varda devoted herself to her career and her family. They loved each other and were very respectful of each other's individualistic space. They wrote separately and never asked or interfered with each other's work. When they lived on the island, Demi would occasionally visit Varda's set to take photographs, and Varda, a photographer by trade, would photograph Demi working on the set. One of the stills in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* is from Varda, showing Deneuve's tearful farewell to the platform, but the composition is centered on Demi in the distance, out of focus, standing on a railcar wearing a yellow mackintosh, which shows how much love Varda had for her. Varda has made four films featuring Demy, *Nantes' Gram*, about Demy's cinema-obsessed childhood, *The World of Jacques Demy*, a complete account of Demy's cinematic journey, *The Girl from L.A.* Was Twenty-Five, in honour of Demy's *The Willows*, and *The Creator*, which has not yet been released. -Dedicated to Jacques Demy.

Although Varda was a pioneering female film writer, she still aspired to a lifelong love affair. Varda has She has photographed a couple who have been married for over 40 years, and in the narration she says she is a little jealous that it is better to grow old together. It's better to grow old together. For Demi, she was truly devoted to

her life and to her death. In 1988, Demi was getting weaker and weaker because of AIDS, a very shameful term in those days, and it was viewed as a scandal. But Valda never left her lover, always protecting him with a kindly silence, allowing him to live his life to the end. He was always there to protect his lover with a kindly silence, so that he could experience unlimited love in his last days. After Demi's death, Varda made no secret of her memory of him on various occasions. After Demi's death, Varda made no secret of her memory and affection for him, she kept everything about him and always lived in their small courtyard. She kept everything about him and lived in their small courtyard. After Demi's death, she said to herself, "Damn it, it's time for her to grow up. What a strong attachment and love it was."

Varda and Demi had two children, a daughter and a son. She loved them dearly as well as their children. As far as she was concerned, her own daughter had three sons, Augustine, Valentin and Corentin, and her own son also had a son, Constantine, and his wife, Josephine, and together these family members were the sum total.

It is this intimate and friendly relationship with men in family, friendship, love and general life contact that makes Varda's films so. It is this intimate and friendly relationship with men in family, friendship, love and general life contact that makes Varda's films, although full of feminist consciousness, not anti-male but respectful of men and, in the case of love, expectant of them. and, in the case of love, the happiness of true love.

4.3 Authenticity - real women and their real lives

Varda says, "As a citizen, as a woman, my work reflects my political choices, and I stand with those who are not favored by life, including the poor, the marginalized, the defiant, the authentic and those who do not submit to stereotypical conventions." 17

This statement truly speaks to her heart. The women in her cinematic works are no longer the women portrayed in traditional film productions; they are not royalty, ladies of a thousand, or dark girls or kindly prostitutes, but truly ordinary people. Her works truly show the lives of these ordinary people whose voices are missing, truly showing their growth, struggles and struggles, and therefore seem so rare and valuable. Their problems, confusions and struggles are so real, and the pursuit of freedom and self that flows from them is so moving. To show the real, rather than to create a fantasy, is one of the major attractions of Varda's films that captivate us.²⁴

In *The Village of Short Point*, the lives of the fishermen and the hero and heroine are shown interactively. The fishermen's village is a very ordinary hamlet under the small French town of Sète where Varda lives. The inhabitants there live their lives like all ordinary country folk, with their worries about survival, their joys and their habit of dying from injuries. The hero is a child growing up in this fishing village, while the heroine comes from Paris, where, as one of the villagers in the film says, such women are everywhere, and is also a small, ordinary clerk; *Happiness* shows an ordinary couple, one a carpenter and the other a tailor, both very small people, yet this film sincerely explores their happiness; *One Singing, One Doesn't* shows the courageous lives and struggles of two women. One is Pauline, who runs away from home and becomes a vagabond singer, and the other is Suzanne, who comes from the countryside, lives with her poor photographer boyfriend and has a child, returns to the countryside after his death, and finally relies on her bravery and strength to live a good life with her child. This is the story of a humble but dignified girl who had her

²⁴ Philippe, P. (2004). *Our century: 1958-1980, new wave* London, Oracle Home Entertainment.

own little job as a clerk, but got bored and became a vagrant girl, free to choose her own life. Her fate and experiences, and whether people can help her or not, are of interest to Varda and to the audience; the heroine of *The Master of Kung Fu*, an unattractive divorced mother who dresses unisex and occasionally wears a skirt in the most ambiguous moments of her relationship, who must devote herself to her children and her life, is not a conventionally attractive protagonist, but she is real and relatable, as if she were living in She is not a conventionally attractive protagonist, but she is real and relatable, as if she were a neighbor or a friend living close to us.²⁵

This focus on real, ordinary people is also linked to Varda's career as a photographer. Varda said that photography humbles people. She was very good at people photography and left behind many portraits. Photography has honed Varda's ability to capture the subtleties of people's expressions and her sense of the sadness and joy of life that lies beneath them. This is particularly evident in the case of Jérôme, Suzanne's suicidal boyfriend in *One Singing, One Doesn't*. Jaromou, like Varda, is a photographer whose photographs are of all sorts of sad and weary women and children who, in Pauline's words, feel so sad, like abandoned wives, survivors and unwed mothers. Jérôme could not shake these sad eyes, could not bear these real heavy pains and eventually committed suicide. This inability to bear it is something that I believe Varda, also a photographer, would have felt, perhaps even as an aspect of her own feelings. But beneath the surface of this unbearable suffering of strangers lies a great sense of humanity and love. Having been through war herself and having travelled extensively as a photographer, Varda has seen a lot of life and death, grief,

²⁵ Battista, K., & Bloomsbury. (2019). New York, new wave : the legacy of feminist art in emerging practice (First edition. ed.). I.B. Tauris.

poverty and struggle, which has made her understand and revere every human life even more, and who, Varda once said, can pretend to grasp the whole essence of someone?

Each person is a piece of a jigsaw puzzle, of which we can put together a part, but the rest is unknown. Therefore, respecting each individual and focusing on the lives of people, especially ordinary people, is an important aspect of Varda's work.

Not only that, but Varda is also very fond of making documentaries in his filmmaking. Making documentaries also allows Varda to listen to people and understand the world, rather than categorizing them by profession or class. With curiosity rather than curiosity, he shares what he sees and thinks in a tolerant and calm manner, and the independent beauty of his personality, his humanity and his human feelings are moving. In Varda's films, we see her caressing people of all colours through her lens with compassion. When *The Wandering Woman* won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, it was a hit in Europe, and Varda's performance of the tragic death of a young life was timely.²⁶

The tragic death of a young life had a correspondingly timely social effect. This is what Varda felt was the most important value of the film. She made her position clear, saying that she would always belong to the Left Bank and would always be at odds with those who were damaged. The film is a good example of this.

Similarly, when asked in an interview about her digital filming of *The Gleaners*, she said that she had been confronted with a very poor and underprivileged situation.

²⁶ Ince, K. (2013). Feminist Phenomenology and the Film World of Agnès Varda. *Hypatia*, 28(3), 602-617.

She said that she was dealing with very poor, very underprivileged people and that a large team of photographers would not have been able to accept it psychologically. It would probably have been harmful to them. So she used a small digital camera, not only for technical reasons, but also for humanitarian reasons. It was also a humane thing to do.

From these examples we can see that Varda is a humane and loving artist. She is on the side of ordinary people, and her films show the real lives, joys and sorrows of ordinary women. Her films also show the real lives and the joys and sorrows of ordinary women.

4.4 Love

Love is also a constant pursuit in Varda's film. Cleo is sad and crying because everyone dotes on her but no one loves her. As she sings the song "*Cry of Love*", Cleo cries out in despair. In *Happiness*, wives and husbands, husbands and lovers all pursue their love, even when it is fraught with hurt and even appears to die; there is such magic in love that one can live for it and die for it. In *One Sings, One Doesn't*, Varda gives a clear answer to love, which is "It is love that complements each other and can never be separated from each other. As long as he is there, there is love and now. As long as there is love. A happy couple in love."²⁷

Marriage is a common cause, and people who love each other don't change." In *Kung Fu Master*, the actor's words, "Love is the greatest mystery of all", are spoken in a

²⁷ Ramanathan, G. (2006). *Feminist auteurs : reading women's film*. Wallflower.

moving way. The significance of love for us as human beings needs no further explanation, and Varda has given his own reflections.

4.5 Solitude

Loneliness is also a common plight of the women in Varda's films. This is most evident in *Cleo, Susanna*: all the people she knows and knows well, the maid, her boyfriend, her old friends, have no way of understanding her or Only at the end is she offered understanding and companionship by a soldier she has just met who is going off to war. When she goes out because no one understands her, she goes to a café, puts on her sunglasses and watches the world, paying attention to how people are living, what they are talking about and what they care about. She puts on her sunglasses and looks at the world, at how people live, what they talk about, what they care about, and opens herself up to the world she lives in for the first time. The café was full of people chatting with their companions, the music was upbeat, her music, but no one was paying attention, she was alone. She looks so lonely with her heart full of thoughts but no one to talk to. With her sunglasses, she doesn't fit in with the lively crowd. cold, cold and sad. So, she drank her brandy, took off her sunglasses, walked out of the café and back into the street, where only loud voices were heard. The only sound she heard was the sound of her footsteps, which made her feel even more lonely. Cleo is even more upset by what has happened to her and the people around her. So she went to her nude model friend and told her she was she was worried about people picking on her flaws and that she was sick with cancer, and her friend drove out with Cleo in her The friend goes out with Cleo in her old car, concerned about her illness but unable to comfort her. They talk about how Cleo's

boyfriend doesn't know about it and Cleo can only be silent. This hilarious loneliness, which is felt so deeply despite the presence of friends and lovers, is the greatest loneliness of all.

Suzanne: The loneliness that almost consumed Suzanne during the ten years she spent bringing up her children alone.

Yolande: envies Mona. Thinking that being alone is tough, and that being a lonely couple isn't any better. She even felt lonely in Paul's arms. This feeling of loneliness, which is not only female, though spoken through a woman, is, however, for all humanity.



CHAPTER 5

LIMITATIONS AND SHORTCOMINGS

However, the feminist character as expressed in Varda's films also has her own limitations, which are full of a kind of Vardaesque idealisation. Firstly, Varda's protagonists in her films are more inclined towards the feminine characters that she likes or at least admires. Whether it is Cleo, his wife and lover, Suzanne and Pauline, or Mona, there is something about them that Varda admires and wants to show. None of them are plagued by money or temptation, all have a feminine resistance, all are in some way pursuing or manifesting themselves. They are also free from the desperate realities of life and the complexities of human nature that they are forced to present. They have an idealized version of themselves and their lives.²⁸

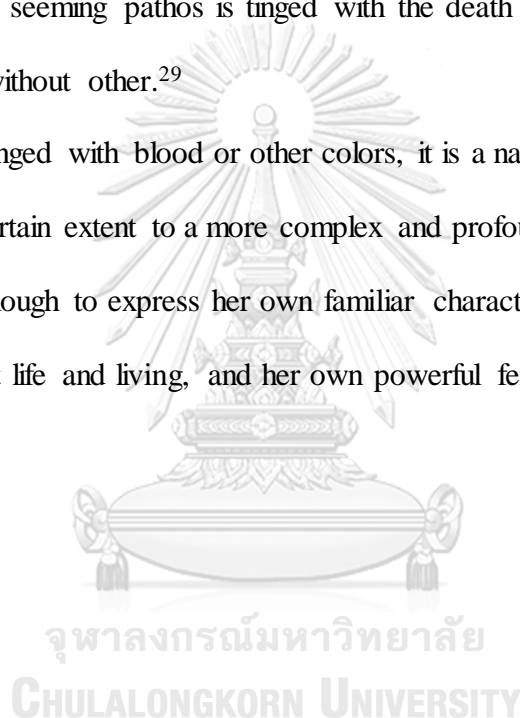
Secondly, many of the characters in the film have a literary tone. For example, Cleo is a singer and Pauline is a vagabond singer. Cleo's girlfriend is a mannequin, and Cleo's girlfriend's boyfriend is producing a film, and they are talking about art and film as well. Suzanne's boyfriend is a pessimistic suicidal idealized photographer who likes to shoot nudes. Whereas Varda says Mona comes from the sea, in *Happiness* the wife and husband come from an idyllic background, the wife a seamstress and the husband a carpenter, both in the same primitive and unindustrial and commercial profession as Mona finds work. The wife is almost perfectly portrayed and the husband's love of nature, the smell of trees, grass or river water, is in keeping with Varda's love of the environment and plants. The philosopher couple Mona meets who raise goats for

²⁸ Chamarette, J. (2012). Agnès Varda's *Trinket Box*: Subjective Relationality, Affect and Temporalised Space. In J. Chamarette (Ed.), *Phenomenology and the Future of Film: Rethinking Subjectivity beyond French Cinema* (pp. 107-142). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

cheese, the female botanist, and so on, are almost none of the characters with a heavy industrial or commercial flavor.

Again, these characters often have an idealized ending that follows the pursuit of self. Cleo, for example, surprisingly does eventually conquer her fears and begins to feel happy. Her husband and lover also get seemingly happy endings. Susanna grows up to be an independent and strong woman, Pauline finds her happiness as a wandering singer, and Mona's seeming pathos is tinged with the death of self after absolute freedom, a death without other.²⁹

This death is not tinged with blood or other colors, it is a natural death. These analyses limit Varda to a certain extent to a more complex and profound presentation, but Varda is mature enough to express her own familiar characters and their lives, her own feelings about life and living, and her own powerful feminism.



²⁹ French, L. (2021). The 'Female Gaze'. In L. French (Ed.), *The Female Gaze in Documentary Film: An International Perspective* (pp. 53-70). Springer International Publishing.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Varda is an outstanding feminist, and her films are full of care and exploration of the female condition of life and psychology. She is open and confident in being a woman, full of a passionate search for the true, independent self of women and a celebration of the meaning of life that women carry. Here, women follow their own hearts and by the power of her own resistance and struggle, she ultimately achieves inner peace and strength and real happiness.³⁰

She is not radical or nihilistic; her feminism is a joyful, not radical, reconstruction.

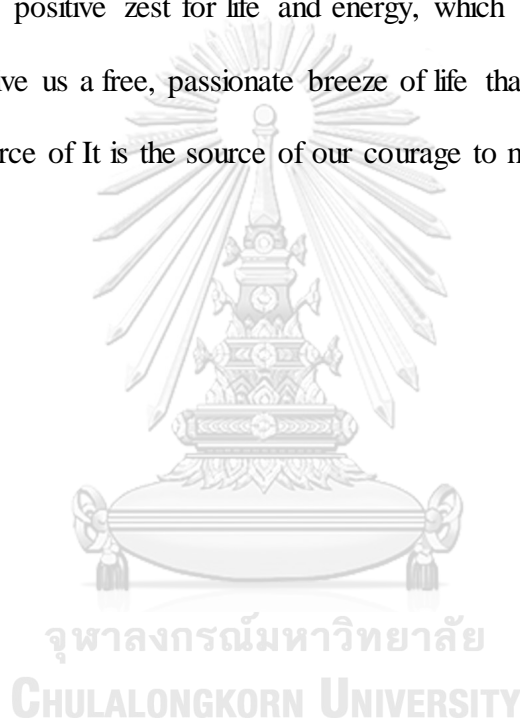
The women in her films are not hostile to society, rejecting morality or hysteria; they are not trying to be hostile to men and reject their own femininity; her heroines have transcended the constraints of a patriarchal society, or even social norms.

Beauty, gentleness, virtue, desire for love and marital happiness are all possible as long as they are motivated by their true selves of human nature. She expresses reality rather than creating fantasy, in a realistic and delicate texture of the environment, aimed at the realistic and delicate texture of the setting is aimed at the real ordinary women, and truly shows the lives of these ordinary people whose voices are missing, truly it shows their growth, struggles and struggles, and reveals their emotions and strength. In addition, her feminism is transcendent, not confined to women's thinking, but is based on the larger perspective of humanity and is full of concern for universal values, which are not evanescent and have a certain realistic character.

³⁰ dCidcekoglu, F., & Kennedy-Karpat, C. (2022). The sustainable legacy of Agnès Varda : feminist practice and pedagogy (First edition. ed.). Bloomsbury Academic Bloomsbury Publishing.

This concern is not only not remote, but also has a certain realistic character and is closely linked to social reality. In addition to resistance and expression, she also encourages women to pursue themselves and their true happiness. Although there are some limitations, the power of this care that moves the heart.

She offers a genuine and realistic possibility for women, using her joyful, courageous and positive enthusiasm for life and her love for women. She touches us with her joyful, courageous, positive zest for life and energy, which is always new.³¹ She and her films always give us a free, passionate breeze of life that gently soothes our hearts and becomes a source of It is the source of our courage to move forward in life.



³¹ Flitterman-Lewis, S. (1996). *To desire differently : feminism and the French cinema*. In (Version Expanded) Columbia University Press.

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