

**Frank Sinatra, Hi-Fi, and Formations of Adult Culture:
Gender, Technology, and Celebrity, 1948-62**

Keir Keightley

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The Department
of
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
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Abstract

Title: "Frank Sinatra, Hi-Fi, and Formations of Adult Culture:
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Author: Keir Keightley

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This dissertation involves a detailed examination of selected formations of adult entertainment culture between 1948 and 1962. While much research has focused on the emergence of youth or teen culture after the Second World War, the contemporaneous development of distinct and distinctive adult cultural formations in the fields of popular music and Hollywood cinema has been neglected. The dissertation presents an extensive amount of archival and artefactual research as part of a reconstruction of the dominant institutions, forms, and practices of adult popular music and cinema. It examines the inter-articulation of age, gender and taste across a range of media forms, performers, and technologies associated with adult audiences. The dissertation includes detailed accounts of the installation of high-fidelity audio technology in domestic space and of the cross-media career of the singer and actor Frank Sinatra. These studies involve conjunctural analyses of articulations of adulthood during a period which is historically associated with the emergence of youth or teen culture. The development of age-segmented popular cultural formations is seen to be implicated in the rise of new modes of appreciation and valorization of popular forms and performers, and these are seen to operate within gendered conceptions of cultural legitimacy.

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Introduction

The decade and a half following World War II was marked by a rapid increase in the consumption of cultural commodities in Canada and the United States. This was in part the result of the emergence of new technologies, new cultural forms, and increasing levels of average personal income. A related and significant aspect of this historical conjuncture is the development of age-graded entertainment formations, such as popular music and films marketed toward specifically teen-aged audiences. But there also developed during this period a set of adult entertainment formations, with their own institutions and practices. A 1954 Billboard headline reflects the emergence of age-segmented audiences and markets in its declaration, "Adult Disks Grow to Man-Sized Industry" (Horowitz 1954, 1). The use of gender to express the success and importance of the adult market for popular music also unwittingly underlines a process of masculinization that accompanies the formation of these distinct and distinctive adult entertainment cultures during the post-World-War-II period. The emergence of age-segmented popular cultural formations is implicated in the rise of new modes of appreciation and valorization of popular forms and performers, and these tend to operate within gendered conceptions of cultural legitimacy. This dissertation examines the inter-articulation of age, gender and taste across a range of media forms, performers, and technologies associated with adult audiences. It is concerned with the emergence of specifically-adult popular music and film cultures, and includes detailed accounts of the installation of high-fidelity audio technology in domestic space and of the cross-media career of Frank Sinatra. These studies involve conjunctural analyses of articulations of adulthood during a period which is historically associated with the emergence of youth or teen culture. As I argue, the "teen" and the "adult" are mutually-produced in a relation of tension; while the teen has been the subject of a significant amount of scholarly work, the adult remains relatively unexamined.

This dissertation presents an analysis of cultural formations little-studied in the literature which emerges with rock music culture in the later 1960s. As an object of scholarly analysis, post-war adult popular music has tended to fall into the crack between the academic institutionalizations of jazz and rock. The virtual absence of any scholarly work on adult popular music is in large part due to its unspoken role as unworthy Other, against which both jazz and rock claim cultural legitimacy. While there is a large amount of material of a biographical, discographical, or descriptive nature on post-war adult pop, there is almost no sustained analysis of what was a massively popular and economically significant cultural form.

Thus this thesis grows out of a general dissatisfaction with accounts of recent popular cultural history, in which youth culture in general, and rock music in particular, tend to be emphasized at the expense of adult-oriented culture in conceptions of transitions in the post-war period. The absence of more complex or nuanced accounts of adult entertainment culture is in part the result of a process of demonization and denigration of adult pop in the service of rock music culture's self-legitimation. While it is beyond the scope of the dissertation to conduct an extended argument (see Keightley 1991), it may be suggested that the conceptualization of the emergence of rock culture as a revolutionary rupture with adult pop has served to obscure significant continuities and similarities. Received histories of rock music, especially those associated with what was arguably the dominant rock music periodical of the 1960s to the 1980s, Rolling Stone (as well as affiliated publications such as e.g. The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll [Miller 1979], Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock Music [Ward, Stokes, and Tucker 1986]) explicitly characterize rock as a polemical refusal of adult popular music culture, in which rock is everything adult pop is not.

This is evident throughout the writing on popular music in the past three decades, from one of the first histories of rock music, Carl Belz's The Story of Rock (1969), in which adult pop is described as phony "kitsch" to the true "folk art" of

rock (Belz 1969, 17ff), to the recent remarks of respected critic Robert Christgau at a 1992 conference: describing a “Great Schism” between pre-rock pop and “rock and roll”, Christgau claims that “Pop in 1950 was very different from pop in 1960; as I recently wrote in an appreciation of Nat King Cole: In the beginning, we believe, there was pop: leftover big-band singers crooning moon-June-spoon ‘neath a cloud of violins. And then Elvis . . . and all was changed in what was suddenly an us-versus-them world. It was rock and rollers against grown-ups for control of the hit parade” (Christgau 1994, 222). These accounts tend to conceive post-war popular music history as a heroic narrative, in which rock-as-youth-music triumphs over its uni-dimensional and trivial opposite, the adult popular music of the Tin Pan Alley and Broadway milieux. From this perspective, the cultural legitimization of popular music (as distinct from jazz) as a serious form of Art is seen to occur only with the emergence of youth counterculture in the mid-1960s. Triumphalist conceptions of post-war popular music history tend to elide popular music formations associated with adult audiences. This dissertation seeks, in part, to redress this lacuna in the scholarly literature on popular music history.

The dissertation, however, is not concerned exclusively with popular music culture. The post-war period also saw the segmentation of the audience for Hollywood cinema. While film studies has developed a substantial body of research on mainstream, post-war Hollywood cinema, the conceptualization of the adult segment of its output and audience tends to be limited to a paragraph or two in the standard histories; for example, a recent study of the segmentation of the post-war audience (Doherty 1988) looks at one side of the equation only, the emergence of the teen audience and the “teen-pic”. Therefore an interest in the “other” side of the equation, an adult film formation, is another motivation for the dissertation focus on adult culture in the post-war period.

The dissertation begins with the following question: If the post-war period is said to be marked by the emergence of teen entertainment culture formations that define

themselves in opposition to adult formations, then what is the specificity of these adult entertainment culture formations? The dissertation thus seeks to understand the particularities of the adult cultures associated with popular music and film between 1948 and 1962. This has entailed a historical reconstruction of some of the dominant institutions of adult popular music and adult cinema in order to comprehend specifically the period significance of a technology (hi-fi) and a celebrity performer (Frank Sinatra). I have selected these particular phenomena because of their potential illustrative power. The rise of hi-fi equipment was characterized by an intense degree of adult involvement which seems historically significant, especially in terms of the amount of period reporting. Similarly, the star-image and work of Frank Sinatra across a wide range of media and forms was consistently seen to express the values of a distinctive adult culture, whether in recordings, film, television, or nightclub appearances. Thus by focusing on the installation of a domestic entertainment technology and the career of a multi-media star, I am able to approach more general and more specific articulations of adulthood, which are in turn more associated with the private sphere or the public sphere, commodity-based or image-based, and potentially economically expensive or potentially free.

The advent of mainstream pornography in the shape of Playboy magazine in 1953 marks another instantiation of "adulthood" in the post-war period; although it is not the subject of a sustained analysis, I address its implication in the production of conceptions of gendered adulthood in the discussion of high fidelity and domestic space, and in relation to the idea of the "swingin' playboy" as a component of Frank Sinatra's star-image.

While there is a degree of arbitrariness to any form of historical periodization, the first year of the period covered by the study, 1948, is associated with a remarkable convergence of events which are strongly implicated in the subsequent development of popular entertainment culture. The period beginning in 1948 is characterized by a

series of shifts, re-alignments, and developments within mass media; new forms, technologies, and audience formations are consolidated in the production of what will become recognizable as the contemporary entertainment culture of the past four decades. 1948 is chosen as a starting point because a number of developments are seen to occur that year: the so-called "Paramount Decrees" are signed after a decade of anti-trust litigation, and this leads to the dismantling of the vertical integration of the Hollywood studio system; as a result, independent film production will increase dramatically in the subsequent period; 1948 is commonly seen to mark the beginning of nationwide television broadcasting in the U.S.; 1948 is also commonly seen as the year in which magnetic tape recording becomes the standard of high fidelity within U.S. and Canadian recording studios; finally, 1948 is the year that the 33 1/3 RPM, vinyl Long Play (LP) record album is introduced. Both of the latter technological innovations have important effects on the development of popular music culture in the 1950s and beyond. In this regard, the article cited at the beginning of the introduction points to the emergence of the LP and high fidelity as starting points for the "adult disk" market: "Historically, the big push to the adult buyer goes back to the advent of LP, stimulated further by the startling realism in recorded sound achieved with modern high fidelity techniques" (Horowitz 1954, 1).

The end point of the period under consideration, 1962, results from the conclusion of Frank Sinatra's Capitol Records contract. Sinatra first emerges as a prominent exemplar of an adult performer during the years of his Capitol contract (1953-62). The star-image associated with Sinatra after 1962, while inflected differently, retains the adult associations developed between 1953 and 1962. In addition, an adult cinema formation is well-established by 1962. 1962 was a year in which the Hollywood studios, which for thirty years had sought to ensure that virtually all films exhibited in the U.S. conformed to the values of a so-called "family" audience,

began to recognize the need for age-graded standards of censorship, in a sense thereby institutionalizing the idea of an adult cinema.

The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into two large sections. Part One is entitled “Adults Only: Formations of Adult Taste, 1948-59”, and Part Two is entitled “Sinatra’s Capitol: The Star-Image of Frank Sinatra, 1953-62”. Part One involves general considerations of larger formations of taste and adulthood, and consists of two chapters. Chapter One is entitled “The Idea of Adult Entertainment Culture in the Post-War Period”, and Chapter Two is entitled “Gender, Domestic Space, and High-Fidelity Audio Technology, 1948-59”. To better understand the complexities and tensions laid out in Part One, Part Two consists of a detailed analysis of a cross-media exemplar of adulthood, the American singer and actor, Frank Sinatra, during the years of his affiliation with Capitol Records, 1953-62. Part Two consists of four chapters: Chapter Three is entitled “Frank Sinatra as Adult Performer”, Chapter Four is entitled “The Production of the Capitol Persona”, Chapter Five is entitled “Sinatra as Artist”, and Chapter Six is entitled “One For My Baby”.

1) Part One: “Adults Only: Formations of Adult Taste, 1948-59”

Chapter One, “The Idea of Adult Entertainment Culture in the Post-War Period”, looks at the tensions and tendencies which characterize those entertainment forms and formations associated with adult audiences and markets after 1945. Processes of market and audience segmentation are seen to occur in the period around World War II as a result of the age-grading of popular entertainment. I argue that the well-documented rise of youth or teen markets and audiences was accompanied by the development of concomitant but relatively unexamined adult segments. I discuss the mutual production of “teen” and “adult”, which contributes to the emergence of new modes of valorization

of popular culture after World War II; here I am particularly interested in the inter-articulation of age and taste. I focus on the fields of popular music, radio programming, and cinema, in which distinct, and distinctive, entertainment cultures are articulated with adult audience formations. I examine some of the key cultural institutions associated with audiences for popular music and film. I discuss the construction of an “adult pop” market, and pursue detailed histories of two of adult pop’s central cultural institutions, the standard (a canonized popular song), and the popular music “LP” record album. In the section on the idea of the standard, I look at its emergence as part of a crisis of taste, examine its historical association with art or “classical” music institutions, and discuss its relationship to bourgeois aesthetics, issues of temporality, and music industry economics. In the section on the idea of the album, I trace its history in terms of its class associations and relate this to its role in the industrial coding of popular music markets. I also speculate on the album’s contribution to the organization of musical meaning and affect for the listener. In the final section of the chapter, I discuss the advent of an adult cinema formation. Here “adult films” refer not to pornography, but to films which are seen to address “serious” themes and which are marketed to an adult segment of the cinema audience. I concentrate on industry attempts to improve box-office performance through the marketing of distinctive films and exhibition practices to adult audiences. I also examine briefly the decline of the Production Code as a symptom of the emergence of an adult viewing formation.

In Chapter Two, “Gender, Domestic Space, and High-Fidelity Audio Technology, 1948-59”, I examine the rise of high-fidelity home audio technology from a small cult of do-it-yourself hobbyists to a mass, adult market worth over U.S.\$300,000,000 by the mid-1950s. I focus especially on representations of gendered disputes between husbands and wives over the installation of hi-fi equipment in conjugal space. I analyze the articulation of high fidelity with concerns about the gendering of entertainment technologies and domestic space, which are seen to be tied to period anxieties over

individualism and mass culture. I analyze a series of conceptions of dominant high-fidelity listening practices such as addiction, immersion, transportation, and especially, loud playback volume. I argue that the phonograph undergoes a process of masculinization via the hi-fi boom of the post-war period, despite the production of a counter-discourse which attempts to resist this masculinization. I also investigate the implications of high-fidelity culture for period conceptions of middle-class propriety and taste.

2) Part Two: "Sinatra's Capitol: The Star-Image of Frank Sinatra, 1953-62"

In Chapter Three, "Frank Sinatra as Adult Performer", I argue that Frank Sinatra is conceived as a specifically adult performer during the years of his affiliation with Capitol Records, 1953-62. I offer a range of evidence of his articulation with the values of adult popular music and film formations. I describe Sinatra's emergence as a teen idol in the 1940s, and address the gendered nature of the teen idol. I then discuss his juxtaposition as adult against current teen idols in 1953. I also examine: the maturation of his teenage audience from the 1940s; descriptions of his audience as adult; the deployment of his physical appearance as a marker of adulthood; industry descriptions of his films as adult; and Sinatra's self-description as adult on television and radio programs and in live performances. I analyze the inter-articulation of adulthood, standards, cultural distinctiveness, and gendered taste in industry accounts of his career during the period. Throughout I conceive of Sinatra's "adulthood" and appeal to adult audiences as discursive tendencies rather than simply sociological descriptions of his audience.

In Chapter Four, "The Production of the Capitol Persona", I trace out the complex of processes that contribute to the production of what is recognized as the distinctive star-image associated with Frank Sinatra during the years of his Capitol Records contract. I begin by examining the industrial strategies that both draw upon and

reinforce celebrity in the marketing of cultural commodities. I conceive of "Sinatra" as a cultural production which exists across a series of media, forms, texts, and representations, and thus analyze "him" as the nexus of multiple articulations of his star-image. I am therefore interested in biography only to the extent that it is integrated into Sinatra's star-image. I argue that ideas of autobiography and career are strongly integrated into Sinatra's star-image through his performances from ca. 1953 onward, and therefore examine the trajectory of his celebrity, from his years as a teen idol with a predominantly female audience in the 1940s, through his decline in popularity in the early 1950s, to his "comeback" in 1953. I touch upon the gendering of his star-image and its relationship to the cultural valence attributed to his work at various conjunctures (this is taken up again in Chapters Five and Six). I develop a series of conceptions of his various personas as articulated within period press and promotional writing, performances (musical, film, televisual), and visual representations (press photographs, album covers, and publicity materials). I conceive of Sinatra's cultural significance during the period in terms of articulated ideas of performed autobiography and autonomy (aesthetic, economic, and social). I conclude with an examination of accounts which claim the emergence of a new and significant male contingent within his audience during the period.

Chapter Five, "Sinatra as Artist", returns to the question of the gendering of Sinatra's Capitol star-image, and addresses it in terms of his ultimate articulation as serious and legitimated Artist. I begin by examining period overviews of his career, and further develop the idea of autobiography as central to his Capitol star-image. I argue that a process of career narrativization occurs; here the articulation of his "life" and "art" as intertwined leads to conceptualizations of Sinatra as distinct from other popular performers. I then examine discursive constructions of Sinatra as "tender tough", in which feminized and masculinized articulations of his personas are integrated into a singularity that is conceived as evincing his complexity, seriousness, and

distinctiveness. This leads into an analysis of the gendering of his period film roles, in which representations of suffering in particular appear to effect a feminization of Sinatra's characters. However, rather than involving a dismantling of masculinist values, Sinatra is ultimately recuperated as exemplar of a re-configured masculinity, that has appropriated feminized imagery in the service of legitimizing Sinatra as masculine Artist. This works in conjunction with a series of articulations of Sinatra as culturally distinctive creator, whether classical conductor, jazz musician, or author. The final chapter looks at the ways in which ideas of authorship are deployed in the legitimation of Sinatra as Artist; through a reading of multiple articulations of the song "One for my Baby (And One More for the Road)", in a variety of media across the span of the Capitol period, I contend that the gendering of Sinatra's star-image operates within an overarching trajectory of masculinization, which finally serves, like his "adulthood", to legitimize Sinatra as serious and culturally distinctive Artist working within popular forms.

Research Strategies

In approaching adult cultural formations of the past, I conducted a substantial amount of original artefactual and archival research, which is described in detail below. I attempted to understand the cultural practices of the period in conjunctural terms; this involved immersing myself in the music, films, performers, and writings of the era. I examined writing found within the popular and trade presses, general and specialist publications, mass circulation and less widely-read publications. I watched film and televisual performances from the period, listened to recordings released during the period, and sought out unissued recordings of live performances and radio programs. One of my guiding principles was to deal only with material that potentially could have contributed to period conceptions of forms and performers; I also attempted to extrapolate consumption behaviours from period accounts of people's

behaviour (I include magazine letters to the editor under this last category), due to the extremely limited amount of period ethnographic material. Overall, in reconstructing the adult formations examined within the dissertation I sought discursive regularities across a broad range of mediated forms of public culture

Much of the archival research involved an examination of periodicals published between 1948 and 1962. These include, among others: entertainment-industry publications such as Billboard, Variety, and Capitol Music Views, newspapers such as the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, and the Wall Street Journal, and a wide range of popular-press publications, including, among many others, general interest magazines such as Look and Time; so-called women's magazines such as Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, and House Beautiful; so-called men's magazines such as Playboy and Climax; specialist publications including movie magazines such as Photoplay and Cue, jazz magazines such as Down Beat and Metronome, high-fidelity magazines such as Audio Engineering, High Fidelity, and HiFi Review, so-called "mini-magazines" such as Celebrity or People Today, literary and cultural magazines such as Saturday Review of Literature and Harper's and so-called scandal magazines such as Confidential or Inside Story.

While I relied on periodical indexes such as Reader's Guide, the New York Times Index, Music Index, Motion Picture Performers Index and the annual indexes of those magazines that indexed themselves, I also found that luck came with the luxury to browse through period issues of magazines which were purportedly indexed, but which in fact contained numerous unindexed but relevant articles. I also benefitted from a privately-published scandal magazine index written by Allan Bettrock of Brooklyn, N.Y.

For the study of adult popular music and cinema cultures in Chapter One (as well as for the subsequent studies), I examined every issue of the weekly Variety between 1948 and 1955, as well as a large number of selected subsequent issues up to and including 1962; I examined every issue of the weekly Billboard for the years 1953,

1954, 1961, and 1962, as well as numerous selected issues between 1948 and 1960 (this was due to the absence of any nearby library holdings for period issues of Billboard); I examined every issue of the monthly Capitol Music Views between 1953 and 1959 held by the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archive (their collection is incomplete; however, it was the only collection of the Capitol Records in-house publication I could locate outside of Los Angeles). This last publication was published monthly by Capitol Records; a one-year subscription cost U.S.\$1 in the mid-1950s, and was claimed to have a circulation of 500,000 by Variety in 1953 (29 July, p.110). I examined every issue of Playboy between 1954 and 1959 (Playboy begins publishing in December 1953; unfortunately the first four issues had been cut from the microfilm). I looked at articles on popular music and cinema in the period popular press (many of the titles are listed below). I also spent time watching a large selection of period Hollywood films, especially those seen to be associated with adult audiences in the late 1940s and 1950s.

In the study of high fidelity between 1948 and 1959, I focused on three internationally-distributed specialist publications dealing with home audio: Audio Engineering, High Fidelity, and HiFi Review. I examined every issue of High Fidelity from its first issue (Summer 1951) until December 1959. I examined every issue for the first two years of publication (February 1958 to December 1959) of Music & HiFi Review (which changed its name to HiFi Review in December of 1958, and ultimately became Stereo Review, in 1968). Unfortunately, due to library holdings, I was only able to examine the years 1948, 1952-53, and 1955-57 for Audio Engineering, which began publishing under that title in 1947 (as a continuation of Radio, which began in 1917). I also looked at articles and advertisements concerning high fidelity in the New York Times and the following popular magazines: Life, Look, Time, Newsweek, N.Y. Times Magazine, The Saturday Review of Literature, Playboy, The Nation, American Mercury, Harper's, Fortune, Business Week, McCall's, and House Beautiful. I also acquired a selection of hi-fi and stereo test records and demonstration LPs, as well as a

range of recordings seen to be specifically associated with the high-fidelity experience during the period; although I do not discuss these recordings in the chapter, they did contribute to my understanding and conceptualization of the articulation of hi-fi and domestic space during the period.

For the study of Frank Sinatra between 1953 and 1962, in addition to the publications mentioned above, I examined as many issues of Metronome and Down Beat as I could locate or purchase, and acquired every documented article on Sinatra between 1953 and 1962, as well as those found during my archival research. I also benefitted from a newspaper clippings file on Sinatra held at the Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center in New York City. However, the over 100 articles I located are likely only a portion of the total number of articles on Sinatra published during the period, which is certainly in the hundreds, if not thousands. I acquired all of the 29 LPs released under Sinatra's name between 1953 and 1962 which appeared on the Billboard charts.¹ I acquired or viewed every available Sinatra-related film, televisual appearance, radio program, and live performance recording from the period. Unfortunately, only a portion of the total of Sinatra's numerous television appearances between 1953 and 1962 are extant. A great deal of my time was spent familiarizing myself with the codes, conventions, and styles of pre-rock, so-called "Tin Pan Alley", popular music. I read the standard histories and biographies, I learned to play many of the popular "standards", and I listened extensively to a wide range of performers - from the early 1900s to the mid-1960s - who were seen to be a part of the musical culture associated with Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood, as well as to the music of the big bands of the so-called Swing era, ca. 1935-45.

¹Regrettably, I was unable to locate Frank Sinatra Conducts Tone Poems of Color (1956). It has not been re-issued as an individual CD; it is available as part of a box set of almost two dozen Sinatra CDs, entitled Concepts, whose cost restricted this researcher's access.

In keeping with my focus on the cross-media processes involved in the production of celebrity, for the study of Frank Sinatra I examined and analyzed a wide range of cultural output, including: album covers, liner notes, reviews of media and live performances, interviews, essays, films, television programs, radio programs, audio recordings of studio and live performances, cartoons, press photographs, motion picture publicity materials (posters, press releases), press accounts of consumer behaviours and audience reactions, advertisements, song lyrics, musical stylistic practices, and clothing,

To the best of my knowledge, no one has previously done this kind or extent of archival research on adult cultural formations during this period. The archival research for this study was conducted in Montreal public and university libraries, as well as at the following institutions: the New York Public Library and its Performing Arts Research Center (which includes the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archive of Recorded Sound), the Museum of Broadcasting in New York City, the television archives at the Museum of Broadcast Communications at the Chicago Cultural Center, the archives of the Wisconsin State Historical Society at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the National Archive of Canada in Ottawa. I also made use of extensive inter-library loans, and spent a great deal of time tracking down period magazines, audio recordings, films, and television programs.

One of the ironies of researching the relatively recent past is that libraries, due to space restrictions, tend to discard popular press periodicals very quickly. Thus locating issues of TV Guide or Photoplay from forty years ago became a formidable challenge. For those publications never held by libraries in the first place, such as scandal magazines, I had to rely on the private archives of Alan Bettrock and Prof. Will Straw. A number of the motion picture fan and men's magazines had to be purchased from collectors.

Chapter One: The Idea of Adult Culture in the Post-War Period

At La Vie [en Rose nightclub, N.Y.C.] . . . the routine was pegged for the adult crowd, with a concentration of standards. On the other hand, a songalog [set] in a vaudery [vaudeville house] has to be full of current pops or else the youngsters won't sit through . . . [according to Nat King Cole] 'No matter how the pendulum swings . . . it'll always return to the standard song. The biggest all-around payoff comes from the solid love ballad'.

"Cole Wary of Disk Juve 'Exclusivity'; Need Adult Fans", Variety (1953, 43)

This passage explicitly lays out a new and significant development in the popular culture of Canada and the United States in the post-World War II era: the segmentation of audiences by age. In a theatre or ballroom, Hit Parade pop songs of the moment are required to satisfy a teenage audience; entertaining an alcohol-drinking, adult nightclub audience calls for standards, "timeless" and "classy" songs like "Stardust," "My Funny Valentine," or "Night and Day." The singer interviewed, Nat King Cole, is also clear on which is the most "valuable" audience: "the biggest all-around payoff" refers to the cultural, as well as monetary, economies associated with adult audiences. Augmented levels of cultural prestige and higher profits are believed to accompany the cultivation of the adult segment, whether through the sale of higher-margin LP albums, high-paying nightclub appearances in Las Vegas, or career stability and longevity. In the post-war years, the institutions of the standard, the LP album, the hi-fi system, the nightclub, and the career emerge as key elements of an adult listening formation which is distinguished by class as well as age, wherein Bourgeois aesthetics and commercial profitability intertwine unproblematically.

Cole is "wary of disk juve exclusivity" (i.e. relying solely on a teen record-buying public) partly because of the notoriously short careers of teen idols and the fickleness of the teen audience, but also because of the cultural valence of "juve"

music. Cole is able to appeal across generational lines, in part due to his recognition of the differing cultural institutions associated with each audience. However, the possibility of a single performer appealing to multiple age cohorts is about to be severely diminished with the advent of rock 'n' roll about a year later ("Rock Around the Clock" reaching #1 in the summer of 1955 is generally taken as the beginning of the so-called "rock era"). In many ways, rather than describing a particular style or genre of music, rock 'n' roll more properly represents the widespread recognition of a process of audience segmentation that had been ongoing since at least the late 1930s. As we shall see, rock 'n' roll, rather than constituting the beginning of a crisis of taste within popular music culture in the 1950s, is in fact the final act in a series of crises over the allegedly declining standard of popular song from the late 1940s onward. Rock 'n' roll marks the point at which the discursively-produced opposition between adult and teen audiences is rendered most rigidly. By the 1960s, the mutual "exclusivity" of the adult and teen audiences would seem not only natural but necessary, insofar as each required the other to function as cultural antagonist against which the values of the respective popular music culture could most effectively be highlighted.

However, popular music is only one area in which age grading is linked to the emergence of new modes of valorization of popular culture after 1945. The development of so-called "adult films," whether foreign imports, Hollywood sex comedies, or "frank" realist dramas, along with new modes of distribution and exhibition, is part of the wider creation of specifically "adult" cultural forms. This chapter looks at some of the key cultural institutions associated with adult audiences for film and popular music between 1948 and 1962, specifically the idea of the standard, the idea of the album, and the idea of an adult cinema.

Where Are the Adults?: "General" vs. "Teen" Audiences

Most observers of the social and cultural life of Canadians and Americans in the 20th Century see the immediate post-World War II era as a period of "de-generalization." In this account, the putatively undifferentiated, mass, "general" audience of the pre-war period gives way to a series of specialized niche markets, in which age functions as the primary indicator and organizer of a multiplicity of tastes and values.¹ The recording, radio, and motion picture industries are seen to move away from marketing the same product to "everyone" in favour of targeting a series of generational cohorts, who in turn were simultaneously products themselves of these new marketing strategies (as I shall argue, television's courting and production of a "general" audience is a signal exception against which these industries seek differentiation).

Sociologist Philip Ennis, in his recent study of the recording and radio industries from the 1930s to 1960s, argues that the age grading of audiences was specifically a post-World War II development:

Peculiarly, and most consequentially for the story to come, age was an insignificant social category, hardly worthy of political or cultural commentary before World War II. There had been incipient age-graded distinctions during the 1920s, but these were thought to be mere flashes of cultural discontinuity. They were short-lived anyway, being arrested during the Great Depression and war years. The speed and extent to which age categories became important after the war was without parallel. Not only in the United States but in most of the developed nations in the West, most social institutions reoriented their perspectives along age lines (Ennis 1992, 36)

¹ While race and region have segmented the popular music and radio audiences since at least the 1920s, by "general" audience I am here referring to the mostly white and middle-class constituents who at the time dominated and defined a mainstream, sometimes called "Main Street U.S.A."

Ennis goes on to argue for the centrality of this development to the emergence of rock 'n' roll, which is also underlined by Charlie Gillett in his classic study of the advent of rock music: "The growth of rock 'n' roll cannot be separated from the emergence, since the Second World War, of a new phenomenon: the adolescent or youth culture" (Gillett 1983, 15). Thus the "teenager" and "rock 'n' roll" are understood to be the mutual products of the articulation of a new age category and a new popular music formation.

In their history of Radio in the Television Age, Fornatale and Mills argue that the appeal to a general audience, which had characterized radio during the so-called "Golden Age" of the 1930s to mid-40s, also begins to disappear in the late 1940s as network radio is displaced by local outlets. While television, from 1948 onward, takes both national sponsors and an appeal to a mass audience away from radio, the result is a new form of "specialized" radio broadcasting, which focuses on segmenting the audience:

On the heels of localization [of radio] came specialization; seeking out and catering to special interest audiences. If television, like the radio of the Golden Age, sought to provide its advertisers with the largest audience possible, radio was now able to fill the cracks and find the people not watching television or not served by television. Where only a few years before [the 1930s and 40s] radio had offered a standardized, coast-to-coast sound, it now spoke in a variety of voices to specialized audiences (Fornatale and Mills 1984, 15)

While the most spectacular specialization involved the emergence and success of a teen-oriented "Top 40" format, adults were also targeted as a discrete segment of the audience, with specific tastes and advertiser appeal. "Adult" radio was typified by an avoidance of extremes, disdaining both adolescent "noise" and too much contemporaneity, in favour of the smooth, classic values of standards and the "Middle of the Road": "An MOR format aims to please adults who don't like a steady diet of teenage music, classical, or jazz, and who want to hear a blend of old favorites and current releases by favorite performers . . . The MOR of the late 1950s and 1960s was laden with ballad singers like

Sinatra, Andy Williams, Tony Bennett, Patti Page and Peggy Lee" (Fornatale and Mills 1984, 68).

Thomas Doherty argues that Hollywood cinema underwent a similar process of specialization in the 1950s, which contrasted with the broad appeal motion pictures had sought previously:

Prior to the mid-1950s, movies were the mass medium of choice for a heterogeneous, multi-generational audience that motion picture industry officials invariably envisaged as "the public" . . . Unlike opera or drama, they sought no "specialty audience" but aspired to be a truly popular art, a "universal entertainment" for the whole family . . . In the 1930s and '40s, that all-embracing ideal mirrored Hollywood's pluralistic audience. By and large moviegoing was a familial, almost ritualistic activity, with children, adolescents, young couples, housewives, breadwinners, and the elderly partaking together of the liveliest of the arts (Doherty 1988, 1-3)

Doherty goes on to argue that a process of "juvenilization" occurs within Hollywood cinema in the 1950s, wherein the teenage segment of the audience becomes the target market for the majority of Hollywood production. In his account, the "general" market is left behind in favour of the more active movie-going adolescent audience. However, there is little attempt to account for or even acknowledge the burgeoning of another audience segment during this period, which in fact exists in a relationship of mutual exclusion or refusal with the teen audience: that of the adult film audience, which I shall argue involved more than a handful of so-called "art" cinemas during the 1940s and 50s.

In fact, most writing on the segmentation of audiences in the 1950s privileges the teen audience, virtually ignoring the adult audience which was essential to the very construction, in opposition, of "teenageness". Clearly, if the segmentation of a general audience is understood in terms of the emergence of a separate "teenage" constituency,

then the remaining audience can no longer be understood as "general"; given the organization of these audiences as markets of active consumers, wherein the purchase (or in the case of radio, potentiality of purchase) of commodities is a key component of participation in an audience formation, children must be understood from an industrial perspective as participating only by proxy (i.e. someone other than the child must purchase the cultural good). Thus the general audience disappears as one component is segmented off, since other segments must be produced simultaneously in the process of segmentation. The teen segment entails a not-teen segment for differentiation; in the case of the particular historical conjuncture of the 1940s and 50s, not-teen equals adult, which in turn permits teen to be understood as not-adult.

To the extent that the marking of cultural distinctions allied with age grading produces new tensions and tendencies, "adult" and "teen" emerge as opposites within this formulation/formation. The idea of a teen culture is frequently articulated during this period around crises of taste, massification, and mechanization; as adult culture tends to be conceived as everything teen is not, much of the popular cultural production articulated with the idea of the "adult" is discursively rendered through appeals to Bourgeois aesthetics and a sense of certainty about quality, individuality, and craftsmanship.

In his study of the spectacularization (and demonization) of adolescent criminality, Charles Acland describes the discursive tendency toward the definition of age categories through opposition, in which the linkage of cultural difference to physiological or developmental stages is fundamental to the conception of youth and adult as antagonists:

The young are seen as "sub-human" - that is, not in full possession of the characteristics of the "normal" adult - and must therefore be guided through that ancient period of "storm and stress". The narrative of development is imbued with the rhetoric of evolutionism: growth is the movement from the absence of

the social, the "primitive", to the presence of the prosocial, the "civilized" adult. Among other things, this narrative allows the organization of cultural difference by providing a visible Other against which the "parent" culture (meant in the multiple and patriarchal senses) emerges (Acland 1995, 28).

Thus the formations "adult" and "youth" (or teen) rely on each other for definition and delineation. In the post-war years, the so-called "generation gap" thus may be understood as a point of agreement on the differentiation of "adult" and "teen"; however, as Acland points out, "Generations are discursive constructs, marshaling certain meanings and desires into a single imagined location, rather than statistical truths pure and simple" (Acland 1995, 24-5). Thus the use of "teen" or "adult" to refer to cultural practices ultimately involves an appeal to ideal-types, around which only tendencies and tensions can be identified. The degree to which "real" adults or teens participated exclusively in the culture attributed to them is less important than the identification of the points of discursive inter-articulation between age, taste, and social power. In this light, the invocation of generationally-defined taste categories suggests a struggle over value, which Acland sees as crucial to an understanding of generation: ". . . "generation" has no fundamental essence except as a problem; as a crisis of value, of economics, or of resources, it is always played out between at least two ambiguously defined age groups" (Acland 1995, 24).

"Adult" and "teen" exist in a relation of interdependence that is particularly visible in moments of "crisis": "Youth-as-problem can be seen as a necessary element in the constitution of the adult economic social", insofar as it ". . . provides an area for social and cultural lines of difference to be demarcated" (Acland 1995, 28-9). "Youth-as-problem" (e.g. the moral panics around juvenile delinquency in the 1950s; see Acland 1995, 115 ff.; Doherty 1988, 105ff.; Gilbert 1986) was frequently conceived in terms of the idea of the "teenager", whose culture in turn was seen as a new and disturbing development (or decline) in the post-war years. If "teen" and "adult" are

conceived as opposites which produce each other, then identifying the moment of emergence of "teen" (which is easier due to the virtual absence of sociological or historical material on "adults" - most work on this subject tends to be of an ahistorical psychologistic nature) should suggest coordinates for the "birth" of the "adult".

The emergence of the teenager is variously seen as a post-World War I or a post-World War II phenomenon. Paula Fass (1977) argues for the emergence of "youth", in its contemporary sense, in the 1920s, as it is then fully articulated for the first time with age-grading institutions, mass media representations, and especially consumerism. However, when read in conjunction with Lewis Erenberg's (1981) study of the rise of nightlife and the decline of Victorian culture in the U.S. between 1890-1930, it is clear that youth in both cases refers to what we would today call young adults, and not specifically "teenagers" (Erenberg's larger argument is that the 1920s, rather than initiating a period of social transition, are in fact the culmination of a longer historical development of new, anti-Victorian cultural practices). It is the lower end of the "young adult" category (i.e. college-age) who first break with Victorianism, most visible in the dance crazes and nightclub- and lobster-palace-going of the 1910s.

On the other hand, Prohibition and then the Depression are seen by many as inhibiting the full blossoming of "teenagers" until after the Second World, with rock 'n' roll, as noted above (Ennis 1992, Gillett 1983), constituting the ultimate expression of this new category. However, positing the post-war period as a location for the emergence of the "teenager" is clearly too late; by 1942, Archie comics were subtitled "America's Typical Teenager" and the bobby-soxers associated with the young Frank Sinatra ca. 1942-3 were indisputably "teens". Beth Bailey makes an important distinction between college-age (young adult) and teen-age conceptions of youth, illustrating the rise of the latter in the World War II period with her description of the changing magazine market:

As youth culture grew in strength and size, it came to support its own cultural institutions and media. Mademoiselle, founded in the 1930s, focused on college-age women. During World War II, while paper stock was rationed, the head of Triangle Publications bought out Click, the third largest picture magazine in the United States (with projected ad revenue of \$1 million for that year) and "buried" it in order to divert the paper stock to a new magazine, Seventeen, intended to tap the "hitherto unexploited market" of teenage girls. The response was "electric", and a host of imitators followed (Bailey 1991, 10)

In 1946, Business Week also claimed that the moment of World War II was crucial in the production of a distinct teen market, referring to " . . . the teen-age market - a special area that has come into its own during the war" ("Teen-Age Market: It's 'Terrif'" 1946, 72). The article is careful to distinguish between teenagers as human beings and "teenagers" as a specialized marketing category: "Obviously, the teen-age market is no new physical entity hinging on population or similar factors. What is new is the exploitation resulting from the realization that young females of high-school age (who are incipiently boy-conscious, hence style-conscious) can be sold special merchandise at special prices" (72).

As early as 1939 Variety noted a widening generation gap between teen and adult listeners. In a review of a new orchestra leader's radio program, the anonymous author is able to mobilize a discursive linkage between age, taste, and intellectual acuity in his or her implicit critique of teen music: "Unlike so many of the recent orchestral discoveries, it isn't essential that the listener be a slaphappy refugee from highschool [sic] assembly in order to 'get' the message. He's more than a musician: he's an entertainer" ("Radio Reviews . . ." 1939, 36). Clearly teen tastes are colonizing the big bands ("unlike so many"), leading to an exclusion of non-slaphappy, non-highschool listeners, who are unable to relate to ("get") the newer styles. The "musician" vs. "entertainer" opposition set up within the review is noteworthy as well; both post-war

jazz and 1960s rock cultures would valorize the virtuoso musician against the commercial insincerity of "entertainers", whose commitment to pleasing an audience might mask their often substantial technical abilities. In 1939 however, it is the ("adult") entertainer whose cultural worth is clearly applauded by the adult reviewer.

That "teen" and "adult" are articulated together at the end of the Depression and at the height of the Swing era is significant. While the production of identities articulated with consumer goods and styles requires disposable income (which was rising for most Canadians and Americans at the time), the increasing stylistic diversity within Swing culture also offered greater opportunities for self-differentiation through taste affiliation. While Swing is generally conceived as a racially integrationist cultural form, the very extent of its success in transforming the popular musical culture of the time resulted in a great degree of formal segregation (e.g. swing vs. sweet, instrumental virtuoso vs. vocalist) which could be articulated with age and gender differences.

The development of Swing ca. 1935-45 marked the emergence of a new commercial popular music culture within Canada and the U.S., which in its broad outlines remains with us to this day. Tied to industrial, cultural, and musical changes, the Swing era saw the integration, for the first time, of a variety of media channels, as Andre Millard has recently pointed out:

The extended system of broadcasting and duplication of recorded sound brought popular music to every part of the United States through a national network of radio stations, chains of movie houses, and record stores. The first musical product of the empires of sound was called swing. During the 1930s and 1940s, this jazz-inspired dance music dominated popular culture as completely as the large integrated corporations controlled the world of entertainment (Millard 1995, 178).

While Swing culture participated in the larger imperative of U.S. popular music at the time to appeal to "everyone", it also led to growing distinctions within the audience, most notable² in the case of teenagers:

Swing managed to appeal to the tastes of young and old. A large part of Benny Goodman's audience consisted of teenagers, the "bobbysoxers" who danced in the aisles at his concerts. Swing meant different things to different people, but the important thing to the empires of sound was that it appealed to millions of Americans . . . The record companies found that the young were a very important market for swing. Although it took several hours of part-time work to come up with the 50 ¢ for a disc, thousands of teenagers were buying them. Swing had become the central facet of a youth culture which covered music, dance, dress, vocabulary, courtship, and social ritual (Millard 1995, 181, 184)

However, as I shall argue below, Swing also marked the emergence of new relationships to the past within popular music culture, wherein the revival of "oldies", non-plug songs, became a significant practice within the big bands, and contributed to a central institution of what would become "adult" popular music, the standard.

Adults Only

The idea that "adult" and "teen" are related has etymological roots. According to the second edition of the O.E.D. (1981, p. 178), "adult" is derived from the Latin adultus, the past participle of adolescere, which means "to grow up." Adolescere has another, closer cousin, of course: "adolescent", the more formal term for teenagers.³ "Adult" (as adjective) is defined as "Grown up, having reached the age of maturity . . .

²Perhaps because of the felt need for increased surveillance of the "adolescent", teen cultural practices seem to be more consistently remarked upon than adult, making a reconstruction of adult popular forms a question of making the unspoken speak.

³"Adolescent" appears in English about 50 years before "adult", according to the usages provided in the OED. "Teenager" is often distinguished from "adolescent" in terms of the former's "American" connotation; here the life-style of a particular post-war generation of affluent American adolescents is intertwined with a life-stage description.

Characteristically mature in attitude, outlook . . . befitting or suitable for adults, as opposed to children or youngsters". Thus a particular relationship to time, growth, and experience distinguishes the adult. While usages for the sense of adult as "grown" date back to 1531, the first "attitude, outlook" usage given dates from 1929, suggesting that contemporary associations of "adult" with sophistication, seriousness, or sexual explicitness are of very recent origin.

However, the making of age distinctions is itself a relatively recent phenomenon. In his study of age consciousness in American culture, Howard P. Chudacoff claims that, prior to ca. 1850, ". . . age did not play an important role in the structure and organization of American society" (Chudacoff 1989, 9). "Though age-related norms and prescriptions were not totally absent . . ." continues Chudacoff, ". . . cultural values associated with age were imprecise . . . age-graded stages of life, such as Shakespeare's "seven ages of man" were more often theoretical than experienced" (Chudacoff 1989, 9-10). Prior to the 19th century, the multi-generational association of family life and the variability of life spans tended to "blur" age distinctions in a world with "weak age norms" (Chudacoff 1989, 10ff.).

Chudacoff points out that as age-grading in schools and consumer marketing to specific cohorts both echoed and produced a new conception of "youth" in the first half of the twentieth century, so too was the idea of an "adult" the result of a larger attenuation or breakdown of multi-generational forms of association:

A variety of institutions reflected and reinforced peer organization among adults as well as among children and youths. Adults did not always associate exclusively with people their own age, but by the turn of the century urbanization had brought increasing numbers of Americans into a world in which many more choices and opportunities for peer association existed . . . Society had become more organized at all levels, and age groupings often, though not always, resulted from the organization process (Chudacoff 1989, 106)

In turn, "adulthood" was subdivided into groupings of "young adults," "middle-aged adults", and "golden agers": "Heightened consciousness of distinct adult stages reflected age grading and peer groupings beyond childhood and adolescence . . . Indeed, the "discovery" of middle age as a distinct life stage climaxed the postwar [WW I] discussions of age in American culture. Before the nineteenth century, middle age was seldom considered as a separate time of life." (107-8). Chudacoff claims the success of Walter Pitkin's 1932 book, Life Begins at Forty (the #1 non-fiction best-seller of 1933, #2 in 1934), ". . . ratified the recognition of middle-age in American culture" (Chudacoff 1989, 108). Thus by the post-World War II period, a more nuanced conception of age-grading had become widespread, with "adult" carrying a complex ideological baggage.

The cultural valence of age categories at the time can begin to be gauged through an examination of notions of "middlebrow" taste. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to rehearse the debates and critiques of the notions of highbrow/lowbrow and middlebrow which were prevalent during the immediate post-war period (see especially Ross 1989; Beaty 1995), popular press articulations of the "taste debate" are extremely revealing of dominant conceptions of the relationship between age and cultural esteem. Here new tensions and tendencies within popular culture relating to the conflation of social class, taste, and audience segmentation frequently are exposed; the idea of the "adult" is often used to describe non-lowbrow cultural forms, and "lowbrow" forms in turn are seen as immature or childish. In a 1949 article in Harper's magazine, Russell Lynes attempts to map out the cultural terrain of the U.S. in terms of a vertical hierarchy, at the "bottom" of which is the ". . . lowbrow, who doesn't give a hang about art qua art. He knows what he likes, and he doesn't care why he likes it - which implies that all children are lowbrows" (Lynes 1949, 23). Lynes links what he calls "the upper middlebrow" to adulthood: "It is the upper middlebrows who are the principal purveyors of highbrow ideas . . . Many publishers, for example, are upper

middelbrows - as are . . . the editors of most magazines which combine national circulation with an adult vocabulary" (Lynes 1949, 25, emphasis mine).

The idea that cultural difference can be hierarchized not only by a spatial metaphor (high/middle/low)⁴ but by an age-graded one as well is reinforced in a remarkable Life magazine article, whose subject is explicitly the Harper's article itself. Taking the same title ("High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow"), the Life article outlines what it calls ". . . the three basic categories of a new U.S. social structure" ("High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow" 1949, 99). These are illustrated by a chart in which "everyday tastes from high-brow to low-brow are classified" (100-101), including such categories as clothes, furniture, reading, salads, causes, and records (I will return to the last category in the discussion of the idea of the album below). That a number of the exemplars of "low-brow" taste (Westerns, comic books, dice, old army jackets, and the jukebox) are equally associated with youth culture implicitly underlines a relationship between conceptions of age and taste. In a section entitled "In Defense of the High-Brow", Winthrop Sargeant reiterates the articulation of taste with age:

What culture and civilized living we have today is provided by the interaction of two groups - the esthetically radical high-brows and the somewhat more conservative upper middle-brows. Beneath the upper middle-brows there yawns an awful chasm peopled by masses whose cultural life is so close to that of backward children that the difference is not worth arguing about ("High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow" 1949, 102)

If we recall Charles Acland's conception of the developmental logic underpinning the opposition between civilized adults and primitive youth ("backward children"), it becomes clear that the inter-articulation of age, taste, and social class played an

⁴Which is derived from racialized conceptions of intelligence and civilization; see Levine 1988.

important role in the reproduction (and demonization) of social differences in the post-war era. Nowhere was this clearer than in the distinctions made within popular music culture.

Adult Popular Music

Prior to World War II, the products of Tin Pan Alley, as the mainstream popular music industry was called, sought the largest possible audience. This meant that songs, singers, and bands aimed for a multi-generational, family audience, from grandmother to grandson. Just as songwriters generally avoided gender-specific lyrics in order to facilitate performances by female and male performers (and thus increase opportunities for exposure), songs which were too mature in content, or too juvenile in approach, were generally also seen as "speciality" material. While there were important exceptions to this "generalization", in the main Tin Pan Alley prided itself (and based its profits) on its "universal" appeal.

While it is clear that the advent of "rock 'n' roll" in the mid-1950s signalled a massive generational split within popular music culture, largely through the exclusivity of its teenaged audience, it is also apparent that the popular music industries were managing the new realities of an age-segmented audience at least as early as the 1940s. Two key institutions which characterized this adult market were the standard and the album. Audience members were keenly aware of the linkage between these institutions and adult audiences; a letter to the editor of Teen magazine in 1958 defending rock 'n' roll is explicit about this: "We absolutely, positively agree that rock 'n' roll has to be here to stay. It's our music! The older generation has a tendency to go for classical music and standards" (quoted in MacDonald 1958, 91). The trade press consistently remarked upon the segmentation of the audience according to recording media and musical forms: "The new phonograph owner . . . is building a record library to fit the demands of the family group. Albums and classicals for the adults, pops for the

teenagers and children's records for the toddlers. Modern home has become extremely record conscious" ("Diskers Watch Exploding Birthrate As Index To \$15,000,000 Juve Market" 1954, 1). Albums, like standards, were in their own way "classical", as I shall argue below, and were generally taken as the cultural opposite of the single disks and contemporary pop hits associated with teenagers. Irwin Chudacoff describes the adult popular music culture of the 1950s in terms of albums, standards, mood music, Broadway musicals, and adult-oriented singers:

The recording industry, aided by the advent of vinyl plastic phonograph records, which took the form of 45 rpm "singles" and 33 1/3 rpm long-playing albums ("LPs"), experienced explosive growth and reinforced the bifurcation of popular music into life-stage divisions . . . Larger companies, such as RCA Victor, Capitol, and Decca, aiming at an older adult market, tended to record established singers and bands, as well as Broadway musicals . . . The best-selling LPs usually were recordings of Tin Pan Alley music; sentimental standards performed by adult-oriented singers such as Bing Crosby, Patti Page, and Nat Cole; or "mood music" bands, such as those led by Mantovani and Mitch Miller (Chudacoff 1989, 155)

The massiveness of the new "specialized" teen music market that supplanted the previous "general" market has lead rock historians especially to ignore the other "specialized", adult audience which emerged.⁵ While the unit sales of teen records were phenomenal, the dollar value of the adult market was greater, and institutionally more stable and predictable. In the wake of rock 'n' roll, several contemporary observers were quick to point out that economically, adults constituted the more important segment

⁵Or to confuse the earlier "general" audience with the adult, wherein songs from the 1930s' musical formation, which now appear stylistically to be "middle of the road" or "easy listening", are assumed (incorrectly) to reflect an "adult" audience. This is part of a larger tendency within popular music studies to conflate genre and audience, which stems from industry chart categories (Pop, R&B, Country) that appear to designate musical styles but which in fact refer to market formations.

of the audience. In an article, "The Big Revolution in Records", whose title refers to the spectacular growth of the record industry in the 1950s rather than to any stylistic rupture or nascent counterculture, Look writer Richard Schickel sought to correct the general impression that rock 'n' roll had somehow "taken over":

To judge by rock 'n' roll's contribution to the national noise level, it is the biggest thing in records. But surprisingly, the sale of single pop records - including nearly all r. 'n' r. releases - accounts for only a quarter of the record industry's income. Pop albums bring in 40 per cent of the take, but that category includes such listenable items as songs by Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, as well as recordings of Broadway shows . . . (Shickel 1958, 27).

Note that the sales of higher-cost albums of adult-oriented performers are almost twice that of teen-oriented singles. Writing in the New Yorker in 1958 on marketing to teenagers, Dwight MacDonald reiterates Look's statistics, but emphasizes the cultural distinctions associated with the adult audience:

. . . although teenagers . . . strongly influence the record industry, they don't dominate it. Records, like books, can be made for comparatively small groups of customers - in contrast to the mass audience of radio and television - and the grownups still have a fighting chance. Surprisingly, classical L.P.s account for about the same proportion - one-quarter - of total record sales as single pop records, a category that includes almost all rock-'n'-roll releases. Pop L.P.s - show tunes, jazz, and so on - come to about forty percent of the total, and the remaining ten percent is divided among such categories as country music, hymns, and poetry readings (MacDonald 1958, 93-4)

For MacDonald, a notorious soldier in the middlebrow taste wars, record albums are like books, and like classical music, all three are anti-mass forms aimed at "grownups".

Throughout the 1950s, adult forms and performers were rendered distinct from teen taste through appeals to Bourgeois aesthetic categories. In a review of a Lena Horne

album in 1957, a Variety columnist implicitly juxtaposes the values of the two cultures, and is clear as to the felt superiority of the adult: "Lena Horne, a performer who stands outside and above the vicissitudes of the pop disk market, has been having a resurgence on wax via her recent RCA Victor releases. For the package field, she's a natural. There's nothing transient about her style and her workover of the standards are themselves [sic] durable standards" (Schoenfield 1957, 44). For the reviewer, Horne's value lies not only in existing "outside" the "transient" world of the Hit Parade, but in her position "above" it. Note that albums ("package" is the industry term; see below) and standards are linked; the "standard" of her performance is itself superior and timeless ("durable"), like the songs she sings, unswayed by mass fashion. But the most interesting comment is the reference to her appeal as an adult performer ("For the package field, she's a natural"), in which her transcendence of time, cultural trends, and the quick buck add up to a "natural" marketability (and profitability).

In this context, the term "class" was often used as a synonym for "adult", as is implicit in a review of Ella Fitzgerald: "The Fitzgerald style grows in quality and texture by the year and she's all class and several yards wide now" ("Stanley, Pittsburgh" 1953, 55). Similarly, "good music", which in the 1930s had been used to describe "classical" music and opera, began to be used to refer to adult popular music in the 1950s: "In the late '50s, albums were for adults. When Station WZIP of Cincinnati, Ohio, decided to further its image as programers [sic] of "good music", it began billing itself as the hit-album station" (Shaw 1974, 263). A 1961 Billboard account of shifting radio programming trends and the rise of FM stereo broadcasting contrasts "rock 'n' roll" with "familiar standards": "In spite of the hoopla, though, the ratio of Top 40-type outlets to "good music" stations remains about the same. The only new programming trend appears to be the "Sing Along" [with Mitch Miller] format. It, of course, is a variation on the "good music" policy - since it features so many oldies" (Bundy 1961a, 1). "Good music" was seen at the time as explicitly opposed to rock 'n'

roll; in a story about declining Top 40 formats entitled "Gradual Shift to 'Good Music' Creates Quandry for Pop Labels", Billboard made the exclusivity of the two audiences clear:

What is unsettling to the pop single record labels is the fact that many of them have pinned much of their future hopes to rock and roll type of disks. Mainly this is because the rock and roll platters are the ones the kids seem to want and the singles field is mainly a teen-age market. If the trend is changing toward good music, and toward less Top 40, and less rock programming, a good many labels could be out on a shaky limb ("Gradual Shift to 'Good Music' Creates Quandry for Pop Labels" 1961, 1)

An article entitled "Broadcasters Move to Soft Formats Producing 2 Distinct Music Trends" points out that while rock 'n' roll works for Top 40 stations, ". . . sweet platters, the type that many veteran music and record men continue to refer to as "good music", are now being pushed on a good music station level . . ." (Rolontz 1962, 4); Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald are named as key "good music" artists (Rolontz 1962, 18).

The sense that Top 40 and rock 'n' roll are antithetical to adult audiences is seen in a 1957 Variety article about the rise of easy listening or middle of the road formats: "Radio stations, and disk jockeys, hypnotized for the past couple of years by the so-called "Top 40" listings, are now taking the lead in bringing back a more adult brand of music" (Schoenfeld 1957, 43). The piece's title "New 'Ballads for Americans': Bestsellers Be Hanged: Radio", reinforces the sense of a latent anti-commercial discourse, wherein the "bestseller" logic of Top 40 is rejected in favour of more solid, patriotic values.

"Good music" or a "more adult brand of music" refer to standards and especially to the music of the generational cohort who came of age during the Swing era. A Billboard description of a station that cut out all rock 'n' roll in favour of "good music"

in 1957 bears this out: " One of the oldest oldie record shows is "The Old Timers Show", on WDOX, Cleveland . . . Specializing in the big band era of the 1930's and 1940's, the program was started in 1953, and reports program director Norman Wain, "has been on the air with heavy sponsorship ever since" . . . Wain notes that the program "was one of the few shows that remained on the air when we switched to 'good music' programming" (Bundy 1961b, 8). Another Billboard article notes: ". . . the current trend toward more "good music" programming and the growth of stereo FM means that more and more big band sides will garner air exposure, since this kind of wax is a basic component of "good music" formats and stereo FM libraries" ("Radio Fanfare for Big Band Revival" 1962, 8). The continuing buying power of the (now adult) Swing generation is seen in a 1955 Variety article, in which a Capitol Records executive describes the company's decision to stop making big band 45 RPM singles in favour of the exclusive production of 33 1/3 LP albums of that type of material, for which there is a strong adult market:

. . . the label believes there is virtually no market for the single [big band] platters. Albums, on the other hand, have long been going strong and the label intends to concentrate on this type of packaging in the future. [VP A&R Alan] Livingston believes that a more adult purchasing group is interested in bands in packages and feels the success of recent Harry James, Benny Goodman, Les Brown and other albums bear this out ("Capitol K.O.'s Band Singles" 1955, 36).

A 1962 Billboard article on programming jukeboxes for non-teen markets links standards, easy listening, and high-fidelity sound to an adult audience: ". . . more and more [jukebox] operators are offering their locations a skillful blending of pop records which appeal to their audiences - mainly adult - together with a careful selection of . . . standards and soft music for cocktail lounge and restaurant programming . . . grown-ups prefer and demand stereo with its finer sound quality" ("Adult Selections Boost Collections" 1962, 52). The same year, updating older, catalogue albums with added stereo sound is seen as improving product appeal to the adult market almost exclusively:

"Up to now, most of the catalog items that have been re-processed to stereo have been adult-type records, except for the forthcoming Elvis Presley LP's which have teen and adult appeal. The teens don't seem as yet too interested in stereo . . ." ("New Sound Adds New Life to Catalog Sets: Growing Number of Firms Re-Processing Monos in Stereos Shows Old Album Power" 1962, 5).

The Idea of the Standard

Part of my argument here depends on a revision of our understanding of post-war adult culture. This involves, in part, the historicization of a taken-for-granted popular music institution, the standard. The following section of the chapter begins by looking at critiques of the state of popular music by industry insiders before the advent of rock 'n' roll, in order to suggest that the production of adult and teen audiences in opposition was in part facilitated by reference to the idea of the standard as a distinctive emblem of adult taste. The importance of temporal relationships to industrial institutions and generational cohorts is touched upon in the course of a speculative genealogy of the "standard".

i. "Taste Panics"

Dominant perspectives within rock historiography reinforce a conception of the emergence of rock 'n' roll in mid-1950s as a revolutionary rupture, wherein the complacent world of Tin Pan Alley was rudely awakened by a radical new music. In this account, the articulation of rock 'n' roll with a "taste panic" (rather than a moral panic) is understood as the initial digging in of heels by the established music industry forces against the heroic new music. However, anxieties about changing musical tastes and industrial practices were being voiced within the industry well before the advent of rock 'n' roll. Interviews with musicians, songwriters, and industry professionals in the late 1940s and early 1950s frequently contained scathing critiques of what were taken as

declining musical standards, especially around the quality of new songs. This consisted largely of a wariness about the perceived dominance of so-called "novelty" songs, in which new production techniques, sound effects, and song structures (melody, harmony, rhythm, lyrics) were seen as threatening the health of popular music from within. Tin Pan Alley had been producing novelty songs since its beginnings in the late 19th century; much of the music of the Swing era sought novelty effects, especially through the emphasis on new band "sounds". What is different about the post-war discourse on the state of popular music is the mobilization of a new musical institution, the standard, in the articulation of segmented audience formations and questions of taste.

By the late 1940s, industry observers were bemoaning the simultaneous appearance of new players, new modes of hitmaking, and allegedly declining levels of craftsmanship, as seen in a 1948 Variety front page story describing the established Tin Pan Alley publishers' reactions to recent developments: "They have found that the normal process of selecting an established writer's material, having it recorded, then timing promotion and exploitation by expensive staffs, is being smothered and pushed aside by what they term "atrocious" melodies and performances of tunes by obscure writers" ("Major Pubs, Diskers Must Readjust Aim to Keep Step with Public 'Rhythm'" 1948, 1). The same year, a Variety columnist saw a gap opening up between new and old, in terms of quality of contemporary song hits versus that of the catalog of standards:

At 75 ¢ a crack no one can be blamed for passing up the sort of tripe that's been served lately. The music biz is not bad because of the disk ban [musician's union strike] - it's because of bad songs on the disks. Tin Pan Alley could use new blood. How long can the writers who have built and sustained the valuable catalogs hold it up . . . with few exceptions, the only saleable music available currently is the increasing number of standards being issued . . . (Woods 1948, 34)

Note that it is within the domain of commercial music that the aesthetic argument is being conducted; the opposite of "tripe" is understood to be "saleable music". In 1949, songwriter, arranger, orchestra leader, and Capitol Records Artists & Repertoire man Paul Weston voiced similar concerns, this time in Down Beat:

Whatever became of music? . . . Arrangements and interpretations have become so big that they're bigger than the music. You've got to snap whips and crack bones to get attention now . . . we're not getting good new songs these days. I don't think anything has been written in the last few years that has a chance of becoming a standard, nothing that can compare with the wonderful tunes that were being turned out in the '30s (quoted in Wilson 1949, 7)

While Weston is less explicit about commercial concerns, the implication is that the "chance of becoming a standard" refers to a long-term industrial strategy; thus a contemporary crisis of taste is used to articulate a (potential) future crisis at the level of catalogue sales. The idea that songs were "being turned out" (i.e. manufactured) previously without adversely affecting quality reinforces the location of the taste panic within an industry context.

In a February 1948 interview with George Simon in the jazz magazine Metronome, entitled "What's Wrong with Music", singer Frank Sinatra also worried that the quality of pop material was declining:

About the popular songs of the day, they're so lifeless, they're bloodless. As a singer of popular songs, I've been looking for wonderful pieces of music in the popular vein, what they call Tin Pan Alley songs. Outside of show tunes, you can not find a thing . . . The music business . . . must give people things that move them emotionally and make them laugh, too. But we're not doing it, and there's something wrong someplace (quoted in Simon 1971, 357).

The reference to Broadway musical theatre ("show tunes") as a lone outpost of quality in a music industry gone "wrong" suggests an increasing tension between the pop and

Broadway musical streams; this is all the more disturbing for the industry, since Tin Pan Alley and Broadway had jointly (and unproblematically) provided the bulk of material for the previous decade's mainstream, "the wonderful tunes" of the 1930s Paul Weston nostalgically deploys as the standard against which contemporary songs come up short.

Five years later, in another interview in Down Beat, Sinatra suggests the solution to this "problem" is to record more standards, to assert tradition and classicism in the face of an ephemeral and trivial Top 40:

Do I think it's hard to find a decent new pop tune these days? . . . Man it's worse than ever. These trick songs are coming out of my ears . . . I think it's all part of a cycle - including the echo chambers and the other gimmicks - that will exhaust itself . . . But the situation isn't hopeless . . . we've got to . . . record and revive more of the standards - like "Birth of the Blues" on my last release - that way we can at least balance the hokey tunes. It's murder now ("Hokey Tunes 'Bug' Frank" 1953, 32)

The "tricks" and "gimmicks" of "hokey" (and presumably teen-oriented) pop songs operate in a dialectical relationship with standards, which are honest and solid, and ultimately adult; thus the rejection of the "false consciousness" of teen music is seen to evince a taste for enlightenment and truth. A Variety article from the same year linked a low opinion of novelty songs and performers with a disdain for the teen audience:

"Public desire for the different, the unusual, the offbeat, has resulted in freak hits like Johnnie Ray and a brand of diskery interpretation that has prompted one tunesmith to observe: "we must write 'em and sing 'em in the manner in which the present-day crop of riffraff, reefer-addicted juvenile delinquents want 'em - loud, brash and with a socko attack from the very first note - or else"" ("Never A Dull Moment" 1953, 4). The unrestrained qualities that are claimed to appeal to "riffraff, reefer-addicted juvenile

delinquents" - "loud, brash and with a socko attack" - are implicitly the antithesis of smooth adult performers subtly singing standards.

In a year-end review of the state of popular music in 1952, music publisher Arnold Shaw also contrasts the values of the contemporary Hit Parade with those of an earlier time. Developing an extended parallel between the mass popularity and violence of Mickey Spillane (whose pulp paperbacks have given the established writers of hardcover books a "bloody beating") and the new tastes of the teen audience, Shaw's narrative of decline is framed in terms of violence and coarsening:

'52 was also a bad year for the big Tin Pan Alley publishers and writers who had been generally responsible for the song smashes of previous years. The big song hits of '52 frequently popped out of left field . . . The Mickey Spillane analogy goes deeper. Belting replaced crooning and singing as a recording technique. Romance moved over for sex to creep into many song lyrics . . . It is no secret that in '52, the relaxed, rubato style that made der Bingle [Bing Crosby] the king of pop singers and accounted for so many hit records by Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, and Dick Haymes, laid a bomb . . . There are signs that '53 may bring a return to "good songs" . . . (Shaw 1953, 222).

The restrained and subtle music of the past, which the Hit Parade now rejects (note that in '52 "Sinatra . . . laid a bomb"), is relaxed, romantic crooning, like contemporary adult pop. While the reference to higher standards of craftsmanship ("good songs") seems hopeful, Shaw's conclusion, in which he explains the title of his piece ("Sex-Vex-Wrecks Supersedes June-Spoon-Moon"), is more cynical in its opposition of generations and tastes: "The generation that is buying Spillane's sadism in such astronomical quantities is no longer attracted by the old, polite, tender little sentiments".

In a Letter to the Editor of Variety, Phoenix DJ Frank Pollack points out that taste, not censorship, lead to his refusal to play a minor R&B/rock 'n' roll song, "I'm A

Rollin": "I myself have not played the record on air . . . not because I was told to bar it, but because it does not fit in with the type of music I play. I rarely play novelties on my shows, preferring to concentrate on standards and the prettier popular tunes. I'm one of those rare deejays who didn't play "Doggie in the Window". . ." ("KOOL Disk Jockeys Deny Station Banned "I'm A Rollin'" Disk" 1954, 43) That standards are positioned as opposed to both pre-rock novelty songs and nascent rock 'n' roll suggests an adult/teen opposition. While rock mythology views Patti Page's massive 1953 hit, "(How Much Is That) Doggie in the Window", as the demon from which rock 'n' roll rescued teenagers, most industry analysts at the time saw it as a symptom of both aesthetic decline and teenage domination of the pop singles chart. The rejection of "novelties" by the adult DJ in favour of "standards" suggests a taste opposition organized by issues of temporality. However, before examining this "dialectic of the hit and the catalogue", as Miège (1989) describes it, it is first necessary to attempt to trace out the origins of the very term "standard".

ii. "Semi-Classic"

While the "standard" comes to us in the 1990s as the core concept and form of an entire musical culture, there is extremely little of a historical nature written about it. The handful of music encyclopedias and dictionaries which attempt to define it do so with an ahistoricity that rivals the imputed timelessness of standards themselves.

A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary defines a standard as "A tune or song of established popularity, esp. in Jazz" (1986, Vol. 4, p. 478), while Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1981) offers "a musical composition that has become a part of the standard repertoire" (2223). While I shall return to the issues of "popularity" and "jazz" emphasized in the OED definition, Webster's highlighting of issues of class, insofar as the "standard repertoire" usually refers to the canon of Western art music performed by symphony orchestras, is an important historical clue.

"Standard" derives from a Middle French term for "rallying place", and thus the first usages of "standard" in English refer to a marker for a gathering point, generally a flag, and frequently in a battlefield context. This is still seen in the heraldic emblem of the "royal standard", in which a sign of class distinction is tied to military leadership. Subsequently, through analogy, "standard" comes to refer to a "measure by which one judges a thing as authentic, good, or adequate"; an "authoritative rule, principle, or measure" used to determine value, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1981). Thus "standard" brings together authority and value, the elements necessary for the making of judgements. Commonplace references to "standard works" or "standard English" reinforce a sense that "standard" refers to the articulation of evaluation and social power.

In the 19th century, as certain musical forms and practices were taken up by a burgeoning bourgeoisie as markers of cultural distinction, the development of a "standard repertoire" of the "immortal masterpieces" composed by the "geniuses" of "classical" music was a key component of what Lawrence Levine (1988) has called the "sacralization" of art music. This process occurred simultaneously with the "professionalization" of musicians within symphony orchestras in the mid-19th century, wherein "standards" of musicianship were instituted in order to demarcate the social statuses of amateur and professional musicians. Both Levine and William Weber (1975) see these developments as essential to the emergence of "classical" music as the emblem of a "high status" audience.

Within the sphere of popular music in the first three decades of the 20th century, "standard" meant two, related, things. On the one hand, there were those publishers of European art musics, who were distinguished from the Tin Pan Alley popular publishers, by being referred to as "standard publishers". Sanjek and Sanjek (1991) point out that this distinction often also took the form of economic rivalry, seen

in their description of the Music Publishers Association, which was ostensibly founded to protect all music publishers' interests:

. . . when the MPA primarily protected high-class standard music to the exclusion of popular songs, a group of leading Tin Pan Alley houses left in 1907, only to resume membership when [pop publishers] Witmark, Stern, and Marks, Feist, and others acquired standard-music catalogues. However, in 1914, they again found their interests diverging over the advancement of standard and educational music and the extinction of a gratuity system affecting their popular catalogues (Sanjek and Sanjek 1991, 17)

At the time, this was part of the impetus toward the founding of ASCAP in 1914. However, by 1924 the standard publishers had joined ASCAP. The following quote reinforces the association of standard publishers and art music: ". . . the MPA's decision to use their standard and concert music for broadcasting free of charge. America's most important serious music was added to the ASCAP repertory only after its publishers received four places on the the society's board as well as free licenses to major concert-music auditoriums" (Sanjek and Sanjek 1991, 28). A 1939 article in Variety on changes in the way performing rights society ASCAP evaluates radio play suggests the distinction is still in place on the eve of World War II: "Many of these pop pubs [publishers] felt that the only group benefitting from such checking expansion are the standard publishers with their massive catalogs of special arrangements of music that is in the public domain" ("Payoff On Old Tunes Rises" 1939, 41).⁶

On the other hand, a "standard" song was a piece associated with the standard repertory of classical music, and especially denoted a "light opera" work: "Louis Katzman, vet[eran] radio and record maestro, is represented on the initial Decca releases with a swell couplet of the standard 'La Estrellita' and 'Cielito Lindo', semi-

⁶The common practice of publishing what were labelled as "standard arrangements" of popular songs may have contributed to the popularization of "standard" as a term.

classic waltzes, beautifully batoned . . ." (Green 1934, 47). As late as 1953, the semi-classical piece "On the Road to Mandalay" is described as a "standard for concert baritones" in Variety; the article notes that Myers Music is "exploiting the tune as a pop", and splitting the copyright with Schirmer, the original "longhair" publisher ("Inside Stuff - Music" 1953, 42). A footnote to Theodor Adorno's 1941 article, "On Popular Music", cites a 1939 songwriter's manual by Silver and Bruce entitled How to Write and Sell a Song Hit, which uses the term "standard" in its semi-classical sense. Silver and Bruce contrast standards with what they call "popular songs," by noting that "standards" are "serious songs" with "no structural confinements," thereby "allow[ing] the composer freer play of imagination and interpretation." "Mandalay" is one of the examples offered. Adorno, whose article consists of a critique of popular music as a form of anti-art, characterizes popular songs as formulaic and "standardized", as opposed to the (slightly) better "standards": "It ought to be added that what Silver and Bruce call a "standard song" is just the opposite of what we mean by a standardized popular song" (Adorno 1990, 314).

Thus "standard" carried with it connotations of "classical" music, seriousness, and elevated social status. While the articulation of taste distinctions within Tin Pan Alley frequently appealed to the "legitimacy" of classical music, the term "standard" did not widely refer to popular songs until at least the end of the 1930s. Writing in 1930, publisher Isaac Goldberg seems to be describing something like the contemporary sense of "standard": "Anything that is not obviously fast and gay becomes, in Tin Pan Alley, a "semi-classic". It is usually printed between sober covers, as befits a labour of such dignity; hence its designation as a "black and white"" (Goldberg 1961, 214). Notice how aesthetic restraint ("sober") is associated with classical "dignity". Goldberg goes on to use the term "standard", but in its older sense: "Jazz, for the most part, is still born; so, for that matter, is music of the more standard cast. The creative spark, the kick of the unborn child that tells the mother there is life within her - these do not

occur too frequently in the Tin Pan Alley of the jazz slums, or in the academic groves" (264). However, jazz will be an important player in the elevation of (certain) popular songs out of the status slums.

The idea of the popular standard as a canonical representative of the best of a popular music culture is largely absent from Tin Pan Alley in the late 1930s. Of course, older songs were occasionally revived, but this had been a relatively marginal practice within the pop recording mainstream, and there were terms for non-plug songs. Abel Green, a Variety columnist in the 1930s who would go on to be the newspaper's editor in the post-war era, prided himself on being up-to-date in the use of Alley slang. In a 1937 review, he refers to two recent recordings (of "Dinah", published in 1925, and "Somebody Loves Me", published 1924) not as standards, but as a "perennial" and a Gershwin "oldie" respectively (Green 1937, 48). "Dinah" is also referred to as an "evergreen" (defined as "popular music that has stood the test of time") in a 1937 New Yorker profile of Benny Goodman cited in Webb (1937, 179). While each of these terms (perennial, oldie, evergreen) refer to temporal relationships, issues of taste and class are not explicitly part of their cultural distinction. Within the culture of jazz musicians, however, things were changing.

The first usage of "standard" to refer to popular music, according to the OED, occurs in a 1937 article in American Speech entitled "The Slang of Jazz." H. Brook Webb, surveying the language of the jazz subculture, offers the following definition: "Standard. A number whose popularity has withstood the test of time (viz., Alexander's Ragtime Band [published in 1911])" (Webb 1937, 184). While this is almost identical to the definition of "perennial" cited in the same article, the explicit reference to time is absent in the term "standard", and a new, "classical" connotation has been added. The next usage cited by the OED occurs a year later in the jazz magazine Down Beat (31 August 1938), where Jelly Roll Morton is quoted: "I also transformed . . . After the Ball, Back Home in Indiana, etc., and all standards that I saw fit". The

"transformations" effected by Mr. Jelly Lord are key to an emerging aesthetic in which improvisation is valorized as the locus of a heightened cultural esteem for jazz as distinct from pop music. "Back Home in Indiana" is today considered to be part of a sub-category of standards, that of the jazz or Dixieland standard.

In his New Grove Dictionary of Jazz entry for "Standard", Robert Witmer initially defines a standard as "A composition, usually a popular song, that becomes an established item in the repertory; by extension, therefore, a song that a professional musician may be expected to know", but then distinguishes between Dixieland standards ("When the Saints Go Marching In"), "unqualified or mainstream standards" from Broadway musicals and Hollywood films (Gershwin, Arlen, Berlin, Porter, Kern, Rodgers), and jazz standards. Witmer notes that while ". . . it is the consensus that the essential repertory of standards is comprehended within the mainstream category", the jazz musician uses a standard as a technical device, almost a canvas upon which the true work of art, improvisation, is to be performed: ". . . part of the impact of a [jazz] performance of a standard derives from its being familiar to the listeners, who are better able to appreciate skillful arrangement and inventive improvisation because they know the original work" (Witmer 1995, 1155). Within this particular articulation of jazz as a form of Bourgeois Art, then, "standards" are not themselves works of art, what a Kantian approach to aesthetics would call "ends in themselves," but rather "means to an end". On the other hand, "unqualified or mainstream standards" in the context of an adult popular music formation in the post-war period are most definitely conceived as works of art within a similar Bourgeois aesthetic, if not as the very "standard" of musical art itself. Within adult pop, the standard confers cultural distinction on the performer "tasteful" enough to recognize their transcendent value.

iii. "Timeless/Out of Time"

As noted above, the comfortable marriage between Bourgeois aesthetic categories and the economic imperatives of the music industry is especially visible in the concept and practice of the "standard". In the 1950s, the most profitable commodity of the record industry would be Long Play LP albums, the majority of which featured a repertoire of popular standards performed in a variety of settings (mood music, big band, star vocalist). Industry insiders, as seen in the discussion of "taste panics" above, were well aware of the economic stakes of the standard in the context of the back catalogue. Irving Berlin, a mainstay of Tin Pan Alley as both publisher and composer of innumerable standards for almost half a century, frequently voiced his concern over shifting industry emphasis too far away from the back catalogue in an era of "ephemeral" novelty hits:

[Berlin] feels that the smash pop seller is a very nice thing for the immediate economic benefit of all concerned, but he believes that the importance of the song is to be preferred, so far as copyright value is concerned . . . A 1,000,000-copy bestseller may become as dead as yesterday's newspaper, whereas the sturdy, so-called "solid" songs of the Kerns . . . et al, have a durability which appreciates with the years ("Berlin Waxes Lyrical About 'Steady' Songs" 1948, 1)

The key words here are "steady", "solid", and "durability", for it is in a song's long term commercial appeal that true profitability lies. Five years later, Berlin is clear that these qualities are those of the standard: "The basis of the music business is the standards. The sudden pop hits are the gravy and quick profit, but the standards are the backbone" (quoted in Schoenfield 1953, 223). The idea that standards form the economic foundation of the music industry ("basis", "backbone") results from their consistency of sales and imperviousness to fads and slumps. This is made clear in a 1949 Variety year-end review article (which reiterates the close connection between classical music and standards): "The sharp slump in music sales hit most countries

more or less alike and, as always, standard and classical music was affected hardly at all . . ." (Connelly 1949, 173).

Throughout the period, "standard" and "solid" were used interchangeably, the latter underlining an opposition to hollow, trivial, and disposable teen pop. In an overview of the first year of rock 'n' roll, a Variety columnist is optimistic that in spite of the rise of novelty music, the future economic health of the industry is assured by the year's crop of "solid" songs: "While the rock 'n' roll and cornball tunes seem to be running amok over the hit lists, a rundown of the year's top hits indicates that the solid song was by far in the ascendancy. In fact, the impressive list of class songs that clicked this year is a complete answer to that oldtimer's query: "Where are the standards of tomorrow coming from?" . . ." ("Great Year for Good Songs: Top Rock 'n' Roll, Novelty Clicks" 1955, 1). The reference to "class" songs as a synonym for standards underlines the continuing inter-articulation of taste, social status, and age-graded popular musics.

Miège's (1989) conception of the publishing cultural industries (which includes records) as being organized by a "dialectic of the hit and the catalogue" is useful here. While the "hit" represents novelty and volatility, the "catalogue" functions as repository of the old, familiar, and stable, and thereby functions as a consistent and reliable economic base that counterbalances the turbulence of the "hit" marketplace. Throughout the post-war period, the recording industry increasingly sought to build and exploit its back catalogues, exploiting the overlap between the long-term marketability of non-ephemeral songs and the putative aesthetic "timelessness" of standards. These discourses come together in a 1954 review in Variety of a group of recently released LP albums of mood music and vocalists aimed at an adult audience. An emphasis on "standards" is noted, and Jackie Gleason's mood music album, Music, Martinis and Memories, is described as consisting of "suave salon music, lush, nostalgic . . ."; "suave salon music" emphasizes the classicism of the product. While the reference to nostalgia

underlines the generational associations of a now-canonized music of the past, the reviewer, Variety editor Abel Green, points to the intersection of "timeless" taste and "durable stock" in adult albums, which will remain saleable far longer than teen novelty singles:

. . . these are durable stock items for any dealer or customer, timeless in their appeal. It's a wise merchandising move by all concerned to build a backlog and catalog by no means dependent on any quick-whim hit of the moment. These are lasting potpourris of fine music, given the lushest treatment in technique and interpretation. They deserve the popular vogue they will enjoy (Green 1954, 42).

Again, quality and popularity are positioned as complementary. Green emphasizes the catalogue over the "quick-whim hit of the moment" in his praise for the "wise merchandising" of material of "lasting" value.

iii: "Permanent Records"

One of the key differences between (arguably) the two dominant musical cultures of the 20th C. - Tin Pan Alley and rock - is the centrality of the song, as opposed to the record, as the dominant commodity of the Tin Pan Alley era (roughly the first half of the 20th C.). Although record sales surpassed those of sheet music as early as 1922 (according to Russell Sanjek; Charles Hamm dates it slightly later, to the mid-20s), the song continued to occupy a privileged position within Tin Pan Alley. Thus listeners and charts were seen to be interested primarily in songs, and less so performers or recordings. We see this at work in Your Hit Parade, a radio show begun in 1935 (it later moved to television before going off the air in 1959) which featured the top selling songs in the U.S. each week, performed by a series of resident staff singers. In other words, unlike Top 40 radio, where hit recordings are played, Your Hit Parade, as well as the majority of network radio shows, presented the most popular songs of the day sung

by a variety of performers. Thus even though a particular performer might have a hit with a recording of a song, it was the song itself which was foregrounded as having an existence of its own, apart from that particular performer/performance. Similarly, Billboard continued to publish a chart until the late 1950s which listed song titles, with the names of any number of performers who had made recordings of the song, listed alongside. This chart, the "Honor Roll of Hits," organized the popularity of songs (its subtitle was "the nation's top tunes"), as opposed to other charts of the period, which presented data regarding record sales and jukebox or DJ plays of individual recordings.

However, the standard appears to emerge during a period of transition, the late 1930s and 40s, when the sound of specific recordings was becoming more important (eg. big bands, then solo singing stars, culminating in Mitch Miller's early 1950s Columbia productions in which sounds were thought to have overtaken songs in importance). At the same time, the process of market segmentation by age was becoming clear, with the emergence of what John Rockwell has called ". . . the first truly national, truly hysteria-provoking teen idol . . .", Frank Sinatra (Rockwell 1986, 25). In the early 1940s, Sinatra attracted a predominantly female, and predominantly teen-aged, audience. Prior to this, Tin Pan Alley had consistently sought to be all things to all people. Its main product, songs, were generally appreciated by the entire family, and stars such as Bing Crosby, despite collegiate airs, were meant to appeal to the widest possible audience (I am here omitting discussion of so-called "race" and "hillbilly" markets). The Sinatra of the early 1940s, however, had the effect of establishing what came to be known as "teen" music as an important category for the industry. And it is at this point that the modern discourse of the standard truly begins, as a vehicle for differentiating age-taste relationships through an appeal to an atemporal category.

In 1939, singer Lee Wiley custom recorded the first of several albums of 78 RPM records of Broadway show tunes for an elite Manhattan record shop. Will Friedwald argues that these recordings were essential to the development of the standard:

. . . Wiley may have been the one to introduce the idea of the standard. In the 30s performers did whatever tunes music publishers hoped would sell . . . the only exceptions were jazz musicians, who, much to the song plugger's chagrin, frequently recorded old numbers out of the New Orleans or blues tradition, or that Louis Armstrong had transformed into jazz perennials (Friedwald 1990, 87).

Friedwald sees Wiley's late 30s and early 40s recordings of the songs of Gershwin, Porter, and Rodgers and Hart as a move from a mass to a "selective audience." It is important to note that not only were these recordings made for a ". . . high class music shop that catered to an upper crust clientele of sophisticated showgoers" (Friedwald 1990, 87); the songs were also chosen not on the basis of recent publication, current hit status, or because they had appeared together in a single show - the prevalent recording criteria of the period. Instead, the songs Wiley recorded were selected according to some sense of quality which would outlast the transitory Hit Parade. At the same time, as Friedwald's comments reveal, the element of class was foregrounded along with a sense of "adulthood" ("sophisticated showgoers").

Although Friedwald sees Wiley as a pioneer, he subsequently argues that Frank Sinatra - this is now after the peak of his teen idol days - was instrumental in expanding the role of the standard. Friedwald, as a jazz critic, tends toward the "great singer" theory of musical history, and so it is his description of temporal relationships within the music industry, rather than any attribution of historical agency, which is of use here: ". . . Sinatra all but invented the standard. Before Sinatra, the basic repertoire for singers consisted of the latest plug tunes, good or bad, that their A&R men put in front of them. Previously, as one Downbeat commentator wrote in 1949, singers "rarely made much of melodies penned prior to six months ago" . . ." (1990). Now, while the "six months" may be an overstatement, the Downbeat writer is clearly registering a shift in performance practice, from a musical culture where songs, not records, were hits (and

therefore singers sang the current hits), to a musical culture where questions of taste, selection, and sophistication are articulated with a sense of adulthood seen as distinct from the "mass" teen audience. This distinction is articulated through a relationship with the past as embodied in the standard.

George T. Simon links the recording of non-current songs by the big bands of the late 30s and 40s to a refusal of the mass and the "commercial." Discussing band recordings of older songs (ie. non-contemporary), Simon notes that

Usually the bandleaders came up with the idea of resurrecting such old standards. Sometimes they met with strenuous objections from the A&R men, who were under constant pressure to record "sure hits," and from music publishers, who constantly kept reassuring them that their particular tunes were those "sure hits." It's gratifying to those of us who were constantly fighting for higher musical standards that the big band record hits that have survived have almost always been those that the bands, not the businessmen, dug up and fought to get on wax (Simon 1981, 52)

Simon makes explicit the common sense that pop standards involve "higher" aesthetic standards than "hit tunes," particularly insofar as it is believed they will "survive" the ephemeral world of the music business and commercial exploitation. As early as 1937, Variety columnist Cecelia Ager pointed out the tension between art and commerce organized around past and present within the big band repertoire: ". . . music publishers don't happen to adore swing bands - with their heartless way of doing one new plug number to gosh knows how many old non-copy-selling tunes . . ." (Ager 1937, 188).

Gerald Early, in a recent article on Motown, also makes the connection between notions of aesthetic standards and pop standards. Commenting on the late 1950s outcry against the "mass infantilism and bad taste" attributed to rock 'n' roll by Tin Pan Alley performers such as Sinatra, Early remarks that "[t]his was the conservative's cry for standards (literally in this case, as the body of "timeless" pop songs is called just that)."

(Early 1991, 30). Early invokes the etymological association of the standard with a rallying place, where adult culture's defence of "taste" can be spearheaded.

This "timelessness" seems also especially tied to recordings. A number of writers mention the contribution of Billie Holiday to the establishment of pop standards. In a recent interview, Decca producer Milt Gabler (who produced Holiday from 1944-50, as well as Louis Jordan and Bill Haley and the Comets) discusses his role as producer:

My big thrill was to take a great artist, and match them with a song and have it become a standard . . . You would hope that these songs broke - one of the new ballads. You know, "Crazy He Calls Me" was pretty big. "Lover Man" was very big. I think I created a lot of standards with her ("Liner Notes" 1991, N. pag.)

Apart from questions we might have about the extent of Gabler's participation, these comments, along with George T. Simon's remarks with regard to putting non-plug songs on wax, as well as Friedwald's emphasis on Lee Wiley's albums, suggest that the emergence of a particular song as a standard was less a question of live performance than of an artistically (and often economically) successful recording, whereby the imputed "timeless" quality of the standard was embodied in some permanent form. Subsequently the song would enter the repertoire of live performance, where a further sense of "timelessness," tied to familiarity and repetition, becomes reinforced.

However, as we shall see, the replacement of fragile shellac 78s (which up to this point have been the medium of standard creation) by the allegedly unbreakable and eternal vinyl LP (long play) record in 1948 - the rhetoric of early LP advertising sounds uncannily like that which introduced the Compact Disk - was the final step in the solidification of the idea of the standard within Tin Pan Alley, and once again, Sinatra is seen to play a key role.

Despite his long-standing concern for the quality of the material he was performing, it was not until he joined Capitol Records in 1953 that Sinatra was able to pursue fully his interest in standards. His Capitol recording career illustrates the

tensions between formats, audiences, and taste assumptions mentioned above. His Capitol LPs (excepting greatest hits compilations) contained adult pop standards, while his singles pursued the ephemeral success of the Top 40 with newly-written songs. There are no chart hits on his original Capitol albums, and his LP work in the 1950s came to codify a particular adult pop standard repertoire. Billboard describes a Sacramento radio station's publicity stunt of playing nothing but Sinatra for 5 days in 1962 (the last year of his affiliation with Capitol), which is intended to herald a change in format to "the great artists exclusively". This is seen as a sign of "... a resurgence of the great 'standard' artists", of whom Sinatra is seen as the "greatest" ("More Stations Switch with Sinatra Wax" 1962, 30).

By the end of the 1950s, the standard had entered the realm of specifically adult concerns and pleasures, and represented, as coded by Sinatra in particular, the maturation and fruition of a musical culture. The embodiment of standards in Long Play albums which formed the highly profitable catalogues of the major record companies ultimately came to represent both the best (according to its own "standards") and the last of a mature musical culture.

From Hazel Meyer's 1958 book, The Gold in Tin Pan Alley, comes this prophecy: "It is the opinion of the younger men that the fat, rich, old-time firms will ultimately atrophy insofar as new popular music is concerned; because of their lucrative backlog of standards, they do not have to struggle for existence"(Meyer 1958, 237). Thus even in 1958 it was apparent that a musical culture so reliant on the back catalogue, depending exclusively on familiar, canonized works could not sustain itself without change indefinitely.

Throughout this history Sinatra has been positioned as the standard bearer, as it were, for an adult cultural formation, when of course it has not been simply his "unique and individual genius" at work. The larger problematic within which the standard developed is tied to the cultural esteem which came to characterize a particular adult

popular music formation. "Standards" represent a series of cultural practices marked by a Bourgeois aesthetics of autonomy and transcendence, which practices ironically come to be part of the music industry's economic base. There is articulated with the idea of the standard an insistent sense that the standard represents a classic(al) phase in a musical culture. Hazel Meyer, again writing in 1958, notes that "When it becomes a standard, a song with roots or tendrils in Tin Pan Alley is just about as classical as it can get - whether it was written for a stage production, a motion picture, or an independent publisher" (Meyer 1958, 216). Notice the hierarchy, with Broadway first, Hollywood second; yet even an independently published song with no pedigree can be considered "classical," and rated with a Broadway show tune, if that Tin Pan Alley product comes to be considered a standard. So the sense that a standard is a "classic" example of a form puts us into an Arnoldian realm of culture - the best that has been thought and sung. Even as recently as 1992 we have Mark Sinker in The Wire describing a standard as "an independent aesthetic object of value" (Sinker 1992, 32).

Standards are articulated as the timeless and classic objects of an autonomous aesthetics, transcending the chaos of the marketplace and standing "above" the fickleness of immature taste. However, standards represent the fruit of a mature musical culture; they are selected from the music of a generational consumer cohort, whose subsequent economic hegemony overdetermines the canonization or valourization of the music of their youth (which may have passed through the Hit Parade). Thus the standard offers a point of articulation of age, taste, and social difference. But standards also involve a transformation of relations of temporality; the very processes that produce a first moment of familiarity (and contribute to the production of "a generation"), via an existence in a musical public sphere of radio programming, dances, Hollywood films, and Hit Parades, are then disavowed in the conception of the standard as "timeless". This serves to naturalize cultural prestige as well, as the standard's movement "out of time" is also a movement into cultural legitimacy conceived as

objective judgement: these songs “stand the test of time”, these are “the best” songs ever written, and it is mere coincidence that they are articulated with dominant cultural formations. Thus standards stand for the cultural esteem attributed to the taste of a culturally and economically dominant formation.

The Idea of the Album:

i. The Origins of the Album

It is important to understand some of the hidden traditions and assumptions feeding into and surrounding the construction of pop LPs. While new communications technologies are often accompanied by rhetorics of novelty and innovation, frequently their contents and values are derived from older, established forms. This first part of this section will address the emergence of commercially mass-marketed albums of popular music; it is important to note that albums of Western classical music pre-date popular albums by up to several decades.

But first let us look at the origins of the term “album.” Derived from the Latin albus, meaning “white,” the first albums sold in North America were not related at all to music or phonograph recordings. According to historian Alan Trachtenberg, the first albums were containers for commercially-produced sets of photographs of the U.S. Civil War: “the album (from a word meaning “blank”) had emerged only recently, an adaptation of the genteel visiting book as a popular form of storing and displaying cartes de visite. The earliest albums offered slotted pages for the insertion of cards within proscenium-like openings, a theatrical frame for portraits” (Trachtenberg 1989, 89). Commercial photographic albums appeared in the mid-19th Century, well before the first sound recording in 1877; thus the first manifestation of the photographic album was tied to upper-class, domestic social customs (the practice of exchanging cartes de visite), as well as to its subsequently more widespread function as a storage

container and means of display. The use of albums to collect and store stamps or flora likely dates from this period as well.

With the emergence of Berliner's flat disk recordings in the late 1880s, albums eventually came to be manufactured which could contain a collection of records in a series of sleeves or pockets (Edison's cylinders were generally stored in boxes). However, these albums existed as separately purchased containers for a potentially disparate series of recordings; only after the turn of the century did recording companies begin selling sets of musically-related 78 RPM disks bound up into albums (like photo albums, hence "record album") with specific titles.

However, these earliest pre-packaged albums were of Western "classical" music such as symphonies or operas, which were seen as having some "natural" coherence, insofar as the four minute per side time limitation on phonograph records of the period necessitated chopping up longer works to fit the available space; commercially-produced albums thus presented the somewhat imaginary or figurative re-combination or re-integration of a work which existed in its complete form elsewhere. While popular records were undoubtedly stored in separately purchased albums during this period, the history of the commercially-issued pop album begins later and remains somewhat obscure.

Bound collections of classical 78s were sold in Europe at least as early as 1903 (Gelatt 1977, 186) and appeared somewhat later in the U.S. according to Schicke: "... by 1914, record companies were busily selling multirecord editions of the traditionally popular symphonic works of Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and other composers" (Schicke 1974, 73). Gelatt (1977, 204) and Read and Welch (1976, 267) date the beginning of the commercial importance of the classical album in the U.S. later, to circa 1923-24. Read and Welch note the appearance of the "album library" (Victor's "Music Arts Library" and Columbia's "Fine Art Series") in 1924 and see it as the beginning of a major trend in record merchandising (1976, 257). Batten (1956, 58), discussing his

production of a multi-disc version of Elgar's Dream of Gerontius in the early 1920s, remarks that "[i]t must be remembered that albums of long works were then a rarity, buyers of records having shown small interest in such expensive luxuries."

The higher cultural status generally accorded the album may be seen to stem from a number of factors. As early as 1903, Gelatt claims ". . . a distinction had been drawn between the disc public and the cylinder public: discs were meant for the Main Street parlor, cylinders for the shack on the other side of the tracks" (1977, 157). The fact that only flat discs could be bound up into albums, and that "highbrow" classical albums appeared almost a generation before pop albums, reinforced the sense that multi-record albums were "expensive luxuries" for a discriminating class of listener. The bound set of 78s that we now refer to as an album appeared in the pop field sometime in the mid to late 1930s. Kinkle doesn't provide a precise date, but states that "[i]n the late 30s record companies began producing albums of 78s" (Kinkle 1974, 2043). The oldest non-classical album I have come across is a Columbia Bessie Smith Memorial Album, issued in honour of her death in 1937, and consisting of performances of songs associated with her by jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.⁷

In 1939-40, singer Lee Wiley custom recorded a number of multiple disc sets of songs by Porter, Gershwin, and Arlen for New York record stores which catered to a Broadway clientele such as Liberty and Schirmers; these may be seen as precursors to the "songbook" LPs which became popular in the 1950s, insofar as the Wiley sets consisted of 8 or more songs by a single composer, chosen not as a result of appearing in a single show together or having been recently published, but based on some mix of notions of quality and lasting popularity. The expansion of the availability of albums appears to have occurred in the 1940s, although it is not until the end of World War II and the accompanying de-rationing of shellac as a strategic material that the pop album

⁷This album can be seen (though not heard) at the Memphis Music and Blues Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

begins to be seen as a noteworthy commercial entity. On March 15th, 1945, Billboard began charting album sales for the first time; its first number one album was King Cole Trio (Whitburn 1973a, 207).

The immediate post-war years saw an increase in the importance of multiple disc sets for the recording industry, which culminated in the introduction of a number of new formats. Columbia introduced the 10", 33 1/3 RPM vinyl Microgroove Long Play album in June of 1948, and sought to have it become the industry standard by offering the technology to other record companies. However, RCA-Victor declined to follow Columbia's lead and introduced their own new format, the 7", 45 RPM single in 1949. The resulting "war of the speeds" is said to have been one of the major causes of the subsequent drop in record sales in the early 1950s.⁸ At the same time, the higher pricing of the LP against the cheaper 45 seems to have contributed to a higher cultural valuation.⁹ By the early to mid-1950s, the LP was established as an "adult" medium with the 45 for "teens", "blacks", and "working class" listeners, as if all of these categories were mutually exclusive.¹⁰ Of the first 100 LPs unveiled by Columbia in 1948, 69 were "classical," again underlining the sense of higher cultural capital and prestige with which the album, now the LP, was associated (Burke 1953, 59).

⁸Throughout the period 1948-58, 78 RPM records continued to be sold, and it would be inaccurate to assume that the public welcomed the new formats with open arms; in fact Gelatt (1977, 293, 300) claims LP sales were not significant until at least 1950, which may have been partially a result of public uncertainty over the cultural status of each medium (the CD being an anomaly in its swift public acceptance). In this regard, it is interesting to note that RCA released box sets of classical 45s (on red vinyl, in reference to their prestigious Red Seal 78s) during the period in question; the failure of the 45 as a 'serious music' format contributed to the subsequent bifurcation of musics and media: 45s for pop and R&B single songs, LPs for 'more worthy' musics such as Broadway, soundtracks, jazz, opera, and so on.

⁹It is interesting to note the record industry's continuing practice of establishing differing cultural esteem for specific recording media, such as the current devaluation of the cassette against the Compact Disc, the medium of choice for the 'serious' listener.

¹⁰Capitol issued its longer recordings in the 1950s on both LPs and three and four part EP 45s containing 3 songs each (which taken together contained all the songs on the more expensive LP), so that an album could be acquired paycheque by paycheque, without the need for saving up or securing credit.

In February 1950, RCA relented and began issuing 10" LPs; Columbia issued its first pop 45s in February 1951 (Read and Welch 1976, 342). The length of the 7" 45 RPM single was doubled to 8 minutes per side, and in 1952 the first EP (extended play) 45s were issued. The first modern 12" 33 1/3 LPs as we know them began appearing in late 1954.

This bifurcation of formats (LPs vs. 45s) is similar to the late 80s experience, whereby the pre-meditated premature disappearance of vinyl produced a kind of price discrimination, in which consumers were positioned in classes tied to capital available for CDs versus Cassettes (and a resulting parallel set of cultural categories related to the "seriousness" of the format - CDs for high fidelity concentrated listening, cassettes for cars and jogging with your Walkman). In the 1950s, the record industry effectively split their market into teenage single purchasers and adult LP buyers.¹¹ Of course, this distinction had been possible with the older 78 RPM format, where the availability of single 78s and bound collections of 78s may have allowed for a degree of market segmentation; however, in the early 50s as much as the late 80s, the introduction of new formats is important insofar as it allows the industry to formalize and solidify previously existing categories, while simultaneously increasing control by reducing format options.

It is important to note some of the distinctions underlying the chronology outlined above. The modern idea of the "album" as a coherent whole (as opposed to, say, a greatest hits collection), in other words as a set of songs either recorded at the same time, linked thematically, or representative of a particular artistic intention, is not necessarily present in the multiple disc sets and bound collections of 78s seen in the 30s and 40s.

¹¹This was also tied to changes in the overall conception of popular music, from pop as accessible to everyone (from grandson to grandmother), to a greater differentiation between listeners. This increased emphasis on individual (as opposed to common or popular) taste resulted in the ultimate downgrading of LPs designed to appeal to the greatest possible number of listeners (Elvis Presley's Something for Everybody, 1961), in favour of 'difficult' concept albums and million selling 'cult' artists.

While these may be seen to have their commercial ancestry in the multirecord editions of classical symphonic works, which, as Batten's memoirs (1956) illustrate, often involved editing 15 or 20 minute or longer orchestral suites and movements into a set of "highlights" which were broken down into the 4 minute pieces which would fit onto a 10" 78 record (or the later introduced and slightly longer duration 12" 78 RPM discs), the length of the pop song required no such breaking up and re-assembling (the identification or equivalence of a song with a record was a sign of difference between pop and classical up until the emergence of the LP).

The pop multi-record album may be seen initially as a marketing device; the album was thus not much more than a re-packaging of sides sold separately. While original cast albums found their coherence outside the grooves (ie. in the narrative presentation of song on the Broadway stage), the pop multi-record set was most often a collection of previously popular recordings collated into a sort of deluxe or distinctive package which enhanced their value.¹² In both of these cases (O/C [original cast], pop), and unlike classical recordings, the length of the composition and the length of the recording were virtually identical, as the length of the pop song had stabilized at almost always under 4 minutes (the convention being in part influenced by the recording process itself, but to a large extent retained even when LPs were introduced).¹³

Thus there were at least two visions of the early pop multi-record album: the first, out of the classical and Broadway traditions, drew its unity from beyond the records, in the objects re-presented (symphony or musical play); the second understanding of the album saw it as not much more than a glorified (or prestige enhanced) package of separate single recordings, linked primarily by mere authorship

¹²The CD box set being a modern relative.

¹³Although some popular recordings dropped verses or introductions from Broadway songs, this does not necessarily mean that time restrictions were the prime motivation (Hamm 1983 includes a history of pop song length). At the same time, the continuity of song (and dance) experienced at a Broadway show was necessarily disrupted in the process of separating individual songs for individual disc sides (as well as the loss of overture, incidental, and scene-linking musics).

(the band or singer). In both cases (O/C and hits), the format (one song per disk side) determined the segregation of pieces of specific lengths (although there were medleys which contained a number of songs on one side, or the occasional 78 with two separate, short songs on one side, these were exceptions; the vast majority of pre-1948 records held to the one song/one side rule).

Gammond (1980) argues that the time limitations of 78s (which meant that pop items had to make their effects within 3 minutes, and longer works had to be cut-up and truncated) ". . . meant that right until the dying days of the 78 rpm record there was still, in some quarters, only a half-hearted commitment to the idea that recording was a permanent and important part of musical culture" (Gammond 1980, 25). He goes on to claim that the ". . . turning point came with the advent of the long-playing record . . . [i]t is from that date that recording became, in one dramatic move, a serious proposition . . ." (1980, 26). One of the most publicized features of the LP in its early history was its unbreakability and permanence. As Gammond notes, an increase in the cultural status accorded records begins around the same time the LP gained acceptance, and must be seen to some extent as a result of the diminution of the ephemeral nature of pop music as contained on single song, fragile shellac 78s (which would subsequently be transferred to the 45 RPM single, notwithstanding its unbreakability).

The key words Gammond uses in reference to the LP are "permanent", "important", and "serious"; a central discourse surrounding the idea of the album became its status as superior cultural good, in terms of class of purchaser and worthiness of the music contained within, as discourses of permanence (ie. aesthetic timelessness) and artistic complexity, important categories of bourgeois aesthetics, were conflated with the technical characteristics (durability and unbreakability, improved noise and frequency response, extended storage capacity) of the medium itself. This "complexity" stems from both the increased playing time, which removed the constraints associated with 78 RPM production Gammond mentions and allowed longer

and more “complex” works, and the increase in audio fidelity associated with the LP (more “subtlety” and “accuracy” were now possible - as we shall see, this is also key to the discourse of ‘realism’ within hi-fi as audio mimesis).

The shift in the late 40s and early 50s to the 33 1/3 Long Play record involved a number of changes in the organization of the pop album. Some of the important developments in the history of the content of pop LPs in the 1950s include mood music, theme albums, and songbooks. One of the earliest developments in the content of the modern pop album was the popularity of programmed mood music. Paul Weston released what is probably the first mood music album, Music for Dreaming (Capitol), in a multi-record set of 78s in 1945 (which he then re-recorded for stereo LP in the 50s). However, it was the introduction of the long-play 33 1/3 album, with its enhanced continuity, control of sequence, and extended duration, which provided a more effective medium for music designed to create particular moods. The first mood music superstars were Jackie Gleason and Mantovani circa 1952-53 (see Wilson 1953).

Mood music utilizes affect as the organizational principle of an album. It seems to have inspired pop vocal artists to develop album formats which went beyond the 78 RPM model of record production. A 1949 Billboard interview with Frank Sinatra (“Sinatra’s Pioneering Thoughts on LP Pop Tune Production”) provides an insight into the development of what some writers (Holden 1984, 86) have seen as a precursor of the rock concept album, the theme album:

. . . Frank Sinatra . . . believes that the LP calls for new orientation and pioneering. Sinatra, it’s known, is thinking in terms of the 10-inch 15-minute record, and he conceives of it as a disk making possible the use of production techniques and ideas not now feasible on the conventional 78-r.p.m. record The LP, figures Sinatra, calls for an entirely new approach to recording - from the artist’s point of view. Thus far, he feels, much of the production thought that has gone into LP has derived from

conventional 78 production methods and thinking . . . conventional methods . . . will not be enough. Artists and a. and r. men, he believes, will have to pioneer in the use of script material in conjunction with music, the presentation of musical sketches, commentary, narrative and mood music ("Sinatra's Pioneering Thoughts on LP Pop Tune Production" 1949, 13).

Apart from the wild predictions that always seem to accompany programmatic statements about the uses of new technology, the quote serves to emphasize the extent to which new approaches to the pop LP were seen to derive from notions of narrative and mood. The theme album, as it came to be known, although often simply a collection of disparate songs with the word "moon" in their titles, did develop, particularly in Sinatra's Capitol albums of 1955-62, into a vehicle for the pursuit of particular moods and ideas. These LPs used standardized pieces (standards) in combination (sequence, title songs, album cover and liner notes, and so on) to provide a complex of meaning which was not usually acknowledged as possible within the conventions of the single pop song; thus a form of musical narrative could be constructed (and deconstructed) which might be seen as overcoming traditional objections to the possibility and specificity of musical meaning.

Often, as in Lee Wiley's Night in Manhattan (1950), Sarah Vaughn's After Hours (1953), and Sinatra's In the Wee Small Hours (1955), a particular late night, sophisticated urban atmosphere would be depicted using standards, which when combined with artwork and liner notes, created a mood and a world previously unavailable within the confines of the 4 minute 78.

The standard was also central to the "songbook" album of the 1950s, which contains nothing but standards, such as Ella Fitzgerald's Cole Porter Songbook (1956), which Friedwald claims is ". . . one of the biggest-selling jazz records of all time" (1990, 147), and thus relevant to our discussion of the pop vocal LP. Here a further

connection may be made between notions of aesthetic quality and LPs not organized around current (and thus possibly transient) hits.

Thus LP albums which are neither collections of standards by a single composer or team (and thus seen to have been chosen "independently" of industry/market forces), nor soundtracks or original cast recordings which cohere by reference to an "external" construction (which thus ties them to the classical album tradition) must either provide some "internally" generated justification, or be degraded as genealogically associated with a notion of the pop album as a series of unrelated and ephemeral songs (whether hits or filler, and frequently assembled not by the performer but by the record company; thus authorship was also an issue in the differentiation of albums conceived of as a whole by the artist vs. record company assemblages of material).

ii. Listening to the LP

One of the very few scholars to address the specificity of album listening is Paul Willis, whose brief remarks on the assumptions of album listening in his study of motorcycle sub-cultures, Profane Culture (1978), are worth repeating:

By and large, LPs are more popular with an audience which is prepared to sit and listen for a considerable period . . . LPs tend to serve the interest more of the "serious" listener, who is concerned to appreciate all the aspects of a particular field, and not simply those to which he is already attracted. Of late, LPs have also been produced which have been conceived as a unit, parallel in a way to the opera or extended musical piece. Dating approximately from Sergeant Pepper by the Beatles, the so-called progressive groups particularly have been concerned to produce LPs which are imaginatively conceived as a whole in this way and which are meant to be taken as a whole at one sitting. All this implies an audience which is stationary, sitting, not engaged in other activities, and prepared to devote a substantial amount of time to the appreciation of the music

alone . . . generally, and especially in contrast to singles, it holds true that the LP audience is stationary and mono-channeled toward the music. (Willis 1990, 49).

Album listening often entails specific attention or intention (listening vs. background, or background as specifically sought effect), as opposed to the "mere" entertainment, fun, or transitory pleasures of 45 RPM singles. Album listening frequently requires a certain degree of "comfort" (ie. a chair or couch), due to the length of time involved; finally, tied to the musics historically associated with the emergence of the long-play album format, the attendant cultural esteem, and the greater amount of monetary investment involved in buying LPs, listening to albums can involve a relatively greater degree of "seriousness", whether manifested in "concentration" of listening (doing nothing but listening) or the means-ends pursuit of specifically delineated effects (relaxation, or, in the case of "make-out" albums, excitation).

Although we "play" both LPs and singles, we only "put on" an album, which underlines a common sense that an album (perhaps like clothing) is often used to envelope or immerse the listener in a mood or world, as opposed to brief, single songs. Of course, individual album cuts may be played at will, and the linear, pre-programmed, extended-form aspect of album play may be subverted, using the music for purposes not necessarily related to those discussed above; just such a subversion occurred in the 1980s, when home taping (along with the wide dissemination of Walkman and car stereo playback equipment) allowed the creation of "custom" cassettes of cuts from favourite albums, arranged in personalized order. This had the effect of altering some of the cultural pre-conceptions operating on the album-listening process, and occurred in parallel with a re-invigoration of Top 40-type radio and the return to the mainstream of an aesthetic of the pop single. The industrial response to this change is

best seen in the (failed) late 80s development (to some industry resistance) of commercial custom tape services such as the Personics system.

Most importantly, album listening has traditionally involved the private sphere, although this is undergoing change. Apart from a brief, aberrant moment when FM stations played whole album sides, we seldom listen to albums in public; they seem to be tied to the home, although Walkmans and car stereos have undercut this monopoly in the past decade. Even when albums are played among large numbers of people, it is most often in the context of a party in a private home or apartment. Much of the development of contemporary recording aesthetics has been predicated on a certain quality of stereo reproduction, most ideally in a carpeted den not dissimilar to the modern recording studio in which the recording was made.

iii. Theme Albums

As noted above, theme albums as developed in the 1950s often involved a number of features which allowed for a greater specificity of musical reference; specially written title songs and selected standards were deployed in a particular sequence, which, when experienced with album covers and liner notes, served to frame the recording so as to allow the (re)construction of an imaginary narrative, involving a particular mood or the depiction of a self-enclosed world.

An archetypal 50s theme album is Frank Sinatra's Come Fly with Me (1958), which is organized, like a number of late 50s LPs, around the idea of travel.¹⁴ It contains all of the above-mentioned characteristics (including two specially written songs: the title track, "Come Fly with Me" and the 'closing song' or theme, "It's Very Nice to Go Travelling (But It's So Much Nicer to Come Home)", neither of which were released as singles). Each of the songs on the album is explicitly about travel or a specific city,

¹⁴Which are in turn tied to the song "Around the World," from the film Around the World in Eighty Days (1956), such as Around the World with Bing Crosby (1957) and Kay Starr's Movin' (1959).

state or country (eg. "Let's Get Away from It All", "London By Night", "Moonlight in Vermont", "Brazil"), and Billy May's arrangements use a type of orchestrational illustration (largely developed by Hollywood film scorers) which deploys instruments or effects associated with the subjects of the songs¹⁵ (such as mandolins in "Isle of Capri", temple blocks and gongs in "On the Road to Mandalay"). Taken together with the album's cover, liner notes, and the way the opening and closing songs can be read as framing a movement away from, and back to, the home, the listener may be able to discern a fairly explicit worldview or narrative.

The series of LPs tied to the film Around the World in Eighty Days were in some ways a sub-set of LPs equally dedicated to transporting the listener to exotic or foreign locales, by immersing the listener in a musical world meant to evoke the intended place. For example, the Decca series "Your Musical Holiday in ____" which featured France, Rio, Mexico, etc. or Capitol Records pre-cursor to contemporary World music, their "Capitol of the World" series, which presented indigenous musics from other cultures, albeit often performed by American studio musicians, or the series of "Exotica" albums produced by artists such as Les Baxter and Martin Denny. These kinds of albums were especially associated with adult audiences; a Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney "travel" theme LP, Fancy Meeting You Here (Decca, 1958) features 10 standards with lyrics that describe locations "around the world" ("On a Slow Boat to China", "Brazil"), as well as specially-written opening and closing songs.¹⁶ A Variety review described it as "a set with adult appeal" ("Album Reviews" 1958, 54), articulating theme LPs with an adult market.

Often, as in the case of June Christy's 1954 Capitol LP Something Cool, a mood and world might be (re)presented which was not so exotic. The title of the album,

¹⁵See Tagg 1983 for an approach to the musical specification of moods and ideas as developed in Hollywood and elsewhere.

¹⁶Written by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, who wrote theme songs for a number of Frank Sinatra's Capitol LPs, including Come Fly with Me.

Something Cool, refers to a number of things: to the title song, about an alcoholic's fantasies as she sits in a bar on a hot summer day drinking "something cool"; to the style of jazz she and her backing musicians were a part of, the West coast school of "Cool" jazz; and to the taste culture to which a purchaser of the commodity (the LP) could ostensibly hope to belong, a sense of "hip" which would be transferred from the "tastefulness" of the music to the cultural status of the listener. The album is full of mood-inducing songs, such as the Kurt Weill-Langston Hughes composition, "Lonely House," which uses orchestration to depict the sounds a woman whose husband has left her hears around her home on a summer evening; as the sounds surround the singer, the listener too is wrapped up in the aural textures, and the listener's own home is transformed into a "Lonely House."

iv. Sophistication

In the 1949 Life magazine article cited above ("High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow"), the chart correlating taste positions with cultural practices and commodities contains a category labelled "Records". While the "low-brow", as noted above, is associated with the single records of the jukebox (the records themselves are not visible, simply a cartoon of a jukebox with the caption "Jukebox" is offered),¹⁷ the "everyday tastes" in records of the "high-brow", "upper middle-brow", and "lower middle-brow" are each characterized by a different set of albums.¹⁸ This distinction (between singles and albums) underlines both the age-grading of recording formats

¹⁷While the "juke" of jukebox is African in origin, and, by 1949 had had a long association with predominantly African-American roadside nightclubs called "juke joints", it is important to remember that "Jukes" was the fictional name given to a poor, white Southern family studied in a widely-publicized pre-war account of the genetic inheritance of "mental deficiency" (and its contemporary corollary, poverty). Thus "jukebox" carries connotations of marginalized race, class, age, and low intelligence.

¹⁸There is also an implicit distinction being made concerning the ownership of the means of production of the music: the "low-brow" only rents his or her records off a jukebox, while the "middle-brow" and "high-brow" own their albums, which are part of a collection.

noted above (if we accept the jukebox as a "teen" technology) and the class-taste positions associated with the idea of the album as a "classical" format.

Each of the three "highest" taste locations is characterized by a description: "Bach and before, Ives and after" for the "high-brow", "Symphonies, concertos, operas" for the "upper-middlebrow", and "Light opera, popular favorites" for the "lower middle-brow". However the composers, performers, and titles of each of the sets of representative albums are also visible, and the popular artists offered as examples of both "upper-" and "lower-" middlebrow illustrate contemporary hierarchies of taste within popular music culture. There are no "classical" or academic art music composers in the "lower middle-brow's" collection; "light opera" is presumably represented by the American operetta and popular song composer Victor Herbert and an album of Hollywood operetta star Nelson Eddy. American composer and arranger Ferde Grofe's Grand Canyon Suite and an album by orchestra leader Andre Kostelanetz may be classified as orchestral pops, involving string-dominated arrangements of original compositions, "light classics", and popular songs, performed in a restrained and relaxing style similar to mood music. Finally, singer Perry Como is the representative of a purely "popular" singer; Como began his career in early 40s in the big bands, and went on to a solo success characterized by an extremely relaxed singing style.

The "upper middle-brow's" collection, on the other hand, is dominated by "legitimate" art music composers, including Brahms, Sibelius, and Chopin; opera is represented by Wagner's Parsifal. It is the inclusion of an album of Cole Porter's Broadway musical, Kiss Me Kate, which suggests that it is possible to legitimize "popular" composers and compositions, if they possess the right breeding (Porter was a WASP from "old" money) and live in the right neighbourhood (even though Porter had song hits and wrote for Hollywood films, he was first and foremost associated with Broadway). His work does not fit easily into the three types of music ("Symphonies, concertos, operas") given in the characterizing description under the cartoon of the

actual albums. But his presence confirms a sense of the rising cultural esteem associated with popular music in the post-war period.

Even before World War II, the world of Broadway musical comedy was seen as adult and sophisticated in a way other popular forms were not. Writing in 1930, Isaac Goldberg noted that "Sophistication is the quality most often attributed to the songs of Cole Porter . . . His lyrics are always adult, his melodies sensuous and structurally complex" (Goldberg 1961, 331). The adultness, sophistication, and presumed musical and lyrical complexity of the songs of Broadway composers were seen to link their work to the classical world. In 1955, House Beautiful magazine claimed that LP recordings of Broadway musical comedy, especially non-original cast productions, could achieve the high-status appellation "classical": "These are frequently made with all-star casts and excellent musical direction; such casts are lavished on the more durable - or shall I say "classical"? - of our operettas. Here you find such standbys as Porgy and Bess, The Student Prince, and Carousel" (Green 1955, 187). Green's usage of "operettas" is appropriate only in the case of The Student Prince; the other two titles, while in their own way marking departures from standard Broadway musical comedy, are more "musicals" than operettas.

In his history of the New York cabaret, James Gavin links standards and Broadway showtunes to a sense of sophisticated adultness: " . . . an evening of "sophisticated songs", as they were called, became a rite of passage into Manhattan adulthood" (Gavin 1992, 17). The articulation of Broadway, sophistication, and adultness is not new to the post-war period, and, like the album and standard's "classical" pedigrees, is tied to class relations. At least as early as the latter part of the 1920s, there is a sense that the music of Broadway is associated with cultural elites, the so-called "smart set"; a 1930 Variety article, "It's Smart to Chum with the Pro Party Entertainers", claimed that the "upper classes" no longer wanted "string quartets or sopranos" for their parties, instead preferring the music of Broadway composers and

performers such as George Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart, Libby Holman, and Ethel Merman ("It's Smart . . ." 1930, 46). However, what is significant in the post-war period is the mass distribution of the music and institutions associated with Broadway to a largely middle-class and suburban white adult population, where original cast LPs, theme albums, and standards articulated cultural distinction in age, as well as class, terms.

The Idea of an Adult Cinema

As noted above, the 1950s especially were a period of transition for Hollywood's conception of its audience. While the move from a "general" audience to a series of specialized audience segments is most visible in terms of the rise of what Doherty calls the "teenpic", other developments contributed to the segmentation of the movie-going public. In the wake of the Paramount consent decrees (in which anti-trust laws forced the major Hollywood studios to end their vertical integration through forced divestiture of their exhibition wings), as well as the emergence of television as the mass visual medium of choice and a general slump at the box office after the movie industry's peak year of 1946, Hollywood began to adapt to the new realities of the post-war entertainment environment. This involved attempts to differentiate its products from television. Technical enhancements of image (Cinerama, 3-D, Cinemascope, colour), sound (stereo soundtracks), and an increased emphasis on big budget spectacle were central to this strategy. However, the Hollywood studios, along with non-studio producers and independent exhibitors who imported foreign-language films, began to offer stories and situations previously forbidden an industry committed to a "family" audience.

In a section of their Film History: An Introduction (whose title, "Art Cinemas and Drive-Ins", suggests a bifurcation of the audience into adult and teen viewers conceived in terms of exhibition practices), Thompson and Bordwell link the rise of

independent film production after the Paramount decrees to new conceptions of the audience: "The burst of independent production typified a larger strategy. Many producers responded to the decline in theater attendance by targetting specific segments of the population. Before the 1950s, most studio productions were intended for a family audience. Now films designed only for adults, children or teenagers appeared more frequently" (Thompson and Bordwell 1994, 384).

Robert Sklar describes the emergence of an "art cinema" in the post-war period, and links it not only to age grading, but, importantly, to issues of taste, discrimination, and intellectuality:

By the early 1950s, interest in British and foreign-language films was strong enough to support the first significant innovation in audience segmentation since the arrival of talking pictures - the rise of "art houses" devoted exclusively to non-Hollywood movies . . . The art houses marked an important break with Hollywood's way of doing business. Over the years, Hollywood's critics had asserted that American companies would never produce intellectually respectable films as long as every one of their products was tailored to the tastes of a mass audience. What was needed was a recognition of separate audiences and films catering to various levels of taste and intelligence . . . for discriminating audiences (Sklar 1975, 293).

Here "mass" and "intellectually respectable" are implicitly conceived as opposites that describe the new segments of "teen" and "adult" respectively. In his history of the Hollywood box-office, John Izod stresses the emergence of a "distinctly adult" audience not only in terms of an opposition to teenagers and an embrace of the "art house" but to new kinds of Hollywood production as well:

. . . Hollywood was gradually finding out how diverse its audiences were becoming, for as it discovered teenagers so too it began to identify a demand for adults for distinctive films. The discovery of this new audience can be attributed

to some of the small neighbourhood cinemas that desperately needed product and patrons. A few of them (typically located in university towns and large cities) found that by the early 1950s a sufficient interest had developed in British-made and foreign-language films to draw a constant audience. Further they could charge them more than for the old double bills because these were new releases . . . this innovation also demonstrated to the majors the possibility of screening to distinct adult audiences . . . From these small beginnings this market grew, and a division opened between sophisticated foreign-language features requiring an educated attention (the 'art' film) and the sexploitation piece (the so-called 'adult' movie)" (Izod 1988, 147-8).

While Izod's use of "adult movie" clearly looks forward to the rise of mainstream cinematic pornography in the 1960s, in the 1940s and 50s, as we shall see, an "adult" film referred more precisely to a film which was intended for a particular audience segment and which connoted a sense of heightened seriousness and cultural esteem. Often this cultural prestige was articulated in opposition to television, which was quickly becoming the emblem of mass society's social ills:

With both the European and the 'adult' movie the industry had not only identified a change in audience demand, but had found yet another way of differentiating its product from anything television could mimic. Precisely as a consequence of its continuing success in stealing the family audience, television was precluded from showing foreign-language material, anything that could remotely be described as difficult viewing, and above all else, anything admitting active human sexuality (Izod 1988, 149).

This sense of seriousness ("difficult viewing") in part originated in the "minority taste", to use David Riesman's expression, associated with the exclusive art house cinemas. The "snob appeal" of this viewing formation was being critiqued as early as 1949, in an article in Harper's magazine, which saw the art cinema's function as a

source of social distinction overwhelming any claims to "art" and individual response or judgement:

. . . foreign movies are today automatically artistic successes no matter how bad they are. Although they still have to be advertised to the sizable movie public in New York as though they were one step removed from a stag show, they have become so highly regarded among the confirmed consumers of minority taste that it is worth your title as a connoisseur to slur them ("After Hours: Rossellini Film Four" 1949, 100)

Similarly, in a 1951 article in the Saturday Review of Literature entitled "Strictly for the Art Houses", Hollis Alpert characterizes the appeal of foreign films and "art houses" in terms of Russell Lynes's notion of the "taste snob": "So prevalent has this sort of snobbism (or, more politely, preference) become that in recent years a sizable number of movie houses have mushroomed throughout the land in order to cater to it" (Alpert 1951, 27). Alpert estimates that there are 200-300 art houses out of approximately 10,000 US cinemas at the time. The description of these theatres provided by Alpert suggests a sort of exclusive adult playground, with all of the accoutrements of anti-mass taste (expensive coffees, avant garde paintings, high fashion magazines) on display:

. . . most of the art cinemas keep up the assumption that their clientele are "tasteful" people and work hard at providing suitable atmosphere for them. The lounges are cozy, and the serving of coffee in demi-tasse cups to patrons waiting for the program to break is standard procedure. Some of the lobbies have been turned into galleries for the exhibition of paintings by new artists. Current magazines are kept available (a young woman I know regularly gets to read Vogue and Harper's Bazaar at her local art house) . . . (Alpert 1951, 27).

The implication here is that the expression of a socially-distinct, sophisticated adulthood is as important for the foreign film audience as is any interest in "art."

Domestic producers/exhibitors during the period were also increasingly aware of the value of investing in non-family, non-teen films. A 1957 article in Variety about art houses in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region links (fine) art and (Box Office) commerce in its headline: "Twin Cities Making 'Fine Art' (B.O.) Out of 'Adults Only' Gimmick." (1957, 1) The article stresses the profitability of art cinemas, even in the historically conservative American midwest. This is achieved through the linkage of adult exclusivity and mature content. The cinemas'

. . . virtual "adults only" policy pays off in more ways than one . . . By banning the small-fry and teenagers, it's claimed, these houses permit their patrons to enjoy the pictures sans the noise and other disturbance usually generated by the younger element . . . The local arty theatres, too, have acquired the reputation of being the homes of the strong and daring sex pictures that go much further in the direction of boldness than anything presented in the theatres with conventional policies or on television screens ("Twin Cities . . ." 1957, 1).

Throughout the immediate post-war years, trade press writing about movie audiences expressed concern over the apparent decline in adult viewers, as seen in a 1948 Variety headline, "Exhibs Wonder if it's Kids who are keeping Oldsters out of U.S. Theaters". At this time, rather than representing the direction Hollywood would soon take, the "lopsided appeal of films to the young", as another article put it, was seen as a problem to be rectified through an appeal to an adult audience ("Films B.O. Pitch for 'Over 35's': Aim for Older Customers" 1948, 3). How this was to be achieved was as yet uncertain, and research was called for: "Some execs feel that careful checking of foreign-lingo, semi-documentaries, "adult" films and other products deviating from the norm should be made to determine whether the same heavy proportion of youngsters is attracted to these. If not, Hollywood may swing further in that direction" ("Films B.O. Pitch . . ." 1948, 14). Note that already existant genres were marked as having "adult" appeal, and might offer hope for the revitalization of a slumping box office.

While, as we have seen, the combination of the highbrow appeal and "sexacious selling" (as one article put it: "Sexacious Selling Best B.O. Slant For Foreign Language Films in U.S." 1948, 2) of foreign films was one response, another was closer at hand.

Running parallel throughout this period was the development of domestically-produced films with explicitly adult appeal. The Motion Picture Production Code had since the mid-1930s restricted the depiction of a variety of mature or controversial topics from being presented within Hollywood cinema, thereby foregoing censorship or age restrictions on viewers. This permitted Hollywood to market its products as "clean" entertainment for the whole family, and was consistent with its courting of a mass, general audience. However, at the same time as foreign film imports began to make money in the U.S. (the success of Roberto Rossellini's Open City [1946] is generally believed to have started the trend), a cycle of what Variety labelled "adult pix" began which challenged, and ultimately contributed to the demise of, the Production Code. These films, in part coming out the social consciousness film tradition, tackled serious issues and sought to be intelligent interventions in contemporary social debates. And like a number of the foreign films, certain of the "adult pix" ran into problems being certified for a Code Seal, which signalled to audiences that the film had been "approved" by the Breen Office (as the Code administration was known).

In the late 1940s and 50s Variety ran numerous articles about this new, segmented cinema. Studio executive Dore Schary suggested that the box office slump might be ended by producing films of a higher intellectual character: "The fact that one cannot say a 4-letter word on the screen does not mean that the screen cannot be mature" ("Schary Urges Writers with New Ideas to Help Hollywood Ride Out Crisis" 1948, 50). The election of liberal Democrat Harry S. Truman to the U.S. presidency in the fall of 1948, along with the defeat of several members of the conservative House Un-American Activities Committee, was seen as an encouraging sign for "socially relevant" films such as No Way Out, whose script about an African-American doctor had just been sold for

\$87,000 ("Truman 'Rewrites' H'Wood Scripting as Pix Lean to Social Significance" 1949, 1). In fact, Frank Capra's State of the Union (1948), which was critical of political manipulation of the media, was claimed to have assisted Truman's election. In an article entitled "Film That Changed History?" (1949, 5) Truman's repeated viewing of State of the Union is linked to his decision to "tell the truth" during the campaign that won him the presidency.

While idealistic appeals to ideas of social and artistic relevance were frequently presented, often the profitability of these "semi-art" films was emphasized. A hyperbolic 1948 Variety headline ("Anti-Bigotry Pix Snare \$500,000,000 Domestic Profit" 1948, 1) told potential producers all they needed to know - adult pix could be art for money's sake: "The idea that pictures on controversial subjects are questionable at the B.O. [box office] has been beaten over the head by results to date on Gentleman's Agreement (20th-Fox) and Crossfire (RKO)" ("Anti-Bigotry" 1948, 7). An article whose title prescribed an adult balm for a bottoming box office ("More Adult' Pix Key to Top Coin: Johnston's Plea to Coast Execs; MPAA Prexy Sounds Off After Tour of H'wood Film Studios" 1949, 1) offered the opinion of an industry association president, Eric Johnston, who believed that fiscal health could be achieved if producers would ". . . raise their sights on film content by seeking a more mature treatment of stars and presentation. America, he emphasizes, is growing up, and films must catch up with that phenomenon". Johnston was further quoted as claiming that declining theatre patronage is due to "the low-key at which the average film is aimed" since education levels have risen in the U.S. over the past decade, implicitly operating within the "high-low" metaphor of cultural hierarchy ("More Adult'. . ." 1949, 1).

A 1953 page one story, "'Adult' Yarns Hit Film Paydirt: Answer Beefs on 'Immature' Pix" noted that: "Producers are definitely trending toward "mature" themes and frank, realistic circumstances. . . Execs of major studios reveal they're well underway with increased use of "grown-up material", and point to the current

production skeds to prove the point" ("Adult' Yarns Hit Film Paydirt: Answer Beefs on 'Immature' Pix" 1953, 1). Frankness and realism were consistently offered as keys to the adult market, which was seen as being inadequately serviced by the Hollywood mainstream: ". . . the indies are generally in the vanguard of film makers "developing films designed to appeal to the adult mind" . . ." (Ellis Arnall, president Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, quoted in "Adult' Yarns. . ." 1953, 1).

In the wake of the Paramount Consent Decrees, independent producers tended to take the initiative in "daring" filmmaking.¹⁹ Successful "adult" filmmaker Elia Kazan frequently criticized the conventionality of Hollywood's output, in 1954 deriding the "industry ostriches" who "continue to stick their heads in the sand and make the same movies their fathers made before them". Again, the compatibility of art and commerce is stressed: "Kazan pointed to the historical box-office success of films which had departed from the standard tradition of "young love, boy meets girl, father in trouble or just plain nonsense themes". Finally, the link between adult audiences and "message" films is conceived in terms of the rejection of an infantilized mass: "If a picture has something to say, and says it well, then the industry can stop wondering about the 'lost audience'," Kazan reported: "That audience isn't lost, it's just waiting . . . audiences don't have a 12-year-old mass mind"" (quoted in "Kazan: Studios Still in Rut: Offbeat Films Can Hypo B.O." 1954, 3).

The sense of a maturing cinema is also conveyed in an interview a year later with former Broadway director Daniel Mann, who was now specializing in "adult Hollywood pix" such as The Rose Tattoo. Mann claims that "Hollywood has discovered that audiences have grown up - and audiences discovered that Hollywood has grown up". After noting Hollywood's early attempts to differentiate its product from television through technical

¹⁹Apart from its "erotic" connotations (especially as applied to foreign, non-Code approved films), "daring" was frequently used to distinguish "adult" films as resistant to backward-looking (and ultimately "immature") mass sensibilities, as seen in the advertising campaign for the anti-racist film Home of the Brave (1949): "A picture that dares to take a stand - and stands alone!"

improvements, Mann links intelligence, integrity and adult audiences to the rejection of the same audience Kazan demonized:

The big screen [Cinemascope etc.] made audiences sit up, but it was adult themes that made them take notice . . . A few years ago, stories like 'The Rose Tattoo,' 'The Country Girl,' and 'Come Back Little Sheba' would have been considered too adult for the supposed 12-year-old audience Hollywood once catered to. Now a story must have intelligence and integrity or it doesn't stand a chance ("Public and Screen Both Grow Up" 1955, 1)

In large part, that intelligence and integrity were seen to involve the rejection of Hollywood's previously rose-coloured view of reality. A 1955 article entitled "Pix Surge to Realism — Wald: Happy Endings No Longer a Must" interviewed producer Jerry Wald, who articulates "seriousness", "realism", and "intelligence" in his plea for more adult films:

. . . "Films today to be successful must reflect the conflict of our times, the mood of our times . . . the world is a serious place. We face serious, grim problems . . . [audiences want] an ending that has a ring of truth to it - like 'From Here To Eternity' and more recently 'On the Waterfront'" . . . don't underestimate your audience's intelligence, Wald warns producers (quoted in Williams 1955, 3)

The "down" ending of From Here to Eternity, which was based on a controversial novel that many believed could not be filmed with Code approval, features the death of one of the movie's most sympathetic characters, played by Frank Sinatra. Sinatra also appeared in a controversial Otto Preminger film, The Man with the Golden Arm, which was released without a MPPC Seal, and was the subject of another 1955 Variety article on the new realism in Hollywood, entitled "New H'Wood Focus on 'Realism': But, Pic Execs Ask: Is It B.O.?". The article begins by asking "Is Hollywood picking up the cue for a new semi-macabre cycle from the postwar Italian neo-realism and American television's more recent run of seamy-side-of-life scripts?" (Hift 1955, 1), linking

the foreign-film explosion of recent years with one of the few explicitly adult areas of T.V. programming, so-called Golden Age television anthology drama. The article points to The Man with the Golden Arm as an extreme example of Hollywood's new, serious and downbeat cycle of adult films, which is said to include The Big Knife, Night of the Hunter, The Harder They Fall, Marty, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Bad Seed, and I'll Cry Tomorrow. Remarking on the portrayal of drug addiction and urban hopelessness in The Man with the Golden Arm, the Variety columnist claims "Trade disposition was to rate this a thoroughly depressing drama with few scenes to relieve the gloom".

Nonetheless, like The Moon is Blue, Preminger's earlier, Code Seal-less, adult sex comedy, The Man with the Golden Arm was widely distributed without a Seal and became a box-office success. These were key films in the gradual demise of the Production Code. In their history of the Code and censorship in Hollywood, Leff and Simmons consider adult films such as these to be as important in the breaking down of the Breen office's grip on cinematic expression as foreign films such as Vittorio De Sica's The Bicycle Thief (1948) and Roberto Rossellini's The Miracle (which, in a 1952 U.S. Supreme Court decision, was declared "art", paving the way for principles of free speech to be applied for the first time to motion pictures) . Along with The Moon is Blue, they see "adult" Hollywood films such as A Streetcar Named Desire and Detective Story (both 1950) in particular as important challenges to the Code. Leff and Simmons refer to "adult audiences" (1990 165), "adult films" (171), and "adult cinema" (196) throughout their discussion of Code-breaking Hollywood films during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Come Back Little Sheba, Moulin Rouge, and Carrie are described as "serious adult drama" (188), once again suggesting that the "Code wars" involved the articulation of adult-ness with discourses of artistry in the defence of commercial interests, although of course this was also an index of the rising cultural prestige of cinema as an institution.

A Life cover story, "Outbreak of New Films for Adults Only: Shocking Candor on the Screen a Dilemma for the Family" (Bunzel 1962) points out that adult films were by 1962 a key segment of Hollywood output:

These are not films made for art theater audiences. They are produced for the mass market and they will be seen at neighborhood movie houses . . . They are done with good taste and are absorbing entertainment . . . They are . . . thoughtful films for grown-ups, all made with the box office in mind, but rarely crassly commercial. Most are adapted from distinguished books and plays" (Bunzel 1962, 88, 90).

Clearly the articulation of taste and age is at work here. The article goes on to give a brief history of adult films, which are tied to the declining post-war box office and a rejection of teen taste: "It was clear that movies would no longer make money by pandering to a teen-age mentality. TV was doing that sort of thing better and for free" (Bunzel 1962, 92). By 1962, the Code was on its way out, and age-restrictions on film attendance were not far in the distance, as a Wall Street Journal headline makes clear: "Adults Only: Movie Men Rate Fitness of Films, Hope to Avert Censorship — Youngsters Warned Off from *Lolita* and Children's Hour: Trend is to 'Frank' Films; An Impact at the Box Office?". Lolita obtained a Code Seal, but under condition that a legend, "For persons over 18 only", be affixed to all promotional material, suggesting an institutionalization of the adult film. The same year, Frank Sinatra appeared in The Manchurian Candidate, which was received as a serious, artistic, adult film with little Code controversy, despite its scenes of torture, incest, and political critique; adult films were by then an ongoing part of Hollywood's segmented output.

Conclusion

The emergence of distinct and distinctive adult cultural formations in the post-war period is part of a larger process of audience segmentation, in which "teen" and

“adult” formations are produced in discursive opposition. A key institution of the adult popular music formation is the idea of the “standard”, which serves as a rallying point for a complex of tastes characterized as mature, serious, sophisticated, and beyond commercial imperatives. Similarly, the idea of the album, especially with the advent of the LP in 1948, is articulated with a series of values derived from bourgeois aesthetic categories. At the same time, both the standard and the album, as well as adult popular music in general, are seen as economically viable from industrial perspectives, since the temporal relationships valued within adult popular music culture contribute to stable and highly profitable commodities and markets. The post-war period also sees the emergence of age-graded Hollywood cinema formations. The rise of the “teenpic” is accompanied by the development of an adult film formation, in which ideas of maturity are mobilized in ascribing and valorizing seriousness and artistry to select films. Again, the adult is associated with an anti-mass ideology.

The next chapter moves from an exclusive focus on taste and age, and examines their inter-articulation with questions of gender in the phenomenal rise of high-fidelity home audio in the same period. The chapter analyzes popular press accounts of the installation of hi-fi in a domestic space seen to be in crisis. This crisis is also seen to be related to articulations of anti-mass tastes, and to adult conceptions of the role of technology in the private sphere.

Chapter Two: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity Home
Audio Technology, 1948-59

This is the space age. Not just for sputniks and moonshots but also for hi-fi. We have 'space' conveyed through stereo sound - if we can find space for that extra stereo speaker. The theory that space is limited is nothing new to the average housewife.

- HiFi Review, 1959¹

In 1954, High Fidelity magazine published one of its occasional 'humourous' articles about male high-fidelity enthusiasts, and the problems posed by hi-fi equipment in conjugal domestic spaces. The author of the article complains that the hi-fi, which sounded so perfect in the dealer's showroom, suddenly sounds awful when installed in the purchaser's living room,

a room which mars its [the hi-fi's] sound . . . by day the room is filled with the joyous squeals of our children. By night, it is filled with our wife's [sic] reminders that the little angels are asleep, but won't stay that way if the volume isn't kept down (Lucci 1954, 37).

As in many articles on high fidelity in the 1950s, hi-fi occupies a problematic place within domestic space, with wives positioned as antagonistic to the high volumes produced by the equipment. In his quest for a solution to ' . . . a problem the audio industry has meticulously avoided - the problem of the home' (Lucci 1954, 37), Lucci invents something he calls 'the Yogi Enclosure,' so-named because it consists of a box just big enough for a man to sit in, cross-legged, in the 'Yoga position.' This box is positioned directly in front of the loudspeaker:

¹ Hans H. Fantel, 'Take Two! They're Small!: Jumbo Bookshelf Speaker Systems - Good Sound for Compact Rooms,' HiFi Review, April 1959, p. 49.

'the listener sits in his own enclosure which is an extension of the speaker enclosure . . . the walls of the enclosure are constructed of soundproof material to insure protection against outside noises, and, for the sake of privacy, a door that can be locked from the inside is provided' (Lucci 1954, 37). The soundproofing is not to prevent the disturbance of his sleeping children or next-door neighbours; along with the lock, these measures are to ensure the listener's privacy. Lucci concludes by admitting that some may see the 'Yogi Enclosure' as 'anti-social' (Lucci 1954, 101), but notes that it does have a slot in the top which 'allows your wife to slip you a sandwich now and then, and warn you in the event of fire' (Lucci 1954, 37).

While the article, and its accompanying cartoon (depicting a man enclosed in a speaker box), are intended satirically, the humour stems from the mobilization and exaggeration of discourses circulating around hi-fi during the late 1940s and 1950s. Lucci imagines high-fidelity technology as a means of simultaneously transforming and escaping domestic space. This is accomplished through immersing oneself in sound and music, a hi-fi ideal which is most strongly stated here in terms of 'enclosure.' While the cabinets in which loudspeakers are housed are referred to as 'enclosures,' Lucci is not simply engaging in wordplay. As he puts it, during the ideal hi-fi experience 'the listener is not outside the music, but literally right in the middle, feeling every note' (*ibid.* 37). Immersion permits transportation into the world of music, away from domestic realities. As I shall argue, the article is representative of the cultural value of high fidelity for many men during the 1950s.

The conception of home audio as a masculine technology that permits a virtual escape from domestic space is a significant development in the history of sound recording. Before World War II, the phonograph, and recorded music in general, were not especially associated with men. By the 1960s, however, the

phonograph and home audio sound reproduction equipment had hardened into masculinist technologies par excellence. The gendering of high-fidelity sound reproduction technologies as masculine is an important and unexamined component of the general rise of masculinist popular musics and musical cultures in the post-war period.² While rock music and youth audiences are often seen as key to the masculinization of popular music culture after World War II, a reconstruction of the specifically adult music culture organized around high fidelity suggests that adults were implicated in this process of masculinization. This chapter will offer an analysis of popular press writing and advertisements related to hi-fi in selected U.S. publications during a historical moment which generally is read as originary in the history of youth and teen music: the period between the introduction of the vinyl Long Play (LP) high-fidelity album in 1948, and the mainstreaming of domestic stereophonic phonographs around 1958-59. The aim of this analysis will be to suggest some of the ways in which the idea of 'high fidelity' was figured in the popular imagination, and, more crucially, to understand how hi-fi may have been used by white middle-class heterosexual adult men during the period as a means of reclaiming domestic space from their spouses. Following some of Lynn Spigel's (1992) groundbreaking work on television and feminine domestic space ca. 1948-55, I will contend that men may have used hi-fi sound reproduction technology (including its necessary adjunct, the Long Play (LP) record album) to produce a domestic space gendered as masculine.

²For recent work on popular music and masculinity, see Shepherd 1987, and Medovoi 1991.

The Rise of Hi-Fi

The popularization of high fidelity home audio equipment in the post-war period was contemporaneous with the 1948 introduction and subsequent mass acceptance of the LP album. While the LP was not explicitly coded as 'masculine' at the time, hi-fi most definitely was. In 1953 Life magazine commented on this aspect of the hi-fi phenomenon: 'One of the strangest facts about both [hi-fi] bugs and audiophiles is that they are almost exclusively male . . . women seldom like high fidelity' (Brean 1953, 154). The article then notes the violent distaste many women have for hi-fi, telling of a man 'whose wife objects so strongly to hi-fi that she will not let him play it while she is in the house' (Brean 1953, 154-55). This masculinization was partly tied to the origins of hi-fi in do-it-yourself home hobbyism, as well as its connections to World War II military techniques and technologies. Like the LP, hi-fi also connoted a sense of elevated class, cultural capital, and prestige.

While the term 'high fidelity' had been in use in specialized circles since the mid-1930s³ (referring to improved audio reproduction with increased bandwidth and lower noise in sound reproduction equipment), it was not until after World War II that 'high fidelity' came to identify a quality of sound, a sound reproduction technology, and a cult of (male) hobbyists. A number of articles from the period refer to male high fidelity fans as 'hi-fis,' conflating the technology with the men who used it. Read and Welch trace the beginnings of the hi-fi cult of the late 1940s to the 1920s and 30s, when radio and phonograph

³The O.E.D. cites two usages in 1934 relating to radio sound; in fact, the first widespread dissemination of the term was probably connected with radio stations such as New York city's W2XR: 'When we started in business [1936] our station identification on the air was "W2XR - the High Fidelity Station"' (Sanger 1973, p. 46). In 1939, 'General Electric introduced the first two commercial FM receivers, its "golden tone" radios that "set the pace for spectacular realism in high-fidelity reception"' (quoted in Lewis 1991, p. 274). RCA-Victor advertised 'higher fidelity' records in 1937, the earliest reference related to the phonograph I have come across.

enthusiasts would attempt to improve their equipment, either by upgrading mass manufactured sets with ad-on attachments (Read and Welch 1976, 344) or by building a system from scratch. This latter option is thought to have become more popular in the post-war years due to the extensive electronics training received by many men in the armed forces. In fact, the major profile of 'The Hi-Fi Bandwagon' in Life (Brean 1953, 147) relates the story of a U.S. Marine who developed his affinity for building and improving home audio equipment while stationed on a Pacific island during the war; there he scraped together the components to build a phonographic system, which he used to entertain his fellow soldiers.

In the 1940s and 50s, a number of companies such as Heathkit emerged which sold unassembled kits of hi-fi parts via mail order, thus contributing to the sense of hi-fi as a continuation of the manly activities of the workshop. However, the do-it-yourself ethos of hi-fi was in many ways used as a marketing device, insofar as the growth of the modern component system as we know it occurred simultaneously with the mainstreaming of the rhetoric of hi-fi; thus even the man who was not electronically skilled could participate by selecting the various components (turntable, tuner, amp, speakers, etc.) of a system which would then be uniquely his own combination.⁴

By the mid-1950s, the term 'hi-fi' was used generically to refer both to any stationary sound reproduction system, as in 'put this album on the hi-fi,' and to the sonic quality of a recording (a 'High Fidelity' album). Interest in improved sound quality had been increasing for some time; British record

⁴Several key technological developments converged in the late 1940s to enable the hi-fi boom. In 1946 Pickering and General Electric introduced magnetic phonograph cartridges; in 1947, the H.H. Scott and D.T.N Williamson companies marketed what are generally seen as the first commercial high-fidelity amplifiers; in 1948, Ampex began marketing professional tape recorders and Columbia introduced the LP; and in 1949 Magnecord demonstrated the first stereo tape recorder at the NYC Audio Fair.

companies had been selling higher quality 'ffrr' (full frequency range response) recordings to the British public since 1944. These records used an improvement in audio quality that was developed for the military in 1940. During World War II, sonar operators were trained to recognize the differences between German and British submarine sounds with special 'ffrr' recordings; though embodied within the older medium of 78 RPM records, the 'ffrr' recording process offered increased bandwidth, better dynamic range, and less surface noise.

However, it was only with the advent of the LP that a generally-accepted designation of enhanced audio quality emerged in North America. This can be seen in the industrial practices of Capitol Records, which released bound sets of 78s throughout the late 1940s without any specific labelling as to their sonic quality; after they began issuing LPs in 1949, Capitol LPs began to sport a special insignia, generally in the upper right hand corner of the front of the record sleeve, noting that the recording was 'high fidelity.' This new practice of marking and marketing LPs on the basis of high fidelity would expand rapidly throughout the recording industry in the 1950s.⁵

Philip Ennis notes that high fidelity equipment and LPs were closely linked, both economically and ideologically, in the post-war period, pointing to the class connotations used as part of their marketing: 'Home phonograph sales increased sharply as the hi-fi craze spread beyond its initial hi-brow audience and into the mass public' (Ennis 1992, 267); 'The upscale hi-fi sector was

⁵The following corporate trademarks, which appeared on the respective labels' album covers during the 1950s, represent this emphasis: 'Living Presence High Fidelity' (Mercury); 'Guaranteed High Fidelity' (Columbia); 'Panoramic True High Fidelity' (Verve); 'HiFi/New World of Sound' (Decca); 'A 'New Orthophonic' High Fidelity Recording' (RCA-Victor). Capitol also used 'Full Dimensional Sound' in conjunction with 'High Fidelity,' at various points in the 1950s. Thus the term 'high fidelity' came to be used as a standardised designation used in conjunction with various corporate attempts at product differentiation.

stimulating the production of LPs rather than singles' (Ennis 1992, 265).

Read and Welch suggest that the introduction of the LP in 1948 by Columbia was partly an attempt to regain market share lost to those distinctive, high quality, British 'ffrr' disks, which began to be imported into the U.S. circa 1946:

. . . it was the export of large quantities of London Decca records to the United States and the establishment of a distributing organization in 1948 that finally brought the American record manufacturers to the realization that higher fidelity was not only salable, but was being demanded by a fair share of the American public . . . The 'Hi-fi Bandwagon' was at last on its way! (Read and Welch 1976, 348).

High fidelity was often misconstrued as referring to the 'height' of the highest frequencies obtainable with an audio system, when in fact 'high fidelity' was meant to refer to the degree of truth-to-reality produced by the system (which would of course entail wider frequency response and dynamic range, and lower noise, than earlier 'no-fi' equipment). In other words, hi-fi conceived the faithful reproduction of aural phenomena to be a primary purpose of home audio. This had several implications for the recordings played on a high-fidelity system. First of all, it contributed to the popularity of 'sound effects' LPs, high quality recordings of steam trains, thunderstorms, explosions, church bells, and other extremes of sound, whose veracity, when played on a particular system, could be authoritatively adjudicated.

The 'typical' purchaser of such records was called a 'sound-for-its-sound-sake' enthusiast by a HiFi & Music Review article in 1958 (Jacobs 1958, 33). The article begins: 'Addict or realist? This is the question neighbors ask when assaulted by "weird" and inexplicable noises from that hi-fi system next door. Some hi-fiers, rather than immerse themselves in operatic or chamber music, or even rock 'n' roll, listen for the joy of just "hearing"

sounds not likely to be found in the average living room' (Jacobs 1958, 33). Notice the reference to immersion, a common trope used to describe both LP and hi-fi listening, as well as the insinuation that the hi-fi is being played at high volume. A 1953 New York Times Magazine article ('That Strange Hi-Fi Set: It Is A Machine and A Society, Both Tuned To A Frantic Pitch'), whose title already indicates the figuring of hi-fi as tied to extremes, links excessive volume and masculinity in its description of sound effects devotees: 'On the far end or lunatic fringe of Hi-Fi cultism are the all-outers, the boys engaged in an endless search for ever-deeper bass notes and for jet-altitude highs, a masochistic group that subjects its ears to all manner of torture. This band is almost exclusively male . . .' (Berger 1953B, 19).

But hi-fi was predominantly tied to musical recordings, whose value was also judged based on an aesthetic of audio realism, sonic immersion, and mental transportation. The listening experience was to be enhanced by the approximation of aural 'reality,' an illusion of presence ideally indistinguishable from the 'live' real thing. Loud playback volumes, enabled by increases in amplifier wattage in the 1940s, were felt to contribute to this realism: 'this [hi-fi system] they play rather loudly to achieve full tonal range' (Brean 1953, 151).⁶ The following quote from a home audio handbook, although several years outside the time frame of this study, is nonetheless representative of the dominant hi-fi aesthetic of the 1950s:

. . . high fidelity is not concerned with bringing orchestras - or even string quartets - into our homes, but with presenting the players or singers performing in acoustic settings appropriate to the music, allowing us to 'listen in' to both the music and the surrounding ambience

⁶ Due to the psychoacoustic phenomenon known as the Equal Loudness Principle, the human ear requires a certain minimum volume levels to fully appreciate parts of the audible frequency range.

almost as if we had been transported to the studio. In practice this transportation includes the listening room in which we are seated, and unless we wear headphones the sense of space around and with the music can lie only between and beyond the loud speakers, almost as if the end of the room had been opened up on to the concert hall. (Crabbe 1968, 135)

Life magazine offered a not dissimilar account of hi-fi in 1953: 'Today the goal is to transport the listener to the concert hall' (Brean 1953, 156). A 1957 Newsweek letter to the editor suggested that hi-fi fans made an important distinction between 'lo-fi' and the real thing, the latter defined by the illusion of a transparent transportation: 'Do you want your radio or phonograph to sound like a radio or phonograph or do you want to be transported to the concert hall without leaving your living room? I'll take hi-fi' (Dare 1957, 19). High Fidelity magazine also described high fidelity as a virtual experience: '... the usual definition of hi-fi, by its exponents at least, is the illusion of being in one's favorite seat in the concert hall ...' (Wayne 1958, 45). As early as 1946, Fortune magazine articulated the identical audio aesthetic: 'Perfect fidelity would mean that the radio-phonograph transported the listener to a point near the actual sound source - say eighth row center at Carnegie Hall' ('Music for the Home' 1946, 160).⁷

By 1951, interest in high-fidelity sound reproduction was becoming sufficiently widespread to sustain magazines devoted specifically to audio hobbyists, such as Audio Engineering and High Fidelity. Before turning to an

⁷.Note the use of a term to describe home audio which was about to be bisected - 'radio-phonograph.' By the end of the 1950s, the gendered difference between the respective technologies - radio and the phonograph - rendered 'radio-phonograph' an anachronism. See the cartoon accompanying Diamond 1955, p. 40, which depicts a married couple sitting beside their separate and respective (i.e. gendered) sound technologies: the husband operates his hi-fi phonograph, while the wife listens to her radio, both in the same living room.

analysis of popular press accounts of high fidelity between 1948 and 1959, however, it is first necessary to understand the general domestic context with which hi-fi was articulated. The following section looks at the popular discourses which portrayed domestic space as a site of crisis and conflict between men and women during the period.

The Crisis of Masculine Domestic Space in the 1950s⁸

Housing historian Margaret Marsh argues that the 20th century saw a diminution of specifically male domestic space as suburban homes came to emphasize togetherness, particularly by reducing the number of separate rooms and opening up floorplans. While during the late 19th century 'the study was commonly viewed as a male refuge' (Marsh 1990, 29), Marsh describes an emerging 'distaste for the segregated social spaces that had characterized the floor plans of the 1870s,' arguing that 'the younger generation intended to discard, within the house at least, the physical manifestations of separate spheres' (Marsh 1990, 86). Marsh contends that the changes in domestic architecture during the period both echoed and produced changes in social relationships in the home: '... suburban houses in the early 20th century almost compelled togetherness ... the important new idea about domestic space was that the house should express togetherness and family activities, not provide special spaces for individual activities' (Marsh 1990, 83-84). The idea of 'togetherness' eventually became a problematic expression of the post-war consensus: 'suburban families of the 1950s ... espoused the idea of togetherness ... However, ... [h]usbands were heard to say that togetherness made them feel trapped' (*ibid.* 186).

⁸For work on the apparent crisis in masculinity in the 1950s see Ehrenreich 1983, Tyler May (1988, esp. pp. 20-2, 208ff), Segal 1988, Cohan 1991, and Spigel 1992.

Thus the discourse of togetherness also produced a backlash or counter-discourse of entrapment, involving expressions of desire for privacy and autonomy. During the 1950s, numerous articles in the popular press as well as sociological studies focused on the sense of entrapment experienced by males in the consolidating world of corporate America, where togetherness was seen not simply as a domestic concern but implicitly, in the emphasis on being a 'team player' and a 'company man,' as a pressure within the workplace as well. Thus, though the Victorian notion of the home as private refuge retained a modified presence in contemporary discourse, increasingly domestic space was seen as a potential site of conflict between husbands and wives. As misogynistic rhetoric increased, housewives were cast in the role of oppressor,⁹ as architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright points out:

As suburban families multiplied, many sociologists and psychiatrists became concerned about the effect of suburban life on the families who lived there - and on society as a whole. The Organization Man (1956) told of dissatisfied executives and middle-level managers retreating to the suburbs at the end of the day, where they faced more pressures to conform. Women, living in a world almost totally devoid of men, had little to say to their husbands. 'Domination by the little woman' extended from the family to the larger community and portended dangerous results, according to social scientists. (Wright 1981, 256).

This seeming crisis over male space reached such a frenzy within popular discourse that a 1958 article, in a series in Look magazine on the crisis in American masculinity ('The American Male: Why Do Women Dominate Him;'

⁹An earlier representation of this discourse of the 'henpecked' husband is seen in James Thurber's famous cartoon of a husband cowering before his wife, who has partially taken on the physical form of their house.

Moskin 1958, 80),¹⁰ went so far as to reverse perversely the long-standing view of home as haven. It suggested that the home had become even more oppressive to men than the workplace, which ironically began to be figured as a space of escape, as seen in the following passage from Barbara Ehrenreich (who quotes the Look article cited above):

Thus, the corporate workworld was actually a refuge - perhaps men's last indoor refuge - in a matriarchal society. As Look described man's flight from female tyranny: 'For a while, the male fled to the basement and busied himself sawing, painting and sandpapering. But the women followed him, and today they are hammering right along with him. No place to hide here . . . Having exhausted the nooks and crannies of their homes . . . some men are finding more and more escape in the pleasures and fraternity of corporate life. A large proportion of business is now conducted 'in hiding' on the golf course and on all-male fishing trips.' (Ehrenreich 1983, 38)

The concern on the part of some men to locate a site of freedom, whether inside or outside the home, is also seen in several films of the mid-1950s and early 1960s. Films such as The Tender Trap (1955), Pillow Talk (1959), The Apartment (1960), and Boys' Night Out (1962) offered a vision of a masculine domestic space which was a private refuge, and which was specifically portrayed within the narrative as an object of desire for married men: the bachelor pad. The freedom, sexual and otherwise, of the male protagonist is seen as residing in his possession of a domestic space in which women are transient sexual partners only. The ideas of marriage as 'trap' and of freedom as 'apartness,' seen in the

¹⁰ The other two articles in the series examined the impact of conformity and the rat race, respectively, on American men in terms of a crisis of masculinity, and deployed discourses that would become more prominent in the U.S. with the rise of the counterculture in the late 1960s (Leonard 1958; Attwood 1958).

philosophy of the swinging playboy during the period, conceive a crisis in heterosexual relations in spatial terms.

The ideal of togetherness was critiqued in the 1950s by emerging discourses of bachelorhood and masculine freedom in magazines such as Playboy, which began publishing in 1953. As Barbara Ehrenreich has argued (1983, 43-44), one of Playboy's concerns from the very first issue in 1953 was to reclaim feminized indoor space on behalf of men. A 1957 article described publisher Hugh Hefner's vision for the magazine, and included a reference to hi-fi as an essential component of a truly masculinized domesticity: 'A little more than three years ago, Hefner. . . essentially an indoor man . . . talked of creating a special kind of magazine . . . aimed not at a "general" audience . . . nor at that segment of the male citizenry primarily interested in the great out of doors, but, rather, at the young urban man who appreciates the pleasures of an apartment, the sound of hi-fi, the taste of a dry Martini' ('Playbill' 1957, 2). Playboy magazine, which was central to the glamourization of the bachelor which occurred in the 1950s, was explicit about the spatial dimensions of the masculine sense of entrapment, and offered several 'fantasy' bachelor apartment designs as imagined sites of compensation. A 1956 feature, 'Playboy's Penthouse Apartment,' prefaces its elaborate architectural floorplans, sketches, and detailed lists of furnishings (including, of course, 'binaural hi-fi'; 'Playboy's Penthouse Apartment' 1956, 59), with the following remarks: 'A man's home is not only his castle, it is or should be, the outward reflection of his inner self - a comfortable, livable, and yet exciting expression of the person he is and the life he leads. But the overwhelming percentage of homes are furnished by women. What of the bachelor and his need for a place to call his own?' (*ibid.*, 65).

Playboy employed noted misogynist Philip Wylie to further articulate anxieties over alleged female control of the residential interior, and the

resultant attenuation of a man's 'inner self.' In a 1958 article, 'The Womanization of America,' Wylie explicitly links a perceived crisis and decline of masculine domestic space to 'feminine' interior decoration and the rise of 'open' floorplans in the post-war years:

Women had always been allowed their sanctuaries . . . But it never occurred to America's females that they were outrageously abusing their new 'equality' as they probed, cajoled, pushed and heckled their way into every private male domain . . . home design fell into the hands of women and decorators who were women or, when not, usually males in form only . . . homemaking magazines brought forth a welter of counsel on how to convert normal residences into she-warrens . . . Where once a man had a den, maybe a library, a cellar poolroom, his own dressing room - and good, substantial floors to protect his privacy - he now found himself in a split-level pastel creation with 'rooms' often 'created' by screens his wife moved about as often as she changed her flower arrangements. He thereafter hardly ever knew where he was in his own home . . . (Wylie 1958, 52, 77; emphasis in original)

Wylie accurately notes the general shift in suburban housing design in the 20th century from enclosed, separate spaces with particular functions (dens, libraries), to open, split-level floorplans, where any spatial divisions are provisional and mutable. He sees this development as diminishing the husband's sphere of influence, resulting in 'pastel creations' and 'she-warrens,' and ultimately leading to a displacement of the male at several levels. Firstly, a fear that this alleged powerlessness will lead to effeminacy is articulated with the description of interior decorators as 'males in form only' and the comparison of the floorplan to a 'flower arrangement.' Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the displacement of the male is experienced as a dislocation, a

literal loss of a sense of place (and ultimately, of identity): 'He thereafter hardly ever knew where he was in his own home.'

Hi-Fi, TV, and Mass Society

Television . . . threatens to undermine the masculine position of power in the home to the extent that the father is disenfranchised from his family whose gaze is fastened onto an alternate, and more seductive, authority.

(Spigel 1992, 29)

The individual's loss of identity within mass society was a concern for many observers of social life during the period. Television was regularly invoked as the cipher for a range of social and cultural ills in the 1950s; what William Boddy calls 'television's problematic domesticity' (Boddy 1994, 121), is in part tied to a conception of television as the nexus of mass society and the alienated individual. While Lynn Spigel (1992) has recently documented television's perceived threat to masculinity in the 1950s, discourse around high-fidelity sound reproduction equipment at the time articulated a critique of television, rejecting it as a debased, feminine taste.

The hi-fi hobby was often proposed as a means of escaping both mass mediocrity and feminized domestic space. A 1952 Business Week article on the boom in high-fidelity equipment sales attributed its growth, in part, to a rejection of television: '. . . there was a big group who became hi-fi fans because they would have nothing to do with TV' ('Cashing in on Finicky Ears' 1952, 54). The same year an article in Audio Engineering saw hi-fi and television as antagonists in a rivalry of taste: 'There is no question the public is becoming more quality-conscious with respect to its musical reproduction . . . Some of this we may attribute to TV, for while the newest art is certainly popular, there are

still many who are not amused by combined sight-and-sound entertainment' ('The Audio Fair' 1952, 18).

The opposition between high fidelity and television ultimately comes to operate within discourses of gendered taste, whereby high fidelity is cast as high, masculine, individualistic art, and television is portrayed as low, feminine, mass entertainment. A 1957 article in High Fidelity, about the benefits of a portable hi-fi rig (which permits the husband/author to listen to recordings as loudly as he wishes, escaping his wife's reprimands by moving his hi-fi elsewhere), represents a relatively benign version of this dichotomy: '. . . my wife draws the line at the Bartok quartets and all harpsichords as firmly as I refuse to share nine-tenths of her television programs' (Schmitz 1957, 40). At its most extreme, the gendering of high fidelity is explicitly linked to a refusal of the passivity of the (feminized) television viewer:

If the hi-fi husband has trouble getting his equipment into the house in the first place, this is nothing compared to the amount of trouble he may have getting to use it once it's in. The principal asp in the grass, my investigations convince me, is television. Other issues separate the men from the boys; this one separates the men from the women. The cleavage seems to come on this point: most men are aware that a TV set may be turned on, off, and then on again; women often seem to feel that for some vague reason it is harmful to turn off the TV until the very last possible minute.' (Schopenhauer 1957, 49)

Thus an antagonism between television and high fidelity is figured in terms of a conflict between the sexes over domestic space. Overcoming the debasing effect of television becomes a question of re-configuring domestic space. In the table of contents for the May 1955 issue of High Fidelity (3), an article about the advantages of listening to hi-fi through earphones is described in terms

of this bifurcation of taste: 'Through earphones, you can commune with the masters, while the rest of the family hobknob with Sergeant Friday and Mr. Peepers.' While the title of the article, 'Nobody Hears It But You' (Marshall 1955)¹¹, may seem to express concern for the rest of the family, it is precisely a virtual escape from the wife and family which is being celebrated. The hi-fi frees the husband from the family's debased taste, via its capacity to permit the listener to 'commune' with great (male) musicians. The following quote suggests an extreme distance from the ideals of togetherness associated with what Lynn Spigel describes as the 'family circle' (1992, 36ff) conception of television viewing in the 1950s: 'Finally, I can cut myself off at any time from the sound of TV - and that in itself is worth a good deal' (Marshall 1955, 92). Here hi-fi is as important for what it obviates as for what it facilitates.

Cutting oneself off from TV or escaping the family circle were seen as key means of asserting masculine individualism in the face of a homogenizing and feminizing mass culture. In 1951, the editor of High Fidelity magazine articulated a critique of conformity, mass culture, and feminization:

The highest duty of the good American, as viewed from inside the Ad Club, is not to want something better. It is to want exactly what he is told to want by someone being paid \$20,000 a year to tell him. Too often the good American does just that . . . In his living room, come evening, he derives spiritual solace from a Sumptuous Supercroon TV-radio-phonograph, endowed with synthetic pine knobs, a 29-cent crystal pick-up and the full tonal range of a rubber hammer hitting a dishpan . . .

(Conly 1951, 13).

¹¹The table of contents (p. 3) lists the title of the article as 'Nobody Hears It But You,' while the article itself is titled, perhaps more selfishly, 'Nobody Hears It But Me' (p. 91).

The likening of the sound of the 'TV-radio-phonograph' console to a 'rubber hammer hitting a dishpan' implicitly links the critique of mass culture to a fear of feminization. Integrated console phonographs were seen by marketers and hi-fi fans alike as 'feminine' equipment, as opposed to the separate individual components of a 'masculine' rig. The physical integration of the television with the phonograph produces a sound which is 'soft' (the 'unnatural' and oxymoronic 'rubber hammer') instead of hard, as it should properly be; the reference to a 'dishpan' further underlines an implicit scorn for the feminine. Here we may understand the gendered distinction between integrated consoles and separate components in spatial terms: the 'artificial' synthesis of television and phonograph is too close for comfort, while the 'authentic' autonomy of separated components is produced by a distance from the feminine.

Conly then goes on to propose high fidelity as a means of male liberation from feminizing mass conformity:

There is so much forced uniformity in our prosperous American life that escaping it becomes an exciting adventure and a feat to be proud of. And the biggest, proudest group of escapees in the nation, without much doubt, are the people for whom this Magazine [High Fidelity] is published - the music-lovers, hobbyists, craftsmen and engineers who together have built the sizeable industry known (perhaps regrettably but probably incurably) as hi-fi (Conly 1951, 13).

High fidelity is thus understood as an 'exciting adventure,' a means of 'escaping' the synthetic conformity of a society brainwashed by mass advertising.

A number of articles contended that the high-fidelity hobby fostered a sense of individual empowerment and a reclaiming of self-identity. As early as 1948, in a letter to the editor of Audio Engineering, a reader insisted that 'Our audio systems must become instruments of individuality' (White 1948, 47).

A refusal both of conformity, and of the repression of individualism, is evident in a 1955 article in High Fidelity, in which a psychologist is asked for an explanation of the popularity of high fidelity, the mania for which is described as 'audiophilia:'

The reason, I believe, is only partly aesthetic, but stems rather from a basic drive within all of us to achieve truth in our lives, to abandon, momentarily at least, the compromises, pretenses, and rationalizations which are often, of necessity, part of our daily living. In an age of speed and high tension, it is inevitable that - to varying degrees - we cannot always be true to ourselves . . . we find it necessary to repress emotions and attitudes which are, in reality, part of our real selves . . . with the aid of just the right tubes, dials, cabinetry, and machinery, we can realize an experience which is true in every detail and which is unbridled by sham and pretension (Segal 1955, 50).

Here high fidelity represents a technological means ('tubes . . . machinery') of realizing one's repressed, true self, of momentarily abandoning the sham, pretense, and rationality of a compromised age, in favour of authentic emotions and unbridled experience.

This remarkable linkage of technology and authenticity is evident in numerous references to high fidelity as an anti-commercial hobby which was first championed not by big business, but by small craftsmen and do-it-yourselfers. An article in High Fidelity praises the masculine pleasures of building one's own speaker cabinets: 'Heaven knows, a man needs something he can do for himself in today's world' (Cost 1958, 43). Editor Conly notes that '... a distinguishing feature of the hi-fi rig purchaser, thus far, has been his healthy distrust of mass advertising' (Conly 1951, 13). An article in the New York Times comments on the dangers inherent in expansion of the high-fidelity

market: '... taste in high fidelity is too personal for an assembly line ... The problem, then, for the growing high fidelity industry, is how to produce for a mass market without resorting to "mass mediocrity"' (Schumach 1953, 41). The subtitle of a 1954 article, 'Hi-Fi Revisited,' conveys the sense that making distinctions between 'authentic' and 'commercial' hi-fi is a key activity of the male hobbyist: 'Three years ago, fidelity-semantics were simple: either a set was hi or it was lo. Now commercialism has created borderline cases. Novices ask "How do I know if it's hi-fi?" Herewith, a harassed editor tries to answer' (Fowler 1954, 37).

Similarly, the perception that high fidelity originated at the craft and amateur level is cited as a source of hi-fi's individualistic, anti-commercial, and cult-like status: 'In the successful launching of this industry, it was the consumers rather than the producers who furnished the critical kinetic component' (Conly 1951, 13). The title of a 1954 article on the birth of the hi-fi industry in The Nation, 'The Little Fellows Did It' (Riggio 1954), indicates a David-versus-Goliath conception of high fidelity.¹² While the discourse of the authentic amateur and small-scale craft production would continue to circulate within the world of high fidelity, by the later 1950s the question of craft versus mass modes of production became attenuated. The question of gender, however, remained central. As Newsweek put it: '... it is beginning to look as if cult and commerce [do-it-yourself vs. mass market hi-fi] will learn to live together. The war between the sexes, on the other hand, will probably last a little longer' (Chappell and Conway 1957, 71).

¹²This is similar to the 'anti-commercial' ideology of rock, evidenced in historiographical perspectives on the birth of rock 'n' roll music which see it as the achievement of independent, rather than major, record labels (e.g. Gillett 1983), or in the contemporary valourisation of 'indie' labels over 'corporate rock.'

Hi-Fi Becomes a Weapon in the Battle of the Sexes

For years, wives of fidelity fanatics watched their living rooms evolve into professional sound studios with giant speakers peering from corners where once graciously reigned Queen Anne wingback chairs . . . men have 'bulldozed' the opposite sex into the belief that they cannot possibly understand the workings of this complicated equipment . . . As time went by, men were happy that audio interest had taken on the aspects of a secret fraternal organization from which women were barred (Reif 1956, 11)

Susan Douglas has argued that early radio forged important links between domesticity, audio technology, and masculinity. In the first three decades of radio, amateur radio enthusiasts and hobbyists (who most often had built their own sets) understood radio as a manly adventure which could be experienced within a private, domestic setting: 'Within the safety of one's home, and out of public view, one's masculinity could be tested and reaffirmed' (Douglas 1991, 193). While early radio was especially associated with an individualistic masculinity, in the 1920s marketing shifted from targeting the male 'parts buying fan' to the female 'fine cabinet' purchaser (Boddy 1994, 112). Whereas radio, and later television (Spigel 1992), came to be seen as 'feminized' technologies, high fidelity was frequently conceived as a masculine weapon in a battle of the sexes over domestic space.

The emergence of a widespread interest in domestic high-fidelity sound reproduction in the 1950s had its roots in a cult of do-it-yourself hobbyists, who in turn were part of a general post-war boom in hobbyism (Miller and Nowak 1976, 8-9). As David Nye has argued, the rise of home improvement and male hobbyism in the 20th Century was frequently articulated with an

escape from the deadening routines of the corporate workworld, and a reclaiming of individual, masculine identity: 'As they did their own electrical wiring, built a porch, or finished a recreation room, the house became more their own . . . remodeling it [the home] was a way to remodel the self' (Nye 1990, 283). As well as compensating for a perceived loss of individuality, the post-war boom in hobbyism may have sought to counter the apparent domination of domestic space by women. While wives continued to direct the decoration of suburban homes well beyond the 1950s, certain forms of home improvement hobbyism may be understood as interventions in the organization of domestic space during the period. For example, the married man building a basement bamboo bar in the 1950s may be seen as (re)producing an imaginary, lost primal site of freedom (the bachelor pad) within the space of his apparent confinement (the suburban marriage); the basement bar sought to transform a marginal space below the above-ground centre of the home, by mixing the exoticism of bamboo and the eroticism of booze into a fantastic cocktail of married promiscuity. The 1950s especially saw a dramatic increase in male suburban domestic leisure activities, which frequently involved the creation of a separate space for husbands, whether a garage workshop, a basement darkroom, or a backyard toolshed (see Spigel 1992, 37ff). All of these spaces may be thought of as domestically marginal or liminal, as outside the sphere of influence of the wife; to some extent they represent a return to earlier notions of separate male domestic space.

During the post-war period, a series of discourses emerged around high fidelity which positioned it too as a means of producing a masculine domestic space. This new, socially-produced space was marked by apartness from one's wife, and involved immersing and transporting the suburban husband in a world of technological freedom. Listening to LPs loudly on one's hi-fi or stereo would frequently be seen as a means of re-configuring both domestic space and one's

self-identity; but this was in turn part of a larger conflict over who should control conjugal domestic space.

High fidelity was repeatedly seen as a source of friction between husbands and wives in the popular press of the period. Two New York Times articles, 'Hi-Fi Spouse Sings Dirge: Her Husband Runs Amok Assembling Audio Parts' (Anonymous 1953) and 'The Woman's Touch: Pressure from Hi-Fi Wives is Sending Components Back Into the Woodwork' (Reif 1956; this is the article quoted at the beginning of this section), emphasized a sense of domestic struggle in the living room. A husband running amok needed to be contained, somehow: ' . . . when the high fidelity frenzy is upon him . . . he rearranges the living room furniture constantly . . . ' ('Hi-Fi Spouse Sings Dirge' 1953, 44). Several articles attributed to so-called 'hi-fi wives' (or 'hi-fi widows') bemoaned the physical rearrangement of domestic space demanded by high fidelity: 'As his mind becomes more and more warped by this progressive mania, his viewpoint, and perforce your own, will become strangely distorted. Your whole life will gradually come to revolve around that phonograph. When you arrange the furniture in your living room you must always keep the speaker in mind' (Edwards 1953, 44); 'We had shunted and shifted it [the speaker cabinet] into every corner, searching for the acoustically - if not aesthetically - correct spot . . . ' (Goodenough 1954, 11); 'Fortunately most husbands take up High Fidelity gradually. If the average wife could foresee what it would do to her house, her husband would find himself out on the street, while he could still move his equipment in a suitcase' (Loomis 1955, 34). As these quotes suggest, the allegedly technical and physical demands of high-fidelity equipment led to a largely unwelcome masculine participation in the arrangement of the domestic interior, whereby feminine aesthetic concerns were sacrificed for masculine technical performance.

A humourist, Barbara Diamond, tackled this problem in a January 1955 article in the Saturday Review entitled 'Live with Hi-Fi and Like It.' She notes that she is a member of the hi-fi 'Faith, not by choice, but by marriage . . . ' (Diamond 1955, 40). She goes on to note that:

There must be tens of thousands of women who find themselves in the same position as I do, and perhaps they can benefit from my experience. They will perhaps, find peace and quiet from within, since peace and quiet from without are virtually, literally, absolutely . . . impossible! . . . you cannot beat the hi-fi cult . . . it is very specially designed to put snags in your stockings and gray in your hair. In addition, it makes a hell of a lot of noise (Diamond 1955, 40).

Diamond claims the hi-fi hobby is intentionally antagonistic toward women ('specially designed to put snags in your stockings'), and then makes a crucial connection between hi-fi, LPs, and the masculinization of domestic space:

Only recently the miracle of long-playing records, which made their big splash several years ago, has shown itself to be the work of the devil. Since they take up little space that has been a strong selling point. But did you ever realize that the reduction in the area covered by record collection was just a preliminary means of clearing your living quarters for the high-fidelity equipment? (Diamond 1955, 41).

Throughout the article, which is constructed as a 'how-to' coping guide for hi-fi wives, the addressee ('you') is explicitly female; the reference to 'clearing your living quarters' in the above quote understands the domestic space to be female, until the masculinizing machinery of high fidelity is surreptitiously imported via the LP album, which initially appears to save space. The LP was indeed marketed at first, like the compact disk, as a space saver. This is further underlined in the New York Times Magazine article cited

above, which connects the mainstreaming of high fidelity with the LP and space: 'The influence that set Hi-Fi upon the common door-step was the LP disc, the long-playing record with its microgrooves. This sheered [sic] away old record size; reduced the need for bulky record cabinets in shrinking homes' (Berger 1953B, 19).

The reference to shrinking homes is tied to the decreased floorspace of suburban tract homes in the post-war period (see Wright 1981, Marsh 1990). As a result, a number of articles from the period explicitly addressed the question of limited domestic space and home audio. For example, the article quoted at the beginning of this article ('Take Two! They're Small!!') evaluates recently introduced stereo bookshelf speaker systems as a means of coping with the added space requirements brought on by the introduction of stereophonic LPs in 1958: 'Launching stereo in the modern home usually requires a lot of space conservation' (Fantel 1959B, 49).¹³ An earlier article by Fantel in HiFi Review, 'Of Speakers and Spouses' is subtitled thusly: 'Living room shrinks - Hi-fi expands - Wife objects - A noted interior designer offers advice on this domestic problem' (Fantel 1959A, 30). The article compares the married couple to a pair of loudspeakers and deploys military metaphors:

The lady of the house stands sorely embattled. The double-flank advance of stereo threatens her home with a pincer movement - left and right. But her resistance has stiffened. She won't let her husband derange their home for sound's sake. The two-by-two era of stereo, far from producing paired harmony, has put the pitched battle of the sexes into a two-front

¹³ This is because monophonic sound reproduction generally involves a single speaker cabinet, whereas stereo involves a doubling of speakers. Although stereo tape recorders were commercially available from 1954 onward, they were relatively rare due to their expense and the limited repertoire of pre-recorded tapes; it is the advent of the less expensive stereo LP in 1958 which leads to the widespread adoption of stereo playback equipment (and thus to greater physical space requirements for home audio).

phase . . . To make matters worse, the house itself has been shrinking. Architects tell us that the average American today has a living room 1 foot lower and 3 feet smaller than was common in his parent's time . . . A husband may deem himself lucky to obtain permission to share his residence with one full-sized speaker system. But when he tries to lug in a second system for stereo, he will most likely find the uxorial barrier insuperable (Fantel 1959A, 30-31).

Note that the while average American is male ('his parent's time'), it is the wife who is seen as ruling domestic space ('lucky to obtain permission'), and who is objectified as an unbreachable obstacle to improved sound reproduction.

Writing about 'High Futility' in Audio Engineering in 1953, Joe Dickey complained that:

. . . few living rooms are arranged or furnished with real consideration for the reproduction of music. It is a matter of slight misfortune that a room we would consider as comfortable for living, is 'too soft' for best music enjoyment. With the battle lines so clearly drawn, it is easy to see whose point of view will prevail (Dickey 1953, 68).

Again the domestic space is imagined as a battleground ('battle lines'), which is nonetheless ultimately controlled by the wife ('easy to see whose point of view will prevail'). The 'feminine' furnishings of the 'too soft' living room will thus most likely remain, despite their (alleged) technical incompatibility with high fidelity. A High Fidelity article from 1954 ('In Defense of the Faithful'), which is conceived as a response to the 1953 Life article cited above, explicitly positions wives and hi-fis as antagonists: ' . . . high fidelity . . . makes enemies . . . Good similtude and high fidelity are synonymous, and the most valid objection to either would be force majeure - lack of money, presence of wife, restricted space, atrophied ear, hatred of art' (Burke 1954, 34, 36; emphasis mine).

Note the linking of the presence of the wife, through parallel construction, to natural catastrophe, poverty, hearing disability, and Philistinism. While true high fidelity involves a form of mimesis ('good similtude'), the key point here is a spatial one: the proximity of the wife both degrades the hi-fi experience and is equivocated with restricted space.

A more sympathetic portrayal of a wife's dilemma is presented in an article especially written for High Fidelity in 1955 by Hollywood film star Dana Andrews:

My wife's patience and forbearance are monumental. They were sorely tried when I first came down with the high fidelity virus. I experimented with equipment for well over a year, and my den became a workshop strewn with the entrails of components of every imaginable shape, size, make, and model . . . As the confusion mounted, and the room came to resemble the graveyard of America's audio equipment, my wife's anxiety grew. She began to avoid the room as if it were haunted. She forbade it to the children, muttering darkly of electrocution and irresponsible fathers (Andrews 1955, 41).

Nonetheless, hi-fi is conceived as a technological wedge placed between couples sharing domestic space. While Andrews's status as a millionaire possessing his own den, unlike the average American of the period, might problematize the relevance of the article for this study, nonetheless the discourses of spousal alienation ('she began to avoid the room') and 'irresponsible fathers' are aligned with dominant media representations of the problematic place of high fidelity in the suburban middle-class home.

Hi-fi was consistently represented as a weapon in the battle of the sexes, and masculinist discourse positioned women as the enemies of high fidelity. A 1958 advertisement for Fidelitone needles (High Fidelity August, 8) implicitly

draws upon the misogynistic discourses circulating around hi-fi in the 1950s. It consists of a photograph of a woman in high-heeled shoes stepping on and breaking a record, and text which reads 'A worn needle ruins records just as surely - Not as quickly as a spiked heel, but just as surely.' Here defective equipment ('a worn needle') is equated with a key sartorial marker of sexual difference (and sexual danger), a 'spiked heel' shoe. While the advertisement utilizes ambiguity over intentions (is the breakage accidental, or deliberate?), its position on sexual difference is rigid.

There is no ambiguity of intention in a 1959 High Fidelity cartoon (January, 94), which shows a wife attempting to light an electronics schematic diagram on fire, unbeknownst to her smiling husband, who is immersed in the plans for his new hi-fi. The representation of the wife's face as a caricature of malicious mischievousness emphasizes that hi-fi is an enemy of women in the battle of the sexes, and is best defeated before the husband acquires sonic capability. A 1959 advertising campaign by Altec loudspeakers in HiFi Review depicts another sort of plan: '11 Sneaky Ways to Beat Your Wife at Hi-Fi' is organized as a battle campaign to convince wives to allow husbands to purchase Altec speakers. The cartoon accompanying '#2' (HiFi Review, December 1959, 13) depicts an enraged wife attacking and pushing her cowering husband over, shouting 'Who says I've got a tin ear?' The ad copy goes on to offer a flattering and persuasive rejoinder which will, the potential purchaser is assured, permit the husband to have his piece of equipment ('You'll get your Altec'). At the same time, one of the ad's subtexts suggests that you can 'beat your wife' and get away with it, by using the invisible sound of a hi-fi as a 'sneaky' weapon.

That husbands had to convince their wives to permit hi-fi purchases, whether through bribery, trickery, or begging, often articulated a power struggle over finances with one over aesthetics and domestic space. A 1958 High

Fidelity article which, like the Altec campaign, mixed rationality and deception, was entitled 'Christmas Tactics for Golden Eared Husbands,' and also featured a series of strategies for conquering wives' resistance to hi-fi. The male author positions husbands as the oppressed; he talks about being 'afraid to get caught buying' hi-fi equipment (Geraci 1958, 38), and prefaces his list of tactics with the following: 'Now is the time when all we harassed married men begin wrestling with a dilemma which has plagued us since the day we first twiddled the treble knob on a dealer's amplifier . . . how in the world to get our wives to give us something useful' (*ibid*; emphasis in original). A 1954 photo spread in High Fidelity, 'Home Listening,' shows readers' domestic setups. A caption accompanying one custom installation reads: 'The equipment cabinet shown at left . . . was designed by John Kneuhman . . . for a special purpose - to persuade his wife to let him keep some equipment in their home' ('Home Listening' 1954, 32-33). The cabinet is thus conceived as a Trojan horse, a bribe for a bride who might otherwise deny hi-fi a place in domestic space.

Another 'Custom Installations' photo spread in High Fidelity (1954) articulates the central aesthetic division between husbands and wives over the visual appearance of high-fidelity equipment in domestic space. The two set-ups shown are contrasted in terms of implicitly gendered taste differences:

Two approaches to the subject of music in the home are vividly contrasted on these pages. Below: the sound emerges subtly from a tasteful installation which almost defies the listener to locate the music or its producer. Across the page: the formidable music making facilities of a man who really means business. Fashionable or functional? Take your choice. ('Custom Installations' 1954, 26)

The vivid contrast is conceived in terms of an opposition between invisibility and visibility, read onto sexual difference. The accompanying photos reveal the key

visual difference between the two systems: the first system is contained within a piece of wooden furniture, the second consists of a series of separate, exposed-metal electronic components spread across several shelves. The article differentiates the 'audio hobbyist's dream' with its 'complex wiring system' (*ibid.* 27), from the 'cherry wood cabinet' with 'louvered doors' (*ibid.* 26) by marking one as 'functional,' the other as 'fashionable.' While the masculinized 'facilities of a man who really means business' are described as 'formidable,' the feminized installation is described with words connoting restraint, such as 'subtly' and 'tasteful.'

These gendered taste positions are borne out in a number of articles which argue for the respective merits of each taste (and implicitly, gender). *Look* recommends individual component systems over 'packaged sets' (i.e. integrated consoles), but warns that 'Wives have been known to be a bit touchy about turning the living room into something resembling a radio-control booth' ('The Unending Search . . .' 1958, 39). *House Beautiful* complains that the equipment of 'electronic extremists' overwhelms domestic space at a number of levels: 'Its various component parts are scattered about several rooms; its dials resemble the control board of an ocean liner's engine room; its speakers outnumber those at a political convention, and when it is turned on full blast (as it nearly always is), the sound can make a building tremble' (Kupferberg 1955, 171). The refusal of physical containment was often seen to be as disruptive as the excessive volume associated with hi-fi. At times, this was conceived in sexual terms, as complaints about naked chassis and bare wires mounted: Eleanor Edwards, the 'hi-fi wife' quoted above, finds the 'bare tubes of the amplifier' (Edwards 1953, 44) problematic within the conjugal domestic space, and implicitly underlines a psychiatrist's claim in *Look* that hi-fi is a 'rival' to the wife ('The Unending Search . . .' 1958, 39).

Edward Tatnall Canby, on the other hand, articulates the dominant masculinist discourse : 'Me, I'm a hi-fi man of sorts and I want my stuff really separate. I like bare wires and I enjoy hooking things up. I can stand solder if necessary . . . I like to look at my amplifier and wouldn't put it in a fancy box for love or money' (Canby 1952A, 30; emphasis in original). The bare wires of visually explicit hi-fi underwrite the hi-fi man's pleasure in his sense of separation from feminine tastes. Ed Wallace, writing in High Fidelity the same year, emphasizes the link between forceful masculinity, the reclaiming of domestic space, and electronics: 'I have now paid my money, the living room is electronic beyond all belief, and I own more than a hundred long playing records. I am one of the boys, and I am entitled to speak' (Wallace 1952, 38). In the New York Times, Meyer Berger notes his wife's protestations against the messy masculine meddling in domestic space represented by his encroaching electronic extravagance: 'She told me how the house was one mess of wires and how it got so there was no place for the regular furniture' (Berger 1953A, 44).

Addiction + Volume = Spatial/Spousal Conflict

I will now turn to a series of popular press articles which touch upon questions of addiction, volume, space, and spousal conflict, wherein the hi-fi experience was imagined to involve a masculinization of domestic space. A humorous article in HiFi & Music Review is representative of the sense that many, especially wives, saw hi-fi as a form of addiction. Entitled 'The Man with the Golden Tone Arm,' it portrays a man convinced to try to 'quit the habit' (Kohler 1958, 61) by his exasperated wife. He experiences physical withdrawal symptoms, and eventually returns to his hi-fi, this time diminishing the volume with baffles (which suggests that part of his wife's annoyance had been with the excessive volume). While he describes the baffles as 'filters'

(*ibid.* 78) - clearly a reference to smoking - in fact the article's central image derives from the 1955 film, The Man with the Golden Arm, in which Frank Sinatra portrays a jazz musician addicted to heroin. The 'Golden Tone Arm' of the article refers to an expensive part of a turntable assembly; the implication here is that the cost of the system is overwhelming, and, via the implicit reference to heroin, uncontrollable. Thus while the highly-priced piece of equipment may seem to be a highly-prized possession, high fidelity equally possesses the husband.

A 1955 article in House Beautiful notes that '. . . hi-fi addiction, like any other kind, can be carried to excess . . .' (Kupferberg 1955, 147), while a 1956 piece in the New York Times, 'Crazy Over Tweeters,' is written as a parody of a confession to a psychiatrist about 'fever flushes' (Berger 1956b, 44) and other problems associated with hi-fi addiction. A 1952 High Fidelity article by a self-described 'audiomaniac' (Wallace 1952, 41), begins with a reference to psychoanalysis: 'What follows is the case history of a convert to high fidelity' (*ibid.* 38). The widespread faith in 'experts' led to the involvement of psychologists and psychiatrists in the diagnosis of the 'hi-fi addict.' A Montreal psychiatrist, Dr. H. Angus Bowes, was interviewed in a 1957 New York Times article entitled 'The Hi-Fi Addict: New Personality - Canadian Psychiatrist finds "Interesting Maladjustment to Stress of Our Times".' The article reports that Dr. Bowes sees loud playback volume as a principle symptom of the problem: 'Generally male, the patient usually acts out his hostilities toward life and its pressures by turning up the volume on his hi-fi set . . .' (Harrison 1957, 56). Note the use of high fidelity and loudness as weapons against the 'pressures' of life. In Look magazine, Dr. Bowes expands his diagnosis to include a struggle between the addict's wife and his high fidelity equipment:

'Dr. Bowes even found that many an addict's wife considers hi-fi her chief rival' ('The Unending Search . . .' 1958, 39).

The 'medicalization' of hi-fi was also seen in the frequent description of the high-fidelity hobby as an illness which worried wives. The women's magazine McCall's (subtitled 'The magazine of Togetherness' in the 1950s) featured a humorous article entitled 'I am a Hi-Fi Widow: The High Fidelity bug will get your husband if you don't watch out,' which uses the terms 'contagion,' 'bug,' 'immunity,' 'symptoms,' and 'onset' (Goodenough 1954, 11) in discussing the high-fidelity phenomenon. A year earlier, High Fidelity published a similar article, 'I am a Hi-Fi Wife,' which discusses 'the hi-fi infirmity' (Edwards 1954, 43) in terms of a 'mild case' (*ibid.* 132) of the 'high fidelity virus' (*ibid.* 42). The author, Eleanor Edwards, makes the connection with psychiatric discourse, referring to the 'sadistic pleasure' of the 'audiophile (the learned name by which this particular kind of psycho is called)' (*ibid.* 43). She argues that hi-fi wives must realize that '[t]he first thing is to accept the fact that your husband is suffering from a mild form of insanity, ' and that ' . . . you must face the fact that there is now no connection between his logical mind and the part of his brain with the ears attached to it' (*ibid.*). Here the adult male's use of technology to escape into forms of irrationality appears to prefigure aspects of the youth-oriented rock music counter-culture of the later 1960s.

While the description of hi-fi fanatics as obsessive addicts appears in numerous articles during the period, it is the articulation of this discourse with the belief that hi-fi alienates men's wives which is essential to the gendering of high fidelity. A 1955 article from the Saturday Review of Literature 'Concerning Audiophilia' (whose very title represents hi-fi as a form of sickness or uncontrollable urge), portrays wives as enemies of hi-fi (and by implication,

of husbands): 'High Fidelity has . . . taken an almost supernatural hold on a slice of the population . . . it has broken families . . . produced a crop of mental aberrants . . . the home life of the amateur audiophile is none too pleasant . . . [but] the irate wife is not the only hazard the amateur audiophile must face' (Nunley 1955, 37-38). A 1958 technical article on the necessity for loud playback volume to ensure accurate frequency perception (see note 6 above) in HiFi & Music Review, 'Must You Shake the Walls?', opens with a 'humorous' anecdote about spousal conflict, excessive volume, and a domestic space which is in both figurative and literal crisis. The article begins with the line "'Turn it down," she shrieked' (Burstein 1958, 41), and goes on to describe a man whose house and marriage simultaneously collapse because of excessive volume. While hi-fi is imagined as literally threatening to destroy conjugal domestic space (the ultimate transformation), it is the wife who is positioned as the source of the truly oppressive noise (the commanding shriek). The frequent identification of high fidelity with excessive volume was most often represented as central to the production of sexual difference, and thereby to the gendering of hi-fi as masculine. Loudness was seen as a source of spousal conflict because it (figuratively) 'repelled' the wife out of the domestic space; at the same time, the equipment capable of producing such volume was also seen as disrupting the interior aesthetics of the home, by occupying an excessive amount of physical space and by virtue of its overtly technological appearance.

The following quote, from an article written by another 'hi-fi wife' for HiFi Review, is quite explicit in its deployment of discourses regarding addiction, spousal antagonism, loud volume, and a struggle over domestic space:

I wasn't particularly alarmed when my husband - his eyes glittering - came home, lugging an intriguing assortment of electronic machinery, and announced: 'Have I got a surprise for you!' No, I wasn't alarmed at

all; but, then, neither was Bluebeard's first wife . . . until the axe fell. His fingers trembling with anxiety (translation: audiomania, advanced degree), my husband fumbled a disc onto the turntable . . . 'Hey, what gives?' I asked. Those were my last words before Hi-Fi. I shall distinctly remember them the rest of my life. In fact, they were still rolling naively around on my tongue when the horrific blast . . . thundered across the room, engulfed my senses, and swept me away, ears ringing gaily, sanity somersaulting merrily. That I, later, still knew my own name and address, and could stagger without assistance from the room, I credit to the physical and mental superiority of the female sex. (Brandt 1959, 41)

The 'trembling' of 'advanced' 'audiomania' is quickly re-read as potential source of violence against the wife, as she compares her husband to a famous wife-murderer; the husband's weapon in this particular battle of the sexes is revealed to be his hi-fi, which he uses to 'blast' his wife out of the room ('stagger without assistance from the room'). The title of the article, 'Two Years Before the Blast,' plays with the title of Richard Henry Dana's novel, Two Years Before the Mast (1840), which protested the unjust and miserable conditions endured by low-ranking sailors in the 19th century. Thus a nascent feminism ('superiority of the female sex') is articulated with a general sense of abuse and injustice at the hands of an irrational hi-fi husband commandeering conjugal space with excessive volume.

Newsweek offered the following expert opinion on women and volume:

"Most wives want the volume softer than the husbands," complains Thomas P. Fussell, an engineer who installs hi-fi systems for Atlanta's Baker Fidelity Corp. "My guess is that the women want to talk and want to be heard" (Chappell and Conway 1957, 71). A more expressive version of the gendered difference of

opinion over volume was presented in a cartoon accompanying the Newsweek article: it features a smiling husband relaxing on his living room couch, eyes closed and feet up. His hi-fi is represented as playing at an extremely loud volume by means of an oversized line of musical notation (accompanied by drawings of the loudest instruments of the orchestra, e.g. brass, tympani, cymbal) which arcs out of the hi-fi speaker and over the living room. However, while it appears that the sound is reaching the husband, it equally looks as if the sound is blasting directly at his wife, who is pictured cowering behind the couch with her hands to her head. Thus we may re-read the husband's smile as self-satisfied, since the volume of the hi-fi is clearly dominating domestic space (even the dog is covering its ears).

I would like to turn now to a remarkable debate over volume, gender, and domestic space which occurred in The Saturday Review of Literature in 1949, at the outset of the high-fidelity moment. Below Edwin C. Buxbaum's 'On Playing Music LOUD' (1949 51) - the title's rejection of the effete '-ly' of the more grammatically proper 'loudly' signals the author's intentions - is another remarkable cartoon (see figure 2.1). It depicts a husband and wife sleeping in a double bed. While the husband sleeps soundly with a smile on his face, the wife is represented as distraught over a nightmare she seems to be having. In the nightmare, she is tied to a chair, while her husband gleefully tortures her with an oversized speaker horn protruding from his hi-fi. His hand appears to be on the volume knob, and it is clear that excessive volume is the source of his wife's oppression. Beyond any phallic connotations, the cartoon draws its potency in part from its polysemy: wives looking at the cartoon may read it as an expression of their anxieties over their unruly hi-fi husbands' disruptions of domestic space with excessive volume; husbands, on the other hand, may derive pleasure from the intertwined fantasies of a powerful hi-fi and power over their

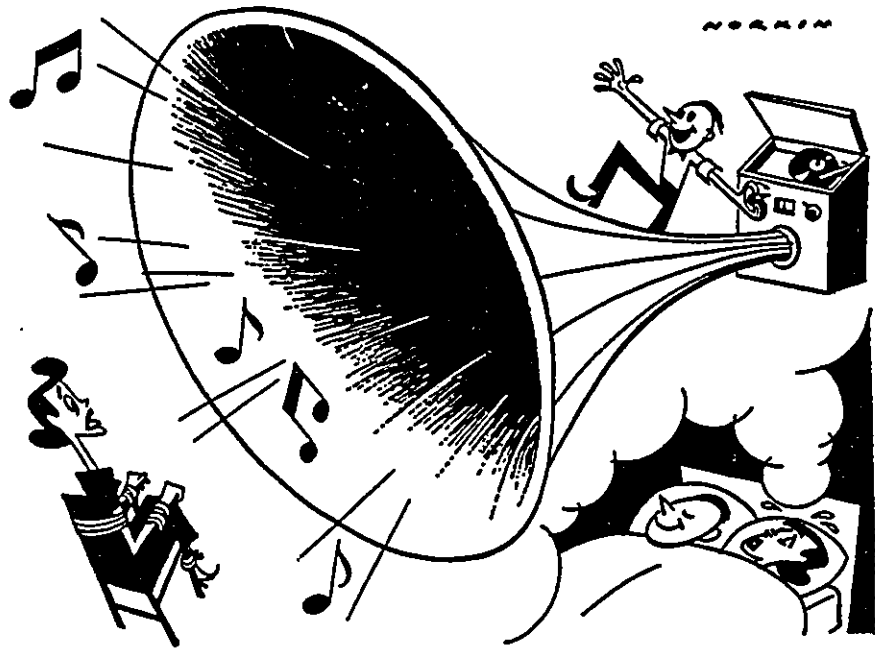


Figure 2.1: Cartoon, Saturday Review of Literature (1949)

wives. Thus the wife's anxiety is articulated with the husband's pleasure, and a difference of taste preference (regarding playback volume) is read onto the conventional construction of gender as a binary opposition.

The article itself begins with Buxbaum asking what the relationship is between the phonograph and '... domestic felicity ... Most males of my acquaintance ... are in agreement that it contributes remarkably little to this important state' (Buxbaum 1949, 51). He then proceeds to issue a diatribe against female reticence toward what he calls the male preference for loud, 'normal,' 'proper volume' (*ibid*). He describes women's alleged preference for lower volumes in highly misogynistic terms: he claims women tend to place the volume control in the 'ignominious position,' the 'retrograde, or female, position' (*ibid*). His subsequent remarks attack women's concern for the hi-fi's appearance in the domestic setting, question the sincerity of their interest in music, and end with a claim about the female sense of hearing which was repeated frequently in the hi-fi literature of the period.¹⁴ Here he attempts to account for the apparently divisive effect of the phonograph, and wonders why the phonograph contributes so little to 'domestic felicity:'

The reason is one not likely to be discussed in those soft-carpeted salons of display where one is invited to hear 'the best in reproduction in the finest of furniture' - which may, to your surprise turn out to be a shoemaker's bench, a drum table, or a lacquered Chinese cabinet with provision to enclose your treasured collection of snuff boxes. Not there

¹⁴ *High Fidelity*: 'The feminine ear, as has long been known, does not respond with favor to shrill sounds' (Wallace 1952, p. 39); *Life*: 'The reason for this feminine opposition may be physiological. Woman's hearing is slightly more sensitive to the high frequencies than man's, and music reproduction which sounds normal and balanced to a man sometimes can sound shrill to a woman' (Brean 1953, p. 156); *Time*: "... screeching strings and piercing piccolos ... [are] ... the bane of hi-fi wives, perhaps because female ears are more sensitive to high frequencies than the male's' ('Hi-Fi Takes Over' 1955, p. 64).

will you hear the reasons why you and your wife, 'who always got along so nicely,' now have differences, even if only acoustical . . . these machines can not only play well, but loud . . . And, to bring the matter to a head, it is the men who like them loud, the women who like them quiet . . . most women like to play records . . . at sub-normal volume because they can thus continue their chatter over the music, or above it, or - let us be frank - in spite of it . . . Do women really listen to music . . . ? Is music a part of their experience because it is thought-provoking and soul-satisfying, or merely because it comes out of a 'blond' cabinet . . . and thus adorns the domestic premises? It is hard to say. There are medical men who state that the reasons are physiological, that the female is more sensitive to sound than the male, and that - like such familiar pets of our civilization (I hesitate to say other pets) as the cat and the dog - they are hypersensitive to the upper frequencies and simply cannot endure the blare and blast of the brass, the shimmer of tremolo on the E string, or any good long crescendo (Buxbaum 1949 51).

In the final analysis, 'acoustical' differences are read as 'physiological' differences, and may ultimately constitute 'grounds for divorce' (*ibid*). Buxbaum concludes by sarcastically suggesting separate control panels 'marked His and Hers,' and the use of earphones, as solipsistic solutions to the conflict (*ibid*). Like the accompanying cartoon, technology is understood not as a means of articulating preferences and tastes, but rather, ironically, as a 'natural' expression of essential differences; men are associated with music, thought, and civilization, women with furniture, talk, and the hypersensitivity of animals. Note that Buxbaum appears to recognize different interests, as he counterposes a taste for music with a taste for furniture. However, he rejects female interests precisely because they are seen as female (the vocabulary he clearly disdains

includes: 'soft-carpeted,' 'lacquered,' 'snuff,' 'chatter,' 'blond,' 'adorns'); a hi-fi which masquerades as furniture is a feminized hi-fi, even if it can play 'loud.' His description of the sounds women cannot 'endure' subtly deploys aesthetic praise ('the blare and blast of the brass, the shimmer of tremolo on the E string, or any good long crescendo'), while women's tastes are linked to the physiology of pets (whose attenuated social power, like women's, is the ultimate justification for their continued subordination). Although women appear to be human, their 'retrograde' tastes and assumed affinity with animals seal their difference, and lead to their dismissal.

A month after Buxbaum's article, two women responded, each differently, to his attack. The July 30th, 1949 Saturday Review contains a letter to the Recordings Editor from a reader who 'resent[s] . . . the recent condescending article' and who (along with her women friends) enjoys playing 'my phonograph at a rather full volume' (Heathcote 1949, 58). She goes on to argue that since there are men who dislike loud volumes as well, 'Rather than being a matter of sex, doesn't it depend on how well the listener knows and enjoys music as such?' (*ibid*). Reader Heathcote recognizes Buxbaum's conflation of sex difference with differences in taste. She ends her letter with a remarkably prescient comment: 'Come, come Mr. Buxbaum, don't let us be coy and adolescent about such things' (*ibid*).

In the same issue, another woman, E.L. Halpern, responded to Buxbaum in an article entitled 'On Not Playing Music Loud, Or, Buxbaum's Gambit Refuted.' Halpern, rather than presenting counterexamples, accepts the general premise that women prefer music at lower volumes than men, and defends the position using logical argument. She begins by critiquing Buxbaum's use of the terms 'normal' and 'proper' to describe his preferred volume level, pointing out the unrestrained extremism involved in his hi-fi practices: 'Mr. Buxbaum's notion

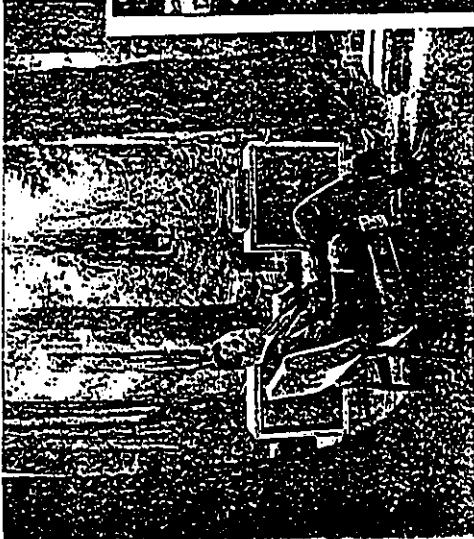
of "normal" and "proper" volume is achieved when the control dial is turned to "the far position on the right" - in other words, full blast' (Halpern 1949, 53). She subsequently identifies the oppressiveness of this abuse of power by describing this as the 'Fascist position.' She continues to associate Buxbaum's position with excess: 'His attitude is an apt illustration of a theory I have long held: that twentieth-century man can only wring the uttermost enjoyment from his gadgets when he presses them to the very limits of their capacities' (*ibid*). She argues that women will tolerate loud volumes for chamber music but not for symphonic music because 'Women are not masochists' (*ibid*) and non-chamber music at full volume produces a 'hellish din' (*ibid*) due to the acoustical limitations of a home listening environment for which it was never intended. Thus playing symphonic music loudly in a domestic setting involves a perversion of the civilized values Buxbaum seems to cherish so highly. She then suggests that it is in fact men who are not interested in music, using it only as a measure in technological competitions and arguments. Halpern argues that symphonic music played back at extreme volume levels is favoured by men only as a means of testing and proving their equipment: 'there is no question of listening to music when two or more men gather around a phonograph, except as the recording serves to illustrate some point of discussion' (*ibid*, 54; emphasis in original). She concludes by describing a typical domestic scenario in which men shout at each other, while the phonograph plays at 'full blast,' until the wife asks that the husband turn down the volume, whereupon the husband replies 'Say, what's the matter with you anyway? Don't you like music?' (*ibid*).

Other women found the masculinization of home audio problematic. As Rita Reif of the New York Times puts it, 'men have "bulldozed" the opposite sex into the belief that they cannot possibly understand the workings of this complicated equipment' (Reif 1956, 11). In an article in Harper's, 'The High

Fidelity Wife, or A Fate Worse Than Deaf,' Opal Loomis's complaint that 'Our equipment has become so complicated I no longer try to play it' (Loomis 1955, 36) bears out Reif's contention; while the hi-fi occupies shared domestic space ('our equipment'), its operation is under exclusive male control. Men actively encouraged this separation; writing about the attempt of (radio) console set manufacturers to move into the hi-fi market in Audio Engineering, in an article entitled 'Hi-Fi For Aunt Minnie,' E. T. Canby implicitly stresses how (properly) difficult true high-fidelity equipment is to operate, by describing how easy the new consoles are for women to use: 'Aunt Minnie can run it and so can three-year-old sister Jane' (Canby 1952A, 30). The hi-fi fan's disdain for console sets and female control of high-fidelity is here blended with a desire to view women as technically inept as three-year olds.

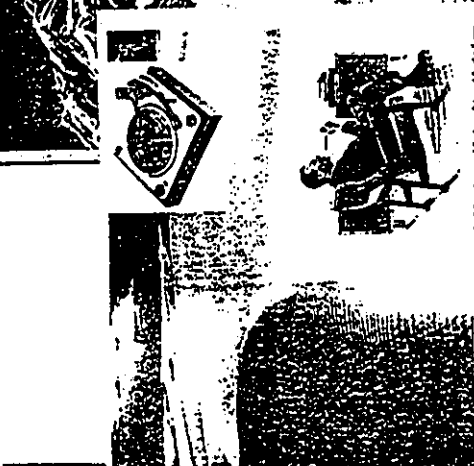
Silence, Immersion, Transportation

So far I have examined articulations of high fidelity as addiction, as tied to disruptive volume levels, and as part of a larger crisis within conceptions of heterosexual conjugal space. I would like to examine a final set of discursive regularities around hi-fi, which are tied equally to musical and audio aesthetics and technologies, and to male/female relations in the home. As has been suggested, a key trope for both the LP album and the high fidelity listening experience is that of immersion. This is in turn related to the idea of transportation, insofar as the listener must receive cues only from 'his' hi-fi (immersion) in order to be effectively transported (mentally) 'elsewhere.' This of course requires what is known as focused listening, which necessarily abhors distractions of any kind, but especially from competing sound sources. The need for environmental silence during the playing of LPs on a hi-fi phonograph, even at high volume, was frequently mentioned in the audio literature of the period.




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For the past several years, the Collaro Company has been producing a line of high fidelity stereo components. These components are designed to provide the listener with the best possible sound reproduction. The Collaro Company's products are known for their exceptional quality and reliability. They are the result of years of research and development, and they are now available to the general public. The Collaro Company's products are sold through a network of authorized dealers, and they are available in a variety of price ranges. Whether you are a serious audiophile or a casual listener, the Collaro Company has the right product for you.



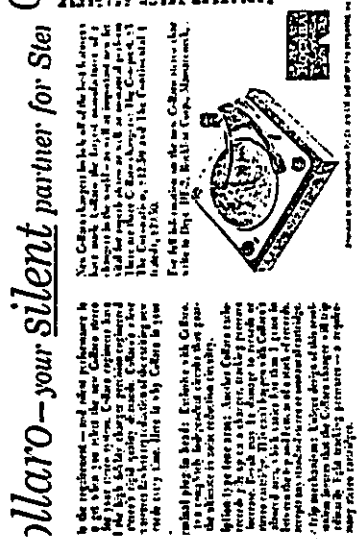
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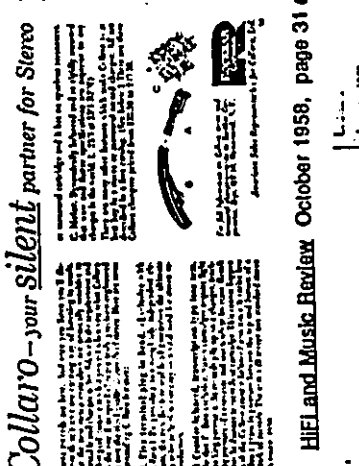
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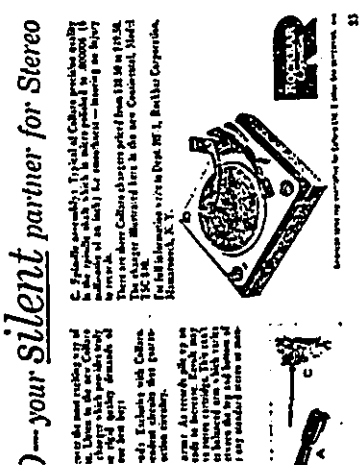
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Figure 2.2: Advertisement, High Fidelity (1959)

As touched upon above (Buxbaum 1949, Marshall 1955), the use of headphones was one common remedy for domestic distractions; the ideal listening situation, however, often involved silencing 'noisy' individuals. Dana Andrews writes: 'I'm a man who takes his music seriously. I can't combine conversation and listening. Of course, I've been afflicted as the next man with guests who ask to hear a work and then take the passage of the first few bars as a signal for social chatter. On such occasions I'm tempted to . . . turn off the sound . . . My wife was more embarrassed than the offending guest' (Andrews 1955, 41). This privileging of masculine silence is juxtaposed against the apparent insensitivity of (presumably) female 'chatter' and social niceties.

Silence is also, ironically, the central image of an advertising campaign for Collaro stereo record changers (High Fidelity and HiFi & Music Review, fall/winter 1958-59) entitled 'Collaro - your silent partner for Stereo' (emphasis in original; see figure 2.2). The campaign features a series of photographs of film star Ralph Bellamy - wearing a suit, smoking a pipe, and relaxing in an easy chair in front of his stereo system - superimposed upon a variety of unpopulated, rugged natural settings such as deserts, forests, or mountaintops, to which his phonograph had presumably transported him. The implication here is not only that the changer is as silent in its functioning as a desert, but that the experience of hi-fi listening is ideally an escape from domestic space, and the noisy distractions of telephone, children, and perhaps most interestingly, that not-so-silent partner - 'the wife.'

The gendering of the experience of mental transportation is most explicit in a 1956 advertisement for Bogen power amplifiers in High Fidelity (March, p.109), whose tag line is 'You're the Sultan . . . with 70 watts in your harem.' The accompanying photograph features a Caucasian male model wearing a turban and sitting cross-legged, but dressed in a tuxedo, bowtie, and sporting a cigarette

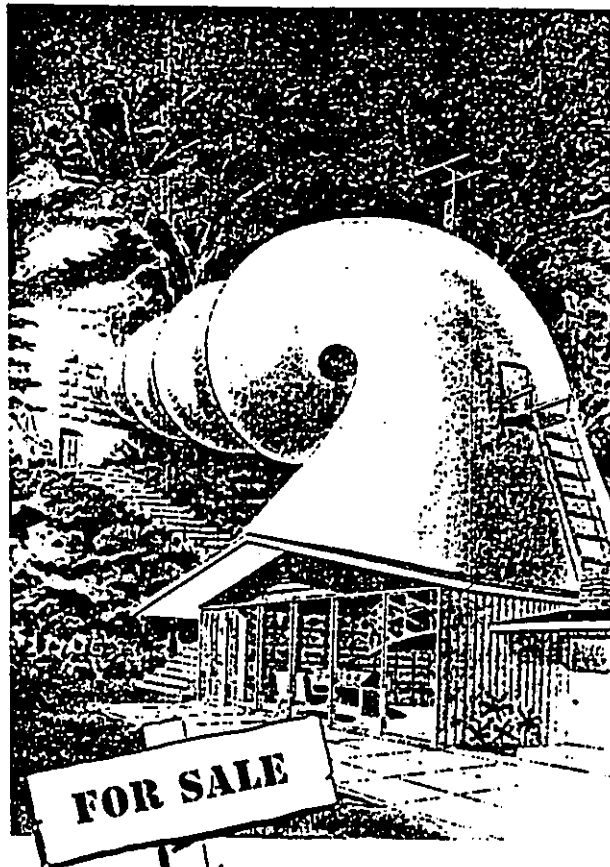
holder; here the signifiers of Western sophistication are articulated with the imagery of Orientalist gendered power relations. The text implies that the power amplifier is a kind of magic carpet: 'Our impressionable friend is high on his Persian carpet . . . transported by Scheherazade and the princely new Bogen D070 power amplifier.' The ability of the male hi-fi fan to control the 70 watts of power in the amplifier is articulated with the fantasy imagery of the sexual control exerted over a 'harem;' it may be implied that the ability of a powerful high fidelity amplifier to reach loud volumes, and thereby immerse and transport the (male) listener, will also give a husband power over his wife and domestic setting. Once again, the articulation of multiple differences (sexual, cultural, technical) functions to gender high fidelity as masculine.

The back cover of the November 27th, 1948, Saturday Review of Literature presents an earlier version of a similar image. In an advertisement for Vinylite Plastics, a key component of the recently-introduced high-fidelity LP album, the legend 'let down the barriers between you and music' accompanies a cartoon of a man (with eyes closed) sitting on a spinning record, which is in turn floating over a group of musicians. While a series of circular lines reinforce the impression of immersion, the arrival of the man on his magic flying record at the concert hall suggests transportation. Thus the 'barriers' between the listener and music are imagined to be, on the one hand, the physical body of the listener, which has to be immersed and forgotten (eyes closed), and on the other, the walls of the domestic setting (which may be breached through mental transportation).

An ad for Pentron stereo tape recorders (High Fidelity, May 1954, p. 107) also utilizes the trope of audio immersion, with an illustration of musical notes encircling a male listener, reclining in an easy chair, feet up, and smoking a pipe. The copy reads: 'Pentron . . . the only tape recorder that surrounds you

Figure 2.3: Advertisement, HiFi and Music Review (1958); Cartoon, Audio Engineering (1953)

HiFi and Music Review April 1958, page 10

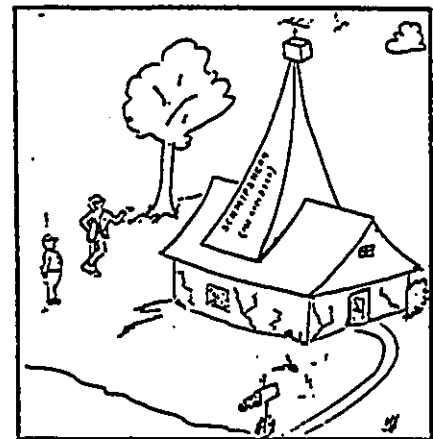


Practically new ranch house with 200-foot, poured-concrete, spirally curved, exponential bass horn; 12-foot multicellular midrange horn (24 cells); large inventory of assorted dynamic and electrostatic tweeters; three 2,000-watt water-cooled amplifiers; infinite-attenuation electronic crossover networks; master control-mixer-preamplifier console; two 1,500-lb. belt-driven turntables suspended in mercury bath; vacuum-sealed record-positioning chamber with servo-controlled record lifters and nuclear-reactor record deionizer; foam-rubber basement for acoustical feedback isolation; also complete blueprints for construction of identical house for stereo.

Will sacrifice, or trade for NORELCO speaker, which owner of house has discovered to be ideal for delightful hi-fi listening without electronic anxiety neuroses or showdowns with the loan company. For detailed and convincing confirmation of latter viewpoint, write to North American Phillips Co., Inc., High Fidelity Products Division, 230 Duffy Avenue, Dept. NR11, Hicksville, Long Island, N. Y.



a complete line of 5" to 12" high-fidelity speakers and acoustically engineered enclosures



"Sure it's tough on plaster, but you should hear the bass!"

Audio Engineering April 1953, page 68

with sound.' Similarly, an ad for Harman Kardon receivers (HiFi & Music Review, October 1958, 65) positions immersion as key to the transportation of the listener into the world of the music: the photograph features a string quartet, with a non-musician sitting in their midst with his hi-fi in his lap. The photo is captioned 'You are the Fifth man in this Quartet,' with subsequent copy emphasizing the idea of sound surrounding the listener as key to high-fidelity enjoyment: 'Listen to Harman-Kardon high fidelity and you are in the very midst of the music.'

A number of cartoons and advertisements for hi-fi equipment during the 1950s were constructed around the idea of sound surrounding or immersing the listener in a potentially anti-social fashion. An ad for Norelco loudspeakers from HiFi & Music Review, April 1958 (p. 10; see figure 2.3), features a drawing of a suburban ranch house with a large front window, through which we can see banks of speakers lining the walls; however, the most visually striking aspect of the illustration is the giant exponential bass horn which is perched on the roof of the home, pointing downwards, almost overwhelming the house itself (in fact it looks like that symbol of solipsism, a gargantuan snail's shell). While the ad copy makes it clear that this is intended as a joke, the very fact that the compact Norelco speakers are promoted as an effective (and assumedly, equivalent) replacement for the monstrosity suggests that the home with a hi-fi as big as a house is a fantasy object which would offer the ultimate high-fidelity experience of immersion (and thus so too might the Norelco product). The drawing also features a 'For Sale' sign, which is at first glance an ironic reference to the fact that this is an advertisement, and that ultimately the Norelco speakers, which are positioned as equivalent to the house, are for sale. However, it is also likely that the 'For Sale' sign signals trouble in paradise;

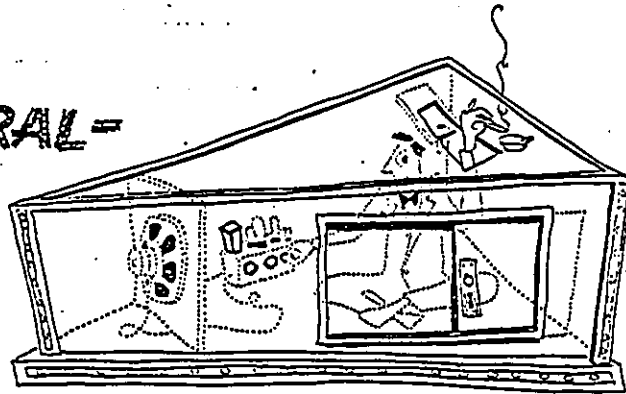
perhaps the three-dimensional domestic bliss sought by the hi-fi man became too one-sided.

The Norelco ad is also reminiscent of an earlier cartoon which accompanied the 'High Fidelity' article from Audio Engineering quoted above (Dickey 1953, 68; see figure 2.3). This cartoon also consists of a giant speaker horn forming the roof of the house. The caption reads: 'Sure it's tough on plaster, but you should hear the bass!' The walls of the house are shown to be cracking, evidence of the electronic extremist's unrestrained pursuit of hi-fi, even to the point of self-destruction. Although these are humorous and fantastical representations, there were reports during the period of men who attempted to realize this scale of excess. A 1953 New York Times article, 'The Quaint and Restless Rites of the Frequency Hunters,' claims that 'There is a man in New Jersey so far sunken in high fidelity that his speaker begins in the basement of his home, comes up through the floor of his living room, where it achieves a width of ten feet and a thickness of two and a half, and enters the attic, which it takes up all of, turning upon itself finally to bring sound to the living room . . . ' (Millstein 1953, 39). Another article, entitled 'A Hi-Fi Set-Up With Wiggling Walls' (Berger 1956, 15), describes a man who had installed speakers across three of the four walls in his living room.

Transforming one's house into a giant speaker was one way of imagining the excesses of high-fidelity enthusiasts; escaping domestic space into an enclosure within the home was another. Look magazine's 1958 profile of the hi-fi boom, 'The Unending Search For Higher and Higher Fi,' features a cartoon of a bow-tied and bespectacled man floating in blissful rapture, enclosed within his hi-fi system. The first lines of the article are as follows: 'The gentleman who has built himself into the hi-fi set in the picture above is named Feedback J. Flutter. He is a mythical hi-fi addict, and he has invested something like

AFTER
BINAURAL-
WHAT?

OR



UNCLE TOM'S CABINET

By THOMAS I. LUCCI

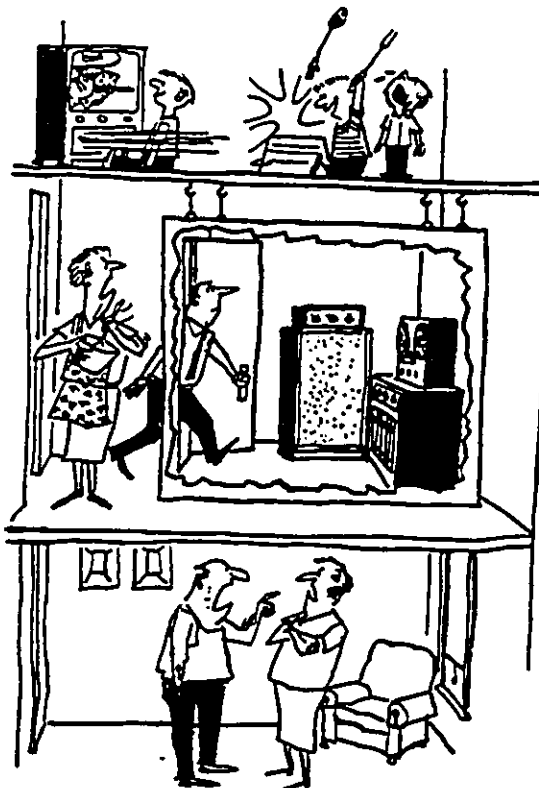


Figure 2.4: Cartoons, High Fidelity, 1954/1955

\$4,000 in a set that covers an entire wall of his apartment' ('The Unending Search . . .' 1958, 36). Here discourses of immersion and excess meet: while the cartoon represents the ideal of immersion in the most literal of terms, the dozens of hi-fi components, the fact that his system is said to take up a great deal of domestic space, and the high cost of the equipment reinforce a sense of the extremes and excesses of the 'hi-fi addict.' The cartoonist's representation of the mythical addict's immersion (and presumably transportation) is also quite reminiscent of another kind of rapturous, 'higher and higher,' trip: the acid trip of the rock era.

In a cartoon feature satirizing the tradition of presenting photographs of expensive high-fidelity systems in reader's homes, cartoonist Charles Rodrigues sketched a series of humorous, imaginary adaptations of hi-fi systems to unusual circumstances for High Fidelity. While the majority of his cartoons played with situations traditionally involving men without women (including a lighthouse, a prison cell, a ship captain's cabin, and a prospector's mule), the only cartoon which explicitly featured a family and its home depicted a husband fleeing a nagging wife, screaming children, and noisy neighbours into a sealed hi-fi listening room, which was suspended in mid-air in the middle of the home (Rodrigues 1955, 40; see figure 2.4). Again we see the fantasy of a technological virtual escape from the family circle, without physically leaving the home, via a literalized immersion in high fidelity.

Thus hi-fi's transformation of domestic space, either through loud playback volumes which repelled wives out of shared areas, or through mental transportation away from domestic realities, was a key component of the masculinization of home audio equipment during the period. High fidelity represented a moment of masculine involvement not only in the arrangement of the domestic interior, but as well, an interesting instance of increasing male

commodity consumption during a period in which women still controlled the majority of retail expenditures.

Conclusion

High Fidelity . . . is a way of thinking, a means of emotional catharsis and of creative activity (Canby 1952B, 62).

High fidelity, for all the abuse it endures at the hands of hacks and hucksters, is not a slogan. It is an idea and an aspiration of music preserved and made physically immortal (Milder 1958, 35).

This constant striving for a sonic nirvana can only brighten the future of component makers (Chappell and Conway 1957, 70).

The high-fidelity phenomenon of the late 1940s and 1950s involved not only the masculinization of home audio technology and the reclaiming of masculine domestic space; it was also part of a significant development in the history of Canadian and American adult, middle-class culture. As we have seen, debates over high fidelity frequently were conceived in terms of gendered taste differences. However, if we view hi-fi from a wider perspective, it is apparent that the middle-class engagement with excess which characterized high fidelity represented a remarkable rejection, at least by men, of behaviours and attitudes conventionally associated with middle-class tastes and sensibilities.

Middle-class taste has frequently been characterized as 'middlebrow,' as restraining the perceived excesses of both high and low culture, in favour of the 'middle of the road.' Andrew Ross describes Leslie Fiedler's mid-1950s view of middlebrow: 'Fiedler suggests that the middlebrow mind, engaged in a 'two-front

Figure 2.5: Advertisements, Audio Engineering 1952/1953



"You certainly do have an ear for music, Chadwick"

SERIOUSLY, though, a surprisingly large number of you seem to share our opinion that the days of music for one ear may be numbered. Partially buried beneath healthy controversy concerning what to name the baby is one inescapable truth: SOUND REPRODUCTION FOR TWO EARS IS HERE TO STAY!

The high-fidelity fraternity has one unusual characteristic which has always impressed us. In the five years of Livingston's growth we have yet to see an occasion when personal differences, commercial rivalry, and even editorial policies were not subordinated to one overwhelming common issue — improvement of the art.

The fabulous growth of the audio school and its rapid succession of improvements and refinements derive, we believe, directly from this constructive attitude. The audio art seems to attract the finest types of participants, both suppliers and consumers. We all benefit from this progressive technical philosophy.

Livingston's part in this open-minded program of improving the quality of the art has been slanted in a supplemental rather than a competitive direction. We are wholeheartedly behind this development — the most refreshing we have observed in these past five years.

The Cook Binaural disc excited our immediate interest and enthusiasm. That it translated a startling effect into a practical technique was enough to launch a serious program in our company.

Results are the Livingston Binaural Arm and a line of binaural recordings to augment the already growing catalog of Cook Laboratories and others. At this moment, however, we feel it more important to direct the attention of the audio enthusiast to the overall aspects of sound for two ears, rather than to plug our products. The primary purpose of this "editorial" is to offer cooperation to any and all interested in this technique.

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Audio Engineering with Transistors? Don't forget to check the Chicago Audio Transformer. It's the only transformer that's been tested by the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force. It's the only transformer that's been tested by the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Navy. It's the only transformer that's been tested by the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force. It's the only transformer that's been tested by the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Navy.

When your audio quality is a "must" — the experts specify and use CHICAGO "Sealed in Steel" Transformers.

CHICAGO Output Transformers

really deliver for you

2db

| Model | Power (Watts) | Impedance (ohms) | Frequency (Hz) |
|---------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| CH-100 | 100 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-200 | 200 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-300 | 300 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-400 | 400 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-500 | 500 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-600 | 600 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-700 | 700 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-800 | 800 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-900 | 900 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |
| CH-1000 | 1000 | 16,000 | 20-20,000 |

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class war,' is characterized by a rabid fear of hierarchy, in which 'the fear of the vulgar' runs as high and as strong as 'the fear of the excellent' (Ross 1989, 57-58; emphasis in original). Herbert Gans also characterizes middle-class taste as '... disapproving of content which they perceive as too experimental or philosophical on the one hand, or too cliched or "vulgar" on the other hand' (Gans 1974, 83-84). As Pierre Bourdieu puts it, 'Middlebrow culture is resolutely against vulgarity' (Bourdieu 1984, 326). Loren Baritz notes that the post-war middle class may have been intrigued by extreme forms of behaviour, but only in other classes: 'Its need for respectability and approval led the middle class to conform to currently fashionable opinion. It was horrified by eccentricity in its own ranks, but entertained by it in the very rich or very poor' (Baritz 1990, 94).

In this light, many of the behaviours and beliefs of male high-fidelity enthusiasts in the 1950s seem antithetical to the middle-class status necessary to engage in this relatively expensive hobby. The obsessive hi-fi addict dreaming of a speaker as big as a house or the electronic extremist blasting his wife across their equipment-strewn living room are indulging in vulgar excesses previously foreign to middle-class sensibilities. The common visual representation of the hi-fi fan's overdeveloped sense of hearing, one oversized ear, is symptomatic of the 'pathological' embrace of the extreme which was seen to characterize high fidelity. By setting restrained normality against vulgar abnormality (one normal ear and one giant, golden ear) in its depiction of the middle-class hi-fi hobbyist, cartoons such as those in advertisements for Chicago Transformer (Audio Engineering, August 1952, p. 34) or Livingston Electronic (Audio Engineering, May 1953, p. 47; see figure 2.5), or the cover of a 1954 RCA-Victor hi-fi demonstration LP, Hearing is Believing, position the male audiophile as oblivious mutant, simultaneously inside and outside class norms.

As Eleanor Edwards puts it, 'An interesting aspect of the hi-fi infirmity is the fascination with extremes. All things in the medium range are merely tolerated. Full attention is lavished on the very large or the very small, the very high or the very low, the very loud or - but no, the very soft appears to have been overlooked' (Edwards 1953, 43). Here Edwards is quite explicit about the disavowal of 'middleness' characteristic of the high-fidelity male's engagement with excess. The 'high' in hi-fi becomes emblematic of a movement toward both irrationality and extremism. Another hi-fi spouse notes that recklessness and lavish spending, two very un-middle-class behaviours, characterized her husband's involvement with hi-fi: 'When the spirit is upon him he tests recklessly and spends lavishly, convinced that this new speaker system, that new equalizer, will be the final answer to all his auditory problems' ('Hi-Fi Spouse Sings Dirge' 1956, 44). Fred Laros, writing in the middlebrow American Mercury, criticizes the behaviour of the hi-fi man as outside the bounds of middle-class propriety, calling him an '... odious ... hi-finatic. By constant electronic blasting, by uninterrupted boasting, he has made himself a major public earsore' (Laros 1957, 30). The accompanying cartoon depicts musical instruments suffering from gigantism issuing from a hi-fi (*ibid.* 29), reinforcing a perception that 'hi-finatics' had lost the sense of appropriate proportion said to typify middle-class behaviours.

In conjunction with the adult middle-class male's involvement with unrestraint and excess, the audio aesthetics of the period often pointed toward perspectives and attitudes generally associated with psychedelia in the 1960s and virtual reality in the present.¹⁵ In 1948, a letter to the editor of Audio Engineering suggests that ultimately mimesis should not be the standard of high fidelity; rather, the solipsistic sensory stimulation of technologically-induced

¹⁵See Boddy 1994 on virtual reality's ancient history.

experiences should be sought: 'It is not fidelity or realism that sends a thrill through my spine as I listen . . . It is reproduction that enhances that portion of the frequency spectrum that gives me psych-delight, and lessens that which irritates, even in the original . . . This is not realistic reproduction . . . This is private intimacy.' (White 1948, 4; emphasis mine). Likewise, E.T. Canby envisions electronic technology as an 'imagination-stimulator': 'To an experienced listener, Bach on a miniature portable is supremely faithful and more than adequate as a stimulus for creative inner listening. In this sense, reproduced music is not literal, nor is high fidelity a form of electrical perfection. The [sound] engineer's function as an imagination-stimulator is not the easiest thing to define!' (Canby 1952B, 62). The editor of High Fidelity suggests that losing contact with reality may be a pleasurable aspect of hi-fi fanaticism: 'A constant threat to any earnest hi-fi enthusiast, especially if he hobnobs largely with others of the ilk, is hifi-phrenia. This is a psychological ailment, marked by loss of contact with reality. Sometimes it becomes incurable: the sufferer likes his disease' (Conly 1951, 88; emphasis in original). Again, hi-fi offers a technological escape into irrationality. That these notions circulating around home audio in the 1950s seem so reminiscent of later discourses within the counterculture, where a key image was that of the rock fan on LSD listening to a stereo LP on headphones, should not surprise us. Nor should the fact that a key ideological architect of 1960s countercultural space, Timothy Leary ('tune in, turn on, drop out'), later became a leading figure in the virtual reality movement.

The overlapping of the ideas of immersion and transportation attached to the high-fidelity experience involves a conception of social space implicated in gendered power relations. As I have argued, the deployment of high-fidelity equipment can be seen as a strategy for re-configuring domestic space as

masculine. Looking at some of the ways in which home audio evolved in the post-war period (including the masculinization of the phonograph, the linking of technology and authenticity, and the engagement with excess), constitutes part of a larger re-examination of neglected areas of popular musical cultures, especially the mainstream 'adult' musical culture of the 1950s, which has for too long been dismissed as irrelevant to post-rock 'n' roll popular music cultures. From the 1960s onward, conflicts over the volume at which recorded music is played would most often be articulated with inter-generational strife; in the 1950s, however, this antagonism was pre-figured in a gendered dispute between adults.

Part II: Sinatra's Capitol: The Star-Image of Frank Sinatra, 1953-62

Chapter Three: Frank Sinatra as Adult Performer

In November 1953, Frank Sinatra was one of the guests on the Colgate Comedy Hour Starring Eddie Cantor television program (30 November, NBC). The veteran vaudevillian also had another guest star, the singer Eddie Fisher, who was in the midst of a string of Top 10 single-record successes. Cantor brought Fisher, in his twenties, on first. Cantor asks Fisher to sing based on his record reputation: "A lot of the people here tonight would like to hear some samples from some of the records you've made . . . would you do it for me?" Fisher, full of a humility and earnestness that would later be associated with the first TV appearances of a young Elvis Presley, responds "I would love to, Mr. Cantor". Eddie Cantor then shouts to his orchestra leader, "Al Goodman, with a lot of schmaltz, you know what I mean!" and Fisher proceeds to sing a string of his hit singles, including "I'm Walking Behind You", "Anytime", "With These Hands", and "Many Times", all songs virtually unheard today. After Fisher finishes, he asks Cantor to make a guest appearance on Fisher's Coca-Cola-sponsored NBC-TV show, even mentioning its time slot. Cantor, clearly relishing the young performer's chutzpah in plugging another show, turns to the audience and exclaims "Oh, this boy has learned!" He then tells Fisher that he has heard one of the records that he would like Fisher to perform, "Oh My Papa", played on "A platter show - what are they called?", to which Fisher interjects "Disk jockey". Fisher then sings the song. Cantor comes back on stage and, as Fisher bows off, he tells him "Don't forget Eddie, you're coming back, you're coming back. You're going to meet Frank Sinatra in a little while".

Later in the show, just before Sinatra comes on, Cantor introduces another guest, "A fine composer . . . Harold Arlen", who proceeds to play piano, and occasionally sing, a selection of the standards he has written over the previous quarter century, including "It's Only A Paper Moon", "Over the Rainbow", and "One for My Baby (And One More for the Road)". The latter song serves as the cue for Cantor to introduce Frank Sinatra: "You know, Harold, there's one fellow that sings your songs better than anyone else . . .

lately he's become a dramatic actor -pretty good, too - Frank Sinatra!" (This is before Sinatra has been nominated for an Academy Award but after his critically-acclaimed non-singing performance in From Here to Eternity). Sinatra enters, and sings a medley of Arien standards, accompanied by the songwriter at the piano. He sings "Come Rain or Come Shine", "I've Got the World on a String", "That Old Black Magic", "Blues in the Night", and "Stormy Weather", playing with the rhythm of his phrasing in a fashion that would at the time have been seen as "jazzy" and "swinging". When not singing, his onstage comportment is that of the wiseguy, joking easily with Cantor, and flirting with singer Connie Russell.

Subsequently, Cantor introduces the former teen idol to the current bobbysox favourite: "Frank, I'd like you to meet Eddie Fisher". Fisher and Sinatra exchange greetings, and Fisher compliments Sinatra: "Gee, you look wonderful. You know, your performance in From Here to Eternity was one of the greatest I've ever seen". Sinatra replies: "Well thank you Eddie. I'd like to tell you that I've seen so many of your television shows and they're just marvelous, just wonderful, all your TV". Fisher continues the flattery: "But, you know, Frankie, your version of "I've Got the World on a String" is the greatest I've ever heard". Sinatra responds with: "Well you can take this from me that your new record of "Oh My Papa" will be the biggest thing the jukeboxes have ever had in the history of the record business". Throughout this exchange, Cantor has been getting increasingly frustrated at the flattery, and he finally interrupts, sarcastically saying "Look, may I, may I make a suggestion? Why don't you two get married?", which gets a big laugh. After Fisher and Sinatra struggle to find a compliment for the obviously jealous Cantor, he invites them both to dinner at his house. Sinatra replies: "Well yes, Eddie. Except we [meaning Sinatra and Cantor] don't eat the same kind of food". The Jewish Cantor (Fisher is also Jewish) then tells the Italian-American Sinatra: "Well, I've figured out, see, so Ida [Cantor's wife] has arranged to have lasagna and pizza pie stuffed with Matzoh balls!" Cantor shifts into a Yiddish accent

for the term for the traditional Jewish food, and Sinatra throws up his hand and exclaims "Oh well, that's different!"

These three scenes from a network television show in 1953 reveal a great deal not only about dominant conceptions of ethnicity and humour. They also lay out, in schematic form, the dominant institutions of a segmented popular music culture: those of the teen (hit singles, television) and of the adult (standards, films). Eddie Fisher at the time had a predominantly teen (and largely female) audience, who bought his newly-composed, 45 RPM single records, or listened to them on "Disk Jockey" radio shows¹ and in jukeboxes. Cantor mentions Fisher's recordings on two different occasions, and tells his bandleader to play for Fisher "with a lot of schmaltz", a Yiddish word for chicken fat that in this context refers to an excessive sentimentality; the songs Fisher sings are indeed extremely sentimental, slow ballads, with virtually no connection to the rhythms of the swing era. Fisher did not have a major film career, although he was a frequent television performer. At the time, however, he was the biggest (or most popular) guest star on Cantor's show, and he is accordingly brought on first, with a promise that he will return later in the show (thus hopefully "hooking" viewers who have tuned in to see Fisher).

Frank Sinatra, on the other hand, represents a musical culture whose values and institutions are, to varying degrees, different or even opposed to those of Fisher's Hit Parade, teen culture. As the imperative of television programming at the time was to achieve the largest possible, "general" audience, it may be that the producers of Cantor's show felt that the multi-generational appeal of a teen idol (Fisher) combined with an adult standard-bearer (Sinatra) would produce high ratings. While in the early 1940s

¹At this time, the triumph of recorded music over live on radio was not yet complete, as Cantor's bafflement ("a platter show") over the correct term evidences. At the time, a significant portion of radio broadcasting would have consisted of "live" musical performances, even if these were "electrically transcribed", i.e. specially-recorded for broadcast. Overall, however, this is the period that saw the rise of the record and of the Disk Jockey as the most powerful hitmaker in the music industry.

Sinatra himself had been arguably the first performer to rise to mass fame as a teen idol, by the early 1950s, his teen appeal was limited at best, and his overall popularity had suffered greatly. 1953, the year of the Cantor appearance, is significant in that it is the year Sinatra began a comeback which would take him to a level of success far greater than his popularity in the mid-1940s. This comeback was in large part tied to his articulation with the values of a non-teen musical culture; his appearance on the Cantor show highlights adult popular music's investment in the great, "standard" songs of the past, written by "fine" composers such as Harold Arlen (every one of the songs Sinatra performs on the show would have been at the time considered a "standard", as opposed to the "pop" songs sung by Fisher, who doesn't sing even a single standard). While Fisher is associated with the novel and the ephemeral (new songs, 45 RPM records, DJs, jukeboxes, television), Sinatra is presented as a dramatic film actor and a singer of "great" versions of timeless songs ("I've Got the World on a String" was written in the early 1930s). While Fisher would go on to make a few films (Bundle of Joy in 1956 and Butterfield 8 in 1960), his career, like that of virtually all post-World War II teen-identified American singers (with the notable exception of Elvis Presley), would founder, partly due to an inability to make the transition into Hollywood that had contributed to the long and stable careers of large numbers of singers up until ca. 1945.² Sinatra, on the other hand, was in 1953 entering a second phase of his film career, in which he would be seen as a serious, dramatic actor. The prestige associated with Sinatra the dramatic Actor, appearing in "adult" films, and Sinatra the singer of standards, together with his increased association with an adult audience (especially in nightclubs), would together mark his difference from teen culture and contribute to new conceptions of popular performers in the 1950s and later.

²The most popular male singers of the immediate post-war period (Frankie Laine, Johnnie Ray, Eddie Fisher) failed to develop successful and sustained film acting careers.

Sinatra merits close examination because he was commonly perceived to be the leading figure of adult popular music at the time; because he was involved in a series of "adult" films which were seen as controversial, socially-relevant, or "risque" (in the sense of being marketed as explicitly non-family entertainment); and because his increasing (and increasingly visible) activity as an entrepreneur within a variety of cultural industries contributed to public perception of Sinatra as a serious businessman. During this period a conception of Sinatra as something "more" than an entertainer develops. Discourses of artistry and seriousness, new to popular music culture at the time, begin to be articulated with Sinatra. These discourses deploy ideas of career and autobiography which, while having been disseminated most widely through the culture of Hollywood celebrity, involve multiple articulations across a range of media in the case of performers such as Sinatra in the 1950s. The idea that a performer working within the popular arts could be considered a serious artist using autobiographical materials to pursue a career whose meta-narrative was explicitly understood to be the life of the performer him or herself, would be commonplace by the later 1960s. Most analysts attribute this to developments within youth cultures, especially the strands of rock music culture seen to be derived from folk and blues musics. However, in the case of a performer such as Frank Sinatra ca. 1953-62, these developments clearly occur within the context of an adult popular culture, in which ideas of adulthood are tied to ideas of seriousness generally absent from teen cultural formations.

Sinatra As Adult Performer

Before we can attempt to understand the specificity of Frank Sinatra between 1953 and 1962, it is important to understand his significance for age-grading within the popular culture of the first dozen years of his career. Sinatra came out of the big bands of the Swing era. In 1939, he performed with the Harry James big band briefly before being signed to the even more popular Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. From 1940-

42, Sinatra was the "boy vocalist" of a large organization that included a female vocalist (Jo Stafford) and a vocal group (the Pied Pipers). The Dorsey band was arguably the most successful in the U.S. at the time, and Sinatra sang on a number of best-selling recordings and appeared as part of the band in three feature films (Las Vegas Nights [1941], Ship Ahoy [1942], and Reveille with Beverly [1943]). At this time, the big bands, partly due to their function as accompanists to social dancing, attracted relatively equal numbers of male and female fans. Sinatra, who had become increasingly notorious for attracting a large, teen-aged and female group of fans who would scream and swoon during his featured spots, wanted to go solo. He left Dorsey in September of 1942, became the star attraction of the Your Hit Parade radio program in February of 1943, and achieved notoriety for what came to be known as the "Columbus Day Riot" at the Paramount Theatre in New York City in 1943. This event sealed Sinatra's association with a predominantly teen-aged and female audience in the public imagination. The anarchic display of young female sexual desire was conceived in contemporary reports in terms of a "mass hysteria", and psychiatrists were called upon in the popular press, somewhat tongue in cheek, to diagnose this "new" social behaviour. The effect of much of this reporting was to link the swooning "bobbysoxers", as teenage girls were called, with "Sinatra", who arguably initiated the very idea of the popular singer as "teen idol". (Rockwell 1986, 25)

Thus from its initial moment onward, the idea of the teen idol would be a gendered idea. It is precisely the "feminized" nature of the teen idol which has historically made a performer's transition from teen to adult audiences extremely fraught with difficulties. "Maturing" as a performer in part involves being taken "seriously", and the discursive denigration of the feminine in Western culture as unserious and trivial mitigates against excessively-teen-identified performers moving "up" and away from a presumed irrelevance. The turbulent and short careers of teen-identified performers are well-documented (who today knows where the New Kids On The Block are?).

The "young" Frank Sinatra's run at the top was relatively long by contemporary standards, but by 1947 his career began to falter. Other teen-oriented performers emerged such as Frankie Laine, and later Johnnie Ray and Eddie Fisher, who replaced Sinatra at the top, and in the years 1950-52, Sinatra lost his recording contract, his film contract, his booking agency, and even his voice one night during a performance, due to a throat hemorrhage. As noted above, however, Sinatra subsequently re-emerged as an important, adult-oriented performer, with a mixed but increasingly male audience; this section of the chapter will examine press accounts of his adult constituency beginning in the mid-1950s. I will address the gendered aspects of Sinatra in the 1940s in the section on celebrity and autobiography below, as well as offering an account of some of the factors which contributed to his comeback in the 1950s.

A review of a Sinatra live performance in Boston early in 1953 highlights the shift in his audience; the Variety reviewer contrasts the age of Sinatra's audience with that of a current teen-idol, Frankie Laine: "Although first nitery appearance here of Frank Sinatra conflicted, during his first week, with that of Frankie Laine at neighbouring and spacious Blinstrub's, the former swoon king proved strong marquee lure in the smaller but more lavish Latin Quarter. In sharp contrast to Laine's popularity among bobbysoxers, Sinatra's audiences were conspicuous by absence of screeching juves" ("Latin Quarter, Boston" 1953, 54). Sinatra is identified as a past teen idol ("former swoon king") who is now appearing in an intimate and luxurious ("lavish") nightclub before a conspicuously adult audience. Another Variety article on shifting live performance practices noted a difference between the Latin Quarter and Blinstrub's in terms of the kinds of performers they present: "Boston has its Latin Quarter and Blinstrub's. Latter is a record room; former wants names but will play

record people if they're big" ("Theater, Club Foldings Hurt Live-Act Mart: Niteries Off 35%; Combo Houses Now Virtually Extinct" 1954, 10). The implication is that specific performance venues are now catering to a segmented audience, understood in terms of a distinction between "record people" (current Hit Parade favourites) and "names" (long-established personalities). Here the temporal distinction between recently-emerged performers and performers with long careers may be mapped onto age differences. The "record room", Blinstrubs, as seen in a contemporary advertisement, appears to be a "beer garden", with a central, boxing-ring-like stage surrounded by two-stories of open floor space. Elsewhere Variety notes that Blinstrubs holds 1700 while the Latin Quarter holds 420. Thus the putatively "adult" Latin Quarter can accomodate a smaller, more "select" audience, who, presumably, will spend more than a teen audience.

Another Variety article made exactly that point in linking Sinatra to an older but wealthier audience. The article, "Bobbysoxers of Sinatra Era Grow Up To Be Heavy Spenders For Right Names", reiterates the linkage of "name" performers with an adult audience, and emphasizes that a smaller, select, adult audience may ultimately lead to greater profitability (thus venue size, age, class and taste are articulated in terms of a profitable exclusivity):

The recent stand by Frank Sinatra at the Copacabana, N.Y., proved anew that the size of each check rather than the size of the attendance is the determining factor in the ultimate gross. Although attendance figures . . . have been higher than [sic] clocked during the Sinatra's [sic] engagement, size of the individual checks has been averaging much higher . . . Sinatra's major audience were in bobbysox about fifteen years ago. Since then, bulk of the kids have apparently done alright [sic]. Bulk of them may have married well and can afford to splurge . . . Bonifaces [nightclub owners] have long felt that a few wine customers can turn a light house into a profit-making venture . . . If headliners that entice the wine-buying

trade can be bought, then a leisurely class operation can be maintained.

("Bobbysoxers of Sinatra Era Grow Up To Be Heavy Spenders For Right Names", 1955, 57)

Note that the audience is presumed to have aged with Sinatra; the reference to "bobbysox" codes the old fans as female, while the "married well" suggests that the audience is made up of adult couples. The reference to the "wine-buying trade" posits a class distinction embedded within the appeal of the adult performer, underlined by the reference to "the more lavish Latin Quarter" cited above.

Others also noted Sinatra's new, older and wealthier audience: "The transition from then [late 1930s] until post-midcentury sees the skinny songster catering to a moneyed, mature crowd - a sort of AK bobbysox set (Green 1954, 47; presumably "AK" refers to some brand of support hose). A 1953 review of a Las Vegas appearance links Sinatra's adult audience, nostalgia, and standards to a rejection of the teen audience and its unrestraint: Sinatra performs a " . . . set of standards. As he meanders down memory lane, Sinatra slams the door on his former worshippers to please an older and less exuberant set of applauders" ("Sands, Las Vegas" 1953, 64). Another reviewer pointed out that "This was a mature Frank Sinatra who was caught at the Copacabana Thursday . . . This was no . . . idol of the bobby sox brigade" (Smith 1955, 7), suggesting that the changed age of Sinatra's audience was accompanied by a changed Sinatra.

Other observers linked Sinatra's 1940s teen audience to his adult audience of the 1950s, as seen in a review of a Miami Beach appearance in 1958:

That femme contingent that swooned with him during his Paramount Theatre days have grown older and are much more expensively and immaculately groomed now, but they still gave out with yelps and cries as he worked out his varied song book . . . Even the staid dowagers who flocked in, wanted souvenirs of any kind. When the Sinatra pix displays were torn out of settings and the furniture started to go,

[hotel prexy Ben] Novack had to get extra security men to control the mobs"
 ("Fontainebleu, M. Bch." 1958, 86).

Notice how the aging of the audience is again linked with its prosperity ("more expensively and immaculately groomed"), and how the theme of female anarchy is continued in the description of vandalism by "staid dowagers". However, the "staid dowagers" remark undercuts the assertion that this audience is simply Sinatra's teen fans grown up; a dowager is generally a wealthy widow or an old lady (Sinatra's teen fans of the 1940s would be in their thirties at the oldest).³ While the reviewer is obviously using hyperbole to emphasize the humorous inappropriateness of the female behaviour, it ultimately emphasizes the general adult-ness of Sinatra's 1950s audience as much as any continuing loyalty of 1940s fans.

However, Chudacoff, in his study of age consciousness, noted that the alignment of age cohorts and taste early in life could continue across the life-cycle: "Significantly . . . the fans of some recording stars aged along with their idols, and they maintained age-graded, peer-defined cultural loyalties as they grew older. Thus, for example, Frank Sinatra, who had been the hottest star among teenagers in the late 1930s and 1940s, was most popular among young adults in the 1950s, and among middle-aged adults in the 1960s and 1970s" (Chudacoff 1989, 155).

Abel Green, the editor of Variety in the 1950s, saw an industrial strategy in the linkage between the development of long careers, the aging of long-time fans, and the practice of signing performers to "renewal" clauses in nightclub contracts. Green notes that many nightclubs are happy that they can,

³One 1954 Variety article suggested that Sinatra's teen fans were in fact now Liberace fans: "Every generation has its Liberace . . . Sinatra's former squealers may now be Liberace's droolers, for the Voice [Sinatra] hit the Paramount long enough ago to make this so . . . A healthy, well-fed matron is entitled to a love-fixation and if she can't get it at home she'll find a dream-man she can pay to see. So what's new?" (Ballard 1954, 42). From this perspective, the mixed-sex, adult audience of Sinatra in the mid-1950s does not simply consist of his teen fans grown up.

. . . by insuring the renewal rights for seasons hence, capitalize on the vintage years that come with maturing audience appreciation . . . the overgrown bobbysoxers evidence, by their audible requests, that they're disk disciples, completely au courant with his catalog. He gives them the torchants [torch songs] in the style he accustomed them to. He heralds his repertoire as "Songs for Young Lovers", and no matter the age of the outfronters at the Copa, which isn't exactly a Horn and Hardart, he strives responsive juvenile accord (Green 1954, 47)

Green is also recording a number of remarkable features of Sinatra's audience here. The fact that the adult audience responds with the enthusiasm of a "juvenile" audience and that it is equally a record-purchasing group ("disk disciples") are noteworthy exceptions to the current music industry belief that as consumers age, they become less involved in music-industry-related activity (i.e. record purchasing tends to decrease with age). Green also links age and wealth; the reference to the Horn and Hardart Automat, an inexpensive cafeteria in Manhattan, suggests that the Copacabana nightclub attracts a prosperous clientele.

Reporting that Sinatra calls his set "Songs for Young Lovers"⁴ despite the age of his audience, Green calls attention to the fact that throughout the mid-1950s much of Sinatra's material explicitly addressed the question of age. His first Capitol LP was entitled Songs for Young Lovers (1954); his biggest hit since 1947 was entitled "Young At Heart" (also 1954; its lyrics are about age as a mental, rather than physical, state, presumably more of a concern for the old than the young: "And if you should survive to a hundred and five/Look at all you'll derive out of being alive/And here is the best part, you have a head start/If you are among the very young at heart"); his critically-

⁴Obviously this is a promotional linkage to his current Capitol LP of the same title. But it may also refer to the song "Hello Young Lovers" from The King and I (1951), in which an older person reflects on past loves as he or she watches couples strolling in public, much as Sinatra appears to be doing on the cover of Songs for Young Lovers (1954).

acclaimed LP In the Wee Small Hours contained the 1937 standard "Last Night When We Were Young" (whose lyrics suggest sexual activity can render [old] age irrelevant); he began most of his nightclub appearances and his LP Songs for Swingin' Lovers in 1956 with the song "You Make Me Feel So Young" (1946; the song's lyrics understand age as a mental state and again suggest love transforms physical senescence). In each of these cases, the lyric addresser and addressee are implicitly adults, people who have passed their youth, which now serves as a metaphor for love and sexuality. Sinatra's last LP for Capitol in 1962, Point of No Return, began with one last "young" song, "When the World was Young", whose lyrics describe a world-weary "boulevardier" reminiscing about his lost innocence, embodied in the "apple trees" which formed the background to his adolescent first love. The inter-textual relations across all of these references to "young" cohere in their articulation with "Sinatra" as an icon of a certain kind of cosmopolitan adulthood.

Often during his nightclub appearances during this period, as a comedy bit Sinatra would stop the set to drink a cup of tea, which at the time was seen as an elderly person's beverage; according to one review, Sinatra accompanied this with dialogue that played upon his getting older: "Midway in stint he takes time out for a cup of tea to "relax my aging pipes" . . ." ("Latin Quarter, Boston" 1953, 54), while another points out the linkage between the tea and his age-themed hit of 1954: ". . . after a tea-sipping bit" Sinatra performs "Young at Heart" (Green 1954, 47). Calling attention to one's age is generally not a source of humour for teen audiences, while adults may identify with a performer's acknowledgement of time passing.

The use of age as a source of both humour and cultural difference is especially apparent on an episode of Sinatra's 1959-60 television series, The Frank Sinatra Timex Show (ABC, December 23rd, 1959), on which the Hi-Los, a so-called "modern" close-harmony vocal quartet, were guest stars. At one point, Sinatra squeezes himself into the middle of the group, clearly intending to sing with the quartet, one of whom tries to

discourage Sinatra: "You wouldn't be happy in a vocal group, Frank". The following dialogue ensues, in which age as sign of differing tastes and competences is the central focus of the humour:

Sinatra: Are you kidding? . . . You're very young. I started with a vocal group.

a Hi-Lo: Gee, you must go way back

Sinatra: You call Major Bowes⁵ a "way back"?

a Hi-Lo: Major Who?

another Hi-Lo: I dunno.

a Hi-Lo: Was that your C.O. in World War II?

Sinatra: No no, before that.

a Hi-Lo: Try World War I.

Sinatra: Oh, you whippersnappers . . . You remember the Forties? . . . I should hope so.

Sinatra then mentions the Pied Pipers, the vocal group with whom he sang in Tommy Dorsey's big band between 1940-42, whereupon a Hi-Lo exclaims "You must be that guy!" and another Hi-Lo asserts "You must be Joe Stafford!", making a gender pun on female vocalist Jo Stafford's first name. They then proceed to perform Sinatra's biggest Dorsey-era hit together, "I'll Never Smile Again".

In a similar vein, the closing sequence of Sinatra's 1953-55 NBC radio show, To Be Perfectly Frank, explicitly drew on a conception of Sinatra as a self-identified mature adult. The show ends with Sinatra sarcastically referring to his age: "Well the big hand's on the six again which means it's time for ol' Dad to hit the old road. But I'll be swinging down the lane Friday at the same time and I hope you meet me at the corner. Because to be perfectly frank, Sinatra doesn't like to look down that lonesome road and

⁵Major Bowes hosted a radio talent contest program in the 1930s; Sinatra, as part of a vocal group, won one of the competitions and toured with the Major Bowes revue for some time. This was his first "big break" into show business.

not find you"; it is also noteworthy that Sinatra works in references to two standards, "Swingin' Down the Lane" (1923) and "The Lonesome Road" (1928).

The ongoing association between standards and Sinatra as adult standard-bearer is evident not only in his song selection on To Be Perfectly Frank. The majority of his Capitol LPs contain large numbers of standards, or other older songs which will become standards as a result of Sinatra reviving them. The titles and liner notes of a number of Sinatra's albums articulate standards and a relationship to the past, whether on his second Capitol LP, Swing Easy! (1953; "Of course, the tunes in this album were all great long before this newest approach of Frank's - but what he does with them is something for tired old ears and eager young ones to rejoice over!") or on 1957's A Swingin' Affair! ("You recall the song from a happy past . . . but the beat is brighter than you remember it . . . the orchestra is richer sounding . . . more exciting . . . and the voice is Frank Sinatra's. It's a swingin' affair!"). Note how the album titles refer to the Swing era of the late 1930s and early 1940s; the songs and musical arrangements are in large part also of that vintage, and the liner notes assert a well-established and familiar repertoire.

An emphasis on the "classic" popular music of the past (and a rejection of the Top 40 music of the present) is also evident in Sinatra live sets. A Variety review noted of a 1957 performance that "There isn't a hit parade tune in the lot (the newest being "Alright with Me" [sic] from "Can Can" [Cole Porter, 1953]) but the songalog [set] is a veritable cavalcade of the best material of the last two decades" ("Mocambo, Hollywood" 1957, 76);⁶ Sinatra's assertion of a better past (standards) over an inferior present (novelties) asserts the temporal relation between old and new in terms of a classicism understood as "good taste". Abel Green commented on the class connotations of Sinatra's repertoire of standards (here signified by "pashiest" and "ASCAP catalogue",

⁶At this time it was commonplace for nightclub performers to include several contemporary Hit Parade numbers along with their own material in a set, even if they had not recorded the songs.

respectively) during a 1953 performance in a New Jersey nightclub: "Sinatra culled the pashiest set of ballads out of Cole Porter, Rodgers & Hart and the ASCAP catalogue and hit the jackpot with a personal whammo such as few straight singers achieve . . . (Green 1953, 55). Writing in Down Beat in 1955, Ralph Gleason assessed the post-comeback Sinatra in terms of taste and class: "He's doing a great thing for music with his Capitol albums and his singles. He's proving that you can sell music. And it doesn't have to be junk . . . a champ with class, and that's exactly what Sinatra is . . . We all owe him a tremendous debt for proving that good songs and good lyrics are not passe. How could they be with a guy like that to sing 'em?" (Gleason 1955, 26). Gleason later links Sinatra's "good taste" to his selection of standards: "His selection of tunes to perform is a continuing indication of his good taste . . ." (Gleason 1958, 10).

In a 1953 article in Metronome entitled "Sincerity's A Thing Called Frank", George Simon also praised Sinatra's song selection in terms of Sinatra's "impeccable taste" for "the great songs" of the past, as opposed to the "horrible" music of the present: "Frank seemed happy that I liked what he did and especially so because so many people approved of the great songs that he sang. The impeccable taste he showed was his way of answering the men and mice who have been deluging the music scene with material which he considers not merely unmusical, but horrible . . ." (Simon 1953, 14-15). Similarly, in a mini-magazine biography of Sinatra published after his comeback, Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra (1955), the anonymous author saw Sinatra's careful choice of standards as evidence of "basic good taste". The success of the post-comeback Sinatra's recordings of standards is seen as a "vindication" of his commitment to artistry, here conceived as "respectful consideration" of basic musical values which, it is claimed, have been "overlooked" in the present:

The songs they [Sinatra and his producer and arranger] picked were good ones - tried, true and familiar - but had not been done to the death by every other entertainer . . . they . . . possessed . . . a high degree of musical merit - a factor

largely overlooked in recent years . . . It is still one of the best-selling albums in the country, and it was more than a successful commercial enterprise. It was a vindication of Sinatra's basic good taste and often expressed belief that popular music is still music, and must be treated with respectful consideration of rhythm, melody and phrasing (Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra 1955, 36-7)

In another episode of The Frank Sinatra Timex Show (ABC, October 19th, 1959), Sinatra sings a medley of "The Old Songs"⁷ with guests Dean Martin and Bing Crosby, choosing songs that have "old" in their titles but, as important, are older standards, the implication being "they don't write 'em like that anymore". A month earlier, Sinatra appeared as a guest on The Bing Crosby Show (NBC, 27 September, 1959), and sang a specially-written paen to adulthood, "We're Glad We're Not Young Anymore" with Crosby, Peggy Lee, and Louis Armstrong.

A Billboard article about Sinatra's return to the Paramount Theater, N.Y., in 1956 (site of the bobbysox "hysteria" of the Columbus Day Riot in 1943) articulated standards, nostalgia, and the aging of the audience: "His aptly titled opener - "You Make Me Feel So Young" - set the mood for a nostalgic, yet basically timeless half hour of great old ballads and swingy rhythm tunes . . . " ("Frankie Brings Back Swing Panic to Paramount" 1956, 15). Evident here as well is a tension in the idea of the standard, between its supposed "timelessness" and its powerful ability to evoke and bring back a precise moment in time - "nostalgic yet basically timeless". This sense of a return from the past, but with a significant difference, continued in the New Yorker coverage of the event:

While the waiters at the stage door were uniformly young, there were a good many older types among those lined up before the box-office. It made us feel a trifle melancholy to realize that perhaps some of the quiet matrons in the queue

⁷The medley included "Ol' Man River", "That Old Feeling" and "Down by the Old Mill Stream", among others.

were the phrenetic bobby-soxers of yesteryear. When a drunken sailor staggered by, shouting, "Down with Sinatra, up with Elvis!" he was booed good-naturedly, whereas in the dear dead days he would have been dismembered on the spot ("Paramount Piper" 1956, 23).

A sense of loss is expressed in terms of time vanquishing youth, whereby energy ("phrenetic") is sapped ("quiet") along with sexuality ("matrons"; it may be extrapolated that Sinatra's performance would provide a re-sexualizing tonic, restoring a lost energy through songs about "feeling" rather than being young). The quote also juxtaposes Sinatra's appeal with that of the current teen idol, Elvis Presley. The New Yorker then interviews Sinatra, who notes the change in his audience, which he links to his own aging: "It's funny, you know, the kind of people who come up and ask me for autographs. A fellow grabbed hold of me today, a dignified guy, and he told me he'd been a fan of mine when he was just an office boy or something in the dress business. Well, let's face it. I'm forty, and the kids I used to sing for are getting up there, too" ("Paramount Piper" 1956, 24). Note how Sinatra emphasizes male fans as well as the restraint ("dignified") associated with his adult audience.

In 1953, Sinatra appeared on the cover of the jazz magazine Down Beat (11 March, 1953; this issue contains the article discussed above in the section on standards, "Hokey Tunes Bug Frank"). The physical image he presents is different from earlier magazine covers; not only is he older (Sinatra would be 40 in 1955); he is not smiling as he had on previous covers (compare his 1951 cover photo for another jazz magazine, Metronome [May], in which he is smiling broadly).⁸ On the 1953 cover, he is sitting at a mic in a radio station studio, looking at a script, but most importantly, he

⁸In the early 1950s, before Sinatra established himself as an adult performer, and during the lowest ebb of his popularity, Metronome published a photo (June 1951, p. 7) of Sinatra, sporting a scraggly-looking forelock, signing autographs for female fans. The photograph caption implied a growing contradiction between his age (by calling attention to his receding hairline) and his audience: "Frank Sinatra, who'll go to Hollywood this summer to make Meet Danny Wilson for Universal-International, still commands his flock of bobby-soxers in spite of thinning curls".

is holding reading glasses in one hand. Until this point, Sinatra was virtually never photographed wearing glasses; however, from 1953-56, several photos of Sinatra in glasses appeared in print.⁹ A 1954 Photoplay article on the end of Sinatra's marriage to Ava Gardner (discussed in detail below) features a photograph of Sinatra wearing glasses, head bowed; the article stresses Sinatra's fatigue and loneliness, and the glasses underline a sense of an older, world-weary Sinatra (Arnold 1954, 88). In 1956, several photos of Sinatra wearing glasses were published in Capitol Records' in-house magazine, Capitol Music Views, accompanying an article about an instrumental, "semi-classical" LP entitled Frank Sinatra Conducts Tone Poems of Color ("Frank Sinatra Conducts Tone Poems of Color" 1956, 7). Out of a series of seven photos documenting the recording session, three feature Sinatra wearing glasses as he uses a score to conduct the orchestra. Here the glasses are as much a signifier of age as of seriousness, although both are clearly related. Nonetheless, the fact that he can be seen on the cover of the leading jazz magazine in 1953 holding a pair of reading glasses suggests a mature (and serious) Sinatra, moving away from his youthful (and trivial) image of the 1940s.

Sinatra's receding hairline was also frequently commented upon as a signifier of age, maturity, or adulthood in the mid-1950s. Time noted Sinatra's hair loss in its 1955 cover story: "He hates to be photographed or seen in public without a hat or hairpiece to cover his retreating hairline" ("Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 53), while Celebrity magazine matter-of-factly referred to him as "balding": "He's made a smash comeback . . . but the press still snipes away at the balding crooner-actor" ("Who's Out to Get Frank Sinatra?" 1955, 4). Women's Home Companion reported that, in the early 1950s, "his hairline was receding. He experimented with hairpieces and began to

⁹By the 1960s, an even older Sinatra would again be pictured wearing glasses: Sinatra wears glasses for a scene in The Manchurian Candidate (1962, discussed below); a widely-circulated photograph of Sinatra wearing glasses would be taken after the kidnapping of his son in 1963.

accumulate a wardrobe of hats" (Taves 1956b, 61), linking a key component of his new Capitol-era visual image (wearing fedoras and snap-brim straw hats) to his aging (Sinatra almost never wore hats in the 1940s, and his hair was frequently seen as a source of his sex appeal for women). Pose magazine published an article entitled "Are Baldies Better Lovers?", in which women were asked to rate the sex appeal of bald men. One woman explicitly linked Sinatra, hair loss, and adulthood: "Another added balding Frank Sinatra to her list of irresistables, but pointing out she never cared much for him until his thinning hair "indicated he was all grown up"" ("Are Baldies Better Lovers?" 1956, 5).

A scandal magazine, Inside Story, also noted Sinatra's hairline in an article on his appeal for women, despite his age: "Today, famous, 40, and flushed with the success of a comeback on records and a spectacular new career in films, Francis Albert Sinatra may be minus a few strands in his receding hairline, but he has lost not one whit of the magnetism that draws women like moths around the flame of his intense personality" (Roberts 1956, 21). In a highly-publicized, three-part series of articles on Sinatra, the mass-circulation magazine Look offered the following, in the context of a discussion of Sinatra's "misery" and "moodiness": "He walked to the mirror and cursed aloud as he examined his hair, thinning precariously in front, nearly gone on top" (Davidson 1957a, 36). The idea that Sinatra's hair was now not only a marker of age but a source of anger continued in a 1958 movie magazine, Movie Show: "He took one look in the mirror, cursed at his receding hairline and screamed for a make-up boy to bring him his toupee" (Dowd 1958, 58). I will discuss the discourses around Sinatra's "moodiness" and "anger" in the section on celebrity below; here it is the widespread circulation of ideas about Sinatra as no longer young which are noteworthy, and contribute to his articulation with an adult cultural formation.

Several magazines explicitly linked Sinatra's aging and his new audience in terms of a newfound maturity. Tempo magazine published an article, "The Boy Comes of Age",

which implicitly compared Sinatra's career to the human life-cycle, seeing his 1940s fame as the childhood which preceded the present, true, adult Sinatra: ". . . the string-bowed juvenile with the peg pants and multi-colored socks has suddenly become a man . . . and his fans love it" ("The Boy Comes of Age" 1954, 28). But the analogy also subtly deploys gender as the overarching discourse; the triviality of the boy in an almost clown-like costume is replaced by the seriousness of a man.

Similarly, Down Beat, in its account of Sinatra's comeback entitled "Sinatra Back on Top via Oscar and Recent Hit Disc", saw Sinatra's maturity not only in terms of a new audience (they claim he has kept his teen appeal as well), but in terms of his leaving behind the markers of an immaturity conceived as trivial:

The guy has come of age. Once the golden boy only to the younger set, he has at last reached the level where his singing and personality appeal to a broad cross-section of the public - the kids, the supper club crowd, and moviegoers. No longer a youngster in a floppy bow tie and a sport coat padded out to here who had kids screaming every time he glissed a note, he is now a completely poised 36-year-old who walks out on a nitery floor and performs to hushed audiences . . . (Tracy 1954, 3).

By discarding his "floppy" and "padded" youth, Sinatra has emerged as a "poised" adult who commands the respect of an audience who demonstrate their own, restrained ("hushed") maturity. In a New York Times Magazine piece, two photos, of 40s and 50s female fans respectively, were contrasted in terms of behaviour, and captioned "Sinatra Then . . . And Now . . .". The "And now . . ." photograph of the 1950s fans was further captioned ". . . by and large, the crowd was composed, older and interested in Sinatra's acting, too" (Pryor 1957, 60-61), suggesting that maturity and composure were linked to Sinatra's new reputation as a serious dramatic actor (discussed below). Time quoted an anonymous "friend" of Sinatra's who pointed out the link between an adult audience and "greatness": "He's got it made. He's come all the way back and he's gone

still further. He's made the transition from the bobby-sox to the Serutan set,¹⁰ and if he keeps on going like he's going he'll step right in when Bing steps out as the greatest all-round entertainer in the business" (quoted in "The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 52).

In 1955, Sinatra took on another in a series of post-1953 dramatic roles, that of the Stage Manager in an NBC television production of Thornton Wilder's play, Our Town. In the play, the Stage Manager is a wise and omniscient character who may ultimately be God. Playing a role which clearly called for an older character actor, Sinatra wore a hat and smoked a pipe throughout, props clearly meant to "age" a Sinatra not-quite-old-enough for the part; yet, of course, that Sinatra does play the older and wiser stage manager to the two "young people", played by Paul Newman and Eva Marie Saint, reinforces a conception of Sinatra as more mature and "adult". In a New York Times interview the week the production was broadcast, Sinatra, who is identified as "the one-time idol of the teen-age set", addressed his anxiety over the problems posed by the role:

Frank Sinatra, who has upset the skeptics by excellent performances in dramatic roles in motion pictures, will be facing a new challenge tomorrow night. He will appear in the role of the Stage Manager in a television adaptation, with music, of Thornton Wilder's fine play "Our Town" . . . Sinatra . . . indicated he was not unduly concerned about being able to play the role. "When the subject of doing it first came up, it was thought that it was out of my age range," he said (the late Frank Craven, who created the role . . . was a veteran character actor . . .)

(Shanley 1955, 13)

There is a tension present between Sinatra the new serious dramatic actor taking on the "new challenge" (as all Actors must "stretch" if they are to be considered Artists) of playing a role thought initially to be "out of [his] age range", and the very fact that he

¹⁰The "Serutan set" was a common term for middle-aged or older adults in the 1950s, most likely referring to a product (Serutan) associated with age, much as Geritol was in the 1970s or Depends in the 1990s.

takes the role, and plays it successfully. Nonetheless, Sinatra's playing of roles once reserved for "veteran character actors" constitutes part of a larger trajectory during this period away from youth and toward maturity, not only at the level of image but in terms of both material and audience.

Many of the reviews of Sinatra's films from 1953 on emphasized this articulation of "adult" material and adult audiences. The film that was seen as pivotal to his comeback in 1953, From Here to Eternity, was based on James Jones's 1951 bestseller of the same title, which was notorious for its profanity and frank depictions of sexuality. It was so associated with "adult", non-family sensibilities that it was thought "unfilmable" by many industry insiders (see "Translating a Tough, Topical Tome" 1953). The Variety review of the film linked the maintenance of this "raw" quality in the film version to what it saw as the film's adult appeal: "It's still raw, tough, dramatic stuff of great entertainment pull for adult ticket buyers" (Review of From Here to Eternity 1953; I will discuss Sinatra's supporting role in the film below). Newsweek articulated the film's "adulthood" with a rejection of the technological gimmicks (read as immature and juvenile) that Hollywood had been deploying recently, calling it ". . . one of the most absorbing and thoroughly honest movies to come across a normal screen in years . . . Produced at a time when Hollywood is preoccupied with escapism, and even busier escaping from itself with 3-D gadgetry, "From Here to Eternity" is a grown-up movie for anybody who can afford a babysitter". The review commended the film's "intelligence", and continued to juxtapose "grown-up" seriousness against an adolescent triviality, conceived in terms of an opposition between honesty and deception: while 3-D technology might produce an illusion of depth, in From Here to Eternity ". . . the characters are probed and projected in greater depth than could ever be supplied by Polaroid glasses [i.e. 3-D glasses]" ("New Films" 1953, 82).¹¹

¹¹ See also the Variety review of Sinatra's Kings Go Forth (11 June, 1958): ". . . the mixed-marriage question gets a thorough - and positive - going-over in the dialog . . . It's in these sequences that "Kings Go Forth" takes on an adult shape and deviates from the

Even a musical starring Sinatra was perceived as being marketed toward the adult audience. The Variety review of Pal Joey (1957) noted that the film's "Dialog [sic] is highly seasoned and bits and story situations are uncamouflaged boudoir played for laughs. In other words, "Joey" is still another reflection of Hollywood's turn to "adult" material" (review of Pal Joey 1957). The New York Times called the film of Pal Joey an "adult musical", tying its "sophisticated" quality to Sinatra's performance of the Rodgers and Hart score, and pointing out that Sinatra ". . . gives added lustre to these indestructible standards" (Weiler 1957, 30).

Thus far I have conceived of Sinatra's "adulthood" and appeal to adult audiences in terms of textual or industrial practices, as discursive tendencies rather than sociological absolutes. While the very existence of something like a "sociological absolute" is arguable at best (and certainly itself a product of discourse), there is virtually no sociological material extant on Sinatra's audience in the 1950s, with the exception of two brief references, one in the work of a respected sociologist, the other a more informal survey conducted for a newspaper article. In concluding this section of the chapter, it is instructive to examine this material, not so much as examples of "hard ethnography", but rather as instances of the larger discourse on "Sinatra" (it is also crucial to reiterate that what is being discussed here are tendencies, not fixed and exclusive categories; Sinatra certainly appealed to many teenagers in the 1950s, just as Eddie Fisher or Elvis Presely may have appealed to many adults).

In a sociological study of a working-class section of the West End of Boston in the late 50s, Herbert Gans recorded the opinions of a portion of Sinatra's audience, first and second generation Italian-Americans:

Perhaps the most popular performer . . . was Frank Sinatra. Among young adults, he was almost worshipped. The reasons for his popularity illustrated the kind of values which the young West Ender wants to see in the outside world . . . a

otherwise routine pattern". Clearly in the reviewer's mind "adult" refers also to a quality "above" the "routine" or mediocre, articulating "adulthood" and aesthetic quality.

rebellious individual, he does not hesitate to use either his tongue or fists to fight those who seek to deprive him of what is rightfully his . . . As an actor, [Sinatra] often plays the kind of rebellious roles with which West End men can identify. (Gans 1962, 192-3).

Gans identifies "young adults" and "men" as key members of Sinatra's audience. The implications of men identifying with Sinatra as actor will be addressed in the discussion of gender in subsequent chapters. In a 1955 New York Herald-Tribune article on Sinatra's comeback entitled "Sinatra: Phoenix of Films", Don Ross notes that Sinatra's audience was now different from that of the 1940s, and conducts a casual survey of teenagers to confirm their lack of interest in Sinatra. This section of the article is headed "Audience Has Changed":

One thing is certain. Sinatra's audience, which used to be made up almost exclusively of squealing teen-age girls, has changed considerably. It now contains solid phalanxes of sober, non-squealing adults . . . Teen-age girls are no longer enchanted, judging by a little survey made in Stamford, Conn., which ten years ago was a center of the Sinatra madness . . . "He's nice, but I don't feel too much one way or the other about him," said Ellen Houpt, seventeen, a senior at Stamford High School . . . "He's old enough to be my father," said Milli Viggiano, also seventeen and a senior. "His singing is okay, but there's so much competition now. I'd far rather listen to Eddie Fisher. . ." (Ross 1955, N. pag).

"Squealing" teenagers have been replaced by restrained, "sober" adults, and Sinatra's physical age (40 in 1955) is seen by one informant as a drawback for teen appeal ("old enough to be my father"). Finally, as I intimated at the beginning of this chapter, Sinatra-as-adult is rejected by adolescents in favour of a current teen idol, Eddie Fisher.

Chapter Four: The Production of the Capitol Persona

This chapter examines the multi-media career of Frank Sinatra between 1953-62. During this period, Sinatra worked within a wide range of media: records, films, live performances, radio, television, and press.¹ This chapter conducts a detailed reconstruction of the star-image that is popularly seen to emerge with Frank Sinatra's affiliation as a recording artist with Capitol Records during this time. In doing so, I examine the production of celebrity as it is mediated across a variety of texts, forms, and systems. I begin with an analysis of industrial strategies, and then pursue the trajectory of images associated with Frank Sinatra from his first moment of fame as a teen idol in the mid-1940s, his decline in popularity in the late 1940s and early 50s, and his return to prominence with his Oscar-winning role in From Here To Eternity and his first Capitol recordings in 1953. I then categorize and analyze a series of inflections of Sinatra's public persona between 1953 and 1962, the last year of his Capitol contract. Although Sinatra founds his own independent record label, Reprise Records, and issues its first album under his name in 1961, Sinatra continues to record for Capitol until 1962. His final, non-compilation Capitol LP, Point of No Return, is issued in 1962, thus ending what are commonly referred to as "the Capitol years". Although I have used a recording contract as the source of the historical decoupage of the conjuncture under examination, I am equally concerned with non-musical, film, televisual, radio, live performance, and other aspects of Sinatra's work between 1953 and 1962.

Celebrity and Industrial Strategies

... Sinatra exercises a most powerful control over much of what you enjoy (or don't enjoy) in films, on television, on records, in nightclubs - indeed in every

¹By "press" media, I am referring to newspapers and magazines which contained Sinatra-related interviews, reviews, and commentaries, as well as several magazine articles attributed to "Frank Sinatra" (see Sinatra 1955, Sinatra 1958).

medium of entertainment except newspapers and magazines. To Sinatra's apparent disgust, there is very little he can do about controlling the press. Nevertheless he tries . . . - Good Housekeeping, 1960²

The presence of the figure of "Sinatra" across a variety of texts and media is enabled by the rise of what Andre Millard has referred to as "empires of sound" in the 1930s (Millard 1995, 178), in which a loose integration of broadcasting, recording, and filmmaking industries permitted performers not only to migrate across media boundaries but to exist in a sense everywhere and nowhere. The institution of celebrity within mid-twentieth-century popular culture, particularly as promulgated by the publicity departments of the Hollywood studio system and sustained by the multi-media appearances of select performers, lead to a kind of public knowledge of individual stars which simulated inter-personal contacts. New levels of star-fan intimacy and identification were made possible by the apparently three-dimensional view of the star that was afforded by the multiple channels of access to a putatively pre-existent "personality", which was itself the (misrecognized) product of this very access. The industries' monetary investment in the construction and dissemination of the star was intended to enable forms of emotional investment by the audience, which would then be reconverted into profit through the sale of cultural commodities. The mapping of fiscal economies onto economies of desire was also mediated by issues of cultural esteem, particularly within those cultural formations where a more-than-emotional involvement with the text was privileged. In the case of adult popular culture, a spatially-organized hierarchy of value operated to distinguish selected forms, performers, and audiences through reference to ideas such as seriousness or artistic ambitiousness. Thus class, cultural capital, and aesthetic activity could be inter-articulated to foster and further particular power relations over others.

²Gehman 1960, 180.

As noted above, in the 1940s Sinatra appeared on radio, in motion pictures, on records and in person. His persona was promoted by radio networks and sponsors, Hollywood studios, Columbia Records, and his talent agency, MCA. He became an internationally-recognized celebrity. However, in the late 1940s, as his popularity waned, he began to be less saleable for the various corporations with a stake in his career. Between 1950-52, he was in fact most famous for a long affair with and then marriage to movie star Ava Gardner, which will be discussed below. During this period, in which he was generally considered to be "washed up", it was the fact of his fame which motivated the great majority of press writing about Sinatra, rather than the promotion of the various cultural commodities with which he was associated; in 1954 Good Housekeeping retrospectively referred to ". . . a Sinatra whose name was still in the papers only because of his volcanic marital disturbances" in its account of this period (Wells 1954, 56). By the end of 1952, he was without a record contract, without a film contract, and his agency had "fired" him.

However, in March of 1953, he was signed to a one-year contract, with renewal options, to Capitol Records. Capitol was founded in 1943, at the vanguard of a period of rapid expansion of so-called independent record companies that accelerated in the immediate post-war period. However, by the early 1950s, Capitol, having built a distribution system, was now considered a "major" label, albeit one of the smallest (up until the post-war period, the record industry was virtually controlled by three firms, RCA-Victor, Columbia, and Decca). While Capitol did not have the extensive ties to broadcasting or motion picture studios that many labels possessed (e.g. RCA-Victor was tied to NBC, Columbia to CBS, Decca to Universal Pictures, and M-G-M Records to M-G-M Studios), it still participated in the empire of sound, consciously marketing its performers and products across a variety of media outlets. In the Billboard front page article which announced Sinatra's signing to Capitol, the industrial strategy of linking performers, songs, and other media is made explicit: "Capitol expects to cash in on the

Sinatra disk sales by tying in closely with tune material from his forthcoming movies" ("Sinatra Joins Capitol Fold" 1953, 1). As we shall see, Sinatra's next movie would provide a much-needed impetus toward the resuscitation of his career.

During the summer of 1953, Capitol's industrial strategy of linking its products and performers across a variety of media is visible in a number of advertisements and articles published in Billboard. During the post-war period, the increasing economic viability of Broadway Original Cast Recording albums led to a situation wherein the producers of a potential hit Broadway musical were able to raise money through selling the rights for the original cast recording, before a single performance had taken place, to major record labels eager to invest (and concerned about missing out on a potentially profitable property). Capitol invested in Broadway veteran (and author of numerous standards) Cole Porter's new musical, Can-Can, in 1953, thus securing the exclusive rights to the original cast album. But Capitol sought to exploit its investment further by having various songs from Can-Can recorded by several of its contracted star performers as well, thereby offering for sale a variety of versions of the Can-Can score.

Thus the advertising campaign by Capitol for Cole Porter's Can-Can alternately stresses the original Broadway cast recording album one week (Billboard, 20 June, 1953, p. 41), and the "Smash singles" by Capitol artists such as Kay Starr, Nat King Cole, and Les Baxter a week later (Billboard, 27 June, 1953, p. 35). However, at the bottom of both advertisements, links are made to the other products, whether "And on single records, too - Can-Can song hits by top Capitol artists" (20 June) or ". . . And . . . Capitol's exclusive original Broadway cast album - 15 selections by the stars of the show" (27 June). Here different recording formats (45 RPM, LP, EP), different performers, and various songs from Can-Can are marketed though a link back to the original Broadway musical (as well as to the reputations of Porter and the various Capitol recording stars).

A 15 August article, "'Cantor Story' Tunes by Cap", reports that since Warner Bros. were known to be producing a film of The Eddie Cantor Story, "Cantor was signed to an exclusive disking pact by Capitol last year with an eye towards grabbing disk rights to the 'Cantor Story' . . ." The article goes on to describe part of their promotion strategy: "Album . . . will be . . . played for the first time nationally . . . via Cantor's NBC [TV] half-hour show. Three-way promotion is now being mapped by Warners, Capitol and NBC in pushing the wax package as well as the film". During the Colgate Comedy Hour Starring Eddie Fisher NBC television program discussed above (30 November, 1953), after Cantor tells Eddie Fisher that ". . . you're coming back . . . you're going to meet Frank Sinatra in a little while", Cantor continues by saying to the audience "I don't want to make Eddie Fisher jealous, but I make records too". At this point he holds up a 10" Capitol LP entitled The Eddie Cantor Story, and says that it includes "such old favourites of mine as . . .", giving several titles, and mentioning that there are "about 15 [songs] in all". This kind of "three-way promotion" provides visibility for both the products and the performer, drawing on the fame of the celebrity even as it furthers that fame.

At Capitol, Sinatra's pre-existing celebrity was marketed across a variety of media which simultaneously enhanced his visibility and celebrity. An advertisement for Sinatra's Capitol recording of the theme song from the film in which he was currently starring, From Here to Eternity (Columbia),³ developed the strategy, outlined above, of "tying in closely" tunes, films, and Sinatra in order to "cash in": "Matching his stellar performance in this spectacularly successful film, Frank Sinatra gives a sensational rendition of its title song" (Billboard 5 September, 1953, p. 17). What was perceived at the time to be a clear causal connection in Sinatra's comeback between his acting

³Sinatra does not sing the song in the film; in fact, the song "From Here to Eternity" was written after the film soundtrack had been completed, as an elaboration of an instrumental background to a love scene between Montgomery Clift and Donna Reed.

success in From Here to Eternity and the revival of his record sales led to even greater cross-media linkages in his career.⁴

Throughout the Capitol period, many of Sinatra's single recordings would be tied to motion pictures and television, sometimes those in which he starred (e.g. "Love and Marriage", from the NBC production of Our Town, "The Tender Trap" from The Tender Trap [M-G-M], "Not As A Stranger" from Not As A Stranger [U.A.], all 1955), as well as others (e.g. "Three Coins in the Fountain" from Three Coins in the Fountain [T.C.F.] and "The Gal That Got Away" from A Star is Born [Warner Bros.], both 1954). The reciprocal nature of the process of cross-promotion is seen in the case of a Sinatra hit song, "Young At Heart" (1954), being bought as the title and theme to a subsequent production, Young At Heart [Warner Bros., 1955], in which Sinatra starred. According to Billboard, Warner Bros. paid an estimated \$15,000 to the song's publisher, Sunbeam Music, for use of the title "Young at Heart" for its remake of the 1938 film Four Daughters ("Young at Heart' Title of New Warner Flick" 1954, 18). Here an established hit record is linked to a film with virtually no connection to the song's lyric; however, Sinatra as personality moves from a musical instantiation to a filmic instantiation, and the value of his persona as the nexus between song, record, and film is evident in the price paid to the publisher as well as Sinatra's salary for his role in the film. As I shall argue below, the film in turn reinforced and developed Sinatra's persona and popularity in important ways.

At the end of 1954, Sinatra celebrated his return to the top with a full page advertisement in Billboard (December 4th, 1954, p. 39). The ad features a photo of Sinatra in a suit, tie loosened, pen in hand, standing at a music stand in front of microphone; a portion of the sheet music for his hit single "Young at Heart" is superimposed in the background (an appropriate section of the lyric is legible: "Fairy

⁴As I shall argue below, while From Here to Eternity was a crucial factor, new conceptions of Sinatra's star-persona, evident before the film's release, contributed equally to his comeback.

tales can come true . . ."). A list of his recent awards (1954 Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for From Here to Eternity, 1954 Billboard Disk Jockey Poll Winner for Top Male Vocalist, Top Record ["Young at Heart"], Top Album [Songs for Young Lovers]) appears above a series of notices about his film career: "now in release - Suddenly", "Christmas release - Young at Heart" "Now shooting - Not As A Stranger" "Starting in March - Guys and Dolls". Across the advertisement is a personal message of gratitude to industry insiders involved in his career (presumably Disk Jockeys in particular): "Thanks fellas . . . Busy, busy, busy - Frank". While it is traditional within entertainment industry trade publications to buy year-end or special-issue thank-you advertisements, this ad points out a larger fact of Sinatra's comeback: success at this level for a performer is less about a single blockbuster property than a sort of omnipresence across a wide range of media channels. In this context, each success reinforces the other, each commodity is linked to another, and the availability of the celebrity through a number of textual instantiations enhances desirability and thereby profitability.⁵

The Production of the Capitol Persona: Autobiography and Career

The industrial strategies and tactics outlined above articulate and circulate commodities and images. In the case of Frank Sinatra between 1953-62, an extremely complex "star-image" (Dyer 1979) is produced in the intersection of recordings, film roles, radio, television, and live appearances, and the journalistic discourse on "Sinatra". Here "Frank Sinatra" refers not to an actual living human being, but rather to what Paul Smith (1992) has called a "cultural production", a creation of social discourses which articulate the signifier "Sinatra" to a series of signifieds, within both the media and the audience itself. This section of the dissertation examines the "star-

⁵Given that trade publications primarily (though not exclusively) address an industry audience who are most concerned with making programming or inventory decisions based on likely popular demand, the appeal of "omnipresence" lies in the fact that demand for one commodity is believed to be a strong indicator of the saleability of another, related commodity; here a high degree of product "visibility" (whether film, record, Sinatra) is thought to be a key element in the creation of demand.

image" of "Frank Sinatra" both in terms of the shift in Sinatra's image from the 1940s to the 1950s, and in terms of "dominant" conceptions of Sinatra's cultural significance during the Capitol era.

Ideas of "career" and "autobiography" become increasingly central to popular conceptions of Sinatra during this period. Each of these terms refers to a passage through time; as noted above, there is a sense of having "grown up in public", of a movement from adolescence to adulthood, at work in the discourses around Sinatra which produce his Capitol persona. A key discourse differentiating the Capitol Sinatra from the 1940s Sinatra concerns a sense of having paid one's dues, of having struggled in a manner explicitly lacking in the perceived experience of the "overnight success" of the teen idol. Regardless of how long or hard a teen-identified performer might have worked for success, the gendered aspects of teen-idolhood encourage dismissal and resentment of what is seen as unmerited or manufactured popularity. Conversely, the very fact of his fall from the top of the heap in the late 1940s, and his subsequent come-back, imbued the Capitol Sinatra with a sense of experience, of a life lived through ups and downs, more intense than most, which would be hard to believe in a performer who simply rose to the top and stayed there; in other words, the history of Sinatra's career itself becomes a key component of his image ca. 1953-62.

Related to this is the way in which a sense of autobiography begins to be perceived within Sinatra's work starting in 1953. While today it is commonplace to believe that certain performers draw upon their life experiences to inform their work, this was unheard of in the popular music culture of the 1930s and 40s (obviously I am excluding blues and folk music cultures here, and am referring to contemporary sensibilities, rather than retrospective readings of performers and texts). Film studies work has suggested that parallels between the lives of motion picture stars and their movies informed both the selection of roles and audiences' experiences of films at

least as early as the 1930s.⁶ However, Sinatra's perceived deployment of autobiography as an organizing principle within his Capitol career differentiates his case from earlier Hollywood examples; the idea of autobiography operates within discourses that construct Sinatra as an autonomous "Artist", which are absent from constructions of Hollywood stars clearly working within the constraints of the corporate studio system. As I shall argue, part of the discourse around Sinatra and the idea of career comes to be inflected by his increasing construction as an independent producer, a self-employed businessman who uses his autonomy from corporate structures to further his perceived non-conformism and artistic freedom (ironically, this will also lead into Sinatra's construction as a corporation unto himself, the so-called "Chairman of the Board" phase of his career, which marks the waning of his Capitol persona).

The ground upon which the idea of autobiography, articulated with a conception of Sinatra as artist, is worked out involves, in part, shifting public perceptions of his romance with Ava Gardner between 1950-53; however, this develops in conjunction with shifts in the gendering of Sinatra's star-image, and each is discussed below. To understand the specificity of the Capitol Sinatra, it is useful to trace how his image developed from the peak of his 1940s "bobbysox" phase, through the fallow years of the early 1950s before his comeback in 1953. Let us begin with an examination of Sinatra's image in the 1940s, during the years of his affiliation with Columbia Records and his success as a teen idol with a predominantly female audience.

In the mid-1940s, Sinatra was the teen idol of the hour, softly crooning ballads about dreaming and endless love for Columbia records, inducing widespread "hysteria" (as

⁶See especially Christine Gledhill's anthology, Stardom: Industry of Desire (1991).

it was described in press accounts of the day) among a predominantly teen-aged female audience. He was a skinny dandy, favouring wide-shouldered, light coloured suits, and bowties (recall the articles cited above about "a youngster in a floppy bow tie and a sport coat padded out to here" [Tracy 1954, 3] and a "string-bowed juvenile with the peg pants and multi-colored socks" ["The Boy Comes of Age" 1954, 28-30]). When he did wear a long tie, it was often decorated with a pattern that might be described as "cute", such as the panda bears visible in a 1945 photograph (reproduced in Rockwell 1984, 60) But as seen in a caricature on an LP cover from 1950, Songs By Sinatra, Volume I (Columbia), his overall image was that of a light-weight teen idol in a bowtie.

In the 1940s, Sinatra was a dandy with boyish sex appeal. He appeared in 15 films between 1941 and 1951, and he sang in every single one. He was seen as a crooner,⁷ a song and dance man inserted into lightweight vehicles where he portrayed singers, sailors, dancing baseball players and priests who live happily ever after. One of the most frequently commented upon aspects of Sinatra's physical appearance was his body, which was described over and over again as skinny, scrawny, underfed, bony, and so on. It was the central subject of 1940s articles and even parodied in several animated cartoons (e.g. Swooner Crooner [1944, M-G-M], Little Tinker [1948, Warner Bros.]). The absence of a stereotypically masculine physical presence may have contributed both to his appeal for some women and the largely male dismissal of Sinatra as lightweight, insignificant, and

⁷The connotations of "crooner" are complex. As a term for a popular male vocalist, it became common in the second half of the 1920s, when the rise of radio and of electrical recording popularized new styles of singing. New microphone technology permitted singers to sing in a "softer" fashion than the previously popular "belting" styles (which involved projecting the voice physically in a manner similar to shouting). The "softness" of the crooner's singing both created new forms of intimacy between performer and audience (analogous to the use of the close-up in Hollywood cinema) and led to charges of "effeminacy" and sexual deviance. Thus a crooner might simultaneously have been seen as an idealized romantic figure and a sign of moral decay. Initially crooners tended to attract predominantly female followings, and at times the resentment of many males was used as a promotional ploy, as seen in the poster for crooner Rudy Vallee's first film, Vagabond Lover (1929), whose tag line was "Men hate him!" Bing Crosby, who was considered a "hard crooner", was probably the first crooner to develop a large male following, in the 1930s, in part due to his less florid singing style as well as his "everyman" persona. The Sinatra of the 1940s was clearly articulated in terms of the earlier senses of crooner, both positive and negative.

ultimately effeminate. During World War II, he was originally classified fit for duty, and then suddenly reclassified 4-F. He was criticised for not doing USO work in Europe until after V-E day, and was bitterly resented by many American servicemen. He was reportedly "the most hated man in the South Pacific" after pictures of bobbysoxers mobbing him were published during the war (see Polan 1986, 124-27, for a discussion of male soldiers' feelings about Sinatra during WWII).⁸ A 1945 V-disc transcription⁹ of a performance featuring Sinatra, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Judy Garland contains a series of questionings of his masculinity, done for humorous effect: he is alternately described as "half a man," "a fantasy," and a "weaking."

In a discussion of Rudolph Valentino, Gaylyn Studlar (1993) describes Valentino as a "woman-made man", a reference to his pre-dominantly (if not overwhelmingly) female following, as well as to popular suspicions about his sexuality, which were in turn underpinned by his ethnic "otherness". While the historical conjuncture of the 1920s is different from that of the 1940s, Sinatra too may be considered a "woman-made man". Albert Goldman has described the shift from the Columbia to the Capitol Sinatra in similar terms: "He began his career a softly crooning femme-man, then turned into a middle-aged belter" (1971, 302). His identification of Sinatra in the 40s as a "softly-crooning femme-man" links popular discourse on the gendered nature of crooners as soft and effeminate with a widespread conception of the young Sinatra as emasculated.

In 1950, Time magazine reprinted a section of a British newspaper review of Sinatra, who was then touring England for the first time. The London Sunday Times' Harold Hobson offers an analysis of Sinatra in terms of Sinatra's apparent defiance of

⁸According to a 1955 article, "Sinatra's failure to go into the army made lots of GI's jealous and bitter . . ." ("Who's Out to Get Frank Sinatra?" 1955. Celebrity August: 4-7).

⁹V-discs were specially-commissioned recordings (on unbreakable vinyl for shipping overseas) made for the U.S. armed forces during World War II as a morale booster for troops.

U.S. gender norms; unlike dominant American discourse on Sinatra at the time, Hobson sees this perceived "effeminacy" as an artistic strength:

Here is an artist, who, hailing from the most amiably rowdy and self-confident community the world has ever known, has elected to express the timidity that can never be wholly driven out of the boastfullest heart. To a people whose idea of manhood is husky, full-blooded and self-reliant, he has chosen to suggest that, under the . . . crashing self-assertion, man is still only a child, frightened and whimpering in the dark ("Whimpering in the Dark?" 1950, 47).

Outside of the U.S. cultural context, Sinatra may be perceived as reconfiguring masculinity and thereby commenting on suppressed aspects of gender politics. However, the American perspective was implicit in the title of the Time piece, "Whimpering in the Dark?"; drawing on commonly-held conceptions of crooners such as Sinatra as trivial, the question mark appended to the title subtly editorializes Hobson's assertion into a novelty, a quaint and oh-so-British pretension. It would not be until Sinatra asserted a masculinized identity as serious tough guy that this same quality could be explicitly valorized within U.S. culture; the "tender tough" image of the Capitol Sinatra, as we shall see, exists in an equilibrium, whereby the masculine articulation of Sinatra's persona licenses a feminine articulation.

A decade after the Time article, the New York Times would describe Sinatra's star-image in terms radically different from those of "femme-man" or whimpering child: "It looks as though Frank Sinatra has been tapped to succeed Errol Flynn as the most fantastically romantic representation of the warrior breed on the screen . . . No need for patient establishment of a likely personality with him. He's a hard-bitten, crisp, commanding, wasp-tongued and bottle-guzzling buck from the word 'Go!'" (Crowther

1960, 15). Clearly something has changed. The complex transition from "femme-man" in the 1940s to what I will describe as a "man's man" in the 1950s and later involved the conjuncture of gossip about Sinatra's private life, shifts in his film roles and musical direction, his rise as an independent producer and his articulation with an "older", adult audience, all of which was ultimately wrapped up within discourses of seriousness and artistry.

Sinatra's image began to shift decisively in the later 40s and early 50s. Beginning in 1947, the first year his career began to falter, it was widely publicized (via Robert Ruark's syndicated column) that he had visited Lucky Luciano in Havana; it was rumoured that Sinatra, as a presumably "untouchable" celebrity, had illegally carried a satchel of Mafia money on a flight to Cuba and delivered it to the exiled gangster. He had flown to Cuba in the company of the Fischetti brothers, infamous members of Al Capone's Chicago gang. It began to be reported that Sinatra frequently consorted with other Mob-connected figures, and rumours circulated that the Mafia had in fact been instrumental in Sinatra's rise to fame. He also began a series of antagonistic relations and physical confrontations with the press, including a famous fistfight in 1947 with another journalist, Lee Mortimer, who repeatedly sought to expose Sinatra's alleged ties to organized crime (e.g. "Frank Sinatra Confidential: Gangsters in the Nightclubs", American Mercury, Mortimer 1951). A 1951 incident where he was alleged to have deliberately hit a news photographer with his car further worsened his relations with the media. Sinatra was portrayed in press accounts of the day as a thug or hoodlum. At the time, this contributed to a further worsening of his career. But these incidents resonated so persistently throughout the late 40s and early 50s that by the time of his first Capitol recordings and his role in From Here To Eternity in 1953, a discursive space had opened up in which Sinatra could be articulated as a tougher, more dangerous figure; he would be in a position to be taken more seriously than he ever had been in the 1940s.

Immediately before his comeback, as noted above, Sinatra's career was in trouble, in part because of the organized crime rumours, as well as because of public disapproval of the married-with-children Sinatra's public affair with actress Ava Gardner; but he was also having problems with his voice. A 1950 review of a show at the Copacabana, N.Y., is equivocal in its assesment, referring to Sinatra's "vocal decline" and noting that "Today he may have less voice than ever before - but he has a compensating quality that considerably makes up for his vocal void. That would be salesmanship . . . he has learned much about floor and stage deportment . . . Sinatra today is selling a very saleable brand of showmanship - but not the kind of voice that tingled the distaff side a few years ago . . ." ("Copacabana, N.Y." 1950, 60). A humbled Sinatra is quoted: "'I'm not the greatest singer in the world" he reiterates" ("Copacabana, N.Y." 1950, 60). The reviewer then makes a complaint that is specific to this particular conjuncture in Sinatra's career: "That novelty lyric which suggests a reflection on his personal life should be dispensed with. It's a little too close to home to be in good taste" ("Copacabana, N.Y." 1950, 60); as we shall see, the lack of "good" taste was most likely related to an allusion to his affair with Ava Gardner (or to his wife's refusal to give him a divorce), which, as the reviewer implies, is at this time seen as scandalous and detrimental to Sinatra's career. Just over a month later, Sinatra experienced a vocal hemorrhage ("Sinatra Loses Voice, Dates Cancelled" 1950, 1); the same article that reported his vocal problems noted that his M-G-M film contract had been dissolved (supposedly so he could pursue a television series, which the pact forbade; "Sinatra Loses Voice, Dates Cancelled" 1950, 17), although many assumed it was because his recent box-office performance had been disappointing.

Throughout this period, Sinatra had been trying to get his wife, Nancy, to agree to a divorce. Eventually, Nancy agreed and divorce proceedings were initiated in September, 1950. A September 28th, 1950 article in the New York Herald-Tribune entitled "Sinatra's Wife Will Get Third of His Income" is placed next to a photo of Sinatra

Sinatra's Wife Will Get Third Of His Income

**Wins Maintenance Decree
and Their 3 Children;
He Fails to Oppose Suit**

SANTA MONICA, Calif., Sept. 28 (AP).—The eleven-year-old marriage of Frank Sinatra and his wife was officially terminated today with Mrs. Nancy Sinatra receiving approximately a third of the singer's estimated \$1,000,000 a year income.

Mr. Sinatra let his wife have a separate maintenance decree by default in Superior Court.

Greg Bautzer, attorney for Mrs. Sinatra, disclosed that under terms of a properly settlement, she will receive one-third of his gross income up to \$150,000 annually and then a complicated sliding scale, based on income tax tables, takes effect. Mr. Bautzer said that Mr. Sinatra will earn close to a million dollars this year.

Mrs. Sinatra has been receiving \$2,750 a month support for herself and their three children during months of negotiations over the settlement. In July, the singer's manager, Mack Miller, announced that Mr. Sinatra had signed a three-year contract with Columbia Broadcasting System under which he will be paid \$2,000,000.

Mr. Sinatra and actress Ava Gardner attended the Charles-Louis fight together at Yankee Stadium last night.

Mrs. Sinatra will have custody of the couple's three children. She also gets the Sinatra home in Holmby Hills while he keeps the desert home at Palm Springs. The 1950 Cadillac goes to Mrs. Sinatra.

Sinatra Absent From Court as Wife Wins Decree



Herald Tribune—Acme

Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner at the Joe Louis-Ezzard Charles heavyweight title fight

Sept. 23 1950

Figure 4.1: Photograph, New York Herald-Tribune, 1950

and Ava Gardner at a championship boxing match at Yankee Stadium. While Ava looks like the glamorous movie star she is, Sinatra, with a goofy grin and popping eyes, looks foolish (see figure 4.1). The photo caption, "Sinatra Absent From Court as Wife Wins Decree", articulates a popular view of Sinatra as irresponsible and immature with the choice of a photograph that represents Sinatra as fool. During this period, the New York Daily News underlined the low opinion held by a large portion of the public when it asked "Anyone know of a bigger bore just now than Frank Sinatra?" (quoted in Roberts 1956, 70; also mentioned in "The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 53).¹⁰

While the divorce would not become final until late 1951, the press and gossip columnists intensified their pursuit of Sinatra and Gardner. Throughout early August 1951, Associated Press and United Press wire stories followed Sinatra and Ava Gardner from L.A. to Acapulco to Reno, describing their attempts to avoid, and at times, attack the press (these items can be seen in the Frank Sinatra clippings file at Lincoln Center). An August 6th item reported a "pre-dawn tussle with a cameraman" in which a bodyguard forcibly took the camera away from a photographer, while an August 8th report described the incident at the L.A. airport in which Sinatra allegedly tried to hit press photographer William Eccles with his car: "Mr. Sinatra swerved his Cadillac toward [Eccles], brushing his leg as he snapped the picture. Mr. Sinatra jammed on the brakes and backed up, Mr. Eccles said. "Next time I'll kill you," he said Mr. Sinatra snarled at him" ("Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner Return to Los Angeles" 1951, N. pag.). "Snarling" and "Sinatra" appeared together frequently in the journalism of the period; by 1954, separate photos of Gardner and Sinatra could appear juxtaposed in a magazine with the respective photo captions "Ava smiles for the camera", and "Sinatra snarls at everyone" ("Frankie and Ava: Who Done Who Wrong?" 1954, 36).

¹⁰In 1956, Cosmopolitan claimed that ca. 1951 "... a New York newspaper suggested that his name be filed under things that no longer matter..." (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 82). As with the Daily News quote, I was unable to locate the original reference.

Sinatra's behaviour toward the press was unprecedented for a major celebrity, especially one who had been associated with a major Hollywood studio such as M-G-M; the public relations strategy of the Hollywood studio system had always been to present the star in the best possible light, and to encourage the star to be accessible and polite to the press. While the Hollywood studio system was at this time about to be dismantled, Sinatra's behaviour was still as shocking as it was new. As late as 1958, Sinatra was still operating in a confrontational manner with certain members of the press; according to a New York Times article, "Hit By Sinatra Car, Newsman Charges" (1958, 18), "The Journal-American published a story in which it quoted Mr. Sinatra as having told the chauffeur to run the photographer down". Less than a month later, Sinatra's reputation for violence against the news media was so great that a press photographer covering Sinatra's arrival at the Miami airport (for the location shooting of A Hole in the Head) wore a complete baseball catcher's outfit for protection as he covered the event ("Miami Newsmen Greeted Sinatra with 'Treatment'" 1958, 1, 14).

While Sinatra's attitude toward the press after 1952 would often be understood in terms of a populist suspicion of the mass media and an appreciation of Sinatra's individualism and honesty in his refusal to tolerate journalists hounding him, his behaviour in the early 50s was generally either condemned or viewed as evidence of Sinatra's immaturity. The tone of the caption to a Life magazine photo essay on the Sinatra-Gardner wedding (mere days after his divorce was finalized) suggests that many saw Sinatra's behaviour as ridiculous, reinforcing a perception of Sinatra as self-involved fool (note how Sinatra, sarcastically described as "modest", calls the press "creeps"):

After two years of alarums and excursions - the Frankie-Follows-Ava-to-Spain odyssey . . . the long vigil of the Will-Nancy-Divorce-Frank? period, the Frankie-Threatens-Photographer-with-Fisticuffs incident - the headline-shaking romance of Mr. Frank Sinatra and Miss Ava Gardner . . . came to a

commonplace conclusion last week . . . when reporters and photographers tried to horn in on it, they were stiffly rebuked by the modest bridegroom. "How did these creeps know where we were?" he said . . . ("Well, Said Frankie, We Finally Made It" 1951, 49).

The Sinatra-Gardner marriage was filled with problems from the outset. A 1952 People Today cover story on Ava Gardner contained a section headed "Hollywood Bets the Sinatras Won't Last", in which "Frankie's volatile nature" was seen as a threat to their happiness ("Ava - Bim Bam Baby" 1952, 35). The article saw Sinatra as a problem for both the marriage and himself:

Frankie, even with Ava languorously by his side has plenty of trouble. He was \$40,000 in debt when they got married; his first TV series was considerably less than a smash success; his first post-Ava movie, Meet Danny Wilson, although surprisingly good, did poorly at the box-office . . . The spate of rumors that he was losing his voice - enough to ruin a singers career forever - has done nothing to improve his notoriously violent and belligerent disposition. Though he's proving right now that he can still sell a song, he's got a long hard road to climb to recover the ground he's lost ("Ava - Bim Bam Baby" 1952, 34)

While the possibility of a comeback is suggested almost as an afterthought, the bulk of the discussion of Sinatra stresses his ongoing failure. Sinatra was in the process of trying to reconcile with the press, as seen in a 1952 Variety article, "Sinatra Croons Sweetly to Press: 'So Sorry Now'", which describes his current campaign to, in Sinatra's words, ". . . mend some fences which only those people who really know me can appreciate came to pass because of my private life". . . The "private life" refers to his ardent courtship of Ava Gardner . . . [and] those repeated contretemps with newshounds" ("Sinatra Croons Sweetly to Press: 'So Sorry Now'", 1952, 1). The article concludes with another reference to a potential comeback: ". . . personal friends of Sinatra . . . feel that, in the American tradition of "rooting for a comeback", he'll soon

impress with his sincerity to "make amends"" ("Sinatra Croons Sweetly to Press: 'So Sorry Now'" 1952, 63).

A Billboard review of a live performance in December 1952 suggests that Sinatra's voice has returned to health, and as importantly, that his attitude has improved: "Coming out in a ribbon tie, he started it off with timely chatter about his hassle with customs officials, Africa and similar topical subjects . . . Sinatra was on for more than 40 minutes singing with heart and pace. When he finished he was the old master again . . . The fact that he gave an impression of boyish humbleness, instead of his former irritating aggressiveness, also helped out" (Smith 1952, 3). The title of the article, "Voice Rocks 'Em as of Yore, in N.Y. ; Bow with New Tie, New Personality", links Sinatra's return to his past vocal form with a new image; no longer wearing a key sartorial marker of his bobbysoxer days, the drooping bowtie, and now sporting a new disposition as well.

1953...

Thus as 1953 began, at least at the level of nightclub performances (he was still without television, radio, film, or record contracts at the time), Sinatra was in the process of re-building his reputation. In March, as noted above, he would sign with Capitol Records. He was also about to make From Here to Eternity, which would contribute to changing public perceptions of Sinatra. Eventually, his marriage with Ava Gardner would fall apart, but the reporting on its dissolution showed subtle shifts in attitudes toward Sinatra. These shifts were also the result of the critical and popular success, just as the marriage was collapsing, of Sinatra's non-singing, dramatic role in From Here to Eternity (released at the end of summer 1953) and his Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor (spring 1954), both of which contributed to a new career direction for Sinatra as a "serious" actor. Two New York Times items reporting on the Sinatra-Gardner divorce proceedings less than four years apart suggest how Sinatra's

image will shift: the 1953 piece ("Sinatras in Divorce Step", October 30th, p. 28) refers to Ava Gardner's "singer-husband", while the 1957 piece ("Ava Gardner Seeks Divorce", 15 June, p. 11) reports that "If the actor does not contest the suit . . . it could be granted in matter of days". No reference to "crooner" or "singer" is made (the divorce was granted on July 5th, 1957).

However, more significantly, the winding down of the Sinatra-Gardner marriage at the end of 1953 would now be conceived in terms generally sympathetic to Sinatra; at times, possibly in light of his growing popular and critical success as both singer and actor, Sinatra the fool would be re-constituted as Sinatra the tragic hero of a doomed romance. A 1953 Newsweek article noted that "Romanticists held their breaths when FRANK SINATRA picked himself up from his New York hospital bed (where he was taking a much-needed rest) to fly to Hollywood to attempt a reconciliation with AVA GARDNER, who had announced that she would soon be divorcing the crooner" ("Plans Unchanged" 1953, 46). But even before this, a widely-reported lover's quarrel, public reconciliation, and then separation would take place that would begin a key thread of writing about Sinatra that would continue for years.

That it was common knowledge that Sinatra and Gardner were quarrelling at this time is evident from the description of an audience's reaction to an inadvertent reference, on a network television program, to their marital problems, contained within a September, 1953, page one story in Variety:

Probably the most embarrassing faux pas of the season occurred Sunday night (13) on CBS-TV's "What's my Line?" Ava Gardner, who's been reported having her marital troubles with Frank Sinatra, was appearing as a guest celebrity when Arlene Francis, one of the blindfolded panelists, asked Miss Gardner if she were married. When Miss Gardner replied "yes", Miss Francis, apparently in an effort to be funny, blurted "Are you glad?" The hush was deafening ("Wrong Number" 1953, 1).

That such an incident merits a page one story in Variety suggests a widespread knowledge of (and possibly interest in) the saga of the Sinatra-Gardner marriage; the television studio audience's "hush" suggests a public awareness of the sensitivity of the question posed to Gardner.

The same issue of Variety contained a review of Sinatra's September 1953 stand at a New Jersey nightclub, Bill Miller's Riviera. Abel Green argues that public knowledge of unhappiness in Sinatra's personal life informs the audience's positive response to his performance of standards, especially those known as "torch" songs. "Carrying a torch" is an expression referring to suffering over an unrequited or failed love affair, in which the "flame" of love continues to "burn" in the person carrying the torch despite rejection by the other persons; torch songs emerged in the 1920s with white, female singers such as Helen Morgan, Ruth Etting, and Libby Holman, who sang songs about hopeless love for uncaring men (see Moore 1989, for an interpretation of female torch singing; also Vincendeau 1987). Later, African-American female singers such as Billie Holiday re-interpreted the torch repertoire. Before Sinatra, it was somewhat uncommon for male singers to perform torch material (Green hints at this in his suggestion below that torch material, if sung from the heart, will "click" with an audience regardless of the vocalist's sex) . Sinatra's performance of torch songs at this conjuncture thus articulates a feminized vulnerability with an autobiographical suffering:

If carrying a torch, as most first-nighters suspected, is the key to a resounding click such as Frank Sinatra achieved on his opening last Tuesday . . . then it must be advocated that every chirper, either sex, see a man about a Diogenes . . . The torcheroo, of course, stems from published reports about a lover's spat between Mr. & Mrs. Sinatra, keyed to the just-returned-from-Europe news shots of the beautiful bride, Ava Gardner . . . it registered with the Riviera rounders who are

more Serutan than bobbysox in the actuarial batting average (Green 1953, 55).

Elsewhere Green again emphasized the age of the adult audience, describing them as "exuberant overgrown bobbysoxers", and pointing to the rejection of contemporary styles in Sinatra's performance, noting that Sinatra ". . . reincarnated the straight romantic singing style which, somehow, has left us . . . His was a tour-de-force to delight the Brill Bldg. and Lindy set [mythical homes of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway denizens respectively]; his style of lyrical interpretation gave new values to the wordsmiths . . . Casual reprise of some of the titles reads like a Fire Dept. road company of every top torch and romantic ballad in the book, and Sinatra gave them new meanings . . ." (Green 1953, 55). The articulation of torch songs with Sinatra's private life results in "new meanings"; this development is part of Sinatra's construction as an artist drawing on autobiography to inform his material, enabling Sinatra to "give new values" through his "lyrical interpretation". Green also calls attention to the effectiveness of cross-media linkages, as Sinatra's success at the club ". . . gave new magic to the Hollywood hypo [promotion]. As in the rarefied celluloid days, a picture can still do the trick. "From Here to Eternity" is the answer" (Green 1953, 55).

A September, 1953 issue of Newsweek reported that Sinatra and Gardner had made up: "Movie siren AVA GARDNER, recently returned from abroad, made news by turning up in the audience of a New Jersey night club, where hubby FRANK SINATRA was singing. The result: a touching reconciliation scene ending a ten-day lovers' tiff. To commemorate the event, crooner Sinatra provided night-club patrons an extra fillip by singing 24 nonstop love songs to his one and only" ("Reconciled and Separated" 1953, 59). This integration of performance and "life" would inform much of the writing on Sinatra from 1953 onward. A 1954 Photoplay article describes the same set of incidents: a fight with Ava, her showing up at the Riviera club to hear Sinatra sing, and then another fight. The sequence ends when "Frankie . . . got sick, lost weight, went

without sleep . . and finally wound up in a Manhattan hospital. Again the old melancholy was on him and he didn't care" (Wilson 1954, 90).

A 1956 scandal magazine article on Sinatra's sex appeal re-tells the story in terms of Sinatra's ability to communicate meaning through his performance:

After one of Ava's countless spats with Frankie, she stayed away for 10 days, then went to the nightclub where her husband was appearing. A mutual friend who happened to be present reports: "When Frankie walked out on that stage and saw Ava sitting at a ringside table, you could almost feel the vibrations. Frankie sang like I've never heard him before. He gave every song a 'special something' and it was clear to everyone in the room that Ava got the message. They had a public reconciliation - without exchanging a word!" (Roberts 1956, 21).

This linkage of Sinatra's personal life and his singing became a central component of accounts of Sinatra which saw his sincerity not simply as the result of a well-intentioned honesty, but as part of a compulsion toward autobiography which emerged out of the obsessiveness of the Sinatra-Gardner affair, marriage, and break-up. The Inside Story (Roberts 1956) article cited above goes on to describe the Sinatra-Gardner relationship in terms of emotional extremes: "Their volcanic personalities were too much alike for them to work out a lasting relationship, but in many ways Frankie and Ava were soul-mates . . . Frankie found in Ava a woman who could match him tantrum for tantrum - and then some . . . He and Ava would battle, separate, then reconcile - over and over again" (Roberts 1956, 69-70). Here the conception of Sinatra-Gardner as a great love story ("soul-mates") doomed by the very "personalities" who (ill-) starred in it implicitly casts it as a tragedy. The article emphasizes just how large the failure of the Sinatra-Gardner relationship may have loomed in the public imagination when it points out that this was, in a sense, the one time Sinatra didn't "get his way": "The crack-up of Sinatra's ill-starred marriage with the bewitching Barefoot Countess from Dixie tends to obscure the fact that this gaunt,

hungry-looking guy from Hoboken has always had a way with the women - from doe-eyed dolls to demure dowagers" (Roberts 1956, 21).

Against this background, Sinatra's recordings could be conceived in terms of autobiography informing the popular reception of his performances. A Billboard review of a single released after the break-up of the marriage, "I Could Have Told You So" (April 1954), makes this explicit: "Another mighty convincing effort, this etching has the chanter telling of a love story with autobiographical overtones" (Review of "Don't Worry 'Bout Me' and "I Could Have Told You So" 1954, 22). The song's lyric links insomnia and emotional loss: "I hear her now as I toss and turn and try to sleep/I hear her now making promises she'll never keep . . . Through all of my tears, I could have told you so" (as we shall see below, Sinatra was consistently represented during this period as having trouble sleeping due to "unhappiness"). Similarly, Sinatra's July 1954 recording of "The Gal That Got Away" could be read as a meditation on the failure of the marriage, insofar as Ava Gardner was consistently represented as having left Sinatra.¹¹

In 1956, Cosmopolitan described Sinatra as having been "possessed" and "insanely in love" with Ava, and monumentalized their relationship, calling it "one of

¹¹It is interesting to compare two Variety reviews, a week apart, of Sinatra's and Judy Garland's recordings of the same Harold Arlen-Ira Gershwin song, from A Star is Born. Sinatra's recording of "The Gal That Got Away" is praised as ". . . a standout piece of material for Frank Sinatra. It may not be an immediate hit, but this is a quality song that will be around for a long time. It's peculiarly suited for Sinatra's easy but expressive piping style . . . Sinatra seems to singing better than ever before" ("Jukes Jocks and Disks" Herm Shoenfeld Variety 7 July: probably ca. p. 42 - 44). Sinatra is outside the juvenile Hit Parade ("not be an immediate hit"), and his articulation as standard-bearer for adult "quality" songs with the potential to become standards ("be around for a long time") results in a favourable review. Compare this to the critical dismissal of Garland's recording of "The Man Who Got Away": "it comes across as a little too classy for current market tastes" (Mike Gross "Jukes..." June 30: 42). This suggests that Sinatra occupies a different market and cultural location than Garland, and that quality and classiness can be articulated in terms of a different cultural formation (adult standards) with Sinatra than with other (perhaps more pop oriented) performers. But it may also be that the inter-textual and autobiographical resonance of Sinatra's performance contributes to the perceived quality of the record, insofar as there is a specific "gal" who got away (Ava Gardner) in Sinatra's case, whereas for Garland it is a more abstract "man" who got away (and this in turn facilitates the Garland version's resonance within gay male subcultures).

those violent attractions that throughout history have wrecked lives and caused disaster" (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 88). Photoplay also portrayed the relationship in grandiose terms: "Surely he's entitled to think of himself as a dramatic figure in our history. Why not? When his latest tiff with Ava pushed Eisenhower or Churchill into secondary headlines?" (Wilson 1954, 88). What is central to this discourse is again a sense of passionate extremes, both good and bad, as Photoplay intimates in a caption accompanying photographs of Sinatra and Gardner on their wedding day three years earlier: "With Ava he reached the heights - and the depths . . ." (Wilson 1954, 45). In 1954, Inside magazine pointed out that the intensity of the Sinatra-Gardner relationship had made Sinatra emotionally vulnerable: "Ava Gardner was pretty tough with Frankie for a long time - undoubtedly one of the few persons that has ever gotten beneath the steel shell around him" ("Frankie Plays It Tough!" 1954, 38). The same year Photoplay linked this sense of a newly-vulnerable Sinatra to physical weakness: ". . . Frank's entry into a New York hospital for "observation" shortly after their parting was definitely brought on by his grief . . ." over the end of the relationship (Arnold 1954, 89).

This combination of vulnerability and extreme emotions was played out in subsequent accounts of Sinatra's alleged suicide attempts in the early 1950s (which were not reported as such at the time); these only emerged after the relationship was over, as emblems for Sinatra's turmoil at the time and his seriousness in the present. In 1955, a Time magazine cover story on Sinatra emphasized the emotional and physical toll of the relationship: "They had both come from well below the salt, and they loved the high life at the head of the table . . . Even before the wedding, Frank was worn down pretty fine. One night, in Reno, he had taken an overdose of sleeping pills. And after two years of Ava he was admitted to a New York hospital one night with several scratches on his lower arm . . . After the Avalanche, there wasn't much left of Frank Sinatra" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55). Here Sinatra is represented as victim of the affair's

intensity, with Ava described as an "Avalanche" that overwhelms him. In 1956, Cosmopolitan drew a parallel between Sinatra's professional decline in the early 50s and his problems with Ava: "One night, driven almost to distraction, he took a heavy dose of sleeping pills . . . It was the nadir. He was sick, just about broke, reduced even to borrowing from Ava . . . His career was a shambles and his personality was close to it" (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 88). Just as the relationship with Gardner has almost destroyed Sinatra, so too is his career almost ruined; in this post-comeback account, even his pre-1953 life is now seen as intertwined with his career. The third of a three-part series on Sinatra, published in 1957 in the high-circulation picture magazine Look, describes another suicidal incident, at a N.Y. hotel in 1951. According to a writer who was present, Sinatra called Ava on the telephone: "He told her he was going to kill himself" (quoted in Davidson 1957c, 90). The first installment of the series claimed that "A few years ago, Sinatra took an overdose of sleeping pills at a Nevada resort near Lake Tahoe . . . in 1953, he was admitted to Mount Sinai Hospital . . . with a cut on his left wrist" (Davidson 1957a, 50).

All of these stories are retrospective views which ultimately draw upon "suicide" as a sign of the intensity and seriousness of the relationship, and operate within an overarching discourse articulating Sinatra as intense and serious himself. The idea of taking one's own life stands as the ultimate statement of seriousness, of "really meaning it"; it also functions within the historical valorization of "tormented geniuses" in post-Romantic art, in which artists who kill themselves are distinguished aesthetically and, in the case of painters, economically (insofar as scarcity understood as monetary worth is instantaneously conferred upon the painter's work). Dead artists are "better" than living ones, and refusing to go on living is the ultimate rejection of the profane that sacralizes art in Western culture. The reconfiguration of Sinatra's suffering within ideas of suicide contributes to the articulation of Sinatra as a serious artist, who "takes his own life" as the material for his art, which results in autobiography.

Many articles published after the break-up of the marriage at the end of 1953 stressed that, although it was over, Sinatra carried a torch for Ava, and was ultimately lonely and unhappy despite his comeback successes. Movie Secrets magazine described Sinatra after the break-up in terms of suffering: "Always in a hurry to get someplace he doesn't really want to be; always gloomy, Frankie says, "Man, I really got misery" . . . With Ava, Frankie was miserable. But without her, he's even more miserable. But they're still legally wed" (Randolph 1956, 47). The "still legally wed" comment stands as a "fact" adduced to substantiate a public perception that Sinatra secretly hoped for a reconciliation. As befitting the construction of Ava as the "love of his life", Woman's Home Companion claimed that Gloria Vanderbilt, who briefly dated Sinatra, had inside knowledge of Sinatra's emotional state over Ava: "[Walter] Winchell said that Frank had told her [Vanderbilt] that he could love no other girl but Ava . . ." (Taves 1956b, 62). As late as 1960, Good Housekeeping pointed out that, in the context of a discussion of Sinatra's love affairs, Ava was still in his heart: "And others claim that he is still in love with Ava Gardner" (Gehman 1960, 184).

Adding fuel to the torch-fire was the concomitant suggestion that, even though it was common knowledge that Ava had left Sinatra, she too still felt the flame: "Ava, who legally dissolved her marriages with [Mickey] Rooney and [Artie] Shaw almost overnight when they went on the rocks, still has not divorced Sinatra after three years. Rumor has it that despite her dalliances . . . gorgeous Ava is still under Frankie's spell" (Roberts 1956, 70). Cosmopolitan quoted Gardner on the subject: "I love that temper! I'll say one thing - he's a man! I still listen to his records for hours. I married him because I loved him. What the hell!" (quoted in Rogers St. Johns 1956, 82). Now, like Sinatra's fans, Gardner experiences her own past through his recordings.

Lonesome On Top of the World

But it was a perception that Sinatra had been changed by the relationship that contributed most powerfully to post-comeback descriptions of Sinatra. While Women's Home Companion noted that both Sinatra and Gardner had been affected by the marriage, it was Sinatra's sense of loss that was highlighted: "Marriage with Ava lasted about two years; both emerged bitter. In 1953 . . . Frank was alone and melancholy" (Taves 1956a, 40). A 1955 article in Point magazine on Ava Gardner reprinted a famous photo of the couple while they were still together, walking away from the camera on a cold-looking, windy beach; the caption read "Third, last, and just another loser was Frank Sinatra, here seen fading away with Ava, before he faded alone" ("Ava Gardner's Hidden Problem" 1955, 4-9). Sinatra was clearly perceived as the "loser" in love, who ended up alone (the remark about this being "before he faded alone" again articulates his career and romantic problems). The sense that the experience of losing romantically and professionally had produced a "new" Sinatra is seen in another caption, this time in Inside magazine, accompanying a photo of Sinatra in the dark suit and hat he would wear in his first post-Eternity film, Suddenly: "This is Frank Sinatra today - an "I've been through the mill" perspective on his life" ("Frankie Plays It Tough!" 1954, 38). The "today" serves to emphasize the passage of time that has resulted in Sinatra's changed image; "today" appears in a number of articles as a reminder of a past that subtends the present in the shape of Sinatra's new image. For example, Photoplay also published an article which expressed a conception of a new Sinatra who was "today" a tragic, unhappy, and battle-weary man. Its title, "Stranger to Happiness", and sub-title, "Here is the real tragedy of Frank Sinatra - the man who, always, at the moment of his greatest triumph, seems deliberately to court disaster", suggested that misery had become an essential part of Sinatra. A caption to a photo of Sinatra, in a tux, leaning against a bar, unsmiling, underlined the perceived cost Ava had exacted: "Today . . . a tired and disillusioned man" (Wilson 1954, 44). This new, "moody, melancholy Frank"

(Wilson 1954, 89) was now seen a victim, a loser who had learned his lesson the hard way, paying both his romantic and career dues with suffering.

This is especially evident in a subsequent Photoplay article, whose title, "Lonesome on Top of the World", summed up a public perception that while Sinatra had succeeded in his comeback, he had lost the girl. Its opening paragraph articulates his singing ("I've Got the World on a String"), world-weariness, carrying a torch, and career success:

He had the world by a string. But tonight, he was too tired to care. He had neither the will nor the heart. The papers were reporting that Ava Gardner was going through with the divorce - but carrying a tall torch. If so, wherever she was, it must have been taller than ever tonight. When Frank Sinatra had said, "I have a career too," intimating that the basic problem between them lay in adjusting to two careers, his was an understatement. Tonight that career was really closing in. Motion pictures. Television. Radio. Records. Night clubs. Pick his own spotlight. Write his own ticket. This should have been making him feel great, for just a year ago the wiseacres were writing his ticket for him - only one way. But tonight it seemed an empty victory. He seemed too drained, physically and emotionally, for any of it to matter (Arnold 1954, 59)

The sense of a new, tragic Sinatra, whose return to the "top of the world"¹² has nonetheless failed to compensate for his loneliness, is repeated throughout the article (and the "today" trope is used again): "Today . . . he was on top again. And finding his success empty" (Arnold 1954, 89); a photograph of Sinatra in an overcoat, wearing a hat and glasses, standing on a streetcorner and looking down, is interpreted as evidence

¹²The reference to Sinatra being "on top of the world" comes from an interview with Time magazine in the spring of 1954, just after winning his Oscar for From Here to Eternity and when his Capitol recordings were best-sellers. The article begins with the title of his 1953 recording, "I've Got the World on a String", reinforcing a perceived parallel between Sinatra's singing and his career. Sinatra is then quoted: "'Music is getting better,' Frankie says, and so is he. 'Everything's ahead of me. Man, I'm on top of the world. I'm buoyant'" (quoted in "Back on Top" 1954, 72).

of his new melancholy by a caption which reads: "Today, Frank Sinatra stands alone and knows that success is not enough" (Arnold 1954, 88). Photoplay goes on to show that while both Sinatra and Gardner are unhappy, it is Sinatra who is associated with a conception of it as tragedy: "Pressed for reasons, Ava said to a friend wearily, "It's just too long and complicated to tell". A solemn Frank said, "I guess it's so, if that's what she says. It's very sad. Very tragic""(Arnold 1954, 88). The new Sinatra is humanized and humbled; despite his newfound popularity, he is portrayed as realizing the common-sense sentiment that success "without someone to share it with" is hollow.

A sense of fatigue read as bitter experience permeates the article; this is linked with the busyness of a booming career in a quote from Sinatra: "'I'm tired," he said, "Beat - real beat . . . I've been recording for the last two nights until 2 A.M., cutting an album for Capitol . . ." (Arnold 1954, 87). The late night recording session, as I shall argue below, becomes an emblem for Sinatra's new, world-weary and melancholy persona. The article goes on to articulate further Sinatra's singing, sadness, and Ava in a description of rehearsals for an NBC Comedy Hour: "If [co-star] Jimmy Durante hadn't been an old and dear friend, Frank Sinatra, you knew, wouldn't have been here. Not tonight. Nor would he have been singing into a dark vacuum - "You vowed your love, from here to Eternity . . . This was not the way either Frank Sinatra or Ava Gardner had planned to spend their second wedding anniversary" (Arnold 1954, 88). Like Sinatra's recording of "The Gal That Got Away", his version of "From Here to Eternity" contained lyrics which could be articulated with the collapse of his affair and marriage with Gardner: "Now I'm alone, with only a memory/My empty arms will never know why/Though you are gone, this love that you left with me/Will live from here to eternity".

By the time of the major profile that appeared in Look in 1957, Sinatra's relationship with Ava Gardner had become an essential component of the narrativization of Sinatra's career that continually asserted the difference of the "new" Sinatra from his

earlier bobbysox incarnation. The article quoted an anonymous roommate of Sinatra's on his alleged behaviour after his break up with Ava: ". . . I come home at night and the apartment is all dark . . . it's like a funeral parlor. There are three pictures of Ava in the room and the only lights are three dim ones on the pictures. Sitting in front of them is Frank with a bottle of brandy. I say to him 'Frank, pull yourself together.' And he says: 'Go away. Leave me alone.' Then all night he paces up and down and says 'I can't sleep, I can't sleep'" (quoted in Davidson 1957c, 84). Sinatra's suffering over Ava is here represented in almost cinematic terms, with the lighting, the shrine to Ava, the alcohol, and the insomnia all contributing to a dramatization of Sinatra's putative "life", which is little different, as we shall see, from that found in a number of his films and albums of the period. Look draws upon the "lonesome on top of the world" discourse in its description of Sinatra's loneliness and misery despite his comeback: "Today, at the very peak of his success, Sinatra should be enjoying the fruits of his comeback from near oblivion in 1952. Instead, he suffers from recurring spells of anguish" (Davidson 1957c, 84). This anguish is seen to inform his singing of torch songs: "In his nightclub act, he often puzzles audiences by singing obscure, sad songs, which his friends refer to as "Music for Me Only." In introducing another group of songs about men who have been done wrong by women, he'll say, "Shake hands with the vice-president of the club" . . . All this might seem strange for a man whose success with women is so legendary" (Davidson 1957c, 84-6). The opening paragraph of the first article of the Look series makes it clear that Ava is the ultimate source of Sinatra's suffering:

One day last Spring, Frank Sinatra awoke from a nap in his dressing room. He was in a black, angry mood. He sat for half an hour, pulling on his lower lip, his head bowed. He ignored his friends and henchmen in the room . . . He picked up a newspaper containing a picture of his wife, Ava Gardner, and hurled it acrosss

the room . . . Although he is generally acknowledged to be the top all-around talent in show business today . . . he was miserable"(Davidson 1957a, 37).

A newspaper photograph of Ava figures prominently on the cover of the Time magazine on which Sinatra appeared in 1955 (29 August; see figure 4.2). The cover painting consists of a large photo of Sinatra, which is sitting on a table, with crumpled newspaper clippings scattered around it, as well as a stylized actor's mask sitting in the background. The actor's mask is one associated with tragedy, as it is grimacing in a frown; Sinatra too is not smiling - he is staring out of the photo in a vaguely threatening fashion, his lips slightly parted. Sinatra is presented wearing a key emblem of his Capitol persona, a grey fedora with a black hatband. At the bottom left corner of the cover, a smaller photo of Ava Gardner, partially beneath a corner of the Sinatra photo, appears as part of a newspaper clipping headlined "Ava Stays Away". The legible headlines of the various newspaper clippings offer a narrative of Sinatra's career up to that point, describing a movement from bobbysox idol ("I Donno Why They Go Crazy Over Me - Sinatra"; "'Voice's N.Y. Opener Needs 142 Cops To Quell Mobs"), to press-hating thug ("Socks Columnist at Ciro's"), to serious actor ("Dramatic Roles Attract Sinatra"), to tragic romantic figure ("Ava Stays Away"). Clearly a conception of the history of Sinatra's career as crucial to his current cultural valence is being deployed here, insofar as the larger framework in which the cover story operates is the sense of a "new" post-comeback Sinatra, who is newsworthy enough to sell copies of Time by appearing on the cover. The unsmiling Sinatra and the mask of tragic theatre convey a sense of seriousness that is also new; the reference to Greek tragedy suggests that a heightened cultural prestige can now be articulated with Sinatra and his "dramatic roles". The three largest components of the composition, from top to bottom, are the tragic actor's mask, the photo of Sinatra, and the photo of Ava, a chain of signifiers suggesting links between art and life, with Sinatra as the point of articulation. Sinatra's



Figure 4.2: Cover, Time, 1955

"art" is informed by his "life"; thus the idea of autobiography again underpins the magazine's representation of Sinatra.

In the text of the Time cover story, Sinatra's suffering is signified by the claim that he is afraid of loneliness, and avoids being alone at all costs (including not sleeping):

Frankie loves the clink of ice in well-filled glasses, and the click of Hollywood's oddballs in a well-filled room . . . But everybody has to go home, sooner or later, and the moment comes, sometimes, when Frankie is left alone - the thing he seems to hate the most in life. If that should happen, he may ring up a girl he has known for many years. When she arrives, they sit and talk and talk until the sun comes up or she falls asleep, and then Frank may wander next door to have breakfast with Jimmy Van Heusen, the songwriter and Sinatra friend. So begins another day in the Arabian Nights of Frank Sinatra . . . ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 57)

In a short piece in Time three years later, Sinatra's insomnia is the focus of a humorous account of a trip to London, England, where ". . . the Daily Mirror commented [on his king-sized bed at the Dorchester Hotel]: "Never was so large a bed used by so small a man with so little apparent regard for sleep." Frankie spent most of his insomnia with [socialite] Adelle Beatty" ("Bee Volant" 1958, 55; recall also the "I can't sleep" quote attributed to Sinatra in Davidson 1957c, 84, cited above). Good Housekeeping continued the idea of Sinatra as brooding insomniac: "Often [neighbour Irving Paul] Lazar would come home late at night and see Sinatra alone in his flat, hunched over a table with a bottle and a glass before him, brooding over something he had done or failed to do, the hi-fi system rattling desolately against the walls". Lazar links the behaviour to Sinatras "moods": ". . . when he got into one of those moods, there was nothing anybody could do" (Gehman 1960, 180).

Sinatra's construction as a melancholy creature of the night, a moody insomniac who stays awake to avoid being alone, developed the mythology built up around the Ava Gardner relationship into a more general conception of Sinatra as an emblem of loneliness. The conclusion of the Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra (1955) is entitled "Top of the World", and it does not refer to Ava but to a general loneliness and unhappiness: "If he is not happy, he is at least content, with the deep satisfying contentment that comes with doing a difficult job and doing it well . . . although he lives quietly, perhaps in loneliness . . ." (Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra 1955, 63). In another short article, Time also referred to Sinatra's emblematic loneliness, alluding to John Donne and Ernest Hemingway's writing: "That firm believer in men as islands unto themselves, Cinemactor-Crooner Frank Sinatra . . . tolled the bells over two big deals he had in the works" ("People" 1955, 32). A 1956 article in Screen Stars is entitled "I Walk Alone", and its sub-title, in its reference to "a man who has everything and nothing", re-iterates the conception of Sinatra as "lonesome on top of the world": "There's a loneliness to the words "I Walk Alone" . . . an aloofness . . . an "I'm sufficient unto myself" attitude . . . above all, it is a poignant confession of a man who has everything and nothing . . . This candid analysis of Sinatra's feuds and furies will help you to understand this controversial character" (Richards 1956, 25). On the facing page (24) there is a photo of Sinatra in a cowboy outfit, walking across the deserted western street set of Johnny Concho (1956). His hands are in his pockets, and he is grimacing; the selection of this photo offers a visual equivalent of the unhappy loner described in the text.

Look also "found" a photographic instantiation of Sinatra-as-lonely; a shot of Sinatra, in a fedora and a raincoat (another key piece of Capitol clothing, discussed below), walking away from the camera down an empty hallway. Again his hands are in his pockets, and his hat is tilted to one side, suggesting the fatigue of a long day's work. The caption reads: "He tries to work 18 hours a day, every day of the year. But there

comes a time when he must go home" (Davidson 1957c, 97). Thus Sinatra's work is again linked to his life in terms of a compulsion, as it had been in the first Look article: "Sinatra today is trying to lose himself in his work" (Davidson 1957a 48).

The construction of Sinatra as a "lonely figure" on top resonated through a number of articles in the mid- and late fifties, where he was articulated with the "lonesome on top of the world" imagery discussed above (Arnold 1954), except now without any specific reference to Ava Gardner. Look magazine describes Sinatra's mountaintop Coldwater Canyon home, and remarks at Sinatra's insomnia: "The neighbors say that often the lights in the house are on all night long. They can hear symphonic music, and at a window, they can see a lonely figure with a telescope - staring at the stars" (Davidson 1957a, 48). In 1958, Movie Show described Sinatra's predilection for all-night parties, again linking his insomnia to a fear of loneliness and insecurity:

. . . those closest to him felt he was merely escaping from the very real fact that he could not face loneliness, that he could not live with himself because in his own mind he was nothing at all . . . he was thoroughly miserable and his misery was worst during the few rare hours he had to be alone. Like night time. When the lavish parties were over and Sinatra was left alone, he couldn't bear it (Dowd 1958, 58; emphasis in original)

The sub-title of the Movie Show article suggested that success could not conquer Sinatra's demons: "Fame . . . the love of beautiful women . . . riches . . . Frank Sinatra's life held all these treasures. But what did he do when they were no longer enough to make him happy? He became a new man". The article begins with a literalized version of the "lonesome on top of the world" discourse, probably developed from the Look article cited above:

High on a hill in a rather nondescript house in Coldwater Canyon lives a man few know or ever really see during the daytime. Often, at night, his shadow can be seen moving to replace symphonic records on a turntable. Just as often, half-

wrapped in darkness, he can be seen peering at the stars through a huge telescope. This man is Frank Sinatra. The mature Sinatra now capable of enjoying such things as solitude or study. You "feel" for this new Sinatra, you can't help it. There is something both surprising and admirable about his struggle to become different . . . It wasn't easy for a versatile actor of his calibre to finally admit - both to himself and the world - that he was unhappy (Dowd 1958, 37; emphasis in original)

An article in a 1959 issue of Climax, a magazine sub-titled "Exciting Stories for Men", also described Sinatra's mountaintop Coldwater Canyon house as an example that he was "lonesome on top of the world":

During the wee small hours when all his friends have gone and Frank can't get to sleep, he spends hours on end gazing at the stars through a fine telescope. In material goods and achievement, Frank Sinatra has acquired almost all that the world has to offer, but his is a restless soul, and the evidence seems to indicate he still wants something that so far has eluded him . . . Frank Sinatra, loved by millions of fans and occupying the topmost peak of success, finds his pinnacle a very lonely place (O'Neal 1959, 88).

Another reference to Sinatra's "own" articulation of his emblematic loneliness on his 1955 album, In the Wee Small Hours, appears in the series of Look articles. Describing Sinatra as "morose and irritable", Look painted a scenario that was also extremely influenced (as I argue below) by Sinatra's nightclub performances of the torch song "One for My Baby (And One More for the Road)", in which Sinatra would tell the audience to imagine themselves as the bartender of the song's lyric, to whom the singer pours out his tale of woe, at "quarter to three" in the morning (i.e. just before closing time):

When Sinatra is in his deepest depressions, when he is lonely and girls no longer interest him and he can't sleep at night, he often seeks out the company of a

handsome, white-haired Hollywood night-club proprietor named Johnny Walsh. On these occasions, Sinatra sits with Walsh at a corner table of his 881 Club and pours his heart out to him until the wee hours of the morning (Davidson 1957a, 46)

The lyric of "One for My Baby" begins with by establishing the setting for a barroom confession: "It's quarter to three/There's no one in the place except you and me/So set 'em up Joe/I got a little story I think you oughta know" and concludes with a reference to carrying a torch: "This torch that I've found/It's got to be drowned/Or it soon might explode/So make it one for my baby/And one more for the road". The moody, late night setting of the "wee hours of the morning" in the Look quote also articulates Sinatra-as-lonely-insomniac with the discourses associated with the In the Wee Small Hours LP.

An article recounting the recording of In the Wee Small Hours in a 1955 issue of Capitol Music Views conceives of the LP as a theme album. The table of contents of the issue suggests that mood and theme are integrated in the late night setting of the recording: "As the title suggests, the mood of the album describes how a young man feels in the "wee small hours" when he has had a tiff with his best girl" (Kirwan 1955, 2). Thus the affective quality of the album is understood in narrative terms, wherein "mood . . . describes" a specific situation. The article itself articulates Sinatra's singing with the production of mood: ". . . Frank has the rare ability to establish contact with his audience no matter where he's singing, no matter what the mood he wishes to evoke" (Kirwan 1955, 6). The fact that the album is presented as having been recorded late at night, by a Sinatra who lingers behind after the session ends, is deployed as a sign of Sinatra's (and the album's) authenticity:

Sinatra takes a gulp of the lukewarm coffee remaining in the cup . . . he lifts the inevitable hat from his head, and plops it right back, almost as if he'd wanted to relieve pressure from the hat band. The studio empties fast; just music stands and chairs remain . . . He waves to the night janitor now straightening up the

studio and says, "Jeez. What crazy working hours we've got. We both should've been plumbers, huh?" (Kirwan 1955, 8)

This passage ends the article; implicit in the reference to "pressure from the hat band" is a sense that Sinatra is himself operating under the pressure of a certain compulsion, whether to stay up late or to sing his own autobiography. Like the musical representation of a sad and lonely mood, Sinatra is himself represented in terms which imply that his investment in the performance/recording involves a lived mood, above and beyond the conventional professional distance between the singer and the song. The scene suggests a lack of real closure; there is a melancholy beneath the humorous reference to "crazy working hours", and a feeling that this work is not really over for Sinatra, again in part because it is precisely not work in the conventional sense of the extraction of fiscal profit from labour.

The idea of "crazy working hours" brings together both a sense of artistic work which is a different kind of labour, beyond the economic relations of the professional entertainer and the record label, and a sense that representations of temporality are central to the album's significance. In another issue of the magazine, an ad for In the Wee Small Hours describes the LP in terms of a relationship between loneliness and time: "Frank's intimate balladeering about the loneliest hours of all, from midnight to dawn" (Capitol Music Views, January 1956, p. 17). The lyrics of the songs on the album consistently deploy a specific time of day (late night) as metaphor for sadness and loneliness. The album's "theme" song and opening track, sets the mood: "In the wee small hours of the morning/When the whole wide world is fast asleep/You lie awake and think about the girl/And never ever think of counting sheep/When your lonely heart has learned its lesson/You'd be hers if only she'd call/In the wee small hours of the morning/That's the time you miss her most of all". While night is a time of rest and sleep for "the whole wide world", night is a time of suffering and insomnia for "Sinatra". Repeatedly, song lyrics call attention to nighttime, using pathetic fallacy to express the

sad and lonely mood of the songs' protagonists (e.g. "Deep in a Dream", "When Your Lover Has Gone", "Dancing on the Ceiling", "This Love of Mine"). In the Look quote cited above, Sinatra's purported unhappiness is conceived in terms of night as a time of emotional turmoil, that is then articulated with the album's theme song: "When Sinatra is in his deepest depressions, when he is lonely . . . and he can't sleep at night, he . . . pours his heart out . . . until the wee hours of the morning" (Davidson 1957a, 46).

The articulation of "Sinatra" in articles such as the Look piece operates intertextually with the articulation of "Sinatra" on an album such as In the Wee Small Hours. In each case, "Sinatra" as a singular persona standing outside the everyday is worked out in terms of an opposition between night and day. "Day" connotes the normal, the ordinary, while "night" operates as a sign of difference, of otherness: "night" is the time of creativity and passion, of the illicit and the dangerous, and these are characteristics attributed to Sinatra throughout the period.

The cover of In the Wee Small Hours features a painting of Sinatra leaning against the wall of building, with a series of street lights receding down an empty, impressionistic, blue-turquoise street in the background (see figure 4.3). Sinatra is dressed in a black suit with a grey handkerchief, a white shirt with a maroon tie loosened at the open collar, and grey hat with a black hatband. His hat is tilted back, not cockily but perhaps in resignation, perhaps as a sign of fatigue, "almost as if he'd wanted to relieve pressure from the hat band". An unsmiling Sinatra is holding a lit cigarette, and is leaning against a black wall, looking down, possibly at the smoke curling up from cigarette, but more likely staring emptily into space, looking lost. The right hand side of the composition is made up mostly of blacks, and constitutes the foreground, behind which is the background street scene, which is washed in a phosphorescent blue, almost glowing in its chiaroscuro lighting (as opposed to the representation of Sinatra, which is painted in relatively even light, except for the slight reflection of the blue light visible under one eye - almost a "shiner" - and on the top of the hand holding the cigarette).

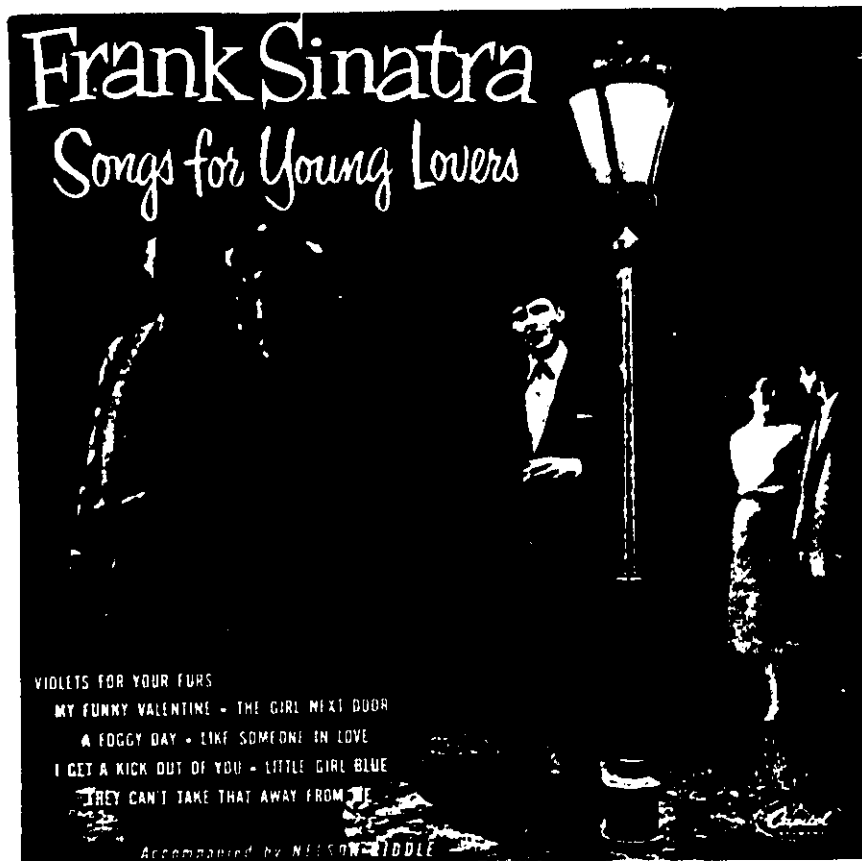


Figure 4.4: Front Cover, Songs for Young Lovers (Capitol, 1954)



Figure 4.3: Front Cover, In the Wee Small Hours (Capitol, 1955)

While Sinatra is painted in a relatively "realist" style of representation, the street scene is slightly more abstract, with parts of buildings missing details (the foundation of one of the buildings is non-existent; the building simply rises out of the misty blue tint). The street lamps which recede down the street have glowing white haloes; while the bulb of the one lamppost visible in the left foreground is outside the frame of the cover, it exists as a compositional balance to Sinatra standing on the right side of the painting, permitting a relationship to be set up between Sinatra and the lamppost.

This relationship is reinforced by its reference to the front and back covers of Sinatra's first Capitol LP from a year earlier, Songs for Young Lovers. In the photograph on the front cover of that album, Sinatra appears dressed in a similar hat and clothes, holding a lit cigarette, standing beneath a lamppost, which illuminates him against a very dark background in which young couples stroll, oblivious to Sinatra (see figure 4.4). The back cover features liner notes which begin "Young love blossoms in the lamplight of the city . . ."; beside the notes is a line drawing, in whose background a solitary couple walk in a park whose urban setting is conveyed by a horizon of stylized skyscrapers, with a glowing moon in the sky. In the foreground of the drawing is a representation of the same lamppost that appears on the front cover. The linkage of the two album covers through the appearance of Sinatra standing in the dark near a lamppost is certainly part of an attempt to link one commodity to another for promotional reasons; someone who bought Songs for Young Lovers might be attracted to In the Wee Small Hours because of similar iconic elements in the cover.

However, the fact that Sinatra's second Capitol LP, Swing Easy! (1954), did not have a nighttime background or a lamppost suggests another motivation as well. Swing Easy!, as its title implies, consists of uptempo, brass-dominated rhythm songs; the liner notes, perhaps drawing on Sinatra's post-comeback quote to Time magazine ("Man, I'm on top of the world. I'm buoyant"; "Back on Top" 1954, 72), claim Sinatra's singing on the album exhibits ". . . the sparkle of a buoyant soul and the breezy

nonchalance of a seasoned performer . . .". Overall, Swing Easy! conveys a sense of speed and joy associated with the lyrical subject of one of its songs, "Get Happy". Conversely, Songs for Young Lovers and In the Wee Small Hours contain slower tempi, string-dominated ballads. In terms of mood, Swing Easy! may be described as "upbeat", unlike the ballad albums. Thus the similarities across the covers of Songs for Young Lovers and In the Wee Small Hours may serve to articulate similar moods and dispositions, as well as musical-stylistic qualities (ballads, slow tempi, strings).

In the case of In the Wee Small Hours, when read in this context, the cover lamppost may also signal the "torch" mood of the ballad-filled album. The lyrics of the 16 songs on the LP without exception focus on lost love; though none of the songs, strictly speaking, comes from the "torch" repertoire of the 1920s, most of them would by 1955 have been considered "torch songs", insofar as their lyrics lament lost love. The mood of the album can be described by two of the song titles, "Mood Indigo" (Ellington, Mills, & Bigard) and "Glad to be Unhappy" (Rodgers & Hart). The "indigo" of the Ellington song refers both to a popular conception of "the blues" as sadness, and to nighttime and darkness as the time of the most intense experience of unhappiness ("In the evening when the lights are low/I'm so lonely I could cry"). "Glad to be Unhappy", like many of Lorenz Hart's lyrics, is an ironic celebration of romantic misery, and clearly draws upon the torch tradition in its account of a rejected lover ("Unrequited love's a bore, and I've got it pretty bad/But for someone you adore, it's a pleasure to be sad"). The album as a whole conveys the "sad mood" of someone carrying a torch; the liner notes contribute to this reading in their linkage of Sinatra and loneliness: "Standing in front of the mike, his shoulders hunched a little forward, he sang . . . And as he sang, he created the loneliest early-morning mood in the world". In this context, the lampposts on the cover may be read as signifiers of the "torch" carried by Sinatra, which is the source of the singer's suffering. If we recall the Capitol Music Views articulation of the album's "denotative" significance ("As the title suggests, the mood of

the album describes how a young man feels in the "wee small hours" when he has had a tiff with his best girl"; Kirwan 1955, 2), it is evident that Sinatra's failed relationship with Ava Gardner may serve as a sub-text of listeners' experiences of the album. The autobiographical resonances are underlined by the final song of the album, "This Love of Mine" ("This love of mine goes on and on/Though life is empty since you have gone/You're always on my mind, though out of sight/It's lonesome through the day/But oh the night"), which was co-written by Sinatra in the 1940s. While he had recorded it with the Tommy Dorsey big band over a decade earlier, its deployment at this particular conjuncture re-inflects a standard torch-like lyric so that it may be read as a statement about the end of the relationship with Ava.

In a review of the album in the jazz magazine Down Beat, Barry Ulanov begins by linking the image on the LP cover to Sinatra's cross-media "image", here called "character", which Ulanov particularly associates with Sinatra's new status as "serious" actor:

There's the title tune . . . to justify the cover picture of Frank leaning disconsolately against a shadowy building, in a blurred street right out of a Hollywood designer's idea of New York at say 3 in the morning or in the middle of a psychiatrist's nightmare . . . It's smart selling, I suppose, because Frank is a character, one you see a lot nowadays as well as hear, and not only a character but a character actor (Ulanov 1955, 11).

Note Ulanov's conception of the cover as either cinematic or psychoanalytic reference. Ulanov again refers to the cover, seeing the lampposts not as torches but as emblems of Sinatra's status in the world of contemporary popular music: "This is a set that has it, in a word: tunes, performances, all-around quality. It's a beacon light, and not just in a dim street on a Capitol LP cover, but in the desert, the dark desert, which is pop singing today". Sinatra is thus positioned against the mediocrity of the Hit Parade, in terms of his "taste and emotional involvement", as well as his involvement in the authorship of

the album; Ulanov praises "the wisdom with which Frank has put this set together". Ulanov notes that while popular song lyrics are seldom "poetry" (i.e. of a heightened cultural status), the artistry of Sinatra's singing confers distinction in an act of what might be described as "re-authorship": ". . . even those that don't deserve the attention benefit by the honor Frank shows them . . . Making sense of them . . . just as if he were talking to somebody and meaning what he says and were determined to convince him or her (mostly her, of course)". Here Sinatra's status as artist conceived in terms of his perceived honesty ("meaning what he says) and intention to communicate ("determined to convince"). Ulanov is most explicit about the cultural distinction he is attributing to Sinatra's work in a passage which deploys the presumed cultural superiority of jazz as the sign of Sinatra's artistic credibility; according to Ulanov, when

melody and meaning are indissolubly wedded . . . for a moment or two popular singing takes on the stature of an art and its close connection with jazz becomes something to be celebrated and not deplored . . . Sinatra is, after all, a product of the jazz environment. He always has had a taste and an intuition for jazz nuances, for improvisational ornamentation, for swinging beats, far beyond the call of popular-singing duty (Ulanov 1955, 11).

Thus Sinatra's status as artist results from a combination of "character" read as image, a desire to convey a truth he believes in, and a demonstration of discrimination in his song selection. In another article in Down Beat, Sinatra friend Sammy Davis, Jr. also articulated a conception of Sinatra as artist, again in terms of Sinatra's commitment to quality:

Frank is now in an enviable position - he can record whatever he wants . . . He's painstaking about his recordings . . . He'll do 20 takes if he feels it isn't the way he wants it . . . There was a session for Wee Small Hours. It was 3 a.m., and he was still going over certain things, listening to the playback, and shaking his

head, saying, "No" . . . He was there until dawn until he got what he wanted. He hears the smallest detail (Davis, Sammy Jr. 1956, 12).

Here late-night recording operates both as marker of perfectionism conceived as artistry and as sign of loneliness. Sinatra is articulated as an "author" because his singing is not for profit; Sinatra is portrayed as independent of industry forces ("record whatever he wants"), and compelled to sing to a standard of his own setting/making ("until he got what he wanted"). As author, Sinatra's involvement is total ("He hears the smallest detail"); this involvement can in turn be articulated with the perceived absence of a gap between his life and art within the discourses of autobiography.

Dangerous

I will return to questions of autobiography, authorship, autonomy, and artistry below, after examining a second set of discourses which construct Sinatra as moody and emotional. These discourses work in conjunction with a conception of Sinatra as "alone" that is inflected differently from the "lonesome on top of the world" imagery of the romantically vulnerable Sinatra discussed above. Here, Sinatra is articulated with ideas of mental instability, rebelliousness, and ethnicity that work together to produce a tougher, more dangerous image. However, the idea of autobiography is equally present, and as I shall argue, it is a conception of Sinatra as a singular personality, as individual artist moving through a career-conceived-as-life, that operates to unify the varying articulations of his star-image.

While the "lonesome on top of the world" discourses discussed above were articulated with conceptions of melancholy and lost love, Sinatra's "moodiness" and emotional extremes were also represented as evidence of more dangerous, self-indulgent and maladjusted components of Sinatra's star-image. As a result of the series of Look articles in 1957, Sinatra sued the magazine's publisher, Cowles, for U.S.\$2,300,000

for libel.¹³ A portion of the suit published in the New York Times captures another side of Sinatra's star-image, in this case articulated by his own lawyers: "Mr. Sinatra's complaint . . . says the article created the impression that the actor-singer was a "neurotic, depressed and tormented person with suicidal tendencies and a libertine"" (Pryor 1957, 44). That this more negative conception of Sinatra as psychologically unstable and troubled was well-known is illustrated by the audience's laughter at a joke made by Bob Hope on the first episode of Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show (ABC, 17 October, 1957), which aired approximately four and a half months after the Look articles were published. Addressing Sinatra, Hope says "I just came down to congratulate you on the beginning of your new series. I know what a thrill it is to step out here on the stage in front of millions of people and know that deep down inside you're insecure". Both Sinatra and the audience laugh at the apparent ludicrousness of the perception that Sinatra suffers from doubts of any kind, and yet it is precisely an articulation of Sinatra as "neurotic" which enables the joke in the first place.

The Capitol period is marked by this production of a new Sinatra who is seen as unstable, dangerous, and non-conformist. As noted above, Sinatra had gone through an extended period of antagonistic relations with the press during the lowest ebb of his career. His comeback in 1953 was certainly assisted in part by his success at mending fences and displaying a more cooperative attitude toward journalists and photographers. However, after his success with From Here to Eternity and his Capitol recordings, his

¹³According to the New York Times, "Mr. Sinatra admitted that he had made a written agreement with the publishing company in January, 1955, for Look to publish his autobiography in December of that year", but that Sinatra was never able to meet with the Look writer (Pryor 1957a, 44). Sinatra subsequently dropped the libel action in favour of a right-of-privacy suit: "Mr. Sinatra said . . . that he would directly challenge the right of the press to report publicly the personal or private life of celebrities, as distinguished from their professional activity" (Pryor 1957b, 45). I was unable to ascertain what became of this second lawsuit, although it is ironic that Sinatra of all people would insist on a separation of the "personal" and the "professional". However, it is consistent with Sinatra's rebellious, autonomous, and individualistic image to launch a populist challenge against a press establishment commonly seen as manipulative, deceptive, and supportive of dominant class interests.

combative approach to the press resurfaced occasionally. Much of the discursive construction of Sinatra as emotionally unstable derives from his displays of temper with members of the press, although as we shall see, the rebellious and individualistic aspects of Sinatra's star-image contributed as well. This resulted in the production of a Sinatra whose "aloneness" was not inflected as "lonesome", but rather in terms of an individualism alternately conceived as rebellious or eccentric.

Well before the Look articles, Sinatra's "fiery" temper was an important part of his image, as the New York Times noted in 1954: "The Sinatra temperament bursts into fiery flame . . . when gossip columnists pry into his personal life" (Schmidt 1954, 3). In 1955, Coronet magazine hinted at psychological problems when it described Sinatra as "a mixed-up mass of complexities" ("That 'Guy' Sinatra" 1955, 6). Movie Secrets understood Sinatra in terms of a kind of righteous wrath, in a 1956 article entitled "God's Angry Man". The article's sub-title conceived of the confrontational side of his image in terms of a compulsive anger: "Frank Sinatra is in what might be called a constant state of trouble. The minute he gets out of it, he can't wait to find some new trouble" (Randolph 1956, 46). The article referred to "His angry, and at times, almost hostile attitude toward the world . . .", and a conception of Sinatra carrying a torch is supplanted by an image of Sinatra carrying "a chip on his shoulder": "It is no secret that Frank Sinatra is guy who goes around with a permanent chip on his shoulder" (Randolph 1956, 47).

In 1955, the New York Herald Tribune also linked Sinatra's temper to a perception that he carried "a chip on his shoulder", which was seen to date from the career nadir before his comeback:

Four years ago it looked as though Sinatra had incinerated himself . . . Frankie, with his ill-tempered outbursts and his weird trans-Atlantic romancing, had gotten to be a bore . . . Since Sinatra scrambled back to the top again, he has become less touchy and irritable than he used to be, according to those who have

worked with him in recent movies. "He seems a little more sure of himself than before," a colleague said. "But he's still got that chip on his shoulder" . . . Though the testimony is that Sinatra is learning to control his quick temper, there are occasional reports of flare-ups. Last year there were items in the papers about a scuffle outside the Crescendo Club in Hollywood in which Sinatra participated (Ross 1955, N. pag.)

The same year, Celebrity magazine conceived of Sinatra in less sympathetic terms: "You really can't blame some people for suspecting that Frank (Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen) Sinatra is one of the biggest heels who ever made a million bucks . . . They think Sinatra . . . carries too big a chip on his shoulder . . . " Here it is sarcastically implied that Sinatra's "chip" is a form of unjustified self-pity on the part of an overpaid "heel" ("Who's Out to Get Frank Sinatra?" 1955, 4-7). The idea of Sinatra carrying a "chip on his shoulder" carried into constructions of his film roles. In a review of his role as Barney Sloan in Young at Heart (1955), Time magazine implicitly drew on the discursive construction of Sinatra as angry even as it (putatively) described a character in a film: ". . . bird-like Frank Sinatra shows up wearing a chip on his shoulder. Frankie, a saloon pianist and musical arranger is on his uppers. "They," he says, looking up at the ceiling from where the Fates guide his misery, have never given him a break. To conceal his tormented heart, he is cynical and wisecracking . . ." ("New Picture" 1955, 70). Note the slippage between Sinatra and the character he plays in the film; while I discuss the importance of the "saloon pianist" to Sinatra's image in the section on "One for my Baby" in chapter six below, it is noteworthy that "Frankie" (as much as the character he is playing) is here seen as "tormented", experiencing "misery", and "wearing a chip on his shoulder", ideas which were commonly associated with Sinatra's star-image at the time.

That Sinatra's "torment" is inflected differently here than in the romanticization of his "suffering" within the "lonesome on top of the world" discourses is seen in his

frequent conceptualization as a contradictory, emotional chameleon who moves from one extreme to another. The "instability" attributed to Sinatra also contributed to new articulations of his persona as dangerous and non-conformist. In 1955, Time emphasized the emotional extremes of his "personality": "He throws pretty frequent crying fits and temper tantrums too, and has even been seen to weep in his secretary's lap" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 53) A 1957 Photoplay article on "The Man Nobody Knows" plays up the "aloneness" of his image in terms of a fluctuating identity that cannot be pinned down: "He is the most controversial figure in show business today . . . He's a restless sleeper and restless liver . . . He is completely unpredictable - chameleon of moods which can change a dozen times in twenty-four hours" (Steele 1957, 68-69, 92-93). The first of the Look articles, whose title, "Talent, Tantrums and Torment", draws on Sinatra's tormented and self-indulgent reputation, is explicitly organized around a conception of Sinatra as an emotional chameleon whose mood swings suggest psychological illness. In 1958, Playboy summarized the impression of Sinatra created by the Look profile, " . . . the gist of which seemed to be that he required the services of a first-rate headshrinker" (Reisner 1958, 87).

The first Look article begins with an account of Sinatra on location in Spain shooting The Pride and the Passion (1957), in which his anxiety over his receding hairline (cited above) is only one part of an overall irritability and hostility. After shooting a scene, Sinatra returns to his dressing room, where the "black, angry mood" (Davidson 1957a, 37) described in the opening section of the article has returned:

He was in a black mood again . . . That segment of a day in the life of Frank Sinatra was not out of the ordinary. The same fluctuations of mood and character take place in him whether he is in Spain, Hoboken, Las Vegas, New York or Hollywood. The great natural acting and singing talent is always there. But, otherwise, Sinatra is a chameleon. He can change a dozen times in 21 hours . . . There is a generous Sinatra and a cruel Sinatra. There is a Sinatra who fights for the

underdog, and a Sinatra who bullies his underlings . . . cocky . . . scared . . . gay . . . brooding . . . There is Sinatra the devoted family man and Sinatra the libertine . . . a fine amateur painter, and an expert on Puccini and Berlioz, and the Sinatra who likes to hang around with bums and gangsters. Even his friends are confused by his many faces. They call him "The Man With the Golden Charm," but they also call him "The Monster". He is completely unpredictable, but his predominant moods seem to be those of anger and self-doubt . . . A doctor who knows him says "He suffers terrible depressions from loss of self-esteem . . . "

(Davidson 1957a, 38)

Sinatra's "great natural . . . talent" is seen to license his self-indulgence in moodiness, which is understood in terms of contradictions of character which Photoplay described as "Jekyll and Hyde" (Wilson 1954, 88), and which, significantly, carry an undercurrent of danger in the Look account: generous/cruel, underdog/bully, gay/brooding, family man/libertine, connoisseur of "highbrow" music/consorter with "low" characters. But all of this is summed up in terms of mental instability, which is legitimized by the anonymous "expert" testimony of "a doctor".

Later in the article, an anonymous "psychiatrist" is invoked to further link Sinatra's "eccentric" behaviour to mental illness: "Some of his eccentricities are becoming more and more pronounced. One of these is an abnormal fastidiousness. He showers two or three times a day . . . He is constantly washing his hands. Psychiatrists say that such fastidiousness means the person may be trying to cleanse himself of a real or imagined guilt, or trying to remove the mire of a real or imagined sullied past". The psychoanalytic idea that one's "past" is the source of present problems is developed by "a psychiatrist" who notes that Sinatra ". . . belonged to the Italian racial minority" in Hoboken; according to the psychiatrist, although it was a tough neighborhood, Sinatra himself wasn't tough, and thus "To prove his manhood to himself, he associates with the toughest kids and gangsters" (Davidson 1957a, 48). Although Sinatra's alleged mental

instability is what is purportedly at issue, a perhaps more significant set of discourses about ethnicity and class are being deployed here. Sinatra's working-class, Italian-American background becomes increasingly prominent in accounts of his comeback which conceive of the "new", unstable Sinatra in terms of volatility and danger.

It wasn't just Look that implicitly linked Sinatra's ethnicity and class origins with his violent temper and emotional extremes. While Good Housekeeping only hints at this (citing psychiatrists who believe Sinatra was wounded emotionally growing up, it is claimed that " . . . this background may have left Sinatra emotionally torn . . ."; Gehman 1960, 184), Time magazine, in its cover story on Sinatra in 1955, is very explicit about the linkage of moodiness, temper, and danger, which is conveyed through the conflation of psychoanalysis, childhood, and ethnic and class origins. As I argued above, the cover painting of a photograph of Sinatra surrounded by crumpled newspaper headlines conceives of his appeal in terms of an articulation of life and art, with Sinatra as performing autobiographer. Beginning with the its title, "The Kid from Hoboken", the article draws attention both to a sense that Sinatra can be understood by referring to his childhood, and to a perception that perhaps he has not matured and is still a "kid" (in terms of tantrums and self-indulgence, as well as retaining his Hoboken "birthrights", ethnicity and class).

The Time piece starts with an imagined incident from Sinatra's Hoboken childhood, in which the "momma's boy" Sinatra, a "pretty little boy . . . all dressed up in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit . . ." is attacked by other boys; however, young Sinatra chases them off with broken bottle. Having found its image of a weaking dandy using a vicious weapon in a tough, ethnic neighbourhood, the article continues:

Thirty years have passed over Hoboken since that day, but what was true then still holds true. Francis Albert Sinatra, long grown out of his Little Lord Fauntleroy suit, is one of the most charming children in everyman's neighborhood; yet it is well to remember the jagged weapon. The one he carries

nowadays is of the mind, and called ambition, but it takes an ever more exciting edge. With charm and sharp edges and a snake-slick gift of song, he has dazzled, slashed and coiled his way though a career unparalleled in extravagance by any other entertainer of his generation ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 52)

"What was true then" (Sinatra's ethnicity and class) "still holds true"; while Sinatra may appear "charming" today, the article warns its readers to beware of the "jagged weapon" with which Sinatra, alternately snake charmer ("dazzled") and lowly snake ("coiled"), has "slashed" his way to the top, not once but twice. Thus ethnic and class origins read as a proclivity to violence and extremism persist in the volatile Sinatra of 1955. The article goes on to link his comeback in 1953 to his role as Maggio, the Italian-American non-conformist of From Here to Eternity: "To the amazement of millions, the boudoir johnny with the lotion tones stood revealed as a naturalistic actor of narrow but deep-cutting talents. He played what he is, The Kid from Hoboken, but he played him with rage and tenderness and grace, and he glinted in a barrel of human trash as poetically as an empty tin can in the light of a hobo's match" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 52). It is no coincidence here that "Hoboken" contains a "hobo"; according to Time, in From Here to Eternity, Sinatra "played what he is . . . human trash" (read: Italian-American working class). Thus perhaps the "chip on his shoulder" can be read as the historical marginalization and abuse of dominated minorities in the U.S.

Sinatra's role as Maggio marked both a professional departure (a "serious", non-singing role for the 1940s song-and-dance man) and a perceived alignment with Sinatra's biography. It also contributed to a "toughening" of Sinatra's star-image. The belief that Sinatra's film comeback was, like the revival of his recording career, motivated by new perceptions of autobiographical resonance is evident in almost every contemporary article written about Sinatra's role in From Here to Eternity. But the idea of autobiography was inflected by new conceptions of non-conformity, toughness, and danger that were ultimately underpinned by Sinatra's ethnicity in particular. In

interviews at the time, Sinatra consistently articulated his belief that Maggio was an autobiographical part, and understood the "fit" between himself and the character in explicitly ethnic, class, and behavioural terms.

Sinatra's ethnicity seems to have been infrequently commented upon during the years of his peak success in the 1940s; however, his well-publicized activism on behalf of racial and ethnic tolerance, along with New Deal/War Effort idealism and a general discursive marginalization of ethnicity within mainstream media at the time may have produced a historical erasure of period perceptions of Sinatra as "Italian". In the mid-1940s, he frequently made public appearances at high schools with heterogeneous ethnic and racial student bodies, and spoke out against bigotry. He "authored" at least two articles denouncing intolerance ("What's All This About Races?" in Senior Scholastic and "We're All Foreigners", which I was unable to locate), and in 1945, collaborated with screenwriter (and later Hollywood Ten member) Albert Maltz and director Mervyn LeRoy on a short film, The House I Live In. Its "message" was that "America" was made up of a variety of races, religions, and ethnicities whose equality must be respected. It was given a Special Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. However, Sinatra's ethnicity surfaced more explicitly in press accounts after 1947, when the reports of his association with members of the Mafia began to circulate. I discuss the relationship between Sinatra, the Mafia, and representations of ethnicity below. First, however, I would like to look at the ways in which alignments between Sinatra and the character of Maggio were produced within accounts of From Here to Eternity.

From Here To Eternity

James Jones's 1951 best-selling novel, From Here to Eternity, was commonly perceived to be too "adult" in its situations and language to be made into a Hollywood film. Its graphic (for the period) portrayals of brutality and sexuality among low-ranking,

U.S. Army career soldiers stationed in Hawaii on the eve of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour led to views of the novel as controversial and sensationalistic, but also as serious and artistically ambitious. Columbia Pictures began pre-production of the film at the end of 1952, and the film was released, to widespread popular and critical acclaim in the late summer of 1953. It was one of the top grossing films of 1953, and went on to win eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Supporting Actor for Frank Sinatra. At the time, Sinatra was without a studio contract, and had not made a film since 1951; From Here to Eternity not only re-established Sinatra as a star with box-office appeal, it led to a re-conceptualization of Sinatra as a serious "Actor". While I discuss the implications of the role and Oscar for Sinatra's career in terms of cultural distinction below, in this section of the chapter I examine the discursive construction of Sinatra's persona in relation to perceived parallels with the character of Maggio.

Even before the film went into general release, a number of reports of Sinatra's casting in From Here to Eternity were skeptical about the crooner's ability to tackle what was perceived as a serious acting assignment. In 1959, the men's magazine Climax recounted a popular perception that Sinatra had been miscast: "But as soon as the word got around that Sinatra had been cast for Maggio, the wiseacres howled that it was the blooper of the year. A crooner playing a tough punk that didn't even call for a song? Oh, brother!" (O'Neal 1959, 86). Note the juxtaposition of "crooner" and "tough punk", in which the implicit triviality of a feminized singer is seen as incompatible with the tough and masculine seriousness perceived to be demanded by the role.

An article published in Collier's magazine the week of the film's release profiled Sinatra's role, and noted that "eyebrows soared" when it was revealed that Sinatra had been cast in the film:

After 14 years of successful minstreling, crooner Frank Sinatra has stowed away his serenades to do a Hollywood character part. When the spare-framed singer signed for . . . From Here to Eternity, eyebrows soared. Everyone was surprised,

except a perceptive few . . . and the crooner himself. From the moment he read James Jones's best-selling novel . . . Frank was bent on playing Maggio, the caustic little dogface whose hatred for authority kept him in a turmoil with the brass . . . "The part was made to order for me," says Sinatra. "I knew hundreds of Maggios in Hoboken where I was brought up. And I came close to being one myself." Like Maggio, Frank is an Italian-American; and he has an explosive temperament (that has helped keep him in the news) ("From Here To Eternity" 1953, 28)

The physically ("spare-framed") and culturally ("crooner") lightweight Sinatra is represented as having been the first to recognize the similarity between himself and Maggio. Maggio's "hatred for authority" and ethnicity are "Like" Sinatra's "explosive temperament" and "Italian-American" ethnicity; both "characters" are in "turmoil" and "hate authority"; thus the part is "made to order" for Sinatra.

This biographical similarity is then articulated in terms of the quality of Sinatra's acting ability. Sinatra's portrayal of Maggio is re-read as a form of Method acting: "'Frank dreamt, slept, and ate the part," says [producer Buddy] Adler . . . "He played Maggio so spontaneously," adds [director Fred] Zinnemann . . . "we almost never had to reshoot a scene"'. The cultural distinction that will subsequently be attributed to Sinatra's acting is hinted at: "Talent-hardened crew members began calling Sinatra "Maggio" - in tribute . . . " The article predicts that Sinatra will be critically vindicated as an "Actor": "The raucous laughs of those who consider Sinatra-as-Maggio a flagrant case of Hollywood mis-casting haven't yet faded. But the cast and crew of Eternity predict that when he shows up on screen . . . Frankie Boy will make the critics swoon" ("From Here To Eternity" 1953, 28). A photo caption of Sinatra's death scene in the film (as well as of photos of him on the set) implies that although Sinatra is still physically lightweight, he has stopped singing and is therefore now tougher, realistic, and a true (and confident) actor: "Still hollow-cheeked, Sinatra has muzzled his

microphone, plays first dramatic role as tough, wisecracking private. Above, Sinatra, in realistic death scene with Clift, who plays Prewitt. Below, he's the confident Thespian at ease" ("From Here To Eternity" 1953, 29).

Much of the writing on the film stressed the novelty of Sinatra the crooner playing a serious role; this is likely the influence of Columbia's "Production Notes", which were given to journalists as background on the film. The "Production Notes" repeatedly refer to the "off-beat" and "unusual" nature of the casting as a "hook" for journalistic coverage of the film: Sinatra's role ". . . is strictly off-beat for the singer who does no singing in the dramatic part" ("From Here to Eternity: Production Notes, Columbia Studios, June 2, 1953" 1995, 63); "It is significant that the stars in From Here to Eternity are playing roles that are unusual for their accepted screen personalities . . ." (62). This also contributes to popular conceptions of 1953 as marking the beginning of a new conjuncture in Sinatra's career. As well as emphasizing Sinatra's own efforts at securing the role, the production notes implicitly invoke the character's ethnicity as a source of Sinatra's perceived commitment: "Frank Sinatra's persistence in applying for the off-beat role of Private Maggio to the extent of traveling 27,000 miles from Africa and return for a screen test, got him the part of the tough little Italian-American who is violent and funny and sour" ("From Here to Eternity: Production Notes . . ." 1995, 61).

The Newsweek review of the film clearly shows signs of its paternity: "Frank Sinatra . . . knew what he was doing when he plugged for the role of Angelo Maggio . . . It shouldn't come as a surprise that Sinatra - who flew from Africa and his wife, Ava Gardner, to make a Hollywood screen test - distinguishes himself in the part of a tough little Italian-American . . ." ("New Films" 1953, 82-83). Variety (29 July, 1953) referred to Maggio as a departure from Sinatra's previous roles, and saw it as part of an overall strategy of innovative, "offbeat" casting, noting ". . . a cast seemingly so perfect for the roles it would be hard to imagine anyone else playing the characters, even though

some of the assignments are offbeat to the extreme . . ." Time magazine emphasized the film's "realism", calling attention not only to ". . . some of the most realistic brothel scenes ever splattered on the face of the screen" ("The New Pictures" 1953, 94), but to the acting as well: "The performers have that curious and captivating air which director Zinnemann calls "behaving rather than acting," an artless form of art . . ." ("The New Pictures" 1953, 96). The acting in From Here to Eternity is then explicitly linked to other films directed by Fred Zinneman and starring renowned Method actors such as Montgomery Clift (The Search, 1948) and Marlon Brando (The Men, 1950). Sinatra's acting is articulated with the "realism" of both Method-style "behaving" and, crucially, Sinatra's ethnicity: "Frank Sinatra does Private Maggio like nothing he has ever done before. His face wears the calm of a man who is completely sure of what he is doing as he plays it straight from Little Italy" ("The New Pictures" 1953, 96). The irony here is that Sinatra is lauded for the sureness of his acting, which involves a directness that is the result of the foregrounding of his ethnicity ("straight from Little Italy", an Italian-American neighbourhood in Manhattan), which is in turn somehow also "new" ("like nothing he has ever done before"; I return to the issue of Sinatra as Method actor in the section on artistry below).

Most reviews similarly linked the parallel between Sinatra and Maggio to ethnicity: "Frank Sinatra scores a decided hit as Angelo Maggio, a violent, likeable Italo-American GI" (Variety, 29 July, 1953, N. pag.); "Frank Sinatra is a sheer sensation as the Italian-American bantam battler and happy-go-lucky Angelo . . ." (Zunser 1953, 16). A 1953 newspaper article¹⁴ describes Maggio, and Manhattan cinema audiences'

¹⁴This article (Norton Mockridge, "He's Made the Big Leap from Hooper to Actor - and Done It Brilliantly") was found in the "Frank Sinatra" clippings file at the New York Public Library Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center. It is possibly from the New York Herald Tribune; however, there is no page number given, and the handwritten date of "1955" is clearly wrong based on the material covered in the article (it discusses From Here to Eternity exclusively, going into detail that would only be appropriate while the film was in release). I believe it is from Summer 1953, as Sinatra has just returned from his tour of England.

responses to Sinatra's performance: "As Maggio, the cocky, comical and completely explosive Italian-American GI . . . he couldn't be improved on. He IS Maggio and audiences at the Capitol cheer him at every showing" (Mockridge 1953, N. pag.). The conception of Sinatra as "being" Maggio is underlined by a quote from Buddy Adler, the producer of From Here to Eternity, on Sinatra's screen test: ". . . it was a case of a natural performer up against some great actors. The natural performer was better" (Mockridge 1953, N. pag.). The belief that Sinatra "naturally" "IS" Maggio is reinforced in a section headed "He Lives the Part", which finds the apparent improvement in Sinatra's acting ability (understood in terms of authority, realism, and genuineness) puzzling: ". . . it's a baffling thing when a crooner who never before put together two spoken lines with authority and realism suddenly gives one of the movies' most genuine performances" (Mockridge 1953, N. pag.). In attempting to account for the change, Sinatra is asked about his performance: "You see . . . Maggio is like a lot of kids I knew in Hoboken, and he's not unlike myself - not entirely like me, but in spasmodic periods of my life. Some people say that Maggio is me and vice versa. Well, I don't know. Maybe. Could be . . . Maybe it will open a new career for me - I want to do more serious acting . . ." (quoted in Mockridge 1953, N. pag.). The idea that Maggio represents a "failed" version of Sinatra, someone who did not escape the ghetto, appears here for the first time; I will return to the intertwining of ethnicity and class opportunity below.

Subsequent accounts of Sinatra's career also tied his comeback to the autobiographical elements in the role of Maggio. A 1955 magazine biography of Sinatra saw a number of parallels, wherein Maggio's attributes are Sinatra's, and biography, ethnicity, and personality intertwine: "His first reaction [on reading the novel] was, 'I know the guy. Why, I went to school with him!'" The tough little Italian-American, violent, funny and sour, belligerent, combative and sensitive . . . yes, it could have been Francis Albert Sinatra, lately of Hoboken, son of a fireman who boxed, son of Italians"

(Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra 1955, 46; emphasis in original). Any ambiguity over who is being described as "The tough little Italian-American, violent, funny and sour, belligerent, combative and sensitive . . ." is both deliberate and beside the point, as the invocation of three kinds of paternity (geographic, class, ethnic) supports Sinatra's claim: "I know the guy".

In 1954, Good Housekeeping claimed that "Apparently the record sales are due almost entirely to the Maggio role. How Sinatra got the part, at a time when he was unproven as a dramatic actor and well into oblivion as a singer reads like a press agent's dream but is corroborated on all sides" (Wells 1954, 217). The article goes on to stress the autobiographical nature of the role in terms of ethnicity and non-conformity, pointing out that Sinatra ". . . immediately identified himself with the character Maggio, the little American-Italian soldier who does everything the hard way, who cannot conform, and who dies after a brutal beating in the stockade" (Wells 1954, 217). Sinatra's own articulation of "behaving rather than acting" and biography is invoked: "Sinatra says, 'I knew I couldn't act. I'd never had stage experience. But I knew Maggio. I went to high school with him in Hoboken. I'd been beaten up with him. I might have been Maggio!'" (quoted in Wells 1954, 217). Here Sinatra's articulation of adolescent suffering with his identification with Maggio re-appropriates Sinatra's ethnicity as a badge of honour (it may be implied that Sinatra and Maggio were beaten up as a result of ethnicity-conceived-as-geography).

But this is also inflected by class position, and in From Here to Eternity, Maggio's position as lowly, "dogface" Private is clearly equivalent to the situation of the working-class; his limited opportunities in the Army follow from his limited opportunities as a civilian, just as his constant abuse and punishment within the Army reproduce his oppression outside. Before joining the Army, to become a "thirty-year man" (i.e. a lifetime, non-commissioned soldier), Maggio had worked in another, literally-"lowly" job, as a clerk "in the basement of Gimbel's" (a Manhattan department

store). Much of the writing on Sinatra emphasized his championing of the so-called "underdog", a euphemism for the marginalized and disenfranchised in U.S. society. Time linked Sinatra's temper and volatility to his social consciousness: "Sinatra's courage, even his enemies agree, is the courage of burning conviction. Many of his worst passages of public hooliganism have proceeded from instances of racial discrimination . . . Sinatra is no underdog. But he bleeds for the underdog, says one of his friends, "because he feels like one. Don't ask me why"." ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55). Women's Home Companion also pointed to Sinatra's role as defender of the "underdog": "Although Sinatra is clearly no underdog, he still identifies with all under-privileged groups. He contributes both time and money to them. And he will carry to the grave a blind prejudice against "finks", cops and newspapermen . . . That prejudice undoubtedly goes back to his days in Hoboken, where he grew up" (Taves 1956, 120). Thus despite the fact that Sinatra has "escaped" his background (again Hoboken is figured as the primal site/source of Sinatra's personality), he continues to identify with "under-privileged groups".

In 1959, Climax magazine claimed ". . .he still finds the time to take an active part in various liberal movements devoted to tolerance and social welfare, particularly those dealing with juvenile delinquency", and then linked this activism to ethnicity: "One of the proudest moments in his life was when the Italian Government named him the Man of the Year in 1958 and presented him with a decoration at the Waldorf-Astoria for his work in [sic] behalf of Boys' Town of Italy" (O'Neill 1959, 83).

Sometime before 1953, Sinatra had been quoted as saying that music had been his ticket out of the constricted opportunities available to the working-class; at least two variations of the original quote (which I could not locate) appear during the Capitol years: "If it hadn't been for music," he once wrote, "I'd probably have ended in a life of crime" (quoted in "The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 52); "I am convinced that I might have ended up in a life of crime if it hadn't been for my music . . ." (quoted in Taves

1956, 123). This idea reiterates a linkage between Sinatra's ethnic background and the perceived pitfalls of growing up in a "tough" working-class neighbourhood. For Sinatra, at worst the oppression faced by the "underdog" could lead to a life of crime; at best it produced a resistance to authority and a suspicion of power. A 1956 Cosmopolitan article outlines Sinatra's adolescent oppression at the hands of representatives of dominant class interests, the police, in a section entitled "He Learns to Hate Authority". It describes Sinatra being beaten by Hoboken plainclothesmen because he was dressed up like a dandy in a new suit; this is seen as the source of Sinatra's well-known hatred of the police and of authority in general: "The beating he got from the dicks that time might well have pushed him across the line from punk to gangster. It did not." (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 83-84). This is then linked to his adult irritability and film directors' fear of Sinatra the rebellious non-conformist: "They also know that if they order him around, the set will blow up . . . "Nobody," a friend says, "can boss Sinatra. Nobody"" (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 83-84; emphasis in original).

Thus Maggio's class and narrative position in From Here to Eternity offer additional points of articulation with Sinatra's persona. Playboy emphasized the uncanny parallel between Sinatra and Maggio in terms of aloneness conceived as resistance and stoic individualism:

It was no accident that his spectacular comeback was triggered by his role in From Here to Eternity. At heart, Maggio was a loner who asked for help from no man. When Frankie won an Oscar for his portrayal of the part, friends insisted, "Frank wasn't acting. He said it himself. He is Maggio." Maggio died in the arms of a buddy, still loveless and searching, bravely making the best of a sad life.

Again, fact and fiction were in mesh (Reisner 1958, 66)

Time noted in 1955 that "Sinatra is doggedly independent . . . ", and in what is perhaps the most widely quoted section of the cover story, this independence is conceived in

terms of a violent and bitter individualism: "Sometimes somebody tries to tell him that his way is no way to live, but when they do, Frank has an answer as simple and as emphatic as a punch in the mouth: "I'm going to do as I please. I don't need anybody in the world. I did it all myself" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55).¹⁵ A characterization of Sinatra's newfound "toughness" in the article describes the character of Maggio in the film as much as Sinatra: "Says Actor Robert Mitchum, cinema's No. 1 problem child: "Frank is a tiger - afraid of nothing, ready for anything. He'll fight anything. Here's a frail, under-sized little fellow with a scarred-up face who isn't afraid of the whole world"." ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55). Describing Sinatra and Maggio as "little" condenses their physical bodies and their imputed social location; however, the epithet of "tough little", seen consistently applied to Maggio above, reworks this into the idea of the underdog, the physically-lesser of two combatants who nonetheless has more "heart", courage conceived as spirit. In From Here to Eternity, Sinatra/Maggio repeatedly comes up against his arch enemy, Sgt. "Fatso" Judson, a physically bigger man (played by Ernest Borgnine) who calls Sinatra/Maggio, among other things, "tough monkey" (which itself plays on Maggio's ethnicity as well). It is possible that the name "Maggio" may suggest another animal: "maggot", a tiny insect which is both insignificant and associated with "human trash".

The narrative of From Here to Eternity focuses on three career soldiers, and intertwines their three stories of struggle with the rigid hierarchies and abuses of

¹⁵The last two sentences of the Sinatra quote are highlighted in the article, as they also serve as the caption under a series of photographs on p. 53. Sinatra denied ever making the claim, and was reported to have offered a \$10,000 reward to anyone who could prove he actually said it. In 1956, Screen Stars noted that the question of whether Sinatra actually uttered the words was less important than the truth about Sinatra's image they conveyed: "The chances are that Frank never did utter such a remark. Yet it will stick with him until the end of his days. For although the quote overstates his viewpoint in immodest terms, the facts remain: 1. He has spent his life doing as he pleases; 2. Although he has many acquaintances, there is no one he considers absolutely indispensable; 3. he deserves most of the credit for his brilliant and varied career" (Richards 1956, 24, 63). In 1961, Time correspondent Ezra Goodman admitted that the quote had been concocted by his editors (see Goodman 1962, 239).

power in the U.S. Army. The film begins with the arrival of Private Prewitt (played by Montgomery Clift) at the headquarters of his new unit, where he meets Private Maggio, who is sweeping up as punishment for an unspecified infraction; thus the low stature of Maggio within the film is established in the opening sequence. Maggio is wearing an undershirt and his physical slightness is evident. Prewitt, we then discover, is a distinguished Army bugler who has left his old unit because a less experienced but better-connected bugler has been ranked above him. Prewitt was also a champion Army boxer who blinded a friend in a sparring match and has therefore vowed never to box again. However, the commanding officer of the new unit to which he has been transferred, Captain Dana Holmes (Philip Ober), is keen to win a Divisional championship, and insists that Prewitt box for his new unit. Prewitt refuses and is given "the treatment", an endless round of abuse, punishment, and ostracism by the other soldiers in the unit, which is intended to "break" Prewitt and force him to box. However, Maggio befriends Prewitt, and tends to suffer the same fate as his friend, especially when Maggio tries to intercede against the injustice of Prewitt's treatment. Maggio's comportment with Prewitt is that of an easygoing wiseguy, constantly trying to keep Prewitt's spirits up with jokes, stories, and casual singing. The First Sergeant of the unit, Milt Warden (played by Burt Lancaster), is a career non-commissioned (i.e. working-class) officer who is contemptuous of the clearly upper-middle-class Captain Holmes (who is portrayed as irresponsible, philandering, and incompetent - Warden is the one who really keeps things running). Warden is a tough-but-fair Sergeant; although there is nothing he can do about Prewitt's treatment, he dislikes the abuse of power it represents (and the unmanliness of Captain Holmes's methods), and does what he can for Prewitt, at one point subverting Holmes's order that Prewitt's leave be withheld (in an important plot development, Warden also begins an affair with Captain Holmes's wife).

On payday, Maggio, as the inner-city wiseguy, wins money at craps from other soldiers. Getting ready to go out on pass that night, Maggio notices that Prewitt isn't getting dressed for a night on the town, and tries to cheer up his friend, who is lying emotionless on his cot: "Come on buddy boy - we're going to town . . . Well, don't let 'em get your goat . . . We'll just dress up in civvies [civilian clothing] and we're as good as the rest of the world, ain't we? Here - wear this [Maggio throws a Hawaiian floral print shirt on Prewitt's cot]. My sister sent it to me - she buys everything too big [Maggio shrugs his shoulders]. Look first we hit a few bars, see, then we go to a place of which I am a member - The New Congress Club . . ." In response to Prewitt's lack of reaction, Maggio explains the Club's significance (and source of interest): "Girls - You got any prejudices against girls?" As Maggio says "prejudices", he makes a traditional Italian gesture of emphasis, thumb held against index and forefinger, and then shaken toward the addressee; Prewitt smiles and gets up, whereupon Maggio says: "That's what I thought".

At the New Congress Club one night, a drunken Maggio goes into a room where Prewitt and his girl are talking, and offers them his bottle of whiskey; before filling their glasses, he empties a glass out the window, and gleefully says "Hope there's a cop under that!", and as he leaves the whiskey, says to Prewitt "Enjoy yourself, Paisan" [a Spanish or Italian term for "friend" or "buddy" derived from "paisano" - "peasant"]. At the club, Sgt. "Fatso" Judson, in charge of the company stockade [prison] is playing a loud and primitive version of "Pennies from Heaven" on a piano; Maggio, who is attempting to dance with one of the "hostesses" to music on a jukebox, complains to Judson about the volume of his piano playing and the following exchange takes place, which highlights both Maggio's marginalized ethnicity and his "underdog" fighting spirit in the face of a physically-superior antagonist:

Maggio: Why don't you knock it off, Buddy, or put a mute in that thing.

Fatso: I'll play as loud as I want, you little Wop!

Maggio: Little Wop? . . . Mess with me, fatstuff and I'll bust you up.

Fatso: You must be in a hurry for trouble, Wop . . . This little Mussolini here is trying to tell me how to play piano.

Maggio: Tryin' to bust my eardrums with that stinkin' noise . . . only my friends call me Wop!

Various soldiers restrain Fatso and Maggio; Maggio snarls at Fatso as he is being held back, but later rubs his arm where he was restrained. In a later scene in a bar, Maggio is showing his friends a photograph of his sister when Fatso walks in, looks over his shoulder at the photo, kisses it and whispers a clearly suggestive remark to Prewitt. As a matter of family honour, Maggio goes after Fatso, hitting him over the back with a bar stool; Fatso turns on him holding a switchblade. At this point Sgt. Warden intervenes, and Maggio later says "I'm glad he stopped it" to Prewitt, who answers "He's a good man" (about Warden).

In a subsequent scene, Maggio, who is happily humming "Chattanooga Choo Choo" to himself as he gets ready to go out on the town on a pass, is informed that he has to do guard duty instead and that his pass has been revoked. Maggio, angry, throws his shirt down and kicks his locker door in a moment of spite. As the shot fades, we see Maggio grimacing and reaching in pain for his foot, which he has obviously hurt. Maggio deserts his post, goes AWOL, and shows up drunk at a bar where Prewitt is meeting his girlfriend. Maggio runs out; Prewitt finds him on a park bench, where Maggio exclaims "I'm tired. I ain't no criminal. I ain't no coward". Prewitt tries to get him to return to the base, but two MPs show up and arrest Maggio, who struggles against them in an ungainly, if valiant, manner (while Prewitt watches from the bushes). Maggio is court-martialed, and sent to the stockade, which is run by Sgt. "Fatso" Judson. They come face to face in a shot taken from behind Fatso, who is sitting at his desk, with Maggio standing at attention facing both Fatso and the camera. Fatso calmly and knowingly says "Hello, tough monkey", and Maggio shivers. Fatso picks up a blackjack from his desk, and Maggio, still standing at attention, looks down at it, and moves his

arms, which had been behind his back, to his sides, tensing up in anticipation of the torture that is to come. Subsequently, Prewitt talks to a soldier who has just been released from the stockade, who tells him that Maggio "just keeps spittin' in Fatso's eye", to which Prewitt replies "He's a good man". The soldier continues: "But Fatso can't make a dent in him . . . that boy's about the toughest nut in the woods".

Later in the film, while Prewitt and Warden are sitting outside the base, drunk, Maggio staggers into Prewitt's arms. Maggio has escaped the stockade and the constant beatings administered by Fatso, but he is badly wounded and near death (from a fall from the laundry truck which was his means of escape). Cuts are visible on Maggio's face, and his comportment suggests drunkenness, although clearly he is drunk with pain. As Prewitt holds him, Maggio says: "Yesterday was bad - he hit me, then he hit me . . ." He warns Prewitt of the dangers of the stockade, telling Prewitt that survival depends on silent stoicism: "Watch out for Fatso . . . Don't yell, don't make a sound . . . You'll still be yelling when they come to take you out. Just lay there, just lay there and be quiet, Prew . . ." These are Maggio's last words, as he dies in Prewitt's arms. Later Prewitt plays taps for Maggio, with a tear running down his cheek. We subsequently learn that Prewitt has killed Fatso and gone AWOL himself. Prewitt is accidentally killed by his own men trying to rejoin his outfit in the midst of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Warden refuses to try to become an officer and thus ends the affair with Holmes's wife (who had wanted him to become an officer so they could be married). Holmes is forced to resign after his superiors discover his "treatment" of Prewitt.

Throughout the film, Maggio's use of traditional Italian words and gestures foregrounds his ethnicity. His frequent punishment by superiors reveals both his low status in the Army and his loyalty to Prewitt. His wisecracking and *joie de vivre* constantly underline his bright outlook; however, when crossed, he becomes enraged, and as seen in his tangles with Fatso, he isn't afraid of anything, despite the odds against him. His stoic refusal to be beaten into submission by Fatso is evidence of toughness and

of what in boxing is known as "heart", an inner indominatability revealed by the resistance to surrender. Although Maggio suffers at the hands of the Army in general (forced marches, endless drilling) and of Fatso in particular, the suffering is kept inside, masked by his outward easy humour. However, Maggio's physical "weakness" is not hidden. While masculinist discourse valorizes the suppression of displays of pain or fear, Maggio's behaviour highlights these in a number of scenes: rubbing his arm after his friends restrain him from attacking Fatso at the New Congress Club; telling Prewitt he is "glad he stopped it" after Warden prevents Fatso from attacking Maggio with a knife; grimacing and grabbing his foot after he kicks his locker in anger. In each of these scenes, Maggio's "spirit" is willing but his flesh is "weak".

In fact it is his capacity for enduring suffering, rather than his conquest of an enemy in battle, which ultimately earns him the reputation of "toughest nut in the woods". Thus Maggio represents a masculinity which is "non-conformist" itself, insofar as masculinist values are reworked and rearticulated with behaviour and body-type which are traditionally marginalized. Maggio's facility with language (joking, singing, humming) is contrasted with Prewitt's stoic silence; frequently, Montgomery Clift's dialogue seems to be reluctantly released from his mouth. This inarticulateness is a common feature of so-called Method acting (Sinatra's nickname for his 1955 Guys and Dolls co-star Marlon Brando, "mumbles", highlights this), in which psychological depths may be suggested through an apparent struggle to communicate. However, it also works with a masculinist disdain for speech as effeminate. In From Here to Eternity, Prewitt/Clift's voice appears to crack from underuse with each line uttered. This (along with its consistency with Clift's star-image) reinforces Prewitt's position in the film as the sensitive, stoic hero. However, when it comes down to a life and death struggle with Fatso, Maggio too adopts silence as sign of strength: "Don't yell, don't make a sound . . . just lay there and be quiet . . .".

Overall, Method actors such as Clift, Brando, and James Dean were seen in the 1950s as reconfiguring dominant masculinities themselves. They were seen to articulate a new, tough-yet-vulnerable masculine identity, and were juxtaposed against what some saw as the rigid and dated masculinity of more established actors like John Wayne or Clark Gable. Montgomery Clift, the first of the major post-war Method stars, frequently played sensitive rebels who are doomed by forces beyond their control, but who can participate in male aggression when confronted (*Variety* [29 July, 1953] noted Clift's "reputation for sensitive, three-dimensional performances"). Clift's Prewitt reconciles two poles of masculinity frequently positioned as incompatible. He is both athlete and artist: a champion boxer who refuses to box on principle, when pushed too far he wins a bare-knuckles fight with a soldier who is clearly in a superior weight class; a respected bugler (he played "Taps" for the President at Arlington military cemetery) who has been denied the opportunity to play, he expresses his grief over Maggio's death not with words but with his instrumental virtuosity and tears.

In fact, it is possible to read the five main male characters and the actors who portray them in *From Here to Eternity* in terms of their articulations of variations of masculine archetypes within the Army hierarchy. At the time, *Variety* conceived of the film in terms of masculinity, noting that the "dramatic masculinity" of the novel has " . . . not been emasculated in the transfer to the screen . . . It's still raw, tough, dramatic stuff of great entertainment pull for adult ticket buyers. Only a few will find it too strong for their effete tastes. Importantly, the distaffers will like it" (29 July, 1953). Although ultimately masculinist in its vision, the film offers a nuanced conception of masculinities conceived along a continuum, which may account for *Variety's* belief that "distaffers will like it". The three protagonists, Maggio/Sinatra, Prewitt/Clift, and Warden/Lancaster, represent "positive" masculine values, and each in his own way is constrained by the system. On the other hand, Fatso/Ernest Borgnine and Captain Dana Holmes/Philip Ober represent pathological forms of masculinity who

abuse the power they possess within the system: the physical girth of Fatso/Borgnine is as excessive as his violence and cruelty, while Holmes/Ober is a failure as a husband (due to excessive womanizing) and officer (due to excessive absence from his command). Their names also signal the normative failure of their characters: "Fatso" and "Dana Holmes" ("Dana" being an "effeminate" male name). Fatso and Holmes are offered as opposite extremes of masculinity: the primitive and the over-civilized, respectively. While Fatso is all action and no reflection, Holmes is indecisive, over-invested in appearances, and self-centred (he wants to win the boxing championship so that his company will look good, thus furthering his career). Holmes is easily manipulated by Warden/Lancaster, who attends to the day-to-day running of the company. However, because of Holmes's class position (and presumably education), he is in the position of power. While Fatso is a failure as a man because of his inhumanity, Holmes's failure is less because of his own mean-spiritedness than because he has not earned his position of power, which is the result of class privilege.

Burt Lancaster's portrayal of Sgt. Warden offers what is arguably the only (relatively) well-adjusted masculine archetype in the film (which is supported by the confident star-image and body type of the former acrobat). He is tough and can fight (even Fatso is shown to be afraid of him), but he also can function smoothly within the system. He claims to be "happy" with his position in the Army, but hates the incompetence and injustice of officers like Holmes. However, he does not "buck" the system; instead he manipulates it from within, getting his own way by making Holmes believe that his (Holmes's) decisions are his own, when in fact Warden/Lancaster has subtly suggested them. Warden resembles a kind of virile ministerial adviser, subverting power from below. At the same time, Warden is put in a position of having to choose between his ideals (hating officers) and his romance with Holmes's wife (he must become an officer if they are to marry, since an NCO having an affair with an officer's wife is against Army regulations and could lead to imprisonment). Warden

chooses the Army, but it is suggested that he is conflicted over the decision. Warden nonetheless maintains his integrity and survives to see justice done - Holmes is forced to resign, and we are shown a scene with Lancaster smiling at the new commanding officer's decision to demote and punish the members of the squad boxing team who perpetrated the "treatment" on Prewitt. Thus Warden's faith in the Army is renewed, and, unlike Maggio and Prewitt, his story has a "happy" ending, underlining his "normality". He is the "last man standing" of the five masculine archetypes, suggesting a normative aspect to the articulation of his masculinity.

From Here to Eternity can be articulated with contemporary concerns about the effects of large organizations on masculine identity. As noted in chapter two, the post-war period saw an increasing social concern over the constraint of male individualism within the corporation as well as at home; this was frequently understood in terms of "conformity". A 1953 review in Cue magazine conceives of the film in terms of a struggle between the individual and the institution over conformity: "The army . . . is a giant leveler: it molds men into automatons . . . Since the army cannot adapt itself to individuals, the individual must adapt himself to the army . . . When Prewitt refuses to conform he seals his own destruction . . ." (Zunser 1953, 16). Here the institution (the Army) levels difference conceived as identity. The institution is all-powerful: its imperative is "conform or be destroyed". The popular discursive construction of corporate life as "de-humanizing" is evident in the reference to "automatons". The review refers to "non-conformity" (Zunser 1953, 16) in relation to Prewitt, but as we have seen (Wells 1954, 217), Maggio is also described as a non-conformist. In retaining their individualism and identity, however, both are destroyed by the conclusion of the narrative.

Their destruction is seen as salutary by Harper's magazine, which, in a rare negative review of the film,¹⁶ compares From Here to Eternity to a previous film by the same director (Fred Zinneman), High Noon. According to Harper's, both films show

. . . characteristic concern for desperate, last-stand stubbornness: the Hero as Hardhead. Integrity, as here portrayed, is a by-product of prolonged warfare between an Innocent and the Big Bad World, a battle in which victory is immaterial . . . The outcome is less important than the struggle itself, to prove one's independence by doing everything the hard way, and by making independence look as much as possible like obstinate, presumptuous, and conspicuous stupidity . . . it (1) sentimentalizes the dilemma of the individual by surrounding it with mock heroics, and (2) falsifies the complexities of the individual's context in order to make his plight seem exceptional and excusable ("Morality Play" 1953, 92)

Unlike the anxieties expressed over the perceived waning of individualism expressed in David Reisman's concept of "outer-direction" or William Whyte's "organization man", the Harper's review sees stubborn independence as a problem. In this account, the "system" is to be valued, not challenged, and it is suggested that From Here to Eternity "stupidly" valorizes rebellion-for-rebellion's-sake and rebels without a cause. However, the larger point here is that the film may commonly have been viewed as articulating non-conformist and rebellious values, in which the individual's struggle against a "levelling" homogeneity was conceived as heroic.

Prewitt and Maggio's "integrity" involves their resistance to this corporate crushing of their principles, which marks them as non-conformist rebels. Prewitt transfers out of his unit when an institutional injustice (an inferior bugler is promoted above him) is perpetrated upon him; in his new unit, a similar idealism (his refusal to box competitively for the company) leads to further injustice, as he is subjected to the

¹⁶However, Sinatra's acting is singled out for high praise, discussed below.

treatment in an attempt to "mold" his behaviour (and beliefs) to those of the organization. Maggio stands up for Prewitt when he witnesses the injustice of the "treatment". He also rebels against authority and power (cops, MPs, Fatso), as well as against larger social "prejudices", whether racism ("only my friends call me Wop!") or classism ("We'll just dress up in civvies and we're as good as the rest of the world, ain't we?").¹⁷ Maggio is willing to die for his beliefs, and this commitment suggests a traditionally masculine integrity (like his loyalty to Prewitt). Thus the unconventional elements of Maggio's masculinity are licensed by his final adherence to a traditionally masculine code of honour and toughness.¹⁸ The role of Maggio contributed to popular conceptions of Sinatra even as it was itself an articulation of his star-image. Most importantly, the role of Maggio provided a discursive ground upon which the previously marginalized question of ethnicity could be worked out. Maggio opened the door for discourses of Sinatra-as-Mafioso, where ethnicity, toughness, and subversion intertwined yet again.

Gangster in the Nightclub

Sinatra ". . . immediately identified himself with the character Maggio, the little American-Italian soldier who does everything the hard way, who cannot conform . . ." (Wells 1954, 217). After 1953, the conjuncture of ethnicity, non-conformism, and toughness worked with Sinatra's existing star-image to produce articulations of Sinatra as a dangerous, violent, and anti-Establishment rebel that were crucially tied to the emergence of new attitudes toward his Mob connections. Allegations of Sinatra's ties to organized crime had been circulating since 1947; however, the reporting tended to be of

¹⁷I have omitted discussion of the female characters in From Here to Eternity; however, their "stories" explicitly involve anxiety over class position.

¹⁸The traditionally masculine "toughness" associated with Maggio (and by extension, Sinatra) is evident in an insert poster for From Here to Eternity (reproduced in Rockwell 1984, 128), which features a bloody-lipped Sinatra in an action pose, holding a barstool as a weapon, clearly suggesting a violent fight scene involving masculine confrontation and aggression.

a moralistic and condemnatory nature (e.g. Lee Mortimer's "Frank Sinatra Confidential: Gangsters in the Nightclubs" 1951), and was articulated with Sinatra's declining popularity. Partly as a result of Sinatra's movement into middle age, partly due to the "toughening" of his image with the Maggio role (and the related opening up of a discourse on Sinatra's ethnicity), partly tied to a new respect for his singing, there is a shift in the way "the Mafia" figures in accounts of Sinatra which both draws on and contributes to Sinatra's newfound "seriousness". While between ca. 1947-52, Sinatra's gangland associations were read as part of a larger failure of character, there is an almost celebratory tone to many subsequent accounts which parallels the emergence of favourable articulations of Sinatra and Maggio's ethnicity. However, these accounts were also preceded by Sinatra's portrayal of a gangster in Suddenly (1954),¹⁹ and reinforced by his performance in The Man with the Golden Arm (1955), in which he portrays a junkie who works for a small-time racketeer. The sense that Sinatra's image has shifted from light to heavy, from trivial to serious, and from benign to dangerous, is articulated with new emphases on his underworld affiliations in both his life and films.

When Sinatra went onstage at the televised 1954 Academy Awards ceremony to accept his Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in From Here to Eternity, he thanked the Academy, and haltingly commented on the turn his film career had taken: "I really, really don't know what to say . . . this is a whole new kind of thing for me . . . you know, I . . . song-and-dance man type stuff". Sinatra is here acknowledging the lower cultural esteem attributed to musical comedy in a Hollywood which valorizes serious drama. Sinatra's subsequent film role did not involve any "song-and-dance type stuff" either; in Suddenly (United Artists, 1954), Sinatra plays a professional hit man hired to

¹⁹As a result of his success in From Here to Eternity, Sinatra's previous film, Meet Danny Wilson (Universal-International, 1951), which had failed badly at the box-office (and thus received limited exposure and confirmed industry perspectives which saw Sinatra as "box-office poison" at the time), was re-released. It featured what was seen at the time as a highly autobiographical story (written by Sinatra friend Don McGuire) of a singer who is assisted in his rise to fame by a gangster who "owns" 50% of his earnings.

assassinate the President of the United States. That this is still perceived as new territory for a lightweight song-and-dance man is evident in the Variety front-page headline which announced his signing to the role: "Sinatra As Assassin!" (1954, 1). The distance Sinatra is travelling from his older star image at this point is underlined by Variety's exclamation mark, which suggests an incredulity at the casting decision.²⁰ This sense of surprise is reiterated in several of the reviews of the film upon its release four months later.

The New York Times review begins by noting the extreme difference between the old and new Sinatra: "Who would have dreamed ten years back, when Frank Sinatra was making sweet moan as the current fascination of the bobby-sox brigade, that he would ever be cast in a movie to play the repulsive role of a fellow grimly intending to assassinate the President of the United States? . . . The suggestion would probably have occasioned the heart-failure of several thousand fans" (Crowther 1954, 27). Sinatra's old, "sweet moan" associated with the transient tastes ("current fascination") of his female "bobby-sox brigade" has been replaced by the "repulsive role" of a grim fellow who is an assassin. Sinatra's newfound "toughness" is linked to his performance in From Here to Eternity: ". . . we think that Mr. Sinatra deserves a special chunk of praise for playing the leading gunman with an easy, cold, vicious sort of gleam. His memorable playing of Maggio in "From Here to Eternity" served fair notice that the singer could act a dramatic role. In "Suddenly!" he proves it in a melodramatic tour de force . . . His old fans should see him now" (Crowther 1954, 27). The sense that Sinatra is convincing as a "cold, vicious gunman", "a psychopathic character" who "maniacally bullies and brags" (Crowther 1954, 27) marks his difference from his 1940s image.

²⁰The tag line on a poster for Suddenly - "The song-and-dance man who won an Oscar" - juxtaposes Sinatra's old and new images understood in terms of light musical-comedy versus serious, critically-acclaimed drama (reproduced in Doctor 1991, 89).

Newsweek also focused on the violent and "repellent" quality of Sinatra's character, and underlined the shift in his image (and audience): "The only box-office star in its cast is Frank Sinatra, chiefly known until recently as a singer of teen-age youngsters' songs . . ." ("Quality Crop" 1954, 76). Sinatra plays "one of the most repellent killers in American screen history. Sneeringly arrogant in the beginning, brokenly whimpering in the finish, Sinatra will astonish viewers who flatly resent bobby-soxers' idols" ("Quality Crop" 1954, 77). The implication is that Sinatra's image has changed to such an extent that he may now be acceptable to those who "resent bobby-soxer's idols". In other words, Sinatra may now be seen as more mature, serious, and accomplished as an actor. Sinatra's articulation as violent and dangerous is especially evident in a still from the film which accompanies the review. Captioned "Sinatra: A repellent assassin", the photo features Sinatra in shirt sleeves, wearing a long tie and a dark fedora, holding a .45, and covering the mouth of a young boy whom he is holding hostage. While Sinatra's character, a dangerous psychopath for whom even children are fair game, is seen as "different" from his older image, the review notes that Sinatra is more than believable ("will astonish") in the role. Here the danger and mental instability associated with Sinatra's star-image may feed into his believability in a role that no one "would have dreamed" (Crowther 1954, 27) he could play a decade earlier.

In an interview in the New York Herald Tribune during the run of Suddenly, Sinatra claims that he is gaining confidence in his acting and believes he can take on almost any role: "As a case in point, Mr. Sinatra has tackled a role that any actor would think deeply about before accepting - a hired Presidential assassin, a heavy in the most extreme sense of the word" (Hyams 1954, N. pag.). The "heaviness" of Sinatra's role contributes to his movement away from his older, "lightweight" image. The gravity of a killer reinforces the conception of Sinatra as a serious actor; as he puts it himself, "It was a challenge - I have never seen on the screen any character as consistently brutal as



"SUDDENLY"—Frank Sinatra stars as a killer hired to assassinate the President of the United States, in the new movie melodrama opening Thursday at the Mayfair.

Sinatra Sitting on Top of the World

By JOE HYAMS

HOLLYWOOD, Oct. 2.—Although Frank Sinatra considers himself "basically a song and dance man" he is quick to act.

*It's a Long Time
Between Acts*

ducer-director Stanley Kramer for his comedy role in "Not as a Stranger," to be followed by the song and dance role of Nathan

Figure 4.5: Photograph, New York Herald-Tribune, 1954

Sinatra greets at news photographers in recent appearance before Los Angeles grand jury of 1954 in connection with probe of a private-detective pact.



Figure 4.6: Photograph, Look, 1957

this man is" (quoted in Hyams 1954, N. pag.). Sinatra then compares his role in Suddenly to that of Richard Widmark in Kiss of Death (1947; Widmark pushes an old lady in a wheelchair down a flight of stairs), and James Cagney in The Public Enemy (1931; Cagney pushes a grapefruit in a woman's face). Sinatra continues: "... those were only scenes. This guy is brutal all through the picture. He's definitely insane" (quoted in Hyams 1954, N. pag.). Sinatra is here placing himself within the lineage of notorious Hollywood tough guys, Widmark and Cagney, the latter of whom made his name playing a gangster. The photograph that accompanies the New York Herald-Tribune article reinforces the articulation of Sinatra as tough guy and criminal. It features Sinatra in a classic gangster action pose: wearing a fedora and crouching behind a table, Sinatra is grimacing and aiming his gun at an unseen enemy (see figure 4.5).

Posters for the film also emphasized Sinatra's role as part of the history of the gangster film: "Sinatra - As a ruthless killer! . . . Not since "Scarface" and "Public Enemy" has the screen witnessed such bullet-riddled fury . . . " The pressbook for the film emphasized both Sinatra's newfound popularity and his new, tougher image: "Frank Sinatra - the hottest commercial property in the entire entertainment industry! . . . Movie-goers in every corner of the country are now eagerly awaiting his first starring role. And they're in for a new thrill as Frankie plays a new kind of role - a tough, terrifying killer! . . . Frank Sinatra tears loose with a gun in his hand" (reproduced in Doctor 1991, 89). In another poster, the tag line, "Sinatra - as a savage, sensation-hungry mad-dog killer", offers a reference to Humphrey Bogart's breakthrough role as hardened criminal Earl "Mad Dog" Carroll in High Sierra (1941). Overall, Sinatra's character is constructed as a tough, vicious, psychopath and placed within a genealogy of Hollywood gangsters.

In Suddenly, Sinatra portrays John Baron, a hit man hired to assassinate the U.S. president. Whereas in From Here to Eternity, Sinatra had played a defiantly tough but sympathetic character, in Suddenly he is a cold-blooded and psychotic killer, a winner

of a silver star during World War II (for singlehandedly killing 27 enemy soldiers), who was subsequently dismissed from the Army because of mental illness (ie. he liked killing too much). He dies at the end of this movie as well, but unlike From Here to Eternity, where he maintains his wisecracking ways even as he is dying in Montgomery Clift's arms, in Suddenly, after he has been shot by the woman whose home he had commandeered, he cries out "no, please, no", in a display of cowardice meant to undercut his earlier, ruthless demeanour. Sinatra's articulation as emotionally volatile may have contributed to audiences' appreciation of his performance. It is also noteworthy that prior to 1953, Sinatra's characters never died in his films; in Suddenly, like Maggio in From Here to Eternity, Sinatra's character dies at the end of the film (that Sinatra recognized the importance of this in changing his image is suggested by his comment to an audience in a Blackpool nightclub in 1953: introducing the song "From Here to Eternity", Sinatra quips that it is "from a motion picture in which I'm very happy to die").

The Capitol-era clothing style of dark suit, long tie, and hat is first established cinematically with Sinatra's role in Suddenly (it can be seen on the cover of Songs for Young Lovers, released six months prior to the film, as well as on the cover of Swing Easy, released a month after the film), and it is interesting to note the motivation for the costume: in the film, Sinatra plays a gangster who masquerades as an FBI agent to gain entry to a site overlooking the president's motorcade. Thus some of the Capitol-era clothing style retains this mixed message, of surface conformity tinged with the subversion and danger.

Sinatra's clothing during the period was frequently used to articulate his ethnicity, Mafia connections, and sense of danger. Time was to the point: "The man looks, in fact, like the popular conception of a gangster, model 1929. He has bright wild eyes, and his movements suggest spring steel. He dresses with a glaring, George Raft kind of snazziness - rich dark shirts and white figured ties, with ring and cuff links that

almost always match. He had, at last count, roughly \$30,000 worth of cuff links . . . more than 100 suits . . . 50 pairs of shoes . . . 20 hats" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 52). Sinatra represents the gangster as dandy, who nonetheless possesses an undercurrent of danger ("wild eyes", "spring steel"). But this is also inflected by ethnicity; George Raft is also an Italian-American actor, but his appearance in Scarface (1931) and innumerable other gangster films produces a link between his star-image and popular conceptions of "the Mafia". Similarly, the "glaring . . . snazziness" suggests a sense of style which would be viewed from within WASP conceptions of taste as unrestrained and "ethnic", i.e. Italian-American. Look also linked Sinatra's taste in clothes implicitly to ethnicity and explicitly to organized crime: "He was dressed in a dark blue suit with a black shirt, a white tie and a black straw hat - a gangster-style dress which he favors" (Davidson 1957a, 48).

Sinatra is consistently tied to the Mafia in articles from ca. 1954 onward. Rave noted that "His first singing job . . . was allegedly landed for him by the gangland mob headed by Willie Moretti. He was a pal with other big-time hoods, too" ("Frankie and Ava: Who Done Who Wrong?" 1954, 34), and goes on to allude to a number of Sinatra's "friends" who are known members of Italian organized crime syndicates (the Fischetti brothers, Lucky Luciano). Even articles which deny Sinatra's ties to the underworld effectively reinforce his articulation as Mafioso; Celebrity appears to suggest that it is a question of truth versus appearances: "A few whisper that Sinatra never would have gotten into show business in the first place if it hadn't been for the help of friends in the underworld . . . Most of these rumors, of course, are false. Yet they have been so widely circulated that many people accept them as gospel truth" ("Who's Out to Get Frank Sinatra?" 1955, 4-7). However, this appears under a section heading which undercuts this assertion and underlines Sinatra's underworld image: "Some think gangsters control Frank". In 1956, Cosmopolitan repeated the claim: "Time and again it has been reported that Sinatra really belonged to Willie Moretti, a gangster . . ." (Rogers

St. Johns 1956, 86). Though his ex-wife Nancy is quoted as denying the allegations, the article notes that "Over the years some of his companions have been none too savory", and mentions Sinatra's ties to Fischetti and Luciano (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 83-84).

A 1954 article in the scandal magazine Inside explicitly articulates Sinatra's new, tough, dangerous image with his Mafia connections. A photo of the 1940s Sinatra is captioned "Then - The inexperienced, wistful Frankie with the boyish smile . . .", and contrasted with a 1950s photo: "Now - A mature, determined, knows-what-he-wants kind of guy, Sinatra will step on everybody's toes to prove that he can also act" ("Frankie Plays It Tough!" 1954, 38). Sinatra's maturity and serious acting skills are articulated with his dangerous and determined "step on everybody's toes" image; the loss of his innocence ("inexperienced . . . boyish") is the result of experience which is conceived as gangster guilt in the body of the article. The article's title, "Frankie Plays It Tough!", refers to his role as professional killer in Suddenly; a still from the film, with Sinatra "in character" in dark suit and fedora, is captioned "This is Frank Sinatra today", again suggesting a seamless integration of life and art. Just as Sinatra and his Suddenly character wear the same clothes, both now "play it tough" as well. The article goes on to suggest that Sinatra's toughness, whether onscreen or in life, is in part a function of his friendships with gangsters: "He's always played it tough, and played it tough with the toughest people in the world . . . Willie Moretti . . . the Fischetti brothers . . . "Lucky" Luciano . . . " ("Frankie Plays It Tough!" 1954, 38-39). It also assumes that readers are aware that it was alleged that Sinatra illegally carried Mob money to Luciano in Cuba, evident in the article's coy reference to "Memories such as trips to Havana, carrying a little black bag for the exiled Luciano. These memories must make movie scripts seem like fairy stories". The sense that Sinatra's real-life "memories" may be more fantastic than "movie scripts" is less important than the assertion of the similarity of their subject matter (and the implication that Sinatra's films, rather than

representing an exaggeration of reality, fall short of the intensity of Sinatra's "real" life). A subsequent quote reinforces the the integration of gangsters into Sinatra's life and art; a reference to the "...thugs" that follow Sinatra around, posing as bodyguards" ("Frankie Plays It Tough!" 1954, 39) implies that although Sinatra, as a movie star, may require bodyguards, they are in fact gangland associates.

Time also saw gangsters as part of Sinatra's "life": "Frankie has his gang. He is rarely to be seen without a few and sometimes as many as ten of "the boys" around him, and some look indeed like unfortunate passport photographs" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55). Playboy understood Sinatra's friends in terms of physical appearance as well: "He is always in the company of a curious collection of friends who look like extras from On the Waterfront" (Reisner 1958, 86). The implication again is that Sinatra's life can be understood in cinematic terms.

Time mentions that Sinatra is an "admitted friend of Joe Fischetti, who is prominent in what is left of the Capone mob, and he [Sinatra] once made himself a lot of trouble by buddying up to Lucky Luciano in Havana - all of which is not to say he mixes his pleasure with their business; Frankie is too smart for that. On occasion . . . Sinatra has also gone in for slapping people around" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55). Sinatra's tough and violent image is linked to his ethnicity via the reference to the "Capone mob" etc. Similarly, Look uses the Italian-American connotations of "pizza" to imply Sinatra's Mafia ties, as seen in a photo of Sinatra and others eating pizza in his dressing room, as the caption puts it, with "show-business tough guys" (Davidson 1957a, 41). The article goes on to describe Sinatra arriving at The Sands Hotel in Las Vegas with Joe Fischetti, "... cousin of Al Capone, and brother of notorious Chicago mobsters . . . in his entourage. When no rooms were immediately available for them, he [Sinatra] threw a tantrum in the lobby of the hotel . . ." (Davidson 1957a 41-2). Again Sinatra's instability, violence, and Mafia-association are articulated together.

In the second of the Look articles, a photo caption - "Rocky Marciano . . . Johnny Indrissano and similar associates add to Frank's idea of himself as a "tough guy"" - is ambiguous as to whether toughness, ethnicity, the Mafia, or all three constitute the category of similarity being deployed (Davidson 1957b, 124). The dangerous, violent, and tough aspects of Sinatra's Capitol-era image are well-represented by another photograph which opens the article, "Why Frank Sinatra Hates the Press: The Life Story of Frank Sinatra". In the photo, Sinatra's lips are pursed and he is staring at the camera with what can only be described as pure evil rage in his eyes (see figure 4.6). With a motion picture camera visible in the background, the caption reads "Sinatra scowls at news photographers in recent appearance before Los Angeles grand jury to testify in connection with probe of private detective raid" (Davidson 1957b, 123).²¹ Sinatra's "hatred" of the press is subtly tied to his ethnicity through the use of the Italian-derived "vendetta": "Sinatra's attitude toward the press over the years has led to a long and sometimes violent vendetta with the Fourth Estate" (Davidson 1957b, 123). The mood of anger and gangster-like aggression is represented by the headings to two sections of the article; although they are what are known as pull-out quotes (in which phrases from the body of the text are highlighted), their selection emphasizes Sinatra's dangerousness in criminal terms. On page 124, "If they ask me personal questions, they're through, dead, period" implies murder, even though the original quote from Sinatra refers to a journalist's loss of access to Sinatra for future interviews if the journalist asks the wrong kind of questions. On page 128, "The next time, I'll kill you" was allegedly shouted through a locked hotel-room door by Sinatra. It was directed at Robert Ruark, the columnist who first reported Sinatra's connection to Lucky Luciano. Despite the assertion in the body of the text that Sinatra associates with "hoodlums" although "there is no evidence whatever that he has ever participated in their activities"

²¹ Sinatra is there to testify about his involvement with friend Joe DiMaggio's search for his allegedly unfaithful wife, Marilyn Monroe. DiMaggio, Sinatra and others broke into a woman's apartment in search of Monroe.

(Davidson 1957b, 128), the pull-out quotes may subtly inflect the reader's understanding of Sinatra's aggressive participation in Mafia "activities".

By 1960, Good Housekeeping would refer explicitly to the Mafia in its retelling of an onstage joke made by a fellow member of Sinatra's "Rat Pack", comedian Joey Bishop: "Later on Sinatra will give a lecture on all the good work the Maffia [sic] does" (quoted in Gehman 1960, 183). This clearly undercuts an assertion of Sinatra's "innocence" made on the same page regarding doubts about Sinatra's ". . . hoodlum companions. Whether he has any such connections is difficult to verify" (Gehman 1960, 183).

Not Nice

By being seen as participating in the underworld, Sinatra could be further articulated as anti-Establishment non-conformist living outside the rules of law and genteel public behaviour expected of celebrities. Look describes a "snarling brawl" at the Crescendo Club in Hollywood in December of 1954, in which Sinatra allegedly said "You're either a reporter or a lousy cop, and I hate both" (quoted Davidson 1957a, 44) to a club employee before assaulting him. The return of his "vendetta" with the press during the Capitol period, for example, could now be conceived in populist rather than self-indulgent terms:

Sinatra is proud of his fight with the press. He says, "I took my stand and I made my point. I blew up the myth that actors must discuss their private lives." It is a tribute to Sinatra's stature that he has been able to get away with his revolutionary public-relations policy. It has, in fact, contributed to his present popularity because many people admire the sight of the skinny little underdog standing up unrelentingly to the powerful press (Davidson, 1957b, 124)

Here Sinatra is "a skinny little underdog" revolting against the dominant interests of the "powerful press". The singularity of Sinatra's "stature" as artist is seen to empower his autonomy from the conventional "public-relations policy" of the film industry.

The re-valorization of Sinatra's aggressiveness/dangerousness in terms of autonomy is highlighted in a perceptive review of Sinatra's 1957-58 television program in the New Republic. The article, "Sinatra with Sweetening", critiques Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show because of the way it is seen to corrupt Sinatra's dangerous and autonomous image by trying to make him "nice" for the television audience. This is understood to involve attempts to "soften" Sinatra: ". . . the producers, obviously with Sinatra's agreement, did everything possible to wipe out the subtle hardness that makes him interesting. Almost every song was given a "pretty" treatment" (Fulford 1957, 22). The implicitly gendered contrasts of "hard" versus "soft", "subtle" versus "pretty", are then re-worked in terms of a juxtaposition of Sinatra's serious and adult work in recent films and albums against his "lightweight", song-and-dance-man image of the 1940s. Describing a comedy sketch on the TV show, the reviewer complains that ". . . it sounded like a parody of Sinatra: not the Sinatra of the recent LP records or the Sinatra of From Here to Eternity and The Man with the Golden Arm, but the Sinatra of Anchors Aweigh and other lightweight extravaganzas of the forties" (Fulford 1957, 22). The reviewer then conceives of the problem in terms of competing taste cultures, between the "sweet" family television audience and the serious, adult film and LP audience: "Now the saddest part of all this is that it is unnecessary. The people who have bought Sinatra's records by the millions and made his movies immensely successful are not enthusiasts of the Bobbsey Twins [a series of children's stories]. They have shown that they like the Sinatra character, with all its toughness and disdain for the so-sweet" (Fulford 1957, 22). Sinatra's adult taste ("disdain for the so-sweet") is seen as a source of the adult audience's taste for Sinatra; as in the case of his "good taste" in selecting standards discussed above, there is an

explicit alignment between the tastes of performer and audience, so that both may be conceived as connoisseurs.

The reviewer points to Sinatra's aggressive, non-conformist, and autonomous individuality as key to his popular appeal:

The first thing that should have been recognized by anyone planning a show around Sinatra is that he is, most emphatically, his own self . . . Sinatra long ago established a public character that is both interesting and diverse. And the most interesting part of this character derives from the fact that Sinatra is - well, there's no better way to say it - not nice. He is tough, sardonic and often funny in a rather rude way. Now there are plenty of people who are not nice, but few of them earn their livings as popular entertainers, and, in a world all too well supplied with nice guys, we should be grateful for them. By their presence they suggest that all life does not exist on the level of country-club chumminess. Sinatra has managed to place himself as far from the ethic of the nice guy as he can get . . . Sinatra - and I should make plain here that I'm talking about the personality he has shown the world, not the one the gossip writers discuss - gives the impression of deep, well-founded suspicion of the world and its ways. But there is more to Sinatra than this negative quality. His acting and singing seem to speak intimately of a special view of life - life lived dangerously but honorably. (Fulford 1957, 22)

Fulford's disparaging of "country-club chumminess" is reminiscent of contemporary critiques of "Togetherness" and organization-man corporatism. But Fulford is also making an argument about "realism" versus "fantasy" within commercial entertainment culture. Implicitly, television is an unreal "world all too well supplied with nice guys" trying to make the audience "buy" (i.e. believe and like) them and their wares. Fulford values Sinatra for generally refusing to masquerade at the "country club"; Sinatra is "emphatically his own self", which means resisting the interpellation of showbiz surface

sweetness and light in favour of a "deep, well-founded suspicion of the world and its ways". This articulates Sinatra's "not nice . . . public character . . . the personality he has shown the world" with non-conformity and autonomy. There is also the suggestion that Sinatra's class and ethnic origins are at play here, as well as a description ("life lived dangerously but honorably") that equally applies to Maggio.

Between October 1957 and May 1958, sociologist Herbert Gans lived in a working-class, Italian-American community in the West End of Boston. As noted above, Gans's participant-observer ethnography of "group and class in the life of Italian-Americans" touched upon the subject of Frank Sinatra as adult icon. Gans also discussed other aspects of Sinatra's popularity with the West Enders. Gans notes that Sinatra's refusal to be transformed by the dominant culture was a source of his subcultural value:

Interest in the performer is strongest when he or she displays characteristics valued by the West Ender . . . Sinatra is liked first because he is an Italian who is proud of his lowly origin, not so much because of his ethnic background per se - although it is not disparaged - but because he is willing to admit and defend it. Unlike some other performers of Italian parentage, he has neither changed his name, nor rejected his background and the people who helped get him started. Many Italian singers are - or are said to be - aided by racketeers who invest in their careers and pay the costs that accrue on the road to success. Some of the singers turn their back on their underworld sponsors once they have achieved success. Sinatra, however, has continued to associate with childhood friends and early supporters even though some may be racket figures and though the association may hurt his career. He has become rich and famous, but he has not deserted the peer group that gave him his start. Nor has he adopted the ways of the outside world (Gans 1962, 192)

Here Sinatra-as-Mafioso is as much about loyalty and honour as it is about danger or ethnicity. This sense of non-conformist integrity figures prominently in Gans's

representation of the composite "West Ender's" conception of Sinatra's significance. The aggressive, "not nice" aspects of Sinatra's star-image can be understood in terms of a continuing class struggle:

Still a rebellious individual, he does not hesitate to use either his tongue or fists to fight those who seek to deprive him of what is rightfully his. Also, he shows scorn for those aspects of the outside world that do not please him, and does not try to maintain appearances required by middle-class notions of respectability. Making headlines regularly for his sexual escapades, he is said to be unwilling to become emotionally involved with his sexual partners. He is loyal to his male friends, and may indulge in action-seeking adventures with them when the mood strikes him. He gambles, plays the horses, and sits up all night for card games (Gans 1962, 192-3)

Sinatra's apparent ability to resist the truism that "money changes you" is again seen as evidence of an integrity in which his class loyalty is conceived in terms of a disdain for respectable appearances.

The oppositional reading of Sinatra as subversive of mainstream values is especially prominent in a discussion of his singing:

As a singer, the inflection he gives to the tune and the lyrics is interpreted as arousing his audience to action. As a West Ender said, "He gives you a little dig in his songs". At the same time, his singing style has a teasing quality which suggests to West Enders that he is making fun both of the song and of the outside world. To them, he seems to be putting something over on the outside world, while at the same time taking its money and attractive women. He has risen to the top, failed, and come back again to even greater fame, to prove that downward mobility is not inevitable, that the "bum" can return to even greater heights than he achieved before. And, despite his success, he has not given up the old values;

he has remained what he was originally - a seeker of action with peer group values (Gans 1962, 193)

Here Sinatra's "little dig" is read as a critique of "the outside world". Gans notes the West Enders' awareness of differential power relations between institutions and individuals. For example, on television, as in life, "Policemen are disliked unless they are sympathetic to working-class characters, and are willing to ask them for help"; therefore the "haughty" Sgt. Friday of Dragnet is disliked, whereas the detective protagonist of Meet McGraw, who uses newsboys to help solve crimes, is liked (Gans 1962, 189-90). Gans argues that the West Enders, as part of an economically-marginalized ethnic minority, are well aware of their erasure within dominant media forms which represent a "sweetened", WASP, middle-class conception of reality. He claims that this has produced a suspicion of the mass media in the worldview of the West Enders:

In effect, the mass media are approached with some of the same ambivalence as other features of the outside world . . . Because of his [the West Ender's] suspicion of the mass media as an institution, the appearance of people and values of which he approves demonstrates that they are there because they are superior and cannot be held back. If Sinatra is in much demand by the media entrepreneurs and yet can act like a quasi-West Ender, he must be better therefore than his employers (Gans 1962, 195)

Thus Sinatra's impression of a "deep, well-founded suspicion of the world and its ways" (Fulford 1957, 22) can be articulated with forms of class consciousness, and prized in terms of a subcultural subversion of hegemonic values through "superior" artistry.

Sinatra's role in The Man with the Golden Arm (United Artists, 1955) similarly represents the articulation of a subcultural identity. Sinatra portrays Frankie Machine, a heroin addict living in an inner-city slum, where he makes his living dealing cards for a small-time bookie (Schwiefka/Robert Strauss). Frankie/Sinatra returns from

prison clean and sober; he wants to become a professional jazz drummer, but his wheelchair-bound wife Zosh/Eleanor Parker wants him to keep dealing cards. Slowly but surely Frankie is drawn back into his old way of life; he becomes addicted to heroin again and returns to his illicit job as card dealer. Frankie is befriended by a waitress, Molly/Kim Novak, who helps him as he goes through the torment of cold-turkey withdrawal, which constitutes an extended segment of the film. Frankie emerges clean, but the film's conclusion, which features Frankie and Molly standing alone on a streetcorner, is hardly a happy ending. As noted in chapter one, contemporary reviews remarked at the film's gloomy and depressing portrayal of the seamy side of life (e.g. Hift 1955). The limited opportunities and self-destructive temptations of the underworld of gambling and heroin Frankie must live in produce a sense of fatalism. Time reads the film as a character study about inner resolve, and praises Sinatra's acting: "Frank Sinatra, in particular, does a hurting job. Weary, weak, bewildered, battered, Frank's dogged Frankie is a creature who comes bitterly to understand that fate is character, fate is the thing a man can't give up" ("The New Pictures" 1955, 59). Although the review identifies "fate" as a central aspect of the film, its focus on the individual elides the socio-economic determinants of that fate, evident in the seedy, dirty, and poverty-stricken sets of the film.

While the ethnicity of Frankie/Sinatra is not specified in the film (in Nelson Algren's 1949 novel, Frankie's Polish ancestry it is an explicit element of the story), it is obvious that he lives in a poor, ethnic neighbourhood, and importantly, as a skid row hustler, is part of a "not nice" underworld. The role reinforced perceptions of Sinatra's dangerousness and non-conformity even as it contributed to the rising cultural esteem associated with his acting and singing. Sinatra's acting was critically praised and he received an Academy Award Best Actor nomination for the role (I discuss this further below). Sinatra's portrayal of the cold-turkey withdrawal was especially highlighted; this was articulated in terms of "torment" in a Life photo essay on the film, which

features a photograph of Sinatra's character biting a towel in anguish during withdrawal, captioned "in a fit of craving, film's hero (Frank Sinatra) bites towel to help him through torment" ("Film, Play On Addicts" 1955, 85). The Time review quoted above also featured a still from the withdrawal scene, in which Frankie/Sinatra is lying in an almost fetal position, arms held around himself, with his mouth frozen open in a scream; the choice of photograph emphasizes extreme pain but may also articulate a resonance between the film role and conceptions of Sinatra as moody, unstable, and tormented.

Sinatra played another underworld figure in 1955, although it was not serious or gloomy. In Guys and Dolls (M-G-M), Sinatra plays Nathan Detroit, proprietor of "the oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York". In other words, he is a bookie, whose companions and customers are clearly meant to be gangsters, racketeers, and assorted underworld figures. Although Nathan Detroit is meant to be vaguely Jewish in the Broadway version of the musical, the point here is that once again Sinatra's appearance in a film as an associate of gangsters offers the possibility of an articulation of ethnicity and non-conformism (if not danger, due to the happy nature of the narrative). Nathan Detroit is also opposed to the idea of marriage, and although he has been engaged for 14 years, he is represented as a confirmed bachelor. In 1957, Sinatra appeared in The Joker is Wild (Paramount), a bio-pic of saloon comedian Joe E. Lewis. In the narrative, Lewis/Sinatra is an aspiring singer during Prohibition who has his throat cut by gangsters when he refuses an offer to work at a rival nightclub. Again, Sinatra is placed within an underworld milieu, although he is definitely not a gangster. However, his non-conformity and sense of autonomy are aligned with the character's determination to do it his own way despite death threats and economic privation.

The Swingin' Playboy

In the 1940s Sinatra portrayed singing sailors and dancing baseball players; with From Here to Eternity in 1953, he begins a series of roles in which he plays more dangerous, non-conformist, and marginalized characters like soldiers, gangsters, and junkies. I discuss the implications of this shift further below; however, Sinatra also appeared in a number of films and recorded a series of LPs which were articulated with his personal life in the production of another new aspect of his star-image, that of the "swingin' playboy". The swingin' playboy component of Sinatra's star-image re-aligned his non-conformism and rebellion in terms of a deployment of power conceived as sexual independence and freedom from restrictive norms of behaviour. The articulation of Sinatra's star-image with discourses of autonomy is present in his construction as carefree bachelor in films such as The Tender Trap (M-G-M, 1955), High Society (M-G-M, 1956), Pal Joey (Columbia, 1957), A Hole in the Head (United Artists, 1959), and Ocean's 11 (Warner Bros., 1960), on uptempo, brass-dominated Capitol LPs such as Swing Easy! (1954), Songs for Swingin' Lovers! (1956), A Swingin' Affair! (1957), and Come Dance with Me! (1959), as well as in press accounts of his amorous adventures with a parade of actresses, showgirls, and socialites. This section looks at the production of Sinatra as swingin' playboy in terms of autonomy and hedonism.

The post-war period saw an increasing celebration of the (confirmed) bachelor, who had previously been seen as a social failure, whether morally (selfish), psychologically (immature), or sexually deviant (homosexual). In part the shift in popular representations of the mature, unmarried, adult male was the result of a process of "Americanization" of the bachelor in the post-war period; earlier cinematic images of a bachelorhood that was not a transitory state but a lifestyle tended implicitly to mark the bachelor's normative failure through a subtly negative, "Europeanized" image. The bachelor's "upper-class" demeanour was often signified by a vaguely British accent, and together with his epicurean tastes, fastidiousness in manners and clothes,

and haughty or effete disposition, a sense of cultural otherness served to insinuate sexual deviance. In the 1950s, the consolidation of leisure consumerism contributed to a new conception of the bachelor as healthy, robust, "red-blooded American" adult male, living according to what sociologist Martha Leites called a "fun morality" of acquisitiveness (quoted in Ehrenreich 1983, 45). Living "apart" from a wife or family, keeping his income entirely for himself, the bachelor was not only responsible for household purchases (unlike the majority of Canadian and American men at the time); he began to represent as well a kind of idealized consumer of luxury, the man of the future, whose financial - and sexual - economies were organized around constant acquisition. In turn, the constitution of identity through lifestyle conceived as commodity consumption became more widespread as the size of the middle-class increased. This meant that questions of taste were integrated into daily decisions to an unprecedented extent, and what a man did for a living began to be rivalled by his consumption as a source of status and self-esteem.

As Barbara Ehrenreich (1983) has argued, the consumer pleasures associated with the playboy lifestyle avoided the stigma of effete deviance traditionally attached to the self-involved dandy, by virtue of the hyper-heterosexuality associated with Playboy magazine (which begins publishing in the first year of Sinatra's Capitol contract, 1953). The production of men as consumers in Playboy involved the articulation of luxury goods and beautiful women as equally objects for consumption. In a profile of Sinatra in Playboy in 1958, Sinatra's distinctive taste in cultural commodities is tied to his "taste" in women, and he therefore embodies the Playboy ethos: "He is as intense in his pursuit of a better broad as he is of a better song or better part in a picture" (Reisner 1958, 63). Despite Sinatra's interest in clothes and luxury items (recall the inventory of cufflinks and shoes etc. in the Time cover story above), his self-indulgence is not portrayed as a moral shortcoming or sign of sexual deviance. A key contributor to shifts in popular conceptions of Sinatra was the series of affairs with

actresses in the late 1940s and 50s, while he was still married to Nancy, which were reported in gossip columns and culminated in the scandal around his courting of Ava Gardner. By the time of his separation from Gardner at the end of 1953, Sinatra was well-known as a "swordsman" or libertine. The tag line from a poster for The Tender Trap (1955), for example, refers to a Marilyn Monroe film but also assures us of the protagonist's (and Sinatra's) sexual orientation and indiscriminate heterosexual promiscuity: "this gentleman prefers girls!".

Sinatra's performance in The Tender Trap (1955) both draws on and contributes to the increasing respectability of the bachelor during the period, even as it simultaneously is read through Sinatra's personal sexual adventures and enhances his image as swingin' playboy. The New York Times review of the film understood its importance in terms of its contribution to the glamourization of the bachelor and his pleasures: "It isn't very likely that . . . "The Tender Trap" . . . is going to make marriage less attractive, but it certainly is going to do a lot to create a whole new respect for the joys and delights of bachelorhood" (Crowther 1955, 29).²²

The Tender Trap offers Sinatra as ur-playboy Charlie Reader, a theatrical agent with a Manhattan bachelor pad equipped with a bar and a bevy of beautiful women at his beck and call. An old, married friend, Joe McCall (David Wayne, who had played a version of the more negative, residual bachelor stereotype less than a decade earlier in Adam's Rib, 1949), arrives at Charlie/Sinatra's apartment while Charlie is necking with one of his girlfriends on his couch. Joe has left his wife, children, and job as the result of a mid-life crisis. He is envious of Charlie's set-up, in which Charlie has all the pleasures of married life but none of the responsibilities; Charlie thus embodies the

²²It is significant that the very "adult" nature of situations similar to those portrayed in The Tender Trap were the cause of a controversy in The Moon is Blue (1953), whose adult frankness about bachelors and bachelorettes in sexual situations led to it being denied a MPPAA Code Seal. However, its successful distribution outside of the Production Code paved the way for films like The Tender Trap, and also contributed to the eventual decline of the Code.

ideal of the Playboy philosophy by being sexually active and economically autonomous. Charlie subsequently meets Julie Gillis/Debbie Reynolds, a young woman who has set a schedule for finding and marrying a man. Charlie pursues her, even though he has rejected marriage as inimical to his lifestyle. Although Julie is attracted to Charlie, and makes her sexual interest in him evident, she will not "put out" without a marriage license. Through a series of mix-ups, Charlie, who finds himself without a date one night, is panicked and proposes to both Julie and another girlfriend, Sylvia. As a result, both leave him, and he goes to Europe to sort out his life. He returns for Sylvia's wedding to another man, where he inadvertently catches the bride's bouquet and realizes that he should marry Julie, who is also at the wedding. Thus the "tender trap" of the film's title has a dual meaning. On the one hand it describes Charlie's tasteful apartment, with its bar, subtle lighting, hi fi, and couch, where the tender sex may be "trapped" and "conquered" sexually. On the other hand, it refers to the deployment of sexuality by the husband hunter intent on "catching" a mate with her tender charms (a lobby card for the film articulates the film as advice for single women seeking husbands: "Many tried, but only one succeeded. See how she did it in The Tender Trap"). Thus two forms of duplicity concerning sexual activity constitute the film's articulation with contemporary views of gender relations as a "battle of the sexes".

The lyrics of the Jimmy Van Heusen-Sammy Cahn theme song, "(Love is) The Tender Trap", portray "love" (read as sexual desire) as the "tender trap" which leads men unwittingly into marriage: "You see a pair of laughing eyes/And suddenly you're sighing sighs/You're thinking nothing's wrong, you string along, boy, then snap!/Those eyes, those sighs, they're part/Of the tender trap". The something "wrong" here is the link forged between sexual pleasure and the "removal" of the male's autonomy via marriage read as trap. The bridge of the song suggests a dilemma for the single male in the 1950s, when sex was ideologically acceptable only within marriage: "Some starry night/When her kisses make you tingle/She'll hold you tight/And you'll hate

yourself/For being single". Thus sexual attraction (the "tingle") poses a potential danger to the bachelor who wishes to resist the marriage trap: "And all at once it seems so nice/The folks are throwing shoes and rice/You hurry to a spot that's just a dot on the map/And you wonder how it all came about/It's too late now, there's no getting out/You fell in love and love/Is the tender trap". The lyrics of the song appear to operate within dominant conceptions of pre-marital sex as forbidden; the song's protagonist sells his autonomy ("it's too late now, there's no getting out") for the expression of sexuality within marriage.

However, the Playboy philosophy argued that sex without marriage was essential to the playboy lifestyle, in which male liberation was understood as the right to keep one's income, and one's "consumer" options open. Just as Playboy sought to subvert the contemporary containment of sexuality within the economic arrangements of marriage, Sinatra's performance of the song, and Nelson Riddle's arrangement, undercut the straightforward appearances of the lyric. The recording (which reached number 7 on the Billboard charts at the end of 1955) begins with a up-tempo swing rhythm, with big band reed and brass sections playing antiphonally. However, the arrangement's "hook", in this case an instrumental sound which seeks to differentiate immediately this from other recordings, is a muted trumpet section which punches at the end of each bar in the introductory segments, as well as during the rhythmic stops that lead into the refrain lines in the second half of the song. The punch consists of a manipulation of the high frequency content of the trumpets, via the mutes and the players' blowing with a slow attack and quick decay; this results in a "squawking" sound which is historically associated with cartoon soundtracks, where it frequently accompanies moments of humorous failure or disappointment. The muted trumpets playing on top of the standard big band arrangement thus suggest a second level of meaning or commentary, which is reinforced by Sinatra's vocal tone and lyric phrasing. Sinatra sings the first section of the song ("You see a pair of laughing eyes . . .") relatively "straight", but his

vocal production in the second section is commonly associated with sarcasm; here he masks his full voice in favour of a more nasal sound on the underlined word: "You're hand in hand beneath the trees/And soon there's music in the breeze/You're acting kind of smart until your heart just goes whap!/Those trees, that breeze, they're part/Of the tender trap". On the word "music", Sinatra also plays with the intonation of the note, moving around the intended pitch in a manner which conventionally connotes "sensuousness". Sinatra's tone on the underlined words from the third section ("You hurry to a spot that's just a dot . . .") also suggests sarcasm. In the repeat of the bridge, Sinatra pauses suggestively before the word "tingle" in the line "Some starry night/When her kisses make you - - tingle". The listener is aware of the pause as deviation since the first bridge is sung without the pause. This serves to insinuate a much more sexually explicit meaning into the euphemism "tingle"; the implication is that "her kisses make you" experience something more than a tingle. Thus Sinatra's sarcastic and insinuating performance, supported by the muted trumpets operating within established musical conventions of meaning production, result in a "little dig" that subverts the narrative resolution of the lyric in marriage in favour of the "knowing" sexual adventurism of the swingin' playboy (who will never have to "hate himself for being single"). This subversion of the surface "straightness" of the lyrics may be the kind of performance Gans's informants refer to above: "As a West Ender said, "He gives you a little dig in his songs". At the same time, his singing style has a teasing quality which suggests to West Enders that he is making fun both of the song and of the outside world. To them, he seems to putting something over on the outside world" (Gans 1962, 193). Thus for adult audiences of the 1950s, Sinatra's performance of "(Love is) The Tender Trap" may have articulated a form of sexual license generally forbidden mainstream popular entertainment.

The image of the carefree playboy and the theme song from The Tender Trap were especially associated with Sinatra from ca. 1955 onward. Many episodes of Chesterfield

Presents the Frank Sinatra Show (1957-58) use an instrumental version of "The Tender Trap" as the opening theme music. This accompanies an opening sequence in which Sinatra runs down an aisle of the television studio, quickly moving through the audience and up onto the stage. Sinatra wears a black hat with white hatband, and carries his raincoat casually tossed over one shoulder; he jumps up onstage, and goes right into a swinging, uptempo, brass-driven song, frequently snapping his fingers in time with the backing rhythm. This iconography is particularly tied to an articulation of Sinatra as free-wheeling playboy; Playboy highlights precisely this imagery at the outset of its 1958 profile: "Hat set cockily on the back of his head, raincoat draped carelessly over a bony shoulder, this hip brand of love god, so different from the lush and limpid-eyed love gods of yore . . ." (Reisner 1958, 63). The raincoat over the shoulder suggests a carefree attitude; the stormy weather that would call for the wearing of a raincoat for protection is nowhere to be found, and a sunny, happy-go-lucky disposition prevails. The upbeat mood is supported by the upbeat, swinging, big band music associated with Sinatra's "hip love god" image, whether in his recording of "(Love is) The Tender Trap" or on all of his Capitol albums with the word "swing" in their titles (and a smiling Sinatra on their covers).

The representation of Sinatra as a "buoyant soul" (as the liner notes to Swing Easy! put it in 1954) is especially tied to his return to the top and the concomitant sense of power regained, now that the rainy days of his career nadir have been weathered. The 1954 Time article, "Back on Top", begins with three lines from Sinatra's recent brassy, swinging big band recording of "I've Got the World on a String": "I've got the world on a string/Sittin' on a rainbow/Got the string around my fingers . . .". It goes on to link the musical imagery of Sinatra "sittin' on a rainbow" (i.e. on top after the rain) with his return to power conceived as popularity in a quote by Sinatra: "'Music is getting better,' Frankie says, and so is he. 'Everything's ahead of me. Man, I'm on top of the world. I'm buoyant'" ("Back on Top" 1954, 72). Time's 1955 profile reiterated

the quote in terms of Sinatra's new cocky, playboy image: "Said Frank Sinatra . . . as he sat cockily . . . and tilted a white-banded black panama off his forehead, "Man, I'm buoyant. I feel about eight feet tall" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 52). Sinatra's claim that he feels bigger involves a literalization of his newfound success (and power) in physical terms. A continuing sense that Sinatra's swinging big band recordings articulate his playboy image in terms of success is found in the opening of a 1957 New York Times Magazine profile: "The selection of "I've Got the World on a String" as the introductory number in the record album, "This is Sinatra," may have been coincidence, but it summarizes with uncanny accuracy the current position of the entertainment realm of [Frank Sinatra]" (Pryor 1957, 17). Thus the playboy persona involved a re-integration of Sinatra's life (his career comeback) into his art (his image as buoyant, carefree, and successful with women)

At the opening of the film The Tender Trap, Sinatra appears in his Capitol costume of hat, long tie, and suit, in a sequence that precedes and then accompanies the credits, before the narrative proper has begun. In a single shot, Sinatra walks toward the camera from a distance as he sings, looking directly into the camera, with a light-coloured, theatrical backdrop behind him. At this point, the viewer is experiencing Frank Sinatra as star rather than character, as no narrative or graphic contextualization has occurred; this "directness" is reinforced by the play of filmic space, in which an extreme long shot becomes a medium close-up not through camera movement, but through Sinatra's own movement as he walks into the camera. Subsequently, the song is sung by his character, Charlie Reader, within the narrative. Again, an alignment between Sinatra's "life" and his film roles is implicit: both Charlie and Sinatra sing the song, and it is likely that Sinatra's "real" playboy lifestyle and sexual adventures not only parallel Charlie's - they may even "make movie scripts seem like fairy stories".

Woman's Home Companion remarked at Sinatra's well-publicized promiscuity: "Sometimes on the same day, in the same paper, gossip columnists will have him staggering under a torch for half a dozen different women" (Taves 1956a, 39-40), and then articulated this in terms of his role in The Tender Trap: "At his duplex bachelor apartment in Westwood, Hollywood girls are always popping in (blondes, brunettes and redheads) - just like in The Tender Trap - ready to do little chores for him" (Taves 1956a, 40). The apparently seamless integration of Sinatra's art and life is then understood in terms of autonomy and integrity; the article notes that while Sinatra's volatile image represents "the challenge of the difficult male", he is true to his image, and therefore, to himself: "One of the secrets about Sinatra is that everything about his complex character is real . . . His honesty is real. So is his generosity. His arrogance is built-in" (Taves 1956a, 40). Despite his "difficult" and "arrogant" personality and his refusal to be "trapped" into another marriage, Sinatra is respected for his frankness.

The potential for male identification with this arrogance and sexual power over women accounts for the men's magazine Climax's inflection of the same imagery: "After Ava divorced him in 1957, Sinatra set up bachelor quarters in a duplex apartment in Westwood and led a life similar to the one he was at that time depicting in The Tender Trap, with coveys of luscious girls popping in, breathlessly eager to do little chores for him" (O'Neal 1959, 87). Note the implication that Sinatra actually lives a Playboy-like fantasy where the women are "luscious", "breathless", and submissive. I discuss Sinatra's articulation with a male audience further below.

Pal Frankie

Replacing the contribution of his ethnicity to his performance in From Here to Eternity, Sinatra's reputed sexual insatiability is now read as the source of the perceived authenticity of his portrayal of the title character in Pal Joey (1957), in a review of the film in Downbeat: "As in his characterization of Pvt. Maggio in From Here to Eternity, Frank Sinatra is the perfect Joey Evans, a wisecracking bounder who can't say no to an inviting derriere" (Tynan 1957, 40; emphasis in original). At the same time, Sinatra's role as Pal Joey offered a means of articulating his personal sexual adventures; a 1957 Photoplay article which denies a rumour that Sinatra might marry Lauren Bacall (with whom he had conducted a widely-publicized affair) ends by asserting Sinatra's promiscuous refusal to be restrained by monogamy in terms of his cinematic creation: "And what about Frankie? Where does romance enter his scheme of things? Where it always has, I should think - playing the field as "Pal Frankie"" (Harris 1957, 21).

Sinatra's performance as Joey Evans in Pal Joey offers another important instantiation of his swingin' playboy persona (see figure 4.7). Based on Rodgers & Hart's Broadway musical adaptation of a John O'Hara novelette, it was critically and popularly seen to be an ideal vehicle for Sinatra, both because of the sophisticated, adult subject matter and because of the character of Joey Evans, a womanizing entertainer. The film begins with Joey/Sinatra being thrown out of a town by the police for having attempted to seduce the mayor's young daughter. He subsequently arrives in San Francisco, where he worms his way into a job as a singing MC at a nightclub. He gets involved with a number of the showgirls at the club, but is especially attracted to Linda English/Kim Novak, a "good girl" who recognizes Joey for the duplicitous "heel" he is. Joey even takes a room at Linda's rooming house as part of his strategy to "conquer" her sexually. Joey and the nightclub band are hired to perform at a soiree given by a rich Nob Hill socialite, Vera Simpson/Rita Hayworth, who in a previous life had been a



Figure 4.7: Publicity Photograph, Pal Joey, 1957

stripper known to Joey, but who is now a wealthy, respectable widow. Mrs. Simpson and Joey begin an affair, with Joey as a “kept man”, held by Mrs. Simpson’s promise to help Joey realize his lifetime dream of owning his own nightclub, to be called “Chez Joey”. Plans and rehearsals for the club’s opening go ahead, but Joey reveals his continuing affection for Linda by reserving a featured spot for her in the club’s opening show. Mrs. Simpson tells Joey to fire her or else lose the club, but he refuses; she ceases her financial support of the club, and Linda, who has changed her mind about Joey, leaves with him.

It is not simply Sinatra’s libertine image which contributed to perceptions of an alignment with the character of Joey. The trailer for the film downplays the substantial narrative in favour of a parade of great songs sung by a great singer; by presenting a procession of Rodgers & Hart standards sung by Sinatra in an intimate nightclub setting (almost all of Sinatra’s singing in the film is done diegetically as part of Joey’s nightclub act), the trailer sells the film as a classy evening of musical entertainment in which the embodied voice of Frank Sinatra is offered as technicolor, hi-fi spectacle. Thus Sinatra as singer, rather than actor portraying a character within a narrative, is offered as part of the movie’s appeal to audiences.

Of course, the promiscuous sexuality of Sinatra’s swingin’ playboy image is both drawn upon and reinforced in his portrayal of Joey as womanizer. But the film equally articulates the autonomous and non-conformist aspects of the swingin’ playboy, in terms of a rebellious assertion of integrity and self-determination over wealth acquired through acquiescence. For a section of the film, Joey lives as a kept man on Mrs. Simpson’s yacht, being sent away from her mansion when “respectable” company visit, and generally submitting to Mrs. Simpson’s control as a condition of acquiring his nightclub. However, when Mrs. Simpson tells Joey that he must fire Linda, he finally realizes that in order to be the boss of his own club he has effectively sold his body and soul and lost his independence. He resists Mrs. Simpson’s orders and asserts his

integrity and autonomy by breaking away from the easy but dishonourable life she represents.

At the same time, the non-conformist element of the swingin' playboy is also articulated in an important scene earlier in the film. Before Joey and Mrs. Simpson become involved, she goes to a nightclub Joey works at late one night, just before closing, and asks him to sing a song for her. Even though the club is empty and about to close, its owner recognizes Mrs. Simpson as a respected, classy, lady of wealth, and serves her champagne and orders his employee Joey to perform for her. (Joey initially refuses, as he doesn't like the way Mrs. Simpson treated him when he performed at her soiree; there she explicitly wields the change in her class status over Joey - they had worked clubs together years earlier - and tells him he must eat dinner in the kitchen "with the rest of the help"). Joey reluctantly agrees to sing, but appears to resist slyly his subordination/subjugation by performing "The Lady is a Tramp" (Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, 1937). The "rude" connotations of the choice are underlined by the band's initial confusion and hesitation when Joey calls out the song number²³ he wants to perform, and by the bar owner's distressed look when he hears which song is being played.

The lyric of "The Lady is a Tramp" appears to involve the casting of an aspersion on a respectable woman's sexual reputation; within 1950s conceptions of sexual propriety, a "lady" existed at a remove from the indiscriminate sexual promiscuity of the "loose" woman or "tramp". Thus claiming that a lady is in fact not a lady, but her social and moral opposite, a tramp, was a serious insult, and this is the initial significance of the song within the narrative of Pal Joey. However, the song's lyric is in fact a hymn to non-conformity, bohemianism, and freedom from social repression; ultimately it describes an independent-thinking woman whose integrity is revealed by

²³The repertoire of songs a band performed was known as their "book", and songs were referred to by number rather than title. Thus even though the cinema audience does not yet know which song will be performed, it is made aware, through the band's reaction to the number called out, that something is amiss.

her indifference to appearances and peer pressure, and by her rejection of hypocrisy and class privilege. The lyric as performed by Sinatra describes an anonymous woman who disdains upper-class habits, and instead acts directly on her beliefs, interests, and emotions: "She gets too hungry for dinner at eight/She likes the theatre and never comes late/She never bothers with people she'd hate/That's why the lady is a tramp". Class privilege and gender stereotypes are rejected: "Doesn't like crap games with Barons or Earls/Won't go to harlem in ermine and pearls/Won't dish the dirt with the rest of the girls/That's why the lady is a tramp". All of these refusals earn the anonymous lady the appellation "tramp"; her non-conformity and integrity are read as social deviance and she is punished with the tarnishing of her good name. The use of language for social control here relies on a consensus over the meaning of "tramp", as something women agree they must avoid being called; however, the lyric itself seeks to subvert language and meaning. In the bridge of the song, a "natural" freedom is preferred to the "cares" of conventional society and the constraints of money: "She likes the free, fresh wind in her hair, life without care/She's broke, and it's ok/Hates California, it's cold and it's damp/That's why the lady is a tramp". Lorenz Hart's lyric links the last word of the bridge ("ok", mispronounced as "oak") with the first word of the final refrain ("hates") in order to produce the full sound of the word implied by the mispronounced "oak" ("okay"); thus the non-conformity of the lady extends to language (as well as to a rejection of conventional wisdom, expressed by a contrarian view of the California climate). The lyric of "The Lady is a Tramp" itself seeks to subvert language by reconstructing the meaning of "tramp" when applied to a woman, shifting it from whore to bohemian.²⁴

²⁴It is noteworthy that "The Lady is a Tramp" was originally conceived to be sung by a woman; its lyrics are a self-description ("I like the free, fresh wind in my hair/Life without care/I'm broke, but it's ok"), and it is only in the refrain line, "That's why the lady is a tramp", that the female performer abandons the first person. In the refrain line, the nominative power of language is foregrounded as a form of alienation from the subject's "true" self; here the female performer distances herself from both appellations (lady and tramp) as inaccurate because they are not self-generated. In

But, ironically, it is not in relation to Mrs. Simpson or any female that “The Lady is a Tramp” is finally deployed in the film of Pal Joey. Mrs. Simpson’s character as revealed within the narrative is certainly not the anonymous woman of the song, nor is Linda. Only at the most literal level does it appear to describe the conflict between Mrs. Simpson’s (stripper) past and (lady-like) present. This requires a deliberate mis-reading of the lyrics, one that is encouraged by the band’s and bar owner’s initial reactions to the song. Its function within the narrative, however, is to assert Joey’s independence (first through the “rudeness” of a literal reading of the song), even as it is the vehicle for his subsequent subjugation, since Mrs. Simpson is finally flattered (and aroused) by the song’s deeper meaning (which she discerns, as revealed by her smile) and at that point begins her affair with Joey. However, it ultimately stands in relation to both Sinatra and Joey as a sign of autonomy, non-conformity, and sexual license. Joey himself is a tramp at a number of levels: he is a whore (in terms of his promiscuity as well as selling himself to Mrs. Simpson)²⁵ and he is a bohemian, rejecting the constraints of straight society in favour of a carefree life of constant movement (recall that he is escorted out of one town by the police for his lack of respect for propriety; presumably this is not the first time he’s had to move on). His rejection of Mrs. Simpson’s wealth parallels the lady/tramp’s; his integrity involves the assertion that it’s “ok” to be “broke”, as he has been all his life. In terms of the narrative, the song functions to put Joey in a position where he can do the first honourable thing in his life; by becoming Mrs. Simpson’s “tramp”, he is offered the opportunity to stand on his principles and become a “lady” when it becomes clear that the price of his nightclub is the loss of his autonomy. Ironically, or perhaps not so, this

addition, the original Broadway version of the song contains a verse which refers to “my hobohemia”, linking the working-class dropout of the hobo with the middle- or upper-class dropout of the bohemian; again language is subverted in the articulation of a rejection of normative behaviour.

²⁵Recall also the “prostitute” connotations of the Sinatra’s lamppost iconography.

is expressed in the film in terms of manhood: as he walks away from Mrs. Simpson's wealth, he says to Linda, "Maybe you can make an honest man out of me".

For Frank Sinatra, the ambiguity over the meaning of the lyrics of "The Lady is a Tramp" allowed him simultaneously to subvert WASP propriety by singing the word "tramp" and to assert a non-conformist idealism about gender and behaviour. Thus Sinatra singing "The Lady is a Tramp" may be "putting something over on the outside world", and articulating a Playboy-like critique of dominant sexual stereotypes. The fact that it is a Broadway standard from one of the most respected songwriting teams in popular music, along with the swinging, big band arrangement by Nelson Riddle, may also be articulated with Sinatra's adult artistry. Finally, Sinatra's phrasing of the melody and lyric also offers a point of articulation for discourses of autonomy.

Many commentators have pointed to the singularity and distinctiveness of Sinatra's phrasing, the way he places the rhythmic emphases on the sung words. In fact, it is arguable that, along with the grain or tone of his voice, Sinatra's manipulation of rhythm is the most recognizable and celebrated aspect of his vocal style. This was seen to become especially prominent in the Capitol period, and the idea of the "swingin' lover" as worked out on an album such as Songs for Swingin' Lovers! (1956) articulates Sinatra's sense of rhythmic "swing" as much as it does his swingin' playboy image. Writing in HiFi Review in 1960, Nat Hentoff saw the stylistic shift from the 1940s into the 1950s Sinatra in terms of his vocal quality and the evolution of his star-image: "As Sinatra's voice roughened and his own self-esteem deepened due to his serious film successes, his style changed markedly. The jazz he had always liked now influenced his singing thoroughly with regard to more freely instrumentalized phrasing, a more incisive beat and much more playing with the rhythm . . ." (Hentoff 1960, 35). For Hentoff, self-esteem and rhythmic freedom are related; increasingly, Sinatra's "buoyant", "on top of the world", cocky persona was articulated with his autonomous and jazzy "playing with the rhythm".

This involves what is known within jazz culture as “back-phrasing”, which is the seeming ability of a musician or singer to maintain two distinct tempi in his or her head simultaneously; the foreground melody or solo performed by the singer or musician appears to be assigned a tempo which feels slightly slower, or “back”, of the tempo at which the supporting musicians are playing. The back-phraser, who is aware of the difference between the foreground and background tempi, can thus “play” with the tempo of his or her performance without “getting lost” or appearing to be falling behind ineptly. This is because the back-phraser, aware of the supporting tempo, is able to begin phrases in synchronization with any particular bar line of the supporting musician’s tempo, even as the synchronization will gradually give way, as the back-phraser’s tempo is slower.²⁶ This produces an effect of rhythmic relaxation or looseness; the back-phraser appears to float on top of the music, independent and yet aware at all times of where he or she is in relation to the supporting background. Within jazz culture, the saxophonist Dexter Gordon is a well-known back-phraser.

In the 1950s, Frank Sinatra developed a simultaneously swinging and relaxed up-tempo rhythmic style through his deployment of back-phrasing, which is especially evident on Songs for Swingin’ Lovers. For example, Sinatra’s performance of “I’ve Got You Under My Skin” (Cole Porter, 1936) on the LP utilizes back-phrasing to create a sense of relaxation, until the post-trombone solo climax, where he sings briefly “in the groove” on the words “I would sacrifice anything”. The opening lines of the song offer a good illustration of Sinatra’s technique. Over a smoothly-swinging big band arrangement, Sinatra begins the line “I’ve got you under my skin” in synch with the backing tempo; however, on the second line, “I’ve got you deep in the heart of me”,

²⁶Conceived in quantitative terms, it is as if the accompanying musicians are playing at 100 beats per minute (BPM), while the soloist plays at 95 BPM. If the soloist continues throughout the solo to play at that BPM, it will quickly become evident that the soloist is off-tempo; eventually, the soloist will be so far out of synchronization so as to appear to not even be playing with the accompanists. However, the back-phraser, aware of the accompanying musicians’ 100 BPM, is able to recognize key points of metrical division in the accompanists’ performance, and temporarily re-synchronize his or her performance to begin in synchronization, and then “fall away” again from their tempo.



Figure 4.8: Front Cover, Swing Easy! (Capitol, 1954)



Figure 4.9: Front Cover, Songs for Swingin' Lovers! (Capitol, 1956)

Sinatra's rhythm becomes more independent of the orchestra's; he holds "you" longer than he should, and rather than compensating by shortening the metrical values assigned the subsequent words, he continues at his own pace, and even assigns a longer duration to "heart" and "me" than is called for. However, he is able to then begin the next line "So deep in my heart you're really a part of me" in alignment with the orchestra.

Throughout the performance, Sinatra moves in and out of synchronization with the disciplined performance of the big band; this rhythmic autonomy offers another potential point of articulation with Sinatra's swingin' playboy image.²⁷

In this context, there is a sense of "looseness" underpinning a number of articulations of Sinatra's swingin' image. An ad in Capitol Music Views (September 1954, p. 17) for Sinatra's first uptempo Capitol LP, Swing Easy!, points to the casualness of Sinatra's swingin' playboy image as a sign of its quality: "Sinatra was never better . . . Frank unbuttoned his collar, loosened his tie, and put his whole heart - and magnificent musical finesse - into tunes you've loved ever since you can remember" (see figure 4.8). On the cover²⁸ of Songs for Swingin' Lovers! (which contains "I've Got You Under My Skin"), Sinatra appears with his collar and tie loosened, smiling (see figure 4.9). Like the raincoat carelessly tossed over his shoulder, or the hat tilted cockily back on his head, Sinatra's "loosened" attire represents both comfortable relaxation and an non-conformist independence of more formal dress codes. Unlike most male office workers at the time, Sinatra can work with his tie loosened. Similarly, his promiscuity involves a sexual "looseness" which resists conforming to current social

²⁷ Additionally, the way Sinatra metrically divides the temporal values assigned to each word of the lyric tends toward variation (seldom singing a repeated line with the same rhythm as first sung) and unexpected emphases (he will frequently "break up" the articulation of a lyric in an unusual way); this contributes to a sense of extreme individuality to his singing, and makes it very difficult to "sing along" with Sinatra, even if the listener knows the recording very well. Thus Sinatra's autonomous image may be articulated in terms of a singular rhythmic individualism.

²⁸ I am referring to the "second" cover of Songs for Swingin' Lovers!. The first release of the LP contained a drawing of Sinatra which was allegedly deemed "too ugly", and a second, similar cover, but with a "better" rendition of Sinatra was quickly re-issued.

norms (it is likely, too, that the 1960s usage of the term “swinger” to refer to a sexual adventurer is derived from an articulation of Sinatra’s sexual reputation with swing rhythms). And finally, the relaxed phrasing of his vocal performances on uptempo numbers presents a rhythmic “looseness” which is the result of an autonomy from the strict tempo of the supporting big band.

That rhythm was seen as a key aspect of Sinatra’s star-image is evident in a review of Pal Joey in Time magazine, which links his acting and singing in terms of a rhythmic “impulsiveness”: “[Sinatra] crowds the screen with rhythm every time he moves. Furthermore, he is a superb rhythm singer. Tense, rackety, jagged with energy, his rhythms pile up, break apart, flow and jolt with all the heel and honk and curiously impersonal impulsiveness of rush-hour traffic . . . Sinatra acts as niftily as he sings” (“The New Pictures” 1957, 98). The description of his singing, in which “rhythms pile up, break apart, flow and jolt”, suggests the metrical re-organizations of back-phrasing, as well as Sinatra’s tendency towards the unexpected in his rhythmic placement of words and melody.²⁹

To return to Sinatra’s performance of “The Lady is a Tramp” in the film,³⁰ he also plays with the rhythmic articulation of its melody and lyric; in fact, Variety’s description of Sinatra’s acting - “He’s almost ideal as the irreverent, free-wheeling, glib Joey . . .” (11 September, 1957) - can also describe his “irreverent, free-wheeling” rendition of “The Lady is a Tramp”. In the repeat of the bridge of the song, Sinatra’s freedom with the rhythm is especially apparent, and emphasizes the “free” imagery of the lyric as well as Sinatra’s autonomy. On the underlined words, Sinatra

²⁹The emphasis on rhythm in the articulation of Sinatra’s playboy image is paralleled by the constant movement associated with the opening of Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show described above (running, jumping, snapping fingers, tossing coat over shoulder) and Joey’s bohemian homelessness, the sense that he is always “on the move” (recall that he is thrown out of a town at the opening; this also calls to mind the fact that Joey and Sinatra are reputed to be “putting the moves on” women at every opportunity).

³⁰It was also released as part of the Pal Joey soundtrack LP (Capitol, 1957), which reached number 2 and stayed on the Billboard charts for over 6 months.

lingers longer than called for by the tempo established by the orchestra, and then pauses for some time before continuing with “wind”, effectively operating in a rhythm independent of the big band: “She loves the free, fresh --- wind in her hair/Life without care”. Sinatra also alters Lorenz Hart’s lyrics, and in one section he modifies the lyric substantially through the substitution of nouns with “lingo” which was especially associated with Sinatra: “She’ll have no crap games with sharpies and frauds/And she won’t go to Harlem in Lincolns or Fords/And she won’t dish the dirt with rest of the broads/That’s why the lady is a tramp”.

The addition or modification of lines or words was a common practice of Sinatra’s Capitol performance style, as noted in a review of a performance at the Mocambo nightclub in 1957: “Some of the lyrics have been slyly amended with high good humour to provide an extra jolt from oblique references to some of his own personality traits” (“Mocambo, Hollywood” 1957, 76). This contributes to the articulation of Sinatra as singular individual, independent of the text as written, and ultimately reinforces his conception as “author” (discussed below). The arcane argot associated with Sinatra and his performer friends who formed the “Rat Pack” (including Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Peter Lawford, Joey Bishop, and Shirley MacLaine) also frequently functioned as a subcultural subversion of the puritan aspects of U.S. culture. For example, in his performance of “I Won’t Dance” on A Swingin’ Affair! (1957),³¹ Sinatra interpolates the words “ring-a-ding ding” into a song whose lyric describes a man’s refusal to dance because his attraction to a woman is so intense that “if I hold you in my arms I won’t dance”, i.e. he will kiss her. However, “ring-a-ding ding” was a term used by Sinatra and his Rat Pack to refer to sexual intercourse; its interpolation thus infers a sexually knowing reading of the song (the expression itself prosodically embodies a triplet, “swing” rhythm, effectively condensing musical and sexual

³¹The title of A Swingin’ Affair! is itself a kind of double entendre: the album cover features Sinatra superimposed upon a group couples dancing at what is presumably the “affair” of the LP’s title; however, the album title also refers to a love affair, which is characterized as “swingin’”, i.e. sexually adventurous.

rhythms). The expression is also used in The Apartment (1960), where Shirley MacLaine is told, when asked about the nature of her philandering boss' previous relationships with other employess, that his interest was in "you know - ring-a-ding ding". The title of Sinatra's first album for his own record company, Reprise, was Ring-A-Ding Ding! (1961), thus reducing the idea of the swingin' playboy to the most basic level, even as Sinatra's autonomy as independent businessman was in the ascendant.

Frank Sinatra's Corporate Image

There was another discourse which articulated Sinatra with ideas of autonomy: that of Sinatra as independent businessman. While this led into the construction of his "Chairman of the Board" image, which marks the winding down of the Capitol era, throughout the Capitol years articles conceived of Sinatra's increasing power as a player in Hollywood and the music industry through the image of the "artist-businessman". Here Sinatra's ownership of a number of cultural industries (music publishers, production companies, record company, radio stations) contributes to an articulation of his star-image in terms of economic autonomy. By 1962, Cosmopolitan magazine would entitle a profile, "Frank Sinatra's Corporate Image".

The articulation of the autonomy of the businessman with the autonomy of the swingin' playboy is evident in an episode of Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show (29 November, 1957). It features the usual opening, in which Sinatra, raincoat over shoulder, runs down an aisle, through the studio audience, and onto the stage. Subsequently, Sinatra introduces his guest star, and friend, Dean Martin: "He's a truly great entertainer and a fellow paesano, Dino Martin". At this point, Dino comes running down the aisle a la Sinatra (with a hat, and a coat over his shoulder), but when he gets to the stage (which is now missing the steps Sinatra had run up), Dino asks, "How do I get up there?" In response, Sinatra turns to camera, taps his temple with his index

finger, and says, laughing, "I know what I'm doing every minute". The following dialogue then takes place:

Dean: Look, I should have stayed in Las Vegas - I'm a big hit down there at the Sands.

Sinatra: How do you like working at my hotel?

Dean: That is right. You got a piece of the action there, huh?

Sinatra: (nods and smiles)

Dean: Uh-huh. So I'm working for you?

Sinatra: Well, you might call me your employer.

Dean: I might . . . I won't but I might . . .

Thus the singularity of Sinatra's Capitol star-image lies not simply in the signifiers of the swingin' playboy (which Dino unsuccessfully tries to appropriate); it is in their undergirding by the articulation of Sinatra's economic autonomy (e.g. part-ownership of the Sands, which is paralleled by his creative control on his television show). Sinatra is "up there", on top of the stage (and world), because he has seized control of his career, and therefore "knows what he's doing every minute".

As with many highly-successful entertainers, numerous articles on Sinatra emphasized his wealth and power by describing his lucrative business dealings. Photoplay noted the shift in his fortunes in terms of a movement from performer to employer: "It wasn't long ago when all Frank had to lean on was a microphone. Today he has fifty-five people working for or with him. "Suddenly, I'm a one man industry" . . . He heads his own record subsidiary company . . . He owns the Atlantic City race track, sponsors a string of fighters . . ."(Steele 1957, 92). Movie Show stressed Sinatra's economic involvement with cultural industries: "Frankie decided to invest in the things he understood the best: The Result: he today is the part-owner of five music publishing companies, an independent film company, and the Sands Hotel" (Dowd 1958, 59). Look

offered quantitative evidence of Sinatra's economic importance within the entertainment industry:

He recently signed a \$9,000,000 television deal, and beginning in October, he will do 28 shows a year on the ABC network, in which he will sing, dance and play both comedy and dramatic roles. He owns music-publishing companies, record companies, real estate and prize fighters. He controls shares of movie-producing companies, a Philadelphia cab company and the Atlantic City race track. In 1957, the total gross income from all his interests should be over \$4,000,000, and his personal net before taxes a staggering \$1,750,000 - probably a new high for a show-business personality (Davidson 1957c, 95)

An article in Show Business Illustrated in 1961, simply entitled "Sinatra, Inc.", suggested that Sinatra's financial holdings had become so enormous that he was looking to behind-the-scenes figures such as his late agent, Bert Allenberg, as role models for the managerial skills needed to oversee his empire:

"Yeah," agreed Frank Sinatra. "He'd be the guy. But as it is, I do the best I can. I've got things going for me" . . . "Things going for me." Chairman of the board of a Beverly Hills savings and loan association, heavily invested in Reprise Records, four music publishing companies, a movie production company, the Sands Hotel, Las Vegas, in which he is a vice president and nine-percent stockholder, real-estate developments in San Rafael and Santa Barbara, California, Cal-Neva Lodge on Lake Tahoe, three radio stations in the Pacific Northwest, shares of the Atlantic City Racetrack, numerous and sundry other adjacent investments (Hyams 1961, 102)

Note one of the earliest references to Sinatra as "chairman of the board".³² The article goes on to describe Sinatra's total control over his Essex Productions' production of his

³²"Frank Sinatra's Corporate Image" (1962) is subtitled: ". . . "Chairman of the Board" Sinatra of the nineteen-sixties bears little resemblance to that cocky crooner of the forties. The troubadour has become a tycoon - hard-driving boss of a twenty-five-

current film, Sergeants 3 (1962), as well as his vertical investment in almost every phase of the filmmaking process (shares in United Artists, Technicolor, Eastman Kodak, Panavision, Westrex). Here financial success is understood as a means of achieving power, conceived as control over every facet of the production process.

The 1955 Time profile ties Sinatra's investments to a newfound maturity which has led Sinatra to think about the long term: ". . . many of Frank's friends insist that he has matured of late . . . he has buttressed the flimsy walls of present success with long-range business enterprises - five music companies, an independent film outfit, a 2% chunk of the enormous Sands gambling hotel in Las Vegas, and eleven shares of the Atlantic City Racetrack. In movies, he picks his parts as carefully as he has always picked songs that suit both his talent and his taste" ("The Kid from Hoboken" 1955, 55). The articulation of Sinatra as mature businessman is tied to an equally important conception of Sinatra as investing wisely in his career as well ("picks his parts carefully"). The dissolution of Sinatra's M-G-M studio contract in 1951, which at the time was most likely a sign of failure, is now conceived as enabling Sinatra to maintain control over his career; Coronet saw this new freedom as potentially enhancing Sinatra's career, by avoiding artistic stagnation: "Now free-lancing, he picks his parts with an eye to variety . . . he has reached a new growth which is paying off in a bright busy future" ("That 'Guy' Sinatra" 1955, 6). Good Housekeeping tied this to shifting production conditions in Hollywood: "To date, no studio has signed him to a long contract, but this situation seems to prevail primarily because picture-to-picture deals rather than term contracts are the fashion in the current Hollywood financial setup and not because of any particular apprehension that there will be another storm of bad publicity" (Wells 1954, 218).

Sinatra's popularity and contractual independence allowed him to participate in the profits of his films, as another Good Housekeeping article noted: "Sinatra's power million-dollar business empire" (Hyams 1962, 48). A 1963 Newsweek article (28 October, p. 60) is entitled "Chairman of the Board".

is not merely personal; it is also fiscal. Because he is ranked high among the top-drawing film attractions, he can demand a share in the production of the film from all major studios that ask for his services . . . " (Gehman 1960, 179). As a result of the 1948 Paramount Decrees, the Hollywood studio system was in a process of re-organization in the 1950s, and like many others, Sinatra began his own independent production companies (including Hobart, Kent, Bristol, and Essex); he was thus involved in projects from their inception. The New York Times Magazine describes his remuneration for Pal Joey and then outlines how he "packaged" The Joker is Wild:

[Sinatra will receive] \$150,000 salary and a 30 per cent ownership in the negative of the picture [Pal Joey]. Practically all of Sinatra's movie work - he has his own company, Kent Productions - involves ownership rights or profit participation on top of a salary. He "packaged" the newly completed production of "The Joker is Wild" by purchasing rights to the Art Cohn biography of Joe E. Lewis . . . and inviting Charles Vidor to be the director. Sinatra suggested the four go into the project as partners and then sold the "package" to Paramount, which provided the production financing. His share comes to \$120,000 and 25 per cent of the profits, not to overlook the satisfaction of having had a free hand in the making of the picture (Pryor 1957, 17, 60).

Sinatra's economic independence is seen to be complemented by his artistic autonomy ("a free hand in making the picture"). This articulation of economic power with aesthetic concerns is a central aspect of Sinatra's construction as businessman.

As early as 1954, in a review of a performance at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, Sinatra's artistic practices and economic power were being articulated with a discourse of autonomy. Sinatra invested in the Sands shortly after it opened in 1953, and the Down Beat reviewer understands Sinatra's rejection of Hit Parade material in his set to be enabled by Sinatra's economic power:

Since Frank owns a small percentage of the Sands, he is sort of his own boss there. This may account somewhat for his relaxed presentation and good selection of tunes. Staying away from the usual hit parade type of songs, he concentrated on the show tunes and ballads he recently recorded for Capitol records . . . It seems that with every passing year, Sinatra's presentation becomes more mature . . . It is a good sign, to this writer, that the crowd accepted Frank's choice selections without reservations. Who knows? Maybe good taste has come back to stay, and vocalists will be able to sing good tunes again without having to resort to gimmicks and acrobatics (Lewy 1954, 3).

Note that standards and "good taste" are seen to require an independence of the marketplace, here articulated in terms of Sinatra's being "his own boss". The articulation of Sinatra as "his own boss" would grow throughout the period, and in many ways culminates in the creation of his own record label, Reprise Records, in 1961. The sense that Sinatra's economic control over his labour is linked to artistic freedom is rendered explicit in an ad in Billboard (17 July, 1961, p. 30), which features the album cover of Sinatra's second Reprise LP, Swing Along with Me,³³ with the following copy: "Now . . . A newer, happier, emancipated Sinatra . . . Untrammeled, unfettered, unconfined . . . on Reprise" (emphasis in original; see figure 4.10). As in the discourse of the swingin' playboy (which is also at work here, as this is a "swing" LP), autonomy is the overarching value that produces happiness (read as either sexual or financial emancipation). Above the reproduced LP cover is a further expression of this belief: "(album portrait of a man enjoying his work)". In other words, having escaped the corporate bonds of Capitol Records, Sinatra is no longer alienated from his labour and can now "enjoy" his work, since its surplus value is no longer extracted by Capitol.

³³Due to the similarity of the "name and content" of the LP to Capitol's recent Sinatra album, Come Swing with Me!, Capitol successfully obtained a temporary injunction against Reprise, who subsequently re-titled their album Sinatra Swings; see "Capitol Wins Restraint Order On Sinatra LP", Billboard, 31 July, 1961, p. 3.

NOW...
A NEWER, HAPPIER,
EMANCIPATED

ALBUM PORTRAIT **SINATRA**
OF A MAN ENJOYING HIS WORK



UNTRAMMELED,
UNFETTERED,
UNCONFINED

...ON



...TO PLAY AND PLAY AGAIN

Figure 4.10: Advertisement, Billboard, 1961

Well before 1961, however, Sinatra's image as businessman and independent producer was widely circulated. An article in the New York Times in 1955 quoted Sinatra as saying "I'm a businessman". This assertion was also an articulation of his rebelliousness and independence. A widely-reported feud developed between Sinatra and Ed Sullivan, host of a television variety program, Toast of the Town, when Sinatra refused to make an unpaid appearance on the show as part of the promotional work for his film, Guys and Dolls: "I think a stand has to be taken on these free appearances . . . I cannot set a precedent. I'm a businessman and get paid when I'm on TV. I'm one of the few in pictures who earns a living on television" (quoted in Pryor 1955, 3). The larger context of the quote is a recent union decision to forbid movie studios from demanding that movie actors appear on television programs for promotional purposes, reported in the same article: "Significantly, the Screen Actors Guild's stand is taken at a time when the movie companies are preparing to become active in television and presumably could call upon contract players to make "guest" appearances . . ." (Pryor 1955, 3). Thus even as Sinatra is asserting his individuality as a businessman, he is also upholding and supporting an attempt by labour to resist corporate exploitation.

The double articulation of Sinatra as powerful businessman and populist independent is also implicit in a 1959 Newsweek article, in which it is noted that "As a free-lance performer, Sinatra works mainly for his own independent movie company, Hobart Productions, which receives his salary - about \$200,000 a picture plus a percentage" ("Talk With A Star" 1959, 84). While the quote emphasizes Sinatra's lucrative deal, the title of the section in which it appears, "Workingman", simultaneously ironizes the idea that being paid so much to do so little is work, even as it emphasizes that it is work, with the difference being the fact that Sinatra is working for himself ("his own independent movie company, Hobart Productions, which receives his salary").

Sinatra's ownership of cultural productions was so well-known during the period that it could serve as material for repartee between Sinatra and Bing Crosby on The Edsel Show (13 October, 1957, CBS). After Sinatra sings "All the Way", host Crosby asks Sinatra, "That's a Van Heusen and Cahn song from The Joker is Wild, isn't it? Got a piece of the action?", to which Sinatra smugly replies, "Naturally". Sinatra "naturally" owns part of the publishing rights of the song (held by one of his companies, Barton Music) because by this time Sinatra's image as "Mr. Success" (as a 1958 single is titled)³⁴ is popularly understood in terms of his well-publicized, behind-the-scenes economic and creative control of his work.

A visual instantiation of Sinatra's image as successful businessman is found on the cover of the September 1956 issue of the jazz magazine Metronome. The cover features a photograph of a smiling, almost laughing Sinatra sitting behind what is presumably his desk in his office. He is wearing an expensive-looking, monogrammed, white dress shirt, with cufflinks and a pin collar, and a long silk tie. In the background is a large photo of Franklin Delano Roosevelt; the desk and surroundings clearly look like the workspace of a busy executive, with piles of paper or manuscripts about, and a file of some sort is partially visible in Sinatra's lap. He has a pencil in his hand, one finger of which is touching the side of his head; it is casual pose not normally associated with celebrity cover shots. As well, a container of pencils is visibly out-of-focus in the foreground, suggesting that this is not a posed shot. The candid nature of the photograph

³⁴Its lyrics play with the idea of Sinatra's star-image as "Mr. Success", insofar as they describe a character who is not a powerful businessman, but who feels like one in the arms of his lover. The bridge of the song articulates Sinatra's non-conformist critique of the gray flannel rat race: "Why, I once knew a worryin' man, he was a hurryin' man, with never a second to play/He had appointments to keep, lots of people to meet, and it took thirty hours to make him a day/Not for me, not what I wanna be/Just your head on my chest, and I'm Mr. Success". The song is listed as being written by "Greines-Sinatra-Sanicola"; I was unable to ascertain who "Greines" is, but Hank Sanicola was one of Sinatra's music business partners. Unlike many Tin Pan Alley-era star singers, to the best of my knowledge Sinatra virtually never "cut himself in" to the royalties of a song in exchange for recording it (this would work against his championing of "good taste" and standards, anyway); thus it appears that "Mr. Success" is one of a handful of songs Sinatra has had a hand in writing.

suggests that Sinatra as high-powered businessman working “behind-the-scenes” behind his desk may be the “real” Sinatra.

This issue features the results of the jazz magazine’s annual selection of the top jazz performers, its “All Star Poll”, in which Sinatra is named “Male Vocalist Winner”. The headline on the cover reads “Frank Sinatra: All Star Winner - Convention Singer”. Sinatra has also just recently sung at the U.S. Democratic Party’s annual convention. Thus critical acclaim for his artistry is linked to his rising political influence; again differing aspects of his career are articulated with success and power. The implication of the photograph, however, is that his business success is the key point of articulation between art and politics. This is borne out in an earlier New York Times item announcing that Sinatra has been asked to sing at the convention, which refers to Sinatra as “the motion-picture singer-actor-producer” (Godbout 1956, 22). It is not merely a star who will sing the U.S. national anthem, but a “singer-actor-producer”; Sinatra’s involvement in politics may be taken seriously because as a businessman he can be seen as “more’ than a performer. While one form of power may attract another, the productions of the businessman are seen as more “real” than the “imaginary” creations of the movie star, and are thus more likely to be valorized in the realm of “real” power, politics. Sinatra would campaign heavily for John F. Kennedy in 1960, and was asked to run Kennedy’s Inaugural celebration. From 1961 onward, Sinatra’s “corporate image” would be reinforced by the popular perception that he was also a political heavyweight, due to his friendship with the U.S. President. The 1962 Cosmopolitan article, “Frank Sinatra’s Corporate Image”, also articulates business success and political influence; it begins with a description of Sinatra’s office in the Beverly Hills City National Bank Building, noting the presence of a teletype and a photo of Kennedy, which is signed “For Frank, With the warm regards and best wishes of his friend” (Hyams 1962, 49-50).

The construction of Sinatra's image as businessman was not an isolated case in the entertainment industries of the 1950s, however. Partly due to upheavals in the Hollywood studio system, partly due to rising personal income tax rates, partly due to the incredible growth of the cultural industries themselves in the post-war period, many star performers incorporated themselves or became independent producers.³⁵ The same 1956 issue of the movie magazine Screen Stars which notes that "Frank Sinatra stars in and produces "Johnny Concho", a UA release . . . This is Sinatra's first business venture for his own Kent Productions, Inc." (Richards 1956, 24), also contains the following item in its "Confidential Gossip" column: ". . . Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas are now such big producers in their own right that we found them both going over each line in each scene, whether they were in them or not. Seems that being producers has made more conscientious actors out of them!" ("Confidential Gossip" 1956, 49-50). The same month, a Time magazine profile of Burt Lancaster and Harold Hecht's independent production company notes that ". . . this is the era of independent producers. Small production outfits are multiplying, and such major studio chiefs as Darryl Zanuck and Jerry Wald have recently quit their jobs to form independent companies" ("Tree Branch" 1956, 74). On the next page, a review of the Western Johnny Concho (United Artists, 1956) points out that "The real villain of the picture is the inept producer who selected this banal film for its leading man. Producer and leading man: Frank Sinatra". A 1957 Newsweek profile of actor Gregory Peck is entitled "Peck, Incorporated", and quotes the star: "You have to be a businessman as well as an actor nowadays to keep any money at all" ("Peck, Incorporated" 1957, 115).

³⁵For a discussion of the larger historical contexts of these developments, see Kevin Hagopian, "Declaration of Independents: A History of Cagney Productions", Velvet Light Trap 22, pp. 16-32, and Tino Balio, "When is an Independent Producer an Independent?: The Case of United Artists After 1943", Velvet Light Trap 22, pp. 53-64, 1986.

But keeping money was not the key discourse in the construction of actors as businessmen. A 1960 New York Times article notes that the current Screen Actor's Guild strike has had the effect of highlighting "the subtle changes that the industry has experienced" since the Paramount Decrees (Schumach 1960, 7). It understands the rise of the independent producer in terms of a defiance of and indifference to authority:

A second exciting change that was spotlighted by the strike was the growing power of the independent producers. Thus, Frank Sinatra defied the position of the major studios by signing with the Screen Actor's Guild and continuing to make his latest movie, "Ocean's 11". Since then, he has shown his indifference to studio authority once more by hiring Albert Maltz, a blacklisted writer, to do his next movie, "The Execution of Private Slovik" (Schumach 1960, 7).

The focus on "the growing power of the independent producers" misrecognizes different economic strategies (the studios spend far more on labour than any individual independent producer, and thus have more to lose by raising wages, whereas the independent can gain market advantage by increasing labour costs and releasing new product, even if it lowers profit margins) as power differentials. However, the Oedipalization of the distinction between Sinatra and studio underlines the centrality of discourses of autonomy to the articulation of the actor as businessman.

A 1958 New York Times article on the general rise of the actor as independent producer, entitled "Film Stars Now Corporate Galaxy", features a photograph of Sinatra and Bing Crosby that is captioned "Bing Crosby . . . and Frank Sinatra are examples of the motion picture stars who have incorporated themselves". Sinatra is sitting in the seat of a motion-picture camera crane, pointing and laughing; the implication is that he is now in the driver's seat, directing his career towards happy fiscal returns. The text of the article describes the "dramatic" shifts in the organization of recent film production:

Today most stars and other movie creators no longer do business as individuals but as corporations . . . The rise of the "small business man" within the

framework of the motion picture industry is regarded as one of the more dramatic developments that have occurred in American industry of recent years. High personal income tax rates are responsible for the change . . . Many of the incorporated stars . . . are in many respects big business . . . It is estimated that Mr. Sinatra, as an artist-business man, currently has a gross annual income from movies, records and television of about \$4,000,000 . . . (Pryor 1958, N. pag.).

The description of Sinatra as an "artist-businessman" is especially important, in light of the critique of the old studio system presented elsewhere in the article. There is an implicit suggestion that the social autonomy of the traditional Romantic or Modernist artist is now paralleled by the situation of an "artist-businessman" such as Sinatra, who is simultaneously "small business man" and "big business". Ironically, the "incorporation" of the individual is part of the individual's resistance to corporate structures, as hinted at in Pryor's comment, "Thus there is in the movie industry perhaps the strangest conglomeration of corporate structures within corporate structures that exist in the nation's business world" (Pryor 1958, N. pag.). The article ultimately conceives of the rise of the actor-as-businessman in heroic terms, as a struggle for autonomy against what it describes as the "benevolent despotism" and "plushy bondage" (Pryor 1958, N. pag.) of an exploitative Hollywood studio system. Pryor compares the studio system to the more notorious forms of monopoly capitalism: "Hollywood . . . once was a company town as tightly controlled and administered by the major movie interests as any coal-mining community in Pennsylvania or West Virginia" (Pryor 1958, N. pag.). Thus the actor-businessman is involved in a form of class struggle against economic domination; the studios' use of long-term contracts "deprived actors, directors, writers of the freedom of job selection" (Pryor 1958, N. pag.). "Freedom" is also explicitly present as the overarching value in Pryor's reference to "the stars' breaking loose from studio control . . ." (Pryor 1958, N. pag.). Thus a

general discourse of autonomy is used to understand the re-alignment of economic relations between studio and star.

However, the specificity of Sinatra's articulation with auto-incorporation lies in its capacity to be aligned with a series of other articulations of his star-image as autonomous. As I argue further below, Sinatra's "breaking loose" from a range of social, moral, and economic constraints operates within a meta-discourse which produces Sinatra as artist. This is especially evident in the concluding paragraphs of "Frank Sinatra's Corporate Image". In the article, author Joe Hyams describes a day in the life of the corporate Sinatra, a significant part of which is a description of a business meeting with Sinatra and his executives, in which business plans and problems are discussed. At one point, Hyams describes Sinatra listening dispassionately to one of his vice-presidents: "In repose, he resembled a human computer being fed data. He processed the information, gave conclusions definitively and concisely" (Hyams 1962, 55). Throughout the article, Sinatra has been represented in similar terms, with reason and logic appearing to have replaced passion and emotion in Sinatra's work. However, this is then juxtaposed with a description of Sinatra's activities after work:

Sinatra . . . drove off alone to United Recorders on Sunset Boulevard . . . He then entered the sound room, greeted many of the fifty-five musicians present by name and moved on to a sound-proofed cubicle with a microphone. He put on a headset, scanned the music which was set up on the stand for him and nodded to Neal Hefti, the orchestra leader . . . The orchestra ran a number through while Sinatra listened intently and seriously, and then began to get into the mood of the beat. His feet began to tap and he sang along with the music softly . . . In the cubicle, with the orchestra playing, Sinatra seemed transported into another world. During the day he was a cool-headed businessman, listening carefully to everything said, but saying little. He was, if anything, removed from most of the discussions, just a listener. Now he was a full and complete participant. The

visitors in the audience . . . were rapt as he poured his entire being into the song at hand. When it was over, he listened to the playback with the same critical intensity he had used all day for business reports (Hyams 1962, 56).

Clearly, Hyams is offering this as the "true" Sinatra: driving off "alone" to a nighttime recording session where he is "transported into another world", Sinatra's daytime demeanour ("cool-headed . . . removed") gives way to the realization of his "full . . . complete . . . entire being", an interiority that is revealed inside the recording studio. Thus the businessman Sinatra is only a partial role, which is ultimately in service to the complete truth of his artistry.

Sinatra and the Male Audience

Sinatra's independence from dominant sexual norms, especially in terms of a promiscuous rejection of monogamy, was well known: "Making headlines regularly for his sexual escapades, he is said to be unwilling to become emotionally involved with his sexual partners" (Gans 1962, 192-3). This was also seen as an important part of the appeal of male television characters for the male West End audience: "The [television] hero's relationships with women . . . are . . . watched closely . . . the Western or detective hero who is able to attract a good-looking woman and to conquer her without becoming emotionally involved is admired" (Gans 1962, 190). This suggests that Sinatra's swingin' playboy persona may be particularly articulated with a male audience. The title of a 1956 Confidential article, "Here's Why Sinatra is the Tarzan of the Boudoir!", conceives of Sinatra's sexual activity in terms of a wild, virile power over women, which is admired and whose secret is sought by men, as in the title of another scandal magazine article the same year: "Why Dolls Go For That Guy Sinatra" (Roberts 1956). The latter article claims that Sinatra's success with women is tied to his dangerous character rather than his appearance:

Sinatra's amatory achievements are based on: • The traditional appeal of the "bad boy" • The fascination of the dangerous, trigger-tempered lover • The attraction of the free-spending playboy and romantic crooner . . . Sinatra is not handsome in the classical sense of the word: he has a hair-trigger temper and carries himself with the leashed violence of a tightly-coiled spring (Roberts 1956, 21-2).

Even his moodiness is seen as part of his appeal: "His volcanic moods add the element of danger that seems to excite women"(Roberts 1956, 22). Climax magazine, which, like the scandal magazines, tended to have a predominantly male readership, claimed that "The most intriguing aspect of Frank Sinatra's complex personality is his fabulous attraction for women" (O'Neal 1959, 87); presumably, Sinatra's attractiveness for women is "fabulous" at the level of male fantasy identification.

While Sinatra's romantic appeal in the 1940s had consistently been attributed to his vulnerability and tenderness, in the 1950s his tough, dangerous image was frequently offered as the source of his attraction for women. A 1961 scandal magazine article, luridly entitled "What Happened When Frank Sinatra Served Breakfast To That Hot French Doll In Bed!", describes Sinatra abandoning a woman after a night of sex, and cheers his behaviour: "That's the way Frankie, treat 'em rough and they love it" (Miles 1961, 44). A 1962 Confidential overview of famous playboys, "Babes, Brawls and Boudoirs: The Plays That Made The Playboys Famous", concludes its survey with Sinatra, who is still on top despite his age: ". . . Frank Sinatra, is still a playboy champion, although . . . he is balding, grey and of an age where most men prefer a good night's sleep to a soothing siesta with a siren" (Robin 1962, 73). The article sees his longevity in almost mythical terms, and uses a Sinatra song lyric to express admiration for his endurance: ". . . Sinatra remains the playingest playboy of them all. Like Ol' Man River, he just keeps rollin' along" (Robin 1962, 73).

The Capitol period was marked by the production of a tough, rebellious, serious, autonomous, and sexually promiscuous image of Sinatra, which also involved his

articulation with an increasingly male audience. As noted above, the Sinatra of the 1940s appealed to a predominantly female audience, and was not thought to be popular among males, as Good Housekeeping remarked in 1954: "He wore no hat in those days, and the limp lock over his forehead, a Sinatra trade-mark, was often a target for clutching hands . . . This enthusiasm was less pronounced among the male element" (Wells 1954, 58). The very fact of his popularity among women in the 1940s was often seen as a source of the smaller number of male fans: "The idea of all this feminine adoration being lavished on a crooner soured a lot of men" (O'Neal 1959, 85). A number of observers saw the shift to tougher, more dangerous film roles as changing men's attitudes toward Sinatra; describing his role in From Here to Eternity, Climax magazine notes that "He didn't seem to be playing it so much as living it . . . He was demonstrating that he wasn't any longer just a crooner with a direct line to women, but a vigorous, versatile actor with a remarkable talent for playing rugged, masculine roles that appealed to men as well as women" (O'Neal 1959, 86). The ability to appear "vigorous . . . rugged, masculine" (and not "just a crooner"), in combination with the aging of his voice, lent Sinatra an authority that resulted in a new, male contingent within his audience: ". . . a voice that had matured and a singing style that not only still captivated women but now took hold of a great number of men - many of them the same men who sneered at him when he was the darling of the bobbysoxers" (O'Neal 1959, 87). As well, it is implied that the loss of Sinatra's bobby-sox audience (they have become adult fans just as he has grown up) facilitated the emergence of a male audience.

In 1958, Playboy noted the shift in Sinatra's appeal and audience. Describing the frenzy of the bobby-soxers at the Paramount in the mid-1940s, the article remarks that his identification with a teen-aged, female audience was so intense then that it was inconceivable that he could appeal to anyone else:

What could not have been foreseen was the universality of his appeal, which crosses all lines of sex, age and station as they have never been crossed before.

There was a time when the girls swooned over Francis Albert Sinatra and the guys dug him not at all. During World War II, the showing of a Sinatra movie to a company of U.S. marines elicited groans and gripes and a derisive cacophony of shouts . . . Today, Sinatra's appeal is so universal that when he arrived at Chicago Stadium to watch the recent Sugar Ray Robinson - Carmen Basilio championship fight, it caused as much excitement at ringside as the entrance of the two boxers . . . A fight crowd is about as far from Frankie's original underage female following as it is possible to imagine, yet the entire stadium rose, almost to a man, to get a look at Sinatra as he came down the aisle to his seat (Reisner 1958, 64)

As in the arrival of a monarch or the singing of a national anthem, the masculinist "fight crowd" stands to pay homage to its superior, singer-king. Sinatra's image as underworld tough guy is also articulated with the boxing milieu, where the manly display of violence exists in conjunction with a high degree of organized crime involvement.

Playboy saw audience identification with Sinatra as key to his popularity among men, and understood this in terms of ". . . a remarkable personality that Sinatra has been able to project in his performances and with which the public has been able to strongly identify. It is his personality that is the key to Sinatra's success" (Reisner 1958, 64). Herbert Gans also noted Sinatra's appeal to men in the late 1950s. Gans points out that West End men valorize stars who not only perform highly masculinized roles, but who are seen to live the life - and the masculinity - that they portray onscreen in reality:

[A] . . . major attraction of the mass media is the performer. West Enders are very much interested in the stars of movies, night clubs, and television, and are knowledgeable about their activities . . . Among the men, the most popular actors are those who concentrate on action roles, such as John Wayne and the late Humphrey Bogart. They are liked because of the roles they play, and also because

their private lives - or at least those portions which are known to the public - maintain the image they create in their roles. Should there be some disparity between roles and private lives, West Enders quickly lose interest in the actor; a man who plays action roles on the screen, for example, but who is rumored to have homosexual inclinations is disparaged in no uncertain terms. The performer is first evaluated by the roles he plays, but his private life must coincide with them. As he becomes a favorite, he is liked because he is playing himself (Gans 1962, 191)

Thus masculinity conceived as a masquerade is rejected, since ultimately the male action star must "play himself", and that self is most crucially articulated in terms of sexuality. Gans reports that Sinatra is included with John Wayne and Humphrey Bogart as a favourite since "As an actor, he often plays the kind of rebellious roles with which West End men can identify" (Gans 1962, 193). If, as Gans implies, identification with the performer is important to West End men, then the star "playing himself" operates as an implicit guarantee against the subversion of heterosexual masculine identity. In this context, the self is read through gender as the "performance" of a cultural obligation (to a legible sexuality conceived as a consistency of self/coherent identity). Sinatra's popularity among West End men is thus again the result of the articulation of his life and art, here in terms of a sexuality which has been "toughened" and re-aligned with heterosexual masculinist norms.

A 1958 Variety review of a performance in Miami Beach specifically emphasizes the male audience members' tremendous response to Sinatra's entrance: "From dramatic entrance a la tv show, hat on head, coat carelessly tossed around the shoulders, weaving his way through the audience as the spot followed, he spurred pounding that neared pandemonium, among the males as well as the femmes, until he mounted the stage" ("Fontainebleu, M. Bch." 1958, 86). The inter-textual link to the opening of Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show is articulated in terms of the swingin'

playboy's "careless" attitude and style. A 1961 review of a show at the Sands hotel in Las Vegas also remarks that Sinatra's audience contains men as well as women: "Combining dramatic sensitivity with overwhelming drive, Sinatra's voice has warm appeal for fans of both sexes" ("Sands, Las Vegas" 1961, 95). Implicitly, the combination of (female) "sensitivity" and (male) "drive" is understood to result in a cross-gender appeal; I take this up again in the conclusion of my discussion of the Capitol Sinatra.

The transition in Sinatra's star-image from "softly crooning femme-man" (Goldman 1971) in the 1940s to "man's man" in the mid-1950s is especially highlighted in a remarkable discussion of Sinatra's masculinity in the jazz magazine Down Beat in 1957. The article begins with a statement that would have been ludicrous a decade earlier: "Frank Sinatra is the most complete, the most fantastic symbol of American maleness yet discovered, for both good and bad reasons . . ." (Coss 1957, 15). The article proceeds to understand Sinatra in terms of a larger transformation of dominant images and situations of masculinity, from outdoors to indoors, and from sportsman to cocksman. The article compares Sinatra, the spokesman for Chesterfield cigarettes, to the mythical cowboy that is the advertising spokes-image for Marlboro cigarettes, the Marlboro Man,

. . . who is nothing compared to the Chesterfield Man (sponsors at Frank's ABC show), who looks at women as if he knew what they were all about, dresses, walks and talks as if he didn't care what they thought and lives as if the world and its women were pretty much built for him. He cuts, as we say, the Marlboro Man, that is, unless you dig fish and horses better than women, which is a sad state some times [sic] commented on by the more understanding writers of our generation . . . All of this is well to keep in mind when you are viewing Sinatra either as a fan of any one of several media or as a critic of whatever kind (Coss 1957, 15)

Sinatra's autonomy, again expressed in terms of a "carelessness" (he "dresses, walks and talks as if he didn't care" what women think), is tied equally to his power over "the world and its women". But his sexuality is seen to represent the ultimate truth of his individuality for the modern male audience, who identify with the indoor playboy rather than the older, outdoorsman model of masculinity. Note the reference to Playboy-like critiques of conventional male roles ("the more understanding writers of our generation"). Sinatra is seen to embody a new kind of masculinity which is nonetheless still masculinist:

. . . aside from the undeniable quality of his singing, Frank's other abilities, which, and this has to be noted, frequently misfire, come from the same source: come from the forceful, virile male personality of which he is more representative than most other public figures. (Too, it is a maleness and a virility quite unlike that of, say, Joseph Cotten or Jack Hawkins. There is little comfort in it. There is much challenge in it; more than a small share of danger; and women are fascinated by that, while men are sometimes envious, but always somehow satisfied by it . . .) (Coss 1957, 15)

The appeal of Sinatra's masculinity is understood to lie in a linkage of conceptions of traditional masculine power ("forceful", "virile") with a refusal of conventional beliefs and responsibilities. Rather than being reassuring ("there is little comfort in it"), it is challenging and non-conformist. The star-images of Joseph Cotten and Jack Hawkins here represent the reassuring, responsible, even-tempered and paternalistic masculinity associated with what Ehrenreich has called the "male breadwinner role" (Ehrenreich 1983, 14ff.). Ehrenreich sees this as the dominant construction of masculinity in the post-war period, and its emphasis on "maturity" and "conformity" was precisely what both Playboy and Sinatra effectively subverted, even as they both reaffirmed heterosexuality as the locus of masculine identity. Part of the article's sub-

title reads “. . . Sincerely Yours, Your Pal Joey”;³⁶ in other words, Joey’s swingin’ playboy person is truly Sinatra’s. Thus the emphasis on “virility” in the description of Sinatra above “satisfies” his male audience of his sexual legibility, even as they “envy” his potency (sexual, economic, and artistic). The envy also suggests that the “challenge” of Sinatra’s “maleness and virility” may lie in the setting of a new standard of masculinity to which men may aspire. Throughout the discussion, Sinatra’s subversiveness is never seen as a challenge to masculinity conceived as power; instead it involves a reformulation of the styles of its articulation. The next two chapters of the dissertation examine this reformulation in terms of the construction of Sinatra as serious artist.

³⁶This is a reference to John O’Hara’s novelette, which is conceived as a series of letters written by Joey and which always end with a variation of “sincerely yours, your pal Joey”.

Chapter Five: Sinatra as Artist

This chapter examines the significance of period overviews of Sinatra's career and image, in conjunction with an analysis of the discursive gendering of his star-image; this leads into a consideration of Sinatra's construction as "artist" (which is also addressed in chapter six). It will be argued that a key to the specificity of the Capitol Sinatra lies in his legitimation as serious artist who happens to work within popular media forms.

The Narrativization of Career

"Frank Sinatra . . . arrives with his usual built-in plot"

- From a review of The Manchurian Candidate in the New Republic (1962)¹

I would like to return to the idea of autobiography. As discussed above, the history of Sinatra's career itself becomes an explicit part of his star-image as a result of his comeback in 1953. Numerous Capitol-era articles articulate the singularity of Sinatra's career in terms of his comeback; titles such as "The Rise and Fall and Rise Again of Frank Sinatra" (Wells 1954), "Sinatra: Phoenix of Films" (Ross 1955), "The Nine Lives of Frank Sinatra" (Rogers St. Johns 1956), and "Rise, Fall and Rise of Sinatra" (Pryor 1957) understand Sinatra's career as more than a simple success story. Instead, the movement of Sinatra's career is seen to resemble a narrative, in terms of a progression from fame to non-fame to fame again; his phenomenal first moment of fame is disrupted, and is then restored to even greater heights. Thus the happy ending (his current success) may be even more compelling than most narrative accounts of celebrity lives (which are by definition successes), because of the (now) "dramatic" crisis and "failure" of his career in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The idea that Sinatra's career had become a frequently-told tale is evident in HiFi Review's

¹From a review of The Manchurian Candidate (Kauffmann 1962, 26).

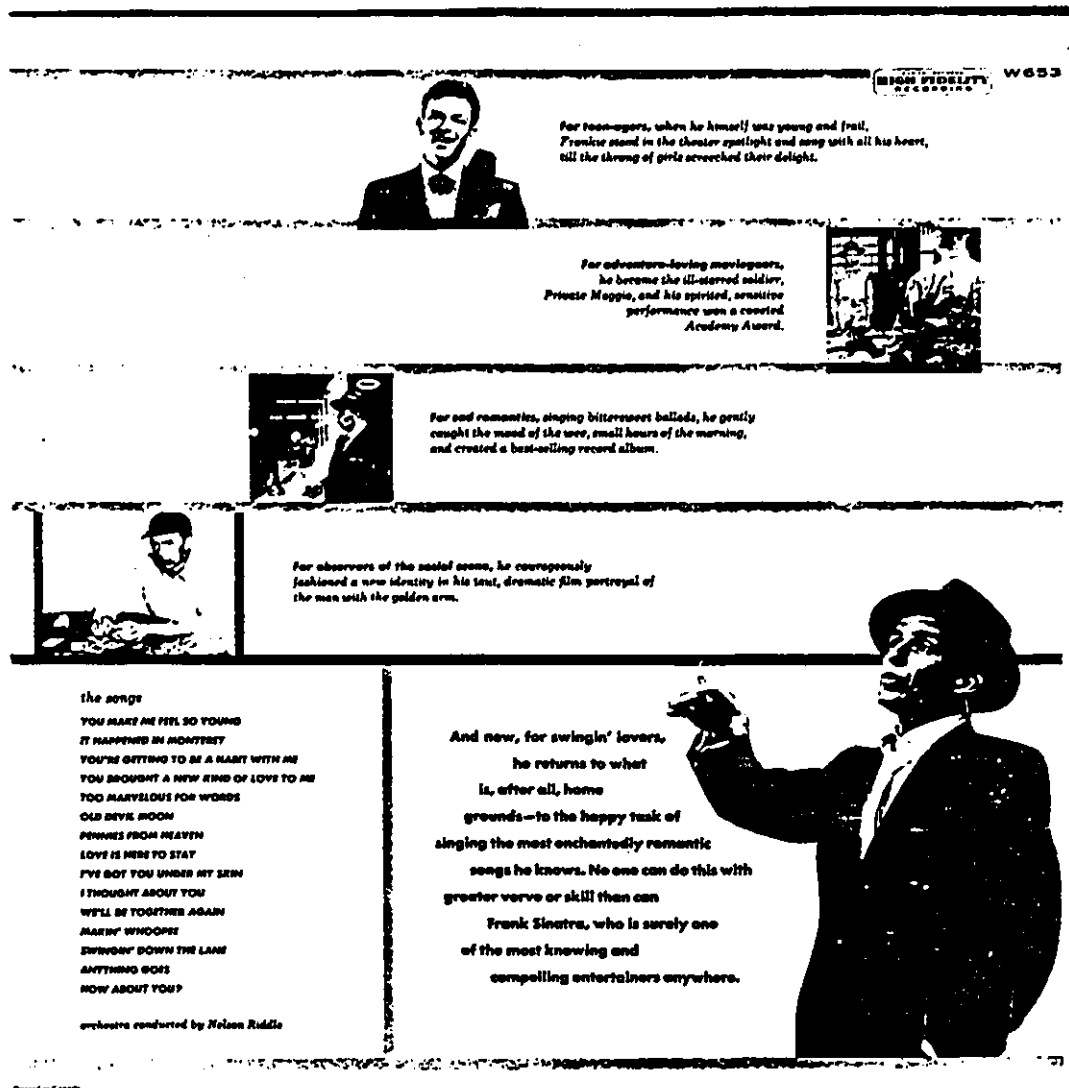


Figure 5.1: Back Cover, Songs for Swingin' Lovers (Capitol, 1956)

comment that ". . . Sinatra's career is now part of urban folklore" (Hentoff 1960, 36), as well as in a 1954 New York Times piece: "The story of his remarkable comeback as Private Maggio in "From Here to Eternity" has been pretty well told since Sinatra sprinted on stage . . . before the watchful eyes of television reviewers to accept the "Oscar" for best supporting actor performance in 1953 . . ." (Schmidt 1954, 3). Often this "narrativization" of his career was seen by contemporary observers as essential to his Capitol success, as is suggested in a Billboard article:

The saga of Sinatra is well known to the trade, his legal hassles, agency differences, explosive temperament, etc. But despite his mistakes, and he even invented some, he's come out of it a great performer . . . And now he's better than ever and more firmly established as a singer who can act . . . His routine at the Copa demonstrated each facet of the Sinatra genius. He was intense and moody with "One More for the Road," reminiscently nostalgic with "Gal Who Got Away" and pulled the heartstrings with "Young at Heart" (Smith 1955, 7).

The back cover design and liner notes of Sinatra's 1956 LP, Songs for Swingin' Lovers!, explicitly conceive of Sinatra's career as a progression of star-images (see figure 5.1). Beside five images depicting different moments and facets of Sinatra's career, are a series of descriptions of his varying inflections of persona (and of his imagined audiences):

1) Image: a photograph of a bow-tied Sinatra from the 1940s.

Text: "For teen-agers, when he himself was young and frail, Frankie stood in the theater spotlight and sang with all his heart, till the throng of girls screeched their delight"

2) Image: a still of Maggio facing Fatso in the stockade from From Here to Eternity.

Text: "For adventure-loving moviegoers, he became the ill-starred soldier, Private Maggio, and his spirited, sensitive performance won a coveted Academy Award"

3) Image: a reproduction of the In the Wee Small Hours LP cover.

Text: "For sad romantics, singing bittersweet ballads, he gently caught the mood of the wee, small hours of the morning, and created a best-selling record album"

4) Image: a still from The Man with the Golden Arm of Frankie illegally dealing poker.

Text: "For observers of the social scene, he courageously fashioned a new identity in his taut, dramatic film portrayal of the man with the golden arm"

5) Image: a large photograph of the Capitol Sinatra in a dark suit, long tie, and hat.

Text: "And now, for swingin' lovers, he returns to what is, after all, home grounds - to the happy task of singing the most enchantedly romantic songs he knows. No one can do this with greater verve or skill than can Frank Sinatra, who is surely one of the most knowing and compelling entertainers anywhere"

The back cover of Songs for Swingin' Lovers! suggests an intertwining of life and career in its first line; beside the photograph of a hatless Sinatra from the 1940s, wearing a bowtie and standing behind a microphone, the text retrospectively articulates Sinatra as "young" (despite the fact that Sinatra was in his late twenties when he went solo) and likens him to his teen audience ("for teen-agers when he himself was young and frail"). The reference to "he himself" suggests that the back cover is telling the story of Sinatra "himself" through a history of his career. Three of the five illustrations are square-shaped, suggesting that they are framed as "representations", whereas the remaining two illustrations are photographs of Sinatra that have been cut out, following the contours of his body. These cut-outs begin and end the top-to-bottom movement of the back cover's design, and suggest that the story of Sinatra "himself"

from the 1940s (smaller cut-out) to the 1950s (larger cut-out) is a process of growth mediated by his films and albums (From Here to Eternity, In the Wee Small Hours, The Man with the Golden Arm). The larger cut-out features a be-hatted Sinatra wearing a long tie, and smoking a cigarette; he is simultaneously commanding (his cigarette hand and arm are raised, as if conducting an orchestra) and relaxed (his collar is loosened and the other hand is in his pocket). The structure of back cover narrativizes Sinatra's career as a zig-zag progression² from teen to adult, and from triviality ("throng of girls screeched their delight") to the serious purposiveness and commanding skill of the current, complex, Capitol Sinatra. The movement of Sinatra's image-career from "young and frail" (1940s) to "knowing and compelling" (1950s) is valorized as a progression that traverses the "new identity" conferred by serious film roles and a sad theme album, and ends with a "return to what is, after all, home grounds" (a sports metaphor for competitive advantage); in other words, Sinatra has succeeded in truly becoming "himself", the swingin' lover, by becoming "adult" both physically and aesthetically.

Climax magazine is more explicit about the narrativization of Sinatra's career, describing it as a "fascinating melodrama": "He's on top when by all the recognized rules of the game he should be mooching handouts at stage doors. How he did it is a fascinating melodrama involving talent, atrocious public relations, big black headlines, feuds and disappointments. But through it all runs the unquenchable drive of a man who has infinite assurance in his artistry and in himself" (O'Neal 1959 27-8). Playboy compared the integration of Sinatra's career trajectory into his star-image to the emergence of jazz: "The story of how Sinatra grew up . . . is by now as familiar as the

²The 1940s photo is centered at the top of the back cover, the From Here to Eternity still is below it to the right, while the reproduction of the In the Wee Small Hours cover and the still from The Man with the Golden Arm are below and further and further to the left side. The final graphic, the "swingin' lover" Sinatra, is in the bottom right hand corner of the back cover, on the opposite side of "Frankie Machine". Thus a "rise, fall, rise again" structure is implicated in the zig-zag construction of the text and images.

weary old saga of how jazz came down the river . . ." (Reisner 1958, 64); the now-taken-for-granted nature of Sinatra's career narrative is seen in the articulation of two mythical creation stories (and it may be implied that Sinatra has achieved a cultural legitimacy on a par with jazz, which began to be taught in high school music courses at precisely this moment). The article goes on to argue that Sinatra's star-image is explicitly not myth, but, like the songs he performs, non-fiction narrative - in other words, autobiography:

. . . the picture he projected was also the songs he sang. For once in the history of show business, there was no need for a myth. "Everything happens to me". "I couldn't sleep a wink last night". "There's no you". Myth and man blended into one. When Frankie sang of life and love, he knew the meaning of the lyrics all too well . . . Nor did his movie career change the pattern . . . The public discovered a strangely driven, searching and forever dissatisfied soul. Sinatra the man became a living representation of the songs he sang. He grew as a symbol of romance as he loved and lost and loved again (Reisner 1958, 66, 64).

Sinatra emerges as "a living representation" of the lyrics and movie roles he performs as a result of his career trajectory, which is understood as a process of maturation through experience ("loved and lost and loved again" certainly parallels "rise and fall and rise again").

The idea the Sinatra is a "living representation" of his art is emphasized in a 1958 Time piece. While filming Some Came Running (1958) on location in Indiana, Sinatra's rowdy and rude behaviour – which included allegedly beating up a 66-year-old hotel employee because of poor room service – was widely reported (e.g. "Frankie in Madison" 1958). Several months later, Time referred to the incidents in terms of Sinatra's acting: "Frank Sinatra . . . recently proved in Madison, Ind. (Time Aug. 25) that he puts on some of his most striking performances off-screen . . ." ("Bee Volant" 1958, 55). While "striking performances" is a pun on the alleged assault on the hotel

employee, it is clearly enabled by the discursive integration of Sinatra's performing career into his "off-screen" behaviour, which is understood to be as distinctive as his Oscar-quality acting (cinematically "striking performances"). This sense of a seamless integration of art into life, and life into art, is also evident in a 1956 Metronome review of Ella Fitzgerald's The Cole Porter Songbook. The reviewer is critical of what is described as an "unreal quality" in Fitzgerald's singing; her performance of Porter's "I Get a Kick out of You" is then compared to renditions by Billie Holiday and Frank Sinatra (on Songs for Young Lovers, 1954), in terms of a distinction between technical virtuosity and believability: "The thought occurs that this kind of lyric is out of Ella's realm of experience - not necessarily better than Ella, just different - a different expression of what she might easily feel. So that she sings each note, works on each word, where Frank and Billie tell their own story (Sinatra being a kind of Porter-ish lyric anyway)" (Review of Ella Fitzgerald, The Cole Porter Songbook 1956, 26). Like jazz singer Billie Holiday, popular singer Frank Sinatra is seen to "tell his own story", through the transformation of song into narrative autobiography; it is this "real" quality which is implicitly valorized over Fitzgerald's "unreal quality". By "being a kind of Porter-ish lyric anyway", Sinatra is conceived not only as a sophisticated, jaded, sensualist (like the protagonists of so many Porter tunes); Sinatra is also seen as a form of aesthetic production himself (a kind of living lyric). Thus the narrativization of Sinatra's career contributes to an aestheticization of his life.

As opposed to first-time stars, whose pre-fame invisibility allows their years of struggle to be elided in their production as "overnight successes", the visibility of Sinatra's decline and return to the top contributes to the perceived authenticity of his Capitol persona. Like the Playboy article just cited, Good Housekeeping understands the career trajectory in terms of a public maturation: "The feeling is that he seems sincerely dedicated to the project of keeping his current slate clean and getting more

jobs as an actor. It may well be that the story of the rise again of Frank Sinatra is simply that the Crown Prince of Swoon has finally grown up" (Wells 1954, 218). The "sincere dedication" of the Capitol Sinatra is implicitly opposed to the immature indulgences of the "Crown Prince of Swoon". Look notes the sense that his first flush of popularity may have been viewed as unearned and inauthentic: "Success came too easily to him" in the 1940s (Davidson 1957b 131); by contrast, his comeback can be understood as a form of legitimation.

This is also seen in an article by Nat Hentoff in HiFi Review, which surveys Sinatra's Capitol career up to 1960; Hentoff praises the new qualities found in Sinatra's "swingin'" rhythm numbers as well as his sad and lonesome ballads, in terms of an implicitly-gendered contrast between the ". . . jaunty, virile assurance of his Capitol swingers and the probing sensitivity of his ballads for the same label. It is as if the lean, disenchanting years that preceded From Here to Eternity and the tumultuous love affair with Ava Gardner changed him from a youngster who had a relatively easy life into an adult who, though neurotic in many ways, was now able to charge the music he sang with experience rawly learned" (Hentoff 1960, 32). Sinatra is "changed" into a serious adult through "experience rawly learned"; Hentoff explicitly relates this to the performance of autobiography in his conception of the significance of the Capitol Sinatra's "charged" singing for his devoted audience:

. . . when he stays on stage for an hour or more, moving from standard to standard without a word of introduction, he has absolute control over his audience. The reason is his ability to make a song come wholly alive and sound like autobiography. A man whose experience with women has been extensive and on occasion, traumatically painful, he selects those songs whose lyrics he thoroughly believes. Singing, in fact, is more than a profession for Sinatra. For a man as driven and as insatiably hungry for love and security as he is, singing is often an outlet for his deepest feelings (Hentoff 1960, 31).

Thus Sinatra is not simply a professional entertainer; he is a serious (and suffering) artist who is compelled to communicate a "painful" inner truth about his life experience through musical performance conceived as autobiography. Hentoff repeatedly stresses the relationship between Sinatra's life and singing in terms of suffering and belief:

. . . Sinatra, for all his quick intelligence, lives emotionally at much the same level as the songs he interprets. He does have a large capacity to feel and be hurt so that, with all he's experienced, he sings these songs now with more power and penetration than he did years ago; but he still believes in what they say. He is a romantic whose fantasy life came true; and leaving him still unsatisfied, it had to be intensified into even more extravagant visions - and regrets (Hentoff 1960, 33-4).

Hentoff ends his article with a quote from a rock 'n' roll star who is in the process of trying to "mature" by moving away from teen music and into standards; the intertwining of life, suffering, and singing is here seen as essential to believability, with the very grain of Sinatra's voice offered as physical evidence of emotional experience and psychic pain: "Young Bobby Darin hopes desperately to be another Sinatra . . . As he said a few weeks ago, "The point is, you have to have lived a little before you can sell a song . . . take Sinatra's voice, for example. It has a wonderful grinding sound. That throat's been trod on"" (quoted in Hentoff 1960, 36).

The explicit valorization of Sinatra's artistry in terms of truth, belief, suffering, and autobiography is also present in a 1953 Metronome article by George Simon, entitled "Sincerity's A Thing Called Frank". Sinatra's Method-like acting in From Here to Eternity is understood in terms of his "living the part", and is seen to inform and distinguish his singing as well:

In his newest found glory, he likes to give special credit to Burt Lancaster and Montgomery Clift. "They helped me a lot in that picture. They're both such great

guys and great actors. They just about lived their parts, because they knew them so well, and they helped me to make what I did out of mine" . . . Maybe Frank realizes it , or maybe he doesn't. But it's this same sort of sincere performing, this same living a part, whether it be as a straight dramatic actor or as a singer, that has always put him so far ahead of most others in his field, that has always stamped him as a truly honest singer, as a guy who feels what he's singing, and who's not just emoting in the hopes that some echo chamber or some sound effects man will so embellish his performance that the public will be fooled and go out and buy a lot of his records. For Frank Sinatra is one of the few performers in the popular music field who has not compromised his music, who has been willing to go through lean years rather than indulged himself in phony commercial sounds, and who has respected the efforts of good musicians and singers in particular and the intelligence of the public in general (Simon 1953, 15)

Simon is clearly operating within a jazz aesthetic, in which honesty of self-expression and independence from mass opinion are key (and intertwined) criteria of worth. Sinatra is seen to sing "sincere" autobiography for its own sake ("a truly honest singer, as a guy who feels what he's singing"), since Sinatra is autonomous of commercial imperatives ("has not compromised his music"). Simon deploys a jazz discourse of "paying your dues", as the "lean years" of the immediate pre-comeback period are understood to have been the direct result of Sinatra's integrity. Thus Sinatra has suffered for his art, just as Sinatra lives his (p)art, whether singing or acting; together, these contribute to the articulation of Sinatra as serious artist.

Simon's linkage of Sinatra and the Method acting of Montgomery Clift recalls the reviews of From Here to Eternity , in which Sinatra's acting is seen as of a piece with other Method-starred films. As I suggest above, Time's description of the acting in From Here to Eternity equally describes Method acting: "The performers have that curious and

captivating air which director Zinnemann calls "behaving rather than acting," an artless form of art . . . " ("The New Pictures" 1953, 96). That Sinatra was associated with the new generation of Method stars is seen in another Time review, this time of a John Cassavetes film, Crime in the Streets (1956): ". . . Actor Cassavetes, who looks as if his name were Marlon Sinatra . . ." ("The New Pictures" 1956, 100). Cassavetes's character's name is "Frankie" in the "sociological thriller", further underlining a sense of Sinatra as sub-text; while ethnicity (and danger) are certainly at play here, "Marlon Sinatra" also refers to a shared acting style, in which "behaving" and "embodying" ("looks as if") are understood to refer to emotional directness, a perceived absence of mediation, "an artless form of art". Thus it may be useful to conceive of Sinatra as a kind of "Method singer", wherein stylistic naturalism (e.g. Sinatra's well-known "conversational phrasing"; see Pleasants 1985, Rockwell 1984, Lees 1987, Friedwald 1995) works in conjunction with Sinatra's "feeling" and "living" the songs. Sinatra, as "a living representation of the songs" he sings, as "a kind of Porter-ish lyric", can be perceived as not having to "perform", in the sense of putting on an act; as an artwork himself, Sinatra merely "behaves" the songs, and his "truth" may therefore result from a perceived absence of mediation.

This perceived embodiment of life in art/art in life is seen as well in the Down Beat article on Sinatra's articulations of masculinity discussed above. Using a quote from Art Cohn's novel based on the life of singer-turned-saloon-comedian Joe E. Lewis, The Joker is Wild (whom Sinatra portrays in the 1957 film of the same name, and which was also developed and produced by Sinatra), the Down Beat article understands Sinatra in terms of the artistic embodiment of a jazz-bohemian ideal:

. . . Frank is living proof that certain things can be done, that a certain kind of life can be lived . . . We've frequently made our point about the quality of his singing, where "the arrogance and kindness, force and gentleness, pride and helplessness of being a man is portrayed by this be-hatted, tie-loosened, after-

hours human with an exactness which somehow gathers all these elements, fits them with precise artistry, handsome tone and compact control, which gives them a shining clarity" . . . We call this jazz singing. We call Frank Sinatra a jazz personality. We could very well call Frank Sinatra a jazz actor (Coss 1957, 15).

Like the "living proof" of Method acting, Sinatra's singing is understood in terms of its embodiment of the true values of "after-hours" jazz subculture. Sinatra is a "jazz personality" because, like Cohn's conception of Lewis,³ Sinatra illuminates and articulates a series of contradictions within masculinity --"the arrogance and kindness, force and gentleness, pride and helplessness of being a man" -- with his "jazz singing". Presumably a parallel is being drawn between the heterophony of jazz and the contradictions of heterosexual masculinity, in which the complexity of the former serves to clarify (though not resolve or simplify) the latter. The overweening quality being praised here is complexity, whether of jazz, Lewis, masculinity, or Sinatra, and the "appeal to complexity" is a central discursive strategy in attempts to legitimate popular forms in "high-art" terms.

That the style and content of this articulation extend to Sinatra's film roles is evident in his description as "jazz actor"; clearly a link to Method acting is being made here. Conceiving of Sinatra as Method singer also draws attention to the simultaneous processes of cultural legitimation at work in popular film and music during the post-war years; just as the idea of "the Method" (a "form of art") operates as a discourse of cultural distinction within the context of film acting, so too do critical responses to Sinatra's singing seek to "elevate" it through an articulation with "high-art" discourse. Both jazz and the Method value improvisation and emotional directness, and as

³There is a series of similes at work here; the protagonist of Art Cohn's novel is "inspired" by the life of Joe E. Lewis; Sinatra portrays the Lewis in the film version of the novel; and the Down Beat writer is comparing Sinatra's star-image to that of Lewis through reference to the novel, even as the film of The Joker is Wild itself contributes to the articulation of Sinatra's star-image.

Krin Gabbard (1996, 136) has recently remarked, a sense of underlying similarity (in terms of their relationship to modernist art) was perceived to exist between them in the 50s.⁴

The modernist painter, the jazz musician, and the Method actor each conceive of “self-expression” as the locus of artistic practice; the expression of a self conceived as a coherent and autonomous individuality implicates the idea of the artist in the production of modern forms of subjectivity, wherein “the artist” stands as a privileged model of the “the individual”. Like the jazz musician or the Method actor, Sinatra begins to be perceived in the 1950s as a singular artist producing a complex body of work or *oeuvre*, which is contextualized in terms of Sinatra’s progression through a career read as narrative; each new development (film role, LP album, fistfight, affair) can thus be understood in terms of its contribution to or development of the “story” of Sinatra the artist. Each attribute is rendered an instantiation of his persona/personality/individuality through its narrativization, which narrativization itself coheres by virtue of its operation under the signifier “Sinatra”, whether voice, body, or name. Ideas of autobiography and the narrativization of Sinatra’s career, as I shall argue, work in conjunction with discourses of autonomy and authorship to construct and legitimate Sinatra as serious artist.

The Tender Tough

Implicit in the Down Beat article quoted above (Coss 1957), is the idea that Sinatra’s career and star-image embody a series of contradictions such as “force and gentleness”. These are implicated in constructions and relations of gender, and in turn

⁴Gabbard claims that “It is no coincidence that the Actors studio and the improvisational practice of Method acting flourished in the 1950s at the same time that jazz was being embraced as another form of modernist art. There is also a definite relationship between psychoanalysis and modernist intuitive practices such as jazz and the Method. Jazz and its mystique of improvisation were related to and perhaps an influence on the technique of many actors in the 1950s who brought an ad-lib aesthetic to both theater and film. A jazz aesthetic had grown beyond music and taken on a life of its own” (Gabbard 1996, 136).

are involved in the valourization of Sinatra as artist. This is especially prominent in representations of Sinatra as “tender tough”. This section examines conceptions of Sinatra as contradictory figure, the “tender tough”, in terms of the gendering of alternating articulations of his star-image and work. The use of the trope of contradiction to represent Sinatra contributes to his construction as complex, serious artist; I shall contend that the discourse of the “tender tough” is ultimately a discourse on the reconfiguration and complexification of gender in the service of claims on artistic legitimacy.

The discursive production of the “tender tough” is evident throughout the Capitol period. One of the clearest articulations of the star-image of Sinatra with the idea of the tender tough is found in the titles of a pair of articles that appeared in Woman's Home Companion in May and June of 1956: “Beginning - The Personal Story of the Tender, Tough Guy Who Won't Behave - Frank Sinatra” (Taves 1956a) and “Frank Sinatra . . . Tender, Tough Guy” (Taves 1956b). The first title renders explicit an articulation of an unconventional or non-conformist masculinity and rebellion; Variety's review of Never So Few (9 December, 1959) also emphasizes the autonomous and unconventional masculinity of the “tender tough”: “Frank Sinatra is the iconoclastic, ruggedly individualistic commander . . . a tough and tender character in equal if unpredictable quantities”. While the tender and the tough appear to exist in a complex relation of tension (“a tough and tender character in equal if unpredictable quantities”), there is no ambiguity as to the gendered nature of the power attributed to Sinatra's portrayal of a military “commander”. As I shall argue, the overarching construction of the “tender tough” as “iconoclastic” male involves the appropriation of feminization (the articulation of Sinatra as “tender”) by the masculinized “tough” in the production of Sinatra as artist.⁵

⁵ By feminization and masculinization I mean the processes whereby the articulation of a taste, image, behaviour, etc., with a relation of power is read as a form of gendering. Here I conceive of gender as a continuum of power relations which masquerades as a binary opposition; gender can then operate as a medium for the expression of power.

Cosmopolitan uses a construction that resembles the “tender tough” in a pull-out quote: “. . . his baffling mixture of tenderness, passion, and violence” (Rogers St. Johns 1956, 83). This sense of paradoxical, contradictory qualities (“tenderness . . . violence”) is also the explicit structuring device for both the 1955 Time and 1957 Look profiles. As noted above, Time’s description of Sinatra’s performance of the character of Maggio (“he played him with rage and tenderness and grace”) is not that different from its description of Sinatra “himself”: “. . . Frank Sinatra is one of the most delightful, violent, dramatic, sad and sometimes downright terrifying personalities now on public view . . .” (“The Kid from Hoboken” 1955, 52). In both cases, a sense of enigma or mystery is produced, thus heightening interest in both the star and the article. While this is a feature common to a great deal of popular press writing on celebrity, the articulations of Sinatra as “tender tough” operate at the conjuncture of multiple discourses, which moves the deployment of contradiction beyond a straightforward rhetorical device. Look’s first profile of Sinatra associates the “tender” Sinatra with the traditionally feminine sphere of the family. The article refers to Sinatra writing a “tender letter to his teen-age daughter Nancy” (Davidson 1957a, 38), while a photo of Sinatra and his eldest daughter is captioned “Tender Frank reveres daughter Nancy”; this is juxtaposed with a section title on the same page in a larger font: “He feuds even with his friends” (Davidson 1957a, 44). Subsequently, the contradiction between the aggressive “tough” and the sensitive “tender” is made explicit: “It is difficult to reconcile this belligerent Sinatra with the tender Sinatra who spends every spare moment with his three children” (Davidson 1957a, 46). Another caption, to a photo of Sinatra and Marlene Dietrich, claims that “Playboy side of Sinatra and Sinatra the family man are in constant state of conflict” (Davidson 1957a, 40). That the “playboy” and the “belligerent” are linked in their discursive opposition to the

Gender is a product of the tender tautological trap of all discourse, wherein meaning is produced in relations of difference and similarity; thus power differentials are read onto sexual difference is read onto gender difference is read onto cultural difference, and so on in a self-perpetuating circle.

“family” and the “tender” is supported by Playboy’s expansion of its conception of Sinatra as “at once tough and tender”:

. . . it was not unusual acting ability that won fans and an Oscar. It was again the projection of a vital, intense human being - if not handsome, then surely the hippest of the hip, and yet naively childlike, too; and despite his many affairs, an incurable romantic about life and love - if not suave and sophisticated, then most certainly a fascinating mixture of both man and boy, at once tough and tender, brooding, searching, and always very much alive (Reisner 1958 64)

Note the alignment of oppositions: hip/naively childlike, affairs/incurable romantic, man/boy, tough/tender. While they appear to operate within a larger structural opposition between experience and innocence, the hip affairs of the tough man are clearly associated with the masculinist values of Playboy. Conversely, the “tender” attributes are discursively associated with feminization, insofar as “femininity” is made to stand for the “not masculine” (and for that which is devalued by Playboy): the naive, the romantic, and the immature of an essentialized “female”.

At this point, it may be instructive to look at the various meanings associated with “tender” and “tough”. Webster’s (1989) offers the following synonyms in its definition of “tender”: weak, delicate, sensitive, soft, easily hurt, yielding readily to force, concerned, sympathetic, immature. “Tough” includes: strong, not tender, violent, hardened, not easily broken, not easily influenced, difficult, inflexible, incorrigible. One definition of “tough” as a noun is provided: “a ruffian; rowdy” (a “ruffian” is defined as a lawless and brutal bully; a “rowdy” is a rough disorderly person). While “tender” has Latinate etymological origins (from Old French), “tough” is derived from Anglo-Saxon roots (Old English).⁶ “Tender” and “tough” are clearly gendered terms; their denotative relation of opposition is undergirded by the connotative opposition of their respective associations with “femininity” and “masculinity”.

⁶See Lees (1987, 3-22), for a provocative discussion of the implications of French versus Anglo-Saxon vocabulary within Tin Pan Alley song lyrics.

"Tender" and "tough" appear to describe what have been historically conceived as "essential" qualities of the feminine and the masculine respectively; their definitive semantic opposition mimics the conventional construction of gender as fixed, binary opposition. Thus the conception of Sinatra as "tender tough" may be understood to articulate a "paradoxical" integration of discursive "femininization" and "masculinization", whereby Sinatra can be understood as a lawless and brutal bully who is weak, sensitive, and sympathetic.

The implications of this gendering for Sinatra's construction as artist are nowhere more apparent than in Nat Hentoff's 1960 article for HiFi Review. A series of accompanying photographs are conceived as instantiations of the related images and affects of the "tender tough". Next to a photograph of a grimacing Sinatra, lying back on a couch with cigarette smoke curling about him, the caption begins: "The most-recorded moods of Sinatra: the brooding, tender, melancholy . . . ". A second photo features an erect, frowning, tuxedo-clad Sinatra, captioned ". . . Truculent determination of the tough insider" (note the photographic alignment of "tender" and "tough" with stereotypically passive and active positions associated with the "feminine" and the "masculine" respectively). A final photo of a laughing Sinatra is captioned: ". . . and a rich, spontaneous joy in the pleasures of his fantasy life come true" (Hentoff 1960, 32-3). That the latter photograph and caption may be assimilated into the "tough" side of the opposition (the capitalized "Truculent . . ." suggests a sentence completed by ". . . and a rich") becomes apparent in the body of Hentoff's article. Sinatra's star-image is portrayed as comprising conflicting impulses, and Hentoff contrasts Sinatra's alternating articulations of power and vulnerability in implicitly gendered terms:

Singing, in fact, is more than a profession for Sinatra. For a man as driven and as insatiably hungry for love and security as he is, singing is often an outlet for his deepest feelings. In his brittle, scoffing world, too frequent displays of sentiment are regarded as "soft", and above all, Sinatra nurtures the image of

himself as a tough, resilient insider who can handle anything. But Sinatra alone, from what his few actual intimates say, is not too removed from Sinatra singing ballads into a microphone (Hentoff 1960, 31).

The juxtaposition of the “brittle” and “tough” versus “soft” and “sentimental” sides of Sinatra represents a gendered opposition. Although the masculinized Sinatra scoffs at softness, which is aligned with the sentimental vulnerability of torch ballad singing, it is implied that the “true” Sinatra, when “alone”, is similar to the Sinatra of In the Wee Small Hours and other ballad albums (I return to this point below). Hentoff distinguishes between albums like In the Wee Small Hours and Songs for Swingin’ Lovers! in terms of the “tender” and the “tough”: “The other side of the brooding, tender, melancholy that pervades his ballads is the resilient, cocky, free-swinging Sinatra of medium and up-tempo tunes which he handles with sharply jazz-influenced, instrumentalized phrasing” (Hentoff 1960, 32). The “brooding, tender” Sinatra is “the other side” of the “cocky, free-swinging” Sinatra, and each is seen to have its own style of musical articulation; that these are gendered conceptions is made clear in a subsequent reference to the “. . . jaunty, virile assurance of his Capitol swingers and the probing sensitivity of his ballads for the same label” (Hentoff 1960, 32). In this context, the “tender tough” may be articulated with a distinction between Sinatra’s lonely ballad and swingin’ lover LPs. The respective moods, instrumentations, tempi and personae associated with each of these album types (melancholy, strings, slow, “lonesome on top of the world” versus buoyant, brass, upbeat, “swingin’ playboy”) can be articulated with feminization and masculinization, respectively.

However, Hentoff does not conceive of this gendering as a means of discrediting or denigrating the “feminized” Capitol ballad LPs in favour of the “masculinized” swing LPs, since both are “authored” by the singular individual, Frank Sinatra, and both offer narrativized instantiations of his Capitol star-image. In a discographical essay which accompanies the Sinatra profile, Hentoff describes the Capitol albums, both swing and

ballad, as superior to what he sees as the less artistically-worthy, and truly feminized, “soft” and “static” 1940s Columbia recordings:

As Sinatra's voice roughened and his own self-esteem deepened due to his serious film successes, his style changed markedly. The jazz he had always liked now influenced his singing thoroughly with regard to more freely instrumentalized phrasing, a more incisive beat and much more playing with the rhythm . . . instead of the wholly soft, almost static ballad backgrounds of his Columbia period . . . Sinatra preferred . . . a more vigorous assist from the band which served as a springboard for his improvised-sounding singing. Even some of the ballad arrangements had more iron in them, and consequently, they complemented his own more assertive attack which was partly to make up for the removal of the “baby fat” of his voice and partly to underline his increased concern with reinterpreting the songs in his own, highly distinctive, sophisticated way (Hentoff 1960, 35)

The maturation of Sinatra, both physically (“voice roughened”, “removal of the “baby fat””) and artistically (“serious film”, “increased concern with reinterpreting”), is seen to contribute to the aesthetic superiority of his Capitol recordings; thus “even some of the ballad arrangements” (the implication being that the vulnerability of torch songs may be feminizing) are valourizeable when masculinization is co-present (they are seen to have “more iron”, “more assertive attack”, than the “soft” and “static” Columbia recordings associated with Sinatra's “softly-crooning femme-man” image of the 1940s). The Capitol Sinatra is legitimated as a “distinctive, sophisticated” artist partly through the deployment of feminization when licensed in the service of a “greater” masculinist totality.

The location of the “true” Sinatra behind the tough exterior in the earlier quote (“Sinatra alone, from what his few actual intimates say, is not too removed from Sinatra singing ballads”) is not about valourizing vulnerability-as-feminization as an

end in itself. Rather, it is the intimate interiority of Sinatra's self "alone" which is being articulated with the feminized, "tender" Sinatra. The "tender" is conceived as an "inside" to the "tough" (similar to the imagery of the tough guy "with a heart of gold", the "soft" centre inside the "hard" exterior); the "tender" can thus function as a marker of interiority, signifying emotional depth, seriousness, truth, and artistry. Sinatra's feminization as "tender" is licensed and appropriated by the masculinized "tough", which remains its ultimate master; the "tender" exists as an adjectival adjunct to the truth of the noun – the "tough" – which subsumes it, and is but a stopping point in a process of masculine re-territorialization. The "tender tough" can ultimately be understood as a discursive complexification of gender in the service of a masculinist claim to artistic legitimacy.

From Here to Masculinity

These processes of masculinization and feminization are also at work in Sinatra's Capitol-era films, from From Here to Eternity (1953) to The Manchurian Candidate (1962). Across this series of 21 films,⁷ "Sinatra" is presented as both action hero and singer, with war film following musical-comedy following social consciousness drama. This is an unusually wide range of roles for a self-described "song-and-dance man". If we think of the extremely rare cases of other Hollywood song-and-dance men who also made action films, such as James Cagney or Dick Powell, we see that neither consistently alternated between musical and action film roles as Sinatra did. Cagney's four musicals, Footlight Parade (1933), Something to Sing About (1937), Yankee Doodle Dandy (1942), and Never Steal Anything Small (1959), are spread across three decades of action films. Dick Powell's years of making musicals (the 1930s) are well behind him by the time he emerges as a star of film noir and Westerns in the

⁷I am excluding his cameo appearances in Meet Me in Las Vegas (1956), Around the World in Eighty Days (1956), Pepe (1960), and The Road to Hong Kong (1962).

mid-1940s and later (for an argument about the "feminizing" of the song-and-dance man, see Cohan 1993).

Conversely, in a 10-year period between 1953 and 1962, Sinatra starred in 21 films, 8 of which were musicals,⁸ and 8 of which were action films⁹ (the remaining five include three dramas, Not as a Stranger [1955], The Man with the Golden Arm [1955], and Some Came Running [1958], and two trans-generic "Rat Pack" films, Ocean's 11 [1960], and Sergeants 3 [1962], which include action, comedy, and musical elements). However, in discussing the alternating feminization and masculinization of "Sinatra" across these roles, it is not my intention to suggest a simple mapping of gender onto genre, in which the binary opposition of masculine/feminine is translated into generic differences between action film and musical comedy. It is not a question here of simple positions, but of the attachment of traits which are then pulled into larger productions. Sinatra's persona is being continuously masculinized in order to be re-feminized, and feminized in order to be re-masculinized; thus, as part of his star-image, this process takes place within individual films, as well as from film to film. This process is a crucial part of the larger articulation of "Sinatra" in this period, and will be seen to contribute to his conjunctural production as Artist. It is also important here to note that Sinatra, as a key case of broader articulations of gendered celebrity during the post-war era, exists alongside stars such as Marlon Brando and James Dean, whose star-images may be said to involve re-configured masculinities.

⁸By "musical" I mean any film in which a song is sung in its entirety (as opposed to Maggio's singing portions of songs to himself in From Here to Eternity); these include Young at Heart (1955), The Tender Trap (1955), Guys and Dolls (1955), High Society (1956), The Joker is Wild (1957), Pal Joey (1957), A Hole in the Head (1959), and Can-Can (1960).

⁹The action film roles: soldier in From Here to Eternity (1953), ex-soldier hitman in Suddenly (1954), cowboy in Johnny Concho (1956), 19th-Century Spanish rebel leader in The Pride and the Passion (1957), soldier in Kings Go Forth (1958), soldier in Never So Few (1959), convict in The Devil at 4 O'Clock (1961) and Army intelligence officer in The Manchurian Candidate (1962).

As I argue above, Sinatra's transition from "softly-crooning femme-man" in the 1940s to tough, "man's man" during the Capitol years, was in part due to his performance as a soldier in From Here to Eternity. While Sinatra had played sailors in Anchors Aweigh (1945) and On the Town (1949), and a soldier in It Happened in Brooklyn (1947), these were musicals, and contain no "action", in the sense of combat or physical confrontation. During the Capitol period, Sinatra played soldiers or ex-soldiers in action contexts in one third of his films (7).¹⁰ These performances both contributed to and were evidence of a perceived "toughening" of Sinatra's star image; they also underline his increasing articulation with a male audience. However, Sinatra did not simply abandon the musical comedies which had constituted his film career up until 1953. Throughout the Capitol period, Sinatra appears in a range of musicals authored by Broadway composers, including Guys and Dolls (1955, Frank Loesser), High Society (1956, Cole Porter), Pal Joey (1957, Rodgers and Hart), and Can-Can (1960, Cole Porter). This combination of action film and musical further underlines the singularity of Sinatra's career in the 1950s and early 1960s. But it is the oscillation between masculinization and feminization in Sinatra's film roles, rather than his affiliations with putatively-gendered Hollywood genres, that will be the focus of this discussion. Sinatra's characters are constantly being feminized in his Capitol-era films, whether through their participation in subversive or non-sanctioned styles of masculinity, through their onscreen suffering of pain or humiliation, or through their positioning within situations historically and conventionally associated with the "feminine". This feminization, however, is consistently recuperated within an overarching trajectory of masculinization. While Sinatra may appear as "tender" at one point, "tough" at another, in the final analysis his articulation as "tender tough" is

¹⁰ I am categorizing Sinatra's performance as Miguel, the leader of a 19th-Century Spanish rebellion against the occupying Napoleonic army in The Pride and the Passion as "soldier". I am also including his role as a U.S. Cavalry Sergeant in Sergeant's 3 as an "action" role, to the extent that the brawling and battle sequences of the film involve Sinatra's character participating in physical combat.

a re-working of masculinity, not a dismantling. I begin with an overview of the moments of feminization within Sinatra's film roles, before examining the moments of masculinization and discussing their interrelation.

As discussed in the section on From Here to Eternity above, Maggio is represented as refusing to conform to dominant conceptions of masculinity. His openness and volubility are commonly associated with women, not men. His physical slightness and "weakness" contribute to his feminization, especially when contrasted with the more "manly" masculinities of Prewitt and Warden. At the New Congress Club, the hostess Maggio dances with is significantly taller than him, reinforcing Maggio's non-conformity to masculinist ideals (men should be taller than women), and positioning Maggio as the "female" partner. In his death scene with Prewitt, Maggio is held in Prewitt's arms, clearly weak and suffering from his wounds; this may be conceived as a further form of feminization.

It is also important to note that the characterization of Maggio in the novel of From Here to Eternity (1951) may have contributed to viewer's conceptions of the film and of Sinatra's role. The novel had sold over 2 million copies before being issued in paperback (N.Y.: Signet) in September 1953, in conjunction with the film's release. The visual image of Maggio created in the novel is of a tiny, thin man with no facial hair and a body which is obviously not muscular ("My name's Maggio and as you can see I aint [sic] no jockstrap neither"; Jones 1953, 41). Sinatra's famous thinness was seen as an important component of his perceived similarity to the character of Maggio, and both are feminized in relation to dominant paradigms of masculine physical appearance. In the case of Maggio, his physical slightness is deployed as evidence of failing to meet certain norms of masculinity, and therefore, of normality. In both book and film, Maggio is an outsider in terms of body type, ethnicity, and implicitly, gender. However, in the novel, Maggio is explicitly represented as deploying a mobile and fluid sexuality; just as he is outside physical norms of masculinity, he can move outside the straitened

sexual specifications of heterosexual masculinity. It is not abandoning guard duty to get drunk in town that gets Maggio court-martialed in the novel; rather, it is Maggio's practice of hustling "queers" for drinks that gets him into trouble. In the novel, Maggio goes to gay bars, and gets "picked up" by gay men, who pay for his drinks in exchange for companionship. He even brings Prewitt along on one of his "expeditions". Maggio gets so drunk that he runs naked out of a gay man's house; Prewitt cons the gay man out of \$40 and goes off to find Maggio, who is subsequently involved in an altercation with the MPs and arrested. He is court-martialed, and sent to the Stockade, which ultimately results in his death. Thus in the novel, Maggio is indirectly killed for his non-conformity over sexual norms. Sinatra's compatibility with Maggio therefore may have been seen, by some viewers, as resulting from a perceived alignment between the feminized homosexual subtext and Sinatra's "femme-man" persona.¹¹

Historically, the cinematic representation of suffering is associated with feminization; Maggio/Sinatra's death scene involves not only suffering, but also a

¹¹This may have contributed to a perceived alignment between Sinatra and queerness, and is supported by developments beyond the Capitol years. In *The Detective* (1968), Sinatra plays a New York homicide detective investigating the mutilation-murder of a homosexual. He makes the rounds of gay hangouts; after a suspect is brought in, other detectives use brutality and threats in an attempt to extract a confession. Sinatra is finally given a chance to interrogate the gay suspect, and is genuinely gentle and understanding. At one point he holds the suspect's hand in order to gain his confidence. He gets the confession, but has doubts about the mental competence of the man who is convicted for the crime. The point here is that Sinatra can credibly play "both" sides without alienating his largely heterosexual (and likely homophobic) audience. Sinatra, as artist, liberal and swinger, possesses a "meta-sexuality" that can "understand" the sexual Other, just as he can be a musical "love god" for both men and women when his albums are used as "make-out music". Tom Waugh has said that Sinatra's recording of "Strangers in the Night" (1966) is "the real gay anthem of the 1960s" (personal communication, 1992); this is supported by the use of a Sinatra record on the soundtrack of *Advise and Consent* (1962), for the sequence in which a character goes into a Washington, D.C. gay bar. In this context, it is Sinatra's particular articulation of a subversive masculinity that is simultaneously hyper-sexualized and sensitively vulnerable which allows him to be articulated with a gay audience without reference to camp or irony. After Sinatra married a short-haired, gamin-like Mia Farrow in 1966, Ava Gardner is reputed to have said, "I always knew Frank would end up in bed with a boy". None of this has resulted in Sinatra being "suspected" of being homosexual or bisexual; instead, it all operates within the articulation of Sinatra as exemplar of an autonomous, unconventional heterosexual masculinity.

passive Maggio/Sinatra being cradled in Prewitt/Clift's arms, further reinforcing a perception of feminization. Similarly, after Sinatra's character Miguel dies in battle in The Pride and the Passion (1957), Captain Anthony Trumbull/Cary Grant carries his body into the town to which they have successfully laid siege. Again, Sinatra's character is placed in a feminizing position.

Many other film roles between 1953-62 also featured sequences in which the camera would linger upon Sinatra's characters' suffering within the diegesis or place them in feminizing positions. For example, in the death scene in Suddenly (1954), John Baron/Sinatra's bullying killer turns into a weak coward after being shot by the housewife. The character's tough masculinity is revealed to be a masquerade (like the FBI clothing that assisted his entry into the woman's home) by the aggressive action of the housewife, which renders Baron a passive, suffering, supplicant (he cries out "no, please, no"). The cold-turkey heroin withdrawal scenes in The Man with the Golden Arm (1955) also feature extensive shots of Frankie Machine suffering and begging for heroin. Frankie shivers and shakes in pain; a review in the Saturday Review of Literature praises Sinatra's performance of the suffering in terms of "tenderness": "The thin, unhandsome one-time crooner has an incredible instinct for the look, the gesture, the shading of the voice that suggests tenderness, uncertainty, weakness, fatigue, despair" (Knight 1955, 26). The idea that the "tender" represents an internal vulnerability is even given biological form in The Man with the Golden Arm, via the mechanism of Frankie Machine's susceptibility to heroin. The feminization of Sinatra's character is further reinforced by his position of dependence on the heroin pusher Louie/Darren McGavin, who also actually administers the "fix", and "penetrates" Frankie's arm with the needle. In Young at Heart (1955), after Barney Sloan has unsuccessfully attempted suicide, his wife visits him in the hospital; he is immobilized and heavily bandaged, and his feminized passivity is reinforced by his wife having to light and place a cigarette in his mouth.

Discursive feminization is also evident in The Joker is Wild (1957). This film begins as a musical and ends as a social consciousness drama about alcoholism, presenting Sinatra both singing and suffering. Sinatra plays an aspiring singer who has his throat cut by gangsters because he refuses an offer to work at their club. Upon waking in the hospital, head and throat bandaged and realizing that he is unable to speak, he begins to panic. He emits croaking sounds, cries, and repeatedly tries to hit his head against a wall, conveying a pain which is not simply physical. Now unable to sing, he takes a job as a clown or stooge in a burlesque house. There he is repeatedly struck (on his wounds) by another performer for humorous effect, while his estranged friend (played by Eddie Albert) watches in horror, inscribing within the diegesis the discomfort and fascination intended for the viewer of the film. Again, the suffering and humiliation can be seen to feminize Sinatra's character.

In Kings Go Forth (1958), the sense of suffering continues, but now existentialized, as Lt. Sam Loggins/Sinatra is pictured drinking in Parisian bars and, in his own words, "brooding" after his arm is amputated; the suffering and the metaphorical castration of the character (he has also, at this point in the narrative, lost the girl) together contribute to feminization. At the narrative resolution of Some Came Running (1958), Dave Hirsh/Sinatra is protected from a jealous ex-boyfriend of Ginny/Shirley MacLaine who is out to kill him. She dives on top of Dave/Sinatra, and takes the bullet that was meant for him. This romantic sacrifice is a traditional fictional trope, but usually it is the man who gives his life for his woman; it is hard to imagine Bogart being a part of this. The reversal of gender positions here yet again feminizes Sinatra's character. It is also noteworthy that in the James Jones novel on which the film is based, it is Dave Hirsh who is killed protecting Ginny; however, it was reported that the film's ending was specifically changed at Sinatra's request: "He rewrote whole scenes, even talked [director Vincente] Minnelli into changing the ending so that the heroine catches the bullet" (Reisner 1958, 87).

In The Manchurian Candidate (1962), a group of U.S. soldiers are kidnapped by Red Chinese during the Korean war; they are brainwashed and then released, with no knowledge of what has happened. A number of years later one of the soldiers, Major Bennett Marco/Sinatra, now an Army Intelligence officer, is suffering from nightmares of the brainwashing. The feminization of his character is especially evident in a sequence in which Marco/Sinatra awakes suddenly from one of these nightmares, and an extreme close-up of his face reveals sweat, fear, and pain; Marco/Sinatra appears to be crying, with his mouth open in agony. The flashbacks of the brainwashing feminize the soldiers in number of ways. Most obviously, the very idea of brainwashing involves a loss of masculine autonomy, resulting in a passivity that may be viewed as feminizing (as well, brainwashing involves a "penetration" of the male mind). However, the brainwashing is conducted by various Communists; prominent among them are a number of Asians (the scenes take place in Manchuria). The racist equation of Asians with emasculation and femininity is reinforced by the mise en scene, wherein the U.S. soldiers' point of view shots reveal that they have been brainwashed into perceiving the Communist brainwashers as a meeting of an all-female horticultural society. Thus the soldiers, who are being forced to perform humiliating tasks as part of a demonstration of the effectiveness of their brainwashing, are further feminized by being the passive victims of Asians-as-women. As a result of Marco/Sinatra's increasing anxiety about the nightmares, of which he cannot make any sense, he becomes passive and feminized; as the Variety (17 October 1962) review puts it, in one scene a female stranger, Rosie/Janet Leigh, ". . . picks up a semi-hysterical Sinatra". The reference to hysteria, as well as the fact that it is the female character who "picks-up" (i.e. sexually solicits) the passive male, produce a feminization of Sinatra's character.

Several Capitol-era Sinatra films offer interrogations of masculinity. Both Johnny Concho (1956) and A Hole in the Head (1959) have protagonists who are explicitly "failures" as men within the diegesis. In Johnny Concho, Sinatra portrays

the title character, a card cheat and coward who is unable to fill the shoes of his recently deceased, gunslinger brother. After being asked to protect the town against his brother's killers, who have taken over the town, Johnny/Sinatra runs away in fear. He meets a woman and a preacher who convince him that what he is running away from is his own "manhood". The Hollywood Reporter's 1956 review of the film suggests that Sinatra's character is initially too much of a "heel" for the film to work: "The chief fault in the production is that Sinatra is made to appear for roughly the first third of the picture in a highly unfavorable light. Nothing he can do in the remainder of the film can overcome the impression that Johnny Concho is nothing but a nasty little bully . . ." (quoted in Ringgold and McCarty 1973, 112).

A similarly unflattering portrayal of masculinity is featured in A Hole in the Head. Tony Manetta/Sinatra is the owner of a failing Miami Beach hotel (the staff haven't been paid in months) and an irresponsible single father with a young son. He is a failure at the various get-rich-quick business schemes he is constantly promoting, and is accused within the diegesis of being an unfit parent. Tony/Sinatra lives the swingin' playboy existence and is an extreme non-conformist; his non-conformity is further emphasized by that of his surfing, bongo-playing, Beatnik girlfriend, Shirl/Carolyn Jones, who lives for "kicks", and doesn't want a family because, as she puts it, "I'm a baby myself. I wanna be free . . . I'm a wild bird . . . Live like there's no tomorrow". However, Shirl doubts Tony's commitment to the bohemian lifestyle, calling him "A kiwi bird", who flaps his wings but can't fly. Tony replies "I'd love to pick up and take off . . . you and me . . . Africa". But Shirl realizes he is tied to his son, and reluctantly leaves.

In order to raise money to save his hotel (from which he is about to be evicted), Tony lies to his respectable, older brother who still lives in the Bronx, Mario/Edward G. Robinson, that his son is sick and therefore requires money for hospital bills. Mario and his wife, Sophie/Thelma Ritter, fly down to Miami Beach, and discover that the boy is

fine, but come to believe that Tony is a “bum” and an inadequate parent; they try to convince Tony that his son would have a better life if he went back to the Bronx with them, but Tony says his son is his best friend, and refuses adamantly. Mario criticizes Tony’s behaviour in terms of his own middle-class values: “You go around with tramps! . . . You’re happiness crazed - you’re a bum! . . . You’re not satisfied with just getting along like everybody else . . . A nice little store, a nice little woman, in a nice little town”. Tony responds by saying he has been “broke, but never poor”. Since his brother will not lend him the money he needs to save his hotel, Tony goes to see an old friend who is now a slick, successful promoter. The old friend turns him down, and when Tony gets aggressive, has his bodyguards punch Tony. Tony, hunched over in pain, staggers humiliated into a men’s room; here his economic failure is expressed by his physical inferiority to the stronger bodyguards, and he ironically takes refuge in a gendered public space. Eventually, Tony realizes that all is lost, and tells his son that he must go and live with Mario and Sophie; when the boy refuses, Tony slaps his face in anger. Immediately, Tony is ashamed of his behaviour; he covers his own face, runs off in shame, and spends the night on the beach under a palm tree. The next morning, he is still there, and Mario, distraught, says to his wife, “Standing behind the tree like a crazy man! What’s going to happen to him?” Eventually, Tony and his son are reconciled on the beach, and Mario, who is beginning to question his own repressed lifestyle, exclaims “They’re broke - we’re poor!”.

The New York Times review understood Sinatra’s character in terms of non-conformity and failure: “He is a dreamer, a promoter, a rolling stone . . . a faker and a fraud in many ways; he’s a chiseler and a cheap conniver. To a Babbitt, he might well seem a bum. But he is, deep down, a decent, wistful fellow, a fugitive from the order to conform and a pathetically lonely individual, who kids no one more thoroughly than himself . . . a soft-hearted, hardboiled, white-souled black sheep” (Crowther 1959, 31). By referring to Mario as a “Babbitt”, conservative, middle-class, and repressed,

the reviewer underlines the film's attempt to valorize a way of life that rejects the proprieties of a "nice, little" existence. But the non-conformity of Sinatra's character goes beyond lifestyle; his failure as businessman, his inability to defend himself physically, and most importantly, his striking of his son, together position him as a failure as a man. He is a "little" man (Tony Manetta) in a number of ways, and, like Johnny Concho, John Baron in Suddenly, or as we shall see, Pal Joey, he is an exemplar of the "heel", the man who fails to uphold an unwritten, masculinist code of honour.

Another film that articulates Sinatra as swingin' playboy is, as we have seen, The Tender Trap (1955). However, Charlie/Sinatra is placed in several feminizing positions. The poster and lobby card feature a still from the movie, in which Charlie is lying on his back on a couch, his feet up on the back of the couch; however, Julie/Debbie Reynolds is in the masculinized position on top of him, just as in the film she is the active, aggressive husband-hunter for whom Charlie is a "catch". She has an agenda and a schedule, and eventually "catches" Charlie. This is occasioned by a second feminizing moment, when Charlie catches the bride's bouquet at his friend's wedding. Normally, the bouquet is thrown to single females, as a portent of a marriage. However, Charlie's being placed in a position associated with females leads to the loss of his bachelorhood; he is "trapped", which can be read as a form of taming or emasculation, insofar as the sexual autonomy which he had so valued previously is now constrained.

In fact, the entire premise of Pal Joey (where Sinatra plays a nightclub singer "bought and paid for" by wealthy widow Rita Hayworth, i.e. a male prostitute), suggests that the masculine pleasures of bachelor pads and promiscuity are tenuous and may ultimately lead to feminization. And yet, as I have argued, the narrative resolution of Pal Joey seeks to re-masculinize Sinatra even as it involves marriage: his character "breaks out" of his role as a "kept man" in order to marry his true love, asserting integrity, autonomy, and rebellion as fundamental to making an "honest man" out of Sinatra, as he puts it himself in the film. But as we have seen, Sinatra is both tramp and

lady; much of Pal Joey works to position Joey/Sinatra as a "heel", who is a failure as a man, and who is also aligned with female roles.

It is interesting to note the similarity of the opening sequence of Pal Joey (both the mise en scene and its diegetic motivation) to the opening sequence of Jane Russell's The Revolt of Mamie Stover (1956). In both films, the police escort the gigolo-whore-sexual miscreant to a means of transportation out of their town (Sinatra is put on a train to San Francisco, Russell is put on a steamer from San Francisco to Hawaii). In The Revolt of Mamie Stover, Russell becomes a dance-hall girl in Honolulu, not unlike Donna Reed's character in From Here to Eternity (1953), thus completing the intertextual loop. The opening of Pal Joey begins the process of feminization experienced by Sinatra's character throughout the film, especially in the way he is carried to the train by two taller policemen. In an early scene, before crashing a nightclub stage in an attempt to get a job, he borrows the hatcheck girl's compact, primping himself in the little mirror before jumping onstage. Insofar as Joey is presented as an excessively heterosexual coward, unscrupulously chasing every "mouse" (as he calls women) he sees, it is relevant to recall the etymological origins of the word "effeminate": a man who is self-indulgent, voluptuous, and overly obsessed with women (see Garber 1992, 27).

The narrative of the film is explicit about the dirty business of struggling to make it in a world of crooked cops, dishonest barkeepers, and sexual double-standards. Joey/Sinatra sells himself to rich widow Mrs. Simpson/Rita Hayworth (in order to get his own nightclub), and then suffers when he realizes he's lost his masculine freedom. Thus Sinatra is ultimately conceived as a serious artist struggling against a corrupt commercial system (the struggle against a corrupt system is also explicit in the opening premise of The Joker is Wild, where Sinatra's character's throat is cut because he refuses to work at a gangster-controlled nightclub where he would be economically exploited).

After Joey becomes Mrs. Simpson's "mistress", there is a remarkable sequence in which we see the convergence of numerous discourses around the image of Sinatra in the 1950s. After Rita Hayworth has sent him away from her mansion for the evening (because she is entertaining upper-class guests whom Joey might offend, or as likely, because she is embarrassed of him), we cut to an incredible shot of Joey on Hayworth's yacht, waiting by the phone for her call telling him he can return to the mansion: Joey is shown in red velvet pyjamas, with "Joey" sewn across his velvet slippers, smoking a cigarette in a holder, and reading Variety. However, even more astonishing than the costuming is the camera movement, framing, and non-diegetic music: the camera begins a languorous tracking shot on his slippers and moves up his body while a saxophone glissando, what I call a "sexy dame sax" (because it normally accompanies the entrance of a buxom blonde in post-war Hollywood cinema), is heard on the soundtrack.¹² These are components of the conventions of the Hollywood cinema of the period for spectacularizing the female body in sexual display. So at the very moment that a fantasy of a certain sort of sybaritic, swingin' bachelorhood is being simultaneously celebrated and mocked (along with a certain conception of showbiz success - reading Variety, wanting to be a "player" - which the "real" Sinatra was becoming at the time, as these

¹²Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to conduct a detailed historical inquiry into the origins and development of the musical semiotics of this technique, it will be a technique familiar to anyone who has seen a sampling of 1940s and 50s films noir or B-films. It is also worth noting that although it may seem initially derived from the conventions of vaudeville and burlesque, and earlier, from the "moaning" blues or "wailing" saxophone of jazz (where some sense of an onomatopoeic link to female sexual expression might seem likely), I would argue that it is motivated by the strong affective productivity of tonal instability, as experienced in e.g. chromaticism. This is borne out by a remarkable transposition of this technique into the 1956 science-fiction film World Without End where, upon the entrance of the futuristic "sexy dame" we hear not a saxophone glissando but a pitch bend of indeterminate instrumental origins, which is clearly operating on the same principle as the "sexy dame sax" effect, yet without the iconographic resonance of the saxophone. It may be speculated that the shift in register in this sort of pitch instability is related to the highly emotional major to minor tonal shifts in the popular music of the period (e.g. "Stardust," "Night and Day," "September Song" - as Cole Porter notes in another song, "how strange the change/from major to minor"). I also believe that the particular affective resonance of Sinatra's oscillation between masculinization and feminization (and other complex star images as well) may operate in a similar fashion.

are the years that lead up to his "Chairman of the Board" image; recall the New York Times Magazine's account of his profit participation for Pal Joey), Joey/Sinatra is being spectacularized, displayed, and feminized. This of course maps onto the narrative position of Joey at this point in the film: he is the kept man waiting by the phone in clothes bought by his keeper (later he will hesitate to pack the slippers as he is planning to leave Hayworth, but then says, "What the heck - I earned them" and takes them, again reinforcing the notion that he has turned his sexuality - and masculinity - into a commodity to be exchanged). But this moment derives its affective power precisely from the simultaneous presence of masculinization (sybaritic bachelorhood, showbiz success) and feminization.

In a number of the action films discussed above, Sinatra is simultaneously masculinized and feminized in his confrontations with hoodlums, torturers, and murderers. While his characters' victimization and suffering are feminizing within individual scenes or sequences, there is a consistent recuperation of the characters' masculinity, whether through toughness, heroism, integrity, or sexuality displayed within the film, or in terms of their contribution to Sinatra's star-image. In From Here to Eternity, Maggio's suffering is ultimately the source of his masculinization, insofar as he becomes the "toughest nut in the woods" due to his resilience. Despite John Baron's ignominious end in Suddenly, the character is remembered for the viciousness of Sinatra's "savage" performance as a "Mickey Spillane-type killer", as the Hollywood Citizen News put it in 1954 (quoted in Ringgold and McCarty 1973, 83). Despite Barney Sloan's failure to "make it", either as songwriter or husband in Young At Heart, advertisements for the film in the New York Times articulated the brooding toughness of Sinatra's performance in the tag line, "Sinatra - In another sizzling he-man role!", a claim which would have been laughable at the height of his pretty-boy phase in the 1940s. Frankie Machine, in The Man with the Golden Arm, is masculinized in relation to his sidekick, the diminutive, bespectacled Sparrow/Arnold Stang, who can

be seen as the “Maggio” to Frankie Machine’s “Prewitt”; although Frankie is a victim of Schwiefka (the owner of the illegal gambling joint) and the drug-pusher Louie, he is admired by Sparrow and desired by Molly. Frankie’s struggle against the feminizing effects of heroin is successful, and in effect he regains his masculinity as a result of getting the “40 pound monkey” off his back at the film’s conclusion. In The Joker is Wild, Sinatra’s character is initially masculinized in his resistance to gangsters and corruption; this leads to his feminization as a result of their slashing his throat, which effectively “castrates” him by removing the source of his livelihood (singing). However, the narrative moves to re-masculinize him as he becomes a hard-drinking, skirt-chasing, successful saloon comedian. The conclusion of the narrative, where Sinatra’s character realizes that he is an alcoholic, serves as another instance of a feminizing dependency, which is instantaneously re-configured as an opportunity for a re-masculinizing struggle of willpower that, it is hinted, will take place beyond the film’s conclusion. In Kings Go Forth, Lt. Loggins/Sinatra loses his arm as a result of bravery in combat, and after his existential brooding in Paris, is reunited with his girl.

Sinatra is similarly re-masculinized by being a good soldier in The Manchurian Candidate, where he solves the mystery of the nightmares and prevents an assassination from taking place. But the ending of The Manchurian Candidate also returns to a suffering which is now masculinized even as it implicitly draws on popular notions of existentialism. The plot of the film has concerned Major Ben Marco/Sinatra’s investigation of the brainwashing of his company during the Korean war; another soldier, Raymond Shaw/Laurence Harvey, has been further brainwashed to assassinate a U.S. presidential candidate, which will pave the way for a Communist-controlled vice-presidential candidate (who happens to be Raymond’s step-father), to step in. The Communist operative who has been assigned to control Raymond is his own mother, who at one point commands Raymond to kill his own wife, which he does. With Marco/Sinatra’s help, Raymond breaks free of the brainwashing and control; however,

without Marco's knowledge, Raymond kills his step-father and mother at the political rally which was to have been the site of the assassination of the presidential candidate. Just after Raymond has shot his mother, Marco breaks in on Raymond, who is perched in a projection booth overlooking the rally. Raymond says "You couldn't have stopped them, the Army couldn't have stopped them, so I had to. . . Oh god, Ben". Raymond then turns the rifle on himself, and we cut to a shot of Marco/Sinatra's face, which winces as we hear the rifle shot on the soundtrack; Marco/Sinatra has not said a word, and remains speechless, his lips parted, throughout the sequence. The rifle shot functions as a sound bridge on the soundtrack, as there is a dissolve into the next shot, of Marco looking out of an apartment window at the rain, while the sound is still ringing; this recontextualizes the sound of the rifle shot into a thunderclap. This also implicitly links the rain and thunder to pain and death through pathetic fallacy.

The last scene of the film is a sort of epilogue, in which Marco/Sinatra, having "solved" the mystery, is shown to have also realized the existence of a new kind of suffering. Standing at the window, with girlfriend Rosie sitting silently, listening in the background, Marco/Sinatra utters a kind of tragic soliloquy: "Poor Raymond . . . Poor friendless, friendless Raymond . . . He was wearing his medal [of Valour] when he died". Marco then picks up a book of military citations for courage, and says, "You should read some of the citations sometime, just read them . . ." The camera dollies in as Marco reads aloud descriptions of incredible feats of masculine valour in the face of mortal wounds and danger. As the camera stops at an extreme close-up of Sinatra's face, he puts the book down and recites a citation of his own: "Made to commit acts . . . too unspeakable to be cited here . . . by an enemy who had captured his mind and his soul . . . he freed himself at last . . . and in the end . . . heroically and unhesitatingly gave his life. . . to save his country . . . Raymond Shaw". Throughout this dialogue, Marco/Sinatra has been blinking his eyes repeatedly, as if holding back tears. At the end of the speech, Sinatra exhales, rolls his head, looks down, closes his eyes, hits his hand on the table,

mutters “hell, hell”, and apparently on the verge of tears, puts his hand to his eyes as he turns away from Rosie and the camera. Again standing at the window looking out at the rain, his back to the camera, we hear a second thunderclap on the soundtrack and the film ends.

This sequence re-configures suffering in heroic and stoic terms, through an articulation with masculinist military ideology and interiority. There is also implicit a Cold War re-configuration of masculine fighting and heroism as activities of the mind, rather than the body; the citations read out loud from the book emphasize valour in the face of physical wounds, in which men with one leg “blown off” drag their comrades to safety, whereas the citation Marco/Sinatra makes up about Raymond Shaw describes an “unspeakable” loss of autonomy and refers to “an enemy who had captured his mind and his soul”. This calls to mind Down Beat’s distinction between what it conceives as the residual masculinity of the outdoorsy and physical Marloboro Man and the emergent, indoors intellectuality of the Chesterfield Man, Frank Sinatra (Coss 1957). The final sequence of the film re-asserts the specificity of Sinatra’s now-masculine suffering in terms of a kind of existential crisis; the “tender” interiority worked out in this sequence involves emotional depths and complexities. Even though his lover, Rosie/Janet Leigh, is present, the final image of the film is of Sinatra “alone” with his pain, tears, and rain, pondering the complexity and monstrosity of modern life.

However, it is the overarching re-configuration of Sinatra as serious actor, and in turn artist, that results from roles such as these, which is significant in terms of an understanding of the gendering of his star-image. The serious actor, the legitimated artist, are finally articulations of masculine privilege and power, and the following section examines Sinatra’s construction as author and artist.

Sinatra as Artist

The articulation of Sinatra as artist during the Capitol period involves the conjuncture of a series of discursive regularities: the perception that his performances are intertwined with his life, with his work being a form of autobiographical self-expression; his conception as autonomous individual, both as non-conformist and as cultural entrepreneur; his construction as contradictory and complex, with the “tender” inside the “tough” producing a sense of depth and interiority around his brooding that is taken as a sign of seriousness. These are further articulated with the discursive traits of cultural legitimation and distinction associated with his work. Sinatra is praised as a serious actor, whether through the Academy Awards, reviews, or, as we have seen, his association with the Method. He is critically hailed as a vocalist, who is seen to be the “author” of his work, and is linked to jazz and classical music as evidence of his increasing artistry. All of this results in and is evidence of his legitimation as a serious artist working in popular forms.

The Actor

Sinatra was nominated for and won an Academy Award for his performance in From Here to Eternity. This recognition of his acting ability cemented popular and critical perceptions that he could now be taken seriously as an actor, rather than a lightweight song-and-dance man. Reviews of his performance, as we have seen, were unanimously glowing. Even the negative review of the film in Harper's contained superlatives about Sinatra's acting abilities:

There is one mature individual in "From Here to Eternity," however, and fortunately his part fell to the ablest actor of the lot. It is Private Maggio, and the actor is Frank Sinatra, who manages to make a fully rounded character from a minimum number of lines and convey all the ripe bravura of the original without any of its profanity. Mr. Sinatra's Maggio moves toward his own private destiny

- the Stockade and its slimily sadistic sergeant-of-the-guard . . . with the inevitability that distinguishes tragedy from pathos. His performance is clean and economical, and it ranges convincingly from drunkenness to death. If Mr. Sinatra can keep this up he has a bright future in the non-singing line, and even if he can't he deserves as much credit as anyone connected with "From Here to Eternity" . . . only Mr. Sinatra manages to break through the ordinary into art. One Oscar, coming up ("Morality Play" 1953, 92-93).

Note the invocation of the most "serious" and legitimate kind of acting, tragedy, in the review's valorization of Sinatra's performance as "art". Recall also the Greek tragic actor's mask on the 1955 Time cover; Sinatra's articulation as "actor" involves an involvement in "serious" material, such as The Man with the Golden Arm, which then feeds back into his articulation as "serious" actor. A review of the film in Saturday Review praises the complexity and virtuosity of Sinatra's performance: "No small part of the complex emotional coloration that we feel toward Frankie Machine comes from a truly virtuoso performance by Frank Sinatra . . . he is also an actor of rare ability . . . " (Knight 1955, 26).

Sinatra was also nominated for an Academy Award for his performance as Frankie Machine, in what was at the time a production-code defying, no-holds-barred examination of a serious social problem. The New York Times pointed out the avant-garde sensibilities of the film: ". . . this is the first time that a company has made public its intention to go forward with the release of a controversial picture in advance of its submission for a Code seal" (Pryor 1955, N. pag.). The sense of the film and the role's "seriousness" is seen in a review in Commonweal, which implicitly worries over the trivial and immature connotations of the character's name, which happens to have been Sinatra's 1940s nickname: "Everything happens to poor Frankie (this confusion of names is unfortunate: Frankie is portrayed by Frank Sinatra in what is the best and most serious portrayal of his career)" (Hartung 1955, 332). In other words,

Sinatra's articulation as serious actor involves a repudiation of his crooner image. Sinatra himself foregrounds the importance of the role in an interview with Edward R. Murrow on Person to Person (CBS, 15 September, 1956), where Sinatra notes that of all his achievements, his Best Actor nomination for The Man with the Golden Arm is the one of which he is most proud.

Sinatra's acting abilities are also singled out by directors with whom he has worked. Charles Vidor, who directed The Joker is Wild, is quoted in the New York Times Magazine: "Sinatra is the greatest natural actor I've ever worked with" (Pryor 1957, 61). Stanley Kramer, director of The Pride and the Passion, is similarly effusive in Look: "If Sinatra really wanted to work, prepare for a role, research it, he'd be the greatest actor in the world. He's darn near being that right now" (Davidson 1957a, 38). This kind of critical legitimation is underpinned by a perception that Sinatra is directing his own acting career toward aesthetic, rather than financial goals. Women's Home Companion conceived of Sinatra as an artistically ambitious actor using his box-office power in the name of art: "He can pick and choose his roles, and it is characteristic of him that he chooses assignments which are increasingly ambitious and challenging" (Taves 1956a, 39). This conception of the actor as artist is seen in a lawsuit Sinatra brought against producer Sam Spiegel in 1955. In October of 1953, Sinatra was cast as Terry Molloy in On the Waterfront. When the role was subsequently given to Marlon Brando, Sinatra claimed damages in terms more artistic than financial; according to Variety, "Sinatra . . . contends that he was anxious to win the role since he knew it would increase his prestige and further his acting career to work with director Elia Kazan and writer Budd Schulberg" ("Sinatra Seeking 500G For Renegé On Starring Role in 'On the Waterfront'" 1955, 2). Clearly, a sense of the cultural distinction attached to certain creators and projects is motivating Sinatra's action, and the perception that Sinatra is actively seeking to "further his acting career" is part of his

construction as master of his own artistic destiny. This is especially prominent in a 1954 New York Herald Tribune interview:

. . . Sinatra had not planned to follow "Eternity" with another dramatic role. He intended to go into . . . a musical . . . but the plans were canceled abruptly . . . This left Sinatra in a difficult position. Because he was committed to do "Suddenly" he was forced to do two dramatic parts in a row without a musical between, contrary to his "career plan" . . . The Sinatra "career plan," based on his return to prominence as a top star, runs something like this: dramatic role followed by a light role followed by a musical or two, or comedy role, and then another dramatic part . . . Ask him about his future and Sinatra will bubble with news of the "career plan" . . . He'll also mention proudly that he just received his first gold record in seven years . . . That plus the Oscar prove to him that the "comeback" - he calls it "the rise and fall and rise again" - is complete (Hyams 1954, 2).

The idea that Sinatra has an explicit "career plan" suggests that he is more than a movie star drifting from film to film according to the highest bidder. The artistic purposiveness of a long-term view is subsequently reinforced by Sinatra's claim that he would like to direct films at some point in the future (Hyams 1954, 2). This is re-iterated in a New York Times interview from the same period: "There is in the back of his mind, he admitted, a determination to gradually drift behind the camera and become a director" (Schmidt 1954, 3). Ultimately, Sinatra's apparent control over his career is figured as a refusal of commercialism and triviality, as another interview in the New York Times Magazine suggests: "He can't be blamed for feeling a little heady at times, for it is true that he pulled himself over the top. "I don't want to give the impression that I know it all," he has said, "But I think I do know better than anyone what I can do best. If I had hung on to my MGM contract . . . I would never have gotten 'Eternity' or 'The Man with the Golden Arm' and I'd still be in a sailor suit'" (Pryor 1957, 61). The self-control

of the artist allows the sailor suit and studio sinecure to be left behind in the name of serious Art. Thus, together with his critical plaudits, Sinatra's ambitiousness, determination, and self-direction reconfigure him as a serious Actor.

The Classical Conductor

Questions of cultural distinction and legitimization within popular music culture appear to be more complex than within Hollywood cinema, which had achieved a level of respectability and cultural prestige in the post-war period that was largely lacking in popular music. This was in part due to the ongoing relationship between Hollywood and the "legit" theatre, from which materials and talent were consistently (and explicitly) drawn, and in part due to Hollywood's own development of critical institutions such as the Academy Awards, which began 30 years before the music industry's Grammy Awards. Popular music's relationship with classical or art music is more fraught, despite its frequent (and frequently clandestine) borrowing of materials. However, institutions within popular music culture that seek consecration have historically tended to do so through reference to classical music, as seen in my discussion above with regard to the popular standard and the idea of the album (the emergence of jazz as an art music in the post-war period, and its relation to Sinatra, is discussed further below).

Sinatra was frequently linked to classical, or as Playboy put it, "serious" music, as a means of articulating his cultural distinctiveness: ". . . he is an intelligent, self-educated man (he reads voraciously, mostly non-fiction, is interested in astronomy, painting, and serious music)" (Reisner 1958, 86). Popular music is here implicitly unserious music; however, like the attribution of "class" via an interest in "classical" music, much of the writing on Sinatra used serious, classical music to express a belief that Sinatra's popular singing was itself both serious and classy. In an article in Movie Show, the hierarchical nature of the relationship between popular and classical is made explicit: "When he had mastered all the rudiments of popular music, Frank delved into

the more profound study of symphonic, classic music" (Dowd 1958, 37). That this involves an "elevation" of Sinatra beyond his birthright is revealed in a subsequent quote: "Frankie steeped himself just as avidly into classical music. After having conducted several symphonies for a recording company (he can't read a note, either), he realized - with a shock - that he didn't know the first thing about Rachmaninoff or Stravinsky. So he badgered the really famous conductors for what was equivalent to a course in Music Appreciation!" (Dowd 1958, 59).

Sinatra is seen to re-create himself as collector and connoisseur of "high" art in a Photoplay article: "He possesses a superb collection of symphonic records, which he can discuss among experts . . . He is an expert on Puccini and Berlioz . . . He visits art galleries" (Steele 1957, 92). Similarly, the jazz magazine Metronome quotes Sinatra's arranger and conductor, Nelson Riddle, on Sinatra's high-cultural competence: "His musical tastes in classics go deeper, and are on a higher level, than anyone would guess" (quoted in Tynan 1957, 16). In this context, it is important to note that Metronome reviews classical records, as well as jazz, at this time; this reinforces jazz's newfound status as an "art" music itself in the post-war period (I discuss this in relation to Sinatra's singing below), and reveals the extent to which the kind of cultural legitimization here involves not an overturning of dominant cultural institutions, but a demand for inclusion within their processes and structures of exclusion. The discursive positioning of Sinatra as "serious . . . high-brow" is also seen in Look: "Sinatra has shed many of the old cronies and now spends many evenings indulging in serious conversation with Hollywood high-brows. He devotes a good deal of time listening to symphonic records. His favorites are Ralph Vaughan Williams and Hector Berlioz" (Davidson 1957c, 95-6). He is also described as ". . . a fine amateur painter, and an expert on Puccini and Berlioz" (Davidson 1957a 38). Look links Sinatra's high-art "expertise" with his conducting for several recordings: "He visits art galleries and has a superb collection of symphonic records, on which he can discourse with expertise.

Although he has had no formal training in music, he has conducted symphony orchestras for both Columbia and Capitol Records" (Davidson 1957a 42). A caption to a photograph of Sinatra with his arms raised like a conductor's articulates Sinatra's popular singing with the "raised" cultural status that is seen to result from his "scholarly" knowledge of classical music: "Scholar Sinatra knows classical music as thoroughly as pop brand, takes occasional plunge conducting symphony orchestra for record albums" (Davidson 1957a 39).

The construction of Sinatra as musical virtuoso is part of his articulation as artist; an article on the recording of an all-instrumental album, Frank Sinatra Conducts Tone Poems of Color (Capitol, 1956), in Capitol Music Views, sees the "difficulty" of orchestral conducting as evidence of Sinatra's power as artist: "There seems to be virtually no limit to the multi-talents of Frank Sinatra. Having already proven himself as a singer without peer, a great actor, a fine comedian and skilled movie producer, he has taken time out to tackle still another difficult endeavor . . . conducting a full orchestra. This was accomplished with his usual success" ("Frank Sinatra Conducts Tone Poems of Color" 1956, 6). An accompanying series of photographs show Sinatra conducting in the studio, in various poses associated with the hard work of artistic creation. Sinatra's visual appearance is different from virtually all other Capitol-era studio session photographs, in which he normally wears a dark suit, tie, and hat. For the conducting session, Sinatra is wearing a pair of slacks and a sweater, with no hat or tie and the collar of his shirt sticking out from under the sweater. He is also wearing glasses in a number of the photographs. Sinatra's appearance here underlines the distinctive difference of this from other recording sessions. One of the photographs features Sinatra, wearing glasses, a baton in hand, his arms up and over his head, with his eyes closed and leaning back. He is clearly immersed in the enrapturing moment of musical creation, transported to a higher level. This conception of artistic ambitiousness and seriousness, however, is not in competition with his popular singing;

the production of Sinatra as the most serious artist within the highest musical form -- the classical music orchestra conductor -- is part of the larger process of valourizing Sinatra as popular artist.

Sinatra also conducted the orchestra for a Peggy Lee vocal album of standards, The Man I Love (Capitol, 1957). The cover features Peggy Lee being kissed on the neck by a man whose face is hidden; only the back of his head is visible. The prominence of Sinatra's name on the cover, and the black, slicked hair of the man imply that it is Sinatra kissing Lee. The liner notes further develop the centrality of Sinatra's contribution to the project (which is arranged by Nelson Riddle) by claiming him as the "creator" of the album: "Peggy Lee sings, Frank Sinatra conducts . . . the arrangements are by Nelson Riddle. Here are three great stars united for the first time in an album created by Frank Sinatra". Sinatra's positioning as author of the work is reiterated in a Playboy review of the LP, in which "Frank Sinatra conducts the ork. [orchestra] (And Frank told us: "I'm as proud of this LP as of anything I've ever done.") . . ." ("Records" 1957, 11). Sinatra's "pride" here implicitly results from its contribution to his position as serious and distinctive artist who happens to work within popular forms.¹³ In part this stems from his articulation as not "merely" a popular singer, but a "musician". While Sinatra's discursive alignment with classical music in general, and conducting in particular, work to re-conceptualize Sinatra as artist-musician, this was especially prominent in accounts of Sinatra's relationship to jazz.

The Jazz Musician

While jazz and popular music were co-terminous in up until the 1940s, in the post-war period jazz emerged as a distinct, and distinctive, form of "legitimate" Art.¹⁴

¹³This is similar to the awareness of cultural hierarchies demonstrated in Sinatra's reference, on Person to Person a year earlier, to being "proudest" of his Best Actor nomination.

¹⁴Bernard Gendron (1995) has recently argued that the emergence of an art discourse for jazz is crucially tied to the debates between traditionalist and modernist jazz camps

By the 1950s, as Krin Gabbard has recently argued, jazz was well-established as a modernist artform; he cites the use of Elmer Bernstein's jazz score as the soundtrack for The Man with the Golden Arm as evidence of the institutionalization of jazz as art (Gabbard 1996, 134). (Up until the late 1940s, only classical music was felt to be "transcendent" enough for non-diegetic film soundtracks; the emergence of the jazz soundtrack at the end of the 1940s suggests that jazz had acquired a cultural status approaching that of classical music). Critics seeking to distinguish Sinatra's singing frequently conceived of its value in terms of its relationship to jazz, and sought to appropriate the cultural cachet of the jazz musician on Sinatra's behalf.

The Swing era (ca. 1935-45) is seen by many observers as the last time "jazz" was truly a "popular" music. While some historians attribute the decline of the big bands to the emergence of star vocalists such as Sinatra in the 1940s, ironically Sinatra's association with the big bands was seen by many critics in the 1950s as a source of the jazz quality in Sinatra's performances. We have already seen a number of articles in which Sinatra is seen as part of a vaguely-defined jazz world: "We call Frank Sinatra a jazz personality. We could very well call Frank Sinatra a jazz actor" (Coss 1957, 15); "The jazz he had always liked now influenced his singing thoroughly . . ." (Hentoff 1960, 35); "The story of how Sinatra grew up . . . is by now as familiar as the weary old saga of how jazz came down the river . . ." (Reisner 1958, 64). In each of the George Simon articles in Metronome discussed above, Sinatra is implicitly valorized as a kind of jazz singer whose artistry transcends the commercial demands of his chosen field of popular music.

It is worth recalling Barry Ulanov's Down Beat review of In the Wee Small Hours, which is explicit about the superiority and difference of jazz to popular music, even as jazz is invoked as the sign of Sinatra's distinction: "... [When] melody and meaning are indissolubly wedded . . . for a moment or two popular singing takes on the

in the 1940s. See also the chapter entitled "Jazz Becomes Art" in Gabbard (1996, 101-37).

stature of an art and its close connection with jazz becomes something to be celebrated and not deplored . . ." (Ulanov 1955, 11). Ulanov then points to Sinatra's ties to jazz, via his big band experience: "Sinatra is, after all, a product of the jazz environment. He always has had a taste and an intuition for jazz nuances, for improvisational ornamentation, for swinging beats, far beyond the call of popular-singing duty" (Ulanov 1955, 11); again, it is insinuated that "popular-singing" is something inferior to the art of jazz, even as Sinatra is seen to transcend popular limits.

Elsewhere, Sinatra was linked to jazz in terms of his persona and films; a Billboard review of his 1953 dramatic radio series, Rocky Fortune (NBC radio, 1953-54), sees his radio character as a "jazzy" version of his new star-image: "Frank Sinatra effectively repeated his characterization of "From Here to Eternity" in an outlandish mystery-adventure script . . . Sinatra is playing essentially the same character as he did in the hit movie, namely a happy-go-lucky, jazzy, trouble-allergic, sympathetic young tramp" (Review of Rocky Fortune 1953, 11). Similarly, the Variety review of The Manchurian Candidate (17 October 1962) refers to the film as "George Axelrod and John Frankenheimer's jazzy, hip screen translation of Richard Condon's bestselling novel".

Sinatra's construction as hip, jazzy performer is tied to claims that he is respected by jazz musicians, and that he is not merely a popular singer, but a kind of jazz musician himself. As noted above, after 1953 he was consistently voted top male vocalist in jazz polls in Down Beat, Metronome, and Playboy. Down Beat names the jazz musicians who are members of the studio band backing Sinatra on his 1957-58 television show, and remarks that, just as Sinatra respects the musicians, they ". . . obviously hold Frank in like esteem, feeling that, above all else, he is a "musician's singer"" (Tyman 1957, 16). This conception of Sinatra as a "musician's singer" is foregrounded in Nat Hentoff's HiFi Review piece. While Sinatra's ability to appeal to a wide audience is offered as a testament to the quality of his singing, it is not a populist

aesthetic that is most significant in Hentoff's view, insofar as it is implicitly understood that the "high" and "hip" elements of that mass audience are the ones that really count: "Sinatra's audience is broader than that of any other entertainer. He appeals to matrons . . . as well as to their progeny. He is a favorite of the high-spending "square" night club regulars of Miami, New York and Hollywood as well as the most "inside" jazz musicians and their followers" (Hentoff 1960, 31). Hentoff notes that Sinatra was voted greatest ever male singer in a 1957 Encyclopedia Yearbook of Jazz poll; the voters for Sinatra include members of the jazz pantheon such as Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Bud Powell, Stan Getz, ". . . and Lester Young, who would play Sinatra records by the hour . . . The hipster, whether hood or avant-garde painter, is attracted to the irreverent brashness of a public figure who can answer a Hollywood columnist's query as to whether he really likes children, "They're great, especially toasted" (Hentoff 1960, 31). This ordination by some of the greatest geniuses of jazz-as-art contributes to Sinatra's sacralization as musician.

However, the singling out of saxophonist Lester Young ("who would play Sinatra records by the hour") is extremely significant in terms of the conception of Sinatra as hipster artist. Lester Young is considered in jazz circles to be one of the most important and influential musicians in jazz history, being closely associated with Count Basie, Billie Holiday, and the sound of post-war mainstream "cool" jazz. However, Young is also seen by Francis Davis as "the first jazz modernist", the first jazz musician to be widely perceived as a suffering artist,¹⁵ and is thus understood as a key figure in the transition of jazz into art: "[Young] was the first black musician to be publicly recognized not as a happy-go-lucky entertainer . . . but as an artist of the demi-monde whose discontents magnified those felt in general by his race" (Davis 1992, 16). Sinatra, too, is transformed from entertainer into an artist by his romantic suffering,

¹⁵Young was court-martialed while in the U.S. Army for smoking marijuana, and his time in the stockade is believed to have contributed to the poor health he suffered for the rest of his life.

and by his independent, underworld image; the reference to the “hipster, whether hood or avant-garde painter” could be a description of Sinatra’s star-image (sensitive gangster, swingin’ artist, “tender tough”). However, it is a conception of Sinatra as jazz-influenced musician which Hentoff stresses in subsequent passages. Sinatra is quoted as saying that he was “educated” by jazz musicians such as Young, as well as Ben Webster, Art Tatum, Count Basie, Miles Davis (Hentoff 1960, 36), and Hentoff ties this to a conception of Sinatra as serious musician, working at his art:

Like a superior musician, he can play with the beat without losing it . . .

Sinatra’s phrasing is also strongly jazz-touched, particularly in these later years of his deepening emotional expressiveness in his music . . . the Sinatra touch is indeed intuitive, but much of it reflects a conscious knowledge of jazz-based techniques and a thorough study of each song to determine how its full potential can most effectively be realized (Hentoff 1960, 36).

Sinatra’s back-phrasing is seen as a sign of jazz virtuosity, resulting from serious “study”, and both are part of a conception of Sinatra as purposive, “superior musician”.

The liner notes to Sinatra’s 1959 Capitol LP, No One Cares, are written by a respected jazz critic, Ralph J. Gleason. Gleason also begins by inserting Sinatra into a pantheon of virtuosos, geniuses in their respective fields: “. . . it is as certain a truth that Frank Sinatra is the greatest ballad singer of his generation as that Charlie Parker was a musical genius, Frank Lloyd Wright an architectural poet and Joe DiMaggio, hitting the ball, a thing of classic beauty”. The “classic” beauty ascribed to Sinatra undercuts the implicit populism of Joe DiMaggio’s inclusion with a jazz soloist and an architectural modernist; although it is clearly also part of a strategy of legitimating Sinatra’s involvement in a popular form, Gleason’s subsequent comments on the popular song are clearly elitist:

. . . the way Frank Sinatra obviously digs ballads, they begin to be something much more than the casual popular songs of the day . . . he can take a song which, in the hands of a lesser artist, would be banal and make it beautiful. He does this partly by magic, that special magic of the timbre of his sound, the accent of his voice and the way in which it brings him personally across to the listener, and partly by his inspired phrasing and his ability to understand and communicate the lyric . . . Sinatra can take lyrics that are in themselves and of themselves banal, lyrics that are trite and sometimes even slight enough to be silly, and yet he can make them live and breathe and communicate emotion. This is the great creative force of a real artist: to make something live. The jazz player can do it with his horn, the painter with his brush, the composer with his pen. Sinatra does it with his voice and personality . . . (Gleason 1959).

Sinatra transcends the illegitimate mediocrity of his chosen material, the “casual . . . banal . . . trite . . . slight . . . silly” popular song through his “voice and personality” (i.e. sung autobiography), and in doing so is consecrated as a “real artist”, like the legitimated jazz musician, painter, or classical composer. Gleason also appeals to the high-art idea of “tragedy” as a source of Sinatra’s “dignity” and seriousness:

. . . For all our gaiety and our brass, this is a country with an element of sadness running through its soul . . . This underlying note of tragedy is imbedded [sic] in most American art, as it is in American life. It is one of the reasons Frank Sinatra can sing the sad songs in this album so well. Those bitter-sweet, late night, sad songs of days that used to be require an interpreter who can be sad without being maudlin, who can, in short, be man enough to cry a little and with the tears gain dignity. For dignity is what Frank Sinatra has brought to the whole field of ballad singing. Dignity and a great sense of music, of love and of beauty. We don't think of him, usually, as a jazz singer. But he is. In his most lyric, un-rhythmic number which moves those to whom jazz is a mysterious world,

Frank Sinatra is a jazz singer because he brings to his every performance the total commitment of the jazz artist to give all that is in him (Gleason 1959). Not only is the banal and trivial “field of ballad singing” redeemed by Sinatra-as-artist; even the “square” listener (“those to whom jazz is a mysterious world”) is understood to be enlightened and “improved” by Sinatra’s “total commitment” as a “jazz artist”. Together with the ideas of dignity and tragedy, Gleason is placing Sinatra within a cultural hierarchy, at the top of which is the serious, male artist who is “man enough to cry a little and with the tears gain dignity”. Again, the appropriation of feminizing tears operates within a masculine process of artistic legitimation.

The 1955 Time profile discussed at length above was largely unflattering, to say the least, in its portrait of Sinatra. However, a description of Sinatra at a late-night recording session is revealing in its use of gender to express its approval of Sinatra’s vocal talent; implicit in the scenario is the idea that Sinatra’s late-night recording sessions offer a model of artistic interiority in which the truth of Sinatra’s inner self may be revealed (recall Hentoff’s claim that “Sinatra alone, from what his few actual intimates say, is not too removed from Sinatra singing ballads into a microphone”):

. . . as Sinatra stands up to the mike, tie loose and blue palmetto hat stuck on awry, his cigarette hung slickly from his lips, a mood curls out into the room like smoke. He begins to sing, hips down and shoulders hunched, hands shaping the big rhythms and eyes rolling with each low-down line. The musicians come to life . . . Instead of the old adolescent moo, the Sinatra voice now has a jazzy undertone of roostering confidence and a kind of jewel hardness that can take on blue and give off fire with subtlety and fascination (“The Kid from Hoboken” 1955, 56).

This is an extremely complex passage, in which Sinatra’s autonomous image (expressed in the conjuncture of the swingin’ playboy’s “loose tie” and the gangster’s “blue palmetto hat”) and his sensitive romantic image (“a mood . . . like smoke” and a

"cigarette hung slickly from his lips" à la In the Wee Small Hours) are united in the ultimate masculinity of his artistry. Sinatra's artistic expressivity is conceived in highly physical terms ("hips down and shoulders hunched, hands shaping the big rhythms and eyes rolling with each low-down line"), and is understood to be so potent that it is able to make "the musicians come to life" (the artist here conceived as giver of life itself). There is also an undertone of race in the physical description and the use of "low-down"; as a kind of "White Negro", to borrow Norman Mailer's term, Sinatra appropriates the cultural cachet of an African-American unmediated expressivity that exists only in the white mind. But all of this is ultimately valourized in terms of Sinatra's conception as jazz musician and masculine artist; his transition from the 1940s to the mid-1950s is expressed in terms of the contrast between two highly-gendered animals, the cow ("the old adolescent moo") and the rooster ("roostering confidence"). Here we see the operation of gendered aesthetic terms, in which the trivial and the feminine are equated and condensed ("moo"), and then dismissed in favour of the valuable ("jewel") and the masculine ("hardness"). The legitimization of Sinatra as artist is seen in the allusion to the cultural hierarchies discussed above (the "jazzy undertone", "subtlety"), as well as to the complexity of his oeuvre: the paradox of the "jewel hardness that can take on blue and give off fire" suggests Hentoff's distinction between Sinatra's melancholy ballad and buoyant swing recordings, as well as Sinatra's star-image itself.

The Author

Most contemporary popular music formations which valourize autobiography view song authorship as fundamental in assessing performer authenticity.¹⁶ However,

¹⁶An important historical exception is French chanson, wherein chanteuses réalistes of the inter-war period sang autobiographical songs written by collaborators; see Ginette Vincendeau, "The Mise-en-Scène of Suffering", New Formations 4: 107-28, 1987. The contemporary Québécois popular music scene also contains a chanson formation in

in the world of Tin Pan Alley adult popular music, it was extremely rare for singers to be involved in songwriting; those exceptions who did occasionally write songs (Nat Cole, Mel Torme) nonetheless performed a repertoire that was overwhelmingly written by others. Of course, the canonization of songwriters is central to adult pop's investment in the standard, but it operates within the long-established and clear cut economic organization of the division of creative labour within Tin Pan Alley (songwriters wrote songs, arrangers made arrangements, musicians played, singers sang). This was manifested in distinct pantheons for performers and songwriters. The idea of a common body of material for performance, a "standard repertoire", emphasized interpretation over "writing" as the privileged locus of value for the consecration of vocalists. Thus, unlike the case of rock culture, singers working within adult popular music formations were not expected to write their own material, even though, as we have seen, authenticity was an operative criterion of judgement.

As I have argued, Sinatra's star-image and performances were consistently valorized in terms of autobiography, in which the "story" being told returned, ultimately, to the story of "Sinatra" himself. The conceptualization of Sinatra's work as his life contributed to perceptions of Sinatra as the author of that work, just as he was perceived to be the author of his life, his individuality, his self. Modern conceptions of the unified subject thereby underpin the narrativization of Sinatra's star-image-career, and produce a demand for resolution of tensions. Thus the singularity of the "tender tough" is seen to contain contradictory tendencies of Sinatra's Capitol star-image and work, including his oscillation between melancholy ballad albums and buoyant swing albums, between serious dramas and musical comedies, between sensitive romantic and bullying gangster. Sinatra's production as author is a function of a belief in a consistency of design, whether of self or work. This also extends to his work on "similar" theme albums such as In the Wee Small Hours or Frank Sinatra Sings for

which non-writing singers perform songs customized to their personas and autobiographies by songwriter associates.

Only the Lonely, where perceived consistencies across lyric subject matter, tempo, orchestration, singing style, artwork, and so on, both on individual albums and from album to album, are understood as part of an overall artistic project unified by the person of the perceived author, Sinatra the artist (who equally emerges within the process of seeking these continuities). I address this further in an analysis of a song ("One for my Baby") and an album (Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely) below.

Sinatra's articulation as author, as creative source and force behind an oeuvre which is itself a product of this articulation, is evident in the claims discussed above concerning his artistry and commanding involvement in the creation of media texts, whether changing the ending of Some Came Running or conducting the orchestra on a Peggy Lee LP. As seen in the Sammy Davis, Jr. article ("He's painstaking about his recordings . . . He'll do 20 takes if he feels it isn't the way he wants it . . ."; Davis 1956, 12), Sinatra's articulation as author is also tied to a commitment to quality and an involvement in production processes which are seen to be unusual for the music industry of the period, which, as noted above, was characterized by a high degree of professional specialization. Period accounts claimed a totality of involvement in the making of an album that is today commonplace, but which at the time was virtually unheard-of. Photoplay noted that "He still loves to make records - whether he sings on them or conducts (as he did recently for an album of Peggy Lee songs). He personally selects the titles for his own record albums . . . He collaborates with the artist in designing the covers" (Steele 1957, 92). As in the later case of the rock auteur, the album cover artwork is seen as one more outlet for the artistic expressivity of the true and total author, Sinatra. Show-Biz Illustrated linked this involvement to the founding of his own label; in a quote from Morris (Mo) Ostin, head of Reprise Records, Sinatra's authorship is conceived in terms of detailed control: "Frank and I passed the Capitol Records Tower one day and he said, 'I helped build that. Now let's build one of my own!' . . . He sits in on everything through selection of material, choice of album covers,

selection of arrangers, picking of musicians and hiring of distributors; he even gets into the technical end of the business with comments to the engineer that the drums are too loud. He's rarely wrong, musically" (quoted in Hyams 1961, 104). Note that while the period division of labour remains largely intact throughout the industrial process, Sinatra's authorship is ultimately a question of decision-making; while A&R people [Artists and Repertoire] usually made most of the decisions regarding song and arranger selection at the time, Sinatra's direction of the process represents an emergent relationship between performers and sound recording.

But it was not only at Reprise that Sinatra was seen to exert unprecedented power in the recording process, as Good Housekeeping noted: "Officials at Capitol let him pick his own tunes and his own accompanists . . . if he decides to record at midnight, they pay the overtime charges without protest" (Gehman 1960, 179). The 1955 Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra praises "the meticulous attention to detail and rigid insistence on quality which Sinatra demands" when making records (Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra 1955, 40). The caption to a photo of Sinatra in suit and hat, motioning with his arms, positions him as the "boss" of the Capitol A&R person supposedly in charge of the session: "Sinatra explains just what he wants the music to convey to [Capitol A&R man Voyle] Gilmore and conductor Nelson Riddle at a recent session for Capitol" (Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook: Frank Sinatra 1955, 36). This perception of control within the recording studio articulates his autonomy and his authorship, as seen in the following passage from a 1954 Capitol Music Views piece:

A musician to the core, Frank Sinatra is no singer to loaf around until time to start singing. The active hand he takes in his own wax sessions may account for some of the hit quality in recent best-sellers like "Young At Heart" and Sinatra's new Capitol album "Songs for Young Lovers" . . . Photos taken during a recent Hollywood recording session show Sinatra working with Conductor-arranger Nelson Riddle . . . and with Capitol producer Voyle Gilmore . . . to achieve the

balance and modulation that have held the "new Sinatra" at the top of the hit lists . . . "Easy - easy!" Frank tells crew while conducting . . . he listens critically to playback with Gilmore and Riddle, then beams . . . at the results ("Session with Sinatra" 1954, N. pag.)

Again, Sinatra's distinctiveness is conveyed through his configuration as more than merely a popular vocalist, parasitically reliant on the true labour of instrumentalists; instead, Sinatra is culturally consecrated as "a musician to the core" (it may be implied that once more the recording studio is configured as a site of artistic interiority, where the privileged inside "core" of the artist may be glimpsed). The "new Sinatra" implicitly takes an "active" and "critical" role in his work that results in both "hits" and the qualities of "easy" "balance and modulation" valued within the relaxed and restrained dimensions of adult pop.

The sense that Sinatra's own "taste" is a key aspect of his configuration as author is present throughout the Capitol period. During the period of his decline in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he frequently (and often publicly) fought with Columbia Records A&R man Mitch Miller over the recording of material Sinatra felt was below "standard" (this is the motivation for Sinatra's comments in the 1948 Metronome interview discussed in chapter one). Sinatra continued to use the alleged "bad taste" of Miller as a means of articulating his own cultural capital as Capitol standard-bearer into the 1960s; a 1956 Variety article reports on a telegram sent by Sinatra to Emmanuel Celler, chair of a U.S. House Judiciary Anti-trust Sub-committee, in which Sinatra claims that Mitch Miller forced Sinatra to record BMI songs¹⁷ against his will while at Columbia: "Sinatra said he "refused to beat my creative head against the wall" and so he took his talents elsewhere . . . and once again his career is "financially,

¹⁷Broadcast Music Incorporated is a music performing rights organization set up by a coalition of radio broadcasters and music publishers in 1939 as a result of rival organization ASCAP's (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) attempts to increase the cost of licensing music for radio play. In the 1950s, ASCAP is popularly associated with standards and BMI with rock 'n' roll, although the reality is far more complex.

creatively, and artistically healthy" . . ." ("Sinatra's Bomb At Anti-Trust Probe: BMI Explosion or ASCAP Backfire?" 1956, 1). In the telegram, the now "artistically healthy" Sinatra stresses "creative freedoms" as key to his Capitol success ("Sinatra's Bomb . . ." 1956, 44).

A key part of Sinatra's Capitol-era distinctiveness is his perceived autonomy from an industrial-bureaucratic structure in which the Artist and Repertoire person decides which songs will be recorded, and thereby effectively limits the singer's ability to express his or her "taste" through repertoire; at Capitol, Sinatra's new ability to select his own material is understood to be tied to "creative freedom" to record standards. This is evident in a Variety review of In the Wee Small Hours: "Ever since Sinatra moved to Capitol from Columbia a few years ago, he's been digging into the standard catalogs for album material . . . There's a lot of Sinatra in this collection. He's got sixteen songs to work with and each is a Tin Pan Alley gem. Only new one in the batch is the title song by Dave Mann and Bob Hilliard but it's got the qualities of a standard . . ." ("Album Reviews - In the Wee Small Hours" 1955, 56). Sinatra's perceptive selection of standard "gems" as well as his taste in choosing a new title song with the "qualities of a standard" are part of the continuous articulation of Sinatra as connoisseur of popular songs, which then function as vehicles for the artistry of his singing.

This is particularly highlighted in the 1953 Metronome interview with George Simon, who also links the distinctiveness of the Capitol Sinatra to the singer's connoisseurship: "On Capitol, Frank has been allowed to show his good taste. All of the songs he has recorded for the company have been good ones" (Simon 1953, 15). Simon sees Sinatra's song selection as making a kind of political statement about aesthetics, i.e. as a discourse on taste: "Frank seemed happy that I liked what he did and especially so because so many people approved of the great songs that he sang. The impeccable taste he showed was his way of answering the men and mice who have been deluging the music

scene with material which he considers not merely unmusical, but horrible . . .” (Simon 1953, 14-15). In the interview proper, Sinatra is quoted on the relationship between the performer’s and the audience’s taste sensibilities:

If what I did at Bill Miller’s [Riviera nightclub] did anything, it convinced me once and for all that you can still show good taste and be appreciated. You don’t have to sing loud and raucously and belt them over the head all the time. You can use a little restraint and try to create a mood that you and they can both feel, sort of like being together in a small room, and if you mean it, and show that you mean it, you can register all right . . . It made me feel great the way they paid attention to the songs I sang. They were good songs, all of them - at least I think so, because they were my favorites. Things by Rodgers and Hart and Rodgers and Hammerstein and the Gershwins and Cole Porter. They don’t write many songs like that today. I got a friendly beef on with some good song writers I know. I ask them ‘please, when are you gonna sit down and write some GOOD songs?’ and they just look at me and give me that routine about who’s gonna buy them, and anyway how are they gonna get a record on them. They’re wrong, and the record companies are wrong. . . (Frank Sinatra, quoted in Simon 1953, 15)

Sinatra articulates the aesthetic values of adult pop in terms of mood, restraint, and autonomy from the current Hit Parade (“They don’t write many songs like that today”); there is also an implicit art discourse in the notion that the nightclub audience “paid attention” to the “good songs”, the classic and timeless masterpieces of the geniuses of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway. Sinatra ends by explicitly relating the lyrics of the songs he sings to a “higher” cultural form, poetry:

One thing, they’re certainly not writing these days is many good lyrics. I know that because I’m more conscious of the words in songs than I am of the melody . . . The melody . . . should be like a back-drop for the lyrics. Sure it should be good and musical. But it should be more like a guy reading poetry with organ music or

something going on in the back. If the poem or the lyrics are stated often enough with the same music going on at the same time, they become associated as one (Frank Sinatra, quoted in Simon 1953, 15).

Simon goes on to distinguish Sinatra's manipulation of lyrics as a singular artistic practice which effectively produces Sinatra as author: "If you've listened to Sinatra much, you'll know exactly what he means. Whereas musicians and singers often ad lib around a melody they know and like, few singers ever ad lib with the lyrics. Sinatra does, though. He doesn't make any major changes, but merely slight switches in incidental words, switches that convince you he feels every word, every lyrical idea . . ." (Simon 1953, 15).

Similarly, Nat Hentoff emphasizes Sinatra's effective revision of the lyrics, now tied to a rhythmic resuscitation of melody, in a reference to Sinatra's ". . . unerring flair for deepening the meaning of lyrics and making the most earthbound melodies swing with startling new life . . ." (Ulanov 1960, 31). This ability go beyond the interpretation of songs to their renovation and reincarnation stems from Sinatra's ability to appropriate them as expressions of his personality: "It's partly because of his own penchant for emotional extremes that Sinatra can so readily believe and make into personal property many of the songs he sings" (Hentoff 1960, 33-34). Thus emotional autobiography "authorizes" Sinatra to re-write the songs:

Sinatra, for all his quick intelligence, lives emotionally at much the same level as the songs he interprets. He does have a large capacity to feel and be hurt so that, with all he's experienced, he sings these songs now with more power and penetration than he did years ago; but he still believes in what they say. He is a romantic whose fantasy life came true; and leaving him still unsatisfied, it had to be intensified into even more extravagant visions - and regrets (Hentoff 1960, 33-34).

(Hentoff here implies that Sinatra and his art intertwine so intensely that almost delusional states are produced in the entertainer).

In live performances during the period, Sinatra constantly acknowledges the composers and lyricists of the standards he sings; however, this marking out of "actual" authorship serves more to articulate further Sinatra's "good taste" than to remind the audience of the collaborative nature of the performance. That the audience willingly suspended knowledge of the multiplicity of "authors" (songwriters, arrangers, musicians) in favour of a singular individual as artist, author, and auteur, is hinted at in a 1953 Billboard account of a nightclub appearance: "At one point while Sinatra was giving a particularly good reading of "I've Got a Crush on You," he ad libbed, "It's only fair to tell you I didn't write this song," for additional laughs . . ." (Smith 1953, 12). Sinatra's comment suggests a perception that he might as well have written the Gershwin song, for the acclaim rendered unto Sinatra ultimately stands as his alone, despite his seeming modesty. Reviewers often explicitly attributed authorship to Sinatra, again articulated with good taste and standards, as in the following from HiFi & Music Review in 1958: "His selection of tunes to perform is a continuing indication of his good taste . . . The basic qualities in Sinatra's voice which make him so superior are sincerity and the ability to phrase a song and sing its lyrics as though he himself had written them" (Gleason 1958, 10).

Thus Sinatra's rendition of standards is conceived in terms of authorship. Ultimately, like the comparative deployment of "poetry" or "jazz", the belief that Sinatra sings standards "as though he himself had written them" stands as a sign of artistic distinction. In other words, working within a dominant conception of popular musical production (division of labour), Sinatra realigns the existing components (standards) in such a way as to produce autobiography without necessarily "writing" his own material. This is not simply about an absence of mediation, but a claim about the

distinctive totality of Sinatra's involvement in the creative process, whereby Sinatra is acclaimed as an Artist.

The Artist

"Status follows the big money, even if it has a touch of the gangster about it"

- C. Wright Mills (1956, 357)

Two moments from a 1959 episode of The Frank Sinatra Timex Show (ABC, December 23rd) underline the association of standards and cultural distinction within the adult popular music culture of the period. First, Sinatra introduces a medley of George Gershwin songs by making reference to guest Ella Fitzgerald's distinctive (and expensive) new LP box set: "A couple of weeks ago when someone told me a record album was coming out that would sell for \$100, I thought he was a ding-a-ling". Sinatra then points out that the prestigious combination of Fitzgerald, arranger Nelson Riddle, Gershwin standards, and a limited edition, autographed 5-LP set made him change his mind about the suddenly-reasonable price; this kind of popular music is now truly valuable. Fitzgerald, Riddle, and Sinatra then perform songs from the collection.

Second, Sinatra sings Cole Porter's "It's All Right With Me" (from the musical Can-Can), up close to dancer Juliet Prowse, with a lot of touching and intimacy (the two were widely rumoured to be lovers at the time). Sinatra comes out of the post-song blackout cooling himself with a fan, smiling and acting overheated: "It isn't like me to lose my head over a girl . . .", a clearly ironic statement which gets a big laugh from the studio audience. "But then she's not just a girl . . ." he continues, noting that Prowse appears with him in the new film version of Porter's Broadway hit, Can-Can (20th-Century Fox, 1960). He goes on to claim that "This picture has many things to recommend it beside the fact that Khrushchev hated it", again getting a big laugh from a reference to the Soviet premier's highly-publicized visit to the Hollywood set of the film

earlier that year. Sinatra adds the names of the other co-stars (Shirley MacLaine, Maurice Chevalier, and Louis Jourdan) to his list of Can-Can's appeal, before articulating what are clearly perceived as the most prestigious elements of the film in terms of canonical art and musical genius: "It has the style and colour of a French Impressionist painting . . . and the best of all [sic] it has songs of Cole Porter, the near-genius I am privileged to call my friend. Now Cole, don't you dare touch that dial . . . I won't embarrass you by sentimentalizing . . . I know that you'd rather we sing your songs than your praises . . . It's our little get-well card, Cole¹⁸ . . . We need you . . . and that's straight from your biggest fan". A Cole Porter medley follows.

Both of these televised moments offer the standard as the linchpin of sophisticated, distinctive, and adult popular music; the standard is the nexus of relations between the greatest living jazz singer (Ella Fitzgerald), the greatest composers (Gershwin, Porter), the most expensive recording medium (the LP box set), a Broadway hit musical, and Porter-connoisseur Frank Sinatra.¹⁹ All of this is further articulated with sophistication and high art through references to French Impressionism and musical genius. Can-Can takes place in turn-of-the-century Paris; the posters for the Broadway musical and film quote the artwork of canonized painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, further underlining the mixing of "high" and "low".²⁰ Yet in its own way, Can-Can is itself also about the legitimization of popular cultural forms (the

¹⁸Porter was at this time in declining health due to a horse-riding accident suffered in the late 1930s, which eventually led to the amputation of his leg before his death in 1964.

¹⁹Sinatra was especially associated with the "classy" and sophisticated songs of Porter during the Capitol years, recording and repeatedly performing Porter songs such as "I Get A Kick Out of You" (1954), "I've Got You Under My Skin" (1956), and "Night and Day" (1957), among many others. Recall also Metronome's 1956 remark about "Sinatra being a kind of Porter-ish lyric".

²⁰Toulouse-Lautrec was an emblematic suffering artist (he was physically disabled and died of alcoholism at age 37), and a prominent Impressionist; however, he was also a wealthy member of the French aristocracy who chose to live his life and pursue his work within the demi-monde of Montmartre dance-halls.

plot concerns the illegal can-can dance; in the film version, Sinatra portrays a lawyer who defends the dancers' right to perform the can-can).

In the modern world, the artist is seen to be set apart socially, to exist as alienated outsider, to some extent because the "setting apart" of artist and society facilitates the capacity of "art" to then confer on those who consume it the social distance of distinction. The ownership of a Van Gogh painting "sets apart" the owner from those who cannot afford the economic capital to invest as well as from those who lack the cultural capital to appreciate the "distinctiveness" of a "Van Gogh". This process of rendering distinct through affiliation with the consecrated is evident in Sinatra's critical alignment with the Method, his association with classical music and jazz, and his championing of standards. Simultaneously, Sinatra's neurotic, lonely, angry, rebellious, non-conformist, autonomous, suffering aspects are all aligned with post-Romantic conceptions of the artist as rebellious outsider, who both suffers for his work and exists in a relation of (comparative) non-alienation from his labour due to control over his creative process, if not its profits.

Sinatra also portrays characters who are aligned with various of these ideas of the artist in almost a quarter of his Capitol-era films, even though only one of the characters is working within a legitimated art form. However, in each film, the character's alienation, struggle, and ultimate failure operates within popular conceptions of the artist as suffering, social misfit. In Young at Heart (1955), Sinatra/Barney Sloan is a failed songwriter with negligible social skills and a nihilistic outlook, who eventually attempts suicide. In The Man with the Golden Arm (1955), Sinatra/Frankie Machine aspires to becoming a jazz drummer, although his dream is ultimately crushed when he fails an audition due to his heroin-induced shaking. In Pal Joey (1957), Sinatra/Joey Evans is a small-time nightclub MC and singer, who is forced to prostitute himself, literally, in a failed attempt to open a "real class" nightclub where he might be a star. In The Joker is Wild (1957), Sinatra/Joe E. Lewis

has his first career as a singer ended by gangsters slashing his throat; after years of suffering and failure, he becomes a successful nightclub comedian, although his drinking is portrayed as a serious problem, and the film's conclusion implies that he is alone (his wife has left him) due to his alcoholism. In Some Came Running (1958), Sinatra/Dave Hirsh is a struggling writer, who has had one story published, but who has been unable to finish a manuscript he has been carrying around for years as he drifts from place to place.

Some Came Running is perhaps most explicit in its configuration of its protagonist as a suffering artist who is alienated from society. Upon his discharge from the Army, Sinatra/Dave gets drunk and is put on a bus back to his home town, from which he was exiled as a teenager years before. Awakening from his drunken stupor, Dave is thrown into a state of visible panic as he pats his own body, looking for something, and then grabbing his own crotch. It is revealed that he has hidden his wallet there, but already it has been established that his masculinity may be called into question (the panic suggests he has lost something other than his wallet when he first reaches into his pants). Dave doesn't want to be back in his home town; he resents his older brother, Frank, who effectively raised him and sent Dave out into the world to look after himself at a young age. He meets up with Frank, who is a successful retailer and upstanding citizen; Dave hates Frank all the more for his middle-class morality and his criticisms of Dave's lifestyle, for not having "made" anything of his life. Dave takes up with a local gambler and alcoholic, Bama/Dean Martin, and a "tramp", Ginny/Shirley MacLaine. Most of the film consists of their alcoholic and sexual exploits, as they live a bohemian existence in a middle-American small town in which they are outcasts. Dave meets a female English professor, Gwen French/Martha Hyer, who tries to encourage his writing, but he is more interested in having a sexual relationship with her. The film ends with Ginny's ex-lover killing her in an attempt to shoot Dave. Dave is left alone again, bewildered and bowed by a destiny he feels helpless to change, even though one of



Figure 5.2: Poster, The Joker is Wild (United Artists, 1957)

his stories has been sent by the English professor, after their relationship has failed, to a magazine which has agreed to publish it.

The overarching feeling of aestheticized loneliness in Some Came Running is expressed in the New York Times review of the film: "Frank Sinatra is downright fascinating - or what the youngsters would probably call "cool" - as a lonely and skeptical Army corporal who returns to his home town" (Crowther 1959, 17). Just as Sinatra/Dave's loneliness is re-asserted at the end of the film (Bama/Dean Martin has a terminal illness), in The Joker is Wild, the aloneness of the protagonist is captured in that film's final sequence, in which Sinatra/Joe E. Lewis is seen talking to his reflection in a storefront window on an abandoned city street. The poster for the film (see figure 5.2) plays upon the similarity of the character's and Sinatra's profession and persona (especially the stills that frame the central portrait; they could be from Pal Joey or Sinatra's nightclub act); the tag line, "Suddenly a spotlight turns . . . And in the limelight's glare, the heart of an entertainer is candidly revealed! . . . Frank Sinatra: Now he stands alone . . . the most electric personality of our time slams home his most shocking and realistic performance!", could equally be about Sinatra's Capitol star-image or the character in the film. The conceit of the brightness of the spotlight's glare revealing "too much", penetrating the "heart of the entertainer", mobilizes an idea of interiority in the service of producing a complex and tragic artist; as well, the scrutiny of celebrity may be seen as a form of suffering itself. The line "Frank Sinatra: Now he stands alone" reinforces the potentially-autobiographical nature of the role in its allusion to the imagery of Sinatra as "lonesome on top of the world". The central illustration of the poster, which features Sinatra with head bowed, an "X"-shaped scar on his face (the result, presumably, of the gangster attack), also works with the slippage between star and role, insofar as the "true" Sinatra is popularly believed to be the sad and lonely "Sinatra" of images such as this. The idea of Sinatra as "scarred" in emotional terms is evident in one of the Look pieces: "Sinatra is at his worst when he is

brooding about the women in his life . . . a friend said “Frank’s carrying a lot of scars” (Davidson 1957c, 97); as well, one side of Sinatra’s neck and face had been scarred in a difficult forceps birth, a fact that is repeated in most period biographies, and which is used by Robert Mitchum as an emblem of Sinatra’s rebellious tenacity in the face of adversity: “Here’s a frail, under-sized little fellow with a scarred-up face who isn’t afraid of the whole world” (quoted in “The Kid from Hoboken” 1955, 55).²¹ All of this is underlined by the poster’s claim that a truth about the “heart of an entertainer” will be “candidly” and “realistically” revealed to the audience. Again, there is a potential articulation with post-Romantic ideas of both “art” as non-functional self-expression (no longer tied to social ritual or entertainment), and the “artist” as explorer of the self, which underpin Sinatra’s valourization as autobiographer.²²

However, even a film which is not about an artist, such as The Manchurian Candidate (1962), deploys tropes of suffering, alienation, and loneliness which, as I argued above, may be articulated with popular conceptions of existential angst; these are also conventionally seen as issues which occupy the modernist artist. In this context, in the next chapter I would like to turn to a discussion of a series of performances of one of Sinatra’s Capitol-era signature songs, “One for my Baby (And One More for the Road)”, in which loneliness and suffering may be seen to be articulated with the idea of Sinatra as artist.

²¹The imagery of the scar may also allude to Scarface (1932), an early and influential gangster film based on the life of Chicago gangster Al Capone; The Joker is Wild begins in Chicago, where Joe E. Lewis is scarred by gangsters.

²²The irony here is that a film biography of another star, Joe E. Lewis, may be reconfigured as a vehicle for the articulation of Sinatra and his own autobiography.

Chapter Six: "One For My Baby"

This chapter continues the examination of Sinatra's articulation as legitimized artist working within popular forms. The chapter focuses on the multiple performances, across a range of media, of one of Sinatra's signature songs, "One for my Baby (And One More for the Road)". The chapter consists of two sections; I begin with an analysis of various live, film, and televisual performances of the song, before concluding with an examination of its place on the 1958 LP, Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely.

Articulations of "One For My Baby" I: Live, Film, Television

The production of Sinatra as artist is especially tied to articulations of autobiographical suffering with his singing of torch-like ballads. A letter to the editor of Look magazine in response to its three-part profile of Sinatra in 1957 is explicit in its deployment of Romantic discourses concerning the artist as suffering genius: "My husband and I both enjoy his singing so very much, it seems a shame he can't be as happy as his music makes us . . . We cannot help but pity him for paying the price that people sometimes pay for genius" ("Letters to the Editor" 1957, 14). "One for My Baby (And One More for the Road)" is a song, perhaps more than any other, identified with Sinatra;²³ but is also especially associated with popular conceptions of Sinatra as suffering artist. Its multiple articulations throughout the Capitol period provide opportunities for further tracing out Sinatra's star-image in terms of masculine seriousness and suffering, autobiography and artistry.

As suggested in the discussion of the Look profile quote which describes Sinatra seeking out the company of a bar-owner in the wee small hours to pour "his heart out" (Davidson 1957a, 46), Sinatra's performances of "One for my Baby" feed back into

²³Recall that the song used to introduce Sinatra on the Eddie Cantor Colgate Comedy Hour is Harold Arlen's "One for my Baby".

popular press accounts of Sinatra's life. Although Sinatra first recorded the 1943 Harold Arlen-Johnny Mercer song in 1947 for a Columbia single, the particular identification of Sinatra with "One for my Baby" develops during the Capitol period, for a number of reasons. From 1953 onward, "One for my Baby" operates within the conjuncture of three important departures from the 1947 version: Sinatra's new image after 1952 (which certainly is itself also a product of his articulations of "One for my Baby"); his hiring of pianist Bill Miller in 1951 (who writes a new, piano-only arrangement of "One for my Baby" around 1952-3 [the first recorded performance of this arrangement is May 1953]); this becomes the definitive arrangement of the song into the 1990s); and the increased centrality of "One for my Baby" to not only live performances from 1953 on, but within a range of media (Sinatra performs "One for my Baby" "live" on his radio show, To Be Perfectly Frank in 1955; he performs it in the film Young at Heart and on its soundtrack LP in 1955; he performs it on Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show in the spring of 1958; he records it as the closing song on his fall 1958 LP, Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely; it does not appear on a single during this period).

It is useful to describe the 1947 Columbia single of "One for my Baby", in order to specify the distinctiveness of subsequent renditions. The 1947 version is played at a constant, mid-dance-tempo; there are no rubato or ad lib sections. It begins with a fade-in (relatively rare for the period), in which a "bluesy"-sounding piano is highlighted over a full rhythm section (bass, drums, and a guitar which marks the beat in an especially noticeable way), a small group of winds (saxes, flute, trumpet), and a small string section (two violins and a cello). There is a very brief intro (12 seconds) before Sinatra's vocal begins; occasionally trumpet or sax obbligatos are heard behind Sinatra's singing. A glockenspiel plays several motifs behind the vocal at various moments in the recording. After the vocal has ended, there is a brief outro (4 bars; under 10 seconds), over which Sinatra whistles while the entire piece fades out. Axel

Stordahl's arrangement stays relatively close to the harmonic progression as composed by Arlen, which uses an ostinato between I and V for the non-refrain and non-bridge sections,²⁴ and which is occasionally modulated. The regular, dance tempo of the recording seems to work against a conception of the song as "sad" or "serious". This is partly due to a contemporary perception that the tempi of many 1940s pop recordings tend to display an indifference to lyrical meaning, wherein the demand for a dance tempo appears to overrule what today we might hear as "expressive" elements (Billie Holiday's 1944 Decca recording of "Lover Man" is a good example of how "fast" 1940s slow ballads sound to us today). But even by mid-1950s standards of ballad tempo, the 1947 recording of "One for my Baby" is not slow (ballad tempo is first released from the demands of dancing in the 1950s). Sinatra's voice is light-sounding (unlike the baritone sound he achieves on many of his mid-1940s ballads), and his phrasing is relatively even, with almost no manipulation of tempo or melody. Together, the arrangement, tempo, and singing almost work against an evocation of sadness, to some extent trivializing the lyric, melody, and harmony of the song. Nonetheless, the recording does convey a sense of melancholy, albeit not a tragic or especially passionate unhappiness.²⁵

In 1951, former Red Norvo and Charlie Barnet big band pianist Bill Miller joined Sinatra. Apparently Miller worked out a new arrangement, which departs from Arlen's chord progression and Stordahl's arrangement.²⁶ As noted above, the earliest

²⁴In contemporary terms, we would say that the ostinato is used in the verse sections of the lyric; however, within Tin Pan Alley musical culture, "One for my Baby" would be described as having no verse at all (at this time a verse referred to an entirely different, introductory section of a song, which would frequently be omitted in recordings, in favour of the "core" of the song, which at the time was called the "chorus"). Thus all recordings of "One for my Baby" contain only the chorus.

²⁵Within Western popular music culture, slow songs are, very generally speaking, more likely to be viewed as "serious" or "artistic", possibly because of the historical association of slow tempi with lyrics which explore suffering and sadness, and which operate within Romantic conceptions of "poetry" and tragedy. By the same token, there are conventions which associate "happiness" with faster or "brighter" tempi.

²⁶While Arlen's chord progression is based on an I-V ostinato, Miller re-harmonizes the progression, producing loops of Imaj7-IIIm7-Imaj7-IVm7 by adding a major 7th to

document of the new arrangement comes from a bootleg recording of a live performance in Blackpool, England, in May 1953. Sinatra introduces "One for my Baby" with a monologue that attempts to set a scene for the performance, something he would do on virtually all subsequent performances of the song; the consistent prefacing of "One for my Baby" with a discussion of its merits and meanings distinguishes the song from others in Sinatra's repertoire, and contributes to its popular association with the Capitol-era Sinatra. The May 1953 monologue begins by explicitly calling attention to the "unusual" quality of the song and its performance: "Let's do something unusual for you . . . as a matter of fact, I feel like smoking a cigarette anyway [Miller starts playing piano at this point] . . . Ladies and gentleman, you'll envision yourselves as a composite picture of one bartender, running a small pub and getting ready to close up . . . it's in the wee hours of the morning and you're ready to lock it up, and in comes a young man . . . who is obviously suffering from affairs of the heart . . . he's looking a little down at the chin and he's looking for someone to talk to . . . and you being the only one available, you're it. This is a song written by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen, and it's a great song, I feel that way, anyway. It's called "One for my Baby (And One More for the Road)""'. Miller's new piano introduction (which will be heard on all subsequent Sinatra performances of the song) with its "honky-tonk" blues-like riff is heard at this point, and the tempo of the performance has slowed somewhat from the 1947 recording. Sinatra's voice, however, is much darker, deeper, and rougher than in 1947.

Note also the reference to the "wee hours of the morning" in the Blackpool monologue; In the Wee Small Hours (1955) hasn't yet been recorded, but the sense that "One for my Baby" is linked to the complex of meanings associated with the "night" is explicit even in 1953 (it is noteworthy that Sinatra doesn't include "One for my Baby"

the I and substituting minor 7ths for the V. Chord substitution is a fundamental component of jazz harmonic practices, and Miller's piano playing on "One for my Baby" alternates between "blues" (the intro and outro "honky tonk" riff) and "jazz" (the chording behind the vocal) connotations.

on In the Wee Small Hours, but "saves" it for Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely [1958], discussed below).

Sinatra's monologue is both a dramatic device (as he puts it himself - "I feel like smoking a cigarette anyway" - his lighting of a cigarette is motivated by the need for a stage prop for the performance of "One for my Baby"; see the discussion of his television performance of the song below) and a form of stage direction, wherein he seeks to involve the audience as a character in his performance. The instruction to the audience that it should imagine itself not only in a deserted barroom but as a "composite picture of one bartender" makes explicit a conception of live music performance as dramaturgical exchange between performer and audience. The monologue seeks to produce a transformation of time ("wee hours") and space (small, deserted pub), transporting the audience into another reality (and identity, in the form of the composite bartender); the irony here is that the suspension of disbelief called for will then work in conjunction with the "realism" of Sinatra's autobiographical performance to realize an artistic "truth".

A Billboard review of a contemporaneous performance (at the Riviera, September 1953) highlighted the dramatic nature of Sinatra's nightclub act: "There's little doubt that Sinatra is a performer and an actor besides being a singer . . ." (Smith 1953, 12). There is also a bootleg recording of Sinatra's performance at the Riviera nightclub on September 15th, 1953 (this is the stand, if not the very show, discussed in a number of articles on Sinatra carrying a torch for Ava Gardner discussed above). Sinatra's remarks before he performs "One for my Baby" at this show are relevant; Sinatra here draws on the rough and tumble imagery of the "saloon" in American popular consciousness. Though it is an extremely poor quality recording, Miller vamps for 66 seconds under Sinatra's monologue, in which he announces:

It comes as a great pleasure for me, ladies and gentlemen . . . a fine saloon song I would like to sing for you . . . see the way I figure it, even if this place looks a

little fancy, it's a saloon. Any place where they peddle booze it's a saloon . . . I use that word affectionately - I've had some of the greatest moments of my life in saloons, of one kind or another. This is a tune we've been doing here at the Riviera . . . it tells its own story. I just really make the statement that it was written by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen. Fred Astaire picked it some years ago . . . it took a long time for this song to catch on, but everybody certainly got hip - they couldn't avoid it.

Sinatra then sings "One for my Baby", with the Bill Miller piano arrangement and the slower tempo. Upon finishing the song, Sinatra introduces a member of the audience: "Ladies and gentlemen: Mr. Harold Arlen, sitting right over here . . . Hal . . . Put a light on him, Jimmy . . . Why can't you write a song like "Doggie in the Window"? — I can bark! . . . Great songwriter, great composer". The audience laughs at Sinatra's sarcastic critique of the juvenility of contemporary Hit Parade values; it is also implied that Arlen's quality is out of (commercial) fashion ("Why can't you write a song like . . ."). At the Riviera, Sinatra's comments around "One for my Baby" articulate it with conceptions of adult popular music as classic and timeless ("took a long time for this song to catch on"), as distinctive and "cool" ("everybody certainly got hip"), and perhaps most importantly, as a means of exploring serious subjects through image and narrative (imagining the saloon, "it tells its own story") when read through the autobiography of a star such as Sinatra ("I've had some of the greatest moments of my life in saloons").

The deepening and darkening of Sinatra's voice from the 1940s to the 1950s is largely a function of physical aging and wear and tear; together with the new sense of "adulthood" about Sinatra after 1952, it contributes to articulations of Sinatra as world-weary, "been through the mill" ("Frankie Plays It Tough!" 1954, 38) survivor. The fact that his place of employment (nightclubs) was also a place of drinking, along with his notorious penchant for all-night partying, and his fondness for

whisky, encourages an association between Sinatra and alcohol. In 1957, Look linked his drinking to suffering, to drowning one's sorrows, and then added, as noted above, that his "work" was a similar source of escape from pain: "In recent years, as Sinatra's star continues to rise, there have been more and more fights, blowups, walkouts on contracts. He has become increasingly moody. At parties now, he often sits in a corner, staring off into space, and doesn't speak to anyone for hours. He is drinking heavily for the first time in his life . . . Sinatra today is trying to lose himself in his work" (Davidson 1957a, 48). The intermingling of Sinatra's life and art (losing himself in drink and work) echoes the blurring of his places of leisure and work (nightclubs); when seen in conjunction with Sinatra's explicit valorization of "saloon" songs like "One for my Baby" and "Angel Eyes" (whose opening line is "Hey, drink up, all you people"), it becomes clear that the adult pleasure of alcohol to some extent underpins the Capitol Sinatra (Sinatra would even portray a nightclub performer who becomes an alcoholic in The Joker is Wild, 1957).

The lyric of "One for my Baby" refers to drowning one's sorrows in alcohol ("This torch that I've found/It's got to be drowned/Or it soon might explode"), and the monologue that introduces the song at a live performance in Seattle in 1957 describes it as a song that "you go and weep in your wine" to. Here Sinatra articulates alcohol, aging, saloon songs, seriousness, and generational taste shifts:

You know ladies and gentleman, I've been making some jokes about . . . some alcoholic jokes and all that type jazz, but I would like to say something serious about being a frequenter of saloons . . . I'm 41 years old and I've noticed that through the past twenty years, twenty five years, about every new generation there comes along a saloon song, a definite song that you go and weep in your wine . . . and I think on this particular day the best song, that typifies this kind of a . . . trap, is a song that was written by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen for a picture

some years ago,²⁷ and I'd like to do it for you now. This simply tells the story of a young man who's been boozing it up pretty good all night and it's obvious that he's got a lot of problems . . . it's all summed up in one word: a broad. Now you know that it's pretty difficult when you got these kinds of problems . . . now let's face it - wars you can win! Now this is some different kind of thing . . . oh, it's moider, doc, I tell ya²⁸ . . . shake hands with the president of the club.

The reference to saying "something serious", and the very fact that "One for my Baby", unlike the majority of Sinatra's live repertoire, is consistently marked out from the other songs through the mechanism of the monologue, points to an articulation of Sinatra's "One for my Baby" as something "more" than a popular song. The seriousness of alcoholism, of having "problems", is also tied to the seriousness of an older ("I'm 41 years old") Sinatra singing his own painful ("it's moider, doc"), autobiography (the reference to "shake hands with the president of the club" makes it clear that Sinatra is singing about himself, despite the reference to "a young man").

At this point in the Seattle monologue, the music starts, and Bill Miller's solo piano produces the impression of "saloon" music (partly through the use of pentatonicism and semi-tone grace notes; I discuss this further below). Sinatra continues to speak, over the music: "About closing time, and he comes into the bar . . . you'll assume the positions of the bartender and hear his tale". Sinatra then hits his hand against the microphone, to replicate calling for service by tapping on a bar, and begins to sing "One for my Baby", the first line of which ("It's a quarter to three/There's no one in the place 'cept you and me") gets a big round of applause, indicating the audience recognizes the song, despite the fact that Sinatra has yet to record

²⁷In *The Sky's the Limit* (1943), Fred Astaire sings and dances to an uptempo "One for my Baby". In 1945, Lena Horne had a minor hit with a big band version of the song.

²⁸"Moider" here means "murder", but pronounced in a Brooklyn or New Jersey, working-class accent. The reference is likely to a Warner Brothers gangster or Dead End kids film.

it for Capitol.²⁹ It also points out the irony of the contrast between the suspension of disbelief in the imagined intimacy of "no one in the place 'cept you and me" (referring to an almost empty saloon), and the huge space of the Seattle Civic Auditorium, which is instantly inscribed in the sound of the applause.

As noted above, Sinatra performed "One for my Baby" on his transcribed NBC radio show, with Bill Miller at the piano, sometime in 1955; however, I was unable to locate a recording of this performance. However, Sinatra's performance of the song that year in Young at Heart offers another articulation of Sinatra as suffering artist. In the film, Sinatra plays Barney Sloan, a stoic, apathetic, chain-smoking proto-punk, whose attitude is one of nihilism and romantic cynicism. He is a talented musician who just can't get the lucky break he needs, because, as he puts it, "the Fates" conspire against him. He is hired by a successful songwriter, played by Gig Young, to orchestrate a piece. Sinatra/Sloan falls in love with Gig Young's fiancée, played by Doris Day, who eventually leaves Young for Sinatra/Sloan. They elope, and abandon her small-town home for the big city, where Sinatra/Sloan tries to "make it" as a songwriter. However, he is unsuccessful, and, living in a cheap apartment, becomes increasingly morose and depressed. Short of cash, Sinatra/Sloan and his wife fight over her reluctance to pawn a bracelet given to her by her first fiancé. Sinatra/Sloan, angry and jealous, leaves their small apartment, and walks off wearing his Capitol-era uniform of hat, dark suit, tie and raincoat. He goes to his job at "Joe's" bar-restaurant (recall that the bartender's name in "One for my Baby" is "Joe"), where he supports himself by playing piano and singing while customers eat, drink and talk.

²⁹The Young at Heart soundtrack version was on Columbia, and was generally seen as a Doris Day album, as she sang 6 songs to Sinatra's 2 (Joel Whitburn's Top Pop Lps, 1955-85 lists it under Day's name). It reached #15 on the Billboard LP chart in 1955. I was unable to locate this album, or to assess its sales, although my sense is that it was not a big seller. I have never come across a discussion of or even a reference to Sinatra's performance of "One for my Baby" on this album, which suggests its exposure was probably limited.

The piano is elevated above the customers, and behind Sinatra/Sloan, part of the bar is visible, with rows of liquor bottles forming a backdrop. The elevation of Sinatra/Sloan over the customers in the long shots, and the total absence of customers in the close-ups reinforce the intimate nature of the lyric of "One for my Baby", despite the fact that it is diegetically being performed within a busy restaurant in the evening (it is clearly not the wee small hours). Mid-way through the arrangement (which uses Bill Miller's piano-playing, although Sinatra/Sloan is represented as accompanying himself onscreen), an extra-diegetic string section comes in, and this also further removes Sinatra/Sloan's performance from the immediate diegetic context. Sinatra/Sloan either looks down at the piano keys, or actually closes his eyes, throughout most of the sequence, and this underlines the true diegetic motivation of the performance: rather than simply having to report to work, Sinatra/Sloan has run out on his wife as a result of his pessimistic belief that she is still in love with her former fiancée, and has chosen to sing "One for my Baby" to himself as a kind of therapeutic performance.

The progression of shots and sound editing across the sequence moves the performance toward a sense of interiority; Sinatra/Sloan is singing to console himself, to express an inner truth for its own sake, not to entertain the audience to which he is largely oblivious (and which is largely oblivious to him; there is a sense of "lonely in the middle of a crowd" to the scene). The sequence begins with a long shot of the restaurant-bar, with the Bill Miller piano intro and crowd noise audible (especially a laughing, boisterous table in the foreground), but without a visible diegetic source. The camera slowly pans left, as Sinatra/Sloan begins to sing, toward the bar and the elevated piano at which the singer is seen from one side (in fact, the vocal begins before its source is visible, with the physical presence of Sinatra/Sloan revealed only on the word "me" at the conclusion of the song's opening line: "It's a quarter to three/There's no one in the place except you and me"). There is a cut to a medium shot of Sinatra/Sloan at the

elevated piano for the lyric line "We're drinking my friend/To the end/Of a brief episode/So make it one for my baby/And one more for the road". With this edit, the level of the crowd noise, which at times had almost drowned out the music, drops, and the crowd itself is now out of the frame (although a lone bartender serving a single customer is visible behind the piano, and waiters cross the foreground at points). At the end of the first refrain line just cited, there is a further cut to a medium shot of Sinatra/Sloan from the side, with only a portion of the piano visible, the liquor bottles prominent in the background, and no one else seen onscreen. When Sinatra/Sloan begins to sing the second section of the song in this shot ("I got the routine/So put another nickel/In the machine/I'm feeling so sad/Can't you make the music/Easy and sad"), the crowd noise drops out completely, and the orchestral strings begin to be noticeable. At this time, wisps of cigarette smoke begin to drift in from left offscreen, contributing to the increasingly wistful mise-en-scene.

Throughout these shots, Sinatra/Sloan's body movements (shoulders moving up and down with the piano's rhythm, head moving dreamily back and forth) work with his closed or averted eyes to suggest an enrapturement in the melancholy mood, a transportation into the music. After the second refrain line is sung ("I could tell you a lot/But you've got to be/True to your code/Make it one for my baby/And one more for the road"), the camera cuts to the tightest shot of the sequence, with the singer in a now straight-on, head and shoulders composition, ashtray and cigarette on top of the piano lid in the foreground,³⁰ and the liquor bottles behind him. This cut to the first non-side shot of the sequence is aligned with the song's structural shift into a completely new section, the bridge or middle-eight of the song. This section of the lyric is most explicit, when articulated with Sinatra's Capitol star-image, about claims to artistry: "You'd never know it/But buddy I'm a kind of poet/And I've got a lot of things to say/And when

³⁰This may be an allusion to Ida Lupino's performance as a torch-song singing piano player in *Road House* (1948), where her repeated performances of "One for my Baby" are marked by the increasing number of cigarette burns in her ashtray-free piano top.

I'm gloomy/You simply gotta listen to me/'Til it's all talked away". As in the Ulanov review of In the Wee Small Hours discussed above, the invocation of the "poet" serves as an appeal to legitimacy conceived as seriousness, whereby the popular singer (or barfly) may be "elevated" to the status of artist.

The shift in camera position and song structure is accompanied by a shift in Sinatra/Sloan's performance; during the just cited lines, the singer looks up from the piano far more regularly and frequently than in earlier sections, at times virtually looking straight into the camera. While it has been argued that filmic musical performance frequently breaks from narrative to move into forms of direct address to the cinematic audience, here a distinction is being set up within a single musical performance. The shift in the lyric, from the telling of a story ("I got a little story you ought to hear") to a direct command that the addressee listen to the self-described "poet" ("You simply gotta listen to me") implies that the compulsive communication of an artistic truth is at issue; the performer must tell the story, as a form of therapy ("'Til it's all talked away"). At this point, it is not simply a structural feature of musical performance within narrative cinema which determines the significance of the performed bridge of "One for my Baby"; it is its conjuncture with the lyric, music, and importantly, the production of Sinatra as suffering autobiographer, which makes possible a popular conception of this performance as a serious artistic statement.

The sequence ends when, at the beginning of the final section of the song ("Well, that's how it goes/And Joe I know you're getting anxious to close"), the singer does a double take, acknowledging a change in the circumstances, looking up at the door of the establishment, where the singer's wife (Doris Day) has entered. This motivates the first cut-away from Sinatra/Sloan in the sequence, and also the return of the diegetic crowd sounds on the soundtrack. As Sinatra/Sloan completes the song, he exchanges romantic glances with his wife, and the return to the external, "unartistic", social world of the diegesis is marked by a return to the earlier side-view, medium shot of the

singer at the piano. Sinatra/Sloan thus moves out of an interiority conceived as artistry, and the couple are reconciled, although tragedy still awaits (as we have seen, the film ends after a suicide attempt, with Sinatra/Sloan in bandages).³¹

Similarly, and even more explicitly, Sinatra's performance of "One for my Baby" on his ABC television program, Chesterfield Presents The Frank Sinatra Show (7 March, 1958), reconceives popular singing in terms of serious art. This performance of "One for My Baby" takes place on a minimalist, highly theatrical set, with much of the backdrop only "suggested": a skeletal, empty barroom is evoked through the reversed letters of "BAR", in white, hanging in mid-air as if lettered on a nonexistent window seen from the inside. The Capitol-era icon of the lit lamppost is present, as several recede in the background. Overall, the lighting is extremely selective, producing a great number of shadows and clearly suggestive of a gloomy, late-night scene. Other than the lampposts, the only "realistic" part of the set is a bar, with a bartender standing behind it, and glasses and silhouetted bottles present. The scene is shot from behind the bar, suggesting the bartender's point of view (recall the instruction for the audience to assume the role of the bartender in some of the live performance monologues).

Sinatra walks in as the piano-only intro plays. He is wearing a raincoat and fedora, and sits down at the bar, facing the camera at a slight angle. The bartender is cleaning a cocktail glass as Sinatra sits down. The studio audience applauds after first line, "It's a quarter to three", indicating a familiarity with the song (even though the definitive LP version of the song would not be available until the release of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely five months later). Sinatra gestures to the bartender, who pours him a shot of whiskey. Sinatra, while singing, puts a cigarette in his mouth and lights a match. However, he pauses, apparently in reflection, staring at the match flame for some time, and then lights the cigarette. Instead of putting out the match, he pauses

³¹It is interesting to note that Sinatra/Sloan is not "punished" for his non-conformity and failures, unlike John Garfield, whose character dies at the end of Four Daughters (1938), of which Young At Heart is a remake.

until he can synchronize the extinguishing of the flame with his singing of the end of the refrain, "And one more for the road". This use of a prop to illustrate a lyrical point (the dying flame parallels the end of the affair that motivates the lyric) also calls to mind the "old flame" and the carrying of a torch (reinforced by the lampposts visible in the background).

After Sinatra lights the cigarette, the camera shifts to a straight on, closer shot of his head and torso for the next section of the song; with the composition now consisting of the lampposts receding in the background and a liquor bottle prominent in the near foreground, Sinatra is effectively caught in an existential dilemma between two sources of pain and two kinds of suffering, the torch and the booze.³² Sinatra touches his upper lip and then rubs his mouth and chin with his hand, suggesting thought, distraction, worry. Sinatra's clothing (trenchcoat and fedora) and the way he touches his lips with his fingers while he sings, suggest the image and acting style of Humphrey Bogart in the 1940s. Perhaps like Bogart, Sinatra too is a world-weary anti-hero holding on to a doomed romance (recall also the importance of saloons and piano players – Dooley Wilson and Hoagy Carmichael, respectively – to two of Bogart's most popular films, Casablanca [1942] and To Have and Have Not [1944]; Sinatra's television performance is reminiscent of the sequence in Casablanca in which Bogart, trying to drown his sorrows over an old flame, demands that Dooley Wilson play piano for him). A November 1957 review of Sinatra's TV show in the New Republic draws attention to the similarity between Sinatra and Bogart's star-images: "[Sinatra's] acting and singing seems to speak intimately of a special view of life – life lived dangerously but honorably. In the romantic love songs he somehow manages to convert to something worthwhile, Sinatra achieves the same kind of dignity that French critics used to find in the work of Humphrey Bogart" (Fulford 1957, 22). Note how differential

³²The Young at Heart sequence described above similarly positions Sinatra/Sloan between the background liquor bottles and the foreground "torch" (the lit cigarette in the ashtray) during the bridge of the song.

discourses of artistic validity are deployed; it is assumed that "romantic love songs" are generally worthless, except when transformed through the artistry of Sinatra's interpretive "dignity", which is in turn legitimized by reference to cinema and "French critics". It is also important to recall the reference to honour in the lyric of "One for my Baby", in which the singer seeks the therapeutic release of confession but also maintains the dignity of chivalry (despite the implication that the "baby" has acted badly): "I could tell you a lot/But you've got to be/True to your code".³³

As well, the chiaroscuro effects of the impressionistic lighting are reminiscent of film noir, a cycle of films in which Bogart played an important part. Shadows are everywhere in the barroom set, and are especially noticeable on Sinatra's raincoat, against which they function as a surrogate rain of dark and painful memories and emotions. Sinatra tilts his fedora back on his head ("as if relieving pressure from the hat band") at the line "And when I'm gloomy", a gesture which commonly signals a world-weary resignation. He then rubs his forehead after the line "Until it's talked away", and closes his eyes and leans his head back in another gesture suggesting fatigue. At the song's conclusion, instead of singing "And one more for the road/The long, long road" as in the majority of his live performances, Sinatra repeats "the long, the long, long . . ." as he walks out of the bar, while the credits to the television program roll. Usually Sinatra's television show would end with some sort of goodnight, or the singing of his 1940s radio theme, "Put Your Dreams Away (For Another Day)", which functioned as a regular marker of closure. Instead, implicit in the appearance of the credits as Sinatra walks away is the idea that Sinatra has already made his "statement" with his singing, and nothing more is necessary; after the intensity of such a performance, mere words or another song would be insufficient or anti-climactic. This

³³It is also noteworthy that while some versions of the song refer to "a gentleman's code" (including Harold Arlen's own 1955 Capitol recording), Sinatra's version of the lyric, in conjunction with his star-image, may be seen to effect a modification of the song's moral universe, from what David Reisman might see as the "outer-direction" of the "gentleman's code", to the "inner-direction" of the truly autonomous individual who remains true to his own code.

ending also articulates the conception of Sinatra as artist with an insinuation that his singing and living are so intertwined that he might actually be too drained by the autobiographical performance to do anything other than walk away into the night.

In fact, the ending of the debut episode of his 1957-58 ABC television program (18 October, 1957) draws on Sinatra's lonely and world-weary image in a similar fashion. The program ends with Sinatra singing a section of "Put Your Dreams Away (For Another Day)" while he puts on his hat and raincoat backstage, and then exits. After a final commercial break, the credits roll over an overhead long shot of Sinatra in fedora and raincoat, walking away from the camera, down a rain-slicked, nighttime street, with lampposts on either side, until he becomes so small as to effectively disappear down the alley formed by two parallel buildings. This scene is extremely reminiscent of the cover of In the Wee Small Hours, and clearly draws upon a Sinatra iconography that was by 1957 well-established. The raincoat, the wet street, and the lampposts offer points of articulation with discourses that produce Sinatra as "lonesome on top of the world". Despite starring in his own network television program (for which, it was widely reported at the time, he was paid an astonishing \$3,000,000 per season), Sinatra walks away from the studio alone; the contrast between the flame of the torch carried by Sinatra, and the rain of sadness, against which the raincoat offers no protection, produces a tension (desire versus despair) which results in a loneliness that verges on existential crisis.

The raincoat as icon of an overwhelming aloneness, worn as a reminder of emotional storms, appears the cover of his 1959 LP, No One Cares (see figure 6.1). Released almost a year after the 1958 television performance of "One for my Baby", the cover photograph evokes the TV performance: Sinatra, wearing raincoat and hat, sits at a bar, head propped up by one hand holding a cigarette, looking down into a glass of whiskey held by the other hand, oblivious to the groups of happy people who stand in the shadows behind him. Again, Sinatra is imagined to be lonely in the middle of a crowd;

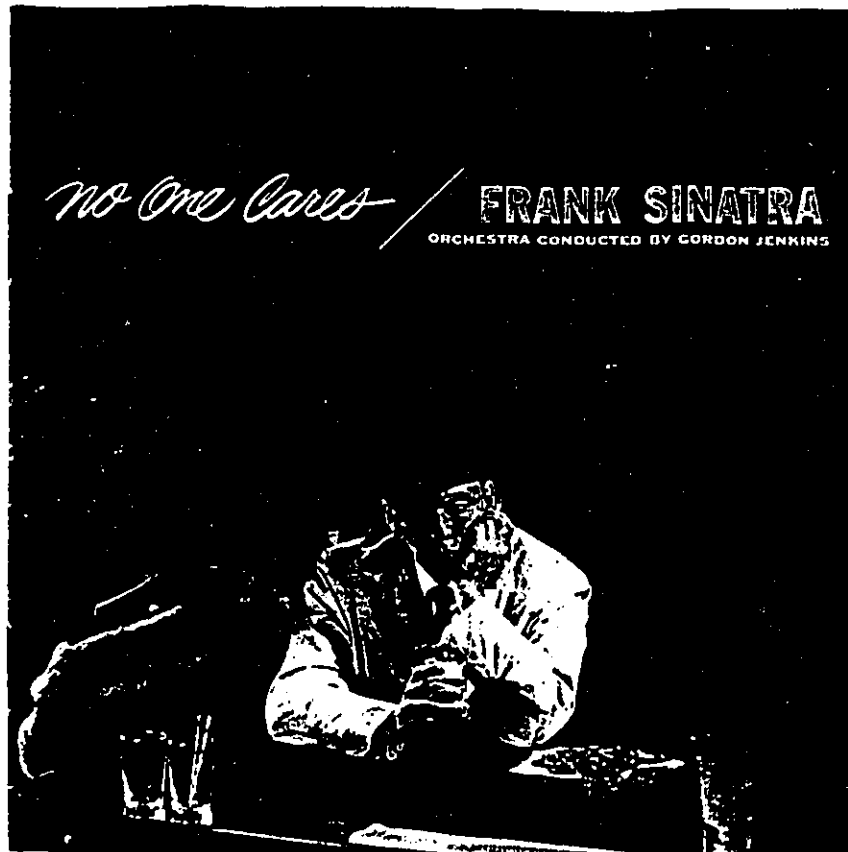


Figure 6.1: Front Cover, No One Cares (Capitol, 1959)



Figure 6.2: Front Cover, Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely (Capitol, 1958)

the wearing of the raincoat indoors marks him out from the crowd, and suggests not only the numbed indifference of depression, but importantly, a "tender" vulnerability to forces beyond his control. On the back cover, the album is sub-titled "Frank Sinatra sings ballads in a lonely mood . . ."; the LP contains "sad" ballads, the lyrics of two of which ("Stormy Weather" and "Here's that Rainy Day") use rain as a structuring metaphor for loneliness and loss.³⁴ Here it is useful to recall the discussion of Ralph Gleason's liner notes for the LP, which claim Sinatra as artist, describing him as "an interpreter who can be . . . man enough to cry a little and with the tears gain dignity". A Capitol Music Views ad for the LP is captioned "even lonelier than "Wee Small Hours"" (August 1959 n. pag.), using the explicit inter-textual link between the themes and moods of the two albums as a marketing device, but also simultaneously drawing upon and contributing to the construction of Sinatra's work as an oeuvre with thematic consistencies from text to text.

Articulations of "One For My Baby" II: Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely

No convention of the gangster film is more strongly established than this: it is dangerous to be alone. And yet the very conditions of success make it impossible not to be alone, for success is always the establishment of individual pre-eminence that must be imposed on others, in whom it automatically arouses hatred; the successful man is an outlaw

- Robert Warshow, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero" (1948)³⁵

"One for my Baby" does not appear on No One Cares; it is featured as the closing track on an album released several months after the television performance discussed above. I would like to conclude this chapter with a discussion of what is the arguably the

³⁴Sandwiched between these two songs is a third, "Where Do You Go", whose lyric is based around rain as a metaphor for loss and sadness: "Where do you go/When it rains".

³⁵Warshow 1964 [1948], 88.



Figure 6.3: Back Cover, Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely (Capitol, 1958)

widest-circulated rendition of "One for my Baby", that found on the 1958 LP Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely (it was #1 on the Billboard "Bestselling Pop LPs" chart for 5 out of the 120 weeks it appeared on the chart, and was certified "Gold" by the Recording Industry Association of America in 1962).³⁶

Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely is a "theme" album explicitly constructed around the idea of loneliness, with, as I shall argue, an alcoholic subtext. Although the raincoat does not appear in the album artwork, the back cover features a line drawing of a man sitting alone on a park bench, with a lamppost towering over him (see figure 6.3). The iconography of the lamppost signals a thematic continuity with certain other Sinatra-authored productions (a continuity that simultaneously constructs Sinatra as author and artist). As in the advertisement linking No One Cares to In the Wee Small Hours, the appearance of the lamppost on the back cover of a Frank Sinatra torch-ballad album with the word "lonely" in its title contributes to a conception of the album as an instantiation of one strand of a coherent oeuvre, whose consistent thematic is a melancholy obsession with romantic loneliness conceived in pop-existential terms. The image of the man sitting on a park bench in the back cover illustration is another part of this iconography; the park as a place of loneliness in the iconography of the Capitol Sinatra is seen in a 1958 guest appearance on Dean Martin's Club Oasis show (1 February, NBC), in which Sinatra sings "Last Night When We Were Young" (from In the Wee Small Hours), in a snow-filled and deserted park. The park (and park bench) is

³⁶According to White (1990, viii), prior to 1975 a "Gold" album meant that the LP achieved at least \$1,000,000 in manufacturer wholesale sales. White claims that this figure represented one-third the retail list price. Thus, with a list price of U.S.\$3.98 for a monophonic version of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely, the album probably sold at least 750,000 copies between September 1958 (its release date) and June of 1962 (when it was certified "Gold"). However, stereophonic versions of the LP were sold at a higher list price (U.S.\$4.98), thus possibly reducing the actual number of copies sold. Assessing actual numbers of records sold is a notoriously slippery business, partly due to a combination of record company self-promotion and accounting secrecy. Regardless, it is safe to say that "One for my Baby" was potentially exposed to over half a million people (at least) on Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely.

a place of lovers as well as hobos, bums, and alcoholics, a public space where the rules of society can be temporarily suspended. Sitting on a park bench among the bare trees of November also becomes a minor trope in the American cinema of the 1960s for representing the middle-aged, lonely male's reflection on the meaning of the rat race, a failing marriage, or a lost love. Thus the back cover illustration for Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely can be seen as a representation of a romanticized despair, in which the drawing's use of perspective results in the lamppost-as-torch dominating and dwarfing the man alone on the park bench.

The front cover of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely is even more precise in its articulation of romantic despair (see figure 6.2). It features a painting of Sinatra in clown make-up, his head emerging from a cover which is completely black, apart from a vertical line of multi-coloured diamonds which runs down the left side of the cover. Sinatra's clown make-up consists of an overall, gray-tinged foundation, with a red nose and lips, and a pink vertical line running from above his eyebrow to below his eye. The overall gray tinge of the face is likely a representation of the white greasepaint associated with clowns, but painted in a light which results in a gray-silver colour. Sinatra's hair is also stylized, with a highly-defined hairline including a widow's peak. Sinatra appears to be looking up at something beyond the frame of the cover (his facial expression may be connotatively associated with hopeless supplication) . Only half of his face is visible, with the other half hidden in darkness. This is an extremely unconventional cover for the period. Very few 1950s LPs feature predominantly black covers; as well, the painting of Sinatra as clown merited comment from a High Fidelity reviewer, who praised the music within, and noted that "Even the grim cover art will not deter the ardent Sinatra fan from acquiring this excellent record" (Rev. of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely 1958, 78). The distinctiveness of the cover also led to its winning the 1958 Grammy for Best Album Cover Design.

The cover of the album clearly positions Sinatra as a kind of romantic fool; the pink vertical line under Sinatra's eye suggests a tear falling. The blackness of the cover, and the fact that half of his face is hidden, underline a sense of despair and loneliness, as well as producing an illusion of depth, wherein the image of Sinatra as crying clown may be only half the story; there is likely an even darker, more tragic side hidden under the "grim" greasepaint. The year before the release of the LP, Sinatra had portrayed a clown in The Joker is Wild, in the segment of the film which dealt with Joe E. Lewis's life working as a burlesque-house stooge (after his throat was cut and his singing career ended). Apart from the silent suffering seen in this sequence (described in chapter four), it is noteworthy that this period of Lewis's life is shown to be the period in which he starts drinking heavily (recall that the film ends with Sinatra/Lewis admitting that he is an alcoholic). In combination with the "saloon" songs about drinking contained on Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely (discussed below), the inter-textual reference to The Joker is Wild contributes to a reading of the redness of Sinatra's nose on the cover (which is not the red "bulb" of contemporary clowns) as the red nose of the barfly and the drunk.

Perhaps the most obvious inter-textual reference, however, is to Canio, the tragic clown of Leoncavallo's turn-of-the-century opera I Pagliacci. An aria from the opera, "Vesti la Giubba" ("On with the Show"), is one of the most widely-known operatic pieces. In a 1907 recording of the aria, which is one of the best-selling "classical" records of all time, another star singer of Italian descent, Enrico Caruso, expresses a stoic attitude to romantic loss in terms of the imagery of the crying clown pretending to laugh. Six decades later, it is also the source of the imagery found within Smokey Robinson and the Miracles hit recording of "The Tears of Clown" (Motown, 1967; #1, 1970), which contains the line "Just like Pagliacci did/I try to keep my sadness hidden". Thus the image of Canio is well-known enough to resonate with period

audiences for Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely as a legitimized, art music expression of romantic pain.

The “high” cultural resonance of the cover is more subtly underlined by the obviousness of its status as a “painting”. While a large proportion of LP covers in the 1950s featured painted artwork, it is the visibility of the canvas on the cover of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely which distinguishes it from other popular albums. The texture of canvas is an integral part of the cover design, as it contributes to the textures of Sinatra’s skin and the vertical line of diamonds. Thus the cover isn’t simply a representation of Frank Sinatra as a clown; the cover calls attention to itself as a work of art (the painter’s signature is clearly visible, in letters almost as big as the name of the album’s arranger and conductor, Nelson Riddle). The “painterliness” of the cover and the multi-coloured diamonds on the left side may also signal an allusion to the work of a Modernist painter who was popularly invoked as the greatest “genius” of 20th-century art during the period, Pablo Picasso. A phase of Picasso’s career produced a number of paintings which featured clowns or harlequins as their subject matter. The multi-coloured diamonds that form the vertical pattern on the left side of the cover recall a similar pattern on the costume of the harlequin, seen particularly in Picasso’s Harlequins (1915), which features a series of multi-coloured diamonds running vertically on a canvas on an easel (they are also evident on Three Musicians, 1921).³⁷

The album cover’s “high-art” references to opera and to the paradigmatic Modernist artist are reinforced by the insistent allusions to symphonic art music traditions in Nelson Riddle’s orchestrations on the LP. While the dominant style of string section arranging in the adult popular music culture of the post-war period is primarily derived from art music traditions, it tends to emphasize the “lush” plenitude of musical Romanticism. On Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely, however, Riddle’s arrangements allude in a number of places to two important Modernists of the art music

³⁷It is possible that the diamond shapes on the cover allude as well to Cubism, with which Picasso was also closely associated.

tradition, Igor Stravinsky and Claude Debussy. On "It's a Lonesome Old Town", a 1930 song which served as the Ben Bernie Orchestra's radio theme throughout the 1930s, Riddle's arrangement supports Sinatra's vocal with a Modernist-associated dissonance in the string section (violin sections simultaneously playing two notes a single tone apart), as well as foregrounding contrasting instrumental colours (oboe/bassoon, french horn) in a fashion associated with musical Modernism; effectively Riddle pastiches Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps (1913). On a 1937 Tin Pan Alley standard, "Gone with the Wind", Riddle's orchestration of the introductory passages deploys Impressionistic "word painting" (the musical representation of non-musical concepts or ideas) in the evocation of a pastoral breeze (the "wind" of the song's title); Riddle here pastiches Claude Debussy, especially Prelude à l'Après-midi d'une Faune (1894) and a flute piece entitled "Syrinx". Riddle's arrangement of the title track, "Only the Lonely", uses string colours and piano stylings which suggest an austere and "semi-classical" sensibility (heard especially in the Chopin-esque phrasing of the piano), rather than the reassuring cushion of most period adult pop string arrangements.

Just as the clown on the album cover is simultaneously a popular circus performer and a symbol of elite art, the use of Modernist orchestrational techniques to arrange Tin Pan Alley pop songs from the 1930s in the album suggests that a dialectic of "high" and "low" may be articulated with the album as a whole; here, I am including the star-image of Sinatra as part of this process, for Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely is a particularly clear example of Sinatra's articulation as serious artist working within a popular form.

Sinatra's close association with loneliness as a theme to which he consistently returned is part of his construction as a serious artist, and also served to contextualize conceptions of his significance. Writing two years after the release of the LP, Nat

Hentoff sees loneliness as fundamental to Sinatra's artistry, tying his appeal to an almost obsessive return to regret, loss, and pain in his work:

Urban sophisticates are drawn by the show business argot he inserts into songs and by the tart regret with which he evokes past mistakes as well as pleasures that can never again be as freshly savored. Romantics of any age identify with the aching loneliness with which he can fill a ballad of lost love. And Sinatra is indeed one of the loneliest of men. He finds it difficult to sleep, often unbearable to be alone. And he is constantly returning to the theme of aloneness (Hentoff 1960, 31).

Thus loneliness is seen as a condition of Sinatra's life, and as his metier; his "constantly returning" to a particular thematic contributes to his articulation as author, as "more" than an entertainer. In the Playboy profile of Sinatra published at the same moment that Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely was hitting the top of the Billboard album charts, the seriousness associated with this loneliness is articulated as an existential struggle against suicide; describing the alignments between Sinatra and his film roles, the article notes that Maggio had died ". . . still loveless and searching, bravely making the best of a sad life. Again, fact and fiction were in mesh. Sinatra has had his bouts with the sleeping pills and the cut wrist. Death is on his mind, but he goes indomitably on. Indeed, he goes cockily on" (Reisner 1958, 66). The perception of Sinatra's seriousness is evident in the assertion "death is on his mind", and in his "cocky" assertion of life in the face of a loveless and sad existence. A 1960 scandal magazine article entitled "The Lowdown on Sinatra and his 'Adult Delinquents'" articulates the perceived existential angst of Sinatra's life with imagery obviously derived from In the Wee Small Hours and the "gray"-faced cover of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely: "Meanwhile, the head of the Rat Pack paces his apartment, chain smoking, staring into a street that is dark with night and gray with oncoming dawn, and Frank Sinatra is gray too, with fatigue, with fear. With a fear that has no name but that

makes him dread being alone as another man might dread the torture chamber. He can't sleep . . . " (Griggs 1960, 52). Sinatra's insomnia is offered as evidence of an overwhelming loneliness and dread, again elevated to the level of an existential struggle with "a fear that has no name".

Similarly, the review of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely in High Fidelity understands the album as a document of a courageous artist:

It must have taken considerable courage on Sinatra's part even to consider making a record of such consistently mournful material. That he manages to bring off successfully a program of unrelieved sadness speaks well for his artistry, taste, and imagination. The liner notes suggest that the singer is, basically, a lonely man. If so, the emotions that this plaint has generated have had a particularly stimulating effect on his work. Each song is projected to wonderful effect, each one a little cameo of masterful phrasing and sincerity (Rev. of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely 1958, 77-8).

Sinatra's seriousness is evident at the level of affect, in the grim "mournful"-ness and "unrelieved sadness" of the album, as well as at the level of artistic practice, in the deliberate consistency of the mood and material, which is implicitly understood to have posed an artistic challenge "successfully" met by Sinatra.

As the quote suggests, the album liner notes claim that the "real" Sinatra is an artist whose material is his own experience of loneliness. The liner notes, by lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen, lay out the artistic claims of the LP in terms of a masculine individualism for which loneliness is an essential condition of existence, like Warshow's gangster described at the beginning of this section:

Loneliness is many things to many people. For the keeper of the lighthouse it is the loneliness of the endless days and nights of watching the angry sea. For the New York policeman on the dawn patrol it is the measured loneliness of his beat to the accompaniment of the nocturnal noises of the city . . . The Frank Sinatra

that we know and have known (and hardly know) is an artist with as many forms and patterns as can be found in a child's kaleidoscopic. Come Fly with Me is one Sinatra, All The Way is another Sinatra. A Sinatra singing a hymn of loneliness could very well be the real Sinatra . . . (Cahn and Van Heusen, 1958).

The seriousness of the construction of Sinatra as lonely artist is underlined by the reference to a "hymn of loneliness".³⁸ Just as the back cover of Songs for Swingin' Lovers! conceives of a range of texts (films, LPs) as a totality held together by the singularity of "Sinatra", so too do the liner notes of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely position the LP as an instantiation in a career of variation and oscillation: the complexity of Sinatra's "kaleidoscopic"-like star-image and oeuvre is both knowable, as the product of an individual author expressed across a range of works (the LP titles cited), and a mysterious paradox that we "hardly know". However, the ultimate singularity of loneliness is asserted as that closest to the masculine gangster-artist's interior being.

Cahn and Van Heusen go on to describe the process of composing the LP's theme song, which was commissioned by Sinatra; they also note that the album would be filled with examples of Sinatra's taste: "What kind of lonely song to write? The album itself would contain songs like One For My Baby, What's New? and Blues In The Night, the very best of the songwriter's art dedicated to the "Lost One," or as Frank likes to describe them, "The Losers." (This album was nearly titled "For Losers Only" . . .)". The emphasis on failure ("The Losers") as the subject of the "very best of the songwriter's art" is more than ironic; it heroizes Sinatra's artistic endeavour as a noble redemption of romantic victims. The alternate album title, "For Losers Only", also suggests the hobo, the tramp, the bum, the drunk. The album's saloon songs, "Angel Eyes" and "One

³⁸The reference to a "hymn of loneliness" also suggests another reading of the cover: the vertical multi-coloured diamonds resemble a stylized stained-glass window, and as noted above, Sinatra's face may be said to connote "supplication" (he is looking up). Thus the cover might be articulated with a conception of Sinatra as supplicant in the church of lost love.

for my Baby", explicitly link losing at love to a life of liquor; the saloon becomes a place of mourning and ultimate aloneness, even in a crowd, and Sinatra is there, too, telling his story to a bartender who knows the end all too well.

Although Sinatra was never described in period accounts as an alcoholic, his affinity for alcohol was well-known, as seen in the discussion of the monologues around live performances of "One for my Baby". At times, articles would imply that his drinking was a problem, as Look did in 1957 ("He is drinking heavily for the first time in his life"; Davidson 1957a, 48), and as Time did a few weeks before Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely was released. Describing Sinatra's troubled time on location for Some Came Running as a "Lost Weekend" (a reference to a ground-breaking 1945 film about alcoholism), in which Sinatra allegedly threw a beer bottle into a television set, Time at one point referred to Sinatra "snarling out of his hangover" ("Frankie in Madison" 1958, 64). The point here is not whether or not Sinatra "actually" had a drinking problem, but rather the availability of such an idea to be articulated with Sinatra's "behaving" songs about drowning your sorrows and singing "For Losers Only".

Sammy Cahn's lyric to the theme song, "Only the Lonely", begins as a veiled description of a "loser" on a bender: "Each place I go, only the lonely go/Some little, small cafe". But the lyric is also explicitly autobiographical, as the "loser" is likely a singer like Sinatra: "The songs I know, only the lonely know/Each melody recalls a love that used to be". Here "the lonely" are the select few who are connoisseurs of the songs "only" Sinatra knows. Although it is a through-written lyric (no sections are repeated), the words "hopeless" and "little" appear in two different lines, reinforcing the sense of futility and despair.³⁹

³⁹The melody of "Only the Lonely" is based around tri-tones, an interval relationship which is associated with dissonance and instability; for example, the main melody for Bernard Herrmann's score for Vertigo (1958) uses tritones in the arpeggiated motif that opens the film [in the key of C, the melody involves a loop of c-e flat-g-b, effectively a C major 7th chord with a minor third (e flat) superimposed]. In

Composer Jimmy Van Heusen describes the struggle of writing "Only the Lonely" : "The lyric came very hard. Session after session without the glimmer of a line . . .". However, this work is ultimately seen as subsidiary to that of the true genius, whose patronage enables the creation of a vehicle for his own artistic self-expression: "Here, then, is Frank Sinatra in Only the Lonely. We have written many songs for Frank, his reaction is never over-enthusiastic. It is always the most imperceptible nod. We hope that you will give this album of songs of loneliness the same imperceptible nod . . ."

Again an identification between Sinatra and the listener is set up at the level of taste (conceived as the restrained acknowledgement of minute distinctions). Perhaps most importantly, the phrasing of the line "Here, then, is Frank Sinatra in Only the Lonely" suggests that the album is a kind of aural cinematic experience starring Frank Sinatra, and reinforces the idea of the theme album as a merging of mood and meaning in the representation and exploration of specific concepts. In the case of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely, the thematic coherence of the album is manifested in: the selection of a series of torch ballads with lyrics which are consistently concerned with pain and loss, the "songs only the lonely know"; their massive string backings, the extremely "dark" orchestral colours of the orchestrations (with few "bright" sounds), and tied to this, the limited use of brass; the consistently extremely slow tempi of the tracks (even for ballads) which could be described as dirge-like or funereal; Sinatra's emphasis on the lower register of his vocal range; and the inter-articulation of all of this with the album illustrations, liner notes, and aspects of Sinatra's star-image described above (including, for example, the inter-textual link between the album and the alienation and loneliness seen in Some Came Running, which was released while Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely was still high on the charts).

As I suggest in relation to the imagery of the clown discussed above, the album may be seen to work out a dialectic between "high" and "low". The "semi-classical"

conjunction with the lyric's description of an all-encompassing loneliness, the use of tri-tones produces an effect of anguish and alienation in the music of "Only the Lonely".

connotations of the opening track, “Only the Lonely”, are followed by the barroom lament of “Angel Eyes”, a 1947 song whose lyrics begin “Hey drink up all you people/And order anything you see/Have fun you happy people/The drink and the laugh’s on me”. Again, the idea of the singer as romantic fool is underlined with the pun “and the laugh’s on me”. “Angel Eyes” uses a descending chromatic bass line which is associated with a certain “low down” bluesiness; the rhythmic and harmonic repetitiveness of the bass line can be articulated with the lyric’s evocation of obsession: “Try to think, that love’s not around/Still it’s uncomfortably near”. The lyric describes a search for the man who has stolen the singer’s lover, “angel eyes”, away from him. At one point, the deep and dark sound of Sinatra’s voice is complemented by a deliberate roughness in his timber on the word “bright” in the line “Angel eyes, that ol’ devil sent/They glow unbearably bright”. Sinatra’s vocal tone starts to break up on the melodic phrase’s high note, on which “bright” is sung; the strained striving for the note, and the “failure” to achieve “proper” vocal tone here suggest a breaking point, perhaps the beginning of a descent into an alcoholic gutter. Within the surface narrative of the lyric, the last line of the song is motivated by the protagonist’s intention to leave the bar and find his lover; however, the last line, “Scuse me, while I disappear”, may also be seen as an implicit prelude to dissolution, to a loss of the social visibility of the sober and respectable world. This articulation is underpinned by the musical backing’s uncertain tonal resolution, in which a chord associated with instability and uncertainty is played after the word “disappear” (the chord is similar to the “Vertigo” chord discussed in note 39 above).

“Angel Eyes” is followed by “What’s New?”, a song derived from a big band instrumental (“I’m Free”, Bob Crosby and the Bobcats, 1939), and which includes an extended jazz trombone solo. Sinatra’s use of the lower register is especially prominent here, and the lyric describes an episode of emotional stoicism, in which the singer meets an old flame for whom he still carries a torch; however, the singer puts on the

emotional greasepaint of a false face, and makes small talk, since it was the woman who left him. This is followed by "It's a Lonesome Old Town", which contains the Stravinsky pastiche described above, and whose lyrics explicitly address the issue of loneliness. Next is "Willow Weep for Me", a 1930 song by Ann Ronell, who dedicated it to George Gershwin in the sheet music edition; it is musically influenced by Gershwin's attempts to bring together "classical" and "popular" music in the 1920s and 30s. The first side of the LP concludes with the Benny Goodman swing band's closing theme, "Goodbye". However, it is performed at a much slower tempo than Goodman, and opens with a Modernist-influenced exchange between oboe and viola, each continuing a melodic line begun by the other. The song's protagonist recalls the promise of love, "I'll never forget you, I'll never forget you/I'll never forget how we promised one day/To love one another forever that way/We said we'd never say 'Goodbye'". However, the protagonist is now alone in his commitment, and bitterly notes "But that was long ago, now you've forgotten I know/No use to wonder why, let's say farewell with a sigh, let love die". The protagonist reluctantly admits that it is over: "But we'll go on living, our own way of living/So you take the high road and I'll take the low". The suggestion here is that social differences, separate "ways of living", have caused the relationship to fail, although the distinction between "high" and "low" unwittingly sums up a cultural dynamic at work in the album's articulation with this historical conjuncture.

The use of a well-known closing theme as the last song on the side reinforces the theme LP's attempts at narrativizing the progression from track to track on a side. One predominantly lyric-driven articulation of the album's potential thematic coherence on this side is the following: the overview or establishing shot of "Only the Lonely" gives way to the interior barroom set of "Angel Eyes", in which a specific narrative enigma is set up: "I gotta find who's now the number one/And why my angel eyes ain't here". However, this is not resolved, and the next song, "What's New?" describes a chance encounter in which the singer admits "it's nice to see you again", even though his small

talk masks the truth. The truth is revealed in "It's a Lonesome Old Town" and "Willow Weep for Me", in which overwhelming states of unhappiness and loneliness are described. The concluding lyrics of "Goodbye" consist of a bitter admission of the hopelessness of the singer's situation.

Side two begins with Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer's 1941 pastiche of the blues, "Blues in the Night", which stems from the film of the same title; the film concerns the struggle of a possibly mentally-ill white composer to "translate" the music of the "Negro" (which he hears while in jail) into a serious and symphonic version of "the blues". This bridging of "high" and "low" may be articulated with an ironic instrumental passage in the middle of the track, in which a call-and-response structure is executed by solo whistling and full orchestra; the music stops briefly, and Sinatra whistles a melodic figure, to which the full orchestra responds. This is then repeated, and the song continues. The song's lyrics function much in the same way as those of "Only the Lonely", insofar as they are offered as an overview of the doomed nature of male-female relationships, with loneliness being presented as the only possible outcome. The deliberately misogynistic lyrics ("A woman's a two-face, a worrisome thing who will leave you to sing/The blues in the night") and low, harsh musical backing (it is the most rhythmically aggressive, and most wind-driven track on the album; a muted, bluesy trumpet is especially prominent) is followed by an extremely gentle, gut-string guitar arrangement of "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry". This is a 1945 song which in 1958 would have been almost exclusively associated with female vocalists; Sinatra sings it in a slightly higher register than other songs on the album. The lyrics deploy highly-gendered metaphors; the verse of the song begins "The torch I carry, is handsome/It's worth its heartache in ransom/And when the twilight steals/I know how the lady in the harbour feels". Thus Sinatra's "handsome" "torch" is that of the Statue of Liberty, with whom Sinatra empathizes. This feminization of Sinatra continues with the dominant metaphor of the song, which links

crying to the gendered labour of washing clothes. The next song, "Ebb Tide", is orchestrated using the Impressionist technique of word painting (using cymbal crescendi) to evoke the crashing surf referred to in the lyrics. The subsequent track is a Rodgers and Hart standard, "Spring is Here", whose morose lyrics ("nobody loves me") are matched by music which evokes resignation and depression. The penultimate track of the album is a standard, "Gone with the Wind", whose opening again deploys word painting and draws on Debussy in the evocation of a pastoral breeze. The side and album conclude with "One for my Baby (And One More for the Road)".

"One for my Baby (And One More for the Road)" can be conceived as the album's summit and summation. It may be seen to operate within the album's high/low dialectic, and ultimately offers, in conjunction with the previously-discussed articulations, a most explicit example of Sinatra as autobiographical artist. As we have seen, by the time of Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely, it was a song closely identified with Sinatra, and with particular narrative-visual contextualizations, whether the monologue and dramatization of live performances, the situation within a narrative and cinematic apparatus in film, or the intermediate medium of televisual performance. "One for my Baby" both "tells a story" and is situated within a larger story, that of Sinatra's star-image-career. But of course it is simultaneously a key contributor to conceptions of Sinatra-as-story, insofar as "One for my Baby" brings together a series of elements associated with Sinatra's Capitol star-image, especially the autobiographical carrying of a torch that must be drowned in alcohol.

Bill Miller's piano arrangement is augmented by Nelson Riddle's use of a string section and an alto saxophone at various points in the song. However, the opening of the song, and the first section leading into the first "one for my baby" refrain line, retain the solo piano heard on the live, film, and televisual versions. The LP version begins with the "honky tonk" riff; it is recorded in stereo, and placed slightly more toward the right channel. This placing in sonic space is augmented by a great deal of added reverb;

reverberation is one of the aural cues used by the human ear to estimate spatial dimension and location, and the LP recording is clearly attempting to set up a virtual space in the way the piano is recorded, panned, and mixed with reverb. The relatively low ratio of original to reverbed sound creates a sense of spatial perspective, in which the piano is perceived to be at some distance from the listener. When Sinatra's vocal comes in, he is placed in the centre of the stereo field, with much less added reverb. As in a cinematic close-up, this suggests he is closer to the listener than the piano; the difference creates a sense of intimacy between the listener and Sinatra's voice, and recalls Sinatra's monologues in which he asks the audience to be the bartender. Thus the audio production of the LP attempts to position the listener as Sinatra's confidante, like a bartender.

In this context, the opening solo piano serves as a kind of aural establishing shot, and not only at the level of recording technique. The style of Miller's piano playing, as noted above, evokes a rough-and-tumble saloon or honky tonk. This is achieved in part through his deliberate stereotyping of musical materials; the simple pentatonic melody in his right hand, with very little harmonization above the octave, the use of chromatic runs at the third of the scale producing the so-called "bent", "blue" note (resulting in a tonality which is, strictly speaking, neither major nor minor), and the syncopation of his left-hand accompaniment, all contribute to a kind of pastiche or even parody of barrelhouse ragtime-blues. These musical materials would have been at the time associated with the "rough and ready" and "earthy" stereotypes associated with African-American culture in the white mind. This kind of simplifying and pastiching of musical styles is especially associated with Hollywood film scoring, and it is clear that the "honky tonk" riff of Miller's arrangement also functions as a kind of affective establishing shot, setting the aural scene in conjunction with the sound production.

But as Sinatra begins to sing, the piano style shifts radically, and effects a transition from "low-down" blues to "uptown" sophistication: Miller shifts into

harmonic and phrasing practices associated with the complexity of jazz-as-art. The chords Miller plays under Sinatra's vocal are re-harmonized substitutions of Harold Arlen's original chords; as noted above, this is a fundamental component of jazz, and the highly-ornamented chords Miller plays (e.g. major 7th, minor 7th add 9) involve a great deal of harmonization above the octave, unlike the harmonies that accompany his opening riff (the tonality is also now clearly major). But what is important here is the sense that Miller, and by extension Sinatra, is in a way "above" the musical discourses, and able to play with the codes, shifting from one into the other and then back again. For example, at the ends of certain lines, Miller continues to play the jazz-harmonized chords, but produces fills which return to the pentatonic, bluesy riff of the opening, as if to remind us of the local "colour". This movement from "low" to "high" and back again, is similar to the dynamic of the album as a whole, in which Modernist art music is mixed with Tin Pan Alley faux-blues, jazz trombone soloing, and vernacular whistling. In itself, this kind of aesthetic autonomy and playfulness may be seen as a form of Modernism; in sum, it reinforces the articulation of Sinatra as serious Artist, no longer "merely" a popular entertainer providing "functional" music for dancing or romancing.

The absence of a drummer or rhythm section on "One for my Baby" contributes to the sense of intimacy that is produced, and underlines the performance and performer's autonomy from the demands of the typical nightclub or bar, where dancing requires a regular and pronounced rhythm. Rather than being played for dancers, perhaps the music is being played for the performer's own edification, or as therapeutic activity. Certainly listening is a focus, and this is another form of seriousness that may be articulated with the song, album, and Sinatra. The listener playing the LP on his or her hi-fi or stereo, may thus be immersed in the sound and transported into the performance space of the imagined saloon or bar. Here the immersion and intimacy of listening to the "close-up" of Sinatra's voice contribute to a sense of artistic

interiority associated with Sinatra's performance of the song and its confessional lyric. The listener is not only virtually inside the bar; he or she is offered an opportunity to "get inside" the head and heart of a performer, with recording technology replacing the spotlight in the process whereby "the heart of an entertainer is candidly revealed" (as the poster for The Joker is Wild puts it).

Sinatra's singing on the track also operates within a dynamic of high and low, but rather than describing shifting positions in a cultural hierarchy, this refers to his use of vocal crescendo and diminuendo, which is tied to timbral change, and to a movement between vocal registers, between the higher "head" voice and the lower "chest" voice. A number of later critics have remarked at Sinatra's use of shifting registers to express vulnerability:

What was most singular in Sinatra's vocalism . . . was his handling of the tricky "passage" from the middle to the higher register, in his voice the pitches C sharp, D and E flat . . . The voice itself was a typical Italian light baritone with a two octave range from G to G, declining, as it darkened in later years, to F to F . . . He perceived, if I hear him correctly, that the slight evidence of strain audible when these critical pitches [the passage from middle to higher registers] are approached openly and lightly, as picked up and amplified by the mike, suggest innocence and sincerity, and, in a song of loneliness or longing, a sense of pain. The way he sings "if only she would call" in "In the Wee Small Hours" is, as I hear it, a charming example (Pleasants 1985, 195).

John Rockwell, drawing on Pleasants's argument, ties the sense of pain to perceptions of weakness as Sinatra's voice ages: ". . . Sinatra sometimes reveals signs of strain in that key transitional area. But he compensates by exploiting that "weakness" for expressive purposes - a process he used to ever more telling effect as his voice aged in the Fifties, nowhere so movingly as on his album No One Cares from 1959" (Rockwell 1984, 61).

The inscription of age, weakness, vulnerability, and pain in Sinatra's singing voice is heard particularly in his vocal production on "One for my Baby", where almost every line in the song involves a movement from higher to lower register or from lower to higher register. For example, in the opening line of the recording "It's quarter to three/There's no one in the place, 'cept you and me", Sinatra begins each phrase in the lower register ("It's", "There's", and "'cept"), and moves with the melody up to the higher register ("three", "place", "me"). On the first refrain line, "Make it one for my baby/And one more for the road", Sinatra sings "for my" and "one more" in the higher register, and everything else in the lower; his final return to the lower register is especially noticeable on "road".

The timbral shifts in his vocal production associated with these movements can be conceived in terms of oscillations between a "tender" and a "tough" grain in his voice. The "softer" vocal tone (which is partly the result of the *dimuendo* of the volume level of his singing) is associated with the higher vocal register, and may connotatively be understood as "tender", while the lower vocal register tends to be sung more loudly as well as deeply, and may be heard as "tough". The respective "grain" of Sinatra's voice in each case may be described as more gentle or more harsh. In addition, Sinatra's vocal production at times appears to "break up", as in "unbearably bright" on "Angel Eyes" discussed above. This is most obvious in his singing of "baby" in the first refrain line of "One for my Baby". Here Sinatra's production of the vowel "a" in "baby" is very jagged, almost distorted, and contributes to the overall vocal articulation of strain and suffering, in part due to the sense of "wear and tear" associated with this kind of vocal production. The inscription of a weary experience in the "grain" of Sinatra's voice, a voice that ". . . has a wonderful grinding sound. That throat's been trod on", as Bobby Darin put it (quoted in Hentoff 1960, 36), contributes to the articulation of Sinatra's performance of "One for my Baby" as an autobiographical artefact of an artist's life, wherein vocal weakness is read as a sign of masculine experience and

worldliness. The “tender tough” here is the male whose suffering and sensitivity are licensed by his courage and stoicism, all of which are central to the articulation of Sinatra as masculinized and legitimized Artist.

At the conclusion of the song, after the final “Make it one for my baby/And one more for the road” is sung, the song does not resolve on the root chord on “road”, as it normally does; instead a cadence is inserted which functions as a postponement of tonal resolution. On top of this transitional section, Sinatra sings “the long . . . it’s so long”, while Miller plays a reharmonized “jazz” version of the opening honky tonk riff, modifying the melody so that a “sophisticated” version of the opening is heard for two bars, before he returns to the actual “barrelhouse” opening riff, on top of which Sinatra sings “the long . . . very long”. Sinatra’s voice has been decreasing in volume (either through manipulation at the mixing board, or Sinatra physically moving away from the microphone) with each variation of “long”, so that, in combination with the slowing tempo (Miller is ritarding at this point), the listener may presume Sinatra sings more “longs” after the final audible “very long”, but that we just can’t hear them. In other words, like the long, lonesome road of life, Sinatra keeps on going. Of course, this is an aural rendition of the effect seen in the television performance of the song described above, where Sinatra walks out of the bar still singing; the rolling of the credits on top of this suggest that while our (possibly incidental) glimpse into the artist’s soul is ending, his struggle and suffering go on without relief or relent.

This final section of the recording involves almost no material from the “original” song by Arlen and Mercer. The concluding piano part (both the “high” and “low”, “sophisticated” and “earthy”, versions of the riff) and Sinatra’s sung words are exclusive to “Sinatra’s” version of the song. In conjunction with the evocation of an endless road of pain, Sinatra’s conception as performing autobiographer, author and artist is here complete, even as it is implied that the intertwined life and work are incomplete, for Sinatra will still be singing his life even after we turn off the hi-fi.

Epilogue

Artistry in popular song is all too often a myth, the disordered dream of an alert press-agentry. To designate a vocalist an "artist" merely because he (or she) is a singer is as wishful as it is inaccurate. Frank Sinatra is an artist; this statement is neither inaccurate nor wishful. His artistry can shape thirty-two bars of words and music into an unforgettable experience that, through empathy, may be shared by millions

- Edward Jablonksi, Liner Notes to Frank Sinatra, All Alone (Reprise, 1962)

In the spring of 1962, Frank Sinatra's last Capitol theme LP was released. Entitled Point of No Return, it served as a kind of conclusion to the narrative of the Capitol Sinatra. The lyrics of the LP's 12 standards dealt with aging and farewells. Although three years later, Sinatra would release a similar, though more critically and commercially successful Reprise LP, September of my Years (which contains "(When I Was Seventeen) It Was a Very Good Year"), Point of No Return is emblematic of an adult culture formation whose market dominance was well-established, and whose institutions enabled the production of a popular music album whose artistic ambition was to explore the issue of age in a serious and thoughtful manner. The cover of Point of No Return (see figure 6.4) features a painting of Sinatra wearing his raincoat and hat, standing and smoking in an inner-city park after dark. Although no lamppost is visible, the lights that are on in several of the windows of a large building in the background are suggestive of torches. The bare branches of trees tell us that it is likely fall, and Sinatra is standing next to a large, silhouetted war monument (a statue of a winged victory figure and the lower section of a mounted horse suggest a military memorial). Along with the album title, Point of No Return, these features may be said to connote irrevocable loss and death. As noted above, the park is a place of loneliness and despair in the

iconography of the Capitol Sinatra. The liner notes refer to the LP's "lonely mood", and claim that its songs "all express the special longing that comes with the memory of a September not spent alone, or an April when someone did care . . . The bittersweet memory of tender moments to which there is just no return . . ." The awareness that the Capitol era was concluding contributes to the "bittersweet memories" associated with the album. But it may also be seen to express a concern with lost possibilities and dreams, to articulate a kind of discontent, a male "problem without a name". As the liberation movements of the 1960s would soon be articulating mass dissatisfaction with social revolution, it is worth considering that Point of No Return is also the title of a 1948 best-selling novel by John P. Marquand, about a dissatisfied, middle-aged organization man who considers "dropping out" of the corporate rat race (see figure 6.5).

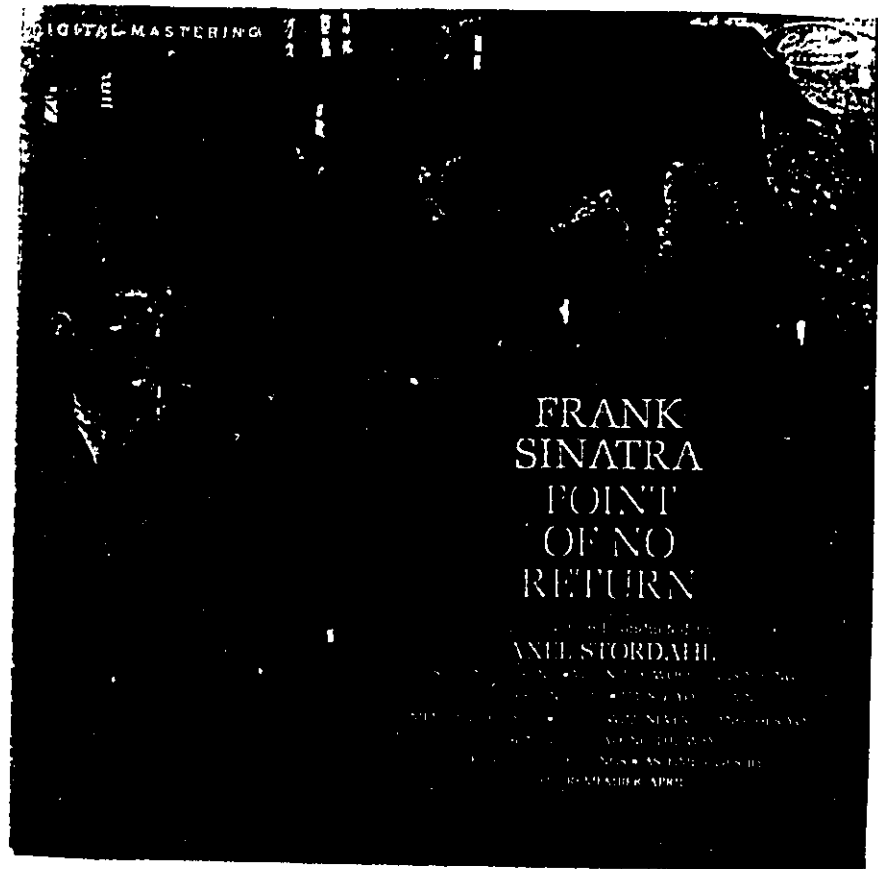


Figure 6.4: Front Cover, Point of No Return (Capitol, 1962)

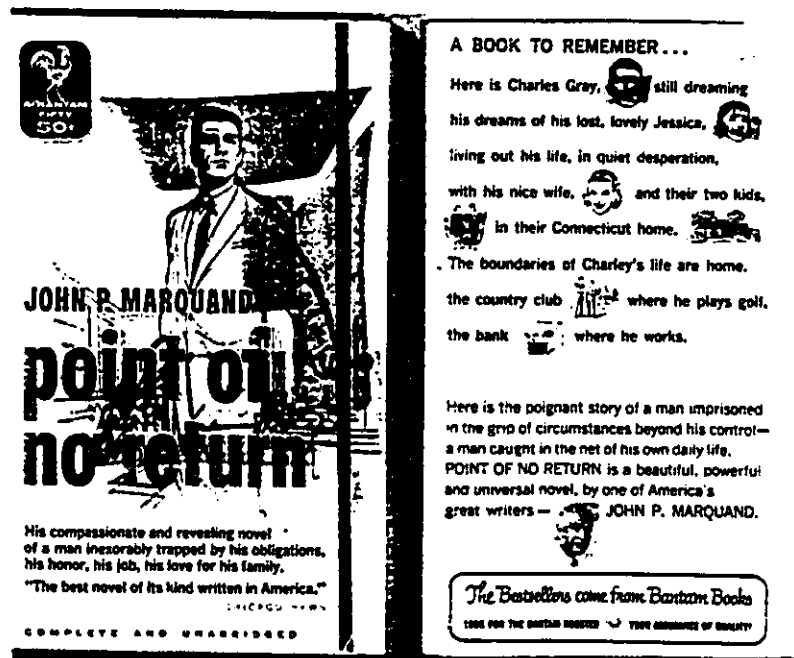


Figure 6.5: Front and Back Covers of the paperback edition of John P. Marquand's Point of No Return (N.Y.: Bantam, 1956; first published in 1948)

Conclusion

This dissertation has sought to understand several formations of post-World-War-II entertainment culture in terms of the inter-articulation of age, taste, and gender. An important component of the development of specifically-adult formations is seen to be the articulation of adulthood and masculinity, and the transformations of conceptions of popular cultural legitimacy that result. The powerful processes of masculinization at work within the adult culture of the post-war period operate within wider dynamics of taste, class, and power. The rendering distinct of teen from adult, immature from mature, trivial from serious, feminized from masculinized, serves to distinguish certain tastes as legitimate and others as spurious. The styles of articulation of these distinctions transform social difference into aesthetic difference, and contribute to the misrecognition of the reproduction of hierarchies of power.

The dissertation has worked toward a reconstruction and conjunctural analysis of the institutions and values of selected formations of adult entertainment culture in the post-war period. It has focused on adult popular music, adult cinema, high-fidelity home audio technology, and the star-image of a popular, multi-media performer. The development of adult cultural institutions such as the standard, the album, and the artist have been seen to involve a series of borrowings from what have historically been considered serious and legitimate "high-art" formations, whether "classical" music or classical tragedy. Thus bourgeois conceptions of art have been articulated with popular forms and performers within the adult cultural formation, and contributed to the general trajectory of legitimation experienced by certain formations of popular culture in Canada and the United States in the post-war period.

Part One of the dissertation, "Adults Only: Formations of Adult Taste, 1948-59", argued that distinctly adult formations emerged alongside the teen cultures seen to be characteristic of the period following World War II. The values and forms of the adult formations were seen to exist, to varying degrees, in relationships of refusal of those of

the teen formations. In the case of adult popular music, the emphasis on novelty in the songs of the Hit Parade was rejected in the assertion of a canon of classic, timeless songs of the past. The “standard” served as a rallying point for an identification with a complex of tastes that were characterized as mature, serious, sophisticated, and beyond commercial imperatives. Similarly, the idea of the album, especially with the advent of the LP in 1948, was articulated with a series of values derived from bourgeois aesthetic categories. At the same time, both the standard and the album, as well as adult popular music in general, were recognized as economically viable from industrial perspectives, since the temporal relationships valued within adult pop culture contributed to stable and highly profitable commodities and markets. It is also worth noting that the crisis of taste articulated with the idea of the standard and the critiques of the state of the popular song in the late 1940s and early 1950s were specifically associated with the adult popular music formation; this calls into question rock music culture’s subsequent, retrospective accounts of the emergence of rock ‘n’ roll in the mid-1950s, in which it is commonly claimed that teenagers’ singular dissatisfaction with the pre-rock ‘n’ roll Hit Parade somehow summoned rock ‘n’ roll into existence (cf. Gillet 1983, especially the section entitled “They Got What They Wanted”, 1ff.). Rather, there is a significant alignment between rock and adult pop articulations of taste regarding the state of the post-war Hit Parade, which has been elided in rock-oriented histories.

The post-war period also saw the emergence of age-graded Hollywood cinema formations. The rise of the “teenpic” was accompanied by the development of an adult film formation, in which ideas of maturity were mobilized in ascribing and valourizing seriousness and artistry to select films. Again, the adult was associated with an anti-mass ideology. Although critiques of the artistic limitations imposed by the Production Code’s family-audience mandate were articulated with the segregated exhibition practices of art cinemas, the formation of a distinct adult cinema during the period may be less about overcoming censorship than about selling cinema within a segmented

market; Hollywood was ultimately as invested in “art” cinema as were so-called “foreign film” distributors and critics.

The discussion of the installation of high-fidelity audio technology in domestic space examined the inter-articulation of gender, anxieties about mass society, and taste. High-fidelity emerged virtually simultaneously with the advent of widespread television broadcasting in Canada and the U.S.; the gendering of hi-fi technologies and techniques took place at the intersection of a perceived crisis of masculine individuality and domestic space, the emergence of television as a “feminized” technology, and increasing male consumer expenditures. Conceptions of high fidelity as an electronic means of virtually immersing, transporting, and stimulating the listener emerged as potential sites for the articulation of masculinist and electronic forms of power. The deployment of electronic technology in the service of an anti-mass pursuit of authenticity and individuality also involved a reconfiguration of middle-class tastes. It may be seen as well as a key moment in the history of male appropriations of control of entertainment technology. Finally, it calls into question the articulation of loud volume with liberatory discourse in rock culture, where amplifier power can easily become the power to oppress and silence.

Part Two of the dissertation, “Sinatra’s Capitol: The Star-Image of Frank Sinatra, 1953-62”, involved a study of the star-image of Frank Sinatra that sought cultural significance across a wide range of media texts, forms, and systems. This research strategy enabled the specification of a complex and multi-valent phenomenon, and may be viewed as a demonstration of the methodological advantages of a multi-media research strategy; it may also be seen to underline the limitations of closed textual approaches to popular culture which seek significance within the boundaries of a single textual system, insofar as the “Sinatra” analyzed herein is explicitly the trans-textual product of multiple articulations. The study examined a number of issues, including the industrial production of star-image, the role of articulations of autobiography,

autonomy, and authorship in the valorization of celebrity, and the complex mobilization of gender in the service of legitimizing taste.

The analysis of Frank Sinatra's star-image during the tenure of his Capitol Records contract, 1953-62, was divided into three parts. First, through an examination of period accounts of image, audience, and taste formations, it was established that Sinatra was seen to be closely associated with a distinctively adult formation. Second, the production of Sinatra's star-image during the period was described in detail. Because of the dialogical nature of celebrity, transitions in Sinatra's star-image were traced out from the 1940s through the 1950s in order to comprehend as completely as possible the potential resonances of "Sinatra". It was argued that Sinatra's star-image undergoes a complex process of gendering and re-gendering over time, in a trajectory that was characterized as a movement from "femme-man" to "man's man". Industrial strategies were examined in conjunction with cultural institutions which enabled the articulation of the various personas grouped under the signifier "Sinatra". These personas included the torching romantic of the "lonesome on top of the world" imagery, the dangerous tough of the "gangster in the nightclub" imagery, the swingin' playboy of the "Pal Frankie" imagery, and the equally autonomous artist-businessman persona described in one article as "Frank Sinatra's Corporate Image". This section ended with a discussion of Sinatra's articulation with an adult male audience during the period. The third part of the study examined the relationship between the gendering of Sinatra's star-image and his articulation as serious and legitimate artist working within popular forms. A process of narrativization of Sinatra's career was seen to occur during the period, in which "Sinatra" was understood to describe a self-contained story. The oscillating gendering of Sinatra's star-image was conceived in terms of the idea of the "tender tough". In a discussion of the deployment of tropes of masculinization and feminization within Sinatra's period film roles, it was argued that processes of feminization were

appropriated by an overarching trajectory of masculinization of Sinatra as complex and serious artist. The contribution of articulations of Sinatra as actor, classical conductor, jazz musician, and author to this process were also examined. Finally, through a discussion of a key Sinatra song, "One for My Baby", the play of discourses of gender and artistry across the Capitol era were analyzed in conjunction with Sinatra's star-image. It was concluded that Sinatra was significantly associated with new attitudes toward the cultural legitimacy of popular forms and performers in the post-war period.

Sinatra's production as serious Artist represents a key moment in the processes whereby popular music sought cultural legitimacy during the post-war period. The articulation of the "adult" with the select, the mature, the expensive, the serious, and the timeless contributed to the legitimization of one of adult popular music's leading figures; Sinatra's valourization functions within the categories of bourgeois aesthetics which underpin adult formations' claims to cultural legitimacy. At the same time, the definitive masculinity of modernist conceptions of the artist implicates gender in the process of cultural legitimization.

Sinatra's erotic appeal to both men and women, both heterosexual and homosexual, is an extremely complex issue that has been largely ignored in favour of discussions of the relationship between the gendering of his star-image and modes of cultural valourization and power. Certainly Sinatra's image as "tender tough", his oscillation between feminization and masculinization, and his close identification with a non-conformist and intense sexuality implicates his popularity and significance in questions of audience desire. However, this desire must remain a lack in this dissertation.

While this study has focused on formations associated with white adults, the place of race in these developments has also remained largely unaddressed. For example, to what extent did African-Canadian and African-American adults experience an age-segmented popular culture in the post-war period? Did the particular articulations of

new domestic audio technology and new conceptions of star-performer-artists differ from those experienced by white audience formations, and if so, in what ways did they differ, and with what implications, if any, for gendered expressions of cultural power and legitimization? For the moment, these questions remain unanswered; while it is tempting to draw inferences about the relationship between “whiteness” and post-war “adulthood” from the accounts of white adult entertainment cultures presented herein, these must remain speculative until comparative research on non-white articulations can be carried out.

As noted in the introduction, this thesis was motivated by a dissatisfaction with dominant views of the history of popular music in the post-war period, in which youth culture and rock music are foregrounded as the engines of a perceived revolutionary rupture with earlier musical formations. I would like to conclude by suggesting some further implications of the dissertation research with regard to historiographical accounts of rock music culture. Rock music, as distinct from rock ‘n’ roll, is conventionally seen to involve the emergence of art discourses around popular music. While jazz ceased being an expressly popular music at virtually the same moment it began to function within an art discourse (ca. 1940s; see Gendron 1995), rock music’s relationship to ideas of seriousness, artistry, and the popular has been in many ways more complex. In fact, rock music begins to understand itself as a form of Art in the midst of a phenomenal expansion of its market, ca. 1967. This is not only the year of the Summer of Love and the advent of Rolling Stone magazine. According to Philip Ennis’s recent study of rock music, 1967 is the first year rock LPs outsell adult pop LPs (Ennis 1992, 345). This may in fact mark the beginning of the “rock” era proper, insofar as the most profitable and artistically-respected commodity within the

music industry, the LP, stops being a predominantly adult pop format, and the music industry's focus on the adult market is transferred to the rock, and youth, market; rock is thus taken seriously as both art and business from that point on. Therefore, unlike the case of jazz, rock-as-art develops hand in hand with rock-as-popular-music. Therefore, the claims for rock as the inaugural legitimization of popular music as Art are based on the assumptions that 1) jazz stopped being a popular music before it came to be considered a form of Art, and 2) that adult pop was never in the running in the first place.

However, as I believe is implicit in much of my research, adult pop developed a range of institutions and criteria of evaluation that offer uncanny pre-echoes of the rock music culture that is consolidated in the later 1960s. Central to both is a conception of the LP album as a medium of artistic expression, that can accommodate ambitious, "long-form" projects similar to those of classical or art music. Both adult pop and rock culture disdain the obvious commercialism and trivial trendiness of the Hit Parade, in favour of more "serious" and long-term artistic goals. Adult high-fidelity culture and rock culture each see electronic technology as a means of pursuing authenticity in the face of a corrupt and synthetic mass culture. And both adult pop and rock culture conceive of the star performer as autonomous artist, drawing on autobiography to tell the authentic story of a life of sensitivity and non-conformity.

Sinatra displays many, if not virtually all, of the traits of the rock star of the past thirty years, and is understood and valued in similar terms within adult culture. Rather than conceiving of Sinatra simply in the context of rock culture, however, it may be more productive to question received accounts of the specificity of rock-as-youth culture, insofar as larger dynamics of formations of white, largely middle-class taste appear to be at work in both cases (adult pop and rock). The larger issues called into question by the parallels between adult pop and rock culture include conceptions of androgyny as liberatory discourse within the counterculture, and the alleged

politicization of popular music, apparently demonstrated by rock culture's radical break with adult pop. The appropriation of feminized imagery by male stars is not necessarily a subversion of patriarchy, as much of the history of heavy metal illustrates. Similarly, the putative radicalism of rock music culture is frequently understood as involving a renunciation of respectable, middle-class values. However, one of the implications of my reconstruction of adult culture in the post-war period is that many of the values and institutions of rock culture resemble (if they are not derived directly from) its despised "parent" culture, thereby suggesting continuities and connections across cultures conventionally conceived as opposed and antagonistic.

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