
Heavenly Bodies

Film Stars and Society

Second edition

Richard Dyer

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

1986 / 2nd Ed 2004

Judy Garland and gay men

He once told me about picking up a bloke who said you could always tell a 'queer's' place because they've all got LPs of Judy Garland.

Kenneth Williams, speaking of Joe Orton

The white kids had the counter-culture, rock stars and mysticism. The blacks had a slogan which said they were beautiful, and a party demanding power. Middle America had what it always had: Middle America. The hawks had Vietnam, and the doves the Peace Movement. The students had campus politics, and the New Left had Cuba and the Third World. And women had a voice. I had rejection from all of them. I also had Judy Garland.

Drag Queen in *As Time Goes By*

In the June 1973 issue of the Birmingham Gay Liberation Front newsletter, there was an article about Judy Garland. It was called 'Born in a Trunk' and was printed on pink paper. It made no reference to gayness whatsoever. The author did not feel that there was any need to explain why there should be a straightforward fan's account of Garland's life in the publication of a militant gay political group. Nor did the editorial collective, of which I was a member (though I neither wrote nor suggested the article). We had a policy of printing anything anybody in GLF submitted provided that it was not sexist, racist or fascist. The Garland piece was none of these, and we were as immersed in gay male culture as the author so that printing a piece on Garland seemed like the most natural thing in the world. When we distributed it, however, a number of people, gay and straight, asked us what on earth the piece was doing in the newsletter. A few were objecting on the grounds that Garland belonged to the unliberated days of gay existence before GLF, but the rest were mystified. Why was Garland in a gay magazine? And when they knew the answer – because so many gay men (especially) are into her – the next question was a bemused 'why?' This chapter is an attempt to answer that question.

There will not, of course, be one answer, but a variety of ways in which a star's image can be read if it is to attain star-sized currency and appeal. Hence Monroe can be read within different discourses on sexuality and similarly in those other than sexuality. Robeson too had to appeal across white and black audiences, and with far greater differentiation within them than I have described. Similarly, not only did Garland have the requisite massive appeal to non-gay audiences, but various aspects of her image spoke to different elements within male gay subcultures. In this chapter I want to explore how specific aspects of Garland's image could make a particular set of senses for gay men.

What I am describing is specific, both in terms of the subculture referred to and in terms of period. The subculture is particular first of all by being male. Historically lesbian and gay male subcultures have been linked, though often only tangentially; equally, lesbian subcultures have used Hollywood stars as important figures in their discourse (see Meyers 1976, Sheldon 1977, Whitaker 1981, Gramann and Schlüpmann 1981, Weiss 1992, Whatling 1997, White 1999). However, lesbian and gay male cultures are not one, and I have no sense of Judy Garland being an especially significant figure in the lesbian subcultures. Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, on the other hand, have been important for both subcultures, and it would be instructive to draw out the links between their images and the aristocratic dyke culture associated with Radclyffe Hall, Romaine Brooks, Lady Troubridge, Gertrude Stein and others (see Ruehl 1982 and Dyer 1983). Though this dyke style would be an important reference point for the gay male readings of Garbo and Dietrich, they would still need to be distinguished from lesbian readings.

The relevant male gay culture is further particularised by being urban (indeed usually metropolitan) and white. This does not mean that small-town, provincial and non-white gay men could not share it, but that it was produced in the developing urban gay male ghettos (New York, London, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Sydney, etc.) and fostered in forms (drag shows, bars) and publications largely controlled by whites. Urban white gay men set the pace for this culture, and in the period under consideration largely defined it as gay male culture itself.

The period under consideration occurs after 1950. It was in that year that Judy Garland was sacked by MGM and tried (rather more desultorily than the press allowed) to commit suicide. This event, because it constituted for the public a sudden break with Garland's uncomplicated and ordinary MGM image, made possible a reading of Garland as having a special relationship to suffering, ordinariness, normality, and it is this relationship that structures much of the gay reading of Garland. In part this reading focuses on her subsequent career – the development of her concert appearances beginning at the London Palladium in 1951; her vehicle films, *A Star is Born* 1954 and *I Could Go On Singing* 1962, as well as starring in *A Child Is*

Waiting 1962 and having a showy cameo in *Judgement at Nuremberg* 1961; a series of albums for Capitol records between 1955 and 1965, notably *Miss Show Business*, *Alone*, *The Letter*, *Judy in Love* and the double album *Judy at Carnegie Hall* (a recording of her 1961 concert that was the first double album to sell over a million copies); television shows, including two successful specials (*The Ford Star Jubilee* 1955, *The Judy Garland Show* 1963) and a less successful series for CBS in 1963; as well as interviews, radio shows, TV chat show appearances and much press coverage, chiefly of the vicissitudes of her life (suicide attempts, divorces, hospitalisations, and the like).

The post-1950 reading was also a reading of her career before 1950, a reading back into the earlier films, recordings and biography in the light of later years. This was facilitated by the growth of television and, in large cities, of repertory cinemas specialising in nostalgia revivals, both making Garland's films constantly available for re-viewing. In addition, much of her post-1950 career deliberately evokes and reworks her early career. Both *A Star is Born* and *I Could Go On Singing* are clearly based on Garland's life story, and 'Born in a Trunk' in the former is like a knowing précis of the image MGM had fostered (cf. Jennings 1979). Equally her concerts were built around her film career, introducing only a limited amount of new material. Medleys of past hits were introduced with verses such as 'The story of my life is in my songs.' As Christopher Finch (1975: 186) puts it, her concerts were

a novel kind of Broadway musical, the words and music by various writers and composers, the book by Judy Garland, with the formidable assistance of the entire Hollywood press corps. To the audience, the book was Judy Garland's life story.

Equally important, during this period Garland spoke increasingly about her life before 1950 (notably in an article in *McCall's* in 1952), thus providing still more opportunity of reading those films and images through later knowledge and understandings.

Because of the availability of her earlier work and its importance as a reference point in her later films, concerts, records and press coverage, the whole of Garland's career is relevant to this chapter, but it is read through the way she was taken up by the gay male subculture after 1950. The fact of the importance of Garland to this subculture was always widely noted. Most of the obituaries mention it, and it was particularly noticeable, for straight observers especially, at the concerts. Al Di Orio Jr (1975: 133–4) quotes from the *Los Angeles Citizen News* review of her 1961 Hollywood Bowl concert:

They were all there, the guys and dolls and the 'sixth man', sitting in the drizzle which continued throughout the concert . . . After 'Over the

Rainbow' the standing, water-soaked audience applauded until Judy came back and sang three more songs. The guys and gals and 'sixth man' wanted more.

'The sixth man' is a reference to Kinsey's findings on the incidence of homosexuality in the American male, a statistic familiar enough to provide the title for a sympathetic exposé of homosexuality by Jess Stearn in 1962. Non-gay observers are often more venomous than the rather neutral *Los Angeles Citizen News* reporter. William Goldman's (1969: 3-4) description of the last night of Garland's 1967 Palace season displays his obvious straightness. A beautiful gay man is a shock to him. He quotes without comment a straight man's reference to Auschwitz, as if the Nazi extermination of gays was of no account, and he includes the same man's gag, presumably for the reader to laugh at; all this laced with the usual vocabulary of homophobia, 'boy', 'flit', 'chatter', 'ooh', 'flutter', 'fags':

as the lobby filled up entirely, the audience itself began to become insistently noticeable. A stunning blonde walked by, in a lovely green jacket, sexy and confident, undulating with every step, and it comes as a genuine shock to realize the blonde is a boy. Two other boys flit by, chattering. First: 'I got her pink roses and white carnations; you think she'll like it?' Second (angry): 'Now why didn't I bring her flowers? Oooh, it's just too late for me now.' Another flutter of fags, half a dozen this time, and watching it all from a corner, two heterosexual married couples. 'These fags,' the first man says. 'It's like Auschwitz - some of them died along the way but a lot got here anyhow.' He turns to the other husband and shrugs. 'Tonight, no one goes to the bathroom.'

I do not intend to go any further into these straight accounts of gay men and Judy Garland. I mention them here partly to indicate how widely observed the gay-Garland connection was and partly to register the extent to which this was felt as in some way offensive or threatening, an index of the degree to which gay men's use of Garland's image constituted a kind of going public or coming out before the emergence of gay liberationist politics (in which coming out was a key confrontationist tactic). This in fact is how going to a Garland concert in Nottingham in 1960 is remembered by one gay man:

I shall never forget walking into the Montfort Hall. Our seats were very near the front and we had to walk all the way down the centre gangway of a hall already crowded. I should think every queen in the east Midlands catchment area had made it . . . everyone had put on their Sunday best, had hair cuts and bought new ties. There was an exuberance, a liveliness, a community of feeling which was quite new to me and probably quite rare anyway then. It was as if the fact that we had gathered to see Garland gave us permission to be gay in public for once.

(Letter to author)

I'm going to begin by looking at what gay men have written about Judy Garland and then move on to consider her image in relation to general aspects of the gay male subculture. There will be some overlap - the gay writings stress Garland's emotionality and its relation to the situation of gay men, and I'll relate this to aspects of her image and performance; equally when discussing those aspects of her image that suggest a connection with gay culture - ordinariness, androgyny, camp - I'll refer where possible to other gay writers' observations on these aspects. The difference in the two sections is of degree - the first is concerned with what is characteristically and explicitly referred to in gay writings, the second to what is more evident by putting her image side by side with characteristic features of gay culture in general.

By gay writings I'm referring equally to articles in gay publications and to responses I received to letters I placed in gay newspapers and magazines.¹ In terms of content there is no significant difference between these two kinds of writing. What does need to be pointed out is that all were written after Garland's death and the emergence of the modern gay movement. Many have memories of the earlier period, but are often articulated in terms that may well have been clearer later - for instance, I do not doubt the memory of the writer, quoted above, who speaks of Garland's Nottingham concert giving 'us permission to be gay in public for once', but equally to articulate things in terms of the importance of being 'gay in public' is very gay liberationist in emphasis. The writings are all informed by an awareness of gay politics, though there is an interesting shift between some of the earlier writings and some of the later. This is signalled by a change in the pronoun used to refer to gay people, from 'they' to 'us'. This goes along with a changed emphasis from Garland representing gay men's neurosis and hysteria to her representing gay men's resilience in the face of oppression. Thus Roger Woodcock (1969: 17), in the first issue of *Jeremy* (a very softly pornographic and, initially, an ostensibly bisexual publication, which appeared just before the development of the gay liberation movement in Britain), wrote:

Every time she sang, she poured out her troubles. Life had beaten her up and it showed. That is what attracted homosexuals to her. She created hysteria for them.

Barry Conley (1972: 11), writing in an early *Gay News* (which had been started under the impetus of the British gay liberation movement), puts a more positive emphasis ('fighting back') but still refers to 'they' and makes a comparison with straight people to the detriment of gay:

She began to gather a large following of homosexuals at her concerts,

who were eager to applaud each and every thing she did . . . Perhaps the majority of those audiences saw in Judy a loser who was fighting back at life, and they could themselves draw a parallel to this . . . One should also remember that she still managed to retain all her 'straight' admirers over the years, though of course these people were less exhibitionistic in their reactions to her concerts.

Nine years later, Dumont Howard (1981: 95) in *Blueboy* (a gay male equivalent of both *Playboy* and *Cosmopolitan*, with that odd mixture of civil rights editorialising and consumer/hedonist copy, plus sexy pictures) took issue with the reading of gay men's enthusiasm for Garland as 'hysterical' and 'exhibitionistic', at the same time himself owning the positive feelings he was describing by the use of the pronoun 'we':

Garland is often painted as a pathetic figure and her fans – particularly her gay fans – as devotees of disaster . . . Now that we, as gay people, are learning more about ourselves as a group and a culture, we can begin to understand the true attraction of Judy Garland: it is her indomitable spirit, not her self-destructive tendencies, that appeals to gay audiences.

Similarly, in the Gay Sweatshop production *As Time Goes By* (a play concerned with the recovery of the radical moments in gay history of the past century), in the final section (a series of interweaving monologues in a New York gay bar in June 1969),² the drag queen, hauntingly played in the original production by Drew Griffiths (Figure 3.1), says:

They say we loved her because she mirrored the anguish and loneliness of our own lives. Crap. My parents were straight . . . They were the most anguished and lonely people I ever knew. No. We do not have a monopoly in the anguish and loneliness department. I loved her because no matter how they put her down, she survived. When they said she couldn't sing; when they said she was drunk; when they said she was drugged; when they said she couldn't keep a man . . . When they said she was fat; when they said she was thin; when they said she'd fallen flat on her face. People are falling on their faces every day. She got up.

(Greig and Griffiths 1981: 62)

The interpretation in the early writings of what gays saw in Garland is similar to many of the unpleasantly homophobic observations of critics, particularly in the obituaries. One might say that Woodcock and Conley are victims of a kind of self-oppressive 'false consciousness', internalising



Figure 3.1 Drew Griffiths as Drag Queen in *As Time Goes By*, London 1981 (Rolf Fischer)

straight interpretations of the gay response to Garland. Maybe, but it would be wrong to assume that only the more 'positive' readings accurately express the range of ways gay men might take the Garland image. Woodcock and Conley condense several levels of self-oppression which may in fact characterise one way of reading Garland. They are gay fans of Garland who distance themselves from any gay identification ('they', 'homosexuals') by putting down gay responses to Garland. At the same time, they can only read Garland in a gay way that is negative ('hysteria', 'exhibitionistic') – they are recognising a quality of emotional intensity that is in fact what the other gay writers also emphasise but they give it a denigratory label. Later readings want to disown all this, quite properly perhaps – but Garland could also be used in this subcultural discourse, more queer than gay, that spoke of the homosexual identity in self-oppressive modes characteristic of oppressed groups – distancing, denying, denigrating. Aspects of Garland's career and performance could be seen as pathetic and God-awful, and gay men could as it were misrecognise themselves in that and hasten, as Woodcock and Conley do, to disown it. I mention this here because they are the only writers to speak of Garland like this, but are also those writing from their most immediate memories of her. In sharing the predominantly positive understandings of what gay men saw in Garland of the other writings, I

don't want to discount altogether this negative reading which the gay liberationist context of the later writing may have filtered out.

There is one source of references to Garland written before 1969, but it is difficult to handle. The British film monthly *Films and Filming*, which began in October 1954, quickly established itself as a closet gay magazine. It consistently published pin-ups of half-clothed male stars and starlets, advertised the kind of fashionable/sexy clothes shops patronised by gay men, and ran a lively small ads column that by the sixties had become quite explicit in its correspondence section ('Gay young man wishes to meet another, varied interests including physiques', November, 1964: 31). In *Films and Filming* the gay-Garland connection is clear, if never explicitly referred to. Ads for the Garland fan club appeared every month (and this was not so for any other star) amid ads for physique films and 'discreet bachelor apartments'. One small ad made the connection as directly as was possible:

Young man leaving London for Durham in early October seeks similar (age 21-23) living in that area - view to writing initially, meeting soon. Interests, films, music (serious), Judy Garland, photography, driving (own car). Photograph welcomed. Box 856F.

(*Films and Filming*, July 1964)

There was a picture of Garland (on the set of *A Star is Born*) in the first issue and she was on the cover of the third (December 1954), a still of 'The Man that Got Away' from *A Star is Born*. Inside there is a long celebratory article by the magazine's editor, Peter Brinson, which, while it does not make any reference to her gay following (which can anyway only have been embryonic then), does write of her positive qualities. I'll refer later to this article; I've brought it in here because it is the one piece of rather fragile evidence from the pre-gay movement period about how gays made sense of Judy Garland, and it is a positive one. Just as I don't want the post-gay liberation readings to drown out the negative, self-oppressive readings, so equally I don't want to give the impression that the more positive readings were only possible after the gay movement had started. On the contrary, the only evidence we have suggests the positive reading was always predominant.

The common emphasis in all gay writings on Garland is on her emotional quality. As Dumont Howard (1981: 95) puts it:

The essence of Judy Garland's art is emotion. She burns right through lyrics, delivering, instead, their pure emotional substance.

Many of the accounts do not refer to the gayness of the emotionality, but rather suggest the immediate, vivid, intense experience of it. This is worth stressing because however much one can see that Garland is appreciated in ways specifically relating to gay culture, she is not necessarily experienced like that. As with any star, the fan's enthusiasm is based on feeling that the star just is wonderful. Thus some of the people who replied to my letter in the gay press said that as gay men they liked Garland because she had, for instance, 'star quality' or 'great talent and warmth', terms that might be used by an enthusiast for any star. The intensity and excitement of our experience of them outstrips our consciousness of what they stand for.

The kind of emotion Garland expressed is somewhat differently described in the gay writings, but on two points all agree - that it is always strong emotion, and that it is really felt by the star herself and shared with the audience.

In every song I've heard it gives you something of her as a person, all the tragedy and happiness of her life is echoed in every word she sings.

(Letter to author)

All the emotions felt inside worn on the outside. The voice a clarion call of power, joy, love, sharing it all with us.

(Letter to author)

Although these are qualities that might be attributed to many stars, it is the particular register of intense, authentic feeling that is important here, a combination of strength and suffering, and precisely the one in the face of the other. Different writers put different stresses on just how the two elements are combined. Some see the strength all but denying the imputed suffering:

Judy . . . the power, the strength, the defiance of all the washed-up-has-been talk.

(Letter to author)

Peter Brinson's (1954: 4) article in the third issue of *Films and Filming* details MGM's exploitation of her and other personal setbacks, but the keynote is the celebration of her strength:

One kind of courage I admire is that which keeps going, come what may. Judy Garland is an example.

Others emphasise her openness to suffering, her ability to convey the experience of it:

gay people could relate to her in the problems she had on and off stage.
(Letter to author)

it was precisely the quality that was the cause of all the pain that was also appealing to her audience. When she sang she was vulnerable. There was a hurt in her voice that most other singers don't have.
(Bronski 1978: 202)

The least attractive expression of this emphasis, with ugly photos as accompaniment, is Kenneth Anger's (1981: 413–16) reference to Garland in *Hollywood Babylon*, written after her death and even here recognising the strength while dwelling on the point at which it gave out:

MGM's Amphetamine Annie really made it at last after so many attempts – pills, wrist slashings years before in her Hollywood bathroom, hack hack with broken glass . . . She was *hundreds* of years old, if you count emotional years, the toll they take, dramas galore for a dozen lifetimes. She was 'She' who had stepped into the Flame once too often.

Wherever the emphasis comes it is always the one in relation to the other, the strength inspirational because of the pressure of suffering behind it, the suffering keen because it has been stood up to so bravely.³

Films and Filming's article is headed 'The Great Come-Back' and the come-back was the defining motif of the register of feeling I'm trying to characterise, for it is always having come back from something (sufferings and tribulations) and always keeping on coming, no matter what. Repeatedly in the news from 1950 onwards for this or that reason (suicide attempts, failed marriages, drunk and disorderly charges, and so on), Garland repeatedly came back (Oscar nomination for *A Star is Born*, most successful ever double album *Judy at Carnegie Hall*, sell-out at all concerts and cabaret performances). The very act of coming back set off the feeling and it was reprised in countless details.

Both *A Star is Born* and *I Could Go On Singing* end with the Garland character coming back from personal despair (widowhood and rejection by her child, respectively) to a public performance. The latter has her sing at this come-back performance the come-back song that is the title of the film. The opening number of the 1961 concert (and record) is 'When You're Smiling', itself a 'keep on keeping on' song, with a bridge passage tailor-made for her image. It begins with rueful references to the kinds of problems one

should smile in the face of, problems very close to those of Garland herself (marriage, weight, drugs):

If you suddenly find out you've been deceived
Don't get peeved
If your husband bluntly tells you you're too stout
Don't you pout
And for heaven's sakes retain a calm demeanour
When a cop walks up and hands you a subpoena
If the groom should take a powder while you're marching down the aisle
Don't weep and moan
Because he's flown
Just face the world and smile.

Then as she leads back into the melody, she could be making two references quite specific to herself:

'Cos when you're crying don't you know that your make-up starts to run
And your eyes get red and scrappy?
Forget your troubles, have yourself a little fun,
Have a ball
Forget 'em all
Forget your troubles, c'mon, get happy
Keep on smiling
'Cos when you're smiling
The whole world smiles with you.

First, she sings about make-up. In part this is singing about her immediate situation, made up for a performance that was also a come-back. The song itself is a vaudeville standard, associated with Al Jolson, the epitome of the showbiz ethos, with whom Garland, dubbed in the fifties 'Miss Show Business', was often compared. It evokes a whole showbiz litany of tears-beneath-the-greasepaint, the show-must-go-on, that gives a resonance of tradition to Garland's coming back. But in addition one of the most frequently repeated stories about Garland was how she used the act of preparing herself for public appearances as an answer to problems. For example, Roger Woodcock (1969: 16) in *Jeremy* writes:

She knew they said she drank too much and took too many pills and it upset her. 'What do you do when people talk about you like that?' she asks, 'commit suicide? No, that's messy. Get drunk? No, that's no solution.' What Judy did in fact was to put on her lipstick, make sure her stockings were straight, then she marched onto a stage somewhere and sang her heart out.

The make-up reference in 'When You're Smiling' suggests the moment of pulling herself together by putting on her make-up.

Second, she interpolates a phrase from another smile-through-your-tears song, 'Get Happy' – 'Forget your troubles, c'mon, get happy'. This was the final number in *Summer Stock* 1950, her last MGM picture. The reference not only reminds the audience of one of the cult numbers from her films, but more generally of her MGM image. It was also widely known, by 1961, that the making of *Summer Stock* had been fraught with difficulties of all kinds, including her perennial weight problems, and that 'Get Happy' was in fact shot several weeks after the completion of the rest of the film, as an afterthought. Garland came back for it, much relaxed and rested, noticeably slimmer and rehearsing and shooting in one day a number that is, as Jane Feuer (1982: 20) puts it, 'the ultimate in professional entertainment'. The facts about coming back to film 'Get Happy', the image of a confident, slimmer Garland on screen, as well as its lyrics, all encapsulate the come-back motif, and are condensed in the snatch of it included in the come-back song 'When You're Smiling' that starts her come-back concert at Carnegie Hall.

This come-back, going on going on, suffering and strength quality could even be read in the performance of the songs, especially towards the end of her career. In the later concerts, the sense of the trials of her life was no longer offstage, in the publicity read beforehand, in what the songs and gags referred to, but could be seen in the frailty of her figure, heard in her shortness of breath and shaky high notes, noted in her lateness or stumbling walk. Yet she was still carrying on with the show. However demanding the melody now seemed for her, she did get to the end of the song and this became a mini enactment of the come-back motif. Al Di Orio (1975: 201) quotes from the *Camden Courier Post* of 21 June 1968 on her delivery of 'Over the Rainbow' at the Kennedy Stadium concert in Philadelphia two nights earlier. She speaks/sings:

If happy little bluebirds fly, beyond the rainbow, why – I made it, I made it – why, oh why – thank you, darlings, I made it all the way through, I didn't think I would – oh why, can't I?

Di Orio argues that this is a misquotation:

What she said was, 'I finally made it over the rainbow thanks to you all'. Then she continued with the song, then she yelled, 'We all do it, you know'. Then another phrase of the song, and finally, 'Thank you. God bless you'.

(ibid.)

I do not know whose memory of her exact words is correct, but may it not be that in the concerts getting to the end of the song enacted getting to the end of the rainbow? In her last recording, of a performance at the Talk of the Town in London, her apparent difficulty in getting through 'Over the Rainbow' nonetheless ends with her coming through loud and true on the final 'I', producing a triumphant last note in the teeth of the ravaged voice that precedes it.

Gay writing returns repeatedly to this emotional quality as in some way representing the situation and experience of being gay in a homophobic society:

[They] saw in Judy a loser who was fighting back at life, and they could themselves draw a parallel to this.

(Conley 1972:11)

To the gay male, in those days, there was a terrific bond between Miss Garland and her audience, we, the gay people could identify with her . . . could relate to her in the problems she had on and off stage.

(Letter to author)

She appeals to me as a gay person . . . because she tended to sing songs which seem to echo all the doubts and trials of a gay man within an unaccepting social order. 'The Man That Got Away' could almost become the national anthem of gay men . . . Others too express 'our' desires as a minority. The great 'Over the Rainbow' suggests a perfect world in which even we could live without restricting our life-styles and songs like 'Get Happy' tend to express our ability to cope and get along with 'our lot', whatever happens.

(Letter to author)

This gives us then the feel of the gay sense of Judy Garland. Other stars can suggest this quality (Billie Holiday, Edith Piaf, Shirley Bassey), though for none has the come-back been so decisive a motif. Equally, other groups in society carry on in the face of social stigmatisation and Garland did appeal in these terms to other people. Why the special felt affinity between *this* 'emotional' star and *this* oppressed group?

I want to discuss shortly three aspects of gay culture which are consonant with aspects of Garland's image, but before doing that I want to look at gay writing which links Garland's emotional quality to a general emotional quality of gay life, the idea of a 'gay sensibility'. The key to this lies in the particularity of gay people's situation, namely that we can 'pass for straight':

The experience of passing is often productive of a gay sensibility. It can, and often does, lead to a heightened awareness and appreciation for disguise, impersonation, the projection of personality, and the distinctions to be made between instinctive and theatrical behaviour.

(Babuscio 1977: 45)

This awareness informs responses to Garland in different ways. Jack Babuscio argues that the sense of Garland performing herself, enacting her life on screen or stage, is a recognition of the theatricality of experience that the gay sensibility is attuned to. Vito Russo (1980-1: 15), on the other hand, stresses the nerve and risk involved in living 'on the edge' between a stigmatised gay identity and a fragile straight front, evoked in the very act of Garland going on stage in the teeth of disaster:

I'm not sure that people know what it means any longer to watch a performer walk onto a stage stone cold and suddenly be absolutely brilliant. When Garland sang 'If Love Were All' or 'By Myself', her whole life was on that stage, and believe me, that's not nothing . . . That's why I'm so attracted to Garland. She had the guts to take the chance of dropping dead in front of ten thousand people. And won.

Is that a particularly gay response to Garland? Perhaps. Gays take chances all the time in ways straights never do. We have traditionally been forced to put on one face for the world and another in private.

What both Jack Babuscio and Vito Russo bring out is the way that the gay sensibility holds together qualities that are elsewhere felt as antithetical: theatricality and authenticity. Equally I'd want to suggest that the sensibility holds together intensity and irony, a fierce assertion of extreme feeling with a deprecating sense of its absurdity. This is a quality I find in a number of popular songs by gay writers – Cole Porter's 'Just One of Those Things', Noel Coward's 'If Love Were All', Lorenz Hart's 'My Romance', for instance. Garland seemed to have a particular affinity for songs like this. Her version of the Haymes and Brandt song 'That's All' (on *Just for Openers*, a collection of songs from her TV series) is a good example. The song uses the extravagant rhetoric of forever-love and is ironically off hand – 'I can only give you love that lasts forever, that's all'. In the final verse Garland gives a characteristic, all-out, slurred, Jolsoney delivery of the lyrics' demand for absolute love in return, then gives a tiny laugh before the final 'that's all':

If you're asking in return what I would want dear
You'll be glad to know that my requests are small

Say it's me that you'll adore
For now and evermore
(hm)
That's all
That's all.

I've spoken personally here, so I'd better make it clear that I'm not claiming that mine is the definitive gay response to Garland – I'm simply using myself in evidence alongside the writings used throughout the chapter. This passion-with-irony is another inflection of the gay sensibility, a doubleness which informs equally Russo's living-on-the-edge, Babuscio's theatricalisation-of-experience and indeed the whole suffering-and-strength motif.

Notions of a sensibility are elusive, though worth persevering with because they are attempts to get to grips with particular ways of feeling, something that semiotic criticism has shown little enthusiasm for. I want to turn now, however, to somewhat more concrete aspects of male gay culture, putting less stress on gay writing about Garland and more on bringing aspects of the culture in general together with aspects of Garland's image.

Garland works in an emotional register of great intensity which seems to bespeak equally suffering and survival, vulnerability and strength, theatricality and authenticity, passion and irony. In this she belongs to a tradition of women vocalists that includes Holiday, Piaf, Bassey, Barbra Streisand, Diana Ross (but not, say, Ella Fitzgerald or Peggy Lee), who have all been to varying degrees important in gay male culture. Garland's image may be identified the most with the gay male audience – Holiday was too early for any clear subcultural identification, Piaf was not a Hollywood star, and the others have not had to orchestrate the come-back as a symbol of survival as Garland did. But in terms of emotional register it is a question of circumstances and degree. Like all these women, she sings of desire for men and of relationships with men going wrong. Male singers could not (still largely do not) sing of these things. Gay men gravitated to women singers because they did sing of them, and perhaps also, for reasons discussed below, because gay men often thought of themselves as occupying a 'feminine position' by virtue of desiring other men. But Garland's very special place in this line of singers has to do with several other qualities of her image that were homologous with aspects of male gay culture. All the other singers mentioned have some of these qualities too, but none has all of them, and none is thus so overdetermined as a potential gay men's star. The qualities I am referring to are ordinariness, androgyny and camp.

ORDINARINESS

It may seem surprising to suggest that ordinariness is part of the male gay reading of Garland. However banal gayness may in reality be, it is not

usually thought of as being ordinary, and the urban gay male subculture (unlike the gay civil rights movement by and large) has never laid any emphasis on gays' ordinariness. It is not, in any case, Garland's direct embodiment of ordinariness that is important, the all-American, girl-next-door image that MGM promoted and that presumably accounted for a large part of her non-gay and pre-1950 appeal. What is important is rather a special relationship with ordinariness, particularly in the disparity between the image and the imputed real person, but also in the way she is set up in relation to moviegoing.

The insistent ordinariness of her MGM image is a prerequisite for the gay male reading. It cannot be overstressed just how dominant the image was, and we should also remember the degree to which ordinariness was offered as the ultimate moral attribute of the American way of life, rather than the ideals of piety, charity, heroism and so on, whose very idealness makes them not ordinary (cf. Marcuse 1964). In a culture in which the images of the small town and next door are the touchstones of normal life, stories about girls who live in small towns and fall in love with boys next door become the epitome of ordinary life. This is the story of the majority of Garland's MGM films. The Andy Hardy films (*Love Finds Andy Hardy* 1938, *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante* 1940, *Life Begins for Andy Hardy* 1941) as well as those other films with Mickey Rooney that were all but Andy Hardy films (*Babes in Arms* 1939, *Strike Up the Band* 1940, *Babes on Broadway* 1941) were clearly packaged and understood as hymns to ordinariness, and promotion material on Garland and Rooney amplified this, showing them for instance at soda fountains (the innocent meeting place of small-town kids) (Figure 3.2), playing tennis (the small-town game) (Figure 3.3) and singing at a simple upright piano with the Stars and Stripes on it (Figure 3.4). This small-town Americana iconography is repeated in their films together, most notably in the Andy Hardy series, themselves hymns to small-town America. The quintessential ordinariness of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* 1939 (though an orphan, she lives on a small farm, another emblem of US ordinariness) is registered by her blue gingham frock, her costume equally in *Pigskin Parade* 1936, *Everybody Sing* 1938, *Strike up the Band* 1940, *Little Nelly Kelly* 1940, *Till the Clouds Roll By* 1946 (Figures 3.5, 3.6). Some of the later films play on this. A chance encounter with a young man in New York, in *The Clock* 1945, leads to a series of incidents and vignettes culled straight from the imagery of the small-town films, rendering the anomic city into something more comfortable. In *The Good Old Summertime* 1949, a woman in love with a man she is writing to discovers that she works in the same shop as him – the discovery that your heart's desire is right where you are being the same structure as that of *The Wizard of Oz*. *Meet Me in St Louis* gives her the role and song ('The Boy Next Door') that most warmly celebrates her ordinary image, although some recent critics have suggested that in all sorts of ways the film also



Figure 3.2 Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland and friends at the soda fountain, *Babes in Arms* (BFI Collections)

undermines the very image of small-town family life it so apparently promotes (see Wood 1976 and Britton 1977; for a sophisticated analysis that remains close to the 'obvious' feeling of the film, see Bathrick 1976).

In the most obvious way, Garland was the image of heterosexual family normality. How, as one of my students put it to me, was a group excluded from and oppressed by this normality able to turn Garland into such an identification figure? The ordinariness is a starting point because, like Judy Garland, gay men are brought up to be ordinary. One is not brought up gay; on the contrary, everything in the culture seems to work against it. Had Garland remained an image of ordinary normality, like June Allyson or Deanna Durbin (who proved her normality by leaving Hollywood and settling down, happily married), she would not have been so available as a gay icon. It was the fact, as became clear after 1950, that she was not after all the ordinary girl she appeared to be that suggested a relationship to ordinariness homologous with that of gay identity. To turn out not-ordinary after being saturated with the values of ordinariness structures Garland's career and the standard gay biography alike.

A sense of this structuring could only fall into place after 1950. The press coverage of the suicide attempt, the *McCall's* story of her tribulations at



Figure 3.3 Garland as tennis player (BFI Collections)

home and (which was nearly the same thing) at MGM suggested that beneath the happy gloss of normality in the MGM films (and the radio appearances, the pin-ups and records) there was a story of difference. In a moment of what would conventionally be considered bad style, the writer of the article on Garland in the Birmingham GLF newsletter remarks, 'On



Figure 3.4 Rooney and Garland at a Stars and Stripes piano



Figure 3.5 Garland in gingham in *Strike up the Band* 1940 (BFI Collections)

the *surface*, Judy's life was happy, but problems were *surfacing*' (my emphases), exactly expressing the way in which a 'below-surface' became part of the surface of the image itself. Once this 'below-surface' was available, it became possible to look back at the films and discern, or think you could discern, not straightforward ordinariness but a special relationship to ordinariness.

In part this meant picking up on the camp elements in her image, which I discuss below, but equally and contradictorily as important are the 'authentic', 'natural' qualities always attributed to Garland (but not to other stars in the gay pantheon, Garbo, Hepburn, Davis, Bassey, Streisand, Ross). For the idea of a sense of difference below or within ordinariness resembles essentialist conceptions of homosexuality as a trait inborn or inbred (but in any event so early established as to be at least second nature), a trait that may be repressed but is always there. This notion of the natural and given quality of homosexuality has been equally important to the arguments of early gay rights reformers such as Edward Carpenter and Magnus Hirschfeld, to the Wolfenden committee and other post-war liberal discourses (including the Mattachine Society) and to the Gay Liberation movement (see Weeks 1977 and Watney 1980); and its affinity to the repression hypothesis favoured by *Playboy* and deconstructed by Michel Foucault (see



Figure 3.6 Garland in gingham in *Till the Clouds Roll By* 1946 (BFI Collections)

the chapter on Monroe in this book) is evident. Such a view of an essential difference within the framework of being brought up ordinary requires a star whose image insists on her or his authenticity, since the 'difference' must be embodied as true and natural. (See Dyer 1991 for further discussion of the notion of authenticity and Garland's relation to it.)

How might this essential difference be registered or discerned in Garland's image in her pre-1950 work? After that her difficulties (albeit overexaggerated or overpublicised) provide the keynote for her relationship to her early image. Her small part in *Judgement at Nuremberg* 1961 is that of an ordinary Hausfrau who reveals her extraordinary (for its pre-war time) friendship with a Jewish man; *I Could Go On Singing* 1962 has Garland (as rather obviously herself) trying to reinsert herself into family-and-marriage with her ex-lover and son, but the attempt clearly being shown as impossible. After 1950, the difficulty of the relationship to ordinariness could be expressed, but before?

In fact, the MGM films were never so uncomplicatedly normal. We caricature them when we see them thus, and take them at the level of both their own promotion and the condescension of contemporary reviewers. Although we don't know what people got from them, and although they do always end up on a note of affirmation of ordinariness, along the way they have dusted up a number of problems, contradictions, misfits, as any entertainment film must do if it is to connect with the lives of its viewers. What the gay reading-back into the film does is seize on those elements, become more conscious of them.

Two elements in particular of Garland's image in the MGM period are relevant here, emotional intensity and lack of glamour. I'll come back later to questions of the androgyny of her image and her camp humour, the former at odds with the sex role norms of the films, the latter tending to denaturalise their normality.

In the MGM films Garland plays a demure girl next door; even if she lives in New York, it is soon established that she comes from a small town and has small-town values (e.g. *The Clock* and *Easter Parade*); her hair is allowed to fall in a simple perm and she wears plain frocks or the kind of party clothes that nice young girls were supposed to. Yet when she sings, it is either in a loud, belting, peppy style or in a torch style. Her abilities as a belter were often stressed by comparing her with the more refined, parlour-singing style of, say, Deanna Durbin (in their MGM film – Garland's first, Durbin's only – *Every Sunday* 1936), or having her teach rising classical pianist José Iturbi how to swing it in *Thousands Cheer* 1943, or simply having her sing 'Swing Mr Mendelssohn' in *Everybody Sing* 1938 (cf. 'The Judy Garland Opera vs. Swing Number' in Feuer 1982: 57–9). Her singing of sad numbers in films of an otherwise happy-go-lucky tone – 'I Cried for You' in *Babes in Arms* 1939, 'But Not For Me' in *Girl Crazy* 1943, 'Better Luck Next Time' in *Easter Parade* 1948 – introduces a note of pathos closer in intensity and emotional register to either blues or opera than any of the other material in these films. The roles as written, sold, dressed and directed are about containing the peppy emotions of the belting in subordination to Rooney or whoever else was the male lead, while the torchy numbers seem like sudden switches of register not picked up elsewhere in the film. The

belting and the torchiness, both very much within registers of authenticity, are in excess of the safe, contained, small-town norms of the character, an essence of emotional difference akin to the idea of gayness as emotional difference born within normality.

The clearest elaboration on this is in *Meet Me in St Louis*, whose warm decor, harmonious scoring, comfortable cameo performances and glow of nostalgia beguile one into thinking of it as a straightforward evocation of the safety of small-town family life. The 'darker' elements do not come most strongly from Esther/Garland but from Tootie (Margaret O'Brien) and the Hallowe'en sequence; but the sense of the family containing Esther/Garland's pep and intensity is nonetheless present. As Andrew Britton has argued (Britton 1977), the film both represents forcibly the strength and vitality of its women characters and yet has them put all that energy into securing their own subordination to a man, either by maintaining (Mrs Smith) or getting (the Smith sisters) a husband. In terms of narrative Esther/Garland is the Miss Fix-It of the household, whether mediating between the family on how sweet or sour the ketchup should be, or trying to arrange for Rose to have her telephone call with Warren in private, or standing up for Tootie when she thinks the latter has been beaten up by the boy next door, John (Tom Drake). In terms of numbers, she not only has peppy songs to sing like 'Skip to My Lou' and 'The Trolley Song' but is shot and directed in such a way that the energy and flow of the song seem to come from her, either because she initiates the square-dance patterns of the former or from the way the chorus groups around her and responds to her gestures in the latter. In these ways *Meet Me in St Louis* is a celebration of Garland's peppiness; yet the film also shows the awkwardness of this pep, the need to contain it. This is done humorously, but nonetheless consistently. Her peppiness makes her forward or leads her into embarrassing situations – it is she who sings the man's part to John Truitt in 'Over the Bannister Leaning', having carefully stage managed a romantic situation (turning low the lights); so fierce is she in defence of Tootie (mistakenly as it turns out) that John backs away from her when she returns to apologise, her actions having confirmed his inept observation at the end of the party that she has 'a mighty strong grip for a girl'. Many of the examples here I'm taking from Andrew Britton's analysis, and he notes the way that at the end of 'The Trolley Song', on the words 'with his hand holding mine', Esther/Garland takes hold of her own hand, a gesture that suggests how much the erotic charge of the story of the song emanates from her alone. This pep must be confined if she is to get the boy next door and end up like her mother – by pinching the 'bloom' out of her cheeks, by squeezing herself into the tightest corset, by accepting the humiliation of going with Granddad to the Christmas ball and dancing with the least attractive men. It is only after all this that John proposes to her.

Following the proposal, Esther/Garland goes home and finds Tootie

crying at the thought of leaving St Louis for New York; she sings to her the one torchy number in the film (though the title of the song would not alert one to the intensity of the way it is sung and used in the film), 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas'. So affecting is the song that, far from being comforted, Tootie rushes out into the garden and hacks down the snow people she and her sisters and brother had made. Whether you take these snow people to represent parents or, as Tootie says, her elder siblings and their boy or girl friends, it is a violently emotional moment in which Tootie seeks to destroy the representatives of her social world. Yet the intensity that has got to Tootie may also be understood to spring from Esther/Garland's sense of defeat, her recognition that getting what she wants (John as husband) marks the end of pep and vitality. Certainly the placing of this sadly ironic song and the singing of it with such yearning intensity means that it expresses more than uncertainty about where they will all be next Christmas (which is all the lyrics would suggest).

In *Meet Me in St Louis* then Garland is the nice ordinary girl with extraordinary reserves of peppy energy and torchy emotion. In terms of the social values of its day, there is no reason why the gradual containment of this energy and emotion should be regretted – growing up was about containing feeling; getting a husband was what adolescent female energies were for. But given the vagueness and almost comic straightness of John (that first shot of him standing with his pipe in the next-door garden) and given the pallid (blue and cream after all those reds, browns and yellows) and unspectacular quality of the final scene (which one would expect to be a splurge of spectacle in an MGM musical), one could certainly come away remembering best the pep and torchiness, the emotional difference contained within the normal confines of the Smith family.

Esther is clearly meant to be a pretty girl and Garland is shot in the film in a conventionally glamorous way – in *Meet Me in St Louis* we are supposed to think of Judy Garland as physically attractive. But in many ways this is unusual; more often there is a clear indication that we are not to think of her on a par with other Hollywood female glamour stars. Her sense of inadequacy and inferiority as compared to these stars of her own age and period was recorded in the 1952 *McCall's* article and elsewhere. In the light of this one can get a strong sense of it being structured into her image and films. In *Everybody Sing* Billie Burke, playing Garland's mother, refers to her as her 'ugly duckling' and this was to have been the title of the film. Later Burke says to her and her (film) sister, 'You're looking very pretty this morning, both of you, even Judy.' When Allan Jones introduces her first appearance at the night club he tells the audience they are about to see a 'real prima donna' and makes the well-known gesture indicating a curvaceous female anatomy – it is supposed then to be cute and funny when dumpy little Judy comes on to sing. During 'I Cried For You' in *Babes in Arms*, she (as Patsy Burton) soliloquises about herself:

I know I'm no glamour girl . . . But maybe someday you'll realize that glamour isn't the only thing in this world . . . Anyway, I might be pretty good-looking myself when I grow out of this ugly duckling stage. And you're no Clark Gable yourself.

She is holding a photo of Mickey Moran/Mickey Rooney just as she did of Clark Gable in 'Dear Mr Gable' ('You Made Me Love You') (Figure 3.7) in *Broadway Melody of 1938*, the embodiment of the girl sick with love for a man she cannot possibly attain. Rooney never has a number or speech similar to this in any film, and both films and promotion suggested he was constantly pursued by girls. Garland is not even as attractive as her leading man.

She is often compared to other glamour girls in the films – to Lana Turner in *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (and the threat of losing Andy Hardy to a glamour girl seems to be a recurrent narrative element in the series), to June Preisser in *Babes in Arms*, to Ann Miller in *Easter Parade*, to Gloria de Haven in *Summer Stock*. (In *Easter Parade* Miller/Nadine can make men's heads turn simply by walking down the street, whereas Garland/Hannah has to pull a grotesque funny face to achieve the same effect.) *Ziegfeld Girl* 1941, a film very consciously using the images of its three female stars, compares her to both Lana Turner/Sheila and Hedy Lamarr/Sandra as prospective Ziegfeld girls. Lamarr/Sandra most approximates to the Ziegfeld model of female pulchritude, but her very classiness makes her reject the Follies by the end of the film. Turner/Sheila is closer in spirit to the burlesque sexual display of the Ziegfeld enterprise, but her very vulgarity makes her unstable, unable to be truly professional, and her career ends in tragedy (see Dyer 2002a). Garland/Susan is the only one to survive, but she does so because of her professional, born-in-a-trunk skills and talent, not because of her Ziegfeldesque looks. In the big production numbers, it seems that the film does not quite know what to do with her. In a film of admittedly grotesque costuming, there is still a fit between what Lamarr/Sandra and Turner/Sheila wear and their particular glamour image. In the production still showing the costumes for 'Minnie from Trinidad' (Figure 3.8), Lamarr/Sandra wears a costume that covers her body and emphasises her height (the 'statuesque' quality supposedly characteristic of the Ziegfeld Girl) – her breasts and vulva are suggested by the placing of the outsize flowers, but the fact that these are orchids and other exotic-looking flowers draws from an iconography of class and wealth, the world of haute couture that Ziegfeld shows often called upon. She stands straight with an air of indifference on her face. Turner/Sheila, on the other hand, stands with one of her legs presented to the viewer, with bare arms and a more sultry expression on her face, as befits her more directly sexual image (as both character and star). The costume emphasises her body, the flowers at



Figure 3.7 'Dear Mr Gable' ('You Made Me Love You'), *Broadway Melody of 1938* 1937 (BFI Collections)

her bosom not, as with Lamarr/Sandra, symbolising the 'beauty' of her breasts but drawing attention to their actual shape beneath the fabric. Garland/Susan, on the other hand, wears a skirt that is open to above the knees and her shoulders are bare, but the costume neither shows off her



Figure 3.8 'Minnie From Trinidad', *Ziegfeld Girl* 1941 (BFI Collections)

body nor symbolises it – on the contrary, the conflicting lines of the fabric itself, the way it hangs and the accessories of loose belt and bow all cut across and break up her body shape. Though all the costumes are from a certain perspective ridiculous, Garland/Susan's hat here is surely ridiculous even in the costuming's own terms. She stands simply and smiles frankly, neither haughty nor sexy. The film does not in dialogue refer to Garland/Susan's looks, but both narrative (she gets to the top on talent) and costuming suggest that she does not have and cannot carry off glamour.

Not being glamorous is to fail at femininity, to fail at one's sex role. She might be valued for her peppy singing, but pretty much as one of the boys. Lack of glamour – and the painful sense of this registered in the torchy numbers which are often occasioned by a sense of inferiority – might correspond with several different ways in which gay men think about themselves in relation to their sexuality and sexual attractiveness, as gender misfits (see below), as physically deformed (if not bodily, at least biologically), and so on. But of course Judy does get Mickey, does get to sing for Clark Gable at his birthday party, does get to be the star of a Ziegfeld show.

The pleasure of identification with this misfit could also be that she does get her heart's desire, as in wish fulfilment alongside her we may too.

There is one further important aspect of the way that Garland is situated in relation to ordinariness: as a movie fan. The moment that established her as a star was the image of her singing to a photograph of Clark Gable; early promotion photos showed her as an avid moviegoer. She is not so much a movie star herself as a stand-in for us the audience. In all her MGM films this is the point of departure, and also the point of entry for us into the magic world of films, for the Garland character is with us outside the magic movie world and yet has the ability to enter it. The films with Rooney play on this in relation to fan worship. He is always the star of the small town, the boy all the girls adore, the leader of the band; Garland is the plain girl who longs for him and gets him in the end. Other films place her outside the surrogate world of movie magic – Oz, glamour in *Ziegfeld Girl*, show business in *Presenting Lily Mars*, *Easter Parade*, *The Pirate* and *Summer Stock*. We go to see the films, for the spectacle of Oz, of big production numbers, of romantic moments. Garland is the person initially outside all this and as taken with it as we are; she enters the spectacle and becomes part of it, as we in our absorption in the dark may.

MGM films both celebrate ordinariness and offer the most extravagant spectacle and roster of stars of all the Hollywood studios; Garland makes the link between these two aspects of the studio's product, makes the spectacle accessible to ordinariness. She is able to articulate directly the desire to escape into the world of the movies. The use of movies as escape is a defining feature of the construction of entertainment, which has had a particular importance in gay men's lives. The isolation of the movie house from other forms of social interaction (other, of course, than heterosexual petting) and the felt isolation of gays from their heterosexual peers are of a piece, giving the movies a very particular place in the experience of many gay men. Garland can be the representation of the desire to live in the movies, because she is herself an ordinary person who escapes into the magic of films.

The concerts amplify this by their constant reference back to her old films; the more she could be treated as 'one of us', the more alive could be the sense of her relationship to the movies, one of us who entered the magic world. Only now it is nostalgia for having entered that world. Part of the intensity of 'Over the Rainbow' at the concerts is a meeting of the moment of yearning to enter the magic world and the moment of remembering entering it. It is yearning for the moment of yearning, perhaps a desire to recover the innocence of believing you could enter the magic world. Just as Garland lost her innocence in her subsequent life (as it was publicly known), so gay men could construct their own biographies as a loss of innocence as dramatic as hers. We do well to remember, of course, that the notion of the innocence of young people's relation to fiction is itself a

culturally and historically specific understanding, and one that probably structures most nineteenth- and twentieth-century biography. Gay men are not alone in feeling they have lost their innocence – Garland singing 'Over the Rainbow' only takes on a particular resonance for the gay reading because it is of a piece with all the other aspects of her image that can be read from a gay perspective.

ANDROGYNY

If Garland could be made to articulate a relationship to ordinariness, that was also because she could be held to be 'different'. In particular, she could be seen as in some sense androgynous, as a gender in-between. It is common in nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought to conflate sexuality and gender. Biological sex difference is assumed to give rise to different sexualities; biological sex gives not only the social sex roles of masculinity and femininity, but also 'appropriate' roles for men and women within heterosexuality. In this context, homosexuality is viewed as 'in-between', an absence of heterosexuality which must go along with an absence of true or full masculinity or femininity. Hence gay men and lesbians are in-betweens, androgynous by gender because not fitting the masculinity and femininity bestowed by heterosexual sexuality. It is important to stress that this concept of a biological basis to homosexuality has not only been used against gay people (gays seen as deformities of nature, or as sick, that is, biologically unwell), but has also been used as a major argument of progressive gay movements, where the fundamental argument has been – if it's natural, how can it be wrong? Magnus Hirschfeld, the leading spokesperson of the German gay movement before 1933, argued, with clinical data and photos to back it up, that gay people were physically different from heterosexual masculine men and feminine women (see Steakley 1975). This view was equally implicit in the early declaration of the Chicago Society for Human Rights, almost certainly the first gay rights organisation in the USA, founded in 1924, which refers to 'people . . . of mental and physical abnormalities' (Katz 1976: 385) in defining gay people. The more successful Mattachine Society declared in its 1950 prospectus:

We, the androgynes of the world, have formed this responsible corporate body to demonstrate by our efforts that our physiological and psychological handicaps need be no deterrent in integrating 10% of the world's population towards the constructive social progress of mankind.

(*ibid.*: 410)

Even when gay people have rejected such notions of themselves, there is still a sense of how ambiguously we are placed in relation to gender and often a

welcoming of that as a release from the rigidity of the sex roles. Michael Bronski (1978: 205) in his article on gay men's fondness for stars such as Garland, Davis, Streisand and so on, links this implicitly to a notion of the refinement of gay sexuality:

The most refined form of sexual attractiveness (as well as the most refined form of sexual pleasure) consists of going against the grain of one's sex . . . It is not surprising that in a society which places so much emphasis upon gender roles gay men should be drawn to personalities that blur such distinctions.

The idea then of gender androgyny expressing homosexuality, or being appealing to homosexual people, is deeply ingrained in straight and gay consciousness alike. Thus although Garland did not express 'sexual androgyny' (in the sense of homosexuality),⁴ it was enough that she so regularly expressed 'gender androgyny'.

One of Garland's most popular records (of a song never used in her films) is 'In-between'. In this she bemoans, comically, her status as an 'in-between'. Recorded soon after 'Dear Mr Gable' ('You Made Me Love You'), what the teenage singer is in between is childhood and adulthood and this is certainly the burden of the lyrics. Yet the song, written by Roger Edens especially for her, does also hint that to be a teenage girl is to be a gender misfit, to have no appropriate role – 'Too old for toys/Too young for boys' – and it draws on the idea of unattractiveness discussed above and which can clearly be seen to relate to ideas of achieving femininity:

My dad says I should bother more
About my lack of grammar
The only thing that bothers me
Is my lack of glamour.

In any event, the song, especially given the fact that it is sung by Judy Garland, has a potential gay resonance strong enough to be used by David Clough for his BBC television play *Belles* (transmitted 27.5.83) about a drag act performing, through an error of booking, at a strait-laced night club. The play explored the way that drag might be seen as a challenge to straight society, but it reaches that point via the doubts the main character Michael (Martyn Hesford) has about himself. At one moment in this earlier part he listens to Garland singing 'In-between'; he has on drag make-up but no wig, thus underlining the gender confusion of his act; and he listens in close-up to the verse which, taken (as here) without the chorus that follows, can easily be assumed to be about homosexuality or drag:

Fifteen thousand times a day
I hear a voice within me say
Hide yourself behind a screen
You shouldn't be heard
You shouldn't be seen
You're just an awful in-between
That's what I am
An in-between
It's just like small pox quarantine
I can't do this
I can't go there
I'm just a circle in a square
I don't fit in anywhere.

Images of Garland as androgynous go right back to the earliest part of her career. A still from *The Big Revue* 1929, when she was still Frances Gumm, shows her with her sisters, unmistakably little girls but wearing playful versions of male clothing – top hats (with polka dots reminiscent of minstrel garb), tuxedo fronts and cuffs (Figure 3.9). Similarly, she wore a sailor dress for promotion pictures with Jackie Cooper in 1936, overalls in contrast to Deanna Durbin in *Every Sunday* 1936, dungarees in *Everybody Sing* 1938 and a cowgirl outfit in *Girl Crazy* 1943 (Figure 3.10), and so on. Yet in context none of these is remarkable. A certain androgyny has always been permissible for women in fashion, in chorus girl costumes, in the tomboy role. The markers of masculinity in such cases – a hat, a collar, a cuff – are never so strong as the markers of femininity – bosom, skirt, exposed stockinged legs. It is an interesting fact that the assumption of a little masculinity is a standard feature of woman-as-spectacle. Frequently the allusion is not to adult masculinity but to boyishness – the sailor suit refers to a standard item of boys' wear in the early part of the twentieth century, the tomboy connotes the notion of a pre-adolescent phase. Although one could no doubt reread these standard androgynous images in a gay way, it seems unnecessary – such images are probably too normalised really to stand out.

The one exception is perhaps her role in Fanny Brice's *Baby Snooks* routine in the final scene in *Everybody Sing* (Figure 3.11). Garland comes on dressed in a short-trousered velvet suit. 'Is you a girl or boy?' asks Brice, dressed in a baby's nightie. 'They call me Little Lord Fauntleroy,' replied Garland, evading the question. 'What's a Fauntleroy?' counters Brice, and the rest of the number plays around with this, with Judy never able to say whether she is male or female. Although a comic routine, Garland performs it with an increasingly tremulous and frustrated quality as it develops. *Everybody Sing* is very much a vehicle film, tailored to the images of all its stars. Although only her second full role in a feature, the Garland character is from the start put down as lovable but unattractive ('mother's little ugly

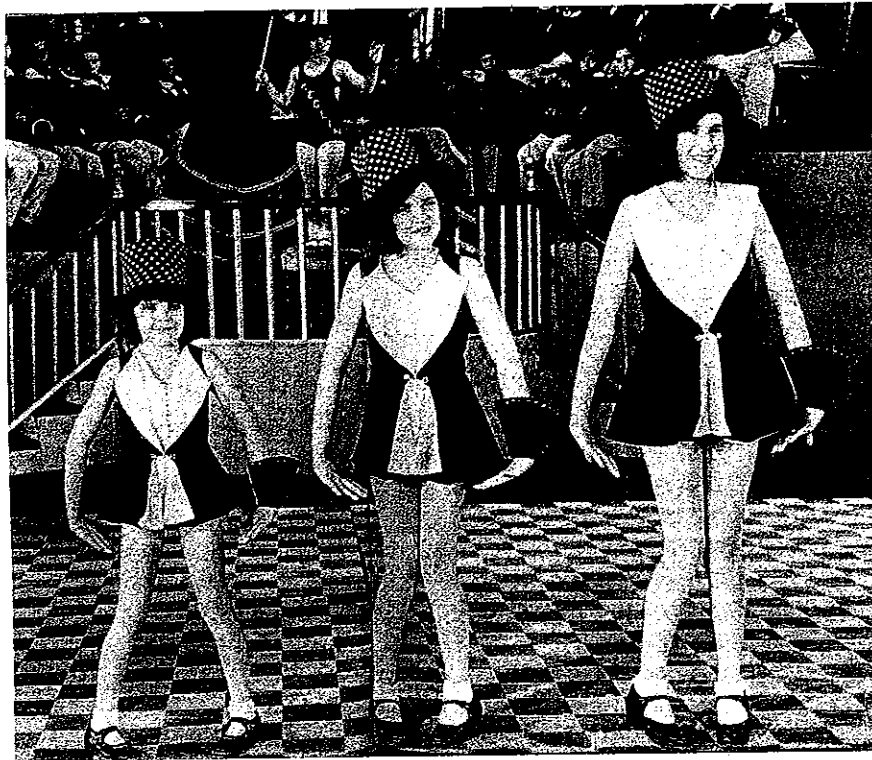


Figure 3.9 The Gumm Sisters (Judy Garland left) in *The Big Revue* 1929 (photo Lester Glassner)

duckling'), and with her first in dungarees for 'Down on Melody Farm' and then done up as Little Lord Fauntleroy the film rather insistently allies this unattractiveness to in-betweenism. It is, however, only later in her career that the androgyny of Garland goes much further, and in two opposing directions – stylish and tragi-comic, vampish and trampish.

'Get Happy' from *Summer Stock* represents the former, and yields one of the most often reproduced images of Garland (Figure 3.12). It is not only the outfit itself that creates the stylish androgyny, but Garland's movement. Near the beginning she pushes her hat from behind with her palm over her brow, a gesture taken from Apache dancing, suggesting the male going in for the sexual kill. Towards the end she pushes it back from the front with her thumb, in a gesture more reminiscent of James Cagney getting down to business. Garland's relationship to the male dancers is ambivalent too. She is centred by them and this, plus her stockinged legs, insists on her femininity, but they do not surround and present her as other male choruses do in musical numbers centred on a female star. They are choreographed in a



Figure 3.10 Rooney and Garland in *Girl Crazy* 1943 (BFI Collections)



Figure 3.11 Garland and Fanny Brice in *Everybody Sing* 1938 (BFI Collections)

balanced (but not uniform) style around her, and her dancing picks up on the movements of different men at different times. In other words, she is to some degree 'one of the boys', especially in a movement of flexing the thighs forward and heels up that is used for men in urban ballets of the kind Jerome Robbins developed. As Jane Feuer has pointed out (1982: 119), this



Figure 3.12 'Get Happy', *Summer Stock* 1950 (BFI Collections)

image from her last number in an MGM film is picked up by her first number in her next film (but four years later and post-1950), *A Star is Born* (Figure 3.13). Costuming and routine are similar, and the sense of being one of the boys is heightened by her amused and professional handling of Norman, who stumbles drunkenly on stage during the number 'You Gotta Have Me Go With You'. Yet the number is preceded by the shot that



Figure 3.13 Publicity shot for *A Star is Born* 1956 in 'You Gotta Have Me Go With You' outfit

introduces her in the film; she is seen from behind adjusting her stockings, a standard glamour introductory shot. In 'Get Happy' and 'You Gotta ...' she is always both glamorous, sexy and one of the boys, a kind of androgyny not dissimilar to that of Dietrich and Garbo. It is an androgynous image with sex appeal.

This sort of image was used in the concerts and on television, but even more characteristic were the tramp and clown outfits derived from 'A Couple of Swells' in *Easter Parade* (Figure 3.14) and 'Be A Clown' in *The Pirate* (Figure 3.18). There is an echo of it in the ragamuffin look in 'Lose That Long Face' in *A Star is Born*, a look used in *Inside Daisy Clover* in evident reference to Garland. Her man's shirt and tights for 'Somewhere There's a Someone' in *A Star is Born* is less evidently within this style, but the narrative context (cheering up Norman by evoking the absurdity of the movie world from which he is now excluded) suggests a tragi-comic element, and the outfit has yielded a particularly memorable off-the-set portrait in this particular androgynous mode (Figure 3.15).

It was the concerts and television shows that most used the tramp look. The first Palace show in 1951 rechoreographed 'A Couple of Swells' and



Figure 3.14 'A Couple of Swells', Fred Astaire and Garland in *Easter Parade* 1948 (BFI Collections)

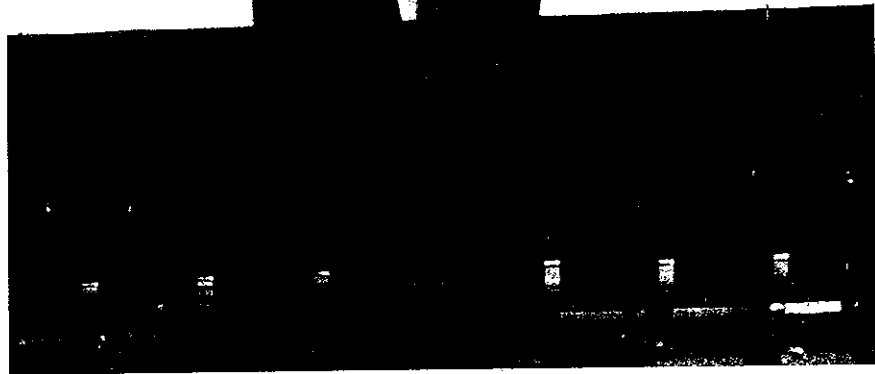


Figure 3.15 Judy Garland during shooting for *A Star is Born* (Bob Willoughby)

placed it late in the show so that Garland was still in its costume for the final 'Over the Rainbow'. This pattern was reworked in all the subsequent stage shows. The concerts, which were not in this sense staged, also often ended with Garland seated on the edge of the stage in a spotlight that lit only her face which, with its cropped hairstyle, could evoke the tramp image (Figure 3.16). Whereas the vamp-androgyne is an image that emphasises sexuality, the tramp-androgyne dissolves both sexuality and gender. Its use equally for comic and sentimental numbers puts it straight in the line of the classic tragi-comic image of the clown, an evocation of the show business heritage very appropriate for Garland's 'Miss Show Business' tag. If in the vamp gay men could identify with someone whose sexuality is accepted by the boys, in the tramp we could identify with someone who has left questions of sexuality behind in an androgyne that is not so much in-between (marked



Figure 3.16 Finale, Judy at the Palace, 1951

as both feminine and masculine) as without gender. The loose clothing (though it is male) conceals the shape of the body; and the abstraction of the image of just a face in a spotlight completes the dream of escape from sex role.

CAMP

Third, Judy Garland is camp. Several people have tried to define both what camp is and its relationship to the situation and experience of gay men. (I do not propose to re-enter the fray of whether it is politically and culturally progressive – for, see Cohen and Dyer 1980; against, see Britton, 1978/79.) It clearly is a defining feature of the male gay subculture. Jack Babuscio (1977) suggests that it is the fact of being able to pass for straight that has given gays the characteristically camp awareness of surfaces, of the social constructedness of sex roles (see also Russo 1979 and Dyer 2000e). Mark Booth (1983) stresses gay men's sense of marginality which is turned into an excessive commitment to the marginal (the superficial, the trivial) in culture. Either way, camp is a characteristically gay way of handling the values, images and products of the dominant culture through irony, exaggeration, trivialisation, theatricalisation and an ambivalent making fun of and out of the serious and respectable. (See, in addition to those already cited, Sontag 1964 and Boone 1979, notably his discussion of 'trivialisation', and especially Cleto 1999.)

The object of camp's making fun is often a star like Bette Davis or Shirley Bassey, and Garland can be read like that. She is imitable, her appearance and gestures copiable in drag acts (e.g. Jim Bailey, Craig Russell in *Outrageous!*); her later histrionic style can be welcomed as wonderfully over-the-top; her ordinariness in her MGM films can be seen as camp, as 'failed seriousness' (Sontag) or else the artificiality of naturalness and normality – as one writer put it:

What I liked about this star was a sort of naive innocence, a sweetness that I believe was genuine. Now, however, I think that the gay audience – especially the sophisticated segment – would or might look upon her style as unintentional camp. This effect, of course, also has to do with the kinds of roles, as well as the movie vehicles, that she played in. Because her style, her stance, was so damned 'straight' (I use the word meaning 'serious' or 'sober'), it amounted to, as I said, that of camp or at least what appeared to be camp.

(Letter to author)

Even this writer doesn't say that he reads Garland like this, and I have no evidence to suggest that it is the predominant way in which Garland is

camp. Anybody can be read as camp (though some lend themselves to it more readily than others), but Garland is far more inward with camp. She is not a star turned into camp, but a star who expresses camp attitudes.

In the later years this was clear, particularly in the chat at the concerts and (specially composed) verses of the songs. At Carnegie Hall, she leads into 'San Francisco' with the verse:

I never will forget
Jeanette MacDonald
Just to think of her
It gives my heart a pang
I never will forget
How that brave Jeanette
Just stood there
In the ruins
And sang
A-a-a – and sang –

MacDonald was well established as camp queen of an already pretty camp genre, operetta. Garland extends the beat on a hum before singing her name and pauses for three waves of laughter before proceeding – for that audience, it was enough to mention MacDonald's name to get a camp response. The send-up (of MacDonald singing in the debris of an earthquake in the film *San Francisco*) that follows serves for those who haven't already got the point that MacDonald is camp.

At her last appearance at the Talk of the Town (like the Carnegie Hall concert, available on record), she introduces 'I'd Like to Hate Myself in the Morning':

I have to do a new song. I haven't been taught a new song since Clive Brooks was a girl. (Laughter) Was he?

Here the gay connection is more direct – Brooks is not only camp because of his high, clipped upper-class English accent, but because his gender can be called into question. Her 'Was he?' presumably is a question about Brooks' sexuality, to which gay cognoscenti in the audience perhaps knew the answer.

Garland's reputation for being camp (rather than being seen as camp) was reinforced by stories that were published after her death. Her own awareness of the gay connection is made clear. Barry Conley in *Gay News* quotes (as have others) Liza Minnelli quoting her mother – 'When I die I have visions of fags singing 'Over the Rainbow' and the flag at Fire Island being flown at half mast' (Conley 1972:11), Fire Island being a largely gay

beach resort near New York. Christopher Finch (1975: 129–30) writes at length of her ease in the predominantly gay milieu of the Freed unit while Brad Steiger (1969: 103–4) talks of her frequenting gay bars in New York in the sixties. One person who wrote to me told me that her

last professional engagement in New York City was when she took money under the table singing in a lesbian bar on East 72nd Street called 'Sisters' in about 1968–9. This \$50 per session or so was paid to support her whenever she would 'wander in' and pretend to sing 'impromptu' so she could support her drug habit. Very sad but nonetheless true.

(Letter to author)

Although published after her death, these accounts do suggest how versed she was, or could be assumed to be, in gay culture, how inward with its procedures and cadences.⁵

The effect of her camp is to act back on her films, in two ways. First, a repertoire of stories has built up around her own attitude to her work. The more these become part of gay fan talk, the more they will inform perception of the films. The simple sparkle of 'Who (Stole My Heart Away)?' from *Till the Clouds Roll By* 1946 becomes ironic when one knows Garland's apparent mirth at singing the song when she was several months pregnant. Her role as the sweet, out-of-town girl in *Easter Parade* may look more acerbic when informed by what Charles Walters says she said to him before shooting:

Look sweetie, I'm no June Allyson, you know. Don't get cute with me. None of that batting-the-eyelids bit, or the fluffing the hair routine for me, buddy!

(quoted in Finch 1975: 158)

The knife edge between camp and hurt, a key register of gay culture, is caught when one takes together her intense performance of the scene after Norman's death in *A Star is Born* and her remark quoted by George Cukor, who had expressed amazement that she had reproduced such intensity over two long takes:

Oh, that's nothing. Come over to my house any afternoon. I do it every afternoon. But I only do it once at home.

(ibid.: 197)

Similarly one may hear the pathos of the later performances of 'Over the

Rainbow' differently when one has at the back of one's mind Garland's remark to a fan who begged her never to 'forget the rainbow' – 'Why, madam . . . how could I ever forget the rainbow? I've got rainbows up my ass' (Conley 1972:10 – the source of the story is Liza Minnelli).

But, second, this bringing together of Garland's reported remarks and the films is not necessary, because there is camp in the text of the films themselves. Her films with Vincente Minnelli, especially 'The Great Lady Gives an Interview' in *Ziegfeld Follies* 1946 and *The Pirate* 1948, are rather obviously camp pieces, with their elements of theatricality, parody and obvious artifice. Garland's camp humour often has the effect of sending up the tone and conventions of her films. In *Presenting Lily Mars* 1943 she sings 'When I Hear Beautiful Music' in a night club, a scene in which the character's star quality is demonstrated. It is camp in two ways. First, Garland mocks the operetta-style singing of Marta Eggerth, who has sung the song earlier in the film. This is a standard camp Garland routine, used on radio broadcasts in the late thirties and forties as well as in other films – she uses excessively elaborated trills, oversweetened notes and hand-wringing, shoulder-rolling, lip-curling gestures to summon up the pretty-pretty soprano style of Jeanette MacDonald, Deanna Durbin and other such stars. Second, Garland's performance also sends up this standard girl-gets-big-break-in-night-club. As a waiter flashes by with a tray held aloft, Garland's eyes roll, she backs away from him, then smirks at this detail of restaurant mise-en-scène that would go by unnoticed in a more straight performance. There are several other such moments where Garland draws attention to the way the number has been set up, culminating in her stumbling over the inconveniently placed drum set, undercutting any notion of this as a straightforward moment of star quality triumphant.

In such ways Garland can seem to be reflecting back either on her own image in the film or on the vehicle in which she has been placed. As Wade Jennings (1979: 324) puts it, there is 'lurking in her eyes and the corners of her mouth . . . [a] suppressed mirth . . . [that] threatens to mock the silly plot and the two-dimensional character she plays'. When Dorothy emerges from the house into Oz for the first time, she says to her dog, 'Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore.' It's obviously a funny line, given the shimmering Oz sets, but is it said in a knowing, camp way? Are we laughing directly at Dorothy's charming naivety, or with Garland at the over-the-top sets and Dorothy's artful gingham frock? Impossible to determine, of course, though Christopher Finch (1975: 85) does point out that, at 17, Garland in *The Wizard of Oz* is 'an adolescent with a grown-up's singing voice acting the part of a child' – the possibility of ambivalence, play, fun with the part and plot is at least there. In 1982, Rockshots, a gay greetings card company, issued a card depicting Garland as Dorothy, in gingham with Toto in a basket, in a gay bar, with her opening line in Oz as the message inside (Figure 3.17). It is not just the incongruity of juxtaposing Dorothy/Garland



Figure 3.17 'Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore' (Warren Fricke/Rockshots, 1982)

and men in gay macho-style clothes and poses that is camp; the card has picked up on Garland's irony towards Dorothy and Oz, an irony very easily transposed by gay men to their cultivation of an exaggeratedly masculine style and scene. Just as Garland in Oz can be seen as both in the magic world and yet standing outside it too, so gay culture is ambivalent about its construction of a fantasy scene that is both keenly desired and obviously a put-on.

For the most part Garland's campness might be seen as mildly sabotaging her roles and films. (Those who dislike camp feel that it is in fact deeply destructive in its insistently making fun of everything – see Britton 1978/79.) It is seldom of a piece with the rest of the film, and only *The Pirate* seems to use Garland's campness in a sustained fashion in its play with sex roles and spectacular illusion, two of the standard pleasures musicals offer.

Sex role send-up centres on the male in *The Pirate* and Gene Kelly's role and performance as Serafin. Garland as Manuela functions in two ways in relation to this. First, she is given a string of lines to deflate his machismo, whether it be his corny chatting up of her at their first meeting or his pretending to be the pirate Macoco later in the film. In the first case she directly mocks his lines; in the second, when she has just discovered that he is not really Macoco, she wildly exaggerates the excitement of his virility while at the same time humorously hitting where it really hurts him, Serafin,

by saying what a lousy actor he is (and thus calling forth a display of bruised male pride, in itself a standard moment in Gene Kelly films). Since Manuela is also a sweet, vulnerable girl, yearning for her dreams to come true (in other words, the standard Garland role), these salty quips unsettle the easy acceptance of that girlish image; and as a lot of the humour is underscored by the way Garland delivers the lines, it can seem like the performer wittily intervening to deconstruct the characters she is playing and playing opposite.

Second, in terms of narrative, Garland/Manuela is placed as the subject of desire; that is, the film is about her desire for a truly exciting life, and man. She constructs this desire in the image of the pirate Macoco, Mack the Black, that she has learnt from her story books. The film plays on this desire, at the same time playing with the Garland image. It turns out that, as in *The Wizard of Oz*, *Meet Me in St Louis* and so many of her films, she is indeed engaged to Macoco, only neither she nor anyone else in the town knows it. The problem is that the real Macoco is nothing like the story-book Mack the Black – he is the fat, fussy mayor of the town. Garland/Manuela has her heart's desire right at hand – only he doesn't look like her heart's desire at all, a point brought out later by the governor-general's rather lascivious comparison of Serafin (whom he thinks is Macoco) and the usual dull round of real pirates. When, in their betrothal scene, Macoco (alias Don Pedro) tells Garland/Manuela that he has no plans to take her travelling, that home is best, there is a reaction shot of her uttering, appalled, the word 'home', the exact reversal in tone of Dorothy/Garland's line at the end of *The Wizard of Oz* or Esther/Garland's at the end of *Meet Me in St Louis*.

The person who does look like her heart's desire, but who she knows can only play the part of it, is the actor Serafin. Through the film's complex narrative peripeteia Manuela/Garland is led to the point where she knowingly settles for the illusion of her heart's desire – she settles for Serafin.

In addition to this narrative progression, the film also suggests the degree to which Manuela's fantasies are themselves socially constructed fictions. Under hypnosis (which close-ups clearly indicate we are meant to take as having really occurred), Manuela expresses her true feelings to Serafin – but these turn out to be an amalgam of lines from earlier in the film, taken either from her story book on Macoco or from what Kelly/Serafin has said to her when he tries to chat her up. So from the book we get 'Someday he'll swoop down on me like a chicken hawk and carry me away', from Serafin's spiel 'Beneath this prim exterior there are depths of emotion, romantic longings.' Garland hardens her voice for such lines, to give them a dryly comic edge; yet her performance of going into hypnosis is soft and tremulous, her performance of the ensuing 'Mack the Black' deliriously all-out (with wildly swinging camera movements to underscore this). This kind of moving in and out of the 'emotional truth' of the character and situation

allows the film, allows Garland, to point to both the vivid intensity of repressed feelings and the fact that those feelings are themselves culturally constructed, not a given authenticity.

In the second hypnosis scene, Garland/Manuela pretends to be hypnotised in order to flush out Don Pedro (whom she has only just realised is Macoco) and save Serafin (who is about to be hanged as Macoco). Again she plays out the exaggerated longing for his virility as she did before when mocking Serafin's impersonation of Macoco; here it is actually on Serafin's stage, thus doubly underlining this declaration of desire as performance. With the way it is played and cut-ins of Don Pedro getting more and more frustrated that this love is not being directed at him, the real Macoco, the whole scene works several levels of camp together. However, when Garland/Manuela then sings 'Love of My Life' to Kelly/Serafin/Macoco, although still on stage the film goes into a soft-focus close-up and standard heartfelt crooning from Garland – in other words, at the point in the film most signalled as illusion, we get the most direct expression of 'true' feeling. It is in the recognition of illusion that camp finds reality.

The treatment of men as spectacle reiterates this. It is Kelly, not Garland, who is the centre of the big production numbers, 'Niña' and 'The Pirate Ballet', each of them emphasising sex through costuming (tights and shorts, respectively), Kelly's movement (for instance, wiggling his bottom at the groups of women clustered about him in 'Niña', flexing his thighs in 'The Pirate Ballet') and camerawork (sinuous camera movement in the first, low-angle, crotch-centred positioning in the second). 'Niña' is not observed by Garland/Manuela, but generally in the film man/Kelly as spectacle is established as being from her point of view. (In itself quite unusual in Hollywood films – *Rebecca*, for instance, a film whose first half hour is entirely constructed around the never named female protagonist's desire for Maxim/Laurence Olivier, nonetheless entirely denies this character any point of view shots of him.) The film keeps shifting its/our perspective on how we are to take Garland/Manuela's libidinous looking. The first introduction of the fantasy of Mack the Black is through the story-book pictures of him. The film starts with this, with us directly enjoying the coloured drawings of him (in which he is predominantly constructed as a figure of rape fantasy). It is only after a few pages of drawings have been turned that the camera draws back and we discover we have been entering the fantasy through Manuela's point of view. 'The Pirate Ballet' starts from a dissolve of her looking at Serafin in the street from her bedroom window, the implication being that the wild, exploding, sexy number that follows is how she sees him in her mind's eye. Later, when she is making fun of his assumption of Macoco's machismo, she runs her eyes up and down him saying with relish, 'Let me look my full at you.' In the second hypnosis scene, she circles Kelly/Serafin (pretending she thinks he's Macoco), gazing at him as she celebrates (sends up) his masculinity, while Don Pedro/Macoco is cut-in looking on,

desiring to be looked at by Manuela as she is now looking at Serafin. The film thus fully allows Kelly as sex object, to a more sustained degree than any male star between Rudolph Valentino and John Travolta; and at the same time plays around with him as spectacle, so that he is both turn-on and send-up.

The film's resolution is the acceptance of both together, the embrace of the illusion of spectacle, and in the widest sense. Not only does Garland/Manuela settle for someone who only looks like (is the spectacle of) Mack the Black, she also opts to become a player – she will get to travel the world through the profession of pretence. Again the film gives another twist to the paradox. In the final number, 'Be a Clown', Garland/Manuela and Kelly/Serafin perform as clowns (Figure 3.18); right at the end in close-up they look at each other and burst into laughter. There is no reason why Manuela and Serafin, in love, doing a jolly number, should not as characters burst into laughter; but many have seen this as Judy Garland and Gene Kelly falling about laughing at the fun they've just been making in the film. Thus dressed as clowns on a stage in a very 'theatrical' movie-musical (in terms of performance and mise-en-scène), the 'real' attitude of the performers is held to come through – the reality of the pretence of illusion.



Figure 3.18 'Be a Clown', Garland and Gene Kelly in *The Pirate* 1948 (BFI Collections)

In lines and role, as well as the way Garland plays them, *The Pirate* explores a camp attitude towards life. Play on illusion and reality does not have to be seen as camp or gay. As throughout this chapter, I am neither claiming that only gay men could see it this way nor that these aspects need be understood as camp or gay. What I am saying is that the particular way in which *The Pirate* plays with questions of artifice, together with the presence of Garland in it and her particular way of delivering a line as funny, make it particularly readable within the gay male subcultural discourse of camp.

I COULD GO ON SINGING

Judy Garland's last film, *I Could Go On Singing*, made in England in 1962, is her most gay film. It is clearly aware of the gay audience and is in many ways a summation of the gay way of reading her image.

It is a gay film in relatively explicit ways. To begin with, there is a gag that would have little reverberation to anyone who had never heard of the New York gay community's favourite seaside spot – when drunk, Jenny/Judy remarks, 'I've had enough to float Fire Island.' (This was probably lost on most of the contemporary British gay audience too.) Second, the casting of Dirk Bogarde at this point in his career must have been suggestive. *Victim* had been released two years before and although he presented his decision to appear in this film (a thriller campaigning for reform in the laws relating to homosexuality) as social consciousness rather than coming out as gay, his image was indelibly coloured with homosexuality thereafter. In the light of it, earlier films such as *The Spanish Gardener* and *The Singer Not the Song* look much gayer, centring as they do on an intense relationship between, respectively, a man and a boy, and a bandit and a priest. After both *Victim* and *I Could Go On Singing* he has played a number of gay or crypto-gay roles, including *The Servant*, *Modesty Blaise* and *Death in Venice*. In addition, his appearance puts him in line with an important gay stereotype of the period, that of the 'sad young man'. There is a similarity between his looks and those of another gay identification star, Montgomery Clift – Garland and Clift were both in *Judgement at Nuremberg* and although not on screen together, an off-screen photograph (Figure 3.19) and reports on the filming emphasised the affinity between these two 'unhappy' stars. Bogarde and Clift are both like other visual and literary representations of the 'sad young man' (see Dyer 2002f), so that they were available to be read through this particular version of how gay men were seen and saw themselves.

Bogarde as star has all this gay resonance even apart from the way *I Could Go On Singing* uses him. In no way does the film suggest his character, David, is homosexual, but it is worth considering the fact that the film centres on a non-sexual relationship between a man and a woman both



Figure 3.19 Garland and Montgomery Clift on the set of *Judgement at Nuremberg* 1961

played by stars with a particular significance for gay culture. The film has come up with a plot situation akin to the well-documented syndrome of intimate relationships between gay men and straight women. It even seems to toy with the exploration of some of the ambiguities of this. Jenny/Garland and David/Bogarde have had a sexual relationship in the past, producing a son, Matt, whom Jenny agreed to disown. In the film Jenny wants to reclaim Matt and this is the drive of the narrative, but it does seem as if part of that could involve renewing her sexual relationship with David. Towards the end, when David is coaxing her out of her drunkenness to go back to the Palladium for her show, he says to her, 'I've always loved you', and she says, nodding, 'That's where it ends?' This is the clearest point at which the woman's desire for greater physical intimacy is blocked by the man's resolute refusal. It is a moment that gay men might flatter themselves could easily happen to them, and it might be doubly flattering in that not only does it express female desire for them but also shows their absolute power to refuse it. This reading has to be hedged about with more than the usual number of qualifiers; but the casting of Garland and Bogarde in this

very unusual (for a film story) kind of relationship does make such a reading at the very least possible.

Stars and basic plot situation (plus one gag) give one a lead into a gay reading of the film, and this is facilitated by the degree to which it accords with most of those aspects of the Garland image discussed above – emotionality, gay sensibility, androgyny, camp. I'll discuss these in a moment. The one aspect that is less explored is ordinariness. As mentioned above, the basic situation – international showbiz celebrity tries to (re)integrate self into ordinariness of family life – starts off from this motif in Garland's image. But the man is Bogarde, equally readable as gay and therefore not the stuff of normal family life (at any rate, as that is represented; it is statistically common); and, as we'll see, the treatment of the public-school sequence renders it anything but nice and normal.

As a vehicle film for Judy Garland, *I Could Go On Singing* both provides several big emotional musical numbers ('By Myself', 'Hello Bluebird', 'It Never Was You', 'I Could Go On Singing'), at least two set pieces of untrammelled (one-take) emotional expressivity (listening to her son telling her he does not want to go to Paris with her; talking out her problems drunkenly to David), and a plot that subjects her to filial and uxorial rejection and yet has her come smiling through by the end. The songs in particular work a kind of meteorological tradition for Garland, going back to 'Over the Rainbow' and all setting up something to do with the weather that you have to experience in order to reach happiness – for instance, 'I'm Always Chasing Rainbows' in *Ziegfeld Girl*, 'In the Valley Where the Evening Sun Goes Down' in *The Harvey Girls*, 'Look for the Silver Lining' in *Till the Clouds Roll By*, 'Friendly Star' in *Summer Stock*, 'It's a New World' in *A Star is Born*. In *I Could Go On Singing*, 'Hello Bluebird' recalls the line from 'Over the Rainbow', 'If happy little bluebirds fly'; 'It Never Was You' opens with 'I've been running through rain and the winds that follow after'; and the title songs ends with 'I must keep on singing like a lark going strong with my heart on the wings of a song-singing day.'

Songs, set pieces and plot place centrally (as the pre-1950 films did not) the suffering and courage nexus so important to the gay reading of Garland. 'By Myself' (which had been featured on the album *Alone* as well as in concerts) catches it most fully, not only because it is a song about courage in the face of loneliness and rejection, but because it occurs immediately after the scene in which Matt has overheard Jenny and David rowing about him and realised that Jenny is the mother who had deserted him. Jenny/Garland sings 'By Myself' as a fierce refusal to be brought low by Matt's horror that this nice and famous lady friend of his father is in fact his despised mother. The way it is performed also builds up from a more fragile, vulnerable opening to a stronger, tougher climax. At the start she is picked out by a spotlight that makes her look small and isolated in the centre of the stage (and of the scope screen); her hands hang by her side, a frail gesture from

someone associated with a more histrionic repertoire of gestures; there is a thin, slightly sinister string accompaniment and she comes in on the song without any intro, thus her voice is unsupported, musically exposed. For much of the first time through (all sung slowly) she is in close-up, which enables us to see a remarkable facial gesture on the words

I'll face the unknown
I'll build a world of my own

where she both backs away with her head (as if from adversity) and yet hardens her facial features (as if setting them against 'the unknown'). The second time through is up tempo, with full orchestra and belting delivery. She struts about the stage or stands with feet apart, one hand on her hip. Where the first time through 'I'll build a world of my own' has the wistfulness of Dorothy's yearning for Oz, the second time it has the determination and confidence of 'Get Happy' in *Summer Stock* or 'Rockabye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody' from the concerts. At the end she does not wait for the applause, but walks straight off, flicking back the flimsy tab curtain as she does. Thus we are to take it that the emotion of the song is carried over into the singer herself, so overcome with emotion that she cannot relate to the audience at all or else, more literally, turning her back on her audience as well as her family to be utterly alone. (In the subsequent narrative she gets drunk and is contemptuous of the audience David says is waiting for her.)

This overlap of performance and life not only authenticates the former (she – Jenny/Garland – 'really feels' the emotion she sings because it is an emotion from her life), but also fits into the film's treatment of the theatricality of experience, part of Jack Babuscio's definition of the gay sensibility. He suggests that in *A Star is Born* and especially *I Could Go On Singing*

Garland took on roles so disconcertingly close to her real-life situation and personality that the autobiographical connections actually appeared to take their toll on her physical appearance from one scene to the next.
(Babuscio 1977: 46)

Be that as it may, the film not only shows the 'real life' of the narrative being performed out in the stage numbers, but also in part theatricalises the narrative too. Jenny/Garland's first appearance is delayed – we see her from behind getting out of a taxi and going up to a door; we then cut to inside the house, a maid answering the door and Jenny/Garland entering and stepping into the light. In part this is just the kind of heavy-handed approach to movies (and hence to big stars) characteristic of British cinema, but it does have the effect of making Jenny/Garland's first appearance in the narrative into a theatrical event. Later the scenes in Jenny's Palladium

dressing room suggest a continuity between theatre and life. There is, for instance, a tracking shot on to a close-up of a microphone in a spotlight which immediately cuts on Jenny/Garland dramatically pulling back a curtain and appearing in her stage clothes. The effect of the cut is to make it seem that Jenny/Garland is making her stage entrance, but in fact the second shot is in the dressing room. Life there is lived in a theatrical manner, and this use of the curtained-off area in the room occurs elsewhere in the film. I do not wish to give the impression that *I Could Go On Singing* has the allusive play on theatre and reality that *The Pirate* or *A Star is Born* have, merely to indicate that something of that interplay is present in it, reinforced by the use of androgyny and camp.

Garland is not herself presented in an androgynous manner in the film. She wears dresses, or skirts with bolero jackets and blouses, throughout, and her hair is done in a conventional sixties perm. Her strutting or feet-astir performance style in some of the numbers might be seen as mannish, but there is certainly no attempt to build on this (as compared to outfits and performance style in 'You Gotta Have Me Go With You' and the finale of 'Born in a Trunk' in *A Star is Born*). What is present is a bizarre sequence at Matt's public school. The idea of Judy Garland going to a rugby match in high heels, as she does here, is already outlandish enough, but it is far outstripped by her attendance at the school production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*. As it is an all-male school, the female parts are played by boys and the sequence we see is in fact Matt dressed as a girl singing happily about the virtues of the British sailor (say no more). After the show, we are introduced to the dressing room with a shot of Matt from behind taking off his skirt and bustle before turning round – the camera position is a standard voyeuristic one (cf. *The Prince and the Showgirl* dressing-room sequence discussed in the Monroe chapter), but the undressing reveals the theatrical construction of gender and the figure's turning round reminds us that what looked like a girl is really a boy. Jenny/Garland comes in and joins in with the 'boys', in varying stages of undress, and the 'girls', to varying degrees in drag and made-up as women. They sing 'His Sisters and His Cousins and His Aunts' together, with Jenny/Garland interpolating skat snatches, joking with the boys and in every way suggesting she is completely at home with this androgynous crew (Figure 3.20) The sequence ends with Matt trying to persuade David to let him go to see her show. Matt tries to act winningly to get David's permission; he is in boy's clothes but still wearing green eyeshadow, with his full mouth emphasised by lipstick; when he turns to Jenny and says, 'Make him say yes', he smiles coyly back at David. Matt is their son and that is how we're supposed to think of him; but there is something insistently gay about Judy Garland and Dirk Bogarde tussling over so emphatically androgynous a creature. When later Judy and Dirk row about Matt, the scene as written and played feels like they are squabbling over the same



Figure 3.20 Garland and the boys in *I Could Go On Singing* 1963 (BFI Collections)

man – only the context makes it clear that it is a boy, their son, not a love object.

One can get a lot of camp fun out of all this weird gender play, and Garland is also herself camp in her performance. One might read this deconstructively, her performance foregrounding the facticity of the vehicle, but oddly her camp seems to reinforce the basic realist/illusionist style of the film. What Jenny/Garland is camp about is herself and her situation, but not the artifices of the film itself. For instance, there is an awkward moment when Jenny first meets Matt and she remarks that he looks like David, his father; Matt believes he is adopted and so thinks this cannot be possible, but David adds that nonetheless he could resemble him – 'adopted children do sometimes grow like their parents, like dogs'. Jenny/Garland nods encouragingly along with this, but double-takes and echoes archly, 'Like dogs?' This could be taken to undercut the after all rather laborious script here, but it seems easier to take it as sending up David's po-faced awkwardness and the incongruity of her own situation as an incognito parent.

Such small interjections, reaction shots, gestural and vocal inflections run

throughout Garland's performance in the film. It's not a very funny script, but she plays it as if it is a stream of wit. Characteristically for camp humour, much of this is directed against herself – her renowned unreliability, drunkenness and so on, traits shared equally by Jenny and Garland and mentioned within the first five minutes of the film. This can also be putting herself down as a woman. At one point in their first conversation, David asks her if she still knits. 'Oh, no,' she replies, 'nothing I knitted ever fitted.' The joke is partly about the stiltedness of this conversation with a man she still loves who is the father of the son she wants to see; but it also bespeaks her lack of feminine skills. She delivers it seated in a wing-backed upright chair, with her left hand raised and resting on one of its wings. It is an elegant pose that is coded as appropriate to a certain kind of graceful woman – but Jenny/Garland does not look like that kind of woman, she is adopting a mannered elegance much as a man does when he is being campily effeminate. Line and pose together are camp because she is not a graceful woman with traditional feminine skills. We may find it funny, but like much camp humour there is a sour edge when you start to think about it. Garland, like gay men, makes fun of herself as she fails to be womanly. Unlike gay men, however, Garland does not have the patriarchal position to retreat to that, in *I Could Go On Singing*, Dirk Bogarde does. This is the point at which Garland's image outruns the gay reading of her, where the fact of her being a woman, not a gay man, takes her image in a whole lot of other directions.

One of the letters I received while researching this chapter tells an interesting story.

When I was 13 or 14 the whole 3rd form at school voted what film they would like to see at the end of term. My friend and I liked Garland and we wanted to see *The Wizard of Oz*. We were labelled as 'poofs' and also laughed at for being childish, unlike many other 3rd formers who thought they were so mature because they wanted to see a sex film. *Dr No* was the film they finally chose.

I have found out since that my friend was gay a couple of years later and I find it interesting . . . that 2 gays, unaware of each other's sexual preferences remained in solidarity for Garland. Furthermore, while we were not conscious of her as a gay person's film star, it is interesting to note that we were brutally labelled as 'poofs' for our choice of film.

(Letter to author)

This letter suggests that the gay reading of Judy Garland was not just something that gay men would pick up as they entered the gay scene; it suggests rather that people identifying themselves as gay (or probably 'different') would intuitively take to Garland as an identification figure.

There need be no consciousness of the connection. Another letter I received stressed that the writer had had a 'teenage love affair with MGM's great star' and at the same time

I was a gay teenager and well aware of it. In fact I was very active. I did not in any way connect the gay life with the affinity to Judy.

(Letter to author)

Only retrospectively does he see 'the reasons for gays being attracted to Judy', which he understands in terms of her appeal to 'sensitive males'.

What seems to be happening in such cases is a coming together of two homologous structures – a star image with strong elements of difference within ordinariness, androgyny and camp, and a way of interpreting homosexual identity that is widely available in society in both dominant and subcultural discourses. The gay subculture would develop the most elaborated, the most inward of readings of Garland, would pick up on the nuances and inflections of her image that could be read in a gay way, and it is this that I have been exploring. But the classmates of the letter writer above clearly sensed, without probably having any knowledge of the composition of Garland's audience, that there was something about Garland which chimed with their sense of what 'poofs' were, a connection between image and social identity that the writer himself also made intuitively.

There is nothing arbitrary about the gay reading of Garland; it is a product of the way homosexuality is socially constructed, without and within the gay subculture itself. It does not tell us what gay men are inevitably and naturally drawn to from some in-built disposition granted by their sexuality, but it does tell us of the way that a social-sexual identity has been understood and felt in a certain period of time. Looking at, listening to Garland may get us inside how gay men have lived their experience and situation, have *made* sense of them. We feel that sense in the intangible and the ineffable – the warmth of the voice, the wryness of the humour, the edgy vigour of the stance – but they mean a lot because they are made expressive of what it has been to be gay in the past half century.

Notes

Preface

- 1 Writing and ideas about stars prior to the present volume were surveyed in my book *Stars* (1979) and, subsequent to it, were extended, debated and contested in, for instance, Butler 1991, Gledhill 1991, McDonald 1998, Geraghty 2000, McDonald 2000.

1 Monroe and sexuality

- 1 All quotations of reviews are taken from Conway and Ricci (1964), unless otherwise stated.
- 2 French is writing retrospectively about the fifties; so am I. The fact that our emphases are similar (besides, I learnt a lot from her novel) should alert us to the possibility that this may be the post-sixties way of constructing the fifties. We should always be aware of the way in which we make over the past in the concerns of the present; but there is a *reductio ad absurdum* whereby any investigation of the past is held to be *only* a reflection of the present. The relation is more dynamic. French (and I) may be emphasising aspects of the fifties out of post-sixties interests, but that doesn't mean that what is being emphasised was not also a fact of the fifties.
- 3 One other dominant feature of the psycho discourse was masochism, which is not however an aspect of Monroe's image. Her desirability is bound up with vulnerability, which potentially overlaps with masochism, with pleasure in being hurt. However, if we are invited to take pleasure in her pain, her image nowhere signals that she might get pleasure from it too.
- 4 Missing from this discussion is the important lesbian take of Lucie Arbuthnot and Gail Seneca 1982 on *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

2 Paul Robeson: crossing over

- 1 For further reading on Robeson written since the original publication of this essay, see Stewart 1997 as well as Martin Duberman's definitive biography (1988).
- 2 Robeson was in a revival of this in 1931. The part was not written as a black one, but the symbolism, including the use of the ape motif, made it seem very suitable for casting Robeson.
- 3 Musical examples are given in the clef and key of the original score for ease of comparison; i.e. my renderings of Robeson's versions are not transposed to his register.

- 4 The epithet 'Uncle Tom' has become so associated with black accommodationist, selling-out positions that the nature of its earlier force as an image is sometimes forgotten. In raising it here in connection with Robeson I am not passing judgement on whether he was an Uncle Tom in this later political sense.
- 5 For further discussion of *Song of Freedom*, see Young 1996: 71–9.
- 6 Besides – Marie Seton (1958: 58): 'The central point of the play was never clear.'
- 7 *Song of Freedom*, in so many ways a vehicle for Robeson, includes a performance by John Zinga of *The Black Emperor*, an opera that is obviously a reference to *The Emperor Jones* even down to the similarity of the costume; we see only the emperor in the forest in his agony of flight – the scene is virtually meaningless if the viewer is not familiar with *The Emperor Jones*, but equally the scene is wholly sufficient to evoke the received idea of the play.
- 8 Note also the opening words, by Bertolt Brecht, sung by Robeson in the English language version of *Song of the Rivers* 1954: 'Old Man Mississippi rages ...' (Musser 2002).
- 9 For more discussion of *Body and Soul*, see Bowser and Spence 2000 and Musser 2000.
- 10 There is some dispute over what part Robeson would have played. The film was to be called *Black Majesty* and to deal with the Haitian revolution in the nineteenth century. Nizhny says Eisenstein wanted Robeson to play Dessalines, but in a footnote to the text Herbert Marshall says that Robeson thought Eisenstein wanted him to play Toussaint L'Ouverture, while he, Marshall, is certain it was Henry Christophe. In any event, what is interesting is Nizhny's account of how Eisenstein intended to use Robeson. Even if Nizhny reports this inaccurately, this is no great matter here; it is not a question of what Eisenstein did or did not think, but rather of the way Robeson figures in the discourse of Soviet montage theory.

3 Judy Garland and gay men

- 1 Namely, *Gay News* and *Him* (Britain), *Body Politic* (Canada), *New York Native* and *The Advocate* (USA). These range from the broadly political/social papers like *Gay News* to more pornographic magazines like *Him*. The letter asked people to write to me about their memories of Judy Garland and why they liked her.
- 2 The emergence of the contemporary gay movement is commonly dated from an incident at the Stonewall bar in New York in June 1969, also the month and year in which Judy Garland died.
- 3 For a different perspective on Garland and suffering, see McLean 2002.
- 4 Since this was written, evidence of Garland's actual relationship to homosexuality has come forth (a bisexual father, bisexual or basically gay husbands, lesbian liaisons (see Clarke 2000); see also Alexander Doty's discussion (2000) of *The Wizard of Oz* as a lesbian text.
- 5 Cf. note 4.

- Sergeant, Elizabeth Shepley (1926) 'The Man with his Home in a Rock: Paul Robeson', *New Republic* 3 March: 40–4.
- Seton, Marie (1958) *Paul Robeson*, London: Dennis Dobson.
- Southern, Eileen (1971a), *The Music of Black Americans*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Southern, Eileen (ed.) (1971b) *Readings in Black American Music*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Stewart, Jeffrey C. (1997) 'Paul Robeson and the Problem of Modernism' in Skipwith, Joanna (ed.) *Rhapsodies in Black: Art of the Harlem Renaissance*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 90–101.
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher (1981) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harmondsworth: Penguin; originally published 1852.
- Taylor, Karen Malpede (1972) *People's Theatre in America*, New York: Drama Book Specialists.
- Walton, Ortiz (1972) *Music Black White and Blue*, New York: William Morrow.
- Williams, Raymond (1973) *The Country and the City*, London: Chatto & Windus.
- Young, Lola (1996) *Fear of the Dark: 'Race', Gender and Sexuality in the Cinema*, London: Routledge.

3: Judy Garland and gay men

- Anger, Kenneth (1981) *Hollywood Babylon*, New York: Dell; originally published Paris, J.J. Pauvert, 1959.
- Babuscio, Jack (1977) 'Camp and the Gay Sensibility', in Richard Dyer (ed.) *Gays and Film*, London: British Film Institute, 40–57.
- Bathrick, Serafina (1976) 'The Past As Future: Family and the American Home in *Meet Me in St. Louis*', *The Minnesota Review*, New Series 6: 7–25.
- Boone, Bruce (1979) 'Gay Language as Political Praxis, the Poetry of Frank O'Hara', *Social Text*, 1: 59–92.
- Booth, Mark (1983) *Camp*, London: Quartet.
- Brinson, Peter (1954) 'The Great Come-Back', *Films and Filming*, December: 4.
- Britton, Andrew (1977) 'Meet Me in St. Louis: Smith or The Ambiguities', *Australian Journal of Screen Theory*, 3: 7–25.
- Britton, Andrew (1978/79) 'For Interpretation, Against Camp', *Gay Left*, 7: 11–14.
- Bronski, Michael (1978) 'Judy Garland and Others, Notes on Idolization and Derision', in Karla Jay and Allen Young (eds) *Lavender Culture*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Clarke, Gerald (2000) *Get Happy: The Life of Judy Garland*, London: Little, Brown and Co.
- Cleto, Fabio (ed.) (1999) *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cohen, Derek and Dyer, Richard (1980) 'The Politics of Gay Culture', in *Gay Left Collective* (eds) *Homosexuality, Power and Politics*, London: Allison and Busby, 172–86.
- Conley, Barry (1972) 'The Garland Legend: The Stars Have Lost Their Glitter', *Gay News*, 13: 10–11.
- Di Orio, Al (1975) *Little Girl Lost: The Life and Hard Times of Judy Garland*, New York: Manor Books.
- Doty, Alexander (2000) '“My Beautiful Wickedness”: *The Wizard of Oz* as a Lesbian

- Fantasy' in *Flaming Classics: Queering the Film Canon*, New York: Routledge, 49–78.
- Dyer, Richard (1991) 'A Star Is Born and the Construction of Authenticity' in Gledhill, Christine (ed.) *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London: Routledge, 132–40.
- Dyer, Richard (2002a) *Only Entertainment*, London: Routledge.
- Dyer, Richard (2002b) 'The Son of the Sheik', in Dyer 2002a: 118–21.
- Dyer, Richard (2002c) 'Don't Look Now: The Instabilities of the Male Pin-up', in Dyer 2002a: 122–37.
- Dyer, Richard (2002d) *The Culture of Queers*, London: Routledge.
- Dyer, Richard (2002e) 'Its Being So Camp As Keeps Us Going', in Dyer 2002d: 49–62.
- Dyer, Richard (2002f) 'Coming Out as Going In: The Image of the Homosexual as a Sad Young Man', in Dyer 2002a: 116–36.
- Feuer, Jane (1982) *The Hollywood Musical*, London: Macmillan/British Film Institute.
- Finch, Christopher (1975) *Rainbow, the Stormy Life of Judy Garland*, London: Michael Joseph.
- Goldman, William (1969) *The Season*, New York: Harcourt Brace & World Inc.
- Gramann, Karola and Schlüpmann, Heide (1981) 'Un-natürliche Akte. Die Inszenierung des Lesbischen im Film', in Karola Gramann et al., *Lust und Elend: das erotische Kino*, Munich & Luzern: Bücher, 70–93.
- Greig, Noel and Griffiths, Drew (1981) *As Time Goes By*, London: Gay Men's Press.
- Howard, Dumont (1981) 'The Garland Legend', *Blueboy*, January 1981.
- Jennings, Wade (1979) 'Nova: Garland in *A Star is Born*', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Summer: 321–37.
- Katz, Jonathon (ed.) (1976) *Gay American History*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- McLean, Adrienne L. (2002) 'Feeling and the Filmed Body: Judy Garland and the Kinesics of Suffering', *Film Quarterly* 55: 3, 2–15.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1964) *One Dimensional Man*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Meyers, Janet (1976) 'Dyke Goes to the Movies', *Dyke*, Spring.
- Ruehl, Sonja (1982) 'Inverts and Experts: Radclyffe Hall and the Lesbian Identity', in Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan (eds), *Feminism, Culture and Politics*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Russo, Vito (1979) 'Camp', in Martin P. Levene (ed.), *Gay Men, the Sociology of Male Homosexuality*, New York: Harper & Row, 205–10; originally published *The Advocate*, 19 May, 1976.
- Russo, Vito (1980/81) 'Poor Judy', *Gay News*, 205, (supplement) 14–15.
- Sheldon, Caroline (1977) 'Lesbians and Film: Some Thoughts', in Dyer, Richard (ed.) *Gays and Film*, London: British Film Institute, 5–26.
- Sontag, Susan (1964) 'Notes on Camp', *Partisan Review*, XXXI, 4.
- Steakley, James (1975) *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany*, New York: Arno.
- Stearn, Jess (1962) *The Sixth Man*, New York: Macfadden Books.
- Steiger, Brad (1969) *Judy Garland*, New York: Ace Books.
- Watney, Simon (1980) 'The Ideology of GLF', in *Gay Left Collective* (eds), *Homosexuality, Power and Politics*, London: Allison & Busby, 64–76.

- Weeks, Jeffrey (1977) *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, London: Quartet.
- Weiss, Andrea (1992) *Vampires and Violets: Lesbians in the Cinema*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- Whatling, Clare (1997) 'Stars and Their Proclivities' and 'Fostering the Illusion' in *Screen Dreams: Fantasising Lesbians in Film*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 116-59.
- Whitaker, Judy (1981) 'Hollywood Transformed', *Jump Cut* 24/25, 33-35.
- White, Patricia (1999) *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Wood, Robin (1976) *Personal Views*, London: Gordon Fraser.
- Woodcock, Roger (1969) 'A Star is Dead', *Jeremy*, 1: 1, 15-17.

Index

Note: page numbers in italics denote illustrations

- abolitionism 112
 action-heroes 10-11
 Africa: atavism 89, 94, 95, 98-9;
 authenticity 85-6; black Americans
 86-7, 89; black history 96, 98; brute
 image 95-6; film representation 85,
 89, 92-3, 94; freedom 100; spirituality
 89
Africa Looks Up 100
 Agate, James 74
All About Eve 13, 19, 20
All God's Chillun Got Wings 65; black
 stereotypes 69; blackness/whiteness 72,
 95; humiliation 132; review 122; Uncle
 Tom 82
 Allyson, June 6, 33, 153
 Alpert, Hollis 38
American Mercury 122
 androgyny: Garland 165, 166-7, 168,
 173, 175-6; homosexuality 165;
 Monroe 62; sex appeal 173; tramp
 look 173, 175-6
 Andy Hardy films 152, 161
 Anger, Kenneth 146
 appearance/reality 2
 Arbuthnot, Lucie 192[1]n4
 Arnold, Eve *xii*, 1-2
 art photography 27, 28, 29
As Time Goes By 137, 142, 143
As Young As You Feel 19, 20, 37, 38
 Ashcroft, Peggy 108
The Asphalt Jungle 20
 Astaire, Fred 6, 12
 atavism: Africa 89, 94, 95, 98-9;
 blackness 89, 94, 95, 98-9; wildness
 95
 Atkinson, Brooks 82
 audience ix; gay 3, 184-5; Robeson ix,
 66-7, 76; *Saturday Night Fever* 14;
 stars ix, 145
 authenticity: Africa 85-6; Garland 145,
 157-8, 159; Monroe 12; Robeson 12,
 85; stars 157
 availability, sexual 42, 46, 49, 51, 56
Babes in Arms 152, 153, 160-1
Babes on Broadway 152
 Babuscio, Jack 150, 151, 176, 187
 Bailey, Jim 176
 Baldwin, James 67
 'Ballad for Americans' 65
 Banky, Vilma 110
 Bara, Theda 53
 Barnes, Albert C. 72, 78
Basalik 69, 85, 95, 126
 Basie, Count 69, 80
 Bassey, Shirley 149, 151, 156, 176
 Bathrick, Serafina 153
 'Be a Clown' 173, 183
 beauty/race 119
 Belafonte, Harry 110
 Belmondo, Jean-Paul 3
 Berghahn, Marion 86, 100
 'Better Luck Next Time' 158
Big Fella 69, 110, 126, 131
The Big Revue 167, 168
 biographies of stars 10
 Birmingham Gay Liberation Front
 newsletter 137, 154, 156
The Birth of a Nation 40, 109
Black Boy 69, 95, 110, 132
 black film-makers 65, 106