

Detourned photograph.  
*Internationale situationniste 1*  
(June 1958).



# Charming Monsters: The Spectacle of Femininity in Postwar France

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*The sleep of dialectical reason has produced monsters.*

—Situationist International, 1962<sup>1</sup>

*Where is the ebullient infinite woman who, immersed as she was in her naïveté, kept in the dark about herself, led into self-disdain by the great arm of paternal-conjugal phallogentrism, hasn't been ashamed of her strength? Who, surprised and horrified by the fantastic tumult of her drives . . . hasn't accused herself of being a monster?*

—Hélène Cixous, 1981<sup>2</sup>

At the cusp of the 1950s and 1960s in France, images of young, sexually precocious women entered the public sphere in unprecedented numbers and unpredictable ways. Through advertisements, popular magazines, movies, and TV, the newly powerful and accessible mass media played an unparalleled role in the reconception of what it meant to be young and female in the public imagination. Caught between a nostalgic desire to re-create prewar values and ways of life and the seemingly relentless forces of change exemplified by the pressures of “Americanization,” decolonization, and the latent threats of the Cold War, the reimagined young woman, the uniquely postwar *jeune fille*, was emblematic of the identity crisis affecting the country at large. Within this context the Situationist International (SI) emerged and began to formulate what would become some of the most trenchant critiques of the mechanics and effects of the spectacle-commodity economy in the second half of the twentieth century. Acutely aware of current events and avid consumers of the mass media, the situationists produced a diagnosis of the insidious and pervasive nature of modern capitalism so apparently thorough that it took on everything from art to the Franco-Algerian war. Contemporary debates related to questions of gender, it may surprise some to learn, were not

wholly left out of this critique. The theories espoused by the SI were visually constructed as much as they were textually explicated and, while most of their early writing focuses on theoretical principles and practices like *détournement*, *dérive*, and the construction of situations, images of postwar *jeunes filles* constitute one of the primary motifs of their visual identity. Far from gratuitous, incidental, or even ancillary, the representations of *jeunes filles* that appear in the SI's eponymous journal (*Internationale situationniste*; *IS*) are paramount to their overall project insofar as these images work on, and thereby do work to, many of the situationists' most prescient texts. Simply put, the figure of the *jeune fille* has both a productive and disruptive role in the SI's oeuvre. On the one hand, the *jeune fille* plays a part in many of the situationists' key insights. Images of *jeunes filles* in *IS* 1, for instance, are some of the most effective demonstrations of the operation of *détournement* on record. On the other hand, the *jeune fille* is a source of incoherence in the SI's political thought, introducing irresolvable slippages between the language of postwar consumerism (exemplified by the new fantasies of femininity) and the aestheticization of Hegelian-Marxist politics that constitutes much of their work.

While increasingly unavoidable, the role played by gender in the situationist project remains difficult territory. Apart from Kelly Baum's exemplary contribution to the subject, scholarship on the SI has all but overlooked the images that are at stake here.<sup>3</sup> Even when questions about gender in relation to the SI's work are raised, they are all too quickly brushed aside as evidence of the group's deep-seated sexism or explained away as a casualty of the situationists' class-based critique. My approach to the role of the *jeune fille* in *IS* is somewhat more skeptical and, at the same time, invested in the historical specificity of this particular construction of young womanhood, a construction that encompasses both the experience of adolescent girls and the representational structures that enable them to conceive their relationship to the social, cultural, and political conditions that shape their lives. Focusing on the conditions and repercussions of the appearance of reimagined *jeunes filles* in *IS* and in postwar French culture at large, I am just as interested in how a careful analysis of these figures might upend some of our usual expectations of the SI—in, that is, opening new, even unforeseen questions—as I am in assessing how images of young women serve the critical framework so carefully developed by the situationists and their biographers.

The appearance of the new *jeune fille* at the same historical juncture that gave rise to the SI is intimately connected to a widespread and at that moment urgent discourse concerning production of subjectivities in France after the

Liberation—a discourse in which several founding members of the SI immediately implicated themselves when they began the second article in the inaugural issue of *IS* with the declaration, “There is a lot of talk these days about angry, raging youth.”<sup>4</sup> This statement, the opening line of the collaboratively penned “The Sound and the Fury,” also reveals the depth of attention granted by the situationists to matters of concern in the popular press. “These days,” roughly the years 1957 and 1958, saw a dramatic surge of interest in youth culture across the country, as the ideological stakes of this category of identity grew more and more pressing while uncertainty about the future continued to loom large. If today’s adolescents are “the France of tomorrow,” then the media’s efforts to define French “youth” en masse in the 1950s and 1960s express as much about collective fears, anxieties, hopes, and desires related to rebuilding the country in the aftermath of one war and in the midst of another, as they do about the case study itself.<sup>5</sup> From the influence of beatnik culture imported from the United States, to the Angry Young Men in Britain, to the work of up-and-coming filmmakers like Roger Vadim and Jean-Luc Godard, to the legacy of the existentialists and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, youth was the topic de rigueur, sparking the interest of writers, academics, and cultural commentators as diverse as Françoise Sagan, Jean-Paul Sartre, François Mauriac, and, of course, the SI.

Fueling the fire, the popular weekly *L’express* published a series of articles in the fall of 1957 summarizing and weighing in on a survey of 15,000 individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 undertaken jointly by the magazine and the Institut Français d’Opinion Publique (IFOP). Coining the term *nouvelle vague* to describe the cultural shifts brought about by the coming-of-age of the children of the Second World War, this investigation into the “ideals,” “education,” “goals,” and cultural and political behaviors of the postwar generation was also an effort to reach out to and define an ever-more-important sector of the magazine’s readership. *L’express*, which was founded in 1953, modeled itself after American weekly news magazines like *Newsweek* and *Time*. The extent to which the “empiricism” guaranteed by the IFOP is emphasized throughout the *nouvelle vague* series is representative of this fact.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the appropriation of sociological methodology that *L’express* inherited from its cross-Atlantic precedents aided the image of the postwar French magazine as a serious source of social facts and, in turn, legitimized the increasing influence of the ever-growing mass media on France’s conflicted national identity. In particular, the sociological posturing legitimized the role of *L’express* as an authority on youth culture across France. However, while claiming to offer an authentic portrait of postwar youth, the *nouvelle vague* series in many ways

anticipated the phenomenon of that generation by establishing a framework, or template, for its subsequent representation and interpretation.<sup>7</sup>

The authors of “The Sound and the Fury” surely had *L’express* in mind, as they list magazine contributors “Françoise Sagan, Robbe-Grillet, Vadim, and the atrocious Buffet” among the “intellectual representatives” of the generation of “misguided,” “pseudo rebels” that was causing such chatter.<sup>8</sup> Wittingly or not, the authors of this text astutely point out that the images of subversive, paradigm-shifting youth so ubiquitous in the popular press were in fact the products of the same system of representations that was responsible for turning them into a topic of national concern in the first place. In other words, by naming the “nouvelle vague” and establishing the vocabulary to describe its manifestations, the postwar mass media—and *L’express* above all—set the parameters for what it meant to be a young adult in 1950s and 1960s France.<sup>9</sup> And more often than not, the magazine’s writers and editors did this by contextualizing the data collected by the IFOP survey in relation to case studies taken from movies, literature, and celebrity culture—quickly creating ready-made icons out of popular writers, directors, actors, and singers and then figuring an entire demographic of the population of France, millions of others defined by the category “youth,” in their image.

This is not exactly a chicken-and-egg scenario wherein the media-constructed image of youth gave rise to preformed populations of beatniks, bohemians, and second-wave existentialists, or vice versa; it is an instance of dialectical formation in which the image and experience of youth were mutually formed, negotiated, and transformed through their ongoing encounters. Moreover, the fact that the celebrities who quickly came to exemplify the nouvelle vague had little in common with the masses they ostensibly represented (as evidenced by the results of the IFOP survey, which depict a relatively conservative general population) was effectively overlooked. What emerged from the *L’express* series on youth was a sophisticated image culture that exemplified the degradation of life—from “being to having to appearing”—described by Guy Debord several years later in his magnum opus *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Or, as the situation was articulated by the authors of “The Sound and the Fury,” contemporary perceptions of youth presented the illusion of subversion without the threat of real change, and this was precisely why “people [were] so fond of talking about them.”<sup>10</sup>

By now the critique leveled by members of the SI in “The Sound and the Fury” will be familiar to most readers. Yet this text continues to warrant attention for an often overlooked photograph of a teenage girl curiously embedded in its second column. Clad in a bikini and looking anything but angry, this young woman,

depicted standing under a shower, smiling coyly, and presumably rinsing herself off after a swim, is one of several modern *jeunes filles*—almost all wearing bathing suits—that illustrate the pages of the first issue of *IS*. Not only was the ubiquitous presence of the *jeune fille* in the mass media echoed on the pages of the situationists' journal; images of young, utterly contemporary women are scattered throughout almost all of their work. The introduction of this burgeoning fantasy of youthful femininity in the context of "The Sound and the Fury" is all the more notable not only because it was one of merely a handful of texts written explicitly to introduce the SI and set them apart from their contemporaries as well as their precedents, but also because, taken together, "The Sound and the Fury" and its illustrations reveal the SI's early emerging engagement in the widespread, complicated, and contentious discourse surrounding the reconstruction of subjectivities happening in France at the time, at the crux of which was a question not only of class but of gender.

In other words, the ideological work being performed by the images of *jeunes filles* in *IS* is inextricably linked to their function within the broader cultural context from which they were detoured. This context was one with which the SI was not only familiar but in which they were deeply invested and to which they often explicitly responded and reacted as they formulated the theoretical program that defined the first few years of their project. Like any successful example of *détournement*, these diverted fragments have a "double meaning" as a result of the "coexistence within them of their old and new senses."<sup>11</sup> That is, they retain something of their prior significance even as they negate it. The conflict between these operations makes the instances of *détournement* in the early issues of *IS* fascinating historical artifacts.<sup>12</sup> Decontextualized, the photographs of young women in the journal may perhaps seem gratuitously provocative, but side-by-side they look less salacious and more like advertisements, catalogue pictures, or even like photos from a spread one would find in contemporary issues of *Madame express*, the women's lifestyle supplement to *L'express*. In fact, women's lifestyle magazines, other popular newspapers, and gossip rags are, somewhat unexpectedly, the types of sources from which these images came. To state the obvious, this means members of the SI read (or at least glanced at) these types of publications alongside the other, more "serious," news sources and theoretical texts and journals they so famously consumed.<sup>13</sup>

While some scholars have hinted at the vaguely pornographic tone of the photographs of women in *IS*, pornography of the period—even relatively soft-core publications like *Paris-Hollywood*—favored a more mature (or at least older-looking, as a result of hair, costume, and makeup styling) representation of femininity,

a distinct contrast when placed next to the relatively fresh-faced *jeunes filles* scattered throughout the SI's oeuvre. Even the instances of nudity found in the later issues of *IS* are more akin to what one might encounter in the movies produced by new wave filmmakers such as Vadim and Godard than what one would see on the pages of a pornographic magazine. Another distinction between the early and later issues of *IS* is that in the later issues the images of *jeunes filles* become a canvas of sorts for slogans and other textual interventions. Most of these pictures are explicitly worked on, whereas the images of young women in the first few issues are not. In both instances, however, the images themselves are somewhat withholding. In some cases they might evoke sexual pleasure but, distinct from the *raison d'être* of pornography, they are designed to thwart or at the very least complicate the realization of that pleasure. This is not to say that the representations of young women in *IS* are not provocative but rather that they represent a specific type of sexuality, one that is embroiled in a broader obsession with youth culture and, specifically, in debates about the changing definition of young womanhood going on at the time.

Although the conjuncture of youth and femininity was one of the foremost images of desire marketed in French movies, advertisements, print media, and television in the 1950s and 1960s, this image was unsettled (and as such unsettling) because it was constituted by the same forces that threatened to destroy it. Not quite the *jeune fille américaine*, but a cipher for the corruption of French values by external influence; neither a mother, nor a wife, nor a dutiful daughter, yet haunted by all three; not the eternal feminine, but linked to the persistent nostalgia for this myth. In many ways the *jeunes filles* that appeared in the public sphere in the 1950s were as displaced, or decontextualized, as those in *IS*. A deeply conflicted and contradictory figure, the *jeune fille* is at once representative of the false, alienated desires that the SI describe as being endemic to the society of the spectacle, an embodiment of erotic desire, and a symbol of another, related, crisis of desire beleaguering France at the time, one that was most apparent in images constructed by the mass media.

Even in the allegedly democratic *nouvelle vague* series, young women occupy a deeply ambiguous position. Although the headline of the series' first segment, "The New Wave Has Arrived!" is (like "The Sound and the Fury") accompanied by an image of a smiling—in this case fully clothed—young woman, the definition of *youth* put forth by *L'express* was consistently equated with young, middle-class men. In her introduction to the survey, *L'express* editor Françoise Giroud claims that by reaching out to youth "from all backgrounds, all social classes," the series is

“designed to show for the first time, in depth, the new generation of France.”<sup>14</sup> Yet the survey itself tells a different story. Not only were the vast majority of the respondents male; so, too, were most of the experts asked to interpret their responses. Additionally, the stories about youth culture published in the series generally focused on the activities and ideas of young men. On a structural level, the young men and women who participated in this project were asked different questions and made to identify with pre-given and deeply gendered descriptors when recording their responses. Whereas men are described relatively clearly as “Workers” (44 percent) and “Students” (10 percent), for example, the categories used to define women are somewhat more confusing. Forty-six percent of young women are “Without Profession” (likely a shorthand for housewife), and 9 percent fall into the hybrid category “Miscellaneous or Student.”<sup>15</sup> In the only article in the series that looks specifically at young women, six out of the seven published respondents are married, and the two accompanying photographs depict young mothers with their children. (This segment was published at the back of the paper, near that day’s *Madame express*, rather than at the front or even in the middle of the paper like the majority of *nouvelle vague* features.)<sup>16</sup>

The language used by *L’express* and IFOP to construct this survey effectively establishes a pre-given, gender-specific framework to describe the experience of youth. The framework defines youth as a coherent category of identity whose needs and desires can be created and fulfilled in the marketplace and simultaneously turned youth into a recognizable product, one that can be viewed, bought, and sold in the growing lifestyle economy. The structural distinction between *jeunes gens* and *jeunes filles* is thus always already determined by the nature of the survey itself, in which manageable variations of consensus and difference are pre-given facts, necessary to validate the survey’s sociological findings. In the case of the *nouvelle vague* survey, its findings, at least in relation to gender, convey an image of young womanhood close to the one sanctioned by the state in the years immediately following the war, with 69 percent of respondents agreeing that the *jeune fille*’s commitments should be to the home and family life.<sup>17</sup> The discrepancy between these findings and the articles about the misadventures of Brigitte Bardot, Françoise Sagan, and the other thoroughly modern *jeunes filles* that surround them should give pause. Not only is the discrepancy evidence of the extent to which images preceded language in forming the identity of the new *jeune fille*, but it bears significant affinity to the operation of the images of *jeunes filles* in *IS* insofar as these images are at once framed by and yet beyond the language of the *SI*’s critique. That is, while the detourned pictures of *jeunes filles* and the texts that



constitute *IS* are related via their proximity on the page, this relationship—some-what unconventionally—is never explicitly expounded in the texts themselves, which collectively make no definitive mention of their illustrations, but rather relate to them in more subtle ways. In both *IS* and *L'express*, this new category of identity resists efforts to define it culturally, sociologically, critically, or otherwise.

The *jeune fille* first emerged as a category of identity in France in the eighteenth century to describe the period in a young woman's life between the onset of menstruation and marriage.<sup>18</sup> As such the traditional *jeune fille* is tightly bound to ideals of feminine purity and chastity or, as *L'express* contributor François Mauriac writes in a lament for the disappearance of the traditional *jeune fille* in the mid-twentieth century, bound to the eternal feminine.<sup>19</sup> Sherry Ortner and Susan Weiner argue that the seemingly unshakable ideals of femininity symbolized by the *jeune fille* and the eternal feminine are an outcome of the specific development of the patriarchal family as an offshoot of the state, which officially defined the symbolic role of young womanhood in terms of virtuousness and religious piety (which, in the eighteenth century, were synonymous with virginity).<sup>20</sup> Historically, the *jeune fille* was a nubile young woman for whom marriage and motherhood were inevitable and who required the protection of the family and the state in the precarious period between reaching the age of sexual reproduction and finding a husband.<sup>21</sup> While some scholars argue that this ideal image of the *jeune fille* was at odds with the real behavior of many young women (across diverse social classes) who engaged in premarital sexual activities, the persistence of these ideals and, more important, the fact that they seem to have been upheld outwardly is what is at issue here.<sup>22</sup> Regardless of their behavior behind “closed doors,” young women had to maintain the appearance of purity and intactness. This was imperative. The *jeune fille* was, thus, from the beginning, a representation. As the definition of *jeune fille* evolved to describe an ever-broadening range of unmarried women, the connotations of intactness and purity endured. At least, they appear to have endured until the 1950s and 1960s when, in the aftermath of the Second World War, this category of identity was radically challenged.

While the term *jeune fille* itself was not resignified until the period following 1945, other uniquely modern images of womanhood, such as the nineteenth-century new woman and the *garçonne* of the 1920s and 1930s, can be seen as precursors to this change. In France, the nineteenth-century new woman was exemplified by Marguerite Durand, a journalist who founded *La fronde*, the official organ of the French women's movement, after covering the international feminist conference in Paris in 1896 for the popular magazine *Le figaro*.<sup>23</sup> Unlike the postwar

jeune fille who was ultimately associated with sex and consumption, the French new woman was clearly and publicly characterized by her political agenda—at the crux of which was women’s emancipation—and by her political advocacy.<sup>24</sup> The *garçonne* emerged in the 1920s, greatly indebted to the new women like Durand who preceded her, as an alternative to the closely monitored intactness of the traditional *jeune fille*. Whereas the *jeune fille* represented a historic ideal of femininity, the *garçonne* adopted the physical attributes associated with young men (cutting her hair short, wearing slacks, smoking, drinking, and driving cars) in an effort to shed the social expectations that restricted the everyday lives of “proper” *jeunes filles*. Seen as a sort of litmus test for the destructive effects of the war on traditional cultural values and codes, the *garçonne* was a source of much anxiety in French society.<sup>25</sup> The same can be said of the reimagined *jeune fille* of the 1950s and 1960s. However, unlike the new woman and the *garçonne* who emerged as distinctly modern categories of identity alongside the traditional *jeune fille*, the postwar version represents an emerging conflict between nostalgic ideals of womanhood and the ambivalent modernization that is specific to that period.<sup>26</sup>

Even after the Liberation the term *jeune fille* continued to carry connotations of intactness and feminine virtue, but it also started to be used to describe a growing number of young female public figures and characters who were often sexually provocative in appearance, were rebellious, and frequently displayed the influence of American culture. When applied to these young women, the label “*jeune fille*” is at once a nostalgic attempt to recuperate them into traditional values and ideals of femininity and a resignification; that is, it begins to suggest something else too. At once a symbol of women’s liberation and symbolic of the sociocultural power of male fantasy, the figure of the postwar *jeune fille* is a double-edged sword. Because the connotations of *jeune fille*, in all its heterogeneity, remained a largely inaccurate description of the experience of female adolescence in France at this moment, this shifting category of identity is also a case study for the increasing primacy of representations in the construction of subjectivities at the time. Young women living in France in the 1950s and 1960s were not adequately defined by either the traditional imperatives of domesticity and motherhood or by the new icons of the “independent” woman, yet through these representations their identities were culturally assigned.<sup>27</sup>

In her seminal work on the changing image of adolescent girls in post-1945 France, Susan Weiner names the new fantasy of femininity it exemplifies the “*enfant terrible*.”<sup>28</sup> By contrast, at stake here is how the historically rich signifier *jeune fille* is reinvested in the decades after the war, becoming a more and more complex

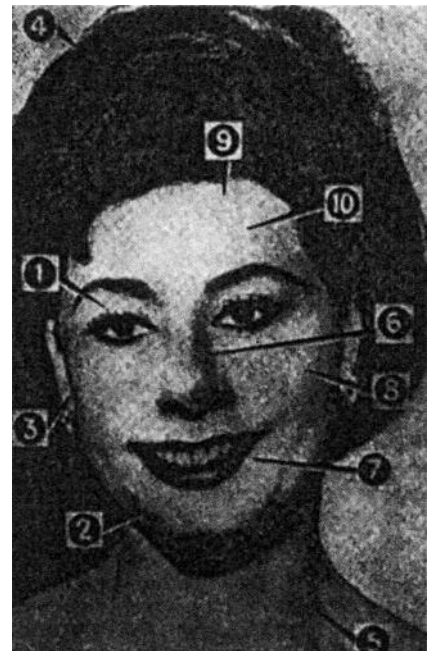
term that, like the image of youthful femininity, was deeply in crisis. These linguistic shifts—the semantics of the *jeune fille*—are paramount to understanding the role played by this fantasy of femininity in the story of the SI at a moment when the modern, rebellious, and sexually precocious young women who first appeared in the mass media and in *IS* in the 1950s were still, by and large, called *jeunes filles*. *Enfant terrible* is a term applied retroactively by Weiner to describe the overall perception of these women. Yet, even the headline on the front cover of the first issue of *Mademoiselle*, a magazine that Weiner argues typifies the *enfant terrible*, exclaims that the magazine is about “le flirt, la beauté et la mode jeunes filles 1962.”<sup>29</sup> That *jeune fille* came to signify something like “*enfant terrible*” in the postwar period but, unlike the previous decades with the new woman and the *garçonne*, no new term developed concurrently to describe and explain this shift in meaning is likely one of the characteristics that made this figure so intriguing to groups like the SI that interrogated the unspoken contradictions and conflicts of their contemporary society.

These contradictions, the related cultural anxiety about the changing face of the *jeune fille*, and the symptomatic nostalgia for traditional feminine imperatives come up again and again in the articles and essays published by François Mauriac throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Mauriac, one of the most visible, not to mention prolific, writers in the postwar popular press, who contributed editorial content to *L'express* in the form of a regular column titled “Bloc notes,” was frequently called upon by popular media outlets to weigh in on topics related to current events, cultural happenings, and other matters of public concern. His name also appears numerous times in texts by members of the SI, but generally as an example of the outmoded values of bourgeois literature. Some of Mauriac’s most telling remarks regarding the postwar *jeune fille* come not from his writing on youth but in the form of his reviews of the novels of Françoise Sagan, the literary *enfant terrible* who made waves with the publication of her first book, *Bonjour tristesse*, in 1954 and shortly thereafter won the prestigious Critics Prize when she was only eighteen years old. In one of his first articles on Sagan, an editorial for *Le figaro*, Mauriac asks why the Critics Prize jury would grant this important national award to a “charming monster” whose “cruel” novel, while skillfully written, displays an utter disregard for the “troubled times” facing France and has no discernible moral. Uncharacteristically lacking an answer to his own question, Mauriac uses Sagan’s accolade as a launching pad for a diatribe about the “stakes” of literature as the fate of the country continued to be tested after the Liberation. For Mauriac, the capricious young author and her book about the callous games of an adolescent

girl could have no bearing on the contemporary world. They are, he writes, “splendidly isolated” from the social, cultural, economic, and political tribulations beleaguering France.<sup>30</sup> Evoking the myth of the eternal feminine, which places women firmly outside of historical contingencies, Mauriac is incapable of seeing the historical significance of Sagan’s zeitgeist-capturing novel. Sagan’s politics—and *Bonjour tristesse* is a deeply political book—did not yet register in the political language of Mauriac and the patriarchal canon of postwar French literature.

Yet the consternation Mauriac expresses when he calls Sagan a “charming monster” nevertheless engages the highly charged paradox of the postwar jeune fille. Echoing the comments on female subjectivity he made a few years earlier in “L’éducation des filles”—a nostalgic plea to modern young women that “there is something infinitely lovelier than exceeding men in every domain” and evoking the perceived underbelly of the increasing gender equality in French society—Mauriac’s seemingly offhanded description of Sagan exemplifies the conflicted gender symbolism that then pervaded the discourses of modernization and reconstruction at all levels.<sup>31</sup> What is a monster but an assemblage of seemingly incongruous parts, animated and approaching human form, an expression of anxiety over the fate of humanity? This dystopian conception of young womanhood is similarly invoked in *IS* 8 by a photograph detoured from *France-Soir*. A “composite of the coveted features of ten of the world’s most beautiful female celebrities,” the aptly named “femme robot” represents to the SI a disarming commodification and policing of desire.<sup>32</sup> Although unique in the context of *IS*, this type of image-collage was a common fixture in the features on fashion and beauty that were becoming more and more popular in mass media outlets like *France-Soir* and *L’express*.<sup>33</sup> In the mainstream media and in *IS*, the image of the “charming monster” or “femme robot”—at once attractive and off-putting or even dangerous—captured a deep-seated tension between fantasies of femininity and the forces of historical change. In the mainstream media, this tension manifested as an obsession with constructions of “femaleness,” and in *IS* it was diagnosed as the human body given over to consumption, a sign of the omnipresent “dictatorship” of false desires manufactured by the spectacle-commodity economy.<sup>34</sup> In both, however, the figure of the jeune fille is a deceptive one, hiding something unknown, sinister, even monstrous, behind her seductive façade.

Perhaps more than any of her contemporaries, Brigitte Bardot, “affectionately and tellingly nicknamed BB (bébé) by the French press,” exemplifies the ambivalent position



“Femme robot” composite photograph detoured from *France-Soir. Internationale situationniste* 8 (January 1963).

occupied by the postwar *jeune fille* in the public imagination.<sup>35</sup> As famous for her personal life as she was for her films, Bardot was a staple in *L'express*, as she was in most of the popular media outlets at the time. Undeniably an icon of the new female sexuality and one of France's most lucrative exports to the United States, Bardot was also the source of much controversy and contempt, repeatedly being made a scapegoat for the actions of rebellious youth across the country.<sup>36</sup> In an essay on the star first published in *Esquire* in 1959, Simone de Beauvoir names the effect Bardot has on her home nation "the *Lolita* syndrome," after the title character of Vladimir Nabokov's controversial novel, which had been banned in France until only the year before.<sup>37</sup> According to de Beauvoir, Bardot was a walking contradiction, a "perfect specimen of [an] ambiguous nymph": slender and muscular, almost androgynous, with a voluptuous bosom and a childish yet "kissable" pout. Embodying the conflict between old and new fantasies of femininity, Bardot first captured the public's attention when Roger Vadim cast her as Juliette in his film *And God Created Woman* (1956), a role that immediately elevated her to the status of myth; specifically, "the very old myth Vadim tried to rejuvenate. . . . A resolutely modern version of 'the eternal feminine.'"<sup>38</sup> By indicating the historical contingency of this universal myth and pointing out the paradox that it could at once be old and unequivocally new, de Beauvoir repeats the revolutionary premise of *The Second Sex* (1949): "one is not born but made a woman."

What then, are the historical stakes of the new "eternal feminine" represented by Bardot? What made her so exemplary of the modern *jeune fille*, both captivating and inciting fear and hatred in people throughout France? De Beauvoir suggests that when Vadim first projected Bardot's image onto movie screens across the country he not only reimagined the myth of the "eternal feminine" but "launched a new type of eroticism," one that was inextricably linked to his muse's youthfulness. If Bardot, Nabokov's "nymphet" Lolita, or any of the other adolescent girls who entered the public eye in the 1950s are any indication, the moment of a woman's life traditionally described by the category of identity known as "*jeune fille*" was no longer determined by the dual imperatives of intactness and piety. On the contrary, the years between puberty and marriage had now become the window of realization for a new type of fantasy of female sexuality, one largely played out in the public domain. This shift was not only affected by the changing aesthetics of consumption-driven desire brought about by the ever-evolving nature of modern capitalism and its corollary image culture; it was also an instance of backlash against the greater gender equality realized in France during and after the Occupation. As de Beauvoir writes,

The adult woman now inhabits the same world as the man, but the child-woman moves in a universe that he cannot enter. The age difference reestablishes between them the distance that seems necessary to desire. At least that is what those who have created a new Eve by merging the “green fruit” and “femme fatale” types have pinned their hopes on.<sup>39</sup>

The conjuncture of youth and female sexuality as an ever-more-ubiquitous image of desire in France in the 1950s and 1960s is a historically determined phenomenon, one shaped not only by consumer and media trends but by the cultural waves created by such milestones as women’s suffrage in 1944. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s many of the social and economic liberties that women had gained, largely out of necessity, over the course of the war were threatened by the explicitly pronatalist agendas of the Fourth and Fifth Republics, as well as by the ideological debris left over from the Vichy regime whose elevation of the patriarchal family to the status of a national icon was echoed in these contemporary agendas.<sup>40</sup> De Beauvoir’s suggestion that “the adult woman now inhabits the same world as the man” was far from accurate, yet the perception—and the fear—that this might one day be the case deeply affected contemporaneous gender representations and relations. The contradictory nature of postwar *jeunes filles* like Bardot is precisely so because they were simultaneously the byproduct of and a potential threat to prevailing antifeminist forces.

Representations of Bardot appear several times throughout the run of *IS*, including on the last page of the first issue. The only photograph of a “recognizable” *jeune fille* in this issue—the others, one assumes, are models—this picture shows Bardot from the side, sitting on the saddle of a horse with her torso extended backward so that her head rests on the tail end of the animal. Her notoriously tousled hair obscures part of her face, leaving only her nose and her identifiable pout visible. As usual, she is dressed casually in snug jeans and a tight-fitting sweater, her arched-back pose emphasizing the by-then infamous shape of her body. Yet with the grainy nature of the detoured image and the compositional obstruction of its subject’s eyes, we cannot rule out the possibility that this is not a photo of Bardot. Nevertheless the features that are visible in this picture are the same ones that, as de Beauvoir points out, were widely associated with Bardot. Thus, the photo might be seen as a precursor to the “femme robot” featured a few issues later. Bardot is identified by her most coveted parts, recognizable but ultimately unknown. Even if her identity cannot be absolutely verified, these parts strongly signify the idea, or myth, of Bardot that reaching the conclusion that the photo is of

Detoured photograph  
of Brigitte Bardot.  
*Internationale situationniste* 1  
(June 1958).



her is all too easy. Yet this assumption comes up against the incongruity between this image and its accompanying text (the final half paragraph of an article recounting a situationist action at a conference of art critics in Belgium) demonstrating the dialectical capacity of *détournement*. The act of diverting this picture of a *jeune fille* from its original source to a context such as *IS* in which it seems so thoroughly out of place undermines the stability of the image, thereby forcing together the identity and nonidentity of the photographic subject, which may not be but likely is Bardot, and unsettling the operational roles played by representations in instances of identification and subjectivization.

Bardot's likeness appears again in *IS 7* in the form of a comic that brings to mind her breakout role in *And God Created Woman*. In this illustration, as in the opening scene of the film, we see the *jeune fille* on a beach, accompanied by a thought bubble that reads, "Oil for sunbathing, a good book, my radio, and . . . *especially* . . . that I have absolutely nothing to do." This comic is embedded in an editorial note published with the heading "Priority Communication," a haranguing text that uses the French Left's alleged nonintervention in Algeria as a scapegoat in an argument about communication as a mode of political action. According to the authors of this editorial, communication must be dialectical, must "contain its own critique," and must do something.<sup>41</sup> The state of things was one of inaction wherein the "bombardment of information" was deemed no more than the "consumption of nothingness," incapacitating language's power to incite. Because this critique is pointedly aimed at the ever-weakening French workers' movement—which, the author(s) write, is weak precisely because it had thus far failed to recognize and build upon the radical unity between France and Algeria, capitalism and colonialism—the comic of Bardot sitting leisurely on the beach may be read as a parody. The luxuriated "especially . . . nothing to do" recorded in the *jeune fille*'s thought bubble corresponds to the repetition of words such as *nothingness*, *incapacity*, and *nonintervention* throughout the editorial text to describe the proletarian class that, "kept apart from life, are kept at a subsistence level, as defined by the spectacle."<sup>42</sup>

The peculiarity of this comic likeness of Bardot in the context of what is ostensibly a political call to arms and, moreover, the fact that semantic slippages between the two can nevertheless be identified, suggests more to this image/text relationship than coincidence or even spatial proximity. These slippages remind readers that the placement of *jeunes filles* in *IS* was a deliberate editorial decision. This leads to a question that is so obvious it risks being overlooked: Why do illustrations of *jeunes filles* accompany some of the texts in *IS* but not others? In "Sex and the SI,"



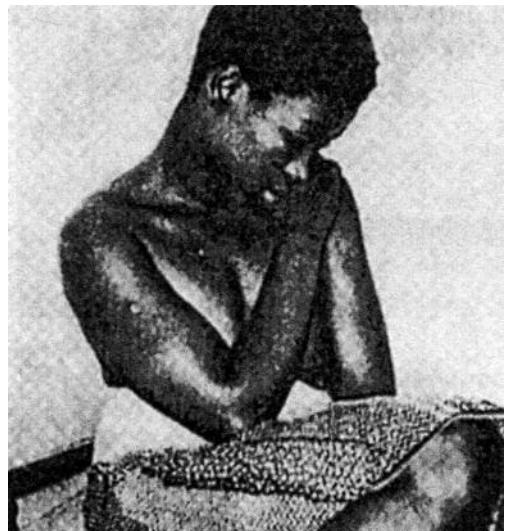
illustrations of *jeunes filles* accompany some of the texts in *IS* but not others? In "Sex and the SI,"

Left: Illustration. *Internationale situationniste 7* (April 1962).

Opposite: Detourned photograph. *Internationale situationniste 7* (April 1962).

Baum argues that, analogous to the subject of the articles they illustrate, the images of *jeunes filles* in *IS* function as allegories for the alienation of desire and can thus be divided into two categories: images of women as objects and images of women as images, both of which converge with the SI's Hegelian critique of the crisis of desire perpetuated by modern capitalism. This is one of the productive functions of the figure of the *jeune fille* in the SI's oeuvre. Yet perhaps even more interesting are the disruptive roles these figures play, the ways in which they trouble the economic determinism of the situationists' textual program, the ways in which they refuse to be reconciled with their accompanying texts. Far from being reducible to a common pattern, the representations of *jeunes filles* that appear again and again throughout the SI's work introduce potentially radical sexual difference into the situationists otherwise monogendered texts. The presence of *jeunes filles* is a constant reminder that, contrary to the many omissions that are naturalized in the texts they illustrate, the structural oppressions that constitute the spectacle-commodity economy are not reducible to class. The answer to the question of why illustrations of *jeunes filles* accompany some of the texts in *IS* but not others is thus deceptively evasive. Even as the *jeunes filles* in *IS* bolster some of the situationists' most radical thinking, they invariably also introduce incoherency, oversight, and tension into these very insights.

Later in the same editorial note the editors include a photograph of a young woman, presumably South African, naked from the waist up with her left arm across her chest, her head bowed, and her chin tucked into her neck. Unlike the cartoon, where Bardot is surrounded by markers of her contemporaneity, this young woman is depicted without context, except for the caption under the photo that, attributed to Reuters but likely fabricated or at least paraphrased by the SI, reports on a statement allegedly made by South Africa's minister of defense the previous year announcing that the country would intensify its internal arms manufacturing in an effort to become more self-sufficient.<sup>43</sup> One possible connection between the image of the South African woman and its caption is evident, if oblique: the young, solemn-looking woman stands in for the masses oppressed by South Africa's vicious official policy of apartheid.<sup>44</sup> The connection between this image and the editorial note is even more indeterminate. "Priority Communication" makes an attempt to unite concurrent colonial conflicts—including the ongoing Congo crisis, resistance to apartheid in South Africa, and the popular insurgency in Algeria—with the struggle of the proletariat class in France. The ensuing argument underestimates the differences and even outright clashes between these movements, prioritizing





anticapitalism as their common thread. If this reductive approach to international politics is troubling for many reasons, it is also indicative of the situationists' tendency to interpret world events as ultimately symptomatic of the same cause: the pervasive condition of alienation perpetuated by the spectacle-commodity economy.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, few of the representations of women in *IS* do not conform to the distinctly Western fantasy of femininity exemplified by the postwar *jeune fille*, and the exceptions that can be found generally refer to France's declining colonial power. Aside from the fact that they are both scantily clad, the two representations of young women that accompany "Priority Communication" could hardly be further apart, with the distinctions between them clearly differentiating the French *jeune fille* from her "Other" even while the text they accompany makes an attempt to align the spectacle-driven capitalism symbolized by the former and the colonial violence associated with the latter.

These intersections are all the more complicated by the fact that the strategic centrality of women's liberation, or at least the centrality of the rhetoric of women's liberation, on both sides of the colonial conflict, and particularly in the context of the Franco-Algerian war, was an often tacit point of reference in popular constructions of the postwar French *jeune fille*. As Neil MacMaster shows, part of France's campaign to keep Algeria colonized involved the distribution of propaganda targeted at Muslim women and outlining France's vested interest in "emancipating" them from what was depicted as their long history of social and religious oppression.<sup>46</sup> Although this program did little to sway popular opinion, the claims made by the French government and army were powerfully inverted by the National Liberation Front (FLN), which dedicated many pages in its official French-language newspaper, *El moudjahid*, to the argument that Algerian women could achieve true equality only after the country had been liberated from colonial rule.<sup>47</sup> The FLN's position was the same as the one vehemently taken up by Frantz Fanon, the Martinican-Algerian psychiatrist who wrote, "The liberty of the Algerian people can be identified with the emancipation of woman and her entry into history."<sup>48</sup> Although explicit representations of the conflict in Algeria were banned in France, the images and accounts that either slipped past or were carefully curated by state censors generally presented a picture of young Algerian women as Europeanized, having reaped the benefits of French education.<sup>49</sup> The official *jeune fille algérienne's* outward appearance, her rejection of the veil, and her style of dress *à la française* were taken as symbolic markers of her ideological assimilation to French culture. The headline-grabbing instances in which such young women were caught collaborating with the FLN thus created a kink in the carefully constructed

image of France as the benevolent benefactor to Algeria and to its colonial empire at large simply by begging the question, “Why?” Nevertheless, the fact that the political behavior of these young women was widely and publicly explained as acting out against teasing, expressing anger at being overlooked for a job, or as the result of being duped by an “outlaw” boyfriend comes as no surprise.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps the most famous of these cases is the trial of Djamila Boupacha, a twenty-one-year-old member of the FLN who confessed to a crime she did not commit after being repeatedly tortured and raped with a bottleneck for thirty-three days while she was held in a French prison. Boupacha became a cause célèbre in France when her lawyer, Gisèle Halimi, enlisted de Beauvoir to help raise public awareness about Boupacha’s ordeal and ensuing trial. Boupacha was a relatively common presence in the news (in large part because of famous supporters such as de Beauvoir and Sagan), as well as the subject of a book and of a portrait by Pablo Picasso, and the publicity surrounding her case contributed to the demystification of the French government’s violent and criminal activities in its colonies. *IS 2* is among the many print media outlets in which Boupacha’s likeness appears. In this case, a popular press photograph of Boupacha at her trial is detoured from one of any number of the other publications in which it had appeared and is captioned with an excerpt from surrealist Paul Eluard’s poem “Violette Nozières [*sic*],” which was written on the occasion of the trial of another jeune fille, the young Frenchwoman for whom the poem was named and who was convicted of parricide in 1934.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps the situationists were correct that Violette Nozière’s trial (or the media circus that surrounded it) could bring something to bear on Boupacha’s, despite the two trials being separated by nearly thirty years and despite their arising from very different contexts. Nozière was a fashionable eighteen-year-old Parisian who was accused of, and eventually admitted to, poisoning her parents with barbiturate-laced drinks before stealing their savings and treating herself to a shopping spree and a night out on the town. Nozière’s mother survived, but her father, who, she revealed in her confession, had been raping her for six years, did not. As Sarah Maza suggests in her historical account of Nozière’s trial, the accusations of sexual abuse garnered little support for the young girl. On the contrary, her confession seemed to aggravate an already resounding public outrage that was predicated on the image of Nozière as a dangerously independent young



Detoured photograph  
of Djamila Boupacha.  
*Internationale situationniste 2*  
(December 1958).

woman who, free to run amok with the questionable students who inhabited the Latin Quarter, had been perverted by their immoral lifestyles.<sup>52</sup> The excerpt from Eluard's poem that captions the picture of Boupacha in *IS 2* is a reference to one of the only public offerings of support Nozière received: a book of images and texts, produced in collaboration by several surrealists, that both explicitly and repeatedly broached the taboo of incest that haunted representations of Nozière's trial and addressed her victimization by the patriarchal order: the state, the police, the judge, the media, and, above all, her father. In a typically poetic turn of phrase, André Breton wrote that it was by an "act of clairvoyance" that Nozière's father called his daughter Violette, "a name that contained in its first syllable, viol [rape], his subconscious desire."<sup>53</sup>

Is this particular instance of *détournement*—a suggestive conjoining of fragments diverted from the public personal histories of Boupacha and Nozière—a glimpse of a heretofore overlooked side of the SI? While this question may be impossible to answer, we do know that by linking these cases the SI reproduced the position of Fanon and the FLN, who saw an explicit connection between Algerian independence and the emancipation of women. The affinities between Nozière's and Boupacha's stories are startling, especially in regard to their construction in the press. At the crux of this coincidence—insofar as it was represented by the SI through the language of Eluard—is the fact that both cases unsettle deeply rooted axiomatic fears. Like Nozière, who was defiled by her father, Boupacha's abuse was suffered at the hand of the symbolic father, the French state, who had claimed (through colonial interference) to care for and to protect her. And, like Nozière, who killed her father, Boupacha was accused of conspiring to commit the ultimate crime, the destruction of the colonial order, the symbolic father, the French state—the same father who spawned the *jeune fille* in the eighteenth century.

*Détournement* is, by definition, a critical repurposing of preexisting materials that engages past constructions to create new forms out of the old. Rather than destroying the old outright, *détournement* reinscribes whatever "use value" it retains in the subsequent formation. According to the logic of this operation, we must assume that the author(s) of this particular *détournement* believed that, decontextualized at least, the surrealist Eluard's poetic insight had something to bear on representations of Boupacha. The intimations of patriarchy, sexual violence, youthful rebelliousness, and the corruption of *jeunes filles* that underwrote the narrative of Nozière's abuse and her act of resistance, which ended in murder, lay bare many of the unspoken issues that shaped Boupacha's story as well.

However, in making this assumption about Eluard in the context of *IS*, we immediately encounter a stumbling block. The article in which this collage of Nozière and Boupacha is the single illustration ultimately asserts that surrealism is dead, that its heyday, its youth, its cultural significance have long passed. Thus, we must ask ourselves whether value attributed to Eluard's poem via détournement contradicts this claim by implying that even surrealism, deemed so resolutely and irrevocably passé in the corresponding text, has residual value. And, if the answer to this question is yes, what does that mean?

Once again the figure of the jeune fille thwarts our attempts to read the SI as the clearly articulated political program it claims to be, as an absolute attack on the totality of the spectacle-commodity economy, in the same way that this new category consistently evaded efforts to figure it in the popular press. The "charming monsters" at stake here are monstrous not only insofar as they are emblematic of postwar France, torn as it was between an irretrievable past, its own complacency in the endemic violence of the twentieth century, and a frightening and fractured future, but also because they were made so by cultural perceptions.<sup>54</sup> That which escapes our limited understanding engenders fear. This is as true in the context of *IS* as it is in *L'express* or in Mauriac's peculiar obsession with Sagan. To quote Debord's well-worn détournement of Hegel, if "the sleep of dialectical reason produces monsters," then these charming monsters upset the sublation of difference that puts our interpretations, our questions, and our creativity to sleep.

## Notes

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1. "Editorial Notes: Priority Communication" (1962), trans. Tom McDonough, in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 134.

2. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *New French Feminisms*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken, 1981).

3. Kelly Baum, "The Sex of the SI," *October* 126 (Fall 2008): 23–43. On the SI's treatment of gender, also see Myriam Maayan, "The 'Feminine' in Contemporary French Critical Discourse on Consumer Society and Utilitarianism," *Contemporary French Civilization* 16, no. 2 (Summer–Fall 1992): 242–261; and Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 214 n. 44.

4. "The Sound and the Fury" (1958), in *Situationist International Anthology*, rev. ed., ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2007), 47.

5. Françoise Giroud, "La lettre de *L'express*," *L'express* 328 (3 October 1957): 2.

6. Françoise Giroud, "La 'nouvelle vague': Une grande enquête nationale. Répondez!" *L'express* 328 (3 October 1957): 18.

7. In a published conversation between *Cahiers du Cinema* critics François Truffaut, Pierre Kast, Jacques Rivette, and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze in 1959, they debated the veracity of the term *nouvelle vague* and, despite offering different opinions on what this term means, agreed that it was, by and large, a fabrication created by journalists in an attempt to articulate an emerging social phenomenon. Pierre Billard, "Entretien sur le jeune cinéma," *France-Observateur* 500 (3 December 1959), 25–27. On the role of *L'express* in defining the postwar generation, or the *nouvelle vague*, see Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

8. "The Sound and the Fury" (1958), 47.

9. *L'express* was not the only newspaper or magazine to publish a series on youth during these years. In 1958 *Arts* published a series of articles on young artists and intellectuals titled "The J3's and the Conquer of Paris," which focused on many of the same public figures (Sagan, Vadim, and Buffet) as *L'express*. See *Arts* 657 (12–18 February 1958): 1; *Arts* 658 (19–25 February): 1, 5; *Arts* 660 (5–11 March 1958): 1, 3, 5, 11; and *Arts* 663 (26 March–1 April 1958): 1, 5. Questions about gender were almost completely overlooked by this series. On Sagan, see *Arts* 660 (5–11 March 1958): 1, 5. Even publications that didn't explicitly publish series on youth weighed in on the *L'express* survey. Among numerous articles on youth culture published in the late 1950s and early 1960, *France Observateur* printed a direct response early in 1958 to the articles that appeared in *L'express* the fall before. See Henri-François Rey, "La jeunesse est un alibi," *France Observateur* 406 (20 February 1958): 17. Around the same time, journalist Madeleine Chapsal published *Vérités sur les jeunes filles* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1960), a book-length survey and analysis of contemporary *jeunes filles*.

10. "The Sound and the Fury" (1958), 47.

11. Guy Debord, "Détournement as Negation and Prelude" (1959), in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Knabb, 67.

12. In an essay that outlines the laws of *détournement*, Guy Debord and Gil Wolman write, "it is the most distant detoured element which contributes most sharply to the overall impression." They then offer as a successful example the juxtaposition of a metagraph relating to the Spanish Civil War

and a text from a lipstick advertisement that reads, “Pretty lips are red.” With this early essay they thus outline the formula that is reproduced again and again throughout the entire run of *IS*; that is, combine political image or text with image or text pertaining to some fantasy of femininity. Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, “A User’s Guide to *Détournement*” (1956), in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Knabb, 16.

13. Excerpts from the popular women’s monthlies *ELLE* and *Vogue*, among others, show up several times in issues of *IS*.

14. Giroud, “La ‘nouvelle vague,’” 18.

15. *L’express*, 12 December 1957, 15–21.

16. “La nouvelle vague: Les femmes parlent . . .,” *L’express* 331 (24 October 1957): 29–31. The general omission of young women from the nouvelle vague survey is all the more peculiar because Giroud, before coming to *L’express*, was a founding editor of *ELLE*, the most popular women’s lifestyle magazine in postwar France.

17. “La nouvelle vague: Les femmes parlent . . .,” 29–31.

18. Sherry Ortner, “The Virgin and the State,” *Feminist Studies* 4 (1978): 19–37.

19. François Mauriac, “L’éducation des filles,” in *Le romancier et ses personnages* (Paris: Éditions Corrêa, 1952), 219.

20. Ortner, 19–37; and Susan Weiner, *Enfants Terribles: Youth and Femininity in the Mass Media in France, 1945–1968* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 1–21.

21. Ortner, 33.

22. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977). Perhaps the most important characteristic of the category of identity that I am calling the “traditional jeune fille” is that, at least outwardly, the young women it describes were seen as being unaware of their own sexuality. The resignification of “jeune fille” in the postwar period is connected to the explicit and self-possessed sexuality associated with youth culture at the time.

23. On the new women of the nineteenth century and Marguerite Durand, see Mary Louis Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Steven C. Hause and Anne R. Kenny, *Women’s Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Claire Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984); and Florence Rochefort, *Photo/Femmes/Féminisme: 1860–2010* (Paris: Galleries des Bibliothèques/Mairie de Paris, 2010).

24. Marguerite Durand’s failed attempt to reestablish *La fronde* in 1926, after its hiatus during the war, points to the differences between the categories of identity “modern woman,” “garçonne,” and what I classify as the “postwar jeune fille” in France. The second incarnation of *La fronde* lasted only a few weeks, indicating that the bourgeois feminist politics it espoused was out of touch with a new generation of modern women.

25. René Delaunay summarized the interwar anxiety about the garçonne when he wrote, “Is the modern jeune fille really this decay of innocence or will she blossom into a beautifully fragrant feminine flower? . . . The innocent young thing of yesterday has given way to la garçonne of today. In this way as well, the war, like a devastating wind, has had an influence.” René Delaunay, contribution to “Une controverse: L’émancipation de la jeune fille moderne est-elle un progrès réel?” *Le progrès civique*, 13 June 1925, 840.

26. A contemporary style feature attests to the fact that the postwar jeune fille was seen as distinct from the garçonne of the 1920s. Citing the popularity of Greta Garbo and Mae West (both American) in the 1930s as the beginning of the garçonne’s gradual fall from fashion, the author writes that by the 1960s, “the garçonne has had its time: men no longer want androgynous comrades, but real women.” Françoise Lucien, “Adieu les garçonnes!” *Arts*, 8–14 February 1961, 17. Moreover, the conflict between nostalgic ideals of femininity—purity, intactness, and so on—and the redefinition of

the modern *jeune fille* is evident in several literary critics' obsession with and ongoing commentary on the young author and cultural phenomenon Françoise Sagan. Descriptions of Sagan are conflicting. She is alternately praised for her talent and her charm and associated with her cruel protagonists. See François Mauriac, "Pour parler encore d'elle," *L'express*, 13 September 1957, 32; and Jacques Chardonne, "Bonjour Tristesse de Françoise Sagan," *Arts* 469 (23–29 June 1954): 5.

27. Claire Duchen, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France: 1944–1968* (London: Routledge, 1994), 123–127. For example, while the media image of the postwar *jeune fille* was characterized by her explicit and seductive sexuality, I have yet to find one of these images that acknowledges the risks associated with sex given the fact that birth control was not legalized in France until 1967 and abortion only decriminalized in 1975. When considered in relation to the advertisements in the same magazine, the monthly column in the short-lived *Mademoiselle*, "J'ai . . . ans, j'habit à . . .," in which "real" *jeunes filles* describe their day-to-day lives and their hopes for their futures, also indicates the discrepancy between the lived reality of most young women in France and the image of the postwar *jeune fille* in the mass media sources they consumed.

28. Weiner.

29. The fact that *Mademoiselle*, the first French magazine targeted specifically at *jeunes filles*, was inaugurated in 1962 indicates the urgency of the contemporary debates around this category of identity. The entire, short-lived experiment that constitutes *Mademoiselle* is an important case study in the complexity of defining precisely to which demographic of the French population the category *jeune fille* corresponded.

30. Mauriac, "Le dernier prix," *Le figaro* 3025 (1 June 1954): 1.

31. Mauriac, "L'éducation des filles," 219.

32. "The Sociology of Beauty," *Internationale situationniste* 8 (January 1963): 33. In the brief caption that accompanies this image in *IS*, the authors compare it to a police composite sketch.

33. Of the many "portrait robots" published in French newspapers and magazines throughout the 1950s and 1960s, one example particularly stands out: a photomontage of the faces of popular new wave actresses that accompanies the essay "Portrait Robot of the New Wave Heroine" by Evelyne Sullerot, a colleague of Edgar Morin, in which she identifies patterns in the representation of young women in new wave films. Eve Sullerot, "Portrait robot de l'héroïne 'nouvelle vague,'" *France Observateur* 537 (27 April 1961): 17–18.

34. "The Sociology of Beauty," 33.

35. Simone de Beauvoir, *Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome*, trans. Bernard Fretchman (Turin: Reynal and Company, 1960), 8.

36. "When three young ne'er-do-wells of reputable families murdered a sleeping man in a train at Angers, the Parent-Teachers' Association denounced BB to M. Chatney, the deputy mayor of the city. It was she, they said, who was responsible for the crime. *And God Created Woman* has been shown in Angers; the young people were immediately perverted." De Beauvoir, 7.

37. The scandal caused by *Lolita* would have been fresh in people's minds when de Beauvoir wrote this essay. Nabokov's protagonist was a popular topic in the press at the time, with *L'express* contributor Madeleine Chapsal even comparing *Lolita* to *Zazie*, the beloved French national *jeune fille* from Raymond Queneau's popular novel *Zazie dans le metro* (1959).

38. De Beauvoir, 8.

39. De Beauvoir, 10.

40. See Duchen.

41. "Editorial Notes," 24.

42. "Editorial Notes," 129.

43. Both the name and date recorded in this caption are incorrect. By most historical accounts, South Africa's minister of defense, Jacobus Johannes Fouché, announced that the country would

increase its arms production just one month before the publication of *IS* 7 in March 1962. However, the text accompanying the image of the young woman in *IS* identifies the minister as “M. François Fouché” and dates the announcement to the previous year, 1961.

44. After he regained power upon the collapse of the Fourth Republic, General Charles de Gaulle’s aggressive response to the Franco-Algerian war included publicizing the proposal for a plan to establish apartheid policies in Algeria that would divide the colony into “white” and “Arab” zones. See Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.

45. Several essays in the tenth issue of *IS* identify world events and politics as evidence of the pervasive totality of the spectacle. See particularly, “The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity-Economy,” in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Knabb, 194–202, which takes up the Watts riots in Los Angeles. It is unsigned but attributed to Guy Debord.

46. Neil MacMaster, “The Colonial ‘Emancipation’ of Algerian Women: The Marriage Law of 1959 and the Failure of Legislation on Women’s Rights in the Post-Independence Era,” *Stichproben: The Vienna Journal of African Studies* 12 (2007): 91–116; and Neil MacMaster, *Burning the Veil: The Algerian War and the ‘Emancipation’ of Muslim Women* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009). See “Journal d’une maquisarde (I),” *El moudjahid* 44 (22 June 1959): 12; “Journal d’une maquisarde (II),” *El moudjahid* 45 (6 July 1959): 12; “Journal d’une maquisarde (III),” *El moudjahid* 46 (20 July 1959): 12; “Journal d’une maquisarde (IV),” *El moudjahid* 47 (3 August 1959): 12; “Journal d’une maquisarde (V),” *El moudjahid* 48 (17 August 1959): 12; and “Journal d’une maquisarde (VI),” *El moudjahid* 49 (31 August 1959): 12.

47. Natalya Vince, “Transgressing Boundaries: Gender, Race, Religion, and ‘Françaises Musulmanes’ during the Algerian War of Independence,” *French Historical Studies* 33, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 446. “Journal d’une maquisarde,” a regular column published in *El moudjahid* in the form of a young girl’s personal account of her involvement in the National Liberation Army, evokes the style of diaristic writing that was also popular in French women’s magazines at the time.

48. Frantz Fanon, *L’an V de la révolution algérienne* (1959; Paris: Éditions Découverte et Syros, 2001), 93.

49. Similar to the representations of postwar jeunes filles in France, the images of young Algerian women were, for the most part, out of touch with the actual experience of young womanhood in Algeria. In 1954, for example, only 4.5 percent of “French Muslim” women could read and write. See Vince, 451.

50. Vince, 452–459. In his memoir published in 1972, French Colonel Yves Godard expresses deep confusion and continued anxiety over several young, Europeanized women who were caught collaborating with the FLN. The particular cases he describes include Zohra Drif, who, Godard notes, was teased at school, and Zakia Hammadi, who was passed over for a job in favor of a European applicant. The combination of these bizarre, depoliticized explanations for the political actions of young Algerian women and the fact that these women were often described as having been “corrupted” by the FLN calls for comparison with the language used to describe the rebellious behavior of the French jeune fille in the contemporary French mass media.

51. The poem fragment reads, “One day there will be no more fathers / In the garden of youth . . . / Violet dreamt of undoing / And undid / The hideous vipers’ knot of blood relations.” *Internationale situationniste* 2 (December 1958): 33.

52. Sarah Maza, *Violette Nozière: A Story of Murder in 1930s Paris* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011).

53. Maza, 214.

54. Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 53. The image of France as a monster has deep cultural roots, dating back at least to 1580 when, at the end of the second book of his *Essais*, Montaigne evokes the image of a child with two heads as a symbol for an embattled France then being torn apart by the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants.