

Chapter 5

ALL DRESSED UP AND RUNNING WILD: SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959)

“Whatever meaning you will find in my pictures, it’s all put in kind of contraband, you know—sort of smuggled in.”

—Billy Wilder¹

“Satires that are understood by the censor should indeed be forbidden.”

—Karl Kraus²

Trading in Counterfeits

A hearse drives through a city at night, four somber men inside seated around a coffin. A siren is heard, faint at first but rapidly growing louder. The driver and the man next to him exchange nervous glances; the men in back peek through the curtain and see a police car bearing down on them. The driver accelerates, weaving crazily through traffic while the policemen behind them open fire. The men in back pull a couple of sawed-off shotguns from a hidden overhead rack and return fire. Bullets riddle their car, smashing the glass panel. Suddenly, the police car skids out of control, jumps the curb, and comes to a screeching halt while the gangsters escape. But bullets have penetrated the coffin and liquid is spurting through the bullet holes. Taking the lid off the men reveal that the coffin is filled to the top with liquor bottles, some of them broken. A superimposed title informs us where we are—it’s Chicago, 1929.

Thus opens *Some Like It Hot*, set in Al Capone’s wintry city during the time of Prohibition, the speakeasy, organized crime, and gang warfare. Yet what begins as a gangster film in the tradition of *Scarface* (Howard Hawks, 1932) and such Warner classics as *The Public Enemy* (William Wellman, 1931), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (Michael Curtiz, 1938) and *The Roaring Twenties* (Raoul Walsh, 1939) soon reveals its more parodic dimension. The destination of the hearse is a speakeasy made up as “Mozarella’s Funeral Parlor,” where patrons wear a mourning band and pretend to attend



Figure 5.1. Josephine and Daphne put a little heat under Sugar's performance

"Grandma's funeral"; once they are admitted, an organ player pulls out a stop to open a secret doorway to "the chapel"—a boisterous bar where guests can request a "pew" and order various kinds of coffees—Scotch coffee, Canadian coffee, sour-mash coffee, and so on—while they are being entertained by a jazz orchestra and chorus of dancing girls. As soon as Joe (Tony Curtis) and Jerry (Jack Lemmon) enter the film—as wisecracking, down in the heel jazz musicians—we have firmly arrived in the world of comedy. Their first exchange revolves around eliminating their many debts by betting their paycheck at the races. Jerry is reluctant because he

fears to lose the little money they make; Joe admonishes him not to be a pessimist:

Joe: Jerry-boy—why do you have to paint everything so black? Suppose you get hit by a truck? Suppose the stock market crashes? ... Suppose Mary Pickford divorces Douglas Fairbanks? Suppose the Dodgers leave Brooklyn? Suppose Lake Michigan overflows?

Jerry: (who has noticed that one client is hiding a police badge and a raid is about to ensue) Don't look now but the whole town is under water!

This exchange establishes an explicit parallel between the late 1920s and the late 1950s. The humor here derives from the fact that events referred to would occur in the immediate future of the characters (the stock market would crash in October of that year, and Mary Pickford's troubled marriage would end in 1933), as well as the recent past of contemporary viewers (the Brooklyn Dodgers did move West in 1955), thereby confirming that most unlikely events do indeed take place, and that there are no safe bets in life. Conflating two distinct historical eras—the Roaring Twenties just before the Great Depression, and the Eisenhower Era that was soon to make way for the 1960s—*Some Like It Hot* provides detailed comments on the present by drawing on the past. Like *Sunset Boulevard*, it reflects on the 1920s both as a historical era and an era of filmmaking, with the use of black and white film stock, a conscious choice to invoke that period. (Some fifteen years later Wilder would also set *The Front Page* in the Chicago of 1929, while *The Spirit of St. Louis* commemorates Lindbergh's transatlantic flight of 1927.)

The opening passage efficiently establishes the central metaphor of counterfeit and camouflage and the binary opposition of being and appearance (“*Sein*” and “*Schein*”) that provides the central structuring device of the film. Dressing up the 1950s as the 1920s allows Wilder to contrast the stifling and confining Eisenhower years with an era that was known for its audaciousness and unlawfulness, its sexual liberties and progressive ideas, and its economic and political volatility. From rapidly growing American cities emerged the Jazz age that brought us great popular entertainment, the Charleston, and the flapper. In Weimar Berlin, Germany's most Americanized city at the time, Wilder had himself experienced Germany's furious race toward modernity, as I have outlined in chapter 1—only to be brought to a screeching halt by Black Friday, the same event that also silenced the roar of the American Twenties. It is thus no coincidence that by wedding two genres which were of particular importance at the time, *Some Like It Hot* foregrounds its ancestry both in Weimar cinema and Hollywood cinema of the 1920s and early 1930s. Joe and Jerry's antics in drag recall the farcical humor and slapstick comedy of Mack Sennett and the Keystone Cops (in the Keystone Comedy *Miss Fattie's Seaside Lovers* [1915], Fattie Arbuckle plays the rotund daughter of a wealthy family

who while at a seaside resort is pursued by three young lounge lizards, during which time Arbuckle, like Lemmon, has a lengthy scene on the beach in a bathing suit). While the American gangster film (and later *noir*) would revolve around alienation and disorientation, fatalism and loss, misogyny and troubled gender relations, Weimar gender-bending comedy, stylish in its own way, would question or ridicule patriarchy, exploring the relationship between men and women in humorous ways, often through impersonation, role reversal, and cross dressing. Finally, by setting the film in the time of pre-Code Hollywood, Wilder pays homage to a period of filmmaking that enjoyed considerably more leeway in its portrayal of sexual relationships, while itself contributing to the noticeable erosion of the Production Code in the late 1950s. With its allusions, double entendres, and blue jokes referencing homosexuality, oral sex, castration, impotence, and transsexuality, *Some Like It Hot* can claim to have pushed up against censorship more than most of its American predecessors.³

The film's playful but powerful critique of the power of appearance positions it firmly in the critical legacy of the Weimar Republic. For Peter Sloterdijk the culture of Weimar Germany serves as model for a liberating and productive cynicism that eroded patriarchy, militarism, and a broad spectrum of metaphysical beliefs: "Weimar culture ... stands before us as the most self-aware epoch of history; it was a highly reflective, thoughtful, imaginative, and expressive age that is thoroughly plowed up by the most manifold self-observations and self-analyses."⁴ Taking his cue from Sloterdijk's enlightened cynicism, Thomas Elsaesser has brought into focus the "transparent duplicities" of Weimar cinema by arguing that its resistance to referentiality has allowed for the creation of a highly sophisticated film language, both on the level of the image and the narrative, repeatedly using strategies of deception, camouflage, impersonation, and duplicity to make larger claims about the forming and deforming forces of modernity.⁵

Some Like It Hot presents a picture of modernity literally running wild, of heat and speed combining to unhinge assumed securities, beliefs, and identities. From the film's opening chase scene, through the ribaldry on the overnight train, shots of elevators endlessly going up and down, and the pivotal use of a bicycle, to the final getaway in a motor boat, there is constant movement and action, rapid transitions of costume and identity, and narrow escapes from all kinds of perpetrators. The uninterrupted motion lets the temperature rise: Sugar's (Marilyn Monroe's) behind gets caught in the hot steam of the locomotive, Sweet Sue demands her band to "put a little heat under" its performance, and Junior's glasses fog up—until the film comes to a boiling climax. The fast-paced dialogue, timed to perfection by Diamond and Wilder as well as Daphne's clever use of the maracas, is underscored with the pulsing rhythm of Sweet Sue's Society Syncopators, a close cousin to Friedrich Hollaender's "Syncopators" performing at the Lorelei in *A Foreign Affair*, which in turn were modeled after Paul Whiteman's famous jazz orchestra. It was Whiteman's music, after

all, that brought Wilder from Vienna to Berlin and made him speak of jazz as “the exigent rejuvenation of a fossilized Europe.”⁶

On another level, the notion of counterfeit trade is also an apt description of the predicament of the exile directors in Hollywood, as Elsaesser has argued. On the one hand, they were forced into accepting directorial assignments—such as Ernst Lubitsch’s or Max Ophuls’ portrayal of fin-de-siècle Paris, Vienna, and the Balkans—that had little to do with their work in Weimar Germany or their cultural origins. On the other hand, these settings do entertain important geopolitical parallels with the era of classic Hollywood: “The secret affinity that existed between Hollywood on one side and Vienna and Paris on the other was that they were societies of the spectacle, cities of make-believe and of the show. The decadence of the Hapsburg monarchy was in some ways the pervasive sense of impersonation, of pretending to be in possession of values and status that relied for credibility not on substance but on convincing performance, on persuading others to take an appearance for the reality.”⁷ A careful student of Lubitsch, Wilder, too, would become a master of make-believe, of using falsehood and pretension to question false securities. *Some Like It Hot* in particular is a masterpiece of playing with appearances, of self-consciously debunking the borders between “Sein” and “Schein” in order to seek a higher form of truth.

Clothes Make the (Wo)Man

From the 1931 Ufa film *Ihre Hoheit befiehlt*, in which a princess dresses up as commoner for a night of fun (remade by William Dieterle as *Adorable* in 1933) to Fedora’s elaborate scheme to claim eternal youth, Wilder’s scripts and films display a fascination, sometimes even an obsession, with disguise, masquerade, and role playing, with switching sexual, social, and professional identities. The prominence of this important dramatic device has certainly to do with its significance and ubiquity within the long theatrical tradition which Wilder venerates and which comes across in the three-act structure of his scripts and the fact that so many of them are based on plays and musicals. Both German and American film, from the 1910s onward, also employ the device time and again for comic or dramatic purposes. When Wilder makes use of it, he consciously situates himself within these important traditions. Nevertheless, Wilder’s penchant for masquerade and impersonation has also to be seen in terms of his experience of exile. The loss of political and economic security and of social and personal identity is a fundamental part of being a refugee, and strategies of impersonation, drag, shape shifting, and cultural mimicry are central to the exile’s efforts to survive forced displacement, economic hardship, and social ostracism. In order to meet the studio’s demand of what German and Austrian culture is all about, exiled film professionals had to perform

Expressionist angst, Viennese schmaltz, and Prussian militarism whether or not it had any relation to their cultural heritage or aesthetic sensibilities. Thus even when in the service of entertainment, impersonation and masquerade always entail a political dimension, serving as allegory for the price the exile has to pay in his or her quest for assimilation, for blending in, or for mere survival.

Role-playing, masquerade, and impersonation, whether in the service of disguise or deception, are part of almost every film Wilder wrote or directed. While Georges Iscovescu's pretension of love to gain entry into the US is necessitated by his refugee status, a direct reference to the experience is rare in Wilder, as it is in Hollywood cinema in general. And while there are few life-or-death scenarios that prompt masquerade (the case of Joe and Jerry being a very important exception) some sense of survival usually depends on it—be it to make a buck, to escape from a pursuer, or to dupe a spouse or superior. Wilder's first commercially successful scripts are still closely related to operatic traditions of role reversal. In *Ihre Hoheit befiehlt* as well as in *Der falsche Ehemann*, which involves identical twins switching positions, role reversals lead to a comedy of errors without lasting psychological repercussions. Similarly, in *Midnight* a down-on-her-luck Claudette Colbert impersonates a Baroness Czerny to fool the upper crust of Paris, only to be saved by, and swiftly married to, a cab driver impersonating the Baron Czerny. Far more sexually ambivalent are the films where women camouflage their age or maturity and where the males surrounding them fail to recognize the woman in the girl. Dolly Haas in *Scampolo* plays the same kind of boyish girl under which a sexually desiring woman hides, as tomboy Audrey Hepburn will in *Sabrina* and *Love in the Afternoon*, where she is an ingénue who poses as a fashion-conscious sophisticate in the hope of snaring Gary Cooper. (Incidentally, it is Hepburn's performance as Cooper's lover that first saves him from a jealous husband who suspects Cooper of having an affair with his wife.) Most daring in this respect is certainly *The Major and the Minor* in which Ginger Rogers pretends to be a twelve-year-old to pay half fare for the train, setting in motion a complicated play of hide and seek during which she also has to impersonate her mother. The closest precursor to *Some Like It Hot*—a link visually underscored by the last frame of the film, which envelops Rogers in the steam of a train that will also mark the entrance of Marilyn Monroe—Cameron Crowe has labeled the film a disguised bit of fluff which is in reality a dark comic spin on pedophilia.⁸

In Wilder's films set during wartime, impersonation is caught up in larger political stories of deception, espionage, or counter intelligence. In *Arise, My Love*, set during the Spanish Civil War, Claudette Colbert plays a journalist who successfully pretends to be the wife of an American pilot in order to save him from the firing squad of Franco's Army; British officer John Bramble (Franchot Tone) poses as an Alsatian waiter in order to outfox desert fox Field Marshal Rommel (Erich von Stroheim) while at



Figure 5.2. Echoes of Lolita: Ginger Rogers pretends to be a twelve-year-old

the same time being mistaken for a spy in the war drama *Five Graves to Cairo*; *Stalag 17* revolves around the efforts of American Prisoners of War in Germany to unmask the snitch hiding in their midst. The film entails memorable scenes of cross-dressing (Shapiro becomes number one war-time pin-up girl Betty Grable), as well as impersonation (one soldier fakes a Clark Gable accent and the whole barrack dresses up as Adolf Hitler). The plot of the Cold War comedy *One, Two, Three* consists almost entirely of the efforts of C.R. MacNamara (James Cagney) to remake the East German Marxist newlywed Otto Piffel (a young Horst Buchholz) into a Western aristocrat his American in-laws will accept; thus, the bulk of the film is given over to preparations (casting, scripting, costuming, and rehearsing) for a performance, inviting us to take pleasure in performance itself, a process rather than a finished product.⁹ This film also includes some cross dressing on the part of MacNamara's assistant Schlemmer (Hanns Lothar) who is made up to look like Fräulein Ingeborg (Lilo Pulver) to fool the East Germans.

One of the few Wilder films where the viewer is not privy to the actual act of masquerading is *Witness for the Prosecution*, which pivots around Marlene Dietrich's ability to fake a cockney accent and fool criminal law-



Figure 5.3. Wilder's other cross-dressers: Shapiro as Betty Grable in *Stalag 17* and Schlemmer as Fräulein Ingeborg in *One, Two, Three*



yer Charles Laughton. While most Wilder films derive their pleasure or suspense from the question whether the impersonating protagonist will be found out, this film's ending surprises viewers by revealing an impersonation where none was suspected. The most versatile of Wilder's con-artists is certainly Jack Lemmon who—apart from turning into Daphne and a bellhop in *Some Like It Hot*—simulates serious injury to mislead the insurance company in *The Fortune Cookie*, and transforms from lowly French cop Nestor into a pimp before passing himself off as an English lord in order to win the sympathy of Shirley MacLaine in *Irma La Douce*. In *The Apartment*, he will undergo an extensive character reversal from schmuck to mensch, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Lemmon is the Wilder (anti-)hero who has the greatest problems distinguishing where the self ends and its performance begins; he is the one most notoriously seeking venues to showcase himself or versions of himself because he falls in love with his masks. This falling for his own performances is invariably followed by rude awakenings, which makes him also Wilder's most tragic hero. (Ironically, at the end of *Irma La Douce* one of his masks seems to survive even after Lemmon has lifted it.)

The confrontation between the role one occupies in life and the role one imagines to occupy is explored in a lighthearted and comic way in *Ein blonder Traum*, and most dramatically and cruelly in *Sunset Boulevard* and *Fedora*, extended metaphors on the dangerous interference of the film industry with our imaginary. The creative conflation between Hollywood personae and scripted characters is also the strategy that underlies Wilder's repeated casting of stars and film professionals as "themselves," or in fictional roles modeled closely on their actual lives and careers; these include directors Erich von Stroheim, Cecil B. DeMille, and Mitchell Leisen, and the occasional supporting role or cameo by someone like composer Friedrich Hollaender or art designer Alexander Trauner. In his use of stars such as Marlene Dietrich, Gloria Swanson, Hildegard Knef, Henry Fonda, Buster Keaton, or Dean Martin, Wilder contrasts their off-screen persona—as carefully constructed of course as their cinematic roles—with the characters they embody in his films. In *The Seven Year Itch* and *Some Like It Hot* Marilyn Monroe provides performances that resonate closely with her celebrated and scandal-ridden public life, as I will explore in more detail below.

In most of Wilder's films, masquerade, impersonation, or role reversal is resolved in some neat and wholesome way. Georges Iscovescu in *Hold Back the Dawn* pretends attraction for Emmy, but then comes to realize a sense of sincere commitment and selflessness. *Scampolo*, *Sabrina*, and *Love in the Afternoon* involve virtually identical endings in which the older man finally recognizes the truth about the young woman and in a dramatic finale swoops her onto a departing train (*Love in the Afternoon*), onto an airplane (*Scampolo*), or arrives by helicopter to catch a departing steamer (*Sabrina*). After impersonating women that are either too young

or too old for Ray Milland, Ginger Rogers finally gets to “act her age” and to elope with Milland on a train to Las Vegas for a speedy wedding. Often, complicated plots are resolved with such efficiency and through such highly clichéd happy endings that the unsettling implications introduced through impersonation and role reversal are hardly toned down. Wilder’s films thus point a very visible finger to the compromises imposed both by censorship and what producers found in good taste. A notable exception here is *Kiss Me, Stupid*, in which Kim Nowak, as a hooker hired to perform as temporary housewife, plays her role with such conviction that the husband who hired her goes to bed with her. Ironically, the man she was supposed to seduce, Las Vegas entertainer Dino (Dean Martin), ends up with the real housewife, who extracts from him the promise to produce one of her husband’s songs before making love to him. The role reversal between housewife and hooker is complete when Novak, having enjoyed “marital bliss” for one night, decides to settle down for a life of domesticity (it is less clear if the adulterous wife will also change her life style). The damning public outrage and poor box office showing of the film indicated how little prepared American moviegoers were to accept forms of impersonation and role reversals that deny “clean” closure and resolution.¹⁰

The refusal of a traditional form of closure is of course also what has kept *Some Like It Hot* so remarkably fresh for almost fifty years. The famous and highly inconclusive conclusion of the film shows Jerry’s/Daphne’s futile attempt to reverse his/her crossdressing and escape marriage to millionaire Osgood:

Jerry: “Look, Osgood—I’m going to level with you. We can’t get married at all.”

Osgood: “Why not?”

Jerry: “Well, to begin with, I’m not a natural blonde.”

Osgood (tolerantly): “It doesn’t matter.”

Jerry: “And I smoke all the time.”

Osgood: “I don’t care.”

Jerry: “And I have a terrible past. For three years now, I’ve been living with a saxophone player.”

Osgood: “I forgive you.”

Jerry: (with growing desperation) “And I can never have children.”

Osgood: “We’ll adopt some.”

Jerry: “But you don’t understand! (he rips off his wig; in a male voice) I’m a MAN!”

Osgood: “Well—nobody’s perfect.”

Jerry's failed attempt to set the record straight is a rare and memorable example in which the effects of masquerade outlast the intention of those involved in the performance, thereby radically questioning the border between essence and performance. Slipping effortlessly and swiftly in and out of disguises and roles, Wilder's shapeshifters invite us to become suspicious of the borders and binarisms through which we define our sexual, social, or psychological identity. While Jerry may get confused about who he really is—at one point he's reminding himself "I'm a girl," while in the next he shouts "I'm a boy"—he and Wilder's other heroes rarely have an identity crisis. The question "Who am I?"—which Oedipus poses at the inauguration of the canon of Western literature—is of no concern to them. They view identity as malleable, open, and transient—an opportunity, not a predicament. No wonder, then, that the teachings of psychoanalysis have no impact on them, and Wilder rarely passes up an opportunity for ridicule. When Joe, as Shell heir and millionaire, tries to seduce Sugar Kane into seducing him by feigning impotence, he laments that he spent, without the slightest trace of success, "six months in Vienna with Professor Freud flat on my back."¹¹ It will take Sugar only a few minutes to fix what the famous doctor allegedly could not.¹²

Some Like it Lukewarm

Two musicians hard up for work hear from their agent's secretary that an all-female band is looking to replace two of its members (who incidentally play the very same instruments as the two men). Their circumstances leave them no choice, and they decide to join. Dressed as women, they climb on an overnight train to the resort hotel where the band will have its engagement. On boarding, they meet the bossy female director of the band, the somewhat subdued male manager, and all the girl musicians. Both men use the journey to flirt with the stunning lead vocalist, engaging in jealous rivalry that constantly threatens to give away their disguise. In the course of their stay at the hotel, the taller, better-looking man slips in and out of drag, finds himself pursued by a lecherous man, continues to compete with his buddy for the attention of the lead vocalist, and finds happiness with her at the end of the film. Sounds familiar? The above is the storyline of *Fanfaren der Liebe* (*Fanfares of Love*), a West German film from 1951, directed by Kurt Hoffmann and based on a story by Robert Thoeren and Michael Logan, which served as a model for Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*. In interviews, Wilder has acknowledged this source, but usually only to dismiss it as a totally different film. But how different is it really?

Apart from the storyline, there are some truly remarkable parallels between the two films. Hoffmann's two protagonists—Hans (Dieter Borsche), a tall, self-confident, and handsome pianist and composer, and Peter (Georg Thomalla), his weaker, somewhat fearsome comic sidekick playing the

bass fiddle—come remarkably close to the male roles Curtis and Lemmon play, and there are also certain similarities in their respective gender reversals. While Curtis’s Josephine goes “towards the demure and Lemmon’s Daphne goes head first into the lugubrious and loud,”¹³ Borsche’s Hans transforms from weak male (early in the film he is insulted as “girlie face” [“Mädchengesicht”]) to strong female Hansi, and Thomalla’s Petra moves into slapstick while at the same time becoming aware (like Daphne) “what the poor women have to suffer” (“was die armen Frauen so erliden müssen”). Furthermore, there is significant overlap between the star persona the four actors occupy within the distinct national film industries in which



Figure 5.4. Some like it lukewarm: Wilder’s model, *Fanfaren der Liebe*

they were employed.¹⁴ Georg Thomalla shares with Jack Lemmon an acting style that foregrounds nervous tics and mannerisms, and a penchant for comic roles in which he plays the underdog and underachiever in the shadow of more successful rivals.¹⁵ Like Lemmon, Thomalla began as a stage actor and would frequently return to the theatre throughout his career. It is perhaps no coincidence that Thomalla would go on to speak Lemmon's part in the dubbed German version of this film, becoming as famous for his voice as for his acting. Often paired with Thomalla and another renowned comedian of the 1950s is Grethe Weiser, who plays the band leader Lydia; she instructs her girls about the dangers of men in terms very similar to those Joan Shawlee would later use in her role of the not so very Sweet Sue.

Wilder was of course right to emphasize that the key plot device he and Diamond introduced was having his male protagonists witness the St. Valentine's massacre, thereby making it impossible for them to go safely in and out of drag as Hans and Peter do. He further streamlined the plot by eliminating the two Germans' prior attempts at crossdressing. Before Hans and Peter would turn into Hansi and Petra, they tried their hand at ethnic drag by dressing up as Gypsies and in blackface in order to join a Balkan ensemble and an Afro-American jazz band, respectively. It is a telling indication of the postwar German mentality that despite recent history such a form of disguise was considered well-suited as comic material; it is also worth noting that donning women's clothes, according to the inner logic of *Fanfaren der Liebe*, is portrayed as the more daring form of disguise because it commands a greater effort to sustain this illusion than the acts of ethnic drag, which they pull off easily.¹⁶

Even though Jerry does remark that he and Joe played once in a "gypsy tearoom" wearing golden earrings, as well as in a Hawaiian band donning grass skirts, Wilder spares us any images of ethnic crossdressing as well as the equivalent of a longish scene in which Hans advises Peter how to transform into a woman. *Some Like It Hot*, in contrast, famously cuts from Joe using a female voice on the phone to inform the agency about accepting the job to Josephine and Daphne in full female regalia swaggering along the platform, thereby not only speeding up the action but also presenting the gender transformation as *fait accompli* (a cut which is copied in Sydney Pollack's 1982 film *Tootsie*). Nevertheless, the shot of Curtis's and Lemmon's derrières, swinging their hips and struggling with high heels, is a direct quote from Hoffmann's film which also presents the women from behind while they test their masquerade by parading by a street musician who knows them well (and fails to recognize them).

While the stakes are high in Wilder's mobster-infused comedy, *Fanfaren der Liebe* mixes comedy of errors with the revue film, one of the most popular German genres of the 1930s. Thus ample screentime is given to the elaborate musical numbers of the band whose repertoire includes typical Bavarian folk songs, waltz, swing music, syncopated big band numbers, and the "Schlager," a popular song with a venerable tradition in Germany

that is characterized by a catchy tune and lyrics that are easy to remember. In accordance with this emphasis on music, an important plot element consists of Hans trying to find an audience for a song he composed. His success at having the girls band perform his song in the end while he enters the stage dressed as man underscores the neat heterosexual closure of the film, combining the success of both his professional and romantic quest. (Wilder and Diamond eliminated this subplot but would use it for *Kiss Me, Stupid*.) This wholesome ending and the inconclusive conclusion of *Some Like It Hot* is certainly one of the most significant differences between the two films. Not surprisingly, the popular success of the German film prompted Borsche and Thomalla to costar again as Hans/Hansi Mertens and Peter/Petra Schmidt in *Fanfaren der Ehe* [*Fanfares of Marriage*, directed by Hans Grimm, 1953] in which, now happily married, they again dress up as women to accompany their musician wives on a cruise ship. In their script, Wilder and Diamond explicitly ruled out a sequel to *Some Like It Hot*. After Osgood has delivered his famous line, and we realize nothing has been settled, the script states: "Jerry looks at Osgood, who is grinning from ear to ear, claps his hand to his forehead. How is her [sic!] going to get himself out of this? But that's another story—and we're not quite sure the public is ready for it."¹⁷

The comparison between *Fanfaren der Liebe* and *Some Like It Hot* points not only to Wilder's aesthetic sensibilities but also opens up larger questions of the similarities and differences between two national cinemas of the 1950s. Given the fact that the German and the American cinemas of the 1920s and early 1930s were not only highly competitive and comparable, producing film professionals that were eminently compatible—one of the main reasons so many émigrés and exiles adapted so successfully to the Hollywood studio system—the discrepancy between postwar developments in both countries is astounding. German cinema of the 1950s was singularly detached from international contemporary developments, producing no significant styles or *auteurs*, and harboring few compelling institutional developments. Emphasizing domesticity and conformity, it was a cinema turned inward, making the "Heimatfilm" (films about the home or homeland) its most notable genre.¹⁸ The fact that the majority of *Fanfaren der Liebe* is set in a spa in the Alps, a typical "Heimatfilm" setting, underscores the film's—and the decade's—overall quest for healing and recovery. The Florida resort of *Some Like It Hot*, in contrast, is implicated differently in the modernity of the 1920s (and 1950s). If Chicago is cold, forbidding, and crime-infested, Florida is warm, welcoming, and leisure-oriented. As Sinyard and Turner have it, "Chicago is associated with night, death, violence and gangsters; its is predominantly the domain of the male. Miami, on the other hand, is immediately associated with sun, life, and song; it is predominantly a female world."¹⁹ But Florida is not just the opposite of Chicago, it is also its extension. If the city provides booze and night clubs, the resort affords sexual prowling for capitalists who live

off the gains reaped from exploiting the underemployed working class in the metropolis. Millionaires like Osgood enjoy a transgressive lifestyle that parallels that of the urban mobsters; no wonder, then, that they in turn disregard the boundaries between locations of labor and leisure and take their gangwar to the Seminole Ritz. Indeed, the melting away of fixed gender identities—another important boundary—is only thinkable under the hot Florida sun.

Both the German films of the Adenauer years as well as the American films of the Eisenhower era emphasize domesticity and conformity. While the former displayed an uncanny historical amnesia regarding the legacy of Fascist rule and the Holocaust—ridiculed by Wilder in both *A Foreign Affair* and *One, Two, Three*—the latter employed mechanisms of self-censorship enforced by the industry and heightened by the Cold War and the Red Scare. An atmosphere of political and cultural uniformity pervades the 1950s, but there are also pressures against it. With the popularization of psychoanalysis and the publication of the Kinsey reports (in 1947 and 1952), there was a greater emphasis on sexuality in American cinema, including suggestions of adultery (as can be seen in *The Seven Year Itch*, a film Wilder regrets having made precisely because he could not go beyond mere suggestions). And while the Production Code was still intact in 1959, stipulating that “sex perversion”—its term for homosexuality—could not be presented or implied in a motion picture, its interpretation had in fact loosened over the decade.

Bracketed by *Sunset Boulevard* and *The Apartment*, the 1950s was the decade of Wilder’s biggest achievements. While several fellow émigrés and exiles—including Fritz Lang, Douglas Sirk, William Dieterle, Robert Siodmak, Frank Wisbar, Walter Reisch, and Peter Lorre—attempted remigration to Germany, most of them with very limited success, Wilder never seriously contemplated a permanent return. Instead, his postwar films from *A Foreign Affair* onward revisited *prewar* German (and also American) genres and styles to articulate postwar US political predicaments and aesthetic sensibilities: the Weimar cabaret in *A Foreign Affair* and *Witness for the Prosecution*; von Stroheim’s naturalist territories in *Sunset Boulevard*; the famed Lubitsch touch in *Sabrina* and *Love in the Afternoon*; the frantic pace and burlesque humor of Kisch’s Berlin and Molnar’s Vienna in *One, Two, Three* and *Some Like It Hot*. Indeed, of the films listed above, *Some Like It Hot* can count as the most sophisticated attempt to heat up the muted 1950s by infusing them with the roar of the 1920s.

“Now and then Mother Nature throws somebody a dirty curve”

While 1950s German gender-bending comedies are indeed lukewarm, their famous predecessors of the Weimar years are a different matter. The

queer cinema of the Weimar years, about which I will have more to say in a moment, is certainly the most important point of reference for *Some Like it Hot*. Its significance may also explain an inconsistency in Wilder's recollections—when talking about writing the script of *Some Like It Hot* he has repeatedly described his source as a prewar German film from 1932, which does not exist.²⁰ What does exist, apart from Hoffmann's 1951 German film, is a 1935 French version, *Fanfare d'amour*, directed by Richard Pottier (also after the story by Thoeren and Logan). Even though Wilder knew Thoeren and possibly Pottier (born Richard Deutsch), both fellow Austro-Hungarian exiles in Paris, it is unlikely that Wilder is referring to the rather obscure French film, which was not premiered until after he had emigrated to the US.²¹ Wilder's lapse of memory may be explained by the fact that he associated gender bending, at least in its sexually daring and innovative form, with the legacy of Weimar cinema and thus placed Hoffmann's film in that tradition. As mentioned above, by setting *his* film in 1929 Wilder clearly desired to see it in that tradition—*Fanfaren der Liebe*, in contrast, has a contemporary setting—a year which, furthermore, references the point in time when he not only received his first credit as script-writer for *Der Teufelsreporter*, but also scored a surprise success with *Menschen am Sonntag*, that would become his entré billet to Ufa. The clearest reference to a German and Austrian theatre tradition within *Some Like It Hot*, though presented rather fleetingly, is a portrait of theater impresario



Figure 5.5. Joe and Jerry barter with secretary Nellie in front of a photograph showing, from left to right, theatre impresario Max Reinhardt, producer Morris Gest, and author Karl Vollmoeller

Max Reinhardt, most likely taken during his 1927 US tour, that adorns Poliakoff's agency.²²

There can be no doubt that in Wilder's own recollections Weimar Berlin figures prominently as a time and space for experimentation with sexual identities. As a twenty-two-year old reporter, Wilder wrote a column for the Berlin newspaper *Tempo* under the pretense of being a woman, by using his nickname Billie (a woman's name in the Anglo-American world) and advising his female readers almost daily in matters of fashion, diet, health, beauty products, and domestic concerns. During the more than one year in which he used this camouflage, Billie spoofed "her" readers by claiming that she had learned from an Indian Yogi how to rid herself of rheumatism, toured Berlin beauty parlors to test their services and products, and confided her own anxieties about receiving the right presents from suitors (a matter of concern also for Daphne).²³ These associations are further underscored by the fact that, in order to instruct Lemmon and Curtis on how to act like women, Wilder brought in "Barbette," a German female impersonator he knew from his "younger days in Europe."²⁴ An apparent holdover of an era famous for drag queens, tomboys, and a spectrum of androgynous types, Barbette was successful in coaching Curtis on how to transform pushy, manipulative Joe into a demure, puckering Josephine, but had trouble with Lemmon who refused to let his Daphne be too feminine for fear of being "like a guy trying to impersonate a gay and overdoing it."²⁵

While Hoffmann's "Tunten" are just a faint echo of 1920s Berlin drag queens, *Some Like It Hot* possesses a far greater affinity to Weimar cinema's challenge to traditional sexual relations and gender identities. Between 1919 and 1933 the German cinema produced a plethora of films that ranged from openly gay and lesbian features to films that questioned traditional representations of gender and sexuality through more nuanced play with modes of concealment and revelation. The first film ever to openly address the issue of homosexuality, with an emphatic didactic bent, was *Anders als die Andern* (*Different From the Others*, 1919), directed by Richard Oswald, and starring Conrad Veidt, Reinhold Schünzel, and as himself, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, whose work on "das dritte Geschlecht," (the third gender) would become vastly influential. Once Hirschfeld had pushed open the closet, representations of homo- and bisexuality would enter the art cinema of the 1920s. From Dr. Caligari's cabinet emerged the androgynous Cesare (played by Veidt, by now a gay icon), and strong gay and lesbian undertones are found in Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), Lang's Mabuse cycle, G.W. Pabst's *Die Büchse der Pandora* (*Pandora's Box*, 1929) and Leontine Sagan's *Mädchen in Uniform* (*Girls in Uniform*, 1931). Most playful and ambiguous in its blurring of homo- and heterosexuality is *Viktor und Viktoria* by Hoffmann's mentor Reinhold Schünzel, which involves a woman dressing up as a man pretending to be a woman.²⁶ Finally, there is Marlene Dietrich's embrace of the ambivalence of appearance, begin-

ning with her cabaret shows with Margo Lion, through von Sternberg's refashioning of the star, to Wilder's depiction of Dietrich as rolemodel for the sexual makeover of Jean Arthur in *A Foreign Affair*, a learning process with considerable lesbian flavor (and in which a male, Captain Pringle, coaches a woman, Phoebe Frost, how to dress up).

Drawing on the long stage tradition of the "Hosenrolle" (trouser role), films involving female crossdressing formed a particularly popular genre that included *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* (*I Don't Want to Be a Man*, 1919), directed by Wilder's mentor Ernst Lubitsch and starring Ossi Oswalda; Svend Gade's *Hamlet* (1920) with Asta Nielsen in the title role; Paul Czinner's *Der Geiger von Florenz* (*Impetuous Youth*, 1926) with Elisabeth Bergner; and Richard Eichberg's *Der Fürst von Pappenheim* (*The Masked Mannequin*, 1927) with Mona Maris and Curt Bois. As Alice Kuzniar observes, films such as these illustrate "gender confusion, but they also unsettle homo/heterosexual distinction, for with the wardrobe comes the closet and its related concern with appearances and camouflage. At a time when the mannish look was fashionably lesbian and young hustlers, similarly androgynous, wore makeup in the streets, these films provocatively raise the questions: Can transvestism be read as a disguise for homosexuality, a closet whose door is slightly left ajar?"²⁷

Wilder's *Some Like it Hot* has certainly been read along the lines Kuzniar suggests. Ed Sikov, for example, emphatically states that "Osgood's final declaration is openly gay, there's no question about that."²⁸ Discussing the scene following Daphne's engagement to Osgood, Jennifer Wicke similarly claims that Jerry has discovered another element of his sexuality: "There is no way not to interpret this as a homosexual awakening."²⁹ In a way it does make sense that Osgood, whose mama is concerned that he may end up "with the wrong girl," finds bliss with a man. When asked about the homosexual undertones of the film, I.A. L. Diamond defended the film as completely straight: "The whole trick in the picture is that, while the two were dressed in women's clothes, their thinking process [sic!] were at all times a hundred percent male. When there was a slight aberration, like Lemmon getting engaged, it became twice as funny. But they were not camping it up. They never thought of themselves as women. Just for one moment Lemmon forgot himself—that was all. The rest of the time, Curtis was out to seduce Monroe, no matter what clothes he was wearing." Wilder has reiterated Diamond's view, but concluded with a remark worthy of Osgood, making his take on the film as inconclusive as the famous "Nobody's perfect"-line: "But when he [Lemmon] forgot himself it was not a homosexual relationship. It was just the idea of being engaged to a millionaire. It's very appealing. You don't have to be a homosexual. It's security."³⁰

No matter how far one wants to push a queer reading of *Some Like It Hot*, there is general agreement that Wilder's transvestites certainly go further in becoming actual women than anyone before them in the long Hol-

lywood (though not Weimar) tradition of crossdressing, as a quick glance at Bob Hope in *Road to Zanzibar* (Victor Schertzinger, 1941) or Cary Grant in *I Was a Male War Bride* (Howard Hawks, 1949), two of the most popular films in that genre, will reveal. As Patrice Petro has pointed out, Joe and Jerry also undergo a significant character reversal regarding their view of women. At the beginning of the film, they are the holders of the male gaze, ogling Sugar Kane's legs and behind, and commenting on her physical movement in a classically motivated male point of view shot. "Look at that," says Jerry/Daphne, "it's just like Jell-O on a spring!" Yet in the course of the film, after having been pinched in the butt in an elevator and being pursued by a precocious bellhop who likes his women "big and sassy," they come to understand "how the other half lives." As Petro comments, "the film could be described ... as an object-lesson in the need for men to abandon their sexual identities in order to survive. Although not entirely or exactly feminist, the film nonetheless forces its audience (and its central male characters) to experience the world differently, as women do—subject to unwanted sexual overtures, male voyeurism, and the constraints and pleasures of feminine culture. This is the source of much of its humor—for both women and men."³¹

With gender reversal and androgyny becoming highly popular and visible in the 1980s—think of pop stars and entertainers such as Boy George, David Bowie, Michael Jackson, and Madonna, as well as the aforementioned films *Tootsie* and *Victor/Victoria*—*Some Like It Hot* has become in retrospect something of an "ur-text" of gender performance. Made at a time when the "homo" was as much a target of public scrutiny and castigation as the "pinko," the film was deliberately daring and progressive.³² Prohibition, the film suggests, did not end in 1933, it merely shifted to make other forms of "deviancy" illegal or immoral.³³

While the film's central plot device is certainly Joe and Jerry's cross-dressing adventure as Josephine and Daphne, gender performance is only one of many performances around which it revolves. In fact, the main strategy in its quest for undoing the binarism of being and appearance is the foregrounding of performativity itself, of showing to what extent ontology depends on sustained acts of representation. Judith Butler's work on gender performance may help us understand the larger epistemological questions raised by Wilder's film. As Butler has argued, sexual identity is something we institute through a stylized repetition of acts that create the *appearance* of substance. As Butler makes clear, we should not understand gender as a role that we simply put on to express or disguise an interior self. The selves do not exist prior to the cultural conventions that prescribe the modes of reenactment since the model of a private internal and a public external overlooks "that the ascription of interiority is itself a publicly regulated and sanctioned form of essence fabrication." Hence there is no "real" gender outside of performance: "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed."³⁴

Billy Wilder himself commented that one reason for making a period film was that with everyone wearing a costume the men in drag would stick out less. Indeed, the film's clever play with all kinds of performances subsumes crossdressing as one of many acts of impersonation and role play. As soon as the curtain is raised in the back of the hearse (which itself performs as a stand in for a liquor truck) the show begins. Notably, Joe and Jerry are professional entertainers who are used to dressing for the occasion, including sporting golden earrings and grass skirts, if need be. When we first see Joe playing sax he even seems to be wearing eye makeup. During the course of the film, the two men will not only dress up as women, but Joe will also pretend to be wheelchair-bound while Jerry will become a bellhop (a disguise also used in *Emil und die Detektive*). Joe's second major persona, Junior, the Shell millionaire, will cleverly incorporate into his seduction scheme the knowledge gained by Josephine, bringing about a complex male-female role reversal: "[T]he male disguised as a female redigued as a male plays the conventional female sexual role, as the female disguised as a love-goddess redigued as a female stereotype must play the conventional male sexual role and seduce him."³⁵

Jerry's conversion into a woman is more complex than Joe's, leading him to suddenly abandon his first pseudonym "Geraldine" for "Daphne," thereby shedding not only the similarity and hence proximity between his male and female identity (which Joe-sephine of course preserves) but also consciously choosing a name whose mythical association foreshadows his own predicament as woman: fleeing the advances of god Apollo, the nymph Daphne was transformed by her father into a laurel tree to protect her from her suitor. Like the nymph, Jerry will learn that what he thought to be a temporary disguise has become a life sentence, with Osgood even more unrelenting in his quest than the Greek god. Furthermore, another notable allusion, this time to the world of fairytale, is Jerry's introducing himself to Osgood the Third as "Cinderella the Second," thereby referencing not only the brother Grimm's well-known rags-to-riches story but also the permanence of the "happily ever after" that concluded this famous transformation.

In the course of the film, both performers will undergo significant character reversals for which their experience in drag serves as an important catalyst. If Jerry, concerned with feeling comfortable and secure from the first moment of the film (when he plans to use a long-awaited pay check to see the dentist), will accept engagement to Osgood precisely for "security," only to be unable to reverse his emergence into Daphne, Joe, the con artist always ready to use his good looks and power of gab in order to get a woman or make the fast buck, learns from his friendship with Sugar how exploitative typical male behavior really is and decides not to let her end up again with the fuzzy end of the lollipop. In one of the film's most emotional scenes, at the conclusion of Sugar's song "I'm Thru with Love," Josephine kisses her on the mouth and says, "None of that, Sugar—no guy

is worth it"—attesting thereby to his newfound moral integrity while giving away his disguise at the very moment the gangsters approach. (Joe's decision to drop both the mask of Josephine as well as the pretense of being a caring male equals Joe Gillis's decision to reveal the truth about himself to Betty Schafer. In both cases the male protagonist saves a young innocent female by highlighting his own shortcomings; in the fated world of *noir* such a revelation cannot rescue those who are already doomed, but in comedy such reversals will be rewarded.)

Performativity is of course also central both to Marilyn Monroe as well as her role as Sugar Kane. Sugar's overemphasized femininity—superblonde and super-curvy—is as much beyond the natural as the men in drag. As we learn from Sugar, her stage name is derived from Kowalczyk, revealing a Polish ancestry which she is trying to leave behind (together with a few other things). Monroe, in Wilder's second film with her, is a curious picture of vulnerability and sexuality, unusual in the Wilder world (though shared perhaps by Shirley MacLaine). If Wilder played with Tony Curtis's on-screen sex appeal as the already established Hollywood actor, as well as his off-screen origins of Bernie Schwartz from the Bronx, with Monroe this layering becomes even more complex.³⁶ While some liked her hot (as Wilder did in *The Seven Year Itch*), here he emphasizes Monroe's talent as comedienne.³⁷ Thus *Some Like It Hot* plays with the dominant narrative of 1950s sexual comedy in which an attractive woman typically is in search of a rich husband for reasons of social mobility. Both in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953) and *How to Marry a Millionaire* (Jean Negulesco, 1953), we see Monroe involved in a mercenary manhunt, exploiting her outrageous sex appeal for economic gains. Together with Betty Grable, Doris Day, and Jane Russell, Monroe became the prototype of a woman whose only quest in life is to "meet the right man and biology will take care of the rest."³⁸ As Leland Poague has observed, this narrative is reworked with considerable irony by Wilder who "borrows certain Hawksian motifs—transvestism; the golddigging blonde; the shy, ineffectual Cary Grantish character— . . . to suit his own purpose."³⁹ It is no accident that in Wilder's playful subversion of stereotype, it is Jerry as Daphne who successfully assumes the typical Monroe role of the flapper in search of a millionaire, while Junior as Cary Grant, the cliché of male desirability, gets the trophy woman, but only at the price of self-renunciation.

By the time of the film's making, Monroe's highly publicized private life had become increasingly tumultuous and crisis ridden. Her health was deteriorating due to alcohol and drug abuse, and her marriage to playwright Arthur Miller, spoofed in Sugar's attraction for bespectacled men, was in jeopardy. While Sugar asserted, "I can stop [drinking] any time I want to—only I don't want to," Monroe could not. Wilder's altercations with her on the set have become legendary as virtually every biographer has recounted in detail. Against this loaded background, the last of Monroe's three songs that give the film its three act structure slices through the

film's overall play with stereotypes and reveals the image of a star without the armor of a persona: "'I'm Thru With Love' is worth all the Method performances she never gave; it encapsulates a tawdry childhood, three disappointing marriages, the adulation-mockery of curious fans, even a final, abortive phone call. Astoundingly enough, Monroe's singing builds audacious swirls of tremolos and breathiness on the solid foundation of a confident vocal technique."⁴⁰

The play with stereotypes and clichés is equally pronounced in the films' supporting roles. Pat O'Brien as a policeman rehashes his many appearances as an Irish cop while George Raft plays a composite of his entire screen career, replete with coin tricks and asides about grapefruit-shoving. The characterization of mobster Spats Colombo brings into focus another important source from the Weimar years, and one rarely associated with Wilder's film—the early plays and parables of Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's interest in urban crime, which permeates *Mahagonny*, *Happy Together*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and *Jungle of Cities*, was expanded by his readings about Al Capone and seeing American gangster films such as *Scarface*. While it would certainly be wrong to see Wilder's notion of realism within a Brechtian tradition of antiillusionism, *Some Like It Hot* sketches its characters very much along Brecht's theatrical devices, making gangster Spats Colombo a close cousin of the glove-wearing Mack the Knife, while *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* features a cauliflower trust that is as thin a veil for the Mafiosi as Wilder's "Friends of the Italian Opera." Brecht's plays present their material in the form of a parable that highlights the interconnectedness of crime and capitalism, not unlike the broad brushstrokes used by Wilder to paint a modernity running wild.

Lastly, the use of location is also implicated in the films' overall concern with performativity. While the streets of Chicago look like sets from the Warner gangster series, the San Diego Coronado Hotel, the Seminole Ritz of the film, is equally nonrealist. Frozen in time, it provides the natural stomping ground for Osgood and his companions; like other seaside resorts, it connotes sexual liberty and the seedier side of life (as it does in the aforementioned Arbuckle short). San Diego is an appropriate stand in for Florida, because the Florida of the film purposely resembles Hollywood and Southern California—being filled with millionaires, sharks, and young women hoping to be "discovered."

At the time of the film's making, industry leaders considered a film that combines the St. Valentine's Day Massacre with uproarious laughter a serious mistake.⁴¹ Yet Wilder's film would turn out to be a commercial and critical success, precisely because his crime-inflected comedy managed to pass by the censors the kind of visual and verbal sexual innuendo that a "straight" dramatic film could not. A bootlegger in mixed messages, Wilder created a film whose risqué probing of gender relations and sexual identity challenged and excited contemporary audiences; since its 1959 premiere, it has lost little of its topicality and none of its comic appeal. *Some*

Like It Hot comes at the end of a decade during which Wilder hit his stride, directing ten films which are quite remarkable for their consistency, cleverness, and vitality. It cemented Wilder's partnership with I.A.L. Diamond and inaugurated his collaboration with Jack Lemmon, who together with William Holden would become the star to define most clearly the films of Billy Wilder. Wilder would work with both Diamond and Lemmon for the rest of his career. In 1998, the American Film Institute voted *Some Like It Hot* the funniest comedy in US filmmaking history.

Notes

1. *Interviews*, 68.
2. Karl Kraus, *Beim Wort genommen* (Munich: Kösel, 1965), 224. ["Satiren, die der Zensor versteht, werden mit recht verboten."]
3. On the erosion of the Production Code see Jack Hamilton, "Hollywood Bypasses the Production Code," *Look* 29 September 1959, 80–84. The film director who can claim to have repeatedly and most unrelentingly challenged Hollywood's censorship practices is Wilder's compatriot and fellow émigré Otto Preminger.
4. Peter Sloterdijk, *A Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. Michael Eldred (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 389.
5. Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
6. Wilder quoted in Hutter and Kamolz, 93. Hollaender explained how the Weintraub Syncopators, whom he joined in 1927, were inspired by Whiteman's music: "When you hear 'Rhapsody in Blue' by Whiteman, you want to throw your trumpet away. But five smart boys are hanging in there ... The Weintraub Syncopators." ["Wenn man 'Rhapsody in Blue' von Whiteman hört, möchte man die Trompete ins Korn werfen. Fünf smarte Jungs aber halten durch ... Die Weintraub Syncopators."] Hollaender quoted in Cornelius Partsch, *Schräge Töne: Jazz und Unterhaltungsmusik in der Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), 112. *Mauvaise graine*, made and set in the Paris of 1934, also has a syncopated soundtrack (by Franz Waxman) and emphasizes speed and modernity in a narrative about young men and a woman running wild.
7. See Thomas Elsaesser, "Ethnicity, Authenticity, and Exile: A Counterfeit Trade?," in *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. Hamid Naficy, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 97–123; here 112.
8. *Conversations with Wilder*, 337
9. As Henry Jenkins and Kristine Brunovska Karnick point out: "The film's dependence upon a system of typeage, of extremely stereotypical characters, does not allow us to see the characters as psychologically rounded individuals, but rather invites an exploration of the false perceptions that block understanding within its Cold-War context. *One, Two, Three* becomes an extreme example of the potentials for excessive or disruptive performance within the romantic comedy tradition." See *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, ed. Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1995), 166.
10. For a particularly incensed review of the film see Judith Crist, "Billy's Getting Wilder," in *The Private Eye, the Cowboy and the Very Naked Girl: Movies From Cleo to Clyde* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 95–98. Crist also has some damning things to say about *Some Like It Hot*: "Seen it lately? All pretty cute and jazzy ... Look at it closely again and you start to notice how for every raucous and/or ribald masquerade joke there is another that involves a transvestite leer, a homosexual "in" joke or a perverse gag" (96).
11. It appears that Wilder never forgave Freud for showing him the door when the young reporter from *Die Stunde* came to interview him, for the founder of psychoanalysis is rid-

- iculed in numerous films, including the figure of dog psychoanalyst Dr. Zwieback (Sig Ruman) in *The Emperor Waltz*; of the criminal psychologist Dr. Eggelhofer (Martin Gabel) in *The Front Page*; of the sex therapist Dr. Zuckerbrot (Klaus Kinski) in *Buddy Buddy*; and author Dr. Brubaker (Oscar Homolka) in *The Seven Year Itch*, whose manuscript "Of Man and the Unconscious" editor Richard Sherman proposes to publish as "Of Sex and Violence," in order to "reach as wide an audience as possible."
12. The allusion to psychoanalysis provides also one of the film's many ironic and self-reflexive comments on the lives of the stars: by the time the film was made, Monroe had been seeing an analyst for several years.
 13. Anthony Lane, *Nobody's Perfect: Writings From the New Yorker* (New York: Knopf, 2002), 718.
 14. Like Curtis's, Borsche's acting career began after the war and made him one of the most sought-after leads of the 1950s, often in charismatic roles that involved romance. Associated mostly with popular film and later television, Borsche became the embodiment of the cinema of the Adenauer era; while he never was the teen idol that Curtis was, his popularity stemmed from roles that emphasized nobility, decency, and mature personality with a clear sense of values.
 15. A clowning small man who invariably conveys the feeling that he would have liked to be taller, Thomalla's characters are always charged up and ready to run wild. Like Lemmon's Joe/Daphne, Thomalla's Peter/Petra was a breakthrough role that made him a national star. Thomalla would go on to have a leading role in a 1957 remake of Reinhold Schünzel's 1933 gender-bending comedy *Viktor und Viktoria*, for which Hoffmann had served as Schünzel's assistant, and which was to be remade again by Blake Edwards in 1982 as the highly successful *Victor/Victoria*.
 16. Aware of how awkward and problematic it would be for an American film to show actors in black face, Wilder has explained that in prewar Germany "we could do that," alluding to the politically liberal climate of the Weimar years, without however accounting for the fact that even then such form of drag was troubling. See Alison Castle, ed., *Billy Wilder's Some Like It Hot* (Cologne: Taschen, 2001), 244.
 17. *Billy Wilder's Some Like It Hot* 222. A sure sign of the film's perfection is that to this date neither a sequel nor a remake has been attempted, though it has spawned a revival of the cross-dressing genre.
 18. The tradition of the "Heimattfilm" extends long before the 1950s and is fraught with considerable contradictions and ambiguities. For an excellent cultural history of the genre see Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
 19. Sinyard and Turner, 215f.
 20. See *Billy Wilder's Some Like It Hot*, 244; *Conversations with Wilder*, 160. It is surprising that none of the many people who interviewed Wilder ever pressed him on this point; apparently, they were all unaware that two versions of the film exist.
 21. Stanley Kauffmann claims to possess a letter in which Wilder wrote him that Thoren was "an old chum from the Berlin days." See Kaufmann's "Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*," *Horizon* 15.1 (1973): 65–71; here 66. Further evidence that Wilder was probably familiar with Thoren's work can be found in the fact that Thoren also cowrote the script for *Hotel Imperial* (directed by Robert Florey, 1939), which was based on the same Lajos Biró play which Wilder would later use for *Five Graves to Cairo*.
 22. As I learned from Brigitte Mayr, Vollmoeller's partner, Ruth Landsdorff-Yorck, was a journalist colleague of Wilder's with the Ullstein publisher in Berlin.
 23. Hutter and Kamolz, 116ff.
 24. Tony Curtis and Barry Paris, *Tony Curtis: The Autobiography* (New York: William Morrow, 1993), 160. There is no indication whether this Barbette is identical with the Texas-born French actor and artist who befriended Jean Cocteau and starred in his *Le Sang d'un poète* (1930).
 25. *Billy Wilder's Some Like It Hot*, 260.

26. See Wolfgang Theis, "Schünzels Requisiten. Zum Beispiel: Die Handschuhe," in *Reinhold Schünzel: Schauspieler und Regisseur*, ed. Jörg Schöning, (Munich: Text+Kritik, 1989), 21–24. *Viktor und Viktoria* is another excellent example to measure the distance between Weimar and postwar Germany. The film's tame remake by Karl Anton, starring again Georg Thomalla, dilutes Schünzel's sophisticated efforts to blur the lines between homo- and heterosexuality.
27. Alice A. Kuzniar, *The Queer German Cinema* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 22.
28. Sikov, *Laughing Hysterically: American Screen Comedy of the 1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 146.
29. See Jennifer Wicke, "Double-Cross-Dressing: The Politics of a Genre," *Annals of Scholarship* 11.4 (1997): 359–377; here 369.
30. *Billy Wilder Interviews*, 124. Lemmon's costars have also offered curious remarks on homosexuality. Curtis has stated how the small print in his contracts stipulated that he have affairs with his leading ladies, for publicity purposes: "[W]ith two or three exceptions, I did. One of those few leading ladies I didn't have an affair with was Jack Lemmon. It just didn't seem right to me. I had some aversions to his charms." (Curtis and Paris, 166.) Walter Matthau, in contrast, has said about Jack Lemmon: "If I were a homosexual, I'd marry him in a minute." (Quoted in Aurich, 14.)
31. Patrice Petro, "Legacies of Weimar Cinema," in *Cinema and Modernity*, ed. Murray Pomerance; forthcoming from Rutgers University Press.
32. For a contrary view see Peter Biskind who asserts: "In films like *Some Like It Hot* (1959), transvestism had become a harmless and humorous metaphor for the feminization of men." See Peter Biskind, *Seeing Is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 340.
33. On the persecution of homosexuals in the 1950s, see David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).
34. Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theater*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 270–282; here 278 and 279.
35. Gerald Mast, *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), 277.
36. The only actor not to be involved in this play on on-screen and off-screen identity is Jack Lemmon, who was considerably less known at the time.
37. While that film also attempted to play with Monroe's star image—Tom Ewell jokingly tells his neighbor "Marilyn Monroe is in the kitchen!"—it was largely complicit with other Hollywood films that portrayed her as a dumb blonde. *The Apartment*, too, will include a joke about Monroe, when executive Dobish picks up a woman at a bar who he claims looks like Marylin Monroe. What is even more startling is that actress Joyce Jameson actually sounds exactly like Monroe.
38. Christopher Beach, *Class, Language and American Film Comedy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 128.
39. Leland Pogue, *The Hollywood Professionals: Wilder and McCarey* (London: Tantivy Press, 1980), 81.
40. Richard Corliss, *Talking Pictures: Screenwriters in the American Cinema 1927–1973* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1974), 154.
41. As David Selznick told Wilder before shooting began, "You want machine guns and dead bodies and gags in the same picture? Forget about it, Billy. You'll never make it work." (Quoted in Sikov, *On Sunset Boulevard*, 415.)