

Thursday 25 August  
5:00-6:30pm, ZOOM ONLY



Sandrine Bonnaire and Agnès Varda

## Monique Rooney

### The Pleasure of Self-Erasure: Catherine Malabou, (Sexual) Anarchy and Agnès Varda's *Sans Toit ni Loi* (1985)

This work-in-progress paper reads Agnès Varda *Sans Toit ni Loi* (meaning 'without roof or law') through the lens of Catherine Malabou's conceptualisation of anarchy as order without command or beginning ('Politics of Plasticity: Cooperation without Chains,' 2021, and *Pleasure Erased: The Clitoris Unthought*, 2022). I elucidate key elements of Malabou's anarchy and, in particular, I highlight her argument that the clitoris (a 'little pebble' or 'scruple') is a symbol of sexual anarchy. The paper also draws on Rebecca J. DeRoo's argument that Varda cultivated 'strategic naivety,' with her public presentation of her apparently artless relation to cinema history enabling her negotiation of, and survival within, a male-dominated industry. DeRoo also highlights the disruptive role that non-cinematic works, including Renaissance paintings and vernacular photography, play in Varda's filmic montage. My paper suggests that it is the intermedial role of photography and ancient myth that meaningfully punctuate both *Sans Toit ni Loi*'s montage and narrative. My paper ultimately suggests that the female film-maker partially occludes the anarchic ('wandering') nature of film itself, training its attention instead on the image of the 'rebellious girl' that is Mona Bergeron (Sandrine Bonnaire).

**Dr Monique Rooney** teaches literature, film, television and new media in the English program, School of Literature, Languages and Literatures (ANU). The author of *Living Screens: Melodrama and Plasticity in Contemporary Film and Television* (2015), she is currently writing a book titled *Brow Network: Programs and Promises*. The plan is that this paper's reading of anarchy in Varda will be published as part of a collection of essays on Malabou in an upcoming special issue of *Film-Philosophy*.

#### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://anu.zoom.us/j/84605938413?pwd=R1JBRFNiWVpkaWMwUmlrNVVUVjFUDz09>

Meeting ID: 846 0593 8413 Password: CALC2022



CuSPP Seminar  
Series 2022

enquiries: [russell.smith@anu.edu.au](mailto:russell.smith@anu.edu.au)