

**Reclaiming the Gaze:  
Mulvey, Feminism and the Woman Spectator**

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## Reclaiming the Gaze: Mulvey, Feminism and the Woman Spectator

*if we study how women express themselves and how they really feel, then that would be women's liberation*

-- Undergraduate woman quoted by Patricia Meyer Spacks  
in The Female Imagination

*Barbara, he's just a shadow on a bedsheet*

-- My father, to a 12-year-old daughter pining over an  
unattainable movie star

In 1975, Laura Mulvey published an article called "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in Screen. This has been, in the burgeoning area of feminist film criticism, an immensely influential paper. It has been anthologized several times, most recently in the second volume of Nichols' Movies and Methods, where Nichols (apparently with no sense of irony) identifies it as a "seminal" article.<sup>1</sup> Teresa de Lauretis, in her 1984 book Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics and Cinema, described the article as "one of the most important texts of feminist film criticism",<sup>2</sup> and several other recent books have paid tribute to Mulvey's work.<sup>3</sup> Screen, Framework, Jump Cut and other film journals have devoted many pages to amplifying or attacking her theories, while Mulvey herself, in later articles, has basically held to the position she took in 1975. Anyone interested, as I am, in women's response to film and particularly in the erotic aspects of this response, has to come to terms with Mulvey's work.

Briefly, here is the argument put forward in "Visual Pleasure".<sup>4</sup> The spectator of a film, according to Mulvey, can derive two kinds of pleasure from the experience. Mulvey identifies the first as *scopophilia*, which Sigmund Freud, in Two Essays on Sexuality, defined as the erotic pleasure derived from looking at another person as a sexual object. (In its extreme form as a perversion, scopophilia can become *voyeurism*.) The second

source of pleasure, again from Freud by way of Jacques Lacan, is *narcissism*.<sup>5</sup> In Lacan's formulation, narcissism arises when the child first recognizes his image in the mirror, but sees this image as an idealized form of the self. Mulvey then presents the core of her argument:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between an active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role [the reciprocal role to voyeurism] women are simultaneously looked at and displayed with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. <sup>6</sup>

The woman so displayed is an erotic object both for male characters in the film and for the spectator in the theatre.

Meanwhile, what of the male characters? Are they not also the objects of the spectator's lustful gaze? According to Mulvey, no. While the woman on the screen is a passive spectacle, the man on the screen forwards the story and controls the action. The spectator "identifies with the main male protagonist", who is his "screen surrogate". Thus, "a male movie star's glamorous characteristics are ... not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more powerful ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror."<sup>7</sup>

Mulvey goes on to point out that, in psychoanalytic terms, the woman connotes the threat of castration, since she has no penis. Men deal with the anxiety caused them by this connotation in one of two ways. They may examine the woman closely to demystify her. (This is associated with the assertion of control and the need to punish, i.e. sadism.) They may, on the other hand, quell their anxiety by turning the woman into a fetish, a penis substitute.<sup>8</sup>

Mulvey concludes by pointing out that there are three different looks or gazes associated with the dominant cinema: "that of the camera as it records the profilmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion." <sup>9</sup> In all cases, Mulvey assumes that [the possessors of these gazes] i.e. those who gaze? are male.

I am thoroughly dismayed by the article's approach and conclusions and by the fact that the irresistible hybrid carrot it provided--feminism, psychoanalysis and semiology--sent so many other critics haring after it. It seems to me a particular disservice to women that Mulvey's work has encouraged so many other film theorists with a commitment to feminism to work in the uncongenial psychoanalytic framework she chose. <sup>10</sup>

As almost everyone commenting on the article realized, Mulvey made no provision in her theory for the female spectator of film. But the film theorists who attempted to find at least standing room for female spectators accepted Mulvey's psychoanalytic approach, and thus were not able to proceed very far.

Both D.N. Rodowick <sup>11</sup> and Gaylyn Studlar <sup>12</sup>, for example, tried to accommodate the female spectator by asserting that rather than Mulvey's sadism (as a response to the castration threat posed by the woman-spectacle) a theory of spectatorship could be built on masochism. As Studlar points out, masochism arises in a pregenital phase of psychic development ( sadism arises in the phallic phase) and therefore does not exclude the female. She describes the film spectator in terms of the sexually undifferentiated infant snuggling up to the breastlike "dream screen", <sup>13</sup> and concludes that film spectators possess a bisexual gaze, identifying with male and female characters. The dreamy gaze of the blissed out, milk-sucking infant is one I find far more appealing than the peering intrusion of Mulvey's hard-eyed voyeur. Nevertheless, Studlar has

neatly side-stepped the issue of what a specifically female gaze might be.

Meanwhile, Laura Mulvey dealt with the "problem" of the female spectator in "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*".<sup>14</sup> In this article she returns to Freud for inspiration, this time to his theories about the development of femininity: "For Freud, femininity is complicated by the fact that it emerges out of a crucial period of parallel development between the sexes; a period he sees as masculine, or phallic, for both boys and girls."<sup>15</sup> Mulvey then quotes Freud's On Femininity: "... the development of femininity remains exposed to disturbances by the residual phenomena of the early masculine period." Where is all this leading? According to Mulvey, when women become spectators, they are "masculinizing" themselves, wearing "transvestite clothes".<sup>16</sup> For Mulvey, it has become unnecessary to prove that the gaze is male. The gaze is male by definition.

Mary Ann Doane enthusiastically embraced Mulvey's theory of the female spectator's transvestite "masquerade". Arriving at what must be the nadir of this kind of critical approach, Doane cites Freud, Metz and Lacan to prove that female maturation processes not only make the female gaze impossible, they call the possibility of any female intellectual or artistic achievement into question.<sup>17</sup> This was what passed for feminist film theory in 1982!

One of the most salutary effects of the modern women's movement has surely been that it has encouraged women to trust their own experience and to speak out in their own voices. In the past, women have often been overwhelmed by experts (nearly always male), who told them what normal female behaviour, attitudes and even orgasms were and were not. And if a woman's own experience told her otherwise, she learned to distrust herself and feel guilt.

The situation is no better if a woman--even one who believes herself

to be working for the feminist cause--causes other women to feel this kind of guilt. From the time I first read Mulvey's articles, I was convinced that her theories were fundamentally flawed, because they did not fit my own experience of film watching. It seemed to me clear that I--and the women friends with whom I shared post-movie discussions--were deriving visual pleasure, often tinged with the erotic, from films. Mulvey's work, nevertheless, has led some educated women film viewers who were aware of her theories to feel ashamed of their tastes in film. For example, Annette Kuhn wrote:

In common, I imagine, with many movie fans who also happen to be feminists and women, I began at this point [mid-1970s] to indulge in a certain amount of guilt as I continued enjoying Hollywood movies, while at the same time searching with some desperation for positive women characters with whom a feminist could happily and guiltlessly identify. 18

I will return to a consideration of this guilt--and what fuels it--later in this paper.

In the following pages I intend to analyse some of the ways Mulvey's theory fails, and also to propose some more fruitful areas of investigation for those interested in why and in what way women watch films.

First, as I have said, I believe that Mulvey erred in basing her work on the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud. There are obvious pitfalls in the use of these theories to explicate works of art. These pitfalls have long been recognized and have been very clearly articulated in relation to the study of literature. Freud's theories depended on the study of dreams (or, more precisely, reports of dreams). These are the primary data. Works of art may make use of dreams, but they always transmute them. Artworks are designed, controlled, and subject to the formal constraints

of the chosen artistic medium. As Dudley Andrew writes about Bellour's psychoanalytic critique of North By Northwest:

He provides no means to distinguish the value of Hitchcock's version [of the Oedipus myth] over against Hamlet or Parsifal or any of the countless other narratives that bear on this fantasy....The differences among artworks [are] thereby flattened. 19

Andrew goes on to compare psychoanalytic criticism to medieval exegesis. In the middle ages, stories were interpreted according to the four-fold hermeneutic (literal, symbolic, analogic and anagogic), until all stories became the same story: the fall of man and his redemption by Christ.

Today, Andrew asserts: "the hermeneutic enterprise remains intact. Today all stories seem to speak to one fundamental condition: a tale of infancy, of successive preoccupation with the parts of the body, then with the primitive social relation (the mother and the family)." 20

This would certainly seem to be an accurate description of "Visual Pleasure", which invokes "the primal scene", "the castration complex" and so on to explain the allure of the "dominant" cinema. Mulvey's approach is reductive--all output of the dominant cinema (which she also calls "mainstream film" and "Hollywood cinema") is interchangeable. She thus provides a very blunt critical instrument indeed, which gives us no way to analyse the specific achievements of individual films, nor to distinguish a meretricious pot-boiler from a film with higher aspirations. Or, to speak in terms of current feminist concerns, Mulvey's theory does not allow us to distinguish between Brian de Palma's Dressed to Kill and Nicholas Roeg's Bad Timing. Both, in Mulvey's terms, present sadism as a response to castration anxiety: "pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and

subjecting the guilty person through [sic] punishment or forgiveness." 21  
 I may feel that De Palma's film is despicably misogynist and that Roeg's film is a serious consideration, but by no means an endorsement, of male sado-masochistic fantasies. Mulvey, however, will not give me the critical vocabulary to explore the differences.

These, briefly, are some of the problems for anyone applying psychoanalytic concepts to works of art. There are further problems when feminists choose to do so. Many contemporary feminists, in fact, have devoted themselves to exposing the biases and limitations of Freud's theories. Much of Kate Millett's landmark work Sexual Politics was concerned with Freud. I will not attempt to reproduce here her detailed analysis of Freud's theory of female sexual development, but will present just one of the points she makes. Millett articulates what many women have instinctively felt--the sheer unlikelihood of Freud's assertion that females view themselves as castrated:

It would seem that Freud has managed by his highly unlikely hypothesis [penis envy] to assume that young females negate the validity, and even, to some extent, the existence of female sexual characteristics altogether. Surely the first thing all children must notice is that mother has breasts, while father has none. What is possibly the rather impressive effect of childbirth on young minds is here overlooked, together with the child's knowledge not only of her clitoris, but her vagina as well. 22

More recently, Miriam Lewin has explored the now-discredited Victorian assumptions that underlay Freud's work. Freud, for example, believed in the Lamarckian inheritance of acquired characteristics, that is

... the view that experiences and traits acquired during the lifetime of an organism could then be passed on to offspring by heredity...Freud combined the belief with the theory of *recapitulation*: that the



young organism duplicates in its development the major historical stages of its kind...For example, according to Freud, the little girl is smitten by a powerful and instantaneous envy of her brother's organ only because the sight evokes unconscious hereditary knowledge of "its organic significance for the propagation of the species." [Freud 1925:257] 23

Lewin goes on to list a number of other Freudian theories based on the rudimentary medical knowledge of human sexual functioning in his day. These include the notion that the clitoris is a masculine organ and the belief that there are two kinds of female orgasm, the good (vaginal) kind and the bad (clitoral) kind. In conclusion, Lewin asks: "If Freud were alive today, would he continue to accept these outmoded concepts? I doubt it. It is time for psychologists to rid themselves of Victorian ideas." 24

Finally, the work of Jeffrey Masson should be mentioned. In his book, The Assault on Truth, he explains why he feels that Freud's psychoanalytic theories, while containing much that is valuable, are built on a cowardly evasion. In the late 1890s, many of Freud's women patients told him stories of being sexually molested by their fathers and other relatives. At first Freud believed them. Later, he decided that he had been mistaken and concluded that these stories were fantasies, evidence of the Oedipal complex. Masson, once director of the Freud Archives, made himself a pariah among psychoanalysts by asserting:

The prevalent opinion in psychotherapy was that the victim fashioned his or her own torture. In particular, violent sexual crimes could be attributed to the victim's imagination, a position ... enthusiastically accepted by Freud himself. It was a comforting view for society, for Freud's interpretation--that the sexual violence that so affected the lives of his patients was nothing but fantasy--posed no threat to the existing social order.

25

There is reason to believe, then, that feminist film critics should use

Freudian psychoanalysis with caution, if at all. And Mulvey, at the beginning of "Visual Pleasure", seemed aware of this. She argued that since the dominant cinema reflects the patriarchal society that produced it, it made sense to appropriate psychoanalysis (also a cultural product of patriarchy) as "a political weapon, demonstrating the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form."<sup>26</sup>

E. Ann Kaplan, whose writing is very much in the Mulvey tradition, makes the same point: "It is extremely important for women to use psychoanalysis as a tool, since it will unlock the secrets of our socialization within (capitalist) patriarchy....We must master its terms of discourse ..."<sup>27</sup>

This sounds promising. When we read Mulvey's articles, however, we find that they do not simply describe the situation of women in patriarchy, using psychoanalytic terminology. They prescribe as well, implicitly accepting the psychoanalytic viewpoint. For example, in "Afterthoughts" Mulvey introduces Freud's theory that young females go through a rebellious "phallic" stage before accepting their female (castrated) state. She in no way attacks the theory, modifies it or transforms it (as Millett, for example, does in Sexual Politics). In fact, she uses it as a building block in her proof that Duel in the Sun's Pearl is regressing disastrously into her phallic phase, and further, that female spectators wear "transvestite clothes".<sup>28</sup> It's difficult to see psychoanalysis used as a weapon here against anyone but other women. Mulvey's articles, in fact, show the extreme difficulty of working within a flawed theoretical model and arriving at anything other than tainted results. Or, as the computer scientists bluntly put it: "Garbage in, garbage out."

Where, then, can we reasonably look for evidence of a distinctive female gaze? Interesting studies that seem to bear on this problem have been

done in the psychology of perception and cognition, and I propose to look more closely at some of them. First, however, I have to touch briefly on the work of Jacques Lacan, who has heavily influenced Mulvey. Lacan's writings have appealed to film theorists because he combines elements of Freudian psychoanalysis with semiology. As Ann Kaplan explains:

Lacan's insight was to rephrase Freudian theory by using a linguistic model for the movement between different stages...The Lacanian child is forced to move on from the world of the imaginary [roughly corresponding to Freud's pre-Oedipal phase] not because of the literal threat of castration but because he acquires language, which is based on the concept of lack [the break with the mother, the object of desire]. He enters the world of the symbolic governed by the Law of the Father and revolving around the phallus as signifier. <sup>29</sup>

Lacan, like Freud, assumes a male child. The female child, meanwhile, becomes the object of desire; as Mary Ann Doane puts it, "the lack of a lack" cuts her off from "assuming a position similar to a man's in relation to signifying systems." <sup>30</sup> Mulvey and Doane use this as one of the proofs of the impossibility of a female spectator.

The use of Lacan's theories, like the use of Freud's, has been fought on its own grounds. Some critics are at pains to point out that a symbolic phallus is not the same as an actual penis. <sup>31</sup> Luce <sup>Irigaray</sup> ~~Inge~~ counters with a theory of the female sexual organs, in which the "two lips" of the vagina indicate the possibility of feminist readings of texts that would yield a multiplicity of meanings rather than the single fixed meaning represented by the phallus <sup>32</sup>

I don't know whether to laugh or to cry when I see women's energies being spent on such endeavours. Long ago, we abandoned the idea that anger is situated in the liver and melancholy in the spleen; may we not now give up the idea that intellectual and artistic abilities are situated in

the genitals?

The assertion that women are, in some sense, cut off from language (i.e. are not effective users of language and other communicating systems) is simply not borne out by empirical studies. There are few differences between the sexes that are consistently revealed by empirical studies. One of the differences that experimental psychologists seem to agree upon is female superiority in the use of language, emerging in childhood and continuing through adult life. As large and recent studies have shown:

... the verbal superiority of women includes vocabulary, listening, speaking, ability at verbal analogies, comprehension of difficult material, creative writing, fluency and spelling." <sup>33</sup>

Face Lacan, "more boys than girls have difficulty in learning to read" and "have more speech defects". <sup>34</sup>

Female superiority in communications is by no means limited to verbal ability: "On all measures of visual behaviour, females have been found to be consistently more active than males, looking more frequently at stimulus persons, whether the gazes be mutual or reciprocal [my emphasis]." <sup>35</sup> Social psychologist Ralph Exline has shown that in dyadic communications, women spend more time looking directly at the other person than do men. <sup>36</sup> Not only do they make more eye contact than men, they seem to rely more heavily on this form of communication. Michael Argyle conducted a study in which pairs of speakers talked to each other, sometimes with a barrier between them. Women reported discomfort with the barrier and talked less when it was in place, while men did not. <sup>37</sup>

What is it that women's eyes are seeing and need to see? In controlled experiments, women seem to be more skilled at reading facial expressions and other body cues. Robert Rosenthal, for example, conducted an experiment in which subjects were asked to interpret eleven different

patterns of nonverbal behaviour, combining facial expressions, body positions and vocal patterns. Women consistently outperformed men.<sup>38</sup>

Other studies in perceptual ability have shown that, from infancy, females are apparently superior to males in recognizing faces and responding to faces;<sup>39</sup> they are also more visually sensitive in the dark.<sup>40</sup>

I find it difficult to believe that such sophisticated users of language and such skilled responders to visual cues of all kinds, go into the dark of a movie theatre, sit down, and do anything other than gaze intently, reading the messages conveyed by those enormous faces, those graceful bodies moving across the screen. The large number of eminent film critics who are women (women have been writing about film right from its beginnings), is a separate confirmation that female perceptual skills are being applied.<sup>41</sup> In fact, Mulvey has caught herself in a logical bind (and she's certainly not the first theoretician of either sex to do so). Her own position as a (somewhat idiosyncratic) feminist reader of films argues powerfully for the existence of at least one woman spectator seeing films with a woman's eyes, even while she marshalls arguments for the impossibility of such a creature.

Mulvey might well respond to all this empirical evidence by replying that, while she did say that women can't be "the bearer of the look," she actually meant something more specific: women can look, but they can't control anything by doing so. They can't make a man the sexual object of their gaze. The film images they look at weren't created to please them. If they actually like the debased images of women's sexuality they are given, it is a sign of their wretched state in a patriarchal culture. (And remember, Mulvey's target is all mainstream narrative cinema.) Enjoyment of dominant cinema is something to be excised from a woman's brain. As Mulvey chillingly states her goal in "Visual Pleasure": "It is said that

analysing pleasure, or beauty, destroys it. That is the intention of this article" <sup>42</sup>

I suspect that Mulvey's article and some of the other feminist articles about film derive some of their vehemence from anxiety and guilt about women's sexual fantasies. Many film critics, male and female, writing within many different theoretical frameworks, have asserted that film is essentially erotic. As Lo Duca fancifully put it, "For half a century, the sheet covering the movie screen has borne like a watermark one basic motto: eroticism." <sup>43</sup> So it is that explorations of film quickly lead to a confrontation with the sexual fantasies of both filmmakers and spectators.

Women's sexual fantasies are, notoriously, not politically correct. (Neither are men's, for that matter.) They tend to feature seduction and being "swept away"--being overwhelmed by a strong man. <sup>44</sup> Women are quite rightly aware that the existence of such fantasies can be used--has been used--as a justification for rape. (Any intelligent reading of a collection of such fantasies reveals quite clearly that they have nothing to do with real-world assault. There is nothing remotely erotic to women about the courtroom evidence of actual rapes.) As Molly Haskell puts it: "The male lead is not some seedy delivery boy with a knife lurking in a doorway, but Clark Gable or Robert Redford in the setting of her choice; he acts not out of hostility but out of desire; and the fantasy ends in euphoria rather than night court." <sup>45</sup> Haskell concludes: "We should never censor these fantasies in the name of civic virtue. They are our own private property, and men are not expected to act upon them as if they were in the public domain." <sup>46</sup>

These fantasies however, arouse guilt in many women, because they seem to be at odds with the caring and equal relationships with men for which they are consciously striving. Enjoying the presentation of these

fantasies in films (and in novels and magazines) seems shameful. As E. Ann Kaplan phrases it, "Why do we find our objectification and surrender pleasurable?" And she goes on to warn, "simply to celebrate whatever gives us sexual pleasure seems to me ... too easy....We need to analyse how it is that certain things turn us on, how sexuality has been constructed in patriarchy." <sup>47</sup> Kaplan clearly equates dominance-submission fantasies with hobbling along in the shackles of patriarchy.

The way out of this dilemma for Mulvey and Doan is denial: they say that a woman watching dominant cinema is actually watching as a man (she has psychically split herself off from her guilty pleasures). Annette Kuhn says something just slightly different when she writes "I was struck by the realization that ... my enjoyment of the movies I attended depended in large measure on identification with male characters." <sup>48</sup>

*Note: she does not mean identification here, but empathy!*

I would like to suggest some alternative ways to look at this issue. For Mulvey, Doan, Kaplan and some other feminist film theorists, [bad and wrong] fantasies of passivity and seduction are to be expected in a patriarchal system. I would argue that there can be no proof of a causal connection, since we do not know what women's fantasies would be like under any other system. Patriarchy is what virtually all women have experienced in all periods of history. We can posit a prehistoric matriarchy with different values--but we have no cultural messages from it. Perhaps both women's fantasies and the pernicious aspects of patriarchy are separate responses to some pre-existing facts. <sup>49</sup> Briefly, these might include the fact that women are, on average, smaller than men and can, in fact, often be physically overpowered. Further, women may give birth as a result of sexual activity, which in all centuries but our own has been a life-threatening event. Can we not, fairly easily, imagine women's fantasies featuring sexual passivity (read: caution) and the need to be swept away (read: help me blot the dangers of pregnancy out of my

mind) as responses to these intractable biological facts?

Some men may have used biological arguments (e.g. anatomy is destiny) or pronouncements about the differences between the sexes as an excuse for the inequities of patriarchy. This doesn't mean that feminists must shy away from fresh, insightful explorations of the same issues.

Laura Mulvey is fairly eloquent on the subject of how dominant film fantasies assuage male fears (in the Freudian tradition, all fears can be reduced to one fear: castration). She does not pay equally respectful attention (in fact, she would likely deny it as a possibility) to the ways dominant cinema might be pleasurable to women because it soothes their fears.

This is just the kind of investigation now underway in one area of literary criticism. Feminist critics have done many studies in recent years of "women's genres": mass market Harlequin romances, "gothics," and "bodice rippers". These critics have not brought to their work the judgemental attitude displayed by some of the feminist film theorists. Ann Barr Snitow, for example, writes about Harlequin romances in a way that could provide food for thought for film theorists too:

The old line about commercial popular culture, that it is some kind of soma for the masses produced by a cynical elite, has been replaced, and properly so, by a more complex idea of the relations between the consumers and sellers of mass culture: in this newer view, popularity is by definition considered a species of vitality. In other words, consumers are not seen merely as passive repositories, empty vessels into which debilitating ideologies are poured. **50**

Tania Modleski, in her study of mass market romances, claims that they are so popular because they soothe deep fears of women, including fear of male aggression and fear of abandonment. For example, Gothic romances



assert that, by using all her skills in "reading" people (and, as we have seen, these are genuine skills) a woman can keep her balance in a treacherous world. Harlequin romances say that men who seem cold and threatening may feel devoted love for the heroine; they can be thawed. 51 Barr Snitow writes sympathetically of Harlequins:

Though one may dislike the circuitous form of social expression in Harlequin heroines, the strength of the books is that they insist that good sex for women requires an emotional and social context that can free them from restraint. If one dislikes the kind of social norms the heroine seeks as her sexual preconditions, it is still interesting to see sex treated not primarily as a physical event at all, but as a social drama, as a carefully modulated set of psychological possibilities between people. 52

Barr Snitow is saying, in short, that women need a story, a context for the sexual encounters, in order to be turned on by them. While men are looking at centrefolds, women are ploughing through novels, learning the details of the characters' lives that will make the "payoff" love scenes meaningful for them. I have long suspected that women--probably more than men--"use" mainstream narrative films for just this kind of erotic frisson.

These films often feature a star who has become known to women spectators in a series of films that have built up expectations based on the star's "image". The presence of the star (at least of some stars) is a kind of guarantee that there will be no nasty surprises--Robert Redford isn't going to be shown beating up a woman, for example, nor is Paul Newman likely to play a leering sex pervert. 53 The sexual encounters that women respond to in film grow out of fictionalized relationships--they are embedded in stories. Molly Haskell, for example, discusses what the difference in response might be when a man and a woman watch Gone with

the Wind together:

An impressionable male will see Clark Gable as the personification of the male image: cool, superior, using his force at the right moment to win the woman, who secretly wants to be raped. The female spectator, on the other hand, will see the drama as belonging specifically to the characters Clark Gable/Rhett Butler and Vivien Leigh /Scarlett O'Hara, and she will see Rhett's taking of Scarlett not as rape, not as instruction in what a Man should do to win a Woman, but as an expression of mutual love between two equals in the only language strong enough to dissolve the barriers raised by pride. Where a man will see territorial conquest in Gable's action, a woman will see uncontrollable longing. 54

I realize that my remarks--and Haskell's--are highly speculative (although grounded in personal experience of film watching), but little investigative work has been done on the subject of women's erotic response to film. This is certainly an area in which I believe interesting work can be done. The bits of evidence that can be marshalled are tantalizing and few. They are, on the one hand, personal and anecdotal, but directly about film; or solidly empirical and "scientific," but from other fields of study.

The Dream Beside Me is a fine example of the first type of evidence, a book that grew out of the author's own response to the films of the 1940s. In this book Carol Traynor Williams writes of the erotic spell films cast over her as she was growing up. Most often she describes the "will they or won't they?" tension that ~~could~~<sup>build</sup> can up in the course of a narrative film. She writes of The Fountainhead: "the lovers' misunderstandings and other obstacles must continue, lockstepped with moments of intimacy and intimations of the patterns that could be, until our tension and yearning for them to get together become almost unbearable." 55 Similarly, she says of The Seventh Veil: "our heads may know that Nicholas is as repressed as Ashley Wilkes, but by the end [of the film] all we want is

release from two hours of tension between a man and a woman fighting sex." 56

In 1975, Lois Gould surveyed women for a New York Times article called "Pornography for Women". Rhett Butler sweeping Scarlett up in his arms and carrying her up the staircase was the love scene most often cited by women--even women in their twenties--as the "most erotic stimulant." 57

These then, are some of the scattered bits of evidence available now on the subject. Some film theorists are beginning to follow the lead of writers like Modleski and Barr Snitow, investigating women's genres such as soap operas and "women's weepies" of the 1940s, so the situation may be improving. 58

The idea that women look at things contextually receives support from several other fields of study. Psychologists studying sex differences have found that women consistently perform worse than men in tests of spatial ability. The tests include the rod and frame test: in darkness, surrounded by a luminous frame, women find it very difficult to separate an independent rod from its frame. They also find it hard to adjust a rod to true vertical if it is surrounded by a tilted frame. 59 The conclusion is that women are more "field dependent" than men; less able to isolate something from its context.

Further evidence for women's overriding concern about connections, contexts, relationships is found in Carol Gilligan's In a Different Voice, a study of women's moral development. Gilligan discusses the way women's "failure to separate" is seen by Freud, Piaget and others as a "failure to develop". She identifies, instead, a pattern of development which has its own strengths and is based on "embeddedness in social interaction and personal relationships." 60 She goes on, "in this conception, the moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than competing

rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal or abstract."<sup>61</sup>

Studies like this seem to me to have some implications for studies of women as spectators. We would expect women, for example, to respond to whole sequences created by cutting and camera movements, rather than to the "spectacle" of individual shots. We would expect women to be sensitive to the links, both technical (cutting from his face to her face) and textual (who the characters are; what is taking place between them in the film's story.)

Mulvey's theory, with its stress on "fetishization", asserts that every time a woman's body, or worse, part of a woman's body, appears on the screen, there is a break in the flow of the diegesis.<sup>62</sup> Her stress on the [male] spectator's "identification" with the leading actor's view of the woman-as-spectacle leads her to write of Vertigo that it is "woven around what Scottie sees or fails to see".<sup>63</sup> But if Vertigo really depended purely on the "subjective camera" as Mulvey describes it, we would not know that James Stewart is playing Scottie. However, we do know, because shots of him alternate with shots of Kim Novak.

Mulvey's theories do, in fact, seem to preclude the female spectator, just as she says they do, but this is more a reflection on the limitations of her theory, rather than on the limitations of narrative film, since we can begin to imagine other relationships between a woman and the screen than the one she describes.

Up to this point, I have focussed on Mulvey's second gaze--the spectator's gaze while watching the film. (This is also the gaze that has received the most attention in film journals.) What of the other two gazes? I would like to use the rest of this paper to discuss what is actually seen on the screen, which will include some discussion of of the "third gaze" that

occurs when the players in the film look at each other. Before doing so, however, I would like to touch briefly on the nature of the "first gaze".

Mulvey's assertion that the first gaze is male is, on one level, indisputable: nearly all directors (and cinematographers and editors) are men, and what the camera records is what particular men chose to show. The situation is a little more complicated than that, however. The questions to be asked are, first: can a man make a feminist film (i.e. a film that presents women in a positive and politically correct light, however that may be defined)? Mulvey seems to imply, by lumping all dominant film together, that he can't. The obvious second question is: are all films made by women in some sense feminist? If so, we have to defend the "positive" portraits of women given to us in Ca'Wani's *The Night Porter* and Wertmuller's *Swept Away*, which at least some feminist critics of film are not prepared to do. Annette Kuhn suggests looking at the problem in terms of feminist intervention in culture, which may happen at the time the film is made, because of the conscious intervention of the director, or may happen when the film is seen by a woman who chooses to "read" it in feminist terms.<sup>64</sup> At least Kuhn's view appears to leave room for a male-created film that a woman could watch without guilt and from a distinctive position as a female spectator.

What do women see when they look at the movie screen? One of the things they see, in film after film, is handsome male stars. Most of them are either tall, lean, muscular and possessors of thick mops of hair, or fixed up and photographed to appear so.<sup>65</sup> Since the earliest days of silent films, male stars have had female fans who inundate them with letters and go to see every film they make. This is something "everybody knows". Yet at the level of the individual woman spectator gazing lustfully at the idealized image of manhood up on the screen, the topic is cloaked in discomfort and disavowal. Richard Dyer's article in Screen, "Don't Look

Now", is typical of the prevalent film journal approach, in its denial that women look or that men offer themselves up to be looked at. He begins by claiming that photographs of male and female sex objects differ because the men don't look at the camera--they refuse to acknowledge they're being looked at. Faced with a picture of Paul Newman gazing straight into the camera, he explains it away by claiming that Newman's expression "still seems to reach beyond the boundary marked when the picture was taken ... as if he wants to reach through and establish himself. The female model's gaze [Dyer is already not playing fair--why not mention a particular actress?] stops at the boundary, the male's looks right through it." <sup>66</sup> I have only included what I take to be a very silly response to a male star's photograph, because it shows how strong a sense of discomfort some people feel with the idea that women are looking at men (who are there to be looked at).

True, there is reason to think that male filmmakers are chary of seeming to display their leading men as sex objects. Cornered by reporters, Bernardo Bertolucci first claimed that he left Brando's Last Tango in Paris full frontal nude scenes on the cutting room floor because the film was too long, but he finally admitted:

It's also possible that I so identified myself with Brando that I cut it out of shame for myself. To show him naked would have been like showing myself naked. <sup>67</sup>

The tacit prohibition against showing men as sex objects in the dominant cinema is usually expressed in homophobic terms. Steve Neale, for example, discussing Willeman's article about Anthony Mann's films, writes:

These pleasures ["of seeing men mutilated and restored through violent brutality" in Mann's films] are founded upon a repressed homosexual voyeurism....In a patriarchal society, the male body cannot be marked explicitly as the erotic object of

another male look: that look must be motivated in some other way, its erotic component repressed. The mutilation and sadism so often involved in Mann's films are marks both of the repression involved and of the means by which the male body may be disqualified, so to speak, as an object of erotic contemplation and desire. **68**

Yet while theorists will tell us that in patriarchy it is unthinkable for men to look at men, they at least discuss it. The true taboo is never discussed at all, the idea that women are appraising men. Thus Mulvey writes "Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like"<sup>69</sup> but denies that the female gaze can exist.

The discussion of the repressed homoeroticism in Mann's work reminded me of a related kind of scene which is prevalent in mainstream narrative cinema, and which seems to set up a display-disavowal mechanism directed at women. (Nobody--not the director, not the performers, not the spectator--has to admit it if they don't want to.) This is what I will call the "wounded hero" scene. It used to be a staple of Charlton Heston's films in the 1960s--occurring, for example, in El Cid (directed by Anthony Mann!), The War Lord, and Will Penny. The male lead has a strategically located wound, gained bravely in battle. Usually the wound is in the upper torso, which is then blamelessly uncovered. The female lead's role is to look after the wounded hero, bandaging his wounds, stroking his fevered brow, and giving him sips of water. The hero gets to be brave and grit his teeth. The female lead gets to show off her maternal and domestic skills. What else is going on? The hero is, typically, writhing around on a bed, in a state of semi-undress, often covered with a sheen of sweat as well. The female lead can't help gazing upon his gorgeous body (actors who don't have gorgeous bodies don't do wounded hero scenes) and touching it. The female spectator gazes too, and all this is achieved by a scene that is not explicitly sexual. **70**

A classic example of the wounded hero scene occurs in last year's Witness. Police captain John Book (Harrison Ford) has bravely removed Rachel Lapp (Kelly McGillis) and her son from danger before collapsing from a bullet wound at their Amish farm. This time the wound is rather daringly low--about hipbone level. Rachel nurses John through several nights of lamplit delirium (John even "talks dirty" to her without being aware of it). The scene marks the beginning of the erotic attraction between John and Rachel that dominates the rest of the film.

Interestingly enough, the scene that clarified for me the true nature of wounded hero scenes was in a film made by a woman--Maria Louisa Bemberg's Camila. Camila, the heroine of the film, has fallen in love with a forbidden man, a priest. He struggles not to return her love, praying and lashing himself with a knotted rope. Finally he falls into a fever. Camila hears about his illness and slips into his room to see him. She lays her hand on his face. In his delirium he grabs her hand and places it on his crotch. My immediate thought was--a man would never film a scene like this! Then I had to analyse why I thought so. It was because Bemberg had dared to make explicit the eroticism usually implicit in such scenes.

Many mainstream narrative films do, of course, have love scenes that are explicitly sexual. In many of these films, there is a difference in the way men and women are displayed and photographed. We have all seen films in which the "story requires" that actresses take off all of their clothes, while the actors in the love scenes with them remove only their shirts. It would be foolish to deny that there are many films in which women are "displayed as sexual objects" just as Mulvey claims. There are many other mainstream films, however, in which this is not the case, films which are not illuminated by Mulvey's theory. One of these is the 1973 film Don't Look Now, directed by Nicholas Roeg.



The film stars Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie as a married couple named John and Laura. (They look married--they are as physically well-matched as book ends, with his and hers mops of blond curls, etiolated bodies, and ~~pale~~<sup>pale</sup> skin.) Still grieving over the recent drowning death of their daughter, they travel to Venice, where John is restoring a church mosaic. This is a spooky, jarring, frightening film, full of unexpected cuts and camera angles. The story begins and ends with wrenching loss--the daughter dies at the beginning, John is murdered at the end--and it's threaded through with death and decay. Venice is cold and grey and its walls seem to ooze corruption.

Embedded in all this is an extraordinary love scene that lasts just over four minutes. It's unusual because it depicts a long-married couple making love, and it's unusual in the way it is edited. Shots of the couple in wild abandon are intercut with shots of them after lovemaking, getting ready to go out to dinner. The scene is certainly erotic (the kind the reviewers invariably describe as "steamy").<sup>71</sup> Yet it is appealing in ways that Mulvey's theories of the erotic do not seem to account for.

The prelude that sets up the love scene takes place in the bathroom of a hotel suite. Laura is soaking in the bathtub, hunched over so that we see very little of her body. John steps out of the shower, naked, in a medium shot, and begins to towel himself. Cut to a closeup of Laura, who looks at him appraisingly and says "You know, those lumps are coming back on the side of your waist." John, in dismay, grabs a small roll of fat on his side, goes over to the bathroom scales (another closeup of Laura watching him), and weighs himself. He announces that he weighs just "85 kilos" and then surveys himself in the mirror.

John leaves the bathroom and patters at his desk, still undressed, until Laura comes out, bundled up in a robe. They lie on the bed together, looking at a magazine. She tells him there's toothpaste on his mouth, and

he, grinning wickedly, says, "Eat it off!" But she says she can't, and they go back to looking at a magazine together. We see closeups of Laura's hand, stroking John's back and then his flank, and this leads into the love scene.

I have detailed all of this because it is the kind of sequence Mulvey's theories cannot account for. It makes no sense to say that Julie Christie/Laura is the spectacle here--we see much more of Donald Sutherland/John's body than we do of hers. Nor does it make sense to say that he forwards the action. He only acts in response to what Laura says: "Those lumps are coming back", "You've got toothpaste all over your mouth". His half-hearted attempt to be sexy comes to nothing; she is the one who actually initiates sex. If anyone is the bearer of the look in this scene, the initiator of the action, it seems to be Christie/Laura. Does it even make sense, though, to see the scene in these terms?

The love scene itself is made up of over eighty shots, most of them only a couple of seconds long. The twelfth shot shows John getting his jacket from the closet (it draws attention to itself with the snick sound of the hangers on the rod), and from then on, every third shot is a flashforward to Laura and John dressing and getting ready to go out. With the exception noted, and one other shot right near the end of Laura tossing her keys, this sequence is silent, accompanied by lyrical theme music.

The shots portray the lovers as equally enthusiastic and inventive--every time the camera cuts back to them they have changed position; sometimes John is the active partner, and sometimes Laura is. After making love, they kiss and cuddle tenderly. They are almost always in the frame together--there are only four or five shots showing just one of the lovers, and they are not point of view shots. By contrast, in the shots of John and Laura getting ready to go out, they are always alone. Both look bemused, but Laura (who will survive) looks calm and happy,

while John (who will not) looks strained and restless.

The scene, simply as a scene depicting sex, seems to work hard at portraying Sutherland and Christie as equals, to make of both <sup>of</sup> them objects for the visual pleasure of spectators. But the scene is not simply an anonymous sex scene; it is deeply imbedded in the rest of the film and takes ~~his~~ <sup>its</sup> power from that. We have come to know John and Laura, the characters Sutherland and Christie are playing, as fragile, sad people. When they make love, it is a step toward recovery; a realization that they can still take delight in each other. But the post-coital intercutting works against this apparent triumph of love over death. (At the end of the film, when John lies bleeding to death, there will be a cut back to this love scene.) Sexual union can't be prolonged very long; people have to return to their separate bodies and their separate fates. Even people who love each other ultimately can't save each other.

John is the one who is soon to die, and these scenes foreshadow that fate. His apparent passivity, the vulnerability of his nakedness, are not simply a novel reversal of the Mulvey formulation, in which the man takes the woman's role as spectacle. It is misleading to isolate the figure from the ground, as Mulvey does, when she separates the meaning of the shot from the meaning of the sequence, and also when she separates the meaning of the star's image from the meaning of the role the star is playing.

Of course, Mulvey did make it her goal to break down narrative film into its component parts, so that we would cease to take pleasure in it and cease to be led astray by it. However, in breaking narrative cinema down, she dropped many pieces on the floor--dialogue, plot, fictional characters--without comment. As I have tried to show in this paper, women spectators in particular are unlikely to follow her lead. Women prefer the figure imbedded in the ground, the character in context. Mulvey

wrote, in "Visual Pleasure," that "sadism demands a story" and then went on to define all narratives as just the kind <sup>of story</sup> ~~of~~ sadism would demand, stories about "forcing a change" in someone else. I would, instead, claim, that "women demand a story" and that many narrative films provide it for them. I have tried, in this paper, to suggest areas of research that could lead to better awareness of women spectators' response to film. I have also tried to suggest ways ~~that~~ women can reclaim, without guilt and without denial of their identity as women, the gaze that Mulvey asserts does not belong to them.

## NOTES

1. Bill Nichols, ed., Movies and Methods, Volume II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 303. Feminist critics are usually careful to use the word "germinal" when praising each other's work.
2. Teresa de Lauretis, Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 58.
3. Notably, Annette Kuhn, Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982; E. Ann Kaplan, Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera (New York: Methuen, 1983); and John Ellis, Visible Fictions (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).
4. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Screen, 16, No. 3 (Spring 1975). Reprinted in Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary, eds., Women and the Cinema: A Critical Anthology (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977). All page references for "Visual Pleasure" refer to this book.
5. "Visual Pleasure," pp. 415-16.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 421-22.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
10. In the U.S., there seem to be more pockets of resistance to the Mulvey school than there are in Britain. For example, Jane Gaines complained in a recent issue of the U.S. journal Jump Cut "To the outsider, such criticism is often as impenetrable as the patriarchal unconscious it hopes to penetrate. In the U.S., the incorporation of psychoanalysis has coincided with academizing the study. Has the study of popular film, once not so respectable, been suddenly made distinguished and serious via the female scholar's association with French theory?" She goes on to describe this earnest work as a form of the "success suit" which ambitious women put

on to gain acceptance from men. Jane Gaines, "Women and Representation," Jump Cut No. 29 (1984), p. 25.

11. D.N. Rudowick, "The Difficulty of Difference," Wide Angle, No. 5 (1983), pp. 4-15.
12. Gaylyn Studlar, "Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of the Cinema," in Nichols, Movies and Methods Volume II, pp. 602-21.
13. The theory of the dream-screen as a large inviting breast is expounded in great detail in Robert T. Eberwein's Film: The Dream Screen: A Sleep and a Forgetting (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
14. Laura Mulvey, "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*," Framework, Nos. 15-17 (Summer 1981), pp. 12-15.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 15
17. Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," Screen, 23, No. 3-4 (Sept./Oct. 1982).
18. Kuhn, Women's Pictures, pp. ix-x.
19. Dudley Andrew, Concepts in Film Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 141. Robin Wood makes a similar assessment of Bellour's work in "Fear of Spying," American Film, November 1983.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 422.
22. Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (New York: Avon Books, 1971), p. 183.
23. Miriam Lewin, ed., In the Shadow of the Past: Psychology Portrays the Sexes: A Social and Intellectual History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 71.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
25. Jeffrey Masson, The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the

Seduction Theory. (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1984), p. xxii.

26. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 412.
27. Kaplan, Women and Film, p. 24.
28. Mulvey, "Afterthoughts," p. 15.
29. Kaplan, Women and Film, p. 19.
30. Doane, "Masquerade," p. 79.
31. Lacan and his followers make the distinction that the phallus as signifier is not the same thing as an actual penis. Nevertheless, as Stephen Heath demonstrates in his very detailed paper about Lacan ("Difference," Screen, 19, No. 3, (Autumn 1978), pp. 51-112), it is not so purely symbolic that women are ever allowed the privileged relationship to it that Lacan bestows on men.
32. Irigaray, Luce, "Women's Exile," Ideology and Consciousness, No. 1, pp. 62-76, cited by Kuhn, Women's Pictures, pp. 11, 12, and 65.
33. Karen Blick Hoyenga and Kermit T. Hoyenga, The Question of Sex Differences: Psychological, Cultural, and Biological Issues (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1979), p. 237.
34. Ibid.
35. Connie Stark Adamec, Ed., Sex Roles: Origins, Influence and Implications for Women, The CPA Interest Group on Women and Psychology Proceedings of the Inaugural Institute on Women, June 1978. (Montreal: Eden Press, 1980) p. 153.
36. Ralph Exline et al, "Visual Behavior in a Dyad as Affected by Interview Content and Sex of the Respondent," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology," 1 (1968), pp.201-209. Cited in Kay Deaux, The Behavior of Men and Women (Monterey, CA: Wadsworth, 1976), p. 61.
37. Michael Argyle et al, "The Effects of Visibility on Interaction in a Dyad," Human Relations, 21 (1968), pp. 3-17. Cited by Deaux, p. 61.

38. Robert Rosenthal et al, "Body Talk and Tone of Voice: The Language Without Words," Psychology Today ( September 1974), pp. 64-68.
39. M. Lewis et al, "Infants' Response to Facial Stimuli During the First Years of Life," Developmental Psychology I (1969), pp. 75-86. Cited by Marsha McCreadie, Women on Film: The Critical Eye, (New York: Praeger, 1983) p. 124.
40. Diane McGuiness, "Perception and Cognition," Exploring Sex Differences, Lloyd and Archer, eds. (New York: Academic Press, 1976), p. 131. Cited by McCreadie, Women On Film, p. 124.
41. Marsha McCreadie has written a book about the achievements of women film critics: Women on Film: The Critical Eye (New York: Praeger, 1983).
42. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 415.
43. Lo Duca, Erotisme au cinema (Paris: Jean-Jacques Prévert, 1956), quoted by Andre Bazin, What is Cinema?, Vol. II. Essays selected and translated by Hugh Grey. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 170.
44. Women's sexual fantasies have been collected by Nancy Friday in My Secret Garden (New York: Pocket Books, 1974). Scholarly books and articles cite this mass market paperback again and again, because there is a scarcity of empirical research on the topic.
45. Molly Haskell, "Rape Fantasies: The 2,000-Year-Old Misunderstanding," Ms., November, 1976, p. 85.
46. Ibid., p. 79.
47. Kaplan, Women and Film, p. 27.
48. Kuhn, Women's Pictures, p. ix.
49. Anne C. Peterson has an interesting theory about why "sexually differential socialization" [i.e. patriarchy] is usually more extreme than "sexually differential biological capacities". "It is possible," she writes,



"that men strive for dominance because of their inadequacies. While sperm is necessary to produce a child, once inseminated a woman may depart with the product of her nurturance unless forced to remain by a stronger male. Hence male power becomes necessary for men to play some role in the reproductive process." "Biopsychosocial Processes in the Development of Sex-related Differences" in J. Parsons, ed., Biopsychological Influences on Sex-role Related Behavior (Washington, D.C.:Hemisphere, 1980), p. 47.

50. Ann Barr Snitow, "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different," Radical History Review, 20 (Spring/Summer 1979), p. 142.
51. Tania Modleski, Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women. (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982).
52. Barr Snitow, "Mass Market Romance," p. 160.
53. John Ellis has a very interesting chapter "Stars as a Cinematic Phenomenon," in Visible Fictions (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), in which he discusses the effect of the star "image".
54. Haskell, "Rape Fantasies," p. 86.
55. Carol Traynor Williams, The Dream Beside Me: The Movies and the Children of the Forties (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1980), p. 104.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
57. Lois Gould, "Pornography for Women," New York Times Magazine, March 2, 1975, pp. 60-62. The term "pornography" has now come to mean something different to many feminists--hate literature about women, depicting violence and degradation. The preferred term now seems to be "erotica," but there is no general agreement on this.
58. Annette Kuhn, for example, has recently written an article about soap opera called "Women's Genres," Screen, 25 (January/February 1984), pp. 18-28. However, the paper is still written in psychoanalytic terms, so

- Kuhn has trouble defining a female spectator.
59. Hoyenga and Hoyenga, The Question of Sex Differences, p. 243.
  60. Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) p. 8.
  61. Ibid., p. 19.
  62. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 418-19.
  63. Ibid., p. 425.
  64. Kuhn, Women's Pictures, pp. 14-15.
  65. Joan Mellen writes "Real men rarely exist who look strong and unflawed enough to portray such an ideal....As they could not be found, they were fabricated. Papier-mâché human beings were created to conceal real-life vulnerabilities in the male no less than the female star....Clark Gable had his ears pinned back and from a very early age wore false teeth. The false teeth of James Dean were also acquired young....Alan Ladd, a short man, stood on boxes to make him seem as tall as the women in his films..." and so on. Big Bad Wolves: Masculinity in the American Film (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), p. 3.
  66. Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now: The Male Pin-up," Screen, 23, No. 3-4 (September/October 1982), p. 64.
  67. Bernardo Bertolucci, quoted in Newsweek, February 12, 1973, cited by Joan Mellen, Women and Their Sexuality in the New Film (New York: Horizon Books, 1973), p. 134.
  68. Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema," Screen, 23 (September/October 1982), p. 8.
  69. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 420.
  70. Women may also like these scenes because they change the power relationships between man and woman--the man becomes temporarily helpless and dependent on the woman. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss a similar theme in literature written by nineteenth century women in The

Madwoman in the Attic (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979). For example, in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, Jane can only marry Mr. Rochester after he is maimed and blinded, because in nineteenth century England, this is the only way they can be "equals" (p. 369).

71. The love scene was reedited, under Roeg's supervision, for the film's North American showing, to avoid an "X" rating. In Reeling, Pauline Kael said that the changes were slight.

72. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 422.

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