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them, one might say that the genotext is a matter of topology, whereas the phenotext is one of algebra.[6] This distinction may be illustrated by a particular signifying system: written and spoken Chinese, particularly classical Chinese. Writing represents-articulates the signifying process into specific networks or spaces; *speech* (which may correspond to that writing) restores the diacritical elements necessary for an exchange of meaning between two subjects (temporality, aspect, specification of the protagonists, morpho-semantic identifiers, and so forth).[7]

The signifying process therefore includes both the genotext and the phenotext; indeed it could not do otherwise. For it is in language that all signifying operations are realized (even when linguistic material is not used), and it is on the basis of language that a theoretical approach may attempt to perceive that operation.

In our view, the process we have just described accounts for the way all signifying practices are generated.[8] But every signifying practice does not encompass the infinite totality of that process. Multiple constraints—which are ultimately sociopolitical—stop the signifying process at one or another of the theses that it traverses; they knot it and lock it into a given surface or structure; they discard *practice* under fixed, fragmentary, symbolic *matrices*, the tracings of various social constraints that obliterate the infinity of the process: the phenotext is what conveys these obliterations. Among the capitalist mode of production's numerous signifying practices only certain literary texts of the avant-garde (Mallarmé, Joyce[9]) manage to cover the infinity of the process, that is, reach the semiotic *chora*, which modifies linguistic structures. It must be emphasized, however, that this total exploration of the signifying process generally leaves in abeyance the theses that are characteristic of the social organism, its structures, and their political transformation: the text has a tendency to dispense with political and social signifieds.

It has only been in very recent years or in revolutionary periods that signifying practice has inscribed within the phenotext the plural, heterogeneous, and contradictory process of signification encompassing the flow of drives, material discontinuity, political struggle, and the pulverization of language.[1]

Lacan has delineated four types of discourse in our society: that of the hysteric, the academic, the master, and the analyst.[2] Within the perspective just set forth, we shall posit a different classification, which, in certain respects, intersects these four Lacanian categories, and in others, adds to them. We shall distinguish between the following signifying practices: narrative, metalanguage, contemplation, and text-practice.

6. That is, the genotext is the shape taken by existing space, while the phenotext translates the relations discovered into a formal language.
7. See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), vol. 1 [Kristeva's note].
8. From a similar perspective, Edgar Morin writes: "We can think of magic, mythologics, and ideologies both as mixed systems, making affectivity rational and rationality affective, and as outcomes of combining: a) fundamental drives, b) the chancy play of fantasy, and c) logico-constructive systems. (To our mind, the theory of myth must be based on triunic syncretism rather than unilateral logic.)" He adds, in a note, that "myth does not have a single logic but a synthesis of three kinds of logic." "Le Paradigme perdu: La Nature humaine" [Paradigm Lost: Human Nature], paper presented at the "Invariants biologiques et universaux culturels" [Biological Invariants and Cultural Universals] Colloquium, Royaumont, September 6–9, 1972 [Kristeva's note].
9. James Joyce (1882–1941), Irish writer known for his innovations in the form and language of the novel.
1. An allusion to *Le Poème pulvérisé* (1947, *The Pulverized Poem*), a volume of prose poems by the French poet René Char.
2. Lacan presented this typology of discourse at his 1969 and 1970 seminars [Kristeva's note].

Let us state from the outset that this distinction is only provisional and schematic, and that although it corresponds to actual practices, it interests us primarily as a didactic implement [*outil*]—one that will allow us to specify some of the modalities of signifying dispositions. The latter interest us to the extent that they give rise to different practices and are, as a consequence, more or less coded in modes of production. Of course narrative and contemplation could also be seen as devices stemming from (hysterical and obsessional) transference neurosis; and metalanguage and the text as practices allied with psychotic (paranoid and schizoid) economies.[3]

1974

3. Suggesting parallels between creativity and madness, Kristeva connects narrative with hysteria, contemplation with obsession, metalanguage with paranoia, and textuality with schizophrenia.

LAURA MULVEY
b. 1941

Writer and filmmaker Laura Mulvey is widely regarded as one of the most challenging and incisive contemporary feminist cultural theorists. Belonging to the 1970s generation of British film theorists and independent filmmakers, she came to prominence with "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," a foundational text in feminist film criticism. This essay, published in 1975 in the vanguard British film journal *Screen* and frequently anthologized since, was groundbreaking as one of the earliest pieces of feminist criticism to go beyond cataloguing images of women in films. Extending the psychoanalytic insights of both SIGMUND FREUD and JACQUES LACAN, Mulvey describes how sexual difference and inequality are inscribed not only in the content or subject matter of a film but in its formal visual apparatus—its characteristic ways of looking—as well.

Born in Oxford, England, Mulvey received a B.A. in history from Oxford University in 1963. In 1972, with Claire Johnston and Linda Myles, she organized the women's events at the Edinburgh Film Festival. She has taught classes at Bulmershe College in Reading, England; the London Institute; the University of East Anglia; Cornell University; the University of California at Davis; and the British Film Institute. She has co-directed several avant-garde films with her husband, Peter Wollen, including *Penthesilea: Queen of the Amazons* (1974), *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), *Amy!* (1980), *Crystal Gazing* (1982), and *The Bad Sister* (1983), all of which attempt to undermine conventional cinematic methods of filming women. In addition, her essays on a wide variety of subjects have been published in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989) and *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996).

In 1975 Mulvey's essay on visual pleasure and narrative cinema was revolutionary. It was written at a time when feminist literary criticism was beginning to establish itself as a field of study in many English departments and when women's studies programs were just getting off the ground. Few of the works now considered canonical in feminist literary criticism had been written. Anglo-American feminists, documenting images of women in literature, focused mainly on the content rather than the form of the texts they examined. Furthermore, many were hostile toward psychoanalysis, though a few were already exploring the potential connections between Freud and feminism. In France the theorists who would come to be known in the

United States as the French feminists—JULIA KRISTEVA, HÉLÈNE CIXOUS, and Luce Irigaray—were using psychoanalytic theory as a means of exploring sexual difference and inequality, but their work would not begin to have a significant impact on American feminism until the 1980s.

"Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" describes the manner in which the traditional visual apparatus of mainstream Hollywood "narrative" film looks at women as passive objects subordinated to the male gaze. Using a dense but illuminating psychoanalytic framework, Mulvey explores how the male unconscious shapes the erotic pleasures involved in looking. While she concedes that psychoanalysis might not offer a way out of the inequalities between the sexes or the oppression of women, she argues that it does provide a useful political tool for illustrating the mechanisms of pleasure on which the cinematic objectification of women depends.

According to Mulvey, the visual techniques of cinema afford viewers two contradictory pleasures. First, through the process Freud terms *scopophilia* (pleasure in looking), we enjoy making others the object of a controlling gaze. Second, through a process of identification that parallels Lacan's famous mirror stage (theorized in "The Mirror Stage," 1949; see above), we derive pleasure from identifying with an ideal image on the screen. Both have their origins in infantile processes by which we learned to separate ourselves from others. As described to this point, the two processes seem to structure the visual pleasure of men and women in the same way. However, Mulvey argues that because the male viewer cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification, he (the viewer is specifically male) deflects the tension by splitting his gaze between spectacle and narrative. A woman on-screen typically functions as the primary erotic object for both screen characters and audience members, becoming the object of the dominant, male gaze; as such, she exists outside the narrative illusions of time and space the film creates. At the same time, spectators identify with the male protagonist, who acts within the parameters of time and space—the diegesis—created by the film's story line.

The visual apparatus of mainstream film is further complicated because the process of gazing on the female object of desire is both pleasurable and threatening. While film creates an illusionistic world that allows for the free play of desire, in actuality the viewer is never free from the circumstances that gave rise to those desires within the symbolic social order, especially from the castration complex. The female object of the gaze, because she lacks a penis, is associated with the primordial fear of castration; although that threat initiates the male subject's integration into the symbolic social order, it also creates considerable anxiety. For this reason, the controlling male ego must attempt to escape the threat of castration evoked by the very gaze that gives it pleasure. Mulvey maintains that the male unconscious has two means of disarming the threat. The first is a form of voyeurism—investigating the female, demystifying her, and either denouncing, punishing, or saving her. The second is male disavowal, achieved by the substitution of a fetish object that becomes reassuring rather than dangerous. She examines these processes in the films of the directors Josef von Sternberg (1894–1969) and Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980).

Before the pleasures of mainstream film can be challenged, Mulvey argues, viewers must be able to break down the cinematic codes that create the controlling male gaze and the illusionistic world that satisfies the desires it invokes. The cinema depends on three looks: that of the camera, that of the audience, and that of the film's characters. It achieves its illusion of truth and reality (mimesis) by denying or downplaying the first two (the material process of recording and the critical reading of the viewer) and by emphasizing the last. Only by disrupting the seamlessness of this whole visual illusion can women's subordination to the male gaze be defied.

The visual dynamics described in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" have been widely applied not only to film but to other media as well, including photography, advertising, painting, and television, making this essay a landmark text for visual culture and media studies generally. But Mulvey's description of the male gaze has not been without its critics—feminists included—who have pointed out its limitations. For many, the spatial logic of the male gaze limits the ways in which vision (and visual pleasure) can be understood. Because the masculine gaze is always posited as the site of mastery and control, while the feminine is marked by submission to the gaze, little room is left within mainstream narrative cinema for resistances or alternative practices. Nor does avant-garde cinema, where Mulvey locates the alternative to the male gaze, offer much evidence of being any more responsive to feminist critique than Hollywood filmmaking. Others argue that her paradigm locks the activity of looking into a traditional Oedipal heterosexuality. Moreover, theories drawing on a visual apparatus based on a gendered split between female object and male voyeur cannot describe the visual pleasure of female viewers, or account for the male gaze at another male. Mulvey herself has recognized the validity of such objections, attempting to address many of them in a later essay, "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun*" (1981). Despite such criticism, Mulvey's 1975 essay continues to inspire important work in feminist film studies.

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Laura Mulvey has published three books: *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989) collects her essays on a wide range of topics, *Citizen Kane* (1992) explores what is perhaps the most celebrated American film, and *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996) examines how the concept of fetishism as it has been developed by Karl Marx and Freud relates to artistic texts. For biographical information on Mulvey, consult the interviews by Jacqueline Suter and Sandy Flitterman, "Textual Riddles: Women as Enigma or Site of Social Meanings? An Interview with Laura Mulvey," *Discourse* 1 (1979), and by Juan Suarez and Millicent Manglis, "Cinema, Gender, and the Topographies of Enigmas: A Conversation with Laura Mulvey," *Cinefocus* 3 (1995).

A great deal of feminist film criticism since 1975 has been written in response to Mulvey's essay. Among the most notable analyses are E. Ann Kaplan, *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (1983); *Re-vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, and Linda Williams (1984); Kaplan, *Rocking around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture* (1987), which examines MTV and the popular music video, in another extension and critique of Mulvey's argument; and Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (1987). An anthology that demonstrates Mulvey's considerable influence on feminist film criticism is *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television*, edited by E. Deidre Pribram (1988). Several major psychoanalytic books on film assess Mulvey's contributions, including Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (1988); *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, edited by E. Ann Kaplan (1990); and *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, edited by Mary Ann Doane (1991).

Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema

I Introduction

(A) A POLITICAL USE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

This paper intends to use psychoanalysis to discover where and how the fascination of film is reinforced by pre-existing patterns of fascination already at work within the individual subject and the social formations that have moulded him. It takes as its starting-point the way film reflects, reveals and

even plays on the straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle. It is helpful to understand what the cinema has been, how its magic has worked in the past, while attempting a theory and a practice which will challenge this cinema of the past. Psychoanalytic theory is thus appropriated here as a political weapon, demonstrating the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form.

The paradox of phallocentrism[1] in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated women to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as linchpin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies. Recent writing in *Screen*[2] about psychoanalysis and the cinema has not sufficiently brought out the importance of the representation of the female form in a symbolic order[3] in which, in the last resort, it speaks castration and nothing else. To summarise briefly: the function of woman in forming the patriarchal unconscious is twofold: she firstly symbolises the castration threat by her real lack of a penis and secondly thereby raises her child into the symbolic. Once this has been achieved, her meaning in the process is at an end. It does not last into the world of law and language except as a memory, which oscillates between memory of maternal plenitude and memory of lack. Both are posited on nature (or on anatomy in Freud's famous phrase[4]). Woman's desire is subjugated to her image as bearer of the bleeding wound; she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it. She turns her child into the signifier of her own desire to possess a penis (the condition, she imagines, of entry into the symbolic). Either she must gracefully give way to the word, the name of the father and the law, or else struggle to keep her child down with her in the half-light of the imaginary. Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier[5] for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning.

There is an obvious interest in this analysis for feminists, a beauty in its exact rendering of the frustration experienced under the phallocentric order. It gets us nearer to the roots of our oppression, it brings closer an articulation of the problem, it faces us with the ultimate challenge: how to fight the unconscious structured like a language (formed critically at the moment of arrival of language) while still caught within the language of the patriarchy?

1. The psychoanalytic system in which sexual difference is defined as the difference between having and lacking the phallus; the term has come to refer to the patriarchal cultural system as a whole insofar as that system privileges the phallus as the symbol and source of power. Because of that privilege, women suffer "penis envy" and men suffer the "castration complex" (the fear of every male child that his desire for his mother will be punished by castration by his father; more generally, the fear of becoming "castrated" like women that leads men to cling to masculinity); both terms are originally from the theories of SIGMUND FREUD (1856–1939).
2. Vanguard British film journal, founded in 1969 by the British Society for Education in Film and Television.
3. In the theories of the psyche put forward by the French psychoanalyst JACQUES LACAN (1901–1981), the Symbolic is the dimension of language, law, and the father; in contrast, the Imaginary is modeled on the preverbal mother-child dyad, or on the relation between an infant and its mirror image.
4. That is, "anatomy is destiny" ("The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," 1924).
5. Term used by structuralist and poststructuralist theorists that was coined by the Swiss linguist FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE (1857–1913) to explain the functioning of signs, which he divided into a *signifier* (the form a sign takes) and a *signified* (the concept it represents).

There is no way in which we can produce an alternative out of the blue, but we can begin to make a break by examining patriarchy with the tools it provides, of which psychoanalysis is not the only but an important one. We are still separated by a great gap from important issues for the female unconscious which are scarcely relevant to phallocentric theory: the sexing of the female infant and her relationship to the symbolic, the sexually mature woman as non-mother, maternity outside the signification of the phallus, the vagina. But, at this point, psychoanalytic theory as it now stands can at least advance our understanding of the *status quo*, of the patriarchal order in which we are caught.

(B) DESTRUCTION OF PLEASURE AS A RADICAL WEAPON

As an advanced representation system, the cinema poses questions about the ways the unconscious (formed by the dominant order) structures ways of seeing and pleasure in looking. Cinema has changed over the last few decades. It is no longer the monolithic system based on large capital investment exemplified at its best by Hollywood in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Technological advances (16mm and so on) have changed the economic conditions of cinematic production, which can now be artisanal as well as capitalist. Thus it has been possible for an alternative cinema to develop. However self-conscious and ironic Hollywood managed to be, it always restricted itself to a formal *mise en scène*[6] reflecting the dominant ideological concept of the cinema. The alternative cinema provides a space for the birth of a cinema which is radical in both a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film. This is not to reject the latter moralistically, but to highlight the ways in which its formal preoccupations reflect the psychical obsessions of the society which produced it and, further, to stress that the alternative cinema must start specifically by reacting against these obsessions and assumptions. A politically and aesthetically avant-garde cinema is now possible, but it can still only exist as a counterpoint.

The magic of the Hollywood style at its best (and of all the cinema which fell within its sphere of influence) arose, not exclusively, but in one important aspect, from its skilled and satisfying manipulation of visual pleasure. Unchallenged, mainstream film coded the erotic into the language of the dominant patriarchal order. In the highly developed Hollywood cinema it was only through these codes that the alienated subject, torn in his imaginary memory by a sense of loss, by the terror of potential lack in fantasy, came near to finding a glimpse of satisfaction: through its formal beauty and its play on his own formative obsessions. This article will discuss the interweaving of that erotic pleasure in film, its meaning and, in particular, the central place of the image of woman. It is said that analysing pleasure, or beauty, destroys it. That is the intention of this article. The satisfaction and reinforcement of the ego[7] that represent the high point of film history hitherto must be attacked. Not in favour of a reconstructed new pleasure, which cannot exist in the abstract, nor of intellectualised unpleasure, but to make

6. In film, everything within the frame of a shot, including actors, settings, costumes, action, and lighting.
7. The part of the psyche, as described by Freud, that is conscious, controls behavior, and is in touch with external reality.

way for a total negation of the ease and plenitude of the narrative fiction film. The alternative is the thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without simply rejecting it, transcending outworn or oppressive forms, and daring to break with normal pleasurable expectations in order to conceive a new language of desire.

II Pleasure in Looking/Fascination with the Human Form

A The cinema offers a number of possible pleasures. One is scopophilia (pleasure in looking). There are circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure, just as, in the reverse formation, there is pleasure in being looked at. Originally, in his *Three Essays on Sexuality*, Freud isolated scopophilia as one of the component instincts of sexuality which exist as drives quite independently of the erotogenic zones. At this point he associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze. His particular examples centre on the voyeuristic activities of children, their desire to see and make sure of the private and forbidden (curiosity about other people's genital and bodily functions, about the presence or absence of the penis and, retrospectively, about the primal scene[6]). In this analysis scopophilia is essentially active. (Later, in 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes', Freud developed his theory of scopophilia further, attaching it initially to pre-genital auto-eroticism, after which, by analogy, the pleasure of the look is transferred to others. There is a close working here of the relationship between the active instinct and its further development in a narcissistic form.) Although the instinct is modified by other factors, in particular the constitution of the ego, it continues to exist as the erotic basis for pleasure in looking at another person as object. At the extreme, it can become fixated into a perversion, producing obsessive voyeurs and Peeping Toms whose only sexual satisfaction can come from watching, in an active controlling sense, an objectified other.

At first glance, the cinema would seem to be remote from the undercover world of the surreptitious observation of an unknowing and unwilling victim. What is seen on the screen is so manifestly shown. But the mass of mainstream film, and the conventions within which it has consciously evolved, portray a hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and playing on their voyeuristic fantasy. Moreover the extreme contrast between the darkness in the auditorium (which also isolates the spectators from one another) and the brilliance of the shifting patterns of light and shade on the screen helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation. Although the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world. Among other things, the position of the spectators in the cinema is blatantly one of repression of their exhibitionism and projection of the repressed desire onto the performer.

B The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world. Jacques Lacan has described how the moment when a child recognises its own image in the mirror is crucial for the constitution of the ego.[7] Several aspects of this analysis are relevant here. The mirror phase occurs at a time when children's physical ambitions outstrip their motor capacity, with the result that their recognition of themselves is joyous in that they imagine their mirror image to be more complete, more perfect than they experience in their own body. Recognition is thus overlaid with misrecognition: the image recognised is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its misrecognition as superior projects this body outside itself as an ideal ego, the alienated subject which, re-introjected[1] as an ego ideal, prepares the way for identification with others in the future. This mirror moment predates language for the child.

Important for this article is the fact that it is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the I, of subjectivity. This is a moment when an older fascination with looking (at the mother's face, for an obvious example) collides with the initial inklings of self-awareness. Hence it is the birth of the long love affair/despair between image and self-image which has found such intensity of expression in film and such joyous recognition in the cinema audience. Quite apart from the extraneous similarities between screen and mirror (the framing of the human form in its surroundings, for instance), the cinema has structures of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing it. The sense of forgetting the world as the ego has come to perceive it (I forgot who I am and where I was) is nostalgically reminiscent of that pre-subjective moment of image recognition. While at the same time, the cinema has distinguished itself in the production of ego ideals, through the star system for instance. Stars provide a focus or centre both to screen space and screen story where they act out a complex process of likeness and difference (the glamorous impersonates the ordinary).

C Sections A and B have set out two contradictory aspects of the pleasurable structures of looking in the conventional cinematic situation. The first, scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight. The second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from identification with the image seen. Thus, in film terms, one implies a separation of the erotic identity of the subject from the object on the screen (active scopophilia), the other demands identification of the ego with the object on the screen through the spectator's fascination with and recognition of his like. The first is a function of the sexual instincts, the second of ego libido.[2] This dichotomy was crucial for Freud. Although he saw the two as interacting and overlaying each other,

6. The scene of the child's parents engaged in sexual intercourse. Freud published *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905 and "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" in 1915.

9. Lacan, in "The Mirror Stage" (1949; see above), describes the development of selfhood in children between 6 and 18 months old.

1. A psychoanalytic term; *introjection* is the unconscious process by which the outside world is taken into the self and represented in its internal structure.

2. Narcissistic libido, a pleasure derived from idealizing the self.

the tension between instinctual drives and self-preservation polarises in terms of pleasure. But both are formative structures, mechanisms without intrinsic meaning. In themselves they have no signification, unless attached to an idealisation. Both pursue aims in indifference to perceptual reality, and motivate eroticised phantasmagoria that affect the subject's perception of the world to make a mockery of empirical objectivity.

During its history, the cinema seems to have evolved a particular illusion of reality in which this contradiction between libido and ego has found a beautifully complementary fantasy world. In *reality* the fantasy world of the screen is subject to the law which produces it. Sexual instincts and identification processes have a meaning within the symbolic order which articulates desire. Desire, born with language, allows the possibility of transcending the instinctual and the imaginary, but its point of reference continually returns to the traumatic moment of its birth: the castration complex. Hence the look, pleasurable in form, can be threatening in content, and it is woman as representation/image that crystallises this paradox.

III Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look

A In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between 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 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*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley,[3] she holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire. Mainstream film neatly combines spectacle and narrative. (Note, however, how in the musical song-and-dance numbers interrupt the flow of the diegesis.[4]) The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation. This alien presence then has to be integrated into cohesion with the narrative. As Budd Boetticher[5] has put it:

> What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance.

(A recent tendency in narrative film has been to dispense with this problem altogether; hence the development of what Molly Haskell[6] has called the 'buddy movie', in which the active homosexual eroticism of the central male figures can carry the story without distraction.) Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the

3. American choreographer and film director (1895–1976), famous for his musical productions. Florenz Ziegfeld (1869–1932), American theatrical producer, best known for extravagant revues featuring showgirls.
4. The ongoing story or narrative.
5. American film director (b. 1916), best known for his westerns.
6. American film critic (b. 1939); she discusses "buddy movies" in *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (1974).

auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen. For instance, the device of the show-girl allows the two looks to be unified technically without any apparent break in the diegesis. A woman performs within the narrative; the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude. For a moment the sexual impact of the performing woman takes the film into a no man's land outside its own time and space. Thus Marilyn Monroe's first appearance in *The River of No Return* and Lauren Bacall's songs in *To Have and Have Not*.[7] Similarly, conventional close-ups of legs (Dietrich, for instance) or a face (Garbo)[8] integrate into the narrative a different mode of eroticism. One part of a fragmented body destroys the Renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative; it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon, rather than verisimilitude, to the screen.

B An active/passive heterosexual division of labour has similarly controlled narrative structure. According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychical structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification. Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like. Hence the split between spectacle and narrative supports the man's role as the active one of advancing the story, making things happen. The man controls the film fantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extra-diegetic[9] tendencies represented by woman as spectacle. This is made possible through the processes set in motion by structuring the film around a main controlling figure with whom the spectator can identify. As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence. A male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror. The character in the story can make things happen and control events better than the subject/spectator, just as the image in the mirror was more in control of motor co-ordination.

In contrast to woman as icon, the active male figure (the ego ideal of the identification process) demands a three-dimensional space corresponding to that of the mirror recognition, in which the alienated subject internalised his own representation of his imaginary existence. He is a figure in a landscape. Here the function of film is to reproduce as accurately as possible the so-called natural conditions of human perception. Camera technology (as exemplified by deep focus in particular) and camera movements (determined by the action of the protagonist), combined with invisible editing (demanded by realism), all tend to blur the limits of screen space. The male protagonist is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which he articu-

7. The 1944 American film (dir. Howard Hawks) that was the film debut of the actress Bacall (b. 1924). *River of No Return* (dir. Otto Preminger, 1954), American film that stars the actress Monroe (1926–1962) as a beautiful saloon singer.
8. Greta Garbo (1905–1990), Swedish-born American film actress. Marlene Dietrich (1901–1992), German-born American actress.
9. Outside the story or the frame of the camera.

lates the look and creates the action. (There are films with a woman as main protagonist, of course. To analyse this phenomenon seriously here would take me too far afield. Pam Cook and Claire Johnston's study of *The Revolt of Mamie Stover*[1] in Phil Hardy (ed.), *Raoul Walsh* (Edinburgh, 1974), shows in a striking case how the strength of this female protagonist is more apparent than real.)

C1 Sections III A and B have set out a tension between a mode of representation of woman in film and conventions surrounding the diegesis. Each is associated with a look: that of the spectator in direct scopophilic contact with the female form displayed for his enjoyment (connoting male fantasy) and that of the spectator fascinated with the image of his like set in an illusion of natural space, and through him gaining control and possession of the woman within the diegesis. (This tension and the shift from one pole to the other can structure a single text. Thus both in *Only Angels Have Wings*[2] and in *To Have and Have Not*, the film opens with the woman as object of the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonists in the film. She is isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualised. But as the narrative progresses she falls in love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamorous characteristics, her generalised sexuality, her show-girl connotations; her eroticism is subjected to the male star alone. By means of identification with him, through participation in his power, the spectator can indirectly possess her too.)

But in psychoanalytic terms, the female figure poses a deeper problem. She also connotes something that the look continually circles around but disavows: her lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure. Ultimately, the meaning of woman is sexual difference, the visually ascertainable absence of the penis, the material evidence on which is based the castration complex essential for the organisation of entrance to the symbolic order and the law of the father. Thus the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified. The male unconscious has two avenues of escape from this castration anxiety: preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman, demystifying her mystery), counterbalanced by the devaluation, punishment or saving of the guilty object (an avenue typified by the concerns of the *film noir*[3]); or else complete disavowal of castration by the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous (hence overvaluation, the cult of the female star).

This second avenue, fetishistic scopophilia, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself. The first avenue, voyeurism, on the contrary, has associations with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and subjugating the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness. This sadistic side fits in well with narrative. Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person,

1. A 1956 American film (dir. Raoul Walsh), starring June Russell in the title role.
2. A 1939 American film (dir. Howard Hawks); the female "object" is Jean Arthur.
3. Literally, "black film" (French), a postwar genre characterized by dark settings, by shady or disturbed characters who are alienated and isolated, and by a view of society from its underside.

narrative + sadism

a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end. Fetishistic scopophilia, on the other hand, can exist outside linear time as the erotic instinct is focused on the look alone. These contradictions and ambiguities can be illustrated more simply by using works by Hitchcock and Sternberg,[4] both of whom take the look almost as the content or subject matter of many of their films. Hitchcock is the more complex, as he uses both mechanisms. Sternberg's work, on the other hand, provides many pure examples of fetishistic scopophilia.

C2 Sternberg once said he would welcome his films being projected upside-down so that story and character involvement would not interfere with the spectator's undiluted appreciation of the screen image. This statement is revealing but ingenuous: ingenuous in that his films do demand that the figure of the woman (Dietrich, in the cycle of films with her, as the ultimate example) should be identifiable; but revealing in that it emphasises the fact that for him the pictorial space enclosed by the frame is paramount, rather than narrative or identification processes. While Hitchcock goes into the investigative side of voyeurism, Sternberg produces the ultimate fetish, taking it to the point where the powerful look of the male protagonist (characteristic of traditional narrative film) is broken in favour of the image in direct erotic rapport with the spectator. The beauty of the woman as object and the screen space coalesce; she is no longer the bearer of guilt but a perfect product, whose body, stylised and fragmented by close-ups, is the content of the film and the direct recipient of the spectator's look.

Sternberg plays down the illusion of screen depth; his screen tends to be one-dimensional, as light and shade, lace, steam, foliage, net, streamers and so on reduce the visual field. There is little or no mediation of the look through the eyes of the main male protagonist. On the contrary, shadowy presences like La Bessière in *Morocco*[5] act as surrogates for the director, detached as they are from audience identification. Despite Sternberg's insistence that his stories are irrelevant, it is significant that they are concerned with situation, not suspense, and cyclical rather than linear time, while plot complications revolve around misunderstanding rather than conflict. The most important absence is that of the controlling male gaze within the screen scene. The high point of emotional drama in the most typical Dietrich films, her supreme moments of erotic meaning, take place in the absence of the man she loves in the fiction. There are other witnesses, other spectators watching her on the screen, their gaze is one with, not standing in for, that of the audience. At the end of *Morocco*, Tom Brown has already disappeared into the desert when Amy Jolly kicks off her gold sandals and walks after him. At the end of *Dishonoured*,[6] Kranau is indifferent to the fate of Magda. In both cases, the erotic impact, sanctified by death, is displayed as a spectacle for the audience. The male hero misunderstands and, above all, does not see.

In Hitchcock, by contrast, the male hero does see precisely what the audi-

4. Josef von Sternberg (1894–1969), Austrian-born American film director; he brought the actress Marlene Dietrich to the United States and featured her in a number of films in the early 1930s. Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980), English film director known as a master of suspense; many of his most important films were made in Hollywood.
5. A 1930 American film directed by Sternberg; La Bessière is played by Adolphe Menjou, Tom Brown by Gary Cooper, and Amy Jolly by Dietrich.
6. A 1931 American film directed by Sternberg; Kranau is played by Victor McLaglen and Marie (not "Magda"), a spy, by Dietrich.

ence sees. However, although fascination with an image through scopophilic eroticism can be the subject of the film, it is the role of the hero to portray the contradictions and tensions experienced by the spectator. In *Vertigo* in particular, but also in *Marnie* and *Rear Window*,[7] the look is central to the plot, oscillating between voyeurism and fetishistic fascination. Hitchcock has never concealed his interest in voyeurism, cinematic and non-cinematic. His heroes are exemplary of the symbolic order and the law—a policeman (*Vertigo*), a dominant male possessing money and power (*Marnie*)—but their erotic drives lead them into compromised situations. The power to subject another person to the will sadistically or to the gaze voyeuristically is turned onto the woman as the object of both. Power is backed by a certainty of legal right and the established guilt of the woman (evoking castration, psychoanalytically speaking). True perversion is barely concealed under a shallow mask of ideological correctness—the man is on the right side of the law, the woman on the wrong. Hitchcock's skillful use of identification processes and liberal use of subjective camera from the point of view of the male protagonist draw the spectators deeply into his position, making them share his uneasy gaze. The spectator is absorbed into a voyeuristic situation within the screen-scene and diegesis, which parodies his own in the cinema.

In an analysis of *Rear Window*, Douchet[8] takes the film as a metaphor for the cinema. Jeffries is the audience, the events in the apartment block opposite correspond to the screen. As he watches, an erotic dimension is added to his look, a central image to the drama. His girlfriend Lisa had been of little sexual interest to him, more or less a drag, so long as she remained on the spectator side. When she crosses the barrier between his room and the block opposite, their relationship is reborn erotically. He does not merely watch her through his lens, as a distant meaningful image, he also sees her as a guilty intruder exposed by a dangerous man threatening her with punishment, and thus finally giving him the opportunity to save her. Lisa's exhibitionism has already been established by her obsessive interest in dress and style, in being a passive image of visual perfection; Jeffries's voyeurism and activity have also been established through his work as a photo-journalist, a maker of stories and captor of images. However, his enforced inactivity, binding him to his seat as a spectator, puts him squarely in the fantasy position of the cinema audience.

In *Vertigo*, subjective camera predominates. Apart from one flashback from Judy's point of view, the narrative is woven around what Scottie sees or fails to see.[9] The audience follows the growth of his erotic obsession and subsequent despair precisely from his point of view. Scottie's voyeurism is blatant: he falls in love with a woman he follows and spies on without speaking to. Its sadistic side is equally blatant: he has chosen (and freely chosen, for he had been a successful lawyer) to be a policeman, with all the attendant possibilities of pursuit and investigation. As a result, he follows, watches and falls in love with a perfect image of female beauty and mystery. Once he actually confronts her, his erotic drive is to break her down and force her to tell by persistent cross-questioning.

7. Three American films directed by Hitchcock: *Vertigo* (1958), *Marnie* (1964), and *Rear Window* (1954).
8. Jean Douchet, French film director and critic, author of *Alfred Hitchcock* (1967). Jeffries, temporarily immobilized by a broken leg, is played by James Stewart; Lisa is played by Grace Kelly.
9. Scottie (James Stewart) is hired to watch Madeleine (Kim Novak), a wealthy man's wife; he becomes obsessed with her, and after her suicide, he finds another woman who resembles her (Judy, also played by Novak).

In the second part of the film, he re-enacts his obsessive involvement with the image he loved to watch secretly. He reconstructs Judy as Madeleine, forces her to conform in every detail to the actual physical appearance of his fetish. Her exhibitionism, her masochism, make her an ideal passive counterpart to Scottie's active sadistic voyeurism. She knows her part is to perform, and only by playing it through and then replaying it can she keep Scottie's erotic interest. But in the repetition he does break her down and succeeds in exposing her guilt. His curiosity wins through; she is punished.

Thus, in *Vertigo*, erotic involvement with the look boomerangs: the spectator's own fascination is revealed as illicit voyeurism as the narrative content enacts the processes and pleasures that he is himself exercising and enjoying. The Hitchcock hero here is firmly placed within the symbolic order, in narrative terms. He has all the attributes of the patriarchal superego.[1] Hence the spectator, lulled into a false sense of security by the apparent legality of his surrogate, sees through his look and finds himself exposed as complicit, caught in the moral ambiguity of looking. Far from being simply an aside on the perversion of the police, *Vertigo* focuses on the implications of the active/looking, passive/looked-at split in terms of sexual difference and the power of the male symbolic encapsulated in the hero. Marnie, too, performs for Mark Rutland's gaze and masquerades as the perfect to-be-looked-at image.[2] He, too, is on the side of the law until, drawn in by obsession with her guilt, her secret, he longs to see her in the act of committing a crime, make her confess and thus save her. So he, too, becomes complicit as he acts out the implications of his power. He controls money and words; he can have his cake and eat it.

IV Summary

The psychoanalytic background that has been discussed in this article is relevant to the pleasure and unpleasure offered by traditional narrative film. The scopophilic instinct (pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object) and, in contradistinction, ego libido (forming identification processes) act as formations, mechanisms, which mould this cinema's formal attributes. The actual image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man takes the argument a step further into the content and structure of representation, adding a further layer of ideological significance demanded by the patriarchal order in its favourite cinematic form—illusionistic[3] narrative film. The argument must return again to the psychoanalytic background: women in representation can signify castration, and activate voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms to circumvent this threat. Although none of these interacting layers is intrinsic to film, it is only in the film form that they can reach a perfect and beautiful contradiction, thanks to the possibility in the cinema of shifting the emphasis of the look. The place of the look defines cinema, the possibility of varying it and exposing it. This is what makes cinema quite different in its voyeuristic potential from, say, striptease, theatre, shows and so on. Going far beyond highlighting a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way she is to be looked at into the

1. The part of the psyche, as described by Freud, that develops through the incorporation of the moral standards of the parents and community.
2. In *Marnie*, the title character (Tippi Hedren) is a habitual thief and liar who steals from her employers and then changes her identity; Rutland (Sean Connery) hires her despite recognizing her.
3. Relying on illusion to convey realism.

spectacle itself. Playing on the tension between film as controlling the dimension of time (editing, narrative) and film as controlling the dimension of space (changes in distance, editing), cinematic codes create a gaze, a world and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire. It is these cinematic codes and their relationship to formative external structures that must be broken down before mainstream film and the pleasure it provides can be challenged.

To begin with (as an ending), the voyeuristic-scopophilic look that is a crucial part of traditional filmic pleasure can itself be broken down. There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion. The conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. Without these two absences (the material existence of the recording process, the critical reading of the spectator), fictional drama cannot achieve reality, obviousness and truth. Nevertheless, as this article has argued, the structure of looking in narrative fiction film contains a contradiction in its own premises: the female image as a castration threat constantly endangers the unity of the diegesis and bursts through the world of illusion as an intrusive, static, one-dimensional fetish. Thus the two looks materially present in time and space are obsessively subordinated to the neurotic needs of the male ego. The camera becomes the mechanism for producing an illusion of Renaissance space, flowing movements compatible with the human eye, an ideology of representation that revolves around the perception of the subject; the camera's look is disavowed in order to create a convincing world in which the spectator's surrogate can perform with verisimilitude. Simultaneously, the look of the audience is denied an intrinsic force: as soon as fetishistic representation of the female image threatens to break the spell of illusion, and the erotic image on the screen appears directly (without mediation) to the spectator, the fact of fetishisation, concealing as it does castration fear, freezes the look, fixates the spectator and prevents him from achieving any distance from the image in front of him.

This complex interaction of looks is specific to film. The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions (already undertaken by radical film-makers) is to free the look of the camera into its materiality[4] in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics[5] and passionate detachment. There is no doubt that this destroys the satisfaction, pleasure and privilege of the 'invisible guest', and highlights the way film has depended on voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms. Women, whose image has continually been stolen and used for this end, cannot view the decline of the traditional film form with anything much more than sentimental regret.

1973 1975

4. Actual mechanisms. 5. Analysis of interaction.

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK
b. 1942

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an unsettling voice in literary theory and, especially, postcolonial studies. She has described herself as a "practical deconstructionist feminist Marxist" and as a "gadfly." She uses deconstruction to examine "how truth is constructed" and to deploy the assertions of one intellectual and political position (such as Marxism) to "interrupt" or "bring into crisis" another (feminism, for example). In her work, she combines passionate denunciations of the harm done to women, non-Europeans, and the poor by the privileged West with a persistent questioning of the grounds on which radical critique takes its stand.

Her continual interrogation of assumptions can make Spivak difficult to read. But her restless critiques connect directly to her ethical aspiration for a "politics of the open end," in which deconstruction acts as a "safeguard" against the repression or exclusion of "alterities"—that is, people, events, or ideas that are radically "other" to the dominant worldview. She writes against the "epistemic violence" done by discourses of knowledge that carve up the world and condemn to oblivion the pieces that do not easily fit. Characteristically, she does not claim to avoid such violence herself; rather, she self-consciously explores structures of violence without assuming a final, settled position.

Spivak was born in Calcutta, India, and received her B.A. from the University of Calcutta. She came to the United States and completed her M.A. and Ph.D. in English literature at Cornell University, where PAUL DE MAN was one of her mentors. She has taught at various American universities, including the University of Iowa, the University of Texas, the University of Pittsburgh, and Columbia University. Her earliest important work was her introduction to and translation of JACQUES DERRIDA's *Of Grammatology* (1977), the first of his major books to be rendered in full into English. Spivak played a key role in introducing French "theory" into North American and British literature departments between 1975 and 1982. Almost from the start, she emphasized how deconstruction's interest in the "violence" of traditional hierarchical binary oppositions (between male and female, the West and the rest, etc.) afforded a passage from literary theory to radical politics. Spivak joined feminism's interest in silenced women to a Marxist global concern with the political, economic, and cultural oppression of nonwhite people. The result was a series of highly influential essays that helped set the agenda for feminism and for postcolonial theory in the 1980s and 1990s.

"Can the Subaltern Speak?" may be Spivak's best-known essay; it is certainly her most controversial. First given as a lecture in 1983 and published in different versions in 1985 and 1988, Spivak offers a greatly expanded revision (more than one hundred pages) in her *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999). Our selection offers three sections from this revised version, beginning with the sentence in which Spivak poses a central concern: "the possibility that the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of the Other as the Self's shadow." Her essay insists "on marking [critics'] positionality as investigating subjects." Postcolonial critics, like many feminists, want to give silenced others a voice. But Spivak worries that even the most benevolent effort merely repeats the very silencing it aims to combat. After all, colonialists often thought of themselves as well-intentioned. Spivak points to the British outlawing of *sati*, the Hindu practice of burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. While this intervention saved some lives and may have given women a modicum of free choice, it also served to secure British power in India and to underscore the asserted difference between British "civilization" and Indian "barbarism." Hindu culture was driven underground, written out of law, denied any legitimacy. Can today's intellectuals avoid a similar condescension when they represent the oppressed?