1998

American Medusa, American Sphinx: The Female Gaze and Knowledge in Modern Fiction and Film.

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AMERICAN MEDUSA, AMERICAN SPHINX:
THE FEMALE GAZE AND KNOWLEDGE
IN MODERN FICTION AND FILM

VOLUME I

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Department of English

by
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May 1998

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In his 1936 Esquire article "The Crack-Up," F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function" (Crack-Up 69). If this is a true measure, then the authors of dissertations have broken the barrier of first rate and ascended to some yet unnamed echelon of mental acuity. In my opinion, and in that of many of my supporters, completing a dissertation is more often a sign that one possesses in abundance that trait so dear to William Faulkner: the capacity to endure. The following acknowledgments, then, are an attempt--always fated to be inadequate--to honor the many people who sustained, advised, and comforted me throughout this long project.

First, I owe thanks to the members of my committee, Elsie B. Michie foremost among them. As my director, she offered not only meticulous comments but the faith that there was an overarching argument in the pages that follow and a vision of what it might be. Richard C. Moreland stands out both as the encouraging voice telling me that I
would finish in the face of whatever obstacles and as a critic who reads canonical American literature with a difference. Mark J. Zucker was the hardest working, most appreciative Dean's Representative a candidate could hope for. David R. Wills's meticulous reading and productive questioning, sometimes from as far afield as Aix-en-Provence and the Côte d'Azur, provided both challenge and clarification. Thanks too to Ricky L. Blackwood, who was on board for most of the trip and whose faith in me never faltered. I owe a special gratitude to Robin A. Roberts, who stepped in at the last minute to give me valuable ideas for revision and organization and who continues to serve me as a model of an academic who meets her own needs without slighting those of her students. I am also indebted to Andrei Codrescu and Malcolm Richardson, who helped bring me to Louisiana State University in the first place, and Dana D. Nelson, Emily Toth, Dave Smith, and Michelle A. Massé, who helped make it worth staying.

I owe a great debt to my parents, Elizabeth and Gerald, for teaching me early that the life of the mind is a pleasure. I especially thank my sister, Ellen, who believed I could finish in my own way and taught me by example that a dissertation can be written even under the most daunting circumstances. She is the one who gave me New French Feminisms and started me on this path.
I could not have completed this degree without the support of many friends, including David Mazel and Catherine Williamson of my dissertation group, Nancy Dixon, Paul Tewkesbury, Mary Jane Smith, Susan Clinkenbeard, Michael Dennison and Sigrid King, Ann and Karl Ludwig, Jeffrey Johnson, Stephanie Sudden, Fred Marchant, Frances Mayes, Stanley Tick, Laura Johnson-Bickford, Lezlie Hart-Stivale, and Michele Watkins. Rosaleen Bertolino urged me on by wanting to read the finished product, and Deborah Wilson believed in me as a critic and scholar perhaps more than I believed in myself. I owe special thanks to Ava Leavell Haymon, who was there at the start and at the finish and whose wisdom, gently offered, was invaluable. To Phyllis LeFeaux and Drayton Vincent, I owe a debt I can never repay. I am grateful too to my friends in Athens, Georgia, including Kristen Smith, Annette Hatton, and Karen Weekes, who supported a project that had begun long before they knew me. Thanks too to Dr. Crawford Barnett. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of New Orleans Video Access Center, the not-for-profit organization that made possible much of the technical knowledge and creative energy that support this study.

The largest portion of my gratitude goes to Jeff Walker, my partner in this project as in so many others, who has always understood my need for a room of one's own.
Throughout the years of preparation as well those of actual writing, he has done more than his fair share of everything, from housework to wage earning, and certainly of comforting and sustaining and sacrificing. His help was invaluable in preparing the final version of this manuscript, although any errors are my own.

I dedicate this work not only to Jeff Walker, but to the memory of those friends who have not survived its composition: Robbin Cage, Josephine A. Roberts, and especially Miriam Gruenfeld, who wanted this degree for me even when I almost forgot to want it for myself. They were all highly valued and are much missed.

Finally, I must acknowledge my debt to William Faulkner for writing the following in an early version of an introduction to The Sound and the Fury: "[O]ne day it suddenly seemed as if a door had clapped silently and forever to between me and all publishers' addresses and booklists and I said to myself, Now I can write. Now I can just write" ("Introduction I" 158-59). Above all, a writer must be able to hear her own voice clearly in her head, and I thank those named here and those I have momentarily forgotten for the physical space, time, and freedom of mind to undergo the process that yielded this volume. Paradoxically, given the solitary nature of scholarly research and writing, their voices are as much a part of this text as those of the authors formally cited.
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Two major arguments define this study, the first being that the gaze, a concept borrowed from film theory, provides a productive approach to many literary texts, whether central to the canon, like *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Great Gatsby*, or relatively new to critical attention, like Nella Larsen’s *Passing*. Locating and following the gaze enables literary critics to bring into focus the power relations within narratives and the scopic negotiations by which hierarchies of privilege are established and maintained.

Second, the study both argues and demonstrates that feminist film theory has prematurely closed important avenues of investigation by assuming that each text affords only one gaze and that this gaze is male. Through readings of literary texts and films including *Days of Heaven*, *Rear Window*, *Mata Hari*, *Pinky*, and both versions of *Imitation of Life*, I argue that what gives many narratives their distinctive shape is the battle among multiple gazers for dominance in looking relations. Through attention to process—rather than
end product—the dénouement—the gaze is revealed as a site of complex negotiations relating to gender but also to race, sexual orientation, age, and class.

In their multiplicity, their struggle to position themselves with respect to others who look, and their disruption or assertion of hierarchy, multiple gazers are important not just in themselves, however, or in the power they lend critics to read narratives anew. Rereading the gaze, especially the female gaze, opens up for spectators and readers a variety of opportunities for identification, including the possibility of identifying with contradiction itself. Integral to this study is an examination of the interaction between looking and knowing, for the gaze is used to gather information but also to police the knowledge of others through surveillance. While the gaze may be both a method for accumulating power and a badge of supremacy, the dominant gazer’s position is made precarious by the inductive problem: no matter how much one looks or knows, it can never be enough. Consequently, the battle for a dominant gaze continues, multiplying the possibilities for new narratives, cinematic and literary.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE PEOPLE’S PLEASURE AND THE GAZE

On April 23, 1896, four months after Louis and Auguste Lumière presented the first public commercial screening of motion pictures at the Grand Café in Paris, a New York music hall named Koster and Bial’s hosted a demonstration of Edison’s Vitascope. According to a report in The New York Dramatic Mirror,

The second picture represented the breaking of waves on the seashore. Wave after wave came tumbling on the sand, and as they struck, broke into tiny floods just like the real thing. Some of the people in the front rows seemed to be afraid they were going to get wet, and looked about to see where they could run to, in case the waves came too close. (Qtd. in Fell 14)

Reputedly, the Lumière brothers’ screening of Arrivée d’un train à La Ciotat (1895) produced similar confusion among spectators, some of whom fled the hall to escape the image of the train as it steamed towards them into the image of the station. In 1904, at the St. Louis Exposition, George Hale and Fred W. Gifford introduced their "Pleasure Railway," a film environment/installation where spectators sat in a mock-up of a rocking railway car and watched a film that had been taken from the cowcatcher of a moving train. According to a trade paper of the time, the image

1

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seemed so believable that "members of the audience frequently yelled at pedestrians to get out of the way or be run down. One demented fellow even kept coming back to the same show, day after day. Sooner or later, he figured, the engineer would make a mistake and he would get to see a train wreck" (Fielding 123-24).

These reports make plain that at least in the beginning, spectators of both sexes had difficulty separating the technological, two-dimensional, projected image—with its incipient narratives of drowning and train wreck—from the palpable world around them, the world which the celluloid images did such a startling job of representing. In the beginning, at least, both men and women had "a tendency to deny the process of representation, to collapse the opposition between the sign (the image) and the real," a tendency in Western culture now assigned, as Mary Ann Doane explains, specifically to the female spectator (Desire 1).

On the vaudeville circuit, both the Lumière and the Biograph companies increased the visual fascination of their programs by shooting familiar local scenes, then tailoring the show to the tastes of each city by incorporating these "local actualities" into the program. In 1900, when a Biograph movie camera was positioned on the rear platform of a trolley to film an "actuality" in Rochester, New York, one newspaper article reports, "Crowds were out to see it done, not a few of whom were
hoping to see their own figures on the canvas at Keith's. . . . Several prominent city officials had heard that something was doing, and they were waiting to cross the street and smile at the biograph as the car went by* (qtd. in Robert Allen 109). Both Biograph and Lumière had already recognized one lure of cinema: to see oneself writ large on the screen, the master of three-dimensional space, even if that third dimension is only an illusion of the magic lantern, an illusion that innovations in lighting, film stock, and lens and camera design would eventually reinforce (Cook 409-10). Never before had spectators been given the opportunity to be simultaneously in the audience and moving lifelike on the screen, and narrative film would continue, expand, and complicate these early processes of identification with the screen subject.

While trains and trolleys figured prominently in early films, just as important were the scopophilic pleasures offered by the female body. The film given first place in Edison's Vitascope program, immediately preceding the "waves" which threatened to splash the spectators, featured "the Leigh Sisters in their umbrella dance. The effect was the same as if the girls were there on the stage; all of their smiles and kicks and bows were seen" (qtd. in Fell 14). While the film replicated for the consumer some of the familiar pleasures of vaudeville, it is noteworthy that of all possible vaudeville acts--
male singers or dancers, magic acts, performing dogs—the film company chose to film and project the female body as entertainment. It is significant, too, that the film of the Leigh sisters provides spectacle rather than the narrative possibilities of, say, a train wreck. Even this very early example of film illustrates one code of sexual difference overly familiar in our own experience of cinema: women are styled as a performance of bows, kicks, and smiles. They embody, in Mulvey's famous phrase, "to-be-looked-at-ness" ("Visual Pleasure" 19).

From the beginning, these anecdotes suggest, film has profited from over-identification with the image, narcissistic identification, and the objectification of the female body. "The Vitascope is a big success, and Mr. Edison is to be congratulated for his splendid contribution to the people's pleasure," closes The New York Dramatic Mirror article from 1896, but one hundred years later the question remains: Whose pleasure, specifically, and what kind? Where does the female spectator position herself in a filmic world where a woman is a spectacle or a landscape through which the male hero moves or an obstacle to be moved or often destroyed? How and with whom does the female spectator identify? Among the looks produced and promoted by cinema—the look of the camera at the scenes being filmed, the look of the spectator at the moving image, the looks of characters...
among themselves on the screen—is there space for a female gaze?  

In the following pages, I argue that although the majority of narratives, whether filmic or literary, construct a dominant gaze, there is an active network of other gazes—what I call sub-gazes—which jockey for position, even for dominance, within the diegesis. The intradiegetic gaze is often, but not always, a form of power: it gathers knowledge, prevents or discourages others from gathering knowledge by placing them under surveillance, and creates hierarchy by constructing others as objects of the gaze. What shapes the narratives I examine in the following chapters is the struggle among multiple gazes and multiple gazers and the eventual emergence or re-establishment of a dominant look within the diegesis, a resolution that provides narrative closure, even if in many cases the closure is an uneasy one.

Recognizing the existence of these multiple gazes within a single text begins to untie a variety of knotty problems that have occupied feminist film theory for the past twenty years. Is the gaze male, as E. Ann Kaplan asks ("Gaze" 309)? With whom does the female spectator identify, and must she shift restlessly in transvestite clothes, as Mulvey concludes ("Afterthoughts" 37)? What spectatorial positions are available in mainstream film for viewers of color and gay and lesbian viewers? Once

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we recognize a variety of gazes within the text, we also recognize a new complexity in identificatory processes: despite the dominant gaze of the camera, which works to capture our identification and align it with a single character, usually the male lead, we have a certain freedom to wander and often do. We may privilege not the character whom the director (and camera) places center-frame but a character in the background or just out of frame. Suddenly the narrative pleasures on offer seem more abundant and less troubled, our participation less compelled and more joyously flexible. Throughout the close readings in chapters 2, 3, and 4, I argue that there is an intradiegetic female gaze, although in many instances—even most—it is defeated or driven underground into subversive action. In fact, the gaze takes a variety of forms that, at times, subvert the familiar categories of narcissism, fetishism, and voyeurism. These other categories of looking often constitute not just another way of looking, but another way of knowing.

The close tie of knowledge with vision in Western culture is indisputable, and the relentless curiosity of the camera's gaze is a compelling psychoanalytic model for the pursuit of information: it seems the camera can go everywhere, as the curious child would like to but cannot. In "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," Freud equates the instinct for knowledge, especially in its scopophilic manifestation, with "a sublimated manner of
obtaining mastery" (194). It is not a shock, then, that in men's eyes, women's knowledge has been perceived as a threat ever since Eve offered Adam the apple, nor is it a surprise that the anxieties (and pleasures) of Caddy Compson's pursuit of knowledge in The Sound and the Fury, discussed in Chapter 2, center on the image of her climbing her own post-Edenic tree to get a more commanding view. Through The Great Gatsby and Mata Hari, Chapter 3 discusses the femme fatale as a woman dangerously in control of information: savvy about sex but secretive about her history, actions, and motives. Yet I also argue in Chapter 2 through a discussion of Days of Heaven and The Sound and the Fury that the data gathered through the gaze is not always in the interest of mastery; while knowledge is power, power does not exhaust the possibilities of knowledge. Repeatedly in the following pages I ask, "Who knows what?" and "How do they know it?" as well as the classic question of criminal investigation and detective fiction, "Cui bono?"--who benefits?

An equally important question is how we benefit from examining literary texts through the lens of film theory. While film scholars such as Mulvey, Teresa de Lauretis, and Annette Kuhn have often called on theories grounded in literary texts to expand and complement their work in film, literary theorists have been slower to call on film theory, although this reluctance has begun to change in the past few years. Yet, as I argue in the following
pages, the gaze is a particularly helpful concept in the analysis of narrative, including literary narrative, because it takes point of view one step further by making central the issues of power and hierarchy. Through the gaze, we are able to enter not just a narrator's or a protagonist's point of view, which literary theory has tended to privilege heretofore, but also the imaginative life of the object of the gaze. Since 1990, when Beth Newman's "'The Situation of the Looker-On': Gender, Narration, and Gaze in Wuthering Heights" appeared in PMLA, literary theorists have become increasingly interested in using the gaze to analyze works as diverse as Shakespeare's plays, Richardson's Pamela, and Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea. Yet critics have been slower to use looking relations to analyze modern American fiction, despite the centrality of point of view and subjective narration to the development of modernism. One goal of this study is to demonstrate that the gaze can open new--and distinctly feminist--perspectives on such canonical works as William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby even as this critical framework makes accessible literary texts that have fallen into neglect and have attracted theoretical attention relatively recently, like Nella Larsen's Passing.

Still, why mix film and literary fiction in the same study? The answer lies in the male gaze as conundrum, as
a theoretical vortex that has drawn much of the best energy of feminist film theory into its seemingly inescapable waters. Moving outside the world of film and into the realm of literary fiction enables us to approach the vortical male gaze from a different direction—different because it is constructed of words rather than a series of visual images—and with greater theoretical freedom and freshness precisely because the gaze has not yet become a dead metaphor of literary studies like point of view. At the same time, because we are not contending with the domineering look of the camera but instead an analogous gaze expressed through written narration, we may be able to break open the frame of perception. At the intersection of literary fiction and film, we can question with renewed vigor the identificatory practices narration promotes. In sum, as the literary and filmic works play off each other in each chapter, they reveal their differences, yet also admit to a kinship that runs deeper than narrative itself, a bond based on vision as the privileged way of knowing in the Western cultural tradition.

"Bearer of the Bleeding Wound": Reading the Gaps in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

To understand the persistence of the argument about the gaze, we must return to Laura Mulvey's essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," which has remained a benchmark in discussions of looking relations and female
spectatorship since its publication in 1975. I summarize the article in some detail here because its terms are a kind of lingua franca in feminist film theory and its arguments are those which other theorists refute, modify, and reframe.

The visual pleasures of cinema, Mulvey claims, are rooted in two kinds of scopophilia, both the product of psychological developments in early childhood. The first is the objectifying gaze, the pleasure of which lies in fixing someone else with a curious, controlling look, which in its extreme form becomes voyeurism. The second is the narcissistic gaze, which Mulvey likens to Lacan’s mirror stage because the film spectator’s identification with the human image on the screen replays the child’s identification with the mirror image as a more complete, more coherent version of the self. Gazing at the screen recalls that first glimmer of subjectivity, that play of likeness/recognition (the child in the mirror is like me) and difference/misrecognition (that child is superior to me). Reverting briefly to Freud’s link between knowledge and mastery in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," I want to emphasize that both forms of scopophilia offer positionings that increase the power of the gazer. The voyeurism of the objectifying gaze establishes a subject/object hierarchy in the mind of the voyeur, which can be expanded by confronting the object of the gaze with her or his objectification or by sharing with others the
knowledge gathered through surveillance, thereby multiplying the voyeuristic effect. Using the objectifying gaze as a weapon of confrontation immediately transforms the target of the gaze from subject to object in his or her own eyes, but also puts any onlookers on notice that the gazer has claimed a superior position. The narcissistic gaze, on the other hand, offers the power of a flattering identification: without any change in the gazer, through identification alone, he or she becomes stronger, more attractive, more knowledgeable—in sum, a more powerful person in a bigger world that belongs to the gazer (or appears to) in a way it never has before.

At first, it seems that the pleasures of the film image are available equally to male and female spectators since both sexes share the formative psychoanalytic structures of scopophilia, but Mulvey argues that the content and form of the film image have been shaped by the patriarchal unconscious to mirror the binarisms of sexual difference. As a result, woman as screen image is styled as the passive recipient of the active male gaze—the bearer of meaning, not its maker. As a spectacle for the desiring male gaze, women are styled visually for maximum erotic impact to the extent, as I mentioned above, "that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" ("Visual Pleasure" 19). Despite the power of the female image as spectacle, the fascination of which tends to interrupt the progress of the plot, woman’s power in film narrative is
negligible, as Mulvey explains by quoting director Budd Boetticher:

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. ("Visual Pleasure" 19)

This division of narrative and visual labor, which mirrors the construction of sexual difference off screen, enforces woman’s role as spectacle and man’s role as action hero and bearer of the gaze; if she is "to-be-looked-at-ness," then he must look and we look with him. According to Mulvey, the gaze of the camera as it is constructed in classic Hollywood film invites—-even compels—the spectator to follow and identify with the film hero as that more perfect self first reflected in the mirror during Lacan’s mirror stage. "Here the function of film," Mulvey explains, "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" ("Visual Pleasure" 20). The train and trolley scenes from the early days of film remind us just how persuasively film creates the illusion of a three-dimensional space in which familiar human dramas are enacted. Even though these scenes don’t offer a hero on
the screen with whom we identify, they still enforce a gaze since we look where the camera looks. To avoid the train speeding towards us, we must reassert our own gaze by turning away from the screen—even running from the theater, as the first film spectators did.

While the image of woman seems far less threatening than that of a looming locomotive, the female form does much more than raise the pleasurable sensations associated with an erotic, objectifying gaze. Because woman serves as the embodiment of sexual difference within patriarchy, her form evokes the threat of castration for both the male characters within the diegesis and the male spectator outside it. The two psychic mechanisms for binding castration anxiety dominate and dictate the narrative and visual pleasures of film, according to Mulvey:

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); 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). ("Visual Pleasure" 21)

A film may privilege one of these binding mechanisms or be shaped by the play between the two.⁸

Mulvey states, "The place of the look defines cinema, the possibility of varying it and exposing it" ("Visual Pleasure" 25), a statement that nicely sums up why the problem of the gaze has troubled feminist film theory.
since 1975. At the end of the essay, Mulvey argues that the only solution to a cinema dominated by the male gaze is the destruction of the traditional pleasures of narrative film through an avant-garde practice that will "free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics and passionate detachment" ("Visual Pleasure" 26). Because both the visual techniques of film and its familiar narrative structures are complicit in enforcing a patriarchal construction of sexual difference, both must be destroyed, Mulvey argues. She concludes, "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" ("Visual Pleasure" 26). In fact, however, women--feminist film theorists foremost among them--have persisted in attempting to explain the very real pleasures they take in classic Hollywood film and, moreover, to define them as distinctly feminist. Much of this discussion has focused on the possibility of locating or establishing a female gaze.

Before looking at the theorists who have replied to Mulvey's arguments and expanded the discussion of female spectatorship, I want to point to some problematic gaps in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." The term look, which at the beginning of the essay is neuter, becomes strongly gendered through an almost imperceptible slippage
in the middle of the essay, at which time a multitude of looks also dwindles unaccountably to a single, gendered gaze. When describing scopophilia's origins in the imaginary, Mulvey is consistent in using look rather than gaze and also in describing the child as "it" to make clear that children of both sexes have equal access to scopophilia. Although scopophilia undergoes some modifications with the constitution of the ego, Mulvey maintains that active scopophilia "continues to exist as the erotic basis for pleasure in looking at another person as object" ("Visual Pleasure" 17). In this she follows Freud in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," who refers to children in general, not just the male, when he locates the source of the objectifying gaze in the child's instinctual desire for knowledge, which "is attracted unexpectedly early and intensively to sexual problems and is in fact possibly first aroused by them" (194). Both Freud's account and the first half of Mulvey's strongly suggest the lifelong persistence of these early psychic mechanisms in all subjects and also the existence of an objectifying gaze corresponding to each ego, no matter what sex the gazer. Mulvey's account of Lacan's mirror stage is just as gender neutral, suggesting that women have equal access to narcissistic identification. Yet once Mulvey introduces the castration complex, she uses gaze for the first time, but without assigning it a restricted or technical meaning or giving any clear
indication of how it differs from look, except that it is already male and singular: "The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" ("Visual Pleasure" 19). Thereafter, she uses look and gaze interchangeably, but now look too is gendered masculine. While the castration complex introduces sexual difference into the life of the child, Mulvey gives no indication of how the female child might have lost the gaze in the transition. The slippage I describe leaves open at least the possibility for a female gaze that originates, as does the male gaze, in the imaginary and persists despite the rule of the symbolic, partly because these early psychic formations endure throughout the lives of both sexes and partly because woman retains a closer tie to the imaginary as a result of her relative exclusion from the symbolic.

Why does Mulvey imply in "Visual Pleasure" that there is only one gaze operative within the diegesis of each film and only one possible spectatorial look, one which melds with the gaze of the hero? Part of the problem stems from the murky meaning of gaze itself. Just as crucial, though, is a collapse among the possible looks of cinema: the look of the camera, the look of the audience at the film, and the looks of the characters within the diegesis. In classic Hollywood film, the look of the camera is constructed for the spectator as singular, and as Mulvey argues, the spectator is invited, even compelled.
through the conventions of framing and camera movement, to follow the camera’s gaze. The result of these two factors--the singular gaze of the camera in classic film plus the tendency to identify the spectator’s gaze with the camera’s--invites the collapse of these two cinematic looks, such that we lose sight of myriad possibilities that film may not promote but cannot prevent. The dominant gaze of the camera, however much it entices or drags us along, does not erase intradiegetic looks, and the spectatorial gaze may join the gazes of the characters, abandoning either momentarily or completely the camera’s agenda and the hero’s. Theorists of gay and lesbian gazing have done the most work in positing identifications that work against the camera’s gaze and have critiqued Mulvey for heterosexual bias, topics I will return to in Chapter 4 through the discussion of same-sex desire in *Passing*. Furthermore, the spectator’s eye is free to wander within the limits of the frame imposed by the camera, as I noted above. The spectator may focus not on the teleological movement of the plot, for example, or on whatever image receives special emphasis through its placement at the center of the frame, but instead on a "minor" character on the edge of the frame or some detail of set dressing that catches her eye for extradiegetic reasons.

Does this "wandering look" of the spectator constitute reading against the grain? Not necessarily.
Instead it illustrates how the cinematic apparatus is unable to control all meanings at all times—to make the "visible things" of film mean one thing and one thing only—much the way that literary texts say far more than their authors are ever aware, and say it differently. Christian Metz points to this multiplicity of shifting spectatorial positions when he refers to "looks and no longer the look":

At every moment I am in the film by my look’s caress. This presence often remains diffuse, geographically undifferentiated, evenly distributed over the whole surface of the screen; or more precisely hovering, like the psychoanalyst’s listening, ready to catch on preferentially to some motif in the film, according to the force of that motif and according to my own phantasies as a spectator, without the cinematic code itself intervening to govern this anchorage and impose it on the whole audience. But in other cases, certain articles of the cinematic codes or sub-codes . . . are made responsible for suggesting to the spectator the vector along which his permanent identification with his own look should be extended temporarily inside the film (the perceived) itself. (54)

Interestingly, and significantly for the arguments to follow, Metz’s description of the “wandering look” as "diffuse, geographically undifferentiated, evenly distributed over the whole surface" echoes Luce Irigaray’s description of female sexual pleasures: "But woman has sex organs just about everywhere. She experiences pleasure almost everywhere. Even without speaking of the hysterization of her entire body, one can say that the geography of her pleasure is much more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle,
than is imagined" ("This Sex" 103). On the first page of The Imaginary Signifier, Metz states that "any
psychoanalytic reflection on the cinema might be defined
in Lacanian terms as an attempt to disengage the cinema-
object from the imaginary and to win it for the symbolic,"
a position he modifies somewhat in later sections of the
book (3).14 Rather than reading against the grain in
seeking a female gaze, though, perhaps we are just now
learning through our disengagement to read a feminine
imaginary of film between the lines of the newly-won
symbolic, only now recognizing that the grain is defined
equally by the lines in the wood and the spaces in
between. Further, while Metz likens our viewing to the
psychoanalyst's listening, he fails to take into account
that what we may be reading when our sight lines diverge
from the camera's (or the hero's) is not some
idiosyncratic motif that no one else in the theater
shares--in other words, not the privatization of
experience promoted by psychoanalysis--but a more public,
shared experience, although a marginalized one. In other
words, if in film we read the patriarchal unconscious, as
Mulvey argues, that unconscious is the site of myriad
contradictions inherent in the culture at large, and
recognizing and emphasizing those contradictions is
central to our self-analysis and to our work with the
cinematic analysand.
When the spectatorial gaze is seen as synonymous with that of the camera and the camera's look as identical with the gaze of the hero, a multiplicity of gazes is buried, but buried along with them is an important—and defining—dimension of film as a visual medium. As Mulvey says, the look defines film, both varying and exposing it. What I argue in the following textual readings is that film relies for much of its drama on the battle for a dominant gaze: the struggle to establish or maintain the gaze in a field of competing looks, a struggle which often requires the defeat of other gazes. In other words, while Mulvey emphasizes the gaze's stability as a patriarchal force within a filmic text, I emphasize the variations and challenges to a single dominant gaze within the text: the struggle to be pronounced "the defining look." While the following readings will also argue for the importance of the gaze in literary texts and their representation of a battle for the dominant specular position, film has a unique capacity as a visual medium to dramatize the instability of the gaze's position. Through close-up, shot/reverse shot, over-the-shoulder shots, camera movement, and the recording of characters' eye movements within the diegesis, we register the many challenges to a singular, powerful gaze.

Take Rear Window as a brief example, since Mulvey uses it to illustrate the oscillation between fetishizing and investigative looks and since film theory has often
employed it to illustrate the identification between the
gaze of the camera and the gaze of the hero. Yet Jeffries
(James Stewart) is not the one and only gazer. Of course,
Thorwald (Raymond Burr) eventually looks back at Jeffries
across the courtyard, inaugurating one battle for
dominance, culminating in Jeffries’s attempt to blind his
would-be murderer with the exploding flash bulbs. But
even earlier in the film, Jeffries faces a substantial
challenge to the pre-eminence of his gaze in the person of
Lisa Fremont (Grace Kelly). Despite her traditional
feminine roles of socialite and clotheshorse—"a real
looker"15—Lisa is more than a spectacle for Jeffries’s
pleasure, more than an object of his gaze. She fixes
Jeffries with her desiring look, most notably near the
beginning of the film when he sleeps in his wheelchair and
her looming (but beautiful) face fills the whole screen as
she moves in for the kill/kiss in her role as sexual
aggressor. Hitchcock styles her look as a source of near
terror, for Jeffries and the audience both as the camera
directs us to occupy alternately Jeffries’s point of view
and the position of an omniscient observer. Lisa
continues to challenge the dominance of Jeffries’s gaze by
training her own investigative look across the courtyard
at Thorwald and actively proposing hypotheses based on her
own observations and her firsthand knowledge of female
behavior, as does Stella, the visiting nurse (Thelma
Ritter).16
In Mulvey's analysis,

His girlfriend Lisa has 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. ("Visual Pleasure" 23)

"So long as she remained on the spectator side" is a crucial phrase, for it points to the fact that Lisa has a gaze, although it has been neglected through the privileging of Jeffries's gaze and his role as the dominant stand-in for the audience. Lisa's new role as lady in distress reactivates Jeffries's erotic interest by offering a drama of punishment and salvation to bind his castration anxiety, but a major source of his anxiety has been Lisa's claim to subjectivity: her gaze at him as well as at Thorwald, her well-articulated arguments in favor of marriage, and her active life outside the romantic relationship. Before she crosses to "the object side" and requires his rescue, she is, in Jeffries's words, "too perfect. She's too talented, she's too beautiful, she's too sophisticated, she's too everything but what I want." She is, then, not "more or less a drag," but more or less a threat; in Jeffries's eyes, she is the feminine as excess. Although scarcely passive—that is, "feminine"—while on the "object side" across the courtyard, Lisa is conveniently at a distance from
Jeffries where her unfeminine activity can be objectified. Earlier, Lisa has asked Jeffries, "How far does a girl have to go before you notice her?" Rear Window gives us this answer: far enough to be an object that doesn't look back, far enough for Jeffries to believe that his gaze, with its voyeuristic power, remains dominant. In the film's final scene, Lisa has styled herself to complete Jeffries's narrative of what his wife should be: she wears a simple shirt and blue jeans and reads a book about exploring the Himalayas. But when her gaze reveals that he is safely, contentedly asleep, Lisa seeks her own visual pleasure in an issue of Harper's Bazaar. Even at the end of the film, then, Lisa retains her gaze, but she has learned to use it clandestinely to avoid challenging male looks. At the same time, the last scene presents a challenge or subversion within its more conservative meanings, for the last gaze we see is Lisa's and we know what Jeffries doesn't: Lisa's apparent transformation is little more than a performance of "the good wife-to-be."

My point here is something more than the privileging of Jeffries's look in film theory. Reading Lisa's gaze reveals a complexity in the narrative that has been foreclosed in two ways: by the idea that only a male gaze is possible and by the intersecting notion that each narrative has but one gaze. Such modes of thinking tend to shut down our looking, eclipsing Thorwald's gaze at Jeffries, for example, and Lisa's and Stella's looks at
each other. The idea of a competition for a dominant gaze reopens our eyes to the complex negotiations for power within the diegesis, enunciated through a vocabulary of looks. Furthermore, this attention to scopic relations reveals that some pleasures, which we might have interpreted before as reading against the grain, are in fact very much part of a film's texture.

**Defining the Gaze: Asserting an I/eye**

While the old proverb states that the eyes are the windows of the soul, in the post-structuralist era, I am even more unwilling to posit a soul than I am to posit a coherent subject. Yet the gaze asserts an "I," however illusory, with whom others must contend or to whom they must respond. The gaze is a sustained, direct look that asserts subjectivity, direct because a lowering of the eyes or a glance away invites objectification by some other gazer. The gaze performs multiple functions including but not limited to the following: it observes, records, tracks (as in surveillance), asserts pre-eminence or power, embraces (as in the maternal gaze, discussed in Chapter 2), caresses, dominates, fetishizes, challenges, defies, questions, gathers knowledge, evaluates, and measures.

In this working definition, I may seem to be arguing with Lacan's view of the gaze, but the disagreement is more apparent than real. In Mary Ann Doane's analysis of Lacan, vision is marked by absence and destabilization:
"it becomes less sure, precisely because it is subject to
desire. . . . The gaze . . . indicates that the 'I,' no
longer master of what it sees, is grasped, solicited, by
the depth of field (that which is beyond)" (Femmes Fatales
63). The activities--the verbs--I have attributed above
to the gaze describe the desire of the subject far more
than the actual accomplishments of the gaze. As Doane
points out, the function of the ego is to foster a belief
in the unity of the ego (Desire 11), and the gaze works to
the same end. The distance between the gaze's attempt to
posit a coherent, powerful self and its ability to do so
(a distance which echoes the mirror stage, where desire
lies in the gap between the coherent, powerful mirror
image and the less coordinated, less unified infant who
mistakes that image for itself) is precisely the distance
that causes the instability in looking relations and
creates the complex play of gazes we see within film and
literary fiction. Because the subject always desires more
authority and coherence than he or she has, the gaze is
always open to challenge, defeat, and uncertainty.
Consequently, the gaze works hard to establish a
subject/object hierarchy so stable it cannot be toppled.
Doane argues that for Lacan the gaze is not the possession
of a subject, but in film theory, "the gaze has become
substantialized, directed--we speak of the gaze of the
camera, the gaze of the spectator" (Femmes Fatales 83).
Doane is well advised to say we, for she herself uses the

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word in this substantializing manner. For Lacan, she points out, "The gaze is beyond appearance but beyond appearance, 'there is nothing in itself'" (Femmes Fatales 83). "In our relation to things," Lacan writes, "in so far as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it--this is what we call the gaze" (Four Fundamentals 73). According to Doane, feminist film theory flies in the face of Lacan by positing a spectator who is the master of representation: "the spectator of the apparatus is quite clearly and unambiguously placed as a controlling gaze, whether the control is illusory or not--it knows precisely where to place itself" (Femmes Fatales 85). I am operating, however, in a middle ground that borrows something from both camps. Like Lacan, I emphasize the slippage inherent in the gaze, that which escapes and so must constantly (and futilely) be reasserted, that which takes the control out of the "controlling gaze" and so repeatedly calls into question where the spectator should position him or herself, where the hero positions himself. At the same time, I want to emphasize the attempt--for that is all it can be--of the apparatus to create a stable gaze in the possession of a subject, whether a screen subject--a character within the diegesis--or a spectatorial subject. In this middle ground, characterized by slippage, the gaze
is pulled between the poles of desire for a coherent "I" and "that which is beyond": nothingness, dispersal, "irradiation, refraction, diffusion, scintillation" (Doane, Femmes Fatales 84). By emphasizing this slippage, I am able to concentrate on the destabilization of both gaze and gazer; as Lacan says, "I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides" (Four Fundamentals 72). Even being the possessor of the gaze, then, is scarcely a defense against the experience of Otherness.

Theories of Spectatorship and the "Elaborate Work of Generic Containment"

Though the primary focus of this study is the intradiegetic gaze, I have chosen that focus specifically because of its implications for the female spectator. In clarifying that the terms male spectatorship and female spectatorship do not refer to actual members of the film audience but instead to structural positions that audience members occupy with greater or lesser degrees of comfort, Mary Ann Doane comments that "masculinity is consistently theorized as a pure, unified, and self-sufficient position" (Desire 8). What strikes me here is the way Doane's language echoes--intentionally--the child's desire at the mirror stage for a unified, coherent, powerful self, which in turn echoes what I have argued above about the subject's aims for the gaze and the varied functions of the gaze in creating at least the appearance of an
indivisible self. Yet if post-structuralist theory has taught us anything, it is that the desire for unity and wholeness is no more than a mask for the failure of those concepts, and in the following chapters, I aim to show how the careful illusion of power and unity created and preserved by the gaze breaks down quite visibly in the face of competing looks. While masculinity and the position of the male spectator recall the jubilation of the mirror stage, Doane points out an apparent contradiction: the activities of spectatorship are more closely linked to the attributes traditionally ascribed to femininity, namely, waiting and passivity—even the connection between a female readership and the rise of the novel. Yet despite this linkage between the passivity of watching film and the characteristics traditionally attributed to femininity, the intersection of the terms female and spectatorship has been troubled or proscribed from the outset. Doane observes, "It is as though the historical threat of a potential feminization of the spectatorial position required an elaborate work of generic containment" (Desire 2). What, then, is the power of spectatorship, the power of the gaze, such that it must be denied to women? Is this a power women want for themselves? As Doane points out, we do not simply want to turn the tables, to preserve the binarisms of sexual difference in spectatorship. I will, therefore, leave these questions open throughout the introduction and into
the close readings of the texts. I want to preserve them, even protect them, as a hovering presence throughout this study, for they point to a scotoma—a blind or dark spot—where film theory intersects feminist theory.

Take, for example, Doane’s assertion that proximity, passivity, over-involvement, and over-identification are the defining characteristics of the female spectator. While I partially agree, I want to point to ways in which these characteristics may be an enabling patriarchal fiction, to point to the constructedness of the female spectator and the source of the construction: the apparatus of Hollywood film. We consume what is on offer, for while feminist film theorists are often the exception, few women who consume films also make them. The over-involvement and over-identification now attributed especially to the female spectator were notable in both sexes in the very earliest film screenings, as the anecdotes that introduced this study demonstrate, and I am not entirely persuaded that these tendencies have migrated to one side of the gender split. Doane points to the female spectator’s "excessive collusion with the cinematic imaginary" (Desire 1), and what I suggest is that Doane’s example—Mia Farrow’s over-involvement with the image in The Purple Rose of Cairo—represents an excess both sexes experience but with different degrees of anxiety. For spectators of both sexes, the proximity of the image and investment in it are rooted in the pull of the imaginary,
the feared but desired melding with the mother. For the male spectator, the threatened loss of symbolic gains can be contained by attributing the tendency to the Other—"domesticating" it, containing it in the feminine space. Through this partitioning of anxiety, the male spectator still has access to the cinematic imaginary, but the female spectator "takes the blame" for the desires aroused, the excesses the male audience member claims not to experience.

This enabling masculine fiction proclaims that the cinematic image is a lure, but one which fails to ensnare the male. On the other hand, the gaze of the female spectator is tainted by proximity, compromised, questionable, and, above all, as Doane explicates in The Desire to Desire, ghettoized in the genre of "the weepie" as a synonym for "the woman's picture." Through this move, in which the woman's gaze is denigrated, then segregated, I suggest, the "historical threat of a potential feminization of the spectatorial position" that Doane points to is partly deflected. Since seeing presupposes distance, the implication of female over-identification is that the female gaze is no gaze at all and, therefore, no threat. Again, we are confronted with the power that women must be denied. In defining subjectivity, Doane quotes Émile Benveniste's language-based account: "'Ego' is he who says 'ego'" (Desire 9). As the spectator of a medium like film whose enunciation
is visual, can woman say I if she has no eye? But the very proximity that the male spectator sees as a threat and a weakness, the female spectator turns to her advantage as a strategy when viewing classic Hollywood film, as I will argue in more detail below.

In "Film and the Masquerade," Doane approaches the question of female spectatorship from a slightly different angle. She recalls Freud’s famous dismissal of women from his lecture on femininity—"you are yourselves the problem"—and elaborates, "Too close to herself, entangled in her own enigma, she could not step back, could not achieve the necessary distance of a second look" (Femmes Fatales 19). For Doane, this is the distillation of the problem of female spectatorship: within the patriarchal construction of gender from which film takes its lead, by definition there is no distance between the woman and the image. Doane then introduces the idea of masquerade as a way woman produces a necessary distance between herself and the screen. As Michèle Montrelay puts it, "The woman uses her own body as a disguise," and in Joan Riviere’s formulation, "Womanliness . . . could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it" (qtd. in Femmes Fatales 26, 25), a move Doane identifies particularly with the femme fatale. But to see masquerade or transvestism strictly as a question of masculinity and femininity is to privilege the binarism at
the expense of the equally important play between the two, to focus on the rigid gender categories themselves rather than on their breakdown as signaled by the play across the border, as Marjorie Garber argues in *Vested Interests* (9). Where Riviere talks about the woman's possession of masculinity as a cause for masquerade, I find it more helpful to concentrate on the larger underlying structure -- the possession of power -- since this way of thinking does not preclude the possibility of a range of feminine powers, just as threatening to the status quo as the theft of masculinity.

Both in *The Desire to Desire* and "Film and the Masquerade," Doane grapples with the question of why the female spectator's relationship to viewing should be more complex than the male's, why her own description of female spectatorship, as well as Mulvey's and Teresa de Lauretis's, must include a masculine element and hence the idea of transvestism. On the surface, it would seem that the blockage in female spectatorship, given the correct analysis, would fall away without the female film viewer having to cross or trouble a gender line. Yet the fact is, as Doane recognizes elsewhere and Mulvey has demonstrated abundantly, both film form and film narrative are constructed within patriarchal culture. It is not surprising, therefore, that the female viewer's access to pleasure is more convoluted and problematic than the male's since the structures in place that privilege male
viewing actively block equal access for women. That
difficulty, though, does not erase nor does it necessarily
diminish female pleasure in film. In understanding female
spectatorship, we must entertain, as we do elsewhere in
feminist theory, the idea of difference—in this case, a
greater complexity of access to pleasure for one gender.

The picture I am bringing into focus is female
spectatorship as an array of strategies, some more
pleasurable than others, a kind of quilt in which each
square or strategy has its own pattern, but where the
whole forms a complex (but not unharmonious) structure of
female viewing. As part of this quilt, I see the
relationship of woman to the image as both close and
distant—two different but related squares. While Doane
emphasizes proximity alone, an equally possible structural
position, and one I believe feminist film theory often
profits from without bringing it to consciousness, is not
an over-identification with the image, but an under-
identification: a withdrawal from engagement, a kind of
cinematic anhedonia, by which I mean to emphasize not some
incapacity in the female viewer—not some neurosis or
pathology—but the incapacity of the image to provide
pleasure. This distance encourages questions like, "Is
the masculine-authored representation of woman familiar,
accurate, recognizable, identifiable? Is that woman in
any way me?" To ignore this program of cultural and self-
analysis and exclude it from our theoretical
considerations is to ignore many of the gains painfully won through the feminist practice of the last twenty-five years. As Doane argues in *The Desire to Desire*, feminist theory too often collapses the opposition between psychical and social subjects (8). What we feel as a steady undercurrent in feminist film theory and in our own partly pleasurable viewing of film is that we often aren't the image. Although Doane writes, "the female look demands a becoming" (*Femmes Fatales* 22), we often don't become; we don't identify, let alone over-identify. We are not the "to-be-looked-at-ness" that classic film constructs and so find ourselves sitting, psychically, much farther back from the screen than the ideal distance prescribed by Noël Burch: twice the width of the image (qtd. in Doane, *Femmes Fatales* 21). Yet it is this same partial and occasional lack of pleasure—a very different lack from that associated with castration anxiety—that allows us and other female spectators to do the necessary work of critiquing film and searching for an alternative practice (and pleasure) to counteract the anhedonia we so often experience. It is this same lack of pleasure, though, that in many cases allows for and even promotes the multiple identifications Linda Williams locates and I discuss below. As Metz reminds us, "one goes to the cinema because one wants to and not because one has to force oneself, in the hope that the film will please and not that it will displease" (7). Yet when the image or
the plot displeases, we seek our pleasure elsewhere in film; to refer to Metz again, I am in the film everywhere in my look, so I wander until I locate my enjoyment.

This ubiquity of viewing is not unlike the over-identification and proximity Doane ties to Hélène Cixous's and Luce Irigaray's descriptions of femininity. Initially, then, it may seem odd that for Metz this ubiquity is equally available to the male. As I argued above, though, and as Metz's analysis tends to confirm, film lures spectators of both genders toward the boundless, indiscriminate imaginary that is the heritage of both sexes even as woman alone is blamed for her susceptibility. Further, because cinematic pleasures are constructed within a patriarchal culture, woman has a need for roving, for ubiquity, in order to access her pleasure. As Teresa de Lauretis puts it, "it is men who have defined the 'visible things' of cinema, who have defined the object and the modalities of vision, pleasure, and meaning on the basis of perceptual and conceptual schemata provided by patriarchal ideological and social formations" (Alice 67). What proximity offers the spectator is not the either/or of the familiar subject/object binarism--either I identify with the hero on the screen or I identify with the object of his gaze--but a both, even an all. About female sexuality Luce Irigaray writes, "woman's pleasure does not have to choose between clitoral activity and vaginal passivity, for example. The pleasure
of the vaginal caress does not have to substitute itself for the pleasure of the clitoral caress. Both contribute irreplaceably to woman’s pleasure but they are only two caresses among many to do so" ("This Sex" 102). While sexual pleasure is not the only metaphor for visual pleasure, it is not totally out of place in a theory so dependent on models like voyeurism and fetishism.

Irigaray’s evocation and sidestepping of the passive/active binarism seems most appropriate, given both Doane’s and Mulvey’s frustrations with their respective dichotomies. What I argue for, then, is not a feminine essence, but female spectatorship as a process, structurally a play through a variety of positions: over-identification, under-identification, narcissism, masquerade, even the transvestism explored by Mulvey in "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure,'" a practice which offers the female spectator, at least momentarily, the seemingly more stable position enjoyed by the male.19 Stability, however, is not the only pleasurable position available; it is not, in fact, superior to the multiple stances adopted by the female spectator.

"Clearly, at least for women spectators, we cannot assume identification to be single or simple," writes Teresa de Lauretis. "For one thing, identification is itself a movement, a subject-process, a relation: the identification (of oneself) with something other (than oneself)" (Alice 141). She then borrows from Laplanche
and Pontalis's *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* this definition of identification: a "psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides. It is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified" (de Lauretis's emphasis; *Alice* 141). In fact, she underlines, identification is not simply one of many, but the central mechanism by which the subject is formed. This portion of de Lauretis's analysis is fully in keeping with the one I am advancing and leaves room—within the phrase "wholly or partially"—for the restless multiple identifications of the female spectator as well as the more stable position of the male viewer. At the same time, it underlines why it is essential to the goals of feminist theory to understand and account for the identificatory processes of the female spectator: we are delineating—and delimiting—female subjectivity.

Delineating female subjectivity is the task Laura Mulvey takes on in "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)." Having explored the masculinization of the spectatorial position in her earlier essay, Mulvey then tries to account for the female spectator's pleasurable engagement with film by using the limited arena of the melodrama in which the narrative focuses on a female
character who is unable to achieve a stable sexual identity (29). Mulvey roots her argument in the Freudian analysis that both boys and girls go through a "phallic" phase, a phase Freud defines as "masculine" for both sexes although "active" might be a more accurate term, although scarcely ungendered. With the onset of the Oedipal period, however, girls undergo "the momentous process of repression . . . that determines the fortunes of a woman's femininity." Throughout a woman's life, Freud claims, in memory of this early active phase, "there is a repeated alternation between periods in which femininity and masculinity gain the upper hand" (qtd. in "Afterthoughts" 30). For Mulvey, this model of oscillation between feminine and masculine positions throughout the life of the female subject is the basis both for female spectatorial engagement in general and for the narrative pleasures of a film like *Duel in the Sun*: Pearl must choose between a man who represents the active pre-Oedipal phase and one who represents the Oedipal law of the Father and integration into the symbolic. If Pearl chooses the pre-Oedipal and the chance to remain active, she rejects "correct" femininity and its requirements of passivity and marriage; the first choice means being like the man she chooses, and the second choice means becoming the man's complement through acceptance of sexual difference, with all its attendant nonphysical attributes. Through the oscillations of its female protagonist into and out of
activity, *Duel in the Sun* offers the female spectator the option of an active position whereas in viewing classic films with a male protagonist, Mulvey suggests, the female spectator "may find herself secretly, unconsciously almost, enjoying the freedom of action and control over the diegetic world that identification with a hero provides" (29). For women, Mulvey argues, given three factors--narrative structure and its dependence on an active male in the role of hero, Freud's account of the never completely repressed active phase in women, and the desire of the ego to see itself as active--"trans-sex identification is a habit that very easily becomes second nature," but an uneasy one that "shifts restlessly in its borrowed transvestite clothes" (33).

I acknowledge the restlessness provoked by women's indirect access to narrative and visual pleasures, and I recognize the sadness Mulvey sees in Pearl's unsuccessful masculine identification based in the pre-Oedipal along with its ultimate failure as a defense against the initiation into patriarchy. At the same time, I see some escapes from what at first appears to be, in the Freudian account, an unbroken line of women descending, like Persephone, into a world defined by masculinity. Inevitably there is some sadness in viewing classic film because, as both Mulvey and de Lauretis have analyzed, it is not-for-us, and in very much the same way that the mother of the Oedipal drama is not-for-us but
for-the-Father. In the midst of narrative disappointments, however, including Pearl’s death as a requirement of narrative closure, we would be negligent if we did not acknowledge that there is some pleasure in seeing dramatized in *Duel in the Sun* our struggles within patriarchal definitions of femininity. As Linda Williams reminds us, we must not let the ending of a film erase the many minutes, and many meanings, that precede it ("Something Else" 152). Mulvey’s account of female spectatorial engagement is a necessary and pleasing attempt to give woman some pleasure of her own rather than to see her being "carried along, as it were[,] by the scruff of the text" ("Afterthoughts" 29). More pertinent to my current argument, however, are the gender issues in Freud that Mulvey brings up, only to drop somewhat prematurely.

Freud states clearly that there is only one ungendered libido that serves both masculine and feminine aims, and Mulvey points out that in equating the active nature of the libido with the masculine, "Freud introduces the use of the word masculine as ‘conventional,’ apparently simply following an established social-linguistic practice" ("Afterthoughts" 31). Similarly, the ego fantasizes itself as active ("Afterthoughts" 33) but has no gender, although again, falling back on convention, Freud gives it masculine attributes: "through this characteristic of invulnerability we can immediately
recognise His Majesty the Ego, the hero of every day-dream and every story" (qtd. in "Afterthoughts" 32). Mulvey acknowledges libido and ego as gender-neutral, but the slippage occurs in the rapidity with which she buries that realization by identifying the activeness of the feminine ego with trans-sex identification. As de Lauretis emphasizes through her reading of "Afterthoughts," "no one can really see oneself as an inert object or a sightless body; neither can one see oneself altogether as other. One has an ego, after all, even when one is a woman (as Virginia Woolf might say), and by definition the ego must be active or at least fantasize itself in an active manner" (Alice 141-42). If ego is ungendered and is necessarily active, then a female spectator’s identification with the activeness of the hero is not necessarily a cross-gender identification and a guilty pleasure. Ego identifies with ego; the ego’s desire for action prompts a search for action, but the subsequent identification does not necessarily extend to the active character’s gender because the ego is gender-neutral. To equate the activeness of the ego in woman with a cross-gender identification is, first, to ignore that the aims of the ego are gender-neutral and, second, to fall into the same slippage so evident in the generic use of he, wherein a term supposedly uninflected by gender quickly slides back toward masculinity as a norm. In sum, Mulvey falls into the same slippage she detects in Freud.
Further, it is in our best interest to apply Marjorie Garber's lesson to Mulvey's anxiety about the female spectator shifting restlessly in borrowed transvestite clothes. We want to look not through the transvestism but at it, to consider it as a border, where gender definitions break down: not exactly neutral ground, not untroubled, but as a site of troubling (even trebling), where new possibilities may be born, where the terms of a binary system are disrupted and redistributed. Restlessness can be productive even if uncomfortable, pointing towards new, yet unidentified pleasures. At the same time, we must not ignore that the ego's desire for action may carry the female spectator into a narrative movement that is antithetical to her subjecthood, a point I will take up in the subsequent discussion of de Lauretis. Given this slippage wherein active is falsely identified as co-extensive with masculine and given the broad and very serious implications for definitions of gender, it is time, I believe, to disassemble this problematic connection and claim our shared ownership of that early active period described by Freud, to recognize --in its etymological sense of to know again--"its Majesty the Ego" (for lack of a better, gender-neutral phrase). While much of Freud's exploration of gender as a construction is helpful to feminist theory, we need not duplicate his slippages and collapses and, in fact, are
under some obligation to excavate and reconstruct these areas, then set out in the new directions they indicate.

Of course, the project of reclaiming for the feminine the active half of the active/passive binarism is not so simple as a rereading of Freud. As de Lauretis points out through her discussion of semiotician Jurij Lotman, folktales consistently establish a binarism based on sexual difference in which the masculine is active, mobile, and capable of crossing boundaries and the feminine is passive—in fact, is the landscape through which the masculine moves or the frontier it crosses while seeking a resolution to narrative tensions. At this point, de Lauretis reattaches the gaze to narrative by equating the activity of the hero with looking and the passivity of the female character with "to-be-looked-at-ness." In de Lauretis's summary,

Lotman finds a simple chain of two functions, open at both ends and thus endlessly repeatable: "entry into a closed space, and emergence from it." He then adds: "Inasmuch as closed space can be interpreted as 'a cave', 'the grave', 'a house', 'woman' (and, correspondingly, be allotted the features of darkness, warmth, dampness), entry into it is interpreted on various levels as 'death', 'conception', 'return home' and so on; moreover all these acts are thought of as mutually identical."

In this mythical-textual mechanics, then, the hero must be male, regardless of the gender of the text-image, because the obstacle, whatever its personification, is morphologically female and indeed, simply, the womb. (de Lauretis's emphasis; Alice 118-19)

I do not argue with de Lauretis and Lotman that the folktale and the preponderance of modern narratives
partake of this pattern. What I suggest, though, is that the pattern is quite ambiguous and, therefore, can encompass a wider range of meanings than Lotman's basic pattern of the masculine entering the feminine and eventually emerging triumphant. While de Lauretis' quotation emphasizes entry into the enclosed space, I want to draw attention to the other half of the endlessly repeating cycle: emergence from the closed space. The imagery of birth immediately springs to mind, and the trip down the birth canal is one journey the male hero cannot claim as his alone. While this endlessly repeating model clearly describes the Oedipal drama, I can see it too as a drama of conception, birth, separation, and (the fear of) reabsorption, which provides some valuable approaches to narratives such as *Mildred Pierce*, *Stella Dallas*, and even *Aliens*, films which are not without problems for feminist viewers but offer some moments of identificatory pleasure. The portion of the cycle that emphasizes emergence and then reentry is familiar to us, for that matter, from Nancy Chodorow's work on the trajectory of female development. Emergence from a closed space also describes the escape from an entrapping domesticity we see at the beginning of *Thelma & Louise*, where the female characters subsequently move through a landscape where the obstacles are gendered masculine but also represent the obstacles to self-definition erected by patriarchal notions of femininity. In sum, while I do not discount
the efficacy of Lotman's model in describing familiar masculine narratives, I do question that the only hero, the only one to emerge from the enclosed space, is male. Further, to privilege the pattern of entrance and emergence (the Oedipal pattern) over the pattern of emergence and then entrance (a pattern more common in women's lives) is, in fact, to flatten and make linear the cycle's circularity. Where one enters the cycle determines the story one reads, and this attempt to see the cycle anew is in keeping with de Lauretis's call for "a rereading of the sacred texts against the passionate urging of a different question, a different practice, and a different desire" (Alice 107). At the same time, I do not claim that this new reading necessarily guides the female character to her heart's desire; in fact, it may just position her to fulfill the Oedipal promise made to "the little man"—that a bride will await him at the end of his journey—or reveal her true status as sphinx—an object to be removed—or Medusa—the monstrous woman who usurps male privilege by returning the gaze.

To explain these Oedipal paradoxes and their serious implications for female spectatorship, de Lauretis proposes two departures from Mulvey's "Afterthoughts." First, she resolves the category mistake, shared by most feminist analyses, in which the gaze and the image are seen as two commensurable terms and, second, she proposes a simultaneous "double identification" for the female
spectator rather than Mulvey's oscillation between a masculine and feminine position. Where the male spectator identifies with the mythical hero in the narrative, the female balances two identifications: first, with the active hero (that is, the one with the dominant gaze) and, second, with the space of the narrative movement, defined as the "feminine" space. Her identification with the narrative space or movement includes an identification with what de Lauretis calls the figure of closure or the narrative image, which is not simply the woman herself but the woman as she completes the narrative insofar as she is the prize awarded to the hero for fulfilling his narrative tasks. She is not just the woman, but the woman who signals that the journey is done, the story over.

While I agree with de Lauretis that much of the content of narrative and even more of its structure appear to be regulated by the binarisms of sexual difference, I want to emphasize again that something escapes the strictly binary formulation, and that is the activity of the ego, be it in a female spectator or a male. As a preliminary step, therefore, and not to discount de Lauretis's advances, I see the mythical hero as both masculine and active, with those terms overlapping but not being fully co-extensive, in this way leaving room for the female spectator to identify with the activity of the hero without necessarily identifying with the hero's gender. After all, even if the ego is gender neutral, the
spectator is not. As de Lauretis puts it, "film spectators enter the movie theatre as either men or women, which is not to say that they are simply male or female but rather that each person goes to the movies with a semiotic history, personal and social, a series of previous identifications by which she or he has been somehow en-gendered" (Alice 145). The spectator is both gendered and ungendered then, and as such is the repository of more than one desire. Like the pairing masculine and active, the labels feminine and passive hang over the space of the narrative movement without being synonymous with each other. At first glance, this labeling arrangement may seem unnecessarily complex, but in fact it begins to undo the historical collapses that robbed the ego of its gender neutrality and helps us understand how the female spectator can take genuine pleasure in film despite the countless blockages that prevent the identifications available to the male spectator. That is, we begin to see how the phenomenon of the female spectator's partial identifications leads to a multiplication of positions with which she identifies.

Before moving on, though, I also want to trouble the waters further by reintroducing (but without resolving) the idea of a female gaze as threat or crime or necessary narrative tension. After all, what was the crime of Medusa, who should have been "to-be-looked-at-ness"? In the prequels to Perseus' tale--the back story, in which
the other brave but foolish young men challenged the Gorgon and died--she played possum in the passive and feminine space, then looked straight back at the would-be heroes, crossing the boundary into the active and masculine domain to claim a gaze of her own. Medusa’s gaze works well as an example of a sub-gaze, as I described early in the chapter, a gaze that battles for pre-eminence within the diegesis and is ultimately defeated. Without her gaze and its defeat, there would be no narrative.

**Overcoming Math Anxiety, or Multiplication Can Be Fun**

In "Something Else Besides a Mother," Linda Williams takes Stella Dallas as a test case for female subjectivity and the female spectator since Stella’s "female look" is at the center of the diegesis and the identification between mother and daughter is intense enough to disrupt the hierarchy of subject and object so familiar in other accounts of the gaze. In critiquing Mulvey’s famous desire to destroy the pleasures in classical Hollywood film in favor of avant-garde practices, Williams argues that it is easier to reject "dominant" modes of representation than it is to locate the pleasures within them, pleasures which will lead us to new representational strategies and a greater understanding of "the ways in which women actually do speak to one another within patriarchy" (142). Her conclusion is that when classic Hollywood films speak to women (and she argues that only
some do), they do so by providing female spectators with a number of subject positions that they then constantly juggle. Her argument rests on Nancy Chodorow's theory, which departs from Freud's, that female identity is grounded in a double identification, but one different from de Lauretis's. The female child identifies first with the mother as the primary love object, but then without ever dropping that identification as the male child does, she adds an identification with the father. The girl's process of developing subjectivity is additive, therefore, not subtractive like the boy's. This developmental history of double identification results in the female spectator's ability to identify with more than one character on the screen, the ability to juggle a variety of positions at once—not just doubling, but redoubling. In her argument for constantly shifting identifications, Williams relies not just on Chodorow but also on Tania Modleski's account of the female soap opera viewer who "is constituted as a sort of ideal mother: a person who possesses greater wisdom than all her children, whose sympathy is large enough to encompass the conflicting claims of her family (she identifies with them all), and who has no demands or claims of her own (she identifies with no character exclusively)" (Loving 92).

Note here that Modleski ties the spectator's process of identification to the possession of knowledge: the mother/spectator knows more than the children but uses her
knowledge in the interests of empathy rather than a hierarchical, objectifying, or sadistic power. The result for the female spectator, either in *Stella Dallas* or in soap opera viewing, is a kind of dialectical pleasure, an identification with contradiction itself, sometimes the contradictions between the desires of the characters, sometimes the contradictions between the spectator's reading of the narrative and the character's, as in *Stella Dallas*, where we know, as Stella does not, that her sacrifice exacts a high price from her daughter. Williams sees this dialectical pleasure as an analog of the male fetishist's attempt to balance knowledge and belief—in this case, though, based not on the missing phallus but on the contradictions of the socially constructed position of women living within patriarchy: "It is both a knowing recognition of the limitation of women's representation in patriarchal language and a contrary belief in the illusion of a preoedipal space between women free of the mastery and control of the male look" (156). It is a new kind of "I know very well, but just the same . . . ." At the same time, the process of multiple identification rewrites and resolves Doane's problem of over-identification because the travel between the different identificatory positions creates for the female spectator a distance from any one image of the woman even as it produces a new version of voyeurism: new because its overtones are empathic rather than sadistic and its agenda is to visit, as it were, the
various subject positions rather than to fix the occupants of those positions in a rigid objectification that increases the voyeur’s sense of grandeur and control.²³

For Williams, then, the female spectator of Stella Dallas is something else besides a mother, besides a daughter, besides an ex-husband, second wife, and so forth. She is, as I have argued above, everywhere in the film, everywhere and elsewhere, inhabiting both the identifications and the contradictions. Where I differ from Williams— and I rank this as less significant than our many points of agreement— is in seeing no reason to stop multiplying identifications once we have recognized the female spectator’s ability to inhabit a number of positions partially, temporarily, empathically. Williams limits the pleasures of the female spectator to a very small number of films: melodramas that encode in multiple characters the contradictions of life within patriarchy. What I argue is that other genres lend themselves, although perhaps not equally well, to demonstrating these contradictions. In de Lauretis’s analysis, narrative form itself demands from the female spectator a restless identification now with the hero, now with the narrative space; now with the active, now with the passive: that is, a living out through narrative form of the contradictions of femininity. I agree with Williams, though, that the female spectator’s possible pleasures increase when the contradictions of gender construction
are at the center of the action, not a subtle structure underlying narrative form, and especially when the intradiegetic gaze dramatizes discrepancies in knowledge, as it does in *Stella Dallas.*[^24] I would also emphasize that in films that may lack what Williams calls female reading positions, the female spectator's identifications may be very brief and very troubled—still multiple but less pleasurably so. Further, I see no reason to restrict the pleasures to empathic ones, as Williams does, for to do so limits the female spectator unnecessarily to a nurturing, maternal essence when Chodorow's additive model of female development leaves room for identifications flattering to the gender-neutral ego in its pursuit of power, dominance, action, and even hierarchy, not just those that prepare the female subject for motherhood. Above all, though, what I both argue and demonstrate in the pages to follow is that multiple identifications are made possible through the multiplication of gazes within the diegesis, through the gaze as a demonstration that characters other than the hero have and seek knowledge and, through their knowledge, subjectivity and power.

As in Irigaray's politicized analysis of female sexual pleasure, I see the multiplicity of the female spectator's identifications as a strength, but a strength within patriarchy—as a valuable difference from the more familiar fetishistic and voyeuristic viewing patterns, even if acquired through the adversity of viewing films.
that are not-for-us. At the same time, and in keeping with the project of addition and multiplication, I do not want to trade for the fragmentation of partial identifications the possibility of films that are for-us. Yet I believe, as does Williams, that a closer analysis of the pleasures available to female viewers of classic film is an important route to new and, we hope, less vexed pleasures. At this point in the argument, then, I would describe female spectatorial pleasure as polyvalent, which marks an advance—a multiplication—over the ambivalent pleasures posited by Mulvey and Doane. We are breaking open the binarism at the etymological heart of *ambivalence*, continuing, it turns out, our task of questioning and complicating Freud, for it was he who coined the term.

While I do not want to collapse the theoretical spectator with the flesh and blood movie goer, Carol Clover’s observations of actual horror film audiences are significant, for they join the experience of social subjects to many of the theoretical considerations I have been discussing here, a move endorsed early on by Doane (*Desire 8)*. The subjects Clover observes are predominantly white male teenagers and young adults, and although *prima facie* this audience does not seem the most likely to advance our understanding of female spectatorship, the patterns of identification Clover detects disrupt previously established theories in some
profitable ways. She points to "groups of boys who cheer the killer on as he assaults his victims, then reverse their sympathies to cheer the survivor on as she assaults the killer" (23). The horror film audience describes only a fraction of the movie-going population, but these signs of actual male spectators' over-involvement and over-identification in the film and its characters, investments that blur the line between two-dimensional fiction and three-dimensional lived experience, once again recall the early film audience—male and female—cringing from the cinematic waves. These observations of actual theatre audiences indicate again that the lack of separation between image and viewer is a common phenomenon in both sexes. And as Clover points out, citing Lawrence Levine's *Highbrow, Lowbrow*, a silent audience, whether for drama, opera, or film, is a modern phenomenon and a constructed one, "the product of a variety of 'taming' strategies" (118). Need we be surprised that the "taming" of the film spectator follows familiar gender lines, dictating an impassive male spectator and an over-emotional female, with the horror genre as a marginalized form that allows some transgression and some release from the strict rules of sexual difference? The over-identification of the horror audience, Clover argues, is facilitated and permitted largely by the genre's play with gender, in which the male viewer's identification with the Final Girl as victim allows him to experience the
cathartic emotional extremity usually limited to femininity while still emerging triumphant by identifying with the vengeful masculinized femininity of the Final Girl as hero.

Horror films distinguish themselves from the mainstream products of the Hollywood system not only in the enthusiasm and polyvalence of audience identification, however, but in camera work. While the first-person camera in the first part of a horror film may encourage our identification with the killer, Clover writes,

Our closeness to him wanes as our closeness to the Final Girl waxes—a shift underwritten by story line as well as camera position. By the end, point of view is hers: we are in the closet with her, watching with her eyes the knife blade pierce the door; in the room with her as the killer breaks through the window and grabs at her; in the car with her as the killer stabs through the convertible top, and so on. And with her, we become if not the killer of the killer then the agent of his expulsion from the narrative vision. If, during the film’s course, we shifted our sympathies back and forth and dealt them out to the other characters along the way, we belong in the end to the Final Girl; there is no alternative. When Stretch eviscerates Chop Top at the end of Texas Chain Saw II, she is literally the only character left alive, on either side. (45-46)

Clover is quick to point out that first-person camera is not always constitutive of identification; what, after all, are we to make of the shots from the shark’s point of view in Jaws, for example, or the bird’s-eye view during the attacks in The Birds (45)? Yet these points of view are fleeting and, I would argue, still partake of the typical identificatory strategies of horror, for what could be more frightening (or, in a sadistic sense,
stimulating) than to be seduced momentarily into the point of view of a violent, nonhuman killer attacking a character with whom we identified just a moment before? What is crucial here is the extended duration of the identification between the camera and the Final Girl, the solicitation of the audience's identification by both camera and story line, and the male spectator's clear acceptance of the identification as he calls out his sympathies to the screen in the darkened theater. Also significant is the male spectator's willingness to identify with a character who is certainly a hero but equally a victim, for, as Clover points out, this identification calls into question film theory's assumption that the mastering, voyeuristic gaze is at the center of the cinematic apparatus.

While I cannot delve farther into the experience of the male spectator in this study, I present Clover's findings because they problematize basic assumptions about the gaze and identification even as they suggest that what I have argued above regarding the female spectator's identificatory processes may hold at least partially true on the other side of the gender divide. Clover's descriptions certainly affirm de Lauretis's assertion that identification is a process, not a stable state. Even more important to this study is Clover's emphasis on what I call the hinge of narrative: where the victim becomes the hero, the gazed upon becomes the gazer. Given the
ways in which the modern horror films that Clover examines mimic traditional narrative—a hero overcomes tremendous obstacles, including challenges to his gaze, to emerge triumphant—while simultaneously turning it upside down—the protagonist is female and starts the story as a victim but turns hero through the acquisition of the gaze directed at a male obstacle—I take Clover’s work as an encouragement to return to classic narrative to uncover and recover the gaze at the conventional hero. This gaze stimulates the hero’s own and becomes that which he must overcome: the gaze back is the equivalent in classic Hollywood film of the killer’s gaze in horror pictures. That is, I aim to find the hinge and look there for the gazes forcibly suppressed or marginalized through the working out of narrative, a process which requires that the hero’s gaze emerge triumphant. For narrative follows a kind of rough Newtonian physics, where an action requires an equal but opposite reaction—a kind of closed economy. When the hero’s acquisition of the gaze or his defense of it is at the heart of the narrative, then other challenging, equal but opposite gazes are necessarily present, but their stories are suppressed in the valorization of dénouement at the expense of narrative tension, a privileging Linda Williams has already warned against. Further, the hinge of the story is a kind of mirror. To quote Heraclitus, the path up is also the path down (Kirk and Raven 189). As Clover delineates, the
Final Girl turns from victim to hero by mirroring many of the characteristics of her tormentor, turning his techniques back upon him the way Perseus killed Medusa.\textsuperscript{27} But as Hélène Cixous points out, Medusa isn’t deadly, she’s laughing ("Laugh" 255). Furthermore, she isn’t dead, or no more dead than Perseus, for without her he would have no hero narrative, her power and knowledge strapped to his shield. In the following chapters, then, I aim to recover or resurrect the that without which of the male gaze, to decenter and recontextualize its power by placing it within the field of possible but forgotten or repressed contenders.

"Visibility Is a Trap"

Foucault writes in \textit{Discipline and Punish} that "the injury that a crime inflicts upon the social body is the disorder that it introduces into it: the scandal that it gives rise to, the example that it gives, the incitement to repeat it if it is not punished, the possibility of becoming widespread that it bears within it" (92). This quotation I would like to carry forward into subsequent chapters, for it does much to explain the swift, sometimes violent, and thorough punishments meted out to those whose actions throw existing power structures into question. By this I mean not those who commit crimes against the law, but the perpetrators of crimes against the Law of the Father, and to both broaden and specify that category, crimes against cultural hierarchy, whether in gender,
race, class, or sexual orientation. At the same time, as I will discuss in more detail below, Foucault’s statement goes far toward explaining why the gaze permeates narratives both as a method of detecting and deterring crimes against hierarchy and as a visible badge of power. But what Foucault describes about crime applies almost as well to what we generally think of as the pleasurable elements of narrative tension, even as we have begun to interrogate these pleasures: a disruption, which is the occasion of the narrative, its eventual resolution or suppression or punishment, and the attendant anxieties about the spreading chaos that will ensue if the disruption is not contained within the bounds of narrative form. Like crime, though, no matter how well individual instances are contained, narrative re-erupts in the pleasurable "Tell me again, Mommy" with which we are all so familiar. In fact, we relish the disruptions that inaugurate narrative: the possibility of existing power relations being undone (the worker Bill taking over the farmer’s mansion in Days of Heaven), hierarchy turned on its head (two African-American women taking tea in the segregated rooftop restaurant in Passing), the thrill of momentary transgression (Daisy kissing Gatsby on the mouth as her husband leaves the room). As Djuna Barnes writes in Nightwood, “children know something they can’t tell, they like Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed!” (69).
Even more, we relish—or part of us does—narrative resolution: the slaying of the wolf and Red Riding Hood put back in her gendered place through the intervention of the woodsman. "Sadism demands a story," Mulvey writes, "depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in linear time with a beginning and an end" ("Visual Pleasure" 22). De Lauretis takes the argument one step further, concluding that the reverse is true, that a story demands sadism if indeed the Oedipal drama is the underlying structure of narrative: "For Oedipal desire requires in its object—or in its subject when female, as in Freud’s little girl—an identification with the feminine position. And while ‘the aim of biology’ may be accomplished independently of women’s consent, the aim of desire (heterosexual male desire, that is) may not. In other words, women must either consent or be seduced into consenting to femininity" (Alice 134). I have already questioned the "mastery" of the Oedipal narrative and through some ambiguities in Lotman’s analysis of the folktale suggested not some "servant" narratives but at least some slippages and alternatives to a too restrictive binarism. Now, taking a page from Foucault’s book, I offer a third term that bridges de Lauretis’s binarism of consent or seduction and tones down the violence of Mulvey’s sadism. As Foucault demonstrates, discipline brings about many of
the same effects as more violent punishments (and is one subset of the sexual practice of sadism) but is more subtle, more cost effective, and far easier to diffuse throughout the social body in what Foucault calls the capillary functioning of power (198). In the film *Days of Heaven*, for example, discussed in Chapter 2, the female gaze is schooled downward as a rite of passage into femininity. The issue is not consent or seduction but discipline with a threat of punishment behind it. This thread running from Foucault through Mulvey and into de Lauretis enables us to cinch together Foucault’s analysis of power and knowledge, Mulvey’s description of power, the gaze, and castration, and Doane’s question: what is the danger of the female look?

If we accept Foucault’s urging and acknowledge that power and knowledge directly imply one another (27)—in fact, work hand in hand—then we see more easily the gaze both as the visible badge of power and as the mechanism by which power is created, accumulated, and consolidated—both the method and the symbolic display of the method’s efficacy, along with a warning not to question either. Yet the fit between knowledge and power is not always a comfortable one; the categories are not perfectly co-extensive, for if knowledge is to be power, knowledge must also be used as power. This discrepancy, this uneasiness between the two categories, is the basis of countless crime dramas and movies-of-the-week: the innocent
bystander observes an apparently innocent event but is pursued relentlessly by the criminal element, for s/he knows (without knowing) the location of the treasure/the identity of the criminal/the raison d'être of the crime. This unknowing knower as the linchpin of the familiar narrative reveals a gap between knowledge and power equivalent to the gap in physics between potential and kinetic energy. At the same time, this gap points to the age-old controversy of Western epistemology: what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge? That is, when does belief turn into knowledge and—to add the next level suggested by Foucault—when does knowledge become power?

While the gaze helps to resurrect the old philosophical questions about the definition of knowledge, it also reactivates the timeless problem of induction, for we do not have a godlike omniscience and can never know everything—never know enough, the word that can mark either the recovery of an infant plenitude or an end to the fear of castration. As Foucault points out, "The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly" (173), and such is Jeremy Bentham's dream of the Panopticon with its central phallic tower. In fact, though, the gaze of the Panopticon is intermittent, as is the beam of that other phallic structure, a lighthouse, with respect to any stationary object. The gaze is partial, riddled with gaps
and momentary lapses, scotomized, although it attempts to appear seamless to the objects of its gaze by spotlighting their objectification. In reality, the mechanism of the Panopticon is very much like the optical phenomenon that makes film viewing possible: the persistence of vision, where image follows image, and the brain glosses over the gaps in between, until we slow down and examine the functioning of the apparatus. When we turn our attention to the gaps in the view from the center of the Panopticon, we perceive the anxiety of knowledge: the gazer who blinks, who must constantly look behind him- or herself, must compete for information, position him- or herself in a hierarchy of looks, is always in danger of being toppled, either through a war of gazes--the familiar stare down--or some lack of crucial information. Hence, discipline must be constant because it is less than perfect. To return to and expand Foucault's metaphor of the capillary functioning of power in the social body: the circulatory system requires that the fluid pressure of knowledge be maintained in the veins to avoid collapse, so the gaze goes everywhere, manufacturing more knowledge. Consequently, visibility is a trap not just for the objects of the Panopticon's gaze, but for its operator, who must constantly maintain the illusion of seamless looking to resist the inexorable pressure of other gazes attempting to return its objectifying look. As in the case of the Wizard of Oz, who also aspired to godlike
status, the flip side of the power located in the Panopticon but actually possessed by the unseen observer in the central tower is its inadequacy, its feeble injunction to "[p]lay no attention to that man behind the curtain."

The gaze's failure of mastery as an instrument of knowledge and power is potentially liberating news for feminist film theory; the gaze itself is riddled with wounds. In the gaze, subjects--whether men or women--are linked in a shared inadequacy, as they are in castration. "Lacan's major state of ethical purpose and therapeutic goal, as far as I am concerned, is that one must assume one's castration," Jane Gallop writes.

But castration for Lacan is not only sexual; more important, it is also linguistic: we are inevitably bereft of any masterful understanding of language, and can only signify ourselves in a symbolic system that we do not command, that, rather, commands us. For women, Lacan's message that everyone, regardless of his or her organs, is "castrated," represents not a loss but a gain. Only this realization, I believe, can release us from "phallocentrism," one of the effects of which is that one must constantly cover one's inevitable inadequacy in order to have the right to speak. (Reading 20)

I argue in the following pages that we see through the gaze in narrative both the functioning of power and its failure, the futile attempt at mastery designed to hide the wound of castration, both the gaze making itself invisible and, when that fails, revealing itself in response to rival gazes. Foucault explains that, as we see in the Panopticon, disciplinary power benefits from
its own invisibility as well as the heightened visibility of its objects, a reversal of the older system wherein power was visible and its objects overshadowed (187). What I will suggest here and explore hereafter is that when the invisible eye of discipline fails to preserve existing hierarchies, the older system of power asserts itself within the new and through this hybrid characterized by intense visibility enunciates a clear binarism to combat the breakdown of boundaries: I am the Gaze and you are the Object.

Before entering the following chapters, it would be helpful to establish some basic terminology. Throughout this study, dominant gaze will mean the look within the diegesis that at that moment has the power to travel wherever it likes and to defeat other looks by making them turn away, look down, or otherwise demonstrate subservience. At the same time, dominance is relative, and a gaze that is dominant on the axis of gender, for example, may quickly lose its pre-eminence on the axis of race, a shift and dis-ease within power relations that this terminology should be flexible enough to accommodate. Competing gaze will refer to a look that challenges the dominant gaze directly, as in the stare down common in Westerns, or indirectly, for example, by setting up a separate hierarchy of gazes that calls into question the boundaries of the dominant gaze’s dominion. The direct challenge is a display or performance of power while the
indirect challenge may include displays of dominance but largely shows its rivalry with the dominant gaze by constructing an alternate network for gathering information and transforming it into knowledge, then power. The competing gaze, whether direct or indirect, poses a challenge the dominant gaze must answer to achieve narrative closure. Sub-gaze I will use more broadly to refer to any gaze other than the dominant one, any look that is competing, might one day be so, or may always signal its subservience when confronted. In the absence of a godlike omniscience, the dominant gaze must fall back on a series of relays, a network of sub-gazes that pass information to the dominant one, data which is then consolidated as knowledge and deployed as power. But not all sub-gazes serve the dominant gaze; many are striving amongst themselves for power and position. It is this complex network of dominant and sub-gazes, with its struggles, defeats, triumphs, betrayals, and epiphanies, that I aim to bring to the surface in the following chapters through the analysis of selected films and novels. In so doing, I argue that the concept of the gaze, for which I have substituted the phrase the dominant gaze, has been oversimplified insofar as it applies to the web of looks within the diegesis, the interplay and conflict that both shapes the narrative and gives it its many complicated layers of action and meaning.
One result of this oversimplification is the shutting down—the "silencing"—of less familiar forms of the gaze and, consequently, their relationship to power, a subject I will develop in some detail in the pages that follow. While domineering and coercive looks are easy to recognize as instances of power, more ready to elude us is the force of a maternal gaze like Stella Dallas's or the soap opera viewer's. Even though the purpose of the maternal gaze is not coercion, it partakes of power nonetheless by placing the gazer over the objects of the gaze, by creating an overarching if benevolent view denied the other players in the drama; in sum, by privileging the gazer with a greater knowledge on which to base future actions and judgments. From a patriarchal viewpoint, the categories power and women ought never to overlap yet seem inevitably linked, producing a series of seemingly panicky exclusions and exceptions, so familiar as to seem trite: women are not powerful unless evil; women are not powerful in the world but in the home; women are not powerful in brain but in beauty. When we extract the nots and buts and unlesses, the result is two distillations: feminine power and anxious masculine reactions to it. One goal of this study is to recognize a range of powers from coercive to nurturing, to see power uninfected by the anxieties that so often attend it, and, above all, to remain attentive to powers that have been veiled, diminished, or erased by
ideological imperatives and the knowledge that produces them--and, in turn, is produced by them.

In Chapter 2, I examine the gaze of the female child, arguing that the girl is allowed a certain latitude to look that is foreclosed through sexual maturation. In Days of Heaven, Linda has a gathering gaze, the purpose of which is not to objectify but to accumulate information that might help her understand her life and her future since so much of her fate is in the hands of adults. In The Sound and the Fury, Caddy Compson alternates between an objectifying gaze and a maternal one, the latter, emphasizing closeness and nurturing, directed primarily but not exclusively toward Benjy. As Caddy matures, however, both gazes are disciplined and diminished, for in the eyes of the Compson family, Caddy is too great a threat to the border that defines sexual difference, borrowing from the masculine side leadership, activity, and sexuality and from the traditionally feminine domain access to the emotions, physical beauty, and maternity. Further, the novel offers insight into the racial dimension of the gaze through Dilsey’s ability to witness if not to act. Days of Heaven complicates the male gaze by demonstrating that class is as important as gender since Bill as a laborer must adopt a subservient look if he is to survive in the working world, a lesson he is unwilling to learn.
In Chapter 3, we first encounter the strategy of glancing away, a deferral of confrontation that places the objectifying, investigating, or punitive look on hold and allows Mata Hari to pursue her dual aims: collecting classified information and exploring the realm of her own subjectivity. Daisy uses the same deferring glance in The Great Gatsby, but here class is again at issue, for Myrtle Wilson's too direct gaze reveals not only her challenge to masculinity but the futility of her social aspirations.

In Chapter 4, the gaze in Passing is the currency through which Clare and Irene negotiate sameness and difference, the desire for and the desire to be the other woman. Additionally, a gaze that hybridizes fetishism and surveillance polices the color line, making the woman who passes, not just in the novel but in films like Pinky and the two versions of Imitation of Life, a fetish of racial indeterminacy. Each of these texts is shaped by a number of gazes that intersect as their possessors jockey for position, intersections that reveal once again how gender issues cannot be separated from those of race or class or the permutations of sexual desire and definition.

By now it should be evident that this study moves forward through circularity, and I will end by circling back over spectatorship. What I want to emphasize is that diegetic gazes--in their multiplicity, their struggle to position themselves with respect to other gazes, their disruption or assertion of hierarchy--are important not
just in themselves or in their ability to help us see the narrative anew, but particularly because they provide spectators with a variety of identifications as well as the possibility of identifying with contradiction itself. By pointing out a multiplicity of gazes and identificatory positions in the texts analyzed, my goal is to open up the viewing process so that spectators/readers as well as theorists can examine the process of identification—for it is a process, not a steady state—both as a theoretical construct and as an everyday occurrence open to an investigation with one foot in sociology, like Carol Clover's. We need to locate more precisely where the pleasures of classic narrative film and familiar literary fictions are located, even for the resisting reader/viewer, for the fact is we do return to these texts even though we resist many dominant readings. To that end, I hope to offer a new perspective or—to use the terminology I have just introduced—a competing gaze, sometimes directly challenging, sometimes re-illuminating alternative views the dominant gaze has eclipsed.

Teresa de Lauretis ends the introduction to Alice Doesn't by writing, "There are, needless to say, no final answers" (11). In fact, her statement is needful because the desire for that final, monolithic closure to the question—another manifestation of enough—is central to the anxiety of knowledge, the very anxiety we will attempt to resist and even question here. I propose the ideas to

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follow, then, not in the interest of any permanent closure but more in the spirit of the metaphor with which Ludwig Wittgenstein ends his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: use these arguments and provisional conclusions as steps, and climb up beyond them. When the ladder is no longer useful, push it away (151). In the meantime, the temporary elevation may allow us to see something different or jolt us into seeing the same thing from a new and productive angle. This metaphor, too, leads us smoothly into the next chapter and the image of Caddy Compson climbing the tree to look in the parlor window, the image that Faulkner claimed inaugurated his composition of *The Sound and the Fury*. The objectifying gaze has always seemed larger than life, insurmountable. Perhaps a little elevation will allow us to face that look—and look back.

**End Notes**

1. Interestingly, there is a parallel to this incident in the work of the sculptor Bernini and a "spectacle" he staged in Rome in the seventeenth century. In the words of his biographer, Filippo Baldinucci, Bernini's ability to blend his talents in the arts for the invention of stage machinery has never been equalled in my opinion. They say that in the celebrated spectacle *The Inundation of the Tiber* he made it appear that a great mass of water advanced from far away little by little breaking through the dikes. When the water broke through the last dike facing the audience, it flowed forward with such a rush and spread so much terror among the spectators that there was no one, not even among the most knowledgeable, who did not quickly get up to leave in fear of an actual flood. Then, suddenly, with the opening of a sluice gate, all the water was drained away. (83)
Of course, in this instance the water from which the audience fled was real water as opposed to a celluloid representation, but the flood in which the water "performed" was a dramatic representation mistaken for a reality by the nervous spectators. I am indebted to Mark J. Zucker for this reference.

2. While most contemporaneous reports reflect the over-involvement of both genders in the image, at least one account follows Doane in emphasizing women's particular susceptibility. An article in the October 31, 1898, issue of the Louisiana Daily Press (Missouri) states, "The pictures of the battleships in action were so real that every time a shot was fired the women would duck their heads to let the 13-inch shells pass over" (qtd. in Lowry 134).

3. See the discussion of Laura Mulvey on page 9 and thereafter, and of Teresa de Lauretis, page 43 and thereafter.


5. In the glossary of Issues in Feminist Film Criticism, Patricia Erens defines diegesis as "[t]he artificial world of the film, including the narration" (423). Christian Metz points out that diegesis is not a new concept, although film theory has promoted a slightly different definition: "For the Greeks, diegesis (like its correlate, mimesis) was a modality of lexis, that is, one
of a number of ways of presenting the fiction, a certain
technique of relating a story (and at the same time the
act of relating); it is a formal (or, more exactly, modal)
concept. In current studies, 'diegesis' tends to denote
rather than which is related, the fiction itself as
material content, with its connotations of the pseudo-real
and the referential universe" (Imaginary 145).
Incorporating simultaneously elements of reality, dream,
and daydreams, according to Metz, the world of the film
provides "a place consisting of actions, objects, persons,
a time and space (a place similar in this respect to the
real), but which presents itself of its own accord as a
vast simulation, a non-real real; a 'milieu' with all the
structures of the real and lacking (in a permanent,
explicit fashion) only the specific exponent of real
being" (Imaginary 141). The film's fictional world
differs from the novel's in being composed of real
movement, light, sound, and sometimes color--vivid sensory
impressions in and of themselves, but ones which serve to
create a fictional world.

6. I cannot and do not expect to resolve all the
conflicts of female spectatorship within these pages but
certainly to suggest new possibilities through the
exploration of the gaze.

7. See, for example, William Van Watson's "Shakespeare,
Zeffirelli, and the Homosexual Gaze," Kristina Straub's
"Reconstructing the Gaze: Voyeurism in Richardson's
Pamela," and Freya Johnson's "The Male Gaze and the
Struggle Against Patriarchy in Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso
Sea."

8. Sternberg's work, for example, favors the image and
the fetishizing gaze, whereas Hitchcock's Rear Window
oscillates between fetishizing and investigating gazes,
both trained on the feminine (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure"
22-23).

9. On page 24, I take up in a preliminary way the
distinction between the gaze as defined by Mulvey and as
used by Lacan, a subject I return to in more depth in
Chapter 3 on page 255 in the discussion of the unsettling,
unspecified feeling of being objectified in The Great
Gatsby.

10. Mulvey differs from Lacan, however, who in describing
the mirror stage refers to the child as "le petit
d'homme," "l'enfant," and "le petit homme," although the
mechanism he details in no way necessarily excludes the
female child (Écrits 1 89-90).

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11. According to Marcelle Marini, the symbolic is Lacan's reformulation of the Oedipus complex "as the entrance, thanks to the paternal figure, into the universe of the law, of the participation in socio-cultural values, and of the recognition of the subject as a full subject, provided he abides by the fundamental prohibitions" (43). Only the Father (as in the Name-of-the-Father, not to be confused with Freud's Oedipal father, who is a man like any other man) can give access to language, and at the same time, language is our entrance into patriarchy (Gallop, Daughter's 47). Yet the subject "is alienated in the signifier, to the point of having no other existence than that of a pure locus of passage from one signifier to another" (Roustang 115).

The imaginary, on the other hand, is rooted in the mother-child dyad, conceived as conceptually and emotionally outside language and culture (Chodorow, Feminism 188). According to Maire Jaanus, "Identificatory and sexual fusions, rather than simply synthesis as traditional psychology believed, are the imaginary's aim. The imaginary ego is constantly affirming or negating its identificatory oneness with the other or its difference from them. 'I am you' or 'I am not you' is what the imaginary tirelessly reiterates" (Jaanus 324). In its investment in binarisms, the imaginary is in a constant "struggle of identifications and de-identifications, fusions and defusions, idealizations and devaluations, loves and hatreds. Only in alliance with the symbolic does this imaginary strife cease in a sublimation or an absolute identification with mass groups, nations, ideologies, God, or the entire cosmos as such" (Jaanus 324). Nonetheless, from the viewpoint of the symbolic, the imaginary is the site of a lost plenitude and wholeness, one which can never be regained.

12. E. Ann Kaplan points out that Mulvey has suggested the possibility of some slippage, although she was not referring specifically to the gaze: "even if one accepts the psychoanalytic positioning of women, all is not lost, since the Oedipus complex is not complete in women; she [Mulvey] notes that 'there's some way in which women aren't colonized,' having been 'so specifically excluded from culture and language'" ("Gaze" 321).

14. Christian Metz points to one important interrelation of the imaginary and the symbolic in the world of the film: "A strange mirror, then, very like that of childhood, and very different. Very like, as Jean-Louis Baudry has emphasised, because during the showing we are, like the child, in a sub-motor and hyper-perceptive state; because, like the child again, we are prey to the imaginary, the double, and are so paradoxically through a real perception. Very different, because this mirror returns us everything but ourselves, because we are wholly outside it, whereas the child is both in it and in front of it. As an arrangement (and in a very topographical sense of the word), the cinema is more involved on the flank of the symbolic, and hence of secondariness, than is the mirror of childhood. This is not surprising, since it comes along after it, but what is more important to me is the fact that it is inscribed in its wake with an incidence at once so direct and so oblique, which has no precise equivalent in other apparatuses of signification" (Imaginary 49).

15. Beth Newman remarks on the same double meaning with respect to Catherine Heathcliff: Lockwood "is ambivalent because Catherine is doubly a 'looker'--both an attractive woman (the modern colloquial sense of the word) and someone who looks back" (1032).

16. Tania Modleski makes a similar point, although in general her analysis emphasizes feminine knowledge whereas mine centers more on the gaze itself as well as its function as a route to knowledge: "Lisa is able to provide the missing evidence because she claims a special knowledge of women the men lack: the knowledge, in this case, that no woman would go on a trip and leave behind her purse and her wedding ring. Lisa appeals to the authority of Stella, asking her if she would ever go somewhere without her ring, and Stella replies, 'They'd have to cut off my finger'" (Women Who Knew 81).

17. Slavoj Žižek also takes issue with Jeffries as privileged gazer, but more importantly with feminist film theorists who see the male gazer as the site of an untroubled power (although he unnecessarily simplifies the complexity of the feminist enterprise): "The lesson of Hitchcock's great masterpieces from Notorious to Rear Window, however, is that the dialectic of gaze and power is far more refined: the gaze does connote power, yet simultaneously, and at a more fundamental level, it connotes the very opposite of power--impotence--in so far as it involves the position of an immobilized witness who
cannot but observe what goes on" (Metastases 73). While Žižek points to one important circumstance that partially undoes the power of the male gaze, and a circumstance pertinent to the Panopticon, not all male gazers are immobilized or passive witnesses. I think, for example, of the history of noir detectives who are highly mobile in their investigation of the femme fatale. A more widely applicable troubling of the monolithic power of the gaze, I argue, is the inductive problem since the investigative gaze seeks a totalizing knowledge, which is by definition impossible to obtain. See page 62 and following.

18. For examples of analyses grounded in the experience of social subjects, the following are helpful. Janice A. Radway’s Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984) relies on interviews with consumers, publishers, and a bookseller who has established a circle of readers who rely on her to recommend romance novels, a practice that has led to a newsletter distributed nationally. Jacqueline Bobo in Black Women as Cultural Readers (New York: Columbia UP, 1995) expands the notion of "interpretative community" to mean not just academic scholars concerned with particular texts but the African-American women who have come together in groups to analyze and appreciate such works as Julie Dash’s Daughters of the Dust and the novel The Color Purple as well as the film version. Elizabeth Ellsworth’s "Illicit Pleasures: Feminist Spectators and Personal Best" (Issues in Feminist Film Criticism, ed. Patricia Erens [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990]: 183-96) concentrates not on the film itself (or on spectators in general) but on reviews of the film in the feminist press.

19. This play through positions in some ways recalls Judith Butler’s concept of gender parody: “This perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identities that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization; parodic proliferation deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or essentialist gender identities" (Gender 138). Yet the female spectator’s shifting identifications are not a parody of the male spectator’s seemingly stable viewing position. They are instead an attempt to find pleasure in an apparatus that is not-for-her. Butler’s idea of parody through multiplication does offer, however, an intriguing possibility for an avant-garde foregrounding and "performing" of the female spectator’s complex of identifications as a way of denaturalizing male spectatorship.
20. While Jane Gaines does not take Mulvey to task specifically, she does make reference in "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory" to the ways in which feminist film theory has marginalized race as an issue and theorized white female experience as universal (201). She also treats in more detail the problem of the gaze in the film about race, where "racial difference structures a hierarchy of access to the female image" (207) (Issues in Feminist Film Criticism, ed. Patricia Erens [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990], 198-214). Mulvey avoids the issue of race in "Afterthoughts," treating Pearl as a woman but ignoring the fact that she is of mixed heritage.


22. "The back story is what happens to your main character a day, a week, or an hour before your story begins," adding motivation and emotional weight to the narrative (Field 96).

23. The multiplication of identifications by which the female spectator locates her pleasure may call into question the fixed position of the male spectator. While the examination of that possibility lies outside the realm of this study, Kaja Silverman makes an argument for a greater flexibility of male positions in Male Subjectivity at the Margins (New York: Routledge, 1992).

24. Williams points, for example, to the scene in which Laurel and Stella are in upper and lower berths on the train, each overhearing Laurel's friends make fun of Stella's working-class excess. Yet each is "hoping that the other is asleep, each pretending to be asleep to the other" ("Something Else" 150), each character's look registering the painful knowledge she hopes the other doesn't share.

25. See note 18.

26. Clover supplements her own observations with William Schoell's in Stay Out of the Shower, although she disagrees with his characterization of the Final Girl as the "sexy" equal of her murdered friends:

   Social critics make much of the fact that male audience members cheer on the misogynous misfits in these movies as they rape, plunder, and murder their
screaming, writhing female victims. Since these same critics walk out of the moviehouse in disgust long before the movie is over, they don't realize that these same men cheer on (with renewed enthusiasm, in fact) the heroines, who are often as strong, sexy, and independent as the [earlier] victims, as they blow away the killer with a shotgun or get him between the eyes with a machete. All of these men are said to be identifying with the maniac, but they enjoy his death throes the most of all, and applaud the heroine with admiration. (Chainsaws 46)

27. Beth Newman points out that Lockwood in Wuthering Heights is able to look at Catherine and yet avoid her threatening gaze through a double mediation: he admires her portrait while Nelly narrates her story, with listening as a metaphor for looking. "Lockwood," she writes, "a latter-day Perseus, has found himself a shield" (1034). In this instance, Perseus does not adapt Medusa's techniques as his own but instead sets up a chain of representations or objectifications to distance himself from the woman's emasculating gaze.

28. "Bentham's Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; the tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions--to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide--it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap" (Foucault 200).

29. An epiphany, after all, in its original formulation was visual: three men seeing for themselves, after a long journey and many obstacles, the divinity of the baby boy
lying in the arms of his human mother. In keeping with Cixous’s project in "The Laugh of the Medusa," I wonder about Mary’s gaze in this story, imagine it playing over the baby, turning to the visitors to grant them permission to hold the child, scrutinizing them as they do so to see that the child is safe and comfortable, his head well supported on his still wobbly neck.
"It was to be the fate of this patient little girl to see much more than she at first understood, but also even at first to understand much more than any little girl, however patient, perhaps ever understood before," writes Henry James in the first chapter of What Maisie Knew (qtd. in Sinyard 110). James might just as well be describing Caddy Compson in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury or Linda, the narrator in Terrence Malick's 1978 film, Days of Heaven, a girl of about ten or twelve who is swept along on the adventures of her brother, Bill, and his lover, Abby, as they flee Chicago and land in the Texas Panhandle. Both the novel and the film are worth considering for their intriguing representations of pre-adolescent female subjectivity, but most particularly for the questions they raise about the intersection of voice, gaze, sexual maturation, race, and class. Caddy’s active and assertive gaze as a child gives way to a fragmented gaze and hysterical shards of a voice as she is exiled from the Compson family. What was uneasily tolerated in childhood--not just her active looking but also her
maternal love, expressed partly through the gaze--becomes intolerable as Caddy reaches sexual maturity and is cast as the contaminated and contaminating one. *Days of Heaven* pairs Abby, the only representative of mature femininity, with Linda as femininity in the making and in doing so constructs female maturation as the loss of both voice and gaze through entrance into heterosexual romance. As Linda hovers between childhood and maturity in a state of "becoming," the constraints under which Abby is placed and the ultimate defeat of her gaze allow us to read Linda's gaze simultaneously as an "is" and an "unbecoming" (Deleuze and Parnet 42).

In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey describes two possible gazes for the film spectator and, by extension, for characters within the diegesis. Both gazes, she argues, are gendered masculine in classic Hollywood film: "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" (18). But Mulvey's description sidesteps at least two other kinds of looking, which partake of the two types of gazing she describes, but are neither exhausted by them nor necessarily gendered like them, and which are critical to Caddy's looks in *The Sound and the Fury* and Linda's in *Days of Heaven*. Caddy exhibits, particularly in her care of Benjy, what I call
the maternal gaze, which emphasizes closeness rather than an objective and objectifying distance. In privileging bonding and melding, two values important in the imaginary, the maternal gaze works to erase the hierarchy of subject and object. The gathering gaze, characteristic of children but not exclusive to them, best describes Linda’s looks in *Days of Heaven*. An attempt to acquire data and through data, knowledge--and, as James suggests, understanding--the gathering gaze is different from the investigating, demystifying gaze common to *film noir*. Its primary goal is not to objectify, but to defend against objectification, since knowledge is one form of power and an essential foundation for strategy in the battle for subjectivity. In the face of adults’ ability to change totally and capriciously the emotional and physical circumstances of their lives, Linda and Caddy find separate but related manifestations of the gaze through which they try to preserve their agency in childhood but also which they carry with them as they approach the border of adulthood.

**Flowering and Restriction: Female Spectatorship and Caddy Compson’s Gaze**

In "Feminism and Faulkner: Second Thoughts or, What’s a Radical Feminist Doing with a Canonical Male Text Anyway?" Minrose Gwin raises the question of whether "feminists who do feminist criticism should do it with texts of canonical male writers" (55). Defining her
constituency as "feminist readers . . . searching for a sense of authenticity about women's voices and women's lives" (56), Gwin cites Judith Fetterley's argument in The Resisting Reader that as far as the American canon is concerned, "the female reader is co-opted into participation in an experience from which she is explicitly excluded; she is asked to identify with a selfhood that defines itself in opposition to her; she is required to identify against herself" (Fetterley xii). Both Gwin and Fetterley echo the ongoing debate in feminist film theory about the possible pleasures of the female spectator, here stated in its simplest formulation by Mary Ann Doane: "Confronted with the classical Hollywood text with a male address, the female spectator has basically two modes of entry: a narcissistic identification with the female figure as spectacle and a 'transvestite' identification with the active male hero in his mastery" (Desire 19). At this intersection of film, novel, and theory, I raise the question again, as other feminist theorists continue to do: In what texts are we willing to participate as readers and as critics, and why? Are we acting, either deliberately or unwittingly, as apologists for the canon, whether cinematic or literary? Even when standing outside the Father's house, Gwin asks, does our position make the center more central ("Feminism" 58)? Or do we have something different or more to say, more as a sign of the feminine as excess, as disruption,
as the troubling of the boundary between subject and object? Do we offer enough more, and does William Faulkner? I leave these questions open now, perhaps even later, taking as one of many banners for my quest this quotation from Hélène Cixous: "But there is a nonclosure that is not submission but confidence and comprehension; this is not an opportunity for destruction but for wonderful expansion" (Newly Born 86).

The previous paragraph is overflowing with quotations from women, for I feel the need to surround myself with female voices as I approach The Sound and the Fury and its din of intersecting male narrations. Like Minrose Gwin in her earlier work, The Feminine and Faulkner, I feel I can almost hear Caddy Compson's voice in The Sound and the Fury, but I also feel endangered by the diminishment of Caddy's initially active gaze through the workings of the narrative and the array of restrictions placed on the other female characters. Taking Caddy's childhood gaze through the parlor window as a starting point, I see a simultaneous movement of flowering and restriction—a time-lapse film where a rose opens petal by petal, but superimposed on that image is the rose closing up, each petal gliding back whence it came. This time, though, the flower is iron and the petals close like the doors of a dungeon. There is pleasure in this double movement and the beauty of its realization, pleasure even in seeing
parts of the mechanism of containment exposed, but the petals still close inexorably.

Late in Quentin's narration, as he nears the final act of his suicide, he remembers in his childhood a picture in one of our books, a dark place into which a single weak ray of light came slanting upon two faces lifted out of the shadow. You know what I'd do if I were King? she never was a queen or a fairy she was always a king or a giant or a general I'd break that place open and drag them out and I'd whip them good.

Unlike Caddy, I do not desire to break or drag or whip anyone, including Faulkner. At the same time, the fact that Caddy persists in the imagination of the brothers and the reader or that her powers in the text provide some pleasures is not sufficient to silence my dis-ease about her many containments. I agree with John Matthews that "Caddy is the figure that the novel is written to lose" (Plav. 23), but my emphasis is different, for I want to draw out why this loss must be feminine, that is, how the text assumes, even as it partially undercuts, a gendered position. What we experience in The Sound and the Fury are the narrative pleasures provided by Caddy's containment as well as some pleasures provided by her escapes. That Faulkner casts Caddy's slow destruction as a tragedy does not fully remove the sting of her containment, especially since the narrative structure makes peripheral the consequences for Caddy herself while privileging the tragic consequences for her family, especially her brothers. Even as I argue that Caddy has a
gaze of her own, which makes her a force to be reckoned with and a figure of intense interest for feminist film theory, I also argue that the narrative is shaped by the need to contain Caddy's gaze through male gazing and knowledge, to make her change to achieve narrative closure. Something of Caddy escapes this containment, but at the same time, much of what is left is fetishized, polished up to remove (or veil) its dangerous edge. What is dangerous about Caddy is summed up in her gaze, which is both the source and expression of her knowledge. While her gaze at times shares qualities with the male gaze, Caddy also expresses an intimacy in her looking that places it in a category apart from her brothers' investigative and punitive looks.

Like the femme fatale in film noir, Caddy is constructed as unknowable insofar as we are invited to understand her through the limited narrations of the brothers, just as the voice-over narration in film noir trades omniscience for a more modern fragmented consciousness, usually that of a detective, almost invariably that of a man. Faulkner stated, "Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to reduce her to telling what was going on, that it would be more passionate to see her through somebody else's eyes" (Gwynn 1). Faulkner seems to be positing here a required distance that creates passion, something akin to the distancing between subject and object necessary for the
voyeuristic gaze (in its pleasurable rather than punitive moments), or a discontinuity that preserves beauty, something like the delay upon which the fetishizing gaze is based. In any case, something would be lost for Faulkner—and we assume he is thinking of his readers as well—if we were to hear Caddy’s story in her own voice, or know what she knows in her own words. “This unknowability,” Mary Ann Doane writes, “is consistent with a broader cultural/social positioning of woman as having a privileged link with the pre-Oedipal or pre-symbolic. Female sexuality is spread out over the body, signified by all its parts. And it is the very non-localizability of this sexuality which defines her as a proper ‘other’ to the man whose sex is in place, a reassurance of mastery and control. Woman thus becomes the other side of knowledge as it is conceived within a phallocentric logic. She is an epistemological trouble” (Femmes 102-03). But, as Judith Butler points out, “trouble is inevitable and the task, how best to make it, what best way to be in it” (Gender ix). Caddy as the unknowable serves many and conflicting purposes, some disruptive, some pleasurable, and of course the pleasure depends on one’s desire. Her sexuality without boundaries helps to define the reassurances of phallocentrism even as it threatens that patriarchal power; her unknowability helps to delimit male knowledge even as it runs beyond the boundaries of traditional patriarchal knowing. At the same time, as a
reminder of the pre-Oedipal, Caddy evokes a lost plenitude that can be experienced as a nostalgic, bittersweet pleasure or the threat of regression.

In addition, Caddy is another kind of epistemological disturbance, a constant reminder of castration, the anxiety of which is bound either through fetishism or, in Mulvey's words, through "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 film noir)" ("Visual Pleasure" 21). Caddy, then, is epistemological "double trouble." As bearer of the bleeding wound, she reminds the male gazer insistently that his sex too could "go missing," could be violently "not in place," a mutilation that Benjy suffers in reality and Quentin imagines vividly. At the same time, Caddy's sexuality and her maternity are everywhere, all over her body and beyond, since the imaginary breaks the ranks of the symbolic and flows wherever, challenging the binarism of phallic sexuality/castration. Caddy is simultaneously too familiar and too different: by virtue of her power to objectify through the gaze, she is the woman who knows too much, and by virtue of her maternity, whether the child is Miss Quentin or Caddy's first "child"--Benjy--she is the woman who knows differently.
"You know what I'd do if I were King?": Following Caddy's Gaze

By the end of Quentin's narration, when he names Caddy's preference for the roles of king or giant or general, we have seen enough of his anxiety about sexual difference to read his underlying tone of resentment and envy ("she never was a queen or a fairy"), but also his admiration for the gumption Caddy has that he lacks (198). Even at this young age, Caddy has learned to cross-dress in her imagination to gain the benefits denied her by patriarchal power, so it is not surprising that at first she seems simply to be pre-empting the male gaze, particularly in its objectifying form.

The clearest example of Caddy's objectifying gaze is in the tree-climbing scene, which has been narrated so often outside the novel, both by Faulkner and his critics, that it has in the critical literature the stature of a myth of origin.7 In Faulkner's words, the novel originated "with the picture of the little girl's muddy drawers, climbing that tree to look in the parlor window with her brothers that didn't have the courage to climb the tree waiting to see what she saw" (Gwynn and Blotner 1). Unlike the typical voyeur, Caddy does not look for something sexually arousing framed in the lighted window, nor does she happen upon the primal scene. Instead, she uses her gaze to gather knowledge, Eve-like, about something she isn't supposed to know.8 While the visual
payoff for Caddy isn't enormous since she doesn't understand the significance of the adults "[j]ust sitting in chairs and looking" (52), her action is important, for she gathers knowledge from the adult world both she and her brothers want while she spares her brothers and the Gibson children the risk of confronting or usurping parental--in particular, white patriarchal--authority: "'Your paw told you to stay out that tree.' Versh said. 'That was a long time ago.' Caddy said. 'I expect he's forgotten about it. Besides, he said to mind me tonight. Didn't he say to mind me tonight'" (44). In her desire to know, Caddy is willing to risk transgressing patriarchal borders, either claiming to be the heir apparent to patriarchal authority or arguing that the law of the white father has expired or directed its gaze elsewhere.

Caddy offers the children the pleasure of being "one up" on the adult world, not just by sharing her knowledge, which confirms what Versh and Frony Gibson already know from their mother, Dilsey, the Compson's African-American housekeeper, but by taking the adults as the object of her gaze and telegraphing this objectification to the children on the ground. In this attempt to compete with adult power through a specular challenge, Caddy is different from the girl Linda in Days of Heaven, who uses her gaze to gather knowledge as a defense against adult capriciousness. Caddy too is contending with the inexplicable actions of adults; for example, the
possibility that they are having a party she hasn't been
told about. She is impatient (unlike Henry James's little
girl) to know, to have the necessary pieces of the puzzle:
"Dilsey said. 'You'll know in the Lawd's own time.' . . .
'When is the Lawd's own time, Dilsey.' Caddy said" (28).
What differentiates her most from the more passive Linda,
however, is that even though Caddy is gathering
information about the grownups that may have an impact on
her immediate future, her intent is larger. She actually
challenges adult power by encouraging the other children
to follow her in pursuit of the knowledge they have been
denied--a mini children's revolution. In response to
Caddy's threats to familiar adult power relations, the
children then jockey for position within the complex
structures of race, gender, and age: Frony says, "Aint
nobody said me and T.P. got to mind you" and eventually
Caddy agrees, "Frony and T.P. dont have to mind me. But
the rest of us do" (42). Jason attempts to escape his
sister's power by denying it ("I'm not going to mind you.
. . . Frony and T.P. are not going to either") and
threatening to make a separate peace with patriarchal
authority ("I'm going to tell on her") (44, 45). Quentin
has already made a separate, if incomplete and
unsatisfactory, peace by staying at the house, physically
close to parental authority, while Caddy, Pied Piper-like,
leads the other children away. When Dilsey comes to round
up the errant children, Caddy implies that her older
brother is disturbed because she has disrupted the hierarchies imposed by sexual difference and age: "Quentin's mad because we had to mind me tonight" (52). When her authority wavers, however, Caddy reattaches the junior power structure to the senior one by naming one source of her power: "Father said" (43). Caddy challenges the notion of primogeniture, in which power automatically passes not just to the eldest child but to the first son, substituting instead a rudimentary meritocracy: Caddy leads because her father finds her worthy of the role.

Even if Caddy spares her brothers some of the anxiety of Oedipal defiance and provides them through the gaze with the pleasures of new knowledge, she still provokes their anxiety by troubling the boundaries of sexual difference through her leadership. To make matters worse, what could be more active, more "tomboyish" (with all its connotations of femininity temporarily gone astray) than climbing a tree? All the children want to answer the question "What are the adults doing in the parlor?" (even the Gibson children, who know the bare outlines of the occasion though no more), but only Caddy is brave enough to do the gazing. Through her actions, then, she invites the children to identify with her as their braver, bolder, more physically active mirror self (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 17). Yet this identification is fraught with anxiety for the Compson brothers because as much as they

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want to identify with such traditionally masculine traits as activity and the pursuit of knowledge, identification with Caddy across the boundary of gender necessarily raises the specter of castration. Caddy has already activated this Oedipal fear by usurping some of her father's power and questioning the brothers' right of succession. Not surprisingly, then, at the precise moment when Caddy is challenging sexual difference by pursuing knowledge through active looking, a common defense against castration anxiety arises in the form of the fetish as her brothers focus their gaze on Caddy climbing out of their reach: "We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers" (44).

As Christian Metz explains, the fetish as a repetitive particularity has its origins in castration anxiety: "[T]he child, terrified by what it has seen or glimpsed, will have tried more or less successfully in different cases, to arrest its look, for all its life, at what will subsequently become the fetish: at a piece of clothing, for example, which masks the frightening discovery, or else precedes it (underwear, stockings, boots, etc.). The fixation on this 'just before' is thus another form of disavowal, of retreat from the perceived, although its very existence is dialectical evidence of the fact that the perceived has been perceived" (70). The scene where Caddy climbs the tree, then, is a recapitulation of that early experience of castration anxiety: the male desire to see and know provokes a
confrontation with sexual difference, literally in the view of Caddy's bottom rising up the tree trunk and figuratively in Caddy's role as "action hero" rather than demure heroine. In defense, the brothers focus not on difference and Caddy's active refutation of anatomy as destiny, but on the piece of clothing that veils (even as it points to) the difference. While the muddy drawers become for the brothers a foreshadowing of Caddy's sexual maturation (muddy drawers become bloody drawers), they are a fortiori an image of her agency in seizing knowledge through action and a signal of her challenge to sexual difference, especially masculine mastery. The emphasis on her sexuality (with its intimation of coprophilia) deflects attention from the broader anxiety: Caddy's subjectivity. At the same time, the fetishizing attention paid to the muddy drawers cuts Caddy down to size by making her ultra-physical, even shitty, in contrast to the ideal gazer, who is male, rational rather than physical, almost disembodied, and "clean" in the sense that looking requires distance, in fact thrives on being the antithesis of "hands-on" (Keller and Grontkowski 218). Rather than demure, dainty, and clean, passive, receptive, and dependent, Caddy is bold, rough, as dirty as the job requires, active physically and mentally, and more independent than either her family or the construction of femininity permits, as we see repeatedly in such scenes as
the fight between Caddy and Quentin at the branch and Caddy and Jason's fight over Benjy's paper dolls.

Yet even to her objectifying gaze, Caddy brings a feminine difference, an inclusiveness that questions the hierarchy of subject and object and the desirability of dominance. She shares with the children on the ground the knowledge she gathers through the gaze, fulfilling the promise of her original enticement, "I bet if we go around to the parlor window we can see something" (41). This we is important to Caddy even when she demands that all the children mind her that night. She goes to great lengths to negotiate with Frony and T.P. to keep them within the band of children and to be sure Benjy has a comforting object, in this case, T.P.'s bottle of lightning bugs. Carol Gilligan observes that "[s]ensitivity to the needs of others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care lead women to attend to voices other than their own and to include in their judgment other points of view" (16). Caddy displays this sensitivity when she uses her objectifying gaze to gain control over the adult world but then distributes that power by sharing her discoveries with the other children—including what Faulkner described as "her brothers that didn't have the courage to climb the tree."

"I like to take care of him": Caddy's Maternal Gaze

The objectifying gaze is not the only kind of look Caddy employs in The Sound and the Fury. The other gaze,
most easily read through the gaps in Faulkner's text, often acts as a challenge to the phallocentric order in general but the objectifying gaze in particular.

Objectification draws subject and object together into a relationship, but even as it does so, it valorizes separation and "a model of truth based on distance between subject and object, knower and known," as Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine R. Grontkowski describe in "The Mind's Eye," an investigation of the supremacy of sight in the Western hierarchy of the senses (220). This separation supposedly guarantees "objectifiability," in which "the world is severed from the observer, illuminated as it were, by that sense which could operate, it was thought, without contaminating" (Keller and Grontkowski 218). I would add here "without being contaminated," for the model of the objectifying gaze implies a look that travels like a beam to its object, but without anything traveling back up the beam except "pure"--and controllable--information. Philosopher Hans Jonas describes this gaze of distance in these terms: "I see without the object's doing anything. . . . I have nothing to do but to look, and the object is not affected by that. . . . and I am not affected" (qtd. in Keller and Grontkowski 219). In contrast, this other gaze, which I call maternal, devalues separation and privileges closeness, bonding, and melding to the extent that it attempts to erase--does not even recognize--the hierarchy
of subject and object. I label it maternal not because one must be a mother to possess or understand it, but because it brings to the foreground the qualities most closely associated with the mother-child relationship of the imaginary, qualities Cixous in the following quotation ascribes not to the maternal but to femininity itself: "that which is ours breaks loose from us without our fearing any debilitation. . . . we extend ourselves without ever reaching an end; we never hold back our thoughts, our signs, our writing; and we’re not afraid of lacking" ("Laugh" 248).

This "economy without reserve," to borrow Cixous’s use of Derrida’s phrase (Newly Born 86), I see everywhere in Caddy’s communion with Benjy, but in particular in the scene where Caddy feeds him dinner. She enthusiastically assumes Versh’s duty because "Sometimes he cries when Versh feeds him" (80). For Caddy, Benjy’s satisfaction is paramount, and her pleasure is inseparable from his. She refills his bowl as many times as he wants with no talk of scarcity or greed or her own possible hunger; she is "not afraid of lacking." We must take one more step, though, to read Caddy’s gaze in this economy because it does not separate itself from her actions; it partially collapses the separation between seeing and doing and negates the idea that "I have nothing to do but to look, and the object is not affected by that. . . . and I am not affected." I am reminded of the old joke, spoken in the
mother's voice but whose humor stems from the symbolic's anxious denigration of the imaginary: "Put on a sweater. Your mother's cold." The mother doesn't reach this conclusion through a classical syllogism (I am cold; my child is like me; therefore, my child is cold). In the dyad of mother and child, coldness demands warmth, and the mother sets about creating it for her child whose needs are her own. We have a split second in which to read the maternal gaze because when Caddy senses a lack, whether through gaze or touch or hearing, she sets about remedying it immediately. Her fulfillment of Benjy's needs, therefore, is often the trace of her maternal looks. We must read the "just before" of the filled bowl, of Caddy's admonition to "Keep your hands in your pockets... Or they'll get froze. You don't want your hands froze on Christmas, do you" (5)—a very different "just before" than that of the fetish.

The traces of the maternal gaze are clear in the descriptions of Caddy's physical position with respect to Benjy, in particular the many instances where she touches him. One of our earliest views of Caddy shows how she adjusts her posture so she can meet Benjy's gaze, which leads immediately to her meeting his needs: "'Hello, Benjy.' Caddy said. She opened the gate and came in and stooped down. Caddy smelled like leaves. 'Did you come to meet me.' she said. 'Did you come to meet Caddy. What did you let him get his hands so cold for, Versh'"
(6-7). Then, as she talks to him, she rubs Benjy’s hands, commingling gaze with touch, need with remedy. She looks at Benjy not to objectify him as if his needs are a scientific problem and she the distanced, rational scientist, but for his protection and well-being. The maternal gaze is simultaneously "a looking at," "a looking after," and "a looking out for." ¹⁰

Caddy’s maternal stance is in vivid contrast to the behavior of Caroline Compson as Benjy’s biological mother, who demands, "Are you going to take that baby out without his overshoes. . . . Do you want to make him sick, with the house full of company" (9). From an objectifying distance, Caroline sees Benjy as just one more player she must maneuver in a complex grid of social interactions. When Caroline combines gaze and touch, she does so to pity herself through Benjy as pitiful object: "'Come here and kiss Mother, Benjamin.' Caddy took me to Mother’s chair and Mother took my face in her hands and then she held me against her. ‘My poor baby,’ she said" (9). When Caroline takes Benjy’s face in her hands, she sees not his pleasure that Caddy is home from school nor his excitement that he is heading outdoors to play with his sister, both of which hint at a small plenitude. Instead, Caroline names Benjy as lack, which Caddy immediately tries to rewrite through an apparent mimicking of her mother’s actions coupled with an unsaying of her words: "we stopped in the hall and Caddy knelt and put her arms
around me and her cold bright face against mine. She smelled like trees. 'You’re not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You’ve got your Caddy. Haven’t you got your Caddy” (10). While the actions of mother and daughter seem very much the same—touching the child, looking into his face, then holding him close—the differences imply a corresponding difference in the gaze. While Caroline’s words emphasize my, as in "my affliction, my shame, my cross to bear," Caddy’s language gives herself away in another transaction in an economy without reserve—"Haven’t you got your Caddy" [my emphasis]. Similarly, while Caroline demands that Benjy be brought to her, Caddy accommodates herself to Benjy by kneeling down to meet him. Caddy’s maternal gaze establishes a communion between the siblings that is not separate from but continues in her touch as she hugs Benjy close.

As Keller and Grontkowski argue, there is an entire dimension of the visual experience not centrally contained in the experience of looking at, or surveying. That dimension is most dramatically captured in the experience of looking into, or "locking eyes"—a form of communication and communion which is primitive and universally formative. In direct eye contact, we have a visual experience quite different from and in many ways even opposed to the sense of distance and objectivity evoked by merely looking at an object. The often highly charged experience of "locking eyes" seems to do away with distance. As such, it may remain for all of us as a kind of paradigm for communion, for the connective aspects of vision. (220)

What I argue here is that the maternal gaze, which does not exhaust the category of "locking eyes" but represents
one very important subset, offers a communion rooted in the pleasures of the imaginary, "linked to the bodily contact with the mother before the paternal order of language comes to separate subject from mother" (Gallop, *Daughter's* 124). This communion, however, is not always welcome since it can disrupt the symbolic order and invite "backsliding" to the imaginary. Caddy's use of the maternal gaze challenges the hegemony of language, seems to dissolve the division between subject and object, and encourages synesthesia, a prime characteristic of both Benjy's and Quentin's narrations and which in Faulknerian terms we might call the miscegenation of the senses. In describing *l'écriture féminine*, for example, whose roots are also in the imaginary, Cixous moves quickly from an image of rising bread to "a turbulent compound of flying colors, leafy spaces, and rivers flowing to the sea," and her mixture of images sounds much like what Caddy tells Benjy about sleep: "The shapes flowed on . . . bright and fast and smooth, like when Caddy says we are going to sleep" (*Newly Born* 88, *Sound* 13). But in terms of the potential for disruption, is Caddy's maternal gaze semiotic or imaginary? As Jane Gallop summarizes Kristeva, "the imaginary is conservative and comforting, tends toward closure, and is disrupted by the symbolic; the semiotic is revolutionary, breaks closure, and disrupts the symbolic. It seems there are two kinds of
maternals; one more conservative than the paternal symbolic, one less" (Daughter's 124).

Appealing as it is to cast Caddy as "the little mother" (we are all nostalgic for the selfless giving of the maternal), we must also focus on the fact that Caddy herself is a child--seven years old when she falls in the branch and muddies her drawers. Although Caddy moves from these early scenes through sexual maturation, into and out of marriage, and ultimately into ostracism from her family, Benjy remains the "always infant" who continues to produce Caddy's "little mother." He represents the constant demand of the child in the Oedipal triangle that the mother choose him over the father--or better yet, that the mother not enter the triangle at all but stay with him forever in his perpetually pre-verbal "half-light of the imaginary" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 15). When Benjy catches the adolescent Caddy kissing Charlie in the swing and pulls on her, she is willing to forfeit her sexuality for surrogate maternity, although it is a promise she can't keep: "'I wont.' she said. 'I wont anymore, ever. Benjy. Benjy.' Then she was crying, and I cried, and we held each other. 'Hush.' she said. 'Hush. I wont anymore'" (55).

While at first Caddy's maternal role with Benjy may seem subversive since it is in stark contrast to the behavior of the rest of the family (except for Dilsey), it is notable that no one tries to stop Caddy in her
mothering or assume her burden, although Caroline Compson
does try to reproduce her own mothering through Caddy,
telling her daughter, "He's too big for you to carry.
. . . Let him stand up. . . . You humor him too much"
(72). How ready we are (as are the Compsons), how
enchanted to let the girl do the work of a grown woman.
For patriarchy, Caddy's premature surrogate maternity is a
reassuring counterpoint to her transgressive search for
and assertion of knowledge since she valorizes that which
patriarchy holds dear in femininity even as she challenges
sexual difference by usurping powers her brothers should
manifest. Furthermore, even her trespass in search of
knowledge is somewhat forgivable in one so young, a
dispensation that recurs in somewhat different form in
Days of Heaven. The affectionate term tomboy contains and
authorizes "excessive" activity and forcefulness in a
girl, promoting the idea that this developmental phase
will pass.11 The feminist reader, though, must unpack and
separate the rewards and punishments doled out to Caddy,
recognizing simultaneously the appeal of the imaginary as
a feminine space, articulated in particular by French
feminists, but also its danger as a site of conservative
patriarchal fantasies about maternity. Caddy's mothering
cuts in two directions, for her and for Faulkner's
readers. The maternal gaze is, I believe, an important
addition to our understanding of scopic relations, yet
Caddy's deployment of it, while not conservative in and of
itself, is put to conservative purposes by the patriarchal family and turned against her in a variety of ways.

While Caddy's surrogate maternity is not punished within the text, her bold and independent sexuality is, starting with the slap she earns from Quentin for removing her wet dress in the branch when she is seven, continuing through Jason's surveillance of her activity with adolescent boys in the garden (in which he acts as his mother's deputy), and culminating in her enforced separation from her biological daughter, Miss Quentin. Not only is Caddy disowned by her family, but she is banned from the symbolic insofar as her mother ordains that her daughter's name not be spoken on the Compson property. Mrs. Compson, then, acts as the enforcer of patriarchal constructions of femininity, declaring, for example, that "there is no halfway ground that a woman is either a lady or not" (118) and wearing black and moaning that her daughter is dead after she catches Caddy kissing a boy (264). Through Mrs. Compson's vigilant protection of the binarisms of sexual difference, Mr. Compson is free to sit back, drink, and formulate broadly cynical aphorisms about womanhood, which are his principal bequest to Quentin: "Because women so delicate so mysterious Father said. Delicate equilibrium of periodical filth between two moons balanced" (147). But Mrs. Compson is not the only enforcer of traditional feminine virtue, as
we have seen when Benjy insists that Caddy stop kissing Charlie in the swing and return to maternity.

When all attempts at surveillance and punishment fail, however, and Caddy has her own biological child, she cannot be allowed to raise Miss Quentin since the infant is the product of the sexual knowledge Caddy has gathered in the same grounds where she muddied her drawers a decade before. Where virginal maternity is acceptable (how ready the Compsons are to have Dilsey raise Miss Quentin), maculate--because sexual--conception is not. In Speculum of the Other Woman, Irigaray writes about Freud, "Thus, 'femininity' fades away before maternity, is absorbed into maternity" (74). This, I argue, is Caddy's greatest transgression: her femininity, which she defines transgressively as active, seeking, knowing, assertive, and sexual, does not give way to maternity but coexists with it, albeit in diminished form. The coexistence of feminity and maternity is somewhat tolerable in childhood because the child is malleable, at least in theory. Jason's constant threat of telling the adults, Quentin's slap, and Mrs. Compson's admonitions are all part of the discipline designed to direct Caddy toward a proper femininity--eventually. But Caddy's pregnancy ends the eventually, substituting now. Caddy reverses Irigaray's summary of Freud: her premature maternity of Benjy yields to a sexual femininity that cannot be tolerated within the family, by brothers, mother, or father. The existence of
that femininity, even as it coexists with biological
maternity and a maternal gaze, casts Caddy as "unfit
mother." The child/mother grows into the bad/daughter.
As Jane Gallop points out in examining the differences in
tone between Irigaray and Kristeva, the latter, like a
mother, "presumes the right to assert, to speak as if she
'knows'" whereas Irigaray, "writing in a tentative,
interrogative tone, always speaks her minority, her
inadequate command" (Daughter’s 116). In a parallel that
turns chronological age upside down, the child Caddy
firmly asserts her knowledge ("That’s all right how I
know. . . . I’m seven years old. . . . I guess I know"
[20]) where the adult Caddy doubts herself and her ability
to mother, falters and turns back in her speech ("'Oh, I’m
crazy,’ she says. 'I’m insane. I cant take her. Keep
her. What am I thinking of’" [240]). Caddy becomes the
lost mother, stuck in the imaginary without the child.

On the outskirts of the symbolic, Caddy continues to
undergo a variety of disciplines at the hands of the
remaining Compsons even as her daughter is the object of
an even more intense surveillance than Caddy underwent in
her adolescence. Where Miss Quentin is denied Caddy’s
maternal care, Caddy’s first child, Benjy, remembers her
gaze, although he can’t name it anymore than he can name
the act of remembering. In remembering her kneeling or
bending over to put herself on his level, in remembering
the moments that preceded her many hugs, in the ritual of

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waiting at the gate for her to return from school, Benjy
keeps alive the communion of looks he and Caddy shared, an
economy whose foundation was Caddy’s selfless giving, the
was of the lost imaginary.

"An Epistemological Trouble": Shutting Down Caddy’s Gaze

I want to circle back now to examine more closely how Caddy is expelled from the narrative, for how is as important to this study of the gaze as why. As a means to understanding the canonical narrative of *The Sound and the Fury*, it is helpful to consider a newer narrative in the canon of contemporary popular culture, the case of O.J. Simpson. The Faulkner novel and the Brown/Simpson narrative have in common the gaze as a method of control, male anxieties about female subjectivity couched in terms of female sexuality, the conjunction of sex and death, and, of utmost importance for this study, the question of knowledge. In describing Nicole Brown and Faye Resnick in his opening statement, Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., proclaimed, "Nobody was controlling these women" (Toobin 32), as if femininity is by definition out of control, in need of external—and, therefore, necessarily masculine—restraint. From such a view of women follows a practice of surveillance and discipline in which the gaze plays a major role. Cochran’s statement begins to reveal the highly gendered nature of his narrative, for to substitute the term men in Cochran’s complaint significantly changes our expectations about the narrative trajectory and
denouement. The specter of "women out of control" evokes images of the Bacchae, male dismemberment (especially castration), and the reversal of the binarisms of sexual difference—in sum, the gendered world turned on its head. One assumption that I will suggest, then hold in abeyance, is that women out of control look men in the eye—Medusa, certainly, and probably the Sphinx. This suggestion is an important one because it begins to pull into focus how rare—and transgressive—is the female gaze, and how likely to result in punishment for the gazer.

In the prosecution’s opening statements in O.J. Simpson’s trial, Deputy District Attorney Christopher A. Darden constructed this portrait of Simpson:

There was one evening when Keith [Zlomsowitch] and Nicole [Brown Simpson], they went to a comedy show, and after the show, they went to Nicole’s house on Gretna Green. It was about 3:00 in the morning. And they were seated on the sofa in her living room. The kids, the kids were upstairs asleep. It’s 3:00 o’clock in the morning. And Keith and Nicole made love on the couch.

But they weren’t alone. There was somebody watching. There was someone watching through the window. It was the defendant. At 3:00 o’clock in the morning, he was looking through Nicole’s window watching her make love to another man.

And the next day, when Keith and Nicole were together, he walked right into her house, and he was beside himself and he was angry and he said some very naughty things. But one of the things that he said to Keith and Nicole was that, he said, "I watched you last night. I watched you and I saw everything."

The evidence will show that that is somewhat unusual behavior to say the least. The evidence will show also that this is all part of this cycle. It’s all part of this dominant theme in their relationship. This is all part of his need to know everything about her, to know where she is, to know who she’s with, to know what she’s doing, to control her.
It’s control. It’s all about control. And though he did not interrupt them during the middle of the act and he didn’t punch Keith out and he didn’t punch Nicole out, he still watched so that he would know. And to control her, he had to confront her with what he knew, to intimidate her, to keep her from doing it again. It’s all about control. (California v. Simpson n. pag.)

The Sound and the Fury and the O.J. Simpson narrative share a similar agenda: "To know everything about her, to know where she is, to know who she’s with, to know what she’s doing." The possible closures for "her" are death, salvation, or expulsion from the narrative, the same resolutions for the femme fatale in film noir. "To know everything about her" is to see woman, whether Caddy or Nicole Brown, as an epistemological problem solved most directly through the gaze of surveillance. As I have argued in Chapter 1, a dominating gaze, which seeks to eclipse all other gazes, accounts for some of the theoretical confusion about looking relations: the success of the dominant gaze in suppressing other looks promotes the conclusion that only one gaze existed in the literary or cinematic work from the outset, or in the case of The Sound and the Fury, only one per narration. What we see in the story of the Compson siblings, though, is the building of narrative tension through a battle for the dominant gaze, a tension dispelled through Caddy’s disempowerment. Her expulsion to the margins of the narrative is both effected through and marked by the defeat and subsequent disciplining of her formerly
powerful gaze. The experience of "locking eyes" may be a paradigm for communication and communion, as Keller and Grontkowski contend, but it can also be the call to a battle royal for a single, dominant gaze.

The Sound and the Fury describes an elaborate network of surveillance. I have already detailed how Benjy preserves Caddy’s surrogate maternity by following her and watching, disrupting her amorous activities in the garden. Furthermore, Caddy’s failure to suppress her sexuality for Benjy’s sake is signalled by the change in her look, the loss of intense connection that marked the maternal gaze and her new inability to lock eyes with Benjy:

Caddy came to the door and stood there, looking at Father and Mother. Her eyes flew at me, and away. I began to cry. It went loud and I got up. Caddy came in and stood with her back to the wall, looking at me. I went toward her, crying, and she shrank against the wall and I saw her eyes and I cried louder and pulled at her dress. She put her hands out but I pulled at her dress. Her eyes ran. (78)

Nowhere else in Benjy’s narration is Caddy described as "looking at" Benjy. That small preposition is the trace of the distance—the separation—now established between brother and sister ("mother" and "child") as Caddy moves into adult sexuality and the Oedipal triangle, in which the child is set aside for the father.

Furthermore, this scene in which Caddy’s maternal gaze is lost serves as the climax of Benjy’s narrative, driven home by the last dialogue in the section, when Mr. Compson asks the seven-year-old Caddy (using Benjy’s birth
name before it is altered by Mrs. Compson), "'Are you
going to take good care of Maury.' 'Yes.' Caddy said" (85). In this way, Caddy’s maturation is tied to a failure "to take good care," an abandonment that leaves Benjy with only a slipper as a fetish: "I squatted there, holding the slipper. I couldn’t see it, but my hands saw it, and I could hear it getting night, and my hands saw the slipper but I couldn’t see myself, but my hands could see the slipper, and I squatted there, hearing it get dark" (82). This synesthesia, although not unusual in Benjy’s narration, is subtly marked in its poignance as Caddy’s fault in that she has always been the one to urge Benjy towards a symbolic that he will never reach, trying to interpret his attempts at speech, trying to sort his senses out for him. Consequently, this merging of sight with touch after Caddy is banished from the family marks her absence as tutor and loving object of Benjy’s gaze, the ability to separate object from subject being an achievement of the mirror stage where the mother is the necessary prop. Caddy’s culpability cuts two ways, as does so much else in The Sound and the Fury. On the one hand, we recognize Caddy’s entrapment as the "little mother," the young woman literally pushed up against the wall by her brother’s accusing gaze, "her eyes like cornered rats" (171). It is not until Quentin’s narration that we truly realize the fearful violence of Benjy’s reaction:
one minute she was standing there the next he was yelling and pulling at her dress they went into the hall and up the stairs yelling and shoving at her up the stairs to the bathroom door and stopped her back against the door and her arm across her face yelling and trying to shove her into the bathroom (171)

On the other hand, we also are invested in the narrative movement of Benjy's section, which casts Caddy not only as "the one to lose" but as the mother-betrayer. The maternal gaze is a plenitude hard to part with, and identifying with the maturing Caddy is identifying against the infant remnant in all of us. In our mixed feelings--and the text's--about Caddy's new sexual knowledge, we register the power of the desire not to know, which is a constant undercurrent in the epistemology of the gaze.¹⁷

Quentin's wish not to know takes a somewhat different form from ours in that one of his pre-eminent desires is to fortify the binarisms of sexual difference around Caddy, hemming her into a traditional femininity that will in turn confirm his masculinity, and through that his subjectivity. Not knowing can be as potent a form of control as knowing. Like his brothers, Quentin has watched Caddy, policing her sexuality; for example, as an adolescent, he drags himself out of bed with a broken leg to throw lumps of coal at an amorous delivery boy. But for the oldest brother, this project of propping up his own identity through his sister is necessarily at the cost of choosing not to know some important things about Caddy--her desires and frustrations, the ways in which she pops

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out of the seams of traditional femininity. Instead of knowing and understanding his sister, Quentin retreats into the repetition of a patriarchal creed that increasingly fails to reassure him: "Father and I protect women from one another from themselves our women" (110). Despite Quentin's attempts, though, "all stable things . . . become shadowy paradoxical" (195). In a way, the brother's enterprise is like a microcosm of Faulkner's narrative form: for Quentin, it is more moving to watch Caddy or think about her than it is to listen to her speak about her own life--more moving to look at her but not really see. Edgar Allan Poe wrote,

I asked myself--"Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy topic most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious--"When it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world --and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

(458)

Through Faulkner's kaleidoscopic form, we are presented with a multiplication of bereaved lovers (figuratively speaking, Quentin and Benjy), a multiplication of deaths (Quentin and his father), and the figurative death of a beautiful woman in Caddy's exile from the text. Perhaps exile approaches death in melancholia, for the temptation of and desire for a reunion is tantalizingly conjoined with the "nevermore" of a living death. And this
multiplication of melancholy narrative elements works itself out over (and around, given the way the narrations cluster around Caddy) the body of a woman and of her daughter as her avatar.

When Quentin does ask Caddy about her feelings, after the Compson household has been thrown into an uproar by Benjy’s reaction to his sister’s new sexual knowledge, Quentin’s response to her revelations is a knife to her throat and an offer to kill her, then himself. While the situation between the siblings is complex, and I risk being reductive here, it is not without significance that the method of death Quentin offers is specifically a silencing, as was the method used to kill Nicole Brown Simpson. Nor is it by chance that he offers a wounding and destruction of the very part of her anatomy that Caddy has used to demonstrate her desire for her lover: "she moved my hand up against her throat her heart was hammering there" (173). This imagery of desire and life drawn to the surface of the body recurs on the day of Quentin’s suicide when a sparrow perches outside the window, taking the young man as the object of its gaze: "First he’d watch me with one eye, then flick! and it would be the other one, his throat pumping faster than any pulse" (90). Quentin’s path toward death is marked by his repeated objectification: by the sparrow, the little Italian girl, the boys swimming in the river, the bold eye of the law, the idea that a drowned man’s shadow watches
for him in the water, and by the girls with the Blands, who "looked at me again with that delicate and curious horror, their veils turned back upon their little white noses and their eyes fleeing and mysterious beneath the veils" (167). Quentin's recognition that he cannot assert his subjectivity in the face of these objectifying gazes confirms for him his failed masculinity--male as bearer of the gaze--and encourages him on his path to the river.18

In childhood, Quentin's struggle with Caddy to establish a gendered hierarchy takes the form of statements like "I'm older than you" (20). As Caddy achieves sexual knowledge, Quentin persists in asserting the timeworn basics of sexual difference, telling Caddy "I'm stronger than you" (170, 176), a primitive defense against the fact that his sister has turned upside down the most basic rule of gender and sexuality: in the South (as elsewhere) women are supposed to be virgins until marriage and men are not (89). Even as he attempts to find a foothold to take the dominant position over his sister, Quentin's obsession with sororal incest links him to the imaginary and constructs Caddy once again as surrogate mother, the role she already plays for Benjy. Quentin imagines Caddy and himself in hell (by definition, as far from the Father as one can get) in a perfect dyad: "Then you will have only me then only me then the two of us amid the pointing and the horror beyond the clean flame" (133). Such an objectification of the couple--such
a spectacle—is acceptable so long as Quentin can have Caddy to himself, all her looks for him, their gazes locked together in communion.

On a number of occasions, Quentin tries to compel Caddy’s gaze to focus on him, moving around in front of her each time she turns her back on him in the hog wallow, for example (157), and getting in front of her on the path when she tries to walk away after his plan for a double suicide fails (174). In these instances, a possibility of dominance, in this case through the male gaze, results not in Caddy’s recognition of Quentin’s manliness but instead in maternal affection: at the branch, after Quentin drops the knife, Caddy says “don’t cry poor Quentin” and holds his head “against her damp hard breast” (175), removing through this configuration of bodies any lingering possibility that he might assert the prerogative of masculinity and take her as the object of his gaze.

Quentin’s desire to kill his sister with a knife wound to the neck is also a desire to castrate the phallic mother—behead Medusa—since his own phallic power (including his ability to hold onto the knife or find it in the dark) has proved so illusory. As Freud explains, “probably no one finds the mental energy required to kill himself unless, in the first place, he is in doing this at the same time killing an object with whom he has identified himself, and, in the second place, is turning against himself a death-wish which had been directed against someone else”
"Psychogenesis" 149). Mr. Compson tells Quentin, "we must just stay awake and see evil done for a little while" (202), a philosophy that casts the gaze in a passive role. In suicide, Quentin chooses an apotheosis through objectification. His eyes permanently closed, he becomes the object par excellence, but an object that always indicts those who still have the gaze, particularly Caddy, whose look has upset the apple cart of sexual difference ever since she climbed the tree to look in the lighted parlor window.

"If I've got to spend half my time being a dam detective": Jason and the Defeat of the Maternal Gaze

The significant developments in the third and fourth sections of The Sound and the Fury with respect to the female gaze are its tragic defeat in the person of Caddy and its re-emergence, albeit in diminished form, in Miss Quentin. While Benjy's and Quentin's gazes, each in their own way, sought a communion with Caddy, Jason's look represents surveillance and investigation at their most punitive. The subversive irruption of Miss Quentin's gaze through the barrier of Jason's domineering looks, however, reveals a species of communion not anticipated by Keller and Grontkowski in their description of "locking eyes": Jason as gazer is locked in opposition with Miss Quentin, who plays desperately with her position as object of the gaze to transform herself into a subject. Locking eyes becomes not a welcome communion of subject with subject,
but a struggle for dominance ordained by a restrictive view of the gaze as a binary system.

While Miss Quentin is Jason's perfect opponent, Caddy, as Minrose Gwin points out, is Jason's perfect victim because her economy is based on excessive giving while his thrives on taking more than he gives (Feminine 56). His excess profit is created through such noiresque pursuits as blackmail, browbeating, physical force, hoarding, forgery, and highly risky commodity trades. Like any blackmailer, Jason trades in knowledge, helping Mrs. Compson keep the news of Mr. Compson's death from Caddy and controlling her access to information about her daughter--in sum, setting himself up as the tollkeeper between the remaining Compsons and the disowned, exiled young woman. "Information wants to be free" is a catch phrase in Internet culture and serves equally well as a motto for an economy without reserve like Caddy's. But when the disgraced woman attempts to destabilize Jason's economy by seeing Miss Quentin with Dilsey's help and gathering information about the family firsthand, Jason re-establishes his power by characterizing Caddy's gaze as contaminated and--particularly significant for its ties to the imaginary--contaminating: "I told Dilsey she had leprosy and I got the bible and read where a man's flesh rotted off and I told her that if she ever looked at her or Ben or Quentin they'd catch it too" (237). Allegedly, Caddy's gaze reaches out like a touch to spread contagion;
it does not maintain the safe, non-contaminating distance of an objectifying look. In Jason's damning description, Caddy becomes a kind of Medusa, whose look reaches to the horizon, spreading death not through the stiffening of the flesh that Freud reads as a reassurance in the face of the castrating woman (212), but through a diminishment that foreshadows the extended description of Dilsey that begins the fourth section of the novel:

She had been a big woman once but now her skeleton rose, draped loosely in unpadded skin that tightened again upon a paunch almost dropsical, as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts . . . (307)

When this damning of her gaze fails to keep the persistent sister away and Jason threatens to have Dilsey fired and Benjy institutionalized, Caddy's economy of maternal looks and liberated information at last bows painfully to Jason's strict monetary exchange:

She looked at me for a while. There wasn't any street light close and I couldn't see her face much. But I could feel her looking at me. When we were little when she'd get mad and couldn't do anything about it her upper lip would begin to jump. Everytime it jumped it would leave a little more of her teeth showing, and all the time she'd be as still as a post, not a muscle moving except her lip jerking higher and higher up her teeth. But she didn't say anything. She just said, "All right. How much?" (239)

The objectifying gaze Caddy trains on Jason during this negotiation has lost most of its force now that both siblings know Jason can control the maternal gaze by
enforcing physical distance between mother and daughter. Yet Caddy’s look touching Jason’s face is a reminder of that gaze which diminishes the distinction between looking and touching and threatens to carry the adult brother back to the realm of the imaginary. When the siblings meet at their father’s funeral, for example, Jason reports, "We stood there, looking at the grave, and then I got to thinking about when we were little and one thing and another and I got to feeling funny again, kind of mad or something" (233). Caddy has an unusual power to remind Jason of their shared childhood history and evoke in him a rush of feelings for which he has no words, partly because his life is ruled almost exclusively by monetary exchange, anger, and resentment, but also because Caddy’s look evokes the imaginary and the period before language, when “his mouth moved, like tasting” (82).

Even as the younger brother is cruelly thwarting Caddy’s maternal gaze by allowing her only a glimpse of the infant Miss Quentin as the carriage rushes by, the fragility of his economy is evident in his anxious, repetitive counting and the hectoring tone of the voice in his head: "And so I counted the money again that night and put it away, and I didn’t feel so bad. I says I reckon that’ll show you. I reckon you’ll know now that you cant beat me out of a job and get away with it" (235-36). Like O.J. Simpson as constructed in the prosecution’s opening statement, Jason employs a two-step
process to contain the threat of femininity. First, the woman is framed through an objectifying gaze: Caddy is framed by the carriage window as the desperate woman, the beaten woman, while Nicole Brown is framed by her living room window as the "adulterous" woman. Then each man further props up his shaky subjectivity by reminding his victim of his power, either directly, as with Simpson, or through an imagined confrontation, as with Jason. For both men, when these two steps fail--objectification as knowledge gathered visually and verbal confrontation as a declaration of knowledge and power--the implied third step is physical violence as a performance of the power knowledge confers--"See (and feel) that I know how to control you." Jason makes the steps of the procedure plain in his rumination on keeping the upper hand in gender relations through the marshaling of knowledge: "I never promise a woman anything nor let her know what I'm going to give her. That's the only way to manage them. Always keep them guessing. If you can't think of any other way to surprise them, give them a bust in the jaw" (222).

Even in Jason's successful domination, however, a sad remnant of Caddy's power remains. Jason's life is ruled by his need to take revenge on Caddy in particular and women in general. While the ostensible reason for revenge is the lost bank job offered by Herbert Head as part of the bride price, the text makes clear in the childhood scenes Jason's long-term resentment of Caddy's power and
autonomy; hence, the "job" Caddy has taken from him is also masculinity, with its attendant privileges of seeing and knowing. His constant refrain of "I'm going to tell" signals his early use of surveillance to try to contain Caddy within the hierarchy of age and gender, first by watching, then by threatening, then by reporting her activities to those in control. But Jason is also always the corrupt noir detective: while he wants to re-establish order in the patriarchal system, his primary allegiance is always to himself. If he can meet his immediate needs by bartering or withholding information, he is happy to make a private deal, with Caddy or anyone else.

Significantly, after she begs Jason for custody of Miss Quentin, then breaks down under his browbeating, we never see Caddy again, although we hear about her from Miss Quentin, Jason, and Mrs. Compson. Additionally, we hear her distant voice in the form of a letter threatening Jason with her objectifying gaze and a knowledge that transcends looking ("Let me know at once or I'll come there and see for myself. . . . You're opening my letters to her. I know that as well as if I were looking at you" [218]). While Minrose Gwin argues that Caddy's voice is silenced as female subject, but not as a "disruptive excess" (Feminine 46), I cannot make as strong a claim for her gaze. Although Caddy's gaze persists in the memory of her brothers, her threat to "come and see for myself" is
virtually empty since even when she is on the scene negotiating with Jason she is unable to gain more than a surreptitious bi-annual visitation, and she is completely unable to control the flow of cash to her daughter. Furthermore, her knowledge that claims to transcend the gaze has no power over Jason; he continues to open Miss Quentin's mail at will and embezzle the "feminine" funds Caddy sends to buy Miss Quentin "things like other girls" (241).

Jason, whom Faulkner described as "the first sane Compson since Culloden" (Portable 750), has disarmed Caddy's gaze by keeping her out of sight, "out of the know." All that remains are faint traces preserved in memory: Caddy's gaze in the tree outside the parlor window (when she was still "in the know") and her maternal gaze toward Benjy and her daughter, both of which persist as disruptive excess in the narrative. But working to counteract this excess are the moments when Caddy is forced into hysteria and her gaze is trapped and diminished: after her first experience of intercourse when she can no longer meet Benjy's eyes, for example, and in her negotiations with Jason, when he feels her eyes on his face, yet is able to close the discussion by saying, "As long as you behave and do like I tell you" (241). Caddy is disciplined at last. Like the contagion it threatens to become, Caddy's gaze is encircled by the objectifying looks of her brothers much the way we used to
imagine white corpuscles encircling and containing an infectious invader.²⁰ We are left with two consolations: First, like a virus, Caddy persists feebly in the narrative system that works to exclude her and, second, Miss Quentin develops a mutated version of Caddy's gaze and uses it to attack Jason.

In Jason's narration, Caddy becomes "[t]he hysteric, whose body is transformed into a theater for forgotten scenes, relives the past, bearing witness to a lost childhood that survives in suffering" (Clément, Newly Born 5). She "speaks badly, stutters, hiccups" (Clément, Newly Born 4) when she finally relinquishes her hope of retrieving the infant Miss Quentin: "'Oh, I'm crazy,' she says. 'I'm insane.' . . . 'No,' she says, then she begun to laugh and to try to hold it back all at the same time. 'No. I have nothing at stake,' she says, making that noise, putting her hands to her mouth. 'Nuh-nuh-nothing,' she says" (240-41). While Caddy begins the novel as an active gazer and finishes as a hysteric within Jason's world or a reprimanding, faint voice outside his world—a echo of her former self—Miss Quentin bounces quickly and repeatedly through positions similar to her mother's like the ball in roulette jumping across the numbers. Miss Quentin finally comes to rest as neo-noir femme fatale: the one who got away (with it all), like Matty Walker in Body Heat.²¹ While Caddy was "the one who loves," Miss Quentin as a hybrid of Caddy and Jason becomes "the one
who loves money," as we see when she ignores her mother's letter and has eyes only for the amount on the check (244). Although Miss Quentin can objectify Jason for a moment with "eyes hard as a fice dog’s" (215), she quickly loses her subjectivity when Jason overpowers her physically and verbally, fixing her for the moment in the positions of daughter of the family, youngest Compson, sexual criminal, and heir to her mother's misfortunes:

By the time I got the car stopped and grabbed her hands there was about a dozen people looking. It made me so mad for a minute it kind of blinded me.  
"You do a thing like that again and I'll make you sorry you ever drew breath," I says.  
"I'm sorry now," she says. She quit, then her eyes turned kind of funny and I says to myself if you cry here in this car, on the street, I'll whip you. I'll wear you out. Lucky for her she didn't, so I turned her wrists loose and drove on. (216)

Notice, however, that even as Miss Quentin is forced out of her defiant subjectivity toward the position of hysteric--the woman who suffers publicly, who weeps--she undermines Jason's position as subject through her public defiance and positions him as object of the townspeople's gaze, a kind of blinding. In her rapid-fire play among positions, Miss Quentin puts the spin on the binarism of subject/object. Soon we see not two distinct, opposing positions, but the impossibility of maintaining a fixed position; not the subject of the gaze above and the object below, but a whirling circle like a cartoon fight between a cat and a mouse.
Especially in the car chase around the county and its preliminaries in the alleys of Jefferson, Miss Quentin dramatizes for Jason the instability of the gazer: his desire for mastery—for a dominant gaze—dominates where it was supposed to empower. His wish to control Miss Quentin’s behavior, especially her sexual activity, through surveillance and punishment leads him to follow his gaze farther and farther from town, where he is at the mercy of his "blinding" headache and becomes an amusing spectacle for the country people, a rural replaying of his objectification by the townsfolk. Miss Quentin turns her position of "object of the gaze" into a public performance of femininity taken to an extreme, complete with excessive makeup and costume. About her dress, Jason reports, "I’ll be damned if they dont dress like they were trying to make every man they passed on the street want to reach out and clap his hand on it" (267). He describes her face as "painted up like a dam clown’s" (267) and tells her "you dont look all the way naked . . . even if that stuff on your face does hide more of you than anything else you’ve got on" (215). Even as his words indicate disapproval, the details that characterize Jason’s descriptions indicate he can’t take his eyes off Miss Quentin, as if part of his punitive surveillance is in the interests of keeping his own incestuous desire in check as another part caters to his visual pleasure.
To a limited extent and for a limited time, Miss Quentin brings into Jason's life something akin to Bakhtin's carnivalesque destabilizations. It is particularly appropriate, then, that Miss Quentin's play-with-a-purpose occurs at the time that the traveling show is in Jefferson and almost everyone but Jason is in a festive spirit. Her excessive makeup and costume, the mad car chase, the blaring car horn that publicly mocks Jason's vulnerability are like a clown's performance, except they don't take place on a stage or in a ring. As Bakhtin points out, "carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates," Jason unwillingly, of course (Rabelais 7). Miss Quentin's behavior on this carnival day disrupts the binarisms upon which Jason depends and which he reveres, and disrupts them in a highly public way: inside bursts outside, private becomes public, youth mocks maturity, subject becomes object in "the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (à l'envers), of the 'turnabout,' of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear" (Rabelais 11). Carnival represents "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank,
privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed" (Rabelais 10), including Jason's inflexible view of his own rectitude, suffering, and superiority. Bakhtin points to the regenerative function of laughter in carnival and gives as an example risus paschalis--Easter laughter--which seems particularly appropriate for a discussion of The Sound and the Fury, given that its action builds to Easter Sunday.²²

But as Bakhtin also points out, carnival laughter is ambivalent; it is directed equally at those who laugh, folding back on itself (Rabelais 12). In this spirit, the laugh is also on Miss Quentin, for even as she turns the tables on Jason, stealing the money that he has stolen from her, her disappearance from the narrative, which mirrors her mother's, separates her--seemingly irrevocably--from the only community she has known and from her mother, for her only contact with Caddy is through Jason. Furthermore, as in carnival, Miss Quentin's disruptions are temporary; they revive the spirit of Caddy in the narrative after she has been expelled, but ultimately the Compson household returns to its dysfunctional but satisfying routines: Jason as brutal as ever, Mrs. Compson as selfish, Dilsey as long suffering. Benjy's bellowing quiets as the carriage is put back on its familiar path, and "his eyes were empty
and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place" (371). Such order is, like the structure of The Sound and the Fury, a melancholy pleasure, but it is order--and closure--nonetheless.

"I knows what I knows": Dilsey and the Gibson Gaze

Throughout The Sound and the Fury, the Gibson family is present, although not always accounted for. While the fourth section of the novel gives significant attention to Dilsey, like Caddy she is not vouchsafed her own narration, although Faulkner made no claim that such a narrative approach preserves Dilsey’s beauty. Rather, he always emphasized the novel’s failure of sense and the last section as an attempt--a vain one--to draw into cohesion the other sections:

And so I told the idiot’s experience of that day, and that was incomprehensible, even I could not have told what was going on then, so I had to write another chapter. Then I decided to let Quentin tell his version of that same day, or that same occasion, so he told it. Then there had to be the counterpoint, which was the other brother, Jason. By that time it was completely confusing. I knew that it was not anywhere near finished and then I had to write another section from the outside with an outsider, which was the writer, to tell what happened on that particular day... I was still trying to tell one story which moved me very much and each time I failed, but I had put so much anguish into it that I couldn’t throw it away, like the mother that had four bad children, that she would have been better off if they all had been eliminated, but she couldn’t relinquish any of them. (Meriwether 147)
While Faulkner still judges that the last section failed, what I want to emphasize is his desire for the last section, which was a wish for order and control. In the context of the gaze, the final section, characterized by an omniscient narrator, is a kind of literary Panopticon—the see-all and know-all of narration, precisely that which the other sections are structured not to deliver.

Interesting for a study of the gaze, then, is the attention that the fourth section devotes to a detailed description of Dilsey: "one gaunt hand flac-soled as the belly of a fish," "her fallen breasts," the skeleton "draped loosely in unpadded skin that tightened again upon a paunch almost dropsical," "the somnolent and impervious guts" (306-07). While the comparison of her skeleton to a "ruin or a landmark" does convey a kind of dignity rooted in history, the extreme physicality of the description also provokes a certain distaste. Additionally, the account of Dilsey's outfit ("a stiff black straw hat perched upon her turban, and a maroon velvet cape with a border of mangy and anonymous fur above a dress of purple silk" [306]) conveys not only the old woman's poverty but also an almost comic impression of excess and inappropriateness—a hat and a turban and fur that no longer lays claim to a particular species. Yet these images of Dilsey's clothing, face, and body represent the single most detailed description of any character in the
novel, all of whom have been created more through dialogue and action than physical appearance.

Furthermore, Luster, Dilsey’s grandson, is also made the object of the narrator’s acutely objectifying gaze as he puts on a new hat to attend the Easter worship service: "The hat seemed to isolate Luster’s skull in the beholder’s eye as a spotlight would, in all its individual planes and angles. So peculiarly individual was its shape that at first glance the hat appeared to be on the head of someone standing immediately behind Luster" (334). Thadious Davis sees this description as derived from the Sambo or pickaninny figure, although in general she judges that Luster is represented as something more than a comic stereotype (Faulkner’s 79). While later in the section, the Reverend Shegog is described in similar unflattering detail that suggests a racist stereotype ("He had a wizened black face like a small, aged monkey" [339]), there is a narrative purpose that partially justifies this description, namely moving Shegog from the diminutive and unimpressive figure who produces a sigh of disappointment from the congregation to the powerful speaker who transports the worshippers--and especially Dilsey--to a religious epiphany. In contrast, the text’s treatment of Luster seems gratuitous--an exhibition of objectification that creates the young man as an incongruous spectacle who, as spectacle will, temporarily stops the flow of the diegesis (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 19).
The omniscient narrator is also less than flattering in describing Mrs. Compson and Jason, although they receive a far less detailed treatment than Dilsey. In the case of both white characters, however, their eyes are described, and in mentioning this feature, the text creates the possibility of their gaze—that is, gives them the anatomical feature along with the expectation that they will at some point use it. Still, some of the purpose of this final section seems to be to fix the remaining characters of both races (in the sense that a specimen—a butterfly, for example—is fixed or pinned) with a steady, meticulous, somewhat unsympathetic gaze. Given that this fourth section was written to create order out of the chaos of the three previous sections, it is not without significance that the African-American characters are, to a greater or lesser extent, "put in their place" through stereotyping, mild humor, and an objectifying gaze that constructs them as incapable of looking back since, unlike Jason and Caroline Compson, they have no eyes. These portraits are taken in what might be described as the harsh light of noon, a light which shows every foible and flaw. While such a light might be described as "objective," in comparison to the lyricism in many passages in the previous sections, this viewpoint can also be seen as mean spirited in its distanced and judgmental stance. We see the Gibsons not "as they are" but instead as they appear to the eyes of an outsider (as Faulkner
intended, according to his own report), but an unforgiving one with little sympathy for a poverty based in race and the accommodations that make it tolerable: the hand-me-downs with which the Gibsons make do and the pleasure of wearing whatever finery one has, especially to honor a sacred occasion like Easter. Furthermore, given that Dilsey is the one in the Compson household who creates order out of chaos, the choice to deny her a narration when order is called for casts her structurally as servant to the narration, whose proper place is once again behind the scenes. For these reasons, the omniscient gaze of the narration in the fourth section seems particularly white, privileged, and traditionally masculine in its emphasis on distance, judgment, harsh objectivity, and a willingness to take credit for someone else’s labor.

At the same time, this outsider’s view reveals to the reader how fully she or he has seen the household, whether Gibson or Compson, from the inside. The brief mention of "the square, paintless house with its rotting portico" (344) and the "battered and lopsided surrey" (367) in the fourth section makes plain the physical decay of the property and brings with it a sudden flash of economic insight: as busy as Jason has been with his literal and figurative economies, no one brings in enough money to keep the property up. And with this insight arises the question of who pays the Gibsons, if anyone does—and how many of them, and how much. As Davis points out, Luster’s
search for the quarter as well as his inability to pay
Jason five cents for a ticket to the show is strong
evidence that he isn’t paid by the Compsons; "[h]is
position, something else for him to moan about, is that of
a bondsman, body servant, or family slave, rather than
that of a modern employee" (Faulkner’s 78). Even so,
Jason’s constant complaint about the freeloading Gibsons
is a form of bragging, for it shows indirectly both the
Compson heritage of family retainers and the family’s
continued ability to take care of "their own"--a
postbellum noblesse oblige that manifests itself not in
wages but in room and board for the African Americans on
the Compson land (Davis, Faulkner’s 85). As is so often
the case with Jason, however, his bragging folds back on
itself insofar as anyone who glances at his property can
see that the ongoing support of family retainers is
scarcely synonymous with prosperity.

The proximity of the Gibsons to the Compsons--
Dilsey’s cabin just beyond the Compsons’ house, her almost
constant presence in the kitchen or elsewhere in the main
house, the coming and going of the other Gibsons in the
lives of the Compsons--means the Gibsons know far more
about the Compsons than the white family begins to
imagine. An important privilege of power, as I mentioned
in discussing Quentin, is not to know: not to think about
the details of the lives of one’s servants (for example,
in the film Imitation of Life [1959], Lora Meredith is
floored to discover that her housekeeper, Annie Johnson, who has also been her friend for many years, has friends of her own and an active life in her church) and not to see their grief or trouble (Dilsey's late husband Roskus disappears from the novel in a way that Mr. Compson never does since Mrs. Compson has the luxury—and the narcissistic personality—to keep him alive through her complaints and self-pity). The blind eye of the privileged white family allows the African-American gaze to travel with relative freedom behind the scenes—an upstairs/downstairs arrangement where the servants know both levels but the served know only their own. Hence, Frony knows hours before the Compson children that Damuddy is dead and is instructed, we assume by Dilsey, to keep the knowledge to herself, which she obediently does, knowing also that this knowledge gives her a temporary superiority over the white children. "I knows what I knows," she says. "I already knows . . . I don't need to see" (41). The marginalized gazer is temporarily one up on the privileged white children.

While Frony's statement, "I already knows . . . I don't need to see," probably has as its basis knowledge gleaned from Dilsey, the fact that we are never privy to the conversation between mother and daughter gives Frony's assertion an undercurrent of the uncanny or supernatural, a note picked up again in the fourth section when Dilsey raises "her face as if her eyes could and did penetrate
the walls and ceiling and saw the old woman in her quilted dressing gown at the head of the stairs, calling her name with machinelike regularity" (312). But calling Dilsey is not the only thing Mrs. Compson does with machinelike regularity; her self-pity and self-centeredness make her needs and behaviors highly predictable, so Dilsey’s look can be read as one of focused attention just as much as one of arcane knowledge. The construction of the African-American characters, then, hovers on the line between the Other endowed with magical powers--second sight--and the marginalized figure who has an unusually acute knowledge of the center as a result of her or his exclusion from it.24

What is most characteristic of the Gibson gaze in the Compson household is its power to witness. Dilsey asserts after the Easter service, "I’ve seed de first en de last" (344), sounding like an Old Testament prophet, but at the same time speaking truthfully of her long service to the Compson family and her conviction that they will not endure, as she has and will, despite her advanced years.25 As a teenaged witness, Luster looks "like a fice dog, brightly watchful" as he attempts to fathom why Jason is so upset Easter morning (329). Of course, it turns out Luster has a crucial piece of information about Miss Quentin provided by the gaze: "'Me and Benjy seed her clamb out de window last night. Didn’t us, Benjy?’ ‘You did?’ Dilsey said, looking at him. ‘We sees her doin hit
ev‘y night,’ Luster said. ‘Clamb right down dat pear tree’" (331). The gazer marginalized by class, race, and age knows not only what probably happened to Jason’s money and when but also that Jason’s surveillance of Miss Quentin has been ineffective in a major way, as has Mrs. Compson’s role as jailer. When Dilsey asks why Luster didn’t mention any of this, “’Twarn’t none o my business,’ Luster said. ‘I aint gwine git mixed up in white folks’ business’” (331). The color line creates a divide in knowledge since what Luster has discovered is for him a curiosity, whereas for the Compsons it is essential information, "business" in the sense that the profits from Jason’s fraud have been stolen by his victim, "a bitch of a girl" who has foiled his attempt to right the gendered wrongs inflicted on him by her mother (355). Since Luster can’t see any way in which Jason’s best interests coincide with his own, he simply keeps out of trouble and by doing so short circuits the flow of information to the detriment of the white economy, but not the black. If trouble is inevitable, as Judith Butler claims, Luster has learned an important skill in a racially polarized world: to sit quietly in the eye of the storm as the white folks’ trouble swirls around him but leaves him untouched and unmoved.

In his narration, Quentin mentions the ability of African Americans to synthesize the knowledge they have gained through observations of white life, sometimes
sharing a judgment across the color line. For example, when the Compsons change Maury’s name to Benjy, “Dilsey said it was because Mother was too proud for him. They come into white people’s lives like that in sudden sharp black trickles that isolate white facts for an instant in unarguable truth like under a microscope; the rest of the time just voices that laugh when you see nothing to laugh at, tears when no reason for tears” (195). In Quentin’s analysis, African Americans are at times objective, distanced observers—scientists of white life—who then retreat behind the veil of their segregated lives, remaining inexplicable to whites. It is significant, though, that Quentin was just a boy when Dilsey shared this information about Benjy’s name change, for his youth placed him often in the downstairs world with a special closeness to Dilsey as his caretaker and the chance to overhear adult talk between Dilsey and Roskus, for example. It is intriguing, though, that Quentin chooses emotions for his two examples of the mysteriousness of African Americans, for the emotions are better understood through empathy than objective study. Quentin’s inability to part the veil between the races becomes above all a failure of feeling, that which both Caddy and Dilsey have in abundance. But Caddy too has her problems seeing across the lines of color and class: “‘The [window] next to it is where we have the measles.’ Caddy said. ‘Where do you and T.P. have the measles, Frony.’ ‘Has them just
wherever we is, I reckon.' Frony said" (43). What we see, then, are small moments when one marginalization--age or gender, for example--creates a temporary solidarity or shared interest that supersedes other differences, allowing an epiphany or instant of greater communication. Then differences or hierarchies reassert themselves, and through the veil travel only fragments of information, "full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing" ([Macbeth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macbeth) 5.5.27-28).

In her travel from her cabin to the house, from downstairs to upstairs, Dilsey is often the one to part the veil, allowing a brief flow of information in both directions. While her gaze travels freely in the execution of her duties, because of her race it has little force to dominate the Compsons except when they are in her care as children. Although she offers maternal protection to Miss Quentin by physically inserting herself between the young woman and the punitive Jason, Dilsey is violently thrown aside by the angry Compson son and called "You damn old nigger" by Miss Quentin (212-13). Furthermore, her gaze is rarely mentioned in her interactions with the adult Compsons and must be imagined in moments of confrontation, for example, when Dilsey scolds, "You, Jason! Ain’t you shamed of yourself" (212). On the other hand, Dilsey’s gaze is potent and far reaching with her grandson Luster, whose "head turned backwards continually until the house passed from view,"
at which point he does exactly what he knows Dilsey wants him not to do: stop to pick a switch with which he will hurry the horse around the square in the wrong direction in the final pages of the novel. The power of Dilsey’s gaze, then, is tied directly to her role as mother or mother surrogate, and the hierarchy of race reasserts itself at the first opportunity, her white “children” demoting her at their convenience. But therein lies the difference between what might be called the first generation and the second generation of Compson children, although the distinction is made more by behavior than chronology: Caddy and Quentin benefited from and continued to respect Dilsey’s care (to the extent that they were able) where Miss Quentin and Jason are opportunistic and self-involved. The gaze as an instrument of shaming, as a moral force, has little effect in an economy based solely on self-interest. And in this diminishment of the Compson family through the expulsion and death of the children who best reflected its humanity (however imperfectly), Dilsey is diminished too, yet remains a landmark, a ruin, an upright skeleton—the hard core that endures across the generations as Miss Quentin heads for the horizon, Jason and Mrs. Compson feed on self-pity, Caddy hovers at the margin. Meanwhile, the Gibsons make do, constantly negotiating the difference between white folks’ business and their own.
Repetition and Doom: Complicitous Narrative Pleasures

I want to circle back now to the chapter’s beginning to reactivate the question of spectatorship/readership, taking as a guide Susan Winnett, who argues for "a rereading that evaluates the ideology of narrative dynamics according to whose desire they serve, rendering us suspicious of our complicity in what has presented itself to us as the pleasure of the text" (516). We have had our pleasure in watching the rose bloom, particularly in the childhood scenes: Benjy’s eager response to Caddy, her tender care of him and also Quentin, her flouting of the rules of feminine decorum, her ability to weave the children into a loose-knit group, and her gaze that travels widely. Now we must answer for the second part of the double movement as the rose closes back up into a tight bud, as if claiming that Caddy’s subjectivity and sexuality never bloomed.

Within the patriarchal family, Caddy is a civil disruption which must be put down, but what troubles a feminist reading more than the details of plot, I argue, is our complicity in narrative dynamics. Mulvey asserts, “Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end” (“Visual Pleasure” 22). The disruption that is Caddy must be suppressed and Caddy must be changed if we are to reach
the promised sense of closure, and here our pleasures turn guilty or, as Mulvey implies, even sadistic. As there is pleasure in seeing Caddy gazing, there is narrative pleasure in seeing contained the disruption that is her gaze; as there is pleasure in seeing Caddy come into her sexual agency, there is pleasure in seeing the patriarchal balance re-established, not because it is patriarchal, but because it is balance. Yet it is not surprising that the balance is patriarchal if we see narrative as a mapping of sexual difference in which the roles are divided between male-hero-human on the one side and female-obstacle-boundary-space on the other (de Lauretis, Alice 121). What is notable about The Sound and the Fury within this context is Caddy’s refusal to settle down into the prescribed roles, even as her voice fades to a whisper like the sibyl’s: to be obstacle to be overcome or landscape to be traveled through, monster to be conquered or reward at the end of the journey. Even as she is the loving mother, she is also the one who aims to be "a king or a giant or a general" (198). In her both and and, she resists the narrative drive towards stability and stasis, just as she resists Quentin’s wish that "people could . . . change one another forever" (202). In our identification, we too are both and and, complicit in our desire for closure, which forces Caddy to the margins, and disruptive in our pleasure that she continues to transgress, even if weakly. And so we shift uneasily, not
exactly in transvestite clothes, as Mulvey would have it ("Afterthoughts" 37), but in motley, or in something akin to Dilsey's hand-me-down Easter attire: clothing that doesn't quite fit but we have put together as best we can and for which we have an enduring fondness.

In Jean-François Lyotard's complex analysis of narrative in The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, he explains the mechanism of repetition by which narrative, which would seem to say "never forget," actually promotes forgetting. He argues that "a collectivity that takes narrative as its key form of competence has no need to remember its past. It finds the raw material for its social bond not only in the meaning of the narratives it recounts, but also in the act of reciting them. The narratives' reference may seem to belong to the past, but in reality it is always contemporaneous with the act of recitation" (22). As part of a culture that valorizes the restriction and containment of women, The Sound and the Fury has a meaning in excess of its particulars, a meaning that runs contrary to our pleasure in Caddy's disruptions. The surveillance Caddy and Miss Quentin undergo is strangely contemporaneous with Simpson's surveillance of Nicole Brown. The restaurants of my youth named "The Silent Woman" (at least one of which was still doing business in the early 1980s), whose advertising featured a woman cradling her own lopped-off head, are repetitions of this
same narrative, as are the constant news stories, which risk becoming generic, of "woman killed by estranged husband/boyfriend."

I do not claim that each of these stories "means" the same thing; I have no interest in being so reductive. As Lyotard indicates, however, "The important thing about the pragmatic protocol of this kind of narration is that it betokens a theoretical identity between each of the narrative's occurrences. . . . what it emphasizes is the metrical beat of the narrative occurrences, not each performance's differences in accent" (22). In other words, the differences that both Minrose Gwin and I are so eager to locate--Caddy's escapes, the remnants of her voice and gaze, Faulkner's sympathies for the plight of his "heart's darling" (Gwynn and Blotner 6)--are at least partly overpowered by this narrative's participation in a larger narrative repetition: the pleasure of seeing a disruptive feminine element brought back into line through investigation, punishment, or salvation. If those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, as George Santayana claimed, narrative assures its own repetition through repetition; the narrative machine pulls us along, producing pleasures we consume greedily in our desire to feed the hunger for both disruption and closure.

As a way of ending this section without ending, for our investment in narrative and its troubles has just begun, I want to recount two competing--or are they
intersecting?—narratives about repetition. The first is Mary Ann Doane’s rehearsal of Freud’s tale:

In attempting to explain the pleasure involved in the compulsion to repeat a traumatic experience, Freud seized upon a game played by his grandson. The little boy came to terms with the comings and goings of his mother by means of a game which consisted simply of throwing away a cotton-reel attached to a string and then pulling it in. While playing this game the child emitted sounds which Freud interpreted as _fort_ (there it goes) and _da_ (here it is). The psychical significance of the game is related to the fact that it represents the child’s mastery through symbolization of the loss of the first object of desire—the mother. The game itself usurps the place of the woman . . . (Femmès 102)

But where Freud interprets this game as a repetition that eventually masters loss (something the Compsons are never able to master), what if repetition is also a way to find a different ending: _not to lose_? I knew a woman who in her childhood begged her parents every night to read the fairy tale "The Red Shoes." Her hope was that the ending, in which the young girl’s feet are chopped off (a traumatic experience for the listener as well as the character), would rewrite itself overnight, yielding a new narrative closure, a "happily ever after." While we are too old to believe in purely happy endings, our repetitive readings of narratives in which women are lost—in which narrative pleasures replace the woman herself—are also always investigations in a mode other than _film noir_: not an attempt to demystify the woman’s mystery, to devalue, punish, or save her (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 21).

Instead, we backtrack at least partly to hear her voice,
let her speak for herself, see not how she is seen but what she sees--her gaze in action and the different story it might tell.

**A Gaze Unbecoming: Gender and Class in Days of Heaven**

In describing cinema's "endless renarrativization of the castration crisis," Kaja Silverman equates woman's castration with "exclusion from symbolic power and privilege," an exclusion "articulated as a passive relation to classic cinema's scopic and auditory regimes--as an incapacity for looking, speaking, or listening authoritatively, on the one hand, and with what might be called a 'receptivity' to the male gaze and voice, on the other" (*Acoustic* 31). This half chapter concentrates on the complex interaction of gazes in *Days of Heaven*, including those of Linda (Linda Manz) and Abby (Brooke Adams) as they attempt to look, speak, and especially know authoritatively. Linda and her gaze go everywhere, gathering information, and her voice follows suit, although often the camera doesn't: she observes and comments on the romantic dyad of Bill (Richard Gere) and Abby, the triangle of Bill, Abby, and the farmer (Sam Shepard), her teenaged friend's romantic disappointments, and the farm she comes to love but is forced to leave. Linda's narration, then, represents the intersection of gaze and voice: in voice-over, she relates the knowledge she has gathered visually and aurally, what she has seen.
for herself and gathered from other voices. She is granted a narration of her own, something Caddy Compson was denied. Yet Linda's voice and the openness and activeness of her gaze draw attention to Abby's silence and the way in which her role as object of desire positions her—and constrains her—as object of the male gaze and voice. At the end of the film, however, when Abby acquires a gaze of her own and is no longer a romantic commodity to be traded between Bill and the farmer, her specular advances are quickly and repeatedly defeated, a forceful reminder that the escape from heterosexual romance is not to be mistaken for an exemption from gender trouble. Between Linda's gaze and Abby's downcast look, between the girl's narration and the woman's susceptibility to the male voice lies the entry into mature femininity and the recontainment of the female gaze. Although there are distinct differences between the characters in a number of ways, Days of Heaven takes Caddy Compson and splits her into two figures, giving a variety of freedoms to the girl that are denied to the woman.

But Days of Heaven is also a narrative of class, although the male characters play the primary roles in that conflict. Where the construction of femininity is split between Linda and Abby on the axis of age, masculinity is split between Bill and the farmer on the axis of class. As was the case with gender, I am most interested in the character who is disempowered, who
shifts uneasily in his position and attempts to escape the specific constraints assigned him by the ideology of class. What comes into clearer focus here and in subsequent chapters is the many ways in which those who are marginalized fight back through the gaze. Bill's multiple attempts to have a gaze of his own reveal the limits of our assumption that sexual difference alone is sufficient to explain specular relations, and the multiple containments Bill suffers at his death further reveal the severity of the threat posed to class by one laborer's look. Bill's resistance in the face of class allows us to observe Foucault's gaze of surveillance from another angle, to climb down the tower and see the other side of the story. What we discover is that those under the eye of the Panopticon find any number of ways to look back.

**What Linda Knew: Gathering Knowledge Through the Gaze**

The title sequence, which introduces Linda's gaze and features a montage of work by turn-of-the-century photographers such as Lewis Hine, H.H. Bennett, and William Notman (Donougho 20), includes many sepia-toned photographs of urban, working-class children as well as a few images of young working-class adults and people of indeterminate class enjoying themselves in nature. The montage ends with a photograph of Linda in an urban setting looking directly at the camera. Martin Donougho in "West of Eden: Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*" states that the photo of Linda is "jarring in its modern
look," but I would argue that the final photograph is
designed to fit seamlessly with the rest of the montage
and almost does so, by virtue of its sepia tint and its
subject matter: another working-class child in a working-
class street (20). What is jarring about the photo is not
its "modern look," but Linda's look itself, that is, the
directness of her gaze at the still camera.28 It has none
of the hazy sweetness of the blank look offered by the
curly-headed young girl featured earlier in the montage,
whose eyes and the reflections of light playing on them
invite our lingering, objectifying gaze. Nor does Linda's
gaze turn partly away, as do the eyes of the veiled young
woman later in the montage, inviting us to enjoy her
partially averted face without the danger of being
observed in return. Instead, Linda looks straight into
the camera without smiling, and that straightness, when
all rules of gender cast Linda as the object of the gaze,
not its author, can be read as a challenge, one that will
be answered before the film's final frame.

Even as Linda's direct gaze challenges the filmic
construction of sexual difference, her image in the still
photograph recapitulates the pleasure and threat of the
female figure. Linda is displayed for our examination,
for our lingering eye to recognize her as female and,
therefore, castrated. Yet at the same time, her straight,
unsmiling gaze holds ours, refusing to bind castration
anxiety by looking down and accepting objectification.
Similarly, her posture, while a typical childhood one, offers a double reading. She crouches in the street, legs spread apart comfortably and innocently, with her skirt draped around her knees and down to her ankles. Her spread legs call attention to her status as castrated woman, yet simultaneously the casualness of the posture recalls the heedlessness of youth, before girls become "ladies," schooled to keep their legs together to hide their genitals—or from a Freudian perspective, the lack thereof. From the film’s opening, then, Linda is cast as a liminal figure: feminine by virtue of her attire, not feminine by virtue of her gaze; a woman becoming or a child unbecoming, playing on that border called adolescence where the struggle between the imaginary and symbolic is resurrected and replayed, and difference is reinscribed on the body by puberty.\textsuperscript{29}

While the homosocial drama of Bill and the farmer struggling for possession of Abby tends to dominate our attention as it dominates the center section of the film, it is important to register where Linda’s gaze goes and what Linda knows as reported in her voice-over narration. In "The Image and Voice in the Film with Spoken Narration," Eric Smoodin describes a typical voice-over: "This narrator, while not the ‘author’ of the film, seems nonetheless to be the organizing force behind it, the one who selects and orders images and describes them to us" (19).\textsuperscript{30} Linda both does and doesn’t perform this
organizing task for the viewer of *Days of Heaven*. Take, for example, Linda’s inaugural narration, which describes the life she and her brother used to have in Chicago before Bill met Abby: "Me and my brother--it just used to be me and my brother--we used to do things together, used to have fun. We used to roam the streets, there was people suffering of pain and hunger. Some people, their tongues were hanging out of their mouth." This information is crucial, for it introduces not only the misery of Bill and Linda’s surroundings in Chicago but also the triangle of sister-brother-lover, which predates the love triangle of Abby, Bill, and the farmer and holds more importance for Linda. Where Caddy was the one to create triangularity in *The Sound and the Fury* through her maturing sexuality, here Linda as the child is forced into the triangle by her brother’s appropriate resolution of the Oedipal complex through his choice of a female partner who is not his mother.

Despite the authority of Linda’s voice, what we see on screen is not what she reports--we see neither Linda and Bill adventuring together nor their gaze at the suffering people they pass, but Bill fleeing the foundry after wounding the foreman, possibly mortally. We know immediately that there is a disjunction between camera and narration since Linda did not witness Bill’s fight with the foreman. In the next two shots we see Linda making paper flowers to sell, then Bill reassuring a reclining,
passive Abby that "Things aren't always going to be this way." The latter shot offers another clue that we are not following a subjective camera whose movements will dog Linda's since Linda is not included in Bill and Abby's conversation, nor is it clear that the shot of Abby and Bill represents Linda's gaze. As the narration continues ("He used to juggle apples. He used to amuse us, he used to entertain us. In fact, all three of us been going places, looking for things, searching for things, going on adventures."), we see not adventure, but flight as Linda, Abby, and Bill desperately run to jump a freight and make their getaway from Chicago. The early days of Linda's life (which in her narration seem a patchwork of idyll and horror, although her voice reflects acceptance) are never shown on screen, but her narration helps to create what is called in screenwriting the "back story," and this history of poverty adds urgency to the flight West. The threesome flee not just Bill's arrest, but a life of grinding hardship, and by heading West, to that site designated in legend and ideology as the region of freedom and openness, whether in geography or class mobility, they are shaking up not just their personal lives, but perhaps their economic ones as well.

At the same time, the disjunction between the image on screen and the image created by Linda's voice-over, the former depicting an anxiety-filled present and the latter describing a memory of closeness and pleasure even amidst
suffering, dramatizes early in the film Linda's lack of self-determination and the autonomy of her narrative strand. She is not selecting and ordering the images, as Smoodin suggests a voice-over typically does, but providing a counterpoint, directing our attention subtly to the separation between knowledge and power, voice and vision, vision and knowledge. Far more often this narration generates energy from its friction with the image, from the discrepancy between the desires of childhood and adulthood and the spectator's allegiances to both worlds. As the freight train chosen by the adults steams into the future, Linda's narration snatches at the past. Because she is a child, she must go where adults take her and put her life together piecemeal from what she is given and can find around her: childhood as hand-me-down, or perhaps childhood as crazy quilt, since Linda makes the hand-me-down pieces into a pattern very much her own, creating what might be called a co-text. The same might be said of the Compson children, but Linda is more passive than Caddy, and her economic disadvantage forces on her a geographical mobility and attendant insecurity that Caddy is spared.

What is even more unusual about Linda's narration is its unwillingness to take responsibility for forwarding the narrative action or, rather, what adult spectators are most likely to see as the narrative: the love triangle between Bill, Abby, and the farmer. While Linda is at
times the "narrator-witness" to the romantic triangle on the farm (a role Sarah Kozloff describes as a narrator in the story but not central to it [62]), her voice both on screen and off weaves a narrative separate from that of the lovers. Although the threats and promises of the romantic triangle are a concern, they are not—at least at first—Linda’s primary worry. As she makes clear in her opening narration ("it just used to be me and my brother"), the triangle that concerns Linda most is the one created by the intrusion of Abby on the dyad of adult brother and child sister. As the new triangle develops, in fact, Linda’s voice-over recedes into silence punctuated by a few comments, most of them designed to forward the romantic story by revealing Linda’s interpretations of the adults’ motivations and emotions.

The discrepancy between what Linda wants and what she gets, introduced in the opening voice-over, is quickly reinforced and expanded by her gaze, which reveals her exclusion at Bill and Abby’s hands. For example, as the three migrants travel toward the Panhandle atop a freight train, we see Linda looking discontentedly at something out of frame. The next shot is a quick pan across the faces of a little boy and a little girl to the face of a man we imagine is their father. The following shot lingers on Abby reclining against Bill, the couple laughing as Abby kisses the arm that encircles her. Pointedly, Linda is not included in this frame, in this
"family" of two lovers. Although the sequence suggests the shot/reverse shot structure, Linda’s gaze is not sutured by the anticipated reverse shot, so she is denied the structure most often used in classic film to represent desire, albeit male desire. She is granted, however, an alternative suture in that her gaze of discontent is continued instead in her narration, which describes the Apocalypse:

I met this guy named Ding Dong. He told me the whole earth is goin’ up in flames, flames will come out of here and there and they’ll just rise up. The mountains are gonna go up in big flames, the water’s gonna rise in flames. There’s gonna be creatures runnin’ every which way, some of them burnt, half their wings burnt, and people are gonna be screamin’ and hollerin’ for help. See, the people that have been good, they’re gonna go to heaven and escape all that fire, but if you’ve been bad, God don’t even hear ya, he don’t even hear ya talkin’.

During this narration, the visual track proceeds from the lovers to the spectacle of waving golden wheat, blue skies marbled by pastel clouds, and a shot of grazing antelope that suggests a peaceful "home on the range." The only apocalyptic note is the black smoke billowing from the train’s stack. While Linda’s account of the Apocalypse reports knowledge she has gathered second hand in her travels, the juxtaposition of apocalyptic narration—wherein the children are cut off from the Father—with Linda’s gaze at two families—one where the children are happy and necessary, the other where no children are needed—represents Linda’s direct emotional knowledge of
being excluded from the attention and care of her brother and the woman who could be friend or surrogate mother.

While numerous scenes show Abby, Bill, and Linda together, playing, working, or relaxing, Linda is rarely the center of the couple's attention, and often, even within these scenes of the threesome, the two adults have gazes only for each other. In a telling shot, Abby and Bill are alone in the frame, reclining in the grass under a wagon and talking, while Linda, alone in the following shot, leans against the wagon wheel as she impatiently plucks a chicken and looks away from the lovers; the child works while the lovers love. Linda's gaze away from the lovers is significant for it speaks of absence. In summarizing Lacan, Silverman writes, "the child wants to be desired by the mother . . . it desires the mother's desire. The mother, on the other hand, desires what she lacks, the phallus, which she associates with the paternal function. The child's desire for the mother is therefore displaced onto what she desires, and the paternal signifier emerges as the definitive one in the history of the subject" ("Kaspar Hauser" 74-5). The lovers' gaze away from Linda replicates for her the primal disappointment of a mother who is not-for-her, but for-the-Father. At the same time, Bill's gazes away from Linda and toward Abby make clear that if Linda is to enter adolescence via the heterosexual economy, her desire must be doubly displaced--from Abby to Bill to some other
paternal signifier. *Days of Heaven* dramatizes the persistence and coexistence of the imaginary and symbolic in Linda so that the "fall from plenitude into difference, from all-inclusiveness into a partitioned world," to borrow Kaja Silverman's language, is experienced again and again, like a recurring dream ("Kaspar" 74).

Besides knowing that "three’s a crowd," what Linda knows and wants to know is often revealed through her questions, which indicate also where her gaze lands, and in this she is very much like Caddy Compson. They are useful too in gauging the difference between her concerns and the adults’: she cares most about whether she likes the place she’s in (since she has little power over choosing that place), whether she is having fun and has friends, and whether she can expect any stability, physical or emotional, in her current situation (since the choice to stay or go is rarely hers). For example, she asks her friend on the farm, the nameless teenaged woman, "You like it out here? You have any brothers or sisters?" The latter question reflects Linda’s interest in other people’s familial configurations, a preoccupation that surfaces later in a brief shot where Linda dandles a baby and gazes at it while the baby’s family looks on. The former question allows Linda to gauge whether her new friend is likely to stay on at the farm and prefigures one of Linda’s most poignant gazes when at the end of the harvest the friend jumps a new freight that will take her
who knows where. In a high-speed monologue she tells Linda, "I'll try and come back, I'll try and come back 'cause I really liked staying with you, you were so much fun. I love you, OK? [She kisses Linda on the forehead and begins to run for the freight train.] I want you to be really good. I don't want you to do anything wrong. If you do anything wrong, I'll come back and I'll get you." Neatly bifurcated by the kiss, this parting speech, which in its expression of love recalls the undifferentiated closeness of the imaginary but in its punitive notes recalls the separation and castration anxieties of the symbolic, leaves Linda gazing after the train with no one to return her gaze, another fall from plenitude into lack. Where Caddy uses her knowledge to set up structures that compete with those of the adults, taking for herself the powerful positions of "king" or mother, Linda is more passive in her approach, gathering information that may allow her to predict other people's next move but accepting what she must, much as her voice-over makes a narration out of travels and destinations she had no part in choosing.

This separation between Linda and her friend also marks a shift in the film's focus as the narrative concentrates less on Linda and more on the two men's battle to possess Abby, creating a triangle which entangles the discourse of class with the language of romance. Alison Light argues, "Class and gender
differences do not simply speak to each other, they cannot speak without each other" (19), and the middle portion of *Days of Heaven* is an excellent example of the necessary intersection of these two discourses as Bill fights to maintain his gaze and his masculine privilege as they are challenged by the farmer's wealth and social position.

"I'd rather be the King of Siam": Marrying Up and the Classed Gaze

Society is composed of two great classes--those who have more dinners than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinners.

Sébastien-Rock Nicolas de Chamfort
(Andrews 431)

While Linda's free-ranging gaze scouts out information and her voice-over pursues the concerns of childhood, her narration also introduces in a very direct way her knowledge of the hard labor exacted from the working class, something that the narrators in *The Sound and the Fury* don't discuss but which we gather abundantly from the dialogue of the Gibson family. As Abby and Bill lug sheaf after sheaf of wheat to throw atop a wagon loaded high with profits for the owner, Linda reports, "From the time the sun went up 'til it went down, they were workin' all the time, workin' non-stop, just keep goin'. You didn't work, they'd ship you right out of dere. They don't need you, they can always get somebody else." This picture of workers as a renewable, exploitable resource (a view similar to one patriarchal perspective on women) is not just Linda's fantasy or some...
cynical attitude picked up from her brother. The pan along the top of the migrant-laden freight train early in the film gives visual authority to Linda's voice-over account of the inexhaustible and poverty-stricken labor force: always more trains coming through, always more migrant workers aboard. The fragility of Bill and Abby's temporary employment and the arbitrariness of the employer are underlined in the fields when the foreman comes down the row and docks the couple a day's pay for allegedly wasting a dozen bushels of grain. Although Bill has defeated the gimlet eye of his Chicago foreman by wounding and possibly killing him, there is always another foreman to contend with, another scrutinizing, punitive Father to infantilize Bill and his fellow workers.

If we foreground Bill's gaze rather than that of the more powerful gazers who seek to control him, Days of Heaven's narrative assumes the following shape. In Chicago, in a battle of gazes, Bill defeats his foreman and must flee. He arrives in the Texas Panhandle, where he reluctantly defers to the new foreman's gaze but can't keep his eyes off his employer's house. Meanwhile, his gaze at Abby is pleasurable, but doesn't offer all he seeks, so he positions Abby in the farmer's line of sight, pretending she is his sister, and the farmer marries her. Now that Abby is the farmer's to look at as much as he pleases, Bill can't keep his eyes off her--off them. After the farmer sees Abby and Bill embracing, he
threatens Bill with a gun in a stare down worthy of a Western (and reminiscent of Quentin’s confrontation with Dalton Ames, although in this case Abby and Bill are seen by the farmer as the incestuous couple and he is defending his wife and his marriage). In self-defense, Bill stabs and kills the farmer, winning the stare down. Despite the change of venue from Chicago to Texas, Bill is locked in a cycle where he fights for the dominant gaze and then must flee, but here the cycle stops, for he is spotted by the police and gunned down as he runs, the object of every gaze.

What does this melodramatic synopsis tell us? Above all, it reveals how the gaze structures not just Days of Heaven’s representation of heterosexual desire, but also the desires provoked by class struggle. Political philosopher Joel Feinberg writes, "Having rights enables us to ‘stand up like men,’ to look others in the eye, and to feel in some fundamental way the equal of anyone" (qtd. in Dimock 26). Feinberg describes precisely what Bill desires but is denied, for the hierarchy of class requires that workers display their subservience by looking down, by accepting the objectification we have come through the literature of the gaze to identify as feminine but here recognize to be classed as well. Bill may feel he is the equal of anyone, but when it comes to manifesting that feeling through the gaze, some are more equal than others. Claiming one’s rights and dignity (which Feinberg
patriarchally defines as a masculine act) does not abolish class, nor does it, as in a fairy tale, magically transform one from a pauper to a prince. When Bill asserts his right to look the Chicago foreman in the eye, he initiates a chain reaction which transforms him into a worker without work, a worker on the lam, a violent and dangerous character, for he will no more look down and submit than will the foreman. In contrast, under Abby’s guidance, Bill accepts injustice at the farm foreman’s hands and keeps his job, but at the expense of his gaze. More precisely, Bill loses only part of his gaze, for class ordains that he may not look up at his male betters but he may continue to look at Abby. Although Bill may temporarily accept objectification as part of his classed role, within gender he maintains his power and the privilege of a masculine objectifying look.

To better understand the workings of class, let us consider not the division of labor as manifested in the plot—the farmer as owner, Bill and Abby as workers—but the division of narrative labor. The allocation of duties within the plot mirrors the tensions of the characters’ socially assigned positions. At the same time, it reveals more clearly and in more detail the function of the gaze—and the circulation of women—in the men’s struggle over power, for Bill uses Abby like a lever in his attempt to pry wealth and ease out of the farmer. We have already established that Linda’s functions are to gaze, gather
knowledge, and fall into lack. The farmer’s realm is well described by Martin Donougho, who calls attention to the "jarring shots of the farmer in a wing armchair placed in the open, or else reclining on a well-upholstered sofa, while his accountant is at a desk complete with adding machine, ledger, and microscope. . . . And as for what the farmer is doing in the middle of a field--as John Berger once asked in his TV series, 'Ways of Seeing'--the answer is that he is owning it, along with his workers, who appear in the distance almost dehumanized into a swarm of ants" (23-24). The farmer’s primary jobs are owning and gazing, the latter function encompassing his supervision of the workers’ labor, his broad looks out across his vast acreage, and his gaze at Abby. Yet owning and gazing begin to collapse into each other, for the looks across the land are proprietary, and according to Marx the capitalist owns the labor of his workers to the extent that the surplus value they create is his profit. As Michael Taussig puts it, "The commoditization process conceals the fact that within the matrix of capitalist institutions, labor as use-value is the source of profit. By the purchase of the commodity of labor power, the capitalist incorporates labor as use-value into the lifeless constituents of the commodities produced" (27).

Furthermore, the farmer will soon profit romantically from having hired Abby. In the scene Donougho describes, the microscope as an implement of scrutiny--an aid to the
gaze—is a small detail, but more important is the telescope that sits behind the accountant’s *plein air* office. Ostensibly the telescope is for the observation of the harvest, but the farmer uses it to zoom in on Abby and admire her as she works. His looks at this stage are disguised by his official capacity as owner—that is, they are masquerading as the classed gaze—but Abby as the specific target of their objectifying power and the spectator’s complicity in these lingering looks are made plain in the shot following the one Donougho details, which reveals that this gaze is both classed and gendered: Abby as worker walks toward the camera, eyes down, and the corners of the frame are masked in black to mimic the view through the telescope’s eyepiece, a macrocosm of the view through the eyepiece of a microscope. Our eye (and the camera) lingers on Abby not to objectify her as worker, but as *female* worker. For a moment at least, as the spectator’s gaze joins the farmer’s, the spectator takes on the power of the man who is literally the master of all he surveys, by virtue of class and gender. Further, his class makes him the master of *more* than he himself can survey because his privileged position enables him to use his foreman like a microscope and telescope to intensify and expand the power and dominion of his look, for example, when he asks the foreman for information about Abby’s history. In the older, agricultural sense of *broadcast*—to scatter seed widely by hand—the foreman
broadcasts the farmer’s gaze, just as the foreman in Chicago symbolized the gaze of the factory owner while extending his power.

While the farmer’s gaze goes everywhere, as both a literal and figurative manifestation of his power, Bill’s work in Days of Heaven is to be blocked and stymied—to be angry, sometimes murderously so, to look at Abby, and to have his gaze defeated by the two foremen and the farmer but also by a herd of bison and a family of river otters. This objectification at the hands of animals is a figure repeated in The Sound and the Fury when Quentin is fixed by the beady eye of the bird on the day of his suicide. In both novel and film, this reversal of man’s dominion over the animals is mortifying to masculinity, but in Days of Heaven, the imagery of the animal world also naturalizes the “heterosexual family” in contrast to Bill’s nonprocreative relationship with Abby. Further, Bill actively trades his alliance with Abby for an even more “unnatural” arrangement in the interests of “marrying up”: Abby as his proxy in a kind of same-sex marriage with the farmer. As the culmination of his specular problems, Bill dies as an object of the gaze while the couples and families on a weekend stroll by the river enjoy the spectacle of predators shooting prey. This entertainment is performed by the police and directed by the farm foreman, who has seen the farmer as his son even as he has been the employee of this highly successful
young capitalist. Bill, then, is marked as the one who doesn’t have a proper sense of family (or of his own position within class) and destroys other people’s emotional ties as a result: the predator poised on the edge not just of the family but of capitalism itself. It is fitting, then, that the foreman as the representative of good hard work for honest wages plus the good worker’s love for his boss should oversee Bill’s expulsion from the happy capitalist community.

Another of Bill’s jobs is to desire, to want what he doesn’t have. In contrast, the farmer rather stoically pursues Abby, Linda tries to extract what she wants from her constrained circumstances, and Abby rarely expresses a wish or hope. Bill, on the other hand, is a roiling mass of desires, dislikes, and plans for a better future. The surprising thing is that he doesn’t yearn for the object we might first imagine. Where Pauline Kael faults Richard Gere’s acting, complaining that “the one basic emotion he needs to show—sexual avidity for his former companion, now another man’s wife—seems quite beyond him” (120), I argue that Kael has misplaced her criticism by misreading Bill’s desires. In fact, the shot/reverse shot structure, which Days of Heaven uses sparingly to underline critical moments of desire, reveals that the apple of Bill’s eye is the farmer’s mansion, a kind of Edward Hopper Victorian in the middle of nowhere. After Bill proposes that Abby accept the farmer’s invitation to stay on at the farm
since "somethin' might happen," the couple returns from the river and walks below the house, looking up at it, as the camera closes in on Bill's face and he gazes upward yearningly. The next shot shows the mansion, and the reverse shot returns to Bill's face, revisiting his longing look. As Bill perches on the fence between the classic Hollywood enticements of heterosexual romance and upward mobility through the Abby-farmer union (with Bill as a silent partner), this skilled and parsimonious use of shot/reverse shot signals that Bill has landed with both feet in class, on the side of the fence nearer the mansion. Gender becomes the servant of class: because Bill has no power as a worker, he attempts to employ femininity in a circuitous plot to change his economic fortunes. Instead, he finds himself in the feminine position in a romantic coupling that is explicitly heterosexual (Abby marries the farmer) but implicitly homosexual (Bill marries the farmer). In a society both heterosexist and patriarchal, a homosexual union, even one that is structural more than sexual, is not an effective route to power.

Although Bill gazes at Abby regularly in the first act of *Days of Heaven*, those looks never take the form of shot/reverse shot. After Bill has goaded Abby into employment in the farmer's house, though, after she is packaged by privilege and stamped with value by the farmer's gaze and acquisitiveness, then the camera frames
Bill's heterosexual romantic desires in the tripartite shot classic Hollywood film developed to portray filmic desire. Abby, who in the first act was "just a woman," is now a romantic commodity, "something transcendent," "a mysterious thing" (Marx 71, 72). Bill wants not his former companion, but the new "golden girl," who, like Daisy Buchanan in The Great Gatsby, embodies the wealth of the man who possesses her; she is not just Abby, but the woman and the house and the farm (so large it exceeds the gaze) rolled into one.

In Linda Williams's summary, the commodity fetish "is a form of delusion whereby the workers who produce a commodity fail to recognize the product of their own labor" (Hard Core 103). Interestingly, Marx has recourse to a visual metaphor to explain the commodity fetish:

[T]he light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of things qua commodities, and the value-relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connexion with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. (72)

In Days of Heaven, though, light plays a significant role in the fetishizing of the commodity. Abby, bathed in the rosy glow of wealth--a literal glow, for in her move from the natural light of the fields to the interior of the house, she enters the area, and era, of artificial
illumination—looks like a different person to Bill. He does not recognize what he sees as the same old Abby in a new dress illuminated by a different source of light; that is, he is unable to break down the fetishizing effect into the component parts that bounce off the optic nerve. Instead, he sees the difference in Abby as something real, something more than lights and mirrors. What was an objectifying gaze turns worshipful. But who's to say Abby isn't a different person? She has more leisure, the almost undivided attention of a man who loves her, and a future in which economic security is only one part, although both the love and the future are colored by her new husband's supposedly fatal illness. She has "gone inside," to borrow a phrase used by telephone line workers to describe the choice to take a desk job, to move from blue collar to white collar. But in a capitalist remake of *Pygmalion* and an inversion of the King Midas tale, the worker Bill falls in love with his own creation now that she has come to life through the golden touch of money.

In "The Queen Christina Tie-Ups: Convergence of Show Window and Screen," Jane Gaines discusses how the newfangled bourgeois department store triumphed over the traditional small shop by using packaging and setting to create consumer desire:

The first and most significant step in the transformation of the unshaped, unarticulated dry good, whether bolt of cloth or plank of wood, is its fashioning into a ready-made object-image. Significantly, in Marxist theory, this is the
notorious moment when the human labor which endows the commodity with value is expended without the knowledge of the laborer, which becomes the basis for surplus value extracted, and which provides the foundation for capitalist society. The raw material which becomes object-image is able to imply a use, inspire a want, connote a social context, and even suggest a purchase scenario. (36)

Gaines describes precisely the method by which Abby is transformed in Bill’s eyes as she moves into the house, changing from unshaped, unarticulated feminine goods into ready-made feminine object of desire displayed in the mansion window. In fact, a crucial element in formulating Abby’s appeal was crucial also to the development of the department store, as Gaines points out: "The self-advertising properties of commodities were further enhanced by the installation of an amplifying medium which rivals the cinema in its tendency toward transparency--glass" ("Queen" 36). The mansion lends Abby a context and suggests a purchase scenario, a kind of lay-away plan: when the farmer dies in a year or less, Bill will acquire the beautiful woman, the land, and the house, fully and elegantly furnished. After all, Bill has already taken careful inventory as he walks through the hall, dining room, and parlor after the wedding, eyeing the farmer’s paintings and family portraits which offer the coherent ancestry that Abby, Bill, and Linda lack. He pauses at the decanter with two matching glasses sitting alone on an end table like a still life symbolizing the newly formed union from which he hopes to benefit.
But even as the glass in the window amplifies the desirability of the commodity, whether the goods in the department store window or the now well-dressed Abby, it also works its tantalizing magic on the senses: the oh-so-visible object, lighted to heighten its to-be-looked-at-ness, has been removed from touch—unless the consumer can pay the price and have the object for his or her very own. Such a maddening disjunction between visibility and palpability only enflames consumer desire. Furthermore, the transparency, which is, after all, real on the sensory level, disguises a structural opacity or barrier, namely that consumer desire or even the fulfillment of that desire through the purchase does not change the buyer’s class. In that sense, the shop or mansion window is also a glass ceiling.

Even though Bill began to imagine the transformations money would bring about in his and Abby’s circumstances, he did not take into account the power of commodity fetishism—in fact, at times a kind of narrative power. Abby in her new setting and her new clothes, framed in the proscenium-like parlor window or trying on a sheer, flowered wrapper and admiring herself in the elegant looking glass, is the object of desire complete with mise-en-scène. Add a man and a heterosexual narrative almost writes itself. But the Marxian fetish is not the only one in play; Abby is fetishized in the Freudian sense too: I know very well (she is only Abby), but just the same (who
is that beautiful woman?). Marx and Freud meet where "the gleam of gold" shines on "the lacy frill of an undergarment" (Williams, Hard Core 104). In keeping with the mystification of the commodity, Bill blames himself as he and Abby agree to part, characterizing the problem as his failure of vision and couching it in terms of a possession that can be read as simultaneously consumer-based and romantic: "I didn't know what I had with you. I think about it. Things I said to you. How I pushed you into this. I got nobody to blame but myself." Bill turned Abby over to the farmer as if she were not just a commodity but a small amount of capital that might, if properly invested like a bourgeois nest egg, yield a big return. In moving from the agricultural economy of the fields to the capitalist economy of the mansion, however, commodity fetishism has worked its magic, and Bill will have to pay a very steep price to repossess the feminine goods his labor helped to manufacture: the "sister" who married up.

Abby's work in the narrative (in addition to being a commodity) is to be sorry, look at herself in the mirror, and accept the objectifying male gaze—jobs more closely associated with gender than with class. Her attempt to set aside many of these gender-based duties in the final scenes of the film causes first her containment, then her expulsion from the narrative. Her duties do change, though, as she moves up, literally and figuratively: from
the fields, where she ran alongside the baler, throwing the sheaves of wheat aside as the machine set the inhuman pace and threatened her with impalement if she took one false step in the uneven field, to the first floor of the house, where she churns and cooks. With her marriage, she moves another story up, where she sleeps with the farmer and dresses up. After she marries the farmer, in fact, we rarely see her working at all, although Bill lingers among the lines of laundry, admiring the multiple rows of Abby’s fashionable underclothes. Who did the washing? No house servants materialize to relieve Abby of her labor, so the film reinscribes the fantasy of the middle class, more particularly the middle class of 1950s advertising: with prosperity, work is not displaced onto the servant class, but magically disappears. What replaces Abby’s physical labor is the work of leisure, which requires multiple outfits, ranging from the wedding dress itself to the bathing costume she wears when playing in the river where she and Bill used to wade in their multipurpose, utilitarian work clothes. "I’m tellin’ ya: the rich got it figured out," Linda marvels in her voice-over, as if all the new finery and privileges have dropped like an obscuring curtain, severing Linda and her family from their previous understanding of the source of the riches they now relish. The privileged class commands not only the right to gaze, but the right not to look at laborers
and their work, a right Caroline Compson uses freely in *The Sound and the Fury*.

Abby’s new position as lady of leisure, though, replicates the disease of the movement into a capitalist economy. While Bill as robber baron advocates an attitude of *caveat emptor* toward the farmer and his romantic intentions, Abby worries about her misleading packaging. On her wedding night as she lies framed by white pillows in an elegantly carved bed, the farmer marvels, "You’re like an angel," and Abby replies, "I wish I was." In fact, in a rare piece of authoritative speech, Abby has explained to Bill how she resisted earlier attempts to commodify her, which might have offered upward mobility, if not respectability: "I held out a long time. I had rich men pay me compliments." But like Caddy Compson when she tries to speak to Quentin about her desires, Abby can’t get through to Bill. He adroitly turns her moral rectitude against her by making her current situation as a worker seem as much an offense to the patriarchal, bourgeois construction of feminine virtue as the scam he offers: "I hate it, to see you stooped over out there, him lookin’ at your ass like you’re a whore--hate it!" In Bill’s formulation, Abby is commodified if she does, commodified if she doesn’t. He is, however, as unable to recognize that Abby is always already commodified by patriarchy as he is to name the class system he hates, which he can only allude to as "it." As a worker, Abby is
possessed by the farmer’s gaze, but as his wife she would be "paid" to be objectified as well as being "paid" through Bill’s approval. In other words, moving up the social ladder does not promise Abby a gaze of her own, as it does Bill, but boosts her value as an object for all classes of male gazers.

In staking a claim to Abby’s affections, both men recount narratives that have the gaze as their foundation, although the farmer appropriates Abby more quickly as another of his tools. The farmer confesses, "You know what I thought when I first saw you? I thought if only I could touch her, then everything would be all right. You make me feel like I’ve come back to life; isn’t that funny?" For the farmer, facing a terminal illness alone, Abby is like Aladdin’s lamp; to touch her is to have his wish for renewed health granted, so he plucks her from the field, from among her fellow laborers who have no magic powers, and polishes her to a rich gloss—a lovely piece of gold found amidst the dross. Bill’s recollection of love’s origin is more directly tied to class, although he sees it as a purely romantic tribute: "I remember the first time I ever saw you. I had never seen hair as black as yours, skin so pretty. I was scared I’d never see you again." What positions this fetishizing memory in the discourse of class is the scene almost immediately preceding in which Abby speaks authoritatively to Linda about her own history—a rare example in Days of Heaven of
the two women sharing intimate dialogue. After it has been decided that the three workers will stay on at the farm, Linda asks, "Why ya doin' this?" Abby replies, "When I was your age, I was all by myself in the world. I used to sit and wrap cigars until after dark. My skin was as white as paper. I never saw the daylight. This isn't so bad."

The aesthetic of Abby's beauty was formed by her exploitation as a child laborer and is a remnant of urban deprivation. At the same time, her skin, white as ever even after sustained labor in the fields, contrasts startlingly with her dark hair, evoking the appearance of a fairy tale heroine like Snow White. In Bill's fetishizing gaze, Abby's paleness is a pleasure, not the signature of her class and the sign of her exploitation by the forces of leisured, cigar-smoking privilege. As the two men from two different backgrounds battle for a hegemonic classed gaze, each falls back on a gendered gaze--the fetishizing gaze in particular--as a means to resolve the homosocial struggle for power and position through the control of Abby as a commodity.

But Abby's color bespeaks race as well as class even if the voice is a faint one. In a fairy tale like "Snow White," the heroine's whiteness is a signal that she should be plucked from mundane labor by a deserving prince, luck that does not extend to darker women; her whiteness is her nobility shining through the mistake of her current position. Abby is the fetish of whiteness in
a film that is consciously very much not about race or even nationality. The workers on the farm are almost uniformly Anglo-Saxon, with the exception of one Asian and one African American. Yet Abby’s move from the fields to the "big house" evokes the color caste of plantation slavery. Further, her elevation hints at blackness in particular (and color in general) as the prop and foundation of privileged white femininity, although the film displays only the white end of the spectrum. In Days of Heaven, whiteness is that which draws the admiring gaze, the sine qua non of beauty; its racial import is hidden behind the aestheticizing of femininity. Yet Abby’s skin, along with Daisy Buchanan’s and Jordan Baker’s rippling white dresses in The Great Gatsby and Susie Vargas’s white-and-blondness in Touch of Evil, is yet another manifestation of what Toni Morrison calls a "blinding whiteness" (Playing 33), one which naturalizes when we fail to see white as yet another color in the spectrum of race.

To return to class, within that meta-narrative, Bill’s defeat and death are foregone conclusions. His first action in the film is to challenge and defeat the authority of the Chicago foreman through a battle of gazes—an intolerable affront to class hierarchy, although the film itself casts Bill as hot headed but not evil. From the outset, though, the discourses of class and psychoanalysis meld because the foreman, by virtue of his
solitary authority, stands in for both the Father and the Owner. Hence, Bill’s fatal wounding of the foreman is as transgressive Oedipally as it is capitalistically. Despite what Bill learns later in the narrative about controlling his violent temper and accepting the farm foreman’s authority as a means whose end is survival, *Days of Heaven* is not a *Bildungsroman*, either for Bill or Linda. Bill’s initial transgression must be punished, and with a punishment as severe as the original offense to patriarchal, capitalistic order itself.

Within the diegesis, are Bill’s dreams of status and influence grandiose? Yes. Are they out of proportion to the promises of the American dream? Certainly not. One of Bill’s tragic flaws is that he believes adamantly if inarticulately in the American myth of the classless society and its promise of upward mobility, both of which ensure a gaze of one’s own. As he explains to the farmer as they sit side by side, leaning against a barn wall, “So I went to work in the mill. Couldn’t wait to get in there. Begin at 7:00, got a smile on your face. And then one day you wake up, you find you’re not the smartest guy in the world, never goin’ to come up with a big score. When I was growin’ up, I thought I really would.” Bill saw employment in the mill as the glorious start to an even more glorious career, but as we know from the opening scenes of the film, work at the mill led to more work at the mill, not to a position as foreman or (picture the
dream expanding) as owner. Yet Bill is determined to better himself, as he makes plain when Abby balks at his plan that she ensnare the farmer's affections: "Don't tell me. I already know. On account of your unhappy life, all that shit. I'm telling you, we gotta do something about it, can't expect anybody else to." Bill's call to action, which could be a call to revolution if his plan benefited anyone other than his immediate family, is instead a clear restatement of the capitalist bootstrap philosophy: overcome personal hardship, and through initiative and hard work (even if fraud is your career choice), take your rightful place as a prosperous citizen who—to return to Joel Feinberg—can look anyone in the eye. Because Bill is immersed in the ideology of capitalism, which benefits from defining financial hardship as personal and individual, he is unable to see that neither initiative nor intelligence will level the playing field, placing him eye to eye with those who turn his labor into surplus value and profits for themselves.

Movement up the social ladder guarantees more choices: the choice to stay or go, buy or not, assert a right or let an affront pass. Like Linda and Abby, Bill is constricted in his choices by his position within intersecting hierarchies. As the workers finish up with the harvest, Linda asks Bill, "Are we gonna stay?" "If she wants to," Bill answers. "You'd rather go?" Linda inquires. "I'd rather be the king of Siam." In this
sarcastic reply, Bill expresses his frustration at the limits of his choices, registering also a partial understanding that his own bootstrap philosophy is flawed since (to take that philosophy to its logical extreme) no amount of hard work or initiative will provide him with the privileges of aristocracy, even American self-made royalty. But while Bill’s choices are constricted by his position within class, Abby is constrained by gender in that she has little room to gaze, yet she has a certain fluidity in class through the commodification of her femininity. Linda, on the other hand, is restricted by her position in class, gender, and age. Bill’s course depends on the farmer’s offer of employment, but Linda is dependent on both the farmer and Bill and so must ask a series of questions that are never satisfactorily answered.

Within the romance narrative, the film mourns the deaths of both Bill and the farmer. Within the meta-narrative of class, though, the greatest tragedy would have been Bill’s gaining possession of the mansion. In comparison to that narrowly averted disaster, his death is small change and, paradoxically, all important. Bill’s challenge to the capitalist order--his desire, the building of circumstance upon circumstance that may ultimately give him what he wants--creates a large part of the narrative tension, which is then partially released through his defeat and death, a death which concurrently

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heals over the Oedipal wound inflicted on patriarchy by the upstart son. What I want to emphasize is that this struggle for power and position, both within class and within patriarchy, is played out through the gaze, beginning with Bill's stare down with the Chicago foreman and ending with his transformation into prey. The sequence of shots depicting his death hammers home Bill's lost gaze. As prey, he is the object of all gazes, including those of Linda and Abby; as he is fatally shot, he falls face down in the water; but as if that closure were not sufficient, the camera must look up through the water at his closed eyes, then watch his body eddying sightless but face up in the river. These multiple—and excessive—closures directly relating to the gaze indicate how many anxieties Bill's look has provoked throughout the narrative, for if the anxieties were not both acute and multiple, a far simpler death sequence would suffice. The shots of Bill floating face up in the river and Abby mourning over Bill's body as it lies face up on the bank echo the shot of the farmer lying dead in the burnt-over field, the screwdriver still penetrating his chest. This parallelism makes explicit visually that Bill has paid his debt for his crimes against the Father and Owner, including the plan to subvert the heterosexual economy through his attempt to "marry up."

The one crucial element I have not discussed in Days of Heaven, although I have tried to gesture toward it with
my prose, is its visual splendor. In the 1992 documentary tribute to the cinematographer’s art, *Visions of Light*, scenes from *Days of Heaven* appear again and again in the montages of exceptional American cinematography. Director Terrence Malick is credited with introducing recent European cinematic style to American film by choosing as his cinematographer Néstor Almendros, best known for his work with François Truffaut and Eric Rohmer (Petrie 39). I introduce the issue of visual pleasure here because *Days of Heaven* is literally stunning: the shots of the harvest and the workers laboring in the wheat fields bathed in light are so glorious that it is difficult for viewers to hold onto the notion of labor: the backbreaking, sweaty, dirty, dangerous, seemingly endless work of reaping, literally and figuratively, profits for someone else. On the basis of this one harvest, the accountant urges the farmer to retire since he will be one of the richest men in the Texas Panhandle. Abby, Linda, and Bill, on the other hand, will not be retiring; they’ll earn enough to move on to the next migrant job. But the golden-brown light in which the laborers work and the sweeping panoramas of wheat and sky invite—almost demand—an aestheticization of farm work, which even a close-up of Abby wiping the sweaty strands of hair from her brow promotes rather than contradicts.

We frequently see Abby and Bill relaxing—wading in a nearby river, playing tag in the wheat fields, reclinig
as they talk—so we’re invited to believe that hard as their work on the farm may be, it beats life in Chicago. The intermixing of labor and beauty and the bounty of the harvest, even if it is not owned by the workers, lends the farm an Edenic quality, undercutting Linda’s account of Bill’s primitive Marxism, with which he justifies his fraud: "He was tired of livin’ like the rest of them, nosin’ around like a pig in a gutter. He wasn’t in the mood no more. He figured there must be somethin’ wrong with them, the way they always got no luck and they oughta get it straightened out. He figured some people need more than they got, other people got more than they need--just a matter of gettin’ us all together." Our position as film spectators replicates the farmer’s: we sit in our upholstered chairs at a comfortable distance, enjoying the spectacle of the labor of others and a landscape so beautiful it is at times hard to care about anything else. The seesawing of the film between a class critique in narrative and dialogue and the visual romanticizing of work lends the film a peculiar incoherence or fuzziness, which many critics have pointed to in a fragmented way but have failed to recognize as a function of an unproductive friction between our identification with the narrative track and our fascination with the spectacle of the landscape. While I do not want to collapse the material differences between film and literary fiction, there is a point of comparison here between Days of Heaven and The
Sound and the Fury, for the technical pleasures of the novel--its innovative structure, the distinct voices of each narrator, the characteristic richness of Faulkner's language--seduce us into enjoying--even against our will--the tragedy of Caddy's disempowerment. As Susan Winnett suggests, we must question our complicity in the seductions of the text (516), whether literary or cinematic.

On the one hand, Bill is an easily replaceable cog in a giant industrial/social machine and, on the other, he is the saboteur who, with his desire as simple and rough hewn as a wooden sabot, can bring the machine to a grinding halt, as could any of his fellow workers. So, although Bill is dead, the threat he represents lives on as a residue of unresolved tension, with Abby as its avatar. The mechanism Cora Kaplan describes in nineteenth-century British fiction is equally at work in Days of Heaven: "the woman and her sexuality are a condensed and displaced representation of the dangerous instabilities of class and gender identity for both sexes" (968). Although Bill cannot choose to be the king of Siam, Abby has chosen to be queen, although at a very high price, and as Caddy Compson recognized even in childhood, the power of the king and that of the queen is not commensurate. This discrepancy of gender is not something Linda has learned to read if we judge by her voice-over narration, but it is inscribed forcefully in the film's dénouement, a bit of
action Linda is destined to miss, for she and Abby part company and Linda is left in a setting more appropriate to a formal schooling in the discipline of femininity.

"He don't even hear ya talkin’": The Defeat of the Female Gaze

Despite the girl’s repeated falls from plenitude into lack, the strength and individuality of Linda’s voice and the free range of her gaze (even when the camera doesn’t allow us to follow it) would seem to augur well as she prepares to shed the encumbrances of childhood and emerge as a mature woman. Yet the gathering gaze is a problem in itself, for Linda (and the spectator) has no one to turn to for her image of femininity but Abby and, to a much lesser extent, Linda’s teenaged friend on the farm.

Annette Kuhn argues that narrative point of view "is worth examining for what it reveals about the place of woman as enunciator, her place in relation to 'truth' and knowledge" (Women’s 52). We turn to Abby, then, as Linda’s fellow enunciator, but since she seldom speaks authoritatively, partly because Linda is responsible for the narratorial duties, partly because Abby has a heightened receptivity to male voices, the final moments of Days of Heaven, when both the farmer and Bill are dead, provide the best instances of Abby’s gaze asserting itself in a declaration of subjectivity.

While Linda’s voice and gaze persist into the last frames, the containment of the mature female gaze at the
end of *Days of Heaven* is swift and sure. Parallels between Linda and Abby have been apparent throughout the narrative but come clearly into focus in a scene at the film’s center where Abby has a rare moment of authoritative speech, one I have alluded to earlier. In the context of Bill’s plot to marry Abby to the farmer, Linda asks her, "Why ya doin’ this?" Abby responds, "When I was your age, I was all by myself in the world." The playing out of the romantic triangle on the farm, resulting in Abby’s departure and the deaths of Bill and the farmer, leaves Linda mirroring Abby’s history: all alone in the world and on the brink of maturation. Because Abby’s silence and downcast looks have been Linda’s primary model for mature femininity and because Linda’s gaze has been so pronounced since the title shots, we may read the defeat of Abby’s gaze, present in the film’s final scenes in a way it has never been before, as a dire--but not necessarily conclusive--prediction for Linda and as a containment for the anxieties produced by female gazing throughout the film. Added to these anxieties are the residual ones stemming from Abby and Bill’s assault on class privilege.

As Abby crosses the street in the center of town, having settled Linda at the girls’ school, she begins to look around with pleasure at the pedestrians, bus, motorcars, and horse-drawn wagons which signal the bustle of commerce, exercising the scopophilic privilege that
marks her as subject, not object. The corners of her mouth pull up into a smile until she sees in a shot/reverse shot--the first Abby has been allowed, and only in the last few minutes of the film--that she is the object of multiple gazes. She stops in the middle of the road as two women sitting on a porch interrupt their conversation to watch her, their gazes reinforced by those of a woman who hawks oranges from a basket and a man leaning against a porch. As the camera returns to Abby's face, her smile fades, and although she meets these multiple gazes briefly, she ultimately looks down at her feet. As she lifts her eyes and continues walking, the camera cuts to two young women on another sidewalk who lean toward each other, whispering and pointing, then cuts again to a man who leans against the entrance to a store, his gaze fixed and his face unsmiling.

As to why she is the object of so many looks, we are not told, but the structure--in which Abby starts out possessing a pleasurable gaze and ends up looking at the ground--clearly constructs Abby as "the guilty one," the one who needs to be contained through surveillance and punitive looks, even though throughout the rest of the narrative she has been constructed as the reluctant accomplice, the one with scruples and downcast eyes. As Linda reported early in the film, "See, the people that have been good, they're gonna go to heaven and escape all that fire, but if you've been bad, God don't even hear ya,
he don't even hear ya talkin'.' On earth, though, the female sinner is punished both through an ostracizing silence and a community of condemning looks. In each brief shot that defeats Abby's gaze, the challenging stares of women are reinforced by the gazes of men, and the last gaze of the whole sequence belongs to the man by the store entrance. This final look reasserts the primacy of male gazing and suggests that the other female looks were authorized by the male gaze. The composition of the individual frames reinforces this impression since the first male gazer filled the left-hand side of the frame and the last male gazer fills the right, suggesting a bracketing or containment of female gazes even as they are put to use to defeat Abby's scopophilia.\(^9\) The deputizing of the female gaze by patriarchy provides some of the benefits of Foucault's Panopticon: it contributes greatly to "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (21).\(^{40}\) Abby, unlike the town women, has no male supporter to deputize her gaze and, therefore, is at the mercy of all adult looks, without respect to gender.

Abby's freedom as a sexually mature woman and \textit{a fortiori} her pleasure in that freedom as evidenced by her smile creates a castration anxiety so acute that it requires additional containments, before the defeat of her gaze and after. Kaja Silverman points out in \textit{The Acoustic Mirror} that a primary characteristic of the female voice
in film is "a remarkable facility for self-disparagement and self-incrimination" (31), this lack of moral authority acting as a place marker, a substitute, for the more threatening lack the female form represents for the male spectator. This characteristic guilt is evident in the voice-over narration that accompanies the images of escape after the farmer’s death and before the showdown of gazes in town. Linda reports about Abby, "She promised herself she’d lead a good life from now on. She blamed it all on herself. She didn’t care if she was happy or not. She just wanted to make up for what she did wrong." Although Linda’s voice, not Abby’s, reports the guilty feelings, Abby is still encircled and contained in the narrative by her reported regrets and the visual images that validate the voice-over, notably Abby in the foreground looking mournful while in the background Bill, the one who stabbed the farmer, sleeps peacefully in their woodland hide-out.

As the film concludes, though, and Abby begins smiling as she moves freely through town after Bill’s death, she represents a significant threat to the hierarchy of sexual difference: she is a free sexual agent (a "merry widow" since both husband and lover are dead) with the freedom of her own money, as evidenced by her clothing and Linda’s, not to mention Linda’s enrollment in a relatively elegant girls’ school. All indications are that Abby has benefited from the farmer’s estate and risen in class. Above all she seems happy, in
contradiction to her previous plan to accept guilt as a permanent state. Because the two men have died out of the plot, Abby "is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which [s]he articulates the look and creates the action," as Mulvey has described the special privileges attendant on masculinity in film ("Visual Pleasure" 20). Abby tells Linda to "turn around and go inside" the school, so Abby now directs the action and determines when the two women will break the exchange of loving looks. She swings through the streets of the anonymous town eyeing her possibilities.

Yet it seems the defeat of Abby’s gaze is not sufficient to hold her in the place of "the guilty one" (or, more specifically, "the one who can never be sorry enough"), for her containment is reinforced by an almost invisible incident as she hops the train and disappears from the screen and the narrative. On the station platform, a uniformed World War I recruit relieves her of her traveling bag, and as Abby jumps on the train, he helps her aboard with the assistance of another soldier. This moment in the film is particularly ironic since Abby has again and again demonstrated her physical strength and agility in fieldwork and housework, but the transfer of the bag re-establishes several equilibriums simultaneously. First, it reasserts sexual difference through an act of possession: Abby yields a womb-like bag to a man, who will guard it for her. This scene of
transfer and possession places Abby back in a heterosexual regime, and one she is familiar with, where two men vie for her favors. Her re-insertion into the world of heterosexuality is crucial since the emotional scene in which she says good-bye to Linda has posited a closeness between grown woman and nearly grown girl through an exchange of heartfelt looks that threatens to replace the pre-eminence of the male-female bond with a female-female bond, emphasized by a female-female gaze. At the same time, the transfer of the traveling bag emphasizes Abby's change in class but fixed position in gender, since the soldier's offer to carry the bag was motivated by sexual difference, but limited by the hierarchy of class, which ordains that working class women and children do their own carrying, as we have seen both on the farm and in Chicago. Abby is marked as woman by being made the object of the gaze, but through the transfer of the bag from female hands to male hands she is additionally marked as lady. Interestingly enough, this sequence reverses the punishments Caddy undergoes but with the same end in mind: containment of the transgressive female. Caddy is marked as not-lady by the surrender of her infant, her exile from the Compson family, and her unnaming by her mother (Caroline Compson says, "But she must never know. She must never even learn that name. Dilsey, I forbid you ever to speak that name in her hearing. If she could grow up never to know that she had a mother, I would thank God")
[229]). She is marked as woman not through objectification so much as through the diminishment and defeat of her own objectifying gaze.

Downward Looks: Linda’s Schooling in Femininity

As Abby rides the train out of town and out of the left side of the frame, her threat has been contained through the defeat of her gaze and her subtle reabsorption into the heterosexual world. Any residual threat is bound through her construction as the guilty one who will be punished further, come the Apocalypse Linda has described early in the film. In contrast, Linda walks the tracks out of town and out of the right side of the frame, having escaped (at least temporarily) the institution where girls are schooled in what is becoming for a lady, such as downcast eyes and the graceful movements of the ballet, designed to gratify the male gaze. Abby’s direction is coded as Eastern, back towards "civilization," maybe towards Chicago since she is wearing fine traveling clothes, her fortune is made, and she travels in the company of soldiers who continue on to be shipped across the Atlantic. Meanwhile, Linda’s departure is coded as Western when she walks into nature, into the region of becoming, but uses the railroad tracks which have been built to open the West to the East. These departures in opposite directions foreground the sundering of the bond between these two women, a separation that echoes Miss Quentin and Caddy losing each other as the younger woman
pursues her line of flight. But Abby and Linda’s loss of each other might be mitigated if we were persuaded that through the escape West Linda would evade the containments Abby has suffered. In fact, we are given some fairly strong indications that she might not.

The ballet lessons offered at Linda’s new school become an emblem for the process of feminization: Abby learned some ballet steps from watching the female dancers at Baker Hall, and now, by virtue of the money inherited through heterosexual romance, she provides for Linda a more systematic schooling in femininity. One generation of women directly or indirectly schools the next under the watchful and objectifying eye of patriarchy. While Linda’s ballet lessons will school her to be the object of the gaze, they carry within the film the added danger of schooling her specifically for heterosexual romance since it was Abby’s ballet performance for the farmer—her invitation to his objectification—that occasioned his first declaration of love. The specter of heterosexual romance is a particularly threatening one for Linda, as it is for Miss Quentin, since this form of love has disrupted most of her relationships, starting with the one described in the opening words of the film: “Me and my brother—it just used to be me and my brother.” Just as Bill’s gazes at Abby have prevented a closer relationship between siblings, Abby’s receptivity to Bill’s gaze has prevented a closer relationship between the older woman and the
younger. Similarly, on the farm, Linda's teenaged friend directs most of her attention to the boyfriend who left her, and then when she appears in town and helps Linda escape from the girls' school, she does so because she wants Linda to keep her company while she waits for her new soldier-boyfriend, who stands her up. Furthermore, beyond turning the female gaze downward submissively, the male gaze acts as a colonizing force, teaching the woman to commodify her own body. After Abby marries the farmer and "moves upstairs," she models a flowered negligee in Bill's presence, and he remarks, "I bet he likes looking at you in that." Abby looks down at herself, then at Bill, and answers, a little surprised and hurt, "This? I thought you liked it." Abby reveals through her reply that her looks in the mirror are not for herself--not narcissistic according to Mulvey's formulation--but are in service of her "to-be-looked-at-ness" ("Visual Pleasure" 19); her pleasure lies in the scopophilic male gaze, whether the spectator is Bill, the farmer, or some imagined man. The teenaged friend reinforces this construction of femininity as receptivity to male looks when in the last frames of the film she says about her soldier boyfriend, "He said I'm pretty, and maybe I am!" then adds a few minutes later, "He said he was gonna buy me a fuh. I always wanted a fuh." The colonizing male gaze creates a captive feminine economy, whose fluctuating values are tied to male desire.
Taken out of context, the closing image of the film--two friends talking and walking out of town--promises an intimacy between women that Linda has been lacking throughout the film. But read in light of the friend's preoccupation with boyfriends and Abby's last minute absorption into the heterosexual economy, the final frames suggest a bittersweet commentary on the ideology of heterosexual romance: it is inescapable, by train or on foot. The past tense in Linda's final voice-over reinforces this reading of female friendship as fleeting and endangered: "This girl, she didn't know where she was goin' or what she was gonna do. She didn't have no money on her. Maybe she'd meet up wid a character. I was hopin' things would work out for her. She was a good friend of mine." Yet in the eyes of the friend, "things working out" has always meant finding a boyfriend. The irony of this last segment of narration is that Linda is describing her own situation without fully understanding the implications, especially for her entry into heterosexuality. Because Linda is describing herself as well as her friend, we as spectators can occupy momentarily the position Linda vacates: we wish her well as she wanders down the tracks, although her prospects look melancholy.

Still on the threshold between childhood and sexual maturity, bracketed by women who desire what they lack, Linda accepts her friend's invitation to walk into the
dawn ("You comin' with me or what?"), but her narration suggests not a *happily-ever-after* for female friendship, but another happy but lost *was*, another fall from plenitude into lack. We hold little hope for the endurance of Linda's gaze, which was so disconcertingly direct in the opening credits, for what we learn from the women around Linda is that entrance into the heterosexual economy is marked by the female gaze turned downward in the presence of the male gaze or turned toward one's own reflection in an erotic contemplation of commodification that mirrors the male gaze.

As the two friends walk down the railroad tracks, the final frame fades to black and we suspect, given the anxieties produced by the mature female gaze and the swiftly following containments, that Linda's gaze will follow suit. We read Linda's ability to gaze, like Caddy's, as an artifact of her youth; her gaze was allowed to roam as children themselves do. Whether in the girls' school or on the road, the construction of sexual difference dictates that a direct gaze is unbecoming in a woman, and *Days of Heaven* represents not just nostalgia for lost love, whether romantic or familial, but nostalgia for a gaze that may disappear before our eyes as Linda prepares to cross the border from female into feminine.

Based on the diminishment of Bill's gaze through the operation of class, however, I would suggest that it is no longer appropriate to think of objectification solely as
feminization, which Mulvey does in statements such as this: "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female" ("Visual Pleasure" 19). If that were the case, then Bill as the object of the farm foreman's punitive looks would be on an equal footing with Abby: both characters feminized, both the object of the gaze. But where gender and class intersect, it becomes apparent that the male object of the classed gaze still retains the gendered prerogative to objectify women, certainly within his own class but even at times across class boundaries, although the latter instances are much more likely to be contested through a battle of gazes. Ultimately, Days of Heaven is more conservative about gender than it is about class, content to have Abby silent most of the time and to leave her the guilty one, equally content to have Linda comment perceptively on poverty and privilege but not, in general, on Abby's entrapment in commodification. At the same time, the film's structure, playing Linda's fascinating and quirky narration against Abby's silence, gives us in two characters, as did The Sound and the Fury in one, a rare and original contrast between femininity accomplished and femininity becoming.

The next chapter continues in a number of ways this examination of the sacrifices of adult femininity and its subversive escapes, especially the ways the gaze asserts itself surreptitiously despite the anxious containments
imposed by the male gaze. I hope to carry forward throughout the following chapters, though, as both memory and inspiration, the very different gazes of the young girls in this chapter: Linda's wide-eyed, unjudgmental gathering gaze and Caddy's maternal looks alternating with her impertinent objectifying gaze, which says in the face of both adulthood and masculinity, "I'm seven years old... I guess I know."

End Notes

1. Sinyard points out that Malick acknowledges Maisie as a model for Linda's narration. Malick's only other film, Badlands, also features a female voice-over with literary forbears: the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, and The Swiss Family Robinson (Beverly Walker 82-3).

2. In taking to task those scholars who are able to study American literature without in any way noticing the effects of race, Toni Morrison notes, "It is possible, for example, to read Henry James scholarship exhaustively and never arrive at a nodding mention, much less a satisfactory treatment, of the black woman who lubricates the turn of the plot and becomes the agency of moral choice and meaning in What Maisie Knew" (Playing 13).

3. Films such as Gigi and Margie also address the issue of female maturation, but fall outside the bounds of this study.


5. Christine Gledhill lists five main structural features of film noir, all of which pertain to The Sound and the Fury: "1) the investigative structure of the narrative; 2) plot devices of either voice-over and flashback, and frequently both; 3) proliferation of points of view; 4) frequent unstable characterisation of the heroine; 5) an 'expressionist' visual style and emphasis on sexuality in the photographing of women" ("Klute, Part 1" 14). The Sound and the Fury was published in 1929, long before the period of film noir, which according to Sylvia Harvey began with The Maltese Falcon (1941) and ended with Touch
of Evil (1958) (33). It is important to remember, however, that film noir grew from the tradition of hard-boiled crime novels by writers like Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) and Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961), who were contemporaries of Faulkner’s (1897-1962). Black Mask, the pulp magazine of mystery, crime, and detective fiction was in operation from 1920 to 1951 and published 45 works by Hammett, beginning in 1922 (at which time he was using the pseudonym Peter Collinson) (Hagemann 117-21). Hammett, Lillian Hellman, and Faulkner became friends in 1931 after the publication of The Sound and the Fury (Blotner 740-1). Faulkner did not know Chandler, who began publishing detective fiction in 1933 (Hagemann 57-8), but he did write the screenplay for Chandler’s The Big Sleep (1946) and worked on the film of James M. Cain’s Mildred Pierce (1945), for which he does not receive screen credit (Blotner 1172-73, Mildred Pierce).

6. As Freud describes the crucial moment in "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes," when the girl first sees the penis, she "makes her judgment and her decision in a flash. She has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it." The boy, on the other hand, when confronted with the female anatomy, "begins by showing irresolution and lack of interest; he sees nothing or disowns what he has seen, he softens it down or looks about for expedients for bringing it into line with his expectations" (252). As Mary Ann Doane explains, "This gap between the visible and the knowable, the very possibility of disowning what is seen, prepares the ground for fetishism. In a sense, the male spectator is destined to be a fetishist, balancing knowledge and belief" (Femmes Fatales 23). On the other hand, the girl, based on this early relationship to the visible, is incapable, technically, of fetishism.

7. Faulkner repeated various versions of this inaugural moment for different audiences, but the basic elements remained the same. In another lecture at the University of Virginia, Faulkner explained, "It’s more an image, a very moving image to me was of the children. ‘Course, we didn’t know at that time that one was an idiot, but they were three boys, one was a girl and the girl was the only one that was brave enough to climb that tree to look in the forbidden window to see what was going on" (Gwynn and Blotner 31). In an interview with Jean Stein Vanden Heuvel, Faulkner states, "It began with a mental picture. I didn’t realize at the time it was symbolical. The picture was of the muddy seat of a little girl’s drawers in a pear tree where she could see through a window where her grandmother’s funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below" (Meriwether and Millgate 245).
8. Caddy’s challenge to her father’s authority echoes another canonical narrative of Western literature, so it is not surprising that in calling Caddy down from the tree Dilsey calls her not Eve, but Satan (Sound 51).

9. The adults in the parlor are voyeurs too, but Caddy’s language recalls more specifically the role of the movie audience or the position of the never-visible jurors at the O.J. Simpson trial.

10. I want to emphasize here that even the maternal gaze requires some physical distance from its object, for there is a distinction to be preserved between look and touch. Yet the maternal gaze seems to do away with distance in much the same way that the imaginary seems to defy separation between infant and mother.

11. The American Heritage Dictionary defines tomboy as "A girl, especially a young girl, who behaves like a spirited boy," emphasizing that such behavior is time-limited, as is the appropriate use of the term itself. The definition also assumes we all agree on the binarisms of sexual difference, that "like a boy" is both necessary and sufficient description.

12. Woman as enforcer of patriarchy— as deputy authorized by masculine power—is a structure that recurs at the end of Days of Heaven. See page 188.

13. Of course, Caddy turns the baby over to her family voluntarily at first, but she is not the one to determine visitation privileges, nor is she free to take Miss Quentin back at any time, as evidenced by her offer to Jason: "If you’ll get Mother to let me have her back, I’ll give you a thousand dollars" (240).

14. Here we necessarily recall another "woman out of control" from contemporary popular culture, Lorena Bobbitt, who not only cut off her husband’s penis but took him as the object of her punitive gaze when he was drunk and asleep.

15. In his opening statement, Darden refers to two other incidents in which Simpson used his gaze as a weapon to control and intimidate. The first occurred before Simpson’s voyeurism at the window:

   [Nicole and Keith] went to a restaurant called The Trist [sic], it had just opened, Nicole and Keith and some other friends. They were there, they got a table, they began to have dinner. And as they sat there having dinner, guess who showed up? Guess who attempted to gain control again? The defendant showed up...
And what he did is, he walked into the restaurant, he saw Nicole and Keith and her other friends, he went to another table, he grabbed the chair--the chair was facing in the opposite direction--he grabbed the chair, he turned it around, he sat there staring at Keith and Nicole and their dinner party. Keith will be here to tell you that that was an awfully intimidating experience.

The second incident occurred at the dance recital that immediately preceded Nicole Brown Simpson's murder:

Well, when he [Simpson] walked into the auditorium, he greeted just about everyone in the party in the Brown family. He said hello to them, he kissed Denise on the cheek. "How are you, how you doing," whatever, and he pretty much addressed everybody except Nicole.

He sat behind the Brown's [sic] for a few moments. And then he got up and he grabbed a chair and he dragged it in the corner of the auditorium and he turned that chair around and he sat in it, and he sat there facing Nicole and he just stared at her. He just sat there staring at her.

And you'll hear testimony about this, and the evidence will show that this was a menacing stare, a penetrating stare, it was an angry stare, and it made everyone very uncomfortable. (California v. Simpson n. pag.)

Both these incidents differ from Simpson's voyeurism at the living room window because immediate knowledge is built into the structure of the incident: the overt gaze objectifies its target immediately because the object of the gaze knows he or she is being watched.

These brief descriptions of O.J. Simpson's behavior are significant, for they encapsulate how open stalking reinforces covert, voyeuristic stalking to create what Foucault describes as the major effect of the Panopticon: "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Discipline 201). What is particularly interesting--and upsetting--about the Brown-Simpson situation and other instances of stalking is the way in which the wide world is reconstructed as a prison through the power of the stalker's gaze.

16. Emily Miller Budick also suggests, "Benjy's object-oriented and often tactile-induced thought processes could be considered reminders of a mother language" (81).

17. The desire not to know recurs powerfully in Passing, discussed in Chapter 4, in which Irene Redfield prefers belief to knowledge when it comes to ascertaining if her husband is having an affair with her friend Clare Kendry.
18. Quentin is able to establish a temporary and unstable relationship of older, more knowledgeable brother and younger, more vulnerable sister with the silent little Italian girl outside Cambridge—"Nothing but a girl. Poor sister," Quentin says to her (158). But her unwavering, friendly, black-eyed gaze at Quentin throughout their time together and the revelation that she speaks English after all undercut even that little reassurance of male mastery.

19. John T. Irwin further multiplies the figures—and the meanings—in Quentin’s offer of a double suicide, "a double killing that represents the equivalent, on the level of brother/sister incest, of the suicidal murder of the brother seducer by the brother avenger. For if the brother-seducer/brother-avenger relationship represents doubling and the brother/sister relationship incest, then the brother/brother relationship is also a kind of incest and the brother/sister relationship a kind of doubling" (41).

20. In Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture—From the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS, Emily Martin explores how this attack-and-defense model of the immune system is giving way, both in the medical community and more slowly in the media and popular imagination, to a more complicated model based on complex systems theory, also known as chaos theory.

   Interestingly, several laypeople Martin interviewed vividly remembered the film The Fantastic Voyage (1966), in which Raquel Welch is attacked by antibodies, much as I am imagining Caddy is encircled as infectious agent: "These [antibodies] were depicted as flickering shapes that adhered tightly to her chest and nearly suffocated her, until, just in the nick of time, the male members of the team managed (more than slightly lasciviously) to pull them off with their hands" (50).

21. Miss Quentin embodies both meanings of the French verb voler, as Cixous connects them: she both flies and steals. Cixous writes, "It's no accident: women take after birds and robbers just as robbers take after women and birds. They (illes) go by, fly the coop, take pleasure in jumbling the order of space, in disorienting it, in changing around the furniture, dislocating things and values, breaking them all up, emptying structures, and turning propriety upside down" ("Laugh" 258). Unfortunately, as I detail below, much of this disruption works against Miss Quentin even as it undermines Jason.

22. Risus paschalis was a festive laughter integral to the celebration of Easter during the Middle Ages. "During the Easter season," Bakhtin writes, "laughter and jokes were permitted even in church. The priest could tell
amusing stories and jokes from the pulpit. Following the days of lenten sadness he could incite his congregation's gay laughter as a joyous regeneration. . . . The jokes and stories concerned especially material bodily life, and were of a carnival type. Permission to laugh was granted simultaneously with the permission to eat meat and to resume sexual intercourse (forbidden during Lent)" (Rabelais 78-9). If Miss Quentin is indeed "under the closest bush" with the man in the red tie, as Jason imagines (277), she is jumping the gun a little, for it is only Good Friday in the novel.

23. "When [Dilsey] called the first time Jason laid his knife and fork down and he and his mother appeared to wait across the table from one another in identical attitudes; the one cold and shrewd, with close thatched brown hair curled into two stubborn hooks, one on either side of his forehead like a bartender in caricature, and hazel eyes with black-ringed irises like marbles, the other cold and querulous, with perfectly white hair and eyes pouches and baffled and so dark as to appear to be all pupil or all iris" (323).

24. I take up this point in more detail in Chapter 4 through bell hooks's analysis of the special knowledge gleaned by workers in white households in the days of segregation, information then shared with the rest of the African-American community. See page 419.

25. In the appendix to The Sound and the Fury, written specifically for The Portable Faulkner, published in 1946, the last entry is titled "Dilsey" and reads in its entirety, "They endured" (756).

26. DuBois uses the veil in the somewhat different sense of the caul, which bestows upon the child born with it the gift of second sight

   in this American world,—a world which yields him "no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (3).

27. While this uncomfortable taking of pleasure is reminiscent of Teresa de Lauretis's account of double identification in female spectatorship, identification and
pleasure are not necessarily one and the same. (Alice 143-44)

28. Although the movie camera rephotographs the still photo, creating another level of mediation, the effect of the image is still to disrupt the voyeurism of the spectator.

29. See also Nancy Chodorow on "the resurfacing and prevalence of preoedipal mother-daughter issues in adolescence (anxiety, intense and exclusive attachment, orality and food, maternal control of a daughter’s body, primary identification)" (Reproduction 109) and the persistence of the "internal emotional triangle" of daughter-mother-father (Reproduction 140).

30. In Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film, Sarah Kozloff defines voice-over narration as "oral statements, conveying any portion of a narrative, spoken by an unseen speaker situated in a space and time other than that simultaneously being presented by the images on the screen" (5), a definition broad enough to encompass the independent route Linda’s narration pursues.

31. See Chapter 1, note 22.

32. I am indebted to Pamela Robertson’s "Structural Irony in Mildred Pierce, or How Mildred Lost Her Tongue" for my discussion of Days of Heaven’s spatial detachment from Linda. Robertson’s article also encouraged me to consider the gendering of topics in Linda’s voice-over narration and to question whether feminine gains, particularly at the end of the film, were structured as masculine losses.

33. In "Narrative Space," Stephen Heath mentions the very strict requirements for voice-over, which normally keep it in lock step with the image track, a relationship Malick subverts once again in Days of Heaven: "voice-over is limited to certain conventional uses (as, for example, the direction of memory sequences, a kind of documentary of the past of a life within the film) which effectively forbid any discrepancy--any different activity--between sound and image tracks (Malick is even reputed to have had trouble in getting Holly’s narration in Badlands accepted)" (Questions 55).

Kaja Silverman considers the question in terms of gender, judging that the female voice-over is particularly subversive if the actress does not appear on the image track when her voice is on the sound track because the disjunction disrupt[s] the specular regime upon which dominant cinema relies; it would put her beyond the reach of
the male gaze (which stands in here for the cultural "camera") and release her voice from the signifying obligations which that gaze enforces. It would liberate the female subject from the interrogation about her place, her time, and her desires which constantly resecures her. Finally, to disembody the female voice in this way would be to challenge every conception by means of which we have previously known woman within Hollywood film, since it is precisely as body that she is constructed there. (Acoustic 164)

I argue, of course, that the sound track deviating constantly from the image track in Linda's quirky narration and her absence from the screen during portions of her voice-over is authorized, like her gaze, by youth. While the narration is still subversive in structure and content, it is deprived of some of its sting precisely because Linda has not reached sexual maturity and, consequently, has not yet been defined as body alone.

34. In the enlarged edition of The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film, Stanley Cavell asks what Days of Heaven's "extremities of beauty are in service of" (xiv) and describes another view of the "partitioned world." He states,

Objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive, they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place. Then if in relation to objects capable of such self-manifestation human beings are reduced in significance, or crushed by the fact of beauty left vacant, perhaps this is because in trying to take dominion over the world, or in aestheticizing it (temptations inherent in the making of film or of any art), they are refusing their participation with it. (xvi)

I am not persuaded that human beings are reduced in significance in the face of the self-referential physicality of filmic objects, for human beings on film have physical origins as firm as those of the objects that surround them. One might argue that an actor on screen has no physical "location in another place"--that the "Bill" on screen has no corresponding "Bill" off screen, only Richard Gere, for that rupture in correspondence is the nature of acting. Yet in Days of Heaven, the landscape itself is acting: the "wheat fields of the Texas Panhandle" are played by the wheat fields of Alberta, Canada, so "location in another place" in fiction film can be as illusory for nature as it is for human beings.

In weighing voice-over narration and image in their competing claims for objectivity, Sarah Kozloff argues
powerfully that "the photograph's special relationship with its signifieds is by no means incontrovertible." Even if one were to grant that still photographs do resemble their signifieds, numerous film scholars, especially in recent years, have succeeded in depriving film of any claims to presenting nature in the raw. After all, any study of individual frames reveals all sorts of meaningful manipulation—which should not be surprising, since it is precisely the job of the director, cameraman, gaffer, art director, costumer, and so on to supplement or control the meaning of each image, which is then mechanically fixed on celluloid. Furthermore, as soon as one moves from the level of the single shot to sequences of shots edited together, one moves into an area completely dependent upon cultural/ideological coding; we are now aware that both classical editing and Eisensteinian montage control the significance of the shots and the reactions of the spectators. And even before filmmakers determine how to compose or juxtapose their shots, consciously or subconsciously, they make subjective decisions regarding what to include or leave out, and these inclusions and exclusions have the force of radically altering the vision of reality presented by the film. (14)

Based on Kozloff's analysis, I argue that the intrusion of the cinematic apparatus troubles the chain of self-referentiality equally whether the image is of a human being or a landscape.

Above all, what I wish to emphasize in Days of Heaven is the overwhelming size of the landscapes and the longing they create through their visual excess, both of which echo the fall from maternal plenitude. The expanse of the landscapes recalls the lines from Robert Hass's poem, "Meditation at Lagunitas": "Longing, we say, because desire is full / of endless distances" (4-5).

35. Here Days of Heaven echoes the biblical story of Abraham, in which he claims not once but twice that his wife Sarah is really his sister and in both cases profits monetarily. In the first instance, Abraham says to Sarah, "Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee" (Gen. 12.12-3). Pharaoh takes Sarah into his house and gives Abraham great wealth in return. But God afflicts Pharaoh with multiple plagues until he returns Sarah to Abraham, asking "Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way" (Gen. 12.19). Abraham leaves with all his goods.
Then, when Abimelech, the king of Gerar, claims Sarah for his own, God comes to the king in a dream and says, "thou are but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife" (Gen. 20.3). The king, who has not yet touched Sarah, returns her to Abraham along with great riches, saying, "Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleases thee" (Gen. 20.15).

Interestingly, the root meaning of Pharaoh is "great house," quite in keeping with the farmer's mansion, which would dwarf any other house, except that there are no houses anywhere in sight.

I am indebted to David Mazel, Deborah Wilson, and Ellen Wondra for these references.

36. A similar moment occurs in The Great Gatsby, when Daisy Buchanan tells Nick Carraway how she felt when she learned she had given birth to a girl, an incident I take up in more detail in the following chapter. Although the situation is somewhat ambiguous, Nick, like Bill, is inclined to sweep away the possibility that Daisy is speaking with authority about her own life, her husband Tom as microcosm and gender as macrocosm.

37. Haskell Wexler finished shooting Days of Heaven when Almendros left to fulfill a previous commitment (Kroll 97).

38. Vladimir Petric summarizes a number of vehement opinions on the film: "Everybody is fascinated by its visual (as well as auditory) qualities, yet many find its characters 'unconvincing both as people and as symbols' (Joy Gould Boyum), 'its drama deficient, and its psychology obscure' (Andrew Sarris); others claim that 'most of the film's events take place abruptly, lacking adequate preparation or a dramatic pay-off' (Arthur Knight); while some discard it completely as an 'overwrought artifact' (Pauline Kael) or 'a test case of pretension' (David Thomason) and 'one of the most perversely undramatic, uninvolving and senseless movies ever made' (David Denby)" (37).

On the subject of film beauty, Hollis Frampton writes, "The film frame is a rectangle, rather anonymous in its proportions, that has been fiddled with recently in the interests of publicising, so far as I can see, nothing much more interesting than the notions of an unbroken and boundless horizon. The wide screen glorifies, it would seem, frontiers long gone: the landscapes of the American corn-flats and the Soviet steppes; it is accommodating to human body only when that body is lying in state" (53). I would certainly agree with Frampton about the wide screen's ability to glorify the frontier and the agricultural past. Days of Heaven is also admirably suited to the wide screen in that the narrative provides a
number of dead bodies. But what Frampton fails to take into account is that such a format is perfect for representing how small the human figure is when set down in nature or how much land one capitalist can own, and Malick uses the screen for just these purposes in *Days of Heaven*. 

39. In his *Village Voice* review, Andrew Sarris states, "Abby seems to have become a whore, and Linda may follow suit" (77). In his use of passive voice, Sarris neatly effaces the question of agency in Abby’s supposed prostitution. I assume that Sarris takes as evidence the whispers of the townspeople and Abby’s bold look, in its own way as challenging as Linda’s gaze in the opening credits. In fact, the evidence more strongly suggests Abby as masculinized capitalist/robber baron: she has made her fortune exploiting the resources of the West and is now heading back East; she is wearing a masculinized brown frock coat that buttons up to the neck, accessorized with a dangling watch chain and a scarf that suggests a man’s tie; and she has the freedom of independent movement associated with masculinity. While Sarris reacts to the anxieties provoked by woman as sexual and economic free agent, he has overlooked the containment of Abby’s gaze and its redirection into shamefaced downward looks. The whispers of the townspeople suggest that Abby’s complicity in the deaths of Bill and the farmer is hot gossip, although we have no idea if the town is near the farm or the river, where Bill’s death became a spectator event. The very fact that the town remains nonspecific geographically adds force to Abby’s containment because it hints that her guilt is universally known and trails after her as she attempts her escape via train. The quick containment of Abby’s masculine freedoms makes plain that although she might have crossed class boundaries, gender boundaries are inviolable. 

40. Given that any deputized female gazer can immediately be demoted to an object of the gaze, and continuing Foucault’s prison imagery, a female gazer might more accurately be called a trusty than a deputy. 

41. In Chapter 4, I examine briefly an instance in *Passing* in which the working class male gazer defers to the middle or upper class female gazer, although the situation is complicated by misperceptions on the man’s part about the woman’s race.
AMERICAN MEDUSA, AMERICAN SPHINX:
THE FEMALE GAZE AND KNOWLEDGE
IN MODERN FICTION AND FILM

VOLUME II

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Department of English

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May 1998
CHAPTER THREE
THE FRISSON OF THE FEMME FATALE:
THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER IN MATA HARI
AND THE TORN BREAST OF THE GREAT GATSBY’S NEW WORLD

Woman is a necessary evil, a natural temptation, adorable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill.

St. John Chrysostum (c. AD 345-407)

Where The Sound and the Fury characterizes feminine maturation as a process of losing both gaze and voice and where Days of Heaven suggests through its pairing of Linda and Abby a similar diminishment of the gaze alone, Mata Hari and The Great Gatsby take us deeper into the territory of mature heterosexual romance, where the female gaze still exists but often in a more veiled form. While Mata Hari contrasts the romances that are the spy’s stock in trade with her great love for Rosanoff (one she imagines leading to marriage), The Great Gatsby opens on a marriage that is interrupted by a romance. In both narratives, however, the women rely on their ability to defer the male gaze and gain temporary power through a look that is not quite a look. Yet this capability is to some extent a function of class, a strategy Mata Hari, Daisy Buchanan, and Jordan Baker possess but Carlotta, Mata’s fellow spy, and Myrtle Wilson, Tom Buchanan’s
mistress, lack. In both film and novel, the women do not set the terms of competition for the gaze and the power it bestows, but through their capacity to defer a showdown of gazes, they are able to modify the terms of battle to their advantage—at least in the short run. Eventually, though, Mata Hari’s gaze is conscripted for masculine use when her lover Rosanoff is blinded, and Daisy’s gaze is reabsorbed into marriage as she is made the guilty one through Myrtle’s death, a turn in the plot that both eliminates the working class woman’s bold looks—and her equally threatening excessive body—and reasserts Tom’s primacy over the wife who is more voice than flesh.

Even as both these texts are about heterosexual romance writ large—Gatsby’s love of Daisy and Mata Hari’s for Rosanoff—they are also very much about bonds between men: male homosocial power, its preservation through surveillance and punishment of the woman, and the romance narrative as a way to talk not about women but about feminine disruptions as interruptions in a history or narrative of masculinity. Hence, The Great Gatsby tells the tale not just of Gatsby and Daisy, but also of Nick Carraway’s identification with Gatsby and the eventual reinstitution of homosocial bonds between Nick and Tom. Similarly, Mata Hari is certainly the story of the great spy conquered by an even greater love, but it is just as much the tale of how the military was forced to turn its gaze of surveillance inward but succeeded in directing its
punitive looks outward again—toward enemy lines—through the expulsion of Mata Hari from the narrative and the defeat of her scopic regime. In the need to stop the transgressive power of women within heterosexual romance, both narratives depend on the play of binarisms: the woman's knowledge versus the knowledge about her, the woman's gaze versus the gaze directed at her. Furthermore, the binarism of male and female is extended through other pairings: in Mata Hari, Occident versus Orient and in The Great Gatsby, Aryan versus non-Aryan and upper class versus working class. As in The Sound and the Fury, both narratives are haunted by the women they expel, Mata Hari more strongly than The Great Gatsby, in which the femme fatale turns out to be more homme than femme, more modern capitalist saint than sinner.

**Performing Gender:**

*Mata Hari and the Frisson of the Femme Fatale*

My mama done tol' me
When I was in knee pants
My mama done tol' me, "Son,

A woman'll sweet talk
And give you the glad eye
But when that sweet talkin's done

A woman's a two-faced,
A worrisome thing that'll leave you to sing
The blues in the night."

"Blues in the Night," lyrics by Johnny Mercer, music by Harold Arlen, from the film of the same name, Warner Bros., 1941

When Odysseus, bound to the mast of his ship, hears the Sirens singing, what they offer is knowledge wider
than that promised by the Panopticon, closer to the knowledge gathered by the sweeping eye of an omniscient god, encompassing events past, present, and future (Hamilton 214). Further, the knowledge is sugarcoated by the flattering feminine "sweet talk" described in "Blues in the Night":

Draw near, illustrious Odysseus, man of many tales, great glory of the Achaeans, and bring your ship to rest so that you may hear our voices. No seaman ever sailed his black ship past this spot without listening to the honey-sweet tones that flow from our lips and no one who has listened has not been delighted and gone on his way a wiser man. For we know all that the Argives and Trojans suffered on the broad plain of Troy by the will of the gods, and we know whatever happens on this fruitful earth. (Homer 184)

Despite the fate of all the sailors who have charted this course before him, Odysseus again manages to have his cake and eat it too: he hears the Sirens' lovely song, learns what is on offer, but escapes before the Sirens close the deal. In this outcome, Odysseus sets a new standard for success in masculine encounters with treacherous women.

In addition to setting out from a patriarchal standpoint the risks men face at the hands of women, Odysseus' tale and the epigraphs above serve as a menu of characteristics associated with the **femme fatale**: excessive sexuality, great personal attraction, obscure or exotic origins, dubious integrity, changeability, and treachery. Add to these the mysterious finances and underworld connections **film noir** later contributes to the mix, and we have a fairly complete repertoire of the **femme**

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fatale's traits and strategies. Above all, the treacherous woman is marked by the vortex of danger that surrounds her (like the whirlpool Charybdis in classical legend) from which few men emerge alive. I would argue further that she is marked by the intersection of male gazes since her power to draw the eye turns men away from masculine affairs—and away from each other—toward the territory of the feminine, where they either battle each other for female attention or expend resources on surveillance and containment that would otherwise be put to homosocial use. Yet despite the characterization of the femme fatale as the locus of danger, in film history she is at least as endangered as the men who encircle her. Not until very late in the history of dangerous women, in films like Body Heat (1981), The Grifters (1990), The Last Seduction (1994), and Bound (1996) do femmes fatales survive their own narratives. Mata Hari and Myrtle Wilson fall prey to the familiar closure for femmes fatales, and Daisy Buchanan, like Caddy Compson, is neatly expelled from the narrative so that she troubles only its margins.

My focus in examining Mata Hari is another central trait of the femme fatale: knowledge, and in particular its intersection with the gaze and the attempt to create subjectivity. Above all, the femme fatale is knowing, one of her chief weapons being the knowing glance, with all its connotations of slyness, manipulativeness, treachery, and secrets shared—or withheld. She is one of the
principal embodiments of femininity as enigma because her seductive excess foregrounds the anxieties (and pleasures) swirling around the relationship between feminine knowledge and sexuality, the avatars of which include Eve, the Sphinx, Circe, Medusa, Cleopatra, Salomé, Carmen, La Belle Dame Sans Merci, the Sirens—and, of course, Caddy Compson.¹ The masculine dream of the femme fatale is a fantasy of exotic sexual pleasure colored by both dominance and submission: the man is helpless to resist the seduction of the woman’s beauty and knowledge, often sexual but not exclusively so (the Sirens promise a godlike omniscience, for example), but at the same time her choice of consort earmarks the lucky man as exceptional among his humdrum fellows, an exclusivity that boosts his value in the male homosocial economy while at the same time it marks him as a danger because of his proximity to a powerful, transgressive femininity.² The fantasy, however, is that he will be tutored in arcane sexual practices and aggrandized in his own eyes and those of other men when he becomes not part of the femme fatale’s male harem but brings her to heel as his exclusive partner.³ In some instances, this scenario takes on another shading, as with Daisy Buchanan, whose promise of sexual knowledge is secondary to the class mobility she offers Gatsby.

The male fantasy of the femme fatale feeds off the woman’s danger, desiring to preserve that element of risk
even while thriving on the idea of the dangerous woman domesticated. What unites these two seemingly incompatible goals of fantasy is masculine power. If the *femme fatale* retains her danger but is destroyed, the fantasy continues pleasurably, each time with a different leading lady, replaying in an endless narrative loop a drama of masculine privilege threatened (with its attendant frisson of pleasure as well as anxiety), then masculinity triumphant. If the *femme fatale*’s challenge is neutralized through domesticity, she is transformed into the hero’s reward instead of the obstacle to be overcome in the move toward narrative closure; she is the princess at the end of the fairy tale rather than Medusa or the Sphinx.⁴ As Mulvey argues in her account of sadism as narrative, something must happen, there must be a battle of will and strength, someone must change, and not surprisingly, the woman’s threat is resolved at least partly through a change in the female gaze.

While at first Mata Hari’s gaze is difficult to read and even to discover, once located it proves crucial to the narrative, for among other things the film depicts a woman struggling to assert her subjectivity where the roles available are severely limited: object of the gaze, status symbol, go-between, pawn in political maneuvers orchestrated by men, and—perhaps potentially—wife.⁵ Because of these limited and limiting roles, failure in which could lead to a traitor’s death, Mata in her role as
spy has two gazes, one layered on top of the other. The first is a performance of the eyes, most often characterized by half lowered lids, an act which invites the male gaze but doesn’t meet it and through this avoidance is able to defer a number of confrontations. Beneath this look and half hidden by it is Mata’s full gaze, which marks her as alert, resourceful, highly intelligent—a woman with an agenda of her own. This fuller gaze surfaces, as a matter of survival, when no one in the diegesis is watching. Then, when Mata accepts Rosanoff’s love and the new and unlikely role of bride-to-be, her full gaze surfaces permanently, although not without substantial modifications. Her access to a more open gaze, which accompanies Rosanoff’s affection almost like an engagement ring, also signals a double move towards containment, as I will describe below. To put the narrative in the terms of the melodramatic (and reductive) tag line on a movie poster, Mata Hari finds her gaze in the arms of the man she loves only to lose it to the arms of the firing squad.

**Gender as Performativity, Gender as Performance: The Femme Fatale Seeing and Seen**

One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (301)

In the literature, descriptions of the femme fatale’s gaze are almost as difficult to pin down as the woman herself.⁶ Surveying visual art at the end of the
nineteenth century, Virginia Allen concludes that the fatal woman is regularly represented with half lowered eyelids, suggesting the object of the gaze, but this seemingly demure look is contradicted by the rest of her body, which is erect in posture and consistently oriented towards a full frontal exposure, "signifying a threatening power" (2). At the same time, such a posture represents the femme fatale not as the more familiar fetishized part object, "with visual emphasis added through perspective, angle, or lighting of the legs (Marlene Dietrich), buttocks and breasts (Marilyn Monroe), hair (Rita Hayworth), or face (Greta Garbo)," but instead the "comforting phallicized totality," where the whole woman through her erectness stands in for the phallus (Studlar 231). My point here is the seductive mix of the femme fatale's appeal: like the fetish itself, she is always both the reassurance and the reminder of the danger that required that reassurance. Her ability to switch rapidly between these two opposite poles creates a kind of alternating current of fascination, as we see with Mata Hari, a force field difficult to escape unless the circuit is broken.

Yet, as Mary Ann Doane argues, the femme fatale's power "is of a peculiar sort insofar as it is usually not subject to her conscious will, hence appearing to blur the opposition between passivity and activity. She is an ambivalent figure because she is not the subject of power.
but its carrier (the connotations of disease are appropriate here)." As Doane describes it, the femme fatale’s body has agency independent of her will or consciousness and so "she has power despite herself" (Femmes 2). In Mata Hari’s case, and in contradiction to Doane’s analysis, her power within the diegesis is constructed very much as a matter of her will, something she turns on or off as she struggles to balance the demands of espionage and personal interest. Yet Doane’s assessment still holds at least partly true when we look a little deeper. The foundations of Mata’s power are her beauty and her Oriental exoticism, two factors that attract the male gaze and over which she has little control. Her response, then, is to build an elaborate edifice, with all the attendant connotations of art and artifice, on these substantial foundations and further enhance its value by making entrance into it highly exclusive.10

My choice of metaphor here is, of course, conscious. Beginning with the early shots of Mata’s dance to Shiva, a dance that illustrates her ability to rivet the male gaze but which ends as abruptly as coitus interruptus, the question of Mata’s accessibility—and particularly her penetrability—is a persistent one. This question continues to circulate in the film’s first two acts in the form of Adrian’s elaborately fetishizing and vaguely Oriental costumes, with their emphasis on slit skirts and
bodices and other labial openings. Furthermore, Mata’s actions reiterate the question as she refuses or postpones Shubin’s sexual advances through "sweet talk" and a parodic performance of the American adage that supposedly describes the regulation of heterosexual conduct: "The girl sets the limits." In Gaylyn Studlar’s view, the mother sets the limits in that this fort/da game of desire is the structure of male masochism. Studlar writes, "Masochism obsessively recreates the suspended moment between concealment and revelation, disappearance and appearance, seduction and rejection, in emulation of the ambivalent response to the mother who the child fears may either abandon or overwhelm him" (237). Through this strategy of denial and delay, Mata constructs herself as perpetual Other, site of pre-Oedipal desire, and object of the male gaze while she refuses all supplicants entrance into the inner sanctuary of the temple--the penetralia. At the same time, her allure pits men against each other, as is evident in the dance scene, where General Shubin glares at Lieutenant Rosanoff, his fellow Russian officer and a newly anointed hero, who is so engrossed in Mata’s dance performance that he doesn’t even notice his superior’s angry gaze. The fascination of the femme fatale short circuits the homosocial, most obviously by creating competition between men, but also by interrupting the flow of homosocial information since men are attending
not to each other but to the mysterious woman in their midst.\textsuperscript{12} Yet the \textit{femme fatale}'s dance is more than a theatrical performance. It is also a performance of femininity, as is Mata's elaborate manipulation of Shubin. In \textit{Bodies That Matter}, Judith Butler summarizes gender performativity as follows:

Insofar as heterosexual gender norms produce inapproximable ideals, heterosexuality can be said to operate through the regulated production of hyperbolic versions of "man" and "woman." These are for the most part compulsory performances, ones which none of us choose, but which each of us is forced to negotiate. I write "forced to negotiate" because the compulsory character of these norms does not always make them efficacious. Such norms are continually haunted by their own inefficacy; hence, the anxiously repeated effort to install and augment their jurisdiction. (237)

In \textit{Gender Trouble}, Butler defines \textit{performativity} in a way that explains how it might shade into \textit{performance}. Also, her account of identity provides a link to my metaphor of edifice, foundation, and subterranean life in \textit{Mata Hari}. As Butler describes it, words, acts, and gestures create the effect of an internal core or stable identity when in fact they are all manifestations \textit{on the surface of the body}.\textsuperscript{13} In fact, this account of identity sounds very cinematic (and very much like Lacan's mirror stage), for it is the movement of light and shadow on the screen plus the gestures and words of the actors in an imagined three-dimensional space--all examples of surface--that encourage us not only to identify in a highly emotional way with the
characters but also to believe so strongly in the reality of their identity that we weep at their misfortunes and imagine alternate solutions to their plights after the film is finished. To return to gender, Butler explains that "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality" (Gender 136).

What I want to point to here is the way in which Butler's description of a surface mistaken for a core encompasses Mata's strategies as a spy. Through a series of gestures--seductive posturings, half-glances, and small touches--Mata creates the illusion of a very particular gender core: the available, responsive, highly desirable woman. Crucially, though, what reveals in cinematic terms that these bodily manifestations are only surface is Mata's gaze: the sly glances from beneath her lashes whereby she looks to measure the effect her actions have on other characters within the diegesis, whether she is assessing Rosanoff's willingness to extinguish the holy flame in exchange for a night of passion or Dubois's gullibility when she admits jokingly that she is indeed a spy. Through the dramatization of Mata's subversive gaze, we share the "view behind" that Annette Kuhn sees as so necessary to the comedy of sexual disguise but here is equally necessary to the drama of gender performance and
to identification (Power 65). We are "in the know" at the expense of most of the men in the narrative--one up (at least temporarily) on the male homosocial. As Butler explains, the gender norm is a command and necessarily produces insubordinations, so it is no surprise that Mata's femininity-in-excess reads like a revolt, an over-the-top performance, a parody revealed not by a knowing glance at the audience, as in a humorous stage performance, but a glance the audience is privileged--and intended--to catch voyeuristically (Bodies 237).

At first, Mata Hari's gaze is difficult to find and to read, as one might expect with a spy, a problem only intensified by what the 1932 Time review described as the character's "awning lashes" ("New Pictures" 25). It is fitting, however, that the spy's lashes should trouble our investigation, for traditionally a woman's lashes are like the fan of a coquette, used to veil and reveal (in its etymological sense of unveil) in a peep show where the body is the stage--a peep show that stimulates and continues the masochistic play. What is revealed or promised or teasingly offered, however, is not the genitals, but the gaze, in a presentation very different from the direct look of the child Caddy in The Sound and the Fury or Linda in Days of Heaven. As Doane points out, and as is certainly true in Mata Hari with respect to the gaze, the fetishistic aspects of the striptease allow the male viewer to avoid the anxieties of the full look and
instead linger at the relatively safe margins of desire (Femmes 106). The constant play of Mata’s lashes veil for the characters within the diegesis and for the anxious spectator the woman’s usurping of the traditionally masculine privilege of surveillance while still offering the fetishized pleasures of a lingering look at a famously beautiful face.¹⁸ At the same time, the excessiveness of the lashes denaturalizes Mata’s feminine posturings and suggests again that they are a performance.

While throughout the film the men bemoan the control this siren has over them, Mata is able to wield her power partly through an elaborate vocabulary of gazes, a language the men often misread since they are looking in the wrong direction or training an intense fetishizing gaze at some other part of Mata’s body. In fact, the eyes tell the story, sometimes in a full gaze but more often in the veiled and subtle shadings of an under-lash glance or a sly look from the corner of her eye. With her eyelashes accenting each move the way a fan dramatizes and enlarges the graceful movement of a feminine hand, Mata keeps her eyes at half mast when she is manipulating, requesting, requiring, or maneuvering, using her lashes to veil her true feelings or unstated goals. For example, in trying to extract state secrets from General Shubin, whose mind is on his imminent exposure as a traitor, she pouts, "Well, maybe you’d rather be alone. You might as well be. Your thoughts are not with me," as she lowers her lids,
offers him a quick, mournful glance, then denies him her gaze by looking down and turning away. Only after he offers Mata his undivided amorous attention does she reward him with a direct, sustained look. Even then, her eyes are only half open in a performance of "the woman in love," the performance that will allow her to question him repeatedly until she extracts the facts she needs for Andriani. With Shubin, Mata’s eyes are only fully open when she is gathering information and he is oblivious, having turned away or buried his face in her neck. Such manipulations are unheard of in the gazers I have examined previously, but neither have Caddy, Miss Quentin, and Abby had much luck in preserving their active and mature gazes within heterosexuality.

When Mata first meets Rosanoff as he helps her into her car after the dance performance, however, her eyes are wide open in a prolonged and direct gaze at the young officer. Notable in this scene is the structure of the shot/reverse shot. It begins with Rosanoff’s unblinking look at Mata, an extension of the pleasurable objectifying gaze he trained on her during the dance to Shiva. Her direct look back at him, however, turns the exchange into a battle of equals: she is no longer simply "to-be-looked-at-ness," willing to accept objectification as her gendered lot. She is, instead, a subject holding her own ground. The third shot, in which Rosanoff continues to look right at Mata, should be the last in this sequence--
the suture drawn tight—if the goal is to establish Rosanoff as the gazer and Mata as his object. Instead, there is a fourth shot in which Mata continues to gaze at Rosanoff. This lack of suture, this open-ended exchange, creates in the spectator a vague unease, since Mata has escaped her gendered place in the vocabulary of classic Hollywood editing. At the same time, the unease is productive, for it prompts a desire for closure quite in keeping with the narrative’s goal of bringing these two characters together again.

Mata’s full look, for once not veiled by lashes, coquettish glances to the side, or seductive flutterings, is evidence in the vocabulary of this film that we are seeing for a moment her true feelings, not another performance of the master spy. When she does play the spy with Rosanoff—when, for example, she requires him to betray his mother, his vow, and his faith by extinguishing the flame beneath the icon of the Virgin Mary—her eyes are less than fully open even as she looks him full in the face. Toward the end of the film, when she has resigned her duties as spy and redefined herself as "woman in love," her eyes are almost consistently wide open, and there are many shots where the camera lingers on her face to take full advantage of their gaze: at Rosanoff, at the court proceedings that sentence her to death by firing squad, at the nuns and prison guard toward whom she directs a tender and nurturing solicitude. While in
description this vocabulary of gazes may seem intricate or indecipherable, in fact it is a language we interpret readily, based on our own everyday experience, not to mention what we have picked up unconsciously as filmgoers, and it is a testimonial to Garbo’s acting that we as spectators read her meaning consistently.

After Mata falls in love with Rosanoff, however, her gaze loses most of its threatening content, for she is no longer gathering information and putting her knowledge to work to challenge masculine power. In fact, her energy is directed toward saving Rosanoff’s life and reputation even at the expense of her own. And what this requires is a desperate hoarding of the knowledge that Rosanoff was present at Shubin’s apartment immediately after the general was shot. In keeping with this difficult task of stopping the flow of information when before Mata merely diverted it to her own aims, her gaze is often a suffering one, framed by a furrowed brow and down-turned lips. Gone is the knowing half-smile of the Mona Lisa. Before proceeding to analyze the shift in Mata’s gaze, however, I wish to look more closely at her relation to knowledge and her attempts at self-making, for even as Butler’s account of performativity calls into question a core identity, Mata Hari looks within and without for such a stable definition.
"I feel I do know her": A Spy in the House of Knowledge

Nothing succeeds like excess.

Oscar Wilde

Mata Hari is an enigma or, more accurately, a performance of the enigma associated with femininity. Her histrionic poses, her display of sensuality, her heightened mystery all attract men to her as does the mercurial play between these attitudes, which I spoke of before as an alternating current. In discussing the unpredictability of the femme fatale, Christine Gledhill notes that in film noir, one most often sees not a coherent representation of an unstable, treacherous woman, but instead a sequence of partial characterizations separated by gaps in time, a fragmentation which contributes not only to a certain incoherence of plot—a well known feature of film noir—but more particularly to the construction of the male hero’s world as fractured, uncertain, and unstable ("Klute" 18). While Mata Hari, like film noir, certainly dramatizes the destabilizing influence the spy has on the men who encircle her, the film is also concerned with Mata’s search for a definition of self, her attempt to assert a stable identity against the crushing weight of assumption, innuendo, gossip, and desire that surrounds her.

Immediately after her dance performance, before Mata has had the first opportunity to account for herself, we
overhear the following defining remarks rising from the dispersing audience:

"They say her mother was a sacred dancer, her father a temple priest."
"You know, she married a Dutchman. My dear, he used to beat her."
"She makes matrimony seem so dull. I'd like to know her."
"I feel that I do know her."

Spoken by an anonymous man in the audience, the last remark is telling, for it illustrates the tightening net of "knowledge" that denies Mata the autonomy to define herself even as it creates the illusion she needs to successfully perform her duties as a spy. If total strangers feel they know her, as if they are within a comfortably coherent (even if unpredictable) structure of identity backed up by a genealogy, then she is safe--at least temporarily so--to move beneath the structure in the subterranean passages only she knows about, a headquarters from which she can spy but also the mythic locale of the self. The identity she has structured above the surface, aided by the enthusiastic projections of an entranced populace, is intriguing and exotic enough to amaze and mystify as well as distract. Why look further if you are quite content with what you see on the surface?²² By constantly attracting the male gaze, Mata creates the illusion that her actions are visible and, therefore, aboveboard while she works to create an air of Oriental mystery, composed of silence and enigmatic smiles, which
siren-like attracts a select few into her inner circle of deception.

Even as she is highly successful in her spy persona, Mata longs to assert some kind of bedrock self, something more than the *mise en abyme* she presents to the world and that we have come to acknowledge, post-Lacan, as identity. Within the diegesis her attempts are foiled by the male homosocial structures she works within, one of the functions of which is to provide the men, but not Mata, with seemingly stable self-definitions and a hint of class identity: Shubin is male and a general in the Russian Imperial Army; Rosanoff is male and a Russian lieutenant; and Dubois is male, French, and the chief of the spy bureau. As Stephen Heath so concisely puts it, "All the trappings of authority, hierarchy, position make the man, his phallic identity" ("Riviere" 56). Mata, on the other hand, is maybe Javanese, maybe not, of uncertain parentage and unstable class standing--she is, after all, a dancer--with a Dutch passport and perhaps many others. When she asserts to Andriani, "I am Mata Hari. I am my own master," her adamant statement contains within it the contradictions of her situation: a subjectivity that is always sliding into an objectification that is not part of her strategy, an enslavement that has as its obverse not freedom but only a different master. Mata's choice of the word *master* is apt, for it links the *femme fatale*'s historical reputation as a wild force, almost impossible
to harness, with Doane's notion that the dangerous woman's power is somehow separate from her self, something that can be under her own control or, even more easily, under someone else's. When Mata attempts to resign from spying, Andriani makes clear that the only former spy is a dead one. His point is brought home by the murder of Carlotta in the next room, which Mata overhears. An all-purpose spy or minion of Andriani's, certainly without Mata's sophistication, Carlotta has made the mistake of defying Andriani and looking him straight in the eye, rather than employing the more devious half-glance that is Mata's specialty. Consequently, Mata takes Andriani seriously: if she is her own master and no longer the puppet of the men around her or a marker in a complex political game, she is master of nothing but a corpse. This situation is filled with irony, for in life her body was both the vehicle of her power and a vehicle only nominally under her control since it cast her in the limited role of object of the gaze. As Doane suggests, the femme fatale's power is more apparent than actual, weaker than we first imagined, given the strength of her legend.

When Mata is on the brink of execution, she again ponders the question of her identity. One of the nuns who attends her says, "We serve God and are content," and in response Mata muses, "I wonder if I could be like that if I had to do it all over again. No. That's how I am; that's how I had to be." In this conclusion, Mata defines
herself as not content with the circumscribed life offered a female religious or with self-sacrifice alone, even if she has given her life to save Rosanoff. Above all, she has been and is a desiring woman, and her gaze, whether veiled or direct, has helped her to maneuver toward her desires and survive in the man’s world of international politics.

By definition, the femme fatale is sexually knowing, which provokes desire as well as castration anxiety in her male entourage, but even more threatening than her physical allure is Mata Hari’s entry through sexual knowledge into the traditionally masculine domains of politics, diplomacy, and military secrets. It is her entry into this sanctum sanctorum that differentiates her from many other femmes fatales and that brings her before the French tribunal. Still, the heart of the film’s anxiety is not the female spy’s disregard for national loyalties but her disruption of male homosocial bonds and the attendant troubling of the border between genders. This border is represented not just by gender itself but also by the iconography of a treacherous and sexually licentious Orient deviously penetrating--through the gaze and the knowledge it gathers--a somewhat naively honorable and prim Occident, whose strongest emotional bonds are to country. By orientalizing Mata’s femininity, the narrative heightens its principal effects: she is doubly Other, twice the enigma, and twice the lure. She is also
doubly susceptible to the epistemological containments Edward Said sees as characteristic of orientalism but which work equally well in this instance for the objectification of the feminine: "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). Here I am reminded not only of the male spectator's comment after Mata's dance—"I feel I do know her"—but also Freud's tone as he opens his lecture on "Femininity," suddenly turning half of his audience into objects under the microscope, dismissed from intellectual endeavor: "Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem—those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply—you are yourselves the problem."

Like Said's orientalist, Freud assures us that his territory is "observed facts, almost without any speculative additions" (577), thereby justifying the tone of his study, which, in common with the orientalist's, relies on sentences that "are all declarative and self-evident; the tense they employ is the timeless eternal; they convey an impression of repetition and strength; they are always symmetrical to, and yet diametrically
inferior," in Freud's case, to a masculine equivalent and, in the orientalist's, to a European one (Said 72).²³

My intention here is not to collapse Said's analysis of orientalism into the patriarchal construction of femininity nor do I wish to posit a single, monolithic, homogeneous orientalism.²⁴ Instead, my goal is to show how the twinning of these discourses in the film is used to double both the enticements and the anxieties related to femininity, to intensify them so the femme is more than ever fatale. At the same time, the intersection of femininity and orientalism both provokes and justifies the need for information, surveillance, and containment. As Said states, "knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control" (36). Mata Hari is, in the end, "known" to death. At the same time, as the passage in Freud reveals, lack of knowledge is a "problem," a "worry," an anxiety that is only partially assuaged by the cycle of knowledge, power, and control Said describes. Again we are faced with the inductive problem: we can never know everything; in fact, we can never know enough. To pursue a controlling, dominant knowledge is in this sense not profitable, for one is controlled by a search that will never end. Mata in death is not known, therefore, so much as terminated: no new information about her will be generated or needs to be.
Her file is comfortingly closed, although I will problematize that interpretation a little later.

Before Mata is fixed in and by death, the political areas in which she trespasses are the epitome of masculinity: physically violent, worldly, far-reaching, and external in opposition to the traditionally internal, enclosed, and peaceful domestic spaces of femininity. While the world politics of Mata Hari are obscure, the gender politics are plain, especially when we read through "country" as a geopolitical division to an analogous pattern of allegiances: namely, male homosociality. In this light, the negotiations and betrayals of Mata Hari take on new meaning as knowledge passes from the "country" of men to the "country" of women: Shubin intentionally passes his country’s information to Mata in exchange for her sexual and emotional attentions; Rosanoff unintentionally allows Mata access to his country’s top secret dispatches; further, Rosanoff stops the flow of information to his country when he intentionally lingers in Mata’s embrace instead of answering the telephone call ordering him to fly from Paris to Russia at dawn.

One might argue that gender is not the central issue since Mata immediately passes her information on to Andriani, thereby placing the narrative back in the realm of political drama. But it is important to note, first, that Andriani’s political transgressions are not punished by the narrative whereas Mata’s gendered ones are and,
second, that Mata is as disruptive to Andriani’s spy network as she is to the diplomatic and military establishment. When an assignment displeases her, she balks or sets her own schedule or maneuvers Andriani into fulfilling it himself. When he fixes her with a dominating gaze, she at first returns it, then defers the duel of looks, as Daisy Buchanan will do, by refusing to take it seriously, casting her eyes around flirtatiously, and wandering the room. Treating a standoff as just another social situation and a bit of a joke is her favored--and very gendered--technique (one she uses again when Dubois solicits Shubin’s aid in exposing her as a spy). "You are capricious," Andriani tells her in the declarative, timelessly eternal statements Said has described above. "You’re a little bit mad. You might give me away just for the excitement of the thing. You might get me killed, unless I kill you first." In this fear, Andriani parallels Shubin despite their political differences, since Mata does kill the general to prevent Rosanoff from being discredited; it is only in his understanding of her motivations that Andriani is off the mark.

Mata Hari is indeed an epistemological trouble: she disrupts the lines of communication between men, crosses and tangles their wires even as she listens in, trespasses across the border of sexual difference, and shows no respect for geopolitical divisions that, among other
things, formalize the patterns of knowledge and allegiance between men. As if these disruptions were not enough, as Mata drains patriarchal information and reroutes it, she additionally taxes male homosocial resources when epistemological energy must be reallocated to know and contain her. In other words, the energy--and the gazes--that should be flying straight and true across battle lines are instead attracted to the Charybdis-like vortex that is Mata Hari.

Mata’s threat to male homosociality is even clearer when Dubois attempts to persuade Shubin to expose her spying. "You’re very friendly with a lady," Dubois delicately begins. "We consider this woman a very grave danger, and as you know her better than anyone else, we want you to help us." Yet Shubin would rather jeopardize his position within the homosocial network--his generalship, the trust of his foreign colleagues, his invitations to elite social gatherings, the sense of "us" that Dubois appeals to--for the pleasures of Mata’s company. In sum, Shubin is hoarding his knowledge of the femme fatale, a knowledge he should be willing to share or trade within the homosocial economy. Shubin has become a blockage in the circulation of knowledge between men about women, an epistemological circulation essential to preserve the centrality of masculinity. The male eye in the Panopticon is both a symbol of masculine power and a practical necessity since collecting additional knowledge
provides insurance that the centralized power of the gaze will never fall into other hands. At the same time, as I have suggested above, the anxiety of the inductive problem is partially soothed by a constant flow of information.

Soon Dubois realizes he can break Mata's hold on Shubin by playing on the general's sexual vanity, waking him from the fantasy that he is the _femme fatale_ 's exclusive partner. "We older men," Dubois deviously sympathizes, "merely furnish the soft lights and champagne--the mood, as it were. Youth whistles and we--we spend the rest of the evening reading a book." When Shubin learns that Mata has spent the night with Rosanoff, he sets about exposing both of them, and at his own expense since he cannot reveal Mata's subterfuge without implicating himself. Exposing Mata will close down her competing epistemological economy and re-establish the flow of information between men. The diminished flow has sapped the strength of male homosociality from the opening scenes of the film, when the ineffectual officer, accompanied by Dubois, asks the man facing the firing squad, "Is any woman worth that? Surely you regret having betrayed your country."25 Dubois coaxes Shubin back into the homosocial sphere by reminding him of the binarisms Mata has turned upside down, the privileges on which Shubin has based his career: general over lieutenant, older man over younger, and male over female. So valuable are these homosocial arrangements that Shubin is willing
to sacrifice himself to ensure their re-establishment. Besides, to desert the country of men for that of women, as Shubin has done, is a living death, and nature abhors such an oxymoron. Shubin recognizes the price to be paid for his border crossing when he states early on, "I’m dead now just as surely as though there were a bullet in my heart."

Mata Hari uses femininity—or rather a performance of femininity—to try to seize power in a male homosocial economy where women are markers in an elaborate masculine game of status and allegiance and where the game board is world politics. Despite her gamesmanship, which is, as the film establishes, legendary, Mata Hari earns through a combination of wisdom and wiles a familiar feminine narrative payoff: heterosexual romance, self-sacrifice, and death. Still, what makes the film especially appropriate for this study is the role of the gaze in Mata’s performance of a transgressive femininity and her struggle to retain her look under dauntingly objectifying conditions: the punitive surveillance of Dubois, as the official representative of the Law of the Father; the alternately admiring and suspicious regard of young Lt. Rosanoff; the lustful and doting looks of the older General Shubin; and the fetishizing, worshipful gaze of all Paris. In the last act of the film, when Mata’s gaze is easiest to identify because it is open and aboveboard, it has lost much of its force, fated as it is to be
extinguished by the firing squad and turned away from self-making toward pipe dreams of homemaking with Rosanoff.

**Double Containment for a Double Threat: The Gaze Recast**

In reading the film as Mata Hari's search for subjectivity and a gaze of her own within a field of fiercely battling male gazes, the moment when Mata visits the military hospital in search of Rosanoff is crucial, for it marks the place where her gaze surfaces permanently and begins to travel freely in a world where it used to be veiled and circumscribed. For a reading of the female gaze, however, this new freedom is less promising than it first appears since it is in this scene that Mata learns of Rosanoff's blindness and reconsecrates her gaze to his use by placing his hand on her face and saying, "Here are your eyes." Her looks are now authorized as male: she has declared herself to be Rosanoff's proxy rather than the free agent she strove to be in the first two acts. Further, her gaze becomes one of desperation, for by visiting Rosanoff in the hospital and providing him with new eyes, then refusing his participation in her trial, she has deliberately chosen a martyr's role. To paraphrase the nun's declaration, Mata serves Rosanoff and is content, even with her death sentence.

In the service of heterosexual love, Mata's gaze is fetishized suffering: luminous, wide open, agitated eyes cling and plead rather than assert, and they often fly
upward as if toward a heavenly power she previously seemed to dismiss when she required the young officer to exterminate the flame below the icon of the Holy Virgin. Her eyes no longer challenge, but accept; as her body is engulfed in severe draperies, her eyes become to-be-looked-at-ness. Where Mata is restricted by the dock during court proceedings and by the jail cell as she awaits execution, physical constraints that also serve to corral what used to be her wide-ranging looks, her gaze is contained temporally by her imminent death and thematically by her new-found domesticity, which limits her interests to an over-involvement in Rosanoff’s. Although Mary Ann Doane is discussing the female spectator here, her analysis serves equally well for this female protagonist and the circumstances under which she now gazes: "Proximity rather than distance, passivity, overinvolvement and overidentification . . . these are the tropes which enable the woman’s assumption of the position of ‘subject’ of the gaze" (Desire 2).

Mata’s new, selfless direction is signaled in other ways besides her new open but rewritten gaze. Her attire lacks all ornamentation to the point of a nun-like austerity, and it no longer hints at the threateningly mixed sexual pleasures defined as Oriental by Adrian’s costuming: for example, the tight, shiny leggings that fetishize her shapely legs even as they highlight their phallic length and the pagoda-like hat she wears during
the dance to Shiva, which frames her face with sparkling labial folds but in silhouette looks more like a stylized French tickler. Further reinforcing her martyrdom is Mata's generosity toward her keepers, both the nuns and the prison guard, which is matched by their dedication to her, despite the fact she is a convicted traitor. Finally, the violin rendition of "Ave Maria," played by one of the soldiers as Mata and Rosanoff are reunited in the hospital, provides a musical bridge between Mata's new saint-like persona and her former incarnation as iconoclast and extinguisher of sacred flames.

Not only is Mata's position changed with respect to the gaze, however, but as we might expect, she is no longer in perfect control of knowledge. The clearest evidence that the epistemological balance has shifted is a scene in court. The prosecutor offers nothing but hearsay and double hearsay gathered from Dubois to prove that Mata was in Shubin's rooms at the time he was killed. Consequently, the defense attorney calls for Mata's release, protesting, "You've not brought to that stand one human being who will state that this is so: 'I know it, I saw it, I swear it.'" Mata the spy has seemingly once again foiled Dubois despite his penetrating gaze and his officially sanctioned powers of surveillance. Yet when the prosecutor plays his ace in the hole by calling for the testimony of "that brave young soldier recently blinded in the course of heroic duty," Mata the lover
blurts out that Rosanoff was outside the room where Shubin was killed and knows nothing. She has convicted herself, masochistically even if unintentionally. Mata supplies the prosecutor with the "I know it, I saw it" without which he has no case. To add insult to injury, she is undone by the very faculties that have made her a great spy, those she has stolen from the trove of masculinity and must return for narrative closure: her gaze and her corner on knowledge. Mata’s scopic power has lost its original force and is displaced by the punitive gaze of the court and its officers. Her self-confident control of knowledge and disregard for public perceptions have given way to an over-involvement in Rosanoff: not only his health and happiness after her death but his good opinion of her. The woman who sought to be her own master has indeed been mastered by love.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the disruption that is the *femme fatale* is subject to two different kinds of containment—the domestic and the destructive—and Mata Hari is fated to experience both. While these punishments are not the same as those undergone by Caddy or Abby, the pattern of multiple containments of femininity continues. For the love of Rosanoff, Mata gives up spying, but her damage to the homosocial network has been so extensive that her anticipated marriage is insufficient to heal the wounds she has inflicted, particularly since her sexuality has
been so pronounced throughout the narrative and the desires she has provoked in the men surrounding her so strong. "She makes matrimony seem so dull" re-echoes at this point in the story. While recognizing that only death is sufficient punishment for Mata's excesses, I want to underline that domestication is a containment nonetheless: of Mata's gaze, freedom of movement, sexuality, and search for subjectivity--the characteristics that have defined her throughout the narrative.

The message the film conveys through the evolution of Mata Hari's gazing is disturbing: a woman may gaze freely and openly when she is contained within heterosexual romance and her looks are not in her own interests but in the service of the male homosocial. At the same time, Butler's idea of gender as performative--even as performance--is worth considering further here, for it helps to explain a certain distancing that takes place as Mata moves from agent who wants to be her own master to woman mastered by love and condemned prisoner, a distancing that creates simultaneous pleasure and displeasure--a kind of double exposure in the female spectator's identification with Mata Hari.

When Mata is transformed into the "woman in love," and her gaze becomes a fetishized suffering put to the service of Rosanoff's needs, all her subversive looks cease and, one would imagine, so would our investment in
distinguishing between surface and core, performance and "reality." Yet so many of the film's pleasures have been based on these distinctions--or our inability to be absolutely sure about them--that it is difficult if not impossible to lay these concerns aside so late in the narrative game. Consequently, even as the film invites the viewer to perceive the "woman in love" as Mata's core revealed at last, her performance of the spy and *femme fatale* shines through that identity like a double exposure. Performance, performativity--the border between these terms is increasingly permeable as both call the existence of a core identity into serious question. Even though Mata has dropped the calculated glances from under her lashes and instead looks Rosanoff full in the face with wide open eyes, we are far too aware of how the play of surfaces can simulate a coherent self to believe fully that this new Mata is the "real" or only one, complicated by the possibility that we might prefer the powerful, self-defining *femme fatale*. Further fueling this discontent is Mata's movement into the realm of masquerade: while at the beginning of the film Mata offered a *performance* of woman as phallus to a number of men for her own purposes, at the end, in her wholehearted embrace of monogamous heterosexual romance, she *becomes* the phallus especially for Rosanoff. In response to Rosanoff's love, "she becomes the woman men want, the term of phallic identity, phallic exchange," as Heath describes
the feminine masquerade ("Joan Riviere" 52). In her new role as object of masculine exchange and site of masculine identity and reassurance, she passes willingly from the court to the prison, past Rosanoff, into the hands of the guards, and on into the darkening frame. But masquerade requires a mask—and a behind-the-mask, as Heath points out—so we are free to read Mata's new "core identity" of "woman in love" as I have written it here: within quotation marks (50).

Adding to our skepticism and encouraging an even greater distance from the action is the tired narrative trope of the woman at last satisfied through the ministrations of her adept male lover, as if one night of love with Rosanoff would transform Mata from an untrustworthy, manipulative spy into an "honest" woman intent on marriage or translate such a self-protective, independent woman—-one intent on being her "own master"--into a nurturing, true-blue martyr for love. Of course, we don't know what occurs behind the bedroom door of Rosanoff's Parisian pied-à-terre. What we do know is that Mata enters the door as a spy and exits as a servant of the male homosocial, insofar as her sacrifices for the man she loves, up to and including the sacrifice of her life, heal the wounds she inflicts on the body of patriarchy. Again, these wounds are cast not just in gender terms but in political ones since Mata's expulsion from the narrative will level the martial playing field: the flow
of political information will no longer be blocked and
diverted, we are encouraged to believe, and the
underhanded, underground tricks, so characteristic of the
Occidental construction of the Oriental, will be over. In
fact, they are over, if we are to judge from Adrian's
costuming, when Mata kills Shubin and goes into hiding--
the moment when Mata acknowledges to Rosanoff through her
silence that she loves him and her clothes turn drab and
understated.

Yet what reveals again that politics are masking
gender issues--are primarily the costuming in a drama of
the male homosocial threatened, then saved--is the
unfinished story of Andriani. As far as the spectator
knows, Andriani's spy ring continues despite Mata's
multiple containments and is as destructive to the Allied
war effort as ever. Instead of expunging all political
dangers--which, technically, would include Rosanoff, since
he has unintentionally made secrets available to Mata and
has chosen her over his orders to return promptly to
Russia--the narrative instead encapsulates and expels the
threats to gender difference while it wraps them in
political bunting: General Shubin as gender (and
political) traitor, Carlotta as a woman who, like Mata, is
uncontrollable in her brokering of (political) knowledge,
and Mata herself, who knows too much (politically),
although the narrative emphasizes that she knows far more
than what she knows. Knowing--knowledge itself--is Mata
Hari’s offense: it is as if she has attempted to storm the Panopticon. Appropriately, then, she ends her story as the object of the gaze: under the eye of lawyers, judge, and courtroom spectators; prison guards, however sympathetic; and, by imaginative extension, the firing squad. The male gaze re-establishes itself, as a signal that narrative closure is imminent but also as a display of phallic power—the erect Panopticon looming over the small, solitary woman who has stood up to it in challenge.

Significantly, Mata Hari’s execution is not represented on screen, and this narrative ellipsis creates another double exposure. The process of execution, which so dramatically initiates the film’s action, is still clear in our minds: the dirty, rumpled, pitifully defiant prisoners, who seem so small, face the uniformed, well-orchestrated firing squad in a vast pastoral landscape disrupted by a few moments of state-sanctioned violence. In case we have forgotten those images, the firing squad in an echo of the opening scenes marches onto the field again right before we see Mata’s last minutes in prison. Her execution is easy to imagine, therefore, but the film ends with a very different image: a cleanly austere, regal figure willingly joins a martial procession and, while marching away, glances heavenward with luminous eyes as if transported with joy as she kisses the ring given to her by Rosanoff.
Certainly the heaven-directed look encourages us to believe in an apotheosis based on heterosexual love. Furthermore, the choice not to show Mata's execution, even while bracketing that omission with the setting for her death and the presence of her executioners, invites us to imagine that the skills of the master spy combine with the desires of the woman in love to produce an improbable physical escape. While this interpretation, favorable to heterosexual romance and the containments of domesticity, is more in keeping with the Hollywood tradition of reinforcing patriarchal values, yet another—and more subversive—meaning eludes the fade-to-black that supposedly leads to Mata's death. As I suggested above, it is difficult to let go of the power of the femme fatale: her subversive gaze and her ability to turn topsy-turvy the homosocial structures that prevent her exercise of subjectivity exert a powerful appeal. In an analysis based on film noir but equally appropriate to other femmes fatales, Janey Place suggests,

It is not their inevitable demise we remember but rather their strong, dangerous, and above all, exciting sexuality. In film noir we observe both the social action of myth which damns the sexual woman and all who become enmeshed by her, and a particularly potent stylistic presentation of the sexual strength of women which man fears. This operation of myth is so highly stylized and conventionalised that the final 'lesson' of the myth often fades into the background and we retain the image of the erotic, strong, unrepressed (if destructive) woman. The style of these films thus overwhelms their conventional narrative content, or interacts with it to produce a remarkably potent image of woman. (36)
As readily as we can picture an escape into heterosexual love, then, we can imagine an escape from both execution and domesticity into the strength and independence Mata has manifested earlier, although we may not be able to cast those traits very far into the future. By not representing the execution itself, Mata Hari preserves our desire for the femme fatale, who remains in the last scene erect and proud, clear and open eyed, smiling, but--most important--the site of meanings both subversive and conservative.

In reading this film, do we go too far in our desire to preserve the strength and independence of the femme fatale? As Butler asks in the context of drag, is parodying the dominant forms of gender, as Mata seems to be doing in her performance of femininity, enough to displace them, or is the denaturalization of gender "the very vehicle for a reconsolidation of hegemonic norms" (Bodies 125)? Certainly the dominant values are reconsolidated both in Mata’s implied execution and in the spectator-driven reading in which Mata escapes into heterosexual romance. Even more important for this study, however, is that the norms reassert their power through the gutting of Mata’s gaze, when it is emptied of her desire for subjectivity and filled up with her longing for Rosanoff. In these readings, Mata Hari is, as Butler puts it, "a ritualistic release for a heterosexual economy that must constantly police its own boundaries," not against
the invasion of queerness, which is Butler's primary concern, but in this instance against the threats of an insistent feminine subjectivity expressed particularly through the possession and exercise of the gaze (Bodies 126).

The more subversive readings of the film's ending do not displace the conservative ones but exist simultaneously with them. Yet they successfully trouble the "that's that" of narrative closure much as Mata's looks have disrupted the closure implied in the authority of the male gaze. Moreover, I want to reinvoke Linda Williams's admonition not to privilege a film's ending at the expense of all that has come before it ("Something Else" 152). The pleasures of seeing the femme fatale threaten and trouble the privileges of masculinity and trespass into the territory of masculine knowledge remain despite the double containments of domesticity and implied death. The notion of a performance of femininity in the first two-thirds of the film trespasses into and disrupts the more conservative territory of the film's ending; what at first may seem like reading against the grain is actually the continuation of a reading the film itself encouraged. The femme fatale haunts Mata Hari, then, not just as the frisson of a containable anxiety but also as the indomitable return of the repressed.
The Gaze Deferred, "That Bitch America," and the Torn Breast of Gatsby's New World

While Mata Hari focuses on the play of Mata's gaze, the same cannot be said for The Great Gatsby with respect to Daisy Buchanan's gaze or that of other female characters. Because of the narrational duties in Gatsby, Nick Carraway's looking is necessarily foregrounded since he is our guide and interpreter—our eye on the action. In his role as the literary equivalent of the camera's eye, Nick has the capacity to pan, as he does in the party scenes; draw back for a wide shot in looking at Gatsby's lighted mansion; or move in for a close-up, as he does in kissing Jordan Baker in the victoria in Central Park.²⁹ Yet these cinematographic moves are metaphors, promoted by Fitzgerald's seductively filmic style of description. We must keep in mind that despite certain parallels between film and literary fiction, a written narrative can never be a camera. The elements of the cinematic apparatus—the director, cinematographer, set designer, the camera itself, including the technical aspects of lighting, film speed, lenses, type of film itself, and so forth—work to mimic the physiology of human sight while the literary narrative works through words on paper—description, action, dialogue, meditative passages, and the persuasive powers of rhetoric—to encourage belief in the narrator's ability to see and report the events and settings in a diegetic world (which is not to say film lacks dialogue or
rhetorical persuasions). My point here is that both media solicit and encourage belief but through different mechanisms, yet mechanisms which often stand in metaphorically for each other.

As discussed in Chapter 1, while the camera's view, real or metaphoric, is an important one—even a dominant or domineering one—the spectator or reader's view is not wholly dictated by the camera's selection and movements or the narrator's point of view, a freedom the spectator or reader deploys to produce pleasure, both visual and narrative. We are free to wander within the frame and even to imagine that which is just outside the frame, for the frame itself, whether delimited by words or an optical mechanism like the camera, evokes and provokes belief in a wider world: that which we could see if we (or the camera or the narrator) were to turn another few degrees. But as Stephen Heath explains it, "it must be seen that the work of classical continuity is not to hide or ignore off-screen space but, on the contrary, to contain it, to regularize its fluctuation in a constant movement of reappropriation. It is this movement that defines the rules of continuity and the fiction of space they serve to construct, the whole functioning according to a kind of metonymic lock in which off-screen space becomes on-screen space and is replaced in turn by the space it holds off, each joining over the next" (Questions 45). In other words, continuity attempts to draw the spectator's errant
pleasures back into the dominant narrative—to mainstream them. Heath’s description also characterizes the task—and the pitfalls—in this project to reread The Great Gatsby. To bring the female gaze to the fore is to risk its containment and reappropriation as Nick attempts to structure both on-screen and off-screen space, both what is said and what remains unspoken. To foreground the female gaze fully is to avoid this appropriation, to see and hear a different story. The canon of classic criticism about Gatsby, much like that relating to The Sound and the Fury, exerts its own pressure to fit the female gaze into the familiar narrative that damns Daisy Buchanan and looks askance at Jordan Baker. Part of my task, then, in bringing forward the female gaze is also to bring forward the gaps in the story, but in such a way that they remain unappropriated and productive.

To revert to a quotation from the introduction to this study, Lacan writes in Four Fundamental Concepts, "I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides" (72), a remark that could well have issued from the unconscious of Nick Carraway, whose conscious mind retorts, "life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all" (9). What I argue in the pages to follow is not simply that the female characters in Gatsby possess distinctive gazes, although that is certainly true even if they are less readily apparent than Mata Hari’s powerful looks. One of the main
preoccupations of this half-chapter is the way in which the narrative is determined by male anxiety about an omnipresent gaze, a look that shapes subjectivity but also threatens to dissolve it in the experience of alterity. In *Gatsby*, the threat of an overwhelming Otherness, primarily evident in Nick's constant preoccupation with looking and being looked at as well as his tendency to slide into viewing positions not his own, is then channeled into more specific symptomatic anxieties about femininity, class, and race. The anxious attempt of the male gazer to avoid being objectified is one of the ways we detect the female gaze and the gaze of characters of color, in the gaps that the male gazer leaves as he attempts to defend against being defined externally by what Kaja Silverman calls "the photo session": "the clicking of an imaginary camera which photographs the subject and thereby constitutes him or her" (*Male Subjectivity* 128). The novel represents repeatedly the dis-ease of a privileged white male subjectivity, particularly Nick's since it threatens to slide away from him at the first sign of a competing gaze or even one which fails to acknowledge his pre-eminence.

**The Lacanian Gaze: The Photo Session and the Sardine Tin**

It would be helpful to pause for a moment to clarify once again the slippery term upon which this study is based. As I mentioned in the introduction in discussing Mary Ann Doane's analysis of looking relations, for Lacan...
the gaze is exterior, destabilizing, a site of slippage, and not substantialized as it seems to be in most of feminist film theory: positioned, clearly interior, and seemingly firmly in the possession of the male protagonist and masculinized spectator. While I attempted to problematize these two positions somewhat in the introduction and even draw them closer together, it is important here to revisit the controversy in an attempt to avoid the imprecision that can lead to logical error.

In Male Subjectivity at the Margins, Kaja Silverman reasserts Lacan’s use of gaze in order to distinguish it from what gaze has come to mean since the 1975 publication of Mulvey’s "Visual Pleasure":

Although the gaze might be said to be "the presence of others as such," it is by no means coterminous with any individual viewer, or group of viewers. It issues "from all sides," whereas the eye "[sees] only from one point." Moreover, its relationship to the eye is sufficiently antinomic that Lacan can describe it as "triumph[ing]" over the look. The gaze is "unapprehensible," i.e. impossible to seize or get hold of. The relationship between eye and gaze is thus analogous in certain ways to that which links penis and phallus; the former can stand in for the latter, but can never approximate it. Lacan makes this point with particular force when he situates the gaze outside the voyeuristic transaction, a transaction within which the eye would seem most to aspire to a transcendental status, and which has consequently provided the basis, within feminist film theory, for an equation of the male voyeur with the gaze. Four Fundamental Concepts suggests, on the contrary, that it is at precisely that moment when the eye is placed to the keyhole that it is most likely to find itself subordinated to the gaze. At this moment, observes Lacan, "a gaze surprises [the subject] in the function of voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him and reduces him to shame." (130)
I do not wish to undermine Lacan’s definition of the gaze nor to undo or confuse the years of feminist film scholarship that have followed on the heels of Mulvey’s first essay and her quite different use of the term. Neither do I want to collapse the important difference between an external, nonspecific, but omnipresent look like Lacan’s gaze, which is unmasterable but "grasps me, solicits me at every moment" (Four 96), and the dominating gaze I have defined in Chapter 1. After all, the voyeur’s look through the keyhole wields an undeniable power over its object up to and even after the voyeur realizes, as Lacan puts it, "in the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture" (Four 106). The distinction between the two types of looks is especially important in this chapter, so I am eager to retain both.

Since I have already made wide use of look as a synonym for gaze, and regard seems altogether too feeble either for Lacan’s sometimes unsettling omnipresent gaze or for feminist film theory’s objectifying look, I will continue to use gaze or dominating gaze to describe the localized look intended to both demonstrate and exert power over those who are its objects, the look with transcendental aspirations--the gaze most familiar from feminist film theory since 1975. I will use Lacanian gaze to indicate that sourceless, bodiless experience of being observed, which can cause each subject, no matter how
powerful in the world of competing looks, to be as unsettled as Lacan was when observing the floating sardine can and realizing "[t]hat which is light looks at me" (Four 96).32

Further, we should not ignore that Lacan's anecdote, like Nick Carraway's narrative, has a dimension dictated by class. As a young intellectual on the boat with working fisherman, watching the sardine can float by, Lacan was, as he wrote himself, "out of place in the picture. And it was because I felt this that I was not terribly amused at hearing myself addressed in this humorous, ironical way" by the fisherman Petit-Jean (96).33 Similarly, Nick is out of place in his picture, in the "weather beaten cardboard bungalow" with the old Dodge out front, dropped as if by a tornado in what will prove to be the not very "consoling proximity of millionaires" (10). Given his anomalous situation--the son of "prominent, well-to-do people" in a nameless Mid-Western city, but here playing "poor relation" to Cousin Daisy and her fabulously wealthy husband (7)--it is not surprising that Nick would be heir to some doubts about identity, perhaps more than someone enclosed in his own milieu. As Silverman suggests, those secure in their illusion of self (and she leaves open the possibility that we may not all fit this category) are party to a convenient and gratifying misapprehension: "consciousness as it is redefined by Lacan hinges not only upon the
internalization but upon the elision of the gaze; this 'seeing' of oneself being seen is experienced by the subject-of-consciousness--by the subject, that is, who arrogates to itself a certain self-presence or substantiality--as a seeing of itself seeing itself" (Male Subjectivity 127). What we see in Nick Carraway, though, exacerbated by his partial displacement within class, is the slippage inherent in the méconnaissance of the Lacanian gaze: the uncomfortable movement where the subject's seeing-of-itself-seeing-itself flips over into the seeing-of-itself-being-seen. Suddenly, with the click of the "photo session," the fiction of the self-determining, self-defining subject is laid bare when that subject becomes image--and object.

We see this flip-flop clearly in Myrtle and Tom's apartment when Myrtle illustrates her disdain for her husband, George, by protesting, "I never was any more crazy about him than I was about that man there" and points at Nick (39). Suddenly Nick is the object of all gazes rather than the privileged spectator--no longer the wryly disdainful observer above the fray but the object the light pinpoints; that is, he has his own experience of "to-be-looked-at-ness." In explaining the "photo session" and woman's vulnerability to it, Kaja Silverman describes "the 'click' of a 'camera' which is both the manifestation of the Other and the necessary support of a subjectivity grounded in specularity, but which has nevertheless come
to be coded as male, and entrusted with a sexually
differentiating role" (*Acoustic* 170). In this sudden
reversal of specific gazes that stand in for the Lacanian
gaze (in much the same way that the penis "can stand in
for" the phallus "but can never approximate it"), Nick is
coded for an uncomfortable moment as female—the
spectacle. Yet he does not attempt to retake the
masculine position by imposing his own gaze, as Tom
Buchanan might. Instead, he *plays* the spectacle as he
tries "to show by my expression that I had played no part
in her past" (39). Nick is unusually susceptible to the
flip side of the "photo session," in which the Lacanian
gaze turns from constituting subjectivity to
disintegrating it. This susceptibility makes all the more
important those "constituting moments" that Nick treasures
in his interactions with Daisy but to a far greater extent
with Gatsby. It is necessary to consider in greater
detail, then, the ways in which different looks prop up or
tear down the illusion of identity. One of these looks, a
kind of deferred gaze we saw first in *Mata Hari* is
prominent again in *The Great Gatsby*’s feminine arsenal.

An *"exhibition of complete self sufficiency": The Gaze Deferred as Passive-Aggressive Strategy*

We first considered the power of a gaze deferred in
*Mata Hari* when Mata refused to take seriously either
Andriani’s orders or Inspector Dubois’s accusation that
she was a master spy. In both instances, she simply
refused to return their gazes, thereby demonstrating that the situation didn’t warrant her serious consideration but also signaling that she was partially redefining the power struggle played out through a battle of looks. This look, which is neither a dominating gaze nor a dominated one but something in between, confers on its user not the power to set the terms of a showdown but instead the ability to postpone the struggle. It is evasive rather than aggressive, but its evasion has a strategic edge, not a purely defensive one. While the dominating gaze is active, this deferred gaze is passive—but not without power. Where the gaze looks into or intrudes or thrusts, this gaze that slips away denies engagement or eludes intrusion or simply moves away from the thrusting and domineering look. Whereas a showdown of gazes requires that both parties stand their scopic ground, this elusive look neutralizes the gaze’s force by moving off, but neither in defeat nor retreat. While this passive strategy may yield increased power for her or him who uses it well, the advantage is usually a temporary one: in most instances, this look-that-doesn’t-look simply defers the battle, particularly because it provokes intense frustration in its "object." After all, in terms of the specular economy, narrative closure is predicated on the triumphant power of the gaze, not the ability to evade a dominating look.
Take, for example, the final moments of *Rear Window*. Reading her book on the Himalayas in a performance of "the wife who shapes her interests to her husband's," Lisa Fremont accepts Jeffries's objectification while he is awake, but in the final humorously ironic twist that closes the film, Lisa's still active gaze is revealed. Not only does she trade the Himalayan volume for *Harper's Bazaar* as soon as Jeffries nods off, but she fixes him with an objectifying look as he dozes. Thus, the narrative signals that the balance of power in the Fremont-Jeffries union will be more complex than a first glance might reveal and, in a move that is characteristically Hitchcockian, that a major element provoking disruption throughout the narrative is still in existence at the close of the story. What is significant here about *Rear Window* is not that the narrative ends with a gaze potentially subversive to patriarchy, although that is certainly true. What deserves emphasis at this point in the argument is that the story closes on a gaze that objectifies, not on a look that looks away.

If a deferring gaze is not a final answer in a confrontation with a dominating one, why is it significant at all? First, it is a familiar weapon of the marginalized, whether women, people of color, the working class, or children. As used by someone in a privileged position, it has a somewhat different valence, tied to a concept that pops up repeatedly, and in odd places,
throughout this study: the position of power occupied by the one with the luxury not to know. Second, it is a well-known strategy, one which we have all used or had used against us, so its tremendous force is common knowledge and readily recognized. In Mata Hari, for example, we understand immediately why Inspector Dubois exits in a huff after the femme fatale eludes his accusation by laughing off the charge of spying while simultaneously looking away from his angry stare. The deferring gaze as exemplified by Jordan, Daisy, and Mata Hari is a passive-aggressive technique, passive in that it slides away from a confrontation of gazes with no apparent effort, aggressive in its ability to gain or retain power and prestige—for example, "a stunned tribute," as we will see below—for the person who seems to be doing nothing at all. Finally, as a gesture, it is virtually unanswerable. It knocks the foundations from under specular relations, at least temporarily, by exploding the assumption that the gaze imposes a binarism: either a look down in submission or a challenging look that will lead to a showdown and one clear victor. This odd but very familiar look posits a broader repertoire of responses to the gaze: looking back, looking down, and avoiding the issue. Furthermore, through its deferral of confrontation, this look inserts into specular relations and their underlying negotiations of power a temporal dimension, previously unrecognized in theory, whereby the scopic strategist indicates, "Maybe
I'll respond to you and maybe I won't, but it will be at a
time of my choosing"--a move familiar from many cinematic
encounters with the *femme fatale*. Both the addition of
the temporal dimension and the multiplication of
possibilities for response to an aggressive look
complicate the previously accepted and overly simplistic
view of subject/object positions in specular relations.

As discussed in Chapter 2 in the context of O.J.
Simpson's voyeurism, there are often two levels in the
process of objectification. In the first, we take an
unsuspecting person as the object of our pleasurable gaze,
which gives us pre-eminence in our own minds. On the
second level, the other person is confronted with the
experience of objectification, either through a verbal
declaration, like Simpson's, or a visual one, in which the
victim feels subjectivity drain away upon discovering that
he or she is the target of the dominating gaze. While the
first level of scopophilia offers distinct pleasures, they
are limited in scope, and for the battle of gazes to be
fully joined, the object of the gaze must be aware and
acknowledge his or her subordination. In other words, the
look down--the gesture of defeat--is in some instances as
important to the exchange of power as the objectifying
look itself. The demand "Look at me!"--so familiar from
battles between parent and child, teacher and student,
boss and worker--illustrates the need for the familiar and
repetitive choreography in which the dominating gaze first
meets the challenger's look, then bends it to the ground. In fact, the tragic dimension in the narrative of *Days of Heaven* is inaugurated by the familiar demand "Look at me!"--this time in pantomime. When Bill refuses to lower his gaze in a showdown with management and instead turns away, the foreman grabs him and swings him around since he still requires the display of submission which Bill insubordinately withholds.  

The deferring gaze, though, imposes an alternative and sometimes infuriating choreography, one which *The Great Gatsby*’s Jordan Baker has mastered. The passage in which Nick Carraway first encounters her is worth quoting at length, for it illustrates an important difference between Daisy's style and Jordan's, the latter more closely resembling the coldness and distance associated with the Nordic incarnation of the *femme fatale*:

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it--indeed I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise--she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression--then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

"I'm paralyzed with happiness."
She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward
her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)
At any rate Miss Baker’s lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly and then quickly tipped her head back again—the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me. (13)

Obviously, both Jordan and Daisy are the objects of Nick’s gaze, as evidenced by his quite complete description of the room that precedes this passage and his account of the two women’s position and appearance within it. Through Jordan’s refusal to meet Nick’s look or even acknowledge it, however, she provokes several feelings that signal her pre-eminence over him: his desire—not once but twice—to apologize; a feeling of deficiency in the face of her "complete self sufficiency"; a need to pay tribute, as to a superior being; and the feeling of being stunned, which implies a passivity and vulnerability that flies in the face of the traditional construction of masculinity—active, forceful, full of initiative, and equal to anything. Simply by choosing not to acknowledge his gaze, Jordan has in a sense "unmanned" Nick, which is not to say that he has failed to objectify her. Her countermove, which is scarcely to move at all, dismisses his objectification, however, as any kind of triumph.36

At the same time, the deferring gaze invites repetitive objectification for a number of reasons. As I mentioned above, narrative closure seeks resolution
through the domination of one gaze by another, so the would-be dominating gazer anxiously revisits the scene of the crime, seeking a permanent resolution. Further, the pleasures of objectifying even someone who is oblivious (or pretends to be) somewhat mitigate the disappointment when the battle of gazes is avoided through a strategic glance away by the object of a dominating look. Hence, Nick's descriptions of Jordan, which recur with an obsessive frequency (in itself pointing to anxiety), emphasize both pleasure and dis-ease: the "autumn-leaf yellow of her hair" and "slender muscles in her arms" (22) give way to her look of contemptuous interest and "her slender golden arm" (46-47), the "cold insolent smile" and "hard jaunty body" (63) of "this clean, hard, limited person" (84). Nick reports early on, "I enjoyed looking at her," yet immediately he makes clear that her appeal is a hybrid of pleasure and displeasure, her demeanor a mixture of engagement and distance: "Her gray sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming discontented face" (15). Here Jordan looks back, but even as she temporarily abandons the glance away as a strategy, some displacement or disconnection is at work, for it is not Jordan who returns Nick's gaze in her full subjectivity but Jordan's eyes, as if the visual organs were operating independently, as if her eyes, unlike those of the people around her, are not "the windows of the soul." Such a
look is difficult to dominate, for it is scarcely there. In its disengagement, it raises the specter of the Lacanian gaze—"unapprehensible"—and hints at an unsettling Otherness that flies in the face of the patriarchal requirements for femininity, which prescribe that Jordan, like Daisy, should be casting doting looks on Nick and the other men around her. It is not just Jordan’s musculature, clothing, and posture that challenge her neat containment within gender.

Where Jordan’s look tends to disintegrate male identity, Daisy’s helps constitute it—as if the two women have split between them the powers of doing and undoing usually incorporated in a single *femme fatale* like Mata Hari. Daisy’s look, which promises "that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see" is quite similar to the power of Gatsby’s smile, which Nick states "understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey" (52-53). A primary difference between the quality of attention Gatsby and Daisy bestow, though, is that Gatsby’s smile, in its ability to accurately reflect Nick’s view of himself (notice the insistent hammering on you) and at the same time polish it to a perfect sheen, constitutes a classic mirror-stage identification: "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, reintrojected as an ego ideal, prepares the way for identification with others in the future" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 17).42 Daisy's look, on the other hand, even though it carries some of the same power to flatter Nick's view of himself, represents another approach to narcissism, one in which desire is the key. Through her apparent desire to see him, her desire for him, Daisy confirms Nick's value, not only in his own eyes but also in the eyes of whoever observes the exchange, since Daisy's flattering notice establishes Nick as a valued player in the heterosexual game: she "re-mans" Nick after Jordan has "de-manned" him.43 In a sense, then, Gatsby's smile acts as an internal reaffirmation (although, of course, the external components of the mirror stage are well known) while Daisy's loving glance is external--and safe, since she shows no intention of following through on her playful desire. Both Daisy's and Gatsby's looks, though, constitute Nick as a subject through a pleasurable specularity quite different from the "photo session" in the apartment.44 Both provide a protective circle that for the moment fends off what Breitwieser calls the "enigmatic impersonal gazingness that institutes the novel's never-very-distant panic" (20).
But in Daisy's case the effect is fleeting. For as Nick quickly recognizes, Daisy can turn her desire (or the performance of it) on and off, and she may not be as invested in the heterosexual economy as her first doting looks indicate: "Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire" (17). Daisy's gaze and this conversation between women illustrate the limits of the two women's interest in the heterosexual duties of the dinner party: the flattering, joking, and absorbed interest (not to mention admiring looks) with which women conventionally demonstrate their investment in the men around them. Rather than making the men the featured performers, Daisy and Jordan treat Nick and Tom as an opening act to be politely waited out as they pursue their own interests "unobtrusively": "They were here--and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or be entertained. They knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening too would be over and casually put away" (17). Nick has glimpsed an exchange in a social sub-register--talk between women--and although he recognizes the rules are different--the two women talk simultaneously, making it difficult for someone outside the conversation to follow--he cannot quite understand this form that is neither banter nor chatter,
that seems to be inconsequential, yet absorbs the women more than the conversation of their male dinner companions. The women are in the realm of the enigma: seen but not very clearly heard. Yet Nick reads these differences not as gendered ones but as symptoms of Eastern sophistication. Confronted with the Otherness of this female conversation, Nick attempts to banter Daisy back onto familiar ground, definitely Midwestern but equally male: "'You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy,' I confessed on my second glass of corky but rather impressive claret. 'Can't you talk about crops or something?'" (17). This attempt to bring the women back into the circle of the heterosexual economy of the dinner party backfires, however, when Nick's half playful question stimulates Tom's rant about white supremacy, and Daisy deploys her own deferring gaze.

As Tom argues, "It's up to us who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things," Daisy chimes in, "We've got to beat them down" and "wink[s] ferociously toward the fervent sun" (18). Soon she is winking at Nick conspiratorially as Tom expands on his racist theories. Daisy's wink "quotes" the look of the wife hanging on her husband's words only to change the meaning of that quotation to ridicule "in a wink," literally and figuratively. It is Medusan in its ability to deflate Tom in his pose as a man worldly in his political views (Cixous, "Laugh" 255). In fact, up until
the dénouement, Tom and Daisy’s relationship is characterized by their practiced avoidance of each other’s eyes, Tom’s interruptions when Daisy speaks, and Daisy’s fluctuation between ordering Tom—to mix drinks or ignore the ring of the telephone—and needling him with witty observations addressed to others but at his expense. In sum, Daisy withholds from her husband the performance of desire and approval that she turns on Nick and the desire she bestows on Gatsby. What signals the closing of various narrative ruptures, then—the schism between husband and wife, Daisy’s affair with Gatsby, and Tom’s temporary loss of a controlling knowledge (and Nick’s)—is the realignment of the couple’s gazes. The price to be paid for this dénouement is Biblical: an eye for an eye. In the diegetic specular economy, Tom and Daisy’s renewed ability to look each other in the eye is purchased at the expense of Myrtle Wilson’s gaze.

"Flush in the eye": The Labor of the Working Class Gaze

Where Jordan and Daisy have skillfully deflected dominating male looks, the very directness of Myrtle’s look is coded as working class: part and parcel of her excess and lack of "inbred" sophistication, that is, the mark of her commonness. Unlike Daisy and Jordan, she is not familiar with the power of a deferred gaze, much as Mata Hari as the embodiment of sophistication is successful at fending off unwelcome competitions for the gaze but her working-class counterpart in the spy world,
Carlotta, is not. In this coding, then, the violent defeat of Myrtle’s gaze re-establishes not just gender norms but class ones. Furthermore, it is through the service and sacrifice of the female working class gaze that the female upper class gaze is realigned, transmogrified from the almost unanswerable glance away to the conventional look downward in deference to the male upper class look. For, as I will discuss in greater detail below, it is Myrtle’s death that causes Daisy to conspire with Tom, that gives Tom the upper hand, both figuratively and—as we see in the kitchen scene—literally.

"Then I heard footsteps on the stairs and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door," Nick relates, describing his first meeting with Myrtle.

She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crépe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and walking through her husband as if he were a ghost shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. (29-30)

The boldness of Myrtle’s look throws into relief Daisy’s troubled marriage, in which the few glances the husband and wife exchange are not recognizable in Nick’s description as those of desire. At the same time, Myrtle’s desire as exhibited in her gaze is too direct,
threatening, even dangerous. It is represented as sapping her husband—and her marriage—of strength, making both ghostly. Her excessive smouldering turns her husband into ash, just as her surplus flesh seems at the expense of George Wilson’s materiality. In the nursery rhyme, Jack Sprat and his wife work as a team to "lick the platter clean," but George Wilson seems to be fading away as his wife grows larger and stronger, parasitic not just in body but in gaze. Furthermore, she has the corner on knowledge in the marriage since she is able to conduct her affair under her husband’s nose while George, as Tom reports, is "so dumb he doesn’t know he’s alive" (30). In her physicality, aggressive gaze, and transgressive knowledge, Myrtle is coded as too much.

Despite her demonstrated strengths and a dominating physical presence, Myrtle is not, as she might appear to be when looking Tom "flush in the eye," her lover’s equal, either in gender or class. Myrtle’s méconnaissance—her belief that consumer desire is a substitute for class privilege, that the purchase of "Town Tattle" and a dress of cream colored chiffon can somehow match Daisy’s "white girlhood" in Louisville—is corrected when Tom punctuates his claim that Myrtle is unfit to mention Daisy’s name by breaking his mistress’s nose with his open hand. This single blow (a minor exertion on Tom’s part) re-establishes the two boundaries Myrtle has threatened: she is no longer the phallic woman, standing face to face and
eye to eye with Tom, but once again, according to the rules of sexual difference, the bearer of the bleeding wound. As she tries "to spread a copy of 'Town Tattle' over the tapestry scene of Versailles" (42), her woman's blood threatens to mar the suddenly vulnerable consumer goods she has used to prop up her social standing. As Myrtle matches gazes with Tom, confronting him face to face not with desire but with her claim to be "good enough," she is revealed as a piece of furniture Tom uses to furnish the life he maintains separate from Daisy's, as expendable as the chambermaid in Santa Barbara or the imagined co-conspirator in whatever indiscretion chased the Buchanans out of Chicago. Playing out the familiar stereotype of the violent lower classes, the doubly-marginalized working-class female gaze earns a beating.

I want to pause here to emphasize with what fervor the text vilifies Myrtle. While both Jordan and Daisy are mixed figures, the one cool and disdainful yet with a come-hither appeal, and the other an all-American virginal siren of charming voice, Myrtle is the embodiment of looming excess: too big, too fleshy, too greedy, too common, and too bold in her willingness to match looks with all comers. In her excess, and the excess of the text's representation of her, it is difficult to see her as anything but monstrous or view her death as less than a relief, a reaction that in itself gives pause to the feminist reader. Judith Fetterley views Myrtle somewhat
differently, claiming that she achieves an apotheosis in death: "Her impassioned plunge toward her own particular green light and her subsequent death are registered as ‘tragic achievements,’ and she emerges as a figure of vitality, passion, and reality in the midst of the wasteland . . . Myrtle Wilson’s coarse and unlovely mouth becomes the symbol of her achievement, obliterating the bright charm of Daisy’s mouth in an image of loss that may well elicit tears" (91). Yet I would characterize that image of loss to be as monstrous as the other representations of Myrtle, evoking not just a frightening birth but also the wound of castration, a fitting end for a phallic woman: "The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long" (145). Her left breast "swinging loose like a flap" is the final insult to a body whose "too-muchness" has taken it over the top of patriarchal definitions of femininity. Although Nick refers to Myrtle’s "tragic achievement" (163), there is irony in the phrase, for what has she accomplished other than to provide a ghoulish spectacle for commuters in the valley of ashes, one that is diminished by the next morning to a few "dark spots in the dust" to be objectified by some little boys (163)?

In fact, Myrtle’s most important task, from a narrative point of view, is to bring Tom and Daisy back together again, but in a more conventional and
conservative Oedipal arrangement; that is, she is the obstacle Tom overcomes so that Daisy will be placed again in the domestic space where she is "the fulfillment of the promise made to 'the little man'" (de Lauretis, Alice 133): the princess bride or, as Nick puts it to himself, "High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl" (Gatsby 127). Where Daisy is high and white and gold, Myrtle is low and dark (in her dresses of dark blue and brown) and dross.

While I do not agree with Fetterley about the moment at which the text invites sympathy for Myrtle, I do find nearby a gap where for an instant Myrtle is represented as a woman rather than a monster, although even here her emotions are outsized compared to those of other characters. Interestingly, the incident involves two objectifications and a hint of the Lacanian gaze, where Myrtle rather than Daisy "is a temporary vessel or moment of a fugitive gaze that installs itself variously in the novel, that settles into anomalous locales" (Breitwieser 20). When George Wilson locks Myrtle in the apartment above the garage in preparation for a move West, away from her yet unidentified lover, Nick is disturbed, and not for the first time, by the sensation of eyes upon him.

That locality was always vaguely disquieting, even in the broad glare of afternoon, and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil but I perceived, after a moment, that other eyes were
regarding us with peculiar intensity from less than twenty feet away.

In one of the windows over the garage the curtains had been moved aside a little and Myrtle Wilson was peering down at the car. So engrossed was she that she had no consciousness of being observed and one emotion after another crept into her face like objects into a slowly developing picture. Her expression was curiously familiar—it was an expression I had often seen on women's faces but on Myrtle Wilson's face it seemed purposeless and inexplicable until I realized that her eyes, wide with jealous terror, were fixed not on Tom but on Jordan Baker, whom she took to be his wife. (131)51

Of all the feelings that might play across Myrtle's face—anger, envy, resentment, curiosity, scorn, appreciation, apprehension, or even fear—jealousy seems predictable, but terror does not. I read this moment as a little tear in the text, a gap quickly covered over by Myrtle's dramatic death, the literal tearing of her breast from her body, and the text's swift turn toward Tom's panic that "[h]is wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure and inviolate, were slipping precipitately from his control" (131).

Myrtle's expression of terror reconfigures the emotions and actions that follow: for example, Nick's characterization of her voice as "scolding" right before she runs from the garage. This is a woman terrified by her first, albeit mistaken, view of her lover's wife, a woman imprisoned by her husband, about to be transported across the country against her will in what can only be called a spousal kidnapping. In addition to reframing the events that follow, Myrtle's terror in looking at the
upper-class wife (for we don't have adequate evidence to say "terror of") throws a retrospective light on her investment in the relationship with Tom and the horror she feels toward her husband, two emotional questions we have been invited to downplay by Nick's framing of her physical presence and the circumstances of the party at Tom and Myrtle's apartment, particularly the evident pleasure Myrtle takes in posing as the upper-class hostess, a pose Nick's scorn exposes at every turn as unsophisticated and absurd. We do not want to lose sight of the fact that it is Nick's anxiety about Myrtle's physicality that we read, not some neutral or omniscient account. Yet particularly in retrospect, Myrtle's disappointments in marriage have a believable ring even as they are couched in terms of money and class. They even echo Daisy's insofar as the discussion at the "love nest" turns to the question of whether wife loved husband in the early days of the marriage or if the whole thing was a mistake from the outset. Myrtle's méconnaissance in taking Jordan for Daisy indicates the extent to which Daisy's position as privileged, upper-crust wife is at issue more than who stands in that position and, further, the extent to which patriarchy working through class has separated these women from each other. The word méconnaissance is particularly ironic in this situation, for it is the need of the women to negotiate their relationships through the indirect circuit of the men around them that keeps Myrtle from that
more productive misrecognition, rooted in the mirror stage, that might lead to a moment of identification with Daisy. Thus the opportunity to understand the mistress’s common ground with the wife, and even with the woman mistaken for the wife, passes and is lost. Also lost in a quick reading of the passage above is Nick’s odd admission that Myrtle’s look of jealous terror “was an expression I had often seen on women’s faces,” another little tear in the text, quickly healed over, that points us toward a subterranean complex of women’s emotions glossed over by the homosocial agenda of the narrator.

Despite the isolation of the female characters from each other—the upper-class women travel in private cars and only with their male counterparts, and in typical suburban style, the classes are separated geographically—the unspoken and unrecognized points of commonality between the two wives make poignant Myrtle’s fatal dash toward the car, which she believes holds not just Tom but also Daisy, the one who has been labeled “good enough.” Even in death Myrtle cannot transcend her class, though, for her demise works to resolve the upper-class narrative while her story and George’s are left unfinished; her body lies torn by the side of the road and his lies “a little way off in the grass“ from Gatsby’s, the body that is lifted, carried, buried, and mourned, even if sparsely. That Gatsby’s body is so honored is particularly bitter because in contrast to Myrtle he has been able to climb
the ladder into the outer vestibule of the upper class. Yet in her parallels with Daisy, her excess, and her violent death, Myrtle remains to haunt the novel: not the mad woman in the attic, but the angry woman in the garage apartment, a woman with a gaze. Still, Myrtle’s is not the only haunting of the text. Even as her look down from the apartment persists, it is colored by her fate, for in *The Great Gatsby*, the female gaze is caught in a double bind: damned if you do, as Myrtle so graphically proves, and damned if you don’t, as Daisy’s fate quietly illustrates. Myrtle is another of Cixous and Clément’s hysterics, “waving her hands and shouting” something we cannot hear and are never told, calling down upon herself the brutality of the men around her (“Throw me down and beat me, you dirty little coward!”) (144), saying all the things that Daisy with her low siren tones cannot voice, at this point in the narrative and certainly at the end, when she has no voice at all.

And brooding over this paradox are the giant faded eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg as an avatar--an advertisement--of the Lacanian gaze, eyes that can never be locked in a battle for dominance although they look and look and never blink. As in Lacan’s anecdote of the sardine can, this unsettling but unassailable gaze has class as one of its dimensions. Eckleburg’s eyes demarcate "a zone of derangement or defamiliarization" (Breitwieser 23), made strange not just by the shift from
seeing-of-one-self-seeing-one-self to seeing-of-one-self-being-seen, as Nick experiences, but also by labor and its remains, by the ashes from which the upper class shrinks. The novel is strewn with the remnants of the vast underpinnings of the economic machine, including everything from the mountains of fruit rinds that leave Gatsby’s back door (and the faceless ones who process them) to Myrtle’s sex work, which preserves Daisy in her eternal “white girlhood,” and Myrtle’s body, which disembodies Daisy’s enchanting, memorable voice.

"An air of natural intimacy": Marriage, Insiders, and Outsiders

When Nick peers in the windows of the mansion after Myrtle’s death, in an uncanny inverted déjà vu of O.J. Simpson peering in his ex-wife’s window (the aura of death surrounds both acts of voyeurism), Nick sees a tableau of domestic harmony quite different from that which either he or Gatsby imagined.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren’t happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale—and yet they weren’t unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together. (152-53)

In fact, as subsequent events reveal, there is every likelihood the married pair are conspiring: to leave
Gatsby behind and avoid the inquiry into Myrtle's death. Yet conspiracy marks the healing of their relationship since throughout the novel the couple have rarely been able to agree on anything, even a day trip to New York. While Tom seems to be exhibiting his familiar domineering tactics in that he is talking at Daisy, what is more significant is the air of agreement between the two, sealed by Daisy looking up at Tom. The maddening glance away is gone, replaced by a traditionally submissive look: lowered eyes that rise only to register silent agreement with Tom's intentions. In this tableau, where Nick and Gatsby are shut out of the intimacies reserved for marriage, Tom and Daisy are at last eye to eye and apparently easy in each other's company, and the narrative is folding up around them like a flower closing for the night, a closure that recalls *The Sound and the Fury*.

In its simple beauty, however, such a "natural" image may overstate or mislead. Significantly, this frame--this tableau of domestic light surrounded by the shadow reserved for the unmarried--rewrites a frame at the end of Chapter 1 where Nick prepares to drive away from the Buchanan house after witnessing the depth of the division between Tom and Daisy. In that scene, the pair stand "side by side in a cheerful square of light" in ironic quotation of the familiar representation of matrimonial accord (24). In rewriting this earlier view of the marriage, the second framed view of the couple aims to
"correct our vision," a variation on the phrase Nick uses to describe his disillusionment with the East after Gatsby's death, and revise our view of Daisy in particular (185). By capturing Daisy in dialogue with Tom but silencing the dialogue itself, the text once again makes Nick the writer of the titles for this scene from a silent movie, a scene that seems to damn Daisy for abandoning her love for Gatsby (and to a much lesser extent for her heartlessness toward Myrtle).

We must guard against "over-correction," for we don't know--can never know, despite Nick's compelling narrative voice--all that transpires in that kitchen, especially since we never see or hear from Daisy again. This point I cannot emphasize enough. The division between Tom and Daisy is healed at the expense of Daisy's voice and her version of the story, a silencing much like Caddy's in The Sound and the Fury and one worth noting and mourning. Highlighting our lack of knowledge, however, and the gap that Nick's narration frosts over allows another metaphor to rise to the surface. The flower closing around Daisy also suggests a kind of imprisonment, albeit one in a luxurious domestic setting and with a long history in gender relations. The implication that the prisoner consents (after all, she nods in agreement as Tom talks, and Nick detects a "natural" intimacy) must be taken in light of the power relations of this marriage and marriage as an ideological formation. Nick's use of the term
"natural" should alert us, as should Tom's heavy hand atop Daisy's and her lowered eyes, to a major power shift in the relationship, one brought about through an important transfer of knowledge. It is not my intention to smooth over Daisy's guilt in Myrtle's death or her failure to report her responsibility in the accident, only to register that through the mistress's death, Tom has become the "head" of the traditional family: the one who talks and thinks and plans and possesses the dominant gaze. Daisy, on the other hand, is silenced, deprived of her insouciant glance away, which was a significant weapon, and rendered passive, giving the term house arrest a new and very gendered meaning.52

While Daisy's imprisonment may seem farfetched at first, it gains credibility when compared to the house arrest imposed on Myrtle Wilson and the parallels between the two husbands.51 While George Wilson is "so dumb he doesn't know he's alive" (30), Tom Buchanan, despite his pose of dominating knowledge--his theories on white supremacy, his definitive statements about the sex of Myrtle's puppy, his dismissal of Nick's bond company with an all-encompassing "Never heard of them" (14)--is not much better off than George Wilson when it comes to knowledge of his wife's whereabouts and desires. Although his demeanor and attitudes are the picture of domination--"'Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final,' he seemed to say, 'just because I'm stronger and more of a
man than you'" (11)—the objects of his power too often
slip away: through a dismissive glance, as in Daisy’s
case, or a simple bantering remark, a strategy shared by
Daisy, Jordan, and Nick. While Myrtle walks "through her
husband as if he were a ghost" (30), Daisy does much the
same on a conversational level by making Tom’s racial
fears, for example, insubstantial through her lighthanded
mockery. Despite the "[t]wo shining, arrogant eyes" that
have "established dominance over his face" (11), Tom, like
George Wilson, is the last to know that his wife is making
eyes at another man, even though Tom has deployed one of
the standard strategies of the anxiety-driven, penetrating
gaze—investigation—in an attempt to gather knowledge
about that very same man, a technique Wilson will mimic
after his wife’s death. The deficiencies of the gaze are
particularly apparent when Tom learns at last that Daisy
is in love with Gatsby, for the realization comes to him
through a thoroughly unrewarding instance of
objectification: "She had told him that she loved him,
and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded" (125). Although
he can objectify Daisy and Gatsby to his heart’s content,
Tom’s gaze is next to nothing when Daisy and Gatsby look
each other in the eye—in the popular phrase, only have
eyes for each other. The activity of Tom’s gaze, noted in
our first view of him—"'I’ve got a nice place here,’ he
said, his eyes flashing about restlessly" (12)—and in our
last—"his head moving sharply here and there, adapting
itself to his restless eyes" (186)—proves far less than panoptical, to his dismay. Such a deficiency, of course, only makes the gaze more restless.

For Tom to regain the dominant position, one that was his previously but mostly through bluster, he and Daisy must meet eyes and she must look down, and that is precisely what Tom achieves in the kitchen scene. What is crucial, though, is that Tom gains his dominance over Daisy through Myrtle’s death, through her removal as obstacle. In this structure lies what we are encouraged by Nick’s narration to believe is one of the text’s tragedies: Tom, with his swagger and his bullying and his partial knowledge masquerading as omniscience, fills the spot reserved for the hero, while Gatsby, described in the glowing language of admiration and desire that usually encompasses and cushions the hero, is sacrificed; the princess falls into the "wrong" hands. This discrepancy between desire and fulfillment, between what the text has led us to want and what we get, produces a kind of endless mourning, not just in Nick, as Breitwieser argues persuasively, but in the reader as well (17). But not every reader is pulled only by the dominant Oedipal tide; the desire for some other kind of master narrative, one in which the woman is not silenced or maimed or exiled or killed, fosters resistance. Although there is significant evidence that Tom has successfully killed the dream between Gatsby and Daisy in the argument in the Plaza.
suite, what seals Daisy and Tom's union is his knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the accident. It is this knowledge, from a narrative point of view, that guarantees Daisy will leave East Egg without a word and that there will be no final good-byes between the lovers since Daisy now has a dirty little secret in Tom's keeping. Furthermore, Daisy's silencing in the text is in some ways like a castration: onto that gap where Daisy's voice used to be, Nick projects a variety of meanings, from carelessness to betrayal to cold heartedness, meanings that foreclose on whatever interpretation of events Daisy might offer. Nick's interpretations set Daisy up, like the castrated woman, as an object of horror.

While implying that Tom knows Daisy was driving the car, I have no intention of doing more, for firm evidence doesn't exist. Nevertheless, when Tom tells Nick in their encounter on the street that Gatsby "ran over Myrtle like you'd run over a dog and never even stopped his car" (187), we must decide if we have trusted Tom before. Indeed, why would we choose to trust him now? Further, Tom doesn't know that Nick already knows Daisy was driving the car, so Tom may be repeating the public story because he doesn't realize Nick is already privy to the private one. Foremost in Tom's mind, whether because of this discrepancy between public and private or because of Tom's immense selfishness, is his perception that Gatsby "threw dust" in Daisy's eyes. Gatsby's part in Myrtle's death
seems almost an afterthought, as does Tom's grief when he discovers the dog biscuits in the apartment he shared with Myrtle (187). Yet Nick is willing to accept the facts as related by Tom, in conjunction with his voyeur's view through the kitchen window, as sufficient knowledge by which to judge Daisy, having no interest in her version of the narrative. The homosocial pact between Tom and Nick is sealed when Nick shakes hands with Tom--"it seemed silly not to, for I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child" (188) --but this gesture between men, so easily justified by Nick, is made across the silent and absent body of Daisy, in much the same way that the new agreement between Daisy and Tom, also sealed with a clasping of hands, is made across the torn body of working-class Myrtle.55

I do not wish to belabor this reading, for Daisy's presence in the "death car" is adequate knowledge for Tom to contain her, although a residue of doubt remains, a stain that recalls the Lacanian gaze with its power to decenter and pull apart coherence and subjectivity. Let it rest as suspicion rather than assertion. The narrative retains its own dirty little secret and calls readers back not just to mourn, but also to peer voyeuristically through the kitchen window in an attempt to gain a dominating knowledge, to achieve some mastery over the narrative, and, in the case of much criticism, to objectify Daisy as "the guilty one," letting Tom off easy,
as Nick does, as well as letting Nick off easy, a service Nick provides for himself since he relates the story. At the same time, we are encouraged by the first-person narration to mourn the tragedy of Gatsby as the hero displaced and, by extension, the death of Nick's dreams through his mirror-stage identification with Gatsby.

This familiar narrative trajectory demands, noir-like, some relief from the castration anxiety provoked by the previously uncontrollable female characters. In Mulvey's summary of solutions offered by _film noir_, investigation and demystification of the woman offer a release of tension through a re-enactment of the original trauma, but devaluing, punishing, or saving the guilty object provides another avenue of binding anxiety ("Visual Pleasure" 21). It is notable that Daisy, like Caddy in _The Sound and the Fury_, Abby in _Days of Heaven_, and Mata Hari, is repeatedly contained: "saved" through her reunion with Tom, the prince/hero who re-situates her in the marriage from which she momentarily escaped; devalued through the same marriage since Tom is the debased prince who has usurped the throne from the silver and gold Gatsby, "the gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover" (1); and punished through Nick's disdain--and, like Caddy Compson, that of the critics. In the course of these multiple containments, Daisy's gaze is impugned metaphorically, for the implication is that she is not clear sighted enough to detect Gatsby's value when measured against the dross that
is Tom. Yet in most ways, Daisy's view of love is more acute than Gatsby's. When she cries, "you want too much! . . . I love you now--isn't that enough? . . . I did love him once--but I loved you too" (139-40), she breaks a romantic spell cast in the adolescent glow of pre-war Louisville, one that should not outlive the maturing of a marriage and the birth of a child, a mother's love proving that "I love you too" is not as paradoxical as it may first appear to the romantic imagination. In many ways, this scene in the hotel is simply a replaying of that romantic moment early in Daisy and Gatsby's relationship: Gatsby has his eye on "unutterable visions" while Daisy, with her perishable breath, has her feet on the sidewalk (117), even when Tom carries her down from the Punch Bowl so she won't sully her shoes. Unlike Charlotte Rittenmeyer in Faulkner's The Wild Palms, Daisy is enough of a realist to suspect that a relationship can't be "all honeymoon, always" (83).

In The Resisting Reader, Judith Fetterley sketches how Nick "creates the position of outsider as the ultimate object of romance" (96) in contrast to Gatsby's worship of Daisy's position as insider. "But if one is going to romanticize the position of outsider, as Nick finally does," she argues, "surely Daisy, the excluded middle in Nick's romantic syllogism and thus the real outsider, is the logical choice. That its context makes this logic seem absurd defines the degree to which The Great Gatsby
is based on the lie of a double standard that makes female characters in our 'classic' literature not persons but symbols and makes women's experience no part of that literature's concerns" (96-97). Although Daisy is encapsulated and then excised from the narrative, like a cyst on the body of true romance,6 what I point to here, partly as a grateful heir to Fetterley's insights, are the ways in which it is no longer absurd to see Daisy as one of the outsiders in The Great Gatsby, how the complexity of the text's grain includes the foreclosure of Daisy's gaze, her glance away as a strategy in a homosocial economy, and her silencing. To see Daisy as a symbol only is to gloss over the moments in the text where Daisy and the other female characters speak through and around and over and under the patriarchal structures in which they are encased, using the gaze itself and also their ability to defer the gaze in an attempt to carve out a feminine space.

In rereading Fetterley, it is striking how her language echoes that of the debate about female spectatorship in feminist film theory—or how closely the battle for a spectatorial place parallels the struggles for a feminist voice in the study of literature: "the female reader . . . is asked to identify with a selfhood that defines itself in opposition to her; she is required to identify against herself" (xii). What I am arguing and illustrating above is how the thoughtful reader is asked
to identify against herself—enticed, inveigled, positioned, even directed—and at times may do so, but to claim that she is required posits that the text is so powerful, so monolithic as to allow one and only one reading position, a hypothesis with which I cannot agree. Fetterley goes on to quote Adrienne Rich, whose metaphors actually work to undercut Fetterley’s assertion of a single dominant avenue down which the text leads our reading: "Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival" (xix). Rich’s metaphors closely parallel the ones I have drawn from Metz and Heath: the spectator’s power to prowl the frame and discover overlooked but very present elements of the mise en scène, even to incorporate in a radical way that which is just off screen but without allowing it to be appropriated by dominant meanings. Female experience is very much part of The Great Gatsby, but we are still in the process of teasing those meanings out of the grain, especially by focusing on the gaps in the text that have been glossed over previously.

**Homme Fatal and the Fulcrum of Specularity: Gatsby’s Apotheosis and Nick’s Mirror Stage**

So far Gatsby has been peculiarly absent from this reading, and in some ways that bothers me very little, given the disproportionate share of attention he and Nick
have received since the novel entered the canon and also Gatsby's absence from the novel itself: his entrance delayed until Chapter 3, his death in Chapter 8, leaving the novel to finish up without him. How different from Mata Hari, who enters the frame and then rarely leaves it, creating and sustaining her mystery before our eyes rather than behind the scenes.

Yet Mata and Gatsby have much in common, homme and femme fatale(e). Gatsby shares with the classic femme fatale the facets of great personal attraction, dubious integrity, obscure or exotic origins, and mysterious, unsavory finances. In fact, he possesses more of these defining qualities than Daisy, although her siren voice and association with disaster make her a strong runner-up. I use the word facets advisedly, for like Mata Hari, Gatsby shines not despite these planes that keep him from being an upright fellow like Nick—or what Nick claims to be—but because of them, the aspects of his personality set at odd angles, giving off unexpected shots of light. Marsh suggests that "in Gatsbv Fitzgerald had deliberately constructed not a protagonist or even a character of fiction subject to the conditions of 'development,' 'roundness,' 'individuality' and 'interior development,' but a 'star,'" "a cluster of existing meanings, born of his previous roles, his publicity and promotion, his reviews, tidbits of new[s] items about his private life" (5, 12). Like Mata Hari, Gatsby is on everyone's lips
from the outset, a shadowy figure on the scene even before he appears, while the music from his parties drifts over Nick's house and wafts as far as East Egg, where Jordan drops the first mention of his name. Like Mata Hari, he is suspected of everything: "Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once" (48), "it's more that he was a German spy during the war" (48), "I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him" (141). While the gossip mill fuels itself, Gatsby as homme fatal is knowing, not only in sole possession of information about his own background and current activities, data he doles out on a need-to-know basis, but in touch with a finely spun web of connections locally and nationwide: he knows the degree of friendship between Jordan, Daisy, and Nick, does favors for the commissioner, has someone doing research for him on the Midwest ("Well, he's no use to us if Detroit is his idea of a small town," he admonishes an unidentified phone caller [99]). And like the classic femme fatale, Gatsby meets a violent end, yet endures in the reader's mind and Nick's as a figure to be mourned even after the mortal remains are removed from the scene.

The difference, aside from being homme not femme, is that Gatsby lingers on without the equivalent negative valence of the femme fatale, despite the vortex of destruction that surrounds him and in which he is implicated: Myrtle's death, George Wilson's death, Daisy's flight, Nick's flight (for what else is it, even
if not as precipitous as Daisy’s?), even the demise of Nick and Jordan’s relationship, predicated as it is on Nick’s distaste for everything associated with the Buchanans’ messy affairs. While the femme fatale’s death partly contains her, neutralizing her destructive powers on earth but leaving a residue of pleasure in the memory of those powers, Gatsby’s death seems to erase his destructive and dangerous traits, or at least attribute them not to Gatsby but to his reprehensible associates, from Wolfshiem to Daisy, those whom Nick labels morally bankrupt through their desertion of the millionaire in death. What is left after the false friends are subtracted is Nick’s identification with Gatsby—"I found myself on Gatsby’s side, and alone" (172); "I began to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all" (173)—an identification heightened by the suggested montage of flashbacks at the end of the novel, which encompasses not only the moment when Gatsby "first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock" (189) but also the evening when Nick first saw Gatsby seeing Daisy’s green light. This experience of one man seeing another man seeing—the beginnings of a mise en abyme of specularity—is the fulcrum that balances the dominant gaze against the Lacanian one. Through this subtraction of Gatsby’s questionable traits and their attachment to other characters and, further, through the post-mortem
strengthening of Nick’s identification with his neighbor and friend, Gatsby begins to cast a diffuse glow over the whole narrative. It is as if that special quality of Gatsby’s smile, that feeling of well-being and wonder, spreads over the sky of the text, like another well-known disembodied smile: that of the Cheshire cat. Where the disembodied face that "floated among the dark cornices and blinding signs" used to be Daisy’s, now it is Gatsby’s, caught (as Nick last mentions him, and as is appropriate for a secular saint in the process of his Ascension) in an attitude of secularized belief: “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us” (85, 189).57

Despite his apotheosis, Gatsby is--to use a term usually reserved for "the other woman"--a homewrecker, someone who comes on the scene, either from out of nowhere or out of the past, and tears asunder a married couple, usually with children. Yet Gatsby is anointed in Nick’s last words to him: "'They’re a rotten crowd,' I shouted, across the lawn. 'You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together’" (162). I want to emphasize that despite Gatsby’s participation in, even instigation of, the destructive events listed above, and despite Nick’s broad condemnation of "the whole damn bunch," in the end, it is the female principle that is faulted, the "fresh green breast of the new world" that panders to the Dutch sailors, as if the American landscape herself is the siren
(Westling 4)—"that bitch America"—and the good breast of the mother has gone bad. Hence, as Gatsby ascends to his heavenly home in the imagination (the rightful place for a "star"), the destructive qualities of the <i>femme fatale</i> are left below, earth- and landscape-bound, like Myrtle and her ripped and bleeding breast, while the mystery and allure and appeal rise with him. Meanwhile, much of the remaining fault follows the siren Daisy out of the frame; she is an early manifestation of that very contemporary invention, the <i>femme fatale</i> who got away.

The Great Gatsby is, among other things, a tale without mothers. Where is Daisy’s mother when the young bride receives Gatsby’s letter on her wedding day? Where is she when Jordan steps in to sober Daisy up, one young woman preparing another for the homosocial exchange of women that Lévi-Strauss explains "establishes communication between biological families" (106), in this case one in the Midwest (or, from the Confederacy’s point of view, the North) and one in the South? This marriage also seals Gatsby outside the upper class as the pearly bride price is removed from the waste basket and wrapped again around Daisy’s neck. Jordan’s parents are dead, Nick, like Gatsby, has a father but no visible mother, and Tom’s parents aren’t mentioned. The only biological mother in the text is Daisy, and Pammy is so absent that we, like Gatsby, have trouble believing in or remembering her existence.
Yet the mother is present throughout the text in the lure and dim memory of the imaginary and its objects, particularly the breast and the mother's voice. Nick speaks of "an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air" (118), as if dimly remembering the imaginary through the veil cast over it by the symbolic or recollecting the sound of Daisy and Jordan talking together, another fragment Nick can't quite grasp. Nick is fascinated with Daisy's compelling voice, following it "up and down, with my ear alone before any words came through" (90). Most of all, though, the mother is present in Gatsby's temptation by "the pap of life . . . the incomparable milk of wonder" (117). Voice and breast are the lost but always partially remembered pleasures that the boy trades for entry into the symbolic and the promise of the princess awaiting him at journey's end. But the culmination of Gatsby's narrative is not the bride but apotheosis. Even so, on his narrative journey, the obstacle to be overcome or traveled through is female, and in this somewhat surprisingly structured tale that intersects Tom's, Daisy is the impediment rather than the reward, the diversion that kept Gatsby from ascending into the sky back when he made his choice on that moonlit street in Louisville: "He
knew that when he kissed the girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God" (117). In this narrative that seems to work at right angles to Tom's, and at the same time crosses Oedipus with Jesus, Christ lingers for awhile with a Mary Magdalene who is also Judas, the one whose kiss betrays.

But if *The Great Gatsby* represents an ambivalent hovering between the imaginary and the symbolic and the longing for past pleasures (Nick ventures to Gatsby, "'You can't repeat the past.' 'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'" [116]), it also delineates some of the pleasures attendant upon the mirror stage, when the child realizes that the subtraction of the mother yields that figure in the mirror: him (Silverman, *Acoustic* 7). While retroactively, from the position of the symbolic, this subtraction of the mother may be seen as a loss, in Silverman's description, "Insofar as the mirror stage could be said to have any emotional 'content,' it would be that 'jubilation' of which Lacan speaks, a 'jubilation' which is itself based upon an illusory unity, or—as Jane Gallop encourages us to see it—upon an anticipation of self-mastery and a unified identity" (Silverman, *Acoustic* 7). "Jubilation" may be overstating the case somewhat, but Nick's reaction to Gatsby's smile, both at the beginning and end of the novel, partakes of some of this joyous anticipation. To
unpack Nick's impression somewhat, Gatsby's smile believed in you not as you believe in yourself but as you would like to believe; it assured you that it had the impression of you not that you have of yourself, but that you would have at your best. In these conditionals exists a future perfectibility, an assurance that everything is going to be all right. But Gatsby's smile presupposes a gaze, an instant in which he takes Nick as his object--and then affirms him. This important lag between gaze and smile, this moment of anxiety that is transformed into pleasure, is present both when Nick first meets Gatsby ("It faced--or seemed to face--the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor" [52]) and when Nick unknowingly bids him farewell ("First he nodded politely, and then his face broke into that radiant and understanding smile, as if we'd been in ecstatic cahoots on that fact all the time" [162]). Nick has been weighed in the balance and not found wanting.

While Nick depends on Gatsby's affirming looks, he is also very much invested in looking at Gatsby, as is the text, which casts him--in his silver and gold and pink, riding in his "circus wagon"--in the role of a spectacle for Nick's eyes and sometimes Daisy's: "he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling" (26-27); "[h]is tanned skin was drawn attractively tight
on his face and his short hair looked as though it were trimmed every day" (54); "the figure of the host who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell" (60); "you look so cool," Daisy says, "You always look so cool" (125). With Daisy's help but Nick's especially, we can't keep our eyes off Gatsby, as if he is a figure from the period before "The Great Masculine Renunciation," that moment in Western history when sartorial display became not a masculine prerogative signaling one's class, but a feminine responsibility to display the wealth of one's husband and shoulder the burden of difference (Silverman, "Fragments" 140). In fact, Gatsby's display of plumage, which Tom disparages ("'An Oxford man!' He was incredulous. 'Like hell he is! He wears a pink suit.'" [129]), both advertises his wealth, since he has no wife to do it for him, and exposes him as a parvenu like Myrtle, caught in a "too-muchness" of rainbow-hued shirts, overlit mansion, and parties catered--and catering--to excess. At the same time, in Gatsby's post-Renunciation world, it is the women who are noticed for their clothing, whether Daisy and Jordan in their white dresses or the bejeweled women at the extravagant parties. Hence, Gatsby's attire tends to move him toward the feminine domain and once again blur the line between homme/femme fatal(e). After all, clothing is not just an advertisement of wealth but also a lure (as we have seen with Mata Hari), but in this case the moth circling is
Daisy and the "human orchid" is not the female star at Gatsby's party but Gatsby himself (111).

Even as he is the object of multiple gazes, Gatsby is also the spectacle who looks—an odd phrase, but one which speaks of Gatsby's hybridity, for he is feminine insofar as he is spectacle and, therefore, object but masculine in his ability to look back. Not only are we aware of the gaze that precedes his affirming smile, but when Nick fixes him with an objectifying look, Gatsby himself is in the process of gazing, first at the green light at the end of Daisy's dock, then "standing alone on the marble steps and looking from one group to another with approving eyes" (54), and finally standing on the porch watching his guests depart. This relay of gazes—from Nick through Gatsby to the objectified world—positions Nick comfortably as the masculinized movie spectator: basically passive but through his gaze able to identify with the stronger, more active, more attractive, more coherent subjectivity of the figure he watches. Nor is it surprising that the gazing Gatsby is also the standing Gatsby. Silverman points out that male attire since the Great Masculine Renunciation has emphasized its connection to the symbolic order through its overall effect of verticality, which evokes metaphorically rather than metonymically the penis itself, helping "to conflate the penis with the phallus" ("Fragments" 147). Keeping this trope of verticality in mind reveals Gatsby as
masculinized indeed: standing at the dock yearning for Daisy’s green light, standing at his own party, standing awkwardly against Nick’s hearth, standing outside the Buchanans’ house with Tom, springing to his feet in the Plaza suite to fight for Daisy’s love, standing outside Daisy’s house in the shadows after Myrtle’s death. In fact, it is difficult to picture Gatsby other than phallicly standing whereas the enduring image of Daisy and Jordan is that of them reclining in white on the enormous couch in the Buchanans’ living room. Nick’s gaze of identification, then, provides him with abundant reassurance of his own masculinity, for he himself is looking in addition to identifying with the one who looks and whose sexuality is so evidently vertical and "in place."

Furthermore, Gatsby’s reassuring gaze back at Nick counteracts the dis-ease of the Lacanian gaze, which manifests itself unpleasantly in everything from Tom’s arrogant looks to Jordan’s disdainful glance to the eyes of Dr. Eckleburg to the brother who "began throwing mean looks" (61), even if ultimately the Lacanian gaze cannot be localized. Gatsby’s mirroring look is "in place," unlike the Lacanian gaze that comes from everywhere and nowhere, and in that fixity it recalls the reassurance of the mother in the original mirror stage, where she supplies not just orthopedic support but also "stands in" for the Other in a loving way (Silverman, "Fragments"
And the Other is necessary: "In order for the child to continue to 'see' itself," as it did in the mirror stage, "it must continue to be (culturally) 'seen'" (Silverman, "Fragments" 143). Through this complicated system of looks and relays, compounded by his narrative duties, Nick is situated--against a background that mixes anxiety with pleasure--as the one who gazes, the one who identifies with the one who gazes, the one who is seen positively, and the one who writes/speaks. In his capacity as gazer and repository of confidences, Nick positions himself above all as the one who knows. Etymologically speaking, what else is a narrator? But even such a powerful positioning cannot hide the gaps that open up not only through gender and class but also through race.

"Their whites are so white": Nick and the Gaze of Color

I do not want to leave The Great Gatsby without at least beginning to pull into focus the gaze of color, but the issues I introduce here I will treat in greater detail in the next chapter. Additionally, I want to clarify, as the title of this section implies, that the contested area in Gatsby in not just the references to color and ethnicity but the territory of whiteness itself. As Bryan R. Washington states in reference to Daisy Miller, "The insistence on whiteness prods blackness, in effect, into the text" (36).
While I have mentioned a number of looks that suggest an underpinning of the Lacanian gaze—Jordan’s deferral of the gaze, Myrtle’s aggressive looking, and the fading eyes of Dr. Eckleburg—I have sidestepped a number of looks that are not central to the action but create a background buzz of anxiety. Take as an introduction an instance of ethnicity rather than color that does not even relate directly to the gaze except as Nick wields it. Nick describes in Chapter 2 how he and Tom stand at a discreet distance from the garage so Myrtle can evade her husband and accompany them to New York: “We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track” (30). In this image reminiscent of the little Italian girl who follows Quentin in The Sound and the Fury, the child’s very existence in an area near East Egg echoes Tom’s fear that “the white race will be--will be utterly submerged” (17) even as the child’s genderlessness and apparently less-than-robust health suggest a foe of very little power or immediate reproductive capacity. Still, the implied sickliness of the non-Nordic child raises the specter of “foreign disease” while the torpedoes hint at invasion or class warfare or, at the very least, a reformulation of the American-ness celebrated on the national holiday. This unlikely mixture of fears would be as laughable as Tom’s blusterings about racial purity if it were not for
the fact that Nick, who found Tom's pseudo-scientific attitudes pathetic, casually fans a variety of racial and ethnic fears. The importance of the child, I believe, is that he or she adds an ethnic note to the pervading disease of the valley of ashes, a note picked up soon thereafter in the register of race.

Like the female gaze, the gazes of color are rarely the focus of The Great Gatsby. The most prominent example of a gaze across the color line occurs when Gatsby and Nick are on their way to lunch in New York, riding in Gatsby's "circus wagon": "As we crossed Blackwells Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white chauffeur, in which sat three modish Negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry. 'Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge,' I thought; 'anything at all. . . .'" (73). Not only does Nick take the limousine's passengers as the object of his generalized gaze, but he objectifies their eyes themselves, containing their threats to his pre-eminence not just through his own dominating look but through a demeaning metaphor. His amusement and amazement that "anything can happen" is the fraternal twin of Tom's "It's up to us who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things" (17). Nick's comment, like Tom's, posits a "natural" order that is in danger, an accepted balance that obtains outside New York but not in the
chaotic, unpredictable city where borders break down as people live in close proximity. The clearest sign that the center will not hold is the African Americans' white chauffeur, a member of Tom's "dominant race" who takes orders from the leisured people of color. Behind Nick's amusement is the assumption that in this configuration of master and servant, something is not just wrong, but self-evidently wrong; perhaps Nick's assumption is, to borrow Jordan's words, that "[w]e're all white here" (137). At a moment like this, as Nick and Gatsby pull away in their own fantastic car, we begin to realize just how much space the white male gaze occupies in this narrative and how little room it leaves for other gazes. Yet it is also textual moments like this one that remind us of our ability to deny an identification with the narrator and the narration, to wrench ourselves from the seeming headlock of the spectatorial position and move to another viewpoint--to look back at the text rather than glide along passively in the passenger seat as Nick drives the action.64

Immediately before the scene described above, Nick has another close encounter with difference when Gatsby's car is passed by a hearse and "[t]he friends looked out at us with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of southeastern Europe and I was glad that the sight of Gatsby's splendid car was included in their somber holiday" (73). While this scene lacks the same harsh need to ridicule
that which is described, Nick still goes out of his way to objectify the mourners and put them in their place, with implications for both ethnicity and class. The mourners are positioned as the peasantry of the Old Country, now the working class of America for whom the spectacle of the rich serves the dual purpose: they are put on notice of an unbridgeable gap between the upper and lower classes while at the same time they are allowed the limited pleasure of observing a splendor they can never hope to own. Conspicuous consumption becomes a spectator sport that calms the masses in the face of privilege but also in confrontation with death: mourning mitigated by money. One is reminded of the bon mot that sometimes graces the bumpers of contemporary "circus wagons": "Whoever dies with the most toys wins." At the same time, Nick's condescension towards the working class stirs memories of Bill's aspirations toward wealth in Days of Heaven.

These gazes of color and ethnicity heighten the anxiety level of a narrative very much preoccupied with mixture, hybridity, and miscegenation. As Tom describes the slippery slope, "Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white" (137). What, after all, is Tom's relationship with Myrtle (and Daisy's with Gatsby) if not a miscegenation based on class instead of race? The problem of mixture reappears in a slightly different form.
in the minor episode of the puppy "of an indeterminate breed" (31). Washington writes about Myrtle, "This, then, is a woman who has yet to learn the difference between mongrels and Airedales, between gossip magazines and the social register. In a text preoccupied with and intolerant of the racial and social hybridization of America, Myrtle’s most unforgivable sin is perhaps her inability to distinguish a hybrid from a thoroughbred" (42). But in this instance the question of blood pedigree quickly shades into the related fear of indeterminate borders between the sexes:

"Is it a boy or a girl?" she asked delicately.
"That dog? That dog’s a boy."
"It’s a bitch," said Tom decisively. "Here’s your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it." (32)

In this exchange, it seems that the man with the money defines the border of sexual difference and who falls on either side. Of course, this is the kind of power Tom desires: to establish pedigree, whether social, racial, or gender, once and for all ("The idea is that we’re Nordics. I am and you are and you are" [18]). He must banish ambiguity and defend the borders. To achieve this kind of power, above all Tom must know, use his gaze, already defined as "restless," and that of hired investigators to gather the necessary knowledge. Unfortunately, that knowledge will always be insufficient: he learns, for example, something of Gatsby’s origins only to be poleaxed by the quite obvious news that Daisy has
been carrying on with the parvenu. As he concentrates on fears of class, he is bushwhacked by gender as Daisy slips over the border of proper femininity.

Nick’s virulence in referring to the African-American limousine passengers is matched only by the text’s representation of Jews: "the little kyke" that Mrs. McKee almost married (38) and Wolfshiem, described by Nick as a "small flat-nosed Jew [who] raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in each nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half darkness" (73-74). Once again, Nick defeats the unwelcome gaze by rendering it in a ridiculous objectification: it is the hairy nose that looks, animalistic and primitive, like a mole or some other underground creature. Nick then contains Wolfshiem’s gaze a second time by describing the eyes as tiny, with the implication that they are scarcely powerful enough to take Nick as their object. Wolfshiem is out of balance: excess in one dimension and lack in another. Further, his cufflinks made from human molars re-emphasize that he belongs to another, less refined species (as his name implies), different not only in his basic five senses but also in finer feelings.

Why must Wolfshiem, like the limousine passengers, be contained twice? Before answering that question, I want to turn to the overall effect of these marginalized gazes, which, like the female gaze, contribute to the impression
that "things aren't right," a dis-ease that pervades the text. Women are too free, they dance alone, the white man may not be in the driver's seat much longer except as a chauffeur, the lower classes are restless. These anxieties are not separate from the recurring dis-ease related to looking: the slippage Nick experiences in seeing Gatsby's parties from his own pleasurable point of view, then Daisy's less favorable one; his tendency to be both "within and without" in many instances of looking (40); the anxiety he experiences when he takes a woman as the object of his gaze, whether on the street or in an affair at the office, only to become the object of a brother's "mean looks"; the slippage in the valley of ashes between a diffuse, unsettled feeling of being observed and Myrtle's very pointed look of terror directed at Jordan. The gaze will not hold still; it slips from person to person, from focused to unfocused, from seeing to seen--like a small oil slick that rides the ocean swells, a reminder of Lacan's sardine can. Barbara Hochman comments on Nick's slipping borders but in terms that ring with allusion to Mary Ann Doane and the construction of the female spectator: "We have repeatedly noted Nick's sense of being undermined by the voices and faces that surround him. . . . Over-involvement, passivity, betrayal--these are only some of the consequences of proximity" (110). But if the Lacanian gaze-as-stain can be colored, held at a distance and
viewed scientifically as one stains bacteria on a slide, perhaps it can be detected, contained, cleaned up, bleached—above all, fixed (again, as one fixes a scientific specimen or fixes an object in the distance with a dominant gaze). The gaze of color and ethnicity offers a resting place for the anxiety the Lacanian gaze can provoke, localizing it at last through a species of scapegoating. What is scapegoating, after all, but a narrowing of the field, a cinching in of something threatening in its largeness? These "colored" looks, whether shaded by femininity, class, or race, become more particles of "foul dust" that fill the atmosphere unfit for the white and silver and gold Gatsby.

The question of Wolfshiem draws us nearer to the next chapter and its analysis of Nella Larsen’s *Passing*, for I venture that the problematic visibility of Jewishness sparks the need for a double containment. If, as Homi Bhabha so persuasively states, "Skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognised as ‘common knowledge’ in a range of cultural, political, historical discourses" (101), then for those who mistake religion for *race*, Jews are among the least visible of peoples, the least susceptible to the twinned containments of seeing and knowing. Their chances for passing, for crossing the border without detection, are great and require strict measures on the part of the supremacist. That Gatsby
refers to Wolfshiem as his friend indicates that the older man has already slipped across one border. But if Wolfshiem requires two containments to quell the fear of passing, why would the double measure be needed for the limousine passengers, whose race is highly visible? First, through their "haughty" gaze and apparent wealth, the two men and the woman stake a claim to an equal if not superior racial and economic position, or so Nick's view implies, for it is he who reads their gazes as threatening. Second, if darkness is the standard against which whiteness defines itself, if the white girlhood of Daisy and Jordan and their white dresses and Daisy and Tom's white windows in their buoyant living room are constructed as one half of a binary opposition, then each instance of whiteness requires that color be kept in its place, that any rivalry must result in the sound defeat, even humiliation, of the dark foe.

What then of the "pale, well dressed Negro" who witnesses the "death car" (147)? In Breitwieser's view, the witness is virtually pure gaze. Knowing so little about him, unable to do more than speculate about his thoughts and feelings, we cannot place him, settle him into a social typology, comic or otherwise, that would allow us to laugh or commiserate, even nervously, and then move on, as Gatsby's car does after it strikes Myrtle. The unknown witness brings us to a halt, all the more powerfully when the gaze rises up in one who has not been anticipated as possible gazing subjectivity. (49)

Breitwieser, however, did not remember the witness until Ralph Ellison in an essay titled "The Little Man in Chehaw
Station" called him to the critic's attention. So the pale, well-dressed Negro halts us critically but not narratively. Or to be more accurate, the witness halts Ralph Ellison and his imaginary little man through an identification: "As a citizen, the little man endures with a certain grace the social restrictions that limit his own social mobility; but as a reader, he demands that the relationship between his own condition and that of those more highly placed be recognized. He senses that American experience is of a whole, and he wants the interconnections revealed" (14). As Ellison points out, though, the interconnection is that the witness is excluded, his contribution occluded, the plug pulled on the connection before any energy can pass through it: "a black man whose ability to communicate (and communication implies moral judgment) was of no more consequence to the action than that of an ox that might have observed Icarus' sad plunge into the sea" (15).  

Breitwieser is correct that the text hustles away someone who appears to be a social aspirant like Gatsby, someone who presents a possibility for intradiegetic identification—a well-dressed man, probably a car owner himself. But the witness doesn't leave the scene quite so quickly as Breitwieser implies: with Nick he overhears Tom suppressing Wilson's account of the accident, maneuvering the police officer away from the Buchanans' connection to the yellow car, rendering the vehicle
invisible to the police, but planting for Wilson "the first shoot of an idea that, with some diligent watering by Tom, will blossom as Gatsby's assassination" (Breitwieser 43). Then the man disappears. He is witness not only to the accident but to the upper-class white man's manipulation of the legal system, a manipulation so effective, as far as we can tell, that the witness does not appear at the inquest, a gap the text races over like a crack in the road. The white lower class (in the person of Myrtle's sister) and the white upper class (particularly in the person of Nick) close ranks to protect the dead—Myrtle and George—and the departed—Daisy and Tom, who have moved on to "wherever people played polo and were rich together" (10). The preceding is Nick's phrase but what it leaves out—and Ellison's critical gaze reinserts—is the crucial word white.

The gaze of color within the diegesis provides an opening, then, for identification, critique, and realignment of the narrative. Nick's degrading metaphor that evokes the minstrel show (Breitwieser 47) or the disappearance of the witness of color becomes a kind of mystery or crime to be solved through locating the gaze of color and further understanding the process of identification. But while working within the metaphor of the unsolved mystery, I do not want to slip toward that common misconception that race itself is the crime or that the person of color stands in for the femme fatale.
who must be "known to death." In the spirit of an
investigation that turns back on itself--moving forward
and folding back, the eye turned both outward and within--
I leave the witness not behind but at the edge of the
frame: still looking, although at what we cannot see;
willing to speak to those willing to listen.

End Notes

1. In fact, collages from the 1930s show Garbo’s head on
the body of the Sphinx at Giza, and she was known
popularly as the Swedish sphinx (Krützen 45).
   A companion piece to the knowing glance is the
enigmatic smile, and it was Walter Pater who first made
the connection between the femme fatale and Mona Lisa’s
"unfathomable smile, always with a touch of something
sinister in it, which plays over all Leonardo’s work"
(qtd. in Praz 243).

2. Eve Sedgwick loosely defines male homosociality as men
promoting men’s interests (5) or social connections
between men that can include friendship, bonding,
mentoring, or even rivalry (1). In a description that may
seem quite similar at first, Heidi Hartman defines
patriarchy as "relations between men, which have a
material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish
or create interdependence and solidarity among men that
enable them to dominate women" (qtd. in Sedgwick 3). In
fact, male homosociality need not include the oppression
of women although it often does.

3. As Mulvey describes the narrative trajectory of female
domestication, the beautiful woman is at first "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" ("Visual Pleasure" 21).

4. Two quotes from de Lauretis are pertinent here:
"Medusa and the Sphinx, like the other ancient monsters,
have survived inscribed in hero narratives, in someone
else’s story, not their own; so they are figures or
markers of positions--places and topoi--through which the
hero and his story move to their destination and to

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accomplish meaning" (Alice 109); "The end of the girl’s journey, if successful, will bring her to the place where the boy will find her, like Sleeping Beauty, awaiting him, Prince Charming. For the boy has been promised, by the social contract he has entered into at his Oedipal phase, that he will find woman waiting at the end of his journey" (Alice 133). In both instances—obstacle and reward—woman represents a place, either where the hero encounters conflict and overcomes it or the location recognizable as the end of the journey by virtue of the woman’s presence in it.

5. Interestingly, Greta Garbo commented on her own objectification when she told a group of hostile journalists, "I hate to be stared at. I know how the animal in the zoo feels when unfriendly people poke it with sticks" (Gronowicz 413). After only two American films, The Torrent and The Temptress, Garbo bemoaned, as do American actresses today, the limitations of Hollywood roles and the demonizing of women: "Always the vamp I am, always the woman with no heart" (Walker, Garbo 10).

6. As a literary example of the femme fatale’s gaze and of her mutability, take Nyssia in Théophile Gautier’s Le Roi Candaule, the tale of a king whose queen is so beautiful he feels compelled to share his scopophilic good fortune with another man. Nyssia is alleged to have double pupils or the ability to see through walls (37-38): At times their lids opened like the portals of celestial dwellings; they invited you into Elysiums of light, of azure, of ineffable felicity; they promised you the realisation, tenfold, a hundredfold, of all your dreams of happiness,—as though they had divined your soul’s most secret thoughts; again, impenetrable as sevenfold plated shields of the hardest metals, they flung back your gaze like blunted and broken arrows. With a simple inflexion of the brow, a mere flash of the pupil, more terrible than the thunder of Zeus, they precipitated you from the heights of your most ambitious escalades into depths of nothingness so profound that it was impossible to rise again. . . .

At other times, their languid glance was so seductively persuasive, their emissions and irradiation so penetrating, that the icy coldness of Nestor and Priam would have melted under their gaze, like the wings of Icarus when he approached the torrid zones. For one such glance a man would have gladly steeped his hands in the blood of his host, scattered the ashes of his father to the four winds, overthrown the holy images of the gods, and stolen the fire of heaven itself, like the sublime thief, Prometheus.

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Nevertheless, their most ordinary expression, it must be confessed, was of a chastity to make one desperate,—a sublime coldness,—an ignorance of all possibilities of human passion such as would have made the moon-bright eyes of Phoebe or the sea-green eyes of Athena appear, by comparison, more meltingly tempting. (53-54)

The excess of Gautier's description is far from unusual. The *femme fatale* is commonly perceived to be nearly superhuman, her powers sufficient to explain the male victim's susceptibility and, even more importantly, defuse the anxiety that he might be hopelessly weak. At the same time, those powers necessitate that she be destroyed (or at least changed), partly because she is "against nature," but also because she aspires, to revert to Gautier's hyperbole, to the powers of Athena or Zeus. The *femme fatale* is a monster of feminine hubris.

Virginia Allen describes how in the second half of the nineteenth century the aspect of Eve in the familiar Mary/Eve binarism was so intensified as to become a new image: the *femme fatale* "was--and is--the diametric opposite of the 'good' woman who passively accepted impregnation, motherhood, domesticity, the control and domination of her sexuality by men" (4). Whereas the "good" woman repopulates the earth and provides her husband with an heir, the primary issue of the fatal woman's sexuality is death. Mary Ann Doane takes this idea one step further by placing the *femme fatale* in the historical context of the newly industrialized West, where she is barren "in a society which fetishizes production" (*Femme Fatales* 2).

On the cover of the paperback edition of Mary Ann Doane's *Femmes Fatales*, Louise Brooks appears in a publicity still as the embodiment of the deadly woman, and her gaze is intriguing to contemplate: her look at the camera is paradoxically both direct and slightly veiled. Her head is tipped a bit down so that she looks up from under her brows, her eyes a little out of focus, with two small slashes of light in each that seem to bracket the pupil. Those pinpoints are in themselves distracting and a little ominous, suggesting a doubling, like Nyssia's double pupils. The strong, straight lines of bangs, brows, and even lips juxtaposed with the whiteness of Brooks's skin solicit our voyeuristic contemplation even as we circle back to that slightly threatening gaze, rendered momentarily inert and available for our study through still photography.

Apropos of Gautier, in Parker Tyler's essay "The Garbo Image," he claims the perfect role for Garbo would have been Mademoiselle de Maupin in Gautier's work by the same name, in which the heroine masquerades as a cavalier as her sister travels dressed as a boy (26-27).
7. Allen points to flowing and abundant hair as another signature of the femme fatale, as does Joy Newton, who seconds Allen's observations about the fatal woman's half-closed eyes (27). Interestingly, in Mata Hari, we see the spy's hair loose in only one shot: when she rises from bed the morning after her first meeting with Rosanoff. The visibility of Mata's hair in this one scene signals first the informality of the situation; for once we see the spy at home--off-duty, as it were. Second, it softens Mata for us just at the moment when we are expected to believe she is capable of true love, despite her hardness, earlier underlined by the austerity of her silhouette in turbans, headdresses, and other helmet-like gear. This moment of exposure in her apartment "naturalizes" Mata into femininity. She is "a woman after all," to whom adjectives like soft and fluffy can still apply. In subsequent scenes, when Mata continues her role as spy, with each new example of concealing headgear, we spectators are positioned to identify with Rosanoff: we've seen Mata's hair; we've seen Mata in love; we know she's "not like that." In the last act of the film, as Mata becomes the renunciatory woman, her tightly bound, slicked back hair recalls the nun's vow to sacrifice her "crowning glory" in service to Christ.

In Shanghai Express, when her lover, Doc, expresses regrets about his past actions, Shanghai Lily (Marlene Dietrich) replies flippantly, "There's only one thing I wouldn't have done. I wouldn't have bobbed my hair." Here the woman's long hair is represented as a certain innocence rather than the entangling danger of the femme fatale. The photograph Doc carries of Lily shows her as a romantic, younger, softer woman, whereas the bobbed hair--not just for Lily but for women of the 1920s and 1930s (the film is set in 1931)--symbolizes freedom in general, but especially a sexual one. Given that Lily is now known as "the notorious white flower of China," the one who drives men mad while taking their money, her regret about her hair is another little mocking gesture at Doc, the true femme fatale saying à la Piaf, "Je ne regrette rien."

8. This phallicized totality is well illustrated in Pretty Woman when Vivian (Julia Roberts) presents herself to Edward (Richard Gere) in a full length, tight red evening gown he has bought for her as appropriate apparel for a dinner à trois with one of his clients. She is the living, walking representation of his phallic potency.

9. In Doane's account, there are significant differences between the diva, the vamp, and the femme fatale, but despite her attempt to distinguish between them, they shade into one another. The diva is marked by her lack of agency; she is "a woman of exceptional beauty who incites catastrophe--not by means of any conscious scheming but
through her sheer presence" (Femmes 125). As a character in La Signora di tutti remarks, "The girl is dangerous and doesn’t realize it" (qtd. in Femmes 123). The vamp, a specialty of the Nordic countries, takes her name from the vampire, for she lives off the misfortunes of her male victims (Femmes 127). The femme fatale, on the other hand, is consciously manipulative or conniving (Femmes 125). I see Mata Hari falling into this last category rather than that of the vamp, for although she causes a good deal of misfortune among the men of Paris, she seems to take very little pleasure in their downfall and death.

10. This architectural metaphor recurs in Chapter 4 with respect to Clare Kendry in Passing, another femme fatale--or to unpack that charged term, a woman whose physical beauty serves as both a means to an end--subjectivity--and a mask behind which she pursues aims quite different from those of the men around her.

11. Of course, the woman’s ultimate power to control heterosexual sex by simply saying no is an illusion made plain not just by rape but by the fear or threat of rape. In Mata Hari, however, the spy’s apparent control of the situation unravels when Shubin realizes that the exchange rate he has negotiated is not so favorable as he imagined: he has sacrificed his high standing in the male homosocial hierarchy for less-than-exclusive access to Mata’s body and affections.

12. Oddly enough, a double exposure of Mata Hari exists in the form of another film: Dishonoured, released the year before the Garbo vehicle, starring Marlene Dietrich at a time when she was being styled by Paramount--complete with a similar wavy bob and high arched, very plucked eyebrows--to compete with MGM’s Garbo. Dietrich plays X-27, the "good" spy, loyal to Austria, who then "goes bad" for love unlike Garbo’s "bad" spy who "goes good" for love. At the end of Dishonoured, we see X-27 executed by the firing squad and lying dead in the snow while in the last frames of Mata Hari the spy is still alive although marching toward what will be her final, extra-diegetic moments. While a detailed examination of the parallels between these two films is beyond the scope of this study, both female spies mark a wound in the male homosocial order that is at least partly healed through their deaths, even as those deaths are constructed, as is Caddy Compson’s exile, partly as tragedies: the love you love to lose. Highlighting the female spy’s threat to the homosocial, the spy H-14, a colonel in the Russian Army and no angel himself, castigates X-27: "I’m a soldier, but you bring something into war that doesn’t belong in it. You trick men into death with your body. . . . You’re a cheat and a liar."
13. While Butler does not carry her epistemological skepticism so far, her emphasis on surface and gesture recalls Descartes's famous but brief introduction of the problem of other minds, one of the few truly new problems in the history of modern philosophy: "We say, for example, that we see the same wax when it is before us, and not that we judge it to be the same from its retaining the same color and figure: whence I should forthwith be disposed to conclude that the wax is known by the act of sight, and not by the intuition of the mind alone, were it not for the analogous instance of human beings passing on in the street below, as observed from a window. In this case I do not fail to say that I see the men themselves, just as I say that I see the wax; and yet what do I see from the window beyond hats and cloaks that might cover artificial machines, whose motions might be determined by springs? But I judge that there are human beings from these appearances, and thus I comprehend, by the faculty of judgement alone which is in my mind, what I believed I saw with my eyes" (232).

14. Parker Tyler also emphasizes the importance of gesture in creating the illusion of a core identity when he analyzes Garbo's acting techniques: "Garbo 'got in drag' whenever she took some heavy glamour part, whenever she melted in or out of a man's arms, whenever she simply let that heavenly-flexed neck . . . bear the weight of her thrown-back head . . . . bear the weight of her thrown-back head" (12-13). See also note 17.

15. While these coquettish behaviors might call to mind Joan Riviere's "Womanliness as a Masquerade," I see significant differences between performance or performativity and masquerade. In Riviere's formulation, masquerade is anxious, unconscious, and obsessive whereas Mata Hari's hyperfemininity is constructed in the first two acts of the film as coolly considered, conscious, and discretionary. Furthermore, masquerade follows a particular chronological sequence, as in the case of the intellectual woman whose "need for reassurance led her compulsively on any such occasion to seek some attention or complimentary notice from a man or men at the close of the proceedings in which she had taken part or been the principal figure" (36). The "masculine" behavior followed by the "feminine" compensation and the reassurance it earns--this is the chronology of masquerade, "an unconscious attempt to ward off anxiety which would ensue on account of the reprisals she anticipated from the father-figures after her intellectual performance" (37). In Mata's case, however, the performance of femininity and the "masculine" activity of gathering knowledge--and power--through the gaze occur simultaneously, the one providing the screen behind which the other transpires. While masquerade is an example of doing and undoing,
Mata’s double layering of femininity and a strategic epistemological strike work hand in hand to the same end. Interestingly, Rivière’s article, published in 1929, is not far removed chronologically from Mata Hari, which was released in 1931, a link for which I am indebted to Stephen Heath.

In "Film and the Masquerade," in the interests of producing some distance from the image for the female spectator, Mary Ann Doane creates a notion of conscious masquerade to set alongside Rivière’s concept, which is by definition unconscious. I prefer to retain Rivière’s original meaning of the term to avoid any unintentional slippage. Further, performance underlines the intentionality of Mata Hari’s acts that taken together weave a highly conscious, highly deliberate illusion of identity (Femmes 26).

16. Butler reports, "As one lesbian femme explained, she likes her boys to be girls, meaning that ‘being a girl’ contextualizes and resignifies ‘masculinity’ in a butch identity" (Gender 123). What I see in Mata Hari is a performative feminine upon which is layered a performative hyper-feminine, which is not to say the first feminine is not also hyperbolic. In the intersection of Butler’s quotation and Mata Hari is a notion of ordering up the manifestation of gender one wants as opposed to selecting from a menu fixed by nature. Mata’s success is grounded in her ability to anticipate and deliver the type of femininity each man will find most desirable.

17. H.D. too decries the Hollywood-ization of Greta Garbo’s appearance, comparing the vamp of The Torrent to the relatively untouched actress in Joyless Street: “Her wigs, her eye-lashes have all but eclipsed our mermaid’s straight stare, her odd, magic quality of almost clairvoyant intensity” (33).

18. Similarly, while Shanghai Lily (Marlene Dietrich) has quite a keen gaze in Shanghai Express, it is at its most unblinking behind the black veil since the veil is, among other things, a fetish which "protects" the viewer by stopping his eye midway to the gaze itself. For a more thorough and detailed account of the multiple meanings of the veil, see Doane, "Veiling over Desire" in Femmes Fatales.

19. These "gestures of the eye" will return in the next chapter in the discussion of Passing, for Clare Kendry too has a trick: "sliding down ivory lids over astonishing black eyes and then lifting them suddenly and turning on a caressing smile" (Larsen 221).
20. It is not uncommon for the **femme fatale** to set herself up in competition with orthodox religion. As Mario Praz describes in *The Romantic Agony*, a primer on the **femme fatale**, Matilda in M.G. Lewis’s *The Monk* conjures up the Devil himself, much to her lover/victim’s horror, by breaking an *agnus Dei* and throwing the pieces into the flames (193).

21. Gledhill points to Cora in *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, who takes up a dizzying array of positions in the course of the film: "1) sex-bomb; 2) hardworking, ambitious woman; 3) loving playmate in an adulterous relationship; 4) fearful girl in need of protection; 5) victim of male power; 6) hard, ruthless murderess; 7) mother-to-be; 8) sacrifice to law" ("**Klute**" 18).

22. As Michaela Krützen points out, Garbo’s acting style is characterized by a motionless face and a blank gaze onto which each spectator can project her or his own narrative: "even a relaxed face with no identifiable expression is not without meaning." Further, she suggests that this blank expression conveys dominance, an observation which helps explain why Mata’s expression (and Garbo’s face) becomes far more mobile in the last act of the film, when Mata is no longer the manipulative spy with the upper hand but the suffering martyr for love (31).

23. In "Dark Continents," Doane makes a similar move in drawing together Freud and texts on blackness: "In Freud’s text, women (and it should be stressed that these are white European women) and ‘primitive’ races function in a similar way and through opposition to buttress the knowledge of the psyche to which psychoanalysis lays claim—with the crucial difference that white women constitute an internal enigma (Hegel’s ‘enemy within [the community’s] own gates’) while ‘primitive’ races constitute an external enigma" (*Femmes* 212). This parallel between femininity and race—internal and external enigmas—is represented in *Shanghai Express*, where Lily as white fallen woman and Hui Fei as Asian fallen woman fall into an on-board alliance in which Hui Fei completes actions—even against her will—that begin with Lily: for instance, Hui Fei kills Chang after Lily’s feeble attempt at assassination fails, and Hui Fei is raped by Chang off screen after Lily turns down his advances. In these parallels, in which Hui Fei must go one drastic step farther than Lily, we see the patriarchal construction of the white woman as one step away from the border with the external enigma. The "fear that white women are always on the verge of ‘slipping back’ into a blackness comparable to prostitution" finds a subtle representation in costuming through Lily’s gloves, which
are black on the upper surface but white on the palms ("Dark Continents," Femmes 214).

24. As Lisa Lowe has argued persuasively, orientalism is not "a consistent, univocal discourse that dominates, manages, and produces cultural differences, an oversimplification proliferated in certain criticism since the publication of Said's book" (x).

25. The condemned man's reply echoes the popular perception of Greta Garbo: "I want to be alone." Obviously, to him the woman is worth more than his country, for he refuses to talk further and is shot dead.

26. In another context but echoing my observation about a woman's eyes as fetishized suffering, Roland Barthes describes Garbo's gaze in Queen Christina as follows: "the eyes alone, black like strange soft flesh, but not in the least expressive, are two faintly tremulous wounds" (56).

27. In discussing another famous femme fatale, Salomé, Rita Severi writes, "The dance of the seven veils corresponds to the dance of the seven planets, or the dance of creation performed by Siva. It is through the cosmic dance that Siva Nataraja (master of the dance) begins the process of transformation of the Universe from a state of pure matter to its development into the elements, to their combination into the vegetable and animal worlds and to the creation of man as an act of love during which the androgynous Siva separates himself into his two natures, the masculine and the feminine, each still retaining something of the other" (460). It is fitting, therefore, that Mata's costume in the dance to Shiva should encompass elements both masculine and feminine, yet this fact in no way diminishes the threat or anxiety attached to "mixture," whether it be hybridization, androgyne, hermaphroditism, or miscegenation. It is also interesting to note that Shiva is the god of both destruction and reproduction.

While the structure of Mata Hari in some ways recalls Queen Christina and its gay subtext, a parallel only accentuated by Adrian's hermaphroditic costuming in the first two acts, I argue that Mata's hybridity in dress indicates not a gay plot in masquerade but another dimension of male masochism. According to Studlar, these mixed sartorial pleasures relate to "masochism's underlying refusal to accept the 'reality' of the Oedipal regime in which the father's genital sexuality dominates within rigidly defined gender and sex role boundaries. Instead, the polymorphous possibilities of bisexuality are symbolically maintained through cross-dressing and other masquerades that break down the patriarchal polarity of
sexual difference and provide the visual vehicle for expressing the masochist's belief that it is possible to become both sexes" (245). I am reminded, for example, of the moment in Shanghai Express when Lily removes Doc’s military cap as she seductively forces him to kiss her, then dons it momentarily so that her face is framed above by the male cap and below by the excessive collar of her rich feminine furs.

28. See note 12 for a comparison of the executions in Mata Hari and Dishonoured.

29. The reader/spectator here may experience some of the same discomfort felt by spectators of Lady in the Lake, that well-known (at least in theoretical circles) hard-boiled adaptation of Raymond Chandler’s novel, in which the camera is the male protagonist. At one point, the camera pulls in for an extreme close-up as Marlowe/the camera attempts to kiss an unwilling woman, who subsequently slaps him/it/us. The discomfort is complex as we loom towards the woman’s face, for it may stem from anything from homosexual panic to an imperfect identification with the actions or motives of the protagonist. In The Great Gatsby, as Nick/we move in on Jordan, I suggest that the possible discomfort can be attributed primarily to an ambivalent identification with the protagonist. (See note 40 on the question of Nick’s reliability.)

Continuing the comparison between Gatsby and film, Joss Lutz Marsh writes, "The Great Gatsby combines striking visual imagery (the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock) with long but fast-paced set scenes of dialogue, interspersed with directions as to gesture and facial expression--a technique owing as much to the pantomimic art of silent screen as to the theater" (4). Marsh argues that the movies were not Fitzgerald’s subject just in The Last Tycoon, but in all his work.

The Great Gatsby has been adapted for the screen on three occasions: in 1927 with Warner Baxter as Gatsby, in 1949 with Alan Ladd, and in 1974 with Robert Redford (Anderson 25).

30. Critics have often referred to Fitzgerald’s debt to Joseph Conrad for the narrative stance in Gatsby. Equally important in terms of craft, though, is Conrad’s injunction that the writer has an obligation "to make you see," emphasizing that the artist’s use of language must transcend the barrier of the page to become visual, even cinematic (Lee 41).
31. Phillip Sipiora, for example, accuses Jordan of entering into "a series of short-term relationships that are destined to fail," a charge more accurately leveled at Nick. He also seems to take offense that she confronts Nick with his own dishonesty (214-15). Marius Bewley writes, "no critic has ever given Fitzgerald credit for his superb understanding of Daisy's vicious emptiness. Even Fitzgerald's admirers regard Daisy as rather a good, if somewhat silly, little thing, but Fitzgerald knew that at its most deprived levels the American dream merges with the American debutante's dream--a thing of deathly hollowness" (44). Harold Bloom refers to her as the "absurdly vacuous Daisy" (2). David H. Lynn claims, "Daisy lacks any meaningful integrity between self and gesture," even though he grants in the passage just above that "what Daisy 'is' emerges only through Nick's own private interpretation" (179).

32. Slavoj Žižek points to Hitchcock's use of the Lacanian gaze to provoke a nonspecific, pervasive disease:

A heroine (Lilah in Psycho, Melanie in The Birds) is approaching a mysterious, allegedly empty house; she is looking at it, yet what makes a scene so disturbing is that we, the spectators, cannot get rid of the vague impression that the object she is looking at is somehow returning the gaze. The crucial point, of course, is that this gaze should not be subjectivized: it's not simply that "there is somebody in the house," we are, rather, dealing with a kind of empty, a priori gaze that cannot be pinpointed as a determinate reality--she "cannot see at all," she is looking at a blind spot, and the object returns the gaze from this blind spot. ("I Hear You" 90)

33. As Lacan recounts the incident, the fisherman Petit-Jean pointed out a small sardine can floating on the waves and said to Lacan, "You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!" Petit-Jean was highly amused by this observation, Lacan less so. Lacan realized that he was out of place in the picture: an intellectual but also a tourist, since these men were earning their living by supplying the canning industry, with the sardine can as a floating reminder of that negotiation between labor and capital. While the fishermen were prey to the constant dangers of the sea as well as those of tuberculosis as "a constant threat to the whole of that social class," Lacan was merely broadening his horizons. At the same time, Lacan's lack of amusement was based in the following realization: "if what Petit-Jean said to me, namely that the can did not see me, had any meaning, it was because in a sense, it was looking at me, all the same. It was
looking at me at the level of the point of light, the
point at which everything that looks at me is situated—and I am not speaking metaphorically" (Four Fundamental
95).

34. In The Threshold of the Visible World, Kaja Silverman relates the personal anecdote of avoiding the eyes of the homeless on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley. Silverman reports an "irrational panic," which she first analyzed as the need to give, conflicting with an inability to give enough or allocate the economic boon fairly. On further analysis, she realized that the panic was also specular: "What I feel myself being asked to do, and what I resist with every fiber of my being, is to locate myself within the bodies which would quite simply be ruinous of my middle-class self" (26). The dissolution of an idealized self through identification with the less privileged is, then, something that can be partially staved off through a look away, a movement of not knowing, yet the panic lurks at the edge of sight, and it is the mutual exchange of gazes that threatens to open up an unwelcome identification. Evidently, there is more than one kind of deferred gaze, dependent not only on one's position relative to economics, but also on the type of specular exchange solicited, for example, whether it be one of identification or domination. Such exchanges are worthy of further consideration, which must take place in some later study.

35. One might ask if Bill's look can be characterized as a deferring one since he turns away from the foreman and breaks the showdown of gazes. An important factor in such a deferral, however, is the refusal to even begin a showdown, to acknowledge that a confrontation is possible or necessary or desired—that is, to present an impregnable front of obliviousness to the power of the gaze. Bill, though, has already joined in a struggle with the foreman through a prolonged locking of furious looks. While his strategy incorporates a glance away and a deferral that attempts to renegotiate the terms of the battle, it is too late since his initial stare down with the foreman has established the gaze as a legitimate weapon of battle. Consequently, his strategy is not a deferral but an interruption, one which the foreman sees as a challenge in itself, what in contemporary parlance would be called "dissin'."

36. According to etiquette books of the day, it is Jordan who is deficient in this encounter, however effective her tactics may be in gaining power over Nick. Instructions for those of high school age (1930) specify the following: "Girls, if a friend is introducing you to his or her sister, or to a girl whom you know to be a good friend of
his or hers, rise and offer your hand. If a boy is being introduced to you, you need not rise if you are seated. If you wish to express cordiality, however, you may meet him halfway by extending your hand (Faculty 20). Emily Post (1922) follows much the same line: "When a gentleman is introduced to a lady, she sometimes puts out her hand--especially if he is some one she has long heard about from friends in common, but to an entire stranger she generally merely bows her head slightly and says: 'How do you do!'" (Etiquette 7).

37. Part of Nick’s attraction to Jordan is his desire to demystify her mystery, a typical preoccupation of the investigative gaze, particularly in responding to the femme fatale: "I wasn’t actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity. The bored haughty face that she turned to world concealed something" (62). When Nick uncovers Jordan’s propensity for lying--in her golf career and then when she leaves a borrowed convertible in the rain with the top down--he feels he has plumbed the depths of her mystery (and ticked off another item on the agenda of the investigative gaze: devaluation). Yet the text gives us a complex web of possibilities for Jordan’s mask that Nick chooses not to examine: her status as an orphan, her resulting homelessness (which echoes Lily Bart’s in House of Mirth), and her achievement as a sportswoman in the predominantly male world of sports, an accomplishment she manages to make look effortless: “How you ever get anything done is beyond me,” Tom exclaims when Jordan says she’s in training (15). Above all, the text demonstrates the efficacy of Jordan’s mask in deflecting--and attracting--the male gaze, something we can’t expect Nick to see since it is his own gaze that is affected.

38. "I like to balance a beautiful word with a barbed one," Fitzgerald wrote to the novelist John Peale Bishop, yet what is apparent in Gatsby is the many times Fitzgerald chooses this technique to delineate Jordan’s personality compared to its infrequent use in sketching the novel’s other characters (Bruccoli 282).

39. In an etiquette book of the same vintage as The Great Gatsby, coyly titled How to Behave--Though a Débutante, and even more coyly authored by "Muriel as overheard by Emily Post," "Muriel" attempts to capture one factor in "it," the era’s shorthand for sex appeal: "In fact, another name for the quality called ‘it’ is ‘Lorna.’ So, if I put Lorna down as chokable, I simply put myself down as a green-eyed who would do as she does if I could! To tell the truth, she doesn’t do anything. She just looks through her eyes instead of with them, and she looks soft and sweet and cold and hard and sympathetic and baffling"
(36). On a continuum, Jordan is at the cool, hard, and baffling end of the scale and Lorna is a hybrid of hard and appealing, but both characters seem to rely on a similar technique: creating an objectifiable but mysterious exterior—a kind of hard candy shell—that protects whatever lies within. In this they resemble the femme fatale even though Jordan is represented as less destructive than Daisy and we don’t know what damage Lorna leaves in her wake. Still, an important difference from Jordan lies in Lorna’s hybridizing, for she seems to add just enough appealing characteristics to create a "come hither" atmosphere, like Daisy or Mata Hari, while Jordan’s Otherness is more pronounced and forbidding.

40. Jordan also defers the gaze when called upon to support, in some unspecified way, her friend Daisy during the confrontation between Tom and Gatsby in the suite at the Plaza Hotel. "I glanced at Daisy," Nick relates, "who was staring terrified between Gatsby and her husband and at Jordan who had begun to balance an invisible but absorbing object on the tip of her chin" (141). The withdrawal inherent in Jordan’s look away conveys that she is neither subject nor object nor bystander in this battle for heterosexual supremacy, neither aggressor nor victim nor witness. Once again, the deferred gaze succeeds in redefining the battle lines of the conflict simply by being positionless: "unapprehensible" and unapprehended.

41. Marsh extends this quality of Gatsby’s reassurance—rightly, I think—beyond the bounds of the novel: "As a star, Gatsby’s greatest role is perhaps simply to assure his audiences—within the book and without (in the domain of readers, critics)—that there is meaning, and a self to encompass it, even if we, like Nick Carraway, cannot pin down what ‘incommunicable’ quality of his it was that held such promise" ("Fitzgerald, Part One" 9). This sequence of re-mirroring—a kind of mise en abyme, in which Nick sees himself mirrored in Gatsby, the critic/reader sees himself mirrored in Nick, the reader of criticism sees himself mirrored in the critic’s assessment of Nick (and through mirroring, Gatsby), and so forth—largely accounts, I believe, for the tendency among scholars to overvalue Nick as a moral agent. Furthermore, the intense desire for a coherent self, whether in the novel or in criticism, points to anxiety about the Lacanian gaze, which both constitutes and decenters the self, rendering the personalized, substantialized dominant gaze a feeble defense in a world where one is always the object of the Lacanian gaze and only in fantasy the subject. Interestingly, Marsh compares the enigmatic quality of Gatsby’s smile to the "inscrutable calm of the face of Garbo in the closing shot of Queen Christina (1933), which
allows yet eludes all interpretations" ("Fitzgerald, Part One" 9).


42. As Gatsby mirrors for Nick the younger man’s best self, Marius Bewley argues that Gatsby himself is a mythic character, "less an individual than a projection, or mirror, of our ideal selves" (138). Since the need to possess the dominating gaze is motivated partly by the desire for a coherent self, Gatsby’s smile (and the approving gaze that we imagine accompanies it) provides substantial reassurance.

43. I am not presupposing Nick’s heterosexuality here. Whatever his sexual identity, he seems to enjoy Daisy’s playful show of desire and be unnerved and diminished by Jordan’s lack of interest, real or feigned. Even outside the heterosexual economy, Jordan’s glance away is quite effective at undermining subjectivity.

44. Interestingly, *constitute*, from the Latin *constituere*, means at its etymological root "to cause to stand, set, fix," from *com* (an intensive) and *statuere*, meaning "to set up" ("constitute"). Such meanings, in their evocation of an erect penis, are appropriate for *The Great Gatsby* where, from the outset, Nick is anxious about what might be required to hold his own in the hierarchy of masculinity. His early impression of Tom is particularly telling: "'Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final,' he seemed to say, 'just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are'" (11). Tom's "cutting down to size" of those around him, whether actual or projected by Nick, makes all the more appealing the mirror-stage identification Gatsby provides and the propping up of self-esteem that Daisy's interest supplies within the heterosexual economy. Nick's repeated references to Jordan's hardness--her muscles and athletic pursuits--also suggest anxiety about his status within masculinity.

45. In a letter dating from about 1915, Fitzgerald advised his younger sister, Annabel, "Expression[,] that is facial expression, is one of your weakest points. A girl of your good looks and at your age ought to have almost perfect control of her face. It ought to be almost like a mask so that she'd have perfect control of any expression or impression she might wish to use" (Bruccoli 8). While Daisy's face is a mobile mask, Jordan's is perhaps an immobile one, perfectly controlled to minimize expression and to protect the inner state from detection, no matter how thorough an investigation of the outer.

46. See Chapter 2, note 33. For a woman to be under full patriarchal control, she must be both seen and heard--subject to both dimensions of male surveillance and interpretation. As Kaja Silverman explains in terms of film, the woman seen and not heard escapes man as maker of meaning and definitive interpreter. The woman heard and not seen is even more dangerous, for she is out of range of the male gaze and, consequently, not subject to its interrogation (*Acoustic* 164).

47. Marsh makes the interesting point that in the age of consumption, movie "stars must idealize consumption itself . . . they are depicted not as producing but as enjoying the fruits of the world--Valentino with his dogs and his mansion, Douglas Fairbanks on his yacht, in the innumerable fan and movie magazines (which obsessively returned to what Thorstein Veblen called the 'conspicuous consumption' of their subjects)" ("Fitzgerald, Part One" 8). No wonder, then, that Myrtle mistakes the act of consumption--the purchase of dog and perfume and clothing and furniture to dress the set where she will stage the
performance of her relationship with Tom—for the reality of class standing: buy as the stars buy, and you are a star. Her purchase of Town Tattle is part of the endless, obsessive spiral of conspicuous consumption: fans consume the stars and in so doing become more like the stars, who create more product to be consumed based on their popularity, which is measured by their ability to attract fans to consume them and their lives, constructed by studios for the consumption of tabloids and fans.

48. As Glenn Settle argues, by virtue of her compelling voice even more than her fatal attraction for a voyager nearing the end of his travels, Daisy fits the role of Siren. He points out that Hesiod foregrounds the Sirens’ voices in his naming of them: Thelxiope, "Charming-with-her-voice"; Molpe, "Song"; and Aglaophonus, "Lovely-sounding" (116, 119).

In terms of agency, though, Daisy is more readily categorized as a diva since her presence more than her intentions leads to disaster (see note 9 above). The constant references to white also move her away from the femme fatale’s knowing sexuality; Mata Hari’s dark rich fabrics and strategic bared areas of flesh provide an instructive contrast. Furthermore, the diva’s hyperbolic gestures are characteristic of Daisy, with her theatrical display of helpless hospitality upon seeing Nick and her claim that she is "p-paralyzed with happiness" (13).

49. The description of the literal castration of Joe Christmas in Light in August offers parallels to the imagery of Myrtle’s mouth at death: "Then his face, body, all, seemed to collapse, to fall in upon itself, and from out the slashed garments about his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath. It seemed to rush out of his pale body like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket; upon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever" (346). In this imagery and the lines that follow, there is no doubt of Christmas’s apotheosis.

50. Fitzgerald insisted on this image, writing his editor Maxwell Perkins on January 24, 1925, "Dear Max, This is a most important letter so I’m having it typed. Guard it as your life. . . . While I agreed with the general suggestions in your first letters I differ with you in others. I want Myrtle Wilson’s breast ripped off--its [sic] exactly the thing, I think, and I don’t want to chop up the good scenes by too much tinkering" (Fitzgerald, A Life in Letters 94).

51. Along with this instance where emotions develop additively in Myrtle’s face as they do in a resolving photograph, Marsh emphasizes the many moments in the novel
where Fitzgerald relies for his imagery on the cinematic apparatus (including references to persistence of vision) and the larger family of photographic processes: the discussion of photography, modeling, and lighting at Myrtle and Tom’s love nest; "the ‘glamour-lighting’ of Daisy in her first appearance in the novel, during D.W. Griffith’s ‘magic’ twilight hour"; "the image of ‘great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies’"; and the metaphor, which occurs twice, of life as a "constant flicker" on the restless eye (4). Also worth noting is that the play of emotions on Myrtle’s face closely resembles an extended reaction shot, in which the camera focuses on the (usually female) star as one feeling after another works its way to the surface of her face.

52. Daisy’s house arrest casts a new light on Mata Hari’s imprisonment, where the jail cell has the emotional atmosphere of an apartment in which she awaits her lover’s return, the nuns and the benevolent old prison guard in the roles of doting and concerned neighbors.

53. A. Robert Lee recognizes some of Daisy’s entrapment when he draws a parallel between Tom’s wealth and Gatsby’s: "If Gatsby’s house represents new money, Tom’s means old money, parvenu wealth as against socially laundered wealth . . . Gatsby and Tom as custodians and Daisy caught like jewelled royalty in between" (49).

54. Without knowing what transpired in the kitchen, Susan Resneck Parr asserts that Daisy doesn’t tell "either the police or Tom that she was driving the car, an act of omission that eventually leads to Gatsby’s death" (68). Jeffrey Meyers in his biography states, "Fitzgerald is deliberately unclear about whether Daisy lied to Tom and told him Gatsby was driving or whether Tom knew Daisy was driving and tried to protect her by blaming Gatsby. In any case, Gatsby saves Daisy from scandal, is rejected by her and is killed for her crime" (128). While Meyers and I agree about the text’s ambiguity with respect to what Tom knows and what Daisy tells, he is eager to pile the blame on her alone despite Gatsby’s and Tom’s complicity. After all, they hide what they know about the circumstances of Myrtle’s death and Tom’s guilt in forwarding Gatsby’s murder. Like many of the critics, Meyers tends to make Daisy "the guilty one."

Richard Lehan, on the other hand, steps more gently into the territory of silence: "The word ‘conspiring’ suggests that Daisy does confide in Tom—and so the meaning of The Great Gatsby in some ways turns on one word. The narrative implications here are gigantic: if Tom knows that Daisy was driving Gatsby’s car when he sends Wilson to Gatsby’s house, then Tom kills Gatsby as
clearly as if he pulled the trigger himself. If he does not know, then Daisy is equally complicit in Gatsby's death. Nick's anger at Tom at the end of the novel suggests that he believes Daisy told Tom the whole story and that both Tom and Daisy must share responsibility for Gatsby's death" (78).

55. George Garrett makes the interesting point that "popular fiction in which crimes could be allowed to go without punishment (if only by fate and bad luck) was very rare. After all, in American films and television, as late as the 1960s there was a serious problem of getting Code approval for a story in which vice was not punished in some way. It was startling in 1925 to let the Buchanans off the hook with a brief judgmental aside by the narrator" (104).

As an intriguing sidelight both to the structure of the Oedipal narrative and the role of the femme fatale, Zelda Fitzgerald wrote Scott sometime around April 1919 that women "love to fancy themselves suffering--they're nearly all moral and mental hypo-crondiacs [sic]--If they'd just awake to the fact that their excuse and explanation is the necessity for a disturbing element among men--they'd be much happier," a sentiment that reappears almost verbatim in This Side of Paradise (Milford 44).

56. In her role as malignancy excised from the text, as well as in her silencing, Daisy is "uncommunicable forever" (118), a phrase Nick uses when he can't quite capture a memory aroused by Gatsby's account of falling in love with Daisy.

57. The disembodied smile in the sky also necessarily recalls Man Ray's famous painting, A l'heure de d'observatoire--Les Amoureux (1932-34), popularly known as The Lips, which Ray describes as follows: "The red lips floated in a bluish gray sky over a twilit landscape with an observatory and its two domes like breasts dimly indicated on the horizon--an impression of my daily walks through the Luxembourg Gardens. The lips because of their scale [39 3/8 x 98 1/2 in.], no doubt, suggested two closely joined bodies. Quite Freudian. I wrote the legend at the bottom of the canvas to anticipate subsequent interpretations: 'Observatory Time--The Lovers'" (quoted in Forasta 262-63). The occasion of the painting was Man Ray's break-up with his lover, model, and fellow artist Lee Miller, whose lips are the ones represented (Baldwin 174-75). This use of art in mourning recalls Breitwieser's argument that Nick Carraway uses his narrative not to mourn but to preserve the dead (17).
58. The phrase is borrowed from Fetterley's condemnation of Gatsby's double standard: "men are legitimate subjects for romantic investment and women are not . . . Daisy must fail Gatsby but Gatsby need not fail Nick. This is the double standard which produces the disparate judgments in the book; which makes Daisy's narcissism a reason for damning her . . . yet makes Gatsby's utter solipsism the occasion for a muted romantic overture. . . . Gatsby's investment in Daisy is seen as a tragic error, the fault, however, not of himself but of that bitch America" (95).

59. Among the critics who mention Daisy's motherhood or discuss Gatsby in terms of infantile pleasures are Edward Wasiolek in "The Sexual Drama of Nick and Gatsby" and Murray Levith in "Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby."

60. There is a brief mention of Daisy's mother finding Daisy "packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say goodbye to a soldier who was going overseas" (80), a situation reminiscent of Jordan's preparing the recalcitrant bride for the wedding ceremony, an action in which the mother's maid assists. The text continues, "She was effectually prevented," the passive voice stepping in to veil the mother's further actions in stopping the trip to New York. Then we never see Mrs. Fay again--like mother, like daughter.

61. "The jubilation, the enthusiasm, is tied to the temporal dialectic by which she appears already to be what she will only later become. . . . After [the mirror stage], the subject's relation to himself is always mediated through a totalizing image that has come from outside" (Gallop, Reading Lacan 78-79). (Gallop deliberately alternates between "she" and "he" as the generic pronoun in the interest of resexualizing he [21].)

62. For the rest of the world, Gatsby seems not to manifest as spectacle, given that many of the party goers cannot pick him out from the crowd and he is never described by the minor characters as "the man in the pink suit." He hides behind the spectacle of the party itself and the mansion. But once one is introduced to him (or re-introduced in Daisy's case), he becomes the center of spec(tacular) attention, a pattern we see at work in Nick and to a lesser extent Tom.

63. In an interesting parallel to Gatsby's verticality, Tania Modleski points to Lisa's position with respect to Jeffries in Rear Window: "the woman is continually shown to be physically superior to the hero, not only in her physical movements but also in her dominance within the frame: she towers over Jeff in nearly every shot in which they both appear" (77).
64. In analyzing Nick's list of party goers, Luther S. Luedtke notes that it is filled with names of people he presumes to be Irish, Italians, and Jews. "The party is America," he asserts, giving Fitzgerald credit for sprinkling throughout the novel "harbingers of a changing America" (197, 196). My emphasis is somewhat different, however, for as we know from the Buchanans' reaction to the guest list, the party consists largely of those excluded from East Egg society. That exclusion is also America. Furthermore, the guest list, jotted on the margin of a railway timetable, represents the names Nick remembers from the party, and given Nick's anxieties about African Americans and Jews, we are justified in wondering to what extent his memory is jogged by fears about the changing America. Finally, based again on Nick's reports, there seem to be no people of color at Gatsby's gatherings, so what the parties appear to reflect are the waves of inclusion that sweep across American society, designating new outsiders with every group that is washed into acceptance.

65. It is pertinent that Gatsby's narrative includes through a series of light touches almost all the major anxieties about American middle-class family life in the early part of the 20th century: the problem of men seeking sexual gratification outside marriage; the new freedom of women, particularly sexual freedom (made possible through contraception); the increased freedom of young unmarried women; the declining birth rate among Anglo-Saxons, leading to fears that they would be outnumbered in the U.S., with an attendant loss of privileges and the domination of cultural life; and loss of male power within marriage. In the 1920s, these anxieties were resolved, at least temporarily, "by a quiet acceptance of contraception on the part of the middle class, a lessening emphasis on motherhood, and a valorization of heterosexual eroticism, especially women's, as a central ingredient in marriage" (Epstein 118). While Daisy's married eroticism is left somewhat of an open question, at the end of the novel Myrtle Wilson is out of the picture, Daisy and Tom are touching, which in itself is rare, and Tom has evoked the romantic and erotic image of his carrying Daisy on their honeymoon, a memory of intimacy Daisy is unable to deny. But just as we are unwilling to believe that Tom and Daisy's rapprochement is a permanent solution to their marital problems, so Epstein sees "the 1920s redefinition of marriage or family as a sort of New Deal of family politics: it allowed for a temporary resolution of a series of family issues without requiring any basic change in the structure of family life" (126). Further, as Epstein points out, once the definition of womanhood in the early twentieth century moved away from motherhood and "once sexual attractiveness
and the ability to maintain an intimate relationship with one’s husband were added to the list, both men and the media gained a much more direct influence over the definition of femininity" (127). We detect a similar movement at the end of The Great Gatsby (minus the media) when Tom is talking at Daisy and she nods in assent, closed up once again in the domestic space bought with Tom’s wealth.

66. Breitwieser points to the men in the valley of ashes who stir up an impenetrable cloud through “an anomalous, repellent, almost insectivorid vitality,” suggesting “a gaze that does not usurp the center but rather generates a zone of derangement or defamiliarization” (23).

67. Ellison states in parentheses, "This, by the way, is not intended as a criticism of Fitzgerald, only to suggest some of the problems and possibilities of artistic communication in the U.S.A." (15). Yet this parenthetical remark can’t fully remove the sting of Ellison’s observation. As he states elsewhere in the essay, he doesn’t demand "that his own shadowy image be dragged into each and every artistic effort" (13), so when a point of identification and complexity is introduced, it is all the more disappointing that it disappears without development. Still, this small rupture in the narrative--an emergence and disappearance--points to a pattern of fault lines that make up the text, faults that Nick both runs from and tries to cover over with the white snows of a Midwest where the immigrants are Swedes and the privileged white young feel "unutterably aware of our identity with this country" (184).
Purity of heart is to will one thing.

Søren Kierkegaard

[T]he problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.

W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk

"I have been called Egyptian, Italian, Jewish, French, Iranian, Armenian, Syrian, Spanish, Portuguese and Greek. I have also been called black and Peola and nigger and high yellow and bright. I am an American anomaly. I am an American ideal. I am the American nightmare. I am the Martin Luther King dream. I am the new America" (15). Without the last five short, politically conscious sentences, this quotation might have issued from the mouth of Irene Redfield, the narrating consciousness in Nella Larsen’s novel Passing (1929). Of course, Peola positions the quotation after 1929, for the name and its use as a racial epithet entered the American vocabulary through Fannie Hurst’s 1933 novel Imitation of Life and the 1934 film adaptation, directed by John M. Stahl, starring Claudette Colbert as Beatrice Pullman, Louise Beavers as Delilah, Beatrice’s business partner and "girl" (to use
the language of the movie), and Fredi Washington as Delilah’s daughter, the fair-skinned Peola.¹ In fact, the quotation was taken from The Sweeter the Juice, the 1994 memoir by Shirlee Taylor Haizlip, named after Shirley Temple by her mother, "who found no dissonance in giving to her infant Negro daughter the name of an apple-cheeked Hollywood princess" (19). Haizlip changed the spelling of her name in high school to differentiate herself from all the other girls of her generation named for the ringleted white child star. Many years later, Haizlip hired a private detective to track down her mother’s sister and reunited the siblings after a seventy-six-year separation, one sister having lived her life as black, one as white—the kind of family schism threatened in both film versions of Imitation of Life but resolved through the remorseful, teary return of Peola in the 1934 version and of Sarah Jane, played by Susan Kohner, in Douglas Sirk’s 1959 remake. As Brian Redfield, Irene’s husband in Passing, says, "They always come back,"² and in fiction, whether filmic or literary, his observation seems true, although the facts of Haizlip’s fragmented family undermine Brian’s certainty.

The border between white and black and the travel across it are among this chapter’s preoccupations, but that large issue is set within the larger one of similarity and difference, which encompasses not just race but also gender and same-sex desire. Above all, I am
interested in exploring the anxiety of failure inherent in the gaze, the desire for and the frustration of irrefutable knowledge through visibility, whether the knowledge sought relates to race or sexual orientation. Perhaps seeing is believing, but believing is a far cry from knowing, as epistemologists will willingly testify. The battle for the gaze, then, becomes all the more important even as its futility is revealed: No matter how hard the gazer looks, his or her knowledge will always be partial. Emptied of certainty, the gaze provides some cold comfort in its power to objectify, the much diminished pleasure of an unstable hierarchy of gazes providing some compensation until the moment when someone looks back. As Homi Bhabha points out, fixity contains its own opposite: chaos, disruption, and repetition ("Other" 66).

The fictional Irene of Passing uses language very similar to Haizlip's to describe the troubled border between black and white, troubled in the sense of distressed or perturbed certainly, but also agitated as water is troubled by wind: roughened on the surface, stirred up, no longer presenting a smooth interface where two clearly opposed elements meet without blending, except insofar as one mirrors the other. Here Irene offers her own reflections on color and the naiveté of white people when confronted with the finer points of race:
Absurd! Impossible! White people were so stupid about such things for all that they usually asserted that they were able to tell; and by the most ridiculous means, finger-nails, palms of hands, shapes of ears, teeth, and other equally silly rot. They always took her for an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a gipsy. Never, when she was alone, had they even remotely seemed to suspect that she was a Negro. No, the woman sitting there staring at her couldn't possibly know. (150)

"When she was alone" is a significant phrase, for in its evocation of a group identity that meshes--sometimes awkwardly--with an individual one, the phrase speaks of similarity and difference, community and ostracism, solidarity and privilege--some of the many pairings that *Passing* and the films about race explore. If Irene were to accept one of the many possible identities that erases her African-American heritage--that is, if she were to pass--she would have to sacrifice husband, children, and other relatives, friends and neighbors, even enemies. In sum, she would forfeit and abandon her community and her context, which is precisely what Clare Kendry has done, and this long separation from her community explains why Clare is staring at Irene in the tea room in the opening scenes of the novel, for she and Irene are childhood friends, separated for the past twelve years. Although Clare has built another context for herself, seemingly from the ground up, a white identity that allows her to sit at ease taking tea in the Drayton Hotel while eyeing Irene, it has no anchor, no foundation, and no permanent ease; she is a woman without history and with
few personal attachments, always in danger of being "discovered," as if she herself is the "dark continent." Ironically, Freud borrowed this phrase from a colonialist text to describe not Africa, not race, but female sexuality (Doane, *Femmes* 209), another preoccupation of the novel, and one to which I will return, for it is also a major preoccupation of the scholars who have analyzed the text before me. When Clare tries to add on to her current life the already fully formed structure of Irene's social circle, the resulting construction is top heavy, badly designed, ungainly--like an architectural folly. It is no wonder, then, that the ill-balanced structure tumbles down like the House of Usher, carrying Clare with it. The folly is an apt metaphor, for Clare deliberately builds so the various wings and late additions do not communicate with each other and so she alone (at least until the dénouement) can travel the twisted corridors from the older edifice into the new construction: her life in Harlem, which in a convoluted way is connected to the very earliest structure in her history, namely her childhood in Irene's African-American neighborhood. Further, the folly traditionally has an economic dimension: the structure remains unfinished because the profligate owner has overspent. It is ironic, then, that Clare quotes her dead black father, an unreliable provider at best, who used to say, "Everything must be paid for" (169). In fact, one of Irene's objections to Clare is her
seemingly spendthrift attitude toward the metaphoric
economics of passing: "If, at the time of choosing, Clare
hadn't precisely reckoned the cost, she had nevertheless,
no right to expect others to help make up the reckoning.
The trouble with Clare was, not only that she wanted to
have her cake and eat it too, but that she wanted to
nibble at the cakes of other folk as well" (181-82).
While Irene can articulate this problem with Clare, what
she is hard pressed to admit until the climax of the novel
is her desire for a gaze that will expose Clare, a desire
inseparable from her own fascination with the color line
and with Clare as a manifestation of both sameness and
difference.

When Irene claims that the woman staring at her
"couldn't possibly know" who and what Irene is, she has
two reasons. First, she imagines the gazer is white, and
in her essentializing view—one not peculiar to Irene
alone—the dominant white culture simply doesn't have the
inexpressible something that allows African-Americans as a
subculture, however complex, diverse, and multifaceted, to
recognize each other.5 "I'm afraid I can't explain,"
Irene tells Hugh Wentworth, a privileged white regular on
the Harlem social scene. "There are ways. But they're
not definite or tangible" (206). Second, the gazer in the
Drayton "couldn't possibly know" because Irene is positing
a type of knowledge for which the gaze may be necessary

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but certainly isn’t sufficient. In explaining the inexpressible to Hugh Wentworth, Irene uses this example:

Well, take my own experience with Dorothy Thompkins. I’d met her four or five times, in groups and crowds of people, before I knew she wasn’t a Negro. One day I went to an awful tea, terribly dicty. Dorothy was there. We got talking. In less than five minutes, I knew she was "fay." Not from anything she did or said or anything in her appearance. Just—just something. A thing that couldn’t be registered.

(206)

In Irene’s view, the African-American community possesses a knowledge beyond the gaze, a privileged epistemology unavailable to the dominant race.

Yet when Hugh generalizes that people pass all the time, Irene is swift to point out, "Not on our side, Hugh. It’s easy for a Negro to ‘pass’ for white. But I don’t think it would be so simple for a white person to ‘pass’ for coloured." When Hugh admits that he never thought about the one-sidedness of passing, Irene replies, "No, you wouldn’t. Why should you?" (206). Hugh needn’t think about passing because he is firmly placed on the side of the border where the preponderance of privilege lies. If Clare is characterized by a "having" nature, as Irene believes (and the emphasis is on the function of the gerund, the ing denoting a process, an action, a moving toward), then Hugh is a "have": for him, the money, the material goods, and the status are already in the bag. He has arrived while Clare is still a "becoming"—and always will be, in the sense that she is a self-construction always underway.6 She must constantly dodge the
investigative gaze of people like Hugh, who remarks at the Negro Welfare League dance (which might just as well be Cinderella's ball with Clare as the rags-to-riches spectacle), "But what I'm trying to find out is the name, status, and race of the blonde beauty out of the fairy-tale" (204-05). Clare has the advantage of being "in the know" at the expense of Hugh and others, but she must always keep one step ahead of those who want the knowledge she has; she must know what they know one moment before they know it, a split-second deception she manages until the last scene of the novel. Being "in the know," which Brian Redfield sees as an advantage--convenient sometimes and even humorous (185)--is small comfort when the ignorant party is in possession of nearly all the other advantages.

Given its deceptively limpid surface, Passing is a challenging text to analyze. While critics have opened the novel to a number of surprising interpretations, each believable and productive, sometimes the critical enterprise has felt like a colonial one, with an emphasis on stake and turf and territoriality. The text seems to reproduce in the critics the effect we see in many of the characters: a desire for fixity, stability, and certainty at almost any cost. The novel has been claimed for race, and certainly such a move is appropriate, but if that claim is overemphasized, we miss the subtle play of female sexuality, especially the exchange of gazes between Irene
and Clare. To claim the novel primarily for sexuality runs the risk of placing too little emphasis on the surface of the text and its complex and important treatment of racial difference. In the following analysis, therefore, I do not want to claim the novel purely for one category or another. As Cherrie Moraga asserts, "The danger lies in ranking the oppressions" (29). Instead, this reading attempts to pursue a strategy of both and and while at the same time adding a new dimension, one negotiated through the gaze: a play of similarity and difference that binds the discourse of race to that of sexual desire and, additionally, female friendship. Of course, the play is serious, for it ends in Clare's violent death under ambiguous circumstances.

There is much that is ambiguous in Passing. In fact, one should expect shifting meanings in a novel so titled, based as it is on slippages in knowledge, physical movement across invisible borders, and the inefficacy or indeterminacy of the gaze in deciding questions of race and sexual orientation. Speaking through the indeterminacy, though, is a brand of multivocality, seen most clearly in Clare, for as much as she is "neither white nor black," to borrow a portion of the Langston Hughes epigraph from Larsen's other novel, Quicksand (xlii), she is both and and. She is the one who lives part time in both cultures (while Irene is more of a tourist of whiteness), the one who repeatedly makes the
dangerous border crossing and who reaps the benefits by partaking of the privileges—both sides of the border offer, sometimes sharing what she learns, sometimes keeping it to herself with a slyness Irene sees as catlike. Clare is hard to interpret, not given to cryptic utterances so much as peculiar facial expressions that Irene, as the narrating consciousness, is unable to read; Clare’s multivocality is in body rather than voice. She is another femme fatale who creates furor and disruption around her as she emerges from nowhere, seemingly fully formed, and disappears almost as quickly, out the sixth floor window. Like Gatsby and Mata Hari, she lingers in the atmosphere of the narrative even after her death, exerting a post-mortem force both centripetal, in that Clare remains as one center of story even in her absence, and centrifugal, in that Clare tugs at the edge of Irene’s consciousness, “something that left its trace on all the future years of her existence” (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 271-72, Larsen 208).

What separates Clare from other femmes fatales and links her loosely to Gatsby is that her "out of nowhere" is actually "somewhere," in fact, two "somewheres." We know with some precision (certainly in more detail than in The Great Gatsby) where Clare Kendry comes from, where she goes, and to some extent why. For the white community, "nowhere" is the middle-class African-American neighborhood in Chicago from which both Irene and Clare
come. For the African-American community, "nowhere" is Clare’s marriage with John Bellew, the white international banking agent who removes her not only from Chicago and New York but often from the United States so that her two "nowheres" are unlikely to intersect in a single disastrous somewhere. What differentiates Clare from the traditional femme fatale, though, is the text’s willingness— even its desire— to show us the woman’s history: to take us across the border, to see for ourselves the cost of the racial divide, not just for Clare, but for a culture heavily invested in the binarisms of race. If necessity is the mother of invention, then the dominant culture is complicit in inventing passing, changing it from a possible option to a desirable one, and decreeing that the punishment for discovery will be ostracism, shame, and, in Clare’s case, death. Our presence as readers on both sides of the border is scarcely neutral, however, for it is through the unreliable narrating consciousness of Irene Redfield— through her gaze— that the border crossing and Clare’s two lives are filtered.

Other chapters in this study have preserved a divide between film and literary texts while drawing out a number of similarities. In this chapter, though, partly in keeping with the metaphor of crossing borders, both racial and sexual, partly because enough theoretical commonalities between film and literary texts have been
established to justify and even invite the practice, and partly because a number of films raise issues equally critical to a full consideration of *Passing*, I deliberately weave the analysis of the film texts into the reading of the novel: novel as warp, film as weft, the fibers at right angles in recognition of their theoretical and material differences, but bound together in one piece of cloth in recognition of their similarities.

**Looking White: Power and Seduction in the Female Gaze**

In the tea room at the Drayton, before Irene recognizes Clare, the two women engage in a highly complex exchange of glances, one which sets the stage for many of their later interactions in the novel. Importantly, it establishes from the outset the centrality of the gaze in Irene’s life, whether it be an investigative, assessing, or challenging look. The passage also bears detailed analysis because it encapsulates and introduces the intersections of race and sexuality, of desire and friendship, of similarity and difference—and the futility of trying to establish a firm border between each half of each binarism. The **and** that connects these pairs is not just some loose linkage that temporarily draws these terms into conjunction; instead, it is a sign that the terms are interwoven, closely tied like warp and weft. To better understand race in its pairing with sexuality, however, we must first revisit some of the history of gazes between blacks and whites. As bell hooks explains,
An effective strategy of white supremacist terror and dehumanization during slavery centered around white control of the black gaze. Black slaves, and later manumitted servants, could be brutally punished for looking, for appearing to observe the whites they were serving, as only a subject can observe or see. To be fully an object then was to lack the capacity to see or recognize reality... Reduced to the machinery of bodily physical labor, black people learned to appear before whites as though they were zombies, cultivating the habit of casting the gaze downward so as not appear uppity. To look directly was an assertion of subjectivity, equality. Safety resided in the pretense of invisibility. ("Whiteness" 35-36)

It is valuable, too, to remember that the Biblical justification for slavery takes as its text an incident of an objectifying gaze and an Oedipal transgression. Ham sees his father, Noah, drunk and naked in his tent, and when Noah awakens, he curses Ham by cursing Ham's son: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Gen. 9.20-27). Historically and mythologically, the gaze has been troubled territory for African Americans.

Since Irene sees Clare initially as an unknown white woman--an early treachery of the gaze--inherent in the first exchange of looks between the two women, at least from Irene's point of view, is a differential of race. At play for both women, though not highlighted in this scene, is the differential of gender: they are both potentially objects of the male gaze, although even this power relationship is partially negotiated through race and class, as the following encounter between Irene and a cabby demonstrates. Before Irene enters the Drayton
Hotel, when she is nearly ready to faint under the influence of "a brutal staring sun," the cabby who rescues her and drives her to the tea room looks at her only to the extent necessary to ascertain how he can serve what he assumes to be a white woman; this time the failure of the gaze works to Irene’s advantage in saving her from a racist reaction. In turn, she assumes the role of the white upper-class lady politely taking service as her due: "'The Drayton, ma’am?’ he suggested. ‘They do say as how it’s always a breeze up there.’ ‘Thank you. I think the Drayton’ll do nicely,’ she told him" (146).8 Both play their parts according to their perception of the structure of the situation, combined with the "pseudo-knowledge" provided by the gaze: Irene appears white, so she plays the white role, and her manner and attire place her in a class above the cabby. When Irene arrives on the roof of the Drayton, the "upper" and "lower" of class become literal as well as figurative: "It was, she thought, like being wafted upward on a magic carpet to another world, pleasant, quiet, and strangely remote from the sizzling one that she had left below" (147). The street left Irene "feeling disagreeably damp and sticky and soiled from contact with so many sweating bodies" (147), an image that recalls the segregations by class in Days of Heaven: the workers jammed onto box cars as they flee Chicago hoping to make a living, and the crowded, primitive camp of the harvest laborers in comparison to the emptiness around the
farmer's Victorian mansion, an open space the foreman enforces through his injunction that the workers are not to go "up there." It is the privilege of the middle and upper classes in Chicago to rise and escape the sweating street, but—as Irene well knows—it is the exclusive privilege of whites to be served at the Drayton. It is with significant dis-ease, therefore, that Irene finds herself the object of another woman's gaze. Irene at first takes pleasure in the free play of her gaze as she casts looks around the tea room, glancing out "at the specks of cars and people creeping about in the streets, and thinking how silly they looked" (148). Her gaze is positioned for the moment as white and economically privileged, even if she does not "look white"—that is, Irene's "warm olive" skin allows her to pass and assume temporarily the free range of white female looking (145), yet her attitude toward what she sees is not necessarily formed by the privileges and assumptions of whiteness, although she obviously relishes the privileges she has been able to gather, even the temporary ones. As part of her momentary privilege, she is even able, for a moment, to objectify the couple arriving at the table nearby, a red-faced white man and "a sweetly scented woman in a fluttering dress of green chiffon whose mingled pattern of narcissuses, jonquils, and hyacinths was a reminder of pleasantly chill spring days" (148). For a moment, Irene continues to objectify the woman at the next table, "An
attractive-looking woman . . . with those dark, almost black, eyes and that wide mouth like a scarlet flower against the ivory of her skin" (148). In the context of race and the gaze, Irene's look at this woman is a hybrid of private and public, black and white. The private inheres in Irene's identity as an African-American woman, which allows her to look at and objectify the white woman so long as Irene is unobserved. The public aspect inheres in Irene's passing, for she is the white woman's equal insofar as her presence in the tea room defines her as white and authorizes her gaze as the equal of any other female patron's. There is nothing else Irene can be, although those who gaze at her may further define her as Italian or Spanish or any one of the other European subsets of whiteness that Irene and Shirlee Taylor Haizlip have listed. Irene counts on and invests in the insufficiency of the gaze. When Irene realizes she has been staring at the other woman, she quickly looks away, but to what extent this reaction is motivated by the racial rules of looking and to what extent the class-conscious dictates of good manners we are not able to measure.

But then, "by some sixth sense," Irene perceives herself to be the object of someone's gaze. She discovers that the woman she was eyeing is now eyeing her, although this woman does not share Irene's scruples about staring:
Very slowly she looked around, and into the dark eyes of the woman in the green frock at the next table. But she evidently failed to realize that such intense interest as she was showing might be embarrassing, and continued to stare. Her demeanour was that of one who with utmost singleness of mind and purpose was determined to impress firmly and accurately each detail of Irene’s features upon her memory for all time, nor showed the slightest trace of disconcertment at having been detected in her steady scrutiny. (149)

To continue to look after one’s gaze is detected is to present a challenge. As Helena Michie points out, "Clare’s power throughout the novel will lie in her ability to cut through convention, her ability not to turn other people’s opinions, assumptions, glances, back upon herself" (149). As the battle of gazes is joined, Irene quickly loses ground because she lacks Clare’s hard-core self-possession: "Feeling her colour heighten under the continued inspection, she slid her eyes down," wondering if something was wrong with her attire or her makeup. Braced in her knowledge that there is nothing amiss with her appearance, Irene looks again at the gazing woman, "and for a moment her brown eyes politely returned the stare of the other’s black ones, which never for an instant fell or wavered" (149). Here, the steadiness of Clare’s gaze is a sign—and a foreshadowing—of her unbending will and what Irene thinks of as her "having" nature. She will know who Irene is before she looks away.

The power of the gaze to draw two people into a relationship, even if an undesired one, is undeniable: Irene attempts to treat her objectification with
indifference but is unable to do so. She begins to suspect that this seeming stranger has detected her passing, which fills her with anger, scorn, and fear: "It wasn’t that she was ashamed of being a Negro, or even of having it declared. It was the idea of being ejected from any place, even in the polite and tactful way in which the Drayton would probably do it, that disturbed her" (150). As her attempts at indifference fail and her anger mounts, Irene is "seized by a desire to outstare the rude observer. Suppose the woman did know or suspect her race. She couldn’t prove it" (150), for the gaze at its best offers knowledge but not proof. This desire to retake lost ground, to have a showdown of gazes is pre-empted, however, when the unknown woman approaches Irene’s table and reveals she is Clare Kendry.

Why is this charged exchange of glances between the two women significant? As Helena Michie observes, it "complicates feminist notions of the heterosexual gaze, as the two women negotiate their differences and their power through looking and turning away" (148), through objectifying and consenting to objectification, much like a showdown of gazes between gunslingers in a Western. It is an excellent example of what Michie calls sororophobia, played out entirely through the gaze: "the negotiation of sameness and difference, identity and separation, between women of the same generation, . . . meant to encompass both the desire for and the recoil from identification
with other women" (9). Further, the sororophobic exchange between Irene and Clare reveals some important facets of the gaze as gender, class, and race intersect. Initially, when Irene scrutinizes Clare, then Clare turns the tables and objectifies Irene, their gazes construct them as equals: two well-to-do women operating within the same rules of decorum, which dictate that ladies may take a good long look, but they mustn’t stare and certainly not to the point where the object of the gaze becomes uneasy. When Clare fails to drop her gaze, Irene automatically interprets her look as a challenge, a desire on Clare’s part to establish a hierarchical relation--to be one up on Irene. The only basis for such a relationship with this total stranger that Irene can imagine is race since both parties are well-to-do women and, therefore, seemingly equally matched in gender and class with no apparent need for competition. It is no wonder, then, that Irene feels "her colour heighten under the continued inspection"--literally, an experience of shame or embarrassment at being objectified, signaled by the downward movement of her eyes, but figuratively an intensification of "color," the very factor which places Irene on the opposite side of the border from the gazer--or so she imagines. Irene’s desire to stare down the upstart Clare is a wish to establish racial equality with this white woman, even to declare superiority through a battle of the gazes, in which one party will be objectified and only one subject
will remain. Such a war of gazes promises the possibility of righting a social inequity, not through social or political action but through something more localized, a very personal—if subtle—competition. But Irene has been hoist with her own petard, for Clare is passing just as she is. Irene has counted on the inefficacy of the gaze to protect her, and now the inability of her own gaze to reveal the hidden facts of Clare’s race has caused her a panicky discomfort.

Yet this exchange of glances has another possible meaning not rooted in race, one which Irene fails to register consciously, although she does note something unusual about Clare: "What strange languorous eyes she had!" (150). Immediately after Irene makes this observation, she detects in herself "a small inner disturbance," a dis-ease that leads to her suspicion that the woman has caught Irene passing. Yet the languor in Clare’s eyes might be desire, a possibility Irene forecloses when she quickly concludes that race motivates the other woman’s gaze, even though a languid glance seems incongruous as a marker of racial suspicion or hostility. This possible hint of same-sex desire triggers in Irene an assertion of difference, but not only difference. A battle of gazes seeks to establish a hierarchy, a clear-cut structure of dominance and subordination. Irene wants to come out on top, a phrase that speaks of power and triumph certainly, yet in this situation, in its imagery
of mastery combined with the possible attempt to shut out homoerotic desire, the expression undoes itself by producing a snicker of sexual innuendo.

The play of gazes in which Irene and Clare engage shares a number of similarities with the technique of "cruising," a cultural practice developed first within the gay male subculture but to some extent adopted within the lesbian one as well. R. Bruce Brasell in his essay on Andy Warhol's film My Hustler borrows the following description from a gay men's sex manual:

There's an art to cruising and it has a lot to do with timing and with the eyes. Take eyes first. You're walking down the street and you pass a man going in the opposite direction. Your eyes lock but you both keep on moving. After a few paces you glance back and see that the man has stopped and is facing a store window but looking in your direction. If he's not exactly the partner you're searching for you'll probably register the compliment his stare is paying you but leave it at that.

But if he does catch your fancy you may go through the little charade of examining the shop window nearest you. After a bit, the frequency and intensity of exchanged glances will increase and one of you will stroll over to the other. There are a few safe and stock opening lines banal to the point of absurdity .... After these preliminaries you may extend your hand, introduce yourself, ask him his name and suggest you have a drink together. (60)

At first glance, the connection between cruising and the exchange of looks in the tea room may not be apparent because of Irene's hostility, yet the structures are similar. Irene takes a prolonged look at Clare and admires the details of her features and attire. Clare takes a long look at Irene, their eyes lock, and Clare is not abashed that she has been caught staring; she looks
and continues looking. Although Irene looks down momentarily, she gathers her nerve and returns Clare’s gaze. While Irene takes Clare’s continued look as a challenge, the languor of the gaze coupled with its intensity tips the balance toward a look of interest, of assessment not in the register of race but of desire. Ultimately, Clare makes the approach, uttering the banal opening, “Pardon me . . . but I think I know you”—a variation on the hackneyed pick-up line, “Haven’t we met somewhere before?” (150). In Clare’s case, of course, the remark is a symptom of honest perplexity even as it functions to open a relationship with the object of her gaze, but genuine confusion does not preclude erotic desire. The two women then share a drink—in this case, tea—and cigarettes, that frequent and phallic accessory to sex, but at the same time an innocent accompaniment to social intercourse. The meeting of two old acquaintances may be nothing more—or it may be passing for a romantic overture.¹⁰

I will not argue at this early stage in the analysis or in the novel that Clare’s look is one of desire, for there is simply not enough evidence yet. Further, as I will consider in more detail below, does one woman desire the other woman or desire what the other woman has?—a troubling of the border between having and being also negotiated through the gaze. At this juncture, I simply wish to indicate that Clare’s behavior is consistent with
that of a desiring subject and less consistent with a hostile one. Further, it is helpful to know that the term **passing** is used freely in contemporary gay and queer theory to describe the experience of masking one's sexual identification while moving through the straight world. Although homosexual connotations did not cluster around this term at the time the novel was published, its usage today points to the fact that with race and sexual orientation, the investigative gaze, no matter its mission to "lay bare" the truth of origin or identity, falls short of its goal. Moreover, an important aspect of cruising is that nothing much seems to be happening--that is, to the straight eye. If the straight observer doesn't recognize homoerotic desire as desire, then he or she misses the narrative that organizes the apparently random remarks and aimless glances of which cruising is composed. Hence, it is in keeping with the clandestine nature of cruising that the exchange of gazes between Irene and Clare in the tea room can be read with complete coherence as one old friend recognizing another in a racist social circumstance and not betraying her. Yet the question of identity is as central to the practice of cruising as it is to Clare's recognition of Irene as a fellow woman of color: if homoerotic acts are illegal at worst and homoerotic desire is stigmatized at best, how are desiring subjects to find each other discreetly?
Cruising, as an elaborate negotiation of gazes that looks to the outsider like "nothing much," provides one answer.

Brasell makes a distinction between glance and gaze, stating, "'The gaze' implies a continuous, uninterrupted, unified hold/whole. 'The glance' does not. Moreover, a glance implies that the screen may not always be a safe place for the spectator, that the spectator may be forced emotionally to look away, an experience common to gay men" (63). While I understand Brassel's desire to draw a distinction between the two terms, I am not willing, particularly in light of the many types of gaze defined in this study, to grant that the glance is different in kind from the gaze, although perhaps it is different in degree or duration. When Clare stares fixedly at Irene in the tea room, for example, and Irene interprets her look as a challenge, I would argue that Clare's look is beyond doubt a gaze, and Irene's move to stare Clare down is an answering, competitive gaze. Further, when Irene first takes in Clare's face and attire, her gaze is one of objectification and, as Michie points out, identification when she approves of Clare's choice of clothes: "just right for the weather, thin and cool without being mussy, as summer things were so apt to be" (148). Michie notes "a sense of a common feminine problem, an inhabitation, however brief, of the body of the other woman" (148). That Irene is forced to look down by the power of Clare's gaze is not an indication that Irene's look was no gaze at
all, but rather that her gaze was not strong enough to triumph in a battle for subjectivity—or when faced with Clare’s desiring look, Irene was unable to tolerate its meaning and turned her eyes away. Brasell also associates the glance with the gay spectator’s need to turn away from the screen when his security feels compromised. As I have argued earlier, this experience is common to a number of groups, whether marginalized by race, gender, or sexual orientation. The breaking of the spectator’s identification with the gaze of the camera or a gaze within the diegesis is perhaps a signal not that the spectator is glancing rather than gazing, but instead an indication that the pleasures initially promised have failed to materialize and the spectator is seeking his or her desire elsewhere: still within the frame possibly or, as Brassel suggests, in the theater through the objectification or the answering looks of fellow spectators. In any case, this scene early in *Passing* is striking for its detailed and articulate representation of two women establishing identity and difference by gazing at each other and remarkable for the number of different kinds of gazes present in a chronologically short but phenomenologically prolonged encounter.

"I’m not safe": *The Tragic Mulatta Meets the Femme Fatale as Clare Meets Pinky*

When Clare issues the following warning to Irene, the context is her supposed difference: Clare’s excessiveness
and relentlessness, her dedication to personal goals over political ones, particularly racial solidarity or uplift, her inexorable search for happiness, and one more point, which should be obvious, but which slips away in our troubled identification with and separation from Irene's point of view and her conscious and unconscious desire to demonize Clare—the simple fact that Clare is saying to Irene, in contradiction to the centripetal pull of the pre-Oedipal mother, "I am not you. We are separate. To see us as one person is a mistake."

"Can't you realize that I'm not like you a bit? Why, to get the things I want badly enough, I'd do anything, hurt anybody, throw anything away. Really, 'Rene, I'm not safe." Her voice as well as the look on her face had a beseeching earnestness that made Irene vaguely uncomfortable. (210)

The double meaning of Clare's "I'm not safe" places her squarely at the intersection of the *femme fatale* and the tragic mulatta. As much as Clare threatens the security of Irene's marriage (both through the alleged adultery with Brian and Irene's attraction to Clare as femme as well as *femme fatale*) and the security of others in Clare's sphere of influence (including Clare's husband and daughter), ultimately Clare is the one who is most endangered. As the narrative works itself out, she is certainly dangerous to others but fatal only to herself. My intent here, though, is not to blame the victim, lying broken on the Harlem pavement six floors below the Freelands' window. The fatal quality in Clare is not her
"havingness," as Irene would have it, but her troubling of the color line that can be tolerated up to a point, then no farther.

Passing demystifies the murky aspects of the femme fatale, as I mentioned above, showing something of Clare's early and unhappy home life, so her origins are less mysterious, and revealing that despite hints of possible unsavory financial and sexual arrangements—perhaps Clare as a prostitute or mistress—she was married to John Bellew all along. Despite these demystifications, Clare remains the femme fatale in her desire to be and her success at being a feminine spectacle that attracts all eyes. As the object of the gaze, she is enticingly ambiguous: a fetish not of blackness, like Josephine Baker, or whiteness, like Susie in Touch of Evil or Lora Meredith, the glamorous star in Imitation of Life (1959). Despite her ability to pass and Irene's repeated references to her ivory or white skin, Clare is a fetish of the color line itself, as John Bellew reveals unconsciously when he calls his "white" wife "Nig."14 Clare is the center of the text in that she is stellar, a body with such gravity that all are drawn towards her, and here I hope that my previous metaphor of the mother as the center of the infant's solar system still reverberates, for Clare's ability to reactivate pre-Oedipal longings, like Daisy Buchanan's, echoes throughout the text, as do her murmurings, in this instance to Dave Freeland,
overheard by Irene and rewritten through her ellipses, as was Clare’s note: "... always admired you ... so much about you long ago ... everybody says so ... no one but you ..." (221).

Even as she is a center of the text, Clare is also the border, the one who pushes the limit of that which is safe, who is, in popular parlance, "out there," the beyond which where we dare not go, the border as the sill of the window over which Clare falls. She is "a disturbing force, a magnetic power placed at the periphery tending to distort the natural development" (Bhabha, "Mimicry" 89)—of what? Certainly she disturbs the smooth trajectory of Irene’s life and John Bellew’s; perhaps she distorts the "natural" parallel course of the two races, their existing segregation. To use the term mulatto or mulatta is to create a border even while paying lip service to a bridging of the contested area, for the word points to a racial mixture that is first and foremost not white. Quadroon, octoroon—the whole family of words points to a mathematical bisecting of the perceived differences between black and white, and the very existence of the words—the act of naming the generations of mixture—points to the anxiety that the racially mixed figure will, in contradiction to Zeno’s paradox of bisection, eventually gain and overtake the ever receding territory of whiteness. In Louisiana, for example, according to a 1970 statute finally repealed in 1983, 1/32 "Negro blood"
was established as the dividing line between white and black, although "Louisiana law traditionally held that any trace of Negro ancestry was the basis for legal blackness" (Domínguez 2). In Louisiana, then, race was an inductive problem: one could never be white enough!16

In Gloria Anzaldúa's words, "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants" (3). In her travel back and forth and her disregard for the danger entailed, Clare disturbs the border--stirs it--so that them and us are in danger of merging. If Clare marks the border, her constant repositionings--is she in Chicago or New York or Europe? is she at home with Bellew or up in Harlem? upstairs or down with the servants?--show us how mutable the border is. She gives new meaning (and a new pronoun) to the saying, "We have seen the enemy and she is us." For John Bellew, the experience is particularly distressing, for not only is the enemy the viper in the bosom of his family--his wife--but she is also the mother of the next generation. Clare--or rather, Clare's blackness--has infiltrated both the present and future of whiteness as Caddy Compson's transgressive femininity and sexuality,
also seen as a function of "bad blood," have flowed—in family ideology, at least—into her transgressive daughter, Quentin, and through these generations into white femininity itself. Through the corporealizing of disruption in the phrase "bad blood," these female troublers of the border, whether defined by the binarisms of race or gender or both, persist across generations, returning, like the repressed, to haunt the certainties of the dominant culture, as does Joe Christmas in Light in August and Charles Bon in Absalom, Absalom!

By definition, the tragic mulatta is a figure caught on the border, "whose beauty is at once her power and her downfall" (Michie 145), her tragedy the inability to find a home on either side of a racial binarism. The closer one is to the border, the sadder one is, or so the convention would have it. The tragic mulatta differs from the femme fatale—at least in many tales more conventional than Larsen’s—by being noble and long-suffering, and her plight is often used to illustrate the oppression of African Americans and the irrationality of prejudice or concepts of race in general (Wall 89). In the hands of Harriet Beecher Stowe and other abolitionists, mulattoes are the rebellious element in the African-American population, stirred up by the taint of restive Anglo-Saxon blood (Christian 21). Mulattas like Laurentine in Jessie Fauset’s The Chinaberry Tree and Helga Crane in Larsen’s Quicksand often have a quality of strangeness, as if the
two sides of their heritage are at war within them or, at the very least, set them apart from those around them. Clare has this quality too, and Irene comments often on her "queer" expressions and unreadable smiles.18

Seeing Clare as a species of tragic mulatta helps to explain why the figure in most instances ends badly or is ejected from the narrative, for the tragedy or disappearance provides the necessary containment of the mulatta's threat and to some extent the protection against passing. Interestingly, the mulatta is a threat to both the dominant culture and the marginalized one, for in the case of the former, she casts difference and purity into question, and in the latter case, she is, in Clare's words, a deserter, one who takes for herself through an accident of birth the rights and privileges not available to others who share the heritage of marginalization (169). Yet Irene captures the ambivalence of the marginalized group when she ponders aloud to Brian, "It's funny about 'passing.' We disapprove of it and at the same time condone it. It excites our contempt and yet we rather admire it. We shy away from it with an odd kind of revulsion, but we protect it" (185-86).19 As Brian in turn points out, sometimes it's pleasant to be "in the know" at the expense of those who exclude you, which in part would explain the protection of and admiration for passing. But the tragic message in the tale of the mulatta is "Stay on your own side of the border," although
the narrative itself usually demonstrates that the mulatta has no side that is her own, "being neither white nor black." The warning, consequently, is not for the mulatta herself so much as for those who might consider but have not yet undertaken an assault on the border, either through passing or miscegenation, the latter promising the reproduction of the mulatta—{
reproduction} taken in the genital and biological sense certainly, but also as the replaying of the old narrative with newly born players, the return of the repressed across generations.

In her role as a hybrid of the {
femme fatale} and tragic mulatta, Clare demonstrates that the containment desired by both the dominant culture and to a lesser extent the marginalized one is never complete; she haunts the narrative and Irene's life after death although certainly such a haunting pales in comparison to her vivid presence—and disruptive power—in life, much like Mata Hari's diminishment in memory. In a sense, those who survive the mulatta have their cake and eat it too (exactly the desire that Irene condemns in Clare), for they enjoy the {
frisson} of Clare's threat as well as the satisfaction of her death, yet the pleasure lives on in the memory of her trespass (and the memory of its containment): a {
mise-en-abyme} in which each repetition of threat and punishment as it moves away from the original becomes a little cloudier, a little more out of focus, a little less threatening, like a frightening fairy tale.
read each night until its repetition is a pleasure. As in Mardi Gras, some subversive meanings and desires are allowed to emerge but in a containable form; the dénouement--that which Linda Williams has urged us not to privilege too much ("'Something Else'" 152)--ties up many of the subversive meanings much as the stroke of midnight encloses the subversion of carnival and ushers it into the cathedral for the Ash Wednesday repentance.

The doing-and-undoing entailed in threat and containment comes into clearer focus through the examination of another tale of a tragic mulatta who passes and returns, namely the 1949 film *Pinky*. While *Pinky* fulfills more of the conventions of the tragic mulatta than Clare, Pinky's fate--at least on its face--is not a tragedy. *Pinky* (Jeanne Crain) has returned to her hometown and her grandmother's house after passing in the North during her education and training as a nurse. While overtly the narrative is critical of the white racists of the South--the two young white men who molest Pinky when they learn she is not white but "the whitest dinge I ever saw," the police whose polite treatment of her evaporates when they learn she is the granddaughter of Dicey (Ethel Waters), not a white woman who has accidently wandered into the African-American part of town--the film undercuts its own radical meanings in a number of ways. Many of the white characters who seem at first to be motivated by racism are revealed by the end of the film to have good
hearts under somewhat crusty exteriors—in sum, they are not racist but misunderstood, specifically by Pinky. Miss Em (Ethel Barrymore), for example, who ordered Pinky from her garden when Pinky was a girl, sets the course for the rest of the nurse’s life by willing her the antebellum house and the very garden from which Pinky was ejected. Pinky transforms the property into a nursing school for African-American young women who have no other access to training. But the debt that Miss Em is repaying has nothing to do with her own racism, her harshness to a child, or the decades of discrimination Dicey and Pinky have suffered. Instead, the bequest is Miss Em’s thanks for Pinky’s nursing during her final illness, and in gratitude Pinky names her institution “Miss Em’s Clinic and Nursery School.” While a large bequest is nothing to belittle, particularly when it passes money across the color line and causes a national furor, and Pinky and Em have formed a kind of odd friendship—never spoken but indicated through an exchange of knowing glances—Pinky’s inheritance is the final wedge between her and her white fiancé from the North, Dr. Thomas Adams. Miss Em’s generosity, then, names Pinky’s future, literally and figuratively, and even more importantly, it keeps Pinky in her place: geographically because she doesn’t follow her original plan to return to the North, and racially since she breaks off her plans for marriage across the color line. Consequently, when Pinky clings to the sign for the
school funded through the beneficence of the white woman, the dewy-eyed gaze in close-up that ends the film is directed not at the young white doctor but at something unspecified—heaven or the future—and Pinky is anchored next door to her grandmother, in a community where she can no longer pass since the local knowledge of her heritage unveils the secret illegible in her ambiguously colored skin. Family and community history tell what the gaze cannot. Actually, the whole nation now knows Pinky and her history as a result of the publicity generated by the court case through which Em’s relatives attempt to break Em’s will, so there is an underlying hint of an even larger containment: because of her notoriety, Pinky would not be able to pass for long anywhere in the United States.

In the final scenes, Pinky is surrounded by African-American children and female nursing students, all of whom are darker than she, so by virtue of her professional attainments added to the rules of color caste, Pinky is at the top of her small segregated hierarchy. Or nearly so, for the final scenes reintroduce the elderly white town doctor and the young African-American physician. The two men split between them the characteristics of Pinky’s former fiancé and offer an illusion of compensation for the loss of a forbidden love that Pinky herself has chosen to forfeit. The old white doctor is a figure of knowledge, experience, and white privilege but an
inappropriate object for romantic love, and the young African-American doctor, dark and handsome, is just above Pinky in professional status— the perfect structure for romance, according to patriarchal standards—and his color would anchor the young nurse even more firmly "with her own kind." But he is an inappropriate object too, for it was established early in the film that he is already married. Like the mule, the root for *mulatto*, there is no heterosexual pairing in sight for Pinky or clear opportunity to pass her "bad blood"—bad because mixed—to the next generation. Her purpose, like the mule's, is to work, or so the structure of the ending tells us. And such a structure has racial implications too, as *Passing* makes clear when Clare relates to Irene the nature of her life with her white aunts: "[T]o their notion, hard labour was good for me. I had Negro blood and they belonged to the generation that had written and read long articles headed: 'Will the Blacks Work?'" (158-59).

Since all of Pinky's racist acts have transpired in the South and the North is just a dim "beyond" in the diegesis, the South is identified as the principal site of racism and, consequently, the locale where Pinky's labor is most needed. The racism of the North is elided, even though Pinky found obvious advantages in being white there or she would not have passed while living above the Mason-Dixon line.
In the previous paragraphs, I have to some extent privileged the ending of *Pinky*, but with a purpose. It is not my intent to diminish the overall achievement of the film, particularly in its own time: following on the heels of the segregated military units of World War II and leading the public toward the Civil Rights movement. The purpose of this analysis is to unpack the anxieties about race within a text that professes to be sympathetic to the African-American plight. The film challenges racism somewhat, principally through the depiction of the hardships Pinky and Dicey have faced, but most particularly through the radically different treatment Pinky receives depending on the racial lens through which she is perceived. A particularly effective moment of resistance occurs when Pinky challenges through an unbending gaze the bigotry of a white storekeeper who charges her double for a mourning veil once he learns from Miss Em’s spiteful relative that Pinky isn’t white.

The doing-and-undoing of the narrative, too often at Pinky’s expense, constructs racism as a misunderstanding primarily, something that can be remedied before too long, and mostly through African-American efforts at uplift, like Pinky’s school under the aegis of the dead white woman. Pinky, the young hothead, should in Faulkner’s words "[g]o slow now" and not be so quick to misinterpret the generous impulses of her betters ("Letter" 87). Above all, she must stop troubling the color line and
demonstrate an allegiance to "her own people." The problem that inaugurates the narrative—the disparity between the treatment and privileges of whites and African Americans—is resolved through a friendly separatism: North from South and white from black, with Pinky as a kind of relay between the two worlds. In this schism between the races, we see one good reason why Passing is set in the middle-class African-American world, for it is only by cinching the two worlds tightly together in terms of work, leisure, and opportunity that we are able to see the details of how separate is not equal. In Pinky's case, though, the tragic mulatta turns happy when she becomes the not-quite-white head of the female and predominantly dark-skinned student body. Through this corporeal metaphor stemming directly from Cartesian dualism, the narrative "rescues" Pinky again from the excess of sexuality and sensuality attributed to African Americans, having already saved her once by depriving her of her fiancé. As in the dénouement of Days of Heaven, where class and femininity have been destabilized, this narrative of race and femininity is doubly anxious about the unmarried adult woman set loose in the community, and only multiple containments will suffice to settle Pinky near the border, that region of tumult and uncertainty, and fix her clearly and permanently on the African-American side.
For Pinky, then, beauty is not exactly her power, as the classic formulation of the tragic mulatta would have it, but her influence is intimately connected to her appearance insofar as her "whiteness" makes her the diplomat across the color line once she is safely situated on "her own side." Seemingly, communication is desirable only with one's own race or, barring that, with someone as close to one's own race as possible--the not-quite-white colonial (but native) administrator--"a reformed, recognizable Other" (Bhabha, "Mimicry" 86) who will help keep control on the "Other" side of the border. This trait of "speaking for one's people" ties Pinky to Irene Redfield as does the practice of racial uplift. Although Irene's service to the community is different in kind from Pinky's nursing and teaching, structurally their position within their respective groups is not dissimilar. Both are in a privileged spot vis-à-vis most African Americans, and both serve an educational function for the whites with whom they have cordial or even friendly relations across the color line. Additionally, both act as gatekeepers to a more privileged way of life for the Others whom they administer, although this aspect of Pinky's new position as school administrator is only hinted at in the film's dénouement.

Irene's role as border guard is central to her existence, however, both in her family and within her race--microcosm and macrocosm--although she hides her role...
(even from herself) by affirming separatism, claiming the superiority of African Americans—namely, middle-class ones—and belittling the few whites with whom she comes in contact. Ultimately, though, her loyalty to class wins out over her allegiance to race; she protects Clare’s passing up to the point where it endangers her own middle-class economic and social privilege. Although she wears the mask of proud separatism, she is like the go-betweens T.B. Macaulay called for in India, "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (qtd. in Bhabha, "Mimicry" 87). Irene’s taste for class privilege even extends to employing African-American servants, always darker than herself, so her privilege within color caste is underlined even as she is clearly still "Other." In her strategies of control, Irene is very much like a colonial administrator whose goal is to "secure" the colony, although the verb secure takes on different shades of meaning depending on whether the colonial subject is Clare or Brian. In either case, though, the gaze is central to her policing. Where Brian is involved, to secure is not so much to get possession of but to keep possession or guard from risk of loss, especially through expatriation to Brazil. A crucial part of Irene’s project is to repackage what she wants so that her desires can surreptitiously be substituted for
Brian's, an enterprise that requires a constant surveillance of his moods and reactions, a function linked to gender as well as race: woman as power behind the throne, the iron hand in the velvet glove. But it is Brian's aversion to racism in its American formulation that fuels his desire to leave the States, so Irene's very gendered attempts at pacification serve the ends of racial separatism insofar as she is able to persuade Brian to remain in the United States and accept the pleasures doled out and the responsibilities imposed by the racial ideology he despises. In Irene's management of Clare, however, to secure means to make certain, guarantee, ensure in a sense that either Foucault or Bhabha would understand.

In Bhabha's description, "colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" ("Other" 70-71). To know the Other thoroughly is to be certain of her; to keep her visible is to guarantee her whereabouts--and, ideally, even her behavior since constant visibility mimics externally the function of the superego internally. But like a trusty, Irene is in an awkward position since she must police Others while being an Other herself, her Otherness fading into and out of focus. Meanwhile, Clare presents a complementary double focus in that she both looks and doesn't look like an Other, with her "Negro eyes" peering through the white skin of her face. Further
complicating the situation are two more factors: the
gender Irene and Clare share, which creates another layer
of similarity, and the same-sex desire that is never
spoken but is looked.

What we see repeatedly in Passing is a fluctuation
between two very different epistemologies, based in two
types of gazing. The mutual gaze in which Clare and Irene
are locked provides a particular kind of passionate
certainty, unmediated by the distance required for
investigative looking, and resistant to conventional,
patriarchal definitions of knowledge. When that gaze is
broken, though, either by Clare’s absence or by her
attention to someone else, then Irene’s passionate
certainty dissolves, yielding to an insecurity best
allayed through surveillance and stereotyping. The
stereotypes demonstrate the shifting but overlapping
ground where the attempt to fix femininity as knowable and
nameable intersects a similar enterprise with race: Clare
is "having" (153, 174), "acquisitive" (216), "selfish"
(144), "alien" (143), "sly" (143, 156), "furtive" (143),
"catlike" (144), "menacing" (176), "too provocative" (149,
152), "too good-looking" (198), and "intelligent enough in
a purely feminine way" (216). For Bhabha, the stereotype
"is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates
between what is always ‘in place,’ already known, and
something that must be anxiously repeated" ("Other" 66).
Irene’s description of Clare holds to this pattern, with
most of the characterizations occurring early in the novel, then repeating anxiously throughout the text with little variation. For Irene as unreliable narrator, who resists the knowledge that we gather from the dramatic irony of her narration, to know Clare at the beginning is to know her forever; nothing changes. And, like Mata Hari, Clare is known to death.

Like voyeuristic looking, the investigative, assessing gaze of colonial power requires a distance, a difference that creates the object of the gaze as Other. But when Clare and Irene are fused in mutual looking, Irene falls into a reverie that defeats the kind of seeing measured by judgment, assessment, and cool reason; she is overidentified, like Mary Ann Doane’s female film spectator (Desire 2). When Irene draws back, her faculties of judgment are more intense as if to make up for her momentary swoon into Clare’s eyes. Irene is always at her harshest when contemplating the absent Clare, always ready to emphasize the differences between them after one of these intense experiences of fusion and identification: "Since childhood their lives had never really touched. Actually they were strangers. Strangers in their ways and means of living. Strangers in their desires and ambitions. Strangers even in their racial consciousness. Between them the barrier was just as high, just as broad, and just as firm as if in Clare did not run that strain of black blood" (192). Here we see Irene in
the process of producing alterity: Clare is totally different from her because she passes, even though Irene occasionally passes too and can scarcely contain her curiosity about the practice; Clare is totally different because she thinks only of herself, although Irene tries to bend Brian's desires to match her own; Clare is totally different because she's not a "race woman," although Clare treats Irene's African-American servants as if they are her equals, an even-handedness which unsettles and irritates Irene. The production of an Otherness is essential if the colonial administrator is to justify the surveillance and discipline of the colonial subject, body and mind, a discipline essential to the smooth functioning of the system. Moreover, the Otherness should make it clear (as in Clare, who is notably not clear) who belongs on which side of the border. Clare's desire "to be a person and not a charity or a problem, or even a daughter of the indiscreet Ham" (159) is in clear opposition to the colonial enterprise of producing not individual identity--not subjectivity--but group identity and a border between groups. To repeat bell hooks in her analysis of the black gaze, "An effective strategy of white supremacist terror and dehumanization during slavery centered around white control of the black gaze. Black slaves, and later manumitted servants, could be brutally punished for looking, for appearing to observe the whites they were serving, as only a subject can observe or see. To be
fully an object then was to lack the capacity to see or recognize reality" ("Whiteness" 35-36). Full subjectivity, and with it the gaze, are reserved for the dominant group, which once again makes plain why Clare would want to cross the color line despite the sacrifices she must make. Irene is both fascinated with and fearful of Clare's embodiment of race, for in her mixture of blond and ivory and black, Clare has one foot on either side of the color line, and Irene, with her olive skin, her curiosity about passing, and her convenient justifications of her own occasional border crossings, is almost as close to the line as Clare, ready to step or be pulled over.

"To be a curiosity is a painful profession": Passing for the Object of the Gaze

Let us return via a detour to the exchange of looks between the two women, for Clare's decision to pass has significant implications for the gaze and for her own objectification. The quotation in the title of this section comes from Josephine Baker, the twentieth-century African-American woman who made her living first in the United States, then abroad as the object of a gaze predominantly white, but not exclusively so. According to Cheryl Wall,

Even as she sought the glare of publicity, Baker tried to maintain control of the image she projected. In interviews and memoirs, she referred proudly to private situations that she had negotiated with skill. For example, she explained that when she was "summoned to a social function to be shown off like a circus animal in fancy dress, I would glue myself to the buffet table instead of joining the expectant
guests on the lawn, then quietly slip away." In Berlin, where La Revue Nègre enjoyed a popular run after leaving Paris, Baker was told that she symbolized primitivism. She retorted, "What are you trying to say? I was born in 1906 in the twentieth century." (109)

In this quotation, Wall presents a number of ways in which the African-American woman was (and is) expected to play to the gaze, to be "seen and not heard" (a comment on the infantilizing dimension of a colonial dependency), to represent for whiteness the distillation of exoticism and primitivism, a role similar to the one in which Mata Hari is cast for her Parisian audience. As related in the above quotation, Baker disrupts these expectations by being visible but in the wrong place and breaking the silence of the spectacle by being the object that talks back, with all its connotations in fairy tale and fable of animals that suddenly speak as well as the insolence and uppitness of the child disrespectful to the authority of parent or teacher--or a slave talking back to the master.

While both women in Passing are positioned as objects of the privileged white male gaze by virtue of being female, and Clare commands a good number of gazes by virtue of her unusual looks, she has, through passing, subtly changed her position and her own ability to gaze. By ensconcing herself in white privilege, Clare is entitled to cast an objectifying look at African-Americans: at the Negro Welfare League dance, for example. She is like Hugh Wentworth, the well-to-do white
man who along with many of his kind goes uptown to Harlem "to see Negroes" (198), but also unlike him in that her gaze partakes of both voyeurism and identification. Although Irene at first interprets Clare’s look in the tea room as an investigative or punitive gaze, literally speaking Clare is innocent, for her investigation is based not on race and the desire to exclude African Americans from the Drayton, but on old, shared associations. Structurally, though, Clare’s is a "white gaze" in the sense that she has positioned herself to assume the privileges of whiteness, one of which, as bell hooks notes, is to objectify blackness and evacuate the possibility that an African American might exercise an objectifying gaze of his or her own. Consequently, Irene is not far off the mark; in more than one sense, Clare "looks white" as her gaze forces Irene’s downward.

At the same time, Clare is still the magnet for objectifying gazes by virtue of her looks. Clare is a spectacle; in Mulvey’s words, one whose "visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" ("Visual Pleasure" 19). Clare produces this effect again and again in the novel, as does Sarah Jane to a lesser extent in Imitation of Life (1959). Irene remembers "her own little choked exclamation of admiration" on the night of the Negro Welfare League dance,
when, on coming downstairs a few minutes later than she had intended, she had rushed into the living-room where Brian was waiting and had found Clare there too. Clare, exquisite, golden, fragrant, flaunting, in a stately gown of shining black taffeta, whose long, full skirt lay in graceful folds about her slim golden feet; her glistening hair drawn smoothly back into a small twist at the nape of her neck; her eyes sparkling like dark jewels. Irene, with her new rose-coloured chiffon frock ending at the knees, and her cropped curls, felt dowdy and commonplace. She regretted that she hadn’t counselled Clare to wear something ordinary and inconspicuous. What on earth would Brian think of deliberate courting of attention? (203)

Clare’s appearance is so powerful it even disrupts syntax, causing the text to break into incomplete sentences, little fragments of admiration. Additionally, it provokes Irene to envy as she turns her gaze around and finds herself wanting. As Barbara Johnson explains in her examination of the Poe-Lacan-Derrida "Purloined Letter" controversy, "2 is an extremely ‘odd’ number. On the one hand, as a specular illusion of symmetry or metaphor, it can be either narcissistically reassuring (the image of the other as a reinforcement of my identity) or absolutely devastating (the other whose existence can totally cancel me out)" (Critical 119). As a spectacle that stops the narrative--including Irene’s narrative, either by diminishing Irene in her own eyes or locking her in a moment of suspended time--Clare is able repeatedly to delay the dénouement, creating blockages, schisms, and ruptures in knowledge that can’t be leapt over--the hallways of her architectural folly are tortuous and confusing to the outsider. She provides just enough of an
autobiographical narrative (for example, the existence of the ancient white aunts) to keep people satisfied but not enough that they might be able to join in the storytelling. She holds off as long as possible the inevitable moment in the Oedipal story where the secret of origin is revealed, the sphinx's riddle answered, the price paid. In contrast, both versions of *Imitation of Life*, as maternal melodrama, cast the mother as the one who most often reveals the missing link in the story, causing the daughter to move on to a new location and new job where she might be able to weave a coherent narrative of whiteness. Of course, Clare has no mother to coax her back to "her own side," either through filial and racial duty, as in *Pinky*, or through death, as in *Imitation of Life*.

Through Irene's filtering gaze, Clare is excessive, like Caddy Compson in her femininity, like Mata Hari in her femininity and racial mixture. Clare is "to-be-looked-at-ness" as "too muchness" (Shelden 19). Her excess lies particularly in her face, which I have treated in psychoanalytic terms but is also a function of racial mixture. Irene, as the one closest to Clare's secret, sees Clare's eyes in particular as the source of her beauty: not because they are luminous or caressing, which they are, but because they are "Negro eyes! mysterious and concealing. And set in that ivory face under that bright hair, there was about them something exotic. Yes,
Clare Kendry's loveliness was absolute, beyond challenge, thanks to those eyes which her grandmother and later her mother and father had given her" (161). For Irene, Clare's eyes are the text of her history rising to the surface of her face. At the same time, Clare's excessive loveliness—as an absolute, as immune to challenge—stops the reading of that racial text for those who don't have the key of shared history, as Irene does, or as some other African Americans might. As in "The Purloined Letter," Clare hides her secret in plain sight, in the fragments of her face that don't quite fit together. She is a spy in the house of objectification. Like Mata Hari, another woman of mixed race though one who doesn't pass, Clare invites scopophilia as she conducts her business behind a mask of feminine beauty, and her business specifically is the creation of subjectivity. Sarah Jane in Imitation (1959) follows much the same route as she brings the question of skin color to the forefront of her life by flaunting it in skimpy chorus girl outfits. Through the spectacle of exposed skin, Sarah Jane not only eroticizes her passing but challenges the spectator of her dances to see and identify that which cannot be seen. Each performance is a spectacle of racial ambiguity, a challenge to the investigating gaze. "What is race?" both Sarah Jane and Clare seem to be saying through their flaunting. "I dare you to tell me."22
The continued conduct of Clare's double life is dependent on her being taken for white by whites, a dangerous situation once she insists on attending affairs in Harlem like the Negro Welfare League dance, where the races mix. If, as Irene suggests, African Americans can recognize their own, then the guests at the dance are a mixture of those who know directly (like Irene and her husband Brian), those who know although they have not been told (here, based on Irene's analysis, we imagine the African-American guests), and those who don't know, divided into at least two groups: those who don't care or don't know enough to care and Hugh Wentworth's contingent, who want to know but don't--yet.

Here, I want to interject a corrective to a statement I made early in this chapter, namely, characterizing Irene's belief that African Americans know their own as an example of essentialism. First, as Diana Fuss argues in Essentially Speaking, essentialism in itself is "neither good nor bad, progressive nor reactionary, beneficial nor dangerous" (xi). Further, essentialism can play a valuable role in uniting a disenfranchised group of people into a body ready for political action (Fuss, Essentially 40). At the same time, the knowledge Irene attributes to African Americans may be something other than an essence she posits in the interest of racial unity. I have argued throughout this study that there are a number of gazes, some more visible than others, some that occlude others.
especially by achieving a dominant position at the end of a narrative. As a corollary to that axiom, I also want to posit different kinds of knowledge—and different ways of knowing—that accompany these marginalized gazes. As bell hooks persuasively argues,

black folks have, from slavery on, shared in conversations with one another "special" knowledge of whiteness gleaned from close scrutiny of white people. Deemed special because it was not a way of knowing that has been recorded fully in written material, its purpose was to help black folks cope and survive in a white supremacist society. For years, black domestic servants working in white homes, acting as informants, brought knowledge back to segregated communities—details, facts, observations, and psychoanalytic readings of the white Other. ("Whiteness" 31)

What hooks describes is the historical power of African Americans to gaze back, if clandestinely, and to gather a body of knowledge about the dominant group through that undetected look, a power that in Pinky’s case is judged to be illusory. When Irene explains to Hugh Wentworth, the privileged but curious white man, why African Americans can identify those who pass, she may not be expressing an essentialist position so much as she is trying to articulate something on the margins of white experience, a body of knowledge yet to be codified. The fact that she is explaining her perceptions to Wentworth is an additional complication, for she is translating one culture for another, putting into words, perhaps for the first time, one of the basic assumptions of her community: that those who pass always maintain some kind of
relationship with the marginalized group, even if the ties are attenuated, and by ties I do not necessarily mean connections with family or friends. The repressed returns, if not in looks, then in sympathies or attitudes or patterns of speech or knowledge, a circumstance that gives an additional figurative meaning to Brian Redfield’s declaration about passing: "They always come back" (185).

Furthermore, the marginalized group is positioned to recognize about the passer that which the dominant group systematically denies. As Homi Bhabha argues, "The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations" ("Other" 75). The stereotype is a blockage—both anxious and pleasurable—in knowledge, which produces a corresponding distortion of vision, a misapprehension that the stereotyped group is unlikely to share or by which it might be blinded. Bhabha’s analysis suggests that Clare’s architectural folly is perhaps something closer to a hall of mirrors. Clare throws out repetitive reflections of herself that are alluring enough to satisfy the gazer but have no substance.
The partial vision of colonialism is most fully represented in *Passing* by John Bellew, Clare's husband. Very much like Tom Buchanan, in physical appearance as well as in his racist attitudes—almost as if American racism comes in one size and shape per gender—Bellew is described as a tallish person, broadly made. His age she guessed to be somewhere between thirty-five and forty. His hair was dark brown and waving, and he had a soft mouth, somewhat womanish, set in an unhealthy-looking dough-soft face. His steel-grey opaque eyes were very much alive, moving ceaselessly between thick bluish lids. But there was, Irene decided, nothing unusual about him unless it was an impression of latent physical power. (170)

His eyes are restless, like Tom's, but also like Tom, his role is to be the one "not to know," despite his all-knowing demeanor and his investigative gaze. Having made his first fortune in the colonial setting of South America, he professes to hate "black scrimy devils": "'I know people who've known them, better than they know their black selves. And I read in the papers about them. Always robbing and killing people. And,' he added darkly, 'worse'" (172). Yet despite his professed knowledge of race, always second hand, he cannot imagine that his wife is African American, except insofar as his pet name for Clare—"Nig"—a joke husband and wife share, reveals a truth his conscious mind works hard to disavow: "When we were first married, she was as white as—as—well as white as a lily. But I declare she's gettin' darker and darker. I tell her if she don't look out, she'll wake up one of
these days and find she's turned into a nigger" (171). In fact, Clare isn't the only one who awakens to a different view of racial identity. It is Bellew's belated recognition of Clare's passing that precipitates her fall from the window as he bellows "Nig! My God! Nig!" (239), an exclamation that simultaneously expresses his grief as his wife falls to her death and broadcasts, ironically, that which Bellew has tried so hard not to see even as he has joked about it.

"No niggers in my family. Never have been and never will be," Bellew asserts (171), and these repeated negatives (so close to Nig-atives) shape his identity: he defines himself as the purely not-black, the man in control of his origins, in complete possession of all knowledge about past generations of his family and in control of his own, and his family's, future. But of course his emphasis on, his stake in, and his anxiety about the white half of the binarism calls out for color--almost requires Clare's presence as the constant, if unconscious, reaffirmation of his whiteness. If, as Homi Bhabha argues (and I repeat myself here, although I hope not anxiously), the stereotype "is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated," how convenient, if unconsciously so, that Bellew has those repetitions "in place" in his home, close at hand, and safe (in some anxious sense) ("Other"
The "'otherness' which is at once an object of desire and derision" is safe too: Bellew has Clare to desire, and he can deride to her, who cannot reply fully, the otherness of which she is secretly a part ("Other" 67). If one doesn't know one's wife, whom does one know? A rhetorical question, but in this case a very telling one.

Which brings us to the end of the tale, for Bellew's final knowing of his wife is the end of her. "Clare Bellew" was a meticulously assembled construction, although Clare had begun to lose interest in maintaining it. "Damn Jack!" Clare cries, "He keeps me out of everything. Everything I want. I could kill him! I expect I shall, some day" (200), and in her own death Clare kills for Bellew his certainty in the efficacy of the gaze as a way of knowing generally, but in particular knowing his own identity as well as his wife's and his daughter's. While the fall from the window adds a melodramatic touch to the novel's ending, Clare's death also seems a necessity, for once "Clare Bellew" as a construction is destroyed, there is too little "Clare Kendry" to take its place: "Clare Bellew" was "passing"; "Clare Kendry" is "past." I am not suggesting that "Clare Kendry" is real and "Clare, Jack's wife" is not, nor am I claiming that there is some basic, bedrock identity underpinning the construction that Clare has worked so hard to build and maintain. Rather, "Clare Bellew" has
eaten up most of the materials—-in fact, all of Clare’s adult life—-that might have gone into an adult "Clare Kendry." Further, there is nowhere outside of the ideologies of race and gender where Clare can have what she wants: "to be a person and not a charity or a problem" (159). At this point we must hear the echo of Freud, speaking as a psychoanalyst but also as a white European man bridging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and bearing within him, as most of us still do, the seductive metaphors of colonialism, where the Other is the "problem":

[T]o those of you who are women this will not apply—you are yourselves the problem. ("Femininity" 113)

We may compare [fantasies] with individuals of mixed race who taken all around resemble white men but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other and on that account are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges. (qtd. in Bhabha, "Mimicry" 89)

In answer to Freud, as he carries us back to the beginning of the chapter and that desire for an infallible knowledge played out through the gaze, I reinvoke the epigraph from DuBois, which suggests that the person of color is not the problem, but the color line itself.

About *Passing* and Larsen’s other novel, *Quicksand*, McDowell writes, "These unearned and unsettling endings sacrifice strong and emerging independent female identities to the most acceptable demands of literary and social history" (xi). While the end of *Passing* is unsettling--and should be--given the arguments I have made
above, I don’t find the conclusion unearned (although I might apply that adjective to Pinky), nor do I read it as a servile bowing to literary fashion. Rather, I place the novel in a genealogy that includes works as separated in time and genre as Kate Chopin’s The Awakening and Thelma & Louise, both of which share with Passing the problem of a place where an "emerging independent female" identity can not only surface but grow into old age, although Passing addresses not just female identity but the complicated intersection of "African-American" and "female." In the absence of such a place, in the world or in the imagination (which is, after all, no more outside of ideology than any other part of an individual), these authors have chosen death cushioned by ambiguity: the amniotic swim out in The Awakening; the line of flight, the elision of landing, and the montage of pleasure, adventure, and friendship in Thelma & Louise; and in Passing, a disappearance in keeping with Clare’s earlier dematerializations, first when her father died ("And, in the next instant, she had turned and vanished through the door" [144]) and then again when she escapes from her aunts ("Clare had disappeared" [152]). Says a guest who witnessed Clare’s fall, "I was looking straight at her. She just tumbled over and was gone before you can say ‘Jack Robinson’ . . . Quickest thing I ever saw in all my life" (241). Our final image of Clare before her last disappearance is consistent with her character throughout
the novel. Her look is catlike—specifically, Cheshire Cat-like: "There was even a faint smile on her full, red lips, and in her shining eyes" (239). Clare takes one last, good, transgressive look before she goes.

End Notes

1. I have not been able to find Peola in any slang dictionary dating from the 1930s because the collections from the era do not include African-American terms. The earliest appearance I have traced is in The New Cab Calloway's Hepsters Dictionary: Language of Jive (1944), which states, "Peola (n.): a light person, almost white" (259). In Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, the protagonist's name—Pecola—echoes Peola, just as her desire for the blue eyes of happy white storybook characters links her to the light-skinned Peola, who through passing hopes to attain the privileges of whiteness, among them, she imagines, happiness.

   In an interesting connection to the Harlem Renaissance, around 1926 Zora Neale Hurston worked as Fannie Hurst's live-in secretary (despite Hurston's lack of secretarial skills) and then her chauffeur and companion. According to Robert Hemenway, Hurston's biographer, she privately expressed doubts about why Hurst was so pleased to appear in public with her: "she told at least one friend that she thought it was because Hurst like the way Zora's dark skin highlighted her own lily-like complexion" (21).

2. Nella Larsen, Passing, in Quicksand and Passing, ed. Deborah E. McDowell, American Women Writers Series (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1986), 185. All subsequent quotations will be from this edition, and will be cited by page numbers in parentheses in the text.

3. The practice of passing is a major theme in African-American fiction, starting with William Wells Brown's Clotel, or the President's Daughter (1853), the first novel published by an African-American author. The theme continues with The Garries and Their Friends (1893) by Frank J. Webb, Iola Leroy (1893) by Frances E. Harper, The House Behind the Cedars (1900) by Charles W. Chesnutt, and James Weldon Johnson's The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man (1912). The writers of the Harlem Renaissance carried on the theme in works such as Walter White's Flight (1926) and Jessie Fauset's Plum Bun (1929) and Comedy, American Style (1933).
4. Doane points out that the phrase is to be found not in one of Freud’s more familiar texts, such as "Femininity," "Female Sexuality," or "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," but instead tucked away in "The Question of Lay Analysis":

Stress falls entirely on the male organ, all the child’s interest is directed towards the question of whether it is present or not. We know less about the sexual life of little girls than of boys. But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction; after all, the sexual life of adult women is a "dark continent" for psychology. But we have learnt that girls feel deeply their lack of a sexual organ that is equal in value to the male one; they regard themselves on that account as inferior, and this "envy for the penis" is the origin of a whole number of characteristic feminine reactions. (Qtd. in Doane, Femmes 210)

Interestingly, "dark continent" appears in English in Freud’s original.

5. Shirlee Taylor Haizlip claims, for example, "I do subscribe to the racial mythology that black people know their own" (13).

According to Thadious Davis in her excellent biography, Larsen never made a habit of passing but did so on at least three occasions, one of which she described to Carl Van Vechten in a 1932 letter:

You will be amused that I who have never tried this much discussed "passing" stunt have waited until I reached the deep south to put it over. Grace Johnson and I drove over fifty miles south of here the other day and then walked into the best restaurant in a rather conservative town called Murphreesbourough [sic] and demanded lunch and got it, plus all the service in the world and an invitation to return. (424)

6. Deleuze and Parnet define a becoming as "an encounter between two reigns, a short-circuit, the picking-up of a code where each is deterritorialized" (44)—a most suggestive description of Clare and her activities on the border between races, or as the border between races. Deleuze and Parnet also evoke Clare in their account of "the Anomalous," which is "always at the frontier, on the border of a band or a multiplicity; it is part of the latter, but is already making it pass into another multiplicity, it makes it become, it traces a line-between" (42). In a way, Clare is cinching together white and black, tracing a line-between that calls into question both difference and similarity, that doubts whiteness just as much as blackness, that really asks Brian Redfield’s question, "What is race?"—and refuses any one simple answer.
7. For instance, Charles R. Larson marginalizes the racial theme, instead putting the issue of security at the center of his analysis (82). Merrill Horton takes a biographical approach and claims that the themes in the novel "are reducible to the issue of racial identity" (31). Cheryl Wall offers a sophisticated view on black femininity but sidesteps the issue of same-sex desire. Mary F. Sisney sees the novel as an African-American version of the novel of heterosexual manners. Deborah McDowell sees *Passing* as a novel in code: Larsen "uses a technique found commonly in narratives by Afro-American and women novelists with a 'dangerous' story to tell: 'safe' themes, plots, and conventions are used as the protective cover underneath which lie more dangerous subplots" (xxx). While I understand that McDowell means "safe" in the sense of a plot familiar from previous literary works, I am disturbed by the use of the word and her seeming dismissal of the narrative of racial passing, for Clare's racial transgressions are indeed dangerous, and her representation of herself in the white world is as important in the events immediately preceding her death as her sexuality.

Even as I am skeptical of any approach that fails to take into account the complex intersections of race and same-sex desire, I realize that the exclusive and exclusionary approaches many critics have chosen are at least partially the result of the novel's being near the beginning of its critical life.

8. I assume the cabby is white, both from Larsen's representation of his speech patterns and from his willingness to pick up Irene, whom he takes to be white since he suggests she go to the Drayton.

9. In the remake of *Imitation of Life* (1959), it becomes evident that it is the privileged white woman's prerogative to initiate an exchange of friendly gazes. As Lora Meredith, with her white blonde hair and pale skin, becomes rich and famous, she rarely looks Annie Johnson in the eye anymore despite her warm feelings for the African-American woman. Even when the two women exchange gazes, the camera no longer highlights their mutual looking by moving in for a close-up. Previously, when both women were struggling economically, though Lora was clearly "the boss" in terms of worldly status as well as decision making, the women often looked directly into each other's eyes, and the looking was initiated as often by Annie as it was by Lora.

10. Barbara Johnson gives an intriguing perspective on this scene in "Lesbian Spectacles: Reading *Sula, Passing, Thelma & Louise*, and *The Accused.*" In her experiment of "reading as a lesbian," she finds it erotic that "Irene's..."
'no' constantly becomes a 'yes'" (162). While I understand the appeal of desire blocked and then set free, I am also troubled by the way in which the structure—and the terms—that Johnson identifies as erotic describe equally well a rapist's fantasy, a libidinal investment she doesn't discuss, despite her self-questioning in other areas of the article.

11. Brasell provides an example of contemporary usage: "When gay men internalize a public role such as passing for straight, that public performance influences and informs private performances as well" (56).

The Oxford English Dictionary is not a particularly good source for information on the original, racially informed use of the term. It offers no information on passing and under to pass lists the first appearance of the word in H.W. Horwill's Dictionary of Modern American Usage, published in 1935, six years after Larsen published Passing: "In American, there are many persons with a strain of Negro blood in whom the heritage of colour is so inconspicuous that they might easily be supposed to be of pure white lineage. If such persons leave their Negro associations and succeed in becoming accepted as whites, they are said to pass."

Interestingly, queer, a word which appears with unusual frequency in Passing, did have a homoerotic connotation in 1929. The OED notes that this specialized meaning originated in the United States and cites the following, from Practical Value of Scientific Study of Juvenile Delinquents (Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor), as its first appearance in 1922: "A young man, easily ascertainable to be unusually fine in other characteristics, is probably 'queer' in sexual tendency." The word appears again in 1931 in a book titled American Tramp and Underworld Slang: "Queer, crooked; criminal. Also applied to effeminate or degenerate men or boys."

12. Brasell notes that a number of reviewers of My Hustler thought nothing much happened in the second half of the film when in fact Joe is cruising Paul (60). Furthermore, as an interesting sidebar to this study, Brasell argues that the film, particularly through its patterning of glances, positions the spectator as part of the community of gay men: "as Joe cruises Paul, he also begins to cruise me/you/us. He eyes us through the bathroom mirror, inviting us to eye him back. To continue to look at him on the screen is thus to become implicated in the process of cruising" (62). Consequently, to claim that nothing much happens as Joe looks at Paul is to deny, consciously or unconsciously, both an identification with Paul or Joe, a desiring objectification of either man, or any pleasure in being objectified by Joe as he "cruises" us through the looks in the mirror--in sum, we must claim
total disengagement. While such disengagement is certainly a possibility for the spectator, I wonder to what extent that distancing from the action is a screen for homophobia, given the many positions open to the spectator, all of which are supposedly denied.

13. For example, see Tamsin Wilton’s "On Not Being Lady Macbeth," particularly the description of her discomfort during an incident in The Living End, described as a "gay men’s film," in which lesbians are both excluded and endangered (147-48).

14. In fact, Josephine Baker’s early career was thwarted to some extent by "New York’s infatuation with 'white' blond-haired Negro girls." La Revue Nègre in Paris broke that pattern by featuring performers who were clearly black (Wall 106).

15. Zeno’s paradox of bisection, also known as Zeno’s racecourse paradox, states the following: "If a man is to walk a distance of one mile, he must first walk half the distance or one half mile, then he must walk half of what remains or one fourth mile, then again half of what remains, or one eighth mile, etc. ad infinitum. An infinite series of finite distances must be successively traversed if the man is to reach the end of the mile. But an infinite series is by definition a series that cannot be exhausted, for it never comes to an end. Hence the man can never reach the end of the mile, and seeing that the same argument may be applied mutatis mutandis to any infinite distance whatever, it is clearly impossible for motion ever to occur" (Hughes and Brecht 20).

16. According to the testimony of anthropologist Munro Edmundson in defense of Susie Phipps’s claim to be white in a 1982 Louisiana court case, genetic studies show that African Americans average twenty-five percent white genes and American whites average five percent black genes. According to these statistics, "using the 1/32 law, the entire native-born population of Louisiana would be considered black!" (Domínguez 2). At the time, Louisiana was the only state that had a mathematical equation for computing questions of race (Domínguez 4).

17. Barbara Christian points out that the tragic mulatta has been with us since the beginning of American fiction. Cora Munro in James Fenimore Cooper’s The Last of the Mohicans is an octoroon who meets a tragic end. "[T]he fruit of miscegenation is Tragedy," she continues, "regardless of what other positive characteristics the mulatta might possess. The word mulatto itself etymologically is derived from the word mule and echoes the debate Americans engaged in about whether blacks are
of the same species as whites." The ethnologist Josiah Nott claimed that like the mule, the mulatto "was a genuine hybrid, weaker and less fertile than either parent" (Christian 16).

18. *Imitation of Life* (1959) follows *The Chinaberry Tree* in having a scene in which the concept of bad blood is literalized by children who are coming into the ideology of race—as it were, entering the symbolic of race through language. In the Fauset novel, one of Laurentine's African-American friends stops playing with her, and Laurentine, the product of a lifelong romance between Sal, an African-American woman, and Colonel Halloway, a white man, confronts her.

Lucy stared at her, her eyes large and strangely gray in her dark face. "I wanted to Laurentine," she answered, "but my mumma say I dasn't. She say you got bad blood in your veins." Abruptly she left her former friend, ran to the table and came back with a tiny useless knife in her hand. "Don't you want me to cut yo' arm and let it out?" (8)

In the novel, the bad blood is white, but in the film, the problematic blood is black. A child at school tells Sarah Jane that "Negro blood is different," so she encourages Susie to cut her wrist so the two friends can compare the evidence. This scene is part of Sarah Jane’s ongoing but always frustrated attempt to find the location of race, for skin alone cannot be the answer if she—as pale as Lora or Susie Meredith—is still considered African American.

19. The same paradoxes apparently hold true in real life, at least in some communities. In Virginia Domínguez’s study, the Creole of color who passes, called *passablanc*, breeds both jealousy and pride in the community he leaves behind. It is a situation to which many have reluctantly resigned themselves. They fault not the individuals who pass but the dichotomous system of classification that forces them to pass. Hence, many colored Creoles protect others who are trying to pass, to the point of feigning ignorance of certain branches of their families. Elicited genealogies often seem strangely skewed. In the case of one very good informant, a year passed before he confided in me that his own mother’s sister and her children had passed into the white community. With tears in his eyes, he described the painful experience of learning about his aunt’s death on the obituary page of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. His cousins failed to inform the abandoned side of the family, for fear that they might show up at the wake or the funeral and thereby destroy the image of whiteness. Total separation was necessary for secrecy. (161)
According to Domínguez’s study and contrary to Brian Redfield’s assertion, those who pass rarely come back and, in fact, go to great lengths to assure their continued membership in the privileged white community.

20. Josephine Baker also appears in the text of Passing when Irene answers one of her guests at a tea, “No, I’ve never seen her . . . Well, she might have been in Shuffle Along when I saw it, but if she was, I don’t remember her. . . . Oh, but you’re wrong! . . . I do think Ethel Waters is awfully good” (219). In the endnotes, Ethel Waters is identified as an actress of stage and screen, best known for DuBose Heyward’s Mamba’s Daughters (1938) and Carson McCuller’s Member of the Wedding (1950), but she also has a lead role in Pinky as the hardworking grandmother of the young woman who returns home to the South after several years of passing in the North.

21. I am indebted here to Gayle Shelden, whose thesis in landscape architecture posits the "too muchness" garden, based on the theoretical work of Mary Russo and Cynthia Fuchs, as one way in which to rupture the traditional narratives of landscape design and disrupt the dominating gaze of the garden visitor.

22. In the famous—and infamous—Rhinelander case, mentioned in Passing when Irene considers the question of whether Bellew could divorce Clare, the issue of skin once again takes center stage. In 1924 the immensely wealthy Kip Rhinelander married Alice B. Jones, a mulatta chambermaid, one week after coming into his inheritance. One month after the wedding, Rhinelander sued for annulment on the grounds that his wife had deceived him about her racial identity. At one point in the year-long trial, Alice Rhinelander was required to partially disrobe so that the jury could examine her skin (Madigan, "Miscegenation" 524-25).

23. Cheryl Wall also likens Helga Crane’s position in Larsen’s Quicksand to Edna Pontellier’s in The Awakening (114).
Women, whose image has continually been stolen and used for this end [voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms], cannot view the decline of the traditional film form with anything much more than sentimental regret.

Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" (26)

That cynicism you refer to I acquired the day I learned I was different from little boys.

Karen Richards in All About Eve

Toward the end of Chapter 1, at the intersection of Foucault’s analysis of discipline, Mulvey’s of the sadism inherent in narrative, and de Lauretis’s examination of consent and seduction as the two routes available to femininity in the Freudian Oedipal trajectory, I asked, echoing Mary Ann Doane, "What is the danger of the female look?" I do not want to close this question down, for I believe it is one of the inquiries we must continue to pursue, assiduously and imaginatively. Nor do I believe that we will find one answer only. At the same time, it is appropriate to draw some provisional conclusions at this moment, complicating the original question, then ushering it back into circulation.
First, we may be ignoring important facets of the gaze by casting the question in terms of danger when anxiety might be more provocative, especially since that term holds within it the capacity for both fear and desire. In Mulvey's formulation,

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. ("Visual Pleasure" 21)

Even when the female figure is styled and displayed for the male gaze, however, and even if the female viewer is positioned to share the gaze of the male spectator, the female figure means something else to the female spectator, something in excess of the missing penis and the fact of sexual difference. As this study has shown repeatedly, even in the most monolithic constructions of femininity, something escapes, an element or elements to which the restless process of identification may attach itself and begin its work. When the female figure is presented to the female within the narrative, as it is in Passing, for example, it is likely to provoke a play of difference and likeness, to prove a source of anxiety, certainly, but also one of pleasure, both for the characters themselves and for the reader. In this play through positions lies one possible answer to Doane's problem of woman's over-identification.
But I do not want to take Mulvey too much to task for giving woman a singular meaning; as she says early on in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," "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" (15). To these, Linda Williams, quoting Adrienne Rich, would add "the essential female tragedy": the loss of the daughter to the mother ("Something Else" 138). Certainly this topic has been treated in melodrama--Stella Dallas, for example, and Mildred Pierce--but it has still not been granted its full tragic dimensions. I would add to this list of neglected topics friendship between women, a frequent subplot but rarely the center of narrative action (Thelma & Louise being the notable recent exception), although competition between women has received considerable attention in films such as The Women and All About Eve. Through the exploration of these neglected issues that loom large in our extradiegetic lives, we may test the boundaries of narrative, discovering what besides Oedipus might fit within its familiar contours. In opposition to Mulvey, then, whose stated aim is to destroy beauty and pleasure through analysis, I advocate close reading as a tool to locate the female spectator’s or reader’s pleasures--even
in classic narratives--and as a step toward formulating strategies to maximize them. There is intense--and, unfortunately, rare--pleasure, as Days of Heaven proves, in seeing the female gaze represented on screen and having it as a central structure in the narrative, not to mention in hearing a female voice-over. Such pleasures must be brought to the forefront of consciousness and analyzed further if we are to build on them.

In the course of this study, I have been surprised by the extent to which female characters provoke not fear of castration pure and simple, as Mulvey would have it, but instead a welter of feelings associated with the border between the imaginary and the symbolic. No one would question the existence of Quentin Compson's castration anxiety in The Sound and the Fury, for example, or its actual playing out in (or on) the person of Benjy. Equally important to the narrative, however, is the substantial appeal (and threat) of Caddy Compson as a figuration of the imaginary and its lost plenitude--in fact, Caddy as an intrusion of the imaginary into the symbolic (even a penetration), something that must be shoved to the margins if not destroyed. Central to Caddy's construction as "little mother" is her maternal gaze, which provides both the pleasure of "locking eyes" and the danger of backsliding: losing the independence of the symbolic (even if it is an alienating one) and merging once again with the mother, a union that may feel like a
devouring. Through this rereading of masculine anxiety, we can imagine that Medusa is not objectifying the male hero through her gaze but instead is welcoming him, drawing him into a strangely familiar communion of looks to which he cannot put a name. His stiffening is his last stand in the symbolic, his embodiment as the phallic Law-of-the-Father as he resists an exchange of looks that recalls something only dimly recollected, a time in his pre-history when two sets of eyes meeting did not stimulate a battle for supremacy. In The Great Gatsby, Daisy’s voice, rather than her gaze, serves the function of recalling the imaginary, offering a trace of something lost but still infinitely desirable even though threatening to masculinity. Lost maternal plenitude is like the Sirens’ song: a powerful lure but one which draws the hero dangerously off course in his solitary masculine journey. In Mata Hari, the spy capitalizes on the ambivalent valence of the imaginary by playing to male masochism through a pattern of seduction and rejection, disappearance and reappearance that finds one of its clearest expressions in Mata’s evasive gaze. The spy makes of desire an adult version of Freud’s fort/da game, casting herself as the seductive but ever elusive mother. My point here is, first, that the phases of the imaginary are complex, as is the movement toward and into the symbolic. Second, the multifaceted developmental task of moving out of the imaginary finds its reflection in any
number of narrative, visual, and aural pleasures and anxieties. To privilege castration anxiety alone is to be unnecessarily reductive and to hinder our understanding of the text, be it literature or film. Additionally, the spotlight on castration casts a shadow on the very different female trajectory toward sexual maturity, eclipsing us to its representation in such works as *The Sound and the Fury* and *Days of Heaven*.

In addition to unpacking carefully and thoroughly for both sexes the movement toward sexual maturity, we might again take up the Oedipal narrative itself, a project that raises two separate but related sets of questions. First, is Oedipus' story the master of master narratives? Are we prepared to say there are no others and have never been? Or as part of the feminist project to recover and revalue female writers--and for that matter, female history--can we seek other patterns, other sets of concerns that have been buried by the phallocentric order? Or are we satisfied, as de Lauretis and Mulvey seem to be, that Propp and Lotman have adequately covered the history of narrative? An even more important question, perhaps, given the grip of Oedipus on the Western imagination is the following: can we take our knowledge of this classic tale and use it to make new narratives? Where de Lauretis does not want to advocate the replacement or appropriation of Oedipus, I am less reluctant to do so, but I join her in calling for "an interruption of the triple track by
which narrative, meaning, and pleasure are constructed from the male Oedipal point of view (Alice 157). Is there pleasure in subverting the master narrative? In Bound, for example, film noir is turned on its head by casting Corky, a soft-butch lesbian, as the hero, and Violet, a femme in every sense of the word, as the femme fatale. They are two women who know too much and, as lesbians, know something different: among other things, the answer to Queen Victoria's question—what do two women do with each other? Not only does Bound allow the femme fatale to survive her own narrative, but she escapes in the company of her lover Corky, who asks earlier in the tale, "You know the difference between you and me?" When Violet answers no, Corky admits, "Me neither." Based on a classic Hollywood narrative form but subversive in its unwinding of the plot, particularly in its characterization and especially in its exploration of likeness and difference, Bound offers within mainstream film a variety of alternative pleasures, some of which are shared by lesbians and straight women spectators and some of which are not. Not the least of these pleasures are the women's gazes at each other and their objectifying looks at (and consequent judgments of) the men around them. De Lauretis maintains, "The most exciting work in cinema and in feminism today is not anti-narrative or anti-Oedipal; quite the opposite. It is narrative and Oedipal with a vengeance, for it seeks to stress the
duplicity of that scenario and the specific contradiction of the female subject in it, the contradiction by which historical women must work with and against Oedipus" (Alice 157). In sum, I agree with de Lauretis that some exciting work is emerging from an Oedipal atmosphere; I am simply not ready to foreclose the possibility of other narrative structures, given that the investigation is relatively new insofar as feminist theory is concerned.

Am I advocating that we turn our backs on avant-garde cinema? Certainly not. Nor should the avant-garde be constructed as a farm team from which the big leagues draw players and techniques, although that is undoubtedly one relationship between classic cinema and its underfunded, underviewed, rabble-rousing poor relation. Yet, to reiterate a passage from the introduction, Christian Metz points out, "one goes to the cinema because one wants to and not because one has to force oneself, in the hope that the film will please and not that it will displease" (7). To date, avant-garde artists' emphasis on pleasing themselves rather than their spectators, especially through their avoidance of narrative, has proved an inescapable impediment to a wide audience largely ignorant of the avant-garde tradition.

In Linda Williams's view,

it is an understandably easier task to reject "dominant" or "institutional" modes of representation altogether than to discover within these existing modes glimpses of a more "authentic" (the term itself is indeed problematic) female subjectivity. And yet
I believe that this latter is a more fruitful avenue of approach, not only as a means of identifying what pleasure there is for women spectators within the classical narrative cinema, but also as a means of developing new representational strategies that will more fully speak to women audiences. For such speech must begin in a language that, however circumscribed within patriarchal ideology, will be recognized and understood by women. ("Something Else" 142)

If feminist film theory is a fair indication, women have viewed Mulvey’s prediction of the decline of traditional narrative film with a great deal more than sentimental regret. Nor has abandoning dominant cinema proved the easier task, as Williams suggests, for the investment in understanding Hollywood film and "saving" it for female spectators has been far greater than that in attracting women to the side of the avant-garde. Furthermore, relatively recent trends in female viewing--for example, the tremendous popularity of Thelma & Louise among white women and the phenomenon of African-American women gathering into groups to view Waiting to Exhale, and watching it repeatedly--indicate that the mainstream female audience is actively seeking pleasure, and sometimes finding it. Yet Williams’s point that film must be accessible is well taken and echoes Jane Gaines’s critique that feminist film theory is often elitist, exclusionary, and so stuck in theory that it has no point of contact with social practice ("White Privilege" 107-08).

Recently there has been a greater call for sociological investigation into how we watch dominant
cinema and a corresponding criticism of feminist film theory for being divorced from the female spectator as an individual as opposed to a psychoanalytic construct.¹ While I count as significant the enthusiastic response of feminists to work such as Janice Radway’s with the readers of romance novels or Elizabeth Ellsworth’s with reviews of Personal Best, I do not take it as a sign that we should abandon, tone down, or even necessarily modify the project of a psychoanalytically-based film theory any more than I would argue that Freud and Lacan should have been sociologists. Those not trained in sociology can experiment with interviewing spectators, observing behavior during screenings (as Carol Clover does), and tallying results, but it is also appropriate to cede these methods rooted in the social sciences to our very well-trained feminist colleagues, knowing that theory will be all the richer when it is informed by results scientifically gathered, just as sociological models will draw on theoretical investigations, psychoanalytic or otherwise, in constructing modes of research and interpreting results.

While I may seem to be wandering far afield from the gaze in this conclusion, in many ways it was the problem of female spectatorship that inaugurated this study, in particular the project to locate the female gaze within the narrative as a way to provide new possibilities for identification. Breaking open what had become a
monolithic male gaze and finding within it a complex and active vocabulary of intersecting, warring, subverting, and sympathetic sub-gazes has been a challenge in itself, but I have been surprised not so much by the number of different types of female gaze, which I expected to some extent, nor even the many strategies of the gazer of color. Most surprising to me has been the role of class in the gaze. As is too often the case in feminism, I had assumed that in a conflict between gender and class, masculinity would win hands down, a mistaken assumption revealed through close study of Days of Heaven, The Great Gatsby, and Passing. Continuing study of the competition for a dominant gaze would reveal not just the many ways in which marginalized groups find pleasure within dominant cinema, but also the ways we might structure new narratives to foreground this search for power through the specular. To rephrase de Lauretis, maybe we need narratives that are scopophilic with a vengeance, that reveal not only the desire to dominate through surveillance but how that desire entraps its possessor. Such a narrative--utopian at this point, and perhaps not even imaginable--would lay bare not the object of the gaze, nor even the subject, but the structure that erects the binaries and sets them in opposition.

In "Looking Through Rear Window: Hitchcock’s Traps and Lures of Heterosexual Romance," Jeanne Allen makes an interesting and productive slip. She describes Miss
Torso's performance of femininity as she "hostesses, flirts, pleases, and wards off various suitors," reporting that Lisa Fremont tells Jeffries, "She's performing a woman's most difficult task: balancing roles" (37). In fact, Lisa says "juggling wolves." Yet juggling roles is the best metaphor I have found for the process by which marginalized viewers make their narrative and visual pleasure, just as Miss Torso makes her social life as best she can until her chosen pleasure knocks at her door. And it is a matter of making and taking--a complex creative act, which in some cases evades consciousness until after the fact, like a Freudian slip, and in other cases is highly conscious: a well-developed method of building pleasure into a text where that viewer has been excluded from the original design, as in gay and lesbian readings of heterosexual romance. But while Miss Torso's true love arrives at her door, with the implication that her juggling days are over, our narrative has no clear-cut happy ending, except insofar as we suspect we must make one for ourselves. And that in itself--the resolution to be active rather than passive in our own pleasure--is useful and fully in keeping with what feminist film theory has accomplished in previous years. When Perseus sets out to bring back the head of Medusa as a wedding present for his stepfather-to-be, he must first gain the knowledge of the Gray Women, who have but one eye between them, which they share by passing it along (Hamilton 144). While
marginalized spectators may be juggling roles, they are not juggling one gaze among themselves, at the mercy of the first male hero who happens by. Nor is the princess at the end of the journey waiting with eyes demurely lowered. Medusa is not the only one who looks back.

End Notes

1. Furthermore, psychoanalytic film theory itself has been criticized for its monolithic power, for example, in David Bordwell and Noël Carrol’s *Post-Theory*: "And all the essays in the volume show that solid research can proceed without appeal to the doctrines once held to form the basis of all proper reflection about cinema. In particular, the essays here demonstrate that film research can proceed sans psychoanalysis. Indeed, if there is an organizing principle to the volume, it is that solid film scholarship can proceed without employing the psychoanalytic framework routinely mandated by the cinema studies establishment" (xiii).
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Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

Oct. 27, 1997