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Male spectatorship and Hollywood star acting

Bingham, Dennis Patrick, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990

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MALE SPECTATORSHIP AND HOLLYWOOD STAR ACTING

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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INTRODUCTION

"Men have everything to say about their own sexuality"—Helene Cixous

"And I know my life
Would look all right
If I could see it on the
silver screen."—
"James Dean" by The Eagles

Since 1975, when Laura Mulvey's ground-breaking article, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," appeared in the journal Screen, feminist psychoanalytic film theory has proceeded from the premise, cast in Freud's dichotomy of active masculinity and passive femininity, that the cinematic "look" derives from a male subjectivity and is directed at a female object, who takes on the characteristics of a possession. What this means for narrative film is that "the split between spectacle and narrative supports the man's role as the active one of forwarding the story, making things happen" (310).

By exposing the way in which the look and action in "classical" narrative film are organized, in terms of scopophilia (Freud's division of a perverse "pleasure in looking" into voyeurism, fetishism, and narcissism) and the Oedipus Complex, Mulvey determined the project of feminist film criticism—to find a screen identity for women that is not controlled by a male gaze. Feminist film
study since Mulvey's article has pursued two parallel goals: to understand female representation and spectatorship in dominant cinema, and to find a new way in independent film, and occasionally in dominant cinemas as well, to film the female body and privilege a female spectator. Much of the work along these lines has pinpointed complications in a female subjectivity that Mulvey sees as excluded from dominant film.

Interest has centered more slowly on Mulvey's imperturbable and nearly omnipotent male subject. Where Mulvey theorized a narrative driven by sadism ("Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person ..." [311]), writers such as Kaja Silverman and David Rodowick began probing its repressed opposite, masochism. Critics began debating some of the Freudian assumptions which Mulvey reproduced without question, such as castration anxiety and the castrated woman as the bases of fetishism. Susan Lurie, in an extension of Karen Horney's Neo-Freudian work in the 1930s, "Pornography and the Dread of Woman," suggested that man does not dread woman, as in the Freudian scenario, because she has been castrated and thus reminds him that the same could happen to him, but because she has not been castrated and yet can still function about the same as he can. Thus, the importance of the phallus is diminished and such Freudian doctrine as penis envy and the wounded,
incomplete woman is exposed as phallocentric wishful thinking, in a way reminiscent of the doubts which Freud himself expressed about some of his gender formulations.

In the first of her articles dealing with masochism and male subjectivity, Silverman asserted that "the writing of the history of the male subject ... constitutes an elaborate verneinung, an elaborate denial of passivity and masochism" ("Masochism and Subjectivity" 8). In other words, where Mulvey's ruling-out of a place for a female spectator in narrative film led critics to look for underground ways in which the apparatus inscribes female spectatorship in spite of itself, her monolithic "figure in a landscape" began to lead critics to find ways in which the male subject shows the ruptures to his mastery and reveals male subjectivity as a construction, one which organizes itself around the repression of those weaknesses, fears, and passivities which it defines as "feminine."

Gender definitions themselves are, after all, posited in patriarchy as monoliths, and Mulvey's essay has been so influential partly because it traces the one-dimensional outlines of the monolith, leaving it for others to fill in gaps and find complications.

In the early eighties came the first tentative calls for studies of the construction of what Steve Neale called "the images and functions of heterosexual masculinity within mainstream cinema" (8). These came in the form of
two articles in *Screen*, Neale's "Masculinity as Spectacle," and its follow-up a year later, Ian Green's "Malefunction." Neale's article hoped to open up discussion by recasting Mulvey's agenda in terms of masculinity. Neale seemed most concerned with the male figure as an object for erotic spectacle whose exhibitionism is displaced, in genres such as the Western, onto action scenes, such as chases and gunfights, and at other times (Neale's example is Rock Hudson in Douglas Sirk's 1950s melodramas) "feminized" by the objectification. As Green and much later, Paul Smith, noted, this notion sticks much too doggedly to the active/passive paradigm of Freud-via-Mulvey. Neale even more unconvincingly considers the prospect of a fetishized male figure without dealing with the castration issue which in any version of fetishism is the impetus for a gaze which robs a human figure of subjectivity and invests it with a quality of pure objectification.

Despite the problems with Neale's article, it is valuable for its attempt to direct attention to the construction of masculinity in film. Green's article addressed some of the problems with Neale's argument and hence seemed a kind of corrective. However, Green even more than Neale gets bogged down on the issue of identification with characters. Green wonders if men identify with, say, Joan Crawford in *Mildred Pierce* (1945), when the point is moot; both critics seem not to have read
psychoanalytic semioticians such as Silverman, Raymond
Bellour, Stephen Heath, Teresa de Lauretis, and Thierry
Kuntzel, who find gendered subject positions inscribed in
films along the lines of desire and ideology. A male
spectator could well "identify" with Crawford in Mildred
Pierce in the sense that a spectator shares her emotions
and wants to see what happens to her, while experiencing
her story as being about a woman who has brought tragedy on
herself and her daughter by straying outside the bounds of
patriarchy—that is, outside the home—in a newly postwar
era in which women are being called back to their places
as homemakers to make way for the men returning from the
war. Thus, a male spectator in 1945 could become involved
in Mildred Pierce without having the sense of himself as a
male in patriarchy shaken in any significant way.

We should remember the distinction between what Emile
Benveniste terms "the speaking subject," which as Silverman
explains, "is that agency responsible for the text's
enunciation" and the subject of speech, or of the film's
discourse, which
can be best understood as that character or group
of characters most central to the fiction—that
figure or cluster of figures who occupy a
position within the narrative equivalent to that
occupied by the first-person pronoun in a
sentence (Subject of Semiotics 47).

Silverman warns further against confusing
the speaking subject [apparatus] with the subject
of the film's discourse [character], since many
cinematic texts attribute to a fictional
character faculties which actually belong to the apparatuses of enunciation, such as coercive vision or hearing, or control of the story (Subject 47-48).

These issues are dealt with perhaps definitively in Christian Metz's landmark book, The Imaginary Signifier. While Metz acknowledges the filmed image of a human figure (character, actor, star) as a point of identification, he finds it secondary to the spectator's own perception as it aligns with the film "apparatus of enunciation"--with narrative, mise-en-scene, camera movement, editing, sound, music, dialogue. Metz calls such an alignment "a pure act of perception" (49), an identification with oneself in the sense that the spectator both "receives" and "releases" what he/she experiences in the film. An ideological application of this concept would be that the spectator both constructs from his/her own subject position and is constructed by (has his/her subject construction reaffirmed by) what is on the screen. Jean-Louis Baudry, in "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus," equates cinematic identification with the effacement of the difference between film frames in continuity editing. "Film ... lives on the denial of difference: differences are necessary for it to live, but it lives on their negation" (536).

However, the issue of the gendered likeness on screen is crucial to an understanding of the appeal and operations of movies. Up to now, my discussion of the work of Mulvey
and others has not considered Jacques Lacan's revisionist psychoanalytic theories. Mulvey bases her concept of male subjectivity on Lacan's account of the child's entry into language and subjectivity at the Mirror Stage. This is the moment when the child first recognizes a self separate from the mother; however, the realization is of something not-real, an image, a fictional "ideal-I." The process of subject construction which follows the Mirror Stage produces a social subject spoken by patriarchal law and language but still in thrall to the mirror image, drawn to it as an ideal with whom the subject identifies and experiences a fantasy self but from whom (and note the tendency to see the reflection as a "who," not a "what") the subject is detached and alienated, unable to match the representation, much as a male subject will fall shy of the image of the ideal father.

This moment at which the Imaginary is crystallized for the subject at the Mirror Stage, while marking the subject's entry into the Symbolic Order, is central not only to Mulvey's theory of spectatorship, but even more so to Metz's and to those who have followed them. The specular fascination with the larger-than-life fantasy image of the screen combines with the codes, structures, and gender definitions enforced by the Symbolic. What results is an apparatus in which spectators speak and are spoken by their own subject constructions. Jean-Louis
Baudry elaborates upon the primary and secondary identifications which result:

The origin of the self, as discovered by Lacan, in pertaining to the imaginary order, effectively subverts the "optical machinery" of idealism which the projection room scrupulously reproduces. But it is not specifically "imaginary," nor as a reproduction of its first configuration, that the self finds a "place" in the cinema. This occurs, rather, as a sort of proof or verification of that function, a solidification through repetition.

The "reality" mimed by the cinema is thus first of all that of a "self." But, because the reflected image is not that of the body itself but that of a world already given as meaning, one can distinguish two levels of identification. The first, attached to the image itself, derives from the character portrayed as a center of secondary identifications, carrying an identity which constantly must be seized and reestablished. The second level permits the appearance of the first and places it "in action"—this is the transcendent subject whose place is taken by the camera which constitutes and rules the objects in this "world." Thus the spectator identifies less with what is represented, the spectacle itself, than with what stages the spectacle, makes it seen, obliging him to see what it sees; this is exactly the function taken over by the camera as a sort of relay. Just as the mirror assembles the fragmented body in a sort of imaginary integration of the self, the transcendental self unites the discontinuous fragments of phenomena, of lived experience, into unifying meaning. Through it each fragment assumes meaning by being integrated into an "organic" unity. Between the imaginary gathering of the fragmented body into a unity and the transcendentality of the self, giver of unifying meaning, the current is indefinitely reversible (539–40).

Although Mulvey takes off from Lacan's concept of a misrecognition at the Mirror Stage, in using it as the foundation for an overwhelmingly forceful perceiving agency, she disregards its most powerful implications for
feminism. Surely a subjectivity based upon self-idealization, misrecognition and an image which can never be matched by the subject would be prone to reveal gaps in its constitution, to commit unconscious slips, and perhaps even to split apart from the strain of its repressions. In other words, in applying Lacan's concept of an illusory subject formation, Mulvey, like Metz and Baudry, fails to consider the potential in Lacan for illuminating the contradictions implicit in patriarchy and Hollywood cinema.

While Baudry emphasizes identification as a denial of the difference between self (subject) and other (machine), by also positing the subject as one that "rules the objects in this 'world,'" he acknowledges another crucial difference between self and other that identification entails, one which Mulvey is quick to cast in gender terms. Clint Eastwood's films pose an example of identification as simultaneously a refusal of difference between self and the "transcendental subject" and an absolute insistence upon difference between that subject and all others--those others themselves defined as quintessentially different. What happens then when this pattern breaks of its own elaborate repression and the subject finds himself confronted with the denied difference, perhaps even identified with it? When subjectivity threatens to become its object, (how) does it
recuperate, restore its sense of primacy, its sense of the subject?

Such considerations of ruptures and contradictions in the codes of a text/social order that (re)presents itself as coherent have become central to the practice of feminist film criticism. In an explanation of "reading against the grain," Judith Mayne writes that

the assumption is that the classical cinema consists of images that are not so much "accurate" or "distorted" as they are components in a system. Thus notions of the film image as a kind of social imperative are, from this point of view, less important than is an understanding of the film's contradictions, of the lapses in what might appear to be a coherently constructed whole. To read the classical cinema against the grain is a deconstructive enterprise ("The Female Audience and the Feminist Critic" 23).

This "deconstructive enterprise," as Mayne points out, is a useful one for feminists because it locates in the classical film a place for female spectatorship far preferable to the bleak alternatives which Mulvey's system leaves--either "masculinized" identification with a male subjectivity or a "masochistic" identification with an objectified, marginalized femininity.

There is an undeniable if somewhat curious pleasure involved in such analysis: you can still like the classical cinema without turning it into a "bad object." But it is necessary to question the extent to which such readings inform the consumption of films. One of the major advantages of a reading against the grain of the classical cinema is that it allows us to analyze films from the standpoint of the viewer (27).
Such a reading strategy is closely related to the critical practice of textual analysis, a meticulous method which should not be confused with a New Critical brand of "close reading" in literary study. Textual analysis at the same time stays with and goes outside the text by identifying the signifying system of a film or scene and the inscription of the socially constructed spectating subject within the operations of the film apparatus.

The psychoanalytic feminist critic, then, occupies an ambivalent position: that of a lover of classical film who resists its ideological spectator positioning and wants to understand her implication in it or exclusion from it, and does so by making its invisible operations visible. This is done by isolating the classical film's elements, such as its unobtrusive camera position, "realistic" mise-en-scene, editing, music—and in this study—star signification and acting, and by using psychoanalytic concepts to show spectator construction and those places where the construction begins to come undone, to contradict itself. However, it should be said that textual analysis is by no means necessarily a feminist project. Constance Penley writes that

the contradictions and gaps that the feminists had been positivistically ascribing to the attempt to stage a feminine discourse in a patriarchal form or to the specific difficulty that the woman's image entails, were for the male
theorists no more than necessary components of the classical film's illusionistic economy (377).

Indeed, consider the conclusion of Thierry Kuntzel's exhaustive analysis of the film *The Most Dangerous Game*; the passage begins with a quotation from Metz:

"Cinematic voyeurism, unauthorized scopophilia, is ... in a direct line from the primal scene." *The Most Dangerous Game* is uncanny because it constitutes a *mise en scene* of my "love" of the cinema; that is what I go to see (again) with each new film; my own desire--endlessly repeated--for re-presentation (62).

This rather typical passage, in its rapturous tone and frank use of first person pronouns, shows the conundrum of textual analysis, at least as practiced by men. At the same time that the critic lays out the unconscious lures of cinema in intricate detail, he seems to celebrate those same practices. However, this problem actually keeps him from falling into another one, namely, the appearance of condescension toward spectators and the exemption of himself from the effects that the film apparatus can be shown to have on some "other" spectator, of appearing to distance himself from the implications of his own findings about male desire, in the ways against which writers such as Stephen Heath and Arthur Brittan warn.

Issues of identification and the place of the spectator in the cinema's signification process have led critics to the consideration--long neglected in film studies--of stardom and acting. The star can be seen as the point of Metz's "secondary identification"; it can be
assumed that stars personify fantasy projections of the spectator, acting out Imaginary values of freedom and autonomy and Symbolic values of authority, community, and stability, in a complex balance. The interest in stars can, again, be traced to Mulvey, who wrote of classical cinema's

production of ego ideals as expressed in particular in the star system, the stars centring both screen presence and screen story as they act out a complex process of likeness and difference (the glamorous impersonates the ordinary) (308).

Barry King in "Stardom as an Occupation" writes that stars represent that which "is otherwise suppressed by the prioritised realities of the dominant culture" (156). For Richard Dyer,

stars articulate what it is to be a human being in contemporary society; that is, they express the particular notion we hold of the person, of the 'individual.' They do so complexly, variously--they are not straightforward affirmations of individualism (Heavenly Bodies 8).

The complexity and variety of which Dyer speaks poses a contradiction to the concept of "star image," which itself tends to be monolithic. The very mention of certain stars, for instance, John Wayne, Marilyn Monroe, Katharine Hepburn, Henry Fonda, is enough to evoke an entire set of codified, idealized standards and values.

Anne Friedberg, in an article philosophically close to the theories of non-contradiction put forward by Mulvey, Baudry, and Metz, writes that the secondary identification
with stars is intensified by the meaning that stars build up outside their films. In fact, in a study of the history of the star system, Richard de Cordova writes that "The star is characterized by a fairly thoroughgoing articulation of the paradigm professional life/private life" (11). According to Friedberg,

Identification with a film star is a process which extends beyond secondary cinematic identification, an engagement that occurs for the duration of spectation, into extra-cinematic identification, an engagement which is prolonged and amplified by the auxiliary systems of codification that extend beyond the specificity of a single film's signification. And it is precisely outside of the viewing experience, in the economic and social context, that identification has become one of the most pivotal figures of the institution. The fascination with a film star is not a fascination with a single signified person (Norma Jean Baker, Marion Morrison, Greta Gustafson) or with a single signifier (Monroe in *Niagara*, Wayne in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, Garbo in *Mata Hari*) but with an entire system of signifiers and a code ... As an object in an identificatory relation, the film star is simultaneously recognized (acknowledged) as other and misrecognized (disavowed) as self. As an object transformed in a commodity system, the film star is marketed not for pure use, but for his/her exchange value. The star is an institutionally sanctioned fetish (42-43).

However, such an account casts the star as too much a fixed, immutable icon. A close survey of the films of many durable stars will show that a star's salient cinematic and extra-cinematic image is clearly articulated in only a few of his or her many films, and is as often even made problematic and contradictory in the star's vehicles. Jane
Clarke and Diana Simmonds in their monograph on Doris Day speak to the widespread reputation of Day's films, that

... they flesh out the aspirations of middle America uncritically and unproblematically. But which films are these? What about *Storm Warning* (1951), a melodrama about Ku Klux Klan murder and terrorism in a small Southern town? What about *Love Me or Leave Me* (1955), in which Day plays the 20s torch singer Ruth Etting who was involved in a disturbingly violent relationship with a small time hood? Or *The Pajama Game* (1957), which deals with labour/management disputes and sexual antagonism in a way that is not as light-hearted as might first appear? (2)

A consistent star persona runs up against the demands of narrative, which almost by definition produces drama by forcing disruptions in previously stable situations. Not only must narrative and character accommodate persona, but occasionally they disrupt the very basis of the particular ego ideal. For example, a male star of powerful spectator agency, such as Clint Eastwood, may play a character out of control, as he does in *Tightrope* and *The Beguiled*, or he might play a narrow-minded bully, as John Wayne does in *Red River* and *The Searchers*. An actor such as James Stewart, whose persona centers on his mastery despite character traits perceived as weaknesses in the context of conventional masculinity, may play characters who succumb to those weaknesses, as in several of Stewart's films for Hitchcock and Anthony Mann.

In such cases the disturbances occur in the ego ideals themselves, contradicting the values and fantasies which
comprise them. Moreover, climactic attempts to restore the questioned star image to its previous, unproblematic state—as Capra and Stewart, for example, try to do in *It's a Wonderful Life*—are sometimes exposed as awkward "happy endings," contrasted with the seamless recuperations at which classical cinema typically excels.

Ruptures such as these can be compared to a crack in the mirror which shows unexpectedly the medium of representation—a plain sheet of glass, now flawed—to one who had mistaken it for the referent itself. The skilled naturalness and ordinariness of most stars combined with the aura of the exceptional which surrounds them duplicates over and over that first magnification in front of the mirror. The exposure of so many plurals within a paradigm construed as singular finds a parallel in dominant ideology.

Patriarchy which represents itself as a natural order and gender roles which are taken as not only innate but simple and inflexible are reflected in a star system in which a signifier—the star persona—overrides and obscures any signifieds which show trouble in the outward image. Similarly, "femininity" and "masculinity" outweigh conflicting indications of bisexuality and ambiguity, of a subject's own preferences and traits. In stardom as in other myths of the individual, not only does "the glamorous impersonate the ordinary," but to paraphrase
Mulvey, the general appears as the particular; the mass masquerades as the singular, creating a mass-ive contradiction: a mirror image in which each one out of many millions of consumers sees something of her or himself. The very individuality which the star system celebrates often reproduces norms which approve certain ways of living over others, thus actually discouraging individuality.

However, patriarchal constructions are not easily maintained; Kaja Silverman speaks of film theory's "preoccupation with male subjectivity, and with that in cinema which threatens constantly to undermine its stability" (Acoustic Mirror 2). Male subjectivity represses its masochism, its castration fear, and its fear of an exhibitionism and objectification which it has defined as exclusively feminine. It finds myriad ways to equate woman with lack and view her with dread because she does not possess the phallus. Male subjectivity represses its bisexuality, positing "penis-envy" in women as a displacement of its own womb-and breast-envy—what Lawrence Kubie called "the drive to be the other sex" (quoted in Ross 50). It poses woman as enigma in order to circumvent the mysteries of its own sexuality, asking Freud's famous question, "Was will das Weib?"—"What does woman want?" in order to avoid facing its own assumptions about what men want.
Much of what I include under the term "male subjectivity," by which is meant the generalized experience and identity of "I/male" inextricably intermingled, is termed by Arthur Brittan as "masculinism," which he defines as

the ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination. As such, it is the ideology of patriarchy. Masculinism takes it for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour, and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres ... masculinism gives primacy to the belief that gender is not negotiable (4).

The danger of definitions as hard-edged as the ones above is that individual males can easily exempt themselves from them—"others, not me," as Stephen Heath writes about similar issues ("Male Feminism" 2). The difficult point for men, writes Brittan is "radical feminist writers'" insistence that it is men-in-general who are responsible for the oppression of women. The usual "liberal" response is that we cannot talk of men-in-general, only individual men who behave in a variety of individual ways ... If a man rapes, then he is culpable, not his friends, his father or society ... What horrifies men is the claim that most men behave like this, and that this is nowhere more evident than in the family ... The proposition that it is men-in-general who oppress women runs counter to all the established axioms of liberal individualism (178-79).

The star persona is presented and received, along very similar lines, as a non-contradictory subject. However, it is a solid center which cannot hold for long given the pressures of character, which as Richard Dyer writes, tends
to be organized in terms of "particularity," "development," "interiority," "motivation," and "consistency" (Stars 109); narrative, which tries to replicate a version of everyday life; and performance, which essays a character. Male stardom produces singular and distinctive paradigms of coherent, consistent masculinity and sends these into the marketplace of commercial cinema to be buffeted and tested by the contradictions which the persona itself tries to hold down.

In what is probably the most important study of a male star to date, "Cary Grant and the Comedy of Male Desire," Andrew Britton argues that Grant's most characteristic films—he cites the screwball comedies of the late thirties, and especially The Awful Truth (Mc Carey, 1937), Holiday (Cukor, 1938), Bringing Up Baby (Hawks, 1938)—involve the star in a delicate comic play between "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics, resulting in what Britton terms "something like the image of a positive bisexuality—something with which we are familiar in the personae of many of the great female stars, but which it is difficult to parallel among the men" (11). The reason for this, of course, is that in patriarchy masculinity is a virtue (the word "virtue" itself derives from the Latin "vir," for "man") which woman would naturally want to appropriate, while femininity remains associated with
weakness and dread and is thus to be avoided. It is, to Britton, all the more remarkable that *Bringing Up Baby* has disassociated the theme of a man's discovery of his 'femininity' from the idea of loss—loss of dignity, loss of status, loss, ultimately, of the balls. What Hawks emphasises is the gain; the losses are themselves felt to be positive. Indeed, it is the acquisition of the phallus which is associated with deprivation (11).

Britton's work is important because it finds the greatest instability in filmed representations of gender to take place within the persona and performance of a male star actor, one who on close study is shown to wear the accoutrements of male mastery uncomfortably and "unnaturally"—in short, to show them as artificial constructions. To Britton, bisexuality is what foregrounds Grant's masculine presumption and turns it into the butt of comedy in film after film and into "detestable" oppression of women in Hitchcock films such as *Notorious* (1946) and *Suspicion* (1941) in which the director's approach to Grant is "to subdue the comedian" (11).

The maintenance of male subjectivity, then, is a negotiation of masculinist mastery with the repressed bisexuality which is poised to undermine it, or to put it in Britton's less threatening, more positive terms, to free the male subject from it. This will be the theme of this dissertation, which looks at male subjectivity in Hollywood cinema as it is constructed, maintained, and ultimately made unstable in the careers of three of the most durable,
emblematic and contradictory male stars of the (mostly) postwar, post-studio era, James Stewart, Clint Eastwood, and Jack Nicholson. I will look at each of these star actors as representing his own version of masculinity.

Britton's work on Grant and on Katherine Hepburn is also important in that he views a star's career as following a certain arc, having its own logic and coherence. For example, he sees Grant's late thirties comedies for Mc Carey and Hawks as subversive in their reversals of phallocratic values, and his later films as attempts to accommodate and contain what Britton considers Grant's "feminine" characteristics. In other words, film study conventionally treats actors as expressive figures in the mise-en-scene, or subsumes them into the characters they play. But writers such as Britton and Dyer have begun to view the films of some major stars as representing a body of work and a vision which are consistent and unified in the ways that the discipline usually associates with the work of directors. The career of a male star can also show an interesting, often troubled struggle to maintain—or shake off—a consistent definition of masculinity. So in James Stewart's work, for instance, the critic can see connections between, say, Capra protagonists and Hitchcock protagonists that might seem far-fetched at best without their added context as Stewart protagonists.
This dissertation is divided into analyses of the personae and the key films of each of these three star actors. James Stewart is the first chronologically, but more important, he is an actor whose star persona seems seriously at odds with many, if not most, of his best known performances. Stewart's early successes, such as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Destry Rides Again*, deal with his essentially "unmasculine" traits, construed as "boyish" in *Mr. Smith* and as "feminine" in the Western comedy *Destry*. His later films, especially his Westerns for Anthony Mann and thrillers for Alfred Hitchcock, showed the actor's propensity for wading into uncharted waters of male emotion, hysteria, and masochism, areas for which Stewart's face, one minute ordinary, the next minute haunted, and his rather fragile-looking physical equipment, made him particularly suitable. I will contrast the differences between Stewart's general persona and his screen roles, and chart his career from *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, with special attention to his Westerns, a form which seemed to bring out the starkest contradictions in Stewart.

Clint Eastwood, whom Paul Smith calls one of "the most visible icons of masculinity in North American culture," is worth looking at as a construction of a completely narcissistic type of male egoism, one which has often been read as a defensive reaction to the feminist, gay liberation, and civil rights movements. Eastwood is
highly interesting for film theory for several reasons. His presence and look are often articulated in the film apparatus itself, especially in the Man with No Name and Dirty Harry films which established his persona and stardom. This has masculinist and ultimately openly political meaning for spectatorship of his films. Eastwood, despite or perhaps because of the over­determined fantasy and repression of difference in his basic persona, has also made two of the most remarkably contradictory films in Hollywood cinema, especially in their profoundly confused views of male and female sexualities, The Beguiled (Don Siegel, 1971) and Tightrope (Richard Tuggle, 1984). He has also made films such as Bronco Billy (Clint Eastwood, 1980) and Honky Tonk Man (Eastwood, 1982), which seem revisions of his violent, omnipotent persona. The chapter is divided into three sections; the first, on The Man with No Name persona; the second, on the Dirty Harry series; the third, on The Beguiled and Tightrope.

Jack Nicholson's star persona is possibly the most complex of the three. Nicholson appears to critique male self-confidence and aggressiveness by setting up a Brechtian sort of separation between actor and character, exposing the playing of male roles as performance, rather than nature. Nicholson's acting style and philosophy show the salient influences of the American counter-culture of
the 1960s and of European art cinema, especially the French New Wave. But while Nicholson's ironic approach to masculinity as a performance leads to some remarkable films, it also produces a tension between Nicholson's performances and the general climate of classical cinema and naturalistic performance within which they take place. The chapter will examine Nicholson's approach to acting and will analyze specifically Five Easy Pieces, The Last Detail, Chinatown, and The Shining.

Although we tend to think of the "star image" as a fixed icon (certainly extra-cinematic publicity encourages this) and as a consistent, "real person" off-screen, a star's iconography both changes and stays the same from film to film. In fact, I insist on the term "star actor" for specific reasons; I've discussed the ideal, "larger-than-life" connotations of the star. In addition, "star" connotes a trademark, a commodity which is, in effect, sold for the first time again and again. That is, the need to present the star commodity in recognizable, salable form each time operates along with a need to introduce to the familiar, provocative variations and bits of newness. Thus, advertising copy along the lines of "Bogart--as You've Never Seen Him Before!" promises a star the spectator has seen before in a role different enough from his others to justify the spectator's paying to see his latest incarnation, but similar enough to the persona not
to disturb the fantasy values which the star represents, a promise not always kept.

The idea that a star is also an actor, however, introduces an element of chance, of personal intervention, of creativity and unpredictability to the notion of pure commodity or ego ideal. I have chosen three stars from the era of independent production because this period, which began in the early fifties with the breakup of the studio system, has allowed for more contradiction and complications to a star's persona in his/her films. Since the end of the studio era, stars have had more control over their choices of roles than studio contract stars did. They often own their own production companies and become moguls and directors themselves, although some stars such as Robert Redford use their power to guard their star images as closely as M-G-M controlled Clark Gable's and Warner Brothers maintained James Cagney's tough-guy image, limiting the number of musicals that he made, for instance. Cary Grant, the subject of Britton's article, was an anomaly, a free-lancer at the height of the studio system, but he too rode herd on his image, turning down the role that James Mason played in A Star Is Born, for example, because, according to George Cukor, that film's director, it would have involved too much self-exposure.

A star like Jack Nicholson, whose shrewd and risky choices coincide with an ironic approach to masculinity,
could not function in a structure in which actors did not have autonomy. Clint Eastwood makes films for his own, ironically named, Malpaso Company (the name is Spanish for "bad move"), and has used his freedom to become one of the most active actor-directors of his era and occasionally to make dramatic departures from his established persona. The star who made the first deal for a deferred salary versus a percentage of a film's box office grosses and set a precedent for what became a common practice was James Stewart; the film was *Winchester '73* (1950), the first of five Westerns for Anthony Mann in which Stewart played neurotic characters around whose divided, unstable personalities the film's drama usually revolved. It is hard to imagine a Louis Mayer or a Harry Cohn allowing so much instability from one of the commodities in his stable.

Finally, a project which includes the signification of stars, acting, consideration of narrative, character, and the cinematic apparatus, and feminist and psychoanalytic theory might seem to pose gargantuan obstacles for methodology. Rather than clash, however, the varying approaches mesh surprisingly well, befitting a medium which itself thrives on a coming together of diverse influences. Each chapter does take a distinct approach, however. The Stewart chapter considers the frequently problematized star persona within the framework of character and narrative. Eastwood's films, in which star and character are welded
not just to each other, but embedded within the apparatus of look and montage and aligned with the spectator, provide a ripe opportunity for textual analysis that directs, rather than detracts from, attention to star signification. With Nicholson, the focus is on the actor as actor, with the idea that Nicholson's calling attention to his own acting also points up the male role, asserted as "natural" in patriarchy, as itself a series of roles.
The Persistence of the Extra-Filmic Persona

James Stewart would never play a killer.
--Alfred Hitchcock (Truffaut 102)

Well actually he was a man who could kill his own brother.
--Anthony Mann on his idea of the Western hero, as played by James Stewart in five films (Kitses 33)

Much of the writing on the Hollywood production system has emphasized that among the advantages of stars, from a film studio's point of view, is their easy reduction to types. Not only does the industry think along the lines of "types," but writers outside the industry find themselves referring to stars in this way as well. In the case of James Stewart, writers rely heavily on the "type": Vivian and Thomas Sobchack, in an introductory film textbook, refer to Stewart as "the naive and sincere righter of society's ills" (326). Hortense Powdermaker, in listing examples of star types, calls Stewart a "nice, simple guy, on the naive and idealistic side" (248). What's interesting about these characterizations is that the Sobchacks' was written in 1987, and Powdermaker's in 1950, but they're essentially identical. Although Stewart made a wealth of well-known films throughout the 1950s that
problematize his basic persona, they apparently did nothing to mitigate what Vincent Canby in 1990 called "the aw-shucks image that has become Mr. Stewart's annuity in age and maybe a straitjacket" (20).

A December 30, 1946 cover story in *Newsweek* stated that

The word "boyish," in spite of its unfortunate connotation, was used more often than any other to describe [Stewart], and was given credence by his addiction to model airplanes. The boyishness dwindled, however, when he bought his own plane, and vanished with his return from the B-24s, which left him with a few un-boyish gray hairs (reproduced in Wolfe "Return" 47).

The passage, in an issue headlined "The Return of Jimmy Stewart," marks both the star's return to films after a five-year absence due to war service and the release of his first post-war film, *It's a Wonderful Life*. This combination of "real" life and reel life events is exemplified, according to Charles Wolfe, by the cover photo, a now-familiar publicity still from the last scene of the Capra film, with the Bailey family and friends grouped in front of a Christmas tree. The passage's depiction of the boy-turned-man by battle experience as an Air Force Colonel with over 2,000 flying hours logged, sets the tone for Stewart's later star mythology in general. Subsequent events solidified this. For instance, Stewart, who was single until the age of 41, married in 1949, a date which coincided with the beginning of a series of "more
mature" roles. A recent biography observed that after *Winchester '73* (1950), his first "adult western,"

he ceased to be Jimmy Stewart and became James Stewart. He would still be called upon now and then to be affable and boyishly charming, but there would now be pictures in which he would be anything but boyish and charming (Thomas 127).

Such remarks point up a peculiar rift in Stewart's career—one between his off-screen persona and many of his film roles. This split moved David Thomson to call him "one of the most intriguing examples of a star increasingly cast against his own accepted character" (539). Given the off-casting, which happened so frequently that it almost cannot be called casting against type, one is struck by the consistency of Stewart's extra-filmic persona over a fifty-year career. A 1988 article marking Stewart's eightieth birthday, published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, a magazine which itself clings to what remains of its aura from an earlier time, celebrates Stewart as follows:

The door opens and Jimmy Stewart stands framed in the entryway. He looks as if he had just stepped out of a vintage Norman Rockwell painting [again, consider the source] ... He's the patriotic American who flew 20 combat missions in World War II. He's the nice guy who's never had a scandal attached to his name and he's been married to the same woman for more than 38 years. Once described as "the most normal of all Hollywood stars," James Stewart is still the "aw, shucks" kid on the block, the "Mr. Nice Guy" in town, and "everybody's man" to a world of fans (60).

Stewart himself participates in this typing. His slow drawling speech heard as he reads his homespun poems on *The Tonight Show* and off-screen in 1989 Campbell's soup
commercials connotes the values of the American heartland, of the small town and the frontier; the Post article itself is entitled "Ah ... Waal ... It's Jimmy Stewart." And yet despite the conflation in the popular culture of the star's off-screen life and his film career, Stewart always tried to keep them separate. In fact, he might have been thought of as the "most normal" of stars because, like "normal" people, he had a private life. His wife and children were rarely photographed. He insisted upon keeping certain aspects of his life--such as his war experience--out of his films, making no World War II films that would appear to capitalize on his military record and far fewer movies on war and military subjects than stars such as Wayne, Bogart, and Peck, who did not serve in the war. The persistence and solidity of his "normal" off-screen image enabled him repeatedly to play roles which pushed normality to and beyond accepted limits without worrying about damage to his persona.

To a great degree, his "normality" seems to have permitted the real life Stewart another dimension of the average man. Like most "normal" people, Stewart worked at a job; in fact, in the early fifties, as a new husband and father, Stewart seemed to assume the role of breadwinner, maintaining a heavy work schedule (he made two or three films a year at this time) in order to support his family. During the war, his job had been in the Air Force where he
earned honors, "none of which," according to the 1946 *Newsweek* story, "was the result of his being an Academy Award winner" (Wolfe "The Return of Jimmy Stewart" 47); before and especially after the war, the job was acting. The *Post* story states that "His first big hit, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, established him not only as 'Mr. Average Nice Guy,' but also as an exceptionally talented actor" (60), as if the second attribute were incidental and secondary to the first. In short, although Stewart's persona is a conflation of his private life and public career in one sense, in another the two seem always separate. When the actor James Stewart speaks in the voice of the "Mr. Nice Guy" Jimmy Stewart, as he does in a voice-over introduction to *Harvey* which he recorded for the film's 1990 release on video cassette, he forces attention to the off-screen "normal" guy and on-screen character both as constructions separate from the "actor."

Latter-day press articles similarly seem split between celebrations of the persona and considerations of the actor. Vincent Canby's thoughtful article appeared the day before Stewart received the life achievement award of the Film Society of Lincoln Center in April 1990. Its title, in contrast to the *Saturday Evening Post* story's "aw ... waal...", is "James Stewart's Talent: More Than Aw-Shucks." Canby's title emphasizes the name "James," which always appeared in print, in movie ads, film listings, and the
like, while "Jimmy" was his name in oral parlance by fans, TV and radio interviewers and such. Canby also sets out to de-bunk the "public image ... encrusted with the barnacles of the all-American 'Jimmy' Stewart character" (20) and to stress the skill, variety, and "dark subtext" of Stewart's acting. Canby calls Stewart "a great behavioral actor," who "somehow absorbs each role into his own particular physical frame, shaping the mannerisms, the voice and even the intelligence to coincide with those of the known actor" (20). The behavioral actor, as opposed to the actor who remakes his body and voice to accommodate a role and hence does not carry a clear persona with him from film to film (Canby's examples are Laurence Olivier, Dustin Hoffman, and Daniel Day-Lewis; Robert De Niro and Robert Duvall are other male examples), is often seen by the public as "not really acting" and as "just being himself," thus reinforcing the blurring of the public and private selves.

On the other hand, because acting is Stewart's job, he is free in his prime to take risks and to play roles which at times end up subverting his public image and the assumptions upon which it is founded. And because his post-war career turned on the boy-turned-man, many of the films turn on a division between men's roles and their antitheses. The latter are depicted as pre-Oedipal immaturity, or a boyish imaginary representing freedom from male adult responsibility, or "femininity."
Stewart's persona suggests that he is perpetually remembered as Jefferson Smith in Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (dir. Frank Capra, 1939). The public, with the foggy recollection that marks a sort of retrospective reception of old movies, thinks of Stewart in that film as the earnest, determined innocent who crusades against corrupt politicians—and, by extension, thinks of the Stewart persona in terms of the shy, honest boy next door, in the kind of small-town mythology evoked but problematized by Stewart and Frank Capra in the film that both men say is their favorite, It's a Wonderful Life (1946).

Capra's films, when one sees them now, turn out to be far more complicated and dark than the hokey Americana ("Capracorn") with which they are often associated by critics. Similarly, Mr. Smith takes most of the film's length to become the dogged filibustering crusader of its last couple of reels. Andrew Sarris writes that Capra specializes in scenes of "idealism betrayed and innocence humiliated" (88) and the Stewart characters in Mr. Smith and It's a Wonderful Life are made to suffer disillusionments and harsh confrontations with reality.

As much as James Stewart the actor seems an entity distinct from "Jimmy Stewart," the naive, idealistic "boy next door," in many of his films "Jimmy Stewart" is a remote, suspended romantic ideal, sometimes attained only partly by the Stewart character himself, sometimes not at
all. In the face of a formidable persona, John Belton writes that "Stewart is not that easy to type. His persona is a complex of fascinating paradoxes and contradictions" (537). Stewart did most of his interesting work for four directors--Capra (three films), Anthony Mann (eight films in six years, the best of them Westerns), Alfred Hitchcock (four films) and John Ford (two leading roles in features and two short roles). In fact, the public persona of Stewart takes in a very narrow range of roles. The folksy accounts of Stewart's persona in effect screen out the blustering, insecure American husband abroad in The Man Who Knew Too Much (Hitchcock, 1956), the neurotic avengers and bounty hunters of Winchester '73 (Mann, 1950) and The Naked Spur (Mann, 1953), the apron-wearing lawyer and compromised politician of The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (Ford, 1962) or the crooked marshal of Two-Rode Together (Ford, 1961), not to mention his two most famous Hitchcock roles, the laid-up voyeur in Rear Window (1954) and the man who falls in love with a fetish in Vertigo (1958).

If one starts looking in the films for an "essence of Stewart" upon which his career was based and his image rests, it becomes hard to find anything close to a full expression of it. On this score, Stewart is unusual among male personality stars. It's easy to think of several if not many films which exemplify the coherent, consistent persona of each of the following: Cary Grant, John Wayne,
Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, Fred Astaire, Jack Nicholson, Clint Eastwood, Robert Redford. In the case of Stewart, however, it's hard to find even one, a situation not unique among star personae, my examples above to the contrary. For instance, Barry King notes that "a study of Ingrid Bergman found that her image reflected only a few of the roles she had played ..." (167). What's unusual about Stewart, however, is that although that basic persona, the carry-over from Mr. Smith, continues to keep him a foregrounded star and an individual with whom the viewer identifies, the characterizations which seem to be inconsistent with the persona are themselves consistent with each other as representing the kind of role that Stewart often plays in the postwar period.

Star/Character: "Masculine"/"Feminine"

Destry Rides Again (George Marshall, 1939), a Western comedy which plays on the familiar "trickster" story structure--the unsophisticated bumpkin gets laughed off by the city slickers, whom, the ending reveals, he has been outsmarting all along--is Stewart's first star vehicle to assert his difference from normative masculinity as an advantage. Difference is the point around which every star career coalesces. An identification figure must be foregrounded (often in the compositions themselves; see Capra's treatment of Stewart in the mise-en-scene in It's a
Wonderful Life), and must differentiate him or herself from the mass of humanity, just as the subject/spectator sees him or herself as a differentiated individual.

There is to Stewart a consistent doubleness, as he and his best directors seemed aware. The doubleness in Stewart often shows up in a kind of moral strength that comes to him easily, contrasted with an over-reaching that brings on weakness. Stewart's expressive blue eyes, his ingenuous manner, and his ability to summon up reserves of strength all made him an appealing and compelling identification figure. However, for every characteristic that could be viewed as positive, Stewart suggested a dark side. The wide eyes could be guilty, guileful, and suspicious, the sloping shoulders and shambling walk could denote naivete and—anathema to constructed masculinity—ineffectualness. The high-pitched, rangy voice could suggest cowardice, weakness, even madness.

What makes Stewart's difference peculiar is that in his gentle, gangling manner and physical equipment which signify him in Westerns, for instance, as a "tenderfoot" rather than a "tough hombre," he is different from the accepted male paradigm and, by the dictates of dominant cinema, he must find a new male paradigm into which he does fit. This observation would seem to make Stewart's stardom problematic in the context of much of the theory of stardom
that has been articulated by writers such as Barry King and Richard Dyer. King writes that

what the stars represent is otherwise suppressed by the prioritised realities of the dominant culture ... the stars indicate the gap between private behaviour and public conformity and this gap in itself through being represented furthers the "cause of the underdog." ... Stars are not only an institutionally unique means of registering the private concerns of the individual in the "mass"—since all other means represent how the common people should behave and not how they are—but an exemplary means such that private experience only becomes consummated in the image of the star (156).

King's point here is one that few would disagree with—that stars act out and embody desires and scenarios which the subject/spectator must suppress in order to get through life. However, while his idea works obviously well in explaining why, for example, working class men like to watch Clint Eastwood easily and violently dispose of obstacles, to apply it to many of Stewart's films is to discover a wealth of contradictions. Many of Stewart's performances force a distinction between King's notion of suppression and a more serious repression.

Tania Modleski, in writing about how the Hollywood cinema maintains male subjectivity, says that

... in patriarchy the feminine position alone is devalued and despised, and those who occupy it are powerless and oppressed. The same Freud who spoke of bisexuality also, after all, spoke of the normal masculine "contempt" for femininity. Freud showed very precisely how men tend to repress their bisexuality to avoid being subjected to this contempt and to accede to their "proper" place in the symbolic order (10).
It is no coincidence that Modleski makes this argument in the introduction to a book on Hitchcock, in which she argues that Hitchcock makes uncomfortable a dominant sort of male subjectivity. Of course, Stewart starred in three of the films in which, in Robin Wood's phrase, "Hitchcock's murderous gaze is directed at the hearts of men" (28). If one accepts Modleski's premise, it might be for a reason that actor Richard Dreyfuss hit upon in an interview that was part of a 1987 PBS documentary about Stewart. Dreyfuss said that Stewart "was a very feminine hero." The conflict of many of Stewart's films involves a warding off of bisexuality in Freud's use of the term, an attempt by the male to negotiate his femininity and avoid being consigned to the inferior, feminine position.

The "feminine" shows up often in the films in connection with Stewart, in two ways. First is a conventionally coded "femininity": Destry, the supposedly tough deputy who's been brought in to clean up a wild Western town, alights from the stagecoach carrying a woman's parasol while the townspeople guffaw; more often, Stewart characters espouse a code of non-violence which is usually represented in Westerns by a protesting, Eastern woman; Stoddard in Liberty Valance wears an apron, washes dishes, and what's more, doesn't seem to think that there's anything unmanly about doing this. Stoddard also doesn't
believe in guns and his masculinity is called into question in ways that Destry's is not.

Second, there is the sense of "feminine" as absence or lack of masculinity, and thus, a feeling that Stewart is "less than" more masculinist men; there are many more examples of this, from the scene in *Winchester '73* in which Lyn McAdam (Stewart) and his antagonist reach instinctively to their hips for guns which they've been required to check at the marshal's office in Dodge City, to the protagonist in *Rear Window* whose phallic leg-cast and long telephoto camera lenses only underline—in a way that calls humorous attention to the "vulgar Freudianism" of Hitchcock's exploitation of such objects—his utter impotence. The audience has seemed to view Stewart as representing something other than conventional masculinity. Borden Chase, who scripted three of the Stewart-Mann Westerns, reported that "the most frightening experience I ever had was *Winchester '73* [Stewart's first serious Western, considered a gamble at the time] when we previewed it and the minute Jimmy Stewart's name came on the screen, everybody laughed" (Eyles 102), much as the townspeople laugh at Destry. In film after film, Stewart achieves subjectivity only after he throws off and conquers feminine tendencies; if he does not entirely succeed, as in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, his subjectivity—in terms of male spectator—remains incomplete.
Stewart characters often seem most lacking when trying to play traditional male roles—when "making things happen," in Mulvey's phrase (310). For instance, Mr. Smith is at his most helpless when he overpowers and punches out the reporters who have humiliated him on the front pages. In *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, Dr. McKenna continually tries to take charge during the crisis surrounding his son's kidnapping. His attempts at male leadership are continually thwarted and even made ridiculous. On vacation in Morocco and later looking for his son in London, outside of his own little familial and professional power base (in Indianapolis, Ind.), McKenna is impotent and adrift. Scottie Ferguson in *Vertigo*, a police detective, cannot perform in simple chase scenes that would be all in a day's work for Bogart's Spade or Marlowe or dozens of other movie and TV cops. Howard Kemp in *The Naked Spur* "gets his man—dead or alive," except that the fugitive is not his man; in fact, this film comes closer than any of Stewart's except *Vertigo* to losing audience sympathy because the motives of the Stewart character are so suspect within the value system of the film.

The question that must finally be asked concerns which one of two possibilities is more important. The first is that if bisexuality recurs so often as a "conflict" to be solved in these narratives, it must be a strong tendency
which the male subject must repress. The other is that in dominant cinema, the threat of bisexuality (or any other deviation from the norm) is usually neutralized in the last reel. If misguided attempts to "act masculine" are so often obstacles in the Stewart character's realization of his proper role, then are these films expressing man's unconscious doubts about his own gendered expectations of himself? If Barry King is right in saying that stars play out the spectator's private representation of him/herself in public, how is this concept reconciled with the frequent contradictions posed by and within Stewart, the actor and the persona? Do Stewart's films, as Kaja Silverman maintains about It's a Wonderful Life, call "into question the potency of George Bailey [Stewart] and the authenticity of the structures of the family and capitalism only so that [they] can re-validate them?" (Subject of Semiotics 221). Or, as Robert B. Ray asks about the same film (213), can any value that has been called seriously into question actually be recuperated once the impact of the "rupture" has been felt?

Mr. Smith Grows to "Manhood."

Stewart was under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer from 1935, when he was brought out to Hollywood from Broadway, until he left for service with the Army Air Corps in 1941. For most of those years, by all accounts, the studio didn't
know quite what to do with him. Ted Allan, a portrait photographer at MGM, said, "Was he a comedian, or a romantic leading man? We tried photographing him outside, leaning over fences, working with a shovel, with a tennis racket--but while that worked with Robert Taylor in helping to make him more athletic, it didn't work with Stewart" (Eyles 42).

After several films at MGM and elsewhere which cast him in supporting roles, sometimes appropriately, sometimes not, the film which fixed the Stewart star myth, Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, operates on the notion that in order to achieve true subjectivity, the individual must, in the words of Raymond Bellour "fissure the system that holds him." In fact, in an extended analysis of the film, Raymond Carney likens the Taylor political machine's search for a replacement for a U. S. Senator who has died in office to a movie mogul's casting of a picture. Carney compares the action of Mr. Smith to the struggle of a type-cast bit player to break out into stardom (302). The political snake pit into which the innocent Jeff Smith has been dropped is a closed system which preordains human reactions to events. What the film would like to ignore is the fact that Mr. Smith himself springs from a strong system of beliefs and traditions, and that his actions are predetermined by that system. By the end of the film, moreover, Mr. Smith has become for the audience a monument
to American ideals as surely as "Mr. Lincoln" at the
memorial to him which Jeff repeatedly visits, embodies
those virtues for him.

However, what gives the film its power—and its
contradiction—is that these ideals are played off against
a persistent American distrust of its own institutions.
Ironically, during the New Deal era when government was
doing more for its people than in any other time in U. S.
history, many films showed a political system run by
crooks, bullies, and incompetents (e.g., Preston Sturges'
The Great McGinty [1940], a cynical comedy about a derelict
who becomes a political boss' puppet candidate for
governor, or even Citizen Kane's depiction of Boss Jim
Gettys). Smith is the "simple man" who will deliver
American ideals from these vipers, but not before he is
ridiculed, humiliated, and made impotent by the mildewed
milieu of Washington, as claustrophobic and existential a
void as any to be found in Beckett's or Sartre's works.

Like the other well-known Capra-Stewart film, It's a
Wonderful Life, Mr. Smith depicts the diseased condition of
the world in which it takes place so pervasively and
convincingly that this condition virtually takes over the
film. The resolution, which here calls for merely
Herculean effort (in Wonderful Life, heavenly intervention
is required), can't entirely dispel the bitter taste left
by the film's first two-thirds.
This film repeatedly identifies Smith, leader of the Boy Rangers, with boys; certain other characters are compared with mothers and fathers. Manhood here is defined to a surprising extent as brutal and bullying, and womanhood, less surprisingly, is shown as nurturing and spoiled by the rough-and-tumble workaday world. Capra takes his place in a line of American artists, from Twain to Spielberg, who want to believe that while white male maturity equals patriarchal oppressiveness, white male immaturity equals faith and innocence and, in a word which reverberates throughout the film, "rightness." This film, like so many in the American cinema, replaces a system which suppresses male freedom of action with one which restores it.

However, male subjectivity in this film— as well as the image that will stick to Stewart for the following fifty years— is, like the title of Jeff's newspaper, "Boys' Stuff"; it celebrates masculinity in a formless, unfinished condition, dependent upon the nurturing of the mother and facility with language and the crusading spirit of the dead newspaper editor-father.

*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* tells the story of a political machine in an unnamed state (The short story upon which the film is based is entitled *The Gentleman from Montana*) which must find a quick replacement when a U. S. Senator dies just before a rider on a bill containing lots
of graft for the machine is about to be voted on in Congress. The pols wind up with Jefferson Smith (Stewart), a young, naive "Boy Ranger" whom they think they can trust not to ask questions and to vote as he's told. The state's highly respected senior Senator and a possible Presidential nominee, Joseph Harrison Paine (Claude Rains), turns out to have known Smith's father, an editor who was murdered by a mining syndicate his paper opposed. Paine takes a liking to Jeff Smith; his fondness for the young man begins to conflict with the fact that Paine is very much owned by the Taylor machine. When Jeff, guided by his knowing, world-weary secretary Saunders (Jean Arthur) frames a bill for a national boy's camp, to be located, unbeknownst to him, on the site where the machine has been buying up land for the graft-soaked dam, Saunders tells him about the dirty goings-on and begs him to go home, as does Paine. When Smith rises in the Senate to tell about the graft, Paine rushes in and denounces Smith himself as a grafter. Smith is found guilty by a Senate committee and is about to be expelled when he launches a nearly twenty-four-hour filibuster (which takes up the film's final forty minutes); eventually, and against great odds, Jeff prevails, Saunders falls in love with him, and Paine breaks down and confesses on the Senate floor to his involvement with the corrupt machine.
This synopsis makes the Stewart figure sound like a very conventional hero, but the film doesn't present him that way. In fact, the montage, mise-en-scene, and soundtrack of the film—in short, the storytelling apparatus—seem ambivalent and unsure about him as an identification figure. Part of this ambivalence stems from the fact that an ego ideal, apart from embodying moral "rightness" that the spectator would like to adopt, must be competent to carry out plans set out by the narrative. Therefore, Jeff has to prove himself as a man with the purpose and effectiveness to carry through the action of the narrative before the film will commit to him as the film's subject. This idea may seem to contradict the idealization of boyishness and indeed it does. American male subjectivity wants to have it all: the boyish faith and innocence to envision a plan and believe it can come true, and the manly confidence and competence to carry it off—without compromising.

Until the film will commit to Jeff as an unconditional subject/protagonist—and this doesn't happen until the last 40 minutes of this 125-minute film, Capra engages with a couple of strategies. One is to put the audience in the position of the Washington pols: Jeff is noble but hopeless, a boy, as Paine tells him in so many words, in a man's world. The other strategy, related to the first, is to pose two fully developed supporting characters, Paine,
played by Claude Rains, and Saunders, played by Jean
Arthur, either of whom could be the protagonist of a
different sort of story.

Paine may be halfway between a classical tragic hero
and the "anti-heroes" of the fifties. The anti-heroes,
including those played by Stewart (in Mann's films
especially), have the characteristics of identification
figures but their actions mark them as other. Paine,
conversely, is coded as other, but does things which mark
him as sympathetic and his self-destruction as sad. More
typically, whatever selfhood and independence is granted to
a female character is nearly always recuperated by the end
of the film, even if the female star has top billing. Mr.
Smith is a particularly strong illustration of this because
it ultimately doesn't matter that Jean Arthur is every bit
as individualistic and engaging a screen personality as
Jimmy Stewart. While all three main characters are
contradictory, the male protagonist is divided in terms of
characteristics which must be downplayed so that
contrasting values can be affirmed.

Destry Rides Again introduces Stewart twenty minutes
into a ninety-four minute film, after the forces arrayed
against him have been established. Jeff Smith is kept in
the wings for twelve minutes. He is literally introduced
in a blustering speech by the governor, "Happy" Hopper (Guy
Kibbee), lost in the left half of a composition in which he
is a virtual prop; when a match-on-action gives us the first medium close-up of Smith, the governor's hand is still in the shot, motioning toward him. As Stewart plays him, Smith is a living question mark; his mouth is slightly puckered, he doesn't know what to do with his hands, and his eyes dart everywhere. This is a young man embarrassed to be on the dias, named a senator, surrounded by pomp. He flinches slightly as the speaker continues to gesticulate at him, and when he has to get up and give a speech, he stammers. As his speech goes on, however, one mark of the subject/protagonist becomes clear: unlike the clownish governor, beset by nearly everybody in private but bombastic in public and, unlike Paine, furtive and corrupt in private, noble and statesmanlike in public, there is no difference between a public and a private Smith.

There is a difference, however, between a Smith who is comfortable and sure of himself and one who isn't. In the scene in which Smith gets Saunders to help him frame his bill, he is all enthusiasm and earnestness. His eyes, aimless and frightened in the banquet scene and in the Senate, look directly at Saunders or off at some distant but fixed point within his memory. He comes into a jaded Washington transfixed by monuments that none of the professionals notice and when he points out the window and tells Saunders that what they have somehow to get into the bill is "the Capital dome," a series of shot/reverse shots
registers not only her exasperation at his naivete but also the fact that she is moved by his sincerity. Saunders becomes a mirror for Jeff's idealism. Her gendered response—she falls in love with him—serves as one of many signals that it's okay to admire Jeff. The clues come usually in the form of lines that serve as endorsements, at other times in the form of approving looks from the Vice President, played by Harry Carey, a veteran actor in B-Westerns with what Capra in his autobiography calls "a strong, American face" (263), a face like the one at the Lincoln Memorial. In the end, it is Jeff's latent fervor, inspired by historical father figures, that bursts forth on the Senate floor and enables him to hold it for so long.

For much of its length, however, the film makes Smith a figure of fun. At a press conference which Saunders sets up for the newly arrived senator in return for World Series tickets, a reporter's request for bird calls ushers in a Vorkapich montage of ridiculous photos and headlines as Dimitri Tiomkin's music score bleats and guffaws in reaction.

A scene which problematizes dramatically the film's point of view toward Smith is a comic one in which he is utterly immobilized in the presence of Paine's daughter, whom Jeff worships. Susan Paine walks into the room, Jeff shakes her hand, and nervously drops his hat. As he picks it up, a dialogue of sorts ensues. With Jeff's voice
dropping to a shy monotone, the camera follows a close up of the hat, as Jeff drops it again, fumbles with it and tries to put it on his head (it falls off). The narration picks out the most comic and pointed angle from which to show Jeff's shyness, but it's an angle which makes him an object for the audience. Interestingly, it was in reference to this scene that Richard Dreyfuss made his comment about the "feminine side."

The laughs and snickers which greet Jeff's sheepish reading of his bill are even shared by the pageboy who awaits the bill. The pageboy is split between admiration and derision--his face breaks into a titter. Even he is sophisticated enough to know that he's in the presence of an amateur. However, when he turns his head slightly he reveals a cowlick, an emblem of boyhood which Jeff and the Vice President also have, as Jeff--and by extension, American ideals--are endlessly identified in the film with boys, both visually and in the dialogue. He is referred to variously as "the Boy Ranger," "this boy" (Paine), "that infant" (Saunders), and "that drooling infant" (Taylor). Paine tells Jeff that he has come to feel like a father toward him and Saunders drunkenly tells Diz that in helping Jeff frame his bill and in coaching him from the gallery, she felt "just like a mother, sending her kid off to school for the first time." However, Boss Taylor doesn't see the irony in his own use of the word "boys." When Taylor hears
that Jeff's Boy Rangers have published a truthful edition to counteract Taylor's propaganda campaign, he barks, "What are you waiting for? Get the boys out," referring to his hired thugs. He also refers to the congressmen in his pocket as "boys." He is the film's evil father, seeing all his underlings as children and referring to them with misplaced affection.

Of course, the film has its good fathers. Paine, as I've said, is a good patriarch turned bad; Jeff's disillusionment and disbelief as Paine admits that he's crooked but says that he feels like a father to him illustrate that Paine has lost his fitness for the paternal role. Jeff's father, who died fighting for "lost causes," is an obvious role model. But the film's major "good patriarch" has his likeness at the Lincoln Memorial. Perhaps the key to the film's subjectivity is that Jeff himself becomes a sort of living monument to American revolutionary ideals (which in 1939, despite the New Deal, or perhaps because of it, are conservative ideals). The fact that Mr. Smith actually ends with its hero passed out on the floor at his moment of triumph illustrates a power of ideology that lives beyond its particular human instruments. Accordingly, the scene in which Jeff, about to leave Washington, is met by Saunders at the Lincoln Memorial is a sustained two-shot in which the two, in silhouette, come to look like monuments themselves.
Ultimately, the film makes obvious an ideological strategy which in most other Classical Hollywood films is kept embedded in the apparatus. Mr. Smith brings its protagonist out of an existential mire in order to reaffirm values made explicit by scenes like the "monument montage." Unlike other, more "masculine" male stars, Stewart carries neither an imposing physical presence nor a strong sexual aura. Hollywood thus has to find other paradigms into which he does fit and Capra fits him into the type of the American innocent who, like Huck Finn, transcends the corrupt world by virtue of a pure heart. Unlike Huck, who has to ignore his socialization in order to find his moral bearings, Jeff needs only to draw upon the values he's internalized, according to the film's mythology, through a closeness to the land and a study of the founding fathers, in order to straighten out a system lately perverted. Stewart's persona goes forth from this film as a loping, drawling, physically awkward vindication of the wisdom of naivete, of New World (the West) idealism and faith versus Old World (the East) cynicism and civilization. But the "weak," less than competent side which audiences laugh at and directors undermine, is always there, as an important half of the persona. This dichotomy is further explored in Stewart's very next film, Destry Rides Again, and definitively revised twenty-three years later by John Ford in The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance.
The West without Guns: "Destry Rides Again" and "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance"

In *Destry Rides Again*, released only about six weeks after *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, in November 1939, the Stewart character is granted a control over events and over the sympathy of the viewer that *Mr. Smith* takes most of its running time to give him. The fact of this hegemony seems odd because the character of Tom Destry, a reputedly tough young deputy sent in to clean up a hyperbolically wild and lawless town, runs counter to most of the codes of the Western hero. He's passive, non-violent, and, in the words of one of the townspeople, "lady-fingered." This comedy uses Stewart's "femininity" to invert the generic formula, while merely taking a different approach to male mastery. Once again, the Stewart character triumphs by virtue of his difference from the norm, in a way that seems, for about the first hour anyway, to call that norm into question.

The plot is that of a classical Western. Kent (Brian Donlevy) is a rancher who obtains his property by cheating small farmers and ranchers out of their land in crooked poker games, with the help of Frenchy (Marlene Dietrich), a popular saloon singer. One night, Sheriff Keogh sees Claggett, Kent's latest victim, heading back to Kent's back room with a rifle; the sheriff takes it from him and goes with it to see Kent. A short while later, as Frenchy waits downstairs with the mayor, shots are heard and it is
shortly announced that the sheriff was called out of town and "will be gone permanent." The mayor appoints as sheriff Wash (Charles Winninger), the town drunk who boasts that he used to be deputy to the late, great Tom Destry, a legendarily tough marshal. He announces with great pomp that he's sending for Destry's son, who has "cleaned up Tombstone," warning the townspeople, "Prepare yourselves—you're gonna meet a man!" When the lanky, gentle Destry (Stewart) arrives in Bottleneck, he angers and disappoints Wash by getting off the stage carrying a parasol and a birdcage for a woman passenger, and then by revealing that he doesn't believe in carrying guns. Later, after he demonstrates his prowess with a gun by shooting at some ornaments on a roof, he explains to Wash that his father (like Jeff Smith's) was shot in the back—guns "didn't seem to do him much good." He says that he'd rather bring order to the town "my way"—using "horse sense" and the law. Expected to settle a fight between Claggett and his family and Kent, Destry tells the Claggetts that Kent has a legitimate legal claim to the land, and then tricks Kent into sending one of his men to look after the body of Sheriff Keogh; the man found with the body is arrested and charged with murder. When the gang hears that Destry has sent for a federal judge, they set about to break the prisoner out of jail. Frenchy, who has turned against Kent and is siding with Destry, hears about the plan, and calls
Destry over to her place, saving his life. Kent's gang breaks the man out of jail, shooting Wash in the back. This moves Destry to strap on his guns; a group of men follows him to back him up and a classic shoot-out looks immanent, when Frenchy rallies the women, who march through the shoot-out wielding hoes, rolling pins, sticks, and other makeshift weapons, and storm into the saloon to take on the villains. In the resulting bedlam, Frenchy sees Kent aiming at Destry, whom she runs to, taking the bullet intended for him. The film ends with peace returning to Bottleneck; in the last scene, when Grace Tyndall, the "good girl" of the film, mentions marriage, Destry, whose trademark has been that he has an anecdote to fit any situation, begins "I had a friend once ..." as the music and "The End" come up.

In Destry Rides Again, the protagonist is more clearly constructed as a masterful subject and a recreation of a mythic figure than he is in Mr. Smith. A major difference is that Tom Destry (Stewart) is sure of himself, unhesitating amidst his surroundings, confident that as a leader he can win the trust of his followers and face down his adversaries. And yet Destry is, if not an subversion, at least an inversion of the norms of the highly coded Western genre. Part of the inversion—a turning upside-down of generic conventions and audience expectations—can be seen in Will Wright's categorization of the film's story
as a "Classical Western plot" (31) despite the fact that the film is a comedy. In other words, the film inverts the conventions of the form but the structure continues to operate as it would under more "ordinary" circumstances. In a sense, the film clears up the Western's central contradiction—that of the chivalrous peace-officer who shoots people—by positing a hero who doesn't believe in the use of firearms. The recuperation of what appears for most of the film's length to be a questioning of the order that considers guns and competence with them a privileged use of phallic power comes in Destry's assertion of control underneath personal traits that are read by the other characters as feminine, while Destry/Stewart takes a quite masterful control over the unfolding of the narrative. Perhaps the question is why the film overturns all the masculine codes, redefining—but nonetheless reasserting—masculine hegemony itself.

Since the film was made some two or three decades before the Western broke down into revision and parody, the object of humor is not the genre itself—or by extension, the audience's belief in the ideology of the generic conventions. In fact, the precise brunt of the humor is hard to pinpoint. The film is, in form as well as in effect, a fable preaching non-violence in a genre which, in the best of instances, portrays violence as a necessary evil, and in which prowess with a gun is seen as proof that
a man "has what it takes." But "having what it takes" in life and in narrative most often constitutes "what it takes" to impress other men. Men—in groups, in so-called male bonding rituals—become the arbiters of what's masculine and what isn't. These rituals are usually tests of a boy's or man's fitness to become "one of the boys." Howard Hawks' Westerns often involve such tests. In Red River (1948), Dunson (John Wayne) tells young Matt (Montgomery Clift) that he can put his initials on the Red River brand "when you earn it." In Rio Bravo (1959), Sheriff Chance (Wayne again) makes his former deputy Dude (Dean Martin), a recovering alcoholic, prove anew his fitness, to him and to himself. Wayne's films usually install him as the absolute embodiment and judge of "maleness" and not in a self-conscious way suggestive of male excess, a la Eastwood. In Ford's The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, Tom Doniphon (Wayne) decisively tells Ranse Stoddard (Stewart), "you're a tenderfoot," and from then on, treats him with condescension, as if he's talking to a child. In fact, Westerns, as a basically male genre, often revolve as much around issues of "toughness" and "softness" as they do around more vauntedly fundamental issues such as right and wrong, wild lawlessness vs. decency and security, and the other various binary oppositions of the genre delineated by critics such as John G. Cawelti, Tag Gallagher, Robert B. Ray, and Jim Kitses.
The rationale for such values is, of course, survival in the frontier world of the Western, but in the world that the male spectator inhabits, these standards help to construct his ego.

In the two major films in which Stewart characters threaten to rupture what Doniphon calls "the way we do things out here," Liberty Valance and Destry, his unconventional approach to being a male poses more of a threat to the men on his side than the villains do. In an ethic in which heroes and villains "respect" each other, the outsider who doesn't share the values is not allowed to play the game and is thus dismissed because the implications of his suggestion that there might be something wrong with the game must be repressed in order for patriarchal domination to continue. Destry tells the heavy, Kent (Brian Donlevy), in a confrontation in which Kent has asked for the deputy's gun, that he doesn't wear one because "if I'd had a gun, one of us might've gotten hurt; it might have been me, and I wouldn't like that." Kent shrugs to his henchmen, at a loss for how to read this "official" hero who doesn't speak a language Kent understands.

However, this scene puts the spectator on the side of Destry, for two reasons. One is a visible disjunction between how the characters read Destry's actions and how these actions are presented to the spectator. This is a
scene that Kent has played before; he even introduces it as "an unusual hobby of mine ... I collect deputy sheriff's guns," but Destry, pretending not to know the script, changes it; he throws Kent off a course in which he's in control to one in which he isn't and can do nothing but laugh, causing all of his underlings to laugh at Destry's behavior, which is "feminine" to the "boys" in the bar, precisely because it's different from any "masculine" response to threats that they recognize.

To the spectator, however, Destry is coded as the hero because he has faced danger, spoken up to Kent unblinkingly, and has thrown the issue back to Kent ("... I wouldn't like that--would I?") in a shot/reverse shot close-up which puts the spectator in Kent's place. By facing up to the danger while feigning ignorance of it, Destry does what an identification figure often does: he exhibits qualities of bravery and competence that the spectator would like to have in a similar situation, and probably wouldn't. Furthermore, to the goal-oriented male spectator, Destry has achieved the objective of any Western protagonist in a similar situation--he's survived a situation fraught with danger, in this case, by "disarming" his adversary.

The second reason that the spectator identifies with Destry is related to the first. Ian Green writes that the spectator identifies with the character in a film--male or
female—who exercises "active control of the narrative"; this idea is close to Mulvey's concept of the male who controls the gaze and the action. But as Green in his discussion of *Rear Window* draws a distinction between "the active control of the gaze and the active control of the narrative" (44) (Tania Modleski takes this idea even farther in her analysis of the same film in *The Women Who Knew Too Much*), in *Destry*, much more than in *Mr. Smith*, the protagonist is the one who holds the narrative, who appears to know where it is going. So, the "femininity" which Destry's attitudes repeatedly reflect is contradicted by the hold that the figure has over the narrative. However, there appears to be a contradiction between control of this film's narrative (by a male character) and the dominant ideology which such control enforces in classical narrative.

This film is full of inversion and gender role reversal. The only sustained fight between two characters takes place between two women—Frenchy (Marlene Dietrich) and Mrs. Callahan (Una Merkel), a housewife—meaning that the classical Western dialectic of dance-hall girl-prostitute/housewife-schoolmarm is levelled here, the housewives exhibiting little of the demure, seen-but-not-heard behavior that is conventionally expected of them. The housewives pack guns and shoot alongside the men, while Destry, official guardian of the Symbolic Order, does not.
And in the film's climax, the women barge into the classic shoot-out between good guys and bad—knowing that, according to the social codes, even the outlaws wouldn't shoot at them. They take on the bad guys themselves in order to keep the men from getting shot and to express their impatience with male rituals of confrontation and conquest.

The women in this film venture outside the parameters designed to contain them. Of course, comedy derives much of its humor from the sudden and unexpected rupture of rules and conventions, and the comic climax strikes the spectator as a burlesque of male weaponry; furthermore, the women can cow the violent villains because the villains are men who don't know what women want and are at a loss to know how to respond to them (just like the Wayne characters in the Hawks Westerns).

Destry, however, does not stand on the ground that males are supposed to occupy. Molly Haskell criticizes the films of the 60s and 70s—*Lawrence of Arabia* is a prime example—which marginalize women by combining masculine and feminine traits in a single male character. If critics such as Tania Modleski and Kaja Silverman are right in saying that the project for dominant cinema is to protect male subjectivity from bisexuality—to shield masculinity from any influence by the feminine—then how does this film
whose protagonist refuses the phallic signifier, a gun, adhere to the dominant ideology?

Perhaps it does so by throwing up Destry's femininity as a ruse; the spectator can leave the theater saying "They thought he was 'lady-fingered' but he fooled 'em." The spectator would otherwise share the male characters' view of Destry, except that he sees what they don't see—the self-confidence and carefully constructed sense of "rightness," which mark Destry as masterful. As Mary Ann Doane has pointed out in her study of 1940s "women's pictures," female protagonists normally have to sacrifice their personal desires to a higher good; however, the fulfillment of the desires of an "official hero" like Destry actually achieves the higher good. In fact, perhaps because of the inverted coding, Destry, unlike many of Stewart's films, doesn't complicate or problematize identification with its hero.

Any perception of "weakness" in Destry can be attributed to "bad readers," characters who are slower than the audience to understand the hero. However, the pervasiveness in the film of "feminine" attitudes toward non-violence and civil tranquility, as well as the film's outward critique of male aggressiveness—seen in the comic Wash's blusterings about lawmen "comin'out a-blastin'" and Jack Tyndall's ineffectual machismo—does seem pointed and is followed through to the end of the film. When after
the death of Wash, who, like Destry's father (and Jeff Smith's), is shot in the back—the ultimate breach of tacit rules of "fairness"—Destry takes his guns off their hook in his closet (he's literally a closet gunslinger). This action ultimately results in the death of Frenchy by a bullet meant for him, proving again Destry's dictum that when you carry guns, someone needlessly gets hurt, but also proving again Doane's thesis that it is women who must make the ultimate sacrifice.

Women in Hollywood films are often seen as nurturers, tempering men's hard-headed practical schemes and violent impulses. In the 60s and 70s, these mothering voices are spoilers and withholders; Lucas' and Spielberg's films are full of mother-figures who are seen as holding back their dreaming, ambitious men (e.g., Cindy Williams in American Graffiti, Teri Garr in Close Encounters of the Third Kind), but in the 30s, 40s, and 50s, such nurturing is often seen positively (e.g., Elizabeth Taylor's wanting to help the poor Chicanos, over the objections of her Texas rancher husband in Giant (1956), or the Patricia Neal character in A Face in the Crowd (1957), appalled at the ego-maniacal TV star (Andy Griffith) she "gave birth to"). In Sturges' The Great Mc Ginty (1940), the political boss tells the new governor who suddenly announces plans to help the poor, "You're talking just like a woman!" and indeed Mc Ginty had gotten the ideas from his wife. In Destry, a mostly male
genre has "female" attitudes imposed upon it, although they're enacted, of course, by one version of the Jimmy Stewart male—"peculiar," as Frenchy's stereotyped comic black maid (Lillian Yarbo) puts it, but with plenty of "personality."

To understand why this elaborate gender-twist on the generic paradigm came about, one should remember that this film appeared at the end of 1939, very soon after the start of World War II in Europe. President Roosevelt would spend roughly two years trying to manipulate the U. S. into the war, over the objections of much of the populace. In a reversal of the way domestic politics are configured now, conservative Republicans stood for "America First," for an isolationism that bordered on pacifism. Democrats and liberal Republicans stood for intervention. The latter tendency foundered with the wars in Korea and Vietnam; the anti-Communism of the late 40s and 50s turned the conservatives into fervent interventionists.

Seen in this light, the inversions in Destry Rides Again add up to an isolationist fable. The guns of Destry's father "didn't seem to do him much good," just as the deaths suffered in World War I, the "war to end all wars," by the fathers and uncles of the prospective soldiers of a second world war didn't seem to have done much good either. The film becomes a wishful story of a society of laws somehow vanquishing its foes in such a way
that "no one gets hurt." Seen in this way, the film's male advocates of force appear insecure, bullying, and inadequate, somewhat like the characters of a later generation's anti-war comedy, Dr. Strangelove (1964), a film whose world is not redeemed by a masterful, sensible fantasy figure like Destry. For a world becoming enveloped in war, a place in which people could solve conflicts with others by using their wits was a thing devoutly to be wished. With this attitude, the film betrays a bit of womb-and breast-envy based in desperation and fear of death: after all, women don't go to war, and under the chivalric codes of the West, they don't get shot at.

Finally, I return to those aforementioned binary oppositions of the Classical Western, especially "gun vs. book, use of force vs. the law, words vs. direct action." The Western as genre is fundamentally split between the circuitous American system of justice—a system whose process and efficacy are celebrated in a much later Stewart film, Anatomy of a Murder (1959, Otto Preminger)—and the desire for swifter, more visible action than the system allows (See my discussion of Dirty Harry [1971, Don Siegel] in the chapter on Clint Eastwood). Destry Rides Again comes down soundly on the side of the quiet, steady work of deduction and the rule of law. In fact, the narrative virtually turns into a detective plot about halfway through. In this sense, the narrative brings law and order
of all kinds to Bottleneck. This is best shown in the epilogue which shows Destry walking down the street with an adoring little boy who earlier tooted a gun; like Destry, he is carving a napkin ring and he's aping Destry's every move. (The boy is played by the same child actor who played the Senate pageboy in *Mr. Smith*.) Destry is fathering a new male order, one which is strong and controlling, all the more so, the film says, for not needing to emphasize the phallus.

Such prewar pacifism would not last, of course, and yet Jimmy Stewart remained an embodiment of it (as with the audience that laughed at his name on the credits of a "real" Western). This is a reason why John Ford, drawing on the association of Stewart with wistful, Lincolnesque, non-violent heroes, used him to reflect a West grown "civilized" in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962).

In Dorothy M. Johnson's short story "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (1949), Ranse Foster "had been nobody in particular--a dude from the East, quietly inquisitive, moving from one shack town to another; just another tenderfoot with his own reasons for being there and no aim in life at all" (799). In addition, he is lazy, takes menial jobs that he's ashamed to be seen doing, and can't say "thank you" when he learns that it was Bert Barricune, not himself, who shot Ranse's nemesis, Liberty Valance. The truth of Barricune's relationship to Foster, which
Senator Foster won't admit, but which the narrative voice divulges, is that "He was my enemy; he was my conscience; he made me whatever I am" (799).

In adapting Johnson's story, John Ford and screenwriters James Warner Bellah and Willis Goldbeck changed the names and returned the characters to generic archetypes. Tom Doniphon (Barricune) is the Western hero as manly individualist; "Out here a man settles his own problems," he says, holding up his gun. Ransom Stoddard (Foster) is a testy, naive, impatient young crusader, reminiscent of Mr. Smith.

Laura Mulvey, in "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'," used this film to discuss the tension between two points of attraction, the symbolic (social integration and marriage) and nostalgic narcissism, [which] generates a common splitting of the Western hero into two ... Here two functions emerge, one celebrating integration in society through marriage, the other celebrating resistance to social demands and responsibilities, above all those of marriage and the family, the sphere represented by woman. A story such as The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance juxtaposes these two points of attraction, and spectator phantasy can have its cake and eat it too (73).

Although Mulvey's two functions of masculinity in the Western are extremely useful, and can be seen to operate in many Westerns, she picks the wrong film upon which to practice her theory. I intend to show that "spectator phantasy" can have not "have its cake and eat it too," that both the functions of the symbolic and imaginary are
problematized to the extent that spectator fantasy is frustrated and the limitations and illusions inherent in both functions are made obvious.

One of the things that has been often noted concerning this much-written-about film is the disparity between the actual ages of the two stars and the characters they play in the flashback which takes up most of the film. Both characters should be no older than thirty, about the ages of John Wayne's Ringo Kid in *Stagecoach* (Ford, 1939), what Richard D. McGhee in a study of Wayne calls Wayne's "first good-badman role" (11), and of Jeff Smith and Tom Destry. Doniphon and Stoddard signify John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart as they were in 1961, in their early fifties, both with a quarter-century of films and spectator-associations behind them. Wayne/Ringo Kid has grown into a bit of a bully; he's complacent and even sadistic. He takes pleasure in Ranse's insecurity and awkwardness with a gun, and he's too quick to tell Hallie (Vera Miles), "You're awful pretty when you get mad," when doing so will defuse and trivialize her anger. He's the chivalrous Wayne hero, post-Tom Dunson (Wayne's tyrant in *Red River*) and post-Ethan Edwards (his vengeful bigot in *The Searchers*).

Similarly, Ranse Stoddard is Mr. Smith, revised after Stewart's prickly, neurotic Hitchcock and Mann characters. Ranse is the Jimmy Stewart of night club impressionists; he is, as McGhee says, "all arms and legs," his voice is much
more strident and screechy than usual, and Stewart probably does more stuttering and stammering here than in all his other films combined. The chivalrous Wayne and the idealistic Stewart personas, to use a shopworn phrase, have lost their innocence, as the West of Liberty Valance has; they have become tiresome reminders of the values they once represented. When Wayne/Doniphon, in a low-angle shot, speaks the line, "Liberty Valance is the toughest man south of the Picketwire--next to me," or when Stewart/Stoddard pounds his fists and insists "I've got something to do," as if trying to remember what it is, the two actors and their director are striking a postmodern chord, calling upon a store of iconography in the spectator's moviegoing unconscious.

Joseph McBride and Michael Wilmington write that Stewart is "in a role that Henry Fonda would have played had the film been made twenty years earlier" (176). Fonda played noble, haunted heroes for Ford in the late thirties and forties (Lincoln, Tom Joad, Wyatt Earp). Ford seemed to use Stewart, with all of the baggage he carried, to caricature those roles; Stewart even played a decadent Wyatt Earp, more concerned with his poker game than with Indian raids or anything else, in an episode in Ford's Cheyenne Autumn (1964). Increasing the resonance was the fact that Doc Holliday in that sequence was played by Arthur Kennedy, who had played Stewart's doppelganger.
The plot and theme of Liberty Valance are similar in many ways to those of Mr. Smith and Destry. Like Jeff Smith, Ransom Stoddard is called by duty into what turns out to be hostile territory. Like Jeff, Ranse is out of place, is not taken seriously, and must learn to acquire "what it takes" to impress other men (that is, to "survive") in the new place. Like Jeff Smith, Ranse rises at the expense of another—Jeff's rise, of course, results in the "Silver Knight's" fall; Ranse's, in Tom's. Like Jeff, Ranse "gets the girl" and changes the place to which he came. Like Destry, he doesn't use firearms (at first), he believes in the legal system, and he slowly brings the townspeople to his side. Like Destry, he is moved to the climactic showdown by an assault on an older mentor figure—Wash in Destry, Peabody the newspaper editor in Valance. Like Destry, he is laughed at, ridiculed, and associated with things feminine. Each of these plot points, however, has its mitigating factor. In fact, this film is virtually about mitigating factors, with something to frustrate nearly every audience expectation and to problematize nearly every turn of the plot. Furthermore, Fonda in Ford's films is usually a quiet, sad, death-haunted figure on the edges of society (even while Lincoln, the young lawyer, and Earp, the marshal of Tombstone,
occupy a place at the center); a figure who while strong and heroic, doubts himself and still more doubts the society he is asked to serve and needs to be drawn into the conflict. Ranse Stoddard is sure of himself and demands to be included, but his persistence looks more like inflexibility; in a less ambiguous film, his determination to hang up his law practice shingle where doing so could get him shot might look courageous; here, it looks foolish and, because he endangers Peabody's newspaper office, selfish as well. The audience seldom sees Ranse's prowess; whatever skills he possesses as a lawyer are not on display here and when he gets to show his speaking ability, the speech is always interrupted and Ranse thrown into the shadow of Doniphon or Valance.

Interruption of an almost Brechtian kind becomes a motif in the film. Although the 1962 ads announced "Two Great Stars, Together for the First Time," Stewart and Wayne appear to be in competing films. Wayne's is a conventional cowmen-vs.-settlers Western; Stewart's an idealistic story (typical of the early sixties--1962 was the year of To Kill a Mockingbird and The Miracle Worker) of a young liberal who comes to bring enlightenment to a backward region. Neither plot can be followed through because the other interferes; this can be seen when Ranse "ruins" Tom's and Valance's restaurant confrontation over a steak (which Ranse picks up off the floor), and when Tom
disrupts the class in which Ranse has been waxing eloquent about the drive for statehood.

Ranse in the flashback is uncomfortable in his surroundings and in his own skin; despite this, however, he has the perseverance of a hero—Tom calls him a "persistent cuss" and yet his persistence is as irritating as it is necessary. Conversely, Tom is at home in his surroundings, but, of course, those surroundings change. In the frame story in which Senator Stoddard and his wife, both now in their sixties, return for Tom's funeral and Ranse tells the story to a (persistent) newspaperman, Ranse has learned to affect a gregarious politician's demeanor. He seems comfortable in the "modern" Shinbone, an environment in which Tom has been an outcast, but just as surely that demeanor is false—the present is illusion for these characters; the past is their reality.

The Stewart character here is undercut by attitudes similar to those of the supporting characters in *Destry*. While the civilization he brings with him from the east provides "progress for the future," that progress is repeatedly pointed out by the film to be a mixed blessing, marked by "mitigating factors." Moreover, Robert Warshow, in a famous 1954 essay entitled "The Westerner," wrote about the conflict in Westerns between men and women:

> Very often this woman is from the East and her failure to understand represents a clash of cultures. In the American mind, refinement, virtue, civilization, Christianity itself, are seen as feminine, and
therefore women are portrayed as possessing some kind of deeper wisdom, while the men, for all their apparent self-assurance, are fundamentally childish. But the West, lacking the graces of civilization, is the place "where men are men"; in Western movies, men have the deeper wisdom and the women are children (46).

These deeply patriarchal tenets, which hold true in hundreds of Hollywood films, are problematized here. In this film, the Easterners are men—Ranse and Peabody, and the narrative becomes partly a conflict between them and two men of the West, Tom and Liberty, for the heart, mind, and soul of the Western woman, Hallie (Vera Miles). Hallie, albeit in her female role, is as tough and practical as Tom. When Peabody, one of the bearers of "civilization," says "Hallie, please, the proprieties concerning the cutlery. How many times do I have to tell you—the fork goes to the left of the plate and the knife goes...," she interrupts him: "What's the matter with you? You superstitious or somethin'? Well, what are you gonna have to eat?" Although it is Ranse who offers to and eventually does teach Hallie to read and write, she rebukes him with a line that is a direct reversal of Destry's line that guns didn't seem to do his late father much good—"What good has readin' and writin' done you? Look at you—in an apron!" Although it does not occupy the center of the film—a center marked by loss and absence, rather than by action and purpose—the film is about Hallie's choice of Ranse, who represents change, over Tom, who represents the
Old West which Hallie has known and which, in accordance with "progress" (capitalism, requiring change which opens up new markets and provides a demand for new products) and "history," must be tamed. Much of the criticism on this film touches on the woman's choice as the pivot on which the plot turns, without recognizing it as such. Ray writes that "Tom's bitter admission to Ranse, 'Hallie's your girl now,' indicated that he knew, if Ranse did not, what an immense change had taken place" (229) and "Valance kept the struggle on an equal footing, between two men with markedly contrasting personae, Wayne's implacably anachronistic, Stewart's uncertainly contemporary. That both were attractive was the film's point. Which was more beautiful, the cultivated or the cactus rose?" (237), the latter an allusion to the question that Ranse asks—"Hallie, have you ever seen a real rose?"—after Tom brings her a cactus blossom.

The issue of which male character—and way of life—the film prefers is constituted as that of a patriarchally constructed female subjectivity. As Mary Ann Doane points out at the opening of The Desire to Desire by citing the example of the Mia Farrow character in staring raptly at the movie screen in the last shot of The Purple Rose of Cairo, woman is construed in patriarchy as the consumer, the receiver of narrative. In Liberty Valance narrative in history ("his story") and Hallie's choice is bound up with
it. The woman marries one man who is successful in the new order while perpetually feeling the loss of another who was successful in the now dead one; she is construed as an arbiter of values that are actually those imposed by patriarchy. However, both sets of values are found wanting; in the scene in which Tom disrupts the class, Hallie sees that his brand of chivalry would enslave her; when she protests "you don't own me," he answers "you're awful pretty when you get mad," an old line whose intent is to put a woman in her place by flattering her. As time goes on, however, Hallie lives with Ranse and his civilization, the "mitigating factors" of which Robert B. Ray points out:

The railroad which ran straight to Washington and brought progress to Shinbone also filled the sky with black smoke ... The film's attitude toward Ranse's civilizing efforts seemed taken from Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents: education, however attractive, involved repression (Ranse ordered hats off in the classroom, corrected grammar, ordered children to be quiet), marriage, a loss of spontaneous vitality (the loud, cheerful Hallie was transformed into a sober, stern woman) (236-37).

This point of view clashes with that of Laura Mulvey, who sees Hallie as the repressive force and because "'marriage' is an integral attribute of the upholder of the law ... Hallie's choice is pre-determined" (74). One could also add that Hallie is caught in the double-bind of language which frees the subject from ignorance at the same time that it binds her to the symbolic. But Mulvey goes on to say that Hallie is the trophy, that she "equals princess
equals Oedipal resolution rewarded, equals repression of narcissistic sexuality in marriage" (74). It is clear to me that Hallie has unwittingly chosen repression, not imposed it. To the male imaginary represented by Tom, Ranse's law of the symbolic imposes the repression of the East, of "feminine" civilization. If Tom is Narcissus, then Hallie is the pool; her rejection of Tom as she comes to realize the restriction of living to be his reflection leads her to choose Ranse, who represents knowledge and freedom from the life she has known, but imposes the necessary confinements of civilization.

However, Tom, in his own intractible ideas about how men and women should behave, also represents repression; it is this repression which Hallie has rejected. Hallie longs not for the reality of the old Tom Doniphon, the old masculinity as it actually was, but Tom--and man--as he might have been. In this, Hallie's longing for Tom is like Sheriff Wash's longing for Destry's father: Tom was chivalrous and noble, but he was also complacent (he assumes that Hallie's "my girl," building on rooms for her and planning his life around her, but never directly courting her or asking what she wants) and bullying; the senior Destry was rough and tough, but not enough so to keep from getting killed. In this, Mulvey is correct to say that "the story is shot through with nostalgia and loss," but incorrect to write that "Ranse Stoddard mourns
Tom Doniphon" (74). It is Hallie who mourns Tom Doniphon, or rather, to the patriarchal sensibility, she mourns the chivalry which he embodied, but which never actually existed.

Further, the strongest clue to this film's inextricable Fordian/female subjectivity is found in the use of a piece of music originally written by Alfred Newman for Young Mr. Lincoln and known as the "Ann Rutledge" theme. Newman was one of the practitioners of a convention in film music whereby themes are associated with certain characters—in this case, in two senses. Ann is a love of Lincoln's who dies early in his life and early in the film. The theme is first played very liltingly as Ann and Abe walk along the river; the sequence ends with a shot of the river after Abe throws a stone into it; Ford dissolves this into a shot of the frozen river in winter; the music grows colder also and Abe is shown visiting the grave of Ann. The theme is heard again, but this time is slowed down, signifying loss and longing; when the theme comes up again, as it does twice more in the film, Abe is looking out onto the river, and the theme emphasizes—and lets the spectator feel—his longing for the dead young woman whose memory both drives him and haunts him.

Twenty-three years later, Ford reprises the theme—heard always in its slower version—in Valance, in which it's used more often than it was in the earlier film. The
theme becomes a kind of signifier for the absence at the film's center; for me, any mention for years of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* would instantly bring back the theme. In the highly abstract way that music works in films, the theme becomes associated in a powerful way with whatever effect it is that this film has. Yet it is used subjectively, always associated with Hallie's sentiments. It is heard five times in the film— in the frame story at the beginning, when Hallie and Link ride out to Tom's burnt-out house to see the cactus roses and Link picks one to put on Tom's coffin; in the flashback, after Hallie and Tom have an angry confrontation, the music comes up as Ranse tells Hallie to "go find Tom and make it up to him; he's only trying to protect you"; in the flashback, when Hallie is tending Ranse's wounded arm after the showdown with Valance— this interlude is interrupted by the entrance of Tom, who now realises that he's the odd man out; in the frame story as the mourners leave Tom's coffin and Ranse discovers the cactus rose on the coffin as the camera comes in for a close-up of it; and in the very last scene, on the train, after Ranse and Hallie's wistful thoughts of leaving Washington and coming back to Shinbone to live are disrupted by the conductor's ironic reminder, "Nothing's too good for the man who shot Liberty Valance." The film then ends with the theme, in the final shot of the train.
steaming out of the landscape, Hallie's feelings of loss having become inextricable from the film's.

Unlike *Destry Rides Again, The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* is not interested in rehabilitating its "feminine" Stewart protagonist as a masterful male subject. Moreover, casting a fifty-three year old actor divests the character of the downy innocence and idealism of Mr. Smith. *Valance* is concerned with the closing of the American frontier and the aging of the West. It takes subjectivity for the spectator away from not one but two potential protagonists—and as if to prove how easily this can be done, Ford casts the two top box office male stars from 1946-66, and then makes identification with either of them impossible. He places it instead—by use of the flashback/frame story, contrast-between-then-and-now approach—in the sweep of time and history, represented by a mediating female.

On the other hand, patriarchal sensibility is at work in the fact that an "effeminate" male, who doesn't measure up to the masculine standards, who needs John Wayne to do his shooting for him, and who doesn't change, is allowed to change the West, the place "where men are men, and," as the old saying goes, "women are glad of it," to a place where the men are less than men (they, like Ranse, don't mind wearing aprons and waiting on tables) and women feel the loss of the stronger male. In learning to read and write,
however, Hallie acquires the power of language and outgrows Tom and the restrictions he represents. She chooses Ranse, and the freedom to ride that railroad to Washington, but meets with a different set of restrictions.

Even more than in *The Quiet Man* (1952), Ford leaves his heroine up a sexual/political cul-de-sac. Hallie is stuck with a Mr. Smith reincarnated as the Silver Knight. Like Paine, Ranse is a compromised man; he is stuck with a reputation for a heroic act he didn't commit, and would have felt uncomfortable with if he did. Like Paine, he's been "blown up to look like a Senator" and has learned to play the role as well as to look it, with bombast and pomposity. Hallie's third choice would seem to be her best—to rid herself of both men, both flawed versions of masculinity, and go off on her own. But Hallie, like Ranse, is imprisoned in her role; she cannot go back to her roots, to Shinbone, where she would be haunted by her husband's legend.

In the film's most resonant line, the newspaper editor who decides not to use Ranse's story, tells him, "This is the West, Sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." It is Ranse's and Hallie's curse to live under a patriarchy that bases its institutions and its economy on male legends, forgetting and ignoring the mitigating facts.
The Overcompensating Man— the Anthony Mann Westerns and a "Tough" Stewart

As I've mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, Stewart's incursion into "real" Westerns in 1950 with *Winchester '73* and *Broken Arrow* (dir. Delmer Daves) was a calculated risk. His career the first few years after the war had been shaky and uncertain; it needed new direction and Stewart himself later referred to *Winchester '73* as "a desperation move, a lifesaver" (Eyles 102). The Westerns brought Stewart to a new stage as a star actor. They allowed him, now in his forties, to shed the shy, boyish persona and to be credible as a mature man. Accordingly, they took him away from the persona of the Capra films which, as Nick Browne notes, open with Stewart living with his mother (7), and put him in an arena of conventional masculine action and myth. Moreover, they recast his type, though as what it's difficult to say. "These Westerns redefined Stewart's character," writes David Thomson, "he was now revealed as a colder, more pained and selfish man, who was often made to suffer, and put to a brutal test of courage and honor" (539).

What Mann's Westerns did was crystallize the contradictions in Stewart's persona and use them in revisionist, contradictory genre films. Jacques Rivette, one of the Cahiers du Cinema critics who in the fifties heralded Anthony Mann as an auteur (others were Andre Bazin
and Jean-Luc Godard, recognized the centrality of Stewart to Mann's project. "Anthony Mann's mise en scène," he said, "is definitely influenced by James Stewart's style of acting" (Hillier 37). Each of the films, from *Winchester '73* to *Bend of the River* (1952), *The Naked Spur* (1953), *The Far Country* (1954), and *The Man from Laramie* (1955), goes farther than the last in undercutting the traditional supremacy of the Western hero and in making him psychologically problematic, while at the same time constructing a narrative that finally brings the protagonist to his proper place in the ideological framework (that is, one of benign dominance). Furthermore, the films delivered to the eye of the spectator the scenic beauty of the American frontier that the Western was supposed to provide; all the films after the first one were photographed in the overripe Technicolor of the period, satisfying Hollywood's renewed emphasis in the television age on spectacle, while complementing the frenzied extremism which marks not only the Stewart characters but also the desperate pitch of the dramas themselves.

Stewart's persona was appropriate, then, for the dual nature of the films; he could be invested with the foregrounded specialness of the ego ideal, as for instance in *Winchester '73* in which he alone knows how to help an inexperienced Cavalry unit fight Indians. However, the boyishness and the femininity of the Stewart persona do
operate here, but in a very different way from the films I've looked at previously. The Stewart figures suffer from an excess of misguided masculinity in a way that crosses, or threatens to cross, the social and ethical line between right and wrong; they must be guided--always by a nurturing woman--to see their own more humane, civilized characteristics. Thus, the Stewart character's attempts to be purposeful and follow a plan through to its conclusion are seen as covers for insecure masculinity and moral frailty. The laconic pose of the traditional Western hero is shown here to hide a mental disturbance; in these films, the less the protagonist talks, the more unbalanced he is.

Accordingly, since the films are reluctant to assert a hero, the self/other dialectic upon which the genre, with its farmers vs. ranchers, sheriffs vs. outlaws, cowboys vs. Indians, had always turned, is blurred. The Stewart characters in Bend of the River, The Naked Spur, and The Far Country must prove that they are different from the villains--who are personable, charming, and sometimes even comic and don't show their true colors until it's "too late." (Curiously, this blurring contrasts with the paranoia of the self/other dialectic in America during this period, which has come to be identified as the McCarthy Era.) Moreover, because the protagonists are so problematized, the violence of Mann-Stewart Westerns is not justified, as it conventionally is in the genre, just
because the good guys are exterminating the bad guys. Of the famous scene five minutes into *Winchester '73* in which Dutch Henry Brown (Stephen McNally) and Lin McAdam (Stewart) reach for their weapons, forgetting that they're not wearing them, Jeanine Basinger writes

> For the first time, the devoted viewer of the western is forced to confront a subversive fact: that his noble hero of the west, that man who rides tall in the saddle, off into the sunset, may be a flipping maniac. Furthermore, the violence of the pantomimed behavior of drawing to shoot forces a viewer to reevaluate the ritual ... Suddenly it becomes all too evident that a man who solves his problems by shooting them may not be a hero at all. Stripped of the violent glory of the gunfight, the "reach and draw" scene is laid bare as a psychotic event (101).

These postwar films then question the convention of prowess with guns as a test of masculinity. Moreover, the "suffering" alluded to earlier in the Thomson quote is not the usual kind; the spectator is used to the protagonist who suffers for a good cause (Mr. Smith, for example) and whose will is tested in a way that strengthens character and proves fitness. The Stewart figure in these films is made to suffer because his cause is morally dubious; the will that is tested is the will to serve himself to the detriment of others and in the face of obvious "rightness."

The narrative system whereby the protagonist is endorsed by other characters, which we've seen is important in constituting Mr. Smith and Destry as admirable subjects (and is part of the formula in Clint Eastwood's films) is askew here. The wrong people, the villains, approve of the
protagonist; the characters whose opinions count, the settlers in *Bend of the River* and *The Far Country*, Lina in *The Naked Spur*, distrust him until he proves himself.

Altogether, this rethinking about what constitutes the subject—especially in a genre as highly coded as the Western—is new in the fifties. The revisionism and criticism are genuine, even though, as in *Destry Rides Again*, the old conventions of masculinity are reworked into a new definition that reasserts patriarchy—a definition which suited the fifties orientation toward home and family. The question we must ask is that while these films are read now by critics as important revisions of the genre, they were marketed and received at the time as unexceptional Westerns and each did well at the box office: how does the films' detailed criticism of the conventional Western hero affect the spectator, who apparently finds satisfaction in following the narrative and its play on the generic formulas?

Laura Mulvey, in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," wrote of the male protagonist as the active bearer of the look who controls the narrative action and the camera's gaze. She referred to this male as "a figure in a landscape" (310), an image which itself evokes the archetypal "rugged individualist" Western hero. Mulvey also theorised this figure's "glamorous characteristics" as "those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful
ego ideal conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror" (310). Many critics have attacked Mulvey's definitions as monolithic; not only do they make the male subject of films sound insuperable, they rule out the possibility of contradiction—of doubts indicated from within the patriarchy. Mulvey seems to have in mind the John Wayne of a film like *Rio Bravo*, in which he is in charge of a group, decides upon the action, sets his sights on a woman, and is concerned with conflicts around him, not within.

The Stewart of the Mann films provides an opportunity to question Mulvey's assumptions. Although Molly Haskell included Mann in a list of fifties directors whose films she called "monolithically male" (271), these Westerns posit a male subject who is incompletely developed, and not because he doesn't possess the phallus. The difference between Stewart, in many of his films, and John Wayne, in most of his, is that Wayne appears to stride into his films a complete man. Even when that completeness connotes rigidity and repression, as it does in *The Searchers*, Wayne, it appears, is what he is. Stewart, on the other hand, is usually in process; he's in a state of becoming.

Mann's films revise the conventional action of Western plots. By "action," I mean the Aristotelian model of drama as the imitation of an action; a linear play takes on the purpose of its protagonist as the animating force of
the story. The Moscow Art Players, in identifying the action of a play to be performed, insisted that it be expressable in an infinitive phrase. So, for example, while what I'll call the generic action of *Bend of the River* is to bring the winter food to the settlers in the mountains, the psychological action of the film is to bring Glyn McLintock (Stewart), to conquer the side of himself that had been a Missouri border raider and to learn to help others instead of just himself. Each of the films could be broken down in just this way; look at the difference between the two actions for *Bend of the River*: the generic action is effected by the protagonist himself; the man who "makes things happen," in Mulvey's phrase, must perform the action, and in film narrative he does so in all the ways that Mulvey suggests. The psychological action is forced from outside the protagonist, in effect making the central figure an object upon whom the narrative will act.

By this I mean to suggest that subjectivity in these films is operated somewhere outside the protagonist for most of the length of the film, thus putting the spectator in a position to examine and speculate upon the protagonist's motives and mental state in a way that makes the idea of these star performances as ego ideals as in Mulvey's formula, most problematic.

*Winchester '73* presents the Mann/Stewart protagonist at an early stage; Basinger refers to this first
collaboration as "explorative" of themes and characters which will be more fully developed in the later films (97). The film itself contains most of the characters and plot situations familiar to the genre, but the plot is both simple and unusual. A man hunts another man for reasons that the audience doesn't know; this alone is unusual because in earlier Western vengeance stories—such as the Ringo Kid's in *Stagecoach* and Wyatt Earp's in *My Darling Clementine*—the reasons for the revenge are fully explained to the audience in order to justify the vengeance and make it sympathetic. The action of the film is directed by the progress of a gun—a Winchester '73, which like the Holy Grail is so special and perfect that it cannot be purchased; it can only be won. When the two antagonists meet up with each other in Dodge City on the Centennial Fourth of July, they quickly establish themselves as the best shots in a shooting contest, with the Winchester as the prize. Immediately after Lin McAdam (Stewart) wins the rifle, it is taken away from him by Dutch Henry (Stephen McNally) and the narrative structure of the film—which follows the rifle's progress as it falls into and out of the hands of people not worthy of it—begins. Five minutes before the end of the film, Lin's sidekick, Highspade (Millard Mitchell) explains to Lola (Shelley Winters) and to the audience, that Dutch Henry is Lin's brother and that the murder Lin is avenging is that of their father.
Mann's films have been often tagged "Freudian Westerns," and it would be all too easy to work out a facile psychoanalytic interpretation of this one: the death of the father leaves Lin with an unresolved Oedipus complex (in this Cain and Abel story, "Lin Mc Adam" = "from the line of Adam") and he must settle his father's death in order to complete the Oedipus Complex. The Winchester equals the phallus (as guns do in general; the lack of them in this film is referred to as nudity; one of Dutch Henry's gang says that without the guns that he had to leave behind in Dodge City, "I haven't felt this naked since the last time I took a bath." Highspade remarks that in Dodge "everyone did look a little undressed"). As the phallus, the rifle confers a false sense of power to the interlopers who come upon it; Lin proves early his worthiness of it, but he must resolve his Oedipal dilemma before he can become its rightful owner. While it would be possible to find evidence for such a reading, there are other, less vulgar ways of analyzing this film's meaning.

We can see in the film's first ten minutes a clear articulation of the special bearing of the Stewart character and the disturbances which mar it. The opening places the spectator in a position to the hero both as an accomplished figure with special abilities and regards him with some skepticism and suspicion. The action of the film is determined by the rifle itself—in the opening shots,
after a superimposed legend introducing it, the Winchester hangs in a shop window as the camera pans to show boys and men marvelling at it. In the same shot, the camera moves past a crowd and alights on Lin and Highspade who sit on their horses, looking at both the gun and the reaction to it. The gun embodies the narrative line; each new episode in this both highly linear and highly episodic story begins with a close-up of the gun which then pulls back to reveal who has the rifle now and to lead into the next sequence. At the opening, it acts as the narration, literally pointing the audience to the protagonist, the setting, and the situation.

In these early shots, Lin is set up as the classical Western hero with his trusty sidekick; the spectator knows from their first dialogue exchange that Lin is after a man. He also learns shortly that Lin is a nice, trusting man. When a young boy wearing a Tom-Sawyer-like straw hat comes out of the corner of a shot and asks to board the men's horses, Lin doesn't even insist on seeing the stall and, moreover, treats the boy like a grown-up: "You look like an honest man," he says, "take your word for it, Mister."

However, when Lin and Highspade come upon an affable, middle-aged gentleman (Will Geer) who turns out to be Wyatt Earp, the spectator-positioning begins to shift. Lin sees Geer pulling a resistant Lola (Shelley Winters) onto a stagecoach and takes it as his duty to intercede. The
woman smiles at him, once in a two-shot with Geer and again in a shot/reverse shot with Lin: this latter articulates her clearly as the "love interest" and object of the gaze. However, Lin's first move toward chivalry is rebuffed; Earp ignores him, telling him after the coach leaves that "Some folks in town thought that the dance hall girls would give the place a bad name over the holiday. Not that I'm one of them." Earp thus is presented as an agreeable enforcer of the symbolic order; his job is to maintain a peaceful equilibrium. He prevents all kinds of disruptions to the order—be they the threatening end of the madonna/whore dialectic or a threatening male phallicism; that is, he strips all the men of their guns. Guns in this town are permissible only in controlled situations like the July 4th Shooting Contest; as in Destry and Liberty Valance, the domestication of firearms is seen as the only way to ensure the existence of civilization. Similarly, female sexuality is permissible only in the culturally sanctioned settings of courtship and marriage.

When asked for his guns, not knowing that Geer is the marshal, Lin again reacts automatically according to his conditioning, and again his reaction is inappropriate. When the stagecoach leaves, Earp takes the dominant position visually, leading the two men ahead of him in a tracking shot, then looking down on them in an over-the-shoulder shot. When Earp asks for their guns, Lin stiffens
his arm into his "draw" position, and says in a low, tense voice as before with Lola, "You must have a real good reason to ask a man to do a fool thing like that." After fishing in his pockets—"Where'd I put that thing?"—Earp pulls out his badge, pins it on, and formally introduces himself. Earp gives the guns to a drawling, Chester-like deputy who complains to him that "you got half the guns in Kansas hangin' on the wall right now," as the camera shows an office completely clogged with rifles and gunbelts. Like Destry, the film posits a paternal authority figure so sure of his mastery that he doesn't need to assert it by means of a tough manner. In fact, this Earp is much more at ease (and much older) than Fonda's haunted, weary Earp, but he's just as cagey and masterly. Like Destry, sees the insecurity and bluff of men behind their guns; he laughs a bit maniacally when Highspade speaks his line about the men in town looking "undressed."

All of this sets the stage for the next scene, in which Earp leads Lin and Highspade to the saloon to sign up for the shoot. This is where Lin encounters Dutch Henry, and the furious reaching for non-existent guns takes place—another of Lin's conditioned, involuntary reactions, which Earp, and through him the film itself—undercuts. When the two men glare hatefully at each other in a series of reverse shots, Lin is shown in a close-up; Earp's head and shoulders come into the shot, slightly in back of Lin, to
his left, as if looking over Lin's shoulder; he peers at him suspiciously, out of the corner of his eye. "I thought you said you didn't know him," Earp says. "I said I didn't recall the name," Lin replies through clenched teeth in a low, strangled voice that bespeaks barely suppressed rage. As the scene ends, Earp takes on the role of father, mediating between quarrelling siblings.

In the next scene, the spectacle of the festive Centennial Fourth of July celebration combines with the ritual of the shooting contest. The scene quickly establishes Lin and Dutch Henry as the two special figures; the camera pans past some fifteen contestants as they shoot, but shows only the targets of Lin and Dutch Henry. In no time, the contest narrows to the two of them, as does the spectator's attention. But that attention is still mediated by Earp who, again like a father, finds that he needs to praise his charges and to keep a watchful eye on them as well. When Earp notes a similarity in the target groupings of the two men and says "looks like you fellas might have learned from the same man," Lin replies "Oh, he taught quite a few folks how to shoot," adding, "he taught 'em how, he didn't teach 'em what to shoot at." Exchanges like this by Lin and Dutch are aimed at each other, but are spoken to whomever will listen; the two antagonists, who possess special skills, provoke spectator interest but preclude identification by the fact that they are seen to
drag their private fight out into a public arena on a festive occasion; they are family members (in the subtext; the audience at this point doesn't know what their relationship is) arguing in a celebratory crowd, so that their conflict is jarring and disrupts the mood of the scene.

As the film goes on, Lin is shown to be a conventionally heroic subject whose Achilles Heel is his vengeance; he becomes crazed and distracted whenever the topic comes up. In each of the films, in fact, the Stewart character comes increasingly to suffer from a private disturbance. Jeanine Basinger calls the figure "the man with a secret" (103). The spectator does follow the Stewart figure; however, he also investigates him. In the Mann films, the narrative enigma is the situation, but it's also the male protagonist himself. This seems a subversive idea given the Mulveyan premise, articulated by Steve Neale, that in dominant cinema "where women are investigated, men are tested. Masculinity, as an ideal at least, is implicitly known. Femininity is, by contrast, a mystery" (16).

Stewart's emotional disturbances in the Mann films are specifically motivated as stipulated in Ellis' formula, but the spectator is kept puzzled by the intensity of the character's struggle and the fact that Mann doesn't reveal the cause until the latest possible moment. In Bend of the
River, the rope burns on McLintock's neck from the time when, "some vigilantes tried to hang a gunman," are not revealed until after he has killed his double whom he saved from hanging at the start of the film. Furthermore, the reactions of other, reliable characters, like Wyatt Earp, and the fact that Mann is a much less subjective director than either Capra or Hitchcock, keep the spectator in a kind of middle distance, interested in Stewart as an object for scrutiny as much as a protagonist through whom they experience the film. In the shooting contest in Winchester '73, the spectator is embarrassed for him, intrigued by him, and rather enjoys his breaking of decorum. However, what leaves the keenest impression is not Lin's mastery of the rifle, but the fact that his rage seems to have mastered him, that he is not in control of his reactions. It is this more than anything which makes these characterizations subversions of the Western hero, a figure who, Richard Dyer writes, is constituted classically "as 'man'—straight, straightforward, morally unambiguous, [who] puts his actions where his words are" (181).

John G. Cawelti, in The Six-Gun Mystique, identifies some fundamental characteristics of the appeal of the Western hero, among them the horse, which "embodies [the hero's] ability to move freely across [the wilderness] and to dominate and control its spirit" (85); close to this is "the desire to keep moving ... the image of a man directly
opposed to the official American pioneer virtues of progress, success and domesticity. In place of 'getting ahead,' he pursues the ideal of honor." Most importantly for my purposes here, Cawelti writes

...the American tradition has always emphasized individual masculine force ... This radical discrepancy between the sense of eroding masculinity and the view of America as a great history of men against the wilderness has created the need for a means of symbolic expression of masculine potency in an unmistakable way. This means the gun, particularly the six-gun (86).

However, Cawelti points out that the gun-play is carried out at a distance of the hero from his adversary and that the rituals of the draw, the showdown in the empty street, the fact that the hero always gives his opponent a fair chance and would never shoot him in the back (as villains almost always do) all keep the spectator from having to confront the brutality of violence:

The most important implication of this killing procedure seems to be the qualities of reluctance, control and elegance which it associates with the hero ... The hero never engages in violence until the last moment and never kills until the savage's gun has already cleared his holster (87).

The Mann films contradict each of these tenets and the film which demonstrates this best is The Naked Spur. The story unfolds by means of a narrative structure in which the plot relies almost entirely on character details; the gradual revelation of these details constitutes virtually all of the movement of the plot. Basinger refers to the story as "simplicity itself" (111), partly because of its
spare, tight structure: there are only five speaking parts; no other human beings appear except for Indians in one scene. The entire film takes place in the wilderness; the only interior is inside a cave. The characters are all either fugitives or self-exiles from civilization.

However, the "simplicity" proves deceptive. Howard Kemp, a lone man in the wilderness, at first seems to be a marshal hunting a man wanted for murder. He meets up along the way with Jesse (Millard Mitchell), a prospector, and Roy (Ralph Meeker), a dishonorably discharged Army lieutenant who turns out to have raped a squaw. These three find the object of the search, a desperado named Ben (Robert Ryan) who has brought with him Lina (Janet Leigh), the young daughter of a dead outlaw friend. The Stewart character turns out to be not a lawman, but a bounty hunter, a skittish, disturbed man who lost his ranch and is willing to do anything—namely take back a hunted criminal with a five thousand dollar price on his head—to get it back. Ben, a cheerful, intriguing trickster figure, quick to spot a weakness in each of the three "partners," continually thinks of ways to turn the three men against each other and somehow wriggle his way free. Meanwhile, Lina is slowly revealed as the Stewart character's salvation, the woman who can bring him to see that he is too good for the grim task he is trying to get himself to perform.
The enigma in this film involves the difference between what men are, and the way they act. Roy and Ben, both bluff, confident, smiling fellows, conceal a moral rot which shows through only gradually. Roy is forced to reveal himself as a rapist when he must admit that a "hunting party" of Blackfoot Indians ("No trouble with them for years," says Jesse) is after him. Then, after he seems to run off to evade the Indians, a panning camera reveals him hiding behind a clump of trees, setting up the foursome as bait and firing just as Kemp signals friendship to the chief. Jesse, the harmless old man, a comic relief figure who, as Basinger writes, is a stock character in each of the Stewart/Mann Westerns, reveals himself as a gold-grubber willing to betray the others in order to have Ben show him a cache of gold he supposedly has stashed nearby. Ben, the ostensible villain, is set up as the one who actually "makes things happen"; he is the one the audience watches, but also one who, in another sense, needs to be watched. His villainy is kept in check until the end, both in order to keep him a center of audience interest, and to maintain the ambiguity of the moral difference between him and Kemp.

In his book Acting in the Cinema, James Naremore discusses Stewart as, among other things, "an expert pantomimist" (65), having defined pantomime in talking pictures as a refinement of a "rhetoric of conventionalized
expression" (64), a set of techniques whereby a character's emotions and motives are communicated by natural-seeming, but nonetheless codified physical gestures and facial expressions. Naremore goes on to discuss "the idiolect of the performer" and gives as an example Stewart's reliance "on a personal habit rather than a standardized expressive vocabulary ... whenever he wants to register 'anguish' in close-up ... Inevitably, at the point of his greatest trauma, he will raise a trembling hand to his open mouth" (65); Naremore cites instances of this in Rear Window and Vertigo. However, there are many examples of "anguished" moments in which Stewart doesn't use this technique; for instance, at the end of The Naked Spur, a close-up of a sobbing Stewart fills the screen as Kemp insists to Lina that he's taking back Ben's corpse for the reward. However, Naremore's point is important: pantomime, even in Method acting, which is supposedly performed "from the inside out," involves performance codes which are crucial in delineating both character and persona.

In The Naked Spur, as in Winchester '73 and Bend of the River, Stewart's acting takes on an extra dimension because these "meta-Westerns" posit a split in the protagonist which causes him to mime behavior—and the actor to indicate many of the character's reactions by miming them. Stewart does this by physically suggesting an uncomfortable gap between what the character is and the way
he is trying to act. In the first scene, an encounter between Kemp and Jesse, Jesse asks, in a medium two-shot, "this party you're askin' after--friend of yours?" Kemp unfolds a paper from his pocket and in an authoritative tone states "He killed a marshal." On a shot of the wanted poster, after which Mann cuts back to the two-shot. Jesse crouches over a pot of coffee; Stewart/Kemp is framed from about the ankles up. Jesse says "Kansas. You've come a ways." On his line, "It ain't every peace officer that'd do that," Stewart, tucking the paper back into his pocket, raises his head and looks out, his eyes suggesting guilt for a instant, as if caught in a fib, which in a way he has been.

This small motion is the audience's first indication, besides the fact that Jimmy Stewart is playing an uncharacteristically gruff character, that this man is suffering a split between his private motives and his outward purpose. This telltale motion reveals what Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* calls a "fissure," whereby a subtextual disturbance breaks through, undermining and transforming the outward text, the text in this case being the face and body of the actor/character. Stewart uses his acting skills to show that Kemp is mimicing toughness and authority; he signals a "disturbance," of what he is trying to be, by what he "actually" is, according to the film. This disturbance is drawn out further in a scene in which
Kemp, delirious from a bullet wound suffered in Roy's Indian fight, hallucinates that he is back at his ranch before the Civil War and that he is telling his wife Mary that he'll be home before she knows it. At this point, about midway through the film, Ben reveals that Kemp lost his ranch because his wife sold the ranch while he was gone, and "used the money to run off with another fella." What's important is that in the delirium, Kemp's high tension is gone, and what shows through is the "good" Jimmy Stewart, the "naive," pure-hearted, nice-guy Stewart of the Capra films. In fact, the scene recalls It's a Wonderful Life, in which the name of the woman, as in Kemp's hallucination, is Mary, and in which he promises to "lasso the moon" and give it to her as a present; as here, the promise later haunts him. From this point, The Naked Spur becomes a conflict between the "good Stewart" and the disturbed, nearly maniacal Howard Kemp.

This conflict can be made clear at this point because the delirium scene is simply the fissure opened up to reveal a "good man" underneath the bounty hunter whom Kemp had constructed out of his desperation and bitterness. Moreover, what is on the surface can be taken for hysteria; the Stewart characters in these films are usually described in just this way: Jim Kitses in his chapter on Mann in Horizons West uses the word "hysteria" to refer both to
Stewart's playing of this role (35) and to the character himself (39).

The key to understanding how this character works in The Naked Spur is to see him as a male hysteric. Kemp suffers under the strain of trying to act out a harsh masculinity which he doesn't really possess. The symptoms of hysteria, as posited by Freud, namely paralysis and contortions (Mitchell 8), are part of Kemp's demeanor. In the scene for instance in which he gives Ben a gun and unties his wrists so that he can, in Basinger's phrase, "reach and draw," Ben appeals, as he often does, to Kemp's conscience--"If you're going to murder me, Howie, don't try to make it look like something else." Kemp's reaction is a strained, contorted, heavy-breathing attempt at ruthlessness. He tries to fire his pistol and, struggling against himself, gives up the effort, his tensed arms and shoulders collapsing into powerlessness.

Freud and Breuer found that hysteria is usually caused by memory: "hysterics suffer principally from reminiscences." Freud wrote that "the hysterical symptom is the memory-symbol of the operation of certain (traumatic) impressions and experiences." In four of the Mann Westerns (I'm leaving out Man from Laramie, which has a more typical revenge plot), the Stewart character is immobilized by the memory of a perceived loss of manhood. In each, the movement of the plot leads him to erase his
loss—by killing his patricidal brother in *Winchester '73*, or by eradicating his past as a border raider in *Bend of the River*. In *The Naked Spur*, he moves to erase it by gaining the money to buy back the ranch. However, by performing an act whereby the end justifies the means, Kemp goes against what the film sees as his "natural" role as a "good" man. Jim Kitses calls the Stewart/Mann heroes men "brought low, driven by forces over which they have no control to face themselves, reliving the very experiences they flee" (35). The task of the narrative in *The Naked Spur* is to bring the suspicious, mercenary Kemp back to his good, "true" self, by showing him that he can once again trust a woman—and thus, regain his manhood and become a unified subject. The film seeks to return the hero to the original moment of perceived loss of manhood, in order to disprove its validity and, thus, erase it. And his avenue back to "manhood" is the woman who, in the film's last scene, becomes the mirror in which he "faces himself," to repeat Kitses.

While it would be easy to say that the film "blames" the woman of the past for starting the cycle of hysteria, the Mann films tend to blame the male protagonist for abandoning his principles and letting his hysteria carry him away. In *The Far Country*, a film obscure about its characters' motivations, the cynical Ronda (Ruth Roman) tells her male counterpart Jeff (Stewart), "I trusted a
man -- once"; he replies, "That's quite a coincidence; I trusted a woman," the important thing being not the betrayal itself, but the fact that the characters could allow a single betrayal to turn them selfish and cynical.

In the other Mann Westerns, but especially in this one, the Stewart character mimics a particular type of masculinity, one which conforms to the conventional definitions of the Western Man, and which is at odds with Stewart's vulnerable characteristics. Where the Mann films recuperate is in seeming to insist that the self that Stewart denies is "Jimmy Stewart," a decent, honest, unified male subject.

The progressive breakdown of the mimicry takes place throughout the film; toward the beginning, when Kemp is first confronted by partners wanting a "cut" of the reward, Mann frames him alone, slightly halated against an icy blue sky; Kemp, shaking, raises both his guns and strains to say behind clenched teeth in a low, even voice, "I'm takin' him back and I'm gonna do it alone." In the film's last scene, Kemp drags Ben's carcass out of the river and insists to Lina, "I'm takin' him back, I swear it; I'm gonna sell him for money," breaking into sobs as he says it. The character goes from heavy-handed attempts at masculine dominance, to a final release from his masquerade, signified by "unmasculine" tears.
Although Mann rushes to the salvation and reconciliation which the commercial film and the star system require, the status of the hero at the film's end is actually quite ambiguous. Jim Kitses writes that in these films

... we rarely witness a process we could call growth in the character ... Entry into the community can thus feel like defeat, the hero not so much integrated as exhausted by his compulsion to pursue an unnatural course, not educated so much as beaten by a struggle against profound forces that operate as a kind of immutable law ... these men seem nothing more than empty shells (43).

The "defeat" which Kitses describes involves not Kemp's falling onto dependency on a woman as opposed to manly independence, but rather the film's lack of faith in salvation following such a willful hysteria.

The spectator position would seem to alternate between masochism and sadism, the latter associated with Ben and the spectator as scrutinizer of Kemp, the former associated with identification with Kemp. Much has been written about the classical cinema as turning upon a voyeuristic subjectivity combined with sadism; one of Mulvey's premises is that "Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat" (311). As I've indicated, however, in this film the will is marred, the strength displaced, and the "victory" and "defeat" ambiguous. Masochism, as posited by Gaylyn Studlar, using the work of Deleuze and Freud, has as its goal submission
to and reunion with the mother. Reunion with the mothering Lina is not the goal of Kemp, but it is the narrative's goal for him. Furthermore, Freud, in "The Economic Problem of Masochism," writes a description which can easily be applied to Kemp:

In order to provoke punishment ... the masochist must do what is inexpedient, must act against his own interests, must ruin the prospects which open out to him in the real world and must, perhaps, destroy his own existence (169-70).

Although Kemp seems to be doing precisely what is expedient, the film begins to make clear that it would be in "his own interests," to drop his increasingly cruel and self-defeating struggle, to stop and nurse his gunshot wound instead of dragging himself across rough country, and to marry Lina. The problem is, of course, that by involving himself with the venal Roy, and with a wanted murderer on his hands, he has enveloped himself in a moral thicket—inviting more and more punishment from the superego—and with no easy way out; like Oedipus, he is doomed to follow his appointed linear road to its self-destructive end.

Moreover, Kaja Silverman writes of what Theodor Reik calls "the demonstrative factor," the masochist's drive toward self-exposure:

To begin with, he acts out in an insistent and exaggerated way the basic conditions of cultural subjectivity, conditions that are normally disavowed; he loudly proclaims that his meaning comes to him from the Other, prostrates himself before the Gaze even as he solicits it, exhibits his castration for all to
see, and revels in the sacrificial basis of the social contract. The male masochist magnifies the losses and divisions upon which cultural identity is based, refusing to be sutured or recompensed. In short, he radiates a negativity inimical to the social order ("Masochism and Male Subjectivity" 51).

Kemp acts out each of Silverman's "conditions": the meaning of the quest does come to him "from the Other," from the woman who stole his ranch, an event which becomes tantamount to the loss of the mother. He means to wield control over Ben ("the Gaze"), but time and again the gaze is reversed, making Ben its subject and himself the object. "His castration"—both his literal wound and his figurative loss—is displayed and paraded through the film—mostly by Stewart's explosively self-exposing acting style. The "sacrificial basis of the social contract" also turns on him: he sees Ben, a fugitive with a reward attached ("he's not a man; he's a sack of money," as Roy bluntly puts it), as having offered himself up as sacrifice for a higher good (Kemp's). As Kemp makes himself more and more vulnerable, he himself—not Ben—becomes the sacrificial object. He must offer himself up twice—as a target for the freed Ben's "insurance against dyin' young," and in his final submission to Lina.

Furthermore, Stewart is known for his ability to express pain in such vividness that the spectator can share it. Several critics have noted the scene in The Man from Laramie in which he swoons and seems about to faint after getting shot in the hand; James Naremore writes of Stewart
that "as he grew older, he became increasingly spindly, and in potentially violent situations he could raise the level of anxiety in an audience simply because he seemed so breakable" (255). It's significant that in later years Mann was "to speak admiringly of Stewart's readiness to do virtually anything from staging a fight under horses' hooves to allowing himself to be dragged through a fire" (Kitses 31; my emphasis). The spectator recoups pleasure from, as Silverman puts it, "the compulsive repetition of those painful moments in which the subject is culturally mastered" ("Masochism and Subjectivity" 5); that is, the masochism could actually be a recuperation, Kemp's punishment for allowing himself to be manipulated, to lose, to be castrated. And there is no denying that there was audience appeal in watching Stewart take his licks. In the 1955 ads for *The Man from Laramie*, the dominant image was a close-up of the moment that Mann describes above--Stewart's anguished face as he, in the film, is pulled by a horse through a campfire. Publicity and later interviews with both Mann and Stewart made much of the fact that it really was a fire and it really was Stewart who was dragged through it.

Clearly then, the Mulveyan concept of male identification/voyeurism aligned with control is extremely problematic for this film, in which control is wielded by virtually everyone but the star/protagonist. Identifi-
cation with Ben, perhaps the film's most attractive figure, is nonetheless impossible; the film cagily compounds the speeches and scenes in which he could catch the audience's sympathy, with his most outrageous acts of cruelty; for example, the scene in which he relates a sad tale of his childhood as the five ride on a mountain ridge where he waits for the already wounded Kemp to fall from the saddle which the audience has watched Ben unstrap. In waiting for fall of the strap, to which Mann keeps cutting away as it slips, we are at once implicated in Ben's effort to kill Kemp (we are "in on it," in both senses of that expression), and masochistically aligned with Kemp; the spectator is put in a position like that of Jeffries in Rear Window in the scene in which he is forced to watch while Thorwald attacks Lisa: he sees what's happening and can do nothing but watch helplessly.

Intriguingly, if the male spectator does identify with the Stewart character, he finds himself in the place where Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane position the female spectator, forced to identify with either the controlling male character--in this case, Ben--or to identify masochistically with the female (or, in this case, feminized male) object. The Stewart character regains subjectivity only by submission to the mother figure; even the sadistic act of throwing the "naked spur" in Ben's face, enabling Roy to shoot Ben (one of those startling
moments in which Mann reveals his film noir experience),
does not restore him to subjectivity within this film's
moral system. While the final masochistic submission
remains problematic in terms of feminism—and it is
certainly not my intention to "save" this film "for
feminism"—the film seems equally lost to the formulas and
purposes of the dominant ideology. In The Naked Spur an
identification with Stewart is a masochistic one, a
position which, if the film manages to disguise it at all,
still remains disturbing for the spectator, whose only
comfort rests with that "good Stewart" whom he knows dwells
somewhere in Howard Kemp's troubled breast.

Conclusion: The Hitchcock Stewart and a Subversion of Male
Desire

There was the Capra Stewart and the Hitchcock
Stewart as well as the Mann Stewart, and the
three bear a direct linear relationship (Capra to
Mann to Hitchcock) (Basinger 101).

After reviewing the masochism of the Mann Westerns,
the Hitchcock films certainly seem the logical next place
to look and to conclude this study of James Stewart; in
fact, biographies of Stewart assume that Hitchcock cast him
in the three fifties films as a direct result of his
performances for Mann, notwithstanding Stewart's miscast
and awkward earlier role for Hitchcock in Rope (1948).
David Thomson writes that "Hitchcock pounced on this new
Stewart [of the Mann films] and put him in a wheelchair as
the voyeuristic protagonist of *Rear Window,*" the film which Stewart began just after completing *The Far Country,* the fourth of the Mann Westerns. While a full discussion of Stewart's work for Hitchcock could not be included in this chapter, at least a few remarks seem called for, with a complete analysis of one of the films, probably *Vertigo,* to come with a later revision.

In feminist psychoanalytic theory, Hitchcock's films have often been cited as exceptions which prove the rule in that they use extremely subjective devices to involve the male spectator with specifically male drives and concerns, and then make the identification uncomfortable. Mulvey wrote that

Hitchcock's skilful use of identification processes and liberal use of subjective camera from the point of view of the male protagonist draw the spectators deeply into his position, making them share his uneasy gaze. The audience is absorbed into a voyeuristic situation within the screen scene and diegesis which parodies his own in the cinema ... the spectator, lulled into a false sense of security by the apparent legality of his surrogate, sees through his look and finds himself exposed as complicit, caught in the moral ambiguity of looking (312-13).

Although no one has directly challenged Mulvey's analysis of *Vertigo,* some critics, such as Tania Modleski and Karen Hollinger, have seen subjectivity in *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* as passing from an impotent male subject to a female. Relatedly, Ian Green sees the question of "Who controls the gaze?" as connected to "Who controls the narrative?" and finds that the narrative, which originates
in both films with Stewart, slips from the hands of the incapacitated male protagonist who, in *Rear Window*, can do nothing but watch, and who in the last forty-five minutes of *Vertigo*, is immobilized by his desire for the lost object and lacks essential information which the female character and the audience share; thus, he becomes an object, acted upon by the gaze and the narrative instead of being their driving force.

In discussing Hitchcock's use of Stewart, James Naremore's analysis closely parallels that of Mulvey and others:

Stewart was important to Hitchcock primarily because he could elicit a strong sense of identification from the audience, serving as a perfect locus for a film's point of view; once that initial attachment was formed, he could exhibit unusual degrees of neurotic suffering, moral anguish, and physical pain. Without his contribution, *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* might have seemed far less disturbing (255).

Although Mulvey does not consider acting, Stewart's performance would seem to rank as one of the "identification processes" she cites as drawing the spectator so firmly into these films. Moreover, Naremore refers to Stewart as "the most successful actor of the 'common man' in the history of movies" (253). While Capra used Stewart to signify an historic American idealism, Ford to burlesque and revise that idealism, and Mann to emphasize neuroses and masochism within the iconic Western hero, it was Hitchcock who negated any special talents or qualities in the Stewart persona; he stressed Stewart's
"commonness," without celebrating or elevating it. Jeffries in Rear Window may be an honored news photographer, but looking out the window of his apartment, he's just another scopophilic male subject. Vertigo opens with its protagonist leaving his successful police career because a fear of heights leaves him unable to do his job. And Ben McKenna in The Man Who Knew Too Much is a prototypical Middle American fifties husband out of place in a Middle Eastern country and overshadowed by his famous wife's celebrity, which he can keep under control in quiet Indianapolis. Nor does Hitchcock hold out the possibility of a "better" subject under the surface; the redemption of which the commercial cinema requires at least a suggestion is mitigated to insignificance.

Hitchcock understood that a combination of the unique and the ordinary makes up the persona of a successful star. He exploited the familiarity of such stars as Stewart and Cary Grant, placing these icons in incongruous locales and situations (the suave Grant alone in an Iowa cornfield, the homespun Stewart in Morocco and London where his drawl seems exaggerated and out of place) and drawing out negative sides of their personae; Stewart's naïveté turns to delusion; his bedrock Middle-American stability looks rigid and narrow-minded. On the other hand, Jeffries' voyeurism, Scottie's romantic obsession which is equated with falling, Ben's frantic efforts to re-establish male
control—all of these are devastating partly because of their ordinariness.

Yet at the same time, as in Mann's films, the focus on "Jimmy Stewart," the ego ideal, the site of difference and interest for the spectator, contributes to the disturbance in the spectatorial identification process to which Mulvey refers. While there is a temptation to say that because Stewart is such a familiar presence, what happens to him and to the spectator identified with him is less disturbing, one can speculate, with Naremore, that Stewart's familiarity—and Hitchcock's emphasis on the mundane—makes the disturbance more profound and the spectator's implication in it greater.

The fact is that Hitchcock features Stewart in a trilogy of films in which male hegemony collapses and male desire is self-reflexive, turns inward. In the intense uncertainty of his gaze and the perpetual gawkiness of his physique, for Stewart to exercise authority is for that authority to be questioned. The Stewart persona is most non-problematic when Stewart plays nice fellows whose mastery flows easily and effortlessly out of his modest demeanor, for instance in a trio of biographies, *The Stratton Story* (1949, Sam Wood), *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954, Anthony Mann), and *The Spirit of St. Louis* (about Lindbergh, 1957, Billy Wilder), in *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959, Otto Preminger), whose lurid titillation (this was
the first Hollywood movie in which the words "rape," "sperm," and "panties" were heard without the film losing the Production Code seal) was tempered by Stewart's self-effacing, common-sense defense lawyer--Destry twenty years later, and in Harvey, the film which does the most with the "nice guy" Stewart and which I wish I could have devoted an analysis to in this chapter.

However, star careers which rely simply on a star's niceness tend not to last long. For one thing, "niceness" connotes "sexlessness," and indeed more sexless protagonists cannot be found than those of the five films I named above. For another, niceness defies drama; drama depends on difference, on a disturbance in the existing order and except in narratives of which Harvey is a prime example which pose a "nice" hero against a callous world, niceness doesn't offer much threat to an order which the audience is already prepared to see as "nice"; for instance, in all three of the Mann-Stewart Westerns scripted by Chase, the stable characters give thanks for the "nice people" they've encountered and look forward to the day when the conflict will be settled and everyone will be "nice."

When Stewart is referred to as "non-threatening," what is referred to is the threat of the phallus. The actors which I'll discuss subsequently both carry that threat, veiled and suggested but always present, with them to some
degree or another. Stewart doesn't, and so he must affect it and in so doing, appears unconvincing to the extent that his inability to exercise phallic authority calls that authority into question, as happens in the Mann Westerns and in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. In films like *Destry Rides Again* and *Liberty Valance* Stewart poses a threat to the phallus by his lack of reliance on it, and patriarchy must regroup in order to include Stewart's non-phallic nature under its umbrella (but not its parasol). Thus, to use Mulvey's dialectic from "Afterthoughts" of the symbolic and the narcissistic in male subjectivity, Stewart's persona comes down on the side of the symbolic to an extent unusual among male stars, especially those in the post-war era. Stewart is almost always pulled toward social interaction and the law. The narrative of *It's a Wonderful Life*, for example, pulls him away from narcissistic fantasy (to travel, to build things, to change the world) and toward the symbolic (home, family, civic responsibility). It is the rare film which ends with him single, autonomous, and "his own man": *Harvey* and *Anatomy of a Murder*, both buddy films, leave him happily walking off with his buddy, having eschewed female companionship; *Vertigo*, in which he has pursued the imaginary, leaves him disconnected from any realm. In fact, since male narcissism, as we'll see in later chapters, involves strong identification with the phallus, tall, gangly, squeaky-voiced James Stewart is the
least narcissistic of male stars, and in fact, we've seen that in his early star vehicles, *Mr. Smith* and *Destry*, new categories of male mythology for him to exemplify needed to be created.

Patriarchal male subjectivity contained James Stewart, but I hope that I've demonstrated the extent to which his films reveal just how contradictory and fraught with ruptures male subjectivity in classical cinema can be, and how recuperation is usually reimposed, before too much potency can escape from the consciousness of the tightly constructed subject.
CHAPTER II
CLINT EASTWOOD: FANTASY, VIOLENCE, AND THE REpressed

Men with No Names
It is the true heroic feeling, which one of our best writers has expressed in the inimitable phrase, 'Nothing can happen to me!' It seems, however, that through this revealing characteristic of invulnerability we can immediately recognize His Majesty the Ego, the hero of every day-dream and every story. -- Freud, Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming

Dissolve to ... a figure on horseback, seeming to emerge out of a distant horizon, as the opening titles announce the figure and the film: "Clint Eastwood"; "High Plains Drifter." As the credits flash, the camera follows the horseman down from the hills, through a graveyard, into the seacoast town of Lago. In most of these establishing shots, the camera is far behind the rider, showing the audience where he's going, but also seeming to tag along. Once he reaches the outskirts of this typical movie-Western town, the audience's alignment with the stranger becomes quite close. As the man rides through the main street, seeming to put himself on exhibition, the spectator is positioned directly behind him or sometimes in his place, the place of the reverse shot, of what Christian Metz calls "the out-of-frame character" (55).
It becomes apparent that the reactions of the townspeople to the character on horseback are as significant as the character himself. From the spectator's point of view, these people are also on display. And since the spectators are in the position of the horseman as he rides past porches and shop windows, the townspeople are gawking at them, and thus are set up as Other. But although the spectator is identified with the rider, there is an important difference between them: the audience members look at what the Stranger passes; he doesn't. His failure to look codes, among other things, the townspeople's reaction to him as predictable and beneath interest. Only one thing makes him stop and look--the crack of a whip, a gesture which breaks his single-minded riding and will be explained shortly to the audience in a subjective flashback.

This opening sequence establishes the spectator's position for the rest of the film: he/she is placed as a kind of middle term, aligned with the hero who knows the town he has come to and why he is there; the spectator can trust that the film will reveal his motives and unfold the action. At the same time, although the citizens are shown at a distance that establishes them as Other, the film apparatus, and especially the soundtrack, displays the things that cause their apprehension. As the horse goes by, its hooves and breathing combine to sound like some
inexorable machine; when the man gets off his horse, the jingling of his spurs, amplified in post-production, sounds like knives gnashing against each other; also exaggerated by dubbing is the sound of his footsteps as he walks up the wooden stairs to the saloon. In the position in which the spectators have been placed, it is they who cause the apprehension, so effectively have they been aligned with the stranger.

Because the male spectator knows that he is watching a movie, he also knows that this reflection with which he is encouraged to identify is a fantasy projection of himself as a socially constructed male; however, the projection expresses an irresistible narcissism. At times the spectator seems in the position of Mordecai the dwarf, the only character sympathetic to the stranger. Mordecai can burrow in to tight spaces to watch the stranger do things that no one else can see, except of course, the spectator. He lights cigars for the stranger, enjoys his threat to the town, and lives vicariously through him, just as the spectator does. So even dwarfs started small: at the movies they can be six-foot-four, or at least forget their size at the same time that they, on another level, must remain aware of it.

But in typical Clint Eastwood films, of which *High Plains Drifter* (1973, directed by Eastwood) certainly is one, there is something else operating as well. When the
men in the saloon taunt the "flea-bitten range bum," it is the spectator who is challenged; the stranger seems unconcerned. When a woman walks by the stranger, daring to initiate the glance at him but framed in an object position, the shot places the spectator right behind Eastwood, who is unimpressed and doesn't look; it is the audience members who are interested. The ultra-laconic Eastwood figure and the Others' "look at the camera" allow for even more direct engagement with the spectator as the enunciative source of the film than usual in a classical Hollywood film.

The sequence culminates in two events: the Stranger, trying to get a shave from a comic barber too nervous to do the job, is surrounded by the thugs from the saloon; the spectators are positioned with the stranger: they too are surrounded. When the men are shot with super-human speed, the audience doesn't see Eastwood draw his gun. At the first shot, the spectators are in the stranger's position; they hear the blast, see the smoke and the bullet hole in the target's forehead. In the second and third shots (in both senses of the word), the spectators see Eastwood's guns from the same position from which they would see them if they themselves were doing the shooting: in short, the shots are issuing from the spectator.

As the thugs' provocation is followed through, so is the woman's; when she brushes up against the stranger in
the street, he asks her contemptuously "If you want to get acquainted, why don't you just say so?" The woman, pretending to be outraged as the film would have it (her "no" means "yes"), calls him "trash." The stranger, promising to teach the woman "a lesson in manners," as he taught his male antagonists, drags her into a barn and rapes her, while Mordecai, who suppresses a smile, looks on as the woman's outrage at being raped turns to submissive rapture.

In each of these events, Eastwood's presence has occasioned a threat and, as a result, gratified a desire, not in the character but in a spectator—a spectator unquestionably constituted as male, or, at least an extremely "masculinized" female. The obscenity of the rape and murders requires a disavowal on the part of the spectator who seeks to recoup pleasure from them: "she deserved it," or "those guys asked for it." The fact is that absence of character and motivation, combined with strong identification techniques which the film employs almost from its beginning, relieves the spectator of moral responsibility for enjoying the rape and murders—even though it's enjoyment which the spectator must disavow, as Mordecai does by keeping himself from smiling during the rape. Moreover, in both events desire is justified by threat and thus displaced onto law: thus, the gunmen are "justly punished" by the gun; the woman, the sexual threat,
is "justly punished" by sexual violence. This pattern is similar to that which Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott find in their study of the James Bond films, noting that in *Never Say Never Again* (1983),

the traditional narrative by which Bond puts attractive women back in their place sexually but reserves violence and killing for the villain is reworked to deal violently and finally with those women who cannot be conquered sexually (41).

However, Eastwood's films, and none more so than this one, have trouble defining the Bond films' distinction between the sexual and the violent, however phallocentric those definitions are. Judith Mayne, in an article on Eastwood's later film *Tightrope*, notes that the film "is ... unsure of what rape is" (69); although this uncertainty runs through Eastwood's films of the seventies and eighties, his films seem fairly obsessed with the topic of rape, as I'll discuss in the third section of this chapter.

At the same time, the disconnection of the rape and murders in this first scene of *High Plains Drifter* from any sort of moral rationalization on the part of a narrative which has not yet been articulated reveals those images as pure pornographic projections from the imaginary. The spectator can trust, because this is a Hollywood movie, that a moral framework, rooted in language and law, will be provided. Eventually, one is, although it's a singularly egoistic sort of morality. In the meantime, the Eastwood
film seems to provide a tentative answer to a question
posed (tentatively) by Paul Smith,

What does a man writing his imaginary actually
produce? ... If the structures in which we are caught,
in which our egos are constructed, are accurately
described by theory and feminist theory, is our
imaginary anything but a pornographic defence against
the mother's body? (37)

The film needs spectators in order to complete the
scene; the desire and passion missing from Eastwood are
supplied by the audience. As a movie star, Eastwood in his
persona and his presence is oddly incomplete; the cause of
his phenomenal success could be said to lie in the fact
that he is only a schematic figure whose desires and
motivations the spectator fills in. The signifier is the
phallus; the spectator provides the signified.

Eastwood deconstructs the Western, making it serve a
solipsistic function for the spectator. This point is not
lost on Pauline Kael, who told Eastwood biographer Iain
Johnstone that

People used to think the Western was such a popular
form because of its morality, but really it was
because of the melodrama and the action. In a sense
Eastwood has removed the hypocrisy from those
characters by getting rid of all the morality ... The
Eastwood character expresses a new emotionlessness
about killing that people think is the truth now. It
used to be that the man who stood for high principles
was also the best shot. Now we no longer believe
that in order to be a great shot you need principles
at all. And Clint Eastwood is a totally unprincipled
killer (50-51).

The three "Spaghetti Westerns" for Sergio Leone which
launched Eastwood's film career in the sixties and the
Americanized versions which Eastwood made in the early seventies were the latest reactions to the breakdown of the genre's "high principles" which began shortly after World War II with Westerns such as Anthony Mann's. Rather than personifying "good" or "justice," Eastwood's heroes represent nothing but the ego; they expose the extent to which the moral grandeur and "Americanness" of previous Western heroes had been based upon a glorification of Self in which subjectivity translates, probably by definition, as "good."

This is made explicit in Leone's The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1966) in a prologue in which the titular "characters" are introduced. The Eastwood character, known to audiences as "The Man with No Name," is revealed as part of a scam in which he goes from town to town and turns in the outlaw Tuco ("the Ugly," played by Eli Wallach) for the reward money; later, he shoots the rope as Tuco is about to be hanged and the two split the reward money once they get out of town. The sequence ends with Eastwood leaving his hapless partner to die in the desert as the camera and the narration freeze his image into a kind of portrait with the ironic caption, "the Good." Leone and Eastwood posit "good" as a mask, a narrative and cinematic construction built on codes of power and heroism familiar to the audience, and they do this by showing just how far they can push the moral boundaries of "hero," while maintaining a
quite monolithic audience identification with this "hero." Eastwood restores the myth of the subject in an era when ideals seem to have died, by returning heroism to its ground zero: narcissism.

Freud defined narcissism, after Nacke, as "a perversion ... in which an adult treats his own body with all the caresses that are usually devoted to an outside sexual object" (416). This extreme self-love, to Freud, leads the libido away from objects and into the ego where it "cannot find its way back to objects" (421). "It is probable," Freud writes, "that this narcissism is the universal and original state of things, from which object-love is later developed, without the narcissism necessarily disappearing on that account" (416). If we extend "objects" to include not just love-objects, but everything upon which the subject's integration into civilization depends--family, society, allies--then we have named everything that The Man with No Name stands apart from. Moreover, the figure's narcissism and isolation lead to reactionary if not fascist fantasy and nostalgia when Don Siegel gives him a somewhat differentiated identity and moves him to the polarized settings of late 60s-early 70s New York (Coogan's Bluff, 1968) and San Francisco (Dirty Harry, 1971). To paraphrase the epigraph of For a Few Dollars More (1965), "When life had no value, death,
sometimes, had its price": "When the outside world has no value, the only thing of value to the ego is itself."

The Man with No Name, a combination of the standard and the unfamiliar, is the figure from which Eastwood's persona descends, but it has a very strange lineage itself. The character was established in Westerns made by Italians, in Spain, with an actor from a routine American TV series (Rawhide) and Italian actors playing Mexicans, all with West German financing. While such internationalism was not unusual in the fifties and sixties, Fistful of Dollars (1964), the first of the Leone/Eastwood "Spaghetti Westerns," did not stop there. It was a remake of Akira Kurosawa's Yojimbo (1962), an ironic parody of the heroic Samurai genre, with borrowings from American Westerns and Italian commedia dell'arte.

In fact, the Man with No Name figure owes as much to the role that Toshiro Mifune's silent, sardonic itinerant Samurai plays in the narrative of Yojimbo as to any figure from Westerns. The Kurosawa film, inspired by Carlo Goldoni's play The Servant of Two Masters, is about a wandering yojimbo (bodyguard) who comes to a town caught in a feud between two wealthy families over control of the lucrative silk trade. Each family is presented as comically greedy and venal, and each sees the omnipotent, mythic swordsman the way the homesteaders in a film such as Shane would see a stranger who is fast on the draw: he's
the strongman who will help them defeat the interlopers. The *yojimbo*, finding both sides contemptible and seeing a way to exploit their greed and viciousness, alternately and surreptitiously goes to work for both of them, sabotaging their schemes and ultimately giving new meaning to the phrase, "cleaning up the town," as only an innkeeper, a maid, and an undertaker are left alive at the end of the film. The *yojimbo* stalks away, muttering "Now maybe you'll have some peace around here."

It is important, in defining the Eastwood persona, to look back to *Yojimbo*, even in as simplified an account as I give here, in order to show the archetype as not a character, nor even as an identification figure, but as a sort of supernatural presence who functions—at least in the Leone trilogy—to entice, thwart, or mediate the desires of the narrative's main antagonists—the feuding Rojos and Baxters in *Fistful*, the bandit Indio and the bounty hunter Mortimer in *For a Few Dollars More*, "The Bad" and Tuco ("The Ugly") in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. The man with no name, like Kurosawa's *yojimbo*, kills or tricks people who manifestly deserve to be killed or tricked; in fact, Christopher Frayling in his book *Spaghetti Westerns*, calls him "a super-efficient trickster" (78) who leaves at the end of the film when "the various groups he has tricked cannot be exploited anymore" (130), but his apparently selfish ends coincide with a "moral"
structure based on ego, whereby clearly bloodthirsty and murderous elements must be destroyed and the merely foolish and garrulous—"God's not on our side because he hates idiots" the Man tells Tuco—receive milder punishment. In short, he provides audience pleasure because he profits from turning the greed, stupidity, cowardice, and brutality of others against themselves.

I want to be careful to show the difference between the Kurosawa film's relation to its audience and the Leone and Eastwood-directed films' relation to theirs. Although, as David Desser has pointed out (105), the identification structures of the Kurosawa film align the spectator with the swordsman, the mocking gaze of the yojimbo, as played by Mifune, is so clearly nihilistic and misanthropic, and the didactic level of the film so vivid, that the spectator is on some level implicated in the greed of the townspeople. This is especially true when one remembers that the film was made about the Japanese and for an assumed Japanese audience at a time when intense industrial-ization and commercialism were bringing massive change to a basically insular and conservative society. The spectator's ego is not aligned with the ironic yojimbo, whose archetypal features, such as a heavy strut usually seen from behind, are so exaggerated that they seem to have quotation marks around them. The samurai figure, obviously an artificial construct in Yojimbo, seems more
closely aligned with a level of the film which could be called authorial— the film's point of view— than with the spectator.

At first, the Leone-Eastwood character appears to be as self-consciously "constructed" as the Kurosawa-Mifune one. Leone even told an interviewer that "I looked at him [Eastwood] and I didn't see any character, just a physical figure" (Cumbow 154). Furthermore, the Spaghetti Westerns remind the spectator that the character is fabricated out of spare parts which nonetheless add up to a recognizable myth: the traditional Western loner is de-familiarized; he wears a Mexican-style poncho and gaucho's flat hat, thus disrupting the coded "American-ness" of Hollywood comboys, and he smokes thin cigars which Eastwood said "just put you in a sour frame of mind" (Johnstone 40). He is unshaven, even though grizzliness in Westerns signifies a lack of civilized manners unbecoming a hero; for example, in My Darling Clementine the first thing the bearded Wyatt Earp does upon arriving in town from the range is get a shave. The Stranger in High Plains Drifter has his shave interrupted and goes bristling— in more ways than one— through the rest of the film. The figure in the Leone films never goes near a razor.

The hyperbolization of an archetypal figure in the Kurosawa film and the defamiliarization of one in the Leone films do not amount to the same thing. Hyperbole can come
close to removing a character as a credible ego ideal, turning the fiction into meta-narrative, as Eastwood's own Bronco Billy (1980) proves. In that film, spectator agency is weakened by the attention drawn not only to the by-then-familiar Eastwood mannerisms (such as the narrowing of his eyes just before he draws his gun), but to typical Eastwood camera placements (such as one which places the hero at an extremely low angle, from a distance), in such a way that the spectator's pleasure in agency is critiqued, made self-reflexive. Defamiliarization, on the other hand, is usually considered an alienation device, but it can allow a filmmaker like Leone to serve up old wine in new bottles; it can dehistoricize and remove from the myths political, moral, and social contexts; with those elements gone, identification revolves solely around such regressive concerns as ego-preservation and self-love. It is the ego and id minus a superego, the Imaginary as its own Law, minus the Symbolic components of language and social interdependence.

Why the Man has No Name (and no face and no body)

Leone and Eastwood put the man with no name in front of the camera sparingly, and, it seems, with caution. When he is shown in full figure, that figure is heavily cloaked—by the poncho in the Leone films, by a nondescript long coat in the American Westerns. These coverings
flatten out and obscure the lean musculature that is displayed (though not in a way that suggests exhibitionism) in some of Eastwood's other films. In fact, they blur the body almost entirely; in the Leone films, the presence of the "shroud" is often called attention to, usually in a shot in which one corner of the poncho is dramatically drawn back like a curtain, sometimes in close-up, revealing the six-guns which traditional Western heroes wear openly. In the final shootout of A Fistful of Dollars, he is even able to hide a bullet-proof metal shield under the poncho, and advances toward his assailant like a ghost whom bullets can't reach.

The stranger's physical presence is often amorphous and elusive, both to the camera and in the world of the fiction; as I've mentioned concerning the opening of High Plains Drifter, Eastwood is often felt as a presence not so much before the camera but in its place, and not simply as the momentarily out-of-frame character in a point-of-view or shot-reverse-shot. His first "appearance" in The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly is a good example: Tuco is being captured by three Mexicans. One of them, who about half-faces the camera, gloatingly unfurls the reward poster for Tuco and says "Hey amigo, do you know you got a face beautiful enough to be worth two thousand dollars?" At this moment, Eastwood's calm, even voice, completely disembodied and seeming to emanate from the screen, says
"Yeah, but you don't look like the one who'll collect it."

At this, the men draw, again toward the camera, as a gun hand reaches in from in front of the screen and shoots. When Eastwood finally does enter this film bodily, he's photographed from behind; when he faces the camera, his head is bent down to light his cigar and his face is shadowed by the brim of his hat. The elusiveness does not stop here; in the same film, his presence is sometimes indicated merely by a cloud of cigar smoke wafting from around a corner. And all of this in films full of huge close-ups of sweaty, grimacing, blemished faces.

The American films go, if anything, farther than this in stressing the figure's physical amorphousness. In High Plains Drifter, the audience learns only at the end of the film that the Stranger is an avenging angel, the ghost of a marshal who had been conspired against and put to death by the town of Lago. It is obvious, however, that he has appeared in a different incarnation, a changed body, because no one knows him—not the outlaws who whipped him to death ("Who are you?" one of them stammers again and again), nor the dwarf who apparently was the marshal's only friend. Eastwood's personage (though not his persona) is insubstantial enough to be changed easily.

There is, moreover, a violent, recurring sight gag which revolves around Eastwood's physical slipperiness; the villain's henchmen think they see the stranger isolated in
a room and file in to beat him or shoot him; each time, the stranger has somehow managed, usually unbeknownst to the audience, either to slip outside and toss in a stick of dynamite (*Fistful of Dollars, High Plains Drifter*) or to hide elsewhere in the room and shoot the men after they've used up their ammo firing on his decoy (*For a Few Dollars More, Pale Rider*).

Besides discrete camera placement and narrative legerdemain, Eastwood's manipulation of his own physical equipment as an actor emphasizes suggestion of character, rather than delineation of it, and effaces any individual characteristics and mannerisms. In a tradition in which even the most "masculine" stars such as Bogart and Wayne had unique, even eccentric voices and ways of carrying themselves, Eastwood is a minimalist. There is nothing distinctive about his walk—unlike Stewart, whose slightly stooped gait emphasized the ungainliness of his long arms and legs, or Wayne, whose way of hitching up his shoulders and letting them point his body in a given direction called attention to his overall size and strength. Eastwood's gestures are tiny, his movements economical to the point of appearing studied. When Eastwood was younger, his voice was thin and reedy and seldom rose above a whisper; as he got older, the voice deepened, but his use of it remained understated. Some of the later, self-reflexive films, such as *Bronco Billy* and *Honkytonk Man* (1982), in which Eastwood
embodies a much more relaxed persona, reveal just how much he had been limiting the range and timbre of his voice.

Similarly, Eastwood's face is inaccessible, but not inscrutable. As the Leone films alternately hide and reveal the presence of Eastwood's body, the face is also hidden—not just behind the scruffy beard and the cigar with its attendant stream of smoke, but also by Eastwood's manipulation of these things. Although Eastwood's face is always a mask, except in the few films in which he eschews conventional heroism for a more naturalistic demeanor (The Beguiled, Play Misty for Me, Honky-tonk Man, Tightrope), the mask in the Leone films is paradoxical in its inconsistency. The pleasant second-lead TV actor who for seven years played a role on Rawhide which Johnstone compares to the callow Montgomery Clift character in Red River is making the transition to unprincipled desperado; The Man with No Name's accoutrements are part of an attempt to compensate for facial features which are basically soft. The amiability of Rawhide's Rowdy Yates often shows through the outward grizzliness.

Accordingly, the Leone films seem interested in the contradiction in traditional Westerns between a hero's politeness and his brutality. Leone and Eastwood learn to capitalize on the incongruity, reserving Eastwood's smile and humor for his most sadistic and ironic moments and playing the young Eastwood's fair-skinned downiness, to
which attention is often called, off against the invincibility of the character. Later, in the American films, the mask hardens and Eastwood's trademark squint predominates, as does a neutral look that makes the figure seem self-occupied and disinterested. The face, already paradoxical in the Italian Westerns, manages to appear both blank and overdetermined in the American ones. Robert C. Cumbow—in the sort of film criticism which attributes everything in a film to the director—calls Eastwood "a tabula rasa on which Leone would write ineradicable capital letters" (154). I would call him instead a tabula rasa on which spectators can write their own "letters," but on which nothing is written because nothing actually needs to be written. Let me explain this comment in terms of sexual difference. When the French actress Isabelle Huppert performs in a laconic style, she acts out in an ironic way the patriarchal convention of woman as mystery (much as Jack Nicholson ironically acts out machismo). But when Eastwood employs understatement and extensively cuts dialogue out of his scripts, as he is reported to have done, he's not read as inscrutable or mysterious—even though the film may ostensibly posit him that way—because masculinity is implicitly understood and does not need elaboration.

Still, the feeling persists that for a major star, Eastwood in these films is a schematic and insubstantial
figure. He would seem to a casual observer to possess little of the individuality and distinction of the star-as-ego-ideal, and in "The Man with No Name" films which first established him, he doesn't even bear the most basic signifier of identity—a name. Although "The Man with No Name" might itself come to sound like a name because it does serve to identify the character, it must be remembered that the words come from English language publicity for these movies and are never spoken in the films themselves.

As semioticians have pointed out that the use of a certain word to name a certain object is arbitrary, so there is nothing in any proper name itself to mark it as inherently appropriate for its referent. In fictions, however, names become one of the codes which fix characters in nationality, social class (consider "Willy Loman" on one end of the scale, "C. K. Dexter Haven," the Cary Grant character in The Philadelphia Story, on the other), gender characteristics, and—in commercial films—star personae, along the lines of existing social codes. "Fielding Mellish" fits the star characteristics of Woody Allen, as "Sugar Kane" fits Marilyn Monroe and "Ransom Stoddard" and "Tom Doniphon" fit Stewart and Wayne. Similarly, character names can mark the story's milieu, and the film's genre.

To leave the Eastwood figure unnamed, therefore, is to decline to locate him in national identity (although there
is no doubt about this, outward defamiliarizing devices notwithstanding), and in specific time and place. If the Eastwood figure doesn't have one of the most basic signifiers which grounds a subject to his/her existence in society--another being gender--then he and the spectator positioned to identify with him elude responsibility to anything but the figure's own distinctly Darwinian survival needs--he has no "good name" to protect. The lack of a name takes the narrative one remove further from realism, as it relieves the character and the spectator of language and the responsibilities which follow from it.

Furthermore, the figure's frequent placement in the cinematic apparatus itself--in the place of the camera, or the place of the spectator, or both--situates him as a free-floating presence who is never exactly fixed, not confined even to the designation, "character"; he is farther from an objective "he" and closer to a pre-verbal "I." Yet for all the amorphousness and seeming contradiction of the Man with No Name, what he signifies is unmistakable--the phallus, the salient male Imaginary image which requires no name, which simply is. With the elaborate paraphernalia of the Man with No Name reduced finally to the male's Imaginary (in both senses) essence, language is a hindrance to be kept to a minimum; spectators can forget their Symbolic connections and
experience the film as men with no names. Jacques Aumont writes about spectatorship as

caught up in a kind of "turnstile" effect (alternating between the Imaginary and the Symbolic) that allows us both to believe the image as real and to disengage ourselves from it sufficiently to endow it with meaning (Saxton 24).

Eastwood's films, however, come closer than most to constructing a solipsistic order organized around the phallus, and in the service of an Imaginary projection of the self. In his structural study of the Superman comics, Umberto Eco writes that although twentieth-century superheroes differ from the heroes of classical myth because they live in a representation of our everyday world (that is, they are not gods), what keeps such heroes at a pleasurable distance from the viewer or reader is their freedom from chronological time. In Eco's words, such a hero does not "consume himself" (111); that is, he draws no closer to death, and his previous adventures have no consequences in the next. Similarly, the Leone films operate in a comic book's lack of responsibility for--and to--time: in the second film, which takes place some years after the Civil War, the Man With No Name is referred to as a young man; however, the next film is set during the Civil War, with the character no younger than in the previous movie. Moreover, in each of the Leone films and in Eastwood's American Westerns, other characters do suffer with a vengeance, so to speak, the consequences of
previous actions; these are usually brought home to them by the Man With No Name.

However, the spectator is apt not to be bothered by or even to notice such inconsistencies as those referred to above, just as Christopher Frayling is able to write an entire book—an often perceptive one—about Italian Westerns without mentioning that it's not clear in the second Leone film that Eastwood is even playing the same character as in the first! So persuasive is this archetype's combination of the amorphous and the monolithic that these uncertainties do not ruin the spectator's pleasure, or go against the genre's logic. And if the Italian Westerns defy time, the American ones defy death—the ghostly Eastwood figures in High Plains Drifter and Pale Rider are more substantial dead than alive.

The psychoanalytic theory of identification articulated by Christian Metz in The Imaginary Signifier has become so generalized and commonplace that to apply it to a single mainstream narrative film or group of films may appear naive. It might seem hard to find films to which Metz's theories wouldn't apply, in that as Metz himself emphasizes, his theory refers not so much to film-texts as to spectators. However, because Eastwood films so foreground the ego of the spectator as having a stake in the fantasy while they place that ego in a threateningly real situation, and because all that is tangible about the
schematic "Stranger" persona is its phallic power, Metz's theory is the best place to look to define the appeal of Eastwood as he is used in most of the films.

While setting up the model of the mirror stage and then specifying the differences between a child's identification with a representation of him/herself in the primordial mirror and a spectator's identification with images on the screen (that is, the spectator's ego has long since been formed; she stays aware that she's watching a representation because she is "wholly outside the mirror, whereas the child is both in it and in front of it" [49]), Metz seeks to answer the question, "with what, then, does the spectator identify?..." (46). He brushes aside, but doesn't exactly eliminate, the usual suspects—a character in the fiction, or an actor; these are "secondary" identifications—and concludes that

the spectator identifies with himself, with himself as a pure act of perception (as wakefulness, alertness); as the condition of possibility of the perceived and hence as a kind of transcendental subject, which comes before every there is (49).

Metz later ties this crucial concept in with the cinematic apparatus, at whose center is a perceiving spectator in "identification with the (invisible) seeing agency of the film itself as discourse ... the agency which puts forward the story and shows it to us" (96). Metz's theory, as he acknowledges, is closely akin to Baudry's concept of an apparatus dependent upon the infantile regression described
by Freud (this regression is sometimes confused with the Imaginary, although to Lacan, the Imaginary is not a phase in temporal development to which the subject returns, but part of an ever-present dialectic which functions to coordinate the subject's social identity with his/her desire).

More crucially, although the spectator does identify with him/herself to some extent in all films, the Man with No Name films take Metz's principle to its most monolithic extreme, as, in different ways, do the Dirty Harry films. Eastwood's low voice, his economical movements and dialogue, his frequent absence from the shot and seeming embedded-ness in the apparatus, the dream-like qualities of his mobility and lack of embodiment— all of these things make him a figure who performs in our place, whom we release, as Metz would put it; at the same time we receive him (51)— a figure perceived by the spectator's symbolic, while projected from his/her imaginary.

As I said at the start of this chapter, Eastwood's impassivity contributes to audience engagement; the spectator fills in the desire of a character in a point of view shot in which the character doesn't look. In other words, many theorists talk about spectator positioning in terms of an alignment with a character's look in a shot/reverse shot, but what to do with a character who doesn't look? Branigan, for one, defines "narration in the
visual arts as a positioning of the viewer with respect to 
a production of space, and subjectivity as a production of 
space attributed to a character" (64). In this passage 
Branigan is saying that it is the space which characters 
occupy and not their gaze which brings audiences into 
subjectivity with them.

Nevertheless, the disconnection of the Eastwood figure 
from sight is one of the features which makes the Stranger 
omnipotent but also amorphous. Not only does he not need 
to see in order to know—in For a Few Dollars More, for 
instance, he knows somehow that there are three men in back 
of him and he turns and fires three shots, then while 
looking in the opposite direction, he shoots a man who is 
trying to get away; in all cases, we see what he doesn't, 
but he acts upon the visual information as if he does see 
it, thus making mastery for the spectator complete—the Man 
and the spectator make a team; the spectator has the sight, 
the Stranger the agency.

The Man with No Name also does not need sight in order 
to desire, because he wants nothing; Frayling points out 
that even the Leone character's lust for "dollars" is not a 
desire for money itself, since he never seems to spend it 
or get rich from it; it's simply that "dollars are the 
prize" (161). As a trickster, the Stranger functions to 
keep the dollars out of the wicked hands of Others such as 
"the Bad" and or of greedy hands such as those of "the
Ugly," and not to satisfy a desire which would, after all, mark him as a mortal, fleshly subject. In *High Plains Drifter*, therefore, the townspeople's looks at an "absent" Eastwood go to a subject who both is and isn't there; that is, the looks go to him, but they also go through him—to the audience. Because these looks are not returned in the usual way, the spectator is put in a powerful position as the one who returns the look, the one whose desire animates the film.

In an article entitled "The Look at the Camera," Marc Vernet addresses this sort of look, albeit in a different context. Vernet refers to a shot/reverse shot pattern common in horror films whereby the victim's look makes him/her (usually her) scream:

At the beginning of *While the City Sleeps*, the first victim of the young killer is seen at the moment of the murder from a slight high-angle shot, screaming with terror and address-ing a frightened look toward the camera. This shot is in fact subjective because the axis and position of the camera are situated in the place that the killer occupies, there where he can already no longer be struck back at. The mortifying look is a sort of anti-communication because it affirms itself without allowing for a reply and adopts an attitude of superb impermeability to all reactions of its spectator. The look here is impersonal, unreachable ... it is an unbearable look. It is that look that condemns without appeal, that crushes whomever it is addressed to: it is the look of murderous folly, a devouring look, the look of the Law, the look of Death (59).

Here finally we have a description of the Eastwood look in these films—impenetrable, monolithic. There are two elements which make it different from Vernet's
explanation, that is, not an "unbearable look." First is the fact that the contempt, or at best, indifference, that the spectator in horror films is implicitly invited to feel for the **victim** simply for making him/herself so disposable (thus the furor when Hitchcock killed off his presumably not negligible "star" a third of the way through **Psycho**) is made explicit in the Eastwood films. Also, the Stranger is the center of interest; spectators are put in the invincible position of the hero, while again being able virtually to program him to do their bidding without responsibility, without consequence.

**High Plains Drifter** shows not only how Eastwood's persona had solidified in the U.S. by 1973, but how the American realist tradition dictated that the Stranger be much more grounded in circumstance, coherence, and cause-and-effect motivation than in the Italian films. For one thing, the codes are clear: the Stranger is a "range bum"; he is dressed simply and shabbily—no exotic ponchos or gaucho's hats, although the scraggly beard and thin cigar from the No Name persona do remain. Gone is any hint of lightness or mischievousness from this character; he means business—and the audience finds out why. The Stranger turns out to be a ghost, and he's back to exact revenge on the venal town which had him killed, and to earn himself a marked grave, so that his spirit can stop wandering. Thus, by making the seemingly other-worldly Man With No Name
concretely other-worldly, the American films are able to base the spectator's pleasure in an overwhelmingly Imaginary image, but then justify that pleasure by grounding the action of the film in elemental Symbolic principles of law, and justice, and language (the grave needs lettering, a name).

In short, the films become really dangerous. Eastwood's films from the late sixties through the mid-seventies confuse individual and community values; in High Plains Drifter, the powers of a community must be punished for violating the individual; in the Dirty Harry films, the individual purports to protect the community, but these films share with each other a contempt for community, for all others except the ego ideal. It is this point which critics who call High Plains Drifter a satire on social hypocrisy and capitalist greed overlook. In these films other people are greedy and vicious; the considerable achievement of the Eastwood persona is that it keeps male audience members from recognizing their probable likenesses on the screen by giving such figures the stigma of weakness. The mirror stage, whereby a basically incoherent existence is rendered coherent by an idealized reflection which the subject embraces, finds its cinematic apotheosis in the fundamental Clint Eastwood persona, a monolith which Eastwood himself would spend much of his
later film career both distancing himself from and condescending to.

**Authority of One: the Dirty Harry Films**

If I had a shiny gun
I could have a world of fun
Speeding bullets through the brains
Of the folk who give me pains;

Or had I some poison gas,
I could make the moments pass
Bumping off a number of
People whom I do not love.

But I have no lethal weapon—
Thus does Fate our pleasure step on!
So they still are quick and well
Who should be by rights in hell. -- Dorothy Parker

Vice President Bush boasted today that the Reagan Administration had turned around 'the permissive philosophy' of the 1960's and 1970's, helping to change a society that savored movies like Easy Rider into one preferring Dirty Harry films. -- news story, New York Times, Oct. 7, 1988

The first ideological analysis of film that I ever wrote as an M. A. student was of Eastwood and Siegel's 1971 Dirty Harry, and I would probably include the film in introductory courses on film and ideology. Dirty Harry and its sequels are no more ideological than other films, but unlike those cultural products which mask their apparatus and keep their ideological agenda invisible, produced as they are by pervasive, unconscious structures of values and social hierarchies, the Dirty Harry films--and particularly the first one--appear to be deliberate demonstrations of a conscious political strategy. Furthermore, the films are
embraced by conservative U. S. politicians, as seen in the Bush quote above, Ronald Reagan's use of "Go ahead, make my day" in a 1985 news conference, and Richard Nixon's suspension of a self-imposed rule against showing R-rated films in the White House so that he could watch Dirty Harry. Moreover, mainstream reviewers who are usually blind to the politics and especially the sexual politics of films, have condemned these Eastwood policiers as reactionary, forcing Eastwood in interviews to deny that he is "some kind of right-wing fanatic" (Cole 104). In a January 15, 1972 New Yorker review of Dirty Harry, Pauline Kael concluded that "this action genre has always had a fascist potential and it has finally surfaced" (388).

The 1971 film is self-evidently both a product and an emblem of right-wing backlash against the activities of the sixties, as well as a gesture of nostalgia for an imaginary time when social and moral oppositions were simple and soluble. Eastwood's four films with Siegel between 1968 and 1971--five if one includes Play Misty for Me (1971), which Eastwood directed and in which Siegel acted in a supporting role--have a defensive, reclamatory, spiteful spirit, as if taking back by force the standards and traditions which the white patriarchy perceived it had lost to feminism, the civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam protest, sixties youth culture, the so-called sexual revolution--in particular the new tolerance of
homosexuality—the civil-libertarian decisions of the Warren Court, and the "permissive philosophy" in general.

This backlash, fully articulated in Dirty Harry, first shows itself in Siegel and Eastwood's 1968 Coogan's Bluff, Eastwood's first American film set in the present, in which he plays a deputy sheriff from Arizona sent to New York to extradite a prisoner. There, the bureaucracy is seen as keeping criminals from justice because of useless red tape and convoluted legal theories; the locals are greedy and parochial, the town is an open sewer, and especially, the women are in need of being put in their place: when Julie (Susan Clark) takes out her purse to pay for her dinner, Coogan says, "You're a girl, aren't you?" "There are rumors to that effect," she answers. "Then sit back and act like one," he says, taking out his wallet.

While rightist impulses can be found in the Dirty Harry cycle (it would be harder not to find them), the films, as the classical Hollywood entertainments that they are, cover their tracks at the very same time that they push the spectator's "hot buttons" (to use late eighties Republican terminology). Are the films' contradictions unconscious betrayals of ideological instability or are they part of a conscious and canny strategy of audience address? My approach to these films assumes that they are clever mixtures of traditional and countercultural—or at least anti-authoritarian—codes, manipulated to make a
reactionary point that is hard to resist. I am uncomfortable reflecting "the view which once predominated in Marxist writings ... that works of popular fiction could be regarded as the mere containers of ideology, conveyer belts for the reproduction and transmission of dominant ideology from the 'culture industry' to 'the masses'" (Bennett and Woollacott 2). However, these films do more than "transmit" ideological content to their spectator; they establish a powerful complicity with him/her in which the films take a demagogic role, playing on the "Silent Majority"'s resentments and desire for violence.

The contradictions of these films, in fact, begin outside them and redound ironically on the filmmakers: for example, the films use San Francisco as a frightening site of the counter-culture, of gays, drugs, lenient law enforcement and lifestyles which are depicted as threatening the working-class position that Harry occupies as does the implied spectator. However, San Francisco is Clint Eastwood's home. Johnstone reports that Eastwood enjoyed making the "Harry" films in San Francisco because he felt comfortable there and would even "meet childhood friends and old neighbors while filming" (92).

The first Dirty Harry is a polemic, while the sequels take the original's political arguments as little more than a convention of the series. Since the 1971 film does ostensibly make a political argument, it needs to do what
Hollywood narratives have always done: make the political personal and hence efface it; this is a task which the Eastwood persona, in its essential egoism and solipsism, carries off with ease. Because these films pretend to a "realism" which the "No Name" films eschew, Eastwood becomes a three-dimensional presence, with motivations and at least the suggestion of a past. Eastwood's physical presence is far more substantial than in the "Stranger" films. The film's use of him in the mise en scene partakes of conventional heroic subject placement. He develops a characteristic walk—although it does recall Leone's description of him in an interview as "a block of granite," and he gives his voice some variety, albeit within the still-straitened limits of the character.

Eastwood's Harry Callahan seems made to order for Laura Mulvey's now classic characterization of the male protagonist as the force which defines the look and controls the narrative. The films are built around Harry/Eastwood as the representative of an the "right-wing backlash" I described earlier, as the agent of the spectator's desire (a desire, which as a polemic, Dirty Harry both constructs and fulfills), as a show-business performer, of whom a certain "act" is expected, and as part of a sub-genre ("Clint Eastwood is Dirty Harry") whose pleasure for the spectator, to return to Umberto Eco's "Superman" thesis, lies in the repetition of the formula.
In an article on Ian Fleming's James Bond novels, Eco breaks down the 007 formula into a sequence of events which he says can be found in each of the novels in his study. Although the topicality of the 1971 Dirty Harry made it an unlikely candidate for a series of five films spanning seventeen years, the "Harry" series came to transcend historical change by borrowing plots "from today's headlines," by maintaining a consistent subject position, and by re-producing a standard formula each time. Here is a breakdown of the formulaic events which can usually be found in some order in each of the films:

1.) The introduction of an ongoing series of crimes by a perpetrator whose identity is not yet revealed. The first crime comprises the opening scene—in the first film in a pre-credit sequence; in the sequels, just after the credits.

2.) Harry arrives at the scene of the crime and begins an investigation.

3.) The case is usually potentially explosive and embarrassing to Harry's superiors; they assign the case to Harry while warning him about his methods, which they euphemistically call "unconventional," but which the audience reads as violent and "effective."

4.) Before the main plot really gets started, there is a gaudy, violent set-piece, such as a bank robbery (Dirty Harry), airplane hijacking (Magnum Force), liquor store
hold-up (The Enforcer), or coffee shop robbery and hostage taking (Sudden Impact), which Harry settles in spectacular and bloody fashion. The film's tag-line--"Do I feel lucky?", "Make my day"--often comes from this scene. These scenes serve an identical function to those solo numbers which Fred Astaire's M-G-M musicals such as Easter Parade (1948) and The Band Wagon (1953) gave him to perform before the story got under way in earnest. In these cases, the genre-star performs his signature "routine" outside the narrative, and is foregrounded as a star performer before character and story claim him entirely. In Eastwood/Harry's case, moreover, character and performer are hard to separate from each other and from the artifice; while Astaire was actually dancing in front of the camera, Eastwood was not actually killing people, but the set-piece makes it more difficult for a spectator to remember this—that is, it effaces its own production. At the same time, the killings are not experienced as deaths; there is no sense of loss of those killed—they are strictly expendable—and there is no responsibility for their deaths. They are nothing but obstacles to be cleared out of the way, just as the scenes in those Astaire numbers were humdrum places waiting for him to enliven them with song and dance. Thus these scenes actually ground Harry in verisimilitude while introducing and re-asserting his extraordinary masculine mastery in a spectacle which the
spectator both watches from outside and is part of, just as the audience shares Astaire's exhilaration in his dancing talent. In other words, violence is used as catharsis for the audience. Eastwood's awareness that the violence in his films is not connected to real death—except in that it desensitizes a spectator to the idea of violence and death by connecting an aggressive drive to pleasure-in-looking—explains why he turned down the lead role in The Killing Fields (1984); he said that the audience would have gone to the film with the wrong expectations; even the title would hold a [grotesquely!] changed connotation. Tightrope, as we'll see, is the only Eastwood film in which death is accompanied by a sense of loss and remorse and carries consequences.

5.) Harry is given a partner who, besides being "green," represents equal opportunity employment at the police department—a Hispanic (Dirty Harry), a black (Magnum Force), a woman (The Enforcer), occasioning initial jokes at the partner's expense. The partner comes to do well in his/her job and to prove useful to Harry; furthermore, the partner overcomes initial skepticism about Harry and comes to admire him, signalling (in the first film especially) that the spectator should too. The partner either dies by the end of the film (Magnum Force, The Enforcer) or is injured and quits the force (Dirty Harry), in either case leaving Harry alone once again for the climax.
6.) Harry eventually identifies the villain, but is stymied by laws upholding the rights of the accused and prevented from bringing him to his kind of rough justice.  
7.) Harry's brash actions infuriate his superiors, who take him off the case. Harry then completes the case and kills the villain independently.  
8.) The audience, in a sense, knows more than Harry does, in that they are shown the crimes before he knows about them, often being put visually in the position of the murderer. The pattern of the films is always the same: we see the scene of the imminent crime, watch the killer arrive on the scene and commit the murder. What these scenes show, however, is the chaos of a world without Harry; the absence of the hero indicates a kind of voyeuristic (we often see from the killer's point of view through telescopes and gun-sights) bloodlust in which the audience is implicated at the same time as it is isolated from it, secure in the knowledge that Harry will put things (including their proper subject alignment) right.  
9.) In the later films Harry forms an alliance with a social "undesirable"; e. g., a black revolutionary leader in The Enforcer, the avenging rape victim in Sudden Impact, a sleazy movie director in The Dead Pool.  
10.) The film's tag-line is repeated at the end, again inviting comparison with the musical genre, in which songs
are reprised at the finale. This device renders some symmetry to the narrative and gives Harry the last word.

We can define the political text— the "fascist potential" of *Dirty Harry*— in this way: that American life is no longer "safe" and "stable" (assuming, as such fantasies do, that it once was) and that there must be reasons— that is, culprits. The films find aberrant, out-of-control villains of a primal, unfathomable evil. While the threat of these killers would seem to call for a strong authoritarian power, the films deny any suggestion of police state control (an issue which the second film, *Magnum Force*, specifically addresses, following criticism of the first) by celebrating the authority of the individual. The films vest vigilante power in an "official hero" (he belongs to the police force) who defies the authority of which he is ostensibly a part. This paradox— an authority figure rebelling against authority— allows the films to avoid actually advocating authoritarian repression although they condense a wish for it. They pull off this sleight-of-hand by embodying that wish in a fantasy figure who appears to be acting in the "public interest" when he is actually fulfilling the wish-dreams of the ego. In other words, Clint Eastwood is "acting" in the solipsistic interest of individual members of his "public"— that is, the spectator.
Earlier, I said that when Eastwood's "Stranger" films begin to combine the Imaginary self-image with the Symbolic order of law and language, they become dangerous. In the Dirty Harry films it would seem that a hostile Imaginary image (as in Paul Smith's "pornography against the mother's body") rampages through the world of the Symbolic Order, rendering language, law, personal connections, responsibilities and consequences puny and unimportant. There is so much evidence for this that it becomes difficult to accept the assumption made by most critics that Harry is out to protect ordinary people, since the films regard ordinary people and their concerns with ridicule and contempt. For example, in Dirty Harry Harry talks a suicidal man off a roof by insulting and belittling him, provoking him to lunge at Harry instead of jumping; when Harry goes to the hospital to check out a report that Scorpio had been there at the emergency room, his conversation with the doctor is repeatedly interrupted by a woman's demands that the doctor tend to her husband's chest pains; these demands appear unreasonable in light of the more pressing requirements of Harry and the narrative. In The Enforcer DiGiorgio, Harry's sometime partner, already a figure of fun for the "too much linguini" which makes him unable to chase suspects and climb chain-link fences, says that if he's late from work his wife will kill him "because she has a nine-church novena tonight." Even the terrified
children on the school bus which the villain Scorpio hijacks in the original scream at the spectator and become nuisances; the "look at the camera" once again threatens and annoys when, in another film, the same situation, with different camera placement, would easily move an audience to empathy—an alien emotion in these films. Eastwood told Johnstone that the moment in the same sequence when the bus driven by the villain runs a Volkswagen off the road "usually got a cheer from Californian audiences familiar with the irritating presence of old VW bangers clogging the road" (86).

From these examples—and many more I could cite—it should be clear that community safety and society's well-being are not what is at stake in these films; personal problems and crises are reduced to inconvenient nuisances. The spectators see ordinary humans from such a height that they identify with the height itself and with themselves there, rather than with the ordinary people going about their business on the streets and in apartments. From the spectator's vantage point, the people look like ants, and the superhuman but real-seeming Harry becomes the fantasy-mirror image. In the first film private lives are objects for titillation as well; Harry peeks through a window at a man bringing a suitcase full of sexy lingerie to his girlfriend; at another point Harry, on a roof with a telescope, watches an orgy apparently about to take place
in a nearby apartment and misses seeing the sniper Scorpio, whom he is supposed to have under surveillance, come out onto a neighboring rooftop: the narrative can wait for these things; they're not impediments to spectatorial pleasure. Not until _Tightrope_ do the Eastwood films deal with the fact that hero, sniper, and spectator have in common with each other voyeurism and the hostile objectification of others.

Harry Callahan was one of many anti-authoritarian male protagonists in sixties-era American films. The topic of the anti-establishment hero and his cousin, the anti-hero, is too large to go into here in much detail. However, the distinction should be made between the anti-hero and the anti-establishment hero, as much as I usually resist such categories. Generally, the anti-hero never achieved the crucial Oedipal identification with his father and wanders aimlessly, acting out a kind of selfish rebellion connected to whatever signifiers of masculinity he has managed to latch onto (cars, pool cues, sexual conquests). In some films he is a "misunderstood youth," in others, a "ne'er-do-well." The search for an identity and the rejection of the place in society marked out for him are hallmarks of the anti-hero. Prime examples are James Dean in _Rebel without a Cause_ (1955), _East of Eden_ (1955), and _Giant_ (1956); Montgomery Clift in _A Place in the Sun_ (1951) and _From Here to Eternity_ (1953); Paul Newman in _The_
Hustler (1961), Hud (1963), and Cool Hand Luke (1967); Dustin Hoffman in The Graduate (1967); and Jack Nicholson in Five Easy Pieces (1970). The glamour associated with many of these examples should make clear that the anti-hero can still be an identification figure and usually is, sometimes over the apparent intentions of the script and because of the force of the star's personality and iconography; Dean in Giant and Newman in Hud are examples of this.

The anti-establishment hero, on the other hand, rebels against and replaces a system which has either lost its authority or represses individual freedom or both. The codes of behavior which allow freedom of action for the male individual are bogged down in excessive diplomacy and protocol (as in Patton [1970], whose original ads disingenuously subtitled it "A Salute to a Rebel"), numbed by a desensitized and dehumanized—that is, "emasculated"—society (A Clockwork Orange [1971]), or restricted by straitened economic conditions (Bonnie and Clyde [1967], an anomalous film in which the subject position is split into two characters, the most dynamic of which is female). Unlike the anti-hero, Harry, perhaps the ultimate anti-establishment hero, doesn't question his identity and knows why he is rebelling. The villain is the evil against which the hero must act. In order to do so, however, he must circumvent the system which stands in his way, prevents him
from acting, and allows the villain to continue his terrorism. Harry is coded as the primal man who must disregard an overly civilized, refined, and intellectualized system because it does not recognize and reward male virtues. In the first film especially, the mayor and the police are willing to capitulate to the murderer's demands for money in order to stop the killing, with disastrous results. They also show misgivings about Harry's methods, which to the spectator are self-evidently sensible, as seen in Harry's "I shoot the bastard" comeback to the mayor in the first film, and in the same film, in Lieutenant Bresler's reaction as Harry straps a stiletto to his leg before going to meet Scorpio--"It's disgusting that a police officer should know how to use a weapon like that."

There is also a strong class connotation in Harry's characterization. Harry is a kind of working class hero; he tells the doctor mending his wounded leg to risk causing him pain by pulling off his pants rather than cutting them off: "these cost $29.50; let it hurt," he says, stressing the hero's stoicism, but also the fact that $29.50 is a lot of money on a policeman's salary. He's shown eating only at cheap diners and coffee shops; the cars he drives are older models; his apartment, in the one film (Magnum Force) in which we're shown it, is very modest. A sign over a
supply table in the Police Department in *The Enforcer* reads
"If we don't have it, you don't need it."

This relative austerity in which Harry lives and works
not only allows the films to establish a sort of solidarity
with a working-class audience; it also increases the
feeling that Harry is put upon, exploited. Harry gets his
nickname, as he tells his partner Chico in the first film,
because he draws "every dirty job that comes along." Chico
soon echoes this sentiment, complaining to Lieutenant
Bresler that Harry "always gets the shit end of the stick."

The films' mounting evidence of Harry's exploitation
not only allows them to occupy their ambivalent position in
regard to authority, positing Harry both as the source of
authority and as its victim; it also helps the films to
straddle the race issue; Harry terrorizes black criminals,
but he also forms friendships and alliances with blacks--
and this is true in most of Eastwood's other films as well.

The presence of blacks and other minorities in these
films is surprisingly complex. The films pursue a careful
strategy of pleasing blacks without alienating racist
whites, and vice versa. A good example is in *Dirty Harry*;
Harry faces a wounded black bank robber on the street and
as the robber reaches for his gun, Harry recites the "I
know what you're thinking--'did he fire six shots or only
five'..." speech. In a shot/reverse shot, with the black
man on the ground and Harry towering above him in a
slightly high-angle shot, the black man puts the gun down, but as Harry walks away, the robber cries "Wait--I gots to know"; Harry points the gun at him, it clicks, and Harry laughs as the robber curses under his breath. Cut to the hospital where a black doctor tends to Harry's wounded leg. Thus, while the film shows the cowering black thug, it also shows professional, respectable blacks who know the hero on a personal basis--almost before the first impression can completely sink in.

Another example of the same phenomenon is in a non-Harry film, Siegel's *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979). Eastwood, playing a hardened inmate at Alcatraz strikes up a friendship with English (Paul Benjamin, who plays one of the "three men at the wall" in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*), a black prisoner who was sent up for life for killing two white men, albeit in self-defense. The film is set in the early sixties, so that the injustice against blacks that the film seems to take for granted can be safely consigned to the past. English, who is presented as the "king" of Alcatraz's black contingent, sits atop his steps in the prison yard. When English sees Morris (Eastwood), he asks, "The way I figure, there are two reasons why you didn't sit down on my step. Either you're too scared, or you just hate niggers. Which is it, boy? You too scared." "I just hate niggers," Eastwood answers through his teeth--*as he sits down*. So again, the film
gets a laugh from a racist line even while taking it back.

Even more fundamentally, many of the films position the Eastwood figure partway between white and minority cultures. This goes back to the Spaghetti Westerns. His playing the laconic American cowboy against stereotypically emotive Italians casting themselves as the ethnic others contributes to those films' unreality. This is especially true when one remembers that it was actually Eastwood who was ethnically alien: "[the producers of the Leone Westerns] just hated me and wanted to get rid of me they thought I was so bad ... To get my effect I stayed impassive and I guess they thought I wasn't acting. Only Leone knew what I was up to" (Johnstone 41).

In the American films, the Eastwood characters' solidarity with minorities expresses the films' anti-authoritarian class conflict. In a scene in *High Plains Drifter*, the Stranger enters a store where the shopkeeper is shooing a poor Indian family away from some blankets; when the store owner tells the Stranger that he can have whatever he wants as the town's agreement with their new "protector," the Stranger picks up the blankets and gives them to the Indians. In *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, Josey, a Rebel outcast on the run from the U. S. Government just after the Civil War, finds his only friends in an old Indian, played by Chief Dan George, a popular character actor in the seventies, and a squaw. The members of *Bronco*
Billy's Wild West Show troupe, all of them former prison inmates, including Billy, make up a veritable who's who of social outcasts— a black petty thief, a prostitute, a Vietnam deserter (the film treats this issue with ambivalence), an Indian—and they perform free at orphanages and old age homes and when they need a new circus tent, they appeal to a friend who runs a mental institution, whose denizens sew a new tent, albeit out of American flags, which is all they know how to make (conveniently). Similarly, Honky Tonk Man, a Depression-era tale about a country singer on the road to Nashville, includes a scene in which the protagonist plays with a black band in an all-black night club and is accepted there, a scene seemingly obligatory in such films, from Mann and Stewart's The Glenn Miller Story (1954) to Scorsese and DeNiro's New York, New York (1977).

All of these things suggest that the Eastwood figure is not quite connected to the dominant white culture, and has an affinity for those on the margins of society. This theme is made as clear as the films want to make it in a scene in The Enforcer. Harry visits Mustafa (Albert Popwell), the head of a black separatist group, and the two establish a bond of trust. "Callahan," Mustafa tells him, "you're on the wrong side ... you go out there and put your ass on the line for a bunch of dudes who wouldn't even let you in the front door anymore than they would me."
not doin' it for them," he answers. "Who then?" "You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

As ambiguous as the last line may seem, what's implicit in it is this: "I'm doing it for you." The ordinary and the unexceptional are loathsome to "His Majesty the Ego," who wants to see himself as extraordinary and apart from the crowd; however, the Eastwood figure's alignment with those whom society scorns betrays a brand of "White Man's Burden" paternalism which keeps minorities in their place by setting up the white hero as protector. After High Plains Drifter, the ceaselessly repeated scene in which Eastwood rescues women from rape serves the same purpose. Large minority audience or no, these films keep a white male subject at the center, with others either adversarial or dependent.

Along these lines, the authorities in Dirty Harry play the role of the protesting Eastern woman in classical Westerns--for instance, the Quaker bride played by Grace Kelly in High Noon (1952), who tries to restrain the hero from using violence on his enemies, even if it means protecting the town; High Noon is a particularly appropriate example here since Dirty Harry ends with Harry throwing away his badge as the Gary Cooper character did at the end of High Noon; High Plains Drifter works a full variation on that earlier Western's plot.
As we saw in the Stewart chapter, civilization in Westerns is conventionally coded as feminine, as, for instance, with Ransom Stoddard in his apron. In this "disguised Western" (to borrow Robert B. Ray's term), Harry's adversary is the killer, but he can overcome him. His real antagonist—and obstacle—is the law. Scorpio, by screaming for a lawyer and demanding his rights when Harry has caught him at last, aligns himself with the system to frustrate Harry's—and the audience's—instinct for violence.

The obstacle which keeps Harry from reaching his goal of ridding the city of the villain is the fretting system which, according to the film, has smothered the sense of right and wrong which Harry retains, behind a thicket of restrictions. The law which will not allow the hero to kill the villain and sets the criminal free on legal technicalities not only holds back the protagonist from action within the story, it also defers the spectator's pleasure in the violence which is sure to erupt and obstructs the progress of the narrative along its linear and active—that is, violent—way.

Although law is the product of the Symbolic Order and acts as its arbiter in society, it fails in Dirty Harry to perform its function as regulator and facilitator for the phallus. It has been "feminized." To quote Freud in "Femininity," "passivity now has the upper hand" (128).
This "feminization" of the powers-that-be is apparent, on one level, in the female representatives of the establishment who scold Harry for his methods—a female judge (Sudden Impact), a woman chair of a personnel board (The Enforcer), a woman journalist (The Dead Pool). It is also apparent in the male characters' concern over cosmetic details, suggesting a narcissism which in the Freudian scenario is displaced onto woman: the police chief fusses with the lint on his blue serge uniform, the mayor in the first film talks on a gold-handled telephone receiver and a new mayor in The Enforcer constantly prims his blow-dried hair. These peripheral characters are regarded in the same way as the everyday people referred to earlier: their actions—or more precisely, non-actions—mark them as frivolous and extraneous.

The crowning irony among all of this displaced narcissism is that Harry is a narcissistic figure for the spectator. He is constructed, like the Man with No Name, from colliding signifiers; while the effect of No Name's incongruous coding was to defamiliarize the character, the effect for Harry is to make him appealing to the polarities in 1971. Thus, his hair has a retro pompadour in the front, counterculture shag in the back. When Bresler asks Harry probably the most frequently asked question of the late sixties, "When are you going to get a haircut?"
younger males hear a reassuring echo of recognition; their fathers approve of Harry's authoritarian values.

The institutions and figures of official authority in *Dirty Harry* are perceived as feminine in that they reflect two limitations in particular that Freud attributed to woman—"we can consider women as having very little sense of justice" and "society holds little interest for women" (133-34). Freud, as analyzed by Luce Irigaray in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, sees woman, in her preoccupations with home, husband, and son, as the ultimate protector and sustainer of the phallus. However, while the law in the late sixties was perceived by the political right as severely restricting a male right to authority and action, woman had renounced her role as "venerator of the phallus." Hollywood film, where woman had been celebrated as the helpmate, the hero's restoration and salvation, begin angrily to drop women characters out of its films, creating interdependent male relationships ("buddy films"—remember that the film that started this "outlaw couple on the run" genre was *Bonnie and Clyde* [1967]; in the many buddy films that followed, including Eastwood's *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* [Michael Cimino, 1974], the original female character was displaced onto and replaced by a male). If women could no longer be depicted as supporters and satisfiers of men, then they were of no value as commodities and as representations in dominant films.
Women were depicted in films of this period in two ways—as perfunctory sex objects, whose function is to demonstrate that the protagonists of the buddy films aren't gay. The other was the displacement of coded female weaknesses onto institutions and male characters. As Harry in *Magnum Force* witheringly says to a young rookie upset at just having killed a robber at a shootout, "you better go take care of the women."

In *Dirty Harry* the law cast in the role of withholding mother threatens Harry's ruin. The law has been feminized and it will feminize Harry too unless he leaves the nest and breaks out on his own. His superiors order him to capitulate to Scorpio and take him the money he demands "with no tricks," resulting in Harry's humiliation and near death; authority deprives him of the phallus—his 457 Magnum, "the most powerful handgun in the world." It renders him impotent, unable to kill the villain when he has him presumably dead to rights. To Harry, this law is tangled, enigmatic, incomprehensible, like woman herself in man's eyes—precisely because to man the failure to preserve the phallus is incomprehensible, mad; if the effeminate district attorney rejects Harry's evidence against Scorpio as inadmissible under the law, "then the law's crazy," as Harry says, and the male ego withdraws to its own devices.

"Veneration of the phallus," writes Irigaray,
defies the laws of the city, challenges their rulings and penalties. It doesn't give a fig about issues of legitimacy in men's conflicts. All it cares about is keeping the phallic emblem out of the dirt, covering over its dissoluteness, veiling its decay. Preserving it from derision, insigificance, and devaluation (117-18).

I can't imagine a better characterization of the project of Siegel's Dirty Harry; however, Irigaray is describing woman's patriarchal role as keeper of the order. By 1971, the Hollywood cinema, finding the male without a credible "helpmate" and supporter, takes upon itself the role of protector of the embattled phallus. At the same time it reveals male contempt for women by attributing to those female "weaknesses" which excessive devotion to men had engendered, everything that is passive and therefore threatening. Since the law will not uphold the right of men to dominate, then after Harry has settled his own battle of egos with Scorpio, he throws authority's emblem--his police badge--into the dirt of a polluted river. Once again in Eastwood, the pretenses are dropped. In egoistic Eastwood fashion, man is not meant to preserve the social structure; it is meant to preserve him. By taking support for the phallus into its own devices, Hollywood perpetuates the fantasy that if law, government, and woman abandon phallic authority, the male subject always can maintain it himself, while letting the world feel his bitterness.
"That Buried World": Eastwood and Sexuality: "The Beguiled" and "Tightrope"

Chico: "I was just thinking ..."
Harry: "About what?"
Chico: "Oh, about why they call you 'Dirty Harry'" — after Harry has been found peeking in a window in Dirty Harry

Sarah: "You're a man who makes people afraid and that's dangerous."
Stranger: "Well, it's what people know about themselves inside that makes them afraid." — High Plains Drifter

An irony of which the Dirty Harry series never seems aware is that the "permissiveness" which it critiques allows the films themselves to exist. The San Francisco kinkiness which cavorts all around these films may provide a straw man against which they can rail, but it is also part of their attraction. Through these films runs a puritan streak which by a Freudian slip becomes a prurient streak. The same Harry who wishes that someone would throw a net over the denizens of a red-light district also peeks through windows at kinky goings-on and, while watching through a telescope as a naked woman meets two friends at the door of her apartment, says to himself, "Harry, you owe it to yourself to live a little." From the dialectic of Puritanism and prurience, in which one seems to lead to the other, comes a dark and unsettled view of sexuality. In the films in which it fully emerges, this
"dark side" raises questions not often dealt with in American commercial films.

In **Tightrope**, a police psychiatrist tells Wes Block (Eastwood) that "there's a darkness in all of us ... you, me, the man down the street. Some have it under control. The rest of us try to walk a tightrope between the two." The choice of words here is telling, because in the film's context, a number of impulses—heterosexual desire, rape, homosexuality, S/M, murder—all seem included in the category, "darkness." As Judith Mayne points out in an article on the film, **Tightrope** is unsure of the difference between male sexuality and male violence, between sex and rape, perhaps because the culture itself is unsure of these distinctions (68-69). Sexuality in Eastwood's films is seldom anything healthy; the films don't know the difference between "dirty" and "normal" sex, between desire and "darkness," and between "love"—as in the "Lookin' for Love" tattoo worn by two prostitutes in **Tightrope**—and manipulative sex or, as with the world of prostitution and pornography surveyed in **Tightrope**, commercial sex (a world of which, it could be argued, mainstream film is also a part). The idealized heterosexuality so often endorsed by Hollywood spells trouble in the Eastwood films which hold it out as a possibility. Heterosexual desire leads to disaster in the two films before **Tightrope** which center around sexuality—**The Beguiled** (Siegel, 1971) and **Play**
Misty for Me (Eastwood, 1971); men and women in these films reach an impasse; they do not know how to co-exist.

Sexuality seems something to be feared, as in the many films in which Eastwood characters save women from being raped (for example, The Outlaw Josey Wales, The Gauntlet, Bronco Billy, Pale Rider). Heterosexual relationships seem something to be suffered over and survived, as in the numerous films in which the Eastwood character recounts a ruined love affair in his past, scenes which evoke the woeful lyrics of country music, a form for which many of the films display great fondness.

When gender enters into this equation, the fear becomes more specific. As I've discussed, masculinity and femininity are defined very narrowly in the Dirty Harry series; male subjectivity according to these films is best isolated not so much from women individually, but from the idea of woman; women are "safest" to deal with in these films when they are like men (but still certifiably heterosexual). Officer Moore (Tyne Daly) is a hazard for Harry until she shows that she possesses the requisite "male" attributes—courage, logic, ability with weapons—to measure up to his standards. Similarly, male homosexuality can be talked about in the same breath as woman because these films, like the homophobic culture at large, often characterize male homosexuality as "feminine," perhaps in that it poses a similar threat to men's
conventional notions of themselves. Male homosexuality is regarded, albeit furtively, as permissible so long as gay men exhibit masculine standards of competence: in *Magnum Force*, for example, when Harry hears rumors that a group of crack-shot young rookies might be gay, he answers, "If everybody could shoot like that, I wouldn't care if the whole damn department was queer." If, as I've written in regard to Westerns, masculinity is measured by competence with guns, then Harry's standards for acceptance of women and gay men are clear: throw off the stigma of your "affliction" by living according to my criteria.

This still tentative acceptance goes a few steps further in *Sudden Impact*. By this time, twelve years after the first film, the murderer, that indefinable source of evil from whose point of view the audience sees uncontrolled death, has become not only a woman but someone who, like Harry, has given up on the institutions of law as guarantors of justice. This turns the victims from nameless targets into those who deserve to die and it aligns Harry with the figure positioned by the formula as the villain. Furthermore, the artist played by Sondra Locke and the artist's comatose sister are rape victims; in a repeated subjective flashback, the gang-rape of the young women is shown as a horrific violation, the fullest expression of the later films' virtual preoccupation with rape.
However, the film gives masculinity an out. As if the sight of men as rapists were not convincingly brutal by itself, the rape scene is made truly horrible to male subjectivity by the inclusion of a woman, coded as lesbian, who laughs demonically through the rape, encourages it, and is shown in a later flashback to have set it up. Here is a characteristic displacement of Eastwood's films: the onus for male sexual violence is shifted onto woman, with woman somehow as its instigator. The film separates out the threat and the male dread of woman by condensing them into a figure in which, it is assumed, women would not recognize themselves anymore than men would recognize themselves as Scorpio. If men can no longer argue that women indirectly want, invite, and enjoy rape, then this film demonstrates how the impulse to rape can still be located by patriarchy outside the male body—women must somehow be found to take the blame.

The question to ask of Eastwood's films is this: if sexuality is threatening, does that threat come from a male fear of castration, or as Karen Horney suggested, from a fear of the vagina itself—and do both constitute displacements from the real issue, man's suspicion and fear of his own sexuality, his dread of the consequences of his own desires and impulses?

The film to look at first for these issues is The Beguiled (Siegel, 1971). Although the better-known film
from the same period which raises the specter of male fear of women is *Play Misty for Me*. I find *The Beguiled* much more interesting and troubled. *Misty* is strictly one-sided in its view of sexuality; it finds literally horrifying the prospect of women as autonomous sexual agents. The film can imagine only two related types of female sexuality. One involves role reversal, with the woman the aggressor and the man forced to submit. Even the ad image displays this reversal: a crazed Evelyn (Jessica Walter), looking remarkably like Andy Robinson as Scorpio in *Dirty Harry*, stands over Eastwood, brandishing a knife while he covers in fear. The tag-line, "The Scream You Hear May Be Your Own," puts a male spectator in the untenable position of having a scream elicited from him in a scenario dominated by a knife-wielding (castrating) woman.

The other alternative to male-determined female sexuality that this film can imagine is hysteria; Evelyn's psychosis stems from her inability—which a different film might find perfectly understandable—to stay within the one-night-stand agreement proposed by the Eastwood character at the beginning—and to stay within the heterosexual arrangement whereby the woman waits for the man to initiate things (this latter point is explicitly explained by the Eastwood character). She is aggressively dependent—an oxymoron which expresses the man's fear of a female sexuality inside which he could lose himself; the
Jessica Walter character virtually embodies the myth of the "vagina dentata" described by Horney.

This film's plot—and spirit—is so close to that of the 1987 Glenn Close-Michael Douglas hit Fatal Attraction that Eastwood jokingly referred to Misty in a 1988 interview as "Fatal Attraction I." While the later film sees autonomous female sexuality as a threat to the family, the favored myth of the late 80s, Misty's hysteric threatens the "swinging single" male heterosexuality celebrated in the late 60s and early 70s as a by-product of the "sexual revolution"; in short, each film puts an endangered patriarchal myth of its era on the line in order to restore it finally—Eastwood is reinstated at the end of Misty in an "open" relationship with his properly passive, "feminine" girlfriend; Fatal's last shot is a framed portrait of the newly reasserted, holy family.

The Beguiled, on the other hand, is the flip side of Tightrope. Patriarchal films—and Eastwood's are certainly no exceptions—either code female sexuality and femininity itself as frightening and dangerous, or neutralize female sexuality by fetishizing it. However, these two films, made thirteen years apart, explore sexual repression and desire; they peer into the darkness, and often they look away, but what they turn up asks more questions about male sexuality than the film themselves seem comfortable with.
The Beguiled, directed by Don Siegel, was the first of three Eastwood films released in 1971, the other two being Misty and Dirty Harry. It is perhaps Eastwood's least known film and one of his rare commercial disasters, although Siegel in interviews calls it his own best work. It is perhaps Eastwood's only film not designed as a vehicle for him, but this is not to say that he is miscast; on the contrary, his performance as a mendacious opportunist, is the best answer to those who call Eastwood "limited" or a "non-actor" (Patterson 92). In fact, the film, which takes place entirely on the grounds of a private girls' school in the South during the Civil War, was so out of character for Eastwood that Universal Studios, according to Johnstone, "appeared to have a corporate breakdown over its release" (74), showing the sort of confusion that can result in the Hollywood system when a star commodity—especially one so narrowly defined as Eastwood—offers a product different from what the marketers know how to sell. "The Beguiled wasn't a picture where Clint wins the Civil War single-handedly," Siegel said, "but from their publicity you'd have thought it was" (Johnstone 74). Eastwood attributed the film's failure to the audience's expectations: "It probably would have been a more successful film if I hadn't been in it ... [Eastwood's fans] didn't like seeing me play a character who gets his leg cut off, gets emasculated. They wanted a
character who could control everything around him" (Johnstone 74).

Consider this plot: In the South during the Civil War, Amy, a twelve-year-old girl in the woods picking mushrooms, comes across an injured Union Corporal named John McBurney (Eastwood); she brings him back to the Farnsworth Seminary for Young Ladies, a plantation turned boarding school whose student body the War has reduced to six, most of them in their teens. The matriarch, Miss Martha (Geraldine Page), lets the wounded man convalesce at the school, and plans to turn him in to the Confederates as a prisoner as soon as he is well enough to travel. After locking him into a room, the women, who include a virginal young teacher Edwina (Elizabeth Hartman) and a black slave Hallie (Mae Mercer), nurse him back to health. The women, who haven't been near a man in many months, become attached to him. Awakening to the prospect of sitting out the rest of the war in his own private harem, McBurney begins to tell the women stories which are contradicted by quick cuts to the actual facts. Martha has much to hide as well; subjective flashbacks reveal an incestuous relationship with her brother.

Martha, Edwina, and Carol, a libidinous 17-year old, all begin to fall in love with McBurney, with his encouragement. One night, unbeknownst to the others but shown to the audience in an elaborate montage, each waits for him to hobble on his crutches to her room. McBurney
goes to Carol's room where Edwina finds them in bed; furious, she pushes him down a flight of stairs. Martha, seeing what has happened, directs the students to carry McBurney to the long dining room table, while he, unconscious and in some kind of lewd dream, mutters on about "well-bosomed" women. Martha decides to cut off his leg, in order to guard against gangrene she says, and makes Carol and Edwina watch. The next day, McBurney, horrified and wrathful, convinces Carol to leave the door to his room unlocked and wreaks havoc in the house. He threatens the women with rape, telling Hallie he'd like to start with a black woman, and a flashback shows her using a pitchfork to hold off a rape attempt by Martha's brother; she tells McBurney, "you'd better like it with a dead black woman, because that's the only way you'll get it from this one." McBurney finds Martha's letters from her brother and reveals the incest to the girls, hoping to discredit Martha; he stalks out of the room, as Edwina runs after him.

The women, led by Martha, plot their final revenge, a supper in which the corporal will be fed "mushrooms." This meal takes place, but not before McBurney, eating the fatal herb, announces that he is leaving, taking Edwina with him as his wife. As Martha warns Edwina away from the "mushrooms," the poison takes effect on McBurney. The film ends with the women sewing him a winding sheet and
preparing to bury him in the garden as a plaintive period ballad heard at the film's opening, "Come all ye pretty, fair maids," sung a cappella by Eastwood, comes onto the soundtrack.

Obviously, this is a far cry from the Eastwood formula; the film's resounding box office failure assured that it would be a long time—about ten years, to be exact—before he veered from it again. The bizarre story, with its macabre irony, overtones of gothic melodrama, and its spectator distancing, is worthy of Claude Chabrol, a director with a taste for poisonings, for poisonous sexual and family relations, and for absurdist twists on melodramatic situations. The film's irony, underscored by the ballad which warns young men, "don't go for a soldier; don't join no army," is that while armies rage against each other on the outside, the real war is between men and women. McBurney is on enemy territory in a dual sense— he's a Yankee on Rebel territory and he's the sole man in a female environment; but in the same dual sense, he is himself the enemy. The film is entirely uncertain about whether he is the one threatened, as in Play Misty for Me, whose very title is a woman's order to a man, or whether he is the threat. Who is the beguiler and who "the beguiled"? Similarly, the spectator positioning is very hard to locate. The film is not shot in a subjective way in which the spectator experiences the action as the Eastwood
protagonist does, as in *Misty* and *Tightrope*; nor does it pose Eastwood as an omnipotent figure who supplies the narrative action, as in the Man with No Name and Dirty Harry films.

However, it is tempting simply to dismiss *The Beguiled* as a misogynist film; as in *Misty*, its Eastwood protagonist is forced into a passive role in relation to women. The three main female characters fall into familiar types—Carol, the tart, a type which embodies both a male fantasy and contempt for aggressive female sexuality; Edwina, the virgin, a type which adheres to nineteenth century patriarchal law at the same time as men despise her for her withholding aloofness; and Martha, the aging woman whose active control over her life must be seen as a cover for some unspeakable secret and whose sexual desires are so threatening to a male audience that they must be rooted in some monstrous motivation—they must, in effect, be taboo; thus, the association here with incest. By 1971, the aging Southern female with a scandalous past was a familiar type from the plays and films of Tennessee Williams; the casting of Geraldine Page, who had starred in film versions of Williams' *Summer and Smoke* (1961) and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962), reinforces this connection.

Furthermore, the reaction of the three characters to events is true to the types: Carol and Martha, rejected and humiliated, live out the adage, "Hell hath no fury like a
woman scorned"; Edwina's forgiveness and ecstatic acceptance of McBurney illustrate the cliche of the grateful deflowered virgin whom male sexual attention turns into an insatiable sex partner. The spectator can infer from the ending that McBurney's death and Edwina's commitment to stay at the school as Martha's partner condemn her to lifelong "spinsterhood" and saddle her to a repressed secret like Martha's incest; in fact, in the last scene Martha is already rehearsing the girls in what will apparently become the official "line"—that McBurney died because "his heart just gave out on him."

Edwina is a pivotal character because she is an innocent surrounded by guile and lust. First deceived by McBurney, later ignorant of the group's plan to poison him, she is posited as sympathetic because she is a passive victim; the more active characters, Carol and Martha, must be punished for their aggressive desires. McBurney's victimization by Martha, Carol, and even little Amy, all motivated by jealousy, and by the others, who are motivated by hatred of northerners, seems judged by the film as more final and insidious than Edwina's victimization by the dissembling McBurney.

In contrast to the destructive war which men wage just outside the demilitarized zone which is the Farnsworth School, the women's warfare is mysterious. Everything is indirect and veiled. The poisoning is done under the guise
of a reconciliatory supper; Martha in one scene approaches McBurney with a hatchet wrapped in a towel; Carol goes to see him on the pretense of going to her room. McBurney's "masculine" confrontations in the climactic scenes can be read as preferable to the furtive, euphemistic, wily "feminine" approach of the women. Furthermore, the cinematographer, Bruce Surtees, uses a sepia tone which grows especially intense in the night interiors. The sepia casts a sinister, jaundiced pallor over this female domain, suggesting a sickly dread surrounding female desire or perhaps this film's version of sexual desire in general.

However, the film leaves unsettled the matter of whether or not McBurney's leg needed to be amputated. Although McBurney immediately concludes that he's been the target of vindictive, castrating women--and the amputation clearly is a symbolic castraction--Hallie, the black slave who has been established as one of the few reliable characters, tries to convince McBurney "you're wrong to blame her, Mr. Johnny. Your leg was busted bad."

Moreover, in another sort of movie, Eastwood's wrath and his move to take matters into his own hands would carry an overriding authority because the character would be acting as the agent of the spectator. But although the film finally seems to tip the balance--clumsily--toward the male character, enough doubts have been cast on masculinity to at least undermine its authority, even when represented by
Eastwood. We can regard *The Beguiled* after all as a Hollywood film which throws up more contradictions than can be recuperated.

Duplicity and ambivalence are virtual themes of this film, both in the actions of its characters and in the ways the film itself seems of two minds about many of the issues it raises. The ambivalence is shown in the very first scene when Amy finds McBurney. As she wanders among the trees looking for mushrooms, the spectator sees the standing, hiding soldier first, with him and the girl shown together in a very brief shot. Then comes a point of view shot of the blood on his boots—the only color in this monochromatic scene—followed by a shot of Amy frozen in fear. The camera, again from her point of view, pans up his body until it reaches his face—which glares frighteningly down on her (and us); then a shot of her from his high vantage point; next the combination of his fall and his scary appearance causes her in the following shot to recoil, sending basket and mushrooms flying. She collects herself and edges toward him. The film makes a style of subjective flashbacks and voiceovers. As a head-on close-up of Amy turns to a two-shot with the wounded man's face in the foreground and Amy behind, we hear her voiceover: "My daddy died that way, crawled off in the bushes and bled to death. Maybe you were the cause."
In this opening scene, the attitude for the film is set: the filthy, bleeding Yank appears both menacing and pathetic; in the girl's reaction sympathy mingles with distrust. In the next scene, when Martha and the women have found McBurney and are carrying him from the gate, the mix of reactions continues—there are shots from the man's point of view of the women as they carry him; they look distorted and hulking, much as he did to Amy. The reactions of the girls range from those of Southern loyalists who ask if Yankees really do have tails, to Martha's pragmatism; she assumes that they will notify the Rebel patrols immediately to take the Union soldier away. Edwina's reaction is more compassionate—she wants to at least keep him out of prison until they dress his wounds. However, Martha's resolve is belied by a subjective voiceover in a tight two-shot as she wipes the face of the wounded man—"If this war goes on much longer, I'll forget I ever was a woman."

This sets up a dialectic between the women's wariness of an enemy soldier in their midst—and of a man on their premises—and their desire for him. We could say that the disaster that follows is logical given the tenet of feminist film theory which holds that when a woman initiates the gaze and desire, the narrative will punish her in some way. However, in this film, the women's desire for McBurney is seen as natural and involuntary. Early in
the film, when Martha compliments Edwina on her appearance, she adds, "the Corporal seems to be having an effect on all of us." Even the hen starts laying eggs--Hallie tells McBurney that "you must have rooster blood in you"--and Hallie tells a cow that won't give much milk, "You're dryin' up like all us other women around here." Of course, the alignment of women with nature is nothing new in patriarchy, and as we've seen, the various women's desire for McBurney is problematic.

But the film is ambivalent about the women's desire because it's ambivalent about its male protagonist. In the opening sequence in which Amy is guiding the wounded man, who walks using a long branch as a cane, one of the girls, in close-up, asks Edwina if it's true that "if the Yankees win, they'll rape every one of us"; at this moment there is a quick cut--virtually a match cut--to McBurney, panting and lurching past the camera. Thus, McBurney is almost immediately associated with the prospect of rape. It's pointed out early that despite the self-other dynamic of the war, the women are afraid of even the men on their own side--and with reason. As Martha leaves the house, ostensibly to tell the passing Southern patrols about her prisoner, she asks a student who wants to go with her, "You want them to see you, girl?" Later, after Martha--in a scene coded with danger and threat--gets rid of three frightening Southern soldiers who want to stay at the
school, one of the younger girls asks Edwina why they should be afraid of their own soldiers. At another point, Edwina tells McBurney that she doesn't trust any man and later, he justifies her distrust by deceiving and betraying her. And in a exchange between McBurney and Hallie in which he tells her that as a black she should want the North to win, she says "You white folks ain't killin' each other 'cause you care 'bout us niggers. White men are the same everywhere in this world." McBurney replies, "you should say that men are the same everywhere, no matter what color..."

The film strongly suggests that all men are indeed the same. One of the points argued by Anthony Wilden in his article, "In the Penal Colony: The Body as the Discourse of the Other," is that the rapist is the man who actually perpetuates the social order by making women dependent upon other men for protection (38-39). McBurney is different from other male outsiders only by the values and desires which the women project onto him. Moreover, the Man with No Name's identity is consistent in that it's not specified; later Eastwood characters have simple names; however, McBurney's many names show a fragmented identity. He is known variously as "John," "Johnny," "Mr. Johnny," "Mr. McB," "The Yank," "Mr. Yank," and "The Corporal," the latter being the best indication of his status as "the body," "the object." This variety of names shows the
extent to which he is defined by each of the women rather than assuming his own salient identity.

Actually, however, he is a sexual predator; if it is true that men are seen in patriarchy as implicitly understood, then this film takes as given this man as a manipulative, omnivorous sexual aggressor. While the film makes clear that the women's flashbacks and voiceovers are subjective, McBurney's seem the intrusions of omniscient narration charged with telling the "true" story. For example, as soon as he says "I have a great respect for land," a loud crackling is heard on the soundtrack and a flashback shows him running wildly through a Southern field, torching stacks of wheat. Thus, the narration itself undercuts McBurney, introducing evidence which exposes him as unreliable.

While McBurney doesn't actually become a rapist, the film indicates that he'd be capable of rape. He visualizes himself as a kind of sultan with his sexual "run of the place," at one point dreaming a soft-core-porn montage in which he cavorts individually with each of the three women. After his amputation, he angrily tells Martha and Hallie "I'm gonna be with any young lady that desires my company," but he then tells Hallie that maybe he'll start with her, a quick elision of the women's desires with his own, not to mention a confusion of sexual impulses with violent, contemptuous ones. But what his post-amputatory threats
about how he won't leave "'til I've had my fill" suggest is that what sexual "conquests" he can't make by charm and cajolery he'll take by force, even though his "missing extremity" renders him less than forceful. Given that there are no men to come to the rescue (as peculiar as a rescue from Clint Eastwood, rather than by him, would be), that McBurney simply takes his place among male victimizers and scoundrels like Martha's brother, and that the film refuses to allow that either side in the war might be less rapacious than the other, it is no wonder that The Beguiled has never found an audience.

Thus, while in one sense, the film depicts the women as castrating, jealous, ready to give over everything for a man, it also shows them as more than capable of living without men and as justified in their fear and wariness of them. Conversely, McBurney tries to act out a male fantasy which many Hollywood films would endorse, is physically and numerically dominated by women, at the same time as he manipulates them despite his diminished position; moreover, by his calculation and sexual gluttony, he brings much of what happens to him on himself. Through it all, the film seems to alternate in its sympathy for McBurney or for the women, almost from scene to scene. In short, this is a film divided against itself, both fascinating and maddening in its contradictions. These are exacerbated by the last-minute attempts to redeem the Eastwood character,
a stab at recuperation of which the film itself doesn't appear convinced.

Readers familiar with psychoanalysis, and particularly with Karen Horney's concept of "the dread of woman," might find the preceding analysis naive and obtuse. Surely a story which shows a man surviving warfare but dying at the hands of women must sound like a classic example of the condition described in the first sentence of Horney's article:

Men have never tired of fashioning expressions for the violent force by which man feels himself drawn to the woman, and side by side with his longing, the dread that through her he might die and be undone (134).

The same dread of women and "female" characteristics which pervades much of Eastwood's other work, seems to be operating at full mythic force here. However, unlike Play Misty for Me, in which dread of woman transposes the archetypal horror elements of male assailant-female victim, this film allows for something else entirely: the possibility that man covers his dread of woman, his fear of passivity and subordination, with aggression and domination. Arnold M. Cooper writes that

...all men have spent a significant formative part of their lives totally in the care of women who wiped their bottoms, fed their mouths and egos, and held their hands whenever there was danger or difficulty. The prevalence of forms of macho behavior can be generally understood as counteracting the inner fear of reversion to this earlier state (113).

McBurney, reduced to a situation where women mend his wounds, bathe and feed him, and decide whether or not he
goes to prison, spends all of his conscious moments scheming from his prone position about how to turn things his way and return to his assumed role as dominant male. The difference between *The Beguiled* and the works of myth cited by Horney as examples of man as victim and woman as destroyer—Samson and Delilah, Judith and Holofernes, John the Baptist and Salome—is that the film contains the competing myth of the trickster who gets tricked, the lecher who gets caught in the wrong bed and receives his comeuppance; for example, in Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale," the conniving young lover and the foolish cuckolded husband are punished by the narrative, but not the young wife whose desire for sex sets the plot in motion and is viewed by the narrative as quite legitimate and unexceptional.

In this film with its thesis that "all men are the same," questions of male myths and motives come to the surface. Referring to a comic-relief scene in *Tightrope* in which Wes Block's (Eastwood) little daughter asks "Daddy, what's a hard-on?," Judith Mayne writes that

The film has no answer for the question she asks ... but what indeed is a hard-on? Is it the desire to kill, or the desire for sex, and is it possible to resituate the polarities of violence and sexuality in any but either-or terms? (68).

Remembering that some of Eastwood's other films are explicit about guns as phallic substitutes—"My, that's a big one!" exclaims Scorpio upon getting a look at Harry's
357 Magnum—and that even the amputated McBurney's answer to his newly diminished state is to find a pistol, the reason that Eastwood's films are so incapable of imagining meaningful sexual relationships is that they are caught up in what Anthony Wilden calls a "basic male axiom ... that sex is an act of violence" (42). It is this seldom glimpsed but ever-present dialectic of sex and violence as weapons of power and domination that shows its ugly face in The Beguiled and which, once exposed, will not go away and cannot be convincingly displaced onto woman.

Finally, I need to conjure with the seeming incongruity of Eastwood's presence in this film. The remarks of Iain Johnstone, in which he seems to conclude that Eastwood's appearance in The Beguiled was a mistake, a bad career move, tell much about what this film might have been without Eastwood, and how his presence contributes to its ambiguity and its interest.

As McBurney, Eastwood had an unaccustomedly wordy role. At times he was required to be the life and soul of the dinner table and his technique for winning the ladies over, especially Edwina, consisted of a considerable amount of questioning and persuasion. The audience is left with few clues as to how truly calculating McBurney is in his pursuit of the ladies; he could be merely lustful. Eastwood's performance, though suffused with charm, gives little away. When he switches to the gun-toting drunk at the end, there is still nothing in the character to indicate he would be ruthless with his captives. Eastwood gives a good performance but one that could perhaps have been bettered by several of his more experienced contemporaries (74).
It is interesting that Johnstone, in a book just barely a cut above idol-worship, criticizes Eastwood for inscrutability and fails to see the irony. In the heroic films in which Eastwood is less demonstrative than he is here, the motivations are so clear that no delineation on the part of the actor is necessary. However, the audience in *The Beguiled* is still left wondering what McBurney wants; this is an unpardonable lapse in a male protagonist, and it pervades the film with unwelcome mystery and disorientation, the latter all the more so because there is no controlling desire to direct the proceedings. If McBurney were played by an actor who made the character's appetites and motives more specific, the spectator could participate in McBurney's desires and conquests in ways tending toward voyeurism and scopophilia (In fact, the resulting film could be something like Nicholson's *The Witches of Eastwick*). Or a different sort of actor could make McBurney such a despicable lecher as to render him Other and the spectator superior to him. Eastwood, however, gives the film an edge of ambiguity which keeps it queasily ambivalent and vaguely dialectical.

**Tightrope**

More than *The Beguiled*, *Tightrope* is the film which Eastwood's other films had been repressing. It opens with a concise reprise of that earlier film's theme: a woman is
being followed through ominous, deserted streets by a shadowy figure wearing tennis shoes; when a man does lay a hand on her, it is the protective hand of a police officer; the woman and the audience relax--until the camera pans the length of the cop's body to reveal the tennis shoes. Once again, a woman's attacker and her would-be savior are the same man.

A match cut to another pair of tennis shoes heightens the confusion between male subject and other. These shoes are worn by the star, another man on another street, with young females; this street is bright and suburban; the girls are the man's daughters. Their toss-football game abruptly ends when they find a stray dog eating out of a trash can. Wes Block (Eastwood) tells the younger girl that they should take the dog to the pound, where "they'll find him a good home." She asks "what happens if they don't?" Block, caught in a lie, is confronted with the first in a series of unpleasant questions into a furtive, adult world, questions which the narrative will spend most of its time fielding. Furthermore, in a penultimate scene at a brewery to which the cops have tracked the serial killer, the tennis shoes which will supposedly identify the murderer have the opposite effect: all the men are wearing tennis shoes; instead of one male suspect, there are as Block says, "120,000 of them," the male population of New Orleans, where the film takes place. Anyone constructed as
a male subject is capable of violence, the film suggests obliquely; "men are the same everywhere."

If *The Beguiled* was not ready to confront the male subject as the source of sexual darkness, *Tightrope* finally tries to deliver on that film's promise, to correct its displacements as well as the self/other fantasies of Eastwood's films throughout the seventies. *The Beguiled* displaces much of its sexual trouble onto the secrets of the Geraldine Page character; *Tightrope*, acknowledging the patriarchal arrangement in which woman is the embodiment of sexuality and man is its source, attempts no such shift. In *The Beguiled* when Martha charges at McBurney, crying "you beast," he replies, "yes, but I don't run a school for young girls." In *Tightrope* Wes Block runs a home for young girls and harbors a beastly secret. In *The Beguiled* it is still the women who stay at home, and wait for love and romance. In the later film, it is Block who is lonely and disillusioned. The women of the Farnsworth school mean to treat the enemy soldier's wounds and then do their patriotic duty by turning him in, but they give in to his calculating charm and their own desires; Block is supposed to be questioning prostitutes as part of his investigation, but he gives in to their conditioned seductiveness and his (implied) sadomasochistic fantasies.

It would be wrong to see the film as merely another instance of role reversal, dominant cinema's superficial
variation on the active male/passive female paradigm. The film centers around the very issue of the male as desiring subject. But since the star is Eastwood, the subject of desire itself is new because, as we've seen, the essential Man with No Name/Dirty Harry persona is superior to the base desires of ordinary males, satisfying those of the spectator, but not becoming susceptible to them himself. However, in those films in which Eastwood is paired with a female character by the end of the film--the films with Sondra Locke in particular--the male identification figure does not usually vie with another, less magnetic man, for the hand of the heroine; instead, he fights off rapists and other "undesirables."

The Beguiled is exceptional because it refuses to categorize men in these ways, but Tightrope goes further; by using the classic device of the doppelganger, the film pits a responsible citizen who supports children and lives in the suburbs against a weaker side of the same man which succumbs to the carefully constructed commercial temptations of the Tenderloin; the film then hints at just what the latter might be capable of. The dialectic of the puritanical and the prurient comes to the surface here, with a protagonist who can't explain sex to his children despite, or because of, the fact that he consorts with prostitutes. Here again is an Eastwood film which knows what exploitative or "dirty" sex is but can't arrive at a
norm for heterosexuality. This film deconstructs Eastwood's films' exploitation of cathartic violence by implicating its hero's involvement in—or desire for—the deaths of women and, again like The Beguiled, comes close to naming man as the author of most of the things for which men blame women and because of which they dread them.

In The Beguiled, I identified several types of women; I won't call the women in Tightrope "types," but they do fall into four distinct categories: young daughters (Amanda, played by Eastwood's own daughter Alison, and Penny [Jennifer Beck]); Block's wife who left him; the prostitutes of the French Quarter; and the feminist, Beryl Thibodeux (Genevieve Bujold), who runs a rape crisis center. In this film the hero's success or failure depends not on competence, the quality which Eric Patterson considers the most important to the Dirty Harry films (99) (in fact, Block's preoccupations render him less than competent), but on how he relates to each of these categories of women. Of these four, the daughters and Beryl seem to belong together because Block cares about them, they seem to want to help him, and his actions and proclivities indirectly leave them vulnerable. I want to discuss the ex-wife and the prostitutes first, however, because Block's wife's departures drives him to the prostitutes, with whom he acts out fantasies and drives which the film poses as the main problem of the narrative.
In an article on *Tightrope*, Christine Holmlund writes that the film contains elements of the thriller and film noir genres and of soft-core pornography: "the movie's point of view shots indicate just how strong patriarchal vision is in this movie. They are overwhelmingly male, and they overwhelmingly position women as sexual objects and little more" (38). While the prostitutes are presented in the codes of pornography, I think it can be argued that the film advances a critique of the position in which women are placed in everyday life and in representation, but that this critique is as ambivalent and underdeveloped as the dark suggestions about masculinity in *The Beguiled*. Holmlund sees a split in the film between good women and bad women, "reminiscent of the Victorian angel/whore split" (38). However, the film hints that all women, except those whom it defines as feminists, simply accept and play the roles to which they are assigned by patriarchy (and even the film's feminist winds up playing some of these roles too).

The film is unclear about the reasons why Block's wife has left him. The wife is seen briefly in two scenes and she never speaks; the second time she appears, in the hospital after the attack on Amanda, Block's stay there is interrupted by his being called to the phone, perhaps an endlessly repeated event in their marriage, especially since phone calls often cut short Block's time with his
daughters. Block tells Thibodeaux that his wife left him "for anyone else," and we do see her with her new man in his Mercedes. These details are important because they make the wife less threatening to a male audience than does a character such as the wife played by Meryl Streep in *Kramer vs. Kramer*, who leaves her husband and child for a new life on her own, not for another man. *Kramer* finds abhorrent the possibility that a woman could find something better outside of marriage, and then creates a double standard by demonstrating that the former husband can do just fine at his role and hers. The wife in *Tightrope*, however, doesn't object to marriage—just marriage to this man, suggesting that the problem is with him. While the suggestion that Eastwood could be lacking is a radical idea within his films, a rival of flesh and blood is preferable to male spectators to a suggestion that their institutions are found wanting. It turns the character, however, and the star persona bound up in it, into a subject in the therapeutic sense, and the spectator into partly an investigator of a morass of problems that most of Eastwood's films artfully ignore, and partly into someone whose own desires and fantasies are problematic.

In running to prostitutes after the failure of his marriage, especially when the images of these women are familiar from pornography, Block acts out a common scenario. Ethel S. Person, in an article about the male
fantasy of the "omni-available woman," writes that men create for themselves in fantasy a woman who is always ready for sex, always ready to please the man, a figure whose sexuality is, in effect, the man's adolescent sexuality projected onto woman. "Such women cannot accuse men of being beasts, barbarians or dirty" (78); they represent how "men cope with ... anxieties about performance and female rejection" (83). Susan Lurie pursues a similar idea in "Pornography and the Dread of Woman," in which she says that "pornographers literally attempt to shape female sexuality in the image of male sexual fantasies" (159). However, Lurie takes this notion much further by working a reversal on Freud's concept that fetishism is a response to man's realization that the woman has been castrated and that the same thing could happen to him. Lurie writes that

The terrifying problem, of course, is not that Mother is "castrated," but that she isn't. Males would be castrated, mutilated if they had no penises, and the idea that women possess the whole range of individual powers that the male identifies with his penis and yet have "no penis" is what is so terrible. Eventually men embrace the project their socialization meticulously designs for them: To convince themselves and all the world that women are what men would be if they had no penises--bereft of sexuality, helpless, incapable (166).

Block, having experienced rejection, baffled at his failure to please his wife but suspecting that the problem is his, not that of always-culpable woman, flees to women who don't find fault with him and can't pick up and leave; they are
made-to-order products offered by an industry which, like Hollywood film, carefully effaces its production and presents an illusion of reality—in this case, the omni-available woman, seductive and aroused, with no purpose but to provide pleasure to men. They are fetish objects, in whom Block looks for a validation of his virility. He is searching, but again the film doesn't seem to know for what; is it for love, for an understanding of his impulses, or for what happened to the myths of male control like those which Eastwood's own films have served to perpetuate?

The film seems so unsure of what to make of these women that a critic such as Holmlund can arrive at what I feel is a misreading. Are these really "bad" women; that is, is the film itself buying into (and, of course, selling) the "omni-available" fantasy? Or is it aware that the women are wearing masks and practicing the learned behavior of "temptresses"? Are they posited as "bad" women or as performers who have learned to project a persona, again as in Hollywood cinema, in order to perpetuate their commodity value in a system which depends upon them and vice versa? The mask, the persona, the performance are after all items which Eastwood films know something about, adept as they often are at displaying the star's expected performance of violence. In Bronco Billy, a self-reflexive film which virtually takes image-construction as its
subject matter, Eastwood's ex-convict, ex-shoe salesman from New Jersey, turned children's carnival cowboy, explains that "I'm who I want to be." While the freedom to be the person one wants to be and to be sure of that identity is not an option for all men, it is even less possible for women. If Billy has made himself into who he wants to be, then these prostitutes, perhaps like all women in conventional roles, have made themselves into what men want them to be.

Fleetingly but frequently, the film finds cracks in their poses. _Tightrope_ opens with several of the women who are later identified as prostitutes at a birthday party scene; this seems an odd way to introduce _femmes fatales_. The scene is shot by only the light of birthday candles, using the Zeiss lens which Stanley Kubrick originally commissioned for _Barry Lyndon_ (1975), but which by 1984 had become a way of coding warmth and togetherness, as in the scene of the Henry Fonda character's 80th birthday party in _On Golden Pond_ (1981). In a later scene a young woman named Becky, interviewed by Block about one night stands, asks "Is there any other kind," dropping for that instant the seductive pose that she had been striking. Her question is significant not only because it shows a poignant hopelessness through the mask, but because it is a question that Block himself could be asking.
Similarly, when the police are at the home of the first victim, Block listens to an answering machine tape from the young woman's parents wishing her a happy birthday, indicating that she, like Block, has had a "normal" homelife unconnected to her secret life. This idea is taken further in a puzzling segment, in which Block has sex, viewed by the killer-double, with a woman who doesn't look like the other prostitutes; she wears horn-rimmed glasses and an ordinary flowered blouse and her come-on doesn't seem elaborate and rehearsed like those of the other women. When she turns up dead, the newspapers identify her as "a nurse." Who is this woman? Is she a prostitute? Is she, like Block, a visitor from another sort of world, exploring a dark side of her sexuality (and being punished for her transgression)? The film has no answers.

I've said earlier that these glimmers of contradiction and sympathy for the prostitutes are only that—glimmers. The film seems not to know finally who these women are (perhaps, as Mayne suggests, "it doesn't know what a woman is" at all). Certainly, they show little reaction to the multiple murders. It doesn't occur to the film that the women might grieve for each other or be afraid. Instead they continue to go about their business as sex toys, again raising questions about the film's point of view regarding them.
Anthony Wilden discusses rape as "a means of communication between men" (39); using Susan Brownmiller's book Against Our Will, and citing examples of war atrocities, Wilden writes that woman is a term of exchange, and that a way of claiming another man's property is to violate that man's female relatives. Brownmiller says that in such cases "Women are used almost as inanimate objects to prove a point among men" (quoted in Wilden 41). The 1988 film The Accused displays an awareness of these issues in showing a rape victim used as a way for men to prove their virility to each other and show their contempt for the woman as human being.

Stephen Heath makes nearly identical points about pornography, calling it "a relation between men, nothing to do with a relation to women except by a process of phallic conversion that sets them as the terms of male exchange" (2). I've discussed earlier the ways in which the women of pornography and prostitution in Tightrope have been remade in the images of male sexual fantasies; the men in this film use women as slates on which to write messages to each other. The pornographers remake women into images that Block, the consumer, then wants to recreate for his own pleasure. For example, Block watches Becky wrestle with another young woman in a pool of Vaseline on the stage in a bar; later they have sex—with her in handcuffs, oiled up as she was "on stage." In another scene Block
questions a tattoo artist who was said to have beaten one of the victims, as the man inscribes a "Lookin' for Love" tattoo on Becky—two men literally writing messages to each other, using women. The women in this film are given no rest from male scrutiny and violation; the men in the forensics lab where this film spends a good deal of its time (very unlike the Dirty Harry films in which the hero would never be bothered with such mundane processes) take delight in proving their competence to each other and themselves by combing the victims' bodies for clues; one can even recite in detail everything one victim ate and drank before she was murdered. Even dead, these women are granted no privacy.

More centrally, the sneakers-clad double who kills the women Block has sex with wants to get to Block; women, in time-honored tradition, are used as his media. Otto Rank theorizes the double in psychology, folklore, and literature as a disastrous wish-fulfillment apparatus which acts out the darkest repressed desires of the subject (76), and as "that image which has been constructed by one's guardian spirit into a pursuing and torturing conscience" (57). In Eastwood's films in which women figure prominently—and I'm thinking especially of the six films with Sondra Locke—they are usually brought under a kind of gentle domination in which they share the hero's adventures (as in The Gauntlet and the two Every Which Way
movies) and/or become part of his world, due, as the films would have it, to his protective love and benevolence (as in Bronco Billy and Sudden Impact). These motifs are opposed, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, by the frequent mentions of failed relationships in the Eastwood character's past. In Tightrope the two motifs merge in the character of the wife, who refuses to be part of the hero's life and whose rejection of him is not an old story narrated in passing in the dialogue, but the event which propels the plot. Because of this, the man's desire to control, which usually displaces his need for love and hence his vulnerability, is rebuffed and his resultant hurt brings to the surface the aggression and resentment which drives much of man's relation to woman.

Wilden sums up the paradox: "In [men's] depending for their own sense of identity—and above all for their sense of security as 'real men' among other men—on their relationship to their wives or woman friends, they resent them" (49). So in taking to its murderous extreme the aggression which Block rehearses with sadomasochistic handcuff sex (blurring once again any distinction between violence and sex), the double acts out both of the functions identified by Rank: he carries out the protagonist's repressed desires, and in exposing those desires in all their horror, acts as his conscience as well. Furthermore, the result of the release of violence
is that it becomes self-directed and nearly destroys everything close to the subject.

Most of those who have written about this film criticize its ending, in which the film seems to fall back on crime genre conventions—Block rescues Thibodeux; the murderer turns out to be a former cop whom Block had arrested for rape years earlier, making the double's actions too easy to explain away as acts of revenge—all in order to resolve a narrative conundrum which might just resist resolution; I am reminded of Henry James' remark about Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, that the play is "the picture not of an action but of a condition" (Le Gallienne xxiv), and thus not resolvable in dramatic terms.

However, the classic doppelgänger plot, according to Rank, is resolved by the "slaying of the double, through which the hero seeks to protect himself permanently from the pursuits of his self"; however, this "is really a suicidal act" (79). Although modern literature on the doppelganger theme has retained this theme of the "double-suicide," for example, Humbert's absurd and self-destructive tracking down of Quilty, resulting in his own arrest and death in Nabokov's *Lolita* and the equally absurd death of Hazel Motes' "New Jesus" double when Hazel runs him over with his car in O'Connor's *Wise Blood*, Hollywood film has often made of the hero's killing of the double a cleansing act; the death of Lin McLintock's (Jimmy Stewart)
murderous double, performed in water like a baptism, in Mann's *Bend of the River* is one example; Guy's ridding himself of Bruno in *Strangers on a Train* (to whose ending *Tightrope*'s may be alluding) is another.

The difference between the classical double and characters like Block and McClintock is that they are granted a recognition that it is they themselves who pose the problem--and in the other they recognize the dark instincts which they themselves repress (absurdist characters, on the other hand, wear blinders, and plod on relentlessly toward their fate). Block finally confronts himself in the mirror--illustrating the Hegelian notion that the need to change is motivated by self-disgust--but the film doesn't go nearly far enough in showing how he sheds his violent impulses and his taste for prostitution and pornography. In *Tightrope*, the contradictions are just too great to be swept away with a purgative (all right, a happy) ending, and anyway a more appropriate ending probably would have resulted in commercial suicide for the filmmakers, since Eastwood's biggest flops to 1984, *The Beguiled* and *Honky Tonk Man*, were the only films in which the Eastwood character dies.

The awkward and unconvincing slaying of the double--and, by extension, of Block's worst instincts--is not all that critics have found wrong with this film's ending: the character played by Genevieve Bujold, despite her feminism
and the fact that she runs a rape crisis center, nevertheless needs to be rescued by the hero in the finale, even though as Mayne points out, "Beryl Thibodeaux may well be rescued by a man, but the man himself was saved by a dog" (68). Although the film refuses to allow for any ultimate authorities—be they police, male subjects, fathers, or rape crisis counselors—the fact is that the film will not permit this character to be competent at the very thing she teaches others how to do—ward off an attacker. Beryl Thibodeaux is presented as a determined, witty, likable person who doesn't need a man; she is explicitly a feminist ("remarkably free of the 'libber' stereotype one might expect in an Eastwood film" [Mayne 70]). However, the role she plays is not so different from that of the conventional "love interest"; she is peripheral to the plot and the spectator finds out very little about her; her function, as Mayne points out, is to provide Block with his "salvation"; what's more, his case is too serious to be solved by "true love," the constitution of which this film doesn't pretend to know; it takes a feminist. Thibodeaux may be coded as a feminist, without that label taking on a negative connotation; furthermore, her instructions to women about rape seem the product of some solid research into the work of real-life rape crisis counselors on the part of the screenwriter (Richard Tuggle). However, outside of her work, which is shown in
one scene, she doesn't seem really to practice feminism; in fact, when the subject comes up, it is handled gingerly with the vaguest dialogue in the film: about the work she does, Thibodeaux says, "We all need it." But what is it that "we all" need—an understanding of why men rape, of why violence is confused in the culture with sex, of what to do to change these attitudes, of how women can empower themselves? The film presents a feminist character while meeting the question of what her project is, with euphemisms.

Moreover, the film attributes to Thibodeaux the oldest of "feminine" characteristics—intuition. She just seems to know, as if by magic, Block's problem, his fear of intimacy. She also accepts with amazing placidity Block's carousing (which she intuits) and his sadomasochistic sexuality (ditto). In the film's strangest scene, she offers her wrists to Block to be handcuffed, after asking, "nobody can get to you in these," and receiving the answer, "they'll stop just about anybody." Is her offer a test to see if he will shut out intimacy with her? Is the film suggesting that women—even feminists—might like to be handcuffed and dominated? Does Block refuse because as his partner in a socially sanctioned "dating" relationship (one with whom "you can have a hard-on anytime you want," as the younger daughter innocently puts it, summing up the terms of the contract as it is understood by patriarchy),
Thibodeaux is in the wrong category for handcuffs? In positing (uncertainly) a feminist as the Eastwood character's redemption, while also saying (uncertainly) that redemption must come by way of Block's recognition of his condition and his elimination—in the death of the double—of "the darkness inside of him," the Eastwood film switches (uncertainly) from the male subject's monolithic independence to his use of a woman for validation—something a woman who really tries to live out her feminism would probably not consent to.

As it is, however, this is still an extraordinary film to have been produced in Hollywood, let alone as a vehicle which Eastwood's audience was apparently able to accept (unlike other films in which he departed from his persona, this one was a box-office success, perhaps a reflection of its titillation value), but it was seen in 1984 as a not quite satisfactory first step. J. Hoberman, a Village Voice reviewer who usually covers independent cinema wrote in a rave review that if Bujold were to make more films with Eastwood, "she might draw from him something extraordinary," suggesting not only that the Bujold character's function is to "draw something" from the star, but that this very ambitious genre film doesn't accomplish all that it might have.

When I saw Tightrope on its original release, I felt that it didn't go far enough in implicating the Eastwood
protagonist. The film seemed to shield the character/star even while setting out to expose him. While I am more appreciative now of what the film does and fault it less for what it doesn't do, the discretion that I sensed then lies in what the film opts not to show. Not only is it puritanical about sex, fading out like a Production Code-era movie at the suggestion of it, but uniquely for an Eastwood film it is also discreet about the handling of violence. Like the Dirty Harry films, this one revolves around serial killings; however, Tightrope's murders, like its sex scenes, take place offscreen. We've seen that the voyeuristic views of murders in the Harry films—often of pretty young women—show the chaos of a world awaiting the hero's intervention and perhaps give the audience a misogynistic, misanthropic pleasure which it can easily disavow.

However, a guilty, horrific aura surrounds both the sex and the murders in Tightrope, not only linking them to each other but showing the care and trepidation that comes into play as soon as the subject becomes (a) suspect. The dialogue of the other films, which is strictly of the "hard-boiled" school of detective writing, is exposed here as a self-protective cover for hidden drives and hurts. The face of the star, by definition, but especially in Eastwood's case, is a mask presented as an open access to the soul. The star's face is offered here, however, with
emphasis on the mask—as if the face were itself a shield protecting men from truth about themselves, and not just Wes Block's face—but the face of Clint Eastwood going back to The Man with No Name. The narcissism which excludes all Others is doubled back on itself; in close-up, Block/Eastwood's look doesn't glint off into the distance at some threatening menace; it winces at the consequences of its own excesses and appears as if it would prefer to look away, as the film itself does with its demure fade-outs—as in the scene in which Block/Eastwood sees the tie he left with a prostitute at the scene of a murder.

Eastwood's films in the early 80s—Bronco Billy, Honky Tonk Man, Tightrope—seemed passionate attempts to critique and break out of one of the most monolithic star personas ever devised. Bronco Billy is an affectionate parody of the sort of Western Eastwood never actually made, one which celebrates the ideals and values which the "No Name" Westerns blithely ignored; Billy is a kind of guilty conscience for the violent Eastwood heroes, reminding them, as he says, "never to kill a man unless it's absolutely necessary." Billy's narcissism is blatant while the other films efface it; the film values community where the earlier films shunned it as something outside the self and therefore not to be trusted.

But it is Tightrope which offers the ultimate contra-
diction—that of a star who tries to convince his audience that the qualities on which his successful persona has been based are lies. Ethel Person concludes her article on male fantasies by writing that "phallic narcissism, reinforced by the male cultural ego ideal of macho sexuality, tends to obscure ... underlying dynamics. The fantasies of the omni-available woman ... are 'windows' on that buried world" (93). That some of Eastwood's late films unearth the dynamics of "that buried world" of masculinity—with the very same hands which helped bury them—provides its own criticism of the dominant order. That the criticism comes long after the damage has been done makes it no less remarkable.
CHAPTER III
JACK NICHOLSON: PERFORMANCE ANXIETY AND THE ACT OF
MASCULINITY

Transitions: Nicholson's Acting Style and His Influences

There is a shot in Broadcast News (dir., James L. Brooks) which got a laugh from the opening-weekend audience in 1987, even though there is nothing particularly funny at that moment in the script. The film, which narrates the operations of a fictional network news bureau, simply cuts to a monitor where the anchor is giving his sign-off to the evening news program; in the anchor's chair on an authentic looking news-set is Jack Nicholson.

While it is not my intention to confuse spectator position with real audiences, or to mix up theory and empiricism, the audience's laughter seems to me to pose a number of questions about Nicholson's star persona as a signifier. What were they laughing at—the surprise of seeing a major star in a small, unbilled role; the incongruity of Jack Nicholson impersonating Dan Rather or Tom Brokaw; the fact that Nicholson often plays characters who try to act out incongruous roles; an awareness that the
male "news anchor" himself wears an oversized mantle of authority and performs a presumptuous, impossible role?

Later in the film when this Nicholson/anchor arrives in the newsroom, his walk is heavy and ponderous, his voice low and authoritative. He appears in the Washington bureau on a day when the network plans to lay off a large number of the staff and states his position, well, authoritatively: "If we're not there for each other during the tough times, we're not a news organization." He punches the word "news" in a way which suggests that this man either takes his role too seriously, or not very seriously at all; that is, this is not so much a man as a set of roles: anchor, network star, managing editor, formidable patriarch. Similarly, Nicholson is present in this film in the roles of this newsman, guest star, "Jack Nicholson," and working actor—taking a part in the script.

The tone of the line reading and of the brief performance is irony. Whose irony it is—the character's or the actor's—seems an open question. At the same time that the line—and the man's bearing—is pompous, it's also serious; this is how a network news anchor would act around his colleagues, one imagines. However, the verisimilitude of the man's behavior are undermined by an air of mockery which would be absent—as would the audience's laughter—if the role were played by an actor long typecast as authority
figures, as for example Leo G. Carroll and Walter Pidgeon were for years.

*Broadcast News,* after all, is about a young anchor (William Hurt), who doesn't understand the news he reads but knows how to "sell" himself as an authority on it, a concept which illustrates Lyotard's assertion that in post-modernity what matters is not the truth of a statement but how convincingly it is performed. In this context, Nicholson's style of acting, in which a character's "truth" lies in his performance of an assumed identity, undermines the film's theme of solid competence versus hollow performance by exploding the difference between them. Nicholson's characters often mistake performance for competence, and their "failure," as Robert C. Cumbow describes it in an article on Nicholson, tends to be overshadowed in terms of spectatorial pleasure, by the actor's exuberant emphasis on performance. Thus, the spectator familiar with Nicholson infers that this anchorman is probably more entranced by his narcissistic performance of an exalted role than he is involved in substantial work.

I've begun with the shortest of what Nicholson calls "short parts" because his style of acting is more easily introduced in a performance which makes a quick impression and is not sustained over the course of a film. When Nicholson plays a starring role, his acting most often
displays a character who defines himself by the male role he plays. In addition, the character plays it badly; despite the role's hollowness and limitations, he is compelled to perform it because doing so promises self-worth and acceptance in the patriarchy. Nicholson's performances construct a seeming verisimilitude—a self-conscious effect which turns the concept of "verisimilitude," or "that which resembles truth," into "that which resembles a resemblance of truth," an awareness of artifice and of the character as a construction separate from the actor and from any notion of unified subjectivity.

Nicholson's persona does not operate on the kind of Lacanian misrecognition which sustains the relationship between film and spectator at an Eastwood film. If anything, the Nicholson persona itself dramatizes, acts out, misrecognition in that a little man thinks—or pretends to think—that his gender gives him special powers and abilities. Despite this, Nicholson's stardom does fulfill many of the roles of the ego ideal. He projects a force of personality, a wit, a smart-aleck glibness, and rhythmical, snappy line delivery, all of which do add up to an idealized image. But these qualities rarely succeed for the character in the narrative; in fact, his illusion of force and strength, mitigated by irony, usually defeats him, sometimes without his recognition.
It should be made clear from the beginning that Nicholson's persona and the way it operates in his films differ from many feminist assumptions about male subjectivity in film. The figure of Nicholson is seldom aligned with the apparatus, as Eastwood's is, in a way that creates spectator agency. In fact, Nicholson is often distanced from the spectator, either by his acting or in the composition of shots or both, so that the spectator is set up as an observer in a way which would seem to establish Nicholson as an object, although I would say that at the same time he seems an ironic, or extremely problematic subject.

Nicholson's acting, which is Brechtian in that the actor foregrounds himself and his characters as actors, separates the actor from liberal/humanist notions of characters as real people. These characters make spectacles of themselves, by experiencing themselves as "masculine" individuals, rather than as the social constructions that they are revealed to be. This is because Nicholson makes a spectacle of himself and of the character. He also makes a spectacle of masculinism as a set of assumptions about mastery and superiority.

All of this will make my treatment of Nicholson's films different from that of, say, Eastwood's, because Nicholson's performance style turns character into a discourse on male subjectivity. For male spectatorship, to
identify with *The Last Detail* or *Chinatown* or *The Shining* in a Metzian sense is to receive and to release an oddly parodic and ironic experience of self in a time period—the seventies—marked by trouble for masculinism. The difficulty of these films for analysis is that (with the possible exception of *The Shining*) they cannot be talked about, in terms of how masculinist subjectivity or the male gaze is constructed in the apparatus; they must instead be analyzed in terms of what the characters do and how Nicholson, again in a Brechtian way, "narrates," rather than embodies, the characters and undermines male autonomy by revealing masculinity as an act. Furthermore, the films' view of masculinity is often self-reflexive in that the films themselves show how masculinity is constructed and maintained.

Thus, I need to discuss what goes on within the cinematic representation, rather than to examine the means of representation. This may put me as critic in the paradoxical position of discussing characters as discrete individuals in films that I see as deconstructing the notion of a discrete individual. In order to show the difference between the ways that men in Nicholson's films model themselves after masculine notions of identity and the actor's demonstration of that modeling, I must play devil's advocate and discuss—to a certain extent—the representation of the representation, the "real people" or
more to the point, the "real men" that the characters are represented as trying to be.

Accordingly, Nicholson's relation to the mainstream of American film and to classical Hollywood style is much more complicated than that of either James Stewart or Clint Eastwood. While Stewart and Eastwood have been regarded as creations of the Hollywood star system and of powerful auteurs (Capra and Hitchcock for Stewart; Leone and Siegel for Eastwood), Nicholson is often described in the press—and portrays himself in extraordinarily articulate interviews—as making choices based on a personal aesthetic rather than on a concern for his image or a desire to repeat formulas that have been successful for him before. His unstar-like (meaning: against the stereotype of an egotistical, image-conscious star) willingness to take a supporting part if he likes the script and the director is often cited as an example of this. Calling himself "a body-of-work artist," he remarked in 1983 that "Nobody would advise anyone who's trying to advance their likability quotient demographically to do The Postman Always Rings Twice" (Wolf 37). In Nicholson's twenty years of stardom, he has appeared in only five films which placed among Variety's list of the year's ten highest-grossing films—Easy Rider (1969), One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975), Terms of Endearment (1983), The Witches of Eastwick (1987), and Batman (1989).
Nicholson's background as screenwriter on several films during his ten-year "apprenticeship" (roughly 1960-69) to Roger Corman, director Monte Hellman, and others, contributes in an indirect way to his persona. For instance, during the summer of 1989, when Batman was in theaters, it was rumored that Nicholson had improvised large parts of his role as the Joker (Green 1-2D). There may have been something to these rumors, since Nicholson's role, according to producers Peter Guber and Jon Peters, had been greatly expanded during filming, most of which took place during the 1988 Writers Guild strike, when new writing on existing scripts was forbidden. The rumors were never substantiated, beyond the citing of a few lines, but the fact that the public was willing to believe that Nicholson so epitomized The Joker that he supplied him with much of his own madness says much about Nicholson's star mythology.

The notion of stars making up their lines meshes with popular myths, encouraged by industry publicity and the press in which they are real people inextricable from the parts they play and independent of a film apparatus. Nicholson's star image operates partly on an image of this actor as a reckless subverter of the film, with his own competing script. There appears to be enough truth to this notion to perpetuate it. For example, Diane Johnson, the American novelist who collaborated with Stanley Kubrick on
the script of *The Shining* (1980), told a lecture audience that while she and Kubrick were subverting Stephen King, the author of the original novel, Nicholson was subverting them. In fact, although Kubrick is usually envisioned as an all-controlling *auteur*, Nicholson wrote an entire scene of that film, the one in which Jack Torrance first shows signs of madness, bitterly telling his wife Wendy to leave him alone while he's writing (Rosenbaum 21), and he improvised in rehearsal the film's best-known line, "Heeeere's Johnny," which Kubrick, who lives in England and doesn't see much American television, needed to have explained to him.

Much of Nicholson's sensibility, including the glints of subversion in his star persona, comes from philosophical roots in sixties counterculture. He reached stardom with *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Five Easy Pieces* (1970), at the forefront of a movement billed at the time as "The New American Cinema." This movement drew its impetus from Vietnam War protest, and from Hollywood's discovery of a young audience ready to reject the standard genres (Westerns, musicals, war movies, romantic comedies) offered by a film industry in severe financial straits. Nicholson became involved in BBS Productions, "an ultra-hip collective of seasoned Hollywood veterans who introduced timely political concerns into their work" (Cagin and Dray 81). At BBS, Nicholson made *Easy Rider, Five Easy Pieces,*
The King of Marvin Gardens (1972, Bob Rafelson) and Drive. He Said (which he directed only, in 1971).

The BBS offices ... embodied aspects of Hollywood legitimacy and rebelliousness; one visitor in the early seventies observed the typically bustling secretaries and rarely quiet telephones, as well as walls decorated with posters from the 1968 French student riots, and noted that meetings at BBS segued smoothly from Hollywood gossip to Vietnam to New York to Cannes (Cagin and Dray 81).

The movement found its inspiration in European cinema and particularly the French nouvelle vague; Nicholson refers to this period as "Hollywood New Wave." The film which in many ways launched the "New Hollywood," Bonnie and Clyde, was written by Robert Benton and David Newman for Francois Truffaut; after Truffaut turned it down, the script was offered to Jean-Luc Godard who, characteristically, wanted to shoot it on location in two weeks. Many of the films, including the two Nicholson-Hellman Westerns and the "biker" films that Nicholson worked on at AIP, were infused with a romantic existentialism in which attractive young rebel heroes and heroines were pursued by an inescapable fate, in the guise of the Establishment. Such films put a spectator in the position of a flattering masochism; characters in these films bear little responsibility for their actions. Like Meursault in Camus' L'Etranger, they are posited as born martyrs, stripped by existence itself of control.

Although this period in film, BBS Productions, and the counterculture itself were finished by 1973 or so, the
cinema and currents of the sixties continued to have a hold on Nicholson. He worked consistently with directors of some of the era's most distinctive and least "classical" films: Arthur Penn of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Alice's Restaurant* (1969); Mike Nichols of *The Graduate* (1967); *Carnal Knowledge* (1971), *The Fortune* (1975), *Heartburn* (1986); Stanley Kubrick of *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); *The Shining* (1980); Michaelangelo Antonioni of *Blow-Up* (1966) and *Zabriskie Point* (1970); *The Passenger* (1975); Roman Polanski of *Knife in the Water* (1963) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968); *Chinatown* (1974); Milos Forman of *Loves of a Blonde* (1966) and *The Fireman's Ball* (1968); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975); Tony Richardson of *Tom Jones* (1963); *The Border* (1982).

Nicholson also made many remarks years later which showed the influence of the period's modernism on him. He said in the mid-eighties at the height of the space-film craze that "I don't want to make a better 'alien' movie. If I did, it would probably reflect that period we're so fond of. I'd do it Alphaville-style: Take out all the art direction and mix in a little Krapp's Last Tape" (Walker 58). He talks about his desire "to press on the nerves" of the spectator (Rosenbaum 49); "I'm going to play the devil," he says, referring to *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), "and I don't want to play him safely. I want
people to think Jack Nicholson is the devil. I want them to be worried" (Rosenbaum 16).

Nicholson's roots in sixties counterculture and European-inspired "art cinema," and the avoidance of "safety" evidenced in his films, poses problems for "Classical Hollywood Cinema" as I treat it in this study. Many, if not most of his films, especially those of the seventies, scrutinize and problematize male subjectivity. However, two of the very few that do not, Cuckoo's Nest and Terms, were ironically Nicholson's only "breakout" box-office hits before his star villains of the late eighties. Many of the films also utilize identification structures which are considerably more distanced than the Hollywood norm as it's usually discussed in film study. The films which take a subjective approach vis-a-vis their protagonists, such as Chinatown and parts of The Shining, do so ironically; rarely in Nicholson films does point-of-view equal mastery, knowledge, or possession.

Nicholson's attraction to modernism manifests itself most of all in an acting style which to varying extents undermines realistic form. In an article comparing screen acting to stage acting, Charles Eidsvik writes that although film acting appears to recreate behavior in "reality,"

Comparison between on-screen behavior in fiction films and the behavior of people in documentaries or "real life" demonstrates that fiction film acting is rhythmically, gesturally, and linguistically stylized;
It is a stylistic system almost as separate from everyday behavior as stage acting is. The logical explanation for stylization is that it separates signifier from signified—that stylized behavior in films or on stage somehow "represents" behavior in everyday life. To some extent that seems true. But there is no one-to-one correspondence between a lot of acting behavior and behavior on the street. Film and stage acting are two different kinds of poetic behavior (22).

One of the functions of most film acting, like that of classical realist film, is to mask all signs of its artifice. For the actor this actually means masking a mask, making stylization appear real. What Nicholson does is make the mask visible, causing a reviewer of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1981, Bob Rafelson) to complain that "Nicholson's face is becoming a Kabuki mask: it's those triangular eyebrows and the hair receding on both sides of his head and the stylized, leeringly evil expressions" (Kael *Taking It All In* 179).

Nicholson explains that he wants "to attempt the affectation of style within cinematic acting, which is something the audience heavily penalizes you for because they're stuck at the turn of the century; they're only interested in naturalism" (Wolf 36). This "affectation of style" allows Nicholson to superimpose a layer of self-awareness onto an unaware character. In this way, a character's traits are mediated by the actor, rather than simply "portrayed" by him, making the character's actions predictable and inevitable, and emphasizing the character as a social and a narrative construction, in a way that
explicitly recalls Bertolt Brecht's descriptions of "epic" acting.

A good example is the early scene in Batman in the Axis Chemical plant, in which Jack Napier, before he becomes The Joker, picks up his gun off the floor, and whirls around to find that his target, Batman, has disappeared. In facial expressions which describe "surprise" and "suspicion" rather than portray them, Nicholson's eyes move a bit too deliberately. The facial expressions seem separate from one another; each is virtually a mask on which is an emotion or reaction is imprinted, as if the actor's face itself were a late-nineteenth century Delsarte facial-expression chart. The character in this film may soon wear a mask, but the actor certainly does wear one, setting up a self-consciousness and mediating the action marked as "present" with the audience's familiarity with conventions and archetypes. Rather than pretend, as realist acting generally does, that the character is a differentiated individual, the like of whom the spectator has never seen, Nicholson's performance has quotation marks around the character; it recalls every character in a similar situation that the spectator has ever seen.

Nicholson's determination to "unmask" acting precisely by putting the mask back on has for male spectatorship the effect of watching the construction of a male identity, and
what's more, watching that identity being constantly "re-
earned," in the way in which Nancy Chodorow, for example,
demonstrates that it must be. It may be true, as Ron
Rosenbaum writes, that "few men between the ages of 25 and
50 in America today have not delivered a line without some
imitation or caricature of Nicholson's trademark, mocking,
deadpan drawl" (15-16). However, an element of imitation
in Nicholson's acting seems essential to his appeal.
George Lellis, in a study of the influence of Brecht's
ideas on the criticism in Cahiers du Cinema, finds that for
these critics "the ideal actor is not the one who creates a
convincing illusion of reality, but the one who produces
the most pleasure in the comparison of the illusion to
reality, in acknowledging how he has helped create the
illusion" (149); such acting "shows us reality, but in the
process of acting out and recording that reality, it makes
that reality strange, comments on it, turns it into a
discourse" (150).

The question is whether Nicholson, by coyly
undermining masculinism at a time when it perceives itself
as under siege, is critiquing it--or rehabilitating it,
finding an alternate way for it to exist, fashioning the
kind of fake self-consciousness that can serve as a
disclaimer, like the person who apologizes for being a
racist before telling an ethnic joke. Just what are the
implications for male spectatorship of turning masculinity into a discourse?

For one thing, Nicholson's project of artistic risk-taking and spectatorial self-examination—"pressing on the nerves"—nonetheless reproduces women's diminished role under patriarchy. The renewed feminist movement beginning in the late sixties came about partly as a reaction to the sexism of the anti-war and civil rights campaigns. "In ... politically progressive movements ... women were experiencing [a] discrepancy between male activists' egalitarian commitment and their crudely sexist behavior toward female comrades" (Moi 22). An irony of the male left, as reflected in post-war art especially, is that rebellion against the dominant order is too often blindsided by a misogyny and phallocentrism which ensure the order's continuation, a situation which the Nicholson—Nichols—Jules Feiffer film Carnal Knowledge seems almost to recognize. Furthermore, the influence of European art cinema doesn't necessarily entail a more enlightened depiction of gender. "Sexist ideology," wrote Claire Johnston, "is no less present in the European art-cinema because stereotyping appears less obvious" (135). In short, although the "New American Cinema" aspired to revise and counter "classical cinema," it too is marked by contradiction.
Nicholson at the time of *Easy Rider* was already 32 in an era when the advertising tagline for *Wild in the Streets* (1968), a youth-protest fantasy film from Nicholson's former studio, AIP, proclaimed "If You're 30, You're Through!" Nicholson's age, his receding hairline, and his characters' sympathy with sixties youth culture dampened by their inability to be actually a part of it, made him a transitional figure. Ironically like Clint Eastwood in the same period, Nicholson made a crucial connection between sixties counterculture and an older tradition. Eastwood managed to combine anti-Establishment impulses with the interests of the selfsame conservative Establishment, while Nicholson did the opposite, reprising the figure of the postwar "anti-hero" in its lineage through Garfield, Clift, Brando, Dean, and Newman, but revising genres and story structures which asserted the values and assumptions of the Establishment (but not revising those of the patriarchy).

In his breakthrough performance in *Easy Rider*, Nicholson plays George Hanson, the alcoholic lawyer son of an old Southern family who meets the young hippies Wyatt (Peter Fonda) and Billy (Dennis Hopper) in jail where he's sleeping off a bender and takes up with them on their motorcycle trek across the country. The role is a good example of the contradictions which keep Nicholson oddly ahistorical. Hanson, told to wear a helmet for motorcycle-riding, brings a football helmet from his high
school team some fifteen years earlier. While Wyatt and Billy, obvious references to Western legend and all, are one-dimensional icons, Hanson conveys disillusionment ("This used to be a damn good country; I can't figure out what happened to it," he says), crossed with the sense of being stuck between two cultures; he belongs to neither idealistic youth (for which the self-centered Wyatt and Billy, who make a fortune at the start of the film selling drugs to the rich, make poor representatives), nor to the indifferent middle-class.

The sense of not belonging connects Nicholson's early stardom to a durable and ongoing type of male protagonist who began to turn up some twenty years earlier, shortly after the end of World War II. Usually categorized by an over-used and under-defined term, "anti-hero," this character is alienated by a confining world which doesn't accept him. In the Eastwood chapter I distinguished "anti-heroes" from "anti-establishment heroes." There are, however, two closely related types of anti-heroes: those who cannot accept the lives that have been planned for them or who are rejected by others whose values the audience is led to criticize; and anti-heroes of whom the spectator is invited to disapprove, despite the character's attractive qualities. These latter protagonists overreach the bounds of morality and civilization or contemptuously reject the
normative values of society and are left finally to stew in their own failure and bitterness.

What these two strains of "anti-heroism" have in common is a failure to complete the Oedipal identification with the father and thus to occupy a properly male role. These protagonists fail to move beyond the desire for the mother and join with a mate in a marriage which would perpetuate the traditional familial pattern. Thus, Jim Stark (James Dean) in Rebel Without a Cause (Nicholas Ray, 1955) who is among the first type, escapes a domineering mother and a "henpecked" father to "play house" with a runaway "family" made up of a young girl who needs to learn her "proper" female role as wife and mother, and a fatherless young boy who seems to act as Jim's "son."

On the other hand, Hud Bannon (Paul Newman) in Hud (Martin Ritt, 1963) is cold-hearted and unethical, while his father stands for old-fashioned values of integrity and hard work. Although as his father tells him, "You got all that charm goin' for you and it makes the youngsters want to be like you," Hud's shunning of an honorable father/role model and his disinterest in monogamous heterosexual love relationships mark him as a lost man. The audience is positioned to reject Hud's hedonistic values because they go against the ideal of responsible manhood privileged in a film coded as "realistic" (that is, fantasy figures such as
James Bond or Dirty Harry are not held to these responsibilities, but represent an escape from them).

*Rebel without a Cause* and *Hud* exemplify the 1950s version of a subgenre which had long existed in American film, the "social problem drama." The subgenre's new success in theatre and TV, as well as film, coincided with the new postwar predominance of the "Method," or Stanislavski System of acting which, simply put, sought to create "realism" and honesty by teaching actors to act from "the inside out" and to channel the characterization through the actor's memory and emotions. The emphasis on behavior that is "natural" rather than "performed" lent itself to the "honesty" and "realism" of the new generation of playwrights (Williams, Miller, Inge) and filmmakers (Kazan, Ray, Lumet).

Bobby Dupea in *Five Easy Pieces* (1970), Nicholson's first starring role and the one which solidified his star status, seems cut from the anti-hero mold. Bobby is a musical prodigy turned prodigal, an unhappy young man who has fled his family of musicians to drift among the working class. When the film begins, we see him working with the crew in an oil field, which is in California, although most of the accents sound Appalachian; he lives with a dependent, simple-minded waitress named Rayette (Karen Black) and goes bowling and carousing with an equally simple-minded worker and drifter named Elton (Billy Green Bush) who, it turns
out, is just steps ahead of his parole officer. The film divides between two sections. The first takes place among the low culture of oil fields, of trailer parks, bowling alleys, all to the steady twang of country music. The second section concerns the high culture of the Dupea family compound on Puget Sound, a sterile environment on which the sun never shines, where glass doors wall people off from each other, and where Chopin and Mozart sound stark and arid and linger as oppressively as the Tammy Wynette songs of the first section.

The characters of both worlds conform to American stereotypes—the ignorant hillbilly and the repressed egghead intellectual. Bobby's sister Tina (Lois Smith) is a distracted and sexually frustrated spinster; his brother Carl (Ralph Waite), a conceited prig who, as the film literalizes his rigidity, wears a neckbrace and walks stiffly. Most rigid of all is the patriarch, who has had two strokes, can't speak, probably can't hear or understand, and must be hand-fed and pushed around in a wheelchair, virtually an icon of "the father." Bobby is one of the only attractive characters we see; he conforms exactly to the earlier anti-hero model as he has failed to grow up to the life marked out for him by his middle name--"Eroica"—a life of heroic musicianship.

The hyperbolic polar alternatives, and Bobby's impossible relation to both of them might appear to put the
spectator in a familiar position; that is, an alignment with the protagonist in an attitude of superiority. However, the unacceptability of both worlds leaves the film without a moral position, unlike the earlier anti-hero films, and posits instead an existential hopelessness more typical of the European cinema of, say, Antonioni or Resnais than of American film; in fact, the film's last scene, in which Bobby leaves everything—his girlfriend, car, jacket with wallet and identification—at a filling station and hops aboard a logging truck bound for Canada, seems to foreshadow Nicholson's film with Antonioni, The Passenger (1975), in which a man exchanges his clothing and passport with those of a dead man and takes that man's identity (not leaving out the significance of Canada as a sanctuary for draft evaders).

A typical Hollywood film might pose the deadening influence of the symbolic, of home, family, and responsibility, against the freedom of escape and wide-open spaces. In the post-frontier, industrial America of Five Easy Pieces, however, there is no escape. The fields of the imaginary are now pocked with oil derricks; trailer parks contain drastically confined versions of home, family and responsibility; and bosses—father figures with their own repressive laws—wield power. Palm Apodoca (Helena Kalliantotes), the garrulous hitchhiker on her way to Alaska whom Bobby and Rayette pick up on their drive to
Washington State, appears to speak for the film when she rails against "all the crap" of the consumer society created by "Man," a stinking, contaminated place which one can only flee in the hope of finding something that will be, as she says, "cleaner."

The film's women function as mirrors for the male protagonist; in fact, it is in its sexual issues that the film shows confusion about its male protagonist as well as its roots in sexist ideology. The women represent the limitations of both locales and embody Bobby Dupea's confinement; the film uses the male fear of being confined, embarrassed, or disapproved of by women to demonstrate his impossible relation to both cultures. Rayette (Karen Black), alternately pathetic and smothering, is a male nightmare vision of intimacy; she is manipulative and dependent. Like a child, she pouts and play-acts to get what she wants, innocently says embarrassing things around the "grown-ups," and refuses to do what she's told. Rayette DePesto (as in "pest") is a vacuous sex toy; shots such as a full-length two-shot of the two of them, both clothed, Rayette wearing a skimpy minidress, cuddled on a bed with the camera in the position of someone standing at the end of the bed, do nothing to break the Mulveyan model of the woman's mutual possession by male protagonist and spectator. Like Betty (Sally Struthers) and Twinkie (Marlena MacGuire), two women Bobby picks up in a bowling
alley, Rayette is a childish sex object who wears pink and sleeps with stuffed animals; unlike the other two women, she has stayed around long enough to have become a nuisance; in fact, pregnant by Bobby, she becomes one of the responsibilities he looks to evade. The film's only way of making these women into "sympathetic" characters is to point up their victimization; in the midst of a children's game, "Banberry Cross," that Bobby and Elton play with Betty and Twinkie, Betty tells a story that indirectly points up her neglect as a child; Rayette eventually becomes an object of pity, but that pity seems mixed with the contempt with which Bobby regards her.

The women on the island, Tina, Bobby's sister, and Catherine (Susan Anspach), his brother's fiance, represent different kinds of arrested development. Tina, overweight, awkward, and bespectacled, seems an incorrigible "old maid" (in her early thirties); her only sexual outlet on the isolated compound is with Spicer (John Ryan), her father's oafish caretaker, in what the film suggests is a sadomasochistic relationship. Catherine, graceful and self-confident, would seem the hero's match in a conventional romance, but she serves to show Bobby's unsuitability for such a romance; what he sees in the mirror she holds up is his own emptiness. She sums him up: "When a person has no love for himself, no respect for himself, no love of his
friends, family, work—something—how can he ask for love in return. I mean, why should he ask for it?"

However, what is as troubling as the misogynistic treatment of women is the emphasis on Bobby's sexual conquests. A long scene shows Bobby and Betty having sex while moving around a room, finally landing on a bed. After they climax (simultaneously), Bobby sits up, revealing a Nicholson grin and a t-shirt which reads "Triumph," the word referring to more here than a make of motorcycle. Even though Catherine senses from the first that she and Bobby are all wrong for each other, the film, on the force of Bobby's sexual process and spectatorial desire, at first overrules her, as Bobby overrules her objections in a bedroom scene which could be said to idealize acquaintance rape; the man knows his desires and the woman needs him to show her hers.

The film's insistence upon Bobby's sexual heat seems a concession to conventional male subjectivity; this forcefulness in the face of frustration (or at least every kind of frustration but sexual) was probably a key factor in making Nicholson a star in spite of the film's hopelessness. It also pulls the film into fantasy; it might seem that a man as lost and confused as Bobby Dupea would be depicted as impotent, but Bobby pulls women into bed as easily as James Bond. The handling of each of the sex scenes lines up with patriarchal thinking: Betty is
just a lay, so the film shows hot and heavy sex with her; Rayette soon becomes a dependent drag and thus not sexual, so no sex with her is shown or alluded to; Catherine is more important as a possible "love interest," dominant cinema's way of putting a woman on a pedestal; thus, the film needs to establish that Bobby "conquers" her, but discreetly fades out for The Act itself.

Bobby's escape at the end is literally and figuratively an escape from woman, or at least an escape from his inability to "be a man" with women. But if women show him what has happened to him, his inability to adapt to his father's values and do what he intended for him to do are what has happened to him; the lack of paternal reconciliation or recognition leaves him without identity. Although the film was popular precisely because it reflected a generation's disaffection with the values of its parents, it not only locates rebellion and confusion in men alone, it shows how lost the male subject is when he abandons the subject position destined for him by the father. As Kaja Silverman writes about the Oedipus Complex, "the 'normal' Western subject is fully contained within a predetermined narrative" (The Subject of Semiotics 136); there really is no other option. Although many of Stewart's films for Mann, Hitchcock, and Capra show the problems and difficulties of an Oedipal reconciliation with the father which Capra's and Mann's films do
eventually force into being, this "New Hollywood" film depicts a hopeless universe by showing no alternative to the Symbolic and little recourse for the subject in the Imaginary; in fact, Bobby seems to act out the confusion of the subject "trapped within that order [the Imaginary] ...":

unable to mediate between or escape from the binary oppositions which structure all of its perceptions, [the subject] will fluctuate between the extremes of love and hate toward objects which will undergo corresponding shifts in value. Moreover, the subject will itself be capable of identifying alternatively with diametrically opposed positions (victim/victimizer, exhibitionist/voyeur, slave/master (Silverman *The Subject of Semiotics* 158).

Moreover, with its musical patriarch, the film poses a quandary, since music is a form, like film, which combines the Symbolic values of language, form, and rationality, while appealing to images of the Imaginary. Thus, one of Bobby's few moments of liberation comes when he bolts from his pal's car in a freeway traffic jam and plays a Chopin Etude on an upright piano on the back of a flat-bed truck; in this instance, music is subversive and celebrates freedom from social restrictions.

Nicholson's acting at this time is mostly naturalistic and understated; while his even, reedy voice might seem to lend itself to a calm placidity, it almost never does; instead there is a vocal tension which the character can be heard to be trying to keep under control. The face, similarly, is often kept impassive, as if the character is
trying to maintain an even temperature even while he's boiling. Accordingly, Nicholson shows an impressive range in this film, notably at times when the character's attempt to be calm and civil won't hold and he breaks into a rage, as in a shot in which, after trying to stay calm with Rayette who is passive-aggressively trying to goad Bobby into taking her to Puget Sound with him, he gets into his car alone and explodes into a flailing, inarticulate fit, or in the famous scene in which he carries on a tearful, desperate monologue with his father.

The ironic, self-aware style which Nicholson developed later can be seen at its early stages here in that this character performs one way in the working-class milieu, affecting a Southern drawl, the artifice of which the spectator discovers only gradually, and another way on the island, where he at least tries to behave with cultivated civility. But the spectator who knows Nicholson's later, stylized acting might be surprised to find that an often recalled scene like the "chicken salad" sequence at a diner in which Bobby antagonizes a waitress while trying to get his order the way he wants it, is played rather quietly, the effect coming from the intensity of Nicholson's vocal inflections and the accelerating rhythm of his diction. This outward calm should not be taken to connote a macho strong silence. Rather, Nicholson, by the film's end, conveys the feeling that the character keeps himself from
constant explosions in anger or despair by affecting an even disposition, just as he affects a dialect and behavior to fit his surroundings.

Nicholson's style is eclectic, although explicitly Brechtian in some films of the late seventies and early eighties. He has never been a Method actor, although he attended classes at the Actors Studio for a short time in the mid-seventies; Jeff Corey, one of Nicholson's two acting teachers (the other was Martin Landau), says that he teaches the Delsarte chart, a late-19th century method that stresses outer movement and physical and facial display of emotions, and that he also took elements from Brecht, Peter Brook, and Stanislavski/Strasberg (McGilligan 38). Nicholson's career has reflected this eclecticism; this might explain why one of the only references to Nicholson in James Naremore's book on film acting comes in a discussion of the Method. Referring to the scene in Five Easy Pieces in which Bobby talks to his father, Nicholson told an interviewer that he drew on the same sort of "affective memory" that is at the heart of Method acting (203).

Five Easy Pieces draws its air of hopelessness from the male Oedipal compulsion to identify with the father and the impossibility of a man's living as a unified subject if he refuses. The problem of Nicholson's next important characters, Buddusky in The Last Detail, Gittes in
Chinatown, and Jack Torrance in The Shining, is not that they haven't achieved separation from the mother and identification with the father. The trouble is that they have.

"A Staging of the Father": Nicholson and Oedipal Narrative: "The Last Detail," "Chinatown"

Many feminist writers have acknowledged the patriarchal role of woman as "actress." "Cast as the Other to the male norm, [women] have been urged to embody a wide range of dramatis personae: from earth mother to temptress, from madonna to whore" (Fischer 64). Luce Irigaray posits "'femininity'" as an elaborate role which must be played, one in which "the woman loses herself, and loses herself by playing on her femininity" (This Sex 84). As we've seen in the Stewart chapter, patriarchy's posing of feminine performance against masculine nature is a displacement onto woman of a notion that male gender identity might consist of play-acting, and a denial of any quality of constructed-ness or "performance" in masculine identity. In the Mann Westerns of the early fifties, Stewart's role-playing is presented as a refusal of his proper position in the Symbolic, and one which goes against his "true" subjectivity. Beyond this, however, several key Nicholson films reveal the patriarchal masculine role itself as one which must be put on, and performed.
Far from being static and stable, masculinity is in constant danger of slipping away, of losing its coherence; thus it must be repeatedly re-earned (Chodorow 33). We can see examples of this in male genres such as the Western in which courage, stamina, and prowess with guns must be proven again and again. While woman, assigned to her passive position, need only stay "in her place" to keep her gendered identity, man must "act" in order to keep his; that is, women just "are" while men must "do" (Chodorow 33). This dialectic of "doing" and "being" goes further; as Silverman bluntly puts it, "men can only be aggressive and potent if women are passive and impotent" (Subject 140). Moreover, the Oedipal complex of identification with the father is so fragile that the male subject repeatedly convinces himself of its efficacy by re-enacting as drama the process by which manhood is earned and retained.

In the politically retrograde era of the 1980s, for Hollywood narratives ceaselessly to repeat the Oedipal process was to reassert the dominant order in a most fundamental way. One example out of many was Field of Dreams (1989, Phil Alden Robinson), a restorative film in which the 1980s atone for the 1960s across the common ground of a baseball diamond. The "field of dreams" is treated as a condensation of male aspirations and self-idealizations; all struggles, father-son or black-white, can be levelled out there. The whispered phrases, "If you
build it, he will come" and "ease his pain," whose pronouns turn out to refer not to a baseball hero but to the protagonist's dead father, move Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) from being a somehow still anomic sixties rebel to becoming a fully integrated traditional male whose wife watches from the porch as father and son finally learn to play ball with each other. George Hanson or Bobby Dupea at last turns into George Bailey or Jeff Smith.

But the "benign patriarch," Robert Kolker's term for an implied figure who predominates in films of the 1980s (255), represents only one side of the Oedipal coin. It is a fearsome, primal father with whom the male child bonds in the Freudian scenario, but the male subject represses those negative elements and reconstitutes them as positive values in order to complete his identification process. "The means by which the male subject 'dissolves' his Oedipal desires are important" (Silverman 141), these desires being the subject's transformation of the mother into his object of desire and a "cultural imperative to be his father" (140).

If everything goes according to cultural plan, he identifies with his father by internalizing the latter's authority or 'voice.' This operation is in essence an assimilation of cultural prohibition, and it forms the superego. The male child will henceforth measure and define himself in relation to this repressive paternal representation, and thus to his society's dominant values (Silverman Subject 141).

Much of the instability in male subjectivity lies in this concept that a subject identifies with a figure who
represents law and restriction, a figure toward whom the subject holds deeply repressed resentments. This volatile relation gets acted out in narrative which, in A. J. Greimas' persuasive formulation, is a conflict between law and desire. Roland Barthes calls "the pleasure of the text" "an Oedipal pleasure (to denude, to know, to learn the origin and the end), if it is true that every narrative ... is a staging of the (absent, hidden, or hypostatized) father" (10). So the drama of male subjectivity is a struggle to bond with an authoritarian figure whose hostility and benignity exist implicitly in a perpetual dialectic. "Death of the Father," writes Barthes, would deprive literature of many of its pleasures. If there is no longer a Father, why tell stories? ... Isn't story-telling always a way of searching for one's origin, speaking one's conflicts with the Law, entering into the dialectic of tenderness and hatred? (47).

Stewart's films tend to emphasize the bond with a benevolent father (think of Jeff Smith's compulsion to emulate his saintly, slain father). Eastwood's films eradicate the conflict with a repressive father by having the subject take on himself the characteristics of the Law with authority defined as feminine. Nicholson's films express a loathing of Oedipal identifications, but demonstrate the male subject's inability to get beyond them.

The Male as Actor
As I've mentioned, the "New Hollywood," like the Nouvelle Vague in France a decade before, sent dozens of young first-time directors behind the camera, where most of them rapidly self-destructed (including Nicholson-the-director, whose Drive, He Said [1971] was barely distributed).

However, as an August 1974 Time article, issued in the flush of Chinatown's success, noted, Nicholson survived the demise of the "New Hollywood" and transferred his power from the offices of the short-lived independent, BBS, to the boardrooms of the major studios ("The Star with the Killer Smile" 44). When Nicholson shifted to "Establishment Hollywood," one might assume that he "sold out," that he acquiesed to making conventional films while cashing in on his commodity value as a star. On the face of them, his new films were conventional commercial products. He went from an existential identity-crisis drama with heavy overtones of the "Beat" writers, and an examination of sexual mores written by a Village Voice cartoonist (Carnal Knowledge) to his first major-studio projects, both released in the first six months of 1974, a military comedy-drama in which he played a sailor, and a private eye film.

Of course, this is an oversimplification; for one thing, it overlooks the fact that both Chinatown and The Last Detail were written for Nicholson by Robert Towne, his
longtime friend from the Corman days. But perhaps because
Nicholson was now in the mainstream industry, he played
characters who were at the same time generic types and
fully-formed individuals who do things; this is a change
from the confused, lost men of Easy Rider and Five Easy
Pieces. However, it is just at this time that one begins
to note a change in Nicholson's acting style away from
naturalism and toward a multi-layered stylization. And it
is through this stylization that Nicholson shows up, as it
were, man's "geological rings"; like the chart showing the
phases in a tree's life that Madeleine shows Scottie in
Vertigo, these are the stages and layers which make up a
character's construction and self-delusion.

Identity construction in Western culture conditions
the male to think of himself as master of his destiny. At
the same time, he represses the fact that his father and
other father figures are his masters. As he molds himself
by emulation into a perception of himself as master of
others, he must forget that other subjects, who have been
conditioned as he has, can be master of him. He does this
by setting himself up as superior to some, such as women,
who re-affirm his masculinity, and male members of other
races and groups. He does it by engaging in competition
with "peers," glorifying any mastery over himself by
others as some sort of great accomplishment. And he does
it by keeping the cycle going, setting up himself as
"father" to "sons" whom he will ridicule and belittle (castrate) if they fail to cast themselves in his image.

Billy "Badass" Buddusky, the protagonist of The Last Detail, is a sailor who never seems to go to sea, but awaits his orders on the naval base in Norfolk, Virginia and, in the action of the film, escorts a hapless young Seaman to military prison in Massachusetts where he's been sentenced to eight years for committing the trivial but politically sensitive crime of stealing $40 from the polio contribution box, a favorite project of the base commander's wife. At first, Buddusky talks his fellow escort, Mulhall (Otis Young) into racing the prisoner up to Portsmouth and taking five days to spend the rest of the week's per diem allowance on the way back. However, when he sees the pathetic callowness and naivete of Meadows (Randy Quaid), their 18-year-old prisoner, Buddusky takes it upon himself to "show him a good time." This means initiating him into "manhood"—teaching him how to assert himself, how to ask for and get what he wants (which in this case means insisting on having the cheese melted on his hamburger the way he likes it), getting drunk, holding his own in fights, and having his first sexual experience (with a prostitute).

In a film starring a father figure such as Eastwood or John Wayne a young boy might be guided through similar rituals, but the stakes would be life or death--the
completion of a massive cattle drive, the crucial support for the older man in a desperate gun battle. The rituals would also involve a temporary separation from the father, as if the youth's "wild oats" have to be sown in an uncontrollable burst of nature which defies the restrictions of the father, or at least pretends to, even if the father gives his tacit approval.

In The Last Detail, however, the triviality of the rituals, as opposed to the weight they are given by Buddusky, calls them and the "manhood" they ostensibly signify into question. Even though it could be said that behind the entire plot is a feminized chain of command, caused by "the old man's old lady's favorite do-gooder project," the film spends most of its time on the pointlessness and emptiness of masculine identity. Mulhall, the more practical of the two escorts, perhaps because he is black and knows better than Buddusky how much there is to lose, insists that showing the kid a good time will "only make it harder" for him to spend eight years in the brig, a line which turns prophetic when Meadows' newfound assertiveness gives him enough nerve to try to escape, the acquisition of "manhood" proving a futile accomplishment in the face of the rules these three are bound by.

That there is no separation between "father" and "son" and that the young man acts out the supposed virility
rituals under Buddusky's encouragement suggest Buddusky's stake in "the rites of passage." He needs to prove that the steps do "make a boy into a man," that they work. His adamant insistence reveals a desperate insecurity, the need to have his way of life validated. At one point, Mulhall upbraids Buddusky for "turning that boy's head around to prove what a fuckin' big man you are. You're a lifer like me." This seems to be the film's point: that displays of masculine prowess, and indeed, masculinism itself, are meaningless when the constraining social apparatuses of modernity confine and virtually negate male autonomy.

This is not to suggest that the film sees authoritarian structures the way the Dirty Harry series does, as feminizing. Rather, the film shows the military as an institution of the repressive father. It does this in the way that it shows the Navy holding up methods of threat and intimidation to be emulated; for example, consider this tirade that the Executive Officer at the Norfolk base (Clifton James) gives Meadows while introducing him to his escorts:

Do you know why they are taking you to the brig? Because they're mean bastards when they want to be and they always want to be, and you can take my word for it, they aren't about to take any shit from a pussy like you. If they do, they'll get reamed out and they know it.

During this speech, the camera, which holds on a two-shot of Buddusky and Mulhall, shows them looking embarrassed at the floor and rolling their eyes at each other. These
"lifers" know that they're being billed as "mean bastards" for the purpose of intimidation and humiliation. The speech shows that all meaning here comes around to the institution: "they'll get reamed out and they know it."

They are "mean bastards," "badasses," at the pleasure and for the purposes of the Navy. Furthermore, the Ex. O. has been shown in the previous scene with the two escorts as a nice guy when at ease, so his speech itself is clearly an act, an expression of his "public" persona as opposed to his "private" personality.

Buddusky, however, doesn't separate so easily into public/private. His public side (which seems conflated with Nicholson's performance of it) is an expression of bravado, braggadocio, and toughness which he has internalized to the point where there is no interior, no "private" that the character knows or understands. The private side of Buddusky that Nicholson does show is uncontrolled, debilitating rage; this is a man who, for all his (or Nicholson's) charm, could get abusive. We see this three times in the film, once with a surly bartender who won't serve the underage Meadows; once in a beer-soaked hotel room scene when he tries to get the lamb-like (and appropriately named) Meadows to "take a poke at me," Meadows' refusal launching Buddusky into a snarling, inarticulate rage during which he punches a lamp and smashes his fist on the wall; and at the end, when he
frenziedly pistol-whips Meadows, and needs to be pulled off by Mulhall. These outbursts of primal anger are scary and they set a pattern in Nicholson's films of definitive moments when the character becomes an embarrassment, when the spectator would like to look away but can't, moments which eventually become knitted into an entire film, *The Shining*, in which Nicholson shows the short space between man's elaborate civilization and his evolution from violent, primal, "Dawn of Man" origins.

It's hard to know immediately if the film attributes Buddusky's violent rage to his subservient position within the massive structure of the U.S. Navy, or to man's persistence in pumping himself up into a replica of the Father who oppresses him, in trying to embody an image that cannot be lived up to. I vote for the latter, although the film could be accused of reflecting the views of sociologists who theorize a "crisis in masculinity," a result of modern bureaucratic structures which negate individuality, challenges from women and other "marginal groups," and loss of economic power to serve as the "provider." "The concept 'crisis' involves the realization that [men's] power and authority can no longer be taken for granted" (Brittan 183).

But such a notion of "crisis," with its attendant ideas about trivialization and impotence, assumes constructed masculinity as an intrinsic good, not as
something which itself needs criticism toward change. The *Last Detail*'s "crisis" comes instead from the exposure of masculinity as a measure of man's capacity to bend things and people to his will; in other words, where a typical Eastwood film justifies and celebrates pure male egoism, this film in a somewhat gentle way shows the rites of masculinism as ways that man continues ignorantly and complacently to assume his superiority and that it is such ignorance and blindness which keeps the dominant order moving on its implacable way.

Accordingly, Buddusky's defense mechanisms move him to grab at any tiny victory, such as correcting a Marine at Portsmouth for forgetting to "pull a few goddamn copies" of paperwork and "hustling" some men in a bar at darts, propping up his self-image as "the badass." The U.S. military, probably the safest target for a leftish Hollywood film just after the U. S. withdrawal from Vietnam (even right-wing stars like Wayne and Eastwood stayed away from military topics during the 70s), may oppress and demean its members, but the white male keeps himself going with lies and male fantasies which, the film and Nicholson strongly suggest, he must know but can't admit aren't true.

The blue language which made the film a minor *cause célèbre* on its release gives the men a kind of verbal power, as if by surrounding themselves with a shield of
constant profanity, they construct a private language that keeps intruders out. But, as I found during my undergraduate years when I worked summer jobs in factories where the f-word was used in practically every sentence and as every part of speech, profanity and obscenity lose their shock value after a while. With overuse, they become as banal and humdrum as the rest of Buddusky's and Mulhall's lives (they actually become a kind of jargon, and we know how deadening that can be).

Visually, the film is bleak; it was shot during winter on locations in Washington, New York, and Boston, and the sun never appears to shine. The director, Hal Ashby, opts for a quasi-documentary look, both in the flat, cold light of the cinematography, and in the distancing of the figures; the film uses few close-ups, little subjective or point-of-view work, and favors group-shots, medium shots, and in some important moments such as the climactic one when Buddusky and Mulhall chase the fleeing Meadows in the snow, long shots. The spectator is put in a kind of fly-on-the-wall position, a point not of involvement but of interested behavior observation.

The group shots do something else as well; they emphasize Nicholson's small stature, especially when he is shown walking between the much taller Quaid and Young; this, combined with his military-shaved head and the dark blue uniforms against his pale, almost pink skin, makes
Buddusky comically scrawny and pallid, especially compared to the machismo ("I am the badass!") of which he is the would-be embodiment.

The kidding showmanship for which Nicholson later becomes well-known shows itself for the first time here. Nicholson plays Buddusky as an actor, intent on attracting attention and approval. The ads for *The Last Detail* showed a bare-chested, tattooed Nicholson, wearing a moustache and a sailor's flat cap, and pointing a cigar. The pose, like so many of Nicholson's performances, suggests something a bit off-balance; part of this feeling of things being not quite on the level comes from the fact that the ad image is so self-consciously a pose. And poses are exactly what Nicholson's Buddusky continually strikes. He appears variously as a concerned father figure (but not too openly concerned; that would be unmanly), authoritative professional (as when he manages an unconvincing straight face and asks Meadows if his "trouble with the cops" was "in the nature of a serious offense"), signalman instructor ("Some people have a flair for this sort of thing," he pronounces; "I, for instance, I have a flair for this sort of thing"), dashing would-be seducer of a young woman (whom he bores to distraction) at a party ("There's nothing like being on the sea. Doing a man's job," he mock-solemly intones).
Furthermore, each of Buddusky's "accomplishments"—his demonstration of the signals, his fight with the Marines in the men's room, his confrontation with the surly bartender—is carried out with a flourish, with "a flair for this sort of thing," and followed by Buddusky's own (highly favorable) critique of his performance. With his eyes, his slightly exaggerated facial expressions, and stylized "Gestus," Nicholson adds the actor's layer of self-awareness to the character's behavior, contributes a element of criticism to Buddusky, italicizing the sailor's attempts at machismo as just that. This is Nicholson's first strongly Brechtian performance, or what Brecht called "acting in quotation marks" (Esslin 115), in which

the character who is being shown and the actor who demonstrates him remain clearly differentiated. And the actor retains his freedom to comment on the actions of the person whose behavior he is displaying (Esslin 116).

It is this "quoting" that qualifies the customary softening of an unsympathetic character by the charm of the star who plays him. With Nicholson, one is invited to imagine the unpleasant character apart from the charm of the actor. The illusion involved in acting is not effaced; rather the actor's awareness of the illusion reveals the character's mask, his illusions about himself.

Accordingly, the change in Nicholson's roles as he moves to mainstream film is not only that he now plays men who have completed the Oedipal separation from the mother
and identification with the father, but that the resultant male identity is a cage these men are now stuck in, whether they know it or not. The image of the father is so imposing and unreal that the subject, no matter how busily he flails away, can never match it. Furthermore, the character never recognizes that the power he craves is also the power that oppresses him. While a star such as Eastwood indulges the spectator in fantasies which fill in the gap between the subject and the idealization, Nicholson highlights a lack, the negotiation of which is the preoccupation of dominant male subjectivity (Silverman Acoustic Mirror 2), and shows the difference between the "badass" Buddusky wants to believe he is and a frustrated, subordinated man. Although much of this awareness is conveyed comically, the spectator laughs with Nicholson at Buddusky, in the kind of laughter akin to criticism.

Nicholson's next film, Chinatown, carries even further the concept of Nicholson male as one who acts out a masterful role, this time using vaunted intelligence, experience and logic as his tools. He is a private eye in late-thirties Los Angeles, a role and milieu which put him a familiar place in myth and genre. J. J. "Jake" Gittes (Nicholson), heaving a world-weary sigh, tells his "associate," "Walsh, this business requires a certain finesse." The Random House Dictionary defines "finesse" as "delicacy or subtlety in performance ... skill and
adroitness in handling a highly sensitive situation."
Nothing could better describe the self-image of Nicholson's Gittes, a careful, self-confident, glib detective who dresses immaculately, parts his (sparse) hair down the middle, and does business in a smartly furnished office, with Venetian blinds (a nod to film noir) that were "just installed on Wednesday."

Gittes' demeanor suggests that he has seen and done everything, an attitude that contrasts with the warning of the wealthy Noah Cross (John Huston) that "You may think you know what you're dealing with, but believe me, you don't." By the end of Chinatown, which could be called a revisionist "hard-boiled" detective film, the cool Gittes is shown up as a kind of prize fool, with virtually every deduction he's made having proved disastrously wrong. His mistake, like that of Stewart's and Hitchcock's Ben Mckenna, is that he "knows" too much. But while Hitchcock's more realist/humanist film repeatedly shows the audience Ben's uncertainty, in Roman Polanski's Eastern European fatalism/absurdism, Gittes is never uncertain for a moment.

In an article in which he contrasts Chinatown with the figure of the "hard-boiled" detective as written by Dashell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Ross Macdonald, and others, John G. Cavelti describes the archetypal detective not only as a figure outside the institutionalized process of law enforcement, but as the paradoxical
combination of a man of character who is also a failure ... He is the most marginal sort of lower-middle-class quasi-professional. Yet unlike the usual stereotype of this social class, he is a man of honor and integrity who cannot be made to give up his quest for true justice. He is a compelling American hero type, clearly related to the traditional western hero who manifests many of the same characteristics and conditions of marginality (561-62).

In addition, Cawelti writes that "one of the most deeply symbolic cliches ... is the hero's refusal to do divorce business, in fact one of the primary functions of the private detective" (565). Gittes, on the other hand, does what he euphemistically calls "matrimonial work," terming it "my metier."

In one of his most understated performances, Nicholson and the script entangle Gittes in a mass of contradictions between the character and the archetype and within Gittes himself. Cawelti calls Nicholson's Gittes "a character who is not quite what he seems" (564), but the characterization is more complicated than that. Take, for instance, the scene just quoted above, a conversation with Mrs. Mulwray (Faye Dunaway) in an expensive restaurant. The look of the scene evokes Hollywood glamour. Mulwray/Dunaway, just widowed, is lit softly from above as she wears an elegant black mourning dress and hat with veil. Gittes/Nicholson wears an impeccable dark blue pinstripe suit with white silk pocket handkerchief and showy print tie. The lighting is classical; while the woman is lit to look alabaster and ethereal, the man's look is warmer, tanner,
and earthier. "The Way You Look Tonight," a song Astaire sang to Rogers in a musical, issues diegetically from an unseen piano as the two converse warily.

Even though Polanski's intention to make the film in noirish black and white was overruled by Evans, the scene, like much of the film, could be in a forties romantic thriller; Nicholson and Dunaway seem to stand in for Bogart and Bacall. However, subtle differences jar the spectator's perceptions. Nicholson/Gittes mixes innocuous sounding euphemisms and pretentious French terms a few breaths after telling Mulwray, "You see me, your husband dies, you drop the lawsuit like a hot potato, all of it quicker than the wind from a duck's ass." Pause. "Sorry."

Throughout the film, the detective's smoothness and "finesse" are undercut by an errant vulgarity that Gittes seems helpless to control. The women in the film (namely Mrs. Mulwray and the actress [Diane Ladd] hired to "play" her) seem posited, as in the Western, as arbiters of civilization, and also as mirrors in which men see their true selves; Gittes makes his slips in front of them, the most spectacular one being the long dirty joke that Gittes tells Duffy and Walsh as Evelyn Mulwray (in Dunaway's entrance into the film) appears behind Gittes in a deep focus shot. While the women, true to the generic victims and femmes fatales of "hard-boiled" novels and films noirs, are mysterious and hide secrets, Gittes himself is
something of an enigma—a smooth-talking, suave detective who seems oddly unable to control himself and winds up under the control of forces beyond his understanding.

This film is famous partly for the fact that Nicholson appears in the middle third of it, including the scene just cited, with a big white bandage taped across his nose, rendering the glamour treatment in scenes such as the one in the restaurant slightly ridiculous. The gauze-covered nose is often mentioned by critics as proof of Nicholson's willingness to do whatever a part requires and of his lack of the narcissism popularly associated with actors. It is Gittes' narcissism, however, of which the bandage seems a mockery, one which goes directly to a quasi-comic exhibitionism and narcissism that mark many Nicholson characters beginning with these two written by Robert Towne. The archetype described by Cawelti of the private eye as a relatively poor man is violated by Gittes' suits and ties, which are meticulously stylish, and manage to seem both fussy and gaudy, showing a concern for haberdashery which is heard even in Gittes' complaint about the "goddamn Florsheim shoe" that he loses in one of his late-night stakeouts of the L. A. River bed. In fact, the Nicholson characters in both The Last Detail and Chinatown do a lot of preening and seem very concerned with their appearance. The payoff of the montage with Buddusky and the woman at the party is that he likes the way the uniform
"makes my dick look." At another point, Buddusky is shown slicking back his hair and touching up his moustache with great flourish; his flat hat which he habitually rolls up, adjusts, and refashions, serves as what Naremore calls an "expressive object" for Nicholson throughout that film.

The moment in which Gittes/Nicholson is first shown with the bandage on his nose can nearly be viewed as an enunciation, a setting up of the character as an object of spectacle for an implied spectator. A straight cut follows the scene in which Gittes gets his nose stabbed with a shot in Gittes' office. The back of Gittes' head is unfocused in the foreground, with his associate Walsh focused in the background, talking about something else, but reacting with dismay to what he sees. A cut then reveals the object of dismay, Gittes' nose; Gittes in close-up rolls his eyes as if in exasperation and embarrassment over something in the conversation, although the spectator reads it as a reaction to the tape on his nose.

This shot makes clear what has been implicit before in the film—that Gittes/Nicholson's appearance is on exhibit in an unusual way for a Hollywood cinema which ordinarily effaces male exhibitionism. Furthermore, the bandage obscures the actor's face so much that it winds up serving as a mask, prefiguring Nicholson's willingness to use his face as a mask in later, stylized performances. The theatrical mask, far from hiding a character's identity,
exaggerates and abstracts a particular aspect of identity; in this case, it serves as a reminder of Gittes' vulnerability and frailty—in several scenes it actually is a bleeding wound. However, I don't mean to suggest that it simply is a castration, the sign of a loss of otherwise potent virility, etc. Rather, it signifies a return of the male repressed; it is a marker of fragility that contradicts and undermines Gittes' slick male logic and self-confidence. Like a more urbane Buddusky, Gittes seeks to forget how powerless he actually is; the bandage that glares from the center of his face makes such forgetfulness impossible.

As I suggested earlier, the bandage calls an unusual amount of attention to the actor behind the character; the spectator can't help but think of Nicholson the star not caring how he looks, daring to appear ridiculous. However, as soon as one is tempted to think of Nicholson, the actor-as-hero, s/he is reminded that it is a problematic hero who comes dressed in adhesive tape and gauze, dripping blood from a nearly surreal attack. Again, in commenting on a character by telegraphing the fragilities and undermining the facade, Nicholson recalls Brecht. It's as though, as in Brechtian theater, the actor came on screen carrying a placard.

Of course, Nicholson has been commenting on Gittes before this point in the film. As Cawelti mentions, the
"hard-boiled" hero is best known to popular audiences from the screen version of *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Big Sleep*. Any actor who takes on such roles also takes on the icon of Bogart, an association of which Nicholson seems entirely aware. In the very first scene, Gittes responds to the traumatized reaction of a client to photos of his wife having sex with another woman with extreme boredom, as if to Gittes no one with class would get upset over a spouse's affair. Gittes/Nicholson, without getting out of his swivel desk chair, puts a cigarette in his mouth, turns to a liquor cabinet in back of him, gets out a bottle and pours. In close-up, he is shown with a heavy-lidded squint like Bogart's; he finally lifts his eyebrows, the cigarette in his lips giving him a Bogartian lisp as he says "down the hatch." Only once more, late in the film, does he perform a specifically Bogartian gesture. In his first close-up as Gittes, however, Nicholson has done enough to code the character as "Bogart" that the spectator may be prompted to "read" the character as being "like Bogart," or of the same type as Bogart. It is as though the character idealizes himself as Bogart and has internalized some of his mannerisms.

Such an association, especially in the nostalgia-mad early seventies, works to undercut the character. Anyone would suffer in the comparison to Bogart's Marlowe or Spade, and so Nicholson is signalling, in Brechtian
fashion, that he knows that Gittes is bound to fail. More important is the fact that in 1937, when the film is set, Bogart was still a fourth- or fifth-billed Warner Bros. contract actor, playing supporting parts as heavies and mob henchmen; he starred as Spade in 1941 and Marlowe in 1946. So Gittes could not have seen Bogart's iconic detectives, making Nicholson's mediation even more obvious; Nicholson plays not so much on the character's perception of Bogart, as a more "realist" narrative would, but on the audience's and the actor's perception of him. This is another way that Nicholson isolates his acting from the character, a separation that reveals at once the character's behavior and the acting as performed constructions.

Gittes' gashed nose serves as a reminder of the film's self-reflexivity and of Gittes' status as object in another way as well. The thug who cuts Gittes' nose is played by none other than the film's director, Roman Polanski. If we think of Raymond Bellour's analysis of the opening scenes of Hitchcock's Marnie, in which the director's on-screen look toward the heroine in his trademark cameo seals the enunciation of her as the object of the film's gaze, we find here a parallel. If the need to set up others as objects in a narrative is fueled in Mulvey's theory by sadism, Polanski's on-screen violence literalizes even more than Hitchcock's coercive on-camera gaze the protagonist's status as object of the narrative and of the look. This is
especially true since the look in films is often the starting point for violence, even if it is a desire for sex confused with a desire for violence.

Polanski's slash diminishes Nicholson-slash-Gittes' two most attractive traits--his wisecracks ("Hey, Claude," he says on his first glimpse of the unfamiliar small man in the white suit, "where'd ya get the midget?") and his mastery as a detective, as seen in his ability to look and investigate ("You're an awfully nosy fella," says Polanski/thug. "You know what happens to nosy fellas? They lose their noses"). If the detective's nose--the figurative site of his ability to "snoop," to "sniff out clues"--is thought of as connected to vision in his capacity for investigation, then Gittes' lascerated nose undermines the heroic mastery which could give pleasure, and shifts that pleasure from Nicholson/Gittes as subject to the star/character as something of an object who goes on acting the part of subject.

Cawelti notes that the ending of Chinatown is "almost contrary to that of the myth. Instead of bringing justice to a corrupt society, the detective's actions leave the basic source of corruption untouched" (564). He also calls "the potent perversity embodied in the figure of Noah Cross ... reminiscent of the primal father imagined by Freud in Totem and Taboo" (567). The revelation of Cross's incest with his daughter Evelyn is the second-to-last layer of the
narrative that Gittes/Oedipus unravels; the final one is the fact that the primal father controls all of the apparatuses (governments, courts, police) that could possibly put a stop to him.

The presence of John Huston as Cross, even though he has only about fifteen minutes of screen time in a 130-minute film, has enormous resonance in a film in which a Nicholson character acts out a detective's role. Nicholson told an interviewer that

'there was a kind of triangular offstage situation. I had just started going with John Huston's daughter [Anjelica], which the world might not have been aware of, but it could actually feed the moment-to-moment reality of my scene with him.'

'Are you sleeping with her?' intones Nicholson, in an unmistakable imitation of John Huston's line from that scene (Rosenbaum 17).

This "triangular" subtext which involves Huston as an intimidating father figure on-screen and off, puts Nicholson at a vague disadvantage which adds to the distinctness of Jake Gittes' powerlessness in the face of Noah Cross's money and power. This is compounded by the fact that Huston was, of course, the director of The Maltese Falcon and the best friend of Bogart. It seems appropriate that one of the fathers of the genre being "revised" should be unveiled as the sire of a bottomless evil that devours everything in its wake. Huston's screen presence is so overwhelming that it almost obliterates a strong personality like Nicholson. Not only do Gittes' claims to myth diminish in its shadow, but Huston's ripe,
hammy delivery, his deep facial pouches and lines, and his sachel-like mouth suggest in Cross an atrocious malignancy.

And yet Gittes' struggle against him is not a fight of good against evil, but one of duelling male egos. A long climactic scene between Cross/Huston and Nicholson/Gittes in Evelyn's backyard, filmed in a wide-screen two-shot in one take, opens with Gittes confronting Cross with the evidence—a pair of Cross's glasses that Gittes' found at the bottom of Mulwray's salt-water pond—that he killed Hollis Mulwray and with his knowledge that he is the father of Evelyn's daughter. It ends with Cross disarming Gittes and making him take him to the girl, in Chinatown. Huston delivers the line to his henchman, "Claude, take those glasses from him, will you," with a kind of nonchalant authority that is chilling in its presumption.

But Nicholson/Gittes has delivered lines with the same presumption of knowledge and rightness throughout the film; Nicholson's reading of lines like "C'mon, Mrs. Mulwray, you've got your husband's girlfriend tied up in there" shows Gittes' assumed mastery of a situation; it also refers back to the genre, in that such detectives, and in particular, Bogart, delivered lines with the subtext, "Don't kid me." So sure is Gittes that Evelyn is lying to him that "Mulwray's girlfriend" is actually her sister that he bullies her into telling the truth, as detectives traditionally revert to force when deduction fails them.
Nicholson bites on a cigarette at this moment, recalling Bogart's slurred speech—"I'll make it easy for ya," he snarls, and slaps her with each of her "lies."

At the end of this scene, not only has Evelyn revealed a worse corruption than Gittes could have detected, but he has just added to her brutalization; he is one more male beating and abusing her. Ultimately, he and Cross both try to master and control people; Gittes just isn't nearly as good at it. Once again, the attempt at identification with the father only brings a demonstration that what the male has identified with and perpetuates is a talent for oppression, a fact that the male, in his complacency, discovers only when some of the oppression rubs off on him, as it did on American men during the Vietnam War which provides a thinly veiled subtext of this and many other American films of the late sixties and early seventies.

It is ironic that the makers of Chinatown are apparently blind to the racism of the film's title and its premise that Chinatown stands for a kind of inexpressible, unfathomable evil and corruption, the kind that (white) men are incapable of understanding and doing anything about, just as white men find ethnic or sexual others enigmatic. Jake's return to Chinatown for this plot's disastrous climax is an acting out of his compulsion to repeat. He has said earlier in the film that when he worked in Chinatown before, "he tried to keep someone from being
hurt, and instead ended up making sure that she was hurt."
Just as that line represents an unconscious prophesy, so Chinatown represents for Jake the return of the repressed. The film's famous last line, "Forget it, Jake. It's Chinatown," is a further invitation to repress, and to displace his latest failure—not to mention the monstrous oppression of the White Father—onto the Sphinx-like Chinese, just as many American men in Vietnam apparently displaced the evil of that war onto the Vietnamese.
Another Nicholson film, The Shining, will be far more frank about who really authors oppression under the psuedonym, "White Man's Burden."

"The Shining": Masculinity and Hallucination

We have seen in The Last Detail and Chinatown the difference between how characters view themselves and what Nicholson shows. Like Lacanian subjects, these men have formed their subjectivity by a kind of misrecognition. Nicholson sets up a tension by giving subtly Brechtian performances which open a space between character and actor, but in fairly conventional, realist films. In Stanley Kubrick's The Shining (1980) Nicholson plays out a more abstract, less differentiated idea of the male subject, but it is as dependant as the others upon role-playing and illusion. Nicholson undermines the behavioral surfaces of Buddusky and Gittes, pointing up the hollowness
and fragility of two masculine "types"; nonetheless those characters do assume coherent, recognizably distinct identities.

The difference between actor and character in The Shining is paradoxically both more and less distinct than in the earlier films—more distinct because the more insane and robotized Jack Torrance becomes, the more one is aware of the histrionic heights to which the actor is pushing himself. At about this time, the phrase, "over the top," meaning beyond conventional limits of naturalism, humanism, and mimesis, becomes regularly attached to descriptions of Nicholson's style. In particular, Nicholson does not forget Brecht's dictum that "even if [the actor] plays a man possessed he must not seem to be possessed himself, for how is the spectator to discover what possessed him if he does?" (193).

On the other hand, the difference between character and actor is less distinct than before because Jack Torrance seems melded with a star persona and mannerisms which by 1980 are very well defined—the arching eyebrows, the smirking, electric smile, the insinuating, nasal voice. In The Shining the star persona is intertwined with and implicated in the character in a way that it wasn't yet in the early-seventies films. The close connection between actor and character is literalized by the character's name. Try writing the names of character/actor, as I have done so
far in the chapter and they come out Jack/Nicholson. One must go back to comedians like Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy to find stars who play characters with their own names (Nicholson has done this once since *The Shining*, in *Batman*, where The Joker's "real" name is Jack). The name originates in Stephen King's novel and Kubrick was reported to have worried that having Nicholson play a character with his own first name would be "distracting" (Wilson 54) (not the first or last time that Kubrick in interviews has seemed [pretended?] not to understand his own films; the purpose would seem to be to have it be distracting). The effect is an estrangement of the usual star/character dichotomy, as if "Jack Torrance" were--absurdly--impersonating "Jack Nicholson."

Furthermore, in doing what he has called "pushing at the modern edges of acting" (Wolf 36), Nicholson adds a strong element of the Absurdist style of acting, in which the self, as Virginia Wright Wexman explains, contains no core of authenticity but rather is constituted out of a series of roles. Absurdist actors dramatize the absence of a center out of which these roles are generated by using the occasion of their performance to problematize the relationship between role-playing and identity. The absurdist emphasis on the self as a series of roles parallels poststructuralist notions of fragmented subjectivity (3).

Jack Torrance acts out the roles that are assigned to him as a male in society out of no other motivations than ego and instinct. He plays the eager and obsequious job
interviewee, loving husband and father, family breadwinner, loyal employee, writer, hale-fellow-well-met with Lloyd the bartender, sophisticated man of society--all of these without being convincing as a single one.

Jack seems a composite of earlier Nicholson characters. Like George Hanson, the out-of-sync rebel who wears a football helmet on a motorcycle trip, Jack Torrance is an out-of-sync sophisticate who wears an old maroon jacket at a society ball; like Bobby Dupea, the alienated musician, he is a frustrated writer; his attempts at rationality and deduction, like his speech to Wendy about ethics and principles and his triumphant recognition of Delbert Grady as the caretaker who murdered his wife and kids, mimic the cool detective Jake Gittes; his male bravado covering limitless anger recalls "Badass" Buddusky; perhaps most important is a quality that Rosenbaum sees in a performance I haven't talked about, Nicholson's R. P. McMurphy in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, "a pathological impulse behind the drive for pure liberation, a self-absorbed quality that ignores the destruction that 'liberation' can bring upon more fragile souls" (17).

"You suspect that Kubrick cast Nicholson ...," wrote one reviewer when the film was released, "chiefly because of Nicholson's unique face--the sharp nose, wide, mobile mouth and angled eyebrows that can re-deploy themselves in an instant from sunny friendliness to Mephistophelean
 menace" (Kroll 96). Perhaps, but such a reading ignores the star mythology of tragicomic presumption and blindness that Nicholson built up during his star-making period in the seventies.

However, Nicholson does not abandon Brecht's concept of the actor as one who shows character as an ideological construction. As he falls deeper into madness and the manipulations of his ego by the patriarchs of the Overlook Hotel, Jack/Nicholson comes to illustrate a remark by Earl Jackson, Jr., that "phallocentric culture is a hallucination," that is, a vision which the male subject wants to have because it shows him a gratifying image of himself as powerful, important, and autonomous. At the same time, the patriarchy encourages the self-image because it perpetuates the dominant order. But Nicholson not only appears in this film as a kind of Nicholson-cartoon character (in a film which asks to be seen, on one level, as a kind of cartoon), a composite of his over-confident, self-destructive characters of earlier films, and as a prototype of the husband/father in American capitalism; he also acts as a comment upon the horror movie madman, in effect, helping Kubrick put quotation marks around a genre.

The Shining is based upon the novel by Stephen King. In King's story a failed schoolteacher and playwright with a history of alcoholism and violent tendencies takes a job at an isolated uppercrust resort hotel high in the Colorado
Rockies during the winter when the hotel is closed. Jack moves there with his six-year-old son Danny and wife Wendy. Danny secretly possesses a psychic talent called "shining," which he has personified as "Tony." "Tony" can see premonitions of the future, visible traces of the past, and things happening in the present time in other places. Before the staff at the Overlook leaves for the season, Danny meets Dick Hallorann, the elderly head chef, who also has the gift of "shining." Once the family is settled in at the hotel, Jack's frustrations eat at him and he begins to read a scrapbook he finds full of old newspaper stories about dark events and murder in the Overlook's past. The hotel, which has supernatural powers of its own, begins to beckon to Jack, presenting him with a bartender, Lloyd, and moving him to kill Danny, for his powers which the hotel would then appropriate, and Wendy, who would undoubtedly stand in the way. Danny, feeling himself and his mother threatened, "shines" to Hallorann in Florida, who slowly makes his way to the snowbound Overlook, and eventually saves Wendy and Danny from the mad, homicidal Jack by exploding the hotel, with Jack in it. The novel's last scene shows Hallorann, Wendy, and Danny in Florida, safe and poolside.

If much classical narrative can be seen as a reaffirmation of values and of an order which events in the story endanger, then no less an authority on the horror
genre than Stephen King sees horror working in a similar way:

Monstrosity fascinates us because it appeals to the conservative Republican in a three-piece suit who resides within all of us [sic]. We love and need the concept of monstrosity because it is a reaffirmation of the order we all crave as human beings ... and let me further suggest that it is not the physical or mental aberration in itself which horrifies us, but rather the lack of order which these situations seem to imply (quoted in Carroll 199).

Similarly, when he was making the film, Kubrick is said to have phoned King and asked, "Aren't all ghost stories fundamentally optimistic?" because they assume a life after death (Wilson 42).

Noel Carroll in his book The Philosophy of Horror construes horror as confronting its spectators with a being, a monster, which is shown to possibly exist, to threaten, and to be impure (27-28). Under King's terms, Carroll's monster would be a threat to our established notions of existence, order, and propriety. In the novel the monstrous results from an inversion of the accepted order: the father is supposed to be the provider and protector of the family. When he turns on those whom he should protect—the wife and child—and becomes the threat to home and security, the effect is horror (as it would be in real life; in fact, David Cook, in a footnote about Kubrick in the 2nd edition of History of Narrative Film [1990], calls the film "an account of America's long-concealed history of domestic violence and child abuse"
What is then required is for the male child to reclaim the mother and subvert the horrific father by summoning Hallorann, who is black and fits perfectly the stereotype of the loyal servant who saves his master's child (Shirley Temple established the same sort of bond with the "uncle"-types in her films). This formulation may sound simplistic, but King's novel does work a variation on a formula whereby "the humans regard the monsters they meet as abnormal, as disturbances of the natural order" (Carroll 16), the latter being in this case the "natural order" of the family.

Contrastingly, Robin Wood in "The American Nightmare: Horror in the 70s," sees horror as based upon concepts of repression and the other, especially as these are contained in the family. He finds some 70s horror films "progressive" because they bring out horrors that society represses in order to maintain institutions such as monogamous heterosexual marriage and capitalism. Both of these theories have major problems; Carroll, in the early chapters of his book, appears to posit horror fiction as a usually restorative kind of narrative (the kind that Wood calls "reactionary"), but in a later chapter entitled "Horror and Ideology," he backs away from ideological implications like those that King frankly admits to, feebly offering examples of horror stories that do not end restoratively and sometimes missing the ideological
undertones of those. In Rosemary's Baby, for example, "Satan is birthed" [201] indeed, but the ultimate horror is Rosemary's mother instinct, which proves stronger than her revulsion at discovering that she has given birth to the devil's son. As for Wood, the fact that he offers as his model of a progressive, anti-repressive horror film, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1973), in which a young woman is prolongedly tortured and hacked to death, ought to tell us all we want to know about the gaps in his thinking, a point made by Tania Modleski in an article, "The Terror of Pleasure," about which I'll have more to say later.

Kubrick and Nicholson's Version of Horror

"Patriarchy is born!" -- overheard at a campus screening of 2001 during the scene in which the ape-man finds that he can use the bone of his prey as a weapon.

Carroll's and Wood's theories are of interest in that they help show how the film of The Shining works against conventional definitions of horror. Kubrick subverts the restorativeness of King's plot so that whereas in the novel the hotel wanted Danny's powers, in the film it wants Jack to carry on its history of murder and oppression. The novel operates on the feeling, redolent again of the Oedipus myth, that something is wrong, with the something becoming more and more threatening as its shape becomes clearer. In the film it is very hard to pinpoint what is wrong. As many commentators have noted, Jack seems crazed
from the beginning; "something wrong" seems a normal state for the Overlook and the Torrances. The only real change is that the stilted, deliberately pleasant manner that Jack, Wendy (Shelley Duvall), and Ullman (Barry Nelson), the manager, affect around each other in the film's first half-hour perceptibly falls away after the Torrances begin their isolation together.

The "order" of which King and Carroll speak seems shaky in the film. Danny has his premonitions of blood and terror even as Jack is at his interview; Wendy nonchalantly explains to the pediatrician (Anne Jackson) about how Jack had dislocated Danny's shoulder in a drunken rage. This trouble in the family is there in both versions, but in King's it foreshadows and sets up motivations for Jack's later attacks on his family, and establishes the eventual conflict between Jack and the Overlook against Wendy, Danny, Hallorann, and "the shining." In the film this disorder is covered over by an aura of normality; Wendy describes Jack's action as "just the sort of thing you do a hundred times with a child in a park or in the street."

However, in Jack's retelling to Lloyd the bartender, in which the incident happened three years before (in Wendy's version it was five months earlier; men's tendency to consign their violent incidents to the past becomes a central issue in the film), what emerges mixed up with the father's expressions of love and duty is contempt—"I
wouldn't hurt one hair on his goddamn little head. I love the little son of a bitch!"

It is with revelations such as these, which the film presents in such deliberate but unexceptional ways that every event seems part of a normal continuum, that the film reverses Carroll's and King's notions of order and Wood's notion of repression. I need to state here one additional concept explicitly central to Carroll's argument and implicit in Wood's, and that is "affect." "The genres of suspense, mystery, and horror derive their very names from the affects they are intended to promote—a sense of suspense, a sense of mystery, a sense of horror" (Carroll 14). In a paper at the 1989 MLA convention Linda Williams asserted further that the most disreputable genres are those which elicit from their spectators/readers the same base physical responses which they draw from the characters: in horror, screams; in the woman's picture or "weepie," tears; in pornography, orgasm.

To Wood, disreputability, affect, and repression are bound up with each other. The horror film exposes hostility toward Others of race, nationality, gender, sexuality, and class, which even though repressed, drives the operations of society. According to Wood, horror films are subversive because they do violence to established institutions of order, and show the tensions within them. The problem with this idea, as Modleski shows, is that in
such films "the female is attacked not only because ... she represents sexual pleasure, but because she represents a great many aspects of the specious good--just as the babysitter [in Halloween] quite literally represents parental authority" (163). Modleski worries that it is the slashing, bloodletting, and killing which appeal to the horror film's audience, and that the desire for these exists outside a desire for narrative, thus connecting the terror(ism) to an ego gratification like that served by Eastwood's quasi-vigilantism. Horror may exist (at its most benign) for its reaffirmation of order, but it surely also exists for its "affect." Kubrick's film subverts both of these functions on one level, in order to lead the spectator to deeper horror on another.

The horror is the order. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Robert Kolker theorizes a guiding patriarch in 80s cinema; in criticism indebted to Lacan and Metz, Kolker writes that the

hailing of the subject into the imaginary realm ... reverses the Oedipal process. The subject is not cut off from comfort and sustenance, he is offered them. He is given an illusion of power. Rather than being positioned against or at the mercy of the patriarchy, the subject is put under and made witness to its protection (255).

In a chapter on Spielberg Kolker refers to films which operate under such a system, not that make it their subject matter, as Kubrick's film does. In The Shining the apparatus of society is treated as unconscious. This is
why the film shows effects, but not what caused them. A key to this approach is the "narration" within the film of Mr. Ullman, the hotel manager. Ullman, a pleasant but completely impersonal man, interviews Jack and later leads the Torrances—and the audience—on a tour of the hotel. Among the little tidbits of history that he mentions, in the offhand manner of a tourguide, is that the hotel was built on an Indian burial ground, "and I believe they actually had to repel a few Indian attacks while they were building it." He says this only a few minutes after he has drawn the Torrances' attention to the "Navajo and Apache motifs" in which the lounge was decorated. Thus, the hotel's (the country's) past is built on the conquest of Others whose culture it then appropriates and assimilates into the mainstream; similarly, the fact of oppression is repressed and assimilated into an ordinary (meaning: plain, unexceptional, according to the order) life as bland as the film's conversations between people, which David Cook likens to the inane chatter which passes for conversations heard by news anchors and disk jockeys on TVs and radios during the film.

Moreover, Kolker identifies the 80s' "benign patriarch" as a specific personage:

The patriarchy assumes a maternal position, of care, rather than of authority. In the process, an extraordinary event happens as the ideological material from the larger discourse of the government is given shape by its image-making arm, eighties film.
Ronald Reagan (re)enters cinema as the guiding patriarch offering maternal care (255).

Stuart Ullman sits concernedly in his office explaining to Jack about the caretaker who had slaughtered his wife and children, and says "I can't believe that actually happened here." Reagan in his 1980 debate with Carter said that "we didn't know we had a race problem." Reagan went on genially to lead the country through eight years of willed unconsciousness and denial, not believing that any dark doings in our history actually happened here or that they could have "left traces behind," as Halloran explains to Danny. Intriguing to me now is the fact that in my original review of The Shining, published in August 1980, I referred to Ullman as "a blandly pleasant, Reagan-like Westerner" (132), one of the first of the "benign patriarchs," in a film which can be seen as a thorough deconstruction of Spielberg's first extravaganza of patriarchal authority/maternal care, Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977). The day after the film's opening in New York and Los Angeles, Kubrick, I think unfortunately, took out a scene at the end of the film in which Ullman visits Danny and Wendy in the hospital after their ordeal and assures them that he just can't imagine how such a thing could have happened--more sincere ditherings by a Reagan figure whose confusion in the face of reality assures the blithe continuation of the status quo. The scene was undermined by the one following it--the
final dolly-in to the photograph showing a Jack-look alike at the Overlook in 1921. (Let's hope we get a "restored" version [by two minutes] of The Shining someday.)

In the same way, the Torrances have repressed their own history, as Wendy begins her explanation of Jack's abuse of Danny oxymoronically, as "... purely an accident. My husband had been drinking ..." The Torrances deny their problems, calling each other "hon," "babe," and "darlin'," and generally acting as a married couple is expected to act.

Furthermore, the film is studded with mirrors into which people look, and don't see themselves (but an idealization?) A mirror, after all, shows the referent, only backwards; thus, as Danny/Tony shows with the "redrum"/murder scrawlings, a referent, paradoxically, must be backwards in order to be recognized--and Jack and Wendy appear to themselves deceptively straightforward. As the film goes on, when Jack looks in mirrors, he doesn't see himself at all; the naked woman who rises from the tub in Room 237 is alluring when gazed at voyeuristically from across the room (Nicholson's leer in the reverse shot parodies the desiring male gaze, thus breaking the spectator's pleasure in voyeurism); when he looks in the mirror, he sees a rotting crone, the embodiment of his dread of woman, just as the fantasy woman embodies his fetishism. Still later in the red and white bathroom with
Grady he sees Grady, his ancestral "double," not himself. As Poe's "William Wilson" shows, to gaze into a mirror and see the Other is to be mad. The hotel's "Overlooked" history of class oppression ("all the best people" stayed there, according to Ullman,) murder, and violence, ultimately mirrors Jack's violent tendencies, which seem based upon an unconscious frustration with his position as an "ordinary" male in society. David Cook refers back to the film's opening scene, the interview, calling it a typical job interview, with the candidate grabbing for the brass ring he both desires out of his socially conditioned sense of competition and desperately needs because of the ruthless competition built into our market economy. Jack Torrance is in a classically defined position—that of an American male who both wants and needs to support his family and who, we soon learn, deeply if unconsciously resents the fact. The interview is successful (as how could fraudulence fail to appeal to fraudulence); Jack will sell his labor to a corporation and move his family to a new job in a new town. It happens every day (3).

The film fuses together two entities which would seem to be opposites—maternal care and patriarchal law. The combination sets up a Brechtian difference between how the character acts and how the spectator responds to him. Jack's insane exhilaration at his (he thinks) newfound murderous freedom and power (it's as if Jake Gittes unconsciously wished he were Noah Cross, as well he might) may be experienced by the spectator as exhilaration at falling back into the womb, a sensation which, according to Freud, is a secret desire of men, often associated with water (hence the number of key scenes in bathrooms). The
womb is evoked in the motherly way that Jack is treated by Lloyd and Grady; Grady cleans off Jack's jacket and tells him "you're the important one." Lloyd nurtures Jack with a soothing presence and drinks that look creamy through the white light of the "Gold Room"'s bar. Jack reads these encounters as male camaraderie while the mise-en-scene absorbs Jack into womb-like settings from which he is not always distinguishable.

There is a debate, which I think will grow more heated as study of acting and stars becomes more important to the field, over the place of the actor in the film apparatus. Formalist critics like Bordwell and Thompson see the actor as an expressive figure in the mise-en-scene (see Film Art 2nd ed., 131-35); others argue that actors' presences are so strong that they themselves can be auteurs whose styles and personas transcend and define the mise-en-scene, even if they are technically inside it. I tend toward the latter view, but The Shining provides brilliant examples of why both should be taken into account. Nicholson told an interviewer, "I complained that he [Kubrick] was the only director to light the sets with no stand-ins. We had to be there even to be lit" (Kroll 99). The film reveals that what Nicholson must have seen as eccentric obsessiveness on Kubrick's part produces a startling effect; in the key scenes showing Jack's "possession," the lighting on him matches a warm, glowing background so that it becomes hard
to see where the surroundings end and Jack/Nicholson, the ostensibly human figure, begins.

In the first scene in which Jack conjures up Lloyd (in a very offhand way; the camera is on a medium close up of Jack in which he, under his breath, offers "my goddamn soul for just a glass of beer," the most unconscious Faustian pact on film), Jack covers his face with his hands, looks up, and says "Hi Lloyd." Lloyd is then shown, completing the eyeline match, the first shot of which is held long enough for the spectator to become conscious of it. The amber light of the ballroom is so warm and intense that it envelops Jack too; the only contrast comes from the white of Nicholson's teeth and eyes. Jack's ravings and his chummy confidentiality with Lloyd make him part of the spectacle, rather than the individual that the character thinks he is. The music throughout the film (by Bartok, Penderecki, and Lygeti) does not call attention to itself as the music in Kubrick films often does; rather, it seems one long primal scream issuing from the Overlook (or toward it). And the aura of the (false) womb enfolds even more the conversation in the white and blood-red bathroom in which Jack in effect seals his inevitable fate with Grady ("You have always been the caretaker here," Grady tells him), the lighting again blending Jack in with the surroundings, not so that he is lost in them, but so that they seem an organic part of him and he of them.
This feeling of enclosure by the womb is not treated with the dread one might expect, especially since it may be Jack's and the spectator's secret desire and may explain why Jack is so welcoming of his fate; it is treated with irony because once again the Nicholson character does not recognize the real object of his drive. This double-presence of patriarchal/maternal pervades the film visually. In the opening shot, the (apparently helicopter-borne) camera advances on an island in the Rockies; the island is tiny, and it is surrounded with water, but it is so verdant, with a large pine tree and overrunning foliage, that it doesn't appear to know that it's an island. Jack doesn't appear to know that he is bonding with the primal father, as his descent into its control resembles a fall into the warm, welcoming womb. The gaze which advances on him repeatedly as he types away in the cavernous Colorado Lounge becomes his undoing when he tries to appropriate it for himself, evidence that the male subject can never really take the father's identity as his own, but can only serve its purpose; the best example of this is the shot following the well-known one in which Wendy discovers Jack's "All Work and No Play Make Jack a Dull Boy" manuscript. The massive camera movement from behind the outside pillars of the room and through them into the room is one that we have seen before in the film. When we see it here, from Jack's point of view, it is clear
that Jack both is encouraged to take the hotel's position, to do its bidding, and is doomed by his presumption in taking the controlling position of the father unto himself.

Therefore, the dichotomy, patriarchal authority/maternal care, is expressed visually. The patriarchal gaze shows itself in its many voyeuristic "peeks in" on Jack and in the tracking camera's relentless monitoring of him. The maternal side is shown in the warm, enveloping lighting of the scenes in which Jack is being enticed but also absorbed. The paternal camera represents (literally) what is happening to Jack; the maternal camera shows how the fantasy works. The spectator is distanced and unnerved by both because they put him/her in an uncomfortable, unaccustomed position—Danny (on his Big Wheel, for instance) and Wendy are the pursued but they usually move toward the camera or with it. Jack is the pursuer, but the camera usually moves toward him (with the effect of an enunciation of Nicholson). The Gold Room and red-white bathroom scenes are startling because they are unconventional. At once chilling and warm at the same time, comforting and indefinably strange, they suggest unmistakably notions of the unheimlich.

Kubrick and Johnson told interviewers that they read a good deal of Freud while preparing the screenplay. Johnson told a New York Times reporter with the doubly uncanny name of William Wilson that they read with particular interest,
"The Uncanny" (1919). "Uncanny" is an imprecise English translation of the German word unheimlich. Heimlich means "familiar" or "homelike," from the word heim or home. However, Freud finds that heimlich also can denote its opposite—"concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not know about it, withheld from others" (25). Eventually, Freud traces the ways in which the subject represses some things that are heimlich—as in "familiar," "friendly," etc., into things that are unheimlich—eerie, strange, taboo; thus, heimlichkeit unconsciously contains its opposite.

Here then is the idea behind the principle that the horror is the order underlying the male subject, that it is inside him waiting for release, and that when it is released, the subject will not recognize it as horror, but as something familiar and friendly—like Lloyd the bartender—or the womb, which Freud says is a heimlich object which men construe as unheimlich (51). This begins to account for one of the many things that bothered critics about this film, that Jack does not go through a rational process to madness (as nonsensical as that sounds); he seems mad to start with. Thus, the interview scene, in which Nicholson darts his eyebrows and flashes his devilish grin, prompting some to think that the actor is just indulging in unmotivated mugging, is the character's unconscious responding to the heimlichkeit of
the hotel while his conscious obsequiously grins and gladhands in order to get the job. This scene is important because from the beginning we have another Nicholson character, like Gittes, whose outward attempts at decorum cannot equal his unconscious drives and responses.

Freud writes that "the uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (47). Jack finds long-buried animosities, recalling Robin Wood's discussion of the centrality of The Other in the horror genre. In the dialogue with Grady (from the novel) Jack is asked if he knows that his son has made contact with "a nigger." Jack/Nicholson lowers his head, pauses, and asks incredulously, "a nigger?" as if to reorient himself not only to the idea that his wife and his son "interfere," but to retrieve from the buried past the idea of black people as "niggers," and all that the slur connotes. In contrast, the spectator recalls Jack's cheerful, polite handshake and hello to Halloran in the first part of the film.

The 1921 Jack, however, would probably not have repressed this concept, not in a place—and a state of mind consigned now to the past—built on an Indian burial ground. The 1980 Jack has repressed his racism ("We didn't know we had a race problem") but finds it heimlich—familiar and comforting—to know that he can displace his
feelings of inadequacy expressed by his writer's block onto blacks, just as he has displaced them onto his wife. Nicholson's performance has often been called "robotized" and in a sense, Jack does recall HAL the computer in *2001*. Where HAL's handler dismantles his memory in order to bring him under control, Jack's handlers activate his. The hotel's treatment of Jack rests on a process of getting him to remember repressed attitudes of resentment, hostility, and murder. Freud writes that

An uncanny experience occurs either when repressed infantile complexes have been revived by some impression, or when the primitive beliefs we have surmounted seem once more to be confirmed (55).

The key event in Kubrick's *oeuvre*, the one to which all of his films inevitably return, is the moment in *2001: A Space Odyssey* in which history proceeds in a simple match cut from the prehistoric age to the inter-planetary-travel age with the toss of a weapon into the sky. History and male identity (the "man" in "The Dawn of Man" is gender specific, I believe) are shown to be built on violence and the domination of others. In addition, it is a very short space between man's advanced civilization and his most primitive instincts; a good example of this is Jack's description of the yanking of his son's shoulder out of its socket as "a momentary loss of muscular coordination--one extra footpound of energy per second..."

Kubrick would certainly say that attention should be called to dialectics, but he appears to believe even more
that the difference between binary opposites should not be overemphasized. His project seems to be to collapse such differences as those between reason and madness, past and present, self and Other, horror and normality, strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance. As with heimlich and unheimlich, the favored side easily turns into its opposite through a repression. This film seems in agreement with Michel Foucault that

"We have yet to write the history of that other form of madness, by which men, in an act of sovereign reason, confine their neighbor, and communicate and recognize each other through the merciless language of non-madness (ix)."

One effect that this film seems to have had on Nicholson is that his acting moves much more quickly between the opposites the farther away he gets from realism/humanism. This performance also left Nicholson with a reputation for playing insane characters, or perhaps more precisely, for playing insanely. Kubrick's previous film, Barry Lyndon, used an unreliable voiceover narrator, subtly inappropriate music, and an odd ensemble of clashing, non-naturalistic acting styles to set up a problematic relation between the ideological content of narrative convention and the values that the conventions assume; the signifier and the signified never match.

In The Shining the inversion of the affect of horror comes from the fact that the signifier (Nicholson's performance) never matches the apparent signified
(Torrance's madness and menace). Jack/Nicholson is funny when he should be frightening and self-destructive when the character acts other-destructive. Nicholson acts out this misfit between genre convention and the film's affect. It is the sense of role-playing, and of Jack Nicholson self-consciously playing a character who self-consciously plays a horror movie villain from Nicholson's AIP period, that takes over here, shifting the film to a Santayananan horror whereby men whose forgetfulness of the past assures not only that they will repeat it, but that the patriarchy that forgetfulness supports will continue.

Epilogue: Nicholson Recuperated?

I have concentrated on the films which problematize male subjectivity, works which, as we've seen, stem from the mixture of late sixties radicalism and European influence that enjoyed a brief but intense vogue in the early seventies (and which, incidentally, sometimes resulted in some of the most openly misogynist films ever made). However, the farther the country—and American cinema—got from the influence of sixties counterculture in the increasingly conservative climate of the late seventies and early eighties, the more Nicholson's acting evolved into experimental styles.

This experimentation culminated in a trio of extraordinarily stylized, anti-realistic performances—
Goin' South (directed by Nicholson, 1978), The Shining, and The Postman Always Rings Twice (Bob Rafelson, 1981). The commercial failure of these three, combined with those of The Missouri Breaks (Arthur Penn, 1976), The Last Tycoon (Elia Kazan, 1976), and The Border (Tony Richardson, 1982), nearly caused Nicholson's extinction as a "bankable" star. The afore-mentioned trio of non-naturalistic performances also brought about his rejection by the journalistic critical establishment which had celebrated him in the Easy Rider-through-Cuckoo's Nest period. In fact, an early 1984 cover story in American Film suggested that one of the reasons that Nicholson took his "comeback" supporting role in Terms of Endearment (James L. Brooks, 1983) is that he had become practically uncastable in lead roles.

The enormous popular success of Terms was accompanied by rapturous reviews for Nicholson, even by critics such as Pauline Kael and Andrew Sarris, who didn't care for the film. The tone of these reviews suggested a welcoming back of a prodigal actor who had learned restraint (the operative word in many reviews) and gotten over his "self-indulgence." Critics had seemed to take a punitive attitude toward the mugging stylization of The Shining and Goin' South. This "punishment" of Nicholson for going beyond codes of realism and humanism which the mainstream knows how to read is oddly matched by the course of the narratives in many of Nicholson's films. A great many of
the films require that the Nicholson figure "lose," that his transgression from decorum, either patriarchal (Five Easy Pieces, The Last Detail, Chinatown) or matriarchal (Cuckoo's Nest), or a Freudian type of social repression (Carnal Knowledge, The Shining, Postman), result in his downfall. Just as the deviation of Garrett Breedlove (Nicholson) from (female-imposed) manners can be rehabilitated by taking his proper male role in a relationship with a woman his own age (who, the film suggests, needs a man in order to fulfill her), so Nicholson the actor may show glints of devilishness and unruliness, but the characterization is nonetheless rooted in rational motivation.

The key to Nicholson's appeal even in the films that are critical of male role-playing is the sense of his breaking the standards, marked by repression, for acceptable social behavior. It is as though the spectator recognizes that when Gittes scoffs at the cops and Water Department thugs; when McMurphy outsmarts Nurse Ratched; when Torrance giggles over his own menace; when Charley Partanna loses himself in love over the disapproval of his Mafia godfathers; and when The Joker gleefully overruns Gotham City, that their carelessness and lack of male self-control and reason guarantee their ultimate failures. Many of the films may be critical of patriarchal roles, but the childish abandon of the Nicholson figure is often
suicidal—"Sometimes I just kill myself," as The Joker says—because it leaves him open to the strictures of the Symbolic which cannot allow irresponsible behavior in grown men.

At the same time that the figure's childish abandon of rules and mores, his play-acting, and his loquacious misappropriation of Symbolic language must be reined in, even though the films almost always disapprove of such restraint, it is the sense of the figure's crossing of behavioral boundaries that gives pleasure in Nicholson's films. This is established early in his star career, in the best-remembered moment in *Five Easy Pieces*, the scene at the diner in which Bobby Dupea tries to get around a rigidly made-up menu in order to get a few pieces of toast, finally elaborately ordering a chicken salad sandwich, and telling the waitress (woman seen here as the source of the sort of authority that withholds) to hold the chicken salad "between your knees," and sweeping the dishes off the table with his arms; the next scene, back in the car, shows Palm Apodoca, the hitchhiker, saying "fantastic that you could figure that out and lay all that on her as a way to get your toast. Fantastic!" "Well, I didn't get it," answers Dupea/Nicholson. "No, but it was very clever." The "cleverness" that exists for its own sake expresses a repressed male desire for the Fall; it also represents another kind of "imaginary signifier," a desire to revert
to a state of mess and disorder; the difference between this and the model of an "imaginary signifier" in classical cinema is that most Nicholson films make a spectator conscious of the imposition of Symbolic structures which, in classical cinema, invisibly operate in the film apparatus.

One film which doesn't is Terms of Endearment; Garrett Breedlove's unruly behavior is explained away, by Aurora, as the actions of "a man who has achieved his ambition and is now and forever a spoiled child." Breedlove/Nicholson's leering delivery, arched eyebrows, and lilting, insinuating line readings are neatly motivated and excused. The script later not only turns him into Aurora's faithful helpmeet when he's needed—"Who would have thought you'd turn out to be a nice guy?" she says when he turns up halfway across the country where Emma, Aurora's daughter, is in the hospital with cancer—but even suggests that he will take his proper place as father figure to Emma's orphaned children.

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Nicholson, the role-playing Oedipal subject, is now posited (as he was once before, in Cuckoo's Nest), as the "natural man"--and in a way that redounds to the actor's honesty and the star's daring. It is Aurora Greenway who role-plays, and wears wigs and frilly, impractical dresses that over-emphasize femininity. At the same time, Breedlove,
although his sin is his string of pointless romances with women half his age, is frank about his middle age. Nicholson told an interviewer that he wanted to dispel the notion of "mid-life" crisis (he was 46 at the time) and that while he usually loses weight for a film, he didn't for Terms. So in the striking bedroom scene in which Nicholson and MacLaine stand at opposite sides of the bed, the actor/character's paunchy belly sticking out, the attention once again goes past the character to the actor, who dares make a spectacle of his middle-aged spread. This is opposed to the tradition of actors such as Cary Grant, Gary Cooper, and even Clint Eastwood, who continued their careers while seldom calling attention to their own advancing ages and while playing the same sorts of characters at 55 as they had at 35, with results like North by Northwest, in which Grant's mother is played by Jessie Royce Landis, an actress born the same year as he, and to top that, an Anthony Mann Western, Man of the West (1958) with Cooper, age 58 (in a role that should have been played by James Stewart), as the son of a man played by 49-year-old Lee J. Cobb!

After Terms of Endearment, Nicholson, who had never been a physical actor--his face and voice having served as his expressive focus--makes an issue of his body as a point of spectacle and mortality. Like Sean Connery, who become in his forties the first romantic leading man to be frank
about his baldness, Nicholson receives credit for daring to make his body an object precisely and paradoxically by not being narcissistic about it.

However, as soon as Nicholson asserts the "natural," familiar double standards set in. Men, after all, expect to be accepted as they are in this society; what is refreshing about the "role-playing" Nicholson is that he reveals that men cannot actually be "as they are," but as the masculinist standard requires them to be. When Nicholson asserts the "natural," the man's prerogative to do what he pleases, free from standards and requirements, imposes itself. Could Shirley MacLaine's character display a flabby tummy and still be credible in a sex scene?

This issue becomes more pointed in The Witches of Eastwick, another film in which Nicholson exhibits his paunch and plays a comically pudgy satyr; the spectator is aware that Nicholson is being honest about his body while acting opposite two fortyish actresses, Cher, whose debt to modern cosmetic science has been well documented in the press, and Susan Sarandon, whose staying power seems due to a chameleon-like talent by which she can be mousy and housewifely in one film (Compromising Positions [1985]), sultry and exhibitionist in another (Bull Durham [1988]; she moves between both extremes in Witches). Nicholson's candor about his girth and age serves to calm male fears of
growing old (this is precisely what Nicholson has said he wanted to do), but it also asserts that men can let themselves go and still attract women—while women must work out and submit to tummy tucks in order to stay attractive into middle age.

Nicholson's exuberant display of impulses that the spectator must suppress also leads to his playing villains; The Joker is the product of both a yielding to mortality and a transcendence of it; like Jack Torrance, he dies with an expression frozen on his face, leading the spectator to believe that he isn't dead at all. However, the threat of Jack's continued reincarnation at the end of The Shining promises endless patriarchy, endless horror. The apparent interminability of The Joker seems an embodiment of Kubrick's fear of the optimism of ghost stories—a victory over death. The Joker seems the last step in the taming over the eighties of both Nicholson's acting and of his unconventional treatment of masculinity; only Prizzi's Honor (John Huston, 1985) is in the sardonic, absurdist spirit of extreme Oedipal trouble that marks so much of Nicholson's seventies work. The Joker is actually object-turned-subject in that the on-screen figure comes to embody the horror-movie machine for eliciting screams from women. Nicholson's "over-the-top" acting is safely enclosed within a literal mask, ruling out any confusion with realism; "there was no top," as Nicholson said about the role
(Morgenstern 130). Nicholson's irrepressibility is not even defeated at the end; it is simply held in reserve for a possible sequel.

Jack Nicholson remains an ambiguous figure. At this time, at an apparent high point in his career and still in his prime at age 53, it remains to be seen what directions his acting and persona will yet take. To date, he provides a vivid example of the lengths to which a gifted, independent-minded actor can stretch dominant cinema, but also of the limits to which he may ultimately be restricted.
CONCLUSION

A Few Words about Men in Feminism, Male Feminists, Feminist Men, and Other Suspicious Characters

Do you know the entire witchcraft scare—Christ, as far back as the 14th Century—was started by the medical profession? They were trying to get midwives out of the child-birthing business. That's what they were, most of the women that they burned, midwives ... Just another example of male-dominated professional society, exploiting women for their own selfish purposes. Men are such cocksuckers, aren't they? You don't have to answer that. It's true. Their dicks get limp when confronted by a woman of obvious power and what do they do? Call them witches, burn them, torture them until every woman is afraid. Afraid of herself. Afraid of men. And all for what? Fear of losing their hard-ons.

—Jack Nicholson as the devil in The Witches of Eastwick, making a seduction

This dissertation can be seen to manifest a flip side of feminism: feminist analysis practiced by a man on male subjects (in both senses of the term). This critical practice is valuable for the field of film studies in that it contributes to the understanding of cinematic gender articulation. It also hopes to show men the consequences of patriarchy, to help us understand the operations of our own constructions as subjects who conform, under social pressure which we disavow even as we help apply it, to a firmly held notion of what it means to be male. The effect of this conformity is the repeated reproduction of
patriarchal ideology in men whose mistake is to experience
themselves as individuals, an impossibility given the mold
that they've cast themselves in. If feminism has had as
one of its projects the teasing out of "his-story," a long-
hidden story of women, feminism as practiced by men should
read "his-story," our story, against the grain, a long
narrative of fantasy, displacement, denial, and strict
limits on identity.

"Men's relation to feminism is an impossible one" (1),
writes Stephen Heath. If men simply allow feminism to
remain one in a line of "women's concerns," then not only
do we end up hunkered down in a kind of "bunker mentality,"
but feminism fails to achieve one of its goals, that being
to turn society away from phallocracy. Once men begin to
enter feminist discourse, however, the danger, if not the
likelihood, is that we will "colonize" (Heath's term), that
we will take over—as in the Nicholson devil's "You don't
have to answer that. It's true" in the quotation above;
men have done it throughout history.

The purpose of this dissertation then is not to
reclaim feminism for men by making men the subjects of
feminist discourse. It is to remember the goal of
educating ourselves about our own buried subjectivity.
"While mainstream cinema," as Steve Neale writes,
in its assumption of a male norm, perspective,
and look, can constantly take women and the
female image as its object of investigation, it
has rarely investigated men and the male image in
the same kind of way: women are a problem, a source of anxiety, of obsessive enquiry; men are not. Where women are investigated, men are tested. Masculinity, as an ideal, at least, is implicitly known. Femininity is, by contrast, a mystery (15-16).

Victor Seidler in "Reason, Desire, and Male Sexuality," talks more about the "real" mystery, the one that men constitutes to himself:

As men have learnt to be estranged from their bodies, to regard them as having no part in their identities or experience. This can place men outside their own lived experience, as if destined to observe their lives from outside. Men can achieve tasks they have set themselves, but often they are deaf to their own emotions, feelings, and desires (96).

The purpose of this project has been to understand the subjectivity that has shaped me as a male subject and the ruptures and contradictions that confirm my suspicions (or are they hopes?) that "the system that holds me" (in Bellour's phrase), that oppresses and colonizes, is as vulnerable as the actor who vibrates beneath the star icon.

One thing that has struck me while writing this dissertation, even more than I had expected, is the diversity of male identities that one finds in the films of just three actors. Arthur Brittan emphasizes "masculinities," as opposed to just one monolithic definition of "masculinity"; he means to show that there are many types of identity that can veer from the dominant definition and can still be male and he means to show the
artificiality and oppressiveness of a terms like "masculinity." Ironically, such an idea serves the purposes of patriarchy; dominant classes always grant their members their "individuality," while casting Others as narrowly defined, caricatured "types," connoting inferiority. One of the problems with patriarchal models is that they allow white males to come in all shapes, sizes, and ages, while women are objectified as young, slender, and "to-be-looked-at."

A closer look at the diversity of masculinities in Hollywood cinema shows the common element which defines them more than any other: limits. Hollywood cinema, catering as it does to the male subjectivity of which it is itself a product, must restore mastery to the male subject. We see this most strongly in the films of James Stewart; even protagonists as gentle as Destry, Jeff Smith, and Elwood Dowd in Harvey are determined masters of their own visions and will not be dissuaded by distractions.

It is the Stewart characters who are masterful in a recognizably "masculine" way who show the strains of masculinism's limits. Films such as The Naked Spur and The Man Who Knew Too Much anticipate Jack Nicholson's openly ironic approach to male mastery in films made more than twenty years later in a totally different era. It is not that "men are tested," in Neale's phrase, but that the test itself is tested, and fails. Those two films especially
suggest that mastery and reason are artificial constructs, and that to hold to them is to push at the limits of what human emotions and feelings will bear. The moment at the end of *The Naked Spur* when Stewart/Howard Kemp weeps unabashedly in full close-up brings this home to me more clearly than any other. Other Hitchcock/Stewart films emphasize the lengths to which man's ignorance of his own desires and emotional—as opposed to his egoistic—needs oppresses women and confines him to an endless repetition of the same patterns of base pleasure and attainment, minus emotional nourishment and contentment.

That Eastwood's films demonstrate the fact that male mastery is and depends upon a fantasy is a point made by Paul Smith in a recent article. Smith avoids the assumption that Eastwood's films imply a male, or even a masculinist spectator, or that they might ally a male subjectivity with their omnipotent heroes. Smith takes off from a statement by British critics Andy Metcalf and Martin Humphries that "popular versions of what it is to be a 'real man' have become so outlandish as to prompt the idea that all is not as it should be for the male sex" (quoted in "Action Movie Hysteria" 88). From this he approaches Eastwood not as a powerful subject, but as an eroticized, objectified male body, citing a "repertoire" of "the kinds of objectifying shots favored by Siegel, Eastwood, and other action movie directors" (95). These include
under-the-chin shots (where the heroized male figure, shot most often from the waist up, seems to loom above the spectator's eyeline), heavily backlit shots (in which either the details of hero's whole body or his face are more or less obscured while the general shape is given in silhouette), facial close-ups (preponderantly with the actor's gaze going right to left at a roughly 45-degree angle and especially often used to deliver Eastwood's characteristic snarls and slight facial movements), and travelling shots and pans following the male body's movement (but often relatively unsmoothly, and usually avoiding centering the body in the frame) (95).

Smith goes on to discuss the physical pain to which the Eastwood figure is typically subjected, in scenes which he sees as marks of the persona's masochism, and the need for Eastwood, his body tested, to survive these bouts with masochism and to triumph. Smith concludes by trying to locate the "male hysteria" that seems to him to pervade the films; the "hysterical residue ... is an unresolved or uncontained representation of the body of the male as it exceeds the narrative processes" (103). At length, the cause of this "hysterical residue" is revealed:

In the cases of Sudden Impact and the 1984 Tightrope (both movies of the "Dirty Harry" mold), as well as The Gauntlet (1977, an early sketch of such movies), there is an explicit alliance on the part of the male protagonist with what is presented as the hysteria of femininity ... [there are] serious consequences for the male body of being allied--even temporarily--with that of the hysterical woman protagonist (104).

I'm not sure that I can even begin to list my problems with Smith's article. Although I will engage in a full discussion of the article elsewhere, a few points seem in order here. First, Smith, having explicitly abandoned
textual analysis and theories of spectator positioning to their critics, is left with some highly problematic ideas about Eastwood as an object. But an object of whose gaze? Smith jumps on an easy straw man, Steve Neale's assertion that a male object of the gaze must be feminized, and then goes on to cite a number of examples of objectified male bodies in film and sport.

Oddly, the word "narcissism" never appears in Smith's article; he doesn't conjure with the possibility that the Eastwood figure could be a fantasy projection of a male self-image or that the "objectifying" shots that he cites could as likely be identification devices. The under-the-chin shots and the oft-repeated shot of the silhouetted Eastwood in the distance, usually at a point in the narrative where his absence and the outlaw chaos that has resulted necessitate a rescue, are assertions of a phallic male power which is seen as natural, inevitable, and generalized as a male ideal. For example, such a silhouette shot interrupts the rape of Sondra Locke and her family in *The Outlaw Josey Wales* and foretells their imminent rescue. The travelling shots and snarls that Smith mentions imply a desiring spectator. The snarls are often reverse shots, reactions to something displeasing that Eastwood—and the audience—has seen or heard; the travelling shot avoids "centering the body in the frame" because the body is not to be looked at. The empty space
in the frame points to what Eastwood is seeing, or as in the first scene of High Plains Drifter, what is beyond his gaze but not worth his glance; this creates an as yet unviewed object to be seen, and sets up in the spectator a desire to see it as well.

Just as Eastwood seems precisely the wrong actor for a demonstration of an eroticized, objectified male, he is a weird choice for a discussion of masochism. In the Freudian definition, masochism is a self-willed punishment by the father, caused by the subject's having done something "inexpedient." In The Naked Spur the Stewart character seems to luxuriate in his self-inflicted punishment for not doing what is expected of him and trying to scratch out a new life for himself (like a good pioneer) on the land instead of setting out to bring in an outlaw for the reward. The Nicholson character in The Shining could be seen as masochistic in that he experiences as pleasure the wounds, confinements, and eventually death that he never recognizes as his punishments for assuming the roles and power of the father.

Eastwood's punishments and pain, such as his whipping by the townspeople in High Plains Drifter and his suffering at the hands of Scorpio in Dirty Harry, are not construed as indirectly self-inflicted or experienced as pleasure-in-punishment. They are signs of his victimization at the hands of "femininized" legal institutions and the feral
criminals they coddle; the punishments necessitate Eastwood's calling upon his own, externally restrained phallic power. Must all pain and punishment suffered by men on screen be "masochistic"? These films specialize in the disavowal of any sense of personal responsibility or self-criticism that triggers pleasure-in-punishment. By ruling out Eastwood as an identification figure around whose subjectivity the films are constructed, Smith mistakes for masochism a suppression of phallocracy experienced in the films as unjustified and intolerable.

Smith finally shows his hand in his desperate location of "hysterical residues" left by "hysterical females." Smith comes to Eastwood's films with the preconception that any female protagonists they posit would necessarily be "hysterical," and these have blinded him to the films' contradictions. The Beguiled is discussed only as a "counter-example" of his masochism-restoration theme; he sees the fact that such a film would have been made at all as unremarkable. He also places Tightrope "in the 'Dirty Harry' mold" (did he see the film?), whereas in fact Wes Block/Eastwood's search for his failed sense of masculinity with prostitutes seems much more a mark of hysteria than anything that the self-sufficient Genevieve Bujold character does.

The limits of a conception of masculinity as such as Eastwood's, whose project it is to deny limits, show up in
The Beguiled and Tightrope, two films which constitute a return of the repressed. Smith, in what I suspect is a condescension toward and eagerness to distance himself from the disreputable body of films which he has chosen to study, regards Eastwood's films as having a "seen one, seen them all": sameness which keeps him from recognizing not only what they can show about spectatorship, but those films which problematize the very project of a "Clint Eastwood" film.

Jack Nicholson is the actor among those I've studied who most suggests some room for "masculinities," for flexibility and variation, in male representation. Not only do some of his films, such as Five Easy Pieces and Carnal Knowledge at first appear openly critical of conventional male roles and attitudes, but in others Nicholson calls attention to himself and the characters he plays as actors, undercutting the values of masculine mastery that the characters represent, and in a way recognizable to the audience.

The Shining is perhaps the most thorough critique of patriarchy in its dimensions of gender and race ever accomplished in a mainstream film. However, the problem with my interpretation of the film is that it is the product of ten years of study; insights such as mine would be hardly apparent on a first (or second, or third) viewing. In a recent article Barbara Klinger reviews the
academic studies of Douglas Sirk's *Written on the Wind* (1956), which read the film (and its elaborate, stylized mise-en-scene, especially) as a critique of the conformity and materialism of the Eisenhower years. Klinger then poses the recent work on Sirk against evidence of the popular reception of the film pieced together from studio publicity and press reviews. Her research seems to confirm her suspicion that the way the film is now read is not the way it was received by 1950s audiences. Similar research on *The Shining* would find that the film was seen at worst as a failed attempt at horror and at best as an eccentric one. I think that fans of the horror genre understood that their pleasure was being deliberately frustrated; the opening-day crowd I saw the film with booed when it was over. While I treasure the Kubrick film's ever-unfolding enigmas and its density, I wonder about the effectiveness of a film which is laden with social criticism but which can be experienced—and even enjoyed—without appreciating any of it.

Nicholson's performance certainly met with the same sort of misapprehension and in order to survive, Nicholson in the 80s had to find narratives that enclosed his bent toward non-naturalism within the limits of a naturalistic framework. Where Nicholson once undercut conventional characters by emphasizing masculinity-as-performance, the actorishness of his masculinity is now itself often
undercut by an emphasis on the "natural man" and an artful removal of his "over-the-top" style from "realistic" contexts. The result is not much less than the recuperation of a subversive style for mainstream signification.

Again and again we find that subversive elements must be and nearly always are contained by the apparatus, by the narrative, or in the case of Stewart, perhaps by the star's persona. While Stewart's more disturbing performances may be somewhat softened by the reminder that backstage is the "normal" James (or is it Jimmy?) Stewart, a performance such as Eastwood's in *Tightrope* seems a shattering rupture after which the persona can never be quite the same. *Tightrope* is an example of a narrative whose subversiveness cannot be swept away by attempts in the last reel at restoration and recuperation; the same can be said for some of the Stewart/Mann films. It should be remembered that the difference between critiques of mastery in Stewart's more classical 1950s films and those in Nicholson's 1970s films is the difference between a liberal-humanist belief in the individual and a post-1960s assumption of, in Arthur Brittan's phrase, "men-in-general."

There could never be agreement on which stars should be studied in a project like this one, and I suspect that some readers could find fault with my selections here and
especially with my omissions. One might wonder why I've chosen these three actors and not three others. For instance, why use Eastwood to represent soft-spoke, violent machismo? Why not Gary Cooper or John Wayne? I am interested in star actors who 1.) have exercised a large measure of control over their careers; thus, I have avoided actors who made most of their films under the studio-contract system. 2.) have cultivated a persona with which they are identified and which represents a salient, recognizable version of masculinity; therefore, I ruled out such actors as Marlon Brando and Dustin Hoffman, whose mystique lies more in their tendencies to re-make themselves with each new performance; on the other hand, one of my major points is that each of the stars here is an actor (as opposed to singer/movie stars such as Bing Crosby or athlete/stars such as Arnold Schwarzenegger) and the frequent tension between the persona and the particular character or performance makes for contradictions between the films and the spectator's extra-textual expectations; 3.) have made important films which contradict the persona, or seem to criticize or revise masculinist assumptions.

There remains much to be done, by me and others, in the still-new fields of male signification and of star study. I hope that this project works to illustrate the contradictions within gender definitions, but also the
system which manages to hold all of us, men and women, in our places, with all that those places imply. The work of getting ourselves free of our own subjectivities lies ahead.
The following are lists of the films to date of James Stewart, Clint Eastwood, and Jack Nicholson. The listings include the films' directors, production and releasing companies (when available), and year of release. Also noted after each listing are any New York Film Critics or Academy Award honors that the actor may have won for that film.

**James Stewart (1908- )**

**Murder Man** (Tim Whelan, MGM, 1935)

**Rose Marie** (W. S. Van Dyke, MGM, 1936)

**Next Time We Love** (Edwin H. Griffith, Universal, 1936)

**Wife vs. Secretary** (Clarence Brown, MGM, 1936)

**Small Town Girl** (William Wellman, MGM, 1936)

**Speed** (Edwin L. Marin, MGM, 1936)

**The Gorgeous Hussy** (Clarence Brown, MGM, 1936)

**Born to Dance** (Roy Del Ruth, MGM, 1936)

**After the Thin Man** (W. S. Van Dyke, MGM, 1936)

**Seventh Heaven** (Henry King, 20th Century-Fox, 1937)

**The Last Gangster** (Edward Lustig, MGM, 1937)

**Navy Blue and Gold** (Sam Wood, MGM, 1937)

**Of Human Hearts** (Clarence Brown, MGM, 1937)
Vivacious Lady (George Stevens, RKO, 1938)
Shopworn Angel (H. C. Potter, MGM, 1938)
You Can't Take It with You (Frank Capra, Columbia, 1938)
Made for Each Other (John Cromwell, Selznick-UA, 1939)
The Ice Follies of 1939 (Reinhold Schunzel, MGM, 1939)
It's a Wonderful World (W. S. Van Dyke, MGM, 1939)
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (Frank Capra, Columbia, 1939)
(New York Film Critics Award [N.Y.F.C.A.], Academy Award nomination)
Destry Rides Again (George Marshall, Universal, 1939)
The Shop Around the Corner (Ernst Lubitsch, MGM, 1940)
The Mortal Storm (Sidney Franklin, MGM, 1940)
No Time for Comedy (William Keighley, Warner Bros., 1940)
The Philadelphia Story (George Cukor, MGM, 1940) (Academy Award)
Come Live with Me (Clarence Brown, MGM, 1941)
Pot o' Gold (George Marshall, United Artists, 1941)
Ziegfield Girl (Robert Z. Leonard, MGM, 1941)
It's a Wonderful Life (Frank Capra, Liberty Films, 1946) (Academy Award nomination)
Magic Town (William Wellman, RKO, 1947)
Call Northside 777 (Henry Hathaway, 20th Century-Fox, 1948)
On Our Merry Way (King Vidor and Leslie Fenton, United Artists, 1948)
Rope (Alfred Hitchcock, Transatlantic-Warner Bros., 1948)
You Gotta Stay Happy (H. C. Potter, Universal, 1948)
The Stratton Story (Sam Wood, MGM, 1949)
Malaya (Richard Thorpe, MGM, 1949)
Broken Arrow (Delmer Daves, 20th Century-Fox, 1950)
Winchester '73 (Anthony Mann, Universal-International (U-I, 1950) (made after Broken Arrow, but released earlier)

The Jackpot (Walter Lang, 20th Century-Fox, 1950)

Harvey (Henry Koster, U-I, 1950) (Academy Award nomination)

No Highway in the Sky (Henry Koster, 20th Century-Fox, 1951)

The Greatest Show on Earth (C. B. DeMille, Paramount, 1952) (Stewart performs entire role wearing clown makeup)

Bend of the River (Anthony Mann, U-I, 1952)

Carbine Williams (Richard Thorpe, MGM, 1952)

The Naked Spur (Anthony Mann, MGM, 1953)

Thunder Bay (Anthony Mann, U-I, 1953)

The Glenn Miller Story (Anthony Mann, U-I, 1954)

Rear Window (Alfred Hitchcock, Paramount, 1954)

The Far Country (Anthony Mann, U-I, 1955) (made between Glenn Miller and Rear Window, but released third)

Strategic Air Command (Anthony Mann, Paramount, 1955)

The Man from Laramie (Anthony Mann, Columbia, 1955)

The Man Who Knew Too Much (Alfred Hitchcock, Paramount, 1956)

The Spirit of St. Louis (Billy Wilder, Warner Bros., 1957)

Night Passage (James Neilson, U-I, 1957) (marked a falling-out between Anthony Mann and Stewart; Mann considered this a poor script and left the production)

Vertigo (Alfred Hitchcock, Paramount, 1958)

Bell, Book, and Candle (Richard Quine, Columbia, 1958)

Anatomy of a Murder (Otto Preminger, Columbia, 1959) (N.Y.F.C.A.; Academy Award nomination)

The FBI Story (Mervyn Le Roy, Warner Bros., 1959)

The Mountain Road (Daniel Mann, Warner Bros., 1960)
Two Rode Together (John Ford, Columbia, 1961)
The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (John Ford, Paramount, 1962)
Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation (Henry Koster, 20th Century-Fox, 1962)
How the West Was Won (Henry Hathaway, John Ford, George Marshall, MGM, 1963)
Take Her, She's Mine (Henry Koster, 20th Century-Fox, 1963)
Cheyenne Autumn (John Ford, Warner Bros., 1964)
Dear Brigitte (Henry Koster, 20th Century-Fox, 1965)
Shenandoah (Andrew V. McLagden, Universal, 1965)
Flight of the Phoenix (Robert Aldrich, 20th Century-Fox, 1965)
The Rare Breed (Andrew V. McLagden, Universal, 1966)
Firecreek (Vincent McEveety, Warner Bros., 1968)
Bandolero (Andrew V. McLagden, 20th Century-Fox, 1968)
The Cheyenne Social Club (Gene Kelly, National General, 1970)
Fool's Parade (Andrew V. McLagden, Columbia, 1971)
The Shootist (Don Siegel, Paramount, 1976)
Airport '77 (Jerry Jameson, Universal, 1977)
The Big Sleep (Michael Winner, ITC, 1978)
The Magic of Lassie (Don Chaffey, Lassie Prods., 1981)

Clint Eastwood
Revenge of the Creature (Jack Arnold, U-I, 1955)
Francis in the Navy (Arthur Lubin, U-I, 1955)
Lady Godiva (Arthur Lubin, U-I, 1955)
Tarantula (Jack Arnold, U-I, 1955)
Never Say Goodbye (Jerry Hopper, U-I, 1956)
The First Traveling Saleslady (Arthur Lubin, RKO, 1956)
Star in the Dust (Charles Hass, U-I, 1956)
Escapade in Japan (Arthur Lubin, RKO, 1957)
Lafayette Escadrille (William Wellman, Warner Bros., 1958)
Ambush at Cimarron Pass (Herbert Mendelson, 20th, 1958)
Rawhide series, CBS Television, 1959-66
Fistful of Dollars (Sergio Leone, 1964, U.S. release 1967)
For a Few Dollars More (Sergio Leone, 1965, U.S. release 1967)
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (Sergio Leone, 1966, U.S. release 1968)
The Witches (Italian omnibus film prod. by Dino DeLaurentiis; Eastwood segment dir. by Vittorio De Sica, 1967)
Hang 'Em High (Ted Post, United Artists, 1968)
Coogan's Bluff (Don Siegel, Universal, 1968)
Where Eagles Dare (Brian G. Hutton, MGM, 1969)
Paint Your Wagon (Joshua Logan, Paramount, 1969)
Kelly's Heroes (Brian G. Hutton, MGM, 1970)
Two Mules for Sister Sara (Don Siegel, Malpaso-Universal, 1970)
The Beguiled (Don Siegel, Malpaso-Universal, 1971)
Play Misty for Me (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Universal, 1971)
Dirty Harry (Don Siegel, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1971)
Joe Kidd (John Sturges, Universal, 1972)
High Plains Drifter (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Universal, 1973)
Breezy (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Universal, 1973); directed only
Magnum Force (Ted Post, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1973)

Thunderbolt and Lightfoot (Michael Cimino, United Artists, 1974)

The Eiger Sanction (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Universal, 1975)

The Outlaw Josey Wales (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1976)

The Enforcer (James Fargo, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1976)

The Gauntlet (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1977)

Every Which Way but Loose (James Fargo, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1978)

Escape from Alcatraz (Don Siegel, Paramount, 1979)

Bronco Billy (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1980)

Any Which Way You Can (Buddy Van Horn, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1980)

Firefox (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1982)

Honky-Tonk Man (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1982)

Sudden Impact (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1983)

Tightrope (Richard Tuggle, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1984)

City Heat (Richard Benjamin, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1984)

Pale Rider (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1985)

Heartbreak Ridge (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1986)

The Dead Pool (Buddy Van Horn, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1988)

Bird (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1988) directed only

Pink Cadillac (Buddy Van Horn, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1989)

White Hunter, Black Heart (Clint Eastwood, Malpaso-Warner Bros., 1990)
Jack Nicholson (1937-  )

Cry Baby Killer (Jus Addis, Allied Artists, 1958)

Little Shop of Horrors (Roger Corman, 1960)

Too Soon to Love (Richard Rush, 1960)

Studs Lonigan (Irving Lerner, United Artists, 1960)

The Wild Ride (Harvey Berman, Corman, 1960)

The Broken Land (Roger Corman, 20th Century-Fox, 1962)

The Raven (Roger Corman, American-International [AIP], 1963)

The Terror (Roger Corman, Grand National, 1963)

Thunder Island (Jack Leewood; scr. by Nicholson and Don Devlin, 1963)

Ensign Pulver (Joshua Logan, Warner Bros., 1964)

Back Door to Hell (Monte Hellman, 1964)

Flight to Fury (Monte Hellman, scr. by Nicholson, 1965)

The Shooting (Monte Hellman, scr. by Nicholson and Hellman, 1966)

Ride in the Whirlwind (Monte Hellman, co-prod. and scr. by Nicholson, 1966)

Hell's Angels on Wheels (Richard Rush, AIP, 1967)

Rebel Rousers (Martin B. Cohen, AIP, 1967)

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre (Roger Corman, AIP, 1967)

The Trip (Roger Corman, AIP, scr., Nicholson, 1967)

Psych-Out (Richard Rush, AIP, 1968)

Head (Bob Rafelson, Columbia, prod. and scr. by Rafelson and Nicholson, 1968) (a vehicle for The Monkees)

Easy Rider (Dennis Hopper, BBS-Columbia, 1969) (N.Y.F.C.A. for Supp. Actor; Academy Award nomination)

On a Clear Day You Can See Forever (Vincente Minnelli, Paramount, 1970)
Five Easy Pieces (Bob Rafelson, BBS-Columbia, 1970)  
(Academy Award nomination)

Carnal Knowledge (Mike Nichols, Avco-Embassy, 1971)

Drive, He Said (Jack Nicholson, BBS-Columbia, 1971); directed only

A Safe Place (Henry Jaglom, BBS-Columbia, 1972)

The King of Marvin Gardens (Bob Rafelson, BBS-Columbia, 1972)

The Last Detail (Hal Ashby, Columbia, 1973) (Academy Award nomination)

Chinatown (Roman Polanski, Paramount, 1974) (N.Y.F.C.A. as 1974 Best Actor for Chinatown and Last Detail; Academy Award nomination)

The Passenger (Michaelangelo Antonioni, MGM, 1975)

Tommy (Ken Russell, Stigwood-Columbia, 1975)

The Fortune (Mike Nichols, Columbia, 1975)

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Milos Forman, Fantasy-UA, 1975) (N.Y.F.C.A.; Academy Award)

The Missouri Breaks (Arthur Penn, Winkler-Chartoff-UA, 1976)

The Last Tycoon (Elia Kazan, Paramount, 1976)

Goin' South (Jack Nicholson, Paramount, 1978)

The Shining (Stanley Kubrick, Warner Bros., 1980)

The Postman Always Rings Twice (Bob Rafelson, Lorimar-Paramount, 1981)

Reds (Warren Beatty, Paramount, 1981) (Academy Award nomination as supp. actor)

The Border (Tony Richardson, Universal, 1982)

Terms of Endearment (James L. Brooks, Paramount, 1983)  
(N.Y.F.C.A., Academy Award, for Best Supporting Actor)

Prizzi's Honor (John Huston, ABC-20th Century-Fox, 1985)  
(N.Y.F.C.A.; Academy Award nomination)
Heartburn (Mike Nichols, Paramount, 1986)

The Witches of Eastwick (George Miller, Guber-Peters/Warner Bros., 1987)

Broadcast News (James L. Brooks, 20th Century-Fox, 1987)

Ironweed (Hector Babenco, Tri-Star, 1987) (N.Y.F.C.A. for Ironweed, Witches, and News; Academy Award nomination for Ironweed)

Batman (Tim Burton, Guber-Peters/Warner Bros., 1989)

The Two Jakes (Jack Nicholson, Paramount, 1990)
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