

Theories of Representation and Difference

General Editor: Teresa de Lauretis

The Desire
to Desire

*The Woman's Film
of the 1940s*

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of the woman to the screen. The difficulty, if not impossibility, of representing the woman in the position the films forcefully ascribe to her—that of subject of the gaze—is most succinctly articulated in a line from *Rebecca*: “Most girls would give their eyes for a chance to see Monte.”

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Female Spectatorship and Machines of Projection: *Caught* and *Rebecca*

Caught and *Rebecca* are especially interesting, even exemplary, instances of the woman’s film because each of them directly confronts the issues of female spectatorship and the woman’s relation to processes of imaging. Both films explore the contradictions which emerge when the attempt to position the woman as subject of the gaze is accompanied by an acknowledgment of her status as the privileged content of the image. Her desires are strongly circumscribed by her relation to spectacle. Each of these films contains a scene in which the camera almost literally enacts this repression of the feminine—the woman’s relegation to the status of a signifier within the male discourse. The camera movements in these scenes can be described as hysterical—frantically searching for, retracing the path of, the lost object, attempting to articulate what is, precisely, not there. As such, the camera movements have the status of symptoms.

Caught and *Rebecca* also exemplify the process, described in the last chapter, whereby female desire is transformed into fear in relation to the apparatus of the cinema. The two films belong to the subgenre of the gothic-influenced woman’s film and thus activate paranoia as a primary psychological mechanism. Although *Caught*, a later instance of the subgenre, tends to modernize and naturalize the gothic aspects of the paranoid films and hence to suppress much of the iconography or gothic machinery, it nevertheless maintains the centrality of the axis of seeing and its relation to aggressivity. *Caught* and *Rebecca* both present scenarios which mobilize the elements of the theatrical situation in the

cinema. The female protagonist is herself transformed into a movie spectator within the diegesis, and the films demonstrate that, even as she spectates, the force of the tendency to reduce the woman to an image is inexorable. The sense of surveillance, of constantly being watched—even as she herself watches—is overwhelming.

Thus, as argued in the previous chapter, the metaphor of paranoia may prove even more appropriate for a delineation of this subgroup of the woman's film than that of hysteria. As Freud points out in his analysis of Dr. Schreber, whose most striking symptom is his assumption of the position/body of the woman, paranoia is systematically disintegrative.¹ Hysteria condenses, paranoia decomposes. In this respect, both *Caught* and *Rebecca*, by privileging moments in which the cinematic apparatus itself undergoes a process of decomposition, situate themselves as paranoid texts. Both films contain scenes of projection in which the image as lure and trap is externalized in relation to the woman. The films disarticulate the components of the apparatus which construct the woman as "imaged"—camera, projector, and screen—and incorporate them within the diegesis as props. In this *mise-en-scène* of cinematic elements, camera, projector, and screen are explicitly activated as agents of narrativity, as operators of the image.

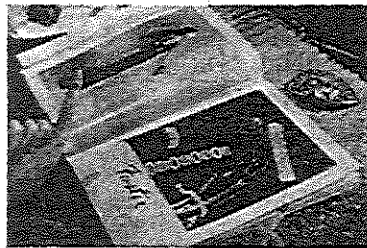
Yet, this gesture of disarticulation does not preclude an elaboration of the woman's relation to spectacle. In fact, the desire of the woman in both films is to duplicate a given image, to engage with and capture the male gaze. In *Caught*, the image is that of a woman in a mink coat; in *Rebecca*, that of "a woman of thirty-six dressed in black satin with a string of pearls." And in both films, movie projection scenes act to negate each of these appropriations of an image, to effect a separation on both literal and figurative levels between the woman and the image of her desire (always situated as a desire to be desired or desirable, hence as subordinate).

The background of the credit sequence in *Caught* is constituted by a series of pages in a fashion magazine, slowly flipped over in synchronization with credit changes to reveal women posing in front of monuments and art works, women posing in the latest fashions (figures 1 and 2). Merging with the body proper of the film, this background becomes the first shot, its incorporation within the diegesis signaled by the addition of voices-over and pointing fingers, metonymic signifiers of female desire (figures 3, 4, 5, and 6). The voices-over—"I'll take this one," "That one," "This one's for me"—are the indexical actualizations of the female appetite for the image, an appetite sustained by the commodity fetishism which supports capitalism. And the ultimate commodity, as here, is the body adorned for the gaze. The logic of this economics of desire culminates in the final magazine image of the scene, a sketch of a woman modeling

a fur coat, the unmediated signifier of wealth (figure 7). The camera marks its significance by tracking back at this moment (accompanied by the voice-over, "I'd rather have mink") to incorporate within its image the two women whose fantasies are complicit with the fashion industry (figure 8). Signifier of economic success, the fur coat (which becomes mink, aligning itself with Leonora's desire) is the site of a certain semantic wealth in the text, resurfacing again and again to mark the oscillations of female subjectivity. In the image, significantly, it is a sketch which replaces the human model as support of the coat. The fur coat overpowers the body, given only as trace.

This first scene initiates the narrative trajectory along the line of an investigation of the contradictions and convolutions of female spectatorship. Owners of the look in this instance, the women can only exercise it within a narcissistic framework which collapses the opposition between the subject and the object of the gaze—"This one's for me." The woman's sexuality, as spectator, must undergo a constant process of transformation. She must look, as if she were a man with the phallic power of the gaze, at a woman who would attract that gaze, in order to be that woman. There is a necessary movement or oscillation between the periphery of the image to its center and back again. The convolutions involved here are analogous to those described by Julia Kristeva as "the double or triple twists of what we commonly call female homosexuality": "I am looking, as a man would, for a woman"; or else, 'I submit myself, as if I were a man who thought he was a woman, to a woman who thinks she is a man.'"² For the female spectator exemplified by Maxine and Leonora in this scene, to possess the image through the gaze is to become it. The gap which strictly separates identification and desire for the male spectator (whose possession of the cinematic woman at least partially depends on an identification with the male protagonist) is abolished in the case of the woman. Binding identification to desire (the basic strategy of narcissism), the teleological aim of the female look demands a becoming and, hence, a dispossession. She must give up the image in order to become it—the image is *too* present for her.

And this is precisely the specular movement traced by *Caught*. Within the space of two scenes, the look is reversed—Leonora (Barbara Bel Geddes) dons the mink coat and adopts the pose of the model, soliciting the gaze of both male and female spectators (figures 9, 10, 11). She now participates in the image, while her dispossession is signaled by the rhythmic chants which punctuate her turns, "\$49.95 plus tax." The economics of sexual exchange are on display, for it is not only the coat which is on the market. Leonora receives an invitation to the yacht party at which she will later meet millionaire Smith Ohlrig (Robert Ryan), and, as her friend Maxine points out in the face of Leonora's resistance to the invitation, "How else do girls like us get to meet guys like Smith Ohlrig?"



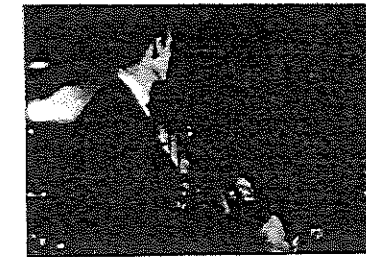
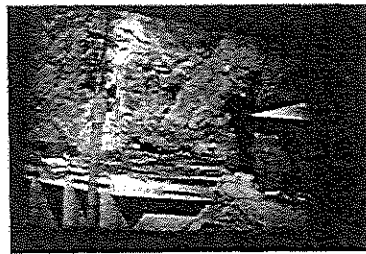
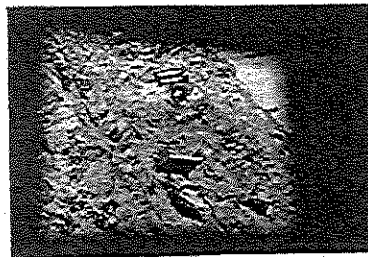
When Leonora actually marries Ohlrig, her transformation into the image is completed by the newspaper montage sequence announcing the wedding, framing and immobilizing her in the photograph (figures 12, 13, 14).

These three moments of the narrative trajectory—defining the woman as, successively, agent, object, and text of the look—would seem to be self-contained, to exhaust the potential variations of Leonora's relation to the image. Yet, the film recovers and rewrites its own beginning in the projection scene, situating Leonora once more in the place of the spectator. But this time she is explicitly located as a spectator who refuses to see, in a cinema delimited as male. By the time of the projection scene, Leonora is fully in place; she owns the mink coat and no longer has to model it. Her alienation from the cinematic apparatus is manifested by the fact of her exclusion, her positioning on the margins of the process of imaging. The cinema which Ohlrig forces her to attend is described only as the "movies for my new project," and all its spectators, except Leonora, are male (a situation which Leonora attempts to resist with the excuse she weakly presents to Ohlrig immediately preceding the screening: ". . . so many men.").

The first shot of the sequence, with a marked keystone effect, presents the first image of Ohlrig's documentary, which appears to be a kind of testament to the technological power of industrial enterprise (figure 15). Ohlrig positions himself as the most prominent spectator, his gaze held by the image, the projector's beam of light emanating from behind his head (figures 16 and 17). The images celebrating machinery and its products are, however, only a prelude to the image which really fascinates Ohlrig—his own (his excitement contained in the anticipatory voice-over which assumes the language of the cinéphile, "Wait 'til the next shot.") (figure 18). The relation between the image and himself is articulated at this moment by a pan rather than a cut, the camera movement apparently motivated by the shadow of a figure³ crossing in front of the screen to sit next to Ohlrig (figures 19 and 20).

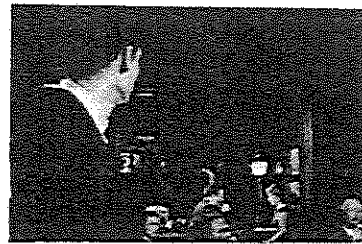
It is at this point—the moment of Ohlrig's most intensely narcissistic fascination—that Leonora's offscreen laugh breaks the mirror relation between Ohlrig and his image. Within this shot, Ohlrig turns to face Leonora, acting as a pivot for the displacement of the spectator's attention from the movie screen to the woman as screen. Assuming his quasi-directorial power, Ohlrig stops the projector and lights Leonora, transforming her from voice into image (figures 21 and 22). This shot initiates a shot/reverse shot series which dominates the sequence, the deployment of space inscribing a hyperbolized distance between Ohlrig and Leonora (figure 23). The reverse shot here, with Leonora in the foreground on the left and Ohlrig in the background on the right, is a crucial condensation of sexual and cinematic positions and invites a number of comments. (1) The keystone effect characterizing the projected documentary image shown

12-16

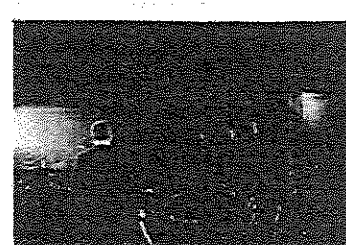
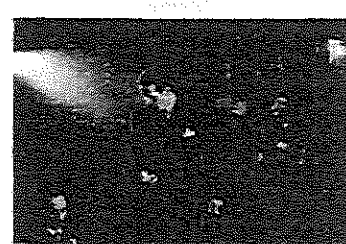
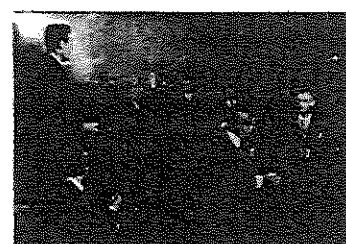
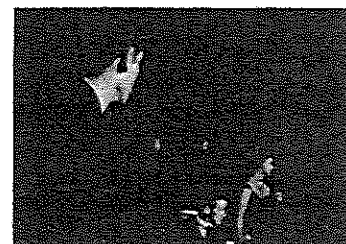


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previously together with Leonora's placement in this shot retrospectively situate the point of view on the screen as coincident with hers. Nevertheless, both her laugh and the fact that she faces *away* from the screen indicate her refusal of this position as spectator, the marked absence of that diegetic spectatorial gaze which would double and repeat that of *Caught's* own spectator. Leonora's glance is averted from Ohlrig and his cinema. (2) The *mise-en-scène* situates the screen directly behind Leonora's head (lending it the beatific power of a halo), just as, in the previous and following shots, the projector is situated directly behind Ohlrig's head. There is a kind of sexual/cinematographic symmetry which the shot/reverse shot sequence rigorously respects. Leonora's face emerges from the confines of the screen as though the medium had suddenly gained a three-dimensional relief. In a perverse movement, the close-up of the woman is simultaneously disengaged from the diegetic screen and returned to it. (3) The eye-lines attributed to the two characters are staggered in relation to one another. The directions of their looks are correct, but the planes of the image are not (i. e., in an image with no illusion of depth, they could be, would be, looking at each other). As it is, however, Ohlrig stares at the empty screen while Leonora looks in the direction of the projector. Ohlrig becomes the displaced and dislocated spectator of Leonora's image, the *mise-en-scène* articulating a difficulty in the gaze.

The remaining shots of the shot/reverse shot sequence frame a dialogue in which Ohlrig attempts to ascertain Leonora's guilt (figures 24 and 25). He immediately assumes, in paranoid fashion, that her laugh is a response to his own image—the last image of his film presented in the scene. But Leonora's guilt lies rather in not watching, in dissociating her entertainment from the screen and laughing instead at something said by the man sitting next to her. Ohlrig eliminates the competition, which is both sexual and cinematic (figures 26 and 27), and resumes his cinema at the expense of Leonora—blackening her image in order to start the show. Leonora, however, leaves, asserting her final alienation from his spectacle despite his orders that she stay (figure 29). Invisible support of a cinema which excludes her, Leonora demonstrates by means of her exit the force of that silent complicity. For without her presence, Ohlrig cannot continue the show. After emptying the theater, he paces back and forth, his rage punctuated by the beam of the projector (figures 30, 31, 32).

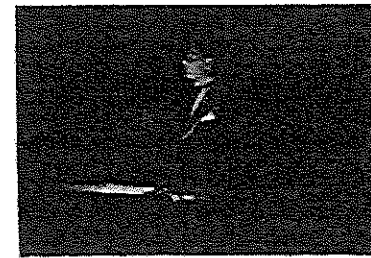
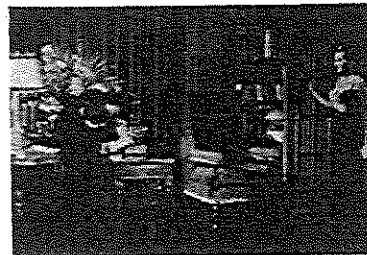
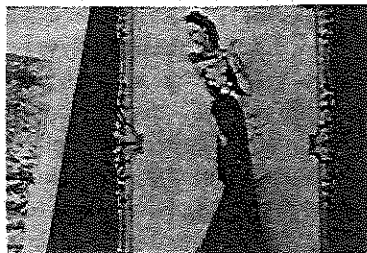
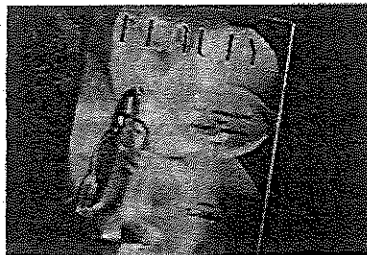
The projection sequence as a whole marks an important turning point in the narrative. The interruption of the filmic flow of images within the *diégésis*, here as in *Rebecca*, is the metaphor for the disintegration of a short-lived family romance. Spectator of a cinema whose parameters are defined as masculine, Leonora is dispossessed of both look and voice. Yet, the trajectory which traces her dispossession in relation to the image is not completed until the end of the film. For, when Leonora leaves Ohlrig as a result of this scene, she takes a piece

of the image with her—the mink coat, signifier of her continuing complicity in the process of imaging.

Hitchcock's *Rebecca* also contains a crucial scene in which the film effects a decomposition of the elements which collaborate in making the position of female spectatorship an impossible one. The home movie sequence depicts a process of projection constituted as an assault on the diegetic female spectator. This scene as well is preceded by the delineation of female desire in relation to the fixed image of the fashion magazine. A preface to the projection scene, the shot of the fashion magazine whose pages are slowly turned is here unlocalized (figures 33 and 34). Unlike *Caught*, *Rebecca* elides the establishing shot which would identify the woman as viewer and, instead, dissolves immediately to her transformation into the image, an image she had previously promised Maxim (Laurence Olivier) she would never appropriate for herself—that of a woman “dressed in black satin with a string of pearls” (figure 35). The character played by Joan Fontaine (who is never given a proper name) enters the cinema in the hope of becoming a spectacle for Maxim (figures 36, 37, 38), but is relegated to the position of spectator—spectator of the images Maxim prefers to retain of her, those taken on their honeymoon.

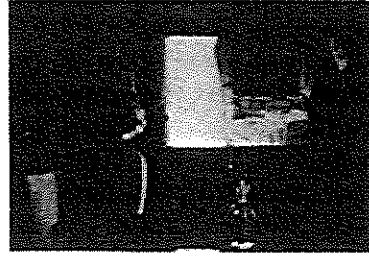
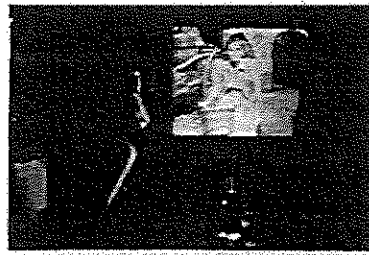
Space here precludes the possibility of an in-depth analysis of this sequence,⁴ but it is necessary to make several points relating it to the sequence from *Caught*. (1) Maxim, like Ohlrig, is in control of both lighting and projection (figures 39 and 40), while the *mise-en-scène* frequently positions the projector itself *between* Fontaine and Maxim as a kind of barrier or limit to their interaction (figure 41). (2) The movie projected is a proper “home movie,” unlike that of *Caught*, the logic of its syntax hence supposedly more arbitrary, linking disparate shots designed to capture pregnant moments for a private family history. (Maxim says at one point, “Won't our grandchildren be delighted when they see how lovely you were?”) The images of Fontaine feeding geese constitute a denial of the image she has constructed for herself by means of the black evening dress, while Maxim's binoculars give him a mastery over the gaze even within the confines of the filmic image (figures 42 and 43). (3) Like *Caught*, the projected movie is interrupted twice, displacing spectatorial investment from the screen to the woman. The first interruption is caused by a film break (figures 44 and 45) which coincides with and appears to negate Fontaine's remark, “I wish our honeymoon could have lasted forever.” When Maxim attempts to fix the film the interruption is prolonged by the entry of a servant who reveals the discovery that a china cupid is missing—a cupid Fontaine had broken and hidden earlier in the film. This forced pause in the home movies serves to emphasize Fontaine's inability to deal with the servants, to fully assume her position as mistress of *Manderley*, in short, to effectively replace Rebecca. The home movies are resumed but this deficiency in her image, her discomfort in the eve-

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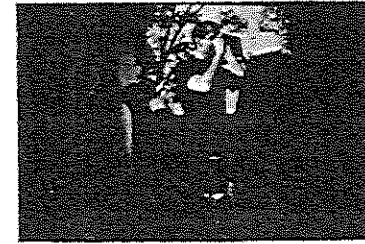
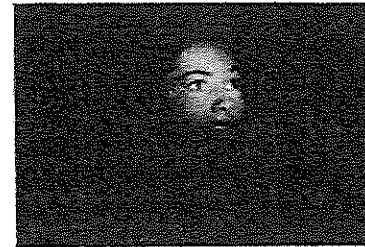
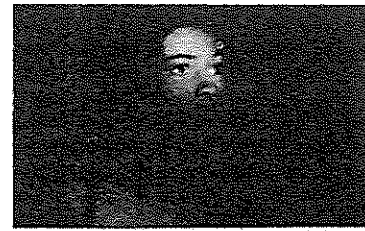


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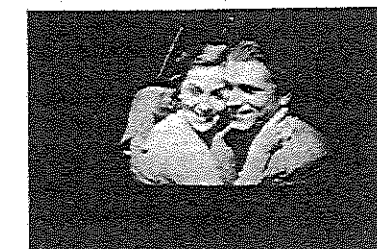
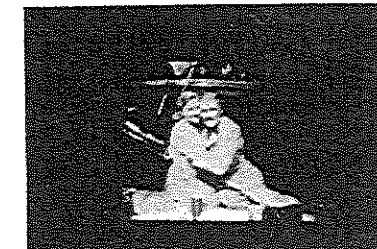
ning gown chosen to imitate Rebecca, leads to the second interruption of the screening. When Fontaine suggests that Maxim must have married her so that there would be no gossip, he abruptly walks between Fontaine and the screen, blocking the image with his body and effectively castrating her look (figures 46, 47, 48). Substituting himself for the screen, he activates an aggressive look back at the spectator, turning Fontaine's gaze against itself. The absolute terror incited by this violent reorganization of the cinematic relay of the look is evident in her eyes, the only part of her face lit by the reflected beam of the projector (figures 49, 50, 51). Furthermore, the image Maxim blocks with his body is her own while the image revealed as he finally moves out of the projection beam to turn on the light is that of himself, once again holding the binoculars (figures 52 and 53). (4) All these aggressions and threats are condensed in the penultimate shot of the sequence which constitutes the most explicit delineation of projection as an assault against the woman. The projection light reflected from the screen fragments and obscures Fontaine's face (figures 54 and 55), contrasting it with the clarity, coherence, and homogeneity proffered by the home movie image of the next shot. The camera positions itself so as to coincide with the diegetic projector and slowly tracks forward toward the final image of the couple together, taken, as Maxim points out, by an autonomous camera mounted on a tripod (figures 56 and 57). At this point, the rule dictating that the home movie conform to an arbitrary and contingent syntax is broken by the insertion of a cut to a closer shot of the couple (a cut, furthermore, interrupting a shot still supposedly taken by an autonomous camera [figures 58 and 59]). The cut guarantees a certain rhetorical finesse, a satisfying closure which demonstrates the stability of the couple and simultaneously sutures the diegetic film to the larger film. For the camera continues to track forward until the edges of the screen disappear and the home movie coincides with *Rebecca* itself.

It is as though in both *Caught* and *Rebecca*, the diegetic film's continuous unfolding guaranteed a rather fragile binding of the drives in the heterosexual unit of the harmonious couple. Its interruption, in each instance, signals the release of aggressive tendencies. In this way, the films play out the problematic of paranoia in its relation to the process of imaging and, simultaneously, the institution of marriage. As Rose points out, paranoia is "the aggressive corollary of the narcissistic structure of the ego-function."⁵ The women's films as a group appear to make a detour around or deflect the issue of spectacle and the woman's position (an obsession of the dominant cinema addressed to the male spectator), and hence avoid the problem of feminine narcissism. Yet, this narcissism returns and infiltrates the two texts by means of a paranoia which is linked to an obsession with the specular. The projection scenes in both films are preceded by the delineation of a narcissistic female desire—the desire to become the image which captures the male gaze. Nevertheless, it is as though the aggressivity

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55-59



which should be attendant on that structure were detached, in the projection scenes, and transferred to the specular system which insures and perpetuates female narcissism—the cinematic apparatus. Thus, the aggressivity attached to her own narcissism is stolen and used against the woman; she becomes the object rather than the subject of that aggression.

The desire to be looked at is thus transformed into a fear of being looked at, or a fear of the apparatus which systematizes or governs that process of looking. From this perspective, it is interesting to note, as mentioned earlier in chapter 5, that in the only case of female paranoia Freud treats, described in “A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psychoanalytical Theory of the Disease,” the woman’s delusion concerns being photographed. Recall that this case involves a young woman who, during lovemaking with a male friend, hears a noise—a knock or tick—which she interprets as the sound of a camera, photographing her in order to compromise her. In his analysis, Freud doubts the very existence of the noise: “I do not believe that the clock ever ticked or that any noise was to be heard at all. The woman’s situation justified a sensation of throbbing in the clitoris. This was what she subsequently projected as a perception of an external object.”⁶ Female paranoia thus finds its psychoanalytic explanation in the projection of a bodily sensation from inside to outside, in a relocation in external reality.

Projection is a mechanism which Freud consistently associates with paranoia. Yet, he is reluctant to make it specific to paranoia, since it is present in more “normal” provinces such as those of superstition, mythology, and, finally, the activity of theorizing. For Freud, projection is instrumental in formulating the very condition of the opposition between internal and external reality, between subject and object. For projection enables flight (from the “bad object”) and the possibility of a refusal to recognize something in or about oneself.⁷ The invocation of the opposition between subject and object in connection with the paranoid mechanism of projection indicates a precise difficulty in any conceptualization of female paranoia—one which Freud does not mention. For in his short case history, what the woman projects, what she throws away, is her sexual pleasure, a part of her bodily image. The sound of her own body throbbing becomes the click of the camera, the capture of her image. For the female spectator in the cinema, on the other hand, the spectator so carefully delineated in *Caught* and *Rebecca*, the problem is even more complex. In the cinematic situation, in the realm of the image, the distinction between subject and object effected by projection is not accessible to the female spectator in the same way as to the male. For Leonora and Maxine in *Caught* and the Joan Fontaine character in *Rebecca*, the pictures in fashion magazines demonstrate that to possess the image through the gaze is to become it. And becoming the image, the woman can no longer have it. For the female spectator, the image is *too close*—

it cannot be projected far enough. The alternatives she is given are quite literally figured in the two films: she can accept the image—full acceptance indicated by the attempts to duplicate it (by means of the mink coat or the black satin dress); or she can repudiate the image (voluntarily in *Caught*, unwillingly in *Rebecca*). The absoluteness of the dilemma is manifested in the mutual exclusivity of its terms—a condition which does not mirror that of the male spectator, who, like Sean Connery in *Marnie* (as described by Mulvey), can “have his cake and eat it too.” As a card-carrying fetishist, the male spectator does not have to choose between acceptance or rejection of the image; he can balance his belief and knowledge. Deprived of castration anxiety, the female spectator is also deprived of the possibility of fetishism—of the reassuring “I know, but even so. . . .”

To the extent that the projection scenes in *Caught* and *Rebecca* mobilize the elements of a specular system which has historically served the interests of male spectatorship, they are limit-texts, exposing the contradictions which inhabit the logic of their own terms of address as women’s films. The relation between the female body and the female look articulated by the two films (a relation which always threatens to collapse into the sameness of equivalence), together with the overpresence of the image, indicate a difficulty in the woman’s relation to symbolization. Sexuality, disseminated in the classical representation across the body of the woman, is for her nonlocalizable. This is why psychoanalytic theory tells us she must *be* the phallus rather than *have* it. As Parveen Adams points out, the woman does not represent lack; she lacks the means to represent lack.⁸ According to the problematic elaborated by *Caught* and *Rebecca*, what the female viewer lacks is the very distance or gap which separates, must separate, the spectator from the image. What she lacks, in other words, is a “good throw.”

Although the projection scenes in *Caught* and *Rebecca* do deconstruct, in some sense, the woman’s position relative to the process of imaging, there is a missing piece in this *mise-en-scène* of cinematic elements—projector and screen are there, but the camera is absent. In *Rebecca* the home movie camera is briefly mentioned to justify the final shot, but in neither film is the camera visualized. The camera is, of course, an element whose acknowledgment would pose a more radical threat to the classicism which ultimately these texts fully embrace, particularly if the camera whose presence was acknowledged were nondiegetic. Yet, while it is true that indications of the presence of a camera are missing in the projection scenes, it is possible to argue that inscriptions of the camera are displaced, inserted later in the films to buttress a specifically male discourse about the woman. Paradoxically, in each of the films the camera demonstrates its own presence and potency through the very absence of an image of the woman. In a frantic, almost psychotic search for that image, the camera contributes its power to the hallucination of a woman.

In *Rebecca*, there is a scene late in the film which exemplifies the very felt presence of the woman who is absent throughout the movie, the woman whose initials continually surround and subdue the Joan Fontaine character—Rebecca. It is the scene in which Maxim narrates the story of Rebecca, despite his own claim that it is unnarratable (“She told me all about herself—everything—things I wouldn’t tell a living soul.”). The camera’s very literal inscription of the absent woman’s movements is preceded by a transfer of the look from narrator to narratee. Maxim, standing by the door, looks first at the sofa, then at Fontaine, then back at the sofa. Fontaine turns her glance from Maxim to the sofa, appropriating his gaze. From this point on, the camera’s movements are precisely synchronized with Maxim’s words: when he tells Fontaine that Rebecca sat next to an ashtray brimming with cigarette stubs, there is a cut to the sofa, empty but for the ashtray; as he describes Rebecca rising from the sofa, the camera duplicates that movement and then pans to the left—purportedly following a woman who is not visible. In tracing Rebecca’s path as Maxim narrates, the camera pans more than 180 degrees. In effect, what was marked very clearly as Maxim’s point of view, simply transferred to Fontaine as narratee, comes to include him. The story of the woman culminates as the image of the man.

Caught makes appeal to a remarkably similar signifying strategy in a scene in which Leonora’s very absence from the image becomes the strongest signified—the scene in which her empty desk is used as a pivot as the camera swings back and forth between Dr. Hoffman (Frank Ferguson) and Dr. Quinada (James Mason) discussing her fate. The sequence begins with a high angle shot down on Leonora’s desk, the camera moving down and to the left to frame Dr. Hoffman, already framed in his doorway. Moving from Hoffman across the empty desk, the camera constructs a perfect symmetry by framing Dr. Quinada in his doorway as well. The middle portion of the sequence is constituted by a sustained crosscutting between Hoffman and Quinada, alternating both medium shots and close-ups. The end of the sequence echoes and repeats the beginning, the camera again pivoting around the absent woman’s desk from Quinada to Hoffman and, as Hoffman suggests that Quinada “forget” Leonora, back to the empty desk, closing the sequence with a kind of formal tautology. The sequence is a performance of one of the overdetermined meanings of the film’s title—Leonora is “caught,” spatially, between an obstetrician and a pediatrician (other potential readings include the theme of “catching” a rich husband which initiates the film, the fact that Leonora is “caught” in her marriage by her husband who wants to keep her child or that she is “caught” between Smith Ohlrig and Larry Quinada).

In tracing the absence of the woman, the camera inscribes its own presence in the film as phallic substitute—the pen which writes the feminine body. The two scenes demonstrate the technical fluency of the camera in narrating the

woman’s story, extended to the point of ejecting her from the image. In its foreclosure of a signifier—here, the woman’s body—from the symbolic universe, the camera enacts its paranoia as a psychosis. It is as though, in a pseudogenre marked as the possession of the woman, the camera had to desperately reassert itself by means of its technical prowess—a prowess here embodied in the attribute of movement. The projection scenes discussed earlier effect a cleavage, a split between the image of the woman’s desire (linked to stills—photographs or sketches without movement) and what is projected on the screen (in *Caught*, the machinery of industry, capitalist enterprise; in *Rebecca*, the images of Maxim’s memory of her before the black satin dress). In each case, it is the man who has control of the projector and hence the moving image. Thus, the films construct an opposition between different processes of imaging along the lines of sexual difference: female desire is linked to the fixation and stability of a spectacle refusing the temporal dimension, while male desire is more fully implicated with the defining characteristic of the cinematic image—movement. The two scenes in which the camera inscribes the absence of the woman thus accomplish a double negation of the feminine—through her absence and the camera’s movement, its continual displacement of the fixed image of her desire. Invoking the specific attributes of the cinematic signifier (movement and absence of the object) around the figure of the woman, the films succeed in constructing a story about the woman which no longer requires even her physical presence.

Nevertheless, each of the films recovers the image of the woman, writing her back into the narrative. At the end of *Caught*, in a scene which echoes the earlier one pivoting on Leonora’s empty desk, her image is returned to the diegesis. Inserted, almost accidentally it seems, between two shots of Dr. Hoffman and Dr. Quinada, who are once more discussing her, is an image of Leonora in which the camera stares straight down at her lying in a hospital bed. In *Rebecca*, Joan Fontaine’s full appropriation of Rebecca’s position toward the end of the film coincides with the abolition of even the traces of Rebecca’s absent presence. In the final shot of the film, the initial R which decorates the pillow of her bed is consumed by flames. This denial of the absent woman and the resultant recuperation of presence form the basis for the reunification and harmony of the couple which closes the film.

The closure in *Caught*, however, is less sure, the recuperation more problematic.⁹ The oppressiveness of the mise-en-scène toward the end of the film is marked. This is particularly true in the scene inside an ambulance, in which sirens wail as Dr. Quinada tells Leonora how free she can be if her child dies. The claustrophobic effect of the scene issues from the fact that there are two simultaneous movements toward Leonora—as the camera moves gradually closer and closer, framing her more tightly, Dr. Quinada repeats its movement from another direction. By the end of the shot he appears to have nearly smoth-

ered her with his body. Leonora is caught in the pincers of this double movement as Quinada tells her, "He [Smith Ohlrig] won't be able to hold you. . . . Now you can be free." The camera's movement explicitly repeats that of Dr. Quinada in its domination, enclosure, and framing of the woman. In the next scene, in which the image of Leonora in a hospital bed is inserted between two shots of the doctors, the camera literally assumes Dr. Quinada's position in the ambulance, aiming itself directly down at Leonora. Dr. Quinada has just been informed by Dr. Hoffman in the hallway that the baby has died and his reply, the same words he used in the ambulance ("He can't hold her now—she's free"), constitutes the voice over Leonora's image.

But Leonora's ultimate "freedom" in the last scene is granted to her by Dr. Hoffman when he tells the nurse to take her mink coat away with the statement, "If my diagnosis is correct, she won't want that anyway." With the rejection of the mink coat comes the denial of the last trace of the image in its relation to Leonora. By means of the doctor's diagnosis, she becomes, instead of an image, an element in the discourse of medicine (as discussed in chapter 2), a manuscript to be read for the symptoms which betray her story, her identity. It is appropriate that the final scene in *Caught* takes place in a hospital. For the doctor, as reader or interpreter of that manuscript, accomplishes the final despecularization proposed by the text's own trajectory and the terms of its address. The final image of the film consists of the nurse slinging the mink coat over her shoulder and taking it away down the hospital corridor.

The movement of the narrative is thus from the representation of the mink coat which sparks desire to the rejection of the "real thing" (a rejection really made "on behalf" of the woman by the doctor). One could chart the elaboration of female subjectivity in the film according to the presence or absence of the mink coat. At the beginning of the film, Leonora's only desire is to meet a man rich enough to allow her to return to her home town with two mink coats—"One for my mother and one for me." A cut from Leonora at Dorothy Dale's School of Charm pretending that a cloth coat is mink to a tilt upward along the mink coat she models in a department store in the next scene establishes her rise on the social scale. When she leaves Smith Ohlrig after the projection scene discussed earlier, she takes her mink coat with her, and the coat immediately signals to Quinada her alliance with an upper class. Yet, when she briefly returns to Ohlrig after quitting her job as Quinada's receptionist, she realizes that he has not changed, and, as she calls Dr. Quinada on the phone, Leonora tells Franz, "I'm through with that coat." Dr. Quinada subsequently buys Leonora a cloth coat, an action which initiates their romance. The opposition cloth/mink governs the economic thematics of the text.

The mink coat is thus the means by which the specular is welded to the economic—it functions both as an economic landmark of Leonora's social posi-

tion and as the articulation of the woman's relation to spectacle and the male gaze. The textual mediations on the sexed subject and the class subject merge imperceptibly. Leonora's desire to own the mink coat is both narcissistic and socially/economically ambitious. Yet, the text attempts to prove the desire itself to be "wrong" or misguided since the man she marries in order to obtain the coat is dangerously psychotic. Dr. Quinada, unlike Smith Ohlrig, is a member of her own class; hence, Leonora's understanding of her own sexuality is simultaneous with her understanding and acceptance of her class position. A poster for the film which situates Barbara Bel Geddes's face within the middle of the huge *C* of *Caught*, claims in bold letters: "You were a pretty waitress! You married a millionaire! You thought you were lucky! But, Oh! how you wish you were a waitress again!"

In *Rebecca*, the situation is somewhat similar, with important deviations. Generic considerations are here much stronger since *Rebecca* belongs more clearly to that group of films (discussed in chapter 7) which are infused by the gothic and defined by a plot in which the wife fears her husband is a murderer. In films like *Rebecca*, *Dragonwyck*, and *Undercurrent*, the woman marries, often hastily, into the upper class; her husband has money and a social position which she cannot match. The marriage thus constitutes a type of transgression (of class barriers) which does not remain unpunished. The woman often feels dwarfed or threatened by the house itself (*Rebecca*, *Dragonwyck*). A frequent reversal of the hierarchy of mistress and servant is symptomatic of the fact that the woman is "out of place" in her rich surroundings. Nevertheless, in films of the same genre, such as *Suspicion*, *Secret Beyond the Door*, and *Gaslight*, the economic/sexual relationship is reversed. In each of these, there is at least a hint that the man marries the woman in order to obtain her money. Hence, it is not always the case that a woman from a lower class is punished for attempting to change her social and economic standing. Rather, the mixture effected by a marriage between two different classes produces horror and paranoia.

By making sexuality extremely difficult in a rich environment, both films—*Caught* and *Rebecca*—promote the illusion of separating the issue of sexuality from that of economics. What is really repressed in this scenario is the economics of sexual exchange. This repression is most evident in *Caught*, whose explicit moral—"Don't marry for money"—constitutes a negation of the economic factor in marriage. But negation, as Freud points out, is also affirmation; in *Caught* there is an unconscious acknowledgment of the economics of marriage as an institution. In the course of the film, the woman becomes the object of exchange, from Smith Ohlrig to Dr. Quinada.¹⁰ A by-product of this exchange is the relinquishing of the posited object of her desire—the expensive mink coat.

There is a sense, then, in which both films begin with a hypothesis of fe-

male subjectivity which is subsequently disproven by the textual project. The narrative of *Caught* is introduced by the attribution of the look at the image (the "I" of seeing) to Leonora and her friend. The film ends by positioning Leonora as the helpless, bedridden object of the medical gaze. In the beginning of *Rebecca*, the presence of a female subjectivity as the source of the enunciation is marked. A female voice-over (belonging to the Fontaine character) accompanies a hazy, dreamlike image: "Last night I dreamed I went to Manderley again. It seems to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive. For a while I could not enter." The voice goes on to relate how, like all dreamers, she was suddenly possessed by a supernatural power and passed through the gate. This statement is accompanied by a shot in which the camera assumes the position of the "I" and, in a sustained subjective movement, tracks forward through the gate and along the path. Yet the voice-over subsequently disappears entirely—it is not even resuscitated at the end of the film in order to provide closure through a symmetrical frame. Nevertheless, there is an extremely disconcerting reemergence of a feminine "I" later in the film. In the cottage scene in which Maxim narrates the "unnarratable" story of the absent Rebecca to Joan Fontaine, he insists on a continual use of direct quotes and hence the first person pronoun referring to Rebecca. His narrative is laced with these quotes from Rebecca which parallel on the soundtrack the moving image, itself adhering to the traces of an absent Rebecca. Maxim is therefore the one who pronounces the following statements: "I'll play the part of a devoted wife." "When I have a child, Max, no one will be able to say that it's not yours." "I'll be the perfect mother just as I've been the perfect wife." "Well, Max, what are you going to do about it? Aren't you going to kill me?" Just as the tracking subjective shot guarantees that the story of the woman literally culminates as the image of the man, the construction of the dialogue allows Maxim to appropriate Rebecca's "I."¹¹

The films thus chronicle the emergence and disappearance of female subjectivity, the articulation of an "I" which is subsequently negated. The pressure of the demand in the woman's film for the depiction of female subjectivity is so strong, and often so contradictory, that it is not at all surprising that sections such as the projection scenes in *Caught* and *Rebecca* should dwell on the problem of female spectatorship. These scenes internalize the difficulties of the genre and, in their concentration on the issue of the woman's relation to the gaze, occupy an important place in the narrative. Paranoia is here the appropriate and logical obsession. For it effects a confusion between subjectivity and objectivity, between the internal and the external, thus disallowing the gap which separates the spectator from the image of his/her desire.

In many respects, the most disturbing images of the two films are those which evoke the absence of the woman. In both films these images follow pro-

jection scenes which delineate the impossibility of female spectatorship. It is as though each film adhered to the logic which characterizes dreamwork—establishing the image of an absent woman as the delayed mirror image of a female spectator who is herself only virtual.

37. Diane Waldman analyzes the films in relation to what she terms the "fear of the familiar" (the uncanny), "familiar" here defined as both "recognizable" and "of the family." See Waldman, "Horror and Domesticity," p. 17.
38. Thierry Kuntzel, "The Film-Work, 2," *Camera Obscura*, no. 5 (spring 1980), p. 9.
39. Pascal Bonitzer, *Le regard et la voix* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1976), p. 105. My translation.
40. Kuntzel, "Film Work, 2," p. 10.
41. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* vol. 2, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 37.
42. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, vol. 17, p. 226. Although it is clear that the translation in English of *unheimlich* as "uncanny" poses difficulties in the appropriation of Freud's analysis, the word "canny" nevertheless has a wide range of meanings, many of which can easily and fruitfully be articulated with that analysis. Among the most provocative meanings listed by the OED are: 1) Knowing, sagacious, judicious, prudent; wary, cautious. 3) Skilful, clever, 'cunning.' *Canny wife*: 'wise woman,' midwife; hence *canny moment*: moment of childbirth. 8) Quiet, easy, snug, comfortable, pleasant, cosy. 9) Agreeable to the eyes or perception. . . .
43. Freud, *Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 245.
44. Samuel Weber, "The Sideshow, or: Remarks on a Canny Moment," *MLN*, vol. 88, no. 6 (December 1973), p. 1112.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 1113.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 1133.
47. For an excellent analysis of the representation of women in the horror film see Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks," in *Re-vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, and Linda Williams (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America and The American Film Institute, 1984), pp. 83-99.
48. "Something to Be Scared Of" is the title of the second chapter of Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*.
49. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, pp. 1-2.
50. Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," p. 90.
51. Williams, "When the Woman Looks," p. 88.
52. For a more extensive analysis of the function of the portrait in these films in relation to contemporary understandings of the opposition between illusionism and modernism in art, see chapter 4 of Waldman's dissertation ("The Portrait and Modes of Representation").
53. For an elaboration of this difficulty in the mother-daughter relationship, see Luce Irigaray, "And the One Doesn't Stir without the Other," trans. Hélène Vivienne Wenzel, *Signs*, vol. 7, no. 1 (autumn 1981), pp. 60-67 and Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
54. Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1982), pp. 70-71. For other analyses of gothic literature in relation to mother-daughter separation anxieties see Holland and Sherman, "Gothic Possibilities" and Claire Kahane, "Gothic Mirrors and Feminine Identity," *The Centennial Review*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1980), pp. 43-64.
55. The veiling or repression of the narrative's obsession with the maternal in comparison with the explicit concern with the paternal can be seen in the fact that these portraits represent actual fathers (men whose actual role in the film is that of father), while the female portraits are representations of maternal figures (metaphorical mothers).
56. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 58.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
60. Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 47-48.
61. See François Truffaut, *Hitchcock* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 102.

62. Stephen Jenkins, "Lang: Fear and Desire," in *Fritz Lang: The Image and the Look*, ed. Stephen Jenkins (London: British Film Institute, 1981), p. 104.
6. *Female Spectatorship and Machines of Projection: Caught and Rebecca*
1. Sigmund Freud, *Three Case Histories* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 149.
 2. Julia Kristeva, *About Chinese Women*, trans. Anita Barrows (New York: Urizen Books, 1977), p. 29.
 3. The figure is Franzi, Ohlrig's rather slick public relations man and secretary who is endowed with characteristics stereotyped as homosexual. Thus, an intensification of the representation of male binding (as in the predominantly male audience of Ohlrig's cinema) immediately precedes the threatening laugh of the only female spectator present.
 4. The sequence is composed of fifty shots; this brief analysis covers only twenty-five of these.
 5. Jacqueline Rose, "Paranoia and the Film System," *Screen*, vol. 17, no. 4 (winter 1976-77), p. 86.
 6. Freud, "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psychoanalytical Theory of the Disease," in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 104.
 7. See J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 349-56. Laplanche and Pontalis define projection as having a sense "comparable to the cinematographic one: the subject sends out into the external world an image of something that exists in him in an unconscious way. Projection is here defined as a mode of *refusal to recognize (méconnaissance)*. . . ."
 8. Parveen Adams, "Representation and Sexuality," *m/f*, no. 1, pp. 66-67.
 9. An acknowledgment of the difficulties with the ending of *Caught* can be found in Ophul's remarks about the film: "I worked for MGM. I made *Caught*, which I quite like. But I had difficulties with the production over the script, so that the film goes off the rails towards the end. Yes, the ending is really almost impossible, but up until the last ten minutes it's not bad." Paul Willeman, ed., *Ophul's* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), p. 23.
 10. In the generic subcategory to which *Caught* and *Rebecca* belong, the "paranoid" woman's film, there are frequently two major male characters, one evil or psychotic, the other good and heroic. The woman, as in Lévi-Strauss's fable of the constitution of society, is exchanged from one to the other. In *Rebecca* this is not quite the case. Nevertheless, Maxim is a composite figure and therefore incorporates both character types—both sane and insane, rich but with middle-class tastes (e.g., the Joan Fontaine character). At the end of the film, Fontaine finds a harmonious reunification with the sane Maxim, whose strongest symbol of wealth—Manderley—burns to the ground.
 11. The vicious quality of such a gesture is mitigated by the fact that Rebecca, in contradistinction to the Joan Fontaine character, is isolated as the evil, sexually active woman.
7. *The Shadow of Her Gaze*
1. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 193.
 2. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
 3. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1965), p. 183.
 4. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 394.
 5. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-98.
 6. Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Litera-*