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In the Absence of the Woman: The Spectator's Presence in Hitchcock's Rear Window, Polanski's The Tenant, and Lynch's Blue Velvet.

by

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

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IN THE ABSENCE OF THE WOMAN: THE SPECTATOR'S PRESENCE IN HITCHCOCK'S REAR WINDOW, POLANSKI'S THE TENANT, AND LYNCH'S BLUE VELVET

BY

H. FAYE MCINTYRE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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INTRODUCTION

The following discussion of Hitchcock's Rear Window (1954), Polanski's The Tenant (1976), and David Lynch's Blue Velvet (1986) was motivated by a sense that film criticism, and particularly criticism with a psychoanalytic basis, has become so sophisticated and self-referential that it has lost the capacity to speak about the affective experience of film viewing. In part these scientific studies of film seem understandable as a determined effort at self-defense against a patriarchal cinema conceived of as being a seductive system, catering to and promoting visual pleasure for the male viewer. By intending to expose cinema's guarantee to the male spectator of a vicarious possession of the woman, who is expressly there to be visually consumed by him, these critics hope to disturb the voyeuristic satisfaction that they suppose determines, and is determined by, narrative film.1 To that end they have charted the inherently sadistic Oedipal desire which apparently shapes the representation of the female figure on the screen, and which is narrativized by means of cinema's shot-reverse-shot system.2 However, by insisting on a strict gender identification, and on the spectator's immovable place as such within the spatial configuration continually re-stabilized by the system of the look, theorists are unable to satisfactorily account for the connections formed, lost, and re-formed by individual viewers of specific films, viewers who might be at various times engaged in the lives of characters of either gender.

Of course the placement of female spectators, who willingly comprise one half of the viewing population, is made especially problematic if we consider the image of the woman on the screen to be definitely situated as the passive site of voyeuristic gratification for the spectator. Teresa De Lauretis takes up the issue of the "invisible," or unrepresented, historical female viewer who is left without a place of identification, somewhere between the look of the camera and the image on the screen.3 Her solution, though, is a complicated two-fold process of identification for the woman with the mythical subject, and the space of, the narrative movement, an identification which is "effected by the cinematic apparatus of the look," and which is, therefore, based on determined masculine and feminine "positionalities" in relation to an Oedipal desire (De Lauretis, Alice Doesn't 142-143). Mary Ann Doane, and Tania Modleski also recognize the need to more fully evaluate the female viewer's investment in individual films, but similarly they insist upon an Oedipal framework for desire in their discussions.4 In Doane's essay, as Modleski points out, this leads to a rather complex proposition that the woman is motivated by a symbolic "lack of a lack," which prevents her from achieving a distance from the image, something our relationship to the woman in Hitchcock's film would not bear out, as I hope to show. Modleski, whose work I will consider more fully in chapter one, suggests instead a mysterious incarnation of the female figure in the masculine narrative, a figure who comes into being despite the repressive

instincts of the male author. According to her, the identification of male and female viewers with the victimized female character opens up a shared masochistic place for spectators of both genders. This suggestion, then, also concentrates primarily on an ahistorical desire motivating narrative representation, as the other psychoanalytic criticism does as well, and therefore minimizes the importance of narrative film's discursive aspects.

A further option we have open to us is to question the nature of desire itself. We might ask with Jay Clayton if all desire expressed and satisfied by narrative art is sexual desire, and essentially Oedipal, and then wonder if our only relationship to the film screen is, therefore, as a voyeur, craving the anonymous control and satisfaction of watching unseen.5 I would like to propose instead that what keeps us in front of the screen, at times at least, might be thought of as a more "general desire for presence," something which Cavell has long maintained.6 The fulfillment of such a desire, I suggest throughout the thesis, depends on our perceiving an acknowledgement from the film of our invisible presence. This is an idea, therefore, that runs contrary to Metz's notion that cinema must always pretend that it does not know it is being watched in order to satisfy our voyeuristic impulses.7

Rear Window brings this idea into focus with its self-reflexive critique of voyeurism. What is intriguing to me about Hitchcock's depiction of the relationship between Jeffries, the

photographer, who is our surrogate voyeur, and Lisa, who is the beautiful model socialite, is not the fact that they do not neatly fit the roles of active male voyeur and passive female object of desire, as Tania Modleski notices. For it is Jeffries's desire to see, and to reconcile what he sees with what he thinks he knows, which puts him in command of the narrative proceedings, even if he is made impotent by being confined to a wheelchair. Coincidently, while Lisa's energy and resolve seem to make her an unusually self-motivated and mobile female character, she does ultimately confine herself to corroborating and actualizing Jeffries's vision of the world. Rather, it is the woman's need to transform herself into someone who is more active and masculine-looking which seems to define the dynamics of their relationship, and as such I believe the film's emphasis is on the need for the woman's re-creation, a theme which Cavell has written on in connection to the genre of film he calls the "melodrama of the unknown woman."8 The focus of my first chapter on Rear Window, therefore, is not on the protagonist's voyeuristic relationship to the woman's body as the sight of castration (as Mulvey would have it), but rather on the woman's "disembodiment," which results from the male protagonist's "idolatrous" perception of her, his splitting of her into a being and an image. His investment in seeing her as such is as a means to prove her "unknowness" and hence the possibility of his presence to the world.

Here I am not disagreeing with the idea of the invisibility

of the woman in cinema, but rather suggesting that this is a thematic concern of Hitchcock, and also something that happens between the viewer and the woman on the screen. It is a way of explaining the analogous affect of our perception of the female in Rear Window who seems to "disappear," as a character to whom we may relate, in proportion to her being situated as a visual object for our pleasure. Accordingly, I am proposing that the manner in which she is represented becomes one of the means whereby the film may signal its acknowledgment of our invisible presence.

For all its self-consciousness about the issue of looking at the woman, voyeurism as a moral question, as far as I can tell, does not figure prominently in the viewer's experience of Hitchcock's film. Although, Hitchcock himself has spoken of his protagonist's activities in judgmental terms, telling Truffaut for instance, that Jeffrey "deserves" what he gets when his neighbor Thorwald, the primary object of his voyeuristic investigation, comes to stare murderously at him in his own private space. 9 The issue of our "illicit" enjoyment of the film only becomes apparent with our sense of our callously assumed distance from the suffering of the woman, Miss Lonelyhearts, with our perception of a self-created, and perhaps self-protective barrier between us and the events which we observe. Rather than a fixed place of voyeuristic control, then, the viewer knows the tenuousness of the boundary between herself and the filmic world, which is affected by our sympathetic

understanding of the characters.

The parameters of the self and the impossibility of definitely locating them seems to me to describe both the problematic symptoms of the protagonist's mental illness in The Tenant and the analogous experience of the film's spectator. For we are eventually prevented from establishing a sense of our fixed presentness in relation to the filmic world by the director's disturbing refusal to distance us from the protagonist's insane point-of-view. Commentators on Polanski's film have seen it as his subversive attempt to provoke our self-awareness of our voyeuristic desire by having us participate in and contemplate the surreptitious looking of the protagonist, Trelkovsky. However, I cannot help but feel that in his mysterious madness Trelkovsky is finally blameless and that we are prevented from assigning him the guilt of the voyeur, or claiming any such guilt as our own. As well, Trelkovsky's desire does not seem to be that of the voyeur, which is engaged by, or directed toward, anyone as a sexual object. The woman's body accordingly, is not the locus of scopophilic pleasure for the viewer or the protagonist. Instead of assuring us of our place in front of a world possessable by our sight, the invisible presence of the woman in fact reminds us of the untenable place which we occupy. For the mysterious suffering of this absent (deceased) woman keeps us continually mindful of a realm of unseen meaning outside the one which we are given visual access to by the camera. This extra dimension of experience is not

accounted for by theories of perspectival placement and gender identification. As such, The Tenant effectively challenges traditional theory's idea that the look, (of the camera and the interconnecting looks of the characters), is that by which we are held "in a coherence of meaning and vision" (De Lauretis Alice Doesn't 138).

David Lynch's Blue Velvet is a film which also undermines our sense of being decisively and comfortably placed in the visual structure of supposedly inherent meaning that is provided by the cinematic system of the look. Though we initially feel that we occupy the privileged place of the spectator, we are nevertheless at points left suddenly without means of interpreting what we see, and thereby situating ourselves in the film. Lynch has us confront the moral dimension of our seeing, not by awakening us to the sordid pleasure of looking per se, but by abandoning us to the sights of violence and sexuality without recourse to a comfortable identification with morally circumspect characters. It seems that in Blue Velvet we are awakened to the need to feel both an identification with ourselves as watchers, (as Metz proposed), and with the characters we watch (Metz 91-97). For the necessity of our being able to "find ourselves" in one of the characters is inextricably connected to our being able to consider ourselves to be the point of our watching them, that is to think that we are the reason that they are there to be watched.10

In chapter three I hope to show that theories of

perspectival centering and gender identification are also insufficient to explain our investment in the sight of the woman's body which, as in Rear Window, may or may not be displayed in such a manner as to reflect the unified identity of the watcher. The sight of her body may actually interrupt the viewer's desire for recognition from the film, rather than, as is usually thought, provide immediate acknowledgment to the male spectator of his presence. Finally, our complicity in the woman's "disembodiment" must be recognized in Blue Velvet as in Hitchcock's film. For if the place of woman is made invisible by patriarchal cinema, it is also made silent by a criticism which will not admit to vulnerability in the face of the film's power, and publicly examine the experience of it.

Susan Gubar includes an anecdote in her discussion on women's creativity that nicely locates the problem of representing the woman, and the role of the spectator in this problematic, as I believe these issues are imagined by Hitchcock in Rear Window (1954). She remarks upon statistics from the Louvre which confirm that more people came to stare at the empty space where the Mona Lisa used to hang, before it was stolen in 1911, than had ever come to see the work of art in the twelve previous years when it had occupied that space.11 It has formerly been commonplace in film criticism to regard the visual pleasure taken in the female body by the spectator, whose gaze is appropriated by the gaze of the male protagonist, as a vicarious means of "possessing" the woman who is necessarily figured as a possessable sight.2 However, I would like to suggest that the protagonist's looking at the body of the woman in Rear Window is not an assured means of knowing, in the sense of possessing, what he sees, but may, in fact, be a means of his holding off or not seeing what he fears knowing. For the woman's body is here shown to be the site of the gap between seeing and knowing, and necessarily perceived by the protagonist as unknowable. Accordingly, the idea of the viewers of Mona Lisa's invisible image being lured by the mystery of unrepresentable presence aptly suggests the burden of representation that the woman bears in modern society, and indeed in Hitchcock's film.

Tania Modleski's study also takes as its focus this issue of representing the woman in its discussion of Rear Window, and is

conceived as such, in the wake of a growing number of critical works about narrative film, and narrative in general, that are concerned with charting the way in which the female body is "incorporated" as image. 12 However, her argument marks the start of a hopeful movement away from the tendency to regard the spectator of film as being placed determinately by cinema's equivalent to the perspectival system, which is the classical point-of-view technique. This formulaic means of including the viewer, necessarily situates the female character as the sight of castration, and as the passive object of the male viewer's, and the male character's coincident, and frequently sadistic desiring gaze. Although I will diverge widely from her argument at a later point, Rear Window seems to me, as it does to Modleski, to deserve a critical distinction, from the traditional consensus that "cinema works for Oedipus"13 and the accompanying notion of a violently generated "desire of the text,"14 or the idea, as Laura Mulvey puts it, that "sadism demands a story." 15

Modleski chooses to re-imagine the problem of narrative film's sadistic hold on the woman by privileging a pre-Oedipal origin of desire. In this way she is able to open up the discussion of gender specific narrative roles, and the opportunities for the spectator's identification with these, which traditional Hollywood films have seemed to offer. As she notes, the prevailing ideas about these roles, first proposed in Laura Mulvey's influential article, severely limits the place of the female viewer to one of a masochistic identification with the

victimized female, and in the case of Rear Window in particular, does not account for the expressive power and mobility of the female characters, (Stella, Lisa Freemont, and Miss Torso), which seems in ironic juxtaposition to the impotence of the male protagonist, L.B. Jeffries, who spends the whole of the film in a wheelchair (Modleski 77).

These "eccentricities" of the women in Hitchcock's film can be more fully accounted for, according to Modleski, by seeing the female image not as a reflection of the male's fear of castration per se, but rather as the threat of the enveloping feminine, which would challenge his authority and control, making it necessary for him to regain this power through "the most energetic and rigorous," "transcendent," and "masculine" kind of narrativity (Modleski 83). Patriarchal narrative in general, and L.B. Jeffries's act of narrativity in particular, (his story of his neighbor, Mrs. Thorwald's, murder and dismemberment) is seen by Modleski to be designed accordingly so that the protagonist may re-discover the woman as fragmented. Because she might otherwise seem too s(motheringly) present, he must maintain his own sense of wholeness by relocating difference at the level of anatomy, and in effect castrating her (Modleski 79).

In her analysis of the film, Modleski does suggest the possibility of a subjective involvement for the spectator, uninhibited by a strictly heterosexual gender consciousness, but proposes that a fearful blurring of gender differences is, in fact, the root cause of aggression towards the woman in these

films (Modleski 8). Reluctant to see audience participation in Rear Window in any other way than as a tenuous reversal of the traditional sadistic/ masochistic binary, she proposes that Rear Window opens up a masochistic position for both male and female spectator, by its fostering of an emotional identification with Lisa, especially at the moment when she is caught by the suspected murderer in his apartment. The experience of witnessing this scene, according to her, allows the male viewer, as it does L.B. Jeffries, who is forced to watch his lover's suffering, a momentary acknowledgment of his own otherwise frighteningly "feminine" impotence (Modleski 82).

Notwithstanding the fact that this proposal does not seem to greatly extend the possibilities for reviewing the stereotypical distribution of power between the sexes, it also seems to me that at this particular moment in the film we do not actually experience an identification with Lisa in her entrapment. For this is a situation much farther removed from our sight, and I think we are more inclined to identify with Jeffries, whose suddenly painful consciousness of his fixed and helpless state of hiddenness closely mirrors our own uncomfortable passivity during this tense scene. Modleski, it seems, is assuming that we "see through" Jeffries somehow, via his gaze, without sharing the affect of what he sees. Whatever his political or psychological disposition, even the female members of the audience, I suspect, "relate" to him consistently. Certainly the detective work he is involved in must be as vicariously compelling for male, as it is

for female spectators. What we must also notice is that at this moment his position as controller of the gaze has not changed, nor has our relationship to him in this position, but the power structure upon which the look is always assumed to have rested has been shown by Hitchcock to be a very precarious one. Jeffries and we are forced to acknowledge the reciprocal nature of seeing and being seen. 16

It is because Modleski needs a means of explaining how, in a male-dominated cinema, the female character could possibly be invested with power of her own, that she is not tempted by the interesting question of how power could be aligned to sympathy, if that is the right word to describe our general admiration for, or our being attuned to, a character. This I imagine to be a response differing at times from moral approbation. For if Modleski did entertain such a thought, she might be lead to the idea that perhaps to surrender one's own "authority" in a sympathetic connection with a character of either gender, at anytime, or in fact of the human race or not, or of the animate world or not, (we can think of the emotional pull for a creature of animated film), would be something akin to forfeiting, without conscious deliberation, our objective distance from characters of any sort or shape, and allowing them to occupy us momentarily. Because she is arguing from the standpoint that power and authority are the exclusive domain of the cinematic system itself, rather that something bestowed, shifted and withheld by the spectator as well, Modleski is saved from

admitting that we have probably only the most illusive and compromised means of saying by what proportions character and audience participate in, or empower, or authorize, one another's being.

Nevertheless, this means that she is logically obliged to offer the very provocative suggestion that the image of the female refuses to be assimilated or "incorporated" in patriarchal narrative, that her aberrant desire is somehow spoken through the male artist/creator "against his will," and despite his attempt to speak it "otherwise" for her (Modleski 121). It is almost as if Modleski is proposing that the female character in general, as Lisa Freemont might seem to, derives her authority from an inherent and essentially feminine creative faculty, which she is somehow able to disguise and put into play without alerting her author to her own seditious designs. (If this were the case why would we need to worry about self-representation for the woman, and about the woman's invisibility in the cinema?) The result of this thinking seems to be a logic which saves the rhetorical authority of the Oedipal paradigm, and the integrity of all who share this perspective, and the by-product, it seems, is the unwanted (by feminists) creation of some immutable essence of femininity, which has been thought of as being effectively unrepresentable (De Lauretis 4). It seems to me finally that there is a paradoxical danger for the critic evident in Modleski's work. For in her iconoclastic enthusiasm to shift the grounds of power from the "artist as master" to the

"theorist as master," or even to imagine that such a shift is necessary, the critic is awfully close to the "idolatry," which L.B. Jeffries could teach us something about, and that is accomplished by "discovering" one's consciousness reified in the world, or in this case, in art (Modleski 120).17

I would like to re-consider the final scene which Modleski cites as being evidence of Lisa's escape from the narcissistic narrative entrapment meant for her, which would see her created in the image of the male. As Jeffries lies sleeping, his two legs now encased in plaster, Lisa reclines in on a couch nearby reading what would appear to be a book on travel and adventure, which we suppose she has taken up in preparation for sharing Jeffries's nomadic lifestyle. After making sure that Jeffries is not watching, she picks up a copy of Harper's Bazaar, which obviously has stronger claims on her attention. Modleski interprets this shift in Lisa's attention as a reclaiming of her own desire, and it might well be. However, if her metamorphosis and her subversively duplicitous image in this final scene is an image <u>for</u> us, rather than for Jeffries, which it certainly is, since he is unconscious at the time, then the fact that her completed transformation into the more "masculine" looking and adventure-minded woman is no more than another of Lisa's poses, is part of an address to us, part of the narrative's discourse, rather than a mysteriously generated internal resistance to it.

Furthermore, the idea of the woman's "incorporation" as image, apart from the validity and excellence of individual

arguments on the subject, seems to me to hold an interesting contradiction of terms. Though I am in agreement with Modleski's assessment of Jeffries's attempt to narrativize the woman's body as a means of re-writing or re-(in)stating his own subjectivity, I am more inclined to emphasise the film's intended ironic stance toward such a project, in and of itself, toward Jeffries's procrustean attempt at fitting the body to the story, (the flesh made word rather than the word made flesh.) Hitchcock creates this emphasis on the protagonist's detective work by presenting the process of the narrative as a search for the body that will verify Jeffries's too hastily preconceived story of its absence, prior to establishing the fact of its absence: Even Jeffries and Lisa question, if not too thoroughly, their need to prove that the murder has taken place when faced with substantial evidence to the contrary. The logic, which even they suspect is at work here, is one of confirming the absence of the woman as evidence of the man's self-affirming thesis of her absence.

This is a situation in Rear Window which has a flip side, and it may be described in the words of Gubar, as "the deflection of female creativity from the production of art to the creation of the body" (Gubar 80). Hence the duplicity, or seeming duplicity of the woman's creative expression, which Gubar says has been written about as though there has previously been little distinction between the woman's art and her body (Gubar 81). Hitchcock asks us to contemplate such a confusion by choreographing Miss Torso's movements so that we may not easily

determine if in fact she is rehearsing an erotic ballet or performing a domestic routine of eating and cooking. We might also remember Lisa confiding to Jeffries her wish to be "creative." Her confession is made in the most casually elegant manner, spoken over her shoulder to him, from where she has artfully composed herself in front of his window. It is as though she could not possibly be serious, (how could desire be spoken with so little evidence of itself?); it is too much to believe that she had ever felt any need to be other than exactly what she had worked very hard to be at this moment. Hitchcock's narrative features the woman created rather than creating, entering the fantasy of the other, as a parody of "the sharing of fantasy" required in the sharing of a point of view (Cavell, The World Viewed 65). So in the final scene once again the camera seems to contrast the fragmented body of Jeffries with what might be thought of as Lisa's narcissistically reflected "wholeness," as it travels the length of Jeffries's broken legs and then immediately afterward moves its eye over the Lisa's legs, as she reclines seductively and rather smugly in her masculine garb in the chair nearby. However, what we are also plainly given to understand from this "twinning" of their images is their "difference," the misalignment of their respective fantasies about the future life which we assume they will share. For she obviously regards herself as being in Jeffries's life in the capacity of "a tourist on an endless vacation," while he, as all his previous comments make clear, thinks of his stay in her

life as a forced and unforseen stopover on the way back to his "real" life.

This scene also shows Lisa to be not only a beautiful "spectacle," and a narcissistic reflection of wholeness for Jeffries, but as Jeffries is also, she is a watcher in the guise of an active participant in life. In fact, both she and Jeffries, I would suggest, are poseurs, fictionalizing their presence to one another, and to the world, most clearly when they play the detective and his girl friday, but something of this attitude is noticeable also in the superficial language with which they speak to one another. This is the "ready-made" language of the movies, and rather hard to define, since it has the illusive quality of seeming not to originate with them, but yet to be perfectly germane in their artificial milieu. (Who is to say just where their self-consciousness begins and ends?) The terminology of the stage and screen which they use as well is easier to define: ("It's opening night of the last depressing week of L. B. Jeffries in a cast.") Both Lisa and Jeffries relinquish the burden of authority, (or the "burden of creation" as Cavell calls it 18), by refusing to give up their spectator's seats which keep them separate from experience. In his professional life, Jeffries does seem passionate about wanting to be involved, to be in motion, ("I can take pictures from a jeep, or a water buffalo"), to spontaneously brave the harsh challenge of whatever natural environment he happens to be in. He also prides himself on his intuitive skills for keeping one

step ahead of explosive political confrontations around the globe. All of this seems to me, given his resistance to change in even the smallest detail in his personal life, (nostalgia is attached even to his cigarette case), like a frenetic attempt to get closer to something that feels like moving with the temporal flux of life. This I believe is a thematic corollary to Lisa's quest to appear to be "up to date" on the latest fashion trend. It is Jeffries' reluctance toward any change in his private life, preferring especially that the "status quo," be maintained in his relationship with Lisa, and Lisa's professional habit to promote the value of change, that explains why they cannot move together in the environment of a shared perspective. For Lisa threatens to minimize the importance of such changes for Jeffries, to expose them as superficial surface changes, of scenery and clothing, thereby effectively challenging their value to him as a means of achieving a sense of presentness to the world. It is because he fears change so much that he will only undergo geographical variety. Lisa rightly guesses the exclusive nature of his occupation, though she is perhaps ignorant of the extent to which he would shut out unmediated emotional experience, when she charges him with professional snobbery. One might suspect at first that this is an accusation which he might level at her; however, though it is harder to see, perhaps because it is so cleverly disguised as masculinity, on a second look his pridefully assumed un-sophisticated mien becomes apparent. Later he will defensively retaliate, and they will

compromise on difference in bad faith, he by reifying and valorizing the ordinary secrets of femininity, and she by adopting his adventurous masculine pose as her own.

It is here that Modleski's thesis concerning the female image as a deep and unrecognizable aspect of the male creator has important implications for Hitchcock's film. Because even though the image of Lisa in the concluding scene of the film is part of an ironic address to us, and therefore a conscious, expression of Hitchcock, the male artist/ director, on the level of the narrative she is an unconscious or disavowed "creation" of the protagonist in the sense that she has quietly conformed to his image of an ideal mate. To this extent Lisa's changing appearance, and her gradual self-effacement, is another symptom of Jeffries's loss of "participation" in the world, of his making of Lisa an idol of his consciousness by refusing to acknowledge the extent to which his consciousness finds itself mirrored in the world, or in the Other. I am using the term "participation" as Barfield does to refer to the recognition that "there stands behind the phenomena, and on the other side of them from me a represented which is of the same nature as . . . the perceiving self inasmuch as it is not mechanical or accidental, but psychic and voluntary" (Barfield 42). Hitchcock makes Jeffries's idolatrous perception unmistakably clear, while simultaneously demonstrating our complicity in this kind of activity, by organizing the fantastic space of the mise-en-scene so that we automatically read the various images of events in the courtyard

by inferring their related significance to Jeffries's life.

As Lisa enters Jeffries's idolatrous vision, she enters a world of shades, becoming a phantom herself. Lt. Doyle's first image of her, in fact, is as a shadow on Jeffries's ceiling. He sees her reflection on the night that Lisa stays with Jeffries, having by that time committed herself totally to Jeffries's view of the murder. At one point, when she vaguely understands the vested intellectual interests that she and Jeffries have in the murder, and conceives of a possible connectedness to the human tragedy outside their desire to take some credit for predicting it, and just briefly remembers the emptiness created by the leaving of grief, she herself thinks of them as having become "two of the most frightening ghouls." It is in this context of Lisa's disembodiment that I would like to suggest that we see Jeffries's looking at the body of the woman as a problem of looking <u>for</u> the body of the woman, or more accurately, because of its dual and paradoxical sense of relocating and of obscuring from sight, of "re-covering" the body of the woman.

In this I am seeing the thematic connection between the two genres of the film, the murder mystery and the romance/comedy. For, in the mystery story, the protagonist L.B. Jeffries tries to locate the missing body of his neighbor Mrs. Thorwald, allegedly murdered by her husband, the travelling salesman. Mr. Thorwald is suspected by Jeffries of having dismembered his wife in an effort to make her body transportable, and to thereby hide her incriminating, tell-tale body from view, to, as it were,

prevent her from making his presence known to the world. Thorwald's project might then be seen as a thematic parallel to the dilemma which Jeffries faces in his personal life, and that is how to accommodate his girlfriend Lisa, or not, in his life, and in his professional travels as a photographer. Of significance to their comparable situation is the fact that both men are involved in "saving the appearances" of women. Thorwald is a costume jewelry salesman, and Jeffries is a photographer, who sometimes photographs women, as we surmise from seeing the magazine covers in the opening shots. Though Thorwald's crime against the body of the woman has been paralleled to Jeffries's "sadistic" voyeurism before,19 I would like to suggest further to this idea that Jeffries's looking, at Lisa especially, is not only a seeing that would fragment her into fetishized component parts, which is what the parallel with Miss Torso's image has been thought to suggest, but that motivating his vision of woman is a desire to save her appearance of "un-knowability." This is a need which results in a splitting of her being into an image and an identity, an image, which narcissistically reflects his self, and coincidentally blinds his perception of her as an expressive body, a being who might declare his "knownness" to the world.20

To begin with, Jeffries's looking at the body of the woman, as I believe the film presents it, seems not so much to be a question of whether or not he objectifies the woman for his own enjoyment. Nor does it seem to depend upon the idea of his

taking up our vicariously possessive gaze at the woman, although of course this is not to suggest that the issue of his looking at her is not central to the film. However, neither does it seem immediately contingent upon the question of which of the sexes has the power of the gaze. Though I would not hesitate to suggest that this power is always a (suspiciously) male prerogative in Rear Window, whether the woman is seen to be looking when he is not looking or not (Modleski 85). Even Lisa at her most animate and authoritative always ends up on the other end of Jeffries's or Hitchcock's camera lens. Rather, the problem seems to be one of Jeffries looking at the woman and not seeing her; it turns upon his acknowledging Lisa or not, and subsequently upon the necessity of her transformation into someone else. The issue of how and why the body of the woman needs to transform, why she needs to "suffer creation by the man" is an issue that Stanley Cavell explores in relation to the genre of film he calls "the remarriage comedy." In his article, "Ugly Duckling, Funny Butterfly: Bette Davis and Now, Voyager," Cavell refers to the thematic prevalence of a "misrecognition" of the other in this genre, which I believe is also a theme central to Rear Window.21 For, it seems to me that with Jeffries's apprehension about Lisa, the issue of point of view, and the engendered gaze is subsumed by the more general problem of Jeffries's wish to deny the Other and the need for Lisa to suffer "creation" at his hands, or in his eyes. Hitchcock centers his exploration of this problem around the issue of

marriage and Jeffries's, (I will use Stanley Cavell's term), "skeptical" attitude toward this possibility of union.22

Accordingly, I see the repetitive and self-destructive cycle Jeffries perpetuates during the course of the film as one which can be described by means of Cavell's ideas about the ordinary and about skepticism. For Jeffries appears to have the skeptical intent of repudiating the ordinary world, which is according to Timothy Gould, the world of domesticity, the "dull round" that Blake spoke of, or the "weight of custom" that Wordsworth mentions, or what Jeffries himself calls "this swamp of boredom."23 Gould, in summarizing these concepts as they are meaningful for Cavell, says that the willingness to repudiate the ordinary temporal world of the domestic and the everyday, ". . . is at once the most common and the most intellectual (or intellectualized) form of the wish to repudiate the world as such" (Gould 121). I would like to suggest, that, similarly, Jeffries's refusal to claim Lisa is seen by Hitchcock to be, in a more general and profound sense, a skeptical denial of the presence of the other.

Skepticism, which Cavell says, is the enemy of marriage, is according to Gould, often viewed as a kind of success, or as the result of intellectual progress (Gould 121). This is exactly the logic of which Jeffries is disabused by Stella when he tries to defray her suggestion to marry:

> Stella: I'm not an educated woman Mr. Jeffries, but I can tell you one thing. When people see each other, like each other, they ought'a come together ...wham! Like a couple of taxis of Broadway, not sit around and analyze each other

like two specimens in a bottle.
Jeffries: There's an intelligent way to approach marriage.
Stella: Intelligence! Nothing has caused the human race so much trouble as intelligence.

Another way of understanding the friendly confrontation between Stella and Jeffries is to see that he has the skeptical intent of refuting the expressiveness of the body of the other (Cavell, "The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman" 34). It is Jeffries's skepticism, that does not allow him to trust what Stella is certain of, and that is the immediate truth of the body's expressiveness: ("Lisa's loaded to her fingertips with love for you. I've got two words of advice for you--marry her.") The insurance company nurse proves her talent for "fortune-telling" when she relates her story about predicting the stock market crash by looking at and "reading" the body of the director of General Motors. ("When General Motors has to go to the bathroom ten times a day, the whole country is ready to let loose.") Conversely, we notice that it is, in fact, the woman's disembodied cry that twice opens up the possibility of a fissure or absence in the self-reflexive world in front of which, and outside of which, Jeffries positions himself, a fissure which also makes his recovery of this world as a totality possible.

To return then to the Jeffries's narrative act, it seems to me that it is an activity that is not dependent upon his perceiving the woman's body decisively either as bearing the threat of castration, or the equally threatening lack of castration, but upon the fact of his necessarily situating himself in a studied relation to this double threat, taking up a

philosophical position of skepticism, in Cavell's terms, towards the "ordinary" mundane world of domesticity and marriage. The passage from Cavell's essay on Ophuls's Letter to an Unknown Woman which describes the closing scene of this film, could just as easily be referring to Jeffries's attempt to ward of the possibility of the world being known, which would then mean the possibility of his own presence being known by the world marching on outside the domain of his consciousness, and, therefore, the possibility of his own death, an attempt shown to be hopelessly inadequate during Thorwald's attack. In this scene Jeffries tries to blind Thorwald with flashes from his camera, a method of defense which requires him to shield his own eyes with his hands. Cavell describes the protagonist's final gesture in Ophuls's film which seems to me to be the same gesture which Jeffries makes during the climatic moment when Thorwald demands that Jeffries acknowledge his presence and the existence of "a secret private world out there," as Doyle calls it, a realm "of space and time," as Barthes says, "where [one is] not an image."24 Here is Cavell on the final moments of Ophuls's film:

> And I think we can say that when the man covers his eyes-an ambiguous gesture, between avoiding the horror of knowing the existence of others and avoiding the horror of not knowing it, between avoiding the threat of castration that makes the knowledge accessible and avoiding the threat of outcastness should that threat fail- he is in that gesture [covering his eyes] both warding off his seeing something and warding off at the same time his being seeing by something. . . his own existence being known (Cavell, "The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman" 40).

I think it telling in this respect that both Modleski and Ruth Perlmutter agree that Jeffries's reason "for resisting

marriage," which is that Lisa is not ordinary enough, seems "patently absurd" (Modleski 76). Perlmutter, according to Modleski, finds this implausible excuse a means for Hitchcock to induce frustration in the reader and the consequent desire for their union. I agree insofar as it seems that we are placed in a position of wanting our expectations for a romantic union fulfilled. However, it is more interesting to me that Jeffries talks about Lisa's inappropriateness for him in terms of excessiveness: ("she's too talented, too beautiful, too sophisticated, too everything but what I want.") This invites the suggestion that Jeffries would like to put off naming his desire so that he might be certain of its object, because he does not want to experience the vagaries and disappointments of desire in the world. And this is just the question that Thorwald will not let Jeffries put off any longer when he confronts the photographer behind the screen of his fantasies and asks him, "what is it that you want?"

The irony of Jeffries's search for difference, as I mentioned previously, is that it ends, to his satisfaction, with him valorizing the obviously reified appearance of difference. Yet it is from his skeptical position in front of his rear window world with its accessible and knowable yet distant scenes of ordinary life that Jeffries necessarily disavows the presence of Lisa who may, he fears, prove finally to be just an "appearance," as opposed to an "appearing," to put the problem in Sartre's terms.25 This is accordingly the very argument that Jeffries

uses against marriage to Lisa, that she is essentially "shallow," and interested in life only as " . . . a new dress, the latest scandel, and a lobster dinner. . . ." Jeffries, therefore, paradoxically locates difference in the veil or in the clothing and jewelry of the woman, that which covers her body and could yet be stripped away to reveal, and allow recovery of, her presence. Peter Brooks comes to a similar conclusion about the representation of the woman's body after studying pictorial and narrative representations of the nude in the nineteenth century, in which, he says, ". . . unveiling ultimately encounters a veil, which is here the ultimate veil: the woman's sex as unknowable and unrepresentable . . . ."26 Again, Brooks notes that ". . . the female sex [is found] to be itself a veil, perhaps from the anxiety that its final unveiling would reveal there is nothing to unveil . . ." (Brooks 29). Hitchcock seems to present an ironic look at the question of difference that occupied Lacan. Stephen Heath, in his article "Difference," remarks that somewhere for Lacan, the woman is always the exact image of herself contained as she is, on the God face of the Other, infinitely unknowable, knowable only as the different, visibly, certainly that . . . if that image fails, there is nothing left but the threat of castration.27

Hitchcock depicts Jeffries indulging in what I have called an "idolatrous" perception of Lisa, insofar as he is seen to be making a distinction between Lisa and her clothing, and thereby affecting a split between her appearance and her identity.

Herein lies Hitchcock's self-conscious suggestion that in the movies "a woman and her garb are a divisible whole" (Cavell, The World Viewed 45). Jeffries exhibits this perceptual tendency when he asks Lisa, at the moment of her first appearing, if she is "the same Lisa Freemont who never wears the same dress twice." His words, later, recall Stella's prediction about the stockmarket crash, and her implicit warning about separating the body from its appearance when he tells Lisa that "they oughta list [her] dress on the stock exchange." Jeffries's idolatry as Hitchcock presents it is summed up neatly by Barfield, who says that before the scientific revolution "the world was more like a garment men wore about them than a stage on which they moved" (Barfield 94). Coincidentally, Sandra Gilbert notes that fashion is a product of the industrial revolution and made its emergence in art as a metaphor of the self (as mask or expression) only in modern times.28 Jeffries sees Lisa's clothing in light of what for Gilbert is a typically masculine sense of "the theatrical nature of clothing itself": "the heart's truth which stands apart from false costumes" (Gilbert 194). He is therefore adamant that Lisa cannot change her nature and be able to come with him on his travels simply by changing her apparel. Lisa, on the other hand, seems to exhibit the feminine understanding of fashion as "creating identity" that may be changed at will (Gilbert 193). However, with Jeffries's refusal to see the possibility of her transformation, she begins to not know herself either: ("I guess I'm not the girl I thought I was.") The film is thereafter a

steady process of splitting her being between an outer and inner, ". . . the problem of unknowness [being] one of splitting the other, as between outside and inside, [or] between perception and imagination" (Cavell, "The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman" 22). By the end of the film, then, Lisa is no longer announcing herself but being announced by the song, which has been developing simultaneously during her re-creation as an idol of Jeffries' consciousness (Modleski 84).

The manner in which Miss Torso's image is presented by Hitchcock suggests the problems and possibilities of Jeffries's idolatrous relationship with the Other, and indicates the challenge to his imagination which the image of the woman poses. Accordingly, our distant and truncated view of her is all the more seductive because on some level we know that she is placed there by Hitchcock for us and Jeffries to watch. 29 When I say her image is seductive, I do not mean to suggest exactly that her "routine" performances invite us to share a voyeuristic fantasy with Jeffries, but rather that it is compelling in the sense that it opens up that dangerous and delightful gap between the fantasy of a world fully present with its promise of a "unified ego," and the real world where this image is a made, and mediated exchange. Miss Torso's image is seductive, interestingly, and ironically, because it allows us to acknowledge the filmic world as a fantasy, and at the same time, it addresses us as privileged viewers of this dream or fantasy which is being presented to us.30 Charles Affron has noticed this similar effect in the

musical in which the appearance of the showgirl requires that we recognize a space that is exclusively cinematic.31

Paradoxically, in terms of what is thought to be cinema's voyeuristic basis of address, Miss Torso's presence, or rather non-presence, calls attention to the filmic world as fictional, and yet, as it does so, it does not disrupt our viewing, but rather places us securely in front of this realm, which is not so much exposed as being unreal, as it is offered by the filmmaker as a shared fantasy with the spectator. She is the focus of a united community of audience, male character, and camera, all of whom bear, rather more easily than not, the burden of voyeuristic complicity. Her fragmented presence, then, assures the spectator of this filmic world of wholeness, but not in the world as Imaginary, as Metz suggests, but rather as recognizably fantastic (Metz, "A Note on Two Kinds of Voyeurism" The Imaginary Signifier 89-98).

Miss Torso's appearance is an indication of the fantasy machine of cinema at work, calling up the camera's presence, even as it summons up hers, revealing and honoring the image-maker and confirming the place of the audience as much as she is presenting herself. In this sense she maintains the border place between fantasy and reality; she holds the "fantasmatic body" of the film together, and to the extent that she does so her own presence as a "real" person, with whom we might identify or sympathize, disappears.32 In this sense our relationship to her is analogous to Jeffries's relationship with Lisa. We are

therefore united in her absence, and do not in any sense "identify" with her. In fact, our position regarding her, I would say, could easily be thought of as skeptical. It seems to be cinema's way with women, as Cavell has suggested. He compares the blanket, strung like a curtain between Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert in their hotel room to the cinema:

> In It Happened One Night the famous blanket that conceals the woman and thereby magnifies her metaphysical presence dramatizes the problem of unknowness as one of splitting the other as between outside and inside, say between perception and imagination, and since the blanket is a figure for a film screen, film as such is opened up in the split. p.22 in Images.

The camera in Rear Window does not bring Miss Torso's presence to our attention; instead it verifies our sense of place. In fact, when we do finally get a close-up of Miss Torso, as the camera moves apart from Jeffries's point-of-view at the window to maintain an autonomous position in the courtyard, we do not recognize her. Her identity is not assured by the close-up, for it is too much unlike the distant image of her that we have "known." This seems to me an ingenious way for Hitchcock to show how the camera, and cinema, makes the woman disappear, and for him to parallel the photographer protagonist's attempt to not see Lisa, to make her disappear, with Thorwald's similar "sleight of hand."

Earlier, before Jeffries is awakened to the world and the camera is freely surveying Jeffries's apartment, it stops on the framed negative of a woman's face, framed, it seems, as a trophy or memento of the professional accomplishment of the

photographer, rather than as an homage to the woman whose resemblance it pretends to represent, but has strangely benighted. Beside the negative image are copies of the magazine which feature the "positive" image of this woman on the cover, her likeness duplicated many times over, and by this reproduction of appearances, attesting to the photographer's professional success. The woman's presence is again displaced by the value of her image as a mirror of the photographer's self-esteem and identity in the professional world. This is the thematic corollary of Jeffries's involvement in his world, and with Lisa, and the nature of the affect of Hitchcock's self-conscious treatment of the woman.

To reiterate, it seems to me that Jeffries's chosen profession, his photography, is the technical knowledge with which he denies the ordinary or the domestic. His search to capture the "dramatically different" moment is a failed attempt to hold off the on-rushing world. (It fails most dramatically during the catastrophic auto race, during which his leg is broken, and later when Thorwald attacks him.) Stella's maintaining that a couple ought to come together like "a couple of taxis on Broadway" recalls the accidental collision of subject and object during the auto accident, and her metaphor suggests the danger Jeffries conceives of in such a meeting. Jeffries refers, interestingly, to the possibility of either he or Lisa being able to find a place for themselves in the other's world as making "a hit" or not.

The photography which is Jeffries's means of securing his professional identity, and his medium of expression, is symptomatic of a kind of "failure of voice," a means of expression which only seems to narcissistically reflect the integrity of the self, but finally comes back to the self as a haunting mechanical echo, reminding one instead of the temporal world outside of consciousness (Gould 121). Hence the annoying voice of the radio announcer (the first "human" voice heard in the film- a voice mechanically mediated) interrupts the musician during his morning shave with a query: " Men, are you over forty... tired, run-down..?) This male artist will create the vehicle for the voice, the song, which will name the woman, and in so doing re-name himself, re-establish his public identity as song writer and secure him material success. Similarly, it is my contention that it becomes Lisa's burden to re-present the world of Imaginary wholeness for Jeffries, to secure his sense of immutable identity. Yet Lisa, moving over into his self-reflexive fantasy world with the intention of verifying the integrity of Jeffries's perspective, ironically, becomes the means of deflecting the glance of the other back at Jeffries, and making his presence known to a world that suddenly becomes dangerously present.

Something that is not often considered about Rear Window and indeed is difficult to respond to in any psychoanalytic reading, (premised as it is likely to be on the metaphor of the film as mirror), or in any reading that sees Jeffries's

voyeuristic position exactly mirroring our own, is the fact mentioned by Modleski in passing, that the world that Jeffries lives in and interprets is patently different from the "larger-than-life-world of most films" (Modleski 79). Its fantastic status is in some measure, and at various times, an address to the viewer, fantastic <u>for</u> us, not just fantastic, and not for the characters. At these points of hearing ourselves being addressed by the film, and being asked to notice its discursive means, we could say that we become aware of a separation between the subject of the enonce, the "I" which Colin MacCabe says is the comforting fixed point of the spectator, and the subject of the enonciation, the "it," which he calls the psychoanalytic subject, constantly threatening the stability of the "I." This is the spectator as he or she is caught up in the play of events on the screen, as he or she "utters," or "enounces" the film.33 This separation MacCabe describes as a "constitutive moment" at which we experience ourselves in the very moment of separation . . . ." I introduce these terms only as a means of referring to our experience of these moments, and their emotive effect, as a thematic correlation to Jeffries's circumstances. For during those moments we recognize that we are held someplace, over a gap, or on a boundary between the symbolic and imaginary realms, a boundary area which in this film, I would like to suggest, seems to be mediated by the figure of the woman, both for us and for Jeffries.

Like Hitchcock's Rear Window , Polanski's The Tenant (1976) has generally been regarded as a film which intends to expose the analogously voyeuristic behaviour of its protagonist Trelkovsky, (played by Polanski himself), and its viewers. Linda Williams argues for the film as a "scenario of repressed desire . . . played out in the orchestration of gazes - both our own and Trelkovsky's." 34 Certain images, she contends, provide us with an " . . . infinite mirror reflection of our own position as voyeurs of the film" (Williams 70). Virginia Wexman maintains similarly that the viewer perceives the self-alienation and obsessive voyeurism, that is characteristic of Trelkovsky, and is subsequently forced to ". . . face up to . . . " the ". . . squalid nature of [his/her] pleasure . . . " in the ". . . false self of the filmic body . . . " which Polanski has created.35 The spectator, in this argument, is made shamefully conscious of his/her crude and illicit need to watch the macabre events of the film by the director's persistent attention to window frames, his placing a film within the film, as well as his thematic and structural emphasis on Trelkovsky's covert looking (Wexman 74).

While neither Wexman nor Williams treats Polanski's film exclusively as belonging to an imaginary realm, Wexman in particular seems to be saying that the director intends a meaningful interruption of the film's imaginary relationship to the spectator, without making it clear exactly how Polanski is able to make of an analogy a disruption, and one which is a point of self-reflection and self-knowledge for the viewer. (When, I

feel inclined to ask, does an image of a window transparently represent a window, and when does it turn into a mirror reflecting my voyeuristic isolation ?) We need to ask how our engagement with individual films can be so simply and consistently schizophrenic? How can we take an ignorant pleasure in the image's instantaneous "guarantee of a unified ego," while simultaneously evaluating our unauthentic or "disembodied" involvement with the represented events? 36 Though we might have to account for the difference between a critical and a casual viewing of the film, and perhaps between an immediate and a retrospective understanding, what still remains to be asked is whether or not self-knowledge is the privilege (privilege: privus: private + lex: law), of those who manage to escape the power of the image, of those who hope to protect that authoritative privacy, we might say, upon which the image often tends, or intends, to aggressively intrude? 37 Criticism lately as a whole, might begin to mark its paradoxical tendency to speak, as if from a place of "self-possession" while crediting the notion of a heterogeneous "self-in-process" to particular artists and works. Finally, even if we should somehow become aware of our voyeuristic detachment, perhaps by noticing the film's alien "madeness," are we necessarily disengaged from the process to the extent that we are inclined to question our continued involvement as morally reprehensible? For, actually recognizing the film's invitation to look might not result in disorientation, and the self-recrimination that follows the

viewer's discovery of hidden voyeuristic impulses. It might just as well secure him or her in a complimentary bond of a kind that seems to have gone unrecognized in discussions conducted from behind the conceptual mask of a transcendental subject.38 Here we might remember Miss Torso's appearance in Rear Window and the experience of solidarity between filmmaker and audience that is created during her "performances."

Conversely, there is a certain reflexive moment in Rear Window when we do find ourselves no longer able to take our emotional distance from the events and characters for granted. It is a case in which our sympathetic connection to the characters, which seems to have been mysteriously held in abeyance, is brought to consciousness by our awakening to our "real", rather than cinematic, distance from them. During one such instance in the film, which Hitchcock seems to have organized to demonstrate just this point, we are given pause to reflect upon the morality of our looking, or rather, and this seems an important qualification, upon the "privateness" of that which we witness. This is also the point at which Jeff and Lisa move away from their vigil at the window, and with shameful glances at one another, begin to debate the ethics of voyeurism. As the scene begins, we are watching the nocturnal happenings of Jeffries's neighborhood from his rear window with him and Lisa when Miss Lonelyhearts returns to her apartment from the local tavern, bringing with her a new acquaintance. For an instant then we feel as though we are part of a boorish invasion of Miss

Lonelyhearts's privacy, and the sense of our collective leering is mirrored back to us while we watch, through partially drawn shades, the youthful stranger's carelessly amorous attempts to get closer to her.

This private realm, which we now feel we have entered, has a perceptible boundary only at the moment when it is felt to have been violated, and this has very little to do with our suddenly acknowledging the sanctity of the space which Miss Lonelyhearts occupies, since we have accessed her apartment window, unself-consciously, many times before. Nor is it a matter of the intimate nature of her encounter with the young man, since the personal lives of all the apartment dwellers in the complex, have always been, as we have come to expect them to be, a relative array of "open secrets." We have no such feelings of guilt and embarrassment for Miss Torso; nor do we experience a self-questioning reflex when we see that she is fighting off the "wolves" at her door. We do not "turn away" from the sight of Lisa being molested by Thorwald when he returns to find her searching his apartment and personal effects for clues. Rather our feeling of having trespassed, which curiously coincides with one of the rare moments in the film when the courtyard world suddenly becomes "real," stems, I think, from recognizing the nature and extent of Miss Lonelyhearts's estrangement from the world, the profound depth of her loneliness, which cannot be filled up by the physical nearness of another, nor by the possible intimacy of sexual contact. Because she has placed any

faith in it at all, her attempt to reach for what we instinctively know will not console her seems all the more pathetic. In fact, this spurious physical encounter is actually a threat to her proprietary dream of intimacy. When we perceive this embarrassing disparity between the young man's more easily interpreted desire and her own, we understand what her "guest" does not, and that is her longing to be intimately "known" by another, her silent desire to be "be-spoken," something which is later simulated for her when she hears the musician's newly completed love song, "Lisa." Upon hearing the work Miss Lonelyhearts is inspired, brought to life like the automaton Olympia, by the expression of the artist's desire, the desire of the Other.39 In Miss Lonelyhearts's situation is revealed her longing to be authenticated, or realized, in the role that she has created for herself to play, (the role of the beloved). She would have her "character" enlivened, it seems, just as Lisa would animate the role of the detective's "girl friday," and yet, she hangs on to the fearful knowledge that she may always be merely a performer. The song heard coming from the musician's suite while we watch her torment that evening is "Mona Lisa," and its words speak of her tragic desire to remain "a cold and lonely, lovely piece of art." Yet the tragedy is not that she will always be conscious of a distance between herself and her audience, but that she may never have an audience, and so may never make her consciousness of herself immortal by having a consciousness of her audience.40 This perhaps accounts for our

and Jeffries's immediate apprehension upon noticing the age difference between her and the young man.

Ironically, though the stranger wants no part in Miss Lonelyhearts's romantic charade, his insistence on himself and her as physical beings, his impatient refusal to be transformed into her dream-lover when he enters this private theatre of her desire, results only in her withdrawal further into in her "paralyzed fantasy." Both she and Lisa would share their dreams, but their would-be lovers have their own private fantasies, or fantasies of privacy in Jeffries's case. However, having the more artful disposition, Lisa accepts the role of performer knowingly, almost as if she senses that what Jeffries wants is, in fact, an imaginary other, rather than someone who would, he fears, draw him away from his narcissistic speculations, and into the world of difference and change and the vagaries of desire.

Herein lies the irony of Rear Window, of L.B. Jeffries's intellectual debate about marriage and his skepticism about the presence of the other: we can discern the silent pain of Miss Lonelyhearts even from an almost dehumanizing (cinematic) distance, and so can Jeff and Lisa. For they also concede at this point that "there's some pretty private stuff going on out there," granting as they do so that Miss Lonelyhearts suffers, and that she has a right to her suffering; it is almost as if they have to "forgive" her her loneliness, admitting as they do this, that in their impertinent tendency to caricature her pain,

they have overlooked their obligation to dignify it by granting her otherness, which would seem to be what is necessary in order to look upon her isolation with the right attitude. It would mean choosing to forfeit, temporarily, as if this might be possible, our "given" positions as viewers of a drama. 41 Afterwards we are given this option to chose the border of the stage, which Hitchcock has earlier chosen for us as Jeffries's window frame. It is a choice, presumed but not prescribed by him, a border which is two-way, being a boundary of the self and of the fictional or cinematic world. Our point of view on this world departs from Jeffries once again, though our spatial place remains the same, as ever afterwards we remember Miss Lonelyhearts's suffering, while Jeffries, as Hitchcock make us anxiously notice, is inclined to forget it.

Critics have referred to the turning point in Jeffries and Lisa's relationship as coming at a time when Jeffries is finally able to disengage himself from Lisa's presence so that he may "enjoy" watching her from a cinematic distance.42 However, this crucial moment which occurs when Lisa has entered his courtyard cinema in search of Mrs. Thorwald's wedding ring is the one time when Jeffries is actually the most visibly uncomfortable in his spectator's chair (apart from the interval when Thorwald demands that he leave it.) Cavell has asked what is revealed of us when we watch the suffering of characters in a drama and his conclusion might apply to Jeffries as he watches paralyzed while the woman he loves is at the mercy of a murderer.

> What is revealed is what I share with everyone else present with me at what is happening: that I am hidden and silent and fixed. In a word, that there is a point at which I am helpless before the acting and suffering of others. But I know the true point of my helplessness only if I have acknowledged totally the fact and the true cause of their suffering. Otherwise I am not emptied of help, but withholding it . . . . In another word, what is revealed is my separateness from what is happening to them; that I am I, and here. It is only in this perception of them as separate from me that I make them present. Then I make them <u>other</u> and face them (<u>Must we?</u> 338).

Our feelings for Miss Lonelyhearts differ slightly from Jeffries's anxiety at the moment when he sees Thorwald attack Lisa. For though our perceived distance from her determines her presentness to us, it is not that we believe that we should be doing something more for Miss Lonelyhearts at this moment, or feeling something different, or more compassionately for her, instead of merely passively looking on, but rather it is that we should not be watching her at all. It is as though being an audience for her were to compound or reify her state of painful isolation, though paradoxically, as we know, it is her sense of isolation which makes her wish for an audience (Cavell, <u>Must We?</u> 351).

As we watch Miss Lonelyhearts on that particular evening when she dares venture beyond her self-created and self-creating stage into the real world of uncertain desire, we understand the despair that results from her being a prisoner of that fictional realm. We see her "beside herself" in her grief, as she performs for an imaginary audience, or so she thinks of it, though, as we and Jeffries know, her audience is really only invisible. This is the omniscient secret we are entrusted with

by Hitchcock. Our invisible presence, is always recognized by Hitchcock, and we are always reassured in our invisibility, such as, for example, when we are privileged by the camera with sights of which the protagonist is unaware. On the other hand, there is almost nothing so uncomfortable and alienating as watching from an "unseen" place while someone rehearses alone (in front of a mirror perhaps), for an audience inside their head. Nothing denies our sense of hidden presentness to the world more, our sense of a chosen temporary absence from it. And at the same time, nothing makes so dramatically apparent the split between the private and public self, exposing the fantastic nature of that split and of that unity, and, depending on the act we see, nothing might haunt us half so much with the knowledge of how devious and unknown this being may be, (who is, ironically, determined to present the world an unchangeable singularity of being), how close to the edges of madness and self-destruction this performance can bring him.

The Tenant has been credited with a subversive denial of the "the mythical unity of the subject," by Williams, who maintains that the film accomplishes this in part by withholding the potentially comforting sense of narrative closure that might have been affected by its having provided the spectator with a logical cause for Trelkovsky's madness (Williams 72). While I would definitely agree that The Tenant is closed at the price of the viewer's satisfaction, I must argue about the kind and course of the discomfort I know as a viewer. For, I feel a constant

uneasiness while watching Polanski's film, and this is certainly caused in a broad sense by my not understanding Trelkovsky's illness, but in particular, it seems to me that the experience of his insanity, as Polanski creates it, would not finally be mitigated by a rational explanation. For my discomfort is connected throughout to a growing awareness of Trelkovsky's disintegrating presence of mind, and from the sense of his world itself being eerily unfamiliar. Even before I am certain of his paranoia and realize that he is masochistically assuming the identity of Simone Choule, the woman who was the former tenant of his new apartment, and who has lately committed suicide, I am perplexed by the insidious ambiguity of events, gestures, and objects which the camera makes "notable" (Stephen Heath, Questions of Cinema 135). (What does the cafe owner really mean, or does he intend anything malicious, by offering Trelkovsky the dead woman's brand of cigarettes?) I find myself inside a symmetrical totality of meaning, which seems to take shape in spite of me, and a narrative which is restricted, with a pornographic insistence, to only one possible resolution, the protagonist's inevitable death.43 I both suspect, and resist the suspicion, that Simone Choule's history will inevitably repeat itself, that narrative closure will be coincident with Trelkovsky's suicide. The unusual narrative work required by this film, therefore, as it involves confirming the gradual effacement of our personalized point of view, paradoxically, "decentralizes" the spectator, not by alerting her generally to

the degrading activity of watching, or by breaking the perceptual illusion of oneness with the camera or the screen, or by withholding a psychological rationale, but by binding her in a tight network of "unbearable significance." 44

In this sense our participation as viewers is analogous to Trelkovsky's paranoid hermeneutic, and furthermore, it is affectively analogous. We perceive the death of our surrogate to be an inexplicable necessity, "necessary, but we do not know why," "wrapped in meaning," (just as Simone Choule's ineffable pain and death is), but yet still a mystery (Cavell, Must We ? 341). Here is Cavell on the circumstance of freedom and authority that seem to prevail in this film:

> Kant tells us that man lives in two worlds, in one of which he is free and in the other determined. It is as if in the theatre these two worlds are faced off against one another. In their intimacy and their mutual inaccessibility. The audience is free of the circumstance and passion of the characters, but that freedom cannot reach the arena in which it could become effective (Cavell, Must We? 317).

Even though we are sure that his suicide occurs in a world of chance and change, of "radical contingency," because his insane mind is turned away from us, we are plagued with an uncanny presentiment of a supernatural mechanism at work "concealed beneath the ordinary appearance of animation," a partially formed sense that his death is, as Trelkovsky himself believes, the climax of some demonic drama already in play before he actually emerges on the scene (Cavell, Must We? 341) .45

In the opening segment of the film, accordingly, the camera calls attention to itself as a "manipulative and pre-cognitive

presence" as it begins an extended establishing shot from an "impossible place" near the ledge of a third story window (Heath, Questions 49). As well, during this credit sequence we see an en-capsulation of Trelkovsky's "fate" as the camera makes a mechanical sweep of the courtyard and the exterior of an apartment building, defining it as an enclosed arena in which, as we watch, a woman standing in a window (whom we assume in retrospect is Simone Choule) is transformed on the spot into a man (whom we also recognize later as Trelkovsky).46 Since Trelkovsky enters this enclosure "as a character" at the end of the prologue, and his arrival starts the narrative proper, this supernatural transformation is made to seem as though it was arranged in advance of his coming. At this early stage, then, it appears as though the camera and narrative processes at work are not clearly sympathetic to, empowered by, or obliged in anyway to his consciousness.

However, the camera also seems not to be the originating power behind Trelkovsky's "incarnation" in the prologue. Like Hitchcock's camera in the opening shot of Rear Window, Polanski's camera initially situates itself in proximity to a curtained window before moving around the courtyard of an apartment complex to regard all of the various possible sights which might present themselves at the neighboring windows. Yet, while sights at Hitchcock's windows readily yield themselves up to the camera, the sights at the windows outside of which we are stationed by Polanski's camera refuse to clearly materialize for us. Because

of this, the mysterious apparitions and transformations with which we are teased in the prologue appear to go on outside the camera's reach, so to speak, in front of the camera, rather than via the camera, which would consequently appear to have less than perfect foreknowledge of them. Later in the film as well, the spectator, as she does in this scene, may not identify with herself "as a pure act of perception," as "transcendental subject," and therefore, often finds it impossible to identify with the camera as that "which has looked before" him/her (Christian Metz, The Imaginary Signifier, 49). There seems to be a treacherous fissure between the camera's presence, and its powers of revelation, since in this scene and afterward, the camera claims knowledge of, but withholds or disclaims access to, a realm of unreachable meaning beneath the surface of this world, and therefore, like Trelkovsky, the viewer finds herself locked "outside" of a world which will not reflect her presence.

In the first part of the film, following the prologue, Polanski is generally consistent in ensuring a sympathetic involvement in the protagonist's world, and he achieves this precisely by anticipating any objective suspicions concerning Trelkovsky's voyeurism. At one point Trelkovsky confides in his office mates, telling them about the people whom he has seen standing "absolutely dead still" in the window opposite his apartment, and Polanski has us compare the lasciviously repulsive explanations they volunteer, to Trelkovsky's own seemingly sincere appeal for understanding; Trelkovsky's concerns thus

appear to originate with a finer sensibility. The director does not take an obviously self-conscious stance toward the issue of voyeurism, the way Hitchcock does, because Polanski's aim is not to have us question the ethical propriety of the protagonist. To do this would automatically mean having us place our faith in the camera as moral arbitrator, and his intention is eventually to dissolve the camera's authority and undermine our reliance on it as a mediator between subjective and objective realms in the filmic world. He would thereby have us question the boundaries of this world and our place in it, so that we might vicariously know the nauseating terror that is symptomatic of Trelkovsky's self-alienation, his failure to secure himself as subject in relation to an object world.

Accordingly, it seems curious to me, that Trelkovsky has been labelled a "stereotypical voyeur," to use the words of one critic, even though there appears to be no evidence in the film to suggest that while he gazes out of his apartment window that he experiences the (perhaps sadistic) pleasures of objectifying an other, or the self-affirming sense of control that such objectification provides the secluded voyeur, as it does L.B. Jeffries (Williams 69). For rather than indulging in the hidden delights of voyeurism, when he does watch others, and particularly when he gazes out of his window at the unindividuated "beings" who appear across the courtyard, he seems to undergo a fearful refraction of his sense of self; he is haunted with a diffuse fear, as the viewer is, by the sight of figures who are

inexplicably and indistinctly present at the bathroom window opposite his apartment, and whose estranged presence is menacingly inanimate.

While the scene in which Trelkovsky and Simone Choule's friend, Stella, watch a Bruce Lee film has been cited as evidence of Trelkovsky's voyeuristic tendencies, and Polanski's self-consciousness regarding this issue, this is not our experience of it (Williams 69). For part of the comic tone of this scene derives from our noticing that Stella, not Trelkovsky, is aroused by the violent images and sounds of breaking bones, and that Trelkovsky is shocked by, and cautiously responding to, the passion which he did not excite, and which he cannot rekindle, though he does try to, after they have left the theatre. Like the landlord, Msr. Zy, who will not look up at Trelkovsky during the bargaining for his apartment, and like the concierge, who turns her back on him until he bribes her to show him the apartment, and who ever afterward mispronounces his name, and like Msr. Zy's wife who confuses him with a charity canvasser, and like the police officer, who barely glances at him during an interview, Stella is part of a world which will not look back and recognize Trelkovsky, which will not become the object world necessary to reflect his subjectivity.

It seems more likely that these scenes of violence on the movie screen are a fantasy of retribution for Trelkovsky, since the image of Bruce Lee's flying kick at his attackers immediately follows upon a scene in which we see Trelkovsky, walking with

Stella, being besieged by a bullying panhandler who asks him for "bread for a starving artist." Despite his meek protestations, the panhandler takes the money right out of Trelkovsky's wallet. The scene ends as we see Trelkovsky, his authority compromised in front of Stella, doing his own fancy footwork, as he tries to wipe something from his shoe after inadvertently stepping in it. The juxtaposition of these scenes suggests that the Kung Fu film is Trelkovsky's projected fantasy of repelling the onslaught of omnivorous forces which would deplete and debase his being.

To return to the voyeurism question, then, it also seems significant that no woman is marked as the desirable object of Trelkovsky's and the viewer's gaze. (Trelkovsky, is not the bearer of our gaze at the woman in the traditional theoretical sense.) An oblique reference to this situation is found in Polanski's autobiography in which Polanski remarks on the difficulty the make-up persons faced in transforming the beautiful Isabel Adjani, who plays Stella, into a "real frump."47 The potentially erotic impact of Adjani's beauty is purposefully muted by dark-rimmed glasses, heavy makeup and unattractive clothing. This attempt to disguise Adjani's appearance, in fact, seems commensurate with a general "displeasure" that is felt by the viewer at the sight of both male and female characters, many of whom are physically repugnant or grotesque in some manner. There is a kind of democracy of ugliness in Trelkovsky's world and as a result there is an ambiguity of visual value in terms of scopophiliac pleasure in the human figure, such that the mise-en-

scene is diffusely charged with significance in a non-polarized (non-genderized) and disconcerting way.

Why does the filmmaker avoid localizing visual pleasure in the human body, and in particular in the female body? Why would Adjani's natural attractiveness corrupt his intentions for involving the spectator, for shaping or opening up the spectator's place in the narrative? In other words, what potential does the image of the desirable woman have for displacing the viewer of Polanski's film? And, we might further ask, how is our position as such analogous to Trelkovsky's, since he too is obliged to take up his place in the narrative "over the dead body of" or in the absence of, the woman, Simone Choule, to whom he fictionalizes a relationship? : (Trelkovsky tells the head nurse at the hospital where Mme. Choule is dying that he is "a friend" who has come to visit her, though he has in fact never met her; then later he tells a nurse the same thing, so that he may find out if Choule has died, and thereby learn if it is possible to take over her apartment.)

The Tenant it seems, more than anything else, is about the protagonist's attempt to locate himself, literally, to find a place of residence, and metaphorically, to establish the boundaries of the self by staving off the aggressive encroachment of the external world on its still tentative borders. Polanski's technique of collapsing the distance between the camera as authoritative medium and Trelkovsky's insane perspective results in an eclipse of the viewer's point of view, such that our

experience is commensurate with that of the protagonist, who is a being lost in space and time, unable to tell what is and is not of relevance to his own life,48 and, therefore, necessarily appropriating for himself "a life to relive" (Kristeva, Powers 50). This method, is most often used in the latter half of the film, and especially at times when Polanski opens a scene just as Trelkovsky is awakening, so that we are disoriented by realizing some surprising new symptom of his metamorphosis at the same moment that he discovers it himself. As well, we are often left searching for coordinates by which to place ourselves, most commonly in Trelkovsky's darkly lit apartment which never does seem to take on a familiar organization. Polanski jars us at one point by having us face a black screen and then suddenly flashing the image of Trelkovsky as he awakens, while at the same time producing a noise on the sound track that sounds like a blind being snapped open. Trelkovsky twitches as he is waking, and it seems as though the sound we have heard has also wakened him. The aggressive suddenness of this image being opened up before us gives us a feeling of having been placed there in front of Trelkovsky "without our consent" and even before we "enter" the scenic space. As such, the film denies recourse to a "comfortably integral subjectivity" and for the spectator this is commensurate, in cinema's terms, with the affect of the "Abject", as Kristeva calls it, the pre-narcissistic, object-less dread of the self apprehending itself as an unbounded place (Kristeva, Powers 8). 49 Trelkovsky is not concerned with asking "who am

I," but instead asks, "where am I?" Accordingly, his terrifying discovery of a tooth in the wall of his apartment contributes to his apprehension about the ex-centricity of the individual and generates his conversation with Stella about the problem of circumscribing the self: (" What right has my head to call itself me?")

To that extent the title of the film in effect obliterates the engendered centrality of Trelkovsky as it identifies him with his place of residence, which has also been Simone Choule's place, and wherein, he finds himself to be a trespasser. (Simone Choule herself is undefinable in terms of polarized gender characteristics: When Trelkovsky suggests that Mme. Choule may have committed suicide because of a disappointment in love with a man, her friend Stella reminds him indignantly that Simone "didn't like men.") The archaeological remnants of her presence which he finds there in the wardrobe just behind the mirrored door are the indication that "an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be [him]. Not at all an other with whom [he may] identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses [him], and through such possession causes [him] to be" (Kristeva, Powers 10). Because Trelkovsky's fantasy of a circumspect being turns into a desperate and paradoxical attempt to establish the outlines of being through an abjection of the self, the moment of the suicide act is therefore the triumphantly grandiose performance of self. His fall from the window is the final stage of his transformation into the image of woman as

cadaver (cadere -to fall), as the image of the borderline place, the sight of which poses the deadliest threat of an illimitable self, of boundaryless being (Kristeva, Powers 3-4).

Trelkovsky's psychosis is such that it is characterized by the desire for purity, for the poles by which he tries to establish himself are the more archaic "pure and impure," rather than those of sexual difference (Kristeva, Powers 82). In Kristeva's terms, Trelkovsky is unable to incorporate the Other, the revengeful Maternal who is the guardian of the place of demarcation between the profane and the sacred, and accordingly it is always a woman who hinders him from securing refuge in the father's "respectable house," (as Msr. Zy calls his apartment building), and who threatens him instead with incorporation or devouring (Kristeva, Powers 13,72,101). The first female who bars his passage into the apartment building is the concierge, and her pet lap dog, who welcomes Trelkovsky with a similar viciousness, is merely an extension of the threat posed by her exorbitant body. Similarly, the church where Trelkovsky goes to attend the funeral of Simone Choule eventually turns into a trap for him in which he is seen to temporarily forget "where he is" (Cavell, Must We? 319). The possibility of a "natural" consolation, is conceived of by him during the service, while he watches Stella, and at first seems sanctioned by the priest's words, ("face to face in eternal blessedness"). This imagined possibility turns imperceptibly into the revulsion signalled by the image of the decaying corpse of the crucified Christ, and the priest's reminder

of bodily putrification: ("Worms shall consume thine eyes, thy lips, thy mouth . . . .") The words of the priest cross the margin from the sacred to the profane, from beatific union to horrifying corporeal dissolution, as they also seem to move from a source outside Trelkovsky to one inside him.

At the point at which the narrated identity of Trelkovsky becomes "unbearable," as Kristeva says, " . . . when the boundary between subject and object is shaken, and when even the limit between inside and outside becomes uncertain, the narrative is what is challenged first" (Kristeva, Powers 141). The crisis point in Trelkovsky's sanity and the breaking point for his narrated identity (when his hallucinations are plainly juxtaposed with the "reality," and the suspenseful ambiguity of the film is dispelled), comes accordingly when Trelkovsky confuses the homeless vagrant woman at the entrance of the apartment building for Mme. Dioz. Mme. Dioz had earlier tried unsuccessfully to get him to show allegiance with "civilized" forces by signing a petition against Mme. Garderian and her disabled daughter, tenants, whom she said did "unspeakable things" in "their lair." When Trelkovsky refuses Mme. Dioz, she compares his stubborn individuality with the man of similar disposition who lived opposite and who was "struck down with paralysis" and left there by his spiteful neighbors to "stew in his own juice." This is an image of horror for Trelkovsky of the "gross" body open to the world, the body contaminated by its own inside (Kristeva, Powers 71).

The disquiet which Trelkovsky knows as a result of apprehending the heterogeneity of the body is experienced by the viewer within a thematic binary opposition. This dynamic might be described as the antipathy between what I have just called the "gross" body, which is the body that defies the circumscription of the patriarchal community, and that is defined by those habits which mark it as not being self-contained or complete, but rather as open to the world, and the closed and completed body.50 The body, according to Kristeva also, "must bear no trace of its debt to nature: it must be clean and proper in order to be fully symbolic" (Kristeva, Powers 102). This idea would account for Trelkovsky's anxiety about his performing the same habitual routines of oral consumption that Simone Choule did, drinking her morning cup of chocolate and smoking her brand of cigarettes. Consuming, he is consumed by the absent woman whose presence is ubiquitous.

In The Tenant, the gross (or untenable) body always appears at the frontier of Trelkovsky's incorporation into the community and as an infringement on the social contract. Consequently, Trelkovsky's leverage in the bargaining for terms is the fact that the bathroom is around the corridor from the apartment, and that he is forced to by biological necessity to move out of the space which the patriarch cannot make self-contained. Following Msr. Zy's discussion of the terms, during which he has continued the revolting gesture of picking his teeth, Msr. Zy must concede the inconvenience, and Trelkovsky is thereby successful in

driving his premium price down.

Once Trelkovsky is settled in the apartment, the gross body is felt to be continually in violation of the boundaries between the individual and the community as it is potentially destructive to the symbolic economy of the group (Kristeva, Powers 56, 67). This is the case when one of Trelkovsky's dirty socks is discovered in his apartment by a party guest while they are moving furniture to set up for dinner. This damning reminder of the body's excreta isolates Trelkovsky in embarrassment from his friends who are holding their noses and laughing at him. Later during the party one of Trelkovsky's offices mate Leo urinates in the kitchen sink, an action which draws the loud criticism of the rest of the celebrants, and immediately brings about one of Trelkovsky's angry neighbors who comes to complain about the commotion. The morning after the housewarming party, when Trelkovsky is cleaning up the garbage made of foodstuffs, and is taking it out to the garbage cans in the courtyard, he drops several pieces of it on the stairway, but when he returns to pick them up, they have disappeared. This is taken by him and the audience as a sign of a plot against him, on the part of a nameless collective perhaps, and it is for Trelkovsky mysteriously threatening evidence of the vanishing boundaries between the organic and the social or symbolic realms.

Excrement, in particular the excrement of the mother, subsequently comes to "signify" Trelkovsky's incorporation into the group and cover up his suspicious individuality. Mme.

Garderian, another tenant in his building, brings her crippled daughter with her when she comes to tell Trelkovsky that she is being persecuted by the other tenants because of the noise she makes and, she says, because the girl is disabled. As Trelkovsky is sympathetic to her, Mme. Garderian returns sometime after receiving her eviction notice to make a whispered confession to him that she "did it" just in front of their doors, but not in front of his door. Trelkovsky must then scrape up some of "it" and drop it on his doorstep so that his neighbors will not suppose that he is the guilty party. This excrement, then, becomes the means of disguising his integrity or his purity from the vigilante group headed by Mme. Dioz; "You're a saint; You're the only one who cares," Mme. Garderian tells him. Kristeva elaborates:

> Food waste and excrement are an indication of that which compensates for the 'collapse of the border between inside and outside' (Kristeva 53). Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse etc.) stand for the identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by outside, life by death (Kristeva 71).

Accordingly, the bathroom becomes the locus of the Abject, the Abject as the site of the Other (Kristeva, Powers 54). It is the place which houses all the curious sights that have plagued Trelkovsky because they have failed to be animated by his gaze. Trelkovsky finally crosses over to this location when he is physically incapacitated by fever, in a fulfillment of his own imagined "fate." The scene in which he does so is the playing out of a hypothetical scenario that he has described to Msr. Zy

in order to press his advantage during the bargaining for terms for the apartment. It is a place that is marked by a language that is pure signifier (Kristeva, Powers 49-51). The walls are covered with hieroglyphics which signify the culmination of a pattern of meaning which Trelkovsky is at the centre of, but the hieroglyphics in and of themselves, are meaningless: "intolerable significance in the place of the Abject" (Kristeva 11). They speak of Simone Choule's enveloping identity, since she, seen here as a "mummy," was an Egyptologist, as well as the infinity or duplication of Trelkovsky's own self. Following the discovery of this cryptic "message," then, he turns to see his own window across the courtyard and sees the mirror image of himself standing there looking back at him. Later he sees his head made up to look like Simone Choule, bouncing up past his window as if it were the object of some game being played in the courtyard. Finally in a grotesque tableau of torture and coercion he sees his face as a mask being placed onto Mme. Garderian's disabled daughter, who points up at him, denouncing him in his Simone Choule "disguise" and making his presence known to the vengeful crowd.

Trelkovsky's failure to keep himself self-contained is a breach of Msr. Zy's demands for his physical and sexual integrity. He prefers that Trelkovsky not be married because he and his wife do not want noisy children in the block, yet either does he want a bachelor bringing around his girlfriends. Any attempt at intercourse with the opposite sex is potentially

"noisy"; discourse is a disruption of the prescribed silence of a polarized heterosexuality or what is actually a "homosexuality." 51 Thus Leo's comment later at Trelkovsky's housewarming party: "Pretty soon you won't even be able to jerk off without the neighbors complaining." Leo also uses a deafening military march to silence his neighbors in a show of manliness for the benefit of the meek Trelkovsky.

This idea finds further narrative representation during the party sequence in which Trelkovsky has his friends from work over for a housewarming in his new apartment. The camera opens on one scene in which the group of guests, divided into male and female camps, are in involved already in a conversation, the subject of which is implied, to varying degrees, but which is discernable as the abhorrence caused by the sight of the genitals, or the body in general, of the opposite sex. A woman is first seen and heard speaking to her friends and the viewer is given no verbal context for her comments so that the missing referent (the phallus) must be assumed by the viewer from what follows: ("Yeech, I saw one once....etc) The remainder of the conversation leaves little room for doubting the sexual context of the remark. But the actual reference and context is never substantiated so that we are always left guessing, like outsiders at the party ourselves, securing ourselves only to the extent that we can judge the signs of stereotypical masculine and feminine behaviour and attitudes in the guests. This exclusively polarized conversation ends when Leo is told to change the subject by

another woman present, and he replies, " What should we talk about then ? Women's Lib? Have you seen those militants? Its enough to make you turn queer."

The silence of a homosexual heterosexuality in the film's discourse is precisely what Simone Choule's silent scream undercuts. Trelkovsky's jump into the abyss, is a jump into the jagged wound that is the negative imprint of the body of woman and out of which issues the fascinating and repulsive call of the Abject, a call which gives a haunting significance to all objects and events in this world, both for Trelkovsky and for us. The material expression of this mobile "signifier" is the scream of Simone Choule, heard at the start of the film, and then perceived thereafter as a silent echo which underwrites all visual and verbal language in the film and charges scenic and narrative space with uncertain meaning. We read Trelkovsky's situation, his sitting in Choule's regular spot in the cafe, for instance, in light of this remembered scream of pain and the expression on his face shows that he does likewise. The woman's silent echo thus takes up its place with the camera's fixing narcissistic visions, effectively challenging their authority and thereby holding us tentatively between two realms of scenic space, between what we see, and what we do not see, but "feel" is mysteriously present.52 In this way the film works outside the hierarchy of the senses, outside the senses, that is, of sight and hearing, which film theory normally privileges.

This is quite unlike the function of the woman's scream in

Rear Window, which opens up the possibility of a fissure in the imaginary world of the protagonist L.B. Jefferies, the tantalizing possibility of a difference which can be fully accommodated by him and the viewer, guaranteeing the integrity of both. However, in Hitchcock's vision, finally, the dividing line between the self and Other which the protagonist has unconsciously set in place in order to preserve the hopeful silence of the Other is not sufficient protection for the self from a world which demands retribution (Cavell, Must We? 276). Trelkovsky, who lives in the closest thing to an amoral universe, can only dream of the cleansing punishments of retribution.

The break in the narrative which results from its intention to follow Trelkovsky into his insanity, a break which forever locks us outside the protagonist's mind, is found by most viewers, I would guess, to be more annoying and dissatisfying, and dissatisfying in a different way, than being held between the two scenic realms in which we initially "find" ourselves. This seems to me to attest to the strength of desire and grief by which we can still be moved, and by which we would still be moved. The scene in which Trelkovsky goes to the hospital to visit the dying Simone Choule and meets Simone's friend Stella is indicative of this absurd world, which, fortunately, I think, we feel is terrifyingly so, in which not only can no one can know the pain of the other; but that therefore grief as well as desire has lost its potential power to pull us out of our solitary confinement. Instead it produces revulsion and a

narcissistic withdrawal. When confronted with the sight of Simone Choule's broken body, and having been warned of her delicate physical state (newly emerged from a coma), Stella, it seems to me, makes a frivolously cruel bid to identify herself to Simone, to have the dying woman acknowledge her, and she is very upset later because Simone "didn't even recognize [her]." Her greeting is in fact what provokes the unfathomable and repulsive scream of horror from Simone. Later, we are slightly appalled to see that Stella is content to trade the "knowness" of her friend's suffering for the sensational notoriety which is claimed by the witness to some lethal and mysterious catastrophe: ("We were the last ones to see her alive," she boasts to a friend.)

In concluding I would like to refer to an anecdote in Jonathan Miller's book of interviews called States of Mind. Miller talks to George Mandler, who cites discussions with people who had had severe spinal cord injuries, and who were, therefore, no longer able to feel sensations as strongly as they did before their accidents.53 All of the patients, however, told him that they wished they could feel with the same intensity as they were able to previously. It seems to me that Polanski has created a film which makes us long for a renewed connection to the protagonist and his world, and which therefore calls into question ideas about the spectator's "desire" to occupy a "disembodied" place in front of the screen. The film, as such, also complicates the issue of the spectator's self-possession. For, although we always occupy the position of privilege within

the economy of the look, without the sense of a sympathetic connection with Trelkovsky, which we lose because of the film's attempt to represent the subjective experience of his insanity, we feel as though we too are without a recognized "place" in this world. That is, we often feel that our place is unrecognized by the film.

As a film which cruelly penetrates the defense system, or the "pain threshold" as Burche calls it, of many of its viewers, David Lynch's Blue Velvet (1986) offers further opportunity to think about the fluctuating boundary between self and cinema, and the woman's role in negotiating this boundary for the viewer (Burche, Film Practice 125). To my knowledge there have as yet been no comprehensive critical articles written on Lynch's film, though in the innumerable reviews of it there has been a general trend to remark upon the director's daring, and "painterly" style, and upon other innovative formal qualities of his work.54 In a situation that seems to typify the abstraction of feeling found in current film criticism, none of the commentators on Blue Velvet mention the fact that in one crucial moment of the film we bear an apparently deliberate and violent affront to our sensibilities, as we are forced to watch, and this is indeed what it feels like, while a woman, Dorothy Valens, is raped, in a graphic and terrifying manner, by one of film's most insidiously abject of characters, Frank Booth. The effects of our watching this display of raw and brutal sexuality, and the woman's suffering that it incurs, radiate outward, forever altering our perception of events previous and to come, as well as denigrating our sense of ourselves as protected witnesses of these events, and yet about this scene there has been among critics, what Paul Fry might call, an "unnatural stillness of consensus."55 Had there been more intensive studies carried out, we might not have been surprised to find in reading them that the film had been

reduced, with a scientific rigour, to an Oedipal paradigm. The voyeuristic orientation of the young detective protagonist, Jeffrey Beaumont, is never disavowed by the film, nor is Frank Booth's Oedipal trauma, as we see it ritualized in the rape of Dorothy Valens. It would not seem unlikely that in these studies the spectator was conceived of as being in the same voyeuristic relationship to the woman's body as the protagonist is, given our own arguably voyeuristic situation as we watch what Jeffrey Beaumont, watches that night in Dorothy's apartment. Certainly Blue Velvet would yield to this kind of systematic analysis, for the signs of an Oedipal logic at work in the narrative are everywhere.

To begin with, Jeffrey has the obligatory task of reconstructing sexual difference, of polarizing a world that threatens to lose its familiar structure after the sudden physical collapse of his father, and this is his accomplishment by the film's end, as he restores the patriarchal order by re-uniting Dorothy Valens with her son, and killing Frank who has separated them from each other, and from Dorothy's husband. As it does for Hitchcock's protagonist also, a preoccupation with the fragmented body attends the young voyeur's fantasy of wholeness, and his detective enterprise is undoubtedly as much an investigation of the glamorous Dorothy Valen's "castrated" body, as it is an altruistic or socially responsible attempt to solve the mysterious network of crimes in which she is somehow involved. Moreover, during his preliminary investigations, both

he and we see Dorothy as an exotic and glamorous spectacle, a vision of plentitude from a dream of the fifties, as she entertains at The Slow Club, where Jeffrey first sees her. Then, later, during the rape scene, as Mulvey might predict, she could be seen to be undergoing the de-glamorization and punishment that reflects Jeffrey's castration anxiety (Mulvey 14).

What would be more understandable about such a hypothetical interpretation as a response to Blue Velvet, as opposed to say Rear Window, which could just as well be mistaken for the same film, if seen in these terms, is the seeming necessity of it as an intellectual defense against this film itself, and conversely the pitiful inadequacy of such a defense in the face of the overwhelming visceral experience of Lynch's film. This does not mean that in suggesting my misgivings about the Oedipal paradigm as a means of explaining our response to Blue Velvet that I wish to ignore the unforgettable connection here between voyeurism and a heinous raging anger directed toward the woman. However, we must notice that this is not a connection which Lynch asks us to take lightly, in the way that we might suggest Hitchcock does. There is very obviously a great deal more than a mere "taint of villainy" surrounding the male voyeur in this film (Cavell,"The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman" 11-44). What we need to ask, then, is whether or not it is possible to, or worth trying to, publicize what the film seems to not know about itself, (that is, presumably, its sadistic economy), in order to cripple or counteract the authority of a cinematic system of "seductive

texts" (Modleski 119).

An immediate problem with this method, might be caused by the fact that this particular film seems to admit everything, to openly depict the connection between sadism and voyeurism that is normally screened off from our sight by the pleasure it brings. Surely there can be no disagreement about Lynch's self-conscious juxtaposition of the criminal underworld that is Frank's domain, and the middle class suburban neighborhood that lives in quiet suspicion of it, in terms of the similar forces of desire that shape the relationships between men and women in each world. The film also self-consciously undermines the binary of active male watcher and passive female spectacle or performer. For it asks us specifically to respond to the fact that the woman, in this case, Jeffrey's girlfriend Sandy, is left out of all active seeking and adventuring. The closest Sandy gets to investigating alongside Jeffrey is to act the part of a Jehovah's Witness in order to draw attention away from him as he searches Dorothy's apartment. As such she is merely a visual lure rather than a participant in the solving of the mystery.

What I had purposefully, but I realize, for too casually, intended to make evident in imagining this criticism of Lynch's work was the over-simplification which results from a critical method becoming more and more sophisticated and hence "internally rather than referentially consistent" (Fry 7, 10). As I have tried to show in my discussion of Rear Window and The Tenant, and would also maintain in regard to Blue Velvet, is that

the perfection of formal method strived for in some psychoanalytic film theory, based as it is on a foundation of linguistics, and the reification of the subject that results, while it may possibly be conceived positively as a reaching to transcend the self, precipitates a breach between subject and object which engulfs the life of felt experience (Fry 5). Even Teresa De Lauretis's calling our attention to the need to "theorize the notion of experience" strikes me as slightly paradoxical (Alice Doesn't 11). Fry's reminder that there can never be a ". . . formal liaison. . ." or a completely ". . . mirrored opposition, between representation and experience in spatiotemporal terms" is nowhere brought to bear more pertinently, it seems to me, than in film theories of the perspectival centering of the subject upon which the patriarchal cinematic system is assumed to rest in psychoanalytic theory (Fry 6-7). In order to maintain the authoritative totality of both interpreter and text, such theories attempt to shelter the objects of our perception from the formless flow of time in which we and what we observe are both immersed (Fry 10). We have to do this to a certain extent in order to reconstruct experience after the fact, but as a corrective we might remember the suggestion of Vico who, according to Fry, proposes that we become "all things by not understanding them, by not trying to disregard those elements which do not fit our systems, and as a critical approach this would mean "refusing to pretend not to have been surprised" by what we read or see (Fry 200).

Like Polanski's The Tenant, Blue Velvet is a film which carefully establishes, and then abruptly violates, what is felt by the spectator to have been a unified and self-containing "point-of-view." It is also another work, therefore, which challenges us to re-imagine the nature of the viewer's involvement by extending the concept of point-of-view beyond the notion of a spatial configuration and even beyond that of a figurative point-of-view, as Browne has talked about this.56 For, our relationship to this film is not initially or thereafter entirely contingent upon our alignment with characters who hold or represent a certain sanctioned moral outlook. It is not a matter of being situated in the narrative because of the film's having elicited our sympathies for a character or characters within a moral binary. Our response to Lynch's sequence of establishing shots especially seems to indicate that the idea of point-of-view in this film must include something like an unconscious, pre-existing "prejudice" toward what is seen. It depends upon our holding, or being willing to assume, an attitude toward the filmic events, or perhaps toward our place in relation to the film, even before we are "sutured" into the story by being caught up in the characters' lives. 57 It is an orientation anticipated by the filmmaker, quite accurately, I think, and I believe it is a symptom of our unconscious desire for privacy or self-preservation, or for a pleasure in the self that is not controlled or limited by an external authority, and which is therefore a defense against the self-destructive

possibilities of desire.58

> . . . the relation to self is also defined as a concrete relationship enabling one to delight in oneself, as a thing one both possesses and has before one's eyes. If to convert to oneself is to turn away from the preoccupations of the external world, from the concerns of ambition, from fear of the future, then one can turn back to one's own past, recall it to mind, have it unfold as one pleases before one's own eyes, and have a relationship with it that nothing can disturb: ' This is the part of our time that is sacred and set apart, put beyond the reach of all human mishaps, and removed from the dominion of fortune, the part which is disquieted by no want, by no fear, by no attack of disease; this can neither be troubled nor snatched away- it is an everlasting and unanxious possession.' And the experience of self that forms itself in this possession is not simply that of a force overcome, or a rule exercised over a power that is on the point of rebelling; it is the experience of a pleasure that one takes in oneself. The individual who has finally succeeded in gaining access to himself is, for himself, an object of pleasure (Foucault 65-66).

In retrospect, and with L.B. Jeffries in mind, our attitude toward the film is something which feels like an uncharitable skepticism about the mundane middle class life in Lumberton, U.S.A., the fictional setting of the film. Because, as in The Tenant, the narrative presence in Blue Velvet has at times a conspiratorial intent, and to that end, a variable and "duplicitous" relationship with, its viewer, we are first taken into its confidence, and allowed to think that this "prejudiced," or skeptical, point of view is a certain, explicitly authorized (and readily available) "point-of-view" regarding this filmic world. We are thereby given a secure

place "above" it, so to speak, from where we may review the "memory-spectacle" of the film,59 before it begins, (most fiercely in the rape sequence), what will be an assault on us at a "vulnerable and bewildered eye level." 60

At the start of the film, then, we are treated to a casual overview of "picture-perfect" images depicting the harmonious civil order of small town life in Lumberton, all of which are accompanied on the soundtrack by the nostalgic strains of Bobby Vinton's " Blue Velvet." This sunny daydream of a world is first represented by the visual cliche of the immaculately white picket fence, which is a background for glorious kodachrome-colored red and yellow tulips, the whole effect being something like a 3-D postcard. We see children walking in orderly fashion to school, guided by a matronly crossing guard, and the leisurely movement of a fire engine across our path, with a dalmatian on the running board, completes a Rockwellian picture. Vinton's song, which itself produces nostalgia for a certain bygone era, is reminiscent of some earlier time in a mythical past of our culture, and the now seemingly distant and quaint sentiment of its innocent desire to recapture the past and the absent woman through dream or memory also contributes to our sense of this place as familiar and recoverable. Our impression is of Lumberton being a place suspended in the fictionalized past of our shared cultural memory, (at least the only culture from inside of which I can speak). Here is yet another place where the theory of perspectival placement is unable to account for our

experience, especially for our immediate understanding of the complex cultural meaning associated with styles of clothing and hair, speech and gesture which call for a response from us and are therefore part of the film's address. Significantly, in this regard, Lynch makes certain that the story does not appear to take place in any definable historical time period, though he occasionally invokes the aura of the fifties with certain clothes and cars, etcetera. In this way we do not immerse ourselves in an imaginary relationship with a "real" past, but instead reclaim this mediated memory.

In this opening sequence of images we locate ourselves in the film as a result of our recognizing a completely familiar world, yet it is a world to which we would nevertheless not belong. For placing ourselves in relation to this world is concomitant with our absenting ourselves from it, though we do not perceive our absence as such since the artificial-looking images of the town are so clearly addressed to us. In front of all these sights we occupy the place of an objective bystander, an outsider, or tourist, to whom a fireman happily waves a welcome. We must note that even this overt acknowledgement of the viewer here does not bring disaffection, or detract from our sense of a world of people who are oblivious to our presence, who do not see themselves being watched by us, but are nevertheless there to be watched, and so, as in Rear Window, the recognizably fictional quality of the cinematic space is reassuring rather than disorienting.

We know immediately, or think we know, exactly what we are expected to understand about these images; we suppose that they are generically representative of the superficiality of this small town's sensibility. Following the prologue, we also know a desire to see ourselves as removed and different from the people and lifestyle represented, to believe ourselves to be not living as unthinkingly mundane a life as the people in this world do. Our response to the radio D. J.'s announcing of the time, ("At the sound of the falling tree it's nine-thirty") is to enjoy the idea of this town being unable to see itself being watched by us. This effect is continued sporadically, as for example when the logging trucks from Lumberton, which are loaded down with enormous logs, roll by in front of Arleen's diner. They are perceived by us as being both "naturally" proper to the background setting and as a kind of visual refrain, one more reassuring connection we make to this knowable and familiar world, which is itself passing by in front of us.

Near the end of the credit sequence the feeling of being in the presence of a world totally recoverable for us by the camera is severely altered by our perceiving the camera, or narrative forces, to be callously and inhumanly passive during Mr. Beaumont's struggle with death in his garden. The calamity of the patriarch's stricken body is calmly reported to us while Bobby Vinton continues to dreamily re-member the woman in blue velvet. A toddler wanders on to the scene to innocently watch the spectacle of his convulsions, and a dog takes advantage of

Mr. Beaumont's misfortune to drink from the spouting water hose that is still gripped in his paralyzed hand. The world is no longer wholly recoverable now because of our sense of the absurdity of his "unseen" suffering, and of our being abandoned by the film to our shocked helplessness in the face of it, our being helpless to see it, when the seeing of it is what is most desperately needed. A threatening difference is now perceived between the world as it is present to us, and the world as we are present to it.61 Like Jeffrey who returns to look upon his hometown with an alien eye following his father's illness, we now regard a once familiar place and have the uncanny sense that it has suddenly become "strange."

Blue Velvet threatens us not with our invisibility as The Tenant does, but with the maddening knowledge of the inefficacy, perhaps the obsolescence of our seeing; it threatens to blunt the power of our vision, to render its animating force impotent. Lynch's film seems, therefore, to rudely intend to disabuse us of the skeptical assumption that "we only animate what we see, and see only what we animate."62 This is tantamount to depriving us of the fantasy of having a place of seeing the world, of having a "point-of-view" (Cavell, The World Viewed 102). I would like to suggest further that the film intends to give up the pretense of saving us from the desire for presence to the world and "from the links of nostalgia" (Cavell, The World 119).

Lynch awakens us most abruptly to the extent that we have traded the responsibility for this desire for cinema's fantasies

of privacy in Blue Velvet's rape sequence, which is played out around our changing fears and assumptions in relation to the act of watching, and in particular, watching the woman. As the sequence begins, then, Jeffrey, innocently trusting in the importance of his seeing things, though not immediately questioning their importance to him, has hidden himself in Dorothy's closet after watching her performance at The Slow Club. At first we are vicariously apprehensive lest our surrogate be caught inside her apartment. We are under the assumption at this point that the greatest danger to Jeffrey would come of his being exposed as a voyeur, of his being seen by the woman he plans to watch, and we are caught up in his struggle to hide himself from her sight. We have delighted in the elaborate scheming and planning in which Sandy and Jeffrey have immersed themselves in preparation for this moment, and like them we have not thought beyond the problems of how to get Jeffrey into Dorothy's apartment. Any question about why Jeffrey has decided upon the undercover project has been largely unimportant. Sandy does pause to tell Jeffrey that she is "not sure if [he is] a detective or a pervert," but the place of desire in the scheme is given only this brief examination by them. Of course we have been intrigued by their attraction to one another and tried to gauge the extent to which desire motivates their involvement in the plan to investigate Dorothy Valens. But for the most part, we believe at this juncture that Jeffrey's seeing and Dorothy's being seen is a matter of morality and/or legality.

This has also meant that we have been able to ignore our own investment in watching, which Lynch puts immediately into question once Jeffrey and we are safely hidden in Dorothy's closet, and Dorothy steps into our line of sight. As we watch with Jeffery, we see Dorothy strip off her clothing, as we have expected she would at some point, but we are not prepared for the sight of her body, or rather we realize we were prepared for something other than the sight of her body. For it is revealed, as much as cinema can reveal it, and yet it looks to be too uncinematic and real. We are mildly insulted by the fact that her body seems to be clumsily fleshed, to be unfinished, to need re-shaping to match the image we have held in our minds of the naked Isabella Rossellini, who plays Dorothy. It is as though she is not to be looked at, that is, not set there by the film to be looked at by us, and this is disconcerting. Her body is naked; it is not a nude situated before us for our viewing pleasure, to make the distinction that John Berger makes (John Berger, Ways of Seeing 45-64).

Our response to the sight of this woman is to try and veil her somehow in a representation of a woman's body. Although we see her "de-mystified," then, it is as though we still cannot really see her, as though she were yet veiled by her own body. What Pauline Kael has to say about the naked body of Isabella Rossellini, who plays Dorothy, would indicate that it is almost impossible to see the female figure on the screen except as a representation even when one's intent is to remark upon the

difference between this woman's nakedness and the cinematic nudes to which we are accustomed:

> There's nothing of the modern American woman about her. When she's naked, she's not protected, like the stars who are pummelled into shape and lighted to show their muscular perfection. She's defenseless, tactilely naked, like the nudes the Expressionists painted (Pauline Kael 101).

The naked and vulnerable body of the woman as she is presented here seems to thwart the viewer's struggle for possession, rather than as is usually thought of the woman in cinema, to embody this possibility (Mulvey 13). This is not the same thing as suggesting, as Mary Ann Doane does, that she interrupts the narrative's temporal movement because of her "forced affinity with the iconic, imagistic aspects of cinema" (Mary Ann Doane, The Desire to Desire 5-6). Nor is it to suggest that she stops our attempt to possess the world from its perspectival centre. Instead it is that as we try to re-create the image of Dorothy Valens's body we discover our own need to be recognized as watching by the film, to recover the fantasy of our unseen presence being acknowledged by the world (Cavell The World 120).63 To this end the aestheticized image of the woman serves as a kind of mirror reflecting our own privileged position in front of this filmic world, and to the extent that she does so her own being disappears. We notice this phenomenon occurring metaphorically and affectively when Dorothy, naked and obviously viciously beaten and traumatized, wanders out from behind the hedges in front of Jeffrey's house and inadvertently stops the fight between Jeffrey and Mike for "possession" of Sandy. When

she comes into view our eyes furtively and guiltily rove over her body trying to put it together and trying not to notice the bruises that seem to demand a more sympathetic response to her tragedy.

The fact that we cannot see Dorothy at times, is intimately bound up with the fact that we cannot see her as wanting to be seen, an idea which we encounter when she first takes off her clothes, and again, this is partly because her body is not perceived as being presented as a nude for our sight. The result of this, however, is to make a troubling mystery of her desire. In Rear Window we confront a similar problem as Miss Torso's ambiguous desire complicates our relationship with her. Somehow I think of Miss Torso as a "dumb blonde," though I have no evidence of her intellectual capacity whatsoever. I think of her as foolishly incapable of seeing herself as being objectified. Miss Torso seems perversely unself-conscious about this possibility, and therefore, somehow, "deserving" of her objectification. It is as though being in a place to be seen in such a manner as she is, were her "fault," not Hitchcock's. (My conceiving of being watched as a kind of punishment strikes me only now as rather alarming.) How much of this moralistic response is a defensive reaction against the embarrassment of having to watch her, I do not know. I do know, however, that I am exasperated because I cannot believe, though I am plainly asked to, that a woman could not see herself being watched, could be oblivious to herself as a sight (John Berger, Ways of Seeing

45-64). Because of her uncertain volition I am required to watch her sexually suggestive movements and to interpret them as such even though it seems that I am not the intended recipient of them; I must consequently be responsible for perceiving these gestures as erotic rather than domestic, and the burden of this choice makes me quite indignant.

Dorothy Valens's desire, which cannot be separated from her suffering, is much more troublesome to us and to Jeffrey, and our response to her far more complex and threatening. We want to see her place in the scenario of voyeurism that unfolds before us as we watch with Jeffrey from the closet in terms of a moral binary, within which we may comfortably situate ourselves. When Dorothy discovers Jeffrey in her closet and forces him to strip at knife-point we partly feel that this is poetic justice and that his being looked at by her now is a fitting, albeit eccentric, punishment. This is the one point in the entire episode when we are alone in watching unseen and our security in this position seems partly the result of Dorothy taking the responsibility for the desire to see Jeffrey remove his clothes, and doing our watching for us. At the same time, Jeffrey, as our surrogate, is taking our punishment for watching. Therefore, we are for a brief spell free to indulge our voyeuristic impulses and feel morally justified in doing so. For the burden of this sado-masochistic fantasy is being carried for us by the characters. Accordingly, we are bound to the screen at this point by the tension between our combined expectations of castration and of

oral sex, which create a nervous and exciting balance of pleasure and fear in a violent sexuality.

However, our sense of the inherent power structure of voyeurism and the fixed authority of the watcher is shaken, as soon as Dorothy's motivation for wanting to see Jeffrey undress seems to turn from an understandably impassioned urge for revenge for his illegal and morally reprehensible act of invading her privacy, to a mesmerizing desire for this person who has "victimized" her. Now the terms of their relationship become mysterious and her partial relinquishing of control in her overwhelming desire for him makes her seem dangerously unstable. We feel that her desire ought not to exceed the limits of her indignation and anger at having been watched unknowingly. Her desire, therefore, seems "out of place," even though, if we bothered to think about it, his apparent willingness to "abandon himself" in his desire for her is no less "inappropriate," given the physical danger of mutilation which she may represent to him. What does it mean to say that we think her desire is out of place, but that her anger is not, considering the fact that they take her to the same place, to the feet of the naked young intruder? Where can we place the boundaries of her desire, and why is it necessary for us to draw them? Because Dorothy harshly refuses Jeffrey's instinctive caress, while she is touching and kissing him, and shouts at him to not look at her, because she does not want him to reciprocate her passion, we are led to ask, what <u>is</u> the object of her desire? Is Jeffrey threatened not only

with castration, but with complete annihilation by her desire? Surely the irony we will come to appreciate by the film's end is that at this point her passion is both a frightening mark of her unstable identity, and a welcome sign that our surrogate is in no real danger at her hands.

Frank's arrival further dismantles our expectations about the relationship between the watcher and the watched. When he comes to the door we are hurried back into the closet with Jeffrey again, but this time we concern ourselves not so much with whether or not he will be found to be hiding in there, as we do with what now seems like our own entrapment in this place where we have formerly been watching "feeling unseen" (Cavell, The World Viewed 16-25). We are immediately thrown off guard by Frank's abusive language and his cold hard manner toward Dorothy, who is obediently compliant with his demands, and further by the fact that despite his treatment of her she seems to understand her victimizer. They appear to have performed this voyeuristic ritual before and this is disconcerting and more than a little frightening because we cannot understand its rigidity and its rules which seem to have been decided without us. Why must the lights be out? Why must Frank have his bourbon? Why must he be called "daddy" and not "baby"? We can not comprehend what we see, and we can do nothing now except see.

This is no longer the adventure we had so carefully prepared for with Jeffrey and Sandy. Frank seems to have complete command of the proceedings. His control of Dorothy is

terrifying: "Spread your legs!," he simply and dispassionately orders her, and we are left without the shelter of our fantasies (Cavell, The World 102). It is as though the film itself was defiantly asserting its distance from our fantasies, refusing to carry the burden of them any longer, and so leaving us completely at the mercy of our desire to see with all its possibly terrifying mysteries, and so at one and the same time, reclaiming its power over us. (Perhaps this is why Pauline Kael can venture the bold suggestion that Lynch seems to have reinvented movies.) We are made vicariously naked by this command to Dorothy in a way that we were not when our surrogate, Jeffrey, was undressed before our eyes, even though we do not actually see her body, since she is facing away from us. While it is, in fact, Frank's voyeurism that we are watching, and Dorothy who is his object, it is as though he has stripped us of our privileged cover and is commanding the terms of our privacy.

We cannot say what he is moved by. What is the significance of his repeated phrase, "now it's dark," which seems to have some ominous meaning only for him, and to mark a mysterious transitional point in his mercurial shifts of personality. This is no longer a matter of simple scopophiliac pleasure in the sight of the body that we must vicariously participate in. Frank's mind is lost to us the way Trelkovsky's is. When he reaches for a mask, and turns on a container of what probably is nitrous oxide, and insanely and defiantly takes himself to some unreachable place, he becomes uncanny. Some unknown force

prompts him to transform himself instantaneously from someone in control to someone at the mercy of his own desire, into a weak and supplicating child at Dorothy's feet, staring between her legs and moaning repulsively, "mommy, mommy." Yet something of his animal rage and his horrible yearning echoes uncannily inside of us and we have the sense that we are seeing something that is too private to be displayed on the screen. Though we have luxuriated in our communal "participation" at other times in the film, especially in the opening segments, this scene is an utterly private experience that we feel embarrassed about sharing with others in the theatre. We are called upon to recognize the desire for possession here in its ugly and unfathomable aspect as a self-destructive drive, and sexuality as a powerful means of venturing beyond the limits of consciousness, and toward the dissolution of consciousness (Sontag, "The Pornographic Imagination" 212). Something of our instinctive recognition of this yearning and our wish to turn our eyes away from it is like Jeffrey's experience of watching Frank, an uncanny perception of himself as another (Fry 63).

Thereafter we cannot look upon the desire for presence as innocent, the way it seems to be in Vinton's song. Part of our being situated in the film was as a result of understanding the typical male and female patterns of relationship, such as Jeffrey's need to put his arm around Sandy, whom he has only just met, when a group of guys in a car start whistling and yelling suggestively at her. We accept the need to perform and capture

the attention of the other in the way that Jeffrey does his "chicken walk" for Sandy on the night they meet, and in the way Dorothy's little son does for her in the final scene of the film. We see the minor jealousies and heartache that accompanies our need to possess another, and to belong to another. Then against this background of seemingly innocent desire for recognition from the other, and possession of the other, we must somehow find a place for Dorothy's taunting reminders to Jeffrey that she "still has [him] inside of [her]." Jeffrey finally perceives the desire he shares with the psychotically sentimental Frank, as a threat to his self-preservation and it seems an increasingly dangerous exploration. Frank's beating him unconscious, and the damage to his physical person is therefore combined with the danger to his self that is created by him staring into eyes of the man who has smeared him with makeup so that he actually looks like his double.

What, then, does Jeffrey understand following this tortuous night in which he must claim Frank's desire as his own, and at the same time suffer the violent, self- threatening consequences of it? He knows that he too is capable of brutality against a woman, who is wife, and mother, and that his desire for her is greater than what he thinks should be his respect for her as a mother and wife, or than what he thinks the limits of his desire should be, greater even than his respect for the privacy or propriety of her person. So what could that desire be for, if it is not for her, but only directed toward her, perhaps against

her?

In Blue Velvet Lynch shows us how the body of the woman, as it does in Rear Window, bears the burden of representation, of representing the possibility of regaining the lost object of desire, the body of the woman coded and costumed to be the veil of a mystery, to represent the hiddenness of presence, a potential presence which will stave off the sight of lack. Yet as Jeffrey's fears about the self-destructive potential of this desire for presence mount so the image of that veil seems increasingly menacing to him and to us. Dorothy, as we first see her with her fifties dress, songs and microphone is the image of the "the woman desired as remembered" (De Lauretis 27); later when Jeffrey sees her dressed in blue velvet, her body is literally clothed in the material which is cathected in the absence of the lost object of desire named by the film's title and title song which she performs. Further, Lynch's use of a blue velvet curtain as a screen, a background for the opening credits, recalls Cavell's idea about the film screen as that which divides the woman into image and presence. However, the blue velvet gown develops increasingly morbid or violent associations. First Jeffrey sees Frank make a crazed attempt to remake an umbilical connection to Dorothy by attaching himself to her with a piece of her robe, and then he watches while Frank tries to viciously stuff some of her robe up her vagina. We subsequently see blue velvet in the mouth of Dorothy's husband's corpse, and then finally a piece of it we notice is tied like a

decoration on the end of Frank's gun as he comes looking for Jeffrey, who is once again hiding in Dorothy's closet.

Because we are privileged with knowledge of his sexual relationship with Dorothy, Jeffrey's interest in Sandy is highly ambiguous, and we cannot trust his declaration of love for her, or have faith in the meaning of the young couples mild display of passion, and the truth of this desire, the certainty of its object. That is why Sandy's hysterically plastic display of grief seems so comical when she finds out that Jeffrey's relationship to Dorothy has been as a lover, that his desire is aberrant, and that she is not the sole object of it, or not in control of it.

It is the question of Jeffrey's objectless desire that Dorothy Valens puts to him. "What do you want?," she asks him that first night in her apartment. Like L.B. Jeffries, however, he can find no answer for this question. The closest he can come to finding an acceptable object, an acceptable answer to the question, is to make Sandy the deferred answer to the question: (She: "Do you like mysteries that much?" He: "You're a mystery, and I like you, very much.") Because he knows that the limits of his desire do not coincide with the limits of its object, he therefore chooses to stop his desire in Sandy.

Sandy verbally expresses rather than embodies a vision of wholeness for Jeffrey. Accordingly, the dream of consolation which she describes to him following his first shocking night at Dorothy's, is a dream of transcendent love, a sort of Disney

version of Revelations, which does not in anyway involve questions of desire. Sandy herself is introduced to us as a portrait of her face only which fills up the screen immediately after we have watched Jeffrey, from the darkness behind him, entering her parents' home. Prior to this, the camera has followed Jeffrey, out for a nighttime walk, and then moved from his figure down into the disembodied and decaying ear of the missing husband/father. Jeffrey's appearance on Detective Williams' doorstep, then, is made to seem like the first stop on a subterranean voyage, and the first landmark of his journey which will eventually take him into the underworld of Lumberton is this image of Sandy which marks the psychic boundary between the upper and underworld of the film.

Woman, according to De Lauretis, is the ground of representation, "at once the dream's object of desire and the reason for its objectification . . . ," "both object and support of a desire which, intimately bound up with power and creativity, is the moving force of culture and history" (Alice Doesn't 13). The dream of the retreating woman is, she maintains, the driving impetus for civilization. The image of the woman in Lynch's film also stands, as such, at the boundary of the natural world and civilization, and it is the representation of the woman (often quite literally in the form of a portrait or picture on a billboard) which takes up the place at the boundary of the civilized /conscious familiar world and the unconscious, the strange wilderness of being which

becomes unfamiliar or "uncanny."

Blue Velvet, like The Tenant and Rear Window, can be seen as the protagonist's act of narratology in which he "narrativizes" the woman's body. In this case it is one that involves Jeffrey's abstracting the experience of Dorothy's body (telling Sandy of the facts of Dorothy's predicament, not about what he saw), much the way that criticism has abstracted the experience of the woman's body in cinema in the past. Finally, however, it is the sight of the woman's body which he and we must negotiate and "narrativize" in this film, as in the other two, and it is this sight which makes us conscious of our desire for possession and our part in obliterating the woman's presence that this desire occasions.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing I have attempted to argue that the spectator's place in front of the screen is not simply identifiable as the still centre of a moving spatial configuration, that it is rather an unlocatable place, the boundaries of self and cinema continually overlapping and being re-drawn. In general, and to varying degrees, the three films I have discussed suggest the arbitrariness of this boundary by threatening our sense of privacy and self-possession. As we see in Rear Window, this is not necessarily accomplished by the film's calling our attention to its "madeness" or its fictional nature, or what Metz might think of as its voyeuristic economy (Imaginary Signifier 91-97). In Hitchcock's film, as I suggest in chapter two, we have the sense of occupying cinematic space and "real" space simultaneously, though again there is not a distinct or simple separation between these realms. For at the moment of our being touched by Miss Lonelyhearts's pain we become aware of our "real" distance from her, as a suffering person, rather than as a caricature of an "old maid," and coincidentally, as a result, we might say that we are more fully engaged in the imaginary realm of the film at this time.

In The Tenant the sense of our own coherent presence in front of the filmic world is eventually disrupted by our inability to re-form our sympathetic connection with Trelkovsky after his madness becomes evident, and by our feeling that his insane mind is uncanny, that it is an indication of a world of

meaning outside of the one to which we have visual access. We feel dislocated then in spite of the fact that we still hold the "privileged" place at the perspectival centre of this world.

Similarly, Blue Velvet disorients us by changing the terms of our involvement in what we see, by disturbing the "coherence of identification" we have assumed was open to us (De Lauretis, Alice 28). To start with we believe we are watching a controlled voyeuristic fantasy, controlled by us in the sense that it has its reason to be in our being there. What we are subsequently obliged to watch is, ironically, a controlled voyeuristic fantasy, but this time it is controlled by Frank Booth, whose presence effectively usurps our own, leaving us now to watch completely unseen, our invisible presence seemingly unnoticed by the film.

In all three films I find that the image of the woman has the potential to alienate the viewer, rather than to offer an automatic assurance of self-possession. In The Tenant it seems that the possibility of this assurance is expressly avoided in Polanski's decision to mask Isabella Adjani's attractiveness. Conversely, I cannot say with certainty how the woman's body might be composed and aestheticized, as it is in Rear Window, to the end of providing an acknowledgment of the viewer's being there to look at it, and how her "being" tends to "disappear" as a result. Nor can I determine exactly how Isabella Rossellini's body is masked by our desire to see it aestheticized. However, rather than evaluating the woman's invisibility as a consequence

of her body being the symbolic absence which reminds the male viewer of the symbolic presence of the phallic signifier, I have tried to describe what I believe would be the common experience of its invisibility on the screen. I realize the danger in speaking as a woman for male viewers, and for other female viewers for that matter. However, I am fairly confident that the affect of seeing Isabella Rossellini's body, for example, is a result of shared expectations about the aestheticized image of the woman's body from cinema and other media, and that no matter what other private fantasies we would bring to her unveiling that our perception of it would result in some sort of insecurity, and the subsequent re-evaluation of our status as privileged watchers. For finally the desire to be seen by the film seems to me to be as consequential as our desire to see.

Endnotes

1. See Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Screen 16, no. 3 (1975): 6-18; Claire Johnston, "Towards a Feminist Film Practice: Some Theses," Movies and Methods, vol. II, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1985) 315-327; and Ruth Perlmutter, "Feminine Absence: A Political Aesthetic in Chantel Ackerman's Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai De Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles," Quarterly Review of Film Studies Spring (1979): 125-133.

2. For a most exhaustive examination of Hitchcock's The Birds in this regard see Jacqueline Rose, "Paranoia and the Film System," Screen vol. 17 no.3/4 (Autumn 1976), 85-104. See also Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," Screen vol. 23 number 3/4 (Sept/Oct. 1982), 74-87; and Stephen Heath," Film Narrative System," Questions of Cinema (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) 131-144. See Edward Branigan, "Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot" Screen vol. 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 54-64, for a thorough analysis of the point-of-view system.

3. Teresa De Lauretis, Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) 8.

4. Tania Modleski in her book, The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory (New York and London: Methuen, Inc., 1988) refers to the article by Doane cited in my note no.2.

5. Jay Clayton's "Narrative and Theories of Desire," in Critical Inquiry vol. 16, no.1 (Autumn 1989) 33-53, is a very helpful analysis of the problem of desire perceived as an ahistorical phenomenon in psychoanalytical criticism. Clayton gives a precise outline of De Lauretis's argument in Alice Doesn't, and compares her work to Leo Bersani's and Peter Brook's in terms of their understanding of the violent desire that shapes narrative.

6. The phrase I use is Paul Fry's from his work The Reach of Criticism (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983). I have been much influenced by Stanley Cavell regarding the spectator's needs and expectations about film. See his The World Viewed (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1979), especially his chapter six "Ideas of Origin" pp. 37-41.

7. Christian Metz's The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster, and Alfred Guzzetti, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) outlines the argument of the voyeuristic basis of cinema, that has been influential for much psychoanalytic work on narrative film.

8. Stanley Cavell, "Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman," Images in Our Souls: Cavell, Psychoanalysis, Cinema, ed. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) 11-44.

9. Francois Truffaut, Hitchcock (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983) 219.

10. Heath remarks upon Oudart's proposing the necessity of the spectator's place being reserved for him/her throughout the film, "'if he-she is not to refrain from fulfilling his-her role of imaginary subject of the cinematic discourse.'" (Questions of Cinema 88.) This idea does not consider the discursive nature of cinema to extend beyond the "articulation of [a] signifying chain of images." The viewer's/subject's assurance of a place accordingly comes as a result of being "sutured" into the flow of images, that is, finding himself/ herself included as the "absent" focus of a spatial configuration. However, our need for reassurance, I will suggest in chapter three, is not fully satisfied by locating ourselves within such a perspectival arrangement.

11. Susan Gubar, "The Blank Page and the Issues of Female Creativity," Writing and Sexual Difference, ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 73-95; 73.

12. See Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme" Critical Inquiry no. 8 (1981-82) : 265-79; Peter Brooks, "Storied Bodies, or Nana at Last Unveil'd" Critical Inquiry vol. 16, no. 1 (Autumn 1989)1-31; De Lauretis, "Desire in Narrative" in her Alice Doesn't 103-157.

13. Teresa De Lauretis, Alice Doesn't 153.

14. See Dudley Andrew, Concepts in Film Theory (Oxford; New York; Toronto; Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984), chapter 8 especially, for a concise discussion of the problems and issues of psychoanalytic studies of narrative film.

15. Mulvey, " Visual Pleasure" 14. For additional discussions of this issue of a sadistic Oedipal necessity of narrative film see Peter Benson, "Identification and Slaughter" CineAction! no. 12 (April 1988): 12-19. For an anti-Oedipal argument see Francois Lyotard, " The Unconscious as Mise-en-Scene", Performance in Post-Modern Culture ed. Michel Benamou and Charles Caramello

(Coda Press, University of Wisconsin): 87-98.

16. See John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: B.B.C. and Penguin Books Ltd., 1986).

17. I am using the word "idolatry" to describe Jeffries' perceptual habits, so that I may link his narcissistic concerns with the courtyard world in general with his desire to see Lisa re-formed into his ideal image of a mate. I am influenced in regard to the issue of perception by Owen Barfield. See his Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry (New York and London; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

18. Stanley Cavell, The World Viewed 40.

19. See Modleski's chapter five, pp.73-87 and George Toles, "Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window as Critical Allegory" Boundary II vol. XVI, no. 2 (Winter/Spring 1989) 225-247.

20. Modleski sees Lisa's image at the end of the film as an indication that "acceptable femininity is a construct of narcissistic desire" (84), which is an idea echoed by Jane Gallop in her work The Daughters of Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982) 70. Gallop's comments are a working through of Luce Irigaray's Speculum de l'autre femme. She summarizes the woman's role as one in which she "has no desires that don't complement his, so she can mirror him, provide him with a re-presentation of himself which calms his fears and phobias about (his own potential) otherness and difference . . . . " What Gallop brings up is the problem of the woman's complicity in her self-representation, a problem which I have not directly confronted in this paper, but which deserves to be the focus of further study. For a better understanding of the problem of the woman's "unknowness" see Cavell's essay "The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman" mentioned previously, page 22.

21. Stanley Cavell, "Ugly Duckling, Funny Butterfly: Bette Davis and Now, Voyager," Critical Inquiry 16 no.2 (Winter 1990) 213-247.

22. Stanley Cavell, "Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Melodrama of the Unknown Woman" Images in Our Souls, 11-43.

23. Timothy Gould, "Stanley Cavell and the Plight of the Ordinary," Images in Our Souls, 109-137.

24. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981) 15

25. Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956); 4.

26. Peter Brooks, "Storied Bodies, or Nana at Last Reveil'd," 19.

27. Stephen Heath, "Difference," Screen 19 no.3 (Autumn 1978): 51-113; 61.

28. Sandra M. Gilbert, "Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature," Writing as Sexual Difference, 193-219.

29. See George Toles, Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window as Critical Allegory," cited earlier in note 19.

30. Mary Ann Doane contradicts Metz's notions of a spatial positioning for the spectator in his Imaginary Signifier. ("The Film's Time and the Spectator's Space," Cinema and Language ed. Patricia Mellencamp and Stephen Heath, (Los Angeles; University Publications of America, Inc., 1983)

31. Charles Affron. Cinema and Sentiment (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 138.

32. The term is Mary Ann Doane's from her essay "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space" Movies and Methods vol.II ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1985) 565-576; 567.

33. Colin MacCabe, "Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure," Screen 17, no.3 (Autumn 1976):17.

34. Linda Williams, "Film Madness: The Uncanny Return of the Repressed in Polanski's The Tenant," Cinema Journal 20, no.2 (Spring 1981): 63-73; 69.

35. Virginia Wexman. Roman Polanski (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985) 74.

36. Mary Ann Doane decries the emphasis on perception in Metz's work: "The Film's Time and the Spectator's Space,"Cinema and Language, 46-47.

37. Dawne McCance, "The Ethics of Exile," Tessera (Spring 1990)6. McCance looks at the ethical implications of Julia Kristeva's idea of the self-in-process as opposed to the concept of a unified self which is the basis of our sense of individuality and privacy. See also Noel Burche, who has done a study of the structural uses of filmic aggression. Burche refers to the viewer's "pain threshold," which films often cross, even though the viewer might intellectually recognize, and assure himself/herself of, the film's fictionality. Noel Burche, Theory of Film Practice, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York; Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1973) 124.

38. Mary Ann Doane defines the subject of cinema as this concept is considered to distinct from the viewer. See her The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 40's (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1987) 9-13.

39. Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud vol. XVII, trans. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alex Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964) 217-253.

40. Stanley Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say? (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1969) 351.

41. See Cavell's chapter V on Beckett's Endgame, "Ending the Waiting Game," 115- 162, and his chapter X on King Lear, "The Avoidance of Love" in Must We Mean What We Say? 267- 353.

42. Mulvey, " Visual Pleasure" 15-16, and George Toles, "Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window as Critical Allegory."

43. My thinking about narrative desire and the death drive has been influenced by Susan Sontag, particularly her essay "The Pornographic Imagination," The Susan Sontag Reader (New York: Vintage Books, 1982) 205-235.

44. Dudley Andrew discusses the ratio of perception to signification in film narrative in his Concepts in Film Theory previously cited (150-155). The phrase I am borrowing here is Julia Kristeva's, and she uses it to refer to her idea of the "Abject," on which I will elaborate at a later point. See her Powers of Horror, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) 11.

45. Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny."

46. I am disagreeing with Jonathan Rosenbaum's contention that the opening sequence is a "non-narrative" pattern." (Jonathan Rosenbaum, "The Tenant," Sight and Sound vol. 45 no. 4 (Autumn 1976) 253.

47. Roman Polanski, Roman (New York: William Morrow and Company Ltd., 1984) 373.

48. Cavell, Must We? 322, 348.

49. The phrase is Dennis Turner's from his article, "The Subject of the Conversation," Cinema Journal vol. 24, no. 4 (Summer 1985): 4-23.

50. Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed" ReWriting the Renaissance, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 123-142.

51. See Jane Gallop, The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982) 65.

52. J.P. Telotte's discussion of fantasy and horror in narrative film includes the interesting and pertinent notion of "blind space," which is "everything that moves (or wriggles) outside or under things, like the shark in Jaws. According to him, "if such films 'work' it is because we are more or less held in the sway of these two spaces." (J.P. Telotte, "The Doubles of Fantasy and the Space of Desire" Film Criticism vol. VI, no.1 (Fall 1982) 56.

53. Jonathan Miller, States of Mind (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983) 146.

54. See Ron Magid, "Blue Velvet--Small Town Horror Tale", American Cinematographer 67:60-64 (Nov. 1986); Terrance Rafferty, "Blue Velvet" The Nation , 243: 383-5 (Oct. 18, 1986); and his article in Sight and Sound vol.56, nos. 1-4 (Winter 1986/87); Laurent Bourzereau, "Blue Velvet : An Interview with David Lynch", Cineaste vol. 15, no.3 (1989) 39; Karen Jaehne, "Blue Velvet" Cineaste vol. 15, no. 3 (1987) 38-41; John Powers, "Bleak Chic," American Film 12: 46-51 (Mar. 1987); Sean French, "The Heart of the Cavern", Sight and Sound 56: 1-4,(1987); Pauline Kael, The New Yorker, 62 (Sept. 22 1986) 99-103.

55. Fry, The Reach of Criticism 10.

56. Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of Stagecoach" Movies and Methods vol.II ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1985) 458-476.

57. See Stephen Heath, Questions of Cinema 76-113.

58. Michel Foucault, The Care of the Self, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986) 65-66.

59. Teresa De Lauretis considers Stephen Heath's idea of narrative film as "the structure of a memory-spectacle, the perpetual story of a 'one time,' a discovery perpetually remade with safe fictions." (Teresa De Lauretis, Alice Doesn't 27)

60. George Toles, "Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window as Critical Allegory." See note 29.

61. See Stanley Cavell, The World Viewed especially, pp.37-41 and pp. 68-80.

62. Ralph Waldo Emmerson, Selections from Ralph Waldo Emmerson, ed. Stephen E. Whichler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960) 257.

63. See also Michelene Frank, who notes that desir as Wilden mentions it in his discussion of Lacan is "fundamentally the Hegelian desire for recognition." ("Kiss of the Spiderwoman" Images in Our Souls 150-168; 164).

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Addendum

I realize too late that I have neglected to acknowledge, once again, the influence of Stanley Cavell. In chapter two, page 39, the phrase "open secrets" appears in quotation marks. I have appropriated this phrase from Cavell's article, "Postcript (1989): To Whom It May Concern," which I have not included in my bibliography, but which is found in Critical Inquiry 16.2 (Winter 1990): 248-289, (254). Another phrase, "paralyzed fantasy", found on page 41 of my thesis, while also used in an entirely different context than the one in which he uses it, is from the same article by Cavell, page 267. As well on page 41, I refer to the idea of "fantasies of privacy." This concept is discussed by Cavell on page 257 of the "Postscript" article.