

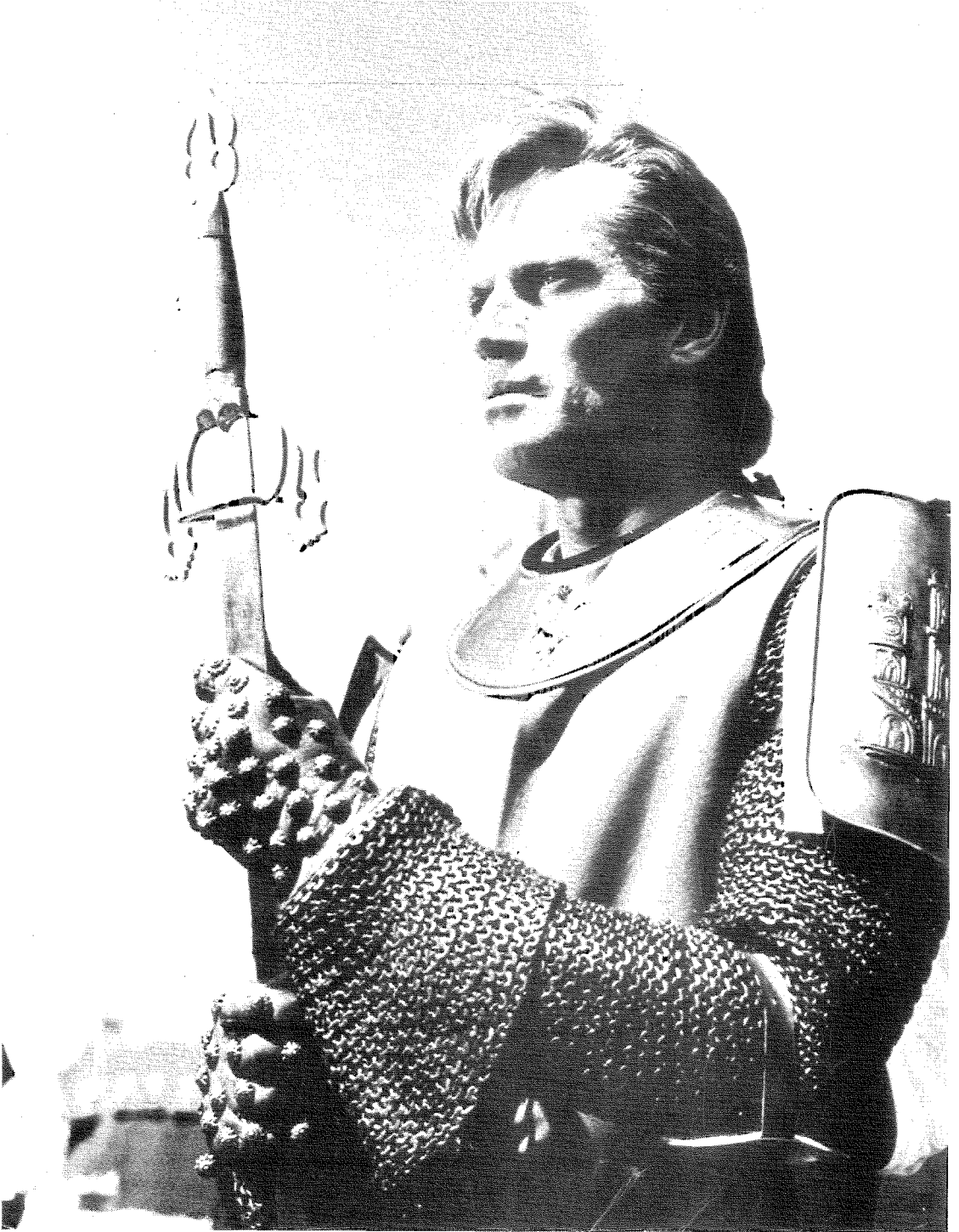
MASCULINITY AS SPECTACLE

REFLECTIONS ON MEN
AND MAINSTREAM CINEMA
BY STEVE NEALE

¹ Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* Autumn 1975, vol 16 no 3, pp 6-18.

OVER THE PAST ten years or so, numerous books and articles have appeared discussing the images of women produced and circulated by the cinematic institution. Motivated politically by the development of the Women's Movement, and concerned therefore with the political and ideological implications of the representations of women offered by the cinema, a number of these books and articles have taken as their basis Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', first published in *Screen* in 1975¹. Mulvey's article was highly influential in its linking together of psychoanalytic perspectives on the cinema with a feminist perspective on the ways in which images of women figure within mainstream film. She sought to demonstrate the extent to which the psychic mechanisms cinema has basically involved are profoundly patriarchal, and the extent to which the images of women mainstream film has produced lie at the heart of those mechanisms.

Inasmuch as there has been discussion of gender, sexuality, representation and the cinema over the past decade then, that discussion has tended overwhelmingly to centre on the representation of women, and to derive many of its basic tenets from Mulvey's article. Only within the Gay Movement have there appeared specific discussions of the representation of men. Most of these, as far as I am aware, have centred on the representations and stereotypes of gay men. Both within the Women's Movement and the Gay Movement, there is an important sense in which the images and functions of heterosexual masculinity within mainstream cinema have been left undiscussed. Heterosexual masculinity has been identified as a structuring norm in relation both to images of women and gay men. It has to that extent been profoundly problematised, rendered visible. But it has rarely been discussed and analysed as such. Outside



'The more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego': *El Cid*.

² Pam Cook, 'Masculinity in Crisis?', *Screen* Sept/Oct 1982, vol 23 nos 3-4, pp 39-46; Steve Neale, 'Chariots of Fire, Images of Men', *ibid*, pp 47-53; John Caughie and Gillian Skirrow, 'Ahab Ishmael... and Mo', *ibid*, pp 54-59; Tania Modleski, 'Film Theory's Detour', *Screen* Nov/Dec 1982, Vol 23 no 5, pp 72-79.

³ Paul Willemen, 'Anthony Mann: Looking at the Male', *Framework* 15/16/17, Summer 1981.

⁴ Raymond Bellour, 'Le Blocage Symbolique', *Communications* no 23, Paris 1975.

⁵ John Ellis, *Visible Fictions*, London Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

these movements, it has been discussed even less. It is thus very rare to find analyses that seek to specify in detail, in relation to particular films or groups of films, how heterosexual masculinity is inscribed and the mechanisms, pressures and contradictions that inscription may involve. Aside from a number of recent pieces in *Screen*² and *Framework*³, Raymond Bellour's article on *North by Northwest* is the only example that springs readily to mind. Bellour's article follows in some detail the Oedipal trajectory of Hitchcock's film, tracing the movement of its protagonist, Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) from a position of infantile dependence on the mother to a position of 'adult', 'male', heterosexual masculinity, sealed by his marriage to Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint) and by his acceptance of the role and authority of the father. However, the article is concerned as much with the general workings of a classical Hollywood film as it is with the specifics of a set of images of masculinity.⁴

Although, then, there is a real need for more analyses of individual films, I intend in this article to take another approach to some of the issues involved. Using Laura Mulvey's article as a central, structuring reference point, I want to look in particular at identification, looking and spectacle as she has discussed them and to pose some questions as to how her remarks apply directly or indirectly to images of men, on the one hand, and to the male spectator on the other. The aim is less to challenge fundamentally the theses she puts forward, than to open a space within the framework of her arguments and remarks for a consideration of the representation of masculinity as it can be said to relate to the basic characteristics and conventions of the cinematic institution.

IDENTIFICATION

To start with, I want to quote from John Ellis' book *Visible Fictions*⁵. Written very much in the light of Mulvey's article, Ellis is concerned both to draw on her arguments and to extend and qualify some of the theses she puts forward *vis-à-vis* gender and identification in the cinema. Ellis argues that identification is never simply a matter of men identifying with male figures on the screen and women identifying with female figures. Cinema draws on and involves many desires, many forms of desire. And desire itself is mobile, fluid, constantly transgressing identities, positions and roles. Identifications are multiple, fluid, at points even contradictory. Moreover, there are different forms of identification. Ellis points to two such forms, one associated with narcissism, the other with phantasies and dreams. He sums up as follows:

Cinematic identification involves two different tendencies. First, there is that of dreaming and phantasy that involve the multiple and contradictory tendencies within the construction of the individual. Second, there is the experience of narcissistic identification with the image of a human figure perceived as other. Both these processes are invoked in the conditions of enter-

tainment cinema. The spectator does not therefore 'identify' with the hero or heroine: an identification that would, if put in its conventional sense, involve socially constructed males identifying with male heroes, and socially constructed females identifying with women heroines. The situation is more complex than this, as identification involves both the recognition of self in the image on the screen, a narcissistic identification, and the identification of self with the various positions that are involved in the fictional narration: those of hero and heroine, villain, bit-part player, active and passive character. Identification is therefore multiple and fractured, a sense of seeing the constituent parts of the spectator's own psyche paraded before her or him;⁶

⁶ *ibid*, p 43.

⁷ Laura Mulvey, *op cit*, p 12.

A series of identifications are involved, then, each shifting and mobile. Equally, though, there is constant work to channel and regulate identification in relation to sexual division, in relation to the orders of gender, sexuality and social identity and authority marking patriarchal society. Every film tends both to assume and actively to work to renew those orders, that division. Every film thus tends to specify identification in accordance with the socially defined and constructed categories of male and female.

In looking specifically at masculinity in this context, I want to examine the process of narcissistic identification in more detail. Inasmuch as films *do* involve gender identification, and inasmuch as current ideologies of masculinity involve so centrally notions and attitudes to do with aggression, power and control, it seems to me that narcissism and narcissistic identification may be especially significant.

Narcissism and narcissistic identification both involve phantasies of power, omnipotence, mastery and control. Laura Mulvey makes the link between such phantasies and patriarchal images of masculinity in the following terms:

As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look on to that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence. A male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of his gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror.⁷

I want to turn to Mulvey's remarks about the glamorous male movie star below. But first it is worth extending and illustrating her point about the male protagonist and the extent to which his image is dependent upon narcissistic phantasies, phantasies of the 'more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego'.

It is easy enough to find examples of films in which these phantasies are heavily prevalent, in which the male hero is powerful and omnipotent to an extraordinary degree: the Clint Eastwood character in *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, the Tom Mix westerns, Charlton Heston in *El Cid*, the *Mad Max*



films, the Steve Reeves epics, *Superman*, *Flash Gordon* and so on. There is generally, of course, a drama in which that power and omnipotence are tested and qualified (*Superman 2* is a particularly interesting example) as are Howard Hawks' westerns and adventure films), but the Leone trilogy, for example, is marked by the extent to which the hero's powers are rendered almost godlike, hardly qualified at all. Hence, perhaps, the extent to which they are built around ritualised scenes which in many ways are devoid of genuine suspense. A film like Melville's *Le Samourai*, on the other hand, starts with the image of self-possessed, omnipotent masculinity and traces its gradual and eventual disintegration. Alain Delon plays a lone gangster, a hit-man. His own narcissism is stressed in particular through his obsessive concern with his appearance, marked notably by a repeated and ritualised gesture he makes when putting on his hat, a sweep of the hand across the rim. Delon is sent on a job, but is spotted by a black female singer in a club. There is an exchange of looks.

From that point on his omnipotence, silence and inviolability are all under threat. He is shot and wounded; his room is broken into and bugged; he is nearly trapped on the Metro. Eventually, he is gunned down, having returned to the club to see the singer again. The film is by no means a critique of the male image it draws upon. On the contrary, it very much identifies (and invites us to identify) with Delon. Nevertheless, the elements both of that image and of that to which the image is vulnerable are clearly laid out. It is no accident that Delon's downfall is symptomatically inaugurated in his encounter with the black woman. Difference (double difference) is the threat. An exchange of looks in which Delon's cold commanding gaze is troubled, undermined and returned is the mark of that threat.

The kind of image that Delon here embodies, and that Eastwood and the others mentioned earlier embody too, is one marked not only by emotional reticence, but also by silence, a reticence with language. Theoretically, this silence, this absence of language can further be linked to narcissism and to the construction of an ideal ego. The acquisition of language is a process profoundly challenging to the narcissism of early childhood. It is productive of what has been called 'symbolic castration'. Language is a process (or set of processes) involving absence and lack, and these are what threaten any image of the self as totally enclosed, self-sufficient, omnipotent. The construction of an ideal ego, meanwhile, is a process involving profound contradictions. While the ideal ego may be a 'model' with which the subject identifies and to which it aspires, it may also be a source of further images and feelings of castration, inasmuch as that ideal is something to which the subject is never adequate.⁸

⁸ For further elaboration of these two related points see Moustapha Safouan, 'Is the Oedipus Complex Universal?', *m/f* nos 5/6, 1981, pp 85-87.



The cool gaze of the lone gangster: *Le Samourai*.

⁹ D N Rodowick, 'The Difficulty of Difference,' *Wide Angle*, vol 5 no 1, p 8.

¹⁰ Paul Willemen, *op cit.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, p 16.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

If this is the case, there can be no simple and unproblematic identification on the part of the spectator, male or female, with Mulvey's 'ideal ego' on the screen. In an article published in *Wide Angle*, D N Rodowick has made a similar point. He goes on to argue both that the narcissistic male image – the image of authority and omnipotence – can entail a concomitant masochism in the relations between the spectator and the image, and further that the male image can involve an eroticism, since there is always a constant oscillation between that image as a source of identification, and as an other, a source of contemplation. The image is a source both of narcissistic processes and drives, and, inasmuch as it is other, of object-oriented processes and drives:

*Mulvey discusses the male star as an object of the look but denies him the function of an erotic object. Because Mulvey conceives the look to be essentially active in its aims, identification with the male protagonist is only considered from a point of view which associates it with a sense of omnipotence, of assuming control of the narrative. She makes no differentiation between identification and object choice in which sexual aims may be directed towards the male figure, nor does she consider the signification of authority in the male figure from the point of view of an economy of masochism.*⁹

Given Rodowick's argument, it is not surprising either that 'male' genres and films constantly involve sado-masochistic themes, scenes and phantasies or that male heroes can at times be marked as the object of an erotic gaze. These are both points I wish to discuss below. However, it is worth mentioning here that they have also been discussed in Paul Willemen's article 'Anthony Mann: Looking at the Male'.¹⁰

Willemen argues that spectacle and drama in Mann's films tend both to be structured around the look at the male figure: 'The viewer's experience is predicated on the pleasure of seeing the male "exist" (that is walk, move, ride, fight) in or through cityscapes, landscapes or, more abstractly, history. And on the unquiet pleasure of seeing the male mutilated (often quite graphically in Mann) and restored through violent brutality.'¹¹ These pleasures are founded upon a repressed homosexual voyeurism, a voyeurism 'not without its problems: the look at the male produces just as much anxiety as the look at the female, especially when it's presented as directly as in the killing scenes in *T-Men* and *Border Incident*.'¹² The (unstated) thesis behind these comments seems to be that in a heterosexual and patriarchal society, the male body cannot be marked explicitly as the erotic object of another male look: that look must be motivated in some other way, its erotic component repressed. The mutilation and sadism so often involved in Mann's films are marks both of the repression involved and of a means by which the male body may be disqualified, so to speak, as an object of erotic contemplation and desire. The repression and disavowal involved are figured crucially in the scenes in *T-Men* and *Border Incident* to which Willemen refers, in which 'an undercover agent must look on, impassively, while his close (male) friend and partner is being killed'.¹³

There is one final and important contradiction involved in the type of narcissistic images of masculinity discussed above to which I'd like to refer. It is the contradiction between narcissism and the Law, between an image of *narcissistic* authority on the one hand and an image of *social* authority on the other. This tension or contradiction is discussed at some length by Laura Mulvey in an article seeking to re-consider her 'Visual Pleasure' piece with particular reference to *Duel in the Sun*.¹⁴ It is a tension she sees as especially evident in the western. Using a narrative model derived from Vladimir's Propp's analyses of folktales¹⁵, Mulvey points to two narrative functions, 'marriage' (and hence social integration) and 'not marriage', a refusal by the hero to enter society, a refusal motivated by a nostalgic narcissism:

*In the Proppian tale, an important aspect of narrative closure is 'marriage', a function characterised by the 'princess' or equivalent. This is the only function that is sex specific and thus essentially relates to the sex of the hero and his marriageability. This function is very commonly reproduced in the Western, where once again 'marriage' makes a crucial contribution to narrative closure. However, the function's presence also has come to allow a complication in the Western, its complementary opposite 'not marriage'. Thus, while the social integration represented by marriage is an essential aspect of the folk-tale, in the Western it can be accepted . . . or not. A hero can gain in stature by refusing the princess and remaining alone (Randolph Scott in the Ranown series of movies). As the resolution of the Proppian tale can be seen to represent the resolution of the Oedipus complex (integration into the symbolic), the rejection of marriage personifies a nostalgic celebration of phallic, narcissistic omnipotence.*¹⁶

There are thus two diverging images of masculinity commonly at play in the western:

*The tension between two points of attraction, the symbolic (social integration and marriage) and nostalgic narcissism, generates a common splitting of the Western hero into two, something unknown in the Proppian tale. Here two functions emerge, one celebrating integration into society through marriage, the other celebrating resistance to social standards and responsibilities, above all those of marriage and the family, the sphere represented by women.*¹⁷

Mulvey goes on to discuss John Ford's western *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, noting the split there between Tom Doniphon, played by John Wayne, who incarnates the narcissistic function of the anachronistic social outsider, and Ranse Stoddart, played by James Stewart, who incarnates the civilising functions of marriage, social integration and social responsibility. The film's tone is increasingly nostalgic, in keeping with its mourning for the loss of Doniphon and what he represents. The nostalgia, then, is not just for an historical past, for the Old West, but also for the masculine narcissism that Wayne represents.

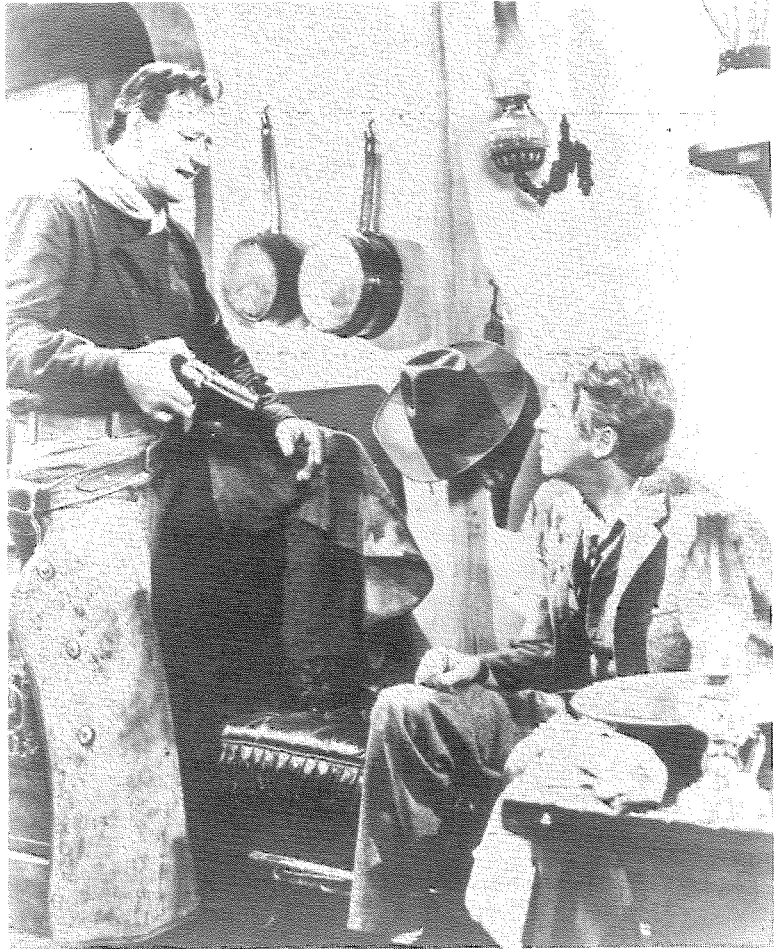
Taking a cue from Mulvey's remarks about nostalgia in *Liberty Valance*, one could go on to discuss a number of nostalgic westerns in

¹⁴ Laura Mulvey, 'Afterthoughts . . . Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*', *Framework* 15/16/17, Summer 1981.

¹⁵ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, University of Texas Press, 1968.

¹⁶ Laura Mulvey, 'Afterthoughts . . . Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*', op cit, p 14.

¹⁷ *ibid*, p 18.



The outsider and the civiliser: John Wayne and James Stewart in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*.

these terms, in terms of the theme of lost or doomed male narcissism. The clearest examples would be Peckinpah's westerns: *Guns in the Afternoon*, *Major Dundee* (to a lesser extent), *The Wild Bunch* and, especially, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*. These films are shot through with nostalgia, with an obsession with images and definitions of masculinity and masculine codes of behaviour, and with images of male narcissism and the threats posed to it by women, society and the Law. The threat of castration is figured in the wounds and injuries suffered by Joel McCrea in *Guns in the Afternoon*, Charlton Heston in *Major Dundee* and William Holden in *The Wild Bunch*. The famous slow-motion violence, bodies splintered and torn apart, can be viewed at one level at least as the image of narcissism in its moment of disintegration and destruction. Significantly, Kris Kristofferson as Billy in *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, the ultimate incarnation of omnipotent male narcissism in Peckinpah's films, is spared any bloody and splintered death. Shot by Pat Garrett, his body shows no sign either of wounds or blood: narcissism transfigured (rather than destroyed) by death.



Male narcissism
transfigured by
death: *Pat Garrett*
and *Billy the Kid*.

I want now to move on from identification and narcissism to discuss in relation to images of men and masculinity the two modes of looking addressed by Mulvey in 'Visual Pleasure', voyeuristic looking, on the one hand, and fetishistic looking on the other.

LOOKING AND SPECTACLE

In discussing these two types of looking, both fundamental to the cinema, Mulvey locates them solely in relation to a structure of activity/passivity in which the look is male and active and the object of the look female and passive. Both are considered as distinct and variant means by which male castration anxieties may be played out and allayed.

Voyeuristic looking is marked by the extent to which there is a distance between spectator and spectacle, a gulf between the seer and the seen. This structure is one which allows the spectator a degree of power over what is seen. It hence tends constantly to involve sado-masochistic

¹⁸ Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', op cit, p 14.

phantasies and themes. Here is Mulvey's description:

*voyeurism... has associations with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and subjecting the guilty person through punishment and forgiveness. This sadistic side fits in well with narrative. Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory and defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end.*¹⁸

Mulvey goes on to discuss these characteristics of voyeuristic looking in terms of the *film noir* and of Hitchcock's movies, where the hero is the bearer of the voyeuristic look, engaged in a narrative in which the woman is the object of its sadistic components. However, if we take some of the terms used in her description – 'making something happen', 'forcing a change in another person', 'a battle of will and strength', 'victory and defeat' – they can immediately be applied to 'male' genres, to films concerned largely or solely with the depiction of relations between men, to any film, for example, in which there is a struggle between a hero and a male villain. War films, westerns and gangster movies, for instance, are all marked by 'action', by 'making something happen'. Battles, fights and duels of all kinds are concerned with struggles of 'will and strength', 'victory and defeat', between individual men and/or groups of men. All of which implies that male figures on the screen are subject to voyeuristic looking, both on the part of the spectator and on the part of other male characters.

Paul Willemen's thesis on the films of Anthony Mann is clearly relevant here. The repression of any explicit avowal of eroticism in the act of looking at the male seems structurally linked to a narrative content marked by sado-masochistic phantasies and scenes. Hence both forms of voyeuristic looking, intra- and extra-diegetic, are especially evident in those moments of contest and combat referred to above, in those moments at which a narrative outcome is determined through a fight or gun-battle, at which male struggle becomes pure spectacle. Perhaps the most extreme examples are to be found in Leone's westerns, where the exchange of aggressive looks marking most western gun-duels is taken to the point of fetishistic parody through the use of extreme and repetitive close-ups. At which point the look begins to oscillate between voyeurism and fetishism as the narrative starts to freeze and spectacle takes over. The anxious 'aspects' of the look at the male to which Willemen refers are here both embodied and allayed not just by playing out the sadism inherent in voyeurism through scenes of violence and combat, but also by drawing upon the structures and processes of fetishistic looking, by stopping the narrative in order to recognise the pleasure of display, but displacing it from the male body as such and locating it more generally in the overall components of a highly ritualised scene.

John Ellis has characterised fetishistic looking in the following terms:

where voyeurism maintains (depends upon) a separation between the seer and the object seen, fetishism tries to abolish the gulf. . . . This process implies a different position and attitude of the spectator to the image. It represents the opposite tendency to that of voyeurism. . . . Fetishistic looking implies the direct acknowledgement and participation of the object viewed. . . . with the fetishistic attitude, the look of the character towards the viewer. . . . is a central feature. . . . The voyeuristic look is curious, inquiring, demanding to know. The fetishistic gaze is captivated by what it sees, does not wish to inquire further, to see more, to find out. . . . The fetishistic look has much to do with display and the spectacular.¹⁹



¹⁹ John Ellis, op cit, p 47.

²⁰ Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', op cit, p 14.

'Direct erotic rapport with the spectator': Dierrich in Sternberg's *Blonde Venus*.

Mulvey again centrally discusses this form of looking in relation to the female as object: 'This second avenue, fetishistic scopophilia, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself.'²⁰ 'Physical beauty' is interpreted solely in terms of the

female body. It is specified through the example of the films of Sternberg:

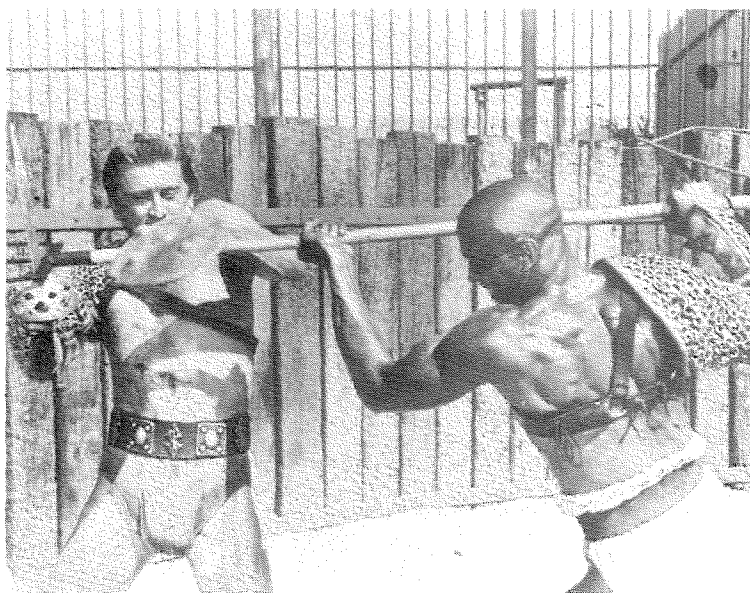
While Hitchcock goes into the investigative side of voyeurism, Sternberg produces the ultimate fetish, taking it to the point where the powerful look of the male protagonist is broken in favour of the image in direct erotic rapport with the spectator. The beauty of the woman as object and the screen space coalesce; she is no longer the bearer of guilt but a perfect product, whose body, stylised and fragmented by close-ups, is the content of the film and the direct recipient of the spectator's look.²¹

If we return to Leone's shoot-outs, we can see that some elements of the fetishistic look as here described are present, others not. We are offered the spectacle of male bodies, but bodies unmarked as objects of erotic display. There is no trace of an acknowledgement or recognition of those bodies as displayed solely for the gaze of the spectator. They are on display, certainly, but there is no cultural or cinematic convention which would allow the male body to be presented in the way that Dietrich so often is in Sternberg's films. We see male bodies stylised and fragmented by close-ups, but our look is not direct, it is heavily mediated by the looks of the characters involved. And those looks are marked not by desire, but rather by fear, or hatred, or aggression. The shoot-outs are moments of spectacle, points at which the narrative hesitates, comes to a momentary halt, but they are also points at which the drama is finally resolved, a suspense in the culmination of the narrative drive. They thus involve an imbrication of *both* forms of looking, their intertwining designed to minimise and displace the eroticism they each tend to involve, to disavow any explicitly erotic look at the male body.

There are other instances of male combat which seem to function in this way. Aside from the western, one could point to the epic as a genre, to the gladiatorial combat in *Spartacus*, to the fight between Christopher Plummer and Stephen Boyd at the end of *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, to the chariot race in *Ben Hur*. More direct displays of the male body can be found, though they tend either to be fairly brief or else to occupy the screen during credit sequences and the like (in which case the display is mediated by another textual function). Examples of the former would include the extraordinary shot of Gary Cooper lying under the hut toward the end of *Man of the West*, his body momentarily filling the Cinemascope screen. Or some of the images of Lee Marvin in *Point Blank*, his body draped over a railing or framed in a doorway. Examples of the latter would include the credit sequence of *Man of the West* again (an example to which Willemsen refers), and *Junior Bonner*.

The presentation of Rock Hudson in Sirk's melodramas is a particularly interesting case. There are constantly moments in these films in which Hudson is presented quite explicitly as the object of an erotic look. The look is usually marked as female. But Hudson's body is *feminised* in those moments, an indication of the strength of those conventions which dictate that only women can function as the objects of an explicit-

ly erotic gaze. Such instances of 'feminisation' tend also to occur in the musical, the only genre in which the male body has been unashamedly put on display in mainstream cinema in any consistent way. (A particularly clear and interesting example would be the presentation of John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*.)



The displaced eroticism of male bodies in combat: *Spartacus*.

It is a refusal to acknowledge or make explicit an eroticism that marks all three of the psychic functions and processes discussed here in relation to images of men: identification, voyeuristic looking and fetishistic looking. It is this that tends above all to differentiate the cinematic representation of images of men and women. Although I have sought to open up a space within Laura Mulvey's arguments and theses, to argue that the elements she considers in relation to images of women can and should also be considered in relation to images of men, I would certainly concur with her basic premise that the spectatorial look in mainstream cinema is implicitly male: it is one of the fundamental reasons why the erotic elements involved in the relations between the spectator and the male image have constantly to be repressed and disavowed. Were this not the case, mainstream cinema would have openly to come to terms with the male homosexuality it so assiduously seeks either to denigrate or deny. As it is, male homosexuality is constantly present as an undercurrent, as a potentially troubling aspect of many films and genres, but one that is dealt with obliquely, symptomatically, and that has to be repressed. While mainstream cinema, in its assumption of a male norm, perspective and look, can constantly take women and the female image as its object of investigation, it has rarely investigated men and the male image in the same kind of way: women are a problem, a source of



Unashamedly on display: John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*.

anxiety, of obsessive enquiry; men are not. Where women are investigated, men are tested. Masculinity, as an ideal, at least, is implicitly known. Femininity is, by contrast, a mystery. This is one of the reasons why the representation of masculinity, both inside and outside the cinema, has been so rarely discussed. Hopefully, this article will contribute towards such a discussion.

I would like to thank John Ellis and Andrew Higson for their comments on an earlier draft of this article, which is based on a talk given during the course of a SEFT Day Event on Masculinity held at Four Corners Film Workshop, London, March 19, 1983.

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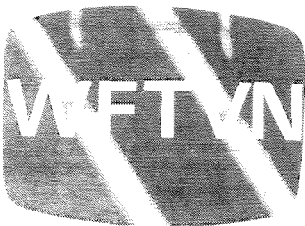
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