A QUEER ROMANCE

Lesbians, gay men and popular culture

Edited by Paul Burston and Colin Richardson

London and New York

First published 1995
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Typeset in Times by
Ponting—Green Publishing Services, Chesham, Bucks
Printed in Great Britain by Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from
the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A queer romance: lesbians, gay men and popular culture/
edited by Paul Burston and Colin Richardson.
p. cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1 Gays in popular culture.. 2. Homosexuality and art.
3. Homosexuality and literature.
4. Homosexuality—Public opinion.
I. Burston, Paul. II. Richardson, Colin.
HQ76.25.Q38 1994
305.9'0664—dc20 94-10783

ISBN 0-415-09617-0 (hbk)
ISBN 0-415-09618-9 (pbk)

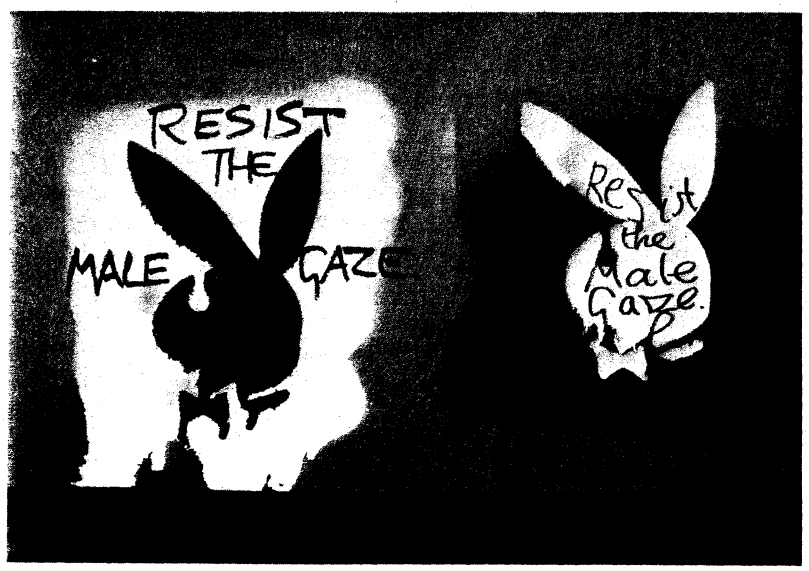
1

THE GAZE REVISITED, OR REVIEWING QUEER VIEWINC

Caroline Evans and Lorraine Gamman

INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years or so many critical reflections on what has been 'the gaze' have been published and we are not the only writers who grappled with the complexity of the theory.[1] Many debates about the gaz been dogged by factionalism, theoretical impasse, and a kind of orth which this article hopes to review and challenge. It is our feeling that writers have demanded too much of the gaze, and that it has almost bec cliché. Often when individuals use the term the 'male gaze' they mean nc more complex than the way men look at women or, worse, they refer male gaze as a metaphor for 'patriarchy'. For example, in Figure 1, the g



1 Playboy graffiti (Séan O'Mara)

slogan 'resist the male gaze' is coupled with a playboy motif. We liked the graffiti but we felt the ideas underlying it were a troubling sign of something else. Such usage undermines complex argument and produces crass and essentialist models of social relationships. Primary texts about the gaze were originally much more sophisticated. But even they have proved inadequate as a tool for analysing the complex ways in which individuals look at, and identify with a range of contemporary images, beyond cinema, from art to ads, fashion mags to pop promos.

In this article we want to shift the course of the debate about the gaze by engaging with what Constantine Giannaris has described as `genderfuck'.2 By importing some queer notions into the world of critical theory it may be possible to begin to acknowledge many perverse but enjoyable relations of looking. Our reasoning is not only that today's complex visual iconography requires the sort of theory that can comprehend it, but that previous models of the gaze have produced some very one-dimensional accounts of viewing relations.

This article is therefore written in two sections. The first section reviews gaze theory, including important work which has addressed gay and lesbian spectators, but argues that even this work is flawed by the essentialism of the terms that frame the debate. The second section explains why 'adding on' or including the experiences of gay and lesbian spectators is not enough. Instead, we should be problematising the very categories of identity themselves. We go on to locate ideas about queer looks with reference to an anti-essentialist model of gender (and other) identifications.

The first section implicitly draws on the work of two theorists often thought incompatible, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. Instead of making a choice between the two we have opted to act like smash and grab artists and help ourselves to concepts from both. In the second section we have also helped ourselves to the ideas of Roland Barthes. Rather than trying to negotiate a monogamous relationship between Foucault and Lacan, we thought instead a *m^nage a trois* might be productive and that promiscuous relations, even group sex, with Barthes might show the way forward. It is not that this orgy of theory produces any single cohesive model but that none of the models are adequate on their own. We see the only position to take theoretically is to oscillate between all the theories, to be eclectic and make the best of the recognition that the new grand narratives are no better than I the old ones in explaining everything.

GAZE THEORY REVISITED

The gaze: two models, some preliminary observations

`The gaze' has been theorised primarily in two ways and to some extent both models deal with questions raised about objectification. First, Michel

Foucault has discussed the `panopticon', the perfect prison, where the controlling gaze is used at all times as surveillance. This model posits a relationship between power andknowledge.[3] Second, film theorists have used psychoanalyis to formulate a cinematic gaze in terms of gender which functions on the .level of representation, rather than in terms of other types of cultural practice.[4] Here, film theorists have raised questions about the viewer's identificatory experiences in relation to what is seen/read. They argue the viewer's identificatory experiences are constituted exclusively by the visual text in question. One of the things this section tries to do is to challenge this `exclusivity' of definition by the visual text through looking at context (although in the second section we do return to issues about the way texts prduce meanings).

Cinematic theories have been applied to many types of visual representation, from high art to popular culture, even though Laura Mulvey's influential writing on the gaze never claimed to explain more than spectatorship of `classic narrative cinema'.5

In this convergence the distinction was lost between cultural activities (such as cruising, cottaging and even market place shopping) which may involve a reciprocal exchange of looks, and cinematic viewing which does not. Most of the theory conceptualises the gaze in relation to representations of people and not inanimate or `natural' things. Hence it is posited as constitutive of social or psychic relations. Neither model (the Foucauldian or the film theorists') posits the gaze as a mutual one. Of course the cinematic image is an object and therefore cannot look back, so obviously we need to distinguish questions of representation from other cultural practices. But in some writing this distinction has been elided. When individuals cruise each other on the street, or in clubs, the mutual exchange of glances is sexualised and often reciprocal; of course this mutuality is not the case with cinematic viewing.

Our reasons for writing this article stem from mutual discussions about gaze theory and its relevance in teaching critical theory and visual culture to art students. We both found that these ideas about the gaze didn't help us very much to think about the complex ways images resonate in contemporary culture. This is because when people use the term the `male gaze' they often mean nothing more complex than the way men look at women, and notions about the ubiquitous male gaze often go unquestioned and unspecified.6 Student essays frequently use the term `the male gaze' as shorthand both for the voyeurism implicit in spectatorship (for example, when looking at paintings) and for the idea that women are objectified in Western culture (advertising and porn are often used as examples). It seems as if these ideas about the gaze have entered academic language without students necessarily having read the primary texts which engendered the terms. Also most students seem unable to comprehend from their reading the distinction between looking and gazing. This is not surprising, because the theoretical material

so fails frequently to distinguish between the look (associated id the gaze (associated with the phallus). Indeed, there is much conflation in discussion about `the look' and `the gaze'. To clarify the differences between the terms, requires a `return to Lacan'. Lacan posits the gaze as a transcendental ideal — omniscient and omnipresent — whereas he suggests the eye (and the look) can never achieve this status (although it may aspire to do so).[7] Indeed, Carol J. Clover argues that `the best the look can hope for is to pass itself off as the gaze, and to judge from film theory's concern with the "male gaze" ... it sometimes succeeds'.[8] Elizabeth Grosz has argued:

> Many feminists ... have conflated the look with the gaze, mistaking a perceptual mode with a mode of desire. When they state baldly that "vision" is male, the look is masculine, or the visual is a phallocentric mode of perception, these feminists confuse a perceptual facility open to both sexes ... with sexually coded positions of desire within visual (or any other perceptual) functions ... vision is not, cannot be, masculine ... rather, certain ways of using vision (for example, to objectify) may confirm andhelp produce patriarchal power relations.9

One of the reasons students may be confused is because gaze theory is so difficult and it has been applied differently by different academic writers. Therefore we felt it necessary, in the next few sections, to go back and review those texts which have been influential, directly or indirectly, in conceptualising the gaze, starting with the male gaze.

Both in and out of college the phrase `the objectifying male gaze' has become a cliche used to identify the way men look at women, almost as a metaphor of patriarchal relations. Within such cliches there is no space to conceptualise queer relations of looking, or to explain changes in some contexts where women's experience is not completely defined by patriarchal discourse. Nor is there any space to talk about the implications of a fashion system which encourages women to take pleasure from images of other women, or an advertising system which uses eroticised images of men to sell products to both sexes.

But advertising cannot be construed simply as a `determining' discourse because there is always resistance to consumer marketing. At the time of writing this article graffiti appeared all over a British advertising campaign for Vauxhall Corsa cars in which supermodels were photographed, supposedly with irony, draped glamorously over cars in the classic `woman-as-object' pose. At the same time a piece of spray-canned graffiti appeared on the wall opposite the London college in which we work which said `resist the male gaze' over a Bunny Club/Playboy motif (see Figure 1). Whether this graffiti was `real' or a spoof slogan was unclear. Certainly, in a college where young female students often say `I'm not a feminist but ...' it was heartening to read a feminist slogan imprinted on the masonry. Yet there is a negative

implication to this graffiti if it means, as we suspect it does, that ill-formed ideas about 'the male gaze' have simply replaced the radical feminist model of 'patriarchy'. [10]

Woman as object — feminist critiques

The most familiar article which refers to ideas about 'the male gaze' is without question Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975). [11] But even before she wrote it, many similar ideas about the way women are objectified in Western culture had been raised by feminist critics. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* [12] is perhaps the first feminist writer to use the idea of woman as 'other'. [13] De Beauvoir describes at length how she learned to appraise her adolescent self through male eyes during the processes of adornment. As Jane Gaines has pointed out, in de Beauvoir's writings on this subject 'there is a premonition of the theory of female representation as directed towards the male surveyor-owner.'" Later texts from the second wave Women's Movement, such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), [15] Sheila Rowbotham's *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World* (1973) [16] and the anthology of feminist writings from the 1970s edited by Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful,"* all in some way make the association between women's appearance via fashion, cosmetics and body shape and women's social inequality and oppression. These books have in common not only an anti-consumer strategy but also the notion that there is some place outside the fashion system for women — a point many subsequent feminist critics have rejected. [18] However, the vast majority of feminists do hold on to the idea that women are objectified and this is connected with the experience of being looked at.

John Berger

John Berger's collaborative book and four TV programmes, *Ways of Seeing,* which appeared in 1972, were very influential in introducing similar ideas about women's oppression through objectification to the debate. [19] Although Berger does not use the phrase 'the male gaze' or psychoanalytic concepts, his analysis has much in common with Laura Mulvey's subsequent attempt to raise questions about the objectification of women. We start with him because in *Ways of Seeing* he was strongly influenced by feminism in his discussion of women's objectification through *representation.* Berger, like Mulvey, cites representation as a basis for political struggle and cultural intervention and suggests that the perspective of cultural forms like art are not free of social ideologies.

In *Ways of Seeing* Berger argues that oil paintings in the European tradition privilege unequal relations of looking. By introducing the terms 'surveyor' and `surveyed' [20] to explain the way oil paintings position those who survey

representations of Western culture.

Berger's thesis about who owns perspective is based on a reading of the way capital influences everything, even viewing relations. He says, `It reduced everything to the equality of objects. Everything became exchangeable because everything became a commodity.' [2] ' Whereas Marx had argued that the commodity form produced fetishised relations between men, Berger extends his argument to explain how commodity fetishism has impacted upon relations of looking. He also suggests that relations of class, colonisation and gender become codified in the image-making process. Edward Said has subsequently made similar observations about the impact of colonial relations on visual and other discourses about the Orient.22

In *Orientalism (1978)* Said shows how Europeans and Americans have seen Eastern and Arab culture, not as it is, but `through their own eyes'.23 Said argues that Westerners are `spectators' who see the Orient from a privileged point of view, one which allows them to construct representations of the Orient as a mysterious, occulted, fragile and static place. By mobilising Foucault's ideas about discourse, [24] Said has raised questions about the power relations underlying various representations — in literature, architecture, fine art and film — of the Orient. Hence, Berger and Said have in common the desire to make visible the invisible power relations in art and other cultural forms. Both Berger and Said find `unequal' relations of looking reproduced everywhere.

Unlike Said, however, Berger has no model of `discourse' to explain power relations. Instead his account is limited by a rather crude Marxist reading which places social values above aesthetic values.' [$] Nevertheless, despite its analytical shortcomings, [26] Berger's account is particularly clear in explaining how images, and the codes and conventions which govern them, feature unequal gender relations of looking. And he is also clear about how these relations affect personal, as well as cultural, definitions of masculinity and femininity. In 1972 Berger could argue: `Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.' [27] He went on to explain that in our culture the spectator is `usually assumed to be male' because:

> to be born a woman is to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men. The social presence of women has developed as a result of their ingenuity in living under such tutelage within such a limited space. But this has been at the cost of a woman's self being split into two. A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually.28.

Berger explains how power inequalities, deriving chiefly from the economic and ideological effect of capital, operate to impact on relations between the sexes and position women as objects and men as subjects. He argues that gender relations and relations of looking are constructed by the commodity form. Further, he asserts that the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of woman is designed to flatter him'.29

What Berger does not do is use the word 'gaze' (although, as mentioned already, he does use the word `spectator'), nor does he have a concrete model of how these visual relations work upon the unconscious, except as an act of power, an overall effect of processes of commodification. It is Laura Mulvey who formally introduces ideas about the 'gaze' and the 'unconscious' to the debate some three years later, although clearly Berger's work has been formative upon feminist thinking.

Michel Foucault

Berger's work does implicitly contain a model of 'power' which is connected to ideas about consumer fetishism and the operations of capital, but it is a Marxist model of power 'from above'. Foucault's model is somewhat different in that it is diffused throughout all social classes and it is not purely economic. Foucault aligns knowledge with power. Yet when referring to the `male spectator' Berger does seem to be implicitly addressing similar ideas about 'discourse', which Catherine Belsey defines as follows:

> A *discourse* is a domain of language-use, a particular way of talking (and writing and thinking). A discourse involves certain shared assumptions which appear in the formulations that characterise it. This discourse of common sense is quite distinct, for instance, from the discourse of modern physics, and some of the formulations of the one may be expected to conflict with the formulations of the other. Ideolo$1, is *inscribed in* discourse in the sense that it is literally written or spoken I *in it* it is not a separate element which exists independently in some free-floating realm of 'ideas' and is subsequently embodied in words, but a way of thinking, speaking, experiencing.3°

Foucault has suggested that such discourses regulate power/knowledge/perspectives and produce:

> An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he (sic) is his own overseer; each individual thus exercising the surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula, power exercised continuously.'31

Foucault's discussion also refers to the panopticon, where prisoners learn to internalise their supervisors' inspecting gaze. The discussion about the way discourses of power culminate in effect to assure 'internalisation' of specific

values by individuals, relates to the experiences of more than just prisoners. There are similarities between Foucault's analysis of the public spectacle of the body[32] and Guy Debord's reading of the way consumer society relies on spectacle to graft social relations and social values onto things.-" But Foucault's reading goes further and explains the internalisation of the idea of spectacle in terms of discipline imposed on docile bodies. [34] Foucault suggests that we all internalise this control as, for example, when we agree to submit to work to timetables or when soldiers engage in military drilling and parading. Frantz Fanon has made similar observations about internalisation, in particular the way self-hatred via racism is taken on through definitions which negatively frame experience. [35] The same point could be made about the internalisation of homophobia by some gay men and lesbian women as well as the way oppression is internalised by other groups.

Foucault's discussion of the way prisoners learn to internalise oppressive discourses, and may be appellated [36] by such discourses, is also appropriate to describe the experience of many women. In particular the processes that inform the subjectivity of women who experience themselves as more visible (like the prisoner being watched), and learn to appraise themselves through male eyes, seem comparable to us. This is because women in Western culture continue to experience more social `surveillance' and objectification than men. This point about the oppressive way women often survey themselves is made specifically by Sandra Lee Bartky, who applied this Foucauldian model to the female experience of being looked at. She argues that `a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women'. [37] This point about self-appraisal and objectification is also increasingly experienced by gay men, who have used the term `body fascism'. It seems that the gay fashion for bare torsos and body building puts men on display in ways that can be experienced as oppressive.

In brief, Foucault gives us a model with which we can talk about the objectification of both women and men without drawing on psychoanalysis. This theoretical writing is very useful but offers an inadequate account of desire underlying sexualised looking. Although we are critical of some of the applications of psychoanalysis in Laura Mulvey's approach we nevertheless feel psychoanalysis does give us a way of talking about desire and fantasy. Perhaps it is not enough to say that the social subject is merely an effect of discourse because most individuals feel they are agents of their own desire and have feelings that are unique. While we recognise that all subjects are constructed, we also feel that fantasy has a relationship to `the real'. Such feelings of desire could be explained with reference to what Judith Butler has described as `constitutive discourses'. [38] However, it is only psychoanalysis that provides a model to formulate questions about agency and desire at all. It is within this psychoanalytic framework that one can talk about emotional situations or social contexts which produce instabilities which may disturb many things, including gender performance and gender identifications.

Laura Mulvey

Foucault's central thesis is that power lies at the root of the gaze. A psychoanalytic perspective shifts the emphasis onto the idea of gendered power relations (specifically 'phallic power'). The principal contribution of accounts of the gaze which incorporate psychoanalytic theory, primarily since Laura Mulvey applied the ideas of Freud and Lacan, has been to introduce consideration of the gendered 'unconscious' to the debate in relation to the Oedipus complex. In 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'39 Mulvey suggests that unequal gendered relations of looking are a universal effect of the way men acquire sexual identities and resolve castration anxiety..

Published at a time when women's objectification by men was a crucial issue for many feminists, her analysis of cinematic codes drew on psychoanalysis as a feminist strategem and a way of theorising how sexual difference is culturally, but not merely sociologically, constructed. Implicit in Mulvey's model of the gaze, therefore, are questions of gendered identity, as well as `sexual looking', although it must be noted her model was only originally intended to explain classic Hollywood narrative cinema. Like Berger, she is concerned with the idea of 'woman as spectacle' for the pleasure of men. But if there is a notion of power implicit in Mulvey's account of spectatorship it 1 is the cultural power of men over women and the film text over the spectator. Other relations of power are not dealt with, because they literally cannot be `seen' if a psychoanalytic framework is central to the analysis.

At the heart of Mulvey's essay is the idea that a cinematic narrative can be more influential in structuring the spectator's viewing experience than the discourses the spectator brings to the text. While Mulvey is only talking about cinematic spectatorship, other writers have extended this theory beyond the cinema to other viewing situations. Within film theory:

> [Mulvey's] initial insights have led to a number of different feminist responses . . . contesting and modifying Mulvey's one-to-one correlation between masculinity and voyeurism and femininity and exhibitionism.4°

Before Mulvey, Christian Metz in his book *The Imaginary Signifier*[41] uses Lacan's idea of the 'mirror stage' [42] to explain cinematic identification. For Metz the 'imaginary signifier' of the mirror image is reproduced wholesale in the cinema where star images created by the camera offer 'ego ideals' to the audience who often identify with them and thus `misrecognise' themselves. Metz is the originator of the model of spectatorship based on identification rather than power. He argues that the imaginary union provided by film images has a comparable relationship to the way the mirror constitutes us as subjects.

Laura Mulvey takes the work of Metz as the starting point of her argument when she points out: 'Important for this article is the fact that it is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition

and identification . :[43] Like Metz, Mulvey suggests that the spectator's relationship to visual texts may accommodate 'narcissistic' identifications. This occurs in the darkened arena of the cinema when images are bigger than ourselves and so idealised they inspire us to identify with characters and even imagine that we are the characters we see before us, who are so much larger than life. But Mulvey also suggests that relations of looking which articulate classic narrative cinema are voyeuristic, to the extent that the spectator's look stands in for the look of the camera. Mulvey discusses three types of looking in the cinema:

- the look of the camera as it records the filmic event;
- the look of the audience as it watches the final film product;
- the look of the characters at each other in the visual images of the screen illusion.

She says these looks are linked to the issue of gender because many relations of looking in the cinema are informed and disrupted by sexual desire and the erotic contemplation of the female form:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so they can be said to connote *to-he-looked-at-ness.* Woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle. . . . The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation."

In explaining the male gaze, Mulvey argues that certain 'erotic' scenes in films do not move the actual plot along, so much as provide 'many pure examples of fetishistic scopophilia'.[45] Mulvey explains this phenomenon of woman as erotic spectacle in psychoanalytic terms when she argues:

> the female figure poses a deeper problem. She also connotes something that the look continually circles around but disavows; her lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure.46

Thus Mulvey suggests the reason why women in film always looks so perfect — so glamorous, through the way their clothes, make-up and hair are styled, the way the camera lingers upon them — is linked to male castration anxiety and the way it is resolved. She suggests:

> woman in representation can signify castration and activate voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms to circumvent the threat.47

That is, the visual image of the woman is 'fetishised', although she does not specify the type of fetishism she is discussing.48

The question of how women look in the cinema was subsequently addressed by Mulvey in a later article.[49] Her.first article formulated the gaze as gendered and discussed the pleasure of the male spectator. The second article, while adhering to the idea of the gaze - as gendered (i.e. male), nevertheless asks whether or not something different happens when women, in contrast to men, look at classic narrative cinema. This is partly because she acknowledges the pleasure she and other women experience in relation to Hollywood movies. Her explanation of the female spectator, however, remains connected to ideas about the male gaze. She argues for female spectatorship as masculinisation and consequently makes the case for `visual transvestism':

> `for women (from childhood onwards) transsex identification is *a habit,* that very easily becomes *second nature.* However, this Nature does not sit easily and shifts restlessly in its borrowed transvestite clothes.50

This psychosexual model of cross-gender identifications does not, however, explain autonomous lesbian or gay desire, except in the heterosexual I terms of psychoanalytic discourse. As Hearn and Melechi have identified, there are two problems with her conceptualisation of the male gaze: first, the heterocentrism of its `repressive hypothesis' (citing Foucault) `which approaches homosexual desire as the barred subtext of the image'; second, its maintenance of a dichotomy between homosexuality and heterosexuality as mutually exclusive.[51] Other writers — Green, for instance — challenge Mulvey's contention that spectators are always forced into a masculine subject position, citing narratives in which men are encouraged to identify with female characters and to objectify male characters without a homosexual `threat emerging[52] All these criticisms suggest the possibility of multiple identifications and a less rigid spectatorial position. They move towards a more post-structuralist analysis, as do we in the second section.

The masquerading gaze

Mary Ann Doane tries to take Laura Mulvey's work one step further to theorise female spectatorship. She retains Mulvey's explanation of the gaze but brings in Joan Riviere's account of the masquerade in order to substantiate why the masculinisation of female spectatorship' results in psychic transvestism. Doane suggests: `The transvestite wears clothes which signify a different sexuality, a sexuality which, for the woman, allows a mastery over the image and the very possibility of attaching the gaze to desire.'[53] Her point is that women are far more transvestite:

> Thus, while the male is locked into sexual identity, the female can at least pretend that she is other — in fact, sexual mobility would seem to be a distinguishing feature of femininity in its cultural construction.54

She argues that it is understandable for woman to want to be men, but their masquerade as 'womanly' women is a 'reaction formation against the woman's transsex identification, her transvestism'. [55] Doane therefore employs the idea of femininity as masquerade in relationship to identification because she says 'the female look demands a becoming' [56] to explain not the sexual desire of women in the audience for women on the screen, but female agency in spectatorship through fluidity of identification:

> The masquerade, in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance. Womanliness is a mask which can be worn or removed. . . . To masquerade is to manufacture a lack in the form of a certain distance between oneself and one's image.57

In brief, Doane is implying that because women know how to put identity on, they also know how to take it off (although this point is contested by Judith Butler) [58] and thus offers an explanation of fluid female identifications in the cinema.

Despite an interesting discussion of Riviere, we feel Doane's explanation of how women look is inappropriate. She connects arguments about masquerade (essential to explanation of identity) to arguments about spectatorship, which she herself admits in a subsequent article does not work. [59] We agree that masquerade is an inappropriate concept with which to discuss female spectatorship. The pleasures from performance of identity are very different from cinematic identifications (which are mainly vicarious in terms of the pleasures they offer). Furthermore, it is arguable that men can 'masquerade', as well as women, although Lacan accounts for this phenomenon as 'phallic parade' rather than 'masquerade'. In his account women masquerade as the phallus because they don't have it — although it has been argued that men don't have the phallus either, only the inadequate penis.6°

Black representations — reviewing black looks

Who is viewing, as well as the context of viewing, raises questions about the spectator/viewer her/himself. One of the biggest criticisms of the psychoanalytic framework is that it privileges gender inequalities over all other forms of inequality, including that of race. It has no model of ethnicity in relation to the sexualised looking of the male gaze, nor can it address the *social context* of the spectator's experience.

This point about contextual issues being dominant in terms of the way images are read has been made by many cultural studies writers, who have been critical of the somewhat universal application of psychoanalytic concepts. Some critics have looked at the social context of viewers and readers (as well as spectators of the cinema) and suggest that contextual issues require further analysis than is allowed by gaze theory. It should be noted, however, that much of this cultural studies work which has applied gaze theory to the

study of forms and processes of popular culture uses the terms `Spectator' (deriving from psychoanlytic film theory) and `Audience' (deriving from a more sociological or cultural studies approach to the media) as if they were interchangeable. As Annette Kuhn has pointed out, there is a distinction between the two terms and they are not simply interchangeable, because:

> `Spectator' is a term associated with a mode of analysis focusing on the subject positions constructed by the film and belongs to psycho-analytic film theory. `Audience', on the other hand, refers to the actual people in the cinema and is associated with a more sociological or cultural studies approach to the visual media, especially television and video.6l

Severalp oints about cultural difference are raised by the study of context. These concern not only the cross-cultural differences between spectators and viewers but also the fact that different media produce different responses. Obviously, watching a video in your own home when the image is smaller, and you may not be confined to your seat, is quite different to the more formal atmosphere of cinematic viewing when images are larger than life.62 In order to challenge ideas about the determining gaze these contexual differences of viewing have been highlighted by `media effects research' to argue for (a) active viewing and (b) differences between viewers.63 Such research also indicates that individual identities, in the sense of ethnicity or class differences, for example, are often relevant to the way people view things.

Looking at the diversity of viewers watching television programmes *EastEnders* and *Crimewatch,* and also the mainstream film *The Accused,* media effects researchers in *Women Viewing Violence* argue that `ethnicity proved to be a strong differentiating factor between different groups of women viewers'. [64] Evidently, many black women viewers felt alienated because of the `perceived irrelevance of some of the images to them'. Researchers observed that `Ethnicity, therefore, played a crucial role in two quite distinct ways: it was an indicator of alienation among Afro-Caribbean women and a way of affirming difference amongst Asian women.'65

In regard to the film *The Accused,* which provoked a strong identificatory response from many women interviewed, black women's experience of viewing was found to be somewhat different. Researchers argue that ethnic identity functioned to limit the measure of identification they had with the rape victim.

Despite the limitations of media effects research, [66] it does show that ethnicity is an issue to be taken seriously in regard to the context of spectators/ audiences. Nevertheless, Laura Mulvey's framework cannot conceptualise ethnicity in relation to the gaze. In the film *Some Like It Hot* (Billy Wilder, 1959), where Marilyn Monroe walks to the train as the focus of a voyeuristic male gaze, the black train guard she passes might as well be invisible. He is

The train guard's gaze on the screen has no potency or power; he is symbolically castrated by his subordinate social position. Despite the erotic spectacle provided by Monroe, the blankness of the black train guard's gaze perhaps creates some level of anxiety for certain spectators. This raises the question of whether narrative pleasure from the film text can only be achieved by identifying as a white man. Such a reading would suggest that classic narrative cinema does exclude black looks. Obviously, being black doesn't stop individuals enjoying the film, but one might question the nature of the pleasure on offer to black men and women. There is no straightforward answer, but Kobena Mercer's ideas about `contradictory identifications' may help us think through those issues.

Kobena Mercer has written about the question of ethnicity in relation to spectatorship, and has raised questions about `sexual ambivalence' in relation to viewing. As a gay black man he was originally surprised by his own contradictory responses to Mapplethorpe's collection of nude photographs *(Black Males,* 1982). He wanted to review his previous criticism of the book,[67] and to look at the contradictory feelings he first experienced when viewing the photographs. He says:

> On the one hand, I emphasised objectification because I felt identified with the black males in the field of vision, an identification with the other that might be described in Fanon's terms as a feeling that `I am laid bare.... I am a slave not of the "idea" that others have of me but of my own appearance. I am being dissected 'under white eyes. I am *fixed....* Look, it's a Negro.' But on the other hand, and more difficult to disclose, I was also implicated in the fantasy scenario as a gay subject. That is to say, I was identified with the author in so far as the objectified black male was also an image of the object chosen by my own fantasies and erotic investments. Thus sharing the same desire to look as the author-agent of the gaze, I would actually occupy the position that I said was that of the `white male subject'.... Taking the two elements together, I would say that my ambivalent positioning as black gay male reader stemmed from the way in which I inhabited two contradictory identifications at one and the same time.68

The focus on gender rather than ethnicity in relation to voyeurism and identification in the cinema, taken up by many cultural studies writers in the last ten years, mirrors some early feminist debates which virtually ignored the issue of race.[69] Pratibha Parmar and Valerie Amos in `Many Voices One Chant'[70] berated British socialist feminists, among others, for their ethnocentrism. Similarly, it could be argued that psychoanalytic gaze theory is an ethnocentric discursive practice. Indeed, psychoanalysis has had many limitations and misuses. Lola Young has discussed the possible dangers of

transcultural and ahistorical uses of psychoanalytic theory. [7I] She notes such dangers occur when explaining 'the psychic processes involved in racism and racist ideologies' but nevertheless goes on to argue that psychoanalysis can be helpful in understanding how blackness is constructed as a category in white fantasy, in a particular context where

> white is a non category. . . . White is the norm against which everything else is measured and it has no need for self-definition.72

Yet gaze theory is notorious for ignoring contextual issues, particularly significant when explaining the experience of black people, because the context of viewing film in Western culture posits whiteness as the norm and blackness as other. Indeed, gaze theory's universal focus on questions of gender has been applied wholesale to the extent that it cannot begin to address or explain how other dynamics of identity, in addition to gender — such as race, class, and generation, and the complex ways these categories intersect — may influence representations.

Female spectators and the female gaze

Questions about ethnicity are not the only ones absent from gaze theory. Even on the issue of gender the psychoanalytic framework is not completely adequate in so far as it aligns the masculine position with active looking and the feminine with passivity. Various writers have taken up Mulvey's arguments,[73] and tried to include the female spectator in more detail within the original framework of the gaze. [74] Many of these writers, as well as the fifty feminist film critics and theorists who contributed to the journal *Camera Obscura* on female spectatorship in 1989,[75] have argued that women spectators are *active* in the cinema.

Overall, most feminist writers remain loyal to the psychoanalytic foundations of gaze theory, and indeed have tried to adapt it to explain the agency of female spectators, as well as the 'female gaze' on the screen. Laura Mulvey's original argument about the male gaze suggests there is no space for women within mainstream narrative cinema. She suggests only the avant-garde can accommodate feminist narratives and that 'women . . . cannot view the decline of traditional film form with anything much more than sentimental regret'.[76] This position is not shared by many subsequent feminist critics. They see the mainstream as a site of possible 'feminist intervention' for film makers as a way of taking feminist messages into mainstream cinema, particularly as elsewhere in popular culture 'strong' women performers and actresses seem to have had some success with introducing feminist meanings into the popular arena.77

Gamman and Marshment (1988) argue that overall, during the 1980s, there were moments in popular culture, as well as the cinema in films from *Black Widow* (1987) to *Aliens* 2 and 3 (1986 and 1992) where feminism had

2–5 (from top to bottom) The absent black gaze (*Some Like It Hot*, Billy Wilder, 1959; stills by Séan O'Mara)

permeated certain genres and the female gaze could be seen to 'interrupt' patriarchal discourse, to the extent of disrupting the objectifying erotic gaze at women. Here the female gaze is argued to 'be able to literally throw itself within the frame to whoever is clever enough to catch it.[78] This often means that in order to get the jokes both men and women in the audience are required in some way to identify with the female point of view (of course point of view is not the same thing as spectatorship). This use of mockery and irony to subvert the subordinate female position is a common and by now familiar sit-com strategy, found in TV programmes from *The Golden Girls* to *Absolutely Fabulous*. Many female comedians now present a discourse that does seem to indicate an autonomous space for women within popular culture — a space that may resist objectification and accommodate feminism.

The male body as erotic spectacle — women and sexual looking

Mulvey bases many of her arguments on the assumption that 'the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification'.[79] It is true that when she wrote this in the 1970s there were fewer eroticised images of men in circulation, although Steve Neale has pointed out instances of covert male objectification in mainstream cinema, specifically in Hollywood epics involving gladiators and cowboys."

In 'Don't Look Now: The Male Pin-Up' Richard Dyer looks at the circumstances in which the eroticisation of the male body is sanctioned, and the conditions under which women are permitted to look. He argues for the instability of the male pin-up, first, because the pin-up denies he is the object of the female gaze by the direction of his look. Second, the pin-up denies his passivity as an object for the gaze by being active. Third, the pin-up wants to be the phallus but can't; his flaccid penis can never match the mystique and power of the phallus. 'Hence the excessive, even hysterical, quality of so much male imagery. The clenched fists, the bulging muscles, the hardened jaws. . .[81]

Whereas Richard Dyer's article considers the heterosexual eroticisation of the male body, Steve Neale's article looks at the homoerotic component of the male gaze and, while agreeing with many of Mulvey's premises, he argues that mainstream cinema has to deny the possibility of an erotic relationship between the male spectator and the protagonist. This argument about the disavowal of the explicitly homoerotic in representation has also been made by Michael Hatt and D. A. Miller.[82] Yet Miller, unlike Neale, argues that the gay male cult of developed musculature is an 'explicit aim . . . to make the male body visible to desire'.[83] Miller differentiates

> the macho straight male body and the so-called gym-body of gay male culture. The first deploys its heft as a tool (for work, for its potential

> and actual intimidation of other, weaker men or of women) — as both an armoured body and a body wholly given over to utility.... The second displays its muscle primarily in terms of an *image* openly appealing to, and deliberately courting the possibility of being shivered by, someone else's desire.84

Many writers, among them Andy Medhurst and Yvonne Tasker, have argued that the degree of objectification of men in cinema has oecome more overt than ever before.[85] Male stars such as Rudolf Valentino and Cary Grant had always achieved the status of sex objects but over the last twenty years, from Richard Gere to Mel Gibson, the naked male body has been increasingly displayed and sexualised.

This objectification of the male body is not only confined to cinema. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s mens' bodies were increasingly featured in advertising and fashion imagery. Examples include: the first Calvin Klein advertising campaign; Nick Kamen in the Levi's ad; fashion spreads in magazines such as *i-D* and *The Face;* the work of photographer Bruce Weber and stylist Ray Petri, and fashion designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier. Frank Mort describes how, in the 1980s, young men were sold advertising images in which they were `stimulated to look at themselves — and other men — as objects of consumer desires ... getting pleasures previously branded taboo or feminine'.S6

By the 1990s `porn' magazines for women, such as *For Women* and *Women Only,* founded in 1992 and 1993 respectively, were utilising codes about male objectification previously only found in gay magazines aimed at homosexual men. These women's magazines created eroticised images of men specifically for women to consume, perhaps for masturbatory purposes. Their founding editor, Isabel Koprowski, says that even though they

> can't show an erection ... we found that many women do want to see the Chippendale type, very muscular, oiled bodies. They also want to see men who look as though they've got personality: men who perhaps aren't as well developed: and they want, you know, dark men, fair men, red-headed men — all kinds of men. The thing that really impressed . me was that for a men's magazine you could fill it with busty blondes and with very little editorial and men would buy it. You cannot do that with women [87]

Despite the appearance of male sex objects in the early 1980s, some feminist critics continued to argue that men cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification and that the male gaze cannot be simply inverted to produce a straightforward female gaze. Mary Ann Doane, for example, in her first essay on female spectatorship, suggested that when a woman looks at male striptease her first reaction is to associate this body with a female role and to imagine a woman stripping. This is because, she argues,

Ul 1GVV INai 1LJG11, 1-U11^l11U1111g lm mull1^G1VUN 4W aUGII411U11N WIIU^G au&IIUWI-

'i edgement simply reinforces the dominant system of aligning sexual difference with a subject/object dichotomy'.88

Suzanne Moore, in Here's Looking at You, Kid',[89] was among the first critics to differ from Mary Ann Doane and to draw attention to the voyeuristic heterosexual female gaze as well as to shifts, in the last ten years, in representations of men and masculinity. Moore points out that gay porn had always eroticised the male body. She argues that the codes and conventions associated with gay porn, taken up by photographers like Bruce Weber (whose work was regularly featured in magazines in the 1980s) created a different space for women (as well as men) as active voyeurs of erotic male spectacle.

The British style magazines of the 1980s *(The Face, i-D, Blitz)* were the first magazines that were marketed to both sexes and recognised that pictures of pop stars and fashion models were `polysemic'. They could speak, for example, both to a gay man and a straight woman at the same time (see Figure 6). (Lynda Williams has discussed pornography which is targeted equally at gay men and straight women in the USA.[90] More and more images in contemporary culture make many forms of address to more than one audience, and allow the possibility of multiple identifications by the spectator. Of course, images have always been capable of speaking differentl to different spectators but the new style magazines of the 1980s were more knowing. They gave readers permission to be promiscuous with images, and they permitted images to function ambiguously, and thereby to speak to a range of different subject positions. Indeed in the 1980 advertisers used images of new men' to promote products to men - who were now discovered to be shopping - as well as to women, whom they recognised would also enjoy them, because traditionally women were found to make 85 per cent of consumer purchases.[91] While Moore did not overtly make the case for a ubiquitous female gaze, she argued that homoerotic representations, far from excluding the (voyeuristic) female gaze, may actually invite it

Lesbian/gay spectators and lesbian representations

Many lesbian and gay critics have argued that gay and lesbian representations and gay and lesbian desire pose a challenge to the Mulveyian framework.[93] All have utilised psychoanalytic models to some extent, either using Freud, Lacan or debates informed by psychoanalysis from film theory. Two main themes emerge throughout this work. The first concerns the dynamics of sexual desire of the audience in relation to images. The second concerns the way in which individuals narcissistically identify with images of people in

6 Buffalo Boy (© *The Face*, March 1985, p.86; photograph by Jamie Morgan; stylist Ray Petri)

all sorts of ways, including people not of the same sex. (For instance, Richard Dyer has discussed the way some gay men identify with Judy Garland.)[94] These questions often get conflated and below we discuss Jackie Stacey's paper on the lesbian spectator to illustrate how such conflation is problematic.

Jackie Stacey's analysis of two mainstream Hollywood films from different periods, *All About Eve* (1950) and *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985),[95] reviews the psychoanalytic framework of film. This project, for virtually the first time, includes the lesbian spectator in the debate and looks at sexual desire in relationship to sexual 'similarity' as opposed to sexual difference. Her approach is different from that of Richard Dyer, who writes about identification. Although Stacey does ask how lesbian women identify with male protagonists she suggests this approach can be too narrow:

> one of the limits of this approach may be that a more detailed analysis of the lesbian audience would reveal a diversity of readings and pleasures or displeasures in relation to mainstream cinema.... There is likely to be a whole set of desires and identifications with different configurations at stake which cannot necessarily be fixed according to the conscious sexual identities of the cinematic spectator.96

Stacey goes on to argue that `the rigid distinction between *either* desire *or* identification, so characteristic of psychoanalytic film theory, fails to address the construction of desires which involve a specific interplay of both processes'.[97] So Stacey's approach frames lesbian desires partly in relationship to similarities between women on the screen and the possibilities for identification this creates for women in the audience. She stresses that lesbian spectatorship, like all spectatorship, is often a `contradictory' experience. Teresa de Lauretis is one of several writers who criticise Stacey's account. She argues that Stacey has 'desexualised' the lesbian spectator, and instead made the case for female narcissism, rather than erotic contemplation of women by women.98

Nevertheless, Stacey's article highlights the psychoanalytic point that all forms of looking are sexually charged because of the scopic drive. As Jacqueline Rose argues:

> there can be no work on the image, no challenge to its power of illusion and address which does not simultaneously challenge the fact of sexual difference..... Hence one of the chief drives of an art which addresses the presence of the sexual in representation — to expose the fixed nature of sexual identity as a phantasy and in the same gesture, to trouble, break up, or rupture the visual field before our eyes.[99]

Furthermore, Stacey relies on the specifically Lacanian point that looking itself is split between sexual objectification and narcissistic identification. Obviously in sexual relationships there may be elements of narcissism co-existing with voyeuristic objectification. Stacey, like Metz and Mulvey, suggests a connection between the mirror and the cinema screen and the capacity individuals have to identify with objects (the mirror image or the cinematic image). Her model of spectatorship returns to Lacan's point that the mirror image of the mirror stage is both an adversary (a specular opposite) and an identical image.[100] Lacan argues that identification is partly made through aggression and rivalry — hence objectification and identification may be closely meshed and not opposites.

Additionally some feminist critics have found Stacey's paper on lesbian spectatorship limited. The equation of complexity and fluidity specifically with the lesbian spectator is thought to be a problem, not least because all spectators may be both complex and fluid in their identificatory processes. Judith Mayne has argued that no adequate model of lesbian spectatorship has

yet been found. Lesbian desire may disrupt the psychoanalytic model but, she says:

> Quite honestly, I have some ambivalance about a theory of lesbian spectatorship. The models of female spectatorship that have been elaborated in feminist film theory disturb me on two counts. First, female spectatorship becomes the process of displacement itself: contradiction, oscillation, mobility. Though I'm as interested in contradiction as the next person, there is too great a tendency to valorise contradiction for its own sake. So, second, the female spectator becomes the site at which contradiction itself is embodied and it begins to appear that the female spectator functions very much like the Woman in classical cinema — as the figure upon whom are projected all the messy, troublesome, complicated things that don't fit elsewhere. I would rather start from the assumption that all spectatorship is potentially contradictory, so contradiction doesn't have to carry this utopian burden as proof of some kind of resistant force.1°1

We would take Mayne's arguments about lesbian spectatorship further and suggest that no adequate model of spectatorship has been posited for any individual or social group. But certainly it seems far too simplistic to argue that who you sleep with may determine how you identify with cinematic images.

However, while there may be no such thing as an essentially 'lesbian' gaze, there is certainly lesbian imagery in circulation. [102] As Suzie Bright has observed, [1°3] lesbian porn videos featuring butch/femme relationships (women without bouffant hair and long fingernails, enthusiastically performing sex) are experiencing a consumer boom in the USA. Evidently, many lesbians enjoy these videos which eroticise women for women. Some would argue that this is because there is a different gaze at work within them. We would argue, however, that there is no essential 'lesbian gaze' at work here, but that lesbian film-makers and lesbian audiences bring diffent cultural competences [1°4] to I bear on the production and consumption of lesbian imagery. This is why, as I Bright points out, [105] mainstream porn producers don't seem to be able to get it right; they don't know lesbian subcultural codes and fail adequately to address the lesbian market.

We would also argue that the 'cultural competence' of the lesbian spectator (and lack of such competence in other viewers) may influence the way representations are viewed and understood by some women. Using Foucault's model of discourse we would argue against any essentialist model of the lesbian gaze and instead suggest that lesbian viewers may bring certain subcultural experiences and knowledge to the reading of specific texts. This may give these women a different perspective on the erotic images in question.

The point we are making is that there are many visual clues and 'cultural competences' which generate interpellation, identification and voyeurism in the cinema. And these visual signs need more analysis and investigation, rather than relying on ideas about 'authentic' sexual aims.

On looking at the photographs of British-based photographer Della Grace in her book *Lovebites* Reina Lewis has commented:

> There is an element of being looked at in this collection that does not simply relate to the stereotypical gaze of the (male) voyeur . . . [it] forces us to theorise a lesbian gaze. . .[106]

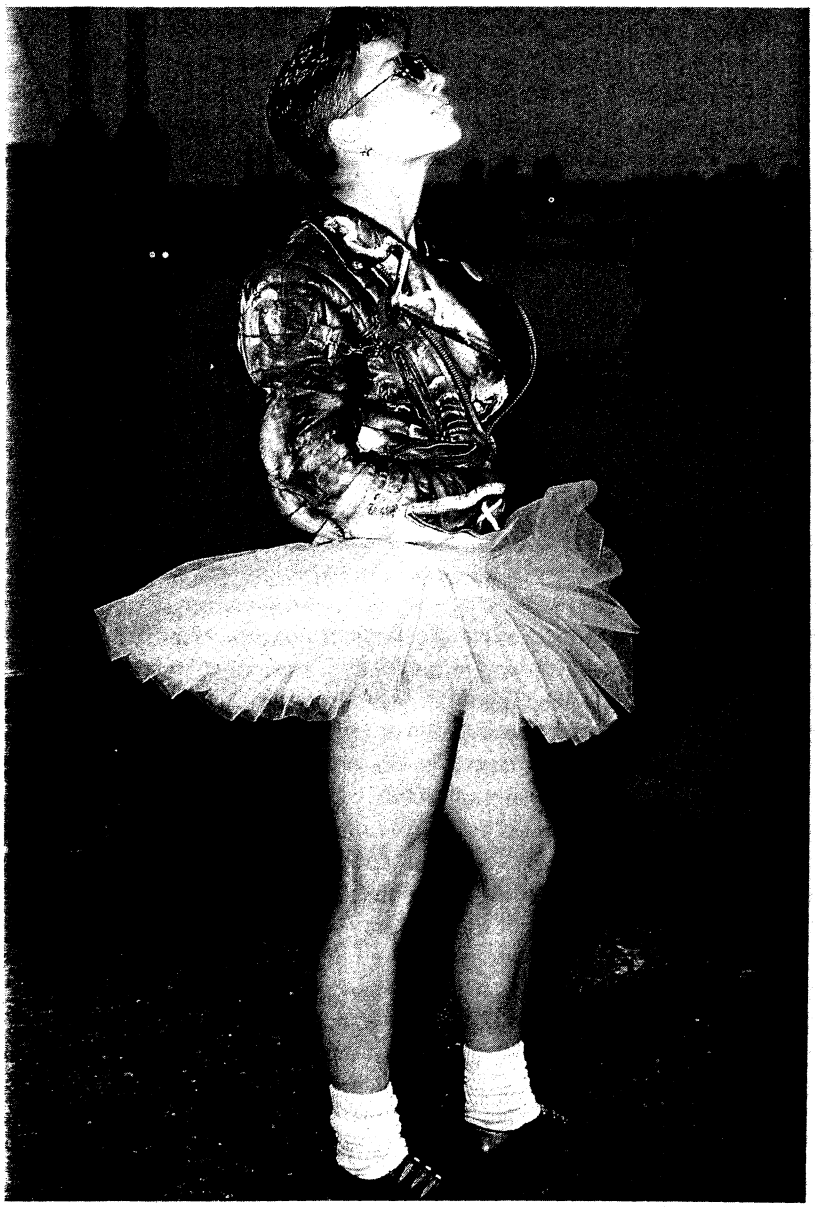
But when we looked at this overtly 'lesbian' collection we, like Reina Lewis, found it impossible to pin the photographs down to any fixed reading. Although Grace may deliberately be celebrating lesbian imagery, Lewis makes the point that it is not only lesbians, or straight women, who may find the images erotic. Indeed, there is no controlling, single ubiquitous female gaze that excludes heterosexuals but a range of possibilities for spectatorship offered by the photographs. Similarly, lesbian films from *Lianna* (1982) to *Desert Hearts* (1984) appear to invite a multiplicity of spectator positions, including lesbian spectatorship, and certainly do not simply equate with popular notions about the male gaze or any simple 'inversion' of it.

With regard to Della Grace's photographs it is possible that the spectator may not necessarily 'understand' the relationship of particular 'signs', specific haircuts, footwear and clothing, that have subcultural meaning in some lesbian communities (see Figure 7). What we are arguing, then, is that some codes associated with visual images of women (which are often overt in lesbian representation but perhaps require subcultural knowledge in order to recognise or even eroticise them) may be central to constructing lesbian subjectivity.

The s/m scenarios and subcultural fashion codes of Della Grace's work may interpellate 'lesbian spectators' as well as other knowing viewers (be they heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian or homosexual in their 'real' lives) and so address and form the spectator because of the spectator's relationship to knowledge about specific objects and products. These items, as a consequence of activities and histories associated with contemporary sexual subcultures, carry heavy symbolic meanings and connotations, not least because they have been used by gay men and lesbian women to carve out more fluid gender identities for themselves.[107]

AFTERTHOUGHTS: REVIEWING QUEER VIEWING

In the first section we reviewed and criticised gaze theory for its treatment of the visual text as being the sole determinant of viewing experience. We emphasised the importance of context as much as text. In this section we want to reinstate the text in order to ask questions about how, and to what extent,



7 Robyn (Della Grace, 1989)

likewise he cites Stuart Marshall's 'necessary fiction', as a way of understanding how individuals are often involved in 'accepting what is known to be untrue in order to facilitate action'.[112] And of course imaginary fictions also frame the way we understand unified categories of gender and sexual orientation.

A homosexual identity or a homosexual identification, as Foucault pointed out, are very different from a homosexual act[113]. Nowadays, one might identify politically, and with pride, as gay, lesbian, female or black, but in reality the sense of unity and sameness on which such identification is predicated might be illusory. Alan McKee states: 'Queer politics has come with the realisation that, to quote Derek Jarman, "There never was a [homosexual] community, in fact."'[114] Perhaps the differences between us are as great as the similarities.

In homophobic society, the necessary fiction of a cohesive identity must be spoken in order for political communities to maintain any sort of presence. But there are obviously problems with the articulation of any sort of fixed identity. Judith Butler has argued that even within the field of gay and lesbian studies there are problems with essentialism. This is because a kind of discourse of sexual identities emerges and 'identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalising categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a libratory contestation of that very oppression.' But she adds: 'This is not to say that I will not appear at political occasions under the sign of lesbian, but that I would like to have it permanently unclear what precisely that sign signifies.'[115] Indeed, this deconstructive mode, which may produce ambiguity, can itself be a political strategy:

> it is no longer clear that feminist theory ought to try to settle the questions of primary identity in order to get on with the task of politics. Instead, we ought to ask, what political possibilities are the consequence of a radical critique of the categories of identity?[116]

If one formulates identity as a more fluid category, one might then be able simultaneously to talk of queer identifications and to acknowledge the complexity and variety of different subjectivities. The impact of these ideas on gaze theory is that, because identity itself is not fixed, it is inappropriate to posit any single identification with images.

If we deconstruct the subject we must by implication also deconstruct the subject's reading/viewing position and, therefore, the text also:

> because subject-positions are mutiple, shifting and changeable, readers can occupy several 'I-slots' *at the same time* . . . there is no 'natural' way to read a text; ways of reading are historically specific and culturally variable, and reading positions are always constructed. . . . Readers, like texts, are constructed. . . . If we read from multiple

likewise he cites Stuart Marshall's 'necessary fiction', as a way of understanding how individuals are often involved in 'accepting what is known to be untrue in order to facilitate action'. [112] And of course imaginary fictions also frame the way we understand unified categories of gender and sexual orientation.

A homosexual identity or a homosexual identification, as Foucault pointed out, are very different from a homosexual act [113]. Nowadays, one might identify politically, and with pride, as gay, lesbian, female or black, but in reality the sense of unity and sameness on which such identification is predicated might be illusory. Alan McKee states: 'Queer politics has come with the realisation that, to quote Derek Jarman, "There never was a [homosexual] community, in fact."' [114] Perhaps the differences between us are as great as the similarities.

In homophobic society, the necessary fiction of a cohesive identity must be spoken in order for political communities to maintain any sort of presence. But there are obviously problems with the articulation of any sort of fixed identity. Judith Butler has argued that even within the field of gay and lesbian studies there are problems with essentialism. This is because a kind of discourse of sexual identities emerges and 'identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalising categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a libratory contestation of that very oppression.' But she adds: 'This is not to say that I will not appear at political occasions under the sign of lesbian, but that I would like to have it permanently unclear what precisely that sign signifies.' [115] Indeed, this deconstructive mode, which may produce ambiguity, can itself be a political strategy:

> it is no longer clear that feminist theory ought to try to settle the questions of primary identity in order to get on with the task of politics. Instead, we ought to ask, what political possibilities are the consequence of a radical critique of the categories of identity? [116]

If one formulates identity as a more fluid category, one might then be able simultaneously to talk of queer identifications and to acknowledge the complexity and variety of different subjectivities. The impact of these ideas on gaze theory is that, because identity itself is not fixed, it is inappropriate I to posit any single identification with images.

If we deconstruct the subject we must by implication also deconstruct the subject's reading/viewing position and, therefore, the text also:

> because subject-positions are mutiple, shifting and changeable, readers can occupy several `I-slots' *at the same time* . . . there is no 'natural' way to read a text; ways of reading are historically specific and culturally variable, and reading positions are always constructed. . . . Readers, like texts, are constructed. . . . If we read from multiple

> subject-positions the very act of reading becomes a force for dislocating our belief in stable subjects and essential meanings.' 17

Such an approach might sound like heresy in a collection where many writers for political reasons are concerned to establish the idea that gay and lesbian spectatorship has a material reality (not adequately conceptualised by critical theorists to date), and where other writers are arguing that specific relations of looking are produced by visual texts they suggest constitute evidence of a 'gay gaze'. Our reasoning in aligning ourselves with a sort of Judith Butler mode of analysis is that anti-essentialist discussion of identificatory processes actually challenges the fixity of notions about gay, lesbian or straight identities. It also challenges essentialist ideas that relations of looking are determined by the biological sex of the individual/s you choose to fornicate with, more than any other social relations (such as those associated with ethnic or class subjectivities). We would argue that the heterosexual subject position is equally as unnatural, and more importantly, as fluid, in terms of gender identifications, as homosexual or lesbian subjectivities. This collection is politically important because it looks at gaze theory from a gay and lesbian perspective. But our inclusion reveals the anti-essentialist nature of the project and recognises that we too might be queer, if not personally then theoretically. Our political stance here is that all sexuality is a construct and sexual categories and definitions impinge on us all. Rethinking gaze theory to include lesbian and gay perspectives means rethinking heterosexual perspectives too, not least because the responsibility for radical sexual politics should be a heterosexual as well as a homosexual imperative. As the 'closet' heterosexuals of this collection, we feel gaze theory as it stands cannot explain all our experiences of viewing. We are probably as perverse in our looking habits as many 'essentially' gay or lesbian spectators, and only by introducing some queer notions can we begin to explain our experiences beyond the dogma of ideas associated with the meaning of specific sexual orientations.

Further, we recognise that most women dress up as 'women' every day and yet, like us, frequently feel they are in drag. As Judith Williamson has written:

> often I have wished I could . . . appear simultaneously in every possible outfit, just to say, how dare you think any one of these is *me*. But also, see I can be all of them. [18]

If we have such a strong sense of our identity as being constructed through appearances, even though we are biologically as well as culturally defined as women, how therefore can we identify in any straightforward or 'authentic' yay with images of women? Queer theory, perhaps, gives us the space to start to rethink difficulties with cohesion of identity or identification through viewing, and to look for greater fluidity in terms of explanation. It also raises

critical questions about cross-gender identifications. Kobena Mercer has talked about inhabiting `two contradictory identifications at one and the same time' and this idea of multiple and simultaneous identification, we would argue, has always been part of the female experience of viewing.[119] This idea of ourselves as split subjects can also be extended into the metaphor of genderfuck where the free floating signifier, biological sex, is detached or cut loose from its signified, cultural gender.

Genderfuck

Della Grace's images of `lesbian boys' (see Figures 8a, 8b and 8c) cause gender trouble, not least because often her images of lesbian women look so much like gay men that they have attracted a large gay male following. Evidently, in one gay bar when the lesbian `object of desire' was revealed not to be a biological man the picture was removed from the wall: genderfuck was not to be allowed in this bar.[120] Conversely, in the 1990s some gay men have adopted the opposite strategy, and have celebrated finding images of lesbian women whom they mistake for `boys' as perversely attractive. Here, then, `genderfuck' or `gender trouble' is created not only by the image but by the subjectivity of the viewer, who likes playing games with political hierarchies as well as those of gender.

June L. Reich has suggested that genderfuck is

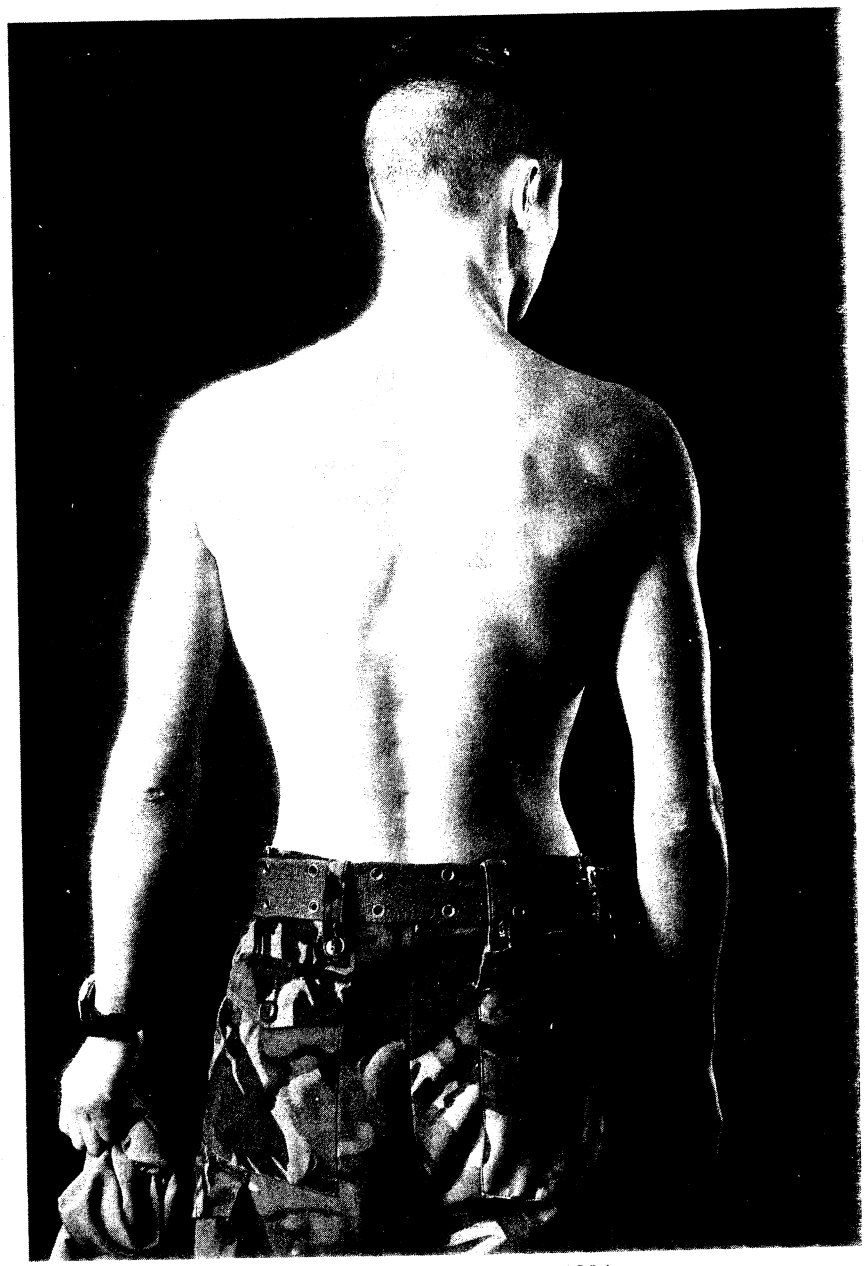
> the effect of unstable signifying practices in a libidinal economy of multiple sexualities.... This process is the destabilisation of gender as an analytical category, though it is not, necessarily, the signal of the end of gender.... The play of masculine and feminine on the body ... subverts the possibility of possessing a unified subject position.[121]

She aligns the notion of genderfuck with the end of identity politics and makes the case for a politics of performance (exemplified for her in butch/femme role-playing). She goes on to argue:

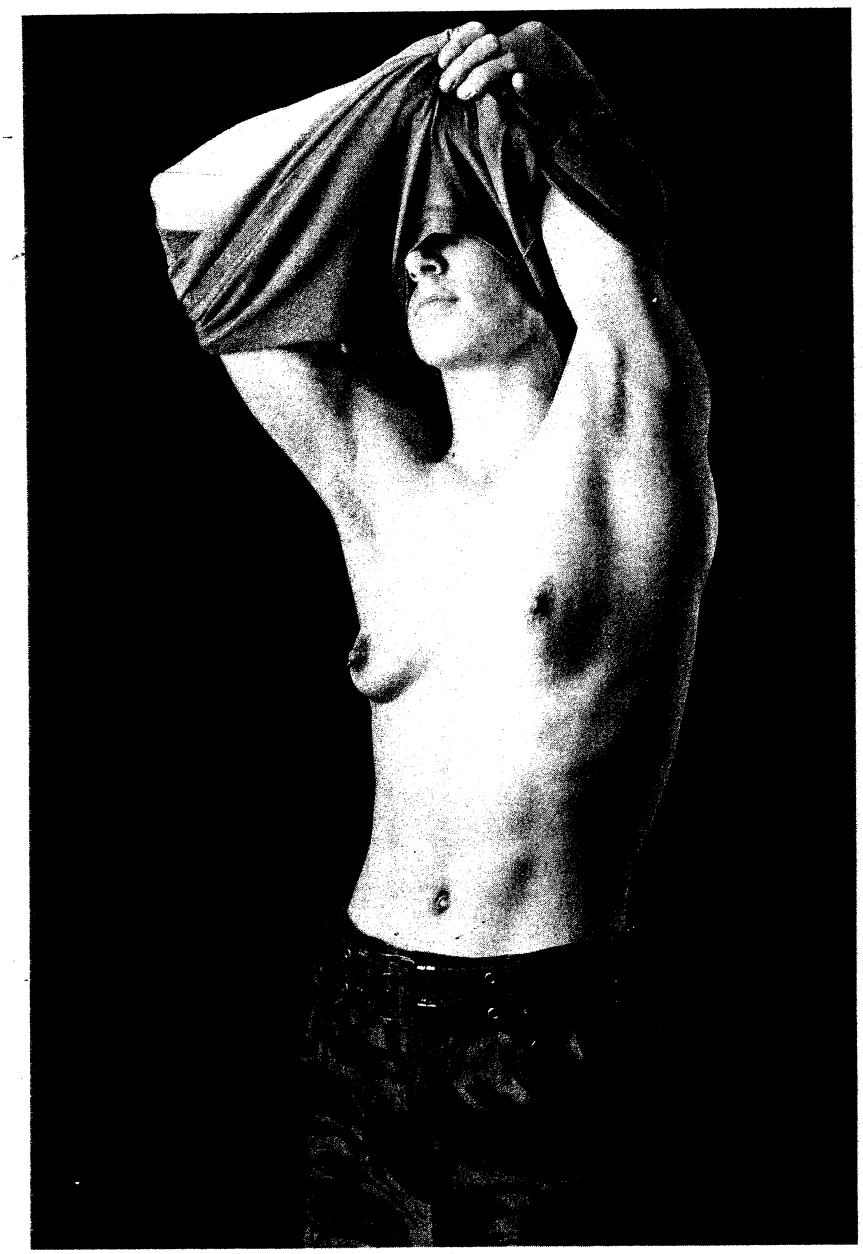
> We are defined not by who we are but by what we do. This is effectively a politics of performance. It neither fixes nor denies specific sexual and gendered identifications but accomplishes something else.... Genderfuck ... `deconstructs' the psychoanalytic concept of difference without subscribing to any heterosexist or anatomical truths about the relations of sex to gender.... Instead, genderfuck structures meaning in a symbol-performance matrix that crosses through sex and gender and destabilises the boundaries of our recognition, of sex, gender, and sexual practice.[122]

Queer viewing .... queer texts?

These ideas about `fluidity' of gender identifications may be accommodated by two things. First, that we are at a specific moment in history in which



8a Jack's back I (Della Grace, 1994)



8b Jackie II (Della Grace, 1994)

television images have copulated wildly with film and other visual texts. Today ideas about the interrelationship or intertextuality of visual images are generally accepted. Second, new generations of gays and lesbians have articulated their experiences differently from before, and what is being called 'queer cinema' and the 'queer gaze' has come into being as a consequence of that experience.[123] Although we would argue against the idea of an essentially gay or lesbian gaze, we do not want to make the case for the 'queer gaze' either. Rather, we want to make the case for identifications which are multiple, contradictory, shifting, oscillating, inconsistent and fluid. But does the queer gaze always reconstitute the visual text as queer? Or do some images encourage polymorphous identifications more than others? As we argued in the first section of this paper, context is important, but the text also is a structuring discourse. Cultural meanings are actively generated through representation,[124] and as Michèle Barrett has argued, 'Cultural politics are crucially important . . . because they involve struggles over *meaning*.'[125]

The visual text alone cannot exclusively construct spectator positions or identities and in the first section we criticised the fixity of Mulvey's analysis as opposed to the notions we raise here about spectatorial fluidity. There we shifted the focus from filmic text to spectatorial context, minimising the determining power of the texts and therefore by implication questioning the political usefulness of a Mulveyesque analysis, one committed to a structural analysis of the ideological character of the filmic or other text.

In this section we criticise the essentialism of the subject implied in gaze theory, in order to suggest a 'queerer' or more fluid model of identifications, and consequently of the text. If we accept that visual texts do produce meanings to some extent, regardless of arguments about viewing competences and contexts, we need to decide whether these texts encode dominant meanings (which then allow for the possibility of reading against the grain) or whether all texts can be read anyhow, that is, 'queerly'.[126] Media effects research, as well as some of the theoretical writings associated with Stuart Hall, has discussed the way that some texts present material in order to construct a 'preferred reading'.[127] Despite examination of how the cultural codes that frame representation achieve this, most cultural studies critics are rarely able to identify causal mechanisms. This is perhaps because structuralist methodology never sought to explain why things existed but instead focused on the way codes were arranged.

So Roland Barthes on codes is helpful in thinking through whether a textual code is a system of signs governed by rules agreed explicitly or implicitly, or whether these codes are unstable and open to different interpretations. Barthes's early work focuses on cultural codes, which he describes as dominant or conventional ways of reading the signs in the text, whereas his later work moved towards the idea of reading as a 'writerly' process 'because it can involve the production of plural texts, with different meanings'.[128] Despite the apparent rigidities of semiotic analysis, with its suggestion of a

television images have copulated wildly with film and other visual texts. Today ideas about the interrelationship or intertextuality of visual images are generally accepted. Second, new generations of gays and lesbians have articulated their experiences differently from before, and what is being called `queer cinema' and the `queer gaze' has come into being as a consequence of that experience. [23] Although we would argue against the idea of an essentially gay or lesbian gaze, we do not want to make the case for the `queer gaze' either. Rather, we want to make the case for identifications which are multiple, contradictory, shifting, oscillating, inconsistent and fluid. But does the queer gaze always reconstitute the visual text as queer? Or do some images encourage polymorphous identifications more than others? As we argued in the first section of this paper, context is important, but the text also is a structuring discourse. Cultural meanings are actively generated through representation, *and* as Warren Hall has argued, `Cultural politics are *crucially* important ... because they involve struggles over *meaning*' [125]

The visual text alone cannot exclusively construct spectator positions or identities and in the first section we criticised the fixity of Mulvey's analysis as opposed to the notions we raise here about spectatorial fluidity. There we shifted the focus from filmic text to spectatorial context minimising the determining power of the texts and therefore by implication questioning the political usefulness of a Mulveyesque analysis, one committed to a structural analysis of the ideological character of the filmic or other text.

In this section we criticise the essentialism of the subject implied in gaze theory, in order to suggest a `queerer' or more fluid model of identifications, and consequently of the text. If we accept that visual texts do produce meanings to some extent, regardless of arguments about viewing competences and contexts, we need to decide whether these texts encode dominant meanings (which then allow for the possibility of reading against the grain) or whether all texts can be read anyhow, that is, queerly. [126] Media effects research, as well as some of the theoretical writings associated with Stuart Hall, has discussed the way that some texts present material in order to construct a preferred reading'. [127] Despite examination of how the cultural codes that frame representation achieve this, most cultural studies critics are rarely able to identify causal mechanisms. This is perhaps because structuralist methodology never sought to explain why things existed but instead focused on the way codes were arranged.

So Roland Barthes on codes is helpful in thinking through whether a textual code is a system of signs governed by rules agreed explicitly or implicitly, or whether these codes are unstable and open to different interpretations. Barthes's early work focuses on cultural codes, which he describes as dominant or conventional ways of reading the signs in the text, whereas his later work moved towards the idea of reading as a writerly process because it can involve the production of plural texts, with different meanings'. [128] Despite the apparent rigidities of semiotic analysis, with its suggestion of a

universal language of codes, Barthes's model gives us a way of thinking through the ambiguities as well as the clarity of visual texts. For while there might be consensus on the denoted meaning, there is always ambiguity in the realm of connotation.[129] For example, in texts with a homosexual subtext D. A. Miller has argued that the love that dares not speak its name, except ambiguously, is relegated by virtue of its very ambiguity to a system of connotation. He argues that even in Barthes's writing homose xual ity is nowhere proclaimed but everywhere inflected as `a gay volce'.[13°] Elsewhere 1 he argues that the trouble with connotation is that homosexuality simply t disappears, becomes invisible.[131] In Hitchcock's *Rope (1948),* for example, homosexuality is consigned to connotation ... to a kind of secondary meaning.... Connotation will always manifest a certain semiotic insufficiency.... It suffers from an abiding deniability' because you can refuse a connoted meaning, just by saying, `."but isn't it just... ?" before retorting the denotation'.[132] In *Rope* homosexual meaning is elided at the same time as it is being elaborated. Miller goes on to say that connotation is the signifying process of homophobia, denying homosexuality even as it re- j iterates it, although we would not necessarily agree that this process amounts to homophobia *per se.*

But this suggests ambiguity which is `coded' in the text, which is different from reconceptualising the reader as `queer' in his/her identifications. We have said above that some images encourage polymorphous identifications and perhaps it could be implied that any text can become an object of a queer gaze. However, this suggests (by semantic implication) that some texts *do not* encourage such identifications. Again we are back to asking questions about 1, the definition of particular texts, how they are structured and what kinds of spectatorial positions they authorise or elicit. What exactly does it mean for E a text to encourage `polymorphous identifications' and how do we recognise the characteristics of such a text? Do some texts discourage queer viewing?

In short, because we are arguing that identification is fluid in terms of gender identification, we recognise that we are virtually saying that all texts can be viewed queerly. Some texts do seem to `encourage' queer viewing (e.g. Madonna's `Justify Your Love' pop promo) because the sexualised images are so ambiguous. But even texts which have overt heterosexual narratives can come over time to be seen as queer. This is because such re-readings are not ahistorical but the product of a queer cultural moment in which images have been subject to so much renegotiation (including subcultural renegotiation) that the preferred heterosexual reading has been destabilised.

7 So our point is that some representations, what we call `queer' representations, seem to share in common the capacity to disturb stable definitions. As Judith Butler points out, many such representations cause `gender trouble'. What she means is that such images mobilise `subversive confusion and proliferation of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place'.133

These new images from queer cinema shatter and fragment images of `normative' gender, and 'essential' gender. For example, in the film *Paris is Burning* (1990) [134] the act of 'passing' as a particular gender or profession is not an index of authenticity. The term 'realness' is used simply to mean `convincing' image rather than 'real' image. The implications of this categorosation system are that gender is constantly changed and remade in and through the process of performance and representation. [135] This is because representation is an arena in which meanings about gender can be and are contested and constantly renegotiated. Queer representations are important not least because they offer wider opportunities for viewing/identification than those associated with the more stereotypical cinematic representations, even though we note some lesbian film critics like Pratibha Parmar have argued that queer film usually means homosexual (rather than lesbian) film in terms of the funding of such productions.136

But what do we mean by a queer representation? In cinema, the term has come to mean a representation that is not necessarily right on. Queer representations may not always be positive; they are frequently ambiguous, slippery, and in total don't add up to a coherent whole. They often leave the spectator/viewer questioning.

This type of imagery crops up in advertising and fashion photography too. What do we make of advertisements which use a heterosexual couple who look like lesbians (to one of us) and gay men (to another), to sell jeans (see Figure 9)? What viewing position is the male or female spectator supposed to take when Thierry Mugler uses drag queens to model women's clothes on the Paris catwalk and when Naomi Campbell says she would kill for RuPaul's legs? Or when Bette Midler on stage pretends to be a type of woman based on her viewing of gay men in drag? Or in the film *The Crying Game* (1992) when the 'female' lead turns out to be a biological man acting as a transsexual complete with male genitalia? Perhaps the answer is that we enter some sort of 'drag' when viewing, but what sort of drag is it?

Carole-Anne Tyler argues that the transvestite look of M.ulvey's theory may be an option for men too. She argues that the concept of the phallic woman, embodied by a drag queen with an erection, is a queer concept, citing the scene in *Pink Flamingoes* (1972) where a 'beautiful woman' lifts up her skirt to reveal a penis. [137] The question raised here is one of authenticity. If anti-essentialist notions of the self construct identities as fictions, [138] then what's the difference between a lesbian boy and a gay man in terms of the transvestism of the spectator? Is there a difference between a woman with a dildo and a man with an erection, or a drag queen and May West? Or between mimicry and masquerade? None of the examples is authentic. As Tyler says, `Style is the wo/man: there is no authentic, "real" self beyond or before the process of social construction.' [139] If all identities are alienated and fictional how can we differentiate parody, mimicry, camp, imitation and masquerade? Yet words like 'masquerade' or 'parody' both imply there is an opposite, i.e.

9 Women's fashion ad.: Joseph (*Arena*, no. 1, Winter 1986)

a 'real', and posit a binary opposition between May West and a drag queen. As Diana Fuss has usefully pointed out, anti-essentialism is in a dependent relationship to essentialism, so the two positions are not opposites but mutually dependent:

> what is *essential* to social constructionism is precisely this notion of `where I stand', of what has come to be called appropriately enough, `subject positions'.[140]

But genderfuck is about play and performance which destabilise subject positions. In playing with binary opposition it moves towards a model of gender as a simulacrum (without an original). These questions about essential identities cannot be answered within the confines of this paper. Nevertheless, by raising them we recognise that we are invariably challenging the essential categories that frame models of gendered spectatorship. Ultimately, such questions bring us back to two familiar debates. First, the idea that the underlying model of human sexuality is `polymorphously perverse'. Second, that debates about identification in the cinema necessarily raise questions about gender, masquerade and identity — questions unanswered by film theorists to date.

NOTES

1 See bibliography in Linda Williams, 'Film Theory', and Elizabeth Grosz, `Voyeurism/Exhibitionism/the Gaze', in Elizabeth Wright (ed.), *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, pp.118-26 and pp.447-50.

2 Constantine Giannaris, 'The New Queer Cinema', *Sight and Sound*, September 1992, p.35.

3 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Harmondsworth, Peregrine Books, 1979. See Foucault's discussion of the panopticon in Colin Gordon (ed.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-77 by M. Foucault*, Harvester, Brighton, 1980.

4 Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1975. Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (first published in *Screen*, vol.16, no.3, Autumn 1975), and `Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun (1946)'* (first published in *Framework*, vol.6, nos 15-17, Summer 1981), both reprinted in Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1989, pp.14-26 and pp.29-38. See too bibliographies on 'Film Theory' and 'Voyeurism/Exhibitionism/The Gaze' in Wright, (ed.) op. cit., pp.118-26 and pp.447-50.

5 Mulvey, op. cit., pp.15-16.

6 Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse*, Martin Secker & Warburg, London, 1987.

7 See Kaja Silverman 'Fassbinder and Lacan: A Reconsideration of Gaze, Look and Image', *Camera Obscura*, no.19, January 1984, pp.54-84.

8 Carol J. Clover, *Women, Men and Chainsaws*, BFI Publishing, London, 1992, p.210.

9 In Wright (ed.), op. cit., p.449.

10 So eloquently criticised in terms of their political shortcomings by Lynne Segal, *Is the Future Female: Some Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism*, Virago, London, 1987 and Meaghan Morris, *The Pirate's Fiancee*, Verso, London, 1988.
11 Mulvey, op. cit.
12 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1989 (first published in 1949, in France).
13 ibid, ch.l.
14 Jane Gaines, `Introduction: Fabricating the Female Body', in Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds), *Fabrications, Costume and the Female Body*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990, p.3.
15 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Gollancz, London,1963.
16 Sheila Rowbotham, *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, reprinted 1981.
17 Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful*, Doubleday, New York, 1984.
18 Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton, *Women and Fashion:* A New *Look*, Quartet Books, London, 1989, ch.1.
19 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, BBC Publications & Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1972.
20 ibid., p.46.
21 ibid., p.87.
22 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991 (first published 1978). Said has pointed to the political effects of European and American definitions of the Orient. We would cal Western discourse about the Orient `ethnocentric' in its bias (although in some instances `racist' seems like a more appropriate definition). Furthermore, we would argue that the gaze can be found in many visual representations which privilege the Eurocentric viewpoint above those of other cultures, and affect the way many individuals see themselves.
23 ibid.
24 For Said on discourse, see ibid., pp.22-3 and p.94.
25 See Lorraine Gamman and Merja Makinen, *Female Fetishism:* A New *Look*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1994, ch.6.
26 Geoff Dyer, *Ways of Telling: The Work of John Berger*, Pluto, London, 1986, p. 97.
27 Berger, op. cit., p. 47. See Marcia Pointon's critique of the sweeping nature of this assertion in *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting .1830-1908*, Cambridge University Press, New York, Cambridge and Sydney, 1990, p.4.
28 Berger, op. cit., p.46.
29 ibid., p.64.
30 Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice*, Methuen, London, 1980, p.5.
31 Gordon (ed.), op. cit., p.156.
32 Foucault, op. cit., part 1, ch.1: `The Body of the Condemned'.
33 Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Malcolm Imrie, Verso, London, 1988 (first published in 1967).
34 Foucault, op. cit., part 3, ch.1: `Docile Bodies'.
35 Frantz Fanon, *Black* Skins, *White Masks*, Paladin, London, 1970.
36 Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisments: Ideology and Meaning in Advert*-ising, Marion Boyars, London, 1978, defines interpellation in relation to appellation thus: `All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects'; e.g. `people like you are changing to number six'. She defines appellation thus: `A transaction between the people in it and the product; but since

we ourselves are a part of this meaning, we can decide if we will be "appellated"; e.g. "I am a number six man myself . . .".9

37 Sandra Lee Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power', in Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (eds), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance,* Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1989, pp.61-86.

38 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex',* Routledge, New York and London, 1993.

39 Mulvey, op. cit.

40 In Wright (ed.), op. cit., p.448.

41 Metz, op. cit.

42 Jacqueline Rose, 'Introduction II', in Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (eds), *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne,* Macmillan Press, Basingstoke and London, 1982, p.53, cites Lacan (1949):

> The mirror stage . . . took the child's mirror image as the model and basis for its future identifications. This image is a fiction because it conceals, or freezes, the infant's lack of motor co-ordination and the fragmentation of its drives, but it is salutary for the child, since it gives it the first sense of a coherent identity in which it can recognise itself. For Lacan, however, this is already a fantasy — the very image which places the child divides its identity into two. Furthermore, that moment only has meaning in relation to the presence and the look of the mother who guarantees its reality for the child. The mother does not (as in D. W. Winnicott's account) mirror the child to itself; she grants an image *to* the child, which her presence instantly deflects. Holding the child is therefore, to be understood, not only as a containing, but as a process of referring, which fractures the unity it seems to offer. The mirror image is central to Lacan's account of subjectivity, because its apparent smoothness and totality is a myth. The image in which we first recognise ourselves, is a *misrecognilion.* Cacin is caidlificisiress, however, that his point is not restricted to the field of the visible alone; 'the idea of the mirror should be understood as an object which reflects — not just the visible, but also what is heard, touched, and willed by the child'.

Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics,* Methuen, London and New York, 1985, p.100, defines the mirror stage as follows:

> The Imaginary is for Lacan, inaugurated by the child's entry into the Mirror Stage. Lacan . . . postulates that the child's earliest experience of itself is one of fragmentation . . . between the ages of 6 to 8 months the baby enters the Mirror Stage. The principal function of the Mirror Stage is to endow the baby with a unitary body image. This 'body ego', however, is a profoundly alienated entity. The child, when looking at itself in the mirror — or at itself on its mother's arm, or simply at another child — only perceives another human being with whom it merges and identifies. In the Imaginary, there is then, no sense of a separate self, since the 'self' is always alienated in the Other.

43 Mulvey, op. cit., p.18.

44 ibid., p.19.

45 ibid., p.22.

46 ibid., p.21.

47 ibid., p.25.

48 Gamman and Makinen, op. cit., p.179:

> Furthermore, it seems to us that Mulvey tends to conflate the terms voyeurism and scopophilia with fetishism, and that these terms, at times, appear to be used

interchangeably. Mulvey suggests that 'scopophilic' pleasure arises principally from using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight. Voyeurism and scopophilia for most cinematic viewers rarely replace other forms of sexual stimulation, nor are they preferred to sex itself. Thus these forms of pleasure cannot be encompassed within our definition of fetishism.

49 See `Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" inspired by King *Vidor's Duel in the* Sun (1946)' in Mulvey, op. cit., pp.29-38.
50 ibid., p.33.
51 Jeff Hearn and Antonio Melechi, `The Transatlantic Gaze: Masculinities, Youth and the American Imaginary', in Steve Craig (ed.), *Men, Masculinities and the Media,* Sage Publications, California, London, New Delhi, 1992, p.215.
52 Ian Green, `Malefunction: A Contribution to the Debate on Masculinity in the Cinema', *Screen,* vol.25, nos 4-5, 1984, pp.36-48.
53 p. 81, Mary Ann Doane, `Film. and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen, vol.* 23, nos 3-4, September—October 1982, pp.74-87.
54 ibid., p.81.
55 ibid.
56 ibid., p.78.
57 ibid., pp.81-2.
58 Butler, op. cit., p.x and p.230.
59 Mary Ann Doane, `Masquerade Reconsidered: Further Thoughts on the Female Spectator', *Discourse,* 11, Fall/Winter 1988/89, pp.42-54.
60 Richard Dyer, `Don't Look Now: The Male Pin-Up', in Screen Editorial Collective (ed.), *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality,* Routledge, London and New York, 1992, pp.265-76; Mark Simpson, *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity,* Cassell, London and New York, 1994.
61 Annette Kuhn (ed.), with Suzannah Radstone, *The Women's Companion to International Film,* Virago, London, 1990, p.25.
62 John Ellis, *Visible Fictions,* Routledge, Chapman & Hall, New York, 1983, p.137.
63 Media effects research on viewing is diverse but perhaps the most central texts include: Stuart Hall *et al.* (eds), *Culture, Media, Language,* Hutchinson, London, 1980; David Morley, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure,* Comedia, London, 1986; Sean Cubbitt, *Timeshift: On Video Culture,* Comedia for Routledge, London, 1991; Lisa A. Lewis (ed.), *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media,* Routledge, London, *1992.*
64 Philip Schlesbinger *et al.* (eds), *Women Viewing Violence,* BFI Publishing, London,1992.
65 ibid.
66 For the strengths and weaknesses of `media effects research' see Tim O'Sullivan *et al.* (eds), *Key Concepts in Communication,* Methuen, London and New York, 1983.
67 Kobena Mercer, `Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary', in Bad Object-Choices (ed.), How *Do 1 Look? Queer Film and Video,* V Bay Press, Seattle, 1991, pp.169-210; Robert Mapplethorpe, *Black Males,* Introduction by Edmund White, Gallerie Jurka, Amsterdam, 1982, and *The Black Book,* Foreword by Ntozake Shange, St Martin's Press, New York, 1986.
68 Mercer, op. cit., pp.179-80.
69 Stuart Hall, `New Ethnicities', ICA Document *7, Black Film/British Cinema, ICA/* BFI, London, 1988, p. 28; Jane Gaines, `White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory', *Screen,* vol.29, no.4, Autumn 1988, pp.12-27; bell *hooks, Black Looks: Race and Representation,* Turnaround, London, 1992.

70 Pratibha Parmar and Valerie Amos, 'Many Voices One Chant: Black Feminist Perspectives', *Feminist Review*, 17, Autumn 1984.
71 Lola Young, 'A Nasty Piece of Work — A Psychoanalytic Study of Sexual and Racial Difference in *Mona Lisa*', in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990.
72 ibid., p.194.
73 Although it should be again noted that Mulvey's original model only applied to the cinema and other critics have extended it to explain other forms of popular culture.
74 Doane, op. cit., 1982 and 1988/89. See also Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1984; Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989; Deidre Pribham (ed.), *Female Spectators*, Verso, London, 1988; Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment (eds), *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*, The Women's Press, London, 1988. All these books attempt to reconceptualise the female gaze/spectator.
75 *Camera Obscura*, no. 19, January 1989.
76 Mulvey, op. cit., p.26.
77 Gamman and Marshment (eds), op. cit., p.17.
78 Lorraine Gamman, 'Watching the Detectives: The Enigma of the Female Gaze', in Gamman and Marshment (eds), op. cit., p.16.
79 Mulvey, op. cit., p.20.
80 Steve Neale, 'Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema', in Screen Editorial Collective (ed.), op. cit., pp.277-87 (first published 1983).
81 Dyer, op. cit., p.270 (first published 1982).
82 Michael Hatt, 'The Body in Another Frame', *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts* ("The Body' issue, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Academy, 1993); D. A. Miller, `Anal Rope', in Diana Fuss, (ed.), *InsidelOut: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, Routledge, New York and London, 1991; D. A. Miller, *Bringing Out Roland Barthes*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1992.
83 Miller, op. cit., 1992, p.30.
84 ibid., p.31.
85 And Medhurst, 'Can Chaps Be Pin-Ups?', *Ten 8*, vol.8, no.17, 1985; Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, Comedia by Routledge, London and New York, 1993.
86 Frank Mort, 'Boys Own? Masculinity, Style and Popular Culture', in Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (eds), *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1988.
87 Isabel Koprowski, unpublished interview with Lorraine Gamman, 1992, available in Central St Martins College of Art & Design Library.
88 Doane, op. cit., 1982, p.77.
89 See Gamman and Marshment (eds), op. cit., pp.44-59.
90 At `On/scenities: Looking at Pornography: A Conference at the NFT', Summer 1993.
91 Rosemary Scott, *The Female Consumer*, Associated Business, London, 1986.
92 Gamman and Marshment (eds), op. cit., p.55.
93 Teresa de Lauretis, op. cit., 1984; Dyer, op. cit., 1984; Doane, op. cit., 1982 and 1988/89. See also Mark Finch, 'Sex and Address in *Dynasty*', *Screen*, vol. 23, nos 3/4, September—October 1982; Mandy Merck, 'Difference and its Discontents', *Screen*, vol. 28, no.1, Winter 1987; Jackie Stacey, in Gamman and Marshment, (eds), op. cit.; Teresa de Lauretis, 'Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representations', *Theatre Journal*, vol.40, no.2, May 1988.

94 See Richard Dyer on Judy Garland in *Heavenly Bodies,* St Martins Press, New York, 1987.
95 Jackie Stacey, `Desperately Seeking Difference', in Gamman and Marshment (eds), op. cit. (first published 1987).
96 ibid.
97 ibid.
98 Teresa de Lauretis, `Film and the Visible', in Bad Object-Choices (ed.), op. cit., pp.223-64.
99 Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision,* Verso, London, 1986, pp.226-7
100 Jane Gallop, *Reading Lacan,* Cornell University Press, New York and London, 1985, pp.59-61.
101 Judith Mayne, `Lesbian Looks: Dorothy Arzner and Female Authorship' and subsequent `Discussion', in Bad Object-Choices (ed.), op. cit., p.136.
102 In Tessa Boffin and Jean Frazer (eds), *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photographs,* Pandora, London, 1991, lesbian critics and photographers offer a variety of approaches to explaining the meaning of overtly lesbian representations. But none offer an adequate model of lesbian spectatorship or significantly move beyond the contribution Jackie Stacey has made.
103 In *Every Conceivable Position,* Clare Bevan (Director), Mandy Merck (Producer), roughcut never broadcast by the BBC, London, 1991,
104 Elizabeth Ellsworth, in `Illicit Pleasures: Feminist Spectators and *Personal Best', Wide Angle,* vol.8, no.2, 1986, pp.45-56, discusses `interpretive communities' in terms of the cultural competences brought to a viewing situation. See also Alan McKee, `Review', *Screen,* vol.34, no.1, Spring 1993, p.91.
105 In Claire Bevan (Director), Mandy Merck (Producer), op. cit.
106 Reina Lewis, `Dis-Graceful Images: Della Grace and Lesbian Sado-Masochism', *Feminist Review,* no.46, Spring 1994, pp.76-91; Della Grace, *Lovebites,* Aubrey Walters, London, 1991.
107 For historical accounts of butch/femme codes see Joan Nestle, *A Restricted Country* Sheba Feminist, London, 1988 and Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twi htli ht Lovers: a History of Lesbian Life* in *Twentieth-Century America,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1992. For a discussion of the way gay men and lesbian women use clothing to carve out identities see `Chic Thrills', in Elizabeth Wilson, *Hallucinations: Life in the Postmodern City,* Hutchinson Radius, London, 1988.
108 See Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference,* Routledge, New York and London, 1989.
109 Richard Dyer, *Gays and Film,* Zoetrope, New York, 1984.
110 This issue is discussed by Kobena Mercer, op. cit., pp.169-222. See in particular p.193 where Mercer criticises `the mantra of "race, class, gender" (and all the other intervening variables) which does not deal with `the complexity of what actually happens "between" the contingent spaces where each variable intersects with the others'. See also pp.215-17.
111 McKee, op. cit., p.89.
112 ibid., p.90.
113 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume l: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981, p.43 (first published 1976).

At *a Marxism Today* conference, in June 1992, Suzanne Moore described a gay New York journalist who had an affair with a military cadet. The military cadet said he wasn't `gay', he just enjoyed homosexual sex (which is not surprising given the penalties for being gay in the army). The point of he argument was that the sussed-out New York journalist said that in relation to the military cadet he felt `straight' too..

114 McKee, op. cit., p.89.

115 Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barala, David M. Halperin (eds), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader,* **Routledge, New York and London, 1993, p.308, reprinted from Fuss (ed.), op. cit., 1991.**

116 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* **Routledge, New York and London, 1990, p.ix.**

117 Fuss, op. cit., 1989, p.35.

118 Judith Williamson, 'A Piece of the Action: Images of "woman" in the photography of Cindy Sherman', *Consuming Passions,* **Marion Boyars, London and New York, 1986, p.91.**

119 Mercer, op. cit., p.180.

120 Reina Lewis, op. cit., p.89.

121 June L. Reich, `Genderfuck: The Law of the Dildo', in Cheryl Kader and Thomas Piontek (eds), *Discourse,* **vol.15, no.1, Fall 1992, p.125.**

122 ibid., p.113.

123 See Cherry Smyth, *Queer Notions,* Scarlet **Press, London, 1992.**

124 This point was made in response to this paper by Gavin Butt who lectures in fine art and teaches a course on `Homovisibilities' at Central St Martins College of Art and Design. He also argued 'that what is lost in the shift from determining text, to determining context, is an analysis of the way images structurally encode power relationships, which of course was the strength of Mulvey'. The reason why he took such an analysis to be important is because it enables us to comprehend how, for instance, homophobic representations consistently encode and disavow 'queer pleasure'. He went on to argue that in homophobic culture the queer look is still largely an illegitimate one, relying on D. A. Miller's notion that in many representations homosexuality is disavowed in so far as it is) `pushed' into the shadowy realm of connotation. (See D. A. Miller, op. cit., 1991 and 1992.) In this context Gavin Butt also cited the arguments of Michael Hatt, op. cit. Hatt argues that the homosocial and the homosexual must be kept apart in cultural representations in order for the erotic to be disavowed in the homosocial so that it can be contained by the homosexual.

125 Mich^le Barrett, Teminism and the Definition of Cultural Politics', in Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan (eds), *Feminism, Culture and Politics,* **Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1982, p.37.**

126 See Alexander Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture,* **University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993.**

127 There has been so much media effects research that discusses ideas about `preferred readings'. This debate has been summarised by Tim O'Sullivan *et al.* (eds), *Key Concepts in Communication,* **op. cit.,** *as* follows:

> **preferred reading . . .** a **text is open to a number of potential readings, but normally 'prefers' one (or, occasionally more). Analysing the internal structure of the text can identify this preference.**
>
> **Texts according to Eco** *(The Role of the Reader,* **Hutchinson, London, 1981), can be open or closed. A** *closed* **text has one reading strongly preferred over others; an** *open text* **requires a number of readings to be made simultaneously for its full 'richness' or 'texture' to be appreciated (to use literary critical terms). Open texts tend to be highbrow, high culture, whereas closed texts tend to the more popular, mass culture. Most mass media texts are closed in so far as they prefer a particular reading.**
>
> **Alternative readings to the preferred one usually derive from differences between the social positions and/or the cultural experience of the author**

and the reader, or between *reader* and *reader. Eco* uses the theory of aberrant decoding to account for this but Hall and Morley produce subtler and more sophisticated accounts based on Parkin's theory of meaning ms. *Hall et al. (S. Hall,* D. Hobson, D. A. Lowe, P. Willis (eds)), *Culture, Media, Language,* Hutchinson, London, 1980) propose three main types of decodings or readings of tv texts which correspond to the reader's response to his/her social condition, not to the structure of the text. These are:

(1) The dominant hegemonic which accepts the text `full and straight' according to the assumptions of the encoder. This is the preferred reading, and corresponds to F. Parkin's *(Class Inequality and Political Order,* Paladin, St Albans, 1972) dominant meaning system.
(2) The negotiated reading which acknowledges the legitimacy of the dominant codes, but adapts the reading to the specific social condition of the reader. This corresponds to Parkin's subordinate meaning system.
(3) The oppositional reading which produces a radical decoding that is radically opposed *to* the preferred reading, because it derives from an alternative, oppositional meaning system. (Radical meaning system in Parkin's terminology.)

128 Diana Saco, `Masculinity as Signs: Poststructuralist Feminist Approaches to the Study of Gender', in Steve Craig (ed.), *Men, Masculinity and the Media,* Sage Publications, California, London, New Delhi, 1992, p.31.
129 Miller, op. cit., 1991 and 1992.
130 Miller, op. cit., 1992, pp.24-5.
131 Miller, op. cit., 1991, p.123.
132 Miller, 1991, ibid., pp.123-4.
133 Butler, op. cit., 1990, pp.33-4.
134 *Paris Is Burning,* Jenny Livingstone, 1990.
135 Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender,* University of Indiana Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987, p.3, argues that:

> gender is (a) representation — which is not to say that it does not have concrete or real implications, both social and subjective, for the material life of individuals. On the contrary ... the representation of gender is its construction — and in the simplest sense it can be said that all of Western Art and high culture is the engraving of the history of that construction.

Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences,* Polity Press, Oxford, 1990, p.1

> culture is central to gender formation. Art, literature, and film do not simply represent given gender identities, or reproduce already existing ideologies of femininity. Rather they participate in the very construction *of* those identities. Second (and consequently), culture is a crucial arena for the contestation of the social arrangements of gender.

136 This is not to say that there haven't always been transvestite effects in theatre and cinema. For a wide-ranging survey see Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety,* Routledge, New York and London, *1992.*
137 Carole-Anne Tyler, `Boys will be Girls: The Politics of Gay Drag', in Fuss, op. cit., 1991, pp.32-70.
138 See Butler, op. cit., 1990 and 1993, and Fuss, op. cit., 1989.
139 Tyler, op. cit., p.53.
140 Fuss, op. cit., 1989, p.29.