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"Misogyny, Violence and Voyeurism"

The Transition from Canvas to Celluloid

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INTRODUCTION

Many articles have been written and re-written about "woman" as bearer of the look. It is the intention in this text to examine another possibility, that would dispel the gender specifics of that look. It has been accepted by Art critics and Film Critics that the role of woman is predetermined. Taking a closer look at John Berger's theory of the painted icon of woman, and the idea of woman's to be-looked-at-ness. Also Laura Mulvey, with psychoanalysis applied to film theory and criticism, who, follows along behind Berger, backed by Freudian ideals of "womanly" behaviour, and a belief in the fetishistic scopophilia of man.

By taking specific films from the 1980's and 1990's, with an aim to reversing the roles of the signifier (male) and the signified (female). Challenging the idea of masculinity and the deconstruction of the ideals of femininity within a context of both painting and film which bear a close relationship. With a desire to move from the 70's ideals of the "feminine" and bringing it up to date, with the 90's "masculine". Looking at film directors like Quentin Tarrantino and the idea of the male as victim of his own masculinity.

FEMALE AS OBJECT OF THE LOOK

Made in Gods Image.

John Berger in Ways of Seeing considers the relationship between the surveyed (the female, bearer of the look) and the surveyor (the male spectator). In his eloquent argument, supported by various examples of the painted female nude, he is at pains to understand the relationship between the female nude and her spectator/owner. He neither agrees nor disagrees with the idea that the female ^{is?} as subject of the male gaze. He allows for an opinion that the female nude has, to a small degree, control over her own to be looked-at-ness. Berger assures us by reinstating a belief that it was man, as head of a patriarchal society, and not woman who wrote history. The principal of an argument by Berger is an extract that he has taken from Genesis. Using this by way of explanation, of the phenomena the female nude in European oil painting. He believes that the story of Adam and Eve created the ideal of nakedness in the mind of the beholder.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons... And the Lord God called unto the man and said to him, 'Where are thou?' And he said, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself...

Unto the woman God said, 'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee'.

which has relevance in a historical context as it refers to the fall of man, but only in the biblical terms. This ideal of woman's imperfection looked at from a theologian's point is twofold.¹ The creation of Eve and the Fall. The creation

of Eve from Adam, was enough for the theologians to justify the subjectivity of woman to man, hence the justification of patriarchal dominance. Using the metaphor of a rib, a curved bone, as an indication to suggest, that the mind of woman was perverse and twisted, because of this imperfection in her creation. Satan tempted Eve, who in turn, led Adam to sin, therefore it was she as woman that led to the direct Fall of man. It was this religious belief that laid out a precedence. Berger using this extract, was trying to place the female nude in a 'proper' historical position, by explaining the impact that the nude had in the Renaissance. Which in turn, part explains the subjectivity of the nude female to the male spectator.

In part, painting looked at from a didactic point of view, was used to teach the Catholic ethos. In this manner the principals of feminine behaviour could be laid out plainly in a religious context. Women were seen to ascertain to a certain standing in society. This role model of today's woman has its roots in the medieval European society. Where, the virgin was placed at the pinnacle, the good wife and mother somewhere in between, and the sinner/prostitute at the base 2 this idea of femininity has continued. The film industry helped to exploit this ideal throughout the twentieth century. Feminist movies of the 1980s and 1990s are the exception.

Throughout the medieval period, up until the eighteenth century, women were thought to be similar to the male but incomplete. It was believed that women possessed the same genitals as men, only that they were turned inwards. This belief in one sex held sway. (Woman's social identity has long been conditioned by a cultural perception of their bodies,³) Whether considered as imperfect males or walking wombs, the earthly reflection of man's definition of divine beauty, or an immoral enticement in the service of Satan. Their lives were dominated by society's attitudes towards the body in general, as much as it was by specific definitions of gender. Just as the breast and the belly had dual functions, for the baring and nourishment of children, they also served as erotic objects, the primary focus of the male fantasy. Women, like any wild creatures were deemed not to be in control of their own sexuality. Given the opportunity they would indulge in excesses to the detriment of mankind.

footnotes:

1 George Duby and Michelle Perrot, **A History of Women, Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes**, vol IV, Harvard University Press, 1993, *ibid*, p447.

2 George Duby and Michelle Perrot, **A History of Women, Silences of the Middle Ages**, Gius, Laterza & Figli spa, Roma-Bari, vol II, *ibid*, p323

3 George Duby and Michelle Perrot, **A History of Women, Silences of the Middle Ages**, Gius, Laterza & Figli spa, Roma-Bari, vol II, *ibid*, p204.

The Female as Painted Image.

Therefore Berger merely advocates that through painting men and women are fulfilling defined roles, he is also stating tenuously that this is human nature and that we are following trends beyond our control. Men like to look and women expect to be looked at. In fact the female nude can be clearly defined as having or holding the gaze of the male spectator. Although Berger suggests that the woman as subject is aware of being seen by the spectator, he holds steadfastly to the idea that when men look at women, the women watching themselves being looked, at are in fact surveying that part of them that is male. It could equally be argued that woman assesses the controlling gaze, he is after all 'fixed' to her, the male spectator who is inferiorly positioned, he has a coveting gaze. In so far as it is the woman, who 'holds' and for a time possesses the male gaze, is in fact superiorly positioned.

The Spectator and The Artist's Vision

In order for the spectator to understand the gaze of the artist, the artist has had to first place himself as the surveyed.⁴ This is a twofold identity. The spectator firsts identifies with the view of the artist. Secondly he is identifying with the subject viewing the artist, as the subject/object. Thus suggesting that vision/view is singular, producing one focal point or point of view. It could be then implied that the male spectator in identifying with the artist, is actually identifying with the female side of himself.

Since the 70s there has been a noticeable backlash through within the arts, against patriarchal dominance. There can be no denying the injustice that have been meted out to women over the centuries, but to label all female nudes as mere objects of the male gaze, is farfetched. John Berger has clearly stated that the woman is following a well defined pattern, and to some degree revels in this special place that 'she' has created for herself, in the male society. One wonders whether he means that it is a matter of biology.

As we are dealing with the painted nude, one could argue that the "nude" or image should not be so gender specific. If painting is merely the vehicle, through which the artist/creator is expressing his skill. Then it cannot be dismissed that the first principle of any artist is to sell the work. Looking at this moment to renaissance art, as a fundamental source of the female nude, it has to be pointed

out that the vast majority of the works were sold to wealthy male patrons. This Supports the theory of the male spectator ownership. It would be churlish to assume that all the works in question would have been mere figments of the male artists imagination. Many pieces were specially commissioned, for the personal pleasure of the male patron. Be it his wife, or more commonly, his mistress, to be hung in some public fashion within the confines of a domestic setting, provoking a sense of coveting in others. Although, in the actual physical creation of the work, the artist would impart some of his own identity onto the subject. It is almost impossible for the artist to be so impersonal through the creation of work. Although the subject and image we are dealing with can be clearly seen as "female", it is to a large degree the intention of the artist that we are dealing with. In order for the artist to understand the subject, he must to some degree sympathize or have empathy with his work/subject. Bringing us back to the suggestion of the identity of the gaze, or the source of that gaze. The male spectator is asked to identify with the 'monocular view' of the artist, and we have established that this fixed gaze, is the view of the female nude.

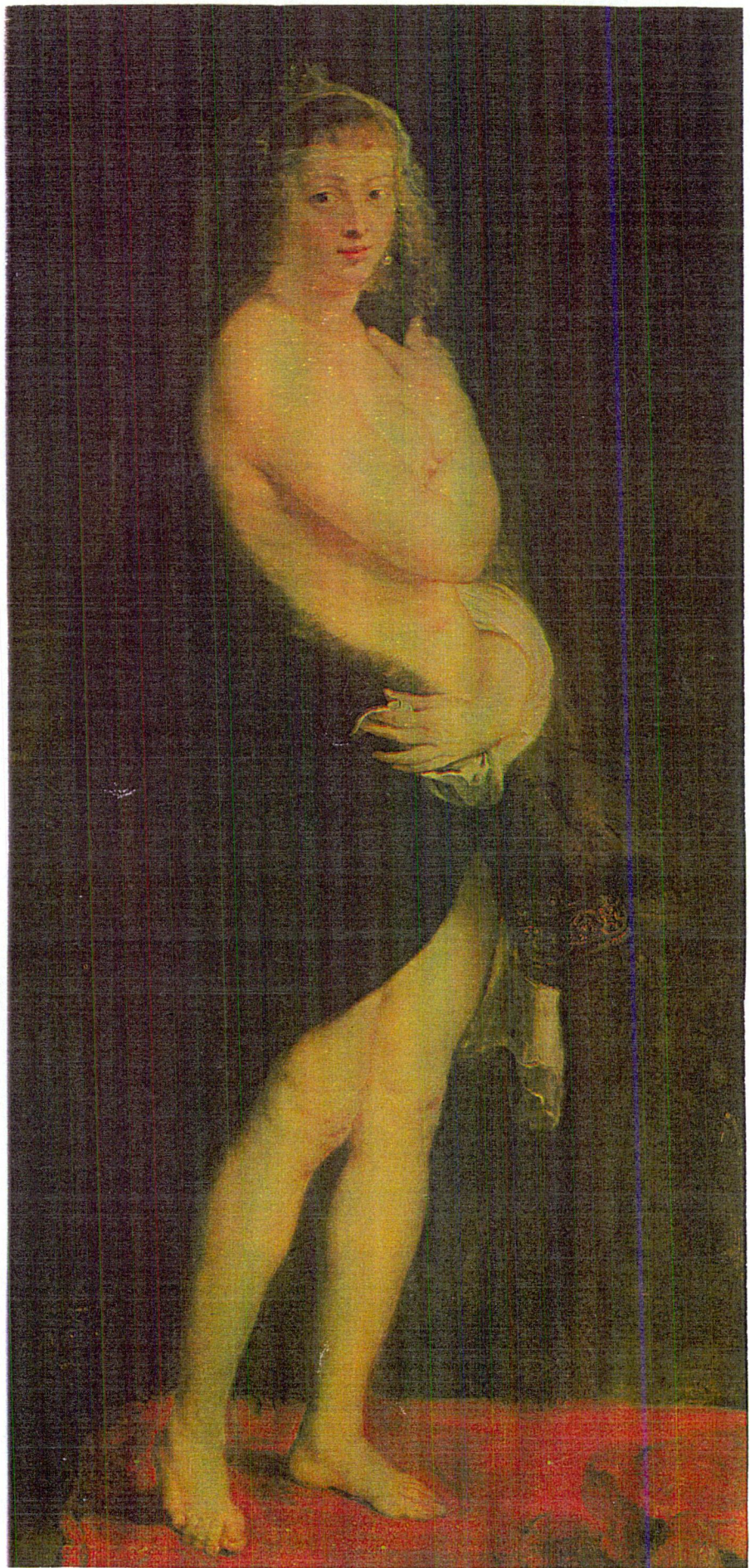
Albani -
Cartesian Perspective

The problem with so many writings on the idea of femininity, is that the female has always been portrayed as the victim/object of male domination or aggression. In reversing the role and looking at how the painted image was created, the subject is then taken to another level. By not becoming

a mere object for the spectator, instead, it becomes the controller. Thereupon the image would redress the status quo, with the suggestion of a promise of what "she", the subject, could do for "him", the male spectator. Berger argues that in the painting of the subject, the artist has in some way expressed "her" will and intention, within confines of the structure of the image. It could then be argued, that it is impossible to portray the intention of another. Although it is possible to imply one's own desires, and to impose this impression on the subject, or the impression that the artist wishes us to see. Therefore, this control ultimately lies in the skill of the creator/artist, and it is a mere projection of his fantasy as the surveyed, that is on view to the spectative audience.

In painting a nude, it must be expected that one cannot take the living flesh of another, and treat it in an astatic fashion. There is expression in gesture and a hint of promise in a look which is captured by the artist (again it should be questioned for whose pleasure). Rubens captured the image his second wife, Fig1, in the act of turning, cloak slipping from her shoulder, she stares out at us. Is she the embodiment of his pleasure, her youth giving him a new perspective on life?. She looks out at us with the age of wisdom in her eyes. There is an empathy between subject and artist.

Fig1, *Helen Fourment in a fur coat, by Rubens*
1577 -1640



painting like this, was thought by Berger to be painted for the pleasure of the artist, and has no place for the spectator's involvement. While this is a plausible point of view, it is one with problems. A portrait of a loved one captured in such a position would have been made to flatter the ego. Rubens an old man at the time and considered an established, well respected artist. We can conclude that it was not for monetary gain or to show potential patrons the range of his skill. It is highly unlikely that it would have been hidden, rather displayed in a place of prominence With this in mind it would put any spectator involvement other than the artist, in the position of coveting, rather than ownership.

Painting has a direct relation to film, which is unlike an image in photography which captures reality. Photography, in the nineteenth century preceded the moving pictures, but could not escape from harsh, flat ^{But} realism. Therefore it remained a static image, an imprisoned moment. Whereas Painting, captures imagination and it is this, which is impressed on the viewer. In film like painting, when are asked to identify with the surveyed/surveyor, we are guided at every turn, to view the film from a certain point of view or vision. A perspective that has been predestined for maximum effect. The same way an artist could manipulate the renaissance view of the world, for maximum effect. ^{But}

From Canvas to Celluloid

Film could therefore be considered as the moving canvas. Both, obviously are a forms of art, have owner/spectator involvement, both are portrayed to maximum effect to engage this spectator involvement. In each a language unfolds and envelopes the spectator, who cannot help but participate in the drama of the piece. Whether through the spectacle stare of Manet's Olympia, or the all consuming knowledgeable gaze of Hannibal Lector (Silence of the Lambs, Jonathon Demme, 1991.) We are similarly guided and pushed, provoked by the creator to see their vision or own brand of the truth, real or imagined.

The subject and the orchestration of a movie, remains very much in the control of the director. It is their version of the gaze that we are left to contend with. Their ideals and fantasies played out in graphic detail, rather than the implied fantasies of the artist. The artist allows the spectator some scope to read into the work, and perhaps manipulate it, into their own ideals.

For further analysis of the spectator/owner have to look to Laura Mulvey. In her germinal article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (which jumps on the shirt-tails of Berger), on the female as the object of the look. Her article is ardently set in the 70s feminist movement, her thoughts and articulations completely dismiss one half of the spectative audience, women. Who make up some two thirds of the cinema

populous. She wraps her argument in a Freudian haze of misinterpretation. In the interest of fairness, Mulvey does try to understand the need for psychoanalysis in film, although she fails to work through her own position and comes across in a contradictory fashion.

By looking at the association between the subject and the "gaze," through spectator manipulation. Mulvey stated that the narrative film was made for the pleasure of the male spectator alone. The role of the camera serves to relay the view through the eyes of the male protagonist, which masquerades as that of the male spectator. Quite simply, the camera acts as the eyes of the male spectator, who is encouraged to identify with that of the male protagonist. Mulvey argues that the voyeuristic camera becomes the centre piece. It moves around, drawing us into the picture and sends out exactly enough information so as to perceive the subject (female), within clearly defined boundaries. Whereas to digresses from this narrow parameter of identity of the gaze, is to break with the "tradition" how the female/subject is viewed, and to some how break from the harmony of narrative truth. Although, the gaze of the spectator and the male protagonist are combined, she feels, they do not break with this verisimilitude. Her view of this type of movie, is blindsided by her insistence of a certain definition of voyeurism.

The Voyeur's Gaze

It is Mulvey's belief that voyeurism and the fetishistic representation of the woman are one and the same thing. The voyeuristic participation in which the male spectator is asked to engage through camera manipulation, revolves around watching the sexual encounters of others. Mulvey maintains that it is in fact a fetish, and has represented the woman as the spectacle for the male as the representative of the bearer of the gaze and creator of the fantasy. Moreover this sPECTORIAL desire in most modern films is described or explained away as either voyeurism or fetishism.

In psychoanalytical terms, Mulvey explains that the male can escape the castration complex ⁴. The female poses threat as she implies something that the look continuously revolves around, but disavows (her lack of penis) manifesting in a threat of castration therefore unpleasure. Although Mulvey is making reference to the female "lack" causing a fear of castration in the child/man, to which repercussions may lead to a denial of the mother's/female's lack through fetishism. To this end, the male may view of this "lack" in woman by turning the represented figure (female) of the gaze, into the object of the fetish or the cause of the fetish itself. Hence it becomes reassuring/comforting rather than a threat.

Once more, Mulvey is only allowing for the male as the spectator, and reduces the female to the role of signifier of the lack. She also conveniently ignores the fact that the male can act in the position of compliance, and the female in the role of the possessive. (Berger, at least acknowledges the fact that the female, does have some involvement, even control over the spectatorship of the male viewer. Another way of the fetishistic scopophilia in the male is to transform it into something pleasurable in itself, by constructing the object into something that is physically beautiful. Which is just about here that Mulvey, fails to see fetishism as masochistic. By asserting the suggestion that by demystifying the female mystery, ie, her first principle of voyeurism (by lessening the threat of castration) has its associations with sadism. Pleasure lies in defining guilt, by asserting control and conquering the guilty person (female) through punishment or forgiveness.

5 Stephen Frusl, **The Politics of Psychoanalysis, An Introduction to Freudian and Post Freudian Theory**, Mac Millan Education Ltd, 1987. Ibid. 197

" It is the moment of humanization of the child into the social world, the world in which the Law of the Father dominates. The castration complex is the instant at which the structuring power of patriarchy is imposed directly on the subjectivity of the individual, coming from outside, wrenching desire away from the Imaginary mother-child absorption with its fictitious promise of life outside the signifier, creating difference and separation."

Alfred Hitchcock, used the theme of voyeurism in many of his movies. Laura Mulvey cites him in support of her theory on the female, as the bearer of the look. There can be no doubt about the voyeuristic skill of Hitchcock, although it was a particular type of voyeurism. It could be suggested, that perhaps that there is another side that Mulvey has not considered. In the movie Vertigo, Scotty, is hired by a supposed old friend to follow the mans wife in the belief that she is becoming obsessed or possessed by the spirit of a long dead ancestor. We are led to believe this film evolves around the fetishistic scopophilia of Scott. There can be no denying that the audience is brought along with Scott and can identify with his blatant voyeurism. It could be argued that, it is we who are not aware of the role of Madeleine, instead of her being the bearer of the look she is the instigator of the look. Scott is put in the position of the passive, and this becomes clearer as the movie progresses. Madeleine is all the time directing him/us to a certain view. It is Madeleine who acts as the vehicle of our voyeurism, she is guiding us along to view the situation. She is aware of Scotties/our voyeurism she alone controls what we see. She takes the role of the masculine, because she is aware of the outcome before it has been played out. She allows Scott to fall in love with her even though she is fully aware that he will be blamed, accused, because his vertigo on "her" death/suicide. Scott's vertigo, which was highly publicized at the beginning of the film was used as a weapon against him.

(but made comment)

Second half of the film, (Madeline's murder/suicide is the first half) deals with the extent of the fixation that Scott had with Madeleine. It might be suggested that for him, Madeleine represented a perfect unobtainable love. Which made him secure in the knowledge, that because she was married therefore not wholly available to him, should the relationship flounder, he could believe that she was never really his, making him less of a failure. His reconstruction of Judy into Madeleine had at first nothing to do with the solving of the mystery. He saw in her this figment of perfect love without actually realizing she had been his Madeleine. Judy indulges in the masochistic only because of her love for Scott. As Madeline she indulged in the sadistic by allowing Scott to fall in love with her as Madeline. Judy as the only person who is aware of the truth, It could be suggested by not telling Scott the truth she retains dominance over him. Furthermore the real suicide of Judy, by throwing herself out of the same belfry, released in Scott the guilt of the burden of the passive. It miraculously cures his vertigo and releases him from the guilt of a failed relationship (Judy), thus restoring in him his masculinity.

→ explain HBT
→ mystery
→ unclear
better
identity

Norman Bates and the PreOedipal Mother

"Psycho", Hitchcock, 1960, is the Oedipus complex 5, an image of the pre-Oedipal mother in the form of Norman Bates. The mother-child relationship, which we are led to believe existed between Norman and his mother, is manifest in Norman's need to restore his mother's body after he committed matricide. The characterization of Bates comes across to us as that of the child, by his munching of candy throughout the film. As he cleans up after the murder in the shower, he can be seen popping this candy into his mouth, he secrets it out like a child that is unwilling to share. This child o pathologically jealous of the mother, develops a perversion caused by identity crisis. He could not differentiate between himself as the child/mother which culminated into a fetish. This Resulted in him dressing as his mother, and speaking in her voice. (In an effort to "keep her alive" in him).

The movie gives us a pseudo-scientific explanation and lays blame on the innocent mother/woman. A psychologist the "clarifies" for us the need in Norman to dress, think and speak for the mother after he had murdered her and her boyfriend (by making it look like a murder /suicide). His feelings of guilt about the extreme jealousy, suggested in typical Freudian fashion, is a direct result of the father figure in the young Normans life dying when he was only five. Because he was an only child and "male" figure in the mother's life, she totally dominated and clung to him. When the mother took a lover, the repressed side to Norman's

character took hold. He presumed that because he was so jealous of her then "she" was just as possessive and jealous of him. Therefore when he found himself to be aroused by (lone) females staying at the motel for the night, the mother side of Normans character took hold and committed he murders out of jealous rage.

By murdering these women (it was suggested that Norman was under investigation in connection with the disappearance of two more women), one could read that he was in fact responding, to a typical example of the psychic fear of castration, and the sexual difference defined by lack. In so far that, if we employ a Freudian understanding, this contempt for the women by Norman Bates, who was compulsively motivated to take a defensive position against the maternal power, so long the only developing influence in his life, was the inevitable out come in response to female "castration." The castrating mother in Norman's life was the parent who laid down the law in the absence of a male figure. To him it was "she" that appeared as the phallic woman, an all consuming murderous woman. Resulting in a need for Norman to reform the patriarchal ideology and to control power over his mother, which he extended to all women. Thus controlling woman's/his desire, rather than be corrupted with her femininity and showing himself to be incapable of "performing" in a heterosexual manner.

Fear of the Castration Complex

Dressed to kill, (Brian de Palma, 1980), essentially a remake of Psycho, presents Dr Elliot, a therapist as the psychotic killer. He is man in a position of respect, caught by the duality of his personality. His female 'half' Bobbie is figured as the murdering, dominant side. Bobbie killed Kate his attending patient, because she aroused in him his masculine sexuality. Through discussing her own sexual frustrations, caused by her husbands lack of interest. Subsequently out of jealousy Bobbie had to eradicate the source of his masculine arousal. Therefore, Bobbie was displaying feminine dominance over Dr Elliot, in the form of symbolic castration by disallowing him is masculinity. Although that it could be argued, that perhaps rather than killing Kate, because she was the source of his (Dr Elliot's) masculine (sexual) arousal, he (she) killed her, because she embodied all that he aspired to be, as Bobbie, but was unwilling to go through with the idea of physical castration.

Another aspect to male fear of castration, although not directly related to the actuality of castration, a more symbolic theory. Dealing with a more deeply distressing concern, the fear of the feminine in the male. The notion of (male) castration and (male) audience association with the (male) protagonist, bringing us to the question of male rape, (power not sexual). The passivity of one man towards another, a deep phobic fear of latent homosexuality. To any

heterosexual the fear of being labelled or branded effeminate is an insult that is quickly dispelled, with a display of macho posturing and bravado. The very idea of the male being invaded or penetrated in a pseudosexual manner brings to the surface this basic primal abhorrence of male rape. A man can be killed, maimed, beaten up, run over, hung, drawn and quartered and in most films this is an accepted part of the male/hero protagonist. To suggest that he be raped, strikes at the very heart of the male facade.

5 The Oedipus Complex, is a Freudian belief that at the "crucial moment" in the shaping of a child's sexual identity, which is based on the established prevalence of a patriarchal culture. Which is a culture of dual opposition, with ideals of masculinity and femininity structured by hierarchal difference. The former (masculinity) embodying primary (positive) qualities, the latter secondary (femininity) negative qualities.

The Oedipus Complex specifies the sexual desire of the male child towards his mother. Arising fear and hostility towards his castrating rival his father. That is resolved by dis-identification with the mother and identification with the father. Resulting in the child's entry into the symbolic (the patriarchal order to which the child aspires.) →

Barbara Creed, **The Monstrous Feminine**, The Medusa's Gaze, Routledge, 1993, Ibid p159.

By defining the castration complex as a law, Freud was able to deal with a problem that affected his earlier version of the Oedipus Complex - that the complex was presented as a 'passing developmental stage' which somehow 'dissolved naturally'. As a law, the castration complex provides an explanation for the origins of the human order which does not leave things up to chance or human nature.

THE MALE AS VICTIM

The Sport of Male Rape

Few films deal with the subject of the male as sexual victim. This status of victim seems the preserve of the female. In a display of male dominance, women can be raped, conquered, and brought to submit by the force of the male penis, making rape the subject of power relations not sex/love. Take away means of male domination, his symbolic power and subjecting the male by means of this domination (penile rape) then the boundaries between male/female, becomes blurred. In so much as men become sodomizable as women rapable, therefore the anus and the vagina "performing" the same function, reduce gender identification to the one level. A world in which gender precedes and determines sex.

Deliverance, (John Boorman, 1972), recounts the story of city-slickers going out into the backwoods, to indulge in the primal tradition of man pitted against the elements. A 'run in' with the locals ends with two of the group being terrorized and one sodomised. Alien, (Ridley Scott, 1979), deals with male rape in a different manner. The 'rapist alien' rather than trying to exert power over the male victim it is merely trying to procreate. While both films superficially deal with the threat of male rape, Pulp Fiction, (Quentin Tarrantino, 1994), deals with 'real' portrayal of rape, men raping men. Deliverance is low grade horror at its best. The idea of characters inhabiting the backwoods are not easily recognized as human, or having human characteristics because of generations of inbreeding. Their

antisocial behaviour can be explained away more easily because they themselves are more monstrous than the recognized socially accepted norm. Therefore the rape of Bobby itself is not counted as a weakness in the male, more of an unfortunate occurrence when man meets beast. When the androgenous Ripley (Alien) and crew first encounter an Alien life form, it subsequently enters, in a violent parody of a sexual act, one of the male crew members. This act of oral rape can be explained as an unfortunate encounter, rather than deliberate choice. The alien requiring a host was not specific. This raises the question that if Bobby (Deliverance) were female, rather than male, would the outcome have been any different?.

Governed by an ultimately postmodern sensibility Pulp Fiction offers a parody on the male myth. First and foremost it is a film of male aggression and posturing, it takes everything that signifies masculinity and turns it on its head. Right at the heart of the movie it deals with male rape, or the (Freudian) fear of the male castration. This is not a movie that can be easily categorized as low grade horror, the sadistic rape of one of its principal characters summarizes the whole tone of the film, which is beset by violence and male domination. It is not set on a distant planet a couple of centuries in the future, nor in some unexplored terrain in the backwoods full of myth and unexplained phenomena, instead, it is the mean, but familiar city streets of gangster movie genre.

Breaking with Myth

The manner in which Tarantino deals with the myth of the male protagonist sets it apart from other films of rape-revenge.⁶ The characters, strong violent people, a middle weight boxer, a big Don of the criminal underworld. Marcellus Wallace, (criminal) paid Butch (boxer) to take a fall in a fixed fight. Butch double-crosses Wallace, betting on himself to win and makes a "killing". He is forced to return to his apartment by his own sentiment, (knowing that Wallace would have him killed) to retrieve a family "heirloom" his great grandfather watch that was left behind after he fled. He accidentally runs into Marcellus Wallace. An ensuing fight sees them fall prey to the sadistic and perverse pleasure of a couple of sadomasochists. Here there is no preOedipal mother waiting revenge on the "son", instead, the traditional role of victim is turned around and it is the male aggressor who in turn becomes the 'signifier' of the male castration complex. Here it is the male that is held up as the subject of the male gaze and we as the spectative audience are forced to participate in a homosexual rape. The power of the male penis is turned onto itself, placing the male in the uncomfortable position of that as female and bearer of the look and object of a fetish. We are forced to sympathize with the male victim placed in the position of the female helplessness. Thus strongly suggesting that there are no specific boundaries in alliance with the male\female body, it proves that if women are rapable so too is the man. Therefore, the male does not

have an universal right of dominance over the female.

6 Carol J. Clover, **Men, Women And Chainsaws**, Princeon University Press, 1992, Ibid p 125 - 136. chapter 3 Getting Even, deals specifically with the rape revenge sequence, from female protagonist to male victim.

Essentially the very act of the rape in film can be accepted as natural in a sense, if the object of the rape is female. To reverse the female as victim of rape with the male, then it is viewed as unnatural and considered perverse, even pathological. Giving rise to the question of the feminine in man existing as female masochism. Which should not be confused with the masochism of women rather as the masochistic aberrance in man which is all too often confused with bisexuality and the transvestite. It is this cross-over of sexual identity which rests uneasy with the male spectator, to identify with the male protagonist is the objective of the spectator. When that identity is threatened and has become feminised, the spectator is left to come to terms with the feminine within himself.⁷ Returning us to what was said earlier about the male anxiety to castration, and the acquiescence to another man.

7 Carol J. Clover, **Men, Women And Chainsaws**, Princeton University Press, 1992, Ibid p216 - 217

The relevance of "feminine masochism" in a technical sense to a body of cinema addressed to male viewers and featuring female characters in some form of distress, more or less sexual, is self evident. Indeed, "feminine masochism" as it is articulated by Freud suggests a distinctive psychosexual profile or experience base for each genre. The rape revenge film is organized around thoughts of being or having been humilatingly and violently penetrated (this plot more fully allowing for the process of sadistic reversal). "Feminine masochism" also makes remarkably good sense of the figuring, for a predominantly male audience of horror spectator-ship itself as a feminine or feminizing experience.

Destruction of the Masculine

The character of the gimp in Pulp fiction has never been explained, here is a "man", trussed from head to foot in bondage gear who, it would appear, spends his days living in the confines of a box, rather like a coffin giving us images of Dracula and vampires. His function, we surmise, is a sexual play-thing for Zed and his companion. The revulsion that is brought to the surface when he is released and the two male protagonists comprehend their fate is all too real. The question is what exactly is that realization? The role of the Gimp serves to disprove the Freudian theory of the characteristics of the masculine, which are, aggression, sadism and voyeurism. Therefore he throws doubt on same theory of the characteristics of the feminine, which are passive, masochistic and exhibitionist. The Gimp embodies all the Freudian qualities of the feminine, and more. Similarly it is the realization by the male protagonists of the destruction, of all they believe to be the embodiment of the masculine. Their loss of power, and subjugation to the passive. The Gimp represents a castration dilemma exemplify pleasure, but not as Freud would have us believe a pleasure of mastery, instead, it is the pleasure of passivity. The gimp (male) being the manifestation of the male desire, and the source pleasure for Zed.

Challenging Mulvey's theory that pleasure for the female can only be attained through pain and mutilation, which testifies to the woman's lack. The gimp as subject, compromises the polarity of the symbolic order,⁸. The recognition that at the moment when pleasure (female) issues from an overwhelming need, on the part of the subject (male) to repeat those painful moments, which the subject has culturally mastered, (the masculine). It places the subject (male) in a passive position, teaching him to take pleasure in the "feminine masochism". The subject (male), forces the male spectator through identification, to re-assess all that he has learned culturally. Relating to certain expectations of male dominance, and mastery. Placing him as spectator in the uncertain position of learning to derive pleasure from the passive, through his association with the subject with the subject.

8 Stephen Frousl, **Psychoanalysis and Politics**, An Introduction to Freudian and Post Freudian Theory, Macmillan Education Ltd, 1987, p198.

The symbolic order is entered by means of the castration complex; that is, for entry to occur the phallus has to be missing, cannot be possessed by either male or female.

The two male protagonists, in their identification with the Gimp and his lack, (feminine) which gives rise to the realization that they are not identifying with him, rather he is identifying to them. The exhibitionist activities of the gimp endangers their misimpression of the masculine, and poses for them the greater threat of symbolic castration. By revealing the temptation of the feminine/masochistic position and eliminating the masculine/ sadistic position. A masculine position that had already been established through their earlier actions in the movie. A position based on the that the inadequacies in the male culminates, in the denial of the passivity of the male as subject and a belief that the penis is the phallus.⁹

9 Frusl, pg 197.

The phallus is not the penis, the biological emblem of the male, but a representation of the penis in which it is portrayed as the originator and possessor of a power which in fact is found outside the self, in patriarchal discourse. The phallus enters at the point of the castration complex, to subjugate both boys and girls, but also to hold out the former hope that accession to its power may be possible, that it is identical with the penis which he currently possesses. But the castration complex also solidifies an awareness of lack for both girls (an awareness of an absence which results in penis envy) and boys (discovery of the impossibility of Oedipal union with the mother). All sexuality is created in this lack, leaving male and female as partial beings and articulating a dimension of desire on which the phallus is placed. Because sexuality as division is incomplete, the phallus comes to represent that which stands outside it, which is whole and which can repair the damage produced by castration and instituted by the Law of the Father.

Victim of Power

The rape of Marcellus Wallace, by Zed is not about sex its about power. Zed, a law enforcement officer, by the action of rape is committing an offence. But, the person that he is inflicting this humiliation upon is himself a criminal. Therefore Wallace, whose criminal activities have "fucked" over others is then in turn "fucked" over by the law (indulging in criminal activities). Consequently the spectator in order to identify with the masculine, the aggressor and the male sport of rape, he must identify with that power (Zed)

Rather than identify with the masculine, (Zed) the spectator is forced to identify with the victim, which in turn brings about a masochist gaze. Confronted with an image signifying extreme terror, the male spectator who recognizes in himself, his screen equivalent, is clearly placed in a powerless situation. The masculine, in this instance, plays on his possible fears of domination and castration. In order for the masculine to be appeased, Trantino allows, the character of Bruce Willis, in a parody of his ultra macho Die Hard, persona with the aid of a samurai sword, to exact vengeance on Zed and his companion. He releases Wallace from his degradation, thereby allowing him, his own revenge on his tormentor. This re-establishes their position in the patriarchal hierarchy, and sets straight the cultural abnormalities of their situation.

Looking Back

In many respects this scenario of rape revenge recalls many 70s and 80s slasher movies. Here virginal or androgenous females, following a humiliating rape/torture take revenge on the male perpetrator, I Spit on your Grave (Meir Zarchi 1977). She (the female victim), plays the male (game) according to his violent terms and wins, disposing of the perpetrator's of the game in a quasi -masculine manner. Emerging from the ordeal reconstituted as the masculine. Thus questioning the argument that it is only the phallic masculine that is violent and the feminine (female) is never violent. for if the female spectator identifies with the aggressive qualities of the female protagonist, Mulvey would have us believe it is as a direct result of corruption by the patriarchal. Unfortunately this is the perceived idea of a cultural norm, or learned behaviour. Feminist movies like Thelma and Louise, (Ridley Scott, 1991), tried to break from these ideals, only to fail. Turning what could have been a ground- breaking movie and replaying Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid, (George Roy Hill, 1969). Thelma and Louise are faced with the option of death by public prosecution or death by their own hand, (they decide to go over). In this instance, they just regurgitated the female as victim role. → Tough gusty women don't exist, retribution gets them in the end for daring to break free from their oppressive role.

Playing Duel Roles

With the upsurge of feminist movies in the late 80's and 90's, the role of the woman as main protagonist, needs to be re-defined. With the Renaissance, we saw through painting that the role of woman was confined to, maid/virgin, mother, prostitute. Today, film guides us through the quagmire of the accepted cultural norms, even parameters of what it is to be a woman. We have female characters playing duel roles. Alex (Fatal Attraction, Adrian Lyne, 1987), is a career woman, successful, strong, and independent, (male characteristics), yet she a pathological stalker, deranged, (corrupted by the patriarchal), a modern day Jekyll and Hyde. Breaking with the traditional view of womanhood, for her sins she is cast in a deviant role standing outside the cultural norm. Ripley androgynous (manlike) in appearance, is identified with the ideology of femininity, she is strong, aggressive, intelligent, and independent, however, she retains the qualities of a woman, protective, sensitive, and mothering, (first towards her cat Alien, 1979 then to Newt Aliens, (James Cameron, 1986). Fatal Attraction, the preview of which, enraged the audience by its original ending, the suicide of Alex, they demanded "kill the bitch" (Alex). Aliens 2, had audiences not too dissimilar shouting "kill the bitch", in this case it was the alien. Audience identification showed that to identify with Alex was to go outside the parameters the cultural norm. Whereas Ripley evoked a sense of nurturing and despite her (male) appearance remained within the boundaries of accepted cultural parameters

made
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In Fatal attraction, the audience does not identify with Alex despite her strong role, (as castrating monster figure), but with Beth. Not unlike Aliens, Beth embodies the best qualities of wife and mother, she protects her family from the destructive force (Alex). Alex has an interesting character as she represents the female as both surveyor and surveyed. Through Alex as the surveyed, the audience are placed in the position of coveting. Feeling/experiencing the sexual play, identifying with Dan. They are also placed in the position of privilege in Beth. The audience knows who Dan he is 'playing' around with and why. Beth finds out when the seemingly harmless fling turns nasty and the siren/temptress Alex, turns stalker. Alex as the instigator of the gaze, by her surveillance of Dan, pursued and caught him. She initiated sexual contact with the promise a very masculine promise of no strings attached. Therefore she had placed Dan in the position of the passive and forced the spectative audience into the position of the female gaze. From our privileged position as the voyeur and co-conspirator of the gaze we learn about the character of Alex. Once sexual relations have been initiated we identify with Dan, and it is Alex that becomes the bearer of the look, the surveyed. Dan as male protagonist takes the position of the masculine, and Alex the passive. Yet it is Alex who controls the relationship Dan as the masculine is a very weak character, to a large degree "allows" for female manipulation.

Alex takes control of the gaze again, as the female voyeur as her character becomes more demented and out-of-control. We are forced to identify with Beth, as Dan submitting to hypothetical castration, watches passively as Beth disposes of Alex in the final scene (Dan by not killing Alex has freed himself from guilt, which alone is Beth's to bear.) It is good conquering evil, the good wife and mother, not too dissimilar to the female hero/virgin of the slasher movie. Proving that family unity has strength, while people like Alex are outsiders, alien, a viral infection that threaten to destroy order. Alex takes control, by placing Dan back into the passive, she harasses him, turns up at his work, turns up at his old apartment invading the very essence of his family, kidnaps his child, breaks into his house, all of which send him into over-drive, but he still cannot get rid of Alex, he is forced to admit his guilt /responsibility as Alex's constant destructive gaze weakens him.

The Female Gaze

Through innovative camera technique, there are four parts to the gaze of Alex. 1) The libidinous look. The surveillance of Dan at a party by Alex, as he departs with his wife, the perfect couple they are watched by Alex as the spectative audience. 2) The annoying, psychotic gaze. Through the use of a hand held camera, we are brought into the daily life of Dan, the invasion of his privacy by means of the boiled rabbit, forcing him to admit his guilt. 3) The murderous gaze. The surveillance of Dan through the window of his home in the final scene 4) Finally the death of the female gaze. Set in the bathroom it echoes Psycho, 1960 running water, intended victim unaware of approaching danger. Moreover, the motif of the female gaze that stands for Alex, it is the constant running water. Alex as victim, hysterical, thunderstorms, demise in the bathtub, the water is a motif of inherent weakness of woman. As her character was portrayed as masculine and strong, in her moments of weakness there was water, her suicide attempt.

SURVEYING THE MASCULINE

Women in Control

Other films which foreground the female gaze include Basic Instinct, (Goldsmith 1992) and Black Widow, (Bob Rafelson, 1987). It has to be pointed out is that this female gaze, is a tenuous one, bearing in mind the gaze itself has limits. The female is given the power of the gaze, power to look at themselves and at their male counterparts. In part they are exceeding the traditional role of the passive, although the action of the female body is still defined in patriarchal terms. Silence of the Lambs, Agent Starling, (Jody Foster) working in a traditional male field, the F.B.I.. Her manner, dress, and speech are all masculine. Is on a mission to uncover the true identity of a serial killer called Buffalo Bill. Interestingly the female gaze of the surveyed subject, Hannibal Lector by (Agent Starling) is returned and she becomes the object of the male gaze. This is a two fold function, it proves that the gaze of the female relies very heavily on the masculine. The film becomes much more than the female investigator, as the investigation itself relies an the observations, of an incarcerated felon, who in turn is without a view. He relies not on the visual, as we expect, but he builds a mental picture through riddles for us to follow. This is the gaze we are led through. It is Agent Starlings interpretation of Lector's clues, which gives us a mental picture of the killer.

Lector acts (for us) as a camera, we are led to believe that it is he that is the surveyed. We are brought via the camera, through the woods, through the training school, through the every day working life of Agent Starling. We (the audience) can only view from the outside. Being chosen for the assignment, initially, to interview Lector with a view to unravelling the mystery. In doing so, she becomes the subject of Lectors/our probing gaze. Through Lector we are being introduced into the private and personal world of Agent Starling. Surprisingly we learn very little about Lector, apart from his inescapable gaze. His voyeurism, is based on perception, deprived of sight of an outside world, he relies on instinct and primal senses. Starlings choice of perfume can speak volumes, with Lector articulating that which we could never guess. He imposes his narrative which is taken as truth. Although Starling initially appears as a parody of the masculine, her contact with Lector places her in a passive (feminine) position. However, once she accomplishes the challenge (set by Lector), she is returned to a privileged masculine position. It is she who is in control of the investigation, who builds up the psychological profile of the killer. Alone she uncovers Buffalo Bill, using the information and guide-line from Lector, whilst her erstwhile colleagues are sent on a wild goose chase to the other side of the country.

He Kills because he Covets

Buffalo Bill kills women, not out of the usual fear of castration or feelings of inadequacy. He kills because he covets (my reading of Berger has already suggested that the spectator possesses a coveting gaze and is controlled or held captive by the female surveyed object). Through the persistence of Agent Starling, Buffalo Bill is found to be the embodiment of the male coveting. The male gaze focussed on the female is not the gaze of spectator-ownership, it is a gaze coveting in the female image that which he sees in himself. Not so much as the female lack, rather the lack of the female in man. Matriarchal societies (perceived to have gone before the patriarchal cultural society), celebrated the mother/power/birth image, the very mystery of life itself. It could be suggested that the male fear of the castration complex, is not so much based on the actual fear of the castration by the female, but the creation of man through woman.

Bill, forces the spectator to identify not with the passivity of the female but her uniqueness. We see Bill surveying himself as female, we watch as he applies his make-up and as he gazes at himself in a full length mirror. Clearly in this female persona Bill revelled in himself as the surveyed. As Berger suggested in the act of looking at herself, the surveyor in the female is male, and the surveyed female. In Bill, the surveyor of himself as a woman was male, and the surveyed in him was female. Subsequently he turned himself into an object of his own voyeurism, through which he

projected his femininity. Bill should not to be confused with the transvestite, he does not wish to dress as a woman, he wishes to be a woman. The transvestite is indulging in a fetish, to dress as a women while still retaining the masculine/male side, like slipping from one persona into another, or borrowing a persona. Bill targeted certain types of girls to kill, a little on the large side, he killed these women because of their femininity, and was making for himself his real female persona from the skin of his victims. Any identify with Bill would put the male spectator in a position of identifying the female in himself. The female as passive, Bill lacked the masculine, enjoying the masochistic and the exhibitionist in himself.

Likewise With Dressed to Kill and Psycho, Dr Elliot/Bobbie and Norman Bates/Mother, were not transvestites or transexuals they were dual personalities trapped in the same body. In each case the female personality carried out the acts of violence against women, who they saw, from their own female personas as a threat. The masculine side to both Norman and Dr Elliot were quite aware of their female counterparts, and to a degree revelled in the feminine. The feminine in each acted out as the aggressor the sadist and the voyeur, all the Freudian qualities of the masculine. The masculine in both Bates and Dr Elliot was the passive, therefore took its essential qualities from the freudian feminine, these qualities being exhibitionist and masochistic. Additionally, these qualities of the masculine

were also to be found in the character of Alex, Fatal Attraction. Therefore, there cannot be strident definitions of the masculine and feminine. Just as the qualities or essence of a person cannot be so gender specific. It is only the acceptance of a cultural norm, which gives us this narrow field of stereotyping.

Trans-gendered Identity

The trans gendered identity a source of destruction is powerfully played out by Robert de Niro in Martin Scorsese's Cape Fear. It is the ultimate in rape revenge, de Niro, as Max Cady, embraces in a masochistic/sadistic fashion the notion of the feminine as a revenge on society. Cady, a victim of circumstance, is jailed, sodomised, loses his home and family seeks revenge on the lawyer Sam Bowden who aided in his incarceration and ultimate humiliation of rape. He seeks to destroy by acts of aggression, that which he perceives to be his feminine side. He is aided and abetted by Bowden's 15 year old daughter, Danielle, who narrates the tale to us. Her emerging sexuality, with overtures of incestuous feelings for her father helps with the destruction of the family unit and the demise of Cady. She is the embodiment of the monstrous feminine, the all consuming and destructive force. This movie leaves all of the principal characters as victims, the women identify with the feminised Cady as a representation of their own female victimization. The story essentially is related from the side of the feminine, there are no male characters strong enough for the male spectator to associate with. Hence the male spectator is put in the position of admitting to his own feminine aggression.

Cady's appearance towards the end of the movie in the clothes of the murdered maid servant, he is trying to express his mastery over the feminine. another way to view this is the menacing side of Cady, was actually threatening a symbolic form of female castration with the threatened rape of Danielle. Taking away from her the power that enabled her to participate in the role of the monstrous feminine. The intervention on the part of Leigh her mother, finds an empathy surfacing between the female as victim, and the would rapist as victim. Her dilemma as mother/wife places him back in the position of the passive and replaces him in the position of his own earlier helplessness. It is Danielle alone who finally finishes off Cady, by setting him alight. It is she, who controls the sadistic gaze, and Cady as victim, her object. While his mutilated remains are left to remind the male spectator as a manifestation of the castration complex. Scorsese is trying to demonstrate the feminised side of Cady as a dual embodiment of the masculine, that they are really one in the same thing, and not so gender specific. (I feel that here he is not so successful), he manages to retain the cultural norm of the feminine as weak. Using the feminine as a pretence to align the fears and motives of the male protagonist.

CONCLUSION

The violence perpetrated by men, can be construed as misogynistic, because of their jealousy of the feminine therefore, coveting for their own reasons. Man as the victim, under different circumstances, found us turning to the Gimp, in Pulp Fiction as a parody on the delusion of the masculine. Subsequently he must be killed by the male protagonist, not because of his lack in the masculine, but for his stance in the feminine, that is recognizable as a threat to the sexuality of the male. He is as much a victim of circumstance, he represents no physical danger to the male but stands aside of the cultural norm, therefore, he threatens the existence of the patriarchal society. Other male victims include Mark, the main protagonist in Peeping Tom, (Michael Powell, 1960), differs from the Psycho killer Norman Bates, although these two movies were made in 1960. Bates had a mother guilt complex, Mark is a victim of the patriarch , and is guilty of the Oedipus Rex complex based on his hatred/love/fear of his father. Peeping Tom differs from the usual psychotic murderer from the point of view that he kills his female victims the object of his gaze, because they represent to him the passive qualities of the feminine in him. As a direct consequence of him as the victim, of his fathers voyeuristic gaze. His intended victims have little shock value, a prostitute, a bit-part actress, a soft porn photographer's model. They do not represent to Mark the guilt of a sexual encounter, in fact he disposes of them in a cold

and calculated fashion. For him it is the replaying at the moment of his victims realization of their own demise, that arouses in Mark a sense of sexual excitement. This excitement stems from the remembered or learned experience of Mark as a child, probably the masochistic pleasure of the surveyed. The three female victims are themselves victim to their own voyeurism, in the reflected gaze of the camera lens, which is our gaze and Marks, and their own reflected horror in the mirror at the realization of their fate. In Mark, the Gimp and Buffalo Bill it is their trans-gendered identity that sets them apart from society, which is why they have to die before the movie ends as a neat way of packaging up any loose ties. They force an acknowledgement in the obliteration of a gender specific society.

Plates:

Fig1, *Helen Fourment in a
fur coat, by Rubens*
1577 -1640

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