

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION: OPEN BOOKS, PRIVATE LIVES

1. Considering the “convergence of sexuality and textuality” in the writing of Emily Dickinson, Thomas Foster raises a similar issue. Noting that in one letter to her beloved sister-in-law Dickinson had signed a postscript, “open me carefully,” Foster argues that the phrase itself “raises the possibility of interpretive violence as sexual violence, violence against women. In other words, Dickinson ends her letter in the hope that Susan Gilbert will not take the potentially hostile position of a male reader in relation to her text” (241).
2. I define this term simply, as “a way to think” (often paired with its simple opposite, practice, “a way to act”)—not as the intellectually sophisticated form of contemporary literary criticism derived from continental philosophies. Therefore, for myself, all criticism issuing from these fields that offers its readership repeatable methods and approaches or new ways to understand the text(s) in question belongs to the category of theory.
3. I refer here to a trailing off in titles related to “straight” feminism—discussions of women versus men, uninflected by more contemporary concerns with history, environment, ethnicity, age, etc. Pop feminism of the Katie Roiphe/Naomi Wolfe/Susan Faludi variety has in fact taken up this basic opposition, while Susan Gubar’s essay “What Ails Feminist Criticism?” laments the loss of “woman” as a solid and stable category in contemporary discourse.
4. I appreciate Schlichter’s critical response to earlier writing of my own and find other moments of this essay valuable as well. As I do elsewhere in this study, Schlichter critiques Daphne Patai’s *Heterophobia* and moves toward the point I make here when she observes that the binary construction of some queer criticism is “supplemented by limited, often stereotypical representations of straights. As a synecdoche for straight life, the figure of the white suburban couple committed to reproduction . . . and fully in sync with power structures dominates even queer writings that intend to subvert the hetero/homo division” (549).
5. Consider for instance the equation created in the titles of works by Duberman and Levay. In addition, Goldberg’s *Queering the Renaissance* is described on its back cover as “a major reassessment of the field of Renaissance studies . . . within the perspective of gay and lesbian studies.”

6. Chris Cagle's work on bisexuality interestingly critiques the monosexualist's reliance on identifiable categories such as these. He describes bisexuality as in part eliciting "the crisis of sexual taxonomy" (242) and calls attention to the problems with categories in and of themselves. Well aware of the problems attached to an overzealous faith in solidly demarcating lines, I must still maintain these categories as provisional critical constructs, so as to interrogate the relationships among them.

## CHAPTER 1 THE TRIALS OF TRIALOGUING IN LESBIAN, GAY, AND FEMINIST STUDIES

1. Jeffreys (*Anticlimax*) is bothered by almost all gay sexual habits, including cross-dressing ("gender fetishism"), cruising and casual sex ("phallogocentrism"), and interest in pornography (à la MacKinnon/ Dworkin, an "eroticization of violence"); Frye's views are close to hers.
2. See also Boone 12. While he in fact singles out Owens's essay as one of three "thoughtful commentaries" in the Smith/Jardine collection, he gives reasons for this praise only for the other two commentators, leaving his defense of Owens somewhat weak.
3. Owens accuses Irigaray of making "patently homophobic" formulations in her work and accuses Nochlin and Showalter of "Tootsie Rolling," a term denoting both the presumption that all gay men are effeminate (or transvestites) and the "outing" of male critics whether they be gay or not.
4. Queer theory's at-best reluctant embrace of the phenomenon of effeminacy is evident in multiple writings. In his study of popular film, Brett Farmer determines effeminacy to be largely a matter of cultural perception: "Because male homosexuality is widely represented in our culture as possessing strong, even constitutive ties with femininity, an active assumption of a male homosexual identity will potentially occasion marked identification with the feminine at several levels" (127). Elsewhere, the curiously ambivalent position of sociologist Martin P. Levine, at times coauthoring with and being posthumously edited by Michael S. Kimmel, deserves special mention here. Unwilling to posit various natural types of gay subjectivity, Levine argues that "neither 'butch' nor 'swish' styles are innate in gay physiology" (56) but that both are constructed from influences placed on them by straight society. Gay men have passed through "swish" and "butch" stages progressively, says Levine; in preliberation days, the swish identity was imposed on them by stereotypes they had learned from youth, while, curiously, gay liberation has led them to a more heterosexual/ist form of manhood—the macho posturings of clone culture that were also learned in childhood. While Levine later allows a quote from a subject—"Darling, beneath all this butch drag, we are all still girls" (63)—to close a discussion, he and Kimmel ultimately argue that only AIDS caused the death of clone

culture and the reemergence of the softer gay man. At different places in *Gay Macho*, Levine seems to argue for the social constructedness and underlying reality of both “swish” and “butch” modes.

5. See also Walters, whose emphasis is not on urban dwelling but who considers “well-meaning heterosexuals” (xvii) and their indeed problematic recourse to an ethic of “acceptance” (16) of gay and lesbian lifestyles.

## CHAPTER 2 WHAT'S IN A NAME: SEMANTIC SLIPS AND SLIDES IN LESBIAN, GAY, AND FEMINIST STUDIES' KEY TERMS

1. In fact, Butler herself has questioned the sufficiency of these terms, specifically in the early pages of *Gender Trouble*, while here refraining from qualifying their deployment in a way that implicitly ratifies the gender = man/woman equation.
2. See also Jackson and Scott 16–17 and Stanley 32.
3. The term refers here both to system malfunction and system apprehension-through-dissection; as Butler sees it, the political genealogy of gender is that which would “deconstruct the substantive appearance into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frame” (*Gender Trouble* 33).
4. I speak here solely in terms of societal “looksism,” which rewards beautiful people (even gay and lesbian ones) with a literal and metaphorical opening of doors that are often closed to (or closed upon) those deemed less attractive, regardless of their belonging to other privileged social categories (straightness, whiteness, etc.).
5. See for instance essays by Ross, Robert K. Martin, Seltzer, and Vorlicky.
6. Butler (“Against Proper Objects” n.8), Biddy Martin (“Extraordinary Homosexuals” and “Sexualities without Genders”), and Harris and Crocker make similar moves.
7. See also de Lauretis “Sexual Indifference” 147, Livia and Hall 6, and Paul Smith 6. An interesting exception is Boone and Cadden’s reference to “the category of gender (‘gay’) as a separate analytic tool” (5).
8. Butler is clearly aware of the challenge facing her as she opens her inquiry in *Bodies That Matter*. In the Preface to this work she concedes that bodies are in fact material and that her assertion regarding the utter constructedness of sex differences is “hardly a self-evident claim” (x). Shortly thereafter, however: “The category of ‘sex’ is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a ‘regulatory ideal.’ In this sense, then ‘sex’ not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that *produces the bodies* it governs” (1, emphasis added).
9. See also Delphy 54–55 and Fausto-Sterling 26. Jackson and Scott argue that “Just as class struggle seeks to do away with classes, so feminist struggle should aim to do away with sex differences” (17).

10. Susan Gubar has also challenged Butler's obfuscating approach (125–29). See also Charnes.
11. Halberstam's desire to clear a space for the specific focus of female masculinity—to the exclusion of male masculinity and even to the seeming companion subject of male effeminacy—causes her to make another interesting slide—from issues of gender to issues of sexuality—at important points in her argument. A centerpiece of this early discussion is her critique of sex-segregated bathrooms, where, she claims, the problem is much worse for masculine women than it is for effeminate men. The argument gives way, however, when, on the authority of a single essay by Lee Edelman, who explores a specific, historical context, Halberstam concludes that “whereas men's rest rooms tend to operate as a highly charged sexual space in which sexual interactions are both encouraged and punished, women's rest rooms tend to operate as an arena for the enforcement of gender conformity” (24). Later, “in the women's room . . . *all* gender-ambiguous females . . . are scrutinized, whereas in the men's room biological men are rarely deemed out place” (26). Yet I question so cut-and-dried a distinction, which disregards not only issues of gender in the men's room—the difficulties still faced, for instance, by effeminate boys bullied in junior high and high school restrooms—but also the issue of sexuality in the women's room: while Halberstam glances at the necessity of sex-segregated bathrooms “to protect women from male predations” (24), she offers no solution to this problem in the model of common-use facilities she calls for. For another slide from gender to “sex” (sexual activity), see her discussion 9–12.
12. In *Tendencies*, for instance, Sedgwick ruminates frequently on the issue of AIDS and on her own dealings with breast cancer, two themes that call frequently into question the fragility of the material body. See especially “White Glasses.”

### CHAPTER 3 THE CRITICAL IMPASSE: INVERSE RELATIONS AMONG LESBIAN, GAY, AND FEMINIST APPROACHES

1. In her reading of the film *The Crying Game*, Maria Pramaggiore describes a similar dynamic among Fergus, Jody (his male adversary), and Jude (his female ally), who becomes an “increasingly cruel and crude female outsider” (284) as the bond between the men intensifies, and is eventually killed by yet another male rival (the transvestite Dil). Although the interpretive issues surrounding the textual death of Jude are not Pramaggiore's primary focus, the “either-or” relationship

- between Fergus's two choices—despite Pramaggiore's emphasis on the "both-and" qualities of this bisexual scenario—is evident here.
2. I mean to lean hard on the particularity of the aspect of the gay-feminist relationship under consideration here, implying neither that most gay men dislike straight women nor that effeminate gay men are a cultural myth or "race traitors" in any way.
  3. While Michael P. Brown cites several women theorists in his text and would have to acknowledge that lesbians are as subjected to metaphoric and material cultural closets (his main theme) as are gay men, he notes that lesbians will be included only in the discussion of national census statistics, while personal, urban, and international scales will be discussed in terms of their meaning for gay men alone (23). Higgs provides a lengthy disclaimer in his introductory section "Why male-centered?" (2–4), while Leap and his several male contributors make (and indeed owe) no apologies for their male-only focus: so evidently plain in the minds of these several writers is the connection between public sex and gay *male* activity that no language anywhere in the volume was evidently necessary to justify the exclusion of women.
  4. Other theorists grant visitor status to the "other group" in their respective discursive neighborhoods in similar fashion. In the midst of his otherwise all-male tour of gay Christchurch, for instance, Michael P. Brown refers to "the city's most popular gay and lesbian bar" (80). In fact this bar's owner is male, and references to the clientele here and in the sauna he visits next are plainly indicated to be male. In the next paragraph, Brown points out that "Lesbian space is extremely hidden in Christchurch, much more so than gay space. Traditionally, activists informed me, it has been produced only in the private space of women's homes" (81). See also Binnie 197.
  5. See also Hemmings 147 and Polchin 387. In her discussion, Hemmings is one of the few women to elide the specificity of the lesbian lifestyle in a phrase like the following: "the importance of public spaces—streets, parks, backrooms, and baths—in the formation of a contemporary gay and lesbian identity" (147). As "streets, parks, backrooms, and baths" must be acknowledged as overwhelmingly the domains of gay men, the addition of the "and lesbian" seems perfunctory and disconnected here.
  6. In a geography similar to Park Slope, Vancouver's eastern neighborhoods boast a visible lesbian presence in local businesses— "[f]rom vegetable markets to Italian coffeeshops . . . to economic alternatives such as co-ops"—all of which welcome lesbian customer as an "equal and valued citizen" (40). Meanwhile, these customers come and go from the commercial settings, while what remain to define the atmosphere of the neighborhood are businesses lacking any overtly lesbian appearance or theme. Munt would credit "moment[s] of presence" for such lesbian *flâneurs* as these with "spatial reconstruction," arguing that "Lesbian identity is constructed in the temporal and linguistic mobilisation of space, and as we

- move *through* space we imprint utopian and dystopian moments on urban life” (124–25). Yet Munt herself points to the tenuousness of such mobilizations with her comment, “we need our fictions of consciousness or we will disappear” (125).
7. See also Bouthillette 218–27, Elsie Jay, Quilley 286, Retter 207, and Walters 243–44. To the degree that gay men indeed tend to maintain stronger purchasing power than lesbians, “commercialization” and “revitalization” of formerly depressed communities, as referred to by Quilley here and by Polchin (387) are often buzz terms for a specifically gay presence in urban neighborhoods.
  8. I extend this emphasis on *representation* to every reference to gay and lesbian urban dwellers in play here. I recognize that dichotomies between affluence and poverty, public and private sexual activities, and sexual versus cultural forms of expression speak not at all to the great, ultimately immeasurable diversities characterizing gay and lesbian populations throughout western society, yet they prevail overwhelming in the contemporary critical discourse about such groups.
  9. See for instance Lo and Healy 35, Rothenberg 175, and Davis 291–92.
  10. For delineation of the tradition of conflict dividing gays and lesbians over the issue of public space, see Califia 187, Quilley 282, Sommella 433, and Moyer et al. 439. Multiple theorists have noted the ultimately limited amount of public grounds on which these dilemmas can be resolved, raising the stakes regarding the outcome. See Ingram “‘Open’ Space” 122 and Califia 183.
  11. It is argued that certain gay men—especially lower class or homeless ones—engage in outdoor sex only because they lack adequate private housing, yet it is acknowledged just as often that much outdoor sexual activity occurs because such exposure intensifies the thrill of the encounter. Chauncey 249–50 is most persuasive on the issue of forced public exposure from a historical perspective; more recently, Clatts has investigated homeless youth hustling for cash or drugs in Greenwich Village, while Michael Brown reads a similar population in Yaletown, Vancouver. See also Ingram “‘Open’ Space” 101 and 120, Tattleman “The Meaning” 394 and “Presenting” 234.
  12. See Bronski *Culture Clash* 205–06; elsewhere the editors of *Queers in Space* blame the misogynist tradition of threatening women who dare to occupy public space (especially after dark) *and* the heterosexism of the feminist movement for lesbians’ “sanitized sexuality” (12), while Ingram (“Marginality”) applauds the radical photographic compositions of Del LaGrace Volcano, which position female models in outdoor, nighttime, sexual arrangements. Warner presents a striking reversal of this argument: “Gay journalists are repudiating the legacy of safer sex, depicting lesbians as sexless homebodies whom gay men should imitate” (163).

13. Because of this term's multiple connotations, critics differ significantly on whether "visibility" is or is not a proper goal. See Bell 82, Clarke 12, Ingram "'Open' Space" 122, Nestle 63, Polchin 385–86, Tattleman "Presenting" 254 and "The Meaning" 403, Walters, and Wolfe 303. See Berlant (*Queen of America*) for an insightful variation on this theme.
14. Peter Coviello points to a similar catch-22 created for gay men by the AIDS crisis: "queer communities are a great deal more visible now than they were fifteen years ago, and . . . such visibility comes, at least in part, as a rather direct result of AIDS, which has in that brief time turned upon gay men in particular the full glare of any number of differently calibrated public gazes" (42).
15. Rechy's comment is part of a larger discussion as to whether sex in parks is an inherently political activity or whether it is gay men's comparatively desexualized occupations of park space that constitute real activism. Ingram insists that "furtive sexual contact in public places is often limited," then later in that paragraph describes the same park as "a highly eroticized and commodified landscape of constant sex" ("'Open' Space" 104). Ingram and his coeditors warn against "emphasiz[ing] eroticism at the expense of domesticity" (376), as this would limit the full development of queer urban spaces, while John Grube contends both that "'open space' . . . was not only a place for sex but also for touching base with other members of the community" (132) *and* that anonymous, silent orgy episodes were political statements in their own right (132–33).

#### CHAPTER 4 WHAT WE READ: LESBIAN, GAY, AND FEMINIST APPROACHES TO FICTION

1. In Judith Fetterly's still-influential formulation: "To read the canon of what is currently considered classic American literature is perforce to identify as male" (xii).
2. Discussing a related medium, Richard Dyer makes a similar observation: "I'll happily teach *The Searchers* (John Ford) as a John Wayne movie about race, but as soon as it's *Dance, Girl, Dance* (Dorothy Arzner) or *Car Wash* (Michael Schultz) I'm wanting students to worry about whether you can tell they were directed by a woman or a black person, respectively, and how, and whether it matters. . . . [I]t does make a difference who makes a film, who the authors are" (185).
3. As Rachel Blau DuPlessis comments in another context, "If I had not become a feminist, I would not have been able to write much or think anything especially interesting in any original way" (97–98). Although DuPlessis is likely reversing the point I make here—that feminism did not give her something to complain about, as it were, but gave her the means by which to voice her complaints—we must

acknowledge that this relationship, between the politics and theory of feminism and the woman's "voice," is a two-way street.

4. My arguments here are close to those of Gubar, Ch. 7, esp. 142–45.
5. This is Lillian Faderman's position, when she determines Hall to be under the unfortunate influence of "the English and German sexologists" ("What is Lesbian Literature?" 50) who did so much to pathologize lesbianism at the turn of the 20th century. In that same reading, Faderman even describes the negative influence of "the nineteenth-century French male aesthete-decadent writers, whose purpose was to 'astound the bourgeoisie' . . . through the most shocking image they could devise, namely two women being sexual together" (50). See also Faderman "Who Hid Lesbian History?" Clearly, Zola's *Nana* belongs to this targeted canon, while Castle later credits the novel for freeing up the lesbian subtext in James's *The Bostonians*.
6. Castle herself delves into this dilemma in a later chapter: "by raising her arms to 'ward off' the oncoming phantoms, Radclyffe Hall's self-loathing heroine somewhat oafishly pantomimes the repressive theatrics we've seen before in Defoe, Diderot, McKenzie, and Strachey. But it's a useless move now. . . . [W]hat ensues, despite the maundering mock religiosity of Hall's presentation, is a loopy, delirious, untrammelled consummation: a kind of sex scene with ghosts" (*Apparitional* 51).
7. Castle questions the absent lesbian in Sedgwick's erotic triangle, arguing that only a lesbianizing of the woman in question will challenge patriarchal rule. Yet her model is only partially analogous to the model she critiques; Castle accuses Sedgwick of a "nervous avoidance of the topic of lesbianism" (*Apparitional* 13), but her own triangle neglects the figure of the gay man. Using *Summer Will Show* as a test case, Castle's triangulated figures are a lesbian couple and one lover's patristic husband; the women are not figured as homosocial rivals for the man's affections—in fact they could not care less about him—but the economic aspects of Castle's model are too close to Sedgwick's own to represent a true alternative: the lesbian romance does not empower the women to control their financial situation (i.e., engage in subversive trafficking in men) but instead seriously threatens this.
8. Markedly diverging from Castle's interpretation, Robert L. Caserio reads Warner's work within a long tradition of stories of "celibate" sister-figures, who turn their traditionally defined chastity toward revolutionary praxis. Caserio's Marxist reading argues that depicting these women engaged in lesbian relations would capitulate to the status quo as fully as would depicting them as heterosexually active (259). Warner's novel is described as an intensely political and theoretical novel that works toward "Sophia's politically correct separation from Minna's allegedly amateurish revolutionism" (268). The argument is suffused with a heterocentrist rhetoric, as Caserio constantly pictures the women as "delivering" and "giving birth to" Marxist politics and late in the article refers to "Warner's intercourse with Marx" (274).



Strikingly, Caserio makes use of Castle's own key trope, the apparitional, describing both *The Communist Manifesto* and Minna's dead body as "haunting specters" throughout the story. Yet Caserio's argument is no holdover from an old-school misogynist critical period but part of a recent collection titled *Engendering Men*. Meanwhile, his brand of "feminism" moves, in a fashion I have noted many times in this study, detrimentally away from themes of lesbianism, sexuality, and typical definitions of subversion.

9. This emphasis in Stevens's argument juxtaposes somewhat uncomfortably with his Foucault-inspired observation that many of James's characters "need to confess" their sexual irregularities. Just ahead in this chapter, I will argue that gay male theory is as indebted to the ideas of Foucault as it is involved with these questions of silence; in Stevens's study, this double involvement leads to the paradoxical situation of "sexuality, like hysteria, [being] characterized not only by the absence of speech but also by linguistic excess" (7; see also 147–48).
10. In a related argument, in search of his own "ambiguous conclusions" in Austen, Robin Grove in fact contrasts more open endings (such as that found in *Mansfield Park*) with the situational certainties promised at the end of *Northanger Abbey*, whose final phrase, "that we are all hastening together toward perfect felicity" (qtd. in Grove 183) reproduces the tone and even word choice evincing "sarcasm" for Litvak: "unblemished happiness really is waiting for Henry and Catherine, for whom, inside the world of the novel, the present claim is no mockery but rather a statement of happy truth" (Grove 183).
11. Kipling's story "The Janeites" depicts a cadre of artillerymen whose secret society formed from their shared affection for Austen's work enables them to recognize an intimate alliance and cope with the horrors of World War I. Interrupting a discussion as to whether or not Austen died childless, the verbose (and intoxicated) Macklin announces, "'She *did* leave lawful issue in the shape o' one son; an' 'is name was 'Enery James' " (qtd. in Claudia Johnson "Divine" 31).
12. "Threaten" is as interestingly ambiguous a term as is "desperation." When Lisa L. Moore argues, for instance, that in *Emma* "female freindship is represented in the novel as the significant threat to Emma's virtue and marriageability" (121), she may be arguing (and in fact makes both cases persuasively) either that the novel therefore uses this threat to challenge these ideological strongholds *or* that it sets up female friendship as a stumbling block to the marriage plot expressly to devalue such friendships.
13. See also Gerster 116–17, 129 and Chandler. Alice Chandler's argument is of a vintage (originally published in 1975) that in part explains its myopia with respect to an adequate definition of "sexuality." Her several assumptions about "the antitheses and hostilities of the sexes" (38) in fact tend to reinstate the gender-based status quo rather than disrupt it.

14. Moore, in her survey of critical responses to *Emma*, in fact classifies Claudia Johnson's as a feminist reading, whose focus on "heterosexual manhood" (115) depicts the novel's "gender-based censure of masculine characters" (115), to the exclusion of questions of "feminine sexuality" (115).
15. This discussion parallels some having taken place recently with respect to *The Portrait of a Lady*. Sheldon M. Novick informs us in neutral tones that "Osmond, indeed is a portrait of [James's] long-time friend, Paul Zhukovsky" (9), while he is detested by most feminist readers (e.g., Tessa Hadley, who calls him a "monster" [17]).
16. Hugh Stevens also links Olive's politics and "virginity," though this latter term is as confusing as is Fetterly's substituting "sexuality" for "fertility" above. Stevens argues that Olive belongs to "a feverish cult of virginity, a virginity preserved for political ends" (97). If for Stevens Olive is a virgin simply because she has never been sexually penetrated, he only removes her from the sphere of heterosexual activity. If, however, virginity in this argument precludes any sexual contact or organism, then for Stevens, lesbianism would detract from her political efficacy as well. Finally, Stevens does aver that Olive makes an "extremely convincing [lesbian] indeed" (99), though not because of her politically powerful (because virginal/nonpenetrative) modes of sexual expression but because of her "tragic" solitude. (See also Caserio, n.8).

## CHAPTER 5 WHY WE WATCH: LESBIAN, GAY, AND FEMINIST APPROACHES TO FILM

1. Farmer provides a helpful survey of straight and lesbian feminists' charges of misogyny leveled against gay drag culture (128, 137). Also Doty has responded to similar arguments by Julie Burchill ("There's Something Queer Here" 76).
2. See for instance Bronski *Culture Clash* 99 and "Judy Garland" 205, Doty *Flaming Classics* 93, Farmer 133, Sheldon 17, and White 33.
3. Elizabeth Ellsworth's frequently cited study determined that lesbian viewers seeking "illicit pleasures" from what was ultimately a mainstream Hollywood film "ignored large sections of narrative material focusing on heterosexual romance" (54) and were able to "interpret the film's ending as a validation of lesbianism" (55). Additionally, these viewers "redefined 'main character' and 'supporting character' in order to elevate Patrice Donnelly as the film's star" and "named and eroticized illicit moments of the film's 'inadvertent lesbian verisimilitude'" (54). Interestingly, Ellsworth's article, subtitled "Feminist Spectators and *Personal Best*," refers directly to lesbian viewing practice only in the last pages, in a section persistently titled "Feminist Reviews of *Personal Best*"; throughout, "feminist" functions alternately as a term for feminists regardless of orientation and as

another name for “lesbian,” when in fact her lesbian-centered research constitutes her significant contribution and receives, not surprisingly, the bulk of the attention from more recent sexuality film theorists.

4. In fact, Mayne’s text, *Framed: Lesbians, Feminists, and Media Culture*, plays this game constantly, conducting cultural studies-style readings of film, television, and cultural events. Mayne’s focus is on proto- or pseudo-lesbian situations in these texts or, as with her reading of *L.A. Law*, actual lesbian characters and their homophobic handling by mainstream media.
5. Clare Whatling’s *Screen Dreams: Fantasizing Lesbians in Film* works along similar lines. Chapters 1 and 2 of her text focus almost exclusively on reviews of relevant theory and very little on film itself, while her third chapter’s emphasis on identification and desire provides the bridge to her specifically cultural studies-style analyses of nostalgia, gossip, and Jodie Foster in the last three chapters.
6. Despite questioning Mulvey’s pessimistic dichotomizing of sex roles in cinema, both Gaylyn Studlar and Steve Neale ultimately concede the dominance of the system Mulvey describes: Studlar considers it “naive to assume that the identification of female scopophilia or fetishism would open a gap for the female spectator within dominant cinema” (216), while Neale “concur[s] with [Mulvey’s] basic premise that the spectatorial look in mainstream cinema is implicitly male” (263).
7. Rodowick’s defense of Mulvey is just as biology-based, however: “Rather, her argument is searching to define the specificity of the female body as the locus of a repressed yet articulate being. Recognition of this body and the representations proper to it, would thus enable both the recognition of a subjectivity so far elided under patriarchy and the overthrow of the discursive and social practices that censor this subjectivity” (194).
8. See for instance Doane “Film” 425, Weiss 141, and Traub “Ambiguities” 119. In addition to these theoretical considerations of women’s lesser response to visual sexual stimuli, we might glance around at contemporary culture to compare the obvious discrepancies in market share between *Playgirl* and *Playboy* magazines and between the waning fad of Chippendales performances and the always-burgeoning market for female dancers for gentleman’s clubs and even restaurant chains like Hooters. Women’s encounter with male sexual display often triggers a laugh response; they may buy *Playgirl*, a sex toy, or the services of a male stripper to embarrass a friend on the eve of her wedding, while the atmosphere at male strip shows often includes hilarity, romantic adulation, and a competitive sense of pride (that we can do this as well as the boys) but rarely sexual intensity.
9. Sue-Ellen Case’s critique of Doane in this instance rests on shaky ground. Taking Doane to task for her very emphasis on spectatorship, Case attempts to forge a link between spectatorship, passivity, and

heterosexuality. She negatively compares Doane's "passive" cinematic spectator to "the femme" who "actively performs her masquerade" ("Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic" 66), thus faulting Doane for turning her attention to film and the film-viewing experience, instead of the lived social realm where actual butches and femmes subvert patriarchy. The untenable nature of this argument is apparent, as it makes impossible the necessarily passive activity (after all, one must sit and watch) of even lesbian film theorists.

10. At the outset of the essay, Riviere informs readers that the situation in which "intellectual pursuits for women were associated almost exclusively with an overtly masculine type of woman . . . has now changed" (33), indicating that intellectual women are more and more the norm, that intellectual women are ordinary women. Following elaboration of her primary case history, she turns to several briefer examples from "everyday life" (39), but each example features accomplished professional women, and Riviere insists ultimately upon their extraordinariness—the rarity of the achievements, the pathology of their psyches. Interestingly, feminists have made use of Riviere's insights for decades, while the remarkable strain of antifeminism on display in her most famous essay is rarely if ever mentioned. Primarily, limitations of historical context lead Riviere to "diagnose" intellectual women as homosexuals (with no word here as to how Riviere's own intellectual success pathologizes her psychic makeup). For Riviere, the masquerade is less a clever survival strategy than a vigorously barred closet door; this striking "prefeminist" statement only postpones the moment at which a third alternative (between traditional housewifery and pathologized sapphism) presents itself for women. Yet again, the lesbian and feminist alternatives function here in inverse relation.
11. Mulvey argues that though "her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation," ultimately the woman's "alien presence . . . has to be integrated into cohesion within the narrative" (62). While her status as spectacle thus challenges the narrative's progress, this challenge in fact necessitates the very movement (beyond these barriers) that constitutes narrative structure—we might say that in classical film, the woman "happens to" the man—so that recuperation of the spectacle is inherent in its very form.
12. In an endnote Mayne states that "What I am calling 'homotextual' is what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick would describe as 'homosocial'" (*Woman* 232 n.31); why she borrows this concept without retaining Sedgwick's terminology is not clarified, but what Mayne sets up as an equation cannot really stand as one: we would have to be talking about at least two texts—homotextual relations between two or more films—to parallel Sedgwick's delineation of homosocial relations "between men." If Mayne in fact refers to film characters, these are confused with the

- film itself if she designates them as “texts,” and although she makes a loose connection between Sedgwick’s ideas and her own by noting their shared theme of “the sexual and its erasure,” this definition is only briefly elaborated upon and never introduced into the chapter itself.
13. In chapter 2, I questioned Traub among others for deploying the term “gender” where “sex” is the more productive term. Here, gender comes to us in “binary categories” and thus resembles and supports the “binary teleology that upholds a structural heterosexuality” (*Desire* 117). As per my discussion in chapter 2, I posit a wide-ranging gender spectrum of masculinities and femininities, not an entrenched dichotomy (characteristic of two sexes). Elsewhere Traub refers to “the belief that homoerotic desire depends on gender similitude” (126) and may be suggesting the image of two femmes or two butches (the way two lesbians might do their actual gender) or simply two women, in which case her reference should have been to sex similitude.
  14. See for instance Russo, Weiss 53–55, and Patricia White’s readings of the film throughout *Uninvited*. White specifically responds to Doane (“*Caught and Rebecca*”), as I am doing here, and to Tania Modleski’s reading that instills, similar to Rose’s oedipalization of *The Birds*, mother-daughter relationships between the two otherwise lesbianized figures, Mrs. Danvers and Rebecca, and the second Mrs. DeWinter (64–67).
  15. While she has another use for this term, Ruth Goldman has urged consideration of “class” within gay/lesbian textual analyses, to advance a more effectively queer agenda both within and outside the academy (179). As valuable as suggestion this, I remain interested in the de-eroticizing effects of the class reading in this case and the persisting mutual exclusivity of the class-based (i.e., feminist) and lesbian readings of this film.
  16. In Janet Meyer’s oft-quoted formulation, “The qualities [women on screen] projected, of being inscrutable to the men in the films and aloof, passionate, direct, could not be missed. They are all strong, tough and yet genuinely tender. In short, though rarely permitted to hint it, they are lesbians” (qtd. in Sheldon 18). See also Britton (86–87). His critique of Meyer relates to my discussion here, though I do not share his harsh judgment of camp (88).
  17. I appreciate the discussion of Becker et al. on a related subject, 28–29. Here the frequently denounced “lesbian continuum” is deployed for subversive effect.
  18. Heilbrun opposes the ensnaring “erotic plot” of fiction and lived experience to the “quest plot” in various forms (49), always open to men and regaled in auto/biographies about them—and here reproduced in the image of Colette Lafonte on the rescuing white charger. Heilbrun’s text is not especially vocal on the issue of lesbian relationships, but at certain points she opposes women’s isolating erotic

- attachments in general to liberating interactions among women, as sisters and “close women friends” (47).
19. White, acknowledging the influence of de Lauretis early in *Uninvited*, also speaks against “the tendency in straight feminist theory to defuse lesbianism by using it as a metaphor for female bonding” (xxii). Again, however, the question remains as to the political and theoretical merits of isolating moments of “female bonding” throughout popular film (as White herself will go on to do at length) and deploying these as “metaphors” for lesbianism.
  20. In Mulvey’s “reluctant men” we in fact find a subtle critique of the homophobia she is charged with; consider the similar import of an observation from Steve Neale’s more overtly gay-affirmative discussion of “male to-be-looked-at-ness”: “The (unstated) thesis behind these comments seems to be that in a heterosexual and patriarchal society, the male body cannot be marked explicitly as the erotic object of another male look: that look must be motivated in some other way, its erotic component erased” (258).
  21. In a related context, Elizabeth Young mounts an impressive reading of the film’s feminist elements then avers that in fact its homophobia undoes its feminist intent. Yet can Young have it both ways? As persuasive as is her feminist reading—we might even credit her interpretive skills more than the film itself—it is difficult to accept her abrupt decampment from this position when she declares in her essay’s second movement that “such a celebratory reading of the film, obviously schematic, is also premature” (17). Moving through her negative analysis (of the film’s homophobia), Young reaches a summation: “This reading of *The Silence of the Lambs* . . . may at this point sound entirely condemnatory” (21), yet she simply doth protest too much: the reader has hardly forgotten the sympathetic-feminist tour de force with which the analysis began. After attempting to establish her argument’s condemnatory stance, Young returns to favorably assessing the film’s “productive confusion” (21), though the zigzag fashion of her argumentative line only indicates yet again the near-impossibility of creating a unified text analysis from both feminist and gay male perspectives. The article is somewhat long, owing to Young’s basically writing two (or perhaps three) in the space of one, and her witty accusation, that the film “cannibalizes its own food for thought,” is applicable to her own reading of it.
  22. See also Young 20. Writing from the feminist perspective, Adrienne Donald delights in the film’s final placement of “the murderous gay dandy” Lecter—he is about to feast on the reprehensible Dr. Chiltern—as this enables “a form of subversive energy turned against a figure of administered life” (359). Meanwhile, though Donald senses the homophobic element in her argument—“Delighting in a fiendish gay killer is ultimately not that much different from hating him” (359)—she shrugs off the problem by asking, “But what more could one ask

of a film? We turn to the passing distractions of art not for a substitute for the world but for a shock that will make us recognize our desire for another world” (359).

23. Donald describes this scene as “startling, since Foster’s performance, like almost all of the film, is otherwise tastefully understated. Indeed, it is bizarrely comic” (353). Wardrop observes that “the final encounter with Bill still posits Clarice very much as a victim” (97).

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