

## CHAPTER ONE



### *It Looks at You: The Returned Gaze of Cinema/Video Reception*

What is most significant is . . . the confluence of the two distinct formal developments, of movie technology on the one hand, and a certain type of modernist or protomodernist language on the other, both of which seem to offer some space, some third term, between the subject and the object alike.

—Jameson

What is at stake here is the 'fourth look' . . . that is to say, any articulation of images and looks which brings into play the position and activity of the viewer also destabilizes that position and puts it at risk. . . . When the scopic drive is brought into focus, then the viewer also runs the risk of becoming the object of the look.

—Willemsen

Near the beginning of George Landow's short film *Remedial Reading Comprehension* (1970), there is a shot of a group of moviegoers ostensibly waiting for the projection of a film to begin. Landow's camera adopts the point-of-view of the film

screen, staring out at the audience it seeks to possess. This shot thus accomplishes at least two functions. It valorizes the audience (Landow later asserts, "This is a film about you, not about its maker," in a textual intertitle within the body of the film), and it also directly expresses the gaze of the projection surface, impassively "looking back" at the faces of the spectators. As a function of this "look back," we (the viewers) are, "in a sense . . . more aware of our own reactions [to the film] than we are of the film itself" (Camper 76-77). The film acts upon us, addressing us, viewing us as we view it, until the film itself *becomes* a gaze, rather than an object to be gazed upon. This "gaze of the screen" in Landow's film resembles the look of the Gorgon, because the screen's gaze transfixes the audience into a state of willing immobility just as the viewers within Landow's films are rendered immobile. Cinema audience members may, at times, verbally or gesturally respond to the spectacle they bear witness to on the screen, but for the most part, audience reception of the cinematic process involves a reciprocity of "looks:" the gaze of the spectator, and the concomitant gaze of the screen looking out into the darkness.

There has been much discussion of the viewer as voyeur or omniscient auditor of the cinematic spectacle, and recent reception theory has aggressively investigated the crucial role of the audience in interpreting the film it visually apprehends, usually along sociological or psychoanalytic lines of interpretation. Marc Vernet's pioneer 1983 essay "The Look at the Camera" discusses the "look back" from the screen to the viewer, but centers much of its argument in the "gaze" of the performers within the film out into the audience. This is indeed a part of the "look back" in cinema, but one should also take into account the returned gaze of the cinematic apparatus itself, or as Sobchack puts it, the fact that "the film can look at and make visible to itself and to us an array of filmmaking apparatus presently connected to and enabling its very look, its present perception and *perceptive presence*" (emphasis mine) (224). What I may call "the gaze of the screen," or "the look back" (of the cinema/body) deserves further examination, and should not be narrowly categorized within genres. This widening of the "scopic scope," the function of the "returned gaze," is the work this volume seeks to accomplish.

Practitioners of "the look back" range from the reflexively sophisticated Landow to such commercially and/or artificially diverse filmmakers as Ernst Lubitsch, Wesley E. Barry, Andy Warhol, Robert Montgomery, Laurel and Hardy (as directed by James Parrott), Jean-Luc Godard, and many other artists—all of whom employ the reciprocal gaze of the screen to mesmerize or entrance their intended audiences. Godard's *Masculine/Feminine* (1966), *La Chinoise* (1967), and *Contempt* (1963) both incorporate direct declarations of the power of the gaze of the camera out into the audience. In *La Chinoise*, one of the actors refers to the fact that he is being filmed and then we see the camera filming us, (as well as the actor); *Contempt* begins with a long tracking shot that culminates with cinematographer Raoul Coutard composing a shot into the void beyond the periphery of the screen that directly "looks back" at the film's audience. Ernst Lubitsch's *One Hour With You* (1932) includes numerous instances of Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette McDonald "breaking through the frame" to directly address and gaze upon the spectator.

Laurel and Hardy used "the look back" to express frustration or disbelief, directly "viewing" the audience in such films as *Brats* (1930) and *Hog Wild* (1929). Buster Keaton also directly acknowledged his audience with a solemn stare. All of these instances of reflexive film practice incorporate the audience into the work—not as a by-product of exhibition and reception, but an essential part of the entire apparatus of cinema. For one of the key tenets of "the look back" is the supposition that an audience for the film will someday exist, and that inversely, the film itself will *not* exist until it is actually projected on a screen. Films that employ "the look back" are thus considerably diminished in their visual resonance when translated to video, inasmuch as screen size, and thus the scope of the screen's gaze out into the viewing space, is greatly reduced.

But what I wish to stress here above all other considerations is my notion that the "look back" is an integral function of all cinema, whether this responsive "look of the screen" is foregrounded by the work or not. It is not so much the returned gaze of the actors within a film, or the intensity of subject matter (as Willemsen suggests) that introduces this phenomenon, but rather the combined, cohesive act of the entire cinematic apparatus in



FIGURE 1. The look of the advertisement in Godard's *Masculine/Feminine*. (Courtesy of Jerry Ohlinger.)



FIGURE 2. Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette McDonald contemplate the viewer in *One Hour with You*. (Courtesy of Jerry Ohlinger.)

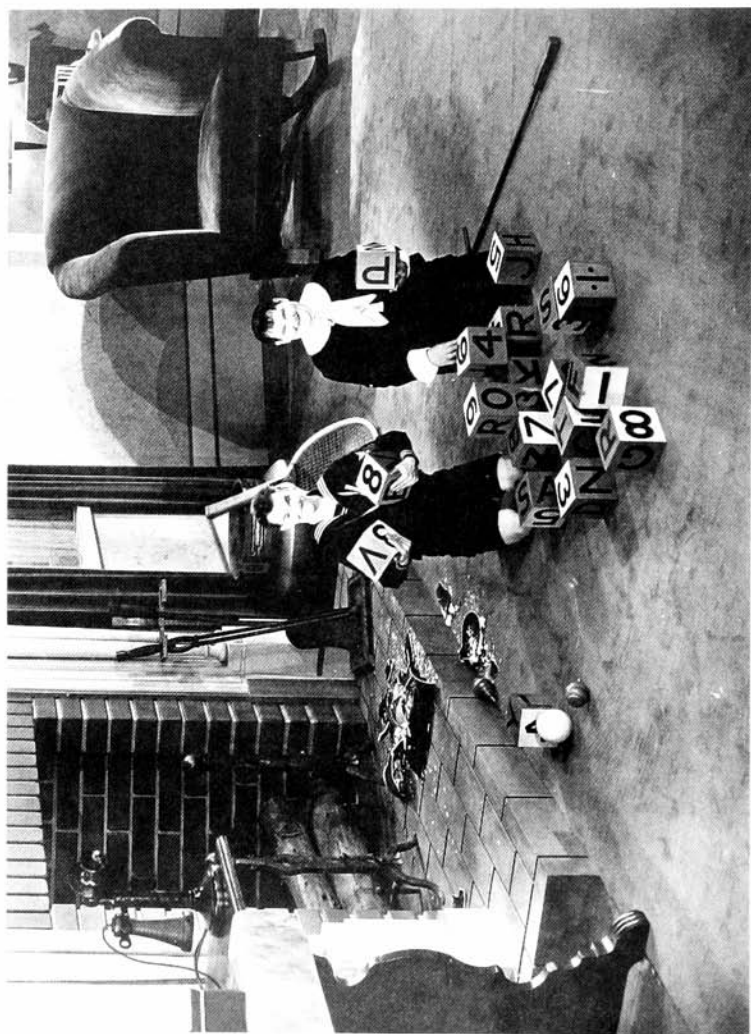


FIGURE 3. Laurel and Hardy acknowledge the spectator in *Brats*. (Courtesy of Jerry Ohlinger.)

operation: the production, presentation, and ultimate reception of a film. If there is a finite background to every shot in the cinema (or even if there is not, as in John Ford's spatially infinite elegies to Monument Valley, or the many science-fiction films set in interstellar space), there is still a look that is *returned* by the frame, by a force deep within the field it embraces, a force focussed by the rectangular dimensions of the screen—a window, a portal, an emitter of light into the audience.

This "gaze of the screen," or "look back," has the power to transform our existences, to substantially change our view of our lives, and of the world we inhabit. The violent "gaze" of Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), or of its low-budget predecessors such as *I Spit On Your Grave* (1977) or *Last House on the Left* (1972), as positioned within the body of the film (as shown between characters in varying shot strategies encompassing point-of-view, over-shoulder, extreme close-up, and seemingly benign establishing shots) or experienced as an external function by audiences (when the characters, or the shots themselves, extend their collective or separate gaze out into the auditorium) has a profound and problematic visual hold on viewers, conversely inciting or desensitizing patrons to acts of violence, misandry, misogyny, and/or calculated cruelty.

It has often been remarked that films of extreme violence adopt point-of-view shots to encourage audiences to identify with either the victim or the tormentor within the narrative structure of the work, particularly at crucial points during the film when scenes of risk or retribution are played out upon the screen. But these films also possess a gaze that projects out into the audience, a gaze that transfixes and collectivizes individual auditors into a momentarily cohesive group, stunned by the reflection of light thrown on the screen. In the same way, many "pornographic" films such as *Teenage Fantasies* (1970) include sequences in which the protagonists speak directly to the audience, even enticing the presumably male spectator of the film to engage in simulated sexual intercourse with one of the film's actors during the final ten minutes of the work.

Willemsen argued that "the look back" (what he called "the fourth look") operated most aggressively in the reception/production of pornography, describing it as "a look 'imagined by me

in the field of the other which surprises me in the act of voyeurism and causes a felling of shame,' as J[acques] Lacan put it . . . in simpler terms: the fourth look gains in force when the viewer is looking at something he or she is not suppose to look at" (56). But this seems to me a limited and "lack" driven definition of the returned gaze. For me, the "look back" gathers force from shot duration, composition, and editorial patterning; it can also gain power from the gender origins of its address. As Stephen Prince (27-39) and others have demonstrated, however, determining the origin of the gender/production in pornography is an inherently reflexive process that also looks back on itself, and many of our presuppositions as to exactly what audience is being addressed (or catered to) in pornographic representation are open to sustained additional discussion.

The idealized bearer of the gaze of the screen in *First Comes Courage* (1943) and *La Fée aux Choux* (1896) is female, as these two films (directed by Dorothy Arzner and Alice Guy, respectively), turn the gaze of feminist film practice back into an audience expecting the confines of patriarchal narrative. In Arzner's film, the returned gaze is that of the lone practitioner of feminist film practice in 1940s Hollywood, excoriating the audience for her marginalization from then-contemporary commercial film production. Much has been written on Dorothy Arzner's work, particularly *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940). Although that film contains effective and deeply felt testimony in the marginalization of women within the twentieth-century American patriarchy, one might prefer the countertestimonial example of Merle Oberon's Nikki in *Fast Comes Courage*, a Norwegian freedom fighter who effectively operates undercover during the Nazi occupation of Norway to bring down the fascist hierarchy. Nikki rejects the boring patriarchal domesticity offered in the "generically required" love interest (Brian Aherne) to continue her disruptive fight against the conquering dictatorship beyond the boundaries of her intended espionage assignment. Throughout the film, Oberon's Nikki is continually framed by Arzner in striking close-ups, looking directly at the audience. Much of the film's action is seen through her eyes; indeed, the opening sequences of the film is a staged optometrist's examination. All the viewer can see is Nikki's eyes, and the eyes of the doctor who examines her (the



doctor is actually her underground "contact" for espionage operations). Framed in the surrounding darkness, Nikki gazes beyond the camera, out into the auditorium, alerting us to the fact that the power of the "look at controls" is central to Arzner's conception of the film. This strategy of the returned gaze continues throughout *First Comes Courage*, climaxing in a crushingly gothic Nazi wedding ceremony that Nikki is forced to endure. Arzner frames the sequence in a series of near-Bressonian wide shots, bordered by groups of SS "honor guards" in attendance, emphasizing the panopticonic surveillance implicit in the hierarchy of the Nazi regime.

In Alice Guy's work, the look back is imbued with wonder and amazement, as one of the first filmic narratives unspools (within a single shot) before our entranced eyes. The "look back" in the cinema films can either enlighten or degrade us; it is, it seems to me, a mistake to say that we are not possessed by the body of the film during the period in which its visual presence and control defines the perimeters of our existence. Although only a handful of Alice Guy's films survive, in those films that do still exist, we can see Guy exploring a number of interesting visual and syntactical strategies. *His Double*, a tale of romance and mistaken identity, is typical of the surviving Solax films, and because the film is difficult to obtain for viewing, it is analyzed here in some detail.

Grace Burleston, a young woman, wishes to marry the man she loves, but is temporarily thwarted in this ambition by her father, who wishes her to marry "Count Laking Coyne" ("lacking coin"). However, the Count's moustache makes him easy to impersonate, and Grace's true love, Jack, does exactly this. No split-screen work of any kind is used to carry off this "duplication of identity"; two actors with similar features are employed to stage the scenes. The highlight of the film is a pantomime sequence in the hallway of the Burleston home, as Jack, standing in for a conveniently missing mirror, copies the Count's actions perfectly. At the conclusion of the film, Jack, in disguise as the Count, is married to Grace.

Immediately after the wedding ceremony, Grace's father discovers the deception, and is furious. The minister, however, admonishes him, and points to the "Eleventh Commandment" in

a Bible he has used to conduct the ceremony: "thou shalt not swear when thou are outwitted." At length, the father relents and agrees to the duplicitous marriage. Most of the action in *His Double* is staged in a single set, the living room of the Burleston home. A wide angle lens is used, and close-ups are almost nonexistent, except in the mirror sequence discussed above. Exteriors are photographed with natural light; interiors are obvious stage sets. In these strategies, Alice Guy mirrors the work of her contemporaries, particularly D. W. Griffith, who intercut obvious studio sets with near neo-realist exteriors in many of his early films.

In *A House Divided*, the best known of the Solax films, similar visual strategies are employed, with the only significant difference being the number of sets that are used. In the latter film, there are at least four major sets that are intercut to tell the story, that of a young couple who, due to a series of misunderstandings, refuse to speak to each other except through notes. The film also offers a caustic commentary on the place of attorneys in the marital contract, as the couple's jointly shared lawyer enthusiastically approves of this domestic rupture, as long as he is paid to draw up the documents to enforce it. There are a few more close-ups used in the film, but on the whole, the direction is straightforward and unadorned. The camera stays approximately twelve feet from the subjects, photographing them head on in a conventional master-shot.

However, even with the confines of such traditional visual choreography, Solax films often display a flair for deep-focus staging and the use of simultaneous planes of action. In *The Girl in the Arm Chair*, which has been preserved in its original color tints (these tints were accomplished by a machine process, and not by hand), the main set of the film is the drawing room of a well-to-do suburban home. Much of the action of the film takes place in the foreground of the shot, but exits, entrances, and instances of eavesdropping are often confined to a staircase that dominates the rear of the set. This main set is seen for more than two-thirds of the completed film; in view of this strategy, it is a tribute to the ingenuity of the director that the film still holds audience interest.

In *The Girl in the Arm Chair*, Frank, a young man who is betrothed to Peggy Wilson, is "forced into stealing \$500 from his

father-in-law-to-be's safe. Frank's descent from respectability begins when he falls in with a group of card sharps, who swindle him during a crooked game. The direction here is particularly astute, as the card sharps (in the foreground, left) contemplate Frank, their victim (to the right of the shot), while a sleazy bartender (in the extreme rear of the set) chuckles with obvious amusement at Frank's naïveté. These dubious companions then induce Frank to borrow money from a loan shark to cover his losses. When the loan shark's note falls due, "at 500% interest," Frank, in desperation, steals the money. As he does so, Peggy watches him, unobserved, from the armchair mentioned in the film's title, to the extreme right of the frame. In the wake of his crime, Frank endures a horrible nightmare, effectively suggested with blue tints and swirling superimposed cards which hover over his bed. The next morning, Peggy covers for him, but Frank makes a clean breast of it and is forgiven. In the final red-tinted scene, Peggy and Frank contemplate matrimony, as Peggy's parents look on approvingly.

The performances in *The Girl in the Arm Chair* are rather exaggerated, a trait paradoxically typical of Alice Guy's films. While she strove to get "natural" performances out of her actors, Alice Guy often let them play scenes in the broadest possible manner, with the result that some sections of Guy's shorts have much in common with episodes of the television series *I Love Lucy*, or other contemporary situation comedies. The subject matter in *The Girl in the Arm Chair* is much more serious, however, and as a consequence, the film verges on the melodramatic. The loan shark, in particular, is a caricature rather than a genuine creation, rubbing his hands together in glee at the amount of money he will realize on his short-term loan, and conducting his business dealings in the manner of a conventional nineteenth-century stage villain. Of all of the surviving Solax shorts, *The Girl in the Arm Chair* is easily the most stagebound, using the minimum number of camera set-ups possible to realize the narrative, with most of its action confined to a single set, and one camera set-up. Still, with the added enhancement of the color tints, the film effectively captures our imagination, and for a project realized in one or two days of shooting, it is certainly an admirable effort.

Other surviving Solax productions, such as *Officer Henderson* (a comedy involving two undercover cops who dress in women's clothing to catch purse-snatchers), *Burstup Homes' Murder Case* (a parody of the Sherlock Homes stories), *Matrimony's Speed Limit* (in which a young man must marry by noon of a certain day in order to gain an inheritance) *The Detective's Dog* (in which the detective himself is tied to a log in a sawmill for the film's climax, thus neatly inverting the generic requirements of conventional melodrama), *A House Divided* (a brief domestic comedy in which a young wife and husband refuse to speak to each other because of a misunderstanding), and *Canned Harmony* (a young man pretends to play the violin, with the aid of a hidden phonograph, to win the hand of the girl he loves over the objections of her father), display an engaging sense of relaxed character development, and an air of cheerful haste in their often improvised construction.

Nevertheless, in these brief films, Guy demonstrates a level of daring and sophistication absent from other American shorts of the period. In *Officer Henderson*, the cross-dressing policemen adapt easily to their roles as "women": after arresting several criminals, the two men return to the police station, where they amuse their comrades with demonstrations of "womanly" hand gesture, bearing, and manner. The other policemen laugh uproariously, but the scene is still a sharply observed comment upon the role of dress and presentation in the creation of one's sexual identity. It is one of the structural conceits of the film that when the two policemen wear wigs and skirts, their true gender is effectively concealed; even though their faces are clearly masculine, the other characters refuse to recognize them as men, as long as they wear traditional "feminine" clothing.

One of the policemen is married; Guy inserts a subplot in which the detective's wife, sure that her husband is being unfaithful, returns home to her mother with some of the clothing her husband is using to realize his disguise. The other policeman spends time in an up-scale restaurant, attracting the attentions of a Fatty Arbuckle-like admirer, with whom he makes a date for a rendezvous for the following day. Both of these situations are developed in an innocent fashion, neatly skirting any serious issues of gender identification and sexual placement the two sub-

plots might have raised. Yet one still gets the feeling that Alice Guy knew precisely what she was exploring in *Officer Henderson*, even if she chose not to develop her material in more serious directions. Solax films were primarily popular entertainments, and strove to satisfy the American appetite for primitive comedy; this does not mean, however, that Guy was any less adventurous in her choice of the material for these films.

Matrimony is a persistent theme in the surviving Solax films; often the heroine must overcome the objections of either her husband-to-be or a doltish patriarch to effect the requisite happy ending. In *Canned Harmony* and *His Double*, it is the father who objects to the proposed match; in both cases, the woman refuses to marry anyone but the desired object of her affection. Through a combination of aural and visual deception (the wig and moustache in *Double*; the same disguise, with the addition of a prop violin and the aid of an off-screen photography, in *Harmony*), the woman is at last able to marry the man of her choice. In *Matrimony's Speed Limit* it is the husband-to-be who objects to the match, but only because of his comparative poverty. Realizing this, the young woman concocts a flimsy ruse, inventing a mysterious relative who will leave the young man a fortune, but only if he marries by noon of that day.

Much of *Matrimony's Speed Limit* is taken up with the man's desperate search for a mate, any mate, in order to beat the twelve o'clock deadline. (There is one unfortunate racist "joke" used here: one of the young women the young man accosts is heavily veiled. When she removes her hat, we see that she is black. The young man reacts with horror and runs away. The "joke" is all the more distressing because of its inclusion in a film created under the supervision of a woman who knew first-hand of the deleterious effects of sexism.) Predictably, the man meets his true beloved in time, and the two are married just before the stroke of noon. The new bride then reveals her deception and is immediately "forgiven" by her new husband. One of the titles in *His Double* assures the viewer that "everything is fair in love and war"; this theme is repeated again and again in the Solax comedies. In many respects, the heroines of Solax films are far more individual than those offered by Griffith during the

same period. In all of these films, the "returned gaze" of the performer is an integral part of Guy's performative and syntactical structure.

### WATCHING THE VIEWER IN COMMERCIAL CINEMA

Perhaps no "commercial film" carries the visual strategy of "watching the viewer" to the limits explored by Wesley E. Barry's *Creation of the Humanoids* (1962). The film consists of a series of metronomically timed, unhurried, seemingly unemotional shots that proceed from establishing wide-shots to lengthy, minimalist close-ups, in which an actor often addresses the camera (and thus the audience) for minutes at a time, all the while ostensibly speaking to another performer within the film, supposedly viewing the speaker through the perceptual filter of her/his point-of-view. This "fragmentation of the look" is made all the more intense by Barry's studious avoidance of "standardized" rules of editorial structure governing sequences of expository dialogue; that is, that the camera should, for the most part, gaze upon the face of the speaker, with occasional glimpses of the face of the person being addressed. In Barry's film, once the simultaneous, bipolar point-of-view of character/audience is established, we (the audience) are never deprived of the gaze of the speaker. Conversely, we are seldom allowed to see the face of the person whose point-of-view the camera has adopted, although we can *hear* (from time to time) the off-screen responses made by the bearer of the protagonist's gaze. This oracular vision results in a pronounced distanciation from normative rules of cinematic practice and recalls Foucault's description of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, in which one is continually subjected to external (as well as internal) surveillance as an ineluctable process of penal existence (216). Barry's radical film structure watches *us*, and when his characters gaze at each other, they gaze at *us* as well. Even in the wide-shots of the film, we feel the look of the image being turned against us, surveilling us, subjecting us to the "look back" of the screen. Entombed in darkness, enmeshed in the eye-matches of Barry's protagonists, we cannot extricate ourselves

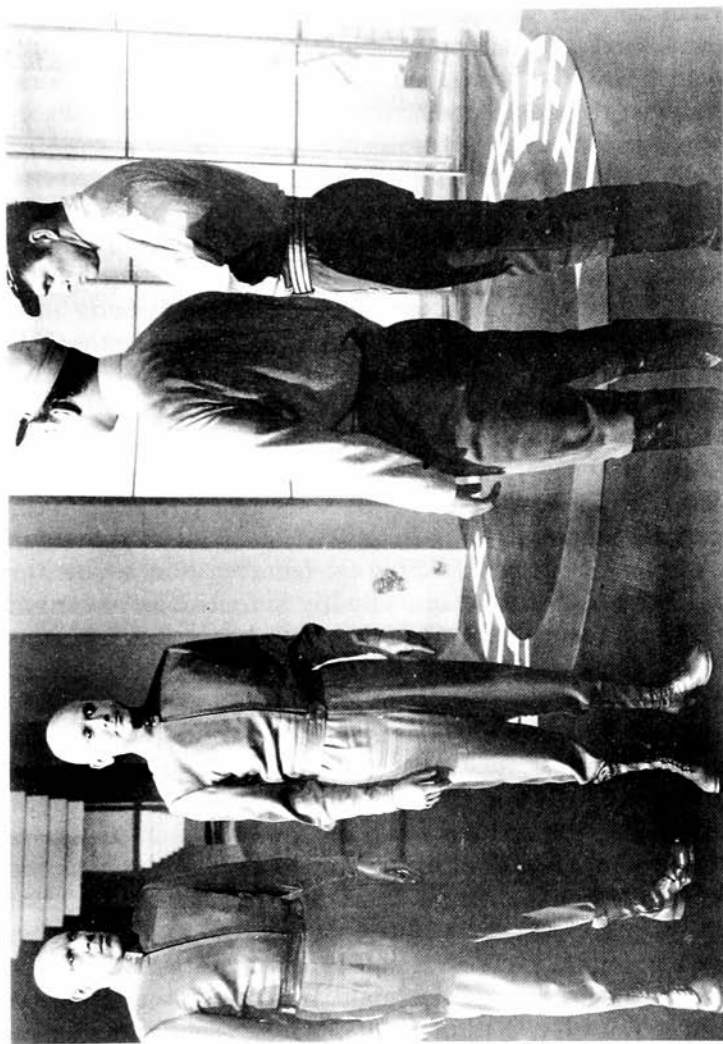


FIGURE 4. The gaze of the machine melts the gaze of "human" inquiry in Wesley E. Barry's *The Creation of the Humanoids*. (Courtesy of Jerry Ohlinger.)

from either the gaze of the screen, or of the actors within the fictive construct the film documents.

The informing mechanism of Barry's look at the audience is revealed in the final shot of the film. All of the actors in the film, whether human or "humanoid" (robotic) are revealed, in fact, to be "humanoids" (thus, there are no humans left alive). In a final perverse twist, we are informed (by an actor who speaks directly to us) that we too are "humanoids," the progeny of the protagonists of the film we have just witnessed and which has just "witnessed" us. While Barry's use of the "look back" is an extreme example of this phenomenon (recalling, as an inverse example, the perpetual point-of-view shots employed by Robert Montgomery's "famously unsuccessful" (Levinson 76) *Lady in the Lake* (1946), Barry's film seems ultimately more aesthetically successful (i.e., pleasurable) than Montgomery's work, precisely because it delivers to the viewer exactly that which it implicitly promises: the controlling power of the "look back" at the audience.

As Vivian Sobchack notes of *Lady in the Lake's* monomythic visual structure, "the desperately felt self-consciousness of incarnate existence that *Lady in the Lake* belabors as the film's body strives to convince us of its bodily authenticity as human" (246), but the illusion is never convincing. A punch is never concretized, a kiss never resonates; we are perpetually locked outside the spectacle, no matter how desperately Montgomery tries to drag us in with his endless series of P.O.V. shots. Barry, on the other hand, promises to subject us to the omniscient gaze of a panopticon universe, and we can feel the power, oppression, and scrutiny of this "look back."

Barry's film failed to recoup its investment at the box office; however, Andy Warhol cited *Creation of the Humanoids* as one of the most interesting films of the year. Shortly after seeing (and being seen by) the film, Warhol purchased a 16mm Bolex with an electric motor and commenced production of his own "reciprocal gaze" films. Tellingly, Warhol's filmic practice began with a series of three-minute "screen tests," in which a person would gaze directly into the camera, while the camera gazed intently into the eyes of its subject. These filmic constructs remain the purest and most direct confirmations of Warhol's interest in the "look back."



The subject matter of these films is nothing more or less than the returned, or reflected, gaze. Yet beyond the audience-subject eye-match interlock inherent in Warhol's and Barry's projects, I would argue that the film itself constitutes a body, a living being (however animated), that throughout the duration of its existence (i.e., screening time), views its potential audience, holds them in its gaze, subjects them to the same sort of reciprocal surveillance that is experienced between prisoners and guards, a state that leads the viewer, inevitably, to look within her/himself.

### RISK AND PLAY: WARHOL'S FACTORY

While many film historians have chronicled Andy Warhol's substantial career as a filmmaker in New York in the 1960s, the precise details of Warhol's working methods during this period are worthy of sustained examination. Later "Warhol" films (such as *Trash* and *Flesh*, which will be discussed later), actually directed by Paul Morrissey, have obscured Warhol's own achievement as a filmmaker. Thus a brief "redaction" of Warhol's genesis as a filmmaker seems appropriate at this juncture. Warhol's film style was an individual and highly idiosyncratic affair, but at his best, he created films of real intellectual interest, quickly and cheaply, using whatever materials were readily available.

Warhol was born in Pittsburgh, and attended what was then known as Carnegie Tech (it is now Carnegie-Mellon University) for training in commercial art. Moving to New York City in the 1950s, he began a long period of work as a commercial artist and steadily rose in prominence and influence in the Manhattan commercial art world. However, although the window displays, advertisements, and jobs illustrating cookbooks had all been extremely lucrative, Andy longed for a different kind of fame. He saw others around him, particularly Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein, appropriating "found" imagery—newspaper ads, comics, and stock photographs—and incorporating these images in their paintings.

Warhol began fooling around with comic strip assemblages, in which he would cut panels out of comic strips and paste them onto canvas or paper, then add some paint to highlight certain

portions of the strip. This gave way to the "S&H Green Stamp" paintings, for which Andy would sometimes paint each stamp individually and later use rubber stamps to create the multiple image effect of a large "block" of the trading stamps. Robert Rauschenberg showed Andy how to use a photo silkscreen, directly transferring a photograph to canvas with a single stroke, to create much the same effect. Immediately, Andy had silkscreens made up of many of the images he'd been most interested in, and began turning out paintings by the dozen at home. He still had no studio to work in. During a telephone interview with me in 1991, Gerard Malanga recalled,

On visiting Bob Rauschenberg's studio sometime in 1962, Warhol was both fascinated and intrigued by the silkscreens that he saw being applied to the canvases and that he soon afterward ordered screens of his own to emulate Bob Rauschenberg's technique.

Using silkscreens, which could create a "finished" painting in a matter of seconds, Andy created his first major series of paintings starting in 1962, including the *Campbell's Soup Can* series, the *Disaster* series, and the *Marilyn, Elvis, and Troy Donahue* paintings. He later used these same images over and over to create "new" canvases to pay the rent and living expenses.

I remember we were like little kids when we first met Marcel Duchamp out at Pasadena, whose retro coincided with Andy's LA exhibit of *Liz* and *Elvis* portraits. Duchamp was the spiritual father and role model, suggesting ways to "embrace the mistakes" that ultimately became the style of Andy's paintings and movies in the early to mid-sixties.

The first paintings sold well but weren't valued very highly. One could buy a Warhol painting for a hundred dollars, less if you purchased a group of paintings at once. Andy simply had to pay for his living expenses, and during this period, he even gave his paintings away to curry favor with influential art world figures. Sometimes, Andy would invite prospective buyers up to his house to select a group of paintings for purchase.



FIGURE 5. The gaze of the voyeur: Andy Warhol. (Courtesy of Jerry Ohlinger.)

In June 1963, Andy met Gerard Malanga at a party hosted by Willard Maas. Maas, a well-known experimental filmmaker who often collaborated with his wife, Marie Menken, had offered Gerard a place to live in New York, at their penthouse in Brooklyn Heights.

I first met Andy at a party at Willard and Marie's. However, it wasn't until several months later that I met Andy again through an introduction orchestrated by Charles Henri Ford. Andy let it be known to Charles that he was in need of an assistant, and Charles, aware that I had previous silkscreen experience, arranged to have us meet at a reception for a Sunday afternoon poetry reading at the New School. In a matter of minutes Andy asked me to come to work for him. The pay was \$1.25 an hour. Somehow the work appealed to me. The money obviously was not at issue, otherwise I would have moved on.

Gerard's first day on the job took place at an old abandoned firehouse on East 87th Street, which was the prototype of the first real Warhol "Factory," or studio. Warhol rented the entire building for \$150 a year, but could only use the top floor for a studio. The rest of the building was practically falling down around him.

I went to work for Andy in June of '63. It was warm weather, and so we got a lot of work done. But in the Fall, when we were still working there, and we were also in the process of looking for a new loft, there was no heat in the building, or even running water, and so we could only work there a few hours a day, because it got too cold. The building had electricity, but that was it. There was no heat. We set up a few lights to work with, but it was completely primitive as a work space.

He had the whole building. No one else was on the other two floors. But he used the top floor for his first studio. It was an actual firehouse that the City of New York owned. Andy rented it through some city agency for nothing. And then eventually we had to vacate because someone bought the building at an auction from the city.