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Feminist Chriticism in Television Studies

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*Danish Summary:*På baggrund af en kort oversigt over TV-forsknin-
gen i USA og England og over udviklingen i den feministiske te-
ori beskriver artiklen udviklingen i den feministiske TV-forsk-
ning som et forløb i fire faser: Borgerlig, marxistisk, radikal
og poststrukturalistisk feminisme. De tre første beskrives som
hovedsagelig byggende på en essentialistisk feministisk filoso-
fi, hvor det kvindelige betragtes som noget essentielt anderle-
des end det mandlige, med rod i naturen og mere humant og mo-
ralsk, med en implicit kritik af det mandlige, konkurrencemen-
talitet og individualisme. Den antiessentialistiske filosofi
ser det kvindelige som en side af den patriarkalske orden og
beskæftiger sig med hvordan kønsidentiteten, specielt den kvin-
delige subjektivitet, dannes.

Artiklen gennemgår de fire faser med eksempler fra især forsk-
ningen omkring soap-opera, og understreger at faserne ikke skal
opfattes som historisk tilbagelagte faser, men at de stadigvæk
findes og har deres berettigelse. I forbindelse med den sidste
fase, den poststrukturalistiske, udstikker Kaplan i forlængelse
af sit eget forskningsprojekt omkring musikvideoer retningslin-
jer for fremtidens feministiske medieforskning.

Den borgerlige feministiske TV-forskning beskæftiger sig typisk
med at undersøge repræsentationen af kvinder i TV-programmerne
sammenlignet med repræsentationen af kvinder i det virkelige
liv. Styrken ved denne form for forskning er, at den dokumente-
rer, hvilke roller TV-serierne indeholder, at den kan dokumen-
tere forandringer og at den kan være repræsentativ. Den er nyt-
tig i politiske forhandlinger og som baggrund for aktioner. Den
kan bruges som baggrund for at stille borgerlige feministiske
krav. Faren er, at den implicit opstiller et positivt kvinde-
ideal som modsætning til alle de "negative" billeder, den selv-
bekræftende, succesfulde, stærke kvinde, jf. kravet om positive
heltinder. Denne metode siger ikke noget om, hvordan og hvorfor
alle de "negative" billeder bliver skabt. Kvinderollerne analy-
seres, som om de er levende kvinder og ikke figurer i en fikti-
on, som om medierne umiddelbart reflekterer virkeligheden.

Med en terminologi hentet fra Julia Kristeva beskriver artiklen
forskellen mellem den første kategori og den anden, den marxis-
tisk feministiske forskning, ved at mens den første kræver ad-
gang for kvinderne til den patriarkalske symbolske orden, så vil
den anden undersøge hvad der sker kvinder i den patriarkalske
orden. I den anden fase ses kvinderollerne også som afspejling
af virkeligheden, men i modsætning til den borgerlige feminisme
undersøges her årsagen til kvindebilledernes opståen: TV er en
del af den økonomiske magtstruktur og fremstiller derfor de
kvindebilleder, som det kapitalistiske samfund har brug for:
Husmoderen som ulønnet producerer merværdi, kvinder som arbej-
dere, når der er brug for arbejdskraften.

Den radikale feministiske TV-kritik kritiserer, at populærkul-
turen ikke kan beskrive kvinders forhold til hinanden positivt,
at ægteskabet og heteroseksualiteten idealiseres. Også denne
retning indebærer en afvisning af den mandlige symbolske orden
og en dyrkelse af det essentielt kvindelige.

Den poststrukturalistiske feministiske TV-forskning afviser mod-
sætningen mellem det mandlige og det kvindelige som metafysik,

forsøger at overskride modsætningen eller i det mindste at er-
kende denne som en kulturel konstruktion.

Der bygges på den feministiske filmteori, Mulvey og Johnston,
der hævder at Hollywoodfilmen er konstrueret så den svarer til
det mandlige ubevidste og at blikket på kvinden er voyeristisk
og fetishistisk. Kaplan gennemgår forskellige eksempler på fe-
ministisk forskning i "kvindegenren" soap-opera, hvor fortællin-
gen og identifikationen ses som forskellig fra Hollywoodfilmen.
Men det væsentlige spørgsmål er, hvordan disse teorier skal vi-
dereudvikles, så de kan anvendes på TV? Appelerer TV også til
det mandlige blik, eller er blikket og udsigelsen og den kon-
krete oplevelsessituation fundamentalt anderledes i TV? TV hen-
vender sig til tilskueren på en anden måde end film: Han sidder
ikke i et mørkt rum, hvor han kan koncentrere sig om et samlet
forløb i to timer, men i et rum, hvor der er meget andet at be-
skæftige sig med, ser på en lille skærm, hvor programmerne hele
tiden skifter, og hvor der er mulighed for selv at skifte. TV
er under alle omstændigheder ikke så monolitisk som Hollywood-
filmen, der er mange forskellige blikke og identifikationsmulig-
heder.

Målet for fremtidens feministiske medieforskning er at under-
søge, hvordan TV som "apparat" henvender sig til den kvindelige
seer, og hvordan de enkelte genrer fremstiller det "kvindelige".
Som eksempel analyseres Madonnas video "Material girl":
Videoen placeres som postmodernistisk med Madonna som dens post-
feministiske heltinde: Den er typisk for videoer med kvindelig
hovedperson og karakteristisk for TV-mediet. Det er karakteris-
tisk, at den refererer til en klassisk Hollywoodfilm, nemlig
"Gentlemen prefer blondes" og spiller på dennes konventioner.
Hvor rummet og fortælleren er klare størrelser i filmen, og Mon-
roe et typisk eksempel på kvinden som objekt for det mandlige
blik, så er disse ting udviskede i videoen. Det er uklart, om
det er den mandlige voyeur eller Madonna i en af de tre roller:
som sig selv, som skuespiller eller som performer, der er bærer

af blikket. Videoen fremstiller Madonna som objekt for det mandlige blik, uden at denne funktion parodieres, men snarere som pastiche, med terminologi hentet fra postmodernismeteoretikeren Jameson, uden at der tages stilling hertil. Samtidig bryder Madonna som person gennem rollerne. Hun er voldsom, aktiv og skamløst forførende og meget anderledes end det passive objekt for det mandlige begær. Hun nyder at være obejkt. De unge piger kan bruge hende som identifikationsfigur i oprøret mod den traditionelle passive kvinderolle, men er alligevel stadig bundet til en optagethed af udseendet, som de bruger tid og penge på.

I "Material girl" er fortællingen og den traditionelle kønsforskel nedbrudt i overensstemmelse med den måde TV fungerer på: TV, især MTV (den amerikanske kanal, der viser musikvideoer 24 timer i døgnet) anbringer tilskueren i en tilstand af evig forventning om opfyldelsen af begæret og opfordrer derved til konstant forbrug. Der er ikke mulighed for en regression til den ødipale fase som i Hollywoodfilmen, men snarere en leg med de ødipale positioner eller focus på afgrænsede faser i ødipuskomplekset. Der er mulighed for flere forskellige subjektpositioner, og ikke udelukkende appel til det mandlige ubevidste. TV er mere flertydigt.

Hvad betyder så dette set fra et feministisk synspunkt? Feminismen har været baseret på liberale eller venstrehumanistiske synspunkter, men TV fremmer nu en anden bevidsthedstilstand, kommunikationssamfundets. Måske er kønnet ikke mere den organiserede faktor, som i det gamle samfund, men dette behøver ikke nødvendigvis at være progressivt.

Hvis der er ved at ske ændringer i forholdet mellem jeg'et og billedet, noget som bl.a. udtrykkes af og styrkes gennem TV-mediet, så må den feministiske kritik forholde sig hertil. Det postmoderne univers er uden grænser og referencerammer, uendelig overflade, billede. For kvinder, som har været vant til at se sig selv reduceret til billede, er det derfor meget vigtigt at studere hvad TV betyder for kvinder.

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The two parts of my title, "Feminist" and "Television Studies",
require brief discussion, individually, before linking them to-
gether. I need to say something about the contexts in which Te-
levision Studies arose in order to account for the historical
paucity of feminist approaches; and since "Feminism" does not
have a single meaning, I need to discuss the ways in which I de-
fine the term.

I will be mainly concerned with Television Studies in America,
but the contrast with England is important in illuminating,
through differences, what happened in Television Studies in the
USA. In America, Television Studies has suffered from having
had even more difficulty than film in being accepted as an aca-
demic subject. The one way that film finally obtained such ac-
ceptance, i.e. through its claims to be "art", was impossible
for Television since no one was willing to make that argument
for its fare. Thus, while film was able to find a place in va-
rious humanities departments in the '60'es, Television was for-
ced to focus mainly on production. It was housed in Schools of
Journalism and Communication, themselves heavily embedded in
social science methodologies of the quantifying and positivist
type.

Several scholars have discussed the limitation of these metho-
dologies. (1) According to David Morley, they arose partly in
reaction against the Marxist sociological perspective of the
German Frankfurt School, who relied on "social theory and qua-
litative and philosophical analysis". (2)

In Britain Television study took a different tack because it
was not developed in Schools of Communication but rather through
organizations like The British Film Institute and places of
higher education other than the University, such as the Art Col-
leges, Further Education Colleges and Polytechnic Institutes.
British intellectuals outside of the University, then, originally

developed methods for studying and criticising television not
that dissimilar from those used in early cultural and film stu-
dies.

However, neither in America nor in Britain was there much femi-
nist work throughout the 70'es (a paper by Richard Dyer, Terry
Lovell and Jean McCrindle on "Soap Operas and Women" at the
1977 Edinburgh International Televison Program was a rare ex-
ception). I analyze the reasons for this elsewhere (3)(and rea-
ders are also referred to Helen Baehr's article in this volume),
but things did begin to change in the early 80'es, when a sig-
nificant number of women finally began to work on female repre-
sentation in television. An article by Stephen Heath and Gilli-
an Skirrow, published in Screen in 1977 but not much followed
up at the time, was there as a model for certain kinds of work;
this article, about the British program World in Action, was
one of the first to apply 70'es British theoretical approaches
worked out for the classical Hollywood film to television. A
model for any future close-reading analysis, the essay tried
to focus on "the fact of television itself", and on "the ideo-
logical operations developed in that fact", (4) rather than on
discussion of any particular (political) positions that the
"content" may take up. Meanwhile, various Graduate Programs in
film, such as that at UCLA, began to turn their attention to
critical analysis of Television, and Graduate Students produ-
ced some of the first interesting work (5). People like Tania
Modleski interested in women's popular fiction also began to
apply their critical approaches to related kinds of popular TV
women's programs, like Soaps.

But before discussing this work, let me turn briefly to the se-
cond term in need of clarification, namely "feminist": in the
areas of literature and film, the word "feminist" had come, by
the 1980'es to mean a variety of things. I will briefly detail
these meanings, since understanding the different kinds of fe-
minist work in allied humanities fields will both explain some
of the work that scholars have been doing, and suggest future

work that we need to begin doing, in television. We knew enough
by the 80'es to see that the word "feminist" had come to mean
different things to different women, depending on what their
theory of feminism was. Since feminism is by definition a poli-
tical and philosophical term, let me list the most obvious kinds
of feminism as they have been developed under these categories.
I want to emphasize before I start, however, that I am not in-
tending here to set up a hierarchy such that any of the types
are meant as "higher" or "superior" to others. There is a rough
chronological sequence to the types listed, but historically
later methods are not to be viewed as necessarily replacing
earlier ones. Certain developments naturally produce challen-
ges to what went before (they of course only arise because of
earlier work) but it seems to me that this is a challenge that
can be answered. A second caveat has to do with the inevitably
archetypal nature of any categorizing such as that which fol-
lows: very rarely will we find any piece of feminist criticism
offering a pure illustration of a particular category: many
pieces I will discuss combine types or do not fit neatly into
any one type. The categories are merely useful as a charting
of the terrain for purposes of clarification and illustration.
All of this will be more clear after delineating the types.

Thus, thinking politically one might isolate bourgeois feminism
(roughly, women's concern to obtain equal rights and freedoms
within a capitalist system); b) Marxist-feminism (roughly the
linking of specific female oppressions to the larger structure
of capitalism and to oppressions of other groups: gays, minori-
ties, the working classes, etc.); c) Radical feminism (roughly
the designation of women as different from men, and the desire
to establish separate female communities to forward women's
specific needs and desires); d) Post-structuralist feminism
(roughly the idea that we need to analyze the language order
through which we learn to be what our culture calls "women" (as
distinct from a group called "men") as we attempt to bring about
change beneficial to women). (6) By reviewing briefly examples
of feminist work on television, I will show that scholars may

be seen to develop a critical method according to their political definition of feminism.

But first a word about the philosophical definition of feminism. There are two main philosophical positions labelled "essentialist" and "anti-essentialist" which have been much discussed in Americal scholarship recently. (7) While the distinction is problematic, it makes discussion simpler. That is, one could view all the first three political definitions of "feminist" as falling under the category of "essentialist" feminism, while the fourth reflects "anti-essentialist" feminism. This is not to deny that there are crucial differences among the first three types: I will be pointing these out in the course of my review. But the broader categories set up a more general and abstract distinction between the kinds of television criticism produced by scholars taking on one or the other of the philosophical definitions.

Essentialist feminism assumes a basic "truth" about woman that patriarchal society has kept hidden. It assumes that there is a particular group "women" who can be separated from another group "men", in terms of an essence that precedes or is outside of culture and that ultimately has to have biological origins. The essential aspects of woman, repressed in patriarchy, are often assumed to embody a more humane, moral mode of being, which, once brought to light, could help change society in beneficial directions. Female values become a means for critiquing the harsh, competitive and individualistic "male" values that govern society, and offer an alternate way, not only of seeing but of being, that threatens patriarchy. Just because of the essential humaneness of female values, these feminists believe that they should be resurrected, celebrated, revitalized. Marxist-feminists would in addition focus on the way social structures and the profit-motive have prevented humane female values from becoming dominant, while Radical feminists would emphasize how silencing of the female voice results from male domination, forced heterosexuality, the insistence on the

bourgeois, nuclear family, etc. Liberal essentialist feminists remain largely reformist, and are content merely to assert women's right to whatever our society has to offer them.

Anti-essentialist feminists view things rather differently, although the philosophical approaches are not necessarily as incompatible as they might at first seem. These theorists are concerned to understand the processes through which female subjectivity is constituted in patriarchal culture, and they do not find an "essential" feminine behind the socially constructed subject. The "feminine" now is not something outside of, or untouched by, patriarchy, but integral to it. Theorists are concerned with the links between a given sex-identity and the patriarchal order, analyzing the processes through which sexuality and subjectivity are constructed at the same time. We are all agreed by now that we can change sex-roles—many Western societies are catching up with the Eastern block in enacting such changes. But anti-essentialists argue that for such changes to take a firm hold, to have any more than a merely local, fashionable and temporary change, we have to understand more about how we arrive at sex-identity in the first place. (The fact that sexism remains a problem in Eastern and other Communist countries attests to the fact that social changes are not sufficient in and of themselves). If the goal is to get beyond the social constructed difinitions of "man"/"woman" or "masculine"/"feminine", then, anti-essentialists argue, we need to know precisely how those social constructions are inscribed in the processes of becoming "human"; and this inevitably entails moving into the psychoanalytic terrain.

Now it is significant that between 1963 and about 1980, American feminists thought mainly in essentialist terms and in most disciplines (except film studies) produced work within the frame of the first three political positions. With the recent influence of French Feminisms, scholars have begun to use the psychoanalytic/semiotic/post-structuralist theories underlying continental work. These permit us to look at the various kinds

of feminisms a bit differently: Kristeva's account of the three
broad stages of feminism, seen in a loose historical manner, is
useful in providing a scheme for distinguishing types of femi-
nist criticism which combines the political and philosophical
categories outlined above (8). However, the word "stage" is
perhaps misleading and better replaced by "type"; for while
there is a broad developmental aspect to the account of criti-
cal methods-a particular kind, as I noted, may be seen as ari-
sing out of questions not answered by a previous approach - it
is also true that a new approach does not <u>invalidate</u> or <u>elimi-
nate</u> earlier ones. In fact, in the 80'es we can find examples
of most types of feminist criticism still being produced along-
side each other, where they have not been incorporated into me-
thods that combine earlier approaches with new ones. The pro-
cess is synthetic or dialectical rather than negatatory.

In what follows, I will attempt to provide examples of each
sort of criticism that is produced by the various Kristevian
types; as far as possible, I will use Soap Opera studies to
illustrate each method, so as to highlight similarities and
differences.

Kristeva's analysis relies on Lacan's theories of the way the
subject is constructed in a patriarchal language order (that
Lacan calls "the Symbolic") and in which woman is normally re-
legated to the position of absence, or lack. Because Lacan's
distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic is central
to the different kinds of feminism being discussed here, let
me dwell on the theory for a moment. For Lacan, the Imaginary
<u>proper</u> lacks gender specificity or rather, it brings both gen-
ders into the feminine through the illusory sense of being
merged with the mother. What Lacan calls the "mirror-phase"
(the moment when the child first sets up a relationship to its
image in the mirror) marks the awareness of the illusoriness
of oneness with the mother. The child, that is, begins to be
aware of the mother as an object distinct from itself (the mir-
ror contains an image of the mother holding the child); it also

recognizes its "mirror" self (which Lacan calls an Ideal Imago) as an entity distinct from itself. The subject is thus constituted as a split subject (i.e. both mother and non-mother; this side of the mirror and within the mirror). It is important that the Ideal Ego constructed during this mirror-phase is not entirely on the side of the Imaginary in that the child introjects the image of the mother as another image; it begins to symbolize thus its own look as that of the Other, and to set in motion the desire for the mother (displaced as we'll see into a desire for what she desires) that will persist through its life.

This symbolization of the mother as the Other is for Lacan a universal experience and one that is essential for the human-to-be to in fact become human. The individuation that the level of symbolizing involves is a necessary development; the mother-child dyad must be interrupted by the language order if the child is not to remain down in the level of the Imaginary. The mirror-phase thus prepares the child for its subsequent entry into the realm of the Symbolic (be which Lacan means the language and other signifying and representational systems, such as images, gestures, sound, etc.), in which the child takes up its position as a "sexed" being (it recognizes various subject positions such as "he", "she", "you", "it"). Because signifying systems are organized around the phallus as the prime signifier, for Lacan the woman occupies the place of lack or absence. THe boy and girl child, thus, find themselves in vastly different positions vis a vis the dominant order, once they enter the realm of the Symbolic.

The problem for the girl is in being positioned so as to identify with the mother, which means desiring what the mother desires, namely the phallus. This desire has nothing to do with anything essential or biological about the girl but everything to do with the way that the Symbolic is organized. Lacan's system, particularly as used here by Kristeva, frees us from the tyranny of the biological. It also enables us to see what cer-

tain stages of feminism conceived of as due to "nature", as in fact socially constructed.

Kristeva's first stage of feminism is that in which women demand equal access to the (patriarchal) symbolic order, desiring equality rather than subjugation. This has two possible results: the first is what we have called "domestic" feminism (and that is largely characteristic of the nineteenth century, as noted) in which momen valorized the patriarchally constructed "feminine".

However, they were likely to see this "feminine" as "natural", and they celebrated the qualities assigned women as morally higher or better than the male values of competition and aggressive individualism. The second is what above I called "liberal" feminism, more characteristic of our own recent movement, in which women strive for equality with men in the public work sphere. Women, that is demand equal access to jobs and also to institutional power (of whatever kind), equal pay for equal work, equal benefits as men across the board, and also changes in family routines to accomodate their right to demanding careers.

This first stage of feminism leads to a type of television criticism heavily dependent on content analysis. TV programs are analyzed in terms of the kinds of female roles represented, and the method used is that of "counting" the number of occurrences of specific "roles". Theoretically, study could also be made of the degree to which dramas reflect recent changes in the status of women, their movement out of the home and into the work sphere, the characteristics working women are shown to have, the quality of family life and the involvement (or not) of men in domestic chores.

A recent example of work produced out of this type of feminism is Diana Meehan's Ladies of the Evening: Women Characters of Prime-Time Television, (9) combining the quantative, interpre-

tive and comparative approaches.

The heart of Meehan's book is her ambitious attempt not only to isolate and study occurrences of a whole series of female roles (the imp, the goodwife, the harpy, the bitch, the victim, the decoy, the siren, the courtesan, the witch, the matriarch), but also to show the changes in each image from 1950 to 1980. Her conclusions are too numerous to detail here (readers are referred to chapter 13 in her book), but one main conclusion was that (the composite impression of the good-bad images was a forceful endorsement of a secondary position for women, a place in the world as selfless, devoted adjuncts to men". (p. 113).

This kind of feminist criticism is important in documenting what we have come to understand as a prevalent way of imaging women in popular culture, but unfortunately it does not tell us much about either how these images are produced (a study which might help us understand their continuity (with small changes) over a thirty-year period) or about exactly how these images mean, how they "speak" to the female viewer. We are left with a vague notion of "positive" as against "negative" images of women, and of a standard-the autonomous, self-ful-filling, self-assertive, socially and financially "successful" woman - against which the images are judged to be either "positive" or "negative". It was against just such a way of reading images of women in film that work by Mulvey, Johnston and others referred to earlier was undertaken.

Meehan's model has serious problems first because it represents the human consciousness as a tabla rasa upon which TV images work. Images are seen as models that viewers imitate because they are "read" by them as "real" people. Second, it is assumed that this process of imitation is analagous to that which takes place in the family where the child models its persona-lity on that of its parents. What this obviously leaves out is, first, that fictive characters are not real people, and that

therefore viewers are forced to take a very different position
toward them; and second, that the processes through which chil-
dren "identify" with significant adults in their lives is enor-
mously complicated, and involves (as we saw in discussing La-
can) the unconscious and the language order in which children
are placed. The viewer exists in a dynamic relationship both
to other people and to the screen image, bringing an already
complex unconscious to reception, and in a certain sense be-
ing "constructed" as a subject in the processes of reception.

It is clear that, within Kristeva's Lacanian paradigm, such
works shows women demanding equal access to the (patriarchal)
Symbolic. The "stories" Meehan says it is time "to tell" en-
vision precisely a society in which women are incorporated in-
to the masculine public sphere as "heading families, heading
corporations...." etc. Women, that is, are to be seen as no
different than men, but this really means that women are "to
become men". The position fails to take into account how this
means woman's complete surrender to the patriarchy and its va-
lues, norms, ways of being. As will be clearer later on, it
implies woman replacing being defined via the phallus, with
her identification <u>with</u> the phallus; while this may be impor-
tant as a transitional phase, it should not be seen as an end
in itself.

Before moving on to Kristeva's second stage of feminism, it is
necessary to insert a category, Marxist-Feminism, not explicit-
ly mentioned by her, perhaps because she did not consider it
sufficiently different from the stage just discussed or because
it was not specific enough to feminism per se. However, in the
America of the early 70'es, this was an approach developed by
some women in media and literary studies.

Marxist-Feminist critics construct Television as a critical
object in relation to the larger economic and industrial power
networks in which it is embedded. Relying on the long tradition
of Marxist criticism, feminists who are also Marxists look at

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how Television's status, as an explicitly capitalist institution, affects the images of women portrayed. Researchers here stress the production of the woman-viewer as a consumer, which emerges from television's need as a commercial, profitmaking institution to sell objects along with providing entertainment. But television's reliance on constructing numbers of viewers as commodities involves reproducing female images that accomodate prevailing (and dominant) conceptions of "woman", particularly as these satisfy certain economic needs.

Marxist-feminists, then, are interested in how women as a group are manipulated by larger economic and political concerns outside of their control; thus, narratives may be seen to construct images of the working-woman, if society needs women in the work force; or, alternatively, to represent woman as content to be a housewife, when that is economically beneficial. The approach involves content analysis not that dissimilar from the previous "liberal" or "reformist" feminism, but the ends are different since the discussion, unlike the other, always takes place within the context of television as a profit-making, capitalist concern. (10)

Lillian Robinson's "What's My Line? Telefiction and Women's Work" is an excellent example of this Marxist-feminist approach to television. (11) Written in 1976, before there was much feminist work on television at all, it deals with the contrast between the image of working women on television serials (including Soaps) and the actual situation of women as workers in society.

Unlike Meehan, however, Robinson accounts for these distortions in terms of television as "a branch of something called the entertainment industry", which, Robinson says, "implies something (that) is manufactured here, mass-produced by alienated labor for the consumers who constitute its mass audience". (p. 313) However, Robinson refuses to fall into Meehan's trap of conceiving her audience as completely vulnerable to the

images provided, arguing rather that women do not necessarily accept what they are shown, the images being merely "one of the factors that _influence_ the consciousness of women", (p. 313) but do not provide the whole story.

Robinson proceeds to contrast the statistics relating to women's work in society to TV images of working women. She finds that, despite the trend away from family-based situations in comedy and drama, "the probability of a TV-woman's being employed is about half what it would be for her real-life counterpart". In addition, "Motherhood almost always means leaving the work force, which is not too surprising, but marriage itself tends to have the same result..." (p. 315). Robinson proceeds to give examples from Soaps like _Days of Our Lives, All in the Family_ and _One Day At A Time_ to prove her points, before going on to show, in addition to the distortion in the proportion of women working on TV, there is a large difference between the kinds of work women are seen to do on TV and the work they do in real life.

Robinson's essay has many of the same advantages and limitations as Meehan's, but it differs in not demanding equal access to the patriarchal Symbolic. Robinson rather attempts (although she would not use this language) to show how that very Symbolic exploits and manipulates women workers and further constructs images that either belittle women's work or warn women of the deletarious effects of aiming too high. The concern here is with exposing the goings on in what I would call the patriarchal symbolic rather than with arguing for woman's access to it. But like Meehan, Robinson assumes an essentialist notion that women can resist their exploitation--that they are not socially constructed through the processes of their positioning.

Kristeva's second stage of feminism is that in which women reject the male symbolic order in the name of difference, resulting in Radical Feminism. Here, femininity is not only cele-

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brated but also seen as better and essentially <u>different</u>.Focus
is on women-identified women, on a striving for autonomy and
wholeness through communities of women or at least through in-
tense relating to other women. Radical Feminist criticism might
be concerned with the images of family life as the solution
for all ills, with the forced heterosexual coupling in most po-
pular narratives, or with the discrepancies between images of
marriage in popular culture and in real life. The failure of
popular culture to address women's positive relating to one another
and the portrayal of men as "naturally" dominant may also be
issues.

Carol Aschur's pioneering essay "Daytime Television: You'll
Never Want to Leave Home", written in 1976 (under the name "Lo-
pate"), has elements of this position (12). Among other things,
Aschur suggests that Soap Opera families "portray the idealized
lives of families economically headed by professional men",
while most women are housewives. Even when they work, they are
rarely seen on the job. What Aschur most objects to is first,
the way that the family is set up as central: people, she says,
are never allowed to leave the family or to "be alone long
enough to develop a real self and thus have a personality that
can be known" (p. 79); and second that Soap Operas do not re-
veal "the nonbenign aspect of the power that men hold over wo-
men". (p. 81) Soaps misrepresent "real life" in portraying men,
like the M. C. in the Game Shows, as "having the capacity to
assist, protect, and give, without retaining the power to do-
minate that most men potentially have over most women. No soap
opera father is a disciplinarian; no husband a wife beater"
(p. 81). Aschur concludes that there is more equality between
women and men in soaps than in real life or any other dramatic
form; and that soaps ultimately function to promise the house-
wife, confined to her home, that "the life she is in can ful-
fil her needs". What soaps repress is both her actual loneli-
ness and isolation, and also that it might be precisely through
her solitude, "that she has the possibility for gaining a self"
(p. 81).

In accord with stage two feminism, Aschur implies a need for
women to reject the male symbolic order, although, again, she
does not use this terminology. That order, as revealed in popu-
lar TV shows addressing women, is seen to exploit and infanti-
lize women on the one hand, and to idealize the (in fact op-
pressive) patriarchal family on the other. The implication is
that women can, and should, reject such debasing images, and
indeed, such degrading life scenes, in order to find themsel-
ves. Autonomy, independence from men and bonding with other
women are suggested, parenthetically, as both possible and de-
sireable. We see here Aschur's essentialism, but it is impor-
tant that she arrives at very different conclusions than does
Meehan, and differs also from Robinson in suggesting individual
rather than social alternatives.

Kristeva's last stage that in which women reject the dichotomy
between masculine and feminine as metaphysical, and aim at
transcendence of the categories of ssxual difference or at
least at recognition of their cultural construction, is only
possible in the wake of the great 20th century modernist move-
ments and of the postmodernist theories that follosed upon
those movements. In this stage, scholars analyze the symbolic
systems including the filmic and televisual apparatuses through
which we communicate and organize our lives so as to understand
how it is that we learn to be what our culture calls "women"
as against what are called "men".

This poststructuralist feminism then is often antiessentialist
in contrast to the essentialism of the previous three types
discussed, although as we'll see, some of the work combines
essentialist and anti-essentialist assumptions. Critics with
this philosophical orientation found resonances in the work of
Laura Mulvey and Claire Johnston, central to the formulation
of the feminist anti-essentialist theory in film studies (13).
These authors were themselves influenced by European theories
(from Russian Formalism, to Benjamin and Berthold Brecht in
Germany, to (in France), Roland Barthes, Althusser, Foucault,
Lacan, Kristeva and Derrida). Most important for our discussion

here is Mulvey's crucial, and by now much discussed, essay on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", written in 1975. Mulvey's interest in the commercial Hollywood film as embodying the patriarchal unconscious provoked new interest by women in dominant popular forms. Her analysis involved Hollywood's apparent inscription of the male, as against any possible "female" unconscious. Relying on Freud's twin mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism, Mulvey showed that the dominant Hollywood Cinema is built on a series of three basic "looks", all of which satisfy desire in the male unconscious. There is first the look of the camera in the filming situation (called the profilmic event); while technically neutral, this look is inherently voyeuristic and usually "male" in the sense that a man is generally doing the filming; second, there is the look of the male figures within the film narrative, and these are organized through shot-counter-shot so as to make the woman object of their gaze; and finally, there is the look of the spectator, which imitates (or is necessarily in the same position as) the first two looks. That is, the spectator is forced to identify with the look of the camera, to see as it sees.

Voyeurism and fetishism are mechanisms that the Hollywood Cinema uses to construct the (presumedly male) spectator in accordance with the needs of his unconscious. Voyeurism is linked to the scopophilic instinct (i.e. the male pleasure in his own organ transferred to pleasure in watching other people have sex). Mulvey argues that cinema relies on this instinct, making the spectator essentially a voyeur. If the spectator is a woman, Mulvey originally argued that she had to assume the male position.

Most critics are agreed that the Hollywood cinema lays out for our contemplation and analysis unconscious processes difficult to gain access to outside of the psychoanalytic session. These theories lead to a very different set of concerns on the part of feminist scholars employing them than those undertaken by previous essentialist feminists. Following Mulvey, feminist

film critics became interested in what she had theorized as
an exclusively "male" gaze, discussing what possible "female"
gaze there might be; people soon realized that the theory ap-
plied mainly to the central male genres - the Western, The
Gangster and the Adventure and War films. Women turned to the
one film genre that specifically addresses the female spec-
tator - the melodrama, and issues relating to this genre and
women viewers are still being actively pursued (14). Women be-
gan to think about the text-spectator relationship, about how
exactly the actual (historical) female viewer (or subject) sit-
ting in the cinema is related to the screen images passing in
front of her. Some of this work took a direction similar to
"Reader-Response Criticism", (15) and contains some sociologi-
cal aspects. That is, some work still assumes an interaction
between two given entities - the text on the one hand; the
reader on the other; while other more psychoanalytically orien-
ted approaches assume that the reading-subject is created
(or constructed) in the very act of reading - that there is no
reader outside of the text, and no text, for that matter, out-
side of the reader.

Some of the most interesting new feminist work on television
written by people with humanities backgrounds has begun to
apply methods developed for the Hollywood film, at least in the
sense of asking some of the same kinds of question of the tele-
visual, as previously of the filmic, apparatus. What this means
is that instead of trying to study sex-roles within certain
television programs, these studies examine the entire way
that television functions, what kind of apparatus it is. By
this I mean the complex of elements from the machine itself, its
technological features (the way it produces and presents ima-
ges); to its various "texts", including ads, commentaries,
displays; to the central relationship of programming to the
sponsors, whose own texts, the ads, are arguably the real TV
texts (see Flitterman below); to the now various sites of re-
ception from the living room to the bathroom. Scholars may fo-
cus on problems of enunciation, that is of who speaks a text,
and to whom it is addressed; or look at the manner in which we

watch TV, its presence in the home, the so-called "flow" of the programs, the fragmentation of the viewing experience even within any one given program, the unusual phenomenon of endlessly serialized programs; or they may study the ideology embedded in the forms of production and reception, which are not "neutral" or "accidental", but a crucial result of television's overarching commercial framework.

One of the still unresolved issues that nearly every article has to address (whether explicitly or implicitly) is that of the degree to which film theories can apply to the very different "televisual" apparatus. Since feminist film theory evolved in relation to the Classical Hollywood Cinema, it is particularly important for women approaching television to consider how far that theory is relevant to the different apparatus that television is; for example, how far do issues relating to the "male gaze" apply to watching television, when usually there is no darkened room, where there is a small screen, and where viewing is often interrupted by commercials, people coming in, or by the viewer switching channels? To what extent is the television spectator addressed in the same manner as the film spectator? Do the same kind of psychoanalytic processes of subject construction apply? Will semiotics aid in illuminating the processes at work? Is there a different form of interaction between the television text and the female viewer than between the cinema screen and that spectator? What might that relation then be?

Let me begin with an essay on the Soap Opera addressing this latter issue, written by Tania Modleski in 1981; this essay set up the terms of the debate and a set of interests for much of the work on Soaps that followed, even when people were taking things in a rather different direction. (16) Modleski's essay was the first to develop Aschur's suggestion of relationship between the structure/rythm/mode of the Soap Opera and women's work. Modleski is enabled by recent theoretical developments to take the argument further into the realm of the parti-

cular psychic demands on woman in the family. Using psychoanalytic arguments from both Nancy Chodorow and Luce Irigaray, Modleski theorized that "Soap Operas tend...to break down the distance required for the proper working of identification... they point to a different kind of relationship between spectator and characters that can be described in the words of Irigaray as "nearness"...(17) Modelski uses the theories of Chodorow and Irigaray about the mother-daughter relationship to describe the way that the female spectator is socialized to relate to fictional texts: just as a relationship of "nearness" is inevitable in the mother-daughter bonding, which involves a kind of symbiosis, a difficulty of knowing where mother begins and daughter ends, so the female spectator will tend to over-identify with fictional characters, and not observe the boundaries that in fact separate her from the image.

Just as Modleski makes use of the new interest in psychoanalysis and the screen-spectator relationship to build on work done before, so scholars built on her essay. Sandy Flitterman, for instance, uses the semiotics developed by Christian Metz for film analysis to discuss, in more detail than Modleski or Aschur, the precise nature of the relationship between commercials and the soap drama. To do this, she focusses on the processes of enunciation, asking who speaks the text? To whom is it addressed? (18)

Flitterman's point is that "far from disrupting the narrative flow of daytime soap opera, commercials can be seen to continue it". Commercials, that is, prolong and maintain the overall impulse for narrative that Soaps satisfy, while providing units of satisfying closure in an overall form that itself frustrates closure.

Meanwhile, in her essay on Crossroads (19) Charlotte Brunsdon concludes that the address of the Soaps is a gendered one in relying on "the traditionally feminine competencies associated with the responsibility for managing the sphere of personal

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life" (p. 81). She is careful to avoid the essentialist trap of claiming such competencies to be "natural" to women; she rather sees women as socially constructed to possess such skills through inscription in "the ideological and moral frameworks (the rules) of romance, marriage and family life". (p. 81)

Brunsdon's essay is important in focussing explicitly on the different narrative conventions in soaps and in the classical Hollywood Cinema, and on the ideological implications of these differences. The structure of the soap as endless dialogue about personal life inscribes the viewer in a particular ideological framework regarding the family. This is a positioning quite different from that in the Hollywood film..

It seems to me that exploring these differences in relation to all kinds of TV-programs is an important future task. As feminists, we need to explore the degree to which theories worked out for the dominant Hollywood narratives apply to what above I called the "televisual apparatus", since the representation of woman is produced by the apparatus as much as by the narrative. Indeed, much recent film theory has argued that one cannot make any distinction between the apparatus and the narrative, since it is the apparatus itself that produces certain inevitable "narrative" effects (such as, in film, the forced identification with the look of the camera).

Now this argument, a very complex one indeed, goes beyond the confines of this paper. I introduce it simply to highlight what I think is a crucial area for future feminist television research. We need to know how the televisual apparatus is used in any one TV genre to represent the female body - to see what possibilities there are for different kinds of female representation, and how bound by the limits of the apparatus are images of woman on TV. Let me conclude with reference to my recent work on issues of enunciation, gender address, narrative and the gaze in rock videos shown on Music Television (MTV) as an example of feminist work which tries to combine analysis of fe-

male images in individual texts with attention to their con-
text of production/exhibition, and to the televisual apparatus.

Let me begin with the implications of the televisual apparatus
for the representation of women on Music Television. Music Te-
levision is an advertiser supported, 24 hour cable station for
which subscribers do not pay extra. Now owned by Via Communi-
cations, Music Television (MTV) was the brain child of Robert
Pittman, then of Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company,
who, in 1981, had the inspiration of a channel devoted mainly
to the showing of promotional videos provided free by the re-
cord companies on the model of providing radio stations with
free records. Confined to at short, four-minute format, inser-
ted within the 24 hour flow, rock videos are a unique artistic
mode (their song-image form has links with both opera and the
Hollywood musical, but as we'll see, it differs in central
ways). I am interested in the spectator-screen relationship as
that is produced by both the visual strategies of individual
videos and by the placing of four-minute texts with a series
of other four-minute texts, and within a flow that includes
other kinds of text, such as sponsor's ads, ads for MTV itself
and its contests, interviews, music news, and the Deejay's
Somments. How does this "flow" affect the spectator? Is there
any particular gender address in this flow? How does this kind
of flow particularly affect the female spectator?

Let me first say something about the construction of what I
have elsewhere called the "decentered" spectator through the
very rapid flow of comparatively extremely short segments with-
in a continuous, 24 hour channel (20). Here MTV possibly car-
ries to an extreme elements present in other TV-programs parti-
cularly those that are also 24 hour stations (like the conti-
nuous weather and news channels) but also those that are "se-
rials" in some form or another that is continuous segments to
be viewed daily (most obviously soaps, but also the news that
is regularly slotted and so highly stylized as to be "drama",
(21) the game shows, or the Phil Donahue show).

All of these programs exist in a kind of horizontal axis that
is neverending, instead of being discrete units consumed within
a fixed 2 hour limit, like the Hollywood movie, or forms like
the novel, which also have a fixed, and clearly defined "frame".
TV in a certain sense does not have a "frame", since the texts
are not bounded in that sort of manner. The texts rather re-
semble an endless film strip, turned on its side, in which the
frames are replaced by episodes. Or, as Peggy Phelan has ar-
gued, perhaps a better model is that of Foucault's Panopticon,
in which the guard surveys a series of prisoners through their
windows. (22) Phelan is interested in setting up the TV produ-
cer as the "guard" and the individual TV viewer as the "priso-
ner" who watches in "a sequestered and observed solitude". But
I think the guard metaphor works well also for the spectator's
relationship to the various episodes that represent, in Fou-
cault's words, "a multiplicity that can be numbered and super-
vised"; in fact, for the TV viewer, that desire for plenitude,
for complete knowledge is of course forever delayed, forever
deferred. The TV is seductive precisely because it speaks to
a desire that is insatiable, it promises complete knowledge in
some far distant and never-to-be-experienced future; its stra-
tegy is to keep us endlessly consuming in the hopes of fulfil-
ling our desire; it hypnotizes us through addressing this de-
sire; it keeps us returning for more.

This strategy is particularly evident in Music Television,
since the texts here are only four minutes and so keep us for-
ever watching, forever hoping to fulfil our desire in the next
one that comes along. The mechanism of "Coming Up Next.." that
all programs employ, and that is the staple of the serial, is
an intricate aspect of the minute by minute watching of Music
Television. We are trapped in the constant hope that the next
video will be one to somehow ultimately satisfy, and so we go
on and on watching and hoping, lured by the seductiveness of
the constant promise of immediate plenitude. But all we are ac-
tually doing is consuming, endlessly.

Now, the question is to what degree this decentering televisual apparatus specifically positions women? Are women necessarily addressed differently by the apparatus, as was argued (at least in the beginning) for the classical Hollywood film? Is there something inherent in the televisual apparatus that addresses woman's social positioning as absence, lack, as again was the case for the Hollywood film?

This question takes me beyond the confines of my topis, but it is possible that what is true for Music Television is true for other TV programs, namely that instead of a more or less monolithic gaze (and a largely male gaze at that) as was found in the Hollywood film, there is a wide range of gazes with different gender implications. In other words, the apparatus itself, in its modes of functioning, is not gender specific per se; but across its "segments", be they Soap Opera segments, Crime Series segments, News Segments, Morning Show segments, we can find a veriety of "gazes" that indicate an address to a certain kind of male or female "Imaginary". It is possible that there is frequently a kind of genderless address, and also that people of both genders are able to undertake multiple identifications, depending of course on the program involved.

What this implies is that the Televisual Imaginary is more complex that the cinematic one and does not involve the same regression to the Lacanian mirror-phase as theorists discovered in the filmic apparatus, and that was discussed above. In the case of MTV, for example, instead of the channel evoking aspects of the Lacanian mirror-phase Ideal Imago - a process that depends on sustained identification with a central figure in a prolonged narrative - issues to do with split subjectivity, with the alienation that the mirror-image involves, are rather evoked. (See Chart I).

Chart I

Polarized Filmic Categoris in Recent Film Theory that MTV violates:	
The Classical Text (Hollywood)	The Avant-garde Text
Realism/Narrative	Non-realist anti-Narrative
History	Discourse
Complicit Ideology	Rupture of Dominant Ideology

In other words, while filmic processes seek (especially for the male viewer) to heal, for the duration of the movie, the painful split subjectivity instituted during the mirror-phase, MTV rather produces the decenteredness that is our actual condition and that is especially obvious to the young adolescent.

MTV thus addresses the desires, fantasies and anxieties of young people growing up in a world in which all traditional categories and institutions are being questioned. I have elsewhere argued that there are five main types of video on MTV and that there is a whole series of gazes instead of the broadly monolithic Hollywood gaze (sse Chart II for summary of the types and how the gaze affects female images). The plethora of gender positions on the channel arguably reflects the heterogeneity of current sexroles, and the androgynous surface of many star-images indicates the blurring of clear lines between genders characteristic of many rock videos. (23)

Chart II

		MODES (All use avant-garde strategies, especially self-reflexivity, play with the image, etc.)				
		ROMANTIC	SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS	NIHILIST	CLASSICAL	POSTMODERNIST
PREDOMINANT MTV THEMES	STYLE	Narrative	Elements varied	Performance Anti-narr.	Narrative	Pastiche No linear images
	LOVE/SEX	Loss and Reunion (Pre-Oedipal)	Struggle for Autonomy: Love as Problematic	Sadism/Masochism Homoeroticism Androgyny (Phallic)	The Male Gaze (Voyeristic, Fetishistc)	Play with Oedipal positions
	AUTHORITY	Parent figures (positive)	Parent and public figures; Cultural critique	Nihilism Anarchy Violence	Male as Subject Female as Object	Neither for nor against authority (ambiquity)

Because of both the peculiarities of the televisual apparatus
and the new phase of youth culture produced by the 1960'es,
most of the feminist methodologies that have emerged in tele-
vision research so far are inappropriate for the rock videos
on Music Television. This is mainly because of the sophistica-
ted, selfconscious and skewed stance that the texts take to-
ward their own subject matter. It is often difficult to know
precisely what a rock video actually means, because its signi-
fiers are not linked along a coherent, logical chain that pro-
duces any unambiguous message. The mode, to use Jamesons' con-
trast, is that of _pastiche_ rather than parody. (24) By this
Jameson means that whereas modernist texts often took a parti-
cular critical position vis à vis earlier textual models, ridi-
culing specific stances or attitudes in them, or offering a
sympathetic, comic perspective on them, postmodernist works

tend to use _pastiche_, a mode that lacks any clear positioning vis à vis what it shows, or toward any earlier texts that are used.

This has implications for gender first because it is often unclear who is speaking the rock video text, and therefore whether the male or the female discourse dominates; and second because the attitude toward sex and gender is often ambiguous. One finds oneself not knowing, for instance, whether or not a video like John Parr's "Naughty Naughty", or John Cougar Mellemcamp's "Hurts So Good", are virulently sexist or merely pastiching an earlier Hollywood sexism. Even in the category that I call "Classical", (see Chart II) where the gaze is clearly voyeuristic and male, there is a studied self-consciousness that makes the result quite different from that in the dominant commercial cinema.

The ambiguity is usually as prevalent in the videos made from lyrics by female stars as in those of the dominant white male stars featured on the channel. In a forthcoming paper (25), I examine a variety of enunciative positions in select videos by female stars in order to show the range from videos in the "Socially Conscious" category that make a kind of statement one could call "feminist" (e.g. Pat Benatar's "Love is a Battlefield", or Donna Summer's "She works Hard for the Money"), and that have fairly conventional narratives (although they still do not work as logically as the Hollywood narrative), through those which comment upon the objectifying male gaze (as does arguably Tina Turner's "Private Dancer"), to those which attempt to set up a different gaze altogether, or to address some (possible) female gaze (as arguably happens in the Annie Lennox/Aretha Franklin video "Sisters are Doin' It For Themselves"). But it is significant that all of these types are extremely infrequent within the 24 hour continuous MTV flow, and it is here that the situation of individual texts within that flow has implications for gender issues. According to a recent quantifying study of MTV, videos featuring white males take up 75% of

the 24 hour flow. (26) Only 20% of MTV videos have central fi-
gures who are female (indicentally, the figure is even lower
for blacks), and women are typically, like blacks, rarely im-
portant enough to be part of the foreground. Brown and Campbell
assert that "white women are often shown in passive and solita-
ry activity or are shown trying to gain the attention of a man
who ignores them". (p. 15) Among those 20 percent, the number
of videos by women that fall into my three categories above is
miniscule; and those few rarely, or only briefly, fall into the
frequent cycling pattern. The female videos that are frequent-
ly cycled fall into the first type mentioned, namely those whe-
re the position is ambiguous, where what we might call a post-
feminist stance is evident.

Let me explain what I mean by this, and several other points,
by looking at a video figuring Madonna, one of the most success-
ful women stars to date. "Material Girl" is particularly useful
for discussion because it exemplifies a common rock video phe-
nomenon, namely that of establishing a unique kind of intertex-
tual relationship with a specific Hollywood movie. Because of
this, as well as the difficulty of ensuring the text's stance
toward what it shows and the blurring of many conventional
boundaries, I would put the video in the "Postmodern" category
in my chart, despite its containing more narrative that is usu-
al for the type.

As is well-known, "Material Girl" takes off from the famous
Marilyn Monroe dance/song sequence in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,
namely "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend". The sequence occurs
towards the end of the film where Esmond's father has severed
Monroe financially from Esmond, forcing her to earn her living
by performing. In this sequence, having finally found her, Es-
mond is sitting in the audience watching the show. We thus have
the familiar Hollywood situation, where the woman's performing
permits her double articulation as spectacle for the male gaze
(i.e. she is object of desire for both the male spectator in
the diegetic audience and for the spectator in the cinema

watching the film). The strategy formalizes the mirror-phase
situation by framing the female body both within the stage pro-
scenium arch and the cinema screen.

During this sequence, which starts with Esmond's astonished
gaze at Monroe from the theatre seat (presumably he is surpri-
sed anew by Monroe's sexiness), Monroe directs her gaze toward
the camera that is situated in Esmond's place. The space rela-
tions are thus quite simple, there being merely the two spaces
of the stage and of the theatre audience. We know that the film
is being made under the authorial label "Hawks", that within
the diegesis, Monroe and Russell are setting up the action, but
that, despite this, the patriarchal world in which they move
constrains them and makes only certain avenues available.

When we turn to the video inspired by the Monroe dance sequence,
we see that the situation is far more complicated. First, it is
unclear who is speaking this video, even on the remote "autho-
rial label" level, since credits are never given in the usual
run of things. Is it perhaps Madonna, as historical star sub-
ject? Is it "Madonna I", the movie-star protagonist within the
"framing" diegesis? Is it "Madonna II", the figure within the
musical dance diegesis? Is it the poor director who has fallen
in love with her image, and desires to possess her? If we focus
first on the visual strategies and then on the sound track, you
will see that we get different and still confusing answers to
the question.

Visually, the poor director's (PD) gaze seems to structure some
of the shots, but this is not consistent, as it is in the Mon-
roe sequence. And shots possibly structured by him (or in which
he is later discovered to have been present) only occur at ir-
regular intervals. The video begins by foregrounding (perhaps
pastiching?) the classical Hollywood male gaze: there is a
close up of the poor director, played by John Carradine (the
video thus bows again to the classical film), whom we soon re-
alize is watching rushes of a film starring "Madonna I". An ob-

sessed, glazed look on his face, "I want her, George", he says;
George promises to deliver, as we cut to a two-shot of the men,
behind whom we see the cinema screen and Madonna I's image but
as yet hear no sound from the performance. The camera closes in
on her face, and on her seductive look first out to the camera,
then sideways to the men around her. As the camera now moves
into the screen, blurring the boundaries between screening room,
screen, and the film set (the space of the performance that in-
volves the story of the Material Girl, Madonna II), the "re-
hearsal" (if that is what it was) ends, and a rich lover comes
onto the set with a large present for Madonna I.

This then is a desire for the woman given birth through the
cinematic apparatus, in classic manner; yet while the sequence
seems to foreground those mechanisms, it does not appear to
critique or in any way comment upon them. In Jameson's terms,
this makes the process pastiche rather than parody, and puts
it in the postmodernist mode. The blurring of the diegetic spa-
ces further suggests postmodernism, as does the following con-
fusion of enunciative stances, taking the visual track alone.
For while the PD's gaze clearly constructed the first shot-se-
ries, it is not clear that his gaze structures the shot where
Madonna I receives the present. We still hear the whirring
sound of a projector, as if this were still the screening room
space; and yet we are inside that screen - we no longer see the
space around the frame, thus disorienting the viewer.

There is no room here for a full analysis of the video, but
such work does show that the usual hierarchical arrangement of
discourses in the classical realist text is totally violated
in "Material Girl". While Madonna I is certainly set up as
object of the PD's desire, in quite classical manner, the text
refuses to let her be controlled by that desire. This is achie-
ved by unbalancing the relations between framing story and per-
formance story so that Madonna I is over-ridden by her stage fi-
gure, Madonna II, the brash, gutsy "Material Girl". The line
between "fiction" and "reality" within the narrative is thus

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blurred: this has severe consequences just because the two women are polar opposites.

In Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, on the other hand, no such confusion or discrepancy exists. From the start, Monroe's single-minded aim is to catch a rich man, and she remains fixed on that throughout. The function of her performance of "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend" is partly simply to express what has been obvious to the spectator, if not to Esmond, all along; but also to let Esmond get the idea, were he smart enough. Monroe sings a song that expresses her philosophy of life, but we are clear about the lines between the stage-fiction and the context of its presentation, and Monroe as a character in the narrative. Part of the confusion in the Madonna video comes about precisely because the scene of the performance is not made very clear and because the lines between the different spaces of the text are blurred.

The situation in "Material Girl" is even more problematic because of the way that Madonna, as historical star subject, breaks through her narrative positions through her strong personality, her love of performing for the camera, her inherent energy and vitality. Madonna searches for the camera's gaze and for the TV spectator's gaze that follows it because she relishes being desired. The "roles" melt away through her unique presence and the logical narrative incoherence discussed above seems resolved in our understanding that Madonna herself, as historical subject, is the really "material girl"!

It is perhaps Madonna's success in articulating and parading the desire to be desired in an unabashed, aggressive, gutsy manner (as against the self-abnegating urge to loose oneself in the male that is evident in the classical Hollywood film) that attracts the hordes of twelve-year-old fans that idolize her and crowd her concerts. The amazing "look alike" Madonna contests (viz. a recent Macy's campaign in New York) and the successful exploitation of the weird Madonna style of dress by

clothing companies attests to this idolatry. It is significant that Madonna's style is a far cry from the conventional "patriarchal feminine" of the women's magazines – it is a cross between a bordello queen and a bag lady: young teenagers may use her as a protest against their mothers and the normal feminine while still remaining very much within those modes (in the sense of spending a lot of money, time and energy on their "look"; the "look" is still crucial to their identities, still designed to attract attention, even if provocatively).

In some sense, then, Madonna represents the post-feminist heroine in that she combines unabashed seductiveness with a gutsy kind of independence. She is neither particularly male nor female identified, and seems mainly to be out for herself. This postfeminism is part of a larger postmodernist phenomenon which her video also embodies in its blurring of hitherto sacrosanct boundaries and polarities of the various kinds discussed. The usual bi-polar categories – male/female, high art/pop art, film/TV, fiction/reality, private/public, interior/exterior, etc. simply no longer apply to "Material Girl".

This analysis of "Material Girl" has shown the ambiguity of enunciative positions within the video that in turn is responsible for the ambiguous representation of the female image. The positioning of a video like "Material Girl", moreover, within the 24 hour flow of this commercial channel ensures that it is this sort of ambiguous image that appears frequently, as against the other female images mentioned and that are only rarely cycled. That this sort of post-modern image is seen to be the most marketable one is evident from the fact that the same postfeminist image dominates the ads interspersed among the videos.

The whole televisual apparatus thus contributes to the prevalence of the ambiguous female image. To summarize: first, the main force of MTV as a cable channel is consumption on a whole variety of levels, ranging from the literal (i.e. selling the sponsors' goods, the rock stars' records, and MTV itself) to

the psychological (i.e. selling the image, the "look", the style). MTV is more obviously than other programs one nearly continuous advertisement, the flow being merely broken down into different kinds of ads. More than other programs, then, MTV positions the spectator in the mode of constantly hoping that the next ad-segment (of whatever kind) will satisfy the desire for plenetude: the channel keeps the spectator in the consuming mode more intensely because its items are all so short.

Since the mode of address throughout is that of the ad, then like the ad the channel relies on engaging the spectator on the level of unsatisfied desire. This remains in the psyche from the moment of entry into the Lacanian Symbolic, and is available for channelling in various directions. Given the organization of the Lacanian symbolic around the phallus as signifier, it is not surprising that MTV basically addresses the desire for the phallus remaining in the psyche of both genders. This partly accounts for the dominance of the channel by videos featuring white male stars.

Nevertheless, as my chart shows, the male gaze is not monolithic on the channel: here again, the televisual apparatus enables the production of a variety of different gazes due to the arrangement of a series of short, constantly changing segments in place of the 2 hour continuous film narrative, or the usually single book-length or theatrical narratives. There is no possibility within the four-minute segment (others are shorter) for regression to the Freudian Oedipal conflicts in the manner of the classical narrative. What we rather have is a semi-comical play with Oedipal positions, as in the postmodern video, or a focus on one particular mode in the Oedipal complex in some of the other video-types outlined in the chart.

The implications of all this for a feminist perspective need close analysis. Feminism has traditionally relied on a liberal or left humanist position, as was clear in my earlier delineation of major types of feminism, historically. If the televisual apparatus manifests a new stage of consciousness in which

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that liberal/left humanism no longer has a place, this implicates a majority of feminist positions. If Baudrillard is correct in seeing the TV screen as symbolizing a new era in which "The Faustian, Promethean (perhaps Oedipal) period of production and comsumption" has given way to "the narcissistic and protean era of connections, contact, contiguity, feedback and generalized interface that goes with the universe of communication", (27) then feminism needs to address the changed situation. Gender has been one of the central organizing categories of what Baudrillard calls the old "hot" (as against the new "cold") universe, but this may be lost in the new era, with unclear (and not necessarily progressive) results.

Feminists need to explore television's part in the changed, and still changing, relationship of self to image. This change began at the turn of the century with the development of advertising and of the department-store window; it was then further affected by the invention of the cinematic apparatus, and television has, in turn, produced more changes. The television screen now replaces the cinema screen as the central controlling cultural mode, setting up a new spectator-screen relationship which I have begun to analyze in the work on MTV. For MTV constantly comments upon the self in relation to image (especially the TV image), to the extent that that may be seen as its main "content". The blurring of distinctions between a "self" and an "image" - or the reduction of the old notion of "self" to "image" - is something for feminists to explore, even as we fear the coming of Baudrillard's universe of "simulacra". By this, Baudrillard means a world in which all we have are simulations, there being no "real" external to them, no "original" that is being copied. (28) It would be as if all were reduced merely to exteriors, there no longer being any "interiors".

The reduction of the female body to merely an "image" is something that women have lived with for a long time, and the phenomenon has been extensively studied by feminist film critics.

But this study always somehow assumed an entity possible of being constructed differently. The new postmodern universe, with its celebration of the look, the surfaces, textures, the self-as-commodity, threatens to reduce everything to the image/representation/simulacrum. Television - with its decentered address, its flattening out of things into a network or system, the parts of which all rely on each other and that is endless, unbounded, unframed - is an apparatus urgently requiring more through examination, particularly in relation to its impact on women.

Notes:

(1) Cf. Kaplan, Ann E., "Introduction", and William Boddy, "Loving a Nineteen Inch Motorola: American Writing on Television", in Regarding Television - Critical Approaches: An Anthology, (Los Angeles: The American Film Institute, 1984), pp. xi-xxiii, and 1-11; and Robert C. Allen, Speaking of Soap Operas Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), chapter Two, especially pp. 40-44; David Morley, The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding (London: The British Film Institute, 1977), pp. 1-5.

(2) CF. Morley, David, The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding, BFI Television Monographs, No. 11 (London: The British Film Institute, 1980), p. 1.

(3) Cf. The full-length version of this essay, to be published in Channels of Discourse: Television and Contemporary Criticism, ed. Robert C. Allen (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1986). Forthcoming.

(4) Heath, Stephen and Gillian Skirrow, "Television: A World in Action", Screen. Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1977), pp. 7-60.

(5) I am thinking here of the work by Cathy Schwichtenberg, Rebecca Baillin, and others. Ellen Seiter at Northwestern was another "pioneer".

(6) One Could add yet one more political feminist stance, namely the postmodern, but I have not yet seen this approach applied by women to television. The concept of the postmodern, as developed particularly by Jameson and Baudrillard, involves the blurring of hitherto sacrosanct boundaries and polarities, the elimination of any position from which to speak or judge. It involves the obliteration of any distinction between an "inside" and an "outside", the reduction of all to one level, often seen as that of the simulacra. There is no longer a realm of the "real" versus that of "imitation" or "mimicry", but rather a level in which there is only simulation. Poststructuralist feminism still honors the concept of a feminist position, even while doubting that the (patriarchal) "feminine" can

be subverted. It still problematizes the issue of searching for
alternate female positions, it still seeks such positions. Post-
modernist "feminism" (the word must be put in brackets since the
position is ultimately a post-feminist one) rather defines feminism
itself, as a concept, as an essentializing term, as looking back
to the individualist framework of early feminist movements. It
therefore refuses to honor "feminist" as a concept, but is rather
interested precisely in elaborating/dwelling upon/working through
the problems with the concept. Thus, the postmodernist position
is still concerned with feminism, but now from the perspective of
exposing its limits, of arguing for the need to think through other
categories. (See discussion of Music Television further on).

(7) Cf. A recent article of mine, "The Hidden Agenda: A Review of Re-vision:
     Essays in Feminist Film Criticism (Los Angeles: The American Film
     Institute, 1984)", in Camera Obscura. Nos. 24-25 (Fall 1985), pp.
     Cf also forthcoming essay reviewing feminist film criticism gene-
     rally in Studies in The Literary Imagination. In both articles I
     discuss the essentialist/anti-essentialist debate in some detail.

(8) Kristeva, Julia, "Women's Time", trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake,
     in Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 13-35.

(9) Meehan's study was published in Metuchen, NJ and London by the Scarecrow
     Press in 1983. Page numbers refer to this edition.

(10) For an excellent example of this kind of work on media images prior to
     television's invention, cf. Maureen Honeywell, Creating Rosie the
     Riveter (Amberst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

(11) Robinson, Lillian, "What's My Line? Telefiction and Women's Work", in
     her Sex, Class and Culture (Bloomington and London: Indiana Univer-
     sity Press, 1978), pp. 310-344. Page numbers refer to this publica-
     tion.

(12) Lopate, Carol, "Day-Time Television: You'll Never Want to Leave Home",
     Feminist Studies, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1976), pp. 70-82.

(13) These theories, too complex to review here, have been thoroughly dis-
     cussed in two recent books on women in film, by Annette Kuhn and
     E. Ann Kaplan. Pleas refer to these for more details.

(14) Cf. for example the the debate being carried out in Cinema Journal around
     various readings of Stella Dallas, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Winter, 1985),
     Vol. 25, No. 1 (Fall, 1985).

(15) Cf. for more information on these methods, chapter by Robert Allen on
     reader-response criticism in Robert C. Allen, ed. Op. Cit.

(16) Cf. Modleski, Tania, "The Rhythms of Reception: Daytime Television and
     Women's Work", reprinted in E. Ann Kaplan, ed., Regaring Television:
     Critical Approaches - An Anthology (Los Angeles: The Americal Film
     Institute, 1983), pp. 67-75.

(17) Cf. Chodorow, Nancy, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1978), especially Chapters 5 and 6; and Luce Irigaray, "This Sex Which Is Not One", and "When Our Lips Speak Together", collected in This Sex Which Is Not One, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

(18) Flitterman, Sandy, "The Real Soaps Operas: TV Commercials", in Kaplan, ed. Op. Cit., pp. 84-96. Page numbers refer to this publication.

(19) Brunsdon, Charlotte, "Crossroads: Notes on Soap Opera", in Kaplan, ed. Op. Cit., pp. 76-83.

(29) For details of these arguments, cf. E. Ann Kaplan, "A Post-Modern Play of the Signifier? Advertising, Pastiche and Schizophrenia in Music Televison", In Philip Drummond and Richard Paterson, Television in Transition (London: The British Film Institute, 1985), the Construction of the Spectator in Music Television", in Oxford Literary Review, forthcoming Spring 1986; and E. Ann Kaplan "History Spectatorship and Gender Address in Music Television". Journal of Communication Inquiry(vol. 10, no. 1, Winter 1986).

(21) Cf. Stam, Robert, "Television News and Its Spectator", in E. Ann Kaplan, Op. Cit., pp. 23-44.

(22) Cf. Phelan, Peggy, "Panopticism and the Uncanny: Notes Toward Television's Visual Time". Unpublished paper.

(23) Cf. for more details fo these points, works cited above.

(24) Cf. Jameson, Fredric, "Postmodernism and Consumer Culture", in Hal Foster, ed. The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture (Port Townsend, Washington Bay Press, 1983), p. 113.

(25) To be published in a forthcoming collection of original essays edited by Deirdre Pribram and published by Verso, London.

(26) Cf. Brown, Jane D. and Kenneth C. Campbell, "The Same Best But a Different Drummer: Race and Gender in Music Videos", Journal of Communication (Spring 1986).

(27) Baudrillard, Jean, "The Ecstasy of Communication", in The Anti-Aesthetic Op. Cit., p. 127.

(28) Cf. Baudrillard, Jean, Simulations, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Phili Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e) Inc. 1983).

Further Reading

As noted in the essay, there has been comparatively little work on the re-
presentation of women on television altogether, and even less from perspec-
tives other than the quantifying, social-science onces.The main body of fe-
minist work in media studies has been on the Hollywood film, with work on
women and the avantgarde, experimental or documentary film taking second
place. As was also noted in the essay, methodologies worked out for the
Hollywood film do not automatically apply to the different televisual ap-
paratus. Nevertheless, it might be useful for students to familiarize them-
selves with a modest amount of feminist film theory, since much of the
best feminist work on television starts off from those positions, and re-
lies on similar theories (i.e. semiotics, psychoanalysis, post-structura-
lism), revising them according to the specificity of television. Three re-
cent books provide over-views of feminist film theory:

Annette Kuhn, Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema. London: Routledge &
    Kegan Paul, 1982.

E. Ann Kaplan, Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera. London and New
    York, 1983.

Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams, eds. Re-Vision Es-
    says in Feminist Film Criticism. Los Angeles: The American Film Insti-
    tute, 1984.

Again as noted in the essay, an introductory understanding of feminist the-
ory is crucial as background to any feminist work in television studies.
For a recent overview of feminist theories as they have developed in France,
America and Britain from 1970 to 1986, see Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Poli-
tics: Feminist Literary Theory. London and New York: Methuen, 1986. Key
texts for recent feminist approaches to television are Nancy Chodorow, The
Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender.
Berkeley: The University of California Pres, 1978; Julia Kristeva, "Women's
Time, " trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, Signs: A Journal of Women in
Culture, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1981), pp. 13-35 (other relevant essays by Kristeva will
shortly be available in a collection edited by Toril Moi and to be pub-
lished by Blackwell's Oxford); Luce Irigary, "This Sex Which Is not One",
and "When Two Lips Speak Together", both collected in This Sex Which Is
Not One, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. Ithaca, New York:
Cornnell University, Press, 1985.

Given the overall perspective of my essay, the most useful essays on tele-
vision criticism for students to start out with are those collected in
E. Ann Kaplan, ed., Regarding Television: A Critical Anthology. Los Ange-
les: The American Film Institute, 1984. The essays by Robert Stam and Jane
Feuer provide excellent background for work on the televisual apparatus
that is central to any specifically feminist analysis, while those by Ta-
nia Modleski, Charlotte Brunsdon, Sandy Flitterman and Robert C. Allen pro-
vide models for different feminist approaches to the Soap Opera.

Essays not collected in the book that provide important background for
work in the collection include Stephen Heath and Gillian Skirrow, "Tele-
vision: A World in Action", Screen, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1977), pp. 7-59, Ja-
nice Winship, "Handling Sex", Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 3, No. 1
(1981), pp. 6-18, and, specifically on Soaps, Ellen Seiter, "The Role of
the Woman Reader: Eco's Narrative Theory and Soap Operas", Tabloid, No. 6

(1981). For detailed analysis of Soaps and full bibliography, see Robert C. Allen, Speaking of Soap Operas. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985. Chapters 3 and 4 in particular contain material relevant to feminist criticism.

Recently, some feminist scholars have begun to extend work being done on melodrama in relation to the Hollywood film to television serials. Cf. for film background essays collected in Douglas Sirk, eds. Laura Mulvey and Jon Halliday. Edinburgh Film Festival, 1972; Laura Mulvey, "Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, Inspired by Duel in the Sun", Framework, Nos. 15/16/17 (1981), pp. 12-15; Mary Ann Doane, "The Woman's Film: Posession and Address", in Re-Vision, Op. Cit., pp. 67-82; E. Ann Kaplan, "Theories of Melodrama"; Women and Performance, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Summer 1983), pp. 40-48; and Christine Gledhill, ed. Women and Melodrama. London: The British Film Institute, 1986. FOr applications to television, see Jane Feuer, "Melodrama, Serial Form and Television Today", Screen, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan-Feb. 1984), pp. 4-16; and Annette Kuhn, "Women's Genres", ibid., pp. 18-28.

Another important area of research is related to discourse theory rather than to either psychoanalytic or semiological approaches, although the work is linked in the interest in the construction of the subject through the processes of desire. Both Fina Bathrick (in a forthcoming book on the media), and Lyn Spiegel (in a dissertation) deal with discourses that address the relationship between television, the home and the family in advertising and women's magazines. In two unpublished papers ("Installing the Television Set: The Discourses of Women's Home Magazines 1948-1955", and "TV in the TV Home: Television's Discourse on Television, 1948-1955), Lyn Spiegel looks at the sites of representing TV in books on interior home decor and in TV programming itself. Spiegel shows how the discourses she discovers dramatize the problematic of TV's relationship to the public in their construction of a series of subject positions for family members in the home equipped with TV.

This work on discourse analysis is being taken up in another important area, little dealt with from the cultural-studies theoretical position, namely that of research in audience response to Television. The best work here is informed by neo-Marxist Althusserian ideas, sometimes together with Foucauldian theory (cf. for a good example, Tony Bennett, "Texts in History: The Determinations of Readings and Their Texts", in D. Attridge, G. Bennington and R. Young, eds, Post-Structuralism and the Question of History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 1986.) This work is important for feminist criticism in combining the problematic of subject-formation crucial to gender issues with equally central issues of contextual and historical specificities. Continuing their work on the audience for the British program "Nationwide", David Morely and Charlotte Brunsdon are studying how the television operates within the home setting - looking at the gender discourses that structure its use, and at how these determine who controls the set, etc. Cf. for earlier work, Charlotte Brunsdon and David Morely, Everday Television: Nationwide London: The British Film Institute, 1978.

Feminist criticism of Music Television is only just starting. The earliest piece is E. Ann Kaplan, "A Postmodern Play of the Signifier? Advertising, Pastiche and Schizophrenia in Music Television", paper delivered in Summer

1983 at the London International Television Conference and published in
Television in Transition eds. Philip Drummond and Richard Paterson, London:
The British Film Institute, 1985, pp. 146-164; a development of these ideas
is available in E. Ann Kaplan, "Sexual Difference, Pleasure and the Con-
struction of the Spectator in Music Television, Oxford Literary Review
(Summer 1986); further work on sexual difference in rock videos may be
found in her forthcoming book, Rocking Around the Clock: Consumption and
Postmodern Culture in Music Television. London and New York: Methuen, 1987.

For an example of a quantifying approach to sex-roles in Music Television,
se Jane D. Brown and Kenneth Campbell, "The Same Beat but A Different
Drummer: Race and Gender in Music Videos", Journal of Communication Inquiry.
Vol. 10, No. 1 (Winter 1986).

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Myth and Reality in Women's Employment in Broadcasting

TEN YEARS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

By Margaret Gallagher

Danish Summary: Margaret Gallagher beskæftiger sig i sin artikel med myter og realiteter i kvindernes ansættelse og indflydelse i de europæiske nationale TV-organisationer.

De europæiske landes TV-systemer har hidtil været underlagt offentlig kontrol og dermed en forpligtelse til at fungere som "public service" institution. Denne status, påpeger Gallagher, har givet anledning til en særlig mytologi, som medierne med flid har plejet og vedligeholdt om sig selv: forestillinger om frihed, objektivitet og pragmatisme i sammenhæng med forestillinger om professionalisme, kvalitet og pålidelighed som fundament for public service systemets mytologi om alsidighed og evne til at beskytte og respektere minoriteter osv. Det der kendetegner disse forestillinger er deres abstrakte og udefinerlige karakter, men fra denne synsvinkel er de nye medier en trussel mod det prisværdige status quo, som vil blive lagt øde af kommercialisme osv. Udfordringen fra de nye medier øger public-service institutionernes behov for at understrege deres 'anderledeshed' - deres rolle som formidlere af sociale normer og national bevidsthed.

Organisationernes samfundsmæssige rolle hviler på to tilsyneladende modstridende ideologier, som ikke desto mindre trives side om side og som har kunnet anvendes alternerende i situationer med skiftende ydre politisk og økonomisk pression til