

What Does Feminism Want?

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Abstract: Like Freud’s famous inquiry ‘what does a woman want?’, this paper asks a similar question of the signifier ‘feminism’ for if one aims to (re)imagine feminism for the new millennium one must first ask: what does Feminism want? This (imperfect) reference to Freud’s question hopes to draw attention to the particular and the universal underpinning the signifier feminism, a slipperiness that works idiosyncratically at the threshold of public and private politics which, though it is perhaps the most unifying aspect of feminism, nevertheless undermines it. To politicize the personal one must question the signifier that comes to universalize an indefinite article for, as I argue in this paper, what ‘a’ woman wants is beneath the bar of what Feminism wants when it is mounted in public discourse. To continue to invest publically in a signifier of personal politics—as Jacqueline Rose advocates (2014)—then, one must rephrase the question: of what does this signifier Feminism speak when it is mounted in public discourse? This paper considers some mechanisms by which this signifier generates and mobilizes desire, fantasy, and phobia in public politics where feminism’s knowledge product covers over or, in Rose’s terms, “sanitizes” those “disturbing insight[s]” (2014: x) of experience, “everything that is darkest, most recalcitrant and unsettling” (2014 xii), in the “furthest limits of conscious and unconscious life” (2014: x). Here, where this signifier constitutes an ideal-ego, its effects are inhibiting. In short, this paper argues that before any future of feminism can be imagined, those occupying a feminist position—discourse, politics, or identity—must ask what their unconscious investment in this signifier is. In Lacanian terms, one must relinquish feminism’s discourse of protest and complete the circuit through the analyst’s discourse to ask: what does a woman want in feminism?

Key words: feminism, psychoanalysis, Woman, desire, the gaze, Lacan, the unconscious, *jouissance*

A Question for a Future Feminism

It is time to return to what feminism has to tell us. It is time to make the case for what women have uniquely to say about the perils of our modern world. But the case cannot be made along the lines that have become most familiar.

—Jacqueline Rose, *Women in Dark Times*.

“What can it mean to be feminist today and further, what could a possible future for feminism look like?” My response to this special edition call for papers—and indeed, my response to Roses’ sentiments upon which it is based—is intentionally provocative. I argue that it is not what feminism has to tell us that is most important to any future in which it plays a part but, on the contrary, a question of what the investment in this signifier is for any individual that is essential to any reimagining of feminist theory or praxis. In this I agree with Rose that “the case” for feminism’s future “cannot be made along the lines that have become most familiar” but I go further to suggest that if we are to address those “disturbing insight[s]” of experience, “everything that is darkest, most recalcitrant and unsettling,” in the “furthest limits of conscious and unconscious life,” feminism is not the tool with which to do it.¹ Indeed, where feminism has been institutionalized as a discourse of knowledge, and in some instances, comes to constitute an ideal-ego for a subject, I suggest that its effect is not merely one (as Rose suggests), of “sanitisation” but one of inhibition: that is to say, that feminism has come to form a super-ego injunction that inhibits—increasingly evident in the conflicted impasses around sexuality and sexuation in the West’s “post-feminist” times, as I have explored elsewhere.² It is the argument of this paper that before feminism can be mobilized anew it must first address the particularity with which this signifier Feminism (capital ‘F’) is invested—at the level of the personal *and* political—through analysis.

In some respects this approach mimics Rose’s own analysis of Marilyn Monroe, as signifying or coming to stand in for something not fully conscious in the American dream.³ Rose suggests that what makes Monroe’s public figure so arresting is her refusal to hide her internal suffering—her quest in the “struggle to be fully human”—and in this I agree that Monroe provides a compelling lesson for

feminists as they broach a new millennium.⁴ In particular, Monroe's relationship to the film gaze—that is, the gaze invested with partial drives: the gaze of desire—that manifests so centrally and problematically in her life parallels a deep preoccupation within feminist discourses regarding the representation and function of women in the scheme of desire that serves to limit a question of their own desire. And though Monroe might be said to parallel feminism's questioning discourse (that effects a protest discourse), her protest is most striking for its double movement: it was not simply that she did not (or could not) hide her internal suffering, but that she allowed this to be exposed while simultaneously striving (self-consciously) to perfect a feminine masquerade that never seemed to be undermined by such questioning. In this dedication to the public image of her feminine persona, the most significant aspect of what Monroe has to offer feminism is arguably overlooked: while Monroe protested in her double movement, she nevertheless entered into a mode of analysis and raised the question: "what is my desire?" or, in light of Monroe's recall to the Freudian/Apollonic adage "know thyself," her question might be better phrased "what is my truth?"⁵ For some, Monroe might thus represent the quintessential image of psychoanalysis of interest to feminists in the question: what does a woman want?⁶ Freud's famous question to Marie Bonaparte has long-since entered into popular cultural parlance through film, television, and music, and often now functions as a cynical (postmodern) reference to Freud's unconscious patriarchal tendencies. Yet as Lacan notes, this question is often misquoted as "what does Woman want?" such that it poses a question at the level of a universal "Woman" rather than a particular subject, and further observes that Freud's question is, rather, about "[a] woman. Not just any woman."⁷

In response to this special edition of *Continental Theory and Thought* regarding feminisms future, the provocative title of this paper poses a similarly impossible question as that attributed to Freud: what does feminism want? The aim of this question is to show where that signifier Feminism functions to universalize the particular, and thus to argue that it potentially does so to (regressively) defend against the question of an individual subject's desire. By working through this provocation, I want to consider what goes unanalyzed in the relationship between the universal and the particular central to the feminist praxis of making the personal political, and ask more properly: what does a woman want *in* feminism? Where feminism has come to structure a speaking position within public discourse, it cannot be said to speak for itself but, rather, speak of a woman's desire, fear, or fantasy.⁸ Therefore, if feminism is to move forward it must, I suggest, first pass through an analysis.

To bring psychoanalytic insight to bear on feminist discourse and praxis is provocative, at least in terms of the direction of the analytic questioning. For

the most, the direction of the dialogue between psychoanalysis and feminism has been to ask what feminists (such as de Beauvoir or Irigaray) have to offer psychoanalysis—feminine or feminist critique and revision—rather than what psychoanalysis has to offer feminism. Mitchell’s famous proclamation that what psychoanalysis offers feminism is a precise illustration of the status quo to be dismantled (or at the very least, worked with), shows us the limit of this direction in the dialogue: psychoanalysis is only useful in articulating something of patriarchal structures (and their reproduction), as evidenced in what is perhaps one of the most popularly known feminist theoretical concepts: Laura Mulvey’s “male gaze.”⁹ Mulvey’s famous essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” follows Mitchell’s call and boldly claims psychoanalytic theory “as a political weapon” to “advance our understanding of the *status quo*, of the patriarchal order in which we are caught”¹⁰—specifically, to advance our knowledge of the mechanisms of the eroticized gaze harnessed in narrative cinema of a certain era. Yet somewhat tellingly while Mulvey’s essay articulates the structure of an eroticized gaze—a male viewing position structured on a woman as the object of desire—it does little to address the position of the one “caught” in this gaze, or to use psychoanalysis to understand what is at stake when one is the object of a gaze. That is, feminism has largely ignored what psychoanalysis has to tell us about women, which is assumed to be both inaccurate (imagined to be what men or patriarchy has to say about women), and, notably, *universalizing* (the presumption that what psychoanalysis has to say about women is not about the particularity of the individual in analysis but, rather, all women). Perhaps this is a consequence of early feminist interventions into psychoanalytic theory, such as de Beauvoir’s critical dismissal of Freud; her famous dictum that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” certainly set the precedent for post-structuralist feminists like Butler to dismantle this category “woman” in whose name feminism is mobilized.¹¹ As I have previously noted, Butler’s disarticulation of “woman” means such engagements between feminism and psychoanalysis have long-since been foreclosed despite Butler herself continuing to engage with psychoanalytic theory—that is, Butler functions for many feminists as a *justification* for rejection of psychoanalysis—and while Mulvey’s theory continues to function as a mainstay of film theory (pedagogically entrenched in the curriculum and regularly cited in digital feminist praxis) there is little feminist interest in what Freud, Lacan, or any psychoanalyst might have to say about women today in or out of theory.¹² This paper seeks to reopen this dialogue and discard the assumptions made along the former lines of feminist enquiry, indeed, it argues that psychoanalysis is essential to any future feminist project.

We cannot categorically ask what feminism wants when it is structured as a politics of the personal inhabited by idiosyncratic subjects (hence

intersectional theory), but when a subject speaks from the feminist discursive position or mounts it in public discourse, an important question must first be made conscious: what does a subject want *in* feminism? We cannot answer this question categorically either, but we can consider how such investments are commonly animated, and this paper takes a central feminist concept widely and popularly articulated in public discourse—Laura Mulvey’s “male gaze” theory—to consider the ways in which this feminist theory is animated in the question of what a woman wants when it is mounted in public discourse and, moreover, to ask how it forms a limit to the question of a woman’s desire. From here we might then ask: what does feminism want when it comes to signify what a woman wants?

The Universal and the Particular

To understand this relationship I put forward for analysis, between feminism and individual (feminist) desire, we must address the problem of the particular and the universal where it underscores feminist praxis and, just as problematically, where psychoanalytic theory built upon the clinic is applied in a *theoretical* analysis. Rose points out that feminism only speaks for “some women” and should never “claim to speak on behalf of all women,” yet claims to the contrary are becoming increasingly vocal in digital feminist media—such as the hashtag “#YesAllWomen”—suggesting this issue remains unresolved in much contemporary feminism.¹³ Nevertheless, the question of a *particular* female desire has been at the center of feminist debates about the representational strategies used to depict women in media cultures. Yet here the possibilities of animating an “authentic” female/feminine desire remains entangled in the problem of the universal.¹⁴ Following the protests of de Beauvoir, Irigaray, and others, contemporary feminists protest being represented—theorized and thought of—according to patriarchal structures, or phallogocentric models of desire.¹⁵ It is a common theme in much feminist criticism of post-feminist women to point out that their sexual enjoyment is “mimicking” possession of a phallus and is thus not authentically female, yet it remains unclear in much of this literature what this universal female desire would look like or structurally be otherwise.¹⁶ In this instance feminist criticism and theory remains stuck at the level of protest, and by maintaining the question of female desire at the level of a universal, one elides the truth at the level of the particular. To suggest feminism needs psychoanalysis is not, however, to suggest that psychoanalysis can tell us something of woman’s truth but, rather, of the particular truth of *any* subject. The call to psychoanalysis I am advocating through this paper then, is one that locates it at the level of a woman, in praxis. Bracher notes that where

“psychoanalysis” is deployed as a theoretical tool within the humanities it often comes to function “as an end in itself—that is, as a truth discourse functioning as a fortress to inhabit and display, or as a weapon with which to colonize other subjects or discourses” that all too often functions “as a body of knowledge to be developed, validated, or celebrated as the bearer of one’s identity.”¹⁷ It is *this* application of psychoanalytic theory that feminist theory and discourses have rejected but, I argue, it is the “psychoanalytic process,” as Bracher argues, that continues to be useful.

In seminar VII, Lacan situates desire at the level of the particular where, in analysis, the subject seeks to relieve suffering by coming to understand what Lacan calls a “liberating truth” but cautions this truth is not a universal “superior law” “beyond the subject” but, rather, as “a truth that frees” it is “a particular truth”—an “intimate specificity”—to be found “in a hiding place in our subject.”¹⁸ Characterized as a Freudian *Wunsch* (what Evans notes is more properly translated as “desire” in Lacan’s work as it denotes “a continuous force”), the “particularity” of this truth is universal only in its presences “in every human being.”¹⁹ More importantly for our purposes of subjecting the signifier Feminism—and a woman’s investment in it—to analysis, is to consider the question of desire. This question of desire is not the identification of an object, but a question regarding the ways a subject’s desire is inhibited by a demand from without: a super-ego injunction—that is, by the demands of a social group or any sovereign Good at its helm. How will one act on their desire *within and against* the super-ego’s command/demand to limit pleasure and enjoyment? This is what Bracher argues is the value of psychoanalytic *theory*: to be applied “as a means” of helping “individuals achieve recovery and integration of a previously excluded elements of the self” where such elements may have been subject to repressive forces. That is, analysis draws on theory but only so as to tool with which to untangle from those inhibiting forces the subject’s particular truth.

For female subjects (or those identifying with a woman’s plight) the demands of the social group are increasingly framed by feminist knowledge. Where the ideas of second wave feminisms have grown in public consciousness and increasingly shape public discourse—what it is permissible to say and do *qua* sexuation—feminist discourses can take on a super-egoical demand, particularly, as I have previously suggested, where feminist discourses promote an inflated morality akin to a Sovereign Good (as I will expand on later).²⁰ In this, feminist knowledge might be said to operate as a type of “duty,” and the response of feminists to any woman or sympathetic subject who rejects feminism hints at the ferocity of this demand: the logic of refusing feminist knowledge cannot be imagined, one must simply not *understand* what feminism is/wants/does/should be.²¹ I want to suggest that this feminist imperative forecloses the task of analysis

by instituting the very super-ego demand upon the subject that presents itself *in* analysis where, as Lacan puts it, “the ‘I’ which asks itself what it wants” attempts to resolve the dilemma of “submit[ting] itself to the duty that it feels within” which appears from without, as a “strange, paradoxical, and cruel command.”²² Though Monroe was largely unsuccessful in her attempts at analysis,²³ to ask the question of one’s desire is, many might argue, precisely what generates feminist inquiry and in this, feminist protest and questioning has been equated with the discourse of the hysteric.²⁴ Indeed, the fundamental question at the heart of second wave feminism animates the hysteric’s ultimate question: what is a woman?²⁵ The results of a properly feminist questioning would appear, at least in some expressions of post-feminist culture, to have resulted in a world dominated by feminist ideas. At the institutional level feminist knowledge is implicated in a range of social, political, and regulatory structures and processes. Perhaps more obviously, spectacles of female agency and desire are promoted among other imperatives to enjoy in neoliberal cultures of self-promotion.²⁶ Yet, as many cultural theorists suggest, expressions of post-feminism (depending on how one defines the ‘post’) always operate—somewhat like Monroe—in a double movement between traditional articulations of femininity and feminism.²⁷ Which is to say, that when one speaks from a feminist position of knowledge, the feminine question is expressed beneath the bar, and as Lacan notes, “as soon as you ask the question ‘What does a woman want?’ you locate the question at the level of desire, and everyone knows that, for woman, to locate the question at the level of desire is to question the hysteric.”²⁸ That is, where the theory is mobilized in this way that places so much emphasis on the master’s desire (at the expense of a woman’s), it might be said to be an expression of hysterical discourse. I have previously argued that feminist discourses—as a form of hysterical protest—have bypassed the analyst’s discourse and moved into the university discourse where feminist knowledge production is taken as truth; here feminism’s knowledge product can intervene into the subject’s affective reality and provide a (seemingly legitimate) name for affect.²⁹ But in doing so, I suggest, it Feminism as a signifier—of identity, knowledge, and universal truth—not only intervenes into the subject’s affects but *defends against them* and obstructs efforts towards (self) analysis.

But if feminism speaks from the position of the hysteric’s discourse articulated in Lacan’s seminar XVII, it is useful to remember that the speaking agent is “caused to act” from the operative function of “truth” beneath the bar: object *a* (see Figure 1 and 2). For the hysteric, this is object *a*, but like the product of the hysteric’s discourse (the bottom right position in the *matheme*), it signifies beneath the bar.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \$ & \rightarrow & S_1 \\ \text{---} & & \text{---} \\ a & & S_2 \end{array}$$

Figure 1: *The discourse of the hysteric* from Jacques Lacan's *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Russell Grigg. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007). 69.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{agent} & \rightarrow & \text{other} \\ \text{---} & & \text{---} \\ \text{truth} & & \text{production} \end{array}$$

Figure 2: *The formula of discourse*, in Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, on Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*. Translated by Bruce Fink. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 17.

If feminism is not to “sanitize” itself then, it is at the level of a subject that the truth causing the agent to act be uncovered, and where feminist theory may occlude—inhibit, shape, or give a name to—this truth, any question of feminisms future must address the signifier Feminism in this function. That is, it becomes essential to distinguish what this signifier Feminism speaks of at the level of the Symbolic and Imaginary signification. Lacan notes that the Symbolic is linked to language where what signifies of language is shared, but when one begins to deal with “projections, introjections, expulsions, [and] reintrojections of bad objects” including the subject’s own “sadism” “coming back from these objects” that we find signification “in the domain of the Imaginary.”³⁰ Such significations might be recognized in the *reactive* work of feminist theory and praxis in the field of desire.

The frequency with which Mulvey’s concept of the male gaze is invoked in popular culture and public discourses would suggest it has become one of the most widely recognized forms of feminist criticism. The influence of this theory in feminisms public discourse is notable in the amount of popular media culture that directly animates it and, increasingly, its reversal: advertising, film, and television all play with a reversal of women’s “to-be-looked-at-ness” in the studied presentation of a female gaze onto an eroticized male object (from sketch-parodies to full productions such as *Magic Mike*), and there is broad public acceptance (in the West at least) of erotic literature for women epitomized in the *50 Shades of Gray* phenomenon, that parallels the growth in pornography produced for a female viewer. The question of authenticity is subsequently raised in response, and much of this media culture can be

compared to the production of a more politically mobilized *feminist* gaze in counter-cultural spaces—there is a marked difference between ‘porn for women,’ for instance, and ‘feminist porn’: while the former responds to the market, that latter animates a libido at the service of politics. In addition to its political gesture, I suggest, this *feminist* gaze functions, as a defence against the question of a woman’s particular desire rather than its uninhibited animation. That is, where Rose suggests feminism must confront the unconscious desires of women, we instead see expressions of *feminist* desire as distorted reactions against phallic desire. As a hysterical protest, expressions of feminist desire follow the hysteric in offering “a teaching about the object and the fundamental fantasy,”³¹ for what is striking about hysterical protest is the ‘relative’ truth of what is produced as knowledge beneath the bar. The hysteric’s discourse is “not a question of the truth of facts [...] but of the truth that determines motives, that defines what torments the subject.”³² Here feminism becomes a signifier that metonymically stands in for what is beneath the bar of a woman when she invokes feminist discourse.

What does a woman want in feminist theory?

While we cannot speculate on what every woman wants with feminist theory, Mulvey’s ‘male gaze’ theory offers a prominent example of the ways in which feminist theory is mobilized politically where it cathects to personal affect, and this section seeks to explore some of the ways it has done so in response to Aronofsky’s 2010 film *Black Swan*. The film follows the story of an ascetic ballerina who, upon finally realizing her ambition of dancing the coveted dual role of Odette/Odile in the classical ballet *Swan Lake*, has a psychotic break and stabs herself during her triumphant debut performance. The film is striking in its self-conscious engagement with the male gaze through a host of cinematic techniques of looking typically associated with the dramatization of women in Hollywood film and the genres that animate female Oedipal dramas, longings, paranoia, and anxiety, such as the woman’s weepy, melodrama, Gothic horror, and psycho-sexual-thriller. The film’s melodramatic excesses, preponderance of doppelgängers, and techniques of visual paranoia somewhat polarized feminist critics, many of who were particularly hostile towards these cinematic techniques even while expressing uneasy enjoyment in the film. The story of an impossibly naïve classical ballet dancer living an ascetic, cloistered existence in the mirrored chamber of her mother’s New York apartment appears to regressively take women’s film and the representation of women in film (and their desire) backwards, for it would seem improbable that such a figure of sexual naïveté could exist in post-feminist times; as one critic put it, the film

should have been classified as horror because it animates an “age-old story” of woman and the “misogynistic” male-gaze rather than a “progressive” female journey, “the story of a whole woman.”³³ Yet the film is, I suggest, a shining example of *neo-noir* preoccupations with female desire; feminist critical response to *Black Swan* therefore show us where feminist knowledge inhibits what Rose advocates in the exploration of a woman’s desire—however “dark” it may be.³⁴

Rose implies that Monroe understood her function in Mulvey’s theory—that a woman’s role in classical narrative film is “to-be-looked-at,” where “women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact” such that she “holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire.”³⁵ That is, Monroe is said to have understood “the difference between gazing and looking” because “‘Men do not see me’ she is reported as having once said, ‘they just lay their eyes on me’.”³⁶ This is certainly suggestive of Lacan’s distinction between the *function* of the eye and the gaze—“mustn’t we distinguish between the function of the eye and that of the gaze?”—because the gaze is invested as a partial drive: “[t]he eye and the gaze—this is for us the split in which the drive is manifested at the level of the scopic field.”³⁷ As Themis notes, then, the gaze thus becomes part of the “perennial” field of the subject’s libidinal drives in the “genital organization”: oral, anal, and invocatory.³⁸ But while Monroe may have understood the fundamental difference between (functional) looking and the (eroticized) gaze, it is hard to see (from what anecdotal evidence exists) if she understood where this relates to a more common structure than simply what came to be known as Mulvey’s male gaze. Part two of Mulvey’s theory—that however pleasurable the gaze can also threaten in its reminder of an earlier castration around which pleasure in looking is fetishistically structured—follows Lacan’s observations that the gaze can induce anxiety, for where the gaze is linked to a partial drive, it recalls an original split that is replicated in the splitting off from the functional eye and the libidinally invested gaze: as Lacan puts it, “[t]he gaze is presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as the thrust of our experience, namely, the lack that constitutes castration anxiety.”³⁹ Mulvey’s theory emphasizes the way in which a woman’s “to-be-looked-at-ness” in narrative film functions as a reminder of this castration; yet the continued common usage of Mulvey’s original concept in public discourse, social media, and the classroom often comes to signify something more than simply a (heterosexual) male viewing position in which a woman is fetishistically invested as the object of the camera’s gaze. That is, the concept is deployed politically to defend at the level of personal affect, where the “male gaze” can come to refer to a fantasy of an all-powerful gaze that punishes and torments: a gaze, I suggest, that metonymically comes to stand in for a ferocious primal father, as I will go on to explain.

Strikingly, *Black Swan* dramatizes the problem of sublimation versus repression of libidinal investment. Its protagonist Nina (Natalie Portman), is confronted with the task of revising an earlier repression in order to dance both the idealized figure of femininity of Odette, and the erotic seductress of Odile. A central yet small scene in the film stages the problem of the gaze for Nina at the heart of this libidinal crisis: while catching the train late one night, an older, well-dressed man makes a masturbatory gesture in her direction and she is shocked to be caught in the erotic gaze of the Other. The scene is significant for at the meta-level of the film it stages the precise mechanisms of Nina's psychoses, which operates around the problem of eroticism—the Real of the drives—signaled by the gaze: her psychosis is triggered by a return of the repressed Real that has been split-off in her investment in the classical ballerina's purified feminine image. Aronofsky's film thus draws on the classical ballet world to animate the mechanisms of fetishism. Where the erotic drive is repressed, as Rose notes in the case of fetishism, "there suddenly emerges on the other side high esteem for what was concerned in a specific way with [the initial drive]." What Lacan might call the "disgusting" element of sexualisation is split off—that is, where the body "presents itself as a parcel of meat"—while a more ascetic version of the gaze is "raised to a fetish":⁴⁰ Nina heavily invests in mastering the (ascetic) feminine form of classical ballet that is the object of many admiring gazes, repressing the erotic aspect of the gaze that signals desire and sexual difference.

At the level of the personal, the film thus animates the anxiety triggered by the Real encountered in Lacan's seminar X, where anxiety is felt in the gaze that signals what has been repressed.⁴¹ Feminist responses to the film's articulation of this gaze functions to both deflect politically what is felt personally regarding the gaze. Nina's psychosis speaks of a lack of symbolic formalization different to that of repression in neurosis, and I do not suggest that a/ny woman's response to the gaze follows this; rather, I suggest, *Black Swan* metaphorises the problem of the gaze for the feminine subject where there is an excessive (moral) force or defence against it.⁴² For a woman, feminism may provide a defence against anxiety invoked in the gaze—whether metaphorically animated in film or popular culture, real experience, or both. Feminist film reviewers were loud in their reaction to the film for its startling animation of the male gaze. As Jacobs put it,

Black Swan reproduces the terms of the Western male imaginary that Irigaray describes and critiques. Woman as passive sexualized object. Woman as a mere muse lacking a subject position or desire and entirely constructed via male fantasy. Relations between women reduced to pathological variants of a mother-daughter bond

characterized by merging or hate and competition.⁴³

This oversimplification of the film might suggest to one who had not seen it that Nina is not the protagonist of the action (she is), or that the film's cinematography lingers longingly on her "to-be-looked-at-ness" (it does not). Indeed, the film is striking for its refusal to ever capture Nina fully in its gaze: much of the camera-work hovers just over Nina's shoulder, giving us her subjective point of view. Jacobs' response (like many others) is thus, overdetermined by feminist theory that is not accurate in its address to the way the film creates a very uneasy gaze that is ultimately one of Nina's psychic instability. Rather, feminist critics such as Jacobs reacted at a political (feminist theoretical) level with the personal disgust of Nina in the film when confronted with the eroticism signaled in the gaze of the Other. This particular deployment works, I suggest, to defend against the problem of the Other's gaze: specifically, the anxiety induced when caught in the gaze of the Other that is a reminder of the (Real) sexual realm so keenly reduced to social convention within feminist discourse and just as adamantly repressed, as Soler notes, in efforts towards making social spaces "unisexual" and thus equal.⁴⁴ That is to say, where film eloquently stages anxiety signaled in the sexual gaze, it does so because the Real of the sex has been repressed: responses to the film thus denote an anxiety in response to what the film makes manifest—the unresolved problem of the sexual in feminist theory. Jacobs further argues that the film's exploration of a female Oedipal drama through conventional cinematic tropes was "laughable" if not "obscene" to contemporary audiences.⁴⁵ This "obsceneness" that is defended against through feminist theory might be better understood through Williams' term, *on-scene*, which is "the gesture by which a culture brings on to its public arena the very organs, acts, bodies, and pleasures that have heretofore been designated *ob/scene* and kept literally off-scene."⁴⁶ *Black Swan's* ultimate crime then is to have put the psychosexual disturbances of a modern female subject *on-scene*, where many would rather not confront it.

Moreover, the film speaks to the *particular* in its animation of the gaze. The female dancer's body is not a universal metaphor for Woman: it is singular type of woman, a highly crafted, artificial body consolidated through two centuries of institutionalized technique to personify an imaginary feminine form. The film does not romanticize this artificial femininity, but shows where its ascetic excess is tragic. What manifests in the feminist mobilization of the male gaze—at least in this instance—then, is, I suggest, the fantasy produced through a hysterical discourse. What Jacobs' critique (as a condensation of many feminist critiques of the film and others like it) denotes, is a fantasy of patriarchy in the form of a punishing primal father, and a fantasy of Woman—pure innocent victim of

this primal father—in the universal. The totalizing “Western male imaginary” of Jacob’s critique—a synonym for patriarchy’s “male gaze”—suggests a figure of “primal omnipotence” like the primal father fantasized by Freud.⁴⁷ For example, many feminist descriptions of the film’s central male figure, the ballet director Thomas (Vincent Cassel) whose gaze Nina particularly wants to excite, are suggestive this omnipotence of a primal father who is “misogynistic,” “punitive,” and “sadistic” in his “refined cruelties.” As Themis observes, when Lacan critiques Freud’s primal Father myth (of *Totem and Taboo*) in seminar XVII, he identifies a hysterical fantasy at its base, where the idea of a mythical originary father cut down by his sons in order to share the women the father was hoarding (and thus instituting the law) is nothing but a “confusion of cause and consequence”: Freud “revers[es] the causal sequence” of the law “when he *engenders* out of the *discontents* with the law imposed by civilization a fantasy of omnipotence, of having all the power and sexual activity one can muster.”⁴⁸ In many instances, this is the fantasy of the “male gaze” that is launched in feminist critical discourse, where ‘male’ becomes a synonym for a sadistic father/master figure.

Politically, Mulvey argues, the male gaze puts Woman at the service of man’s castration anxiety: “the look, pleasurable in form, can be threatening in context” because it is structured on an earlier experience of castration, and Woman is the “representation/image that crystallizes this paradox.”⁴⁹ I want to suggest, however, that despite protestations there is a *jouissance* in mobilizing Mulvey’s theory: where it is mounted *politically* in public discourse it might be compared to a hysteric’s enjoyment, in the satisfaction of (theoretically) producing/fantasizing a patriarchal master only to reveal his castration while enjoying one’s own privation in being the apparently passive (helpless) object of this drama.⁵⁰ That is to say, the “male gaze” is deployed primarily as a mode of experiencing *jouissance* counter to the mode suggested in the concept itself: the *jouissance* of privation in being (metaphorically) reduced to the mode of the others enjoyment. Such fantasies might be prefaced in Mulvey’s original essay, where she explicitly states that in “analyzing pleasure, or beauty,” the result is “destruction” which is “the intention of this article”: to dismantle and “attack” the “satisfaction and reinforcement of the ego that represent the high point of film history.”⁵¹ Yet, as *Black Swan* illustrates, the ballerina is required to not simply embody an object of (ascetic) femininity for the gaze of the viewer, one must *excite* the gaze—a task that is far from passive. Where Mulvey emphasizes “pleasure in looking” as “split between active/male and passive/female” feminist critics tend to avoid engaging with the structure of this pleasure, underlying a certain enjoyment in the helplessness of being the object, as if one simply *was* the object of fantasy without having any role or action in it. The attraction of Mulvey’s theory may be to some, then, what Lacan notes drives the hysteric:

“what matters to her is that that other called a man know what a precious object she becomes in this context.”⁵² Here, as Lacan notes, “the neurotic’s fantasy is entirely situated in the locus of the other”⁵³ and is “striking” for its function of “defending” the subject “against anxiety.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, as Lacan goes on to observe, the neurotic’s fantasy, “is also, contrary to all appearances, the bait with which they hold onto the Other.”⁵⁵ When applied to the feminist use of the “male gaze” then, we see a similar hysterical reaction that defends against anxiety signaled in the gaze through the fantasy of a primal father—a master—who is essential to the defence. The structure is similar in understandings of an emerging ‘female gaze’ in popular films such as *Thelma & Louise* and *The Hunger Games* trilogy, where a “female vantage point” is mobilized to “encourage a questioning of patriarchal power.”⁵⁶

What does feminism want when it comes to signify what a woman wants?

I have elsewhere suggested that where feminism forms a new master discourse—that is, where feminism’s knowledge product becomes a university discourse in Lacan’s formula—it can come to function as a super-ego force equivalent to that held by religion.⁵⁷ Here, feminism operates as a new canon—what Bracher calls “establishment pedagogy”—that one is inculcated into and asked to master.⁵⁸ As a master discourse, feminism can function pedagogically like ideology, and I suggest that where students are interpellated by feminist theory they can become inhibited in their the ability to perceive other ways of thinking. Russell observes, for example, that in the clinic identity bearing signifiers in the symbolic that a subject might be “encouraged to assume” and “fasten” their identity around, can provide assurance in the belief that the symbolic signifier “tells her about what she *is*” but, ultimately, such identifications can stagnate the progress of analysis where they form a regressive defense against the real truth the subject is seeking in analysis regarding their suffering.⁵⁹ More than simply obfuscating access to an individual *particular* truth of being, I want to suggest that where Feminism becomes a university discourse—as an apparently rational force of enlightenment thinking—it can function as a super-ego injunction. Where the super-ego takes its energy from an individual turning their own aggression inwards, Themí observes that Freud’s understanding of the super-ego equates to a form of Nietzschean “bad conscience” because both operate as forms of “internalized aggression.”⁶⁰ And Themí follows Zupančič in linking this operation to a “mode of enjoyment” experienced “in the whole history of Christianity.”⁶¹ Feminism’s inheritance of a religious function is not coincidental. As I have noted elsewhere, feminism is structured around a moral

good that takes on the inflationary qualities of a sovereign Good over-invested in ideals at the expense of knowledge of the drives, not the least because, as Paglia has argued, “feminism, like all liberal movements of the past two hundred years, is heir to Rousseau.”⁶² The problem is twofold in that, feminist knowledge production is generated through liberal Enlightenment thinking that, in Rousseauian tradition, presumes a fundamental innocence beneath socially (patriarchal) corruptive forces. This is Paglia’s point in *Sexual Personae*, that the darker—that is, amoral—qualities of “[s]exuality and eroticism” may be shaped by different historical institutions, but “[f]eminists grossly oversimplify the problem” by reducing sex “to a matter of social convention” and attempt to “readjust society” by “eliminat[ing] sexual inequality.”⁶³

The emphasis in feminist theory on ‘undoing’ patriarchal structures (such as the male gaze) where they are perceived to enforce female victimhood functions subtly at the level of morality akin to a Judeo-Christian slave-revolt. Russell follows Nietzsche’s work on the structure of Christian pity (given to their Roman masters and “persecutors”) to observe that it goes beyond simply redressing a perceived power imbalance to a reversal of the terms of value judgments.⁶⁴ In a simple reversal of power, the persecutor “is forced to assume a position in which he has done something that incurs guilt, something not just bad but ‘evil’” such that “forgiveness constitutes an exercise of domination” over the persecutor.⁶⁵ More importantly, this produces a “reversal of positions from which value might be evaluated in the first place”: the subject deemed to be “evil” is made to assume an “ignorance as to some ultimate, transcendental law according to which the value ought to be assigned” and consequently asked to “reflect upon itself” as criminal while the “suffering” of the Christian is “elevated to the status of universal moral virtue.”⁶⁶ Where feminism becomes a moral virtue that offers a defence against the persecutory gaze, it might be said to perform a super-ego function of a “moral conscience” that Freud theorizes comes to “censor” the individual’s dreams and fantasies.⁶⁷ A woman’s enjoyment in the gaze—enjoyment in being an erotic object—is largely overlooked by feminist theorists as it is seen to be a form of imitation of the status quo: to be “seduced” into thinking that “patriarchy is pleasurable.”⁶⁸ The prominence of feminist discourse and theories in Western cultures may provide (to greater or lesser extent, depending on the particularity of the individual’s engagement with such discourses) a moral groundwork for the super-ego that, Freud puts it, “gathers up from the influences of the environment the demands which that environment makes upon the ego”⁶⁹ and, thus, functions as a form of moral censorship over any possible *jouissance* in the feminine position where it may be in conflict with super-ego demands. This will equally depend on the mother-transference that feminism forms for the individual, as Freud notes, the super-

ego reveals “its origin in the influence of superior powers, and above all of parents.”⁷⁰ The subject is faced with the dilemma: “[s]hould it or should it not submit itself to the half-conscious, paradoxical, and morbid command of the superego[?]”⁷¹

We see this animated in *Black Swan* through the figure of Nina’s mother (Barbara Hershey) in an equally important scene. Nina wakes in her childish bedroom and begins masturbating before she is startled to realize her mother is in the room with her. There is some ambiguity in the scene, as Nina’s subjective vision is edited to suggest that the mother’s presence may be merely a hallucination in Nina’s unraveling psychosis; regardless of the mother’s *actual* presence or absence from the scene, however, we see the significance of her presence in Nina’s psyche, as a prohibiting (moral) force that inhibits Nina’s attempt at erotic discovery (the structure of which is repeated in a later scene when the actual mother inhibits Nina’s potentially hallucinatory sexual encounter). Indeed, it is easy to see how *Black Swan* is “obscene” to feminist critics for presuming of a number of psychoanalytic frameworks in the logic of its plot that run counter to contemporary feminist thought that has long abandoned psychoanalytic engagements. This sense of having “overcome” regressive theory is expected to be recognized in popular film and media cultures. In feminist criticism of the film’s exploration of female desire caught up in Oedipal dramas and the anxiety of the sexual gaze, offer a symptomatic rejection of precisely what Rose would have feminism confront. That is, the film shows us where contemporary gender politics excessively rely on an ideal relation to gendered identity and representation, anchored in what has become the feminist ‘Good’: positive representations of ideal, ideologically progressive female characters. It is the sexual component of Nina’s psychosis—its repression and distorted return—that animates what is “unspeakable” to contemporary feminist discourses—what it “sanitizes”—and therefore, exactly what a feminist must confront. Here, psychoanalysis in praxis is useful in asking what feminism wants when it comes to signify what a woman wants, because it may assist a woman in identifying what feminism asks it submit to—a “paradoxical, and cruel command”⁷²—that keeps one in ignorance of desire.

Concluding thoughts: Does Feminism Exist?

In seminar XX, Lacan makes a controversial statement, that Woman, capital ‘W’ does not exist, writing it *W*oman, and feminists informed by poststructuralist thought might agree, yet many seem reluctant to abandon the signifier feminism where it constitutes the work and aims of this Woman. Such a signifier—Feminism—and the knowledge it presupposes supports the imaginary

relationship formed between the subject and knowledge. Althusser's definition of ideology might be applied here, to express the relationship between a woman and feminism: like ideology, feminism functions to structure "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence,"⁷³ or more precisely, feminist knowledge gives meaning to if not quilts the subject's structure by expressing an imaginary relation to the *sexual* conditions of existence. Jacobs' critique of the "Western Male Imaginary" (and others like it) assumes that, if women were *not* represented within it and were allowed to represent themselves on screen, they would be nothing but pure and virtuous, without jealousy, competition, anxiety or, indeed, sexual being—as Willoughby puts, in the feminist utopia, *Black Swan* would "a progressive film with a positive, young woman-centered journey out of repression at its center," "a whole woman" with "a healthy, multi-faceted sexuality," and a successful career.⁷⁴ Themí notes this fantasy of woman often found in feminist theory is the universal Woman Lacan speaks of in seminar XX, "'Woman' as the universal purity of innocence or victimhood" who, Lacan famously puts it, "doesn't exist."⁷⁵ This statement goes further, Themí notes, towards Lacan's "thesis of the 'not-whole' and lack of a 'sexual relationship,' of which he remarks, 'what do you expect?—if the sexual relationship doesn't exist, there aren't any ladies'."⁷⁶ Lacan thus notes that the hysteric fantasizes a master in part, to resolve their question regarding sexual difference "which is precisely the impossible."⁷⁷ Quackelbeen *et al.* further note that even where the "no sexual relation" is felt, such information in no way stops the hysteric from "dreaming of the contrary" that "there is no sexual relation, but there should be one" because it is essential for a notion of sexual equality.⁷⁸ Yet efforts towards equality in terms of power and status are in contrast to Monroe's questioning and in this she offers a lasting lesson for feminism for as Rose observes, in confronting the "the worst" of her life Monroe never exchanged suffering for "a counter affirmation of power."⁷⁹ In searching for one's particular truth—what motivates and may in turn be inhibited by feminist discourse and theory—one must consider the impossibility of Feminism (capital 'F') as a discourse of truths. For the aims of this Feminism continue to institute the fantasy of Woman: whole, virtuous, and victimized. Indeed, as Themí notes of Lacan's famous *Woman*, if *Woman* does not exist, how can *Feminism*? That is, might we not hold a better relationship towards feminism (lower-case 'f')—develop a more appropriate distance towards feminist ideas and thought, and free feminist agendas towards more productive aims and purposes—by articulating *Feminism* as not existing?⁸⁰

- 1 Rose, Jacqueline. *Women in Dark Times*. (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), x-xii.
- 2 See Horbury, Alison. *Post-Feminist Impasses in Popular Heroine Television: The Persephone Complex*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- 3 Rose, *Women in Dark Times*, 110.
- 4 Rose, *Women in Dark Times*, x, 14.
- 5 See Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*. Translated by Dennis Porter. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997). Rose *Women in Dark Times*, 126.
- 6 Freud's famous comment to Marie Bonaparte, "What does a woman want?" see Ernest Jones. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud: Volume 2, Years of Maturity 1901-1919*. (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1955), 421.
- 7 See Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Russell Grigg. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 129.
- 8 Rose, *Women in Dark Times*.
- 9 Juliet Mitchell. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986). Laura Mulvey. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 14-26. (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1989).
- 10 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 14-15.
- 11 de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Translated by H. M. Parshley. Edited by H. M. Parshley. (London: Vintage, 1997), 295. Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Second ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008).
- 12 As I have observed, this rejection holds a certain curiosity for, though feminism has relinquished engagement with psychoanalysis, many queer theorists continue this engagement, see Horbury. *Post-Feminist Impasses*, 45. See also Horbury, Alison. "Digital Feminisms and the Split Subject: Short-Circuits through Lacan's Four Discourses." *CM: Communication and Media Journal* XI, no. 38 (2016): 135-166. One small exception may be Angela McRobbie's suggestion that psychoanalysis may help understand women's "illegible rage" and "gender melancholia" in post-feminist times, see Angela McRobbie. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture, and Social Change*. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications,

2009), 94-123.

- 13 Rose, *Women in Dark Times*, i. See my discussion of digital feminist praxis in Horbury, "Digital Feminisms," 154.
- 14 See Gill, Rosalind. *Gender and the Media*. (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 1-41. McRobbie, Angela. *The Aftermath of Feminism*, 84.
- 15 For example, Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Translated by C. Porter and C. Burke. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, [1977]1985).
- 16 For example, Douglas, Susan J. *Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message That Feminism's Work Is Done*. (New York: Times Books, 2010). McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism*. Arguably, of course, Lacan makes the same claim against female psychoanalysts on the topic, "we've never been able to get anything out of them" in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, on Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*. Translated by Bruce Fink. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 75.
- 17 Bracher, Mark. *Radical Pedagogy: Identity, Generativity, and Social Transformation, Education, Psychoanalysis, and Social Transformation*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 116.
- 18 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, 24.
- 19 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, 24. See Evans, Dylan. *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 35.
- 20 Horbury, *Post-Feminist Impasses*, 132.
- 21 See Horbury, "Digital Feminisms," 135-166.
- 22 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book VII*, 6.
- 23 *Marilyn: The Last Sessions*. Films d'ici; France 2; ARTE France; *Centre national de la cinématographie*, 2008.
- 24 See Appignanesi, Lisa, and John Forrester. *Freud's Women*. (New York: Other Press, 2000), 68-9. Lacan notes that one is "obliged to pass through the hysteric's discourse" where it produces "the desire to know," Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII*, 33-4.
- 25 Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III The Psychoses 1955-1956*. Translated by Russell Grigg. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (Chatham:

Routledge, 2000), 70.

- 26 See McRobbie, Angela. *The Aftermath of Feminism*. McGowan, Todd. *End of Dissatisfaction? Jacques Lacan and the Emerging Society of Enjoyment*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003).
- 27 See Gill, Rosalind. *Gender and the Media*, 263-273, and Horbury, "Post-Feminist Impasses in Popular Heroine Television." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 28, no. 2 (2014): 213-25.
- 28 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII*, 129.
- 29 Horbury, "Digital Feminisms," 135-166.
- 30 Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*. Translated by John Forrester. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 74.
- 31 Quackelbeen, J. *et al.* "Hysterical Discourse: Between the Belief in Man and the Cult of Woman." In *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society*, edited by Mark Bracher, Marshall W Jr. Alcorn, Ronald J. Corthell and Françoise Massardier-Kenney, 129-37. (London and New York: New York University Press, 1994). p.134.
- 32 Quackelbeen, *et al.* "Hysterical Discourse: Between the Belief in Man and the Cult of Woman," 134.
- 33 Willoughby, Rebecca. "The Horror of Female Sexual Awakening: 'Black Swan'." *Bitch Flicks*, (December 24 2013), viewed 15 February 2017: http://www.bitchflicks.com/2013/12/the-horror-of-female-sexual-awakening-black-swan.html#.VJFs4ihC_nY
- 34 Gordon argues that neo-noir expresses a "moment in which claims are made for an autonomy of desire and subjectivity for women" Gordon, Suzy. "Fatality Revisited: The Problem of 'Anxiety' in Psychoanalytic-Feminist Approaches to Film Noir." In *Neo-Noir*, edited by M Bould, K Glitre and Tuck G, 203-20. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 209.
- 35 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."
- 36 Rose, *Women in Dark Times*, 101.
- 37 Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI the Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 73-4.

- 38 Themí, Tim. "Lacan, Barthes, Bataille, and the Meaning of the Eye—or Gaze." *Undecidable Unconscious: A Journal of Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis* (in-press 2017), n14. Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI*, 78.
- 39 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI*, 72-3.
- 40 Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI*, 172-3. Rose, L. (1988). Freud and Fetishism: Previously Unpublished Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 57:147-166.
- 41 Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X: Anxiety*. Translated by A R Price. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (Cambridge, Malden: Polity, 2014), 160.
- 42 Nina's psychosis follows Lacan's description of psychosis as resulting from "something primordial regarding the subject's being [that] does not enter into symbolization and is not repressed," but ultimately becomes "rejected" until adulthood when "the nonsymbolized reappears in the real," and the subject's mechanisms of denial or negation (*verneinung*) which may have worked in the absence of the Real, "prove inadequate" to deal with it. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III The Psychoses 1955-1956*. Translated by Russell Grigg. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (Chatham: Routledge, 2000) 81-6.
- 43 See Fisher, Mark, and Amber Jacobs. "Debating *Black Swan*: Gender and Horror." *Film Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2011): 58-62, p.59.
- 44 Soler, Colette. "Hysteria in Scientific Discourse." In *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's Major Work on Love, Knowledge, and Feminine Sexuality*, edited by Suzanne Barnard and Bruce Fink, 47-55. (Albany: State University of New York, 2002), 53.
- 45 It's worth noting that Jacobs calls on the word "obscene" several times in her critique of the film. Fisher and Jacobs. "Debating *Black Swan*: Gender and Horror," 59, and 61.
- 46 Williams, Linda. "Porn Studies: Proliferating Pornographies on/Scene: An Introduction." In *Porn Studies*, edited by Linda Williams, 1-23. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 3.
- 47 see Freud, Sigmund. "Totem and Taboo." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XIII (1913-1914)*, edited by James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. (London: Vintage Books, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, [1913] 2001).
- 48 See Themí, Tim. *Lacan's Ethics and Nietzsche's Critique of Platonism*. (Albany: SUNY, 2014), 94-3. See Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII*, 129.

- 49 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 19.
- 50 As Lacan notes in seminar XVII, the hysteric's discourse is where the master is first fantasized, Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Russell Grigg. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 129.
- 51 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 16. It is worth noting that Mulvey reflects on this essay as "autobiographical," see Mulvey, Laura. "The Pleasure Principle." *Sight & Sound* 25 no. 6 (2015):50-51.
- 52 As Lacan notes in seminar XVII, the hysteric's discourse is where the master is first fantasized, Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII*, 34.
- 53 Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, 49-50.
- 54 Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, 50.
- 55 Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, 50-51.
- 56 Keller, Alyse, and Katie L Gibson. "Appropriating the Male Gaze in the Hunger Games: The Rhetoric of a Resistant Female Vantage Point." *Texas Speech Communication Journal* 38, no. 1 (2014): 21-30.
- 57 Horbury. "Digital Feminisms," 156-157.
- 58 Bracher, Mark. *Radical Pedagogy: Identity, Generativity, and Social Transformation, Education, Psychoanalysis, and Social Transformation*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 97.
- 59 Russell, Jared. *Nietzsche and the Clinic: Psychoanalysis, Philosophy, Metaphysics*. (London: Karnac, 2017), 138-9.
- 60 Themí, Tim. *Lacan's Ethics*, 161n27.
- 61 Zupančič, Alenka. *The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 50. Themí. *Lacan's Ethics*, 161n27.
- 62 Horbury. *Post-Feminist Impasses*, 132-133. Paglia, Camille. *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*. (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 1.
- 63 Paglia. *Sexual Personae*, 1.
- 64 Russell. *Nietzsche and the Clinic*, 78.

- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Freud, Sigmund. "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XVIII (1920-1922)*, edited by James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, 69-134. (London: Vintage Books, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, [1921]2001), 109-10.
- 68 Horbury. *Post-Feminist Impasses*, 52, 130.
- 69 Freud. "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," 110.
- 70 Freud. "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," 110. See my discussion of feminist transference in mother-daughter dramas in Horbury, *Post-Feminist Impasses*, 144-69.
- 71 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, 6.
- 72 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, 6.
- 73 Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." In *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. pp. 85-126. Translated by Ben Brewster (NYU Press: <http://www.jstor.org.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/stable/j.ctt9qgh9v>), 109.
- 74 Willoughby, "The Horror of Female Sexual Awakening: 'Black Swan'."
- 75 Themí. "Lacan, Barthes, Bataille, and the Meaning of the Eye—or Gaze," n12.
- 76 Ibid. Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, 57, 72.
- 77 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI*, 167.
- 78 Quackelbeen *et al.* "Hysterical Discourse: Between the Belief in Man and the Cult of Woman," 134.
- 79 Rose, *Women in Dark Times*, 17.
- 80 This concept was formed in discussion with Themí's analysis of Lacan's *Woman* as it relates to feminist responses to George Bataille in Themí, "Lacan, Barthes, Bataille, and the Meaning of the Eye—or Gaze," n12.

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