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# Dorothy Arzner's trousers

by Jane Gaines

Who was Dorothy Arzner? The easy answer to the question is that Dorothy Arzner was the only woman director to survive in the U.S. motion picture industry during the studio system's Golden Era. Preceded in the silent era by Lois Weber and Alice Guy Blaché and followed in the 1950s by Ida Lupino, Arzner worked as the only woman director in this period, and she worked steadily as evidenced by her output—the twenty films released between 1927 and 1940. But the "who" question, although important for feminists, recedes in significance in comparison with the "what" question that matters so much. "What *was* she?"—an impossible determination, especially in relation to such an "impossible identity," a trouble of designation compounded further by time's passage and historical 'change.'<sup>1</sup> If the meaning of lesbian and gay identity stands in dispute in the present, it remains forever unresolvable both in and for the past. For feminist film theory, however, what Dorothy Arzner *was* and how to name it may be moot since feminist critics have already claimed her as *the* most important "lesbian" director in U.S. film history. The question then becomes as much one of what Dorothy Arzner *is* for feminist film theory in the contemporary period.

For the last fifteen years, feminists have made Dorothy Arzner into a kind of patron saint of theory, during which time her work has provided the subject matter for a number of important articles as well as a monograph published by the British Film Institute. Her position as an honorary deconstructionist becomes confirmed by her presence on the cover of one of the most difficult feminist film theory collections.<sup>2</sup> Yet something remains missing. With the exception of an important early talk by Claudia Gorbman, feminists whispered the word but never really spoke to Arzner's lesbianism.<sup>3</sup>

That is, feminists whispered the word until Judith Mayne's recent book broke the fifteen years of silence. Confirming the deepness of this silence, Mayne further asserts that throughout this hushed period, feminist film theory produced a strangely split discourse resulting in two "Dorothys": the "textual Arzner" and the highly visible image of Dorothy Arzner.<sup>4</sup> Quite rightly, Mayne points out the intent focus on the "textual Arzner," recalling the theoretical significance of the moment in *DANCE, GIRL, DANCE* (1940) when Judy (Maureen O'Hara) turns on her male audience, "returning the gaze." One cannot emphasize enough the importance of Claire Johnston's discovery of this on-screen reversal in the first decade of feminist film theory.<sup>5</sup>

Although *Cahiers du Cinéma's* theorization of the "Series E film" demonstrated how gaps and formal disruptions occurred widely in classical Hollywood narratives, the possibility of totally undermining the patriarchal text seemed strategically wrong for feminist film theory, an emerging criticism that had already staked a great deal on establishing how patriarchal cinema functioned in an exclusionary way.<sup>6</sup> Looking back, one recalls how the discipline of early feminist film theory often worked as a constraint that produced more than a little frustration. And yet, following the late 1980s when, in the heyday of celebratory criticism, feminist critics suddenly read many Hollywood texts as progressive, it began to seem that *Cahiers* "Series E theory" and not classical film narrative itself that might be subverted from within. Today one is tempted to feel some nostalgia for the time when a critic rarely found such a moment as Johnston did in Arzner's *DANCE, GIRL, DANCE*. The theory of patriarchal cinema's thorough ideological saturation held at bay another potentially problematic tendency--the tendency to automatically ascribe transgressiveness to films and tapes when made by women.

Serious work on the "textual Arzner," whether it had to do with the discourse on monogamy or the suppression of the feminine in *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* (1932) helped to establish critical credentials for feminist film theory.<sup>7</sup> But Mayne tells us about two Arzners: the "textual Arzner," an always deflected representation of desire, and the photographic image of Dorothy Arzner, an image that hinted at the desire unrepresented in the film criticism. Mayne justly points out how prominent images of Dorothy Arzner wearing trousers and man-tailored suit jackets illustrated early scholarship, so that these images bore the burden of articulating the unspeakable. The significance of the photographs' silent but eloquent evidence cannot be emphasized enough, and not only as illustrations for scholarly discussions of Arzner's work. For years, an "8 by 10" glossy of Arzner with Joan Crawford on the set of *THE BRIDE WORE RED* (1937) hung on the wall of my office—a kind of feminist theory "pin-up." [Figure 1]

I want to explore two avenues Mayne leaves open--first, to further her analysis of how Arzner's image functioned; second, to question the issue of Arzner and authorship by examining how this director worked with gay male costume designers. First, I want to reiterate Mayne's point about the image's incredible attractiveness. Arzner's image offers many delights--the expensive tailoring details on her suits, her patterned ties, cufflinks, white shirts, and jodphurs worn with boots, one leg coolly crossed over the other. More

than one production still features Dorothy in profile, sighting an actress, looking directly into the eyes of the other from under her thick unplucked brows. In these photographs, lesbian desire is made exceedingly alluring and chic.

That the chic butch Arzner (wielding the power of a male director and enjoying the adoration of glamorous actresses) represents only a fantasy of lesbianism doesn't matter. And to say that the image offers food for reverie is not to dismiss the political importance of the way Arzner's image has stood for lesbian desire in exactly the spot where that desire has been repressed. On the contrary, to say this is to acknowledge the tremendous imaginative power of lesbian reclamation, that real fantasy possession of the icons of motion pictures past.<sup>8</sup> It is also to acknowledge that if we wish to chart the coordinates of desire intersecting Arzner's image, we need to look at a variety of contradictory identity crossings. The image, after all, remains indifferent to the sort of fascination it attracts. Although persons may have political positions in regard to fantasy material, fantasy itself doesn't much care what or who inspires it.<sup>9</sup>

Until very recently, the only way to locate the range of identity crossings to which I refer would have been along Adrienne Rich's "lesbian continuum," an ingenious gesture of inclusion that allowed a "maybe, maybe not" position on sexual love between women.<sup>10</sup> Since the 1980 appearance of Rich's essay developing this concept, it has stood as the reigning lesbian feminist paradigm in academic circles. But its influence has not gone without challenge. Many wonder if "lesbian continuum" can adequately express the complexity of identities formed around sexuality. And the concept has come under increasing attack for the way it has smoothed out the conflict between lesbianism involving sexuality and political (only) lesbianism.

At this time in history, academic feminism may look less and less toward the woman's movement (and its cultural feminism) and more toward the lesbian and gay movement as a source for an evolving theory of gender, identity, and sexuality. And I do mean "source," for as academic feminists have become more involved with university politics and less involved with community struggles, they have looked to the people's movements to which they no longer belong for their "supply" of new concepts upon which to base theories. Most recently, lesbian and gay studies has given academic feminism a considerably fiercer theorization of "lesbian," although it remains to be seen whether women's movement lesbians will see themselves at all in the



1. Joan Crawford and Dorothy Arzner on the set of *THE BRIDE WORE BLACK* (1937).

category. What I am looking for in my attempt to comprehend the attractions to Arzner's image is a fluctuating category that acknowledges the uncertainty and the inadvisability of assigning identities based on sexual practice. Here I take my cue from Judith Butler's understanding of "lesbian" and "gay" as "sites of necessary trouble" whose categorical instability offers less an occasion for concern than an occasion for pleasure (a pleasure of duplicity as well as of uncertainty) (Butler, 14). The disputedness of the category should allow room for the cautious and tentative as well as the unequivocal embrace of lesbianism. I especially would like the "site of trouble" definition to allow (although the category may not finally extend this far) for a position of *vicarious transgression*.

*Vicarious transgression* refers to the kind of exhilaration produced by the knowledge of how much "trouble" gay/lesbian desire produces for heterosexuality. It points to an identification with the idea of disruption, although not necessarily participation in that disruption. This is a knowing position, as I have said, and what is known is that the dividing line between heterosexuality and homosexuality remains a disputable boundary, the two identities being so close that they can and do touch.<sup>11</sup> One would expect that the safe *transgressor* stands as nothing more than an interloper or a liberal romanticizer of the margins. This may be the case, but I am also wanting to borrow something from Alex Doty's concept of *queer positioning*, a vantage point on culture which one can step into and out of, a possibility that the text offers which a willing viewer can take up.<sup>12</sup> But *queer positioning* goes beyond its queasier cousin *vicarious trans-*

gression. As I understand *queer positioning*, it is also a direct challenge to the textual subject positioning that in 1970s film theory was said to "produce" the viewer as (heterosexually) gendered. Here, instead, the viewer may be "produced" as a homosexual. Crucially, queer positioning implies that a proposition of some kind has been made and accepted. I would want to retain some sense of this "trying out" of a sexual identity position. It's the *vicarious* aspect of an essentially transgressive fantasy.

My attempt to define this place of *vicarious transgression* is motivated by an interest in explaining the common situation of feminist critics who, although fascinated by her image, did not deal directly with Dorothy Arzner and lesbianism in the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> And I include in the category unequivocal lesbians, feminist not-lesbians, straight, in theory-only lesbians, as well as once only and future lesbians. I make no apologies for this attitude which characterized so many feminists in the first fifteen years of Arzner scholarship. Undeniably, vicarious transgressors are fence-sitters.

While I am on the subject, I wish to emphasize that although Arzner's photographic image may invite a conventional auteur approach, that is not my interest. Judith Mayne also dismisses auteurism for its contemporary naiveté, particularly given the significance of the poststructuralist critique of the author's position vis a vis the text (*Lesbian Looks*, 115). And the biographical approach has other problems, some of which can be illustrated by the influential interview with Arzner conducted by Karen Kay and Gerald Peary in 1973, six years before her death in 1979.<sup>14</sup> This interview, along with revivals of her work, helped restore Arzner to her place in film history. At the time, *DANCE, GIRL, DANCE* (1940) *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* (1933), and *THE WILD PARTY* (1929) had played as centerpieces in the first of the First Annual Women's Film Festivals in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco.

The Kay and Peary interview does not significantly differ in its format from many other interviews with motion picture pioneers which have filled the pages of film journals. But although it is not constructed differently, feminist film critics have read it differently—more closely and over and over. This close close reading has been crucial to the process of writing a lesbian feminist film theory, although when the interview first appeared, it provoked only limited questions. The one question most often asked ("Was Dorothy Arzner at least a woman-identified woman?") actually allowed an evasion of the issue of lesbianism. In retrospect, the 1970 New York Radicalesbians formulation of a "woman-identified woman" seems somewhat quaint.<sup>15</sup> Over time, this strategic move to expand the definition of lesbian to include women who were lesbian in politics only seems to have fulfilled the prophecy about that very move. Yes, the concept worked to embrace Jane Addams, Willa Cather, and Dorothy Arzner. It also postponed dealing with the importance of lesbian sexuality, and it backed off from acknowledging the real dangers of living as an "out" homosexual. The "woman-identified woman" hypothesis also problematically set up a too literal expectation which Arzner's own commentary on her work could not support. This expectation conspired with an unexamined auteurism to produce the

"problem" of Dorothy Arzner. Much was made, for instance, of the fact that when questioned about *CHRISTOPHER STRONG*, (the Katherine Hepburn vehicle about the aviatrix based on the life of the British flyer Amy Lowell), Arzner said that she was more interested in the male character, Sir Christopher Strong. It is this character, a married man, by whom the heroine becomes pregnant. Honorably, to avoid the risk of dividing his family, she commits suicide in a successful shot at breaking the altitude record.

In the interview, Arzner denies that she had any particular interest in either of the important woman characters (Billie Burke's wife and Hepburn's daring flyer):

...I was more interested in Christopher Strong, played by Colin Clive, than in any of the women characters. He was a man 'on the cross.' He loved his wife, and he fell in love with the aviatrix. He was on the rack. I was really more sympathetic with him, but no one seemed to pick up on that. Of course, not too many women are sympathetic about the torture the situation might give to a man of upright character." (Kay and Peary, 163).

One can read this remark in any number of interesting ways, the most important of which may be to repudiate the kind of automatic auteurism Arzner's work could attract. Also, from a contemporary point of view, we have arrived at the point in Left politics where we know that transgression in one arena doesn't necessarily mean transgression in another.<sup>16</sup> Or, as Diana Fuss asks the question, "And does inhabiting the outside...guarantee radicality?" (Fuss, 5).

Clearly, the burden of reading Dorothy Arzner's work in a radical way lies with us and not with the historical person. What this means is that as critics we can (and do) read this group of films "in the name of Dorothy Arzner." By reading "in the name of," I mean something slightly different from the kind of inscription implied in Judith Mayne's term "female signature." (*Women at the Keyhole*, 115). I do want to retain some notion of the female author as having left something *in* the text (for political purposes at least), yet locating that something always requires an act of faith that is politically problematic in other ways.<sup>17</sup> So, by reading "in the name of," or reading "for Arzner," I mean more of a production of critical meaning as an homage to Dorothy Arzner and all that she has come to stand for in film history. And I would extend the same gesture to those designers whose work needs credit and admiration.

Lesbian and gay theories of aesthetics (whether of high art or low camp) have historically started with the paradigm of the discrepancy of homosexuals' lived relation to heterosexual society. In the classic theorizations of camp, for instance, gay sensibility is derived from the need to constantly assemble and disassemble—to perform a self. Richard Dyer has recently given this theorization a new angle in his argument that, in one sense, being gay functions significantly like authorship—both are performances. ("All authorship and all sexual identities are performances, done with greater or less facility.")<sup>18</sup> Some are successful; some are not. Dyer achieves the simultaneous retrieval and dismissal of authorship with a coy twist—to believe in authorship is to believe in fairies. Retaining the social construction of both while en-

tertaining the belief for the course of one fleeting article, he subtly shows us the political significance of believing (all the while we know they aren't really real but "only" made up). And so I only too happily find an argument I can borrow that allows me to pretend Arzner is an author without the danger of lapsing into auteur theory's politically retrograde idealism.

What would a reading "for Arzner" look like? First of all, I'm not arguing that for different readings, because my dissatisfaction is not with feminist readings of female auteurs but rather with the stubborn intrusion of causality whenever one sets up any kind of author/text relation. A reading of *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* "for Arzner," might first of all look at the film in the interests of transgression, considering, for instance, the way the characters undermine conventional morality. *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* then gives us a situation in which the most upstanding of patriarchs admits the contradiction which conventional marriage usually cannot accommodate: It is possible to love two people (or more) at the same time.

The *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* family plight seemingly remains played out within the generic laws of melodrama. But what do we make of the fact that the film finally refuses to bear out the moral pattern of the times (always the test of melodrama)?<sup>19</sup> No one is judged, no lessons are taught, no character is taken to task. The sacrifice of the heroine avoids a soppy, artificial, restoration of the moral order. Because Cynthia Darrington removes herself from the world she never becomes conservative like Christopher Strong, who is given the line: "Marriage and children make almost any woman old-fashioned and intolerant."

The importance of locating the Arzner text in relation to melodrama will not be lost on film theorists, but they will want to know how a reading "for Arzner" might be different from the many analyses of 50s melodrama in terms of director Douglas Sirk's subversive aesthetics. Traditionally, Sirkian auteur criticism has read the director's films as using an excessive cinematic style to "comment" on the narrative, a device which illustrates the moral demise of the U.S. middle class family.<sup>20</sup> A somewhat similar critical position has been attributed to lesbian and gay existence (not to mention cultural production). What defines lesbian and gay identities (if anything does), according to Judith Butler, is how people live them as "running commentaries" on the heterosexual claim to naturalness. As such, they work parodically off the heterosexual assumption (Butler, 23).



2. Hepburn in moth costume, designed by Howard Greer and Walter Plunkett, in *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* (1933)

What we would finally want to argue "for Arzner," however, must go beyond what critics have considered subversive in a Sirkian sense, that is, "for" an immigrant German Leftist point of view on the United States in the 1950s. Whereas a Sirkian point of view may start from a "displacement" in terms of bourgeois United States, Arzner's vantage offers a "displacement" in relation to heterosexual society, producing a more troublesome and inexcusable disjunction.<sup>21</sup> From this peculiar (queerly positioned) point of view, we can interpret *CHRISTOPHER STRONG* as demonstrating how heterosexual monogamy cripples the imagination and curbs the appetite for living and thus how Cynthia's heroic death stands at once for a bold termination of pregnancy and an acknowledgement that heterosexuality kills.<sup>22</sup>

#### ARZNER AND HER COSTUME DESIGNERS

While I see the advantages of considering the film text as the director's performance (especially the lesbian or gay author), the notion has as much or more usefulness when applied to the motion picture costume designer. Significantly, a performance theory of cultural production also allows us to consider collective work which is the real mode of U.S. motion picture industry production in this period (as opposed to single authorship, the imaginary mode). So I want to look at the performances of Arzner and her designers, working toward a performance theory of collaboration.

One point needs clearing up, however, before I proceed any further with what could be seen as a conflict of discourse: the use of a gay male aesthetic based on camp within a lesbian-directed film. Although it is well established

that the gay male relation to camp has a long history, descending from the tradition of the dandy, camp does not clearly have a positive relation to lesbianism. It may be that a lesbian relation to camp is emergent in academic circles, especially following Judith Butler's work which takes drag as one of its central paradigms. A second look may discover camp there all along, certainly evidenced in the lesbian community's enthusiastic reception of Jan Oxenberg's COMEDY IN SIX UNNATURAL ACTS.<sup>23</sup> Probably the best move here (in the interests of encouraging the development of a lesbian theory of camp) is to make a distinction between the bad politics and the good politics of camp. In the first instance, the problem with camp is its refusal to renounce the straight culture on which it has developed a parasitical dependance (Ross, 161). Camp relishes heterosexual romance with its out-dated chivalry as well as consumer culture acquisition with all of its class aspirations. But also, gay male camp is based upon the acquisition of traditional "feminine" tendencies--"emotion," "fussiness," and "narcissism," tendencies that lesbians have abandoned and discarded. Yet herein lies the possibilities of good camp. Camp knows without question how "femininity" and "masculinity" can be detached from gender, so that one gender's abandoned "traits" can become the other gender's "found" qualities. The knowledge of the constructedness of gender thus constitutes the good politics of camp.

One could justify discussing Arzner in terms of costume because her first film at Paramount in 1927 was FASHIONS FOR WOMEN; descriptions of this lost film suggest that she may have undermined the fashion-show-within-the-film subgenre with a commentary on women displayed. The film, starring Esther Ralston as the competitive Lola, features a scene in which one model locks a rival in a closet.<sup>24</sup> I'm also taking my lead from the Kay and Peary interview where Arzner mentions her work with both stars and particular designers, although she provides only selective recollections of these years.

For instance, Arzner nostalgically remembers Dietrich but never mentions Ginger Rogers; she worked with Dietrich's designer Travis Banton at Paramount on THE WILD PARTY, but only recalls that Adrian and Howard Greer designed the costumes. Of all of the thirteen films Arzner directed, only the two she directed with Joan Crawford were designed by MGM's ace designer Gilbert Adrian. Greer, who later designed for Jane Russell, actually co-designed CHRISTOPHER STRONG with Walter Plunkett of GONE WITH THE WIND fame. So I'm using the fact that Dorothy remembers these designers above all the others to justify my interest in singling out two spectacular costume moments for discussion--Adrian's bugle-beaded red dress in THE BRIDE WORE RED (one of the triumphs of his fourteen-year career at MGM) and the Greer-Plunkett moth costume Hepburn wears in CHRISTOPHER STRONG. [Figure 2]

Among scholars who work on motion picture fashion, information about the lesbian/gay identities of the studio costume designers is important history. For some years, the references to these mythic figures' homosexuality has stayed at the level of in-joke and innuendo. There has never really been any effort to discuss gay Hollywood in terms of the de-

signers who created the stars. Although Vito Russo mentions the lesbian relationship between actress Ali Nazimova and Natasha Rambova (Rudolph Valentino's wife), he makes no real connection between Rambova's lesbianism and her designing.<sup>25</sup> Rambova not only served as producer on a film version of Oscar Wilde's play *Salome*, but designed set and costumes for films starring both lover Nazimova and husband Valentino. (CAMILLE, 1921; SALOME, 1922; MONSIEUR BEUCAIRE, 1924). The Nazimova-Valentino-Rambova triangle is also the most available of the myths, so available that it could be mainstreamed in Ken Russell's VALENTINO (1977). I am more interested, then, in the submerged and transient history of motion picture costume design. One can't deny the advantage of the transience of such history to the gay community since in this more fluid state, stories can be embellished, deepened, tampered with, and, if necessary, they can disappear without a trace. As the writers of the JUMP CUT Special Section on Lesbians and Film have put it, "Gossip provides the official unrecorded history of lesbian participation in film." <sup>26</sup>

And in lesbian and gay reclamation of the past, traditional historical "fact" is stood on its head since the most unverifiable rumor may serve as the foundation of a community history within which information is widely shared and jealously guarded. Such information becomes passed on as "truth." The *manner* of savoring the detail while passing it on (with flagrant disinterest in conventional evidence) constitutes its truth claim. Such is the case with Gilbert Adrian's "marriage" to actress Janet Gaynor. A close reading of the fan magazines in the 1940s suggests a different kind of coding--confirmation of the rumor by reverse emphasis--that is, gushing and cooing about the wardrobes Adrian designed for his wife, who in recent years toward the end of her life was linked romantically with Mary Martin.

How, then, do we move from "confirmed rumor" to screen aesthetics? We move with great difficulty because of the popular practice of looking at the films of lesbian and gay directors "that way." Therefore, what I want to undercut in this exercise is the kind of direct correlation of the artistic "performer's" life with an aesthetic effect. Let me raise at least two objections to this tendency. First, as Richard Dyer explains it, it is again the persistent "belief" in authors that produces a "readiness to credit a shot in a film to the director's sexual life..." (Dyer, 187). Second, "belief" in authors always cancels out belief in audiences. In other words, crediting a gay sensibility behind the scenes often means that we forget that this sensibility lies as much in a gay audience's appetite (somewhere, sometime).

In the last five years, lesbian and gay studies has made a significant contribution toward a more satisfactory account of the relation between subcultural production and the host culture. And I look to this work for an approach to homosexuality and motion picture costume design that goes beyond an idea of authorial volition yet still allows for a concept of stylistic signature, so that an analysis of the design performance can be undertaken "in the name" of the designer. Problematically, if aesthetic forms are overdetermined, subcultural aesthetic forms are extra overdetermined, so that

one has to consider local in-group codes, urban life, the history of taste, social class, gender construction, sexual practices, as well as the construction of the unconscious.

In the new lesbian and gay critical work, the relation between gender and clothing stands as a foundational principle. This gives us a starting place for a more comprehensive theory of lesbian and gay costume design; that is, this thing would start from the complete fabrication of gender. As Judith Butler has laid out the critical project for lesbian and gay studies, it is an "engagement" with gender as a performed fabrication and a commitment to fabricate it all over again in new terms, subversive terms that can reveal the way the notion of "true" gender is "nothing other than the effects of *drag*." The "sex" part of gender needs to be put into a "site of insistent political play," Butler concludes. (Butler, 129) Although we can see sex and gender "put into play" in theatrical costume design (taking the two apart and putting them back together in unpredictable ways on the body), we may not necessarily see the political aspect activated at all. Some of this is the apolitical legacy of drag.

Gay motion picture costume design is an exercise based on the premise of *drag*. Here I mean drag as dressing up, as the way in which one "wears" one's gender, and I take this from Esther Newton's anthropological definition of drag as both *distance* and *costume*.<sup>27</sup> If *drag* is the distanced, artificial gender "put on," *camp* is the relationship between homosexuality and everything else (Newton, 185). And since drag is ever and always a relation, it has an internal resistance to location and definition, encouraged, of course, by the way camp is produced in the claiming as much as or more than it is produced in the making.

Perhaps the most functional breakdown for our purposes resides in Newton's finding in camp three intersecting themes: incongruity, theatricality, and humor (although the third theme is not sufficiently fleshed out enough to be useful). As Newton says about the perception and creation of incongruity, it is based on the "moral deviation" that defines the homosexual experience. And one of her informants comes very close to isolating camp's core structure:

Camp is all based on homosexual thought. It is all based on the idea of two men or two women in bed. It's incongruous and it's funny. (Newton, 107)

But how, to ask again, does one get from two men or two women in bed to an elaborated stylistic code? The theatrical property of camp gives us the execution, the perfor-



3. Hepburn as aviatrix Lady Cynthia Darrington in CHRISTOPHER STRONG

mance of style, the "play" of sex and gender where the pairing that is thought to be matched can be made to seem incongruous. The exaggerated wrongness of two men and two women (in bed) becomes the paradigm of lesbian and gay culture re woven into all other aspects of culture--a reiteration of discrepancy everywhere and anywhere. And this discrepancy confounds straight culture- what straight culture sees as a dangerous mismatch (two similarly gendered bodies) is really a match (two similarly gendered bodies).

I see the virtuoso gay costume designers as performing gender themes with the female stars as their material, elaborating these themes in such a way that each actress could be seen as "wearing" gender somewhat differently from the next, with the variation supplied by the part she played. Within the realist aesthetic of the classical motion picture, these designers worked with the tension between clothes and costume, as this dichotomy mirrored another dichotomy, that between natural and unnatural. So, whenever they could, they worked in a vein that thwarted the tendency of costume to become naturalized as clothes and the tendency of gender to become naturalized as a sexualized body. On the day to day level, gay designers expressed this as a disdain for realism, even a deep irreverence toward the classical realist aesthetic. As the natural always threatened to erupt into the unnatural and artificial, the ordinary always remained in danger of becoming the spectacular, hence the often-heard complaint that Hollywood costume in this period looked ridiculous. Because of the constraints of realist costuming, the virtuoso designers performed their strongest design statements in the medium of the costumed costume--

the dress for the formal evening and especially the costume ball.

### SPEAKING IN SARTORIAL TONGUES

The two costumes I want to analyze are such costumed costumes--dresses that one would never wear in conventional society. To do so would mean to risk speaking the language of the unnatural (as opposed to the language of the naturalized), that is, to speak "deviance" in public. Much of this rhetoric of deviation becomes performed on the female body through the imaginative use of textures, not surprisingly one of the favorite vehicles of camp expression.<sup>28</sup> There is something especially delicious about the way these two costumes use clinging fabrics to outline the female body, to literalize the metaphor "dripping with sensuality," celebrating the wetness, the "juice" of female sexuality.<sup>29</sup> But the costumes also make the body dangerous--too blinding to look at, too hot to lick, too slippery to grip. Certainly this is costuming subtexting or speaking in sartorial tongues at its best. Costume, of course, provides the only text which is fabric in two senses of the word--it provides both a meaning in cloth and a clothing in material. And let us not take for granted the actual signifying material out of which these costumes were painstakingly constructed. Gay costume historian David Chierichetti tells us that the glint of Crawford's scandalous red dress came from two million hand-sewn bugle-beads.<sup>30</sup> Hepburn's moth costume which encases her body from toe to head, (echoing her goggles and aviator's cap) [Figure 3], is of gold lame with a diaphonous chiffon wing-like cape.

What, then, does this other "tongue" tell us about desire in the scene from *CHRISTOPHER STRONG*? How does it tell us another (different) narrative from the one about the virginal aviatrix (Lady Cynthia Darrington) entertaining the British politician Sir Christopher Strong who has come to her apartment on the pretext of asking her opinion about his daughter Monica's affair with a married man? Later, the affair between Lady Cynthia and Sir Christopher is consummated in New York, after she has completed a transworld flight and been given a tickertape welcoming parade in the city. Arzner "performs" the editing of the scene that represents their sexual intercourse by cutting to a close-up of Cynthia's hand on the bedside table, with voice over interchange between the two.

Significantly, the moth costume is designed for a character who (rather like the androgynous Garbo) hates clothes. Cynthia is a "tom boy," most comfortable wearing jodphurs so she can swing one leg over a chair and sit with her legs wide apart. An hour before she must leave for a costume ball, she works at her drafting table, and the maid has to remind her to dress. This means that Cynthia is putting on this moth suit while talking to Sir Christopher, a scene which utilizes one of the sexually evocative possibilities of off-screen space, hiding the space of dressing and undressing in order to stage dress/undress for the character as well as the viewer. So Cynthia strips to her essence for the viewer as well as for Sir Christopher who can't recognize or classify her species. "Do you know what I am?" she asks. "Something exquisite, a moth perhaps..." he answers.

The strangeness of the scene, certainly, has to do with the fact that a human man appears to be making love to a large gender inspecific bug, maybe an extraterrestrial. She/it has to ask him "You're not making love to me, are you?" because she doesn't know what human beings actually do... (A virgin might as well be from outer space in this regard.)<sup>31</sup> Beverle Houston has written that the costume marks Cynthia's transition to "body *not* career as a new site of identity."<sup>32</sup> As Cynthia asks, "do you know what I am?" she is not sure what it means to inhabit a female body. What is she supposed to do with such a body? This new female encasement displays her curves and grips her thighs, keeping her knees locked together so that she must shuffle and glide instead of stride. This might be her metamorphosis into femalehood (heterosexual womanhood), the condition in which women experience everything through their bodies. So Cynthia must now wear her female body as a shimmering, trembling casing--disjunctively, perhaps, because the brusque, no-nonsense voice coming out of the body is still the uninflected tomboy voice. In this female encasing, Cynthia learns to avert her eyes--to deny her attractiveness (her powers to lure)--while practicing how to use this power.

But I don't know why no one has yet suggested the lesbian interpretation of this scene ("for Arzner") in which the patriarch stands between the women in the film--Cynthia, Lady Strong (Billie Burke) and his daughter Monica (Helen Chandler), as I have suggested. She then represents the taboo lesbian body--to him she might as well be a moth--perhaps a lesbian vampire moth.<sup>33</sup> Is this why the metaphors are so strangely mixed? (The wire antennae from her close-fitting cap frames Sir Christopher's face in close-up with a question mark.) But who is the moth, Cynthia or Sir Christopher? After all, it is he who faces danger here by getting too close to the flame, and the match strangely prefigures the burst of flames that end the film as her plane dives to earth.

There is yet another way I like to consider both this example of costuming and the one in *THE BRIDE WORE RED*. These costumes have a visual excessiveness which transgresses the basic requirements of cinematic storytelling. As I have written elsewhere, the directorial code in the industry called for the subservience of costume to narrative. Costume was not supposed to call attention to itself (although I don't know how something subdued could also function to inspire envy and awe and to give rise to fantasies about the stars.)<sup>34</sup> What has long attracted me to Adrian's work is his refusal to rein in his designing when the script called for it. (Catty and jealous critics said that his costumes were too "up" for the emotionally "up" scenes.) Even gay director George Cukor has been quoted as saying that if a costume "knocked your eye out" it wasn't good for the scene or the film as a whole (Gaines, 193). Cukor may only have spoken about the directorial rule of thumb, but fortunately he broke his own code in the numerous MGM films on which he worked with Adrian: *ROMEO AND JULIET* (1936), *THE WOMEN* (1939), *CAMILLE* (1936), *PHILADELPHIA STORY* (1940) as well as *TWO-FACED WOMAN* (1940), to name a few. By breaking the codes of classical narrative, by refusing to make the spectacular costume

subservient to the narrative, Adrian gives us designs that visually climax to meet by degree the emotional heights of the developing drama. In other words, the narrative and the costume discourses orgasmically "come" at the same time. Certainly Plunkett and Greer also achieve this with the moth costume in *CHRISTOPHER STRONG*, but the "red dress" scene in *THE BRIDE WORE RED* gives us not only a higher degree of visual satiation but a more complex narrative problem.

I want to frame my discussion of *THE BRIDE WORE RED* with the story of how Dorothy Arzner met Joan Crawford. Arzner was given the job of directing Crawford in the half-finished *THE LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY* at MGM because Franchot Tone (Crawford's husband at the time), urged that she consider Arzner after the picture's director died suddenly. Tone suggested that she go to see Arzner's *CRAIG'S WIFE*, released in February, 1937. Alexander Walker's account of their first meeting, while not a first hand one, still gives us a way of imagining this meeting:

She and Crawford took to each other at once. Arzner was four or five years older than her star, but she looked like a youth in her mid-twenties and could be mistaken for a boy. She was invariably impeccably turned out, usually in twill trousers or weeds tailored with a chic yet masculine line. She affected a slouchy hat on the set. Yet the effect, instead of being "butch," was the crisp statement by a talented and shrewd woman of the qualities she wore comfortably in the Hollywood studios where she freelanced.<sup>35</sup>

The question is, did Tone (after several years of marriage), see Crawford in this role or did she see herself (since later she wanted to do the role when it was remade as *HARRIET CRAIG* (1950) for Columbia, directed there by Vincent Sherman (with whom she was rumored to have been having an affair at the time). *THE LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY* was not a success, but the working relationship between Arzner and Crawford was, and some of its themes were carried over into *THE BRIDE WORE RED*. In the earlier film, Crawford is a jewel thief who thinks of herself as a "respectable adventuress" and believes that she is superior to her wealthy victims. As in *THE BRIDE WORE RED*, Crawford exposes elite society, but in the earlier film this is more indirectly achieved by the device of compromising love letters written by a British Lord to the adventuress. In putting Crawford's sense of superiority into the service of social critique, Arzner is quite original. Certainly Arzner makes productive use of Crawford's conviction that she was better than others, a resource that other directors didn't always tap.

*THE BRIDE WORE RED*, rewritten from the play



4. Anni Pavlovich (Joan Crawford) and her old friend in a moment of class solidarity and female friendship in *THE BRIDE WORE RED* (1937)

*THE GIRL FROM TRIESTE*, originally was to have starred Luise Rainer as the Trieste prostitute whom a philosophical aristocrat discovers and tries to use to conduct a limited social experiment--attempting to pass off someone from the lowest order as a lady--in order to prove that only luck and fate determine social position. He gives her money for a fantastic wardrobe and sets her up for a few weeks in an elite Swiss alps resort. Anni Pavlovich, half Polish, thus becomes the refined and polished Senora Anne Vivaldi. At the resort she meets a young monied aristocrat Rudi Pal (Robert Young) vacationing with his fiancée Maddelena (Lynne Carver) as well as two chaperones, an admiral (Reginald Owen) and a contessa (Billie Burke). By the end of her stay Crawford/Anni has succeeded in getting Rudi to propose to her and to break his engagement to the generous and forgiving Maddelena. Although Crawford/Anni prefers the hotel postman Guilio (Franchot Tone), a peasant, she decides to elope with the aristocrat to seize the fantasy of the yacht in

the harbor, the butler and chauffeur. But she faces a race against time to marry the aristocrat before a telegram to the contessa will arrive announcing that Crawford/Anni is a fake.

THE BRIDE WORE RED is one of a few films from the Golden Era of motion picture costume (1927 to 1940, roughly the period of Adrian's tenure at MGM), where the big dress and its scene become more than the sum of the narrative. The dress gives the Crawford character away and she knows it, but she insists on wearing it down to her engagement dinner. The scene in her hotel dressing room with her old "barmaid" friend from Trieste (now a maid in the mountain hotel), marks a private space of female friendship and class solidarity in opposition to the class distinctions of the public hotel lobby downstairs. [Figure 4] When her friend the maid says that she's like a fire in it, Anni responds that she knows that "it's too red and too loud and too cheap." But the dress becomes the character's means of revenge as she sits at the dinner table, glittering and seething, egging the admiral on to tell stories about how he remembers bouncing her on his knee as a child (but probably as a prostitute.)

If CHRISTOPHER STRONG is about rejecting the heterosexual contract because of the miserable dependency upon men that produces women as conservative, THE BRIDE WORE RED is about the equation of marriage and prostitution, and in its sophistication the film echoes Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* and Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.<sup>36</sup> The harlot dress which is supposed to condemn the wearer on the basis of "taste" (read: class) is a kind of magical dress which betrays not the moral degeneracy of Anni (and the peasants with whom she is aligned) but the class insularity (and moral illiteracy) of the Italian aristocracy. For Anni, marriage to Rudi Pal would be prostitution—she's only doing it for the money—and the dress stands in for the real whore she would become. Returning to her room after the exposure scene, the dress she sees in the mirror no longer seems beautiful to her at all.

What happens in the dining room scene? I want to read this scene "for" Arzner and Adrian as one of those moments that Cuckor and other directors feared—a moment when the scene erupts into the spectacular. Seeing this depends on an analytical separation of character from star image as well as from a "real person" actress—all artificial selves.<sup>37</sup> Each component has its separate critique—Anni the prostitute performs a criticism of the admiral, the contessa, and Rudi Pal, each in turn. (Leaving the thoroughly blameless woman—Maddelena—a favorite Arzner construction.) But simultaneously the actress splits off from the star image "Joan Crawford" and performs an impersonation of herself. What is produced is not a moment of "rightness," or what Richard Dyer calls the "perfect fit" between actor and role.<sup>38</sup> What is produced is perfect redundancy.

But Crawford's charged body, doubly electric because of her performance of herself, has the effect on the scene of a kind of forcefield around which other relations become mysteriously rearranged. Because "prostitute" gets displaced

onto "peasant" ("sex" displaced onto "class"), Anni's sensitivity about references to peasants during the dinner remains ambiguous. Does the character disassociate herself from the peasants because she wants to reject her former life of sin or because she exhibits no class solidarity? The danger of the eruption of spectacle is finally that the answer to this question does not matter—nothing matters except the "play" of the high camp icon, confirming, as we already know, that camp is ultimately apolitical.

Where in this scene do we find Dorothy Arzner, the former editor and craftsman? Crawford has three important reaction shots—the first a reaction to the sound of the flute played by the peasant/mailman (Tone/Guilio); the second a reaction to the shot of Guilio delivering the fatal telegram which he knows carries the news of her ruse; the third a reaction to the shot of the contessa reading the telegram. We need to consider the unusual number of these close-ups within the same sequence and their duration on the screen in relation to Crawford's screen acting capabilities. One explanation for the unusual number might be found in Barry King's close analysis of Crawford in *MILDRED PIERCE* in which he finds that the camera exhibits a pattern of consistently cutting away from Crawford in close-up to adjacent objects or other characters. In his view, this practice helped to compensate for the narrowness of her expressive range.<sup>39</sup> To put it another way, resourceful directors learned to make the objects around the actress bristle with emotion and to let other actors pick up the affective slack. Working in league with the editing pattern, Adrian's characteristic above-the-table detailing creates a glittering focal fascination, directing the eye to the brooch that clasps the ends of the bugle-beaded red cape draped over Crawford's shoulders. Collaborating in a difficult exercise in cinema aesthetics, Adrian and Arzner produce an entire body that "catches light." The costume here functions as an eloquent object standing in for the facial and bodily articulation that was not forthcoming from the actress.

The effectivity of Adrian's conceptions is measured in the success of the illusion that Crawford's characters changed from one film to another in the twenty-four motion pictures for which he designed her costumes. At the same time he differentiated the character, he defined the star image, and in THE BRIDE WORE RED, his fifteenth film with Crawford, Adrian was getting increasingly adept at synthesizing her persona (although the huge-shouldered silhouette wouldn't appear until after 1940). Here, he uses a solid color to help define simultaneously the firebrand sexual volatility of the character and the bloody severity of the Crawford image that surfaced in the book *Mommy Dearest*. The drama of the red dress appears at a point in the development of the Crawford image where her severe self-punishing perfectionistic persona was beginning to overwhelm and take over the characters she played. Joan was never subtle or soft, but always clear, sharp, and driving. Her persona was dedicated to the principle of getting what you want by making a virtue out of saying that you want it. It was only a matter of a few years before there was nothing left to do with the Crawford persona but push it into self-parody as seen in *SUSAN AND GOD* (1940), *MILDRED*

PIERCE (1945) and HARRIET CRAIG (1950).

But what Crawford lost in critical acclaim for her performances after *MILDRED PIERCE* she has continued to win back in camp following. What is campy about Joan, however, is not what is campy about Judy Garland (who wears her pathos on her sleeve and always seems to have a lump in her throat).<sup>40</sup> What is campy about Joan is that she drives such hard emotional bargains and displays such ferocity in pursuit of hearth and home. Not only does she raises bourgeois aspirations to such a pinnacle of disaster, but she wrecks this havoc wearing suits, evening gowns, coats, hats, and "frocks" by Adrian. With Crawford, one can almost reach out and break off the jagged glass edges. The spectacle of this wreckage (in the face of Joan's conviction of her propriety) becomes not horrible but absolutely wonderful.

If each of the major stars from this period "wore" gender in a different way, Joan Crawford's distinctive style can be seen as a "modelling of femininity," that is, existence as a rack upon which to hang the accessories of femininity, telling us that femininity means nothing but its accessories and assuring us that femininity can be taken off by lesbians and put on by gay men. The fact that one of Crawford's definitive roles was in a film called *MANNEQUIN* (1938) and that she was known as a "clothes horse" help confirm this sense of her as only the model of femininity and not the "real" thing. But the profundity of this star construction does not get lost on the lesbian/gay sensibility since it is thorough her artificiality that Joan's persona tells the "truth" about heterosexuality—that, in Judith Butler's words, heterosexuality is "an impossible imitation of itself." (Butler, 23). For propriety's sake (an absurd rationale at this point) the Crawford image insists on a kind of "truth in artifice," the moral high ground swamped with decadence. Hers is not a peroxide artificiality, covering up its roots. The two million bugle beads testify that her "effect" has been laboriously produced. Drag is an artificial gendering, and artificial gender is always drag.

## EPILOGUE: A FANTASY HISTORY

Looking again at my photograph of Arzner and Crawford on the set of *THE BRIDE WORE RED*, an echo of another image reproduced in *The Celluloid Closet*, I wonder if there is something we might have missed about the friendship between these two women? (Russo, 50). How far did their mutual admiration go? What were the limits of their passionate friendship? After all, Dorothy was the perfect consort for Joan—the only person good enough for her, a fact she must have realized after she had discarded so many husbands (Doug Fairbanks, Phil Terry, in addition to Franchot Tone), each of whom was let go no differently than hired help who couldn't learn the job.

Dorothy, however, always satisfied Joan. A commensurate perfectionist, professional and powerful in the film world, Dorothy lent Joan her capable shoulders and Dorothy never let her down—exceeding Joan's impossible expectations where others so often failed. Joan entrusted her friend with the coveted job of directing Pepsi-Cola commercials when she became an executive in the corporation she took

over from her husband—an early first case of women's networking in the television industry.

And Dorothy was tidy enough for Joan's tastes. Women, as we know, have their organs neatly tucked inside them whereas men's organs crudely hang out—all raw and uncooked. On occasion, Joan liked raw meat, but only because it was fashionable and supposedly heathful. Unfortunately for daughter Christine, the mother insisted that Christine should also like it despite the child's understandable distaste. Joan really preferred soft gardenia petals but never admitted it openly. She was sympathetic about closetiness, however. She knew that only clothes belonged in closets and she was sensitive about the dangers of wire hangers which left deep "hanger-marks" on body and psyche. Joan was protective of Dorothy because within the industry her friend was not out as a lesbian and furthermore not out as a woman.

I want to suggest that because the two women admired each other so thoroughly, they began to mirror each other. As Arzner made Crawford, Crawford made Arzner. Joan emulated Dorothy in the mannish look she adored. She practiced striding and learned Dorothy's gestures through shrewd observation. This was a gradual transformation. Adrian suggested that Joan work on her shoulders and she found ways of slimming her hips to approximate Dorothy's boyish figure.

Or was it the other way around—that Dorothy stepped into Joan's body? That Mildred Pierce has Dorothy's smartness, classiness, and drive (not to mention business acumen) was no accident. Was it Dorothy, then, who won the Academy Award for acting in 1945—the only Crawford award? After which Dorothy stepped out of Joan's body because her job was done. She had finally perfected her favorite star—turning the goddess into a real woman with chocolate cake instead of rhinestones for a heart.

So I ask you, was Dorothy Joan—or was Joan Dorothy?

## NOTES

1. Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 14-16.
2. Constance Penley, ed. *Feminism and Film Theory* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988).
3. Claudia Gorbman, "Trance Girls Trance: Seeing and Reading Dorothy Arzner," paper delivered at Duke University, October, 1985. The first significant reference to the silence about Arzner and the representation of lesbians in feminist film theory is Sarah Halprin, "Writing on the Margins," (Review of E. Ann Kaplan, *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera*), JUMP CUT no. 29 (1984).
4. Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), chapter 5. The idea of "two Dorothys" is emphasized more strongly in another version of this chapter published as "Lesbian Looks: Dorothy Arzner and Female Authorship," in *How Do I Look?: Queer Film and Video*, eds. Bad Object-Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 106-107. In October, 1990, I delivered an earlier version of this paper at a Symposium sponsored by the Pittsburgh International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and the Film Studies Program at

the University of Pittsburgh, not knowing until later that I was "pinch hitting" for Judith Mayne. My rewriting has been considerably influenced by her significant work, particularly on this point.

5. See Claire Johnston, ed. *The Work of Dorothy Arzner: Towards a Feminist Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1975), but I refer to the short passage in Johnston's more available essay "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema," in *Notes on Women's Cinema* (London: Society for Education in Film and Television, 1973), 29; repr. *Sexual Stratagems*, ed. Patricia Erens (New York: Horizon, 1979; *Movies and Methods*, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976).

6. See Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," *Screen* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1971), 27-36 on the category "e" film; Barbara Klinger, "'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism' Revisited: The Progressive Text," *Screen* 25, no. 1 (January-February 1984), 30-44, is a good critique of this important article; repr. in somewhat different form in *Film Genre Reader*, ed. Barry Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

7. See Jacquelyn Suter, "Feminine Discourse in CHRISTOPHER STRONG," *Camera Obscura*, no. 3-4 (Summer 1979), 135-50.

8. See, for instance, Claire Whitaker, "Hollywood Transformed: Interviews with Lesbian Viewers," *Jump Cut: Hollywood, Politics, and Counter-Cinema*, ed. Peter Steven (New York: Praeger, 1985).

9. See my "Competing Glances: Reading Robert Mapplethorpe's *Black Book*," *New Formations*, no. 16 (April 1992).

10. Adrienne Rich, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1986), 51.

11. Diana Fuss, "Inside/Out," in *Inside/Out*, 3-4.

12. Alex Doty, "Lesbian and Gay Cultures Meet Auteurism," paper given at University of Pittsburgh Film Studies Symposium on George Cukor and Dorothy Arzner (October 1990).

13. I am indebted to Julia Lesage for helping me to recall this time, but also for articulating the significance of lesbian feminism for me almost fifteen years ago.

14. Karen Kay and Gerald Peary, "Interview with Dorothy Arzner," in *Women and the Cinema*, eds. Karen Kay and Gerald Peary (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977). The interview first appeared in *Cinema*, no. 34 (1974).

15. See Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967 - 1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 215.

16. Stuart Hall, "What is the Black in Black Popular Culture?," paper delivered at the Black Popular Culture Conference, Dia Center for the Arts and the Studio Museum of Harlem, New York (December 1991).

17. On the political significance of authorship for feminism, see Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 106. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 212-17, suggests that the female author may be inscribed in the text in a variety of ways, including through voice or character.

18. Richard Dyer, "Believing in Fairies: The Author and the Homosexual," in *Inside/Out*, 188.

19. For an overview of the importance of melodrama in film theory see Christine Gledhill, "Introduction," in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film* (London: British Film Institute, 1987).

20. See Paul Willeman, "Distanciation and Douglas Sirk," *Douglas Sirk*, ed. Laura Mulvey and Jon Halliday (Edinburgh Film Festival, 1972).

21. Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), 157, says that the "lived spectatorship of gay male and lesbian subcultures is expressed largely through imaginary or displaced relations to the straight meanings of the images and discourses of a parent culture.

22. Mayne, "Lesbian Looks," 120, argues that the "acquisition of heterosexuality becomes the downfall" of the character.

23. For a discussion of this film see Michelle Citron, "Comic Critique: The Films of Jan Oxenberg," in *Jump Cut: Hollywood, Politics, and Counter-Cinema*.

24. Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary, "Dorothy Arzner's DANCE, GIRL, DANCE," *The Velvet Light Trap* no. 10, (Fall 1973), 26. For an analysis of this subgenre see Charlotte Herzog, "Powder Puff Promotion: The Fashion Show-in-the-Film," in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, eds. Jane M. Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).

25. Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 27.

26. Edith Becker, Michelle Citron, Julia Lesage, and B. Ruby Rich, "Lesbians and Film," in *Jump Cut: Hollywood, Politics, and Counter-Cinema*, 301.

27. Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 109.

28. Jack Babuscio, "Camp and the Gay Sensibility," in *Gays in Film*, ed. Richard Dyer (New York: Zoetrope, 1984), 43, sees in camp "an emphasis on sensuous surfaces, textures, imagery and the evocation of mood as stylistic devices--not simply because they are appropriate to the plot, but as fascinating in and of themselves."

29. See Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 55 on Marilyn Monroe and female sexual wetness.

30. David Chierichetti, *Hollywood Costume Design* (New York: Crown, 1976).

31. Mayne, "Lesbian Looks," 120, says that "virginity" stands for all of the marginal positions Cynthia inhabits.

32. Beverle Houston, "Missing in Action: Notes on Dorothy Arzner," *Wide Angle* 6, no. 3 (1984), 27.

33. See Richard Dyer, "Children of the Night: Vampirism as Homosexuality, Homosexuality as Vampirism," in *Sweet Dreams: Sexuality, Gender and Popular Fiction*, ed. Susannah Radstone, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988).

34. Jane Gaines, "Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story," in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, 192-96.

35. Alexander Walker, *Joan Crawford: The Ultimate Star* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 116.

36. Fredrick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884; repr. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (1899; repr. New York: Macmillan, 1912).

37. For an overview of the different ways in which the star image has been broken down see my *Contested Culture: The Imate, the Voice, and the Law* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 33-40.

38. Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1979), 146-148.

39. Barry King, conversation, fall, 1989.

40. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 178-185.