

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

1999

Hitchcock's "Rebecca": A rhetorical study of female stereotyping

Elizabeth Irene Langenfeld

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [Rhetoric Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Langenfeld, Elizabeth Irene, "Hitchcock's "Rebecca": A rhetorical study of female stereotyping" (1999). *Theses Digitization Project*. 1718.
<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/1718>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

HITCHCOCK'S 'REBECCA': A RHETORICAL STUDY
OF FEMALE STEREOTYPING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Elizabeth Irene Langenfeld

December 1999


HITCHCOCK'S 'REBECCA': A RHETORICAL STUDY
OF FEMALE STEREOTYPING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Elizabeth Langenfeld

December 1999

Approved by:


Dr. Bruce Golden, Professor, English

12/8/99
Date


Dr. Renee Pigeon, Professor


Kellie Rayburn

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Bruce Golden whose scholarly knowledge and guidance as mentor strengthened my knowledge and understanding of film, literature and composition. I also want to express my appreciation to Dr. Renee Pigeon for her extensive knowledge of film and literature, and Kellie Rayburn for her advice and time. I especially thank my son Lee Knowlton for his enduring patience while I completed this project as well as the Master's coursework.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTSi

ABSTRACTiii

INTRODUCTION1

CHAPTER ONE

 Classical Narrative Film Norms
 and Cinematic Techniques4

CHAPTER TWO

 Feminist/Psychoanalytical Theory15

 Hitchcock's Spectators20

CHAPTER THREE

 Narrative Form29

 Rhetorical Form32

CHAPTER FOUR

 Hitchcock's Lights, Action, Camera and Women35

CONCLUSION101

WORKS CONSULTED103

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a rhetorical analysis of the film version of *Rebecca*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. By identifying and interpreting cinematic rhetorical strategies such as camera angles, lighting, costume, and spatial proxemics which contribute to stereotyping in the film version, and then comparing them to stereotyping in the novel by Daphne du Maurier, this thesis demonstrates how Hitchcock's portrayal of women in film has exploited female stereotypes.

This thesis will also consider the complicity of spectators who participate in Hitchcock's exploitation of women.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout his career and after his death, Alfred Hitchcock developed various reputations among film critics. While some critics such as Robin Wood and Lesley Brill consider him to have been sensitive to women's plight, others such as Tania Modleski and Laura Mulvey, have labeled him a misogynist. The disapproving criticisms are related to Hitchcock's negative representation of women connected to common themes such as lust, voyeurism, false accusation, and murder found in his films. Interestingly, the iconic Hitchcock has become better known to the world than any other director in history, and his cinematic entertainment continues to be described as fascinating, mysterious, captivating, bold and many times disturbing. Consequently, film critics continue to investigate Hitchcock, his works, and the contradiction of his reputations in order to understand whether an actual intent against women existed with this man of mystery.

Daphne du Maurier wrote the novel *Rebecca* in 1938. The stereotypes in the novel reflect du Maurier's time period

when men occupied most positions. The novel is a classic gothic tale in which the heroine bride comes to a mysterious house and mistrusts her husband. The central question is whether the insecure bride can adjust to being the new mistress of the mansion, and also win and keep the love of her hero-villain husband. The gothic heroine's insecurity and paranoia is a response to her confusion from being mistreated and devalued by men in a man's world. du Maurier's readership was and currently remains primarily women. In 1940, shortly after the novel was written and within the period of Classical Hollywood cinema, Alfred Hitchcock directed his first film in America, a film version of *Rebecca*. The novel and film use stereotypes to heighten the impact of the characters, and while the stereotypes in both are portrayed as negative, Hitchcock's version reveals the magnitude of their negative depiction. His film most notably assaults females for their sexuality. By identifying and interpreting Hitchcock's cinematic mise-en-scène rhetoric, through an examination of such factors as camera angles, setting, lighting, costume, makeup, and spatial proxemics that contribute to negative stereotyping in the

film, this thesis will consider how Hitchcock has exploited female stereotypes through his portrayal of women in *Rebecca*, while at the same time excusing men for their crimes.

In addition, I will also consider and problematize spectators' complicity in perpetuating Hitchcock's exploitation. To support my findings, my thesis will rely predominantly upon the expertise of film authorities David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, who explain and discuss approaches to interpreting rhetorically such cinematic devices as camera angles, lighting, and costume; feminist film critics Laura Mulvey and Tania Modleski, who offer an interpretation of how women are objectified in movies by both men and women as spectators; and psychoanalytical theorists, Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud, who explain the complexities and development of the unconscious origins of pleasure in voyeurism that contribute to our pleasure in viewing films.

CHAPTER ONE

Classical Narrative Film Norms

and

Cinematic Techniques

The director is the ultimate coordinator and creator who regulates all decisions regarding the composition of a film. While he usually collaborates with producers, cinematographers and film editors, the ultimate responsibility for the shots as they appear in film rests with him. In other words, the director controls every aspect of what we see in a film; the *mise-en-scène* is precisely arranged and different camera angles are used to create various chosen points of view and characterization. Consequently, the director edits the spectators in to active observers, moving about in the midst of the action wherever he chooses to lead them.

Unlike most directors, Hitchcock was well known for taking control of as many aspects of his films as possible. Because he created and sketched a precise plan onto storyboards in advance of how he wanted stories to be

filmed, he left minimal room for delegating the various aspects of filmmaking to other film crewmembers.

In Film Art, An Introduction, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson explain the aesthetics of filmmaking and Classical Hollywood Cinema. Historically, cinema was mostly ruled by a single mode of narrative form that became known as Classical, and this mode became shaped by American studios, predominantly in Hollywood. Classical cinema includes its own construction of narration. The idea of narrative depends on the assumption that the action will be determined by the individual characters working as causal agents. The causes, natural or societal, may serve as catalysts for the action, but the conflict usually centers on personal psychological causes such as the traits of a character and choices they might make that move the narrative forward. An important trait that often functions to move the narrative along is desire. The desire establishes a goal that the narrative helps the character achieve. In Classical narrative, an opposition creates conflict with this desire and the protagonist must struggle to find a solution. It is also common for a Classical

Hollywood film to end at the same point of the narrative where it began, such as in *Rebecca*, we see Manderley in ruin both in the beginning and at the end of the film. Also, true to Classical form, *Rebecca* ends so that we learn what happens to each of the characters, the answer to any mystery, as well as the outcome of conflict. While many of Hitchcock's cinematic techniques fit into the Classical Hollywood Cinema norm, he is renowned for his unique application of narrative style.

The cause and effect within Classical Cinema imply change and progression. If the characters don't need or want to change anything, obviously change would not need to occur and there would be no story to tell. The actions that occur within the narrative are predominantly psychological causes and it is these causes that move the narrative events along. Time is subordinated to the cause-effect succession of events; consequently, the plot will ignore particular parts of the story in order to show only the important events. In addition, other than flashbacks and voice-overs, the film plot will usually show the story chronologically to produce the most striking presentation of events. While several

cinematic factors hallmark a film as Classical Hollywood, I will include a brief discussion of the camera techniques that Hitchcock employs in *Rebecca* that contribute to his depicting women as negative stereotypes.

A film shot is like a blank frame of a very complex system that needs to be filled, and the director chooses strategies and techniques to fill the blank frame by arranging the mise-en-scène within the formal context of the total film. The filmed mise-en-scène includes cues that force spectators to notice certain things, while at the same time not notice other things. The director also controls the qualities of each shot, that is, how the image is photographed and framed and how long the image lasts on the screen. Countless decisions within each of these cinematic domains are made in order to convey the precise image and point of view as desired by the director.

The components of mise-en-scène rarely appear in isolation. Each component is combined with the others to create a specific system in each film. As a result, how we view and come to believe the film's characters and the film's point has everything to do with the director's

manipulation of the various combinations of mise-en-scène; the setting, lighting, costume and makeup and spatial proxemics are all coordinated consistently in order to create the reality that the director chooses to illustrate. A simplified example might be if the director desires to create a film involving a vampire, and he wants us to believe the vampire is real. If he chooses to present a commonly known representation of a vampire, he would then make numerous choices, most likely based on our stereotypical notions of what we believe a vampire would look and act like, and then determine the mise-en-scène. The director might decide that we are much more likely to believe in his vampire by choosing to film in a gothic setting, enhanced by dark lighting and showing a full-lit moon. In this setting, we would then see a character costumed in a dark cloak, with lighting strategically focused from below to outline a pale-white made-up face contrasted with dark eyebrows, dark-outlined eyes, sunken cheeks and dark lips. When we next see the vampire, he is framed in an extreme close-up shot, positioned very near to another person's neck, and we see him open his mouth to

reveal two fangs. As a result of this arrangement, we are immediately compelled to expect that the vampire will strike. The director can also create additional suspense as well as invoke fear in the spectators by having the vampire lower his head slightly and stare several seconds directly into the victim's eyes, move quickly or slowly, or open his cape full-width to display an image of bat-like wings. The overall composition of this *mise-en-scène* thus fulfills our expectation and belief that what we see is indeed a vampire.

Classical Hollywood filmmaking customarily uses at least three light sources. One comes diagonally from the front, a second from the rear and above, and the third from a position near the camera. The lighting manipulates areas within the frame to varying degrees that guide our eyes to particular objects and actions, revealing what the director wants us to see and concealing what he doesn't want us to see. Consequently, a bright light from a chosen source can be produced to cue our eyes to notice something, while a shadow may draw our attention to what we suspect might be hidden within or behind it. Lighting is also used to articulate textures, shape objects, and create attached

shadows as well as cast shadows. Different uses of light can also help create our sense of a scene's place. Other major features of lighting control the intensity of the illumination; the path light takes from its source to the object it is lighting; the several light sources that create different effects within each shot; and color, in which color filters are used to create special effects. All of these factors of lighting are used individually or in combination to control the look and function of a shot. Accordingly, there is a close association between lighting and mood. A face, when lit predominantly from below, appears sinister and we react correspondingly with fear. Other lighting effects include long menacing shadows that create one particular mood as opposed to full sunlight streaming through the windows that creates another. Darkness tends to depress our spirits, while a great abundance of light helps to raise them, and direct, harsh light reveals sharply the main contours of a subject and emphasizes linear perspective. We can expect the lighting of a film to correspond to its general theme, e.g. romances are generally filmed in a lighter tone, while in melodrama, low key-

lighting is used but with sharp contrast (Film Art 134).

Classical Hollywood narration also usually tends to be objective and unrestricted, that is, parts of the film give us access to things the character does not know, hear, or see. But the most general way by which a film controls our knowledge is through the numerous point-of-view shots. We see what a character sees more or less as she or he sees it, but more importantly here, the point-of-view shot restricts us only to what the character learns at that moment. A most striking feature of a Hitchcock film is that he excelled at giving every major character a point-of-view shot. As a result, Hitchcock gives us each character's experiences directly. In this respect, in each scene of *Rebecca*, we feel each character's experiences because the camera positions us both with each character and with the character responding to the other characters. If suspense is evoked by giving the spectator more information than a particular character has, we would then react and respond to what is happening to that character in the film. In other words, point-of-view shots also contribute to creating cues to cause spectators to respond and react. Accordingly, if the camera is raised

above eye-level so that it looks down on the subject, it will produce a picture in which the subject appears dwarfed and of diminished importance. If the camera is placed below eye-level and directed upwards, the size and importance of the subject will appear exaggerated (enhancing grandeur or emphasizing dejection). The camera's movement draws attention to the imaginary observer whose movement it reproduces. Therefore, the camera shows irrespective of 'angle' of the shot is seen through the eyes of someone who is reacting to that content.

The Classical film pattern, shot/reverse-shot, was frequently used to film an encounter between two individuals and Hitchcock religiously exercised this technique to create the most dramatic impact possible in his films. As explained by Lucy Fischer, in Countershot Film Tradition and Women's Cinema, "in the first shot of this trope, the spectator might see a character A, and it is understood that the camera frames her from a second character's point of view, character B, who is off-screen. As character A looks at the camera, the audience imagines that she looks at them, and they are temporarily 'sewn into' the filmic interchange.

With the next cut, the structure is reversed and the spectator sees character B from character A's visual stance" (23). Hitchcock is renowned for his effective use of the shot/reverse shot, but even more for his utilizing "reaction" shots. A reaction shot pattern usually involves an establishing shot of the subject, a point-of-view shot of what the subject is looking at, and then the subject's reaction to the content of the point-of-view. As a result of this triad of shots, we are forced to focus exclusively on the characters' "reaction" to the contents of the preceding shot. Consequently, in *Rebecca*, whenever the protagonist reacts in fear, her various degrees of reaction are then emphasized by Hitchcock tracking the camera in for a close-up shot, or back for a long shot, and then the reaction is accentuated even further by the camera holding the shot for a few more seconds than usual. As a result, spectators cannot help but watch the protagonist's reaction, and respond fearfully along with her.

Also consistent in Classic Hollywood cinema, a convention was established that places the dominant character in the left portion of the frame. The left frame

position is considered most important for spectators to notice and because of the repetition of this convention, we expect that the left frame character governs all other characters included in the frame. Consequently, in *Rebecca*, like most Classical films, the male is positioned primarily on the left side of the frame.

While these cinematic modes characterize most of Hollywood Classical films, they are not entirely inclusive; Classical Hollywood cinema embodies a long and wide history with unlimited possibilities of narrative. And, of course, Hitchcock is famous for his own unique touches to his cinematography.

CHAPTER TWO

Feminist/Psychoanalytical Theory

One of Hitchcock's "tricks" was that he worked with many of the world's finest writers. Dan Aulier, author of Hitchcock's Notebooks explains, however, that whoever worked with Hitchcock on a film, wrote a "Hitchcock" picture. "By the time [Hitchcock] moved to America, he had codified the Hitchcock film..." (24). We might not ever know Hitchcock's actual intentions of his representation of women in his films, nevertheless we cannot overlook his repeated depiction of negative female stereotypes in oppressed conditions. Feminist film theorists Tania Modleski, Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane, E. Ann Kaplan, as well as many other critics continue to carefully scrutinize Hitchcock's work to gain some understanding as to how he created these female stereotypes and why this man would choose to discredit women in such a way.

The film *Rebecca* was presented under the genre of a "woman's film", a romantic entertainment for women to enjoy while taking a break away from responsibilities at home and

with the children. The 1940s society tended to follow the patriarchal ideals of the time. Jeanine Basinger, in A Woman's View explains, "her [women's] mobility is linked to the old problem of men and her relationship to them via her decision about love and romance...She struggles to break free of them [men], with films often suggesting at the finish that only by pulling an even tighter boundary in around herself—accepting marriage and love—can she really find happiness" (217). Accordingly, while many women accepted the societal expectations, others strove to gain equal rights. Even though Hollywood has always had a reputation for being liberal, in the early 1940s, studio chiefs were also politically and socially conservative males. It stands to reason that the Hollywood moviemakers, notably men, consciously or not, exerted their power to reinforce their patriarchal convictions, and what better medium to influence their beliefs than through cinema.

Interestingly, Hitchcock dismissed the film *Rebecca* as a "Hitchcock" picture as he believed the story based on the novel lacked humor, and he attributed this lack to the perspective of Daphne du Maurier (Leff, Hitchcock & Selnick

84). An adverse producer/director relationship existed between David O. Selznick and Hitchcock, as they often conflicted when it came to decision-making with the filming of the four films they worked on together. To a large degree, their disagreements relating to the filming of *Rebecca* stem from the fact that Selznick was adamant about remaining true to the narrative of the novel, while Hitchcock strove to depart from it in order to make it one of his own films. Leonard Leff, author of Hitchcock and Selznick, explains that unlike Selznick, Hitchcock disdained original source material; Selznick stated that he wanted to "preserve the structure and characterization of *Rebecca*, including all of "the little feminine things which are so recognizable and which make every woman say [of the heroine], 'I know just how she feels...I know just what she's going through...' etc." After Selznick read a draft of Hitchcock's script changes, Selznick wrote Hitchcock that he was "shocked beyond words" regarding Hitchcock's personal touches, where "Beatrice, Maxim's sister had been vulgarized, Mrs. Danvers detoxified, and Maxim de Winter left with "no charm, no mystery, and no romance." Selznick

continued, "The changes to "Daphne" [the protagonist] were especially harmful. "Every little thing that the girl does in the book, her reactions of running away from the guests, and the tiny things that indicate her nervousness and her self-consciousness and her gaucherie are so brilliant in the book that every woman who has read it has adored the girl and has understood her psychology...We have removed all the subtleties and substituted big broad strokes" (44).

Thus, Hitchcock's influence is very clear. Auiler, author of several books about Hitchcock, explains that Hitchcock was seriously involved in writing most of his films. In fact, because of Hitchcock's intense planning and scrutiny in designing the shots before any filming took place, he considered his task as well as the film complete by the time shooting the film began, and he provided very few options for anything to be changed by anyone. (Hitchcock's Notebooks 477).

After working with Selznick on a few more films after *Rebecca*, Hitchcock moved on to direct many others over his long career that depict not only negative female stereotypes, but violently victimized women. Interesting

factors continue to dare filmgoers to watch a Hitchcock film, and consequently, feminist theorists, in order to uncover some understanding as to how viewers absorb filmed narrative, continue to examine Hitchcock's films to see how women are seen in film, how women are photographed and positioned inside a frame, as well as to find understanding as to how women themselves see films, of which most have been produced, written and directed by men.

Hitchcock's Spectators

How do we absorb film narrative? Many critics believe that spectators measure themselves by the cultural norms that are presented in film. Movies in the forties provided models to answer these questions for the audience, and spectators watched the movies and without question, bought into the stereotypes that power-figures presented to them. In order for a movie to draw audiences, hold their attention, and bring them back again and again, something had to be provided to give them what they wanted or needed, and, as a result, responded to. Thus, the objectification of women in film, as well as the role and involvement of spectators in watching films continues to be explicated.

In From Reverence to Rape, Molly Haskell offers an historical account of women's films. Haskell argues that the tendency of films about women was to show them as self-sacrificing to men and to their families, as well as representing the existence of a repressive social system. In many ways, our current culture still reinforces these traditional roles for women. Because Haskell believes that

cinema reinforces traditional values where men dominate, she therefore also believes that Hollywood filmmaking reinforces a patriarchal ideological system (Basinger, A Woman's View 208).

Laura Mulvey focuses on Hitchcock's works to suggest how women in Classic Hitchcock films are made into passive objects for male voyeuristic and sadistic impulses. She asserts that the films exist solely to fulfill the desires and express the anxieties of the men in the audience. Mulvey further disputes that the male character in Hitchcock's films are positioned (via cinematic apparatus) to actively control the image of the woman. As a result, female spectators view the direction of a female character being controlled by a male character and have no choice but to respond masochistically to the images of women in film.

Mulvey's theory further asserts that when men and women watch films, they view them with a "male gaze." In other words, a woman is an object only to be looked at (by men and woman, but both from a male perspective). "The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist

role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (Visual and Other Pleasures 19). Therefore, the female holds the look and the look is presented for and to signify to the male desire. Mulvey also explains the three looks within the dominant mode of Classic Hollywood cinema. First, is the look of the director (who controls what the cameraperson films) and the editor, who, while we believe he is representing a scene in a 'neutral' way, instead controls the composition by using a personal selection of mise-en-scène to create a desired point of view. Next, within the film there is the look between the actors; the male characters objectify the female ones through their active, desiring, and powerful look. Third, there is the spectators or audience's look that is determined by the previous two. The spectator identifies with the powerful look of the male character on the screen, and the spectator's position in relation to it is a result of what was produced by the director's look. In standard Classic cinema, point-of-view shots and shot-reverse shot editing techniques achieve the

effect of seeing the female characters as objects of desire through the male characters' eyes. Thus, conventions of Hollywood narrative cinema construct a particular spectator position, then, carefully cover up these strategies and presents these "looks" in subtle ways that manipulate the audience into participating with the characters.

The way that we "look" at a film that induces voyeuristic pleasures is dependent upon the illusion the director creates. As Mulvey argues, we have the opportunity of looking and participating in a private world without being looked at, especially in a dark theater that creates the feeling of being alone. Consequently, the look resulting from the camera and the spectator appear to be subordinate to that of the male characters.

Modifying Mulvey's interpretation and clarifying how women project themselves onto characters of a film, Mary Ann Doane argues that a woman has two ways of seeing movies: as herself (a female viewer) or as a "transvestite" (The Desire to Desire 10). E. Ann Kaplan states that a woman "is presented as what she represents for man, not in terms of what she actually signifies." Kaplan believes, "Her

discourse (her meanings as she might produce them) is suppressed in favor of a discourse structured by patriarchy, which her real significance has been replaced by connotations that serve patriarchy needs" (Women and Film 205). In other words, as "herself," the woman viewer identifies narcissistically with the presentation of a woman as an object, and as a "transvestite," she identifies instead with the male hero. As a result, women who watch films learn to identify with being objects.

According to Doane, the woman's film removes the male-hero option, because the film is about a woman. Kaplan and Doane conclude that the only enjoyment for females in the film audience had to come from the refusal of enjoyment or "the desire to be desired." Kaplan and Doane's ideas define the women's experience in watching film as one in which they become part of a trap in the fantasy world of film, as they have no choice but to cast themselves onto the film characters while remaining passive in the audience.

Tania Modleski investigates women in film and focuses specifically on Alfred Hitchcock. Modleski offers psychoanalytic explanations for the ambivalence she finds in

Hitchcock's work. Realizing complications in Mulvey's theory of the 'male' gaze, she explores the possibility that there may be a "female gaze." Modleski argues "some films do allow for the (limited) expression of a specifically female desire and that such films, instead of following the male oedipal journey that film theorists like Raymond Bellour see as the trajectory of all Hollywood narrative, trace a female oedipal trajectory, and in the process reveal some of the difficulties for women in becoming socialized in patriarchy" (Women Who 2). Modleski illustrates that in *Rebecca*, the difficulties the heroine must contend with include her coming to terms with a powerful male figure, as well as assorted mother figures, and also molding herself into what she believes man desires of her. However, before the heroine is able to mold herself into a desirable woman for the man she vies for, she must first find out just what it is that the man desires. Regardless of gender, mise-en-scène determines how we see the characters, and it is Hitchcock who determines what we view in his films.

Watching films is an activity we choose for entertainment. Oddly, however, our viewing of any of

Hitchcock's films gives us the feeling that something very shrewd is occurring when we watch his films. On the one hand we feel unpleasantly discomforted, yet, on the other hand, we feel compelled to continue watching. During *Rebecca*, one moment we might ask ourselves, "Wait a minute, the way the protagonist is treated by others is making me feel uncomfortable. Why am I watching her being victimized and why do I feel guilty, as if I'm also victimizing her?" A moment later we might think, "I'm so embarrassed for the protagonist, but why do I feel guilty and violated too?" Mulvey's theory of the psychoanalytical dynamics of the "three looks" interaction helps explain how we, as spectators, become actively involved as victims, victimizers, and voyeuristic spectators, as we are drawn in to participate with the films' characters and the plot.

What is actually occurring throughout *Rebecca* is that Hitchcock cleverly positions us with the point of view of the protagonist, and as a result, we see, hear, and feel everything that she experiences. Yet, at the same time, we are positioned with the point of view of the other characters, and we also become complicit with their actions.

Furthermore, in between these two fluctuating extremes, we see only minimal happy moments for the protagonist, which doesn't leave us or her feeling good or comfortable for very long. Hitchcock cleverly mixes and fluctuates these restricted and unrestricted points of view. The continual fluctuation of contrasts creates a disturbing feeling of discomfort and imbalance for us as well as for the protagonist. Hitchcock intentionally entices us into watching what he wants us to see, and he creates uncomfortable situations and positions us with the other characters as well, making us feel their discomfort. Finally, other than our choosing not to watch the film, Hitchcock's use of strategic camera angles position us so that we're unable not to watch what we are seeing. Because Hitchcock utilizes these techniques, lighting, and close-up shots that force us to focus on particular aspects, we are forced to focus diligently on the screen; we do not take our eyes off the screen, even though we might feel uneasy about what we're watching. As we participate as voyeurs while unable to alter what's being played out in front of us, a neurotic or guilty pleasure is created. Consequently, we are

enticed into feeling pleasure while watching someone else's discomfort, and according to societal moral codes, we shouldn't enjoy watching someone else being victimized. Hitchcock's effective mise-en-scène and camerawork causes us to experience both a certain sadistic pleasure as we identify through gaze or point of view the protagonist's developing discomfort at Manderley, as well as accept some masochistic pleasure, as we identify with the heroine's helplessness.

A love/hate relationship with cinema from feminist theorists continues to evolve. Despite the many theories of how women are portrayed in cinema, as well as our voyeuristic participation as spectators in viewing films, feminist film theorists do agree that women continue to be misrepresented in film; that is, women's portrayals do not reflect "real life," and negative images of women continue to be perpetuated by filmmakers.

CHAPTER THREE

Narrative Form

In the film *Rebecca*, the narrative reveals the story of an unnamed protagonist, an orphaned, very insecure, inexperienced, young woman, who resides in Monte Carlo as a paid companion to the tyrannical Mrs. Van Hopper. There she meets Maxim de Winter, a moody, wealthy, older man. Following a brief relationship, Maxim proposes to the protagonist to avoid her returning to America with Van Hopper. After an informal wedding and lengthy honeymoon, the couple arrive at Maxim's exclusive family estate, Manderley, where the protagonist is positioned against other characters who continually remind the heroine of her shortcomings in comparison with the late Rebecca, who she later finds has drowned at sea. Throughout the story, the characters at Manderley, even Maxim, appear to be continually preoccupied with thoughts of his first wife. Most threatening is Mrs. Danvers, the estate's main caretaker and Rebecca's personal assistant who remains loyal to her late mistress. Danvers devotes her efforts to keep

the estate exactly as it was when Rebecca was alive. As a result of Danver's behaviors, the heroine becomes obsessed with feeling overshadowed by the ever-living presence of her predecessor, Rebecca.

After the heroine's several attempts and failures trying to make her way against opposing forces, she finally gains courage enough to stand up against Danvers and proclaims her own authority as mistress of the estate. Immediately following, Maxim finally agrees with his wife to host a costume ball. Assuming Danvers has changed her feelings toward her, the new Mrs. de Winter agrees to wear a costume similar to one worn by a de Winter ancestor shown in a stairway painting. Unfortunately, the heroine soon finds out that Rebecca had previously worn the same costume after her husband reacts furious when she arrives at the ball in the dress. Confused and devastated, the new Mrs. de Winter searches and finds Danvers who then tries to persuade the overwrought protagonist to take her own life. However, her potential suicide is interrupted by fireworks indicating a shipwreck. She then snaps her out of her hypnotic state and escapes Danvers to locate her husband.

While divers recover the shipwreck, another small boat is discovered with Rebecca's body in it. This news bewilders Maxim, as he had previously identified another body as Rebecca's. When the heroine finds her husband, she reveals her frustration with him having always loved Rebecca. To our surprise, Maxim admits that he not only hated Rebecca, but he also confesses to striking Rebecca, causing her to fall, hit her head on fishing tackle, and consequently, die. He also admits that he put Rebecca's body in the boat. Maxim then tells the protagonist that Rebecca had not only been unfaithful, but was possibly pregnant by another man, and that she goaded him into hitting her.

After an investigation, Jack Favell, Rebecca's cousin and lover accuses Maxim of murder. When the local magistrate discovers that Rebecca actually had cancer, which provides a motive for suicide, Maxim is acquitted. The de Winters return to see Manderley in flames with Danvers in Rebecca's bedroom window as the mansion begins to collapse.

Rhetorical Form

Throughout the film, *Rebecca*, Hitchcock combines fluctuations of mise-en-scène in order to produce an arsenal of contrasting extremes that operate to accentuate the protagonist as inferior, therefore rendering her insignificant and powerless. To further compound and create the heroine's sense of her own insignificance, other characters, most notably the women in the film, are portrayed as working against rather than supporting the protagonist, causing her to habitually question her sense of trust not only of herself, but of others.

While the film unfolds as a narrative, a covert rhetorical theme reveals the new Mrs. de Winter's efforts toward personal empowerment as a threat to patriarchal society, and how in her struggle to gain equal power, men undermine her persistence in order to maintain their domination. From a close analysis, film readers will gain an understanding of how Hitchcock, believed by many to be a misogynist, has capitalized on this struggle, and has reduced the female characters to neurotics whose only power

lies in the negative realms of their personalities. With their minimal power, these women are of little value to themselves or society. Employing his powerful cinematic reins, Hitchcock contributes to the perpetuation of negative female stereotypes, exhibiting men pitted against women, as well as women against women, continuing the sabotage of women's efforts to share an equal place in society.

The rhetorical element in film moves viewers from looking at not just "what" is being shown, but to looking at "how" narrative is manipulated in order to make a point. As explained by Bordwell and Thompson, cinematic rhetorical form, in contrast to narrative form, includes a filmmaker's pervasive argument. A major component of the picture in addition to providing entertainment persuades the audience to hold a particular opinion about it, and possibly incorporate that mindset into their attitudes. Bordwell and Thompson explain that a film's rhetorical attributes includes the filmmakers' "trying to move the viewer to a new intellectual conviction, a new emotional attitude or to action; [the] subject [matter] will not be an issue of scientific truth, but a matter of opinion toward which a

persona may take a number of equally plausible attitudes" (Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art, An Introduction 99).

Consequently, if the rhetoric is convincing, we may change our opinion, and often a film may attempt to persuade the viewer to make a choice that will affect the way we understand our culture or ourselves.

Because similarities to du Maurier's novel appear in the film, on the narrative level it appears as if Hitchcock has remained true to the novel. Upon closer investigation, however, indeed we notice that Hitchcock exercised his authority as director to skew the novel to further depict women as not only inferior to men, but as threats to patriarchal control. What do these differences between the novel and film involve? Most noticeably Hitchcock intensifies the female characters to extremes of their stereotype personalities, he consolidates negative images and concentrates them into individual scenes, and he also invents scenes not found in the novel. Even more interesting is how Hitchcock uses the camera to manipulate the audience to watch and participate with sadomasochistic pleasure as the heroine struggles to grow into a sexually mature woman.

CHAPTER FOUR

Hitchcock's Lights, Action, Camera and Women

In order to keep patriarchy in control, it would be necessary to abolish the threat of women. One way to restrain woman is to render her powerless by not allowing her to become sexually mature; ways to keep woman from becoming sexually mature include enforcing her innocence or childishness, keeping her off-balance, and withholding information to keep her insecure, thus destroying her attempts toward self-empowerment. In *Rebecca*, Hitchcock utilizes several cinematic techniques to show the heroine struggling to become empowered in order to gain her equal place in society, but we also see her efforts continually sabotaged. A close analysis of Hitchcock's direction will show how the use of mise-en-scène renders the heroine helpless in her plight to achieve her own identity. As the heroine moves from under the influence of one strong female to another in order to seek support and security, we see her fail nearly every time. Hitchcock utilizes opposing comparisons and contrasts to emphasize the heroine as an

inferior and inexperienced child, as well as the spectators and other characters' gaze to emphasize the heroine's struggles and failures as she works to become the woman she believes her husband desires. Her ambition to discover her husband's desire also undermines her own quest for self-hood. Hitchcock uses his camera to manipulate the audience into watching and participating with sadomasochistic pleasure as the heroine progressively moves toward a state of hysteria in her attempt to transform herself into a powerful woman.

The characters in the novel are portrayed as standard gothic stock characters whose roles reflect the societal expectations of the time. As a result, the characters in the film are stereotypical of a 1940 patriarchal society; regardless of women's roles at home or at work, they served under male domination. The novel and film directly solicit a female audience, and what women see in the film (as well as men), depicts that women are threatening; the financially secure, the mature, and the assertive, are all depicted as a threat. Consequently, the only non-threatening female character is the young heroine, as long as she stays a

child.

The main characters include the protagonist (the second Mrs. De Winter), Maxim De Winter, patriarch and owner of the Manderley estate, Mrs. Danvers, housekeeper of the estate and personal assistant to the late Rebecca, Rebecca, the deceased first Mrs. De Winter, and Mrs. Van Hopper, the employer of the protagonist. Minor characters that contribute to the protagonist's victimization include Maxim's sister Beatrice and her husband Giles. While a small handful of the movie's characters are portrayed as friendly and serve as a contrasting backdrop to nearly everyone else who are portrayed as victimizing the protagonist, these characters' appearances are too brief to warrant any lengthy discussion.

Like du Maurier's novel, *Rebecca's* plot begins with the protagonist describing a dream she had of returning to Manderley and then recalling the life she lived while there. As the heroine speaks, the camera enters a gate and meanders along a sinister-looking road, leading us to the burned ruins of the once elegant and enchanting estate. The gloomy lighting, the charred remains, and the ominous music suggest

an uncertainty that we associate with a suspense story.

This scene is followed by another scene, one not found in the novel, that brings us to the present and dramatizes the contrast of mood between the two main characters that plays out throughout the film, as well as introducing Hitchcock's use of the shot-reverse shot and a reaction shot. The scene begins with a long shot of the sea, waves crashing onto a jagged cliff. We are positioned to gaze at the sea and see its powerful crashing waves. The camera, then positioning us looking upward from the sea, slowly pans up toward the top of the cliff where we notice a man in silhouette staring down at the rocks below. Following, we see an extreme close-up of the man's face, appearing possessed while gazing down at the water. With lighting focused only over the center of his face, we are forced to notice the man's intense gaze that makes us to wonder what he is thinking about. Then, a shot reverse-shot positions us suddenly behind him, to an extreme close-up of the back of his shoulders, then another shot below his knees, as the man takes two very slow steps toward the cliff's edge. We follow the left foot forward, with light focused solely on

the forward foot. This shot is followed by a full front extreme close-up of the man's face as he moves very slowly forward while continuing to look down toward the sea. The man's gaze is then sharply interrupted by the sound of a voice crying out, "NO, STOP!" A long shot followed by a reaction shot shows the man abruptly turn around to notice a young woman standing with a stunned reaction of fear. In a biting tone the man snaps, "What the devil are you shouting about?!" We then see a medium close-up of an offended and frightened woman as the man continues, "Who are you...what are you staring at!?" The man's gruff statement is then sharply contrasted and followed by his voicing of a softer, friendlier tone suggesting to the woman to get on with her walk. As the man turns again to look down at the sea, the next frame leaves us to gaze back down at the water. This suspense, tension, and drama of our wondering what the man is thinking and why the man might jump, contrasted with the extreme of friendliness as the man's mood drastically softens toward the woman, introduces spectators to the first of the continual interplay of moods between the two main characters, Maxim de Winter and the protagonist.

A close-up "reaction" shot of the protagonist, like the one of the offended heroine just described, is exercised throughout the film at the end or near the end of many of the scenes. This close-up of her cements audience identification with the heroine. As the camera tracks in, creating a close-up of the heroine, we can't help but notice that she appears profoundly stressed, and holding these close-up shots for several seconds ensures that the heroine's image of fear is deeply impressed upon us. In turn, we strongly identify with her feelings of anxiety.

After the opening scene, the camera next cuts from the previous dramatic opening scene by panning the front of a contrasting setting: a luxurious Monte Carlo hotel where we are then brought inside to find the heroine and her ostentatious employer, Mrs. Van Hopper, seated together on a couch in the lobby. Van Hopper is portrayed as an extreme stereotype of a past-her-prime, wealthy, pompous, gossip who flatters herself to be desirable to younger men. Van Hopper's over-weight build attempting to fit within an over-embellished dress sharply conflicts with her attempt to sip femininely from a petite-sized teacup with a not-so-delicate

sized hand. To emphasize her command, Van Hopper is poised crowding the middle of the loveseat-sized couch with the heroine along side. Van Hopper continually responds with a staccato of incessant complaining to the heroine, and her facial features and manners turn snide whenever she addresses the heroine. The shots mainly focus on Van Hopper's mood changes; from her acting artificially friendly to others in contrast to her heinous treatment towards the heroine.

Commensurate with each scene in *Rebecca*, the Monte Carlo lobby scene begins with our point of view stationed with each main character so that we respond and react with each of them as they interact. The dialogue begins with the sharp-tongued, snooty voice of Van Hopper complaining to the protagonist, "I'm never coming to Monte Carlo out of season again, not a single well-known personality in the hotel!" Immediately a long shot introduces and accentuates the handsome and sophisticated Maxim arriving. After Maxim invites himself to join Van Hopper and the heroine, shots of the over-bearing Van Hopper both smiling and cooing toward Maxim and then her snapping at the heroine while Maxim does

not see, contrasts with medium close-ups of Maxim's warm gazes and obvious attraction toward the young heroine. Interwoven with this interchange we see the heroine attempting insecurely to return Maxim's smile. The shot reverse-shot sequence positions us to respond and react with each character. Other than Maxim, whose attention Van Hopper persistently vies for, Van Hopper is shown mistreating everyone else in a condescending and self-absorbed manner. Further examples of Van Hopper's vulgar characteristics include Van Hopper displaying disapproving looks by lowering her eyes, portraying a face as if she has a bad taste in her mouth, and raising her head in an upward arrogant tilt. In contrast, the protagonist, almost comically, continually over-reacts by recoiling and leaning away from Van Hopper, nearly disappearing from the frame.

In addition to the portrayal of Van Hopper as a person of wealth and power, Hitchcock portrays Maxim's character as even more powerful. His stature and wealth that connote this power, representing patriarchy in general, is illustrated by his dominant left-frame positions, as well as his clothes, including a sophisticated, formal tuxedo. Also, Maxim's

superiority is displayed by his use of witty responses and a softened aloofness that he shows to others. Maxim displays authority by folding his arms with an air of self-assuredness and superiority, and for every insult that we see Van Hopper crudely aiming toward the heroine, Maxim returns the serve to Van Hopper with quick, superior wit, always sustaining his power. Throughout the Monte Carlo scene, Van Hopper is continually embarrassed by Maxim's insults and power, and she retaliates by exuding her power to the nearest and most vulnerable person she is able to victimize, the protagonist. During the characters' conversation, Van Hopper asks Maxim whether his valet has unpacked for him. Maxim replies that he doesn't employ one and suggests that Van Hopper could possibly unpack for him and his voice insinuates that it is pretentious for anyone to utilize one. Again, we see Van Hopper redirect Maxim's insult toward the heroine by condescendingly retorting to her, "Perhaps you could help Mr. de Winter if he wants anything done. You're a capable child in many ways."

While a "child" motif is found in the novel, Hitchcock makes continuous use of this motif throughout the majority

of the film in order to emphasize the heroine's vulnerability and innocence. As a result, the heroine is continually positioned as bait, unprotected by maturity that would protect her from perpetrators. In order to obstruct the heroine's growth towards maturity and to amplify this point, the other characters continually remind her of her status as child rather than adult. Condescendingly, she is also referred to as "the girl," and she is reprimanded "to stop biting her nails," "put on a raincoat," and to "eat your breakfast..." While the main male character of the film, Maxim de Winter carries four formal names, the protagonist isn't given even one. Hitchcock's film emphasizes this point to further stress the heroine's insignificance. As a result of the heroine not having a proper name, we hear the other characters refer to her as "girl," "fool," "stupid," and "idiot." To underscore these references for nearly the entire film, the heroine is costumed in adolescent dress and makeup. Just shy of wearing saddle shoes, the protagonist dons a headband in her hair to complement a simple, drab skirt and a short-sleeved sweater.

Hitchcock's presentation of Maxim as a charming,

authority figure and his obvious fascination to the protagonist causes us to stay focused on his appearance and their attraction; thus, it is easy to set aside the abuse of Van Hopper's treatment to the heroine. While we notice Van Hopper's condemning insults to the heroine, we are more likely to pay attention to the allure of the potential relationship of Maxim and the heroine. As we are situated with each of these characters, we feel the same as the heroine as she is belittled by Van Hopper and is attracted to Maxim; we relate to Maxim as he is repulsed by Van Hopper's attraction to him and is interested in the heroine; and we feel the frustration of Van Hopper in not gaining the desired attention from Maxim and lacking patience with the protagonist.

While at Monte Carlo, Maxim and the heroine spend time together while Van Hopper is bedridden with her cold. During this interval, the heroine behaves like a shy and innocent, but friendly young woman, while Maxim appears warm one moment but becomes seriously troubled and preoccupied in thought the next moment. The epitome of Van Hopper's pompousness is depicted when Hitchcock consolidates her

vulgar habits into a scene showing her taking advantage of a minor illness in order to gain attention. We see the self-interested Van Hopper, primed in a satin bed jacket with a bow in her hair, talking with her mouth full, sitting in a bed strewn with books, tissues, chocolates and other clutter, and at the same time plucking her eyebrows, picking at her teeth, and smoking a cigarette. We are able to understand the oppressive conditions that the heroine must contend with under Van Hopper's employment, and because of our positioning with the protagonist, we also feel mistreated. At the same time, as we are positioned with Van Hopper, we see her impatience and feel her absence of empathy toward the heroine's lack of experience, and we are stationed to comply along with Van Hopper as she inflicts abusive remarks toward the protagonist.

When the heroine hears that Van Hopper plans to leave Monte Carlo for the United States, she frantically searches for and finds Maxim in his hotel room in order to let him know that she is leaving. In this scene not found in the novel, Maxim proposes marriage to the protagonist while he is shaving in the bathroom. While this scene might suggest

a negative image of Maxim, it depicts an even more negative view of the protagonist, and we watch helplessly as she settles for a less-than-desirable setting during one of the most important moments of her life. She replies to Maxim, "I'm not the sort of person men marry...I don't belong in your sort of world." It should be noted that the heroine doesn't overtly accept Maxim's proposal, but taking control of the situation, Maxim patronizingly pats the heroine's hand and says, "Now that that's settled [the proposal], you may pour me out some coffee, two lumps of sugar and some milk please...same as my tea, don't forget." It is obvious from this part of the scene that the heroine is further depicted as being inferior by responding positively to Maxim's proposal, and as feminist Molly Haskell notes, Maxim's expectations of his wife-to-be reinforces the traditional, oppressive patriarchal ideological system. When Van Hopper hears of the wedding plans, she hexes the heroine, "You haven't the faintest idea of what it means to be a great lady...good bye and good luck!" In spite of the obnoxious Van Hopper's ill wish, she is right about the heroine's inexperience. This point is mockingly emphasized after Van

Hopper leaves the room and the heroine is then framed alone in the large hotel room and the camera tracks back to capture a reaction shot for the spectators that makes the heroine appear to shrink in size, creating an atmosphere of isolation and diminution.

Following the Monte Carlo scene, Hitchcock includes another scene not found in the novel that amplifies the distinct differences of the newly married de Winters leaving a common justice-of-the-peace's office. The couple's simple wedding and their everyday clothes sharply contrast with an elegant wedding party parading by. Festive bridesmaids gleefully support their friend's momentous occasion. As the newlyweds leave the office, as an afterthought, Maxim stops at a street vendor to purchase a bouquet of flowers for his new wife. Again, the heroine settles for a less than desired setting for what should be such a momentous occasion. This particular scene further enhances the protagonist's sense of inadequacy and lack of fulfillment, as the romantic celebration of the elegant wedding sharply mocks with the protagonist's reality with her new husband.

On approach to Manderley after the wedding, the setting

and mood changes drastically when the weather changes from beautiful sunshine to a rain storm. When the newlyweds arrive at Manderley, we see Frith, the head butler, greet the couple and as Frith reaches to shake hands with the new Mrs. de Winter, she throws off his timing by awkwardly extending her hand three times in order to complete the handshake. Frith then escorts them into the mansion down an extensive hall. As the newlyweds walk into a lighted area, the camera then positions us along with the protagonist for a several second long shot of the full staff standing at complete attention against the backdrop of the dark, cathedral-sized room, filled with long menacing shadows. The gloomy setting foreshadows the heroine's stay at the mansion. In obvious contrast to the staff at formal attention, we see the heroine, with a dowdy appearance of her messy hair and frumpy clothes. Maxim is costumed to remain neatly groomed; even after the major downpour his clothes remain neatly in place. The culminating effect of the protagonist appearing to lack order, as well as her mistiming with Frith, contrasts with the extremely organized Maxim and the neatly manicured Manderley. Our position both

with Maxim and the protagonist causes us to feel the protagonist's sense of difference to her new surroundings, as well as Maxim's obliviousness to his new wife's fears. Following Classical film norms, the staff is displayed segregated, resulting in showing the men (wearing militaristic uniforms) on the left, while on the right the women wear white aprons over dark uniforms. As a result of the militant-like greeting and the dark, gloomy setting shown to the spectators through the use of several shot-reverse and reaction shots, we are positioned to feel Mrs. de Winter's anxiety and sense the impending doom.

During the greeting with the staff, a close-up then shows Maxim and his wife approaching the staff with the protagonist shown in the bottom right corner of the frame. The corner framing causes her appear as if she is hiding fearfully. Next, a long shot shows the de Winters walking toward the staff, and the protagonist stumbles upon one of the steps. The camera then focuses on a full shot of Mrs. Danvers appearing from the left and moving to center frame in front of the male staff members. A close-up reaction shot pans the protagonist walking alone, her mouth stiffly ajar

suggesting her terrifyingly breathless. She attempts nervously to brush her wet hair back away from her face with her hand, a failing attempt to look more composed. As she moves painfully slowly toward Danvers for an introduction, we anticipate what will happen next. Our expectation of threat is fulfilled by a full front close-up on Danvers, whose pale skin and dark shadowed facial features and minimal movement suggests the living dead. This shot is followed by a series of interchanges of close-up reaction shots showing Danvers' penetrating gaze towards the protagonist and Mrs. de Winter's fearful reactions as they exchange stares with each other. In a deep, curt, monotone voice, Danvers says, "How do you do?" to the protagonist. Danvers is costumed in a long, Victorian-style, matronly black dress that resembles a man's suit. Along with wearing pale white make up, her cheek-bones are shadowed to create a hollowed effect and her hair is styled with braids pinned up close against her head, creating an appearance of her having sideburns. The bizarre combination depicts a masculine-motherly figure. When Danvers moves, she does so very slowly, hands folded together resting at her waist,

reinforcing her cadaver-in-a-casket appearance. In addition, we never see Danvers blinking, but instead with her head lowered slightly and no expression whatsoever with her mouth. Her eyes move in short, very slow glances that also cause her eyebrows to arch slightly to signify her disapproval of the new Mrs. de Winter. The collaboration of costume and makeup effects strikingly depict an unattractive version of a stereotypical vampire, and her slow movements and penetrating gaze gives us the impression that Danvers could exude her power, both from the world of death, as well as life. Hitchcock explains:

Mrs. Danvers is almost never seen walking and was rarely shown in motion. If she entered a room in which the heroine was, what happened is that the girl suddenly heard a sound and there was the ever-present Mrs. Danvers, standing perfectly still by her side. In this way, the whole situation was projected from the heroine's point of view; she never knew when Mrs. Danvers might turn up, and this, in itself, was terrifying. To have shown Mrs. Danvers walking about would have been to humanize her (Truffaut, Hitchcock pp 129-30).

Included in the frame on each side behind Danvers, but in a slightly distorted view, are two butlers who appear to stand guard, one whose stance suggests that he is holding a gun. This effect reinforces the impact of Danvers' dominant force

both to the protagonist, as well as to the spectators.

As we continue to watch the intense interplay of close-up reaction shots between Danvers and the heroine, we hear off-frame Maxim suggest to Frith that tea be prepared. A medium shot on Danvers' eyes show them move slowly to the protagonist who is holding her gloves. The protagonist is nervously fidgeting with her gloves and as we see Danvers' eyes catch sight of the gloves, we then watch Mrs. de Winter submit to Danvers' command by losing hold of the gloves and dropping them. The impact resulting from this shot is that the protagonist has been willed through Danvers' powerful intimidation to drop her gloves. As Danvers and Mrs. de Winter simultaneously bend down to retrieve the gloves, we are positioned as spectators to watch in silhouette, a medium shot of their faces suggestively brushing near each other. Their close proxemics make us feel that Danvers has made a sexual advance toward the heroine. Bright light illuminates Mrs. de Winter, while Danvers' image is shaded. As the two slowly ascend, Danvers is the first to arrive to an upright position, suggesting her success in achieving domination over the heroine. Obviously shaken, the heroine

quickly leaves to join Maxim for tea. To intensify the impact of threat, a medium shot shows the scrutinizing stare of Danvers' gaze following the heroine out of the scene. Maxim's obliviousness to his new wife's fears causes us to see him as an accomplice, unaware of any of the characters who obviously violate the space representative of the young Mrs. de Winter's innocence.

On the surface, it appears that Danvers is jealous of her new mistress encroaching on her dead mistress' territory. Although the story has just begun, it is obvious that the protagonist is being shown as inferior in her new household. But there is a great deal more going on in this scene than is obvious at first glance. Danvers is portrayed as an unattractive form of a stereotypical vampire, an evil-looking woman who exerts her power by intimidating others with her silent stance. Even more noteworthy in this scene is the sexual interplay between the heroine and Danvers when they brush near to each other. This insinuated sexual encounter, the desire of one woman for another, is shown to imply potential threat both to Maxim, as he could lose control and power of his new wife to a relationship with

Danvers, and to the heroine, as she is poised as an innocent victim to the commanding Danvers. As Tania Modleski points out, the desire of a woman for another woman as portrayed in *Rebecca*, is treated as a "problem" (The Women Who 51).

Consequently, Danvers is not only being depicted as a threat to exerting the real power in Manderley, but as one who seduces and preys on innocent women in order to fulfil a sexual desire. The negative depiction stereotypes Danvers as an evil lesbian. In addition, the portrayal of Danvers as a vampire implies that those who submit to this choice of life-style are like her, and it is obvious that the given viewpoint is that homosexual relationships are immoral.

After the threatening introduction and interplay between Danvers and the heroine, the next day at Manderley, Mrs. de Winter is left to assume her new duties alone while Maxim is away on business. As the heroine leaves the breakfast table to look for the morning room, Hitchcock positions us to watch with Frith as she nervously forgets her belongings at the table. Frith then assists the protagonist in retrieving them and the camera is then positioned so that we follow behind the two. As Mrs. de

Winter walks toward the door, the camera angle shows us a towering-sized Frith as he walks very slowly, holding his stare on the heroine as he walks behind her. Frith's movement, as well as his stature, creates a feeling of threat both to the heroine, as well as to spectators, similar as to when Danvers stared at the heroine upon her arrival. When Mrs. de Winter walks out the door, a front shot of her shows her stumbling, and Frith helps her catch her balance. The heroine then walks down a couple of stairs into the dining room with the zombie-like Frith following a few steps behind, eyes still in a frozen stare on her. By the time the two reach the dining room table, not only does the room appear to have grown to immense proportions, but Frith also appears to have grown at least a foot taller. We then see a heavy fog hover above the main stairway that leads to both the east wing where Mr. and Mrs. de Winter stay, and the west wing where Rebecca's bedroom is located. The impact of the enormous room and Frith's stature, along with the fog, isolate the meek and vulnerable heroine amongst the harrowing mansion and powerful characters. Frith continues to observe the protagonist as she makes

another mistake of walking into the wrong room instead of the morning room. When Frith follows to assist her, we see a reaction shot of the fearful heroine completely startled by his appearance. Next, Frith gives Mrs. de Winter directions, and as she carefully makes her way to the morning room, a heavy fog of light emanates from the room. The camera then focuses a several-second shot focused solely on Frith who vigilantly stares at the heroine entering the morning room.

The Morning Room scene begins by showing the cowering heroine slowly ascends the stairs to the morning room and as she reaches the door, lighting blends her silhouette along with the darkness of the door. When the heroine enters the dark room, a several second medium shot shows Rebecca's dog, Jasper, with his head lowered, as he disapprovingly creeps out of the room. Mrs. de Winter reacts dejectedly and insultedly, and carefully scans her surroundings to see if she is being watched. Contrary to the film, in the novel, Jasper and the heroine become immediate friends. Hitchcock's choice to change this particular event adds to the heroine's feeling of rejection in her new home. Because we are posed

to watch, and there is no mistake in our feeling this same rejection.

As the Morning Room scene continues, the camera pans around from the side of the room and arrives above Rebecca's desk showing the heroine and us a close-up of perfectly arranged accessories. We then see on the center of the desk, a large satin-covered address book with other reference books placed under the address book and on both sides, each monogrammed with a decorative letter "R." Included on the desk are two over-sized elaborate sconces, complementing the rest of the extravagantly decorated room. In strong contrast with the elaborate setting, at that point, we notice Mrs. de Winter wearing a drab wool skirt and sweater, and a simple strand of pearls as she apprehensively moves around the desk to pick up the address book. The camera slowly draws us in closer with the heroine to observe the address book, and then holds for a several second extreme close-up of the monogram on the book. The heroine opens the book, and along with her we see another lengthy extreme close-up of Rebecca's name artfully inscribed on the inside cover of the book. Without losing

eye contact of the book, the heroine sits down and we watch her carefully examine Rebecca's signature while she slowly lowers the book toward the desk and immersed in the scene, she ponders and gazes at the signature. The heroine then sets her purse down close to her on the chair, and when the phone on the desk abruptly rings loudly, she reacts so stunned that she has trouble realizing where the ringing sound is coming from. We then we see her troubled as to whether or not she should answer the phone. Leaning over, she answers the phone in an attempted assured voice. We do not hear the voice at the other end of the telephone, but the protagonist replies, "...Mrs. de Winter has been dead for over a year." Realizing her faux pas, Mrs. de Winter reacts with horror at her mistake and at this same moment, we see her aghast when she notices that Danvers has appeared at the door and has been watching her. The camera then shows the heroine's hands grab hold onto the chair arms as if to support herself. In the novel, it is Mrs. Danvers who telephones the new Mrs. de Winter and Hitchcock's having Danvers appear instead at the doorway, effectively causes not only more embarrassment to the protagonist for her

mistake in not identifying herself as Mrs. de Winter, but adds to the compounding progression of threat, fear, and control of Danvers.

As the stunned heroine watches, Danvers walks slowly into the morning room and around the desk toward the heroine. Lighting outlines her silhouette while concurrently a brighter light focuses on her stone face. To the heroine's (and our) relief, Danvers has come to discuss the daily dinner menu. The protagonist is shown cowering in the bottom left of the frame with Danvers standing over her on the right. We notice the heroine in an entrapped position, with her head tilted back towards us to face and answer Danvers. Mrs. de Winter's neck is extended back and her pose causes us to sense that she is defenseless to Danvers threatening presence. In the reverse shot of Danvers, we, like the protagonist, are forced to focus solely in reaction to Danvers' entrance. During the reverse reaction shot to Mrs. de Winter, with Danvers we focus on the heroine. Commensurate with the other scenes, Mulvey's explanation of the three-look mode system is effectively utilized here to invite us to react both as powerless victim and powerful

victimizer. Our position as victimizer causes us to feel helpless to assist the heroine from what we see, know and feel is threatening. Voyeuristically, we continue to watch the scene. It is as if we are watching an innocent child being violated, and even knowing this, we continue to watch as the scene unfolds. Without using any body gestures, Danvers slowly shifts her eyes downward toward Mrs. de Winter with a penetrating gaze. The protagonist cowers even further back in her chair, grasping her hand onto her other arm, appearing as if she is protecting herself. Danvers is then shown standing so close to the heroine that it appears that there is not enough space between them for the protagonist to be able to stand without having to bump into Danvers. As Mrs. de Winter replies to Danvers, the heroine slightly recoils to catch her breath. Hitchcock's use of spatial proxemics in this scene shows us that the protagonist is threatened and trapped by Danvers' dominating stance. In the next frame, the heroine again catches her breath, and Danvers slowly walks out of the room. We then see a medium close-up of the protagonist still slightly hunched forward, propping herself up on the chair arms as if

to recover from the violation of the visit. Positioned along with her, we look down for a several-second extreme close-up on several aristocratic names inscribed in Rebecca's personal address book, which is where this scene began.

As Mrs. de Winter leans to the side of the desk to view another book, she knocks over a china cupid. The crashing sound coupled with lighting focused on the cupid crashing causes us to react not only to the noise and sight of the accident, but also to the heroine's horrified reaction. She looks up immediately to check as to whether she has been seen, and then scrambles to gather the broken pieces off the floor. Again she looks around to see if she is being watched and she then searches hurriedly for a place to hide the pieces. When she opens the desk drawer, an extreme close-up shows only her quick and nervous hands cover the cupid with papers in the back of the drawer. We then see a close-up of her leaning nervously in the chair. Like the protagonist, we are not only positioned to also feel intimidated by Danvers earlier in the scene, but we now also feel the embarrassment of the protagonist's childishness as

she hides her mistake. In addition, Hitchcock's use of displaying Rebecca's refined upper class friends in the address book to contrast with the simple protagonist further accentuates her feelings of insecurity and lack of significance. Because our point of view has been positioned predominantly with the protagonist in the morning room scene, we also feel her fear and vulnerability significantly intensify. This fear consequently causes us to feel unstable and insecure.

In addition to enforcing the protagonist's childishness, another strategy for keeping the heroine from becoming mature is to sabotage her sense of equilibrium, and throughout the film Hitchcock employs *mise-en-scène* to illustrate the heroine off-balanced and disoriented. As a result, we see the heroine repeatedly miss her timing, as in her handshake with Frith, and we see her lose her way, stumble, knock over and break things, and even forget her own new name when the telephone rings unexpectedly. These unsteady actions contrast sharply with the other characters' perception of Rebecca as being a woman of refined social graces and steady command.

Before arriving in America to direct films, Hitchcock was well-known for his mastery at creating mise-en-scène in his British films. In *Rebecca*, most notably at the Manderley estate, Hitchcock directs his painstakingly clever brush strokes to create each setting to emphasize the heroine's inadequacy. In order to perpetuate the heroine's sense of isolation and helplessness, Hitchcock's stresses her sense of isolation by showing the protagonist wandering lost in the mansion, shrinking in size before our eyes (as the camera tracks away from her), and dwarfed in a chair double her own size. We also notice gargantuan-sized doors with doorknobs raised to shoulder level, head height fireplaces, as well as over-sized tables, windows and other furniture. These effects generate the impression that the protagonist is small, child-like and reinforce her own sense of insignificance in comparison to the perceived superiority of the surrounding characters and setting.

After the Morning Room scene, one of the minor scenes contributes to further victimization of the protagonist, as well as establishing further our participation as voyeurs. During the Luncheon scene, Maxim's sister, Beatrice and her

husband Giles arrive for lunch and we are positioned to observe them from the top of the stairs behind the banister. Following this shot, we see the protagonist spying on them from our previous point-of-view shot from the balcony, turning us, along with her, into voyeurs. The next shot discloses the protagonist slowly descending the stairs, and we, along with her eavesdrop on the couple from behind the door. Beatrice, shown taller than the heroine, is portrayed as a commanding and assertive woman, a power figure who contrasts with the inferior heroine who lacks any sense of self-power. When Mrs. de Winter enters the room, it is Beatrice who directs and controls the action by ordering her husband to leave, as he is "very much in the way," and then tells the heroine to "please sit down" in her own house. As the two discuss Danvers, Beatrice is framed on the left and the heroine is shown partly cut out of right frame. After Beatrice mentions that Danvers "simply adored Rebecca," a close-up reaction shot shows the heroine turn towards us to show her despair. Later at lunch, Giles quizzes Mrs. de Winter concerning her hobbies and interests. We all discover that the heroine "doesn't hunt, ride horses,

sidesaddle or stride...doesn't know how to dance very well, including the rumba, and she doesn't sail." Giles, clueless to his rude manners, says to Maxim, "I'm trying to find out just exactly what your wife does." Maxim further diminishes his bride's skills by responding to Giles in a condescending and embarrassed tone, saying, "She sketches a little." When Beatrice mentions to Maxim the possibility of hosting another party, she speaks directly to Maxim as if the heroine isn't even in the room. She then mentions to Maxim that everyone is "dying to see you and, uh...." Beatrice looks directly at the heroine, but she doesn't even call the heroine by any name. Later during the visit, Beatrice further compounds the insults by suggesting that Mrs. de Winter do "something about [her] hair," such as wearing it behind her ears. Desperately desiring approval, the heroine immediately pushes her hair behind her ears only to hear Beatrice respond, "Oh no, that's worse!" The insults continue as Beatrice tells her new sister-in-law that she can tell that she "doesn't give a hoot on how she dresses." Her remarks reinforce her idea that the heroine isn't anything that Maxim should want in a woman and that she

certainly isn't anything like Rebecca. As we are situated with the heroine to see and feel her reactions, the impact of this visit further reinforces her sense of inadequacy and powerlessness, as well as our own as we are positioned with her. Because we are positioned also as voyeurs along with the heroine, we can identify closely with the heroine's compounding sense of insecurity. The Luncheon scene ends with another close-up reaction shot revealing the heroine's despair after Beatrice refers to what Rebecca and mentions "you know the whole story..." Like the heroine, we don't know the whole story and we are left fearfully anticipating what this story might be.

Included with the many extreme contrasts Hitchcock utilizes to manipulate the mood of the audience, interspersed in the film are quips of dry humor that accentuate the opposing moods. Some comedic moments include Maxim suggesting that Van Hopper be his valet, his offering a marriage proposal from his hotel bathroom, and when the couple arrive at Manderley during a major downpour, Maxim appears nice and neat, while the heroine appears drenched and bedraggled. Interestingly, these humorous moments always

yield to Maxim's benefit. As a result, while we respond with amusement to these scenes, in reality, we are laughing at the expense of the protagonist, as well as at the expense of ourselves, because we are also positioned with her. In effect, our participation creates a sort of self-annihilation as the joke ends up also being on us.

Following the luncheon with Beatrice and Giles, where the protagonist, in a child-like plea, begs her husband to host a ball, we see Maxim's personal assistant, Frank Crawley and Mrs. de Winter addressing invitations. After having already told her that Rebecca, "wasn't afraid of anything," which is completely opposite to the protagonist's depiction of continual fear, Crawley continues, Rebecca "was the most beautiful creature I ever saw." This line causes us to immediately contrast the opposing imaginary image of the perceived sophisticated Rebecca, to the plain, inexperienced second Mrs. de Winter. The camera tracks away from Crawley and the heroine, shrinking the couple significantly in size. The protagonist's attire, her body partially shown in the frame, as well as Crawley's comments are all emphasized to further illustrates to the spectators the heroine's own

increasing sense of insignificance. Frank Crawley, Maxim's personal consultant, is portrayed as the only emotionally stable and compassionate character in the film. Notably, as a main character, he has the film's smallest part. Hitchcock used this tactic to accentuate the protagonist's grim inability of gaining support from Frank, the only sympathetic character, let alone any of the other characters (prominently women) thus far.

Augmenting the previous scene where the heroine is shown to be totally deficient by Maxim's relatives, Hitchcock includes another significant scene not in the novel, the Home Movie Scene, to depict the heroine as not only an inadequate child, but ultimately a threat to patriarchy. The scene begins by showing a close-up of a magazine captioned, "The Magazine for Smart Women." As we see Mrs. de Winter's hand turn the magazine page, an extreme close-up focuses on a sophisticated, mature woman displayed in an elegant black gown. The caption on the advertisement reads, "For the Gala Evening." This frame holds still, while another superimposed frame shows our heroine actually wearing this same evening gown. We then see Mrs. de Winter

walk awkwardly into a room toward Maxim, who is setting up a film projector. It's obvious that the heroine is trying to create a more mature, sophisticated image of herself. While the heroine is attempting to mimic the sophisticated woman in the magazine, it is apparent that she lacks the elegance and sexual maturity of the model and what we have heard so far about Rebecca. The heroine is wearing a juvenile bow dressed in her hair, and her posture and youthful shape and stature don't match up to the refined model. The protagonist then consciously attempts to act natural in her elegant dress, and on her way into the room, she checks herself over to make sure she has everything in place for her grand entrance. As she approaches Maxim, she smiles at him, but he is predictably shown preoccupied with setting up a film projector. In an alluring voice, the heroine says, "Good evening Maxim."

As Maxim finally raises his head to see his wife in her formal attire, the camera shows Maxim's disapproving eyes react as he scans her entire body. In an authoritative tone, as if directed toward a child, Maxim says, "What on earth have you done to yourself? Do you think that thing is right

for you? It doesn't seem your type at all...And what have you done to your hair?" Ignoring the obvious insults, the heroine smiles coquettishly as she walks forward to center medium close-up of the frame. Maxim moves his hand to his mouth, and we see him contemplating what it is he ought to be noticing, "Oh, I see... you look lovely, lovely, lovely (as he condescendingly notices a bow in her hair)...That's very nice...for a change." With a patronizing kiss on the cheek as he also holds the heroine's shoulders, we are positioned to relate to Mrs. de Winter's inability to gain approval from her husband. Acting shunned and shamed, the heroine cowers and lowers her eyes. A shadow subtly shades her bare shoulders, signifying her inability to appear sexually mature. Realizing her failure but unaware of the reasons, the protagonist then looks down and touches the flowers on her dress and then touches her hair, struggling to understand why her attempt to please her husband failed. Oblivious to his insensitivity, Maxim turns out the light to show the movie. Maxim's wearing of a formal tuxedo and having expectations that his wife not dress more maturely and sophisticatedly represent a societal double standard. We

can safely assume that the dejected heroine has failed to receive the approval she desired from her attempt to appear more attractive and mature and because we are positioned with her, we also feel the dejection.

The intensity of this moment is then contrasted with their watching a movie screen that shows the couple enjoying themselves on their honeymoon. As the heroine voices, "Oh, I wish our honeymoon could have lasted forever, Maxim," the film instantaneously burns out, and Maxim quickly turns on the room light and curses. Underscoring his sharp tone, Frith suddenly appears and announces that the china cupid is missing. As he is explaining the problem to Maxim, the camera tracks in on the embarrassed and fearful heroine for a several second medium reaction shot. Frith then leaves to summon Danvers. In Frith's absence, the heroine confesses that she broke the cupid. In reply, Maxim refers to his wife as a "little idiot." As the heroine confesses, she cowers in the bottom right of the frame, turning away from Maxim as if he is striking her. When Danvers and Frith return, we watch the heroine admitting her guilt, and she is treated very much like a child who has been caught sneaking cookies from

the cookie jar. The camera then cuts to focus on Frith, head lowered, quietly sneaking out the door. Maxim continues to drill his wife about the cupid incident and forces her to confess to Danvers that she hid the broken pieces in the back of the desk drawer. The protagonist is further embarrassed in front of Danvers when Maxim condescendingly acts amused with his wife's guilt. As the heroine tries to explain to Maxim how hard she tries her best in her new role, Maxim is shown dismissing her feelings as being "foolish as an upstairs maid or something instead of mistress." Along with the heroine we feel her sense of dejection, shame and inadequacy.

As with other Classic Hollywood films, the Home Movie scene, as well as the majority of *Rebecca*, shows the protagonist nearly always on the right hand side of the frame, and many times not even shown completely contained in the frame. Hitchcock's choice to pose the heroine in the inferior position, as well as cutting part of her face or body out of the frame, radically accentuates her own lack of self-importance and inability to be considered a complete person.

After we see that the broken cupid issue is sufficiently resolved for Maxim, he indifferently turns the movie back on, and in the darkened room the movie projector lights flickers in a strobe-light manner directed on the heroine, forcing us to carefully watch what is happening. The strobe effect suggests the fragmented marriage of the couple. The heroine then attempts to talk to her husband about her insecurities and how she feels judged by others. In a strained anger unheard before, she suggests that her husband married her because she's "dull, gauche and inexperienced..." The sentence ends with the heroine mentioning that others "gossip." In a reverse reaction shot, this time focusing on an enraged Maxim, this word in turn triggers Maxim to quickly move in front of the screen, where the only light is focused directly on Maxim's face and specifically on one of his eyes. Maxim angrily says, "GOSSIP, what do you mean about GOSSIP?!" This close-up shows us the threatening rage revealed entirely in his gaze. This shot can easily be interpreted as depicting to us and his wife, Maxim's darker side, suggested earlier by his previous moodiness. We are forced to detect some unrevealed

truth, as well as a potential threat, that his anger might be enough for him to harm his new wife. Comparable to the opening cliff scene, Hitchcock manipulates the spectators' reactions with reaction shots. We see Maxim taunt the heroine, then we see her fearful reaction and we react also, both as victim and victimizer, as well as complacent spectator.

When Maxim turns on the light, his voice drastically changes to a quieter tone as he scolds the heroine for her saying something he didn't believe was true. Not even realizing what she did wrong, the heroine apologizes. Maxim then suggests that he isn't a good companion and that she should have married a "boy" her own age. The scene ends with Maxim answering the heroine's question of whether they are happy by replying that he "really doesn't know, but if she says so." This line, as well as the heroine's plight, contrasts sharply with the home movie that shows them blissfully enjoying their honeymoon. Because this scene is not in the novel, it seems obvious that Hitchcock included it to amplify and underscore the protagonist's inability to become mature in a patriarch's world that will not yield to

the threat of her maturity. In addition, the Home Movie scene adds to the heroine's feeling, as well as our own, of hopelessness as her attempts to become sexually desirable to her husband appear to have failed, and she now feels that her marriage is failing as well.

Immediately following the Home Movie scene, the most distinctive scene in the film, the West Wing tour, discloses Hitchcock's shrewd use of subtle film techniques that bring the protagonist under not just severe threat of Danvers' superior position, but of her sexual threat to the heroine. The three-look point-of-view and reaction shots utilized to force our focus in this scene create maximum discomfort for the heroine and spectators. In this scene, the heroine's intense curiosity about Rebecca haunts and encourages her to investigate Rebecca's bedroom. A several second shot shows Mrs. de Winter ascending cautiously toward the immense west wing bedroom doors. A front shot shows her approaching a door with one arm forward with a fisted hand, and in the process of fisting the other, as she reaches for the doorknob. A track-in dolly moves slowly to an extreme close-up on the bedroom door's keyhole inviting us to partake

firsthand as voyeurs of Rebecca's personal bedroom, the most mysterious and private room of the house. As the protagonist's hand slowly opens the door, a gong sounds, creating an expectation of excitement and intrigue. Upon entering the room, we behold a huge cathedral-shaped window covered with sheer curtains with large shadows shaped like ghosts dancing behind them, suggesting an undecipherable presence. A long shot then shows the protagonist gingerly walking in the room, while also positioning her stance for a possible quick escape. As she looks up and scans the room, the camera is tilted and angled upwards, causing us to also sense the spaciousness and size of the elegant room. A long shot shows Mrs. de Winter opening the sheer bed curtain to reveal Rebecca's majestically decorated bed, enshrined by a ceiling-to-floor silk drape, the trimming strongly akin to the décor found inside of a casket. From the visual cues we are given as the camera shows us Rebecca's wardrobe and possessions, the fact that Rebecca was a woman with impeccable taste is emphasized. This ensemble of cinematic techniques sets the stage for the rest of the heroine's tour, and along with the heroine we feel a sense of

fascination and voyeuristic curiosity of what will occur next.

A medium shot next shows the protagonist turning to see if Danvers is lurking about as she opens the window. She is then shown walking slowly over to Rebecca's vanity. In the act of her reaching to touch a hairbrush, Mrs. de Winter notices a close-up photograph of her husband and she immediately retracts her hand, as if Maxim is reprimanding her. A reverse-shot of Maxim, then focuses for several seconds on Maxim's portrait, implying a reaction shot his presence and power over his wife. With her back to the camera, the protagonist walks toward the bed while holding her wrists and rubbing her arms, as if to shake off her repugnant experience of having the portrait spying on her.

As Mrs. de Winter walks toward the bed, we are positioned to react along with her as she is startled by a progression of the window-shutter banging from an incoming sea breeze to being stunned by Danver's voice who has simultaneously and mysteriously appeared. Positioned with the protagonist, we next see Danver's trance-like silhouette slowly advancing through the sheer curtain. A close-up shot

then shows a petrified protagonist. The next full shot shows Danvers' dark figure gliding slowly toward the protagonist with lighting focused solely on her vampire-like eyes. Because we are again positioned with the protagonist, the penetrating gaze causes us to also feel alarmed like the heroine. After Danvers closes the window, she opens a curtain that lets in enough light to allow Mrs. de Winter to view the room's grandeur. Centered in the frame, the photograph of Maxim on the vanity appears to be larger than before. Mrs. de Winter, holding her arms close to her sides to protect herself, then gets caught in a lie about why she is in Rebecca's room. We are positioned to watch her embarrassment and we also feel embarrassed. The heroine is then shown submitting to Danvers' uncomfortably suggestive offer to provide a tour of Rebecca's room. The shot reverse and reaction shots cause us to be stationed with both Danvers and the protagonist, becoming both a victim like the heroine and a victimizer like Danvers. In addition to these shots, we also are situated as spectators/voyeurs to watch the two of them. Hitchcock's use of the gaze, as well as our view of Danvers and the heroine's interaction compels us to

continue watching, even though we feel a discomfort as a third party in someone else's bedroom.

As Danvers escorts the protagonist to Rebecca's dressing room, Danvers is poised as if she is possessed by an unseen presence. Her mood, which contrasts our previous expectation for her to be sinister, is now tender and affectionate as she holds the open dressing room doors behind her, as if to tease or lure Mrs. de Winter's interest to view its prohibited contents. A close-up reaction shot shows the heroine's fearful reaction. Next, a close-up shows the protagonist leaning forward with cautious interest. The following medium shot then shows Danvers removing a luxurious fur coat. A shot reverse-shot sequence shows another close-up of Danvers caressing seductively the sleeve, and brushing it up against her own face, then looking directly into Mrs. de Winter's eyes. A close-up then shows Danvers brushing the fur sleeve slowly and gently over Mrs. de Winter's cheek. A cut to a medium reaction close-up shows the heroine's dazed response. Danvers then guides Mrs. de Winter to Rebecca's undergarment closet, opens the drawers and tells her that the intimate apparel was sewn

exclusively for Rebecca by nuns. The undergarment closet is positioned for our view, while the protagonist views it from the side. "This is where I keep all her clothes," says Danvers, as she gently primps the clothing for a moment before shutting the drawer.

In a tone expressing more than that of a loyal employee, but of suggestive sexual desire, Danvers narrates Rebecca's evening routine, explaining how she always waited up for her no matter what hour Rebecca would return. Danvers, who by now is shown to have possessed the protagonist under her spell, gestures Mrs. de Winter over to Rebecca's dressing table and brushes her hair as she had once brushed Rebecca's. The camera tracks in to show only Maxim's portrait and the heroine, and then pans to the side for a several second extreme close-up solely of the portrait. This portrait shot suggestively produces not only a sense of Maxim's presence, but his participation as a passive bystander to witness his wife being approached sexually by his dead wife's personal assistant. We then see Danvers lead the protagonist toward the bed, and a several-second close-up shows a monogrammed slipcase cover that

Danvers devotedly explains that she personally stitched for Rebecca to encase her negligee. A medium shot shows us Danvers removing a black sheer negligee from the slipcase, as we watch her carefully unfold it at her side to show to Mrs. de Winter. At the same time, the camera is angled to show the protagonist reacting by turning away from Danvers and retreating against the wall behind her, camouflaged amongst the shadowed and flowered wallpaper print, as if to hide herself.

Danvers continues to bring life to the negligee as she carefully fondles and unfolds it to full-length for our view. Next, Danvers gestures for Mrs. de Winter to join her in admiring the negligee. Acting petrified, the protagonist obediently walks slowly toward Danvers. The camera positions us along as it pans behind and around a curtain to where we are better able to see the two women. The act of the camera's move around the curtain piques our voyeuristic curiosity and compounds our suspense as to what might be occurring between Danvers and Mrs. de Winter while we can't see. When the camera arrives in view of the two, we watch Danvers as she slowly places her hand within and under the

breast area of the negligee to show Mrs. de Winter, and says, "Look—you can see my hand." The camera's movement lures us through the progression, peeking around from behind the curtain to draw us in as participants of this seductively suggestive scene. A close-up reaction shot then shows Danvers staring at the lingerie and we watch as the protagonist turns toward us, tears welling-up, as she is struck by a horrid realization and reacts with utter despair. The result of our participation with the female protagonist, as well as our viewing as spectators, causes mixed responses for us; we feel Danvers' desire as well as the protagonist's ambivalent disparity towards Danvers' subtle advancements. Mary Ann Doane and E. Ann Kaplan explain that because we are positioned with each of the characters, we identify as a transvestite with the characters; that is, we identify both with the protagonist and the male character. Mulvey's three-look mode clarifies further, that Danvers' is positioned as the male character who objectifies the female protagonist through her desiring and powerful look. Because we are positioned with Danvers, the protagonist, and as spectators/voyeurs, again we are

compelled to continue our complicit participation even though we feel significant discomfort; all to the accord of the director's look in order to fulfil his desired point of view.

After the negligee scene and reaction shot of the heroine's despair, the camera then pans to the side of the protagonist as she walks through the sheer curtain away from Danvers. The heroine walks toward the door, wringing one hand with her opposite hand, as if to release her feelings of appalling discomfort. Then, Danvers surprisingly appears near the heroine and she asks Mrs. de Winter if she believes the dead come back to life. As the protagonist reacts with tears and a look of revulsion, simultaneously lighting is again focused on Danvers' possessed gaze. Danvers then moves and leans close to the protagonist's face and suggests that Rebecca comes back from the dead to watch her and her husband together. The camera closes in on Danvers' face so close to Mrs. de Winter's that the proxemics indicate her inescapable entrapment. Lighting has been placed on Danvers, giving her an almost sinister face, donning a strong appearance of a masculine five o'clock shadow. We

also notice that Danvers is given the ultimate left-side position so that she dominates the frame. We next see a reaction shot of the heroine with lighting placed from below to accentuate her paranoia. With her eyes closed, she then turns to face Danvers as if she is willed to succumb to her stare. Mrs. de Winter's lips are slightly parted, and at the same time she opens her eyes to look at Danvers. Danvers then suggests that Mrs. de Winter appears tired and coyly suggests that the heroine should "stay and rest" in Rebecca's bedroom and listen to the soothing sea. On cue of Danvers' mention of the word "sea," Danvers raises her head to look up, then away, to follow an imagined voice that beckons her to go to the window to hear the sea. The camera tracks back, and Danvers walks toward the window while the heroine sneaks out the door. The sequence of Hitchcock's expert shots, leading us first through the key hole at the beginning of the scene, and the reaction shots positioning us with both Danvers and Mrs. de Winter, not only draws us in as voyeurs, but also causes us to feel the same sexual tension in both characters and Danvers' desire for the protagonist as we feel when they first meet. A double

exposure showing Danvers listening to the sea, along with waves crashing on the rocks, along with a medium superimposed shot shows Rebecca's address book on the desk in the morning room causes us to feel Rebecca's imposing control over the heroine. We then see a tearful heroine in the morning room glancing down at the address book.

In the 1940s, homosexual relationships were usually kept quiet and private, and were considered unorthodox. Gays dramatized as "predatory, twilight creatures" were common in the horror films in the 1930s and afterwards, and gays were often depicted as monsters and considered to be a "predatory weakness" (The Celluloid Closet 48-49). As a result of the perceived threat on the social norms of the times, in films, homosexuals were frequently murdered in order to abolish the danger of their potential influence and existence. Leff explains in Hitchcock and Selznick, "Though no one mentioned the underlying lesbianism of the Rebecca-Danvers relationship, Hitchcock sensed it." In addition, Vito Russo, author of The Celluloid Closet, explains that Hitchcock was always interested in any form of sexual perversity and he was aware of the "dissolving ethics and moral change" (37).

It is obvious that Hitchcock more than sensed it as Leff states, "... according to numerous observers, sexual aberrance intrigued the director." In *Rebecca*, "the unnatural attachment of servant to mistress awaited only his 'touch.'" Furthermore, Leff continues, "Hitchcock showed Anderson how her eyes should reveal memories of dressing and undressing her mistress" (Hitchcock and Selznick 70).

Aulier's book reveals that Hitchcock intentionally directed Danvers' voice to be "suggestive" (Hitchcock's Notebooks 52). Some of what makes the new Mrs. de Winter uncomfortable and violated could be Danvers' perverse sexuality, and consequently, there is no mistake in our feeling uncomfortable and violated also due to Hitchcock's point-of-view and reaction shots that force our participation without our permission.

Throughout the entire film, we never see Rebecca. Instead, Rebecca's presence is symbolized by Hitchcock's use of several cinematic techniques; she is represented by the sea, its crashing waves, breezes drawn from it, and its elusiveness to be owned or possessed. Even though we don't see or hear Rebecca, along with the heroine, we are

continually reminded that Rebecca was the epitome of "breeding, beauty and brains." In addition, throughout the house, in the many different rooms, and most prominently focused directly outside of and in Rebecca's bedroom, as well as on the vast property of Manderley, oscillating shadows and fog suggest Rebecca's presence. Her invisible force is also reinforced by Danvers' painstaking efforts to keep the mansion in the same order that it was when Rebecca was alive, as precise as Danvers' obsession in keeping Rebecca's hairbrush in its exact place on the bedroom vanity. We also notice the repetitious extreme close-ups displaying Rebecca's monogram on napkins, a handkerchief, a scarf, a pillowcase, as well as desk accessories.

While on the manifest level it appears that Danvers is only jealous of the heroine trying to replace Rebecca, Hitchcock's portrayal of Danvers as the living dead strongly suggests that Danvers is actually the living embodiment of Rebecca. While we are led on the West Wing tour, we cannot help but feel this to be true as Hitchcock manipulates our point-of-view with the heroine as she undergoes Danvers' intimate replication of Rebecca's routine.

After the West Wing tour, the heroine's extreme anxiety in Rebecca's bedroom finally leads her to stand up to Danvers. From the morning room, Mrs. de Winter phones one of the servants to ask that Danvers come to see her and then assertively tells Danvers to get rid of all of Rebecca's things. While spectators are led to believe, along with the heroine, that she has finally achieved her independence, the heroine's brave action toward Danvers remains short-lived.

Following the heroine's declaration of autonomy, Danvers suggests to her that she wear the same costume as shown in an ancestor's portrait in the hallway for the upcoming ball. The night of the ball, the heroine, so proud of her appearance as the "Lady Caroline de Winter," is greeted at the bottom of the stairs by an enraged Maxim and a stunned Beatrice and Giles who remember Rebecca also wearing a replica. Without the heroine even understanding her error, Maxim orders the heroine to go change her dress. On her way up the stairs, Mrs. de Winter finds Danvers staring at her and realizes then that Danvers intentionally enticed her to wear the same dress Rebecca had once worn. Not only do we feel embarrassed and enraged along with the

heroine, but this scene perpetuates the mistrust and lack of support of woman failing to support another woman striving to develop self-independence.

The next scene significantly compounds audience identification when the betrayed heroine follows Danvers back into Rebecca's west wing bedroom to confront Danvers. There, Danvers while arranging flowers, curtly tells the protagonist, "I watched you go down...even in the same dress you couldn't compare." After the heroine asks Danvers why she hates her, we are positioned with the heroine as the camera tracks forward for a medium shot of Danvers coming toward her. The heroine appears most vulnerable as Danvers moves in closer to her, and a reverse reaction shot shows the heroine's low-cut dress completely exposing her neck area. We then see the heroine retreat again with her back against a wall, where this time on the wallpaper print a face appears to be watching her. As the heroine leans against the wall, Danvers reminds her that she will never be able to take Rebecca's place. Danvers moves toward the heroine, nearly touching her while leaning so close. As the heroine turns her body to face away from Danvers, Danvers

continues striking her with words. The camera cuts to show the heroine walking towards us. Slowly, the camera tracks back so that we are forced to focus on her distress as a result of Danvers' assaults. A several-second medium shot shows Mrs. de Winter awkwardly stanced, as if she is having difficulty trying to hold her balance and dress in place. She appears like a bewildered, wounded prey; an easy target. The hysterical heroine then collapses on the bed with her face landing directly on Rebecca's pillow covers. At this moment, we feel the heroine's submission to Rebecca, as well as to Danvers. With the heroine's back toward Danvers, a medium close-up showing Danvers watching the heroine and then looking out the window. She then moves toward the window and opens the curtains. While Mrs. de Winter is still crying uncontrollably on the bed, Danvers' intentional glance off-frame suggests her next move. Danvers then opens the windows and the following shot shows a thick fog outside. Danvers turns toward Mrs. de Winter on the bed and suggests the heroine is "overwrought" and should come to the window for fresh air. An extreme reverse close-up shows the heroine's despair. Danvers watches Mrs. de Winter get up,

her back to Danvers as she climbs off the bed. The heroine then toward Danvers as she goes to the window and grabs hold of the curtain and leans against it in order to support herself. Danvers says, "Why don't you leave Manderley...he doesn't want you...he's got his memories...you have nothing to live for...look down there." At this point, Danvers is almost a silhouette. A medium shot then shows Danvers looking out the window then approaching the heroine.

The camera tracks in slowly as Mrs. de Winter leans forward out the window, her low cut dress exposing her neck completely, as well as the upper portion of her breasts. Danvers is positioned behind the heroine and hovers over her as Mrs. de Winter closes her eyes. An extreme reaction close-up shows Mrs. de Winter crying, and a part of Danvers' face moves into the frame as her monotone whisper suggests to the protagonist, "why don't you do it?" This shot shows Danvers crowding the heroine nearly out of the frame on the bottom right portion of the frame. Another extreme close-up of her eyes shows the heroine looking down. At this point, the frame encloses the heroine and only the front portion of Danvers' face to show her lips move as she whispers to the

heroine. A close-up shot shows Danvers nearly touching the protagonist's ear with her lips and it is obvious that the heroine is going to jump. We are stationed above them, looking below at the pavement. Our position forces us to watch the potential death of the heroine. More so in this scene, Danvers appears very masculine; her hair is parted in the middle and from this angle, we can't see the braids tied up close to her head. A close-up shows Danvers' penetrating gaze and it appears that she is willing the heroine to jump. As the heroine stares below in a mesmerized gaze, an off-screen canon fires and saves the heroine from taking her life. As Mrs. de Winter snaps out of her trance, she calls below in her childish voice, "Maxim, Maxim!" Because we have been positioned with both Danvers and the heroine, we also feel the victimization of the heroine, as well as the strength of Danvers' threat. It is evident that the fog represents the heroine's submission to Danvers' threat, as well as Rebecca's dominant force, even from the grave. Like the other scenes, the shot reverse-shots as well as the reaction shots in this scene cause us to feel the full impact of participating as victim, victimizer, as well as

complicit spectator. Even more, the tracking in to close-ups forces our identification and reinforcement of the heroine's despondence.

After the heroine leaves to search for Maxim and finds him in Rebecca's cottage, we are stationed right next to Mrs. de Winter when Maxim admits to hiding Rebecca's body in the boat. In the Confession scene, the camera cuts to view the heroine's reaction. We then listen to Maxim's narrative and the camera follows him and retraces the events that occurred the night Rebecca died. Again, we are positioned to identify with the heroine as Maxim tells the story. Our position, as well as close-ups focusing on the heroine's empathy towards Maxim, cause us to sympathize and believe his story of how he loathed Rebecca because of her extra-marital affairs and private parties that she held in the cottage. Consequently, Maxim justifies his concealment of Rebecca's death as he explains his despair with Rebecca's independence. Because our viewpoint is compliant with the protagonist as well as our seeing her reactions to Maxim's story, we are situated to respond empathetically to Maxim as she does.

Conventional methods for shooting the Confession scene would have included a flashback, but Hitchcock rejected this idea as he felt that the actors portraying Maxim and the heroine would not be able to carry the sequence alone (Hitchcock & Selznick 53). Instead, Rebecca's maligned presence was created through the use of a subjective camera that retraces Rebecca's last moments before her death. As Rebecca taunts her husband with her infidelity and possible pregnancy, Hitchcock's technique of utilizing the camera to retrace Rebecca's actions compounds the effect of Rebecca's powerful, unseen presence. Maximizing the intensity of the scene during the confession, again the telephone rings and along with the couple (and similar to the Morning Room scene), spectators are utterly startled by the intrusive ringing.

The discovery of Rebecca's body leads to an investigation. Back at Manderley while Maxim is away at the inquest, and as a result of Maxim's revealing the truth about Rebecca we observe a drastic change in the heroine. While Mrs. de Winter is giving instructions to Frith, we notice that her image has blossomed into a more sexually,

mature woman. Her hair is fashioned and brushed back in a sophisticated manner, and she is wearing a stylish black dress that accentuates a more mature, matronly figure. She also stands erect and carries an air of self-confidence that we did not see before. The new image of the heroine, as well as the point-of-view shots, cause us to feel satisfied with the fact that the heroine finally knows the truth about Rebecca's death. The heroine has developed a different kind of maturity than her earlier false attempts, and she is free from the control of the women in the film: Mrs. Van Hopper, Mrs. Danvers and the late Rebecca, as she now realizes that her future is with Maxim. In Classical narrative fashion, the solution to the conflict the protagonist desires to overcome is now reconciled. Because of Hitchcock's manipulation of point-of-view shots, along with the heroine we feel the growth, confidence and freedom from the control that owned her throughout her plight. At the same time, however, and without conscious submission, we have also united with Maxim and the heroine as accomplices to the secret of what really happened to Rebecca.

After the inquest, Maxim is found innocent in Rebecca's

death. Throughout the film, we are conditioned by Hitchcock to sympathize with Maxim. In the beginning of the film, Maxim is depicted as confident and respected as an upstanding citizen, representative of societal expectations of the times, especially in a male-dominated society. We are then lured into sympathizing with Maxim's justifying his treatment to Rebecca, when he could have instead accepted his mistake in marrying her and sought a divorce. In the Cottage scene, we are told that Maxim never loved Rebecca. Instead of the heroine responding with horror to Maxim hiding his wife's body, the heroine is so relieved to hear that Maxim wasn't in love with Rebecca, that she volunteers to become Maxim's accomplice, all to finally gain Maxim's approval.

Noteworthy differences regarding Maxim from the novel to the actual treatment of the film script reveal that Hitchcock made several changes to sway our sympathy toward Maxim. In the novel, we read that Maxim was frequently angry at the heroine's insecure behavior, and that the heroine frequently stands up for her beliefs. However in Hitchcock's Notebooks, Aulier's actual comparison of the

continuity of treatment of the novel to the film script reveals Hitchcock's explicit intent to soften Maxim's anger to the heroine. Hitchcock "fretted about Maxim's explanation of Rebecca's murder...make absolutely sure that we do not lose any sympathy for him..." (Leff, Hitchcock & Selnick 43). In the novel, Maxim actually kills Rebecca. Even though the Hollywood Production Code during the 1940s did not allow the filming of crimes where the criminal is unpunished, in the film we are left not entirely knowing the truth of just how Rebecca dies, because all we know is what Maxim tells us: Hitchcock maximizes our empathy towards Maxim and even during the inquest after Rebecca's body is found in the boat, the magistrate "apologizes" to Maxim for the inconvenience of an inquest. However, without a doubt, we notice the magistrate's facial expressions divulge his suspicion that Maxim may have killed Rebecca. But because the men--the officials and Maxim's close friends--were aware that Rebecca had other lovers, they sympathize and justify Maxim's actions, whatever his misdeeds actually were. Thus, Maxim is portrayed as both the sympathetic victim and the hero, and no attention is given to his cowardice in not

seeking a divorce instead of physically assaulting her (and possibly killing her), his deceit in withholding the horrid secret of Rebecca from his new wife, nor his inability to control his anger. In addition, we see him painfully oblivious to his wife's needs as a human being, and weak for allowing his housekeeper to maintain his home as a shrine to the dead wife he loathed. If Rebecca's empowerment is a threat to Maxim, it stands to reason that her living embodiment portrayed by Danvers is also a threat.

Consequently, Hitchcock's depiction of Maxim indicates that men's power can often prevail over the law, that his money equates to power, and power can excuse men for their crimes, possibly even murder.

At the end of the film, we are positioned to see yet another scene not found in the novel, but including another horrendous crime. After Maxim is acquitted and the couple arrive back at Manderley, we witness the lesbian-vampire Danvers in Rebecca's room, burning to death; self-destructing the "predatory weakness" and negative representation of a female's desire for another female that Hitchcock took pleasure in filming. Consequently, the male

hero, Maxim de Winter is cleared of his crime, yet, an appalling crime is inflicted (albeit self-inflicted) on a woman. In the novel, Danvers does set the house on fire, but runs away instead with a friend of Rebecca's. Because Danvers instead burns to death, we can interpret this to represent the necessity to destroy the negative horrors represented by Danvers. As Modleski points out, "It is no wonder that the film is (overly) determined to get rid of Rebecca, and that the task requires massive destruction. Yet there is reason to suppose that we cannot rest secure in the film's "happy" ending. For if death by drowning did not extinguish the woman's desire [woman's illicit desire for another woman], can we be certain that death by fire has reduced it utterly to ashes?" (The Women Who 54). Thus, in true Classic Hollywood form, the film ends where it begins, displaying the charred remains of Manderley, but with the horrid display of the death of another woman.

CONCLUSION

Hitchcock was successful in achieving at least one of his goals. *Rebecca* became a box office success and it received an Academy Award as best picture, and Hitchcock made his name in American Film.

Rebecca, as Tania Modleski points out, does allow for the limited expression of female desire, as the story does indeed adopt a female viewpoint, a rare occurrence in a 1940 film. For a moment, when we watch the heroine revel in her glory, we might believe that the heroine has succeeded; she finally stands up to Mrs. Danvers and discovers that Maxim never loved Rebecca, she visually matures into a "woman", and she has received the love, respect and recognition she deserves as a worthy adult, and she is proudly victorious in her success. However, when it comes down to the essence of the entire film, I believe we should question whether the heroine has truly achieved success, or whether she has once again passively settling for less in a male-dominated society.

This year, Alfred Hitchcock would have been one hundred

years old. His films still hold the ability to fascinate, captivate, and many times disturb spectators. The subjects and issues that piqued Hitchcock's own curious interest so many years ago still give cause to feminist critics to continue their investigation of Hitchcock and the illustration of women in his films. Hitchcock's films live on, and sixty years later after *Rebecca*, we continue to respond and react as complicit spectators, thus, reinforcing many of the negative stereotypes of Hitchcock's work.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Auiler, Dan. Hitchcock's Notebook's. New York: Avon Books, 1999.
- Basinger, Jeanine. A Woman's View. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.
- Bordwell, David and Kristen Thompson. Film Art: An Introduction. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1990.
- Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Brill, Lesley. The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Chapman, Sharon. Classical Hollywood Film Directors' Female-As-Object Obsession and Female Directors' Cinematic Response: A Deconstructionist Study of Six Films. California State University, San Bernardino, 1996.
- Doane, Mary Ann. The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Easley, Greg and Lauren Rabinovitz. The Rebecca Project CD-ROM. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995.
- Fischer, Ludy. Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Haskell, Molly. From Reference to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Kaplan, E. Ann. Psychoanalysis & Cinema. Routledge: Chapman

and Hall, Inc., 1990.

-----Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera. New York: Methuen, Inc., 1983.

Leff, Leonard J. Hitchcock & Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987.

Modleski, Tania. Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in the "Postmodernist" Age. New York: Rutledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1991.

-----*Never to Be Thirty-Six Years Old: Rebecca As Female Oedipal Drama*. Wide Angle, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1982.

-----The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Criticism. New York: Rutledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988.

Mulvey, Laura. Visual and Other Pleasures. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Penley, Constance. The Future of an Illusion: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Rebecca. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. With Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine, David O. Selznick Studios, 1939.

Russo, Vito. The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981.

Stacey, Jackie. Star Gazing. London: Biddles, Ltd., 1994.