



Embodied female experience through the lens of imagination

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Abstract: In 1971, I made a film entitled *Self Portrait of a Nude Model Turned Cinematographer* in which I explore the objectifying ‘male’ gaze on my body in contrast to the subjective lived experience of my body. The film was a radical challenge to the gaze that objectifies woman – and thus imprisons her – which had hitherto dominated narrative cinema.

Since the objectification of women has largely excluded us from the privileged phallogocentric discourses, in this paper I hope to bring into the psychoanalytic dialogue a woman’s lived experience. I will approach this by exploring how remembering this film has become a personally transformative experience as I look back on it through the lens of postmodern and feminist discourses that have emerged since it was made. In addition, I will explore how this process of imaginatively looking back on an artistic creation to generate new discourses in the present is similar to the transformative process of analysis. Lastly, I will present a clinical example, where my embodied countertransference response to a patient’s subjection to the objectifying male gaze opens space for a new discourse about her body to emerge.

Key words: feminist, film, gaze, identity, naturalization, phallogocentric

But who, if it comes to that, has fully realized that history is not contained in thick books but lives in our very blood? So long as a woman lives the life of the past she can never come into conflict with history. But no sooner does she begin to deviate, however slightly, from a cultural trend that has dominated the past than she encounters the full weight of historical inertia, and this unexpected shock may injure her, perhaps fatally.
(C.G. Jung 1964, p. 130)

Introduction

In 1971, when I was a 19 year-old university student, I made a four-minute, black and white, silent, non-narrative film entitled *Self Portrait of a Nude Model Turned Cinematographer*. Remembering this film – reflecting upon the making of it, the reaction to it by my student peers in 1971, the resurrection of it 33 years later by the National Endowment for the Arts – continues to be a transformative experience for me. Similar to the process of analysis, the stories that I tell myself about the impact of this film on ‘me’ and ‘others’ continue to change as I imaginatively reflect on these memories through the lens of my

current experiences and understandings about the self, the body, gender and identity. In contemplating this 38 year old film, and in the process of writing this paper, I am struggling with questions about what it means to be an embodied female in a culture of still predominantly phallogocentric discourse and I am linking this to my clinical work.

I am interested in questions about un-examined or under-examined concepts that shape psychoanalytic discourse about embodied female experience: What is the body? What is a sexed body (male vs. female, man vs. woman)? What is gender (masculinity vs. femininity)? What is the relationship between the sexed body and gender? For example, the term 'femininity' is often deployed in a self-evident manner as if everyone knows and agrees upon what this means. Some analytical psychological discourses use 'the feminine' as a concept that implies an ahistorical, universal essence, with a consensual meaning. However, whenever ideas are taken out of their embedded historical context, they become naturalized in a way that hides underlying assumptions, values, and power structures. Thus, 'naturalized' ideas¹ have the potential to be oppressive if employed with an aura of certainty and authority in the analytic encounter or in cultural discourse. When the concepts of the body, gender, and sexual difference are no longer defined in terms of biological reductionism or foundational essentialism, they remain exceedingly complex and problematic and have yet to be adequately thought (Grosz 1994; Butler 1990, 1997, 2005; Laplanche 2007; Stein 2007).

My opening quote from Jung illustrates that for a woman to deviate even slightly from the prevailing cultural discourse invites 'shock that may injure her fatally'. Jung grasped that to transgress the normative² – naturalized – discourses on woman, especially on their bodies, by opening spaces for new discourses to emerge is dangerous business! Since the history of women is largely a history of exclusion from the privileged cultural discourses, it is vitally important to bring into the psychoanalytic dialogue a woman's lived experience in order to question the ideologies that structure female identity.³ And although both men

¹ 'Naturalization' occurs when we assert that we have determined the context that provides the final explanation for the characteristics of particular individuals or groups. The result of any 'naturalization' process is the creation of the 'natural', and the corresponding 'unnatural' individual or group. Those deemed 'unnatural' are seen as 'things' or non-persons by those in the 'natural' group who claim to have established 'normality' (Horne 2008).

² Naturalization is a power move that takes an historical discourse and by giving it foundational status makes it invisible and thus impervious to change or challenge (Barthes 1972; Horne 2008). Once a discourse is naturalized, what is signified as 'natural' constitutes the 'normal' (Foucault 1965 & 1975; Horne 2008).

³ After I had written my personal story as a means to reflect on cultural discourse about embodied female experience, I discovered that I am engaging in 'autoethnography'. Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that uses highly evocative self-reflective response and embodied storytelling to confront dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim representational spaces by marginalized groups (Holt 2003; Ellis 2008; Sparkes 1996).

and women have suffered from the oppressions of patriarchal discourse that have dictated how we can live our bodies and identities, I am going to focus on my own experience of this oppression.⁴ But before telling the story of my film, I will try to set the scene within which it continues to unfold.

Setting the scene

For the practice of analysis, what matters is how we appear in our own stories as persons in relationship to other persons, occurrences, and objects in our worlds, rather than how we appear, for example, as biological organisms when we go to the medical doctor for a specific complaint (Heidegger 1962; Horne 2004; Hinton 2007 & 2009; Brooke 2009). The various 'identities' we claim for ourselves are the multiple and densely particular characters with whom we identify in the ongoing and dialogically unfolding storylines of our lives. Identity⁵ comes from the Latin term '*idem et idem*' which literally means 'the same and the same', or 'repeatedly, over and over'. The notion of 'identity' is only understood in opposition to 'otherness'; for example, we recognize the identity of a character in a story by setting it off against the 'otherness' of other characters (Martin & Ringham 2006). A sense of identity protects one from the anxiety generated by the disturbing 'otherness' of others (Horne 2008) and results in efforts to generate 'the same and the same' 'repeatedly, over and over' in order to avoid this anxiety. Through analysis, we learn that this feeling of identity permanence is actually defensive and illusory and can be transformed in a variety of ways (Austin 2009; Hinton 2009; Horne 2009). Although our 'ego complex' (Jung 1934) or our 'narrative consciousness' (Damasio 1999) maintains an ongoing 'sense of self' over time, this temporal sense of self remains multiple, decentred, and fragmented (Austin 2009; Hinton 2009; Horne 2009) and appears as moods that are the signifiers of self-states, i.e. the various characters with whom we identify in our stories (Heidegger 1962; Oliver 2002; Horne 2004).

Sometimes we are consciously aware of the characters in our stories and sometimes we are not. The stories in which we are unaware of the characters with whom we unconsciously identify are brought into the analytic dialogue through the emotional impact they have on the analyst, that is, through the embodied countertransference (Moody 1955; Bion 1977; Fordham 1993). As Michael Horne (2004) explains in his paper 'The universe of our concerns', when our various stories are brought to light in analysis and found to be incompatible, personhood collapses into an intensely frightening and sad process. At this

⁴ For a very sensitive autoethnographic account of the oppressive impact of hegemonic discourse on the available masculine identities for men and boys see Sparkes (1996), *The Fatal Flaw: A Narrative of the Fragile Body-Self*.

⁵ Identity. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Retrieved September 20, 2009, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/identity>.

point, it is possible for a new and unique story with new characters (identities) to emerge, as long as the tendency to return to the old story is resisted (*ibid.*, p. 44; Hinton 2009). One of our most enduring ‘identities’ is revealed in the story we tell ourselves about being a ‘masculine’ or a ‘feminine’ person.

In our current historical milieu, we as persons always only appear as gendered identities (Butler 1990, 1997; Laplanche 2007). When men and women are conceptualized only from the point of view of their adult reproductive capacities, then the binary categories⁶ of man/woman and masculine/feminine become ‘essentialized’ as though they were a part of ‘nature’. As a result, the power structures inherent in the discourses that create these foundationalist categories cannot be illuminated (Butler 1990, 1997; Jagose 1996; Dean 2006). Judith Butler explains that ‘the’ body is only known through its gendered appearance and inevitably is transformed into ‘his’ body or ‘her’ body (1997, p. 406). For her, gender is not a stable identity from which agency proceeds, but rather gender identity is a *strategy* instituted through a stylized repetition of performative acts that are culturally and historically situated. She emphasizes ‘strategy’ because one can be punished for failing to ‘perform’ the possibilities considered appropriate for one’s gendered body. Gender is an idea, not an essential fact: ‘The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions that are alternately embodied and disguised under duress’ (*ibid.*, p. 405). Butler emphasizes that our ‘performance’ of gender identity is not a conscious choice that we make, but rather the result of the sedimentation of the ways in which we are gazed upon, handled and assumed to be from the moment of our birth (*ibid.*).

This bears a similarity to Jean Laplanche’s idea of the transmission of enigmatic messages from adult caregivers to the helpless infant. He emphasizes the primacy of the particular others (mother, father, sister, brother) who assign gender to the infant through the bombardment of the infant with prescriptive messages (Laplanche 2007, p. 213; Stein 2007; Hinton 2009). This results in ‘the infant being gender *identified* by others, not in the infant autonomously *identifying with* a particular gender’ (Laplanche 2007, p. 214; italics in the original). Laplanche demonstrates how the recently constructed binary sex/gender – where sex is equated with biological destiny and gender with sociocultural construction – is an ‘adultocentric’ fiction that thinks of sexuality only in terms of the individual person who has progressed from child

⁶ Binary pairs of signifiers are problematic because they appear to be neutral; however there is an inequality between the ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ terms, which make up the pair. The ‘unmarked’ term (e.g. in man/woman the unmarked term is ‘man’) is more generalizable (mankind, chairman, spokesman) than the marked term, giving it more power and establishing the binary as a hierarchy. Also, binaries are constructed not as opposites but as ‘A’ and ‘not-A’ for example, man and not-man, i.e. ‘woman’ is defined only in terms of ‘man’ the more open signifier of the pair (Derrida 1976; Foster et al 2004, p. 45; Mulvey 2009, p. 33).

to adult, and ignores ‘the child *in the presence* of the adult and receiving from him messages that are not *raw givens* but “material to be translated”’ (ibid., p. 212). The ‘adultocentric’ view ignores the power differential between little people and adult caregivers, who are trapped in their own cultural imperatives (ibid., p. 210). Laplanche adds a third term to the binary gender/sex – ‘le sexual’ – a French neologism that refers to the fantasy-linked polymorphously-expressed sexuality of the infant. ‘Infantile sexuality is what remains after gender has been ‘organized’ or repressed (repression is a kind of organization) by sex. It is the unending residue that escapes regulatory cultural discourse’ (Stein 2007, p. 191). It is ‘le sexual’ which becomes unconsciously re-activated in the adult caregiver in the presence of the little person resulting in the transmission of enigmatic messages (ibid.). With the addition of ‘le sexual’ as a third term, Laplanche moves beyond the reified binary thinking of sex/gender and emphasizes the particularity and traumatic, unignifiable enigmatic core of sexuality. Queer theory also resists reified binary thinking. Queer theory problematizes the naturalized assumptions that consolidate the binary categories that organize sex, gender and sexuality (Jagose 1996). ‘Queer’ does not signify a binary opposed to ‘straight’; queer theory rejects binary thinking and resists ideas of ‘the normal’ whether in categories of gender, sexual orientation, race, physical abilities, etc. Queer theory questions any identity that claims to be fixed, coherent or ‘normal’ and emphasizes the contingent, arbitrary and ideologically motivated status of ‘identity’ (Dean 2006).

In this paper, however, I am not attempting to address the formation and structure of ‘gender’ (since it has no unitary discourse) nor am I denying biological sexual difference (although this is also a problematic term as demonstrated by Laplanche and queer theorists). But rather, having set the scene, I want to share the story of my struggles with the oppressive discourses regarding ‘gender’ and ‘sexual difference’ that have been projected upon my female body. Through my story and in this paper, I am contending that one of the ways that my ‘gendered identity’ has been maintained and my ‘body’ policed into compliance with normative ideals of passive eroticized femininity is through ‘the objectifying male gaze’.

The gaze

There are multiple historical discourses regarding the many significations of the terms ‘the look’ and/or ‘the gaze’. In some discourses the phrases are meant to be synonyms, and in other discourses ‘the look’ is meant to point to our sensory perceptual capacities, whereas ‘the gaze’ implies the relationship of looking upon another with the full import of the emotional impact evoked in the-gazed-upon-one by the one doing the looking (Zizek 1996; Chandler 1998; Seidler 2000). In this second use of ‘the gaze’ there is also implied a power relationship wherein the one who does the gazing has power and ownership over the one upon whom the gaze is cast (Chandler 1998).

In some situations, with the power relationship instantiated through the gaze, there is also an assumed 'ownership' of the one gazed upon by the one doing the gazing. In this usage of 'the gaze' there is then an objectification of the one upon whom the gaze is cast because the relationship is no longer constituted by a subject responding to an other subject but by one subjected to the power and scrutiny of the other (Foucault 1975; Mulvey 1975; Broucek 1991; Chandler 1998). This is the 'evil eye' of lore and legend (Seidler 2000, p. 68) and Foucault's (1975) all-scrutinizing panoptic gaze that disciplines, punishes and creates the docile body (both male and female) for use in the institutions of modernity by those with power.

In 1973, Laura Mulvey wrote a seminal⁷ paper (first published in 1975) in which she identifies the Hollywood movie industry's assumption that the spectator gazing at a Hollywood movie is a man. Prior to her essay, this assumption was culturally invisible; the universal assumption of the male point-of-view was never questioned (Barthes 1972; Burgin 1996; Mulvey 2009). Mulvey goes on to explain that through the use of cinematic conventions and codes regarding how the female form was shot, lit and through the (generally passive and non-heroic) roles she was allowed to assume in the narrative, woman was portrayed in Hollywood films *not* as a subject with her own active desiring or agency, but as the erotic or fetishistic object of the gaze of Hollywood's presumed male spectator (Mulvey 2009). The phrase 'objectifying male gaze' emerged from this essay to designate the gaze from the point-of-view of the automatically assumed male perspective on an idealized female form. Through this gaze (which is active), the woman is seen only as an erotic (passive) object signifying patriarchal male fantasies about the female body and feminine identity. The norms of physical beauty and gender performance to which the woman is expected to aspire and comply are created and maintained through these fantasies. Whenever a person is viewed against a standard or a 'norm', the person becomes an object, a nonperson, because their unique particularity is subjugated to this oppressive ideal (Foucault 1972; Horne 2008). These are the conditions under which evil acts culminating in the extremes of 'gendercide' (sex trafficking, acid attacks, bride burnings, mass rape, selective abortion of female infants) and genocide occur (Hinton 2002 & 2005; Horne 2008; Kristof & Wudunn 2009).

Hollywood's presumption of a universal male spectator to whom the movie is addressed is an example of phallogentric discourse. Phallogentric discourse presumes a male point of view, such as in the use of the male pronoun (he/him/his) in written texts prior to the deconstruction of the ways in which this usage renders women invisible. Phallogentric discourse requires either a constant identification of the woman with the male perspective or a conscious

⁷ Irony intended! The word 'seminal' is from 'semen' or 'seed'. I see this as an example of phallogentric discourse wherein original or inventive ideas are assigned to 'masculine' physiology and 'woman' is relegated to muse!

re-translation of the text by the woman in order to include her perspective (Mulvey 2009). Since its publication in 1975 Mulvey's essay has provoked and generated extensive critique and further discourse regarding the nature of 'the gaze', its powers to objectify or not, whether there is also a 'female gaze', as well as reflection on the impact on the woman spectator being forced into a position of either assuming or re-translating this masculinist perspective (Burgin 1996; Chandler 1998; Mulvey 2009).

The discussion as to whether there is a 'male' or 'female' gaze is another illustration of the dilemma of the binary construction of gender wherein male/female are assumed to be pointing to something essential rather than to historically situated qualities. Since my story starts with a film that I made in 1971, even before Laura Mulvey wrote her essay that defined the 'objectifying male gaze', I am going to retain that term to emphasize the historical milieu in which I grew up – a world in which all spectators were assumed to be adult men, all pronouns masculine, where the God of my family and church could only be imagined to be a masculine entity, and where 'the' masculine was conflated with activity and subjectivity, and 'the' feminine with passivity and objectification (Mulvey 2009, p. 33). I am not assuming, however, that in our current discourses 'male' only signifies a person whose sexual difference marks them as a man. Rather, I am highlighting the hegemony of phallogentric language that has historically privileged the power of men to determine what behaviours, appearances and desires are appropriate for a woman or a girl (as well as for men and boys!). Thus, for me, 'the male gaze' is a metonym for 'the objectifying gaze', which in our current world can be cast by either a 'man' or a 'woman'.

My film

In my freshman year at the University of Pittsburgh, I discovered the world of avant-garde filmmaking. In the 1970s Pittsburgh was considered the third coast of avant-garde film, and many noted filmmakers visited and made movies there. Stan Brakhage was one of these film artists; since his death in 2003 he has been acclaimed one of the great visual artists of the 20th century.⁸ Through a series of circumstances, I volunteered to participate in making a film with Brakhage, thinking I would be involved in something technical, but instead I was asked to be the nude female form for his film *Sexual Meditation: Room with View* and later *Sexual Meditation: Office Suite*. After making this film, I became a 'nude model' for both painters and photographers as a way to support myself as a student and aspiring film artist. This was occasioned by necessity: my father, trapped in the normative discourse on appropriate vocations for women, did not believe in supporting a girl's college education (though he had supported

⁸ Fred Camper, <http://www.fredcamper.com/Film/Brakhage4.html>. Fred Camper is an art critic and has taught film history extensively at the School of Art, Institute of Chicago.

my older brother). Modelling was more flexible and provided greater income than most other jobs open to a teenage girl trying to support herself.

Being a model for figure artists in a drawing class was an odd experience. I had anticipated experiencing terrible shame, but I quickly adapted to my body being an object for the artists' gaze as I stood at a distance from them on a stage and remained still as they sketched or painted me. Perhaps I adapted quickly because, even as a young woman, I had experienced a lifetime of living as 'a-being-to-be-looked-at' and thus it was a familiar experience (Young 2005; Mulvey 2009, p. 19). However, being photographed was very different; I experienced an embodied disturbance that I could not put into words. For example, one of the male artists made an extensive series of photographs where the mounds and contours of my nude body seemed to me to suggest a sensuous natural landscape – woman and 'the feminine' having long been conflated with 'nature' and 'spatiality' in the Western metaphysical tradition (Grosz 1995; Young 2005). The photographer posed me in various settings and positions in order to obtain the particular composition he wanted. This usually involved being very close to my nude body. I often could feel his arousal and I experienced his passion for his work as possibly disguised passion for my body, but since generally only his camera 'touched' me, I did not know how to think about this and somehow tolerated the disturbance generated in me. Perhaps this disturbance emerged because I did not expect to be the object of the other's fantasy (Broucek 1991), which may have resulted in a feeling of personal boundary violation (Horne 2008). However, if under the patriarchal gaze my body is not my own (Grosz 1994, 1995), then I could not articulate this as a violation, but only as a shameful disturbance. Despite these feelings, I allowed the photographer to 'capture' me on film and to transform his gaze upon my body into something to be displayed and looked upon by the spectator gaze of others. In appreciation for my work, he gave me copies of the photos and proof sheets for *my* gaze.

During this time, while I was supporting myself as a model, I was struggling to 'be' an artist—one who actively gazes—and not 'just' a model—one that is passively gazed at. So, in addition to my involvement in the art and filmmaking communities, I took a university course in film production. For this class, we were required to make a short film as our final assignment in lieu of a written final examination. My identity as a 'good student' was much stronger than my identity as a 'questioning artist', and so as my deadline approached, the anxiety of a graded examination (though in the form of a film) sent me to the brink of madness; I had internalized the policing gaze of the examiner that demanded compliance.⁹ I remember that just days before the film assignment was due, I

⁹ According to Foucault (1975, p. 187), 'the examination' is actually a form of power, which holds subjects in a 'mechanism of objectification'. It is a disciplinary technique that transforms the individual into a 'case' that can be described, judged, measured, compared with others and therefore

was pacing in my studio apartment simply frantic believing that I had no ideas and no vision of my own to draw upon as an artist. The passive female, the compliant student, and the radical artist identities were generating a maddening conflict in 'me' (Austin 2009).

While in this state of anxiety, my recent lived experiences unexpectedly emerged as the idea that I could film myself, my naked fleshy body, and contrast that perspective with all the still photographs I had been given. Thus, without consciously realizing what I was doing, I would move from being a static gazed-upon object to an active desiring subject (I *wanted* to be a cinematographer – a subject – and *not* just a model – an object). I captured this in the film's title: *Self Portrait of a Nude Model Turned Cinematographer*.

The film was created in one feverish night of activity; as I was gazing at my own body, I was able to edit the film in the camera as I was shooting it. For the opening, I created a montage of the still photographs taken of me by the male photographer. The opening shot establishes the setting as a photographic session between a photographer and model: Naked, I casually sit with my arms folded over my legs in a photographic studio with a camera tripod placed in front of me while gazing directly into the camera. Next follows a series of still photos filmed in a staccato rhythm in order to emphasize their passive, object-like nature. This is in contrast to the eroticized quality of the photos themselves; they are sensually signified by conforming to the lighting and composition codes of photography that create the patriarchal ideal of an attractive young female (Mulvey 2009, p. 19). When I saw these photos through my own 'male' gaze,¹⁰ I experienced them as very 'flattering', but also as disturbingly 'not me'.¹¹

I inter-cut these sensual photographs with shots of photographic proof pages – these are the photographic sheets developed directly from the strips of negative film, which show *every* picture the photographer has taken on an entire roll of film including the sprocket holes of the film itself. At the time I made the film, I thought of the proof sheets with their sprocket holes as a device¹² where I revealed that there was a person (the male photographer) who had made these pictures of a nude model. Then, the last still photograph is a

who can be corrected, classified, normalized, and excluded (ibid, p. 191). The examination emerged in the schools of the Enlightenment as one method of creating the 'docile body' that serves the interests of power in the modern industrial age (ibid, pp. 135–69).

¹⁰ In *Throwing Like a Girl*, Iris Marion Young (2005) explicates the dilemma for women living the female body as both involvement-in-the-world and as an object like any other object in the world. When a woman lives her body as an object in the patriarchal world she is casting the 'male' gaze upon herself, which inhibits involved living and a fluid subjectivity.

¹¹ After writing this description of my confused disturbance at the images being both 'me' and 'not-me', I read Sue Austin's description of how living with the enigmatic alien messages of the unconscious alien other within feels 'both profoundly "me" and "not-me" at the same time' (2009, p. 586).

¹² A 'device' in art is a term that refers to any way in which the work of art breaks down or defamiliarizes our automatic ways of perceiving or reveals to our perception something that was

close-up ‘head shot’ of me looking over my shoulder and staring directly and penetratingly into the camera; the shot is held for a longer time than the others and then fades to black, creating an uncanny feeling. In this gaze of direct address,¹³ I would like to think that I was challenging the viewer of this film to see me as a subject. I think of the use of these two devices – the proof sheets and close-up gazing into the camera – as a postmodern act of reminding the viewer that the image is a photograph of a woman that was shot by a man who is being filmed by a woman but the image is not actually the woman – think of Magritte painting the image of a pipe with the caption he has written on the painting saying ‘This is not a pipe’ (Foucault 1982; Foster et al 2004).

Following this fade to black, there are no more still photographs or static images – everything moves. The second part of the film begins with the camera panning over a hand-written poster of the film’s title – *Self Portrait of a Nude Model Turned Cinematographer*. This is followed by a moving image of a mirror in which is reflected the head and the frontal torso of the naked cinematographer holding the camera to her eye and filming herself in the mirror. This shot heralds my transition from object to subject; I am announcing that I am the active agent as the cinematographer controlling the film viewer’s gaze and revealing that there is someone – an active subject – behind the movie camera. However, as Lacan has written, the mirror both creates and reveals the *illusion* of a unified and coherent subject (Grosz 1990; Melchior-Bonnet 2002; Mulvey 2009). Thus, ‘I’ both reveal myself *and* conceal myself in this mirror shot. I reveal the illusion of myself as a coherent subject, but I am also concealing the fragmented nature of self – the multiple identities I live – with this illusion of coherence.

In this second part of the film, I wanted to film ‘me’ as I, through my gaze, experienced my embodiment. I held the camera closely to my eye and filmed my body only as I would actually be able to see it if my eye were ‘naked’. The result of this technique is that my body never appears as a static or unified entity, but only as active and moving and always only as disconnected parts. When one shot cuts to the next the impact of the change creates fragments, jarring movements, and flashes of uncertain imagery that evoke a feeling of disturbance. In contrast to the mirrored self, I reveal my dismembered body and by implication the fragmented self.

Through use of the imagination, I will try to evoke for the reader some of the moving film images: With the eye of the camera, the cinematographer ‘I’ looks down at my breast and nipple and then from outside the frame my hand enters the picture and covers my breast. In the next shot, I see only a roll of

there all along but unseen. The use of devices results in a feeling of ‘strangeness’ or ‘estrangement’ in the viewer (Foster et al 2004, p. 35).

¹³ In *Notes on ‘The Gaze’*, Daniel Chandler identifies the key forms of gaze in photographic and film texts. One form of the gaze is called the ‘direct address’; this entails the gaze of a person looking ‘out of the frame’ at the viewer and is a demand upon the viewer (as the object of the look) to enter into a relationship with the one directly gazing out of the frame (1998).

flesh with a navel. Looking down from a seated position, I see my hair-covered pubic mound and my thighs held tightly together and then as I open my thighs and my knees separate, a triangle of space is created and my calves and my feet-with-their-soles touching come into view and I wiggle my toes. I turn the camera and the room around my body spins until the camera/eye settles on one buttock and part of my back and shoulder; then spinning the other direction, I see the side of my body and part of the other buttock appears. I see my hand reaching into an undefined space as my fingers open and close. Then I see a hand touching my forearm; later a hand strokes the calf of my leg.

For the last shot, I break the subjective point of view with an extreme close-up of one eye staring directly into the camera; in order to film my eye, I had to set the camera on a surface and point it at myself. The eye stares intently, closes, and then opens slowly and deliberately – it is not a seductive ‘wink’. (Briefly jumping ahead let me share that I was later criticized by a fellow student that the shot ‘should’ have been a wink.) The cinematographer’s eye is now seen by the mechanical eye and ‘I’ am intently gazing at ‘You’. This shot is a reprise of the direct gaze at the end of part one, but now distilled down from a young woman’s face to only her eye – the eye no longer an organ of perception but a signifier of the gaze – a powerful demand for a response from the viewer.

In the next few days, the film was ready to be shown in my class. I clearly remember the light mood of the classroom as students showed brief comedies and dramas and action narrative films. Each film was met with ‘appropriate’ laughter or applause and an approving comment by the professor. Then I showed my film. When the film ended, there was a ‘thunderous’ silence. No applause. No comments. Just silence. The shock and shame that I experienced in the wake of this silence was immense. I felt as if the gaze of all the viewers had turned on me with horror. The only way at the time I could make sense of the silence was that my film was ‘bad’, and, therefore, not worthy of a response. Or, alternatively, that my body – my self – was ‘bad’. Sadly, my 19-year-old self did not have *any* way to signify and thus reflect at all upon the traumatic impact of the silence that created the shame that overcame me.¹⁴ It has only been through the re-telling of this story that I have come to realize that my feelings of being ‘bad’ were linked to my radically challenging the objectifying male gaze and transgressing normative discourse.¹⁵ Although I went on to have a first career as a *documentary* filmmaker, I never again attempted to make ‘art’. I was a woman who gave support to Jung’s statement: ‘*and this unexpected shock may*

¹⁴ As in much conceptual art, the intensely uncanny feeling generated in the spectators by this film might also be related to the ways in which conceptual art challenges the very subject/object dichotomy itself by denying the existence of an ‘image within a frame’ and generating instead a sense of presence that transcends both subject and object (Darling 2009, p. 22).

¹⁵ Mulvey (1975) explains that it is only through the challenge of the radical filmmakers that the cinematic codes that create woman as spectacle will be broken down, freeing the gaze of the camera and spectator (p. 27).

injure her, perhaps fatally'. The artist, depicted as both gazing and gazed at, had been dealt a fatal blow.

My film: part II

Surprisingly, though, this is not the end of the story of the film. The photographer Robert Haller, who made the still photographs, became a close personal friend and appreciated my film and the use of his photos in it. Robert went on to become and still is the Director of Collections and Special Projects of the Anthology Film Archives in New York City, a distinguished authority on film history, especially that of the avant-garde, and an accomplished photographer. Robert preserved my film in the archives in New York, and then he and I lost touch. I buried my painful memories of this time of my life and my film until 2004. At that time, Robert was given a grant by the National Endowment for the Arts to write a book and to create an accompanying touring programme of films about the avant-garde film movement in Pittsburgh in the 1970s. Robert located me, and we began an extended dialogue re-creating the times and my experiences for the book project. It was completed in 2005 and devotes a chapter to me, describing my involvement as a model and cinematographer during this era (Haller 2005). My film (as well as two other films in which I appear as a nude figure) is a part of the touring programme. The film series debuted in New York City and was briefly reviewed by the *Village Voice*. Although there were dozens of films included in the festival, I was incredibly surprised that the *Village Voice* film critic signalled out my film and me by name; it was one of only four or five films to be individually recognized. He wrote, 'Former Brakhage actor Sharon Ruppert (my family name) enacts degree-zero cine-feminism in *Self Portrait of a Nude Model Turned Cinematographer*' (Halter 2005). On one hand, I found this pithy review quite gratifying, as I take it to mean that he considered my film one of the first postmodern cinematic reflections of the feminist zeitgeist of the early 1970s. However, even three decades later, the cinematographer as active subject only appears secondary to Brakhage's model – the object of the 'male' gaze.

In the resurrection of the film, two other noteworthy events occurred. First, Robert told me that in researching the book and interviewing people who knew me, he learned that my film production professor had been shocked by my film and had assumed that I was using the film to sexually proposition him – apparently the professor could only gaze at me as the erotic object/model and he could not respond to or *even see* me the active subject/artist. The other event was the reaction of the audience when the film was shown at the debut of the NEA film programme in New York City in 2005 – again, silence from the audience and a surge of shame in me. I had imagined that I might have fictionalized the total silence in response to the film and the intensity of the shame I experienced in 1971, or that my experience of what happened then had been 'merely' a reflection of my own 'intrapsychic' disturbance. However,

this time, to experience the same silence and shame thirty-plus years later and to learn of the professor's interpretation of my film opened the space for me to become curious and to reflect upon ways to think about my own and others' reactions to the film.

Discussion: rewriting the story

What might have happened that evoked the silence and shame? Applying the line of thinking that I outlined in the introduction, I imagine that I stepped out of the patriarchal discourses regarding the female body and transgressed acceptable norms of female identity by challenging the power of the objectifying male gaze to determine the significance of my body, its appearance, to whom it belongs, and what purposes it may serve. From this perspective, the silence of the viewers was perhaps experienced by me as a form of 'policing' in that this was not the response afforded to the other films in my university class. The intense shame that I felt as a student aborted my fragile identity development as an artist/subject.

However, although I experienced the silence as a 'punishment', it is also possible that, by rejecting the prevailing discourse about how the female body is signified, the viewers may have experienced a shocking 'encounter with the Real' – in other words, an experience that could not be symbolized and, therefore, remained unspoken. Like trauma, the Lacanian 'Real' resists assimilation into any imaginary or symbolic universe (Dean 2006, pp. 272–73; Horne 2008). The silence of the audience may have been the manifestation of their extreme anxiety, which could not be articulated, but was experienced by me as a shaming condemnation. Perhaps by calling my film 'degree-zero cine feminism' the *Village Voice* film critic was acknowledging the role of my film in opening space for new discourses about the lived female body to emerge. Perhaps that is the nature of 'art' – to create openings for imagining new possibilities before words are available to generate new emergent discourses (Foster et al 2004; Horne 2009).

So – what are some of the particular ways I – through the film – might have transgressed 'acceptable' discourse? One form of transgression might be thought of as having denied the 'male' gaze the use of the female body as a screen for libidinal desire. This line of thought closely follows a chapter from Slavoj Žižek's book *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (1991, pp. 3–20). Žižek explains that it is only through fantasy that the subject is constituted as desiring, and the realization of desiring does not consist in the desire being fulfilled, but with the continual, circular movement of the *reproduction* of desire. Fantasy space is necessary as a screen for the projection of desires. Said another way, as subjects, we are constituted by a lack into which we are always projecting a fantasied object of our desire that we imagine will fulfil our desire, but which can actually never be fulfilled,

except in death. (This fantasied object is Lacan's *objet petit a*.)¹⁶ The empty space is crucially necessary for the desiring fantasies. Also, filling the lack with *objet petit a* reduces disturbance, as this protects us from the uncertainty of the unknown and its resultant anxiety.

Zizek goes on to describe a story about a group of men who gather at a local saloon to remember their youthful sexual adventures that all occurred in a haunted, 'black house' now occupied by a lunatic who kills all intruders; thus no one ever dares return to this house. A newcomer to the group, a young engineer, announces that he plans to explore the house. 'The men present react to this announcement with silent but nonetheless intense disapproval' (ibid.). The young engineer goes to the 'black house' and returns to declare that it is just 'an old filthy ruin with nothing mysterious or fascinating about it' (ibid.). The men are horrified and attack and kill the young engineer. Zizek explains that the newcomer reduced their fantasy space to everyday, common reality. The engineer 'annulled the difference between reality and fantasy space, thereby depriving the men of the place in which they were able to articulate their desires' (ibid.).

I think that my naked body as represented in the seductive still photographs constituted the female body as a screen for male fantasy and desiring, in a way similar to the 'black house'. To me, Zizek's description of desire and fantasy space provides a more 'fleshed-out' way¹⁷ of describing what it means to be 'an object of the male gaze'. Just as the young engineer was greeted by an intense disapproving silence, the viewers of my film reacted with intense disapproving silence. By my refusing the status of *objet petit a* and by taking the camera to my own eye, my body is revealed in its fleshy particularity 'with nothing mysterious or fascinating about it'. The male fantasy of the naked female body is reduced to the everyday reality of my lived body in its average everyday desiring. In the fragmented, subjective views of body parts that appear and disappear and that I touch, my female body is no longer a unified and static screen for fantasied projections, but is reclaimed for my own desiring self. Perhaps, by destroying the fantasy space of male desire and replacing it with a mortal female body, the abyss of the empty space re-emerges in the viewer with its attendant terrors!

This suggests another way of thinking about what happened with the film and relates to the *content* of the fantasies projected onto a woman's body. According to Julia Kristeva (1986), 'Woman' or 'the feminine' has been conflated in Western culture with Motherhood, the only function for which she is recognized. Thus, the female body is identified with the maternal body – i.e., the abjected body of the Mother. The object is neither subject nor object, but rather that which has been cast off from the subject; the object was once part of oneself but now points to the disintegration of self – e.g., vomit, pus, piss, shit

¹⁶ Secondary sources which introduce the work of Lacan are Slavoj Zizek, *How to Read Lacan*; Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*; and Joel Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*.

¹⁷ Pun intended.

or blood. The abject is not necessarily that which is grotesque or unclean, but rather these cast-off bits of ourselves call into question our sense of impermeable and solid body boundaries and threaten identity (Kristeva 1982; Oliver 2002; Young 2005, p. 109). The maternal body is abject in that the mother's body is what the infant must cast off in order to differentiate from the Other and to enter 'the realm of the Father' (i.e., language) in which the normative symbolic order reigns supreme. The maternal body that brings forth life in a mess of blood and shit and fluid is also the body that reminds us of our inevitable death, the rotting corpse, which points towards the ultimate disintegration of self. This abject maternal body is the site of presymbolic semiosis – primal affective memories prior to language – that constitute the world of the infant before it has entered the symbolic world. So the maternal body signifies both life and death, and stirs up the pre-verbal primal affective memories of the infant-mother relationship. Kristeva points out that what we call 'maternity' is actually the idealized adult fantasy of this mother/infant relationship from the perspective of phallogocentric discourse.

In the images of my youthful body as a static, sensual ideal female form, the 'male gaze' sees 'the nude model' as a mirror reflecting back its fantasy of eternal youth and perfection that would deny death and which would evoke fantasies of primal narcissism where the infant has total access to and ownership of the mother's body. From the perspective of the adult caught in the fantasies of Kristeva's primal narcissism, the breast and nipple belong to the baby and not to the mother. By refusing the idealized fantasy body, the cinematographer 'I' evokes the semiotic body of surplus feelings and excrement and requires the viewers to encounter their own fleshy mortality, most likely a horrifying experience. And in denying this fantasy by shifting the view of my body to a first-person perspective, as well as by touching my own body, I again reclaim it for myself.

There is yet another way of thinking about this touching of my body. In her essay, 'The witch's senses: sensory ideologies and transgressive femininities from the renaissance to modernity', Constance Classen (2005, pp. 70–84) describes some of the consequences for women of the Western tradition's hierarchical ordering of the senses and its symbolic division between 'masculine' and 'feminine' senses. She demonstrates that our sensory experiences are not articulated through language, but rather through the lived body, and yet they are imbued with meaning and values that are regulated in order to enforce the cultural order and normative discourses. In the history of Western philosophical discourse,¹⁸ sight is the 'highest' and most valued sense and has

¹⁸ In her concise book, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, Genevieve Lloyd (1993) traces the history of how 'reason' has been deemed 'masculine' and 'unreason' 'feminine' through the Western philosophical tradition starting with Plato and Aristotle through Kant and Hegel to Sartre and de Beauvoir. She articulates the qualities and values, which then became linked with superior 'masculinity' and 'femininity' as the inferior complement of 'masculinity'. She also traces the linking of woman with 'nature'.

been considered essentially 'masculine', i.e., dominating, rational and orderly. 'Men were believed to be empowered by God and nature to see and oversee the world' (ibid., p. 70). This seeing is the objectifying gaze that has ownership of and power over all that it perceives. The 'lower' sense of touch, along with smell and taste, was considered essentially 'feminine' in nature: 'nurturing, seductive, dissolute in its merging of self and other' (ibid., p. 70). In the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries these beliefs culminated in the great witch-hunts. Witches were women who had turned to 'improper use' of their feminine sensorium, which, although inferior in value to the masculine gaze, could take on supernatural potency through witchcraft. The witch improperly used the feminine senses for self-gratification rather than self-sacrifice and as avenues for empowerment rather than as instruments of service. The most dangerous sense was touch and a woman's touch was believed capable of 'debilitating and destabilizing men's bodies and minds' (ibid., p. 71). The goal of the witch hunters was to constrain the transgressive power of feminine sensuality, which could destroy masculine potency. (This was grounded in physiological theories of the debilitating loss of semen leading to blindness and physical and mental degeneration.)

Possibly my greatest transgression was the act of appropriating the 'masculine' sense of sight and using it as an expression of my 'feminine' desiring subjectivity rather than maintaining an abject stance. So by touching my own nipple, I was perhaps transformed into a witch, using my power of touch for self-gratification and empowerment rather than in the service of 'masculine' desire or infantile need. One of men's greatest fears was that the witch constantly sought out victims for her insatiable lust, leading the men into sin. Perhaps the university professor who thought I was using my film to sexually proposition him may have feared that he would be caught in my lustful trap and damned if he had spoken a kind word to me after gazing upon the witch's brew of my film!

The clinical situation

So far in this essay, I have been creating new narratives about 'what happened' when my artist-self was fatally wounded because she 'deviated from the cultural trend'. I am able to find new ways to understand these events and to make them meaningful to me through the postmodern and feminist discourses that have emerged in the 38 years since the film was made. This is similar to the ways in which we hope that our patients will have more capacity to continually generate new identities and stories as they find new perspectives to make meaning of the events of their lives.

There are other ways that exploration of female body experience, articulated by creating these multiple narratives of 'what happened', is relevant to the clinical situation. For example, a patient of mine has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. She was describing to me the surgery she was about to undergo and, pointing to her breast, she traced an incision that would be along the line of the areola of her nipple. She told me that the surgeon explained that the procedure of cutting into her breast and removing tissue is done this way

to avoid a visual scar-line on the breast proper. I felt horrified, and blurted out, 'But will you lose sensitivity in your nipple?' My patient looked shocked and explained that she had not thought of that nor had the surgeon discussed this with her. Then she laughed and said that perhaps she had better bring it up because 'who knows, I might eventually be in a relationship again and need my nipple!' I felt momentarily stunned by this response.

My initial horrified response is an example of embodied countertransference, which most likely was evoked by my patient's split-off affects related to the horror of having her breast scarred – albeit for the purpose of saving her life. The horror that was evoked in me was so powerful that I did not contain it in that moment. I cannot tell in hindsight how much of the horror that emerged was linked to anxiety about death, the mutilation of her breast or something even more impossible to articulate, something in the realm of Kristeva's semiosis. However, what happened points to something significant. My patient's (female) surgeon seemed to be more concerned about communicating her goal of reducing the visibility of a scar on the breast than discussing the potential impact of the surgery on the patient's erogenous tactile feelings. Here is an example where the female breast, as an object to be visually pleasing to the 'male' gaze, takes precedence over the lived experience of autoerotic female nipple sensitivity.¹⁹ What stunned me was that my patient's first association was through the lens of her own internalized 'male' gaze; she immediately thought of her sensitive nipple as an object for use in a possible future heterosexual encounter, rather than of her own everyday experience of the pleasures of the female body. In that particular session, after I regained a reflective stance, I was able to contain the intense affects as a new story about my patient's body started to emerge.

Conclusions

In order for new discourses to emerge, we must constantly engage in dialogue with each other and with texts – whether they are written words or images in a

¹⁹ Luce Irigaray's discussion of the female body as being covered with erogenous zones comes to mind; she says: 'So woman does not have a sex organ? She has at least two of them, but they are not identifiable as ones. Indeed, she has many more. Her sexuality, always at least double, goes even further: it is plural. . . . Indeed, woman's pleasure does not have to choose between clitoral activity and vaginal passivity, for example. The pleasure of the vaginal caress does not have to be substituted for that of the clitoral caress. They each contribute, irreplaceably, to woman's pleasure. Among other caresses . . . Fondling the breasts, touching the vulva, spreading the lips, stroking the posterior wall of the vagina . . . To evoke only a few of the most specifically female pleasures. Pleasures which are somewhat misunderstood in sexual difference as it is imagined – or not imagined, the other sex being only the indispensable complement to the only sex. But *woman has sex organs more or less everywhere*. She finds pleasure almost anywhere' (1997, p. 252).

film – in order to reveal the hidden assumptions of prevailing discourse about what are acceptable ways for women and men to live. It is important to recognize when we (or our patients) are being forced into constricted, oppressive spaces, through practices that police us into conformity and then deal fatal blows to emerging possibilities.

I would like to close this paper with a challenging thought from Kristeva about what it means to be ‘woman’. Kristeva clearly articulates that women are outside of the male-dominated phallogocentric discourse and that women maintain an abjected, marginalized position in masculine culture. However, Kristeva inverts this marginalized position to reveal its liberating potential:

In social, sexual and symbolic experiences, being a woman has always provided a means to another end, to becoming something else: a subject-in-the-making, a subject on trial... If women have a role to play... it is only in assuming a negative function: reject everything finite, definite, structured, and loaded with meaning, in the existing state of society. Such an attitude places women on the side of the explosion of social codes: with revolutionary movements... By ‘woman’ I mean that which cannot be represented, what is not said, what remains above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies. There are certain ‘men’ who are familiar with this phenomenon.

(1997, pp. 371–72)

And so, this nude model turned cinematographer turned analyst turned writer turned ‘woman’ hopes to never stop turning, to always be the subject-in-the-making, the subject on trial.

TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

En 1971, j’ai réalisé un film intitulé *Autoportrait d’un modèle nu transformé en cinéaste*. J’y explorais le contraste entre un regard « mâle » objectalisant sur mon corps nu et l’expérience subjective de mon corps vécu. Ce film était un défi radical lancé au regard objectalisant sur la femme, regard qui l’emprisonne et qui avait largement prédominé jusque-là dans la fiction cinématographique. Dans la mesure où l’objectalisation des femmes nous a largement exclues des discours phallogocentriques, j’espère dans cet article contribuer au dialogue psychanalytique, en y apportant l’expérience personnelle vécue d’une femme. J’y analyserai la manière dont la réminiscence de ce film est devenue pour moi une expérience de transformation, à mesure que je le reconsidérerais à travers le prisme des discours postmodernes et féministes qui ont émergé depuis. Puis, je m’attacherai à examiner comment ce retour imaginatif sur une création artistique pour générer de nouveaux discours, présente des similitudes avec le processus de transformation analytique. Enfin, je présenterai un exemple clinique au cours duquel, une réponse contre-transférentielle incarnée de ma part à la sujétion d’une patiente au regard masculin objectalisant, ouvre chez elle l’espace permettant l’émergence d’un discours nouveau à propos de son corps.

1971 machte ich einen Film mit dem Titel *Selbstporträt eines Nacktmodells, zur Kamerafrau* geworden in dem ich den objektifizierenden ‘männlichen’ Blick auf meinen Körper untersuche im Kontrast zu der subjektiv gelebten Erfahrung meines Körpers. Der Film stellte eine radikale Herausforderung dar für den Blick, der Frauen objektiviert – und sie dadurch gefangenimmt – welcher bis dahin das Erzählkino dominierte. Da uns die Objektifizierung von Frauen weitgehend von den phallogozentrischen Diskursen ausgeschlossen hat hoffe ich, mit diesem Text die gelebte persönliche Erfahrung einer Frau in den psychoanalytischen Diskurs einzubringen. Ich werde mich dem annähern über die Untersuchung der Frage, wie die Erinnerungen an diesen Film zu einer persönlichen transformativen Erfahrung wurden. Dazu bediene ich mich einer Rückschau durch die Linse des postmodernen und feministischen Diskurses, wie er sich seit der Entstehung des Filmes herausgebildet hat. Desweiteren werde ich untersuchen, wie ähnlich dieser Prozeß der imaginativen Rückschau auf einen künstlerischen Schaffensvorgang zur Erzeugung neuer Diskurse in der Gegenwart den transformativen Prozessen in der Analyse ist. Schließlich werde ich ein klinisches Beispiel vorstellen, in dem meine körperliche Gegenübertragungsreaktion auf die Unterwerfung einer Patientin unter den objektifizierenden männlichen Blick einen Raum für eine neue Art von Diskurs über ihren Körper eröffnet.

Nel 1971 girai un film intitolato “Autoritratto di una modella nuda trasformatasi in operatore cinematografico” in cui esploravo il contrasto tra lo sguardo “maschile” reificante sul mio corpo e l’esperienza soggettiva del mio corpo vivente. Il film era una sfida radicale allo sguardo che reifica la donna—e quindi la imprigiona—che aveva finora dominato la narrativa cinematografica. Poiché la reificazione delle donne ci aveva largamente escluse dai discorsi fallogocentrici privilegiati, spero di portare nel dialogo psicoanalitico la personale esperienza vivente di una donna. Lo farò esaminando in che modo il ricordo di questo film sia divenuto un’esperienza personalmente trasformativa mentre lo riguardavo con le lenti dei discorsi femministi e postmoderni che sono emersi dopo che questo venne fatto. Inoltre analizzerò in che modo questo processo immaginale di ricordare una creazione artistica per generare nuovi discorsi nel presente sia simile al processo trasformativo dell’analisi. Infine presenterò un caso clinico in cui la mia risposta controtransferale alla soggezione di una paziente allo sguardo maschile deificante apre uno spazio in cui può emergere un nuovo discorso sul suo corpo.

В 1971 году я сняла фильм под названием «Автопортрет обнаженной модели, ставшей кинематографистом», в котором исследовала объективизацию «мужского» взгляда на мое тело по контрасту с субъективным живым восприятием тела. Фильм бросил радикальный вызов подобным взглядам, объективизирующим женщину и, стало быть, лишаящим ее свободы – именно такие до сей поры доминировали в кинематографических историях. Поскольку объективизация женщин в большой степени исключала нас из привилегированных фаллоцентрических дискурсов, в этой статье я надеюсь привнести в психоаналитический диалог личное, живое переживание женщины. Я буду приближаться к этому с помощью исследования воспоминаний об этом

фильме: как они стали личным трансформирующим опытом теперь, когда я оглядываюсь назад через призму постмодернистских и феминистских разговоров, появившихся уже после создания фильма. В добавление я исследую, как этот процесс воображаемого оборота назад к художественному творению может породить новые дискурсы в настоящем, тем самым походя на трансформирующий опыт анализа. И наконец, я представляю клинический случай, в котором моя воплощенная в теле контрпереносная реакция на подчиненность пациентки мужскому объективирующему взгляду открывает пространство для новых обсуждений ее тела.

En 1971, hice una película *Auto Retrato de un Modelo Desnudo que se convirtió Cinematógrafo*, donde exploro la objetivización de mirada 'masculina' sobre mi cuerpo en contraste a la experiencia subjetiva vivida de mi cuerpo. La película fue un desafío radical a la mirada que objetiva a mujer –y así la encarcela– que había dominado hasta ahora al cine narrativo. Desde que la objetivación de mujeres se nos ha excluido en gran parte del privilegio del discurso falocéntrico, espero con este trabajo traer la experiencia vivida y personal de la mujer al diálogo psicoanalítico. Me acercaré a ellos explorando cómo el recordar esta película ha llegado a ser una experiencia personal de transformación tal como yo lo recuerdo a la vista de los discursos postmodernos y feministas surgidos desde entonces. Además, exploraré cómo este proceso de recordar con imaginación una creación artística al engendrar nuevos discursos en el presente, es semejantes al proceso del transformador del análisis. Por último, presentaré un caso clínico, donde mi corporeizada respuesta contratransferencial del sometimiento de una paciente a la objetivización de la mirada masculina abre el espacio para que pueda surgir un nuevo discurso acerca de su cuerpo.

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