In what is perhaps the most perceptive full-length study of Hitchcock yet written, Robin Wood dismisses Hitchcock's first American film, *Rebecca* (1940), with these words: "the film fails either to assimilate or to vomit out the indigestible novelettish ingredients of Daphne du Maurier's book." Hitchcock's own dismissal of the film contains a definition of this term, "novelettish": "Well, it's not a Hitchcock picture," he remarked to Truffaut; "it's a novelette, really. The story is old-fashioned; there was a whole school of feminine literature at the period, and though I’m not against it, the fact is that the story is lacking in humor." So the "novelettish" aspect of the work is its "feminine" aspect, a femininity that remains alien and disturbing, neither expelled nor "digested" in the course of the film. In light of Wood's remarks, it is especially interesting to note how Hitchcock intended to supply the humor he found lacking in this piece of "feminine literature": the original script provided for two scenes of vomiting on boats, one of them to be provoked by Maxim's cigar smoking on board a passenger ship. The film's producer, David O. Selznick, however, was outraged by these scenes, as well as by other changes Hitchcock had made, and he insisted that Hitchcock delete the offensive scenes in order to remain true to what he considered the feminine spirit of the book. In one of his famous memos he wrote:

> [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 all so brilliant in the book that every woman who has read it has adored the girl and has understood her psychology, has cringed with embarrassment for her, yet has understood exactly what was going through her mind. [Your changes in the script] have removed all the subtleties and substituted big broad strokes which in outline form betray just how ordinary the plot is and just how bad a picture it would make without the little feminine things which are so recognizable and which make every woman say, "I know just how she feels... I know just what she's going through..."
The struggle between the two men over the script of Rebecca (and here we encounter yet another triangular structure) was clearly the result of a disagreement about the extent to which it should adhere to the feminine discourse of du Maurier's Gothic novel. If Hitchcock failed to subvert this discourse by vomiting out the book's "novelettish" elements, with the result that many male critics find the film distasteful, it's not because he didn't, almost literally, try.

The connotations of cannibalism lurking in our discussion thus far—the implications of eating, and digesting or vomiting out, femininity—provides us with a clue to the obsession in Hitchcock films with dismembering and devouring the (usually female) body. There is a scene in Rear Window, for example, in which L.B. Jeffries (Jimmy Stewart) tries to eat bacon and eggs while Stella (Thelma Ritter) wonders how the murdered woman's body was cut up and worries that the trunk in which the body appears to be hidden might begin to leak. And in Frenzy, a film about a man who rapes and murders a woman and then stuffs her body into a potato sack, a running gag involves the police inspector whose wife serves him food that vaguely resembles human body parts. A full discussion of this concern with cannibalism will be reserved for a later chapter, where I will relate it to the question of identification. However, an analysis of Rebecca, which is all about a woman's problems of "overidentification" with another woman, places us in an excellent position for understanding the stakes of the later films. As we shall see, for all Hitchcock's desire to repudiate it, Rebecca remains very much a "Hitchcock picture": it is that feminine element in the textual body that is unassimilable by patriarchal culture and yet cannot be "vomited out."

As the passage quoted above suggests, Selznick believed his production of Rebecca would appeal especially to women, whom he expected to identify strongly with the main character ("I know just how she feels; I know just what she's going through"). His emphasis on the female audience's potential to empathize closely with the heroine coincides with the culture's view—discussed at the end of the last chapter—of women as closer to the (textual) body than men and thus ready to surrender themselves freely to the fantasies offered by the "woman's film."

What is interesting about Rebecca in this context is that it makes the tendency of women to merge with other women, the tendency taken for granted by Selznick, its chief "problem," the solution to which it shows to be extremely difficult to achieve. This same tendency has been seen as a problem by psychoanalysis as well, and in fact, Rebecca offers a striking instance of a film that follows quite closely the female oedipal trajectory outlined by Freud.

In offering this thesis I am taking exception to the notion of the influential French film theorist Raymond Bellour that all Hollywood narratives are dramatizations of the male oedipal story, of man's entry into the social and Symbolic order. In rejecting Bellour's thesis and arguing that there is at least one film dealing with woman's "incorporation" into the social order (to reinvokes Wood's metaphor), I do not mean to suggest that Rebecca is thereby a "progressive" film for women; the social order is, after all, a patriarchal order. I do, however, maintain that all kinds of interesting differences arise when a film features a woman's trajectory and directly solicits the interest of a female audience. Besides, as I have said, I do not believe the assimilation of femininity by patriarchy can ever be complete. My own analysis is dedicated to tracing the resistances that disturb the text.

In Rebecca a young woman (Joan Fontaine), never named throughout the film, comes to Monte Carlo as a companion to a vulgar American woman, Mrs. Van Hopper (Florence Bates). There she meets Maxim de Winter (Laurence Olivier), a handsome, wealthy, older man with an air of mystery about him that seems to be connected to his late wife, Rebecca, who, we soon learn, has drowned at sea. Maxim takes an interest in the young woman and proposes marriage to her when he discovers she is on the verge of leaving for America with Mrs. Van Hopper. After a hasty wedding, the two go to his imposing country estate, Manderley, where the heroine is intimidated by the wealth and magnitude of the place. Soon she begins to feel overshadowed by the memory of Rebecca: Maxim appears to be obsessed with thoughts of his first wife; mementoes of Rebecca's past life are everywhere (her initial is embroidered on napkins, handkerchiefs, pillowcases); and Rebecca's former servant, Mrs. Danvers (Judith Anderson), dedicates herself to making the heroine feel inadequate in relation to the "first Mrs. de Winter."

After affording the audience numerous opportunities to "cringe with embarrassment" for her, the heroine finally stands up to Mrs. Danvers and asserts her authority as mistress of the house. She then persuades Maxim to give a costume ball at Manderley and proceeds to search for an appropriate costume with which to surprise her husband. Assuming a friendly attitude toward the heroine, Mrs. Danvers suggests that she dress up in the costume of Lady Caroline De Winter, whose portrait hangs in the hall. The night of the ball, the heroine descends the great staircase radiant-dressed in a lavish white gown, only to be greeted by her horror-stricken husband, who, in a cruel reversal of the Cinderella myth, orders her back to her room to change her dress. It turns out that Rebecca had worn the same costume at a previous masquerade ball. The anguished heroine runs up to Rebecca's room where Mrs. Danvers nearly persuades
find that Mrs. Danvers has set fire to Manderley. As Maxim embraces his
men visit the doctor who had secretly treated Rebecca and discover that
(George Sanders), tries to implicate Maxim in her murder. At the end, the
away.

his wife's another body that conveniently washed up ashore some distance
killing herself. Maxim put the body in her boat, sank it, and identified as
his wife's another body that conveniently washed up ashore some distance

The remainder of the film deals with the investigation into the cir-
cumstances of Rebecca's death, as her cousin and lover, Jack Favell
(George Sanders), tries to implicate Maxim in her murder. At the end, the
men visit the doctor who had secretly treated Rebecca and discover that
Rebecca had been told she was suffering from cancer. Since this provides
a motive for Rebecca's suicide, Maxim is cleared. He, however, now
understands that Rebecca had told him that she was pregnant precisely in
order to goad him into murdering her. After the visit to the doctor, Maxim
and his estate manager, Frank Crawley (Reginald Denny), drive home to
find that Mrs. Danvers has set fire to Manderley. As Maxim embraces his
wife, we see Mrs. Danvers through the window being burned alive, and
then the camera tracks in for a closeup of a flaming pillow case with an
embroidered “R” on it.

As this outline of the plot suggests, Rebecca is the story of a woman's
maturation, a woman who must come to terms with a powerful father figure
and assorted mother substitutes (Mrs. Van Hopper, Rebecca, and Mrs.
Danvers). That Rebecca is an oedipal drama from the feminine point of
view has been noticed by Raymond Durgnat: “For the heroine fulfills the
archetypal female Oedipal dream of marrying the father-figure, who has
rescued her from the tyranny of the domineering old woman (i.e., mother).
But in doing so she has to confront the rival from the past, the woman who
possessed her father first, who can reach out and possess him once again.”7

Actually, Durgnat is here describing not the female oedipal drama, but
the long discredited “Electra complex”; nevertheless, his insights contain
a great deal of validity and can be brought into line with more recent
thinking about feminine psychology and feminist film theory.

Rebecca more or less explicitly declares itself to be a kind of feminine
“family romance.” For example, the film emphasizes the heroine's child-
ishness, contrasting her youth with her husband's age. Throughout the
film Maxim continually orders her about, telling her to finish her breakfast
“like a good girl,” to stop biting her nails, to wear a raincoat (“you can’t
be too careful with children”), and, ludicrously enough, “never to wear
black satin or pearls, or be thirty-six years old.” By the end of the film,
however, she has grown up, in spite of his professed wishes. “Ah, it's gone
forever,” he laments, “that funny, young, lost look I loved. It won’t ever
come back. I killed that when I told you about Rebecca. It’s gone . . . in
a few hours . . . You’ve grown so much older.” In addition, the film
repeatedly stresses the heroine’s total incompetence, this time contrasting
her to the “mother” (i.e., Rebecca), who was all efficiency and control.
When the heroine enters the morning room at Manderley, she sees proofs
of Rebecca's industry everywhere and is herself at a loss for anything to
do. At the luncheon table, Maxim's brother-in-law, Giles (Nigel Bruce),
quizzes her about her abilities and succeeds only in establishing that, un-
like Rebecca, she doesn’t ride, doesn’t dance, and doesn’t sail.

Mise-en-scene and camerawork collaborate with the script to convey
the heroine’s sense of her own insignificance: she is continually dwarfed
by the huge halls in which she wanders, and even the doorknobs are placed
shoulder-level so that the viewer receives a subliminal impression of her
as a child peeking in on or intruding into an adult world that provokes both
curiosity and dread. A characteristic camera movement in the film begins
with a closeup of the heroine receiving a bit of unwelcome news about
Rebecca's superiority and then tracking out to a long shot in which she
seems small, helpless, and alone. The culminating instance of this back-
ward movement occurs when Mrs. Danvers attempts to persuade her
to jump out the window to her death, and the camera, placed outside the
window, begins to move away as if inviting and luring her to her doom.

The heroine is also shown to be extremely clumsy, tipping things over,
tripping, breaking a china cupid in Rebecca's “morning room” and then
fearfully hiding the pieces in the back of a desk drawer. This inept be-

behavior—her clumsiness, her bewildered wanderings through the labyrin-
then house—presents a marked contrast to the actions of Rebecca's
former maid, Mrs. Danvers, whose movements were very deliberately lim-
ited and controlled by Hitchcock:

Mrs. Danvers was 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
In psychoanalytic terms, the heroine might be said to be at the Imaginary stage of development—a time when the child’s motor control is not yet fully developed, and the mother’s, by contrast, seems superhuman in its perfection. Further, the mother’s appearances are terrifying because they are so unpredictable, a situation which, as Freud has documented, results in an intolerable feeling of helplessness on the part of the child.

The Imaginary stage is the same for both boys and girls. For males, however, it eventually becomes possible to deny the mother’s physical superiority by asserting their anatomical difference from her, a denial which is enacted in many Hollywood films, perhaps most emphatically in film noirs, the project of which, as has amply been documented, is to bring the woman under the hero’s visual and narrative control. By contrast, the female, who is anatomically similar to the mother, has difficulty assuming such control: thus, rather than appropriating the power of the look, as the male does, the female allows herself to be determined by it. In the words of Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni:

She prefers to tip over into the image guaranteed for her (as she believes) by the quite as captive look of the mother and later, by the all-powerful look of the father. She prefers to believe in that image. She believes she is herself... In so doing, she substitutes for the person of the mother in the fort/da game her own person figured by her body in the specular image; an image that the mother’s look brings out, “causes.”

This passage remarkably and quite literally sums up the plot of the film. For one thing, the heroine continually attempts to take the place of Rebecca in the specular image. From the film’s outset, as the camera dissolves from a tracking movement to the right through the ruined Manderley estate of the heroine’s dream to a leftward pan over the waves crashing ashore at Monte Carlo and tilts up to an extreme long shot of Maxim staring out at a sea that is metonymically and metaphorically associated with Rebecca and her death. The first incident occurs when she answers the telephone and says, “I’m sorry, Mrs. de Winter has been dead now for over a year.” In not recognizing herself as the one addressed, in announcing the mother’s death, the heroine simultaneously declares her own nothingness. The second episode occurs when she almost commits suicide after dressing up like Rebecca. Fortunately, Rebecca’s body is discovered at this moment,
and the discovery paves the way for an open discussion between the heroine and Maxim, in which her difference finally seems assured.

But what does this “difference” amount to? We are made to believe that the heroine is superior to the “mother” precisely because she has no self, no distinguishing characteristics. In contrast to Rebecca, we are told, she lacks “breeding, beauty, and brains.” This is a reflection of the classic psychological dilemma for women, who allegedly remain forever outside the Symbolic: whereas the boy’s entry into the Symbolic is effected by his perception of his (anatomical) “superiority” to the mother, the girl, with every attempt she makes to despise and hence distance herself from the mother, implicates herself in the devaluation of her sex. Thus the heroine, actively desiring the process by which all of Rebecca’s apparently positive attributes are proved to be worthless, can offer the male nothing more than a vacuous self. In the film’s fantasy, a woman’s fantasy par excellence, the hero highly prizes the woman’s insignificance.

In contrast to what Raymond Bellour claims is the classic scenario of American cinema, in which the hero must come to “accept the symbolization of the death of the father, the displacement from the attachment to the mother to the attachment to another woman,” Rebecca shows the heroine’s attempt to detach herself from the mother in order to attach herself to a man. In order to do so, it is true, she must try to make her desire mirror the man’s desire, and in this respect the ideological task of the film is similar to that which Bellour sees at work in other Hitchcock films (most notably in Marnie). Yet the film makes us experience the difficulties involved for the woman in this enterprise. In order for her to mold her image according to the man’s desire, she must first ascertain what that desire is. And given the complex and contradictory nature of male desire, it is no wonder that women become baffled, confused. Feminist critics have noted, for example, the conflicting attitude towards the female expressed in film noir: on the one hand, the domestic woman is sexually nonthreatening, but she is boring; on the other hand, the femme fatale is exciting, but dangerous. From the woman’s point of view, then, man becomes an enigma, his desire difficult to know. Although women have not had the chance to articulate the problem as directly as men have, they could easily ask Freud’s question of the opposite sex: what is it men want?

In Rebecca, the question is posed at the very first view of Maxim de Winter, staring out at the ocean but clearly “seeing” something that we don’t see. Interestingly the system of suture is here reversed. This system typically works by presenting the woman as the object of the look of an inferred spectator—the “absent one” who is made present in the reverse shot, and thus shown to be the possessor of the former image. However, in this scene from Rebecca, the woman (Rebecca), the inferred object of

the look, is the “absent one.” The effect is unsettling and stimulates our desire to see the heroine become a suitable object of the male gaze. And this, as I have said, is exactly what the heroine attempts throughout the film—to remodel her image according to the (incorrect) solution to the enigma: Maxim “sees,” is desiring, a beautiful, sensual, worldly woman. The rivalry which is thus set up between “mother” and daughter can only lead to one paradoxical result: all women become one woman, the girl becomes the mother. This paradoxical situation is reflected everywhere in our culture: in dividing women against themselves, in stimulating competition among women, the culture forces them to shape themselves according to a single standard (the fashion model, for example, whose “look”—in the dual sense of the term—determines the feminine image).

But there is something more at stake here, something potentially more subversive, though it is treated by the film, as it is treated by psychoanalysis, as a “problem”: that is, the desire of women for other women. Freud himself was forced to reject the notion of an Electra Complex, according to which the young girl experiences her mother primarily as an object of rivalry, and to admit the importance of the young girl’s early desire for her mother. Moreover, he recognized how frequently this desire persists throughout the woman’s life, influencing her heterosexual relationships, as well as her relationships with other women. In Rebecca the heroine continually strives not only to please Maxim, but to win the affections of Mrs. Danvers, who seems herself to be possessed, haunted, by Rebecca and to have a sexual attachment to the dead woman. Finally, it becomes obvious that the two desires cannot coexist: the desire for the mother impedes the progress of the heterosexual union. Ultimately, then, the heroine disavows her desire for the mother, affirming her primary attachment to the male. When the heroine stands up to Mrs. Danvers, who has been incessantly reminding her of the rule of the former Mrs. de Winter and forcefully announces, “I am Mrs. de Winter now,” the spectator experiences a sense of relief. Significantly, however, it is after this declaration that she follows Mrs. Danvers’s advice about what to wear for the costume ball. Significantly, too, she has made a great point to Maxim about choosing a costume all by herself, a costume which she thinks will surprise and delight him. Thus just when she believes she has succeeded in pleasing the man, in making her desire the mirror of his, it is revealed that she has not succeeded at all, but is still attached to the “mother,” still acting out the desire for the mother’s approbation. As she preens herself before the mirror on the night of the costume ball, the heroine is blithely unaware of how thoroughly she is conforming to the mother’s image—very much as women can be said to “dress for other women” though they may be consciously motivated solely by the wish for masculine approval.

Finally, there is nothing left for the heroine but to desire to kill the...
mother off, a desire which, as we have seen, entails killing part of herself, for she cannot, like the male, project the woman as "other," as difference, thereby seeming to establish a secure sense of her own identity.

Of course, psychoanalysis tells us that a secure sense of identity is also illusory on the part of the male and that it is woman who poses the threat to masculine identity. Employing a strict psychoanalytic model, Laura Mulvey has analyzed how woman functions in narrative cinema as bearer of the lack, the sight of her serving to provoke castration anxiety in the male, anxiety that he (too) might lack unity and integrity. While in the previous chapter it was suggested that the notion of the castrated woman was a male projection, this projection nevertheless comes back to "haunt" the male subject. Hence, the "castrated woman" serves as a perpetual reminder to him of an undesirable situation he had hoped to ward off by imputing it to the woman in the first place.

As is well known by now, Mulvey considers two options open to the male for warding off castration anxiety: in the course of the film the man gains control over the woman both by subjecting her to the power of the look and by investigating and demystifying her in the narrative. In Rebecca, however, the sexual woman is never seen, although her presence is strongly evoked throughout the film, and so it is impossible for any man to gain control over her in the usual classical narrative fashion. I have discussed how in the first shot of Maxim, the system of suture is reversed. This is of utmost importance. In her discussion of the system, Kaja Silverman notes, "Classic cinema abounds in shot/reverse shot formations in which men look at women." Typically, a shot of a woman is followed by a shot of a man—a surrogate for the male spectator—looking at her. This editing alleviates castration anxiety in two ways: first, the threat posed by the woman is allayed because the man seems to possess her; secondly, the "gaze within the fiction" conceals "the controlling gaze outside the fiction"—that of the castrating Other who lurks beyond the field of vision. But in Rebecca, the beautiful, desirable woman is not only never sutured in as object of the look, not only never made a part of the film's field of vision, she is actually positioned within the diegesis as all-seeing—as for example when Mrs. Danvers asks the terrified heroine if she thinks Maxim was hit when she told him that she was pregnant. Here, not only is Rebecca's absence stressed, but we are made to experience it as an active force. For those under the sway of Mulvey's analysis of narrative cinema, Rebecca may be seen as a spoof of the system, an elaborate sort of castration joke, with its flaunting of absence and lack.

It is true, however, that in the film's narrative, Rebecca is subjected to a brutal devaluation and punishment. Whereas the heroine, throughout most of the film, believes Rebecca to have been loved and admired by everyone, especially by Maxim, she ultimately learns that Maxim hated his first wife. "She was," he says, "incapable of love or tenderness or decency." Moreover, the film punishes her for her sexuality by substituting a cancer for the baby she thought she was expecting, cancer being that peculiar disease which, according to popular myth, preys on spinster and nymphomaniac alike. In addition, Mrs. Danvers receives the usual punishment inflicted on the bad mother/witch: she is burned alive when she sets fire to the Manderley mansion.

The latter part of Rebecca, concerned with the investigation, can be seen as yet another version of the myth of the overthrow of matriarchy by a patriarchal order. After all, Rebecca's great crime, we learn, was her challenge to patriarchal laws of succession. The night of her death she gouged Maxim into hitting her when she told him that she was carrying a child which was not his but which would one day inherit his possessions.
Even more importantly, after Rebecca's death her "spirit" presides and its power passes chiefly down the female line (through Mrs. Danvers). Rebecca's name itself (as well as that of the house associated with her) overshadows not only the name of the "second Mrs. de Winter" but even the formidable one of the patriarch: George Fortescue Maximilian de Winter.

Ultimately the male authorities must step in and lay the ghost of Rebecca to rest once and for all (and true to Hollywood form, the point of view is eventually given over to Maxim while the heroine is mostly out of the picture altogether). Nevertheless, despite this apparent closure, the film has managed in the course of its unfolding to hint at what feminine desire might be like were it allowed greater scope. First, it points to women's playfulness, granting them the power and threat of laughter. Over and over Rebecca's refusal to take men seriously is stressed, as when Mrs. Danvers tells Maxim, Jack Favell, and Frank Crawley (another victim of Rebecca's seductive arts) that "she used to sit on her bed and rock with laughter at the lot of you." Even after the investigation, Maxim becomes upset all over again at the memory of Rebecca on the night of her death as she "stood there laughing," taunting him with the details of her infidelity.

Moreover, Rebecca takes malicious pleasure in her own plurality. Luce Irigaray remarks, "the force and continuity of [woman's] desire are capable of nurturing all the 'feminine' masquerades for a long time." And further, "a woman's (re)discovery of herself can only signify the possibility of not sacrificing any of her pleasures to another, of not identifying with any one in particular, of never being simply one." Rebecca is an intolerable figure precisely because she revels in her own multiplicity—her remarkable capacity to play the model wife and mistress of Manderley while conducting various love affairs on the side. Even after Rebecca's death, the "force of her desire" makes itself felt, and, most appropriately, in light of Irigaray's comments, during a masquerade ball, in which the heroine dresses up like Rebecca, who had dressed up as Caroline de Winter, an ancestor whose portrait hangs on the wall. And all this occurs at the instigation of Mrs. Danvers, another character who is identified with Rebecca, but to whom Rebecca is not limited. The eponymous and invisible villainess, then, is far from being the typical femme fatale of Hollywood cinema brought at last into the possession of men in order to secure for them a strong sense of their identity. Occupant of patriarchy's "blind space," Rebecca is, rather, she who appears to subvert the very notion of identity—and of the visual economy which supports it.

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, can we be certain that death by fire has reduced it utterly to ashes?

Despite the fact that producers of "women's films" expected to attract a large female audience, it seems reasonable to suppose that these films were by no means attended exclusively by women. It is interesting to speculate on men's relation to the woman's film—something film theory has rarely considered, though it has exhaustively analyzed women's relations to "men's" films, like film noirs. For example, in scenes like the one at the costume ball in Rebecca, insofar as the film elicits identification on the part of all viewers, it is the male spectator who becomes the "transvestite," to recall Doane's term, a being not unlike Handel Fane or Norman Bates. In this way Rebecca constitutes a challenge to the male spectator's identity. No doubt, the fact of the viewer's unmediated experience of identification with a woman who herself has profound identity problems accounts for some of the masculine dislike of this film.

It seems fair to say, however, that despite this critical disdain, Hitchcock would develop from his work on Rebecca both a method—for drawing the audience into a close, even suffocating identification with his characters—and a subject: the perils and ambivalences involved in the very processes of identification. For while, as Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis note, "it is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified," there is a danger that the other with whom one identifies may usurp and annihilate the personality—a danger which is especially keen when the other is a woman and hence serves as a reminder of the original (m)other in whom the subject's identity was merged. That Rebecca was a milestone in Hitchcock's work was actually pointed out by Truffaut: "The experience [of making Rebecca], I think, had repercussions on the films that came later. Did it inspire you to enrich many of them with the psychological ingredients you initially discovered in the Daphne du Maurier novel?" Such are the paradoxes of auteurship: by being forced to maintain a close identification with du Maurier's "feminine" text to the point where he felt that the picture could not be considered his own ("it's not a Hitchcock picture"), Hitchcock found one of his "proper" subjects—the potential terror and loss of self involved in identification, especially identification with a woman. Rebecca thus provides one final ironic instance of the notion that the feminine is that which subverts identity—in this case, the identity of the auteur, the Master of the labyrinth himself.
Rebecca


5. Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940's* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976). For another discussion of this shot, see Mary Ann Doane, *Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as Absence,* *Encrit* 5-6, nos. 1-2 (Fall 1981-Spring 1983): 94. Not surprisingly, given the different emphases in our work which I discussed in the first chapter, our conclusions are very different. Doane is concerned to show "the impossibility of female spectatorship" (p. 89), whereas I want to suggest not only its possibility, but also the film's problematization of male spectatorship and of masculine identity in general.


8. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith uses the term "family romance" in connection with Hollywood melodrama. By this term he means the Freudian "imaginary scenario played out by children in relation to their paternity." He is taken to task by Griselda Pollock for his "dangerously misleading," improper use of the term, which has been used by Stephen Heath to describe "a filmic notion of narrativisation and memory which concerns process, rather than content or setting." See "Dossier on Melodrama," *Screen* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 105-19. Nowell-Smith's article is entitled "Minnell and Melodrama"; Pollock's is "Report on the Weekend School." I use the term here in its improper sense.


