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The world wars and the female gaze

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THE WORLD WARS AND THE FEMALE GAZE

by

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For Judith Gallagher, Lynn Montgomery, and David S. Birdsell

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Introduction

The World Wars and the Female Gaze

I have heard--
I myself have seen the floating ships
And nothing will ever be the same--
The shouts,
The harrowing voices in the house.
I stand apart with an army:
My mind is graven with ships.

--H.D., "Chorus of the Women of Chalkis," from Iphigeneia in Aulis

The problem of knowing who is the subject of the state and war will be exactly the same kind as the problem of knowing who is the subject of perception.

--Maurice Merleau-Ponty, cited in Virilio, War and Cinema

It is the constitution of vision as a process both within the . . . text (the representation of the woman seeing) and between text and spectator which most warrants attention.

--Mary Anne Doane, The Desire to Desire

To begin this study of gender, vision, and the world wars, two brief parables:

I. H.D.'s chorus translations from Euripides' Iphigeneia in Aulis, made just prior to and during the First World War, represent a crucial role assigned to women in writing about war in western culture. The women at the shoreline at Aulis sing what they see: the lines of ships, the Greek heroes, their glittering weapons. They are admiring spectators, protesting witnesses, awed or resigned seeing subjects of a belligerent empire. They constitute a singular and a collective

embodiment of the female observer of militarism in action. They are dazzled, puzzled, and wounded by the sight of the gathering Greek forces. Through their act of looking they bear the visible marks (graven or burnt) of massed military power:

> If a god should stand here
> He could not speak
> At the sight of ships
> Circled with ships.
> This beauty is too much
> For any woman.
> It is burnt across my eyes. (Collected Poems, 73-74)

Before her sacrificial death, Iphigeneia herself, in dialogue with the chorus, articulates still another connection between vision, gender, and war: "The contest of beautiful-face by beautiful-face / Has brought me this: / I am sent to death / To bring honour to the Greeks." Helen, the perfect image of female beauty, of course, is intimately connected to (and held responsible for) the lethal glamours of male warfare in western narrative; Iphigeneia's lament reminds us that this perfect image holds very real dangers for women as well.[1]

II. In a 1940 issue of Vogue magazine, a photograph by Lee Miller shows two women perched on the edge of a Hampstead bomb shelter, looking toward the photographer and viewer. Each is well-dressed, and each wears an elaborate mask or visor which the caption identifies as protective eyewear, suggested for use during air raids by incendiary bombs. Posed for female viewers' visual consumption and identification, these two female figures ask us to consider how women were looked at during the second world war and how they in turn looked through a set of technological contrivances, the literal and figurative, physical and rhetorical technologies of vision which constrained and constituted what and how they saw and were seen.

The fragments of chorus and the photograph represent women as seeing subjects and as visual objects in wartime. Each underlines the importance and the difficulty of a female gaze in a belligerent culture, and each addresses an audience through a conflicted or contradictory gaze. The women of Chalkis speak as witnesses ("I myself have seen"), but what they see is a potentially damaging excess of visual experience, "too much for any woman." Miller's models look directly toward the viewer, but that direct gaze is mediated, interrupted, or hidden by the masks. I read both this fragment of chorus and the photograph as figures for the construction of the American female artist, her characters, and her audience as conflicted subjects and objects of vision

in militaristic culture in the first half of this century. This construction is the subject of the study which follows.

* * *

The study of gender and war--how attention to gender makes us re-envision what we know about war, as well as how war illuminates and recasts the workings of gender--is a field recently come into view for feminist scholars in a number of disciplines. Historians, literary critics and theorists, political scientists, and sociologists are engaging in analyses which explore the mutual influence of the discourses of war and gender, reflecting Margaret Higonnet's claim that "war must be understood as a gendering activity, one that ritually marks the gender of all members of a society . . . . [I]t draws upon preexisting gender definitions at the same time that it restructures gender relations" (4).[2]

Much of this recent work on gender and war has made clear that the wartime experiences and texts of non-combatants constitute a crucial ground for examining war and for exploring the intersecting ideologies of war and gender. And it is vision which has traditionally marked the gendered division of war-experience: men "see battle"; women, as non-combatants par excellence, do not. However, even as women have often been identified as those who do not see during war, they have at the same time been construed as the primary spectators of war.[3] Susan Schweik underlines this central contradiction in cultural representations

of gender, war, and vision when she asserts that "in the tradition of modern war poetry, imagery of vision and blindness . . . tends only to exacerbate, rather than resolve, the tensions of sexual division" and that "the gendered scenarios of seeing in wartime" separate "the authoritative eyewitness from the passive spectator," associating "one kind of sight with masculinity and the other with femininity" (149-50). Schweik also observes that "Western war poetry . . . has enacted its arguments about the nature and meaning of war within scenes of female spectatorship" (90). Barbara Bowen points out that in many Western narratives, men are punished for inactive spectatorship of battle; she recounts a tale out of Herodotus in which a Thracian king blinds his sons for following their desire to "see the wars" without participating in them (9).[4] Vision has functioned, then, not only as a mark of and basis for authenticity and authority in war-texts, but has functioned centrally, though often contradictorily, in the development and gendering of cultural discourses about war.

Like the figure of "woman" in western culture, war has often been understood as that-which-is-to-be-seen. Bowen writes that

> Encoded in the idiom "theater of war" is a deep history . . . of imagining war above all as an event to be <u>seen</u> . . . . a spectacle in

the same way a play is a spectacle--in some essential sense, it must be viewed in order to take place. (8)

War can, then, be understood in part as a visual activity; vision engenders and genders cultural discourse about war. The question with which this study is most concerned is how that vision was constructed and gendered between 1915 and 1945, when so much of western culture's understanding what constituted "seeing war" itself changed so drastically due to trench warfare, massive civilian bombardment, and the Holocaust, and when so much of our culture's understanding of "seeing" itself was under interrogation within the discourses of Modernism.

The texts which are the focus of this study were produced during a period of intense intellectual ferment in Western culture's understanding of visual experience, of radical challenges to "the faith in the nobility of sight bequeathed to Western culture by the Greeks" (Jay, Downcast Eyes, 32--hereafter, cited as DE). Martin Jay has identified this cultural shift as "the denigration of vision" and the development of an "antiocularcentric discourse" (DE, i) in twentieth-century thought. Central to this cultural shift was the late nineteenth century's critique of what Jay calls "Cartesian perspectivalism," western culture's dominant "scopic regime" since the Renaissance, which posited a fixed, central, privileged, transcendental subject of vision and knowledge who "resides

at the still point of the turning world, master of its prospects, sovereign surveyor of the scene" (Bryson, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field," 88). Jay writes that

> Descartes assumed that the clear and distinct ideas available to anyone's mental gaze would be exactly the same because of the divinely insured congruence between such ideas and the world of extended matter. Individual perspectives did not therefore matter, as the . . . specificity of the subject could be bracketed out in any cognitive endeavor. The same assumption informed the Albertian concept of painterly perspective; all beholders would see the same grid of orthogonal lines converging on the same vanishing point . . . Perspective in this sense was atemporal, decorporealized, and transcendental. (DE, 189)

In the late 19th century, according to Jay,

> the widespread dissemination of new visual experience brought about by social as well as technological changes had introduced uncertainties about the truths and illusions conveyed by the eye. . . . The hegemony of . . . Cartesian perspectivalism was beginning to unravel, leading initially to explorations of alternative scopic

> regimes . . . and finally to a full-fledged critique of ocularcentrism in the 20th century. (DE, 146-47)

Technology and military strategy during the world wars contributed to this antiocularcentric tendency in the twentieth century. Historians and critics have observed a tension concerning the possibility of complete--or any--vision during the world wars, a tension first manifested in the perceptual conflict concerning the "theatricalization" of World War I. Bowen observes that

> [t]he suspicion that war is a performance had a particular resonance during the First World War, when the metaphor of the war as a theater seems to have been completely absorbed in popular discourse (4)

and reminds us that the early twentieth century's "photography and cinema" contributed to "the increasing specularization of war" during the first half of this century (10). I want to place next to Bowen's and Schweik's observations about the female spectators of the "theater of war" another set of observations by Paul Virilio, who suggests that the theatricalization of war actually reached its peak and began its decline very early in the First World War. With the development of trench

warfare, the visual accessibility of the war (both for military personnel and civilians near the front) began to change--to become less overtly "theatrical" or open to "direct" vision--just as the vocabulary of the "theater of war" was entering popular discourse. Eric Leed writes that for First World War combatants, "the invisibility of the enemy, and the retirement of troops underground, destroyed any notion that war was a spectacle of contending humanity" (19). A similar shift in perception occurred in civilian observers at the front as well: Virilio writes that

> Toward the end of the First World War, when [D.W.] Griffith arrived at the French front to make his propaganda film, the last romantic battle had long since taken place, in 1914 on the Marne. The war had become a static conflict. . . . To the naked eye, the vast new battlefield seems to be composed of nothing--no more trees or vegetation, no more water or even earth, no hand-to-hand encounters, no visible trace of the unity of homicide and suicide. . . . Griffith declared that he was "very disappointed with the reality of the battlefield." And everything indicates that modern warfare had become incompatible with the art of cinema as both he and his audiences still conceived it. (15)

The spectatorial experience lost and mourned by Griffith at the French front during the First World War was constructed not only by the proscenium arch, Napoleonic battle painting (see Chapter 2, below), and pre-World War I cinema like "Birth of A Nation," but by the Cartesian model of linear perspective which underlies these visual technologies. However, there is evidence for the claim that not only was the scopic regime of Cartesian perspectivalism undermined by the experience of soldiers at the front during the First World War, but that the reliability of all visual experience came under interrogation. Leed describes the "constriction" or "radical curtailment of vision" (124) and "the deterioration of the visual field experienced by many in trench warfare" (130). Jay notes that "when all the soldier could see was the sky above and the mud below, the traditional reliance on visual evidence could no longer be easily maintained" (212-13). The visual conditions of trench warfare helped not only to dismantle the hegemony of perspectivalism in art, philosophy, and literature but to question the primacy of sight itself. Jay writes that

> The interrogation of sight hesitantly emerging in certain prewar works of philosophy and art was given an intense, often violent inflection by the war, which also helped disseminate an appreciation of its implications. The ancien scopic regime, which

> we've called Cartesian perspectivalism, lost what was left of its hegemony, and the very premises of ocularcentrism themselves were soon being called into question in many different contexts. (211-212)

Taking the place of the battlefield-as-theater open to the view of spectators situated in classical perspective was the development, begun early in World War I and developed extensively in World War II, of what Virilio calls "eyeless vision" in weapons technology:

> Eyesight and direct vision have gradually given way to optical or opto-electronic processes, to the most sophisticated forms of "telescopic sight." The strategic importance of optics was already clear in World War I, one indication being the dramatic rise during the war in French production of optical glass (for rangefinders, periscopes and camera lenses; for telemetry and goniometry) . . . . (69)

This de-theatricalization of war--both for combatants and for those non-combatants who might claim "eyewitness" status--and the development of an immense visual-optic weapons technology during the world wars constructed both soldiers and civilians (with women as the

most civilian of civilians) not so much as spectators but as observers of war. I find particularly useful here Jonathan Crary's distinction between "spectator" and "observer." He notes the verb spectare's connotations of "passive onlook[ing] at a spectacle," while observare means "to conform one's action, to comply with, as in observing rules, codes, regulations and practices." Crary defines an observer as "one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded in a system of conventions and limitations" (5-6). Jay also takes into account this definition of the socially constructed "observer" when he writes that observation

> could be construed as a . . . complicated interaction of sensations and the shaping or judging capacity of the mind which provided the Gestalt-like structures that made observation more than a purely passive phenomenon. (DE, 30)

Another way to understand this distinction between observer and spectator is in terms of what Norman Bryson calls "visuality," which he defines as a "cultural construct" or "network of meanings" which make up "the socially agreed-upon description(s) of an intelligible world" and which he distinguishes from "vision," the "notion of unmediated visual experience" ("The Gaze," 92).

My project is to read texts produced in the first half of the twentieth century by American women who have made the processes and contradictions of seeing central to their representations of the intersecting discourses of war and gender in the Modernist period. I am concerned with how the American female observer of the world wars might be constructed, by what sets of possibilities, what "systems of conventions and limitations" within a belligerent culture--and how that observer resists such conventions and reconstructs herself and her audience in often quite conflicted critiques of both militarism and specular vision. As we will see, for these works militarism is understood through two of its crucial visual elements: its refusal to "hold steadily visible the centrality of injuring" in war (Scarry 336) and its need to create a unified and specularized seeing subject.[5] All of the texts I examine were produced by American women living in Europe during the world wars. All of the texts address, either explicitly or implicitly, an American audience (located in either a "neutral" or a belligerent United States) from a site or scene of overt military action or government-organized violence: the French front in 1915, Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938, the liberated Paris of 1944, the defeated Germany of 1945, and London under the Blitz. Each representation of the female observer also foregrounds the conflicts between models of

"spectator" and "observer," presenting problems of authority, passivity, and resistance in the realm of militaristic visuality.

The wartime texts at the center of my study are, like the twentieth-century French intellectuals whom Jay reads, "extraordinarily sensitive to the importance of the visual and no less suspicious of its implications" (588). However, I find that the suspicions of these texts are aimed not so much at the visual tout court but rather at one specific model of visuality: specularity. This model of visual experience was, as I hope to show, essential to World War I militarism and to fascist ideology before and during the Second World War, as well as to the wartime ideal of "direct" and "complete" vision, and to the modernist ideal of the unified subject.

Jay defines "speculation," which he associates with the Cartesian subject, as seeing with "the eye of the mind" or "bathing in the light of clear and distinct ideas mirrored in the mind's eye" (29). Speculation can be understood through its difference from what Jay calls "observation," which is associated with Enlightenment positivism, and which he defines, more broadly than Crary, as "trusting in the reflected light of objects apparent to the two physiological eyes" (236). According to Jay, oscillation between these two models or traditions of vision, along with a third, that of "revelatory illumination" ("the irrational and ecstatic dazzlement by the blinding light of God, the 'vision' of the seer" [29]),

has abetted "the tenacious hold of ocularcentrism over Western culture" (236). It is particularly the tradition of "speculation"--and its attendant notions of specularization and "specular sameness"--as both a mode of both vision and thought which the texts discussed in my study most pointedly interrogate, although, as we will see, the modes of "observation" and "revelation" also constitute part of the wartime female subject's conflicted relationship to the visual.

According to Jay, the notion of "specular sameness" is "an especially important strain in the tradition of speculation" (DE, 31). Jay writes that this tradition posits the ideal of "the pure knowledge of self-reflection, a mirror reflecting only itself with no remainder" (31-32) and that "[i]n specular thought, vision is understood not in terms of an eye seeing an object exterior to itself, but rather of the eye seeing itself in an infinite reflection" ("Scopic Regimes," 64). According to Rodolphe Gasche, specular reasoning and vision "deliberately pursue . . . a totalizing goal" (54):

> The mirroring that constitutes speculative thought articulates the diverse, and the contradictions that exist between its elements, in such a way as to exhibit the totality of which this diversity is a part. Speculation, then, is the movement that constitutes the most

> complete unity, the ultimate foundation of all possible diversity, opposition, and contradiction. (44)

Feminist theorists have argued that this visual and epistemological tradition of speculation is founded on sexual difference: women, or cultural constructions of women as "woman," have been the medium, the mirror, which reflects the male gaze seeking and seeing its own reflection. Luce Irigaray, in her highly influential theories of specularity and sexuality in Western philosophical discourse, writes that

> If the ego is to be valuable . . . some "mirror" is needed to reassure it and re-insure it of its value. Woman will be the foundation for this specular duplication, giving back man "his" image and repeating it as the "same." (54)

Toril Moi, reviewing Irigaray's theories, writes that "the feminine" (in psychoanalytic terms characterized by its visible genital "lack") is

> the negative required by the male subject's "specularization." Specularity . . . hints at a basic assumption underlying all Western philosophical discourse: the necessity of postulating a subject that is capable of <u>reflecting</u> on its own being . . . . the philosopher's

> thinking depends for its effect on its specularity (its self-reflexivity); that which exceeds this reflective circularity is that which is unthinkable. It is this kind of specul(ariz)ation Irigaray has in mind when she argues that Western philosophical discourse is incapable of representing femininity/woman other than as the negative of its own reflection. (132)

Jay writes that in Irigaray's work,

> To the extent that women identify with the narcissistic subject created by . . . mirrors, they are imprisoned in a male specular economy in which they are always devalued as inferior versions of the male subject, as mere objects of exchange, dead commodities, in a "hom(m)osexual" circuit of sameness (in which the homme is the only standard of value). (DE, 532-33)

The texts discussed in my study associate specular totality--which identifies "the feminine" as a reflective surface or as that which exceeds thought--with the workings of militarism (and its extreme extension in fascism) and its attempts to create unified, militarized subjectivity. These texts implicitly or explicitly hold forth and interrogate the promise of complete or totalized visual apprehension of war, and, by association,

the unified seeing subject. They offer as well an emerging alternative model of fragmented or indirect visual apprehension, constructing their wartime female observers as much through visual concealment as through visual revelation.

These contrasting models of vision produce in turn different models for the female (seeing) subject in a belligerent culture--a problem related to our understanding of "modernism" and the modernist subject. As with the work of so many women writing during what is loosely construed as the Modernist period, the works I discuss below tend to question the distinction between unified, universal "modernist" and fragmented, decentered, culturally constructed "postmodernist" subjectivity.[6] As we will see, central to the modernist project of these works is an inscription of embodied, gendered vision which both reflects and diverges from the model of "modernism" emerging in recent art and visual theory. Jay writes that while

> Modernist aesthetics . . . has traditionally been construed as the triumph of a pure visuality, concerned solely with formal optical questions, . . . recent critics . . . have reopened the question of the purity of the visual in modernism. By stressing the importance of a hitherto undervalued countertendency, they have revealed the origins within the modernist project of an explicitly antivisual

> impulse that ultimately prepared the way for what has become known as postmodernism. . . . they have explicitly questioned what [Rosalind] Krauss calls "the modernist fetishization of sight." Instead, they emphasize that impulse to reinstate the living body. (DE, 160)

Jay claims that "[a]t its most extreme, this revisionist art historiography . . . has sought to pit the body against the eye, producing a paradoxical project for painting, to say the least" (DE, 161) and that for revisionist historians of modernism such as Krauss,

> The living body is understood . . . not as the subject of the work, but as an aspect of the creation/reception process. The nonfigural, antimimetic impulse of modernism at its most abstract generally meant the denial of the human figure as a worthy subject. (DE, 161, n.36)

As I hope to show, what emerges in the wartime writing and photography examined in my study is neither a modernism that emphasizes the pure opticality of visual experience nor which "pit[s] the body against the eye," but which rather (re-)embodies vision in the specifically historicized and gendered body of the female observer of the

world wars. As we will see, the texts discussed below all offer possibilities not only for understanding the female body "as an aspect of the creation/reception process" but also for representing the female body on the field of wartime vision. Teresa DeLauretis writes that "the construction of gender is the process and product of both representation and self-representation" (Technologies of Gender, 9). The texts in my study exemplify and somewhat complicate this idea in the realm of visual subjectivity: the female observer of the world wars as constructed in these works is the subject and object of vision in both representation and self-representation. As we will see, one way these texts accomplish this representation is by relying quite consistently on a particular kind of sign, the index, to emphasize the importance of (and the conflicts surrounding) the gendered bodies of the artist, her represented subjects or personae, and her audience. It is this (self-)representation of gendered, embodied seeing which makes possible these works' critique of militarized specularity. I want to emphasize here that while I find Irigaray's formulation and critique of specularity most useful, I do not subscribe completely to her claim that "any theory of the 'subject' has always been appropriated by the 'masculine'" (133). The works examined in my study, produced under and representing enormous historical pressures and physical dangers, suggest multiple possibilities for the gendered subject of language and vision and resist most strenuously any

totalizing theory--be it the specularity which Irigaray exposes or Irigaray's own theory of "the feminine's" exclusion from discourse.

The female observers of my study worked and wrote both within and against the conventions and restraints of wartime visuality and attempted to construct possible alternative visualities for the gendered wartime subject. Concerning the "eyeless vision" which is part of the world wars' construction of the civilian and military observer, Virilio writes,

> the innovation of eyeless vision is directly descended from the history of the line of aim. The act of taking aim is a geometrification of looking, a way of technically aligning ocular perception along an imaginary axis that used to be known in French as the 'faith line' (ligne de foi). . . . [T]he word 'faith' is no longer used in this context in contemporary French; the ideal lines appears thoroughly objective, and the semantic loss involves a new obliviousness to the element of interpretative subjectivity that is always in play in the act of looking. (2-3)

What I find in the work of the women artists discussed below is a reinscription of "the element of interpretive subjectivity that is always in

play in the act of looking." In doing so, these texts show how gender is central to that subjectivity and to that act of looking at and during war.

My study does not claim to be an exhaustive survey; I seek, rather, to read exemplary texts by five American women artists who represent different aspects of the female gaze and who address their American audiences from different physical, historical, political, and aesthetic locations during the First and Second world wars. Part One, "The Great War and the Female Observer," examines two instances of Great War propaganda, both written by American women from France in 1915, both dedicated to encouraging monetary and military support for the Allied cause against Germany, and both invested in inscribing the female gaze as the basis for writerly authority in an "eyewitness" narrative. Both Edith Wharton's Fighting France and Mildred Aldrich's A Hilltop on the Marne offer a complex and often contradictory sense of a woman writer's struggles with authority, resistance, the specular, and the promises and impossibilities of "direct" vision of war. These chapters consider the construction of both author and readers as subjects of propaganda and examine how the texts construct potential escapes from or alternatives to the sort of militarized subject they attempt to create. Chapter 1, concerned with Wharton's work, shows how the enlistment of the female gaze--both the gaze of the female characters within the texts and the female readers of the texts--involves women within a wartime

specular economy which tightly regulates their positions as subjects and objects of militaristic sight and at the same time allows for a potential disruption of that economy. Chapter 2 is concerned with how the female civilian "eyewitness" narrator of this text is transformed into a militarized observer on the field of vision during the Great War and with how the gaze and body of the female observer are crucial sites both for participation in and resistance to the militaristic discourses of the Great War period.

Part Two, "Regarding Fascism," turns to texts produced just before or during the Second World War. I am interested in examining how these texts work as an antifascist documents, not only in their content or "subject matter" (the destruction wrought on bodies, cultural artifacts, and subjectivity by Nazism) but also in the texts' very construction of vision, in their inscriptions of what is and is not visible. I am also concerned with how these later works associate fascism with the larger structures of militarism and patriarchy. Chapter 3 looks at how Martha Gellhorn's 1940 novel A Stricken Field provides a range of gendered seeing positions within, and in opposition to, the visual ideologies of fascism. Chapter 4 reads Lee Miller's war correspondence and photography for Vogue magazine in order to explore how she constructed herself and her predominantly female American audience as antifascist observers of war through working both with and against some

of the conventions of surrealist and fashion photography. Chapter 5 examines H.D.'s textual exploration of how being a female civilian under the Blitz (which she often construes as being under the gaze of military violence itself) invokes a kind of vision quite different from what is normally construed as seeing in the other texts I have been examining: hallucination, mystic or "visionary" experience, or "visual disturbance." These visual disturbances provide a link in H.D.'s wartime writing between the Nazi bombardment of London, militarism, and the specularizing violence (visual and otherwise) which she finds in the patriarchal family.

* * *

This theoretical ground from which I launch this project is crossed by recent criticism and theory in both literature and art history which have renewed the extremely well-aged argument concerning the intersection of word and image, a controversy that goes back at least as far as the ut pictura poesis ("as is painting so is poetry") theories of Classical Rome (Jay, DE, 171). W.J.T. Mitchell asserts that

> [t]he history of culture is in part the story of a protracted struggle for dominance between pictorial and linguistic signs, each claiming for itself certain proprietary rights on a "nature" to which only it has access. (43)

The ground where image and word intersect and tend to conflict is itself marked by gender: Mieke Bal and Mitchell point out that the "ideological separation of the two semiotic systems . . . never goes without dichotomies such as time/space, mind/body, man/woman" (Bal, "Visual Poetics," 136). My own concerns might be best described by an attention to what Nancy K. Miller calls "the gaze in representation" and "a metaphorics of seeing in literature" (165), although as the presence of a chapter on Lee Miller's photographs and my examination of war posters, maps, and other photographs indicate, I am concerned with the gaze represented and elicited by visual texts as well. I find helpful here Bal's notion of a "visual poetics":

> Acknowledging the visual input in cognition as well as the pervasive presence of language and the subsequent impossibility to sever the visual domain from the verbal, a visual poetics tries to overcome the word-image opposition implanted in our culture. ("Visual Poetics," 136)

My project is to mark out one portion of a historicized, gendered territory of "the gaze in representation" through attention to both visually and textually represented acts of vision during the world wars in order to discover their bearing on the female seeing subject. H.D.'s

women of Chalkis, figuring the limits of and effects on the female gaze at the beginning of western narrative's "originary war" (which Bowen calls "the supreme example of a war produced for its audience" [6-7]), claim that "nothing will ever be the same." What I hope to show in this study is the difference five women artists might make to our understanding of the intersections of gender, vision, language, and organized violence during the world wars and our understanding of the female subject in the modernist period of a militaristic culture.

Notes

1. Mihoko Suzuki reads Helen and Iphigeneia as two elements in a longer chain of female scapegoats represented in the Western epic tradition:

> woman as Other is consistently assigned the role of sacrificial victim so that epic community among men can be maintained and affirmed. Beginning with Iphigeneia, who was cast in the role of a sacrificial substitute for Helen. . . the sacrifice or scapegoating of female characters recurs consistently. (6)

Examining both the tradition of scapegoating Helen and the "alternative tradition that tells she never went to Troy" (13), Suzuki claims that as early as the Iliad, Helen existed in the epic tradition primarily as a visual/visionary phenomenon or an "emblem" for the Greek warriors (16).

2. Some multidisciplinary collections which suggest the range of recent scholarship on gender and war are those edited by Cooke and Woollacott, Higonnet et. al., and Elshtain and Tobias.

3. Mary Anne Doane outlines a similar contradiction in feminist theorizing about spectatorship in general, especially in film studies:

> although spectatorship is . . . conceptualized in terms which appear to preeminently feminize it, feminist film criticism has consistently demonstrated that, in the classical Hollywood cinema, the woman is deprived of a gaze, deprived of subjectivity and repeatedly transformed into the object of a masculine scopophiliac desire. Yet, women would seem to be perfect spectators, culturally positioned as they are outside the arena of history, politics, production--"looking on." (2)

4. I am primarily concerned with the construction of the female civilian observer, although it is important to note that in military theory, an army is often considered the audience or spectator of its opponent's visible military performance. Virilio writes that

> War can never break free from the magical spectacle because its very purpose is to produce that spectacle: to fell the enemy is not so much to capture as to "captivate" him, to instil the fear of death before he actually dies. . . . There is no war, then, without representation. (5-6)

5. Sara Ruddick, following Scarry, writes that "militarist theories" tend to "divert attention away from what actually happens to real bodies and toward the causes and strategies that justify their abuse" (198) even as "the business of war is a trafficking in bodies" in that "the salient feature of war's body is its susceptibilty to pain and damage that lead to surrender" (199-200).

6. The issue of "modernist" and "postmodernist" subjectivity--or, the issue of "essential identities" vs. a "universal abandon" of such identities --has been central to much of recent feminist theorizing and the subject of lively discussion and disagreement. A brief example of the controversy surrounding these terms is in two sentences which appear in a recent volume of feminist theoretical essays: Rey Chow claims that "feminism's rootedness in overt political struggles against the subordination of women make it very difficult to accept . . . postmodern 'universal abandon'" (103). Chantal Mouffe maintains that

> the deconstruction of essential identities should be seen as the necessary condition for an adequate understanding of the variety of social relations where the principles of liberty and equality should apply. (371)

See also, for example, Patricia Waugh's discussion of the postmodern and modernist subject in the first chapter of her Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern; Judith Butler's Gender Trouble; and Barbara Bowen (22).

PART ONE: THE GREAT WAR AND THE FEMALE OBSERVER

Chapter 1

Edith Wharton and the Iconography of War Propaganda

The governing principle of the "war narrative" genre is implicit in Hector's admonition to Andromache--"the men must see to the fighting"--namely that women must not see to the fighting.
--Nancy Huston, "Tales of War and Tears of Women"

It is one of the most detestable things about war that everything connected with it, except the death and ruin that result, is . . . so visually stimulating and absorbing.
--Edith Wharton, Fighting France

In this chapter, I will be looking at two texts by Edith Wharton--a 1919 short story called "Writing a War Story" and a 1915 collection of essays, Fighting France--in order to explore their inscriptions of vision, gender, and militarism. I am particularly interested in how the acts of seeing represented in and invited by these two texts might have worked to construct wartime female subjectivity. While popular discourse during the world wars, such as recruiting posters, have often tended to reinforce women's position as objects of a male gaze,[1] a culture at war also requires that women be inscribed as seeing-subjects in order to enlist their support for military action. My suggestion is that Wharton's work shows how the enlistment of the female gaze--both the gaze of the female characters within the texts and the female readers of the texts--accomplishes several conflicting things, particularly in relation to the workings of specularity in war. On the one hand, the enlistment of

women's vision through writing and reading about war involves them within a wartime specular economy which tightly regulates their positions as subjects and objects of militaristic sight. On the other hand, such an enlistment allows for a potential disruption of that economy, not only allowing for the possibility of a woman's escape from specular military visuality but recasting that visuality as something which traps or restrains male soldiers. Examining patterns of specularity and of the regulation of wartime vision in Wharton's works will allow a close look at this process and its deconstruction in a specific historical moment.

Very much at issue in reading these texts is the relation between propaganda and female writerly authority. The Scribner's articles collected in Fighting France were written in order to raise money in the United States for the work of the Red Cross in France (Buitenhuis 62) and to raise American awareness of and support for the European Allies. One of the aims of war propaganda is to construct a unified, collective reading-subject who will then actively support a nation's war-effort. How then can Wharton, as a woman writer of propaganda, construct such a subject if, as Nancy Huston has observed, women have traditionally been the "captive audience" (274) rather than the inventors, of war narrative? While women are most often construed by critics and historians as consumers and icons of World-War propaganda,[2] Wharton and many of

her female contemporaries during the First World War wrote propaganda texts which announced (and often problematized) their own status as "eyewitness narratives."[3] The privileged position of "witness" near or on the sites of battle allowed these women to negotiate the discursive and physical space between audience and combatant. In doing so, these writers attempted to establish the often troubled legitimacy of their texts and to address and construct their readers through an appeal to the authority of vision.

Reading "Writing a War Story" alongside of Fighting France suggests that the inscription of the female gaze and the questions of authority which that inscription raises during the war can both exemplify and undermine the workings of specular thought. "Writing a War Story" demonstrates how a woman writer who cannot claim the authority of having "seen" the front is trapped within the extremely narrow confines of wartime specularity. In Fighting France, Wharton relies on her position as eyewitness and on a complex and often vexed series of visual strategies to escape and/or reconfigure such confines, to confer authority on her "eyewitness" text, and to mobilize both the female writing and reading subject through sight--a mobilization that has some disrupting effects on the work of propaganda.

"Writing a War Story", written a year after the end of the First World War, is a compact and satirical cautionary tale of the discursive

constraints placed on women writers during war-time. While it is ostensibly the women writers themselves who are the targets of Wharton's satire, I also want to suggest that it is the specularizing tradition of wartime narrative which also comes up for critique in this story. Through its two models of women writers, this story suggests that when they participate in the discourses of war, women must always be either the mimics of a soldier's voice or pure Image, the silent objects of a soldier's desiring gaze. As I hope to show, the pattern of specularity evident in this story reflects how, in Irigarayan terms,

> [c]aught in the specular logic of patriarchy, woman can choose either to remain silent, producing incomprehensible babble (any utterance that falls outside the logic of the same will by definition be incomprehensible to the male master discourse), or to enact the specular representation of herself as a lesser male. (Moi 135)

In this story, a small-time American poet named Ivy Spang who has volunteered to pour tea in "a big Anglo-American hospital in Paris" (359), is asked by an editor to write "a good stirring trench story" (360) for The Man-at-Arms, a magazine for wounded British soldiers. The editor himself professes a shaky commitment to the principle that the

contributors to the issue be authorized eyewitnesses, establishing Ivy as a kind of bad copy, an inferior version of a war eyewitness:

> "We want the first number to be an 'actuality,' as the French say; all the articles written by people who've done the thing themselves, or seen it done. You've been at the front, I suppose? As far as Rheims, once? That's capital!" (360)

Among the other things that Ivy has never done nor seen done is the writing of fiction; she turns for help to her old French governess, identified only as "Mademoiselle." Mademoiselle is also working in a hospital and tells Ivy that she has transcribed the personal narratives of several wounded French soldiers: "'just as the soldiers told them to me,'" she claims, "'--oh, without any art at all...simply for myself, you understand....'" (363; ellipses are Wharton's). The governess's "artless" transcriptions of these stories are recorded in the same notebook as are Mademoiselle's "lecture notes on Mr. Bergson's course at the Sorbonne in 1913" (364). Before appropriating and revising one of these narratives, Ivy notices that it "poured on and on without a paragraph--a good deal like life itself"--and a good deal like Henri Bergson's ideas about what modernist art might accomplish. Bergson theorized of a stream-of-consciousness prose which would restore to readers an awareness of the

continuous flux of "direct experience" or "real duration"[4] which, as we will see, is an ideal which this story both offers and dismantles.

However, there is another element of Bergson's philosophy which has a bearing on Wharton's representations of gendered wartime visuality. According to Jay, Bergson's work provided "the initial frontal attack on ocularcentrism in modern French philosophy. In fact, if Hannah Arendt is correct, Bergson was the first modern philosopher anywhere to dispute the nobility of sight" (DE, 186). For Jay, Bergson's critique of the centrality of sight (especially of the visual and epistemological model posited by Cartesian perspectivalism) was grounded on three premises: "the detranscendentalization of perspective," "the recorporealization of the cognitive subject," and the "revalorization of time over space" (187). The first and second of these premises in particular concern my reading of Wharton's representation of the female subject and object of vision during the First World War. Jay writes that

> It was not . . . until Bergson that the rights of the body were explicitly set against the tyranny of the eye. Going beyond the residually visual implications of perspectivism, he developed a fundamental critique of ocularcentrism. . . . Bergson helped redirect philosophical inquiry back toward the body as intertwined

> with consciousness before the separation of mind from matter. . . . He challenged the positivist image of the body as an object to be analyzed from the outside, as merely one of innumerable "things" in the material world. Instead, he claimed that it was the ground of all of our perceptions . . . . Rather than construing the body as an object of contemplation, Bergson claimed, we should understand it instead as the ground of our acting in the world. (192-93)

As we will see, the specifically female body as an object of soldierly and self-contemplation in "Writing a War Story" both contrasts with and complements Wharton's own self-representation as an eyewitness in Fighting France. The complex positioning of the female body (as the ground of action and as the subject and object of contemplation) in these two texts demonstrate how Wharton, like Bergson, "despite . . . hostility to ocularcentrism . . . appear[ed] to rely on it implicitly" (Jay 203).

One effect of the traces of the Bergson lecture in "Writing a War Story" is to hold out the possibility of a "natural," transparent war-writing which would accomplish the modernist ideal of articulating immediate experience. The soldier's story is posited as free from narrative conventions, making male military experience the source of

immediate, "real" narratives which women may only mimic. However, neither this "artless" (364) direct transcription nor any part of the Bergson lectures are directly quoted in the story. The absence of the "real story," the unfulfilled promise of a narrative that will deliver directly the soldier's experience of war, reflects a problem recognized by many writers during and since the First World War period: the difficulties or impossibilities of "realistic" mimetic language. This problem is expressed in a particularly troubled and troubling way by Henry James, who said in a 1915 interview, "The war has used up words . . . . they have . . . been more overstrained and knocked about and voided of the happy semblance during the last six months than in all the long ages before" (cited in Buitenhuis, 59). The phrase "voided of the happy semblance" and the absence of any indirect object or term of comparison following it (semblance of what?) underlines and enacts in language the gap in mimesis which so much concerned James, Wharton, and their contemporaries during and after the war.

However, in "Writing a War Story," it would appear that miming male voices is the only possible choice for Ivy and Mademoiselle, even as they seek to avoid such a direct miming. In rewriting the soldier's narrative in order to avoid "artless" transcription, Ivy and her co-author end up imitating older literary conventions and styles. The final product of this collaboration, according to the narrator, reflects outdated models

of how women have conventionally spoken about war: "it finally issued forth in the language that a young lady writing a composition of the battle of Hastings would have used in Mademoiselle's school days" (364). The women writing a war story are placed between two possible poles of mimesis: the soldier's transcribed voice and nineteenth-century rhetorical traditions of representing war. The restraints on Ivy's and Mademoiselle's narrative and the textual repression of any "genuine" or "natural" or "direct" representation of war suggests that mimicry constitutes the only writerly ground for these women writing about the war. While Nancy Huston claims that "war imitates war narrative imitating war" (273), it would appear that for the women writers in Wharton's story, war narrative imitates war narrative imitating war narrative.

When Ivy's story is published and distributed to wounded soldiers in her hospital, her concern is that it resemble a soldier's experience as closely as possible. She asks a group of soldiers she finds reading The Man-at-Arms, "open at the first page of her story," "'You think it's really like, do you?'" (367). Like Henry James' phrase "happy semblance," the phrase "really like," missing the second term of the comparison, both emphasizes and undermines war time language's mimetic possibilities.

The soldiers' answer to Ivy's question, however, shifts the terms of mimesis from verbal to visual and from the woman as a writing subject

(or a mimicked version of a writing subject) to the woman's reproduced image as the object of the male desiring gaze. The soldiers answer, "Really like? Rather!" (367), but they are not reading Ivy's story. They are instead looking at the photograph of her in nurse's uniform which accompanies her text. The proofs of this photo arriving in the mail had, several pages earlier in the story, convinced the beleaguered Ivy to continue her "battle with the art of fiction":

> she saw herself, exceedingly long, narrow and sinuous, robed in white and monastically veiled, holding out a refreshing beverage to an invisible sufferer. . . . The photograph was really too charming to be wasted. (364)

The image of Ivy described here is similar to many found in the iconography of Great War posters and combines the elements of two well-known American posters. The first is a 1918 Y.M.C.A. War Work Campaign poster which features a woman in dark clothes, apparently a uniform which includes a sober hat and tie. She is holding out a steaming cup in one hand and holding two books in the other. The second poster, designed for an organization called the Stage Women's War Relief, represents the kind of long, narrow, sinuous, white-robed and -veiled image that Ivy sees in her photograph. The figure in this second

poster, however, holding out an empty hand, is in the act of doffing a voluminous fur-trimmed coat, and the frame around the figure roughly represents a proscenium arch and footlights. The framing of this figure of the nurse (first by the stage apparatus and then by the fur coat) suggests several concentric circles of mimesis: the drawing of a female figure representing an actress representing a socialite who is dressed as a nurse.

Reading these two posters side by side enables a viewer to rough out a part of the figural map of women caregivers in First World War iconography, an iconography which Wharton's story reproduces and parodies. Within the logic of "Writing a War Story," the woman writer who has no access to the visual authority of having seen a war zone (not to mention access to writerly talent) is bound to occupy a different position on the spectrum of wartime visuality: as the object, rather than the subject, of sight, and as a part of wartime iconography of the female body. Ivy's image becomes the pictorial commodity which the soldiers would like to carry away as part of a war souvenir: they ask her "'to give one to each of us . . . . to frame and take away with us. . . . There's a chap here who makes rather jolly frames out of Vichy corks'" (367).

The "framing" of Ivy's photograph as part of the popular iconography of nurses during the Great War is continued and intensified by the wounded male novelist in the ward who, unlike the other soldiers,

does read (and then laughs at) Ivy's story. Then, like the soldiers, he asks for a copy of the photograph. The novelist suggests that if women are to participate at all in writing about war, they must limit themselves to a stricter miming of male narrative. He tells Ivy, "you've got hold of an awfully good subject, . . . but you've rather mauled it, haven't you?" (369). The novelist's critique of Ivy's story quickly shifts to a critique of Ivy herself, positioning her as an object of a male gaze and thereby as an object of male narrative:

> "You were angry just now because I didn't admire your story; and now you're angrier still because I do admire your photograph. Do you wonder that we novelists find such an inexhaustible field in Woman?" (370)

The novelist's words situate Ivy grammatically as the object of his specularizing "admiration" and narration. The extremely narrow range of positions open to Ivy as a subject and object of representation reflects Moi's claim that within specular thought,

> The thinking man not only projects his desire for a reproduction of himself (for his own reflection) on to the woman; he is . . . incapable of thinking outside this specular structure. (133)

In "Writing a War Story," the parameters which define women writers' relationship to representation in wartime--mimicking a soldier's voice or becoming the fixed visual object of the desiring male gaze (and of male narrative)--mark women's (and women writers') frozen positions in the specular discourses of war. For Wharton, becoming an eyewitness at the French front holds out the possibility for a woman writer to position herself outside of these boundaries and to mobilize her gaze and her own writerly authority--in Bergsonian terms, to posit her body as the ground of perception rather than an object of contemplation. However, that act of eyewitnessing also opens up new avenues of specular entrapment for the female observer as well as new avenues of resistance to that entrapment.

Wharton's 1915 essays, written for Scribner's Magazine and collected later that year as Fighting France, feature a remarkable verbal attempt to represent the visual experience of touring the battle front: "the look" of mobilized France and the complex acts of politicized seeing. In its inscriptions of her own acts of seeing, Wharton's text suggests that in war, the specular's relation to sexual difference might be reconfigured as something between men, a homosocial visuality that situates the female observer outside of its circle. That war is often understood as a male homosocial construct is certainly not a new idea; what interests me is how Wharton's text represents that structure in

terms of vision and specularity, how she positions the female observer in relation to it, and how this positioning tends to disrupt the work of her text as war propaganda.

The attention to visual experience in this verbal propaganda text is vital to the construction of politically militarized subjects both inside and outside the text. As the eye is crucial to the construction of the "I" in so much of western culture's metaphor-making,[5] the eye in Wharton's propaganda text is instrumental in the construction of the collectivized subject, the mobilized "I" which participates in the military policies of a national "we." However, as I suggested earlier, the induction of the seeing female subject as eyewitness-writer and as reader can disrupt the unified subjectivity which war propaganda aims to construct; a gendered gaze disrupts as well as authorizes a woman's eyewitness propaganda text.

In the collection's opening essay, "The Look of Paris," the war exists first as language. Wharton hears verbal "war-rumours" and then sees nailed to a wall France's written declaration of mobilization. The work of this first essay is to attempt to make a verbally-understood war visible, to convert it into image and thereby to convert its American readers to supporting the allied war effort. Describing the spectacle of the newly mobilized soldiers in the streets, Wharton claims, "In an instant we were being shown what mobilization was" (9). The collection

as a whole aims to show its readers just such a vision and to induct them into its "we."

Wharton's textual attention to the visual reflects the long cultural tradition, observed by theorists such as W.J.T. Mitchell, Wendy Steiner, and Teresa DeLauretis, which privileges images as "immediate, natural, directly linked to reality" over an arbitrary, "artificial" language (DeLauretis, 10). This contrast between word and image is, as Mitchell observes, often construed in military terms, as "the war for the representation of reality" (121). However, the most prominent propaganda texts of the Great War--war posters--combine image and text, controlling as many sign-systems as possible in an effort to construct and direct a unified national audience.[6] Wharton's text enters the battle for America's material and military commitment in the European war by attempting to strike a similar truce in the war between word and image.

The terms of this truce between the visual and verbal rest rather uneasily in Fighting France on the kind of sign which C.S. Peirce identifies as an index, a sign which gestures towards its object (such as a finger pointing or a demonstrative pronoun) or which bears physical traces of its referent (such as a footprint).[7] According to Krauss, "[i]ndexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents" (Originality, 198). Verbal and physical gestures of pointing toward are ubiquitous in these essays. Everything

which Wharton witnesses in mobilized France is ultimately an index of, a verbal or visual gesture towards, an unnamed and shifting transcendental signifier of war itself, an always deferred picturing of an always unwriteable narrative. At first, this elusive ultimate referent is the political or diplomatic causes of the war (i.e., the perfidy of Germany), indicated only by demonstrative pronouns in French and English: "every one was declaring all over the country . . . 'Il faut que cela finisse!' 'This kind of thing has got to stop': that was the only phrase one heard" (7). This unnamed referent shifts very quickly to the most unpictureable act of war itself, the unnamed wounding and destruction of bodies which Wharton refers to as "what one dare not picture" (50), and which, as Elaine Scarry points out, is the "main purpose and outcome of war . . . though this fact . . . can . . . disappear from view along many separate paths" (63-64).

Wharton's textual indexes are constructed so as to direct and control as far as possible her American readers' gaze and to evoke for them the narratives of wounding which are not directly represented but which readers must imagine in order to support the Allies in Europe. An example of this would be Wharton's description of Parisians looking at the first captured German flag:

> they stood and looked at it . . . in silence: as if already foreseeing all it would cost to keep that flag . . . . All day the crowd renewed itself, and it was always the same crowd . . . who looked steadily at the flag and knew what its being there meant. That, in August, was the look of Paris. (28-29)

This passage directs the reader's gaze into a dense visual and conceptual network. The Parisians look at the flag, which in turn evokes relative clauses ("all it would cost;" "what its being there meant"), which in turn are indexes of the battle-stories that are not articulated here. These images and indexes all attempt indirectly to construct and control the narratives which readers will tell themselves about the war, demonstrating in a verbal text what Mitchell claims for visual texts: "what pictorial expression amounts to is the artful planting of certain clues in a picture that allows us to perform an act of ventriloquism" (41). By channeling the readers' gaze toward the front and toward the collective, uniform "look of Paris" and of Parisians, Wharton's text attempts to control and to mobilize for war virtually the whole field of readerly vision--while holding invisible the central fact of war's wounding.

The text contains several more examples of a verbal indexing which both gestures towards and conceals the visual perception of

physical wounding. Viewing a town which has become the headquarters of an army, Wharton writes,

> once the eye has adapted itself to the ugly lines and the neutral tints of the new warfare, the scene . . . becomes positively brilliant. It is a vision of one of the central functions of a great war, in all its concentrated energy, without the saddening suggestions of what, on the distant periphery, that energy is daily and hourly resulting in. (49)

Again, the "what" functions in Wharton's sentence as a verbal index, a gesture toward the "distant periphery" where war's central act of bodily damaging takes place. In another move in this chapter which takes the text both further toward and away from "what" is on that distant periphery, Wharton represents the troubled intersection of civilian and soldierly vision as she describes the soldiers arriving in the town from the front: "it is a grim sight to watch them limping by, and to meet the dazed stare of eyes that have seen what one dare not picture" (50). The observer's encounter with the soldiers' eyes is one of visual displacement and disjuncture rather than of a mutual look. The traces of the soldiers's hidden visual experience reside in their very act of looking without seeming to see, the "dazed stare" which constitutes the

object of the civilian gaze. I suggest that what Wharton's text is doing here is representing the specular structure of military vision: the soldiers engage not in a mutual look but in a kind of internal circuit of vision, seeing neither the eyes of the female civilian observer nor their own reflection in her eyes. Instead, the soldiers are caught in a kind of visual lag, seeing their own past acts of vision, what the text refuses to picture, the visual scene from which Wharton removes herself and readers. This outsider's glimpse of the soldiers' acts of internalized seeing recall Jay's definition of specular thought already quoted in my introduction: "[i]n specular thought, vision is understood not in terms of an eye seeing an object exterior to itself, but rather of the eye seeing itself in an infinite reflection" (64). As I will discuss later in the essay, this brief scene prefigures a later encounter in the text between Wharton and soldierly vision, one in which it becomes clear that the nature of specularity in war positions the female observer outside of its circle and finally undoes the work of indexing upon which so much of the text's propagandistic work relies. Like "Writing a War Story," Fighting France, with its recurring textual indexes, invokes a part of the iconography frequently found in World War One posters. While the gesture or pointing receives its most well-known treatment in the United States in the recruiting posters featuring Uncle Sam, the image that most resembles Wharton's authorial gesture is found in two posters by Frank

Brangwyn. In "Help Your Country Stop This," a sailor in a crowded lifeboat in the foreground looks out at the viewer while pointing toward the dark background, where a few darker diagonal bars and smudges suggest a sinking ship. In "Look After My Folks," another sailor on the deck of sinking ship looks out at the viewer while pointing backwards toward what appears to be smoke. Like Wharton's textual indexes, these posters gesture toward unpictured and unidentified acts of destruction, compelling the viewers to fill in the battle narratives signalled only by smudges of black ink and the demonstrative pronoun "this." If "Writing a War Story" inscribes some of the popular wartime iconography of the female figure in order to indicate how it positions women within a wartime visual economy as objects of a specularizing male gaze, the iconography invoked by the indices in Fighting France underlines the authority of the writer. It positions the female author, like the pointing sailor, in the space between the civilian viewer or reader and the virtually invisible physical disaster of the war, directing the reader's or viewer's sight and political loyalties.

This act of pointing seems inherently contradictory or conflicted; it draws the reader/viewer's attention both toward and away from the body which gestures and the body of the viewer/reader. Art historians examining visual and verbal indexes offer conflicting ideas about them, particularly about the significance and presence of the body of the

gesturer, but one thing remains clear: the index gestures toward physical proximity, whether of the person who gestures or the viewer of that gesture. For Claude Gandelman, the "gesture of demonstration" signals the relative unimportance of the designator; it is an attempt at directing the viewer's gaze elsewhere and rendering "invisible" the one who points, focussing instead on the viewer's proximity to the object of vision (127). Bryson, examining the larger visual/verbal structure of deixis (which includes visual and verbal indexes), defines it as "utterances that contain information concerning the locus of utterance" (87). Deixis "not only describes completed action, but adds a comment from the speaker's own perspective":

> The wider class of deixis therefore includes all those particles and forms of speech where the utterance incorporates into itself information about its own spatial position relative to its content (here, there, near, far off), and its own relative temporality (yesterday, today, tomorrow . . .). Deixis is utterance in carnal form and points back directly . . . to the body of the speaker. (Vision and Painting 88)

Another version of the mediating and directive gesture of the index, and one which underlines the problematic status of the female

body as the subject and object of vision in wartime, is found in the frontispiece of Fighting France: a portrait of Wharton herself in front a French palisade. Like the pointing sailors, Wharton occupies the foreground, the space between the viewer and the unseen war hidden behind the palisade. However, the viewer's gaze is directed toward the invisible war not by any gesture of Wharton's but by the imagined gazes of the two soldiers behind Wharton, as they look out over the front from an observation post with their backs to the viewer. The photograph with its divergent looks is emblematic of the conflicting visual models in Fighting France, reflecting Nancy K. Miller's claim that "the gaze is not simply an act of vision, but a site of crisscrossing meanings in which the effects of power relations are . . . displayed" (164). The photograph offers several possible versions of the power relations which govern Wharton, the reader, and the militaristic discourses of the Great War, here visually represented by the soldiers. By sharing the frame with the soldiers, Wharton can at least potentially share the visual experience and authority of the soldiers and see what the viewer cannot. Acting as a mediator between civilian and military sight, she can vouchsafe their--and by extension, her own--visual authority. However, Wharton is also posed with her glance going elsewhere, away from the soldiers, away from the front, engaged instead in a potential mutual look with the photograph's viewer and the text's reader. If the gaze of the soldiers

over the invisible front can be thought to represent the ligne de foi, the "imaginary axis" which allows the soldier to take aim (see Introduction, above), the line of Wharton's own gaze in this photograph suggests another line of faith or belief which her readers might take. It is the issue of Fighting France's errant looks--and the text's attempts to contain them--that I now want to explore through several passages which enact the range of wartime visual power relations emblematized by the photograph and which demonstrate how this text's verbal indexes help to put those power relations into play.

As Wharton tours the front lines, the shifting signified, the elusive object of her straining vision becomes the invisible enemy soldiers hidden in a rural landscape, a phenomenon which, Eric Leed has noted, was a central perceptual experience for soldiers in the trenches during the war. Leed suggests that for soldiers at the front, "[t]he invisibility of the enemy put a premium upon auditory signals and seemed to make the war experience peculiarly subjective and intangible" (19). However, it is not only the threatening and disorienting invisibility of the hidden enemy which marks Wharton's visual experience here; her look at the enemy is intensely regulated by the gestures of her soldier-guides:

> Nothing but the wreck of the bridge showed that we were on the edge of war . . . . But there the Germans were . . . . The longer one

> looked, the more oppressive and menacing the invisibility of the foe became. "There they are--and there--and there." We strained our eyes obediently, but saw only calm hillsides, dozing farms . . . . Suddenly an officer, pointing to the west . . . said: "Do you see that farm? . . . . They are there." . . . and the innocent vignette framed by my field-glass suddenly glared back at me like a human mask of hate. The loudest cannonade had not made "them" seem as real as that! (109-11)

Here, not only is Wharton's gaze directed by the soldiers; her visual experience is itself constituted by the soldiers' repeated and emphatic verbal and physical pointing, which functions as a far more effective technology of vision than the field-glasses themselves. While what Wharton sees does not change, the soldiers' insistent gestures toward the invisible enemy are what renders that enemy real for both the author and the audience of this text, since both share the same inability to see. Both Wharton and her readers must rely not on her eyewitness experience but on the visual knowledge and physical gestures of the soldiers, which "frame" the visual field for militaristic purposes. Wharton as eyewitness here mediates between seeing and not seeing, between military and civilian sight, straining her eyes obediently and submitting her gaze to military construction--and asking her readers to

do the same. At stake in this passage is the very construction of wartime vision and of the wartime female observer, in the sense defined by Crary. The passage quoted above allows a glimpse of the soldier's very act of prescribing for the female observer and her readers the possibilities of seeing in war's landscape.

As we have seen, within the framing or construction of militarized vision and the militarized observer, the citizens of a mobilized nation, the inscribed subjects of war propaganda, all look the same. They are seen as similar by the eyes of the propagandist ("It was always the same crowd"), and they all gaze on the same object (the captured flag, the invisible enemy). In the attempts to construct politically unified subjects both within and outside the text, Wharton looks to the faces of soldiers, refugees, and civilians, who not only function as indexes of unwritten battle stories but who bear the visible traces of the totalizing effects of war propaganda itself. Like the civilians gazing at the flag, the most important feature of the soldiers near the front is their sameness, which acts as an index of their battle experience and the values that experience engenders:

> Almost all of the faces have the same look . . . as though all . . . fussiness, little personal oddities, meannesses and vulgarities, had been burnt away in a great flame of self-dedication. (54)

Civilian women also act as indexes of the unifying effects of wartime discourse--and as potential models for Wharton's American female readers--, but women also signal the earliest place in the text where war's discourse shows the potential for a disrupting difference of vision. Wharton writes that

> Personal sorrow is the sentiment the least visible in the look of Paris. . . . I often pass in the street women whose faces look like memorial medals--idealized images of what they were in the flesh. . . . But none of these faces reveals a personal preoccupation: they are looking, one and all, at France erect on her borders. Even the women . . . at the lace-counter all have something of that vision in their eyes--or else one does not see the ones who haven't. (39)

This passage situates civilian women as both subjects and objects within the intensely specular visual economy of a nation at war, an economy that trafficks in endless reflections of the Same. As objects of sight, these women themselves are indexes and traces of war and its discourses. Memorial medals, usually the indexes of battle and battle-stories, are here also indexes of the workings of war propaganda itself, whose function is to erase from the circuits of a collective war vision all personal desires and griefs and to reinscribe the very bodies of civilians

with the marks of a unified national subjectivity. Like the soldiers, these civilian women are mobilized into a visual immobility. As seeing subjects, as militarized observers, their gaze is directed by the unifying discourse of war: all the women in Paris look at the same imagined and imaginary object, "France erect on her borders." The women who do not participate in this mobilized and immobilized gaze are invisible. Like personal sorrow, they do not circulate within the economy of wartime vision or in Wharton's essay. And yet the trace of these invisible women whose gaze is directed elsewhere is, like the unpictureable act of wounding and the hidden presence of the German soldiers, figured in the text by their very invisibility, a potentially threatening gap in the closed circuit of vision which propaganda attempts to create. While the invisible soldiers physically threaten the author, and potentially the readers, of this text, thereby requiring the uniform belligerent gaze of a mobilized nation, the errant look of invisible women threatens the continuity and commitments of the text itself.

Wharton's final trip to the front offers an unsettling vision of how the perfection of a unified wartime gaze allows for a disruption of that very look. Wharton looks over No Man's Land from a hidden observation post which allows a view of both the French and German lines. Seeing the "orderly and untroubled" activities of French soldiers only a few yards from a German trench, she says, "it was one of those strange and

contradictory scenes of war that brings home to the bewildered on-looker the utter impossibility of picturing how the thing really happens" (208-09; emphasis Wharton's). Here, the juxtaposition of almost domestic activities and the potential for wounding begins to refract the unified writerly gaze which Wharton has tried to maintain as the writing subject of propaganda. The impossibility of picturing, the absence of any index toward an unpictured image, suggests that her status as eyewitness cannot always evoke the necessary narrative the civilian needs to tell herself in order to support the war. Moreover, this kind of bewilderment was a crucial part of soldiers' perceptual dilemmas at the front. Leed describes "the struggle to fit expectations into the actuality of war . . . ending in incomprehension" for many combatants" (132) and claims that

> the war became meaningless for many participants in individual terms . . . . this process was not merely a change of attitude but a function of the transformation of perspective and consciousness necessitated by the realities of war. The very first impression of the war was, for many, an acknowledgement of the peculiar incongruity between its meaning and its actuality. (131-32)

Several sentences after her confession of visual incomprehension, Wharton walks through a long covered observation trench close to the front lines, passing a series of "helmeted watchers" and finally emerging in "a half-ruined farm-house" containing more watchers seated on high shelves. From this "last outpost" (214), only a few yards away from the front line trenches, Wharton's text shows that the specular circuit of war itself finally freezes men as well as women, soldiers as well as civilians, in its fixed gaze:

> Over a break in the walls I saw another gutted farmhouse close by in another orchard: it was an enemy outpost, and silent watchers in helmets of another shape sat there watching on the same high shelves . . . . I could not understand where we were, or what it was all about. . . . And then, little by little, there came over me the sense of that mute reciprocal watching from trenches to trench: the interlocked stare of innumerable pairs of eyes, stretching on, mile after mile, along the whole sleepless line from Dunkerque to Belfort. (215-16)

Wharton's final vision at the front troubles her text and its commitments in several ways. Once again, her visual experience parallels that of trench soldiers, but her position as a female civilian

observer also constructs a very different visuality than the one in which soldiers participated. Leed writes that for World War One combatants, "The sudden appearance of the human enemy form behind the mask of technological violence produced a feeling of the . . . uncanny" (20). Wharton's vision grants, at least potentially, to the once invisible, unreadable enemies an uncanny subjectivity equal to that of the French soldiers through their power of seeing. However, the soldiers' subjectivity is virtually nullified by the immobilizing exigencies of belligerent sight. Wharton's vision shows how the uniformity and the (im)mobilized gaze which war propaganda tries to construct finally only mirrors itself and freezes soldiers in a terrifyingly perfect specularity. The final fixed object of the soldierly gaze is the Other-as-mirror, but in this instant of unbroken mirroring, that Other is the military and militarized male. The intensification of specularity in war here turns on itself, rendering men as objects in a mutual gaze through the perception of the female spectator who cannot break the deadly, objectifying look of war but who can make it visible to the reader.

Wharton's verbally-rendered image of the "whole sleepless line" recalls the job done by military aerial photography or "macrophotography" during the First World War. According to Virilio, military observation photographs and films consisted of a series of

"successive negatives" which could analyze "the phases of the movement in question." The goal of such photography was

> to reconstitute the fracture lines of the trenches, to fix the infinite fragmentations of a mined landscape . . . . Thus, as the Hachette Almanach of 1916 put it, the techniques of representation proved their enormous importance during the war: "Thanks to the negatives and films, it was possible to retrace the whole front with the greatest clarity, from Belfort to the Yser." (70-71)

Leed notes that the imagined aerial view was one of the perceptual and imaginative survival strategies used by trench-bound soldiers: their visual "disorientation. . . generated a need for a coherent vision, the kind of vision attributed to the flier, the pilot who enjoyed an aerial perspective" (123). Again, Wharton's visual experience both parallels and differs from that of the soldiers. Attempting to counter her sense of disorientation at the uncanny vision not just of the enemy but of the enemy looking back, she attempts to reconstruct the "look" of whole front in one imagined, sweeping human glance, but her look encounters a frozen repetition of the same image of mutual looking. The constantly disintegrating landscape of trench warfare is fixed, and in reconstituting with her imagined gaze the "fracture lines" of the front, Wharton creates

yet another fracture: between herself and the visual confrontation which she sees. Wharton's vision of her own visual isolation at the front, outside the fixity of the soldiers' gaze, threatens her subject position as war's seeing eye. The infinite regress of sight at the very center of the war locates and then stops visual perception at the mirror that is no man's land. The war itself becomes a function of the mutual, belligerent male gaze, the mirroring, fixed vision of soldiers, an absolutely closed circuit of sight which excludes the gaze of the female observer.

As we have seen with the invisible women of Paris, to refuse to participate in war-vision, to look elsewhere, is to become invisible, is not to exist, except as the disruptive trace in war's totalizing discourses. All along the line, Wharton has been looking for (and pointing towards) the images which will support her own text as it supports the Allied military cause--but they vanish from sight.

While Wharton's war-writing shows the female gaze and the female body as subjects and objects of militarized, specularized vision, it is also possible for her essays--and their readers--to recuperate vision for a critique of war and of the unified subjects of war propaganda. Far from the traditions of pacifist women and of suffragists who reappropriated sight and image for anti-war and other-than-war purposes in the early twentieth century,[8] Wharton's final vision at the front does allow for the possibility of making visible another position from which to see the war--

the position of its invisible women, looking elsewhere and looking differently.

Notes

1. See, for example, Gubar's overview of a range of female figures in posters and propaganda leaflets of the Second World War, 231-40.

2. See, for example, Leila Rupp, Maureen Honey, and Susan Gubar on women and propaganda during the Second World War. On women and First World War propaganda, see Sandra Gilbert's "Soldier's Heart" and Jane Marcus's "Asylums of Antaeus."

3. According to historians and biographers of women journalists (see Marzolf, Edwards, and Belford), very few women went to France and none to the front lines as credentialled journalists during the First World War. However, outside of the official journalists' circuit, there was "a rash of 'eyewitness' war-reports by women, ostensibly published to raise money for various war-efforts" (Tylee, 27). See Claire Tylee's bibliography and her discussion of May Sinclair's Journal of Impressions in Belgium and Mildred Aldrich's A Hilltop on the Marne, as well as Chapter 2, below. Many of the eyewitness reports listed in Tylee's extensive bibliography are postwar narratives written by nurses and ambulance drivers; see Marcus's "Corpus/Corps/Corpse" for a discussion of the liminal textual and physical spaces occupied by these women during the first World War.

4. See Sanford Schwartz (21-31 and 55-56), Paul Douglass, and Tom Quirk on Bergson's influence on Modernist poetics.

5. For a brief survey of western traditions of ocularcentrism and its construction of subjectivity, see Keller and Grontkowski; Irigaray's work has become crucial and often controversial in discussions of what Nancy Miller calls "the politics of visibility in the formation of sexual identity" (164).

6. That the political loyalties of a collective subject are more readily engaged through images is apparent to a 1918 admirer and interpreter of Allied war-posters:

> It has been the duty of all the graphic artists of all the countries . . . to launch the strongest possible appeal for unity of purpose and activity against a common foe . . . this campaign of graphic propaganda has registered a marked effect upon the minds of millions of people who understand most easily a message that has been conveyed to them through the medium of the eye. The average person is more likely to believe what he sees than to believe what he hears. (Hamilton, 47)

7. See Peirce, 106, as well Mitchell (56-60) and Steiner (19-22) for discussions of Peirce's semiotic theories. Also see Krauss, "Notes on the Index" (Parts 1 and 2) in The Originality of the Avant-Garde for a discussion of the index in 1970's visual art.

8. See Anne Wiltsher's Most Dangerous Women on feminist pacifists during the Great War and Marcus's, "Asylums of Antaeus," on the British suffrage movement's use of posters.

Chapter 2

Mapping the Female Observer in A Hilltop on the Marne

Not exactly the same as any one can see war and more not exactly the same as any one can see.
--Gertrude Stein, "Mildred Aldrich Saturday"

I will be exploring here the dynamics of vision, gender, and First World War militaristic discourse in Mildred Aldrich's 1915 best seller, A Hilltop on the Marne. As in my reading of Fighting France, I am concerned here with how the female civilian "eyewitness" narrator of this text is transformed into a militarized observer on the field of vision during the Great War and with how the gaze of the female observer is a crucial site both for women's participation in and resistance to the militaristic discourses of the Great War period. Through its narrative and visual elements, A Hilltop on the Marne maps a set of possibilities for vision during wartime for the female observer and her readers, even as the militaristic discourse which she encounters works to identify her as a passive spectator of the Battle of the Marne.

As we have already seen in the Introduction, Virilio calls the Battle of the Marne "the last romantic battle" of twentieth-century warfare. However, he makes clear that this particular battle was the first to use aerial reconnaisance in the war (17), thereby becoming the site of

considerable perceptual conflict among the French generals, a "conflict of interpretation" between the view of the enemy afforded by aerial reconnaissance and by ground patrols:

> the French high command refused to accept the evidence and quite naturally set greater store by the horizontal, perspectival vision than by the vertical, panoramic vision of overflying aircraft. Eventually Gallieni imposed his "point of view" [that or aerial reconnaisance] on enemy movements. . . . [I]t seems at least plausible that the [victory] . . . depended upon regulation of points of view--that is, on a definition of the battle image in which the cavalry's perspective suddenly lost out to the perpendicular vision of the reconnaissance aircraft. (73)

What I explore in this chapter is how Aldrich represents a similar "conflict of interpretation" for the female civilian observer during and after the Battle of the Marne and how French military personnel attempt to regulate the female civilian's point of view.

Aldrich was an American journalist who lived in Paris from the turn of the century until she retired to a house about 30 miles north of Paris overlooking the Marne Valley in the summer of 1914. A Hilltop on the Marne is the first of four volumes of letters to an unnamed

correspondent, based on Aldrich's letters to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas during and after the First World War.[1] In 1922, Aldrich was awarded the Medal of the Legion of Honor by the French government "for helping to sway American opinion toward entrance into World War One" with these volumes (Townsend 37).

The central visual trope in A Hilltop on the Marne and the one which works most to construct Aldrich as an observer of the war is what Aldrich calls throughout her letters her "panorama," the view of the surrounding Marne valley which she has from her front lawn. I want to take a moment here to discuss the panorama as a popular art form and as a means for constructing subjectivity before exploring it as a model for or parallel of the panorama in Aldrich's text. One type of panorama, extremely popular in the late 18th and 19th centuries in Europe and in the United States, consisted of a painting executed on the inside of a sphere surrounding a central viewing platform (Lawson, 88-89). The most popular subject of these panoramas was the depiction of battles.[2] As Thomas Lawson points out, a panorama privileges the illusion of an "all-seeing" eye (89), hinting at the visual utopia of seeing everything.

A battle panorama, then, promises the civilian observer the ability to see war from a central, military, and therefore "true" vantage point. This would have been a particularly seductive promise during the early years of the European war for Aldrich's American readers, a group

particularly open to anxiety about authentic vision of war. Rigid press restrictions enforced by the belligerent governments kept journalists and photographers away from the front lines, and American newspaper and film audiences did not find the "authentic" pictures of trench combat which they eagerly sought (Mould 48-65). They did, however, find pictures. Before the entrance of U.S. forces into the European War in 1917, the American press produced a remarkable number of pictorial issues of journals and periodic "albums" of war-photographs, which like most of the newsreel footage of 1914, displayed troop parades and portraits of heads of state and diplomats. One such journal carried an advertisement for reproductions of Matthew Brady's Civil War photographs. The copy for the ad claims that the American war-photographers newly arrived in France "cannot get within 100 miles of the actual fighting. . . . they rage and they fret, but they never see a battle" (Review of Reviews, September, 1914, 6). The advertisement posits the Civil War as a lost Golden Age of unmediated visual perception of war, when both the photographers and civilian spectators could see "war as it really is." The American readerly and film-going public's "persistent demands for war pictures of any kind" (Mould 50) resulted in the redistribution not only of Civil War images but of any available military footage. The images of war consumed in film theaters in 1914 were not from 1914 France and Belgium but, according to

newsreel industry's trade publications, "a series of old pictures showing the various armies of Europe in maneuvers [which] have been taken from the shelves" (cited in Mould, 50). The trade publications claimed that

> Old copies of . . . kinematographic news . . . have been ransacked and often duplicated just to offer the public something that might pass for war pictures. . . . They seem glad of pictures of mimic war if the real article cannot be obtained. . . . [T]his demand for something that looks like war is undeniably great. (Cited in Mould, 50)

A battle-panorama would be one method of addressing the civilian anxiety about seeing the war from an authentic and authoritative viewing position.[3] With its promise of visual authenticity and plenitude, what the Oxford English Dictionary calls "an unbroken view," a panorama also both invokes and breaks with the model of vision and subjectivity found in Cartesian perspectivalism. As the dominant model of vision in western culture since the Renaissance, perspectivalism assumes a central, privileged seeing subject. The viewer of the work of art--and of the visible world--is the unmovable single eye toward which the lines of perspective run. As Norman Bryson describes it, "the subject resides at the still point of the turning world, master of its prospects, sovereign

surveyor of the scene" ("The Gaze," 88). For Wendy Steiner, perspectivalism "presents one atemporal moment of vision by a perceiver standing in a fixed position" (180). Jay notes that the viewing eye posited by linear perspective was understood "to be static, unblinking, and fixated . . . producing a visual take that was eternalized, reduced to one 'point of view,' and disembodied" ("Scopic Regimes," 7). I want first to emphasize the static, unmoving nature of the viewer posited by linear perspective because a panorama differs most markedly from a perspectival painting in its assumption of a mobile observer. As Crary points out,

> panorama paintings clearly broke with the localized point of view of perspective painting . . . allowing the spectator an ambulatory ubiquity. One was compelled at least to turn one's head (and eyes) to see the entire work (113).[4]

Second, I want to underline the "disembodied" and "eternalized" quality of perspectivalism's viewer, since the panorama allows for the presence and movement of viewers' bodies in time. The panorama, in other words, gives back to the viewer the mobile physical body denied by linear perspective.

The panorama therefore could be seen as an extremely powerful model of a sovereign observer: central, all-seeing, and physically autonomous. And yet, the model which suggests such visual and physical autonomy for the viewer relies on an overt restriction: the viewers of the largest, most popular panoramas were enclosed within buildings which housed and provided the round structure for the paintings. This conflicted model for visual experience, at once autonomous and restricted, reflects not only the model of the female observer in Hilltop but also reflects the contradictions which Crary finds in the construction of what he calls the "modernized" observer. Just as the panorama (both in Aldrich's text and in late nineteenth-century popular culture) provides a model of both a mobile, all-seeing observer and of a constrained or restricted seeing subject, the model of vision which began to develop in the mid-nineteenth century involved two "intertwining," apparently conflicting versions of visual experience and of the observer. Because modern optics was able to locate the source of visual experience not in the external objects of sight but rather in the tissues and nerves of the human eye, the body itself became a newly empowered, autonomous locus of vision. On the other hand, this new autonomy for the seeing eye and its body was accompanied by a growing awareness of the possibilities of erratic, idiosyncratic, and subjective vision which in turn called for new techniques of "standardization and

regulation of the observer" (149-150).[5] Crary claims, "what is important is how these paths"--that of the newly autonomous and of the newly erratic and thereby regulated observer--"continually overlap in the same social terrain" (150). That overlapping or intersection of paths marks the position of the body of the female civilian observer on the militarized field of the panorama in A Hilltop on the Marne.

In Aldrich's text it is the panorama, with its possibilities for a mobile and privileged viewer, which is appropriated for and restricted by militarist visuality. The panorama is the central site of struggle between a civilian woman and soldiers over how to see the war.[6] The panorama, with its "unbroken view," is a powerful metaphor for the workings of military propaganda on the civilian seeing-subject, since, as Chapter 1 discusses, the aim of war propaganda is to construct a unified national subject; a nation at war cannot brook any difference of view.[7] The discourses of militarism, embodied in Hilltop by the narratives of soldiers billeted in Aldrich's village, attempt to create an unbroken view of the war and a unified subject which does not differ from the Allied cause. But that same panorama also includes the possibilities for other, differing visions of the war. Like the conflict of interpretation which took place among the French high command during the Battle of the Marne, in which the "panoramic" view of aviators was set against the

more limited view from the ground, so Aldrich's panorama provides the site for several conflicting views of the battle.

At the center of the book is the scene in which Aldrich's "sees" the battle of the Marne from her garden as it invades the visual field of her panorama. Aldrich, describing her view, compares Napoleonic painting's depiction of battle with what she perceives:

> I had imagined long lines of marching soldiers, detachments of flying cavalry, like the war pictures at Versailles and Fontainebleau. Now I was actually seeing a battle, and it was nothing like that. There was only noise, belching smoke, and long drifts of white clouds concealing the hill (146).

According to Michael Marrinan, battle-paintings such as those on display at Versailles and Fontainebleau and executed under Napoleon's orders were, when first exhibited, accompanied by texts "derived--either by direct quotation or close paraphrase--" from the army bulletins which Napoleon himself wrote in order to control the interpretation of the outcomes of battles (186). In her most "direct" vision of battle, what Aldrich looks at and into is a network of visual and verbal discourse about war which screens her retinal perception of battle as effectively as the smoke over the plain. Norman Bryson writes that "between the

retina and world is inserted a screen of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena" ("The Gaze," 92; italics in the original). The shadow of Napoleonic visual representation of battle (and the echo of Napoleonic narrative) function as the only available screen through which Aldrich (and by extension her readers) can understand her visual perception, even when this visual model is clearly inadequate and is called into question.

Despite her description of this visual screen, Aldrich writes in a letter placed immediately after the one containing her narrative of the day of the battle, "I had seen the war" (154). The primary conflict represented in this text is not the Battle of the Marne but the battle between Aldrich and the soldiers which takes place on the ground of the female gaze and its panorama, over her act of looking at the battlefield and over defining what she sees there. Two days after the battle, Aldrich is visited by French soldiers billeted in her village who want to see the view of the Marne battlefield and who ask her to "explain the country" to them. Aldrich writes of her own resistance to looking at the view:

> I had not been out there since Saturday night--was it less than 48 hours before? But . . . I was ashamed to refuse. It would, I know, seem super-sentimental to them. So I reluctantly followed them

> out. They stood in a group about me . . . while I pointed out the towns and answered their questions . . . .
>
> There was a young lieutenant in the group who finally noticed a sort of reluctance on my part--which I evidently had not been able to conceal--to looking off at the plain, which I own I had been surprised to find as lovely as ever. He taxed me with it, and I confessed, upon which he said:
>
> "That will pass. The day will come--Nature is so made, luckily--when you will look off there with pride, not pain, and be glad that you saw what may prove the turning of the tide in the noblest war ever fought for civilization."
>
> I wonder. (156)

Aldrich's reluctance to look at the site/sight of the battlefield and the words, "I wonder" mark small but resilient points of resistance to the soldier's narrative re-vision of civilian sight. Her reluctance to look, even at a plain that appears unchanged, suggests that looking at the battlefield is not an act of direct retinal perception nor of passive spectatorship but rather the conflicted act of an observer within the realm of militarizing vision. The soldiers later on in this exchange use a theater metaphor to define Aldrich's privileged viewing position: "'you can always say you had front row stage box'" (178). The workings of

militaristic discourse here rely on blurring the distinction between spectator and observer: the successful mobilization of the gendered civilian subject depends on the illusion of passive spectatorship and on the veiling of the discursive techniques which construct militarized observers. I read this encounter between Aldrich and the soldiers as a parable of the watershed-moment in military visuality that the Battle of the Marne constituted. The soldiers, in re-viewing the visual field, are constructing the observer as a passive spectator at the "last romantic battle," a military spectacle which in fact requires regulation of its observers.

The soldier's interpretation of the battle also marks an overlapping between image and narrative. According to the military "caption" of the view, Aldrich has seen neither smoke nor the wounding and destruction of bodies, but history itself. The soldier's words constitute a historical narrative in the future tense, a projection of the later interpretation of the battle of the Marne. Like the panoramic battle paintings at Versailles, Aldrich's visual experience of battle is accompanied by an "official" military narrative. The soldier's narrative construes Aldrich as both a viewer of war and a potential reader of military history and propaganda.[8]

This slippage between seeing and reading helps further to reenforce the identification of the wartime observer as a passive civilian

"spectator" of military history's plots. As in the war-posters ubiquitous in Europe and the United States during the war, the combined codes of image and word in Hilltop can be read as a way for militaristic discourse to control as many sign-systems as possible. Like Fighting France, Hilltop participates in a truce between word and image, but it does so through its use of photographs and a map which represent the panorama for readers. This visual apparatus in conjunction with the text functions as a way to construct Aldrich's readers as the seeing-subjects of military propaganda. However, I want to trace how the visual/verbal nexus also creates possibilities for alternative or resisting wartime reading and seeing.

The panorama and its visual representations provide the text's first opportunities to induct the readerly gaze into the field of militaristic discourse. In her first contact with the British army during the first weeks of the war, a captain billeted in her village asks to be shown the view of the country from Aldrich's garden. What is exchanged here is not just information but possession of the landscape and of the way to see it. The captain points to villages within the panorama, asks Aldrich their names and their distances, studies the landscape through binoculars, looks at his map, and concludes, "I have it" (78). Opposite the text containing this dialogue is a photo of "A Part of the Panorama from the Lawn" with pencilled-in names of the visible towns. Her

American readers can also consult the map which makes up the end papers of the book. This map is a mixture of military and civilian information, with hand-written place names, some of which are underlined to denote visibility from Aldrich's garden, according to hand-written legend in the lower left-hand corner. The printed legend to the right is more military in character, indicating sites of battles and troop movements. Both the photograph and the map allow Aldrich's readers to replicate as closely as possible the captain's visual experience.

Along with and within the panorama, there is a second governing verbal/visual trope within this text: the index or pointing-toward that we have already seen at work in Fighting France. The most overt instances of indexing in the text are of course the physical gestures of both Aldrich and the soldiers, as they point toward towns within Aldrich's panorama. These gestures have several, and often contradictory, functions. Like the panorama, the act of pointing both restricts and allows for the possibility of authorial and readerly resistance to the soldiers' stories. The soldiers' acts of pointing trace the required trajectory of vision, the arc of sight that the militarized observer must follow. While the soldier pointing out villages and asking for place-names is directing and militarizing Aldrich's and her readers' vision, Aldrich is also pointing out places and "explaining the country" to soldiers. The gesture reenforces writerly authority and authenticity (as

we have already seen, a crucial issue for women writing eyewitness war narratives), because it allows the writer to emphasize physically her proximity to the scene of combat. Like the ligne de foi, the imaginary line of sight which Virilio identifies as the foundation for later military optics and which underlines the subjective nature of sight, the required line of sight which the soldiers enforce through pointing might be understood as a reinforcing of the "faith" or "belief" required of the militarized observer, just as Aldrich's own physical indexes also gesture toward the subjectivity of the female civilian.

The map and photographs in Hilltop participate in the indexing, the direction and restriction, of readerly vision in several ways. First, they allow for at least a partial replication of the soldiers' vision of the landscape: as readers look at the photograph and map, the place names are already elements in a military strategy and history, and the reader's gaze is directed along the arc of the soldier's gesture. Second, these visual elements within a primarily verbal text also act as "pointers" to guide readerly vision through their very juxtaposition with the verbal text. According to Marrinan, the visual-verbal dynamic is itself indexical, creating "a rhythm of reading, pointing, and gesturing between the text and image." A narrative accompanied by a visual image "generates a series of pointing gestures across the space anchored by the text, the image, and the reader/viewer" (187). This visual and verbal network of

text, map and photograph constructs for the reader/viewer of Hilltop a screen of signs similar to the Napoleonic screen through which Aldrich first "sees" the battle of the Marne, constructing the reader as well as the narrator of this text as an observer of the war.

In another example of how A Hilltop on the Marne constructs its narrator and its readers as militarized viewers, Aldrich describes her panoramic view of the battle of the Marne, returning to an extensive use of the place-names which also appear in the map and the photograph:

> The sun was shining brilliantly on silent Mareuil and Chauconin, but Monthyon and Penchard were enveloped in smoke. . . . Owing to the smoke hanging over the crest of the hill on the horizon, it was impossible to get an idea of the positions of the armies. In the west it seemed to be somewhere near Claye, and the east it was in the direction of Barcy. I tried to remember what the English soldiers had said,--that the Germans were, if possible to be pushed east, in which case the artillery at the west must be either the French or English. The hard thing to bear was, that it was all conjecture. (146)

Here, in order for the long list of place-names to make sense, readers would have to once again re-enact the gaze of the officer,

treating the book itself like a military guide-book, referring to the photo and map. But Aldrich herself also finds her familiar landscape defamiliarized and militarized. She refers to her memory of a soldier's voice speaking of strategy in order to understand the what she sees in the newly prescribed limits of her panorama. What she and her readers see--and don't see--must be "captioned" with military language; the soldier's narrative must anchor the sight to give it meaning.

However, neither the civilian reader nor author, re-enacting the soldier's gaze and re-inscribing the soldier's narrative, can possess the war's landscape, can say, like the soldier learning place names from Aldrich, "I have it". It is, as Aldrich says, all conjecture. For the female civilian observer, seeing the war constitutes a visual exile: any implicit theories of unmediated, unsocialized perception or of the sovereignty of the seeing-subject at the center of the panorama disappear. Readers and author rely first on military visual apparatus, particularly maps, and then on military narrative as a way of making meaning.

However, within the visual and verbal screen or net of directed militaristic vision, there are some snags, some tears in the fabric of militaristic discourse which might allow a 1915 reader of Aldrich's text to slip out of its enclosure. Although the map and photograph attempt to recreate for the reader the panorama and its illusion of a central and mobile observer, the visual-verbal interaction itself creates for the reader

multiple, shifting viewpoints. Marrinan writes that in a viewing/reading situation, "The spectator, though not moving, is engaged imaginatively in several kinds of simultaneous actions in different locales" (Marrinan 187). The legend on the map allows for one such potential site of readerly mobility and resistance. The printed legend on the right names a town near Aldrich's home as the place "where my ambulance broke"--an episode not described in any of the letters which make up the text. Here, the verbal signs of the legend fail to "anchor" the image,[9] to guide and restrict the reader/ viewer's understanding of the visual text. The visual-verbal nexus creates, in its "rhythm of reading, pointing, and gesturing," a space of readerly escape from a unified narrative, a unified visual/verbal message, and, by extension, a potential interruption in propaganda's project of creating an "unbroken view" of the Allied cause.

Aldrich's gestures of pointing reflect the contradiction discussed in Chapter 1, the problem of drawing attention away from and toward the physical presence of the female civilian on the field of the panorama; the body of the female observer becomes the site of conflict in Hilltop. A passage from the letter written immediately after the battle of the Marne shows that the female civilian's resisting gaze on the field of the militarized panorama must not only be anchored or captioned by the narrative line of war propaganda, or directed by gestural and textual indices, but must be controlled physically by the soldiers themselves.

Another soldier looking over the landscape suddenly turns his gaze onto Aldrich herself, when he has "caught" her "looking in the other direction" away from the panorama and asks why "you--a foreigner and a woman happen to be living in what looks like exile--all alone on the top of a hill--in war time" (177). Here, the panorama and the female civilian both become the objects of the soldier's gaze. The panorama is no longer the ground of her vision and subjectivity but the background upon which she becomes the gendered and nationalized object of the military male gaze. She becomes, in other words, a visual element of the battle panorama which now revolves around the soldier as central seeing subject, recalling the way the battle panoramas which Napoleon had constructed in Paris included live trees and actors in the middle distance between the central viewing platform and canvas (Lawson 89). Aldrich answers the soldier's question in terms of vision, attempting to reassert her slipping subject position as the central viewer of the landscape, and one who denounces the war's violence in visual terms:

> I had chosen this hilltop for the sake of the panorama spread out before me; . . . I had loved it every day more than the day before; and . . . exactly three months after I had sat down on the hill top this awful war had marched to within sight of my gate, and banged its cannon and flung its deadly bombs right under my eyes.

This civilian's narrative of the battle of the Marne creates another conflict in the text, this time a physical one:

> Do you know, every mother's son of them threw back his head--and laughed aloud. I was startled. I knew that I had shown unnecessary feeling--but I knew it too late. I made a dash for the house, but the lieutenant blocked the way. I could not make a scene. I never felt so like it in my life. (178)

Aldrich is physically denied the mobility which the panorama promises the observer (a promise which is bound to be broken), and in being so blocked from escaping the site/sight of the battlefield, she is also prohibited from "making a scene." The binary subject-object model of vision here seems to rock and grow uncertain: to make a scene, to introduce the resisting look of an imperfectly militarized seeing subject, is also to run the risk of becoming an object in the landscape under the soldier's gaze--of making a spectacle of herself. Mary Russo describes the combination of will and loss-of-control which characterizes the woman-as-spectacle within a patriarchal specular economy, observing that

> making a spectacle out of oneself seem[s] a specifically feminine danger. The danger [is] of exposure . . . . For a woman, making a spectacle out of herself [has] . . . to do with a kind of inadvertency and loss of boundaries. (213)

By complying with the soldiers' physically-enforced gaze, Aldrich resubmits her own gaze to militaristic boundaries, to the highly regulated model of the seeing subject required for a militarized observer. This process reflects Mary Anne Doane's claim that "when the woman looks in order to see, the trajectory of that gaze, and its relation to the . . . opposition between subject and object, are highly regulated" (177). That trajectory is, as Aldrich's text suggests, even more highly regulated in war time.

Aldrich's panorama constitutes one corner of the contradictory, gendered terrain of modernized vision during the First World War, where the female civilian body at the shifting center of the war's landscape is the both the subject and object of militarized vision and the source of resistance to it. Through its letters to an unnamed correspondent, the narrative structure of Hilltop reflects not the centralized seeing subject of panoramas, but rather a dialogic subject, constituted by the textual gestures of pointing back and forth across the space of correspondence. The letter form itself creates "a rhythm of reading, pointing, gesturing," a

screen of signs across textual space, but it is a screen marked by gaps---gaps around the space of the correspondent, the unrecorded responses of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Mary Jacobus suggests that the textual model of letters between women provides an interplay of identity and difference between correspondents. Jacobus claims that while letters initiate a correspondence or resemblance between readers, "the textual interchange of dialogue refuses the specular structure of frozen resemblance," thus creating "a play of difference or a liberating exchange" (281). Stein herself, in the manuscript "Mildred Aldrich Saturday," quoted in this chapter's epigraph, associates Aldrich's wartime vision with visual difference: "not exactly the same as any one can see war and more not exactly the same as anyone can see." Aldrich's visual difference, the remainder or excess of visual resistance on the unifying panoramic field, runs counter to the kind of specularizing nationalism which Stein identifies in "Patriarchal Poetry": "Patriarchal poetry is the same as Patriotic poetry is the same as patriarchal poetry is the same as Patriotic poetry is the same as patriarchal poetry is the same" (115).[10] If, as Jacobus reminds us, "without difference there is nothing but freezing identity" and "indifference" (280), Aldrich's letters to the unnamed Stein and Toklas initiate a gesture which can attempt to fracture with difference militarism's unbroken view.

Notes

1. Aldrich's letters to Stein and Toklas are in the manuscript collection of the Beinecke Library at Yale University.

2. The painter Bill Sullivan claims that "Panorama in Western art seems to come from a need to portray battles--a place large enough for armies to heroically engage with a grandeur befitting the occasion--a visual epic" (21). Cited in The World is Round: Contemporary Panoramas, ed. Marcia Clark.

3. This model of the inclusive, authentic war-panorama also extended to journals which combined visual image and text. A French journal called Le Panorama de la Guerre, published from 1914 to 1919, consisted of a series of captioned photos of trench life, diplomatic meetings, and military parades (much like the images distributed by the American press). It promised to provide the reader/viewer with "a collection of living, exact, and precise documents" that would enable the war to "unroll before our eyes, day by day, almost hour by hour" (Tome I, February 1915; my translation). The presence of such a journal suggests that French civilians experienced a sense of visual loss or lag similar to the one felt by "neutral" Americans in 1915. Virilio claims that during the first World War, "Direct vision was now a thing of the past: . . . . the target area had become a cinema 'location,' the battlefield a film set out of bounds to civilians." (11)

4. See also Sharon Emmanueli's foreword in The World is Round (ed. Clark): "A traditional perspective system does not invite one to wander . . . . In the West, within the confines of the vanishing point and its singular view, there was no room for . . . mobility" (7).

5. The bulk of Crary's study examines a variety of nineteenth-century pre-photographic "optical devices" which participated in this process of regulation.

6. By referring the already outmoded art form of the panorama (Lawson and Crary both claim that the panorama lost its popularity by the 1890's), Aldrich's text is also able to gesture toward an earlier visual mode, one particularly popular in France, of understanding war. Lawson points out that the panoramic painting "The Siege of Paris," which depicted the 1870 German invasion of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and "which stood in the Champs-Elysees through the 1870's and into the '80's," was one of the most popular panoramas of the nineteenth century (90).

7. See Lasswell's pioneering study of First World War propaganda.

8. Schweik sees the closely connected figures of the female reader and the female spectator of war as essential to (literary) wartime discourses: "Western war poetry . . . has enacted its arguments about the nature and meaning of war within scenes of female spectatorship, one modern form of which is the scene of female reading" (90). Also see Marrinan's discussion of how Napoleonic history-painting evoked both a "viewer" and a "reader" (187-88, 191).

9. See Barthes, Image, Music, Text (38-41).

10. Shari Benstock reads this passage of "Patriarchal Poetry" as an exemplar of what she calls "Expatriate Modernism" (32-34).

PART TWO: REGARDING FASCISM

Chapter 3

A Stricken Field and the Field of Vision: Fascism, Gender, and the Specular

Martha Gellhorn's 1940 novel A Stricken Field, set in Prague, in October, 1938, immediately following the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, provides a range of gendered seeing positions within, and in opposition to, the visual ideologies of fascism for both its characters and its readers. I am interested in examining how A Stricken Field works as an antifascist text, not only in its content or "subject matter" (Nazi terrorizing, torture, and murder of Czech citizens and German communist refugees) but also in its very construction of vision: in its inscriptions of what is visible and what is invisible and how it reveals and conceals events from its characters' and its readers' sight. The novel explores the importance as well as the failures or limits of women's vision under Nazism primarily through the gazes of its two female protagonists: an American journalist named Mary Douglas and a German Communist refugee, Rita. My suggestion is that in this text it is representations of vision and loss of vision which represent for the novel's readers the brutal assault on subjectivity (both individual and collective) perpetrated by fascism and which attempt to construct readers as potentially antifascist readers/observers.[1] A Stricken Field

demonstrates how vision--and, by extension, the seeing subject--is subject to control, torture, and loss under a fascist regime. It also suggests that a differently-constructed vision is essential for readerly resistance to and understanding of the effects of the Third Reich's invasion policy and its aesthetic and sexual ideologies. I am concerned with how this novel constructs that difference through the female gaze and the failures of that gaze in order to offer its readers possible alternatives to what Linda Mizejewski calls "the Nazi cult of the visual" (4). Within the complexities and contradictions of that gaze, political seeing is closely connected to problems of female sexuality and to what becomes the text's always deferred visual referent: not war, but the torture of Czech Communists working against the Third Reich.

Scholars such as Russell Berman and Thomas Elsaesser have begun to explore the position of visual discourses in fascist ideology. Berman outlines what he calls "a fascist privileging of sight and visual representation" (100) and claims that "fascist modernist" works such as Triumph of the Will define and enact "a fascist rhetoric as the displacement of verbal by visual representation" (100). If Berman is right, several questions arise for me in reading Gellhorn's novel: is the "privileging of sight and visual representation" always somehow "fascist"?[2] (How) is sight--particularly women's sight--to be recuperated in an antifascist text?

I find helpful here Elsaesser's characterization of fascism as "the specularization of social, sexual, and political life" (548); for Elsaesser, it is specularization, rather than a more general "privileging sight and visual representation", that best characterizes fascist visuality. Fascism, with what Mizejewski characterizes as its "obsession with both difference and sameness" (32) can, as Elsaesser suggests, be in part understood as a grotesque extreme of specular thought. The subject of Nazi ideology, like the subject of specular thinking, wants to see the Same, and fascism used every available technology (from visual art to weapons of mass destruction) to further its project of eradicating difference within the Third Reich.[3] I read the project of A Stricken Field as the attempt to inscribe a politicized, antifascist female gaze (within the text, in its characters) that refuses specularization, and thereby to construct its American readers as antifascist observers.

I want first to look at passages of A Stricken Field which outline possible positions for the American observer through the point of view of Mary Douglas, then see how the narrative moves past the limitations of what Mary can see to how the reader might be constructed through Rita's point of view: i.e., through Rita's vision and loss of vision. In using the phrase "point of view" I want to emphasize "view," the gazes of these characters represented in the text, and how these gazes construct the novel's characters and readers as observers of fascist politics.

One of the novel's central issues explored by the juxtaposition of Mary's and Rita's sight, is the ideal and limitations of "complete" and "direct" vision during wartime. This problem is raised immediately in the novel's epigraph, a passage identified only as being "from a Medieval Chronicle," which locates the text squarely in the territory where violence, vision, and gender intersect:

> There were young knights among them who had never been present at a stricken field. Some could not look upon it and some could not speak and they held themselves apart from the others who were cutting down the prisoners at my Lord's orders, for the prisoners were a body too numerous to be guarded by those of us who were left. Then . . . an aged knight . . . who had been sore wounded in the battle, rode up to the group of young knights and said, "Are ye maidens with your downcast eyes? Look well upon it. See all of it. Close your eyes to nothing. For a battle is fought to be won. And it is this that happens if you lose." (1)

The narrator's shifting pronouns, from third to first and back to third person make the subject and object of the enunciation difficult to identify. Who is the speaker of the passage? To whom is this emphatic, repeated injunction to see everything addressed? How is it to be

understood as a metaphor for the work of the novel as a whole? The slippage between third and first person narrative ("young knights," "those of us who were left") suggests that this call might be addressed to any combination of the novel's characters, author, and/or readers. This slippage itself would seem to both enact and undercut the completeness of vision for which the knight calls: the pronouns both include a range of possible subject-positions and disperse and fragment those positions.[4]

As a call to vision and against a "maidenly" aversion to seeing, the epigraph asserts the possibility and importance of direct perception of the effects of war. This is what the novel itself radically questions: the power of an all-encompassing and direct vision, one associated with masculinity, under fascism. Paul Virilio claims that after the widespread use of reconnaissance planes using optical technologies in World War One, "Direct vision was now a thing of the past" (11). Seeing "all of it" (like the promise of Aldrich's panorama with its "unbroken view") is the undercut ideal for antifascist observers---and, as I hope to show, is indirectly associated with fascist visuality. It is instead the "downcast eyes" associated with "maidens" which takes the place of this ideal of complete vision for Gellhorn's characters and readers.[5] This casting down of the ideal of complete, direct vision, embodied in the several models of the female gaze at and under Nazi political power, is also a

route by which the text attempts an escape from or alternative to fascist visuality/specularity.

Immediately following the epigraph's call for complete vision, the novel's first chapter opens with a questioning of "the reliability of the image" (Mizejewski 19), as Mary Douglas and her fellow passengers fly over Europe on their way to Prague:

> From this height the Rhine looked narrow, sluggish, and unimportant. When they were over Germany everyone leaned close to the windows, staring out as if they hoped to see something special. But the land looked the same as when they flew across France, summer green and rich . . . . Perhaps the roofs are steeper, she thought, but the land doesn't look any different. . . . Later someone said, "this is occupied territory," and again they pressed at the windows, expecting some change in the land to equal the change on the map. There was nothing to see. What are we looking for, she wondered, maybe a swastika painted on a roof? (3)

While for Wharton an imagined aerial view held out at least the promise of an escape from the disorienting vision of trench warfare, here, the disorientation brought about by Nazi Germany's military

conquests is only exacerbated by an actual aerial perspective. Like Wharton straining her eyes obediently for evidence of the enemy in Fighting France, the group on the airplane is looking for signs of the enemy's visible difference. This disjunction between retinal perception of a landscape and how that landscape is represented on maps establishes the novel's first instance of the immense limitations of vision under fascism, the impossibility of a comprehensive vision, even as vision is asserted as a primary tool of understanding political change and oppression.

This same kind of absence of signs and the failure or refusal of vision to account for or make sense of Nazi-enforced political boundaries is described in the middle of the novel, when Mary drives to the newly-drawn Czech-German frontier. In this scene, however, the confrontation between fascist signs and resisting vision becomes more pronounced, as the American observer encounters a gradually accumulating set of signs of the new political order. At first, Mary again encounters a frontier that is remarkable for its very invisibility:

> There was nothing wrong with the road, there was no sign up, there was nothing to tell you: but the road was condemned. The country had come to an end. . . .

"That is Germany now," . . . [the chauffeur] said, and pointed ahead.

"I don't understand."

He looked at her. "Nobody does. But if we drive on, after a while we will meet the German soldiers."

"But isn't there a frontier post or something, how do know where you are?"

"Sometimes there is. Not here." (111)

Mary's first encounter with some visible sign of the frontier is with a group of Czech civilians whose very act of looking at the frontier itself constitutes a confusing and alarming spectacle, as if the act of looking itself helped to constitute the frontier:

Then up ahead, they saw a group of people standing in the road. "What are they doing?" Mary asked. "What is happening here?"

"They are looking," the chauffeur said. (111-12)

The next piece of visible evidence that Mary sees underlines the arbitrary nature of political signs under the Nazi regime:

> No one talked. They stood in the road and stared at a piece of barbed wire that was pegged into the ground over the road and cut short on either side.
>
> "That's the frontier," the chauffeur explained.
>
> She looked at it with absolute unbelief. You do not simply peg up fifty feet of barbed wire and proclaim a new rule. You did not drive people from their homes or jail them or shoot them, confiscate property and deny their language and the old forms of life, and then lay down fifty feet of barbed wire to prove it. (112)

This act of looking, as it seems to actually reinforce the border, also creates a temporary collective of resisting vision of which Mary is a part. This collective vision of the Czech citizens participates in the text's larger project of inscribing the Czech victims of the invasion as subjects as well as objects of politicized sight:

> The people beside her were looking at the barbed wire with the same shocked, unbelieving faces. Why here? Why not farther ahead or farther behind? The land on the other side belonged to the land on this side; it had the same shape . . . .

> Oh, no, she told herself, I don't believe it. Why don't we lift the pegs ourselves and move the silly frontier . . . ?
>
> Then she saw the soldier. (112)

The resisting vision which refuses to see the difference in the landscape also focusses not only on the arbitrariness but on the paucity of the sign of the Nazis' political power. The barbed wire as a metonym for the invasion must be reinforced by the German soldier, who functions as another, more complex sign, one capable not only of signifying Nazi power but of a physical reinforcement of that power:

> The Czechs watched him, not saying anything, not moving, their faces blank and polite. The boy . . . tried to stare the Czechs down. . . . Mary Douglas stared at him, fascinated like the others, unbelieving. But he was true, he stood six feet in his field-gray uniform, with his square steel helmet and heavy boots and his rifle; he was part of the army that had overrun the land, and behind him lay Czechoslovakia . . . but now it was called Germany and he was on guard. . . . And she thought . . . . the land is exactly the same, on the other side of the barbed wire. (112-14)

The German soldier is identified first through metonymy and then synecdoche: he is identified with his equipment, the elements of his uniform (helmet, boots, rifle) and then with the army of which he is part. The soldier also represents another position on the map of political gazes that this text traces: the policing, threatening gaze of the Nazi regime (a gaze which grows more important to the narrative as the text progresses and to which I will return at the end of the chapter).

What the characters and readers of this scene are witnessing are the first visible signs of the Third Reich's political power, inscribed on the landscape before their eyes. Mary's and the readers' gaze moves from the utter absence of signs to the material sign of the barbed wire, then to the soldier: increasingly complex (and physically threatening) tropes for political borders and for the ability to reinforce those borders. This buildup of increasingly complex signs on/as the frontier might be understood in the context of Jeffrey Schnapp's claim that

> fascism required an aesthetic <u>overproduction</u>, a surfeit of fascist signs, images, slogans, books, and buildings, in order to compensate for, fill in, and cover up its forever unstable ideological core. (3)

The witnesses in the scene at the frontier are seeing not only signs of the fascist frontier, but the very frontier of fascist signs, the earliest stages of such sign (over)production, as if they were a theater audience watching not a play but its stage-set in the process of being built. However, I want to emphasize that these observers at the frontier of fascist signs are not passive spectators but, to use again Crary's terms, intensely regulated observers. The characters looking at the newly inscribed frontier are being inducted into a visuality that condenses the Nazi's power in Czechoslovakia to its simplest material signs: a piece of barbed wire, a helmet, a rifle. These are then perceived as part of an increasingly complex network of signs. A Stricken Field attempts in this scene to replicate for its American readers both the Third Reich's regulation of vision and the observer's act of resistance: the look that refuses to acknowledge the strict difference of land on either side of the new frontier.

In considering how the novel works as an antifascist text, I suggest that these visions of sameness, of the lack of visible difference between Nazi-occupied and "free" territory, are in fact not so much "failures" of "complete" vision as they are one way for A Stricken Field to counter an important element of Nazi ideology: the insistence on the imposition of strict boundaries, of visible, irreconcilable difference as a means of identifying, isolating, excoriating, and ultimately destroying the Other.

Under the Third Reich, that Other was identified in terms of political ideology, race, ethnicity, and gender. Linda Mizejewski writes that "[i]n the biological order that the Third Reich worked to attain, the visible differences of gender and race served to confirm a 'natural' hierarchy" (14). The absolute line between Germany and Czechoslovakia can be read as a geographic metaphor of the strict binary differences of race and gender which fascism sought to maintain in its specular search for "racial purity." Mizejewski claims that the it is the questioning of the reliability of the visible, particularly in the realm of ethnic difference, which acts to destabilize fascist boundaries of identity:

> The complication and frustration of the Reich's aim for visible, natural difference recurs in its aim for ethnic purity. Jewishness, unlike sex and race, is "invisible," and thus tests German fascism's privileging of visibility, the reliability of the image. (18)

In her foreword to Klaus Theweleit's Male Fantasies, Barbara Ehrenreich claims that leftist politics and female sexuality also presented a perceived threat to the stability of fascist signs: the breakdown of barriers "is what the fascist held himself in horror of, and what he saw in communism, in female sexuality" (xvii).

As an antifascist work, A Stricken Field precipitates a crisis over "the reliability of the image," writing the "failure" of seeing as a way to avoid its co-optation by a fascist visuality which requires its subjects to see inherent and permanent difference. The airplane and frontier scenes of the failure of "complete" vision (and the possibility that "failure" is a mode of resistance) prefigure later failures or blocks in the text's visual representations of both female sexuality and the Gestapo torture of political prisoners.

A Stricken Field removes crucial events--specifically, the sight of Nazi atrocities and torture--from the characters' and readers' line of sight, writing into the text heavily-marked absences of vision or "downcast eyes." In a dialogue in Chapter Two between Mary and her fellow journalists (all of whom are men, and almost all whom are American), there are several references to the witnessing of physical atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime, references marked by a conflict in or absence of visual representation. If the scene at the Czech-German frontier inscribes the gradual accumulation of signs of Nazi political power, this long dialogue among the journalists performs a different but equally important function, as if it were drawing an ever-smaller series of concentric circles around the witnessing of the most brutal of Gestapo acts, but finally always defers any visual representation of political atrocities. One of the American journalists,

describing his rescuing of his Czech chauffeur from a Nazi prison, says, "'I've seen people scared. . . . But this boy was scared of something you couldn't see'" (22). This underscoring of the absence of visual representation of Nazi atrocity, its invisibility to Western eyes, is intensified when another of Mary's colleagues tells her,

> "if you hang around the frontier . . . and go to the places the refugees are staying, . . . you will see things that will alarm and surprise you. In the way of messiness, I mean. You will also hear things that are worse, but you can't check them, so you have to throw them out." (23)

The unspecified, invisible presence of the things "you will see . . . that will alarm and disturb you" accumulates still further in this passage:

> "The only one who has seen a first-class atrocity," Tompkins said, "is Markton. . . . from the Daily Clarion. My paper wouldn't use it, but his gives him a bonus. And he's an honest lad; he wouldn't make it up, the way most of their men would. He really did see it."

> None of them asked to hear the story. . . . the others were shying away from it, as if they had heard too much, and seen too much . . . . (23-24)

Again, the absence of what the journalist has seen leaves a heavily marked gap in the text, both an insistence on and a removal of visual perception from the narrative. Like the emphatically-gestured-toward and always-deferred vision of war in Fighting France, acts of torture are indexed more and more in this novel, and this increased verbal pointing-toward serves to underscore the invisibility of Nazi atrocities in the narrative.

As the journalists' dialogue circles closer to a representation of the full force of Nazi brutality, the construction of the journalistic gaze also suggests that acts of seeing atrocities are construed as commodities, acts which simultaneously privilege the visual experiences of journalists of "free" countries and devalue what the Czech and German victims of the Third Reich see. This becomes especially clear when Thane, another of the journalists, tells to the group a brief biography of Rita. His narrative includes the Gestapo's torture and murder of her brother, who had published a Communist newspaper, in Germany several years before the events represented in the novel:

"They slapped her face so she'd keep her eyes open and watch it, and they kept it up with the belt buckle until they'd laid his kidneys bare and after a while he died."

"Right there?" the novelist said in a quiet voice. "Right there in front of her?"

"Right there in front of her." . . . .

"Some story," Tompkins said. "I wonder if I could use it anyway?"

"There must be about five thousand others, as a minimum, just like it in Prague alone," Thane said. (28-29)

This passage establishes Rita's identity in the act of witnessing torture and in the transformation of that witnessing not only into a narrative that might or might not be "used" but that is representative of thousands of similar stories--and therefore "unusable." Her status as a seeing-subject is, in other words, understood in so far as it is subject to control and torture by the fascist regime and as it is representative of a collective, "unusable" narrative of the fascist control of vision, devalued in the economy of journalistic narrative.

The journalist's devaluing of Rita's status as a witness, as a seeing-subject, because of her political identity as a refugee and a communist is also intimately connected to gender and sexuality, to Rita as the object

of a male political and sexual gaze: "'What does she look like?' Tom Lambert said. 'Like nothing,' Thane said. 'Like a she-communist'" (29). Thane's characterization of what Rita "looks like" attempts both to render her invisible (she looks like nothing) and, in calling her a "she-communist," to identify her as a part of a political collective in a way that both genders and dehumanizes, as if "communist" were some form of animal life. Another implication of Thane's statement is that while he emphasizes Rita's gender, he de-emphasizes her sexuality: to "look like nothing" could easily translate as "to fit no requisite standards of female beauty and, by extension, sexual value." However, Thane's description of Rita as looking "like nothing" also suggests the threatening invisibility of female sexuality, the "nothing-to-be-seen" that marks sexual difference in psychoanalytic theory. In Thane's description, the "nothing" that constitutes Rita as the object of his gaze is a gendered, politicized, and sexualized nothing.

This gendering and politicizing male gaze is paralleled and countered by Mary's silent response to the question of what Rita looks like, as she attempts to recuperate Rita as an object of a sexualizing female gaze. Mary remembers two encounters with Rita: the first had taken place before the invasion, just after Rita's release from a German prison and her immigration to Prague; the second has taken place earlier in the evening, an encounter described in the novel's first chapter and to

which I'll return in more detail later in the chapter. Mary's memory of the two encounters is as follows:

> In May, Mary thought, Rita didn't really have a face: just eyes, a mouth, a nose . . . . But she was wonderful to look at anyway, or why did we all keep turning towards her corner, when she never said a word. She had something none of us had, certainly. This evening . . . when she said, "Now I go home," she wasn't pretty. Only you wished you could look like that yourself; you knew with envy how the way she looked would enter in to the man waiting for her; you wanted to . . . touch her and take for yourself what she had behind her skin, behind her eyes. . . . Mary thought, with scorn, a man who knew anything about women would know what she looks like. (30)

The last few lines offer a shifting series of different locations for sexual desire and identification through vision: Mary remembers her own and "our" looking at Rita, imagines herself in the position of a man looking at Rita, and wants to look like, and be looked at like, Rita. In each of these looks, Rita is an object of a female gaze which constitutes "knowledge" about women which Mary's male colleague does not (but should) possess. What do these shifting gazes have to do with the Rita

described only a few lines earlier as the forced witness of her own brother's death, as a witness subject to the most dehumanizing and terrifying control of her own vision? How do all these looks (the enforced gaze on/as torture, the gendering and politicizing look of the male journalist, Mary's shifting series of sexualizing gazes) establish parameters of sexual and political vision in response to fascism?

Mediating the extremes of the political and sexual gazes which are set in motion in the above passage is, as if in answer to the male journalist's "nothing," "something": whatever it is that made "us" (American observers) look at her. "Something" marks the visual territory where the political and sexual overlap. It marks as well the difference between what the American observer can see and what she can't, which is the very territory where so much of the narrative exists. Fiction, as opposed to reportage, is what allows Gellhorn even to begin to map out this border territory between political and sexual, between visible and invisible, between the American witness's visual subjectivity and that of a German communist.

In order to try and define further the "something" that connects all the looks which circulate around Rita and Rita's own gaze, one might benefit from at least a rough map of the iconography of female communists in the fascist imagination; an important source for this is Theweleit's Male Fantasies. Part of Theweleit's work documents the

place occupied by the "Red woman" (xiv) in the writings of members of the Freikorps, the World War I military elite, many of whom went on to fight revolutionary communists in Germany in the interwar years and eventually to enter the upper-echelon of the Nazi party and the S.A. The female communist is the "Rifle-women," the "'proletarian whore'" of the Red Army who represents to what Theweleit calls the "soldier males" a chain of threatening signifiers which circle around female sexuality and the dangerous politics with which it is associated: the conflated threats of uncontrolled sexuality, filth, the loss of boundaries, violence, castration, and communism (70-79). Theweleit traces one chain of sexual and political meanings found in writings by Freikorps members: "Erotic male-female relationship--violent, unfeeling woman--threat to the man--dirt, vulgarity--prostitution--proletarian woman--communism" (70). Theweleit claims that for the early fascist soldiers the "Red woman" is "a natural catastrophe, a freak. The sexuality of the proletarian woman/gun slinging whore/communist is out to castrate and shred men to pieces" (76).

In addition to these fantasies of the "Red woman," there is another problem concerning representations of female sexuality in relation to fascism in this period. Mizejewski's analysis examines how in both pre-war and post-war U.S. and British fiction, film, and theater, the rise of German fascism was troped not only in terms of Nazi spectacle but the

spectacle of the Weimar Berlin "show girl," the "Sally Bowles" figure first found in Christopher Isherwood's 1939 story of that name. Mizejewski writes that beginning with Isherwood's Sally and continuing through later American and British post-war representations, "[v]isibility is situated as a crisis that is both sexual and political, in that the hidden nature of female sexuality is conflated with the hidden sexual secret of Nazi Germany" (17-18).

It is the conflation of female sexual spectacle and political threat--whether from the left or the right--that A Stricken Field works to resist. The American male observer's ambivalent look at the "she-communist" who "looks like nothing" denies her sexuality even as it insists upon a sexuality that is both dehumanized and potentially politically threatening. As an antifascist text, then, the novel counters not only the fascist's terror of the "Red woman" but also an American (male) reader's potential suspicion of the threatening politics "hidden" in female sexuality. It does so partly in it attempts to represent Rita's sexuality without spectacle and without specularization, a project which requires significant gaps or breaks in vision and visual description in the narrative.

The problem of what Rita looks like leads to one of the most difficult projects of this novel: to represent the European victims of Nazi rule, particularly Rita, not only as objects of a sympathetic

American observer's sight but subjects of sight. This project is an extremely conflicted one, given the restraints, torture, and loss to which Rita's vision is subject. (The difficulties of representing fascism's victims as seeing subjects is worked out not only in the text's treatments of Rita's visual experiences of torture but also in a brief parable- like section of Chapter 7 which is narrated from the point of view of an elderly blind woman from the Sudetenland living in a refugee camp outside Prague.) I want to invoke DeLauretis' claim that at stake in feminist criticism is "not so much how 'to make visible the invisible' as how to produce the conditions of visibility for a different social subject" (8). Gellhorn's novel, in its attempt to inscribe Rita as object and subject of sight, sets in motion both aspects of this project--and ultimately demonstrates its limits within the visuality imposed by Nazi rule. These conditions of visibility are, as it were, in the dark, most effectively produced through a blocking of vision, through blindness, darkness, and not-seeing.

In the text's very first encounter with Rita, even before readers or Mary are aware of her having witnessed her brother's death, she is understood in terms of vision. Mary's first-chapter meeting with Rita on a Prague street establishes important associations between vision, sexuality, and politics. Having last seen Rita five months earlier, just after Rita's release from a German prison, Mary now "saw what could be

seen at once," Rita's new clothes and well-cut hair, and she thinks, "but what has changed her, she looks so well" (15). A brief narrative shift to Rita's point of view suggests not only her own pleasure in being so looked at but that this pleasure is indirectly associated with political freedom:

> A week ago she had bought a lipstick no larger than a capsule for five pennies, and at last she had dared smear some of it on her mouth. It was the wrong color but she did not know, and only saw herself as brilliant and gay, with a face she need not hide. She saved the lipstick now, not wanting to squander it, or use it for every day. She wished that she had worn some this evening for Mary to see. (15)

These lines do not allow Rita's point of view complete narrative control; the third-person narrator intrudes on Rita's point of view ("It was the wrong color but she did not know") as if Rita were a child playing at being a grown-up woman. There are several possible effects of this narrative intrusion, depending on the political character of the novel's readers: one is to make Rita's character un-threatening to American readers fearful of communist politics; another is to critique how other readers might underestimate Rita's abilities or view her

politics as naive, much as Thane does in his narrative of Rita and her brother:

> "Of course they were crazy, the way honest Communists are, you know, believing in it like the second coming of Christ. . . . They were just little intellectuals who worked for a better world." (27)

Both attitudes toward Rita are overturned later in the novel as the text eventually requires the reader to trust absolutely Rita and her visual experience. Another possible effect of the narrative intrusion is to see Rita's unfamiliarity with lipstick and her self-conscious use of it as an emphasis on miming, on the act of display, on making visible the performance of the signs of female sexuality and associating it with political freedom--"a face she need not hide."[6]

The connection between Rita's willingness to be seen and the dangers of her political position are underscored when Mary remembers her very first meeting with Rita five months earlier, just after Rita's release from prison, a memory which acknowledges the dangers of visibility to a refugee:

> Rita seemed to fear that sooner or later they [American journalists in Prague] would use what they knew of her, and identify her . . .

> and she kept distrust of everyone. All she wanted then, Mary had guessed, was to disappear, . . . not to be noticed ever again, not to be caught." (17)

The connection between how Rita looks now, her willingness to be seen, her politics, and her sexuality is further elaborated in this scene in Mary's reflection on Rita's statement, "Now I go home":

> She said "home" shyly . . . , as if it were a rare word, and one that she wanted Mary to hear. If it weren't so idiotic, Mary told herself, I'd begin to imagine that she has a fine house, a fine husband, four fine children and at least a British passport. (17)

The series of impossible positions that Mary imagines for Rita--a wife, a mother, a property-owner, a citizen of a country outside of the Third Reich--suggests how gender and governmental politics are intimately connected. Rita, as refugee and a communist, is denied the status of wife and mother which would constitute her as a woman in the Third Reich.[7] The narrative requires that the readers accept Rita as a woman without the socially-recognized signs of female citizenship within patriarchy.

The chapter closes with further connection between Rita's visibility, her "home" life, her sexuality, and her political status when Mary thinks, "Rita's not a refugee anymore. It's finished. She's lost that floating, empty-hearted look they have. She's happy. That's the same thing as having a country, anyhow" (18).

This encounter between Mary and Rita, with its crossing of their points of view, establishes a chain of political, sexual, and visual meanings that I would juxtapose with--and view as a possible answer to--the one Theweleit uses to track the signification of the "Red woman." This chain of significance would link performance of "femaleness," sexual and political visibility, having a home, and democracy. If Rita's status as a refugee separates her from the signs of "safe" (both in fascist and non-fascist culture) womanhood (marriage, motherhood, home), the text attempts to reinscribe Rita's sexuality and indirectly relate it to democracy. Part of the novel's work as an antifascist text is its insistence on rendering Rita's sexuality un-threatening for an American readership, associating it with political freedom--in other words, making a "Red woman's" sexuality safe for democracy.

* * *

As I have suggested earlier, like the perception of combat in Fighting France and A Hilltop on the Marne, the ultimate and always deferred visual referent for the female observers (and by extension, the

readers) of this text is the unseen fact of torture. Two crucial events of the narrative, events which frame Rita's presence in the text, are scenes of death-by-torture by Nazi agents. The first, as we have seen, is that of Rita's brother, an event which has already occurred at the time of narration. The second, occurring near the end of the novel, is the death of Rita's lover, Peter, another German Communist refugee working on an underground party paper in Prague. However, the visual experience which is central to Rita's character and to the narrative is outside the narrative's and readers' direct line of vision. Along with Thane's narrative, there are several other references to her witnessing of her brother's death, each of them narrated from Rita's point of view and each, like the English journalist's sight of atrocity, kept invisible.

In the middle of the novel, Rita recounts to Peter a dream which underlines the mortal dangers of vision, of being both a subject and object of sight, under fascism. It also demonstrates the text's capacity for both representing and leaving inaccessible Rita's visual experience:

> "I was running through the streets--first it was Prague--everybody turned and stared at me but if they stared at me that showed the others who I was and I begged them as I ran not to look at me--please don't look at me--then it was Berlin and I went into a bakery at the corner of my father's street and begged them to hide me but

they said no, no, and waved their arms and were afraid and said go away from here . . . then I ran and all the doors closed in my face--then I ran down a long corridor and I never saw what was behind me and I came into the room."

The room: the dreams always ended here.

"They were standing there in their uniforms and smiling and smiling and there was a big light in the ceiling and they looked at me and laughed and then I saw what was behind them."

"No," he said. "Do not speak of it, Rita." (96)

For a victim of the Gestapo, danger is troped in terms of vision. To be open to the looks of people is to be exposed to mortal, unspecified danger and to the utter control of what is seen. And again, Rita's visual experience is outside the narrative's line of sight; what she sees is not (cannot be?) contained by the text. The dream is a parable of how fascism attempts to invade and control the entire visual field (and by extension, subjectivity), as it traces Rita's movement through object and subject positions in her flight back toward the heart of fascist visuality and brutality, a primal scene left glaringly absent from the narrative. The dream suggests the political necessity of the text's "downcast eyes," of refusing to expose the potential victim of fascism to the dangers of a look that specularizes and destroys. The dream also suggests that

perhaps the only subject who can--or would want to--"see all of it" or be open to being looked at by the eyes in Rita's dream is the subject of a fascist visual agenda, a subject and object of voracious political surveillance. Concerning the German majority during the Nazi era, Elsaesser writes,

> Might not the pleasure of fascism, its fascination, have been less the sadism and brutality of S.S. officers than the pleasure of being seen, of placing oneself in view of the all-seeing eye of the State? Fascism in its Imaginary encouraged a moral exhibitionism, as it encouraged denunciation and mutual surveillance. (545)

In complying with Peter's request not to speak of it, Rita keeps her final vision out of the text--another way in which the novel offers a "failure" of sight as a response to fascist visuality.

In yet another passage in the middle of the novel, the text again traces the effects of being both a subject and object of vision under fascism and both foregrounds and absents Rita's visual experience of torture when Rita thinks:

> The ones who die violently always look tired, she thought. She had seen a woman in her prison who died after being too long in the

> basement cells; she had not been beaten, but perhaps what went on in her brain before she died was the violence. She had seen her brother on the floor under the bright light. She had seen... (153; ellipses in the original)

This memory, like the dream, creates another gap around the sight of torture, another space held open for the reader to imagine--and finally to trust--Rita's sight. For the novel's readers, it is literally blind trust of what Rita has seen that is crucial to the readers' own participation in the antifascist work of the novel. The long and profoundly disturbing penultimate chapter which includes Peter's death is narrated from Rita's point of view and describes her arriving, through information gotten from her fellow party members, at a Prague house where Peter is being held by Nazi police. Rita manages to get into the basement of the house in a series of exhausting and traumatic moves (climbing over fences, crawling through tiny passages, sliding down a coal chute) that takes ten pages to narrate. In the dark she hears through a furnace pipe the interrogation and torture enacted in the room above. The representation of an almost complete absence of vision is crucial to the chapter. Rita's completely auditory experience of Peter's death is an act against his disappearance, even as Peter's removal from the text's (i.e., Rita's and the reader's) sight underlines that disappearance.

What Rita hears in this chapter are the voices of Gestapo officers interrogating Peter, the sounds of weapons being used on him, and Peter's nonverbal sounds of physical pain. The text occasionally refers directly to Rita's visual imagination ("She had seen it all; she knew how the room looked" [268]) or her refusal to imagine ("She would not think how that face looked" [265]), asking the reader to trust a visual experience not accessible to the narrative. But the text accomplishes this request most often and most effectively through the almost complete absence of visual description and a reliance instead on hearing in the part of the chapter that narrates Peter's death.

Removing these scenes of torture from the text's direct line of sight has several possible and contradictory effects on its American readers, and I will be referring here to Elaine Scarry's powerful analysis of the structure of torture in The Body in Pain to help delineate those effects.

On the one hand, by refusing to make the reader "look" at the scene of Peter's death, the text refuses to replicate (and thereby lodges a textual protest against) the totalitarian control and torture of vision. According to Scarry, the display of a weapon, making it a focussed and forced object of sight, is central to the structure of torture:

> What assists the conversion of absolute pain into the fiction of absolute power is an obsessive, self-conscious display of agency. On the simplest level, the agent displayed is the weapon. (27)

By screening the scene of torture from readerly view, the text refuses to participate in or mimic torture's display. At the same time, however, the text replicates, enacts, or implements for the reader the loss of control of vision that is the fate of the victims of nazism. Gellhorn's readers best learn the experience of Nazism's victims through the loss of vision. If, as the dialogue between journalists suggests, the sight of atrocity (rendered in visually descriptive language) is only a journalistic commodity, loss of vision becomes the best way for American readers to "see" the effects of Nazism.

Following her claim about the display of agency in torture, Scarry writes:

> whatever the regime's primary weapon, it is only one of many weapons and its display is only one of many endlessly multiplied acts of display: torture is a process which not only converts but announces the conversion of every available aspect of the event and the environment into an agent of pain. . . . torture is a grotesque piece of compensatory drama. (27-28)

For whom is the "grotesque compensatory drama" of torture performed? Who is its audience? Scarry notes that the language used by many regimes has emphasized the "theatrical" nature of torture (for example, referring to the room in which torture takes place as the "production room," the "cinema room," the "blue lit stage" [28]) but leaves open this question of torture's audience. The grotesque drama that is torture is a closed drama, a closet drama, consisting only of actors (those who torture) and those who are acted upon (the prisoner). A person, such as represented by Rita, forced to witness the act of torture seems to me to be less an audience (which suggests the passivity of Crary's spectator) than another victim of torture. It is narrative representations which can open the scene of torture to an audience--or, as in the case of A Stricken Field, open it only part way, through hearing rather than sight. The audience in the novel's scene of torture (Rita and the readers) are auditors, rather than spectators, and it is through such hearing that the readers and characters are constructed as resisting observers of the fascist regime in Czechoslovakia. In the harrowing reading experience of A Stricken Field's penultimate chapter, Rita's and the reader's listening in the dark is the "scene" of Nazi atrocity.

It is the construction of its readers as historically situated observers, readers who will participate in the text's antifascist work through this contradictory appeal to and withdrawal of vision during the

Nazi period, that allows A Stricken Field to offer a different analysis of the connections between torture, vision, language, and resistance than the one offered here by Scarry:

> Almost anyone looking at the physical act of torture would be immediately appalled and repulsed by the torturers. It is difficult to think of a human situation is which the lines of moral responsibility are more starkly drawn . . . . Yet as soon as the focus of attention shifts to the verbal aspect of torture those lines have begun to waver and change their shape in the direction of accommodating and crediting the torturers. (35)

Scarry is referring specifically to two very serious problems in cultural perceptions of torture and the verbal interrogation which almost invariably accompanies it: 1) inadvertently admitting a "motive" for torture in the torturer's claim that the infliction of physical pain is in service of seeking information and 2) inadvertently discrediting a victim of torture who does confess and therefore "betray." Scarry rightly claims that "[t]he one is an absolution of responsibility; the other is a conferring of responsibility; the two together turn the moral reality of torture upside down" (35). In Scarry's analysis, this unreflecting perception of interrogation's role in torture, encouraged by any regime which inflicts

torture, serves not only to deflect attention away from the central, overwhelming fact of physical pain but also indirectly serves the torturing regime.

If what Scarry claims is true, how can A Stricken Field, with its textual absence of the sight of torture, its "scene" of torture consisting almost exclusively of its verbal aspects, work against torture? I would say that it does so through leaving the traces of Rita's vision in the narrative, through those marked absences of and underscored gaps in vision--in other words, through the inscription of vision under erasure. The text more effectively represents for its American readers the loss of vision (and control of subjectivity) experienced by the victims of Nazism without running the risk of reproducing the controlling effects of fascist visuality. The text manages, through its contradictory use of vision, to make "visible" but to refuse to specularize the scene of torture, just as it makes visible but refuses to specularize Rita's sexuality. The effect of this refusal to participate in specularization either of sexuality or extreme bodily pain is the text's best way of constructing its readers as antifascist observers.

* * *

The novel's last few chapters provide a brief glimpse for its readers of the power of the gaze of state surveillance. Both Rita and Mary are objects within the visual field of "the all-seeing eye of the

State," but the differences in their positions under surveillance are important. The last appearance of Rita in the novel is when, after climbing out of the basement of the house in which Peter has just been killed, she sits on a bench near a river. Rita's devastation is troped in terms of vision: "She sat there . . . . unmoving, staring ahead, seeing nothing" (275). The remainder of the chapter, about two pages, is narrated from the point of view of the local Czech police officer who finds Rita on the bench:

> He passed . . . and noticed the extra darkness where she was. He came close and spoke and pulled out his flashlight and shone it on her face. . . . By the hair, it was a woman. But where would a woman have come from with a face like that? . . . . But it was her eyes that he could not understand. They were wide open and they blinked in the light, they were not blind, but they were as flat, lifeless and hard as stone. (275)

The police officer, finding out that Rita is a German refugee, initiates the procedure that will send her back to Germany by taking her to the local police station. This passage leaves Rita as the unseeing object of official surveillance (a surveillance that will, a reader imagines, be ultimately responsible for her death): "He walked behind her. He

wanted to keep his eye on her, to make sure she didn't do anything to get him into trouble" (277). Rita's point of view literally disappears from the novel; she is seen (both visually and in the narrative) through the policeman's eyes.

Mary is briefly subject to a version of this kind of policing gaze. At the customs counter at the airport as she is leaving Czechoslovakia, smuggling out in her purse eyewitness narratives of the Nazi invasion (documents attesting to the dangers as well as the importance of vision for the victims of the Third Reich), she sees two men behind the customs officials

> who did not move or speak. They had looked at all the passengers, slowly, with no expression on their faces and no change in their steady, impersonal eyes. You could see their eyes examining, carefully, feature by feature, each man and woman who stood by the counter. The two men did not shift their positions or take their hands out of their pockets. They were as controlled and quiet as animals, and their unwinking flat eyes were strange to see. . . . She turned away. She did not want to see them. Looking at their eyes and mouths, she could feel a prickle run down her back. . . . She knew their eyes were the real danger in the room. (294-95)

The eyes of government surveillance are the last thing Mary experiences in Czechoslovakia, just as the gaze of the policeman is the last the text tells of Rita. In both cases, the seeing subjects under fascism (both its victims and its agents) are subject to a dehumanization that is recognized in the way they see, by the looks in their eyes. However, the two agents at the airport are described from Mary's point of view, while Rita's point of view, her very ability to see, (like Rita herself) has (been) disappeared. That disappearance is known to the readers, but not to Mary, whose point of view frames the novel. The closing paragraph reenacts the opening scene of looking at the same aerial view with which the novel opens:

> Mary Douglas stared down at the neat fields . . . . There were the white roads and the white farmhouses and the . . . trees. But the land doesn't look any different, she thought. The land doesn't look any different at all. (302)

The text is framed by Mary's act of looking--a failure of vision which is also a possible recuperation of vision, as the American observer again exercises a kind of visual resistance to the Nazi invasion and it newly imposed boundaries. However, Mary's own lack of knowledge of what has happened to Rita and Peter, her ignorance of what the reader has

"seen," renders ironic the text's framing by the gaze of the American female observer and calls into question her ability to adequately "frame," to contain, or to represent (in the sense not only of representation in language but also in the political sense, to speak for) the brutalizing of vision, bodies, and subjectivity under fascism.

When the refugees in the novel attempt to represent themselves in language, through the telling and transcribing of eyewitness narratives, their ability to do so is undercut by the mediation of official "observers," journalists like Mary who are in turn subject to restrictions on what they can represent. The eyewitness narratives which Mary carries out of the country are themselves signs of the questioning to which vision-represented-in-language is subject in this novel. Reading over the narratives in her hotel room, Mary both acknowledges the enormous importance and "power of two or three typewritten pages that tell the truth" (285) and questions how they will be read or "used" by readers outside the Third Reich:

> if I called in . . . everybody and let them make copies, they couldn't use it. I can't use it. We wouldn't be believed. We'd be accused of propaganda, the way we always are. (287).

Like the medieval chronicles which Hayden White analyzes and which the novel's epigraph's invoke, A Stricken Field "breaks off in medias res, in the chronicler's own present; it leaves things unresolved" (White 5). The dual sense of the power and "uselessness" of eyewitness narratives indirectly gesture toward the novel's readers' ability and willingness not only to imagine the sight of others but to engage with and possibly respond to the language of others. Referring to the work of organizations such as Amnesty International, Elaine Scarry has written that those who respond to the fact of torture in language, who "use language to let pain give an accurate account of itself" create the possibility that the language user "willingly turns himself into an image of the other's psychic or sentient claims, an image existing in the space outside the sufferer's body" (50). Perhaps the American reader in 1940 of A Stricken Field is left with only this possibility as a response to the brutality of fascist visuality, ideology, and practice: the possibility of a response in language informed by an imagining of the downcast eyes of the female Other, eyes which leave a politicized vision and language for readers to see to.

Notes

1. See Doenecke for a discussion of American interventionist and anti-interventionist organizations and rhetoric in 1940-41. The focus of his

study is the set of documents produced by the American First Committee, an anti-interventionist organization, documents which he reproduces extensively.

2. See Martin Jay's "The Rise of Hermeneutics and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism" and Downcast Eyes and W.J.T. Mitchell's Iconology on the history of the conflict between word and image in critical and philosophical discourse. Both Jay and Mitchell are interested in the interaction of word and image and in questioning the necessity for privileging one over the other. I also find encouraging in this context Norman Bryson's suggestions for a criticism that moves beyond a Lacanian notion of the monolithic Gaze. He suggests that in studying the social construction of vision,

> What is at stake is the discovery of a politics of vision. Which is finally why one might want to query the paranoid or terrorist coloration that Lacan gives the Gaze. . . . it is a bit easier, since Lacan, to think of visuality as something built cooperatively, over time; that we are therefore responsible for it, ethically accountable. Yet Lacan seems . . . to view the subject's entry in to the social arena of visuality as intrinsically disastrous. . . . Against this someone else might say: the degree of terror depends on how power is distributed within that construct once it is built, and on where one is made to stand inside it. . . . Terror comes from the way that sight is constructed in relation to power, and powerlessness.

Bryson proposes "analyses, many of them, of how power uses the social construct of vision, visuality. And also how power disguises and conceals its operations in visuality, in myths of pure form, pure perception, and culturally universal vision" (107-08). I hope that this chapter provides one such analysis. See also Chapter 5, below, which looks more closely at the Lacanian Gaze and some alternative models to that Gaze (as described by Bryson) in the World War Two writing of H.D.

3. On the Nazi party's use of visual art, see, for example, Peter Adam, Art of the Third Reich (New York: Harry Abrams, 1992) and the catalogues from two museum exhibits: "Assault on the Arts: Culture and Politics in Nazi Germany" (The New York Public Library, February 27-May 28, 1993) and "'Degenerate Art': The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany" (Smithsonian Institute, October 16-January 5, 1992).

4. This is also the case with much of Gellhorn's wartime journalism: her pronoun shifts often make it impossible to draw strict boundaries around the identities of character, reader, and writer, or around soldiers,

civilians, and military observers. See her reports in Collier's, listed in Rollyson's bibliography, many of which are reproduced in The Face of War and The View from the Ground.

5. As the title and subtitle of his recent book indicate, Jay uses the figure of "downcast eyes" to represent "the denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought." I want again to emphasize, as I have in my Introduction, that for Gellhorn, as for the other artists whose work is studied here, what is "denigrated" is not vision itself, but the particular and heavily gender-inflected tradition of specularity.

6. See Chapter 5 below for another version of the performance of female subjectivity in wartime.

7. See Bridenthal et. al. and Koonz.

Chapter 4

Vision, Violence, and Vogue: War and Correspondence in Lee Miller's Photography

I. Introduction: War Correspondences

In this chapter I want to read Lee Miller's war correspondence and photography for Vogue magazine in order to explore how she constructed herself and her predominantly female audience as observers of the "European theater of operations" (Lee Miller's War 203--hereafter LMW). Miller's wartime photographs can, I think, best be understood as working both with and against some of the conventions of surrealist and fashion photography, genres to which her work was closely connected and which formed a nexus for the construction of the wartime female subject for Miller as an artist and for her female audience. The issue in reading and viewing Miller's war correspondence is, indeed, correspondence--not only between her work and these other visual discourses, but also between subject and object, in the complex interplay between the female viewer and the represented human figures who can be read as both seeing subjects and visual objects in her photographs.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Jacobus suggests that the textual model of letters rests on an interplay of identity and difference between correspondents. My aim is to explore how Miller's representations of bodies and spaces during the war evoke, dismantle, and rearrange the

specular subject-object relations central to both fashion and surrealist photography. Miller's photographs establish for her Vogue audience the possibility of a correspondence, but it is an often tense, difficult, and contradictory interplay of identity and difference between seeing subject and visual object. This correspondence is centrally concerned with the perception of the gendered body and the gendered viewer as they are affected by the war and by the most extreme effects of Nazism: by the radical damage done to bodies and the complex ways that damage is kept in view.

Miller's case is an especially valuable one for exploring the diverse set of discourses for the construction of the female subject in the war and pre-war years because of her own participation as a model and as a photographer in French Surrealism and in the New York fashion industry of the late 1920's and mid-thirties. Born in Poughkeepsie in 1907, Miller worked as fashion model in New York, photographed by Edward Steichen, among others, for Conde Nast publications. She went to Paris in 1929, lived with the photographer Man Ray, and both worked as his model and as a photographer, exhibiting her work in Paris galleries. In 1932, she returned to New York and opened a studio with her brother. In 1934, she married an Egyptian businessman, living with him in Egypt and Europe. She eventually separated from him to live in London with the writer and artist Roland Penrose. She became a member of the British

Vogue staff in 1940 and was the magazine's European correspondent in 1944 and 1945. During the war, her photographs and reportage were published in both British and American Vogue.[1]

Miller's relation to photography was, in other words, that of both seer and seen, as she worked on both sides of the camera within cultural moments and milieus that were concerned with representing the female body--either for a male or a female viewer--and with collapsing the distance between the seeing subject and its visual object. Before looking at Miller's wartime photographs (including her fashion shots taken immediately after the liberation of Paris), I want to explore her work with the surrealists. This exploration will, I hope, prove valuable for what it can reveal about subject/object relations or correspondences, especially as set in motion by the representation of the gendered body--issues crucial to Miller's work during the war.

II. Disarming Surrealism

> First and foremost, surrealism teaches relations and the art of interacting. (Caws 72)

Miller's work with the surrealists both as model and photographer--the oscillation between seeing and being seen, between functioning as an icon and as a constructor of vision, representing and being represented--makes the photographic work in which she participated well suited to exploring surrealist aesthetics and its

problematic relation to gendered subjectivity and the representation of the female body. Mary Ann Caws writes that central to the agenda of surrealist visuality was the ideal of conflating or joining the seeing subject and its object, "the exchange of the organ of vision with the object beheld," "the interchange between the surrealist seeing and seen" (90), an overcoming of "the split between . . . visionary and view" (112).[2] Caws expresses a deep suspicion of this desire to collapse subject and object when the surrealist visual object is the female body and the seeing subject is a female viewer:

> all distance is to be suppressed between seeing and the object seen, between the look of desire and the prey . . . . Unless the female--for it is usually she--submits actively to such a state, giving what is in any case taken by the male, she will have no role except enforced submission. The prise de vue, that expert taking of the view, that shooting of the model, is a one-way venture, far from the erotics of exchange, open only to a willing relation of dominator and dominated. (119)

For Caws, this "willing relation of dominator and dominated" implicates the female viewer as well as the male: "insofar as it is a question of women's bodies, the female onlooker is--willingly or not, partially or

wholly--identified with the body under observation and under the rule of art" (112).

Caws briefly examines as one example of this aspect of surrealist visuality a Man Ray photograph of Lee Miller (whom Caws identifies only as "a live female model") wearing "a wire mesh hat" which covers her head, face, and neck almost completely, save for an opening on one side, which reveals the left ear and some hair (Caws 115). Caws characterizes the image as one of "female entrapment," and a "submission to . . . netting and . . . capture." Miller, looking out at the viewer from the enclosing wire mesh grid, is described as "a prey who is rendered simultaneously mute and speaking of objecthood" (114).

I agree with Caws's reading of the image, which she places next to other Surrealist images of female entrapment which invite (or, rather, demand) that the female viewer occupy either a position of submission along with the model or of complicity with the dominating gaze of the male photographer. However, I want to set this photograph next to one taken by Miller herself in order to see how in her early photography she might be participating in a dialogue of dissent with her Surrealist mentor over representing the female body and over the distance or proximity between subject and object. Her "Nude with a Wire Mesh Sabre Guard," taken in 1930, the same year as the Man Ray photograph, uses the same prop, the wire mesh, now placed on the left arm and shoulder of a

female model, who is seen in profile, her neck slightly arched, her eyes looking up, her shoulder-length hair brushing and covering a piece of the mesh at the shoulder. Like the Man Ray shot, the wire mesh occupies the place of an article of clothing, but here, the metallic object seems to be worn lightly, like a cloak draped on one shoulder. It follows the curve of the model's shoulder, arm, and breast, whereas in the Man Ray photograph the wire mesh "hat" imposes, or rather superimposes, its own shape on Miller's head. Is the female body, so well fitted with this sabre guard, then, a weapon, rather than a prey? My sense is rather that the object that speaks of capture in the Man Ray photograph is now something that actually speaks more of potentially free movement, both for the model understood as the representation of subjectivity, and for the viewer of the photograph. The angle of the woman's head and face direct the line of sight out of and away from the mesh, almost as if the mesh were some shell or carapace about to be shed, the cloak about to be dropped. Miller's photograph functions to evoke not a visual vocabulary of capture or threat but rather a <u>disarming</u> of the viewer posited by the Man Ray image. The wire mesh on the woman's shoulder and arm could be said to reinscribe the distance between seer and seen which Surrealism wanted to collapse. As cloak and carapace and weapon guard, the wire mesh, though permeable and partial (perhaps because permeable and partial), is also a shield, a visual interruption for the

viewer that leaves the both the viewer and the woman pictured unencumbered, constituted in and by difference.[3]

This appropriation of what in a different visual context is a constraint, rendering it a fitting garment easily shed, a shield lightly worn, establishes one version of a surrealist image that allows liberatory possibilities to the female subject imagined on either side of the lens. Caws finds a slightly different version of surrealist juxtaposition most liberating for the female subject: "the free exchange of the ideas of possible images" (127)--in other words, a kind of correspondence, the union not of viewer and object but rather of disparate objects within the frame of the photograph, such as the body with nature. Caws's examples of such a surrealist practice are two Man Ray photographs of, again, Lee Miller: "The Return to Reason" and an untitled photograph (Figs. 3 and 4). Both represent a female torso near a window, the skin surface marked, seemingly imprinted, by shadows from a translucent curtain. In "The Return to Reason" the shadows form a pattern of stripes and circles most reminiscent of an animal's markings; in the untitled shot, the shadows form a fine grid or mesh. Caws writes that in these photographs

> In no way is the body deformed--it is rather augmented by its natural possibilities. Thus do we learn about merging the one with

> the other . . . one object is considered as augmented by the other and each rendered more interesting: their union is not forced but imaginative, and multiple in its possibilities. (127)

Caws goes on to say that the photos "in encouraging the juxtaposition of the notions of superimposed pattern and evident freedom . . . celebrate . . . the play of the intellect in relation to the body" (128).

These two Man Ray shots of Miller (along with a variation of the untitled picture, part of a triptych in which the photos are not cropped at the neck but instead show Miller's face as well as her torso as she stands by a curtained window [figure 5]) are the very photographs that Rosalind Krauss uses as examples of the surrealist fascination with what she terms "mimicry," after the work of the surrealist writer and sociologist Roger Caillois. Caillois studied the ways in which animals camouflage themselves, "mimicking" their surroundings, not so much as an act of self-protection but as a kind of "psychosis":

> The life of an organism depends on the possibility of its own distinctness, a boundary within which it is contained, the terms of what we could call its self possession. Mimicry . . . is the loss of this possession, because the animal that merges with its setting becomes dispossessed, derealized, as though yielding to a

> temptation exercised on it by the vast outsideness of space itself, a temptation to fusion. (74)

Caillois used the phenomenon of animal mimicry as a metaphor for schizophrenia in humans; Krauss sees the achieving or at least the representation of this condition "in which boundaries are indeed broken and distinctions truly blurred" (74) as one of the aims of Surrealist visual practice, best embodied by the Man Ray photographs of Miller:

> If the effect of mimicry is the inscription of space on the body of an organism, then this is . . . the theme of one of the very first photographs ever to be published by the movement: Man Ray's "The Return to Reason". . . where the nude torso of a woman is shown as if submitting to possession by space. It is an image to which Man Ray was to return several times throughout the 1920's, most lyrically in a triptych of Lee Miller before a window. (74)

Krauss also sees the representation of mimicry as reflecting the Lacanian model of vision under the Gaze--a model which Lacan first developed as an extension of Caillois's theories of the visual. Where Caws sees in these Man Ray photographs of Miller the liberating union of the body and the intellect, a "splendid convergence of the bound and the

free" (128), Krauss sees models of the dispossession or fragmenting of the seeing subject "defined or inscribed as a being-seen without, however, being able to see either his viewer or his own figure in the viewer's picture." (78). For both critics, the "strange and convincing convergence" (Caws 127) pictured in these works suggests an understanding of the surrealist construction of subjectivity as an oscillating, complex relationship between vision, body, and space, between subject and object, a relationship based on what I want to call correspondence.

Miller's work as a surrealist model and a photographer models or embodies some of the more fruitful readings of the legacy of surrealism's representations of the female body in the construction of the seeing subject. The issues raised by this brief look at Miller's participation in the Surrealist movement--the ideal of diminishing the distance between subject and object, the possibilities of inscribing a seeing subject constituted by both identity and difference, the gendered body open to the erasure of boundaries and inscription by the space surrounding it, the liberatory or fragmenting effects of such an erasure, the struggles of the female observer to find a position that is neither complicitous with nor submissive to a dominating gaze--all surface with new and often irresolvable tensions in Miller's wartime photography. In representing human figures during the war, human figures who are in

some of these reports in extremes of imaginable pain or brutalization, Miller's photographs constantly experimented with the positioning and constructing of a wartime subject within and outside the photograph's frame. Her work shows an abiding concern with distance and proximity, identification and difference, the unstable relation of figure to ground, in order to inscribe a female viewer who would as far as possible take into account the enormous damage of war to the human body. One of the projects of Miller's work was to make and keep that view possible through an attention to the complexities of subject-object relations and to the gendered body in conflict.[4]

These surrealist photographs, then, raise issues concerning not only formal photographic elements but the very constructions of gendered wartime subjectivity through vision. Equally important for our understanding of Miller's work and of how she might have attempted to construct herself and her Vogue audience as observers of war are her 1944 posed "fashion" photographs, which I would like to examine next. These photographs are of interest not only for how they disrupt the conventions of fashion discourse but also for how they establish visual parameters of proximity and distance for Miller's later photographs of the war.

III. The Pattern of Liberation, Or Fashioning Distance

Is there some way of looking that is not the look of an intruder, some interpretation from which we could exempt ourselves as consumers? (Caws 118)

The pattern of liberation isn't very decorative. (Miller, LMW, 110)

Caws's suspicion of the Surrealist desire to collapse subject/object boundary lines seems particularly well-warranted if we consider another set of discourses, more or less coeval with surrealism, which also aimed to produce such a collapse: women's fashion magazines and "the woman's film" of the 1930's and 1940's. Mary Ann Doane's work traces how the woman's film of the 1940's help to construct a female viewing subject in whom the distance between subject and object is collapsed. For the female spectator addressed by these films, seeing, appearing, being, and having were conflated in the perception of the female star and her material surroundings, which constitute the "image/commodity" on the screen (177). Doane sees this as a specifically historical process:

> "[T]he increasing appeal in the twentieth century to the woman's role as perfect consumer (of commodities as well as images) is indissociable from her positioning as a commodity and results in the blurring of the subject/object dichotomy. . . . The decade of the 1940's, with its reorganization of sexual roles due to the war and the intensity of its very felt need to sustain a consumer

> perception despite the shortage of commodities, marks a crisis point in the elaboration of female subjectivity. (13, 178)

According to Doane, one method of cultural management of such a crisis was the insistent inscription of pathos--intense (over)identification between text and spectator--in women's film genres. For Doane, pathos "always connotes a loss or fading of individual subjectivity in the process of signification," and "is thus one way of containing the potentially disruptive effects of attributing the gaze to the woman, of delineating a specifically female subjectivity" (178).

What Doane claims for the filmic image might also be said of the images in the pages of fashion magazines:

> The cinematic image for the woman is both shop window and mirror, the one simply a means of access to the other. The mirror/window takes on then the aspect of a trap whereby her subjectivity becomes synonymous with her objectification. (33)

The opening sequence from the 1945 Max Opuls film Caught offers a good example of such a process. The screen is filled with a series of closeups in which a woman's hands turn the pages of a fashion magazine, and two female voice-overs discuss the photographs and

drawings of jewelry and of women in dresses and fur coats. Doane writes:

> Owners of the look . . . the women can only exercise it within a narcissistic framework which collapses the oppositions between the subject and object of the gaze--"This one's for me." . . . For the female spectator . . . in this scene, to possess the image through the gaze is to become it. The gap which separates identification and desire for the male spectator . . . is abolished in the case of the woman. Binding identification to desire (the basic strategy of narcissism), the teleological aim of the female look demands a becoming and hence, a dispossession. She must give up the image in order to become it--the image is too present for her. (Doane 157)

It is, of course, within just such a context, just such an image/commodity machine--Vogue magazine--that Miller's war correspondence and many of her extraordinary photographs were published. Miller's images of the war both set going and dismantle the Vogue image/commodity machine as they reinscribe the distance between the subject and object which surrealist texts and the visual products of the fashion industry sought to efface. If, as Bakhtin claimed, in pathos

"there is no distance, there are no reservations" (394; cited in Doane 177), Miller kept and encouraged her Vogue audience to keep what Man Ray inscribed on the reverse of a photograph of one of Miller's eyes: "an eye always in reserve" (Livingston, 40).

It is important to note here that many, and some of the most powerful, of Miller's photographs taken during the war were never published in Vogue, and many have only recently become available through the Miller archives and through three recent publications.[5] While I am interested in the ways the photographs published in Vogue indeed might have addressed Miller's readers and viewers, I am equally interested in the photographs not published. Their rejection by Vogue editors is, perhaps, as telling about the magazine's construction of its wartime female audience and about Miller's self-construction as an observer of war as are those accepted for publication. I am concerned both with Miller as an artist and with the audience her photographs imagined as well as actually addressed.

Miller's documentary piece on the liberation of Paris as it appeared in Vogue in November 1944, is perhaps most striking for the conflict between Miller's own text and the editor's captions for her photographs. Next to images of the Place de la Concorde seen through barbed wire barricades are several photographs whose captions draw the reader's and viewer's attention to the dresses and hairstyles of the women pictured:

"Made for cycling--rayon dress with apron front"; "French girls go in for long Veronica Lake hair-do's" ("Paris," 95). In the text of Miller's report, women's dresses and hair styles are described and understood as political gestures: the women "had all deliberately organized this style of dressing and living as a taunt to the Huns . . . . Saving material and labor meant help to the Germans--and it was their duty to waste instead of save" ("Paris," 69).

I am, however, more interested here in the photographs not published in Miller's piece on the liberation of Paris, posed fashion photos which were in fact sharply criticized by the magazine's American editor, Edna Woolman Chase, and which both would evoke and disrupt, through inscribing distance between the viewer and the model, the image/commodity mechanism so crucial to fashion discourse. According to a telegram sent to Miller by her British editor,

> Edna critical . . . especially cheap mannequins urges more elegance . . . + wellbred women . . . . Edna says quote can't believe pictures typical of highclass french fashion . . . can't Solange get ladies to pose unquote" (LMW, 80)

In her letter of reply Miller verbally recasts the argument, shifting it to political terms, away from the class terms with which Chase categorizes the female body set up for consumption:

> These snap shots have been taken under the most difficult and depressing conditions . . . . Edna should be told that maybe there's a war on--that maybe Solange hasn't the heart to concentrate with the knowledge of the horrors her husband and family are going through in German prison camps. (LMW, 84).

However, the photographs themselves are even more politicized and disruptive of the conventions of fashion photography through their use of distancing and visual interferences between the viewer and the model. Two images (Figs. 6 and 7) identified by Miller's caption sheets as posed fashion shots ("Paquin's navy-blue woolen dress, Place de la Concorde"; "Bruyere's quilted windbreaker, Place Vendome" [LMW, 83-84]) actually establish as objects of scrutiny the disappearance or, rather, the absorption of the models and their costumes into their surroundings. The shot taken at the Place de la Concorde situates the model at such a distance from the camera (which is on the other side of the basin of a fountain) that she is almost lost between the sculpture in the foreground and the large buildings in the background. She is so far away that she

appears to be mostly a miniature mass of dark and light: her pale head, legs, and hands and the set of wavy white stripes contrast strongly with and almost seem to separate from the dark dress. She is both fragmented by the dark and light that represent her body and overwhelmed by exterior objects. Far more noticeable are the fountain statues, particularly one of a discolored and muddied female figure in the left foreground.

The photograph in the Place Vendome is taken from inside the entrance foyer of a building (a plaque to the left of the door identifies one occupant as the designer Bruyere). The model standing outside is framed by a large glass double door, one side of which is open. The pane of glass in the closed half of the door has evidently been shot at, for it is badly cracked, and there are eight large rectangular patches of tape covering holes in the glass. Whereas in the previous photo, the model seems divided and fragmented by extremes of dark and light seen from a distance, this shot is remarkably lacking in contrast. The woman's face, swathed in a hood, is shadowed and dim. Her gloved hands almost disappear in the folds and shadows of her jacket. The skirt casts a shadow on her legs, rendering them the same color as the rest of her figure.

With the women seeming to disappear inside their clothes or into the built environment, these photographs recall the mimicry, the erasure

of boundaries between figure and environment, so notable in the Man Ray photographs of Miller. However, these fashion photographs, which should induce the process of identification or dissolution of visual boundaries in its viewers, puts that loss of boundaries at such a distance from the viewer that the erasure of boundaries is itself the object of scrutiny. The photographs furthermore fill the visual field between viewer and model with marks of physical decay and destruction, traces of disruption and difference, which in the second photograph are the clear traces of the war recently fought.

Even when Miller's camera moves closer to the fashion model, the female figures are protected inside of their surroundings and shielded from the female viewer and the act of identification. In a photograph which the caption sheet identifies as "Models relaxing before a fashion show" (fig 8; LMW, 82-83), three women are pictured wrapped in blankets from the waist down, lying on the floor, their heads resting on overturned chairs. The legs of the chairs protrude like nothing so much as the muzzles of rifles above the women's heads. The face of the woman closest to the camera is completely hidden behind a newspaper; the second reads a book, her eyes on the page; the third looks at the camera, but one eye is effaced by a protruding chair leg. Even though relatively close to the camera, these women are inaccessible to the viewer, protected by the wrapping, the newspaper, and the gun-like

shapes above their heads. Along the curtained wall to the right of the three women is a table holding several hats which range from a canister-like shape on a small hat-stand to a shapeless mass of fur resting on the table's surface. The photograph pictures the fragmentation of fashion photography down to some of its constituent forms (now rendered shapeless or decontextualized, separated from the female body), while the models are protected from and inaccessible to full view.

In these three photographs, Miller is picturing not only fashion models (usually the objects of over-identification for Vogue readers) but, in her distancing from these female figures who are partially absorbed back into their surroundings in an act of mimicry, is actually picturing the tension of wartime correspondence for female viewers of female figures, the tension between (over)identification with the image and the distancing and fragmentation of that image, a tension that puts a significant strain of the image/commodity machine.

Another photograph, showing uniformed US service women at a fashion show (LMW, 81), is both a close-up view of the image/commodity mechanism at work and a stress on that mechanism. The seated women are so close to the model standing in their midst that they can and do touch the fabric of the dress, their arms and hands following the trajectory of their eyes, which are all intensely focused on the dress itself, even though the model is looking directly down at the face of one

of the women examining the dress, as if to engage her in conversation. Here, the act of looking, of engaging in identification rather than in dialogue with the female object, is itself the object of sight. This, I suggest, creates a rift between the viewer of the photographs and the viewers pictured in it. The model's dark head is well above those of the seated servicewomen and is set sharply against a light-colored door in the background. She is wearing a close-fitting plaid dress with a strongly contrasting light and dark pattern; the effect for the viewer of the photograph is that her head and legs appear visually separate from the plaid torso. Like the model at the fountain in the Place de la Concorde, her body is fragmented into separate zones, making the viewer's identification with a whole image nearly impossible. With their gaze following a very focussed trajectory, emphasized by arms and hands, the only part of the model that seems to exist visually for the servicewomen is the plaid torso, while the viewer's eyes are drawn both to the fragmented vertical line of the model's body and to the horizontal line of the women viewers in uniform. While the women in uniform are fixed by their own uniform gaze at the image/commodity, the photograph's viewer is offered a more mobile and contradictory glance over the visual field.[6]

The distances, interruptions, and schisms produced for and in the potential viewers of these photographs would certainly help to

undermine the loss of subject-object boundaries which is itself the object of these photographs. Miller's fashion shots for her piece on liberated Paris could be said to liberate her potential viewers from the closed, uniform circuit of identification with the image/commodity, underlining the crisis in wartime female subjectivity which Doane describes. These photographs use the place held open by the suspension of that identification for inscribing difference, which is a central element in the representations of the wounded male body which constitute much of the later images in Miller's wartime work.

IV. Broken Views of Allied Bodies

In Miller's photographs of Allied troops at or near the front, as in most of wartime photography, it is predominantly male bodies in danger, wounded, or dead which are represented. It is important to note, however, that in its representation of the wounded Allied soldier, Miller's work is remarkably restrained when compared to the representations of wounded Allies found at this point in the war in the work of other photojournalists working for American publications such as Life. According to Susan Moeller, the graphic depiction of injured or dead Allied, especially American, soldiers in the last two years of the war was aimed, in overtly articulated government policy, at producing a greater agreement with homefront sacrifices (such as rationing and wage

controls). Quoting from an editorial in a 1945 issue of Newsweek, Moeller writes,

> in Spring, 1943 . . . [the] chief of the Office of War Mobilization, 'disturbed at public criticism of rationing and wage and manpower controls, suggested to the President that more photographs showing the ordeals of the men on the fighting fronts might harden home morale.' . . . Slowly, beginning in September, 1943, a trickle of photographs showing wounded and dead American soldiers and sailors was released to the press . . . . [It was] the opinion of OWI [Office of War Information] that the publishing of graphic pictures would improve morale. (224)

Moeller traces how World War II photojournalism from this point until the end of the war gradually grew more and more graphic and direct in its representation of dead soldiers:

> There was . . . considerable change over time in the aesthetics of those images of death, even though there were only two years in World War II during which such pictures were allowed to be published. . . . In those two years, the US began to win the war . . . . The military and the press became less cautious about the public's

sensibilities; the photographs of the dead became more candid. (227)

Another way to understand the propagandistic use of the wounded American soldier's image is in terms of pathos. In many of the images of the wounded soldier prevalent in the popular and women's press in the later years of the war, pathos, an eliciting of the female viewer's overidentification and empathy, was turned not into economic activity but rather an acceptance of wartime economic restriction and social controls.

What I characterized above as Miller's restraint in the representation of wounded soldiers must be understood in this historical context: graphic representations of dead American soldiers in the final years of the war used as some of the primary visual material of government propaganda, for social and economic manipulation and control of civilians, in many cases particularly female civilians. Keeping in mind Scarry's claim that the central fact of war's damage to the body often "disappears from view," it can be said that the increasingly focussed propagandistic look at the damage done to male bodies late in the war was, in other words, actually one of the paths by which the central fact of injuring "disappeared" before the very eyes of American observers.

I am interested in how Miller's visual strategies of fragmenting and distancing of the injured soldier's body can actually function as an act against such a disappearance, as do Gellhorn's representations of the failure of vision under fascism. I want to look here at Miller's first overseas piece for Vogue to examine how her representation of the wounded Allied soldier, like her shots of the models in Paris, both evoke and resist photographic conventions in their construction of their female readers/viewers as wartime subjects. Miller's work is, at least at this point in her overseas career, concerned with constructing her viewers without recourse to more commonly recognized visual vocabularies that constituted part of the United States' war propaganda program. As in the work of Wharton, Aldrich, and Gellhorn, Miller's photographs tend to undermine the model of subjectivity most readily inscribed by propagandistic discourse: the subject of the "whole picture," a unified seeing subject constituted by a unified view of the war. Miller's photographs work, I suggest, to construct the female wartime observer neither as a unified subject of propaganda nor as a disappearing subject of pathos (two models which can be understood as closely related) but rather as a subject open to rifts, schisms, and difference--and one who thus keeps in view the central fact of the wounded body. It is in this questioning of the unified subject of vision, too, that Miller's work

registers a certain ambivalence about her own photographic authority, one that resonates with the early lessons of Surrealism.

In Miller's photographs of a tent hospital in France, the wounded bodies of soldiers are surrounded and fragmented, whether by equipment or people, by the arms of doctors or nurses, by tent ropes, tubes, and bandages. Finally, they are fragmented by the look of the female viewer, who is herself fragmented, unseated from a location of unifying and unified visual authority. In some photos, it seems that the wounded body is a field for its own visual interruption and fragmentation. A photograph of a "surgeon using bronchoscope" (LMW, 28) is a good example. What is visible of the soldier-patient is a side view of his upper torso, his left arm from forearm to shoulder, and his neck and chin. Most striking about the shot is that it is not really the soldier's body which is the focus, but, as the caption suggests, the bronchoscope (a metal cylinder in the center of the photo), the surgeons's hand holding the scope, and the surgeon himself. The bronchoscope seems like an extension of the surgeon's arm, which allows the eye to follow it, unbroken, back up to the face of the surgeon, who is looking through a scope the nature of which is unclear to the viewer. The surgeon's hand, holding the scope at an angle, interrupts a full view of the lower part of the soldier's face, so it is unclear how exactly the tube relates to the soldier's body. Moreover, what the

surgeon sees through the scope is a realm of vision unavailable to the viewer. The fragmenting of the view is exacerbated further by three other medical personnel in the shot, all looking a different way, all providing possible, conflicting trajectories of sight for the photograph's viewer to follow. The nurse behind the doctor is looking at him; of the two men toward the soldier's feet, one is looking at the soldier (clearly an angle we cannot share as he is looking from above), and the other is looking at his fellow medic's hand, which is another element which block and fragments the soldier's body. There is also a metal tube resting on the soldier's shoulder, seeming to separate his arm from the rest of his body. This representation of the act of looking at and into a soldier's body, looking closely at the damage done by combat, is for the viewer an experience of visual distance, fragmentation and blockage, even as the soldier himself, ostensibly the "focus" of the photograph, is fragmented and absorbed by his surroundings.

Another photo, an unfocused closeup of the torso of a man whose head, face, chest and hands are completely wrapped in bandages and occupying fully the first page of the Vogue article, offers another site for distancing and fragmenting both the seeing subject of wartime photography (LMW, 18-19; Vogue, September 1944, 138). Miller's comment in the text (also published as the caption for the photograph) is: "A bad burn case asked me to take his picture as he wanted to see

how funny he looked. It was pretty grim, and I didn't focus well." According to the caption, then, the photo is taken for the soldier himself, for his own eyes to look at (at least potentially), an image built for self-reflection. The photo, read with the caption, fragments and disperses its viewers among several seeing positions, or, to put it another way, points simultaneously to several different locations for the seeing subject: that of the photographer, the Vogue reader/viewer, and the self-reflecting object of the view, the wounded soldier. I want to explore each of these positions a bit more closely:

1) With its blurred focus, the photograph draws attention to the situation of the photographer and the act of photographing itself. It is, in other words, deictic, an image which leaves traces of the moment of its making, gesturing back to the physical presence of the artist.[7] The photograph also makes visible the possibility of swerving, of not looking straight, of a mechanical and human looking-askance. The acts of looking and picturing--or of looking askance and of mis-picturing--are being made visible, inserted or dropped like a curtain in between the viewer and the soldier. It is, in this sense, a photograph of Miller's subject-position, mediated by the camera, the lens, the photographic apparatus which represents not only the soldier but the photographer's response to his grim image. It is not perhaps so much that Miller refused to look but rather that she refused to represent "clearly" and

thereby underlined the very act of representing, the construction of the image that most photographs would have read as "natural." It is in this way that the image's lack of focus actually holds the fact of wounding more clearly "in view," in Scarry's sense of the term. The extreme and hidden disfigurement of the soldier's body, its movement away from its "natural," unwounded state, by the burn is both hidden and emphasized by the bandages. The blurred focus pulls the fact of disfigurement even further into the visual foreground, or rather inserts it between foreground and viewer. The wounded male body is triply distanced from the "natural" through the denaturing or blurring of the photographic image itself.

The blurred focus of this photograph thus also calls up the issue of photographic authority, an issue doubly important for a female photographer working so close to combat zones, and one whose work, as I have suggested, ran counter to the propagandistic uses of images of the male body in physical extremity. Krauss quotes Edward Weston's notions of photographic authority:

> The appeal to our emotions . . . is largely due to the quality of authenticity in the photograph. The spectator accepts its authority and, in viewing it, perforce believes he would have seen that scene or object exactly so if he had been there. (91)

Krauss then comments that

> The nature of the authority claimed by Weston and Straight Photography is grounded in the sharply focused image, its resolution a figure of the unity of what the spectator sees, a wholeness that in turn founds the spectator himself as a unified subject. That subject, armed with a vision that plunges deep into reality (and through the agency of the photograph is given the illusion of mastery over it), seems to find unbearable a photograph that effaces categories . . . . (95)

The particular photograph's, photographer's, and viewer's authority is put into question, along with the larger notion of wartime photographic "authority." A similar questioning of visual authority and, concomitantly, the unity of the viewing subject, was enabled by Surrealist photography, which, according to Krauss

> does not admit of the natural, as opposed to the cultural or made, and so all of what it looks at is seen as if already, and always, constructed through a strange transposition of this thing into a different register. We see the object by means of an act of displacement, defined through a gesture of substitution. The

object, 'straight' or manipulated, is always manipulated. (Krauss, 91)

Through emphasizing the constructed nature of the photographic image, Miller also emphasizes the altering of the wounded male body, and the unstable position of the photograph's viewer.

2) That viewer, the Vogue reader, looks at a blurred photo of white bandages, a barely recognizable human form looking back at the camera. This viewer is herself split, since the photo undermines "Straight Photography's" notion of authority, inviting, perhaps even demanding that the viewer ask, "would I see the same thing, the same way, if I were there?" The blurred focus would seem to say no, calling into question the photograph's authority, separating the photographer and viewer: "if I were there, I would see it differently. I would see it clearly." Yet, the photograph might also evoke a hesitation, a set of doubtful questions for its viewer: "would I really see clearly? Would I look? Is this blurring an image of my own looking askance on the wounded male body and the fact of the deep injuriousness of war?" The blurring makes this questioning possible, in fact calls for it. The undermined authority of the photograph and photographer creates schisms for and in the Vogue viewer: rifts between her and the photographer, in her own ways of seeing (would I focus or refuse to focus, would I look or look away,

would I see clearly?), and as Krauss suggests, in her very assumption of a unified subjectivity.

3) A final rift in the visual field stems from the fact that the photograph seen with its caption invites the viewer to imagine the soldier looking back at his own image. The potentially reflecting subject (seeing a blurred image of himself wrapped in bandages) is both seer and picture. He is made strange, altered, transformed by the lack of focus, which calls attention to the act of representing, and by the bandages, which hide the wounds which will in all likelihood be permanently disfiguring. This photograph of the burned and bandaged soldier imagined to be looking at his own image calls forth an extreme version of the Lacanian subject of vision, dispossessed not only by the visual field in which he is both seer and seen, but by the wounds he has received and by the very representation of those wounds. Krauss claims that in photography, and most pointedly in surrealist photography,

> there is a fundamental schism between the subject that perceives and the image that looks back at him, because the image, in which he is captured, is seen from the vantage of another. (78)

In the photograph of the badly burned soldier, it is his status as a wounded soldier which, in the first place, places him as an object of his

own and others' vision and which hides, disfigures, and renders him inaccessible to any whole vision, including his own. If one is to "hold steadily visible the centrality of injuring" (Scarry 336), one is more and more drawn into the realm of the alienated, split subject of vision and away from the specular structures of "unity" and "wholeness." Like a surrealist photograph by Raoul Ubak which Krauss reads, in which a woman's face is reflected back to the camera by a corroded and disfiguring mirror, the imagined scene of the grievously wounded soldier regarding his own photograph can be read as

> a stunning disarticulation of the self by means of its mirrored double. . . . this subject who sees is a subject who, in being simultaneously 'seen,' is entered as 'picture' onto the . . . [visual] surface. In this very moment of inscription . . . one discovers . . . the crumbling of boundaries, the invasion of space. (78)

Opposite the burn-case photo in Vogue is a small photograph of Miller wearing a helmet with the false eye-visor painted on it. It is the first representation in Vogue of Miller herself in her role as war correspondent, and it is a significant one, visually echoing or shadowing the patterns of contradictions and splits which I have discussed above. The visored helmet would signal both accessibility to sight and

protection from harm. But with the eyeholes painted on "for fun" (as the caption says), the visor is a joke, a camouflage, a mimicry of both safety and sight. The photo is a sign of Miller's status as female war photographer: like the photographs she takes, the painted visor both invokes and blocks wartime vision, both protects and disarms.

Like A Stricken Field, these photographs of injured soldiers, through their simultaneous engagement and disengagement of vision, their acts of visual distancing, blockage, and fragmentation, work against the disappearance of some of the most brutal and central effects of the war. In doing so, these images question the authority of vision and the unity both of the view and the viewer of war, a unity so often invoked by wartime propaganda. This unified subject is perhaps most radically undermined in the photographs Miller took inside of the liberated concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald, to which I want to turn now.

V. The "Final Solution" and the Problem of Framing

The wounding and wounded which Miller does picture in a far more frontal and direct way are in her most difficult and extreme images of the central fact of war's damage to the human body: those of the concentration camp victims at Dachau and Buchenwald and of the camp guards who were beaten by prisoners after liberation. In both cases, the

distancing, fragmenting, and blocking which Miller used to inscribe a politicized female observer in other moments of the war are abandoned. The problem facing Miller and her viewers seems to have been how to frame, in both the photographic and conceptual sense of the word, this overwhelming visual evidence of the Holocaust. In the first set of photographs, Miller uses closeups which seem to abandon as far as possible the notion of framing, while in the photographs of the prison guards, the central figures are heavily framed and enclosed. Like other photographs in Miller's oeuvre, these are centrally concerned with the dynamics of correspondence, of identification and difference, proximity and distance. However, these photographs intensify these dynamics in such a way that the observer's very subjectivity and humanity seem to be at stake in her visual encounter with these images.

The photographs of "bodies stacked in the courtyard of the crematorium because they had run out of coal the last five days," (LMW, 163) are close-up, clearly focused images with virtually no space between figures of the bodies and the frame. The corpses completely occupy the field of vision, leaving no space of escape or relief for the viewer's line of sight, eliminating distance from what must have evoked (and certainly still does evoke) reflexes of revulsion, of looking away, of disbelief, and a desire to distance in Miller's audience.

Miller's textual accompaniments to the photographs acknowledge the possibility, perhaps the inevitability, of such a response. The title of the Vogue piece on the camps is a quote from Miller's cable to her editors: "'Believe It'"; according to Antony Penrose, Miller cabled along with the photographs to her British editor, "I implore you to believe this is true" (139). In one photograph , Miller represents the response of disbelief and distancing in military observers. The caption identifies this as a photograph of "United States medics from Rainbow Company with a dead prisoner at Dachau, 30 April, 1945. Some of the troops . . . thought the camp a . . . propaganda stunt faked by their own side" (Penrose 140-41).[8] The photograph is taken from the inside of a truck, looking outward. On the floor of the truck the head and upper torso of a decimated, clearly starved corpse occupy the left bottom corner of the foreground. Framed by the opening of the truck are the two medics, both with their arms tightly folded across their chests and gazing intently at the dead prisoner. It is a picture not only of a Holocaust victim but of American observers' looking and disbelieving. It represents being caught as an observer within the frame of proximity to incomprehensible damage and at the same time straining against that frame, attempting to insert distance between seer and seen.

The photographs of S.S. guards beaten or killed by their ex-prisoners, which Jane Livingston calls some "of the most extraordinary

wartime photographic documents ever made" (82), seem to respond almost directly to the reflex of disbelief and distancing. Two shots in particular use strategies drastically different from the distancing, fragmenting, and blocking so important in Miller's wartime photographs so far. Both are fairly closeup images of badly beaten prison guards (identifiable as guards only by the caption, since they were not wearing uniforms but civilian clothes), and both rely heavily on double and even triple framing. In one (Livingston 85), a man pictured from the chest up and occupying most of the frame looks directly into the camera, his bloodied face and shirtfront pale and starkly illuminated by the flashbulb. In the dark background is a series of frames within the photographic frame: a square archway enclosing the lower half of a window situated above a radiator. The thin line of window-glass at the very top of the photograph's frame reflects light back at the viewer, and the vertical lines of the radiator form the background for the top of the guard's head. The second shot (Livingston 87), published in Vogue (June 1945, 106), is of two beaten guards kneeling in a small cell. Like the guard in the previous photograph, they look directly into the camera and are enclosed within the even smaller frame of a cell, made smaller still by the cropping at the top of the photograph, which makes it appear as if the two figures were enclosed in a box so small that it would be impossible for them to stand up. The painted wall behind the guards,

like the window glass in the previous shot, reflects light back at the viewer.

The strategy in both photographs of tightly framing the figures of the guards so that what is enclosed and central is their gaze looking back at the viewer could be said to enclose the viewer as well, to demand that the viewer encounter these human figures of extreme violence and brutality at close range and in a small space. The only visual exit in these heavily framed images is the invisible fourth wall--the situation of the photographer and finally of the viewer herself, who is dully illuminated by the light reflecting from the claustrophobic back walls of the photographs. As if anticipating the reflex of disbelief or of looking away, Miller visually holds her viewers to a full mutual gaze with these guards. A full mutual gaze: to look at the photograph at all, the viewer cannot look askance, but must somehow make sense of the eye-to-eye encounter with these men in civilian clothes, these most brutalized and brutalizing human extensions of fascism, as visual objects and as seeing subjects. That viewer must, moreover, make sense of her own subjectivity participating in that visual encounter. Perhaps even more than the photographs of the corpses of camp prisoners, these images of their guards "hold steadily in view" for the observer the most brutal and injurious aspects of the Second World War. And perhaps more than any other photographs in Miller's wartime work, these images make use of

the dynamics of correspondence, the oscillation of identity and difference, proximity and distance, subject and object, in the most disturbing and disrupting ways possible for her Vogue viewers.

Faced with and attempting to represent the visual evidence of the results of fascism, Miller completely eschews any trace of surrealist mimicry, of the invasion of bodies by space, which has helped her earlier photographs to hold "in view," by a series of visual contradictions, the central fact of war's damage to the human body. In abandoning the visual strategies of surrealism, Miller accomplishes a far more radical and politicized undermining of the unified subject than surrealism ever could. In these images from the camps, the figures are very distinct from the ground or surroundings, and the space is clearly defined through framing. The viewer is positioned extremely close to these human figures, rather than distanced. Positioned within the frame of these enormously difficult images of human brutalization, the Vogue viewer, a viewer trained to imagine herself as both seer and seen through the reflexes nurtured in the image/commodity visual economy, is called upon by these photographs to both look and look away, simultaneously to gaze most intently and to seek a route of visual escape or relief. As in the surrealist paintings which Caws reads, "the gaze . . . and the glance seem . . . to be called for as if simultaneously" (119). In that desperate visual oscillation Miller's viewer is asked to encounter the flickering sight

of her own subjectivity as it is constructed by the war and by this visual encounter with the visual, embodied representations of fascist rule.

VI. Double Exposures: The Interiors of Fascism

The dynamics of war correspondence, the complex and exceedingly difficult interplay of identity and difference for the female observer of war, take a final and strange turn in Miller's last report from the front, which describes her visit to Munich immediately following the defeat of Germany. What Miller photographs and describes in this report are the domestic spaces occupied by Adolph Hitler and by Eva Braun. The enormous visual, political, and subjective tensions evoked by the photographs from the liberated camps are once again raised here, but now within intensely domestic spaces used as metonymies of fascism itself. The last front of fascist ideology and of the European war is, for Miller and her viewers, the space of the domestic--space most readily known by Vogue readers as the very site or surrounding of the female subject as constructed by perception of the image/commodity.

Miller's report is a detailed catalogue, an extremely close reading of the objects in Hitler's and Braun's houses. She describes Hitler's bookcase, sculpture, and bedroom:

In the main entrance hall were cupboards holding crystal and china, linen and silver, all swastika'd and initialled A.H. There was a rubber plant and a black plaster eagle with folded wings. His bedroom was hung with chintz and the bed was upholstered in the same material. The bed table had a push-button gadget, which had Maid, Valet, and Guard marked, and there was a large cream-colored safe in the corner. (LMW, 191-92)

Miller is even more exhaustive in her description of Braun's house:

Part of the china was modern peasant and part was white porcelain dotted with pale blue flowers. The furniture and decorations were strictly department store like everything in the Nazi regime. . . . Eva's bed was upholstered in self-striped ice-blue satin. The linen was initialled E.B., and the nearly bare cupboards were equipped with chintz-covered hangers and padded hat stands. . . . A carton of envelopes of soapless hairwash for blonds, a few belts, a tweed beret, and a douche bag . . . . The long mirrored dressing table had . . . tweezers, Elizabeth Arden lipstick refills (marked Milan), a half bottle of Arden skin tonic, little funnels and spatulas for transferring beauty products. . . . Her bathroom was supernormal, except for two medicine chests . . .

> Evipan, eyewash, sleeping pills and nose sprays. A variety of bronchial cure-alls--gland medicines and vitamins. The neighboring girls said Eva was always taking something for some sort of pain, especially girl's troubles. (LMW, 198)

Miller underscores the "normalcy" (and in Braun's house the "supernormalcy") of these two domestic spaces, the fact that they look like anyone's house:

> there were no signs that anyone more pretentious than merchants or retired clergy lived there. . . . It looked like any other building. . . . Superficially, almost anyone with a medium income and no heirlooms could have been the proprietor of this flat. (LMW, 191)

Like the visual fact that the beaten S.S. guards wear civilian clothes, these verbal representations of the domestic spaces at the very center of fascist rule are not immediately identifiable as inalterably Other: these spaces and objects look like ours. Miller's detailed catalogue of these interiors is more than just an acknowledgement of the banality of evil. It evokes the kind of viewer's anxiety concerning identity and difference that Linda Mizejewski identifies in post-war

American and British films about the rise of German fascism: a "crisis of spectatorship" which

> duplicates a wider cultural anxiety about the spectacle of Nazism . . . . how are we, as fascinated spectators, different from the European spectators fascinated by Nazism? The key here is the crisis of the reliability of the visual (surely they can't really look or be like us) . . . . This paradigm is reinforced by the reductive historical stereotype of Nazism itself as a sudden failure of vision, a vulnerability to spectacle, a fluke or aberration, rather than a phenomenon situated in mainstream European traditions. (18-19)

Miller's close reading of fascism's domestic spaces indicts not only fascist politics and ideology, but the far more widespread specular structures central to the construction of gendered subjectivity in western philosophical discourse and in texts like Vogue. Her report constitutes a deadly serious play on the items that make up the visual and material field of the image/commodity. The scrutiny of almost every possible surface and interior space and the naming of the familiar name brands function as an enormous and grotesque parody of the pages of Vogue itself and of the irresolvable tensions of the position of Miller's own correspondence, set among Vogue's seemingly endless advertisements.[9]

It is as if the absent figures of Hitler and Braun, represented metonymically only by their domestic surroundings, have been completely absorbed into those surroundings: a political parody of the process of mimicry. The detailed verbal closeup reads as if Miller were using these items to expose the very interiors of the body of the fascist regime itself--a body surrounded by an environment not at all unlike the one repeatedly inscribed in Vogue's advertisements and features.

As if to underline this gesture of exposure, and to gesture as well towards a career spent on both sides of the camera, Miller uses her own body to construct a difficult and complex subject-object correspondence in this report. One of the photographs taken during this tour, shot by Miller's friend, the Life photographer David Scherman, is of Miller taking a bath in Hitler's bathtub in his Munich apartment on the day that his suicide was announced (LMW, 190-191). Miller's head, face and shoulders are visible above the edge of the tub between a portrait of Hitler, which is resting on the left rear edge of the tub against the back wall, and the statue of a female nude on a table at the right of the tub. Miller is scrubbing her back with a washcloth and looking off to the left. A pair of large and muddy combat boots rest on the bathmat and floor immediately in front of the bathtub. The photograph is a conscious, deliberate act of iconographic outrage, a bizarre juxtaposition of protected domestic space, physical and visual exposure, and military

invasion. The photograph functions much in the same way as does Miller's statement in this report, "I took a nap on Eva's bed" (LMW, 199). Miller is reversing the fascist invasion of vision and sexuality and identity (see chapter 3), the destroyed bodies and spaces of the war, by invading with her own body at its most defenseless (in the bath, in bed, naked, asleep) these private spaces of the Third Reich. The visually evident defenselessness of her own body also, of course, underlines the defeat of the Reich, its vulnerability, the fact that it has been invaded by a "femme soldat" (LMW, 65) without a uniform. But what interests and disturbs me most is Miller's participation in the representation of the exposure of her own body to the visible domestic traces and metonymic interiors of fascism.

After Dachau and Buchenwald, after the extremity of its vision (the disbelief it engendered in its first viewers at how the human body could look and what that appearance meant), the report from Munich seems to mark the only place Miller's representations of the war can finally go. Her dispatch is not only a report on the end of the Third Reich, but on the end of "innocent" or apolitical identification with the image/commodity. Appearing in Life, the photograph parodies the central cultural work of women's magazines using not only a detailed description of the personal belongings of Hitler and Braun, but the photographer's own body, which acts as the wrench thrown into the

image/commodity machine as it exposes the very interiors of the fascist state.

VII. Conclusion

Like the fashion and surrealist milieus in which she worked and whose visual conventions she adopted, subverted, and abandoned, Miller's work was deeply concerned with the relationship of gendered bodies to space. As a photojournalist, Miller was able to politicize that relationship through her experiments with the specular subject-object relations which fashion and surrealism worked to engender. Miller's tools for such an experiment were the ones she learned to use in her schooling in the surrealist movement and in the fashion industry: formal pictorial elements like distancing, framing, and juxtaposition; visual metaphors of mimicry; and responses to historically specific situations of the wartime female spectator as consumer. Miller's photographs inscribed an American female seeing subject constituted by enormous tensions of identity and difference. Her war-correspondence truly attempted to involve its viewer-readers in an active acknowledgement and knowledge of the physical costs of fascism and of the war. That this chapter begins and ends with photographs of Miller herself underlines what is for me a crucial aspect of her wartime work: the presence of the female artist's body at its most vulnerable, in a self-

exposure that is also an exposure to and of the dangers of the specular in western culture.

Notes

1. See Penrose's biography.

2. Caws cites as a model of this ideal the Magritte painting, "Le Faux Miroir," in which white clouds float across, or actually constitute part of, the blue iris of a disembodied eye.

3. The model in the photograph is Nusch Eluard. The wife of the surrealist poet Paul Eluard, she was often a model in Man Ray's work, and was herself a photographer who worked with photo collage. As with the case of Lee Miller, the surrealist ideal of conflating seer and seen takes on complications when the subject and object of sight is one woman on both sides of the camera. See Schiffman, 209, for a brief biography of Eluard and reproductions of some of her collages.

4. Scarry uses metaphors of vision quite consistently in her study of the language used to describe war in The Body in Pain. My sense is that she is conflating language and seeing, using metaphors of visibility to describe linguistic acts: to speak or write about something is, for Scarry, to make it "visible," to "hold it in view." What I would like to do here is to focus on actual visual representations of the body in pain, to problematize and examine the conflicts and contradictions involved in the act of making war visible through photography.

5. See Miller, Penrose, and Livingston. Krauss and Livingston's bibliography/biography section in L'amour Fou also includes reproductions of several Miller photographs.

6. Norman Bryson has articulated an important distinction between "the gaze" and "the glance." See Vision and Painting (93) and Caws, 119.

7. Rosalind Krauss, following C.S. Peirce, observes that all photographs are indexical:

> Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a

> type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its object. (Originality, 203).

Also see Bryson, Vision and Painting, 87-88, and Chapters 1 and 2, above.

8. Robert Abzug writes that this kind of reaction was widespread among American soldiers who liberated the camps. See especially chapters 1 and 7. According to Abzug, American military observers began to investigate and report on liberated camps as early as 1944.

9. A typical issue of Vogue from this two-year period runs approximately 200 pages. There are 100 or so pages of full-page advertisements placed before the table of contents in each issue. Of the approximately one hundred pages left, another 80 are occupied by full-page advertisements, 10 by full-page features, and 10 by a continuation of the features' text, usually a single column placed between two columns of smaller advertisements. Of the features, generally three quarters are devoted to fashion developments.

Chapter 5

Visual Disturbances in an Expanded Field: H.D. and the Blitz

Vision is socialized, and thereafter, deviation can be measured and named variously, as hallucination, misrecognition, or "visual disturbance."

--Norman Bryson, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field"

The engagement with the image . . . belongs to a political intention.

--Jacqueline Rose, Sexuality in the Field of Vision

Like the work of Aldrich and Wharton, Gellhorn and Miller, H.D.'s wartime writing is intensely invested in representing the female gaze as a way to understand war and to construct the female subject in a belligerent culture.[1] Living and writing through two wars' worth of air raids on London, H.D. creates in her World War II prose an expanded understanding of what constitutes seeing (and) war. Like Virginia Woolf, who sought in Three Guineas to trace the connections between fascism and patriarchy, H.D. seeks the roots of militarist visuality in the specular structures of the patriarchal family.[2] H.D. performs a textual exploration of how being a female civilian under bombardment (which she often construes as being under the gaze of military violence itself) invokes and valorizes a kind of vision quite different from what is normally construed as seeing in the other texts I have been examining: dream and memory-image, hallucination, mystic or "visionary illumination" (Jay, DE, 236), or what Bryson calls "visual disturbance." This chapter will discuss

what models of female wartime subjectivity, both individual and collective, arise from such disturbances and how those models might represent an alternative to militarist visuality and violence.

In order to begin to explore this concern with subjectivity and visuality, I first want to take a few moments to try to name or identify what H.D. and her personae "see" in the prose texts composed between 1940 and 1944, acknowledging all the while that this identification is a problematic project. In Tribute to Freud's first section, "Writing on the Wall" (composed in late 1944), H.D. identifies her 1933 analysis with Freud with her responses to the First World War and her preparation for the war to come next:

> I had begun my preliminary research in order to fortify and equip myself to face war when it came, and to help in some subsidiary way, if my training were sufficient and my aptitudes suitable, with war-shocked and war-shattered people. (93)

The substance or subject-matter of this war-related "research" described in Tribute to Freud is a range of images: "real dreams" (36), preternaturally clear memories, and all-out visions or hallucinatory experience. It is this set of "visual disturbances" which provides the visual/verbal text for H.D.'s project of understanding war. The entire

first section of Tribute to Freud is in fact named for a vision or hallucination of "writing on the wall" which H.D. experienced in Corfu in 1920. As Adelaide Morris says, "Of all the events that could have titled H.D.'s original account of analysis, her choice, 'Writing on the Wall,' privileges and gives biblical sanction to the vision at Corfu." For Morris "the main question raised by the Corfu pictures" is: "Were they, as Freud maintained, a 'dangerous symptom,'. . . or were they rather an upwelling of creativity, an inspiration, and a promise?" (287-88).[3]

As Freud's terse clinical designation of "dangerous symptom" suggests, any work concerned with the nature of "visual disturbance" and war may want at least briefly to take into account a possible connection between war, mysticism, and madness. Jane Marcus writes that the fact of women's madness resulting from the First World War is often overlooked in critical and historical writing. Marcus observes that in Antonia White's 1928 story "Surprise Visit," the Imperial War Museum visited by the female protagonist is housed in the very building that once contained the women's mental asylum where the protagonist had been incarcerated after the First World War. Marcus writes that

> The horrors of Bedlam are erased, as women's history always is, by aeroplane propellers and gas masks. The ideology of male valor remains a powerful force so that women are still ashamed to claim

> their mental suffering as equal to that of crippling or death on the battlefield. . . . Bedlam become the Imperial War Museum is . . . the site of convergence of the female with war and madness, the heart of one of the unsung other plots. If fighting men suffered "soldier's heart" and shell-shock, it is well to remember that women on the domestic front were also driven mad by war and death and loss. ("Asylums of Antaeus," 58-59)

H.D. herself connects her work with Freud to the problem of war and post-war insanity. She identifies "war, its cause and effect, with its inevitable aftermath of neurotic breakdown and related nerve disorders" as "the thing I primarily wanted to fight in the open" in her work with Freud (93). However, it is important to observe that H.D. does not identify her "visions" as the "nerve disorders" themselves nor, as Freud does, as "dangerous symptoms," but rather as texts, signs, or "signets" (66): alternative modes of seeing that might perform several functions. These "visions," once understood or read or interpreted, might possibly help the female subject in a belligerent culture to "fortify and equip" herself and others. They might help the female writing subject (and her readers) to understand "war, its causes and effects," especially vis-a-vis the construction of gendered subjectivity. Finally, as we will explore at the end of this chapter, they might help to perform some of the work

not of "pacifism" but rather of what Sara Ruddick calls "peacemaking" through the inscribing of models of primarily female communities of vision.[4]

Naming or defining H.D.'s visionary methods and values in her writing during and about the world wars can be frustrating and often involves the repeated use of words like "or" and "another," as the definition leaps from one characterization to another, searching for a taxonomy that will do justice to the odd "other" realms which H.D. explored visually and verbally in her attempt to represent the female subject in militaristic culture. An example of this would be in Adelaide Morris's introduction to "H.D. by Delia Alton," in which she claims that H.D.'s work constitutes a "visionary quest for an idea or an ideal, a messenger or visitor from another realm of consciousness, another field of vision or knowledge" (177). H.D.'s own struggle to name the differences of vision involved in her response to war is often evident in her work. In "Hipparchia," one section of the 1924 novel Palimpsest which tells a version of the story of H.D.'s marriage during the First World War and which is set in "War Rome (circa 75 B.C.),"[5] the narrator circles around names for the various acts of vision in which the wartime female subject engages. In the passage below, Hipparchia has escaped "War Rome" and gone to the countryside:

> Hipparchia came back to actual memory letting slide transition of blurred apprehension. She came back (staring, wide-eyed) to the ceiling across which the outer light had wandered. . . . The dark more realizable square of actual ceiling above her (as she stared longer) obliterated apprehension, ideas for sheer actual memory. Memory in her thought was all about her. . . . . Memory would paint over apprehension, lotus-vision, with actual image. . . . She would . . . set the ceiling with them, actual memory of the rose-red, fire-red anemones of Verrus' garden as she had this morning, seen them. Could actual memory be exceeded by mere imagining? Could vision supersede sheer natural contour of flower petal? . . . . Anemones in her consideration shown, ember all about her. Embers shone about her feet. She again lost memory in vision. (39-40)

Actual memory, apprehension, staring, lotus-vision, actual image, mere imagining, consideration, vision: this burgeoning visual taxonomy conflates as much as it distinguishes the varieties of seeing so important to H.D.'s textual description of the female subject in wartime. Even as I worry about what to call H.D.'s visual experience, my primary concern is not so much with naming, categorizing, or diagnosing what H.D. saw as with exploring what models of the female wartime seeing subject emerge

from these visual disturbances. However, as Morris's and H.D.'s own characterizations suggests, the work asks us to consider an expanded definition of what constitutes vision. What might be the parameters of this expansion?

I would like briefly to place H.D.'s acts of seeing within the context of developments in weaponry and their effects of the civilian seeing subject of "total war." According to Paul Virilio, the nature of weaponry in twentieth century warfare (beginning with the military searchlight-gun developed in 1914) is such that for the military, "observation and destruction . . . develop at the same pace" (68). However, Virilio also notes that

> with the advent of strategic bombing everything is now brought home to the cities, and it is no longer just the few but a whole mass of spectator-survivors who are the surviving spectators of combat. (66)

Virilio's observations create a conflicted, contradictory model of the civilian during total war: on the one hand, he or she is identified as part of a mass of "spectator-survivors;" civilians under bombardment cannot help but see the effects of weapons. On the other hand, the blitzkrieg

"spectator" is also an object under a truly and physically menacing gaze which conflates weapon and eye. According to Virilio,

> alongside the "war machine," there has always existed an ocular (and later optical and electro-optical) "watching machine" capable of providing soldiers, and particularly commanders, with a visual perspective on the military action under way. From the original watch-tower through the anchored balloon to the reconnaissance aircraft and remote-sensing satellites, one and the same function has been indefinitely repeated, the eye's function being the function of a weapon. (3)

Moreover, the "spectator-survivors" of war, who are also literally under the gaze of weaponry, do not actually "see" the war. Describing a military-optical process already underway in the Second World War, Virilio writes that

> war and its technologies have gradually eliminated theatrical pictorial effects in processing the battle image, and total war . . . [has] tended to cancel the scenario effect itself in a permanent technological ambience devoid of any substratum. . . . the world

> disappears in war, and war as a phenomenon disappears from the eyes of the world. (66)

Virilio's description of the conflation of weapons and optical devices directed at civilian populations provides a background for trying to understand how H.D.'s work must expand the kind of "eyewitness" claims we have seen in earlier chapters. The very nature of the weapons aimed at London during the blitz established her both as a "spectator-survivor" of a bombardment whose weapons she literally could not see and as an object of a lethal military gaze.

In trying to map H.D.'s construction of vision and subjectivity during the Blitz in her textual responses to the kind of visual scenario described by Virilio, I find useful Bryson's discussion of the "Gaze in the expanded field." He identifies two realms of vision, or, rather, two ways of conceptualizing the Gaze: Lacan's (via Sartre's) "menacing" Gaze of the Other and the Japanese existentialist Keiji Nishitani's notion of the Gaze in "the expanded field of vision." I want briefly to outline Bryson's comparison and then to discuss how H.D.'s World War II writing might be seen to reflect and to modify these two models of the Gaze for a female wartime subject and a feminist critique of the specular, militaristic gaze.

Bryson recounts Sartre's scenario of the "watcher in the park" in order to describe the model of the Gaze found in both Sartre's and, with some modification and extension, Lacan's work on vision and subjectivity. In Being and Nothingness the solitary seeing subject in a Paris park, like the subject of Cartesian perspective, is at the "unchallenged center of the visual field" until another person enters the park. This "intrusion breaks the peace and fractures the watcher's self-enclosure. The watcher in turn is watched: observed of all observers, the viewer becomes spectacle to another's sight" (100). Given the literal gaze of weaponry which menaced civilians during the Second World War, it should come as no surprise that for Sartre, the gaze of the Other is virtually physically threatening; Jay describes Sartre's imagined visual field as a "universe of threatening" or "warring gazes" (DE, 289).

Bryson writes that for Lacan, this perilous decentering of the observer is set in motion not only by the intrusion of another person, another seeing subject, on the field of vision but by "the irruption, in the visual field, of the Signifier." In the Lacanian model, what always stands between the seeing subject and the perceived world is a "network of meanings" which constitute "the socially agreed description(s) of an intelligible world," "the entire sum of discourses which make up visuality," "a screen of signs consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena" (91-92). This screen or network of

visual meanings, like the network of linguistic meanings which, according to Lacan, decenter the speaking subject in language, creates an always displaced subject of vision:

> the viewing subject does not stand at the center of a perceptual horizon, and cannot command the chains and series of signifiers passing across the visual domain. Vision unfolds to the side of, in tangent to, the field of the other. And to that form of seeing Lacan gives a name: seeing on the field of the other, seeing under the Gaze. (94)

According to Bryson, Nishitani's critique of this model of vision and the Gaze is that even as it claims to decenter the subject, it actually stabilizes subjectivity, as it limits the field of vision to the two poles of subject and object: "Only that which appears within the framing apparatus--perspective, picture frame, camera--exists: the viewer on one side, the object on the other" (100). However, in a theory which would take into account "the question of vision's wider frame" (96) or an "expanded field" of vision, the subject-object dynamic still in place for Sartre and Lacan is more radically dismantled: "Nishitani's move is to dissolve the apparatus of framing," Bryson writes. In the expanded field left by this dissolution of visual framing, "the object is found to exist,

not at the other end of tunnel vision, but in the total field of the universal remainder." Just as the visual object exists on this expanded field, so too does the seeing subject:

> the viewer is pulled away from the aperture of the viewfinder or lens and redefined as radically dis-framed. The viewer still has his or her eyes open: the universe does not disappear. But the viewer is now a being that exists through the existence of everything else in the universal field, and not just as the subject-effect of the object that appears at the end of the viewing tunnel . . . . once that frame is dissolved . . . that narrow angle is found to be enveloped on all sides by a surround of invisibility. Once dis-framed, the brightly luminous segment [seen by the viewer] is found actually to be constituted within the invisible. . . . What can be seen is supported and interpenetrated by what is outside sight, a Gaze of the other enveloping sight on all sides. (100-01)

Bryson observes that the key difference between these two models of the Gaze is that for Sartre and Lacan, the Gaze that displaces the subject is "negative or terrorizing" (105), imbued with a "paranoid or terrorist coloration" (107) and a "sense of menace or peril" (105) which is absent in Nishitani's model of the Gaze in the expanded field.

I want to use Bryson's model of the two gazes not as a rigid template but rather as a possible guide to the simultaneous realms of seeing which H.D. describes in her 1940-44 prose. Her work of the period represents different but interpenetrating realms of vision or Gazes which she articulates as part of a feminist critique of militarism. The first is the menacing gaze of violence and, by extension, of the war itself. In "Writing on the Wall," her autobiographical work The Gift (composed between 1941 and 1944), and in Within the Walls (a series of brief narratives composed in 1940 and 1941), H.D. describes the childhood entry of a female subject into a gendered visuality that is often (although not always) indeed "terrorizing." It is a visual regime which renders the specular gaze--as it exists in the patriarchal family and in belligerent cultures--literally menacing to the female subject. The second realm of vision articulated in these texts is the female seer's answering gaze at an image (a dream image, an hallucination or vision, a scene in a play) that gestures toward an "expanded field" of vision. These visual disturbances suggest in their strangeness the "support" of "what is outside sight": the invisible "other" realms, which H.D. privileges in her antimilitarist critique. I want also to show how H.D.'s wartime writing diverges from the model of the "expanded field" that Bryson elaborates here, especially in terms of female subjectivity. H.D.'s expanded field of vision insists not on "obliterating" the female subject,

but rather on re-centering her in a different, expanded definition of what constitutes vision. As in the writing of so many of her modernist female contemporaries, H.D.'s work shows what we tend to call a "postmodern" sense of the female subject as socially constructed. However, like the work of many--though by no means all--"postmodern" feminists, it insists on (re)positing a female subject as not just a viable but a necessary entity for a feminist epistemology and politics.[6]

My sense is that H.D.'s writing during the Blitz constitutes both a feminist critique of the specularizing violence endemic to patriarchal visual regimes and a feminist model of an "expanded field" of vision and subjectivity as a textual response to the terror of the Blitz and its roots in patriarchal culture. In the pages that follow, I first want to read a passage from "Writing on the Wall" which best illustrates the coexistence of these two Gazes or fields of vision which are so central to H.D.'s critique of militarism. Then I would like to examine each field or each gaze as it appears in other passages from her wartime writing in order to explore H.D.'s larger concerns with specularity, visuality, and violence, and her rescriptings of vision and female subjectivity in an expanded field.

The two fields of vision or two Gazes that are central to H.D.'s understanding of "war, its cause and effect" are perhaps best articulated together in a passage from "Writing on the Wall" in which H.D. describes

the "light pictures" she had seen appear on the wall of a hotel bedroom during a trip to the Greek Island Corfu with her lover Winifred Bryher in 1920. Several of the images or pictures are overtly related to war: the "head and shoulders . . . of a soldier or airman" (45) and an "angel" which H.D. names "Nike, Victory" which is moving "into and through" a "series of tent-like triangles" which

> were not so much the symbolic tents of the past battle fields . . . but tents or shelters to be set up in another future contest. The picture now seemed to be something to do with another war, but even at that there would be Victory. (55-56)

Perhaps even more important than the war-related images which H.D. sees is how she describes her own gaze at these images:

> My facial muscles seem stiff with the effort and I may become frozen like one of those enemies of Athene, the goddess of wisdom, to whom Perseus showed the Gorgon head. Am I looking at the Gorgon head, a suspect, an enemy to be dealt with? Or am I myself Perseus, the hero who is fighting for Truth and Wisdom? But Perseus could find the way about with winged sandals and the cloak of invisibility. Moreover, he himself could wield the ugly

> weapon of the Gorgon's severed head . . . . He was himself to manipulate his weapon, this ugly severed head of the enemy of Wisdom and Beauty by looking at it in the polished metal of his shield. Even he . . . would be turned to stone, frozen if he regarded too closely and without shield to protect him, in its new quality of looking glass or reflector, the ugly Head or Source of evil. So I, though I did not make this parallel at the time, still wondered. But even as I wondered, I kept the steady concentrated gaze at the wall before me. (52-53)

While none of the separate images which H.D. sees on the wall are inherently threatening, the whole set of images is understood as a possible "Gorgon's head," a representation of the "source of evil" or of the war to come. I read this scene of the female gaze staring back at the Gorgon's head, whose gaze in turn is identified with war, as a central parable of the two fields of wartime vision in H.D.'s work. The gaze of the female subject meets, through a "visual disturbance," "hallucination," or "dangerous symptom," the menacing Gaze of war itself.

I want to stress how the nature of the female gaze in this passage works against militarism. H.D. at first has trouble confirming which side of Truth and Wisdom she is on; she unable to settle on "enemy" or "hero" as the correct identity for the visual confrontation in which she is

involved. If H.D. does finally identify with Perseus, she emphasizes both her similarity to and difference from the hero. Perseus is invisible, bearing a mirror-shield to protect him from "dangerous" sight, and can manipulate as a weapon the image of the Gorgon. By contrast, she is engaged in unprotected vision, exposed and visible to the menacing Gaze of technological violence. Without the mirror-shield, the reflecting surface or optical device which protects the hero, she is unable to manipulate as a weapon the image she sees. For the female observer in this passage, to stand outside of the specular protection offered by Perseus's mirror is to risk becoming frozen by the gaze of violence itself.[7]

Another important element of this instantiation of the expanded field of vision is that, through a kind of visual collaboration with Bryher, H.D. finds that she can deliberately sustain the vision or choose to end it:

> "There have been pictures here . . . . I can break away from then now, if I want--it's just a matter of concentrating--what do you think? Shall I stop? Shall I go on?" Bryher says without hesitation, "Go on.". . . I knew that this experience, this writing-on-the-wall before me, could not be shared with . . . any one except the girl who stood so bravely there beside me. . . . perhaps in

> some sense, we were "seeing" it together, for without her, admittedly, I could not have gone on. (47, 48-49)

If Freud called H.D.'s and Bryher's shared vision a "dangerous symptom," what is the danger? And to whom? One possible answer is that this visual disturbance that results from the female subject's gaze constitutes a slip out of the specular circuit that conflates visuality and violence. It eludes, or perhaps rejects, the reflecting, specular surfaces of western culture's heroic legends. Nor does the vision at Corfu, and H.D.'s understanding of it as a vision of the "source of evil," "obliterate" subjectivity as Bryson's and Nishitani's ideal of the expanded field might. Rather, it maintains or recenters or, perhaps, reinvents the female subject as part of a differently socialized and gendered vision: a critique, based on female collaboration (a collaboration connected to lesbian sexuality), of the roots of violence. As we will see later in this chapter, H.D. extends the female community of vision suggested in this section of "Writing on the Wall" to a maternal family inheritance in The Gift and Within the Walls.

At first glance, H.D.'s expanded field of vision might seem an even more ambitious and questionable enterprise than Aldrich's panorama and Gellhorn's "stricken field," the sites upon which militaristic culture establishes its promise and injunction to "see

everything" (a promise and injunction which, as we have seen, is interrogated and interrupted by the female observer). However, H.D.'s expanded field does not claim to include everything, but rather to gesture towards the "surround of invisibility," via the "visual disturbances" which in part constitute the female subject in a belligerent culture. Again we are looking at an index, a pointing or gesturing-toward that which resists representation. Moreover, what is gestured toward here is not so much some ultimate signifier of war itself as a model of the female subject, a "seer" whose visual experiences foreground "the element of interpretative subjectivity that is always in play in the act of looking" (Virilio 3). If, as I suggest in the introduction, the female war-observers of my study re-inscribe in their narratives of sight what Virilio calls the ligne de foi, the imaginary "faith line" which governs the act of looking (as well the act of taking aim), then it could be said that more than any of the writers examined in my study, H.D. requires on the part of her readers an enormous renewed attention to faith and belief, a willingness to expand the field of what constitutes the female subject, violence, and vision itself. What is gestured toward, as we will also see, is a collaborative model of female peacemaking visuality which includes the reader willing to follow along H.D.'s line of sight into an expanded field of the vision.

H.D.'s expanded definitions of vision, violence, and subjectivity also involve a limiting. Not all vision or visual fields are damaging or threatening to the female subject. In his critique of the Lacanian Gaze, Bryson claims that "Lacan's descriptions tend to privilege the genetic and formative moment, not the long and diverse elaborations of adult life" (106) and that this exclusive focus on "subjective genesis and installation makes it difficult to think through the question of cultural variation" and of historical specificity in visual experience. For Bryson, "To think of terror as intrinsic to sight makes it harder to think what makes sight terroristic, or otherwise" (108). He suggests that "the degree of terror depends on how power is distributed within that construct once it is built, and on where one is made to stand inside it" (107). He also suggests that critics perform analyses

> of how power uses the social construct of vision, visuality. And also how power disguises and conceals its operations in visuality, in myths of pure form, pure perception, and culturally universal vision. (107-08)

I would suggest that it is this kind of critique that H.D. is performing in her wartime prose, particularly in The Gift. This text charts the female subject's childhood entrance into (and later adult survival in) both the

"terroristic" visual realms associated with violence and with patriarchal specularity as well as into "other" realms: expanded fields of vision which suggest the possibility of the female civilian's resistance to specular relations and militarism.[8]

H.D. plots her conflicting fields of vision in The Gift through a series of juxtaposed family parables and personal memories. The entire first chapter, "Dark Room," shows the development (literally and figuratively, as the photography-metaphor of the title suggests) of Hilda's vision, i.e., vision as learned, socialized, and gendered. With its descriptions of Hilda's learning to see through a variety of "optical frames" such as microscopes, telescopes, and proscenium arches, the chapter establishes The Gift as a memoir of the female subject's first encounters with technologies of vision and violence--and that subject's first forays into the expanded field of vision.

This chapter links learned, developing, gendered vision to violence, particularly through images of the wounded or dead bodies of women. The opening sentences immediately associate or juxtapose Hilda's family history, family photographs, and the witnessing of a girl's death:

> There was a girl who was burnt to death at the seminary, as they called the old school where our grandfather was principal. . . . the girl who was burnt to death, was burnt to death in a crinoline. The

> Christmas tree was lighted . . . and the girl's ruffles or ribbons caught fire and she was in a great hoop.
>
> The other girls stand round. There is Mama . . . and Aunt Laura . . . and Aunt Agnes in her long frock, who in the daguerreotypes and old photographs looked like the young mother of the two little girls and the three boys, the uncles . . . .
>
> But the girl in the crinoline wasn't a relative, she was just one of the many girls at the seminary when Papalie was there and she screamed and Papalie rushed to her and Papalie wrapped a rug around her, but she is shrieking and they can not tear off her clothes because of the hoop. (1-2)

The parable of the burning girl is immediately entangled with family history, inherited images, and the construction of gender. The description of the girl caught in the hoop of fire, literally trapped in the clothing that helps to construct her as female, is reminiscent of Bryson's description of the Lacanian Gaze, in which "the vocabulary is one of capture, annexation, death" (108). While the first image of this childhood memoir is so clearly menacing for the female subject, it is not the entry into visuality that is "intrinsically disastrous," as Bryson claims it is for Lacan; it is rather the actual damage, caused by uncontrollable forces, witnessed by and done to young girls that renders vision terroristic.

"The other girls stand round": presumably to witness the death of this girl, but the girls are also seen as they are in pictures. Their act of witnessing this death is inextricable from their status as objects of sight, as historical artifacts, as images in photographs. Women as simultaneous subjects and objects of sight are integral to this parable of a girl's death.

If the female gaze in these early pages of The Gift suggests a passive spectator of uncontrollable disaster (along with the blurring of subject-object boundaries), another parable in this first chapter represents a potentially more vicious and active female spectator of war. This parable in which Hilda's father is the object of his mother's mistaken (and emotionally damaging) sight is important to the text's representations of gendered vision and war:

> papa had been a soldier. . . . He and his brother Alvin had gone off, and Alvin had died of typhoid fever. Papa had typhoid, too. He said his mother cried when she saw him come back; she said, "Oh, I thought it was Alvin, coming back." Papa never told us much about himself except that his mother had been disappointed when she found it was Charles and not Alvin who had come back from the Civil War. (6)

What the mother sees when the son comes back from war--or, rather, how she reacts to what she sees and why--is left to her son's interpretation. Hilda's father's reading of his mother's tears suggests that the weeping mother is at best hostile and callous about the life of her soldier-son. The son's implicit interpretation of the mother's gaze and her reaction to what she sees recalls in a slightly different form Schweik's examination of a long tradition in western war poetry of a vicious female spectator who employs "a rhetoric peculiarly feminine, ignorant and instigatory, spoken and published only from safe parapets and behind enclosed walls" (96).

At the end of a later chapter, The Gift rewrites this parable, leaving the interpretation to Hilda and her mother. The narrator tells a story of a neighborhood boy, Teddie Kent, who had fallen out of a tree and broken his arm.

> And [his brother] Jack Kent ran away and was gone a whole night, and when he came back Mrs Kent cried, and that seemed a funny thing to do. "Why did she cry, Mama?"
>
> "Well, she cried with relief, because she was so happy."
>
> "Can one cry because one is happy, Mama?" (72)

The tears of women in the face of danger to their sons are reopened to interpretation. This counter-parable of two brothers (one is hurt, the other comes back, the mother cries) answers the father's parable with two female interpreters, dialogically deciding on the motive for crying. The chapter title in which this rewritten parable appears, "Because One is Happy," underlines the importance of this parable, the way that a mother-daughter dialogue can reinterpret tears, the visible maternal response to sons' danger.[9]

Immediately after the first chapter's narrative of a mother's mistaken look at her soldier-son, the text turns to the gaze of that son, now an adult, a father, and an astronomer:

> Papa went out to look at the stars at night. He measured them or measured something, we didn't know quite what. We could see what Papalie was doing with his microscope on his study table. But when Papa took us into his little domed house . . . and we asked to look into his telescope, he said that we would see nothing; you could not see what he was looking at, or looking for, in the daytime. . . . When we kept on asking him to let us see, he did let us see, but it was as he had told us; there was only a white glare and nothing to be seen and it hurt your eyes. It would be too

> late to go over there at night, he said, and anyhow at night he was busy. (7)

If, as Bryson and Nishitani suggest, optical devices like the telescope maintain strict subject-object positions, the young girl in this scene is barred from a subject position: she can see nothing, and the "subject-effect" created by a viewed object at the other end of the telescope is negated. Hilda's father is, like Sartre's solitary watcher, master of all he surveys and its sole, controlling surveyor. Like Irigaray's model of the male philosopher of specular thought, he is in a "closed chamber . . . the matrix of speculation in which he had cloistered himself in order to consider everything clearly" (Irigaray 192). The father's telescope in the "little domed house" further recalls Irigarayan notions of specularity, as the young girl encounters under his tutelage, in his philosopher's "matrix of speculation," the "nothing to be seen" that confronts the female subject when she looks into the specular mirror of patriarchal visuality.

The father, the philosopher and speculator, the owner of the mirror in which the female sees (her own) "nothing," is further associated in this text with violence and dead women in Hilda's family history. Immediately after the description of the father's telescope, the narrator says,

> I can not say that a story called Bluebeard . . . actually linked up in thought--how could it?--with our kind father. There was a man called Bluebeard, and he murdered his wives. How was it that Edith and Alice and the Lady. . . all belonged to Papa and were there in the graveyard? No, of course, I did not actually put this two-and-two together. (7)

The juxtaposition of the parables of the paternal grandmother's mistaken vision and the father's telescope and the legend of Bluebeard closely link gendered vision and gendered violence in The Gift's first few pages. The text makes more explicit the connections between the paternal specular gaze and military violence in a later chapter's description of two closely associated dreams.

The first is a visually represented dream, an image in one of Hilda's childhood books which illustrates and defines what a "nightmare" is; the second is dreamed by the adult narrator of The Gift during a bombing raid. The first dream represents the female subject's early encounters with images of violence and death, images in which the female body is an explicit target of menace and an object of the specular gaze. I again quote at considerable length in order to underline the way the text works through juxtaposition:

There was another book with a picture; Mama cut it out. Because Mama cut it out, it was there always. . . .

The picture was a girl lying on her back, she was asleep, she might be dead but no, Ida said she was asleep. . . . . the picture was called Nightmare. . . .

It was like an old witch on a broomstick, it was a horrible old woman with her hair streaming out and she was riding on a stick, it was a witch on a broomstick, but the book was science, they said it was to explain real things. Then the witch was real; in Grimm it was a fairy tale but a witch in a book called Simple Science that someone gave us must be real because Ida said that was what science was. Papa and Papalie were working at real things called science; the old witch was riding straight at the girl who was asleep. It was a dream; Ida said, "Nightmare is a dream. That picture is to explain what a nightmare is." . . . .

"It was only a picture, I cut it out," [Mama] said; you could see how she had cut it, the picture was gone.

"What is a nightmare?"

"It's a name for a bad dream." . . .

"Is it a night horse?"

> . . . . A night mare is a mare in the night...it is something terrible with hooves rushing out to trample you to death. It is death. . . . He goes out in the night.
>
> "What does he do there?". . . .
>
> "I've told you and told you and told you, he goes out to look at the stars." (50-52)

This passage describes the early gendering of sight and its connection to menace or threat. The female subject is subject to a several visual controls and frames via the parents: the mother's destruction or hiding of pictures (and thereby preserving them) and the father's specular telescope and its exclusionary frame. The nightmare-image and its "real" threat to the female subject under the Gaze is associated with the father's "scientific" nocturnal gaze at "nothing," at what can't be seen. Hilda's questions about the "reality" of the image suggest that for the female subject, the gendered visuality that identifies the "real" with the father's scientific discourse can indeed be menacing.

Later in the same chapter, the narrator recounts a nightmare which she has at the time of the writing of The Gift, during a Nazi bombing raid on London. In the nightmare, the dreamer is bitten by a snake and seeks comfort from female family members. The narrator goes on to

intercut discussion of the dream with more childhood memories concerning the nightmare image from Simple Science:

> The monster has a face like a sick horrible woman; no, it is not a woman . . . . It is so real that I would almost say an elemental had been conjured up, that by some unconscious process my dream had left open a door, not to my memories alone, but to memories of the race . . . . This is the python. Can one look into the jaws of the python and live? . . . . Long ago, a girl was called the Pythoness; she was a virgin.
>
> "What is a virgin, Mama?"
>
> "A virgin is--is a--is a girl who isn't married."
>
> "Am I a virgin, Mama?"
>
> "Yes, all little girls are virgins."
>
> All little girls are not virgins. The python took shape, his wings whirred overhead, he dropped his sulphur and his fire on us.
>
> "Why did you cut out that picture from this book, Mama?"
>
> "I--I--is it cut out?". . . .
>
> "Why did you cut it out, Mama?"
>
> "Oh--I--I thought you would forget."

> Listen--it was a picture of--it was a picture of a nightmare. It was a picture of a little girl who was not married, lying on a bed, and a horrible creature . . . was riding on stick, like a witch rides on broomstick. She was going to stick the little girl right through with her long pointed stick and that was what would happen in the night if you went to sleep and had a bad dream which the Simple Science . . . calls a nightmare.
>
> Look at its face if you dare, it is meant to drive you crazy. It is meant to drive you mad so that you fall down in a fit like someone in the Bible and see a light from heaven. It is terrible to be a virgin because a virgin has a baby with God. (58-60)

These passages represent several key moments in the early construction of the female look at and under the menacing Gaze of the Other. They conflate the father's specular, exclusionary gaze, the image of the female body exposed to danger or death, and the extreme menace of the "fire and sulphur" of the blitz. The python is the very face of military destruction; like the Gorgon-head in "Writing On the Wall," it is the intensely menacing Gaze of the militaristic Other which not only looks at but offers itself to the look of the female subject. However, to "look at its face" would be to court exactly the kind of wartime madness

that H.D.'s work is so bent on understanding and avoiding, a madness understood in terms of vision or an excess of vision.

This potential (and potentially insanity-inducing) look of the female subject back at the menacing Gaze of overwhelming technological violence is perhaps as close as H.D.'s work gets to representing the kind of seeing subject which Irigaray calls the "mysterique," particularly in its suggestion of a Christian female mystic's identification with the Virgin Mary who "has a baby with God." The mysterique comes to instantiate the Irigarayan ideal of female jouissance: "Touched by flames of the divine, the mystic's soul is transformed into a fluid stream dissolving all difference" (Moi 136). Moi writes that in Irigaray's view, "the mystical experience is precisely an experience of the loss of subjecthood, of the disappearance of the subject-object opposition" and that because of this loss of subjectivity, "the ecstatic vision . . . is one that seems to escape specularity" (136).

Although the model of the "mysterique" brings up questions of subjectivity and specularity in ways that may be reminiscent of H.D.'s model of the female subject under the blitz, I want to stress the difference between H.D.'s model of the female gaze and the mysterique which Irigaray valorizes. Where the mysterique "eludes the specular rationality of patriarchal logic" through a visionary "orgasmic experience" (Moi 136), H.D.'s subject finds the role of the virgin who "has a baby with

god" a horrifying one. To enter into the mysterique's arena of vision, to "look at its face," would actually be to submit herself most openly to the lethal Gaze of specular, organized violence. The fact that H.D. uses the pronoun "you" in the last paragraph quoted above underlines the distance she is placing between the "I" and the subject who "in a fit" sees "a light from heaven." The use of the pronoun "you" also directly addresses the potential reader of The Gift; the address is a warning, as well. I again return to the question raised by Freud's diagnosis of the female subject's visual disturbance: what and for whom is the danger in a potentially "dangerous symptom"? Another possible answer might be that for the female subject in militaristic culture--H.D. and her potential reader--, it is the threat of a "direct" encounter with the unrepresentable Gaze of war itself. As with the father's telescope in the little house, there is no possibility for the female observer of war to become a full seeing subject without risking an obliteration that is far from liberating. H.D.'s potential encounter with what is most terroristic in visuality identifies that terror not with visuality per se but with one order of visuality's specific roots in patriarchy, specularity, and militarism.

At the same time that The Gift is outlining the position of the female subject under the varieties of the menacing Gaze within the patriarchal family and belligerent culture, it also maps out the expanded field of vision that allows the female subject to imagine and represent a

different order of visuality. Hilda's grandfather's microscope is the first model in the text of such an expanded field, an optical device held up as an alternative to her father's telescope. The first important difference between these two optical frames is that of inclusion and exclusion for the female subject: "You could see what Papalie showed you. You could not see what it was the Papa went out to look at" (50). In a remarkable passage in the first chapter, the text represents the female subject's first encounter with an expanded field of vision by juxtaposing Hilda's learning to see through the grandfather's microscope with her early attempts at spelling. During a game of anagrams, the mother praises Hilda's brother Gilbert for spelling "d-a-g," while Hilda's aunt observes "'d-a-g doesn't spell anything that I know of; Sister would know an a from an o if you don't, Gibbie'" (10). The narrator goes on to say, "and it might even be perceived that miraculously, a round shape in black, on the yellow square of cardboard, was somehow alone and staring at me, by Aunt Jennie's elbow." This sudden image of the letter O is juxtaposed with vision through the microscope:

> It . . . was a way of spelling words, in fact it was a spell. The cuckoo clock would not strike; it could not, because the world had stopped. It was not frozen in time, it was like one of Papalie's water-drops that he had brought down from the mountains . . . . It

> was a drop of living and eternal life, perfected there; it was living, complete, not to be dried up in memory like pressed moss . . . . But there was a difference between Papalie's pressed moss and the things that shone in the crystal lens of his microscope, on the glass plate that a moment ago had been empty and just two pieces of glass, like small empty magic lantern slides, stuck together.
>
> When Papalie lifted us, one by one in turn, to kneel on the chair by his worktable, we saw it was true what he said, we saw that where there is nothing, there is something. (11)

The letter O staring back at the female subject who overtly recognizes that "where there is nothing, there is something" suggests how part of The Gift's work is to create a female seeing subject that begins to circumvent specularity. The nothing-to-be-seen of female sexuality in specular thought suddenly is visible; the letter O, the sign of the female nothing, the hoop, the sign of female subjection to danger and/as visuality, suddenly looks back. Under the female gaze, the separation between subject and object positions starts to dissolve, as does the separation between visual and linguistic orders. The gaze looking back at Hilda is not a threatening, menacing other, but is rather a sign of her knowledge of difference (the nothing to be seen) and, simultaneously, of the questioning of sexual difference (where there is

nothing, there is something). We see a mutual gaze between the developing female subject and the letter, both of whom participate in the spell, the spelling out of linguistic and visual meaning. The basic components of language, the alphabet, become themselves objects of visual contemplation.

In one reading, this contemplation of the letter O as both a visual and verbal sign is a paradigmatic modernist moment; even more specifically, a paradigmatic imagist moment. Morris observes that Imagist theory looked toward the ideal, best represented by the Chinese ideogram, of conflating visual and verbal orders of meaning, of valorizing the "word-thing," a "direct, visibly concrete, natural rather than conventional . . . picture language" (276). For Jacqueline Rose, "the modernist stress on the purity of the visual signifier easily dissolves into an almost mystic contemplation" (230). I want to stress here how such a modernist moment in H.D.'s wartime writing actually turns the "mystic contemplation" of the letter-image into a political visual act, interrogating the specular codes of sexual difference implicit in patriarchal visuality, the strict difference between "something" and "nothing."[10] This particular "modernist" moment of "mystic contemplation" and visual disturbance might indeed be read as an illustration of Rose's claim for postmodern visual art:

> A confusion at the level of sexuality brings with it a disturbance in the visual field . . . . there can be no work on the image, no challenge to its powers of illusion and address, which does not simultaneously challenge the fact of sexual difference. (226)

The grandfather who is partly responsible for making this visual experience possible himself occupies a border position in Hilda's family history of visuality. He is her maternal grandfather, the husband of "Mamalie," who, as we will see, is part of Hilda's maternal legacy of visual disturbances. The grandfather's microscope, like the father's telescope, is both an optical frame which enforces strict, diametrically placed subject-object positions and is associated with Hilda's mutual gaze with the letter of female sexuality. The narrator describes him this way:

> our grandfather . . . had a microscope and studied things and drew pictures of branches of moss that you could not see with your eyes. He put them on a glass slide or pressed a drop of water from a bottle . . . between two glass slides. That (in time, it was explained) was fresh-water algae, a sort of moss, invisible (for the most part) to the naked eye. The apple of my eye. He was the naked eye, was the apple of God's eye. He was a minister, he read things out of the Bible, he said, <u>I am the light of the world</u> when

> the doors opened at the far end of the church and the trays of lighted beeswax candles were brought into the church by the Sisters. (10)

In this description, the grandfather, like the girls who "stood about" as witnesses of the death of the girl who burned to death, is both the subject and object of sight, but in a visual realm inaccessible to Hilda: he is "the naked eye" under the eye of God; speaking for and as God, he claims to make sight itself possible.

The "something" that is suddenly made visible in the grandfather's microscope is, then, made visible within the confines or enclosure of patriarchal visuality. The female subject sees within that enclosure the "something" which eludes specularity while still maintaining the female subject as a viable entity. Much of H.D.'s writing uses the word "something" to gesture toward that which is seen and not-seen, the elusive object of sight that the female seer/observer attempts to inscribe as a response to the scene of violence, something which resists the specularization of the female body and of violence to that body.

One example is in H.D.'s 1928 review in Close Up of Carl Dreyer's film, The Passion and Death of a Saint. H.D. criticizes the film's representation of violence in scenes depicting the torture of Joan of Arc: "I do mind standing aside and watching and watching and watching and

being able to do nothing. . . . I can NOT watch this thing impartially" (Scott, 132). Like A Stricken Field, this review protests the use of vision as torture, of the forced seeing of violence as a kind of violence itself.[11] In her review, H.D. seeks another visual order, some other kind of representation, that which is in fact invisible and not representable in any overtly visual way:

> There is another side to all this, there is another series of valuations that can not perhaps be hinted at consistently in this particular presentation of this one kicked little puppy of a Jeanne. . . . Isn't it just that? . . . . I do not mean to say that there could have been any outside sort of beatific screen craft of heavenly vision. I don't mean that. But Jeanne kicked almost . . . to death, still had her indomitable vision. I mean Jeanne d'arc talked openly with angels and in this square on square of Danish protestant interior, this trial room, this torture room, this cell, there was no hint of angels. The angels were there all the time. . . . Such psychic manifestation I need hardly say, need be in no way indicated by any outside innovation of cross lights or of superimposed shadows. It is something in something, something behind something. (reprinted in Bonnie K. Scott 132-33)

The "something" that H.D. seeks here is perhaps her clearest call for attention to an expanded field of vision. The film that H.D. would see, the image she would insert into Dreyer's film, would contain within its "luminous segment" a suggestion of what is not represented, the "surround of invisibility" which supports and interpenetrates the seen or scene, especially the scene of institutional violence directed at the body of a woman. Like the "something" that makes A Stricken Field's American journalists look at Rita but which resists definition, the "something" which H.D. seeks in the film resists specularization; it is outside of scopic regimes and the patriarchal gaze of violence.

Just as "Writing on the Wall" offers the visual collaboration with Bryher as one model of an antimilitarist critique in an "expanded field" of vision, so The Gift and Within the Walls offer models of female communities of visual disturbances and expanded fields in the form of the mother-daughter or grandmother-granddaughter dyad. The Gift's most resonant version of this kind of shared vision of war and of the possibility of peace understood through "visual disturbance" is represented in the fourth chapter's description of the young Hilda talking with her elderly grandmother, "Mamalie," late at night. What the child hears is a series of verbal fragments, as the grandmother addresses Hilda by a variety of female family names, to which Hilda responds in turn. When Mamalie calls Hilda "Helen" (the name of her daughter,

Hilda's mother), Hilda responds as Helen, calling Mamalie "Mimmie," the name Helen uses to address her mother. (This element of performance, in which Hilda "plays" a series of female family members, is important to some of my later observations of how the female subject in The Gift performs in an expanded field of vision.) What the adult narrator inserts into the grandmother's fragmented narrative (which fragments the listener as well with the series of names) is her later knowledge of the larger story about the founding of a town and a ritual of peace performed on the Wunden Eiland or Island of the Wounds, some 100 years before Mamalie's time between members of the Moravian church (to which Hilda's family belonged) and unnamed Native American tribes:

> A hundred years had passed, since the founding of the town . . . when Mamalie's Christian [her first husband] found the papers or the scroll of flexible deerskin which told the story of the meeting of the chief medicine men of the friendly tribes and the devotees of the Ritual of the Wounds. Christian . . . glimpsed here a hint in Hebrew or followed a Greek text to is original, and so pieced together the story of the meeting, deciphered actually the strange pledges passed, strange words spoken, strange rhythms sung. . . . As Mamalie outlined it, it seemed that, in trying over and putting

> together the indicated rhythms, she herself became one with the Wunden Eiland initiates and herself spoke with tongues. . . . (86-87)

The narrator also describes how the pact or pledge was not kept, because the "stricter Brethren of the church said it was witchcraft" (88). The grandmother partially recounts, or, rather, prophecies to Hilda the results of the broken pledge of peace: "she talks about the parchment being burnt and herself being burnt and the promise and the penalty if they didn't keep the promise, and about great wars and the curse on the land" (91).

As with so much of the "visual disturbance" which constitutes H.D.'s examination of "war, its cause and effect," she considers briefly the nature of this particular vision: "Maybe it was all shadows and pictures in Mamalie's mind, maybe there never was a parchment, maybe there never was such a meeting at Wunden Eiland, maybe there never was a Wunden Eiland" (89).

However, just as Freud's diagnosis of a "dangerous symptom" is considered and implicitly rejected through the sheer weight of attention which H.D. gives to the vision at Corfu, so this brief question of the "reality" of this visual disturbance is belied by the consideration given it, and the fact that the entire chapter is named, "The Secret."

The narrator connects her present World War Two experience to the grandmother's vision of the Island of the Wounds through the mediating image which is described in more detail in the following chapter: an episode in which Hilda opens the door of the house in the evening to find her father on the front step bleeding and dazed from a trolley accident. It is an image to which H.D. attaches enormous significance, claiming that she had forgotten it until the bombing of London during the Blitz and claiming it as "the 'thing'. . . that was in a sense to join me in emotional understanding, in intuition anyway, to the band of chosen initiates at Wunden Eiland":

> I cannot date the time of the thing that happened, that happened to me personally, because I forgot it. I mean it was walled over and I was buried with it. I, the child was incarcerated as a nun might be, who for some sin--which I did not then understand--is walled up alive in her own cell or in some anteroom to a cathedral. . . . I was not free, not free to express my understanding of the gift, until long afterwards. I was not in fact, completely free, until again there was the whistling of evil wings, the falling of poisonous arrows, the deadly signature of a sign of evil magic in the sky.

> The same fear (personal fear) could crack the wall that had originally covered me over, because to live I had to be frozen in myself--so great was the shock to my mind when I found my father wounded. (85)

Like the female subject gazing at the writing on the wall and considering the danger of becoming "frozen" in her visual encounter with the Medusa, the "Head or source of evil" associated with war, the female seeing subject again points to the "freezing" nature of the image of wounding in patriarchy, the specular process by which the violent signifier acts as the Gaze which immobilizes the female subject in a "forgotten" scene. This immobilizing process is reversed, according to H.D.'s visual logic, by another visual encounter with violence: "seeing" the "deadly signature" or "sign" which constitutes the Gaze of the war. Without this wartime gaze at the "sign" of military violence, the female subject is "frozen" into a specular enclosure, "walled up alive" with an image which is there, but not literally "visible" to the subject.

The metaphor emerging in this passage of the female subject frozen and "walled up alive" with somehow invisible images is part of a larger and complex set of metaphors associated with walls in H.D.'s World War II writing. The wall-metaphor is another way for H.D. to explore the two realms of vision, the two Gazes which are so central to

her work during this period: the menacing Gaze of (specular) violence (and the female look back at that Gaze) and the female gaze in the expanded field--expanded to include the mother-daughter visual collaboration that offers the possibility of an alternative, peacemaking visuality. The various walls (in various states of dismantling) found in H.D.'s wartime writing suggest at once enclosure and exposure, concealment and revelation, invasion and liberation. They are cultural and bodily signs of the necessary contradictions which construct the female seeing subject of military violence in an expanded field.

As suggested in the passage quoted above, one use the wall-metaphor has is to describe what H.D. calls "the deeply immured image," the brief childhood glimpse of a visual representation of death which is not only an image regarded, but an element of the menacing Gaze of potential and real violence. The Simple Science nightmare-illustration discussed above is one example; the image of the wounded father another. Within the Walls, H.D.'s group of "sketches" ("H.D. by Delia Alton," 203) written during the Blitz in 1940 and 1941, offers another example, echoing much of the language of The Gift:

> Probably terror deeply felt or childhood, submerged terror . . . is tapped by this supreme terror that is always with us. Tales in fairy books or a chance glimpse of illustrations in the Book of

Martyrs or some picture from our illustrated Gustav Dore bible or the Ancient Mariner which we spread open, before we could read, on our grandmother's carpet, seared deeply, awakened one's mind to the actual reality of death.

What was not fully understood . . . was tactfully slurred over; "What is this, in the Ancient Mariner?" "O, it's some spirits, angels." "And this skeleton?" They could not say, "that is Death." They say, "O, it's just a picture in a book." The picture remains after later reading is forgotten. . . . How can we banish what is so deeply hidden, seared into consciousness and then walled over like the proverbial fly in amber or the erring nun, immured for eternity within her wall? . . . .

What is it that I am afraid of? Well, before the night is over I may be caught in a blaze of falling timbers, be burnt (out of the Book of Martyrs) to death. But we must not think of being burnt to death. The Book of Martyrs disappeared, along with the pictures in the Ancient Mariner.

It is the unseen, the unrealized, the deeply immured image that is the most dangerous. The present shock may crack the wall of an old immured shock. ("Escape" 3-4)

The "deeply immured image" is an inherently contradictory entity, both understood as an image and invisible--until "cracked open." This passage again suggests that while this visual memory of images of wounding and/or death is part of the "preliminary research" which H.D. set out to do with Freud in the early 1930's, it is not so much analysis with Freud which "cracks" open the wall which holds the frozen images and the "frozen" subject of specular visuality, as yet another visual encounter with the war--a war which, as Virilio points out, is not strictly "visible." Like the other women artists of this study, H.D.'s visual gestures toward the war, toward what can be seen, involve an indexing of or pointing-toward what resists representation, a chain of signifiers gesturing toward an invisible "source": a "signature of a sign."

This passage's connection between the childhood "immured image" and the dangers of Blitzed London is mediated by a dialogue between Hilda and "them," adult members of her family, who, in order to protect the child from the implications of the image, underline its status as "just a picture," denying its representational power. The recurring question of how to see a picture is further explored through the representations of theater in the first chapter of The Gift, a significant portion of which is devoted to Hilda's experience of seeing a local production of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Through an extensive play on the notion of the missing "fourth wall" of a theater, this section of the text offers a complex construction

or performance of the female seeing subject as an alternative to the specular enclosures of the "immured images" of violence.

Concerning Hilda's tutoring by her Moravian community in how to look at a picture, the narrator describes how during the production, several "University boys" in the balcony laughed and yelled:

> They could not understand how some people could sit like that in the chairs with the red velvet in the dark, and it was like being in church. . . . Lots of people do not know the things we know and that Uncle Tom was seeing a vision, like something in the Bible, when he saw Little Eva . . . standing against the curtain that had wings painted on it . . . so it made Little Eva look like the princess in our fairy book . . . only maybe the university boys didn't have that kind of book or maybe they didn't know how to look at pictures or to see things in themselves and then to see them as if they were a picture. (17)

The community of vision, the "we" of the Moravian church, teaches "how to look at pictures." This instruction involves a double seeing: "to see things in themselves and then to see them as if they were a picture." The difference between these two kinds of looking is not exactly clear; it recalls, albeit in far less baroque fashion, the slippery taxonomy of vision

which H.D.'s character Hipparchia experiences in "War Rome." I want to suggest that while the young Hilda values and valorizes the vision available to the community of seers, this tableau of the female gaze at the slave's "vision" of the white angel contains several contradictions. Hilda's vision of Uncle Tom's "vision" of little Eva suggests another version of Helen, now an expressly white image of female perfection, which, as I discussed in the introduction and in note 7 of this chapter, often signals the dangers of specular visuality for female subjects. The passage also recalls the narrator's extreme suspicion, expressed in a later chapter of the text, of "biblical" visions, of the "mysterique" who "fall[s] down in a fit like someone in the Bible and see[s] a light from heaven." The same adults of the Moravian community who teach Hilda "how to look at pictures," to value the power of representation, fail in that very project themselves in the passage quoted above concerning the image of death from the Ancient Mariner: "O, it's just a picture in a book."

For Hilda, the experience of seeing the play, of seeing it with the double focus learned from her community and the contradictions and failures of that community's gaze, is part of her own performance of becoming a subject marked by race and gender and in doing so, becoming both the subject and object of an invisible gaze:

> If you take down one side of wall, you have a stage. It would be like the doll house that had only three walls, and you could arrange the room without any trouble. . . . a play and to play were the same, you could play now without any trouble. . . . You could arrange the sofa that was too heavy to pull on the other side of the room and you could see how the room had only three sides and you could walk across the room and toss your head and say , "Oh this is so hot, it's so heavy," and you could carefully push it aside when you sat down on a chair; although anyone could see that you had short hair . . . yet you could toss your head and the gold curls. . . .
>
> It was the same gold as the princess had . . . Then I would be like that. But no one would know about it. Everything was the same, but everything was different. You could think about it in bed. Then everyone's house would be open on one side and you would see it all going on. (18-19)

The girl performing as Little Eva (the perfected image of white girlhood) in an opened house is open to seeing and to be seen by others. Mimicking the staged image, this female subject transforms the visual field into a stage, as each house, each domestic unit, is suddenly opened to the performance of gendered subjectivity. The female subject herself

is the image, no longer "immured" in the enclosure of the father's house, but open to and part of a larger visual field.

One question which Within the Walls explores is: is that larger field, the house opened out to a larger view for the performance of subjectivity, a menacing place for the female subject? One early answer in the text, in the first and title sketch, is that the opened walls clearly signal the dangers of wounding. Having survived a night of bombing, the narrator of "Within the Walls" announces,

> January 14, 1941 is like a window miraculously unbroken in a house holding firm above the earthquake. . . . We have a secret. We are alive. Almost, the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. Within the walls, we are within the walls of our bodies, for the time being. This is a notable experience. (2)

The walls in this sketch also are the city walls, the walls which indicate and isolate the community under bombardment:

> Those without the walls, extra muros, even here in England, have already separated themselves . . . from this particular crowd, that has endured for such a long time, at such intensity, unprepared . .

> . to meet the eventuality of death. . . . there is the difference, there are those extra muros and those intra muros. (1)

This opening sketch of the collection conflates the community and the body, both of whose boundaries must be maintained in order to survive. This reading of "walls" is challenged by several other appearances of downed walls in the collection. Many of the "sketches" in Within the Walls are in fact dream narratives, such as this one, which begins with the image of the missing wall, tracing it explicitly to the damage done by bombs:

> The side of a room, my own room, seemed to have slid away, but this was not unpleasant. It was suggested no doubt, by the houses we see, with rooms open to the street like stage-rooms, some are neatly sliced off with furniture still standing. So in my dream, the side of my room is sliced off. ("The Last Day," 2)

The crucial element of this dream is the transformation of that opened visual space from a threatening sign of damage and wounding (open to visual and physical invasion) to a space ever more opened to expanded sight. The unnamed narrator describes how stars drift into the room through the opened wall; she then offers an interpretation:

> It is a dream of peace and hope. It seems to indicate that though our houses and our minds have been sliced open by the attacks of the enemy overhead, that, overhead is as well the great drift of stars, and those stars found entrance into the shattered house of life. ("The Last Day," 2)

In another dream narrative, H.D. offers other possibilities for the image of the opened house:

> A wall of the house is down. The wall of our psychic house is down, to let in unknown, uncharted sensation. Everywhere, all the time, in our dreaming thought is the paralyzing fear, but as well there is the vicarious suffering, for those homeless thousands on the continent. Even in her dream , she thinks, "it's not only the dead who are cold, its the living . . . . in France, Belgium, Holland." ("Before the Battle," 10)

Here, the downed wall of the house signals neither destruction nor the influx of peace, but rather an expanded recognition of and identification with the victims of Nazism and their occupied countries. This dream, recorded in the final sketch of Within the Walls finds the image of the mother in this opened house central to the understanding of war and

peace. Dreaming simultaneously of the opened house and of the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania graveyard attached to the seminary (where the girl in crinoline burns to death on the first page of The Gift) the dreamer remembers that both Confederate and Union soldiers are buried there:

> there they lay with no distinction, with no names. Lost. Lost? Individually, how lost we are. But I am not lost. Why mama! How cold it is. But is it so cold? She is there, she is in black and I realize that in some vague half-house open to the air, I am slipping on a black frock . . . . Around my head, nun-like, I wrap violet and white bands, let there be no mistake that I am mourning for someone! It must be papa, or course, or papalie, her father, who died when I was 7. (10-11)

The appearance of the mother, who joins the daughter in an act of mourning over the graves of soldiers might be easily read as the mater dolorosa of so much wartime imagery and narrative in western culture, a figure which both mourns and accepts the destructive results of war to male bodies.[12] However, the mother and daughter on the "stage" of the opened house and in the visual enclosure of the cemetery gesture toward another arena of the visual, the visual disturbance or expanded field that we have been tracing through H.D.'s prose of this period. The dream

features several regenerative acts taken by both mother and daughter, acts juxtaposed to the continuous wounding of the war and to the visionary peacemaking of the early Moravians and Native Americans to which Hilda's grandmother refers in The Gift. This final sketch ends as follows:

> She is there and I kneel before an open fire-place and break twigs and small sticks to place under a dark log. How high the flame reaches, "this is extravagant," I say, as if we were . . . refugees . . . .
>
> But we are out in the graveyard again and now it does not seem so cold. Over a wall . . . is a branch of white flower. . . . No one must touch it, there is summer in mother and daughter. Demeter and Persephone meet here at last. . . . Here in this graveyard, the dead lie, everywhere the dead are lying and the living fall almost before our very eyes, minute by minute, into the channel. Germans? Yes, the terror is never far absent, waking or sleeping, but here in this cold graveyard (in the town of her own and of her mother's birth) are the rows of flat stones, no titles are indicated on the flat small stones. . . . Small strange names . . . are baptised Indians . . . at peace . . . among the middle European refugees . . . . I am safe now. We built a great fire, brought back a

dead log to life, we got warm, she and I together brought back the spring. This war is over, I tell you. (11-13)

H.D. places at the very end of her wartime dream-text, a text which bears evident traces of its composition during the Blitz, the image of a mother and daughter in a family graveyard that is also an opened house. Their lighting the fire in the opened house might be understood as a re-controlling of fire, the dangerous substance which so clearly threatens the female subject in The Gift.[13] As we have seen, the opened house or downed wall is a complex and contradictory image, signalling the (female) body and the community opened to destruction, to "peace and hope," to "uncharted sensation," to political sympathies, to the recently recovered "immured image" of death, to the menacing Gaze, and to the performance of a subjectivity marked by race and gender.

The presence of the mother in this welter of possibilities suggests (along with the grateful, awed claim of earliest sketch of Within the Walls that "we are within the walls of our bodies") the importance of the female (and specifically maternal) body itself to H.D.'s critique of terrorist visuality.[14] There is a long history of thought in Western culture, both feminist and otherwise, concerning the connections between motherhood and militarism, between childbirth and battle.[15] My final concern in this chapter is to ask how the presence of the mother in

these visual disturbances, the dream images and scenarios that H.D. takes such care to inscribe, is part of her larger effort to critique militarism in an expanded field of feminist vision.

For many theorists and historians of gender relations, a central move in militarist thinking is what Bowen calls "somatophobia" (161) which manifests itself most often not only as fear of the body nor of the female body, but of the specifically maternal body.[16] Ruddick suggests that

> the idealization of reason in Western philosophy may be in part a defensive reaction to the troubling complexities of birthing labor, that Western conceptions of what it is to be reasonable are intertwined with a fear and resentment of birthing female bodies. . . . It is militarists who benefit from the equation of women with the emotional, physical, and subjective, who then call Cassandra mad and defense intellectuals people of reason. (195)

The naming of "the walls of our bodies" in the first sketch of Within the Walls and the presence of the mother in the opened house in its final sketch are both connected with prophetic statements which, unlike Cassandra's, promise peace: "Almost, the voice of the turtle is heard in the land"; "This war is over, I tell you." These verbal assurances

of war's ending associated with "our" presence in "our" bodies as well as with the body of the mother suggest to me not some "final healing of the split subject" (Moi 101), some ideal reunion with the maternal body in the forever-lost Lacanian Imaginary, but rather the wartime, antimilitarist subject as constituted both by the body and a peacemaking female community. In another dream-narrative of Within the Walls the daughter's (re)union with the mother is understood even more clearly in visual terms:

> Now, my mother is showing me a piece of tapestry, embroidery. It is apparently my own. I am not satisfied with it, but "see," she says, "the pattern is not broken." I am sure the stitching is slipshod and badly done but she says, "no, look, there is the one line running through it all." There is a somewhat vague tapestry edge to the center picture. I do not see the picture. We are concerned with the border. It is a wave pattern, the curves meet and run along symmetrically the whole length. Then the wave pattern seems to dissolve or resolve into fleur-de-lys. . . . "Look," my mother says, "the pattern runs right to the end," as if she wanted to assure me that the pattern of my life was right, that the thread would not be cut abruptly, that I was weaving toward an established end. ("Pattern," 1-2)

The mother's presence in these dream scenarios, in the visionary, cooperative work of "bringing back the spring" and of ending "this war," in guiding the daughter to "see" the patterns on the "border" of the visual field, can be understood as an inscription of an expanded field of visuality and community hinted at by Bryson when he says, "it is a bit easier, since Lacan, to think of visuality as something built cooperatively, over time; that we are therefore responsible for it, ethically accountable" (107).

The opened house (and its only slightly more closed version in the "little domed house" of the specularizing father and the female subject-negating telescope) is the site (and sight) of damage and wounding, the target of the specular and the lethal military Gaze. But it is also the domestic stage on which the female subject constructs herself as a subject and object of vision within patriarchal culture and on which she devises possible exits from the stage of terroristic visuality. What she exits into is a collaborative, expanded field of "visual disturbance" in which other women--mothers, grandmothers, daughters, lovers--form an "imaginative collective" (Ruddick 244) of potentially peacemaking visuality. The female subject inscribed in H.D.'s writing during the Blitz is open both to the threat of wounding via the Gaze of warfare and to the possibilities of a potentially peace-making community of vision on an expanded field of subjectivity and sight.

Notes

1. Elizabeth Hirsch observes that

> [w]hat is striking in several prose works written by "H.D." in the forties and fifties . . . is, in general, an obsession with problems of seeing and their relation to the constitution of subjectivity. (438)

I am concerned here with the historical situation of "the forties" for H.D., particularly the massive bombardment of London for the first few years of the decade.

2. Friedman makes a similar claim:

> In The Gift the nightmares of the child are inseparable from the nightmare of history. The politics of fascism are superimposed onto the psychodynamics of the patriarchal family, a psychopolitical analysis that evokes Woolf's critique of the patriarchal origins of war in Three Guineas. (339)

I am interested seeing how H.D. performs such an analysis specifically in the realm of visuality.

3. Clearly, H.D.'s texts concerned with military violence and mystical "vision" can be read next to other literary traditions in western culture of female visionaries in wartime, traditions which go back at least as far as Cassandra, as well as other "visionary" or mystic figures during the Second World War. Susan Schweik observes that the Christian Saint Bernadette's

> famous vision of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes became in the United States during the Second World War a popular symbol of radical faith, innocence, and resistance, primarily as a the result of the best-selling fictional account of the saint's life by the German [Jewish] author Franz Werfel (157).

Schweik also asserts that Muriel Rukeyser's allusion to Bernadette in the 1944 poem "Letter to the Front" suggests that "the source of the healing spring, of true vision in wartime, may be imagined as a woman" (157). See also Christa Wolf's Cassandra.

4. Ruddick defines "peacemakers" as those who "create a communal suspicion of violence, a climate in which peace is desired, a way of living in which it is possible to learn and to practice nonviolent resistance and strategies of reconciliation." At the very end of this chapter, I will return to the potentially "peacemaking" presence of the mother in dream-images in H.D.'s wartime writing.

5. See Chapter 3 of Friedman's Penelope's Web for an extensive discussion of the "Madrigal" plot which constitutes several of H.D.'s novels.

6. See Note 5 of my Introduction.

7. It is significant that in this scene of looking, the "Head or Source of evil" is that of Medusa, and perhaps even more significant that H.D. completely erases the gender of the Gorgons by refraining from naming Medusa and by referring only to her head, "it." It is worth considering how the myth of the Gorgons, like the standard narratives of Helen of Troy (which H.D. explicitly challenges in her later Helen in Egypt), is part of a western narrative which links the image of a woman with violence and death, particularly the deaths of soldiers and heroes. To look on her is to die: this statement can be made both of Medusa and Helen as they appear in Greek myth, where the female image is inherently dangerous to the eyes and lives of men. The specular is projected onto women: western culture constructs women as images, that-which-is-to-be-looked-at, and then ascribes to them, in their very capacity as images of either perfect beauty or perfect horror, responsibility for war, violence, and death.

8. Hirsch would disagree, claiming that in The Gift, "scenes of 'wounding' are linked to the mysteries of copulation, childbirth, and death, so that seeing itself becomes a kind of wounding, a trauma of initiation" (438).

9. See Huston, "Tales of War and Tears of Women" for a discussion of the cultural status and sign-systems of women's tears in war-narrative. See also notes 12 and 13, below.

10. Friedman reads this passage differently: "H.D.'s play with the presence/absence in the water drop resonates with contemporary Lacanian theory of the word or signifier as a material presence that signifies the absence of the phallus" (405, n. 46).

11. Schweik reads this review as part of H.D.'s critique of the passive or helpless female spectator of violence:

> Crying and watching, bullied into pity, Jeanne D'arc's spectators were compelled to occupy a position quintessentially women's own in war narrative. The position of the weeping woman was, for H.D., an intolerable one to be put into by a text (and by structures of power which the text represents) and an untenable one to aim to enforce as authorial agent. (252)

12. See Ruddick, chapter 6, for a look at this icon, particularly as it appears in the work of Kathe Kollwitz, and, again, Huston, "Tales of War and Tears of Women."

13. Friedman has also observed the recurrence of the image of fire in The Gift as a way to connect childhood memory and adult fears "of being burnt to death by a bomb" (334).

14. Friedman offers a reading of "maternal transference" in H.D.'s late work (313-329).

15. For some recent discussions which offer feminist analyses as well as historical overviews of the discussion surrounding the issue, see Ruddick (chapters 7-9), Huston ("The Matrix of War"), Jean Bethke Elshtain (143-49, 191-93), and Klaus Theweleit in Cooke and Woollacott.

16. See, for example, Marcus, "Corpus/Corps/Corpse;" Theweleit, Male Fantasies; Bowen, chapter 5; and Ruddick, chapter 8.

Conclusion

The scopic regime of modernity may best be understood as a contested terrain, rather than a harmoniously integrated complex of visual theories and practices.
--Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity" (4)

The picture cannot be neutral or objective, being made up as it is of bodies and parts, of visual representations and linguistic presentations, of visual presentations and linguistic representations.
--Mary Ann Caws, The Art of Interference (26)

There is no war . . . without representation.
--Paul Virilio, War and Cinema (6)

The work of these five American women artists shows how the female gaze in representation, constructed by conflicting wartime discourses in the first half of this century, occupies a range of possible seeing positions and exercises a range of visual modes in its look at militarism and gendered subjectivity in the two world wars. The female gaze occupies and calls into question the position of a passive "spectator" of war; it participates in and dismantles the specular ideal of totalized and totalizing wartime vision; it offers models of idiosyncratic and collective "revelation" about the nature and end of warfare; it positions the female body as both the subject and object of wartime vision; it identifies the female observer as eyewitness and seer, employing observation, speculation, and revelation (in Jay's sense of these terms).

In spite of the heterogeneity of these positions, these texts quite consistently critique the specular logic of militarism, its extreme extension in fascist ideology and visuality, and its roots in patriarchal culture. In the conflicted and complex acts of "keeping in view" the central fact of the physical damage wrought by militarism and fascism, these women artists also bring into view (again, in a conflicted way) the physical and literally threatened presence of the resisting female observer.

The works examined in this study suggest that just as specular thought, as outlined by Irigaray, disallows the possibility of female subjectivity, which occupies "the blind spot of an old dream of symmetry,"[1] so militarism disallows both the centrality of injuring in war and the presence of a resisting female observer. The wounded or dead body and the body of the resisting female observer occupy a position in militarist discourse analogous to the position of the female subject in a specular symbolic economy: nowhere or, to paraphrase Irigaray, the blind spots of an old dream of military conquest. One project of the women artists of my study is to relocate that nowhere as "elsewhere" or "somewhere" through the various indexes which mark these texts. The index is the sign that performs this often contradictory task: it is the sign of militarism's disavowal of wounding and its attempt to direct and control vision; it is the sign of the wartime female observer's resisting

act of keeping "in view" the damage done by militarism; it emphasizes the physical presence of the female body on the field of wartime vision; it implicates the reader's or viewer's physicality.

We have seen how Wharton and Aldrich try to construct themselves and their readers as militarized observers and in the process construct a conflicted observer, both militarized and resisting, who in part submits to and in part escapes the specular circuit of militarism. The index is the sign of this contradiction. As propaganda texts, the works discussed in Part One try to replicate militarist visuality: gesturing toward injuring, never representing it, directing the reader's sight as far as possible without representing bodily damage. In propaganda, the gesture of indexing could be said to be a gesture of hiding the injured body even as it seems to reveal it, as in the Brangwyn posters discussed in Chapter 1. It is the sign of a unifying, directing, militaristic visuality in which the central fact of wounding "disappears from view." However, that gesturing itself becomes entangled in the contradictions which gender brings to light. The gesture becomes a sign of the female eyewitness's difference, her inability to fully support the unified subject and the specular circuit of vision that war propaganda would create. When these women authors mime the gesture of militarism, it becomes a sign of difference, that which remains outside of and resists the specular circuits of militaristic visuality.

In Part Two, the conflict in visuality is not between an American female observer and Allied militaristic visuality but rather between that observer and the specularizing discourses of fascism. As we have seen, each of the works constructs, or attempts to construct, an antifascist observer and encounters the problem of how to represent endangered, wounded, or destroyed bodies. These later works "hold visible" the act of wounding, but they find conflicted, fragmented ways of doing so. It is the "failures" of vision which are most effective in representing the bodily damage central to war, in indicting fascism's extreme extension of militaristic and specular thought, and in representing the resisting female observer. Again, the verbal and visual index is employed in representing both the female observer and the wounded or destroyed body of war. However, the gesture of pointing for these Second World War writers is itself more fractured and interrupted, underscoring invisibility and loss, removing the female body from the specular gaze, and re-presenting that body as a site of resistance to specularity or as a gesture toward an "expanded field" of wartime vision.

Along with the war-damaged or war-destroyed bodies which are kept in view through the conflicted visual strategies of indexing, concealment, or fragmentation, the body of the female observer herself is a site of conflict and is central to these artists' critiques of militarism. The imagined photograph of Wharton's Ivy, the actual photographs of

Wharton at the front and Miller in Hitler's bathtub, the presence of Aldrich on the conflicting visual field of the panorama, the "something" in Gellhorn's Rita, the endangered female body on the field of visual disturbance in H.D.'s work: all of these inscriptions of the body of the female observer work to foreground, interrogate, and/or elude the specular circuits and entrapments which are so important to militarism and its extensions in fascism.

What I hope I have brought to light in this study is a corner of the field where inscriptions of gender, vision, the body, "the metaphorics of seeing in literature" and responses to militarism intersect during the modernist period. The women whose work I have discussed are important contributors to our growing understanding of modernist subjectivity and modernist representational practices. Shari Benstock has claimed that "Modernism has been opened to Modernisms, and the differences among modernist practices include differences of gender, but not only" (32). I want to suggest that the kind of modernism practiced in these works involves (and involves the reader/viewer of these texts in) a gendered, embodied, historically and ethically engaged modernism: an attention to the presence of the female subject and body on the discursive and physical field of vision, organized violence, and ethical engagement--and an attention to how that body and that subject are constructed, by political, historical, technological, and aesthetic

discourse, both verbal and visual. These female observers of the two world wars participate (and ask their readers and viewers to participate) not only in a gaze that attempts to "fix" their authority as eyewitnesses or seers, but also in a glance that reminds us of the historical, physical, and subjective limitations and pressures placed upon the act of looking--imitations and pressures which are intensified during the intensely gendering activity of war. For Bal, the glance is

> the involved look where viewers, aware of and bodily participating in the process of looking, engage in interactions of various kinds, put themselves at risk, and do not need, therefore, to deny the work of representation. ("His Master's Eye," 384)

She claims that "[t]he virtue in this mode of looking is that the awareness of one's own engagement in the act of looking entails the recognition that what one sees is a representation, not an objective reality" ("His Master's Eye," 384). The female observers constructing themselves and their audiences as subjects of vision during the world wars embody this awareness in their representations of the female look at war and use it in their implicit and explicit critiques of the most specularizing and destructive discourses and events of the first half of this century.

As we have seen, Teresa DeLauretis suggests that in feminist theory, "what is finally at stake is not so much how 'to make visible the invisible' as how to produce the conditions of visibility for a different social subject" (8). The gendered, embodied modernism and its subject made visible in the texts of my study also offer, as I have suggested in the last chapter, the possibility of an "ethically accountable" visuality (Bryson 107)--one which explores the roots and branches of specularizing militarism, the violence it does to gendered bodies and gendered subjects, and the possibility for resisting such violence.

This promise or potential manifests itself in the works I've discussed as an engagement between texts and their readers or viewers. The varieties of the index--textual and visual devices such as letters, maps, the blurring of a photograph, the "disappearing" of a scene of violence from the narrative, the gesturing toward invisible subjects, the representation of a "visual disturbance"--all gesture toward both the artist's and readers' or viewers' embodied subjectivity. These engagements between artist, text, and audience establish other trajectories of wartime vision, other "lines of faith," offering visual and textual alternatives to the specular structures so central to the militarism of the modern--and, for that matter, the postmodern--period.

Notes

1. The quotation is the title of Part I of Speculum; also see the chapter "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Always Been Appropriated by the 'Masculine'" (133-46).

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