

Censorship as Textual Ellipsis: A Post-Structuralist Reading of the Censored Film

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I. History, Textuality and "The Agency of the Censorship"

The opening sequence of the quite forgotten (and deservedly so) 1934 film *Madame Du Barry* displays a series of courtly paintings representing, in turn, the Kings of France from Louis X to Louis XV. While each of the paintings become increasingly elaborate, the final painting, that of Louis XV, is but an incomplete drawing within an otherwise empty frame. The sketch then dissolves into the film's opening scene where we first see the King, in all his glory, indeed, posing before a portrait artist. As I take it, the film thus promises, somewhat like Bazin's "myth of total cinema," to complete (in both senses of the word) the artist's sketch, that is, to offer a moving (again, in both senses of the word) portrait of Louis XV. And indeed, the scene continues with the King moving out from behind his royal garb while the majestic robes and crown remain freestanding. We have, now, standing before our eyes the little man who had previously been dwarfed within the representations of power.

While *Madame Du Barry* is little more than a slight entertainment (in its case a mere sexual titillation), the film claims (in traditional Hollywood fashion) to be an historical biography. And thus the opening sequence of *Madame Du Barry* presents a site of representation wherein the claim is made that there is something called "real history" that stands behind artistic texts, and that can, therefore, be beckoned, like the little King, to step outside the text, to stand before us, to become the object of our gaze and the subject of our study. That this claim is made inside a film text that, itself, was subjected to the censoring agency ("agency" in both an institutional and rhetorical sense) of the film industry's Production Code Administration (functioning as an ideological apparatus) introduces a paradox I find inherent in the imbrication of history, textuality and censorship. For the King's portrait, as an artistic text, viewed from within the enlarged frame of the film as a censored text, suggests, I think, a metaphor, perhaps a metonym, or even, a *mise en abîme* for problems inherent in certain nineteenth century inspired historical-critical

methodologies wherein a like claim is made that history can be coerced to show itself outside of both textuality and ideology.

In today's theoretical climate, both the epistomological "a-theism" of post-structuralist-postmodern textual theory and the ideological "resignation" of certain post-Marxisms overlap to make me more than a little suspicious of claims that, like the little King in *Madame Du Barry*, the historical object (as subject for/to our gaze) can be called forth for all to see, leaving to one side its empty freestanding artistic representation. I am not convinced that in traditional historical-critical method, the historian is not, then, eschewing one "costume drama" for another. As "New Historicism" makes abundantly clear, we can no longer escape recognizing that history is, itself, "always already" a censored text. Consequently, the paradox inherent in the opening sequence of *Madame Du Barry* seems to lead to Jacques Derrida's famous (and, admittedly, to many, infamous) motto: "*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*" ("There is nothing outside the text").

As loyal as I am to deconstruction as both a critical strategy and philosophical position (though, here, I want to make clear, philosophical position must be understood as a site from which one observes rather than as an act of positing a principle or proposition), both thoughtful and serious objections can be raised to the suggestion that there is nothing outside the text (or, as I read Derrida, nothing outside textuality). Certainly, numerous critics of Derrida (from traditional historians to classical Marxists, from bourgeois "protectors of the canon" to cultural materialists and neo-pragmatists) have, alike, protested that if there is nothing outside the text, then, first, deconstructive reading strategies are finally nothing more than an over-theorized "new criticism." And second (and, I believe, a more serious charge), deconstruction offers no way to move from inside a literary or film text into the "real" (effective) world of politics and history. And here, I am forced to agree with critics of deconstruction that, indeed, while history may only be a "text," a "site of representation," it is one within which real blood (not just ink or ketchup) is continually shed.

Accordingly, such critics fear that deconstructive reading makes a fetish of the inside of discourse and thus cuts off the text's relationship with a political economy of knowledge and social practices. Thus, they complain, in deconstruction there is (I will use here, Burke's well-worn Pentad) no final effective Scene, Agent, Agency or Purpose. The text is read as only the Act of free floating signifiers. If this is the case, then indeed, deconstructive reading would seem forever confined within something like the Lacanian Imaginary, wherein all the reader can do is to chase the trace of the tale.

And thus I have found myself, for some time now, caught (up) within the claims and counter-claims of both deconstruction and cultural studies. Yet, it is precisely at this point of oscillation within contemporary theory between deconstruction and a social critique of culture (which is, likewise, the oscillation between textuality and history) that I find my own theoretical

interest in the agency of censorship taking on a political urgency. For if, indeed, history is "always already" not only a text, but a censored text, then while history is "always" nothing but a text, it is a text "already" shaped, reshaped and misshaped by a political agency. That is to say, the politics of experience is "always already" the experience of politics.

Then textuality and history are, alike (in a psychoanalytic sense) secondary formulations. And, here, in this essay, exploring the nature of censorship, you and I are attempting to go further, trying to get at some kind of primary process (the agency of a political unconscious), a process that is, at once, psychic and political, individual and collective, a primary process active within textuality, itself, (whether as literature, or film, or for that matter, culture and history understood as "text").

What makes this discussion of censorship as a primary process so difficult is that, here, we are forced to try to tease out a process that is the very stuff of textuality (that is, censorship creates textuality, but there would be no censorship except for the existence of the text upon which it operates). In one sense, the agency of censorship is of the text, and, indeed, nothing but the text (it is, after all, nothing but a textual operation); in another sense, as a primary process, it is always already an operation outside the text. Thus censorship as a primary process is, as Metz notes, "literally, beyond our grasp since we can only grasp it by making it conscious." And, so, as Metz continues:

no one can "get hold of" the primary process since to do so would involve reducing it entirely to secondary formulations. That is why it is something we point to (rather than define) in phrases which are essentially deictic, in negative and relational terms, as a kind of desecundarised secondary. . . .

The horizon of the "primary" is only the dialectical other of secundarisation: its limit, its point of disappearance, and at the same time its work, its creation. The primary is the name secundarisation gives to the holes in its fabric.¹

And to bend Metz, I trust only slightly, to meet my own needs, I would, then, add: that the political unconscious (here, understood as "the agency of the censorship," is only the dialectical other of history as a process of "secundarisation," (that is, of textualization). The primary process of censorship is, then, the name history is now compelled to give to the holes in its fabric.

Censorship, then, operates something like what Lotman terms a "minus device," that is, the "non-utilization of some element, its meaningful absence . . . [which] becomes an organic part of the graphically fixed text . . . an unfinished construction in a finished text."² The agency of censorship, in its creation of the text as a series of displacements, creates, at the same time, a text wherein the meaning which is present is created by (and

dependent upon) a "meaning-full absence" of meaning. And, I might add, it is to the credit of deconstruction that it insists that we read the "meaningful absence" within the text as, indeed, full of meaning. So, of course, in one sense, it is still possible, even necessary, to continue to talk about "what the text means." At the same time, we cannot escape a realization that what the text "means" to say is the product of what it cannot say. As the product of censorship, meaning is surely present in the text. But, but as an always already displaced meaning, it resides in the text as a negative quality. Something has been erased, has disappeared (though not without a trace). An ellipsis creates an ellipse.

In fact, it is Derrida who has most usefully explored the elliptic nature of textuality. He claims that at the non-symmetrical division of the closure of the book and the opening of the text, there, one finds an "elliptical essence." As Derrida writes, "this lack is invisible and undeterminable . . . yet all meaning is altered by this lack. . . . Something is missing that would make the circle perfect."³ Then, on the one hand, there is "nothing outside the text;" on the other hand, that which is missing (ellipsed) from (thereby forced outside) the text shapes the text into an ellipsoid [a deviation from perfect circular or spherical form]. This, I would argue, is the dialectic tension within which one must read a censored film and further, much further, it is, perhaps, the very dialectic tension which already exists between history and textuality.

Perhaps, then, critics of Derrida misread, and thus too easily dismiss, Derrida's famous aphorism by putting all the stress on the word "text": "there is nothing outside the TEXT." Perhaps we should read it as, "there IS nothing outside the text"/"there is NOTHING outside the text." There is something, which is a no-thing, outside the text, at the heart of the text. (Like the negative theology of Meister Eckhart, Derrida seems to create, here, something like a negative Logos). The task before us, then, is to explore the nature of the "nothing," this NO-THING that is of the text, but outside the text, that unstabilizes the text, that makes its meaning undecidable. It is the NO-THING that acts through the agency of censorship, as something akin to a minus device.

II. Censorship and Cultural Rhetoric

Nevertheless--and yet--on the other hand--to give Derrida's critics their due, the valid concerns they voice force me to, at the same time invoke a double reading of the phrase "agency of censorship," one that creates a degree of resonance between the various contextual meanings of "agency" and "censorship" within the discourses of rhetorical, psychoanalytic and textual theory and its use as a signifier of quite real and historical political-institutional practices. As we have seen, in the case of *Madame Du Barry*, the Production Code Administration is quite literally an "agency" whose job is to "censor" cultural texts. And here, film theory clearly crosses paths with film history.

Indeed, the study of censorship stands at the axis of film theory and film history. In fact, just such a double reading of censorship has already begun in the recent work of several theoretically-minded film historians and/or historically-minded film theorists (Annette Kuhn, Lea Jacobs, Dana Polan and Janet Staiger immediately come to mind) as they seek to read the social logic of a particular time and place within the textual logic which produces the film's text. For example, in her analysis of *The Big Sleep*, Kuhn uses a double reading of the Freudian notion of censorship alongside its meaning as a set of institutional practices to explore the relationship of a film text to its production context. Kuhn attempts to move away from, as she puts it:

the model of the image/text as an isolated concept of analysis, and closer to a conception of the image as inhabiting various contexts: cultural contexts of spectatorship, institutional and social/historical context of production and consumption . . . without losing sight of texts as productive of meaning in their own right.⁴

In this essay, I make a like move, searching out the circular movement in which a film text is produced by a social logic which produces a textual logic within which viewers produce various meanings which, in turn, circulate as social logic. Yes, it is a dizzying process. But thus the text is both a product and agent of a "cultural rhetoric," defined by Steven Mailloux as "the political effectivity of trope and argument in culture."⁵ What is particularly productive in Mailloux's definition is that, here, the word "rhetoric" brings to mind a double scene. First, rhetoric is understood as a textual logic (the structuring of texts through tropes), a textual logic that can be opened up by deconstruction as both a philosophical and critical position (again, recall how I mean position). And second, rhetoric is understood as a social logic (reading the text as a site of argument (we can use, here, argument in both its classical and popular sense: argument as ideology and argument as a site of conflict over ideology). Rhetoric, then, as argument, as a social logic, can, likewise, be revealed by the use of deconstruction as a political strategy.

In my reading of the following censored films, I will, then, be reading censorship as both a textual and social logic that operates both in and as cultural rhetoric. And here, I bring forth two "arguments" of my own. First, just as every text is a censored and thus conflicted text, the social logic in which the Hollywood film is formed is the site of a conflict (of drives?) between its function as an ideological apparatus and its necessity to entertain, to produce pleasure (and I do not believe these two operations are necessarily one and the same). Second, in seeing what is going on in a film's text, we are able to better understand what is going on in the social formation within which the text is a transcoding. And likewise, to deconstruct the censored text is to deconstruct a censored social formation, that is, to listen for what the unconscious (that meaningful absence) of history speaks. In making such a

move, we listen within the mechanistic hum of the agency/apparatus of censorship, for a distant echo of displaced discourses and desires that may yet still speak, if we can learn to listen within the "derivatives of the unconscious" for a return of the sup-(re)pressed.

III. *Madame Du Barry* (1934)

As Greg Black tells us, when Joseph Breen first laid eyes upon Warner Brothers' script for *Madame Du Barry*, his anxious response was to declare it filled with "vulgarity, obscenity and blatant adultery." The script was, Breen decried, "dangerous from the standpoint of industry policy . . . too much exposure of the female body would lower the moral standards of the audience." Before the film could be screened to the public, the Production Code Administration would order twenty-six cuts.⁶ I recount this historical scene within which *Madame Du Barry* came to the screen, as it repeats another scene, a prior moment of shock that, likewise, activated an agency of censorship. As Sarah Kofman notes, Freud, in writing the *Traumdeutung* (*The Interpretation of Dreams*):

exposed for the first time this thing so horrible to see, this thing that could not be directly looked at, the sex of the mother--horrible in its desirability. Freud is constrained by the dread of having to blind himself . . . to elaborate pseudo-solutions, the fictions which *screen* [italics mine] the unobservable and which transforms woman into a never-solvable enigma.⁷

What is "this thing so horrible to see . . . horrible in its desirability" that forces some Superego, some Symbolic No of the "Name of the Father," the "agency (the instance) of the censorship," to demand that both Freud and Breen take up the knife, put scissors in hand--and make the cut? Companions in the dark, Freud and Breen both create texts saturated with the enigma of woman.

When we watch the final cut of *Madame Du Barry*, we see projected on the screen the PCA approved text of the film as indeed a "secondary revision," in both a literal and psychoanalytic sense. As Laplanche and Pontalis explain, secondary revision is an "effect of the censorship . . . the filling-in of its gaps by means of selection and addition . . . In this sense [it] may be said to resemble rationalization."⁸ I would add, then, that as an "effect of the censorship," secondary revision and ideology act as one and the same. They, alike, attempt to construct (as we, now, attempt to deconstruct) "elaborate pseudo-solutions, the fictions which screen the unobservable."

The censoring of *Madame Du Barry*, as the ideological closure of secondary revision thus ever "screens the unobservable" by the projecting of a "screen memory" ("a formation produced by a compromise between repressed elements and defense").⁹ And yet, as a deconstructive reading of *Madame Du*

Barry reveals, the film text screens (in both senses of the word: to obfuscate and to project-reveal-show) fissures and contradictions the agency of censorship attempts to efface. It is in this double act of screening that the Countess-*Madame Du Barry* (both the woman and the film) are, alike, transformed into never-solvable enigmas.

The enigma of *Madame Du Barry* is produced by the agency of censorship expelling outside the text explicit views of the body of the woman and the scenes of the King and the Countess together in bed. The cuts produce a lack, the loss from the text of both the full-bodied presence of the woman and the primal scene. And yet, as psychoanalytic theory insists, it is precisely in the denial and loss of full-bodied presence that the indeterminable desire of obsession and fetish is born. Forbidden to look at the body of the Other, ("horrible in its desirability") a substitution is made, a secondary site is established within an hysterical blindness. The absent is returned to presence in/as an act of oscillating substitution. This oscillating nature of the fetish was first noted by Freud who found the fetish both a disavowal and an affirmation. Likewise, it is the theme of the fetish as an "indecidable oscillation" that is crossed and crisscrossed throughout Derrida's *Glas* (As Derrida quotes Genet, "my excitement is the oscillation").¹⁰

As is well known, since Laura Mulvey's original work on visual pleasure in the classic cinema, the fetishization of the female body has been a key concern in film theory. Mulvey and most feminist film theory to date believe the image of the woman (captured within the male gaze of the camera) is made a fetish to defuse a castration threat and Oedipal guilt. Thus the cut that precedes and produces the fetish is the cut of castration. Recently, however, Gaylyn Studlar, in her study of the von Sternberg-Dietrich films and following her lead, Tony Williams, in his work on *film noir*, question the castration centered Freudian-Lacanian base of Mulvey's theory.¹¹ Studlar, indebted to Deleuze, suggests that the fetish represents a substitute for the mother's lost breast and body. In this realignment of psychoanalytic theory, we might then conclude that the unkindest cut is not the castrating cut that creates woman as the site of loss or lack, but the cutting of the umbilical cord, the cut that produces the woman's body, not as loss but as forever--lost.

In Studlar's formulation, the pre-oedipal fetish produces what Deleuze identifies as the neglected (censored) "masochistic aesthetic." And here, Studlar's study seems to more adequately capture the oscillating nature of the fetish noted by Derrida in *Glas* and displayed (screened) in *Madame Du Barry*. Studlar describes the masochistic aesthetic as making an obsessive movement between "revelation and concealment, appearance and disappearance, rejection and seduction."¹² In a like manner, the PCA, in acting as a parental agency of censorship (the "law of the Father") prevents the camera, as the eye of the child, to be fully reunited with the body of the mother. And thus, the body of the Other is produced as a fetish, the

oscillating presence/absence of the Mother in her "revelation and concealment, appearance and disappearance, rejection and seduction."

And indeed, the first time the presence of Madame du Barry appears on screen, she hides behind a curtain, only, suggestively, revealing--her foot! When the King first sees the Madame, she conceals herself within her coach, only holding out--her hand. And in the film's first full shot of Madame du Barry, she peeks out from under her bed covers, smiles seductively at the camera, then, suddenly pulls the covers over her head. In the first three sequences in which she appears (and disappears), the Madame plays a cruel hide and seek with the camera. Rather than being captured by (within) the camera's gaze, she, instead, like the striptease artist, sadistically creates and controls a masochistic desire within the King, the camera and the audience, by playing her *fort-da* game, hiding and revealing then hiding again--the fullness of the mother.

In the "masochistic" film text, it is not fear of castration but the excessive fullness of the mother ("horrible in its desirability") that elicits that mixture of desire and fear that oscillates within the fetish. And, indeed, the fetishistic nature of the text as revised and approved by the PCA seems to produce just such an oscillation between fear and desire, which displays itself in the oscillation of two discourses: one discourse approved by the PCA and another that keeps insistently speaking from within the text. The first, the discourse of the "agency of the censorship" speaks of Woman as castration, lack, threat: The Whore. Yet, a second discourse, a discourse of desire, speaks of the whore as fullness, excess: The Mother.

Breen sees the Madame as a whore to be censored. The King (and thus the audience, for the king and camera's position [point-of-view] are emotionally aligned--desire puts both at the mercy of the fetish) seeks her out as a child longs for the Mother. And, certainly, the Madame brings out the child in the King. The Madame, in fact, acts within the text, something like Derrida's reading of Plato's pharmakon, as both poison and cure. The film's text, then, is made the site of a conflict between cinema as an ideological apparatus (the discourse as shaped by the PCA) and as an entertainment, as a provider of pleasure (the Madame as fetish). Split by this battle between a cinematic Super-Ego and its Id, the film text, like the fetish, oscillates between a denial and affirmation of Woman, Excess and Desire. In *Madame Du Barry*, we find, then, two discourses on woman, one of poison and one of cure. And following a deconstructive path, we can, perhaps, search out how and where these two discourses counter-act.

Black's careful research shows how the PCA, still ill at ease following the script's final cuts, had Warner Brothers add a prologue to the film that would, they hoped, stabilize oscillation by establishing a "dominant" discourse, the discourse of woman and desire as poison, not cure. Yet, the PCA's use of the "Prologue" as a strategy of containment (both ideological and sexual, if they

are not one and the same) seems only to produce, instead, a moment of aporia (a dialectical shock) that only foregrounds a text at war with itself.

The "Prologue" declares:

... Extravagance and Folly had succeeded at last in arousing in the breast of the Common People the smoldering embers of Resentment and Revolt.

The PCA seems to trust that if it can make the film appear to be more about "politics" (indeed, even politics as "Resentment and Revolt"), than about "sex," then the text will be less dangerous to the well-being of, not only American society, but given the worldwide distribution of Hollywood products--the "civilized world." I would assume bourgeois ideology is protected, here, from "Resentment and Revolt" by keeping the two ever separate from the twin evils of "Extravagance and Folly." It seems a mark of ideological containment, bourgeois and otherwise (certainly in many strains of Marxism), that "extravagance and folly" are squarely encoded with the paradigm of "Things That Are Evil." Of course, it never quite works that way. Extravagance and folly seem to always slip their paradigmatic bonds and in Hollywood films, perhaps, more than anywhere! (Few of us in our youth failed to note that in Hollywood films the "evil" characters are [and had] the most fun.)

Still, both a dour Christianity and a stern Marxism, alike, have sought to contain "extravagant" visions of a utopian future. Even Louis XV's court can't hold a candle to the early Christians' depiction of a future kingdom, open to the poor where streets would be extravagantly paved with gold and populated by prostitutes. The PCA may grasp better than most Marxists that within the "political unconscious," such dreams are less an "opiate" than a stimulant. I am reminded here of the startling truth of Adorno's observation that:

[humanistic] criticism . . . furthers the belief that the sin lies in man's desire for consumer goods and not in the organization of the whole which withholds these goods from man. . . . The sin is satiety, not hunger. . . . [Thus] the "eternal values" of which cultural criticism is so fond reflect the perennial catastrophe.¹³

I will not argue, then, with Joseph Breen's assessment that the text of *Madame Du Barry*, this (w)hor(e)'s texte that reveals and conceals, appears and disappears, rejects and seduces, is dangerous in its "indecidable oscillation." For everywhere the film seems to ache to break its social contract with the PCA and to validate extravagance and folly over reason and rationality. For both the King and the Madame, sin is inscribed as hunger, not satiety. The King is dying of hunger, the hunger to be free from the *trap*-ings of patriarchal power. And while the ideological frame produced by the PCA induced "Prologue" insists that "this picture portrays a King unmindful

of his people--selfish, arrogant, unscrupulous," the King declares himself, "the unhappiest man in Europe," who seems well aware that his problems are the result of bearing the too heavy weight of patriarchy. (And for all the PCA's efforts, the film's point-of-view clearly positions us within the text as sympathetic to his plight.) He cries, "Must I always be King? Is there no woman who will think of me only as a man?" This is a King longing to be deposed.

And as well, the King's hunger to be dispossessed of his power is matched by his Madame's hunger to forget the poverty of her youth, to relish in what she defends as the "righteousness" of satiety. When a liberal and progressive advisor to the King accuses Madame du Barry of insensitivity to the plight of the poor, her innocent, childlike response is, "Why do you hate me? Am I so cruel to be trying to have fun and to make the King happy? Is that so wicked?" Speaking for myself, a liberal, a progressive and a humanist, the question the Madame throws back in my face is a hard one to answer. For Breen, it was easy; the answer is a decided YES! However, the film's text, itself, seems not so sure, and on balance may be read to answer NO!

In fact, there appears throughout the film a pull toward a transvaluation of all patriarchal, bourgeois values. Thus within the text's economy of values, the King values the "feminine" work of cooking and sewing over the "masculine" work of ruling the nation (the only time the King seems happy is when he is displaying his expertise in "cooking and needlework"). Just as, having a mistress is valued over marriage and family (the King's daughters are all harpies who only bring him misery) and, indeed, marriage is described as "a loud pretending, and for what?" Sexual pleasure is valued over the pleasure of making war (in one nonsensical scene, du Barry's sexual escapades actually prevent France from going to war). While at the same time, the sexual and political impotence of the King's grandson is blamed on an overly "rationalistic education" that has produced a "mechanical mind." The first time the grandson is shown on the screen, his head is stuck in an elaborate, mechanical clock (he appears something like a nineteenth century "bachelor machine"). And here the solution, quite genuinely recommended (right in the face of Breen and company) is to have the stupid boy study pornography rather than philosophy and science followed by a night in Madame du Barry's bed! Throughout the film, (forbidden) pleasure is valued over politics, and it would appear, offered as its cure.

In an oscillation of both dismay and wonderment over the excesses of Madame du Barry, the inquiry is made: "Madame, what are you trying to do to France?" She turns her eyes away from the King, and addressing the camera, breaks frame and replies, "Just what it is doing to me!" What can she mean? Several possibilities, one in particular, come to mind, but to take the question literally, just what has France done to the Madame, save by withholding its goods, turned her into a sexual outlaw who now takes

everything she can get, who displays before all the people of France the extravagance of satiety?

Ah, Mr. Breen was so right. The excess of Madame Du Barry, like the excess of Woman and the promise of fullness, of satiety, is indeed dangerous, "horrible in its desirability." And so, the text of history (or at least myth) tells us a revolution comes to France when the hungry of Paris hear Marie Antoinette's disdainful words, "Let them eat cake." A wiser woman, the whore, Madame du Barry, would, I think, have known the revolutionary potential of those words. Her every action declares: Let me eat cake! Let them eat cake! Let us all eat cake! Madame du Barry makes the suggestion, one Breen and his ilk might well fear: revolutions are not caused, alone, by a want for bread, but out of a desire for cake.

IV. *Dead End* (1937)

In bringing Sidney Kingsley's Broadway hit, *Dead End*, to the screen, Samuel Goldwyn saw the opportunity to produce a film he believed would make a significant contribution to the public welfare. Goldwyn went so far as to claim that Kingsley's drama was "one of the greatest social documentaries ever written."¹⁴ Despite Goldwyn's Hollywood hyperbole and in spite of PCA interference, *Dead End* is undoubtedly a deeply felt and politically progressive film, making not only a diagnosis, but offering a prescription, as well, for the ills of urban poverty. The film's prescription for alleviating the misery of depression era poverty is, no doubt, made easier to take by having it delivered by the film's "All American Hero." Our hero is the Hollywood creation replacing the play's central character, the ricket-crippled "Gimpty," who has now been transfigured into a young, strapping and handsome college educated, but unemployed, architect named--Dave. And so, our new hero, Dave, declares: "give people a decent place to live and they'll be decent."

Certainly, Dave's message was not missed by *The New York Post* which wrote, "This is a movie about housing."¹⁵ One trade paper declared *Dead End* a "potent sermon, exerting a deterring influence on youngsters who desire to emulate the lives . . . of gangsters."¹⁶ And thus, not only did numerous church and "women's groups" back the film, but the Legion of Decency listed the film as "recommended." The PCA, itself, after, of course, some changes, praised the film as "a strong plea for slum elimination and better housing as a crime prevention."¹⁷

I have wanted to foreground, here, what John Fiske terms a film's "vertical intertextuality" (a primary text's relationship to other texts which refer specifically to it [reviews, publicity, studio or industry files, etc.] and which directly and indirectly shape the film's reception).¹⁸ In doing so it becomes clear that after Kingsley's play had been tidied up (first by screen writer Lillian Hellman, and still later by the PCA) *Dead End* was finally viewed by decent

people to be a decent film that made a strong plea for human decency as defined by Dave: "give people a decent place to live and they'll be decent."

Within the circularity of the above logic, one can begin to see why the PCA would embrace *Dead End*. Dave and Joseph Breen think a lot alike and share a common goal. Like Dave's argument for housing, the PCA believes: give people a decent film to watch and they'll be decent. Since everyone surrounding the making, distribution and reception of *Dead End* seems so obsessed with decency, I wonder if it might be wise to take a closer look at just how "decency" is articulated in what can be (quite fairly) termed a "progressive" text.

Dead End begins with the camera placing us high above the roof tops of Manhattan's East Side. The camera thus makes literal the text's point-of-view: that the viewers come to the film as naturally, originally, normally, far removed from the slums of New York. We descend into a street scene we would normally "overlook," as indeed, at the end of the film the camera (and we) will ascend (return) back to our natural, original, normal, lofty position. As the camera moves down toward the city streets, it slices between the luxury apartments of the rich and the tenements of the poor, that alike, line the city's river. And so the film begins by visualizing its theme, the indecent division between a society's rich and poor.

It was Michel Foucault, was it not, who taught us to be suspicious of just such (as he termed them) "dividing practices?"¹⁹ Foucault devoted much of his energy to exploring how a long tradition of humanitarian rhetoric on reform and progress (like *Dead End*, no doubt well meaning and progressive) nevertheless, by first dividing, then "moralizing the poor," functions as a technique of power/knowledge and domination. And it is with Foucault's work in mind that I grow equally suspicious of the rhetoric of "decency" that resounds both within and around *Dead End*. The film's argument seems less one that claims that poverty is, in itself, indecent, than that poverty creates people who behave indecently (and thus Dave's declaration that "decent housing will make people decent," or the PCA's approval of the film as one which makes "a strong plea for better housing as a crime prevention," or *The Motion Picture Daily's* praise of *Dead End* as "a potent sermon"). With all this concern for making people decent, crime prevention and deterring youth from going astray, I wonder if the division the film creates isn't one between economic class and conditions, but rather, more a division between decent and indecent behavior. If so, I am not too surprised since much, if not most, of our cultural rhetoric has continued up to the present "War" on drugs and crime to articulate interrelated questions of class, race and economic deprivation within the paradigmatics of morality.

In the case of *Dead End*, a division is marked between the insensitivity of the very rich (in American media texts insensitivity is a mark of the very rich, generally depicted as "indecently rich," while the middle-class stays, of course, decently well-off) and the violent and/or morally illegitimate behavior of the

film's gangsters, the prostitute, Francey, and "The Dead End Kids." The text's dividing practices, then, create a semiotic site which serves, at the same time, as a middle ground within the film's dividing practices. This "middle" ground between the *class*-ified behaviors of both the very rich and the very poor is a site created by and for Dave and his honest and hard working girlfriend, Drina. And in counter-distinction to the film's other characters (both rich and poor) Dave and Drina are constructed as, yes, poor, but more importantly, decent folk who long to work hard and move out of poverty. We start to perceive, here, something akin to that classic strategy of ideological containment identified by Barthes as "ex-nomination." In doing so, Barthes explored how the category ("regime") of the bourgeoisie as an "ideological fact," refuses to be named.²⁰ And thus the discourse of the bourgeoisie masks itself as "common sense," or in this case, a "common ground" created and reserved for Dave, Drina and, of course, we the viewers. In *Dead End*, the discourse of Dave and Drina seems to act, to represent (stand in for), the ex-nominated voice of the bourgeoisie masked in a rhetoric concerned with "decency."

We see something of this in the way Dave and Drina's work ethic shows up the idleness and indecency of both the rich and poor. As inscribed by the film, the progeny of idle wealth is the "sissy," the progeny of idle poverty is the juvenile delinquent who becomes the criminal. But, by the end of the film, as a reward for their decency, Dave, Drina and her young brother, a reformed Tommy, will be transformed into a nuclear family unit, the backbone and source of strength (as we are so often reminded) of American capitalism articulated as a "moral value." In somewhat of a vicious cycle, Dave's "decency" is rewarded in that Dave's hard work (he kills a gangster) provides money (he receives a "reward") so that he can spare Drina and Tommy from the injustice (indecency) of poverty (Dave will save Tommy from prison by using the reward money to get him the best lawyer, as Dave puts it-- "money can buy.")

We see something of the same going on in an interesting subplot concerning the neighbor gangster, "Baby Face" Nelson. Baby Face has returned to his home turf, at least in part, to see his mother. But when Baby Face goes to his mother, she rejects him, addressing her son as "You dirty dog!" When Baby Face tells his sidekick about his mother's reaction, the sidekick simply replies: "I give my mother a little money and she's always glad to see me." The real sin, what creates our antipathy to Baby Face, seems less the source of his ill-gotten gain than how he spends it. Unlike Dave who kills a man and uses the money to save Tommy, Baby Face, like the rich, is shown up as stingy and selfish. I wonder if it is not a mark of bourgeois discourse to articulate morality as a question not of how one makes money, but how one spends it. Bourgeois morality, then, is finally a consumer ethic.

Nevertheless (again, there is always a nevertheless) for all the work of just such strategies of ideological containment, like censorship itself, there

would be no need for containment if eradication was a possibility. That which must be contained, like the unconscious, still speaks in displacement and condensation, in metonym and metaphor. As Lacan insisted: "it speaks." Thus, as always, there is a joker in the deck, one that unsettles the text's dividing practices and ex-nominating operations. The joker, here, is the disrupting presence of "The Dead End Kids."

Brought to Hollywood from the Broadway play, *The Dead End Kids* became (even before the release of the film) a media sensation. Throughout the shooting of the picture, the press gleefully reported the "rowdy" (*Time* magazine's word) behavior of the boys, portraying them as if they were real life lower class delinquents "discovered" on the streets of New York (they were not; in fact, the boys were from middle class families and chosen for the Broadway play out of several well known drama schools, but with help from the press and no doubt to the credit of their acting talent, no one seemed to have cared to believe the truth). Ironically, due to the publicity and the PCA's insistence that overtly crude and violent behavior be elided from the film's depiction of juvenile delinquency (thus making them "loveable" rowdies) when the film was released the *Dead End Kids* became a popular sensation.

The result, from what I can tell, was that *Dead End* was received by the public as much (or more) a vehicle for the carnivalesque, billingsgate-like antics of the Kids than "as one of the greatest social documents ever written." *Time* magazine, in fact, devoted as much space to a recounting of the Kids' antics in Hollywood as it did to its review of the film. And in its review *Time* declared, "the gang . . . contributed most of the noise and all the excitement to the show . . . the whole dirty, ruthless, gay, heroic, nasty, sadistic crew of them."²¹

In coming to terms with *Dead End*, for all the ways Foucault and Barthes shed light on the textual operations that produce the text, the dirty, ruthless, gay, heroic, nasty, sadistic antics of the Kids may lead us on to Bakhtin. The boys' carnivalesque behavior produces an indecidability in the text. *Dead End*, finally, seems unable to decide just how we are to relate to the Kids, as victims of social injustice or as appealing characters precisely because they, alone, are free of the very middle-class decency the film so desperately upholds.

Dead End reflects an ambiguity concerning "juvenile delinquent" that runs through both American history and literature, one that, I suspect, leads to the fact that subversive, revolutionary discourse has so often been transcoded into books and films about "youth gangs" and juvenile delinquency. In the "gang," there is both the echo of a carnivalesque freedom from the constraints of middle-class decency and at least the whisper (a trace) of a "class for [as well as in] itself."²² (The role of a trans-national youth culture, inscribed in music and fashion, in the political upheavals of the old Soviet Block, as well as China has yet to be written). And, in fact, the repressed roots of the *Dead End Kids* (later re-named The Bowery Boys) are, indeed, less innocent and more threatening to social order than one might suspect. In the 1850s a gang of

10-year-old boys known as "The Little Bowery Boys" committed a number of murders in New York, and, as well, a boys gang known as the "Five Pointers" (a name that shows up in later Bowery Boys films) sacked and burned much of New York during the Draft Riots of 1863!²³

Of course, not so radical--our "Bowery Boys"! Still, the carnivalesque subversiveness of their discourse does work to unsettle the platitudes of Dave and Drina. The presence of the Dead End Kids at least confronts the film's sociological analysis with voices (a discourse) that comes from somewhere outside humanism. The Kid's earthy language brings to mind Ken Hirschkop's criticism of cultural and sociological theory, one that parallels the final failure of ideological closure in *Dead End*. As Hirschkop notes:

attempts to connect the languages of "everyday life" with sociological analysis leads to the reification of the former by the latter. The gap between them marks the place of a necessary but absent inter-mediary between the texture of life in civil society and the scientific aspirations of social theory.²⁴

The Dead End Kids, if nothing else, reconnect *Dead End* to the (concrete) languages of everyday life. As Bakhtin asserted, "the pleasures of carnival are not the pleasures of mere talk but those of a discourse which has rediscovered its connection to the concrete."²⁵ And if the dividing practices of *Dead End* attempt to build a mythic "logic of the concrete,"²⁶ the laughing, taunting, singing discourse of the boys gives voice to a liberating il-"logic of the concrete." While Dave, Drina, Baby Face, the cops on the beat and the gangsters, indeed, all the adult characters in the film, are portrayed as victims trying desperately, each in their own way, to escape the misery of their lives, the Dead End Kids appear to have nothing such in mind. When the Kids taunt the rich boy who lives in the adjoining high-priced high-rise it is not, after all, a cry for equal access to his French lessons, nor to swim in the rich boy's (bragged about) private indoor pool. No, they'll take the garbage strewn river over a sanitized pool any day. So I don't think the Kids would be pleased at all with the plans Messers. Kingsley, Goldwyn and Breen, or Ms. Hellman had in mind. I suspect that with another juvenile delinquent named Huck, our Kids would "head out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because aunt Sally" [I suppose, here, aunt Lillian] "she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before."²⁷

Now before I rhapsodize over the carnevalesque nature of popular culture too much, I readily admit that just such a populist tradition can and surely has been used to do the work of an ideology that upholds a certain "poor but happy" (like the "happy slave") Menippean discourse that serves mostly you know who! Nevertheless, I don't think one can dismiss Huck Finn that easily, and while The Dead End Kids are no match to Huck in textual subversiveness, I also doubt one can dismiss their presence in the film as nothing more than

a strategy of containment. But I suppose that is my point, here again is the oscillation, where the text is at war with itself, where the film becomes, like I believe every text, finally, a site of ideological conflict with itself, reflecting a culture at conflict with itself. Ideologies, like censorship, like strategies of containment, never, finally, have their own way.

While it is hard to say how much of an impact *Dead End*, as "a potent sermon," had, finally, on lessening the desire of youngsters to emulate gangsters, or to provide better housing as a crime prevention, it is clear that the popularity of the Dead End Kids caused nearly every studio to produce their own "kid gang" series. And the Dead End Kids themselves stayed on in Hollywood to make eighty-nine films from 1938 to 1958.²⁸ Few, if any, of their films were reviewed by "legitimate" critics (nor are they, presently, studied by many "serious" film scholars). Their films, like the other studio's kid gang series, mostly flattered their teen target audience by proclaiming that kids are always smarter, more competent and "right" than adults who are always dumber, incompetent and "wrong." The Dead End Kids' films contain dialogue like that found in their 1941 *Hit the Road*: one of the boys replies to the moral instruction of a social worker: "I've heard so much of that baloney I could eat it with mustard." In the 1940 *You're Not So Tough*, Huntz Hall declares, "Look what you got us into, jobs!"

Given the long staying power of the Dead End Kids/Bowery Boys, regardless of what either Mr. Goldwyn or the PCA had in mind, many in the audience of *Dead End* took their pleasure in the boys' escape from decency, their ability to "run fast" before the PCA "sivilizes" them because, as we all know, "we've been there before."

V. *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933)

In producing *Gabriel Over the White House*, William Randolph Hearst must have been enthusiastic over the prospect of freeing his political views from the confines of the editorial pages, to frame them within the narrative of a popular film. Certainly, the narrative structure of *Gabriel* appears to have been devised to provide a structure within which to string together a number of political speeches, really, dramatized editorials (while Walter Wanger and Carey Wilson wrote the story and dialogue, Hearst, in fact, wrote the film's speeches). These dramatized editorials offer, then, America and the world the benefit of Hearst's wisdom on such disparate subjects as unemployment, crime, the failure of prohibition, foreign debt and disarmament. And thus, as *Gabriel* unreels, one gets the uncomfortable feeling that a more appropriate title for Mr. Hearst's fantasy would be, "If I Were King."

From the opening moments of the film, with the inauguration of party hack Jud Hammond as President of the United States, political parties and "professional" (Washington "insiders") politicians are portrayed as the root of

the country's woes, thus articulating a populist rhetoric used more recently, and more deftly by Ronald Reagan.

And, in fact, the opening few sequences of the film (that is, before Hammond is transfigured into "one of the greatest men who ever lived") offers the opportunity for some rather jejune, but still entertaining political satire. It is fun to see Hammond's total lack of preparation for the job (he asks his secretary, "Where is Siam?"). Even worse, he employs his mistress, a Miss Pendola Malloy (he affectionately calls her "Pendy") as his very "private" secretary. The film's early scenes end with Hammond being portrayed as nothing more than a little boy playing on the floor of the White House Office.

Oddly, though, in spite of (and I suspect, more tellingly, because of) the president's total incompetence and "immorality," he comes across as a rather likable subject for light satire. As Greg Black shows, this is partly the result of PCA involvement in re-writing the film. The PCA evidently preferred the president to be pictured as more immature than downright sinister (*The New York Times* reported that the original script had Hammond more insulting and bombastic.)²⁹ And, possibly, beyond the question of direct censorship, I wonder if populist rhetoric doesn't tend to transcode incompetence into likability (recently, and more deftly . . .).

Now, it seems to be that as long as *Gabriel Over the White House* stays a (mildly) entertaining satiric comedy, the film at least resists its own inclination toward ideological closure (a sort of textual hardening of the arteries). Comedy requires that the audience's laugh complete the text. (Thus, while a television comedy is played before a studio audience or uses a laugh track, a "serious" drama more fully completes itself.) Comedy, then, foregrounds the dialogic nature of a text by creating within the text, itself, a space in which it must pause, wait and listen for the voice of an other (a laugh) which comes from the outside. Comedy, in resisting closure works, then, in a similar way to a Brechtian criticism which "transforms finished work into unfinished" ones.³⁰

Unfortunately, it doesn't take long for *Gabriel Over the White House* to lose its satirical tone and sound an unpleasantly shrill pitch. And tellingly, the change in tone occurs with the insertion into the narrative of the film's first "political speech." The "speeches," as set pieces always delivered as direct address into the camera, come across rather like paid political announcements (which, I suppose, indeed they are). From the incursion of the first of the film's numerous political monologues, *Gabriel* moves increasingly away from an acknowledgment of dialogic speech to a dependence on the monoglot (singular in both its discourse and view of the world). Significantly, the film's first speech is set up to be delivered not *by* but *at* the president by a (frighteningly) earnest newspaper reporter who resembles pictures I have seen of John Brown, but I assume he represents Hearst's (rather smug) misrecognition [*méconnaissance*] of himself as an Old Testament prophet.

The reporter declares:

My paper's indictment against the government is a staggering one!
 . . . Starvation and want are everywhere. . . [a]state of misery and
 horror, of lost hope, of broken faith, of the collapse of the American
 Democracy!

But, for better or worse, things are about to change in the President and for the country, and Hearst's rather self-righteous monologues will soon be coming out of the mouth of Hammond. One can't help but wonder about this shift in the location of the voice of all wisdom, from the newspaper man to the president, as it repeats Hearst's quite serious, but forever unfulfilled, desire to, himself, make just such a move.

In any event, President Hammond (a pompous politician given to using the "Royal We"--he says, for example to "Pendy," "We are the president, are we not?") is, moments later, involved in an auto accident that leaves him in a coma and Hammond as a "royal we" comes to be literally true as some kind of unearthly presence flies through the window to co-inhabit the President's body. "Pendy" decides, and of course the film's title announces, that this other worldly spirit must be Gabriel (though, in fact, nothing actually confirms this and there is some indication that it could be the ghost of Abe Lincoln, or, I suppose, any spirit of your choice). Given that in one scene, Hammond, not recognizing the words of his own speech, casts his eyes upward to acknowledge its "unseen author," I assume Gabriel is, then, Mr. Hearst.

Be that as it may, the changes in Hammond are immediate and dramatic. Hammond now speaks to his staff in a formal style and distant tone that is presented as a heavenly produced "professionalism" (a move not unknown in the writing and delivery of papers at learned societies). And more tellingly, Hammond (now that he is spiritually possessed) represses any knowledge that "Pendy" is his mistress and from that point on refers to her in a paternalistic tone, again presented as "professionalism," as "Miss Malloy" (a move not unknown in . . .).

So, the President is soon about his heavenly mission to save the people (in Hammond's/[Hearst's] words, the "stupid and lazy people") of the United States from themselves by abolishing congress, the cabinet, the court system, prohibition (by opening federally owned liquor stores), while bullying the "crafty" European politicians into paying their debts and finally to disarm! When (heaven forbid) a senator accuses Hammond of having made himself a dictator, the President replies, yes, it is a "dictatorship of the greatest good for the greatest number!" (Now, if this all sounds a bit like Stalin's perverse interpretation of "the dictatorship of the proletariat," the film goes to some length to deny the fact, as the leader of the unemployed masses declares, "none of us are Reds!")

And as far as I know, no one took the film to be "commie" propaganda, but *The Nation* did dub the film "Fascism Over the White House."³¹ Whether fascist or not, the film is undeniably theocratic. *Gabriel* reflects more the arguments that run throughout the Old Testament to validate "charismatic" political leadership as superior to the evils of a monarchy, a view that, likewise, finds expression in the "adoptionist" Christology of early Christian writings.

Gabriel, thus, employs not only the theology but the very narrative structure of religious myth, for example, the role of an accident or illness as occasion for the making of a shaman (Hammond's coma), the period of retreat (Hammond stays alone for two weeks meditating on the needs of his people) and the denial of sex and earthly pleasure (his emotional withdrawal from "Penny" and his sudden and total sexual abstinence). So, if *Gabriel* reflects a fascist bent (and I think it does), I wonder if it doesn't arise out of Hearst's strange desire to return to the discursive regime employed in the royalist literature of Cromwellian England, what Foucault, borrowing from Ernst Kantotowicz, identifies as a discursive regime founded upon a belief in the royal *aevum*, a holy, mystical, eternal body, a secular perpetuity, a symbol of the body politic.³²

Rather than dismiss *Gabriel* as simply a fascist text, it is perhaps more instructive to note how its religio-mythic structure moves the film away from the secular heteroglossia of satire and comedy to the sacred (theo-phallo-logocentric) monoglot of propaganda and ideological closure. In the theocracy, only the voice of "The Law of the Father" speaks and every other voice is silenced. As if acting out a divine drama, rather than participating in the human comedy, the King is complete in himself.

As Hammond moves through his "anointed" rounds, the text becomes increasingly monoglot, both in *fabula* and in textual strategy. As the president silences his every foe (the congress, his cabinet, the diplomatic corps), the text, likewise, with fewer and fewer voices to be heard, moves ever more into extended monologues. And as Hammond's political opponents are silenced, there remains only three sources from which can emanate another voice: the voice of the Other that speaks in crime (the gangster, Nick Diamond), the voice of the Other that speaks of revolution (the voices of "the army of the unemployed"), and the voice of the Other that speaks in love and desire (the president's whore, Miss Pendola Malloy).

As the film proceeds, the discourse of the criminal is silenced--Diamond is executed without trial (the criminal's opportunity to be heard). While the voices of "the army of the unemployed" are censored--every reference to revolution and violence was expunged by the PCA--the protestors are left little to do but march toward Washington singing hymns. Thus the voice of the poor is repressed into what Fredric Jameson calls the political unconscious of the text, to silently echo, as the text's "absent cause," the "not-revolution that has never occurred."³³ But still, another voice does remain. What is the film

to do with Miss Pendola Malloy, like Madame du Barry, the voice of the (King's) whore?

With this question of what to do with Miss Malloy, we once again foreground the issue that has run throughout the previous discussions of *Madame Du Barry* and *Dead End*. That is, within an economy of meaning production, how are classic Hollywood films sites of conflict between the various strategies of containment operating to bring about ideological closure and the need for a popular film to produce, at the same time, a necessary degree of entertainment value?

For you see, Miss Pendola Malloy can't be so easily silenced. She performs an indispensable function within the text: to make the film entertaining, to provide *Gabriel* with some human interest, a little romance. And once Hammond has been transfigured into a bonafide prophet-saint with little to do but stand and deliver his theocratic monologues, the film must develop a minor subplot about a growing romance between Miss Malloy and Hammond's assistant, Beekman. (Similarly, we might recall how Cecil B. DeMille had to add extra-biblical romance to his remake of *The Ten Commandments*, but then, the addition of some romance and sex was not foreign to the writers of the Old Testament, either, in part for the same reason, to keep the Law and The Prophets, interesting, entertaining, audience centered, more "concrete.") Ironically, as *Gabriel's* text is increasingly given over to Hammond's political oratory, the film as even a "slight entertainment" is all the more dependent on this wisp of a subplot, and the more we long for the voice of Miss Malloy.

Like the naughty antics of Madame du Barry, and the billingsgate and blazons of *The Dead End Kids*, *Gabriel's* need for the voice of Miss Malloy reminds us that it is within the space created by the audience's desire to be entertained, to derive some pleasure from the text, that the struggle against ideological closure is often fought. In *Gabriel*, it is, finally, "Pen-dy" who is left to inscribe the film's only concrete (and for that matter, democratic) sentiments, a counter-discourse that is heard when she observes that "a simple, honest man can do anything." Apparently, if Miss Malloy had been president, being herself, a simple, honest whore, neither the angel Gabriel's services nor, for that matter, Hammond's theocratic, charismatic discourse would have been necessary! Somehow or other, the concrete presence in the text of "Pendency" creates a site of possibility that makes not only this "Miracle on Pennsylvania Avenue," somewhat beside the point, but Hammond's monotonal monologues all the more suffocating (and insufferable).

Postscript

Unlike the assumptions of the Frankfurt School and its various latter-day descendants, the pleasures of "popular" culture, in particular, the Hollywood film, may not only serve as a vehicle for the maintenance of a dominant

ideology (which, granted only a fool would deny) but, also at the same time, nevertheless provide a site for its resistance. After all, the very necessity of a Production Code Administration was an acknowledgment that popular culture must be carefully controlled because it tends toward "breaking the rules," of "going too far," of suggesting elements of the forbidden, of becoming a whore's text. The agency of censorship, as a psychic operation or social practice, exists because it never, finally, has its own way, and perhaps, never less so than when it exists within a narrative form, one wherein readers will always be tempted to take their pleasure where they can. As Annette Kuhn found in her study of the problems encountered in the 1920s when sex education on VD was framed within a film narrative, a critic of sex education at the time complained:

One has only to listen to the conversation of many of these people who believe they [by implication, young and working class] are going to see something frankly pornographic!³³

And I bet "they" did! And "we" still do. Just because: in the slip and the trace of an elided excess of textual meaning, something now removed, absent from the text, but nevertheless present--indeed, always absent because it is already present, always present because it is already absent, this some-thing-no-thing speaks from an outside deep inside textuality, itself, that ever screens (obfuscates and projects) a more extravagant full-ness (personal, social, political) "horrible in its desirability."

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Notes

1. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982) 262-3.
2. Jurij Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, trans. Gail Lenhoff and Ronald Vroon (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1977) 51.
3. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978) 296.
4. Annette Kuhn, *The Power of the Image* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985) 74.
5. Steven Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989) xii.
6. Gregory D. Black, "Censorship: An Historical Interpretation," Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association, Toronto, 7 March 1990, in possession of G. Thomas Poe 41.
7. Sarah Kofman, "Freud: Ca cloche," in *Derrida and Deconstruction*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989) 111.
8. Jean Laplace and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973) 122.
9. 254.
10. Kofman, "Freud: Ca cloche" 119. Cf. Jean Genet, *The Thief's Journal*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1967) 5.

11. See Gaylyn Studlar, *In the Realm of Pleasure* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988), also Tony Williams, "Phantom Lady, Cornell Woolrich and the Masochistic Aesthetic," *cineAction*, No. 13/14, summer, 1988, 56-63.
12. Gaylyn Studlar, *In the Realm of Pleasure* 21.
13. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1986) 25.
14. Gregory D. Black, "Censorship: An Historical Interpretation" 28.
15. 30.
16. 30.
17. 30.
18. See John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Methuen, Inc., 1989) 108-27.
19. For a good introduction to Foucault's concept of "dividing practice," see Paul Rabinow's Introduction in *The Foucault Reader*, ed., Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984) 7-9.
20. See Roland Barthes' essay, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) 137-142.
21. Review of *Dead End* in *Time Magazine*, 6 September, 1937, 61.
22. See entry on "Class Consciousness," in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. Tom Bottomore (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1983) 80-81. See also, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (I Vol.), (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968) 117f. and 170-1.
23. David Hays and Brent Walker, *The Films of the Bowery Boys* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1984) 221.
24. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd, ed., *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester UP, 1989) 35.
25. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984) 122.
26. The concept of the "logic of the concrete" is developed by Claud Levi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1962) 35-74. For an introduction to the concept as applied to media analysis see John Fiske, *Television Culture* 141.
27. Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985) 362.
28. David Hays and Brent Walker, *The Films of the Bowery Boys* 135.
29. Robert L. McConnell, "The Genesis and Ideology of Gabriel Over the White House," *Cinema Journal*, Spring, 1976, 9.
30. B. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 18, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967) 85-6, quoted in Steven Heath, "From Brecht to Film: Theses, Problems," *Screen* (Winter 1975-6) 44.
31. William Troy, review of *Gabriel Over the White House* in *The Nation* (April 26, 1933): 482-83.
32. Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 176.
33. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981) 66-7.
34. Annette Kuhn, *The Power of the Image* 123.