

Male Gaze and Racism

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Abstract:

I would like to present some considerations for a re-positioning of the concept of the male gaze that could lead to a decentering of this much-used construction. In a second move I will try to transfer these reflections onto the concept of racism, thereby aiming at a more thorough understanding of what intersectionality actually means.

Introduction

1 I would like to present some considerations for a re-positioning of the concept of the male gaze that could lead to a decentering of this much-used construction. In a second move I will try to transfer these reflections onto the concept of racism, thereby aiming at a more thorough understanding of what intersectionality actually means.

2 My theoretical justification for this course of action is derived from the fact that practices and discourses that are linked intimately with sexism on the one hand and with racism on the other cannot be conceived of separately but must be thought of as interdependent. (Becker; McClintock)

3 1975 was a special year in the history of the concepts of the male gaze and racism, for it marks both the publication of Michel Foucault's seminal book *Surveiller et Punir* and the first printing of Laura Mulvey's path-breaking essay on the male gaze in Hollywood cinema. (Foucault *Surveiller/Discipline*; Mulvey *Visual*) While it is the controlling gaze of the invisible prison guardian that receives attention in Foucault's book, Mulvey focused on a critique of the male gaze of the camera in Hollywood produced movies. Whereas Foucault conceptualizes the gaze as a form of societal power at the brink of modernity, Mulvey perceived the male gaze as a means to present the female body as an object for a voyeuristic and sexist practice of the spectators.

Laura Mulvey

4 Mulvey's short text can be summed up as follows: Hollywood movies fascinate through the narration of a coherent plot. From an explicitly psychoanalytic viewpoint, based on Freud's "Three contributions to the Sexual Theory" Mulvey argues that that cinema provides visual pleasure through scopophilia and identification with the on-screen male actor. Mulvey argues that Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the key to understanding why film creates a space where women are viewed as sexual objects by men. According to Mulvey, the

combination of the patriarchal order of society and looking as a pleasurable act (voyeurism) create film as an outlet for female sexual exploitation.

5 Voyeurism according to Freud is an aberration or perversion in comparison to a fully heterosexual identity. At the same time Freud insists that in voyeurism the sexual aim is present in an active and a passive form. (Freud) Following Freud, Mulvey breaks scopophilia down into an active part, which is always male, and a passive part, which is always female. Women are the objects that are looked at.

6 At the same time the female image in narrative cinema of Hollywood bears in itself a threat to male viewers, which Mulvey equates with castration anxiety. Against castration anxiety, the only remaining antidotes are the inspection of the woman and her demystification, or the defense that transforms woman into a fetish. Expressing this fetishization is, for example, the female Hollywood star system in which the actual attention of the audience is focused on the female stars. Scopophilia thereby is the power which determines the camera perspective of the film. According to Mulvey, all spectators would be forced to assume a male gaze perspective through a male camera perspective, because the cinematic apparatus or the cinematic dispositive is not gender neutral. In the context of Mulvey's analysis the gaze regime of the cinema was principally equated with the male gaze, whose voyeurism was fed by mainstream narrative cinema, turning the woman into an object of its scopophilia.

7 Mulvey had found that the patriarchal unconscious in Hollywood cinema activated a series of binary sexual oppositions, thus contrasting the male|female, the active|passive, the sadistic|masochistic and the narrative|contemplative.

The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness (*Visual* 203).

The woman in Hollywood represents the castration phobia of male viewers, to be revoked only in a voyeuristic investigation of the female body. Mulvey herself summed up her approach as follows: The film audience has a voyeuristic relationship with the female eroticized picture.

This look, I claimed, is transmuted into that of the male protagonist looking at the eroticized women within the fictional world of the narrative. I also argued that the very perfection of his image was a defense against castration anxiety that the body of the woman may generate. (*Some Thoughts* 16)

8 Mulvey's approach has gained great importance for feminist research and feminist historiography. The "male gaze" approach haunts both literary and historiographical research, often without a consideration of the specific criteria and conditions of Mulvey's theory. David Sorfa has pointed out that Mulvey's essay was primarily a political manifesto, and Mulvey herself declared in 1996 in hindsight: "Film theory of the 70s was political and polemical, and, in this spirit, argued that cinematic illusion worked as a total belief system at the expense of its ability to balance belief with knowledge" (*Fetishism* 9).

9 Mulvey's theses have undergone a critical revision in the following years, in which the film theoretician herself participated actively. In 1993 she published an essay in which she explicitly pointed at the liberating power of an investigation, which postulated a difference between the image and the object, which it claimed to represent. Thus, images were unstable and their meaning was no longer locked or permanently inscribed. Semiotics and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis were used as a reference point for film theory. Semiotics could show that signifier and signified did not stand in a fixed relationship to each other. In analogy to the sign, the picture, therefore, had a signifier, but the signifier is not automatically synonymous with the iconic signified. (*Some Thoughts* 3)

10 The decoupling of the picture and its alleged content finds a correlation in the post-fordist economy. Unlike in the era of industrial capitalism, in which added value was created in the first line through the exploitation of labor performed by dependent employees, the post-modern economy evolved into a system in which the increasingly rapid circulation of capital itself seems to generate new capital. Money, which hitherto had served as a symbolic representation of value, is now tied into an economic exchange process in which money does not necessarily represent commodities or objectified labor time. (*Some Thoughts* 4) Thus fails the old form of representation or referentiality and the relationship between signifier and signified identifier destabilizes further. If history is constructed from representations, then the question arises whether these representations can be relocated to the social forces, which have generated them.

11 In relation to film theory, Mulvey suggests that the dissolution of a seemingly understandable reality as it is achieved by the Hollywood studio system, with its stars and its narrative storytelling tradition, also discharges within new forms of cinema, in which the spectator is relocated from the darkness of the cinema palace into the brightness of the living room, where videos and DVDs have replaced the movie theater.

12 At the same time, Hollywood cinema has become self-referential. Citations, intertextuality and ironic references to other films, books and media are on the agenda,

according to Mulvey. Thus popular culture becomes postmodern culture, in which a game with cause and effect takes place, a joyful interchange between text and allusion, thus making a linear narrative plot impossible to develop — as Dana Polan observes. Polan explains the effect of a quotation of a text by Michel Foucault in an episode of the US soap opera "West Wing" with the term "Savvy TV."

Savvy television often operates at the self-delighted expense of the very audience it is setting out to captivate. It dares one to spot the reference, to solve the puzzle. Its tactics often seem particularly tricky for the academic television analyst who can find his/her best insights turned into amusing fodder for mockery, deconstruction, and ironic reversal in the shows themselves. (*Foucault TV*)

13 Feminist film analysis has developed in the light of radically changed conditions of production and consumption of film. The idea of fetish, to which women were deduced in Hollywood cinema of the 50s, 60s and 70s, was taken to another level within postmodern cinema. In a psychoanalytic perspective, fetishization is based on the endowment of an object with self-sufficient power. The fetish depends on the ability of the defense of the real subject and its transformation into an object, presumed to have the same properties as the defended subject.

14 The typical sentence of a fetishist accordingly goes: "I know all this very well, nevertheless. . . ." (Mannoni 9-33). Accordingly, the process of fetishization is fragile and prone to malfunctions because it is culturally and historically changeable. This critique puts into question the dichotomization of male activity and female passivity of many film theorists. A female spectator would not appear in Mulvey's work at all. Mulvey's apparent essentialism in her early essay was also criticized: According to these critics, audience and masculinity would be treated as immutable, trans-historic entities, thereby tunneling the analysis to a white, heterosexual male spectatorship.

15 In 1983 E. Ann Kaplan asked "Is the gaze male". Both Kaplan (*Women; Looking*) as well as Kaja Silverman (*Masochism*) argued that the gaze could be taken by both, women and men. The man was not always in control, the woman is not always passive. Teresa de Lauretis insisted that one could read the male gaze also against the grain. (*Alice*) The female spectator does not simply assume a male reading, but operates always in a double identification with the active and passive subject positions. Jackie Stacey doubted the automatic combination of femininity and masculinity with female and male viewers' positions: "Do women necessarily take up a feminine and men masculine Spectator position?" (245). And why should there exist only one female and one male spectator position? What about gay and lesbian viewers?

16 Steve Neale identified the gaze in Hollywood films not primarily as male, but primarily as heterosexual. Even if in a heterosexist patriarchal society the homoerotic gaze has to be legitimized specifically, by making a male body only implicitly the object of a homosexual gaze regime, the presence of the gay gaze could not be denied. (281) Neale delivered a queer-theory reading of movies, by showing, how the gaze regime in films could alternate between male and female protagonists.

17 Subsequently, the theory of queer viewing was then developed by Caroline Evans and Lorraine Gamman. Both Neale as well as Richard Dyer criticized the idea that the man would never be sexually reified in mainstream cinema. The man would not always be the observer, who exercised control over the gaze. Since the 1980s, one could also observe an increasing representation and sexualization of the male body in film and television. (Moore, Evans & Gamman, Mort, Edwards)

In some ways, one could say that the difference between seeing and being seen — has overlaid, perhaps even usurped gender differences. Masculinity is defined through gaze, femininity identified by to be-looked-at-ness. It is certainly important to note that this defining power of the gaze is not limited to heterosexual relations (just as it does not automatically occur in every heterosexual relationship). It also characterizes the correlation of same-sex relationships. The key is the recognition that the viewer, because of the way in which the mechanical eye penetrates the object, is thought as a male and the looked-at object is perceived as a female and that this form of perception moves across gender boundaries and the self-perception of the individual. (Brown 9, my translation, N.F.)

18 Jacques Lacan had shown that the subjugation under the regime of being seen pertains to all subjects, if perhaps not equally. We all — in order to be considered as subjects — need to be seen from the outside:

I must, for the beginning, insist on one point there — on the field of vision the gaze is outside, I am being gazed at, which means I am picture / tableau. This is the function, by which the institution of the subject as the visible can be most deeply grasped. Basically the exterior gaze determines me within the visible. By the gaze I am enter the light, and by the gaze I partake in the effect of the gaze. It shows that the gaze constitutes the instrument through which the light embodies itself, and it is for this reason that I am (. . .) *photographed*. (113, emphasis in the original)

For Lacan vision has clearly a chiasmatic or crossed nature: the way that the gaze proceeds from the subject and also to the subject from "outside" (106; McGowan).

19 In her reading of Lacan film theoretician Kaja Silverman addresses his separation of sight/regime/gaze/le regard and look, meaning the embodied, interwoven in desire l'oeil/eye and shows that the voyeuristic, male objectifying gaze only supposedly coincides with the

gaze regime: "[A]ll binarisations of spectator and spectacle mystify the scopic relations in which we are held" (*Male Subjectivity*)

(to) denaturalize the alignment of masculinity with the gaze. (. . .) What must be demonstrated over and over again is that all subjects, male or female, rely for their identity upon the repertoire of culturally available images, and upon a gaze which, radically exceeding the libidinally vulnerable look, is not theirs to deploy. (153)

20 According to Silverman, no subject is actually and fully in a position to adopt the gaze, it can only be staged as if. Between the gaze regime and the eye (seeing) Lacan puts an intermediary body: the screen. Silverman defines the screen as a culturally generated image repertoire in the shape of the camera. This image repertoire is unique in each of us, "similar to the language", it provides us with "presentation parameters"(Blickregime 58), that structure of our perception, they determine "what and how the members of our culture perceive — how they process the visible and the importance they give it" (58). The subject is not the center or the origin of visual perception; it is, to the contrary, determined by the visual codes of a culture. (Mathes 99).

21 In the following, I would like to "take into view" the aspect of desire, and to debate how it can usurp the power of the intercepting, voyeuristic gaze. Silverman shows that the investedness of the gaze in structures of desire as *look* prevents the look from becoming identical with the gaze. The desire, which lures the subject to peek through the keyhole, cannot just be understood as a visual pleasure of an active male subject of the gaze of the subject, "that exercises his power when gazing at the female object using photographic technology" (Williams 67).

22 As Linda Williams has shown in her research on pornography, the focus on only one form of visual desire fails to encompass the complexity of the issue. Williams critiques the description of the male desiring gaze on pornographic photos as disembodied powerful vision, suggesting visual possession. This possession remains imaginary. For Williams the eroticism of the viewing beholder represents a new level of physicality and not the passive submission to the power of images or their voyeuristic mastery. (Williams 75) The voyeur must realize that his secret, always coveted view always contains the risk of being looked at himself. The object of the gaze can reciprocate the gaze and look back. (For a summary of gaze theories see Elkins 26)

Alternatives to the voyeuristic gaze

23 Mulvey has historicized and relativized her own approach in her late work. Her analysis generated out of specific historical conditions of production and a historico-material

film dispositive, as well as a certain political practice at a time when feminist and socialist utopias could claim their request for practicability. The film had to be viewed, for example, in the darkness of a movie theater, in which a heavily bundled light lit the screen so that viewers could retreat into the total immersion of a privileged vision and assume — in the midst of other viewers — that he was alone. Add to this the production conditions of the Hollywood cinema with its star system in which female stars were eroticized and objectified. This voyeuristic approach has meanwhile be replaced and supplemented by other models of looking.

24 Mulvey developed a distinctive concept of the "curious spectator", an audience or a spectator, "driven by curiosity and a desire to decipher the images unfolding on the screen" (*Past to Present* 1289). This curious spectator was again a historical product that emerged in the discursive network of feminism and the avant-garde, grounded on a deliberately different relationship to cinema. This curious spectator is needed for the genealogy of another type of viewing, in which, thanks to the digitalization of the picture, an experimental approach to the technical apparatus of filmmaking has become possible. This means, among other things, a weakening of the pure narrative cinema in favor of other narrative registers, which have enhanced the documentary mode of the cinema. Narrative coherence is shaken in this way, chronology is broken and as a consequence, the master narrative is difficult to realize in film. Thus history can be problematized in film history, evoking a new type spectator, "the pensive spectator", a concept borrowed from Raymond Ballour by Mulvey, but originally stemming from Roland Barthes. (*Past to Present* 1289, 1292)

25 Roland Barthes tried to distinguish between film and photography. While in the moving images of a film the present and the present tense reigned, it was the immobility, the past and a certain absence that prevailed in photography. On the one hand, there is the acceptance of the illusion, while on the other hand, we have the quest for the hallucination. Here is a fleeting image that takes us as if in flight, there is a complete and immobile picture that cannot be grasped completely. On one hand the doubling of life through time, on the other hand the return of the time touched by death — according to Barthes.

26 In 1987 Raymond Bellour published an article in which he continued to argue along the observations made by Roland Barthes in 'Camera Lucida'. Through the digital revolution, it was now possible, to either freeze individual frames or to conduct formal experiments resulting in films consisting of stills in the form of "photo novels" or slide shows. The most obvious example is the short film "La Jute" by Chris Marker (1962), which served as inspiration for the film "Twelve Monkeys" by Terry Gilliam. Using Barthes's findings

regarding the difference between film and photo, Bellour wondered what would happen if the viewer of a film is confronted with a photograph (Bellour).

27 Just as the early film theorists celebrated the film because it revealed more than was visible for the naked eye it seemed the pensive viewer could now discover more than was visible with a projection speed of 24 frames per second. In a reversal of Jean Luc Godard's famous definition of film as "truth 24 frames per second", there is another truth in the freezing of the moving image, dislocating it from the continuum of projection.

Racist (male) gaze

28 For an intersectional approach to racism, this has certain consequences. If racism according to George L. Mosse is a "visual ideology", more attention should be attributed to the standpoint of the observer in studies of racism. (Mosse 9) Gender is not the only criterion that determines the regime of the gaze. Race and Class are also decisive factors and must be conceptualized as intersectional categories. (Lutz & Collins 365; Gaines; de Lauretis *Technologies*; Tagger; Traube) The ethnic background of spectators was the main factor in the different assessment of violence in film, as shown by the empirical study *Women Viewing Violence*. (Schlesinger et al.) As early as 1975, Michel Foucault already had in mind a more general theory of power in mind as one linked exclusively to gender, when he presented his ground-breaking study on the panoptic view. (Foucault *Surveiller*)

29 Meanwhile, the Foucauldian thesis about the pervasiveness of the panoptic view has been modified, yet the question of the normative vision remains virulent, especially if it is further enlarged/expanded to encompass distinctions intermingled with sexism. In the first instance, there exists research that deals with the ethnically/culturally/racially defined Other within the field of visibility and perception. These studies have shown that the invention of technical apparati is closely linked with a gazing subject that directs its gaze at an object without being perceived by the object. The observer's gaze thus "defines" the Other (Note the similarities to early theories of the gaze!). "As God created humans in his image, the gazing subject defines the Other by his technical apparatus: not only "women", but also "Jews", "Blacks" or "homosexuals" (Braun 82).

30 These visual codes seem to have an almost unlimited power of assigning meaning, but if we take into consideration the important critique of Mulvey's early theories on the gaze, crucial distinctions regarding the alleged omnipotent power of the gaze are in order. It is therefore important to demonstrate the constructedness of the normative view, by lifting the veil of its unmarkedness and by naming it. Critical whiteness studies have revealed that the

supposed objectivity of the normative is a historical specificity: It is mainly male, white, and heterosexual.

31 The constructedness of the norm as norm is particularly visible if contrasted against the background of other norms and in times of "crises" as presented in Richard Dyer's now classic essay "White". The films he analyzed show being-white in a legitimacy crisis, which is unable to unfold without criticism of the standard white norm, a criticism, however, "that in the face of the eventual re-establishment and affirmation coagulated to a wistful pose" (Warth 128). In the sources that I am about to quote, the readers will also find this combination of critical representation of the normative vision, which is restricted by affirmative moments in their subversive power. In my contribution, however, I will focus on the questioning of the racist and sexist gaze regime.

32 Film and literary scholars besides historians, myself included, have in the past placed too much emphasis on the unity of gaze, the gaze regime, and the look that is intertwined with desire (Klarer; Finzsch *Discourses* and *Settler Imperialism*). However, a one-sided analysis of this seemingly totalizing view runs the risk of reproducing within the empirical material that which it postulates as a theoretical model. This circular reasoning, which in the long run will always prove what it hypothetically assumes, can only be broken if other readings are authorized and legitimate. An alternative strategy of reading the racist gaze would consist of a deliberate search for signs of a non-normative view in which the racialized and sexualized Other is able to return the gaze.

33 Although it is true that in the majority of descriptions of white male explorers a gaze prevails in which the black female body is fixated and described in its alleged features, researchers have until now looked too little at the counter-discourses that resist the hegemonic construction of indigenous femininity as an objectified, available, sheer physicality. First, I will present some results of the research on gaze regimes in the history of colonialism in Australia and then proceed to search for alternative readings and interpretations as indicated above.

Historical application

34 In 2005, I examined a relatively extensive body of sources about the literature pertaining to the European discovery and colonialism in Australia. (*Discourses*) It consisted of 31 travel and discovery descriptions of white men, between the late 18th and the mid-19th centuries. I put great emphasis on the fact that these men had made their "observations" on the spot and had not quoted other descriptions left by third parties. My reading of these

sometimes lengthy sources was based on the assessment of the axes of evaluation of the indigenous Others, which I arranged in a matrix designed for conducting a discourse analysis.

35 This matrix contained 15 evaluation categories. I was looking for observations and remarks about religion or spirituality, about work, about the physical appearance of the indigenous population, for indicators of "civilization" and for the indigenous form of government. I browsed the sources for information on clothes, sexuality, gender relations, on morals and ethics, on property, on food, on language and orality, on the demography of the indigenous, on housing, on weapons and warfare, and on alleged cannibalism.

6 The matrix was based on the existing research on racist practices during the European colonization of Australia. (Gascoigne; Mosse; English, Van Toorn) It reflected the findings of Australian and American scholars on the importance of the Enlightenment discourse for the constitution of a pre-scientific racism based on the observation of indigenous corporeality. The matrix was no mere head-birth of a German historian in search of racist texts, but reflected the particular importance of external evaluation of indigenous bodies for the assessment of indigenous culture before 1860. In short, I tried a discourse analysis of contemporary white statements, in the sense of "happy positivism", which Foucault demanded in "L'Ordre du Discours".

37 One of the results of this study was that racialized discourse in Australia occurred in two phases, one before 1800 and thereafter. The pre-1800 discourse displayed a rather neutral image of the indigenous peoples. The discourse between 1800 to 1860 turned out to be an almost continuous condemnation of the Aborigines, which marked the transition to the implementation of a genocidal policy of relocation and dispersal. The indigenous population emerged from these sources as a collective that had no human properties.

38 In her introduction to "Bodies That Matter" Judith Butler described the constitutive Other as abject body that resides in the unlivable and uninhabitable zones of social life "which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the defining limit of the subject's domain" (Butler 3). Butler thus borrowed Foucault's definition of biopower. Biopower constituted a form of knowledge or power, which is inscribed on the surface of the body and which becomes visible in the body, especially with a panoptic gaze regime. Groups and individuals outside the desired effects of biopower are "unlivable", which means they are threatened to be defined as unworthy of life. Agamben described them as *homines sacri* (Agamben), discarded to be killed without legal intervention by the government. I argued that it was thus possible to exclude indigenous people from the realm of human life and to render

possible a policy of extermination and conquest, despite the lack of a biologist or Darwinist notion of racism., despite the lack of biologist definition of racism in pre-modern societies As much as I believe these results to be basically valid, as oversimplified they are. By searching for the racist gaze in the sources, the result was predetermined in some way, according to the Gospel of Matthew 7:7 "seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you". If the gaze of the beholder is not cast unilaterally, but the beholden can counter his gaze, it must be asked whether there are texts or pictures in which the indigenous stand up to the European gaze or recast it onto the voyeuristic spectator.

39 This is more likely in instances that are not part of a continuous narrative or a movie, in snapshots analogous to the state of a still or a frozen image of a movie. Hence, an analysis of the gaze regime in the context of the early history of racism should focus on sources that have the status of snapshots. (Virilio 55) Thus, travel descriptions as pure text have to be excluded and one would have to concentrate on what has been conceptualized as a "viscourse". This is a concept coined by Karin Knorr-Cetina. Knorr-Cetina defined viscourse as follows: "The concept of 'viscourse' is the interplay of visual images and their integration into an ongoing communicative discourse" (247).

40 It is relevant for our purpose here that "visual images continually produce the unity and scientific coherence of the field" (247). I would like to borrow her concept of viscourses and associate it with Foucault's notion of discourse. (Siegfried Jäger, cited in Adelman 100) A viscourse analysis therefore aims at the capturing the visible in its qualitative bandwidth, but also the media strategies and procedures with which the expanded field of the visible can be expanded or restricted.

41 I want to give a few examples from the history of the European discovery of Australia. Between 1837-1839 George Gray travelled on the coast of Western Australia and landed at Hanover Bay, near Perth. (Gray) His observations were therefore historically beyond the epistemic break of 1800, mentioned above. His "Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia" stand out because of its factual tone and the accompanying illustrations that are devoid both of the look as defined by Kaja Silverman and the pornography of humanitarian gaze that Mario Klarer and Karen Haltunnen have discovered. (Klarer; Haltunnen) Gray notes the differences of indigenous and European cultures, without trying to dissolve these differences in the image of the noble savage or Greek classic aesthetics.



Fig. 1.

42 Edward John Eyre (1815-1901) undertook an expedition in 1840/41 at the end of which he published a text, which is explicitly aimed at a representation of indigenous Australian cultures. He was the first white person to traverse South Australia from Albany to Adelaide on foot, marching at least 2,000 miles or 3,200 kilometers, with his friend and indigenous leaders Wylie and two other Aboriginal men. (Eyre) He, too, looks almost neutral on the indigenous peoples, without Europeanizing or idealizing them.



Fig. 2.

43 Ludwig Leichhardt (1813-1848), one of the German pioneers of ethnographical research in Australia, disappeared 1848 during an expedition into the interior of Australia. He left, however, a travelogue, which helped settlers to advance into the interior of the continent. (Leichhardt) Leichhardt, too, travelled in the company of two Australian indigenous men, which made it possible for him to survive in the extremely arid land. In his report Leichhardt availed himself of an objective tone, and his drawings reveal that a patronizing or racist attitude is completely missing/absent.



Fig. 3.

44 In 1831/32 Major Thomas L. Mitchell (1792-1855) undertook an expedition on behalf of the British Government, during which he explored New South Wales and the later Victoria. The drawing on the first page of his report shows a scantily clad indigenous man, who does not avoid the artist's and the viewer's glance, but who looks back very self-confidently. Mitchell was conscious of this fact, because he titled this drawing "Portrait of Cambo, an Aboriginal Native." Here, the indigenous man does not only have a name, but a portrait of him has been made which clearly signifies his subject character.

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Fig. 4.

5 If the readers gain the impression that in these more neutral depictions the female corporeality is largely omitted, this is not entirely unjustified. In discourses and viscourses alike, the picture of the promiscuous while unsightly indigenous woman dominated and thus indigenous female bodies were unspeakable. Only Mitchell depicts indigenous women, but never shown in the frontal, one may surmise, in order to avoid the representation of nudity which was discursively with the image of promiscuity. Here one can demonstrate by reference to what is not mentionable or sayable how viscourses determine the qualitative bandwidth of the visible, but also how media strategies and procedures expanded or restricted the field of the visible.



Fig. 5.

Summary

46 Starting from a feminist interpretation of the male gaze regime in Hollywood, cinema studies and research in the humanities have advanced a privileging of the voyeuristic male gaze beyond the theoretical debate about the Hollywood film. The feminist theory debate has, however, modified the importance of the male gaze in the years after 1975 and has formulated certain applicatory conditions for its effective use. At the same time, feminist theory has shown that due to changes in conditions of production and reception men may also become the object of voyeuristic gaze. The inclusion of the texts by Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes has opened the possibility to assign subjectivity even to the gazed-at objects. The masculine look can be reverted, albeit not always as an equal. By concentrating on stills or drawings it can also be shown that besides the dominant racist discourse there is also a space for a more quiet discursive murmuring where the gaze regime does not demand submission, but grants the indigenous other the status of a subject.

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