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Mann and Woman: the Function of the Feminine in the “Noir Westerns” of Anthony Mann

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“No other popular text asks as assiduously as the Western what it means to be a man.” – Lee Clark Mitchell

“In and of herself, the woman has not the slightest importance”
– Bud Boetticher

“Without a woman, the Western wouldn’t work” – Anthony Mann

Introduction

In this paper we seek to make some preliminary observations regarding the status and function of the feminine in the Western. After a brief historical review of the critical discussion of gender in the Western, we develop a mode of analysis which we believe promises to facilitate a more complex and sophisticated understanding of the feminine in the Western than those resulting from the basic distinction between East and West/Civilization and Nature (with the feminine resolutely on the Eastern/Civilized side of the equation) derived from the seminal work of Henry Nash Smith. We explore the potential of the problematisation of female acquiescence in what we call the “Virginian effect” in relation to the “circulation” of women in Westerns. We consider these problematisations in relation to Anthony Mann’s first three Western films: *Devil’s Doorway*, *The Furies* and *Winchester 73*. We focus on Mann because of his explicit insistence on the importance of women in structuring the

Western film.

Gender in the Western

It is without doubt a truism that criticism of the Western has discussed the genre as being centrally concerned with issues of masculinity. As Lee Clark Mitchell suggests, Westerns “are a set of problems recurring in endless combination.” These problems include progress; honour; law or justice and violence; and, “subsuming all, the problem of what it means to be a man” (Mitchell 3). Robert Warshow’s ground-breaking discussion, first published in 1954, proceeds from the assumption that to speak of the Western is to speak of the male Westerner. Warshow compares and contrasts the Westerner with the gangster figure: like the gangster, the Westerner utilizes guns and is a lonely and melancholic figure. However, in contrast to the gangster, he is a figure of repose, of leisure. The Westerner doesn’t need to “get ahead” because he is “already there”: he possesses riding and shooting skills, has free movement across wide expanses of land, “moral openness,” unshakeable “self-control,” and “can keep his countenance in the face of death” (Warshow 36-38). “The Westerner,” in other words, “is the last gentleman, and the movies which over and over again tell his story are probably the last art form in which the concept of honour retains its strength” (Warshow 38).

In 1973, Philip French widened Warshow’s conception of the Western hero, suggesting the hero’s contrast with the villain was more fundamental to the genre than Warshow’s existentialist turn. In French’s “model Western” the hero is:

the embodiment of good ... upright, clean-living, sharp-shooting, a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant who respects the law, the flag, women and children; he dresses smartly in white clothes and rides a white horse which is his closest companion; he uses bullets and words with equal care, is a disinterested upholder of justice and uninterested in personal gain. He always wins [in his battle with the villain]. (French 48)

In the analysis of the hero’s fundamental clash with the forces of lawlessness, embodied in the villain, French is probably quite right in suggesting that “the religious source of such conflict [is] New England puritanism or American fundamentalism,” and its dramatic source is “Victorian melodrama” (French 48). Unlike Warshow’s somewhat static,

ahistorical figure, French's Western hero is subject to historical transformation – for example, the simple moral basis of the early Western was challenged by popular psychology and sociology in the 1940s and 50s, while in the 1960s and 70s the Western genre began to challenge the very concept of heroism (French 48 & 52). From French's historicist point of view, Warshaw's existential Western hero appears very much a function of its 1940s and 50s social context.

As John Cawelti points out, it wasn't until the 1990s that the issue of gender was self-consciously taken up in Western criticism, marked by the publication of Jane Tompkins' 1992 book *West of Everything* and Lee Clark Mitchell's *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film* (Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique* 7). For Tompkins, the Western is essentially a reactive genre: "the Western answers the [nineteenth century] domestic novel. It is the antithesis of the cult of domesticity that dominated American Victorian culture. The Western hero, who seems to ride in out of nowhere, in fact comes riding in out of the nineteenth century" (Tompkins 39). Tompkins' "reactive" thesis has not met with universal acceptance; indeed Cawelti himself argues that the rigidity and separation of gender roles in the modern Western are more related to "the need to mythicize the new values of mobility, competitiveness, and rugged individualism which were replacing the more community and family-oriented values of the nineteenth century" (Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique* 152). Lee Clark Mitchell's highly sophisticated analysis of the construction of masculinity in the Western, however, tends also to see the Western as a reactive genre, since "the emergence of the Western coincides with the advent of America's second feminist movement, and ... the genre's recurrent rise and fall coincides more generally with interest aroused by feminist issues, moments when men have invariably had difficulty knowing how manhood should be achieved" (Mitchell 152). Mitchell suggests that after World War II, "much as the conventional polarities of manhood had altered, the difficulties of achieving an ideal of masculinity were just as exquisite, just as tantalising," (153) and that "almost every study of sexual roles in the forty years thereafter has been preoccupied with the question, "What makes men less masculine than they should be, and what can we do about it?" (153).

All three critics are working out the issue of femininity in the Western precisely in terms of the now standard dichotomies developed by Henry Nash Smith and formalized by Jim Kitses: women representing the values of the East as opposed to the West, and of civilization as opposed to nature (Kitses 11; see also Cook 294). Cawelti's claim that gender roles in

the modern Western are a function of a need to mythicize twentieth century values over and against antiquated nineteenth century values appears, initially, robust and decidedly virile. However, these “twentieth century values” are quite clearly aggressively “masculine” values (mobility, competitiveness and rugged individualism), framed at the expense of a set of traditionally “feminine” values (community, family-orientation). From this point of view, Cawelti’s suggestion that “twentieth century” (masculine) values replace “antiquated” (feminine) ones looks very much like an unproblematized and perhaps unconscious reworking of Tompkins’ suggestion that the Western hero is a reaction against the domestic novel. Mitchell’s suggestion – that the ceaseless crisis of masculinity in the twentieth century is always precipitated by historical shifts in roles between the sexes – is from this perspective a valuable widening of Tompkins’ argument.

The feminine, according to the logic shared by all three critics, represents a kind of “alternative” sphere to the masculine. The Western hero is confronted by two options: he might avoid the feminine sphere, and thus continue his free-ranging existence, or he might enter that sphere, at the expense of “giving up” his status as Westerner. As Tompkins puts it: “fear of losing his identity drives a man west, where the harsh conditions of life force his manhood into being” (Tompkins 47). The female exception to the “feminine sphere” is, of course, the saloon-girl and her variants, neatly described by Philip French as “reasonably plentiful, sexually available and community property” (French 62). The “community” French speaks of here is not the community to which the “feminine sphere” belongs; rather, this is a “masculine” community (albeit a perhaps paradoxical community of “rugged individuals”). The saloon-girl thus functions precisely in order to enable the Westerner to maintain his independent status.

The “Virginian Effect”

Owen Wister’s novel *The Virginian*, published in 1902, may or may not be a kind of “Ur-text” of the Western as movie genre. However, it was at the very least highly influential in spelling out an aristocratic Western code of conduct in gender terms: the precise contours of the effort of “civilising” the Westerner very often works through what we might describe as the “Virginian effect.” For Tompkins in particular, what we are calling the “Virginian Effect” is “central to the Western genre as a whole” (Tompkins 131). In terms of gender relations *The Virginian* clearly casts a long shadow

over criticism of the Western: the function of the civilising woman is to clearly state her moral case, but then acquiesce to the Westerner, and as a result of this acquiescence provide her imprimatur to the Western hero's resolution of conflict through violence. Cecil B. De Mille's film version of *The Virginian*, released in 1914 – a mere 12 years after the publication of the Wister novel – lays out this structure of statement then acquiescence deftly and economically. The climax of the story involves the marriage of "The Virginian" to Molly Wood, an archetypal civilised/civilising school mistress from the East. On the wedding day Trampas, the villain, comes into town for a final shoot-out with The Virginian. Molly delivers an explicit ultimatum to The Virginian: "I couldn't marry a man with blood on his hands – Come away from here – Now." The Virginian ignores her and, in keeping with his Western code of honour, engages in the shoot-out, returning to Molly only for the couple to embrace. No reason is given for Molly's acquiescence; it's enough that "The Virginian" has done his duty according to the Western code for her to rescind, completely, her earlier ultimatum. [1]

The Virginian effect then is a kind of imperative: male violence in the Western requires a female audience, since in order for Western violence to be morally acceptable, the feminine, a "pacifist" force, must yield and publicly give her imprimatur to the very violence she resists. Tompkins suggests the woman's "ceding of power" [2] is a result of the shoot-out not just as male on male violence, but as revolt against the *rule* of women: male "honour" from this point of view is entirely reactive as the masculinist "script" consists of doing what the woman hates in order for the male to prove he's not under her control (Tompkins 144). While not disagreeing with the general tenor of Tompkins' elegant and compelling argument, our suggestion is that what the Western or, more precisely, the "Virginian effect" offers is a very roughhouse *compromise* between the sexes. In essence, the Westerner *makes a deal* with the woman. In order for the Westerner to enter the *feminine* sphere and thus give up his status as free-ranging Westerner, he exacts from the woman the price that she cedes her moral authority vis-a-vis violence. [3]

Mitchell is correct to suggest that her confirmation "under pressure [of] his mastery of her and [acknowledgement of] the clear reversal of roles she had assumed would define their relationship" is first and foremost an *erotic* acquiescence (Mitchell 114). From this point of view, Andre Bazin's perhaps somewhat squeamish suggestion that the erotic, among other values, is an "extrinsic," "additional interest" that does not belong to the Western proper, [4] is simply wrong. [5] Rather, the eroticisation of the

Westerner, as well as the erotic relationship with the civilising woman, is right there at the origin of the Western, and so-called super-Westerns such as *Shane* (Stevens 1953) and *High Noon* (Zinnerman 1952) – which foreground the association between the shoot-out and the erotic relationship – are not aberrations but belong precisely to the long-standing “Virginian” tradition (see Tompkins 143).

Anthony Mann and the “active” feminine

Anthony Mann was a director of Westerns working in the 1950s – the “super-western” era – who was acceptable to Bazin. In his landmark 1955 essay “The Evolution of the Western,” Bazin described Mann as “the most classical of the young novelistic directors,” adding that “we owe the most beautifully true western of recent years to him [*The Naked Spur*]” (Bazin 54-55). As Jim Kitses points out, Mann’s male characters are in a certain sense *hysterical*: “extreme men stretching out beyond their reach [with] little hope of the settled relationships within which most men live” (Kitses 29). At the same time, Mann was clearly convinced of the centrality of the erotic relationship to the Western, and explicitly stated that “without a woman, the Western wouldn’t work” (Lucas 306; see also Cook 293). Mann’s suggestion opens the possibility for considering the Western, in the words of Blake Lucas, “not as a masculine genre but as one supremely balanced in its male / female aspect” (Lucas 301). Female roles such as the saloon girl, Lucas argues, supply both an alternate tone and a counterpoint to the Western’s cathartic violence (Lucas 307). Although Lucas provides some useful pointers for considering Mann’s Westerns in this light, his analysis of Mann remains preliminary and tentative. [6]

Furthermore, “supremely balanced” may be something of an overstatement; it is clear that the Western remains a distinctly masculinist genre, centrally concerned with “the making of men.” However, we suggest that this “balanced” notion is useful if the approach considers the feminine not as essentially passive to a masculine activity, but rather as itself *active* – because femininity in the Western *does things*.

Proceeding from this point, we seek to begin to analyse Mann’s Westerns as “balanced” in gender terms by focusing in particular on the three earliest Western films Mann directed, all released in 1950. Jeanine Basinger describes *Devil’s Doorway* and *The Furies* as Mann’s “transitional” films between his 1940s films noir and his 1950s Westerns, and *Winchester 73* as his “first real Western” (Basinger 71 & 79). All three can be

characterised as Western films employing aspects of noir stylistics as well as thematics: specifically in terms of the “exploration of the corruption inherent in settler society” (Hearne 140). Two questions structure this analysis. Firstly, how does femininity circulate in these films? And secondly, how does the issue of female acquiescence – the “Virginian effect” – play itself out? In asking these questions about these films, we seek to offer a preliminary analysis of the relationship between feminine circulation and female acquiescence in the Western film more generally.

Each film includes a central female character – in each case a variation on a standard Western female “archetype.” *Devil’s Doorway* includes a Western rarity, a female lawyer Orrie Masters (played by Paula Raymond) – who is entirely recognizable as a variation on the educated and “civilizing” figure of the “school marm.” In *Winchester 73*, Lola Manners (Shelley Winters), is a saloon-girl who seeks entry into the “feminine” sphere – an “adventuress” who seeks to “settle down”; and in *The Furies* (1950), Vance Jeffords (Barbara Stanwyck) is a confident and self-reliant rancher’s daughter. In each case, the central female character *circulates* between different groups of men. [7]

Devil’s Doorway

In *Devil’s Doorway*, femininity, in the figure of the lawyer Orrie Masters, is associated with a set of distinctly liberal values: treaty, negotiation, reasonableness, tolerance and compromise (Hearne 143). At first she values law as a universal, transcendent morality; as a kind of “religion.” However, once alerted to native suffering as well as sense of community, her morality becomes more situational. Orrie eschews what might be “Westerner” logic here, and rather than acting as outlaw, she begins to work to attempt to *change* the law. She is caught in a classic melodramatic dilemma: two groups, the Shoshone Indians, led by Lance Poole, and the shepherders are competing for Sweet Meadows, the only available arable land. Orrie is sensitive to the plight and claims of both groups. The Shoshone are the traditional occupiers of the land, but with no legal rights to it; the shepherders have the legal right to Homestead the land. As Hearne points out, “the parallel groups of displaced people – the shepherders and the Shoshone – have no inherent dislike for each other. In fact, their competing need to possess Sweet Meadows as their home suggests they have much in common” (Hearne 144).

Orrie thus circulates between Townspeople, Shoshone and Shepherders.

The pathos of the film is the result of her inability to broker an agreement between Shoshone and Shepherders, in part a result of Lance's refusal to compromise due to the entirely reasonable view that, as traditional owner, he and the land are one and the same thing. As he explains to Orrie: "My father said the earth is our mother. I was raised in this valley. Now I'm part of it like the mountains and the hills, the deer, pine-trees and the wind. Deep in my heart I know I belong. If we lose it now we might as well all be dead." Orrie has no reply to Lance here. Her failure is due also, however, to her inability to counter the machinations of the Machiavellian and deeply racist lawyer Verne Coolan, who is entirely happy to use the plight of the Shepherders for his own ends: reasonableness, tolerance and compromise are no match for deceit and venality.

The "Virginian effect" in *Devil's Doorway* is necessarily complex. The film "steers clear of potential negative audience or Hays Office reactions to any depiction of 'miscegenation' on-screen" (Hearne 130), while constantly flirting with the possibility of romance between Orrie and Lance. When the Shoshone are hopelessly penned into Lance's homestead with no possibility of victory or escape, Orrie implores Lance to give himself up to the Cavalry so he'll face a fair trial. Lance simply refuses. She changes tack and implores him at least to allow the women and children to go free, which he also refuses on grounds that all it would mean would be their going to a reservation (for him, a fate worse than death). It is at this point precisely that there is a discussion of the impossibility of erotic exchange between the couple, resulting in Lance's comment "Don't cry Orrie, a hundred years from now it might have worked." Within the melodrama of the film it is an extremely pregnant moment – set in the 1870s the film alludes both to the possibility of a future social "miscegenation," while at the same time to a moment 20 years beyond 1950, when it might be possible to represent "miscegenation" on screen. It is clearly the effect of this erotically charged moment which facilitates a back-down on the mortally wounded *Lance's* part – he makes an agreement with the Cavalry: "We'll give up if you let the women and children go back to the reservations." At one level, then, an inversion of the "Virginian effect," the male backs down to the female. But, more probably, within this erotic logic, it may well be the case that race trumps gender. [8]

Winchester 73

In *Winchester 73*, Lola Manners (Shelley Winters), a saloon girl seeking to "settle down," circulates between men, paralleling neatly the various

changes of ownership of the prized titular rifle within the more general revenge – or, perhaps more precisely, “pursuit and retribution” (Conley 103) – structure of the film’s narrative. Given her status as saloon-girl and, probably, prostitute, [9] it is entirely unsurprising that Lola is a female figure who circulates in the masculine realm and does not control her own affairs: kicked out of Dodge City by Wyatt Earp early in the film; [10] trying to find a role within society by becoming a family unit with boyfriend Steve; [11] expressing close interest in the cavalry sergeant Wilkes; simply *taken* by the villain Waco Johnny Dean; and concluding the film in the arms of stoic hero Lynn McAdam. What is surprising, though, is the way in which, to our knowledge, with the exception of Joanna Hearne, no critic of the film has mentioned the parallel between Lola and the Winchester. [12] However, we are not at all convinced by Hearne’s suggestion that the circulation of the *Winchester 73* involves an “economy of buying and selling the object of desire, and woman serves as metaphor for that object” (Hearne 140). At no point in the film is the rifle bought or sold: Lin McAdam *wins* it in a shooting contest; his brother and nemesis Dutch Henry Brown *steals* it from him; Brown *loses* it gambling to Joe Lamont; the Indian Young Bull kills Lamont and *claims* the rifle; Young Bull is then killed in battle and the rifle is *found* by a young cavalry soldier who *gives* it to Steve; Waco Johnny Dean kills Steve and *takes* the rifle; Dutch Henry Brown then strong-arms Dean into *forfeiting* the rifle; and McAdam *reclaims* the rifle upon killing Brown in the final shoot out.

The economy of exchange – whether rifle or woman – operating in *Winchester 73* is precisely *not* a commodity economy; the economy of the film lies outside any rule of law that might govern buying and selling. [13] As a result the film’s “Virginian effect” moment is interesting for what we might describe as its extreme “weakness.” Lola, the perhaps “ex-prostitute,” circulates *between* men but is not exchanged by them, and she by definition does not possess the “moral” weight of the school-marm. Her half-heartedness is a function not of her representing a fixed transcendent moral order, but rather because she *needs* McAdam in the same way she needed Steve before him: as a means for “settling down.” The act of “settling down” would presumably provide a certain moral weight. Her attempt to prevent McAdam from going after his brother is made not to McAdam but to his sidekick High Spade, who explains the simple aristocratic Western moral equation: because Dutch killed his father, it is entirely correct for McAdam to go after him.

The film’s final tableau with McAdam and Lola coupled does not appear to have convinced any critic: for John Tuska the ending is too ambiguous

to be able to say Lin McAdam has joined the community (Tuska 97); Douglas Pye suggests that although Mann's heroes "invariably end the films framed with a woman and apparently poised to settle," question marks are placed over these resolutions, and in *Winchester 73* McAdam and Lola have not developed a relationship "that seems a likely basis for the marriage that the end seems to indicate" (Pye 172); and Pam Cook suggests Lola's "ambivalent status is maintained until the end: as she and McAdam embrace, his long-time buddy High Spade looks on with a quizzical expression as if to question his friend's judgement" (Cook 296). [14] This is due, according to the "circulation" logic we have been developing, to the possibility of further circulation for both girl and gun alike.

The Furies

In *The Furies* (1950), wealthy rancher's daughter Vance Jeffords (Barbara Stanwyck) engages in an extraordinary variation of an Oedipal struggle with her father T.C. Jeffords. T.C.'s power and authority is in fact undercut by his propensity to circulate IOUs rather than legal tender money. Vance is her own woman, and as such explicitly tells her otherwise autocratic and patriarchal father "my husband will be my choice, not yours." As a "strong" woman, she thus circulates freely between T.C. and two of T.C.'s sworn enemies: the Mexican squatter Juan, with whom she has a close, somewhat eroticised friendship, and Rip Darrow who becomes both business and "life" partner. [15]

The "Virginian effect" moment here is extremely interesting. The "erotic" relationship is between father and daughter. T.C. decides to hang Juan for stealing horses and cattle from his property. Vance suggests to Juan that T.C. wants her to beg him for Juan's life. Juan – dying game – tells her not to humble herself to her father on grounds that even if she does plead, T.C. will hang him anyway. Vance does not ask her father not to kill Juan: rather she asks her father: "Do you want me to beg? Do you want me on my knees to you for his life?" To which her father responds "I'd hang him anyway." Vance is spared the ignominy of pleading for Juan's life. This is not, as is more typical for a "Virginian effect" moment, the end of the film; rather it is a turning point in the film: as a result of his hanging of Juan, Vance now hates her father, and the film changes course to become a revenge narrative. [16] Vance, in collusion with Darrow, spends the remainder of the film systematically and successfully bringing down her father's financial empire. Central to this is getting the banker, Old

Annaheim, on side. Vance's moral authority in this exchange is a function of her precisely *not* using her "feminine wiles" on Annaheim (a noted philander). This lack of erotic exploitation of her husband is noticed by Annaheim's wife who, as a result, becomes instrumental as an ally for Vance. At the moment Vance succeeds in stripping her father of all his assets, father and daughter return to their old loving relationship, and T.C. is killed in the street by Juan's mother, seeking her revenge in a more traditional Western manner.

Conclusion

Whether educated lawyer, saloon girl or rancher's daughter, the circulation of the female figure in Mann's noir Westerns involves neither *mediation* between the groups of men, nor simple *exchange* between the groups of men. The feminine, as a circulating figure, although routinely crossing clearly and rigidly demarcated boundaries, might but does not necessarily *transgress*: in *Winchester 73* it is not at all clear that those boundaries are unsettled, however, in both *Devil's Doorway* and *The Furies* we can see some work of unsettling those boundaries. In each film, the "Virginian moment" is more complex and interesting than mere female acquiescence. In *Devil's Doorway* it is the male figure who acquiesces (feminine acquiescence is displaced onto "native" acquiescence), and in *Winchester 73* and *The Furies* the "Virginian moment" corresponds largely to the idea of a roughhouse compromise between the sexes. We consider the argument that the Western is a reactive genre to be essentially correct, but we are also confident that Mann's noir Westerns help us make some preliminary observations regarding some of the ways in which the feminine in the Western may not necessarily work inflexibly and solely on the "Eastern/civilised" side of Kites' traditional dichotomies. A thorough exploration of the relationship between complex workings of the "Virginian effect" and the "circulation" of women in Westerns (particularly those moments where the shift from one group to another appears unmotivated) will, we believe, provide a fertile set of possibilities for future research into issues of gender in the Western film.

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Endnotes

1. Wister's novel provides no explanation for Molly's retraction. On his return from the shoot-out: "Yu' have to know it," said he. "I have killed Trampas." "Oh thank God!" she said; and he found her in his arms (Wister 310). The 1923 version of the film does offer an explicitly erotic explanation. Molly exclaims "Oh, thank God," then the inter-title suggests: "and so, Molly's New England conscience surrendered to love."
2. The phrase is from Cook (294).
3. Mitchell's gloss of the "Virginian effect" focuses on Wister's claim for a kind of "natural aristocracy" of the cowboy: Molly's "transcendent morality" is superseded by the Virginian's morality defined by social context, in other words a turn from fixed ethical ideals toward a contingent ethos, contextually defined and determined by the Westerner as a "natural aristocrat" (Mitchell 110-111). Mitchell grounds his analysis in terms of "a muted resolution to the crisis over women's suffrage developing at the turn of the century" (114).
4. "Love is for all intents and purposes foreign to the Western" – but is an addition, a "mutation" brought about by the post-war advent of the super-Western (see Bazin 51).
5. Peter Stanfield's analysis of the emphasis on courtship as a key feature of the early sound Western (Stanfield 15-21) is, implicitly, another counter-argument to Bazin's suggestion that the erotic is, in the Western, a mutation. See also John Cawelti's suggestion that "in earlier Westerns" the cowboy hero is assimilated into the town by "falling in love and [becoming] committed to the pioneer cause" (Cawelti, *Six-Gun Mystique* 44). Cawelti suggests there is a difference between early and later Westerns (where the hero reluctantly gives up his way of life because he accepts the necessity of civilisation or

becomes tired of insecurity). We are not entirely convinced by this distinction given there is no evidence of a moment where the erotic relationship leaves the Western.

6. Unfortunately Lucas' promising analysis devolves into an idiosyncratic listing of the top ten female characters in Westerns (see Lucas 313-320).
7. We are indebted to Joanna Hearne's excellent discussion of *Devil's Doorway* for the concept of feminine circulation (see Hearne 139-140).
8. John Tuska remains vexed by the film, because despite its pro-Indian stance, it is open to the charge that its very liberalism is in the service of single settlement culture. "What is [Poole's] victory? That he dies in the end? That he dies in uniform trying to be a white man, with a white man's property values? That the viewer admires him for his struggle to behave as a white man, even though he is no match for the racial intolerance of the white community?" (Tuska 87-88). In our view, rather than chastising the film for not being liberal enough, we would do better to applaud the film for attempting to raise intransigent racial issues within a conservative genre and for a conservative audience through its utilisation of melodramatic conventions and clear narrative identification with the outsider figure.
9. Pam Cook suggests Lola is an "ambivalent" heroine: "who may or may not be a prostitute" (Cook 296). John Tuska suggests: "It may be a variation on Bret Harte's 'The Outcasts of Poker Flats,' and, if it is, then Winters would clearly be a prostitute – she boasts to Steve when she meets him later in the film that she successfully earned money while waiting for him in Dodge" (Tuska 89).
10. Earp explains to McAdam "Lola's alright. It's just that some folks in town think the dance hall girls might give the place a bad name over the holiday. Not that I'm one of them." Dodge City has been both civilised and feminised – neither dance-hall girls nor gun wearing are acceptable in the town.
11. Steve is described by Jim Kitses as "cowardly" and "pathetic" (Kiteses 59-60)
12. Indeed, John Tuska goes so far as to suggest Lola's presence is "extraneous" to the film (Tuska 91). Basinger does suggest there is a

metaphoric relationship between the gun and the love relationship between Lola and McAdam (81), but doesn't draw a parallel between the circulation of the gun and the circulation of the woman.

13. Time and again "the law" is entirely ineffectual in *Winchester* 73. Wyatt Earp, Marshall of Dodge City, disappears from the film the moment Dutch Henry Brown steals the rifle from McAdam. The extremely young and inexperienced Cavalry are not only pinned down by Indians, but are entirely reliant on Linn and Wilkes' advice in order to get out of their predicament. Likewise, the sheriff chasing Waco Johnny Brown is singularly unsuccessful.
14. Cawelti considers a lack of complete resolution to be intrinsic to the Western genre itself, suggesting that Western narrative tensions are "never quite fully resolved" and routinely in Westerns "there is something lacking in the new social order" (Cawelti, *Six-Gun Mystique* 54). This is because "the Western, with its historical setting, its thematic emphasis on the establishment of law and order, and its resolution of the conflict of civilization and savagery on the frontier, was a kind of foundation ritual ... [reaffirming] ... the creation of America and [exploring] not only what was gained, but what was lost in the movement of American history" (Cawelti, *Six-Gun Mystique* 49).
15. A serious caveat needs to be placed on Vance's economic and erotic independence. She clearly *seeks* a man who will go some way toward "pulling in her horns" as it were: she says explicitly to Juan: "there's no one else to pull the bit on me when I'm wrong." Furthermore, during her ultimately successful erotic pursuit of the often reluctant Darrow, there is an exchange in which Darrow says to her: "Don't ask me to be your husband. If we marry, remember one thing – you'll be my wife. Whenever you're wrong I'll tell you so. If I'm ever wrong you just keep your little mouth shut." To which she smiles and responds coyly: "Mr Darrow, sir, I hope you can chew what you just bit off!" We would suggest that this exchange is well inside the spirit of roughhouse Western gender negotiation and compromise.
16. On revenge narrative in the Western see Cawelti, "Savagery" 62-63.

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