

11.

Who Blinked First?

According to one tradition, if you're a scholar you make progress by learning more and more about less and less, until you know everything about nothing. I'm happy to report that this essay fits firmly into that tradition. If it does make some progress toward understanding how films work, it does so by focusing on some fairly minute matters. Blink and you might miss them.

Not that the general problem is trivial. Despite decades of discussion of *The Gaze* and "visuality," it seems to me that we know very little about eye behavior in cinema. How do film characters gaze or glance or peer or simply look at each other? What patterns of looking can we find, and what functions can we assign them? How do these patterns shape performance, and how might they accord with broader stylistic strategies employed by filmmakers? How do we as viewers respond to these patterns? Such issues are important, because eye behavior is central to understanding human action, both onscreen and offscreen. As an effort toward answering these questions, I want to consider some aspects of eye behavior in mainstream narrative films. Before that, though, we need to consider how looking works in everyday situations.

The Tightrope

Although novels and poems portray eyes as fierce or dreamy, by themselves eyes can express very little. As social signals, they normally function as part of the face. Features, particularly the eyebrows and the mouth, work together with the eyes to create what Paul Ekman has called a "facial action" system.¹ Anger is prototypically signaled less by the eyes than by the knitted brows, the tense mouth, and the set of the

jaw, perhaps aided by a flushed complexion or a loud tone of voice. A Fantômas-style cowl shows in a disquieting way how the eyes alone are rather uncommunicative.

Nonetheless, the eyes do have some locally significant features. The color of the iris is distinctive, and the degree to which the eyes are closed is informative. (The drooping eyelids of my students don't express quite the sensuality seen in portraits of Italian Renaissance ladies.) The size of the pupil was presumably an important cue in our evolutionary heritage, for a dilated pupil can be a sexual signal.² Particularly significant is the direction of a person's gaze, a cue to which we (and perhaps other primates) are highly sensitive.³ When a person is looking off at something, this "deictic gaze" triggers an interest from other parties, who tend to follow the direction of the look. This behavior is apparent in babies' responses to their mother's glance.⁴ The deictic gaze, Noël Carroll points out, is a crucial cue in point-of-view editing.⁵

Eye direction is not, however, a snapshot affair; our glance is often shifting, and in quite patterned ways. A natural place to study longer-term eye behavior is in conversations, both in real life and on film. To keep things simple at the start, I assume a two-person dialogue.

Research in interpersonal communication suggests that in Western societies, talk between two parties displays patterns of looking and looking away. These patterns are regulated by turn taking, as the conversants switch the roles of speaker and listener. Most commonly, the speaker looks away from the listener more frequently than the listener looks away from the speaker. Perhaps surprisingly, the two parties seldom share a look for very long. It appears that stretches of mutual gaze, with eyes locked, are infrequent and brief. Michael Argyle found, with two people conversing, the listener typically gazes at the speaker 75% of the time, the speaker gazes at the listener 40% of the time, and the two make eye contact 30% of the time. Argyle also found that both people's eye directions changed often, with the typical one-sided glance lasting only 3.0 seconds and the mutual gaze a mere 1.5 seconds.⁶ Other researchers indicate that eye contact tends to occur when partners switch speaker-listener roles.⁷ In sum, shared looks alternate constantly with "gaze avoidance" or other eye movements, such as looking upward to recall something or glancing to the side to monitor the environment.

What creates these patterns of interaction? The usual explanation is that the speaker is expending more cognitive resources and needs to concentrate on formulating speech, but she or he still must return at intervals to check the listener's uptake. The listener, on the other hand, concentrates not only on what the speaker says but also on other cues that carry meaning, such as the speaker's expression, hand gestures, shrugs, and the like. So naturally the listener tends to pay more attention to the stream of information. In addition, to look away too often might suggest boredom, inattentiveness, or disagreement.

Imagine by contrast a situation displaying more prolonged staring between parties, with sustained mutual eye contact. This is rare in ordinary life because, depending on the context, the mutual stare typically signals either aggression or deep affinity. We have, on the one hand, Travis Bickle's "Are you looking at me?" and, on the other, the rapture of lovers lost in each other's eyes. Here's another reason why in ordinary

life people don't look at each other more often: Locking onto someone's eyes too frequently can send a signal that could be interpreted as hostility or erotic interest.⁸

So much for everyday conversation. What do we find when we turn to film? A few surprises, I think. Take a scene from *L.A. Confidential* (1997). (For reasons that will become clear shortly, I've picked one in which the parties are in basic agreement, displaying neither hostility nor affection.) Sergeant Edmond Exley has been summoned by his superiors, who ask him to testify that policemen have beaten prisoners. The officials want to make a public relations effort to clean up the LAPD image, and they need officers willing to snitch on their colleagues. Exley immediately agrees, in exchange for a promotion to lieutenant, and he offers suggestions on how they can force another cop, Jack Vincennes, to testify as well.

The dialogue portion of the scene lasts about 2 minutes and 4 seconds. Exley is standing at attention before a desk, with his superiors seated around it. The scene is broken up by editing that alternates medium shots of Exley with group shots and individual shots of his superiors. The officials take turns talking with him, occasionally talking with each other, while he addresses himself to the police commissioner, the most powerful man in the room. In the course of the scene, individuals look intently at each other, either when they are speaking or when they are listening.

If we time the intervals in which any man listening is *not* looking at the speaker and any man speaking is *not* looking at his addressee, they add up to very little—no more than 10 seconds. And during many of these intervals, when one man is not looking at the speaker or his own listener, he is exchanging glances with another listener. For example, the officials glance at one another when they realize that Exley has devised a plan for his benefit.

This sequence appears to invert the default case. The *L.A. Confidential* scene presents a world in which a speaker looks far more frequently and fixedly at a listener, and the listener concentrates on the speaker even more intently, than in the normal case. Why this result? After examining several scenes like this, I'd argue that the standard cinematic case indeed alters the ordinary scenario. Movie characters rarely look away from one another, and they often make mutual eye contact. Indeed, they often seem to be staring into each other's eyes. Yet the stare doesn't necessarily signal either hostility or love.

By contrast, a movie scene that presents something like the normal real-life case risks sending the wrong signals. In a film conversation, when a character avoids looking back at her or his partner, gaze avoidance takes on an expressive tint. A viewer might construe it as evasiveness, furtiveness, lack of interest, or the like (the very attributions made in real life when someone looks from a speaker too long or too frequently). In films gaze avoidance, far from being a normal part of the rhythm of conversational interaction, is rare and highly informative about the character's psychological state.⁹

We can see this condition in an early scene in *Chinatown* (1974). Detective Jim Gittes is visited by a woman claiming to be the wife of Hollis Mulwray, an official in the Los Angeles Power and Light Commission. She sits at his associate's desk and explains that she suspects that her husband is having an affair. She occasionally looks away from

Gittes, and he frequently looks away from her, glancing at his colleagues or frowning at the floor. By my count, a total of 45 seconds of the 118-second scene consists of gazes in which either the speaker or the listener doesn't look at the other partner.

If we examine these moments, however, we find that the deflected glance is psychologically revealing. At times, Gittes shares a glance with his assistants, as did the officials in the *L.A. Confidential* scene. More important, Mrs. Mulwray looks away when she is flustered, as when she voices her suspicion that her husband is seeing another woman. Responding to her eye behavior, Gittes lowers his eyes and looks to the ceiling before returning her gaze. We know from the previous scene that he's a cynic, and so we tend to read his exaggerated gravity as a sign that (a) he is pretending to be shocked by a man's peccadillo, and (b) he's not surprised that Mulwray has strayed from such an unattractive wife. As the conversation goes on, it is clear that Gittes is reluctant to take such a banal case, and this is expressed in fairly frequent glances to the side and to the floor, as if he's searching for a way out. In later scenes, though, once Gittes gets caught up in the investigation and starts to believe he is unraveling a scandal, his gaze at others becomes much more unwavering.

Certainly the contrast between the real case and the filmic case is revealing, but if we look a little further, the inversion isn't perfect. For one thing, aggression and affinity—the feelings that promote prolonged looking on the part of the speaker in normal life—are common bases of dramatic action in movies. So one could argue that many scenes in fact conform to the rule that mutual looking depends on these emotional circumstances. In fact, I had to search a bit to locate fairly neutral scenes like the ones in *L.A. Confidential* and *Chinatown*, for most scenes I found had at least the hint of mutual hostility or mutual attraction. This may suggest that these two areas of emotion are at the emotional center of most scenes in mainstream movies, whereas neutral encounters are fairly uncommon. At the very least, scenes of confrontation or enthrallment are far more frequent in fiction films than in life, so a greater degree of shared looking is to be expected.

Secondly, I'd argue that the cinematic default isn't a true inversion of the normal case because the prototypical cinematic conversation takes the characters' basic attitude to be *mutual attentiveness to the situation*. The norm is that the speaker is paying strict attention to the listener's response because (unlike most conversations in real life) something of consequence hangs upon it. In effect, the eye behavior characteristic of the *listener's* role in ordinary interaction is mapped onto the *speaker's* role as well. The fiction film presents a world in which speakers are constantly monitoring the effects of their self-presentation on listeners, searching for the slightest reactions. It would not be too great an exaggeration to say that one sign of fictional drama is people looking intently at one another.¹⁰

"What we do," says Michael Caine in his instructive tape on acting technique, "we actors who are in the movie, is: We hang onto each other's eyes. That's the most important thing." A more recent manual is just as explicit: "The eye-line is a tightrope that keeps an actor aloft."¹¹ Because the characters pay constant attention to one another, we're encouraged to pay attention too. The drama, after all, is about them. A conversation on film omits the fluctuating eyelines we'd find in life in order to highlight the

ongoing mutuality of interest—that is, the dramatic issue. Correspondingly, when an actor looks away, the act has far more dramatic purport than it would have in life. Our acting manual goes on to remark, “Once eye contact is established between two actors, the moment when it is broken becomes very significant. . . . Breaking eye contact always makes a statement.”¹²

This reliance on mutual gaze to rivet us to the action nicely supports Ed Tan’s theory that the ground of our emotional engagement with films is the attitude of interest.¹³ But is there a way to detect mutual interest among the characters more precisely? We might think of cases when the mutual interest isn’t present. If a listener is oblivious to what a speaker is saying, as in the case of the TV-watching husband or a bored theater audience, the listener is usually shown looking away from the speaker. Still, I think there’s another way to chart mutual interest in conversation scenes, one that brings out some unexplored aspects of acting technique as well.

The Strength of the Stare

In the 1970s I became fascinated with watching Judy Garland films, not just because I found her a captivating performer but also because I noticed that she seemed almost never to blink. At the time, I put this down to her having been fed pharmaceuticals as a child star. Years later I began to notice that she wasn’t the only nonblinker. Most actors seldom blinked. The puzzle didn’t exactly rocket to the top of my research agenda, but it continued to intrigue me.

Only after reading a pop biography of Michael Caine did I get a hunch about the process. Caine claims that as a youth, he read Pudovkin’s treatise on film acting and learned that he should never blink.¹⁴ Caine then practiced staring without blinking until he could do so for minutes on end.¹⁵ In his tape on acting, produced many years later, he explains why.

If I keep blinking, it weakens me. But if I’m talking to you and I don’t blink [stares at camera] and I keep on going and I don’t blink [continues to stare at camera], you start to listen to what I’m saying. And it makes me a very strong person, as opposed to someone who is sitting there going [blinks several times], which is someone who’s completely flustered.

Thespian lore appears to hold that strength, menace, or some other intense quality is best conveyed by the rocklike look.¹⁶ Anthony Hopkins maintains that in playing Hannibal Lecter, he strove never to blink: “If you don’t blink, you can keep the audience mesmerized.”¹⁷ Likewise, Samuel L. Jackson credits his success at playing disturbing roles to winning the no-blinking game as a child. “I have this habit of being able to stare unblinkingly at you until you break.”¹⁸

Now, playing a determined, menacing role might seem to call for unblinking eyes, and there’s no doubt that Caine, Hopkins, and Jackson excel in such parts. But I think that the absence of blinking is far more widespread than these reports indicate. Judy Garland isn’t very threatening. Moreover, we have evidence that filmmakers want to control blinking behavior whenever it occurs. According to a friend of mine, when

he was directing a film, his editor felt he had to make a certain cut in order to eliminate an actor's blink.¹⁹ George Lucas, pointing out the postproduction advantages of digital video, employs a telling example: "If someone blinks right where I'm making the cut and I can't make the cut because it doesn't work with the blink, I just get rid of the blink."²⁰ It seems likely, then, that the suppression of blinking in films occurs fairly often and fulfills purposes beyond the enhancement of Michael Caine's career.

In ordinary life blinks lubricate our eyes, and when relaxing or conversing, we blink between 10 and 25 times per minute. A blink lasts about one third of a second. Interestingly, in conversation, playing the role of speaker tends to raise the blink rate, whereas playing the role of listener lowers it.²¹ Once more, in film, aspects of the listener's role are transferred to the speaker, and the speaker becomes less of a blinker, just as his or her gaze wanders much less. And Caine is right to worry about looking flustered. We blink faster when we are excited or in other states of arousal, such as feeling anxious, addressing a large crowd, or telling lies. One psychological researcher, Joseph Tecce, has specialized in studying U.S. presidential candidates' eyeblinks during televised debates, on the presumption that stress and anxiety increase the blink rate. In 1996, Robert Dole set a recent record by blinking an average of 147 times per minute.²² Do observers pick up on such inadvertent signals? Another study found that people rated a frequently blinking person to be more nervous and less intelligent than one who blinks rarely.²³

When do we not blink? It seems that absorption in a visual task creates longer intervals between blinks. Several Japanese researchers have found that blink rates slow down when people are engrossed in television watching.²⁴ In movie dialogue scenes, the absence of blinking is a very direct way to convey each partner's attentiveness and mutual interest. If my *L.A. Confidential* scene were an everyday conversation, we should find around 160 blinks in total (20 blinks a minute \times 2 minutes \times 4 men). Yet I can find only 34 blinks shown onscreen. Each man seldom blinks when he is speaking, especially when he is the subject of a *single*, or a shot framing only him. Actors whom I've asked seldom report that they decide to avoid blinking, but they do invoke the common actor's advice that credible performance involves watching and listening to the other actors. When actors concentrate on what the other players are doing, fewer blinks may become a by-product.

Yet blinking isn't outlawed altogether. A few blinks make our characters human. Even the "limited animation" of Japanese anime needs to present eye movement and blinks. Chuck Jones points out that Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck "blink when someone's talking. That's big stuff. To establish that the character is alive."²⁵ Consequently, the eyes that never blink may be thought inhuman. Tecce commented that during the 1992 presidential debates, Ross Perot came across as having a "reptilian stare."²⁶ In shooting *SlmOne* (aka *Simone*, 2002), the director told the actress playing a computer-generated performer not to blink; when she inevitably did, the blink was digitally removed.²⁷

An occasional blink humanizes, but the trick is to make it significant. In everyday life, a blink is often read as a signal of surprise, concern, or bafflement. This tendency

seems to have become a convention of fictional narrative generally. No novel reports a character's every blink, but when the narration mentions one, it's important.

"I don't understand," Meyer said, puzzled. "Did she *look* thirty, or didn't she?"

"Well, how would I know *how* she looked, man?"

Meyer blinked. "What do you mean?" he said.

"She was wearing a mask," Bones said.

"A mask?" Meyer said, and blinked again. "At a wedding?"

"Oh," Bones said. "Yeah." He blinked, too. "Maybe I got something mixed up, huh?" he said.²⁸

Our *L.A. Confidential* policemen blink very little. They blink most while shifting the angle of their gaze, and occasionally they blink to register a reaction to what is said; Exley, for example, keeps his face severely composed, but he blinks in response to chastisement from his captain. My *Chinatown* example, where only Gittes' and the purported Mrs. Mulwray's faces are discernible, consumes 118 seconds, about the same length as the *L.A. Confidential* scene. Here I count 53 blinks, making the average (about 13 blinks per person per minute) a little closer to the real-life norm. Again, though, the blinks tend to be dramatically meaningful. Mrs. Mulwray blinks when she talks of her husband's infidelity; as with Exley, her facial expression appears unconcerned, but her blinking shows her to be agitated. Similarly, Gittes' efforts to avoid taking the case are registered by several blinks that convey not only hesitation and avoidance but also an elaborate effort to be polite. At one point, as Gittes strains to charm Mrs. Mulwray, Jack Nicholson makes Gittes positively flutter his eyelashes.

Thus the demands of film acting build upon normal patterns of blinking but functionalize them: Actors strive to make this natural, necessary act a tool of their craft. One study has indicated that in ordinary life blinks occur with greater frequency at the start of an utterance or word,²⁹ but actors tend to blink when they want to *punctuate* an utterance, often after a meaningful phrase. Frequent blinking, as we would expect, is a tool of expressive performance, with implications shaped by context. Just as a change of eye direction will not be read onscreen as the gaze drift characteristic of normal conversation, a series of blinks is likely to be taken not as natural lubrication of the eye but rather as betraying a particular emotional state—all those variants of Caine's "weakness" we can call apprehensiveness, anxiety, remorse, fatigue, or sadness (blinking back tears). In *The Guns of Navarone*, when the David Niven character confronts a member of the demolition team with damning evidence that she is a spy, he holds the screen with unblinking force. The other team members watch her warily, and their vigilance is expressed through a pronounced absence of blinks. By contrast, the suspected spy blinks to indicate that her façade is cracking. Yet in the next scene, when Niven is waiting for the moment to launch the raid on the guns, he blinks mightily. He's afraid.

A little observation of screen performances shows that there are blinking-related tricks of the acting trade. For example, it's easier to keep from blinking if you're not fixating on something (so all praise to Caine, Hopkins, and Jackson for managing an unswerving stare). Film players have discovered that even slight changes of eye direction can help hold back a blink, as when two actors looking at one another seem to search each other's faces. Actors also find ways to conceal their blinks. A performer can sneak a blink by turning the head (the *L.A. Confidential* tactic) or by lowering the eyes, as if in modesty or deep thought (one of Nicholson's tactics in the *Chinatown* scene). Some actors squint, in the process making themselves look more adorable (e.g., Renée Zellweger) or implacable (Charles Bronson).

Do various acting styles find alternatives to the patterns I've been pointing out? Robert Bresson slows down the blink so that it becomes a dramatic event in itself; his players lower their eyelids with such deliberation that they seem to be shutting down an electrical circuit. Yet such variants seem quite rare. We might also expect cultural variations in the eyeblink repertory, but my preliminary searches don't reveal any. In films from various countries and periods, it seems that the actors avoid blinking, and they watch each other as fixedly as Hollywood performers do. This uniformity seems to occur despite a culture's rules about eye behavior.³⁰ Japanese etiquette discourages people from looking fixedly at their conversational partner, but in films they do so frequently, and they seldom blink. Ozu Yasujiro's films are remarkable repositories of staring, nonblinking conversations.³¹

Did actors in other cultures learn from U.S. films to restrain their blinking? Or did they independently rework some transcultural norms of eye behavior? It would be worth studying different films from different traditions and periods to plot the ways in which actors conceal or manifest the simple act of blinking. Similarly, we might consider how various shooting and staging techniques have made blinks more or less salient. Today's insistence on singles, particularly close-ups, would seem to demand actors who can hold back blinks.³² But now you see why I began by saying that I'm approaching the academic ideal of knowing more and more about less and less. Fortunately, though, this exercise harbors some more general implications.

Streamlined Behavior

How may we best understand cinematic conventions? They are often built out of ordinary-life behaviors, but not just any behaviors. The ones favored seem to put people's social intelligence on display. One important function of art may well be the opportunity it affords for us to test, refine, and expand our knowledge of why others do what they do. To this end, for example, faces in films become of particular interest because they're informative on many levels—they provide information about attention and interest, as well as mental and emotional states. From an evolutionary standpoint, our interest in others' inner states can be seen as a problem in "Machiavellian intelligence." We know we can fool others, so we're on our guard against being fooled. It's important for us to detect deceivers, and we've evolved many mechanisms to help us read minds.³³

So films present cowards or liars as blinking characters who won't look others in the eye, thereby reinforcing and sometimes fine-tuning our sensitivities.

Filmmakers have forged conventions that piggyback on the most salient cues for mental states that we encounter every day. The purpose is clear-cut. If you want to tell stories on the screen, you'll normally seek to keep the viewer fastened on the flow of information, especially in character encounters. As practical psychologists, filmmakers know intuitively that the shared gaze and the absence of blinking are two well-defined social signals for mutual attentiveness. They signal to an outside party, the audience, that the characters are participating in a significant exchange of story information. We sense that the situation is dramatic partly because characters' eye behaviors indicate deep engagement. These signals of mutual engagement also hold the viewer's attention from moment to moment, an important consideration in a time-bound medium like film.

If cinema, like other artistic media, often models social intelligence, it doesn't simply copy the relevant behaviors. Like all representations, it simplifies what is represented according to purpose and relevance. Accordingly, many devices of film style rework social acts for clarity and expressive effect. The second essay in this volume suggested that one function of shot/reverse-shot cutting is to accentuate the typical patterns of conversational uptake and turn taking. Similarly, acting already stylizes normal human interactions; it amplifies behavior for our quick understanding. The actor's simplified enactment of psychological states is further amplified by framing, lighting, color design, cutting, and other cinematic techniques. A close-up can make eye direction unambiguous, and cutting can delete blinks.

Such considerations lead us, I think, to think of cinematic conventions from a theoretical standpoint of moderate constructivism, something akin to what Torben Grodal called "ecological conventionalism."³⁴ Conventions are constructed, yes; but they're constructed out of preexisting regularities of human action. Some of those regularities are social, and some aren't limited to a single time or place. Historically, filmmakers have taken as material ordinary social behaviors, often of sorts that are readable across many cultures. But the filmmakers have reworked those behaviors, usually for the sake of greater clarity and force. Cinematic style often streamlines ordinary human activity, smoothing the rough edges, and reweighting its features in order to create representations that are densely informative and emotionally arousing.

If something like this is right, then gaze and blinking turn out not to be utterly trivial things to study. The same goes for facial expressions, which are starting to get the attention they deserve.³⁵ So let's move on to hands in cinema, and mouth movements and even eyebrows—a realm in which, I suspect, John Wayne will prove to be just as resourceful as Judy Garland.

Chapter 11

1. Paul Ekman and Maureen O'Sullivan, "Facial Expression: Methods, Means, and Moues," in *Fundamentals of Nonverbal Behavior*, ed. Robert S. Felderman and Bernard Rime (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 185. See also
2. For a useful review of these factors, see Alain Brossard, *La psychologie du regard: De la perception visuelle aux regards* (Lausanne, Switzerland: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1992), 185–91.
3. Primatologists debate whether chimpanzees and our other near relatives have deictic gaze, which seems to entail a folk theory of mind. Some researchers think it likely, whereas others disagree. See B. Hare, J. Call, B. Agnetta, and M. Tomasello, "Chimpanzees Know What Conspecifics Do and Do Not See," *Animal Behavior* 59 (2000): 771–86, for one position; and, for a contending one, see Michael Povinelli, "Theory of Mind: Evolutionary History of a Cognitive Specialization," *Trends in Neuroscience* 18, no. 9 (1995): 418–24. A useful introduction to the debate is Daniel J. Povinelli, Timothy J. Eddy, R. Peter Hobson, and Michael Tomasello, *What Young Chimpanzees Know About Seeing* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
4. The importance of the mother–child mutual gaze is pointed out in Jeffrey Cohn and Edward Tronick, "Specificity of Responses to Mother's Affective Behavior," *Journal of the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry* 28, no. 2 (1989): 242–48. More generally, see the wide-ranging survey in Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), especially ch. 7.
5. Noël Carroll, "Toward a Theory of Point-of-View Editing: Communication, Emotion, and the Movies," in his *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 127–29.
6. Michael Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1975), 159. For a more complete treatment of the subject, see Michael Argyle and Mark Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), chs. 3–5.
7. Janet Beavin Bavelas, Linda Coates, and Trudy Johnson, "Listener Responses as a Collaborative Process: The Role of Gaze," *Journal of Communication* 52, no. 3 (September 2002): 569.
8. A functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study revealed evidence that direct gaze elicits activity in the amygdala, a brain center bearing on emotion, either positive or negative. See Elizabeth A. Hoffman and James V. Haxby, "Distinct Representations of Eye Gaze and Identity in the Distributed Human Neural System for Face Perception," *Nature Neuroscience* 3 (January 1, 2000): 83. I thank Brian Boyd for supplying this reference.
9. An exception is the scene of two characters conversing while engaged in a common task, such as working on a machine or riding in a vehicle. Even in car dialogue scenes, though, I suspect that the person who isn't driving will look at the driver far more often than we'd expect in real life. Drivers in movies seem to look away from the road recklessly often as well.
10. Since this essay was first published, the point is further supported by Daniel Nettle's observation that conversation is central to social life and that drama captures our interest by offering an "intensified version of the concerns of normal conversation," a "supernormal" display that elicits a correspondingly stronger reaction in us. See

- Daniel Nettle, "What Happens in *Hamlet*?" in *The Literary Animal: Evolution and the Nature of Narrative*, ed. Jonathan Gottschall and David Sloan Wilson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 66.
11. Tom Kingdon, *Total Directing: Integrating Camera and Performance in Film and Television* (Los Angeles: Silman-James, 2004), 315.
 12. Kingdon, *Total Directing*, 316.
 13. Ed S. Tan, *Emotion and the Structure of Narrative Film: Film as an Emotion Machine* (Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1996), 85–119.
 14. I cannot find any passage in V. I. Pudovkin's *Film Acting* (Eng. orig., 1937; reprint, New York: Grove, 1960) that alludes to blinking or not blinking.
 15. Michael Freedland, *Michael Caine* (London: Orion, 1999), 37–38. Perhaps Martin Amis learned of Caine's regimen, for in his novel *Yellow Dog* (New York: Vintage, 2003), we read, "On screen actors blink only when they mean to; and when Xan decided he wanted to be an actor he had spent a lot of time practicing not blinking. 'Stop staring!' his mother used to say. 'I'm not staring. I'm practicing not blinking!'" (240–41).
 16. Noël Carroll suggests to me that this may be the source of the sense of strength conveyed by dark glasses; they seem to present an unbroken stare.
 17. Antony Hopkins, interview with Barbara Walters, *Arts and Entertainment Mundo*, broadcast March 8, 2001, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
 18. Quoted in *Celebrity News*, Internet Movie Database, November 30, 2001. Thanks to Jonathan Frome for the reference.
 19. Joseph Anderson, personal communication.
 20. Quoted in Benjamin Bogery, "Digital Cinema, by George," *American Cinematographer* 82, no. 9 (September 2001): 71.
 21. Daniel McNeil, *The Face: A Natural History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 29. See also Argyle and Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze*, 26.
 22. Patricia Delaney and Sean Smith, "Tecce Analysis Catches Media's Eye," *Boston College Chronicle*, October 31, 1996, http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/rvp/pubaf/chronicle/v5/031/tecce.html. See also J. A. Tecce, "Body Language in 2004 Presidential Debates," http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/meta-elements/html/tecce_analysis_2004.html.
 23. Yasuko Omori and Yo Miyata, "Eyeblinks in the Formation of Impressions," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 83, no. 2 (October 1996): 591–98.
 24. Hideoki Tada, "Eyeblink Rates as a Function of the Interest Value of Video Stimuli," *Tohoku Psychologica Folia* 45 (1986): 107–13; Kenroku Tsuda and Naoto Suzuki, "Effects of Subjective Interest on Eyeblink Rates and Occurrences of Body Movements," *Japanese Journal of Physiological Psychology and Psychophysiology* 8, no. 1 (June 1990): 31–37; and Niina Kobayashi et al., "The Effect of Appreciating Music Videos on Spontaneous Eyeblink," *Japanese Journal for Physiological Psychology and Psychophysiology* 17, no. 3 (1999): 183–91.
 25. Quoted in Hugh Kenner, *Chuck Jones: A Flurry of Drawings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 53.
 26. Quoted in Delaney and Smith, "Tecce Keeps His Eye on Presidential Debates," http://222.bc.edu/bc_org/rvp/pubaf/chronicle/v9/019/tecce.html.
 27. "Acting by Numbers," *Entertainment Weekly*, September 8, 2002, 89.
 28. Ed McBain, *Calypso* (1979; reprint, New York: Avon, 1988), 73.
 29. W. S. Condon and W. D. Ogston, "A Segmentation of Behavior," *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 5 (1967): 229.

30. A few such culture-specific rules are listed in Argyle and Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze*, 27–32.
31. See my *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 173.
32. On today's use of singles, see my *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 129–34.
33. See Matt Ridley, *The Red Queen: Sex and the Evolution of Human Nature* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 33–34.
34. Torben Grodal, *Moving Pictures: A New Theory of Film Genres, Feelings, and Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 21.
35. Michael Newman has argued persuasively that social science research into facial expression can help us understand film narrative. See chs. 3 and 4 of his “Characterization in American Independent Cinema” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2005).

Chapter 12

1. The original version of this essay drew upon a sample of 163 films, nearly all viewed on editing tables for close analysis. I am very grateful to the following archives and their staffs for cooperation in this project: the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the National Film Archive, London; the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels; the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, New York; and Matsuda Eigasha, Tokyo. I also thank John Dower, John Gillett, Peter High, Don Kirihara, and especially Komatsu Hiroshi for helping me obtain out-of-the-way material. Since the essay's publication, I've viewed another 41 titles, on video and in projection, and in revising the piece I've inserted a few new mentions. Thanks again to Komatsu Hiroshi, as well as to Günter A. Buchwald, to Okajima Hisashi and the staff of the Japan Film Center, and to Kato Michiro, who invited me to the Kyoto Film Festival of 1997. A special thanks to the organizers of the Giornate del Cinema Muto festival in Pordenone and Sacile, Italy, who arranged festival screenings of restored classics in 2001 and 2005.
2. Okajima Hisashi reports that the Japan Film Center holds only 500 feature titles produced before World War II. He estimates the survival rate for Japanese films of the prewar period to be about 4%. See Okajima Hisashi, “Japan's Case: Hopeful or Hopeless?” *Bulletin FIAF*, no. 45 (1992): 2. The causes of the low survival rate include the transience of many companies, the bigger studios' neglect of their holdings, the fact that few prints were made of any title, and the ravages of war (e.g., the allied firebombing of Tokyo) and natural disasters (e.g., the destruction of many Tokyo distribution houses in the 1923 earthquake).
3. Figures 12.1 and 12.2 may not be from the same film version of the play. What has survived seems to be a compilation of three films from the years 1910, 1913, and 1917, all directed by Makino Shozo. Even with their uncertain dating, however, the shots indicate some compositional variety across the general period I'm discussing.
4. For a detailed discussion of this period, see Hiroshi Komatsu, “Some Characteristics of Japanese Cinema Before World War II,” in *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History*, ed. Arthur Noletti Jr. and David Desser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 229–58.