

Analyze the Status of Young Women in Patriarchal Societies Films through the Theories of Gaze——Shots of Gazes in "Thelma and Louise"

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Abstract. The Third Feminist Movement in America is the setting for the iconic feminist movie "Thelma and Louise." The third feminist movement at the time demanded the abolition of social gender norms, prejudices, and more while thinking outside of the traditional feminist paradigm. Hollywood movies must continuously examine the significance of women's existence from the standpoint of cinematic art because Hollywood is the primary source of feminism. Therefore, the focus of this essay is on how to use gaze theories, including male gaze theory and female gaze theory, to depict the status of women in patriarchal society films. The term "man gaze" describes how the camera confines women because males predominate the film industry and consequently make decisions based on their own values and interests. The female gaze is a way for women to reclaim the sovereignty of their bodies; it is a gaze on women from a female perspective. Through a series of analyses of film techniques and camera language, combined with the gaze theory proposed by Laura Mulvey, it can be hoped to discuss the current situation of contemporary women in a patriarchal society. Specifically, by analyzing the male gaze and female gaze in the film "Thelma & Louise", it can be hoped to illustrate the poor living conditions of women in a patriarchal society, where the male gaze can be seen everywhere in life.

Keywords: Male Gaze, Female Gaze, Thelma and Louise, Feminist.

1. Introduction

The third wave of the global women's movement in the United States was born throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as evidenced by the 1991 release of "Thelma and Louise," a classic feminist film of the decade [1]. The third feminist movement at the time placed a strong emphasis on the fact that women's issues were multiracial, multicultural, multi-sexual, and a variety of other issues; it encouraged thinking outside of the original feminist framework and called for the abolition of social gender roles and prejudices, among other things [2]. Men's physical strength, therefore, holds a natural advantage in the overall social structure of "Thelma and Louise," and the strong androgynous consciousness frequently makes the distribution of power and social resources unfair for women, reflecting the main theme that the women's movement in the 1990s wanted to call for. This movie also gives women a chance to consider their own self-worth. Hollywood movies, which serve as the major platform for feminism, frequently examine the significance and worth of a female existence from the standpoint of film art. Hollywood women's films have also been delving into the problem of how to preserve the autonomy of women's personalities in the face of masculinity and work toward gender equality. Hollywood feminist films have evolved in terms of themes and storytelling with the growth of the feminist movement, addressing gender roles and gender relations from a wider range of viewpoints. The primary source of information from earlier studies for this paper is Haiyan. In "Thelma and Louise," which focuses on patriarchal culture, and in Mulvey, L., which emphasizes aesthetic pleasure and narrative film, C discusses feminism [3]. The primary distinction between the other research and this one is that the earlier studies concentrate on how external influences on women and how cinematic approaches portray women. In contrast, this essay will present the situation of women using both of these components. In this essay, the situation of women in patriarchal countries

will be examined using theories of gaze. The similarities between several profound scenes from "Thelma and Louise" and situations from Laura Mulvey's gaze theories are rather noticeable. Like shots of random male characters staring at the heroines, which would be the perfect demonstration of the terminology of the male gaze. Therefore, through analyzing significant shots from the films that contain elements of the gaze theories, coming up with the conclusion of discussing the scopophilia of males towards the opposite sex due to phallogocentric society and explaining the formation of women's social status and how it appears on the screen. Phallogocentric refers to the viewpoint centered on or emphasizing the masculine [4]. From the focused analysis on the social status of women, cinematic apparatus, and the image of female characters on the screen, it is hoped that the article will bring more attention and support to the topic and improve the current situation of women and the image of women on the screen, so that female characters will no longer appear to be simple, deceitful and innocent characters, and diminish the materialization and sexualization of actresses and female characters bodies in film and television.

2. Laura Mulvey's gaze theories-Definition

The male gaze in Hollywood movies refers to the way that the camera confines women since males control the industry and thus make decisions based on their own values and interests. Because of this, viewers—including women—accept such limited images. Mulvey contends that humans are "bound" to a "patriarchal system" and that through their subjective consciousness, Hollywood frequently reinforces traditional gender stereotypes [1]. They also instruct women to view themselves from a male perspective. This gives women a misleading impression of how they should behave. Young women should not objectify themselves in order to attract men's attention, and some people may unintentionally objectify these gender roles. Mulvey states that women "cannot see the demise of classic film forms with emotional regret." This is the reason for her conclusion.

The term female gaze is first mentioned in Mulvey's gaze theories, referred to as: "the right of women to adopt the active and objectifying gaze that has traditionally and stereotypically been associated with males, undermining the dominant cultural alignment of masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity [1]." In the gender binary, men are in the active position, while women are in the passive position, which makes women lose their sovereignty over their own bodies and objectify. The female gaze is a way for women to reclaim the sovereignty of their bodies, and it is a form of empathy between women. More precisely, it is a gaze at women from the female's perspective.

3. Analysis of the film

3.1 Male gaze

This medium shot would be the perfect demonstration of the terminology of the male gaze. According to Laura's movie theories, the male gaze is a manner of looking that empowers the male while sexualizing and diminishing the female [1, 5]. The man, who is shirtless and probably drunk, continuously stares at Louise. This kind of stare is unsettling. Moreover, it allows the audience to visually feel that the male character is mentally objectifying women's body parts, meaning that immediately relating woman's body parts to sexual thoughts. The actress encounters this more than once in the play, which also highlights how frequent male gaze and sexual harassment were for women at the time. In another shot in the film, a man standing on the side of the road turns to stare at the lower half of the two female characters as they pass by, such a gaze is not obvious, but that kind of examination of female body parts is a kind of objectification of women.

This shot depicts when the two heroines first encounter the bus driver. The filmmaker used a long shot to capture the moment. The women initially thought that the bus driver was a very friendly and polite person, but after driving in, they found that the bus had nasty and sexualized symbols on it. Not only that, but when they met the bus driver face to face, the driver verbally harassed them. As they approached, the truck driver honked his horn furiously as he examined the two women's bodies with

very disgusting glares and stuck out his tongue in a very nasty manner. Judging from the driver's proficiency, this must not be the first time he has done such an act. Moreover, while waiting for the two female characters to discuss why he did what he did, they express that perhaps the men thought the women would like it. Women have always been passive and the object of being looked at. Those deep-rooted misconceptions are one of the reasons why women are oppressed in a patriarchal society. This expresses the disappointment of women when encountering men doing such disrespectful behaviors. Moreover, it also maps out how high society's tolerance of male misconduct has led to the current situation.

3.2 Female gaze

The primary distinction between the other research and this one is that the earlier studies concentrate on how external influences on women and how cinematic approaches portray women. In contrast, this essay will present the situation of women using both of these components. In this essay, the situation of women in patriarchal countries will be examined using theories of gaze. It might imply how Thelma and Louise feel many years later. They, women, and friendship resonant with it. Whether it was the early Louise who killed the lewd man who kept insulting them or the late Selma because she lost the money of the two dead for a long time, they are not complaining about each other despite the fact that there is conflict. However, the two friends are always able to quickly settle their differences, turn to one another for support, and become dependent on one another when they are in a desperate situation. It is a form of admiration.

In one scene, Thelma, Louise's best friend, gives an implicit account for her of a rape similar to the one that happened to Thelma in Louis, Texas, at the time. This is the female gaze. It can be seen that Louise is reluctant to give an account of her rape experience because it was Thelma who told it for her. This is why Louise is overly emotional when she sees Thelma being raped, which does not fit her calm, collected, and considerate characterization of the whole situation. The fear of male power that lurks deep inside Louise's heart haunts and torments her like a nightmare, and her declaration of war against male power begins when she shoots the man who intends to rape Thelma and Thelma finds her true value and meaning as a result of this escape. This is the empathy between women and women, seeing themselves from the female perspective, that leads to this crazy act. In the ideology of real society, men's rights and women's rights are always trying to find a balance, and this delicate harmony is broken when a certain kind of rights shows a strong tendency; but no matter who loses and who wins in these two ideologies, in their power struggle, there will always be a driver who tries to break the fog of the struggle and show who is the final winner.

4. Discussion on the formation of the gazes

4.1 Formation of the male gaze

Movies and films satisfy viewers' desire to peek into the lives of others, as well as their fantasies and desires for specific intimate relationships. When people watch films and movies, they project themselves onto the characters on the screen, substituting themselves as the characters in the drama. However, most film works have male characters as narrative subjects. According to Laura Mulvey's gaze theories, the film is a product of social forms and socialization used as an instrument to observe society [1]. In some films and televisions, In some of the films and movies, women are forcibly objectified to satisfy male voyeurism because of the lack of male sexuality. Moreover, they are the bearers of desire, not the initiators[6]. However, in the film and television industry, it is mostly male directors and actors who are in charge, and they tend to portray female characters as traditionally "feminine" in the sense that men expect them to be [4]. Many films determine the path of character development by gender alone. Specifically, the male character is the one who drives the plot, while the female character is simply a complement to the male character. These kinds of shots with the male gaze usually display sexual connotated shots of female characters that are unnecessary for the plot development [7].

4.2 Formation of the female gaze

The term female gaze is first mentioned in Laura Mulvey's gaze theories, referred to as: "the right of women to adopt the active and objectifying gaze that has traditionally and stereotypically been associated with males, undermining the dominant cultural alignment of masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity [8]." In the gender binary, men are in the active position, while women are in the passive position, which makes women lose their sovereignty over their own bodies and are objectified. The female gaze is a way for women to reclaim the sovereignty of their bodies, and it is a form of empathy between women. More precisely, it is a gaze at women from the female's perspective. For the first few thousand years of development history, women have been the suppressed side of the two genders, and women's voices have been drowned out and blocked accordingly [9]. As society has become more modern, the social status of women has been elevated, and the respect given to women by society necessarily needs to be elevated [10]. Against this background, literature from women's perspectives slowly emerges as a rare voice in society and begins to gain attention and importance. One is in line with the times, and the other is certainly the author's own sentiment.

5. Conclusions

Thelma, a housewife whose life is not as nice as she would like it to be, and Louise, a lonely best friend, embark on a trip to the country for a break but end up escaping by accidentally killing someone. Thelma and Louise's director offers a distinctive viewpoint on how contemporary men view new-age feminism. Thelma and Louise's escape trip is portrayed by director Ridley Scott with both male boldness and tragedy and feminine compassion and delicacy. With his cool and collected masculine perspective, Ridley Scott's feminism is more objective and compelling. It also depicts how contemporary males view feminism in the modern day. Thelma tries to convince Louis to turn himself in, but Louis responds, "you are dancing with him face to face; who will believe you," in the second half of the film, Louis claims that he was raped in Texas, but the police turned a blind eye at the time, which also made Louis doubt that women would be taken seriously, which is a patriarchal society.

The entire movie has a startling, insane, and longing for liberation vibe about it while also being critical of patriarchal society. The audience can fully comprehend the psychological feelings of the characters thanks to the cinematography and deft usage of male and female perspectives. The police officer who is looking into the matter offers the sole positive male perspective in the movie. When he first speaks with the bar waitress to elicit a statement, he gains a basic grasp of Thelma and Louise. The police wanted to learn the truth and exonerate the suspects. The policeman did not give up and continued to try to save the two otherwise innocent women in his own way, all the way to the back of the police car surrounding the two heroines. However, he realized that his individual influence was insufficient to alter people's perceptions and was helpless to alter this male-dominated society. Although at the time there was much regret, with the advancement of people's thinking, more and more people began to think, began to speak out for women, and began really care about the people around them. His voice is small, and his power is minimal compared to the entire society, but it is because of such a voice that there is hope. Although there is no total fairness or equality, it is possible to assume that our society will continue to improve since such people exist.

A feminist cinematic classic that criticizes the patriarchal society is Thelma and Louise. Thelma and Louise grinded and transcended everything past the unending oppression of the patriarchal society in their final justification for freedom, for their friendship, for their doubt, and for their battle with it. Our discussion focuses on the mistreatment of women, and patriarchal society further emphasizes the greatness of the two brave characters and the powerful friendship between women.

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