

### Close Analysis: Gender & the Gaze

For this assignment, you will be analyzing a very short snippet of media (approximately 1-3 minutes), reading this clip in relation to Laura Mulvey's description of the "male gaze" in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

Focus on the three "gazes" that Mulvey describes (the characters looking at each other, the camera "looking" at the scene, and the spectators looking at the screen), and think about the ways that these gazes encourage us to identify with particular viewing positions. Think, too, about how these gazes might work to either suggest **agency or action** on the part of some of the characters, or whether characters are **objectified** (framing them as objects that exist to be looked at).

You should also consider Mulvey's argument that female characters in film are often either **fetishized**, turned into objects to be looked at and desired, or **punished**, treated sadistically and subjected to violence. In both cases, she argues that women are seen, within many films, as threatening figures that must be contained.

#### Part 1:

Select a approximately 1 minute snippet from a film, music video, television show, or advertisement that relates to Mulvey's essay. Note in your paper the title, director (if listed), date produced, and source of your clip.

#### Part 2:

Using bullet points or a chart, break down the **key shots** in this sequence. Note what happens in each shot, especially in relation to the framing of characters. Pay attention to framing (CU= close up, LS= long shot, MS= medium shot, etc.), lighting, movement, color. NOTE: you do not have to break down every single shot, but the shorter your example is, the more manageable this assignment will be (30 sec.-1 min. ads make for strong case studies).

#### Part 3:

(appx. 1-2 pages) Describe the network of gazes within this scene. How do you see them relating to the depictions of gender being portrayed? What view points are we encouraged to identify with? Are characters represented as active agents with control within their worlds? Or are they represented as objects of desire? Some combination?

Part 4:

(appx. 1-2 pages) How does your example relate to Mulvey's thesis regarding visual pleasure and representations of gender? You are welcome to affirm, complicate, challenge, or adapt Mulvey's argument in any way you see fit. Your analysis does not need to focus on female characters, and you are welcome to consider the relevance (or lack of relevance) of this theory to any example of binary or non-binary gender representation. Your media clip does not have to be live-action (animation is welcome, in other words), and the figures represented do not need to be human, so long as there is still an aspect of gender open to analysis.

For those less familiar with film analysis, this guide from the Yale Film Studies Program has an excellent glossary of film terminology:

<https://filmanalysis.coursepress.yale.edu/>

They include examples of shot-by-shot analyses of film sequences that might also be helpful. Please note that for this assignment, I would not require the same level of detail; given our focus on gender representation, I'd expect that your analysis would highlight the shots and characteristics of the sequence that relate to that theme:

<https://filmanalysis.coursepress.yale.edu/rocco-and-his-brothers-luchino-visconti-italy-1960/>