

The "Male Gaze" in Hitchcock's films

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Abstract: Hitchcock's status in the film industry is not only a well-known director, he is the founder of the mystery film category. In a suspense thriller, there must be one or more unanswered questions running through the film, just like a series of puzzles. The audience, whether subjective judgment or objective reasoning, always want to solve the correct answers to these questions before watching the film." Before Hitchcock, the word "suspense" seemed to the audience to be only a feeling of following the protagonist while watching a film, or a nerve or heart-clenching feeling, rather than a clear definition. However, with Hitchcock's foothold in the directing industry, it seemed to inject new air into the film industry. The "male gaze" theory is also used extensively in Hitchcock's suspense films. Hitchcock's attitude toward female actors in real life was not very good or even bad, but in movies he could always show the best side of women to the audience. Hitchcock's *Lady* also has a profound influence on today's movies. Hitchcock made good use of the "male gaze", which made countless audiences follow the male protagonist unconsciously peeping at and tracking women in front of the screen. This paper focuses on how Hitchcock rendered the "male gaze" in his films after he arrived in America, and how he rendered the subconscious voyeurism of human mind. Hitchcock's attitude towards female actors in life was not very friendly or even slightly evil, but in his films, he showed the beauty of women in place. Hitchcock seemed to be an excellent psychologist, because he always knew what kind of women the audience liked best the audience always unconsciously follow the camera and the male characters in the film to peep at the female and follow the female male gaze has a different interpretation in each of Hitchcock's films, but in the end he can always dig out the deepest voyeurism in the audience's psychology.

1. Introduction

Alfred Hitchcock's contribution to the film community is enormous. Hitchcock's attitude towards the female characters has always been contradictory and ambiguous. The fate of most women in Hitchcock's films is tragic, but at the same time his demands for female characterization are extremely high. So, the "Hitchcock Girl" was born. Freud's regarded "peek" as the hidden desire in everyone's heart, while Hitchcock combines women with voyeuristic things, allowing the audience to satisfy the hidden desire to the greatest extent in his film. "Male gaze" can almost be found in most of the Hitchcock films. In an age of unequal gender power, men had most of the quality resources, while women were automatically reduced to characters being watched and played with. Hitchcock films are mostly typical Hollywood products, and the "male gaze" in the sexes — the male control of power and the desire for sex, the existence of women being weak, peeping, and fertile. The study of "male gaze" and "objectified women" in Hitchcock films can better understand the ambivalence of the two sexes in film and television, and can also provide suggestions for how the image of women should be shaped in modern film and television. This paper selects for analysis how Hitchcock could use male gaze in the film he directed in the US and how he showed prying psychology in the human subconscious.

2. Hitchcock – Suspense Director With A Penchant For “Penchant” And “Male Gaze”

If Hitchcock's film career is divided into two parts, 1939 is the watershed - Britain and America. By the time Hitchcock officially entered Hollywood, he had already achieved some success in the

British film industry. Hitchcock was born in Britain, but he acknowledged the country's contempt for the art of cinema. Famous English humor, which has inspired so many charming murder comedies, often admits of no real excitement [1, 2]. (Truffaut, French director) It was Hitchcock, who came to Hollywood as an Englishman in 1939 and began his free suspense film creation. He officially made the film more thrilled accepted by more people, and also made the British more accepting of the art of cinema.

In 1935, Hitchcock made the thirty-nine Steps, which is already Hitchcock's representative work in England. At this time, the style of the films he shot in The UK was more inclined to show The British culture, with a calm and deep sense of humor. He was extremely concerned about the psychological display and emotional expression of different characters, showing a strong British sense of the world. At the same time, in the creation of the main melody of the film, Hitchcock has shown the characteristics of American Hollywood. An ordinary office worker in the cornered, to stimulate their own potential, through their own fears and obstacles, and finally win. This classic individual heroism is a Hollywood tradition that continues to this day, and was already evident in Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film.

In the 1940s and 1950s, films were dominated by white male directors, and Hitchcock, as a representative director of suspense, romance films, had his own style in portraying the roles of women in every film. And because the women in Hitchcock's films are so distinctive, they are collectively called "Hitchcock girls". They are beautiful and mysterious, and there is a huge contrast between the outside and the inside -- cold and otherworldly looking, but warm on the inside, and blonde hair is a must-have trait. The idea of "serial beauty" also had a great influence on subsequent Hollywood movies. Hitchcock's concern with female appearance had a great influence on the creation of bond girls and the female characters in many subsequent heroic films.

Hitchcock's concern for women's appearance was not just about their looks and hair color. His concern for clothes was noted by his co-star Kim Novak: "I've never worked with a director who cared so much about clothes." Hitchcock even invited Edith Head to design a series of couture gowns for the lead role in "Rear Window," impressing with delicate silk skirts and form-fitting tutus. In the thirty-nine Steps, the heroine has blonde hair, blue eyes and fair skin, which is the first time that the typical image of Hitchcock girl is shown to the audience. Such a deliberate requirement on the female exterior is also to attract the attention of more male audiences. From this, in addition to the blond heroine in Hitchcock's films, a larger feature is revealed -- the male gaze.

The biggest characteristic of Hitchcock-style movies is to use the camera as the human line of sight, so that all audiences unconsciously turn from "watching" to "peeping". [3] Scholar A.W. Eaton defined in 《Feminist Philosophy of Art》 (2008) that male gaze is "an act of objectifying women as objects in order to obtain sexual pleasure with male eyes". Women have long been seen as the second sex, admired and peeped at by men through pictorial coverage and social media. Hitchcock, on the other hand, put the male and female voyeurism reasonably on the screen.

The concept of the male gaze was first developed by feminist film critic Laura Mulvey in a 1975 article entitled [4] 《Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema》 : The male gaze consists of three angles: the person behind the camera, the figure in the representation or the film itself, and the audience. When playing female roles, they are not only stared at by men in film and television works, but also by men in the real world, such as photographers and directors. [5]"People's recognition of beauty is not completely subjective or free, but is bound in the aesthetic consciousness of The Times." Since ancient times, men have dominated the male-dominated society in human history, both culturally and economically. Therefore, men have always held the criterion of judging beauty. And sexual fantasies have always been an important part of the male gaze. The focus of the word "male gaze" is on the word "gaze". When a man looks at a woman, his gaze follows instinct. Men's eyes tend to fall on the chest, legs and other parts. And this line of sight is enough to show that the male at the moment is looking at women in a sexual way. In movies, much of the same is true. Most films are made for the pleasure of men, and the idea of male supremacy has been firmly rooted in the film industry.

3. An Analysis of The “Male Gaze” In Hitchcock’S Films

3.1 “Vertigo”—spying on women

Vertigo, released in 1958, was one of the few films of that era to bring the concept of voyeurism to the screen. Throughout the movie, men determine the direction of the plot. [4]As Laura Mulvey said, "When the audience identifies with the hero, he will project his eyes to his peers and screen substitutes. Thus, the hero's power to control the development of events is combined with his power to take initiative in sexual viewing, both of which give people complete satisfaction. Therefore, the glamour of male stars is not the glamour of visual sex objects. It's the glamour of a more elegant and powerful, ideal self that emerges from that moment of recognition in the mirror. The characters in the story have more control over the occurrence and progression of events than the subject/viewer, just as the mirror image has more control over motor coordination."

As a director, Hitchcock's films show his use and manipulation of women as a male. Female characters appear more as objects in Vertigo, highlighting Madeline's beauty and sexiness, showing men's pleasure in peeping at them, and how men control women, while women's personality and characteristics as human beings are rarely shown. [6] " White, heterosexual men dominate the directing field and always have, and as a result Cinemawell over the past century has been decidedly male-oriented. " Because it is male-oriented, both Peeping Madeline and objectified Judy exist to please men in Vertigo.

In the first half of the film, a large number of male voyeur images were used to create Madeline, a female character. Hitchcock set John as a detective, and Gavin (Madeline's husband) hired John to track Madeline and protect her. The unique character setting of the director makes it reasonable for the male to "peep" at the female in the film. It can also be seen from this that the white male director is absolutely male-oriented in the film. From the beginning of the movie, John followed Madeline all the way, he followed and peeped the heroine all the time. Most of the film was shot from John's vision, using a lot of POV shots. The various behaviors of the leading actor determine how the audience and the camera view women, which also reflects that woman have been peeing through his subjective vision. It can also be found that women are not seen as an independent subject from the beginning, but are viewed as peeping characters throughout the whole process. And the audience in slowly into male role visual peeping, and Madeline has also been gradually given viewed characteristics, John in the film through the door frames, the perspective of car Windows, picture frames, before closure, the heroine is the most beautiful side and positive features into elegantly beautiful western oil painting, camera aimed at the women's beautiful face for many times, As well as the curvy figure, it deepens the audience's recognition of the fictional appearance of the heroine, and effectively satisfies the desire of the hero to stare. [6] As mentioned in 《The Dominance of the 'male gaze' in the film Industry》 : The male gaze is summoned with reference to the patriarchal surveillance of women's bodies.

In the scenes of peeping at women, Hitchcock often used the shooting technique of first photographing the whole building and then slowly focusing on women, which perfectly restored the visual changes of peeping. And when John first saw Madeline, Hitchcock skillful use of a mirror to achieve the effect of peep, as she gradually go far, the mirror is more and more close, mapping out face is becoming more and more clear, the mirror is often used as a prop, peep desire, dual peep through the mirror not only shows the male gaze, a man in the monitoring and control for women, At the same time, it also evokes the pleasure of voyeurism. When John peeks behind the door, there is a classic scene, Madeline's image is reflected in the mirror, and the peeping audience sees both the peeping and the peeping in this scene.

[6]"Men tend to look at women, and women tend to watch men looking at them. " The mirror here does not represent the image of the individual. It is a way of voyeurism and also a way of expression for the female to desire the male identity. In the later stage, Judy constantly reflects her own image in the mirror, from the beginning when she enjoys becoming the most authentic self in the mirror to the end when she becomes another person transformed by a man in the mirror. At this time, the role of mirrors, in addition to peeping, or perhaps witnessing the transformation of women being objectified.

But the development of the story always makes people admire Hitchcock's brilliance. Although the

whole film is about peeping at women from a man's point of view, the truth is revealed to the audience halfway through the film. It is the man who is really being played, what he sees is carefully arranged by the woman. [7] As Colleen Glenn wrote in *Complicating the Theory of the Male Gaze*, Hitchcock's *Leading Men* says, "Furthermore, Scottie may think he's Tailing Madeleine, but he's not: She's leading him, baiting him, every step of the way." Perhaps this is why female audiences also love Hitchcock's films. Men don't have to be the only ones toyed with. Women may have a say, too.

3.2 "Rear window" -- the desire to peep is in everyone's heart

When all the audiences are sitting in the cinema watching the movie, they are unconsciously peeping. People watch other people's lives on the screen and imagine their own storylines to be incorporated into the film. In the 1950s, the disgraceful and even criminal word "peeping" was brought to the screen by directors, who even made up stories to legitimize it. Hitchcock's *Rear Window* is a classic example of voyeur-themed movies. The film even turns the crime of peeping into the act of revealing a crime. This is where Hitchcock is most brilliant. He can always lead people to see things the way he wants them to see things. In Hollywood in the 1950s, the goody hostess set always catered to the majority of the audience's aesthetic, with women eager for praise and attention, showing their bravery at critical moments and showing their vulnerability, arousing men's desire for protection.

Most of *Rear Window* is shot from Jeffery's point of view. The whole film revolves around a disabled Jeffery, who peeks through the window of a neighborhood home and finally solves a murder case. Seemingly simple plot, but in the film to meet the audience's peep desire and subconscious. Staring and peeping is the plot and theme of "*Rear Window*," where Jeffery is a symbol of justice. Under the influence of different countries' cultures, the effects and artistic techniques presented by films and television works are quite different. Compared with Oriental sensibility, western works are more rational. [8]"In European and American suspense movies, the audience is often placed in the position of onlookers, calmly and objectively view the development of the situation. The director puts forward different possibilities one by one with incomplete premises, and then uses strict logical reasoning to play intelligence games with the audience, setting traps one after another and misleading the audience's judgment. " Hitchcock's masterly point is that the audience always stands in the perspective of voyeurs and spies on everyone's privacy with Jeffery. The audience, not only enjoys the pleasure of voyeurism, but also feels guilty for their crimes. Hitchcock, on the other hand, captures people's psychology and makes everyone who sees the film be drawn into the story.

In Hollywood movies, women are mostly used as the carriers of desire, they are always passive, they are sexy, beautiful and even brave sometimes, they fight side by side with men, but it is always the men who drive the plot in the end. They carry the gaze of both the man and the audience. Audiences tend to pay more attention to the beauty and sex appeal of women, while they tend to pay more attention to the drama of men. In *Rear Window*, Lisa takes the initiative to pursue love and even takes risks in order to solve crimes. She seems to break out of the frame of Hollywood. She is independent, passionate and even adventurous in this drama. However when the film is completed, Hitchcock remains the same -- women are still there to fulfill men's expectations. Initially, Lisa did not believe in crime. She paid more attention to it in order to have more topics with Jeffery and attract his attention. [9]"In the face of Jeffrey's invisible scrutiny, she was like an embarrassed examinee desperately trying to show her bonus points in accordance with the examiner's preference, hoping that the examiner would give her a satisfactory score. "

The whole film was shot with the vision of the hero, never thinking or showing from Lisa's point of view. In this situation of extreme inequality of power, Lisa didn't seem to care, she just did everything to win Jeffery's favor. At the end of the film, the scene set by Hitchcock highlights the female's sigh after meeting the male standard -- Lisa quickly picks up her favorite fashion magazine after Jeff falls asleep and puts down her usual disguise. Finally, Lisa did not escape from the tragic female image that she could transform herself in order to satisfy men.

3.3 "Marine" -- female characters in patriarchal films

"*Marine*" is a film directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1964 a peak, already in his sixties, in this film, but boldly portrayed a love of snooping women, control everything around the male role. *Marine*, the

heroine, is a traumatized female thief at a young age, while Mark, the hero, is a man who loves to tame wild animals, challenge and control everything.

[4] Laura said: "The scene of the film provides an effective voyeur space: the screen as the viewing object is shown in the light, and the audience as the viewing subject is watching in the dark. In this way, a relationship of "seeing" and "being seen" is formed between the audience and the screen. In mainstream movies, the objects shown to the audience are usually women. The audience either watches with the hero through his eyes and takes possession of the heroine, or directly views the woman through closeups of her face and legs displayed on the screen. During the viewing, the viewer (male) libido is released, thus obtaining the "visual pleasure" of peeping. " From the beginning of the film, the camera focuses on the heroine's curved back. When the police came to take the interview, the boss's meticulous description of Marine's appearance without thinking is enough to prove the boss's meticulous observation of Marine's appearance at ordinary times. This act just a few has let the audience of the unconscious and lens possession of women to enjoy together, and for the hero's appearance Hitchcock was choosing a simple conversation.

And while Marine was interviewing for a new job and trying to commit another crime, Mark had already figured it out. Throughout the scene, Mark looks at Marnie like an animal about to be tamed. Staring is inseparable from power. Although most of the scenes Hitchcock shot in The whole film "Marine" are female characters staring at other people's behavior, most of them are necessary for the crime. When it comes to relationships, the female character is still the one being stared at. At the level of power, women are once again reduced to objects.

In the opening scene of the film, Hitchcock has helped the audience choose Mark as their agent, and people will follow Mark's step by step to explore the psychology and character of women. In the whole film, "look" is the theme throughout, Mark's open and aboveboard stare at Marine at the beginning, Lean's peep at the couple from the window and so on constitute the whole film.

When Marine washes her black hair in front of a mirror, revealing the standard sexual blonde hair of a Hitchcock girl, she looks like Judy in Vertigo, who tries to please men, and Lisa in Rear Window, who looks independent but still tries to please men. She seems to have broken away from the character set of blonde (in order to tempt men and conform to the aesthetic of the patriarchal film system), but different from the free and easy and confident male characters, she still disguises herself in front of Mark as a female watched character. She craves male approval, and she disguises herself as more beautiful and intellectual to forget her identity as a thief.

4. Hitchcock- A Genius Director Who Plays With His Mind

In Hitchcock on Film, Hitchcock himself admitted that he had planned out every shot, every light and every sound before the film was even filmed. Hitchcock was the general, and the studio was his battlefield, and he knew all the actors and the scene like the back of his hand. [10]"His editing precedes filming. Even if the producers took away his editing rights, they would find that the film he had made could only be assembled in one way, a Hitchcockian way."

Hitchcock, as a representative director of suspense, love films, has his own style in portraying the role of women in every film. In Hitchcock's films, the male protagonists have always been the ones with power. They are manipulating and tracking women to satisfy their own needs and desires, while the audience unconsciously peeks and gazes with the male protagonists. Freud believed that peeping satisfies the needs of the human subconscious, and Hitchcock was a director deeply influenced by Freud. Male peeping at women has always been one of the biggest features of Hitchcock's films.

The film is to vent people's voyeuristic desire and physiological instinct that cannot be realized in reality. While some directors will always pay attention to the audience's psychology when shooting their works, so that everyone can participate in it, while others do not like to pay attention to the audience's feelings, and rush to inform the audience of the story in advance. When watching the films directed by Hitchcock, most of the audience will be quite confident in the beginning of the story from the perspective of the male in the film, the audience seems to be standing in the perspective of God to know all the story, and sometimes can't help but peep at the female together with the male hero. By this time, people had already fallen into Hitchcock's trap. There is always an insight in the middle of

the film, and a fantasy at the end when audiences regret their initial naivete. Hitchcock - a genius director who likes to use the "male gaze" and control the human psychology even as psychologists.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the existence of "male gaze" in the three Hitchcock representative films. Voyeuristic women, objectified women and so on are the most common elements in Hitchcock movies, and these scenes have been constantly staged in the real society. Perhaps film and television always add more artistic techniques and fantasy compared to reality. However art comes from life. Movies are actually a mirror of society. Women are weak in Hitchcock's films and live for men. They desire to be watched by men to show their beauty, while hating that they have been peeped at. Women yearn for the gain of power, they not only have a numb acceptance, they even constantly resist and strive, but sadly, ultimately, they don't even know that they still live for men. In Hitchcock's film, whether it's seemingly Judy, male and independent Lisa, how women struggle to escape the control of the male power society. Hitchcock delicately analyzes the psychology of the female characters, and he skillfully grasps the "seeing" and "being seen". The relationship between "actor" and "audience". Hitchcock's "male gaze" was not only reflected in the actors, he even invited all viewers to go together through his film.

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