



Who is Laura Mulvey?

Laura Mulvey is a British film theorist born on the 15th August 1941, after her education at the St Hilda's College in Oxford, she developed a range of different theories about film but her most recognized work is on her 'Male Gaze' theory.

Visual Pleasure and the Male Gaze theory:

After her education in St Hilda's College, she wrote an article named 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', within the article she presented her theory of the Male Gaze. The 'Male Gaze' is a term referred to when the scene or shot focuses on a female and the audience are in the position of a male, for example if a scene focuses on certain aspects of a woman it places the audience in the eyes of a male, however the male gaze is only referred to when the scene also uses certain cinematography techniques in the film such as slow motion and slow panning of the camera over a female's body. Laura Mulvey suggested that when the male gaze is used in a film, it blocks depth and 'human identity' in a character, this suggests that the male gaze in a film implies how women are more 'sex objects' and how they are perceived because of their physical tropes represented in film etc. Laura Mulvey theory expresses how women in media such as film and tv are represented with little importance and depth in films.

The Male Gaze in Science Fiction Film:

In the 2007 film, Transformers, the director Michael Bay uses the Male Gaze by using certain camera angles and different cinematography techniques such as slow motion in order to objectify Megan Fox's character as a sex object. He places her directly above the car as she opens the bonnet, this represents both her and the car as desirable to men. Her outfit she wears in the scene draws the audience's attention to parts of her body such as her chest and stomach in order to sexualize her character further. The dialogue used in the scene also has sexual connotations which further represents the male gaze. The mise-en-scene in the scene is also used in order to add to the sexual tension of the scene, for example the sunset in the background with the light shining towards her has connotation of her being desirable etc.



Many genres of film such as science fiction uses the male gaze in order to objectify women as sex objects, the theory ultimately highlights stereotypical tropes of women and talks about how films often represent the idea of patriarchy in film and the common roles of men in film.

The Male Gaze in Star Wars:

Star Wars has famously used the male gaze in 'Return of the Jedi' when Princess Leia is captured and taken hostage by 'Jabba the Hutt' and forced to wear the 'iconic' slave outfit. The scene places the character in a vulnerable position whereby she has very little authority, power and characterisation. In these scenes the male gaze by focusing on aspects of her body: interestingly, these few scenes directly contrasted to what we had seen of the princess before, for example she was represented as powerful as she was both a politician and a strong leader behind the rebel alliance.

