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The Male Gaze: Redefined Through Hitchcock's Films

BRIDGET MCSHANE
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Garrett Sullivan
Professor of English
Thesis Supervisor

Carla Mulford
Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Honors Adviser

* Electronic approvals are on file.

ABSTRACT

The male gaze is a phenomenon that continues to puzzle both film theorists and film viewers. Although previously studied and examined by film theorists, the term tends to carry only one definition into modern-day understanding. The male gaze often gets entangled with other terms and phrases such as “voyeurism,” “sexualization,” “objectification,” and “Peeping Toms.” While these terms and phrases do contribute their fair share to the overarching concept of the male gaze, I argue that when examined more closely, other types of male gazes lie below the surface. Hitchcock’s cinematography undoubtedly captures rather risqué images of female characters, leaving audiences without a choice but to partake in male sexualization and objectification. Yet, his films depict scenes between female and male characters – either with or without dialogue – that capture a type of gaze one cannot quite associate with merely male sexualization. From rewatching and analyzing films such as *Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, and *Psycho*, I have created my own terms and definitions of different male gazes that may or may not align with the voyeuristic and innately sexual tendencies associated with the overarching term.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Defining the Male Gaze and Voyeurism	2
Chapter 3 “Looking” versus “Gazing” in Hitchcock’s Films	5
Chapter 4 A Heuristic Process: The Types of Male Gaze	8
Chapter 5 The Objectifying Gaze	9
Chapter 6 The Idealizing Gaze	13
Chapter 7 The Authoritative Gaze	16
Chapter 8 The Murderous Gaze	20
Conclusion	24
Bibliography	26

Chapter 1

Introduction

The art of cinematography invites spectators to be the witnesses and judges of what directors offer on the screen. Audience members are offered an invitation to participate in the same thoughts and feelings as those expressed by a film's characters. The camera invites us to take pleasure or pain in whatever it is willing to show us. What the camera sees, so does the moviegoer. Yet, partaking in characters' thoughts and feelings is not the only invitation audience members hold the power to decline or accept. In classic Hollywood cinema, and more specifically, films directed by Alfred Hitchcock such as *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958), and *Psycho* (1960), the camera invites spectators to participate in the renowned male gaze. The films' narratives are organized and depicted around the perspective of heterosexual men who encounter women who are classical Hollywood beauties. There are often times when the male character will not explicitly participate in the male gaze. Rather, the camera will offer an invitation to look at female characters, and viewers get to decide whether to gaze or not. But, what often gets lost in the audience's mail is the invitation to notice and partake in forms of looking other than those that include objectification and sexualization. While much of Hitchcock's cinematography does send invitations for viewers' participation in objectifying through gazing, scholars have not attended closely to different types of gazing on offer in Hitchcock's films.

A simplistic view of Hitchcock's films would suggest they only offer a voyeuristic perspective – that of a male protagonist dismissive of female attitudes and behaviors who seeks to gain sexual pleasure by looking and watching. "Voyeurism," a term often associated with the concept of the male gaze, describes intentional looking to seek sexual pleasure at a distance

(Bank 182). Alec Charles emphasizes the importance of that distance when explaining what it means to be a true voyeur. He describes this key aspect in voyeurism as “distance [that] dissolves the illusion of intimacy upon which the voyeur’s imagination feeds” (182). Voyeurism can be described as looking, but not being able to touch. For many of Hitchcock’s male protagonists, there is satisfaction in being able to watch from a distance while also knowing that no one sees you watching. This voyeuristic perspective is referred to as “pleasure in looking and fascination with the human form” by author Laura Mulvey, who writes about film and scopophilia. In fact, a more modern-day interpretation of the male gaze stems from Mulvey’s analysis in her article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” That interpretation tends to associate the male gaze with the objectification of women. Although most definitions of voyeurism include ideas about the viewer deriving sexual pleasure, that does not mean that a male voyeur loses his title if sexual intent is subtracted from the definition. My argument is that beyond the aspect of the cinematic male gaze that focuses on merely voyeurism lies other forms of looking or gazing. Understandings of the male gaze that reduce it to sexual looking ignore other forms of looking. Before crafting different interpretations of the male gaze in Hitchcock’s films such as *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, and *Rear Window*, one must examine how the term has already been defined by authors such as Mulvey and other modern-day sources.

Chapter 2

Defining the Male Gaze and Voyeurism

Voyeurism may often be associated with the male gaze, but the two do not necessarily accompany one another at all times. As described in the introduction, voyeurism is looking performed from a distance with the hope of never being seen by the subject being watched. A voyeur is often referred to as “a Peeping Tom.” This title is even mentioned in the beginning of

Hitchcock's *Rear Window* when Jeff's personal nurse, Stella, catches him squinting out of his window trying to make out a conversation between two of his neighbors. She distracts Jeff from his nosiness and says, "New York state sentence for a peeping Tom is six months in the workhouse." Continuing to lecture him on his voyeuristic tendencies, Stella also adds, "Any of those bikini bombshells you're always watching worth the red-hot poker?" Through her judgmental comebacks, Stella actually indicates that a "Peeping Tom" is not always a voyeur seeking out sexual pleasure. Jeff does take notice of a half-naked woman across the courtyard, but most of his voyeuristic behavior is due to his boredom, and later on in the film, his nosiness about a missing neighbor. Whether a voyeur watches with a sexual intention or not, he – in this case, the voyeur is a heterosexual male – gazes from a distance and wishes not to be seen. As Jeff takes on the role of voyeur in the film, the audience has no choice but to also take on this role and peer into neighboring windows alongside him. Perhaps unknowingly, audience members mimic the behaviors Jeff performs as a "Peeping Tom" and become voyeurs.

Voyeurism undoubtedly is a form of gazing that may be linked to the male gaze, but it is important to note that they are not the exact same concept. However, it can also serve as a depiction in the world of cinematography and literature. A film does not necessarily need to include an obvious scenario in which a heterosexual man stares at a woman for it to incorporate the male gaze. A more obvious example of the male gaze takes place in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* between former detective Scottie and his new assignment, Madeline. A prolonged scene unfolds as Scottie steadily watches Madeline as she studies the portrait of Carlotta Valdes in the museum. Audience members can clearly interpret a man with an unfaltering gaze staring at his subject. This focuses on representation – the behavior that is enacted on the screen – but the male gaze also encompasses the technology of movie-making itself. In other words, audience

members fall subject to what the camera is willing to reveal and what it fails to show. A case in which the male gaze becomes more discrete is the attempt the camera makes to showcase a woman. In one of the most memorable moments in a Hitchcock film, the shower scene in *Psycho* is made for that of the heterosexual male eye. While there is no nudity in the scene, Marian washes her body in the shower of the Bates Motel with such pleasure and enthusiasm that it becomes difficult for audience members to not feel like they are intruding. Although her moments of bliss in the shower are soon interrupted by psycho killer Norman Bates, Marian takes a shower as if someone she were trying to seduce is watching. In this case, and like several others in Hitchcock's films, the audience members are given a decision to accept or decline an invitation to assume the male gaze.

In her own definition of the male gaze, Sarah Vanbuskirk acknowledges these ideas and notes, "we are driven to look at and evaluate each other as potential mates, the male gaze twists this natural urge, turning the women into passive items to possess and use as props" (Vanbuskirk). Although her argument refers to an off-screen male gaze occurring in everyday life, it aligns with that of on-screen looking. The man with an unwavering attention and a keen eye gets to gaze while the woman – either aware or unaware of the eyes upon her – is studied and typically sexualized and objectified. He is represented as active and agential – he is the bearer of the look – while she is objectified – she is the one who is looked at. Nonetheless, this very instance described can take various forms in regards to a cinematic perspective. Technically, the camera embodies a heterosexual male perspective as it selectively shows spectators female characters on screen. Next, the heterosexual male characters are represented on screen as looking, whether with a voyeuristic intention or not. Lastly, a responsive male gaze develops in the members of the audience as they look at what is depicted on the screen. With this being said,

the male gaze that is often discussed and analyzed in regards to Hitchcock's film does not necessarily render pleasure in looking and objectifying. Without disregarding the male gaze as an objectifying one, the term does not just signify a means for a heterosexual male's pleasure. Rather, behind the male gaze hides a variety of gazes often overshadowed by an objectifying one.

Chapter 3

“Looking” versus “Gazing” in Hitchcock's Films

Before exploring the variety of gazes that lie behind the male gaze, it is important to recognize the difference between two words that are often associated with the term: *looking* and *gazing*. For the purposes of this study, I will be differentiating these terms from one another. In this analysis, just because a character looks does not mean that they are gazing. To gaze at someone or something comes with a heightened intent to watch with feeling. This feeling, or these feelings, could include admiration, deep thought, or surprise. Heterosexual men can gaze at a woman with a sexual or objectifying intent, but that is not the only form such a gaze could take. Moreover, the male gaze can be exemplified in three forms – technically, through the camera lens; representationally, through the male characters on screen; and responsively, through the spectators in the audience. And, there are countless instances in which characters and audience members are granted the choice to either look or gaze.

In many of Hitchcock's films, the camera tends to zoom in to focus on a certain character. One instance of this occurs in Hitchcock's film *Rear Window*. The camera zooms into the window across the Manhattan courtyard to reveal a physically fit, blonde woman in her undergarments performing stretches and galloping around her apartment while making breakfast. This camera technique used abundantly in Hitchcock's film causes any spectator to share the

camera's view and *look* into the world inside of her miniature apartment. Whether the spectator wishes to idolize or admire the half-naked woman prancing around is entirely up to them; the camera and the angles at which it shows her offer spectators this option. At the technical level, this is "the objectifying gaze;" at the responsive level, the audience may or may not participate in the proffered act of objectification. The camera only invites audiences to *look*. It does not demand watchers to partake in the quintessential objectification of the male gaze because that decision remains up to the watcher. While the camera proposes that the audience member gaze in a particular way – in this case, a sexualized way – the audience member does not have to accept the terms of this proposal. Thus, there is a difference between the audience member presumed by the way the camera looks – in this case, an admiring heterosexual male – and the actual audience member who might not take up the invitation the camera seems to extend to them.

In the same film where viewers face a decision to look or to gaze, Hitchcock allows little to no room for anything but gazing with the intent to objectify Miss Torso – the half-naked blonde woman who dances freely in her apartment. Another fellow detective, Thomas Doyle, comes to visit the crippled Jeff who has grown more and more concerned about the whereabouts of his neighbor's wife. From his visit, Detective Doyle takes notice of everything and everyone that Jeff sees from his wheelchair. It does not take Detective Doyle more than a few minutes to catch sight of the woman with little clothing, dancing around her miniscule living room. He becomes distracted in his and Jeff's conversation as his eyes widen at the sight across the courtyard. It becomes even more clear that Doyle is sexually fantasizing about Miss Torso when Jeff quickly notices his gaze and remarks, "How's your wife?" In this scene, and several others like it in Hitchcock's films, there is no way around the depiction of this type of gazing. Doyle's

sight and mind becomes so enmeshed with the woman across the way that he loses track of all that surrounds him, including Jeff's growing concerns about another suspicious neighbor. With this being said, the camera never seems to make Jeff's looking at Miss Torso as obvious as Doyle's gaze. Jeff certainly *looks* at Miss Torso, but whether he *gazes* at her as Doyle does remains up for interpretation. Doyle represents an on-screen version of the audience member who has accepted the invitation to gaze desirously that is extended to him by the camera.

Thus, to look means not having a charged or heightened intent that creates some sort of feeling. When a character on screen or a spectator off screen gazes, he or she does so intentionally and intently. The gaze might be objectifying, but it is not necessarily. However, some gazes from male characters are often mistaken for objectifying ones. Because the objectifying aspect of the male gaze is so often studied and written about, it allows other gazes to clandestinely manifest in Hitchcock's film without being discussed. In what follows, I will identify and discuss three forms of the male gaze that have been less attended to than the objectifying one: an "authoritative gaze," an "idealizing gaze," and even a "murderous gaze." These gazes might have objectifying elements, but they are not defined by the sexual objectification of women. All of them, however, concern the subordination of women to men. It is not to say that one gaze cannot overlap with another to evoke common feelings of being watched from a woman's point of view.

Chapter 4

A Heuristic Process: The Types of Male Gaze

Different male gazes seem to lack explanation and theorization because they arguably are combined into one, sole term: the male gaze. While the male gaze does encompass these different dimensions of gazing, it is often only explained in terms of objectification: a heterosexual male degrading a woman to the status of an object and not a person. Different dimensions of gazing include watching that evokes authority, idealization, and even murder. But, in order to identify and analyze gazes that are often overlooked, they must be separated through a heuristic approach. Heuristic processes are used in reasoning to provide “short-cut methods” to solve problems (Banks 452). Humans process information that seems relevant and rule out information that proves irrelevant. From here, all relevant information is analyzed to reach a conclusion. In his article “Heuristic and Analytic Processes in Reasoning,” Jonathan Evans describes the distinction between the heuristic process and the analytical process that often follows (Banks 451). He explains that “*heuristic* processes which select items of task information as ‘relevant’, and *analytic* processes which operate on the selected items to generate inferences or judgments” (451). It is important to recognize that a common problem can be concluded by separating different pieces of relevant information. The same approach can be applied to Hitchcock’s films.

To show the problem of female characters feeling subordinate to the heterosexual male characters, I will recall relevant scenes then analyze them to reach the conclusion. For instance, during the heuristic process, a relevant piece of information would be Detective Doyle gazes into the apartment window of Miss Torso in the film *Rear Window*. Using the same film as an example, an irrelevant piece of information is L.B. Jeffries looks at his nurse, Stella, as she walks

into his apartment. As described in the previous chapter, simply *looking* becomes irrelevant while *gazing* becomes relevant and deserving of analysis. Once all instances of gazing are identified in the three films (*Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, and *Psycho*), the male gaze becomes a term that is now divisible. Different types of gazes – that I have termed and eventually will define – remain divided in order to be identified and analyzed, but that does not mean they never intertwine or overlap one another. In fact, some gazes even reinforce one another; for example, and as we will see, “the authoritative gaze” overlaps with the objectifying one in *Psycho*. What will later be analyzed in the chapter “The Murderous Gaze,” psycho killer Norman Bates ultimately kills Marian Crane because of not only his devastating mental state, but because of his sexual attraction to her as a woman. Thus, “the murderous gaze” is fueled and accompanied by the objectifying one. Both gazes overlap to reach the same conclusion: the subordination of women to men.

Chapter 5

The Objectifying Gaze

The concept frequently associated with the male gaze is objectification, but it still can be taken from the overarching male gaze to be properly identified and further analyzed. Similar to that of other gazes, the term I coin as “the objectifying gaze” involves a heterosexual man gazing at his subject of a woman. More specifically, the man takes on the role of the looker with the intent to reduce the woman to an object.

Objectification proves the most common and discussed version of the male gaze and remains consistently prevalent in Hitchcock’s cinematography. Because of this, feminist film theorists use his films as a prime example to showcase the imbalance of the sexual hierarchy. For instance, in her piece *Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey discusses

scopophilia – sexual pleasure acquired from looking – and how two of Hitchcock’s films (*Rear Window* and *Vertigo*) are created in order to please and to relate to a heterosexual male audience. Under the section of her chapter titled “Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look,” she articulates an imbalance of power between the man and the woman within film:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active male and passive female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Women displayed as sexual object is the leit-motiff of erotic spectacle [...] she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. (Mulvey 808-809).

The word choice Mulvey uses in her description of objectification not only assists in a better understanding of the term, but also allows for easier identification of it occurring within Hitchcock’s films. She argues that women are often put on “display” in order for objectification to be carried out in the world of film.

A contradicting argument may be that some of the female characters in Hitchcock’s films do not purposely put themselves on display for the male characters to objectify them. For instance, in *Pyscho*’s shower scene, Marian’s character does not shower in front of another male character. Until Norman Bates enters her motel room, there is not a single male character present to objectify her except in the audience. But, the absence of a male character is accompanied by the presence of the camera and its audience. Just because the audience does not see a male character gazing on screen does not mean the objectifying gaze still lingers throughout the male audience. The audience assumes the role of the absent heterosexual male

character and is invited to step in and objectify. In this chapter, I will be identifying relevant instances of objectification – whether performed by another male character or the audience – and analyzing the ways in which it contributes to or strays from the all-encompassing male gaze.

Hitchcock's *Rear Window* exhibits the most scenes with "the objectifying gaze" in action. The most obvious cases are conveyed by the names which Jeff has assigned two of his female neighbors: Miss Torso and Miss Lonelyhearts. After the opening credits, Jeff's rear window opens and both he and the audience are invited to partake in the commotion of the New York courtyard. The audience has access to a sort of "sneak peek" into all of the neighboring windows. The camera moves from window to window, eventually revealing the backside of Miss Torso as she leans over, puts on her top, and begins her morning stretches. In a later scene, Jeff examines inside the window of Miss Lonelyhearts as she prepares for the arrival of her imaginary date. Next, he takes a look inside Miss Torso's window as she entertains a few men for what seems like a dinner party. Jeff's gaze into both women's windows proves an objectifying one due to the fact that he assigns them names that reduce them to merely body parts. Yet, what remains intriguing about his "objectifying gaze" appears to stray from that described by Mulvey. Mulvey's interpretation of the active looker and passive subject includes women taking on the role of "sexual object." Jeff does, indeed, objectify these women, but he lacks the intent of doing so in a sexual matter with both Miss Torso and Miss Lonelyhearts. In fact, the longest clip of the inside of Miss Torso's window is shown in the beginning sequence of the film where the camera is responsible for the looking. Each time that Jeff catches a glance into Miss Torso's window, he seems fairly disinterested and continues scanning the courtyard for another neighbor's privacy to intrude upon. This is not to say that Jeff does take any notice of her exaggerated stretches and prances around her kitchen; otherwise, he would have never

assigned her the degrading nickname in the first place. But, as a pronounced heterosexual man, that his personal objectification lacks the aspect of sexualization proves there lies an “objectifying gaze” that deviates from explanations provided by theorists such as Mulvey.

Although this “objectifying gaze” has strayed from the norm in terms of lacking expected sexualization, it aligns with all gazes by contributing to the consistent problem of the subordination of the female characters. Throughout *Rear Window*, Jeff and Lisa have a troubling relationship; she wants marriage, and Jeff cannot be bothered with her perfectness. He continuously acts disinterested in Lisa’s attempts to woo him by providing him five-star dinners and spending quality time with him. Lisa could be categorized as any other female in Jeff’s life, but Tania Modleski suggests differently. From her Book, *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, includes a chapter titled “The Master’s Dollhouse” in which she critiques Mulvey’s description of women as “passive.” Modleski argues that “By contrast, Lisa Freemont is anything but helpless and incapable, despite Mulvey’s characterization of her as a ‘passive image of visual perfection’ – and this is where the problem lies” (Modleski 72). As she continues her explanation of the female character, she notes that “Lisa is experienced as an overwhelmingly powerful presence [...] There is a cut to a close-up of Grace Kelly, a vision of loveliness, bending down toward him and us” (72). Thus, Lisa’s heightened stance over Jeff signifies her power over him. Unlike Miss Torso and Miss Lonelyhearts, Lisa stands in Jeff’s apartment with him and not across the courtyard. She has not *yet* fallen subordinate to Jeff’s “objectifying gaze” or voyeuristic tendencies. So, when does Lisa become objectified by not only Jeff, but also the audience?

It is not until the end of Hitchcock’s film that Lisa is categorized with the rest of the neighbors in the courtyard. To help Jeff prove that Thorwald killed his wife, Lisa removes

herself from his apartment and places herself into both the view of Jeff's rear window and the voyeuristic view of the film's audience. There is no room for debate that without Lisa becoming Jeff's pair of legs, he would have never proved Thorwald a guilty man. However, like Miss Torso and Miss Lonelyhearts, Lisa becomes an image that Jeff can study from the privacy of his apartment. Lisa not only has to subject herself to danger for Jeff's approval and success, but also has to classify herself as one of the "images" Jeff and audience members watch throughout the entire film. When she leaves the apartment and is at a remove from Jeff, she is seen through the frame of his window and the lens of his camera for the first time. In this way, she is in a position analogous to that of the other people that voyeur Jeff has been watching from his apartment. While she has always been at a remove from the *actual* audience, she is now also at a remove from Jeff, who has been the on-screen analogue to that actual audience. Although Lisa escapes Jeff's own movie screen of the courtyard and enters safely back into his apartment, she must put herself in a position of being watched before doing so. In this case, "the objectifying gaze" is not eroticized strays, but renders the same conclusion: the subordination of women.

Chapter 6

The Idealizing Gaze

"The idealizing gaze" is one that can become confused with "the authoritative gaze." It entails men constructing idealized images of characters to appease the male eye. Essentially, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* includes two main plotlines: Gavin's plot and Scottie's plot. "the idealizing gaze" involves heterosexual male characters, Gavin and Scotty, manipulating their subjects to perform in accordance with what will satisfy them. This satisfaction does not necessarily allude to one that is inherently sexual or objective. Scottie wishes to change Judy into his deceased lover, Madeline, partly for his own romantic and sexual desire. However, the reason seems

much larger than that of sexual satisfaction. Scottie's attempts to transform Judy appear to stem from a fear of lacking control – something he struggles with due to his fear of heights. In the film, scenes unfold in a way that reveals another plotline orchestrated by Gavin Elster. To find out the motivations for his wife's suspicious behavior, he hires retired detective Scottie to follow her around and to engage in types of gazing to study her. What Scottie fails to realize until the end of the film is Gavin's "invisible gaze" as Scottie attempts to help his wife. While Scottie follows along exactly to his plan, Gavin keeps tabs on his whereabouts and progress in conquering his fear of heights. He orchestrates how Scottie looks at Madeline. In addition, Gavin does not appear to be the only one interested in Scottie's movement through San Francisco. Midge – being once in love with Scottie – becomes interested, and perhaps a little jealous, that he takes Gavin's mission so seriously. This is one of the very rare instances within Hitchcock's films where a woman adapts a pattern behavior of a male character: gazing at others. With reason, Hitchcock crafts *Vertigo* as a film all about looking where different gazes overlap one another.

In fact, "the idealizing gaze" in *Vertigo* can also be one of objectifying. Towards the end of the film after Madeline's passing, Scottie encounters a woman, Judy, who strikingly resembles her. In attempts to heal his grief and fulfill his past obsession, he needs to see her transform into Madeline. In doing so, Scottie suggests more than one way for Judy to resemble his old lover. For example, Judy dyes her hair blonde to appeal to Scottie, but this simply is not enough. While suggesting that Judy change her hair, Scottie makes comments such as, "The color of your hair [...] It can't matter to you When he walks into the room to see the transformation, Scottie remarks, "It should be back from your face and pinned at the neck. I told her that. I told you that." And, after a sincere "Please, Judy," Scottie waits for her as she fulfills his wish and pins

her hair back in the bathroom. The gaze deviates from being authoritative in some ways, but Scottie he persists in changing her looks and bends Judy to his will. He makes suggestions at how she can look more like Madeline, and even after a moment or so of refusal, she adheres to his proposals every time. Scottie also fails to realize that the ideal images he cannot shake are not his own; they stem from Gavin. Because of Gavin's plan for Scottie to basically stalk Madeline, he instills in him an image that Judy has to live up to.

Yet again, the female character cannot surpass the male character no matter how hard she tries. Judy does her best in making herself appear more like what he wants, but the film still ends in her jumping, or accidentally falling, to her death. Although there is not a clear path from Judy dying her hair blonde to her jumping off of the Church building, Hitchcock proves once again that the gaze – regardless of its type – leads to similar conclusions. For the time that Judy is alive and consistent in the film, she lives to please Scottie. Once Scottie pieces together Gavin's plan and Judy's role in it, Judy reverts back to herself and remains no longer perfect in the eyes of Scottie. In other words, once Judy reveals her true role in Gavin's master plan, she is no longer a spitting image of Madeline that Scottie encountered "coincidentally." "The idealizing gaze" proves detrimental to his mental state. Although Scottie overcomes the initial problem introduced in the beginning of the film – his fear of heights, he proves to develop a whole other problem that involves control. He has been introduced to perfection, and everything must live up to that.

Chapter 7

The Authoritative Gaze

The male gaze does not necessarily have to be defined as a singular thing; rather, it is a concept that has numerous dimensions. One of these includes what I term the “authoritative gaze” – one in which the heterosexual male characters on screen gaze at female characters with a sense of power and superiority over them. Instances of Hitchcock’s authoritative gaze at depict female characters reacting with a sense of apprehensiveness and startlement. The authoritative gaze may not reveal itself to spectators from just a singular scene in the film. For instance, in Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, the audience probably cannot infer that Scotty’s first glance at Judy will lead to an attempt to rearrange her entire appearance to look exactly like his dead lover, Madeline. The audience only knows that he becomes captivated at the sight of her because of how much he reminds her of Madeline – the woman he fell in love with. While Scotty does yearn for this change to satisfy his desire he once had for Madeline, he does in a rather dominating way. Thus, the way in which Scotty truly gazes at Judy is revealed as scenes unfold. The more Scotty insists on Judy adhering to a certain look, the more the authoritative and approving male gaze becomes apparent in the film. The example of Judy’s transformation provides the audience access to both gazes. This is only one of several instances in which “the authoritative gaze” becomes distorted and falls shadow to the simplified version of the male gaze – the one that primarily concerns objectification and sexualization of women.

Psycho provides the most obvious illustration of “the authoritative male gaze.” After stealing forty thousand dollars from her boss, Marian Crane flees several hundred miles away from her native town of Phoenix, Arizona. A policeman who follows Marian, and for a time,

does not let her out of his sight. After attempting to flee and falling asleep in her car, the policeman peers through her car window while asking her intrusive questions about her whereabouts and motives. The scene in which the officer approaches Marian's car becomes difficult for an audience member to forget because of the way the camera captures it. Before knocking on the window of Marian's car, the officer peers into the window. Yet, the shot is not a full body image of the officer, but an extreme closeup of his face that fills the movie screen. Confused and disorientated, Marian wakes up in a panic with quite the guilty look on her face. Being that the officer comes upon her sleeping, Marian is positioned in a vulnerable state where she lacks the time to gather her thoughts and potential answers to his questions. As the officer reappears at the used car lot, he is again wearing sunglasses. Not being able to see his eyes adds to the officer's menace and makes him impossible for both Marian and the audience to read. It feels as if he is omnipresent, and that he seems to emblemize her fear of being caught for what she has done.

Because viewers never see his eyes, it could be argued that the gaze in which the officer exercises is up for interpretation. But, his profession as a police officer, his stern tone and demeanor, and the way in which Marian reacts to his presence confirms that his particular gaze strays from that of the quintessential male gaze. In other words, the officer demonstrates a gaze that is not defined by objectification and sexualization. Instead, his menacing-seeming gaze and Marian's alarming reaction suggest he is associated with authority and judgment. The questions he proposes hold validity because of his profession, but what remains something worth noting about the officer's appearance is the pair of sunglasses that never leave his face. His sunglasses seem like a more intentional choice if looked at from a perspective of interpreting male gaze. In

fact, theorists of the male gaze often acknowledge this deliberate choice of costume and make note of it. Aware of Hitchcock's decision-making, American journalist Robert Kolker states:

'Gaze theory' is essential to the understanding of films because both films and their audience are constructed through the way the camera looks at the characters, the characters look at each, and – usually by means of editing – we are asked to look at both. Hitchcock was a master of the gaze. His films are largely structured on the interchange of looks, and he is especially fond of the kind of 'tracking' gaze, in which we see a character walking, intercut with a tracking shot of what or who the character is walking to. (Kolker)

An example of the kind of tracking shot described by Kolker occurs about twenty minutes into the film when Marian arrives at the used car shop. She nervously looks across the street, and the camera cuts to the observant policeman standing up against his vehicle. He appears as the external manifestation of her fears at this point in the film. Once again, Hitchcock presents his audience with a male gazing at a woman, but he leaves them fairly uncertain about the policeman's motivations in looking at her. The choice of having the policeman never take off his sunglasses proves deliberate. The audience, and Marian, never captures the movement of his eyes. His gaze seems more judgmental of Marian's suspicious behavior due to the fact that he verbalizes her suspicious behavior in an earlier scene. On the other hand, it could fall under the established and renowned definition of the male gaze that entails watching and objectifying women for male visual pleasure. The policeman's gaze is most likely one of authority because of his skepticism about Marian's actions—her sleeping in her old car and her frantic attempts to purchase a new one. Not only is the police officer shown to have doubts about her behavior, but also the used car salesman looks quizzically at her and makes a few, general comments about how women behave. For instance, Marian asks to trade in her car for another, and he responds,

“Do anything you’ve a mind to, being a woman you will.” As her paranoia grows and she continues to rush the transaction process, the salesman cannot help but carry the same doubts as the policeman. Their interaction ends with his smile disappearing when Marian does not attempt to haggle over the price of seven hundred dollars. The gaze continues to remain ambiguous when his locked eyes on Marian invite two more gentlemen to watch her. The salesman at the used car shop and another customer stand side by side with the officer as Marian drives out of the lot in her new vehicle.

Based on all three men’s body language and tilted heads, they are clearly interested in why she leaves in such a hurry and dubious as to why she carries a great sum of cash on her person. The faded shot of the three men gazing at her driving away shows Hitchcock’s interest, and perhaps critique, on the way in male characters gaze at the female ones. It also serves as a narrative function. Marian has been subjected to so many suspicious and authoritative gazes that Norman’s non-threatening way of looking lulls her into a false sense of security. Hitchcock’s inclusion of the male gaze in this very scene is not for the audience to watch the officer watch Marian and deem it as objectification. Rather, it is the very fact that the audience cannot construe what remains hidden behind the policeman’s sunglasses. Taking the classic male gaze operation and applying it to his cinematography, Hitchcock continues to create this indistinctness surrounding the male gaze.

Not long after this scene, it is suggested that Marian has internalized “the authoritative gaze.” As she drives toward Fairvale, Marian’s face is the only image shown as she unknowingly drives to the Bates Motel. Marian appears worried; she bites her lip and glances down at the great sum of cash. Meanwhile, she imagines a conversation between the car salesman and the policemen that plays in a voiceover. As intense music grows louder and faster,

she then imagines a conversation between her boss, Mr. Lowery, and his assistant about her tardiness to work that morning. However, Marian's face turns from a worried look to mischievous smirk as she imagines what Tom Cassidy has to say. The wealthy man who waved forty thousand dollars in Marian's face says, "I'll get it back. And, if any of it is missing, I'll replace it with her fine soft flesh [...] She sat there while I dumped it out, hardly even looked at it, planned, and even flirting with me!" By the end of this voiceover, the corners of Marian's mouth stretch from ear to ear, and she seems to take pride in fooling such a wealthy man of power and authority. This is another example of Hitchcock's different male gazes overlapping – in this case, those of authority and objectification. Tom Cassidy downplays his role of flirting with Marian in a position of authority, suggesting that she was the one flirting. The body language of their encounter depicts Mr. Cassidy's authority over Marian: he sat upon her desk while looking down at her in the office chair. Yet, just because Marian has fooled a handful of men she encounters thus far in the film does not erase the fact that their opinions about her race through her mind during her drive. The three-minute voiceover of these men's opinions and speculations prove that Marian has been subjected to their scrutiny so fully as to have it take over her thoughts.

Chapter 8

The Murderous Gaze

Although there is only one example of "the murderous gaze" in the three Hitchcock films I am discussing in this thesis, it is significant to identify and explain because it involves a unique gaze followed by the ultimate subordination of a woman. In order to identify Norman Bates as a male character who depicts behaviors of "the murderous gaze," other gazes that have been already been defined must be examined in accordance to his behavior. For instance, after Marian

arrives at the Bates Motel in the middle of a dark, rainy night, Norman invites her to stay and offers her an empty room and a homemade sandwich. To the audience, he appears to be a lonely man who could use someone to talk to. In fact, there is nothing demanding about the tone he uses while talking with Marian. He does not force her to have a late dinner with him, nor does he force her to stay at the Bates Motel. While she sits with Norman in his motel office, Marian does indicate suspicion based on her jittery behavior because of her guilty conscious and the constant male scrutiny she experiences up until this point. Norman's seemingly innocent questions like, "What are you running away from?" also appear to trigger Marian's growing guilt. Unlike the other male characters that Marian encounters who pry her with questions and express suspicion about her behavior, Norman comes across a bit awkward and even apologizes for asking her what she deems as too many questions. The audience becomes well-aware that Norman certainly does gaze at Marian, but at this point in the film, his gaze only suggests curiosity. "The authoritative gaze" is one which Norman Bates fails to perform. With other male characters' gazing constantly at her, Marian is removed from the rest of the world at the Bates Motel. She experiences the Bates Motel as a safe haven from intrusive male scrutiny. What she fails to anticipate is a "murderous gaze" that replaces that of an authoritative one.

The confusion surrounding "the murderous gaze" occurs moments before the shower scene when Marian is repeatedly and brutally stabbed. What once seemed like an innocent and, perhaps, respectful gaze transforms as he watches her through his hidden peephole. Although Norman does not appear to exhibit behaviors of "the authoritative gaze," he tends to display habits of a "Peeping Tom." From up until the end of Marian and Norman's conversation in the motel office, there are minimal signs that Norman holds the intention to sexualize or objectify Marian. The only indication of objectification is his hobby he describes to Marian after she

notices the numerous stuffed birds hanging from his walls: taxidermy. Otherwise, the audience is not offered a sense that Norman gazes at Marian the same way in which Tom Cassidy gazes at her earlier in the film. Their conversation takes an unanticipated turn when Marian suggests to Norman that he leave his mother and put her “some place.” Before she can even finish her sentence, Norman begins to slowly lean forward. Without blinking an eye, he questions, “You mean an institution? A madhouse?” The foreboding music starts to play, Marian leans back and realizes she may have crossed a personal boundary, and it is clear his gaze and opinion on Marian entirely changes. Marian heads to bed for the night, and Norman’s “Peeping Tom” tendencies come to light. He removes a picture from his office wall to reveal a tiny hole that allows him to spy on Marian. He watches her undress into only her undergarments and calmly hangs the picture frame back upon the wall. Audiences can assume that he sees her take her clothes off because that is what happens in her room when the camera offers the close-up of his eye at the peephole. However, the audience cannot see him seeing Marian undress. Because of the following shower scene in which Norman kills Marian, it is easy for the audience to rule out an objectifying or sexualized gaze. In fact, the audience may very well dismiss the voyeuristic gaze Norman just executed through his personal peephole. Yet, just because “the murderous gaze” eventually outweighs the others does not mean that other gazes are not applicable in the snowballing of Norman’s actions. The troubling aspect of “the murderous gaze” is that it is not directly represented because of the revelation at the end of the film: Norman’s diabolical behavior is influenced by his mother, Norma.

Norman clearly acquired a “murderous gaze” as he and Marian continued their conversation, but it is not until the end of the film that both the unenlightened characters and audience discover the two gazes conflicting within his mind. Norman suffers from a sort of

personality disorder in which he claims his deceased mother takes over and consumes his being. Towards the end of the film, there is even a scene where Norman is shown in a wig and women's clothing, attempting to dress like his mother. The psychiatrist even mentions that "at times, he could be both personalities [and] carry on conversations. At other times, the mother half took over completely. He was never all Norman, but he was often only mother." While providing the police and Marian's lover and sister with an explanation of his manic wrongdoing, a psychiatrist reveals that Norman turned to murder to overcome his sexual desire for Marian. Because Norman's mother often conquered his entire being, "if he felt a strong attraction to any other woman, the mother's side of him would go wild." The psychiatrist inquisitively points at Lila (Marian's younger sister) and states, "When he met your sister, he was touched by her, aroused by her. He wanted her. That set off the jealous mother, and mother killed the girl." Thus, Norman Bates experiences a conflict between two gazes: "the murderous gaze" and one that adheres to the sexually objectifying gaze. Ultimately, the "murderous gaze" outweighed any sexual attraction he felt for Marian, and he (or the mother) chose to kill her. Knowing the information the psychiatrist admits and reviewing the part of the film where Norman spies at Marian like a "Peeping Tom," it becomes evident that whatever sexual fantasy Norman had of Marian dies momentarily due to the fact that he stops watching her undress. As mentioned prior, a "Peeping Tom" usually privately snoops with the intent of obtaining a type of sexual pleasure from watching. But, Norman places the picture frame back on the wall before Marian steps into the shower and fully undresses. He might have been sexually aroused by her for a moment or so, but "the murderous gaze" overcomes the sexual one. This very instance proves that two gazes are capable of existing at one time. The gazes overlap one another and can even reinforce the other. Nevertheless, both gazes bear similar conclusions: the subordination of women. Although

committing murder is evidently an extreme case of this scenario, it maintains the argument that women in these films will always have to be reduced through the eyes of a heterosexual male character.

Conclusion

By separating scenes in Hitchcock's films that features the male gaze, it becomes possible to discover that "gaze" is not one thing, and to identify the gazes for what they truly are. Instead of labeling every scene in which a heterosexual male character watches a female one as the male gaze, spectators hold the ability to specify the type of male gaze in action. This is not to say that the different types of gazes do not unite to formulate a similar, or even identical, conclusion. Throughout the majority of Hitchcock's cinematography, the female characters consistently earn a lower rank to that of the male characters. This reduced rank in the social hierarchy is present on in the films *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958), and *Psycho* (1960). For instance, in *Rear Window*, Jeff exhibits disinterest in seemingly perfect Lisa and holds the decision to withhold marriage. The plot of *Vertigo* is centered around the fabricated, yet debilitating mental state of a female character while it becomes the responsibility of a male character to save her. And, *Psycho* starts with the audience looking into the window at Marian in a rather vulnerable state – half-naked in her undergarments. On the other hand, if female characters are not initially subordinate to the male characters, that changes over the course of the film. Lisa appears as an image in Jeff's "movie screen" across the courtyard; Scottie becomes aware of Judy's trickery, and she jumps to her death; Marian Crane cannot successfully execute her thievery without being murdered. Regardless of the type of gaze one may use to name occurrences of male watching, each gaze I have termed will reach the same conclusion. Yet, identifying the exact gaze becomes significant in the process of analysis. Using a heuristic

approach, reaching a conclusion about the way in which the male gaze operates becomes possible.

What was once a cinematic term painted in black and white is now transformed into one that is merely gray. Hitchcock does, indeed, appeal to the assumed heterosexual male audience in his films *Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, and *Psycho* like most classical Hollywood cinema that engages in this cinematic habit. However, he differs among the classical Hollywood cinema by exploring “other gazing” around the frequently practiced male gaze operation. Rather than creating heterosexual male characters who are only interested in watching women to seek sexual pleasure or fulfillment, Hitchcock directs them to perform other types of gazing to disrupt the assumed male audience who shares in the male gaze.

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ACADEMIC VITA

Bridget McShane

9216 ½ Burbank Road
Philadelphia, PA 19115
267-309-1486
bmm6243@psu.edu

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA Expected: May 2023
Bachelor of Arts in English
Minor in Sociology

HONORS THESIS

The Male Gaze: Redefined Through Hitchcock's Films Spring 2023
Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Garrett Sullivan, Professor of English
Honors Advisor: Dr. Carla Mulford, Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

The Hemingway Letters Project, University Park, PA January 2020- May 2020
Intern

- Scanned books and articles using library resources
- Entered essential information into Microsoft Excel to sort letters and other pieces
- Communicated with other staff members and Penn State faculty to work efficiently
- Completed tasks under tight deadline

WORK EXPERIENCE

HiWay Pizza Pub – West, State College, PA December 2022-Present
Server/ Bartender

North Shore Bar and Kitchen, North Wildwood, NJ May 2020-Present
Server/ Bartender

- Train new waiter staff on server expectations
- Work with other staff members to improve performance and quality
- Skillfully anticipated and addressed guests' service needs in a fast-paced env

Captain Jack's Bar and Grill, North Wildwood, NJ June 2020-Present
Server

Penn Stater Hotel, University Park, PA October-March 2020
Hostess

- Manage in-person and telephone guest inquiries and customer service requests
- Alerted management of potential customer issues

Celtic Flame School of Irish Dance, Philadelphia, PA July 2016-Present
Teacher Assistant

- Assist in teaching children with Down Syndrome about twice a week for an hour each day
- Monitor students while using problem solving skills when a student is agitated or upset
- Work as a team member competitively and in performances to succeed
- Individually achieved a qualification to Worlds and a title as an "Open Champion" Irish dancer

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

School Service Trip to Costa Rica

June 2018

Volunteer

- Cleaned beaches and repainted benches with students and local residents
- Interacted with Costa Rican children while teaching them new English words
- Observed impoverished areas and the minimal resources around me

Penn State – Harmony, State College, PA

September 2019-Present

Team Member

- Volunteer every Monday to work with children and adults with special needs
- Solve problems regarding awkward issues in the classroom
- Maintain a positive attitude during every rehearsal
- Learn new ways of communicating and listening

LEADERSHIP

Saint Basil Academy

April 2018- May 2019

National Honors Society

- Planned and coordinated a Blood Drive with fellow students and faculty
- Tutored underclassmen in subjects such as basic math, Chemistry, and Biology
- Edited underclassmen's papers and assisted them in their writing process