

Research in context.

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Introduction

In this essay I will be discussing how the male gaze has affected the way people think and see things. For example, how women see themselves after viewing a magazine that has a naked woman on the cover, with a toned fit body, perfect clear skin and hair, But the image was taken by a man which just involves him and how he portrays women which is not realistic and is a false reality in my opinion. Times now that when a woman wears a certain type of clothing to feel good about herself or just to because she wants to wear it some men take it as a way to be inappropriate or even touch her without consent and I believe that seeing these many paintings and images and certain media made people believe that it was okay to do it because it happened everywhere they look, without images like this there would've been a decrease of numbers with that happening. By having countless people view this magazine cover will lead to body dysmorphia and develop insecurities.

Since the beginning of time women have been portrayed as objects and been told how they should look, dress, and behave and the culture that we live in and the photography, art, and media that we see heavily promotes a certain way we should be. This essay will explore a number of works including Venus of Urbino by Titan, Marilyn Monroe by Tom Kelley which come from separate times in history that portray the same type of image showing that nothing had changed in the many years between the two. These images and paintings in my opinion if they were not over sexualised, I think would have solved many insecurities and how women feel by if male artists just simply did not sexualise us for such a long time.

Looking at the word taboo in this work is because a lot of times women have spoken up about how they felt about something happening it was labelled as taboo its taboo to speak about self-harm and body dysmorphia. Many women struggled with after viewing these pieces of work, as they do not look like the woman in front of them either that they where too skinny, larger, small or tall there was something with every woman that just could not relate to the one Infront because they just simply were not that woman that was on the paintings, photos, tv or magazines. Media would label that one woman as being sexy but over time it has become so damaging as the beauty standard is constantly changing along with trends that constantly constrain women as they feel they need to keep up with everything the word taboo was a easy pick of the two words as growing up countless girls where on diets speaking about what they would eat and how much they would exercise to try and reach the unrealistic goals that society had made throughout the years.

Thoughts is used to speak about how the male gaze sprung from the mind of a man, the way men think is what caused the photographs, paintings to be made because if they did not think that way they wouldn't have been made. I wanted to show that many men think the same and we can see it through different works of art in different eras of time paintings and photographs.

Chapter 1 – Male Gaze

“The male gaze refers to the way women are objectified by the camera lens in Hollywood movies because men are in control of the production process and make decisions that appeal to their own values and interests. The audience, including women, are then positioned to accept this narrow representation.” (Media Studies, 2024).

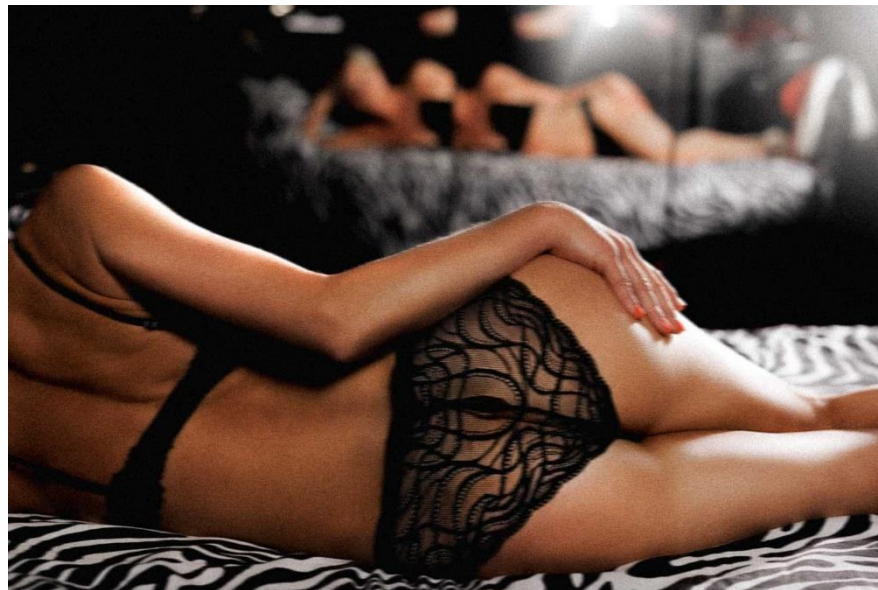


Fig.1: *Male Gaze*

The male gaze in media has been a factor in the arts since the beginning of photography which has been a cause of how some men and how people think and act, without the damage that it has caused I feel that it has caused many issues to people today. Looking through many examples on how the male gaze has had a negative impact on the way individuals think looking closely at a various of different artists that have used the male gaze to their advantage to work their way in the industry and have

profited on any women and taken advantage to get to where they are now made money in the process as well.

The male gaze is a phrase used to show photographers normally male photographers who photograph women or men in a more proactive and sexualised way, The male gaze in media and the arts is that the visual perspective such as the slight line of the camera being in the perspective of a heterosexual man whose sight lingers upon the features of a woman's body and where the sight goes that is where the camera will also linger to for example a woman's breasts ,hips ,waist and bum.

The male gaze had a significant impact on the way that women were portrayed in fashion and photography during the late 20th century. The images often featured women in submissive positions, with the bodies contorted and their gaze directed towards the viewer. The focus was on the female form rather than the clothes themselves, with the models serving as little more than decorative moments. (Hosie,2024)

The male gaze “is a term coined by Laura Mulvey to describe the way women are portrayed as objects in the media. It Has insidiously permeated every facet of our lives and identities. From the films we watch, all the way down to our craving for its validation. Everyday rituals- applying make up, shaving, doing our hair and choosing our clothes_ are all decisions subconsciously filtered through the desires of the all-powerful male gaze. (Given, 2020)



Fig.2: *Venus of Urbino*

The Venus of Urbino is a painting by the artist Titian which was painted to resemble a young bride who is about to be dressed to take part in the ritual known in Venice as a celebration for when a woman's hand has been requested in marriage and would touch the hand of the groom to show consent. Titian painted the girl lying naked on the bed with the bed a mess with crumpled sheets gazing at an onlooker in a flirtatious way whilst hiding her pubis away. This painting is quite controversial for me to include into my argument about whether or not this is damaging to the way individuals think. As Titian and many others see the painting in a different light and many feminists have found the image to be symptomatic of sexist social structures that reduce women real or painted to passive sex objects displayed for visual consumption (Jewitt,1997).

Where others see it for what it truly is and what Titian was portraying. The painting does show a woman in a submissive pose and with her breasts naked and on show, I choose this painting as an example of how the male gaze has been around for many years and that paintings were the blueprint as to how this expanded into the photographic era and into the 20th century in magazines that paint women in a negative light. The painting was painted in 1576 which arrived in Florence Italy and was then placed in the

Uffizi gallery, but today the painting is now stored with the rest of Titian's work in Palazzo Ducale in Urbino.

"The unselfconscious desire in the model's direct, lascivious expression might have offended Twain, but her lovely, lustful gaze has also seduced countless viewers" (Britannica, 2024)

I choose this quote to add in as it explains the position perfectly how Titian painted the girl. A perfect example of the male gaze, that is how he viewed her whilst painting with artists like Titian painting in this way inspired many others to continue to sexualise women in this way and if they never painted women this way then the people of today would not be sexualised or compared today.



Fig.3: Marilyn Monroe Pose 1

This early 1949 image of Marilyn Monroe on “Red Velvet” was purchased from Kelly by Hugh Hefner and graced the first issue of Playboy Magazine as the centrefold in December 1953. Monroe was never compensated by Playboy for the image. Strangely, Monroe and Hefner never met each other but are in fact buried next to each other in Los Angeles. This image of Marilyn Monroe is coveted by collectors worldwide and was chosen as one of the 48 images produced by Playboy Enterprises for the Playboy Legacy Collection, printed and launched in 2007. Each of the 48 images was hand selected by Playboy founder, Hugh Hefner and International Images CEO, Norman Solomon for their iconic place in history and eternal beauty and was originally produced by International Images in 2007. (Charity Buzz, 2024)

Chapter 2 - Taboo

Photography changes the way people look at women.

Taboo definition – “A subject word or action that is avoided for religious or social reasons.” (Cambridge dictionary, 2024)

Art is to comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable (Cruz, 1997)

I found this quote a couple of months ago when scrolling on the social media app TikTok with the quote placed over a painting someone has made in their home, The painting can have many different outcomes and reasons as to why the individual decided to paint this image. The subject portrayed is a taboo subject that can also be a difficult subject to speak about. The reason as to why this is included is to have my input

and what I felt about when I saw the image on TikTok. With the constant change of media and ways of viewing.

The male gaze does not just focus on the way a woman looks' what they are wearing and how they are positioned but also their weight, hair, eyes, and skin color. In magazines growing up all that would be shown is a slim, white, blonde, and blue eyes {not all the time} but that is what my generation was brought up with a certain stereotype that we were all meant to look like because that is all we saw in every teen magazine, newspaper, billboards, ads and now social media platforms. So, the painting above is what I think the outcome of not having enough diversity and a variety of different things seen every day and it represents what some people did to cope with not looking like those they see on the screens and nothing that they can do about it. (3cruz,1997)



Fig.4: Quote

The idea of 'taboo' in this post takes a peek at the comfort level people accord to certain images taken at certain situations. (Wee, 2024)

Chapter3- Thoughts

The definition of thoughts is "the act of thinking about or considering something, an idea or opinion, or set of ideas about a particular subject" (Cambridge dictionary,2024)

"Artists are primarily thought of as makers, yes of course we make stuff, but we are also thinkers and feelers, and we feel deeply and I believe the thinking and the feeling are the most important parts of an artist" (might could studio,2024) Many artists base their work on thoughts, either their own or other thoughts. I feel this links into my discussion on the male gaze as the concept came from the male mind and how certain men think, if they did not think it, they would not have painted or photographed pieces in the way that they have or the style that is portrayed.

If you could change the way women are portrayed, you may also be able to change the way people think, and respond to images that they see daily,

"But it's also true that they depict women as a muse through male eyes" (Europeana, 2024) and this in turn could change the way we respond to and consume images of women both in the media and through photography.

The art of media and cinema many men have done movies over sexualizing women with many people feeling guilty for liking the work that had been created by Roman Polanski the writer of the article from the Paris review stated that she found herself in awe with his work with this causing the phrase "separate the art from the artist" to become a wide spread phrase to be used everywhere and has seeped into art and photography, how are people supposed to separate the art that has literally destroyed so many minds of people which has led to abuse and sexual abuse how will we be able to reverse the damage that has been caused by the monstrous minds of men.

(Dederer, 2017)

Conclusion

In conclusion I have looked at many recourses and articles to back up my question which has given me confidence to write and to explore more into the topic of has the male gaze effected the way individuals think and see certain things. I am hoping to continue this essay into the dissertation next year as I feel 2.5k words is not enough with the number of things there are still left unsaid here and routes that I would have liked to explore and gone down two being the media and film industry, there are still so many parts of art that have had a negative influence which has been by the male gaze and I am hoping to explore and discover more in the dissertation in next academic year.

My question could be. Has male gaze in art distorted how individuals think and could it had been revered.

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