

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

On the surface, cinema may seem unlikely to prey on those who are unaware and unwilling. However, with a deeper dive, it is evident that the majority of mainstream movies creates a sense of detachment for the audience and capitalizes on human's voyeuristic¹ fantasy. The world of cinema caters to human's inherent desire to find pleasure by looking and beyond, developing *scopophilia*². (Mulvey, 1975:6-7). The term "cinema" itself originates from the Greek words, "kinematographos," a combination of "kinema" meaning movement and "grapho" meaning to write or record. In the English language, the complete Greek term is translated as "cinematography," which refers to the art of film-making (Kamarinou, 2017:11). Movies serve as both mirrors and magnifying glasses, reflecting the world humans inhabit while simultaneously amplifying its nuances— and in doing so, bridging the gap between the reel and the real. Amidst the ever-evolving progressive cinema where screens unfold a world of narrative in carefully composed frames, a perpetual specter lurks – the Male Gaze.

¹ According to Cambridge Dictionary, the word voyeuristic relates to a voyeur. Voyeur is someone who derives pleasure from watching other people, especially in sexual situations, secretly.

² According to American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology, *Scopophilia* is sexual pleasure derived from watching others in a state of nudity, undressing, or engaging in sexual activity.

According to Laura Mulvey from her essay titled “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975), the male gaze refers to the way media and culture portray women primarily as objects of male desire, emphasizing their physical appearance and sexuality instead of their agency and personality (1975:26). Insofar, the concept of the male gaze itself continues to be prevalent in cinema, one movie that fits the example is the *Spectre* movie.

Spectre (2015) is the twenty-fourth movie of the James Bond franchise. It is an action movie that revolves around a fictional MI6 agent named James Bond, which is played by actor Daniel Craig. Directed by Sam Mendes, the movie starts as a continuation from the movie prior, *Skyfall* (2012), where James Bond goes to Mexico City to investigate a case. Bond then infiltrates a meeting of a criminal organization named S.P.E.C.T.R.E., and eventually meets their leader, Franz Oberhauser. Following the narrative from the classic James Bond franchise, along the way, Bond meets some ladies—whom the audience may consider as “Bond Girls”—that in one way or another, help him bring success to his missions. The issue with this movie is how damaging its portrayal of women is.

1.2 Research Problems

1. How are the intrinsic aspects depicted in *Spectre* (2015)?
2. How is the male gaze applied in *Spectre* (2015)?
3. How does the general audience on Letterboxd react to the male gaze in *Spectre* (2015)?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To dissect the intrinsic aspects in *Spectre* (2015).
2. To investigate how the male gaze is applied in *Spectre* (2015).
3. To examine the general audience on Letterboxd's reactions to the male gaze in *Spectre* (2015).

1.4 Previous Studies

With the goal of contextualizing the connection between the gender dynamic and audience interpretations on media, the writer has gathered relevant studies, particularly regarding Mulvey's Male Gaze theory and the James Bond franchise.

In "The Image of Women in Movie: A Defense of a Paradigm" (1990), Noel Carroll challenges Mulvey's male gaze theory by offering a new perspective to see the male gaze in cinema. Carroll reiterates that the male gaze in cinema is so much more than just perceiving through the visual, referring to the active/male and passive/female concept.

According to Clifford T. Manlove in "Visual "Drive" and Cinematic Narrative: Reading Gaze Theory in Lacan, Hitchcock, and Mulvey" (2007), the theories of visuality by Jacques Lacan, Alfred Hitchcock, and Laura Mulvey can be of use when it comes to understanding the relationship between the male gaze theory, psychoanalysis, and film theory. Manlove concludes by saying that Mulvey's male gaze theory overemphasizes the role of pleasure and is much more subjective than the Lacanian gaze in film theory.

In a 2010 essay titled “The Male Gaze in *Chicago* movie (2002)”, Twyke Ridhatilla Ayu Sindy dissects the *Chicago* movie and finds that the movie objectifies and sexualizes its main female characters, namely Roxie and Velma. In the conclusion, Sindy reiterates that the *Chicago* movie is presenting the main female characters as objects of male’s desires.

In a study titled “Containing the Spectre of the Past: The Evolution of the James Bond Franchise during the Daniel Craig Era” (2017), Jonathan Murray delves into how the James Bond franchise has adapted to contemporary cultural and social contexts, particularly in response to changing audience expectations and industry trends. Through an analysis of various thematic elements in the article, Murray highlights the ways in which the Bond films have addressed issues such as masculinity, gender dynamics, and political relevance.

Rivi Handayani has conducted a research titled “Male Gaze dalam Fotografi Model : Objektivikasi dan Komersialisasi Tubuh Perempuan” in 2017. The research talks about how beneficial the erotic appeal in commercial advertisement is. Handayani contends that by using the male gaze to sell products, fashion photography reinforces patriarchal power structures and perpetuates gender inequality.

In “Review of *The Playboy and James Bond: 007, Ian Fleming and Playboy Magazine* (2018), by Claire Hines” (2019), Kevin Mccarron analyzes Claire Hines’ book that explores the relationship between James Bond, the iconic character created by author Ian Fleming, and *Playboy Magazine*. Mccarron

emphasizes that Playboy Magazine influenced the portrayal of James Bond and vice versa, considering their shared themes of masculinity, sexuality, and glamour. The article examines how Bond's suave and sophisticated persona aligns with the image promoted by Playboy..

In ““Melted Your Cold Heart Yet?” Amatonormative Masculinity in Casino Royale and Spectre” (2019), Colin Görke states that the movies *Casino Royale* and *Spectre* depict an "amatonormative" form of masculinity, in which the main male character prioritizes romantic love over personal growth. He claims that this take of relationship in those aforementioned James Bond movies break the franchise's hypermasculinity by not prioritizing his case for once

In “Bond Girls: Body, Fashion and Gender, by Monica Germanà” (2019), Nicholas Levesque analyzes Monica Germanà's book that goes in depth about representation of women in the James Bond film franchise. Levesque acknowledges that Germanà's analysis offers important insights into the representation of women in popular culture, where women are characterized by a tension between objectification and empowerment, however, it may also limit on the Bond franchise and its failure to engage with larger issues of intersectionality and diversity.

With a 2021 study titled “Male Gaze Representation in Biopic Movie ‘Lovelace’ (Semiotics Analysis by John Fiske)”, Fatima Meutia Rachma and Himmatul Uly dissect the movie *Lovelace* (2013) by applying John Fiske's “codes of television” theory. In the research, Rachma and Uly conclude by saying that

while the movie's intention is to bring awareness to the exploitation of women's body, the female character, Linda Lovelace, is still heavily sexualized.

Based on the previous studies mentioned prior, this research is distinctive and original due to the difference of the source material and the theories applied. The writer will be dissecting movie *Spectre* (2015) by applying the male gaze theory by Laura Mulvey while also analyzing the audience's interpretation on the aforementioned movie.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research was conducted to investigate and prove the use of male gaze in the movie *Spectre* (2015) and to analyze the audience's reactions towards it. The writer will be dissecting how women are depicted in the movie and how the audience reacts to such portrayal.

The discussion will be divided into three sub-chapters, wherein the writer will answer each research problems accordingly, providing comprehensive answers by analyzing the narrative elements and the composition of the movie, the use of male gaze in the movie, and the audience's reaction to the use of male gaze in the movie. Thereby, aside from collecting data by directly analyzing *Spectre* (2015), the writer will also collect the audience's reactions toward the male gaze in the movie by delving into relevant reviews of the movie on Letterboxd. Letterboxd is a text-based online website where a specific subset of film enthusiasts who actively engage in film discussion and review. Considering the bias in user demographics, film preferences, and reviewing habits, the writer acknowledges

the limitations in generalizability. As such, the user base may not be fully representative of the broader population's perspectives and reactions. Although the platform's Terms and Conditions do not explicitly address the anonymization of data for research purposes, the writer adheres to ethical principles, prioritizing user privacy, ergo, the writer anonymizes every Letterboxd user mentioned in this research.

The validity of the data collected from Letterboxd for this study can be confidently asserted based on several key considerations. Firstly, the platform's terms of service stipulate that users must be at least 16 years of age to create an account and contribute reviews. This age requirement warrants a level of maturity and credibility among users, supporting the reliability of their contributions. Additionally, the requirement to create an account before submitting a review adds an extra layer of authentication, as users must commit to a registered identity when engaging with the platform. While demographic information such as names, ages, and countries of origin are not explicitly provided for each reviewer, the inherent requirements and regulations of the Letterboxd platform provide a solid foundation for the reliability and validity of the reviews gathered for this study. The anonymity ensured by Letterboxd allows users to express their genuine opinions and reactions without fear of prejudice or bias. Furthermore, the focus of this study is on the qualitative analysis of textual reviews rather than demographic characteristics, aligning with the research objectives.

1.6 Writing Organization

In this study, there are four chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of Background of the Study, Research Problems, Objectives of the study, Previous Studies, Scope of the Study and Writing Organization.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter examines the theories and the research method used to analyze the data. The intrinsic aspects that will be analyzed are the narrative elements and the cinematography element of the movie. The theories used for the narrative elements include theme, plot, setting, point of view, and character & characterization accordingly. The cinematography element theory used is the rules of composition. The writer utilizes the male gaze theory by Laura Mulvey for the entirety of this study. As for the research method, this chapter will be elaborating the data and data sources, the methods of data collection, and the methods of approach.

CHAPTER 3: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings based on the data that has been collected and analyzed. The discussion is divided into three sub-chapters; each providing a thorough answer for the research problems. The writer will be analyzing (1) the narrative elements and the composition of the movie in the

first sub-chapter; (2) the use of male gaze in the movie in the second sub-chapter; and (3) the reactions to the use of male gaze in the movie from Letterboxd users in the third sub-chapter.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This chapter delineates the inference of the whole study.