

Male vs Female Troupes in Teen Films

Abigail Jones

The Scoop of the Day

Do majority of films work to support the male gaze while crushing the female one?

The male gaze is a common characteristic in young adult films. The idea of treating women's bodies as objects to be surveyed is somehow written off as an acceptable Hollywood troupe in the film industry. This troupe can be seen in many films, but in this analysis of the male gaze, we will look at Gidget, The Breakfast Club, and some scenes of Clueless.

It is agreeable that not all men objectify women, but for the sake of this argument, let us dive into the possibilities of why the male gaze is such a troupe for young love films.

"Young love" in the media has quite a grip on many teens' on-screen movies. The 1959 film Gidget is just one example of the combination of young love tied to the male gaze. In addition, the film introduced a new genre for movies, aka surfing. The above image (to the right) shows the main female lead, Gidget, surrounded by surfer men who tend to tease and disregard her as a nuisance. The image below shows the same girl, Gidget, but this time she is dressed much cuter and is conversing with one of the men from before. So, only when a man sees a woman as beautiful can they be seen, heard, or respected?

Young love is viewed by outsiders and any older generation as a simple, bland, and fickle attraction. With this predetermined judgment, the opinion of young love for women is already justified as a waste. However, young men are simply utilizing the objects set before them; the beauty of a female can only be accessed if she is with a man. This concept is shown repeatedly in thousands of films, not just set in a romance genre but in countless others that depict the male gaze.



Gidget, Scenes 00:11:56, 1:07:49

Ignoring the Female Gaze

Troupe of men projecting and the women never rejecting

In a journal written by Zoe Dirse, titled "Gender in Cinematography: Female Gaze (Eye) behind the Camera," she writes, "In North America today, women are vastly underrepresented in the technical areas of filmmaking and, in particular, in cinematography."

Women could be represented better in these films' creation of fictional female characters. To get an accurate interpretation of how women truly exist, why wouldn't directors and filmmakers utilize women in the filmmaking process? Is it used to justify the male gaze? Does the ignorance of a female gaze allow Hollywood to develop what they believe women are used for in movies?

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In 2021, the acceptance of female directors was much more common, and the ideas surrounding the female gaze were delved into more willingly.

Although the female gaze is a relatively new concept (that has yet to have a solid place in the film industry, as it can be challenging to pinpoint an exact definition), it is still discussed in films like Clueless.

Unlike the male gaze, the female one is not necessarily about a man's visual appearance, though that could be an aspect of anyone's gaze; the female one is more concerned with intelligence and mutual respect

Clueless Is Not So Clueless

Thinking for yourself is sexy

How this silly film played a bigger role for the female gaze, and how it moved future films in the right direction.

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The Breakfast club

A beautiful basket case

The male gaze at its finest, how a young lady's physical transformation, allowed a young man to see that she is in fact, a person.

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The Female Gaze

Jill Soloway

In the eyes of the male gaze, women are forced to believe that female empowerment is weakness.

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Clueless and The Breakfast Club: A Contrast

Troupes of Young Love Mixed with The Male Gaze and The Female Gaze

Now, Clueless is a movie about a spoiled rich teenage girl who goes through the motions of falling into “young love.” While The Breakfast Club is a movie about five strangers stuck in detention together throughout a Saturday. The five students begin with their assumptions of one another, and end with, their assumptions but with a new sense of “understanding.”

In the 1995 film Clueless, the male gaze is a prominent characteristic of this movie as it bashes Cher, the main female lead.

In this movie, all women should act, think, and dress a sure way to deserve respect; Cher, on the other hand is branded as a “clueless” rich blonde with the perfect body, hair, and life.

Cher is an anomaly in the male gaze scenario as she understands she deserves respect. However, in the female gaze world, it takes her a while to understand why she likes someone new, for his intelligence and charisma.

Clueless still leaves behind a negative assessment of teenage girls and how people assume they throw their emotions around like confetti. Let us discuss the main point of this topic again, the possibilities of why the male gaze is such a troupe of young love films. The male gaze is needed in Gidget for her to feel like a desirable young woman. It is added to Clueless under the hypothesis that it is what Cher needs to grab her man’s attention.

The male gaze ultimately suffocates the Breakfast Club, with whom the male students decide is worth seeing and who is worth ignoring. The 1985 teen film The Breakfast Club is a staple troupe in the Male gaze universe. It shows viewers that women cannot be fully seen, heard, or respected unless they represent themselves as art for males to objectify unintentionally. Clueless scene, 00:52:17



The Breakfast Club Scenes, 00:33:19, 1:37:03

Again, it is understood that not all films cater to the male gaze, but it is not wrong to assume it is most movies. Should the male gaze still be deemed an acceptable Hollywood troupe in the film industry, or should directors and filmmakers seek out perspectives deeper than women's perceived attractiveness? Is young love only shown to undermine the process of love for young girls? Are young boys and adult men not responsible for the opinions of women? The troupe of the male gaze in teens-on-screen films places unnecessary and impossible expectations on women. The female gaze should be considered more common and easily accessible when depicting women on screen.

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Suffocation of the Male Gaze

Does Hollywood work to crush the female gaze? You decide.

In the final scenes of The Breakfast Club, the basket case, better known as Allison, receives a makeover from the number one most popular girl in school. When the five students are about to leave detention, the day is over, and the fights have all been had and made up. Only then can the other male students in the room finally see Allison for who she is, a woman. Alternatively, in this case, a pretty girl whom they want to pay attention to. Now that she, objectively speaking, looks beautiful.

In Jill Soloway’s speech about The Female Gaze, she points out the main reason the male gaze hurts women. “The Female Gaze calls out how the Male Gaze divides us. It is what [I] call The Divided Feminine, and once you notice, you see it everywhere. Men divide us for their storylines. They divide us so they can tell stories about us to other men.” In many ways, the male gaze silences women and places them on pedestals **only** when they fit their standards for splendor.

