How should a woman look?

A study of the male gaze in contemporary film
RQ:

How should women in departing from films that uphold the male gaze aspire to see themselves? How does an intersectional critique complicates the male gaze and moving away from this?
Male Gaze

*Laura Mulvey (1975) “‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’”

* Concept used to analyze visual culture that deals with how an audience views the people presented.
* women are lowered to a status of erotic objects
* In terms of patriarchy: Objectifying women on screen as a passive sexual object, man tries to gain control over her and to overcome his fear of losing his masculinity.
Why?

Young girls grow up idealizing a certain type of woman they want to be. Beautiful, white, thin, middle class or rich, and who has a man who she loves by her side that protects her.
Competing Answers:

1. Imperial Gaze

2. Sexual Gaze (women are more romantic allowing for men to think more about sex, and is normal)

3. Female Gaze
Imperial Gaze

- The imperial gaze focuses on the construction of the images and film portrayal of minorities from a dominant white person.

- The imperial gaze infantilizes and trivializes what falls upon, asserting its command and ordering function as it does.
Sexual Gaze

- Females and males differ in their orientation and short-term mating.
Female Gaze

- Women look at themselves through the eyes of men looking at them from the straight eye.
Case Studies

* Maid in Manhattan (2002)

* No strings Attached (2011)

* Magic Mike (2012)
Maid In Manhattan

In this scene:
- Oppression (based on race and class)
- Sexism
- White Savior component
- women
No String Attached

-Women want to feel in control, yet at the end of the day they still fall in love.
Magic Mike

- men are sexualized but not “hypersexualized”

hypersexualized = the combination of a multitude of sexualized attributes -- body position, extent of nudity, textual cues, and more.
## Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imperial Gaze, Romanticism, Sexualized gender, female gaze</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maid in Manhattan</td>
<td>Romanticism,</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No string Attached</td>
<td>Sexual gaze,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanticism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic Mike</td>
<td>Female Gaze</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MALE GAZE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

*There are other gazes to look at when watching a film, however the male gaze still is deeply rooted in these films.

*While they may no longer be purely a manifestation of heterosexual male’s point of view, directors (primarily white) must appeal to a broad audience.

*Films and their directors are submissive to social standards that persist in this patriarchal society.