

## LAURA MULVEY – MALE GAZE

### Visual Pleasures & Narrative Cinema 1973



- Women in cinema reflect back **the gaze of a male viewer.**
- Society is **patriarchal. (dominated by men)**
- Male Gaze reflects these **patriarchal values.**
- Male gaze is **voyeuristic** (=motivated by sexual desire)



Applies to representations of women in the media.  
Can also apply to media representations of men but patriarchy means the power balance works in men's favour.



# John Berger

1972 Ways of Seeing

In art (...) men act, women appear

a woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself.

Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.



John  
Berger

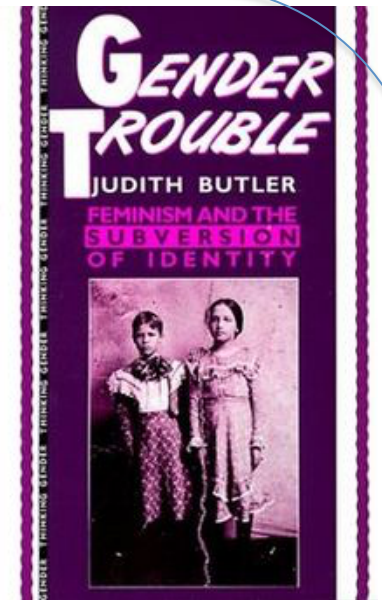
Ways of Seeing  
1972

“A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman. She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another....

One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object -- and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.”

# Judith Butler

## Gender Trouble 1992



- 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave feminism
- Gender is a result of conditioning (learned behaviour based on pressure to conform to society's expectations)
- gender is the result of a kind of performance – a set of roles, behaviours and identities worn like clothes to create an impression
- the basis of 'Queer Theory'



# Judith Butler

## (2)

Gender is a performance or rather it is performative (not about taking on a role = performance) but creating an impression and an identity

Gender is culturally imposed and socially constructed.

Gender involves ritual and routine.

Rejects binary opposites of gay/straight; male/female.

Gender is fluid and linked to ideas of multiple identities.

This is a Postmodern view, based on the blurring of boundaries between traditional (binary) opposites



# Liesbet Van Zoonen

Influenced by Judith Butler (Gender Trouble)

In patriarchal cultures, the way women are objectified is different from the way men are objectified.

Gender is about performing roles, conditioning and conforming to expectations. Our ideas about masculinity and femininity are formed by cultural and social expectations.

Gender norms change over time and depend on cultural, historical and social context.

The Internet has allowed fluid and varied versions of gender identities to flourish.



Discuss representations of gender on a front cover in terms of Berger, Mulvey, Butler and Van Zoonen

see if you can write 80-100 words about your chosen cover. Use a range of theorists.

