

In *Thelma and Louise*, the two main characters go on a journey that changes their lives and break the roles that the society expects them to play. The film uses travel as a tool to get freedom and personal transformation. Thelma and Louise escape from the traditional expectations which has placed on women for a long time. They challenge the authority and patriarchy in the society through the version in it's scene and narrative, which can be related to the points that Laura Mulvey proposed. Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze is helpful for understanding how the movie wants to show that women are trying to take control of their own lives, even when society wants to force them to be the passive roles.

Mulvey's theory argues that, in most movies, woman has been treated as the tool to gain pleasure. Audience look at woman in the movies secretly from the male's view. This concept of the "male gaze" can be applied to *Thelma and Louise* to see how the film reflects and shows these ideas. The movie mainly talks about how Thelma and Louise escaping from being controlled by men to take charge of their own lives. Through their journey, we see how they change themselves, and how the film reflects Mulvey's theory by showing women who aren't just objects to be looked at, but also the active role who breaks the male gaze.

According to Laura Mulvey's theory, women in most movies are shown as passive, existing mainly for men's pleasure and without much control over their own life. Men usually make decisions and tell women what to do, while women are just there to be looked at or controlled. At the start of *Thelma and Louise*, Thelma was placed in this

passive role. She's married to Darryl, who is controlling and never listen to her. When Thelma says she's going on a trip, Darryl barely listens and tells her, "You're not running off anywhere!" This shows how little control she has over her own life, as Darryl expects her to obey without question. Early in the movie, Thelma is also unsure of herself and looks to Louise for decisions. For example, she asks Louise, "Is this okay?" when trying to pack, showing her lack of confidence. She seems used to being told what to do.

Thelma's relationship with Darryl highlights this dynamic. He treats her like part of his life, expecting her to follow his rules and live under the patriarchy. This reflects the male dominance which the Mulvey talks about, where men are in control, then women seldom has chance to speak for themselves. However, as the movie continues, Thelma starts to escape from Darryl's control and take charge of her own life, challenging the passive role she had been forced into. For example, Thelma initially hesitates to even pack for the trip without asking Louise for permission, illustrating her dependence on others' approval, particularly male authority figures like her husband Darryl.

In the scene where Thelma and Louise are pulled over by a police officer, the film shows how they take control of the situation and they reverse the male gaze. At first, the officer has all the power. He orders them to get out of the car, saying, "Get out of the car, please, ma'am. Do it now." This shows how women often acts the passive role in movies, as passive and following men's orders. But Thelma quickly changes

the situations by pulling out a gun. She tells the officer, "Get in the trunk!" and the power shifts to her. Instead of being passive role which the audience supposed to imagine, she forces him into the trunk of his own car. Louise then adds, "You'll be fine. Just keep your head down." And what's more, When Thelma pulls out the gun on the officer, her demand 'Get in the trunk!' is a stark contrast to her earlier submissive behavior, symbolizing a turning point where she rejects the male gaze and claims power.

This scene shows how Thelma and Louise resist to let men control them. They take charge in a situation where they would usually have no power in a traditional Hollywood movie . This scene challenges Mulvey's idea of the male gaze, as the women are no longer objects but are active in controlling what happens to them. Their journey gives them the strength to reject traditional roles and gives them the chance to transform themselves in order to reverse the patriarchy in the society.

Another key scene that challenges the male gaze is when Thelma and Louise revenge the truck driver who has been making rude gestures at them. In the film, a truck driver shows rude gestures at Thelma and Louise, offending them. Then, they revenge him, laugh at him, and eventually shoot the tires of the truck and blow up the truck. After they blow up the truck, Thelma laughs and says, "You sure taught him a lesson."

This scene reverses the male gaze. The truck driver, who insults the women with his offended gestures, is revenged and punished by Thelma and Louise. By destroying his truck, a symbol of his power, they assert dominance and reject his insults. What's more, it directly reverses patriarchal norms because it shows women not only resisting offends but actively taking control and revenging the man who offends them. This reinforces the thesis that Thelma and Louise challenges traditional power dynamics in cinema.

From my perspective, applying Laura Mulvey's theory to Thelma and Louise shows that the film isn't just about criticizing how women are shown in movies. It's also about how the society forces women to be in passive roles. However, by reversing the male gaze and giving women control of their own stories, Thelma and Louise challenges the way that the films usually works and resists the patriarchy in the society. This suggests that movies can change how we see gender roles and patriarchy, and it makes a strong case for breaking away from traditional roles of women. Scenes like the one with the police officer show Thelma and Louise flipping the traditional male-female dynamic. This not only challenges film norms but also questions the societal structures that keep women passive. What's more, it also shows how movie can be the tool to question and challenge systems that forces women to be the passive role, calling for stronger, more complex representations of women in both media and society.