

2018

AP<sup>®</sup>

CollegeBoard

---

# AP Research Academic Paper

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### **Inside:**

#### **Sample C**

- Scoring Guideline**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

# 2018 AP Research Academic Paper Rubric v1.0

The response...

<p><b>Score of 1</b> Report on Existing Knowledge</p>	<p><b>Score of 2</b> Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method</p>	<p><b>Score of 3</b> Ineffectual Argument for a New Understanding</p>	<p><b>Score of 4</b> Well-Supported, Articulate Argument Conveying a New Understanding</p>	<p><b>Score of 5</b> Rich Analysis of a New Understanding Addressing a Gap in the Research Base</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents an overly broad topic of inquiry.</li> <li>• Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works <b>OR</b> through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.</li> <li>• Describes a search and report process.</li> <li>• Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.</li> <li>• Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.</li> <li>• Cites <b>AND/OR</b> attributes sources (in bibliography/works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents a topic of inquiry with narrowing scope or focus, that is NOT carried through either in the method or in the overall line of reasoning.</li> <li>• Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works <b>OR</b> through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.</li> <li>• Describes a nonreplicable research method <b>OR</b> provides an oversimplified description of a method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.</li> <li>• Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.</li> <li>• Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.</li> <li>• Cites <b>AND/OR</b> attributes sources (in bibliography/works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carries the focus or scope of a topic of inquiry through the method <b>AND</b> overall line of reasoning, even though the focus or scope might still be narrowing.</li> <li>• Situates a topic of inquiry within relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives, although connections to some works may be unclear.</li> <li>• Describes a reasonably replicable research method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.</li> <li>• Conveys a new understanding or conclusion, with an underdeveloped line of reasoning <b>OR</b> insufficient evidence.</li> <li>• Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.</li> <li>• Cites <b>AND</b> attributes sources, using a discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited <b>AND</b> in-text), with few errors or inconsistencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.</li> <li>• Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives <b>AND</b> logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.</li> <li>• Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.</li> <li>• Supports a new understanding or conclusion through a logically organized line of reasoning <b>AND</b> sufficient evidence. The limitations and/or implications, if present, of the new understanding or conclusion are oversimplified.</li> <li>• Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.</li> <li>• Cites <b>AND</b> attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited <b>AND</b> in-text), with few to no errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.</li> <li>• Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives <b>AND</b> logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.</li> <li>• Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.</li> <li>• Justifies a new understanding or conclusion through a logical progression of inquiry choices, sufficient evidence, explanation of the limitations of the conclusion, and an explanation of the implications to the community of practice.</li> <li>• Enhances the communication of the student’s ideas through organization, use of design elements, conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and word precision, with few to no errors.</li> <li>• Cites <b>AND</b> attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited <b>AND</b> in-text), with few to no errors.</li> </ul>

# AP<sup>®</sup> RESEARCH 2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

## Academic Paper

### Overview

This performance task was intended to assess students' ability to conduct scholarly and responsible research and articulate an evidence-based argument that clearly communicates the conclusion, solution, or answer to their stated research question. More specifically, this performance task was intended to assess students' ability to:

- Generate a focused research question that is situated within or connected to a larger scholarly context or community;
- Explore relationships between and among multiple works representing multiple perspectives within the scholarly literature related to the topic of inquiry;
- Articulate what approach, method, or process they have chosen to use to address their research question, why they have chosen that approach to answering their question, and how they employed it;
- Develop and present their own argument, conclusion, or new understanding while acknowledging its limitations and discussing implications;
- Support their conclusion through the compilation, use, and synthesis of relevant and significant evidence generated by their research;
- Use organizational and design elements to effectively convey the paper's message;
- Consistently and accurately cite, attribute, and integrate the knowledge and work of others, while distinguishing between the student's voice and that of others;
- Generate a paper in which word choice and syntax enhance communication by adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

## A *Raw* Film Analysis

### Introduction

Feminist film theory (FFT) is a theoretical film criticism that bases its analysis in feminist politics and feminist theory. FFT developed through the politics of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, and took hold in the 1980s as a way to understand how portrayals of women on-screen affect women in real life. Film analysis focuses on the meaning within a film's text and the way in which that text affects the viewing subjects. However, FFT is one way to read a film, including both a literary analysis and also explores how the process of cinematic production both constructs and affects women on screen.

Media is important to study, as media does influence both how women and girls shape their identities, as well as others (spectators) perceive them. In order to explore how the film industry presents a portrayal of femininity, I will be utilizing an intersectional, feminist reading of the 2016 film *Raw*. *Raw* follows Justine, a young veterinarian prodigy, over the course of her first week at the same university her parents attended and that her sister Alex currently attends. As part of a hazing ritual, lifetime vegetarian Justine is forced to eat raw rabbit kidney, resulting in her realizing she craves meat, eventually progressing to cannibalism. In order to fully analyze *Raw*, I will be using multiple feminist film theories surrounding spectatorship as well as a gendered reading of hunger in media.

### Review of Literature

#### *Gaze and Voyeurism in Film*

Gaze, and its tendency to act as voyeurism in cinema, is the basis of FFT as a whole. In her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey first defined what has become

known colloquially as “the male gaze.” Mulvey argues that “unchallenged, mainstream film coded the erotic into language of the dominant patriarchal order.”<sup>1</sup> This has resulted in mainstream films where the pleasure in looking renders men as active gaze, and women as passive material.<sup>2</sup> This gaze relates to scopophilic intent, as in film women are coded to be eroticized and fetishized, built as a spectacle or icon. This denotes a woman’s “to-be-looked-at-ness”<sup>3</sup> wherein both the male spectator in the audience as well as the male character on screen gain pleasure through looking.

While male gaze is present everywhere, not just the movie screen, it is further perpetuated through the norms of cinema. The camera acts as the audience’s perspective, but its motions are controlled by the action of the protagonist, and invisible editing likewise blurs the limits that exist in real life.<sup>4</sup> This allows for the spectator to identify with the glamorized, main male protagonist as a “screen surrogate,”<sup>5</sup> which allows for both spectatorship and a feeling of omnipotence. This power renders women as passive objects for fetishization as the following gaze is focused and male.<sup>6</sup>

Further, the female figure in its eroticization presents problems, as the female figure often disrupts the narrative, and creates a tension between looks on screen. These problems can be solved through both plot devices or camera techniques that take movies out of the context of realism. Contextualizing the character, for example as a performer, engages their “to-be-looked-at-ness” in a simple way that unites the looks of both spectators, on screen or

---

<sup>1</sup> See Mulvey, 835

<sup>2</sup> See Mulvey, 843

<sup>3</sup> See Mulvey, 837

<sup>4</sup> See Mulvey, 839

<sup>5</sup> See Mulvey, 838

<sup>6</sup> See Mulvey, 836-837

audience, and resolves the tension between these contrasting gazes.<sup>7</sup> This solves the complication the female figure presents in narrative.

Besides depicting the woman as a performer, camera shots and angles allow unification of on-screen and offscreen gaze. In her book of essays *Femme Fatales*, Mary Ann Doane builds upon Mulvey's idea of unification to specifically explore how directors utilize conventional close-ups, of faces, legs or other disembodied parts to unite gaze while not disrupting narrative. Doane explains that these close ups act as a "demolition of the dichotomy of surface and depth,"<sup>8</sup> and links this idea to the concealment of truth. Using camera angles and close-ups to depict women renders them as a flat surface and equates them to a cut-out. This, just as choosing to have women perform, does not limit the sexual impact, but rather allows women to become a "sexualized, eroticized, and perfected surface," without disrupting the narrative or causing tension between the looks of audience and actor.<sup>9</sup>

However, both of these arguments focus only on sexual difference, which suppresses the recognition of othering factors outside of just woman/man. This is known as the "abstraction of women," a phenomenon Doane acknowledges, and that bell hooks builds upon in her essay "The Oppositional Gaze." hooks focuses on race as a significant factor that abstraction, and thus FFT, often ignores, but this idea illuminates how gaze analysis must acknowledge factors besides sexual difference as othering.<sup>10</sup> In this way, both Doane and Mulvey's arguments fall short of complete intersectional analysis in practice.

### *The Female Spectator and Hunger*

---

<sup>7</sup> See Mulvey, 837

<sup>8</sup> See Doane, 57

<sup>9</sup> See Doane, 56

<sup>10</sup> See hooks, 124

Within arguments of gaze, it is also necessary to address the female spectator. Doane and hooks both discuss the female spectator, something that is almost completely absent in Mulvey's critical analysis, which focuses on male protagonists, and inherently, male viewers. In contrast, Doane pays attention to the female spectator, and identifies the problems of female spectatorship when, in agreement with Mulvey, cinema has been crafted for the male gaze.

In mainstream cinema, as the male gaze is centered, there is no "female view" to approach cinema from. Thus, Doane argues that the female spectator is only given two options besides resistance: to over-identify with the male view or to become one's own object of desire.<sup>11</sup> To over-identify with the male viewer, Doane offers that the female spectator may gain masochistic pleasure, as she must sacrifice her femininity in order to enjoy the film through the male-centered gaze. The other option is to participate in the fetishization of the female body, while identifying with her, which leads to narcissism, and proves difficult to maintain throughout a film.<sup>12</sup> Both of these options prove othering and further complicate female spectatorship, often leading female spectators to form an oppositional gaze which allows them to "manufacture a distance from the image."<sup>13</sup> This distance is necessary to create a spectator that resists either over-identification or fetishization in order to fully analyze women in film.

This is especially true of media's treatment of women and their hunger. Hunger is inherently linked to gaze, as hunger and gaze both require an active participant. However, as established by Mulvey's binary, women are passive in film.<sup>14</sup> This overcomplicates the relationship between women and hunger, as it must be avoided or changed in order to maintain

---

<sup>11</sup> See Doane, 31-32

<sup>12</sup> See Doane, 31-32

<sup>13</sup> See Doane, 32

<sup>14</sup> See Mulvey, 843

woman as passive. This results in what Susan Bordo identifies in her book *Unbearable Weight* as “hunger as an ideology.”<sup>15</sup> For women in media, food, and thus hunger, can never just be food. Bordo cites hunger for women as a unification with narrative, such as a woman’s appetite acting as a metaphor for her sexual appetite,<sup>16</sup> or a woman’s cooking as a metaphor for her love of those she feeds.<sup>17</sup> Just as Mulvey and Doane argue for a unification of gaze, Bordo depicts the necessity of hunger and food as a metaphor for women on screen.

### *Application of Theory to Film*

The past decade, films starring women have become more mainstreamed. One example of this is a practice many critics and viewers alike have begun utilizing called the Bechdel Test. Originally created from Alison Bechdel’s comic “Dykes to Watch Out For”, The Bechdel Test has become a commonplace evaluation of “feminist” film. This “rule” states that a film has to follow three basic rules, “one, it [a film] has to have two female characters who, two, talk to each other about, three, something besides a man,” in order for the character in the comic to watch a film.<sup>18</sup> Although this rule started as a joke in a comic strip in 1985, it has become mainstreamed, even to the extent that Swedish cinemas now use it as a rating, alongside those of nudity or graphic violence.<sup>19</sup> However, as pointed out by current feminist film theorists, the Bechdel test is very limited.<sup>20</sup>

Representation for representation’s sake is a fruitless pursuit, as these portrayals, when analyzed, often devolve into mere tokenism, fetishism and eroticism: the initial problems with

---

<sup>15</sup> See Bordo, 99

<sup>16</sup> See Bordo, 110

<sup>17</sup> See Bordo, 124-125

<sup>18</sup> See Bechdel

<sup>19</sup> See O’Meara, 1120

<sup>20</sup> See O’Meara, 1120



cinema to begin with. Mulvey, Doane, and hooks all agreed that positive representations of women in film were possible, but that they would often only be able to exist as a counterpoint to mainstream or Hollywood film.<sup>21</sup>

In this vein, *Raw*, an independent and foreign film starring two women surrounding their eating habits, presents itself as a cross genre, progressive piece of cinema. *Raw* clearly has the objective to show women not as fetishized or erotic objects, but as complicated characters with a multitude of facets, which makes it an interesting film to analyze for achieving its goals. *Raw* is only one movie, but conducting a gendered reading on this film is one way to understand if the media, especially the media that hooks pointed to, is continuing to uphold and perpetuate the patriarchy with its harmful depictions of women on screen. This is why it is necessary for *Raw* to be analyzed using an intersectional feminist reading, which has not been done before. The intersection of Bordo's theories in conversation with other prominent feminist film theories leads me to the question: to what extent does *Raw* support and subvert the relationships between gaze and hunger for women?

### **Methodology**

I will be conducting an analysis of the film *Raw* using an intersectional feminist lense focused on gaze and hunger, in order to gauge the extent that *Raw* supports and subverts the relationships between gaze and hunger. Gaze marks the viewer as an active participant, which makes women with gaze (or female spectators) go against the typical grain that wants to mark them as passive. This is especially true in Mulvey's binary, as women as explicitly marked as passive. Because of this complicated relationship, analyzing the gaze in *Raw* is unique. In the

---

<sup>21</sup> See Mulvey, 834

same vein, *Raw* is unique because Justine (the main character) both actively participates in the act of spectatorship and in an active, carnal hunger. I hypothesize that the relationship between gaze and hunger is something intrinsic to the plot of *Raw*, and thus makes it a clear marker of how these relationships are presented when centered in a film, which could be similarly applied to other films where these relationships are subtler.

Some limitations of my project are that I am analyzing a film that is in French, and I do not speak French. Another limit is the nuances of French culture in the film, as I am American. I have emailed the production company but they have not allowed me to have the original script, so I can't examine that specifically. I will not be looking at other people's opinions of the movie, or reviews of the movie. I will not take anything outside of the film in its final, published version into account, like box office numbers or director's commentary.

Feminist film theory<sup>22</sup> will guide my analysis, focusing on scholars who specifically explore gaze and/or hunger in films, making them appropriate and relevant to my analysis. The process of collecting the data, which includes plot, characters, dialogue, and mise-én-scène, will be conducted by viewing *Raw* multiple times, during which notes will be recorded within a chart. The chart will be split into the actual occurrence and interpretation, based on scholarly analysis. After data collection, a cohesive feminist analysis of *Raw* will be more accessible.

### **Findings and Analysis**

I will be assessing the chronological arcs of hunger and gaze throughout the film, and then considering the actions between them in order to come to a conclusion about the

---

<sup>22</sup> Such as Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane, Susan Bordo, Cynthia Freeland, bell hooks

relationships between hunger and gaze, as well as to what extent *Raw* subverts and perpetuates these norms.

### *Hunger*

Justine's first action in *Raw* is eating. With her head down, she orders a lunch with no meat, much to the dismay of her server. As Justine eats, she finds a meatball in her potatoes, while her mother yells at her to spit it out. This first interaction marks Justine as both a vegetarian and as passive person, as her vegetarianism is shown not as a choice, but rather a tradition her family forced onto her. She follows her mother's orders, and remains quiet as her mother berates her and then her server. This scene is crucial in first depicting Justine's lack of control over what she eats. Her parents control her eating habits through their enforced vegetarianism. Bordo extends that in media, the rhetoric of control extends to women wanting control over themselves, where as control for men is over others.<sup>23</sup> In order to code control as feminine, women must master control of themselves, while men are already in control of their own bodies and now must control others. The fact that Justine, throughout the film, struggles with control so often is a clear indicator of her struggle to be feminine, just as Bordo theorized. At first, she struggles for control as her parents police her eating habits. However, as the film continues, she will struggle to control her hunger, which will ultimate be her undoing.

When Justine first gives into her urge for meat, she tries to steal a hamburger.<sup>24</sup> She attempts to extend her control to Adrien, to police his meat eating in the same way her parents did, but he does not react in any way. Adrien is able to partake in such a rich food like beef with no shame or repercussions because, as Bordo explains, a man eating this food is not

---

<sup>23</sup> See Bordo, 105

<sup>24</sup> See fig. 1

transgressive, as a woman surrendering to food would be. Supported by Bordo, the different ways Justine and Adrien react to food illustrates Mulvey’s binary of sexual difference.<sup>25</sup> Adrien presents his food to the cashier normally, while Justine’s burger remains in her pocket, congealing juice and revealing her lack of control or a healthy relationship with food.<sup>26</sup> Bordo explains that the ultimate goal is for women is to obtain a “casual relation to food,”<sup>27</sup> something Justine is clearly lacking. Both the policing over vegetarianism and the hypocrisy presented by attempting to steal the burger (with the implication of eating meat) rather than eating the burger the way society intends (typically on a plate, with a bun) show Justine’s obsession, indicating the continued power of food.<sup>28</sup>



Fig. 1. “Ringin’ Up Stolen Hamburger.” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

The power dynamics between Justine and food come to a turning point during a crucial sequence, where Justine goes from ravaging down schwarma to eating raw chicken breast. In the former, Justine’s eating is coded as fulfilling a ravishing hunger, something that Bordo argues is presentable for a woman who is starved, as typically a women indulging in “rich exciting food, is

<sup>25</sup> See Mulvey, 837

<sup>26</sup> See fig. 1

<sup>27</sup> See Bordo, 100

<sup>28</sup> See Bordo, 100

taboo.”<sup>29</sup> However, because this is presumed to be Justine’s first time eating meat, this transgression can be allowed, although it does suggest a lack of femininity, shown through Adrien’s and the male truck-driver’s disgusted looks as Justine wolfs down her food. In the latter scene, Justine gives full control to her hunger as she eats a raw chicken breast<sup>30</sup>.



Fig. 2. “Justine Smelling Raw Chicken.” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

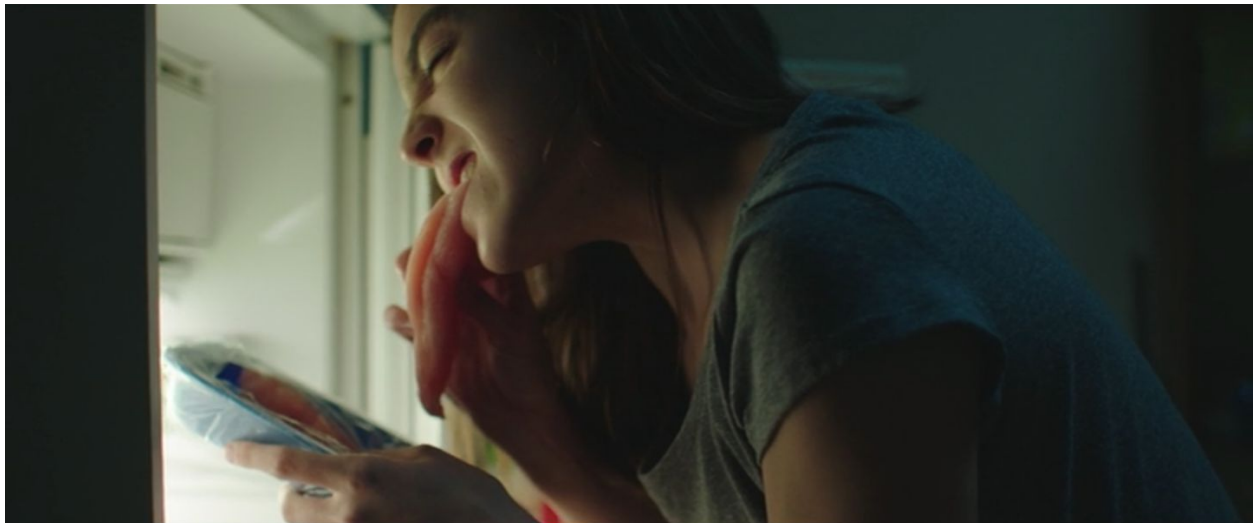


Fig 3. “Justine Eating Raw Chicken.” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

Consuming raw meat is fully taboo, something that acts as a turning point in *Raw*. Justine’s unabashed and wholehearted enjoyment of the raw meat is characterized by the

---

<sup>29</sup> See Bordo, 110

<sup>30</sup> See figs. 2-3

satisfied snapping of the meat, accompanied by Justine moaning and panting as she eats. Similarly, Justine is in her underwear and a flimsy shirt, linking this enthusiastic eating with sexual pleasure/desire. Bordo explains that, in mainstream media, unadulterated hunger in a woman needs to be coded as sexual appetite in order to explain her lust for food.<sup>31</sup> This tie between physical appetite and sexual appetite is also shown when Justine visits the school nurse about a rash. Justine tells the nurse, abashedly, that she has never had sex, and later the nurse tells her to fast. Justine responds that “[she is] hungry though. My stomach always feels empty.” This links her lack of sex to her insatiable hunger, once again coding sexual appetite as hunger. This inexplicable connection that Bordo examined remains true in *Raw*, and seems inescapable even in this “independent” film. This relationship continues to develop as both Justine’s sense of hunger and sense of her sexuality grows, developing alongside her gaze.

### *Gaze*

bell hooks asserts that “one’s gaze can be dangerous.”<sup>32</sup> This quote embodies both Justine and Alex (Justine’s sister), as throughout *Raw* they use their gaze to hunt and prey on victims. We meet Alex with her gaze fully developed and intact, something she has honed while away from her parents. Justine, meanwhile, lacks this assertive gaze at the beginning of the film. Justine is routinely told to keep her “Eyes to the floor for an elder,”<sup>33</sup> by older students as a part of her hazing. There is a power in looking,<sup>34</sup> and thus by forcing Justine to look at the floor, her power is taken away. Furthermore, when she attempts to resist certain actions<sup>35</sup> she is urged that she has to because “they’re watching.” Justine’s resistance ruins the “active/male passive/female”

---

<sup>31</sup> See Bordo, 110

<sup>32</sup> See hooks, 115

<sup>33</sup> See fig. 4

<sup>34</sup> See hooks, 115

<sup>35</sup> Like consuming the raw rabbit kidney at initiation.

that Mulvey explains is necessary for a traditional female role.<sup>36</sup> By reminding Justine of others' gaze, she is brought back into the reality of herself as someone to be looked at, and thus someone who needs to be passive. As she allows her sister to push food into her mouth with her eyes closed, Justine's resistance dissolves, rendering her as passive, lacking gaze, once again.



Fig. 4. "Justine Looking at Floor." Wild Bunch, 2016. Author's screenshot

Immediately after eating the raw chicken breast, Justine is confronted by a teacher about cheating. Although shot from above, making Justine small, she meets her teacher's gaze consistently, already showing growing confidence since her previous confrontations when she kept her eyes down.<sup>37</sup> However, throughout the scene, Justine chews on and eats her own hair. She consumes her own body; reducing herself by making herself smaller, forcing her body to take up less space. Eating her own hair also acts as punishment for Justine, as after she viciously struggles to throw it up.<sup>38</sup> Cynthia Freeland states that in films "women who possess the gaze...require punishment,"<sup>39</sup> explaining why Justine's confronting gaze towards her male

---

<sup>36</sup> See Mulvey, 837

<sup>37</sup> See fig. 5

<sup>38</sup> See fig. 6

<sup>39</sup> See Freeland, 744



teacher, a representation of the patriarchy and order, is immediately met by punishment. Justine has just begun to “possess the gaze” and as her ability to wield it effectively grows, so will her punishments.



Fig. 5. “Justine Looking at Teacher.” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot



Fig. 6. “Justine Throwing Up” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

Alongside confronting the gaze of those around her, *Raw* allows Justine to confront her own gaze. Doane explains the complicated nature of one’s own gaze, as it is inaccessible, except through a mirror which can only create a virtual image.<sup>40</sup> Justine uses a mirror to meet her own

---

<sup>40</sup> See Doane, 47



gaze, simultaneously illustrating the problems Doane associates with female spectatorship and with gaze itself. First shot from a wide angle, Justine looks at herself in her sister's dress timidly.<sup>41</sup> Building alongside an explicit, sexual and violent song,<sup>42</sup> Justine regards herself, then eventually approaches the mirror,<sup>43</sup> and seems to “become her own object of desire,”<sup>44</sup> applying and smearing her lipstick ecstatically.<sup>45</sup> Justine has, thus far, asserted herself as a female spectator who possess an active gaze. However, in the mirror her gaze morphs through the lack of accessibility Doane described. As a female spectator, Justine is unable to fully confront her own gaze, and so instead becomes a site of a dangerous and sexual desire, she seems to be “locked within a mirror of narcissism.”<sup>46</sup> This scene in the mirror presents femininity as a “closeness,”<sup>47</sup> something Justine can be near through the song, her lipstick, and her clothing but is unable to fully possess, a distance resulting from her spectatorship.

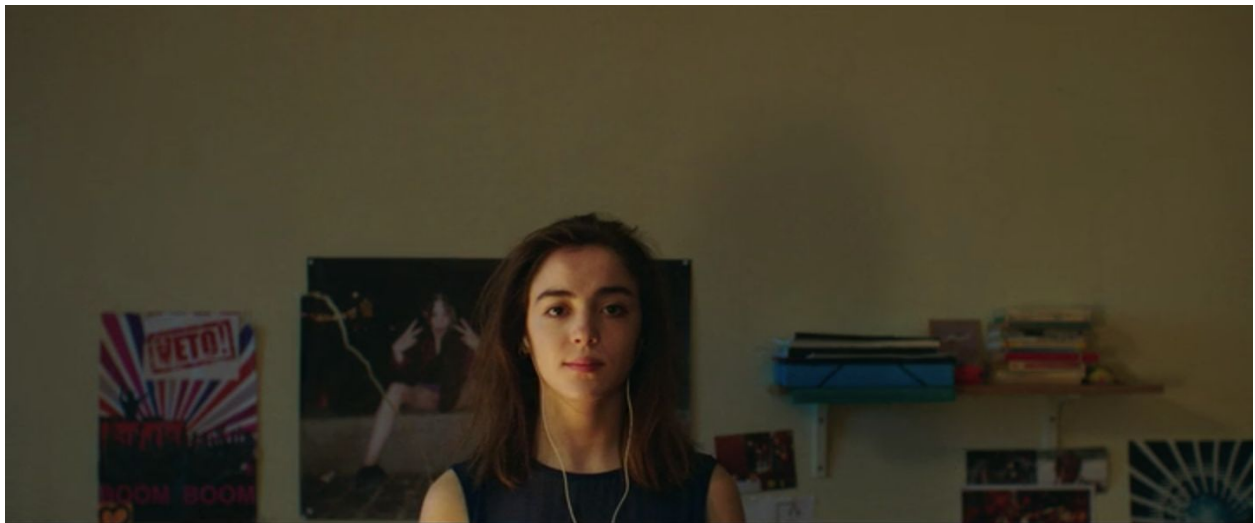


Fig. 7. “Wide Shot From Mirror” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

<sup>41</sup>See fig. 7

<sup>42</sup> “Plus putes que toutes les putes” by ORTIES

<sup>43</sup> See fig. 8

<sup>44</sup> See Doane, 32

<sup>45</sup> See figs. 9-10

<sup>46</sup> See Doane, 47

<sup>47</sup> See Doane, 31



Fig. 8. "Justine Looking in Mirror" Wild Bunch, 2016. Author's screenshot

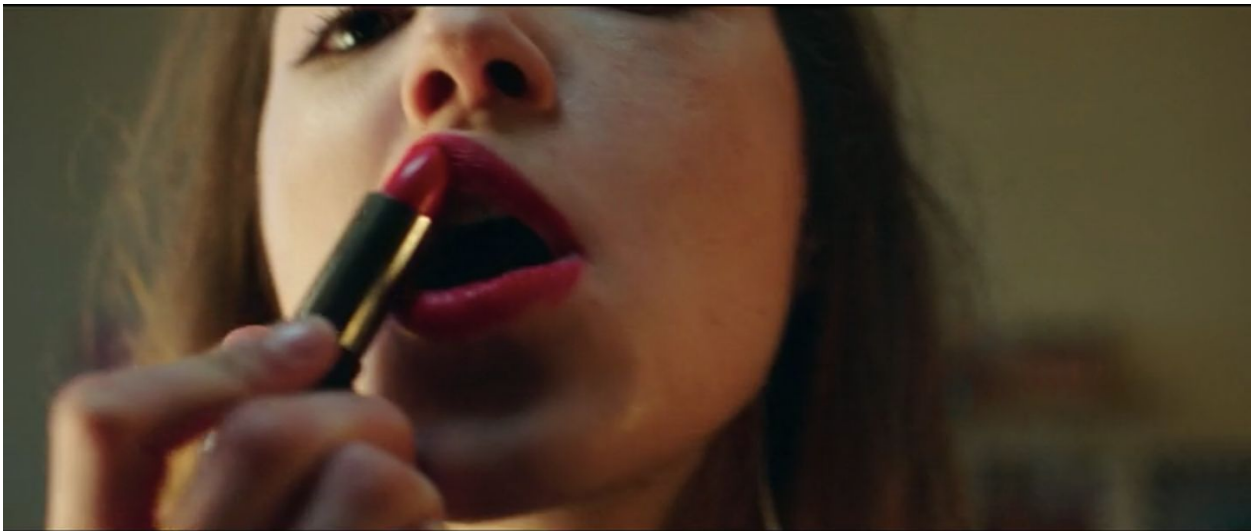


Fig. 9. "Justine Putting on Lipstick in Mirror" Wild Bunch, 2016. Author's screenshot



Fig. 10. “Justine Smearing Lipstick in Mirror” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

### *Gaze and Hunger*

Justine’s arcs of gaze and hunger grow in tandem through the first half of the film, but remain rather disconnected. However, after Justine first tastes human flesh, gaze and hunger combine and grow exponentially in Justine, her newfound gaze and hunger becoming insatiable.

Justine’s first taste of human flesh is her sister’s finger. As Alex wakes up after fainting to her sister indulging uncontrollably on her body, she confronts her with only her gaze, saying nothing while a single tear slips down her cheek.<sup>48</sup> While this is happening, Alex’s dog starts to lap up blood, which Justine hurriedly shoos away. This is a reminder that this indulgence in human body remains taboo, whether for Justine or the dog. Dogs are often relegated to a quasi-human status; given names and treated as part of the family. Here, the dog serves to demote Justine to a quasi-animal status, something (rather than someone) with a hunger so uncontrollable that she can’t stop herself from eating her own sister’s finger. Not only does this break boundaries of raw food, escalating from her previous experience with chicken, but Justine is now actively participating in cannibalism, arguably the most taboo and “savage” eating habit.

---

<sup>48</sup> See fig. 11



Fig. 11. “Alex Sees Justine Eating Finger” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

Justine’s gaze in combination with her hunger becomes more than just something she can control, it becomes a weapon. After eating Alex’s finger, it is clear Justine’s hunger is growing. She sacrifices any control she had over her hunger to control of her gaze, needing a way to find food. Her looking is utilized to show her hunting, as Justine watches Adrien play soccer with such intensity her nose begins to bleed. Adrien is shirtless and vulnerable, while the camera slices him into closeups of his body and disembodied parts,<sup>49</sup> a method Doane specifically cites as a way to form an actor into “sexualized, eroticized, and perfected surface.”<sup>50</sup> While this method is typically used to break women into sexualized pieces, the power is flipped as Justine wields the gaze, both sexualizing Adrien with a subtext of looking him over as a piece of meat. Justine still remains sexually unfulfilled, amplified by her growing hunger since she has not eaten in days, and this scene illustrates her obsession with both sex and food. Justine is a threat, a woman with powerful gaze, on the hunt, and once again she is “defiled by bodily fluids”<sup>51</sup> as

---

<sup>49</sup> See figs. 12-14

<sup>50</sup> See Doane, 56

<sup>51</sup> See Freeland, 744

punishment for her gaze.<sup>52</sup> Justine’s nosebleed is a reminder that her active gaze is a transgression of the feminine, which both Freeland and Mulvey point out needs punishment in order to maintain patriarchal order.<sup>53</sup> However, unlike her past punishment of throwing up, this punishment does not interrupt her gaze, and does not cause her real harm. This weaker punishment shows that her gaze and hunger are morphing, moving her from feminine to monster, while also foreshadowing the pain that is yet to come.

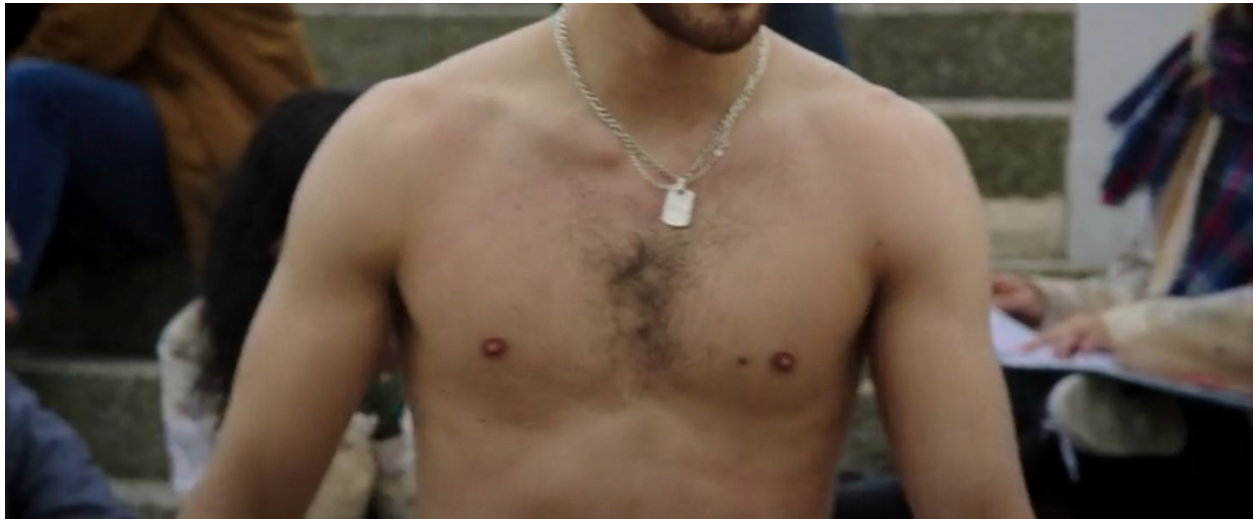


Fig. 12. “Adrien” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

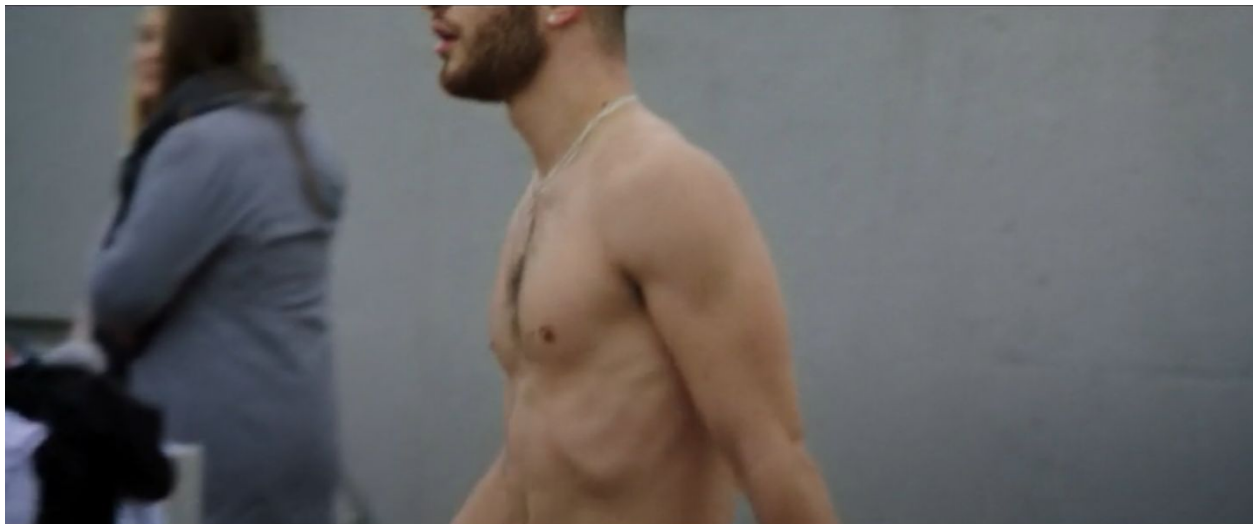


Fig. 13. “Adrien” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

<sup>52</sup> See fig. 15

<sup>53</sup> See Mulvey, 837 and Freeland, 744





Fig. 14. “Adrien” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot



Fig. 15. “Nosebleed” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

After the nosebleed, Justine and Adrien have sex. In a turn on typical film tropes, Justine has an “aggressive masculine gaze” while Adrien is more representative of a passive body.<sup>54</sup> This upsets the patriarchal order, and thus Justine’s active looking and appropriation of the gaze must be ultimately punished in order to fulfill cinematic tropes and Mulvey’s binary.<sup>55</sup> This punishment is shown by the ultimate betrayal of her sister, as they fight in front of the student body. Her sister, in her own weaponization of gaze, takes advantage of a drunk Justine by

---

<sup>54</sup> See Freeland, 755

<sup>55</sup> See Mulvey, 837

inviting people to see her try to eat a cadaver. When Justine sees a video of this, she finds Alex and they immediately begin to fight.<sup>56</sup> A crowd of mostly male students surrounds them, watching and filming as they bite and tear at each other, eventually pulling them apart.<sup>57</sup> Justine and Alex become female spectacles, the active gaze of the (mostly male) students penetrating the sisters connotes their “to-be-looked-at-ness,” their ultimate punishment existing as they are regarded as animals by their peers.<sup>58</sup> In their exposure, Justine and Alex once again are demoted to quasi-animals, their uncontrollable hunger rendering them unable to be tamed, forcing men to tear them apart so they don’t destroy each other. All the power they had gained through their appropriation of gaze is immediately sacrificed through their lack of control. Their obsession with hunger means they can never become more than empty stomachs, can never have any power. Ownership of their bodies is stolen by those watching, and preserved as they are filmed. Film within a film layers the complexity of gaze as the narrative is stolen from Justine and Alex, leaving them only as female spectacles.



Fig. 16. “Alex and Justine Fight” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

---

<sup>56</sup> See fig. 16

<sup>57</sup> See fig. 17-18

<sup>58</sup> See Mulvey, 843



Fig. 17. “Students Watch” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot



Fig. 18. “Breaking up the Fight” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

In the final scene of *Raw*, revelations abound. Alex is now in prison, likely convicted for the many murders she has committed, both on and off screen. Justine is home with her parents, who are forcing her to eat vegetables. Notably, Justine remarks “I’m full,” a crucial progression showing an end to her seemingly endless hunger. However, as soon as her mother leaves the table, Justine’s father begins to explain that he knows about his daughter’s cannibalism, and that it mirrors their mother’s. Showing off his scratches and bite marks down his chest, Justine’s



father becomes a vehicle for her gaze.<sup>59</sup> However, Justine keeps her eyes down, not confronting her father with looks, but down at his chest, a look of sadness on her face.<sup>60</sup> Although in contrast to Mulvey’s idea of “woman as image, man as bearer of the look,” this scene cements Freeland’s theory of a traditional hierarchy being imposed as the film offers Justine’s father as hero of a noble tragedy; keeping his wife and children alive through the desecration of his body.<sup>61</sup> Thus, although the majority of the film focuses what Freeland describes as a “nonstandard narrative centered on female characters”, this scene is a reminder of the ultimate hierarchy that is perpetuated, both within the film and the mainstream.<sup>62</sup>



Fig. 19. “Chest” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

---

<sup>59</sup> See fig. 19

<sup>60</sup> See fig. 20

<sup>61</sup> See Mulvey, 837 and Freeland, 753

<sup>62</sup> See Freeland, 753



Fig. 20. “Justine Looks at Father’s Chest” Wild Bunch, 2016. Author’s screenshot

### Conclusion

*Raw* aims to be a progressive film, that challenges traditional notions of womanhood on screen, which it partially achieved. However, the relationships between hunger and gaze are so inexplicably linked that Justine remains unable to escape them. Although Justine’s relationship with hunger is unconventional because of her cannibalism, *Raw* ultimately upholds patriarchal norms that are present in films where the relationship to hunger for women is much subtler, such as the media Bordo focused on. Similarly, Justine’s relationship to gaze as a female spectator becomes problematic through her constant punishment for using gaze, which remains in line with the media Mulvey, Doane, and hooks analyzed as harmful depictions for women.

There are moments where the script is flipped, and Justine is able to weaponize her gaze as a female spectator and escape punishment, at least temporarily. Far more often, the women who possess gaze in *Raw* are ultimately punished, as Justine is almost immediately punished right after while Alex is punished more concretely by being sent to prison.

Further, the ending of *Raw* is the ultimate undoing of any feminist message. Having her father tell her the news of her problem, rather than her mother, supports a normalized hierarchy rather than upsetting the patriarchy. Justine's father confirms that he has essentially kept the family alive, bearing the burden of her mother's hunger. The feminist frameworks I utilized to analyze *Raw* have led me to the conclusion that it is not a feminist film, because it too closely follows patriarchal norms for gaze and hunger for women. Justine's hunger is always closely related to a carnal and sexual nature, reinforcing the idea that women cannot partake in food normally in media. Similarly, although the women in the film make notable transgressions of gaze, they are ultimately always punished for them, further maintaining patriarchal order of gaze and hierarchy. Thus, although *Raw* exists as a counterpoint of Hollywood cinema as an independent film, it does not offer effective counterpoints to the tropes associated with women, hunger, and gaze.

Although I attempted a comprehensive feminist analysis of the film, there is still further research to be done within *Raw*. Employing a queer framework to specifically analyze Adrien could be an effective next step in analyzing his relationship with gaze, and how that affects the movie as a whole. Further, there are scenes I neglected, in order to focus on Justine. Doing a deeper analysis of Alex using these same feminist frameworks could also be effective further research. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that *Raw* is by no means the only film attempting to be a subversive, feminist horror film. Although *Raw* deserves praise for taking many risks, as well as filming women in a non-objectifying way, it does contain a lot of conflicting messages that support a patriarchal agenda. However, *Raw* is able to achieve a depiction of womanhood that feels more true than so many of the women that I have seen on

screen. Extending a critical analysis to *Raw* allows for its flaws to be exposed and shows that there is a wide berth for improvement, but also shows how complicated the film is. Continuing to make films that at least attempt to subvert stereotypes and tropes is crucial to challenging the hierarchical order, even when there are flaws and missteps alongside progress.

## Works Cited

Bechdel, Alison. *The Rule*. 1985. [dykestowatchoutfor.com/the-rule](http://dykestowatchoutfor.com/the-rule).

Accessed 11 Dec. 2017.

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. University of California Press, 1993.

Doane, Mary Ann. *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. Psychology Press, 1991.

Freeland, Cynthia. "Feminist Frameworks for Horror Films," *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, Noël Carroll and David Bordwell, eds. University of Wisconsin Press. 1996, pp. 195-218.

hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Amelia Jones, Routledge, 2003, pp. 94–105.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film: Psychology, Society, and Ideology*. 1975, pp 833-844.

O'Meara, Jennifer. "What "The Bechdel Test" doesn't tell us: examining women's verbal and vocal (dis)empowerment in cinema." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 16, no 6, 2016, pp 1120-1123. *Taylor & Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1234239>

Raw. Directed by Julia Ducournau, performance by Garance Marillier, Wild Bunch, 2016.

**AP<sup>®</sup> RESEARCH**  
**2018 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Academic Paper**

**Sample: C**

**Score: 4**

The paper earned a score of 4 because it addresses a narrow topic: A feminist analysis of the film *Raw* (page 1, paragraph 2: “In order to explore how the film industry ...”), and situates this topic within a substantive literature review that identifies a narrow gap in the literature (see page 6, paragraph 2: “This is why it is necessary ...”). The paper uses a replicable method in order to conduct a feminist formal and thematic analysis of the film, focusing on “gaze” (pages 1–3) and “hunger” (pages 4–5); this method is continued on pages 6 and 7 and is supported by results that clearly accomplish what the student sets out to do, ultimately arguing for a new understanding that patriarchal structures that inform mainstream cinema also apply to this purportedly subversive work (pages 22–24).

The paper did not score a 3 because it mounts and defends its argument in a clearly-reasoned, detailed, and effective manner. The paper also uses sophisticated writing and graphics to present its evidence.

The paper did not score a 5 because it assumes the relevance and validity of the body of theory informing the research process and fails to fully explain the applicability of feminist theory to this particular film.