Gender Representation and Equality in American Film Posters from 1950s to 2010s

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Abstract
This paper uses content analysis to find out the gender representations and equality between genders, in film posters from the 1950 to the 2018. The study focuses on the Oscar film winners from the 1950 to 2010s the total of film posters is 62. Findings show that representation of Men 55%; Women 15%; Both Gender 11%; No Gender Posters: 19%; and 0% represents the other gender in the film posters.

Keywords: Equality between genders, Femininity Representation, Masculinity Representation, Both Gender Representation, No Gender Representation, Other Gender Representation, and Feminist Film Theory.

Introduction

The study aims to illustrate two steps: the first step is to target the equality between genders in their appearance in the posters and the second step is to analyze the femininity and masculinity representations.

Applying the criticism Feminist Film theory in the film posters as a grounded theory. Mulvey studies show that women actors are used just for visual pleasure and representing sexuality more than doing serious roles.

Research Questions:

RQ1: How do film posters from the 1950to the 2010s represent *equality* between genders?
RQ2: How do film posters from the 1950 to the 2010s treat *femininity* representations?
RQ3: How do film posters from the 1950 to the 2010s treat *masculinity* representations?

Literature Review

In "visual pleasure and narrative cinema" book, Laura Mulvey sees women representing a silent image. She sees that society is the first place that defines women and conveys this meaning in cinema. Changes in cinema production and technology development make the cinema capitalistic. Mulvey mentions scopophilia, which means, "Love of looking happens when sexual pleasure is derived from looking at sexual scenes. Scopophilia, in its narcissistic meaning, is the image of oneself. It is the image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification." (Mulvey, 1975). Mulvey states that there is a sexual imbalance in this world and the pleasure of looking has been split between active males and passive females. Women always play the traditional role of carrying babies in their tummies and raising children. Even in the cinema, this role does not change. The book also mentions male roles in the cinema are important and woman's roles of slighter importance. The cinema displays women on two levels: First, within the screen story and, secondly, within the auditorium, by giving female characters more tension by positioning them on either side of the screen. Therefore, women perform within the narrative, the gaze of the audiences and the male characters in the film. Male roles, as Mulvey mentions, are active and move the story along. Usually, the narrative and the audience response encourage the male to own the important tension in the film. Mulvey sees that the spectator usually is standing beside the main male protagonist. Male character in the story can make things happened they control the events more than the audiences do. Spectators see women scopophilicly, with the image of the male set in an illusion of natural space and through the male character gaining control and possession of the women within the diegesis. Mulvey gives film examples to support her ideas:

To Have and Have not:

In this film, it started with woman as an object of the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonists in the film. The woman in this film is isolated and glamorous, she has been sexualized. In the narrative, the woman falls in love with the main actor and she is considered his property. The spectator may possess her, too, as the protagonist does.

Stenberg:

This movie produces the ultimate fetish as Mulvey mentions. There is a powerful look of the male as a protagonist broken in favor of image in direct erotic rapport with the audience or viewer. The movie uses the beauty of women as an object and the screen space too. There is an absence of a controlling male gaze within the screen scene. The emotional drama and the supreme moments of eroticism take place in the absence of the man the woman loves in the story.

Hitchcock:

The movie uses the process of identification normally associated with ideological correctness and the recognition of established morality and shows its perverted side - the man is always on the right side of the law and the woman on the wrong side. The view of the protagonist becomes the same view as that of the audience.

To summarize, Mulvey's perspective states that scopophilia is the love of looking at another person's sexual parts. Ego libido means forming identification processes. Mulvey mentions three different looks associated by the cinema, which are the camera records the pro-filmic events, the audience as it watches the final product, and the characters interacting with one another within the screen illusion. Mulvey assumes that women always having less important roles and men are always moving the narrative along.

Not many studies has been conducted on gender representations in American film posters. "The use of color in movie poster design," for Cecilia Fagerholm, is a study of four genres - science fiction, romantic comedy, action, and 3D animation. The study focuses on the color of the posters in relation with the genres and the study tried to find a relationship or differences between the genres in the designs. However, the study did not focus on gender representation or how women were represented in these posters.

Another book, Introduction to the Study of Film Form and Representation, by Wiley-Blackwell analyzes how American films have represented race, class, gender and sexuality. The core of this study is to focus on American history. The book also mentions the importance of studying how people are represented in movies and compares that with the real world. The book uses Lion King in 1994 as a case study. The book was useful to read but it mixed all the dimensions together (sex, class, race). In my study, I focus on gender representation in posters and this book focuses on the actors' roles in films.

One more study focuses on Bollywood film posters, which are the closest to my research questions. The study focuses on the importance of the posters to the films and the presentation of the actors. The study uses a case study method of the five most popular Indian film posters from1924 to 1995. The study analyzed the graphic and textual elements of the posters.

Another study, Reflection of Gendered Expectations - Representation of Women in American Film, by Kirk C. Hyde describes the representations of women in American movies. The study clarifies the use of the words "sex" and "gender" and makes a differentiation between both

words, according to some feminism theories. Gender means patterns of actions, behavior and participations. The term sex means the biological formation of the human being and it is related to nature. Usually, the definition of gender varies from culture to culture. The study sees men as privileged more than women. They express their opinion more passionate. In addition, women are passive, stay at homes, repressing their opinions and their expressions to situations and are quiet and tentative and they cannot do anything without men, waiting for their instructions. The study talks about the history of gender representations in American films made in the late 19th century. There was a combination of American and British work in the cinema because this time represented the Victorian Age in Britain. The women at this time are not participating in life. The films at this time misrepresent their actual duties and gender. They were represented as small, cute and defenseless. The study also talks about the participation of women in filmmaking. Women are always active behind the scenes. They are writers and co-writers, make-up artists, hair stylists and costume designers. There are also a number of female producers but the study considers that as a recent development and not yet a trend.

Methodology

Textual analysis is used to analyze 62 film posters. The films were all awarded Oscars. They are famous and popular films. The paper analyzed the existence of genders or who the dominant gender was in the film posters. There are two steps: The first step is to code the gender existence in the film posters. The second step is to write my observations and explanations about their representations qualitatively.

Equality between genders coding definitions

Poster Category	Definition
Female poster	This concept means there was a dominance of female/s in the poster.
Male poster	This concept means there was a dominance of male/s in the poster.
Both-Genders poster	Both genders exist in the poster with no differences in their appearance.
Other-Genders poster	Gays and lesbians represented in the posters. Which means when specific gender has features from other genders like woman dressed like man or vice versa.
No-Gender Poster	Posters with film titles or specific views.

Academy award for the best picture

This award is presented annually. It started in 1927 and 1928 and it had two categories, the outstanding picture and unique and artistic picture. Then in the following year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences removed the unique and artistic picture award. In that year, the

movie Wings was awarded the best picture Oscar. My sample are taken from 1950 to 2010s for best picture award. The reason of choosing this timeline because the study wanted to cover the whole film posters from the first year of academy award to this year.

Findings

RQ1: Gender's Appearance Equality

From the 1950s to 1960, no men existed in the posters at all and the film posters were only the non-gender category or women posters. From the 1960s to 1970, there were three UK films which were Oscar winners and the study did not include these films but the representation of women and men was almost equal – three film posters representing men and two representing women. From the 1970s to 1980, no women were represented and men received the higher percentage in their existence in the film posters. From the 1980s to 1990, men appeared more than women in posters did. However, women representation still existed in 1983. From the 1990s to 2000, six film posters had male actors and two portrayed women. Only two film posters, in 1991 and 1999, had both genders represented. From the 2000s to the 2010s, males existed in 15 film posters and three women existed in 2002 and 2004. This time represented none in the both gender category and no in the other gender category.

RQ2: Femininity Representations

From the 1950s to 1960 women represented make-up and were half-naked. However, from the 1960s to 1970 women represented love story relationships, high-class lifestyles, and dancing starts to appear for the first time. In addition, from the 1970s to 1980 formal dress and family representation appeared in both gender posters (with husband and children). From the 1980s to 1990, there is the first representation of mother and daughter, and the first poster representing a woman in an adventure with a man. From the 1990s to 2000, the decade included first full face posters, romantic relationships, and the first only body poster (American Beauty poster). From the 2000s to 2017, a new representation appeared from women with a ghost (The Shape of Water) a boxer player (Million Dollar Baby) and sex appeal (Chicago). Women appeared before men in the 1950s in the Gigi movie poster and the first appearance for men was in 1964 in the Lawrence of Arabia poster.

RQ3: Masculinity Representations

From the 1950s to 1960, no men existed in the posters at all and the posters represented only women and non-gender posters. Then, from the 1960s to 1970, there were new features in Hollywood, such as Arabic customs (adventure stories), investigation of crime, and cowboy customs. From the 1970s to 1980, male representation was more serious, such as police officer, two films represented holding guns, violent action, boxing and one film represented comedy. From the 1980s to 1990, new roles began to appear, such as magic costumes, two posters representing adventure, and sunglasses. From the 1990s to 2000, saw the first back profile poster (Forrest Gump), cowboys, army and first historical costumes and appearance (Braveheart). Finally, from the 2000s to 2017, men represented leadership roles, such as a king, artist, cowboy-style, weapons, guns, police officer, and mafia.

Conclusion

In summary, this paper has important findings from 62 film posters that were analyzed, according to gender representation and existence. The findings show that men were represented in the film posters more than women were. Men were depicted as more serious than women, such as investigating crime, holding guns or weapons or army or officer roles. Women, however, were depicted in family scenes, romantic relationships and with sex appeal. The findings suggest that, the criticism of feminist film's perception theory is proved through the study samples. This study need to focus on more sampling strategy such as; nominees and winners together in order to generalize the findings in all Hollywood movie posters.

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Film winners:

Year	Movie	Country
1950	All About Eve	US
1951	An American in Paris	US
1952	The Greatest Show on Earth	US
1953	From Here to Eternity	US
1954	On the Waterfront	US
1955	Marty	US
1956	Around the world in 80 Days	US
1957	The Bridge on the River Kwai	US
1958	Gigi	US
1959	Ben-Hur	US
1960	The Apartment	US
1961	West Side Story	US
1962	Lawrence of Arabia	US
1963	Tom Jones	UK

1964	My Fair Lady	US
1965	The Sound of Music	US
1966	A Man for all Seasons	UK
1967	In the Heat of the Night	US
1968	Oliver	UK
1969	Midnight Cowboy	US
1970	Patton	US
1971	The French Connection	US
1972	The Godfather	US
1973	The Sting	US
1974	The Godfather II	US
1975	One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest	US
1976	Rocky	US
1977	Annie Hall	US
1978	The Deer Hunter	US
1979	Kramer vs. Kramer	US
1980	Ordinary People	US
1981	Chariots of Fire	UK
1982	Gandhi	UK
1983	Terms of Endearment	US
1984	Amadeus	US
1985	Out of Africa	US
1986	Platoon	US
1987	The Last Emperor	UK
1988	Rain Man	US
1989	Driving Miss Daisy	US
1990	Dances with Wolves	US
1991	The Silence of the Lambs	US
1992	Unforgiven	US
1993	Schindler's List	US
1994	Forrest Gump	US
1995	Braveheart	US
1996	The English Patient	US
1997	Titanic	US
1998	Shakespeare in Love	US
1999	American Beauty	US
2000	Gladiator	US
2001	A Beautiful Mind	US
2002	Chicago	US
2003	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	US
2004	Million Dollar Baby	US
2005	Crash	US
2006	The Departed	US
2007	No Country for Old Men	US

2008	Slumdog Millionaire	US
2009	The Hurt Locker	US
2010	The King's Speech	UK
2011	The Artist	US
2012	Argo	US
2013	12 Years a Slave	US
2014	Birdman	US
2015	Spotlight	US
2016	Moonlight	US
2017	The Shape of Water	US