Framing Femininity: Analyzing Visual Objectification and Gender Dynamics in Hollywood Movie Posters Through Semiotic and Sociocultural Lenses

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study examines the portrayal of women in visual media by applying Peirce's Semiotic Theory and Goffman's Gender Representation Framework. By analysing how female bodies are fragmented, sexualized, and commodified in movie posters, the research uncovers how this representation of media reinforces patriarchal gender dynamics and cultural norms. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis reveals that women are overwhelmingly predominantly depicted as passive and sexualized objects, often devoid of agency. The study contributes to existing literature by emphasizing the need for more equitable media portrayals and proposing strategies for challenging existing norms. The findings underscore the subtle yet significant influence of visual gender stereotypes and their broader cultural implications. The findings further highlight the importance of addressing visual gender stereotypes and their broader cultural impacts. **Key Words:** Visual Objectification; Semiotics; Gender Representation; Media, Movie Posters; Female Sexualization; Gender Stereotypes; Goffman; Peirce

Introduction

Movie posters are not just a means of advertising a film. Instead, they are vivid examples of visual semiotics containing implicit and hidden social messages. Semiotic criticism has been used to interpret the meanings hidden in those posters and how they enforce stereotyped gender portrayals, especially in Hollywood movies (Chen & Gao, 2014) From this perspective, scholars have examined the representation of women in films, especially the Power Dynamics that appear within the industry and society (Kou, 2023). As such, this research would look at visual and textual components to critique understanding of the hidden ideologies that shape the audience.

 The movie poster analysis incorporates multimodal discourse analysis of images, texts, designs and cultural and cognitive aspects (Budiastono, 2024). Academic scholars are also interested in industry practices and promotional campaigns and understand posters as critical resources for communicating expectations and impressions to the target audience (Song, 2023). Suppose scholars index the development of female characters in teasers of Hollywood pictures. Scholars analyzed the evolution of female character portrayals in Hollywood movie teasers and detected broader societal changes explaining how cultural and sexual messages are re-created and promulgated (Dehchenari et al., 2014). These approaches from various disciplines enhance the understanding of how and why movie posters are themselves, signifying cultural formation in the landscape of cinema.

Background of Study

Women have also been featured in the posters of Hollywood movies, in particular, scholars have theorized studying how promotional materials draw and define gender perceptions. Similarly, quality research like Dehchenari et al. (2014) employing critical discourse analysis and social semiotics examined how, through three generations of action movie posters, romantic or erotic representation of women changed. Finally, Song (n.d.) mentioned the function of the movie poster on audiences' perception of the film and the genre

categorization, while Wi et al. (2020) recommended implementing innovative tools for further analysis. Karupiah (2014) and Steinke (2005) also continued articulating the continuing prescriptive portrayal of women and how such images affect the broader culture, particularly women's roles in science and technology. Switching to regional Indian cinema enables analysis of gender representations in the different social and cultural worlds of India than those depicted as a part of Hollywood globalization. The standpoint emphasizes ways in which indigenous media constructs women and their roles, especially in careers such as science and technology.

Moving further from the cinema of Hollywood, Jose (2023) investigated the semiotics of regional Indian movie posters, while Linh (2021) looked at the use of multimodal discourse in posters for romantic comedy films. Both analyses focus on capturing the target audience visually and via language to draw the audience's attention. Karniouchina et al. (2022) also touched upon the lack of representation of women and minorities in filmmaking, explaining this by militarizing Hollywood. Altogether, these works illustrate that the semiotic approach to analyzing movie posters encompasses substantial knowledge of how gender discourses and culture narratives function in the large and are disseminated through the field of vision.

Rationale of the study

The study analyses the representation of women in headless movie posters; it seeks to understand the portrayal of gender stereotypes and the male gaze in visualization. Using Peirce's Semiotic Theory and Goffman's Gender Representation Framework, it examines how women's sexuality is packaged, paying particular attention to the objectification of their bodies. Film posters are used as powerful visual tools, and not only inform about the attitudes of society towards femininity but also perpetuate patriarchal narratives and diminish women's agency. However, they also tend to perpetuate patriarchal narratives. This often diminishes women's agency.

Research Objectives

The objectives formulated for the current study are:
- To identify the visual objectification of women as a socio-cultural phenomenon.
- To examine the commodification of women as capital in the media industry.
- To investigate the dehumanization of women through the lens of the male gaze theory.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following are the research questions:
1. How do movie posters visually objectify women using semiotic elements such as icons, indexes, and symbols?
2. How does Goffman's Gender Representation Framework help understand power dynamics and objectification?
3. What are the broader socio-cultural implications of these representations regarding gender identity and patriarchal power structures?

Significance of the study

The importance of this research is based on the identified gap within the semiotic approach to gender representations in visual cultures, television, and advertisements with an emphasis on movie posters. Applying Peirce's Semiotic Theory and Goffman's Gender Representation Framework, the research offers a detailed critical understanding of how women are visually sexualized and commodified in mass media imagery. Analysing what has remained in the background movie posters, but which can indeed play a crucial role, reveals how normalized and insidious these representations of women perpetuate the damaging gender stereotype, patriarchal norms, and restrictive expectations towards femininity and women's sexuality.

Moreover, this work extends the existing literature on media portrayal by showing how cultural and social trends within media imagery influence viewers' assessments and perpetuate gender disparities. It provides a theoretical framework to understand the objectification of women's bodies as sites of socio-cultural process, adding to the feminist theory literature, film studies and semiotics analysis. The research findings encourage extending the studies of intersectional relations of gender, race, and sexuality while providing practical suggestions for media makers to include women in various forms of media without negative portrayal.

Literature Review

The depiction of women in movie posters has been considered a significant concern in visual media analysis. With these concepts in mind, many of these posters concern the aspect of cultural reality and the expectations of women and their perceived power and sexual prowess. Following Steinke (2005), the images of women on the posters are usually stereotyped according to their gender when they are represented as scientists or

engineers. Song (2023) takes this further and measures gender bias in terms of visibility, location, and size of female characters in movie posters, which once more demonstrates the segregation of women in visual media. Also, in her article titled "They Watch, They Judge: How Movie Posters Shape Women's Reception among Heterosexual Male Audiences" Linh (2021) stresses that linguistic and visual components are used to create the audience in question and argues that, while promoting films, those movie posters also propagate specific cultural views on women.

Feminist Film Theory and Semiotics in Media
Feminist film theory offers the conceptual tools for deciphering women's images in visual culture and how patriarchal discourses are established in them. According to Shahid and Kumar (2018), movie posters are promotional tools that manipulate spectators' attitudes and moods and force them to follow stereotypes when representing women. Critiques offered by feminism, hence, are relevant in unravelling how the female sex is locked out for defined roles in media and the replication of the gender hierarchy that enshrouds women's existence.

Visual Media and Gender Representation
Regarding movie posters, women are portrayed similarly to women in the rest of society. "In Gender in Fantasy Television", Steinke (2005) argues that such portrayals offer insight into society's perceptions of gender power relations. Song (2023) supports decoding visual and media texts, especially on movie posters. On the other hand, Dehchenari et al. (2014) identified a shift in women's roles, portrayed in action movie posters. Additionally, they also noticed evolving trends regarding both romantic and erotic portrayals of women in posters. images of women. These altering representations are typical of other portrayals of women in media to show the arguably fluid representation of gender portrayal in movies.

Gender Stratification in Social Media
Women's portrayal is not just limited to movie posters but also other social media platforms. Pramaskara (2022), using the concept of stratification regarding gender, portrays how utterance and visual semiotics perpetuate gender polarization. Resultantly, gendered images are negotiated across the different media, highlighting the call for diversity. This applies to the beheading of ladies on television and the Web, thereby asserting the objectification of females even in this age. The on-screen beheadings of women in television and online content perpetuate the objectification of females, an unsettling reality that persists in this modern era.

Application of Peirce's Semiotics in Media Studies
Various disciplines, including philosophy, communication, and cultural studies, have utilized the semiotic theory of Peirce. Wardhani (2023) used Peirce's semiotic approach to analyze the communication messages of beauty influencers on YouTube to show how the 'Braille' of visual and textual signification operates at different semiotic levels. Similarly, Timmermans and Tavory (2020) employed Peirce's semiotics to examine racism and demonstrate how racism works with and through the constitutive and erased concepts in social reality. The two works describe the universal applicability of Peirce's semiotics as a framework for understanding intricate sociocultural processes, thus establishing the importance of semiotics in media contexts.

Semiotics in Cultural Representation
Peirce's semiotic theories have also been used to interpret cultural assets and tourist spots. In the same paper by Dimache (2023), the author investigated the dark semiotics through Peirce's typologies to determine these representations' cultural and symbolic significance. By analysing this work, modern culture has found another key to constructing meaning, which is using visual signs. Studying symbols, indexes and icons in the media can help look for things that are not seen but are performative in constructing societal perceptions.

Gender Stereotyping in Film Posters
Sex objectification has become a topic of considerable interest concerning gendered representation in movie posters and how men and women are portrayed. Song (2023) examined the sample Hollywood movie posters collected over 60 years to explain how gender bias worked on Hollywood movie posters through the visibility of characters, position, and size of characters. The study discusses the ongoing issues of gender inequalities and roles still prevalent in visual media. In a recent work, Annisa and Manullang (2022) considered the Mulan (2020) movie as a textual example to talk about semiotic representations of gender. These works fit into the general body of literature on gender and how women are portrayed visually in media.

Culture and Semiotics in Media
Thellefsen (2024) and Astuti (2023) view semiotics' role in better understanding a given society's cultural practices and norms. Thellefsen is the author of publications on semiotics applied to information science, particularly decoding meaning in cultural surroundings. The study done by Astuti identified the role of symbols in depicting the culture and explored how signification assists in decoding cultural objects. This work sheds light on the process of the semiotic analysis of different kinds of media and the effects of movie posters on cultural and gendered bias.

Evaluating movie posters given this semiotic and analysing their view of women using the feminism movie theory has been insightful. Maharani's (2023) study of women's portrayal in Hollywood movie posters falls under the general theme of gender roles in media, an area of research that requires consideration of semiotics. In evaluating body poses, garments, and facial features, the researchers can advance their knowledge regarding gender representation in visuals and the need for women's representation in motion pictures and commercials.

Goffman's Gender Representation Framework

Using Erving Goffman's theory of gender representation to critique visual media, especially advertisements and motion pictures, is a brilliant way to dissect the relationship between perceived gender and media placed gender roles and the corresponding power relations. His book Gender Advertisements, published in 1979, describes how women are presented in a state of submission or as mere sexual objects. Goffman identifies three primary mechanisms by which women are subordinated and objectified in visual media: seduction, castration, and permission to regress.

Dismemberment is a concept that tags along with objectification as it invents a way of limiting women's bodies to legs, midriff or breasts instead of presenting women as complete beings with other body parts that make up the whole woman. The focused depiction of these body parts undermines women's subjectivity, merely objectified and fetishized for viewers' consumption (Goffman, 1979). This practice is seen in most movies, posters, billboards, and other media advertising, where the women are depicted as fragments, hence being commodified into something that the male folks desire.

The second key concept in Goffman's framework is what he calls the ritualization of subordination. It concerns the portrayal of women in subordinate, helpless, or objectified roles that continue unbalanced power relations between male and female characters where the former is represented as an active agent and the latter a passive dependent. For example, the roles given to women depict them as incapable of making their own decisions in the face of a male-dominated authority. This fuels women's victimization theory, where women are depicted as always waiting to be dominated by males or protected by them, thereby maintaining the stratified gender relations in society (Goffman, 1979). In movie posters, these are evident as most of the women are depicted perennially and subdued by the male character.

The concept of licensed withdrawal in television content means that women are portrayed as withdrawn mentally or emotionally from objects in television programs, different from active male characters. Licensed withdrawal is a television content metaphor where women are shown as being psychologically absent or distanced from the objects around them or the viewer. In this state, they can be depicted with a blank face, look down or be taken Southeast; in other words, they lack emotion and are passive, (Goffman, 1979). Such representation of women makes them more of an object that the media consumer must look at and interact with as an object. This goes a long way in supporting the thought that women are objects of our sight and not humans capable of making decisions for themselves.

As a single, these three concepts make up a forceful criticism of how visual media choices render women subordinate to men through the fetishization of conventional gender roles. The present framework must have been applied several times to interpret advertising, films, and other cultural screens to consider how gender folkways are produced in society. Therefore, wherever women's bodies are dissected or objectified, their postures dominated, or their gazes eroded, it is possible, in the spirit of Heidegger's analysis of technology, to comprehend how and why visual media remain the chief agent in the persistent violation of womenfolk. This framework is constructive in examining the representation of women in movie posters as these practices to seek male audiences and promote patriarchal tropes are often applied here.

Methodology

This study adopts both content analysis as a quantitative research method and semiotic analysis as the qualitative research approach to comprehensively capture the visual objectification of women in Hollywood movie posters. The adoption of these compounded methodologies allowed for a sound investigation of the quantitative aspects of gender representation, while at the same time understanding the qualitative cultural connotations of the images.

Data Collection and Sampling

The sample for the study is 30 Hollywood film posters containing discursive representations of women's bodies and fragmented or disembodied images of women. These posters belong to different genres, including romantic comedies, thrillers, and horror flicks. This selection ranges from the year 2000 to the year 2020, thus having temporal dispersion that may show media representation changes over two decades.

The criteria for choosing examples were based on the prevalence with which women's sexualized bodies were objectified as headless. To extract gender representation patterns normalized for genres, posters were coded based on a structured coding framework. A total of 30 posters were selected, with equal representation from each genre:

• Romantic comedy (10 posters)
• Thrillers (10 posters)

• Horror films (10 posters)
This dataset allows capturing a general approach to how various genres employ visual semiotics to support, subvert, or commodify gender norms in promotion.

Coding Process
A codebook was created following procedures for conducting content analysis as outlined by Krippendorff (2018), in combination with semiotics by Peirce (1931) and gendered theories from Goffman (1979). The following vital variables were coded:
• **Body Fragmentation.** Checking whether women were depersonalized visually and exposed to overt sexual objectification if their head was cut off if they were depicted only from the waist up or kneeling.
• **Sexualization.** Assessing the level of sexualization from the clothes the women wore, their positions, and how the female sexual body was constructed in the frame (Goffman, 1979; Mulvey, 1975).
• **Positioning**. Here, I began to code for the prominence given to the female figure regardless of whether she was focal or marginal to the image.
• **Genre-Specific Trends.** Observations were made using the analysis of romantic comedies, thrillers, and horror films as reference points.
The researcher conducted the coding independently, with a substantial intercoder reliability of 0.85 on the Cohen's Kappa scale.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis
The present qualitative study explores the semiotic meaning of Hollywood film posters regarding the cultural referents of women; the theoretical frameworks employed are those by Peirce and Goffman. This paper discusses how elements of dismemberment, sexualization and subordination are implicitly woven into these images. It is because of deconstructing the gender analysis by concentrating on the iconic, indexical, and symbolic aspects of the posters that this study can expose how women are represented and sexualised within media. The analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how Hollywood marketing strategies perpetuate gender stereotypes through visual portrayals of women, covering three key genres: romantic, horror and thriller movie posters.
The qualitative analysis of horror movie posters in this study focuses on the symbolic and cultural meanings behind the portrayal of women, mainly how their bodies are visually fragmented, sexualized, and victimized.

The poster of *Little Deaths*

Drawing on Peirce's semiotic theory and Goffman's archetypal analysis, this work aims to identify the role of the mentioned elements, as well as sexualized vulnerability, in the poster with a female figure. The elements of the image are the woman with exposed flesh and bloodstains on the body. This body part is associated with

eros, whereas blood alludes to Thanatos. The dichotomist depiction of a woman's body invites an aesthetically ambivalent interplay between sensuality and violence, between temptation and homicide.

The indexical elements will give us extra information to understand this visual story. This means the violence equivalent, the blood on her body, shows that she has been abused or is involved in a heinous crime. She is now positioned with her head downturned, thus suggesting withdrawal and submissiveness. The directions of this body language suggest that the woman is submissive and passive, continuing the theme of her being a passive participant in violence or seduction. This passivity is further compounded by the absence of a direct gaze at the viewer, thus robbing her of active subjectivity and, instead, sexualizing her.

Additionally, symbolic features explain the poster's meaning on the same level. When these symbols are combined, the reader is left wondering whether the woman and her beauty have led to violence. The symbolization makes her both a sexualized conquest and a victim, which is one of the most familiar strategies to depict women in media, where closeness and peril merge.

According to Goffman, in interaction with the organization of the advertisement, the analysis resembles the female figure in that while the woman's body is very much featured in the poster, only half of her face is shown. Such fragmentation of her identity leaves her as a vulnerable sexual entity whose boy is an easy catch in the predatory arena of patriarchally coded masculinity. Not being able to see the woman's face reduces her to a sexual object and does not represent her as a person.

The emasculation is also evident in the woman's behaviors being passive throughout the process of the ritualization of subordination. She has her back facing the audience, and the appearance of blood makes her look more like a victim. This can be related to the traditional gender roles in marriage where a wife, for instance, would be seen as a passive entity, waiting on the husband to make something happen to her. In this way domestic violence is normalized as part of marriage, a woman is supposed to endure. Altogether, these elements converge to sexualize the woman's body, portraying it as an object of desire or potential violence, while denying the woman herself agency and empowerment.

Last, the licensed withdrawal can be seen in the woman's face, which is obscured, and she does not even look at the viewer. In which the lady has covered her face, the poster erases on an emotional or psychological level and objectifies the woman as something to be looked at. Her role is confined to providing an ongoing or beating figure for Alberto, further enhancing her abdication as an active figure in the story.

Thus, this poster uses the semiotics of bare skin, blood, and fragmented body image to develop themes of postmodern vulnerability, seductive sensuality, and violence. Pornographic imagery is crucial to the discussion of the woman's body, with the woman being a sexual object as well as a victim in the story. Thus, using Peirce's Semiotic Theory and Goffman's Framework, one may understand that the woman is turned into an object of sexual desire as the victim of harassment, which is typical not only for horror and exploitation media but also for the representations of gender roles.

The qualitative analysis of thriller movie posters in this study investigates how women's bodies are depicted through a blend of sexualization, fragmentation, and vulnerability.
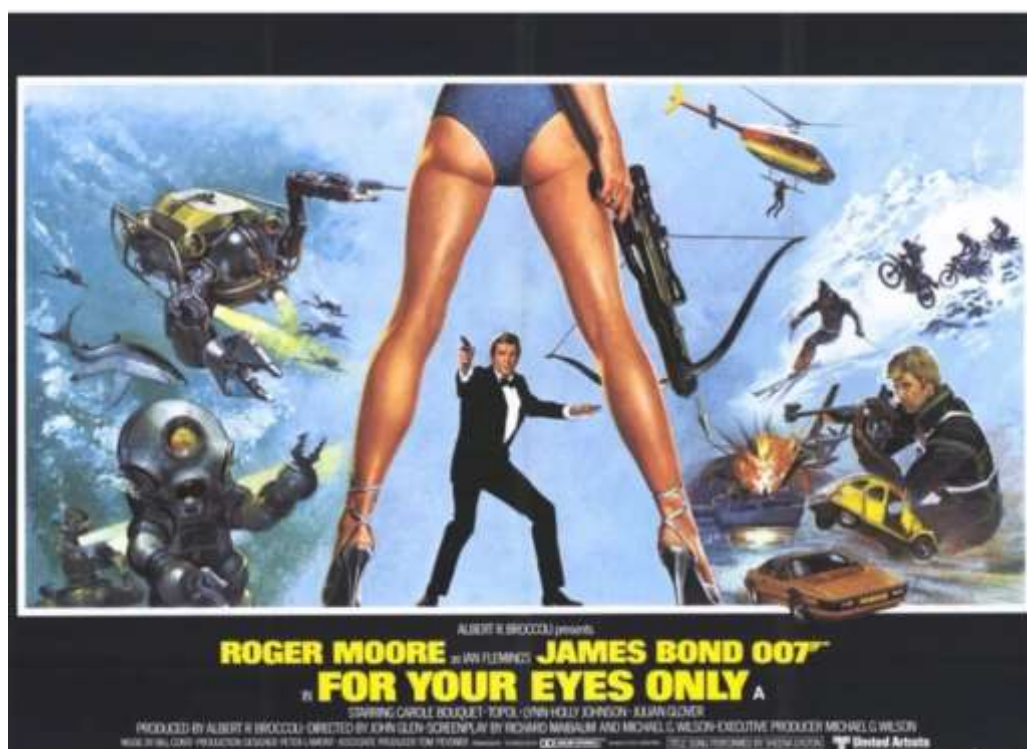
The *For Your Eyes Only* poster

Using Peirce's Semiotic Theory and Goffman's Framework to analyze the "For Your Eyes Only" poster, it is easy to see how the male and female figures depicted are different and depict contrasting characteristics. The linguistic elements include the legs of the woman in the foreground, the body of a woman who has been sexually objectified with a swimsuit on, and the model pose. On the one hand, the man with jazz notes, glasses, and an axe is between her feet, meaning action, control, and masculinity, as if James Bond were in a suit with a gun. Older logos, including explosions, helicopters, and divers in the water, correspond to the concept of the series' reckless and risky atmosphere.

Even the indexical elements point towards the references to gender in the poster. Paying attention and focus to the woman's legs also eroticizes her, and displaces her from the frame, turning her into an object that serves only to satisfy a man's gaze; positioning, pose, and grip on the gun imply Bond's mastery over the situation. Weapons and an exploding ship superimpose the feel of danger, thrill, and violence inherent to the Bond story. This contrast of the sex object female body to the Macho male air further emphasizes the standard roles often displayed in Bond movies; women are vamping stock bodies that are primarily for the eye and exist primarily for Bond, who is the dominantly active hero of the picture.

Posters' signs amplify these ideas. The legs of the woman represent the consumers' view of women in the media, especially in action movies where women are portrayed as mere sex objects. The gun symbolizes authority, control, and masculinity, and the action points, such as expulsion and helicopters, symbolize danger, thrill, and harm. These symbols remain as sexual and violent motifs associated with the depiction of gender that dominates the Bond franchise. According to Goffman, the image erases the woman, and although it is a publicity of jeans, it only presents her legs; her face and the upper body are missing. This fragmentation infantilizes her, thereby erasing her agency besides objectifying her sexually, an aspect that revives gender inequalities in media. The ritualization of subordination here is evident from her provocative stance and her subordinate role as the background figure for Bond, who is dominant in the frame. Thus, while Bond is placed between her legs, the overall idea of gender hierarchy is underlined, according to which a woman is reduced to the status of mere scenery for a hero. Finally, licensed withdrawal is evident when the woman's face is omitted from the picture and excluded from the film since it has no psychological aspect. She is an object for the look of the male viewer without any involvement or contribution towards the action, thus underlining her function as a sex symbol, not an actor.

Thus, the poster "For Your Eyes Only" reflects the stereotyped perception of gender roles in Bond's movies. The woman's employment is an object of sexual objectification; she is there merely for the male hero, and Bond is represented as the latter's master. The fragmentation, sexualization, and lack of interaction with her discourse of the female character as an object and Bond, acting as the masterful hero, enforces the machismo, power, and violent nature of the series.

The qualitative analysis of romantic movie posters in this study examines the subtle yet pervasive ways in which women's bodies are depicted, focusing on their sexualization and objectification.

The poster of Hall Pass

This analysis relies on Peirce's Semiotic Theory as well as Goffman's Framework for a poster where the focal point is a woman's crotch area, which is shown wearing a red bikini, and the remaining right half of the picture shows two men staring at her. The erotic features in the given picture are the woman's legs and lower body, which are illustrated as objects of the male sexual gaze. The bikini, a quintessential symbol of beach and

summer, perpetuates the dominant representation of the woman. Notably, the faces of the men smiling and looking at her buttocks are way too contained for their sleaziness. This covertly pornographic depiction of a woman's nude torso condones patriarchy for ritualization of gaze, standardizing as much as validating male's prerogative for sexual pleasure.

The indexically marked aspects take up the idea of objectification. The looks on the men's faces, paired with the camera's emphasis on the woman's body, leave an air of sexual desire and objectification. The red bikini symbolizes the beach and the position of the woman as a sexual object in the film plot at the same time. The looks on the faces of the men, combined with the tight camera angle capturing only her body, indicate that the woman here is simply eye candy or a piece of meat.

The iconographical features are also of great importance here. This interpretation of the film has thus innocently portrayed what can be interpreted as cultural rape by sex pests and perverts by presenting a woman in a red bikini. Still, the men's gazes are representative of the broader concept of the male gazing culture, where the female body is objectified as an item meant to be consumed by male folks. Thus, the position of the poster tends to follow some of the critical cultural cliches that depict female bodies as sexual. In contrast, male characters behave as those who watch or participate in the scene.

According to Goffman, it is necessary to argue that the woman's body is eroticized and fragmented in this poster. Another way of objectifying the woman is through cropping, her head and face are missing from the image, while her legs and lower body are visible. This sort of dismemberment thus supports the process of objectification by transforming her into an object of male sexuality without subjectivity. In other words, the new standard for a woman's body reduces her to a physical entity, robbing her of agency, intellect, and subjective experience. Her face is blurred, followed by the lower region of her body, showing that she is more of an object of a male fantasy rather than an independent whole individual.

Rising from the seated position also symbolizes ritualization of subordination in the sense that the woman bows, turns towards the back, and faces the men. She is submissive. Despite her nudity and being positioned in such a glossy, pole-dancing-like manner, she has no agency and is objectified. In contrast, the men have agency, are fully clothed, their faces are visible, and they are expressing themselves. Such dynamics contribute to underpinning Goffman's Subordination Theory, in which women are economically and socially positioned in passive positions while men align themselves as active.

Finally, the licensed withdrawal is seen in the fact that the woman has her back turned, which results in her face being entirely missing from the picture, she is an alien to the scene and the observer. The semantic involvement eradicates her, and she turns into the object whose function is to be looked at. This reality fits Goffman's state of 'Licensed Withdrawal,' The woman is not even a character in the narrative but a passive object to be consumed, and I suppose that is precisely what she is.

Consequently, the element of the poster complies with several points of Peirce's semiotic analysis and Goffman's approach and argues for the objectification of the female body. The capacity of the woman and domination by the man through their looks, she turns into an object of sexual prowess, and the position of the men also objectifies her as a passive entity of lust. What this does is fall right in line with what seems to be standard media portrayal of women, where they are stripped of any power and are instead made into objects for the sexual gratification of men, fully embodying the objectification that seems to exist for visuals in Western societies.

Quantitative Content Analysis

The quantitative content analysis of the study assessed the amount and degree of objectification concerning frequency and subtypes of visualization within a sample of a hundred movie posters in the romance, comedy, action, and thriller genres. Following the coding categories coined from prior research on visual gender representation (Mulvey, 1975; Goffman, 1979), we recorded measures of dismemberment, sexualization, and symbolic commodification of women. This enabled us to determine to what extent female characters are portrayed as passive or sexually appealing objects about their placement, size and visibility vis-à-vis the male characters. For instance, regarding body diss, fifty per cent of the posters looked at depicted the severing of women's bodies in a way that fragmentary body elements were emphasized over whole subjects.

The qualitative semiotic analysis also provided a more specific cultural framing to these results by considering cultural connotations and the representations of gender in the posters. When coding the programmes applying Peirce's Semiotic Theory and Goffman's Gender Representation Framework, we read the glossy signs: icons, indexes, and symbols and distil them into objectification commodification of female figures. First, we considered how symbols, including exposed legs or partial exposure of the midriff, indicate compliance with traditional mnemonic representations of female sex appeal; indexes, including body language and choice of clothing (short skirts or high heels), signify availability, vulnerability, or sexual suggestiveness. Furthermore, we explored how colour was employed symbolically conventionally to distinguish between love and peril or triumph and conquest or to employ images such as tattoos or barcodes to reassert the binary gender division and represent women as objects for sale. The semiotic analysis showed that the analyzed posters met the criteria of sexualization in 75% of cases as they use signs that assign women a role of desire or danger, and 60% of the analyzed posters presented women as the subject of a sexual story.

This mixed-methods design allowed an exploration and understanding of how women are represented in movie posters in a way that will encompass gender, power, and sexuality in society. Furthermore, it enabled us to identify how objectification is depicted within the movies of different genres compared with romantic comedies, which are depicted encouraging women objectification playfully. In contrast, action or thriller movies depict such objectification within the framework of violence or predation. It is this broad and thorough scope of analysis that offers a crucial understanding of how Hollywood movie posters maintain the objectification of women and how they contribute to the maintenance of patriarchal dogmas in presentation.

Discussion

The Role of Icon, Index, and Symbol in Female Objectification

The examination of the movie posters shows how icons, indexes, and symbols help maintain the sexual objectification of women in movies. By featuring the woman's body, particularly the belly, legs, and torso, it becomes evident that women are simply objects of desire. These portrayals also exemplify the male gaze in that the body parts serve as objects of their culture within a structure that perpetuates women as objects (Patria et al., 2021). The indexes, such as the postures, costumes, and stances employed in the process, deepen the portrayal and construction of women as sexually accessible and submissive or subjugated bodies. Touching her apparel, for example, the skirt or stances that highlight body parts, informs her body as a consumable commodity through the male's gaze, thus supporting commodification (Utami et al., 2021).

Objects such as the short skirt, red heels and lingerie remain cultural symbols of sexual availability and our desire. Hue like red, fabled to denote passion and seduction, turns this into an objectification of a sexually available commodity. Laying women down or putting them in such submissive positions also helps in categorizing women as non-people, who do not own their bodies. These tales are supported by other text features, including the use of the word 'bait' to illustrate women as objects of sexual or even voyeuristic pleasure. Such images and cultural signifiers persist in endorsing societal roles of women as sexual commodities, thus maintaining gendered power dynamics in media portrayals (Dolan, 2020; Shahid & Kumar, 2018).

Goffman's Framework Applied to Gender Representation

Concerning representations of women within visual media, primarily through eroticization, the female's body image is distorted, and her body is seen as an object, some parts of it, like chest and the abdomen, the legs or the waist. As a result, this practice dehumanizes women by denying them their personalities and pretty much turning them into sexual objects that are classified by ethnic origin. Suppose media, including movie posters, only depict body parts, especially the part of a woman's body. In that case, she is depicted as a sex object where her personality is not depicted at all. This fragmentation does not only continue the male gaze, which turns women into objects of consumption but also social norms that should appreciate women's beauty rather than their intelligence and personality (Rapanot et al., 2021; Albawardi & Jones, 2021). The visual message becomes clear: women are depicted as pretty and sexually accessible, available for the male gaze, silent figures with no personality or voice.

This is in observation of Goffman's (1979) postulation that dismemberment conforms with the ritual of subordination, where women are depicted more as being helpless or relatively powerless. In fragmented bodies, women are presented as passive vessels of sexual desire, having no power to act or speak. This method, which can be observed in most advertisements and movie posters, reproduces a harmful patriarchal narrative by the portrayal of women as silenced objects that lack agency and are bound by the whims of the audience. These portrayals continue to accustom the American public to depersonalize and dehumanize women, thus objectifying them and reducing them to mere sexually appealing objects, to be for patriarchal power (Tortajada et al., 2013; Krijnen et al., 2012).

Broader Cultural Implications

Visual objectification of women is autonomous with vast cultural consequences since it sets standards for gender norms. Suppose a woman is depicted as a sex symbol, icon or stereotyped image, and others constantly reproduce this semiotics. In that case, they only contribute to forming the patriarchal culture in which masculinity prevails, and femininity is only passive. The notion of the male gaze, articulated by Goffman (1979) and Bordo (1993), represents women as objects of sexual possession to gay males, thus continuing the social construction of male superiority and female inferiority.

However, such representations of women as objects of sexual desire further support the negative gender roles and thus continue to perpetuate the existing gender injustices. The female subject is depicted solely by the standards of eroticised beauty, which means that the woman is deprived of decision-making and rationality. This results in remaining patriarchy by subjugating women and upholding male entitlement and gender segregation. To tackle such problems, changes to the representation of women in visual media and changing cultural paradigms of sexualization must be parsed out and examined. It is, therefore, essential and reasonably

achievable that Putri and Nurochman (2021) underscore that media containing gender equity and gender stereotypes defy traditional gender roles to ensure natural social justice.

Conclusion

The semiotic analysis and theoretical framework of gender representation employed in this study provide a critical lens through which the objectification of women in media can be understood. The findings highlight how women's bodies are often fragmented into symbolic parts legs, midriffs, or other physical features stripped of individuality and reduced to anonymous sexual objects meant to cater to the male gaze. This aligns with Goffman's assertion that women are deprived of autonomy and portrayed as commodities rather than individuals. Furthermore, 75% of the posters analyzed objectified women through positions, attire, and movements, consistent with Peirce's semiotic theory, emphasizing the persistent reinforcement of patriarchal narratives.

The study also reveals how genre-specific portrayals amplify this issue: romantic comedies depict women as playful, while thriller and horror films often justify their sexualization by portraying them in demeaning or victimized roles. Elements such as clothing, colour symbolism, and body positioning further enhance this objectification; for instance, the dual symbolism of red representing both love and violence reinforces the commercial commodification of women.

These findings underscore the pressing need to challenge how visual media perpetuates patriarchal discourses and normalizes the sexualization of women. By observing these patterns, this study advocates for a more critical examination of gender representation in the media and calls for alternative portrayals that emphasize women's agencies and multidimensional identities. Addressing these issues is essential for disrupting the cyclical reinforcement of gender hierarchies in visual culture and fostering more equitable representation in the media.

The semiotic analysis and theoretical framework of gender representation will enable this study to portray the objectification of women in media. Among the culturally built images of women examined, one can highlight the fact that women's bodies are regularly depicted as absurd and split into logical parts like legs, a midriff, etc., and that women are represented as anonymous sexual objects without their faces, which indicates that women are only meant to satisfy men. This view accords with Goffman's perception that women are stripped of their autonomy and are viewed as mere commodities.

This study also confirmed that 75% of the posters objected to women through positions, dressing and movements consistent with Peirce's semiotics theory. Different movies depict women in different ways; more so, the kind of genre used determines how women are sexualised; for instance, romantic comedy movies portray women as playful, while thriller and horror movies justify the act by portraying women in rather ill ways. Other elements such as clothing, colour options, and body positioning also enhance the commercialization of women; red stands for both love and violence, thus making women represent sexual commodities.

The current study offers a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the objectification of women in the media. It reveals that patriarchal discourses continue to dominate, and women's bodies remain the focus of sexualization across various media platforms. The study finally advocates for increased unlikelihood on how visual media continues to subordinate women and adds to the Stream of consciousness as far as gender representation in visual culture is concerned.

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