

Representation Of Headless Women: A Feminist Stylistic Analysis Of Visuals In Hollywood Movie Posters

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ABSTRACT

This research paper looks at the representation of headless women in visuals of Hollywood movie posters. The sample images were collected through online sources; which display sexist representation of women by exposing and fragmenting their body parts. It aims to deal with the visual objectification of women through feminist stylistics by Sara Mills and visual semiotics theory involving Charles Sanders Pierce triadic model (1903) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1990's) concept of sign to identify what impact it creates on our society through predictive programming. It aims to draw attention towards media which is blatantly exposing women and presenting them as sexual objects. It focuses on Feminist stylistics analysis and visual semiotic analysis of headless women posters which dehumanize the gender of female in society. This paper analyzes the selected images in detail to put light on the trope of headlessness which are a reason for itemization of female bodily autonomy. This research also helped to shed light on the politics of media industry which take entertainment activities such as; movies a reason to earn and exploit public by provoking them sexually and providing them pleasure by exceeding ethical constraints. The representation of women only as a piece of meat or flesh snatches away their existence as a living human being with intellectual abilities.

Keywords: Headless women, Feminist stylistics, visual semiotics, triadic model, Objectification, Itemization, Dehumanizing

Introduction

The concept of headless women is a gender sensitive issue from past many years in filmography. "Headless women" in this research refers to the portrayal of headless women in movie posters. By decapitating the woman, or fragmenting her body into decontextualized sexual parts, she becomes an unquestionably passive object to the male gaze. This issue was raised by Marcia Belsky on her Tumblr page. She had been posting on faceless women, but unfortunately this issue is yet not taken seriously. No research papers are present arguing on this issue except a few online articles. The act of fragmentation or itemization of women's body parts snatch her existence as a person. This trope displays women as "things" to be looked at making their space vulnerable. And they are used as "props" in such advertisements selling through exposing their body parts. CJ YEH (graphic design professor) says, "The fashion industry is notorious when it comes to using clothes to objectify women", he said, "There's that old saying, 'SEX SELLS.'" (Liffreing, 2016)

According to Sara Mills in her book *Feminist Stylistics* she refers to various aspects of language that can be identified in a feminist perspective through her work. This research incorporates the stylistic devices she discussed in her book like Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's), Althusser's Interpellation, multiple positioning, and discourse. Moreover, it looked into the aspects of semiotics to evaluate images in detail. Ferdinand De Saussure theory of sign is in which drawings, words, and pictures can be signs which convey meaning. This research is based on Peirce's triadic model which altogether refers to visual semiotics. It helped to evaluate the images and the concept behind it that is signified through any representation.

1.1 Significance of the Study:

This research work is substantial in the field of linguistics, feminism and media. It is different from the previously conducted researches because it does not mainly identify objectification of women but a new concept of “headlessness” where women are considered just as flesh with no brain or choice of their own.

1.3 Rationale:

The rationale of this research was to undermine the aspects that are used in media to propagate sexist visual representations. It focuses on the areas of feminist stylistics and semiotics to build a road map for identification and evaluation of such stereotypical ideological concepts prevailing in our society.

1.4 Research Objectives:

The current research aims:

- To evaluate images of headless women through visual semiotics and feminist stylistic theories in linguistics.
- To identify visual objectification of women done through sexist movie posters.
- To find out the stereotypical ideology behind these images.
- To point out objectification of bodily autonomy through the concepts of stylistics in feminism.

1.5 Research Questions:

This research has been done to examine the extent to which the tools of semiotics and feminist stylistics aid in popular media.

Q: How does sexist representation of women lead towards objectification?

Q: How is media playing a role in the itemization of female body parts?

Q: What impact is made through dehumanizing women in our society?

Literature Review

The focus of this chapter of is to build theoretical underpinning of the research. It provides an understanding of the research framework and material that was used to analyze and prepare discussion analysis. It also incorporates previously done research in the selected two domains i.e. visual semiotics and feminist stylistics. A movie poster is a piece of paper or electronic web designed graphics which belong to the public. The main purpose of a movie poster is to share information across public about any upcoming film or movie through the images or graphics they display along with the help of little text they have. The advent of movie posters began in 1870's by a Paris artist and lithographer named Jules Cheret (Simon, 2019). He invented a technique through which images could be transferred on pages by printing. From early 1920's till 1960's movie posters had themes changing according to the circumstances of wars displaying patriotism. This shifted later on when photography came in and beautification became a concept. Later on, Hollywood went towards modernity and sexist representation of women by presenting them naked or half covered became a fashion. Women are used as “props” in such advertisements selling through exposing their body parts. CJ YEH (graphic design professor) says, “The fashion industry is notorious when it comes to using clothes to objectify women”, he said, “There's that old saying, ‘SEX SELLS.’ (Liffreing, 2016). Therefore, it is related to business hiding in the cover of entertainment providing sexual pleasure to public.

First of all introducing the concept of headless women itself this quote plays a great role, as stated by Marcia Belsky; a comedian, ‘Headless Women project seeks to bring attention to the still standard practice of fragmenting, fetishizing and dehumanizing the images of women we see in film, TV, book covers, advertising, and more.’ (Belsky, 2018) It is the practice occupied by media making posters exposing body parts of women but excluding their head. Eyes are considered door to the soul and brain or head as the intellectual part of the body, but this practice clearly diminishes women as a human being who can think or see for themselves.

In this research the focus is on Semiotics which is known as the “science of signs.” It is concerned with the interpretation of meanings through representation which can be in any form such as, text or language, graphics or images and things or objects. A sign is an entity referring to something else in the real environment or in the abstract world. Semiotics was first defined by its founder Ferdinand De Saussure (1985) as “a science which is concerned with the study of signs that are prevalent in society”. Concurrently, another well-known American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce defined sign as, “it is a representamen which stands for something or somebody in a specific capacity which is the object and refers to some sort of idea known as the interpretant.” (Stanford Center for the study of Language and Information, 2010)

According to Chapman (2004) they are icon, index and symbol which provide a base of how meaning can be interpreted through signs and symbols with the help of representamen, object and interpretant.

In Ferdinand de Saussure's book *A Course in General Linguistics* (Saussure, 1983) he had mentioned his concept of semiotics. It is quite simpler and general in comparison with Pierce. The two main components of his theory divide sign into a signifier and a signified. According to him the signifier is the image or sound displaying the sign whereas signified is the actual meaning or concept conveyed by the sign (Berger, 2004). He also argued that there is no literal relationship between the word and meaning it conveys. Thus, makes it clear that the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary in nature. Similarly, Saussure concept of

sign was also not material or physical but rather abstract (Chandler, 1994). Along with the course of different culture a signifier and signified change meanings according to the context they belong.

Charles Sanders Pierce (1903) developed his theory of semiotics based on three main principles. He considered semiotics to be general, triadic and pragmatic. Furthermore, he made it triadic where it forms a connection between the representamen, object and interpretant. Moreover, his theory is also pragmatic in nature where it depends on the context in which certain signs are produced. It also depends how they are interpreted along with its effect on the interpreter. He gave three steps as following (Gupta, 2018);

1. Firstness is a concept which is free of all boundaries and is related to sensations or emotions where a room of possibility is present.
2. Secondness is the further classification in which it shifts from abstractness to reality in which the existence plays an important part.
3. Thirdness is as whole a result of firstness and secondness where the sign and object combine to create an intellectual experience.

Visual semiotics is a new concept which is associated with the theories of semiotics such as the role of signifier and signified given by Ferdinand de Saussure and also different versions of sign given by Pierce. This new branch came into being in 1990's based on the concept that a sign can be anything such as a visual image. According to Midalia (1999, p. 131) visual images are not impartial reflections of reality nor offering a mirror of the world. They are giving us interpretations of the world by looking at it and provoking our intelligence based on the social and cultural context in which those signs are produced.

According to the triadic model of Pierce sign is divided into three main components known as the representamen, object and interpretant. He explained the classification of sign through the stages mentioned above of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness where iconic, symbolic and indexical meanings are used for visual semiotic analysis of images. (Atkin, 2010)

Charles Sanders Pierce triadic model (1903):

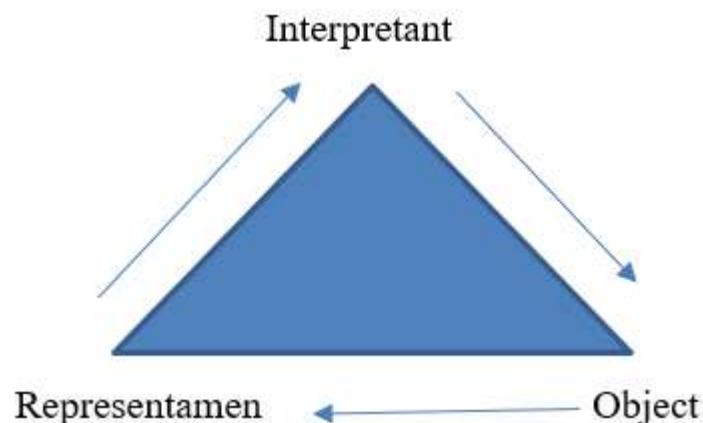


Figure 1: (2.6)

In this representamen is known as the sign vehicle where the sign is referring to the signifier and providing detailed information about what it is representing. Other than this the interpretant tells about the sense which the sign is conveying. In this some theorists have shared their opinion that interpretant should be taken as the translation of the sign (Liszka and Savan, 1998). The third one is object which should connect to the interpretant and representamen because that is for which that object is standing for or signifying something. This triadic model can be explained in detail through the following table: (NI'MAH, 2018)

Table 1: The Triadic Model

Degree of sign	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Firstness (free of all boundaries)	Quality	Icon (physical property)	Rhyme (logical explanation)
Secondness (abstraction to reality)	Effect	Index (sensory feature)	Dicent (assertion)
Thirdness (sign and object meet to give infinity of interpretants)	Process	Symbol (contextual)	Argument (reasoning)

Moreover, Stylistics has been termed as the analysis of the literary texts in a language and it refers to the linguistics' theoretical models to carry out the analysis. Feminist Stylistics shed light on how gender is featured in a particular way that is usually predicted. In a combination of stylistics with narratology, females are stated the object of male gaze. (Mills, 1997)

Althusser's work on Ideological State Apparatus is an important theory, in which he states that ideological state apparatus works in a social formation, which pictures the role of the subject within the society. According to

this theory there are institutions which set certain roles for the subject, and these institutions involve our educational system, church, media and family. Moreover, when the roles are recognized it eventually turns a person into subject to the institution. According to Althusser, the real world is hidden by ideology.

According to Mills (1998) texts play a role in constructing a notion of what cultures then consider is commonsense or a natural phenomenon. Within the framework of Individual State Apparatus (ISA) Interpellation, an important phenomenon is also covered by Althusser (1970) also termed as "hailing". He states that ideologies play a role in calling out or hailing people which they consider is a natural phenomenon and obvious.

As per (Kant, 2018), objectification mainly concerns with lowering the respective person, it treats a human being with the status of an object or item for their pleasure. According to feminist theory, women are itemized, used as a tool to attract men, as a tool to advertise their products, and for the objectifies purposes.

Many researches have been carried in the domain of semiotics and feminist stylistic analysis. This research is significant due to the collaboration of both mentioned domains in one research with specific focus on headless women objectification in movie posters.

A research was carried on Feminist Stylistics in 2018 in which politics of gender was identified in an album of songs by Beyoncé known as Lemonade. It focused on racial and gender discrimination of black women (FANIYI, 2018).

A research carried out in Pakistan which included both stylistic and visual semiotic analysis of commercials on television analyzed the status of women in our society. It explained Pakistani male dominated society where women are considered inferior and are suppressed through male power (Nasir, 2018).

Another research was done in the same field questioning the myth of considering women as beauty idols and as sexual objects. This research analyzed cosmetic names which were stereotypical and marginalized women as an inferior part of the society where they are only appealing entities to male gaze (Radzi, 2017).

A research conducted in the field of visual semiotics focused on images of women present on advertisement posters related to beauty products. This research focused on such images in Baltic States where advertisement posters were pasted on walls itemizing women (Poseiko, 2016).

A research carried on Malawi history textbooks which utilized visual semiotics to identify the role of women presented in history books was done noticed the influence of patriarchy throughout history (Chiponda, 2015).

Another research was done on the women of Middle East that how they are viewed through the eyes of the audience by the means of media which portrays them differently. It focused on the theories of speech act by Halliday and analyzing visual images as given by Kress and Van Leeuwen. It was a pure semiotic research in nature identifying all the aspects of sexism discriminating women. (Adham, 2012)

Summing up the whole discussion, it becomes evident that gender discrimination and objectification of women in visuals can be analyzed through various theories of linguistics. They deeply analyze the stylistic and semiotic aspects of the visual language used in the movie posters and their connotations. The triadic model by Charles Sander's and Ferdinand's concept of signifier and signified along with interpellation helped a lot to deeply analyze the images used as sample in this research.

Research Methodology

This chapter of the research aims to explain the type and nature of research. It gives description about the employed research tool and population chosen for this research.

3.1 Type of Research:

The type of research implemented is qualitative in nature. It examined the use of stylistic linguistic tools and visual semiotics to identify the stereotypical ideology of considering women as sexual objects. It was observed in the area of popular culture i.e. media.

3.2 Nature of Research:

This research is descriptive in nature, mainly dealing Feminist Stylistics by Sara Mills (1995) and visual semiotics theory combining the triadic model of Pierce (1903) along with Ferdinand de Saussure (1900) concept of sign to provide a detailed analysis of sexist Hollywood movie posters.

3.3 Research Population and Sample:

Research population includes all headless women Hollywood movie posters and research sample comprises of five sexist movie posters representing headless women from Hollywood industry.

3.4 Research Limitations:

This research was conducted only in Punjab, Lahore. This research is confined to deal in with Hollywood sexist representation of women with respect to the field of linguistics. It focused on two fields of linguistics i.e., semiotics and feminist stylistics.

3.5 Research Design:

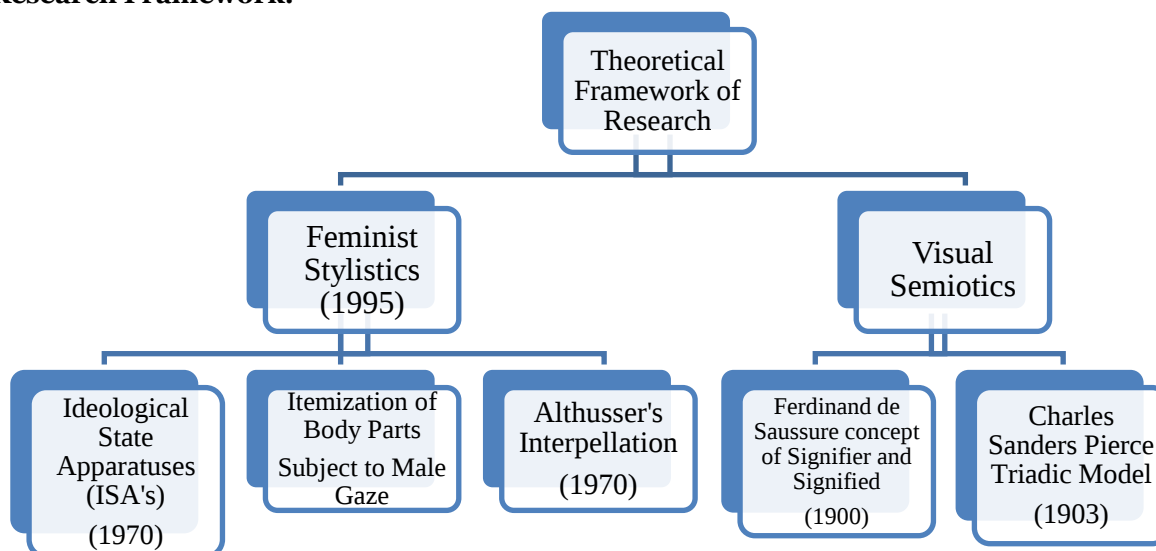
The research design was based on gathering data of Hollywood movie posters which displayed sexist representation of women. Later on, the introduction along with research objectives and questions was done keeping in view the literature review with related data collection for evaluation. The research was carried out by applying visual semiotics theory based on the triadic model by Charles Sanders Pierce (1903) and the concept of signifier and signified by Ferdinand de Saussure (1900). Another aspect to the research which focused on sexist representation was covered by using feminist stylistic analysis by Sara Mills (1995) along with

how ISA's effect media and interpellation as per Althusser (1970) takes place. The identification of signifier and signified through representamen, object and interpretation with a deeper analysis on the base of icon, symbol and index was done in a table form to elicit objective results. This research analyzed the posters in detail by looking at the degree of signs, the meaning they possessed and how it was interpreted through signification. The discussion analysis was divided into three main parts dealing with the research questions and a conclusion with fruitful recommendations was written at the end of this research.

3.6 Research Validity and Reliability:

All Hollywood movie posters are not headless, but this does not mean that they do not objectify women. Objectification of women through sexist movie posters by making them headless and revealing their body parts is dehumanization, reducing women to their bodies.

3.7 Research Framework:



Discussion Analysis

This chapter of research explains all the findings and results obtained through the research work. As women are being objectified as sex objects for male gaze and are blatantly exposed through itemization of their body parts; so, this discussion provides a detailed account on this issue. For better understanding of all concepts and their application on the chosen images this section has been divided into three major parts.

1. Media positioning subject-hood
2. Women as sex objects
3. Soft power of dehumanizing women

4.1: Media Positioning Subject-Hood:

A well-known term known as “Predictive Programming” is the main cause of this conspiracy theory of Headless women in visuals of movie posters. It can also be termed as “psychological conditioning” where brain is shaped through what you feed in via different sources such as, media. People are acquainted with societal changes that the controllers of media want to develop. Similarly, Headless women is one of it where the role of women in society is hampered by eradicating her existence as an equal other like men. Such, background conspiracies have been going on from ages starting from animated movies watched by children reaching to the images selected for this paper from popular media. Human brain is being conditioned to think and place women as sexual objects in society where they have no role in development, progress and growth of other institutions except family where she holds power only as a person to serve others with her services.

Media is positioning subject hood by using women as “props” through selling their body parts as displayed through (Figure 1,2,3,4, and 5) given in the below section of paper. This is marginalizing women from mainstream institutions of society where they hold no place in front of men. This is directly proportional to what media is engraving by brain washing people through “headless visuals.” (See images). The “hidden head” suggests that the foremost part of her thinking is diminished.

4.2: Women as Sex Objects:

Sexual representation of women leading towards itemization of their body parts has led towards distortion of the image of a female body in society through media. They expose body parts by provocative display of a woman's bodily autonomy. It leads to the notion of women “BEING EXOTIC”, through offensive body movements, beautifying lips with red lipstick, exposing; bust, midriff, navel, and cleavage, sexualizing slender legs and even hands with long nails to make an exotic look.

Figure: 1**Movie:** Revenge of the Boarding School Dropouts**Year:** 2009**Genre:** Sport/ Comedy*Figure: 1 Sign Analysis*

Sign	Revenge of the Boarding School dropout's movie poster
Signifier	An image of a half-naked woman posing in snow with images of men around her
Signified	A very sexually tempting female body all jeweled up to look appealing to male gaze.

The movie to which the poster belongs is about sports in which Snowboarding is the main sport they play and compete. The signifier in this image is showing a woman who is dressed in a bikini looking attractive with a perfect body posture to reveal with other male characters starring in the movie. Whereas, what is signified in this movie poster reveals how women are itemized based on their body in media.

Fig 1.1 Triadic model analysis

Degree of sign	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Firstness (free of all boundaries)	The white background and white bikini refer to snow in the movie.	The woman wearing goggles in the image refer to the setting of the movie in a snow region.	The characters of the movie posing with reference to the sport in it i.e. snowboarding.
Secondness (abstraction to reality)	A half-naked body in front of snow refers to sexual intimation in the movie.	The images of men on the sides and in her goggles with only their faces show that the woman is only a sexual object.	A typical Hollywood movie poster posing naked women as an object to male gaze.
Thirdness (sign and object meet to give infinity of interpretants)	Objectification of body parts to gather more views on the movie.	No head, forehead and eyes to show women are just a piece of meat with no brain and vision.	The media subjecting women as mere flesh to satisfy male gaze and seem sexually appealing in order to be considered visible in society.

In the above image the entire poster is covered with the body of a woman in bikini exposing her body parts. As it is quite visible that the "head" is missing and due to sexualizing her body it doesn't make a difference to the audience out there. The missing head symbolizes that women are creatures born without a head and have no brain. Other than this she is wearing snowboarding goggles to show that what the movie is about but instead of wearing them on the eyes they are on her neck. They reflect the images of two men which may assert that the sport belongs to them only or it may also suggest that the female is there to sexually please by being intimate. The goggles around her neck with men reflecting in them also suggest that men are like "noose" in a female's neck allowing them to view what they desire. Women are considered to be led, weak, vulnerable, and passive beings.

The itemization of body parts through exposing slender waist, arms, bust, navel and midriff makes it look exotic, glamorous and sensual. Her each body part as mentioned above is fragmented to make it look visually appealing to the audience.

Another concept discussed in framework about multiple positioning also fits here. The way the model has been positioned through her body movements make her a subject to male gaze. The outlandish way her body is portrayed in a straight posture with maximizing her bust and midriff also suggests that she is open and welcoming to all manly desires. The way that piercing is etched in her navel makes it look more erotic through the way they have positioned it by directing its loop towards her bikini line. Moreover, piercing makes women look like objects and leads towards a more sexual behavior by dehumanizing them to bare that pain and look exotic in front of male gaze.

Figure: 2

Movie: Romance and Cigarettes

Year: 2005

Genre: Romance/ Comedy music



Figure: 2 Sign Analysis

Sign	Romance and Cigarettes movie poster
Signifier	An image of a sexually appealing woman lying in a bed dressed as a prostitute.
Signified	A very sexually alluring female body with painted nails and heels giving a sign to be open for an intercourse.

In this movie poster the addition of bright colors which she is wearing in the poster such as, a hot pink lace bra, a silky purple undergarment looking like a mini skirt exposing her legs, red painted nails and red high heels with a smoke in his fingers are all objects imposed on a female body to portray a sexually affirmative environment.

Figure: 2.1 Triadic Model Analysis

Degree of sign	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Firstness (free of all boundaries)	The alluring model and cigarette represent intimacy.	The sexually attractive model and a cigarette go hand in hand with the title of the movie.	The bright colors, high heels, red nails and smoke from the cigarette makes it sexually attractive.
Secondness (abstraction to reality)	A half-naked body dressed accordingly as a prostitute asserts sexual behavior and the word "romance" in the title suggests only a sexual meaning associated with a female body only.	The presence of a sexually intimating woman with her clothes and shoes on and smoke coming out of the cigarette shows she is waiting to be taken.	A typical Hollywood movie poster posing an intimating woman as an object to male gaze specifically for sexual desire.

Thirdness (sign and object meet to give infinity of interpretants)	Objectification of body parts with bright concealing and revealing garments to grasp the attention of audience.	Just revealing the body to look submissive with only "their body". A woman is reduced only to her body in this image. No head, forehead and eyes to show women are just a piece of meat with no brain and vision.	The media subjecting women as mere flesh to satisfy male gaze and seem sexually appealing by wearing such clothes and red nails with high heels in order to be considered more tempting.
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In this movie poster the missing head snatches away their thinking capacity branding them as "being led, rescued and instructed" creatures by other members of the society. the very "eyes" which are windows to the soul expressing emotions are totally out of the scene here "dehumanizing" them regardless of having emotions or brain.

Media has positioned women as a subject to male gaze using media as a repressive tool shaping ideologies with such tormented mindsets. The concept of "high-heels" is to make women seem appealing making their legs look slender and posture tempting. Moreover, "heels" also suggest that women are trying to be higher to reach or match the height of their partner and look down upon others as they will feel up righted by such feeling. "Red high-heels" represent a tempting sexual behavior and "power" but unfortunately its temporary and can be taken away anytime. It shows that women have no power and if they want to get it only objects like, "shoes" can help them to achieve it but still it makes them sexually positioned as a stimulus for sexual desire in men. Similarly, "long nails" and "red nail polish" also add to it creating an allusion that women are bold or powerful but on the contrary these little things are dehumanizing them to look pleasing and beautiful not for themselves to assert power but for others to be a liability of reassurance.

This poster has the women slightly covered where her intimate parts are but the "cherry on the top" which is the bright garments she is wearing makes it look more enticing ready to be revealed. The bright colors, the fabric and size of the bra and skirt she is wearing makes it look exotic. The "little curl of hair" adds to the sexuality because long hair of women are considered sexually attractive and such women are considered more fertile. It also leads towards the concept of interpellation given by Althusser because it is making female body as a visual desire in eyes of public calling for such behavior in the society.

Figure: 3

Movie: Kingsman-The Secret Service

Year: 2014

Genre: Sci-fi/ Crime



Fig: 3 Sign Analysis

Sign	Kingsman-The Secret Service movie poster
Signifier	An image of the hips and legs of a woman and a man dressed like a detective.
Signified	Associating action with the detective like man and making the woman look sexually appealing through her body and wine but displaying action with a gun

The image clearly displays the genre of the movie which is crime and science fiction including a lot of action. To portray the character of a male he is present as a whole in the poster but the woman is only visible through her lower body parts including hips and legs only. It is sexually arousing to display a tempting posture with covered wide-open legs, uncovered wrists and hands holding a glass of wine in one hand and a gun in the other. The prosthetic legs are not displaying weakness or lack of submissiveness rather they are adding to the beauty of her slender legs making them look taller with firm limbs.

Figure: 3.1 Triadic model analysis

Degree of sign	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Firstness (free of all boundaries)	The guns, wine detective like man, and a sexy woman showing action, pleasure and crime.	The sexually attractive back lower part of the woman and focused armed man show how two genders are placed.	The image makes a man look positioned and focused but the woman appears desirable.
Secondness (abstraction to reality)	The color scheme, objects such as guns makes it look like a more crime and action movie. The glass of wine and female hips and legs give a feeling of women as sexual objects for men in action.	The gun in the male's hand show power and some target added by his body language. Whereas, the glass of wine and gun in the female's hand show pleasure, reassurance and stillness through her body posture as waiting to be commanded.	A typical action or crime Hollywood movie poster posing a man in action who is focused but a woman seems sexual even if she is looking powerful. (e.g. Gun in hand)
Thirdness (sign and object meet to give infinity of interpretants)	Objectification of body parts with skin tight clothing and posture to tempt the audience to dwell in the movie.	A woman is again reduced only to her body in this image. No head or any upper body parts to show women are just a piece of meat with no brain and vision.	The media subjecting women as mere flesh to satisfy male gaze and seem sexually appealing by hiding their faces so that people are aroused to see and look at them.

This image is quite different from others as skin is not exposed but the way highly appealing legs and hips are shown almost reveals the body structure of the actress with all the curves. It is also confusing for the audience to suggest that whether the woman is in the way of the male character or just *in his way* standing to be looked at. The glass of wine and gun are aimless like not adding to make the woman seem bold, assertive or powerful. It just seems another act of gathering male gaze and dehumanizing women on the base of their physical features. It also displays the notion of focus our attention by making the male look focused at front with his eyes and posture and the female only focused in her seductive posture with no other identification of body parts. The gun in the man's hand goes with the focus in his eyes as if he is aiming but the woman is headless holding a gun with *no aim or target visible through her action*.

The question is that the man with the same weapon "gun" in his hand is shown assertive, bold and focused which is primarily known by the presence of his "head" making eye contact which reveals his intentions. Whereas, it is not the case with the female actress in the poster. She is objectified with the label of "sex sells" so blatantly in this movie poster to keep her a secret for the audience revealed in fragments through her body parts.

Figure: 4
Movie: Confidence
Year: 2003
Genre: Thriller/ Drama



Figure: 4 Sign Analysis

Sign	Confidence movie poster
Signifier	An image of an appealing woman with red lips and revealing bust.
Signified	A woman seeming to be presented as a hook for men as it is also assured by the word "bait" in the poster.

In this movie poster the picture of a woman is present which is headless. The poster belongs to the movie "Confidence" which is thriller and drama and includes several other male characters in this movie. The signifier is the image of a female who is dressed revealingly wearing red lips and posing in an upright manner. Moreover, what is signified through this poster again objectifies the existence of women to lure male gaze by their looks. Other than this the use of the word "bait" for the only female character in this movie opposingly to other male characters who are labelled as "The king", "The player", and "The law" targets the capacity of a female as someone not constructive and having no brain.

Fig: 4.1 Triadic model analysis

Degree of sign	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Firstness (free of all boundaries)	The red lips and red light in the poster make it dangerously sexual.	The dressing and red lipstick makes her look like a prostitute.	The pose of the woman revealing her bust and tempting lips makes it look arousing.
Secondness (abstraction to reality)	The way she is portrayed displays sexual intimation in the movie.	The loud expression of the word "bait" is revealed through the way she is displayed in the poster.	A typical Hollywood movie poster posing naked headless women as an object to male gaze.
Thirdness (sign and object meet to give infinity of interpretants)	Objectification of body parts such as cleavage, bust and lips to gather more views on the movie.	No head, forehead and eyes to show women are just a piece of meat with no brain and vision born to lure men. As compared to the male posters their eyes are tools of expressions but the woman is objectified.	The media subjecting women as mere flesh to satisfy male gaze and seem sexually appealing in order to be considered visible in society. As compared to other male characters in the movie only the woman is objectified.

In this movie the three male characters are not objectified and no negative word is used for them but the female is body shamed and given a negative title "The bait" fixing her in the mold of considering women as things for sexual pleasure. Four movie posters were launched individually where men are displayed with their face having sharp looks and eye contact making their appearance bold, assertive, strong and leading. Whereas, the lead actress Rachel Weisz eyes are cut off in the poster and she is itemized through her "red lips" "cleavage" and "bust". As "Eyes are windows to the soul", and cutting her head shows that her character, personality, gaze and emotions are of no value.

The “hidden head” suggests that her foremost thinking part of the body is diminished. The female character is “the bait”, a piece of meat to attract others while the male characters are defined on their intelligence as, “king, player and the law”. “**Eyes**” the same human organ is used differently for men and the woman, where all the male characters are made highly expressive only by the use of their eyes making contact, expressing various emotions but as soon as the female is concerned her head and eyes are rightly cut out of the scene dehumanizing her. This image is highly discriminating and violates the existence of women as homo sapiens sharing the same level of cognitive and emotional intelligence as men.

Figure: 5

Movie: The Wolf of Wall Street

Year: 2013

Genre: Drama/ Comedy



Figure: 5 Sign Analysis

Sign	The Wolf of Wall Street movie poster
Signifier	An image of a woman covered in money with two men looking as to reassure.
Signified	A woman presented as a mannequin covered in money and standing for reassurance in front of the two males scanning her from tip to toe.

This poster is very sexist in terms of its meaning, as the lady is an object to male gaze looking for some kind of “assurance” and she seems “uncertain” of herself through her gestures. In this movie poster a woman is looked at through the perspective of how men want them to appear. She is portrayed as a “decoration piece” which is beautified and decorated as desired by the men of our society. The sign, signifier and signified are expose realities regarding the sick mindset of our patriarchal women who see women as props. The way money is used and the gestures of the characters in the movie poster objectify the status of women at large.

Fig: 5.1 Triadic model analysis

Degree of sign	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Firstness (free of all boundaries)	The woman covered in money relates to the movie title referring wall-street.	The money stick to the female body makes her look like a mannequin.	The woman indicates pleasure and attention in the eyes of men who win women over money.
Secondness (abstraction to reality)	The way the female character is portrayed displays submission.	The body covered in money seeking assurance shows how weak and controlled women are.	A typical Hollywood movie poster posing women as a subject to male gaze openly.
Thirdness (sign and object meet to give infinity of interpretants)	Objectification of women by dressing her bikini, revealing some body parts and rest covered in money.	No head, forehead and eyes to show women are just a piece of meat with no brain and vision born to lure men.	The media subjecting women as mere flesh to satisfy male gaze and seem submissive. Dehumanizing women

		Secondly, they can easily be won over money.	as canvass which can be painted according to men's will.
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This movie poster blatantly objectifies the status of women as a “thing”, “prop”, “canvass” or “mannequin” used by the men as they will. She is just a thing itemized as desired in the eyes of our patriarchal society which has power and control over the other gender. Using “money” as a dress in this poster shows how they win the bodies of women in exchange of mere paper money buying their chastity.

It is suggesting that women are only reduced to their bodies which are like *an empty canvass* for men who can paint them according to their desires. They are controlled and led by them who can win them easily over money. It is an act of dehumanizing women in front of the entire humanity who cannot win their place in this world as humans. This trope displays women as “things” to be looked at making their space vulnerable. Women are used as “props” in such advertisements selling through exposing their body parts. This puts women in a position where they earn by selling their chastity to men of power who are hungry for such pleasures. Men control the society, earn money first hand and are respectful whereas, women need to be exposed and undertaken by men in order to earn and gain a place in society.

4.3 Soft Power of Dehumanizing Women:

Media is playing a role in dehumanizing women by snatching their true existence as humans who should be treated equally. The concept of “soft power” in this paper refers to the concept of Interpellation where ideology hits the surface. As per Althusser’s interpellation it involves Individual State Apparatuses (ISA’s) and media is one of it.

Media is working as a soft power shaping ideology where women will and are only considered as sex objects. Through using such sexual images, they are shaping the preference of people towards attractive and appealing females which is a result of soft power. It is a discursive practice as well as coercive in some cases as well where the rules of business make women expose and hide their face because in media “headless” images of women are paid more.

As media is an ISA it also hails other women out there who live in reality and are not exposed like these women in posters by putting them into the same frame in front of men and even other women. It interpolates women out there in the following ways;

- They should be as sexually appealing as them.
- A perfect body posture is what is desired of women.
- Exposing body parts make them look appealing.
- Their appearance is important than their intelligence. (Hiding heads)
- They are means of sport, party and celebration for men.
- They are mannequins dressed as men desire.
- They are meant to be an object for male gaze.
- They need reassurance from men.
- They are fragile, weak and passive.
- They are meant to fulfill sexual desires of men.

Moreover, in the act of dehumanizing women in all the figures discussed above exhibit one theme; whenever there is party or some kind of celebration women are an immediate source treated as means of celebration.

Conclusion:

Summing up the whole discussion, in the light of the above well researched movie posters to analyze the dilemma of power associated with women only in the shape of a perfect body and a beautiful face presents a factual analysis. The images or movie posters analyzed in this research portray the true face of media where objectification of women is a game offering money. Selling nudity to gain public attention, specifically making women an object to male gaze is a practice being observed continuously around us. Fragmenting the body parts of a women and presenting according to the will of the one’s in control is the murder of the gender: female. This concept of “headless women” in movie posters is a technique to make women a bait in front of male gaze by making them think that they only possess a body which is a subject to lure men around. Reverting focus by cutting out heads and eyes; intelligence or the power to think and expressions to express emotions or point of views and inverting it in a candy shop where colorful, sweet candies can make your mouth water is the reality of this so-called civilized society. To be beautiful is not the weapon that can save women but to be respected and given their true status is what will cure societies. This research explicitly depicts that women are not objects made for luring men and let them toy all around. Attaching sexual and erotic vocabulary with women is not respectable nor admirable. These uncultured ways should have been diminished with the cave men but unfortunately men left caves; caves didn’t leave men. The theories of linguistics and feminism play a vital role in researching such commendable topics which can help to enlighten several in the light of study. This research

is dynamic in its approach to reach out the undiscussed portions of our society that are leaving deep marks generation by generation exploiting human right just for the sake of men.

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