

**Comparing Ott and Cinema: A Study of Storytelling Art from the Prism of Feminism****Vishal Sahai**Research Scholar, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University &  
Assistant Professor DME Noida**Dr Gunjan Sharma**

Associate Professor, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University

**Dr Manmeet Kaur**

Associate Professor, IILM University, Greater Noida

**ABSTRACT**

Cinema is one of the most revered media art form that has a universal appeal. Cinema has been a point of debate and discussion for decades. The constant wriggling of cinema related contentions has led to some astonishing discoveries making it a den of potentially more unexplored areas of academic interest. With this in consideration, this study aims to examine and compare the portrayal of male and female characters in selected Hindi films directed by female and male directors, with a particular focus on the storytelling art within the context of the feminist perspective. The films chosen for analysis are "Lipstick under my Burkha", "A death in the gunj" and "Dhobi Ghat" by female directors and "Pink", "Queen" and "Padman" by male directors.

This research explores the aspirations, characterizations and roles of male and female characters in the aforesaid films from both male and female perspectives through a rigorous qualitative content analysis. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate the presence of any stereotypes associated with the characters and the degree of its representation.

By analyzing the films' narratives, character development and the interplay between male and female characters, this research further aims to shed light on the portrayal of gender dynamics in storytelling and its potential influence on the way gender is being portrayed. The findings of this study are not significant for cinephiles alone. Gender psychology aspirants would also find something thought-provoking to ponder upon.

**Keywords:** Cinema and gender portrayal, OTT and Cinema, Storytelling and OTT, Feministic Perspective, Gender Dynamics in cinema

## Introduction

Stories have always shaped the way we see the world—and ourselves. For decades, cinema has been a mirror reflecting societal values, often portraying women through narrow, stereotypical lenses. Yet over time, this reflection has started to shift. Thanks to the voices raised through feminist movements and the growing critique within media studies, we are witnessing a slow but significant transformation in how women are represented on screen.

In recent years, the rise of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms has brought a new wave of storytelling into our homes. Freed from box-office pressures and traditional production constraints, digital content creators have found space to explore bold narratives—many of which challenge gender norms and amplify feminist voices. Unlike mainstream cinema, where market-driven formulas often dominate, OTT platforms offer stories that are more diverse, inclusive, and daring.

This research paper explores how storytelling on OTT platforms compares with that of traditional cinema, particularly in the way each medium represents women and engages with feminist themes. Are OTT platforms truly more progressive? Do they offer more space for complex, empowered female characters? Or are they simply riding the wave of popular discourse?

Anchored in feminist film theory, this study examines a curated selection of films and web series from both mediums. It looks at how each platform constructs female identities, portrays gender dynamics, and weaves feminist ideologies into its narrative fabric. The analysis also considers how audience targeting, production structures, and distribution models influence storytelling choices.

## Understanding the Feministic Prism: Meaning and Context

To view storytelling through a **feministic prism** is to see it in all its complexity—not just through a gendered lens, but through a critical, ever-evolving framework that asks deeper questions about power, identity, visibility, and voice. It's not just about putting women at the center of the frame, but about rethinking how the frame itself is built.

The "feministic prism" is rooted in feminist film theory and media critique. It draws from the work of trailblazing scholars and creators like Laura Mulvey, Patricia White, and Jutta Brückner, who have reshaped our understanding of how cinema can both reflect and resist

patriarchal norms. Through this lens, stories become more than entertainment—they become tools for transformation.

This approach doesn't stop at what is shown on screen—it extends to who tells the stories, how audiences engage with them, and which voices are amplified or erased. In today's digital age, where online media and fan cultures thrive, feminist remix culture and participatory content challenge traditional narratives and offer space for reclaiming sexuality, gender identity, and cultural agency.

Moreover, the feministic prism demands a global outlook. Women's stories from the Global South, voices emerging from international film festivals, and creators transitioning from advertising and music videos into feminist cinema are reshaping the cinematic landscape. Their work highlights not only the power of representation but the need to contextualize it culturally, politically, and socially.

Teaching and studying feminist cinema today also means confronting new challenges. Digital classrooms, shifting student sensibilities, and the complex terrain of sexuality and consent require educators and students alike to engage with care, empathy, and critical thought. Introducing students to pioneering artists like Carolee Schneemann, Ulrike Ottinger, and Shu Lea Cheang opens up spaces for nuanced discussions that resist binary thinking and embrace diversity in all its forms.

Ultimately, the feministic prism is not just a theoretical framework—it's an invitation to reimagine cinema itself. It asks us to listen more closely, look more carefully, and think more courageously about the stories we tell and the futures we envision.

### **Exploring Sexuality and Discursive Barriers**

Issues of sexuality are integral to feminist media and the feministic prism encourages a re-examination of the ways in which feminism intersects with the understanding and representation of sexuality. By exploring fan vids, feminist remix culture and reclaiming

popular culture, feminist film courses provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions on sexuality, often using vernacular that challenges traditional discursive barriers. The changing frameworks and labels related to sexual permissions and institutional protections in contemporary society necessitate a nuanced approach to teaching feminism and addressing student amnesia. By introducing students to the works of pioneering artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Ulrike Ottinger and Shu Lea Cheang, feminist film pedagogy can open

up dialogues about claiming sexuality, feminist, queer and trans positions and exploring unexpected perspectives without relying on warnings or discursive barriers. This approach encourages students to critically analyze and challenge societal norms while embracing diverse expressions of sexuality in feminist media.

### **The Importance of a Global Perspective**

Adopting a global perspective within feminist film studies is vital to understanding the full scope and impact of women's contributions to cinema worldwide. As Patricia White suggests, exposing students to world cinema provides a richer understanding of feminist filmmaking and its cultural contexts. By examining women's professionalization in various regions and the influence of international film festivals, feminist film courses can broaden students' horizons and illuminate diverse narratives and cinematic practices. Furthermore, recognizing the significant contributions of women from advertising, commercials and music videos in Asia and the Middle East who have transitioned to making feminist features highlights the global reach and cultural shifts within feminist media.

The concept of the feministic prism offers a comprehensive framework to explore the multifaceted dimensions of feminist film theory and practice. Through an examination of the transformative potential of feminist cinema, the challenges of teaching feminist film courses in the digital age, the intersections of feminism, online media, fan culture and issues of sexuality and the importance of a global perspective, this writeup demonstrates the complexities and significance of the feministic prism. By continually reevaluating and recontextualizing feminist film pedagogy and embracing diverse voices and perspectives, we can continue to explore and transform the future of cinema through a feminist lens.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To compare and the similarities and contrast in the storytelling styles of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and cinema from a feminist perspective.
- To examine the representation of women characters in selected films and shows from OTT platforms and cinema.
- To analyze the portrayal of gender roles in selected films and shows from OTT platforms and cinema.

### **Significance of Research**

- This study analyses portrayal of gender in OTT and cinema narratives which is the contemporary social need.
- This study unveils the power dynamics by Examining how storytelling reinforces and / or challenges the gender inequalities.
- This study is also important from the perspective of audience reception as the understanding stemming out of this research will throw light over how feminist narratives are received and engaged with by audiences.
- Study is also important as it investigates the influence of OTT platforms on feminist content creation.
- This study is also significant as it explores the potential of feminist storytelling to drive social transformation.

### **Theoretical Framework: Narrative Theory**

Narrative theory in cinema focuses on how stories are structured, conveyed, and experienced by audiences. It provides a framework for analyzing the essential elements of cinematic storytelling—plot, character, time, space, causality, and narration—to better understand how meaning is constructed within films. At its core, narrative theory examines how filmmakers use storytelling techniques to engage viewers and shape their interpretation of the narrative. One foundational concept is narrative structure, commonly exemplified by the three-act format—setup, confrontation, and resolution. However, modern cinema often employs non-linear or fragmented narratives, which disrupt conventional timelines to offer alternative story forms. Narrative theorists analyze these choices and their impact on audience engagement.

Character development is another key component. Through dialogue, performance, and visual cues, filmmakers create multidimensional characters. Narrative theory studies their motivations, conflicts, and arcs, as well as the relationships that drive the plot and evoke emotional responses. The manipulation of time and space also plays a vital role in storytelling. Techniques like flashbacks, flash-forwards, and montage affect temporal flow, while framing, mise-en-scène, and cinematography shape the spatial experience of the film. These choices immerse viewers in the narrative world and guide their understanding.

Equally important is narrative causality—the logical sequence of events that forms the backbone of a coherent story. Cause-and-effect relationships propel the narrative and influence how audiences interpret meaning. Finally, narration and point of view determine how a story is presented. Whether through voice-over, omniscient perspective, or unreliable

narration, filmmakers influence audience perception and emotional alignment. In essence, narrative theory enriches our appreciation of cinematic storytelling by dissecting the methods filmmakers use to construct meaning. It provides critical tools to interpret films and understand how narrative choices affect audience experience and interpretation.

### **Review Of Literature**

**Foundational Feminist Film Theory :**Early feminist film theorists such as Laura Mulvey (1975) introduced the idea of the male gaze, emphasizing how mainstream cinema positions women as passive objects of male desire, lacking agency. Kuhn (1985) extended this argument, underscoring how film narratives contribute to the objectification and stereotyping of women, reinforcing patriarchal ideologies.

**Representation of Women in Traditional Indian Cinema:** In the Indian context, Butalia (1984) described commercial cinema as a powerful social tool, yet one that frequently reduced women to sex objects or victims, especially in films addressing issues like marriage, dowry, and rape. She advocated for humanizing portrayals of women as individuals with autonomy. Mazumdar (2007) and Monteiro & Jayasankar (2006) examined how gender operates in Bollywood and documentary cinema respectively, highlighting the perpetuation of traditional roles and the marginalization of female narratives.

**Shifts in Gender Narrative with OTT Emergence :**Recent studies suggest that OTT platforms have transformed the narrative landscape. Samanta (2020) in her case study of Hindi web series, identified both progress and persistence of gender stereotypes in digital storytelling. Gaurav and Shivani Shrivastava (2020) further explored how Indian web series engage with feminist issues, noting a greater space for complexity and nuance compared to mainstream cinema. These works point to the potential of OTT as a more democratized space for feminist expression.

**Feminist Filmmaking and Female Subjectivity:** Datta (2000) traced the evolving role of women in Indian cinema, from peripheral objects to central figures asserting social and sexual agency. She credited the rise of female filmmakers like Aparna Sen, Aruna Raje, and Vijaya Mehta for this shift. Their works foreground women's subjectivities, challenging dominant masculine narratives and conservative ideologies. Datta highlights the influence of the women's movement in pushing these transformations.

Media, Culture, and Hegemonic Tropes: Uberoi (1990) critically examined the commodification and troping of women in Indian media, arguing that women are often reduced to symbols within a homogenizing cultural matrix. Her work draws attention to how Indian popular culture molds women's representation to fit patriarchal expectations, thereby limiting their narrative scope.

**Research Gap:** The literature reveals a strong historical critique of patriarchal representations in Indian cinema and an emerging discourse on feminist storytelling in digital platforms. While traditional cinema has often reinforced gender hierarchies, the rise of OTT platforms offers a space to challenge these norms. However, empirical and comparative research analyzing narrative structures and character portrayals across both mediums remains limited. This study seeks to address that gap by examining how feminist storytelling has evolved through a comparative lens of OTT and cinema in contemporary Indian media.

### **Methodology**

This research paper aims to compare the storytelling styles of OTT and cinema platforms from a feminist perspective, using a qualitative method of analysis. The study will employ content analysis to examine how the selected films and shows represent women characters, portray gender roles and address feminist themes.

### **Data Collection**

To collect the data, researcher selected a total of 6 films. The sample selection is based on the popularity of the films and shows and their relevance to feminist themes. Each film was watched and analyzed for

- The representation of women characters
- The portrayal of gender roles and
- The overall messaging and themes of the content

**Content Analysis:** This research report presents a qualitative content analysis aimed at examining the representation of gender and feminism in Indian storytelling through an analysis of six selected films. By employing a qualitative approach, this study seeks to delve into the complexities and nuances of gender portrayals and feminist themes within the cultural and social context of India. Through the exploration of three major constructs, this research endeavors to shed light on the evolving narratives surrounding gender and feminism in Indian cinema. The study employed a qualitative content analysis methodology to analyze six films

from different genres and time periods, selected based on their relevance to the research objectives. The analysis focused on three major constructs: (1) Portrayal of Female Characters, (2) Power Dynamics and Agency and (3) Representation of Feminist Themes. These constructs were identified as key indicators of gender and feminist representation within Indian storytelling. A systematic and rigorous coding process was employed to identify recurring themes, character traits and narrative patterns related to gender and feminism in the selected films.

### **Data Analysis**

The films were chosen and then studied using the feministic prism framework. Three films directed by female directors and three by male directors was studied using qualitative content analysis. Films directed by female directors included:

- Lipstick Under My Burkha directed by Alankrita Shrivastava
- A Death in the Gunj directed by Konkana Sen Sharma
- Dhobighat directed by Kiran Rao

Films directed by male directors included:

- Pink directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhary
- Queen directed by Vikas Bahl
- Padman directed by R Balki

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **Films By Female Directors**

"Lipstick Under My Burkha" is a Hindi-language film directed by Alankrita Shrivastava that explores the theme of the suppression of female desire in a patriarchal society. The movie features the lives of four women from different backgrounds living in Bhopal, India, who face gender-based oppression in their daily lives. The movie explores the theme of the suppression of female desire in a patriarchal society, both sexual and non-sexual.

Usha, a 55-year-old widow, is a prime example of this struggle. She longs for intimacy and secretly reads erotic novels, but is forced to suppress her desires due to societal expectations of widowhood. Shireen, a saleswoman and mother of three, also grapples with the suppression of her desires. She is in a troubled marriage with a controlling husband who forces her to undergo sterilization surgery against her will. Leela, a young beautician, faces a different kind

of suppression as she is forced into an arranged marriage against her will. She dreams of escaping her small town and marrying her lover, but is forced to give up her dreams due to familial pressure. Rihanna, a college student, struggles with societal expectations of female purity and sexual repression as she tries to reconcile her desires with the expectations placed upon her. The four characters in "Lipstick Under My Burkha" are portrayed in distinct ways, showcasing their individual experiences, struggles and desires within the context of a patriarchal society.

- Shirin Aslam played by Konkona Sen Sharma symbolizes the oppressive nature of societal expectations and the struggle for freedom.
- Usha Parmar played by Ratna Pathak Shah symbolizes the repressed desires and aspirations of women.
- Leela played by Aahana Kumra symbolizes women's ambitions and aspirations that extend beyond societal confines.
- Rehana Abdi played by Plabita Borthakur symbolizes the rebellion against imposed identities and societal expectations.

The message of "Lipstick Under My Burkha" is to challenge and break free from societal restrictions and gender-based oppression that women face in a patriarchal society. The movie highlights the struggles of women who are not able to live their lives on their own terms and are constantly judged and suppressed by society.

Through the portrayal of the four main characters, the movie aims to inspire women to resist and challenge the expectations placed upon them and to pursue their desires and dreams without fear or shame. It encourages women to reject the societal norms and taboos that limit their choices and to strive for autonomy and self-determination.

The film also sends a broader message about the importance of gender equality and the need to empower women. It shows how patriarchal structures in India and in many other parts of the world, perpetuate gender inequality and restrict women's potential. By challenging these structures and norms, the movie advocates for a more equitable and inclusive society where women can thrive and fulfill their potential.

"A Death in the Gunj" 2016, is a powerful drama film that explores the themes of identity, loneliness and toxic masculinity. The story is set in the 1970s and follows the character Shutu, a sensitive and introverted young man who is struggling to find his place in the world.

Throughout the film, Shutu's attempts to connect with the other characters are met with rejection and ridicule, highlighting the toxic and damaging impact of societal expectations and pressures on individuals. The film also explores the negative impact of toxic masculinity on relationships and society as a whole. The male characters in the film perpetuate a culture of bullying and emotional abuse towards Shutu, highlighting the destructive nature of such behavior.

Shutu, played by Vikrant Massey, is a sensitive and introverted young man who is struggling to find his place in the world. He feels out of place in his own family and has difficulty connecting with his peers due to his reserved nature. Shutu's attempts to connect with the other characters are met with rejection and ridicule, which highlights the toxic and damaging impact of societal expectations and pressures on individuals.

In contrast to the male characters, the women in the film are portrayed as more empathetic and understanding. Shutu finds solace in the company of his cousin's wife, Mimi, who provides a listening ear and emotional support during his struggles.

The film culminates in a tragic event that highlights the devastating consequences of toxic masculinity and the importance of empathy and understanding towards those who are struggling with their identity and sense of self. Overall, "A Death in the Gunj" is a powerful and thought-provoking film that sheds light on complex themes and issues related to masculinity and identity in Indian society.

The movie "Dhobi Ghat" 2010 is a character-driven drama that explores themes of loneliness, urban alienation and the search for personal identity. The movie is set in Mumbai and follows the lives of four characters whose paths intersect in various ways.

The central character of the movie is Arun, a reclusive artist who moves to Mumbai from New York to work on a new project. Through Arun's perspective, the movie explores the alienating and isolating effects of living in a big city like Mumbai. As Arun navigates the city, he meets Yasmin, a young Muslim woman who records her daily life on video diaries. Through Yasmin's video diaries, Arun is able to experience a deeper connection with the city and its people.

The movie also follows the lives of two other characters - Shai, a wealthy investment banker who is drawn to Arun's art and Munna, a young dhobi (laundryman) who dreams of becoming an actor. Through the interweaving stories of these characters, the movie explores themes of

identity, class and social mobility in modern-day Mumbai. The film's portrayal of Mumbai as a vibrant, chaotic and multi-layered city, provides a powerful backdrop for its exploration of themes related to the human experience.

The film 'Dhobi Ghat' portrays the complexities and challenges of urban life in Mumbai through the lives of its four main characters. It highlights the struggle of individuals who come to the city to pursue their dreams and ambitions but are often faced with loneliness, isolation and unfulfilled desires.

The message is that life in the city can be both exhilarating and overwhelming. The characters are all trying to find their place in a fast-paced and ever-changing environment, but they often feel lost and disconnected. The movie also explores the theme of human connection and the need for meaningful relationships, as the characters seek to connect with each other despite their differences.

Another important message of the film is the importance of self-discovery and acceptance. The characters in the film are all struggling with their own personal demons and trying to come to terms with their identity and their place in the world. Through their experiences, the film suggests that it is essential to confront our fears and insecurities and to embrace who we are, rather than trying to conform to societal expectations.

### **FILMS DIRECTED BY MALE DIRECTORS**

"Pink" 2016 is a Bollywood courtroom drama film directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury and produced by Shoojit Sircar. The film revolves around three working women in Delhi, Minal (Taapsee Pannu), Falak (Kirti Kulhari) and Andrea (Andrea Tariang), who are molested by a group of men while attending a party. The film highlights the issue of gender inequality and women's rights in India. It follows the story of three young women, Minal (Taapsee Pannu), Falak (Kirti Kulhari) and Andrea (Andrea Tariang), who are accused of attempted murder and have to prove their innocence in court.

The film portrays the social stigma and victim-blaming that women face in India when they speak out against sexual harassment or assault. It also brings attention to the issue of consent and how it is often ignored or dismissed by society. The male characters in the film are shown as complicit in perpetuating gender discrimination and violence against women.

The central theme of the movie is the struggle of women for their dignity and respect in a society that is deeply patriarchal and oppressive towards them. Through the film, the director

challenges the deeply ingrained patriarchal mindset of Indian society that views women as inferior to men and treats them as second-class citizens.

The film also conveys the message that women have the right to say "no" and that their consent is essential in any sexual encounter. It highlights the importance of education and awareness in changing the societal mindset towards women's rights and gender equality.

Overall, "Pink" is a powerful and thought-provoking film that brings attention to the pressing issue of gender inequality and violence against women in India. It challenges the deeply ingrained patriarchal mindset of Indian society and advocates for a more inclusive and equitable society where women's rights are respected and protected.

"Queen" is a 2013 Indian coming-of-age comedy-drama film directed by Vikas Bahl and produced by Anurag Kashyap and Vikramaditya Motwane. The film features Kangana Ranaut in the lead role of Rani, a young woman from Delhi who embarks on a solo honeymoon trip to Paris and Amsterdam after being rejected by her fiancé. The film explores themes of self-discovery, independence and empowerment, particularly for women.

The movie portrays Rani as a timid and innocent girl who is bound by the societal norms and expectations of her conservative family. However, after her fiancé calls off their wedding just a day before the ceremony, Rani decides to go on her honeymoon alone. Her solo trip helps her break free from her inhibitions and rediscover her true self.

Throughout her journey, Rani meets a variety of people who help her gain confidence and overcome her fears. She befriends a group of women in a hostel in Paris, who teach her how to let loose and have fun. She also meets Vijaylakshmi, a free-spirited Indian girl living in Amsterdam, who encourages her to be more assertive and take risks.

The portrayal of Rani's character development is a central aspect of the film. She transforms from a shy, dependent girl into a confident, independent woman who takes charge of her own life. The movie also challenges traditional gender roles, particularly with the character of Vijaylakshmi, who is shown as a single mother with a promiscuous lifestyle but still leads a fulfilling life on her own terms.

Overall, the film's message is one of empowerment and self-discovery, particularly for women. It encourages individuals to break free from societal norms and expectations and discover their true selves, even if that means taking risks and going against the grain.

The film's theme revolves around female empowerment, self-discovery and breaking free from societal expectations. It highlights the importance of individuality and self-acceptance, while also challenging traditional gender roles and expectations.

The movie "Queen" conveys a message of empowerment, self-discovery and breaking societal norms through the character of a young woman who goes on a journey of self-exploration and learns to embrace her individuality and independence. Theme

"Padman" is a Hindi biographical film released in 2018, directed by R. Balki and starring Akshay Kumar, Sonam Kapoor and Radhika Apte. The movie is based on the true story of Arunachalam Muruganantham, a social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu who invented a low-cost sanitary pad-making machine. The movie aims to raise awareness about menstrual health and hygiene and to break the stigma and shame associated with menstruation.

The film revolves around the story of Lakshmikant Chauhan (played by Akshay Kumar), a man who is concerned about the menstrual hygiene of his wife Gayatri (played by Radhika Apte) and other women in his village. He discovers that the high cost of sanitary pads makes it difficult for many women to access them, leading them to use unhygienic and dangerous alternatives. Determined to solve this problem, he sets out to make affordable and hygienic pads himself.

The film addresses various issues related to menstruation, such as menstrual taboos, lack of awareness and unavailability of affordable and safe menstrual hygiene products. The portrayal of Lakshmikant Chauhan and the other male characters as supportive of women's health and hygiene, breaks the stigma surrounding menstruation and promotes gender equality.

Furthermore, the movie highlights the power of grassroots innovation and social entrepreneurship in addressing societal issues. Lakshmikant's invention not only provides a solution to a pressing health issue but also creates job opportunities for women in his village.

The portrayal of the character of Gayatri, who initially feels ashamed and embarrassed about her menstrual cycle, also highlights the importance of educating women about their own bodies and empowering them to take charge of their own health.

"Padman" is a powerful movie that raises awareness about the importance of menstrual hygiene and breaks the stigma surrounding menstruation. The film encourages viewers to take action to support women's health and hygiene and highlights the role of social innovation and entrepreneurship in addressing societal issues.

## Findings and Conclusion

### FINDINGS

- Research indicates differences in feminist themes between female-directed and male-directed movies.
- Female-directed movies offer more complex and nuanced portrayals of female characters.
- Female directors explore intersectionality (gender, race, class, sexuality) more often than male directors.
- Male-directed movies tend to simplify feminist themes.
- Male directors may perpetuate the male gaze in their portrayal of women.
- Female-directed movies prioritize authentic representation of women's experiences.
- Female directors address diverse social categories (gender, race, class, sexuality).
- Female-directed movies have more diverse casts and characters.
- Female directors challenge and subvert the male gaze.
- Female directors emphasize women's agency and empowerment.
- Female-directed movies avoid presenting women as victims.
- Female directors see women as active agents in their own lives and struggles.
- More female representation in the film industry is needed.
- Diverse perspectives in filmmaking contribute to complex portrayals of women.
- Female directors bring a fresh and empathetic perspective to storytelling.
- Female-directed movies break traditional gender narratives.
- Female directors contribute to a more inclusive cinematic landscape.
- Female-directed movies promote inclusivity and representation.
- Authentic representation of women's experiences is a priority for female directors.
- Female-directed movies offer a feminist perspective on gender and power dynamics.

Possible reasons for the differences between female-directed and male-directed movies on feminist themes can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, female directors often bring a fresh and empathetic perspective to storytelling, drawing from their own experiences and insights as women. This allows them to create more complex and nuanced portrayals of female characters,

as they understand the intricacies of women's lives and struggles. Additionally, female directors are more likely to address intersectionality, recognizing the interconnected nature of social categories such as gender, race, class and sexuality. They understand the importance of representing diverse experiences and identities, resulting in more authentic and inclusive narratives. On the other hand, male-directed movies may simplify feminist themes due to various reasons. One contributing factor is the perpetuation of the male gaze, where women are objectified and sexualized for the pleasure of male viewers. Male directors, consciously or unconsciously, may prioritize the male gaze in their portrayal of women, even in movies that aim to empower women. This perpetuation of objectification can lead to simplified and one-dimensional representations of female characters, focused primarily on their physical appearance and appeal.

Furthermore, the lack of firsthand experience and understanding of women's struggles may limit male directors' ability to delve deeply into feminist themes. They may not be as attuned to the nuances of women's experiences or the impact of intersectionality on their lives. This can result in the omission or oversimplification of crucial aspects of feminist discourse, such as the challenges faced by marginalized women or the importance of diverse representation. The differences between female-directed and male-directed movies on feminist themes also highlight the need for increased female representation in the film industry. With more female directors, there is a greater chance of diverse perspectives being incorporated into storytelling. Female directors prioritize authentic representation and are more likely to challenge and subvert traditional gender narratives. Their emphasis on women's agency and empowerment showcases a belief in women as active agents in their own lives and struggles, rather than passive victims. It can be therefore said that the differences observed between female-directed and male-directed movies on feminist themes can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the unique perspectives and experiences that female directors bring to storytelling, the influence of the male gaze in male-directed movies and the need for increased female representation in the industry.

## **Conclusion**

The findings from the research indicate clear differences in the portrayal of feminist themes between female-directed and male-directed movies. Female-directed movies demonstrate a greater inclination towards offering complex and nuanced portrayals of female characters, exploring intersectionality and prioritizing authentic representation of women's experiences. On

the other hand, male-directed movies tend to simplify feminist themes, perpetuate the male gaze and may lack a deep understanding of women's struggles and intersectional experiences.

The data suggests that the presence of female directors brings a fresh and empathetic perspective to storytelling, enabling them to challenge and subvert traditional gender narratives. Female directors prioritize women's agency and empowerment, avoiding the portrayal of women as mere victims. Moreover, they address a diverse range of social categories and emphasize the importance of representation, leading to more inclusive narratives and diverse casts.

The research underscores the need for increased female representation in the film industry to ensure a wider range of perspectives and experiences are incorporated into storytelling. By embracing these diverse perspectives, the industry can move beyond simplified portrayals and contribute to a more equitable and inclusive cinematic landscape.

The findings thus highlight the importance of authentic representation and a feminist perspective in movies. Female-directed movies offer valuable insights and storytelling that challenge societal norms and stereotypes. By recognizing and supporting the work of female directors, the film industry can create richer, more nuanced narratives that resonate with diverse audiences and contribute to positive social change.

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