UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

CRITICAL DISCOURSE AND SEMIOTIC ANALYSES OF THE CHANGES IN THE ROLES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN ACTION MOVIES ACROSS THREE ERAS OF HOLLYWOOD

MARYAM ABDALI DEHCHENARI

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By

MARYAM ABDALI DEHCHENARI

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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy English Language

December 2014

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Dedicated to:

My Late Father, Mother and Brother:

Mr. Masih Abdali Dehchenari

Mrs. Homa Abdali Dehchenari

Mr. Naser Abdali Dehchenari

My Beloved Sisters,

Parvin, Khadijeh, Mahin

My Beloved Brothers,

Mohammad, Bijan

Who have provided me with care and compassion throughout my study life.

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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By

MARYAM ABDALI DEHCHENARI

December 2014

Chairman: Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Movies have power beyond pure entertainment; they communicate images of female characters that perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. Since the inception of cinema, women have been portrayed in typical roles that show them as under-represented and invisible. This study examines changes of women's roles and representations in action movies and movie posters across three eras of Hollywood: classical, post-classical, and new Hollywood. Fairclough's (1995) and Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) social semiotic as analytical tools are employed to look at the micro and macro levels of movies and movie posters texts. Lakoff's (1975) approach helps to analyze female characters' language. The basic theories of gender stereotype and feminist film are guiding this research.

The research investigates female roles in 40 action movies and accompanying posters from 1930 to 2012, with the following objectives: (1) to explore the roles played by women in Hollywood action movies (2) examine how women's roles are constructed verbally and non-verbally in Hollywood action movies, (3) to investigate the significant changes in women's role across three eras of Hollywood, and (4) to relate the representation of women in movies and posters to the social, political and economic forces of each era of Hollywood.

Based on the analysis of the sample, seven main themes were identified for the roles: (i) occupational, (ii) romantic and erotic, (iii) major, supporting and minor roles, (iv) familial roles, (v) roles reflecting independence and dependence, (vi) roles related to authority and subservience, and (vii) roles depicting good and evil.

Findings show that over time, women have had the opportunity to play roles reflecting a greater variety of professional occupations. Romance and eroticism have prevailed over all three eras; however, romantic and erotic roles for women have become more multifaceted in the new Hollywood era. Post-classical movies contained the highest number of erotic roles, demeaning women with nudity and

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seductive poses were seen in the post-classical movie posters. Female characters in main and supporting roles grew from more passive to more active over time. In the new era, movies showed the most number of women in supporting roles and their images did not find much equity with male hero in terms of size and classificational level in movie posters.

In minor roles, women were common citizens with no significant professions in the first two eras while the new Hollywood reserved more prestigious positions for female characters in minor roles; however, verbally, they were muted across three eras. Women in familial roles showed dichotomous representations across three eras, movies showed these characters in passive and sick versus active and supporting roles. Women also became more aggressive and violent in some of familial roles in the new era. With regard to roles depicting dependence and independence, women retained active speaking parts in the classical and new Hollywood eras, but they started to show some active reactions to villains in recent movies. The new era showed the highest number of independent roles in which women had supernatural powers, as well as assertive words and behaviors. Women played authority roles with a humanistic approach in the new era, while they had soft romantic or lusty depiction in the classical movies, their villainy characters were more emphasized in the post-classical period.

Women also continued to play subservient roles in all three eras, in which female characters remained passive. The more recent movies have portrayed good women in roles in which they possess supernatural powers and fight as errorless warriors. In the new Hollywood movies, women play evil characters using their intelligence for more criminal intentions, as well as characters with a tendency towards doing good deeds.

The findings show that women's roles in action movies have been impacted on by socio-political and economic forces throughout the three eras. In the classical and post-classical eras, particularly in movies revolving around the themes of war or communism, women found villainous, alluring or dependent identities. In the New Hollywood era, they were cast more as intellectual figures and warriors. The impact of the women's liberation movement resulted in the representation of sexually aggressive or villainous characters in the post-classical era. In addition, women are often cast as equals with men in independent roles in the new era. In movies centered on terrorist ideology, women have moved from passive and dependent roles to being in an active supporting role.

In general, the new Hollywood showed more positive representations and roles of women in terms of being more intelligent and showing more physical prowess in both movies and movie posters. Ethnic representation became more positive in the new Hollywood era. Findings of this research help to create awareness of the dynamic patterns of typification of women in movies and movie posters.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenudi keperluan untak Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

ANALISIS WACANA KRITIKAL DAN SEMIOTIK TERHADAP PERUBAHAN PERANAN DAN REPRESENTASI WANITA DALAM FILEM AKSI MERENTASI TIGA ERA HOLLYWOOD

Oleh

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Disember 2014

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Fungsi filem jauh lebih luas, bukan setakat memberikan hiburan semata-mata; filem juga menghubungkan imej karakter wanita yang menggambarkan persepsi yang tidak realistik, stereotipikal, dan terhad.Sejak kewujudan panggung wayang, wanita diperlihatkan dalam peranan yang tipikal yang menunjukkan mereka sebagai kurang diwakili dan tidak kelihatan. Kajian ini meneliti perubahan peranan dan representasi wanita dalam filem aksi dan poster merentasi tiga era Hollywood: klasikal, pascaklasikal, dan Hollywood baharu. Sosial semiotik Fairclough (1995) dan Kress dan Van Leeuwen (1996) sebagai instrumen analitikal telah digunakan untuk mengkaji peringkat mikro dan makro teks filem dan poster filem.Pendekatan Lakoff (1975) juga digunakan untuk membantu pengkaji menganalisis bahasa karakter wanita.Di samping itu, teori asas stereotaip gender dan filem feminis digunakan dalam kajian ini.

Kajian ini menyelidiki peranan wanita dalam 40 filem aksi dan poster iringan dari tahun 1930 hingga ke tahun 2012, dengan objektif kajian yang berikut: (1) untuk mengenal pasti peranan yang dimainkan oleh wanita dalam filem aksi Hollywood (2) meneliti cara peranan tersebut dibina dari segi elemen verbal dan bukan verbal, (3) untuk menghuraikan perubahan yang signifikan terhadap peranan wanita merentasi tiga era Hollywood, dan (4) untuk menerangkan kaitan representasi wanita yang terdapat dalam filem dan poster dengan pengaruh sosial, politik dan ekonomi pada setiap era Hollywood.

Berdasarkan analisis terhadap sampel, tujuh tema utama telah dikenal pasti bagi peranan tersebut: (i) pekerjaan, (ii) erotik dan romantik, (iii) watak utama, pembantu dan sampingan, (iv) peranan familial, (v) peranan yang menggambarkan independen dan dependen , (vi) peranan yang berkaitan dengan autoriti dan ketaatan, dan (vii) peranan yang menggambarkan kebaikan dan kejahatan.

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Hasil dapatan menunjukkan bahawa dalam tempoh tersebut, wanita mempunyai peluang untuk memainkan peranan yang memperlihatkan pelbagai jenis pekerjaan profesional.Tema romantik dan erotik didapati menonjol pada semua ketiga-tiga era; walau bagaimanapun, peranan romantik dan erotik bagi wanita tersebut didapati menjadi lebih bersifat multifaset pada era Hollywood baharu.Filem pascaklasikal mengandungi bilangan peranan erotik tertinggi yang memperlihatkan bentuk martabat wanita yang paling rendah, dengan adegan nuditi dan seduktif yang didapati dalam poster flem pascaklasikal.

Karakter wanita sebagai peranan utama dan pembantu berkembang daripada lebih pasif kepada lebih aktif dalam tempoh tersebut. Pada era baharu, filem menunjukkan peningkatan bilangan wanita sebagai watak pembantu dan imej mereka didapati tidak sama dengan pelakon hero dari segi saiz dan tahap klasifikasi dalam poster filem. Bagi watak sampingan, wanita adalah daripada rakyat biasa dengan ketiadaan profesion yang signifikan dalam dua era pertama, manakala era Hollywoodbaharu menyaksikan kedudukan yang lebih prestij bagi karakter wanita, walau bagaimanapun, secara verbal, peranan tersebut dipendamkan merentasi tiga era.

Kedudukan wanita dalam peranan familial menunjukkan representasi dikotomi merentasi ketiga-tiga era, filem yang menunjukkan karakter wanita yang pasif dan sakit berbanding dengan watak aktif dan sampingan.Dalam era baharu, wanita juga didapati menjadi lebih agresif dan ganas dalam beberapa watak familial. Berkaitan dengan peranan yang menggambarkan dependen dan independen, wanita didapati masih memainkan bahagian pertuturan yang aktif dalam era klasikal dan dalam era Hollywoodbaharu, tetapi mereka mula menunjukkan beberapa reaksi yang aktif terhadap watak jahat dalam filem terkini. Era baharu menunjukkan bilangan peranan independen yang tertinggi, wanita mempunyai kuasa supernatural, di samping kata dan perlakuan asertif.Wanita memainkan peranan autoriti dengan pendekatan humanistik dalam era baharu, manakala mereka digambarkan mempunyai karakter romantik lembut dan bersemangat dalam filem klasikal, watak jahat mereka lebih ditonjolkan dalam era pascaklasikal.

Pada ketiga-tiga era, wanita juga terus memainkan peranan subservien, manakala watak wanita didapati masih pasif.Filem yang terkini lebih menyaksikan peranan wanita yang mempunyai kuasa supernatural dan berjuang sebagai pahlawan tanpa rasa gentar.Dalam filem Hollywood baharu, wanita memainkan watak jahat dengan menggunakan kepintaran mereka untuk tujuan kepada lebih banyak jenayah, di samping watak yang berkemungkinan menjurus kepada kebaikan.

Hasil dapatan menunjukkan bahawa peranan wanita dalam filem aksi dipengaruhi oleh kuasa sosiopolitik dan ekonomi di sepanjang ketiga-tiga era.Pada era klasikal dan pascaklasikal, terutama dalam filem yang berkisar tentang tema peperangan atau tentang komunis, wanita didapati bersemangat, menggoda atau beridentiti dependen.Dalam era Hollywood baharu, mereka diberikan lebih pilihan untuk berlakon sebagai watak intelektual dan pahlawan.Impak pergerakan pembebasan wanita menyebabkan wujudnya representasi watak agresif dan seksi atau watak taat dalam era pascaklasikal. Di samping itu, dalam era baharu, wanita biasanya diberikan pilihan berlakon sama seperti pelakon lelaki dalam lakonan independen. Dalam filem yang berpusat pada ideologi teroris, watak wanita telah berubah daripada watak pasif dan dependen kepada watak sebagai sokongan yang lebih aktif.

Kesimpulannya, Hollywood baharu menunjukkan representasi dan peranan wanita yang lebih positif dari segi kecerdikan dan juga memperlihatkan keberanian fizikal dalam kedua-dua filem dan poster filem.Representasi etnik didapati lebih positif dalam era Hollywood baharu.Hasil kajian ini dapat mewujudkan kesedaran tentang paten perlambangan wanita yang dinamik dalam filem dan poster filem.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 18 December 2014 to conduct the final examination of Maryam Abdali Dehchenari on her thesis entitled "Critical Discourse and Semiotic Analyses of the Changes in the Roles and Representations of Women in Action Movies Across Three Eras of Hollywood" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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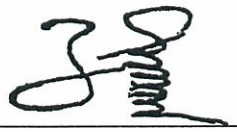

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study and the periods of Hollywood filmmaking; it includes an introduction of action movie genre and gender stereotypes in action movies. The statement of problem, purpose of the study, objectives, and questions of the research are elaborated in the next parts. The theoretical and analytical frameworks are also discussed. The last two sections are related to the scope and significance of the study and the definition of operational terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

As a social discourse, media help to construct "belief, values, attitudes and subjectivities, people's sense of themselves and their place in the world" **(**Morreale, 2003, pp. xi, xix). People's representations stay in an abstract form; gender roles and identities happen through conflicting images that are perpetuated by the media. In other words, the notion of femininity is translated by audiovisual media that tell us "who we are and what we should or could be like" (Press, 1991, p. 6).

Gender stereotype is the most obvious discrimination in media. Gender is an axis of social order. Its organization into femininity is socially constructed and maintained in everyday life through major social institutions (Mackie, 1994). Michael Foucault's (1980) theory of sexuality as a technology of sex proposes that gender is the representation and self-representation produced by various social technologies such as cinema.

Cinema is as an important medium. The representation of identity in movies is revelatory of hegemonic ideology that influences society's belief about power, and power over power. For Fairclough (2001), ideology can be defined as the production and dissemination of beliefs and society reinforces the inadequacies in these beliefs. There has been a link between top-grossing movies and people's lives; Dyer (1993) labeled these movies as ideal entertainments.

Movies represent notions about "societal behaviors" (Griffin, 2006, p. 361). The common circulated images of women in Hollywood movies construct the norm of femininity (King, 2002; Steinke, 2005). The movie genre as the core element makes a distinction between the role of male and female characters. Genre refers to a group of movies that have "similar narrative, styles and thematic features and conventions" (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2005, p. 347).

However, the genre definition is always in flux. What develops the notions of genre is "the movie-goer's experiences, marketing, and media coverage" (ibid, p. 350). Action movies attract the most number of audiences with the most salient categories of gender binary. In recent years, the industrial and aesthetic Hollywood cinema has provided important contexts in action cinema.

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An examination of past American filmmaking reveals some changes and also continuity from the classical Hollywood era. The new movies combine contradictory genre, style and star images. Action movies are the most salient ones (Tasker, 2004). The males are always the violent action figures. They are always trained to fight and win while women need male's protection and no matter how intelligent they are.

In action cinema, people are constantly bombarded by seemingly too many negative stereotypes in terms of entertainment. The main point is that Hollywood history has changed over time. From the past to the present, its system (style, narrative, genre, gender and many of its cinematic elements) is formed and reformed by various social, political and economic changes. However, the question is how this history is classified according to proper era or period. According to the debates of a few famous film scholars, the history of Hollywood movies can be divided into various periods of filmmaking.

1.2 Periodization of Hollywood Filmmaking

An intense debate has centered on the periodization of Hollywood as the classical, post-classical, or new practice. The variety of this division is the result of exploring different aspects and perspectives in Hollywood productions from the past to the present. Serious studies of Hollywood give more attention to the trends such the aesthetic, industrial and economic, in classical Hollywood cinema. Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985) combined industrial-economic analysis with aesthetic analysis. These authors defined the classical Hollywood era as between 1917 and 1960.The period 1961-1974 is seen as the post-classical Hollywood which was one of the most productive and profitable times of Hollywood. Innovations made during classical period continued to the new Hollywood era, also known as neo-classical which started in 1975, and continues to the present.

At the same time, other researchers attempted to explore various fascinating periods in the history of American motion pictures from 1930 to 1934 as the pre-code of Hollywood. This is the time when a series of unconventional movies violated the comments of code administration for production. Doherty (1999) in a historical account of 1930 to 1934, pointed to the connection between the beginning of the Depression Years and the appearance of sex and public immorality to get audiences back to the theaters. If the current time is the post-classical phase, when is the end of the classical cinema period? George King's (2002) *New Hollywood Cinema* is a readable text that synthesizes the social and the industrial changes in Hollywood. For him, the classification of the Hollywood periods can be decided based on different types of perspective.

Focusing on a more contemporary Hollywood, King (2002) introduced a new category in Hollywood studies. The term "the new Hollywood" shows the stylistic change and it rivals the era of the classical or the studio system for the attraction of audiences. At the industrial level, the term "classical" is generally used to describe the economic operations of Hollywood from the 1920s to some point during the 1950s. In the late 1950s and the early 1960s, a different set of departures from the classical style has been identified as the result of developments in Hollywood

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structure and style, known as the Hollywood Renaissance. The late 1970s to the present is famous as the post-Fordism or the new Hollywood for its more standardized mass production and more fragmented system of fractures.

With a broader historical review, Schatz (1993), marked the 1920s, 1930s and the early 1940s as the classical period of American cinema when movies were made by a limited series of the cartel studios. He suggested that the movie industry underwent three distinct phases after the war: from 1946 to 1955, from 1956 to 1966 and from 1966 to 1975. These periods were marked as both the years of Hollywood's recession and its movement toward a Renaissance of the movie production.

These phases of changes spurred the emergence of an era of high-cost, high-tech and high speed products that provided the foundation for the new Hollywood in the form of the global release of Hollywood blockbusters; their box-office sales exceeded expectations. In his art, craft and business review, Monaco (2010) investigated the establishment of Hollywood studio and genres before 1927 as the starting point of the classical era and examined the features of movies from the 1920s to the present. For him, Hollywood can be divided into three sections:

(i) classical Hollywood (between 1927 and 1948)
(ii) post-classical Hollywood (between 1949 and 1975)
(iii) new Hollywood (between 1976 and 2012)

Among the mentioned framework for the periodization of Hollywood filmmaking, the present study chose Monaco's work since it considered all the main aspects of Hollywood changes, which included the pervasive domination of motion pictures in 1928 and the postwar situation of movie production. It also encompassed the formation of the most developed era of digital facilities in the 2000s. This framework, as a map, can provide a matrix for the changes in movie genres in the history of Hollywood filmmaking. A short history of the changes of the classical, post-classical, and new Hollywood eras is discussed in Chapter Two.

1.3 Hollywood Action Movies

In categorizing genre, Moine (2008, p. 169) suggested two groups, local and transnational genres. In the case of the latter category, the movies belong to different periods and cinematic traditions. Action genre can be one of them. Action has emerged as a pre-eminent commercial genre of Hollywood in terms of the blockbuster logic of recent cinema production (Wallace, 1997). Action movies are usually big, often brainless, and extraordinarily popular. The popularity of action movies and their low status lie in the exaggeration of film production and its impact on the mass culture in its capitalist form (Arroyo, 2000). Understanding genre depends, in part, on its contextualizing (historizing). An approach to genre needs to recognize not only the context provided by film history but the fact that many Hollywood movies and many Hollywood genres are hybrid and multi-generic (Neale, 2000).

An action movie is one of the most contemporary and the most relevant to present-day Hollywood filmmaking. Audiences have formal expectations of an action movie. These expectations include elements such as chase sequences, combat of various kinds, an accelerated sense of time and pace (feeling of speed, or fast moves of camera work) visual and aural spectacles and special effects (Tasker, 2004).

One of the problems with constituting action as a movie genre is that these movies often interface with other genres (Welsh, 2000). The post-classical movies are more or less drawing and combining generic plots, settings, and character types from various sources including science fiction, horror, epic, war films, swordplay, martial arts and even comedy (Tasker, 2004). Action is used with adventure for the common concepts and "characteristics of these movies that are spectacular, explosion, narrative structures involving fights, chases and their emphasis on the athletic feats and stunts" (ibid, p. 52).

Similarly, Lichtenfeld (2007, p. 5) detected the influence of other genres on the action genre. He pointed to the raw materials of the action genre such as a loner hero, his combat for justice, vengeance, slaying of his co-combatant, brutal beatings, using a series of weapons, explosion, and depraved enemy. Lichtenfeld (2007, p. 6) confirmed that action movies "reconciled and combined" different conventions of genres such as western and action, film noir, police procedural and gothic production of the 1930s.

Other film scholars considered action genres and adventure narratives as the lively components of popular U.S. cinema. In adventure fiction, the hero or an individual group overcomes obstacles, dangers and accomplishes moral and important missions. He is in life-or-death situations from which he rescues himself and others. Adventure is often called male-romance since its focus is on male characters. The physical setting for this genre is usually an exotic and unknown place, while a historical setting has wide appeal. This genre is often paired with action movies for the exciting stories and new experience. The adventure genre includes swashbucklers and historical spectacles such as epics (Hendrick, 2009).

Some researchers have argued that the action genre was melodramatised in the classical and post-classical movies due to "an incorporation element of the centrality of female protagonists and a concern for the familial themes" (Tasker, 2004, pp. 4-5). However, when critics talk about a type of action cinema, they relate specific qualities to action according to the pace, excitement, exhilaration, emotion, senses, evocation of movement and violence.

Using a different approach, Welsh (2000) makes a distinction between pure action and action-adventure genre is predictable according to the relative complexity of plot and implicit contrast between spectacle and narrative. A major selling point of the action genre is its spectacular special effects while the action-adventure is more concerned with the narrative dimension. In the present study, action movies have the characteristics that are classified by Hill (2012):

(i) They have characters with high mental and physical ability to carry out orders.

(ii) The likability of the character as the root of the story allows viewers to follow the story.

(iii) The existence of a villain as another formula of Hollywood helps the movie to present a well-paced flow.

(iv) Movies should be constructed based on the mission that constructs the main plot.

(v) The quality and amount of action create some motivation for the viewer to follow the story.

(vi) The stunts create amusing moments for movie-goers.

The genre action movie consists of many subgenres such as epic, adventure, war, and science fiction. These subgenres have connections in their historical, cultural, and industrial contexts across the classical, post-classical, and new Hollywood eras (Langford, 2005; Lichtenfeld, 2007). The boundaries among these subgenres are not always clear. Thus, because of the communalities and similarities, this study looks at the action movie as a genre in general.

One can find the relationship between gender and genre in the Hollywood film industry. The movie narratives show the stereotypical roles of female characters that produce particular concepts. This meaning is formed by the patriarchal ideology that reinforces the inferior status of women in relation to men.

1.4 Gender Stereotypes in Hollywood Movies

A stereotype is an idea or image of different groups of people. Stereotypes are simplified and fixed beliefs about a group of people (Aguilar, 2000). Mass media are "one of the agents that channel people to perform culturally approved gender role" (Furze, Savy, Brym & Lie. 2011, p. 377). Baker (2005) states that traditional gender role and gender inequality depicts ideal men as those who are dominant, strong, successful and sexually appealing, and ideal women as those who are physically beautiful, submissive and sexually objectified.

Many researchers investigated the storyline of gender representation in the most recent decades. To Tasker (1995), today's action cinema is a response to the shifts in gender, sexual, racial identities that took place during the 1980s when the existence of masculinities became increasingly apparent. Tasker (1995) argued that the muscular action hero as the new man created the desired image for advertisements and for political purposes. Tasker (1995) claimed that the emergence of action heroines in American cinema constructed a contradictory set of female images. Their sexualized depictions and their physical strength were emphasized and they turned into the common figures of romantic interest for the male heroes.

For Tasker (1995), female fighters such as Cynthia Rothrock became the center of action in American martial arts; her presence was the signal of white female

supremacy in Hong Kong and Hollywood movies. The presence of woman in action narratives is a type of the symbolic guarantee of fixing the desire for heterosexuality and at the same time, reinforces her increasing marginality. Woman as a passive action hero plays a significant role, though this role can be played by a weak male character who is still in need of a hero's protection.

Other feminist scholars focused on the deconstruction of the binary notion of gender in the postmodern society. Gilpatric (2006) argued that the new role of female characters on the screen is a transgression of the traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity. The roles they play as monstrous mother, rape-avenger, and femme fatales occupy a limited space in the patriarchal social order. They try not to be a subject of power but the carrier of it. This depicts an ill-repackaging of masculinity. Doane (1991) confirmed that images of femme fatales have a linkage to the masquerade (disguise or a false show) of femininity.

For many film critics and scholars, Luc Bosson's movies such as *The Terminat*or (1984), *The Professional* (1994), *Joan of Arc* (1999), *The Fifth Elements* (1997) and *La Femme Nikita* (1990) can invite a big debate about the representation of tough women in empowered and sexualized aggressor roles that both invite and return the male gaze (McCaughy & King, 2001; Rowe & Lindsey, 2003; Tasker, 1991). The female character in contemporary popular cinema has a complex and contradictory identity. Her strength and subjectivity are always undermined by the depiction of an exaggerated sexual fantasy (Brown, 2011).

In the field of feminist film theory, researchers have frequently raised a common question: Do we live in the age of feminism or fetishism? "Fetishism is a distortion of sexual behavior in which some non-genital object is used for the sexual act". The fetish has qualities in a slightly hidden form, parts of body or body attributes. Some leather articles such as shoes, gloves or other clothing articles are associated with the body and items such as underwear or braids of hair have fetishistic properties (Eby, 1999, p. 34).

Film studies emphasize the traditional exhibitionist role of women and their appearance which have strong visual and erotic impact in terms of *to-be-looked-at-ness*. These researchers claim that new stars have been turned into notions of ideal beauty and fetishes. They are perfect enough to turn people's attention away from their difference and otherness. It is common to look at the woman as "other"; to be other than the man is the most common idea in movie culture. All Hollywood female film stars are fetishized and the most popular examples in the classical era were Marlene Dietrich and Marilyn Monroe while an example of one in the new era is Angelina Jolie (Mulvey, 1975; Cohan & Hark, 1993; Freeland, 2003; Stam, 2001; Erens, 1990; Smelik 2009).

In the new millennium, the most recent books contain plenty of articles that explore the new female imagery of action characters, including McCaughey and King's *Reel Knockouts* (2001), Sherrie Inness' *Action Chick's: New Images of Tough Women in Popular Cinema* (2004) and Jacinda Read's *The New Avengers* (2000). In these works, these tough girls are translated into phallic women, a male fantasy and a figurative male. To follow and complete the trace of previous studies, this study aims

to examine the under-representation of female characters in action movies across three eras of Hollywood (1930-2012).

1.5 Statement of Problem

The present study addresses gender portrayal stereotypes that are reflected in Hollywood action movies and movie posters (Grover, 2004). Hollywood has represented female characters in various kinds of traditional and non-traditional roles. Since audiences care about these images and symbols that make up their social constructions of gender, the question is how they can be accepted as the real image of women in male-dominated action genre (Brook & Herbert, 2006). This study fills the following gaps that have been explored in previous researches:

Most film critics manage to show that gender inequality is related to some specific decades. Their discussions are related to the idea of new stereotypes in terms of action women (Tasker, 1995; Read, 2000; Inness, 2004; McCaughey & King, 2001). These works focus on portrayals of women in action movies from the 1980s onwards. A few studies showed the representation of female characters across the eras of Hollywood (Borgarosh, 2008). However, his research was limited to the post-classical and the new Hollywood eras. A small number of researchers investigated the portrayal of female characters and their gender roles in both movies and movie posters (Borgarosh, 2008; Bylina, 2012). However, their focus was on various genres. The analysis of verbal and non-verbal elements in constructing female roles has been largely limited to a few specific movies instead of focusing on the patterns of women's representation within and across the eras (Zhoa, 2008).

A majority of the research on gender portrayals was based on interpretative analysis and a few of them followed content analysis methods. None of the research used a combination of social semiotic and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Saarenvesi, 2004; Borgarosh, 2008; Brewer, 2009). The present study employs both CDA and social semiotics to provide a more comprehensive database about gender representation in the Hollywood film industry. On one hand, with such dissenting research, critical discourse analysis takes an explicit position to expose social inequality (van Dijk, 1998) and on the other hand, social semiotics has a synthesis of several modern approaches to the study of social meanings and social action (Lemke, 2002).

Semiotics and discourse studies have different disciplinary backgrounds and a great diversity of methods and objects of investigation. However, "sub-disciplines of semiotics, and discourse studies have some dimensions in common" as follows: a) they show interest in the properties of naturally occurring language, b) they extend their perspectives to non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects of communication, images, films, and c) they focus on the contexts of the language use (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 2).

Both multimodal semiotics and critical discourse analysis focus on the implicit value system, their connections to institutional and personal identity and different types of inequality such as gender discrimination can be found in this regard (Lemke, 2002).

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Previous film studies focused on the effect of social and political forces on the representations of white masculinity. While some researchers focused on John Wayne as a critical figure of U.S. national identities of the 1950s-1960s that reflected social disruptions of global capitalism and modernization (Corkin, 2004; Coyne, 1998), the other group of film critics pointed to James Bond as an agent of the world power during the Cold War (Cork & Scivally, 2000; Cuordileone, 2005). In the same vein, more researchers claimed that the main reason for the creation of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone was related to the masculine identity of the Vietnam discourse (Tasker, 1995; Kirkland, 2009). These studies ignored the female characters' identities during the critical periods of American history.

The present research is an attempt at reviewing the impact of the historical and social-political forces on women's roles and representations in action movies across three eras of Hollywood. America has encountered several crises in its long history that deeply affected Hollywood film production. Changes in the political atmosphere have also occurred through different eras. King (2002) claimed that cultural energies from one decade move to the next decade; from Woodstock to Watergate, this culture made a channel to the arts of the next decade.

This research is worth pursuing since Hollywood is the most important business that produces a product which attracts the largest number of people and upsets the least number of people (Sklar, 1994; Neale & Smith, 1998; King, 2002). Hollywood is a "dream factory", an industry of the culture and desire dynamic (Donald, 1989). Hollywood action is "a cinema of attractions" which highlights privileged visual spectacle over narratives (Funnell, 2011, p. 66). Action has become an outstanding commercial genre of the new Hollywood cinema to perpetuate the ideology about gender role (Tasker, 2004).

1.6 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

As a facet of the media, cinema can be examined through a large socio-cultural lens since it is one of the most effective mediums of visual communications. Movies can reflect the dominant ideology that is applied to women's roles. Although half of the movie characters are women, they are usually stereotypically cast in traditional roles. The research is related to the establishment of fixed ideas about the representations of female characters in action movies. The focus is on the oldest to the newest action movies from 1930 to 2012, the decline or increase of positive or negative representations of female characters. This is achieved via the four main objectives of the research:

1. To explore the roles played by women in Hollywood action movies;

2. To examine how women's roles are constructed verbally and non-verbally in Hollywood action movies;

3. To investigate the significant changes in women's role across three eras of Hollywood; and

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4. To relate the representation of women in movies and movie posters to the social, political and economic forces of each era of Hollywood;

1.6.1 Research Questions

The present study aims to assess the role of female characters in action movies and movie posters in the classical, post-classical and new Hollywood. The investigation reveals the stereotypical gender roles by employing social semiotics and critical discourse theories as the analytical tools to explore the underlying meanings. This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How were women represented in the three eras of Hollywood action movies?
   a) What roles did women play in the three eras of Hollywood action movies?

   b) How were these roles shown through verbal and non-verbal elements in movies and accompanying posters?

2. What were the significant changes in women's roles across the three eras?
   a) What nuances (if any) were there in the changes?

   b) How were these changes reflected in the verbal and non-verbal elements?

3. How did the movies and movie posters reflect the social, political, and economic situations of each era of Hollywood?

1.7 Frameworks of the Study

This study is guided by two basic frameworks. The first, the theoretical framework, provides various interrelated concepts. Stereotyping and feminist film theories are used to test gender representation in Hollywood action movies. The fundamental concepts of these theories form a stable base for this research. The theoretical framework, as a logical structure, represents the research concepts that clearly identify what will be explored, examined, and described. The second, the analytical framework identifies the methodologies and the essential characteristics utilized for the research findings. The analytical framework is arranged based on the micro and macro levels of data description and explanation.

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework

> In no country has such constant care been taken as in America to trace two clearly distinct lines of action for the two sexes, and to keep pace with the other but in two different pathways which are always different.
> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1862

The two primary theories guiding this research are stereotype theory and feminist film theory. As a short introduction, Lippmann (1922) argued that stereotype helps to

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impose order into a complex world. According to him, the real environment is too big and too complex for direct contact. People are not equipped to deal with so much variety. Stereotypes are like maps; they clarify people's journey in understanding social reality but they prove erroneous if used wrongly or with unwariness. That is what may happen in the construction of gender role stereotypes in movies. Entertainment programs such as movies continue to present certain depictions of stereotyped groups, such as women, in their content. These portrayals often show such "stereotyped groups as having less favorable characteristics than those members of the dominant society such as white males" (Brewer, 2005, p. 13).

On the other hand, feminism works against the formation of stereotypes in society. Media content, especially movies, regularly allow the expression of sexism. This unconscious social stereotyping is the criticism of feminist film theory. Film feminists are "political in nature and seek to expose patriarchal practices" (Knight, 1995, p. 39). According to feminist film theory, cinema is controlled by a supremely patriarchal power. In the traditional exhibitionist role, women are displayed; they give coded messages by their appearance which has strong visual and erotic impact (Mulvey, 1975).

Stereotype Theory

Stereotypes are fixed and oversimplified generalizations about groups of people. The focus is generally on negative and unfavorable characteristics, although there may be some conceptions of stereotypes of positive social overgeneralization. Walter Lippmann in *Public Opinions* (1922) coined the word "stereotype". To Lipmann, things in the real world are not often the same as the images that people of a certain society have in their minds. Dominant groups always reinforce the maintenance of the inaccurate images. Lippmann (1922) obtained the concept of stereotype from the image of the printing press. The press makes the copies of what the manager determines how the print should look like.

In society, "individuals look at their social world through the picture they have in their minds." The great confusion of the outer world is one's culture and the selected stereotypes become a part of that culture (Kanahara, 2006, p. 306). Social science theorists apply the same concept; they all focus on the idea of shallow beliefs or generalizations about a particular group or subgroup. Certain schematic images become the shared knowledge among the members of the same society and culture. Stereotyping keeps minority groups in "the positions of lower power and prestige" (DeFleur & Everette, 1998, p. 482). Society is responsible for shaping the concept of stereotyping and separating individuals into certain subgroups within a society according to a specific group membership.

Stereotypes are unreliable and unrealistic generalizations that create negative feelings and build association with negative qualities of specific groups. To achieve self-esteem, a dominant group affects the stereotypical formation of a certain subordinate group. It means that people in the dominant group may place the numbers of other groups in a lower position to make themselves look better in society (Ford & Tonander, 1998).

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As the most pervasive and powerful device, media have a great influence on people's perception of men and women. All forms of media perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical images with limited perception. Under-representation of media considers "men as the cultural standard and women as invisible and unimportant." Men and women are represented "socially endorsed gender views" (Wood, 1994, p. 31). Good women and bad women are the most common images of women. Good women are beautiful, focused on home and care for the family and others.

Other images of women in media are versions of bitch, whore, and non-woman with a cold, hard and aggressive representation. Women's roles have not changed for a long time; a woman is a homemaker, or someone who needs to be rescued, a damsel in distress. In the post-modern mode of stereotyping, strong women are "sexualized and feminized in degrading ways" in action movies (Sarkeesian, 2010, p. 8).

Gender imbalance can be translated through some most outstanding markers in terms of typical masculine and feminine traits. White male supremacy is advertised in Hollywood movies. Heroic roles are more consistent with male characters and fixed portrayals of female characters are culturally encouraged. They have to be thin, sexy and have an attractively packed figure. In common movie narratives, female leads tend to have romantic relationships, and in their love-seeker role, are shown as one-dimensional lovers.

Reflecting various types of behaviors and traits, male characters are more active, constructive, dominant, arrogant and selfish while female characters are more nurturing, deferent and dependent. Women are positioned in subordinate gender roles since they are assigned a physically weaker character. Media has the power to represent what is accepted by society. These representations are political in a sense because they are power-laden (Benshoff & Griffin, 2011). Viewers' minds are reinforced with harmful norms of masculinity and femininity when they receive constant images of stereotypes.

At first sight, it may seem that what audiences receive is decided by Hollywood filmmakers, but practice over the long term, it is public desire that determines the nature of Hollywood movies. In other words, the conventions depicted in films reveal a nation's collective mentality (Manchel, 1990). The main point in a stereotype study which should not be ignored is that viewers reinforce this clichéd image by their presence in the theaters to watch these images. It has become their desire to watch traditional roles and depictions.

Feminist Film Theory

In a world that is filled with social stereotypes, feminism explains how women find their own power. To Knight (1995, p. 39), feminist film theory of a political nature expresses patriarchal practices. Feminist film theory has emerged to respond to the questions about spectatorship, subjectivity, and conceptualization of desire which is driven by patriarchal ideas.

Feminist film critics were not satisfied with the feminist studies that ignored critiques of movies. Feminist film theory became more connected to "film theory in

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the 1970s and early 1980s" (Mayne, 2004, p. 1257). It was the time that feminist film theory departed from other feminist theories to focus on women's images in movies, rather than in all media.

Cultural analysis is vital when researchers attempt to understand how mass media, particularly films, shape one's vision of the world (Snee, 2005). Gender stereotyping still exists in society in the form of objectifying female characters in movies. This issue is becoming more serious since the young masses receive this depiction and they are more prone to becoming accustomed to the influence of the mass media. The central notion of feminist film theory is the objectification of female characters on film; they are treated as objects in the sexual realm.

In the film industry, women are considered as tools to be used to serve objectifier's purposes. They are treated as if they lack self-determination or they can be owned by another. Women are identified by their bodies, not by their intellect. The heavy emphasis is on their bodies (Langton, 2009). Viewers utilize these stereotypical ideas and images as collective beliefs. Although they recognize fiction and the real world, they may not understand the collective impact of these repetitive images over the long term.

These are the pre-determined notions with underlying power structures that have dominated in society for centuries. Gender theorists continue to argue for the breaking up of the traditional gender binary theories and to open a way for understanding the masculine and feminine concepts. Hooks (2000) argues that any effort to dismantle gender binary cannot overturn the patriarchy which constructs the system of social values, which means that women are only socialized into a particular power structure:

> Based on sex, different roles are assigned to women in society but women are not taught a different value system. The overall acceptance of value system of culture leads women to passively accept sexism and pre-determined sex role. Women do not conceptualize power differently, although they do not have "the power ruling groups of men often exercise" (Hooks, 2000, p. 87).

This study borrows the idea of gendered value systems to observe how female characters are represented even if gender roles are swapped (women adopting masculine heroic roles). Depictions of women are still upholding patriarchal values in action movies and movie posters. This is highlighted in Laura Mulvey's work on the male gaze that has played an important role in feminist film theory. Mulvey explained that:

> In a world organized by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been divided between active/male and passive/female. Women are looked at and displayed in the traditional exhibitionist role; their appearance is coded for strong visual and erotic impact labeled as to-be-looked-at-ness (Mulvey, 1975, p. 19).

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Although this text was published in 1975, it is still relevant for analyzing movies and movie posters. Female characters, both in passive and active roles, are still cast for erotic impact. The subjective position of female characters can be explored through a comparative analysis of action movies in three eras of Hollywood. Across the three eras, the narrators were males, the main characters were male, the point of view was male and everything was skewed to a male dominant position. Figure 1.1 summarizes the relationships between the feminist and stereotyping theories and the representation of women in movies and movie posters.

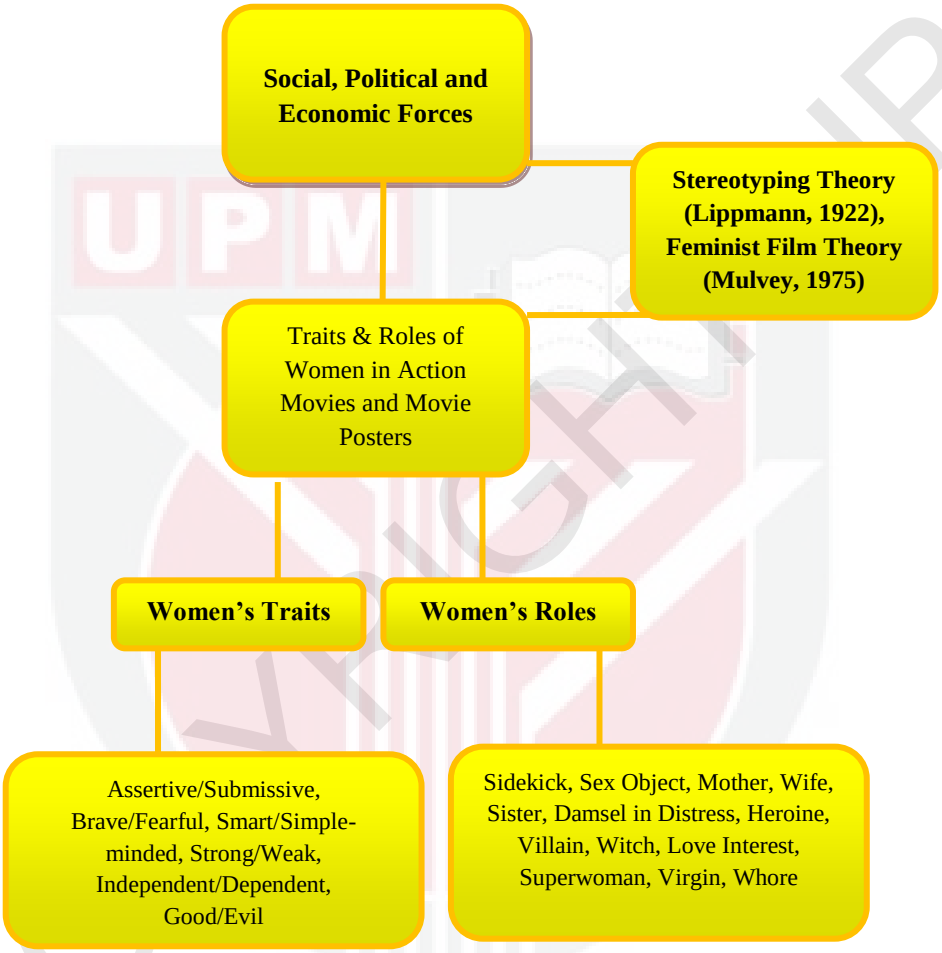

Figure 1.1 Cultural and Ideological Constructions of Female Roles in Action Movies and Movie Posters

Figure 1.1 also indicates that social, political, and economic forces can act on representations of women in Hollywood action movies. The lists of women's traits and women's roles shown in figure 1.1 are not exhaustive.

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1.7.2 Analytical Framework

Action movies have always been the dominant trend in Hollywood's output. These movies have attracted enormous film studies because of their ideological implications and the narrative structure of the political environments of film production. To analyze the technology of gender (de Lauretis, 1987), this research is an attempt to investigate the master narratives in action movies and movie posters to represent underlying meanings in gender roles. The term "gender" is a type of representation that is a social position and carries different meanings.

The basic concept of this research comes from the critical discourse analysis which sets power relationships and reproduction of ideology at the center of the analysis. The study has a close look at the textual analysis to find the line of dominant power in the surface structure and at the macro level; a tick description can combine text and context together. In the discourse practice, the micro level includes movie and poster analysis which leads the research into two different directions of still and motion images. These images are analyzed under two sets of verbal and non-verbal elements in both movies and poster images.

Text can be defined as the multiple modes of sense-making. The visual world demands intermingling modes of communications that go beyond mere written texts. The historical evolution of verbal and visual media urges people to accept the visual *mode* as the emerging dominant form of expression (Stephens, 1998).The combination of different modes or semiotic resources is known as multimodality. This combination conveys specific meanings. All texts are multimodal and constructed through a number of semiotic modes (Kress, 2010).

Multimodality is the normal state of human communication. The contemporary semiotic world poses several modes of representation. These modes include the visual and the verbal forms, and each of them has their own potentialities and their limitations. A move from reliance on one mode to reliance on another mode will have effects on both directions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

According to Kress (2010, p. 79), "a mode is a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning." Thus, music, gesture, speech, image, writing, layout, and moving images are all examples of modes used in representation and communication. Different modes suggest different potentials for making meaning; these potentials affect the choice of mode in a particular instance of communication. A common set of rules governs a mode and its signs to create meanings in different situations. A language or linguistic code is a mode in its own right that can be realized in speech and writing (Stockl, 2004). Speech employs volume and rhythm that are accompanied by non-verbal modes such as body language, and gestures. Similarly, writing employs typography as para-verbal means that is, what intonation and rhythm are to speech, typography is to writing.

In the case of poster images, Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) social semiotics is one of the appropriate analytical tools for investigating the meaningful signs of the text such as movie posters. This study can reveal how images reinforce stereotypical

forms of femininity within three fundamental dimensions of social semiotics: representational, interactive, and compositional meanings.

The representational function helps one to understand the logical relationship among the characters in the image that placed them in higher, lower, or equal power according to their distribution in the space of the image. In the interactive meanings, images create complex and subtle relations between the represented character and the viewers through an imaginary relation with viewers in terms of distance. Jewitt & Oyama (2001, p. 146) stated that, "distance or social relations can be kept through the size of the frame of shots." The more intimate and closer they are, the more probable, they belong to one's group. The concept of visual modality also has a basic role in visual representation to show images in real and natural mode by employing different colors.

The compositional meanings serve to organize the representational and interactive meanings of the image and bring them into a connected and coherent discourse through the information values and salience. In the information value, the role of any specific element is decided by its placement on the left or the right, in the center or at the top or the bottom of the page. The salience is the eye-catching part of the image that is constructed via the size, contrasting colors and foregrounding elements. The power and status of female characters can be evaluated busing these visual signs.

In the movies, the subtle messages about women's representations and roles are decoded by employing a series of parameters of non-verbal communication proposed by Wood (2009) to find the hidden meanings of female characters' images. In this coding system, the interaction can be observed through farcical expressions. Her appearance and type of clothing may show her as a sexual object. The other relevant data will interpret the characters' proxemics or closeness to male characters, haptics (touch) and the quality of her voice can signal different messages. These standing points can capture the overall portrayals of women in the passive or active modes in the selected movies.

At the micro level, the verbal elements of movies and posters are also investigated to get more comprehensive evidence of stereotypical representations of female characters. This research employs Lakoff's (1975) deficit theory to find gender differences in speech. She provided a different model of gender and language. She revealed that women use language that relates them to their passive status in society. Lakoff (1975) elaborated on a series of hypotheses for her study: women use more polite forms, more intensifiers, expletives, tag questions, and hypercorrect grammar. The analysis of movie transcripts can reveal that this style of speech places female characters in strong or weak positions. In the verbal analysis of movie posters, the meanings of poster texts such as titles and taglines can be analyzed by Bordwell's (1991) explicit and referential meanings to find gendered stereotypes.

At the macro level, ideological and power process is elucidated through micro textual analysis and vice versa since movies and social life are exciting in a mutual constitutive relationship (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). To delve deeper into the concept of ideological dominance, the macro analysis of the movies and movie posters needs to investigate the roots of cinematic events that are the consequences

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of the social and political events of a society. Hollywood has struggled with the issues behind many ideological and military battles during its three eras; the most important of them were the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the World War II. Hollywood was also the witness to social changes such as the feminist waves. All the mentioned events had a great impact on movie production and gender representation. Figure 1.2 gives the overall review of the analytical framework of women's roles based on Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis.

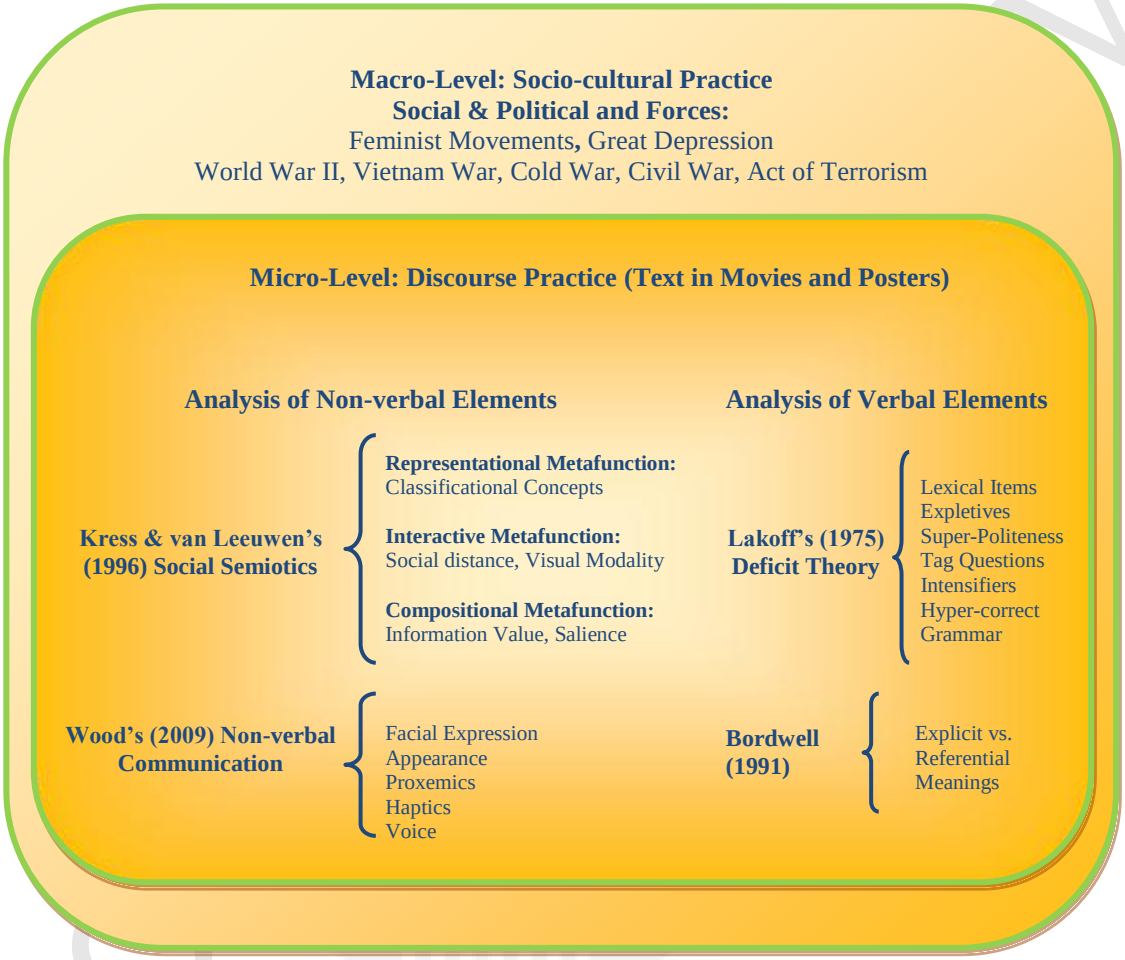

Figure 1.2 Analytical Framework for Looking at Women's Traits and Roles Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis

Figure 1.2 summarizes the analytical tools for investigating verbal and non-verbal elements in movies and movie posters. They are appropriate for showing the weaknesses and strengths of women's representations.

1.8 Scope and Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the examination of female roles in action movies and posters between 1930 and 2012 in Hollywood cinema. The top-grossing movies from the 82-

year period may demonstrate how images and discursive practices perpetuate stereotypes about female characters' representations. The focus is on the classical, post-classical, and new Hollywood film industry and the social, political, and economic factors which may have influenced women's roles and depictions.

This study contributes to the literature on representation of women in different eras of Hollywood action movies and the shift in their representation. The findings of the study will show the dynamic patterns of typification of women in action movies and movie posters in response to changing social and political forces. The present study is related to cinematic culture that is needed for understanding both media's role in the production and reproduction of inequity and for the development of a more equitable and democratic society (Brooks & Herbert, 2006). Social awareness of female roles will prompt society to decide whether to perpetuate the values or change them.

There is an interrelation between discourse and society. CDA as discourse analysis aims to explore obscure relationships between discursive practices, texts, events and wider social and cultural structures. By focusing on how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written, spoken, and visual texts in media, CDA makes an effort to explore how these non-transparent relationships are a factor in securing power and hegemony. It draws attention to power imbalances and social inequalities in the hope of encouraging people to correction actions after social awareness (Fairclough, 2001; Blommaert, 2005).

Visual studies are emerging as an important area of study since it opens the gate to understanding visual culture. Notions of femininity and masculinity are constructed in everyday social practices within institutions and it is represented at a symbolic level in mass media as cultural ideas (Correa, 2009). Visual and multimodal texts such as movie posters provide people with a better understanding of their world through visual images. Mirzoeff (1998) stated that present society is ocular-centric because one can understand things through one's visual experience.

An ocular-centric society means a society in which sight is dominant over all other senses, where the world is experienced through vision alone rather than via an integrative use of all five senses (Hoang, 2011). Readers of multimodal texts need to develop a meta-language for noticing, discussing, and understanding visual images if they want to move beyond the literal perception of images and multimodal texts (Serafini, 2010).

This research also helps movie poster designers to renew a sense of justification in their politically provincial beliefs. Sometimes, messages inside a movie poster may evoke social consciousness in viewers. Through the results of this study, filmmakers and researchers can gain better insights into the roles and identities that are constructed and played out in cinema. Movie producers may benefit from the research by knowing how stereotypical cinematic conventions and portrayals influence the intercultural world.

The popular appeal of Hollywood's products across the world evokes "complex history of globalization, representation, and popular imagination." Hollywood's

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version of American culture has become global and used for colonizing markets (Semati & Sotirin, 1999, p. 176). The hegemonizers view Hollywood as "an agent of global culture industry and a threat to the cultural sovereignty of other nations" (ibid, p 178).

As the dominant visual American culture, Hollywood movies and movie posters produce and reproduce most familiar images of sexuality and modes of gender identity (Green, 1998). Hollywood narratives form the fundamental ideological tenet of patriarchy that shows men and masculinity are privileged over women and femininity (Benshoff & Griffin, 2011). CDA and semiotic analysis of visual texts renegotiates the meanings and norms that are invisibly constructed and naturalized in the cultural fabric and most movie-goers are not aware of them (van Leeuwen, 2005; Hall, 1997).

Global marketing of Hollywood blockbusters shows how Americans have deployed "more systematic marketing strategies to transform super productions into the global media events" (ibid, p. 179). Hollywood's predetermined gender depiction is one of the obvious strategies that allow stereotypes of female characters to be circulated in the global market. This study investigated a small segment of this depiction to represent the unconscious hegemony of gender role that is implemented in movie-goers' minds.

1.9 Definition of Operational Terms

Action Movie

The genre of action movie has been present for more than 30 years in the Hollywood world. Hill (2012) considered six particular qualities of action movies. It has a likable lead character with the ability to take serious action; he/she has exceptional brain power and a special willingness to take risks. The movie includes a hated villain who, like a black hole, pulls everything into a risky situation. The hero's mission constructs the foundation of the movie and the viewer cares about it. The amount of action will keep everything moving and attract the viewer's attention. The action quality gives the movie a load of energy and intensity. The stuntmen and stuntwomen are people who do dangerous stunts to create some entertainment, though they may hide their faces behind a helmet or a pile of hair (ibid, pp. 9-11).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analysis that studies how text and talk in the social and political context produce, reproduce, and resist social power abuse, dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 1998). This concept is discussed in full detail in the theoretical framework, Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

Femininity

Femininity is "a set of ideas about appropriate womanly behavior which is based on cultural assumption of female nature" (McPherson, 2003, p. 21).

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Masculinity

The idea of masculinity is a common term in mass media studies. To Gauntlett (2008), masculinity is the state of being a man who is currently somewhat in flux.

Gender Role

Gender roles are "behaviors that are seen as appropriate for males and females, including attitudes, personality traits and even postures and body language that are associated to the male or female." These roles are culturally determined (Carroll, 2009, p. 94).

Genre

Genre is a fixed element of filmmaking and can be based on a set of conventions. It can be represented through repetition such as familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations (Grant, 2003, p. XV). This concept is discussed in full detail in the theoretical framework, Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

Representation

The term of "representation" can be defined as the creation of a mental image through art, language and other domains that create various meanings (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 117). Representation involves signifying practices and symbolic systems through which meanings are produced (Hall, 1997).

Semiotics

Semiotics is a science that studies the signs. A sign is anything, a color, a gesture, or an object that stands for something other than itself (Danesi, 2004). This concept is discussed in full detail in the theoretical framework, Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping is employing a strategy that "excludes everything that does not fit" (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 140). To Kunda (1999, p. 315), stereotypes are the "mental representations of social categories." Stereotypes reduce a person or group to a small number of exaggerated and negative traits and solidify the differences between the "in" group and the "out" group.

Verbal and Non-verbal Elements

In this study, verbal elements refer to the linguistic elements such as words, lexical choice, plural pronouns, and use of modal verbs. Non-verbal elements mean non-linguistic elements such as visual, motions, facial expression, voice, and proxemics. These terms have already been defined by some researchers (Esposito, 2007; Wood, 2009).

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