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By Yousuf Hasan Parvez

Abstract- The superhero film is one of the most popular movie genres in the entertainment world. Viewers have enthusiasm about the portrayal of key male and female characters. The way costumes, appearances, narrative, gestures, and languages are presented is also a matter of eagerness for spectaculars. The study has looked at how gender is represented in female superhero movies. It has been analyzed whether the female protagonist in these movies is portrayed according to the traditional gender roles. If any male gaze perspective or female gaze perspective has been found then it has been interpreted. Movies like Black Widow, Birds of Prey, and The Suicide Squad have been selected through the purposive sampling technique. The study is conducted with the help of representation theory and feminist film theory. Content analysis and discourse analysis are used as research methodology. The study has found that the female protagonist has come out of the traditional gender role in the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey. The male gaze perspective is almost absent in these movies except in The Suicide Squad. However, the main female character, Harley Quinn could not get out of the traditional gender role in the movie Suicide Squad.

Keywords: *representation, superhero films, male gaze, female gaze, gender role.*

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Gender Representation in Female Superhero Movies

Yousuf Hasan Parvez

Abstract- The superhero film is one of the most popular movie genres in the entertainment world. Viewers have enthusiasm about the portrayal of key male and female characters. The way costumes, appearances, narrative, gestures, and languages are presented is also a matter of eagerness for spectaculars. The study has looked at how gender is represented in female superhero movies. It has been analyzed whether the female protagonist in these movies is portrayed according to the traditional gender roles. If any male gaze perspective or female gaze perspective has been found then it has been interpreted. Movies like Black Widow, Birds of Prey, and The Suicide Squad have been selected through the purposive sampling technique. The study is conducted with the help of representation theory and feminist film theory. Content analysis and discourse analysis are used as research methodology. The study has found that the female protagonist has come out of the traditional gender role in the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey. The male gaze perspective is almost absent in these movies except in The Suicide Squad. However, the main female character, Harley Quinn could not get out of the traditional gender role in the movie Suicide Squad.

Keywords: representation, superhero films, male gaze, female gaze, gender role.

I. Introduction

The indomitable interest of movie lovers, especially in superhero movies, is increasing day by day. The younger generation is more interested in those movies where their favorite male and female superheroes are performing and how they are represented. (The Learning Network, 2019)

A superhero is a special character that possesses abilities and skills beyond those of ordinary people, who typically use his or her powers to help. These films usually include aspects of action, adventure, fantasy, and science fiction. (*Research Guides: Film Genres: Superhero Films*, n.d.). This Character stimulates people to fight for their rights and the sovereignty of their nations. He or she can be represented as brave, bold, fearless, courageous, and sometimes as a role model for the younger generation. (Superheroes as Role Models, 2020)

Representation is about the way that things are constructed in the media. We're talking about everything we see no matter what they let you look at no matter what genre it is no matter what format it is. One of the most obvious forms of representation in the media today is the representation of gender. The ideology of gender stereotypes or the idea behind the construction of representation is largely down to the patriarchy at the time when media was starting to become popular. So, things were largely run by men which meant that they wanted to represent men in a strong powerful way, and the representation of women also followed that idea. (Media: Deconstructed, 2017)

In media studies, representation refers to how different components of society are presented to viewers, such as gender, age, and ethnicity. The way gender, age, ethnicity, national and regional identity, social issues, and current events are handled and presented in media texts is known as representation. The power of media texts to influence how an audience learns and comprehends these fundamental concepts is enormous Because of this, they have great influence over people's thoughts and attitudes. (*What Is Representation? - GCSE Media Studies Revision*, n.d.)

The male gaze is a technique of depicting and viewing women that empowers males while sexualizing and demeaning women. The male gaze discourages female empowerment. (*What Is the Male Gaze?,* 2021). A woman is visually positioned as an object of heterosexual male desire in the male gaze. Her own sexual desires, feelings, and thoughts are less essential than being framed by masculine desire. (Loreck, 2016)

The female gaze perspective does not represent women through male eyes. An attempt is made to see through the eyes of women. Through the eyes of women, they are seen as people with feelings and intelligence. When the female desire is shown and represented through the female gaze, the characters are not objectified. the female gaze is a new perspective. this concept is still being explored. (Ayala, 2022)

In society, there are gender roles that determine how we should act, speak, dress, groom, and behave based on our sex. For instance, it is expected of girls and women to behave politely, be courteous, and wear traditionally feminine clothing. Men are often perceived as being powerful, aggressive, and brave. Every civilization, ethnic group, and culture has gender role expectations, yet these expectations might differ considerably from one group to the next. Men are typically thought to be strong, aggressive, and courageous. Every civilization, ethnic group, and culture has gender role expectations; however, these might differ considerably from one group to the next. (*Gender Identity & Roles*, n.d.)

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This study has analyzed the gender representation of female protagonists in superhero films that have come out in contemporary times. The common feature of superhero movies is that they show a lot of action, conflict, and war. Viewers can think of action from different perspectives. Excessive violence created by superheroes in movies can distort the social thinking of spectaculars. The superhero characters in films are portrayed as role models. Children think of seeing a superhero character from such an ideal place with morality and values. (Miller et al., 2016)

It's necessary to understand the meaning the movie has tried to convey and the message it has tried to give us. This is not a male-led superhero movie. It's a female-centered superhero movie. So, it is possible to present the gender role differently from male-led films. (Vitzthum, 2015) This study has found out if the traditional gender role has been maintained or if a different role has been represented. Most movies are represented from the place of the male gaze, now this study has found out whether the female-led superhero movie has moved away from the traditional perspective or how far it has moved to represent the female gaze.

Since this study has worked on the representation of the female protagonist, Stuart Hall's Representation Theory is the most suitable for this research. Based on this theory the research has been conducted. Also, from which point of view women are represented in the movie is an important aspect of this study. For this, Feminist Film Theory has been used as the second theory.

The study is done based on one research question that how gender is represented in female superhero movies? For getting the answer to the question I also need some sub-questions. They are-

- Has the female protagonist been represented according to traditional gender roles?
- Is there any male or female gaze perspective used in movies?

The purposive sampling technique (also known as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling) is a sampling approach in which the researcher chooses members of the population to participate in the study based on his or her own judgment. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which components chosen for the sample are picked based on the researcher's judgment. Researchers frequently feel that by applying sound judgment, they can produce a representative sample and save time and money. Personal judgment must be utilized to find answers to research questions and to achieve research objectives through purposeful sampling. One of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling approaches is purposeful sampling. If there are only a few primary data sources that can contribute to the study, then purposeful sampling may be the only viable option. (Purposive Sampling, n.d.)

I have chosen 3 films for this study. The first one is Black Widow which is released in 2021. I have chosen this because out of thousands of films, this movie has achieved the 12th position at the box office in 2021. (*2021 Worldwide Box Office*, n.d.)

After this movie, no significant female-led superhero movie came out. Black Widow is one of the latest released female superhero movies. So not much research has been done on this movie. So, there is ample opportunity to do research on Black Widow.

Another two movies are Birds of Prey (2020) and The Suicide Squad (2021). The representation of the female protagonist has been analyzed in these movies. The answers to the research questions have been found through the analysis of these three movies.

II. Method

This research is done by using discourse analysis and content analysis to find the research questions.

a) Discourse Analysis

Zellig Harris introduced the term "discourse analysis" at the beginning. Interpersonal Activity, the transaction between speaker and hearer, written form messages, spoken form messages, interviews, commentaries, speeches can be analyzed using this method. We can analyze and investigate all those features that are part of the total communication act. Conversational behavior and speech arts can be interpreted through discourse analysis. (Discourse Analysis, Types, Elements, Importance, Text Complete in Urdu and Hindi, 2018)

Discourse analysis involves the study of language beyond sentences. It examines how speakers use language to construct meaning and identify. It also views social problems as institutionalized and seeks societal change. (Discourse Analysis, 2021)

Discourse analysis works on all subjects that give meaning to texts. Text works as an object of discourse analysis. It can be oral or written text. (Introduction to Discourse Analysis, 2020)

This method analyzes the framing, foregrounding, and backgrounding of texts. (Critical Discourse Analysis, 2020)

In this study, my discourse is on whether male superiority has been represented despite the fact that it is female superhero movies. Another topic of discourse analysis is to find out how the female superhero is represented through language. The discourse Analysis method is the most suitable for finding these aspects of cinema.

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b) Content Analysis

Content Analysis is a systematic reading of a body of text images and symbolic matter not necessarily from an author's or user's perspective. Content analysis is the study of recorded information or information that has been recorded in text media or physical items systematically we collect data from a set of texts. Content analysis is very widely used in mass communication research fields. (*Learn How to Conduct Content Analysis: Research Method*, 2020)

The quantitative content analysis basically focused on facts from the text are presented in the form of frequency expressed as a percentage or an actual number of key categories. Qualitative content analysis is a concept chosen from examination and expresses an underlying meaning that is dormant content we are analyzing. the researcher must familiarize him or herself with the data and he or she has to read through the transcribed data to obtain a sense of the whole. we need to develop the meaning and connect the meaning units with our research questions. (*Learn How to Conduct Content Analysis: Research Method*, 2020)

Content analysis can be used in various fields, including gender and media studies. It has various possible goals like finding correlations and patterns in how concepts are communicated; understanding the intentions of an individual, group, or institution. (Luo, 2021)

It was necessary to select and observe 14 codes to extract important information about the representation of the female protagonist. From that perspective, Content Analysis is the most suitable method. Therefore, Content Analysis Method has been used in this study.

III. Results

For the content analysis, three movies are taken as samples and the representation of the movie's female protagonist has been observed. 20 scenes in Black Widow movie, 10 scenes in Suicide Squad movie, and 14 scenes in Birds of Prey movie have been analyzed. Results are converted to percentages for easy understanding.

On-Screen Time

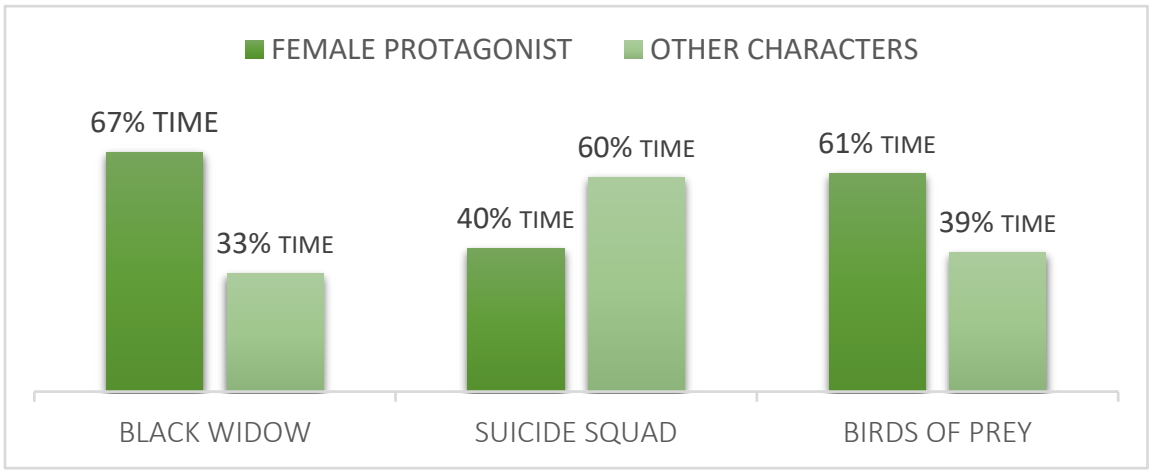


Figure 1

In the movie Black Widow, Natasha got 67% On-Screen Time in the whole movie. Other characters have not had a chance to act for so long. Harley Quinn also got 61% on-screen time in Birds of Prey which is the highest in this movie. However, the main female character in Suicide Squad got only 40% On-Screen Time which is less than other characters.

Conversation Topic

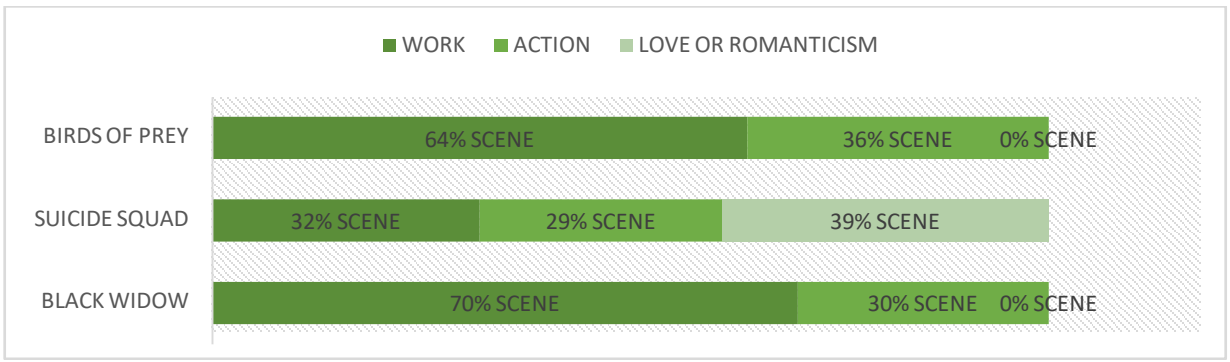


Figure 2

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The female protagonists of the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey have talked a lot about work and action. There was no presence of romanticism in the conversation, but there was no similar representation of Harley Quinn in the Suicide Squad movie.

Presence of Sexualization

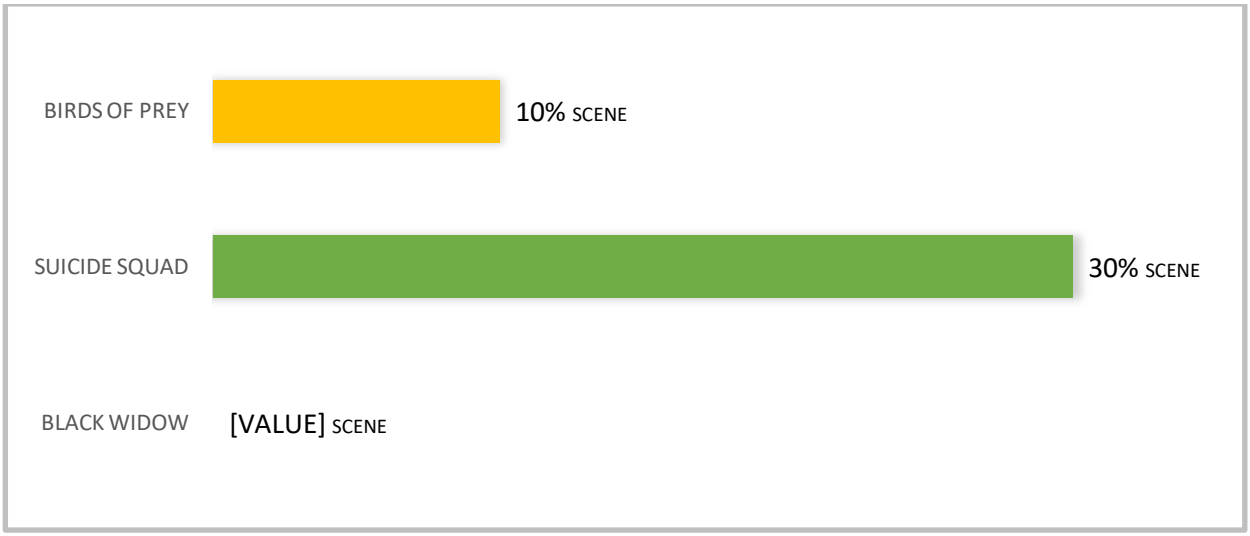


Figure 3

There have been few attempts to sexualize the female protagonists in the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey. However, in the case of Harley Quinn in Suicide Squad, sexualization is noticeable in 30% of the scenes.

Personality Traits

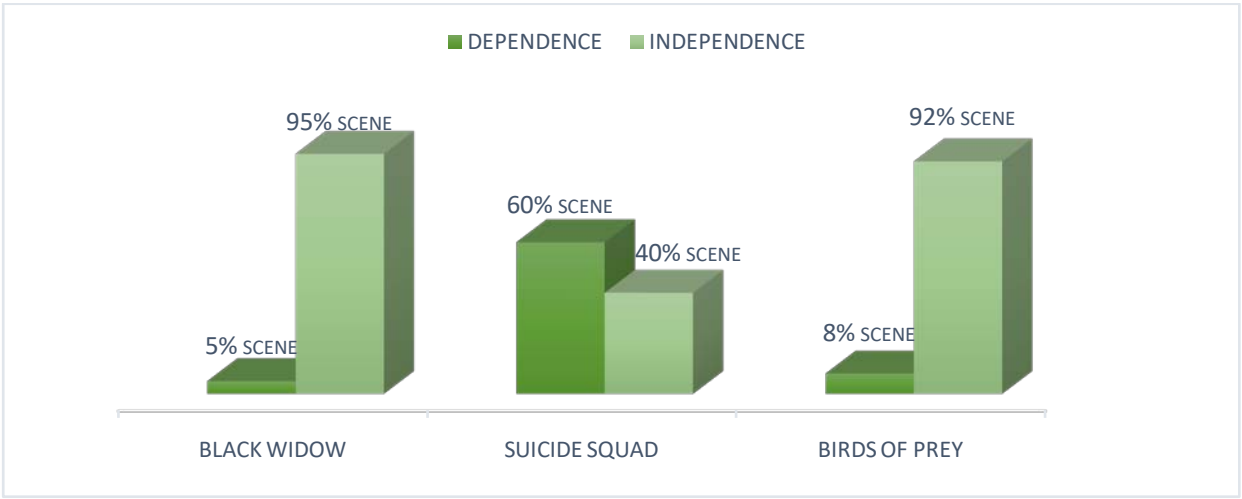


Figure 4

The female protagonists of the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey have been represented as independent female characters almost all the time. However, in the movie Suicide Squad, Harley Quinn has been represented as dependent on others for 60% of the scenes.

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Skills

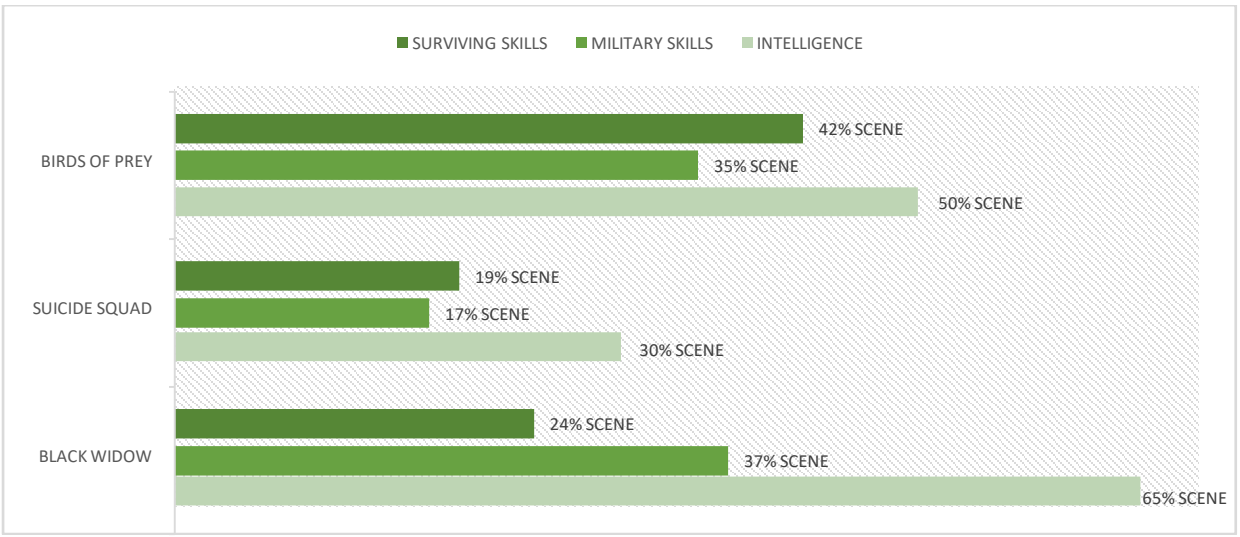


Figure 5

The female protagonists of the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey have applied many skills almost all the time. However, Harley Quinn did not have a similar representation in the movie Suicide Squad. In very few scenes, Harley Quinn has applied her skills.

Dominance of Masculinity

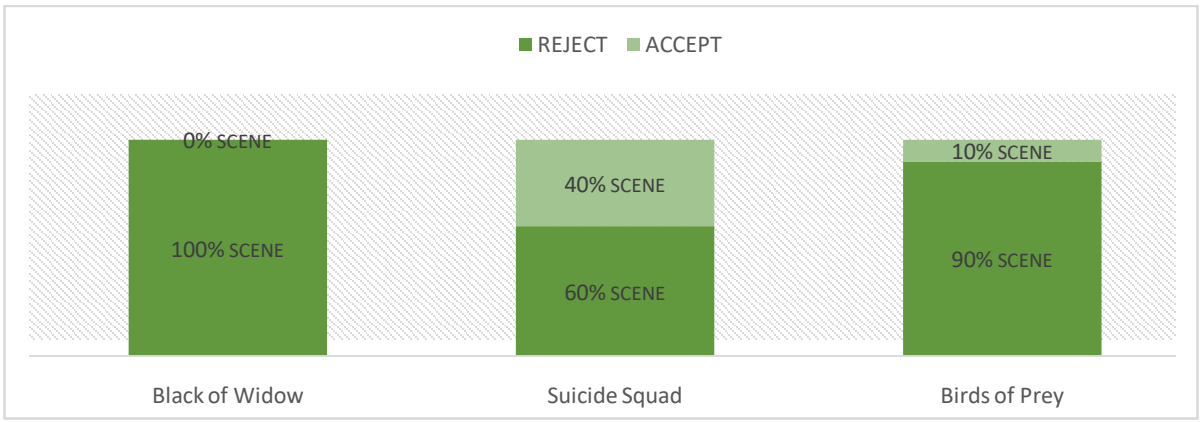
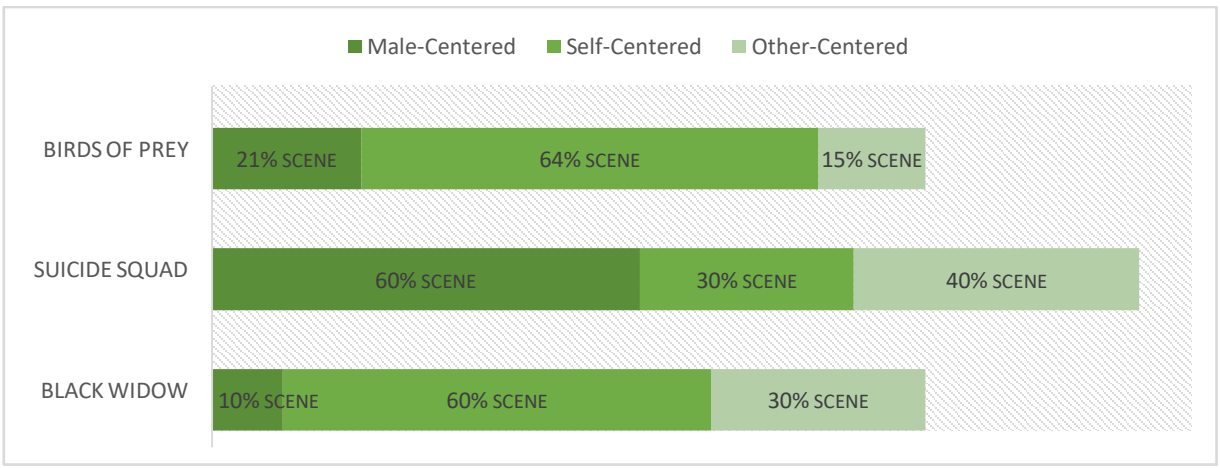


Figure 6

In the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey, female protagonists did not accept the dominance of masculinity or patriarchy but challenged it. However, in the movie Suicide Squad, Harley Quinn is represented as accepting the dominance of patriarchy in 60% of the scenes.

Usage of Language



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The movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey had very few male-dominated dialogues. Self-centered wording was more. However, about 60% of Suicide Squad movie scenes were dominated by male-centric conversations.

Physical Appearance

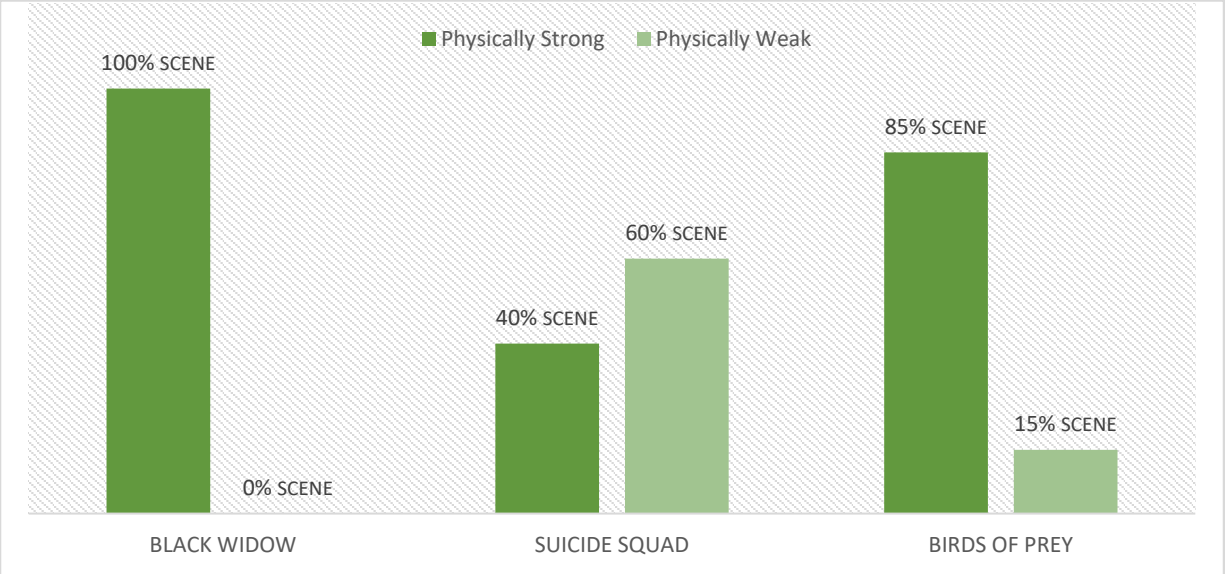


Figure 8

In the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey, female protagonists are represented as physically strong. However, Harley Quinn has been represented as physically weak in almost 70% of the scenes in the movie Suicide Squad.

Role-Playing Areas

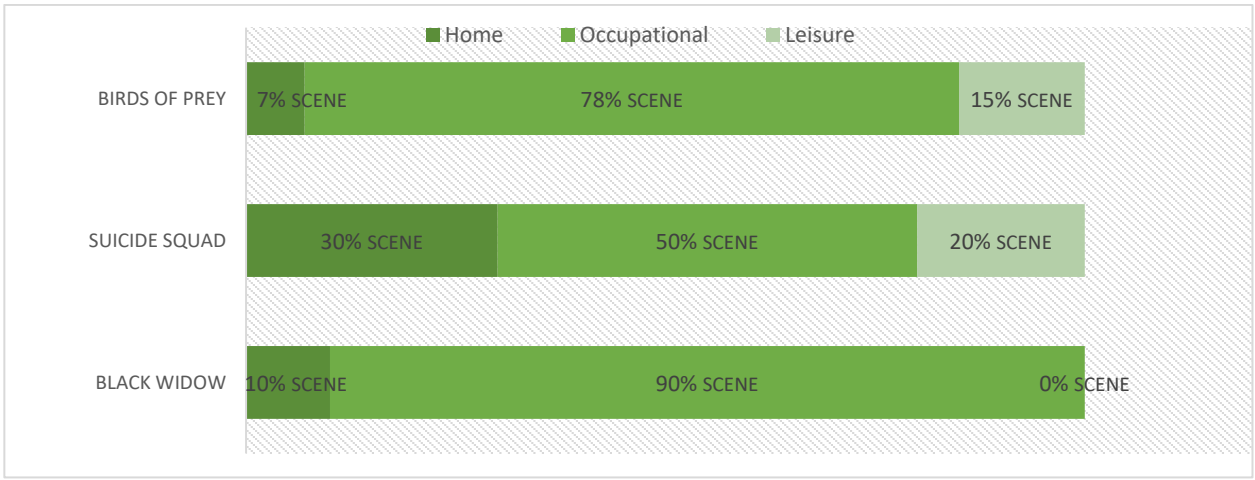


Figure 9

In the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey, female protagonists are represented performing occupational duties in 90% and 78% of scenes respectively. However, in the case of Harley Quinn in the Suicide Squad movie, the rate was around 50% and Harley also performed housekeeping duties in 30% of the scenes.

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Type of Argument

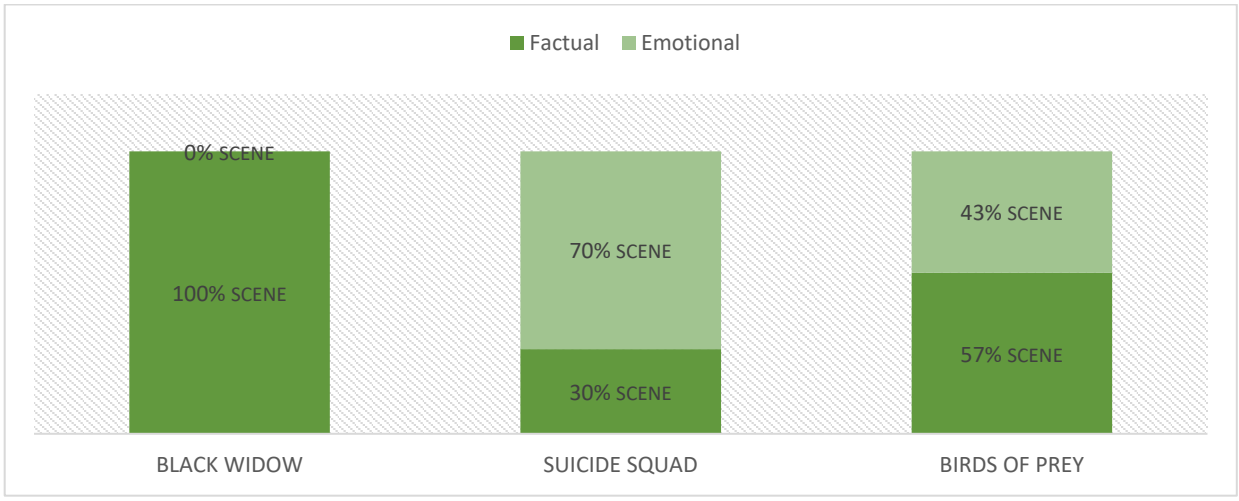


Figure 10

The female protagonist of Black Widow movie was 100% factual all time while talking and arguing. Harley Quinn was factual in 57% of scenes in birds of prey and only 30% of scenes in Suicide Squad. But in the rest of the scene, they were represented as talking and arguing in emotional or irrational ways.

Time-Spending Area

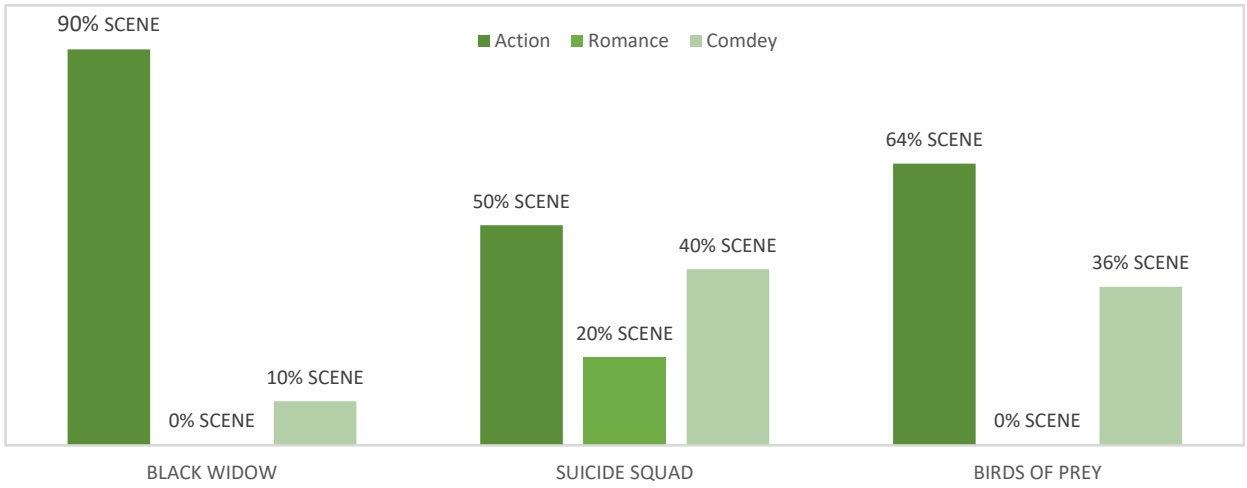


Figure 11

In Black Widow and Birds of Prey, female protagonists are represented by taking action in 90% and 64% of scenes respectively. No time was spent on romanticism. However, in the case of Harley Quinn in Suicide Squad, the action was taken in 50% of scenes, and spending time on romanticism was in 30% of scenes. Harley Quinn has also spent time as a comedian as well.

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Costume

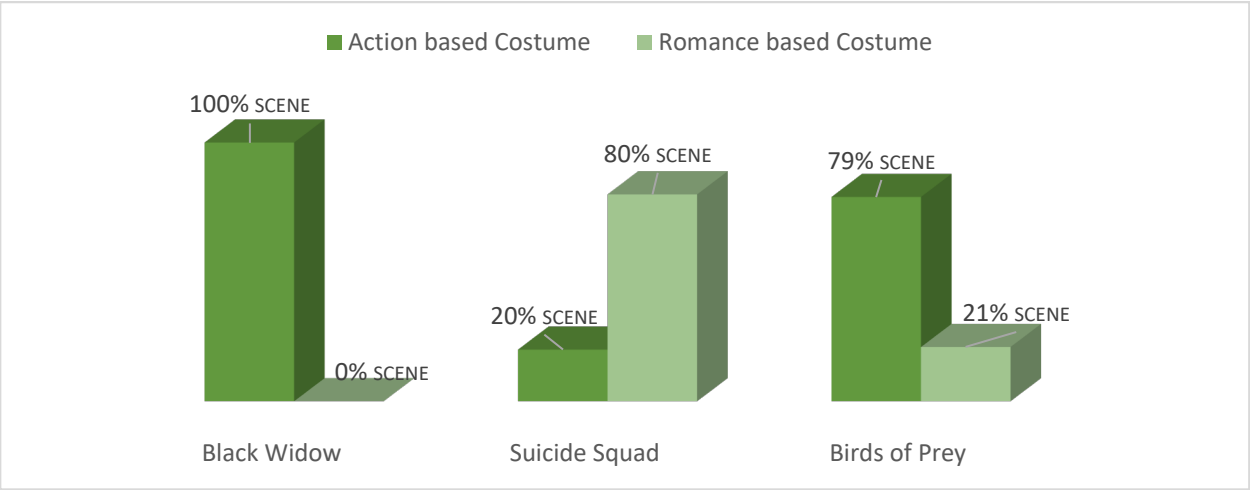


Figure 12

In the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey, female protagonists used action-based costumes in 100% and 79% of scenes, respectively. However, in the case of Harley Quinn in Suicide Squad, the action-based costume was used in 20% of scenes, and the romance-based costume was used in 80% of scenes.

Presence of Objectification

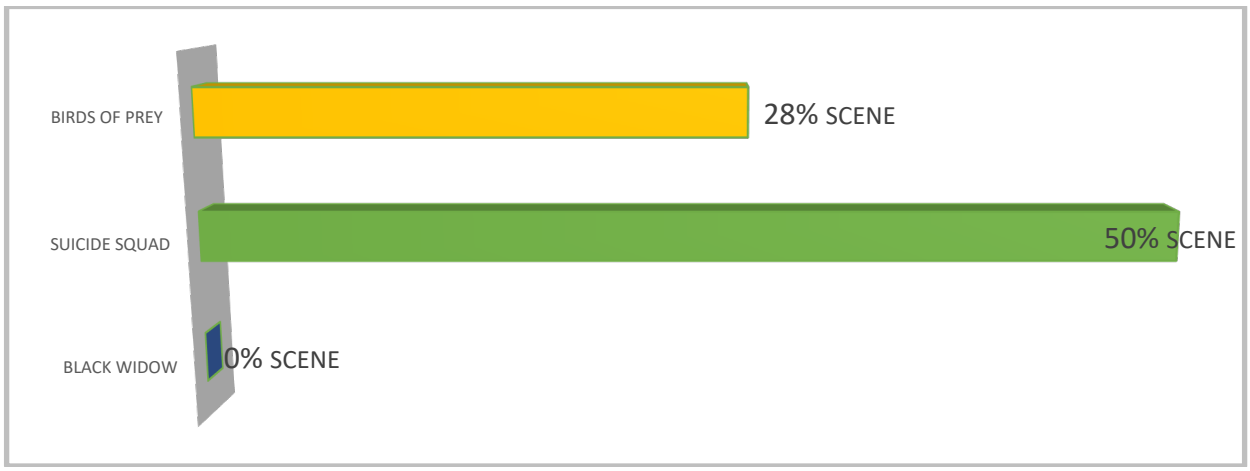


Figure 13

In Black Widow, Birds of Prey, and Suicide Squad movies, objectification is found in 0%, 26%, and 50% of scenes, respectively. That means female characters are used as objects for male pleasure. Most of the objectification is present in the suicide squad.

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Presence of Confidence

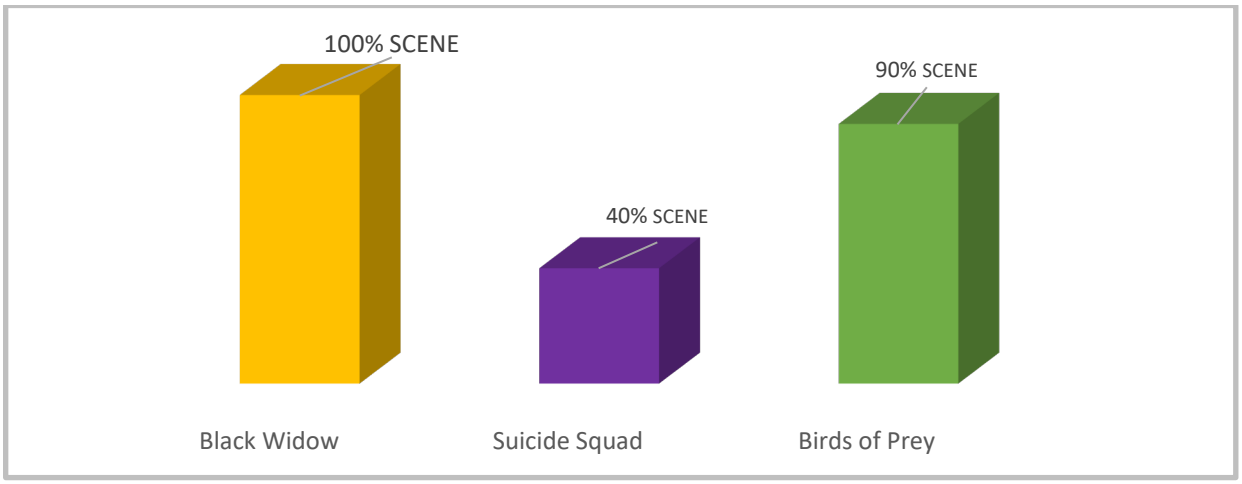


Figure 14

In the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey, female protagonists are represented as very confident. However, Harley Quinn from the movie Suicide Squad is represented as confident in only 40% of the scenes.

a) Discourse Analysis

The purpose of discourse analysis is to find out how the female superhero is represented through Conversation.

Melina: "Pain only makes you stronger"

Melina wants to see Natasha as a strong and courageous person. If Pain comes in life then Natasha should not take it negatively; Because Pain will help her to be more determined.

Alexei: "My girl is the toughest girl in the world"

Alexei is here to encourage and motivate Natasha. But he really wanted to convince Natasha that no power in the world could stop her. Natasha can overcome any obstacle.

Dreykov: "She has fire in her."

Fire here refers to Natasha's determined attitude. It is meant to be talented and different from everyone else.

Nat: "You should know I'm a better shot when I'm pissed off."

If anyone wants to leave Natasha in a hostile environment or put her in danger, she gets more and more fearful. Then the action she takes becomes more accurate.

Yelena: "You are the only superhero person that I know"

Natasha has been praised. Natasha is given a special place here, excluding the male hero characters. She is meant to be the most reliable of the superhero characters.

Natasha: "You can't just steal a guy's car"

Natasha is presented as a person who adheres to both moral and ethical guidelines. She is keen to help people as a helpful character, but not to endanger anyone.

Alexei: "I did my best to make sure you would succeed to achieve your fullest potential and everything worked out."

Alexei has tried his best to be Natasha's father. From a young age, Natasha was considered talented and intelligent and tried to grow up in such a way that all kinds of talents develop as she grows up.

Natasha: "My plan is to kill you."

Standing alone in front of a powerful villain like Dreykov, Natasha said this directly. Natasha's courage and determination are presented here. At the same time, patriarchy has been challenged. Promises have been made to end patriarchy.

In the case of Natasha Romanoff, the main female character in the movie Black Widow, words like 'strong', 'tough', 'superhero', and 'fullest potential' have been used. As a result, Natasha's reputation has grown. She is given a separate place as a superhero character. Gender sensitivity is protected in conversation. Gender-biased words or sentences were not used. Male Gaze was not present anywhere in the conversation. No attempt was made to sexualize her. There were no pleasuring words or sentences for men. Natasha is a woman with a strong attitude, she was brave and strong, very talented, not nervous in a dangerous situation, and much more confident and at the same time very clever. The action taken according to the situation is very accurate; Faithful and dependable, dignified person, deserving of praise; Adhere to ethical guidelines, helpful, intelligent woman who challenges patriarchy. Natasha's presentation in the conversation was like this. The existence of the traditional gender role was not found.

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b) Conversation Analysis of Suicide Squad

Harley: "I love your accent."

Harley's male companion Savant has been praised. Harley Quinn was fascinated by Savant's eloquence and speaking style. Nothing significant has been said about Harley in all the conversations that have taken place in this scene. The dialogue of the male characters has been over-evaluated.

Davidson: "You are the only one fit to carry my javelin."

Davidson passed his javelin weapon to Harley before he died. Because he thinks Harley is more worthy of this weapon than the other characters. This is one of the few scenes of Harley that have been positively represented.

Harley: "I am a princess"

Harley is married to President Luna. Harley was overwhelmed by the thought of being a 'bride' and was portrayed as a romantic person. At the same time, the male characters were involved in action-packed activities as part of the main story. Harley's costume at the time was a dress that supported romanticism.

Harley: "I can't believe this thing had a bullet."

After shooting Luna with a pistol, Harley says she could not imagine the presence of bullets in the pistol. Here Harley is presented as the Comedy Girl. Because it is normal to have bullets in a pistol.

Harley: "I am lonely. Nobody Cares for me."

Here Harley is seen to be sad and depressed. It means she is alone in this world and there is no one to help her. This means that she needs the help of others.

Harley: "I can go back inside and you can still do it."

Harley comes out of prison and sees her colleagues come to her rescue. She became very emotional. Because Harley did not believe that anyone would come to the rescue of a lonely and friendless woman like her. Comedy was also included in this Scene of Harley's representation.

Harley: "I love the rain."

Harley was very happy to see the sudden rain and was very excited to get wet in the rain. Childish and immature behavior and illogical emotions have been represented.

Harley Quinn doesn't have much positive representation in the conversation. Harley has also been negatively represented by the words 'Silly Girl', 'Irresistible', 'lonely', and 'nobody cares'. Gender sensitivity was not maintained in some areas of the conversation and the presence of gender bias existed. In many cases, the male characters have been well represented in the dialogue even from Harley. Harley herself praised the male character Savant's eloquence.

Harley was happy and excited as a being 'Princess' of the male character Luna at the conversation. She was depicted there as a romantic girl. In this case, the presence of the Male Gaze existed as well as the existence of the traditional role. Harley's importance as a superhero character has diminished since most of the conversations were not with Harley Quinn but with other characters. The evaluation of the male characters in the dialogue was even better. Nowhere in the conversation was there such an element challenging patriarchy. The dominance of patriarchy existed.

c) Conversation Analysis of Birds of Prey

Victor: "I said sit down, you dumb slut"

Victor used insulting and obscene language against Harley. There was no respect. She is addressed as untidy and dirty. Harley broke his leg in protest. She did not accept injustice.

Roman: "you are silly little girl with no one around to protect her."

Actor Roman regarded Harley as a foolish and meaningless person and Roman thinks Harley needs protection that she is not able to live in this society as an independent woman.

Black Canary: "You are the bad girl no one likes"

Once again Harley has been under-represented through language. Canary thinks she is everyone's disliked person. Canary used obscene language against Harley.

Harley: "If you want boys to respect you; you have to show them that you are serious. Blow something up. Shoot someone."

Harley believes people will respect her if she is afraid of everyone. That is why violence is the greatest method. Harley wants to use violence to gain respect from the people.

Victor: "You are a good girl."

Harley has been told this with contempt. Here Harley's under-representation is noticeable.

Harley: "We are gonna work together and we are get outta here in one piece."

Harley is urging her team members to work together and to fight against Roman's injustice under her leadership.

Harley: "Follow me"

Harley was accepted as the leader for some time by other members of the team. Other members accepted Harley's command and followed her.

Roman: "You know you can't stand on your own. You are not the type. You need me."

Roman meant that Harley was unable to stand on her own feet. She is weak. She needs the help of others. Harley later gave a clear answer.

Harley: "Your protection is based on the fact that people are scared of you; Just like they are scared of Mr. Joker".

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This sentence was meant in protest of the use of abusive language against Harley. Harley responds to Roman's insulting words. Harley has tried to establish her place against the domination of masculinity.

Harley: "I am the one they should be scared of; Cause I am Harley Quinn."

Harley has challenged patriarchy and expressed her supremacy. Harley thinks people should take her seriously and give her dignity.

Rene: "I underestimated you and I am sorry."

Harley: "I am used to it."

Harley has become accustomed to all negligence, humiliation, and negative attitudes as women face in the patriarchal society.

Harley: "I invested the cash in a little start-up."

Harley wants to be self-sufficient by starting a business. She is shown as a woman entrepreneur who is trying to be self-sufficient by standing on her own two feet. The desire to live as an independent woman has been expressed.

Slang words like 'dumb', 'slut', 'silly girl, 'bad girl' etc. were used by other characters against Harley. Words of praise or positive sentences were not presented in the conversation. But Harley has protested every time. She did not accept the dominance of patriarchy but challenged it. The movie uses Roman as a symbol of masculine domination. That is clear in the dialogue. He wants to convey that Harley, as a woman, needs protection. This has been said more than once. But Harley did not accept it, but rejected it and expressed her desire to live as an independent woman. Towards the end of the movie, Harley has invested in a business that hints at women's economic independence and self-reliance as opposed to Patriarchy. Male Gaze's presence in the conversation did not exist and the traditional gender role did not exist. Because there was no attempt to sexualize Harley Quinn anywhere but there was no sentence in the conversation that has been used to objectify women.

d) Second Topic of Discourse Analysis

The second topic of discourse analysis is whether male superiority has been represented despite the fact that it is a female superhero movie.

Natasha Romanoff is portrayed as the most important character in the movie Black Widow. Natasha's on-screen time was 89 minutes which is the highest in this movie. Natasha is a woman, and the second most important character is also a woman named Yelena. Yelena's on-screen time was 64 minutes. Alexei, the third most important character after the 2 women, came in. His on-screen time was 51 minutes. Alexei was not an important part of the movie's main story. The story of this movie goes through Natasha first and Yelena second. Natasha Romanoff herself was the centerpiece of the most interesting part of the story. Alexei could not act as a completely independent character here. He really needed help. Natasha and Yelena proved all kinds of assistance with their skills. So, there is no presence of patriarchal domination here.

The two most important characters in the Suicide Squad movie were men. In the 1st case Idris Elba whose On-Screen Time was 78 minutes. Then Rick Flag whose on-screen time was 47 minutes. Harley Quinn is the only female superhero character in the movie with an on-screen time of 53 minutes, which is less than that of Idris Elba and almost equal to Rick Flag. Idris Elba and Rick Flag are said to have led the story of the movie. They have been leading the squad for some time. Important decisions were being made through them. Harley Quinn had no direct or indirect role in decision-making. Harley Quinn led nowhere. No one accepted her lead or was seen anywhere. On the other hand, Harley was seen as a scared person in a few scenes. In some scenes, she has worked under men or taken protection for some time. Therefore, it can be said without any doubt that Male Superiority has been found to exist here.

The most important character in the movie Birds of Prey is Harley Quinn. Harley Quinn's On-Screen Time was 66 minutes. No other character has been present for so long and the on-screen time of the main male character Roman in this movie was only 26 minutes. Roman played the fifth important character. The narrative of this movie has come to the fore mainly through Harley. The centerpiece of the interesting part of the story was Harley herself. Male Gaze was present in several places in this movie but Male Superiority was absent. Simply put, no male character has been able to surpass Harley Quinn, the movie's main superhero character.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

The same person played the role of the female superhero in both movies Suicide Squad and Birds of Prey. Her real name is Margot Robbie who acted as Harley Quinn. The difference in the representation of Harley Quinn is noticeable between the Suicide Squad and the Birds of Prey movie. The director of Suicide Squad was a man named Janes Gunn and the director of Birds of Prey was a woman named Cathy Yan; Robbie's representation has changed a lot since the director changed from male to female. Harley's over-sexualization or objectification can be noticed in the Suicide Squad. But there was no over-sexualization in the Birds of Prey film. There was a scene with a male lead in Suicide Squad. Robbie has acted under male leadership for quite some time. But Robbie herself gave the lead in the movie Birds of Prey and She did not accept any male leadership here. Robbie's tendency to live as a completely independent person is not noticeable in the movie Suicide Squad. The movie Birds

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of Prey expresses Robbie's desire to lead a life as a completely independent person. On the other hand, the director of the movie Black Widow was a woman named Cate Shortland. Natasha's representation in this movie has been so good that Natasha has never been so important in previous Marvel films. Natasha has got satisfactory on-screen time. She acted independently all the time, many skills were revealed, Natasha's supremacy was presented, and She was physically strong in 100% of the scenes. Besides, Natasha has not been represented as a sexual object for male desire. In this study, it is proved that if the director is female, the representation of the female character in the movie is much better.

The female protagonist in the movie Black Widow and Birds of Prey respectively got 67% and 61% screen-time, which is a good fit for a superhero. However, in Suicide Squad, Quinn's screen time is less than other male characters. Natasha and Harley of Birds of Prey are able to act as completely independent people. In Suicide Squad, Quinn is represented as an independent female character in only 40% of the scenes. Natasha and Harley of Birds of Prey did not accept masculinity but challenged it. They have established their own place by overcoming the dominance of patriarchy. But in the Suicide Squad, the issue of accepting masculinity dominance has been noticed. If the main character in a superhero movie is a woman, there should be more dialogue about her. Self-centered language is used in 60% of scenes with Natasha and 64% with Harley. Male-centered language is comparatively much less here. However, in the Suicide Squad, 60% of the conversations were male-centered. Natasha and Harley are represented as Physically strong in Black Widow and Birds of Prey. However, in the movie Suicide Squad, Quinn is portrayed as Physically weak. Natasha and Harley have fulfilled their professional responsibilities with their goals and objectives in mind. But in Suicide Squad, Quinn didn't have clear goals and objectives. The over-sexualization of Quinn was present in the 30% scene in the movie Suicide Squad. In the movie Suicide Squad, the main female character is objectified in 50% of the scenes. No objectification was noticed in Natasha's case. It can be concluded that Natasha Romanoff has come out of the traditional gender role in the movie Black Widow. The male gaze perspective is totally absent in this movie. She was represented according to the female gaze perspective. Harley Quinn similarly came out of the traditional gender role in the movie Birds of Prey. The presence of the male gaze perspective was much less but not absent though the Female gaze perspective was highly present in the Birds of Prey movie. However, Quinn could not get out of the traditional gender role in the movie Suicide Squad. The presence of the male gaze perspective was widespread.

According to the Literature Review, the results of the present study differ from those of the previous study. Previous research has shown that gender stereotypes were much higher. Men have acted longer than women. The male character is portrayed as strong and powerful. Their skills and abilities were more than the female character. Women have not played such a role in the professional area. They have been objectified and oversexualized. Women did not have personal goals and objectives. Women's activities were mostly family and household-based. They Broke down with extra emotion and stress.

However, in the present study, the results obtained by analyzing 3 movies show that the gender stereotype has decreased a lot. Women's on-screen time is much longer. Women have acted longer than male characters. The female character is strong and powerful enough. The female character had more skills and abilities than the male character. The woman was not confined to the house but acted from a place of professionalism. The presence of Objectification and Oversexualization is less. Women are moving forward with their personal goals and objectives in mind. They did not break even in the face of severe pressure.

In the present study, Representation Theory and Feminist Film Theory were selected as the theories. This study supports the representation theory. According to the analysis, the same person and the same character acted as the female superhero in the movies Suicide Squad and Birds of Prey. However, there is a big difference in their representation in both movies. The meaning created by Harley Quinn's representation in Suicide Squad has changed to a different meaning in the movie Birds of Prey. In theory, it is said that the meaning depends on representation. If representation changes then meaning will change.

The present study finds a partial reflection of feminist film theory. The male gaze perspective is present in the movies named Suicide Squad and Birds of Prey. The presence of fetishism existed for a short time. There were some scenes that gave pleasure to the eyes of men. Although most of the time the representation of female superheroes was quite good. Therefore, the present study partially supports the feminist film theory.

The strong point of this study is that it is possible to get a complete idea of how the female superhero character is presented. It has been highlighted from different perspectives. Variations and differences between the gender representations of the three movies are clearly visible. All the samples used in the research have been studied on the latest female superhero movies from Hollywood, so it is possible to estimate the present status of female superhero movies in the Hollywood industry. If anyone wants to do some research on the same topic in the future, the current

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research can be informative and useful documents for him or her.

In this study, only Hollywood films have been taken as samples. Although it was not possible to take more samples and discuss details due to time constraints. Outside of Hollywood, Japan, Turkey, Mexico, the Philippines, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France make superhero movies. It will be suggested for future research to discuss gender representation in other superhero movies outside of the United States.

Declaration of Competing Interest

I declare that I have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could influence the work reported in this paper.

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