The representation of women in Moroccan cinema

Imane Elimadi
Departement of “Publicite et communication”, Benmsik University, Casablanca, Morocco

Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to look into how women are portrayed in Moroccan media, particularly on television. It claims that Moroccan television shows, such as films, sitcoms, and advertisements, portray women. Stereotypes, distortions, and misrepresentations abound in such performances, whether purposefully or accidentally. In fact, women are portrayed negatively in these programs, where they are mostly portrayed as housewives, dependent females, or sex objects.

This paper seeks to expose the stereotypical portrayal of women, as well as the ways in which Moroccan TV programs, based on patriarchal ideology, discriminate against women and reinforce male hegemony over them. “The film Source of women” is an excellent example of how women are portrayed; nevertheless, the idea of uses and gratification is a useful way to analyze the film.

Key words: Representation, TV, Women, The film source of women, uses and gratification.
1. Introduction:

In films, the Moroccan woman is always depicted in perilous situations (prostitution, single mother and stigma.) People have recently been talking about and debating a variety of daily issues, including political, social, and economic changes, with the exception of women's issues.

According to Toivonen (2002), most films depict women in various roles, confirming that women are merely servers, maids, and assistants. Men, on the other hand, are portrayed in films as having dominion over knowledge and development, as the lord of any high rank, and as the boss of any status. He goes on to say that women play an important role in the film industry.

He asserts that there are four crucial points of women's representations in films. First, women make up half of the community; second, women are portrayed as housewives, sexual objects, and inferior in men's worlds; and third, women are portrayed as soft-hearted and fragile, with no idea how to control themselves. Finally, ladies are incapable of enduring difficult tasks and are inefficient.

The majority of Moroccan audiences watch films for entertainment purposes, and they apply the same things to women in real life. Movies undoubtedly convey a message to audiences; however, actors are simply imitating an embodiment fact as it is. Furthermore, filmmakers must follow a number of steps and techniques in order to present viewers with a magical vision.
This article tries to answer the following questions:

Why do women have to live at the mercy of men?

What about their insignificance and loyalty?

2. Review of literature:

2.1: Cinema in Morocco

According to Touzani (2008), Moroccan cinema aspires to be the Arab and African world's leader. According to Carter (2009), many operators define Moroccan Cinema as an industrial way, rather than a beneficial one for presenting ideas and changing audiences' beliefs for the better.

Carter (2009) defines Moroccan centre Cinématographique Marocain as a colonial-era fabrication. The invention of CCM is significant in the history of Moroccan cinema. She believes that CCMs existed as producers with no authority to create propaganda. CCM has been providing resources to filmmakers in order for them to create films that are required by the Moroccan government for two important reasons: Education comes first, followed by tourism. Most researchers believe that cinema is a great step forward and a magic bullet for education. Furthermore, it is the most effective way to unite cultures. Thus, Moroccan cinema has played a significant role in promoting and encouraging understanding of Moroccan culture and potential.
In fact, CCM was established in 1945 as a film studio in Rabat. The French colonizer used it to make many films in Morocco. In addition, films in Arabic were produced for global distribution in the Arab world.

According to Carter (2009), CCM was officially inaugurated on September 24, 1946. It has been the first step for filmmakers to take in the process of producing films. Carter (2009) then elaborates on the role of CCM. She claims that it has not only played the role of organizing and producing films, but also of publishing the perfect films and of presenting Moroccan culture.

### 2.2: The representation of women in Moroccan Cinema

Hamdaoui (2009) recognizes that Moroccan cinema does not emerge till after independence, with Mohamed Osfour's 1958 film "Ibn Alaq." Then it began to establish itself in a variety of areas, including psychological, social, cultural, religious, and even political ones. Instead of solely men, there are also women producers in Moroccan cinema. Farida Bourkia, Narjes Najar, Imane Misbahi, and Zakia Tahiri are among them. Those filmmakers fight for Moroccan women's rights and their property.

Women are depicted in all films under the grace of men, according to Toivonen (2002). They are always depicted in deplorable circumstances. He makes the following five powerful distinctions about women's roles in movies:
« Underrepresented »: Women are typically underrepresented in films, with men taking the lion's share, despite the fact that women shape half of the globe.

“Shown primarily in traditional roles,” the filmmakers depict women as mothers, divorcees, or prostitutes. These characters are presented to audiences as a clear image of inferiority in a massive patriarchal society.

“Illustrated as emotionally unstable” At this point, the filmmakers portray women as emotional, cute, and easy to catch.

“As disabled and dysfunctional », the film makers portray the woman as unable to deal with difficulties, as she is constantly incompetent in any unexpected scenario, in contrast to the male, who is sturdy and quick-tempered, always ready to confront adventures and enjoy surprises.

So, Woman is a magic stick in the sexual world, as well as a key to open many doors to accomplish every want and ambition. A woman is nothing more than a desire object for a guy. As a result, the filmmakers portray women who are always under pressure. Men always regard women to be their shoes to be worn whenever they wish to protect their feet from injury while confronting difficulties in any lengthy distance they are hesitant to travel. They also see them as a source of troubles for males.

2.3: Film crew
Eastman Kodak Company (2007) admits that in order to produce a film, key signals must be followed since there is a filmmaking principle. Producing a film is not a simple task; it requires a team of individuals who can work together to accomplish the project, and each person must fulfill the work of the others. To get a successful outcome, it is important to share the same plate of labor.

The scriptwriter should be in charge of the film's production from the outset. He or she is the one who can create a scenario, which can be based on history, a book, a true event, or a play. As a result, he or she begins to sell and distribute the project to producers. The screenplay's purpose is to generate actions that spectators may readily believe.

When the screenwriter has completed his or her work, the producer begins another function. The script must carefully study the scenario in order to be the one in control of the worker and to predict the percentage of success or failure of the project. His/her duty manifests itself in the direction and organization of images, feelings, events, words, actions, and procedures.

The enterprise is in the hands of the director, the following step begins. He/she is the one who must sign the project, interpret the film's components, and command and control personnel to perform whatever he/she believes to be proper and best. He or she is in charge of the photographer, technical difficulties, and financial consultations.
The thought flows through the director of photography, who is responsible for the film's cinematic appearance. His/her duty is to translate screenwriters' words into visual pictures. He or she is in charge of the camera's location, lighting, and shots.

The film cannot be made without the executive producer, who is also the film's financier; he or she must care after the performers and their needs, such as accessories, food, clothing, and even cosmetics. Then comes a tour of the set decorator, who is frequently concerned with the touchable elements, such as designers, decorations, noises, furnishings, and the atmosphere, as well as the weather (sunny, rainy, stormy).

Films, in general, convey clear messages to audiences. “We are cognizant of cinema's function in society,” says Noureddine Sail, director of “the center cinématografique Marocain” (2011). That is, cinema is a tool for educating people, and it may have a detrimental or good impact on the viewer's thinking. In any case, it is determined by the film's substance, or the message that the filmmakers want to publish that makes the things much easier for them to achieve their own targets whether it is material or moral.

2. Methodology:
The article performs a case study to investigate the portrayal of women in Moroccan film. The goal is to discover the primary reasons why Moroccan viewers prefer to watch films concerning women's violence and status the majority of the time. To analyze a film, Uses and Gratification is chosen in this case.

For two reasons, uses and gratification has a high importance in the sphere of communication. First, numerous studies study how and why consumers pick media to meet their requirements; second, few academics investigate Moroccan viewers and the depiction of women in Moroccan film.

For these two factors, Elihu (1987, 1974), Blumber (1974), and Gurevitch's theory of Uses and Gratification was created (1973). Theorizing audiences as energetic, Uses and Gratification focuses on the impulse and relief of the receivers. By assigning this theory, I will be able to discover how and why Moroccan film portrays women as dependent on males in order to gratify viewers.

The uses and gratification theory is a theory that explains why people choose certain media channels and contents for enjoyment. This idea empowers viewers to understand and integrate what they see in the media into their social and private lives.

The idea of uses and gratification has lately gained popularity among academics, and it is critical in the field of communication studies. The majority
of academics apply this idea to audiences who select a certain form of media to meet their wants and desires.

The Uses and Gratification Theory, according to Blumber and Katz (1974), plays a significant impact in media selection. In this idea, users are extremely important since they present the finest media that satisfies their wants and desires.

2.1 Data collection:

The procedures of collecting the data are as follow: at the beginning, I search for films which present women in a bad situation then, I found many, I tried to choose "la sourse des femmes", then downloading it from Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc8cu6nhNY,

it is 1h.59 min, directed by RADU MIHAILEANU.
3 : Film Analysis
The colorful film "Source of Women" is currently under development. It creates a potentially hazardous debate in Arab societies. This product is a mirror that reflects women's pain when they are forced to be at the mercy of males all of the time. The producer possesses a smart intellect and a high level of reasoning ability. He is an exquisite guy with a sense of humanity, yet he is still a man. The filmmaker's style of work is to focus specifically on women's difficult circumstances. The film is based on a true event that occurred in a tiny Turkish town.

Thus, the concept is based on a true story from a distant nation, but the filmmaker has condensed it to be delivered in Moroccan cinema, despite the fact that Turkish culture and customs are vastly different from ours. The general belief here is that a woman's only job is to serve males, labor in the house, care for children, and deliver water from the community fountain. However, males are constantly seated on the throne of the president to impose order and limit women's freedom of speech.

To be honest, the case is neither Turkish, Moroccan, Egyptian, or even Tunisian. It is more than that; it relates to the whole Arab world in which women play the part of the unfortunate victim, carrying the burden without speaking to men. Women are just ignorant maids, unaware whores, source of bad luck and old fashioned, whereas men are definitely wise, lords of the house, and there is nothing wrong with them as long as they still have a full pocket.
The film “Source of Women” is the best example to educate every man in the Arab world; it is also a strong message to wake them up from a coma of bravado, masculinity, patriarchy, and humiliation towards women; in other words, it is an invitation for men to walk hand in hand with women, respect them, debate with them, and love them.

The filmmaker was successful in presenting the difference between men and women in every frame of his picture; initially, he portrays man as a pillar, tormentor, and lion in his surroundings. He portrays women in two ways: the first as slaves who are easy to manipulate, and the second as ambitious, educated women who are eager to achieve their goals.

As a result, the only and quickest method to combat males is to strip them of their masculinity and authority. It was at this point that they decided to go on a sex strike since it was the only way for them to protect themselves in the face of such formidable hurdles. Their desire to resist outweighed men's rejection.

In an effort to go into greater detail while analyzing the film, I notice right away that the filmmaker begins his film by showing women in a marginalized tiny village performing a daily hard activity at the top path of an arduous mountain to bring water for their necessary requirement, despite the fact that pending their trek, they may encounter an unknown fate or lose their lives over there.
On one hand, in a peek of an eye everything can vanish if they did not establish the husband's orders; on the other hand pending one of the shot, camera has focused on two contradictory events; first, when a woman gives birth to a baby, the second one is when another woman loses her baby while she was carrying the pails of water in a mountain. This event has happened over and over again whenever a pregnant woman climbed the mountain for getting water. But, the latest event was a ticking time bomb to explode in the face of men when women's patience was finished. They decide to go into war against men. Leila is one of those who lost their babies in her way to get water, she is a foreigner from the south, women used to call her “the stranger”, thanks to her different attitudes, behaviors, customs, open minded, culture and her own belief.

Leila (the film's main character) is somewhat educated; she is dissatisfied with what is going on in her environment. She is thinking a lot about how she might collect women to raise their awareness of the complex disaster and how to fix it. Leila is one of just a few women who can write and read, while the others are illiterate. So she has a wonderful idea to inspire women to live a respectable life and to be self-sufficient. Leila went to hammam one day, where she could catch ladies. She has discovered what she is looking for, and she begins her speech there to educate and inform them. She describes the present unfavorable situation.

Except for an elderly woman who defends Leila, everyone starts laughing and making jokes about her plan. She begins describing her tragic upbringing when
she is fourteen years old; she marries an elderly guy who has two children her age. She was also carrying water, but she had nineteen miscarriages while there. And she spoke to other ladies who had lost their kids, one six times and the other twelve times, and the list is too lengthy, referring to the agony of women from their youth and their bliss, which ends at the age of fourteen. She was talking so fast, and the agony was still in her heart and mind.

As a result, Leila and the elderly woman continue to push for the removal of men's control and power. They strive hard to persuade them other to fight against their husbands, to have the same rights and obligations as men, and to be equal to men whenever they see ladies washing their clothes or carrying pails near to the water spring.

Finally, Leila and the elderly woman have persuaded other rural women that they do not have to be at the mercy of males all of the time. So they start singing to send their messages, and then they embark on a sex strike. It is the only weapon capable of destroying men's glory. Women now have a chance to be treated equally to males, despite the fact that they still experience violence. They continue to resist achieving their objectives. So, women achieved what they were fighting for.

3. Conclusion:
The film "Source of Women" is a serious message to Moroccan viewers, attempting to awaken them from their slumber in which they treated women as second-class citizens and were unaware of the true meaning of a woman. She is a mother, a wife, a babysitter, a sister, a warm hand to hold, and a kind lady to assist. As a result, the director has prepared this important letter in order to make an impression on the spectator, to encourage him to treat his wife well up to that point, and to make him aware of women's plight and harsh situations.

In reality, most males must put themselves in the shoes of women in order to understand how they feel. Men should not swallow the same poison that women are fed up with. It's reasonable to question why a guy has the right to learn, to rule like a king, and to live like a lion. While a woman is the wildcat who must travel in search of food to feed her lion, she is prone to problems. Of course, women were not designed to live in the wild, and having a tea party while males do is hardly fair. It's either a matter of sharing the same bitterness or sharing a cup of tea.

Nobody can dispute that life is meaningless without women, even men who require women to serve them, fill their lives, and care for them and their children. So, I believe the filmmaker's message is clear: clean up these inherited beliefs, and raise men's consciousness toward women favorably.

References:


• Eastman Kodak Company. (2007). Vision and Wratten are Trademarks of Eastman Kodak Company. U.S.A.


