

Representations in Movie posters

'Satan's Satellites' and 'Planet Terror'

The posters for the movies 'Satan's Satellites' and 'Planet Terror' both show completely different representations of women. When these posters are compared with each other, we can see just how much values towards women have changed within the past couple of decades. The poster for 'Satan's Satellites' depicts the female character as being very frail and helpless, this is conveyed in many different ways. In this poster, the woman is seen to be wearing a pink dress that looks as though it is almost falling off her. The colour pink is usually referred to as being a 'girly' colour, conveying a sense of femininity. This, added to the shot of her lying unconsciously as if she has fainted, makes her look quite fragile. There is a large difference between this woman and the man that is holding her. The man is standing very defiantly, with his legs spread wide and his back straightened out, with a fierce look upon his face, signifying his power and creating a sense of dominance. The lighting on this man is also very different to that of the woman. Where we can see the girl, being very well lit and looking quite petite and harmless, we can also see the man who is lit quite darkly, with the use of shadows over his face, looking very big and menacing. When we compare this to the poster for the movie 'Planet Terror' we can see a considerable contrast. There is only one character in this movie poster – a woman named Cherry. Cherry is shown to be standing in the middle of the shot, with legs spread wide, shoulders back and arms by her side. This body language, in contrast with the feeling of helplessness we get for the woman in 'Satan's Satellites', conveys a sense of strength and power. As well as this stance, Cherry is seen to be missing a leg, and in its place is a gun. The use of this gun acts as a symbol for violence and aggression, creating the impression that Cherry is very independent and can 'take care of herself' and adding to the sense of power. The use of lighting in this shot also helps to convey to Cherry's sense of power. This is done through the large use of shadows covering Cherry's body, making it hard to capture her identity, creating the impression that she is quite dangerous. It is through this great sense of power that we gain for Cherry that we see just how much values towards women have changed since the early days of American cinema.

When given a variety of movie posters like these to analyse together, it seems quite easy to observe how the representations of women have changed over the years. When looking at older movie posters such as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *Le Cauchemar De Dracula (The Horror of Dracula)* (1958), we see in both cases; an illustration of a woman draped helplessly either screaming or having fainted in the arms of the film's antagonist. In almost all of these films, the women are depicted as the victims. These representations convey them as helpless and fragile creatures that need male characters to defend and protect them in order to survive. It is interesting to note that in the poster for *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, you can see in the bottom left hand corner that there are a lot of what we could assume are the townspeople and soldiers. There are both women and men in this part of the image, and every single one of the men are either holding guns and bravely shooting or somehow fighting the enemy, while all of the women are running away helplessly in fear. These representations of both men and women are common throughout a lot of the movies at this time, which when looking back is rather shocking to see.

In contrast, the newer movie posters we have been given are definitely not the same case of blatantly sexist representations. Here, we see women such as Angelina Jolie's character, Jane Smith in *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (2005) as being equal to or more powerful than the men of the films, in this case, John Smith who is played by Brad Pitt. We can clearly see this because, firstly, her character is one of the protagonists in this particular film, rather than the victim like in many of the older movies. Secondly, we are able to observe in the structure of the poster, that Jolie and Pitt both have very similar stances on opposite sides of the screen. They are both wielding guns and have the same glare as each other into the camera. The similarities between the two convey a sense of equality and strength of both men and women. In another case, we have the poster for *Planet Terror* (2007). In this poster, there is one main piece of subject matter, which is the character Cherry Darling, played by Rose McGowan. In this representation, Cherry has lost her leg and has had it replaced with a semi-automatic. This in itself would suggest that she is willing to fight against the antagonists of the film. We see McGowan in the middle of the poster with a menacing stare and posture looking directly into the camera. She has a shadow cast over her which conveys a sense of mystery and makes her appear threatening. You'll also notice that there are no men in this representation, because unlike that of the older posters, it isn't assumed that men need to look out for women anymore.

One interesting thing that I noticed though, even with the positive changing representations of women throughout the years, is that the women in most of the films were still dressed provocatively, which would suggest that they are still viewed as sexual objects by a lot of men, and that the representations don't exactly do women justice in today's society. However, feminism and the representations of women are definitely taking a step forward, and the media and cinema is only reflecting what is happening in society. I believe that in the future, it can and will only change for the better.

Representation in movie posters

The way posters have represented both male and female characters over the last 70 odd years have changed quite dramatically if we compare them from then and now. We can see how specific genders are represented through the posters' *King of the Zombies* (1941), *'Captive Wild Woman'* (1943), *'The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo'* (2009) and *'Sucker punch'* (2011).

When we compare these two film posters together, we can see the differences of values since the first movie in 1943. In this film poster from 1941, we can see that the woman and man are almost the same size, but the lady is crouched into the man representing that she needs caring for and protection from whatever we cannot see. She is wearing the colour red representing a sense of femininity with the colour matching her blush and because she is flushed, she represents the typical needy female role in a movie. The expression on her face shows that she is scared and delicate. The hand on her shoulder from the male proves that she is a very vulnerable character. The male character is holding the flame representing a very protective stance, like he will be the one to fight if they get into any danger. The woman's hand is clutched onto the protagonist's chest making sure she is safe and represents a very defenceless look for the woman.



In this film, *'Captive Wild Woman'*, just two years later, we can see that the woman is represented in a very distressed manner. She appears to be very helpless as she is being carried by the ginormous beast. Her eyes are closed which seems to represent that she has fainted, again, causing us to think that she is very vulnerable and delicate in the arms of the scary monster holding her. Her dress conveys the colour green, which doesn't necessarily mean she takes on too much of a feminine role in the film, but her cheeks are flushed, possibly because she fainted which signifies the fragile state she is in. the outfit itself that she is wearing is quite revealing showing her

torso and the skirt stops quite short proving just what type of character she is, an obvious person who needs to be helped out of situations, because who could fight off a beast in a mini skirt? As she has fainted, her body is positioned like she has just been picked up into the dominant monsters arms, representing again just how helpless she is, in the state she is in. She is being held on her back by the monster showing a completely vulnerable side to her. Back in the time where lots of movie posters like this were made, you can see their view and opinions of women being that they are there to be taken care of and had to play a defenceless and helpless character in order to make a good storyline, but these days our views of women have changed a lot.

In the movie poster 'The Girl with the dragon tattoo' (2009), the way women are represented in movie posters have changed since the 1940's when the other two films were made. In this poster we see a lot of shadows representing a very dark and mysterious look to the girl sitting in this poster. There are no males in the poster, only the girl sitting down with a very menacing look on her face. There is a fire in the background swirling around behind her head showing an even more dangerous side to her than we first thought. The girl is wearing all leather and also has an eyebrow piercing representing a very tough look showing that she can look after herself. She is wearing a quite scary neck brace with sharp bits on the end giving her a very powerful and dominating look. She is the main thing we look at in the poster being in the middle. There is only one other person in the room, another female above the fireplace which creates even more mystery to the poster.



In the movie poster for 'Suckerpunch' which was made just last year, we can see just how much the portrayal of women has changed. In this film they are being shown as dominant characters, because only the main characters are being shown on the poster. No men and no menacing, dominant monsters or men holding them and protecting them from what's happening which also represents that men aren't needed to take care of them anymore. In contrast to 'Captive wild Woman' these characters are being shown as the commanding characters. We can see them wearing a similar outfit as the girl in 'Captive Wild Woman', with their torsos showing, but they are also holding weapons and have weapons behind their backs representing a very powerful look to them. Their eyes are wide open ready for battle. In this poster we also see a lot of shadows being cast over them representing a menacing stance and casting mystery among them all.

Throughout the years of movies going in and out of cinemas, we can see exactly how the portrayal of women and men in movie posters has changed. These days, we don't longer have to worry about being protected by men and there are a lot of women only posters representing that past sexist ways have been abolished.

Year 11 Media

An analysis of King of the Zombies, Revenge of the Creatures, Resident Evil: Extinction, Girl With the Dragon Tattoo 2011.

As long as there have been movies, there have also been movie posters. Movie posters while designed to be an accurate and yet, aesthetically pleasing impression of a film were made for the simple purpose of promoting the title and as a result gaining mass attention (of course now it is known that their sole purpose is to sell tickets and make the most money possible at the box office). Naturally as times have changed so too have these portrayals of up and coming films – in particular the codes and conventions used in the representation of women throughout the times. This analysis will discuss the change in perspective of woman taking the form of comparisons of such posters from different decades and societal stages – two from the relative earlier stages of cinema: “King Of the Zombies” (1941) as well as “Revenge Of the Creature” (1955) and two from modern cinema: “Girl With the Dragon Tattoo” (2011) and “Resident Evil: Extinction” (2005) naturally responding to the present codes and conventions within each.

As far as the representations of women in movies posters go, posters from seventy years ago portray a completely different type of woman from those we view in this day and age, “King of the Zombies” is a perfect example. Femininity while a broad boundaried concept in the 21st century was several decades ago a rigidly structured set of values regarding both the expected appearance and mannerisms of a “lady” in America. Conforming to this idea, the female illustrated is the perfect image of the 1940’s American leading lady the delicate beauty reliant on the protection of a male. In this instance the sweet faced woman clings in fright to the male with a protective arm around her shoulder. Despite appearing worried himself it is a given expectation that he be able to keep her out of harm’s way as she is clearly distressed. Assumptions are made to the nature of this, first that elegant women are unable to defend themselves and second it is because of the correlation between elegance, femininity and fragility that this is so. Undeniably the female has been designed to act as an accessory to who appears to be the protagonist – a tribute to his masculinity which unknowingly so is also slightly hypocritical. The poster responds to beauty in a female as rendering her a damsel and yet the handsome nature of the perceived protagonist – the man has not in kind been affected, suggesting that the need for males to appear well groomed does not interfere with his valiance, let alone bravery. Thus, hinting to a subtle inferiority complex within theatre at the time that is often only rendered deliberately within recent promotional material for films. Her prudence is yet another testament to her status as a lady and her role as a trophy to the male, merely added to throw some glamour into the mix of the movie and stir up drama.

“Girl With the Dragon Tattoo” challenges established ideals of both conventional gender roles and femininity. Captured is (in perspective) an unconventional beauty; dark and seductive. Tattooed and pierced this is a far cry from the seemingly innocent young woman though she is no less of a female. The character Lisbeth is in sound control of her sexuality. Though exposed she remains unfazed as though confident of her image. Femininity in Lisbeth’s case comes from sheer physical attraction, still a woman though she sports accessories once considered taboo rather than stylized hair and mannerisms. Unlike the pinups from decades past she is lean with less curvature and more muscular strength about her that if it were to be coupled with injury or scarring would mark her as a fighter albeit in a manner that was once strictly masculine. Lisbeth stands tall in this eye level mid shot, her face level to meet the eye of the audience thus, exerting her clear dominance which comes from the fact that she has a man willingly to protect her though she does not seem to need it although smaller in stature. The lack of lighting and heavy use of shadows is significant for various reasons as a means to accentuate the sensuality as well as the inner nature of Lisbeth and as a reflection of the dark connotative nature of the film itself in comparison to “King of the Zombies” where there is a greater abundance of lightning and colour. The severity of the colour scheme used in this modern movie demonstrates the almost light-hearted nature of films from a time ago in comparison thus lending an effect to the characters in each: the rosy cheeked

leading lady is a clear take on “what you see is what you get” a seemingly airheaded blonde dame as opposed to the persona Lisbeth suggests: “still waters run deep” further evidenced by the tagline “Evil shall with evil be expelled” a clear reference to Lisbeth from which we can deduce is a hint to her guarded nature, her eyes which betray nothing of emotion, only will.

In terms of the portrayal of women, “Revenge of the Creatures” is a clear representation of the assumptions made in regard to women in both popular film and media of the era also. In an instant, with the use of a bright red the eye is drawn to the position of a woman just off centre of the poster clearly unconscious – (an ichthyology student, though one would never guess) she is strikingly beautiful and also entirely helpless, left to the mercy of her kidnapper a giant creature appearing to have broken from its bonds evidenced by the broken shackles despite the fact that she does not appear to on a relative scale be significantly smaller than her abductor which, unlike the stature of the sea creature which dominates roughly two thirds of the screen and adds to the illusion of power and strength does nothing for the female whose body language suggests she does not at that current moment possess the ability of limb movement and hence, self defense. The young woman who is scantily clad for the time in many ways appears almost as bait from her obvious beauty – lightly sun kissed skin and well styled blonde tresses and clothing consisting of just a tulip pink dress designed to perfectly conform to her exaggerated illustrated curves whilst the sheer intensity of the colour (while flattering) has attracted the attention of the monster in a sense that the poster conveys vanity as rendering a female helpless and the lead to her portrayed victimization. Symbolically the use of red is to make the comparison between the female and the title “Revenge of the Creature” as in abduction the woman is the creature’s form of revenge. The composition of the poster which is completely illustrated allows for exaggeration of certain themes and images to alter the interpretation of the scene further. In this case the crowd depicted below of townspeople obviously being terrorized by the monster although seeming initially irrelevant and only as an add-on to the theme of a monster’s destruction “City flees in terror!” amongst the crowd are women, particularly a woman not dissimilar to the main subject, clad in a dress like all women within the crowd but clearly distressed, head thrown back as though she is screaming as she runs from the monster.

The newer poster in comparison: “Resident Evil: Extinction” represents vast differences. By all means Milla Jovovich the billed actress appears fierce; dominating the entire vertical third of the poster in what is an eye level full shot that allows us the interpretation of her as a “larger than life” figure which relates far more to the creature than the fellow female in the older poster, alluding to the image of strength. Carrying a machine gun in each hand, gritty, dusty from the landscape and slightly disheveled presumably from prior battles from the ruins behind her and yet still impossibly attractive the perfect mix of beauty (though lesser maintained) and strength which was never portrayed of women in the 50’s who only possessed the former of the two. The composition of the entire poster revolves around the character Alice as the subject (unlike the 1955 woman) who is standing tall, mid-stride, head slightly bowed with a focused gaze a strong impression of power while in clear control of her weaponry – items of clear aggression let alone mass destruction that are held as though they are to be used at any moment. The colour scheme and lighting is chosen to reflect upon the character. The use of a red- brown around the edges of the landscape almost perfectly matching her attire, the deep red of her scarf like blood she is subsequently unafraid to shed and the deep orange and yellow leading out from her, while appearing to be a mere part of the landscapes atmospheric colour scheme metaphorically hints to an inner flame within Alice in turn giving an aura of pure determination. The lighting of the shot is positioned high to rain down on the subject’s shoulders and arms lending an almost ethereal glow to her physical being and providing a dangerous glint to the guns she uses to defend herself as a force to be reckoned with. The sharp lines of the title, glinting as though weapons themselves are further representation of just how deadly the character can be but with a feminine grace to them something which the 1955 poster does not incorporate or demonstrate as a duality to the character.

Cinema is often a representation of society's views in itself. To some extent the shifts in views and ideas are evidenced by the release of films. While "King Of the Zombies" and "Revenge Of the Creature" undoubtedly portrayal a certain type of woman helpless, weak to an extent and the picture perfect image of femininity, seventy years has brought about a massive change in attitudes regarding the female gender things that "Resident Evil: Extinction" and "Girl With the Dragon Tattoo" display almost perfectly as polar opposites – the strong, sexy woman more than capable of defending herself – independent by all means. While once a woman is a man's leading lady she rises as a heroine in the 'morrow.