

# [Gender roles in hollywood films](https://assignbuster.com/gender-roles-in-hollywood-films/)

### Construction of Gender as Represented In Hollywood Film

Hollywood’s ability to symbolise or reflect society and history is yet another factor in the study of popular culture through their movies.

It is argued that Hollywood films legitimate conservative ideologies of not only sexism, but also classism, patriarchy and racism (Ryan & Kelner, 1990).

One can perhaps understand the influence of popular mainstream cultural forms and the difficulties in isolating gender as the determining factor in social relations in film if I refer to the controversial woman centred film Waiting to Exhale (1995).

A sanguine analyst may have noted that Waiting to Exhale is an empowering feminist text, however the devices used to parody and satire, although humorous, are essentially inverted archetypes and, according to Bell Hooks (1997) are predicated upon reverse dualisms of sexism and racism.

In contrast the central theory in feminist film criticism is that mainstream popular culture, namely Hollywood film, fails to challenge dominant patriarchal structures in society, gender being the sole signifier within classical feminist theory.

To energise gender debate solely on this single praxis is to reinforce the Enlightenment dichotomies that have informed classical theorists.

Subsequently the ramifications of capitalism and racism are issues that have often been negated, both by classical feminist theory and made invisible within mainstream popular culture arguably reifying capitalist and Eurocentric hegemony (ibid. 1997).

Congruous to this analysis, many contemporary theorists argue that gender is not the sole determinant in representations of women and should thus be analysed in terms of race and class.

Hence representations in film are the results of triple ideologies, patriarchy, racism and capitalism. This paper seeks to address three key areas.

The question of gendering in Hollywood film, the scope of feminists analysis in identifying issues of race and class and the limitations of traditional feminist analysis in assessing these complex issues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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