

# **Media Helps in Reinforcing Gender Ideologies: Discourse Analysis, a Changing Perspective**

**Muqaddas Inayat**

Lecturer

Department of English, NUML

## **Abstract**

With the development of modern technologies, the world has become the global village. One of the most important technologies is media technology that has made our lives easier. It comes under the fastest means of communication. One of the major issues is how media helps in creating gender ideologies. The present study analyses the representation of men and women in a cartoon movie “Toy Story 3”. The objectives and significance of study reveal the rationale behind this topic. From the very childhood we have observed this thing that patriarchal ideology has kept men and women in traditional gender roles. The research question for this study is that how cartoon movie Toy Story 3 is used as a tool to create gender ideologies. This study comes under the heading of discourse analysis as discourse seems incomplete without gender, like how discourse is used as an important tool to depict gender. This research paper focuses on the representation of male and female in media and to carry out the research feminist critical discourse analysis is used as a method to support the analysis.

**Key words:** *Ideology, Gender perspective, Communication*

## **1. Introduction**

With the development of modern technologies, the world has become the global village. One of the most important technologies is media technology that has made our lives easier. It comes under the fastest means of communication. Media includes internet, telephone, television, e-mail, radio, fax etc. We can divide it into three main categories as electronic media, print media and digital media. Media has controlled our minds in such a way that we are blindly following it without giving a rationale behind the things. One of the major issues is how media helps in creating gender ideologies. This is not something new but to some extent we can say that media is playing its role in creating ideologies and because of this human beings have become subjects not human individual, with thinking mind, rather our consciousness is being controlled by media. With the rise of commercialization we are moving towards false consciousness.

### **1.1. Statement of Problem**

The statement of the problem says that for centuries women is portrayed as weak, dependent and an attractive objects in media. She is used an object rather an individual human

being. This present study analyses the representation of men and women in a cartoon movie “Toy Story 3”.

### **1.2. Objectives of Study**

The objectives and significance of study reveal the rationale behind this topic. From the very childhood we have observed this thing that patriarchal ideology has kept men and women in traditional gender roles. In these roles women are subordinate and men are dominant. We have seen the misrepresentation of women in advertisements, movies, dramas, newspapers, magazines, fairy tales and in television shows. A lot of work has been done in the past years not restricted to one society rather in every society we find this division. This research paper will try to find out the misrepresentation of men and women in a cartoon movie Toy Story 3. This study will show how in a cartoon movie women are oppressed politically, socially, economically and above all psychologically by the patriarchy.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The research question for this study is that how cartoon movie Toy Story 3 is used as a tool to create gender ideologies.

The study comes under the heading of discourse analysis as discourse seems incomplete without gender, like how discourse is used as an important tool to depict gender. There are different ways in which gender creates discourse. For example the way men and women talk in their everyday life. Not only in their speech rather we find that they are portrayed differently as well. In every kind of discourse we can easily find a remarkable difference in which they are portrayed. This research paper focuses on the representation of male and female in media and to carry out the research feminist critical discourse analysis is used as a method to support the analysis. Lois Tyson theory will be used as a theoretical framework for the conduct of the study.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today* (2006) says, “Feminists don’t deny the biological differences between men and women; in fact, many feminists celebrate those differences. But they don’t agree that such differences as physical size, shape, and body chemistry make men naturally superior to women: for example, more intelligent, more logical, more courageous, or better leaders. Feminism therefore distinguishes between the word sex,

which refers to our biological constitution as female or male, and the word gender, which refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine. In other words, women are not born feminine, and men are not born masculine rather, these gender categories are constructed by society, which is why this view of gender is an example of what has come to be called social constructionism” (Tyson, 2006,p.86).

In a book “Women and Media : A critical introduction”(2006) by M. Byerly and Ross , Margret Gallagher’s study (1979) gives the answer of why women’s image would continue to concern women for decades to come: “The... media are potentially powerful agents of socialization and social change-presenting models, conferring status, suggesting appropriate behaviors, encouraging stereotypes”(Byerly and Ross,2006,p.17).

Hans Bertens (1995) in his book *Literary Theory: The Basics*, says “Gender has to do not with how females (and males) really are, but with the way that a given culture or subculture sees them, how they are culturally constructed. To say that women have two breasts is to say something about their biological nature, to say something about what it is to be a female; to say that women are naturally timid, or sweet, or intuitive, or dependent, or self-pitying, is to construct a role for them”(Bertens,1995,p.98).

Media has constructed roles for women. If we take the example of Disney fairy tales like “Sleeping Beauty”, “Cinderella” and “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”. We find that the females are represented as good girls or bad girls. If a female follows the roles given by society she will be considered as good girl and if she does not follow, she will be regarded as bad girl. Good girls are shown as weak, submissive, soft, and angelic on the other hand bad girls are shown as aggressive, violent, witch, monster etc.

Ali and Shahwar (2011) write an article about the portrayal of man and women. Their findings are based upon six month long data collection. They have analyzed 150 commercials from different Pakistani T.V channels. Their result shows that woman in advertisements is used as commodity. They are used as a tool to sell the products. In some commercials their use is unnecessary like in motor bike ads or in shaving creams ads .The roles which are given to them are passive on the other hand active or professional roles are given to men. In short, their result shows “that the advertising is affecting the women in three ways: body image, sexuality and consumer spending habits” (Ali & Shahwar, 2011, p.151).

Media is not presenting the true picture of women like their contribution to society. We know that they are taking part in every sphere of life. They are pilots, doctors, engineers, software developers, etc. Beside all this contribution they are still stereotyped in the whole world. Media has controlled our minds so it is not only white washing their contribution rather portraying them negatively as well. "Media is not providing the balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society" (Anusha, 2008). "The women are portrayed in advertisement only as an object of beauty and sex by high lighting certain parts of their body, and this fake image of woman persuades other women in society to buy certain beauty products" (Kilbourne, 1999).

Nerisa Pillay (2008), conducted a research about how female characters are portrayed in South African advertising content and to compare this with how male characters are portrayed. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative analysis. "Male characters dominated the advertisements either in the capacity of character, occupation, role, or by used as voice-overs.

Female characters in comparison were stereotypically understood to be caring, emotional, needing guidance and support and are weak" (Pillay, 2008, p.84). Men want to see them as submissive, weak, attractive, beautiful dolls that are why they are portrayed in media. They are treated as things or subjects for study. They are not considered as individual thinking beings.

An article by Yunjuan and Xiaoming (2007), they examine the depiction of Chinese women in their media. They did the content analysis of their official English women's magazine. They selected 352 pictures of Women of China (magazine). They examined how media portrays the relation of Chinese women to their social changes. Their result showed that the pictures of Chinese women shown by the covers of the magazine are highly controlled by the socio-economic and political-ideological changes in China. The present picture of Chinese society is symbolically presented by the magazine to show that with the change of social and political ideologies the image of Chinese women has changed as well. It shows the readers' interest, editorial policy and the socio-economic and political ideologies that created the portrayal of the Chinese women (Yunjuan & Xiaoming, 2007).

Leonardi and Dickenson (2007) in their article "Feminism for Stupid Girls: A feministic rhetorical critique of a popular Song", showed how masculinity and femininity are reinforced in songs. "Stupid Girls" a song by Pink is examined in the light of feminist rhetorical criticism to

highlight “the negative and demeaning construction of females, and the positive and powerful construction of males”. For them, “Femininity is shown as unintelligent, shallow, and weak while masculinity is infrequently discussed except when depicted as powerful and action” (Leonardi & Dickenson, 2007, p. 2).

Same type of research in music is carried out by Nicola Dibbon (1999)(cited in Ali and Lubna 2012).In his article , “*Representations of Fertility in popular music*” , he tried to explain that women misrepresentation is not only seen in magazines , advertisements and movies rather it is present in the music as well. People listen music to get fresh but it does have hidden ideologies. The words that are used in music depict women as objects, property or things. In most of the songs the themes show them as submissive, weak, faithless creatures instead of human beings.

Parvez, Muhammad Aslam carried out a research “Mass Media and Women:

A Study on Portrayal of Status and Violence”. His research focused on the ratio of violence against women and the status of violent and victim characters portrayed in Urdu dramas of Pakistan Television. Signorielli Model (1980) was used for the collect and analysis of the data. He selected 1060 characters from five different Urdu dramas. He found that “Majority, i.e., 22.83% violent male characters of ascribed status committed violence against women of the same status, i.e. 37.45%” he concluded his research by saying that “male violent and female victims both are from the ascribed status as portrayed in one quarter of PTV Urdu dramas” (Parvez, Muhammad Aslam,2010,p.133).

Shahwar (2013) in her research article “A Study of Audience Perception about the Portrayal of Women in Advertisement of Pakistani Electronic Media”, concluded that “the portrayal of females in most of the advertisements is unnecessary and needless. The females are used as an attractive and eye-catching element of the advertisement having the function of capturing the attention of viewers. It also reveals that the portrayal of female in the advertisement is causing certain alterations in the cultural and social values and also affecting the dressing styles and language expressions of the viewers up to some extent”(Shahwar, 2013,p.25).

In Gangadhear (2008) research article “Women in commercials are prey to blatant sensationalism”. He found that the roles shown in advertisements reinforce ideologies. He found that women are used to promote the sign or exchange value of things instead of their use value.

Women are used as a source or tool to get the attraction of people. Women have the tricks to brain wash our minds that is why used in both female and male products. Moreover, the roles that are given to them show their subordinate or weak nature. They are shown in household works but on the other hand male are given powerful roles. In short, he found that “women in advertisements are prey to blatant sensationalism where commercial interests are promoted by exploiting womanhood and sex” (Gagadhear,2008).

In Shartiely’s research article “The portrayal of Tanzanian woman in television commercials”. The researcher found that the advertisements presented in Tanazanian media depict their social reality. She found that advertisements not only sell different things to the people rather these advertisements sell their lives as well. They sell their traditions, beliefs, customs, and festivals in such a way that they are adopting new things as presented in front of them. Their minds are so controlled that they do not even bother to give a rationale behind these changes. They are not only feeling happy to adopt these things rather feeling comfortable with them. In short, these advertisements help them to forget their traditions and to adopt new things (Shartiely, 2005).

### **3. Analysis and Findings**

In all these researches the researcher has found that women are confined to men and men are confined to earn money. In every sphere of life where patriarchy exists, women is objectified, marginalized and considered as other. This division is based on what men have and what women lack. Biology has determined male or female sex, it is the culture that determines our masculine and feminine gender. Whether we are consciously aware of this division or not but we find that gender differences are not present to the limited areas rather it is working in each and every field of life. Many researchers have done the researches about how media is portraying gender roles. In this literature review we have seen the misrepresentation of women in advertisements, movies, dramas, newspapers, magazines, fairy tales, and in television shows. These researches help the researcher in finding the research question a lot. They way women is portrays in advertisements, dramas, TV shows, magazines, the same situation is present in the cartoon movie Toy Story 3. These researches motivated the researcher to find how cartoon movie “Toy Story 3” is used as a tool to create gender ideologies.

This study focuses on a cartoon Toy Story 3, so the content analysis will be used as a research method for the data because the researcher will deal with the thematic conceptual analysis. The researcher has the text to analyze the things, so the researcher will apply the feminist theory (Tyson, 2006) and will get the results. This research method suits the research as the researcher will describe and explain the text without numerical data.

Toy Story 3 is not a new cartoon movie. It was first released in 1995 with the name “Toy Story”. When it gained enough fame it came in 1999 as Toy Story 2”. Then it came as “Toy Story 3” in 2010. The reason behind the selection of this movie (Toy Story 3) is that it is full of gender ideologies that are clearly presented with the help of the characters. The characters are given the roles that create gender ideologies and anybody knowingly or unknowingly can tell the difference created in the movie. So without any explanation let the cat out of the bag and talk directly about the gender ideologies that are intelligibly seen in the Movie.

The movie starts with the active and leading roles of female characters Jessie and Mrs. Potato Head. Mrs. Potato Head defeated Woody (the protagonist) but it was another female character Jessie who helped him. The movie starts with the active roles of females. They were fighting equally with the men instead of sitting and watching the fight. The point is that in the same incident when Jessie helped Woody to save the lives of orphans, he was not succeeded and at that time a male character (Buzz) appeared who saved the lives. It seemed that female character (Jessie) was not given the chance to save their lives rather she was watching the incident helplessly, at this point we can say that women were portrayed powerful only in the beginning and after that it was portrayed like a helpless female character who cannot save the lives as she is not that powerful. On the other hand Buzz (a male) is depicted as strong, having ability to stop horrible things to happen, after catching the train he says **“To infinity and beyond!”** This statement shows the over confidence of Buzz as a man he knows his infinite power and he knows that he can do anything because he is man and he is strong, as he was holding the train with the hands without any assistance that depicts the strong nature of Buzz. Here a woman is not expected to hold the train because she is weak just like Jessie who did not do anything rather closed her eyes to get escaped from reality that is in the nature of a female as she is considered emotional and hopeless.

In the next scene we see another trait of a male character when Buzz, Jessie and Woody attacked Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head. Mr. Potato Head had a plan in his mind and he looked confident that is the quality of a male who never gets worried at any situation because he is having a backup plan. Same is the case with Mr. Potato Head who says, **“You can’t touch me, Shariff. I brought my attack clog with a built-in force field”** but the reply of Woody shows us that backup plan is in the nature of a man just reduce the element of failure as woody says, **“ Well I brought my dinosaur who eats force-field dogs”**. These dialogues do show that during the whole conversation the female characters were quite. They were not given the chance to reveal the backup plan rather presented as mute. This shows that male characters are shown as intellectuals on the other hand female characters were passive as they are supposed to be.

There are a lot of instances in the movie where male character supposes his self as authoritative and controller. In viewing Andy’s dialogues we will find a clear image. In a situation when Andy looked tensed he ordered , **“Molly , stay out of my room!”** , for him he was in trouble because of a female Molly and he ordered her to stay out of his room so he could avoid such tensions.

At another point when meeting was called it was Woody a male character who thought logically and called a meeting to overcome the situation as he said, **“we need a staff meeting. Everyone! A staff meeting!”** Here this shows the leading role given to a man who can better make solution of a problem instead of a woman. Then again another male character suggested, **“We are going into attic mode, folks. Keep your accessories with you at all times. Spare parts, batteries, anything you need for an orderly transition”**. Woody and Buzz tried a lot to calm the other toys just like a male always there to support but here Jessie is again shown as a typical female character who started weeping and says, **“We are being abandoned ”**. Buzz replies, **“We will be fine Jessie”**, Buzz like a male member tried to console her and relaxed her. Woody and Buzz dialogues showed the male dominance in the movie. They controlled and planned everything because they wanted to remain closed to their master Andy. Here again the element of loyalty or friendship is fulfilled just because of the strong male characters who are intelligent enough to handle the situation and keep all the toys together as it is shown in the dialogue of Andy , **“ Don’t worry. Andy’s gonna take care of us. I guarantee it!”** Buzz and Woody know that they were in a crucial situation, but as a male they did not let anybody to feel about the problem.



When Andy was going to boarding school he selected to take Woody with him. Again a male character was given preference by a male master. He could have selected any female character but they were not as good as Woody, so he preferred Woody over them.

Jessie's quick decision was seen in the story that caused a lot of problems. Again another character of a female to make decision without even giving a single thought. It was Jessie's decision to go to Sunnyside and said, **"Fellas, I know what to do"** when mistakenly Andy's mother put them in the trash but in reality Andy wanted to put them in the attic. Woody went to help them because he knew the reality. They started moving into day care's box (that was in the car) when Buzz stopped Jessie to do this as he said, **"Jessie wait. What about Woody"** as a male he did not want to leave his friend Woody in need but her foolish nature is shown when she did not listen to him and even did not care her friend Woody, who was alone with Andy. Again a female trait is shown when she did not ponder over the situation logically rather made quick and false decisions. A kind of jealousy is also there, as Andy decided Woody to take with him so she said, **"He is fine Buzz. Andy is taking him to college"** so they should not be worried about him. Woody reached there and stopped them going Sunnyside, but it was all Jessie's decision and she did not listen him. Meanwhile Andy's mother started the car to drop the box at day care.

The stereotyped depiction of female characters is seen many times. Let's take the example of Barbie who started crying when Molly left her for day care. Again the typical female nature is portrayed who is immature and does not control her emotions. Everybody in the box tried to console her. Another female stereotyped is shown by Barbie at Sunny side when she was attracted by the charming and luxurious life of handsome Ken. Every woman wants a luxurious house like Ken is having and a beautiful partner like ken. So, here we can say that Barbie got attracted by all this as she said, **"You have everything"** and betrayed her loyal friends. Ken asked, **"Barbie, come with me, Live in my dream house"**, without even thinking that rather Barbie would accept the offer or not. Again element of betrayal is shown that a female can leave everyone at any cost as betrayal is in her nature. She knows her beauty and its importance. So she left them and went with Ken to **"Ken's Dream House"**. Woody as a logical and loyal male member wanted to take them back and made them to remember by saying, **"I have a kid. You have a kid. Andy!"** Nobody wanted to go with him as Buzz said, **"Our mission with Andy is complete"**. Woody tried to explain the things logically but they were not willing to go back so he left them saying, **"I can't believe how selfish you all are"**.

Again another female character Bonnie is shown who took Woody without anybody's permission because she wanted more toys to play with, another female element is misrepresented. The girl could be replaced with a boy. As males do not do such acts and females are expected more of doing this, that is why a female character is selected for all this.

In the story a point came when Ken's friend teased him by saying that he was a **"girl's toy"** as he was attracted by the beauty of Barbie so we found an anger in his voice, he said, **"I am not a girl's toy. I am not."** This shows that he does not want to be a girl's toy as it does not suit with the nature of a man, so he did mind it.

Sunnyside was again controlled by male character Lotso who exercised his power at Sunnyside. He gave them a room where naughty children were looking because he was having the power and it is male patriarchal society who has given the power to male controller who can exercise his power according to his wish, again another powerful male character.

With the help of another character Daisy, woman was misrepresented. She replaced the toys with the new one. This shows that woman can easily replace things even their best friends as Lotsosays, **"She replaced us"**. So again they are not loyal even with their friends. On the other hand Woody as a responsible , ever helping and caring male did not let his friends in need , he was safe but he was worried about his friends , as he said , **"But my friends are in there"**. This shows that a male is always loyal to his friends, he cannot even think to replace his friends. So, male and female characters are used to add something into already existing ideologies regarding male and female.

A female character Barbie was used as commodity to attract Ken, because they wanted to go out, so Barbie was used to control Ken as she says, **"I can't take it here, Ken. I wana go to Butterfly Room. With you!... Please take me away from this! Take me away!"** She was weeping as well because she knew that she could make him agree. So, we can say that a female character is used to trap a male character.

A master plan to escape from the Sunnyside was also planned by Woody, an intellectual male who could make plan by using his knowledge. On the other hand female character accompanied him.

At the end of the story, Buzz as a strong male saved Jessie's life. This act does show the capability of male who can save lives at the stake of his own life. Woody again showed his supportive nature by saying, **“We will be okey. Stay together”**. The same element of creating a bondage is seen by the male characters at the end of the story.

At the end of the story shy, passive nature of Bonny another female character is also seen. There were many instances in the story when Woody and Buzz were leading sometimes individually and sometimes with the help of other toys, but leading roles were given to two male characters Woody and Buzz. They controlled the situations with good suggestions because they were strong and intellectual individuals. Throughout the story females were given passive roles on the other hand active roles were given to females. Hence we can point out that “Toy Story 3” does play an important role in reinforcing gender ideologies.

In conclusion the researcher points out that the content analysis of Tyson (2006) feminist theory on cartoon movie Toy Story 3 shows that the way women are oppressed in society, similarly they are oppressed in the Cartoon Movie. This is written and directed by a male person so it seems obvious that this movie is controlled by patriarchy. It is found that women is negatively portrayed by male writing, it is just to oppress the women. They are shown in two categories good or bad. Those who are the supporters of hero are shown as good girls and those who use their mind to answer the hero shown as bad girls. Throughout the movie it is seen that the active and professional roles are given to men. They contribute for the development of the country on the other hand women are shown as weak, subordinate and in passive characters. Women are used as a tool to show things with their sign or exchange value instead of their use value. In short this research shows that society constructs image of women or men as feminine or masculine. How a women should behave, when to talk when not. All these things are constructed by the society. Hence the results go in line with Tyson's feminist approach and his explanation of the theory.

No one has done research about the gender ideologies in a cartoon movie Toy Story 3 by applying feministic theory. So, this result opens the ways for the new researchers to look over this genre with Marxist perspective. The new researchers can do research in different games and see how games help in creating gender roles.

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