

# Women's Portrayal in Classic Literature and Hollywood's Golden Age to Determine its Ramifications

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## ABSTRACT

Sexism has existed since the beginning of time. Media portrayal is another tool used to control women. In ancient Athens media showed women what would happen to them if they acted out. The character Lysistrata was used to belittle women. Clytemnestra was to warn women to stay in place. There were few female writers and there weren't even female actresses. During the Golden Age of Cinema media portrayal set false expectations of what a woman should be. Often, they were objectified and had little speaking time. Partly because there weren't many women working behind the screen. There were little female directors, cinematographers, and writers. Modern media has bettered in its portrayal of women. It still does occasionally perpetuate gender stereotypes and objectify women it is better. The movie Little Women demonstrates that. It empowers women with its portrayal. That movie is directed by a woman, perhaps a line can be drawn that if more women are involved in media creation, the representation will enhance and be positive. This investigation is important to be disseminated so people are aware of the power media has over us and hold it to a standard that creates a positive impact.

## Introduction

This investigation demonstrates how literature and media have affected society thus, women throughout history. It starts from the Classical Period in Athens, then Hollywood's Golden Age films, and then moves to modern media. With each period, it seeks to determine the impact it has had on women by media, the view of women, and how they view themselves. It compares and contrasts each period above to track the progress, or lack thereof, of media portrayal. Media portrayals have changed a lot over the centuries, and this investigation seeks to display it. Completing the investigation is made difficult by people's subjectivity; the information investigated can be hard to measure, and sometimes there needs to be more reliable information on Ancient Athens, some of it destroyed. It can be affected by subjectivity since the people analyzing this information are human and could make mistakes or change the information to fit their narrative. It is hard to measure since it is personal to each person affected. Finally, since some information compares how literature affected ancient Athenians to us today, it can be hard to find information on that era. Since they no longer exist and have some information that is not available anymore. The investigation combats these limitations through varied sources to see all perspectives. Myths from Ancient Athens are taken from their original context to create a positive message showcasing the progress in portrayal. Media has progressed over the years and, more than ever is used as a tool for empowerment.

## Problem Statement

It is impossible to provide an exact date when the problem arose on how representations of women in media affected them and society. Logically, it must have started when writing systems and literature were invented. From the beginning of the Fertile Crescent to how women were portrayed in epics like Gilgamesh and to the Greeks in Ancient Athens, this investigation focuses on golden age films in the United States during the 50s to today with modern media. It is a relatively new phenomenon to investigate how media has affected women, starting with the feminist movement in the 20th century. Research has proved that media has had negative consequences on women's psyche and societal position, as well as on men and how they perceive women.

## **Purpose**

This investigation is imperative for people to be aware that media affects society, specifically women. With this newfound knowledge of the power media has over us, people and industries can be more careful with what they put out. Now that they know that it can affect varied groups of people, men, and women, they choose to be tactful in what they show and represent and how. Since it can have adverse effects on the mental health, body image, and perception of women and little girls, the media can stop having adverse effects and have positive ones instead.

## **Justification**

Everyone ingests media in some way. It can be movies, shows, books, social media, and others. So, media portrayal is important to everyone because we are all exposed to it. It shapes how you view large groups of people and even yourself. If people are adequately informed about the power media portrayals have over us, then they can think critically about it and analyze what they consume. That way they can demand better if they see something they do not agree with. Which creates a better environment for everyone. This in turn creates a space for positive and empowering portrayal.

## **Research Questions**

1. How have the portrayals of women in literature influenced societal perceptions and women's roles, and what parallels can be drawn between classical literature and portrayals in the Golden Age of Hollywood and Modern Media?
2. How does media affect the mental health of women?
3. How can media be used to portray women in a positive light to create an uplifting impact?

## **Research Objectives**

1. To explain how media affected us before and how it affects us now to be able to be tactful in the portrayals.
2. To understand how to avoid negative effects on women.
3. To discern how media can have a positive effect.

## **Theoretical Framework**

One of the classical forms of discrimination among humanity is sexism (Satienchayakorn & Jimarkon, 2018). Sexism has evolved and taken new forms, making it more subtle but still persistent. These processes continue

steadily throughout individuals' lives as they receive and elaborate information about women and men and what it means to belong to either category, drawing from direct and indirect observations, social contact, personal elaborations, and cultural representations (Santonniccolo et al., 2023). One new form is objectification, which, when women are exposed to it, they are more likely to objectify themselves. Pakistani television has promoted chiefly a sacred traditional image of women since 1964 (Qureshi, I, 2022). Pakistani TV often portrays what a good wife is: obedient and submissive, despite modernity. Since Ancient Athens, sexism has been a tool to control women. Take them inside the house, attendants. Now, women must not wander unrestrained (Lauriola, 2012). The Theme used can underlie literature approaches such as psychological, sociological, feminism, existentialism, biographical, and so on (Indriani, 2021). With new forms of media, new forms of representation occur. With time, the media has tried to represent women in a more empowering light.

## Definition of Terminologies

Bechtel Test is used in movies and shows to determine the quality of the representation of women onscreen. Objectification is when a person is perceived as an object. Gender stereotypes are preconceptions of characteristics that women and men should have.

## Review of Literature

### Sexism Yesterday, and Today as well as Globally

Sexism has existed for thousands of years around the world. Consider the impact of language on the oppression and prejudice that women still endure and have endured in patriarchal societies. This source shows how discrimination has existed for a long time and how sexism has its origins in Greek society, the word misogyny being a Greek word meaning hatred of women. Explores the impact of language on how women are perceived and feel about themselves. It explained theoretical frameworks and concepts like gender inequality, global sexism, and benign sexism. Gender inequality is when women are valued less than men in society, often seen nowadays in job prospects and education. Global sexism is the study of how sexism changes and adapts to each location. Benign sexism is a modern form of sexism that is more subtle. The mild type of sexism is more prevalent today. It is accomplished more subtly than before. Shows how sexism has evolved and argues that it is getting more covert. The following subjects need research while appearing to be less typical. This article was able to indicate that:

One of classic forms of discrimination among human mankind is sexism. It is a gender hierarchy expressed in various ways in a society. Hostile or direct sexism is a traditional or cultural discrimination which puts women in a lower class than men in a sense that men are physically stronger, better at hunting for food, and able to protect family. Meanwhile, benevolent or indirect sexism has received attention in recent decades. It comes as positive statements praising women who comply with traditional gender role such as being a good mother and wife (Ramos et al., 2018). Although women's social and economic roles have been improved to nearly as equal as those of men's in several aspects, we still frequently witness both direct and indirect sexism in daily life; especially, in workplaces. Weiss (2016) reveals that most women are discriminated at workplace in different ways. She said a) job applications with male sounding names are likely offered a job with higher salary, b) one fourth of women working in information technology (IT) have experienced sexual harassment and stereotyped of having aggressive manners... (Satienchayakorn & Jimarkon, 2018)

The article stated that empirical data for the analysis was provided by the publication, which explained concepts from the research on misogyny, global feminism, and benevolent sexism, as explained before. It describes the several types of sexism, such as physical and verbal abuse of women. It focuses on sexism in the modern workplace and compares it to past discrimination. Additionally, it's from the standpoint of historical and contemporary sexism, which provides a range of discrimination women have faced. Misogyny is a Greek word that means "hatred of women." It will help build the foundation for research that starts in classical Greece. It proves that misogyny has occurred frequently throughout history and in various civilizations. The condition still persists and affects millions of individuals, even if it has changed since ancient times.

## Classical Characters and their Effects

Classical portrayals of women did affect women at the time and now. It provides a description of how women were perceived in classical antiquity, along with examples of how Greek literature mirrored that perception. It emphasizes Clytemnestra, Antigone, and Medea. Young married women were supposed to stay home, and only older women could leave the house. A historical figure named Antigone is used as an illustration. They had to remain silent and out of sight. Antigone, Clytemnestra, and Medea exemplify women who defy social norms and "defy" males. As a result of speaking out, they risk psychological or even fatal consequences. Antigone defies his brother and is ostracized, Clytemnestra kills her husband and then is killed, and Medea kills many people and is banished. It demonstrates what happens when you go against the status quo. The investigation states:

"Take them inside the house, attendants. From now on they must be women and not wander unrestrained" (Sophocles, *Antigone* 578-579). With these words, Creon, king of Thebes, sealed his decision to condemn to death Antigone, a young woman and member of the royal family, for transgressing a decree that he, the king and a man, had proclaimed. Antigone's transgression is not simply a violation of a law. Nor is Creon disturbed simply because someone has defied his law. It is the gender of 'this someone' that infuriated Creon, that is, a woman, whose place is to stay inside the house, and, there, to take care of what was regarded as womanly tasks typical to respectable women: weaving and making clothes, in addition to the expected care for raising children. "Surely, a husband should be pleased if he marries a wife who knows how to take wool and make clothes, how to share out the spinning work among the female slaves", we read in Xenophon, *On Household Management* 6.17-10. And, "a woman who travels outside the house" – we are told by the orator Hyperides (Fragment 205) – "must be of such an age, that..." (Lauriola, 2012)

This site provided the most direct answer to the research question. It provides unmistakable proof of how literature affected women during the Classical era. Plays and literature from this time portrayed the outcomes of disobedient women. Murder, bodily harm, and spiritual harm were all inflicted upon them. The portrayals were to intimidate women into staying in line. When Antigone directly disobeys a man, she pays the price. Clytemnestra kills her husband and later is assassinated. Medea will always be remembered as a cruel sorceress for murdering her children. These women typically display male characteristics or hold ideals exclusive to men, leading one to believe that only a manly woman could act in such a manner.

## Treatment of Women in Hollywood

Women have faced many struggles in Hollywood. This source investigates the progress of women in Hollywood and the reason for its slow progress. Hollywood represents a distorted part of reality, yet it still affects society greatly. Male characters dominate screen time. Female representations are more likely to be sexualized than men. It's been proven that having a crew with more women, increases the visibility and quality of the female characters in film. Today women only hold 17% of influential positions in creating films. Women often fare

poorly in gender-neutral awards. One of the biggest factors is gender discrimination which causes many barriers for women as well as sexual harassment. Equal pay is another issue. It states:

The purpose of this report is to investigate why progress for women in Hollywood has been so slow despite gender justice advocates pushing for reform both inside and outside the industry for more than half a century. We begin this report by addressing the question of why gender equity matters. This is followed by an assessment of women's status in key decision-making roles in film and television. In the third section, we address two major obstacles to women's advancement in the industry: gender discrimination and sexual harassment. We conclude with a discussion of what we can do to effectively reform the industry. After a half-century of research and activism, Hollywood is ripe for reform. Today, activists are addressing gender discrimination, gender and race disparities in representation, training a new generation of female leaders and leaders of color in the industry, and harnessing consumer pressure to demand change in the industry. (Heldman & Haggard, 2018)

This source provided important information on how female representation worked during Classic Hollywood and now. Representation does affect the audience, and movies need to consider that. There needs to be more progress toward better representation. Women still are more likely to be objectified and have fewer speaking lines. Minorities are also given fewer speaking lines. Women working in the industry are treated differently and face many inequalities. It gives an insider's perspective on how women are affected by media.

## Role of Women in Film

Women and minorities are often misrepresented in film. This source examines how the representation on screen correlates with the audience watching the movies over a span of 20 years. The source used multiple theories to be able to properly analyze the movies discussed, most notably it uses the Bechtel Test. It asked three questions: Are there two women who have names? Do they talk to each other? Do they talk about something that isn't about a man? It not only examines women's representation in film but minorities as well. In 2013 women comprised only 15% of protagonists in film but that has been changing. Female characters are two times more likely to get home-related roles than work-related ones. It discussed the percentage of people that made up movie theaters. Hispanics are the group most likely to go to the movies but only make up 4.9% of speaking roles. The article shows:

Women are underrepresented in film. Racial minorities are underrepresented in film. White men are vastly overrepresented in film. How do these facts affect audiences that are so demographically different from what is portrayed onscreen? This study serves to examine how character representations in film relate to the demographics of the audience viewing them, and how these portrayals have changed over a 20-year span. Considering the depictions of women in the context of social gender movements of the last two decades will provide a deeper understanding of the attitudes toward female characters, as well as factors that shape the themes and representations that appear in the most popular films. The purpose of this study was originally to examine the relationship between the sexual objectification of women in film and race. It began as a content analysis that would measure the amount of provocative skin shown by major and minor female characters in the top grossing domestic films across a 20-year span, and compare the results to determine if the objectification varied between races in its amount and context. (Murphey, 2015)

This source showed that there are still problems with gender and racial representation in film today, despite its progress. Women still make up a smaller percentage of protagonists and are still sexualized on screen; this affects society, exposing children to gender stereotypes and getting used to them. Movies do not accurately represent the audience that comes to see them. It explained what the Bechtel test was. It is a valuable tool for the future to analyze the representation of women in media. It provided information on more recent movies like *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter*. It gave a perspective on representation in the 21st century.

## Little Women, Analysis of the Book Compared to the Movie

*Little Women* was first a book before it was a movie, despite having the same characters there are differences in their impact. The article aims to assess Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* from a feminist standpoint. It specifically aims to examine Amy and her independence in contemporary cinema and the novel. Jo is independent in three separate spheres: her career, her relationships, and her schooling. Both the book and the movie have depictions of these characteristics. The movie makes an effort to highlight these traits and express feminist ideals, through this character. She challenges the patriarchal systems that are in place. Jo's persona defies gender stereotypes and illustrates women's freedom. She wasn't neat or clean but loud and disorganized. She doesn't care about dressing femininely and confidently expresses her opinions. She decides who she will marry instead of her parents and confidently rejects Laurie. She wants to be a writer, and despite the hurdles, she does so. She is invested in her education, and her sisters. The article demonstrates:

Literature is kind of written art as expression or utterance of someone's feelings or imagination. The definition of literature is kind of written based art in various structures such as prose, poem, drama, etc. Its context is based on the phenomenon or imagination (Dubey, 2013). Literature can be represented in several forms such as poem, drama, movie, or pose. In another word, literature is an art connected to language which has supporting aspects. In its content, literature can be real story or author's imagination which represents phenomenon in life. Movie, I kind of literature used not only text or dialogue, but also uses spatial dimension consists of movie stock, lighting, camera angle, camera movement, point of view, editing and montage; temporal dimension consists of slow and fast motion, plot time, length of movie, flashback, and foreshadowing; and acoustic dimension consists of dialogue, music and sound effects. Another aspect of movie is theme with highlighting its content. Theme used can be underlie literature approach such as psychological, sociological, feminism, existentialism, biographical, and so on. (Indriani, 2021)

The source was essential in giving a current example of how the media affects women. With old patriarchal norms, Jo as a persona struggles. She inspires other women to act by doing so. The book subtly pushed for women's independence and encouraged them to fight for their rights. During the time the book was published the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was in motion. Women are shown in the contemporary film that they may thrive in spite of the patriarchal system. Despite the fact that women now have many more liberties, they nevertheless encounter difficulties. This Jo as a character empowers women by setting an excellent example. Today's women are capable of so much more than Jo was in the nineteenth century yet she still inspires people today, and people can sympathize with her.

## Analysis of Pakistani TV's Portray of Women

Pakistani TV can at times perpetuate gender stereotypes. The intention was to reveal the representation of women on Pakistani television. How it still maintains gender roles despite changes throughout time and trying to modernize. The article focuses on the Pakistani television show *Meray Pass Tum Ho*. Conventional perspectives hinder Pakistani TV's modernization initiatives. Similar to the traits of desirable and undesirable women. What makes a good or bad wife, and how different men have different expectations for marriage. A good wife is obedient and doesn't defy her husband. A husband can be unfaithful to his wife with little consequence. It expanded by making an effort to outperform more popular Indian television. In addition to criticizing media sexism, the article talks about the role that classicism plays. Wealthy women are viewed more positively than poorer women in this specific show that the article focuses on. It elucidates that:

Pakistani television has mostly promoted a sacred traditional image of women since 1964. Although with changing global perspectives, TV's female characters have been given modern dress and bold personalities, portrayals with fierce determination and total independence are scarce. I explore the portrayal of women



in a Pakistani TV drama serial *Meray Pass Tum Ho (MPTH)* (I Have You, 2019) to investigate how the screenwriter, Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar, exploits gender as a social construct. *MPTH* presents an antithetical woman character who goes out of the bounds of society to fulfill her materialistic wishes; she gains freedom and gets involved in an extra-marital affair, hence requiring that in the script she be punished. This show became one of the few Pakistani serials that developed a story about an open live-in relationship between a man and woman out of wedlock. Using a narrative analysis, I argue that the writer conveniently conveys common, biased patriarchal opinions about gender roles, knitted up here in romance and love relationships, and I raise questions about how female characters are and might be reconstructed against... (Qureshi, 2022)

This source was important because it provided crucial details about how women are portrayed in the media. It illustrates the universality of this problem by providing a perspective from Pakistan. It asserts that over time, the way women are portrayed has changed. Depending on the prevailing gender stereotypes in society. It offers precise assumptions about how the show markets itself. They must be docile and never point out their spouses' transgressions if they want a happy life. However, because they are likable, we tend to relate to masculine characters more despite their flaws. It illustrates how sexism is currently understood, along with its effects.

## Objectification and its Effects

Objectification has a strong effect on society. Examining the scientific study on gender stereotypes, objectification, and sexualization of media portrayals and how our culture is impacted by this is the aim of this project. It also aims to pinpoint the circumstances and possible outcomes of these objectifications. The way that various people consume media has an impact on how women are perceived and the results. The source defines objectification and gender stereotypes. Stating that the march of objectification from the outside into the inside hurts mental health. The source states that when women start to be objectified, they'll start to objectify themselves. They generally find it simple to adopt modern trends. Increased exposure to objectification makes certain males more susceptible to sexual harassment. So, it showcases the effect of objectification on women and men. The investigation indicated:

As a social category, gender is one of the earliest and most prominent ways people may learn to identify themselves and their peers, the use of gender-based labels becoming apparent in infants as early as 17 months into their life [1]. Similarly, the development of gender-based heuristics, inferences and rudimentary stereotypes becomes apparent as early as age three [2,3]. Approximately at this age, the development of a person's gender identity begins [4]—that is, the process through which a person tends to identify as a man, as a woman or as a vast spectrum of other possibilities (i.e., gender non-conforming, agender, genderfluid, etc.). These processes continue steadily throughout individuals' lives as they receive and elaborate information about women and men and what it means to belong to either category, drawing from direct and indirect observations, social contact, personal elaborations and cultural representations [5,6]. As a result, social and mental representations of gender are extremely widespread, especially as a strictly binary construct, and can be argued to be... (Santonniccolo et al., 2023)

According to the source, objectification, sexualization, and gender stereotypes are the main ideas in this investigation. It provides concrete examples of how media influences women. It asserts that it influences both how males view women and how they view themselves. As a result, men engage in more sexual harassment, which leads to women objectifying themselves. It helps to connect the two historical eras of Classical Greece and Classical Hollywood since it asserts that sexism adapts. The article claims that objectification changes in response to trends. It helped discuss the different types of objectification and how they impact gender in modern culture in general.

## Representation in Children's Books Affects Children

Children's Books have a strong influence on children and their perception on gender roles. To analyze how the gender bias recorder in children's books affects children. Children's books and textbooks tend to perpetuate gender stereotypes. They also, systematically underrepresent female characters both in Western and non-Western books. A possible repercussion of this is that kids often identify with the characters of their same gender. If there are significantly fewer women in their schoolbooks, girls are more likely to feel unmotivated and uninspired with subjects. The subtle messaging in books mostly shows women in work-related tasks to learn about gender expectations. Throughout societies, it poses the same issue. The source states:

Gender representation in school textbooks, referred to as children literature in the western world, has been researched and discussed extensively in a serious academic tone since the early classic studies by second wave feminist in the 1970s and 1980s using content analysis approach. These early studies as well as those carried out by feminist poststructuralists, using qualitative approaches, asserted that children literature is gender bias: these carry significantly more males than females and both females and males are portrayed within their traditional gender roles. Keeping in view the persistent sexism in children literature, this critical review examines key findings of various studies, both from developed and developing countries, with two basic arguments: (1) Textbooks still carry gender stereotypes and (2) Gender bias in textbooks does matter as textbooks knowledge is essential medium of power that shapes the ways in which children think about themselves and society. Thus, the key purpose of this review is to assert that the persistent gender biases in children literature aims to reinforce and legitimize gender system. (Ullah, et al., 2014)

This source provided an example of how modern media affects society. It focused on how children are affected by gender bias. It provided specific information about the consequences of misogynistic portrayals of youth. It causes them to become dispassionate on specific subjects and accept gender expectations. It also compares these representations across various countries. It shows that no matter the country, this is a problem that they are all affected by. Some countries have worse gender representation than others.

## Women's Social Situation in Ancient Civilizations

Women have faced discrimination since the beginning of time. This source aimed to understand women's position in Ancient Athens and to be able to compare it to Classical Hollywood and Modern Media. Often in the Greek city-states, women were preferred to not be seen. They stayed in the house and left for special ceremonies. Athenian women were supposed to be strong to be able to birth strong heirs. It's unknown how accessible media was for them. They may have seen the theater, but we have no records indicating it. If they did, the media was used to keep women in line. The interviewee states:

Interviewer: "This is a broad question: How were women treated in Greece?"

Interviewee: "It's broad because there were many city-states and different periods. If we focus on the classical period in Athens, we can see that women did not often leave their homes. Even if it was the democratic period, they were more restricted. This can be compared to the Spartan women who had more liberties. Since men had to train often, women were in charge of their households. Men were often away and Spartan women were often given more physical training. They wanted them to be strong to produce strong heirs. In Athens, wealthy women stayed in home while poorer women like slaves were seen outside working. There was a lot of focus on preventing adultery. It was legal for a husband who caught his wife sleeping with another man, to kill the man and the wife. She could also be publicly shamed. For example, she wouldn't be allowed to wear jewelry." (Ramírez, 2023)

This source is helpful to the investigation because it provides the most in-depth information on how ancient Greek women lived. That way it was easier to understand how media would affect them. It tethered together the periods, efficiently comparing all three. In Classic Hollywood women did have more rights than ancient Athenians. Media was used to showcase an ideal that all women should meet. While modern media has



evolved to sometimes be objectifying in subtle ways or be empowering. Media portrayals have evolved but their effect over us has not diminished.

## Antigone Rising Analyzed

Myths have existed for a long time, and how we use them is changing. The objective of this book is to analyze how the ancient myths were perceived back then and how they are molded and used now. It starts off analyzing Antigone, the Greeks probably viewed her critically. She was unmarried and might view her actions as being crazy. Today the myth inspires women to resist institutions that undermine them. The Amazons were used to showcase the male fantasy of killing women. To women at the time, it showed them what happened if they behaved as if they didn't need men, they would be punished. Today these myths empower women like with the creation of Wonder Woman. Lysistrata was a way to make fun of women. The only power that they have is domestic and perpetuates the society at the time. Today, it can be used as empowerment with movies like Chi-Raq. Hippocrates in his time wrote about health. He didn't seem to have a negative impact. Today he is misquoted in dieting books to police women's eating. It states:

The ending of Lysistrata provides the most striking example of these rapid shifts. Our heroine oversees the negotiations between the delegates from the warring cities, and she brings in a naked woman called Reconciliation, who is both an allegory and an exotic dancer. (On the Athenian stage, it is likely that a male dancer dressed up as a naked woman would have played the role.) Lysistrata imparts wisdom to each of the delegates, trying to get them to see the situation from the other's perspective. But it is the nude body of Reconciliation that persuades the men, not Lysistrata's rhetoric. Their attention is riveted to the naked woman, whose body they divide up, as they divide up the Greek territory, with "I'll give you the two hills if I can have the valley" kind of humor. For modern readers and viewers, this scene invokes today's post-truth politics—it doesn't matter what is said, it's the emotional appeal of the visual that counts. The ending poses valuable questions about protest and what makes a protest successful. Is it enough to get the desired outcome by any means possible, or is it also important to win the arguments? (Morales, 2020)

This source provided a unique argument. It connected two of the time periods this investigation is researching. It ties Greek myths to modern media. Back then, the myths could have been used to police women and keep them in their place. Today, they are used as a tool of empowerment. Sometimes as a tool of racism, classism, or unhealthy dieting. It showed the direct result of retelling the myths in different societies.

## Methods

A computer was utilized with an internet connection, alongside an internet browser Google Chrome for this investigation. In order to find the sources required for this investigation, the Google search engine was paramount for pinpointing the necessary sources that would elucidate the research question. Although the internet connection was unstable at times, it proved sufficient to conduct all the required constituents of this investigation. Most of the sources were peer-reviewed or approved by the investigation mentor or the investigation mentor revised the sources and approved them while confirming their validity. All these components working in tandem created the optimal conditions for the consummation of this project.

This qualitative investigation was completed utilizing a historical documentary analysis design. To populate this research, it was necessary to specify the purpose of each of the ten sources used. Furthermore, it was important to recognize the source's design and approach, indicate the target audience, highlight their limitations, and finally, determine the recommendations and findings contained in each. An analytical component outlining the significance of the data presented in the inquiry was generated, so a descriptive content analysis methodology and an interview methodology had to be utilized for this investigation.

## Results

The utilized search engines Ebsco Host and Google Scholar proved most useful for the selected sources of this investigation. Sources six (published in 2022) seven (published in 2023) and nine (published in 2023) were very recent. Source six dealt with the analysis of Pakistani TV's portrayal of women. Source seven discussed objectification and its effects. Source ten explained women's social situation in ancient civilizations. Sources five and ten were recent. Source five was published in 2021 and discussed how the portrayal of women has changed in *Little Women*, comparing the book to the movie. Source ten was published in 2020 and it discussed how classical characters have been used throughout the years. Sources one, two, three four, and eight were not recent. Source one was published in 2018 and explained how sexism has evolved throughout the years, it also compares sexism globally. Source two was published in 2012 and discusses how the portrayal of women through classical characters affected ancient Greek women. Source three was published in 2018 and explains how women were treated in Hollywood and how that influenced media portrayal. Source four was published in 2015 and discusses the role of women in film. It compares how media representation has bettered but highlights how women often still have less screen and speaking time. Finally, source eight was published in 2014 and it discusses how the portrayal of women in children's books affects their social perceptions of themselves and women.

During the early stages of the investigation, the main question was:

1. How have the portrayals of women in literature influenced societal perceptions and women's roles, and what parallels can be drawn between classical literature and portrayals in the Golden Age of Hollywood and Modern Media?
  - The source *Sexism Yesterday, and Today as well as Globally* was able to answer this question more broadly. Women have been subjected to sexism for hundreds of years. Media is another way to subject women to it. The source *Women's Social Situation in Ancient Civilizations* provided clear information on how ancient Greek women were affected by media. They did not often leave the house, so the media they did encounter had a strong effect. Often used as a way to police women in line. The source *Classical Characters and their Effects* explained specific examples. For example, Clytemnestra receives the ultimate punishment for acting out and killing her husband, death. The source *Treatment of Women in Hollywood* explained how portrayal affected women in classical Hollywood. There were not a lot of women working behind the camera. Women had less speaking time than men and screen time. They were more prone to be objectified on screen than their male counterparts. The source *Analysis of Pakistani TV's Portray of Women* explained how media was used to perpetuate gender stereotypes. It is better compared to other forms of previous portrayal, yet it still has its faults.
2. How does media affect the mental health of women?
  - The source *Objectification and its Effects* provided a clear answer to this question. Women when exposed to objectifying material experience negative mental health effects. They are more likely to think less of themselves and objectify themselves. Which may cause insecurity, self-doubt, and other problems like anxiety and depression. The source *Representation in Children's Books Affects Children* shows how damaging portrayal can even affect children and their mental health. Making them feel less important or intelligent than their male peers.
3. How can media be used to portray women in a positive light to create an uplifting impact?
  - The source *Antigone Rising* provided examples of how ancient portrayals that used to be damaging can be repurposed to create something positive. For example, Lysistrata was a classical character often used to make fun of women. The only power women have over

men is sex in this play. It's supposed to belittle women. The author shows how that character is used today in films like *ChiRaq*. She is a symbol of empowerment in this movie that bands together women to stand up against injustice. It doesn't try to make fun of their efforts instead it applauds them. The source *Little Women, Analysis of the Book Compared to the Movie* showed how media has changed. *Little Women* does portray women in a more positive light compared to the other books of the time. But comparing the movie adaptation it is evident the progress in media portrayal. Jo in the movie has more independent and is stronger-willed. She became a symbol of feminism and empowerment which she was in the book but is more developed in the movie. She has independence at her home, in her education, in her jobs, and in her love life.

## Conclusion

The presented sources were able to elucidate that sexism has been changing over time. It used to be more direct but in recent years it's become subtle. As well, as how objectification affects men and women and how media influences us. Moreover, this investigation delineated how in modern times media in Pakistan perpetuates gender stereotypes. Additionally, evidence was provided that in ancient times media had a similar effect, which is seen with the characters of Medea, Clytemnestra, and Antigone. Notwithstanding this, further data also supported the investigation by stating that modern media and its portrayal of women through Greta Gerwig's *Little Women*. The process revealed some limitations, which might be resolved by more investigation. Generally, it would have been beneficial if the sources could outline more information on specifically how women were affected by negative portrayals in ancient Athens. As well as how that has been impacted by the feminist movement. In a general sense, the sources were able to present a vignette on the effect media has had on women for centuries. It properly showed how the effects have not been universal and are malleable to gender stereotypes at the time. For upcoming continuing research and data analysis, recommendations include securing more years of data and requesting more study resources.

Ultimately, this investigation aimed to answer how media has been affecting women. From Classical Greece to the Golden Age of Cinema to modern times. Sources converged to provide an answer, which is back then they had an effect but not significant. It's also hard to measure since most information isn't available. Women were encouraged to stay in their social sphere and not leave their houses. Through negative portrayals, it warned women what would happen to them if they disobeyed. In the Golden Age of cinema, portrayals had a more impact. For modern times, portrayals have been more positive like *Little Women*, but can be negative and if so, are more subtle.

## Limitations

For the investigation to come to fruition, the scope of the research question had to be more encompassing to find more information on the subject, which permitted the optimal conditions to answer the research question. If the original research question had not been changed, perhaps the essay would not have been written as well, given that the research question would have been challenging to complete. The period of modern media was added to be able to provide information on how media has changed and affects us today. All of the research questions were answered but some information was not provided by the sources in this research. The sources could not provide a first-hand account of how media affected a specific woman in ancient Greece since records can be scarce. The sources were not able to highlight specific women who pushed through the boundaries set for them in the film industry.

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