

Women's Representations in Moroccan Cinema: A Comparative Analysis of *Wechma* (1970) and *Deux Femmes Sur La Route* (2007)

Nadir Akrachi¹ and Soumia Boutkhal²

¹Department of English Studies, Mohamed Premier University, Oujda, MOROCCO

²Department of English Studies, Mohamed Premier University, Oujda, MOROCCO

¹Corresponding Author: akrachinadir7@gmail.com



www.ijrah.com || Vol. 4 No. 3 (2024): May Issue

Date of Submission: 30-05-2024

Date of Acceptance: 07-06-2024

Date of Publication: 16-06-2024

ABSTRACT

The present study aims at making a comparative analysis of the representation (s) of women as well as political discourses addressed in Moroccan films mainly seventies films and recently made films. To this end, two films were chosen to be analysed. These films are *Wechma* (Traces, 1970) directed by Hamid Bennani, and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007) by Farida Bourquia. Qualitative content analysis was used as the main data analysis method to compare the films. The choice of using qualitative content analysis did not come at random, but it is because of the fact that the study was qualitatively approached. The results obtained indicated that women's representations still need improvements. Women in the films are depicted in different ways. In *Wechma* (Traces, 1970), women are described as 'subalterns' occupying secondary roles in their society. However, Bourquia's *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007) depicts two different examples of women. One is traditional and still restricted to her society's norms, and another is independent and emancipated from society's restrictions.

Keywords- Moroccan cinema, women's representation, subalternity, visual pleasure, women as subordinate.

I. INTRODUCTION

'Like fish, we "swim" in a sea of images, and these images help shape our perceptions of the world and of ourselves.'

(Berger, 2008, cited in Dutt, 2014, p. 4)

The statement above is a quote by Arthur Asa Berger in his book entitled *Seeing Is Believing: An Introduction to Visual Communication*. This statement indicates that images are so powerful to make individuals believe in what they see. Images are texts full of meanings and have the potential to change people's minds. Images not only help people understand what is around them but also connect them to the world. Motion-pictures or the so called 'Cinema' is influential as well in shaping peoples' perceptions about issues that concern society. The study of cinema is a field that tries to uncover and tackle many different issues and plays a prominent role in revealing issues that concern society.

Such issues include social, political, economic and cultural matters. Moroccan cinema is a new field through which filmmakers try to shed light and reveal matters of Moroccan "reality". Among these issues Moroccan cinema questions are women representation(s) which have been one of the concerns of filmmakers. In other words, Moroccan filmmakers have been concerned with the status of women in their society and the way(s) they are treated in their everyday life.

What Moroccan films try to represent is the manners in which women are treated. Moreover, through the description of women's issues, Moroccan filmmakers focus on depicting the role women hold in their society. Put differently, much attention has been given to women's role and how they are seen in a Moroccan society that is based on male dominant discourse. The present study aims at exploring the representation(s) of women in Moroccan cinema by making a comparative study between films made in the seventies and present-day films. In this respect, two films are purposively

chosen to be compared to make an in-depth exploration and thematic analysis of the way(s) women are depicted in Moroccan films. These films are *Wechma* (Traces, 1970) and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007). Throughout these films, the researcher scrutinizes the similarities and differences that

1. Research Problem

One of the major purposes of cinema is to raise questions about the problems that society suffers from. The present study is a comparative analysis of the representation(s) of women in Moroccan cinema. In other words, the study scrutinizes to what extent Moroccan filmmakers use cinema to express the problems of Moroccan society. In so doing, this study is an in-depth description and analysis of women's representations in Moroccan cinema of films made in the seventies as opposed to contemporary films.

Many studies have been conducted about the representation(s) of women in films in Moroccan as well as Western contexts. Such studies have dealt with women's representations in contemporary times and in the seventies. However, few studies have been conducted to make comparison between these two periods of time. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this inquiry is to explore and make a thematic analysis of the representation(s) of women through comparing seventies films and contemporary films. This comparison is a vehicle whereby the researcher tries to see whether there is an improvement in cinematic discourses and whether cinema plays its prominent roles in changing mentalities and behaviours. The researcher's aim then is to see whether the representations of women in the seventies films is the same compared the recently made films and whether there are any changes in the discourse of cinema.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to make a comparison between Moroccan films made in the seventies and present-day films especially from 2000 onward to scrutinize women's representations addressed in such films. The focus on these representations is due to the scarcity of studies that try to build comparisons between seventies films and recent films. It is also due to the recurrently made remark that women issues have become one of the dominant subjects in Moroccan society since the last twenty years. Hence, the major purpose is to analyse the films from feminist and Marxist perspectives. More precisely, the films are dealt with from Spivak's concept of subalternity (1988), Mulvey's notion of the look (1975), and Althusser's concept of ideology (1970). Therefore, the first goal in comparing the films is to scrutinize women's status and presence and see how they are represented in Moroccan cinema in the seventies and lately shot films. The second objective, moreover, is to reveal the hidden hegemonic discourse in the films under investigation.

3. Research Questions

In view of what has been discussed concerning the major aims of the present study, the latter attempts to answer two central questions. The first question is how are women represented in *Wechma* (1970) and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007). The second research question is formed as follows: what are the filmmakers' ideological intentions in the films? More precisely, the first question seeks to demonstrate whether women are well or ill-treated in films. The second question is concerned with exploring the hidden hegemonic discourse(s) and intentions addressed in the films.

4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it helps the teachers, critics, and students, working in the field of film studies, to build a better understanding of the representations of women in the seventies and lately shot Moroccan films. It is to some extent a kind of a bridge between the past and present Moroccan cinema. In other words, the comparison of these films in such periods of times is a chance to explore how filmmakers have portrayed women in these periods. It is also a way to compare the similarities and differences between these films. This comparison can help in depicting strong points and weaknesses of Moroccan cinema when dealing with women issues.

5. Organisation of the Study

This research is divided into five main chapters. The research begins with an introduction dealing with the statement of the problem, significance, research objectives and questions, as well as structure of the study. Chapter two deals with the research project from a theoretical perspective. It focuses attention on what scholars have mentioned in the field of Moroccan cinema. The aim of the third chapter is to describe the theoretical framework with which the enquiry is investigated. The focus in this chapter is on Laura Mulvey's study, Gayatri Spivak's concept of 'subalternity' as well as Louis Althusser's concept of Ideology as three central theoretical perspectives from which this inquiry is framed. The fourth chapter describes the research methodology. It is concerned with research design as well as population and sampling techniques. It also takes into account data collection and analysis procedures. While chapter five presents the results found along with their interpretations, the last chapter gives a general conclusion emphasizing on limitations and recommendations, and suggestions for further research based on the data obtained through the analysis.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Women's Representation(s) in Cinema

The representation(s) of women in cinema have been the concern of many feminist scholars over the past thirty years (Byerly & Ross, 2006). Several studies have been conducted to explore the representations of women

in different media outlets. Central to this inquiry is the recent study of Mieke Ceulemans and Guido Fauconnier's (1979) which they have conducted on women's representations in Hollywood movies; they find that whenever portrayed in media outlets such as television, news, advertising and films, women are associated with domestic roles or treated as sex objects (cited in Byerly & Ross, 2006). To phrase it differently, women's roles are framed within limited and narrow contexts that do not represent 'the real lives and worlds of women' (Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 17). Another study by Stacy Smith (2010) conducted in the University of Southern California. Smith (2010) argues that women are not only 'stereotyped but also sexualized in popular motion picture content' (cited in Dutt, 2014, p. 6).

In addition, the representation(s) of women in cinema have been connected to secondary roles and subjugation. In a study conducted by Kaplan (1983), She analyses four films namely *Camille* (1936), *Blonde Venus* (1932), *Lady from Shanghai* (1946), and *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977), and she finds that women in such films are heavily subordinated and marginalised in that they are objects of male's gaze and power (cited in Byerly & Ross, 2006). What can be noticed in these films is that they were all produced between 1930s and 1970s, a fact that indicates the subordination of women in such periodization. In the same line of thought, a significant research and feminist study about films is that of Laura Mulvey (1975), *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. Mulvey argues that films are structurally designed for male gaze over women either from male characters, spectators, or camera device (Byerly & Ross, 2006).

Additionally, when pictured in films, women are restricted to normative conditions telling them how to appear and act in films. This is explained by Schubart (2007) as follows:

The first step to qualify as female hero in a man's world is to be young and beautiful. If not young, then she must be Botoxed to look young. If not beautiful, then she must have silicone breasts, be aided by plastic surgery, wigs, make up and never ever have a wrinkle on her pretty face (cited in Dutt, 2014, p. 9).

The above-mentioned statement shows to what extent Hollywood cinema restricts and reduces the role(s) of women to normative conditions of the beauty of physical appearances. In other words, if women are to be given primary roles in films, it must be of a paramount importance that it is conditioned by their beauty and 'physical perfection' (Dutt, 2014, p. 9). This shows that women's presence in the films is targeted toward pleasing the spectator. Hence, the representations in this case are associated with a patriarchal domination based on portraying women in secondary positions. The following section is dedicated to women's representations in Moroccan films.

1.1. Themes, Issues, Questions and the Representation(s) of women

The present section focuses attention on the social issues that have been raised in Moroccan cinema during the 1970-80s as well as the 2000s periods. It scrutinizes in details the themes, social issues and questions that have been raised by filmmakers in these two main periods of Moroccan history. Moreover, much attention is given to films and works related to representation(s) of women in Moroccan films during these periods as it is the major concerns of this research. The following subpart deals with themes and issues related to women's representations in Moroccan films. Moroccan national history has been officially recorded by men. The images of women in it are created from a male's point of view. Accordingly, gender, class, and regional differences have been blurred in official accounts. In these views, women's roles are either ignored or made secondary to men's, constructing thus Moroccan women's subordination and supporting patriarchy through centuries. Sadiqi (n. d, p. 164).

The statement mentioned above indicates the fact that Moroccan history is characterized by male domination. Women were not given many rights, and were under the rule of men. The representation of women in Moroccan cinema is almost the same. When one looks at the films that are produced in Moroccan cinema about women, and the questions and issues that are raised related to women, it would be significantly important to say that there is much improvement in the field of filmmaking and much freedom is given to filmmakers. However, what Carter (2009) notices is the fact that such produced films often depict women in more traditional roles and given less freedom of choice. Carter (2009) describes this situation clearly as follows:

Films discussed previously, such as *Door to the Sky* (1987), *Cane Dolls* (1978), *Enfance Violée* (1993), *Les Beaux Jours de Shahrarazade* (1982), *Cauchemar* (1984), *Khafaya* (1995), *Looking for the Husband of My Wife* (1993), and *Love in Casablanca* (1991), along with *Badis* (1988) and *Ibn Sabeel*, all clearly represent the variety of difficult situations and subjugations that face women in Morocco, whether the women are rich, poor, young, old, modern, or traditional (2009, p.322).

In addition, other films were shot, for instance, during the era of colonialism show women in the same fashion; that is to say, women are always subject to the desires of men and dependent on their husbands etc. In this vein, Hanane Elaissy (2015) clarifies that Moroccan women have witnessed several decades of pain, torture, and subjugation during and after colonialism. Especially significant in this regard are Ben Barka's *Blood Wedding* (1979) and *Bamou* (1983) films which represent women either as subjects of exploitation or sins and sources of evil (Carter, 2009). *Blood Wedding* is a film describing a

woman who was kidnapped from her wedding and separated from her family and tribe because of a man whose desires were much stronger than his reason. *Bamou*, is another film that depicts a woman who loves her husband and is loyal to him. However, a French supervisor kidnapped and imprisoned her in his house to satisfy his desires (Carter, 2009). Other modern films depict women under subjugation and victims of discrimination. Some social issues such as illegal marriage or illegal pregnancy, drugs, and prostitution are issues with which women are accused and described in films. *AL Warta (1984)* and *The Beach of Lost Children (1991)* are two demonstrative films which both depict the naïve woman who believes in the desires of men for marriage, and consequently, they get seduced and left alone at the end (Carter, 2009).

What can be noticed in the presentation of the previous films is the fact that most of them, if not all of them, are directed by male directors. This can be explained by the fact that Morocco during the years of colonialism was male dominated, and hence the process of filmmaking was male dominated. However, women have played significant roles in the field of filmmaking.

1.2. Moroccan Women's Filmmaking

With the coming of women to the field of filmmaking, Moroccan films dealing with women issues have started to be more provocative in the treatment of subjects. In male filmmaking, women often tend to be described as victims of poverty, socio-cultural mores. However, Orlando (2011) claims that the roles given to women in films have changed especially with Moroccan women filmmakers taking charge of the process of filmmaking. One of the figures who have paved the way for Moroccan women's filmmaking is Farida Benlyazid in the early 1970s. Her films and scripts have placed women in roles where they are forced to "confront dramatic changes and problems in Moroccan society" (Carter 2001, 344 cited in Orlando, 2011). What characterises her films, as Carter explains, is her way of storytelling that she uses in order to reveal the structures of oppression and domination (Orlando, 2011). Benlyazid films favour women and place them in positions where they need to be in society. In *kaid Ensa*, for example, one of her films, Farida tries to shed light on the spatial contradictions between genders. This work is seen by Orlando (2011) as a social- realist text that seeks to demonstrate the contributions of women to their societies and cultures.

Narjiss Nejjar is another woman filmmaker who delves into the issues of women. She is known by her feature length film, *Les yeux secs* (Dry Eyes, 2002) in which she reveals the marginalization of rural women and the way men exercise power over them as well as the way they control their destinies (Orlando,2011). In other words, these women are marginalized and oppressed not only by their husbands but also by society as a whole because their society is an example of a patriarchal community whose women cannot speak for

their own rights. Marriage is deemed to be an act of agreement between the two partners. However, what is apparent in this film is that marriage is a state by which women are captivated and are 'linked to traditions and customs' (Orlando, 2011, p.140).

With *L'Enfant Endormi* (The Sleeping Child, 2004), Yasmine Kassari, another Moroccan women filmmaker, reveals the issue of clandestine male immigration. This film portrays the realities about clandestine immigration and poverty people suffer from which is the main factor pushing them to make the decision of immigration. However, what Kassari focuses on in her film is not only clandestine male immigration and the factors that pushed them to do it, but also the situation(s) and conditions these men left their women in (Orlando,2011). In *L'Enfant Endormi*, the main protagonist, Zineb, is described as a woman who is abandoned by her husband once he has immigrated to Europe. Hence, this act of immigration from the part of Zineb's husband in Kassari's film represents not only the loneliness of women in such case but also the absence of their husbands (Orlando, 2011).

In addition to the previous films, Farida Bourquia is another Moroccan filmmaker whose films offer a clearer depiction of the situation of contemporary Moroccan society. In her film *Deux Femmes Sur La Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007), Bourquia depicts the loyalty and love of women towards their husbands and sons who end up betraying them (Orlando, 2011). The film is also an occasion to shed light on the changing situation of women. In other words, Farida shows that women can be independent and powerful enough to make decisions in their lives. What all these films have in common is that they all challenge the traditions, customs and norms.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims at narrowing the scope of the study and presenting the specific framework within which the study is conducted. First, it starts with a general overview of the relevance of the theories presented to the present. Second, a specific and detailed explanation of Laura Mulvey's study *Visual Pleasure and narrative cinema* (1975) is discussed so as to scrutinize the representation(s) of women in Moroccan films. Last, a section is given to theorize the ideological intentions depicted in Moroccan films by focusing on the Marxist Louis Althusser's concept of 'Ideology' and Gayatri Spivak's essay *Can The Subaltern Speak?* Spivak and Althusser studies are helpful to describe the 'subaltern classes' who have been excluded from the dominant discourses of their societies. Attention is then given to the disempowered and 'voiceless' populations being oppressed by their regimes.

1. Relevance to the Present Inquiry

The theoretical framework that is discussed in the present inquiry is crucial in answering the research

questions and relevant to the research objectives. In order to scrutinize the representation(s) of women in the Moroccan films under discussion namely *Wechma* (Traces, 1970) by Hamid Bennani and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007) by Farida Bourquia, Laura Mulvey's study is relevant in that it is needed to describe the case studies, analyse the representation(s) of women as well as compare the two case studies with each other. Using Laura Mulvey's study as a theoretical framework is helpful to depict the situation of Moroccan women and the way(s) they are treated within their society. Since the major concern of the present study is the comparison of the films, this theoretical framework is useful then in comparing the two films. Second, the above-mentioned films are compared also focusing attention on the notions of 'Ideology' and 'subalternity' as two concepts that are represented in the films. These two concepts are essential to the study as the researcher tries to reveal the fact that these films hold ideological discourses within them.

1.1. Women and looking as a Way of Pleasure

This section focuses attention on explaining Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. This study of Laura helps in demonstrating the ways in which women are turned to be just objects for looking and pleasure.

Laura Mulvey argues that film forms depend on two types of visual pleasure: First, scopophilia (essentially voyeurism), derived from Freud's theories of taking other people as objects through scopophilic gaze. Second, narcissism is derived from Lacan's theory of the mirror stage whereby one attempts to identify with a self-like image (Mulvey, 1975). Scopophilia is explained by Smelik (n.d.) in the following quote:

Mulvey analyzed this scopophilia in classic cinema as a structure that functions on the axis of activity and passivity. This binary opposition is gendered. The narrative structure of traditional cinema establishes the male character as active and powerful: he is the agent around whom the dramatic action unfolds and the look gets organized. The female character is passive and powerless: she is the object of desire for the male character(s) (Mulvey, 1975, cited in Smelik (n.d.)).

This scopophilic act arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight (Mulvey, 1975). In this case, it is the woman who is being objectified. Women remain under the power and control of men as characters and spectators. If women are characters in the films, they are subordinated and objectified by the male character playing the primary roles. They are also actively objectified by the gaze of the spectators.

For Freud, scopophilia is an instinct of sexuality associated with taking others as objects and actively

subjecting them to a control of the gaze. Therefore, it constitutes the ego (cited in Mulvey, 1975, p.17). For Lacan, the ego is constituted the moment when a child recognizes his own reflection; the mirror reflection which is for the child more complete and more perfect (cited in Mulvey, 1975, p.18). To word it differently, Freud sees the image as a factor behind rising up the sexual desire of males from an early age and drawing an image of separateness between the two sexes; males are the complete, and females are the tool via which sexual pleasure is reached. Lacan, on the other hand, is interested in the notion of the "I" more than anything else. His mirror stage theory shows that the image in the mirror is a mere reflection and illusion. In Cinema, the mirror becomes the screen. Just like constructing one's self-image through the mirror, s/he can construct the same illusive image through the screen.

In cinema, sexual pleasure is looked at from two angles; the function of sexual instinct, and the function of ego libido. Both their aims are driven heavily by an indifference to perceptual reality that affects the subject's perception of the world (Mulvey, 1975). The only slight difference they have is that the first is an innate feeling that any normal human being carries towards the body as an object. The second is much attached with the idea of the self-idealized ego; that is the image in the screen is the ideal that erotizes the other (male) to create a sexual desire.

1.2. Subordinate Women, Powerful Men

Mulvey centralizes the notion of 'to-be-looked-at-ness'. On the one hand, women bodies are meant for erotic spectacles. These spectacles might not succeed if they are out of very seductive scenes. It signifies simply male desire. Women can be treated as another thing rather than a sexual object. Therefore, it can be noticed that the thematic importance of women in films is not counted. It is a complementary element of the heroine character of male in old cinema and females themselves as heroine characters, but with sexual provokes only (Mulvey, 1975). Hence, what can be concluded is that females' presence in films is designed for two objectives: the satisfaction of the hero as well as of the audience. As Budd Boetticher has put it: "What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance" (cited in Mulvey, 1975, p.20).

On the other hand, male figure cannot be objectified, as the spectator is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist self. Clamoring the male does not make him the erotic object, but rather that perfect, complete ego constituting a narcissism that is conceived in the initial reflective recognition. The hero is a bearer of the look and a controller of the film fantasy. The spectator (male) falls in the illusion of the screen that creates the

action which gives him a sense of omnipotence (Mulvey, 1975).

Laura Mulvey study is significant in that it focuses on the notion of the look as a social phenomenon that really influences film industry. In cinema, the look is a big concept or a heavy notion that can be noticed through various movies. Consequently, the place of the look defines cinema, the possibility of varying it and exposing it. As mentioned previously, men are active while women are passive. Therefore, cinema builds the way women are to be looked at. Finally, three types of looks can be associated with cinema: the look of camera as a recording device, the look of the audience that watches the final product, and the look of characters with each other.

2. Subalternity

The term 'subaltern' has been debatable for many years. Due to the complexity of the concept, it is not easily and effectively defined. Therefore, a start from the origins of term 'subaltern' is significant in this vein. The word 'subaltern', deriving from Latin '*subalternus*', from *sub-*, under, and *alternus*, every other one, refers to "groups of people occupying a subordinate position in a social hierarchy" (Mikula, 2008, p.192). According to Gayatri Spivak (1988), subalternity is associated with those oppressed subjects and inferior positions basing her argument on a Marxist subjective sense in opposition with the French poststructuralist theorists Micheal Foucault and Gilles Deleuze's text 'Intellectuals and power'.

What Spivak (1988) tries to uncover in the first place is that to analyse her text, researchers should not fall into the problem of 'equivocation', which is the construction of arguments wherein one term is used whereas this term has two senses. She is in the first stage telling the scholars, linguists, and philosophers not to fall in the problem of generalization and be far more rigorous in the meaning behind the terms that are used. Hence, Spivak's claim is to avoid this problem of equivocation. Unlike Deleuze and Foucault who claim that the subaltern can speak Spivak answers in the negative sense; that is the subaltern cannot speak for him/herself as he/she cannot invoke a unified voice (Barker, 2004). The subaltern has no history because he /she are oppressed by the hegemonic power or discourse. According to Spivak (1988), women are subalterns and cannot speak for themselves as they are oppressed by their society which is based on a patriarchal discourse. Such society reduces women's roles only to sex and secondary roles. In this respect, De Beauvoir (1988) states:

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being... She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees: thus she is called „the sex“, by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex-- absolute sex, no

less.... He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the “Other” (p. 16).

This statement shows the great difference society puts between men and women. Women are regarded as only having a sexual role; that is fulfilling men's desires. They dependent on men in all aspects of life; they are subordinate in their way of thinking. Women's only function, De Beauvoir argues, is sex. Thus, they are seen as an "Other" who is totally different from men.

Spivak's question Can the Subaltern Speak? has been controversial for many scholars. Spivak argues that there is a huge difference between the words "speak" and "talk" (Gayatri Spivak's, n.d.).The speaking process involves at least one listener, and it involves a face to face interpersonal communication in which body language such as gestures makes communication easier and effective (Gayatri Spivak's, n.d.).The process of talking, however, seems to be passive and deemed to be an intrapersonal communication in which one can speak only with himself/herself, the gesture of whom are not heard by others (Gayatri Spivak's, n.d.).Thus, what makes such intrapersonal communication fail is the fact that a person who is talking is not heard by the listener. Subalterns cannot speak because they are not recognized by the listener who is not ready to listen to them; subalterns cannot speak because the social, economic and cultural factors hinder them from making speaking process achieved. Therefore, women, as subalterns, are in a position that captivates them from speaking to others (Gayatri Spivak's, n.d.). As argued by McLeod, "the subaltern cannot speak because their words cannot be properly interpreted. Hence, the silence of the female as subaltern is the result of a failure of interpretation and not a failure of articulation (cited in (Gayatri Spivak's, n.d.).

3. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

The present subsection deals with the concept of ideology from a Marxist perspective as one of the conceptual frameworks of the study. It focuses on Louis Althusser's concept of ideology and State Apparatuses. It explains the kind of State Apparatuses exist and how ideology functions within such apparatuses.

The term 'ideology' has been debatable for a lot of scholars and political thinkers. Ideology stands for different meanings. It refers to 'a set of beliefs of a social group or individual as it may also refer to a biased worldwide that does not correspond to reality, or one that is motivated by hidden agenda' (Mikula, 2008, p. 95). Based on the two definitions provided about ideology, it is noticeable that there are usually ideas or hidden intentions behind a group or an individual. Put in Marxist terms, ideology is rooted in the exploitative system of economic and social relations of capitalism over proletarian class (Barker, 2004). According to Marx, any society is ruled by the ideas of the ruling class

and its interests to maintain the dominance of capitalism (Barker, 2004).

- **Althusser's Conception of Ideology**

Ideology is a complex term to be explained. However, the following is an explanation of Althusser's concept of ideology and ideological state apparatuses. Althusser (1970) distinguishes between two types of State apparatuses (SA): Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). RSA consists of the Government, the Court, the Army, the Police, and the Administration and its main function is violence whereas ISA includes family, schools, religion, culture, sports, education, political parties and media, and its main function is ideology (Althusser, 1970). Moreover, Althusser (1970) does not only make distinction between the two SAs but he goes further to say that both of them function by both repression and ideology. He argues that the Repressive State Apparatus and ideological State Apparatus function repressively and ideological. In this vein, Althusser says

(Repressive) State Apparatus function massively and predominantly by *repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology... In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression (Althusser, 1970, p. 19).

What Althusser makes emphasis on is the idea of 'double functioning' of such SAs. Put differently, the State uses both apparatuses in order to control individuals and subordinate classes either by repressing them by violence or dominating them by ideology. Moreover, Althusser (1970) argues that individuals get categorized or interpellated from the beginning of their birth; they start learning different ways of life from already-existing institutions (Ideological State Apparatuses) such as schools, religious institutions, communications including television, news, radio, etc. School is an ideological institution where children learn from day one different ways to read, listen and write (Althusser, 1970). From the moment they start their studies, children start learning different ways of reading and writings skills in addition to techniques and knowledge that enable them to have different jobs (Althusser, 1970). Besides, these children learn some rules of behaviour and morality that enable them to respect the jobs they have (Althusser, 1970). Therefore, it is here that ideology comes to existence.

These ISAs teach these children "know-how" but in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology*' (Althusser, 1970, p. 7). This means that such institutional ruling classes hold a power with which they control and practice hegemony over individuals.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims at presenting the methodology which is adopted for the sake of analysing and comparing the social and political issues in Moroccan cinema. Accordingly, two films were chosen to be compared. One of these films was shot in 1970, and the other was shot in 2007. These films are *Wechma* (Traces, 1970) directed by Hamid Bennani, *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007) by Farida Bourquia. These films were chosen on the basis of their importance and relevance to the study. Besides, depending on these cases to analyse the socio-political issues in Moroccan cinema did not come at random. Rather it was because of the fact that these films were full of signs and themes and significance to come up with answers to the research questions.

In the light of what has been mentioned above, the present study reveals the purpose of the study and research questions. Moreover, it attempts to present the research population upon which the inquiry is conducted. Besides, this chapter presents the research instruments which are discussed in details to show their compatibility with the major purposes of the whole research. Also, the study aims at presenting the procedures and data analyses which have been used to answer the goals of the research.

1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to make a comparison between Moroccan films made in the seventies and present-day films especially from 2000 onwards to scrutinize the socio-political issues addressed in such films. The focus on these social and political themes is due to the scarcity of studies about comparisons between seventies films and recent films. It is also due to the recurrently made remark that they have become the dominant subjects in Moroccan society since the last twenty years. Hence, the major purpose is to analyse the films from a feminist and Marxist perspectives. Therefore, the first goal in comparing the films is to scrutinize women's status and presence and see how they are represented in Moroccan cinema in modern and contemporary films. The second objective, moreover, is to reveal the hidden hegemonic discourse in the films under investigation.

2. Research Questions

In view of what has been discussed concerning the major aims of the present study, the latter attempts to answer two central questions. The first question is how are women represented in *Wechma* (1970) and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007). The second research question is formed as follows: what are the filmmakers' ideological intentions in the films? More precisely, the first question seeks to demonstrate whether women are well or ill-treated in films. The second question is concerned with exploring the hidden hegemonic discourse(s) and intentions addressed in the films.

3. Research Design

A qualitative research methodology was employed in the present study in order to explore and understand the socio-political issues in Moroccan cinema. This is justified by Strauss and Corbin (1998) when they argue that “Qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods” (p.11 cited in Creswell, 2012, p.45). Throughout the study, a qualitative approach is conducted to compare films which were made in the seventies to those recently made. Moreover, the choice of conducting a qualitative method instead of a mixed methodology or a quantitative method did not come randomly. Rather it was, first, because the study was thematic in its nature and not technical or aesthetic. Second, this subject demanded the analysis and comparison of social-political issues in the case studies.

In addition, a case study strategy is used in the present study. The researcher might be criticised for his choice of case study as it is claimed by some critics and methodologists that sometimes the use of case study as a strategy result in massive, unreadable documents and reports only the researcher’s conclusions. The latter may fall into the problem of bias and provide inconsistent results (Miles, 1979). However, the use of such strategy is due to the idea that the nature of objectives of the research required the use of case study research because it provides an understanding and exploration of the themes and issues that have been discussed in the research.

4. Population and Sampling Techniques

The following subsection of the methodology presents the population and sampling techniques that are chosen in this research based on the objectives and questions of the research.

4.1. Population

Defining a population of certain research is determined by the research objectives. It is helpful in deciding upon an appropriate sampling strategy and signals how broadly the findings can be extrapolated (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005). Therefore, the population of this research paper is defined by the goals of the study which are the exploration and analysis of social issues and ideological intentions related to the representation(s) of women in Moroccan classical and contemporary films basing the analysis on feminist and Marxist approaches. The population under investigation is limited also in the periods of time. In this respect, the population consisted of films that are made in the seventies (1970s) and those made in the two thousand (2000s), all of them discussed the issues of women as well as political ideological intentions behind them. The choice of these specified periods of time can be justified by the fact of their convenience and appropriateness to the research questions.

4.2. Sampling Techniques

In order to make a comparative study of female representations in Moroccan films, the researcher focuses on analysing and comparing two films, one of which is made in the seventies. In so doing, purposive sampling is relied on to choose films that are suitable to the research questions. Answering the research questions of the social issues necessitates the analysis and comparison of two films namely *Wechma* (Traces, 1970) directed by Hamid Bennani, and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007) by Farida Bourquia. The comparison of these films in so far as the situation of women is concerned provides an idea about whether cinema really represents ‘Moroccan reality’ or not. It also signifies whether the situation of women has changed towards a positive image or not.

5. Research Instrument

This study is qualitatively approached through the researcher himself as the major data collection instrument. Since the study is case study research that needs an in-depth examination and intensive description of themes and signs in the films under discussion, the researcher himself is the main data instrument. The reason behind choosing the researcher himself to be the major instrument is his knowledge about the research questions. In this respect, Kasper declares that “it is generally accepted that methods need to be chosen so that they optimally answer the research questions” (cited in Spencer, 2008, p. 280). Another reason behind the choice of the research instrument is the fact that the films under study needs an in-depth exploration and description of themes and signs, and hence the duty of the researcher is to describe, code, and analyse each scene that was suitable for answering the research questions.

6. Data Collection Procedures

The data used in the present research is collected from the films as the primary sources of information. The data is also collected from books and articles which are gathered from Rabat’s ‘Al Alfia Talita’ library as well as reliable websites from which articles and books are downloaded. The process of data collection has taken place during 3 months in Meknes, Rabat, and Al Hoceima.

In order to decide upon the case studies that would be under study, a first visit is paid to Rabat where the researcher arranged a meeting with Rabie El Jawhari, a Moroccan filmmaker. This first meeting takes place in a restaurant during half an hour, a period of time in which the researcher explains to the filmmaker his research project and ask him some questions concerning the suitable films for the research project. The second meeting with the filmmaker takes place in a café for two hours. During this period, El Jawhari explains and provides clarifications about the two films that would be under discussion.

The collection of data from the two films needs initially a familiarization with the story, actors and

actresses. Then a description of the story is made. Finally, a focus on themes is made to describe similarities and differences between themes and compare them. These themes are formulated via a coding process made during the observation phase of the films. Throughout several times of watching the films, the researcher generates thirty-nine codes in the beginning. Then, after comparing the codes with each other, the list is reduced to be twenty-six codes. Based on similarities found between each set of codes, themes are formulated and then defined before the process of analysis.

7. Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher relies on content analysis as the main data analysis instrument. As argued by Rosengren (1981), content analysis is a method through which the researcher formulates and interprets the data into 'strict textual analyses' (cited in Shannon and Hsieh, 2005). Indeed, the term content analysis suggests the study of the content of something. Moreover, there are different approaches from which content analysis can be conducted. In this vein, Webber (1990) clarifies that the researcher's choice of content analysis approach depends heavily on the theoretical framework and the problem the researcher wants to investigate (cited in Shannon and Hsieh, 2005).

Generally, qualitative approaches seek to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of the researcher (Vaismoradi, 2013). Therefore, and in order to analyse the films, qualitative CA is used to analyse latent notions and themes. This is helpful in depicting the frequencies of events, the sequences of scenes, and repetition of certain characteristics which in turn are helpful in scrutinizing the issues in the films as well as doing comparisons between them (Berelson, 1952). A strength of such method lies in its emphasis on the systematic coding, counting and analysis of content (Berelson, 1952). Therefore, the use of this method was convenient to the current research project.

Since the study was approached qualitatively, the data collected from the films was qualitatively analysed. To phrase it differently, the analysis of each film requires a pause at each scene that is convenient to answer the research questions, and analyse it according to certain categories that are settled by the researcher. More precisely, initially, the two films namely *Wechma* (Traces 1970) directed by Hamid Bennani and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007) by Farida Bourquia, discussing the representation(s) of women are thematically scrutinized; a precise and detailed analysis of the themes and issues related to women's representation(s) have been made. Then, a comparison between the two films is conducted to see the major differences and whether changes are realized or not.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following section is a detailed presentation of the data analysis and discussion processes. Since qualitative research is 'interpretive research' in which the researcher makes a personal assessment to describe the themes that capture the major categories of information (Creswell, 2012), the present study seeks to analyse and interpret the data collected through the films. The enquiry is a comparative analysis of the films that focuses on exploring the themes embedded in the films. The process of analysis and interpretation consists of passing through three main stages namely the description of codes, the coding process as well as the reporting of the data. Making connections between codes and themes is then made to make a comparative analysis and discussion of the films.

1. Description of Codes

This section is devoted to explain the codes, define them, as well as give examples for each code. As cited in Pascoe (2012), Neuman (2003) suggests five steps that guide the researcher in developing the codes for analysis. Initially, each code is labelled. Then is defined. Third, each code's particular characteristic is described or given a 'flag'. Fourth, a description of each code is used to identify the code through the data. Last, an example is given from each code in order to identify what kind of data is needed for each code.

Label: Emotion

Definition: Emotions refer to any kind of feelings that are expressed through verbal or non-verbal expressions. It describes the actual situation of the characters in the films.

Flag: All the scenes that include emotions are taken into account and recorded. If the character expresses certain kind of feelings, they are jotted down.

Example: In a scene from *Wechma* (1970) one can notice the feelings of fear of mother *Lkamla* towards her son *Masseaoud* when he is beaten by his father. Examples of emotions are expressed in *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007) when *Amina* hugs *Rahma* after the latter finds out her son is still alive.

Label: Physical appearance

Definition: Physical appearance focuses on any scene that contains body appearances such as skin, hair, clothes and so forth.

Flag: The scenes including the presence of body appearances of the characters are noted. This contains a focus on face, skin, hair, hands, and legs.

Example: In *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007), many scenes focus on *Amina*'s body, one of the main protagonists of the film. Sometimes the camera focuses attention on *Amina*'s face, hair style, or her way of clothing, or way of walking.

Label: Social artefacts such as clothes, transportation, communication devices

Definition: Any particular characteristic that helps identifying the character. For example, a character rides a horse or drives a car; uses a cell phone; carries a weapon or any tool that is used at home is helpful in understanding the themes.

Flag: All the scenes in which characters use the aforementioned tools are recorded and noted down.

Example: In a scene in *Deux Femmes sur la Route*, *Amina* is depicted as independent women driving a car, smoking, and wearing jeans.

Label: Dialogue

Definition: Any interactions between characters and their verbal utterances. These utterances are helpful to indicate the kind of relationships between the main characters.

Flag: All scenes containing dialogue between the main characters are stopped at and noted. Examples of such dialogue include utterances between husband and wife, friends with each other, mothers with their sons, or women with each other.

Example: Conversations between actors and actresses in the films are significant in that they show how each character is related and connected to another. *Amina* in *Deux Femmes sur la Route*, for example, is depicted in many scenes talking with *Rahma*, the taxi driver, or her family. Such instances are significant in determining the way(s) *Amina* is represented in the film.

2. The Coding Process

This stage of qualitative content analysis deals with the coding process. The researcher uses open coding process because each film consists of a lot of data and its management is necessary. According to Neuman (2003, cited in Pascoe, 2012) open coding is used to condense the data into more manageable pieces by identifying and labelling the initial set of codes to be used. In this vein, description of codes is given in the following table, and each set of codes construct a given theme which is deployed during the analysis process.

Table (1): Description of codes

CODE	THEME
“Sexuality”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gazing at women Men looking at a picture containing naked women Utterance of erotic words Sexual affair with women

“Work”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing food Mother taking care of her son Women washing clothes <i>Shikhat</i> Women’s appearance at home only Chaibia selling cigarettes Rahma selling Blankets
“Women’s presence”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lkamla as the main protagonist Women having secondary roles Lack of conversations with characters
“Emancipation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Amina</i> is driving a car <i>Amina</i> is smoking cigarettes Casual clothes Modern hair style Women’s appearance in the souk Having breakfast in a café Staying in a hotel Waiting alone in the train station at midnight
“Fear”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women are crying Women’s tenderness Fear at being stolen Rahma’s search for son in the morgue

3. Data Description

The following section deals with the description of data. This section reports the data and themes needed in the analysis.

3.1. Sexuality

Sexuality is a theme that is formulated through the coding process during watching the films under investigation. What is meant by this theme is that women are sexually represented in the films. They are looked at as erotic objects and sexually objectified by the gaze of men (Mulvey, 1975). The theme of sexuality seems to have bearing in *Wechma*(1970). Women are looked at as erotic objects, and sexually objectified by the gaze of men. The first scene (minute 41’) depicts a conversation between Si Lharti (Lfqih of the tribe) and

Lkamla (Masseoud’s mother). The conversation’s main subject between the two characters is about Lkamla’s husband sickness; however, when Lkamla goes inside to bring some money for Si Lharti, the latter looks erotically at her body. The second scene describes such sexuality is demonstrated in minute 72’ when Masseoud’s friends are looking at a picture containing a naked woman and uttering some erotic words. The same thing can be said when Masseoud and his friends gaze erotically at the *shikhat*’s bodies in minute 75’. Figure (1) illustrates this act:



Figure (1): Demonstration of men’s gaze in *Wechma* (1970)

Another instance is illustrated in minute 79’ and 80’ when Masseoud and his friends try to have a sexual intercourse with a woman from the tribe who is wearing erotic clothes.

In addition, *Deux Femmes sur La Route* (2007) also demonstrates such theme of men’s gaze. At midnight, in a completely isolated empty train station, Amina, who is wearing tight blue jeans and a black T-shirt, and Rahma are waiting the train heading to Tetouan; they are surprisingly stopped by two thieves trying to steal their money and abuse them sexually (minute 39’). Another scene depicting men’s gaze is demonstrated in minute 71’ in the elevator in a conversation between Amina and Adbelsalam (the taxi driver) as shown in Figure (2):



Figure (2): Men’s gaze at women in *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007)

3.2. Work

Work is another theme generated from the process of watching the films and coding. This theme is

associated with the presence of women in films and their positions in society. In other words, the goal behind this theme is to see to what extent women have access to work. Besides, if these women are working, then what kind of work they have, and how they are treated at work. As described above the work of women is associated with women’s access to work and the way they treated at their work. As illustrated in figure (3) in *Wechma* (1970), for instance, Lkamla is depicted as a housewife whose only mission is to prepare food for the husband, raise her child and do housework.



Figure (3): Demonstration of women’s work

Some other women, moreover, are described as *Shikhat* in that their job is to amuse men by their dance (minute 75’). The same thing can be said about Amina’s friend, living in Chefchaouen, who is depicted as doing the housework. Rahma, the middle-aged women, also is described selling blankets in the market trying to earn money for living as she is abandoned by her husband and son. These scenes in this film indicate that most women do not have work outside instead they work inside their home.

3.3. Women’s presence

This theme has a direct relation with the rate of actresses in the films under study. The purpose behind using such theme is to see the number of women acting in the films in order to depict its influence on the representation(s) of women in the films. In *Wechma* (1970), it is noticed that the number of actresses is fewer compared to that of actors. In other words, only eleven actresses, one of them plays a central role whereas ten others have secondary roles in that they appear once in the film depending on the subject of the scene. Even though playing a central role in the film, Lkamla appears as a housewife; she does not have the right to interfere in her husband’s education to her son. Besides, there is no reference to any scene in which Lkamla makes a conversation with her husband. The other remaining actresses rarely appear in the film. There is no sign or scene in which they are described making conversations with each other or the other characters.

In *Deux Femmes sur La Route* (2007), the situation is slightly different. The presence of women seems to be obvious. Beginning with Amina and Rahma, the two protagonists of the films, appear in most of the scenes, if not all of them. Moreover, one can notice the

appearance of other actresses playing secondary roles such as Amina's friend, Amina's mother as well as other actresses who appear in the bus while driving to Tetouan. Consequently, this few numbers of actresses in the films indicates a lack of women's presence in the films under study.

3.4. Emancipation

To emancipate someone, according to Oxford English dictionary, is to set him/her free, especially from legal, social or political restrictions. Based on such definition, the freedom of people is conditioned by their society's restrictions. Women are not excluded from this definition; that is emancipating women is associated with freeing them from legal, social, or political restriction. In *Wechma* (1970), emancipation is not present. Whenever women are portrayed in the film, they are pictured at home doing house work. Lkamla is always depicted at home preparing food for family and taking care of her son. Being a woman means she is restricted to her house and depends on her family not on herself as an independent individual. Women are also pictured as objects for pleasure. It is clear in *Wechma* that the picture of women men have in their minds is restricted by the social norms society has created. However, the case is deemed to be different in *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007) and emancipation is apparent. Amina, as demonstrated in figure (4) appears in the film as an independent woman relying on herself throughout the whole film. Dressed in a modern and casual way, driving a car, and smoking cigarettes show a total different picture of women compared to *Wechma* (1970).



Figure (4): The main protagonist sitting in a café

3.5. Fear

This theme can be referred to as any psychological emotion causing instability to the individual because of danger, harm, or pain. Illustrations of fear may include a fear of revealing secrets, fear of the future, fear of losing family, or job. In *Wechma*, Lkamla is afraid that her husband would cause harm to the child; hence she tells her son that she would lie if he asks about him. Additionally, this theme is also apparent in *Deux Femmes sur la Route*. Rahma, one of the main protagonists, is demonstrative in that her fear of losing her son is clear throughout the whole movie. Rahma is afraid of finding her son dead after having clandestinely immigrated. Therefore, she tries to convince herself that

he is 'somewhere in Europe' until she makes sure that he is not dead after searching in the morgue and discovering that he is not dead.

All the above-mentioned themes are formulated from the coding process through watching and observing the films. Hence, these themes are used in the analysis process. However, before starting the analysis of the films, a synopsis of the film is given to have a general overview.

4. Synopsis of the Films

In this section, attention is given to the summary of the films under investigation. It focuses on the stories of the films, sequences of events as well as the relationship between characters.

4.1. *Wechma* (Traces, 1970)

Wechma is a Moroccan film directed in 1970 by the filmmaker Hamid Benani. The film contains many messages about love, hatred, patriarchal authority of fathers and issues of women. The film starts with Lmekki who is at school waiting to adopt a kid called Masseur and take him to a countryside house where he will live with a mother in-law named El kamla. While at home, Masseur the kid, tries to familiarize himself with the place, the environment and family he is living with. He is surprised by a severe father who asks him to learn some verses from the Quran by heart, and the result is that he is bitten by his father as he does not know what the Quran stands for and what is the benefit of learning it by heart. When his father is out, the kid is welcomed by his mother who in turn tries to cure him and make him forget his pain.

After the death of his father, the younger Masseur finds himself jobless, hanging out with his friends whose only concern is to find their pleasure either by stealing food, playing cars, or going to the bar to enjoy themselves while gazing at *Shikhat* Meanwhile, Masseur's Mother, Lkamla, is married to *Lfqih* of the tribe, Si Lharti, who has always wanted Lkamla as his wife. The film ends up with Masseur for killing the man he works, for stealing his money and fleeing to the Medina.

4.2. *Deux Femmes Sur la Route* (Two Women on the Road, 2007)

Directed by Farida Bourquia, *Deux Femmes sur la Route* contains many messages about love and betrayal. It is about the love of women towards their husbands and the latter's betrayal towards them. The film opens up with Amina, the main protagonist of the film, driving alone on her road to Tetouan to see her husband in prison because of being a drug trafficker. While waiting for her car to be prepared, smoking a cigarette, she meets a middle-aged woman who sells blankets called Rahma. When the middle-aged women see Amina waiting for too long for her car to be fixed, she advises her not to wait as the men in the village are 'dishonest' and asks Amina to spend the night with her. After spending the night with each other, the two women become road friends as Amina is in her way to get her

husband out of prison whereas Rahma is also trying to find her son's body if he is dead after to clandestinely emigrating to Italy.

What is shared between the two women is that they are both betrayed by their husbands. Amina finds out that she marries a man already having a wife. Rahma is betrayed by her husband and marries a younger woman. When they reach Tetouan, Rahma discovers that her son is still alive and is 'somewhere' in Europe whereas Amina, is waiting for her husband outside prison after being released, she is shockingly surprised by her husband with his former wife and children.

5. Comparative data Analysis and Discussion

The following section is the analysis of the films based on the themes and codes discussed above. This section's ultimate goal consists of making a comparative analysis between the films based on the already discussed themes and codes. To explore similarities and differences, a comparative analysis is made between *Wechma* (1970) and *Deux Femmes sur La Route* (2007) to discuss the way(s) women are represented in such films from the theoretical framework perspective. Discussion is then made to answer the two research questions.

5.1. Comparison of *Wechma* (1970) and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007)

Taking the theme of sexuality discussed previously into account, one can notice many scenes from both films in which women are portrayed as sexual objects made for gazing. There are many scenes in *Wechma* (1970) in which women are portrayed as sexual objects or objects to be looked at. Lkamla, Masseoud's mother, is described in some instances from the film as an object of the look either by Si Lharti, Lfqih of the tribe, or her son Massaeoud. Besides, other scenes include gazes of men at women as shown in figure (5)



Figure (5): Example of fetishizing women

Figure (5) is a scene taken from *Wechma* (1970) in minute 78' in which group of men are staring at a women's body and focusing attention on her uncovered leg. This scene shows a scopophilic act from men's part where in they take this woman as an object of sexual stimulation through sight (Mulvey, 1975). This scopophilic act is then an instinct of sexuality in which Masseoud's friends take this woman as an object and actively subject her to a control of gaze. For them, she is an image by which they construct, as Freud states, and

raise their sexual desire. Thus, this sexual instinct is one form of sexual pleasure that Masseoud's friends carry towards the body of this women. Another form of sexual pleasure which can be derived from this figure is associated with the viewer or spectator. As Mulvey (1975) states, this second form is attached to the idea of self-idealized ego. To phrase it differently, this image in the screen is the ideal that eroticises the male spectator to create sexual desire. Consequently, this sexual pleasure is looked at from two angles; the function of sexual instinct and the function of ego libido.

In addition to this sexual pleasure, women in *Wechma*(1970) are also meant for erotic spectacles. This is called the process of 'to-be-looked-at-ness' (Mulvey, 1975). It is associated with male desire. Figure (6) demonstrates this notion of to-be-looked-at-ness.



Figure (6): Illustration of the notion of to-be-looked-at-ness

What is noticed also in the film is that women's thematic importance is not counted. Women do not have important roles in their society. Their only roles are meant for pleasing men and playing secondary roles. A woman does not carry a primary role. What can be concluded is that female character in *Wechma* (1970) has two functions; the satisfaction of the hero and the audience.

In comparison with *Wechma*, *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007) is another film that contains scenes in which women are the centre of attention of men. They are looked at either to make a sexual stimulation or make control of the gaze over them. Amina, one of the main characters, is in some scenes made to be looked at from men's part; the example here is that Abdelsalam, the taxi driver, gazing at Amina. The taxi driver keeps looking at Amina either in the café or the elevator. Moreover, Amina is almost harassed by two thieves in the train station at midnight. Hence, Amina is an object for three looks. The look of the character, Abdelsalam, the look of the spectator, and the look of the camera as a recording device.

As for the theme of work, women in *Wechma* are depicted as housewives depending on their husbands. Lkamla is a housewife dependent on her husband, and her only duty during the film is to raise her child and prepare food for her husband. There is no scene in the film depicting women having work position outside

home. In this case Lkamla can be considered as a subaltern who is oppressed in her society. Lkamla is deemed to be a voiceless woman unable to speak for her rights. Being a housewife means that she occupies a subordinate position in the social system full of traditions and rituals that considers women as having secondary roles in society. Lkamla, in this case, is represented as a woman who cannot speak about her rights either inside or outside home. Consequently, as Spivak has argued, Lkamla is represented as a woman oppressed from her society. While in *Deux Femmes sur la Route*, women are depicted as housewives (Amina's friend), sellers (Rahma), and independent (Amina). Amina is described and seen as independent through the whole film in that she does not depend on her family to get money for living. Additionally, Amina seems to be sure of her decision of looking for money to get her husband out of prison. Hence, she is represented as independent woman emancipated from the social restrictions of her society.

As far as women's presence is concerned, one can notice the difference between Bennani and Bourquia's films. Women in Bennani's film are rarely presented or given main roles. Throughout the whole film, Lkamla remains only as one main protagonist but not given a secondary role whereas the rest of women depicted in *Wechma* are not given even secondary roles. However, in Bourquia's film the focus is on two women playing major roles and being the main protagonists of the film. Compared to *Wechma*, women are present in *Deux Femmes sur la Route* seems. Women are apparently present in the film either playing major roles or secondary roles.

Comparing the two films in so far as the theme of fear is concerned, it can be noticed that fear is a common theme in both films. Fear is always associated with women in both films. In *Wechma* (1970), Lkamla shows fear towards her son; she is always scared of her husband that he would beat her son. She is also worried something would happen to her son. In *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007), the two main protagonists, Amina and Rahma, are depicted in many scenes in the film as being afraid. Rahma is afraid of discovering her son's death whereas Amina is scared of being stolen or of losing her husband. Therefore, Fear is attached to women more than men.

Additionally, the comparison of the two films in so far as the theme of emancipation is concerned reveals differences and similarities. In *Wechma* (1970) emancipated women seem to have no bearing. Lkamla, though being one of the main protagonists, is represented as dependent on her family mainly her husband. She is not emancipated from society's restrictions. However, the case in *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007) is somehow different. The two main protagonists present totally two different women. Throughout the film, Amina is described as an independent women relying on herself. Speaking with confidence, dressed casually, and

smoking cigarettes, Traveling alone as well as driving a car are features demonstrating that this woman is free from the restrictions of her society. She is also depicted as unhappy with her family situation. To be blessed from society, Amina has to be under the authority of her family either her mother or her two brothers. Hence, she refuses such situation and chooses to be dependent on herself. However, the film does reveal a totally clear emancipation of women. Even though selling blankets at the *souk* and depending on herself, Rahma, the middle-aged woman, seems to be restricted by the social norms her society has created.

5.2. Discussion

In this section, the aim is to discuss the results found after the comparison of the two films. The ultimate goal of this section is to answer the research questions as well as research problem.

The first question of this research is to scrutinise the representation (s) of women in Moroccan cinema, mainly in the two films under investigation. The comparison and thematic analysis of *Wechma* (1970) and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007) have revealed different findings. In *Wechma*, women are represented as dependent, weak, and reduced to being objects of pleasure for men. Women are not treated in a good manner that would allow them to gain status in their society. Hence, this film is reductionist in its discourse about women in the sense that women in the film are associated with fear, sexuality, house, and represented as objects for pleasure either for characters in the film, the camera recorder, or spectator.

Deux Femmes sur la Route, on the other hand, represents women to some extent in a different way. Women apparently have a kind of freedom in so far as some life aspects are concerned. They are depicted relying on themselves and having access to jobs. On the one hand, the film represents women as independent and emancipated from the social norms of their societies, and this is manifested in Amina's character, one of the main protagonists. On the other hand, the film still does not introduce total independent women, and still represents them as voiceless. This is demonstrated in Rahma's character who is introduced from the very beginning of the film as mind restricted to the social norms of her society. It is also manifested in Amina's mother who seems to be under the authority of her sons. Therefore, this film does not clearly represent women as being emancipated from the restrictions of their societies.

The second question of this research deals with the political perspective presented in the films. The research question seeks to reveal the hegemonic hidden discourse as well as ideology disseminated in the films.

The observation process and the analysis of the films demonstrate hidden hegemonic discourse. It is that of patriarchal hegemony. Women are portrayed as dependent on their husbands. It is apparent that women are still under male domination. This is clear in *Wechma* (1970) in which all women described in the film live

under the supervision of a patriarchal hegemonic discourse which limits their roles and deprives them from the least of their rights. In such a case, women are subalterns who cannot speak, oppressed and unrecognized from the hegemonic system which is based on male domination. Being housewives, whose mission are only to take care of their family indicates that these women occupy subordinate positions in a social hierarchy based on male domination.

Deux Femmes sur la Route (2007), moreover, provides the same discourse of patriarchy in which women are still dominated by men. One cannot deny the fact that the status of women, presented in the film, has improved compared to the seventies. The film is deemed to be a counter discourse against the patriarchal hegemonic discourse through the example of Amina. Nevertheless, women are still represented as subordinate and suffering from a patriarchal hegemony. Although living in a modern era in which the situation has been improved, women are still represented as mind-restricted to the social norms created by their society. What can be concluded from the analysis and discussion of the films is that their discourse is almost still the same in the sense women are still treated in the same ways. One cannot deny that women have achieved great positions and given much more freedom. However, the way (s) women are represented in both, even though belonging to different periods of time, reveals the fact that the discourse of patriarchy is still the same and subalternity is still exercised over women.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research paper was an attempt to scrutinize the representation(s) of women in Moroccan films. Thus, a comparative study was made between Seventies films and recently made films. Through the analysis and comparison of the two films under investigation particularly *Wechma* (1970) by Hamid Bennani and *Deux Femmes sur la Route* (2007) by Farida Bourquia, the researcher has concluded that the situation of women in Moroccan cinema still needs improvements. If the representations of women in screen are associated with fulfilling a secondary role or playing erotic roles in which, they are objects of pleasure for men, then these representations are not enough to be generalized. However, one cannot reject the fact that Moroccan cinema in contemporary times sheds lights on issues that were prohibited and banned in the past. Now, Issues of women hold much interest and have become of central issues that cinema try to represent. Women in the modern film *Wechma* are depicted either as sexual objects or occupying subordinate positions. In *Deux Femmes sur la Route*, the situation is different as there are two contradictory women who represent Moroccan women. On the one hand, the film represents a traditional woman whose main concern is to find out whether her son is still alive. On the other hand, the

film also represents a modern woman who seems to be independent and free from society's restrictions. However, these two women have one thing in common is that they are ill-treated by their society.

1. Limitations

The present research has its own limitations. First, since the inquiry is a case study, the sampling consists of only two films. Accordingly, the findings cannot be generalized to include other films. Thus, it is recommended for future researchers to include other films. Second, the researcher could not find original copies of the films. Instead, he relied on copies downloaded from websites. Last, given the nature of the objectives of the study and due to time constraints, this inquiry was only qualitatively approached. Thus, a mixed method may add value to the research.

2. Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

Cinema has become one of the essential institutions that addresses and touches upon issues concerning society be they social, economic, cultural or political issues. Moroccan cinema, hence, is one of those institutions whose major mission is to depict 'Moroccan reality'. As for the representations of women in Moroccan cinema, what the researcher suggests is that instead of focusing attention on the negative side of the picture, there are other alternatives with which the women can be represented. To increase the level of awareness towards Moroccan audience, Moroccan filmmakers may focus attention on the educative role women play. In other words, women, for example, can be described as having great positions at work. Moreover, they can be depicted as playing a central role in having real conversations with their families including their husband, sons.

Given the fact that film studies are still at its embryonic stage in the Moroccan context, many studies are inevitably needed to gain more insights regarding women's representation (s) in Moroccan cinema in general. Thus, for further research, and in addition to the thematic analysis that has been made in this research, other studies may focus on the aesthetic aspects in the analysis of the films. Attention should be given also to the cinematic techniques used in the films as they play a central role in depicting and exploring certain issues.

REFERENCES

- [1] Althusser, L. (1970). *Ideology and Ideological state apparatuses*. Great Britain: The Thetford Press Ltd
- [2] Barker, C. (2004). *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- [3] Basinger, J. (1993). *A Woman's View: How Hollywood Spoke to Women, 1930-1960*. New England: Wesleyan University Press.

- [4] Bertrand, I., & Hughes, P. (2005). *Media Research Methods: Audiences, Institutions, Texts*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [5] Byerly, C. & Ross, K. (2006). *Women and media: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- [6] Carter, S. (2009). *What Moroccan Cinema? A Historical and Critical Study, 1956–2006*. United Kingdom: Lexington Books
- [7] Creswell, J. (2007). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- [8] Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th Ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- [9] De Beauvoir, S. (1988). *Introduction. The Second Sex*. Parshley, H.M. (Ed). London: Picador
- [10] Dijk, T. & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.
- [11] Dutt, R. (2014). Behind the Curtain: Women’s Representations in Contemporary Hollywood. *Media@LSE, London School of Economics and Political Science*
- [12] Elaissy, H. (2015). The Rise of Feminist Consciousness in Morocco during the Lead years. *International Journal of Education and Research*. (Vol 3). ISSN: 2201-6333 (Print) ISSN: 2201-6740 (Online)
- [13] Foucault, M. (1972-1977). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings*. (Gordon, C. Ed.). (Gordon, C., Marshall, L., Mepham, J., Soper, K, Trans). USA: The Harvester Press.
- [14] Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications.
- [15] Hassane, O. (2013). The Image of Moroccan Women in Josef Von Sternberg’s Morocco (1930). *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*. (Vol 1)
- [16] Hsieh, H & Shannon, S. E (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*. doi: 10.1177/1049732305276687
- [17] Krippendorff, K. (1984). Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*. (Vol. 79)
- [18] Lacan, J. (1949). The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience. Sheridan, A. (Trans)
- [19] Mercer, J. (1953). Two Basic Functions of Cinema. *Journal of the University Film Producers*. Vol.5, N.3.
- [20] Mikula, M. (2008). *Key Concepts in Cultural Studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [21] Mulvey, L. (1989). *Visual and Other Pleasures*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- [22] Nelson, C., & Grossberge, L. (Eds.). (1988). Can The Subaltern Speak? *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Macmillan
- [23] Orlando, V. (2011). *Screening Morocco: Contemporary Film in a Changing Society*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- [24] Pascoe, G. J. (2012). *A Qualitative Textual and Comparative Analysis of the Representation of Masculinity in the Action and Romantic Comedy Genres*. (Master’s thesis).
- [25] Pole, C. J. (Ed.). (2004). *Seeing Is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research* (1st Ed). (vol.7). London: Elsevier Ltd.
- [26] Schutz, W. (1958). On Categorizing Qualitative Data in Content Analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 22(4), 503. doi: 10.1086/266824
- [27] Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). *Culturally Speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*. (2nd Ed). British Library Cataloguing-in- Publication.
- [28] Vaismoradi, M. (2013). Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for Conducting a Qualitative Descriptive Study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*. Wiley Publishing Asia Pty Ltd. doi: 10.1111/nhs.12048