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# ***Under Construction: The Female Gaze in Women Director's Film***

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## **ABSTRACT**

Film or cinema is known as a powerful medium of communication across the world. As a result, the discussion of gender issues related to men and women in films has come up in various studies. The construction of women in the language of men in a patriarchal society results in women being seen in commercial films as neglected, omnipotent, male-dominated entities; Commodification of women is also noticeable in most cases. Because of this, it is not easy to find stories that glorify women and embody their power on the film screen. Several women filmmakers are working in the film world of Bangladesh. Therefore, it is important to see how the representation of women, women's aspirations, personal freedom, economic freedom and contribution are being highlighted in the films of domestic women producers. To find the self-identity of female characters, it is necessary to research the female gaze in films by women filmmakers. In this study the film *Under Construction* directed by Rubaiyat Hossain has been selected through purposive sampling using qualitative research method. Then the data obtained through the method of representation. This study shows that women have been searching for their identity in society for ages. The matter is still in process, women also want to stand tall as human beings but women are not able to come out easily from the enclosure of patriarchy. Modern day women are being stifled by tactics and cannot move forward without male support. Along with this, the trend of hindering the advancement of women by being a woman has also been observed. Women's struggle for economic independence and personal freedom continues under the control of men.

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Key words: female gaze, woman director, gender, film, under construction

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Films have become commercialized worldwide. Because of this, women are often presented attractively and charmingly. It rarely matches reality. Chaki (1999) claims that women in so-called commercial films are portrayed as helpless, deprived, man-driven beings. Because in a patriarchal society, men define women in their language, and society defines both men and women. So trying to make women strong on screen is like a tough test.

A director is the most important person behind film production. According to Oscar-winning Spanish cinematographer Almendros (cited in Schaeffer, 1985: 57), the director is the driving force of a film. Again, the Italian filmmaker Antonioni (cited in Patri, 2016: 12) said, as a human being, a director has ideas, as an artist also has some imagination. Every day something new is created from what he sees. When a creator works from the pursuit of art; history emerges and society and people's lives become involved in it, the experience motivates him or her to present the 'truth' to people (Islam, 2016).

Discussing the contribution of women filmmakers, White (White, 1990) notes that Alice Guy-Blash made the first fiction film in 1896. Director, screenwriter, and producer Louise Webber made connections between middle-class feminism and the cultural role of film in the early twentieth century (White, 1990). After that, Dorothy Arzner made 17 films until her retirement in 1943. In the first decade of the 20th century, Italian film director Elvira Notari and Nell

31 Shipman made films focusing on the role of women in the public sphere and women's  
32 participation in the political and social spheres, labor, leisure, consumer culture, and  
33 women's contribution to the formation of national identity. Later, several women filmmakers  
34 became known through European art films, French filmmaker Agnes Varda is one of them.  
35 In the Indian subcontinent, women filmmakers such as Mia Nair, Vijay Nirmla, Deepa  
36 Mehta, Aparna Sen have produced women-centric films (Representation of Men and Women  
37 in Mainstream Bengali Films by Women Filmmakers, 2011, p. 7). However, Vats said that  
38 India's first female producer was Fatima Begum (Vats, 2013). Apart from this, South Indian  
39 Pallavi Bhanumati Ramakrishna collaborated in the production of over two hundred films;  
40 she is remembered for her bold portrayal of female sexuality and desire (Vats, 2013). In the  
41 90s, the story of women's independence and rights emerged in Mira Nair and Deepa  
42 Mehta's films.  
43 Hayat (2009) in a discussion about the *History of film in Bangladesh* said that no film  
44 industry developed in Dhaka from 1896 to 1956. Later, the release of the first talkies film  
45 Mukh O Mukhosh, Rebecca became the country's first female filmmaker (Sayem, 2021).  
46 After that, Nargis Akhtar, Kohinoor Akhtar Suchanda, Kabri Sarwar, Rubaiyat Hossain and  
47 many others made their debut as filmmakers.  
48 Discussing about the female filmmakers of various time, this study will familiarize the  
49 concept of female gaze in the context of Bangladesh. Film is one of the most important  
50 communication medium. Culture and social practices of a country can be highlighted through  
51 films. So, it is important to understand and feel a woman's emotional state, her strength as a  
52 person and a contributor of a society. For this reason, Rubaiyat Hossain's film (written and  
53 directed) *Under Construction* (2015) was chosen because the story of the film revolves  
54 around women's lives. Here, an attempt has been made to highlight their dreams,  
55 aspirations, struggle for survival in the society. Since there have been several studies on  
56 Male Gaze in films in the context of Bangladeshi film studies, it has become necessary to  
57 discuss female gaze on the contrary based on a woman filmmakers perspective. Thus  
58 research related to this will create opportunities for discussions related to new aspects. Also  
59 subject to understanding the attitudes towards women in a patriarchal society, it may be  
60 possible to bring about positive change in the society by showing women as human beings  
61 rather than as products.

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## 65 **1.1 Objectives and Rationale of the Study**

66 The objective of the study is to look at the representation of women in films, how a woman  
67 sees other women in social practice and what kind of message is being presented in the  
68 portrayal of women.

69 Filmmakers, writers, dramatists, painters, musicians etc. can take the society forward  
70 through their responsible behavior and actions. As such, it is important to see how the  
71 country's female filmmakers are presenting women as film artists and how they are  
72 highlighting women's aspirations, individual freedom, economic independence and  
73 contribution. Therefore, there is a need to discuss the female gaze in the films of  
74 Bangladeshi women filmmakers.

75 Regarding films made by women, May (cited in Mulvey, 2001: 9) says that after the First  
76 World War, Hollywood films presented a new type of woman who wanted to leave the home  
77 and seek employment to live independently. Yet they are presented as sexually attractive in  
78 short stature. An artist has the ability to influence society through his or her creations, so his  
79 or her social responsibility is high (Choudhury, 2015).

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## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

82 Abdolmaleki (2013) said, female gaze is the opposite of male gaze; the term is primarily  
83 used to refer to the elimination of patriarchal power imbalances and the creation of gender  
84 equality in cultural representation. Soloway (cited in Deck, 2019: 11) says that the female  
85 gaze strengthens the emotions and characters of the story in the film. Foster (cited in Deck,  
86 2019: 11) notes that discussions of the female gaze often analyze what is not shown and  
87 what is refused to be shown in the story.

88 There have been several studies on gender sensitivity in Bangladeshi films. Although it  
89 discusses the attitude towards women, male-female relationship, third gender, etc., the  
90 absence of discussion related to female gaze is noticeable. Therefore, the purpose of the  
91 research on the female gaze in the films of Bangladeshi women filmmaker is to determine  
92 their own responses and sensitivity about the economic freedom, individual freedom and  
93 sexuality of women in this film in a patriarchal society. As well as to know how much a  
94 person has been able to make a transition from there in the social system. So, *Under*  
95 *Construction* (2015) film is analyzed and reviewed in the socio-economic context of  
96 Bangladesh and an attempt has been made to look at women through the eyes of women  
97 and bring out the social and psychological issues between men and women..

### 99 1.3 Research Questions

100 In discussing the female gaze in films by women filmmakers, the research is guided by the  
101 following questions:

- 102 1. Does this film represent women's aspirations, personal freedom and economic freedom?
- 103 2. How is the transformation of women in the films of women filmmakers in a patriarchal  
104 society?

### 106 1.4 Literature Review

107 There have been few studies on the representation of women in films by women filmmakers  
108 within and outside the country. Deck (2019) states in his research that women are presented  
109 as sexual objects when films are made from a male point of view, less so when made by a  
110 woman. The story attempts to hold the viewer's attention to the female character's  
111 perspective and the emotions of the story through the female gaze, rather than portraying  
112 women as powerful and male characters as sensual objects.

113 Sarkar (2012) analyzed female-centric Hindi films and showed that the actresses cast in  
114 such commercial films were all known in the industry as 'beautiful and glamorous'. Everyone  
115 falls into white skin and traditional definitions of beauty. Songs, film locations everything is  
116 brilliant. In contrast, art films did not present actresses with traditional beauty, did not have  
117 unnecessary music and tried to show scenes of women's oppression very realistically.

118 In discussing the female gaze in romantic comedies, Cohen (2010) says that in such stories,  
119 emphasis is placed on the heroines' clothes, makeup, hairstyles, and their surroundings. The  
120 naked female body is rarely presented as attractive here.

121 Bhowmik (2009) in his research on the representation of women in women's films has shown  
122 that women are traditionally presented in addition to being presented as products. For  
123 example, mother, wife, secretary etc. Women's identities are formed through men and  
124 female characters are omnipresent.

### 126 1.5 Theoretical Framework:

127 Theoretical frameworks helps to make a roadmap for research arguments. In this study, for  
128 understanding the female gaze requires a discussion of the Austrian psychologist Sigmund  
129 Freud's theory of psychoanalysis.

130 According to Palczewski, DeFrancisco, & McGeough (2019), psychoanalytic theory primarily  
131 deals with how the thoughts and memories of the human subconscious mind influence  
132 human activities, cognitions, and beliefs. Although Sigmund Freud used it as a method of  
133 psychotherapy, it is relevant in discussions of gender and sex identity formation.

134 Freud (cited in Bhattacharya, 2014: 57) stated that, the human mind is divided into three  
135 parts, these are - primitive (Id), ego or reality (Ego) and mastery (Superego). Baran and  
136 Davis (2015) stated that individual's personality and behavior are influenced by these three  
137 states of mind. Primitiveness seeks to fulfill the primordial intentions or desires of the human  
138 mind. The ego reconciles the conflict between the primal or dark part of the mind's immoral  
139 desires and the mastery or conscience. But these desires do not die. They remain in the  
140 unconscious part of the human mind and try to get out of it. The psychic force that works to  
141 bind this repressed desire is what Freud called the 'counter-catathetic force' (Raychoudhury,  
142 2014).

143 From a feminist perspective, gender is not a physical phenomenon, but is formed and  
144 influenced by social processes. Chodorow (1991) states that Freud theorized gender in a  
145 patriarchal society from a patriarchal perspective. Woman is seen as the object and the  
146 subject; in patriarchy, the subject type is seen in such a way that women are presented as  
147 objects and the female subject form does not emerge, according to Chodorow (1991).

148 In view of the above discussion, the conscious and subconscious aspects of women's minds  
149 in the films of women filmmakers have been analyzed through this theory.

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## 151 **2. METHODOLOGY**

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153 This is a qualitative research. The film *Under Construction* (2015) was selected through  
154 purposive sampling. The data was analyzed through representation method. Hall's  
155 representation has three approaches. Among them the constructionist approach is  
156 purposively chosen. Constructionist approach means the individuals in the society create  
157 meaning on their own by language. To represent his or her beliefs, ideas, and feelings to  
158 other people, he or she employ signs and symbols in language. These can be sounds,  
159 written words, technologically generated visuals, musical notes, or even physical items. Like  
160 this language functions as a system of representation. here researchers personally watched  
161 the film. At this time dialogue, decoration, expression, images are seen by them. Then the  
162 data obtained through the method of representation. researchers note down the dialogues  
163 and follow the images. Dialogues analyze or image message decode through researchers  
164 own framework of knowledge according to Hall's reception concept where oppositional  
165 reading decoding position is presented.

166 *Under Construction* is set in an urban backdrop, the film follows the life stories and struggles  
167 of three types of women in the society. It is an offbeat genre film. If a film is made outside of  
168 artistic production and traditional story, it is called off beat film (Nasreen & Haq, 2008).

### 169 **2.1 Representation**

170 According to Jamaican-born Marxist sociologist and cultural theorist Hall (1997),  
171 representation is the meaningful representation of ideas existing in people's minds. As a  
172 result of the connection between language and ideas, ideas about all things in the world  
173 come before people. Just as a person creates meaning about other people or things in front  
174 of him, he also creates meaning about abstract things like God, suffering, love, etc. Ideas  
175 are communicated through written words, sounds and images, called symbols. People of the  
176 same culture and language create and exchange meanings of persons, objects and events  
177 through symbols. It has three approaches – reflective, voluntary and constructive. The  
178 reflective approach is that meaning is embedded in things, people and events in the world.  
179 Voluntary means that the author imposes his own meaning on a person, object or event  
180 through his language. And in the constructivist approach, objects do not provide meaning on  
181 their own, but individuals construct meaning through ideas and symbols and impose that  
182 meaning. According to Fairclough (cited in Gayen, 2013: 57), the representation of the topic  
183 to be analyzed needs to understand what topics are discussed, what topics are not, and  
184 what topics are being represented and what their context is. For this reason, he questions  
185 the construction of familiarity with subjects or events and the manner of their presentation.  
186 When discussing representation, the idea of semiotics comes to the fore. According to Kuller

187 (cited in Hall, 1997: 16), according to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the  
188 production of meaning depends on language. Language is a sign system, that is,  
189 representation is understood in terms of how words in language function as signs.  
190 In this way, in the discussion about female gaze and Bangladeshi women's films, the  
191 concept of the text produced in the film is obtained through the representation.  
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### 193 **3. RESULTS**

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195 The story of the film *Under Construction* (2015) revolves around three female characters.  
196 Theater actor Roya Hasan is the central character of the film, whose life revolves around the  
197 story of her mother and housekeeper Mayna.

198 The protagonist Roya, a 30-year-old Bengali lady who is searching for her own identity in a  
199 culture that tends to put people in boxes. Roya's introspection and the complexities of her  
200 relationships with her husband, mother, maid, theatre director, a friend, and a prominent art  
201 curator are brought out, along with modern Bangladeshi issues like religious fanatics and the  
202 tragedies of Rana Plaza and Tazreen Garment Factory. These parallels with Tagore's  
203 "Rokto Korobi" are drawn (quite directly, as Roya plays a theater actress portraying Nandini  
204 for 12 years) into the Jokkho Puri' that women garment workers work in. The drama, Rokto  
205 Korobi, which was written in 1924 by the renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore, is an attack  
206 on modernism and industrialization. In this film, Roya's reflection and the intricacies of her  
207 relationships—with her husband, mother, maid, theatre director, a friend, and a prominent art  
208 curator are highlighted.

209 The data obtained by analyzing the film,

#### 210 **Dress and Grooming:**

211 The film has seen a variety of costumes depending on the character and environment.  
212 But there was no excess in decoration. For example, when Roya is Sameer's wife, a  
213 housewife of a high-class family, she is wearing sarees, t-shirts, pants, skirts. When  
214 going out, they wear saree, salwar-kameez, fatua. Roya's mother scolds her for  
215 wearing modern clothes. Later she goes to meet her mother dressed in desi clothes.  
216 The colors of his clothes are not very bright, much like Roy's life is pale. Roya is  
217 seen in brightly colored clothes only during chats and intimate moments with Imtiaz.  
218 Roya's presentation in intimate moments is appealing. Roya's mother is modestly  
219 dressed. They came forward in light colored clothes and sometimes in black veils. He  
220 put clothes on her head. Mayna's dress is simple. But this young girl is shown in brightly  
221 colored clothes. Also, she is shown to be quite tidy while staying at Roya's house. Again  
222 after marriage when she stays in the slum, Mayna is seen in dirty light color clothes.

223 The makeup or dress of these three female characters is not shown excessively. However,  
224 the dress of the girl named Mehjaben, proposed as the new Nandini, stands out.

#### 225 **Suppression of Desire:**

226 After the announcement that a new actress will play the role of Nandini, Roya wants the  
227 character Nandini to write and direct the play herself. But she is never heard to say this in  
228 front of Samir or his troupe. Also she does not protest when the director of the troupe,  
229 Russell, talks about the new actor to play Nandini. Roya wants to break the old Nandini that  
230 she is playing and make a new version of Nandini. She wants to do something big in the  
231 theater arena, doesn't want to have children for now - Roya keeps it in her mind without  
232 saying it out loud. Beat yourself up with life.

233 Samir, Roya's husband, busy with work, only fulfills his duties towards his wife, but does not  
234 try to understand Roya's mind. When asked if Roya will leave the theatre, Samir reluctantly  
235 says, Roya can leave if she feels like it. But doesn't encourage Roya for acting on a grand  
236 scale by valuing her emotion. Roya also doesn't express the stories of her affection, love or  
237 loneliness. Roya feels alone in his relationship with Samir - physically and emotionally. One

238 day when he went to his mother's house and lay down on the bed, she imagined Samir next  
239 to him, but the next moment she saw a big snake instead of him. That is, Samir is shown as  
240 poisonous and cunning to Roya. Samir indeed skillfully manages Roya as himself. What  
241 Freud (cited Bhattacharya, 2014: 62) called projective identification? But Roya does not  
242 protest Samir's words. She silently validates Samir's activities. She does not bring forward  
243 the unpleasant truth. Roya's behavior manifests Freud's concept of masochism.

244 She suppresses her desires. Late on the loneliness is alleviated by Imtiaz. One who  
245 understands theatre, with whom she has similar thoughts? As a result, Roya got into a  
246 relationship with Imtiaz while Samir was out of the house, one night. Although it is unethical  
247 according to social norms, Roya's primacy of mind prevails in this case. As Freud (1915)  
248 said in this regard, the instinctive desires of man in the unconscious mind seek only the  
249 means of satisfaction.

250 Again Roya's mother believes that her husband will return one day. She praised his ex-  
251 husband in front of her daughter's husband explained that she could not get out of the  
252 patriarchal mentality. Even though his ex-husband found his happiness, she spent her life  
253 alone. She tied herself in religious values and rituals. Also could not clearly express her  
254 pride and regret towards her children. Thus trying to become a good wife by suffering herself  
255 makes her also masochist.

256 Roya's maid Mayna's priority in life is having a good husband. As a result, she falls in love  
257 with liftman Sobuj, and becomes pregnant before marriage. She doesn't get a dream life like  
258 a movie heroine, but she wants to create her own dream world. So without informing Roya  
259 she gets involved in love affair. But Sabuj doesn't want to keep her near Roya. For this  
260 reason after getting married, she came to the slum with Sabuj. Mayna takes a job in a  
261 garment factory for her child's future. Mayna's character has a comfort zone with Roya. But  
262 thinking about her future, she did not protest against Sobuj's decision, she thinks if Sobuj  
263 divorces her, their children will not be able to survive in society. As a result, Mayna herself  
264 chooses a life of struggle.

265 Meanwhile, Roya doesn't want to leave Mayna, the only companion of her loneliness. To win  
266 back Mayna, Roya presents Mayna with expensive gold jewelry as a wedding gift. But  
267 Mayna does not even dare to keep the jewels close. She lets Roya keep them so that Sobuj  
268 can't take them. According to Haque (2014), while gold was once considered an important  
269 savings for housewives in India, women still consider gold as a savings for emergencies. In  
270 Mayna's case the fact indicates that the Sobuj will break this savings. Mayna therefore takes  
271 precautions. Sarkar (2014) said, lower class people are dependent on upper class. Their  
272 protest against deprivation is driven by fleeting and immediate emotions. But Mayna wants a  
273 better future for the unborn child. That desire keeps her alive, keeps her going.

#### 274 **Economic and Personal Freedom:**

275 Roya's mother is independent in the film. When Roya says that girls have a separate world  
276 apart from marriage, she also reminds Roya that she runs the family on her own earnings,  
277 not waiting for anyone like Roya. Even after studying, Roya is dependent on her husband's  
278 money. As her husband has money, she is able to work in theater comfortably. In fact Roya  
279 has no answer as to why she has not become independent even after all these years. But  
280 her maid voluntarily left the house and tried to be financially independent. At this point, Roya  
281 prepares herself. She started to try to establish her identity as a director and actress.

282 One phase of Roya's life is seen to be controlled by another. Roya tidy up Samir's towel,  
283 pack the bag, cook and feed him. However Samir forces his decision on Roya. He also does  
284 not give any appreciation to Roya's qualities and work. Meanwhile, Samir neither  
285 encourages Roya nor hinders her in any matter. But he seeks physical pleasure from Roya  
286 as per his needs. Samir tells Roya to leave the theater and have a child. When Roya told  
287 that she is not ready to have children, her husband reminds her that Roya is getting older.  
288 Besides after Mayna leaves, Samir asks to hire a cook if Roya doesn't get a chance to cook  
289 due to work pressure, trying to fill in some kind of guilt in Roya.

290 Compared to Roya, her mother gets the opportunity to practice personal freedom. This  
291 woman who has been abandoned by her husband has arranged herself according to her  
292 needs. Roya's maid Mayna has found her love. When Roya wanted to interfere in her life  
293 she protested. Mayna has learned from life that no matter how hard she tries, she cannot be  
294 like Roya. So she has to make her own arrangements. Although her husband Sobuj  
295 demanded that Mayna should follow his word to stay with him. Mayna lives by adapting to  
296 this demand. Thus, by letting go to maid job, she is freed from the dependence on them.

#### 297 **Pleasure of Gaze:**

298 Pleasure of Gaze is observed in a few scenes in *Under Construction*. The introduction of  
299 new actress Mehzabeen as Nandini or the intimate moments between Roya and Imtiaz is  
300 highlighted here. Regarding the gratification of looking at films, Mulvey (quoted in Haq,  
301 trans., 2008) states that film images offer many potential satisfactions, one of which is  
302 scopophilia. Many times the feeling of being watched by someone also creates joy. Freud  
303 associated scopophilia with viewing someone as an object with a controlled and inquisitive  
304 gaze. Films create the illusion of seeing the private lives. At the same time, the repressed  
305 desires of the audience are revealed through the film. The result is that the viewer is  
306 satisfied, but creates scopophilia in a sexual way. They want to understand the human body,  
307 face, structure on the screen, the relationship with the surrounding environment, and the  
308 person's presence outside the screen. The feelings between the image and the image itself  
309 are revealed in the film and the audience enjoys it.

310 In addition, the male applies his fantasy to the female body. As a result, women are  
311 simultaneously seen and displayed. Through scopophilia, the viewer's control and authority  
312 over the women in the screen is established. Despite telling the story of a woman as the  
313 central character, the director is stuck in a patriarchal attitude here. That is why scene where  
314 the Mehzabeen sitting on the seat in the dressing room of the theater is presented as  
315 appealing. When Roya's husband is out of Dhaka, Imtiaz and Roya's intimate moments  
316 show Roya as appealing through her makeup and get up. In this case her appeal becomes  
317 for the male character. Here both men use their desired women as per their needs. Even  
318 though Roya decided to get involved with Imtiaz, she never told Samir about her feelings.  
319 Thus Raya is portrayed as male controlled and mentally weak character. Through this, male  
320 audience control is also established over Roya in this film.

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#### 325 **4. Discussion and Conclusion:**

326 Society is establishing women as weak and controlled objects based on physiological  
327 differences. Also socially influential and privileged individuals may try to disseminate an  
328 ideology through media texts by emphasizing their favored messaging or interpretation.

329 Film critic Laura Mulvey discussed the representation of women in films and the patriarchal  
330 view of women from a feminist perspective through the concept of male gaze. Through this  
331 theory, it can be understood that the current patriarchal social system is mainly based on the  
332 idea that men hold about the society, the people of the society and all their functions. A  
333 woman's beauty is made more significant than her talent or ability. Films are constructed  
334 with male audience in mind or entertainment of male audience. In this regard, Amin (2020)  
335 said, a study conducted by Plan International analyzed the representation of women in 55  
336 films from 20 countries, where it was found that only five percent of women are behind the  
337 camera and the female characters in the film do not have their own identity or recognition.  
338 The tendency to present them as objects in films is noticeable. In order to change this idea,  
339 multi-faceted research was started on the films of women filmmakers. Where the  
340 construction of women from a woman's point of view gains importance.

341 *Under Construction*, directed by a woman, tells the story of a woman trying to become a  
342 'man'. Taking into account the mindset of the general male audience, an attempt has been

343 made to present the female characters in a sophisticated and rational way, in terms of the  
344 character's needs, rather than presenting them in unduly scantily clad or over-dressed ways.  
345 Here we see an attempt to match the concept of women's self-identity with urban  
346 development. Just as the under-construction modern infrastructure builds the modern city,  
347 the courage of women will build the new society - such a message emerges here. However,  
348 in this story of Rubaiyat Hossain's film, the female characters could not completely come out  
349 of patriarchy. Roya's character was theatrics but she was not shown from the lead position.  
350 At first the theater is run according to the wishes of the male team leader, then she tries to  
351 align itself with the wishes of Imtiaz. And in family life, she lives according to the wishes  
352 of his husband. Gurkan (2020) did a research on female directors. He also found out that  
353 while the characters fight for their liberty, the female characters in these movies fail to  
354 achieve their goals. The female characters are held captive by the masculine mindset and  
355 discover their release through relationships with men.

356 The Roya is seen taking a tough decision according to the situation at the very end of the  
357 film. Suppression of desire and ambivalence have been revealed as characteristic features  
358 of women. The conflict between reality and personal desire is seen here. Roya's struggle to  
359 shape his own ideas is quite weak. In addition, a woman's own decision-making power is  
360 also influenced by another woman. Roy's girlfriend goes abroad with her husband for higher  
361 education. After giving birth there, she tries to establish the idea that 'motherhood is the  
362 most important thing in the world'. Application of talent in higher education and workplace  
363 seems less important to him which makes Roy's decision making shakier.

364 The representation of women in the film has been appealing at times. Previous researchers  
365 have discussed about the beautification of women on screen, also seen in the film. Apart  
366 from this, the director did not allow the woman to have the right to give her own opinion in  
367 her family, but showed cases like being dependent on another man outside the family.  
368 According to Freud (cited Bhattacharya, 2014: 57) - analysis shows that women carry the  
369 intention or desire in their mind. But his ego does not allow him to express it. However, the  
370 character Raya develops a relationship with Imtiaz, bypassing morality. But can't get out of  
371 male dominance. Childbearing is presented as a common practice of the society but the  
372 issue of women's ability to take the decision to have children is not strongly presented in the  
373 film.

374 The concept of gender is shaped and influenced by a social process; in that sense, the film  
375 shows that there are men who work outside the home, but women are doing housework as  
376 well as outside work. Roya does theater but manages the housework, Roya's mother  
377 manages the house, Mayna is pregnant while working in a garment factory as well as  
378 housework. Samir or Imtiaz - no male character is involved in housework in this film.  
379 Through this an aspect of patriarchy is established here. Where housework is not for men,  
380 but actually for women.

381 At the same time, the tendency of women to hinder progress by being women has emerged  
382 in this film. Roya's mother also dislikes Roya's theatrical, modern clothes. Even though Roya  
383 is a modern woman, she is not revolutionary. Again, women lag behind in terms of economic  
384 independence. As Roya is not earning her own income due to Roya's rich husband, Roya's  
385 father leaves Roya's mother and Mayna seems to become self-reliant to survive.

386 In this film, the character of women, the confidence of women is shown under construction.  
387 That is, women want to break the shackles and come out. Her personality, economic  
388 freedom are all under construction. But a director is a creator of his or her world. He or she  
389 can frame a woman in a different mold if they want. But here in various scenes, she restricts  
390 women to the roles of wife, mother and lover. The stereotypes imposed on women in society  
391 come back again and again in this film. At various times, the dialogues between the  
392 characters discuss topics such as cooking, organizing the husband's belongings, women's  
393 success in having children. Besides, women have been made appealing through the lens of  
394 the camera. Thus, Rubaiyat Hossain as a director could not show her art from a different  
395 perspective. Here the three female characters were psychologically weak. Their emotions,

396 feelings and struggle to be established in society did not emerge as much as it should have.  
397 As a result, it becomes clear that the director herself still maintains a patriarchal attitude  
398 towards the concept of female gaze.  
399 An important aspect of the film *Under Construction* is its attempt to highlight women's search  
400 for self-identity and empowerment. The film made by a woman director could not completely  
401 escape patriarchy. This movie keeps bringing up the social preconceptions that are placed  
402 on women. In addition, women have been rendered attractive by the camera. As a result,  
403 Rubaiyat Hossain was unable to present her art in a constructive way. Though an attempt  
404 has been made to break the traditional social view of women through various statements. At  
405 the same time, efforts have been made to ensure women's independent expression and  
406 decision-making ability. However, the more women filmmakers can tell stories of women's  
407 empowerment by breaking out of the age-old patriarchal ideology, the more it will play a  
408 positive role in society.

409

## 410 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

411

412 I want to thank the technical and support workers from the University of Khulna's Mass  
413 Communication and Journalism Discipline for their assistance. I also want to express my  
414 sincere gratitude to my colleagues Mr. Mamunor Rashid, Mr. Md Mah// Nibir, Ms. Mahfuja  
415 Khatun, who assisted me in completing my article. We don't have not received any funds for  
416 this work.

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## 420 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

421

422 To complete this study, first author SMH generated the idea, design the research, collected  
423 data and drafted the text. Second author MMN also collected data, compile them and  
424 revised the text. Another author MR revised the complete article. The final manuscript was  
425 reviewed by all authors.

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555 [uG2nTExgpPDAWhVKN7c8loCUDTpTKcFFJSTgvhRfzgEF7MAFupWE356tXc5-931-](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/54848202/AQ_The_Muhannad_Effect-libre.pdf?1509217632=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_Muhannad_Effect_Media_Panic_Melodram.pdf&Expires=1673514012&Signature=CFNSsH9z1YivpWKEGQY90DK19nABwqHehKtOb~mQsr5kQ0Nv12X-TjZDi~Bi2bKuKw3XgUguntBCgaTnZh2EdnvY-AF6w9rikfp7xjcFGbQZLq1YKghJpW8WnN8sIXHmVs9PaSPGP3~KHv7iiEZL~Y4648DImbaQqexPsWel5BdJdbMvF6U0BxEcxolyY~Zyy~QXKtYtMGiFv13rv6XojmyVdLNhm9g56~P2UQ~26vAQZ4F-uG2nTExgpPDAWhVKN7c8loCUDTpTKcFFJSTgvhRfzgEF7MAFupWE356tXc5-931-hdQWesnDvVzZkj3n-wnXO5224yvpBnpiwLeV7w__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA)  
556 [hdQWesnDvVzZkj3n-wnXO5224yvpBnpiwLeV7w\\_\\_&Key-Pair-](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/54848202/AQ_The_Muhannad_Effect-libre.pdf?1509217632=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_Muhannad_Effect_Media_Panic_Melodram.pdf&Expires=1673514012&Signature=CFNSsH9z1YivpWKEGQY90DK19nABwqHehKtOb~mQsr5kQ0Nv12X-TjZDi~Bi2bKuKw3XgUguntBCgaTnZh2EdnvY-AF6w9rikfp7xjcFGbQZLq1YKghJpW8WnN8sIXHmVs9PaSPGP3~KHv7iiEZL~Y4648DImbaQqexPsWel5BdJdbMvF6U0BxEcxolyY~Zyy~QXKtYtMGiFv13rv6XojmyVdLNhm9g56~P2UQ~26vAQZ4F-uG2nTExgpPDAWhVKN7c8loCUDTpTKcFFJSTgvhRfzgEF7MAFupWE356tXc5-931-hdQWesnDvVzZkj3n-wnXO5224yvpBnpiwLeV7w__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA)  
557 [Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/54848202/AQ_The_Muhannad_Effect-libre.pdf?1509217632=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_Muhannad_Effect_Media_Panic_Melodram.pdf&Expires=1673514012&Signature=CFNSsH9z1YivpWKEGQY90DK19nABwqHehKtOb~mQsr5kQ0Nv12X-TjZDi~Bi2bKuKw3XgUguntBCgaTnZh2EdnvY-AF6w9rikfp7xjcFGbQZLq1YKghJpW8WnN8sIXHmVs9PaSPGP3~KHv7iiEZL~Y4648DImbaQqexPsWel5BdJdbMvF6U0BxEcxolyY~Zyy~QXKtYtMGiFv13rv6XojmyVdLNhm9g56~P2UQ~26vAQZ4F-uG2nTExgpPDAWhVKN7c8loCUDTpTKcFFJSTgvhRfzgEF7MAFupWE356tXc5-931-hdQWesnDvVzZkj3n-wnXO5224yvpBnpiwLeV7w__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA)  
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