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## **“More Powerful Women in Film and Television are Needed”**

*by*

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Women have been subjects to the male gaze for decades now. Their undermined roles in society are reinforced by their portrayal in the media especially in films and television shows. Domestic violence and rape situations have been rising in number despite some of the awareness campaigns that have been airing on national televisions. Although awareness campaigns supporting women’s aids are effective, it is time for television shows and studio films to feature more three-dimensional powerful female characters as lead actresses.

Many celebrities have participated in Women’s aid advertisements such as Keira Knightley in 2009, who performed in a domestic violence ad in which she plays an actress who is heavily beaten by her male co-star after the director of the scene refuses to call cut. The fact that celebrities spread awareness to campaigns such as women’s aid is already very effective, especially given that millions of their followers will listen and support them. However, the celebrities that play an important role in spreading awareness are blinded by how the industry they work for portray the characters they play in films.

Actresses should begin to reveal the flaws of big studio films. An example is Cate Blanchett, who has recently received an Oscar for her impeccable role in “Blue Jasmine” and in her speech she said: “...perhaps those of us in the industry who are still foolishly clinging to the idea that female films with women at the center are niche experiences. They are not. Audiences want to see them and, in fact, they earn money. The world is round, people.”

Films and television shows have a huge impact on this generation’s view of the world. In Britain, the average person watches 156 minutes of TV per day to be precise, and although the Internet has slowly been a substitute to our home screens, we still watch the same shows in which the way gender is portrayed plays an important role in society. Shonda Rhimes, the acclaimed creative director and writer of many successful television shows such as “Grey’s anatomy”, “Scandal” and “How to get away with murder”. She has been praised for portraying strong women in high positions and does not represent her female characters as fragile subjects whose lives are meaningless without a man, which has been an overused stereotype in most romantic comedies and teenage dramas. On the subject of Young Adult television series, there haven’t been many shows representing female superheroes as the center of the story since “Buffy the vampire slayer”. Studio films have been doing great in that area with “Divergent” and “The Hunger Games”, however more content should be available for Young Women who should not be exposed to entertainment that undermines their gender.

Although reinforcing women’s roles in Hollywood is a minor improvement, it is an improvement nonetheless. As a male student filmmaker studying Media, gender and culture, I believe that it is crucial for directors to put women in the spotlight more often than they do.