Representation of Woman in the "Film Marlina: si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak"

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INFO ARTIKEL

ABSTRACT

In the modern era, opportunities for women and men should be equal. However, this is still far from the reality faced by women in rural areas in certain regions. Women continue to encounter various forms of gender inequality, such as stereotypes, marginalization, subordination, and the double burden. The practice of upholding justice is often marked by the inner conflict of the main character in defending her rights or fighting against injustice. "Marlina: Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak" is a film released in 2017 that tells the story of a rural woman named Marlina, who struggles to confront the gender injustice she experiences. According to a gender perspective, women are often represented as weak and oppressed; however, Marlina's character as a rural woman is not depicted in this way. The urgency of this research is to challenge the stereotypes about rural women as figures who are weak, oppressed, and powerless. This research employs a descriptive analysis method based on Stuart Hall's theory of deconstructive representation. The way to identify the female figures depicted in this film is by reconstructing the image of women who are identified as weak. Nevertheless, Marlina's character serves as an icon (role model) who can take action in resistance. The results of this study indicate that: First, Marlina is a female figure who attempts to break free from the conservative image often associated with rural women. Second, the message conveyed through the encoding and decoding process is that women can resist and defend their justice and self-esteem.

1. Introduction

In general, films can be interpreted as moving images regularly in a storyline that is equipped with space and time. Along with its development, films have become a means of entertainment that is packaged with interesting stories

so that they can attract the attention of the audience. Monk-Turner, et al (2014) argue that film is an important art form because it has a function as a means of good value interpretation. This is based on the idea that audiences can be influenced through films; they tend to convey the lessons they see from films. into everyday life. Entering the rapid development of technology, the audience's attention to films is also getting higher, so more and more quality films are being presented by filmmakers.

The film is interesting to analyze because the film is part of mass communication, which is used as a means of entertainment to present meaning. (Hall, 1997) meaning can mean what you are looking for when you see something that is expressed through pictures, one of the ways used to convey meaning (meaning) in films is by using conversation (language). Along with the advancement of the world of cinema, an issue that has become a big question related to the film is once again not far from the issue of gender inequality. It is clear that the unequal proportion of men and women in the world of cinema has increased in terms of roles or even production involvement. Kunsey (2019), in his research, which takes the background of the Hollywood film industry, suggests that gender inequality can be seen from how women are represented in films as a minority group or can be understood as an oppressed, weak party who always needs help from men, this encourages the formation of stereotypes. to the image of women. In addition, in terms of roles, for example, the film industry employs more male actors than female actors, and the female main character is seen only as a complement to storylines involving romance fiction. This gender imbalance is also seen in the number of men who have the opportunity to hold important positions like producers, directors, and other production positions, while women mostly hold feminist positions in costume or make-up teams. The condition of women in film is a sign that women are still shackled to a patriarchal system that does not give women better opportunities and continues to be shackled in a patriarchal conservative system where men will always be the dominant party compared to women. Yang, L, et al (2020) argue that there is an underrepresentation of women in films, and women are often portrayed in traditional feminine roles such as housewives, non-professional workers, and sexual victims, which characterizes them as weak. The existence of this kind of portrayal of images can have an impact, especially on teenagers who are the audience; this can discourage them from pursuing ambition and actively participating in social affairs.

The study of women's interpretation in films can motivate us to write about the representation of women in films. There are many films produced by

filmmakers in Indonesia, we chose a unique film that is different from most films in general entitled "Marlina: Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak", the attraction of this film is the unusual story, if in most films women are portrayed as the weak side, then in this film women are the main figures who dare to oppose male domination.

Marlina: Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak is an Indonesian film released in 2017, directed by Mouly Surya. the story tells about the injustice experienced by a woman named Marlina who lives as a widow in the interior of Sumba, Indonesia. One day, Marlina was visited by the head of the robbers, named Markus, along with his gang. Markus threatened Marlina's life, property, and honor. The conflict is depicted when Marlina decides to embark on a journey full of twists and turns to seek justice at the police station. After struggling with the horrific incident, Marlina took a journey, which in the film was marked as part of 'the journey to the police station to seek justice by reporting what happened to her. Hoping that law enforcement will be able to help him, but the reality is the opposite; his report seems to be ignored and not taken seriously. The journey he takes brings him together with his friend Novi, a pregnant woman trapped in a patriarchal condition where she has to submit to her husband. Novi invites Marlina to confession at church, but Marlina honestly admits that what she did was not a sin. Faced with this condition, Marlina decides to return and tries to make peace, but is again confronted by a surviving robber named Frans, who wants Markus's head to be returned for the cremation process. But it turns out that behind it all, Frans tried to harass Marlina again. The climax was when Novi, who was there, felt that Frans' actions were very cruel and, following Marlina's way to protect herself, decided to behead Frans after they both left the house where all the terrible things had happened. Based on this reason, the research was conducted out of the necessity to correct the longstanding image that portrays women as weak figures. Through the character of Marlina, we attempt to reveal the text containing connotations of oppression and resistance present within the film. The urgency we aim to demonstrate is how the media have persistently depicted women as objects. However, through the figure of Marlina, we are shown that women can, in essence, be subjects possessing the agency to resist injustice.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Representation Theory

'What does this image mean?' or 'What is this ad saying?' Since no law can guarantee that things will have one. True meaning' or that meanings won't change over time, work in this area inbound to be interpretative, a debate

between, not who is 'right and who is 'wrong'. but between equally plausible, though sometimes competing and contested, meanings and interpretations. The best way to 'settle' such contested readings is to look again at the concrete example and to try to justify one's 'reading' in detail concerning the actual practices and forms of signification used, and what meanings they seem to you to be producing (Hall, 1997).

Representation, as a process that is carried out in interpreting something (Hall, 1997), reveals that representation connects 'meaning' and 'language', which can be interpreted as a process of giving meaning to something using language. Representation theory uses a constructionist approach so that the representation system is very dependent on language and thought is interrelated. Language itself is used to communicate the results of our thoughts to others so that audiences have the same understanding. The process of meaning is very dependent on someone's knowledge and understanding of what they see or hear. There are two processes in the representation system, namely,

First, mental representation, where all objects, people, and events are correlated with a set of concepts that are carried everywhere in our heads. Without concepts, we can't mean anything in this world. Here, it can be said that the meaning depends on all the concept systems (conceptual maps) that are formed in our minds, which we can use to represent the world and allow us to be able to interpret objects both in our minds and outside our minds. Second, language (language) involves all processes of construction of meaning (Hall, 1997).

John Fiske (Noni Anggraini, 2018) reveals that three levels are used to see how the representational discourse is shown in films. The first level is events that are marked, in image language (especially television), which generally relate to aspects such as clothing, environment, speech, and expressions. Here, reality is always ready to be marked when we consider and construct the event as a reality. At the second level, when viewing events as a reality, this includes technical issues such as the language of images (television), lighting, music, the use of certain words, sentences, or certain propositions that will carry certain meanings when accepted by the audience. The third level is how events are organized into social coherence, such as social class, or dominant beliefs in society (patriarchy, materialism, capitalism, and so on).

2.2. Gender Inequality in the Film

Gender discourse has many implications for human life, but the most visible is the emergence of injustice, which causes a hierarchy between the

positions of men and women (Ridgeway, 2011). The existence of a misunderstanding in understanding the concept of gender resulted in the emergence of different constructions regarding rights and obligations between men and women, for example (Dewi & Nugroho, 2017) stated that in domestic life, men are considered leaders who have duties as the head of the household and the breadwinner, while women are considered as housekeepers who have the task of taking care of domestic work. Things like gender inequality through the media.

The media in everyday life has a big role as an agent of socialization, and a lot of information and influence is obtained from the media. An interesting form of media that is most in demand by the general public is a film, as a result of audio-visual film products presenting stories that explore emotions and shape the audience's mindset in interpreting something. For this reason, it can be said that the media has a significant role in building gender construction. Caradeux & Salom (2013) argue that the representation built by the media can be a way to respond to or challenge the concept of gender equality that so far exists.

According to Jaddou &Williams (1981), women tend to have a limited role in the media. It can be seen from the number of women's participation in the production process and also the type of roles they have in films, further said that the image of the awakened woman is 'inaccurate' and 'wrong'. This is in line with research conducted by (Yang, L., et al, 2020), which explains that for many years, the key roles in filmmaking tend to be dominated by men, while women do not have the power to play a big role in making films. In the film industry, as a consequence, there is an underrepresented of women in films. Departing from this, it can be said that there is gender inequality in films, whether it is the role of women as 'producers' or as 'productions' of films, male dominance is seen when they get important roles such as producer, director, cameraman, while women often get a role as a make-up expert or fashion expert. This is not much different in films, men often get the main role where they are portrayed as crimefighters with a masculine and strong image, while women often get roles that are told to experience oppression or even become victims of a weak and unable to fight sexuality.

3. Research Methods

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach. Representation theory is the main basis for reviewing Marlina: The Murderer in Four Acts. Stuart Hall divides his theory into three studies, namely: Intentional representation, reflective representation, and constructionist representation. However, this research focuses on the study of constructionist representation, which discusses

how to construct the meaning contained in the language (film text) through the encoding and decoding process. According to Storey (2006), encoding is the process of the director (filmmaker) in producing meaning, meanwhile decoding is the process of the audience in reconstructing meaning. The research data is taken from the selection of several scenes and dialogues (film text) contained in the four-act film Marlina: The Murderer in four acts.

The researchers attempt to extract meaning from the dialogue within the selected cut-scenes, subsequently explaining the significance of said dialogue. This explanation is then connected to the concept of gender injustice and Stuart Hall's theory of representation. A conclusion is drawn, aiming to demonstrate, through the figure of Marlina, an effort to evade oppression stemming from patriarchal values commonly found in the media.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. The Robbery

00:07:11. Markus says, **"Women shouldn't have a temper."**

At the beginning of the film is shown first act 'the robbery'. This stage shows how the tragedy started in Marlina's life. One of the important scenes that occurs in this stage is when Markus (the leader of the robbers) says to Marlina:

"Women shouldn't have a temper". *Markus said to Marlina*

Markus reprimanded Marlina for showing that she did not like his presence at Marlina's house. This scene shows that there is a prohibition against women from expressing what they feel, from the film scene it can be seen that Marlina not only looks down but looks cynically at Markus as an initiative to fight, if we look from the point of view of Marlina as the main character, what Marlina did was a form of effort to protect herself, on the other hand, this conversation also shows that women are not only people who will stay silent when they find themselves threatened, the sharpness of women's instincts shows an act of rejection like what Marlina did by keeping a distance and also avoiding conversations with the character Markus.

When viewed through gender analysis, this scene shows evidence that there is a patriarchal system in the film that takes the background of the lives of the Sumbanese people. The patriarchal system can be seen in the dominance of men in expressing their opinions. Markus expresses his opinion directly; this is in contrast to Marlina's condition, which seems to tend to be hesitant or afraid when she wants to express her opinion. Patriarchy is a term to describe 'male power, which is often seen through domination that suppresses women in various ways. Patriarchy is still very much embedded in Indonesian culture, in everyday life, many taboos restrict women from doing what they want, (Sakina & Dessy, 2017) in their research on the patriarchal system in Indonesia shows that men in the family institution have control function which means they act as regulators, this condition is often seen especially in married women they are required to obey their husbands, this obligation to submit is what is known as gender inequality. Even though the status owned by Marlina and her interlocutor in this scene are foreign parties, the context that is shown in general is the concept of patriarchy, namely the lack of freedom felt by women, which can trigger the birth of resistance efforts.

Constructive representation suggests that there is a decoding stage where the meaning of the discourse that occurs in the film may be captured by the audience, this scene indicates the possibility of imaging women with a conservative position where the figure of Marlina can be labeled the same as village women in general, but through this scene, We identified that what the storyteller wanted to show was the 'strength of the character of Marlina, that not all women are weak characters. Through the figure of Marlina, the producer of this film builds a 'figure' that is different from most women. Therefore, the main character is shown to have a strong and frank character who can become a strong figure who can defend against injustice. This scene provides an example so that women can stand up and rise out of the limitations of the patriarchal culture that we have encountered so far.

4.2. The Journey

00:43:05 **"I did not commit any sin,"** *said Marlina to Novi*

This part of the film is marked by the start of Marlina's journey after killing Markus by beheading and giving poison to Markus's group members, which also threatens her life. Marlina is told to go on a journey to seek justice from the authorities whose office is far from the interior. While waiting for a bus, Marlina is confronted by a friend named Novi, who is curious about Marlina. Novi considers the murder committed by Marlina as a sin, while Marlina says she did not sin.

The discourse that occurs in this scene indicates an inner conflict in Marlina's character; she understands that the beheading she did to Markus is a criminal act in the eyes of the law, but Marlina's justification is 'self-defense'. Inner conflict is identified with the conflict that occurs within Marlina in interpreting her actions, against two different meaning spaces, where on the one hand, she feels that the action may be wrong in the eyes of others, but on the other hand, what she is doing is an effort to protect her self-esteem. Inner conflict is often the spice of the film, and it often becomes the climax in a scene that would be able to lift the spirits of the audience.

Understanding of this scene is done using Kurt Lewin's analysis of inner conflict (Burnes, B. 2017). Lewin explained that when inner conflict occurs, there will be choices that must be faced by an individual from the actions he takes, and there is conflicting self-motivation between himself and the values of the environment. social figures are located. The meaning of Marlina's actions, contained in this film, is shown as evidence of resistance to the patriarchal system. Marlina's character tries to destroy the argument about male power by taking extreme actions, which in the eyes of some people, could be an act of violation.
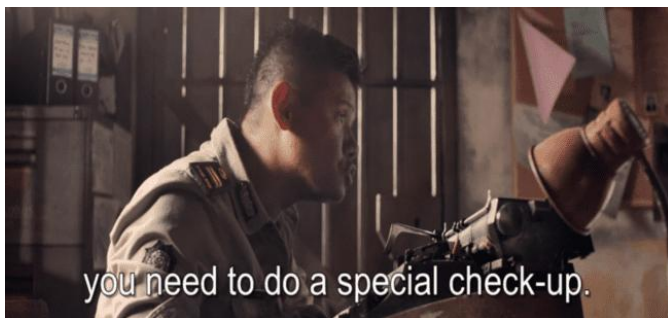

00:35:53 **"This is my prisoner,"** *said Marlina to passengers on the bus*

This scene shows Marlina's focus on the plans she takes to find a way out of the problems she faces. We adapt the thinking of Lewin (in Mayangsari, 2012)

in analyzing this scene, and there will be something identified as the focus and direction. Focus comes when a person describes the life around them. The condition of focus allows a person to push towards the direction he wants to go. When we judge something then it will be our focus. On the other hand, coercion also takes an important part; when an inner conflict occurs, coercion becomes the direction of human action.

What the filmmakers are trying to show the audience is that women's resistance is no longer viewed conservatively, but that there are strong, real actions that women can also take when they feel pressured. We identify that from the viewer's point of view, there will be an over-justification of Marlina's chosen actions, claims about human rights violations may well become the reality that there have been pros and cons, as Lewin identified in his theory of inner conflict.

4.3. The Confession

00:56:29 **"Hey Miss, in the rape case, you have to take a postmortem test."** *Said the police officer to Marlina.*

The analysis of other patriarchal domination that occurs in this film is shown through the scene of the struggle of the character Marlina in seeking justice. It is shown that the main character tries to take legal action to seek justice, the same path that will be used by most people to claim their rights, but the reality is different. found by Marlina when the report was not responded to positively by the authorities (police). The report made by Marlina was responded to with sentences that seemed to have cornered Marlina. The police did not seem serious about seeing this case because they asked Marlina to do a test that could prove her report. This scene directly becomes an example of the arrogance of men. When they have power, their dominance is depicted through the habit of acting as they please toward women.

This action from the police indicates a driving factor for resistance, women often expect protection from men to provide a sense of security against the threats they experience, but when they do not get it, disappointment will arise, which leads to the act of defending their own hands, the same as what happened to the

figure of Marlina. We identify that what these police officers do is similar to what Bourdieu (2010) identifies as masculine domination. suggestions, inducements, threats, criticisms, orders, or reminders of the order. Symbolic violence presupposes the existence of the dominant and the dominated, which ultimately results in the form of physical emotions such as shame, low self-esteem, fear, worry, and guilt, because these dispositions have long been embedded in the deepest part of the body, symbolic violence cannot be defeated by using weapons. consciousness and desire. The filmmakers directly want to show the audience that sometimes women are shackled in conditions of masculine domination so that they cannot completely depend on men, there must be independence in women in seeking justice for themselves.

What we can catch from this scene is the possibility of stereotypes forming against law enforcement, stereotypes can also be caused by negative views towards a group of groups, this bad perception then makes the general public generalize the behavior of everyone, for example when there is a police officer who If you behave like in a movie, the viewer's mind can form a perception that all police officers will behave the same way, but the reality on the ground shows that this is not always the case. Law enforcers have a role as state servants who have to serve the people well and honestly.

4.4. The Birth

*01:22:26 **"Can we go now?"** said Marlina to the man who had been looking for him.*

Act 4 of this film is marked as the last stage, 'The journey', Marlina tries to make peace with her condition by returning to the house. she is left behind where all the tragedies happened, the fatigue she faces makes her strong, she is reunited with Novi who is waiting at her house with Frans Mark's men who survived and tried to get Mark's headpieces for cremation.

We analyze the next incident in the film where the character of Frans tries to prevent Marlina and Novi from leaving as part of the pressure of the unresolved problem, the figure of Frans trying to buy time indicates that there is another motive of Frans trying to repress Marlina again. Marlina's words to Frans are a signal that Marlina doesn't want to have anything to do with people who

have damaged her honor. Marlina wants a new start. The inner conflict faced by each character in this film is the highlight of the film's excitement, we continuously find that the conditions that occur in this film are following Stanton's analysis (Nurgiyantoro, 2010) regarding internal and external inner conflicts. Internal conflict is depicted through the meaning of Marlina's words, where she expresses her intention to leave but finds herself restrained by the behavior of Frans' character; on the other hand, external conflict is indicated by a mismatch between the conditions desired by the main character in the film and the conditions around him. Marlina stated that she wanted to go, but her desire to leave the place was not supported by the environmental conditions, where they had limited access to vehicles plus the remote and dark village conditions that did not allow Marlina to walk. This scene shows that external conflict is a condition where there is a mismatch between human expectations and the environment, and this is what we find in the film scene.

The next scene that becomes an important part of our analysis is the incident when Frans tries to harass Marlina and Novi follows the way Marlina did by beheading Frans, this incident shows that other characters in the film 'Marlina', have become an example of an 'icon of resistance. ', Novi, who initially tried to convince Marlina to confess her sin, ended up doing the same thing when the situation was desperate. Novi's actions following the way Marlina took in dealing with injustice were a form of solidarity motivated by the perception of a common destiny where they were both victims. of masculine domination, the inner pressure they get pushes them to defend themselves in the easiest way which in this film is visualized by acts of violence against the perpetrators of oppression, departing from Durkheim's thinking (Ritzer, 2012) about mechanical solidarity that We claim that this attitude of solidarity tends to grow from the close relationship and feeling of kinship that is built between people living in villages or disadvantaged areas, we think that when Marlina tried to understand Novi's problems with her husband, that's where Novi's feelings of caring for Marlina grew which then became the reason she moved. to protect Marlina.

Stuart Hall (2011), regarding encoding and decoding, put forward the analogy of capital or what is known as the "labor process" in its discursive process, it was stated that production must be able to construct messages, discursive aspects or discourses must be framed by meanings and ideas, and there are considerations of audience image. Moviegoers can be both the 'source' and the 'receiver' of the message. This circulation process of receiving messages is what Marx classifies as a 'moment', in the moment of decoding (Storey, 2006), the audience is not faced with a 'raw' social event but instead translates the

discursive of an event when the events in the film are shown to the audience. there is hope about things that can move the audience to realize the message seen in the film. Encoding is a collection of encoded meanings; this collection of meanings, which then has an effect, namely influencing, entertaining, teaching, or seducing. The message conveyed through the film, through its decoding process appears and enters the structure of social practice.

When we analyze the important discourse contained in this film, we find that the character of Marlina is trying to be represented through critical dialogues full of resistance that are spoken between the characters in this film, in which there is a message that the filmmakers are trying to convey about how women should be. must have the courage to voice their desires and stop submitting to feelings of reluctance to men, the outline that is trying to be penetrated is how to visualize the condition of gender inequality that is often experienced by women, with the hope that this film can be a driving force for women's efforts to face the patriarchal system that is still strict in Indonesia. Through this film, the main character 'Marlina' is represented as an example of the 'Resistance Icon', which breaks the traditional perception that always claims that women are the oppressed party in masculine domination. Encoding has an effect, far from the effect of this film seen from the many positive reviews this film received; one of the reviews for this film was put forward by a well-known presenter from Indonesia, Najwa Shihab, who also watched this film with the director and film players, in her response.

> *"It's very exciting, doesn't disappoint and meets expectations, that's why it gets many awards, so it goes to various festivals and it's refreshing because there are rarely films where all the women are the heroes and the boys ………. (laughs)"* **source: Najwa Shihab's youtube channel.**

The whole film is a sign that the effect obtained is the conveying of a message about the injustices experienced by women, where the message then becomes new knowledge for the audience who watches this film.

5. Conclusions

We conclude that film is an entertainment suggest that has an important role as a medium of mass communication. Film is a tool for expressing for its makers and a means of conveying messages or forming images through the scenes shown. Throughout the film Marlina: Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak, the main character Marlina is represented through critical dialogues who boldly voice their desires, the discursion process in this film is part of an example of the

resistance of women who refuse to submit to men, for that reason Marlina's character represented as an example or 'icon of resistance' which is described as being able to get out of a conservative mindset where women can fight back and are no longer the oppressed party. This film clearly shows that women can also move in a better direction, and overall, the actions taken by women in this film are a form of self-defense that is often constrained by the value of male masculine domination. The image of women is awakened through the character 'Marlina', who takes actions of resistance that can pave the way for efforts to eliminate gender inequality.

We hope that future films will increasingly portray female characters through positive roles and narratives, moving beyond the predominant depiction of them as weak figures. This is particularly important given the film's substantial influence in shaping audience perspective. Films can serve as a bridge to build awareness regarding how women can and should act, as well as how to respond to the forms of gender injustice that remain deeply rooted in society.

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