

Edwin's Representations of Feminism in the Thorny Fog Film: A Semiotic Study of John Fiske

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ABSTRACT

The film *Mist of Thorns* tells the story of a man named Sanja who becomes a detective investigating a serial murder and human trafficking case in Kalimantan. Sanja is not only playing the role of investigating the case, but also trying to voice the voices of women who are blocked, and fighting against the patriarchal social system in the police force. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the feminism in the film *Mist of Thorns* using John Fiske's semiotics. The purpose of this study is to describe the feminism in the film *Mist of Thorns*, using John Fiske's semiotic study which has three levels, the level of reality, the level of representation, and the level of ideology. The benefits of this study can be used as a reference for further research and can increase insight into literature, especially feminism. The data collection technique uses the technique of observing, recording and documentation. The data analysis technique uses data reduction and presentation. The results of this study found that there are three feminisms in the film *Mist of Thorns*, namely, three liberal feminisms, one radical feminism, and one transformative feminism.

Keywords: *Feminism, John Fiske's Semiotics, Mist of Thorns Film.*

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are creations produced from human thought that use language as a tool to express emotions, ideas, beliefs, and experiences. According to Muslihah in (Tiyas 2019:229), it is a work of creative imagination in the format of a story or narrative translated through language as its foundation. In addition, literary works also depict various issues and the author's background, but still have an element of beauty, so that readers can enjoy the work. Based on Sumardjo's opinion in (Purnamasari 2017:141), quality literary works should have an eternal character by presenting universal truths that are always relevant as long as humans exist. Literary works can be in the form of prose which is then adapted into an audio-visual form, one of which is film.

In today's digital era, film has become one of the most sought after mediums by various groups, from children to adults. Thus, movies have transformed into a part of our daily activities. The narrative in a film is packaged in such a way that the message to be conveyed can be accepted by the audience. The values and messages in the film have the potential to influence *the audience* in both cognitive, affective, and connotative aspects. This allows the audience to feel the emotions between the characters. According to Marizal in (Septiya 2021:184), film has the power to embrace all levels of society so that it can have a significant impact. Every film carries a message that its creator wants to convey, both explicitly and implicitly. There are various film genres, one of which is related to the issue of feminism.

Feminism comes from the Latin term "femina" or "femme" which means woman. In general, feminism is a women's movement that rejects all forms of oppression, discrimination, and degradation of dignity by the dominant culture, both in political, economic, and social aspects (Ratna in Wibowo, 2022). This arises from the belief that women face injustice because of their gender (Humm, in Wibowo, 2022). Feminism is often associated with emancipation, which means the struggle for equal rights between men and women is related to gender and women's issues. Therefore, it is important to increase understanding of the unequal relationship between men and women in various aspects of life in Indonesia. In general development, the term feminist refers to individuals who recognize and seek to end the oppression experienced by women in connection with the struggle for their rights as a social group.

The researcher aimed to analyze the feminism in the film *Thorny Fog* using a semiotic approach developed by John Fiske, which consists of three levels. The first level is the reality level. At this level, the real aspects contained in the film are explained, including appearance, behavior, facial expressions, and *makeup* for each character. The second level is the level of representation. This is where the performance, shooting angles, words in dialogue, lighting, and background sounds and music that act as audiovisual code are shown. The last level is the level of ideology. At this level, various elements that fall into the category of ideological codes such as patriarchy, individualism, race, class, materialism, capitalism, and others that appear throughout the film are discussed. It is important to note that both words and images in every scene have an ideological content. At this level, ideology is often not conveyed directly, but is more implicit. There are three types of feminism, namely liberal feminism, radical feminism, and transformative feminism. Liberal feminism.

The film titled *The Thorny Mish*, directed by Edwin, tells the story of a detective named Sanja. He initially served in Jakarta before being assigned to investigate a murder case on the

island of Kalimantan, located on the border between Indonesia and Malaysia. Sanja still carries an emotional scar that has not healed, so she has to deal with her memories at that location. Nonetheless, as a detective, he must adhere to his responsibilities to solve puzzles and catch the perpetrators behind a series of murders. Sanja also cooperated with two members of the local police, namely Panca and Thomas. During her search, Sanja meets Bujang, a migrant who has lived in the area for a long time. Bujang often helps him in solving cases. However, the case he faces is much more complex than he expected. Sanja has to face various other challenges and cases, such as human trafficking, corrupt practices, as well as various myths that develop in society. In this film, the authorities find a body with a head and body that belonged to two different individuals. Sanja also began to investigate and hunt down the suspects.

Based on this background, the focus of this research is feminism in the film *Kamist Berduri*. The purpose of this study is to describe and understand the elements of feminism contained in the film using the semiotic approach of John Fiske. The benefit of this research is to be a reference for future research and to expand the understanding of literature, especially in the context of feminism.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The author intends to describe the data clearly by using words to manage the data in a more structured, real, and precise manner. This research method uses semiotics from John Fiske. The researcher chose John Fiske's semiotics because it relates to the analysis of the world of television and seeks to find and examine signs of feminism which are divided into three levels: reality, representation, and ideology. In addition, the use of John Fiske's semiotics in this study is also because the film *Kamist Berpári* is related to a sign that contains elements of feminism, which tells the story of a woman who investigates a case of serial murder and human trafficking. The data collection technique is carried out by listening, recording, and documenting. The listening and recording techniques are applied by watching movies so that researchers can analyze the *Prickly Fog* and understand more about the elements of feminism in it. Documentation is used to record snippets of the film, making the data more convincing. Data analysis techniques include data reduction and presentation. Data reduction was chosen because after collection, data relevant to the research objectives will be taken first, followed by the presentation of data. After selecting the data, the data is then presented in the form of a description.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the data above, three types of feminism were found in the *prickly fog* film using John Fiske's semiotics, namely liberal feminism, radical feminism and transformative feminism.

1. Liberal Feminism

Figure 1. Sanja shows that she is ready for duty. (duration 04.14)



Source: screenshot of the prickly fog film produced by palari Film, 2024

Picture 1 (duration 04:14), Sanja depicts being ready to serve as a detective in a serial murder problem that is still a secret. Sanja's fighting expression and loyalty in solving cases proves that the profession of being a police officer and detective is not only aimed at men, but a woman can also become a female policeman and a professional detective. When associated with liberal feminism which assumes that equality occurs between women and men without having to be differentiated, a woman also has the right to choose her own life goals such as profession, career and other life goals.

Figure 1 (duration 04:14), there are three levels of John Fiske's television code, namely 1) Reality level: dress code i.e. wearing suit clothes with a t-shirt underneath, makeup code and hair cut short and wearing glasses, a strict and ready expression code. The gesture code of respect to the superior signifies that Sanja is ready to carry out her duties; 2) Representation level: The camera code is *medium shot*; 3) Ideological level: the social code in this scene is Sanja showing her readiness as a woman in working as a detective policeman.

Liberal Feminism is then represented by Sanja at 41.31 who is arresting the Agam figure who is suspected of being involved in a serial murder case. Sanja is a great woman in carrying out her duties, although the suspect is mostly male, but Sanja does not tremble to arrest her. If it is associated with feminism there is no gender difference, a woman can also arrest a male suspect when she has been found guilty.

Figure 2. Sanja captures Agam. Duration 41. 31



Source: screenshot of the film Kamist Berpi produced by palari Film, 2024

Figure 2 (duration 41:31), there are three levels of John Fiske's television code, namely 1) Levels of reality: the dress code is Sanja uses a t-shirt and jeans and Agam uses a short shirt with short black pants, the makeup and hair code is Sanja has her hair cut short and uses glasses, while Agam uses a sling bag. Expression code is relaxed yet still firm. Sanja's gesture code catches Agam; 2) Representation level: The camera code is *medium shot*; 3) Ideological level: the social code in this scene is Sanja showing her persistence in arresting the suspect who is suspected of being involved in the murder case of Thariq and Umi.

The next liberal feminism also occurred to Sanja at the duration of 26.13 who was arresting the character Silas who was suspected of stealing wood at the Battalion headquarters and the character of Silas was also related to Juwing's death. The character of Silas shows his ingenuity in finding the perpetrators in the serial murders. He found one by one the suspects in the serial murder case. When it is associated with feminism, there is no difference in the minds of men and women, which distinguishes only laziness, and has been proven by the figure of Sanja. A woman is no less smart or clever than a man

Figure 3. Sanja captures Silas' character (duration 26.13)



Source: screenshot of the prickly fog film produced by palari Film, 2024

Figure 3 (duration 26:13), there are three levels of John Fiske's television code, namely 1) Levels of reality: dress code i.e. Sanja wearing white shorts and jeans, makeup and hair code i.e. Sanja having her hair cut short and using glasses and a gun in her hand. Sanja's expression code shows his seriousness in arresting the suspect. Sanja's gesture code looks at Silas with a sharp gaze with a gun pointed at his body; 2) Representation level: The camera code is *medium shot*; 3) Ideological level: the social code in this scene is Sanja showing her persistence in catching the suspect who stole wood at the battalion headquarters and is also suspected to be related to the case of Juwing's death

2. Radical Feminism

Figure 4: Sanja and Thomas



Source: screenshot of the film Kamist Berpi produced by palari Film, 2024

Figure 4 (duration 1.12.38) Sanja struggles against the patriarchal system in the police. His anger was poured out on Thomas by holding out a gun so that Thomas could tell what

had happened. When associated with radical feminism is a trend that challenges the patriarchal system. The image above Sanja rejects the police system that she feels is unfair and asks for this system to be restored as it should be. Sanja is not only investigating a serial murder case, but also against a patriarchal system that ignores women's voices.

Figure 2 (duration 1.12.38), there are three levels of John Fiske's television code, namely 1) Reality level: the dress code, namely Sanja uses a t-shirt and jeans and Agam uses a long shirt with a t-shirt inside, the makeup and hair code, namely Sanja's hair is cut short, while 'Thomas' hair is like a man's. Sanja's expression code shows anger. Sanja's gesture code thrusts a gun at 'Thomas' head. 2) Representation level: Camera code is medium shot; 3) Ideological level: the social code in this scene is Sanja investigating the injustices that exist in the police system and asking for it to be resolved immediately.

3. Transformative Feminism

Figure 5: Sanja and the police commander



Source: screenshot of the film Kamist Berpi produced by palari Film, 2024

Figure 5 (duration 1.12.38) Sanja asks her commander when investigating cases that there should be no difference between men and women, both of which are equally important. When associated with transformative feminism, it is a school that wants to change the social structure that makes women oppressed. The image above Sanja asks that cases experienced by women also need help, while her commander prioritizes men, so Sanja wants to change the social structure in the police force to be fair.

Figure 5 (duration 1.12.38), there are three levels of John Fiske's television code, i.e. 1) Reality level: dress code i.e. Sanja using a collarless shirt, makeup and hair code i.e. Sanja has short hair and wears her signature glasses,. Sanja's expression code looked at the commander cynically. Sanja's gesture code looked serious and relaxed. 2) Representation level: The camera code is *medium shot*; 3) Ideological level: the social code in this scene is to ask the commander and ask that the existing system in the police be immediately justified.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that there are 3 feminisms in the film *Kamist Berduri*, namely three liberal feminisms, one radical feminism and one transformative feminism. The first liberal feminism at 04.14 where Sanja shows her readiness to carry out her duties as a detective, not only men can do that. The second feminism is at 41.31 minutes where Sanja arrests Agam who is suspected of being involved in a serial murder case. The third liberal feminism at 26.13 where Sanja catches Silas who stole wood at the Battalion headquarters and Silas is also related to Juwing's death.

Next is radical feminism in the minute 1.12.38 where Sanja fights against the patriarchal system that ignores the voices of women in the police force and immediately investigates the case. Furthermore, transformative feminism in the 56.30 minute where Sanja asks her commander when investigating the case that there should be no distinction between men and women, the important thing must be prioritized.

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