**Blaming The Victim : Representation The Victim of Rape In M.F.A Film**

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**ABSTRACT**

The media in representing rape victims is still gender biased, such as blaming the victim. This study aims to find out how female victims of rape are shown in the M.F.A film by using semiotics to analyze the structure and ideology contained in the text. The theory used by researchers to analyze texts (M.F.A.) is the concept of radical feminism. The results of the research show in the M.F.A. film, women are shown as sexual objects of men. Women are represented as having to accept anything, including their fate when raped by men. They are not given the strength to resist and only accept it. Even in the eyes of the public and the law, women who are rape victims are still weak and are actually cornered (Blaming the Victim). Reports of rape are considered fabricated and have no strong evidence. In the film M.F.A. women who demanded their rights were silenced, by patriarchal ideologies. What's worse is the silence of a woman, because they have been hegemony in patriarchal ideology

***Keywords: blaming the victim, representation, woman, radical feminism***

**ABSTRAK**

Media dalam merepresentasikan korban perkosaan masih bias gender. Bahkan menyalahkan korban (*Blaming The Victim)*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana perempuan korban perkosaan ditampilkan dalam film M.F.A dengan menggunakan semiotika untuk menganalisis struktur dan ideologi yang terdapat di dalam teks. Konsep yang digunakan peneliti untuk menganalisis teks (Film M.F.A.) feminisme radikal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dalam Film M.F.A., perempuan diperlihatkan sebagai objek seksual dari laki-laki. Perempuan direpresentasikan harus menerima apapun, termasuk nasibnya ketika diperkosa oelah laki-laki. Mereka tidak diberikan kekuatan untuk melawan dan hanya menerimanya. Di mata masyarakat dan hukum pun, perempuan korban perkosaan masih lemah dan justru disudutkan (*Blaming the Victim*). Laporan mengenai perkosaan dianggap mengada-ada dan tidak memiliki bukti yang kuat. Dalam Film M.F.A. perempuan yang menuntut hak-haknya dibungkam, oleh ideologi-ideologi patriarki. Yang lebih parah lagi adalah yang membungkam juga seorang perempuan, karena mereka telah terhegemoni ideologi patriarki

***Kata Kunci : blaming the victim, representasi, perempuan, feminisme radikal***

**INTRODUCTION**

*"It's okay Noelle, you're fine with me.*

*Listen to me, I have a friend, she is also a rape victim,*

*then she reports it to the school,*

*What happened? They actually made her feel like rubish. They said that she was basically slut, cheap and crazy. Don't you meet them."*

The quote above is Skye's advice when Noelle told me that she had been raped by a classmate. The M.F.A film released in 2017 tells the story of an introverted post-graduate student in fine arts in California. He received an invitation to a party by his handsome classmate, Luke. Then he was invited to his room and raped by Luke. The shocking thing happened when Noelle reported the rapes she had experienced at the school. They did not consider this to be a serious matter, rather than giving a defense the school actually cornered the victim, with degrading questions.

Sexual abuse cases continued to the occur. Annual Notes in 2019 The National Commission on Violence Against Women shows in the public and community domain, violence against women was recorded in 3,915 cases. 64% of violence against women in the public sphere or community is sexual violence, such as molestation (1,136), rape (762) and sexual harassment (394). This figure is still considered high.

Ironically the media in representing rape is also gender bias. Even worse, by blaming the victims. M.F.A directed by Natalia Leite reveals the sad side of a rape victim girl named Noelle. When Noelle reported the case to the school. She was treated unfairly as if he wanted him to be raped. Likewise, when other rape victims, Lindsey was called by the police, instead she was bombarded with cornering questions, such as how many times she had sex with other men.

This injustice of women's representation contradicts to Article 28 D paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution, namely that everyone has the right to the recognition, guarantee, protection, and fair legal certainty and equal treatment before the law.

The school and the police should not position the victim as the perpetrator. Of the several questions raised by the school to Noelle and Lindsey, the diction used to direct the allegations to the victims, that the victims also enjoyed the rape. Schools that should provide assistance to victims actually blame the victims. The authorities who should be able to give a sense of justice and comfort also blame the victim.

Blaming the victim cannot be separated from the role of mass media. Today's mass media, there is little information, shows that represent gender-sensitive rape victims. The media have not given a positive picture to women victims of rape. The way the media presents women victims of rape is still very patriarchal and gender-biased.

The research related to the representation of rape victims was presented by Dani Marsa Aria Putri entitled Blaming The Victim: Representation of Women Rape Victims in Mass Media (Semiotic Analysis in News in Suara Merdeka Newspaper December 2011 - February 2012). Data retrieval is done by syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis in semiotics. The result is known that the Suara Merdeka daily newspaper presents rape victims as passive, weak and helpless when dealing with rape perpetrators. Women are considered guilty of almost every news. Many of the stigma and labels pinned on victims of rape have a negative impact on the psychological victim.

In addition, the media packs cases of harassment and violence to women with a male perspective so that the victims experience pressure. Yulianto Budi Setiawan in his research entitled Analysis of Critical Discourse on Gender-Based Violence Reporting in the Suara Merdeka Daily Newspaper, said that media workers still had not received workshops on gender. Instead of giving empathy to victims, newspapers tend to misrepresent violence so they tend to put women in disgrace. The media portrays women as objects of sexual fantasy, harassment, and violence. The problem is how the media presents violence in their news. There seems to be no empathy for victims of violence against women.

The study used a qualitative descriptive technique with a critical perspective, this study analyzed qualitative data according to Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. After exploring the texts presented at Suara Merdeka daily news, the study found gender bias. This study shows that most journalists at Suara Merdeka found almost no opportunity to attend gender-related workshops, so the news output they produced did not cover both sides of the story.

**METHOD**

The study entitled Blaming The Victim in M.F.A Films is qualitative research with a critical paradigm. The researcher wanted to find out how rape victims were shown in the M.F.A film by using semiotics to analyze the dominant structure and ideology contained in the text. This study uses Roland Barthes's semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs. Signs are interpreted as stimuli that refer to something that is not themselves (Morrisan, 2013: 32).

According to Barthes, the sign in a media actually represents an ideology or connotation that represents the dominant ideology of society (Griffin, 2012: 332). Barthes tries to uncover the meanings contained in the text, by grouping meaning into two parts, namely the meaning of denotation and the meaning of connotation. Denotation means literal meaning, while connotation meaning is the second meaning or cultural meaning or meaning determined by the community. In denotation meaning, language presents conventions or social codes explicitly, where the meaning of the sign appears based on the relation of markers and markers. While the connotation meanings present codes whose meanings are implicit. The implicit meaning is a code system whose sign has a charge of hidden meanings. This hidden area according to Barthes is an area of ideology or mythology.

In his analysis, Barthes decapitated the text into lexis units. Lexia is reading units. This beheading cannot be denied to be arbitrary in extreme differences. Lexia includes a few words or sometimes a few sentences. Lexia is just a wrapper of semantic content, the outline of a plural text, arranged like a possible (but controlled, proven truth by a systematic reading) under the flow of continuous discourse. This means that the analysis with Roland Barthes's semiotics in the first stage is to cut off arbitrary text (at will). The decapitation of the text is to determine Lexia, both in the form of a word to a paragraph (Barthes, 1974: 13-14).

In this analysis the data is in the form of text, the researcher will select the text, read the media text of the film entitled M.F.A., by retyping, copying the text to be studied. The next step is to find and analyze the meaning of denotations, connotations, and myths. Then interpret the idea or idea and dominance of power (ideology) behind the oppressive phenomenon experienced by the main character.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this patriarchal Indonesian culture, rape tends to be seen from the point of view of men. Rape cases are always seen from the eyes of men. As a result, women are often victims. To explain how rape victims are displayed, 4 scenes are taken, which have blaming messages from victims of rape victims who have been analyzed using Roland Barthes's Semiotic theory. The results show that scenes in the M.F.A film represent women as objects.

The four scenes has been chosen by the researchers showed that female rape victims were displayed as if they were enjoying the sexual relationship. Because the victim is considered to be enjoying it, the victim must be responsible for the sexual violence that befell him. This is where blaming the victim happens. Almost all the women who were raped in the film could not provide significant resistance. They were beaten, even given drinks so they could not do anything. This is then mistaken for sexual pleasure by the victim. The resistance that Noelle tried to do did not work because the environment was not supportive.

In conducting studies on the representation of women victims of rape in the M.F.A film, use the point of view of understanding representation as a view to see the phenomena in the film. This view describes the reality of someone's life, group, or other things in the media. There is something wrong with the representation carried out by the media, because the media only focuses on the upper class (men), and marginalizes the lower class (women). This representation study is very interesting to see there is an ideology hidden behind a questionable text.

Women have strategic positions in critical studies. Regarded as the second gender, the female figure is often the object of oppression, both directly and indirectly. Unconsciously, women are positioned to follow the flow of male thinking. So at that point, women are trapped in a patriarchal perspective. This representation study can see the point of view of the film in positioning a woman who is a rape victim who is fighting for a seemingly lame justice.

Frank Ankersmit (in Webb, 2009: 26) explains the reason why we need representation is that it allows us to obtain and express insight into the nature of a phenomenon. That is why humans have artistic representations, historical representations, and political representations. But representation in other places is just as important. Representation defines reality, this shows reality as it is. But more than that; It also makes and shapes the human understanding of reality. We can know and access the world only through language, or representation.

1. **Representation of Women as a Rape Victims**

Women look like in a media which in this case is the film M.F.A. There are two interesting points of view about representation. First, whether a person or group is shown the media properly. This word as it should be 'refers to whether a person or group is displayed for what it is or is actually defaced. Second, how the representation is displayed. How an idea related to a person or group is conveyed through the media, whether with photos, pictures, writings, accents, or in the form of videos. How media represent someone or group is important in this study of representation (Webb, 2009: 65).

The first point of view on the concept above answers that female victims of rape are usually introverted types. They are the types of people who are covered in their personal lives. After being raped the woman is shown with a face that is severely depressed. But they become strong and strong after they don't get the rights they should get. But there are a number of choices faced by these women, namely they still try to fight for their rights and take revenge (Noelle), choose to forget the past and open a new life (Skye), and decide to hide their past in order to stay strong against the world (Lindsey).

Extras in this film are shown to be very passive. They formed a discussion group based on the women's freedom movement and fighting for women's rights. But what happened was that this group was trapped in patriarchal thinking. They try to attract the attention of men with a variety of displays that actually trap them from the perspective of men.

The second representation perspective in the M.F.A. film, women are shown as sexual objects of men. Women are represented as having to accept anything, including their fate when they are raped by men. They are not given the strength to resist and only accept it. Even in the eyes of the law, women who are rape victims are still weak and are actually cornered. It is as if the reporter is a sensitive person and enjoys sexual relations. Reports of rape are considered fabricated and have no strong evidence. Women are depicted as helpless when they have to fight for their rights, to give appropriate punishment to men who rape.

Noelle as a woman was shown to have 'power' when she was a victim of rape. He struggled hard to demand justice for himself. In an environment that is not supportive, he does not give up to fight for his rights. Initially, he was a closed person, then his personality changed after he experienced this bitter thing.

Often women are trapped in the world of men and don't realize it. There are many aspects in this world that force women into this patriarchal circle. Language has an important role in leading women to enter into a patriarchal perspective. Language is usually a vehicle of representation, even though the language is not always representational. There are three language approaches in representation (Webb, 2009: 43). (1) The first approach is related to reflectivity. Language only reflects or resembles the meaning that exists in the world. Not all words reflect something that already exists in reality. Some of them create reality. Language cannot only reflect or resemble a situation in the real world. Language can only be used to frame and interpret objects. (2) The second approach to language is a deliberate approach. This is based on the assumption that each communication action conveys exactly what is intended by the communicator. As written by Stuart Hall (in Webb, 2009: 43), it is the speaker and author who imposes its uniqueness in the world through language. But there is a problem with this approach. In a condition, speakers and writers can only communicate in language codes and are limited in what they can say and how they can say it. (3) The third approach is the constructor approach to language. This includes the notion that meaning is not reflected or forced, but is actually built, in the process of making representations.

Language seems to be a spear ready to unleash rape victims. The stairs have fallen, this is the right word to be pinned on the victims of rape who are actually cornered and as if they are useless humans. The language used by the school to scrutinize the rape shows that the community still looks down on rape victims.

*"When did this happen? Does he use a condom?*

 *Has anyone seen this incident? How much have you been drinking?*

*Have you ever said 'no'? Are you sure you said 'no' and he heard it? Don't be too sensitive. You want it too right? "*

These are excerpts from a school official when Noelle reported her case to school. As if confirming what Skye had said, that he would only become trash when he reported the rape case to school. This expression is a series of words that they use to colonize rape victims. In fact, they did not recommend a post mortem or other medical examination of victims of rape.

This language intimidates victims of rape that are not supposed to be said to a woman who becomes a victim. Even not only in language, taking pictures in this film is very demeaning to the woman who is a victim of rape. Women are likened to a slice of meat that has no taste and must accept anything when it experiences rape. Women who are victims of rape are considered weak and cheap. Even girls also hate rape victims, because they like to seduce but when invited to have sex they refuse, even though they still want it.

Other women look down on rape victims. They see rape victims as bad women. They considered women unable to do much when they were raped. They accept the patriarchal view that women are always in a guilty position. On the other hand, they think men are people who are lucky, can do whatever they like.

Women in this film are not free or not as capable as men to say what they want. In this film women are shown as the women find it difficult to express themselves even to men who are already known. Noelle failed to resist sexual violence by her college friends. In Luke's rape, Noelle is described as a woman who can only say "wait a minute" and "no, no, no". Noelle is described as a woman who does not have "power". When Noelle tried to fight with energy, Luke as a man was described as having more physical strength so Noelle was helpless. The jurisdiction used in this film also shows that good women must obey men. Like Luke's saying "be a good girl", be a good girl, okay "," be a good girl now ". The same sentence is said repeatedly so as to emphasize, that good women are women who obey what men want.

In the other sides, women are shown willingness to be raped. Many times Noelle said no. Even repeatedly asking Luke not to rape him. Noelle also tried repeatedly to escape Luke's grasp. But in the end, Luke was shown successfully raping Noelle. Noelle's failure to fight Luke was like Noelle was finally willing and willing to be raped. Women are displayed as objects, which can be treated as they please. Women do not have authority over their own bodies. In the film M.F.A., Noelle is portrayed as a woman who was enjoyed by Luke from the beginning. During the lecture, Luke was described as having enjoyed Noelle's beauty and body with his eyes. Then proceed to Luke's party invitation to Noelle who turns out to only channel sexual desire. Even after breaking his lust, Luke casually told Noelle to go home. Women in this film are described only as goods, as objects that can be enjoyed at any time. Women are described as having no rights to their own bodies.

Women who are rape victims are described as weak, helpless women. When Noelle tries to report the incident of raping her to the school, Skye Noelle's roommate banned her, arguing that she was worried that Noelle would be labeled a cheap and crazy woman. Because Skye had a friend who shared the same fate with Noelle when reporting it was considered a cheap woman. Skye even convinced Noelle that it was only one night's love. It is okay. If you report to the school, it will destroy Noelle's entire life. Then the best choice is to be quiet. Women who are rape victims are considered strange, and it is not natural if they are angry or demand justice after being raped. Luke just laughed out loud when Noelle demanded an apology from him. According to Luke, Noelle is too sensitive as a woman. According to Luke, what happened was not rape because he considered Noelle to also enjoy the relationship.

 In front of the law, women who are raped are perceived as cheap women. As Lindsey (other rape victims) experienced even during the investigation process, the statements made led to the accusation that the rape victim had had sex before with another man. The police also consider women victims of rape to be basically seducers and teasers. As a result, the perception was that the rape carried out by men was nothing but the fault of the women as well.

The resistance of female victims of rape ultimately does not work because there is no support from the environment, even from the women themselves. Patriarchal ideologies that have taken root in society have helped perpetuate discrimination against women. When Noelle was about to report her case to the school, Skye Noelle's roommate forbade her. Lindsey, another rape victim when met by Noelle, also admitted that she regretted reporting her case to the police, because she was the one who was blamed. When Noelle tried to enter the women's community in the campus, inviting her to do a resistance movement also did not get a good response. In the end, Noelle's struggle was stopped, and Noelle chose to fight in her own way (killing the rapists).

1. **Radical Feminism Perspective**

Noelle's struggle to get her rights did not get a good response from her environment. He got a lot of obstacles, even from his own friends invited to be quiet and accept everything that had happened. However, Noelle continued to move and fight for her rights, women's rights to be protected from sexual predators. Noelle's efforts and efforts to get justice were not initially considered, and then drew people's attention.

When comparing women's rights groups and women's liberation groups, then connecting the first group with liberal feminism, and the second with radical feminism. But radical feminism focuses more on liberating women's rights to violence. Because Marilyn French attributed differences in men and women more to biology (nature / nature), than to socialization (nurture / nurture), I looked at French more as a radical-cultural feminist.

According to Alison Jaggar and Paula Rothenberg (In Tong, 2005: 69) claim for the interpretation of oppression against women. (1) That women have historically been the first oppressed group. (2) That oppression of women is the most widespread, and exists in almost every known society. (3) That oppression of women is the deepest which means, that this oppression is the most difficult form of oppression to be abolished, and cannot be eliminated by other social class changes, for example by the abolition of the class of society. (4) That oppression of women causes the worst suffering for victims, both quantitatively and qualitatively, even though the suffering caused arises unconsciously due to sexist prejudice, both from the oppressor and from the victim's side. (5) That oppression of women provides a conceptual understanding of other forms of oppression.

With the desire of men to master the combination of "women/nature" outwardly patriarchal, a hierarchical system that respects the so-called power-over. In the beginning, patriarchy was developed to ensure the survival of human communities, power-over quickly became under patriarchy, a value that grew only for the experience of being a powerful person, legal holder, boss, or number one person in the hierarchical status sequence ( Tong, 2005: 81).

French claims that feminine values must be reintegrated into male societies that have been created by patriarchal ideology. If we want to see equality, according to French, one must respect love and gentleness, as well as the willingness to share, and maintain each other equally with control and structure, sense of belonging and status.

Radical feminist perpective of sexuality has the idea that women must have control of their bodies. According to Ferguson (in Tong, 2005: 93) heterosexual relations in general are characterized by the ideology of sexual objectification (men as subjects/masters, women as objects/slaves), which supports male sexual violence against women. This is what Noelle fight for, that men are not entitled to control the female body. Sexual violence or rape experienced by Noelle is also a form of male control over women's bodies which tends to harm them. Finally men act unilaterally on female sexuality and hold control over it.

In the other argument, feminists must resist any sexual practices that support or normalize male sexual violence (Tong, 2005: 94). Through the women's community on her collage, Noelle tried to voice women's rights and refused firmly how pressure was put on women. But the community is still silent and follows a patriarchal view that tends to harm women. Women generally do not realize that they live in a male perspective, so they justify many things to happen in their perspective.

The ideal sexual relationship is between equal partners, who both give consent, who are emotionally involved and do not take part in polarized roles (Tong, 2005: 94). Inequality in the rape experienced by Noelle is a violation of the rights of one's body. Luke did not ask Noelle for approval of the harassment. he forced Noelle to obey his words and asked him to shut up and accept everything.

In the case experienced by Noelle, women really do not have a role and power over their sexuality. As if he did not have the power to enjoy his own body, women were considered only as objects of power over men. Even when he was raped by men, he did not have enough strength to fight. Finally, he only accepted all of the men's treatments. The female victim of rape was then pressured by patriarchal ideology that in fact she really wanted it. Not to mention the public accusations in the event of rape because women are 'cheap' or 'crazy'.

Allegations of rape victims indicate that the public sees women not as victims of rape but as a trigger for rape. When reporting on the incident, Noelle was seen as a person who was too sensitive and considered unable to enjoy the process of unwanted relations. Whereas on the contrary, he should have the right to be served in accordance with applicable legal procedures.

Because of his very clear dislike of masculine power-over values. French claims that a human who has love, must balance himself is not between pleasures with power-over, but between pleasure with the version that has been defined from the power-over that he labeled as power-to. French emphasized that it is good for humans to have power, and also enjoyment in their lives, provided that the power that emerges is not as a power-over, but rather as a desire to create power-to. Recognizing that humans may never be whole, can erase their desire to be number one, French stressed that it is possible for humans to limit their competitive impulses, and then grow the capacity for collaboration between them.

1. **Women's Solidarity and Sisterhood**

Interesting thing in the film M.F.A. is how Noelle finished off the perpetrators of rape. The man who raped himself, the rapists Lindsey, and the person who raped and made Skye depressed. The way Noelle killed was very tragic like a psychopath, he did not know forgiveness. All he did was a sense of disappointment towards the community that did not provide a defense for the rape that had befallen him and his friends. People blame and judge rape victims.

In the concept of sisterhood, when humans face each other, one can change that relationship. Sisterhood was born because of the concept of motherhood. Apart from being a union of mothers, women build brotherhood, women's unity dedicated to women. This sisterhood sometimes involves mutual nurturing and mutual teaching for mothers. Sometimes brotherhood makes a sister (not biological), stand by someone to comfort her or help her do what must be done. Sometimes brotherhood means being a good friend, a place to hear or lean your shoulders. Sometimes brotherhood invites you to have fun together, work on tasks to raise children and have fun and friendly households. Sometimes brotherhood means rolling up your sleeves and diving into unpleasant things, whether it is cleaning up basement floods or exhausting marriages that are done together (Solomon, 2007: 196). Sisterhood means binding, defending, helping, and helping (female) brothers who are in need. Live a day with a variety of jobs ranging from the fun to the annoying things together.

Sometimes a woman stands alone, is not recognized in her vision, and only brotherhood will support her in developing her talents and talents and fulfilling her goals (Solomon, 2007: 200). When depressed thinking about what happened that night, Noelle told Skye everything, because she was sure that she could not bear the burden alone. As a friend or sibling (not biological), Skye keeps trying to strengthen Noelle. Their relationship is very close, because they spend a lot of time together and share anything, either fun or unpleasant things.

One of the beautiful things about brotherhood is that a person does not need to be anything that cannot be fulfilled for what is needed in a relationship. In fact, a woman's weakness creates the need for other people's strengths, and vice versa (Solomon, 2007: 201). A woman has had a hard time with her family. Her husband was fired, his son died, even his parents divorced, women's brotherhood could fulfill their needs and provide comfort. They could live with relatives, but it didn't feel as comfortable as being together in a brotherhood of women. Troubled women can just walk aimlessly for a few moments, but they will find a place to go home to their relatives.

*Sisterhood* telling each other when needed, regardless of age or social strata. A group of women of various ages and incomes can embrace young pregnant women. They provide voluntary assistance, giving space for girls to talk about their fears, hopes, and dreams without judging them. Every older woman chooses a young woman to be a mentor, promises their commitment over the long term and they are serious (Solomon, 2007: 203).

**CONCLUSION**

Semiotic analysis on the text of blaming the victim film M.F.A shows that female rape victims must suffer the consequences themselves. The impact that was received by the victim was the assumption from the community that the victim was a seductress, seducer, and therefore worthy of being raped (Blaming the Victim). Rape victims were also labeled as cheap women. If the victim reports the incident of rape that happened to him, then he will be labeled as a "crazy" woman. Women who are victims of rape are also considered to enjoy the rape committed by men (Blaming the Victim). This assumption was accepted by the community because the victim was considered not to refuse, did not fight when raped. In the realm of law, only women victims are tried, while male rapists are free to walk without guilt, and are free to continue to live without any burden.

 Rape is the worst thing that happens to a woman. Rape victims are described as guilty people. This is the picture of the media today. Women who are rape victims should not be harassed and humiliated. They have experienced bad times, not to make their lives worse because of the stigma of society. Women victims of rape are human beings who must be protected. At school, educators should be able to protect their students. If their students are raped the school should provide assistance both physically and materially. In the jurisdiction, women who are rape victims also have the same position in the eyes of the law. Law enforcers should be fair. Justice for women victims of rape is by not giving questions that corner the victim.

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