

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN MIMI LEDER'S *ON THE BASIS OF SEX* MOVIE

Setiana Sri Wahyuni Sitepu, Dina Diandora

Universitas Pamulang

anasitepu21@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is aimed to discuss the forms of gender discrimination against women in the film "*On the Basis of Sex*" directed by Mimi Leder's. This research focuses on the analysis of visual images that represent social life or social action in the film. In the film analyzes a woman who wants to get the same rights to men by putting forward Beauvoir's theory. The emergence of this form of discrimination still has a relationship and influence with each other and also has a perspective or model of understanding in looking at gender. One of them in this film is that men who dominate women. The theory used is Simone De Beauvoir state that in some societies had successful revolutions in other parts of the world but still the status of the subordination of women remains and the male domination has been an acceptable and invisible reality.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Male Domination, Second Sex, Simone De Beauvoir.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of modernization, the community has undergone many changes. Discourse about women is a very interesting conversation. The study of women today has come to the attention of many parties. The great concern of course departs from conditions which state that women are still in conditions that are excluded, marginalized, and lagging both economically, politically and culturally. A patriarchal culture that has influenced the basic thoughts of all societies about human nature and its relationship with nature. Body have actions that refer specifically to women while men with thoughts.

According to Fakhri (2008: 8) in the book (Rokhmansyah, 2016) for understanding the concept, it is necessary to distinguish the use of the words gender and sex (gender). The definition of sex is the nature or division of two sexes of humans that are biologically determined to be attached to a particular sex. These tools are biologically attached to humans, women and men forever. It is permanently unchanged and is a biological provision or is often said to be a divine or natural provision.

Another concept is the concept of gender, which is a trait that is inherent in men and women who are placed socially and culturally. Inequality towards women is not only in reality and material, but also

ideologically and discourse which a view is taken to see women, as well as women in literary works. Nowadays the role of films is also a pioneer of gender justice that is increasingly needed and must be tried to always be realized. This is because the role of mass media is a very effective way to form opinions. Support conditions for the reconstruction of gender reality itself, so that gender equality is balanced between men and women. So, approaches are needed to uphold gender justice in every image of men and women.

Especially for women, who are more often victims of discrimination or gender injustice. So that stereotypes, marginalization, subordination, violence, and other social inequalities affecting women can be minimized or even able to be erased. However, in the reality that exists in the film industry today, there are still many films that show discrimination or gender injustice for women. Both the film production in the country and abroad. The image of women in various films is still widely represented as having a negative, weak image, etc.

One of the figures of existentialist feminism, Simone de Beauvoir, said that the world of women will always be linked in the world of men as evidence of male

mastery over women. Beauvoir gave an example to the institution of marriage which is an institution that seizes women's freedom. The work of *The Second Sex* (Bauer, 2001) is one of the concrete proofs of Simone's thought that uses the philosophy of existentialism in explaining his theory about women. So that his thoughts can have a significant influence and encourage the emergence of various women's movements that still occur today.

According to Beauvoir, women must be given the same freedom as the freedom given to men to determine their own lives. So, for Beauvoir, the institution of marriage is an institution that seizes women's freedom, where women voluntarily exchange their freedom with calmness, establishment, and satisfaction in marriage. Women, with all their polemics, are becoming increasingly interesting to study, discuss, and discuss in various opportunities, both formal and informal forums.

Including the issue of women's representation in the film. The drama films are also popping up more and more nowadays. Including those that raise the life story of a woman who is treated discriminatory. One of the films about a woman's life is a film called *On the basis*

of sex. The film *On the Basis of Sex* by director Mimi Leder's. This film illustrates clearly how gender discrimination occurs in America. Not only the law or the acceptance of new students, the lecturers were also reluctant to give opportunities to students. Students are difficult to be actively involved in class because they are ignored. When looking for work, Ruth was always harassed with questions that were not related to her academic abilities. He was asked when she had another child or why a Jewish woman dared to enter (and apply for work there).

Not only that, she became a role model for women who took education in the field of law because of the extraordinary career achievements. Ruth is also proof that a feminist as well as a mother and wife are able to carry out their roles well, supported by a good support system. The film "On the Basis of Sex" won the 2019 AARP Movies for Grownups Awards, nominated for Movies for Grownups Award and best director for Mimi Leder's and Best Grownup Love story and other awards.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Conversation Dominance

Conversation dominance is defined as the tendency of one speaker to

control the conversation actions of other speakers during an interaction. The act of dominating the conversation began with a woman named Ruth who was in a room. In the film *On the Basis of Sex* directed by Mimi Leder's, the dominance of this conversation that reflects a situation and expression are shown as shown below:



The picture above uses long-shot medium cinematography, in the picture shows an awkward and unfamiliar situation. The expression can be seen from a woman named Ruth, she felt something that was not appropriate to feel that she felt strange, felt ignored, and so forth. She could only bow her head and put her hands forward to overcome and ignore her gaze of awkwardness and shame in her surroundings. The men around her seemed to belittle her as the only woman in the building. From the clothes, Ruth was wearing formal clothes and let her hair down. And all male character wear suits and ties, from which clothes can be seen that they are on formal occasions.

Gender discrimination and also male domination can be seen clearly how they chat with each other, exchange ideas, or even joke with friends next to them. The woman was ignored without a word from their conversation. In this case, the discrimination or treatment of women dominated by men is very clear and can be seen in Ruth's life. The treatment of discrimination has increasingly taken control of women's lives, many of them trying to show themselves by doing things that are contrary to what the community outlines against women.

Besides, the situation wherein a room the dominance of the conversation occurred to Ruth. It reflects the state and expression of male domination when a woman named Ruth raises her hand and then a man from the left corner also raises his hand. However, someone at the front chose the man to give his opinion. That happened because of a symbol of power exercised by male domination. It is portrayed in the following picture:



The picture above uses a medium shot long cinematography, which tells the story of some of them who were asked to give an opinion about the problem given by someone in front of them. In this film, there is a law class at Harvard that is rarely sought by a woman, but Ruth tries to dismiss that women can also be in a law class. Ruth tried to raise her hand to try to give an opinion and soon a man also raised his hand. However, someone in the front chose a man to give an opinion. In a conversation dominance mentioned that men are better in opposing some women's arguments. Ruth's expression in the picture reflected hatred by bowing her head without looking at someone in front of her and the male speaker.

While the man with a high portion of his body, manly and also carrying a book beside him showed his strength in a state in the room. He shows by putting his face forward, which means that he shows dominance of strong, intelligent conversation that can only be done by men when arguing. However, the

dominance of the conversation in that place was very clear that they did not want the woman to raise her hand to give an opinion. It could be seen from the male audience that their expressions were clear from how some of them tilted their heads a little stating that he was not sure, and some male spectators did not even see his face, and some of them saw him with judgmental faces like a small grin showing that they underestimated him. It was seen on the part of the man who looked at him, showing as if what he wanted in this place was dominated by men. Some of them saw it and some ignored it. Then it was very clear to see a man next to him who moved his hands forward, then bowed his head. The man showed that he ignored what he was talking about.

2.2 Verbal Sexual Harassment

In this situation, verbal sexual harassment that occurs in the public space uses many symbols such as whistling, shouting, teasing gestures, and others. This interaction arises when women are in the public sphere and then men throw verbal symbols of abuse at women. In the film *On the Base of Sex*, verbal sexual abuse occurs to Ruth and her daughter. That is reflected in the following picture:



The picture above uses a medium shot long cinematography and shows that there has been sexual harassment in public spaces. In this situation, Ruth and her daughter were walking but then several men whistled to call them both. The expression shown by Ruth's child was very angry when the men spoke improperly to her and her mother. She grips the umbrella so tightly in accordance with the anger she makes when she sees and hears a saying of sexual harassment. The dominance of men is so clear that the treatment of men is increasingly taking control of women's lives, many of them trying to show themselves by doing things that are contrary to what society outlines to women. The two men were wearing contractor worker clothing, they were from the middle class. The two men looked normal and seemed to be happy with the joke they were expressing.

2.3 Stereotyping

In the final analysis, there is a picture that presents male dominance in

the stereotype in the film *On the Basis of Sex* by Mimi Leder's. That is reflected in the last picture. In the picture, there is a group of men and women named Ruth taking the lift. That can be seen in the following picture:



The picture above uses long-shot medium cinematography, the picture shows the situation in a lift dominated by a man. A group of men are wearing neat suits which prove that they are all office workers. It was also clear that they were all from the upper classes. A woman named Ruth also wears a suit and neatly dressed. In the picture tells that Ruth will go to court to get justice for women. However, many strange things were shown by some of the people behind the woman. Three men from the right showed a very strange and surprising face; they focus on the woman's appearance. Like eyebrows and eyes that lower his eyes and focus on what he is wearing.

This shows that the man felt that there was something strange about what

she was wearing, namely his clothes. Men seem to feel high because the nature of a woman is to look after her home or whatever. However, it was different from Ruth who positioned herself to achieve what she wanted as well as other women. Women are always positioned as weak individuals; this influences the application of ideology which places women always below men, both in social, economic, political and power classes. While in the picture of women and also the theory used shows that dismissed the notion that women are weak, he also tried to fight the patriarchal culture in his environment.

Simone de Beauvoir revealed that women who realize their freedom, they will be able to freely determine their way of life, so according to Beauvoir women can go to work and actualize themselves optimally; women can be intellectual and do not have to worry about their abilities if seen from their biological limitations. The most important woman must be able to refuse to be an object; women can also make men as objects.

3. CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that *On the Basis of Sex* movie represents very strong gender

discrimination from stories or visual images. In this study, five images were analyzed to find out how male domination occurred in the United States, where there was a person named Ruth who defended her rights and desires as a woman. Then through visual images, Ruth does all that. Until finally he can equate what is part of women. The dominance of men against women is evident in various forms, namely the dominance of conversation, sexual harassment verbal and stereotype. The dominance of the conversation occurred to Ruth in a legal classroom. Then sexual harassment verbal occurred to Ruth and her child who were walking on the

outskirts of the city. The last thing stereotype experienced by Ruth was in the lift along with male domination.

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