

THE PORTRAYAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OPPRESSION TOWARD SEYMOUR FLEMING AS FEMALE CHARACTER IN *THE SCANDALOUS LADY W* FILM

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to portray the psychological oppression in the *The Scandalous Lady W* film, which is experienced by Seymour Fleming as the main woman character. This research used a theory of Psychological Oppression by Sanda Lee Bartky. The method that had been used by the researcher was the qualitative method. As the result, this research shows that there are three components of psychological oppression portrayed in the film. First, stereotyping which shows that all women who lived in that era were considered as property to their husband. Second, cultural domination which is shown the domination of men culture in life with their authorities and positions. Lastly, sexual objectification which portrayed by Seymour Fleming as the main woman character in this film was sexually objected by her husband. She was oppressed for having an intimate relationship through twenty-seven men chosen by her husband during their marriage life.

Keywords: Psychological Oppression, *The Scandalous Lady W* Film, Property, Sexually Objected, Marital Life

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan penindasan psikologis dalam film *The Scandalous Lady W* yang dialami oleh Seymour Fleming sebagai tokoh utama wanita. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Psychological Oppression oleh Sanda Lee Bartky. Metode yang digunakan peneliti adalah metode kualitatif. Hasilnya, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada tiga komponen penindasan psikologis yang digambarkan dalam film. Pertama, stereotyping yang menunjukkan bahwa semua perempuan yang hidup pada zaman itu dianggap sebagai milik suaminya. Kedua, dominasi budaya yang ditunjukkan dengan dominasi budaya laki-laki dalam kehidupan dengan otoritas dan posisinya. Terakhir, objektivitas seksual yang diperankan oleh Seymour Fleming sebagai tokoh utama wanita dalam film ini ditentang secara seksual oleh suaminya. Dia ditindas karena memiliki hubungan intim melalui dua puluh tujuh pria yang dipilih oleh suaminya selama kehidupan pernikahan mereka.

Kata kunci: Penindasan Psikologis, Film *The Scandalous Lady W*, Properti, Obyek Seksual, Kehidupan Perkawinan

A. INTRODUCTION

Literature has been widely known by many people and experts. According to Klarer the word 'literature' is derived from the word "littera" in Latin which means letter (1). It refers to the written or printed words. However, now, the term "literature" is more focused and restricted to merely imaginative works, which comes up from the imaginative mind of the story writers. It is written in Klarer's book that there are four genres of literature divided into three classical genres of literature, they are epic or prose which replaced by the new prose form of novel in eighteenth century known also as fiction, drama, and poetry. And film as the fourth textual in the wider sense of literature. Klarer stated that "film is predetermined by literary techniques; conversely, literary practice developed particular features under the impact of film" (56) it means that film has given the new impact in the development of literary work.

The film divided into fictional and non-fictional. Some films could be fictional while some others could be taken from some true stories. In fact, every film always has something to tell, it might consist of the social, politics, reality, and over. Furthermore, the film is not only about entertained but also has a message, and it is commonly consists of the social issues. One of the most issues which commonly brought up in the classical and modern film is about feminist. There are many kinds of the issues about feminism appear in some films.

Psychological oppression is not merely a matter of oppression, violence, or coercion of something that must be done legally, culturally, and the rules that applied. Bartky stated that "psychological oppression is institutionalized and systematic; it serves to make the work of domination easier by breaking the spirit of the dominated and by rendering them incapable of understanding the nature of those agencies responsible for their subjugation" (23). However, this can happen to things that are actually natural and even normal to do, but are misused and forced with the support of existing culture and rules, so this becomes psychological oppression of the object which impacts fear, regret, and the down self-esteem.

According to the background above, the researcher decided to develop a research that should reveal the portrayal of psychological oppression in life of character Seymour Fleming as a main character in the Scandalous Lady W Film. Moreover, it also will reveal the oppression which happens to the main woman character in the film. And the researcher hopes this research will be able to contribute towards the study of feminism in the form of supporting references that can be used by the future researchers, especially in the term of psychological oppression.

B. RELATED LITERATURE

1. Psychological Oppression

This type of oppression is seems very far from physical oppression, but the impact caused by this oppression is enough to imprint and have a significant negative impact on women. Whether consciously or not, this kind of oppression

ultimately affects the erosion of the mental, sexual, and self-esteem of women, even causing de-personalizing of the woman herself.

Bartky in her book *Femininity and Domination* which published in 1990 considers three different components of what she called “Psychological Oppression” of women, they are: stereotyping, cultural domination, and sexual objectification.

a. Stereotyping

The stereotypes that sustain sexism are similar in many ways to those that sustain racism. Bartky stated that “stereotyping is morally reprehensible as well as psychologically oppressive on two counts, at least.

First, it can hardly be expected that someone who has stereotypical beliefs about a person similar to each other will understand all their needs or respect their rights. Second, the object of some stereotypes, being forced either consciously or not, to believe what is believed by people in general, which will slowly create a crisis of confidence to be able to live according to their own desires and hopes. Both counts above could cause the oppressed people find it difficult to achieve an authentic choice or self” (24) . In all ways, the stereotype prevents people from determining themselves.

Moreover, Bartky said that female stereotypes threaten the autonomy of women not only by virtue of their existence but also by virtue of their content. In the conventional portrait, women deny their femininity when they undertake action that is too self-regarding or independent (24).

b. Cultural Domination

To claim that women are victims of cultural domination is to claim that all the items in the general life of our people like our language, our institutions, our art and literature, our popular culture. That all to a greater or lesser degree, manifest male supremacy.

According to Bartky, “Women are not now in possession of an alternate culture, a culture which or even if regarded by everyone, as decidedly inferior to the dominant culture” (25). Certainly in some respect people live in the patriarchal culture where the condition of women is like the condition of a colonized people.

c. Sexual Objectification

Women of all races and ethnicities are not only subject of stereotyping and cultural domination but to sexual objectification as well. A woman is sexually objectified when her sexual parts or sexual function are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduce to the status of mere instruments or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her. Bartky argued that “on this definition, then, the prostitute would be a victim of sexual objectification, the female breeder, and the bathing beauty” (26).

In the case of sexual objectification there are times where women looked this case as an oppression while some others not, this might be necessary to distinguish in which situation this sexual objectification is become oppressive and which is not. The identification of a woman with her sexuality becomes oppressive, one might venture, when such an identification becomes habitually extended into every area of her experience (26).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

In this research, qualitative method was used as a research design and the data were displayed descriptively in the form of words. Mack asserted that this method (qualitative) will generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analyzing. Qualitative research was also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research (11). This method was dominating by the description of words not in number like quantitative method. It meant that qualitative method was a proper method to be used in this study because the researcher collected the data from the analysis and after that seeking the interpretation.

Based on the explanation above, qualitative method was clearly compatible with this study because the researcher wanted to describe about the case of psychological oppression that happened toward the female character Seymour Fleming in *the Scandalous of Lady W* film.

2. Data and Data Sources

The data of this research had been taken from the film script that consisted of actions, words, and sentences. Indeed, it could be dialogue, action or narration that portrayed the issue of psychological oppression toward Seymour Fleming as the main woman character in the film.

Then, the data source of this research was *The Scandalous of Lady W* film (2015) directed by Sheree Folkson which was 2015 BBC2 television film.

3. Data Collection

The researcher used the theory of psychological oppression of woman by Sandra Lee Bartky to collect the data. First, the writer watched film really carefully for several times and read the film script as well. It had a function to learn the contents of the film intensively in term to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation on the dialog or the action of the characters. While watching the film, the researcher also wrote down important points and information which were related to psychological oppression. In doing so, the researcher only observed the main character through her dialogues, conversations and interactions with the other characters.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis is how the researcher would process the data that gathered through the observation. Hatch described analysis as organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories (148).

The researcher used the theory of psychological oppression of woman by Sandra Lee Bartky. The researcher analyzed the character of Seymour Fleming based on theory to find all cases that consisted of psychological oppression by watching the film and also read the film script. Then, the researcher made a list of the dialogue and the narration. After that, the researcher narrowed the data to choose the proper data. Then, the researcher analyzed the data that was already found according to the theory. The last but not least, the writer would recheck the data and the analysis in terms to have proper data to be included in this study.

5. Research Instrument

In this study, the research instrument was the researcher himself. The researcher analyzed the film by watching *The Scandalous Lady W* film and reading the film script as the data more than once. After that, the researcher collected the scenes that portrayed psychological oppression toward Seymour Fleming and classified it through the theory of needs

6. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. **The Portrayal of Psychological Oppression toward Seymour Fleming in *The Scandalous Lady W* Film**
 - a. **Stereotyping**

It is a condition where it can hardly be expected that someone who has stereotypical beliefs about a person similar to each other will understand all their needs or respect their rights. Moreover, the object of some stereotypes, being forced either consciously or not, to believe what is believed by people in general, which will slowly create a crisis of confidence to be able to live according to their own desires and hopes.

Both counts from Bartky above could cause the oppressed people to find it difficult to achieve an authentic choice or self. At the beginning of the film, actually in minute 00.01 to 00.15 there is a narration which depicted the condition of stereotyping of women by men which they were all considered as men's property when they are getting married.

Narration : This is a true story

England, 1782

A time when a man's wife was considered to be his property

Much like his home, his land or his cattle

According to the narration, it clearly explained that in the year 1782 in England, most of women are being stereotyped through their married life, they were just like a property to their husband who must obey the order upon them.

b. Cultural Domination

It is a condition where all the items in the general life of our people like our language, institutions, arts, literature, our popular culture manifest of male supremacy. Women are become victims of cultural domination wherein the most place they lived there are many oppression cases towards them because of male was superior. The domination of man is not only widely in range about institution and culture, but also until in the scope of marital life. It is cannot be denied that mostly husband used their dominance to oppress their wife.

Such as captured in minute 09.41 the dialogue between Seymour Fleming known as Lady Worsley with her husband Sir Richard Worsley, they were talking about the opportunity of Sir Richard in the election and the possibility of being a royal household. Lady Worsley asked for accompanying her husband. But unfortunately, with unpleasant gestures her husband gave an answer which meant no. Moreover, Sir Richard oppressed on his wife for not sharing everything about their marital life

Sir Richard Worsley : I dare say when I achieve a rank within the Royal household; I shall be in court most of the time

Seymour Fleming : And I shall be permitted to accompany you?

Sir Richard Worsley : When it is my wish

Madam, our marriage and our frolics are for us and us alone

Seymour Fleming : Of course they are

Sir Richard Worsley : I must know I can rely on you

The previous dialogue portrayed the domination of Sir Richard to decide a choice, without regard to the desires, needs, or reasons for the wife's rejection.

c. Sexual Objectification

A woman is sexually objectified when her sexual parts or sexual function are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduce to the status of mere instruments or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her. In *The Scandalous Lady W* film, there were several scenes that portrayed the indicator of Sexual Objectification.

The sexual objectification indicator portrayed in this film in minute 92.18 it was Marry Marriot, a bathing woman who testified that Sir Richard asked his wife Lady Worsley for being naked and seen by him and George Bisset when they were in Maidstone.

Marry : No sir, she came with *Sir Richard* and *Captain Bisset*. All three, together
Lawyer : And you are sure that you heard *Sir Richard* suggest this?
Marry : Yes, he did
And it was him that asked *Lady Worsley* to open her legs and place her han upon her quimm

It was really unpleasant for *Lady Worsley*, but as she is a wife and it was an order that came from her husband then she did what her husband bidding for her. And in the end, the public knew that *Sir Richard Worsley* himself who debased and devalued his wife by threatening her with oppression that shocked her psychologically.

7. CONCLUSION

The Scandalous Lady W film represented the psychological oppression that portrayed toward the main woman character named *Seymour Fleming*. Indeed, it has been attributed by the theory that related to this issue, and it has been proven by the portrayal of the psychological oppression scenes in the *The Scandalous Lady W* film. Where the primary power and predominance of the character *Sir Richard Worsley* as a husband and a man used his privileges to take charge even to control over, especially to oppress his wife to obey and doing everything he wishes as he knows that his wife had a vow to cherish, love and obey toward him. In this research, all the components of the psychological oppression, which have been described by Bartky, including stereotyping, cultural domination, and sexual subjugation as the key aspects the psychological oppression of the character *Seymour Fleming* are portrayed in the film.

This research particularly focuses on the examination of the psychologically oppressed female character, which is portrayed in the *The Scandalous Lady W* film. Through this research, the researcher has learned many things, especially in understanding the case that involves gender inequality between men and women, and the other type of oppression which apart from body contact violence.

However, the researcher hopes that the result of this research can be useful for the lecturers who concern about this topic to give their contribution, especially for the scholars in the Faculty of Culture Sciences, in order to develop their knowledge about the issue of psychological oppression that portrays in a social environment.

Second, the researcher expects that the next researchers will learn and recognize all the kinds of psychological oppression components acts that have been found in the *The Scandalous Lady W* film and they can apply it to explore the issue of psychological oppression that happens in a social environment as well. Moreover, the researcher hopes that the further researcher will continue to examine this film in various feminist or other ground approach theorists. There are many issues and perspectives, which can be elaborated from *The Scandalous Lady W* film by contributing more research in this film.

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