

ANALYSIS SEMIOTIC OF ROLAND BARTHES ABOUT REPRESENTATION OF BEAUTY PRIVILEGE IN THE MOVIE “SIERRA BURGESS IS A LOSER”

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh permasalahan yang banyak terjadi di lingkungan bahwa wanita yang berpenampilan menarik cenderung akan lebih mendapatkan banyak keuntungan. Banyak yang mengungkapkan bahwa seseorang yang berpenampilan menarik lebih mudah mendapatkan pekerjaan dan seringkali mendapat perlakuan khusus dari orang sekitar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana isu beauty privilege menggunakan teori semiotik Roland Barthes dalam film “Sierra Burgess is a Loser”. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan pendekatan penelitian ini menggunakan semiotik Roland Barthes. Data dalam penelitian ini adalah film “Sierra Burgess is a Loser” yang disutradarai oleh Ian Samuels. Teknik pengumpulan data pada penelitian ini adalah dengan menonton film, membagi film menjadi beberapa adegan berdasarkan masalah penelitian, kemudian menganalisis film menggunakan analisis semiotika Roland Barthes, dan menarik kesimpulan dari hasil analisis. Hasil dari penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa kecantikan tidak bisa diukur dari penampilan seseorang, sedangkan permasalahan beauty privilege dalam film ini adalah seseorang yang berpenampilan menarik akan lebih diuntungkan dari berbagai aspek.

Kata kunci: *Beauty privilege, kecantikan, semiotika Roland Barthes*

Abstract

This research is motivated by problems that often occur in the environment that women who look attractive tend to get more benefits. Many people say that someone who looks attractive was easier to get a job and often gets special treatment from the people around. This research aims to find out how the issue of beauty privilege uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory in the movie of "Sierra Burgess is a Loser". This research used a qualitative descriptive method and this research approach used Roland Barthes' semiotics. The data in this research were taken from the movie of "Sierra Burgess is a Loser" directed by Ian Samuels. The data collection technique in this study is watching the movie, dividing the movie into several scenes based on the research problems, then analyzing the movie using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, and drawing conclusions from the results of the analysis. The results of this research state that beauty can't be measured by a person's

appearance, while the problem of beauty privilege in this movie was someone who looks attractive got more benefit from various aspects.

Keywords: *Beauty, beauty privilege, Roland Barthes Semiotics*

INTRODUCTION

Movie is one of the mass media in the form of audio-visual and is very complex in nature. Movie can be referred to as cinema or motion picture which is interpreted as a work of art from entertainment as well as industrial production. Movie is also the media to convey messages in society (Berger, 2018). Movies are not uncommonly focused on women's lives because they are usually the main attraction for moviegoers. Women have long been shackled by a stigma regarding the standardization of beauty where most women think that beauty is only aimed at women who have white skin, skinny, slim, tall, and without acne. Beauty standards always differ from time to time or always develop according to the times. Beauty is something that is coveted by every woman. According to Sandhy (2016), beauty is often considered relativity. It means, everyone's view of the concept of beauty is different. There are two kinds of beauty, namely inner beauty, and outer beauty. Inner beauty is beautiful because of its essence, such as the beauty of knowledge, reason, and purity of self. People who have inner beauty will look beautiful, noble, and full of charisma. Meanwhile, outer beauty is physical beauty, the appearance that is visible to our five senses. There are people feel unfair and disadvantaged from this. But there are also people who get benefit from this situation. Privileges given to people with attractive faces are called "beauty privileges".

Beauty privilege is a human privilege that is obtained because of their beauty/handsomeness from birth to maturity which sufficiently influences the careers and views of others towards them (Judhita, 2017). Beauty privilege is a term to describe the privileges that are obtained by people who are born beautiful or have a beautiful physical appearance in society's environment, both women and men with attractive looks will be prioritized. In the context of beauty privilege, someone who is attractive or attractive will be treated better or more privileged than someone less attractive. It happens because the quality of the face can affect social perception. The existence of privileges for these attractive people makes social life seem unfair and discriminatory. Privileges are only often obtained by good-looking people, whereas someone who is born not having such a lucky face will feel social rejection or discrimination such as body shaming and someone who is not attractive will feel insecure (Berry, 2016). Often people feel the impact of this beauty privilege, not only in social circles but also on social media many feel it. Like getting bad comments on posts on their social media accounts and often being compared to people who have attractive looks. The impact of this treatment can lead to psychological disorders in victims, these disorders include eating disorders, being antisocial or not wanting to get along with other people, and self-harm because they feel inappropriate and ashamed of their body shape, which can lead to depression.

Various scientific studies and surveys have proven that appearance is actually directly related to how well a person is accepted by others, both in the social environment and in the scope of work. In addition to sexism, racism, and age which can affect the quality of life, physical attractiveness can also determine, apart from personality, skills, and talents. However, this kind of thinking can lead to prejudice or discrimination based on one's appearance. This can happen in a variety of settings, including on dates, in social settings, and in the workplace. Talking about beauty privileges for women, in mid-2018 a movie appeared that raised women's issues. The movie

of “Sierra Burgess is a Loser” carries the theme of body shaming or bullying of a person's physical form, especially among women today. The movie of “Sierra Burgess is a Loser” has a plot that tells the story of a girl with a fat body, curly hair, and has a hobby of overeating. Besides that, she is a smart girl in her school who is trying to get into the best university. For further research, the writers used a descriptive qualitative method and uses Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to find denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings in the movie. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory focuses on the idea of marking two stages. The significance of the first stage is the relationship between the signifier and the signified in a sign to external reality. Barthes calls this first relationship a denotation. Meanwhile, connotation is the term used by Barthes for the second stage of significance. In the second stage of significance related to content, signs work through myths. After that the researcher can find out how the issue of beauty privilege in the movie “Sierra Burgess is a Loser” uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in the movie.

The result of this research are expected to change the stigma of many people regarding the standard of women's beauty that can not only be seen from their appearance because women's beauty can be seen from their various strengths and also their characteristics. Besides that, the writers hopes this research can help the next researcher advantageously who would like to research similar cases as additional references in literature studies.

METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative descriptive research is a series of activities to obtain data that is as it is without being in certain conditions where the result emphasize meaning. According to Sukmadinata (2011), qualitative descriptive research is intended to describe and illustrate existing phenomena, both natural and humanmade, which pay more attention to characteristics, quality, and interrelationships between activities. In addition, descriptive research does not provide treatment, manipulation, or changes to the variables studied but instead describes a condition as it is. The only treatment given was the research itself, which was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation.

This research also used the theory of semiotics. Semiotics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of a sign, symbol, or symbol in communication theory. The semiotic theory used in this study is the semiotic theory from Roland Barthes had been examined a sign which consist of two increases which are divided into signifiers and signifieds, and then divided into several stages, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. The data in this research were taken from Sierra Burgess is a Loser movie directed by Ian Samuels which released in 2018. This research used one instrument, namely note-taking. The writers looked for the data and when the data is obtained the writers used note-taking techniques to record the data, which is the data in this research are the meanings that appear in the movie.

FINDINGS

This part presented the result of the data analysis based on the research problem. It is divided into two parts that analyzed. The first part was data finding and the second was data discussion. The findings of this research are the scenes that related to the formulation of the research problem.

Scene 1



Picture 1. (doc: Mejesty,2023)

Timecode : 4:20 – 4:34

Context : Three female students who were considered popular in their school deliberately tore up the posters that had been put up by Sierra because they considered Sierra is just a los

Scene 2



Picture 2. (doc: Mejesty,2023)

Timecode : 27:09 – 27:31

Context : Veronica's mother thinks that Veronica is not supposed to skip gymnastic practice because the ideal body for her daughter is important to look attractive. After all, if Veronica doesn't look attractive, men won't glance at her

Scene 3



Picture 3. (doc: Mejesty,023)

Timecode : 33:17 – 34:42

Context : Sierra is an insecure girl because she is not as beautiful as other girls and wants to date a man, but she is not confident, so Sierra pretends to be Veronica who is a beautiful girl.

Scene 4



Picture 4. (doc: Mejesty,2023)

Timecode : 1:25:39 – 1:26:38

Context : Sierra cried and explained to her parents that she felt ashamed to be a teenager who didn't have an attractive face and blamed her mother because her mother had a beautiful face, had a small body while she was not like that.

Scene 5



Picture 5. (doc: Mejesty,2023)

Timecode : 1:34:09 – 1:34:22

Context : Sierra is confused should go to her school's farewell party or not because she thinks only a pretty girl can go to a farewell party with her boyfriend and she is not a pretty girl and doesn't have a boyfriend.

DISCUSSION

The writers discusses the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in the scenes that represent beauty privilege in the movie “Sierra Burgess is a Loser”.

Scene 1

Denotation : At a school, there are three female students (Veronica, Mackenzie, and Chrissy) who are looking at two other students (Sierra and Dan) who have just put up promotional posters for tutoring but the three students tear up the posters.

Connotation : Three female students who were considered popular students in their school deliberately tore up the posters that had been put up by the two students because they did not like them because they considered the two students to be losers.

Myth : It is often discussed in society, especially in the school environment, that someone who does not look attractive will be considered a loser and not even appreciated, even though that person has advantages that others should emulate.

Scene 2

Denotation : After school, Sierra came to Veronica's house to study together, then Veronica's mother saw Veronica in the room with Sierra and looked angry because her daughter chose to study rather than do gymnastics.

Connotation : A mother who thinks that the ideal body shape for her daughter is far more important so that her appearance is attractive. Because if her daughter doesn't look good, men won't even glance at her. Because of that, Veronica's mother was angry at Veronica for skipping gymnastics practice that day.

Myth : Parents often unknowingly burden their children with taking care of themselves so that others don't look bad, on the one hand, a child will feel pressured because of this, and often children will blame themselves for not being able to be what their parents expect.

Scene 3

Denotation : Veronica took Sierra's phone to take a picture of herself and told Sierra to send it to Jamey, then they both agreed to help each other and work together. Sierra helps Veronica study and Veronica helps Sierra date Jamey.

Connotation : Sierra is an insecure girl because she is not as beautiful as other girls and wants to date a man but she is not confident. To be able to date this man, Sierra finally pretended to be Veronica, who was the beautiful the man wanted.

Myth : It is believed that a man will glance at a woman if the woman has an attractive face. Meanwhile, women who do not have attractive faces are often ignored regardless of all the advantages they have. Therefore women are always vying to beautify themselves so that others can see them.

Scene 4

Denotation : Denotation Sierra went home and cried in front of her parents because she felt she was different from her mother. This made her parents sad and feel sorry for Sierra.

Connotation : Sierra returns to her home in tears. Her parents saw Sierra crying and asked their daughter why she was crying. Finally, Sierra explained that she felt ashamed to be a teenager who didn't have an attractive face and blamed her mother because her mother had a beautiful face, had a small body while she was not like that.

Myth : Often a person feels ashamed because she does not meet the standards of beauty that have been believed by society. Beauty standards are used as a benchmark for a woman. Because these beauty standards can make a person insecure and eventually blame himself. Many women out there are trying to do anything to achieve beauty standards so that they no longer consider physical and psychological health, even the economy.

Scene 5

Denotation : Sierra and her parents are having dinner together at the dining table. Sierra was already dressed for the farewell party but had yet to leave.

Connotation : Sierra is having dinner with her parents contemplating whether or not she should go to her school's farewell party. Until finally her father asked why she didn't go and Sierra replied with a disappointed face that she would go alone because no one was waiting for her. Sierra thinks that only pretty girls can go to a school farewell party with their partner whereas she is not a pretty girl and doesn't have a partner.

Myth : At school farewell parties, students usually come with their partners. Therefore, they will find and bring their partner to the party. Because if someone doesn't bring a partner to the school party, people will assume no one wants that person and will be seen as a loser. Not infrequently a man just wants to take a pretty girl to a party because he will feel embarrassed if he brings an unattractive girl to a party.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the five scenes that represent beauty privilege in the movie “Sierra Burgess is a Loser”, all the scenes that were found correspond to the reality of everyday life so being a woman who is not beautiful has a lot of pressure from the people around her. In terms of the denotation of the five scenes in the movie, it illustrates that beauty cannot be measured physically. Then, the issue of beauty privilege in this movie is interpreted as special treatment. Women who have physical beauty will be seen more by men. In terms of the connotations of the five scenes contained in the movie it illustrates that beauty is measured by an attractive appearance. This movie teaches that you don't need to be someone else to be able to make people around you. The myth depicted in the five scenes is that women must look attractive in order to be seen by men. Because men will only glance at beautiful women. Women who have beautiful faces have special privileges in the eyes of the people around them. Beside that, the writers hopes that this research is useful and can be used as a reference for the next researcher who want to raise the issue of beauty privilege.

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