

Panggung

Volume 36

Number 3. Reimagining Arts and Culture: Tradition, Innovation, and Social Transformation

Article 3

September 1, 2026

The Male Gaze and Female Body Politics in 200 *Pounds Beauty*

Hawa La'ala Nabilla Fada¹, Yoggi Bagus Christianto²

¹Cultural Studies Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret

²History Teacher, Surakarta Citizens Foundation, Surakarta Citizens High School

E-mail: lalahlnf@student.uns.ac.id¹, yoggichristianto@gmail.com²

Recommended Citation

Fada, H. L. N., Christianto, Y, B. The Male Gaze and Female Body Politics in 200 *Pounds Beauty*. *Panggung*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Article 3.

Available at: <https://jurnal.isbi.ac.id/index.php/panggung>

The Male Gaze and Female Body Politics in 200 Pounds Beauty

Hawa La'ala Nabilla Fada, Yoggi Bagus Christianto

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the construction of the female body in the film 200 Pounds Beauty through the perspective of the male gaze (Mulvey) and the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) approach. This film was chosen because it represents the transformation of the female body as a path to social acceptance, reflecting the strong influence of beauty standards in popular culture. The study uses a qualitative method with an interpretative paradigm, and integrates semiotic analysis by John Fiske and feminist critical discourse analysis by Michelle Lazar. Data were obtained through documentation techniques by examining scenes, dialogues, and visual elements in the film. The results show that the female body is constructed through two main mechanisms, namely visual and discursive. Visually, the film operates the male gaze by positioning women as objects that are judged based on physical attractiveness, while bodies that do not meet the standards are marginalized. Discursively, this meaning is reinforced through strategies of naming, attribution of traits, and narrative legitimation that normalize beauty standards as something rational and inevitable. The transformation of the main character's body not only produces social visibility but also demonstrates the existence of beauty privilege, where beauty becomes the main capital in gaining recognition. These findings confirm that films not only reflect social reality but also play an active role in reproducing patriarchal ideology that places women in a subordinate position.

Keywords:

Male gaze, body politics, visibility, objectification, discourse

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the media plays a crucial role in disseminating information and serving as an economic channel. Film, as a mass medium, presents representations of everyday life. Sobur states that films generally originate from evolving social realities and are presented on the big screen (Amirah, Mutahir, Dadan, & Rizkidarajat, 2023). Furthermore, films frame reality through societal ideologies and codes, thereby shaping societal paradigms, mindsets, and ideologies (Amal, Wibowo, & Pitana, 2022).

Film is not only entertainment but also a medium for understanding and reflecting on life (Qorib & Hasis, 2023). Film is a creative work of art capable of depicting social conditions, culture, and character to audiences (Sinuraya, Azhar, & Sazali, 2022). As an information medium, film represents social reality (Kamil & Rochmaniah, 2024) and contains specific cultural values and messages. Societal realities are the primary inspiration for filmmaking. Sobur emphasized that films present social realities that shape society's ideological views (Amirah et al., 2023). However, films also often reproduce gender bias. Women are often portrayed as weak, victims of discrimination, and objects of male sexuality (Du & Li, 2024). Sinuraya et al. (2022) explained that in films, female characters are often portrayed as "whiny" and inferior. However, there are also critiques of the standards used to evaluate women (Perkins et al., 2023).

Patriarchal culture is associated with hegemonic masculinity that dominates and maintains gender hierarchies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Films portray strong and powerful male characters, reinforcing male dominance in the social order (Castelnuovo & Guthrie, 2022). Women are often subordinated to men and associated with the domestic sphere and as objects of male sexuality (Rachma & Ulya, 2021). The erotic depiction of women in film reflects patriarchal views (Bayezid, Hossain, & Hasin, 2020). Film provides a space for patriarchy to represent women as passive objects, while men and audiences play an active role, including in narcissistic forms (Xue, 2024). This concept, known as the male gaze, positions women as objects for male visual gratification (Syahbana & Puspita, 2024).

The male gaze also influences beauty standards and remains relevant today (Ariftha & Azhar, 2023). Masculinity shapes the image of the ideal woman, such as fair-skinned, slim, and sexy (Castelnuovo & Guthrie, 2022). Dayanti explains that symbolic violence emerges through the negative labeling and marginalization of women, which is reinforced by the media through stereotypes (Novarisa, 2019).

From a feminist film theory perspective, Laura Mulvey states that films position women as objects of heterosexual pleasure (Xue, 2024). According to Mulvey, the male gaze is divided into three: (1) the camera's gaze that reflects the male point of view; (2) the gaze in the narrative that positions men as active subjects; and (3) the audience's gaze that also enjoys women as objects, including narcissistic elements (Okide & J, 2024).

The concept of the male gaze in feminist film theory has been discussed in previous studies. First, Xue (2024) analyzed the film *Chicago*, a feminist cinema trapped in the male gaze.

This study examined the position of women through the eyes of heterosexual men. Women are positioned as dependent individuals who must conform to social aesthetics. The film explores the plot of a beautiful woman imprisoned for murdering a man in the name of romance. Although at the beginning of the film, women are portrayed as resisting and appearing superior due to their murder, this perception deviates from various forms of female gender stereotypes. Women are consistently portrayed as individuals in need of love, thus committing murder. On the other hand, women still need men, and the presence of a male lawyer in the film seems to portray them as heroes.

Second, Bayezid et al. (2020) examined the male gaze of the popular song “Munni Bodnam” in the 2010 Bollywood film “Hui of Dabang.” This study illustrates that gender discrimination is clearly and consistently present in Bollywood films. When popular songs are played in films, women dance with their curves and body shapes highlighted cinematically by the camera. This condition is considered to be established. Men’s reactions to attractive women are also highlighted in films. The female body is said to be the primary focus, with the camera centered on it. Third, research by Okide and Ujubonu J. (2024) examines the male gaze that objectifies women. The research object was Igbo literature. Patriarchal culture highlights women’s physical bodies, such as skin color, body shape, and facial features. Igbo culture, an African society, defines beauty in terms of moral values, with physical beauty as the primary focus, especially as depicted in literature and art. The description of beauty in the poem Ugamma (Igbo poetry) depicts a beautiful woman with dark, shiny skin, a long neck like a deer, and teeth gleaming like drops of water. The poem also describes how the effect of such a female body will make young men tremble and lead them to imagine dancing together to the music of love.

Film is a medium with great potential to convey messages about symbolic violence. One form of symbolic violence in film is related to symbolic violence against women. The film industry has the opportunity to create stories about the exploitation of women (Nutfa, Magfirah, & Alingkas, 2022). Patriarchal culture, which positions men as the dominant subject, is the basis of symbolic violence. This violence operates very subtly and is neither visible nor conscious.

Symbolic violence is a concept expressed by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu, in Burawoy and Michael (2019:141), states that symbolic violence is something embedded in individuals’ habits, beneath their subconscious. Bourdieu, in Novarisa (2019), explains that women are objects of symbolic violence based on a patriarchal cultural background. The entertainment industry positions women as objects, commodities, and profit-making. Power within the capitalist system impacts the psyche and biology of women, who become objects of patriarchal cultural construction (Ruangnapakul, Yusof, & Hamid, 2018).

Based on the statement above, the researcher is interested in conducting in-depth research on the male gaze in films being developed in Indonesia. The 2023 film *200 Pound Beauty* can be viewed through Mulvey’s feminist film theory. The film tells the story of a talented woman with a melodious voice but a fat body. The woman’s fat body is seen as something that is not ideal.

The author creates a story that in the entertainment world or the music industry, a good voice is not enough to become a famous singer. Singers must have a slim, beautiful body to get a positive response from the public. Women who do not have ideal bodies only play behind the scenes, such as the main character in the story, who is only a voice actor for a famous and beautiful singer. The producer places the voice actor behind the scenes and manipulates the ideal singer with her voice.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the concept of the male gaze in the film *200 PB2023*. The focus of this research is the camera's gaze in the film and the male gaze in its narrative, especially the narrative of the standardization of female beauty constructed by the male gaze (patriarchal culture). This research is expected to contribute to awareness of gender equality and reduce the pressure on women who are always objectified and regulated according to the standardization of patriarchal culture..

METHOD

The focus of this research is the 2023 version of the film "*200 Pounds Beauty*." This material object was chosen because it represents issues related to female beauty standards in the entertainment industry. The formal object of this research is Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze, which highlights the male gaze in the film (through the camera's focus and the viewer's gaze). The film depicts the construction of women, which can be analyzed through the camera's perspective and the representation of the female body.

This study uses a qualitative research design within an interpretive paradigm, positioning meaning as socially constructed rather than neutral. This approach allows for a critical reading of visual representations that operate ideologically in shaping perceptions of the female body. Qualitative methods are research methods that utilize textual data without numerical elements. Data collection is also conducted in narrative text form (Sugiyono, 2020:5). This research method is used because the research focuses on the meaning and interpretation of visual representations, revealing the hidden power relations behind them.

The data sources for this study include primary and supporting data. The primary data for this study is the film *200 PB2023*, specifically from the cinematographic perspective (shooting techniques or perspectives) and character dialogue. The theoretical framework is strengthened by Mulvey's theory of the male gaze, John Fiske, and Michelle Lazar, ensuring the analysis is integrated within a relevant scientific context.

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques, including repeated viewings of the film. Observations were conducted by identifying scenes that represent the construction of the male gaze in the visualization of women and the visual text. This process focused on identifying scenes of bodily transformation, dialogue containing judgments of women, and visual techniques that convey specific perspectives. Furthermore, a literature

review was used to build a theoretical foundation that enabled a more critical and contextual reading of the data.

This in-depth analysis integrates two primary approaches: television semiotics by John Fiske and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) by Michelle Lazar. Semiotics, as explained by John Fiske, examines three levels of code: reality (physical appearance and expression), representation (camera techniques and narrative), and ideology (values contained in the film) (Rachma & Ulya, 2021). This study uses a concept related to representation, reinforced by the male gaze theory. Furthermore, FCDA is used to analyze the discursively produced meaning in films, as seen through naming, prediction, and argumentation (Tabatadze, 2023). Laura Mulvey's male gaze theory is used to analyze the construction of visual meaning and narrative related to the male gaze (Xue, 2024). The validity of the research data is established through theoretical triangulation and diligent observation, ensuring a systematic and academically accountable analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The film *200 PB2023* tells the story of a woman named Juwita, who plays the main character and has a fat body. This condition prevents Juwita from getting a place in the public sphere. Although Juwita has a fat physical appearance, she has a beautiful voice. The talent she has is not enough to take her to the music entertainment industry. Beauty standards determine one's position in the entertainment world, as depicted by another character, Eva. Eva becomes the benchmark for beauty standards in this film. Eva has a slim, white, and agile body. Eva's voice, which is not melodious, does not make her retreat from the world of music entertainment. With an ideal body, Eva entered the music entertainment industry. In contrast to Juwita's condition, she was only placed backstage as a backing vocalist for Eva, a singer who has a mediocre voice but a beautiful face.

Visual Construction of the Female Body in Film

The film *200 PB2023* often depicts women's physical bodies with tracking shots that follow the flow of body movements and certain perspectives that emphasize how women's bodies are used as aesthetic objects to fulfill the expectations of the audience (male). Image 1 shows a camera position that objectifies the female character Eva, who is singing and dancing, and focuses on her supposedly ideal body. On the other hand, the audience below, in front of Eva, are men who are enjoying her singing and dancing (the camera focuses on how women use their bodies to attract the audience's attention and enjoyment). This is emphasized by Image 2, which shows the setting of two places in the story: Eva, who has an ideal body, appears on stage and is watched by many people, while Juwita, who is overweight, is positioned backstage as a backing vocalist. The close-up camera in Image 2 emphasizes that the audience is shown which female



Image 1. Eva Sings on Stage with Dance, minute 03:57
(Source: Film 200 Pounds Beauty, accessed 2025)

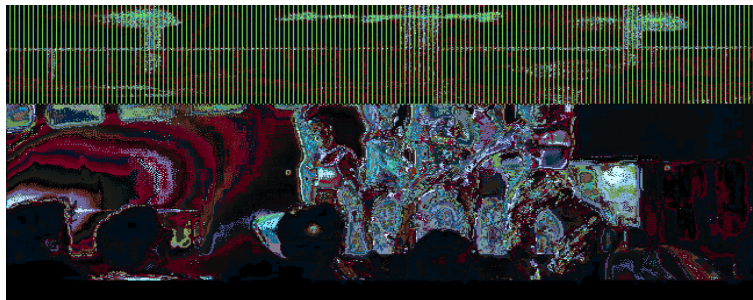


Image 2. Eva singing on stage and Juwita singing backstage, minute 02.00
(Source: Film 200 Pounds Beauty, accessed 2025)

bodies are acceptable and enjoyable to them, and which are not worthy of being seen or enjoyed.

Eva's perfectly slim and proportional body appearance reinforces the narrative that women's bodies that have aesthetic value are those that meet criteria like Eva; this criterion is the result of the patriarchal views that develop in society. The ideal female body is also a tool in realizing recognition from the environment, especially from the male gaze. Therefore, from the two images, it can be concluded that society or the audience will enjoy and accept women with perfect bodies. Women as objects of male spectacle cannot change this view; they must follow the culture that the patriarchal society has determined if they want to be accepted in society.

Beauty standards are not limited to the entertainment world, such as music; patriarchal beauty standards are embedded in everyday life. This is evident in several scenes in the film that provide a contrasting picture of the social life of women who have beautiful, slender, and pretty bodies, with women who have fat bodies. Images 3 and 4 highlight the camera's male gaze, which is more attracted to women with ideal bodies. Image 3 above shows a camera angle that focuses the gaze of a male waiter on a beautiful female customer. The landscape of Image 3, which depicts the waiter looking at the customer in a friendly manner, provides emphasis for the next scene or camera movement, which shows the landscape of Image 4, depicting the unkind gaze between the waiter and the fat customer. The camera's focus is emphasized through the film's dialogue. The restaurant waiter provides friendly service to the woman with



Image 3. A restaurant waiter serves a beautiful woman in a friendly manner
(Source: Film *200 Pounds Beauty*, accessed 2025)



Image 4. Restaurant waiter serves Juwita rudely
(Source: Film *200 Pounds Beauty*, accessed 2025)

an ideal body, saying, “If there are more orders, just call me,” with a smile. On the other hand, when the waiter is called, the woman with a large body (Juwita) changes her attitude, becoming unkind, and says, “Is there anyone else? So I don’t have to go back and forth?” in a high-pitched tone. The scene, through the dialogue and expressions of the maid character, depicts men’s perceptions of social views of women and their deeply ingrained notions of women’s standards.

The social pressure Juwita experiences continues in her work and daily life. Juwita experiences arbitrary treatment from others because of her appearance. In her professional world, Juwita is denied recognition and attention by her colleagues, who consistently discriminate against her and objectify her. Juwita’s daily life is also shrouded in discrimination from those around her when they perceive her body. All these forms of pressure led Juwita to decide to seek a solution that could change her life. The solution she chose to escape this pressure was plastic surgery. Juwita underwent plastic surgery to meet social expectations influenced by patriarchal culture. Juwita wanted to be a woman valued according to existing beauty standards. This transformation not only serves as a way for Juwita to be accepted by society but also illustrates the necessity for women to adapt to the prevailing culture. This situation highlights the close relationship between the standardization of women’s physical beauty and social recognition within a patriarchal culture.



Image 5. Juwita is walking in the mall after Juwita had plastic surgery, minutes 35.02-35.24
(Source: Film 200 Pounds Beauty, accessed 2025)

Juwita's physical transformation reinforces the male gaze, reflecting women as visual objects consumed by men and required to conform to their expectations. The camerawork in the film *200 PB2023* constructs a narrative of a woman's body undergoing a "perfect" transformation; the camera's primary focus is on depicting the ideal female body, aligning with the audience's expectations.

Image 5 shows the camera focusing on Juwita's body after a free-flowing transformation. Meanwhile, the camera also depicts the ideal female body, focusing on her from her feet to her face. The camera's transitional perspective also reveals a man who doesn't take his eyes off Juwita, staring at her admiringly.

This film utilizes the female protagonist's body to fulfill men's aesthetic needs, both through the narrative and visuals. This physical transformation takes center stage, while other aspects of the character are often overlooked. This is evident in the numerous times Juwita wrongs others and is forgiven. Even when Juwita is negligent and endangers others, she receives kind treatment from those harmed.

The camera again focuses on the protagonist, Juwita, who has transformed into a beautiful woman desired by men. Image 6 demonstrates that the protagonist's transformation is a crucial step in achieving happiness and acceptance from society. Juwita, who initially received cynical glances from her peers, becomes a Juwita who receives increased attention from men who observe her. This implies that women who meet ideal beauty standards will be valued in society. Even though Juwita made mistakes, she still received good treatment from men because they objectified her, focusing only on her appearance rather than her character or personality.



Image 6. Reaction of Taxi Driver and Police when Juwita Hits Taxi While Driving, minutes 38.38-40.50

(Source: Film *200 Pounds Beauty*, accessed 2025)

Male Gaze and Objectification of the Female Body

Fiske views film as a sign system that creates meaning through three analyses: reality, representation, and ideology. Reality is explored through text in the form of gestures, physical appearance, and interactions (Rachman, 2023). The level of representation relates to how the media organizes visual signs through camera angles, lighting, and image proportions to frame messages (Bernicka, 2023).

This research uses a semiotic approach to understand the visual narrative and meaning of socially constructed and consumed signs of the female body. Fiske's semiotics maps the relationship between visual signs and broader social structures, particularly in the representation of socio-moral issues in popular media (Rachman, 2023). This approach is combined with Laura Mulvey's male gaze framework to examine patriarchal power relations at work in film.

The film's visual representation plays a significant role in highlighting the bodies of its female characters. The film *200 PB2023* demonstrates visualization techniques that depict the female body as an aesthetic object to be enjoyed. At the level of representation, camera angles, lighting, and visual proportions reinforce the female body as the center of visual attention. This statement aligns with Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze in Rachma and Ulya (2021), which emphasizes the use of the camera, camera position, and lighting as a means of reinforcing patriarchal narratives by linking women's physical beauty to the viewer. The camera is a tool

used to highlight visual objects in films, particularly female characters, who are the center of attention in film visualization (Andari et al., 2025).

Beauty becomes the standard by which society judges women. Insults and discrimination occur when women fail to meet these standards. Patriarchal culture shapes the standardization of beauty within the discourse of femininity; patriarchal society dictates that the ideal woman is fair-skinned, slim, and sexy (Castelnuovo & Guthrie, 2022:7). Juwita's changes are an effort to improve her self-confidence and gain acceptance from those around her, especially men. The male gaze focuses on how patriarchal society positions women as objects to be viewed, enjoyed, and controlled. Through Mulvey's male gaze approach, this film can be viewed through this theoretical lens.

Actor Juwita, before her surgery, experienced various forms of unfair discrimination, both verbal and physical. Juwita's overweight body was negatively perceived by society, especially by men. Juwita's talent alone was not enough to make her successful; physical appearance was the primary asset for women in the public sphere. This male perspective on women has shaped society's perception of women, resulting in a standard of female beauty characterized by a symmetrical face, a slender, fair body, and agility.

Juwita's initially discriminatory situation changed after undergoing plastic surgery. Juwita found her freedom to become a famous singer. On the other hand, Juwita had to hide her true identity and create a new one. Her old identity became a disaster for Juwita when it was revealed to the public, so she changed her identity to Angel. Behind Juwita's freedom to become a famous singer lay new pressures in her life; in other words, this freedom was a false one. Juwita was always haunted by the fear that her true identity would be revealed. This condition implies that beauty not only provides freedom and opportunities for women but also creates new pressures to continue maintaining society's perception of them. This condition aligns with research by Ernawati and Triyono (2023) in the FTV *Crazy Not Rich Mentog di Warteg*, which shows that mass media plays an active role in shaping women's images through beauty standards and social class values. Women are represented as ideal images if they have a proportional body and an attractive appearance, while personal qualities such as intelligence and talent are secondary. This finding contrasts with the research of Kamila, Amalia, Priyatna, and Rahayu (2025), which examined the representation of women's bodies in the *Birthcare Center* series. Women's bodies are represented as subjects of personal experience, not merely visual objects. The study also explains that women's bodies are not entirely subject to patriarchal aesthetic standards, but rather are presented as a space for negotiating women's identities and experiences. This is also in line with the research by Nurcahyanti, Sachari, Destiarmand, and Sunarya (2021) on "Mbok Mase" and "Mbok Semok" in batik culture, which portrays Javanese women as empowered, independent subjects who control their work, identity, and social roles. The women's bodies in the representations of "Mbok Mase" and "Mbok Semok" are not positioned as objects of gaze or aesthetic judgment, but rather as part of the work ethic, fertility, and the continuity of tradition.

This difference confirms that the objectification of women's bodies in *200 Pounds Beauty* is not something natural, but rather the result of ideological media choices that consciously reproduce the logic of the male gaze. Through Mulvey's theoretical approach to Sadistic Voyeurism, it can be argued that patriarchal culture demands that women be visual objects of desire. Juwita experienced discomfort in her life when she was overweight, but after transforming, she was also constantly haunted by the fear of her true identity being revealed. This situation contrasts with men, who hold power over women's bodies. Men, as subjects who control women's bodies, are not burdened by the pressures and expectations of the public sphere. Therefore, Juwita can be described as a construct of the ideal woman shaped by the male gaze, where the female body is manipulated to serve male pleasure and fantasy (the audience's visual satisfaction).

Furthermore, Mulvey also explains the concept of fetishistic scopophilia, which explains the process by which a woman's body becomes an object of the male gaze. After undergoing plastic surgery, Juwita's body is represented as a "fetish," an idealized aesthetic object that fulfills men's visual desires (Rachma & Ulya, 2021). Image 5 clearly shows a close-up of the face and body, which are considered sensual pleasures for men. The tracking camera shot that follows Juwita's body movements also provides a perspective that directs the viewer's gaze toward the camera's movement, seeing the woman's body as a visual object to be enjoyed. This condition reflects the idea that a woman's body is central to her identity, and that being a woman with a beautiful, ideal physique is necessary.

However, her ideal body, thanks to plastic surgery, forces her to obscure her identity. After the man she likes discovers her identity, she faces further resistance. This is evident in the dialogue between Juwita and the male music manager she likes: "Why did you have to lie and say your name was Angel when you're actually Juwita, and why did you have to change your appearance like this?" This situation certainly creates a dilemma. Juwita has taken this risky action because she wants attention and a place in the public sphere. However, when circumstances change, and her true identity is revealed, those around her judge her again. The narrative and depiction in the film convey the meaning that women are merely passive objects constantly demanded by the active subject, namely, men.

This condition aligns with research by Suhaeb and Susanto (2025) on the Commodification of the Female Body in Ronggeng Ketuk Dance Performances in Indramayu, which reveals how female dancers' bodies are constructed as objects of entertainment and visual consumption for a predominantly male audience. In the Ronggeng Ketuk performance, the dancers' movements, expressions, and costumes become a medium for fulfilling visual desires as well as a means of producing economic value, so that the female body is no longer viewed as an autonomous subject, but rather as a commodity to be enjoyed, valued, and controlled. A similar pattern is evident in the representation of the character Juwita, where the female body becomes the center of social assessment and the primary requirement for obtaining a space to exist. Before meeting ideal beauty standards, Juwita experienced discrimination and exclusion, while after

undergoing a bodily transformation, she gained the freedom to enter the public sphere as a famous singer. However, this freedom is illusory because it still requires compliance with visual standards shaped by the male gaze. In both the Ronggeng Ketuk performance and this film, women are positioned as passive objects of the male gaze, as Laura Mulvey explains, with men playing the role of active subjects who control women's bodies and images. The difference is that commodification in Ronggeng Ketuk occurs openly in the cultural performance space. At the same time, in this film, it is disguised through narratives of transformation, success, and the promise of freedom. Thus, the representation of beauty in film does not bring about women's liberation, but rather reproduces a new form of commodification of the female body, remaining under the control of patriarchal logic and the male gaze.

This discussion demonstrates that the representation of beauty in the film *200 PB2023* does not bring about women's liberation, but rather reproduces a new form of control over the female body. Beauty is constructed as a primary requirement for social recognition and access to the public sphere, while also serving as a mechanism of punishment for women who do not meet dominant aesthetic standards. The experience of Juwita demonstrates that the female body becomes an arena of power, constantly monitored and evaluated within a patriarchal culture.

The film's visual construction works systematically through cinematic mechanisms and normalizes the power relationship between the subject and the female body, the visual object. The camera is not only used to record reality but also shapes the viewer's perception of the female body. The narrative flow and visual strategies in the film shape Juwita's body, aligning it with dominant beauty standards and initially representing it as an object of social punishment. This condition reflects sadistic voyeurism (women are punished for failing to meet the visual expectations of the patriarchy).

Thus, this film asserts that the objectification and commodification of women's bodies are ideological media constructs that reproduce patriarchal domination through visual representations of beauty. This argument aligns with Mulvey's view in Okide and Ujubonu (2024) that cinema functions as an ideological apparatus that normalizes male domination in visual pleasure. The male gaze guides women to meet female beauty standards, where visual functions in film are divided into active/male and passive/female (Kondrat, 2023). Through cinematic camera techniques, the position of the female body in the film is transformed, highlighting that the object of gaze is the ideal female body. The female body is constructed as an object to be watched or *to-be-looked-at-ness* to satisfy the visual satisfaction of male viewers (Omoera & Okwuowulu, 2021). Patriarchal control over women's self-assessment is closely linked to the use of the camera as a tool to affirm patriarchal views and desires towards women (Putrianti, Sumaryadi, & Alya, 2022). Modern beauty standards are a form of body discipline that makes women voluntarily carry out patriarchal demands. Therefore, it can be concluded that Juwita's body transformation is not emancipation, but rather a subtle mechanism of power reproduction. Women's bodies remain controlled through image.

Visual and Discursive Hegemony in the Representation of the Female Body

The meaning of the body can be seen through the FCDA approach, which shows how women's bodies are massively produced through linguistic and narrative pressures (Tabatadze, 2023). The first strategy, referential, is understood through the way the main character is represented within reductive social categories. Before the change, inherent identities implicitly associated fat bodies with unsuitability. This assertion implies a boundary between "what is acceptable" and "what should be discarded" (Peng, Wu, & Chen, 2024). After the change, the inherent labels changed to "beautiful" and "presentable." This demonstrates that women's identities are contingent on prevailing aesthetic standards.

The second strategy, predication, functions through attributions that link physical condition to moral and social values. Observing the film, fat bodies are systematically linked to psychological and social inferiority, such as self-deprecation or the inability to maintain romantic relationships. In contrast, bodies that conform to beauty standards are consistently associated with success, self-confidence, and social acceptance. This pattern reflects a body morality that constructs beauty as a fundamental indicator of personal identity. The main character's excellent vocal abilities are not accepted before she transforms. This transformation reveals a fundamental contradiction: social recognition is not based on competence, but on conformity to visual norms (Roy & Bailey, 2021).

The third strategy, argumentation, examines the narrative legitimacy of body transformation practices as a rational solution. The film frames plastic surgery as a logical step toward achieving social mobility. This argumentation is similar to a form of scientific rationalization; beauty standards are naturalized as objective and beyond dispute. Thus, plastic surgery is not positioned as a form of pressure, but disguised as a rational individual choice, seemingly driven by individual desire.

These strategies work together to create a discursive regime of the body. This regime is the meaning that governs how women's bodies are perceived, valued, and treated. The rationale behind this regime is that beauty serves as social capital in determining access to economic resources, forming interpersonal relationships, and securing public recognition. The concept of beauty privilege helps explain how women must meet beauty standards to gain structural advantages in society (Putrianti et al., 2022). Thus, beauty reinforces their dependence on external values.

This aligns with patterns of representation found across cultures. Studies of sports fandom in China show that women are often reduced to a "naive, white, sweetie" image or compared to male standards to emphasize masculine superiority (Peng et al., 2024). On the other hand, the Ghanaian film industry often positions women as voyeuristic objects, serving to satisfy male audiences' visual pleasure through eroticized body framing (Omoera & Okwuowulu, 2021). In Iran, the structure of surveillance of women's bodies is present through the so-called "Isaemic gaze," which contorts women's representations through moral regulation. Indonesia itself, as

seen in the film “Wedding Agreement,” reinforces the construction of women as subjects who must conform to patriarchal expectations (Putrianti et al., 2022).

The overall pattern above shows that the objectification of women across cultures occurs through similar visual and discursive mechanisms, despite differences in form. The film *200 PB2023* shows the mechanism at work in the transformation of the body that must align with dominant social norms. The female body is always in a paradox (it must be seen to be recognized), but at the same time, women lose autonomy because they become objects of view. The transformation experienced by Julia (the main character) does not change the structural position, but rather shifts one form of marginalization to another. The male gaze framework sees the camera’s perspective and the power mechanisms that regulate women as being accepted in society. The combination of visuals and discourse in understanding the film reveals the patriarchal ideology that always places women in a subordinate position and normalizes this condition as a normal or natural form.

CONCLUSION

The 2023 Indonesian adaptation of *200 Pounds Beauty* explores the complex dynamics between beauty standards, female identity, and patriarchal cultural structures in modern society. The physical transformation experienced by the main character is not merely a personal journey toward self-confidence, but rather a social mechanism that requires women to comply with dominant aesthetic norms to gain public acceptance and recognition. The female body becomes the primary terrain in which power relations operate, where value, identity, and social acceptance are determined through a hegemonic masculine perspective.

This research contributes to cultural and film studies by using a male gaze approach articulated through cinematographic techniques and the film’s narrative. The film consistently reduces the female body to a passive, aesthetic, and consumptive visual object. The camerawork, visual perspective, and the male characters’ responses to the main character’s body after its transformation emphasize how female subjectivity is constructed and controlled by male visual interests. This representational practice not only reinforces the fetishization of the female body but also perpetuates patriarchal norms that place women in a subordinate position, where self-worth is measured solely by physical attractiveness. The semiotic approach employed reveals how visual signs and cinematographic techniques subtly yet systematically reproduce patriarchal ideology. Thus, this research enriches critical perspectives on the relationships among media, women’s bodies, and the social construction of beauty in modern society.

However, this research is limited by its analytical scope, which focuses solely on a single object: film. Furthermore, the researcher relies solely on qualitative interpretations of visual texts without incorporating audience perspectives or comparing them with other works. Therefore, future research is expected to expand the scope of the study with a more comparative approach.

This approach, involving audience data, will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of women's representation in media.

REFERENCES

- Amal, Y. K., Wibowo, P. A. W., & Pitana, T. S. (2022). The Symbolic Violence in "Imperfect" (Pierre Bourdieu's Review of Critical Discourse Analysis). *International Journal of Science and Applied Science*, 6(2), 253–261. <https://doi.org/10.20961/ijsascs.v6i2.74094>
- Amirah, P. A., Mutahir, A., Dadan, S., & Rizkidarajat, W. (2023). Analisis Ketidakadilan Perempuan pada Film Dokumenter Keep Sweet, Pray and Obey. *Jurnal Dinamika Sosial Budaya*, 25(2), 301. <https://doi.org/10.26623/jdsb.v25i4.7975>
- Andari, A., Syahvila, A. R., Iqbal, R. B., Usnan, M. R., Ali, M., & Alfathoni, M. (2025). Teknik Sinematografi Dalam Film Women From Rote Island Dalam Memvisualisasi Aspek Feminisme. *Jurnal Penelitian Multidisiplin Bangsa*, 2(2), 295–304. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.59837/jpnmb.v2i2.490>
- Ariftha, A., & Azhar, A. A. (2023). Symbolic Violence Against Women in Medan's Patriarchal Culture. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 11(2), 709–728. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v11i2.953>
- Bayezid, K. M., Hossain, F., & Hasin, S. (2020). 'Male Gaze' in Bollywood Item Songs: A Study of Popular Song Munni Bodnam Hui of Dabang (2010) Movie. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(1), 88–102.
- Bernicka, A. M. (2023). Analisis Semiotika John Fiske Mengenai Perspektif Kekerasan Pada Series Katarsis. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Andalan*, 6(2), 133–144. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31949/jika.v6i2.6783>
- Burawoy, & Michael. (2019). *Symbolic Violence Conversations With Bourdieu*. Durham and London: DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS.
- Castelnuovo, S., & Guthrie, S. R. (2022). *Feminism and the Female Body*. United States of America: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), 829–859. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>
- Du, Y., & Li, L. (2024). Exploring the Awakening of Female Character Consciousness in Film Works from a Male Perspective. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 39(1), 105–111. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/39/20240684>
- Ernawati, A., & Triyono, A. (2023). Representasi Citra Perempuan Dalam Film Televisi Crazy Not Rich Mentog Di Warteg. *Jurnal Panggung*, 33(3), 417–431.
- Kamila, S., Amalia, D., Priyatna, A., & Rahayu, L. M. (2025). Konstruksi Ibu dalam Serial Televisi Drama Korea. *Jurnal Panggung*, 35(2), 270–290.

- Kondrat, M. (2023). Male gaze : le devenir absent du concept. *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 27(3), 368–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17409292.2023.2225366>
- Novarisa, G. (2019). Dominasi Patriarki Berbentuk Kekerasan Simbolik Terhadap Perempuan Pada Sinetron. *Bricolage : Jurnal Magister Ilmu Komunikasi*, 5(02), 195. <https://doi.org/10.30813/bricolage.v5i02.1888>
- Nurcahyanti, D., Sachari, A., Destiarmand, A. H., & Sunarya, Y. Y. (2021). “ Mbok Mase ” dan “ Mbok Semok ”: Reinterpretasi Karakter Perempuan Jawa dalam Kultur Batik. *Jurnal Panggung*, 31(3), 347–362.
- Nutfa, M., Magfirah, T., & Alingkas, S. T. (2022). Perempuan Dalam Genggaman Ekonomi Politik Kapitalisme. *Jurnal Sosioreligius*, 7(2), 12–22.
- Okide, & J, U. (2024). Ode To Female Beauty: The Male Gaze Paradigm. *Odezuruigbo: An International Journal of Igbo, African and Asian Studies*, 8(2), 84–98. Retrieved from <https://www.nigerianjournalonline.com/index.php/ODEZURU-IGBO/article/view/5494>
- Omoera, O. S., & Okwuowulu, C. C. (2021). Female Representation in Select Films of Frank Rajah Arase: Evidence of Male Chauvinist Tendencies in the Ghanaian Film Culture. *CINEJ CINEMA JOURNAL*, 9(1), 15–41. <https://doi.org/10.5195/cinej.2021.287>
- Peng, A. Y., Wu, C., & Chen, M. (2024). Sportswomen under the Chinese male gaze : A feminist critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 21(1), 34–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2022.2098150>
- Perkins, C., Brooks, J., Loreck, J., Tan, P., Ford, J., & J, R. (2023). Doing Film Feminisms in the Age of Popular Feminism: A Roundtable Convened by Claire Perkins and Jodi Brooks. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2023.2287205>
- Putrianti, E., Sumaryadi, & Alya, W. C. (2022). Male Gaze the Role of Women in the Wedding Agreement Film : Case Study of Feminism Paradigm. *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, 10(7), 75–79.
- Qorib, F., & Hasis, M. (2023). Tubuh Wanita Ideal Dan Body Shaming Dalam Film Imperfect: Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes the Ideal of Woman’S Body and Body Shaming in the Imperfect Film: a Semiotic Study By Roland Barthes. *Jurnal Semiotika*, 17(2), 143–154. Retrieved from <http://journal.ubm.ac.id/>
- Rachma, F. M., & Ulya, H. (2021). Male Gaze Representation in Biopic Film ‘ Lovelace ’ (Semiotics Analysis by John Fiske). *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, Dan Humaniora*, 5(2), 384–394. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31604/jim.v5i2.2021.384-394>
- Rachman, N. A. (2023). John Fiske ’ s Semiotic Analysis of Moral Education in “ Budi Pekerti ” Film. *Journal of Language, Communication, and Tourism*, 20(1), 18–28. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25047/jlct.v2i1.4481>
- Roy, S., & Bailey, A. (2021). Safe in the City ? Negotiating safety , public space and the male gaze in. *Cities*, 117, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103321>

- Ruangnapakul, N., Yusof, N., & Hamid, N. A. (2018). Perspectives on violence against women in Thai film: The Eternity. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 39(3), 509–517. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2018.07.005>
- Sinuraya, J. S. B., Azhar, A. A., & Sazali, H. (2022). Analysis Of Semiotics Representation Of Feminism In The Molan Film 2020. *International Journal of Cultural and Social Science*, 3(1), 94–105.
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: CV. Alfabeta.
- Suhaeb, I., & Susanto, D. (2025). Komodifikasi Tubuh Perempuan pada Pertunjukan Tari Ronggeng Ketuk di Indramayu. *Jurnal Panggung*, 35(3), 472–494.
- Syahbana, F., & Puspita, R. (2024). Representasi Male Gaze Pada Film “Open Bo The Series” (AnalisisSemiotika Roland Barthes). *Journal Education Innovation E-ISSN*, 2(2), 274–287. Retrieved from <https://jurnal.ypkpasid.org/index.php/jei>
- Tabatadze, S. (2023). Woman against a Woman ? Inherited Discourses to Reproduce Power : A Gender Discourse Analysis of School Textbooks in the Context of Georgia. *Education Sciences*, 13(1–17). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13080795>
- Xue, K. (2024). An analysis of feminist cinema caught in the vortex of the male gaze: Taking the film Chicago as an example. *Addressing Global Challenges – Exploring Socio-Cultural Dynamics and Sustainable Solutions in a Changing World*, 751–756. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781032676043-103>