

Production of Femininity Discourse in Documentary Films (Critical Discourse Analysis of Our Mothers' Land Films)

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ABSTRACT

The documentary film is an audio-visual communication medium that tries to represent a social reality. The film entitled *Our Mothers' Land* (Tanah Ibu Kami), one of the documentary films, is a form of social criticism of environmental issues and women. In fact, the environment as something that must be protected is everyone's responsibility. Not only the responsibility of women or mothers. The diction choice of 'mother' in *Our Mothers' Land* strengthens the dominant ideology that femininity and nature are the responsibility of women. Meanwhile, on the other hand, being a destroyer of nature is the men's job. Femininity as a fluid concept that is attached to women. In the end, the discourse of femininity is normalized by regimes in power. This study aims to reveal the gender ideology of the media and criticize the structure of reality against women, who are represented as the only entities with the obligation to protect nature. Using the critical discourse analysis method of Norman Fairclough's model, this study shows that the text, the relationship between texts, and their relationship to the social context in the film *Our Mothers' Land* will affect the construction of the discourse of femininity. From this study, I found that although the film *Our Mothers' Land* is a documentary film brings the spirit of women's freedom, this film is still trapped in the bias of representation of women's roles. This film constructs a discourse that women, femininity, and nature are inseparable things like something natural.

Keyword: *Women, Gender Ideology, and Documentary Films*

INTRODUCTION

The documentary film is an audio-visual communication medium that tries to represent a social reality (Nichols, 2001). The film entitled *Our Mothers' Land* (Tanah Ibu Kami), one of the documentary films, is a form of social criticism of environmental issues and women. This film is produced by The Gecko Project and Mongabay. This film release at 2nd November 2020 and Leo Plunkett as a director.

With a duration of 55 minutes, this film tells the story of women's struggles in dealing with environmental problems. This film features an

interview by Febriana Firdaus with four female environmental fighters from different regions. The stories that are raised in the film are the Kendeng women's struggle in fighting for the rejection of the cement factory; Aleta Baun who initiated the weaving movement to block mining companies in East Nusa Tenggara; Eva Bande from Luwuk Banggai who was imprisoned for forming a farmers' movement to block oil palm plantations; and Farwiza Farhan, a forest ranger who protects the Leuser Ecosystem.

There is so much damage and exploitation of Natural Resources that occurs in almost all parts of Indonesia. Deforestation is one example of environmental exploitation. Meanwhile, The United Nations Program estimates that Indonesia will lose 98% of its forests by 2022 (Selectra, n.d.). Most of these deforestation activities are carried out by big companies and powerful parties. This is the highlight of the film *Our Mothers Land*.

In addition to nature as an object that is exploited, women also get a burden that is not much different from being subordinated. Therefore, women have to do more to get the recognition of their rights as human beings. There is no denying that this is related to the low index of gender in Indonesia, this can be seen in The Global Gender Gap Index 2021 report released by the World Economic Forum, which reveals that Indonesia is ranked 101 out of 156 countries with a score of 0.688 (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Although this film carries the spirit of the struggle of women and nature, I found some indications of gender bias in representing it. The environment as something that must be protected is everyone's responsibility. Not only the responsibility of women or mothers. The diction choice of 'mother' in *Our Mothers' Land* strengthens the dominant ideology that femininity and nature are the responsibility of women. Meanwhile, on the other hand, being a destroyer of nature is the men's job.

Therefore, this research will explore how the discourse of femininity in the film *Our Mothers' Land*? and how did gender ideology affect the production of *Our Mother's Land*? At the end, this study aims to reveal the gender ideology of the

media and criticize the structure of reality against women, who are represented as the only entities with the obligation to protect nature.

This study will increase knowledge and understanding as a form of critical awareness for public to question how reality is constructed by media. This study is also expected to be a transformative critique of social reality to create a life balance without domination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Study

Based on my research, studies on environmental, gender, and media issues are mostly done using the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm only tries to explain the reality represented by the media, so it still requires in-depth study to be able to arrive at the level of social transformation. One of the studies on women and nature in the media uses a constructivist paradigm is the research entitled *Forest and Women in Media Coverage (The Study about Role of Women in Sustainable Forest Management in News Reporting of Kompas Daily)* (Mihardja & Azmawati, 2020). This study uses discourse analysis model of social knowledge discourse approach that develop by Keller. The results of the study show that with the limitations of existing women, it is not a barrier to protect the earth.

Although this study also uses an ecofeminist point of view, the ecofeminism used in the analysis is different. That study uses the Vandana Shiva ecofeminism point of view, while this study uses the Karen J. Warren point of view in defining ecofeminism. Based on this, this study is present as a form of novelty and looks at similar phenomena from a different point of view and different method to analyse.

B. Theoretical Framework

1. Femininity in Discourse

According to Fairclough and Wodak, discourse as a social practice shows a dialectical relationship between certain discursive events and situations, institutions, and social structures (Wodak & Meyer, 2008). There is relation between power and knowledge in the practice of discourse. Knowledge will provide validation for power, and power will create a regime of truth to legitimize knowledge (Foucault, 1968). This also applies to the discourse on femininity in women. Women as entities that are always stereotyped as weak and inferior are often associated with feminine attributes.

In the view of the discourse on gender relations, every action or role is determined by biological differences between men and women. This causes a class tendency (polarization) or even

a binary oppositional dichotomy which always contrasts the feminine and the masculine to create power relations.

However, masculinity and femininity as a complex concept will always change along with discursive practices that develop in society. In this condition the inclusion and exclusion process will operate. A woman will be considered right or wrong, normal or deviant through the meanings that operate in the discourse of femininity. The patriarchal culture that separates men and women and masculinity and femininity as binary oppositions defines women who are not feminine or men who are not masculine as something that is excluded.

2. Gender Ideology in Media

According to Karl Marx, ideology is a set of societal beliefs that explain the situation in such a way that what is actually invalid is considered as something legal (Zaprul Khan, 2018). In the end, ideology gives legitimacy to certain groups who have power. The influence of the dominant ideology is also related to the existence of the media. The media is not neutral. Media becomes a tool for the dominant group to control the public. Because the power of the media is so influential, the media becomes a means to strengthen the dominant group and at the same time marginalize the minority by presenting a false reality. It is distributed unconsciously and continuously.

This also applies to the understanding of media gender ideology. Media gender ideology will follow who is behind the media. In fact, the gender ideology of media owners will be related to the power regime. Not only government regimes, but also industry or even parties with certain knowledge who have power in community groups. For example, during the Orde Baru era, the government had the power to intervene in social constructions, including gender ideology. In that era, Indonesia implemented the practice of gender ideology in the form of state ibuism and Soeharto positioned himself as the "Father of Development".

Also in that era, the media became an instrument used to support development discoursed by the government. The control over the media carried out by the Orde Baru government can be seen in the banning of newspapers that reported negative things related to the government of that era. In the end, media production in the Orde Baru era only featured content that had passed government censorship. So that the subordination of the media to women at this time seems legitimized. For example, films during the Orde Baru era tended to show the erotic side of women (Akbar, 2021). Women's bodies become objects of

exploitation in horror, romance, or even comedy genre films produced by the media.

3. Construction Reality in Documentary Films

Documentary films are "discourses of sobriety" (Nichols, 2001). Viewers will hope that what they see in a documentary is a representation of the world they live in. This expectation is what distinguishes the involvement of documentary filmmakers from other films. Everything that is decided and said in a documentary can affect actual events and have real consequences.

Even though they are often labelled as non-fiction films, in reality, documentaries often pay attention to the entertainment and knowledge aspects at the same time (Godmilow & Shapiro, 1997). Just like other cinematographic, what a documentary film presents also brings creative elements and intervention from the filmmaker (Nichols, 2001).

Another thing that needs to be highlighted is how documentaries represent reality. Reality in documentary films will not be presented as a whole, but only part of reality. Events in reality will be selected by considering the urgency and relevancy of the issues to be raised according to the viewpoints and interests of the production media. This is getting worse by the fund that needed to produce the documentary films. In producing a documentary film, a large amount of funds is needed, so it requires investors or sponsors to support the production process. This support from various parties actually has an impact on the freedom of the production media in representing reality. Reality that represented by the media cannot be contrary to the value of investors or even tends to adjust.

METHOD

This research uses the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model of Norman Fairclough. Text analysis was carried out on a documentary film entitled *Our Mothers' Land* which was released on November 2, 2020 and produced by The Gecko Project and Mongabay. Fairclough explained that text has a context so that there are three dimensions that need to be analyse, namely text (microstructure), discursive practice (meso-structure), and sociocultural practice (macrostructure) (Fairclough, 2010).

A. Data Collection Techniques

This study will be conducted through the stages of observation and documentation. Sources of research data were obtained by recording every phenomenon that appeared in the text of the film

Our Mothers' Land with a duration of 55 minutes, as well as collecting documents related to the phenomenon under study.

B. Data Analysis Techniques

This study emphasizes multilevel analysis referring to the critical discourse analysis of Norman Fairclough's model so that in analyzing the discourse of femininity in the film *Our Mothers' Land*, the following stages are carried out:

1. Description stage, focus on the text.
 - Verbal text analysis focuses on identifying the representation of femininity in the film *Our Mothers' Land* through dialogue between characters. Text analysis was carried out on the collected data by paying attention to diction, metaphor, sentence structure, style of language, and paradoxicality.
 - Nonverbal text analysis will be carried out through representational codes such as camera techniques, lighting, editing, music and sound (Fiske, 1987).
2. Interpretation stage, focus on intertextuality and interdiscursivity. In this stage, an analysis will be carried out on the texts distributed on the Gecko Project youtube account as a distributor and involved in the production of the film *Our Mothers' Land*.
3. Explanation stage, focus on relation between text and social context. At this stage, I will use literature studies through books and journals to examine the description of socio-cultural situations such as government policies and other social issues that affect the production and distribution of the film *Our Mothers' Land*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION



Our Mothers' Land is a documentary film that tells the story of women's struggles in dealing with environmental problems. This 55-minute film features an interview by Febriana Firdaus with four female environmental fighters from different regions. As for the stories that are raised in the film, namely the struggle of the Kendeng women in fighting for the rejection of the cement factory; Aleta Baun who initiated the weaving movement to block mining companies in East Nusa Tenggara; Eva Bande from Luwuk Banggai who was imprisoned for forming a farmers' movement to block oil palm plantations; and Farwiza Farhan, a forest ranger who protects the Leuser Ecosystem.

The following is a table of analysis and findings in the film *our mothers' land*:

Table 1. Verbal Text Analysis

Verbal Aspects	Analysis
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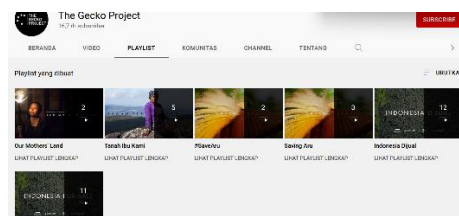
<p>Tanah Ibu Kami (Our Mothers' Land) Ibu Bumi (Mother Earth)</p>	<p>rewording mother earth's diction continuously, even being used as the main title in this film, is actually a very ideological thing. The repetition is a form of affirmation to show that nature and women are manifestations of femininity.</p>	<p>Sukinah's dialogue "... digendong, nek wong wedok, nek wong lanang kan iso dipikul".</p>	<p>The activities of lifting grass to feed cows that do not even affect the biological physique of women are still grouped together. Based on the analysis of women's strengths. In fact, there are no specific rules how to lift grass for men and women.</p>
<p>Sukinah's dialogue "Pertimbangannya, jadi kalau kita aksi ibu-ibu tuh harus di garis depan karena supaya tidak ada gerakan yang anarkis, karena kalau bapak-bapak mungkin, maksudnya anarkis, kekerasan, bertatap muka dengan polisi, kalau seorang laki-laki mesti ada apa ya, mbak, darahnya yang begitu marah dan ibu-ibu tuh harus mengendalikan semua itu, jangan sampai ada apa kekerasan. Apalagi ada sampai korban jiwa seperti itu. Dan untuk gerak lingkungan ini tidak harus bapak".</p>	<p>The Sukinah dialogue is a form of paradoxicality. She said that protecting nature and the environment is not only the duty of the fathers (men). However, Sukinah is still trapped in the stereotype that men are masculine entities and women are feminine entities. This stereotype has an impact on the notion that the responsibility of protecting and caring for nature is the duty of women, as fellow feminine entities. This can be seen from the way Sukinah associates men with anarchy and violence.</p>	<p>Febri's dialogue "Bagaimana saat itu menjelaskan kepada anak-anak?"</p>	<p>Media that already have a sensitivity about gender issues still always associate women who play a role in the public sphere with questions about children, husbands, and other domestic areas.</p>
<p>Febri's dialogue "Orang-orang menganggap gunung sebagai ibu bumi, mereka yang memelihara dan bahkan mencukupi kebutuhan air untuk lahan pertanian mereka. Saat saya berjalan melintasi ladang bersama Sukinah ia bernyanyi dengan lembut. ibu bumi telah memberi, ibu bumi terluka, ibu bumi akan mencari keadilan"</p>	<p>Equating mountains (nature) as mothers is a form of feminization of nature. Although this kind of thing is similar to the Chipko movement (feminist ecology) in India. But linking nature with humans is a concept of eco-feminine. Because ecofeminism according to Karen J Warren is not only describing, but breaking the ism of domination (Warren & Cheney, 1991).</p>	<p>Farwiza's dialogue "Iya tapi kan lagi-lagi yang menanggung biaya membeli air, itu adalah si ibu yang harus bikin budget keluarga bukan si Bupati".</p>	<p>The dialogue explains that the job of making a family budget is a mother's job. The dialogue seemed to ignore the real reality that the family budget is a decision made by each family, regardless of gender identity, anyone can make a good budget.</p>
<p>Farwiza's dialogue "Bahkan kita menggambarkan bumi saja sebagai sosok perempuan, Ibu Bumi"</p>	<p>As a closing dialogue, the diction of Mother Earth was again conveyed by Farwiza as a forest ranger who has internationally recognized achievements. Farwiza's power seems to legitimize the ideology brought in this film.</p>	<p>Table 2. Nonverbal Text Analysis</p>	
<p>Nonverbal Aspects</p>		<p>Analysis</p>	
<p></p> <p>Figure 1. Sukinah on demonstration</p>		<p>Camera's technique: Slanted, taking a 45degree angle to the object, not from the front, not from behind. This technique has the aim of showing other objects that exist with the main object.</p>	
		<p>Analysis: This incident of cementing the legs by Kartini Kendeng is shown by footage of several men helping to lift Sukinah whose legs have been cemented. This has implications for the</p>	

	<p>assumption that when women want to voice their aspirations, they must get help from men.</p>
 <p>Figure 2. Mama Lodia and Febriana</p>	<p>Camera's technique: long shot, taking pictures of the object as a whole and the environment around the object.</p> <p>Analysis: This technique is used to explain that women are closely related to agricultural activities. In ecofeminism studies, farming activities (agriculture) are often associated with the role of women in the social sphere. This is in line with the division of labour in pre-literate times where women lived in villages to farm, while men went sailing to find food.</p>
 <p>Figure 3. Women footage</p>	<p>Camera's technique: Knee shot, taking pictures of objects from head to knees, the size of this rather bearish image aims to show what the object is doing</p> <p>Analysis: This is actually an insertion footage, which is not related to the activities of women activists in fighting for the environment. If this footage wasn't included in the film, it wouldn't even change the storyline. However, by inserting this footage in a film that tries to encourage women to be empowered with nature, they are trapped again by</p>

	<p>labeling women with domestic roles.</p>
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The Gecko Project and Mongabay, both are independent media that get their own funding. Both of these institutions are media institutions that focus on environmental empowerment. Based on the content produced by the two, these two institutions do not have a background in empowering women other than the content of Our Mothers' Land Film. This can be seen from the rubric between the two media institutions.

Figure 4. Youtube Account of The Gecko Project



Source: youtube

Other than that, we also need to pay attention to the day this film is released. This film was released in general on November 2, 2020, coinciding with the passing of the Omnibus Law. In the discussion, the Omnibus Law is considered to be detrimental to women and the environment at the same time. Regulations that facilitate investment and development permits as well as regulations for menstrual and maternity for women are quite controversial. This is one of the factors why this film can be distributed to the public well. As alternative media, these two media try to be on the public side by taking the point of view of empowering women and nature at the same time and taking the right moment in their distribution. However, in practice, this alternative media cannot be separated from the ideology of media production. Therefore, there are still many biases found in the text of this film. The researcher also found that most of the production team of Our Mothers' Land were male. This affects the perspective on women's empowerment and nature.

- Director, cameraman & editor : Leo Plunkett
- Writer and Producer : Febriana Firdaus
- Producer : Tom Jhonson
- Music : Tom Adams & Dan Jeffries
- Illustration : Nadiyah Rizki
- Color grading : Jack Mcginity
- Translator : Nurdiansyah & Afrizal Zulkarnain

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Using the critical discourse analysis method of Norman Fairclough's model, this study shows that the text, the relationship between texts, and their relationship to the social context in the film *Our Mothers' Land* will affect the construction of the discourse of femininity. From this study, I found that although the film *Our Mothers' Land* is a documentary film brings the spirit of women's freedom, this film is still trapped in the bias of representation of women's roles. This film constructs a discourse that women, femininity, and nature are inseparable things like something natural. This study has the potential to be continued using a political economy perspective. This is because there is a link between media ownership, economic business, and political power which cannot be covered only by this research.

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