

Construction of Female Housemaid Profile in Indonesian Movie

Redi Panuju¹, Daniel Susilo², Harliantara³
{redipanju@gmail.com;Daniel.susilo@unitomo.ac.id;harliantara@unitomo.ac.id}

Universitas Dr. Soetomo Surabaya^{1,2,3}

Abstract. This paper tried to analyze Indonesian movie which tells about housemaid. The aim of the current research was analyzing if after reformation era signed by the emergence of awareness on gender, the female representation has been free from gender bias. The method used was Ethnographic content analysis. It used perspective of seeing film as the art creature as well as representation from social situation of its era. The element inspected here were: physical characteristic, environmental service, reaction and/or expression of the housemaid, and synopsis. The dominant finding was a movie about housemaid tends to emphasize the body shape and face of housemaid as the attraction, thus the housemaid problem in the relation with social problem was not found. The movie was underlined the recreative purposes as the economical commodity menu. As well as the housemaid in Indonesian movies were framed as stimulus to comply the taste and dominant norms in society.

Key word: gender bias, education, Indonesian movie, recreation, and housemaid.

1. Introduction

It has been long time that a figure of housemaid becomes the never ending material for movie production in Indonesia. Housemaid is depicted as the representation of a social condition in its era, including how the situation and condition of society perspecting housemaid in the social structure. As the part of art that tend to require the creative imagination of the creator, which almost similar to the fiction such literature novel, then movie and literature are not only as the artworks, but inside it also convert the system of cultural value, ideology, economical value, and many other that growth in society.

According to Teeuw every artwork is the actualization or realization of convention system and cultural code [1]. Until in such level, artworks depict the main tendencies in society whether as intentional text or unintentional text [2]. Esti Ernawati reaches the conclusion that in realizing the behavior, values, occupation idealized, the creator may use the figure as the communication media. The appearance of figure in literature may use various ways for instance the creator directly analyze the figure's characters, depicts the situation around the housemaid, and the response on employee's figure against the main figure, or through the employee's figure who talk about the condition of main figure [3]

In Indonesian movie, housemaid is constructed with different characters in accordance with the genre of movie taken. For example, in the movie of *Inem Pelayan Sexy (1-3)* by director of Nya Abbas Akup (1976), figure of Inem is depicted as the representation of housemaid in Capital City who becomes the victim of modernization. Inem finds problem related to her job such as urbanization, salary, imbalance development in the city, the change of life style, and her efforts in increasing the dignity of other housemaid [4]

Movie of *Inem Pelayan Sexy* get much attention from the viewers, proven it is produced in serial 1 up to 3. This movie was stated as the first movie most wanted in Indonesian Festival Film in 1977 with total viewers 371.369 people. It also gets Antemas trophy, the award for most wanted movie in 1978. One of the attractions of this movie is played by beautiful actris Doris Callebaute. Anton Marbruri KN says that the viewer's interest on this movie not only due to the good story presented, but also affected by the figures or actor/actrees played in that movie. The viewers are interested with the name of director and the actrees supputing the movie [5]

Although *Inem Pelayan Sexy* tell about life of a housemaid, it is very interesting due to the figure is played by beautiful actrees with slender body. As well as when this movie is reproduced in the form of TV cinema with beautiful actrees too, Sarah Vi, then it obtains high rate.

As a story, housemaid is often depicted as a female from marginalized social class; poor, low education, simply outfits, and get unwell treatment from the boss. This kind of profile is told in a novel *Pengakuan Pariyem* (1978) by Linus Suryadi Ag. This novel has been ever translated into English, Dutch, and French. In addition, it is also adapted into TV cinema in 2001 by Sam Sarumpaet with famous actrees Niniek L Karim, Adi Kurdi, and Mathias Muchus. Meanwhile, *Pariyem* is played by Dewi Rahmawati. This novel tel about violences toward housemaid that caused by the different social status [6]

Different with movie of *Minggu Pagi di Victoria Park*. This movie not depict about violence against housmaid by the boss, but tell about the female worker who is going into the wrong relationship until she is in debt. As faced by Sekar (Titi Sjuman), a female worker from East java in the movie of *Minggu Pagi di Victoria Park*. Sekar is falling into debt in debt institution named Super Credit. She is required to make her parents always happy. Because she cannot pay the debt including the interest, her passport is detained thus she cannot work. In the other hand, Mayang (Lola Amaria) is a farmer of cane who flight to Hong Kong to be female worker under her father's command. Mayang's father asks her to look for her sister, Sekar, who never communicate with her family anymore. Actually, Malang and Sekar has 'sibling rivalry' relationship. From the problem between Malang and Sekarang, we may understand various problem faced by Indonesian Workers

in Hongkong [7]. This movie is directed by Lola Amaria. At the awards event of Indonesian Movie Award 2011, one of its players, Titi Sjuman, received an award as The Best Female Actress and Ella Hamid received an award as the favourite new comer actresses.

Female in mass media according to Sunarto and Fanny Puspitasari, are often displayed by mass media in very typical, such as: her place is at home, her role is as a housewife and nanny, depend on male, unable to make important decision, only involved in some professions, always look at herself, as sexual objects/sexual symbol and fetishism object, as affirmation object on patriarchal work pattern, object of abuse and violence, being the victim but put as the wrong, passive, the consumer of goods and services, and as persuading media. The root of these problems actually is the dominant ideology in society that is patriarchal ideology. This ideology put female as the object [8]

Novi Kurnia says that during this time gender discourse is dominated by the criticism on the firmness of Female inferiority than male. Female inferiority construction is considered as the reflection of an established reality patriarchal culture. In patriarchal culture female is considered as passive creature, and subordinate of male. Mass media has large contribution in firming this stereotype. According to Novi, the role of mass media in this context is providing the arena of struggling of "sign". Media is the arena of seizures position, seizure the sign that reflects such thing. In other words, in media the struggle of sign hegemony and gender domination is occurred [9].

The study has been conducted by Rahmat Edi Irawan concludes that the development of movie industry not change the negative stereotype about the female existence in movie industry. Even, at present almost all female is considered as fantasy world in movie industry, which is needed for commercialising the movie produced. The presence of Female, mainly from the physical side, is considered as the effective recipe for encouraging viewers to come and watch the cinema. Or in other words, female is only considered as the erotic object that can be enjoyed by the viewers, particularly the male [10].

After reformation era, the movements that criticise the gender inequality is continually done, whether through the Collage room, seminaries, conference, and civil society movement care about gender. In fact, movie as part of Social reflection should change in carrying the female symbols. Housemaids that tend to be represented by female figure in fact still become the commodity in the story of Indonesian movies. The problem is how Indonesian movies construct the housemaid reality. That is the reason for the writer interested in researching this problem.

2. Research Method

This review uses *Ethnographic Content Analysis* approach that is observing the document (text) in cyber media to understand the meaning of communication occurs. As well as the ethnographic research in social reality, content analysis on cyber text also reflects the research object in much information [11]. The analysis is focused on how the female figure in the movie is constructed by the creator according to the character, life style, story, and social relationship.

Construction of Female in the movie can be obtained from the signs showed in gesture, dialogue, or even the story. Meanwhile, from the dialogue, it is observed as a text following the intertextuality approach that is the relation between such texts with other texts. This relation is defined from the reader's point of view. A text only can be understood in its relation or its contradiction with other texts [12].

The analysis scope is limited by the concept of Kristeva that text is permutation from other texts. In a text there are utterances from other text and it may contradict or support/neutralise each other [13].

The subject of this research is Indonesian Movies which present the figure of Female Housemaid, those are:

Table 1. The Movie Observed

No	Title of the Movie	Director	Year
1	Mr, Mrs, and the Housemaid	Mardali Syarief	1991
2	Housemaid Never Breaks Their Promises	Wien Gayo Malalatoa	2014
3	Jenny the Cool Housemaid	Widodo Sendy	2016
4	My love for Davi and Davin	Sulistyono Link	2018
5	Oops!! My housemaid make me puzzle	Andri Sudjarwo	2017
6	My crazy housemaid who captured My Husband	Nanang Istiabudi	2018

The movies above are Indonesian movie which put the figure of Housemaid as the main character of the story. The elements observed are physical characteristics, environmental treatment, reaction, and/or expression of Housemaid, and synopsis.

3. Finding and Discussion

3.1 Physical Characteristics

Table 2

Physical characteristics consist of description of face, body, and hair.

No	Title of Movie	Actor/Actrees	Description
1	<i>Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pembantu</i> (Mr, Mrs, and Housemaid)	Anna Shirley	The age is under 30, beautiful face, slender body, maintained hair;

			language dialect indicates her origin from village.
2	<i>Pembantu Tak Pernah Ingkar Janji</i> (Housemaid Never Break Her Promises)	Ariel Tatum	The age is under 25, beautiful face, slimming body, maintained hair, her dialect indicates her origin from city
3	<i>Jenny Pembantu Gaul</i> (Jenny the Cool Housemaid)	Rebecca Tamara	The age is under 25, beautiful face, slender body, maintained hair, good locking.
4	<i>Cintaku untuk Davi dan Davin</i> (My love for Davi and Davin)	Masayu Clara & Eza Gionino	The age is under 25, beautiful face, slimming body, maintained hair, tomboy appearance, Jakarta dialect.
5	<i>Oops !! Pembantuku Bukin Galau</i> (Oops!! My housemaid make me puzzle)	Sharena	The age is under 25, beautiful face, maintained hair, vivacious appearance, Jakarta dialect.
6	<i>Pembantu Tak Tahu Diri Yang Merebut Suamiku</i> (My crazy housemaid who captured my husband)	Icha Annisa	The age is under 30, beautiful face, maintained hair, slimming body, good in cooking, her dialect indicates her origin from village.

According to the finding above, it can be seen that Indonesian Movie makes construct housemaid as beautiful woman, with slimming body, maintained hair, and have interesting appearance, and has such strength. Housemaid is reduced as woman with enticement due to the physical aspect owned. In this case, the problem reviewed in the story is from the physical enticement. Because she is beautiful, slim, and good in cooking cause her boss fall in love with her. Social problem is presented from the turning of master's love to his housemaid. In “the crazy housemaid”, the housemaid is told received the love from his master who prefer to divorce with her wife to marry her. In this context, the presence of Housemaid among the family is as the disturbing harmony. The same thing is presented in “Mr., Mrs., and Housemaid”: the master is willing to pretend to be sick just because want to be alone with his housemaid. From the two movies above, housemaid is positioned as not different with body with see appeals. Therefore, the reason to present young beautiful actress as housemaid player is just because their physical appeals. In fact, if housemaid in the real definition is require by a family due to their skills in domestic sector. The relationship between housemaid and the work giver is mutualism. Housemaid need the incentive from their skills, the work giver need their energy to reduce the

burden of household, but the construction in our movie it has been replaced by love relationship. Interesting if from the cinema's point of view but irrational from the empirical reality side. Irrational things are considered as the attraction of movie.

3.2 Environmental Treatment

Table 3

Environmental Treatment toward the Housemaids

No	Title of movie	Good treatment	Negative treatment
1	<i>Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pembantu</i>	The master requires her wife to serve him well, such as cooking, feeding her husband, putting on his tie, put off his shoes, etc. But she doesn't do it, so the housemaid replaces her role: do what should be done by wife.	Reviled, intimidated by her masters wife after knowing her infidelity with her master. Finally she prefers to back to her village.
2	<i>Pembantu Tak Pernah Ingkar Janji</i>	3 sons of the master compete to take the housemaid to shop in market.	Defamed by the ex.girlfriend of her son's master who jealous, so she got fired.
3	<i>Jenny Pembantu Gaul</i>	The housemaid (Gina) is given a clothe by the master that make her appearance look so sexy	Seduced by rich guys, seems like by their property housemaid will be interested to them.
4	<i>Cintaku untuk Davi dan Davin</i>	People who stay close with me just because my property, but she is different.	Verbal violence, "everytime I meet you, you always crash at me!
5	<i>Oops!! Pembantuku Bukin Galau</i>	Before working as housemaid for her research, firstly she learn to cook, wash, sweep the floor, etc.	Why don't you buy the thesis?
6	<i>Pembantu Tak Tahu Diri Yang Merebut Suamiku</i>	Kiki (housemaid) go to the city to look for her mom. In her way someone steals her bag. Handsome and rich guy help her. He felt bad and give her some money. Kiki refuse it. The guy respects her,	Narration: "Trust your housemaid is good but \trusts her 100% is bad."

No	Title of movie	Good treatment	Negative treatment
		and then asks her to work in his house.	

source: observation results

Environmental treatment toward housemaid tends to be caused by gender and domestic factors. In “*Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pembantu*, the master is happy because his housemaid treats her as a wife treat her husband such as feeding him when he is sick, compressing, providing clothes, and put off the tie and shoes. This movie carries good message which identical with the responsibilities of Female in domestic sector. Worstly, just because housemaid's strength the master erases his love to his wife. In “*Pembantu Tak Pernah Ingkar Janji*”, three sons of the master are falling in love with the housemaid because of her beauty. Two story on these movie is from the same thing that is housemaid become the reason of the break of love relationship. In the first story, the wife blames her housemaid as flirty woman whereas in the second story the ex.girlfriends of the master's son also blames the housemaid as flirty woman too. In “*Pembantu Tak Tahu Diri*” is more extreme in describing housemaid as the other's husband capturer with two things (service in domestic sector and her beauty). Housemaid appearance in those movies can be said as sexy, so it stimulates people desire to seduce her and deliver verbal words that lead to abusement.

In this context, it is not different with what has been called as Primada Qurrota Ayun says that sensuality appearance and woman's body in horror movies show women is in inequality social structure. Women have violence and oppression caused by a power system in various types. Social class relations have made class inequality between men and women. One of the real problems is in film, women are considered as something that threatens men, for that women must be used as objects of domination. In addition to class inequality, women also have a use value that can be used as an exchange rate. Horror films assume that women have exchange rates and save physical potential to be exposed. Women's sensuality and body are often displayed as something that has its own charm. [14]

This reason for gender and body encourages putting housemaid with female gender. That way of thinking has social relations with the six movies directors who are mostly male. Thus it can be assumed that male movie makers have patriarchal tendencies in determining the structure of the theme and story of a film. This is different from movies made by female directors. The nuances of the construction of women in the film have been inserted with messages of resistance to gender bias.

At least from Chatarina's research Heny Dwi Surwati on the movie by Nia Dinata like *Ca Bau Kan, Berbagi Suami, Arisan, dan Perempuan Punya Cerita segmen Perempuan dari Cibinong* many construct first-wave feminism, especially liberal feminism. Some things can be seen from the following aspects: a. women have chance to improve carrier which is their choice. b. women have sexual rights. c. women have the right to determine their future [15].

While in the six movies that the writer observed, a domestic worker was portrayed as a woman who was gentle with the charm of beauty and body, resigned to the situation, even if there was a personal struggle, namely the struggle to achieve goals.

3.3 Synopsis

The meaning of synopsis is summary of movie stories based on the certain perspective. In this review movie is seen as a media that aims to convey certain message to entertain. This message is considered as function of education for community. In the context house maid what is meant by educating is that the community increases its awareness as a free individual. Their existence is not determined by gender and subordinated by patriarchal myths. The problem is which is more dominant between the functions of entertaining and educating? Let's examine the synopsis of the movies one by one.

1. *Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pembantu* (Mr, Mrs and House Maid)

This movie tells about a household where the husband longs for a wife who sincerely serves him while the wife of a career woman who is busy pursuing her wealth and social status. As the result, the wife is often rude to her husband, even slapped her husband in front of their house maid, while the house maid is soft. Therefore the husband hate his wife and love their maid. The relationships between the husband and wife become not harmonious. At the culmination point, the husband intends to divorce his wife but the wife feels it is unfair and feels demeaned. The wife blames their house maid using an unethical verbal word. In this conflict, the house maid chose to return to their hometowns with feelings of guilt for causing the employer's household to fall apart.

In the context social relation, this movie shows gender bias which puts a housemaid (women) in the weak position. Simultaneously the concept of thinking of domestic workers represents the way people think in general, that if happen scandal in a house hold involving house maid, the employer can not or not worthy to be blamed. The employer pay house maid, then it cannot get a love return from the salary, because the salary given to house maid is exchanged for sweat and tears. In the incident the wife blame house maid show that higher social structure has the right to decide who is wrong and right in a conflict. Because this way of thinking is a public opinion that lives in the community, it is appointed in the movie.

Prof. Ariel Haryanto argue that movies are made to make money and he can get money if can provide something that pleases people. Movie is a reaffirmation of what crystallization has become the dominant norm in society. The movie makers don't want to make weird movies. He just wants to reiterate what the public believes. Thus the movie will be watched and get money. [16]

2. *Pembantu Tak Pernah Ingkar Janji* (Maid never broke promises)

This movie tells the story of a student named Maya who is taking a final stage at a university. Maya needs money to pay for college. So working as a maid doesn't matter. Maya work in a house where a mother lives with her 3 children who are all teenagers and adults. The three children of the employer both fell in love with Maya. So interested are the three guys that make their girlfriends become jealous, because after there is Maya in that house the attitude of the three guys to her girlfriend turns into cold.

In this movie is found the idealism of a woman who completes her studies in college with a halal fee, including being a maid. The movie maker want to convey the message that

maid is halal and can be used as a backrest to achieve higher goals. Unfortunately, this message feels superficial because it is obscured by the love story of maid with three of her employer's children.

Deddy Mizwar states that in the context of the entertainment industry, films get a large space as mass entertainment. Because of its entertaining nature, of course the film is made in a way that is lighter and merely recreational [17].

3. *Jenny Pembantu Gaul* (Jenny the cool house maid)

This movie tells about triangel love story between Jenny and the young employer named Gilang. Jenny obsessed with a rich guy while the employer obsessed ordinary youth. Therefore, the Employer makes an exchange of roles, if in front of Gilang the employer becomes Jenny's temporary assistant as her employer. This movie tends to be a comedy genre, so as a result of the exchange of roles that humor occurs. But in the end Gilang chose Jenny and Jenny were forced to accept Gilang because Jenny did not want to be forced to marry her parents' choice.

In terms of synopsis of the story, this film does not provide any discourse except the ridiculous nature of house maid and the prominence of the face and body of house maid as a spectacle. Deddy Mizwar emphasize, because films are made for mere recreational purposes, then don't be surprised if then the films that are born no longer speak quality, let alone moral messages

4. *Cintaku untuk Davi dan Davin* (My love for Davi and Davin)

This movie tells about rich guy named Davi who frustrated many times because he was betrayed by his girlfriends. Davi finally concluded that women who approached him only because they wanted to use his wealth. Different with a girl named Mona who works as a house maid in a restourant. Mona works because her father is sick and need money to pay treatment. Mona is different, ignorant with him. Therefore, to approach him Davi pretended to be Davin, a poor young man and his face was ugly with buck teeth. But Mona was even more interested in the presence of Davin who looked poor and geeky or stupid. In this movie the perception of men is portrayed as not following the stereotype of women. Davi assessed the quality of a woman not from her body or social status, but from her simplicity and struggle to help with family difficulties.

5. *Oops!! Pembantuku Bukin Galau* (Opss!!! My maid make me puzzle)

This movie tells about student named Selly who will do research about life of house maid. Her best friend suggested that Selly bought the thesis in the Bureau of Services, but Selly refused. He wanted to observe and felt directly how to live as a house maid. From here Selly can only feel how heavily becomes a house maid. But the story more leads to the romance process between himself and the employer's son and his misunderstanding.

The theme of this movie is almost the same as Maid Nevver Broke Promises, both the helpers to complete the study. One because of the cost, and the other because idealism. In the

context of feminism entered into liberal feminism, which is struggling to get freedom in taking ways to solve problems. But its nature is still very individualistic.

6. *Pembantu Tak Tahu Diri Yang Merebut Suamiku* (The Crazy House Maid Who Seize My Husband)

This movie based on the true story which previously published in the capital magazine. A house maid who initially wanted to catch up with her mother in the city, then stranded into maid in a household. Initially normal, but over time this maid fell in love with the employer. The employer dissolved in the persuasion of maid and divorced his wife.

In this movie, domestic workers as women are positioned as immoral individuals. Pragmatism causes a person to use every means to obtain it.

4. Conclusion

Although the feminism movement has been carried out in three decades, its thinking has not been able to influence creativity in movie maker in Indonesia. Women, especially maid, tend to be described by gender and their existence is determined by gender and social status. As assumptions are applied in a gender perspective, housemaids are portrayed as women who are powerless against employers, patriarchal domination, and confined to a static social structure (not to have ideals that come out of their domestic problems). The movie still follows the political economy of the laws media, which put it as nothing more than a commodity, made to be bought by the audience so that the audience's taste becomes very dominant. Women are genderly regarded as a stimulus that comply the conditions of a commodity, so that his body characteristics are exploited to comply recreational tastes.

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