



Analysis of Radical Feminism in Hagar and The One Who Sees Film Using John Fiske's Semiotic Approach

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ABSTRACT

With the development of modern social life, the issue of gender equality has become a topic of increasing concern because various forms of injustice are still commonly found in daily life. This study aims to identify and analyze the representation of radical feminist values in the film Hagar and the One Who Sees using John Fiske's semiotic approach. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The primary data were taken directly from the film Hagar and The One Who Sees, while the secondary data consist of journals, research articles, and literature related to semiotics and feminism. Data collection techniques included watching, taking notes, as well as conducting a literature review and analysis. Data validation was carried out through increased researcher diligence and peer discussion. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Analysis at the level of reality reveals that facial expressions, simple and worn-out clothing, the barren desert environment, acts of running and refusal, and Hagar's dialogues reflect suffering and oppression within a patriarchal structure. At the level of representation, cinematographic techniques (long shots, low angles, close-ups, and tracking shots), the use of lighting (low-key vs. natural), and sound or music emphasize Hagar's alienation, her struggle, and her hope for liberation. At the ideological level, the film represents radical feminist values through its critique of patriarchy. Hagar and The One Who Sees effectively conveys the ideology of radical feminism through its visual and narrative codes, which critique patriarchy and highlight the struggle of women to gain freedom. This study recommends that John Fiske's semiotic analysis be applied more widely in research on short films and other media that portray issues of gender and oppression, particularly within Middle Eastern cultural contexts..

Keywords: radical feminism, film, semiotic approach

Analisis Feminisme Radikal dalam Film Hagar dan The One Who Sees Menggunakan Pendekatan Semiotik John Fiske

ABSTRAK

Seiring perkembangan kehidupan sosial modern, isu kesetaraan gender menjadi topik perhatian karena praktik ketidakadilan masih banyak ditemukan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis representasi nilai-nilai feminisme radikal dalam film Hagar and The One Who Sees dengan menggunakan pendekatan semiotika John Fiske. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Sumber data primer diambil langsung dari film hagar and the one who sees, sedangkan data sekunder meliputi jurnal, artikel penelitian, dan literatur tentang semiotika dan feminisme. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi menonton, mencatat, dan Teknik baca dan telaah pustaka. Validasi data dilakukan melalui peningkatan ketekunan dan diskusi sejawat. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yaitu kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Analisis level realitas menunjukkan bahwa ekspresi wajah, pakaian yang sederhana dan lusuh, lingkungan gurun tandus, perilaku lari dan penolakan, serta dialog Hagar mengungkap penderitaan dan penindasan dalam struktur patriarki. Pada level representasi, teknik sinematografi (long shot, low angle, close-up, tracking), penggunaan lighting (low-key vs natural) dan suara/music menekankan keterasingan Hagar, perjuangannya, dan harapan akan pembebasan. Di level ideologi, film ini merepresentasikan nilai feminisme radikal melalui kritik terhadap patriarki. Film Hagar and The One Who Sees secara efektif mengangkat ideologi feminisme radikal melalui kode visual dan naratif yang mengkritik patriarki dan menyoroti perjuangan perempuan untuk meraih kebebasan. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar analisis semiotika John Fiske digunakan lebih luas dalam kajian film pendek dan media yang menggambarkan isu gender dan penindasan, terutama dalam konteks budaya Timur Tengah.

Kata kunci: feminisme radikal, film, pendekatan semiotics

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INTRODUCTION

As modern social life continues to evolve, the issue of gender equality has become a growing concern across various social groups. This topic is considered significant because, in reality, many social practices still “oppress women”. Gender inequality is a global issue. It arises from long-standing stereotypes embedded in social structures that position women as having a lower status than men, both in the domestic and public spheres. In contrast to women, men are often regarded as superior, holding full authority and power in decision-making, leadership, and control. This situation causes women to experience barriers in accessing resources and participating in public life, as well as to encounter various forms of discriminatory and unjust treatment. Men are often perceived as superior and more dominant than women.

Gender equality issues continue to persist today, and various forms of injustice are still commonly found in everyday life. Gender inequality refers to a condition in which unfair differences between men and women occur, ultimately leading to discrimination. Various forms of gender inequality include marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and disproportionate workloads. These inequalities can occur across multiple sectors, such as the economic, political, entertainment, religious, social, cultural, and even educational sectors. The role of women is often undervalued and regarded as less significant than that of men. This situation occurs more frequently in countries that uphold a patriarchal social structure, where men occupy the highest position in all aspects of life and are regarded as naturally entitled to lead and to subordinate or marginalize women. Women still frequently encounter stereotypes, sexual harassment, and limited access to both education and career opportunities. Although times are changing and awareness of gender equality is increasing in many countries, many people continue to adhere to patriarchal norms that are deeply ingrained in social structures and position women in a lower status than men.

This study seeks to reveal the meanings of radical feminism constructed through the visual, audio, and narrative signs presented in the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees* by employing John Fiske’s semiotic approach. The analysis is conducted through three levels of meaning—namely the levels of reality, representation, and ideology—to examine how patriarchal structures, gender power relations, and various forms of oppression against women are represented in the film. Accordingly, this study focuses on how *Hagar and The One Who Sees* construct women’s experiences as subjects who endure patriarchal injustice, as well as how the values of resistance and women’s liberation central to radical feminism are articulated through John Fiske’s semiotic framework.

This research aims to analyze the representation of radical feminism in *Hagar and The One Who Sees* using John Fiske’s semiotic approach across the levels of reality, representation, and ideology. The study concentrates on uncovering meanings related to patriarchal structures, gender power relations, and forms of oppression against women as depicted in the film.

This research is expected to contribute to the development of feminist studies and media studies, particularly in the application of radical feminist theory combined with John Fiske’s semiotic approach. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this study will enrich the body of film analysis research, especially studies on Arabic short films, which remain relatively underexplored within academic research in Indonesia.

Several previous studies have applied John Fiske’s semiotic theory to various objects of analysis. One such study was conducted by Nezar Ariffananda and Dimas Satrio Wijaksono (2023), titled *Representation of the Father’s Role in the Film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap (A Semiotic Analysis Based on John Fiske)*. This study employs a qualitative method within a critical paradigm. The findings reveal that the father figure is represented in accordance with the characteristics of private patriarchal culture and assumes several roles:



protector (as a guardian and controller), decision maker, monitor and disciplinarian (as a supervisor and provider of guidance), provider (as a supplier of resources), and bearer of responsibility in fulfilling the family's needs (Ariffananda et al., 2023). Furthermore, a study conducted by Rizca Haqu and Twin Agus Pramonojati (2022), titled *Representation of Terrorism in Two Scenes from the Film Dilan 1990 Using John Fiske's Semiotic Analysis*, employs a qualitative approach with John Fiske's semiotic framework. The findings indicate that there are two scenes in the film *Dilan 1990* categorized as acts of terror. At the reality level, the characteristics are reflected through codes of appearance, costume, environment, behavior, manner of speaking, and expression. At the representation level, the indicators appear through camera codes, music, editing, sound, narration, character, action, and conflict. Meanwhile, at the ideological level, the terror scenes in *Dilan 1990* represent the concept of terrorism (Haqu & Pramonojati, 2022). In addition, research conducted by Setiawan et al. (2020), titled *Patriarchal Ideology in Film (John Fiske's Semiotics on Father-Son Interactions in the Film Chef)*, employed a descriptive qualitative method with a semiotic approach within the branch of pragmatic semiotics. The findings are presented through John Fiske's three levels of semiotic analysis. At the reality level, patriarchal elements are depicted through the interactions between Carl and Percy that take place in narrow and crowded spaces within the "El Jefe" food truck, as well as in other interior and exterior settings. At the representation level, these elements are conveyed through camera angles and visual composition that keep the audience engaged in each interaction between the characters. Finally, at the ideological level, the study reveals that the patriarchal ideology portrayed in the film can serve as a reference for understanding how father-son interactions are constructed so that children do not lose the presence of a parental figure (Setiawan et al., 2020).

All of the studies mentioned above share a commonality in employing John Fiske's semiotic

theory as the primary analytical framework to uncover signs, meanings, and socio-ideological constructions through three levels of codes: the reality code, the representation code, and the ideological code. These three levels are utilized to reveal the visual, auditory, and narrative meanings that emerge within the films (Ariffananda et al., 2023), (Haqu & Pramonojati, 2022), (Setiawan et al., 2020).

The primary differences among the previous studies lie in the objects of analysis and the representational focus examined. The study by Ariffananda and Wijaksono (2023) used the film *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* to explore the representation of the father's role within a private patriarchal culture, finding that the father character embodies five main roles: protector, decision maker, monitor and disciplinarian, provider, and bearer of responsibility. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Haqu & Pramonojati (2022) analyzed two scenes in the film *Dilan 1990* that are represented as acts of terrorism through the examination of reality, representation, and ideological codes. In contrast, the research by Setiawan et al. (2020) investigated father-son interactions in the film *Chef*, revealing that the film reflects a strong patriarchal ideology within the dynamics of male and father-child relationships as expressed through visual composition and cinematographic techniques.

What distinguishes this study from previous research is its object of analysis, namely the Arabic short film *Hagar and the One Who Sees*. This film offers a distinct representational context, as it portrays the experiences of Arab women and the dynamics of gender oppression that are characteristic of Middle Eastern culture. To date, no studies have been identified that specifically analyze this Arabic short film using John Fiske's semiotic theory. Furthermore, no previous research has integrated Fiske's semiotic framework with a radical feminist perspective to examine how patriarchal structures are represented through the codes of reality, representation, and ideology in an Arabic short film. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on issues of patriarchy within family relationships (Ariffananda et al., 2023),

(Haqu & Pramonojati, 2022) or the representation of terrorism in popular Indonesian films (Setiawan et al., 2020) This study broadens the application of Fiske's semiotics to an object that differs significantly in language, culture, form, and theme. Thus, this study offers a new contribution to the field of media and representation studies, particularly within the realm of Arabic short films, which have not been widely examined using Fiske's semiotic approach.

Feminism is a concept that addresses the struggle for gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. This concept focuses on efforts to critique social, cultural, and legal systems that have long positioned women in a significantly lower status (Hooks, 2000). In various spheres, including politics, economics, culture, education, religion, and media, feminism has emerged to advocate for women's rights to be respected and recognized as equal to those of men (Tong, 2018). According to Fakhri (2003) Movement and a form of awareness rooted in the belief that women experience oppression and exploitation. The primary goal of feminism is to achieve gender equality. This entails demanding that women have the same opportunities and capacities as men to take an active role and participate fully in all aspects of life, including the public, economic, social, cultural, and educational spheres. Furthermore, feminism also insists that women have the same access to and benefits from all facilities and the outcomes of development.

Feminism is a critical theory that highlights gender-based injustice and seeks to achieve equality between men and women (Tong, 2018). Feminism is often directed toward uncovering how women are portrayed or represented in literary works, as well as identifying indicators of women's oppression by those in positions of power, whether in the form of men, certain authorities, social systems, customs, and so on (Surur, 2023). Feminism seeks to challenge the objectification of women, as women are often subjected to various forms of control, both directly and indirectly (Anwar, 2009).

Thoughts on the feminist movement are divided into several schools of thought, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism. Liberal feminism emphasizes the principles of freedom and rationality in its focus on achieving equal rights for women. Meanwhile, radical feminism views the main source of women's oppression as rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal structures. Marxist feminism considers women's oppression to be a consequence of their economic status and position. In contrast, socialist feminism stresses the need to abolish the system of ownership, which is seen as contributing to gender inequality (Patimah et al., 2023)

Radical feminism holds that gender structures are the root cause of women's oppression. The main focus of radical feminism includes issues of reproduction, gender identity, and power relations between men and women, particularly within the contexts of motherhood and family structures. This movement emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and independence from the constraints of marriage, patriarchal family systems, and heterosexual norms (Amin, 2013). From a radical feminist perspective, various forms of oppression against women arise from the patriarchal social system, including racism, bodily exploitation, heterosexuality, and class-based ideologies. All of these components are interconnected and reinforce male domination. To achieve women's liberation, fundamental changes are required within social systems that are grounded in patriarchal values (Kurniasih, 2015). In addition, the main factors contributing to gender inequality include discrimination based on sexual orientation and restrictions on reproductive rights (Nur, 2020).

Radical feminist theory focuses on two key issues: patriarchy and sexuality. In the patriarchal view, women are perceived as a social construct whose function is to fulfill male sexual desires, while women's sexuality is simultaneously objectified (Ningrum, 2024). Radical feminism highlights the family structure and the patriarchal system as the main sources of oppression against



women. According to radical feminism, it is viewed as a means of reinforcing male power and placing women in a subordinate position. This can be considered consistent with its name. This perspective assumes that the main source of oppression against women lies in the biological differences between men and women, which are particularly significant within the context of the family. These differences often result in men occupying a more dominant position than women (Fitriani et al., 2022).

Film is a visual communication medium that serves to convey information to the public. As a medium, film is a combination of efforts to convey messages through moving images supported by camera technology, color, and sound. All these elements come together in a storyline that conveys a specific message the director intends to deliver to the audience (Maulana & Sabri, 2023). Based on Law Number 33 of 2009 concerning film, Article 1 Chapter 1 explains that a film is a cultural artwork that functions as a social institution and a medium of mass communication, created according to cinematographic principles, with or without sound, and intended for public screening (Syarifudin, 2023). A film exists when it presents a story that contains meaning or a message intended to be conveyed to the audience. As a tangible reflection of social reality, film is not merely a form of entertainment but also a medium for education, social reflection, and even a tool for critiquing various phenomena that occur in society (Sobur, 2001). By utilizing elements such as narrative, characters, cinematography, and dialogue, films can represent various social, cultural, political, and humanitarian issues. However, films do not always depict social reality in its entirety; instead, they often blend it with elements of imagination, fantasy, and abstract ideas (Hall, 1997).

Film as an art form often depicts the social changes that occur within society. Short films are a type of film that has gained widespread attention due to their ability to present stories in a concise, aesthetic, brief, and meaningful manner. With a shorter duration, this becomes both a challenge and an opportunity for filmmakers to convey their

stories and ideas in innovative and meaningful ways. Various aspects of human life can be explored and examined through a short film, including themes of gender equality and women's resistance to oppressive systems such as patriarchy. According to Walby (2014) Patriarchy is a social system characterized by power relations in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit. In the world of cinema, patriarchy is often depicted through representations of gender inequality, restrictions on women's roles, and injustices experienced by female characters. One such film that will be analyzed is *Hagar and the One Who Sees*, which addresses themes of feminism.

The film *Hagar and the One Who Sees* served as the inspiration for this research. It was released on July 11, 2022, directed by Jonathan Enns, with a runtime of 17 minutes and 15 seconds. This film tells the story of a slave who is pregnant with her master's child and is physically abused by his jealous wife. To protect her child, Hagar fled to the desert. After encountering a stranger, she realized that God saw her suffering and provided for her needs. She returned to her challenging circumstances with a new perspective, free from the fear and hatred she had once felt, and carrying a promise destined to change the course of history. Hagar is the embodiment of an oppressed woman, trapped by the patriarchal system as well as social and religious norms that reinforce women's subordinate position. Hagar's struggle is not only related to gender but also to race, social class, and marginalized identities.

Through the character of Hagar, the film illustrates how women experience structural violence across various aspects of life. At the same time, it highlights how Hagar embodies women's resistance in their pursuit of self-recognition. Hagar's resistance is not only physical but also emotional. In this context, Hagar's story depicts Tong (2018), a woman striving to reclaim her rights and dignity from the grip of patriarchal structures. To analyze the meaning of radical feminism in the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees*, the researcher employs a film semiotics approach. Semiotics is the study of signs found in objects

and how these signs are used to convey meaning across various contexts of human life. Semiotics also examines symbols, codes, and communication systems used in various forms of media, both verbal and nonverbal.

In this regard, the researcher employs John Fiske's semiotics. Fiske developed a media semiotics approach as a means of understanding how meaning is constructed and represented in media texts such as television, films, and advertisements. John Fiske's semiotics differs from the semiotics proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce. Fiske's approach emphasizes how meaning in the media is created, disseminated, and negotiated through signs within social and ideological contexts. According to Sobur (2006) in his book *Media Text Analysis*, semiotics is a discipline or analytical method for studying signs. Signs here are the means we use in our efforts to find our way in this world, both among and alongside other people. According to Zoest (1992) in his book *Semiotics*, semiotics is the study of signs, their functions, and the production of meaning. A sign is something that represents something else to someone. Something can be considered a sign if it can be observed.

According to Fiske (1990), Semiotics is the study of signs and meanings within a sign system, that is, the discipline that examines how various types of signs exist in a work and function to convey meaning. Therefore, signs are not limited to objects alone. The presence or absence of events, the structures found within things, and customs, all of these can be considered signs. In semiotic studies, the text is the primary object of focus. The term "text" is understood broadly here and is not limited to writing alone. According to Fiske (1990), Television programs can be viewed as a "text" that may be analyzed to uncover various layers of meaning and the socio-cultural contexts contained within them. Fiske rejects the notion that mass audiences passively receive and consume the content presented to them without actively engaging in any cognitive processes. Fiske rejects the concept of "viewers" as a passive and uncritical group. He prefers to use the term "audience,"

which encompasses individuals from diverse backgrounds and social identities, allowing them to interpret and respond to media texts in varied ways. The codes that appear or are used in a television program are interrelated, thereby forming meaning (Fiske, 1990). In Fiske's view, an event in a television program can be considered a television event if it has been encoded through social codes and constructed through three levels: reality, representation, and ideology (Laksono & Wangi, 2024).

At the level of reality, Fiske explains that codes containing hidden meanings can be found in various elements perceivable by the five senses, such as appearance, clothing, makeup, environment, gestures, behavior, facial expressions, and voice (Aulianissa, 2022). Next, at the representation level in John Fiske's semiotic theory, the analysis focuses on the use of various codes such as camera work, lighting, editing, and music, which are combined to create and convey specific meanings. The shooting techniques employed include extreme close-up, extreme wide shot, medium shot, medium close-up, two-shot, group shot, and long shot. The use of long shots allows the full body of the model to be shown along with part of the surrounding area. Finally, at the ideological level, meaning is shaped through the acceptance of various social relationships governed by ideological codes such as individualism, nationalism, patriarchy, race, social class, materialism, capitalism, and others (Fiske, 1990). This aligns with the statement (Risal & Nisa, 2021) who mention that films and dramas often depict events or phenomena that occur in society.

Through this framework, John Fiske's semiotic analysis offers an effective approach to examining how media functions not only in conveying facts but also as a battleground of meaning, highlighting who controls the codes, how the codes are interpreted by audiences from diverse backgrounds, and how the codes can reinforce or challenge social structures and ideologies (Laksono & Wangi, 2024). Therefore, this study, which examines the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees*, employs Fiske's semiotic framework as an



appropriate analytical tool to explore how the codes reflecting liberal feminism in the film operate within John Fiske's three levels of semiotics: reality, representation, and ideology.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to uncover and identify the representation of radical feminist values in the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees*, based on John Fiske's semiotic theory. This study employs a qualitative method because its implementation does not rely on numerical data, but rather on the interpretation and narrative analysis of previously obtained data (Ahmadi, 2014). This research is descriptive in nature because the findings emphasize interpretation rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2019). The data analyzed consist of words, scenes, and visual signs, which are then presented in the form of analytical descriptions (Khonsa et al., 2024).

The primary data in this study consist of the visual and verbal elements in the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees* that contain signs of radical feminism. The data sources used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data sources refer to sources from which researchers obtain data directly, meaning data collected by the researchers themselves and taken straight from the source (Siswanto, 2012). In this study, the primary data consist of all scenes, dialogues, expressions, costumes, gestures, and narratives in the 17.15-minute film *Hagar and the One Who Sees*. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are those that do not provide information directly to the data collector, such as documents, other individuals, and similar materials (Prastowo, 2011). These include research articles, journals, and books relevant to the theme of this study.

In collecting the data, the researcher employed viewing techniques (Margolis & Pauwels, 2011; Olsen, 2012) to understand the overall narrative of the film and to identify dialogues that contain radical feminist values in *Hagar and the One Who Sees*. This process involved examining scenes, dialogues, expressions, costumes, gestures, and

narrative elements present in the film. The note-taking technique is used to document scenes, dialogues, and symbols related to the representation of radical feminism across the three levels of John Fiske's semiotic analysis: the levels of reality, representation, and ideology. Finally, reading and literature review techniques are employed to examine supporting theories on semiotics and radical feminism, ensuring that the analysis is grounded in a strong conceptual foundation.

The data obtained were validated using two methods: prolonged engagement and peer discussion (Leung, 2015; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Prolonged engagement was conducted by repeatedly watching the film and examining each scene carefully to obtain accurate data consistent with John Fiske's semiotic theory. Peer discussions were conducted with colleagues or academic supervisors who have expertise in feminism and semiotics to ensure the validity of the data interpretation.

In the data analysis process, the researcher employed the Miles and Huberman model (Miles et al., 2014), which consists of the following stages: (1) data condensation, namely the process of selecting, simplifying, and categorizing data relevant to the theme of radical feminism and the levels of John Fiske's semiotic analysis; (2) data presentation, which involves displaying the findings through narrative descriptions and visual excerpts that illustrate the relationship between signs, meanings, and feminist ideology in the film; and (3) conclusion drawing, namely formulating the research findings based on the analysis conducted across the three levels of Fiske's semiotics (reality, representation, and ideology) and relating them to the concept of radical feminism.

RESULTS

Hagar and the One Who Sees is a short film released on July 11, 2022, directed by Jonathan Enns, with a runtime of 17 minutes and 15 seconds. This film tells the story of Hagar, the main character, an Egyptian woman who becomes a

domestic servant and later a concubine to Abraham at the request of his wife, Sarah, who was barren and desired to have a child. After Hagar becomes pregnant, the relationship between her and Sarah deteriorates. Sarah subjects Hagar to both mental and physical abuse, prompting Hagar to flee into the desert to escape the mistreatment. During her escape, Hagar suffers greatly and feels unseen by those around her. However, in the wilderness, she encounters an angel of God who comforts her and promises that her descendants will become a great nation. Hagar then refers to God as “El Roi,” meaning “the God who sees me,” signifying her recognition that God is aware of her suffering.

The film *Hagar and the One Who Sees* represents the experiences of a woman living under the pressure of patriarchal social structures. The film features several scenes, dialogues, settings, and visual elements that reflect radical feminist

themes, illustrating how women are positioned in a subordinate role and how they employ various strategies to confront and resist the patriarchal system. This film is highly relevant for analysis because it addresses broader social issues such as gender inequality, feminism, and the oppression of women within social, political, and cultural structures. Through John Fiske’s semiotic approach, the researcher is encouraged to analyze Hagar and the One Who Sees to identify the signs and symbols that refer to feminist concepts.

1. Level of Reality

At the level of reality, the analysis focuses on codes that can be directly perceived by the senses, such as facial expressions, clothing, makeup, environment, behavior, and dialogue. These codes construct the representation of Hagar as a woman who experiences oppression within a patriarchal social structure.

Table 1
Reality Level Codes.

| Reality Level | Analysis |
|------------------|---|
| Expression Code | In the film, Hagar repeatedly displays expressions of fear, exhaustion, and helplessness. She is shown crying alone, appearing weary and emotionally drained. She also expresses joy upon finding a water source, and when encountering the mysterious man she believes to be God. At the end of the film, Hagar shows happiness as she succeeds in resisting patriarchal oppression. |
| Clothing Code | Hagar wears simple brown clothing that appears wrinkled, worn, and plain. She also uses a head covering that is arranged loosely and not neatly styled. |
| Makeup Code | Hagar does not wear any makeup or jewelry. Her skin appears darkened, her face dusty and tired, and her hair is messy. No noticeable cosmetic enhancements are present. |
| Environment Code | Hagar does not wear any makeup or jewelry. Her skin appears darkened, her face dusty and tired, and her hair is messy. No noticeable cosmetic enhancements are present. |
| Behavior Code | Hagar flees from her mistress because she can no longer endure Sarah’s growing anger and the physical and emotional abuse inflicted upon her. Hagar shows joy when she finds a water source, only to discover that it has dried up. She becomes emotional when she encounters a mysterious man whom she believes to be God. She refuses when the figure she believes to be God instructs her to return to her mistress. Hagar appears joyful when she sees her son playing with arrows. |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Dialogue Code | 3:03 Sarah: "أين كنت؟" Sarah: "Where have you been?" |
| | Hagar: "أنت لا تفكرين مدى صعوبة الأمر" Hagar: "You do not understand how difficult it is." |
| | 4:05 Hagar: "أتر بدين قتل ابني؟" Hagar: "Would you have me kill my son Abram's son?" |
| | Sarah: "إن تكوني أكثر من جارية، لا أحد يهتم، لا أحد يراك" "ولا حتى الله! ياك" Sarah: "You will never be more than a slave. No one cares about you. No one sees you not even God!" |
| | 5:17 Hagar: "لا بأس" 5:17 Hagar: "It's all right." |
| | 8:42 Hagar: "لقد وصلنا، وصلنا يا ابني، وصلنا" 8:42 Hagar: "We have arrived. We have arrived, my son. We have" arrived |
| | 10:23 Hagar: "كن من أنت؟ أنت الرب؟ كيف يمكن أن أراك بعيني يا رب؟ أين كنت؟ أين كنت؟" 10:23 Hagar: "Who are you? Are you the Lord? How can I see You with my own eyes, my Lord? Where were You? Where were You?" |
| | God: "كنت معك" God: "I was with you." |
| | Hagar: "أين كنت عندما كانت مولاتي أن؟" Hagar: "Where were You when my mistress was about to" |
| | God: "كنت هناك في الخيمة، لقد قمت بحمايته" God: "I was there in the tent. I protected him." |
| | 11:00 God: "أنا لم أتركك قط كنت دائماً بجانبك، أراك أكثر من أي شخص آخر وفي أحضانك، أنت تعرفين ذلك، أرجي" "أرجي إلي مولاتك، واخضعي لها" 11:00 God: "I have never left you. I have always been beside you. I see you more than anyone else does, and deep within yourself, you know that. Return to your mistress and submit to her." |
| | 11:17 God: "لأنك لن تتركين، أنا لن أتركك" 11:17 God: "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they cannot be counted, and they will be strong, just like you, Hagar. You are stronger than you think. I will never leave you." |

2. Level of Representation

At the level of representation, the results of the analysis indicate that the film constructs meaning through cinematographic techniques, lighting, and sound.

Table 2
Representation Level Codes

| Representation | Level Analysis |
|----------------|---|
| Shot Code | Long shot used when Hagar walks across the vast desert landscape. |
| | Low-angle shot used when Hagar meets the mysterious man she believes to be God. |
| | Close-up shots of Hagar to highlight her expressions. |
| | Tracking shots that follow Hagar's movements. |
| Lighting Code | Low-key lighting is used when Hagar experiences suffering, sadness, loneliness, and isolation. |
| | Natural lighting is used in the scene where Hagar encounters God, symbolizing hope. |
| Sound Code | Sound is used to reinforce the meaning of the narrative and create a more dramatic effect |
| | The film <i>Hagar and the One Who Sees</i> incorporates music and sound that harmonize with each scene. |

1. Level of ideology

At the ideological level, the findings indicate that *Hagar and The One Who Sees* represents the ideology of radical feminism. The film portrays patriarchy as a dominant social system that positions women in subordinate roles and renders them vulnerable to violence. However, Hagar is not represented solely as a victim, but also as a woman who possesses the courage and strength to break free from oppressive patriarchal structure.

DISCUSSION

1. Level of Reality

At the level of reality, the researcher analyzes the codes presented in the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees* through expressions, clothing, environment, behavior, speaking style, voice, and dialogue. This is in line with Fiske's (1990). view that the level of reality encompasses all signs that can be directly perceived by the senses, including facial expressions, clothing, environment, actions, voice intonation, and dialogue, each of which contributes to the construction of social meaning. The character of Hagar in the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees* is a complex female figure who endures suffering and physical violence. She serves

as a symbol of those who are marginalized within societal structures (Fiske, 1990). Based on the results of the data analysis presented in the form of a reality-level coding table, the following images are provided to illustrate each of the data described above

a. Expression Code

The image below depicts a scene that illustrates Hagar's expressions as a representation of radical feminism. Through Hagar's portrayal, the film conveys that the oppression of women emerges from a deeply rooted patriarchal system embedded within society. This is particularly evident in Hagar's social context in Canaan in 1911, a period in which women were perceived as weak, powerless, and often reduced to the status of slaves, resulting in their systematic placement in subordinate positions. In the expression code, Hagar is depicted through recurring facial expressions of exhaustion, fear, and sorrow. Scenes of her crying alone, experiencing despair in the desert, and the gradual transformation of her expression into a calmer and happier state toward the end of the film illustrate Hagar's emotional journey from alienation to self-recovery



Figure 1
Level of Expression Code

a. Clothing Code

The image below presents Hagar's costume in the film *Hagar and The One Who Sees* as a representation of radical feminism. Hagar is shown wearing a simple, modest, worn, and unkempt robe, combined with a head covering to protect her from the intense sunlight and thin leather sandals. Her clothing reflects the prevailing social order that positions women—particularly enslaved women—in inferior roles. The costume thus functions as a symbol of social inequality associated with the lower class (slaves), while simultaneously representing the struggle of women to resist deeply entrenched patriarchal structures within society.



Figure 2
Level of Reality Clothing Code

b. Makeup Code

The image below depicts a scene in which Hagar is portrayed without any makeup, jewelry, or cosmetic enhancement. Her darkened skin, resulting from prolonged exposure to the sun, along with a dusty and exhausted appearance and unkempt hair, reinforces the representation of her physically and psychologically oppressed condition, as well as her loss of control over her own body and appearance.



Figure 3
Level of Reality Makeup Code

c. Environment Code

The image below depicts the background setting of the film. Hagar lived in the region of Canaan in 1911. Canaan is an ancient name for a region that today encompasses most of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, parts of Jordan, and Syria. This region upheld a deeply rooted patriarchal culture embedded within its social structure, in which men held greater power than women and positioned women in subordinate roles. In ancient Arab societies, women had limited mobility and lacked autonomy over their own lives. Hagar's condition is further exacerbated by the fact that she is not only a woman but also an enslaved individual, a status regarded as extremely low and often subjected to inhumane treatment. Enslaved people were considered the property of their masters, deprived of rights and freedom, and frequently exploited. This phenomenon illustrates the severe challenges faced by women in societies that strongly upheld patriarchal values, with Hagar portrayed as a victim of such a system. The environmental code is dominated by a barren and arid desert landscape, which represents alienation, suffering, and Hagar's powerlessness as a woman marginalized both socially and culturally.



Figure 4
Level of Reality Environment Code

d. Behavior Code

The behavioral code reveals Hagar's actions as she escapes from her mistress, searches for a source of water, and interacts with a mysterious male figure believed to be God. These behaviors reflect Hagar's initial form of resistance against the oppression she experiences, as well as her efforts to preserve her survival and personal dignit.

Hagar flees from her mistress because she can no longer endure Sarah's growing anger and the physical and emotional abuse inflicted upon her

The image below depicts Hagar's behavior of fleeing from her mistress as a representation of radical feminism. Hagar's escape, driven by her inability to endure Sarah's anger and psychological as well as physical abuse, signifies an initial act of resistance against an oppressive patriarchal system. This action indicates Hagar's refusal to continue accepting the subordinate position imposed upon her as both a woman and an enslaved individual. The second image depicts Sarah, Abraham's wife, expressing anger and inflicting psychological and physical abuse upon Hagar, representing a form of violence produced by a complex patriarchal structure. Although both are women, Sarah occupies a higher position of power due to her social status as the legitimate wife and owner, while Hagar is positioned as an enslaved woman and a reproductive object. From a radical feminist perspective, this condition demonstrates how patriarchy not only oppresses women through male domination but also perpetuates oppression through power relations among women. The violence experienced by Hagar emphasizes that women's bodies become sites of control and ownership, illustrating how patriarchy operates structurally by creating hierarchies that disadvantage women in the most vulnerable positions.

Hagar shows joy when she finds a water source, only to discover that it has dried up.

The image below depicts Hagar's behavior as she appears joyful upon discovering a source of

water, only to realize that it is dry, representing the false hope experienced by women in situations of oppression. Her initial sense of joy reflects Hagar's hope for safety, freedom, and a better life after escaping the violence she endured. However, the disappointment that immediately follows demonstrates that women's efforts to escape patriarchal systems do not always proceed easily and are often confronted with harsh realities. From a radical feminist perspective, this scene underscores that patriarchal structures are systemic and difficult to evade, causing women's struggles for liberation to be continuously obstructed. The dryness of the water source symbolizes the limited access to support and resources available to oppressed women in their pursuit of rights and safety, after she has traversed vast stretches of desert in search of water only to find it completely dried up.



Figure 5
Level of Reality Behavior Code

She becomes emotional when she encounters a mysterious man whom she believes to be God.

This image depicts Hagar's emotional expression as she encounters a mysterious male figure whom she believes to be God. The scene represents a crucial moment in Hagar's psychological journey as a woman who has long experienced alienation and oppression. The presence of this figure symbolizes the recognition of Hagar's existence, which had previously been ignored by patriarchal social structures. In this context, Hagar is no longer positioned as a slave or an object, but as a subject whose suffering is heard and acknowledged. The emotional intensity conveyed through Hagar's expressions and behavior indicates a process of emotional recovery and the emergence of self-awareness, affirming that she possesses value and dignity as a human being regardless of her social status and gender.

This scene also marks a symbolic turning point in Hagar's resistance against the patriarchal system that has oppressed her.



Figure 6
Level of Reality Behavior Code

She refuses when the figure she believes to be God instructs her to return to her mistress.

The image below depicts Hagar's behavior as she refuses to obey the command of a mysterious male figure whom she believes to be God to return to her master, representing a form of resistance and subjective awareness as a woman. This refusal demonstrates Hagar's courage in questioning the authority that has long governed and restricted her life, both socially and symbolically. Within the context of radical feminism, this act reflects a woman's effort to reclaim control over her own body and destiny, while simultaneously rejecting patriarchal domination that positions her as an object of ownership. Hagar's stance marks a shift from a passive and oppressed woman to an active subject who asserts agency in determining her own life choices, even when those choices conflict with prevailing norms and power structures.



Figure 7
Level of Reality Behavior Code

Hagar appears joyful when she sees her son playing with arrows

Hagar's behavior as she appears happy while watching her child play with a bow represents a phase of recovery and liberation in her life journey as a woman. The happiness conveyed through her facial expressions and bodily gestures indicates that Hagar has reached a state in which she regains

a sense of security, hope, and meaning in life. This scene signifies Hagar's success in overcoming experiences of oppression and alienation caused by deeply entrenched patriarchal systems, through which she ultimately reclaims her rights and freedom. From a radical feminist perspective, this moment can be interpreted as a form of symbolic victory for women who successfully reclaim control over their lives, bodies, and futures, as well as those of their descendants. The child playing with a bow also symbolizes strength, continuity, and hope for a generation that is no longer entirely bound by oppressive patriarchal structures.



Figure 8
Level of Reality Behavior Code

e. Dialogue Code

Meanwhile, the dialogue code reveals unequal power relations between Hagar and Sarah. Degrading and threatening dialogues that emphasize Hagar's status as an enslaved woman reinforce practices of verbal and symbolic violence against women. In contrast, Hagar's dialogue with God presents recognition and affirmation of her identity as a subject who is "seen." Overall, the results of the reality-level analysis demonstrate that *Hagar and The One Who Sees* represents the experiences of oppressed women through concrete visual and verbal signs, thereby reinforcing the meaning of gender injustice within patriarchal structures.

1. Level of Representation

At the level of representation, the researcher analyzes how the media constructs reality through visual and narrative techniques such as camera work, lighting, and sound, which together convey the meaning shaped by the media to the audience. At this level, the researcher focuses on three codes: camera techniques, lighting, and sound. These codes work collaboratively within a scene to

represent a story so that it can be effectively communicated to viewers. According to Fiske (1990), the representation level involves how the media reconstructs reality through various production techniques, including camera usage, lighting, editing processes, and sound elements (Fiske, 1990).

a. Shot Code

The cinematographic and lighting codes function as representational devices that help construct the meaning of the narrative. Cinematographic techniques are used to direct the audience's attention to the character's psychological condition, power relations, and the social situations experienced by Hagar.

1) Long shot

The use of a long shot when Hagar walks alone across the vast desert landscape represents women's alienation and powerlessness within patriarchal social structures. Hagar's small bodily presence in contrast to the expansive visual space emphasizes the marginalization she experiences, both as a woman and as an enslaved individual. This technique illustrates how social space fails to provide safety or protection for oppressed women.



Figure 9
Level of Representation Shot Code Long Shot

2) Low-angle shot

The use of a low-angle shot when Hagar encounters the mysterious male figure she believes to be God carries strong symbolic meaning. This angle not only signifies a spiritual dimension but also positions Hagar as a subject who maintains a direct relationship with transcendent power, without mediation by patriarchal structures. This representation challenges patriarchal narratives that often monopolize religious authority through male figures.



Figure 10
Level of Representation Shot Code Long Angle Shot

3) Close-up shots

The use of close-up shots on Hagar's face serves to highlight emotional expressions such as fear, exhaustion, hope, and happiness. This technique directs the audience's attention to Hagar's inner experiences, transforming women's suffering from an abstract concept into a personal and humanized reality. Within the context of radical feminism, the close-up functions as a representational strategy that shifts women from the position of objects to subjects who possess their own voices and lived experiences.



Figure 11
Level of Representation Shot Code Close-up Shots

4) Tracking shots

The use of tracking shots that follow Hagar's movement serves to emphasize both the physical and psychological journey of the female character in confronting the patriarchal system. This technique creates a sense of continuity and emotional engagement, allowing the audience to accompany Hagar in her struggle. Within the framework of radical feminism, the tracking shot represents a process of women's liberation that is not static but dynamic and evolving. The camera movement that follows Hagar also signifies her agency and control over the direction of her own life, rather than positioning her as a mere object controlled by patriarchal social structures.



Figure 12
Level of Representation Shot Code Tracking
Shots

b. Lighting Code

Lighting codes are used to create specific emotional atmospheres and to emphasize changes in the character's inner condition. Both codes operate simultaneously to represent the social reality as constructed by the media.

1) Low-key Lighting

Within the framework of radical feminism, low-key lighting is used to depict Hagar's suffering and to intensify the sense of inner conflict she experiences.



Figure 13
Level of Representation Lighting Code Low-key
Lighting

2) Natural Lighting

Natural lighting is used to signify the beginning of Hagar's rebellion, marked by her escape and her desire to break free from the patriarchal order.



Figure 14
Level of Representation Lighting Code Natural
Lighting

c. Sound Code

Sound elements, including both dialogue and background music, contribute to deepening the

film's representational meaning. The music employed is predominantly minimalist and emotional, reinforcing an atmosphere of suffering as well as hope. Hagar's dialogues function as expressions of symbolic resistance against the injustice she experiences. Thus, sound serves as an important medium for conveying women's experiences that have long been silenced by the patriarchal system.

Level of ideology

According to Fiske, the ideological level refers to the layer of meaning related to value systems, beliefs, and influential, dominant social structures such as patriarchy, social class, and social relations that operate within media texts (Fiske, 1990). In the film *Hagar and the One Who Sees*, the researcher identified codes at the ideological level, specifically radical feminism. Radical feminism stems from a deeply rooted patriarchal system that has developed within society. The character Hagar is depicted as experiencing alienation and violence. This film not only addresses the issue of gender inequality but also conveys that women have historically been in subordinate positions. In the film, Hagar is portrayed not merely as a victim, but as a woman who possesses the courage and strength to break free from a patriarchal system that is deeply entrenched in the social order.

CONCLUSION

The setting of the film is Canaan in 1911. Canaan is the ancient name for a region that today encompasses much of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and parts of Jordan and Syria. It is a region that continues to uphold patriarchal cultural values, where patriarchy is deeply embedded within the social structure, granting men stronger power and authority while placing women in subordinate positions. Moreover, in ancient times, women in Arab society had extremely limited freedom of movement.

This study demonstrates that *Hagar and The One Who Sees* represent radical feminist values through its visual, narrative, and ideological constructions, which highlight the oppression of

women in a patriarchal culture. At the level of reality, radical feminism is portrayed through codes of appearance, makeup, behavior, expression, environment, and dialogue. At the level of representation, radical feminism is conveyed through codes of cinematography, lighting, and visual emphasis to reinforce and highlight gender inequality and violence against women. At the ideological level, the film raises the theme of radical feminism, which emerges from deeply rooted patriarchal systems that develop within societies that position women as inferior to men, often reducing women to objects of sexual exploitation.

Future research may be expanded by applying other feminist theories—such as liberal, psychoanalytic, or postcolonial feminism in the analysis of Arab short films. Such expansion is important because academic studies on the representation of women in Arab cinema remain limited; therefore, further analyses can enrich perspectives and broaden the scope of feminist research within the context of Arab culture.

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