

Meaning of Violence and Sexual Abuse of Women During Pandemic Covid-19 Times: Analysis of Sara Mills's Critical Discussion on "ASA" Short Movie

1st Sheila Rizka Ramadhania
Communication Department
Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia
 Jakarta, Indonesia
 Sheila.rr.susanto@gmail.com

*2nd Yuri Alfrin Aladdin
Communication Department
Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia
 Jakarta, Indonesia
 yalfrin@gmail.com

Abstract— Violence against women is a global issue which in Indonesia is still very worrying. According to the Annual Notes by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) published on March 6, 2020, it said that the number of cases reported in 2019 increased by 6% from the previous year. It was predicted in 2020, the violence against women could be increased due to during pandemic Covid-19 period, in line with the increasing of internet user numbers. Through movie as a medium for reality construction, Asa's short movie showed how victims of sexual violence struggle to get justice. This research used two layers research methods namely the first layer was Saussure's semiotics model and the second layer was Sara Mills's critical discourse analysis. The results of this study indicated that women still often experience objectification and victims of sexual violence experience victim-blaming.

Keywords—sexual abuse, pandemic, covid-19, short movie, Asa

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the Annual Notes (CATAHU) issued by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) published on March 6, 2020 [1] it said that the number of cases of violence and harassment against women during 2019 increased by 6% from the previous year. In 2019 the number of Violence against Women (VAW) reached 431,471, this number increased when compared to 2018 which amounted to 406,178 cases. Among them were cases of violence against women in the public and community sphere, which were recorded as many as 3,602 cases. Especially for cases of sexual harassment, during the Covid-19 pandemic entering Indonesia in early 2020, this figure was predicted to increase sharply along with the increasing number of internet users.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, various community activities generally used the internet, such as working from home, studying from home, or buying things from home, watching movies no longer in theaters, but through online. The increasing number of internet users, on the other hand, has also increased the number of sexual harassment against women, for example in the case of posting nude photos of separated couples. The National Commission on Women does not yet have a record of exact figures regarding this

matter, but the news is quoted from the German news portal [https://www.dw.com/id/\[2\]](https://www.dw.com/id/[2]) and the Indonesian news portal Detik.com [https://news.detik.com\[3\]](https://news.detik.com[3]) on January 6, 2021 reports the same thing, namely the increase in online sexual harassment during the Covid 19 pandemic. Sexual harassment of ex- partners and carried out via online social media was a reality that often occurs in Indonesian society so far [4] and this was what has been brought up to the big screen.

Throughout 2020 in Indonesia, there have also been many cases of violence or sexual harassment, be it against teenagers, adult women and children. These crimes also occurred online or in person. Beginning in January, acts of sexual harassment were emerging, such as, a man did breast touching to a woman in Bekasi. It was experienced by a 38-year-old mother. Another case, a man touched a woman's buttocks in Jatinegara, Jakarta. Then in May 2020, allegations emerged of sexual harassment by the best alumni of one of the leading universities in Indonesia, which then made the survivors (victims) of the perpetrators dare to reveal these despicable acts. A case of harassment also occurred last September 2020, when one of the health personnel at Soekarno-Hatta Airport committed fraud, extortion and sexual harassment of a female passenger, as a result of which the victim admitted to having experienced trauma afterward. Not only that, acts of violence and sexual harassment also occurred until last October. Sexual violence and murder occurred against a housewife and her child in East Aceh.

For this reason, researchers chose a short film titled "Asa" which was released in 2020 on the Rifka Annisa YouTube channel, which is a non-governmental women's activist or foundation [5]. This movie was inspired by the story of a survivor of sexual violence and abuse who finally managed to rise from her downturn with the support of her parents. This research was conducted to see how to interpret violence and sexual harassment against women, one of which is done through social media in the short movie Asa (2020) through Sara Mills's critical discourse analysis model.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Sara Mills Model Critical Discourse Analysis

In the critical discourse analysis of Sara Mills' model, the point of attention was to show how women were depicted and marginalized in a news text, and how the forms and patterns of this marginalization were carried out [6]. In contrast to the ideas of Critical Linguistics, Sara Mills' ideas looked more at how the positions of actors were presented in the text. These positions in terms of who was the subject and who was the object will determine the structure of the text. In addition, Mills also focuses on how writers and readers were placed in a text.

1) Position: Subject-Object

Sara Mills placed representation at the heart of her analysis. In this case, Mills emphasizes how the positions of various social actors, positions of ideas, or events were placed in the text which will ultimately determine the form of the text that was present in the audience. Basically, every actor had the opportunity to tell himself and his view of the world, but in reality, everyone did not have that opportunity, many of them could only be objects (that are told) by the subject (who tell).

2) Reader's Position

In Sara Mills's critical discourse analysis, she argued that readers were very important and must be taken into account in the text [7]. According to her, the text was a result of the negotiations that occur between the writer and the reader. In this way, Mills considered that the reader was not only the party who received the text, but also participated in the transactions of how the text was seen. From a variety of reader's positions, Mills focused on gender and the position of the reader. For example, how men and women had different perceptions in understanding and placing their position in a text and make it into two different conditions, first the dominant reading of a text, whether the text was aimed at men or women and second, how the text was interpreted by the reader.

3) Sara Mills Analytical Framework

Position of Subject-Object: How events were seen from whose perspective the event was seen. Who was positioned as the narrator (subject) and who was being told (object). Each actor and social group had the opportunity to present themselves or be shown by others.

Writer-Reader Position: How the reader's position was represented in the text. How did readers position themselves in the text that is displayed and to which groups do readers identified themselves.

B. Violence Against Women

Violence against women itself was an act of violence in which the victim is a woman [8]. Meanwhile, sexual violence was all forms of sexual coercion and threats against someone. In other words, sexual violence was sexual contact or act that was unwanted by either party. The important point or essence of sexual violence lied in threats (verbal) and coercion (action). Society often misunderstands the term between sexual harassment and sexual violence, even though in its actual form the disrespectful behavior did not have a significant difference. However, in terms of sexual

harassment and sexual violence had different meanings, if sexual violence means in the form of sexual contact or acts that one party did not want either verbally or act.

C. Movie as a Mass Communication Media

Movie as a form of mass communication media was mentioned in Law number 33 of 2009 concerning film in Chapter 1 Article 1, which discussed the meaning of film, namely a work of cultural art which was a social institution and mass communication media made based on the basic rules of cinematography using or without sound and can be performed. As a form of mass communication media, films were not only able to describe reality, but also could form a new reality in the real world [9].

D. Maintaining the Integrity of the Specifications

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III. METHOD

The research method used a critical paradigm and qualitative perspective to see how to interpret messages about violence and sexual harassment against women in the short film "Asa".

In this study, researchers will use two layers of analytical research methods, namely combining the first layer of research using Saussure's semiotic analysis. After several film scenes were analyzed using Saussure's semiotics and obtained the meaning of their representation into the current social context of society, then the analysis was continued using the second layer, namely Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis.

In the first layer of analysis, this study uses a semiotic analysis of the Ferdinand De Saussure model which focuses more on the sign itself. This model emphasizes that the sign is a physical object with a meaning. According to him, signs or symbols (including language) are arbitrary, that is, they depend on certain individual stimuli and experiences. According to Saussure's view, in a marking system, the sign is an inseparable part of the convention system. This arbitrariness, according to Saussure, means that there is no natural relationship between form (signifier) and meaning (sign). However, the use of language is not completely arbitrary, because it all depends on the "agreement" between language users [10].

In his view, Saussure also distinguishes between language (langue or language) and speech (speech or parole). Language is a formal system that can be analyzed separately from its use in everyday life, while speech is the use of language to express meaning [11].

Then in the second layer of research used using Critical Discourse Analysis Sara Mills model. This model looks through the perspective of feminism/women and emphasizes

how women are represented in a text. Mills sees that women are often in the wrong position, weak and they are not given the opportunity to defend or protect themselves. Sara Mills calls her analysis as Feminist Stylistics. Sara Mills said that Feminist Stylistics aims to make the assumptions that exist in conventional stylistics (which is a branch of science about style) clearer, by not only adding the topic of Gender to the list of elements analyzed, but using stylistics / style of language into a new phase in discourse analysis. This is done to maximize stylistics in language analysis, so that there is no longer the assumption that language just exists, or indeed must exist and be raised [12].

In this research model, Sara Mills has two concepts in it, namely the first is the subject-object position and the writer-reader position. The concept of subject-object position is used to see the position of the subject who tells an event to the person being told and makes the position of the subject an image or text in society. For the writer-reader concept, Sara Mills does not only look at it from the writer's point of view, but tries to explore the existing discourse from the reader's point of view. This kind of position will place the reader in one position and affect how the text will be understood and also how social actors are placed [6]. By using film as a medium of research as a medium of mass communication to convey messages to the public at large to see the position of the subject-object in the film and the position of the director (writer)-audience (reader) to be conveyed.

The unit of analysis of this research is the short film *Asa* which was released in 2020 on YouTube Rifka Annisa with the level of analysis in the form of text analysis using critical discourse analysis of the Sara Mills model and the semiotic analysis of Saussure as the first layer on violence and sexual harassment against women in the short film *Asa*. This research uses sources:

- Primary data in the form of the short film *Asa* in the form of soft copy obtained through Rifka Annisa's YouTube.
- Secondary data derived from books, journals, and previous research (thesis, theses and the like) both in the form of soft copy and hard copy.

In this study the data collection techniques used are documentation data by using about 10 scenes of "Asa" short movie, related to the focus of this research. The researchers also interviewed informant Loeloe Hendra as the director and scriptwriter of the short movie *Asa* as well as women activists from non-governmental organization "Rifka Annisa". The data analysis technique from the research uses qualitative analysis which consists of:

- Watch and observe every dialogue and scene from the short movie *Asa*
- Data reduction, namely data analysis activities by classifying, directing, focusing and discarding data that are not appropriate or not needed
- Analyzing the data using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis by looking at the writer-reader and subject-object positions and Saussure's semiotic analysis as the first layer.

- As well as using an in-depth interview analysis of certain informants related to the short film *Asa* 2020. In this in-depth interview, usually the informant is free to provide complete and in-depth answers which is carried out with high frequency in intensive time frames repeatedly [13].

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The film *Asa* told a story of a teenage girl named Shinta, a high school student who was dating a man named Alex who was older and had a wife. Shinta later became pregnant, while Alex refused to take responsibility for marrying Shinta. After a feud broke out because Shinta kept pressuring Alex to marry her, Alex then uploaded a video of intercourse with Shinta on social media. With the spread of Shinta and Alex's vulgar videos, Shinta became the subject of conversation among friends at school. The neighbors around their house had already seen Shinta's video which embarrassed her mother. Meanwhile, Alex was still unreachable. This of course made Shinta worse off. Although Shinta experienced as a victim, she was expelled from school and became the talk of people. By using analysis of Saussure's semiotics model, the movie represented that not infrequently the victim of sexual violence who a woman was considered to be the wrong side due to the disaster that happened to her or victim blaming. In the real life, it is a condition where the victim becomes the target of an incident by society. Whether it's related to the way of dressing, behavior, or the time of the harassment incident. So that the point of the problem is precisely in women who "according to the morality of society" could not take care of themselves properly because they are considered to be tempting men. The victims are finally labeled by the social environment with a bad label or even contempt. In the short film *Asa*, it could be seen that the victim of sexual violence who was a woman experiences a greater impact on her life, both physically and psychologically, such as trauma, unwanted pregnancy, expulsion from educational institutions and embarrassment due to what people around her saying about. Even victims could also sexually transmitted diseases from perpetrators of sexual violence. In the end, both of Shinta's parents chose to forgive Shinta and chose to stay by Sita's side to support and help her get back up. In this case, by using de Saussure's semiotics model, it can be seen in the society context, how the family has an important role to help victims of sexual violence face problems like this. In other words, a victim of violence and sexual harassment really need support from the people around him to get back up, especially her social environment and family.

After finding the representative meaning of the movie by using de Saussure's semiotics model, it was analyzed by the second research method, namely Sara Mills' model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This CDA model has two concepts. First, the concept of the subject-object position, which wants to see the position of the actors who are shown through a text, whether they are in the position that tells (the subject) or in the position that is told (object). Second, the concept of the writer-reader position, in this concept it can be seen how the writer or director expresses his views and places the position of the subject-object he wants to present to the reader or audience. In this

position the reader can also determine which side they were on.

A. Subject Position

The position of the subject was a position when each actor had the opportunity to tell his position and that of others. Based on several scenes and dialogues of the short movie "Asa", the subject positions in Asa's short film were Father-Mother, Ayun, teachers, Shinta's school friends, Shinta's neighbors, and Shinta's sister and friends. As the subject, Ayun, who was Shinta's close friend, was confused by her for wanting to do such an indecent thing and tells that Alex was a married man. Moreover, Ayun also known that Shinta and Alex met through social media which made her even more unaware of Shinta's actions.

B. Object Position

As for the position of the object, based on some of the scenes and dialogues above, there were female characters in general, with the dominance of Shinta and Alex. The position of the object was the position when the actor was told by the subject, making them had no opportunity to tell about himself in real and often their position was marginalized. In the short film Asa, women took the object position when Shinta's sister and her friends talked about certain parts of the female body and judge that women could be used as they please.

C. Director-Audience Position

In Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, she said that the reader or audience had an important role and must be taken into account in a text. According to Mills, the text was the result of negotiations that occur between the writer and the reader. Mills also argued that the reader could also determine his position in the text displayed and to which group the reader identifies himself. In this short film Asa, the director placed Shinta as the main role in the storytelling. By bringing up how the feelings of disappointment, sadness and the decline of Shinta, so the director tried to invite the audience to put himself in the position of the character Shinta, a victim of sexual violence who was trying to get up and get justice.

D. Interview Analysis

The results of an interview conducted with the director of the short film Asa, Loeloe Hendra by telephone, showed that the purpose of making this film was to provide an overview related to the issue of sexual violence to teenagers, if in fact many events like this happen around us. He also said that this film aims to show how Shinta, who a victim of the crime of sexual violence was, continued to struggle to live and achieve her goals. Through this short film, Loeloe Hendra also said, in addition to wanting to show a social phenomenon in the form of sexual violence against teenagers today, they also wanted to show how the attitudes and reactions of teenagers and their parents when experiencing these situations, how the figure of women who were victims of sexual violence, and how men always objectified women.

V. CONCLUSION

The subject position was a position where each actor had the opportunity to tell his position and that of others. Based on several scenes and dialogues above, the subject positions in Asa's short movie are Shinta's father, mother, teacher, and Shinta's school friends. The character of the father and mother who has a dominant position in the subject in this movie. This was illustrated by dialogues and scenes where Mother was disappointed and angry with Shinta for her actions.

As for the position of the object, based on some of the above cut scenes and dialogues, there were female characters in general, with the dominance of Shinta. The position of the object was the position when the actor was told by the subject, making Shinta had no opportunity to tell about herself in real terms and often her position was marginalized.

In Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, it was said that the reader or the audience had an important role and must be taken into account in a text. According to Mills, the text was the result of a negotiation between the writer and the reader. Mills also argued that the audience can also determine their position in the text that was displayed and to which group the reader identifies themselves. The director tried to get the audience to put themselves in the position of the character Shinta, a victim of sexual violence and fraud committed by her lover and she tried to get up and get justice.

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