

Representation of Beauty Construction in the Film 200 Pounds Beauty, A Semiotic Analysis from a Feminist Perspective

Avika Diza^{1*}, Abdul Rasyid²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: avikadiza@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received August 24, 2026

Revised September 29, 2026

Accepted October 12, 2026

Keywords: Construction of Beauty, Roland Barthes' Semiotics, Feminism, Beauty Privilege, Representation of Women

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the representation of women's beauty construction in the movie 200 Pounds Beauty through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach and a feminist perspective. The study uses a qualitative interpretive approach with the film as the main data source. Data was collected through document observation, scene review, dialogue recording, as well as documentation of visual signs such as expressions, makeup, clothing, and the physical changes of characters. Data analysis was done based on the three levels of semiotic meaning by Roland Barthes, namely denotation, connotation, and myth, and then interpreted using a feminist perspective. The results show that women's beauty is represented as a social construct that influences acceptance, identity, and professional opportunities. The physical transformation of the character Juwita into Angel shows the presence of beauty privilege and the objectification of women's bodies, as well as the pressure to meet dominant beauty standards. However, the film also presents a critique of these standards through Juwita's identity conflict and her courage in revealing her true self. These findings show that the movie 200 Pounds Beauty both reproduces and critiques beauty myths. This study highlights the importance of media literacy and a critical perspective in understanding the representation of women, so that appreciation of women is not solely based on physical appearance, but also on ability, identity, and self-autonomy.

1. INTRODUCTION

A woman's beauty is a concept that isn't just about physical appearance, but is also shaped by the values, norms, and social perspectives that develop in society. In the context of Indonesian culture, women are often faced with certain beauty standards, like having a proportional body, fair skin, an attractive face, and an appearance considered feminine (Duvall, 2024; Pratama & Rasyid, 2026). Those standards then become a social measure for judging women, so women who don't match the ideal beauty image can feel pressure to change their appearance in order to gain acceptance from others. Mass media, especially films, play an important role in shaping and reproducing ideas of beauty. Movies aren't just a source of entertainment; they also serve as a medium that presents various symbols about the body, identity, gender, and social life. Through characters, dialogues, makeup, clothing, expressions, and the physical changes of the characters, films can create certain meanings about what makes a woman beautiful or not (Nugraha & Zuhriah, 2023; Espinosa & O'Kane, 2025). That representation can indirectly reinforce the idea that a woman's value and acceptance are closely tied to her ability to meet prevailing beauty standards. The movie 200 Pounds Beauty shows this issue through a female character who faces social pressure because of her physical appearance. The main character's transformation highlights the connection between the body, beauty, social acceptance, and female identity. Even though this movie is from South Korea, the issues it portrays are relevant to Indonesian society too, since global beauty standards also interact with local values and culture (Farrimond, 2025). This phenomenon shows that the construction of female beauty can

be understood as part of social and cultural issues that affect how women are seen and how they see themselves. To understand those representations, this study uses Roland Barthes' semiotics, which distinguishes the meaning of signs into denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this approach, various scenes, dialogues, expressions, makeup, clothing, and changes in appearance in films can be analyzed to find meanings that are not only directly visible but also carry certain values and ideologies (Gilbert & Thompson, 2023). Barthes' concept of myth becomes important for seeing how certain beauty standards can be presented as something natural, normal, and ideal in social life.

The feminist perspective is used to see how these representations relate to the position and experiences of women in facing beauty standards. From this perspective, the female body can be understood as a space that is inseparable from social constructions, objectification, and power relations. Thus, the study of 200 Pounds Beauty doesn't just look at physical changes as a matter of appearance, but also as a representation of social pressure on women, identity formation, and the demands to meet the evolving beauty standards in society. Research on the representation of women's beauty in 200 Pounds Beauty has been carried out through various approaches (Luthfiyahningsy, Khairani, & Camelia, 2024) examining the representation of women's beauty in the film 200 Pounds Beauty using Roland Barthes' semiotics and showing that beauty is represented through physical appearance and becomes part of the process of gaining social acceptance. Other research on beauty privilege also shows that women with physical characteristics that match beauty standards tend to receive more favorable social treatment, while women who do not meet these standards are more vulnerable to marginalization. Meanwhile, (Wiryana & Azeharie, 2024) analyzing the Indonesian adaptation of 200 Pounds Beauty through Sara Mills' discourse analysis and a feminist perspective. The results of the study show the presence of social pressure, body shaming, and patriarchal ideology that shape women's beauty standards in the film. Although previous research has discussed beauty, beauty privilege, body shaming, and feminism, there is still room to study more deeply how beauty is constructed through signs, connotations, and myths in films and how these constructions can be interpreted in the context of Indonesian culture. Research (Fada & Christianto, 2026), using Sara Mills' discourse analysis with a focus on subject-object positions, social pressures, and patriarchal ideology, while previous research using Barthes' semiotics focused more on identifying signs of beauty. Therefore, a study that integrates Roland Barthes' semiotics and a feminist perspective is needed to show that beauty standards are not just about physical appearance, but also a system of meaning that can normalize the ideal body, femininity, and social acceptance of women. The novelty of this research lies in the use of Roland Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth to analyze the construction of female beauty, and then interpreting it through a feminist perspective in the context of Indonesian culture. Signs such as body shapes, faces, makeup, clothing, appearance changes, dialogue, and expressions in the film are analyzed as representations that carry social and ideological meanings. With this approach, the study looks at 200 Pounds Beauty not just as a story about women's physical transformation, but as a cultural text that represents how beauty standards are formed, normalized, and connected to power relations and women's positions. The Indonesian context is important because the adaptation and acceptance of global beauty standards do not happen separately from the values, norms, and local culture of Indonesian society.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretative method to analyze the representation of women's beauty construction in the context of Indonesian culture in the film 200 Pounds Beauty. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on the meaning of signs, symbols, dialogues, visuals, and character actions that cannot be explained through quantitative measurement. The interpretative method is used to understand the meaning behind the representation of women's beauty and to interpret how beauty standards are formed through social

and cultural construction. According to (Creswell, 2018), Qualitative research allows researchers to understand the meaning that individuals or groups give to a social or humanitarian issue. The research object is the movie 200 Pounds Beauty, especially the scenes that represent women's beauty, body transformation, makeup, clothing, expressions, dialogue, and social responses to women's appearance. Primary data is obtained from the movie as the main source, while secondary data comes from books, scientific journal articles, and previous studies that related to Roland Barthes' semiotics, the construction of beauty, feminism, Indonesian culture, and the representation of women in media. Data collection was done through documentation observation techniques, which involved repeatedly watching films, noting relevant scenes, taking screenshots of visual signs considered important, and transcribing dialogues related to the construction of female beauty (Arikunto, 2021).

Data analysis using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which includes three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth (Barthes, 1977). At the denotation stage, the researcher identifies the literal meaning of scenes, dialogues, expressions, body, clothing, and other visual elements. The connotation stage is used to interpret the social, emotional, and cultural meanings attached to these signs. Next, the myth stage is used to reveal the ideologies or beliefs that are naturalized through film representations, such as the assumption that beautiful women must have certain bodies, specific skin, or certain appearances. The interpretation results are then analyzed using a feminist perspective to examine forms of objectification, social pressures, power relations, and gender constructions that appear in representations of female beauty. To keep the interpretation accurate, the analysis was done systematically by comparing visual and verbal findings in the film with theoretical concepts and relevant academic sources. The data was then grouped based on themes, like ideal body standards, face and makeup, physical transformation, social acceptance, female objectification, and pressure on appearance (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) Next, each category is analyzed through the relationship between denotative, connotative, and mythic meanings, and then linked to a feminist perspective and the Indonesian cultural context. Through these steps, the study is expected to explain how the film 200 Pounds Beauty represents and shapes the understanding of women's beauty, as well as how that construction relates to social, cultural, and gender values (Moleong, 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESULTS

The research findings show that the movie 200 Pounds Beauty represents women's beauty as something that isn't entirely natural, but rather constructed through social standards, media, and the entertainment industry. In this study, beauty is understood as physical appearance considered ideal based on certain standards and continuously produced through media representation, making it seem like a common measure of what a beautiful woman is. On the other hand, natural beauty in this study refers to beauty that isn't solely determined by external standards, but is related to authenticity, acceptance of one's body, individual uniqueness, and appreciation of personal qualities. This interpretation doesn't mean that physical changes are always at odds with natural beauty, but it highlights the issue when women feel they have to change their bodies and identities to gain social recognition. These findings are analyzed through Roland Barthes' three stages of semiotics: denotation, connotation, and myth, and then examined using a feminist perspective to critique the construction of beauty that puts physical appearance as the main measure of a woman's value.

Table 1. Roland Barthes' Semiotics Analysis and Feminist Perspective on the Representation of Beauty in the Movie 200 Pounds Beauty

Scene	Denotation	Connotation	Myths and Criticisms of Feminism
	Two women on one stage. One in front with fancy lighting, beautiful face, lip-	Talented women have to be the shadow of beautiful women who	Myth: the hegemony of the Indonesian entertainment industry that visuals sell better than talent.

Juwita singing backstage	syncing. One behind a dark curtain, plump body, singing live with a beautiful voice.	aren't talented. The industry cares about what it sees.	This is a myth that's been naturalized as if the audience only wants to see pretty faces. Feminist critique: Juwita experiences double injustice: as a woman. Her voice is taken, her body discarded her voice is useful but her body has to be hidden.
Juwita cries after being treated badly	Juwita cried after experiencing treatment that humiliated her physical condition.	A woman's body becomes an object of social judgment that affects her self-confidence and self-acceptance.	Myth: women who don't meet beauty standards are considered less valuable. Feminist critique: pointing out the social pressure that limits appreciation of women based on appearance.
Juwita undergoing plastic surgery	Juwita underwent plastic surgery to change her face and body.	Physical changes are seen as a way to achieve the ideal look, social recognition, and opportunities that were previously hard to get.	Myth: ideal beauty can be achieved through body changes and is a requirement for gaining acceptance. Feminist critique: questioning the social pressure that makes women feel they need to change their bodies to be valued.
Juwita uses the identity 'Angel'	After going through a physical transformation, Juwita used the name Angel and got public attention.	Changes in appearance are followed by changes in social treatment as well as professional opportunities.	Myth: beautiful women are more easily accepted and achieve success. Feminist critique: highlights the inequality of opportunities and beauty privilege in the entertainment industry.
Juwita reveals her true identity	Juwita revealed to the public that she is Juwita, not just the figure Angel that people know.	Revealing your identity shows the conflict between the image built on beauty standards and being true to yourself.	Questioned myth: women have to maintain an ideal appearance and identity to be accepted. Feminist critique: expressing identity becomes an act of reclaiming control over one's own narrative, even though it doesn't automatically erase the existing beauty standards.
Juwita accepts herself	Juwita comes across as more open about her identity and past.	Self-acceptance becomes an alternative to relying on external judgments.	Myth being criticized: a woman's value is only determined by her physical appearance. Feminist critique: emphasizes the importance of autonomy, self-acceptance, and valuing women as individuals.

Source: Research data, adapted from scenes of the movie 200 Pounds Beauty.

3.1.1. Beauty as a Social Construction in the Entertainment Industry

Based on Table 1, the scene where Juwita sings backstage highlights a fundamental issue regarding how women's beauty is represented in the entertainment industry. Denotatively, the scene shows that Juwita has vocal ability but does not get the chance to perform directly in front of the audience. Meanwhile, other women who are the main singers take the positions visible to the audience. On a connotative level, this difference in positioning shows that skill and talent do not always become the main consideration in deciding who gets the chance to perform. Physical appearance actually becomes one of the factors that affect a woman's position in the entertainment industry. On a mythological level, this scene builds the idea that women who are considered attractive are more deserving of being shown and more likely to get public attention than women who don't meet dominant beauty standards. This myth doesn't just reflect personal preference, but shows how beauty standards can be created and maintained through entertainment industry practices. When

women deemed beautiful are constantly placed in the public eye, while those considered less attractive are hidden from view, physical appearance can end up being seen as a reasonable requirement for gaining recognition. From a feminist perspective, that representation can be critiqued because it puts women in a system that values the body and appearance over personal abilities. The issue shown in the film isn't just that Juwita doesn't have beauty that fits a certain standard, but that her talent doesn't get equal opportunities because of judgments based on physical appearance. So, beauty is no longer just a personal trait, but serves as a social mechanism that can determine women's visibility, recognition, and opportunities. This scene becomes a basis for understanding how the film represents beauty as a result of social construction that can potentially harm women.

3.1.2. The Pressure of Beauty Standards and Women's Body Transformation

The idea of beauty becomes more apparent in the scene where Juwita experiences humiliation about her physical appearance and then decides to undergo plastic surgery. On a denotative level, the scene shows Juwita's sadness and the medical procedures she undergoes to change her look. On a connotative level, this series of scenes illustrates the psychological pressure women face when their bodies are constantly measured against societal beauty standards. Juwita's decision to transform her appearance can be seen as part of her effort to break out of a disadvantageous social position and pursue better life opportunities. At the mythic level, plastic surgery scenes represent the belief that ideal beauty can be achieved through physical changes and that these changes can enhance a woman's value in society's eyes. A body that was previously considered not to meet beauty standards is then altered to approach an ideal image that gains social acceptance. Through this series of signs, the film shows how beauty standards can be naturalized, meaning they are understood as if they were fair and generally accepted measures, even though these measures are shaped by social values and certain representational practices. The feminist perspective is used to critique this situation by questioning why women have to bear the pressure to change their bodies in order to gain more equal recognition and opportunities. This critique doesn't mean that every woman's choice to undergo plastic surgery is wrong or that women don't have the freedom to decide how they look. The issue of concern arises when the choice to change the body happens in a social setting that gives advantages to women who look according to certain standards, while other women face humiliation, neglect, or restriction of opportunities. In this context, freedom of choice needs to be understood together with the social structures that influence those choices. In this way, the movie *200 Pounds Beauty* represents beauty as something that can be achieved through physical transformation, but at the same time shows the social and psychological consequences of that kind of construction. Juwita's journey shows that the pressure to be beautiful isn't just about wanting to look attractive, but also about the need to gain acceptance, recognition, and opportunities that weren't available to her before.

3.1.3. Identity Changes and Beauty Privilege in Women's Representation

Juwita's physical transformation, along with using the identity of Angel, shows the connection between beauty, identity, and social opportunities. On the surface, Juwita appears with a new look and uses the name Angel to enter public spaces as a singer. On a deeper level, this change shows that physical appearance not only changes how someone looks but can also affect how society treats and judges them. After the transformation, Juwita gained attention she hadn't received before when she was just herself. On a mythic level, these changes reinforce the idea that women who meet dominant beauty standards have a greater chance of gaining recognition and success. This phenomenon can be linked to the concept of beauty privilege, which is the social advantage someone gets because their appearance is considered attractive by society. In the film, this advantage is shown through Juwita's shift from an unnoticed backup singer to someone who grabs public attention. So, the film doesn't just show physical changes, but also highlights how beauty standards can serve as a basis for different

opportunities in the entertainment industry. If we look at it from a feminist perspective, this situation shows that women can face inequality not because they lack ability, but because their abilities don't get the recognition that matches their appearance. Juwita had a talent for singing from the start, but that talent only got more exposure after she changed her appearance and identity. This representation draws attention to a social system that values women's physical image more than their competence. However, it's important to emphasize that the film doesn't directly claim that all beautiful women are guaranteed to succeed or that women who don't meet beauty standards will inevitably fail. The semiotic analysis in this study focuses on the patterns of representation built through certain scenes, especially the relationship between Juwita's physical transformation and the changes in how she's treated. These patterns serve as the basis for identifying the beauty myths produced by the film and critiquing them from a feminist perspective.

3.1.4. Disclosure of Identity and Women's Resistance Ambivalence

Juwita's identity conflict shows that success gained through physical transformation doesn't automatically solve the issue of self-acceptance. Even though she's known as Angel and gets public attention, Juwita still has to deal with issues about the identity she's been hiding. Literally, the conflict appears when she revealed her true identity to the public. On a connotative level, the action showed the tension between a self-image that gains social recognition and a personal identity that has never been fully able to be expressed. On a mythical level, the conflict questions the idea that women have to maintain an ideal beauty image to continue being accepted by society. Juwita did gain benefits after her transformation, but she also faced consequences, like having to maintain a new identity built around her physical appearance. This shows that social recognition based on beauty standards can lead to dependence on external judgments. In other words, women might gain acceptance, but that acceptance isn't necessarily based on appreciation of who they are as a whole. From a feminist perspective, Juwita's disclosure of her identity can be seen as a form of resistance against the demand to constantly maintain an ideal image. This action shows an effort to present herself as a subject who has the right to determine and express her own identity. However, this resistance needs to be understood critically. Revealing her identity does not automatically cancel out the beauty standards that have been at play in the story, because Juwita's previous success was actually achieved after she adjusted her appearance to meet those standards. This is where the ambivalence of feminism representation in the film *200 Pounds Beauty* lies. On one hand, the film shows the harmful effects of beauty standards through Juwita's experience of not being recognized when her appearance is considered less than ideal. On the other hand, resolving the conflict by revealing her identity gives space for reading about women's courage to face social judgment. Nevertheless, the film doesn't completely offer liberation from beauty standards because the physical transformation still plays an important part in the character's journey to success.

3.1.5. Feminist Perspective as a Critique of Beauty Myths

The use of a feminist perspective in this research aims to critique beauty myths identified through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. If Barthes' semiotics is used to explain how visual signs, actions, expressions, and identity changes shape the meaning of beauty at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth, then feminism is used to assess the social implications and power relations contained in those representations. In this way, the two approaches complement each other. Semiotics helps reveal how the construction of beauty is shaped through signs in films, while feminism helps explain why that construction needs to be critiqued from the perspective of equality, autonomy, and respect for women. The first myth being criticized is the belief that a woman's physical appearance is more important than her abilities and personal qualities. This myth is evident when Juwita, who has singing talent, does not get a position equal to that of a woman presented as

the lead singer. The second myth is the belief that women need to change their bodies to be socially accepted. This myth is reflected in Juwita's decision to undergo plastic surgery after experiencing pressure and negative treatment. The third myth is the belief that beauty can be a main asset to gain success and professional opportunities. This myth can be seen through the change in how people treat Juwita after she started using Angel's identity. From a feminist perspective, these three myths show how beauty standards can limit women when their self-worth is determined by appearance deemed ideal. These standards can be tied to the interests of the entertainment and beauty industries, which keep presenting images of women that are considered attractive. In a broader context, this representation can also be critiqued through a patriarchal lens, where women's bodies are judged based on unequal social expectations, and through capitalism, where the ideal appearance can potentially be treated as something that can be shaped and commercialized. However, this relationship should be understood as a framework for critical interpretation, not as a claim that every scene explicitly expresses patriarchal or capitalist interests.

The feminist critique in this study is then directed at the understanding that a woman's beauty should not be a condition for receiving recognition, opportunities, and fair treatment. Women have the right to decide their own appearance and identity without losing acknowledgment of their abilities. Natural beauty, as understood in this study, serves as a point of comparison to emphasize the importance of being authentic, accepting one's body, and appreciating personal qualities that can't just be reduced to physical measures. That said, the movie *200 Pounds Beauty* doesn't completely challenge the beauty myth. Juwita's physical transformation actually becomes the way for her to gain more attention and opportunities. So, the feminist perspective in this study isn't used to say that the film successfully frees women from beauty standards, but rather to critique the contradiction between criticizing physical discrimination and using physical transformation as a path to recognition. The resistance shown at the end of the movie is more about having the courage to reveal her identity and face social consequences, not a total rejection of the existing beauty standards.

3.1.6. Synthesis of Findings: The Construction of Beauty and Women's Position

Overall, the analysis shows that the movie *200 Pounds Beauty* presents an ambivalent representation of female beauty. Through Juwita's journey, the film shows how socially constructed beauty standards can affect women's positions in the entertainment industry, social acceptance, and professional opportunities. The change in how Juwita is treated after her physical transformation shows that beauty in the film's narrative functions not just as an appearance trait, but also as a social marker that impacts recognition and access to certain opportunities. Roland Barthes' analysis of denotation, connotation, and myth shows that the sequence of film scenes creates a meaning about the relationship between physical appearance and women's success. This myth works through portraying women who are considered beautiful as more deserving of being seen, more likely to get attention, and more likely to receive recognition. In a critical reading, this representation shows how beauty standards can be naturalized so that they seem normal, even though they can lead to inequality in how women are judged and treated. The feminist perspective is then used to question those constructions by emphasizing that a woman's value should not be determined by how well her body fits the dominant beauty standards. A woman's abilities, uniqueness, identity, and rights to choosing life options is an aspect what's needed getting recognition on an equal footing. However, Juwita's journey also shows that resistance to beauty standards doesn't happen simply. The main character still achieves success through physical transformation before eventually facing issues of identity and revealing herself to the public. So, the main finding of this study isn't that the movie *200 Pounds Beauty* completely rejects beauty standards, but rather that it represents and shows the consequences of how female beauty is constructed. On one hand, the movie's narrative reinforces the link between physical beauty and social acceptance through Juwita's success after her transformation. On the other

hand, the identity conflict she experiences opens up space for critiquing the system of judgment that makes women feel they need to change themselves to gain recognition. This contradiction is what makes a feminist perspective important in the study to reveal how beauty myths are created, their impact on women's positions, and how far the movie's narrative allows room for resisting those standards. In conclusion, Roland Barthes' semiotics is used to show how the construction of beauty is represented through signs and myths in films, while the feminist perspective is used to critique that construction and its implications for women. The film doesn't have to be seen as successfully rejecting beauty standards to be analyzed from a feminist angle. In fact, the mismatch between criticism of physical discrimination and the success achieved through body transformation is an important critical finding. Through this reading, the study emphasizes that the main issue isn't whether women are allowed to change their appearance, but why certain appearances have to be a requirement for gaining recognition, acceptance, and opportunities that should instead be available based on ability and human dignity.

3.2. DISCUSSION

The research results show that the movie 200 Pounds Beauty represents women's beauty as a social construct closely related to acceptance, recognition, and women's position in public spaces. This is evident from the difference in how Juwita is treated before and after her physical transformation. Before the transformation, Juwita had good vocal abilities but was only placed as a backup singer, and her physical presence was not shown to the public. After undergoing the physical change, she got the chance to perform and received much more attention. These findings align with other research (Situmorang, 2025; Wang, Hu, Cheng, & Roberts, 2025) which shows that 200 Pounds Beauty represents beauty standards through a slim body, fair skin, a clean face, makeup, clothing, and overall physical appearance. The study also found that beauty in films tends to be understood based on outward visual aspects. That representation shows that a woman's abilities aren't always the main basis for gaining social recognition. In Juwita's case, her singing skills, which she had from the start, didn't change much, but the acceptance of her changed after her physical appearance was aligned with beauty standards. This situation reinforces the findings (Agustina, Nugroho, & Fuadin, 2025) about the movie Imperfect, which shows that beauty privilege causes women who are considered visually attractive to tend to receive better treatment compared to women who doesn't meet the standard conventional beauty. Thus, the findings of this study show that beauty in films is not just an aesthetic characteristic, but also a form of social capital that can influence women's opportunities in professional and social life. The scene where Juwita experiences humiliation about her body and then undergoes plastic surgery shows that beauty standards work through social pressure on women's bodies. Denotatively, plastic surgery is an act of changing physical appearance. However, on a connotative level, this act reflects the urge to adjust the body to the image of what is considered ideal beauty. This finding is similar to research (Aulia, Manesah, & Suryanto, 2024; Satria & Rasyid, 2026) About the movie I Feel Pretty, which shows that women's body size and shape are constructed as part of beauty standards. The research also found that the desire to meet beauty standards can be instilled in women through social and cultural pressures, including the desire to change their bodies through diet, exercise, or cosmetic procedures.

When linked to a feminist perspective, this condition shows that women's bodies are not entirely in private spaces, but become objects of social judgment. Juwita's body is judged based on size, shape, and visual appeal before ultimately being altered through surgery. Research (Putra, Amri, Fitriah, Putri, & Triandana, 2026) Specifically, it finds that 200 Pounds Beauty depicts the construction of women's bodies through beauty standards and the male gaze, with body transformation serving as a path to social acceptance. These findings support this study's results that Juwita's body changes cannot be understood merely as an individual choice, since this decision takes

place within a social structure that gives greater rewards to women who meet certain appearance standards. The issue can also be understood through the concept of the beauty myth. (Yu, 2023; Marta, Laksono, Fernando, Sudarji, & Borge, 2025) explaining that the beauty myth constructed by the media can limit women's freedom because certain standards are positioned as if they are a reasonable measure of beauty. In the context of 200 Pounds Beauty, this myth is seen in the change in how Juwita is treated after her transformation. Before surgery, her body was a source of ridicule and prevented her from having a visible presence. After surgery, her new appearance gave her access to popularity and professional opportunities. In this way, the film shows how the beauty myth can work through a process of naturalization, where the idea that beautiful women are more deserving of acceptance, attention, and respect is seen as normal. Research findings also show a link between beauty, identity, and professional opportunities. Juwita's transformation into 'Angel' wasn't just a physical change, but also came with changes in identity and social status. This shows that beauty has consequences for how a person is perceived by their surroundings. Research (Cilizoğlu, Dondurucu, & Çetinkaya, 2025; Hamzah, et al., 2026) which specifically examines the concept of beauty in women in 200 Pounds Beauty using Roland Barthes' semiotics finds the existence of denotative, connotative, and mythic meanings in the representation of beauty. The study shows that the female character's struggle to appear become physically attractive An important part in shaping the concept of beauty presented in the film. This research finding expands that reading by showing that Juwita's change in appearance doesn't stop at the construction of "beautiful", but also results in changes in social access, professional opportunities, and female identity.

However, the representation of beauty in films isn't entirely reproductive. Movies also offer criticism of those standards through the identity conflicts experienced by Juwita. Even though her physical transformation brings her popularity and professional opportunities, Juwita still has to hide her true identity. This situation shows that the acceptance gained through physical appearance doesn't necessarily lead to self-acceptance. These findings align with research on Imperfect, which shows that women can feel pressured when they don't match dominant body and beauty standards. (Pienrasmi, Amalia, Vewawati, & Poyo, 2026) It even shows that the discourse of beauty in films can create a hyperreality about 'beautiful' and 'perfect' women, especially in relation to careers, social relationships, and personal life. At the end of the film, Juwita's action of revealing her true identity can be seen as a form of resistance against the beauty standards that previously constrained her. While at the beginning she tried to change her body to gain acceptance, by the end she chooses to reveal her identity and past. This change shows a shift in women's position from being objects to being subjects who can determine their own identity. This finding aligns with research (Utami, Abidin, & Zuhriah, 2023; Khudlori & Suratno, 2026) which shows that semiotic analysis of films can reveal representations of subordination, power, and women's struggles through visual and narrative signs. Thus, a feminist perspective allows Juwita's actions to be read not just as character development, but as a form of negotiation and resistance against the position of women shaped by social norms. The findings also show that the movie 200 Pounds Beauty presents an ambivalent representation of feminism. On one hand, the film reproduces beauty standards by depicting that physical transformation brings social and professional benefits. On the other hand, the film critiques these standards by showing the psychological consequences and identity issues that arise after Juwita gains what is considered ideal beauty. This ambivalent pattern is important because feminism in the film is not only expressed by rejecting beauty standards, but also through the process of women reclaiming authority over their bodies and identities. These findings are in line with research (Mandradjieff, 2021; Gardiner, 2026) which shows that the representation of feminism in films can appear through female characters as active subjects who are capable of making decisions and facing limiting social structures.

Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous research while also putting more specific emphasis on the relationship between beauty constructs, beauty privilege, identity, and women's agency. Through Roland Barthes' semiotics, beauty in 200 Pounds Beauty is not only read as a visual sign in the form of the body, face, makeup, and appearance, but also as a system of meaning that creates the myth that beauty can determine women's success and acceptance. Perspective feminisme then shows that the myth is related to power relations over women's bodies. In the end, Juwita's journey from a hidden woman, going through transformation, gaining recognition, experiencing an identity crisis, to finally daring to express herself shows that the film both reproduces and critiques beauty standards. This position makes 200 Pounds Beauty not just a story about physical change, but also a representation of women's struggle to gain recognition for their bodies, identities, abilities, and themselves.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the film 200 Pounds Beauty represents female beauty as a social construct that affects acceptance, identity, and professional opportunities. Through Roland Barthes' semiotics and a feminist perspective, Juwita's physical transformation shows that beauty standards can turn women's bodies into objects of judgment while also granting beauty privilege to those who meet these standards. However, the film also shows resistance through Juwita's courage to reveal her identity and accept herself, suggesting that a woman's value is not just determined by physical appearance, but also by her abilities, identity, and personal agency. These findings have implications for strengthening studies in semiotics and feminism when it comes to understanding beauty representation in the media, as well as highlighting the importance of media literacy so that people can critically assess the beauty standards and body image constructed by the media. This study is limited to a single film and is interpretative in nature, so it doesn't yet reflect audience reception or beauty representation in a broader media context. Future research is recommended to compare several films from different cultural backgrounds, use more diverse feminist perspectives, and develop reception studies to understand how audiences interpret beauty standards, body shaming, and self-acceptance as represented in the media.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank everyone who has provided support, help, and contributions in carrying out this research, especially the Communication Science Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences (FIS), State Islamic University of North Sumatra, as well as all those who have helped so that this research could be completed properly.

6. REFERENCES

- Agustina, C. L., Nugroho, R. A., & Fuadin, A. (2025). Dekonstruksi Representasi Perempuan dalam Film "Sleep Call": Kajian Teori Sara Mills. *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, Dan Sastra*, 11(3), 2998-3013. doi:<https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v11i3.6151>
- Arikunto, S. (2021). *Prosedur penelitian: Suatu pendekatan praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Aulia, P., Manesah, D., & Suryanto, S. (2024). Analisis Transformasi Gender Pada Tokoh Utama Dalam Film Imperfect Sutradara Ernest Prakarsa. *Filosofi : Publikasi Ilmu Komunikasi, Desain, Seni Budaya*, 1(2), 19–32. doi:<https://doi.org/10.62383/filosofi.v1i2.36>
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text (Stephen Heath, Trans.)*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Cılzoğlu, G. Y., Dondurucu, Z. B., & Çetinkaya, A. (2025). The Construction Of The Myth Of Youth And Beauty In Cinema: A Structuralist And Semiotic Analysis Of The Film Substance. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design Art and Communication*, 15(4), 1640-1655. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7456/tojdac.1761339>

- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Duvall, S.-S. (2024). You live, you learn: celebrity aging, emotional expression, and femininity in Alanis Morissette's star story. *Celebrity Studies*, 15(4), 506-525. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2023.2244609>
- Espinosa, A. S., & O'Kane, S. (2025). Interpreting "Translanguages" in Transnational Women's Literature: Socially Situated Perspectives and Feminist Close-Readings. *Social Sciences*, 14(7), 414. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14070414>
- Fada, H. L., & Christianto, Y. B. (2026). The Male Gaze and Female Body Politics in 200 Pounds Beauty. *Pangung*, 36(3), 407-420. doi:<https://doi.org/10.26742/pangung.v36i3.4344>
- Farrimond, K. (2025). "Same-Old, Same-Old": The Tired and Tiring Work of Retro as Celebrity Signature Style. *Fashion Theory*, 29(4), 489-515. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2025.2480954>
- Gardiner, R. A. (2026). Trinny takes all! Exploring the gendered effects of authenticity, postfeminism, and leadership on The Trinny TakeOver Show. *Culture and Organization*, 32(1), 389-403. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2025.2579253>
- Gilbert, J., & Thompson, T. (2023). The Year's Work in American Humor Studies, 2021. *Studies in American Humor*, 9(1), 84-177. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5325/studamerhumor.9.1.0084>
- Hamzah, H., Ibrahim, R., Mustafa, A., Demmallino, E. B., Numba, S., & Rasyid, A. (2026). Salinity-driven performance of biological treatment for palm oil mill effluent: Impacts on organic matter removal and nitrogen dynamics. *Journal of Ecological Engineering*, 27(11), 193-205. doi:<https://doi.org/10.12911/22998993/226418>
- Khudlori, A., & Suratno, B. E. (2026). Negotiating female masculinity through Merida's resistance in Disney's Brave. *ANANTA: Journal of Language Education, Linguistics, and Literature*, 1(1), 40-51. Retrieved from <https://journal.derajatilmu.id/index.php/ananta/article/view/4>
- Luthfiyyahningtyas, S., Khairani, S. F., & Camelia, I. (2024). Standar Kecantikan Dalam Film "200 Pounds Beauty": Kajian Feminisme Sara Mills. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Nusantara*, 5(2), 1990-1995. doi:<https://doi.org/10.55338/jpkmn.v5i2.3149>
- Mandradjieff, M. (2021). Intra-acting fat suits, tutu flesh, and sweaty skins: material-semiotic clashes in Maguy Marin's Ballet Groosland. *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 31(1), 43-58. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0740770X.2021.1985278>
- Marta, R. F., Laksono, T. D., Fernando, J., Sudarji, S., & Borge, S. V. (2025). Beauty Standards Portrayed in the Indonesian Adaptation of 200 Pounds Beauty. *Al Huwiyah: Journal of Woman and Children Studies*, 5(1), 21-36. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24042/fmzdmf50>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Moleong, L. J. (2024). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif (Edisi revisi)*. Jakarta: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nugraha, G., & Zuhriah, Z. (2023). kepribadian introvert dalam kemampuan bersosialisasi pada mahasiswa Ilmu Komunikasi. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi UHO: Jurnal Penelitian Kajian Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Informasi*, 8(2), 223-231. doi:<https://doi.org/10.52423/jikuho.v8i2.39>
- Pienrasmi, H., Amalia, N., Verawati, N., & Poyo, M. D. (2026). Existentialist Feminism in Barbie Movie (John Fiske Semiotics Study). *Al Huwiyah: Journal of Woman and Children Studies*, 4(2), 121-135. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24042/Jwcs.V4i2.25746>
- Pratama, A. A., & Rasyid, A. (2026). Communication Strategy Of Cbp Rupiah Educators Towards The Socialization Of The Cinta Bangsa Paham Rupiah Program In North Sumatra. *Sosioedukasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Sosial*, 15(3), 955-969. doi:<https://doi.org/10.36526/sosioedukasi.v15i3.9424>
- Putra, Y. M., Amri, U., Fitriah, S., Putri, A. K., & Triandana, A. (2026). The Myth of the Modern Woman: A Semiotic Analysis of Linguistic Anchorage in Post-Feminist Cosmetic Advertisements. *Sintaks: Jurnal Bahasa & Sastra Indonesia*, 5(2), 90-99. doi:<https://doi.org/10.55338/jpkmn.v5i2.3149>
- Satria, M. D., & Rasyid, A. (2026). Digital Marketing Strategy Of Fedia Creative Social Media Agency In Managing Brand Reputation. *Journal Analytica Islamica*, 15(4), 1-15. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.30829/jai.v15i4.30381>

-
- Situmorang, T. (2025). Analisis Wacana Kritis Sara Mills dalam Film Imperfect: Karir, Cinta, dan Timbangan. *DIKBASTRA: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 7(2), 1-16. doi:<https://doi.org/10.22437/dikbastra.v7i2.39885>
- Sugiyono. (2022). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Utami, I. W., Abidin, S., & Zuhriah, Z. (2023). Personal Branding Jerome Polin Sebagai Content Creator Melalui Youtube (Analisis Isi Kuantitatif pada Youtube Channel Nihongo Mantappu). *Jisos: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial*, 2(6), 1807-1818. Retrieved from <https://mail.bajangjournal.com/index.php/JISOS/article/view/6232>
- Wang, Y., Hu, B. Y., Cheng, X., & Roberts, S. K. (2025). An Analysis of the Portrayals of Mothers in Children's Picturebooks in China. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 53(1), 2489–2507. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10643-024-01725-6>
- Wirjana, F., & Azeharie, S. (2024). Konstruksi Realitas Feminisme dalam Film Barbie (Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce). *Koneksi*, 8(2), 463–471. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24912/kn.v8i2.27664>
- Yu, K. T. (2023). Cinematic ideorealm and cinema following Dao: theorizing film aesthetics through Daoism. *Screen*, 64(4), 462–484. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjad039>