

The Resistance of Women Victims of Domestic Violence in the Film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* (Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis)

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Abstract: Domestic violence represents a form of gender inequality that continues to persist in patriarchal societies, placing women in vulnerable and oppressive positions within the domestic sphere. As a medium, film functions not only as entertainment but also as a site that reflects power relations and social representations shaping public perceptions of gender and violence. This study aims to analyze how the resistance of women who experience domestic violence is constructed in the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method with Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the concepts of subject position, object position, and reader position in constructing the meaning of resistance. The findings indicate that the film portrays women not merely as objects of violence but as subjects who engage in both verbal and nonverbal forms of resistance, offering a critical reading of patriarchal power relations within the family.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Patriarchy, Resistance, Critical Discourse

Abstrak: Kekerasan dalam rumah tangga (KDRT) merupakan bentuk ketimpangan gender yang masih bertahan dalam masyarakat patriarki, sehingga perempuan kerap mengalami penindasan di ruang domestik. Film sebagai media tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai hiburan, tetapi juga memperlihatkan struktur relasi kuasa dan representasi sosial yang membentuk cara pandang masyarakat terhadap gender dan kekerasan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana resistansi perempuan korban KDRT dikonstruksikan dalam film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan Analisis Wacana Kritis Sara Mills untuk menelaah konsep posisi subjek, objek, dan pembaca dalam membentuk makna resistansi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa film ini menampilkan perempuan tidak hanya sebagai objek kekerasan, tetapi sebagai subjek yang melakukan resistansi, baik secara verbal maupun nonverbal, sehingga menghadirkan pembacaan kritis tentang relasi kuasa patriarkal dalam keluarga.

Kata kunci: KDRT, Patriarki, Resistensi, Wacana Kritis



Introduction

The media has a significant influence on how society perceives an issue. According to McQuail (as cited in Huda, 2025), representations in mass media can shape how individuals understand social reality. Film is a form of mass media that can shape perceptions, reflect social realities, and even influence public perspectives of various social phenomena. Beyond functioning as entertainment, film can also serve as a medium for revealing values, conveying norms, and delivering social criticism to the public (Asri, 2020). As part of culture, film plays an important role in reflecting and shaping social norms, including perspectives on gender issues and violence, as well as reinforcing or challenging stereotypes that affect public awareness (Ruandi et al., 2025).

Gender does not refer only to biological differences between men and women, but also to the social constructions that shape the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both (Nuraida & Zaki, 2017). Meanwhile, gender equality refers to a situation in which both women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and treatment in various aspects of life (Asmarani & Emilapalau, 2022). Understanding this concept is very important to realize a just, inclusive, and discrimination-free society based on gender. However, social realities often do not align with these expectations. The term gender inequality describes disparities in rights, opportunities, and treatment between men and women, which generally favor men as a result of the strong patriarchal structure (Murtado et al., 2024).

In social reality, violence against women, especially within the household, remains a serious problem. Data from the 2024 Annual Record (CATAHU) report show that 445,502 cases of violence against women were documented, reflecting a 10.76% increase compared to 2023 (401,975 cases), with the majority (83.7%) occurring in domestic violence situations. Of the total reported cases, sexual violence accounted for 36.43%, psychological violence 26.94%, physical violence 26.78%, and economic violence 9.84%. Among various forms of domestic violence, violence against wives (VAW) ranked highest, with 672 reported complaints. Although 19.6% of victims pursued legal action through the police, many encountered obstacles within the judicial process. This data shows that the family institution, which should be a place of protection, often becomes a place where violence occurs (Komnas Perempuan, 2025).

Besides being a concern in Indonesia, domestic violence is also a global issue. A research report released by the World Health Organization in 2023 estimates that one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. WHO also states that violence against women leads to high mortality rates among women and has long-lasting effects on survivors' physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health (World Health Organization, 2024).

Domestic violence has a strong correlation with the patriarchal social structure, in which dominant power is predominantly held by men across various areas of life, including the household. Patriarchy establishes a system that restricts women's mobility and life choices, placing them in subordinate roles. The strong patriarchal norms in society are



therefore considered one of the primary factors contributing to the occurrence of domestic violence (Maulida, 2023).

Within the context of media, violence and patriarchal structures not only exist as social realities, but are also represented through the narratives, characters, and conflicts constructed in film. A study of Indonesian films produced between 1998 and 2021 shows that representations of violence against women consistently appear across various genres and frequently position women in subordinate roles within unequal power relations (Cahyani & Aprilia, 2022). These representations have the potential to shape how audiences perceive women's roles within the domestic sphere and family relationships.

Amid the increasing production and consumption of national films in recent years, cinema has emerged as a strategic space for the production and dissemination of discourses about violence and women's resistance. Data from the 2024 Cultural Statistics report show that the number of nationally produced feature films increased from 129 titles in 2019 to 565 titles in 2023. In 2024, more than 81 million viewers watched Indonesian films, making up about 67% of total cinema audiences in Indonesia. This growth highlights the strong public interest in Indonesian films and emphasizes film's wide reach as a medium for shaping social meaning (Sugito, 2025).

One of the films that brings social issues to the forefront is *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*, released in 2024 and starring Prilly Latuconsina. The film addresses issues of childhood trauma, power dynamics within the family, domestic violence, and women's struggle to free themselves from recurring violence that constrains their lives.

Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis does not merely present a fictional story about a woman's suffering, but also aims to invite audiences to confront the harsh realities that many women still face in the real world. As a medium that represents and questions gender inequality within the family institution, this film depicts violence that occurs psychologically, verbally, and physically, encouraging the audience to understand how complex the dynamics of domestic violence are and how difficult it is for victims to fight back or show resistance. In their own domestic space, which should be a safe place, women are positioned as marginalized, oppressed, and experiencing violence, a portrayal that aligns with social realities in which women frequently become victims due to unequal power relations (Supina et al., 2025).

The representation of women's resistance to domestic violence in media, especially in film, remains relatively limited in Indonesia. According to Tuchman and Mills (as cited in Fabianti, 2022), the media often shows bias in portraying gender-related issues, a tendency that appears across various contexts. Many Indonesian films still depict women victims of violence in passive roles or as dependent on rescue by external parties (Biasini & Zeusta, 2024). Therefore, the presence of the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* becomes important to analyze because it offers space for the narrative of women victims who actively fight for themselves, and to understand how the media constructs women victims of violence, as well as how dominant discourses about gender and power are negotiated or challenged within the film's narrative. For this reason, this study uses Sara



Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis, which highlights the positions of the subject, object, and reader within the text. This approach is relevant to gender studies because it examines on how women are positioned within the narrative structure and how power relations are expressed through language and representation (Masitoh, 2020). Using this method, the research can reveal how women survivors of domestic violence resist and how this resistance is constructed and interpreted within the film.

Several previous studies have examined how films represent and interpret women's resistance to violence. Putri Ayu Nanda Sari (2023) in her study entitled *Resistensi Perempuan Korban Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga dalam Film Darlings* explains that the female character in the film transforms from an object of oppression into an empowered subject through forms of overt resistance, such as verbal and physical confrontation, as well as covert resistance expressed through subtle refusals to comply with her husband's commands. Meanwhile, Devi Laila Maghfiroh dan Moh. Zawawi (2020) in their research *Resistensi Perempuan dalam Film For Sama: Kajian Timur Tengah Perspektif Feminisme Naomi Wolf* identifies six dimensions of women's resistance, ranging from independence to revolutionary attitudes, as depicted in the documentary narrative of the Syrian conflict. Both of these studies affirm that films can serve as an important space to showcase the acts of resistance by women victims of violence, even though they use different theoretical frameworks and cultural contexts from this research, which will employ Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis to examine resistance within the context of domestic violence in the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*.

In the context of women's struggle, resistance becomes one of the forms of a critical response towards the injustices experienced. This term refers to efforts to defend oneself, oppose, and reject various forms of oppression by utilizing the strength and resources one has (Maghfiroh & Zawawi, 2020). According to Scott, resistance can be understood as any forms of action or effort of opposition carried out by subordinate groups as a form of rejection against demands or claims made by dominant groups (Putri et al., 2023).

Resistance is generally divided into two forms: overt and covert. Overt resistance, often referred to as public resistance, is typically more visible because it is carried out overtly and may involve many people. In contrast, covert resistance tends to occur discreetly and on an individual basis, making it more difficult to observe directly. Despite their differences in form, both are efforts by subordinate groups to defend themselves and reject domination by dominant groups, which often results in pressure or injustice toward those in weaker positions (Putri et al., 2023).

Domestic violence is a form of injustice that violates fundamental principles of human rights and is also a form of discrimination. Generally, this violence occurs among family members within the same household, where the perpetrator and victim have a personal or emotional relationship (Idham et al., 2020). According to Ibrara (2022), domestic violence includes physical violence that causes injuries or death; psychological violence through words or actions that induce fear and make the victim feel helpless; sexual violence involving harassment and coercion into non-consensual or unwanted sexual acts;



and economic violence that restricts the victim's access to work, earn income, or the ability to meet their economic needs independently.

Domestic violence is a complex issue influenced by many factors, ranging from psychological conditions such as mental disorders, emotional instability, and internal stress, to social factors like economic pressure and family instability. Cultural factors that normalize dominance in relationships also reinforce the occurrence of violence, while environments that frequently exposed to violence, access to weapons or addictive substances, and poor security conditions further increase the risk. Gender inequality also constitutes a fundamental root cause, as stereotypical gender roles and discrimination against women create patriarchal power relations. A history of violence within the family further heightens the likelihood that individuals will become involved in similar patterns of violence in the future (Setiawan et al., 2024).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a study that examines how messages in communication are constructed through language, emphasizing the importance of meaning and representation within texts, because every discourse written by the author generally is rarely free from particular interests or ideological positions. One of the most widely used models is Sara Mills' approach, which focuses the analysis on the author's ideology, the positioning of characters or actors in discourse, and how the relationship between the author and the reader is formed through language (Sadiah et al., 2022).

Table 1. Analytical Framework of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

Level	Analytical Focus
Subject-Object Position	How the event is viewed, from whose perspective the event is seen. Who is positioned as the narrator (subject) and who becomes the object of narration. Do each actor and social group have the opportunity to present themselves, their ideas, or their presence, or are their ideas presented by other groups or people.
Reader Position	How the reader's position is shown in the text. How the reader places themselves within the presented text. Which group the reader identifies with.

Source: Yudhawirawan & Nurussa'adah (2023)

In Sara Mills' approach, two core concepts are the main focus of analysis: subject–object positioning and reader positioning. The concept of the subject-object position is used to understand how an individual (as the subject) interprets or assigns meaning to another individual (as the object) in an event. Meanwhile, the reader's position highlights how meaning in a text can be shaped through the audience's perspective, not just from the author's point of view, thus allowing space for readers to actively interpret discourse (Lubis, 2023).

The use of Sara Mills' approach in analyzing the construction of meaning in media is also evident in several previous studies. Research by Novianti, Musa, and Darmawan (2022) shows how subject–object positioning in the film *Rumput Tetangga* shapes stereotypes about



women, especially housewives, and how audiences are directed to interpret gender injustice through a specific perspective. Maheswari and Wibowo (2023) also employed the same model to analyze the representation of childfree discourse in the *Kick Andy* program, and found that the placement of the interviewee as the main subject framed audiences' interpretation of the issue. These findings confirm that Sara Mills' approach is relevant for examining how media organize power relations within texts, thereby strengthening the rationale for applying this theory in research on women's resistance in the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*.

The main focus of this research is to examine how the resistance of women survivors of domestic violence is constructed in *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* through the perspective of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis. In line with this objective, the study aims to elaborate on how women survivors of domestic violence are positioned within the film's narrative, both as subjects and as objects, and how readers are guided in interpreting the text. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze the forms of resistance that emerge as acts of opposition to gender inequality and patriarchal power relations.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative method with Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis as its analytical approach. According to Jane Ritchie, qualitative research aims to understand the social world and the meanings constructed within it through observations of concepts, behaviors, perceptions, and experiences of the subjects studied (Arkandito et al., 2016). This approach is selected because the present study seeks to examine in depth how women survivors of domestic violence are constructed within the narrative of *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* and how their resistance is interpreted within the structure of discourse. Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis approach is used to systematically describe how the film's narrative shapes the position of female characters as subjects and objects within discourse, and how readers or audiences are directed to respond to the power relations depicted.

The units of analysis in this research consist of four scenes from the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*, which explicitly represent power relations within the family and depict forms of resistance by female characters. The selection of these scenes is based on the criteria: (1) the presence of interactions that demonstrate domination and subordination in domestic relationships, (2) the emergence of verbal or nonverbal resistance from the female characters, and (3) the relevance of the scenes to the research focus on the subject, object, and reader positioning.

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*. This film serves as the main reference through dialogue transcripts, scenes, and visual symbols depicting domestic violence and female resistance. Additionally, this research also uses secondary data in the form of academic literature, scientific journals, news articles, and official reports such as CATAHU and WHO that are relevant to gender issues and domestic violence. The secondary data strengthen the analysis and provide a broader social context for the representations that appear in the film.



Data collection was conducted using three techniques. First, discourse content analysis of film texts by examining and identifying parts that represent power relations and women's resistance. Second, documentation in the form of recording and archiving scene clips or dialogues, as well as collecting secondary data. Third, library research that includes exploring theories and previous studies to strengthen the analytical framework.

Data analysis using Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis approach, which emphasizes three main aspects: the subject's position, the object's position, and the reader's position. The analysis aims to examine how the female victim of domestic violence is constructed as a subject who enacts resistance or as an object of violence, as well as how the film's narrative guides audiences in responding to these representations.

Results and Discussion

To understand how the resistance of women survivors of domestic violence is constructed in *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*, the initial stage of analysis involves examining the narrative and visual elements in the scenes that most represent power relations within the family and the forms of resistance enacted by the female characters. Based on the overall mapping of the film's storyline, there are nine scenes set in the domestic space contain discourses of resistance. Among these, four are selected as primary data because they most clearly portray the power relations within the family and the various forms of resistance shown by the female characters. The selection of these scenes is based on their relevance to the research focus, which is how the positions of the subject, object, and viewer are shaped through visual language and dialogue.

Subject Position

In the framework of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis, the position of the subject reveals who holds control in a discourse event, and how characters are situated within power relations between perpetrator and victim. In *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*, the construction of the female subject's position is primarily reflected through the forms of resistance by the main character, Tari, and her mother in response to the violence experienced within the domestic sphere. These forms of resistance appear in two types: overt resistance and covert resistance.

Overt Resistance

Table 2. Scene 29



Timecode: 1.09.00-1.10.30

Source: Screen capture by researchers, 2025

Tari's father was so emotional that he shook the refrigerator when he couldn't find the item he was looking for. Tari told her father to see a psychologist after seeing his increasingly uncontrollable behavior. The father felt insulted, thinking he was being considered crazy, and then slapped Tari.



Scene 29 presents one of the most explicit forms of resistance, as Tari boldly confronts her father and urges him to seek professional help after witnessing his increasingly aggressive and uncontrollable behavior. Her statement, “Father, you need to see a professional,” signifies verbal courage and marks a shift in subject positioning, from a previously passive figure to an active subject who directly addresses the source of violence. However, the father's response of slapping Tari shows how patriarchal power tries to suppress and reassert control over such resistance. In this context, Tari’s action does not merely oppose the act of violence itself but also challenges the legitimacy of paternal authority that has long been perceived as unquestionable within the domestic sphere.

Table 3. *Scene 31*



Timecode: 1.13.15-1.17.50

Source: Screen capture by researchers, 2025

Tari and her mother decide to leave the house after enduring repeated acts of violence. The father attempts to prevent them from leaving and accuses them of being ungrateful. In this confrontation, Tari resists verbally by expressing the trauma and unhappiness she has long suppressed in response to her father’s abusive treatment.

Scene 31 depicts the culmination of overt resistance enacted by Tari and her mother against the violence and oppression they are experiencing by deciding to leave the house. In the confrontation with her father, Tari rejects the harsh treatment and opposes her father’s argument that considers violence as a form of 'firmness.' Dialogs like, “Are we truly happy with all of this?” and “I inherited all the worst traits from the person who was supposed to protect me since childhood,” function as verbal articulations of her growing awareness and resistance against the patriarchal structure that oppresses. In this scene, Tari actively takes control of the discourse; she becomes the subject who speaks and forces her father to listen. Her resistance is no longer just a form of self-defense but also a symbolic effort to reclaim power over her life and dignity.

Covert Resistance

Table 4. *Scene 3*



Tari and her mother were talking in the kitchen when her father came in and scolded her mother for baking cakes to fulfill customer orders. Her father accused her of causing the electricity bill to increase. Tari tried to correct him, saying that the electricity costs were already



Timecode: 0.05.20-0.06.45

included in the selling price. However, her father responds harshly and forbids her from arguing.

Source: Screen capture by researchers, 2025

Unlike explicit overt resistance, covert resistance in this film is portrayed through subtle and symbolic actions that nonetheless carry oppositional meaning. Scene 3 shows a moment when Tari attempts to resist verbally, but in a limited way, by correcting her father's statement that electricity is the cause of increased household expenses. Although she is ultimately silenced with the statement, "There is no need to argue," Tari's act of correcting her father's statement demonstrates an awareness of injustice and a small act of courage to negotiate her right to speak in front of an authoritative male figure. This resistance remains covert but serves as the initial foundation for a larger act of resistance.

Table 5. *Scene 7*



Timecode: 0.17.15-0.20.39

Tari gave her mother a marriage counseling brochure, but her father eventually found it. He was very angry and accused Tari of wanting her parents to divorce. In his anger, he threw the aquarium until it shattered and violently pushed her mother against the wall, while Tari chose to stay silent and tried to save her pet fish.

Source: Screen capture by researchers, 2025

Meanwhile, scene 7 presents a form of symbolic and emotional covert resistance. Following the violent incident in which the father throws the aquarium and pushes the mother against the wall, Tari chooses to remain silent and focuses on rescuing her pet fish. Tari's silence is not resignation but a subtle expression of resistance to the violence unfolding before her. The act of saving the fish can be interpreted as a metaphor for preserving life and hope amid a repressive situation. In the context of Sara Mills, this non-verbal action marks a transition in the subject's position, from a victim who merely endures patriarchal authority to an individual who continues to assert control over certain aspects of her life despite being under her father's dominance.

Through the category of subject positioning, the film **May I Cry Just Once** depicts the transformation of a female character from a passive position into an individual who dares to fight against violence. Overt resistance is evident in scenes where Tari urges her father to seek professional help (scene 29) and when she and her mother decide to leave the house (scene 31), with her mother's decision becomes the catalyst for Tari's verbal and emotional



resistance. Meanwhile, covert resistance is seen in scenes 3 and 7 through silence, self-control, and subtle rejection of her father's authority. These two forms of resistance demonstrate that women's opposition does not always manifest through direct confrontation but can also emerge through calm demeanor and steadfastness in preserving their dignity. Thus, the film constructs women as subjects who are in a process, from fear to courage in rejecting patriarchal dominance.

Object Position

Within Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis framework, the position of the object is not only understood as a direct victim but also as a party or element that becomes the focus of evaluation and meaning construction by the subject within a discourse (Asheva & Tasyarasita, 2022). In the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis*, the object position in this analysis focuses on a main figure, namely the father, who represents patriarchal values within the domestic sphere. Through this character, the film depicts how male power operates in domestic life and position women, both as wife and daughter, in positions where they must adapt to this dominance.

This object's position is visible through various scenes that also serve as the backdrop for the emergence of resistance from the female character. In scene 3, for example, when Tari tries to correct her father's statement about electricity expenses, she is immediately silenced with a prohibition against contradicting him. This moment shows how patriarchal authority operates through control of women's voices, as if women's opinions are not worth responding to. In scene 7, male power is portrayed more explicitly through the father's actions of throwing the aquarium and pushing his wife against the wall. These actions represent a form of violence that are not only physical but also symbolic, where men's anger and control are legitimized as ways to maintain authority within the domestic sphere.

A similar form of dominance is seen in scenes 29 and 31. When Tari dares to admonish her father to seek professional help, the slap she receives is evidence that patriarchal power dismisses any effort by women to correct or oppose the existing order. Meanwhile, in the debate scene at the end of the film, the father argues that violence is a form of "firmness," demonstrating how patriarchy tends to reinforce itself through language and morality that seem right on the surface. In this situation, the mother and Tari are positioned as objects within a value system that positions them as wrongdoers, ungrateful, or lacking self-awareness.

Thus, the object position in this film is not solely represented by the father as an individual perpetrator of violence, but also by the patriarchy ideology that becomes the source of oppression against women. This ideology regulates women's behavior, speech, and even their spatial mobility within domestic life. However, it is precisely from this subordinated position that awareness and resistance begin emerge, making every act of violence not only a form of suffering but also a trigger for women's resistance against patriarchal domination.

Reader Position

The reader's position in *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* is constructed through the way the film presents the reality of domestic violence as both an emotional and social experience endured by women. The audience is guided to perceive women not merely a



victims of violence, but also as individuals who struggle to survive and to resist within a restrictive domestic sphere. Through the portrayal of the relationships between Tari, her mother, and her father, the film encourages viewers to understand that violence against women does not occur suddenly but is rooted in a patriarchal culture that places men at the center of power within the family.

The film presents two forms of female resistance that shape the audience's perspective on violence: covert resistance and overt resistance. In the form of covert resistance, viewers are invited to recognize how silence, emotional restraint, and the patience demonstrated by Tari and her mother become forms of resistance emerging from their limited space for expression under patriarchal authority. Silence is not positioned as submission, but rather as a strategy through which women maintain control within unequal power relations. This interpretation aligns with Sara Mills's perspective (as cited in Athiyah & Rifqi, 2024) which argues that discourse possesses the power to position readers in particular ways. In this film, the audience is positioned to understand silence as a subtle form of female resistance to male domination.

Meanwhile, overt resistance in the film demonstrates a shift in the reader's position from passive empathy to active support for women's courage. When Tari confronts her father, urges him to seek professional help, or decides to leave the house with her mother, the audience is encouraged to interpret these actions as forms of self-liberation from an oppressive power structure. The audience understands that women's resistance to violence is not just a spontaneous act, but the result of a long process shaped by awareness and courage. In this context, the film guides the audience to acknowledge that women's resistance is an effort to reject patriarchal values that have been inherited across generations and deeply embedded in cultural structures.

The presence of the father as a dominant figure further reinforces the reader's position to reassess the social construction of the "male head of the household," which is identical with control and authority. This film shows that such power often turns into a tool for justifying violence, as supported by research that finds domestic violence is often legitimized through the assumption that men have the right to regulate or discipline their wives (Agustina et al., 2025). The audience is encouraged to evaluate how patriarchal power can create fear and false obedience among women. This inequality between men and women is further reinforced by social and cultural norms transmitted across generations, positioning women's roles and status beneath those of men and thereby perpetuating female subordination within the domestic sphere (Karwati, 2020).

Thus, the reader's position in the film *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* is directed not only to sympathize with the victims but also to understand the complexity of the structures that cause violence against women to continue recurring. This film places the audience in a reflective position to recognize that resistance, whether overt or covert, is a form of women's struggle to preserve their existence and dignity amid the pressures of patriarchal culture

Women's Resistance in the Shadow of Patriarchal Culture



Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis represents a social reality that remains deeply shaped by patriarchal values. Through the portrayal of the father as authoritarian, harsh, and easily angered, the film depicts a pattern of power relations that positions men as the controllers within the family, while women are in subordinate positions. It is explained that positioning men as the dominant party makes women being constructed as weak and powerless, thus marginalizing them in decision-making, division of labor, and ownership (Modiano, 2021). The forms of violence shown are not only physical but also psychological and verbal, reflecting a patriarchal structure that operates subtly in domestic life. In this context, patriarchy appears as a social system that normalizes male dominance through inherited values and cultural structures transmitted across generations, ultimately restricting women's mobility and reinforcing gender inequality (Qorry et al., 2025).

Through its narrative construction, this film shows that women are not entirely passive in confronting oppression. The forms of resistance that emerge, both overt and covert, reflect women's awareness in rejecting violence and negotiating their positions within the family structure. Covert resistance, such as silence, avoidance, or emotional self-regulation, signifies a survival strategy employed by women when their space is constrained by male dominance, as well as an effort to preserve their dignity amid repression. In contrast, overt resistance becomes evident when Tari admonishes her father to seek professional help and when she, together with her mother, decides to leave the house as an act of courage to break free from the cycle of violence. The shift from covert to overt resistance reflects a process of women's critical consciousness regarding the unequal power relations they experience.

This phenomenon shows that domestic violence does not stand alone but is rooted in a patriarchal culture that places women in a submissive position. The patriarchal culture, which has long been embedded in social structures and grants dominance to men in various aspects of life, causes gender inequality to persist even as society undergoes social changes (Maulida, 2023). Tari's mother, who repeatedly rejects the idea of divorce despite experiencing violence, illustrates the internalization of patriarchal values, whereby women are taught to forgive, endure, and preserve the family even if it means suffering. Internalization of patriarchy can be understood as the process by which values and rules that position men as the dominant party are accepted and used as references by individuals, thereby supporting behaviors and perspectives that sustain the system (Riyanto et al., 2025). Based on this context, the film starring Prilly not only highlights violence as an individual act but also as a social phenomenon rooted in a cultural ideology that continues to position women as weak and expected to yield.

Media, including film, play a significant role in shaping and reinforcing social discourse. Media often function as spaces that reproduce patriarchal ideology by presenting imbalanced gender representations, in which men are positioned as the center of power within social structures (Makiyah et al., 2024). However, rather than following this pattern, *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* constructs its female characters as more than merely subordinate figures. The women are not portrayed as passive individuals waiting to be rescued, but as



individuals capable of negotiating their power, including through the courage to leave an abusive relationship.

Based on the analyzed scenes, *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* does not merely portray suffering, but also constructs a narrative of resistance that represents women as subjects capable of making decisions in confronting patriarchal structures. This representation indicates a shift from the conventional portrayal of women as passive victims to more active figures who respond critically to power relations within the domestic sphere. These findings align with previous research demonstrating that women can still discover inner strength and fulfill their roles fully, even when situated within disharmonious family environments (Utami et al., 2025).

Through its visual presentation, narrative development, and intense emotional dynamics, *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* demonstrates that resistance to domestic violence is a complex and multilayered process. The resistance enacted by Tari and her mother is not merely a personal effort to escape a repressive situation, but also symbolizes the collective struggle of women to reject gender inequality institutionalized by patriarchal culture. By relocating the experience of violence from the private sphere into the public domain through the medium of film, this work contributes to fostering social awareness that violence against women is not solely a personal matter. Gender-based violence is rooted in complex social structures shaped by cultural norms, gender-biased values, and inequalities in social and economic dimensions (Hanapi et al., 2025). Therefore, the representation offered by this film affirms that violence against women constitutes a structural issue that must be understood within a broader social context.

Conclusion

This study concludes that *Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis* constructs the resistance of women survivors of domestic violence through two primary forms: covert resistance and overt resistance. Both demonstrate how women strive to maintain their dignity and regain their agency amidst patriarchal dominance, which is represented through the figure of the father as the family authority. This depiction of resistance shows that women are not merely positioned as passive victims, but as subjects who undergo a process of growing awareness that leads to the courage to reject violence. This representation is important because it affirms that domestic violence does not stand alone but is connected to cultural structures that place women in unequal positions within society.

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