



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**COMPETING PATRIARCHAL AND FEMINIST DISCOURSES IN
SELECTED FILMS OF TAHMINEH MILANI**

ANNA SADAT FEIZABADI

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By

ANNA SADAT FEIZABADI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts**

March 2014

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DEDICATION

To

My Mother, My Sister

&

The Memory of My Grandmother



Abstract of thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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March 2014

Chairperson: Associate Professor Noritah Omar, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

The present study explores patriarchal and feminist discourses and the impact of patriarchal dominance that exists in Iranian culture in two of the feminist director Tahmineh Milani's more acclaimed films, namely *Two Women* (1999) and *Ceasefire* (2006). The ways in which male and female characters are verbally and visually represented in these movies will be examined to reveal the nuances of gender discourse and constructed identities, in terms of power and social relations. This is significant because films influence the construction of gender identity for both men and women; and to overlook this significance runs the risk of perpetuating centuries-old pattern of oppression. Norman Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be applied to the two Milani films, so as to explore the relationship between discourse and society, text and context, and particularly language and power—due to the fact that the ideological properties of language make it a central component of power, and thereby a force in moulding an individual's social and cultural identities. Accordingly, three dimensions of analysis will be carried out, including the description of text, the interpretation of the relationship between elements of the text, and the interaction and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. The findings reveal that two discourses are at play in the films: that of patriarchy/control, which is constructed in the verbal and visual language of the male characters; and the discourse of feminism/liberation, which is manifested in the verbal and visual language of female characters. The objectification of women, verbal abuse, physical violence, and the narrative of male superiority are the elements that constitute the discourse of patriarchy, while the subjugation of women, in terms of the denial of education, employment, independence, sisterhood, and equal power relations form the discourse of feminism. The results also reveal that patriarchy is the more dominant ideology and discourse in Iran that is both manifested and ratified at the family, legal, political and societal levels, and the agents of this discourse attempt to exercise power on the agents of the discourse of feminism. In terms of depiction of women, the results of

the analysis reveal that Milani's greatest concern is the subjectification and liberation of women, through her representations of educated, independent women who struggle for their subject position in family and society, and also for equal relations and rights with men.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sastera

**ANALISIS WACANA PATRIARKI DAN WACANA FEMINIS DALAM
FILEM-FILEM TERPILIH TAHMINEH MILANI**

Oleh

ANNA SADAT FEIZABADI

Mac 2014

Pengerusi: Prof. Madya Dr. Noritah Omar, PhD

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Kajian ini meneroka wacana patriarki dan wacana feminis serta kesan dominasi sistem patriarki terhadap masyarakat Iran dalam dua filem buatan Tahmineh Milani, iaitu *Two Women* (1999) dan *Ceasefire* (2006). Cara bagaimana watak-watak lelaki dan wanita digambarkan secara lisan (*verbal*) dan secara visual dikaji bagi tujuan mendedahkan nuansa-nuansa wacana gender dan pembikinan identiti diri, dari segi hubungan kuasa dan sosial. Ini adalah penting kerana filem sebagai media boleh mempengaruhi pembentukan identiti gender untuk kedua-dua lelaki dan wanita, dan mengabaikan kesignifikanan ini boleh menyebabkan kekalnya penindasan terhadap wanita yang telah wujud berdurasi lamanya. Model tiga dimensi analisis wacana kritikal (CDA) yang diutarakan oleh Norman Fairclough (1995) diaplikasikan terhadap kedua-dua filem ini, untuk mengkaji hubungkait antara wacana dan masyarakat, teks dan konteks, dan terutamanya bahasa dan kuasa—kerana komponen ideologi yang mendasari sesebuah bahasa menjadikannya lokus kuasa, dan boleh mempengaruhi pembentukan identiti sosial dan kebudayaan. Sebanyak tiga jenis analisis akan digunakan dalam tesis ini, iaitu deskripsi teks, intepretasi hubungkait antara bahagian-bahagian teks, serta hubungkait antara interaksi dan konteks sosial. Analisis mendapati bahawa terdapat dua wacana penting dalam tesis ini, iaitu patriarki/kuasa, dan feminisme/pembebasan. Wacana patriarki ini boleh dilihat dalam naratif tentang objektifikasi wanita, keganasan fizikal dan kedudukan lelaki dalam masyarakat. Subjugasi wanita pula, dalam wacana feminis, didefinisikan sebagai penafian pendidikan dan peluang pekerjaan, kebebasan, hubungan persaudaraan wanita, dan kesamaan hak. Analisis juga menunjukkan bahawa patriarki merupakan ideologi dominan yang dimanifestasikan dan diperkukuhkan dalam domain keluarga, perundangan, politik dan sosial. Seterusnya, agen ideologi patriarki ini juga didapati cuba untuk meneruskan kuasa dan autoriti mereka ke atas agen wacana feminisme. Menerusi representasi wanita dalam filem-filem ini, analisis turut mendedahkan keprihatinan Milani terhadap subjektifikasi dan liberalisasi wanita, melalui gambaran

wanita yang berpendidikan dan berdikari, dan yang berjuang untuk mendapatkan kedudukan penting dalam keluarga dan masyarakat, serta kesamaan hubungan dan hak dengan kaum lelaki.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 19 March 2014 to conduct the final examination of Anna Sadat Feizabadi on her thesis entitled "Competing Patriarchal and Feminist Discourses in Selected Films of Tahmineh Milani" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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DECLARATION

Declaration by graduate student

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