



The Intersectional Discrimination of Main Character in the Movie “Self Made” Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J Walker (2020)



Ami Pradana ¹⁾, Periska Andriani ²⁾, Mariska Febrianti ³⁾

¹²³⁾ Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu

^{a)}Corresponding Author: mariska.febby@unived.ac.id

Abstract

This research analyze the forms of Intersectional discrimination experienced by the main character in the movie “Self-Made” inspired by the life Madam CJ Walker. Using Kimberle Crenshaw’s theory of Intersectional, this research show how discrimination based on race, gender, social class and sexuality interact and influence the main character’s experience. It is a qualitative study using the observation method. The results explore the moral messages that can be drawn from Madam C.J Walker’s struggle, highlighting the importance of resilience, solidarity between women and rejection of discriminatory beauty standards. This research is expected to raise awareness about discrimination issues and support the strengthening of women’s position, especially among minority communities.

Keyword: Intersectional Discrimination, Moral Messages, Madam C.J. Walker.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis bentuk-bentuk diskriminasi interseksional yang dialami oleh karakter utama dalam film “Self-Made” yang terinspirasi dari kehidupan Madam CJ Walker. Dengan menggunakan teori interseksionalitas dari Kimberle Crenshaw, penelitian ini menunjukkan bagaimana diskriminasi berdasarkan ras, gender, kelas sosial, dan seksualitas berinteraksi dan mempengaruhi pengalaman karakter utama. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode observasi. Hasil penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pesan moral yang dapat diambil dari perjuangan Madam C.J Walker, menyoroti pentingnya ketangguhan, solidaritas antar perempuan dan penolakan terhadap standar kecantikan yang diskriminatif. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kesadaran tentang isu diskriminasi dan mendukung penguatan posisi perempuan, terutama di kalangan masyarakat minoritas.

Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi Interseksional, Pesan Moral, Madam C.J. Walker.

Introduction

Literature is a form of written work that uses beautiful language to convey ideas, emotions, and human experiences. It includes short stories, poems, novels, and plays, all of which allow us to better understand the world and empathize with others. Unlike ordinary writing, literature has an artistic value that connects readers to the story and its characters, evoking a range of emotions that may be difficult to express otherwise. Moreover, literature offers a glimpse into different cultures and lives, serving as a reflection of how people in the past thought, felt, and dealt with challenges. It serves as a window into different perspectives, making it more than just entertainment, but a means of learning about life and its values.

According to Mursal Esten (Esten, 1978, p. 9) Literature is the disclosure of artistic and imaginative facts as a manifestation of human life and society in general, through language as a medium and has a positive effect on human life. According to Surastina (2018: 3) in (Jayanti et al., 2019) argues that literature comes from Sanskrit, literature which means writing. From its original meaning, literature includes forms of writing, such as records of science, holy books, letters, laws, and so on. Literature is divided into two types, namely imaginative and non-imaginative literature. Imaginative literature is divided into two broad categories: poetry and prose. Intersectional is the interaction and cumulative effect of multiple forms of discrimination that affect an individual's life. The

term also refers to an intellectual framework for understanding how aspects of an individual's identity interact to create a unique experience of privilege or oppression. The term Intersectional was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and is used to address experiences of oppression that cannot be understood as resulting from ordinary patterns of discrimination. Crenshaw reiterated the usefulness of this concept in 1991. It is especially relevant for women of color, who often face multiple forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. The concept of Intersectional helps in understanding the complex ways in which factors such as race, gender, social class and sexuality mutually influence and affect individual experiences.

Racial discrimination involves treating someone in an unjust or unfair manner based on their race or ethnicity. This can manifest in various aspects of life, such as employment, education, housing, and public services. It is often rooted in negative stereotypes and prejudices that arise from a lack of understanding and fear of differences.

For instance, individuals may face difficulty in securing employment due to their skin color or because of prevalent stereotypes about their ethnicity. Even if they possess the same qualifications as candidates from the majority race, companies may be less inclined to hire individuals from minority groups. Racial discrimination reflects systemic injustices where individuals are denied equal opportunities solely based on their racial or ethnic background.

Gender discrimination refers to the unfair treatment or distinction given to someone based on their sex or gender identity. It occurs due to stereotypes and beliefs that certain genders are better suited for specific roles. This discrimination can limit individuals' potential and confine them to traditional roles that may not align with their abilities or aspirations.

A significant example of gender discrimination is the gender pay gap, where women are often paid less than men for performing the same job. Many companies also impose "glass ceilings," invisible barriers that prevent women from advancing to leadership positions, despite having equal qualifications. In addition, society often discourages men from expressing emotions or pursuing careers in areas like childcare or education, as these are considered "women's work." These instances illustrate how gender discrimination restricts individuals' freedom to choose and develop in

line with their interests and talents, without being bound by traditional gender norms.

Social class discrimination refers to the unjust treatment of individuals or groups based on their economic status or social class. Those belonging to lower social classes are frequently subjected to discrimination in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and healthcare. This unfair treatment is driven by stereotypes that individuals from lower economic classes are incompetent or undeserving of equal opportunities and resources. Consequently, this discrimination perpetuates inequality and impedes the ability of those from lower social classes to improve their quality of life.

Example of social class discrimination is observed in the realm of education, where children from economically disadvantaged families often lack access to quality schools and universities due to financial constraints. Within the workforce, individuals from lower-class backgrounds are often overlooked for higher positions despite their capabilities, perpetuating the social divide and hindering opportunities for upward mobility.

Sexuality-based discrimination refers to the unjust treatment of individuals due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTQ+ individuals often experience prejudice, exclusion, or violence as their sexual orientation or gender identity does not conform to societal norms. This discrimination is rooted in ignorance, stereotypes, and bias towards sexual and gender diversity.

Example within the workplace, openly gay or transgender individuals may face harassment or encounter obstacles in advancing their careers. In everyday life, same-sex couples may be subjected to differential treatment or deemed inappropriate when displaying affection publicly. Moreover, in certain countries or regions, LGBTQ+ individuals are denied legal recognition of their rights, such as marriage or child adoption, which should be guaranteed to all. As a result, this discrimination restricts individuals' rights and opportunities to live in a free and equitable manner. Discrimination based on race, gender, social class and sexuality is often highlighted in movies to show the profound impact it has on the individuals who are victimized. Through these works of cinema, we are invited to better understand the complexity of injustice experienced based on race, gender, social class and sexuality, while inviting us to think about the importance of equality in society.

Among the works that are currently favored by the general public is film. Film as a medium of art and communication has become a powerful tool to convey ideas and messages to the public. Apart from being entertainment, movies are also used to depict social, cultural, and political issues. The choice of film as an object of research provides an opportunity to explore various aspects of human life such as gender roles, race, social class, and power dynamics. Movies also reflect the reality of life, provide new perspectives, and trigger critical discussions among the audience.

According to Redi Panuju in (Angga, 2022), films can be a good learning media for the audience, not only entertaining, but also able to convey direct messages through images, dialog, and plays so that it becomes the most effective medium for spreading missions, ideas, and campaigns, whatever they are. This was conveyed in the book review event "Film as a Creative Process" at Wisma Kalimetro and also presented Nuruddin as a discussant who emphasized that the creative process in film must get appreciation in various mediums as well. Nurudin explained that a diverse appreciation of film and its industry should be a driving factor for the progress of the film itself. Communication Science has seriously conducted various studies on films in Indonesia.

Movies can also show the challenges and struggles faced by individuals or groups. In addition, analysis of character representation, narrative, and symbolism in films can reveal stereotypes, social norms, and identity construction in society. Movies also combine visual and auditory elements that can enrich the analysis experience. Choosing a movie as an object of research opens up space to understand the thoughts and values that exist within it, making it a rich source for interdisciplinary research such as gender studies, media studies, and cultural sociology.

The movie "Self Made" based on the life of Madam C.J. Walker, a pioneering black woman in the beauty industry, provides an insightful look into the struggles and resilience of women in the early 20th century. Madam C.J. Walker was one of the first women to become a self-made millionaire in the United States, and her story reflects the challenges faced by women, especially black women, in achieving success.

There are several studies related to Intersectional that have been reviewed by previous researchers. The first research was

conducted by (Wandira et al., 2023) with the title "Understanding Intersectional through Tequila Leila's Experience in 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World (2019)". This article discusses Intersectional and its impact on the characters in the movie "10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World" by Elif Shafak. This research uses a theoretical approach that has never been used before, namely Kimberly Crenshaw's framework on Intersectional.

In this study, primary data was collected through direct and indirect quotations relevant to the issues discussed, as well as secondary data from previous studies taken from books and journal articles. The analysis shows that Shafak represents gender inequality and patriarchy in Turkey as a hegemonic and systematic belief.

This patriarchal system, supported by religious rhetoric, is extended by male dominance in shaping public policy. The researchers also found that the main character, Tequila Leila, and the other characters in the story have overlapping identities, which present unfavorable experiences. The oppressive experience experienced by Tequila Leila reveals structural and representational intersections.

The second research conducted by (Annisa, 2023) with the title "Intersectional of Race, Gender, and Class in Sherri L. Smith's Flygirl" This research discusses the representation of Intersectional of race, gender, and class experienced by women of color in the 1940s in America, using the example of the novel Flygirl. This research highlights two important points. First, the research explains how Intersectional of race, gender and class is portrayed through the main character, Ida, in the novel. Second, it analyzes the researcher's purpose and critical position in viewing the Intersectional of race, gender, and class in the novel.

This research focuses on the application of intersectional approaches in various dimensions of social life, namely education, health, politics and the workplace. This research aims to identify studies that apply the intersectional approach and how this approach can help understand the experiences of discrimination, privilege and marginalization experienced by individuals with diverse social identities.

The third study conducted by (Pinem, 2023) titled "Applying an Intersectional Approach to Multiple Dimensions of Social Life". This research draws on the theory of Intersectional first introduced by Kimberlé

Crenshaw in 1989. This theory emphasizes that social categories such as race, gender, class, and ability interact and influence individual experiences, creating unique experiences of oppression and privilege.

The fourth research conducted by (Kuran et al., 2020) with the title Vulnerability and vulnerable groups from an Intersectional perspective. The identification and protection of vulnerable groups in hazard and crisis situations is important in risk and disaster management. An Intersectional perspective can help in better understanding vulnerability and vulnerable groups. The application of Intersectional should be a guiding principle in risk and crisis management. This allows governments to formulate specific guidelines, hire staff with the necessary skills, and provide appropriate information to vulnerable groups by considering inter-group differences within the same socio-demographic group. Vulnerability not only depends on the characteristics of a particular socio-demographic group, but is also the result of complex and interrelated processes of societal stratification. Therefore, research should focus on individual perceptions of vulnerability and Intersectional approaches to identify vulnerable groups. In addition, crisis cases should be addressed based on the level and likelihood of individual exposure to hazards to more effectively address vulnerability.

The fifth research conducted by (Budiyanto et al., 2024) with the title Intersectional identity of 13th-century Javanese women in the novel "Tutur Dedes". This research analyzes the intersectional identity of Ken Dedes in the novel Tutur Dedes: A Curse Prayer by Amalia Yunus. Dedes is an important woman in 13th century Javanese history but is often omitted from historical records. The research data consists of narrative elements such as story sequence, character, setting, theme, and other literary devices.

The data were collected by reading and note-taking methods, and analyzed qualitatively with an intertextuality approach. The results show that Dedes has a complicated identity formed by various factors such as education, biological physique, social status, religion, gender, and political position. Dedes' identity as an educated woman with significant influence was able to overcome the oppression she faced. This research emphasizes the importance of viewing women's identities as a cohesive whole and recognizing the role of educated Javanese

women in various aspects of community life in the 13th century.

From the five previous studies, the researcher found similarities and differences with this research. For the similarities with this research is that previous research also discusses Intersectional, the difference in this research lies in the title of the research and the discussion of Intersectional components.

The researcher examines a film entitled Self-Made and the first study only examines gender discrimination in movie, the second study examines race, gender, social class discrimination in novels, the third study examines race, gender, social class discrimination in real life, the fourth study only examines social class discrimination and the fifth examines social class and gender, so in this study the researcher examines the 4 components of Intersectional namely race, gender, social class and sexuality discrimination.

Crenshaw introduced the concept of Intersectional to show how a person's identity is formed by many factors, such as race, gender, sexuality and social class. Intersectional can explain how racism in movies is not only related to race, but also related to sexism, classism, or other discrimination.

The researcher is interested in raising issues related to Women's issues, Concern for insecurity among fellow women is a form of empathy and support, where we strengthen each other to face the uncertainties and challenges that are often experienced in various aspects of life. The increasing awareness of insecurity among women underscores the importance of safe spaces for sharing and support, so that each individual feels valued and accepted for who they are. Discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexuality and social class is still common today. Despite the growing awareness of the importance of equality, discrimination based on race, gender and social class is still a serious problem in many countries. Individuals or groups often face unfair treatment because of these differences. One common form of discrimination is unequal access to education, employment opportunities and healthcare.

People from racial minorities often have lower chances of getting decent jobs. Women also face challenges in achieving leadership positions and earning salaries on par with men. In addition, people from lower social classes are often treated differently and find it difficult to move up the social ladder. All of this suggests

that concerted efforts from society and fairer government policies are needed to achieve true equality.

The movie *Self-Made* was chosen as the object of research due to the lack of academic research related to this movie. Although there is one previous study, there is still an opportunity for further exploration. The movie follows the journey of an African-American figure, Madam C.J. Walker, who overcomes discrimination and achieves success as a female entrepreneur in the 20th century.

Researching this movie is important to understand how its themes, characterizations, and socio-cultural impacts are raised. Through this research, it is hoped to dig deeper into the way the movie represents these issues. In addition, this research can also reveal its influence on the audience's understanding of the struggles of minority groups and the role of women in the history of business in America. Therefore, by using Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional through the film *Self-Made*, the researcher will analyze the Intersectional of discrimination that often occurs among black people, especially against women. The researcher determines the object of the study based on the research background above is to find out Intersectional discrimination on the main character in the movie *Self-Made* inspired by the life of Madam C.J Walker and to find out the moral messages can be taken in the movie self made.

Research Methodology

The writer uses a descriptive qualitative method approach to conduct this research. According to Moh. Nazir (1988) in (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021) explains that descriptive research studies problems in society, as well as procedures that apply in society and certain situations including the relationship between activities, attitudes, ongoing views and the influence of a phenomenon.

The focus of this research is the *Self-Made* movie inspired by the life of Mrs. C.J. Walker is an American drama television limited series, based on the biography on her own ground by a'Lelia Bundles, which premiered on March 20, 2020 on netflix.

According to (azhar susanto, 2018) in (Pipit Muliyah, Dyah Aminatun, Sukma Septian Nasution, Tommy Hastomo, Setiana Sri Wahyuni Sitepu, 2020) "data is a fact or anything that can be used as input in generating

information. data can be material for discussion, decision making, calculation, or measurement. currently data does not always have to be in the form of a collection of letters in the form of words or sentences but can also be in the form of sound, still and moving images, both in two or three dimensions.

This analysis focuses on conversations and dialogues in several scenes of the film *Self-Made* to understand more about the discrimination experienced by the main character. using the concept introduced by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, it explains how various forms of discrimination-such as discrimination related to race, gender, and social class-can be interconnected and exacerbate the injustice experienced by a person and Charles S. Pierce's theory, namely the triangle of meaning theory which includes three elements, namely the sign, object and interpretation to analyze moral messages. In this study the writers used secondary data for the object of research, the reality that was the focus of the research. According to Sugiyono, (2018) states that secondary data is a data source that does not directly provide data to data collectors. Secondary data in this study were obtained from reference books, research journals, the internet and others. The analysis in this study focuses on conversations or dialog in the *Self-Made* scene to explore Intersectional discrimination that appears in the film's scenes and dialog.

According to Sugiyono (2017: 273) in (Yusra et al., 2021), defines the data collection technique in the form of triangulation as a data collection technique that combines various existing data collection techniques and data sources. According to Gulo in (Anufia, 2019) Collecting data can be done with several methods, namely interviews, observations (observations), questionnaires or questionnaires, and documentaries. For the preparation and development of data collection, the writer analyzes the research instrument with the observation method, based on the Intersectional theory put forward by Kimberle Crenshaw which includes racial discrimination, gender, sexuality and social class. Through the following stages:

- 1) Watch the movie *Self-Made*.
- 2) Understand the story and look for racism movements that occur in the movie *Self-Made*.
- 3) Write down the conversation or dialog in the scene of *Self-Made* to explore the

Intersectional discrimination that appears in the scene.

- 4) Classify types of Intersectional discrimination using Kimberly Crenshaw's Intersectional theory and moral messages using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory

In this research, the writer uses the theory of Intersectional by Kimberle Crenshaw and triangle meaning theory by Charles S. Pierce's. The focus of Crenshaw introducing the concept of Intersectional is to show how a person's identity is formed by many factors, such as race, gender, and social class. Intersectional can explain how discrimination in movies is not only related to race, but also related to sexism, classism, or other discrimination. The writer uses the Intersectional theory, at the end of this analysis the writer will know how much data the writer has collected.

Peirce's, triangle meaning theory helps us understand that moral messages in films are not directly "given", but constructed by the audience through interpretation of signs (visuals, dialog, symbols). Thus, each viewer may interpret the moral meaning differently, depending on their context and personal experience.

Result

In answering the problem formulation, the discussion in this chapter is divided into two main parts. First, it analyzes the various forms of discrimination experienced by Madam C.J. Walker in the movie, both explicitly and implicitly. Second, the identification of moral messages that can be taken from the main character's life struggle in facing discrimination.

A. Forms of discrimination received and moral messages by Madam C.J. Walker

- 1) "**No**, I don't think sales is for you"

Dialog Analysis:

The sentence was delivered by Addie to Madam CJ Walker (Eps 1 : 6.42) :

Addie undermines Madam Walker's ability because of her skin color and background. This remark shows discrimination among black women, where lighter-skinned people feel more worthy of success. Addie considers Walker unsuitable to be a salesperson, not because of her ability, but because of her

appearance and social status. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Race and Social Class discrimination.

Moral Messages:

Based on Charles Sanders Peirce's triangle of meaning theory, which consists of representamen, object, and interpretant. The representamen in this case is the sentence itself, which shows rejection or doubt of one's ability. The object referred to is a social situation where a person is deemed unfit for a job because of their background. Meanwhile, the interpretant or meaning captured by the audience is that people are often underestimated based on appearance or status, but it is not the determinant of success.

The moral message that emerges through this interpretation is that we should not let the judgment of others limit our potential. Instead, doubts from others can be a motivation to prove our abilities and achieve success. With Peirce's theory, we understand that the moral meaning in the movie is not given directly, but is formed from the interpretation process of the signs that appear in the context of the story.

- 2) "**Colored women** will do anything to look like me, **even if deep down they know they can't**"

Dialog Analysis:

The sentence was delivered by Addie to Madam CJ Walker (Eps 1: 7.37) :

Addie shows pride in having lighter skin and feeling closer to the idolized standard of beauty at the time. This remark shows how light black women often feel superior to those with darker skin, due to social pressure and racism that worships whiteness. Addie trivializes the struggles of other black women, as if they can only dream of achieving beauty and status like her. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Race discrimination.

Moral Messages:

Analyzed through the three main elements in Peirce's theory: representamen, object and interpretant. The representamen is the spoken sentence, which implies a sense of racial superiority and beauty standards dominated by the white race. The object referred to is the social reality of racism, discrimination and cultural pressure on

women of color to conform to beauty standards that do not represent their identity.

The interpretant or meaning that emerges in the minds of the audience is the awareness of psychological oppression and structural injustice, especially against women of color who are often considered physically and socially inferior.

From this process, the moral message that can be captured is a critique of racist and non-inclusive beauty standards, as well as the importance of self-acceptance and resistance to cultural domination that oppresses certain groups. Peirce's theory helps us understand that the meaning of this dialogue does not only come from the text, but from how the audience interprets the sign in a broader social and emotional context.

- 3) "Are you out your mind? **Even in your sundey best, you look like you just stepped of the plantation and I will not have the likes of you associated with them**"

Dialog Analysis:

The sentence was delivered by Addie to Madam CJ Walker (Eps 1: 9.50) :

Addie demeans Madam C.J. Walker by comparing her to an old slave. These remarks show the depth of class, appearance, and skin color-based contempt among fellow black women. Addie humiliates Madam CJ Walker not only because of her clothes and the way she speaks. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Race and Social class discrimination.

Moral Mesagges :

Using Charles Sanders Peirce's triangle meaning theory: this dialog consists of three elements: Representamen: A directly demeaning remark, comparing one's appearance to that of a slave during slavery, despite being at one's best ("Sunday best"). Object: The social reality of racial and class discrimination, where appearance and social status become the basis for judging a person's worth and dignity. Interpretant: The meaning that the audience grasps is that there are race-based insults and a history of oppression, as well as efforts to maintain social boundaries between "who is considered worthy" and "who is not".

Therefore, the moral message that can be concluded is that this dialogue raises a sharp criticism of internalized and systemic racism,

and how the legacy of slavery still affects the way people perceive and treat others. The audience is reminded that self-worth should not be determined by appearance or status, and that demeaning others for the sake of image only reinforces systems of injustice.

Through Peirce's theory, we understand that this moral meaning does not only come from the words, but from how the sign (representamen) is referred to the historical context (object) and interpreted by the audience.

- 4) "They'll never buy from a colored woman with **your skin**"

Dialog Analysis:

The sentence was delivered by Addie to Madam CJ Walker (Eps 1: 10.15) :

Addie clearly insults Madam C.J. Walker because of her darker skin color. This remark shows colorism discrimination, which is when people with lighter skin feel more worthy or more accepted in society. Addie thinks Walker will never be successful just because of how she looks, not because of her abilities. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Race discrimination.

Moral Messages:

By using Charles Sanders Peirce's triangle meaning theory: Representamen: The sentence itself, which implies rejection and discrimination based on skin color. Object: The social reality of racism and colorism, the view that the darker the skin color, the lower the value or ability in the eyes of society. Interpretant: The audience grasps the meaning that black women, especially those with darker skin, are often considered unworthy of trust, especially in the business or professional world.

Based on this, the moral message is that this dialogue voices criticism of racial prejudice and discrimination based on skin color, and how social stereotypes can limit a person's potential. The moral of the story is the importance of fighting social stigma and proving one's worth is not determined by skin color, but rather by ability and integrity.

With Peirce's triangle theory, we see that meaning is not only attached to words, but is formed from the social context (object) and the emotional response or understanding of the audience (interpretant), which ultimately forms the moral message of the movie as a whole.

- 5) “No matter how hard I work or how good the product is, **they always look at my skin before my ability**”

Dialog Analysis:

Madam CJ Walker's frustration (Eps 1: 18.21) :

She expressed her frustration with the discrimination she faced. Despite working hard and creating quality products, she was judged based on the color of her skin, not her abilities. This statement reflects the harsh reality that for black women at the time, effort and quality were often not enough to overcome deep-seated racial prejudice. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of discrimination.

Moral Messages :

Based on Charles Sanders Peirce's triangle meaning theory: Representamen: Sentences that show complaints or the harsh reality of discrimination. Object: A social situation where skin color is still the basis of judgment, even more than hard work and product quality. Interpretant: The audience understands that structural racism is still a serious obstacle for people of color to be fairly recognized in the professional world.

Related to this, the moral message is From this interpretation, a moral message emerges that hard work is not enough if the social system is still full of discrimination. This sentence promotes awareness of the need for a change in society's perspective: that a person's ability and value should not be determined by skin color.

Using Peirce's theory, we see that the moral meaning in this dialog is formed through the relationship between the sign (speech), the social reality it represents, and the meaning captured by the audience. The moral message is strong because it is based on an experience of injustice that can be felt emotionally and socially.

With Peirce's theory, we see that the moral meaning in this dialog is formed through the relationship between the sign (speech), the social reality it represents, and the meaning captured by the audience. The moral message is strong because it is based on the experience of injustice that can be felt emotionally and socially.

- 6) “White customers reject Sarah non-verbally”

Dialog Analysis: (Eps 1: 27.00)

They (the customers) did not say a word, but their gestures such as looking away, refusing to shake hands, or ignoring her presence conveyed a clear rejection. This moment demonstrates a subtle form of racism that black women often faced at the time: not only being overtly rejected, but also being ignored and rendered invisible. This tacit rejection is more painful because it implies that Sarah's existence is not recognized at all. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Race discrimination.

Moral Messages :

Using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory. Representamen: White customers' non-verbal acts of rejection towards Sarah (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, avoidance). Object: The reality of subtle or covert racial discrimination (non-verbal racism), where a person is rejected not because of ability, but because of skin color. Interpretant: The audience grasps the meaning that Sarah is not considered worthy or deserving of being served only because of her racial identity, not because of her qualities or attitude.

Moral message learned this statement conveys a moral message about how discrimination can happen silently, without words, but is still hurtful and harmful. The main message is that racism does not always appear overtly, but also in the form of unfair attitudes and treatment, which must be recognized and resisted.

Through Peirce's theory, we understand that even non-verbal signs can contain deep meaning, as meaning is shaped by the social context (object) and the audience's perception or interpretation (interpretant) of the action.

- 7) “**This is a gathering of men who** built something from nothing”

Dialog Analysis:

Booker T. Washington's words to Madam CJ Walker (Eps 2 : 34.00) :

He emphasized that the meeting was for black men who had built businesses from scratch. This statement reflects a patriarchal view that ignores the contributions of women, like Madam C.J. Walker, in the business world. Although Walker has achieved tremendous success, she still faces barriers because of her gender.

This dialogue highlights the dual challenges that Black women face: racial and

gender discrimination, even from fellow members of their own community. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Gender Discrimination.

Moral Messages :

Using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory. Representamen: The sentence, which explicitly praises men for building something from nothing. Object: The concept of success and hard work in building a business or achievement without initial support, usually associated with values such as determination, independence and leadership. Interpretant: Viewers may interpret that only certain groups (e.g. white men or the elite class) are recognized as "builders" or successful figures, while other groups (women, minorities) are sidelined or not considered part of the success narrative.

The moral of the story is an implicit critique of who is given a place in the narrative of success. This dialogue opens up the realization that recognition is often biased, given only to certain groups, even though many others have also struggled hard. With Peirce's theory, we realize that the meaning of this sentence is shaped not only by its content (representamen), but by its social context (object) and how the audience interprets the bias or inequality (interpretant).

8) **"The negro man needs to be lifted first"**

Dialog Analysis:

Booker T. Washington's words to Madam C.J Walker (Eps 2 :43.25) :

He expressed the view that black men should come first in social and economic struggles. This remark reflects a patriarchal attitude that ignores the role and contribution of black women, like Madam C.J. Walker, in building their communities. Although Walker has achieved tremendous success, she still faces barriers because of her gender. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Gender Discrimination.

Moral Messages:

Using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory. Representamen: A sentence stating that black men should be uplifted (empowered) first. Object: The historical reality of the social, political and economic inequality experienced by black men due to slavery, colonialism and systemic racism.

Interpretant: The audience understands the meaning that there is an awareness of the social disadvantage experienced by black people, as well as the urgency to provide support or priority for their recovery.

The moral of the dialogue is that social justice demands special attention to the longest-oppressed groups. In this case, black men are seen as symbols of the victims of structural injustice who need to be addressed first in order to create equality. With Peirce's theoretical approach, we understand that meaning does not lie only in words, but is formed from the historical context (object) and the social-emotional interpretation of the audience (interpretant). This sentence encourages reflection on who should be prioritized in the struggle towards justice and equality.

9) **"You ladies need to be kept in your place"**

Dialog Analysis :

The sentences was delivered by Booker T. Washington's to Madam C.J Walker (Eps 2 : 43.15) :

"You ladies need to be kept in your place" implies gender discrimination because it implies that women should have a lower position or role than men. This phrase is used to limit women's role in society, preventing them from taking leadership roles or becoming economically independent. In addition, "kept in your place" reinforces stereotypes that see women as only suitable for domestic or supporting roles, not as leaders or innovators. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Gender Discrimination.

Moral Messages:

Using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory. Representamen: The sentence, which is a form of patriarchal speech and demeans women. Object: The patriarchal social structure that positions women below men, limiting their roles to certain spaces (such as the household or domestic tasks). Interpretant: The audience captures the message that women are deemed unworthy of having the same freedom, power, or public roles as men-and that they must be "guarded" from crossing the boundaries set by the system.

The moral message that emerges from this interpretation is a critique of patriarchal

culture and gender inequality. This dialog shows how power is used to silence and control women. However, in the context of the movie, the audience can grasp that this sentence actually strengthens the spirit of resistance to oppression.

With Peirce's theory, we understand that the meaning of this dialog is formed through the relationship between the sign (representamen), the patriarchal social context (object), and the critical interpretation of the audience (interpretant). This dialogue is a reminder that gender equality has not been fully achieved, and the struggle for it is still relevant today.

10) **"If a washer women like sarah** figure it out, y'all should have no problem"

Dialog Analysis:

The sentence was delivered by Addie to her employee in front of Sarah (Eps 1 :5.59) :

Addie demeans Madam C.J. Walker (Sarah) by mentioning her background as a washerwoman. This remark shows how others look down on Sarah's ability because of her social status and occupation. This sentence illustrates class discrimination, where poor people or manual laborers are considered unlikely to succeed. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Social Class Discrimination.

Moral Messages:

Using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory. Representamen: The sentence, which subtly demeans Sarah by referring to her background as a washerwoman. Object: The social reality of lower-class stereotypes and low expectations of women from poor or manual labor backgrounds. Interpretant: The audience grasps that although Sarah is successful, her achievements are considered "surprising" or "unusual" due to her social status. This remark implies that her success is not the norm, but rather the exception.

The moral message is a criticism of underestimating someone's potential just because of their profession or social status. This dialogue reflects the social bias that considers success only natural for those from certain backgrounds. However, Sarah's success proves that ability and intelligence are not determined by social status.

Using Peirce's theory, we see that the meaning of this dialogue does not only come

from the words (representamen), but from the social context about class and gender (object), as well as the audience's interpretation that connects it to injustice and hope for equality (interpretant).

11) "Cleophus (Emblamer) tried to abuse CJ Walker's madam's words "just tell me what it'll take to get you to come on board ""

Dialog Analysis:

Attempted harassment (Eps 2 :11.04) :

Sweetness is intent on perverting Madam Walker's good intentions. Actually, Madam Walker wanted to invite equal cooperation, but Sweetness tried to take advantage of the offer to take advantage of herself. This shows how people around her sometimes underestimate, manipulate, or take advantage of Madam CJ Walker's kindness and ambition for personal gain. Based on Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of Intersectional, this explanation falls into the category of Sexuality Discrimination.

Moral Messages:

Using Charles S. Pierce's triangle meaning theory. Representamen: The sentence "Just tell me what it'll take to get you to come on board" which was originally an invitation for cooperation from Madam C.J. Walker. Object: A business communication situation that should be based on trust, goodwill and professional collaboration. Interpretant: The audience interprets that Cleophus is misusing Madam Walker's words with manipulative intent, turning the positive meaning of an invitation to cooperation into a dishonest or self-interested negotiation tool.

The moral is a warning about the importance of integrity in business communication and cooperation. Sentences that initially intend to build trust can be misused if the interlocutor is dishonest. It also reflects that good intentions can be twisted by people who want to take personal advantage, and that caution in business is essential.

With Peirce's theory, the meaning that emerges (interpretant) is not just from the words spoken (representamen), but from how the context is manipulated (object) and how the audience perceives the deviation in meaning. This dialog highlights that meaning can change depending on who is using it and for what purpose.

Discussion

Discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality and social class is the result of social and cultural systems that have long perpetuated inequalities of power. These four forms of discrimination are rooted in hegemonic norms that shape the structure of society and influence the way individuals and groups are treated. Discrimination can occur because of power imbalances and social prejudices that are entrenched in the fabric of society.

According to classical and contemporary sociological theories, discrimination is not only an individual act, but also **part** of a larger system, referred to as “structures of social injustice” (Feagin & Feagin, 2020). Discrimination occurs when dominant groups use their social, economic, or political power to maintain the status quo and exclude other groups based on categories such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or social class.

Psychologically, discrimination can also be explained through social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which states that individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into “ingroup” and “outgroup” categories. When a person feels their group identity is threatened, they are more likely to show prejudice and discriminatory behavior towards outgroups.

In cultural and historical contexts, discrimination is often passed down through generations through unequal norms and values. For example, past systems of colonialism and slavery have legitimized racism that is still influential today (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Practices such as racial segregation, patriarchy and media stereotypes reinforce systemic discrimination. The following is an explanation of the forms of discrimination and related contemporary phenomena:

1. **Racial Discrimination:** Racial discrimination occurs when a person or group of people are treated unfairly simply because of their race or ethnicity. Historically, it is associated with colonialism, slavery and white supremacy, which created racial hierarchies. Bonilla-Silva (2018) argues that contemporary racism often takes the form of “color-blind racism” where discrimination is subtle and systemic, such as in education, housing or legal policies.
- **Current phenomenon:** Black Lives Matter (BLM): This global movement emerged in response to police violence against black people in the United States, demonstrating

that racial discrimination is still deeply rooted in the legal and justice system. Discriminatory immigration policies in many countries, which indirectly target specific ethnic groups.

2. **Gender Discrimination:** Gender discrimination occurs when individuals are treated unequally based on their gender identity, especially against women and non-binary groups. This is influenced by patriarchal structures that favor men in various aspects of social, political and economic life. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) states that women have historically been constructed as “the other”, not as independent subjects. This view is extended by intersectional feminists such as Crenshaw (1991) who highlight that women experience discrimination in a compounded manner, especially if they also come from a marginalized race or class.
- **Current phenomenon:** Gender pay gap: Women are still paid less than men for equal work. The MeToo movement: A global campaign exposing sexual violence and harassment in the workplace that often stems from unequal power relations between men and women.
3. **Sexuality Discrimination:** Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity usually targets LGBTQ+ people. This discrimination arises due to heteronormativity, which is the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm and other forms of sexual orientation are deviant. Queer theory, especially that developed by Judith Butler (1990), challenges social constructions of sexuality and gender identity, and rejects the binary of male/female or hetero/homosexual.
- **Current phenomenon:** Bans on LGBTQ+ inclusive education in some countries and states, such as the “Don't Say Gay” law in Florida, USA. Violence and discrimination against trans women, especially in public spaces and health services.
4. **Social Class Discrimination:** Class discrimination occurs when access to resources, power, and life opportunities are determined by economic status. The lower class is often seen as inferior and does not deserve the same services as the middle or upper class. Karl Marx's conflict theory states that capitalism creates an exploitative class structure, where the bourgeoisie exploits the labor of the proletariat. In the modern context,

Pierre Bourdieu added that class is also determined by cultural and social capital.

- Current phenomenon: Inequality in access to education and healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that the poor are more structurally vulnerable. The phenomenon of “gentrification” in big cities is forcing the poor out of their living spaces due to rising rents and land prices.

In *Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020), with the main character Sarah Breedlove, who later became known as Madam C.J. Walker faced various complex and intersecting forms of discrimination. The discrimination is not based on just one aspect of identity, but is the result of a combination of race (Black), gender (female), and social class (lower-middle economic). The following are the forms of discrimination identified in the movie:

a. Race Discrimination

As a black woman in early 20th century America, Madam C.J. Walker faced intense racial discrimination. Society at the time was dominated by social and economic structures that placed white people in a superior position. In the movie, this is clearly illustrated when she is refused to sell her products in a market dominated by white-owned businesses. Even when she succeeds in establishing her own business, she still has to face doubts and demeaning treatment from the white elite.

b. Gender Discrimination

As a woman, Madam C.J. Walker also had to deal with gender inequality. The business world at that time was very patriarchal, and women were not considered to have the capacity to be leaders or innovators. In the movie, we see how the male characters around her including her own husband doubted her ability to make business decisions. She also had to fight harder to get equal recognition with men in the business field.

c. Social Class Discrimination

In addition, Madam C.J. Walker also experienced discrimination based on social and economic status. Coming from a poor family, with a background as a laundry worker, she had neither the capital nor the social connections of other white entrepreneurs. When she tried to build her own business, many people looked down on her for being uneducated and unfit to lead a company.

d. Internalized Discrimination from Black Peers

Interestingly, this movie also shows a form of discrimination from fellow black women. One example is the conflict between Madam C.J. Walker and Addie Monroe, a fictional character who represents a fellow black businesswoman. Addie looks down on Madam Walker because of her darker skin color and lower social status. This shows the hierarchy and colorism that complicates the protagonist's struggle.

B. Differences in research results with previous research

Flashback to the background related to previous studies that discuss Intersectional theory developed by Kimberly Crenshaw, namely, Wandira et al. (2023): Analyzing Tequila Leila's experience in the film “10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World” using Kimberlé Crenshaw's Intersectional framework, highlighting gender inequality and patriarchy in Turkey.

Annisa (2023): Discusses the representation of Intersectional of race, gender, and class in the novel “Flygirl” by Sherri L. Smith, focusing on the experiences of women of color in America in the 1940s. Pinem (2023): Applied the Intersectional approach in various dimensions of social life, highlighting how social categories such as race, gender, and class mutually influence individual experiences.

Kuran et al. (2020): Examining the vulnerability of vulnerable groups from an Intersectional perspective, the importance of understanding Intersectional in risk and crisis management. Budiyanto et al. (2024): Analyzing the intersectional identities of 13th century Javanese women in the novel “Tutur Dedes,” showing the complexity of identities influenced by various factors.

The difference between the results of this study and the previous five studies lies in the focus and object of analysis. The following is a summary of the differences:

1. Research Focus: This research focuses on the intersectional discrimination experienced by the main character in the movie “Self-Made,” while the previous studies explored a wider range of contexts, such as other novels and movies.
2. Object of Analysis: This research is specific to the film “Self-Made” inspired by the life of Madam C.J. Walker, whereas previous studies analyzed different works, such as “10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World” and “Flygirl.”
3. Components of Intersectional: This study covers all four components of Intersectional:

race, gender, social class, and sexuality, whereas some previous studies may only focus on one or two aspects.

4. Theoretical Approach: This study uses Kimberlé Crenshaw's framework to analyze discrimination, whereas previous studies may have used a different or not as focused theoretical approach.
5. Significance and Implications: This research emphasizes the importance of understanding black women's experiences in historical and social contexts, as well as how the media represents these issues, while previous studies may not have placed the same emphasis on these aspects.

Focus On previous research that has a similar object, the Netflix series "Self Made: Inspired By The Life of Madam C.J. Walker" explores resistance to racism in various forms. The first form is personal resistance, where Madam C.J. Walker and other characters express their struggle and determination in the face of discrimination. Verbal and non-verbal messages are used to convey this resistance. The second form is institutional resistance, which is demonstrated by Madam C.J. Walker and Booker T. Washington as they build businesses that empower the black community and challenge racial stigma.

Finally, the series aims to achieve racial equality by dismantling white supremacist ideologies and highlighting the capabilities and successes of black individuals in the business world. This research emphasizes the influence of media representations, as depicted in the series, in supporting resistance to racism and changing societal perceptions.

Whereas in this research, the things discussed are related to the experience of discrimination experienced by the main character not only based on one aspect of identity, but is the result of complex interactions between race, gender, and social class. This research uses an Intersectional approach to explore the various forms of discrimination experienced by Walker, both explicitly and implicitly. In addition to revealing the injustices she faced, the movie also shows the strength and resilience of Madam C.J. Walker in fighting against an oppressive system, providing moral inspiration not only for black women of her time, but also for today's audiences from various backgrounds.

Conclusions

This research shows that Madam C.J. Walker experienced various interrelated forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on race, gender, social class and sexuality. Using the Intersectional theory approach, it can be seen that her experience of discrimination did not stem from just one aspect of identity, but was the result of a complex interaction between various factors. From this analysis, several important points can be concluded:

Race Discrimination, Madam Walker faced rejection and demeaning treatment as a black woman in a predominantly white society. Gender Discrimination, As a woman, many male characters doubt her ability in the patriarchal business world. Social Class Discrimination, Her background as a laundry worker makes it difficult for her to be accepted in more elite business circles. Moral of the Movie The movie not only reflects Madam Walker's struggles, but also provides inspiration for the audience to keep fighting despite the odds.

The moral of the movie not only reflects Madam Walker's struggles, but also inspires the audience to keep fighting even in difficult circumstances. The movie shows that perseverance, self-belief, and the courage to break social boundaries are the keys to confronting various forms of oppression. On the other hand, the movie also reminds viewers that discrimination does not only come from one direction, and that true social change can only happen if we understand and address the multi-layered injustices. Thus, the story of Madam C.J. Walker is not only a narrative of success, but also an invitation to fight against oppressive systems with a spirit of solidarity, courage, and hope.

Daftar Pustaka

- Abrams, M. H. (1981). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Aisha, S., & Natasha, M. B. (2024). Analisis Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Korban Diskriminasi di Indonesia. *MOTEKAR: Jurnal Multidisiplin Teknologi Dan Arsitektur*, <https://doi.org/10.57235/motekar.v2i1.2334> 2(1), 409–417.
- Angga, D. M. P. (2022). Analisis Isi Film "The Platform." *Journal of Digital Communication and Design (JDCODE)*, 1(2), 127–136.
- Annisa, N. (2023). Intersectional of Race, Gender, and Class in Sherri L. Smith's *Flygirl*.

- <https://repository.unej.ac.id/xmlui/handle/123456789/118353>
- Anufia, T. A. dan B. (2019). RESUME: INSTRUMEN PENGUMPULAN DATA. 1–20.
- Aristotle. (c. 335 BC). *Poetics*.
- Bauer, G. R., Churchill, S. M., Mahendran, M., Walwyn, C., Lizotte, D., & Villa- Rueda, A. A. (2021). Intersectional in quantitative research: A systematic review of its emergence and applications of theory and methods. *SSM - Population Health*, 14(February), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100798>
- Budiyanto, D., Kusmarwanti, K., Liliani, E., & Sayuti, S. A. (2024). Intersectional identity of 13th-century Javanese women in the novel “Tutur Dedes.” *Litera*, 23(1), 50–62. <https://doi.org/10.21831/ltr.v23i1.70992>
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2018). *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Greenwood Press.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectional, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
- De Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex*. Gallimard.
- Jayanti, F., Suratisna, & Permanasari, D. (2019). Kemampuan menulis puisi modern dengan menggunakan media musik pada siswa kelas X SMA Negeri 2 Gedong Tataan. *Eskripsi*, 1–11. <http://eskrispi.stkippgribi.ac.id/>
- Kuran, C. H. A., Morsut, C., Kruke, B. I., Krüger, M., Segnestam, L., Orru, K., Nævestad, T. O., Airola, M., Keränen, J., Gabel, F., Hansson, S., & Torpan, S. (2020). Vulnerability and vulnerable groups from an Intersectional perspective. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 50(August). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2020.101826>
- Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1848). *The Communist Manifesto*.
- Pinem, M. L. (2023). Applying an Intersectional Approach to Multiple Dimensions of Social Life. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 12(2), 228–235. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jish.v12i2.59906>
- Pipit Muliyah, Dyah Aminatun, Sukma Septian Nasution, Tommy Hastomo, Setiana Sri Wahyuni Sitepu, T. (2020). *Journal GEEJ*, 7(2), 6–24.
- Rusandi, & Muhammad Rusli. (2021). Merancang Penelitian Kualitatif Dasar/Deskriptif dan Studi Kasus. *Al-Ubudiyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 2(1), 48–60. <https://doi.org/10.55623/au.v2i1.18>
- Saku, B., & Kebebasan, U. (n.d.). No Title.
- Saludung, Z. R., Juanda, & Hajrah. (2019). Diskriminasi Mayoritas Terhadap Minoritas dalam Novel Kedai 1001 Mimpi Karya Valiant Budi Tinjauan Sosiologi Sastra (Teori Diskriminasi Pettigrew). *Jurnal Universitas Negeri Makassar*, 1–21. <http://eprints.unm.ac.id/15201/>
- Saputra, B. A., & Qarimah, A. N. (2022). Interseksionalitas Perempuan dan Laki-Laki Bangsawan dalam “Tula-Tula Mia Wakatobi.” *Arif: Jurnal Sastra Dan Kearifan Lokal*, 1(2), 226–241. <https://doi.org/10.21009/arif.012.04>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W.G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
- Wandira, D. P. A., Datau, R. O., & Wulan, N. (2023). Understanding Intersectional through Tequila Leila’s Experience in 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in Strange World (2019). <https://doi.org/10.22146/poetika.v11i2.86712>
- Yusra, Z., Zulkarnain, R., & Sofino, S. (2021). Pengelolaan Lkp Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Journal Of Lifelong Learning*, 4(1), 15–22. <https://doi.org/10.33369/joll.4.1.15-22>