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# **Women's Resistance and Patriarchal Ideology in the Movie *Young Woman and the Sea***

*Perjuangan Perempuan dan Ideologi Patriarki dalam movie Young Woman and the Sea*

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the depiction of women's resistance in the movie *Young Woman and the Sea*, focusing on its portrayal of female characters challenging patriarchal ideologies. The analysis is framed within the context of gender equality, examining how the characters assert their rights, agency, and individuality. Drawing from Naomi Wolf's *Fire with Fire*, the journal connects themes of self-determination, the importance of women's experiences, and the rejection of societal limitations. The central argument of this paper is that the movie showcases a strong critique of 'ideologi patriarki,' reflecting a shift towards empowerment and autonomy for women in both personal and public spheres.

**Keywords:** *Patriarchal Ideology, Women Resistance, Power Feminism, Gertrude Ederle, Gender Equality, Movie Analysis, Descriptive Qualitative Method, Women's Empowerment, Male Dominance*

## **Introduction**

In social life, gender equality is a crucial concept often overshadowed by patriarchal ideologies, where men are considered superior to women, leading to gender inequality. This societal mindset perpetuates oppression, particularly against women, and is deeply rooted in cultural and social constructs. Gender, as defined by Nurgaeni (2009), refers to the roles and characteristics socially and culturally assigned to men and women, influencing their behavior. These constructs lead to inequality and are ingrained in patriarchal societies, where male dominance is justified, and women's rights are often oppressed.

Feminism, as an ideology and social movement, emerged in response to this oppression, advocating for gender equality. According to Tong, feminism is a broad concept encompassing various approaches to addressing the oppression of women and

finding solutions to dismantle these inequalities. Resistance against gender discrimination is a significant aspect of feminist studies, particularly in the context of patriarchal societies. Naomi Wolf's power feminism, which emphasizes that women are not inferior to men, serves as a critical framework for analyzing resistance in this study.

This research focuses on the movie *Young Woman and the Sea*, which tells the story of Gertrude Ederle, the first woman to swim across the English Channel, set against the backdrop of the 1920s in New York City. The movie, produced by Jerry Bruckheimer and starring Daisy Ridley as Ederle, portrays the challenges she faces in a patriarchal society that doubts her abilities. Despite the obstacles, including betrayal by her male coach, Ederle's determination and resilience exemplify female resistance against patriarchal constraints.

Previous studies have explored similar themes of women's resistance within feminist frameworks. For instance, Nur Awaliyah Amir's (2020) analysis of *The Color Purple* examines the female characters' struggles against male dominance and racial discrimination. Similarly, Virgi Marlany Ibanatul Karimah's (2017) research on *A Golden Web* focuses on the protagonist's resistance to patriarchal ideology. Made Dian Ratnawati's (2020) study of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* explores the objectification of African-American women within a patriarchal culture.

This study, however, aims to fill a gap by combining the concept of power feminism with an analysis of female resistance in *Young Woman and the Sea*. The research seeks to identify the patriarchal ideologies depicted in the movie and examine how Ederle's character embodies resistance through the lens of power feminism. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of feminism and gender equality, providing a valuable reference for students and scholars interested in feminist studies and literature.

## **Methodology**

In this research, a descriptive qualitative methodology was employed, as outlined by Moleong (2010), which involves producing descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. This study utilized the observing method and note-taking technique to capture relevant data from the movie *Young Woman and the Sea*. The primary data source consisted of the movie itself, complemented by literature

studies for additional support and development. Data were collected by observing each scene and character conversation, noting significant dialogues, and consulting supplementary references such as journal articles, theses, and relevant books. Analysis was conducted systematically and descriptively using Naomi Wolf's theory of power feminism, following these steps: identifying relevant data, sorting and grouping it according to forms of resistance from Wolf's perspective, analyzing the data with her theoretical framework, summarizing findings to address research problems, and delineating connections between patriarchal ideology and women's resistance through detailed interrelations of the data.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Research Findings**

The research findings was divided into two main parts in the data analysis. The first part focused on patriarchal ideology, illustrating how the movie *Young Woman and the Sea* depicts patriarchal power structures and their impact on female characters. This analysis covered how patriarchal norms were implemented and maintained within the context of the movie's narrative. The second part was address women's resistance, identifying and evaluating various strategies used by female characters to challenge patriarchal norms. This research examined the actions and decisions of the female characters in the movie as forms of resistance against the restrictive power structures. This division in analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between patriarchal ideology and women's resistance in the movie.

#### **Patriarchal Ideology**

In this section, the researcher finds several examples that represent patriarchal ideology. These examples demonstrate how powerful patriarchal ideology is in shaping society's perceptions of women's roles and abilities, particularly in the field of swimming.

## Datum 1



**Figure 4.1 Trudy's Father Forbid His Daughters to Join Swimming Group**

**13:11**

*Father : For girls?, there's no such thing.*

The statement "For girls? There's no such thing" reflects a patriarchal view that rejects gender equality and limits the roles of women. This statement reinforces traditional norms that diminish the potential of women, denying them access to the same power and influence as men. By eliminating the possibility for women to grow beyond the boundaries set by a patriarchal society, this expression reveals the structural injustice that keeps women marginalized, ensuring they are not regarded as equal to men.

The words spoken by Trudy's father reveal a deep-seated patriarchal mindset that dismisses the value of opportunities for women, particularly his daughters, Trudy and Meg. His opposition to his wife's wish to enroll the girls in a women-only swimming class is rooted in the belief that such an endeavor would be futile because, in his view, their daughters are "just girls." This dismissive attitude not only reflects a broader societal belief that women's activities or ambitions are inherently less significant than those of men but also perpetuates the notion that girls are not worthy of the same investment or encouragement. By deeming the swimming class pointless, he effectively diminishes his daughters' potential and reinforces the gender norms that limit women's opportunities for growth and self-empowerment. His perspective embodies a resistance to the idea that women should have access to spaces and activities that foster their independence and strength, further entrenching the gender inequalities that characterize a patriarchal society.

## Datum 2

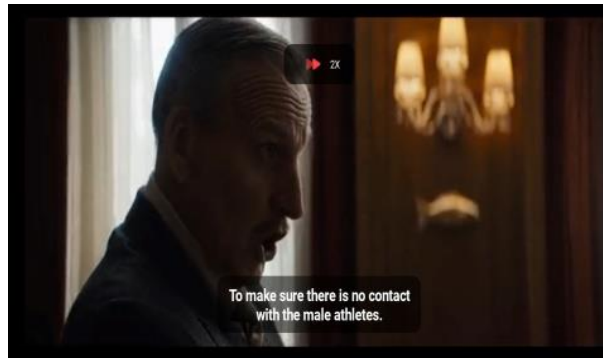


Figure 4.1 Instructions from a male coach to a female athletes

33:35

*Male trainer : to make sure there is no conflict with the male athletes.*

The statement "to make sure there is no conflict with the male athletes" reflects a patriarchal mechanism that seeks to protect the interests and comfort of men at the expense of women's rights and opportunities. Wolf argues that patriarchy systematically places men at the center of the social structure, where their needs and preferences are often considered more important than those of women. In this context, the male trainer prioritizes avoiding "conflict" with the male athletes, which essentially means avoiding disruption to male dominance in the sports arena.

The disparity in the fundamental rules that female swimmers must adhere to in all activities related to male athletes highlights a clear manifestation of social patriarchy. This unequal treatment underscores how patriarchal structures enforce different standards for men and women, often to the detriment of women's opportunities and experiences. Female swimmers are subjected to rules that are specifically designed to ensure they do not disrupt or challenge the dominance of male athletes, reinforcing the idea that men's comfort and status are paramount. This not only limits the potential of female athletes but also perpetuates a broader societal belief that women's needs and rights are secondary to those of men. By imposing these disparate rules, social patriarchy maintains an environment where women are systematically marginalized and their contributions undervalued, further entrenching gender inequality in the realm of sports and beyond.

## Women Resistance

Data from the analysis shows several examples of woman resistance by Gertrude Ederle in the movie *Young Woman and the Sea*. This analysis highlights how Gertrude Ederle challenges patriarchal ideology and helps bring about broader social change.

### Datum1



Figure 4.2. Meg stands for Trudy

24:09

*Meg : Trudy beat measles. You goons would not stand a chance*

The statement "Trudy beat measles. You goons would not stand a chance" reflects a form of women's resistance that Naomi Wolf would likely interpret as a challenge to patriarchal norms. In this context, Trudy's victory serves as a powerful act of defiance against the idea that women are less capable than men. Wolf's perspective on women's resistance emphasizes the importance of women asserting their strength and challenging societal expectations that seek to limit their potential. By proving her abilities and surpassing male competitors, Trudy disrupts the traditional gender hierarchy and asserts her right to be seen as an equal. This act of resistance not only empowers Trudy but also inspires other women to challenge the limitations imposed on them by a patriarchal society, reinforcing the need for gender equality and the recognition of women's full potential.

Meg Ederle, Trudy's eldest sister, embodies the spirit of women's resistance by standing up for her sister against the insults made by another female swimmer. By defending Trudy and affirming her as someone with great spirit, Meg challenges the negativity and attempts to undermine her sister's capabilities. This act of support is a

form of resistance against the societal tendency to pit women against each other and diminish their achievements. Instead of allowing Trudy to be belittled, Meg asserts her sister's worth and strength, reinforcing the importance of solidarity among women in the face of adversity. Through this, Meg not only empowers Trudy but also pushes back against the broader societal norms that seek to suppress and divide women, demonstrating the power of unity and mutual support in resisting patriarchal forces.

## **Datum 2**



**Figure 4.2** The mother talk about Trudy's record

## **31:10**

*Mother : Your daughter trudy has the record in 200 meters swimming.*

The statement "Your daughter Trudy has the record in 200 meters swimming" highlights a significant achievement that represents a form of women's resistance. By setting a record, Trudy defies the traditional expectations that often underestimate women's capabilities, especially in competitive sports. Her accomplishment challenges the societal norms that have historically placed limitations on what women can achieve, particularly in arenas dominated by men. Trudy's success not only showcases her personal strength and determination but also serves as a broader statement of resistance against the patriarchal structures that attempt to confine women to predefined roles. Her record becomes a symbol of breaking barriers and pushing boundaries, inspiring other women to pursue their goals with confidence, regardless of the obstacles posed by a male-dominated society.

Trudy's mother approached her husband, Trudy's father, with a sense of quiet determination. She handed him the award that Trudy had earned, a tangible symbol of her daughter's hard-earned success in swimming. This act was not just about sharing



Trudy's achievement; it was a form of women's resistance. By presenting the award, Trudy's mother challenged her husband's earlier opposition and disbelief in their daughter's potential. Her gesture silently but powerfully conveyed that Trudy had proven her worth and talent, despite the doubts and barriers that had been placed before her. This moment highlights the strength and resilience of women who, through persistence and support, resist the limiting expectations imposed by patriarchal attitudes. It's a reminder that women can, and do, succeed even in the face of skepticism, and that their victories are often shared triumphs for all who have supported and believed in them.

### **Datum 3**



**Figure 4.2** Trudy's trainer talk to the minister

**1:06:35**

*Swim trainer: Two hours and 56 minutes. Your men will verify the time.*

The swim trainer's words, "Two hours and 56 minutes. Your men will verify the time," reflect a significant moment of women's resistance. By acknowledging Trudy's impressive achievement and insisting that it be verified by the same standards applied to male athletes, the swim trainer is challenging the gender biases that often undermine women's successes. This statement highlights the importance of recognizing and validating women's accomplishments on equal footing with men, pushing back against the patriarchal norms that frequently diminish or question female athletes' abilities. The trainer's emphasis on verification by "your men" further underscores a demand for equality, ensuring that Trudy's triumph is seen as legitimate and worthy of the same respect and recognition given to male swimmers. This act serves as a broader resistance

to the systemic inequalities that women face in sports and beyond, advocating for a more equitable treatment of female achievements.

In an agreement with the minister, Trudy was given three hours to swim from New York to New Jersey, a challenge that symbolized more than just sponsorship it was about proving that female athletes could compete with men. Trudy's success in completing the swim in less than three hours was a powerful act of women's resistance against the prevailing belief that women were less capable in endurance sports. By surpassing expectations, she not only secured support but also challenged societal norms that restricted women's roles in competitive arenas. Her achievement sent a clear message that female athletes deserve equal recognition and opportunities, pushing back against the limitations imposed by a patriarchal society.

## **Discussion**

This research examines how *Young Woman and the Sea* (2024) illustrates women's resistance against patriarchy, analyzed through Naomi Wolf's theory of power feminism. The movie reveals four key patriarchal domains economic, social, political, and familial and showcases the protagonist Trudy's defiance against these constraints. Her resistance highlights broader struggles against gender biases and systemic inequalities. The study identifies thirty-one data points depicting various patriarchal structures and corresponding female resistance, emphasizing how these acts challenge entrenched gender norms. Notably, the movie does not address religious patriarchy, which limits the analysis of how religious institutions might contribute to gender-based oppression. This study builds on previous research, such as Nur Awaliyah Amir's exploration of racial and gender oppression, Virgi Marlany Ibnatul Karimah's analysis of patriarchal ideology in literature, and Made Dian Ratnawati's focus on objectification and Black feminism. By extending these discussions to the context of *Young Woman and the Sea*, this research provides a fresh perspective on how patriarchy operates and how women resist, reinforcing the importance of women's empowerment and unity in the fight against gender-based oppression.

## **Conclusion**

This research highlights the critical role of women's resistance against patriarchal ideology, as portrayed through the character Trudy in *Young Woman and the Sea* (2024). The movie vividly depicts women's challenge to traditional gender norms, asserting their agency and autonomy in a male-dominated society. Applying Naomi Wolf's theory from *Fire with Fire*, the study shows how Trudy utilizes women's anger and strength to confront and dismantle patriarchal structures. The movie emphasizes the importance of women's voices and their right to shape their own futures, presenting a compelling exploration of women's empowerment and the ongoing struggle against gender-based oppression, in line with Wolf's advocacy for strength and solidarity.

### **Suggestions**

Based on these findings, future research should use this study as a reference to explore the values of women's resistance against patriarchy in literature, and examine how these themes are represented across various works. Researchers are also encouraged to investigate gender issues in everyday life and how these issues are reflected in or influenced by literature. This study can help individuals understand and recognize the values of women's resistance to patriarchy, and further research could focus on educating about women's resistance and its impact on society. Scholars might also expand this research to explore various aspects of women's resistance theory, including intersectionality and contemporary issues, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's resistance against patriarchy.

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