

The Society's Perception of Social Justice and Gender Injustice in Film *Enola Holmes 2*

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Abstarct

This study analyzes society's perception of social justice and gender injustice issues in film *Enola Holmes 2*. Set in the Victorian era, this film presents a powerful narrative about social struggles and inequalities. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Form. The data is interpreted using Fiske and Taylor's Social Cognition Theory, which focuses on how individuals process social information to form perceptions. The result shows that the audience has a very positive perception of the character Enola Holmes as a symbol of female empowerment. A total of 40% of respondents perceive Enola as independent, 27% as smart, and 20% as strong. This consensus reflects the strong activation of modern gender schemas in the audience. Regarding social issues, 85% of the audience agreed that the film depicts gender injustice, while 75% agreed that it depicts social justice. This study concludes that the film *Enola Holmes 2* is effective in communicating its social message.

Keywords: *Society's Perception, Social Justice, Gender Injustice, Enola Holmes 2 Film, Social Cognition Theory*

Introduction

Society perception is formed when these views are aggregated in a social space and become a consensus. These perceptions not only reflect a collective view of social reality, but also have an important role in shaping how society will perceive, address, and respond to social phenomena. In the daily context, people's perceptions can be seen in small but impactful things such as the way a person is judged based on how they dress, how they speak, how they think, or even by their gender.

Fiske and Taylor (2013) explain the concept of social cognition, which is how individuals understand and interpret their social environment using mental schemas that have been formed. These schemas become the basis for how people judge others, often leading to biased automatic judgments. In addition, society's perceptions of women and social justice are strongly influenced by media portrayals, especially in film.

Film has become one of the mass communications forms that has a great influence on how people view social reality. In a literal sense, film can be interpreted as the use of a special tool such as a camera to paint movement with light. Sumarno defines film as a work of art that is the result of the creativity of the people involved in film production (Ramadhan, 2022). Films, along with audio and visuals, can make the audience not get bored and remember more because it has an interesting script. Films also show a work that can make the audience interested in the message contained in it.

Films can be described as realistic representations. This means that films can represent and shape the reality and views of the society based on the cultural codes, practices and ideologies of the environment. Surahman (2022) explains that representation is a concept that is used in the process of providing social meanings

through the existing meaning system. Representation can lead to certain views because films can influence society toward the messages they contain.

As explained above, films are a medium to convey messages, discourses, and social critiques that help to shape public opinion. Through narration and visualization, films can represent social issues such as injustice, social inequality, gender discrimination, and the struggle for justice. One of the films that gives meaning to the social representation of the struggle for justice is *Enola Holmes 2*.

Interestingly, this film not only presents a fictional story, but also inserts a true story that took place in England in the 19th century about the struggle of women workers in a match factory to demand their rights against very inhumane working conditions.

This representation becomes a crucial point in examining the views of modern society, as audiences from different social circles respond to the narrative constructed in the film. Through this film, the community, especially the younger generation or Gen Z as an audience, can be provided a space to reflect and understand social issues such as gender inequality and social class inequality.

In this research, the author takes the community as the audience of the film as the main object that will provide an overview of the narrative of social change and justice in the film *Enola Holmes 2*. This research will explore the audience's response and interpretation of the social representation shown by focusing on women's struggle, social change, and justice through a questionnaire with Google Form as a medium to collect data. This research will not only study how films portray social issues, but also examine how films influence people's views on social issues and identify factors that influence the way audiences respond to social representations in the film *Enola Holmes 2*.

Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of the society. The data collected is narrative in nature, consisting of opinions and interpretations that cannot be measured numerically. Meanwhile, descriptive research is used to describe and explain the phenomenon in detail and systematically, thereby presenting a comprehensive picture without having to test hypotheses. This analysis is based on the concept of social cognition by Fiske and Taylor (2013). Thus, the combination of these two approaches is considered most relevant for answering the research question.

Result and Discussion

1. Perception of Enola Holmes Character in Film *Enola Holmes 2*

This film intensively builds and challenges the audience's perception of this main character. *Enola Holmes 2* presents Enola as a brave, independent, and intelligent young woman. She continues her role as a detective trying to prove her worth in a society dominated by patriarchal values. Her struggle with age and gender discrimination is an important element in the narrative.

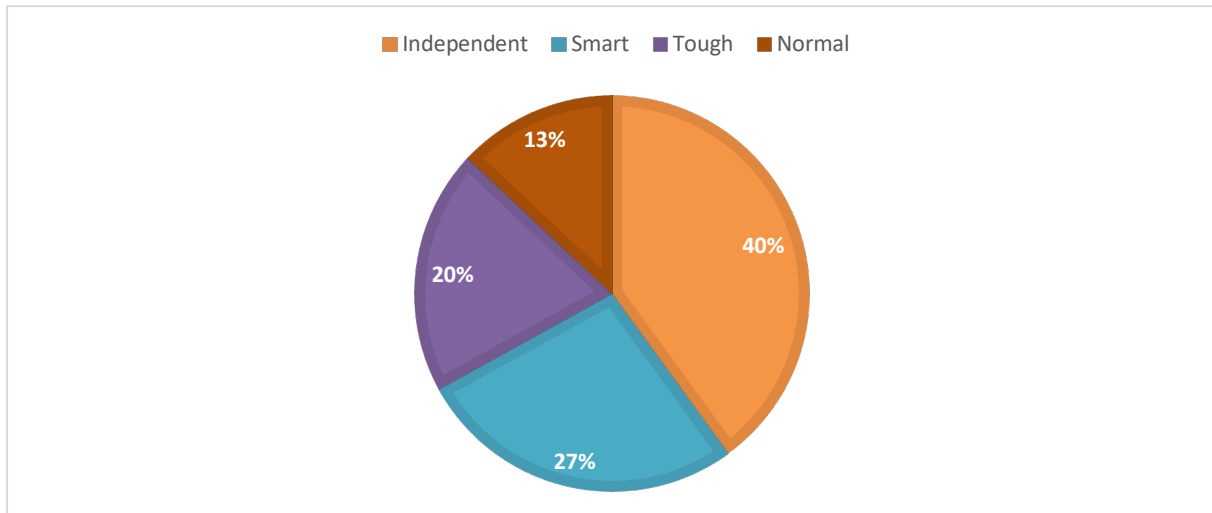


Figure 3.2. 1 Perception of Enola Holmes' Character in Film Enol

Based on the results of a questionnaire distributed to 30 respondents, it was found that most respondents viewed Enola positively. A total of 26.7% of respondents described Enola as an intelligent character, while 40% stated that Enola is a figure who describes independence. In addition, 20% of respondents described Enola as tough.

The majority of respondents with 40% strongly perceived Enola as an independent character. This can be seen from one of the scenes where Enola decides to open her own detective office, conducts investigations without relying on Sherlock, and rejects social norms that require her to marry or follow the rules that apply to noble women. 27% of respondents also indicated that Enola is a very smart character. This intelligence is reflected in her ability to solve complex puzzles, and strategize investigations.

In this modern era, respondents are likely to have positive and active cognitive schemas regarding strong, independent, and innovative characters. When scenes from film *Enola Holmes 2* are presented, such as Enola decoding a secret message or escaping, the 'modern heroine' or 'empowering woman' schema is automatically activated. This schema functions as a mental framework that guides the respondents' interpretations, making them see Enola in a positive light as a representation of these characteristics.

2. Perceptions of Representations of Gender Injustice and Social Justice in the Film *Enola Holmes 2*

Film *Enola Holmes 2* clearly displays the issue of gender inequality and social class inequality. Through the stories of Enola and Sarah Chapman, the audience is shown how the social system in Victorian England placed women in a subordinate position, both in the professional, legal and economic realms. Enola, as a young female detective character, faces discrimination due to gender and age, while Sarah Chapman fights for the rights of exploited female laborers in a match factory.

a. Perception of The Issue of Gender Injustice

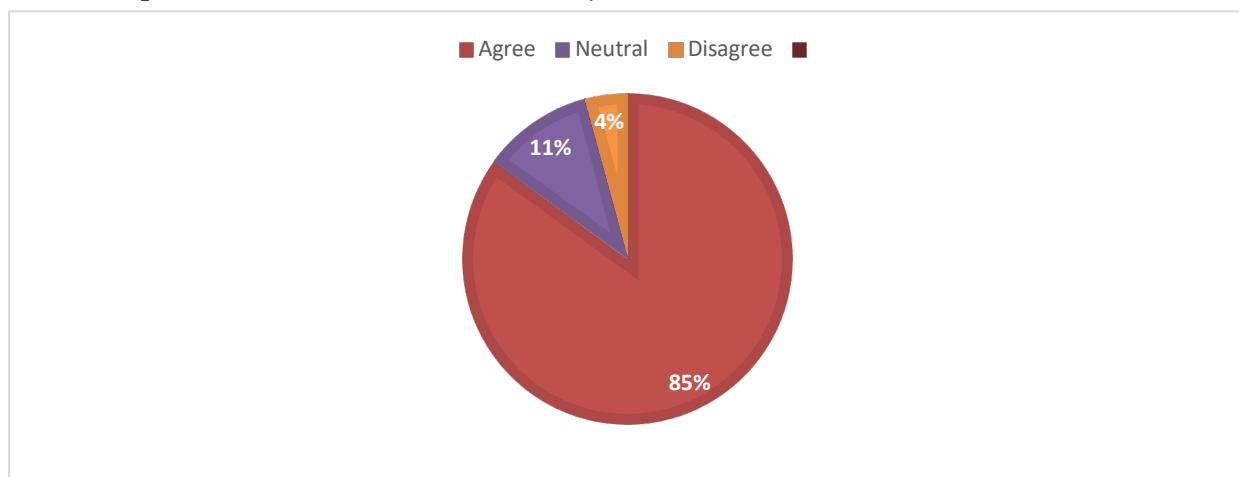


Figure 3.2. 2 Perception of The Issue of Gender Injustice

Respondents in the agree category can be concluded to have cognitive schemas such as patriarchy, feminism, gender discrimination, and women's struggles (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). These schemas can be formed based on personal experience, education, or exposure to modern media that discuss gender equality consistently. So, when the respondents watched the scenes in the film *Enola Holmes 2*, such as the scene where Enola had difficulty getting clients because she was a woman, the information automatically entered into the gender injustice scheme. This automaticity shows that the schema can be triggered easily by the cues in the film.

It can be seen from the scene where female workers in the match factory experience severe exploitation, low wages, and inhumane working conditions. This happened because at that time women had little autonomy over their lives. With the match girls' strike movement shown in the film *Enola Holmes 2*, it can be interpreted that the movement is a form of real representation of the struggle of women workers to obtain basic rights and demand fair treatment.

Based on the charts above, it shows that 11% of respondents who chose neutral which has the possibility of still being in an ambiguous position. It can be explained that they are still not sure to consider the issue of gender injustice as the main issue found in the film *Enola Holmes 2*. This can indicate two possibilities, either the social schema has not been formed strongly or the audience is more focused on other elements such as the storyline.

The 4% of respondents shown as disagreeing in the chart above can be confirmed by the possibility of still being bound to traditional stereotypes about gender roles. In the book *Social Cognition*, it is explained that stereotypes are the most rigid form of schema and simplify the characteristics of certain social groups (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Fiske & Taylor (2013) also explain that individuals with these stereotypes consider that gender injustice is not a relevant issue, thus perpetuating the social messages conveyed in the film.

b. Perception of The Issue of Social Justice

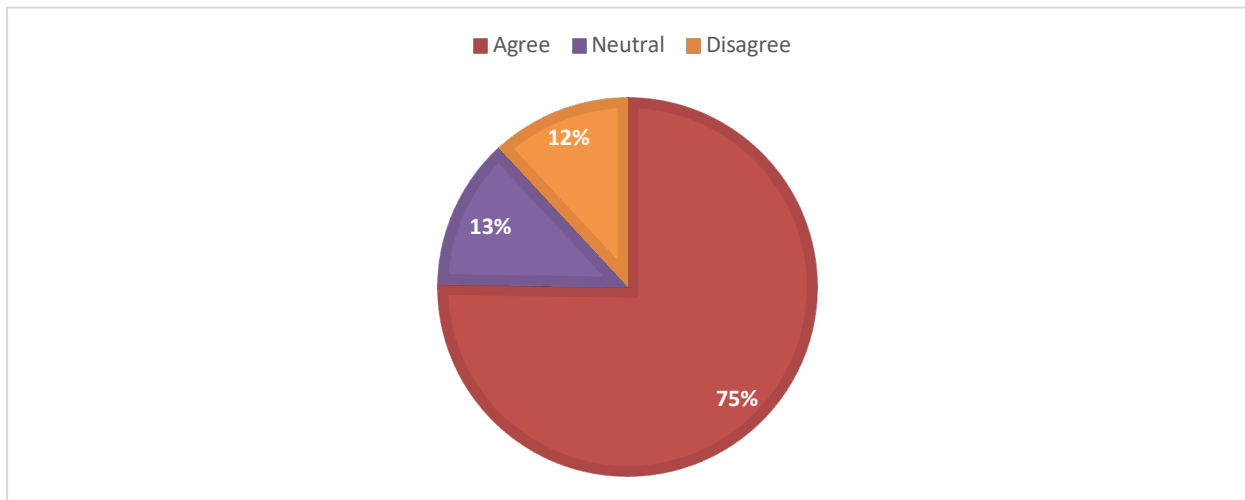


Figure 3.2. 3 Perception of The Issue of Social Class Differences

Based on the presentation of the questionnaire results above, it can be analyzed why respondents agree, neutral, and disagree based on Fiske and Taylor's Social Cognition book. According to Fiske and Taylor (2013), humans understand the social world through schemas, which are mental patterns that help them organize social information efficiently. These schemas can influence perceptions and judgments of certain social groups, including social class.

It can be explained that respondents who show agreement can be said that the cognitive scheme regarding social injustice and labor exploitation is active. This means that when respondents receive visual and narrative information about factories, tired faces, and dialogue that mentions low pay that appears in the film *Enola Holmes 2*, their minds can automatically categorize it into the box of understanding about class differences. In addition, respondents in the agree category also made a dispositional attribution, seeing poverty and suffering as the result of an oppressive class system.

On the other hand, 13% of respondents selected the neutral category. The author can conclude several possibilities. First, respondents may have been aware of the different living conditions portrayed in the film but did not conclude that social injustice was the central issue conveyed in *Enola Holmes 2*. Secondly, it is possible that the respondents saw *Enola Holmes 2* as only explaining family dynamics, a mystery, or Enola's struggle.

Furthermore, 12% of respondents disagreed, which may have caused them to deem the issue of social class differences in *Enola Holmes 2* irrelevant. This could be because respondents' cognitive schemas about social issues are very different. The author concluded that respondents may have made situational attributions. This means that respondents considered the poverty of workers to be just part of the unavoidable historical reality of the Victorian era. This way of thinking automatically establishes a causal connection between the luxury of the few and the suffering of the many.

3. The Influence of Social Stereotypes and Social Schema in Society on the Interpretation of the Film *Enola Holmes 2*

Each individual is believed to carry a complex set of stereotypes and social schemas. Stereotypes refer to overgeneralized and often simplified beliefs about the characteristics of members of certain social groups, such as "women in the 19th century were weak," or "rich people are arrogant". Meanwhile, schemas can be interpreted as

broader and organized cognitive structures, functioning as mental blueprints that store knowledge about people, social roles, events, or even abstract concepts. These schemas not only organize existing information but also guide how new information is processed and interpreted. Stereotypes and schemas operate as a kind of cognitive filter that automatically influences, filters and shapes our interpretation of new social stimuli, including narratives presented in films.

The findings of this study strongly support the idea that individuals' internalized social schemas and stereotypes are fundamental lenses that significantly influence their interpretation of messages in historical fiction films, such as *Enola Holmes 2*. The film activates these schemas, which can then shape respondents' perceptions of social justice and gender injustice issues, as well as the characteristics of the protagonists. The variation in schema complexity and activation is key to explaining why perceptions are not universal, even when exposed to the same media stimulus.

Differences in socio-cultural backgrounds, levels of media literacy, and personal experiences also mediate how these schemas are formed and activated. In other words, even though films present a single narrative, viewers' interpretations are not homogeneous because they are influenced by long-established cognitive structures. These schemas are not merely passive frameworks but active constructions that determine the focus of attention, moral judgments, and emotional affect toward events or characters in the story. Additionally, this research indicates that historical fiction media has the potential to serve as a discursive space where individuals' beliefs, prejudices, and social aspirations are symbolically reproduced and negotiated.

Conclusion

This research started from the fundamental question of how people interpret complex social issues such as social justice and gender injustice that are still relevant and prevalent in today's society. Grounded in Social Cognition Theory framework, the analysis of data from 30 respondents has led to some key interrelated conclusions (Fiske & Taylor, 2013).

The character of Enola Holmes was perceived very positively by the majority of respondents as independent (40%), smart (27%) and tough (20%). This perception is driven by the activation of the "strong woman" or "feminist hero" schema that respondents may have been attached to. The consistency of Enola's behavior that defies the prevailing views in society makes this character very salient and triggers positive dispositional attributions.

The perception of gender injustice in film *Enola Holmes 2* showed a very high level of consensus among respondents, with 85% agreeing with the portrayal. This figure strongly indicates that film *Enola Holmes 2* managed to explicitly and effectively display the role limitations, discrimination, and lack of autonomy experienced by women in the Victorian era. This high percentage is explained by the strong activation of modern gender schemas in most respondents. This schema may have been formed from an awareness of contemporary gender equality issues, allowing the respondents to automatically categorize the film's representations as a clear form of gender injustice.

The results of the study clearly indicate that most respondents (76%) perceive a very obvious depiction of social justice in film *Enola Holmes 2*. This perception is based not only on the contrasting visualizations of the luxurious lives of the nobility and the miserable working conditions in the match factory, but also on the implied narrative of exploitation. For these respondents, cognitive schemas about social inequality, economic oppression, and class hierarchy are activated. These schemas allow them to categorize

these scenes as reflections of structural injustice, triggering a dispositional attribution that the problem is inherent in the Victorian-era class system.

This study clearly shows that film *Enola Holmes 2* successfully communicated its social messages about social justice and gender inequality to most viewers. According to Fiske & Taylor (2013), the process of forming this perception is greatly influenced by respondents' existing cognitive schemas, their held stereotypes, the salience of the presented information, and their attributions to the causes of the issues. Variations in schema and stereotype activation are key to explaining why perceptions are not uniform across respondents, even when viewing the same media stimulus.

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