

GENDER AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: INTERSECTING AXES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE BREADWINNER ANIMATED MOVIE (2017)

Geni Kurniati¹ & Christy Tisnawijaya^{2*}
^{1, 2, Universitas Pamulang}

Corresponding Author: Christy Tisnawijaya E-mail: christy.tisnawijaya@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 09-09-2022

Accepted: 25-10-2022

Published: 31-10-2022

Volume: 6

Issue: 2

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.33019/lire.v6i2.154>

KEYWORDS

Gender discrimination; religious identity; The Breadwinner

ABSTRACT

This study, entitled “Gender and Religious Identity: Intersecting Axes of Discrimination in *The Breadwinner* Animated Movie (2017)”, highlights the importance of conceptualizing gender discrimination related to religious identity as inherently shaped by society. By employing the library research method and intersectional theoretical perspectives, this study examines how gender and religious identity are inextricably linked to portray the main character’s experiences of discrimination. The analysis begins with narrative and illustrative data showing how the main character’s background as a daughter and Muslim results in multiple layers of discrimination. Her gender and religious affiliation substantially influence the discrimination. Moreover, bias varies for men and women of different age groups. The main character experiences more discrimination as a teenage girl than her disguised character as a teenage boy. Women are significantly more likely to face gender discrimination than men, but girls are enormous. Hence, this concurrent examination of the main character’s gender and religious identity reveals that she is characterized by high rates of discrimination throughout her childhood; in a way, teenage boys are not. The main character’s experience of discrimination highlights the importance of conceptualizing gender and religious identity as intersecting axes of discrimination.

1. INTRODUCTION

Discrimination does not merely happen in terms of gender aspects. People’s intersecting and overlapping social identities may be both empowering and oppressing. Regarding gender, class, age, and religious identity, a particular group of people experience mistreatment, oppression, and discrimination. Women especially tend to perceive gender mistreatment at different times of age. Beauvoir claims, “one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman” (1973, p. 301). Women in the patriarchal system - a societal construct - are more likely to encounter numerous forms of discrimination which overlaps with other axes of discrimination, such as class and age. Intersectionality is an approach for better understanding how various forms of discrimination interact. It is predicated on the knowledge that social systems have created layered identities for both men and women. Multiple identities and the ensuing discriminating patterns can be tailored for greater comprehension and more efficient answers. In real life and in literature, including in movies, gender discrimination within a religious identity is portrayed.



The Breadwinner is an animated movie released in 2017 by Cartoon Saloon, with Nora Twomey as the director. The movie is an adaptation of a novel with the same title written by Deborah Ellis in 2001. The movie portrays how gender and religious identity can put women into a vulnerable position; they lose their subjectivity and must rely on men for their safety. The story features a family living in Kabul ruled by the Taliban in 2001. Under the Taliban's rule, it is forbidden for women to leave the house without the company of their male relatives. Parvana, the protagonist, must disguise herself as a boy named Aatish since her father is arrested and her brother is too young to provide for the family. She cuts her hair, wears her late brother's clothes, and works in the city to take care of her family and save her father. Considering that the object of this study is a fictional movie, it is significant to consult gender theories when discussing the issues and cinematography when scrutinizing how the conflict is conveyed on the screen.

This study, entitled "Gender and Religious Identity: Intersecting Axes of Discrimination in *The Breadwinner* Animated Movie (2017)", highlights the importance of conceptualizing gender discrimination related to religious identity as inherently shaped by society. By using intersectional theoretical perspectives – the narrative and cinematography elements and gender studies – this study examines how gender and religious identity are inextricably linked to portray the main character's experiences of discrimination. The discussion covers narrative and visual elements that demonstrate how the main character's identity as a daughter and Muslim leads to multiple layers of discrimination. Discrimination against her is greatly influenced by her religious and gender identity. The likelihood of gender discrimination is substantially higher for women than for men, but for girls is tremendous. Therefore, she encounters high rates of discrimination throughout her adolescence. This study thoroughly analyses both narrative and cinematography elements of *The Breadwinner* animated movie (2017). The discussion reveals how both elements represent the gender bias issue within a religious identity. The problem of this study, then, can be formulated as follows:

1. How do the narrative and visual elements depict gender discrimination issues intersecting axes of religious identity experienced by the protagonist in *The Breadwinner*?
2. How does the protagonist resist the gender discrimination she encounters in *The Breadwinner*?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Three related studies can be references for this study. First, Harper (2007), in her paper, *Studying Masculinity(ies) in Books about Girls*, provided a close reading analysis of *The Breadwinner* novel by Deborah Ellis (2001). She stated that masculinity is more likely found in stories about heroines who must perform cross-dressing. Here, she concluded that the protagonist, an Afghan female teen, can only liberate herself by crossing her traditional gender role. Parvana's disguise proves that masculinity is not limited be performed by males because gender performance is not fixed. Second, Darti and Kristina (2018) analyzed the movie using critical discourse analysis with the help of the feminist stylistics approach by Sara Mills (1998). Their paper, *The Representation of Women Characters in the Movie The Breadwinner*, discussed how the movie comes out with a brave female character, Parvana, who tries her best to provide for her family, yet her late older brother, Sulayman, saves her in her dreams. The analysis used the dialogues as the data and



revealed that patriarchy is deeply rooted in women's unconsciousness. Third, Almughni, Edward, and Fauzi (2020), in their paper entitled *Breadwinner's Propaganda within the English Foreign Movie's Depiction of Middle-East*, proposed that the movie presents propaganda against the Taliban group.

2.1 The Elements of Animated Movies

Animated movies, the combination of narrative and cinematography, help the audience to reform their moral judgment. This is because movies present a more vivid impression of reality than visual texts such as novels (Ramrao, 2016). Since movies project the plot narrative in audiovisual, the audience can quickly grasp the story's value without imagining what happens to the character. A movie analysis covers the referential content and the explicit and implicit contents (Jacobs, n.d.). The referential content means recounting the story's plot; the explicit content refers to the value of the story, while the implicit content is the social issue(s) represented by the story. Two elements to consider in analyzing an animated movie are narrative and cinematography.

The narrative is "a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space" (Brodwell & Thompson, 2008, p. 75). The narrative elements build the story: characters and characterizations, setting, plot, point of view, and theme (Klarer, 2004). We must investigate each of these components to identify the problem the narrative is intended to convey (Wellek & Warren, 1995). Meanwhile, cinematography is "a general term for all the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in the developing phase" (Brodwell & Thompson, 2008, p. 477). This means cinematography presents the story narrative on the screen both auditory and visually. The cinematography elements cover five aspects: time and space, framing, lighting, movement, and editing (The Writing Center, 2014). The time and space aspects include the stage arrangement that portrays the story's setting. This aspect differentiates the moving pictures into shots, scenes, and sequences. The framing aspect defines the characters' positions in each story event. This aspect classifies the shots into long, medium, and close-up shots. Shots indicate the subject size concerning the environment; the function is either to display a character's emotion or the situation of the place (Dise, 2016). The lighting aspect depicts the atmosphere of the story. The kinds of lighting are high key and low key. The movement aspect is how the camera captures the images: low angle, eye level, high angle, pan, tilt, zoom, and track. Each angle determines how the camera is positioned concerning the character (Dise, 2016). Each camera movement signifies the importance of the subject in the frame. The editing aspect is how one shot connects to another one. There are four ways to deliver the stories within shots: fade, dissolve, cross-cut, and eye-line match. This aspect affects the setting, point of view, and storyline. Examining elements within each selected scene picture is necessary to provide a thorough analysis. The composition of all cinematography elements (angle, shot, lighting, color, sound, editing) within one frame is called *mise-en-scène*. These cinematography elements used in animated movies, particularly how a scene is pictured within a frame, are called visual aspects.

2.2 Gender Performativity

Butler (1988) contends that de Beauvoir adopts and reinterprets this idea of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition following this. In this view, gender is not a fixed identity or point of agency from which multiple acts have emanated; rather, it is an identity that has been shakily established through time by repeated acts. Additionally, because the stylization of the body



establishes gender, it must be viewed as the common manner that physical gestures, movements, and enactments of different kinds create the appearance of a permanent gendered self.

The study of gender focuses on how a person's role and physical appearance are viewed as cultural products. Butler defines gender as a repetitive bodily style "a stylized repetition of acts" within a very rigid regulatory framework that sets over time to produce the appearance of substance (Butler, 1988, p. 25). Butler also points out that the opposition between the sexes of men and women is what emerges in the gender binary. Then, women are associated with feminine values and men with masculine values. The binary opposition between the sexes affects how people think and behave in social contexts. A person, however, has the freedom to think and behave in ways that are contrary to what society values. In this case, the individual is judged to have failed, rebelled, or violated the prevailing values. Social values and norms not only shape the mindset of individuals but also regulate and subsequently punish individuals. Furthermore, society will punish individuals who are deemed to have violated these values. Thus, under some conditions, gender conflict in society results in acts of discrimination.

2.3 Intersectional Discrimination

Fundamental to intersectionality theory is a view on race and gender are intertwined, and as a result, they do not exist as distinct identities. Atrey claims, "When multiple identities intersect to yield this dynamic, we can call it a case of intersectional discrimination" (2019, p. 41). Atrey, furthers, argues that intersectionality rejects the notion of segregated identities and emphasizes the fact that they coexist and are mutually formative. Consequently, it is impossible to describe one form of disadvantage in isolation from other kinds (Atrey, 2019, p. 43).

The post-structural and Marxist criticisms provide intersectionality with the most theoretical opposition. The first objection asserts that only the categories of race and sex are relevant to intersectionality, ignoring additional categories like sexual orientation, weight, nationality, ethnicity, language, and class (Atrey, 2019, p. 55). According to Atrey, intersectionality faces three poignant challenges to intersectionality: an excessive dependence on identity categories, the infinite regress problem, and the emphasis on social and cultural inequality over material and structural inequality (2019). These challenges are the base structure of the research discussion. Due to the material, social, cultural, and political disparities centered around identity categories, intersectionality is interested in the simultaneity of similarities and differences between them (2019).

Identity categories like race and sex are supposed to contribute to evaluating disadvantage, which is interpreted broadly in terms of institutional, structural, and relational power structures in the appropriate historical, social, political, and economic context (Atrey, 2019, p. 57). Harris (in Atrey, 2019) makes the same case for multiple comprehension that it is necessary to do so in order to "describe a world in which people are not oppressed only or primarily on the basis of gender, but also on the bases of race, class, sexual orientation, and other categories in inextricable webs." (Harris in Atrey, 2019, p. 58). It indicates that one cannot simply add, multiply, or divide identities to comprehend intersectional discrimination once it is acknowledged that patterns of discrimination affiliated with grounds like race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, etc., are not one-dimensional. This understanding elaborates on how discrimination occurs in the movie.



3. METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this study employs a detailed analysis of the main character and the supporting characters. Both characters' utterances and appearances will be selectively perused to support the argument in this research. The data source of this study is an animated movie, *The Breadwinner* (2017). All data are in the form of essential scenes and characters' lines. The movie is directed by Nora Twomey and produced by Cartoon Saloon, in which the story is adapted from a novel with the same title written by Deborah Ellis (2000). *The Breadwinner* animated movie won several awards, including *Los Angeles Film Critic Association Award* (2018) and *Irish Animation Awards* (2019). This study presents the analysis of both narrative and cinematography elements.

The discussion of gender and religious discrimination is supported by several relevant theories, such as gender studies, feminism, and literary elements. The study is text analysis in which interpreting the movie as a text represents humans' social interactions (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & de Lacey, 2016). In other words, this study aims to discover how and why people behave in such ways (Kothari, 2004). There are three steps in conducting this study. First, the movie was seen several times to identify the issue. In this step, the narrative elements were evaluated by consulting to intrinsic elements theory (Wellek & Warren, 1995). Second, the selected scenes and characters' lines were chosen based on the topics of gender discrimination. In this case, the step involves reading gender studies (Beauvoir, 1973) and feminism (Butler, 1988). Third, the cinematography elements were taken into account since the images as visual text are used to illustrate the narration, tell the story, and define the mood and tone of the story (Russel, 1991). The discussion then provides the analysis of both narrative and visual elements.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The animated movie *The Breadwinner* is set in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2001. The movie depicts the situation under the Taliban regime, especially for women and girls. Animation is "a method of photographing successive drawings, models, or even puppets, to create an illusion of movement in a sequence" (Maio, 2020, para. 3). Animation is "effective, mechanized visual instruction and communication" that has been used for entertainment and commercial (Hamrock, 2000, p. 3). Animated movies, then, like movies in general, communicate ideas visually, through gestures or actions, and through dialogue (Boggs & Petrie, 2008, p. 3). *The Breadwinner* is an animated movie that explores what it is like to be a girl living in a war-torn nation through the experience of Parvana, the story's protagonist. To fully understand and appreciate the debate, reading "image, sound, and movement on the screen" in addition to the storyline narrative is necessary (Boggs & Petrie, 2008, p. 5).

The visual images in animated movies are in the forms of "character modelling," in which the audience can relate the personalities and behaviors, and "scene design," which includes the combination of color, lighting, and picture composition to represent the atmosphere of the story (Jia, 2014, p. 484). Color plays a vital role in delivering the emotional experience or mood as humans react to colors physiologically and psychologically (Boggs & Petrie, 2008), then; the functions of color in film are to "attract attention" (p. 225), create an impression or feeling of temperature (p. 229), and "enhance mood" (p. 240).



The Breadwinner is a story of a young girl, Parvana, who lives in Kabul, Afghanistan when the Taliban rules. The civil war has caused her to lose her older brother, Sulaiman, and her father's disabled. The ruling determines females wear burqa and stays at home. Not only the engagement in public activities prohibited, but any terms of learning are also considered crimes. The militant group took Parvana's father with a false accusation. She and her mother try to visit him in jail but fail due to the order that no females are allowed to be outside the house without their male relatives' company. Parvana then disguises herself as a boy named Aatish in a desperate measure to provide for the family and to reunite with her father. Under the pressure of the Taliban authoritarian, Parvana consequently needs to cross-dressing herself. Atrey (2019) asserts women are more likely to experience multiple layers of discrimination to refer to the society that exercises excessive control over women's activities and rights.

4.1 The Depiction of Gender Discrimination Issues Intersecting Axes of Religious Identity

The Breadwinner represents the issue of discrimination of gender that intersects with religious identity. Here, females are not allowed to be in public spaces if not accompanied by their male relatives. This case can be seen in four events: first, when Idrees scolds a merchant in the market; second, Idrees scolds Parvana; third, when a man hits Parvana's mother on the street; and fourth, when a group of men attacks a mother with her daughter in front of their house. All events show power relations between males and females; society believes males are more qualified than females to make decisions about who interacts socially and thus how everyday life functions. The visual enhances the issue of gender discrimination by differentiating lighting and color around female and male characters.

The first event of gender discrimination is portrayed when Idrees scolds a merchant for serving a female customer. Idrees, a boy of a militant group, actively looks for villagers who break the rules; males for letting females do activities outside and females for being outside without the company of their male relatives. Here, a gender perspective (Butler, 1988) – that heeds the intersectional discrimination (Atrey, 2019) – can best elaborate the situation. At the beginning of the movie, he scolds a merchant for serving a female customer, “I saw you serve a woman! I saw you with my own eyes! ... You were! (Twomey, 2017, 01:56-02:02)” Here, he feels superior because he joins the militant group, even though he is younger than the merchant. He does not have any evidence of his accusation, yet he screams and points his whip to let the merchant know he is under surveillance.

Figure 1

Idrees scolds a merchant for serving a woman



Note. From *The Breadwinner* [02.00], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017



The scene picture shows three significant visual elements. First, the characters in action are positioned in the middle to present the focus of the conflict. The setting is in the market, where many booths are with merchants and buyers. Second, Idrees' company, which has a bigger body, is placed behind him to affirm Idrees' power, supporting his loud voice and whip. In this case, Idrees is presented as the ruling judge of society. Third, the color on the left side is a little darker as the shadow of the tents on the street implies the setting of time; it is in the afternoon. This color in which the merchant's booth being accused is right above the shadow of the tents on its left suggests his bleak situation; he shall be punished for serving a female customer. Here the color is used to enhance the mood of the story (Chagnolneau, 2013).

The second event of gender discrimination still happens in the same market where Idrees accuses Parvana of drawing attention. Although Parvana is with her father, she does not automatically have the right to be present in the market. Gender as social construction by Butler (1988) can best describe her actions; the stylization of the body is propelled by the complex notion of gender, which must be understood as the mundane way bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.

Figure 2

Idrees accuses Parvana for drawing attention



Note. From The Breadwinner [05.53], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

Parvana is trying to get rid of a dog sniffing her dress, “Go away. I said go away, you silly dog!” 05:46. Then, Idrees disagrees with her voice, “Hey, you! What do you think you’re doing? Why is this girl shouting? ... She’s drawing attention to herself! She should be at home, not displaying herself in the market (Twomey, 2017, 05:49-05:59).” This event shows two things; females are not allowed to voice themselves and to be in public places. Even though Parvana’s presence is required to help her father sell things at the market, and her raising her voice to save the product is necessary, Idrees sees her as insolent behavior. Parvana and her father’s sitting position in which Idrees and his company’s shadow fall upon them here is used to show how villagers are powerless in front of the militia. The dark color of Idrees and his company’s clothes represent the injustice they might do in the name of the saviors of the country. Based on the two events, females are not allowed to have any business in the market.

The third event of gender discrimination is depicted when the militia hits Parvana’s mother for going outside without her male relative. This happens while Parvana and her mother are on their journey to the prison. They are stopped by a group of militias who pass by in a car. As Butler



(1988) highlights in their work, if gender attributes are not expressive but performative, these attributes effectively constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal.

Figure 3

Parvana's mother is hit for going outside



Note. From *The Breadwinner* [14.45], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

One of the men questions Parvana's mother and hits her several times, "Going to the prison will change nothing. ... If you make trouble like this, your husband will be punished severely for your insolence. And if I find you out here again by yourself, I will arrest you. Now go" (Twomey, 2017, 14:33-14:47). The visual use darkish color to show the threatening power of the male over a helpless female. The tilting position that makes the left side higher than the right side intensifies the man standing tall and Parvana's mother's bending her body, trying hard to keep still by holding on to the bar of the fence. During the incident, the rest of the men stay in the car and watch their comrades practicing the power of being a militia. Her going to prison is necessary to seek justice for her husband being taken or at the very least bring him his walking stick. However, the man takes blind eyes to the matter and hurts her because he thinks she deserves to be punished. Parvana's mother's veil covering all of her faces signifies how females' bodies and thoughts are unseen and unimportant; the wounds as evidence of being a victim of gender discrimination are covered.

The fourth event of gender discrimination is witnessed by Parvana on her way to the market. A group of men corners a woman and her daughter until they arrive in front of their house.

'Hey! Hey! I told you to stop! Why do you keep running? You should have stopped when you were told to. Where's your burqa? Why are you dressed like this outside your house?' 'My husband took my burqa. I needed to buy medicine.' ... 'He should be punished for letting you outside like this!' ... 'You have to take his punishment! Stay inside where you belong!' (Twomey, 2017, 31:47-32:11)

The men are ready to hurt them if only the female were not succeeding in opening the door. She is considered wrong for being outside and not wearing the burqa—the militia rules about the females' whereabouts and clothes.



Figure 4

Parvana witnesses men corner a woman and her daughter



Note. From The Breadwinner [31.55], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

The visual still uses the dark element as Parvana is witnessing the event from a higher path, and the event takes place in an alley. The dim light on the left corner suggests a better situation without the militia's presence, which simultaneously strengthens the harm to the female and her daughter. The picture's composition that uses black color on both left and right sides gives the atmosphere of Parvana's fear and guilt as she witnesses the danger that comes upon both the woman and her daughter.

The four events imply that females are discriminated against in social interactions; they do not have the right to enter public spaces and thus cannot maintain life. Political events influenced this condition; females in Parvana's village were used to being free until the civil war happened. This finds support from Atrey (2019), who claims patterns of discrimination associated with grounds like race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, etc., are not one-dimensional; it becomes clear that one cannot simply add, multiply, or divide identities to understand intersectional discrimination.

Figure 5

Parvana's father telling a story



Note. From The Breadwinner [04.56], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

Parvana's father tells her about his childhood memory that he was able to go to school with his female friends, but then there came the rule that separated female and male students. The screen then presents several women wearing burqas behind bars. "We have determined specific dignity



This work is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

Copyright © 2022, Geni Kurniati & Christy Tisnawijaya

for women! Women should not go outside and attract unnecessary attention! If a woman shows herself, she will be cursed by the Islamic Sharia and should never expect to go to heaven” (Twomey, 2017, 04:52-05:04). The black screen and the bars depict how the rule confiscates human rights from women. Here, black means submission – the color is used in a religious setting (The Los Angeles Film School, n.d.); when the decree is stated the women simultaneously become the subjects of power. The rule signifies that going outside equals attracting unnecessary attention, and showing herself here means not wearing a burqa equals sins that result in condemned hell. The Islamic Sharia has become the determination of how females live their life. This resonates with Harris’ idea (as stated in Atrey, 2019) of a world in which people are not oppressed only or primarily based on gender but also on the bases of race, class, sexual orientation, and other categories in inextricable webs.

4.2 Cross Dressing as Resilience towards Gender Discrimination

The limitations, females must wear a veil and be accompanied by their male relatives to go outside, have made Parvana and her family starve. The female characters then bind themselves in sisterhood, trying to survive in the middle of gender discrimination. The sisterhood can be seen in two main events: Parvana’s sister helps her cross-dressing to buy food for the family, and Parvana’s friend, Shauzia, completes her cross-dressing to earn money in an attempt to meet her father in jail.

In order to provide her family with food, Parvana decides that she must go outside and buy food.

““Salaam. How much for six apples, please?”

‘Salaam, child. I can’t serve you’.

‘But, sir, can I please have six apples?’

‘Get your father to buy food for you.’

‘My father has been taken.’

‘I’m sorry. Maybe come back later’” (Twomey, 2017, 20:29-20:43)

What happened at the market, how Idrees scolded and threatened the merchant about selling goods to female customers, has put other merchants into caution. Thus, Parvana is unable to buy the grocery. The act of gender discrimination that females cannot enter public places without accompanying their male relatives has restricted females in economic transactions, which leads to their inability to maintain life. Here the film depicts how females and kids in Afghanistan suffer the most under the rule of the Taliban, as many males are unable to provide for them due to war, either imprisoned or wounded. Furthermore, it is also related to the idea that discrimination associated with grounds like race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, etc., are not one-dimensional; it becomes clear that one cannot simply add, multiply, or divide identities to understand intersectional discrimination (Atrey, 2019).

This incident makes her disguise herself as a boy. She cuts her hair initiatively, and her sister comes to help. By cross-dressing, she displays herself the way she wants by dressing and acting like a teenage boy, which amply cross-dressing as resilience against discrimination.



Figure 6

Parvana's sister helps cut her hair



Note. From The Breadwinner [23.50], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

Knowing Parvana cuts her hair, Parvana's sister comes and helps her silently. During the process, they do not converse as they both know Parvana's transformation is their only way to survive. The visual performs darkness even though this action happens in the morning; the minimum light source as they are in the back of their house represents secrecy, and Parvana's identity as a girl is buried along with the fall of her long hair.

“These were your brother's clothes. They will be big, but we can take them up a bit.”

‘Do I look like a boy?’

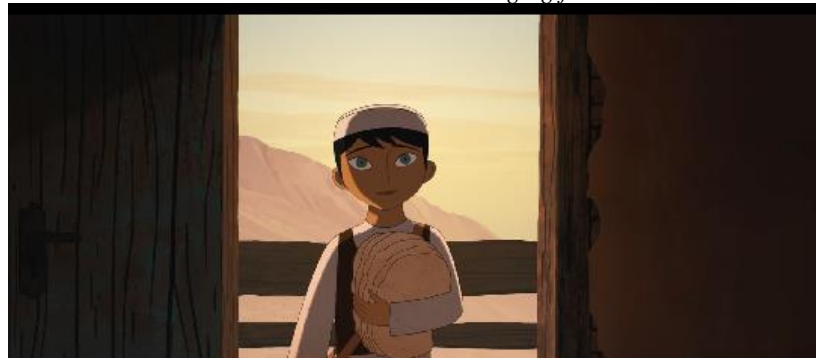
‘You look like Sulayman’” (Twomey, 2017, 24:20-24:36).

As her long hair disappears, Parvana's clothes are changed into her late brother's. Parvana's concern about her look is dismissed by her mother mentioning her likeliness to her oldest son, Sulayman. Here, both Parvana's sister and mother support Parvana's cross-dressing as a way to resist gender discrimination. This is ergo correspondent to Butler's statement that gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time - an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts (1988).

As Parvana transforms into a boy, she manages to buy food for the family. Though she looks like a boy and has the freedom to wander around, she is underage, and the situation in which a coup can happen unpredictably.

Figure 7

Parvana comes home bringing food



Note. From The Breadwinner [27.55], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017



The screen puts Parvana at the center with bright lighting, and both left and right sides are dark, which implies how being placed inside the house gives females no future as they cannot feed themselves. Parvana's disguise with the bright lighting means males has a future as they have the privilege to leave the house, interact in public places, and involve in an economic transaction. Her reactions toward what happens to her family declare her resilience, which further communicates the idea of struggling against discrimination.

This disguise as the resilience towards the Islamic Syaria has also been done by her friend, Shauzia, long before they meet again in the market. She manages to create her boy's name and thus finds work at the market.

Figure 8
Parvana meets Shauzia



Note. From *The Breadwinner* [27.21], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

'I do know you! You're Parvana! ... I am Shauzia! Remember? From school? ... I had long hair then, but so did you. ... You need to get a boy's name so you don't hesitate next time somebody asks you. I am Deliwar now. It means brave' (Twomey, 2017, 27:15-27:37)

The scene again uses darkness to present the nuance of secrecy as they try to reveal their true identity as girls who cross-dress as boys. Shauzia, on the left, is exposed to a bit of light as she stands in front of the alley. This little light suggests her triumph in breaking gender discrimination; she can enter the public spaces. Shauzia, who cross-dresses longer than Parvana, gives the sense of independence symbolized by her name and advises Parvana on the importance of a boy's name to complete her disguise.

The significance of visuals, the opposition of brightness and darkness in gender discrimination, can be seen in the next event. Previously the visual uses darkness Shauzia as Deliwar confronts Parvana in the alley about her identity as a girl. Here, the brightness gives a sense of warmth, not only because they are outside in the morning but also because they have the freedom to choose the activities they do outside.



Figure 9

Parvana and Shauzia at the market



Note. From *The Breadwinner* [33.21], by Nora Twomey (director), 2017

“I remembered my name. It’s Aatish. ... It means fire. ... ‘I’ll call you Aatish then. When you’re a boy you can go anywhere you like’” (Twomey, 2017, 33:08-33:21).

Parvana’s choice of name may have been inspired by Shauzia’s. She decides to continue her efforts to see her father by following Deliwar, working at the market to earn money. The boy’s name is the justification; Deliwar, then, is Shauzia’s negotiation to resist gender discrimination that restricts females from encountering economic transactions because they are forbidden to leave the house without their male relatives. By working as a busboy, she has the chance to live up to her dream of leaving her father and live at the beach.

The discussion shows that the visual elements contribute to the atmosphere for the conflict in the story, which has not been proposed by the previous studies of Dart & Kristina (2018) in “The Representation of Women Characters in the Movie *The Breadwinner*” and Almughni, Edward, & Fauzi (2020) in “*Breadwinner’s Propaganda within the English Foreign Movie’s Depiction of Middle-East*”. Regarding depicting the setting of time, the movie also takes advantage of the disparities between bright and dark hues to imply the confinement of gender bias. Here, black and grey indicate females’ inferiority; Parvana and her mother cannot be outside the house without their male relative’s company as to what the matter is. This rule endangers their well-being. Meanwhile, light orange represents males’ superiority. Despite the country’s crisis, both Shauzia as Deliwar and Parvana as Aatish have a variety of possibilities in maintaining their lives and potentially creating their future. The discussion results impart the intersecting axes of discrimination experienced by the main character. For Parvana, being a Muslim girl results in multiple discrimination. More to the issue, wearing a burqa restricts women from participating in social affairs rather than serving as a symbol of their religious identity. Women’s independence and subjectivity are removed by the politics of placing them in private spaces in the name of religion, dehumanizing them and lowering their quality of life compared to men.



5. CONCLUSION

In this study, gender and religious identity have been perceived as contributors to the protagonist's discrimination. Due to the Taliban's perception of women as inferior to men, the protagonist is subjected to numerous forms of prejudice because she is a Muslim, a woman, and a child. Bias gender based on religious identity is exhibited by the color black, which gives the mood of fear, mystery, evil, and submission. *The Breadwinner* successfully captures this phenomenon through the experience of the protagonist. Contextualized in Afghanistan society, the protagonist struggles against the discrimination she is facing. This explication discloses that the protagonist's gender and religious identity are subject to intersectional discrimination, which is used to reveal multiple layers of discrimination. Unlike the traditional view that treats discrimination as a means to understand the conflict, intersectional discrimination has shifted towards a broader concept grounded in patterns of discrimination associated with grounds like race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, etc., which are not one-dimensional. Because the main character of the story has experienced intersectional discrimination based on both her gender and her religious identity, this study closely examines her.

The data illustrate how the protagonist undergoes diverse levels of discrimination because she is a Muslim daughter. The discrimination is greatly influenced by her gender and her religious affiliation. The bias varies significantly between men and women of different ages. As a teenage girl rather than a teenage boy, the main character experiences more discrimination. The prevalence of gender discrimination is significantly higher for women than men, and is substantially higher for girls. The study highlights the importance of considering gender and religious identity as intersecting axes of discrimination. The discussion denotes that the main character experiences layers of discrimination throughout her youth. The experience of discrimination by the main character emphasizes how crucial it is to think of gender and religious identity as intersecting axes of discrimination that posit the main character with more disadvantages. Those discriminations are defied by intersectionality, which demands concurrently observing patterns of group disadvantage.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Geni Kurniati is both personally and professionally interested in Women's and Gender Studies. She is currently teaching literary subjects at Universitas Pamulang.

Christy Tisnawijaya is fond of the resourcefulness of animated movies. She is currently teaching Literary and Film Studies at Universitas Pamulang.

REFERENCES

- Almughni, O., Edward, & Fauzi, M. (2020). Breadwinner's propaganda within the English foreign movie's depiction of Middle-East. *Elsya: Journal of English Language Studies*, 2(2), 67-71. <http://ojs.journal.unilak.ac.id/index.php/elsya>
- Atrey, S. (2019). *Intersectional discrimination*. Oxford University Press.
- Beauvoir, S. (1973). *The second sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley. Vintage.
- Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2008). *Film art: An introduction*. McGraw-Hill.



- Boggs, J. M., & Petrie, D.W. (2008). *The art of watching films*. 7ed. McGraw-Hill.
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519-531. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3207893>
- Chagnolleau, I.M. (2013) *The use of color in theater and film*. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-03328903/document>
- Darta, D. M. S., Kristina, D. (2018). The representation of women characters in the movie the breadwinner. *International Journal of Humanity Studies*, 2(1), 42-50. <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijhs.2018.020105>
- Dise, J. (2016). *Filmmaking 101: Camera shot types*. <https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types>
- Gitlin, M.P., Jolie, A. (Producers), & Twomey, N. (Director). (2017). *The breadwinner* [Motion picture]. Cartoon Saloon.
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & de Lacey, S. (2016, March 1). *Human reproduction*. Retrieved from Oxford Academic: <https://academic.oup.com/humrep/article/31/3/498/2384737>
- Hamrock, J.T. (2000). *Visual communication and entertainment through animation*. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/782>
- Harper, H. (2007). Studying masculinity(ies) in books about girls. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30(2), 508-530. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/studying-masculinity-ies-books-about-girls/docview/215380509/se-2?accountid=12528>
- Jacobs, C.P. (n.d.). *Film theory and approaches to criticism, or, what did that movie mean?* August 23, 2019. https://www1.und.edu/faculty/christopherjacobs/_files/docs/theory-and-analysis.pdf
- Jia, T. (2014). Analysis of visual symbols application in film and television animations creation. *Proceedings of International Conference on Education, Language, Art and Intercultural Communication, 2014* (pp. 483-485). <https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/icelaic-14.2014.122>
- Klarer, M. (2004). *An introduction to literary studies*. Routledge.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods & techniques*. (2nd Ed). New Age International Publishers.
- Maio, A. (2020). *What is animation? definition and types of animation*. <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-animation-definition/>
- Ramrao, T. M. (2016). Film and literature: An overview. *Epitomejournals* 2(9), 149-156.
- Russel, D. L. (1991). *Literature for children: A short introduction*. Longman.
- The Los Angeles Film School. (n.d.). *The psychological of color*. <https://www.lafilm.edu/blog/the-psychology-of-color/>
- The Writing Center. (2014). *Formal elements of film*. https://clas.ucdenver.edu/writing-center/sites/default/files/attached-files/formal_elements_of_film_chart.pdf
- Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1995). *Teori kesusastraan* (M. Budianta, Trans.). PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

