

The Ideal Body Construction and Beauty Myths in the Film Uglies 2024.

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ABSTRACT

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Film is a mass media that is not only used to deliver information but also to construct social reality through audio and visual elements that can shape viewers' perceptions. Film can be a medium for constructing beauty myths that equate women's physical appearance with their self-worth. The film *Uglies* (2024) depicts a future phenomenon where plastic surgery is mandatory as a prerequisite for social acceptance. This study aims to examine the discourse of beauty standards in the film through the positions of subject-object and audience. The method used is descriptive qualitative with Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis approach. The results show that: 1) *Uglies* (2024) represents beauty standards as a tool of social control to regulate women. 2) Women are positioned as passive objects who lose their rights to their own identities due to the pressure of authority. Beauty standards become a measure of self-worth that deprives women of their freedom as a result of forced standardization by those in power. This study also explains that film serves as a critical reflection on the role of media in shaping unrealistic beauty standards that impact freedom and the way individuals perceive themselves.

INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of women in film is not merely a reflection of social reality, but rather a medium capable of shaping public opinion and reinforcing or even changing social norms within society. Given the significant influence of film in shaping ways of thinking, analyzing the representation of women becomes crucial to understanding how gender values are produced and exchanged (Khairana & Rasyid, 2023). In many works, the image of women is no longer just a narrative complement, but a reflection of how society views them, which often reveals differences in power or influence between men and women. As awareness of equality increases, the direction of this portrayal has begun to shift—many films now highlight women as main characters who are independent and courageous in challenging social

rules, positioning them as primary drivers fully in control of their own lives (Hapsari & Sunarto, 2022). Beauty itself is something that is strongly attached to women, generally defined as something beautiful and attractive. However, in the era of globalization, beauty has acquired its own standards that cause society to judge women uniformly, such as the criteria of a slim body, fair clean skin, and straight black hair (Pakpahan & Fajriyah, 2025). This standard is constructed as a perfect physical image to please the eye, making being beautiful a demand to support self-confidence.

This pressure shows that the female body has become a battleground between personal, social, and industrial interests. In urban society, women face the dilemma between the desire for freedom and the pressure of ideal norms continuously produced by digital media and algorithmic aesthetics. The

construction of the ideal body, strongly supported by mass media, ultimately creates standards believed to enhance self-image, but on the other hand, triggers dissatisfaction when individuals cannot meet them. A critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills discusses stereotypes against women with the profession of housewives in the film *Rumpot Tetangga*.

The phenomenon of being unable to meet beauty standards often leads to low self-confidence and can trigger discriminatory actions or body shaming. Many women are trapped in beauty myths or femininity myths that place physical perfection as an absolute requirement for social recognition and happiness (Putri & Kusumastuti, 2023). In fact, true happiness lies in self-acceptance. The dominance of the media and beauty industry in disseminating these ideal standards creates profound psychological pressure. This proves that the beauty myth does not function merely as aesthetic appeal, but also as a social system that suppresses and controls women's self-identity through body construction.

This phenomenon is in line with Naomi Wolf's thinking in *The Beauty Myth*, which states that the beauty myth is an instrument in the patriarchal system to shackle women. Through the belief that beauty is the key to success, women are trapped in an endless cycle of pursuing unrealistic physical standards. Wolf views beauty as a 'myth' that diverts women's focus from personal or professional achievements towards an obsession with appearance (Wolf, 2002). As a result, women are no longer seen as whole individuals, but as aesthetic objects judged according to social demands. This situation sidelines women from their rights over their own bodies, turning their position into passive objects rather than active subjects.

A dystopian action drama film adapted from the novel by Scott Westerfeld, titled *Uglies* (2024), tries to portray this reality. The film focuses on the character Tally Youngblood, a teenager required to undergo plastic surgery to conform to beauty standards set by the authority system. In its narrative, beauty is positioned as an absolute requirement for social acceptance, while those who have not changed or refuse to do so are deemed worthless. The main character initially longs for the surgery but is later confronted with the reality that beauty standards are merely a control tool used by the system to shackle

freedom. Through the presence of the character Shay, who rejects these standards, viewers are invited to see how the beauty myth works as a discursive mechanism that controls bodies and individual choices.

The phenomenon of plastic surgery in *Uglies* (2024) serves as a metaphor for social pressures in the real world, such as the trends of aesthetic surgery, the use of social media filters, and the commercialization of beauty products. This representation shows that global beauty standards operate as a social regulatory tool that determines a person's position in society. Tally's character is a clear reflection of a woman's struggle to navigate life between societal demands to appear artificially perfect and the sincere desire to maintain her true identity. Through its narrative and visuals, the film directs viewers to reconsider the normalization of beauty as a forced social obligation.

Based on this research gap, this study employs Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis to examine how the discourse of beauty standards is constructed in the film *Uglies* (2024). Unlike previous studies that mainly emphasize representation or semiotic meanings, this research focuses on the positioning of subjects, objects, and readers to reveal how beauty myths function as a form of social control over women. Therefore, this study contributes to enriching discussions on film studies and digital media by providing a feminist discourse perspective that explains the relationship between language, ideology, and power in constructing beauty standards.<

Sara Mills pays particular attention to how actors' positions are presented in texts. These positions, in terms of who becomes the subject of the narrative and who becomes the object, determine the structure of the text and how meaning is treated within the text as a whole (Novianti et al., 2022). Sara Mills analyzes by looking at the roles of actors and readers depicted in the text. These roles position individuals as interpreters and as the interpreted, emphasizing how actors (both doers and readers) function within the text. Beyond the positions of actors in the text, Sara Mills also focuses on how readers and writers are presented. In critical discourse analysis, language does not merely function as a medium for conveying information or content, but also serves as an instrument for enacting particular ideological practices (Sariasih et al., 2023). Regarding subject-

object positions, Sara Mills emphasizes how the positions of various social actors, ideas, or events are placed within the text.

These positions ultimately determine the form of the text as it appears to the public. Every actor essentially has the same opportunity to depict themselves, their actions, and to view or judge the world. They have the possibility of becoming the subject of themselves, narrating their own story, and having the possibility of depicting the world according to their perceptions and opinions. Sara Mills believes that texts are the result of negotiation between writers and readers, so discourse analysis does not only focus on the process of production but also on how the text is received by readers (Lubis, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf

The beauty myth is a social construct and a modern patriarchal ideology designed to control women through unnatural physical standards, such as a slim body and flawless face. Wolf (2002) emphasizes that as women began to gain freedom in public spaces, this myth emerged as a backlash to divert their focus from issues of power to a personal obsession with physical perfection. Through psychological pressures such as anxiety about the body and aging, women's attention becomes consumed with meeting these standards, thus draining their energy to fight for significant positions in society.

The beauty industry, mass media, and popular culture play strategic roles in reinforcing this myth by commodifying products like diets and plastic surgery. These practices create a capitalist economic cycle that positions women's bodies as objects of consumption and symbolic control, where happiness is seemingly only achievable by meeting market standards. As a result, women often feel insecure and trapped in a continual effort to improve their appearance to gain social validation, which subtly limits their mental space and self-confidence. Within the context of media representation, Naomi Wolf's Beauty Myth provides a conceptual foundation for understanding how beauty standards are continuously reproduced through cultural products, including films. Beauty is not merely presented as an aesthetic value but is

constructed as a social norm that influences how women perceive themselves and how they are evaluated by others. Therefore, this theory is relevant to examine how the film *Uglies* (2024) represents beauty standards as a mechanism of social control that regulates women's bodies and identities through institutionalized ideals of physical perfection.

Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis perspective focuses on how texts construct representation through language choices that reflect social practices, power, and ideology. Mills emphasizes that discourse is never neutral; rather, it is a process of organizing meaning that frames events so they appear realistic to readers (Muayyanah et al., 2022). In the context of gender, discourse structures often place women in unequal positions, either as weak parties or as objects of action, in order to perpetuate existing inequalities in society.

Mills' feminist stylistics approach highlights two key positions: subject-object position and reader position. The subject-object position determines who has the authority to speak and who is merely the object controlled or described by the writer's language. Meanwhile, the reader position asserts that the audience is not a passive recipient, but is "invited" by the text's structure to adopt a particular point of view. In this study, Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis is employed to examine how the discourse of beauty standards is constructed through the positioning of subjects, objects, and readers in the film *Uglies* (2024). This approach enables the researcher to identify which characters possess the authority to define beauty standards and which characters become objects of those standards. Through this framework, the analysis moves beyond describing film narratives to explaining how discourse, ideology, and power shape the representation of women's bodies within the film.

The integration of Naomi Wolf's Beauty Myth and Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis forms the analytical framework of this study. Wolf's theory explains why beauty standards function as a mechanism of social control over women, while Sara Mills' framework explains how these standards are represented and legitimized through discourse. In the film *Uglies* (2024), this relationship can be observed through scenes depicting mandatory plastic surgery,

the classification of natural bodies as "ugly," and the social exclusion experienced by individuals who reject physical transformation. These scenes demonstrate that beauty standards are not only represented visually but are also constructed through power relations that position female characters as objects of regulation while institutional authorities become subjects who define and reinforce the norms of the ideal female body. Therefore, combining these two theories enables a deeper understanding of how the film communicates beauty myths as ideological practices embedded within its narrative.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is a method that focuses on examining data to identify a phenomenon or problem in depth (Rahmah et al., 2025). The research design employs Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis not only examines language based on text alone, but also considers how social context and power relations surround it (Hakim et al., 2025). In this study, discourse analysis is used to see how the beauty myth is produced and constructed in the film *Uglies 2024* as a standard that regulates women's identities. Qualitative research aims to explore a deep understanding of the experiences of research subjects. Its main focus includes interpreting actions, perspectives, and internal motivations that influence individual behavior (Soraya, 2017).

Data Collection

Data collection in this study uses documentation and literature review (books, journals, magazines, and other literature sources that support the research focus). The researcher conducts an analysis of scenes in the film *Uglies 2024* that represent the construction of the ideal body and beauty myths. Data analysis in this study is carried out in three stages according to the Miles and Huberman model (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). First, data reduction is performed by selecting and focusing on the data obtained from film observation. Second, data presentation is done by grouping the data based on the positions of subject, object, and reader according to Sara Mills' theory. Third, drawing conclusions and verification are conducted to test the credibility between the data obtained and the theory used in the

research. Before the analysis process, the selected scenes and dialogues were identified and categorized according to Sara Mills' analytical categories, namely subject position, object position, and reader position. This categorization served as the basis for interpreting how beauty myths were represented throughout the film.

RESULT

Sara Mills' model of critical discourse analysis emphasizes how women are presented in a text or discourse. This approach provides space for the representation of women who are often marginalized, portrayed negatively, or not given the opportunity to voice their own perspectives. The focus of the analysis lies in identifying the roles of actors: the subject as the party constructing the narrative, and the object as the party being depicted. Additionally, this model examines how the reader's position responds to the narrative. The subject position can be identified through scenes that show how an event is constructed (Ermayanti et al., 2020).

This enables researchers to understand the dominant perspective and determine which actors serve as the main subjects in the storyline. Meanwhile, the object position refers to the party being depicted or narrated in the text, who usually does not have full control over how their image is presented. In this position, women are often placed as passive parties who receive definitions, judgments, or actions from others, so their identities are shaped by an external, dominant perspective. Based on these subject and object positions, the researcher found that there is a complex power dynamic in which the characters Dr. Cable and Shay serve as subjects who construct the narrative, while Tally is positioned as the object at the center of the narrative conflict. The researcher found that through the roles of these actors, the female body is not merely a natural physical entity, but rather a battleground of ideology that will be discussed further in the following section:

The Female Body as an Object of Social Control.

In the context of social control, the ideal body is not merely a biological phenomenon, but rather a systematic construction produced by the dominant narratives of the beauty industry and the media. These standards impose certain parameters such as eye color,

hair color and texture, as well as specific height and weight standards as the representation of aesthetics considered perfect (Sejati et al., 2025). Through various media instruments, these standards are ingrained into public consciousness from an early age, creating strong pressure on how a woman's physical image should be displayed.

On the other hand, the natural body emerges as a form of resistance that challenges this dominance by celebrating physical diversity, from natural eye color and unmanaged hair texture to authentic body proportions. However, in the film *Uglies* (2024), the effort to maintain a natural body does not escape the pressure of the existing system's rules. Even though there are groups who choose to reject physical alteration, their existence remains threatened by authorities seeking complete uniformity. In this context, the characters' bodies are transformed into spaces of negotiation—a place where individual desires to maintain identity directly clash with system demands that promise physical perfection.

Ultimately, the body in this film becomes the center of choice between conformity and resistance. Social rules that establish rigid beauty standards through drastic changes in eye color, hair, and body shape create a burden for each individual to continually adapt. This phenomenon shows that in the narrative of *Uglies*, the body is not just a physical entity, but a space that is continuously controlled and regulated by those in power.

These imposed beauty standards actually function as tools to erase a person's original identity, making individuals more uniform and easier to control. In the end, the female body becomes a battleground between obedience and resistance. The social construction that sets normative feminine standards—such as gentle posture and symmetrical faces—creates demands for women to continually conform (Fathoni & Fadillah, 2021). This pressure shows that the body is not just a physical entity, but a space that is always controlled, negotiated, and reinterpreted in the relationship between individual will and hegemonic social expectations.

The phenomenon of social control over the body in this study illustrates a condition in which individual autonomy is seized by rigid systemic rules.

The body is no longer seen as personal identity, but as a public asset controlled by authority to perpetuate certain standards. Through intentionally crafted narratives, the natural human physique is labeled as a deficiency to be corrected, while artificial perfection is promoted as the only path to social validation. The tension between systemic conformity and individual autonomy is clearly seen in the dialogue between Tally and Shay:

Tally: "Should I double my left side? Because my right side, I hate it."

Shay: "Symmetry is overrated."

Tally: "No, it's a sign of health, we are programmed to like it."

This dialogue shows how systemic rules have penetrated into the subconscious of individuals. Tally's statement that symmetry is a sign of health proves the system's success in medicalizing beauty, where unrealistic aesthetic standards are ultimately accepted as absolute medical truths. This reflects a condition where someone loses the ability to appreciate their authentic self due to the system's pressures for physical perfection.

Conversely, Shay's view that symmetry is overrated demonstrates an act of resistance against such universal rules. By rejecting a single definition of beauty, a critical awareness emerges that wholeness is not determined by surgical results, but by the freedom to have full control over one's own mind and body. The difference in views between these two characters highlights the identity crisis experienced by individuals when confronted with beauty standards in the real world. This narrative shows that social demands often work by undermining self-esteem, so the presence of critical ideas is essential to reject identity uniformity and reclaim sovereignty over oneself.

From the perspective of Action elements in critical discourse analysis, Tally's action of evaluating her face for manipulation shows how systemic rules have deprived her of individual autonomy. This proves the success of the system in controlling women's bodies to view their natural physicality as a flaw that must be corrected to gain social validation. On the other hand, resistance is shown by Shay through her rejection of symmetry standards. Shay's action

represents an effort to regain control over her body and mind by maintaining her authentic self amid the pressure of identity uniformity.

This scene represents the workings of social control that abuses aesthetic standards until they are accepted as absolute medical truths. This demonstrates the substantial influence of systemic rules that undermine women's self-worth and sideline their personal identities as human beings (Simanjuntak et al., 2026). Through the differing perspectives of these two characters, it is clear that amid the identity crisis caused by rigid social demands, critical awareness is necessary to maintain sovereignty over oneself.

Table 1. Summary of CDA Findings

Scene	Subject Position	Object Position	Reader Position	Main Finding
Mandatory surgery	Government / Dr. Cable	Tally and other teenagers	Readers question compulsory beauty standards	Beauty standards function as social control
Beauty transformation	Authority	Female body	Readers see body standardization as oppression	Beauty myth legitimizes body modification
Tally rejects surgery	Tally	Dominant beauty ideology	Readers support resistance	Rejection of beauty myths
Smoke community	Shay	Dominant beauty system	Readers appreciate natural identity	Body acceptance and freedom

Physical Standardization as a Form of Systemic Oppression

Physical standardization within this system functions as a mechanism of control that compels society to comply. By establishing rigid beauty

standards such as flawless faces and perfect physical symmetry, the system ostracizes individuals who appear natural and regards them as being in the wrong (Sari & Amanda, 2025). This oppression operates structurally through the influence of industry and media, which create social pressure so that individuals feel forced to alter their bodies in order to gain recognition and acceptance.

In the film *Uglies*, the pressure to achieve physical perfection through surgery has shaped the mindset that the natural body is a flaw that must be corrected. The system successfully implants the belief that anyone who has not undergone surgery is considered incomplete or "defective" and must be modified to be deemed normal and worthy of acceptance in society. In this condition, the individual's body is no longer truly free; it becomes an object that must constantly be improved according to patterns determined by authority (Islamey & Semarang, 2020). By making society highly focused on improving appearance, the system indirectly weakens their critical awareness of binding rules. This is reflected in dialogue that emphasizes that standard beauty is not just a desire, but a moral obligation to erase individual imperfections.

“This operation will make you perfect inside and out and free from discrimination.”

Subject Position The governing authority, represented by Dr. Cable, occupies the subject position because it has the power to define and legitimize ideal beauty through compulsory surgery.” **Object Position** Tally and other teenagers are positioned as objects because they are expected to accept surgery in order to gain social recognition and avoid discrimination. **Reader Position** Readers are encouraged to question whether the promise of perfection truly represents freedom or whether it functions as a discourse that normalizes control over women's bodies. The use of the phrase "perfect inside and out" systematically constructs the view that a natural body is a physical flaw that is not only aesthetically lacking but also seen as a moral problem, so that every individual must undergo surgery as the only path toward social validation. By promising freedom from discrimination, the system is actually carrying out subtle oppression; instead of fostering tolerance for differences, those in power erase

diversity itself through total physical uniformity. This narrative serves as an instrument to silence society's critical awareness, making them believe that the root of injustice lies in physical differences and not in the oppressive power structure.

Ultimately, physical uniformity in this film aims to create a society that is homogeneous and easy to control. When everyone is forced to correct their physical "flaws" to look the same, a person's uniqueness and true identity slowly begin to fade. Therefore, the decision to maintain a natural appearance amid such pressure is an act of resistance to reclaim control over personal identity. This proves that a person's value is far greater than just artificial beauty standards imposed by the system as a tool of control. The subject-object relationship identified in this scene demonstrates that institutional authority actively constructs women as objects of regulation, while audiences are encouraged to critically evaluate the legitimacy of these beauty standards.

The Discourse of Rejection toward the Dominance of Beauty Standards in "Uglies"

The discourse of rejecting the dominance of beauty standards in this film focuses on the main character's efforts to reclaim sovereignty over herself. The researcher found four main points in this narrative of resistance:

1. Rejection of Physical Perfection as the Source of Happiness forms the basis for Tally, as the main character, to demonstrate her resistance against a system that imposes uniform beauty standards on everyone. Through her journey, she successfully exposes the false belief that physical surgery is the only path to happiness and self-confidence. Tally affirms that true happiness does not come from forced changes to one's face, but grows out of the freedom to be oneself and the courage to accept one's natural body. This resistance is represented in Tally's dialogue:

"It's better for me to die than to undergo surgery and lose myself."

This statement reflects a critical awareness to take full control of personal identity. It breaks the notion that happiness

can only be achieved through physical surgery. Self-worth is no longer measured by facial perfection, but by the courage to accept the natural condition of the body (Islamey & Semarang, 2020). By maintaining her original identity amid the threat of the system, it is clear that the freedom to be oneself is far more valuable than artificial beauty validation.

2. Critique of Body Modification That Diminishes Cognitive Function becomes the core of Tally's resistance. This emerges when she realizes that the ideal body standard is not just about facial symmetry, but also involves the implantation of "lesions" in the brain to force society into compliance. This narrative shows how unrealistic body ideals are used as tools to damage mental health and shut down critical thinking. Ultimately, Tally asserts that a person's worth is not found in facial beauty, but in the freedom to think and maintain an authentic identity. This is reflected in the dialogue when Tally uncovers the secret behind the surgery:

"There are a few deaths each year, you're anesthetized with fake happiness."

This dialogue exposes the secret that the beauty and happiness offered by the system are merely manipulations. The phrase "anesthetized with fake happiness" reveals that society is deliberately rendered mentally powerless in order to remain obedient and not question existing injustice. The demand for an ideal body in this system is an instrument for damaging mental health and stifling individuals' critical faculties. Tally emphasizes that human dignity does not lie in physical perfection, but in the freedom to think clearly. By rejecting the influence of the system's "anesthesia," she manages to retain her authentic identity and sovereignty over herself.

3. Awareness of the Psychological Impact of Body Modification becomes a central focus in understanding how the system deliberately creates deep-seated feelings of inferiority among teenagers. The film illustrates that the

sense of “worthlessness” experienced by the Ugliers is not a coincidence, but the result of social pressure designed to make them dependent on surgery as a solution. Through personal reflection, Tally realizes that her lack of self-confidence is shaped by system-induced intimidation. Her awareness peaks when she discovers that the Smoke community is able to achieve true happiness through self-acceptance, without having to submit to artificial beauty validation that has long held her captive.

4. Acceptance of the Body and Rejection of Standardization is depicted through Tally’s decision to accept herself as she is. By showing that identity must not be dictated by the scalpel or beauty myths, Tally believes that true beauty lies in physical diversity. For Tally, every individual’s natural appearance is a reflection of their life story, emotions, and unique character, and should not be standardized by a rigid system.

The film *Uglies* (2024) represents a social reality in which human physical standards are constructed extremely through political policies. The authorities in this narrative deliberately construct the idea that radical physical changes through medical procedures are absolute prerequisites for individuals to achieve worthy social status and gain recognition in society. However, through the journey of Tally Youngblood, the film asserts that such physical uniformity is actually an instrument of those in power to erase individual identity and systematically weaken society’s critical thinking ability.

This research also finds that women are positioned as objects who must submit to authority in order to meet normative beauty standards. Through analysis of subject-object positions and the position of the reader, a strong textual bias is evident, where natural or “ugly” bodies are constructed as physical flaws that must be corrected. These imposed beauty standards not only regulate outer appearance, but also function as tools of social control to create a homogeneous and obedient society. Thus, the film serves as a critique of how industry and power can use the human body as a field of control to eliminate freedom of thought and authentic individual identity. Overall, the findings

demonstrate that the relationship between subject position, object position, and reader position consistently constructs beauty myths as ideological tools used to regulate women's bodies and maintain institutional power throughout the film.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study support and expand upon previous research about body representation and the construction of beauty standards in the media. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined beauty standards through semiotic or representational approaches, this study analyzes how beauty myths are discursively constructed through Sara Mills' subject-object and reader positioning. Furthermore, by examining the dystopian film *Uglies* (2024), this research demonstrates that beauty standards are institutionalized not merely as cultural ideals but as mechanisms of political and ideological control over women's bodies. This perspective provides a broader understanding of how film narratives reproduce power relations beyond visual representation. Consistent with earlier studies in media and cultural studies, the film *Uglies* (2024) reflects contemporary social realities regarding the pressure of physical image, the normalization of body modification procedures, and unequal power relations between individuals and authorities who hold aesthetic standards. These findings are in line with past research which argues that media texts often function as instruments perpetuating beauty myths. However, this study extends previous work by showing how body standards are not only represented narratively, but also discursively constructed as physical flaws requiring surgery through subject-object positioning strategies within the film text. Unlike prior research that may have focused only on surface visual analysis, this study reveals how dystopian narratives systematically normalize the erasure of identity in order to obtain social validation and recognition.

Therefore, these findings provide a new perspective by demonstrating that in modern film storytelling, social critique can operate subtly behind the entertainment of the science fiction genre, making its ideological message highly dependent on the media literacy and critical awareness of the audience. For some viewers, this film may serve simply as genre-based entertainment; for others, it functions as a reflective cultural text that frames beauty as a

structural condition imposed rather than merely an individual lifestyle choice. These findings also reinforce the sociological perspective that the human body is a space for the unequal distribution of symbolic capital, where those who comply with the authority's standards gain better social access, while those who maintain a natural appearance are positioned as the "other." The film illustrates how bodily sovereignty is limited by the system's rules, thus reproducing unequal opportunities in life based on physical appearance.

Practically, these findings highlight the importance of strengthening media literacy, particularly among young audiences who are frequently exposed to idealized body representations in digital media. Understanding how beauty myths are constructed through film narratives can encourage audiences to critically evaluate media messages rather than accepting dominant beauty standards as natural or universal. In addition, the findings may serve as a reference for educators, filmmakers, and media practitioners to promote more inclusive and diverse representations of women's bodies.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis by applying Sara Mills's model to a film format on streaming services in Indonesia, showing how text structure, subject-object positions, and reader positions interact in constructing the discourse of the body as an object of authority control. For communication studies, this research highlights how film functions as a contemporary site of ideological negotiation, where entertainment and social critique coexist. For gender and cultural studies, this research adds a communicative dimension that emphasizes that public understanding of the body is influenced not only by beauty trends but also by strong narrative framing and symbolic representation. The construction of beauty is understood not just as an aesthetic issue, but as a discursively mediated condition whose meaning is shaped through the interaction between media representations, the ideological position of authorities, and the broader socio-political context.

Beyond extending the application of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis, this study demonstrates that the integration of Naomi Wolf's Beauty Myth theory and Sara Mills' framework

provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how media simultaneously constructs beauty ideals and legitimizes unequal gender relations. This theoretical integration contributes to feminist media studies by showing that beauty standards operate not only through visual representation but also through discursive positioning that shapes audience interpretation and reinforces institutional power.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the film *Uglies* represents beauty myths as a tool of social control that oppresses individuals through the normalization of plastic surgery, stigmatization of natural bodies, and loss of personal autonomy. The beauty standardization in the film is portrayed as an ideological construction deliberately created by authorities to maintain power and shape compliance, especially by positioning women as objects. However, through the film's narrative and cinematic elements, there is resistance from the main character who tries to break free from this position. This study also contributes to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis by demonstrating how Sara Mills' subject-object and reader positioning can be applied to analyze dystopian films as media texts. Furthermore, the integration of Naomi Wolf's Beauty Myth theory with Sara Mills' framework enriches the literature on media and gender by explaining how beauty standards are discursively constructed as mechanisms of ideological and institutional control.

Uglies also affirms that film is not just a work of fiction, but also a critical reflection on the beauty standards constructed by the media in modern life. The dystopian society depicted in the film reflects how media plays a major role in shaping public perceptions of the ideal body, which are often unrealistic and tend to be homogeneous. Through the visualization of physical transformation and the social pressures experienced by its characters, the film critiques media practices that consistently produce certain beauty standards, influencing how individuals view themselves. The film also highlights that the dominance of beauty standards in the media is not just an issue of aesthetics, but also has psychological and social implications that can limit individual freedom in expressing their identities.

The findings of this study have several important implications. For media studies, they demonstrate that films function not only as entertainment but also as powerful discursive spaces that shape public perceptions of beauty and identity. For gender studies, this research highlights how beauty standards continue to reinforce unequal power relations by positioning women's bodies as objects of social regulation. In the field of education, these findings may support the development of media literacy and gender awareness by encouraging students to critically evaluate media representations of beauty and to appreciate body diversity rather than internalizing unrealistic beauty standards. Future studies are encouraged to examine beauty myths across different media platforms and cultural contexts to further understand how media discourse continues to shape contemporary perceptions of gender, identity, and the body.

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