

The Reality Level of Feminism in Little Women Movie

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Abstract: The research aims to identify and analyse the reality of feminism in the film Little Women. The problem identified in this study is to discover the signs of the level of feminism in the film Little Women. Furthermore, the research uses a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher downloaded "the Little Women" movie on the internet and watched the film. Then, the researcher selects records and takes film pictures according to the required data. Besides that, the researcher also uses John Fiske's semiotic theory to analyse the sign of reality and the sign of representation of feminism in the film Little Women. The results of this research are specific because the setting in the Little Women film strongly shows the role of women in society such as women can work, have talents that can be used to realize their dreams, have intelligence in educating children, have independence, are confident and dare to take action by ignoring the stigma attached to them. Through this character, she proves that a woman has the mind, talent, and confidence to make her way, with the intelligence to have and hone her talents.

Keywords: Feminism, Little Women, Movie, Reality

INTRODUCTION

In social life, language has a significant role because, with the existence of language, humans will be able to understand each other in their daily lives. Language is the ability of humans to communicate with other humans using signs such as words and movements. In linguistics, a branch of science that studies language about symbols is called semiotics. According to John Fiske (2003, p.22), in semiotics (the science of signs), there are two main concerns, i.e., the relationship between signs and their meanings and how a sign is combined into a code. Everything with a communication sign system, such as that contained in written text, can be considered text, for example, movies, soap operas, soap opera dramas, quizzes, advertisements, photography, and football shows.

In today's era, movies are one of the most popular mass media and are often used by the public to fill their spare time, seek information, or entertain other than television; therefore, watching movies is a part of our daily lives. The stories in various types of movies are packaged in stories that certainly attract the audience's interest. Besides that, there is a moral message in the movie that can be used as a lesson for the audience, especially for movies that carry the theme of women.

Movies about women are often called feminism. Feminism is a struggle to end the oppression of women (Jenainati & Groves, 2007, p. 3). One example of a movie that we can see is Little Women. A movie that tells the story of four sisters who have different dreams.



Through Jo and Amy, Gerwig, the director of Little Women movie conveys a feminist message. Gerwig wanted to frame Alcott's classic work on the challenge of gender inequality in marriage and family in those days and perhaps today. This movie is the true story of a woman's experience in a dilemma because of the culture and social environment that requires women to choose between getting married or pursuing their dreams. This social problem often occurs in society.

The position of women in social life has always been an exciting topic. For some people, women are unique and valuable figures who must be respected and protected. However, some people suppress and limit the space for women to move, causing women's roles, positions, and dignity to decline. Women are always placed in a minority position in the social structure that develops in society, especially in a society that glorifies men in all aspects of life. Dougherty, J. (1993, p.91) states that feminism begins with an assessment of the fundamental nature of the oppression of women in society and within the family. Women only want men and women, husband and wife, to have the same level of position in the family; no one is superior, and they mutually complement each other. Therefore, there are no more unequal rights and obligations in the household. Women do not demand a high career that makes them feel free from raising children; they also want equal opportunities to get an education and choose a job they like.

Until now, in society, opinions about marrying a rich man for a woman can help the family economy. During the period in the movie, women have difficulty getting various rights. Jo's character shows her toughness that she can try without having to marry a rich man. It is by feminism that women can choose their rights without facing the gender injustice that occurs in society. As for the type of feminism found in Jo's character, the researcher assumes that Jo's character is included in liberal feminism. Liberal feminism aims to free women from the oppression of gender roles, for example, justification for placing women in a lower place or even not giving a place in the educational, social, and economic fields or marketplace (Tong, 2009, p. 34).

Therefore, this movie is very interesting to research because this movie is told of a woman who dared to change existing traditions. A tradition that requires women to be willing to give their whole life to their husbands and forces women to bury their dreams deep to serve men, whereas a woman also has the right to fulfill her dream. The reason for choosing this title is that the researcher is interested in gender issues that arise in society and cannot be separated from everyday life. To further examine the "Little Women" movie, this research used the semiotics theory by John Fiske. The researcher will use code social signs in John Fiske's theory, namely, reality level. It aims to determine the sign of the real

level of feminism in the “Little Women” movie.

METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive qualitative research method. According to Kriyantono (2006), qualitative research aims to explain the phenomenon profusely through deep data collection. Based on the object of this research, the method used to analyze signs of the reality level of feminism is descriptive using a qualitative approach. The researcher used this method because the researcher analyzed, explained, and found answers to the problem formulation. This qualitative descriptive research aims to determine the sign of the reality and representation level of feminism in the “Little Women” movie.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Reality occurs in people's lives, especially in our society. The social codes included in this level include behaviour, speech style, gesture, and expression.

1. Behavior

Behavior results from all kinds of experiences and human interactions with their environment manifested in knowledge, attitudes, and actions.



Figure 1. Jo teaching children (05.48 minute)

“Money is the ultimate goal of my current situation”

It shows the behaviour of a woman who is enthusiastic about working, teaching children, and writing work according to her dream of becoming a writer to make money for her family. Based on the setting in the movie, a woman should not have to work, just get married and help her husband and children take care of the house. In addition, a woman like Jo March illustrates the existence of feminism because it can fight the stigma in society at that time that women could not work because woman weak and did not have creativity and talent; therefore, women should just get married and take care of her family, but Jo March proved that women could also work by educating and also while being a writer.

2. Speech Style

Speech style is how a person expresses his thoughts to others using different language, pronunciation, expressions, and body language.



Figure 2. Jo March confidence (04.11 minute)

She looks firm and enthusiastic because her writings are accepted despite edits for her work. Based on the movie set, Jo March's speech style shows the existence of feminism because a woman was considered not to dare to make a decision; moreover, Jo March dared to write a paper even though she was a woman who was usually only a man who did that at that time based on the background of this movie. Jo March is confident that a woman can accept all the risks of her decision.



Figure 3. Jo March spirit (05.58 minute)

"It depends on me for my family to survive"

Based on the movie, Jo March's speech style shows the existence of feminism because, at that time, a woman only depended on their parents, but Jo March chose to work and struggle to support her family's life. It is included in feminism because the setting in this movie is only a man who is considered capable of working while a woman is unable.



Figure 4. Jo March wishes (35.24 minute)

"But I want to pave my own way in the world"

Based on the setting in this movie, Jo March's speech style shows the existence of feminism because her aunt said that woman is incapable of making her way which means that a woman cannot realize her dreams. However, Jo March has a solid wish and self-assertion to tell her aunt that she will make her way even though she is a woman. She will prove that a woman has courage amid society's stigma that women are still considered weak in work.



Figure 5. Jo March belief in her writings (2.02.44 minute)

The figure 5 seems to have the courage and confidence to talk to Mr. Dashwood about her writings being read. Based on the setting in this movie, Jo March's speech style shows the existence of feminism because she is very confident and can finally prove that as a woman. She can produce a work that will be published into a novel. Moreover, it is given that the setting in this movie still considers that women cannot be career women other than women who only stay at home and depend on their parents, and the stigma in society that a woman is better off getting married and being a homemaker. However, Jo March proves it through her writings which means she succeeded in breaking the stigma that happens in society in this Little Women movie.

3. Gesture

Gesture is the act or state of moving.



Figure 6. Jo March back to writing a work (1.52.26 minute)

Sit down and start again to write a work, which means that the woman in this movie has strong determination and high spirits. Based on the background in this movie, a woman is considered weak and readily gives up in the face of all situations. Figure 6 contains a feminist sign, such as the gesture section, because Jo March broke all that stigma and proved that as a woman. She is not weak and does not give up on realizing her dream of becoming a writer; even though she uses candles as lights when writing her works when everyone is asleep at night, with all his determination, sits down and goes back to writing.



Figure 7. Jo March received her novel (2.09.24 minute)

Seeing her novel and then holding it means she is pleased to be able to tell her life in a written work according to her dream. Based on the setting of this movie, it is not easy for a woman to work towards pursuing their dreams amid society's stigma that a woman is only suitable for romance, such as marriage and not being a career woman. However, Jo March breaks that stigma and proves it in her writings into a novel that will be published to the public. As for the content of the novel, it is the true story of Jo March's journey with

her three sisters.

4. Expression

Expression is a disclosure or process of expressing or conveying certain feelings, intentions, or ideas.



Figure 8. Jo March disappointment (23.13 minute)

"I've been rejected many times"

Disappointed because her writings had been rejected many times, and even so, she did not give up easily and kept writing. Based on the setting in the movie, there is feminism because Jo March is a woman who has a solid determination to become a famous writer by writing many works. However, her writings are constantly rejected. Also, because the man who checks Jo March's work is not sure, he assumes that a woman will be challenged to become a famous writer and therefore underestimate the writings of a woman. That led to Jo March's disappointment in being rejected several times, but as a woman, she does not give up easily and keeps coming back to write new works.



Figure 9. Jo March happiness (2.07.11 minute)

Happy because her writings about her life are finally printed into a novel, and her dreams come true. Based on the background in the movie, there is an expression sign that indicates the attitude of feminism, which means that Jo March can break the stigma applied in society. That a woman cannot make a career woman and can only be a woman who depends on men,

especially when married. However, Jo March is pleased because she proves it by producing a novel that tells the story of her life with her three sisters that can be an inspiration to others. In other words, she proves that a woman can also be an independent woman with her hard work, making her name famous through her novels.

Based on the analysis above, the researcher found 9 findings for the sign of the reality level of feminism. They were: 1 behaviors, 4 speech styles, 2 gestures, and 2 expressions.

The difference between the results of this research and the results of previous findings is that this research describes in detail what feminism is like in the movie researched through the main character. While the results of the previous findings describe feminism in general because of the background in other findings, such as "The Representation of Women's Characters in Cinderella The Movie" by Octari, H. (2017), resulting feminism in general, namely that women are weak and low quality. Whereas "The Construction of Feminism Reality in the Film" 13 Reason Why: Season 3" (Semiotic Analysis of the Film 13 Reason Why: Season 3) by Harizki, D. (2020), the existence of violence and harassment against women, of course, this is a general description of feminism through the results of this research.

The researcher concludes the previous findings mentioned above in general because they did not discuss the feminism that occurs in society in more detail. It only shows feminism in general that occurs in a society where a woman has low quality, cannot be assertive, and always becomes sexual violence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this reality there is feminism in this Little Women movie such as Jo March is the prominent feminist female character, dares to break the prevailing stigma in society that a woman gives up quickly and is only suitable for romance, such as marriage, and should not pursue their career. Through this character, she proves that a woman has the mind, talent, and confidence to make her way, with the intelligence that should be possessed and honing her talents. Based on the results of the analysis in the Little Women movie using John Fiske's semiotic theory, it can be concluded that there are 9 findings for sign of the reality level of feminism. They were: 1 behaviours, 4 speech styles, 2 gestures, and 2 expressions.

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