



Liberal Feminism In The *Little Women* Movie

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Abstract. *The research objectives are (1) To find out the kinds of gender discrimination experienced by Jo March in the Little Women movie, and (2) To analyze how Jo March represents liberal feminism in the little women movie. The writer uses the dynamic structuralism theory by Mukarovsky. In conducting the study, the writer uses library research. The data in this study were taken from quotations such as dialogues, sentences and phrases in the movie script of Little Women as source of data. The results of the study showed that there are kinds of gender discrimination that occur in Little Women movie are discrimination in society, discrimination in education, discrimination in employment, discrimination in politics and depicting liberal feminism by facing the stereotype of women, she rejects the stereotype by proving that she can live well without marrying a rich man.*

Keywords: *Gender Discrimination, Liberal Feminism, Little Women, Movie.*

Abstrak. Tujuan penelitian adalah (1) Untuk mengetahui macam-macam diskriminasi gender yang dialami oleh Jo March dalam film Little Women, dan (2) Untuk menganalisis bagaimana Jo March merepresentasikan feminisme liberal dalam film little women. Penulis menggunakan teori strukturalisme dinamis yang dikemukakan oleh Mukarovsky. Dalam melakukan penelitian, penulis menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan. Data dalam penelitian ini diambil dari kutipan-kutipan seperti dialog, kalimat dan frasa dalam naskah film Little Women sebagai sumber data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat macam-macam diskriminasi gender yang terjadi dalam film Little Women yaitu diskriminasi dalam masyarakat, diskriminasi dalam pendidikan, diskriminasi dalam pekerjaan, diskriminasi dalam politik dan menggambarkan feminisme liberal dengan menghadapi stereotip perempuan, ia menolak stereotip tersebut. dengan membuktikan bahwa dia bisa hidup sejahtera tanpa menikah dengan pria kaya.

Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi Gender, Feminisme Liberal, Little Women, Film.

INTRODUCTION

Women have always been viewed as weak figures, both at work and in terms of self-image. A kid demands a woman from birth, thus we can conclude that a man requires a woman and vice versa. According to (Allanana & Makama, 2013), one group believes that women have inferior status and power since their roles are limited to the domestic sphere, whereas men's roles are more visible in the public sphere. Women are viewed as having only one eye by society, particularly patriarchy.

As time passes, there is pushback from women who believe that they are not only born to carry out their nature but can also learn to work, lead, and carry out obligations like men. This is now referred to as the feminist movement. Feminism is a way of understanding how women are oppressed (Tyson, 2001). This means that feminism can help prevent bullying by knowing how women experience it. Suwastini later defined it as a belief, movement, and endeavor to fight for gender equality in a patriarchal culture.

The movie is one of fiction works in oral form that commonly played around two hours on television or cinemas. Rabiger (2009) defines that movie is a medium in a form of videos that are started or produced in a real idea, then it must contain entertainment and meaning elements inside it. Through the movie people could get more than one artistic element; they are visual and sound or audio. Through visual elements, people who watch the movie would take the lesson from the content of the movie that is delivered by characters, because the movie is a reflection of human life.

Little Women is a 2019 American coming-of-age period drama movie written and directed by Greta Gerwig. It is the seventh movie adaptation of the 1868 novel of the same name by Louisa May Alcott. It chronicles the lives of the March sister in Concord, Massachusetts, during the 19th century. Little Women movie tells about four sisters, namely Margaret March (Meg) who has a beautiful face, Josephine March (Jo) the boyish girl who likes reading and writing and wants to be a famous writer, Elizabeth March (Beth) who has a shy manner and like to play piano, and Amy March (Amy) who like art. Meg and her sisters struggle to survive despite their different personalities.

The study focuses on liberal feminism. Liberal feminism is a feminist movement that advocates for women's individual freedom in politics, economics, education, and society. It might also be known as the first feminist movement. Liberal feminism is concerned with giving women the freedom to pursue their ambitions depending on their talents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher conducted a study entitled “*Little Women movie*”. This study used descriptive research, to describe the discrimination found in *Little Women* movie. It categorized as library research. According to Zed (2004) library research is a qualitative research where the researcher deal directly with the data and number not from the field or eyewitnesses and the data of library study is ready made. This research method include data sources, data collection, and data analysis. The process of observations or collect the data in library research is conducted by the researchers interact with library materials, such as journals, articles, etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dynamic Structuralism

Dynamic structuralism which views that literary works are a process of communication and semiotic facts consisting of signs, structures, and values. Literary works are nothing but signs that gain meaning through the awareness of the reader, so that literary works need to be returned to the author, the community as a background. produce it, as well as the reader as the recipient.

Structural Analysis aims to unpack and explain as carefully, as precisely, as much detail, and in-depth and entanglement all elements and aspects of literature that together produce a comprehensive meaning. Teeuw (1984) In dynamic structuralism, according Mukarovsky, the chain of relationship is between four factors: the creator, literature, readers, and reality. Manifested as a sign of literary works in its intrinsic structure, in conjunction with the reality, society, creators, and readers (Teeuw, 1984). According to the previous description, before using dynamic structuralism to the study of small women, the writer must consider structural characteristics such as story, character, place, and topic. Based on these factors, the researcher will discuss in *Little Women*, the main character exemplifies liberal feminism and discusses female social formation.

Coming-of-Age period Drama

A coming-of-age narrative is a literary, theatrical, film, and video game genre that focuses on the development of a protagonist from childhood to adulthood, also known as "coming of age". Coming-of-age stories frequently emphasize talk or internal monologue over action and are set in the past. Coming-of-age stories are often about teenagers. Bildungsroman is a subgenre of coming-of-age stories. Coming-of-age stories typically revolve around emotional changes in the characters. Sociolinguistics is concerned with the interaction between language and the context in which it is used, according to Holmes J. (2013:1). Conversational language style focuses on the social messages gained throughout the interaction. As a result, utilizing linguistic style in public communication helps speakers and listeners comprehend each other without bothering them personally.

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on gender (Maroto et al., 2019). Gender discrimination can be in many ways. It is based on her or his genders; they are suffering from it in several causes. Especially for women, they are mostly getting discrimination in several aspects such as education, workplace, marriage and other things. The position of women in society mostly is controlled by men and women do not have freedom of their life. Women have struggled for

equality and against oppression for centuries. This is including of freedom of living without violence and discrimination.

Kind of gender discrimination:

1. Discrimination in Society

Discrimination in Society is frequently used to assess the bad or real behavior of women since society is built on a binding cultural system and the customs and processes that regulate women to be deemed appropriate based on the size of society. People hold different points of view, and they frequently believe they are correct. Women's views and roles have always been regarded as inferior to men's. The fact demonstrates that there are still community attitudes that restrict the movement of space, particularly among women in life.

2. Discrimination in Education

Discrimination in Education is discrimination that occurs within the scope of education. Where everyone or all people can go to school."Women are treated unfairly when it comes to gender, differences between women and men, women who are looked down on by men, acceptance, equipment, and discipline. Women are treated unequally when it is matter of admissions, recruitments, financial aid, grading, housing, classroom assignment, counseling, guidance, academic programs, vocational education, and discipline.

3. Discrimination in Employment

This is a huge difficulty that women encounter in the workplace. They are denied basic working rights and frequently harassed by their coworkers. Because they are ladies, they are not assigned jobs that they are capable of performing. Even bosses occasionally treat women unfairly. In many workplaces, women are the minority. As a result, women are constantly under pressure in the workplace. There is still a belief that disparities in the quality of human capital, such as education and physical aptitude, result in varying levels of production. There is also the idea that women are weak and always rank lower than males.

4. Discrimination in Politic

Talking about politics is never ending. Politics continues to flow andmove. Not only men who can move in the political field, but women also have their rights. The struggle for women's emancipation has led women to create equal rights between women and men. Emancipation is a form of the struggle forequality of women's rights from injustice and oppression.

Liberal Feminism

Feminism is concerned with the equality of men and women in social, political, and economic life without regard to their gender. Discrimination between the sexes frequently places women in an unfavorable scenario in which they are depicted as weak and inept, and they think their main aptitude is in domestic labor. This societal discrimination placed women in a disadvantaged society, which we dubbed patriarchy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research is using qualitative approach. According to Creswell (1994) qualitative study is a method to explore or understanding the meaning of a group or individual from social or human problem through natural setting. Generally this method can be used to analyze the life of society, history, behavior, concept, phenomenon, social problem, etc. It focuses on the depth of the data and not abundance the data obtained. Qualitative research using narrative description and interpretation in order to gain depth understanding than statistical analysis of numeric data (Ary et al., 2010). This is the reason why a qualitative researcher must have abroad perception because the data collected is subjective and the instrument as main tool of data collection is the researcher-self (Borg and Gall, 1998).

Data and Data Source

In this research, the data are the utterances or dialogue, the storyline, and the characters in little women movie. The secondary data for the research are taken from the movie script, articles, books, thesis, online journals, and research papers that related to the materials.

Data Collection

Creswell (2014) defines data collection as the researchers' strategy in collecting information to discuss about issues related to the data required. The information can be obtained from scientific books, literary works, research reports, scientific frameworks, thesis, encyclopedia, or another sources. All of gathered data should be reliable to answer the research problems. Ary et al (2010) states that the most common data collection method used in qualitative research are (1) observation (2) interviewing, (3) and document or artifact analysis. In this study, the researcher using document or artifact analysis to collect the data. Documentation method or artifact analysis is the data sources used to complete the research, both in the form of written sources, films, images (photos), and monumental works, all of which provide information for the research process.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data use the theory of Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) concept. The writer collected all the data needed to analyze the data. The writer identified data related to Jo's character in little women movie. The writer organized data and eliminated unnecessary parts through data condensation. The researcher classifies and makes words or sentences about the character of main character in little women movie.

AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY, WORKS, AND WORKS SUMMARY

Author's Biography

Greta Gerwig, in full Greta Celeste Gerwig, (born August 4, 1983, Sacramento, California, U.S), American actress, writer, and director who was known for the radiant artlessness of her performances in small independent movies before embarking on a successful career as a filmmaker.

Gerwig was born in Sacramento, California, and grew up in the River Park neighborhood. She is the daughter of Christine (née Sauer), an OB-GYN nurse, and Gordon Gerwig, who worked for a credit union on small business loans. She is close to her parents and they make an appearance in Frances Ha as her character's parents. She has an older brother, a landscape architect, and a sister, a manager at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Gerwig has German, Irish, and English ancestry.

Author's Works

Greta Gerwig wrote several movies that were quite famous, like Hannah Takes the Stairs (2007), Nights and Weekends (2008), Northern Comfort (2010), Frances Ha (2012), Mistress America (2015), Lady Bird (2017), Little Women (2019), Barbie (2023). There are also several movies, television series, and also dramas written, directed, and acted by Greta Gerwig which the writer does not mention.

Summary of Author's Work

Greta Gerwig first garnered attention after working on and appearing in several mumblecore movies. Between 2006 and 2009, she appeared in a number of films by Joe Swanberg, some of which she co-wrote or co-directed, including Hannah Takes the Stairs (2007) and Nights and Weekends (2008).

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis

The writer finds that four kinds of gender discrimination experienced by the character in the little women movie it can be explanation below:

Gender Discrimination in Dialogue Script

1. Discrimination in Society

Jo : Should I tell my friend, that you'll take another if she had one better than this?

Mr. Dashwood : We'll look at it. Tell her to make it short and spicy. And if the main character's a girl make sure she's married by the end. (casually) Or dead, either way." (Gerwig, 2019, p.3)

Data above shows that is an illustration of the strong stereotypes attached to women in the 19th century. The dimension text appears with a vocabulary about the strong role of men in decision making. The power of the editor determines how Jo March's novel ends. There is a resistance movement actually shown by Jo to keep the characters in her book from getting married. However, the surrounding conditions did not support his desire. Society wants women to be able to marry or rather die than have to be alone. Director Greta Gerwig emphasizes that every individual has the right to improve his abilities as a human being. She also wants someone's freedom according to the qualities possessed without having to limit his movements. The conversation between Jo and the novel editor becomes a battle between idealism and social reality. The situation of 19th-century society in the United States is described as still in a patriarchal system. Political dominance is also held by men. The editor has the right to change how the storyline of Jo's novel is so that it can be accepted by readers.

2. Discrimination in Education

John : Yes, women being taught at home is much more proper, I believe.

Meg : Only because the schools for women are so poor.

Mr. Brooke : Indeed, quite right."
(Gerwig, 2019, p.43).

The data above shows that the conversation that occurs in the scene tells that Amy was asked by a friend to paint a teacher at her school. However, Amy was punished by being beaten on the hand because her teacher did not accept being painted. At that time, not many women attended school, while the quality was not very good, so it was better for women to study at home. The presence of words that describe that women are more deserving of studying at home.

3. Discrimination in Politic

Dashwood : If you end your delightful book with your heroine a spinster, no one will buy it. It won't be worth printing. Jo shifts. She considers.

Jo : I suppose marriage has always been an economic proposition. Even in fiction.

Dashwood : It's romance!

Jo : It's mercenary."

The data above shows that what Jo said about marriage is a common thing for women. Women cannot get out of the shackles of men who want women to only be in the domestic area and take care of the household. Women who have families will be considered normal because they are in accordance with the prevailing system. However, when there are women who try to get rid of these stereotypes, they are considered unnatural. Jo felt that she was different from women in general who would end up getting married.

Liberal Feminism in Monologue Script

1. Facing the stereotype of women

Jo : there are precious few ways for women to make a good living.

(Gerwig, 2019,p.38).

The data above shows that Jo March is a tough person and different from others. Her life principles make her open-minded to think that women can do anything no matter her gender is. Therefore, there is a scene where Jo's best friend, Laurie, confesses his feeling and wants to marry her in their early twenties.

2. Independent and Smart Person who has Value

Beth : (cuddling up to Jo) That's what you want too, isn't it Jo?

To be famous writer?" (Gerwig, 2019, p.26).

The data above shows that Beth tries to make sure Jo still wants to be a writer by asking Jo the question above. Even though she is not sure but Beth still believes in her and still being a supportive sister, Jo shows her the work for their performance at the Christmas gathering.

Findings

In this research, the writer analyzed how Jo March the character represents liberal feminism in the little women movie.

Liberal Feminism as the Struggle for Gender Discrimination

In the context of Jo March's character in the "Little Women" movie, liberal feminism can be seen as the lens through which her struggle against gender discrimination is portrayed. Jo's journey and challenges reflect the key principles of liberal feminism:

1. Pursuit of Individual Ambitions:

Jo's fervent desire to become a successful writer and make a name for herself aligns with liberal feminism's emphasis on women's right to pursue their own passions and ambitions. Her refusal to conform to societal expectations of women's roles showcases her determination to define her identity beyond traditional gender norms.

2. Rejection of Gender Stereotypes:

Jo's rejection of traditional femininity and disdain for activities that are considered "ladylike" challenge prevailing gender stereotypes. Her choice to wear pants, engage in rough play, and resist conforming to beauty standards reflects her rebellion against limiting expectations.

3. Independence and Autonomy:

Jo's decision to maintain her independence and not marry for convenience underscores her pursuit of personal autonomy, which is a core principle of liberal feminism. Her aspiration for a career and self-sufficiency demonstrates her belief in her own capabilities regardless of her gender.

4. Equal Intellectual Capacity:

Jo's intellectual prowess and passion for writing demonstrate her belief in women's equal intellectual capacity, challenging the societal notion that women are intellectually inferior. Her interactions with male characters, especially her debates with Laurie and Professor Bhaer, highlight her confidence in expressing her opinions and insights.

5. Professional Fulfillment

Jo's dedication to her writing and her efforts to get published illustrate her quest for professional fulfillment, a key aspect of liberal feminism. Her refusal to compromise her creative integrity for commercial success showcases her commitment to her craft.

6. Support for Women's Solidarity

Jo's strong bond with her sisters and her efforts to create a supportive environment within the family reflect the value of women's solidarity and mutual empowerment, central to liberal feminism. Her discussions with her sisters about their dreams and desires demonstrate the importance of open dialogue and shared goals.

7. Acknowledgment of Inequality

Jo's frustrations with the limited opportunities available to women in the publishing world and her experiences with rejection highlight her awareness of gender discrimination and the need for change.

Coming-of-Age Period Drama as Means of Womens Liberation

"*Little Women*" is a classic novel written by Louisa May Alcott and has been adapted into several movies over the years, with the most recent adaptation directed by Greta Gerwig in 2019. The story is a prime example of a coming-of-age period drama that also explores themes of women's liberation. Here's how "Little Women" serves as a means of women's liberation in its narrative:

Setting and Characters: The story is set during the Civil War era in the United States, where traditional gender roles and societal expectations for women were prevalent. The March sisters, Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy, are at the center of the story. Each sister has distinct dreams and ambitions that challenge the limited roles assigned to women in that time.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the explanation about it can be conclude that Gender discrimination is a variety of acts of injustice or discrimination originating from gender beliefs. Gender inequality often occurs everywhere, this is related to various factors. Starting from economic, social, cultural and other needs. Gender issues have existed since ancient times. A deep rooted culture is that women only do things in their homes, making this condition a hereditary habit that is difficult to eliminate. Many consider gender differences or discrimination in the film to be common and general so that they do not feel discriminated against. The truth is, humans have equal standing. Men and women. Both are created in the same degree, dignity and dignity. Even if they have different functions, they are all so that they complement each other.

Liberal feminism wants equality between women and men in the educational, economic and social fields. Jo fought for schools for girls, was able to become a writer who made money and was able to actualize herself in the public space with the profession she lived.

This dimension shows that the language used by Jo March is very strong. Jo used phrases like wanting to stay single, wanting to fend for himself, making money for himself. The discourse that emerged led to the creation of film texts that adapted to the social conditions of society at that time. An example is the gender inequality that occurred at that time, especially regarding unequal education, employment, the labeling of women who were not allowed to actualize themselves in public spaces.

Political conditions do not fully accommodate changes in the viewpoint of society that has been built about women trying to fight for their rights. A society that still adheres to a patriarchal culture does not accommodate women's desire to be the same.

SUGGESTION

Based on the analysis in the research, the writer has suggestion related to this research are, this film is very interesting to watch, because depicts human life presents the usual events experienced by human, especially in adult women. This movie has other characters that can be analyzed with other theories and concept. Thus, the writer suggests to other researcher there are many things the writer can analyze from this movie, such as about characterization, traditional, moral, value, the relationship between men and women that time.

The writer suggest that this thesis will give contribution, knowledge and creativity to make literary work for reader, especially for students of English Literature Department.

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