

REPRESENTATION OF FEMINISM ON THE CHARACTER OF ENOLA HOLMES IN THE ENOLA HOLMES FILM: JOHN FISKE'S SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The popularity of film as an object in literary studies creates many adaptations of literary works from the written form into a film. The meaning of the film as a representation of the reality of society is different from the film which is merely a reflection of reality. As a reflection of reality, films only transfer reality to the screen without changing that reality. Meanwhile, as a representation of reality, films shape and re-present reality based on the codes, conventions, and ideologies of culture. The Enola Holmes film is the result of the novel by Nancy Springer, namely The Case of the Missing Marquess: An Enola Holmes Mystery which was later made into a film by Herry Bradbeer. The film was set around the Victorian era in the nineteenth century in England. The purpose of this study is to determine the meaning of the semiotic code regarding feminism at the level of reality and the level of ideology. The research approach used is a qualitative approach with John Fiske's semiotic analysis. The results of the research on the representation of feminism on the character of Enola Holmes in this semiotic analysis show that (1) the representation of feminism at the reality level includes appearance, costume, make-up, the way of speaking, expression, attitude, behavior, environment, and movement, (2) representation of feminism in the ideological level, which is represented by the flow of liberal feminism where discrimination against women is treated unfairly as in the character of Enola Holmes.

Keywords: *Enola Holmes; Feminism; Film; John Fiske; Semiotic*

Abstrak

Popularitas film sebagai sebuah objek dalam kajian sastra menciptakan banyaknya adaptasi karya sastra dari bentuk tulisan ke dalam sebuah film. Dalam beberapa dekade, sederet film yang sukses secara komersil maupun apresiasi akademis merupakan hasil transformasi dari karya sastra, khususnya novel. Makna film sebagai representasi dari realitas masyarakat berbeda dengan film yang

sekedar sebagai refleksi dari realitas. Sebagai refleksi dari realitas, film hanya sekedar memindahkan realitas ke layar tanpa mengubah realitas itu. Sementara itu, sebagai representasi dari realitas, film membentuk dan menghadirkan kembali realitas berdasarkan kode-kode, konvensi-konvensi dan ideologi dari kebudayaan. Film *Enola Holmes* merupakan hasil dari novel karya Nancy Springer, yakni *The Case of the Missing Marquess: An Enola Holmes Mystery* yang kemudian diangkat menjadi film oleh Herry Bradbeer. Film ini mengambil latar sekitar zaman Victoria pada abad ke sembilan belas di Inggris. Pada masa itu, kaum perempuan masih terikat dengan standar sosial, stigma dan diskriminasi. Isu feminisme tentu menarik perhatian karena selama ini perempuan sering digambarkan hanya sebagai objek narasi yang pasif, pemeran sampingan, bahkan objek erotis utama dalam film. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui makna kode semiotika mengenai feminisme dalam level realitas dan level ideologi. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis semiotika John Fiske. Hasil penelitian representasi feminisme pada tokoh Enola Holmes dalam analisis semiotika ini menunjukkan bahwa (1) representasi feminisme pada level realitas mencakup penampilan, kostum, tata rias, cara berbicara, ekspresi, sikap, perilaku, lingkungan, dan gerakan, (2) representasi feminisme pada level ideologi yakni terrepresentasi mewakili aliran feminisme liberal di mana diskriminasi perempuan diperlakukan tidak adil seperti pada tokoh Enola Holmes.

Kata kunci: Enola Holmes; Feminism; Film; John Fiske; Semiotic

1. Introduction

Film studies in literature and language studies have an inseparable relationship. The film is an audio-visual communication medium to convey a certain message to the audience. Film as an art that has a very strong influence can enrich one's life experience and give deeper meaning to aspects of life. The film can be considered as a visual medium that has entertainment, artistic, and communication values. The film is built on a complex sign system, such as images, sounds, words, music, and the process of making it, and so on. There are also signs in literature and language. This sign is often referred to as semiotics. Semiotics according to Ferdinand de Saussure is defined as a science that examines the life of signs

in society (Sobur, 2004:12), while Charles Sanders Peirce limits semiotics as a formal doctrine of signs. Thus, the basis of semiotics is the concept of signs.

The film is a popular medium and often used by the public so that films have become a part of human life. The story in a film is packaged in such a way that the message carried can be conveyed to the audience. The messages or values contained in the film can affect the audience both cognitively, affectively, and conatively. Graeme Turner (in Sobur, 2013:127) refuses to see the film as a reflection of society. Turner argued that the meaning of the film as a representation of the reality of society is different from film as merely a reflection of reality. As a reflection of

reality, films simply transfer reality to the screen without changing that reality. Meanwhile, as a representation of reality, films shape and re-present reality based on the codes, conventions, and ideologies of culture. However, a view that developed in England in the 1970s and influenced feminist film theory says that representation is not always a reflection of reality, neither true nor distorted, but rather the product of an active process of selecting and presenting, organizing and shaping, making things that show meaning are called marking practices (Jackson & Jones, 2009:367). This marking practice is related to the image of women in a film that does function as a sign, but a sign that gets its meaning not from the reality of women's lives, but men's desires and fantasies (Jackson & Jones, 2009: 369). It is not surprising that women can only function as narrative objects and signify passivity, even women also function as the main erotic objects in films. Siswanti Suryandari in her article entitled Gender Inequality in Indonesian Film (2010) said that in Indonesia, whether we realize it or not, most of her films still depict gender inequality. Not only in Indonesia but the world of Hollywood cinema as well. Women in Hollywood still feel under-represented in these films. The involvement of women in Hollywood films is indeed relatively small and may often be described as a figure who only emphasizes physical beauty. But this can be a motivation for women to play an active role behind the scenes and make films by portraying women who are smart, strong, and tough as shown by the character Enola Holmes in the film *Enola Holmes* (2020).

Enola Holmes is a mystery adventure story that introduces the fiercest competition between the world's greatest detective (Sherlock Holmes)

and his teenage sister (Enola Holmes). The film is set in England in 1884 when the world is on the verge of major change. A girl who has just turned sixteen named Enola Holmes (Millie Bobby Brown) finds that her mother (Helena Bonham Carter) has mysteriously disappeared. The mother left various strange gifts but gave no clue as to where or why she had gone. Previously Enola enjoyed a happy childhood, now she has to be under the care of her two older brothers, Sherlock (Henry Cavill) and Mycroft (Sam Claflin), who are not happy with her existence and determined to send Enola to an all-girls school that educates her students to behave and act like a woman at that time. Enola refuses to follow their wishes and chooses to run away to find her mother in London. In the middle of her journey, Enola suddenly becomes involved in a mystery related to a young nobleman (Louis Partridge) who is also on the run. Unbeknownst to Enola, her detective instincts immediately worked extraordinarily when she tried to uncover a conspiracy that threatened history, even defeating her older brother, Sherlock, who was a famous detective at the time. The character of Enola Holmes is described as an active, cheerful, smart, and adventurous woman.

Researchers use semiotic analysis because films are generally built with many signs. The signs include various sign systems that work well together to achieve the desired effect. Because the film consists of signs that form a system, a film can be studied using semiotic analysis. According to Fiske (2012: 66), semiotics has three areas of study, namely (1) the sign itself, (2) the codes or systems in which signs are organized, and (3) the culture in which codes and signs operate. Based on the descriptions above, the researcher is interested in further

research on the depiction of female characters that may represent feminism. This Enola Holmes film represents feminism which is studied using John Fiske's semiotic analysis. The aims and objectives of this study include: (1) to find out the meaning at the level of reality of feminism in the Enola Holmes character, (2) to find out the meaning at the level of representation of feminism in the Enola Holmes character, and (3) to find out how the meaning at the ideological level of feminism in the character of Enola Holmes.

2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative method using John Fiske's semiotic analysis. The type of research used in this research is descriptive analysis. The researcher tries to describe the author's perspective in terms of elements of feminism which is reflected in the character of Enola Holmes in the film Enola Holmes. In this study, researcher used documentation studies as primary data collection and literature studies as secondary data collection. Through documentation techniques, the authors obtain various information from written sources or documents available to informants in the form of cultural heritage, works of art, and works of thought (Satori & Komariah, 2011: 148). The primary data source in this study is the film Enola Holmes. Before analyzing the data, the researcher first selected the scenes based on the Fiske modification Propp narrative function which was grouped into six parts, namely preparation, complication, transference, struggle, return, and recognition. Preparation is defined as the initial stage in the film where the characters are introduced along with the situation of the problems that occur. The complication is interpreted as the stage of the problem obtained by

the character. Transference is interpreted as the stage of character transfer in carrying out the mission. The struggle is interpreted as the stage of the struggle of the hero character facing the villain. Return is defined as the stage where the hero can complete his mission well. Recognition is interpreted as the final stage where the hero gets recognition and appreciation for his struggles (Fiske, 2001: 135-136). The six sections represent three sequences, namely the prologue (preparation and complication), ideological content (transference and struggle), and epilogue (return and recognition). Then, after the scenes were selected, the writer analyzed them using John Fiske's television codes which were divided into two levels, namely the reality level (appearance, costume, make-up, speech, expression, attitude, behavior, environment, and movement), and ideological level.

It is hoped that with this data analysis technique, researcher can present feminism to the character of Enola Holmes in the film Enola Holmes, played by Millie Bobby Brown. Data analysis in this study is the paradigm and syntagma in the scene that presents the ideology of feminism in the Enola Holmes film. The paradigm is a collection of signs from which selection is carried out and only one unit from that collection is selected (Fiske, 2012: 34). Syntagma is a collection of paradigms. If paradigm is a vocabulary in grammar, then a syntagma is a sentence consisting of a collection of vocabulary. Researcher only take two stages of semiotic level from John Fiske's The Codes of Television theory, namely (1) the reality stage and (2) the ideological stage of the three existing stages. The reason for choosing only two stages of the theory is because the researcher tries to elaborate on the topic or title

taken regarding the Representation of Feminism in the Enola Holmes Character in the Enola Holmes Film: John Fiske's Semiotic Analysis. The focus of research "representation" should not repeat the words from the title of the research, because it can be described in reality and ideology only. The representation stage contains technical codes, such as cameras, lighting, editing, music, sound. This is already included in the level of reality. Although the researcher uses John Fiske's The Codes of Television theory which tends to be used to analyze semiotics at the level of communication science, the researcher still leads to the level of literary and language analysis.

3. Result and Discussion

The results of the research on the representation of feminism in the character of Enola Holmes from the film Enola Holmes based on John Fiske's semiotic analysis are in the form of a description of the depiction of feminism from several scenes in the film. Data acquisition was taken using semiotic analysis using the theory of The Codes of Television by John Fiske (in Vera 2014:35). Based on the data obtained, there are two research results, namely the level of reality and the level of feminism ideology. The following is the code for the level of reality found in the character of Enola Holmes.

3.1. Appearance

Appearance is a representation of self-image that emanates from a person and is a means of communication between oneself and others. Appearance is how you see and treat yourself when others judge. In this film entitled Enola Holmes, the character of Enola

Holmes describes the appearance of girls in the nineteenth century in England. This is evidenced by the initial narration of the film and the first impression that the character of Enola Holmes gives to the audience. Enola's character has a middle to upper social strata with evidence of the clothes she wears, the house she lives in, and the bicycle she often rides. This scene is included in the preparation function which represents the prologue sequence in the Enola Holmes film. In addition, in the recognition stage, there is the reality of feminism from the appearance aspect when Enola often disguises herself as a man. This is due to cover up her identity as a woman to make it easier to achieve her goals in carrying out the mission. In addition, this was also done by Enola so that her two brothers, Mycroft and Sherlock, would not find her. Especially from Mycroft who wanted Enola to enter an all-girls school so that her appearance changed to be like a woman in the nineteenth century England.

3.2. Costume

Costumes can refer to the way of dressing or the style of clothing that a person wears in a theatrical performance, masquerade party, or a film show where costumes can indicate an economic class or a certain period. The costumes in the Enola Holmes film also show the reality of feminism depicted by the character Enola Holmes, which is shown through Enola's mindset towards her view of corsets for women. In one scene, Enola refuses to wear the corset she should be wearing like most women at the time. The corset is used to shape the hips and support the chest. However, Enola has her view that the hips are only a support for the legs and do not need to be strengthened with a

corset because when using a corset, Enola considers that the corset is a symbol of oppression for them as women who are forced to wear it. It reflects that she refuses to follow the culture of European society with her beauty standards. In addition, in another scene, Enola uses a red dress whose red color itself means a symbol of courage, strength symbolizes joy, and also gives passion and energy to do something (Mahnke, 1996). Beneath her red dress, Enola was wearing a corset that she did not want to wear. When wearing the dress, she stands straight and tends to puff out her chest, showing that she is confident and brave. This is included in the complication function.

3.3. Make-up

Make-up is an activity to change the appearance of the actual original form with the help of cosmetic materials and tools. The term make-up is more often intended to change the shape of the face, even though the whole body can be decorated. The make-up of the Enola Holmes character in the film Enola Holmes is unusual from other films because her makeup changes depending on what character she is playing in the film. She can look usual like a normal girl. However, when she escaped from Ferndell Hall, Enola Holmes' makeup changed to match her role, which at that time was disguised as a man. Likewise, when disguised as a gardener, a shabby newspaper seller, and so on. This makes the character of Enola Holmes has a variety of characters that can be played in one film. Enola's masquerade as a boy worked because of her supportive make-up. The reality of feminism created in the nineteenth century in Europe is reflected through the disguise of a male character played by

the character Enola Holmes. Even though it deviates from the stigma of women in society itself. The transference function in the ideological content stage and the recognition function in the epilogue stage are reflected through make-up which influences the deepening of the character of Enola Holmes.

3.4. The Way of Speaking

How to speak is an oral language activity or communication carried out by humans. Speaking is the ability to pronounce articulation sounds or words to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The character of Enola Holmes in the film Enola Holmes has a good way of speaking when she disguises herself so that no one can expose her. Enola easily controlled herself so as not to be intimidated by the Viscount's statement calling herself strange. She tried to cover up her gender with sarcasm. This is included in the transference function as the stage of transferring or disguised characters in carrying out missions.

3.5. Expression

Expression is disclosure, the process of stating, showing, or stating intentions, ideas, feelings, and so on. Another meaning of the expression is a facial expression that shows one's feelings. In one scene, Enola Holmes is in danger of being caught by a hitman hired to find and kill Tewkesbury. Through the displayed code expression, Enola still tried to fight and escape from the killer. She did not feel afraid, smiled a little, and started to position her hands to be ready to fight with the villain. It illustrates that Enola is not afraid even though she is a woman. At the age of sixteen, this

young woman was able to face an assassin to save herself. Even though Enola wore a red dress that should be used to show the elegance of a woman, but the dress did not prevent Enola from carrying out the martial arts moves she had learned since childhood.

3.6. Attitude and Behaviour

Behavior is defined as an action and reaction of organisms to their environment, this means that new behavior will be realized when something is needed to cause a response called a stimulus, and thus a certain stimulus will produce a certain behavior as well. Enola's attitude that grew on her mother's upbringing from a young age influenced on Enola's perspective on the world and her life. Enola had confidence in her abilities even though she was a little different from the other girls. The right way of thinking and analyzing the situation makes Enola an intellectual girl. Eudoria (Enola Holmes' mother) often teaches Enola about word games to train Enola to be able to arrange the available letters into other or new words if the letters are shuffled again. Through quick hand movements in selecting the letters, Eudoria and Enola are seen as careful and perceptive women. It turned out that the word game was very useful for Enola in finding or solving puzzles for her mother's disappearance. Besides word games, playing chess is an activity that Eudoria and Enola do. Playing chess is often associated with one's intellect because this game requires extraordinary thinking power. Enola also has a talent for martial arts that her mother taught her since childhood. While other women were taught embroidery, knitting, and manners, Enola was taught science, martial arts,

playing chess, and reading all the books at Frendell Hall by her mother. This is what makes Enola's attitude and behavior considered different, unique, or strange by the people around her who at that time rarely found a girl like her.

3.7. Environment

The environment is everything that is around humans that affect the development of human life either directly or indirectly. In the film *Enola Holmes*, the environment also affects the character of Enola in all his actions. The city of Ferndell Hall was the environment that shaped Enola's personality at that time. This small town in England is where Enola was born, grew up, and learned all the lessons that ordinary women did not get it. Enola was taught about feminism by her mother from an early age. This is marked by the action of Mrs. Eudoria (Enola's mother) who made her daughter read all the books in the Ferndell Hall Library, such as Shakespeare, Locke, Encyclopedia, Thackeray, and Essays of Mary Wollstonecraft. Eudoria also has the book "The Subjection of Women" by John Stuart Mill on feminism. Since childhood, Eudoria always taught Enola several lessons every day. Starting with history in the morning, physics and fitness after lunch, and after that physical combat. The environment of the City of London illustrates the condition of feminism at that time. It was the center of civilization, the center of civilized society, music, literature, and luxury goods. When Enola went to London which is the capital of England, Edith gave a pretty strong message by saying that it is not easy and you have to be strong to survive in a big city. In London Enola also hones survival

skills with the intelligence she has to find her mother. While at Basilwether Hall, the territory and hereditary home of Lord Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether, Enola uncovers injustices to the Viscount and irregularities in the implementation of the Reform Act which has not been approved by the government due to suffrage considerations. Therefore, the environment greatly influences Enola's thoughts and actions towards everything, especially feminism.

3.8. Movement

Movement is an act, behavior, or action taken by humans throughout their lives to achieve certain goals. The actions taken by Eudoria Vernet Holmes (Enola's mother) together with her friends were a movement against political policies at that time. Since she was a teenager, Mrs. Eudoria has had beliefs about women's rights, against stigma, and discrimination against women. The rebellion against women's rights planned by Mrs. Enola is an act of feminism. In addition, the invitation "Women's Suffrage, Votes for Women, Make Your Voices Heard" found by Enola in a warehouse shows the understanding of liberal feminism because of discrimination against women who are treated unfairly in politics. The absence of justice for women in society and not having equal opportunities with men to vote makes feminism increasingly evident in this film. At that time, voting rights were only reserved for men with higher education. This is what made Enola's mother and her friends carry out a feminist movement and made Enola feel that she had to solve the mystery. Through Enola's thinking ability and intelligence, she was able to find the location of the armory that was created by Eudoria and her organization.

The results of several sequences also see that from the level of reality, feminism shows certain ideological codes that refer to several ideologies. The sequence shows the problems faced. Through analysis, the researcher finds that the Enola Holmes film contains the ideology of feminism, by raising issues in the name of patriarchal ideology and the movement of feminists against patriarchy. The character of Enola in the film Enola Holmes shows several actions that are conveyed through a series of scenes and dialogues that reinforce gender discrimination. Data acquisition was taken using semiotic analysis using the theory of The Codes of Television by John Fiske (in Vera 2014:35). This film depicts the limitations of women's freedom in nineteenth-century Europe. The information that director Harry Bradbeer wants to convey through the film Enola Holmes is something that clashes with existing values and norms. Gender discrimination becomes a prison or becomes a barrier to a human's freedom in this case is limited by gender between men and women. Gender discrimination which is interpreted in the film Enola Holmes is on the character of Enola Holmes. In the film, it is described that Enola's first brother (Mycroft Holmes) has a way of thinking that thinks that women must have manners and follow the norms of that time. Not only that, Mycroft has a perspective that women must look elegant. This can be seen in the scene when Enola Holmes picks up Mycroft Holmes and Sherlock Holmes at the Ferndell Hall train station. Mycroft looked at Enola with a surprised and felt disgusted by Enola's disheveled appearance. Evidenced by Mycroft's dialogue, "*Oh my. Look at you. You're such a mess. Where are your hats and gloves?*" from Mycroft's dialogue devoted to Enola, it is seen that Mycroft views women with

European standards of beauty in the eighteenth century. Through this evidence, Enola gets gender discrimination from her brother from the way he looks. Enola told Mycroft that she once had a hat, but it made her head itch and she was uncomfortable wearing it. Enola also never had gloves since childhood, because since childhood she was given the provision of a free soul by her mother, Eudoria. The scene depicts the unfair treatment of the character Enola Holmes from Mycroft Holmes when Enola is forced to attend the Miss Harrison Girls' School. Enola needs to be disciplined by teaching her manners, and women's ways of thinking to be accepted in society. Mycroft wants to shape and organize Enola so that her life does not deviate like her mother. Enola dislike Mycroft's plan to send her to the school. Therefore, Enola Holmes decided to look for clues to find his mother. In the end, Enola fled from Ferndell Hall to London to find her missing mother. Researcher see that feminism emerges through the environment and behavior. The environment that supports the form of feminism in the character of Enola Holmes is Ferndell Hall, London, and Basilwether Hall. The behavior that illustrates the feminism of the character Enola Holmes is when she runs away from her home in Ferndell Hall to London to avoid her sister's plan to want Enola to go to an all-girls school and when she disguises herself as a boy to carry out her mission. In addition, the form of feminism depicted in the film Enola Holmes is about the way Enola thinks when she makes decisions. The dominant feminism in the Enola Holmes film is liberal. Feminism is motivated by a dominant patriarchal culture and gender discrimination. As Tong (2010:2) said, "*Gender justice can start with ourselves.*" This seems

similar to Eudoria's message to Enola Holmes in a letter that reads "*Our future is up to us*". The character education was given by Eudoria when Enola was a child to form a person who described the figure of an independent and intellectual woman. To be successful in society, women should have the same opportunities as men, depicted when Enola Holmes helped the Viscount to uncover the truth in Basilwether so that the Suffrage Reform Law could be approved through the Viscount's suffrage.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis carried out and the findings of the research data, it can be concluded that the character of Enola Holmes in the film Enola Holmes by director Harry Bradbeer generally found the representation of feminism. The representation of the reality of feminism from the appearance of the character Enola Holmes is described as not following the European culture that existed at that time because Enola who did not wear a hat and gloves was considered a deviant from society and its social strata. In addition, Enola always disguises herself as a boy when carrying out her missions. The costume of the Enola character opposes wearing a corset because she sees it as a symbol of oppression for those who are forced to wear it. The make-up of the Enola Holmes character leads to the deepening of the character when she disguises herself as a man or a noble. The sarcasm way of speaking when Enola tricked the Viscount. Enola's expression was still trying to fight and break away from the assassin. Enola's critical, intelligent, courageous attitude and behavior are evidenced when she carries out missions and when making decisions. The background of the form of feminism in this film are Ferndell Hall, London, and

Basilwether Hall. The movement in the Enola Holmes film is "Women's Suffrage, Votes for Women, Make Your Voices Heard" which was formed by Eudoria, Enola Holmes' mother. The meaning of the ideological level in the focus of the second research can be seen from the three sequences studied in the Enola Holmes film. This shows that the ideology of feminism contained is not only presented through the content of the story and scenes in the film, but external factors also influence the delivery of the message of feminism well. The value of feminism that is represented represents the flow of liberal feminism in which discrimination against women is treated unfairly against the character of Enola Holmes. Women should have the same opportunities as men to succeed in society. According to liberal feminism, gender justice can start from oneself. This is in line with the thoughts of Mrs. Enola Holmes (Eudoria Vernet Holmes) when she fought for women's rights through rebellion against European governments. Enola's character is one of the figures who can explain that in the era of the second wave of feminism, especially in the first stream, women are focused on the issue of acceptance or demanding rights and equality for women.

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