

MAIN CHARACTER'S STRUGGLE AGAINSTS WOMAN OPPRESSION IN “*MARLINA THE MURDERER IN FOUR ACTS*” MOVIE

DESY NATALIA SIMANJUNTAK¹, ANNA RIANA SURYANTI
TAMBUNAN², MORADA TETTY³

¹²³UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MEDAN

Abstract

This study dealt with the struggle of the main character in Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts movie. The objectives were to find out the oppressions that the main character experienced, the struggles against the oppression, and how the main character struggled against the oppression. This study used descriptive qualitative as the method to analyze the data. The researcher used Young's (1990) theory to analyze the data from the movie's script. Marlina, as the movie's main character, suffered from three kinds of oppression; marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. Marlina suffered oppression because she was powerless; she lived in poverty and patriarchal culture in Sumba. Marlina also struggles against oppression by doing feminism; they are; liberal feminism and radical feminism.

Keywords: *Feminism, Oppression, Movie*

INTRODUCTION

In real life, people do not escape from oppression. Oppression is harm through which groups of persons are systematically and unfairly constrained, burdened, or reduced by any of several forces, Cudd (2006). Young (1990) defined oppression as when people make other people less human. It could mean treating them in a dehumanizing manner and denying people language, education, and other opportunities that might make them become not fully human in both mind and body.

In this era, oppression often happens to women. The movie is one of the tools that can help women to communicate ideas concerning the feminism issue. Marlina, the Murderer in Four Acts, a 2017 movie production, is a representation that shows that the oppression of women in this era still exists. Through this movie, Mouly Surya, the director of this movie, brings out feminism.

Some researchers had researched oppression. The previous researcher, Mohd Ashraf Mir (2014), concluded that the three novels' interlocking themes emerge are women's suffering and women's struggle for emancipation and autonomy in patriarchal society and culture.

Based on the explanations above, it is clear that feminism deals with women's standpoints as the second gender in a patriarchal culture. This study aimed to find out how Marlina, the movie's main character, suffered and struggled by using the feminist point of view.

1. Feminism

Yohanes (2014) stated that feminism comes from *femme*, *Femina*, and *Pamela*, which means woman. The other terms of feminism are *gyno test* (a literary work that a woman writes), *gynocritic* (a critique which women give), and *philogyny* (the hate of women through men). Yohanes states that the feminism issue had a significant expansion by American people in 1960. From this issue, people realized that women were still under pressure from society, and many women did not get their rights in society.

Haryanti & Suwana (2014) stated that women who live in some big cities have realized that feminism is needed in life, such as marriage, workplace, and social life. At the same time, women who live in the area which is still active with the patriarchal culture have not realized the crucial thing such feminism since they still respect the culture itself.

2. Types of Feminism

“Women and men should have equal opportunities, that women should not be discriminated based on their gender. Further, women and men should get equal pay for equal work” (Rosenstand, 2006). Feminism has evolved in different areas rather than as one unified concept. The labels that define those areas have varied. According to Putnam (2017), there are some types of feminism.

a. Liberal Feminism

Women should have the equal rights as men and the equal educational and work possibilities. Liberal feminism argues that women and men are fundamentally similar and therefore, women should be equally represented in public arena such as work, government, the professions, and the sciences. Liberal feminism is trying to make women and men equal, corporate, independent and free to decide their own future.

(Marlina took Markus' head to the police) Novi: Marlina! Marlina ! Wait up!

Marlina: I'm taking it to the police. Where are you going?

After being raped by Markus, Marlina resisted herself by cutting Markus' head and bringing it to the police. Although she did not show it to the police, she made a report about the incident. Her effort was a kind of liberalism that Marlina fighting for. She wanted a justice from what Markus and friends had done to her. Marlina assumed that they who had raped and had stolen her livestock.

b. Radical Feminism

Radical feminists stated that the problem of women's oppression is patriarchy and sex-gender system. Radical feminism turns male-dominated culture on its head. It takes all the characteristics that are valued in male-dominated societies, objectivity, distance, control, coolness, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. It also blames them for wars, poverty, rape, battering, child abuse, and incest. It praises what women do, feed and nurture, cooperate, and reciprocate and attend to bodies, minds and psyches.

(Markus raped Marlina) Markus: you like it? You like it?

(When Markus enjoyed it, Marlina took a machete beside the bed and cut off Markus' head)

Rape is one of the cases that radical feminism wants to vanish. In this situation, Marlina was being raped by Markus which includes of radical action. Fighting for her right, Marlina did her own way to save her self-esteem by cutting Markus' head with machete. This action is radical feminism movement done by Marlina.

c. Marxist Feminism

Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) said "changes in women's social conditions with the overthrow of industrial capitalism and changing relations of the worker to the means of production." Marxist feminists focused on the emancipation of women through a concern for the production of labor in family life such as economic, social, political structure, as it concerns with capitalism.

d. Socialist Feminism

A social feminist concerns with the roles allocated to women who are independent of class status. According to Tong (2017) socialist feminist claims that women's workforce, in the domestic sphere serves not only the interests of individual families but also the benefits of capitalism in that the family. It reproduces the attitudes and capabilities needed for wage labor. Socialist feminism aims to construct society to get gender quality.

3. Oppression

Young (1990) understands oppression as a structural phenomenon. For Young, structural oppression refers to the inequities and injustices that are experienced by targeted groups on an everyday basis. This oppression is fundamental in the sense that is systematically reproduced in societal institutions through the "normal processes of everyday life," including the unconscious assumptions and reactions of everyday people, print, television, internet media, and cultural stereotypes.

Mullay (2002) described that the cultural or societal level of oppression consists of thought patterns, values (implicit and explicit), norms, beliefs, perspectives, and discourses that contribute to and reinforce oppression. Mullay defined cultural oppression as the "cement that reinforces the personal and structural oppression."

4. Types of Oppression

According to Iris Marion Young (1990), there are five "faces" or types of oppression; exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism, and violence.

a. Exploitation

To exploit someone is to use another person's vulnerability unfairly to take advantages from them. More specifically, exploitation is the act of using people's labors to produce profit without compensating them fairly.

Exploitation uses capitalism system to oppress. Capitalism differentiates the class of people: wealthy and poor. As Karl Marx, the father of socialism, said the capitalism creates the "haves" (those who have wealth) and the "have-nots" (those who do not have wealth). Eventually, the "haves" exploits the "have-nots" for their hard work.

b. Marginalization

According to Young (1990), marginalization is the act of relegating or confining a group of people to a lower class of the society. Most commonly people are marginalized based on their race or disability. Marlina as a woman was being marginalized by Markus by saying words that make woman's position become low.

Markus: **A widow shouldn't have such a temper. You are lucky if a man still wants you. Don't be too picky.**

Markus' words which were addressed to Marlina above were one kind of marginalization. From his statement, Markus has determined a woman especially a widow as a lower class in the society because he thinks that women cannot choose a man to be by her side but men can. Marlina is being marginalized because of her gender. It shows patriarchy culture on Markus' statement.

c. Powerlessness

Powerless is a state of mind where people have no control over an aspect in social that can impact on their lives. The powerless are those who lack authority or power. In most cases, the powerless do not participate in deciding decision in society. For example, in the United States, the powerless do not participate in basic democratic processes because they feel that they cannot or that their participation will not mean anything. This is an example of powerless that Freire calls as "Culture of Silence."

Markus: Sit down. Who's Topan? Marlina: none of your business.

From the conversation above, Markus had Marlina sit although they were in Marlina's house. Marlina sat straight away without complaining because she felt powerless that she could not decide whether to sit or not. Marlina cannot do anything unless to obey what Markus said. She felt powerless because Markus might hurt her with his machete.

d. Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism aims to take the domination culture as a norm in social life. In other words, the groups that have power in society can control how the people in that society interpret and communicate.

e. Violence

All forms of sexual violence and hate crimes are common examples of violent oppression. This kind of oppression is a crucial thing that happened to women. There are four kinds of violence against women; economical violence, sexual violence, physical violence, and psychological violence.

Markus: Wait. Sit down! Sit! Take it off. Take it off!

Markus asked Marlina to take off her clothes

Marlina: Please don't... Don't... No...

This was the condition where Marlina had given the poison in the soup and it made the five men in the living room who had tasted it died. Then Marlina intended to give the soup to Markus so that he would die too. But at that time the soup fell down to the floor because Markus pushed it accidentally. But when Marlina was trying to take the new one, Markus pulled Marlina's hand and asked her to take off her clothes. This is a kind of sexual violence which forces another person to have sex.

5. Movie

A Movie or a film is one of the crucial media for society to represent a paradigm (Monk-Turner et al., 2014). Movie can also be the media to represent recent issues that happen in the community. "*Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*" movie tries to change a paradigm about women is a second person. Feminism in this movie enables men and women to change a stereotype and individual belief concerning the social roles each gender.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Cresswell (2014), research design is plans and procedures for research to specific methods and collection and analysis. In this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach because the study focuses on the analysis or interpretation of the written content in context. Materials can include textbooks, newspapers, magazines, papers, films, manuscripts, articles, etc. The material of this study focused on selected utterances by the characters in *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* movie. The steps of collecting data were described as following: (1) Downloading *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* movie from the internet. (2) Watching *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* movie. (3) Doing the movie transcription to get the script of the movie. (4) Selecting the dialogues dealing with the purpose of the study.

The data were analyzed by using descriptive qualitative method. According to Cresswell (2014), a method discussion in a qualitative study needs also to specify the steps in analyzing the various forms of qualitative data. According to the theory above, the researcher formulated the techniques of analyzing data as followed: (1) Organizing and preparing the data which are related to the oppression suffered by Marlina and feminism done by Marlina. (2) Reading through all the data. (3) Analyzing and interpreting the types of oppression suffered by Marlina and the types of feminism done by Marlina. (4) Concluding the findings.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSIONS

Findings

1. The Forms of Oppression Experienced by Marlina

Young (1990) defined five faces of oppression experienced by someone. There are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Exploitation happens when someone's effort is controlled by the oppressor to take benefit from the oppressed by manipulating them. Marginalization can be defined as situation when someone is not used in the society due to the race or disability. Powerlessness happens when someone who has no status in the society lacks authority or power. In most cases, the powerless do not participate in making decision in the society. Cultural imperialism refers to a group who claims that their culture is the most superior than any other groups. The last is violence which linked with someone who suffers or humiliates owing to their status or class. In *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* movie, Marlina experienced three types of oppression; marginalization, powerlessness, and violence.

2. The Reasons Why Marlina Experienced the Oppression

The first reason why Marlina suffered the oppressions was she lived alone, far away from the settlement. Her husband had died and so did her child. This condition made the seven men had a big chance to oppress her. They thought she was powerless.

The second one, Marlina was not categorized as a rich person in Sumba, so she could not do anything (such as using a lawyer) to get a justice unless to report the incident to the police by herself. It can be seen from the condition of her house which is small and wooden made. Moreover, the system of law in Sumba seemed to be worn-out. They did not have fully equipped tools to process the reporting that made the report cannot be examined. It can be seen from the conversation spoken by Marlina and the police officer in Act III. It was a big opportunity for the seven men to do the oppressions.

The third was patriarchal concept. It can be seen from the Act III which shows Novi and Umbu as a wife and husband were arguing. Instead of listening to Novi's explanation, Umbu slapped Novi and left her although she was pregnant.

3. The Struggles Done by Marlina

Being oppressed by some men, Marlina did a resistant by doing feminism movement. There are several types of feminism according to Tong (2017); liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism. Liberal feminism emerge justice between men and women as the concept. Radical feminism talk about the problem of women's oppression is patriarchy and sex-gender system. Marxist feminism talk about the core cause of women's oppression is class based on society. Socialist feminism is concern with the roles allocated to women who are independent of class status and patriarchy system. In this research, Marlina has done 2 types of feminism; they are liberal feminism and radical feminism.

Discussions

After analyzing the types of oppression which was suffered by Marlina in using Young (1990)

theory it could be concluded some important points of analysis. First, Marlina suffered from three types of oppression by seven men; marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. Most of the oppression she experienced was powerlessness. It happened due to women's position in Sumba is not as crucial as men. They put women in the second place because they think women are powerless which means women do not deserve to decide what they want to do.

The second is Marlina suffered the oppression was because of the powerlessness, poverty, and the patriarchal culture in Sumba. Living alone as a widow showed powerlessness. The seven men saw Marlina as a second person. Therefore, it was common action done by men in Sumba to oppress women moreover Marlina was a widow in the movie. For urban women, those oppressions can be reported to the police because the tools to investigate the case have been complete instead of women who live in outlying place like Sumba.

The last one is Marlina showed two types of feminism according to Putnam (2017) theory in struggling her rights; liberal feminism and radical feminism. Marlina had her own way to struggle against the oppressions according to liberal feminism and radical feminism. Eventhough, her way to struggle her right cannot be implemented in this era because Marlina had murdered those men who have raped her, women have to imitate her bravery in struggling her rights.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts (2017) movie is about Marlina who were struggle against the oppression she got. The analysis showed that Marlina suffered from three major faces of oppression; marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. Most of the oppressive treatments she experienced were powerlessness and violence.

The oppressions came up because of her status as a widow who lived alone far away from the settlement that made the seven men had a chance to oppress her. Another reason why she experienced the oppressions was poverty. She lived in poverty that she could not do anything for her case. The last, she was woman who lived in active patriarchal culture. Sumba is one of regions in Indonesia which adopts patriarchal culture which is men dominates women. It represents how women suffer in small region in Indonesia.

The analysis also revealed feminism spirit in term of oppression that she had already faced. There were two kinds of feminism she did in the movie; liberal feminism and radical feminism. By seeing her struggle, it proves that Marlina is the representation of women who realize that they have to build gender equality between men and women.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above, there are some important suggestions needed to be examined the first is, the result of this study is suggested to be used as the reference for researchers who will conduct

the same research using feminism theory and oppression as well as the review of related literature in this research. The second is, *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* movie is suggested to be used as the object to do the further research with a different study.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M.H. 1999. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Ashraf, Mohd. 2014. Women's Character in the Three Novel of Anita Desai. Volume: 3 (Article. Retrieved on 10th , March 2019)
www.ijhssi.org
- Bleakley, A et al., 2012. Trends of sexual and violent content by gender in top-grossing U.S. films, 1950-2006. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 51(1), 73-79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.02.006>.
- Cresswell, John W. 2014. *Research Design, Qualitatives, Quantitatives, and Mixed Methods Approaches (Fourth Edition)*. United States of America: Sage Publications.
- Cudd, Ann. 2006. *Analyzing Oppression*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Donald, Ary et al. 2018. *Introduction to Research in Education (Tenth Edition)*. Canada:Wadsworth Publishing.
- Djannah, Fathul et al. 2002. *Kekerasan Terhadap Istri*. Yogyakarta: LkiS Pelangi Aksara.
- Fakih, M. 2013. *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Hardiman, R., Jackson, B., & Griffin, P. 2007. *Conceptual Foundations for Social Justice Courses*. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A sourcebook*. New York, NY:Routledge.
- Haryanti, A., & Suwana, F. 2014. The Construction of Feminism in Indonesia Film: *Arisan 2!* *Prcedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 155 (October), 236-241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.285>

- Larsson, Reidar. 1997. *Politiska Ideologier i Vår Tid*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Masitah, Siti et al. 2016. *Oppression of women in Ladies Coupe*. (Article. Retrieved on 10th, March 2019) www.scholar.google.com
- Monk-Turner et al., 2014. *The depiction of communication technology in film: Differences by gender and across time 1970-2010*. *Technology in Society*, 39, 151-155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2014.09.006>.
- Mullaly, B. 2002. *Challenging Oppression: A Critical Social Work Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Philcer, Jane and Whelehan, Imelda. 2004. *Fifty Keys Concepts in Gender Studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Qasim, Nahid et al. 2015. *Women's Liberation: The Effect of Patriarchal Oppression on Women's Mind*. DOI: 10.18488/journal.1 (Article Retrieved on 10th, March 2019) <http://www.aessweb.com/journals/5007>
- Rosenstand, Nina. 2006. *The Moral of the Story. An Introduction to Ethics* 5th ed. McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages.
- Sehandi, Yohanes. 2014. *Mengenal Teori Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Ombak.
- Sulaeman, Munandar and Homzah, Siti. 2010. *Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan: Tinjauan Dalam Berbagai Disiplin Ilmu dan Kasus Kekerasan*. Rafika Aditama: Bandung
- Tong, Rosmarie. 2017. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Canada: Routledge.
- Widdowson, Peter et al., 2016. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Canada: Routledge.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Pr.
- Young, Iris Marison. (n.d.) *Five Faces of Oppression*. (Article. Retrieved on 10th, March 2019 <https://mrdevin.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/five-faces-of- oppression.pdf>)