

WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE CIVIL WAR ERA PORTRAYED IN MARMEE'S CHARACTER IN *LITTLE WOMEN* MOVIE

Dewi Mudmainah, Singgih Daru Kuncara, Chris Asanti

English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Mulawarman University
Email: dewi.mudmainah@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research analyzed *Little Women* movie which is adapted from a novel with the same title written by Louisa May Alcott in the 19th century. This research focused on Marmee's roles and related to the setting of the movie to be discussed further. The character's role is explained thoroughly by using Tiffany K. Wayne's theory of triple role. This research used mimetic approach and deals with descriptive method to analyse the data qualitatively. The result of this research is Marmee's character experienced one out of three roles that proper with Tiffany's triple role theory. This role is reproductive role where it was shown in many scenes during the story. The reproductive activities shown by Marmee were she cared for her daughters, she looked after them, educated them and cooked for them where these represents as reproductive role according to Tiffany and it proved that Marmee is capable to handle all things without the existence of her husband in that era. The two other roles missing are productive and community management role. These roles are not seen towards the character because Marmee did not work in the story and she chose to be a housewife rather than did voluntarily activity or earned money.

Keywords: woman's role, character, *Little Women* movie, civil war

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis film *Little Women* yang diadaptasi dari sebuah novel dengan judul yang sama yang ditulis oleh Louisa May Alcott pada abad ke-19. Penelitian ini berfokus pada peran Marmee yang terkait dengan setting (keadaan/latar belakang) film yang akan dibahas lebih lanjut. Peran karakter dijelaskan secara menyeluruh dengan menggunakan teori triple role oleh Tiffany K. Wayne. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan mimetik dan metode deskriptif untuk menganalisis data secara kualitatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah karakter Marmee mengalami satu dari tiga role (peran) yang sesuai dengan teori triple role, Tiffany. Role (peran) ini adalah reproductive role (peran reproduksi) di mana ia ditampilkan dalam banyak adegan selama cerita. Aktivitas/kegiatan reproduksi yang diperlihatkan oleh Marmee adalah ia perhatian pada putrinya, ia merawat mereka, mendidik mereka dan memasak untuk mereka di mana ini semua merupakan peran reproduksi menurut Tiffany dan itu membuktikan bahwa Marmee mampu menangani semua hal meskipun tanpa keberadaannya suaminya di era itu. Dua role (peran) lain yang hilang adalah productive role (peran produksi) dan community management role (peran dalam manajemen di masyarakat). Dua peran (role) ini tidak terlihat pada karakter Marmee dikarenakan Marmee tidak bekerja dalam cerita dan dia memilih untuk menjadi ibu rumah tangga daripada melakukan kegiatan sukarela di masyarakat seperti halnya menjadi volunteer.

Kata kunci: peran wanita, karakter, film *Little Women*, perang saudara

A. INTRODUCTION

There are many issues that experienced by women such as domination and violence. In the Civil War era, people assumed that women are weak and they consider that women can only work a little and unable to work hard like men. This condition is unfair for women and emergence of belief called feminism. This feminism related to woman's nature particular to woman's emancipation, a woman movement in order to reach the equality with man in many aspects. Based on that, the researcher feels excited to investigate about women's life in the society.

There is one of the literary works that talks about woman especially woman's role. It is *Little Women* movie. This movie shows about women's determination in the Civil War era. The story of *Little Women* is set during The American Civil War era when the girls' father is away serving as a soldier with the Union Army. The American Civil War happened in the United States during 19th century in 1861 between northern and southern states over slavery states' rights. The Civil War ended in 1865 by not only leaving the impact in economic system in America but also affected the roles of all women at that time. The war brought the impact for women who used to live in that era like Marmee where she had to let her husband leave home for the war and was forced to take full responsibilities of the household.

Based on the issue above, the researcher feels curious to investigate further about the women. All women during The Civil War including Marmee also experience this kind of thing where they had to handle all by their own hand. That is why Marmee also experience the same thing in the way that she has to be responsible to bring up and take care of her children. So then, woman's role is the issue that comes on the researcher's mind to be discussed. By this research the researcher analyzes the role that woman plays at home like Marmee.

The purpose of the study is to describe the role of woman that portrayed in Marmee's character in *Little Women* movie.

B. RELATED LITERATURE

1. Character

Character is a representation of a person, animal or a figure that plays in literary work. According to Longoria (2013) and Javanovsky character is divided into several types in literary work, they are:

- a. Protagonist Character: A character who generally plays as the main character in a story.
- b. Antagonist Character: A character that opposes the protagonist character who usually lives against from protagonist character.
- c. Static Character; A character that remains the same from the beginning of a story to the end.
- d. Dynamic Character: A character that exhibits some kind of change of attitude, purpose, behavior, as the story progresses.
- e. Round Character: A character that shows some complex problem, where they can make surprise action or something surprising for readers or viewers to get their attention.
- f. Flat Character: A character that is not really being exposed and not developing in the story.

2. Characterization

Characterization is a literary instrument that the author uses to express or reveal a character's personality includes the appearance, actions, and dialogue in literary work. According to Forbes (2013) There are two types of characterizations. Griffith clarified they are direct and indirect characterization.

- a. Direct characterization: The author simply tells the reader what the character is like. The author makes the reader easy to come to clear understanding about the character.
- b. Indirect characterization: The author prefers shows the character through the dialogue, external details (dress, bearing, looks) and the character's thoughts, speech, action (deeds) instead of telling the readers directly.

3. Feminism

Feminism is about how woman is placed according to their position in society, even in family. According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker, the history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The first feminist wave was in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the second was in the 1960's and 1980's, and the third extends from the 1990's to the present.

First wave of feminism (1830's – early 1900's) refers to an extended period of feminist activity in the United Kingdom and the United States. It focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women. Around 1960's to 1980's "Second Wave" feminism emerged. It focused on the workplace, sexuality, family and reproductive rights. The third wave of feminism began in the early 1990's. The movement of the third wave feminism focused less on laws and the political process but more on individual identity.

At the beginning feminism was only a movement. Then it transformed into the theory. Barbara state that in literature there is also a study which focuses on studying about woman it is call as Feminist idea. The idea of feminist though has brought a variety of social and cultural change; it is impact touching family relations, the place of woman in society, gendered language and relation between man and woman. Meanwhile, in literature, feminism is connected with feminist criticism that is a direct study which focuses on analyzing about woman.

Furthermore, woman's role is part of feminism. According to the article written by Annelise Orieck, Dartmouth College 2016; feminism was presented in The Civil War, where women served as nurses and volunteers in the field to help the injured soldiers. After the war end, majority of women came back home and returned to their traditional domestic roles. They wanted access to higher education and to various professions. This period marked a significant turning point in women's history. The war had given women a chance to control their own lives, to earn their own money, to manage their own finances, to be independent just like Marmee did to her family especially to her daughters since her husband left home to the war.

4. Gender, Role and Sex

Feminism therefore distinguishes between the word sexes. According to Tyson, sex is all about biological aspects in each individual that people already had since they were born which refers to our biological constitution as female or male, and the word gender, refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine which are emergent from the activities carried out by individuals of each sex in their sex-typical occupational and also family roles. While role is about what the sexes play according to their status in social live. The role of women and men in their life has been constructed by the society.

5. Women's Roles in America during 19th century

According to Tiffany in her book of women's roles in 19th century America, in the marriage and family life the perfection of womanhood is the wife and mother as the center and magnet of the family. Women during 19th century were needed at home, because in that era most American women expected to marry and had children. Middle class families began to focus more on children and spent more and more of their time on childbearing and developing skills as efficient housekeepers.

Single women choose with some formal education. Meanwhile, women who have children in that era mostly play their role at home as a mother or housewife but not less some of them even tried to work in the factory to help their economic life while their husband are sent to the war for a very long period. During the war, some women also are willing to join with voluntarily activity for taking care the injured soldiers. The rest of them chose to stay at home with their children. When the war ended, most women were expected to resume their traditional domestic roles at home became wives and mothers.

6. Woman's Triple Role Theory by Tiffany K. Wayne

According to Tiffany (17-22) women have been described as often having a triple role:

a. Reproductive role (or domestic role)

It refers to the activities needed for the maintenance and survival of human life. This includes child bearing/rearing responsibilities, caring for family members (children, elderly and workers), looking after children, educating children, cooking food for family, washing clothes, growing or foraging food for home use.

b. Productive role

It refers to the activities to produce something which has a benefit for family's economic life in order to get income and minimalize outcome or consumptive. The activities include (market production, home production, and subsistence production) to produce goods or services for the economic needs of the family.

c. Community management role

The community managing role of women includes work mostly related to care and unpaid work, and provision of collective resources like healthcare, etc.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

This research is a qualitative research and deals with descriptive method using Mimetic approach. The data explained descriptively. Descriptive method relies on linguistics rather than numerical data and employs meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data analysis (Elliot and Timulak 147). Furthermore, the result of the data present in forms of words and sentences instead of numerical data. It means that by using descriptive method, the researcher is able to describe woman's role that portrayed in Marmee's character in Little Women movie.

2. Research Instrument

The key instrument of this research is the researcher herself. As the key instrument, the researcher uses her own critical assessment to analyze the data and answer the research question. The researcher only uses the observation by herself in the script of the movie that is being analyzed.

3. Data and Data Sources

The main data source of this research is taken from *Little Women* movie. Data characteristic in this research are the speech (dialogs and monolog), narration and action that contain and represent woman's role towards Marmee's character. The data was presented in a form of words, phrases, and paragraphs throughout the movie.

4. Data Collection

The method of the data collection for this research is observation method. The observation that is used in collecting the data is watching the movie repeatedly while listening to the conversations, reading the script and understanding every scene. After that, the researcher writes notes of all-important information and comprehends all the scenes in the movie related to research question.

5. Data Analysis

After the data, information and theories that are related to the research are collected, the researcher uses descriptive method to analyze the qualitative data. Firstly, the data that are collected from *Little Women* movie are put into a table of woman's role. Secondly, the researcher categorizes every single of the data into the triple role's theory by Tiffany. Then, the researcher explains and analyzes the connection between the data and the triple role especially to woman's role. After the description of woman's role towards Marmee's character is obtained through the data which have found, the researcher determines which role that Marmee's character mostly belongs to. Finally, the last step is the researcher makes the conclusion of the research.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

(Data 1.1)

Meg : **“What a miraculous food! Marmee.**
Marmee : **(Smiling to Meg while grilling sausage)**
Meg : (Turning head to Hannah) isn't this just like the old days, Hannah?”
(Meg kissed on Hannah's cheek).
(Minutes 00.06.09)

From the scene above, it shows that Marmee has done her responsibility for her family which is cooking food. This activity includes in reproductive or domestic role. To see another reproductive role, it is presented in the conversation below:

(Data 2.1)

Marmee : (Walking toward to Amy while handing the letter) **Amy can you discipline yourself to learn at home as Beth has done?**
Amy : (Nodded her head means yes)
Marmee : (Looked at Jo with a full of trust)
Well then, I withdraw my daughter Amy from your school and Jo will now supervise your education. (Smiling at Jo)
Jo : (looked at Amy's side feeling wondered).
(Minutes 00.24.16)

Based on the data above it is true that Marmee pays attention for her daughter's education through the conversation indirectly. The education here for Marmee is not always meant that children who have to study well at school but even more, where they have to study and learn to create a good character and manner as well where these are also very important and needed to be a smart individual. Another reproductive activity is also shown in the conversation below:

(Data 3.1)

Marmee : **(Checked for Beth's temperature and kissed on Beth's forehead)**

Marmee : **(Looked so much worry) Cricket! Marmee's here. Icy cold. Jo, fetch a basin with vinegar water and some rags. Meg, my kit. Must draw the fever down from her head, it's all right... It's all right. It's all right now. That's my love (While rubbing Beth's feet to make it warm)**
(Minutes 00.53.00)

From this scene, reproductive activity is completed by Marmee for what she did for her daughter, Beth. Marmee examines Beth with willingness and nurturing. This data shows that Marmee has a high responsibility for looking after her daughters that is why Marmee knows that Beth needs her more than numbers of doctor who have been invited.

(Data 4.1)

Marmee : **(Hugged and kissed her daughters before leaving them to Washington)**
"Ohh... I shall miss my little women"
(Hugging each other with tears)
(Minutes 00.46.05)

Marmee's character through the scene above has perfectly proved that she is a responsible person. She portrays indirectly how much she loves her daughters more than herself. She hugs her children with tears even she expects she only be away home for some days.

The reproductive role activities shown through the dialogues and actions that Marmee's character has done indirectly.

Marmee is the character which is being analyzed in this research experienced one type of role. It was reproductive role that is seen in many scenes in the movie towards Marmee's character started from looking after children, educating and cooking food for family members. Static character type is compatible with Marmee because she doesn't show any differences or changes from the beginning till the end of the story. She keeps showing that she loves her daughters and cares for them without getting any pressure. As well as characterization, Marmee describes in the explanation of indirect characterization through the dialogs or conversation even the action that she did to her daughters in the story.

Meanwhile, two other roles are missing. Productive role is not seen towards Marmee's character because based on the author point of view, Louisa May Alcott herself intentionally did not make this role too exist towards women's characters in *Little Women* movie. Since Alcott's life time in 19th century, low income women undertake all three roles especially reproductive role while men primarily undertakes productive. Furthermore, most women in that era chose to become a housewife while men are sent to the war as a soldier

for a very long period. This is why productive role is not seen towards women's character including Marmee but reproductive role are found in many scenes in the movie because as Alcott's life time women more focused on their role for taking care of family members, looking after children, cooking food, and doing the housework rather than applying productive role for getting job to earn money.

However so far as the researcher analyzed, community management role is also not seen towards Marmee's character through *Little Women* movie but obviously portrayed as the background of women's life during The Civil War era. Women at that time freely choose their way of life with voluntarily activity or stay at home with their children. Some women are willing to become volunteer for taking care the injured soldiers in the battle camp. While most of them including Marmee chose to stay at home for taking care of her children and family while waiting for their husband to come back home.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there are three roles performed by Marmee. One role which is experienced by Marmee's character is reproductive role that is seen in many scenes during the beginning of the story in *Little Women* movie. Marmee is seen as a strong mother figure who holds high principle of life and responsible for her children since her husband left home to the war. She looked after her daughters patiently, educated them, and cooked food for her family member at home. She never complains yet but she cares so much about her four daughters, about her family without any pressure. Two other roles which are not performed are productive and community management role because Marmee did not work and she chose to stay at home with her daughters than took a part in voluntarily activity.

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