

THE RADICAL FEMINISM OF IMPERATOR FURIOSA'S CHARACTER IN *MAD MAX FURY ROAD* FILM (2015)

Soraya Prasasty Marito Sibarani^{1,*}, M. Natsir², Fatimah M.³

^{1,2,3}Department of English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Mulawarman University

*E-mail: sorayasibarani@rocketmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to find out the way of Imperator Furiosa's character represents in radical feminism in *Mad Max Fury Road* film (2015). The design of this research was qualitative research. The data of this research were taken from dialogue, scene, action, and speech based on the film. The data of this research were analyzed by using radical feminism theory by Rosemarie. P. Tong in *Feminist Thought a More Comprehensive Introduction* (2009) and the categorized as Furiosa's character representation of radical feminism through the theory of indirect characterization by Kelly Griffth. The result of this research showed Imperator Furiosa represented two kinds of radical feminism. First was radical libertarian feminism which were androgyny which found in the Furiosa's character appearance, character dialogue, character speech, character action. And seizes the meaning of reproduction which found in the Furiosa's character dialogue. Second was radical cultural feminism which is women using reproduction as a trump card and power which found in the Furiosa's character speech.

Keywords: feminism, radical Feminism

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui cara karakter Imperator Furiosa terwakili dalam feminisme radikal dalam film *Mad Max Fury Road* (2015). Desain penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif. Data penelitian ini diambil dari dialog, adegan, aksi, dan ucapan berdasarkan film. Data penelitian ini dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori feminisme radikal oleh Rosemarie. P. Tong dalam *Feminist Thought a More Comprehensive Introduction* (2009) dan dikategorikan sebagai representasi karakter feminisme radikal Furiosa melalui teori karakterisasi tidak langsung oleh Kelly Griffth. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan Imperator Furiosa mewakili dua jenis feminisme radikal. Pertama adalah feminisme libertarian radikal yang merupakan androgyny yang ditemukan dalam penampilan karakter Furiosa, dialog karakter, ucapan karakter, aksi karakter. Dan merebut makna reproduksi yang ditemukan dalam dialog karakter Furiosa. Kedua adalah feminisme budaya radikal yang perempuan menggunakan reproduksi sebagai kartu truf dan kekuatan yang ditemukan dalam ucapan karakter Furiosa

Kata kunci: feminisme, feminisme radikal

A. INTRODUCTION

The issues of feminism are common and can be found in our society. The gender gap between man and woman was the reason why the feminist movement formed in order to seek for the equality for women and men. Women commonly treated unfairly or lower than man. Even until nowadays, we still can see how this issue is still debated among scholars.

Coincidentally those feminism issues were found in a literary work including the film *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). As seen in this film, it illustrated about the world after the down of civilization and everything is become a desert and wasteland. The film mainly focuses on Furiosa as female character, as she tried to run away from Immortan Joe who was the representation of the superior man.

As being the most authoritarian king, Joe was the most superior male character who only wanted to dominate in order to get advantages or exploit the women. This case invited sympathy from Furiosa, as the most important female character who had important role as a commander, a fighter, and a caretaker for Joe's women in Citadel Kingdom. Furiosa also known as Imperator Furiosa was the most important female character. Her appearance should have been as woman, but she looked very boyish and had power as a man who was able to fight only with one hand.

Her action showed that she struggled to save" the imprisoned women" in Citadel Kingdom by running away from that place in order to get freedom even though the female character must face many obstacles. From that cases, the researcher analyzed the form of women movement to fight against unfair treatment of unequal right toward female character as the main case of these feminist issues.

The researcher analyzed the female character in the film by using Characterization theory by Kelly Griffith and Radical Feminism theory that formulated from Feminist Thought (*A More Comprehensive Introduction*) book by Rosemarie Tong that stated that if men are required to only show masculine characteristics only, and women are required to only show feminine characteristics only, it means that this is a harmful state of matters and the only solution of this is to permit all human beings to be androgynous so they can show a full range of masculinity and feminine qualities. Men should be allowed to explore their feminine sides and women with their masculine side as well.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Indirect Characterization

According to Reams, indirect characterization is really a blanket term for many different way in which a feature of a character can be expressed and confirmed in the mind of the reader without stating it directly (30).

Griffith further explains that there are some ways to reveal what the characters are like in indirect characterization such as through characters' speech, actions, dialogue, thoughts, and external details (62). Character speech is the way the author reveals what the characters are like through how the characters express their speaking, and what the characters say. The characters may speak in complicated way by choosing of certain words and phrases. Character's Action is the way the author reveals what the characters are like through what the characters do, and how the characters behave. By seeing character's action, the reader is able to find out the information of what the characters are like in the story. Character's thought is the way the author reveals what the characters are like through character's private thought or feelings. The development of characters can be presented by the author through the way of characters express their thought or feelings of the situation, and what characters think inside of their head. Character's Appearance is the way of the author reveals what the characters are like through their external details such as dress, bearing, and looks. It means that the author shows what the characters look like through their appearance. Character's Dialogue is the way of character's speech, a conversation or dialogue between one character and other character that can tell the reader a lot information. The reader can be quite easy to identify what characters are like by observing what they say in the dialogue or conversation.

2. Feminist Criticism Theory

According to Tyson, by using feminist criticism or feminism we can examines the ways of how the reinforcement of the economic, political, social, and also psychological oppression of women happened in literature (83).

According to Freedman, "Feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position. Even after the word feminism was coined, it was still not adopted as a term of identification by many of those who campaigned for women's rights" (3).

3. Radical Feminism

Radical Feminism is one of the feminist thoughts. It is the belief that women's fates were profoundly linked, radical feminists proclaimed that "the personal is political" and that all women are "sisters". It is also believed and insisted that men's control of both, women sexual and reproductive lives and women's self-identity, self-respect, and self-esteem is the most fundamental of all the oppressions human beings visit on each other (Tong, 49).

Radical Feminists perceived themselves as revolutionaries rather than reformers. Dubbed "radical feminists," these revolutionary feminists introduced into feminist thought the practice of consciousness-raising. Women came together in small groups and shared their personal experiences as women with each other. They discovered that their individual experiences were not unique to them but widely shared by many women" (Tong, 48).

Tong assumed that just because radical feminists as she stated that in principle that sexism is the first, most widespread, or deepest form of human oppression did not mean they also agreed about the nature and function of this pernicious or the best way to eliminate it (49).

a. Radical Libertarian Feminism

Radical-libertarian feminists claimed that an exclusively feminine gender identity is likely to limit women's development as full human persons. Thus, they encouraged women to become androgynous persons, that is, persons who embody both (good) masculine and (good) feminine characteristics or, more controversially, any potpourri of masculine and feminine characteristics, good or bad, that strikes their fancy. Moreover Thong also explains that "radical-libertarian feminists did, that women should exhibit both masculine and feminine traits and behaviors" (50).

b. Radical Cultural Feminism

Radical Cultural Feminism is the second type of Radical Feminism. It is the view that it is better for women to be strictly female/feminine. Women, they said, should not try to be like men. On the contrary, they should try to be more like women, emphasizing the values and virtues culturally associated with women (interdependence, community, connection, sharing, emotion, body, trust, absence of hierarchy, nature, immanence, process, joy, peace and life) and emphasizing the values and virtues culturally associated with.

The basic result is feeling trust versus mistrust. This age started from birth to eighteen months. The basic virtue of this age was eating, crying and feeding. In this stage, a baby would be trust with his mother. If this stage failed, the baby got mistrust feel. This stage also called the oral-sensory; because the baby always putted everything into her/his mouth. In this case, mother as a significant relation was an important figure of infant psychosocial development.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative research which described and explained the narrative data in form of words. Qualitative data defined as the data that approximates and characterizes.

According to Denzin and Lincoln, in their book *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994) explain that Qualitative research is multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (2).

Since this research used a qualitative method, content analysis is used to analyzed the data. The data's were taken from the script which formed in words, dialogue and scene of *Mad Max fury Road* film. The researcher used the script and scene as the data and found out the result of the analysis. Furthermore, the researcher also used the radical feminism theory from *Feminist Thought (A More*

Comprehensive Introduction) book, by Rosemarie Tong to analyzed Furiosa's character.

In this study, the primary data would be taken from the script, dialogue, and scenes of *Mad Max Fury Road* film that analyzed by the researcher herself. The film was *Mad Max Fury Road* film directed by George Miller (2015). The secondary data source that the researcher took was the previous study that related to the topic analysis. The instrument was the researcher herself. That mean the researcher directly collected and analyzed the data. Another sources that related were taken to support the researcher in analyzed the data such as *Mad Max Fury Road* Film itself, some previous related research, books, journal and articles about radical feminism, feminist thought by Rosemarie. P. Tong. There were some techniques to get the data, watching the film, reading and understanding the script was the most appropriate data collection technique in this research. Those were the first that had been done to make valid the data. The data of this study are obtained from the following steps: first, watched and understood the film. The second, chose and selected the data that dealt with each problem of this research.

The researcher used the radical feminism theory from Feminist Thought (*A More Comprehensive Introduction*) by Rosemarie Tong, also the researcher used Miles and Huberman interactive model in analyzed the film. There were four processes: first, Data collection was the process of collecting data that the researcher found. Second, Data reduction was the processing of the data that had been collected by the researcher. For this research, after collected the data from conversations, dialogues, scenes and the words that explained the actions from some characters that related to the radical feminism in the film, all of the data were selected again and filtered further in order to be specific. Third, Data display was a process in indicated and analyzed the data. After that the process to analyze the data would be done in order to the answer the research question. Forth, Conclusions: drawing/verifying was the last process after analyzed the data. The conclusions were made after assured that all of the data are valid and relevant in answered the research question.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Radical Libertarian Feminism in Imperator Furiosa

a. Androgyny

As Tong described about androgyny or androgynous person. The person who is a part of radical libertarian feminism has to have the appearance of androgyny, as they really encourage both (good) masculine and (good) feminine characteristics to be applied or embodied by the radical libertarian feminism.

In the **min 00:06:07 (data 1)** Furiosa's appearance from behind categorized as androgyny as when the researcher saw Furiosa's appearance, the viewers may confused whether Furiosa a male or female because of her appearance that looked like male especially from behind.

Min 00:08:12 (data 2). People may feel confused at first, when Furiosa appeared for the first time in the scene, because of her male physical appearance

that showed by her. However, when the scene in data 2 appeared, the researcher was convinced that Furiosa is a female because of her female physical appearance which is the big breast that she has, and her slightly feminine face that showed from her.

Min 01:15:35 (data). In the data 3, we can see that Furiosa's face clearly and the detail of her figures in her face is showed clearly. In the later part of the film, Furiosa's black mark had been wiped out from her temple and face which caused her appearance especially her face very similar with the war boys that also supported the black mark. This is clearly categorized as the character appearance because from it we can analyze her appearance to define Furiosa as androgyny.

Min 00:12:18 (data 4). Furiosa's appearance in the first part of the film in data 4 is very different with the one that showed in the data 3. Furiosa looked much fiercer and masculine with her appearance, especially because she is an Emperor for Immortan Joe's military force which called war boys. Therefore, because she is an Emperor, she led the war boys to Immortan Joe's mission and task from raiding the city to delivering the Citadel's products such as produce and also breast milk to other city. But the most important product of all is the water that is very limited in their world and treated as a very high value source.

Min 00:06:55 (data 5)

War Boy : **"We are war boys!"**
War Boys : **"War Boys!"**
War Boy : "Today we're hauling Aqua Cola!"
War Boys : "Aqua Cola!"
War Boy : "Today we're hauling produce!"
War Boys ; "Produce!"
War Boy : "And today we're hauling mother's milk!"
War Boys : "Mother's milk!"

From the data above it can be seen through the dialogue that the people that went to the mission to deliver the produce and mother's milk or breast milk is war boys. Character's dialogue is conversation or dialogue between one character and other character can tell the reader lot of information. Therefore, it can be quite easy to identify what characters are like by observing what they say in the dialogue or conversation.

Min 01:18:09 (data 6)

Furiosa : "I am the **daughter** of Mary Jabassa".

In data 6 Furiosa was confessing for the first time her real identity when they reach the place that they believed as the green place. In the scene, Furiosa said that that she is the daughter of Mary Jabassa which obviously proofed that Furiosa is a woman. However even though Furiosa is a woman, she can be categorized as androgyny just as the researcher above already discussed. Furiosa's physical

appearance embodied both masculine and feminine side. As we can see above in data 5, Furiosa has quite a big breast which is a peculiar appearance of woman. But her clothes as well as her hair is very different than what the other woman as should be.

Min 00:33:18 (data 7) we can see how the wives are dressed differently. Their clothes embodied the feminine side of the woman. Their physical appearance were also much more feminine compare to Furiosa even though there was one person who has short hair, her feminine side was still playing the major part in her appearance which caused the audience to immediately recognize her as a woman.

Min 00:40:03 (data 8). In data 8 there are great points that we can see to know the differences between Furiosa and the wives. First is their clothes which definitely different. Second one of the wives has a short hair, however Furiosa is bald as she is the Emperor for War Boys who all of them are bald. Third Furiosa's physical appearance is much bulkier with a lot muscles, while the wives is much more delicate and feminine. Last but not least even though her appearance especially her clothes and attire looked like man, she confessed that she is a daughter as already mentioned above.

Min 00:12:25 (data 9)

Furiosa : "We're heading east."

The data above illustrates Furiosa who starter her journey to get away from Citadel and stray away from the right direction of the road, by saying, "We're heading east". She brought the war boys to different reaction by commanded them to follow her order and went to different way.

Min 00:19:03 (data 10)

Furiosa : "We fang it!"

Just as in data 9 the war boys are consistently following Furiosa order and command, this time to fight the buzzard. This is proven again that Furiosa embodied the androgyny masculine side and feminine side which can be analyzing by her character speech in the film.

Min 00:20:48 (data 11); min 00:36:34 (data 12); min 00:54:58 (data 13). From data 11, 12, and 13 the researcher analyzed Furiosa's character action and has found that Furiosa's action are truly embodied the masculine side of her as she is an androgyny. Shooting the enemy along with her subordinate the war boy, or by the one who attacked other male character bravely, and using heavy and equipped guns to shot all of the enemy is some of Furiosa's action that can proved that Furiosa indeed represented the radical libertarian feminism which is androgyny.

Min 00:49:01 (data 14) showed how Furiosa covered her forehead with the black substance as the mark of war boys but also a sign of fighting and also to hide the fact that she was a feminism film by showing the fierce side of her by using the black mark.

b. Seizing the Means of Reproduction

Marx states that the only way to remove oppression is to "seize the means of production, women must seize the means of reproduction" (Tong, 55-56). Therefore, when Furiosa ran away from Citadel because of what Joe did not only to her but also to all the women including the wives, she took them with her and that action can be categorized as seizing the means of reproduction.

Min 00:15:19 (data 15)

Nux : "What's going on? Slit!"
War Boy : "Treason. Betrayal. An Imperator gone rogue."
Nus : "An Imperator. Who?"
War Boy : "Furiosa! She took a lot of stuff from Immortan Joe."
Nux : "What stuff?"
War Boy : "Breeders! His prize breeders! He wants them back! Not a hand laid on them."

From the dialogue in **(data 15)** it is analyzed by using the character's dialogue which related to and stated that Furiosa taken Immortan Joe's prize breeders. By that she is reflecting the 'seizing the means of reproduction.' Marx states that the only way to remove oppression is to "seize the means of production, women must seize the means of reproduction" (55-56). Which means that seizing the means of production, or in this case reproduction is a way for women to remove the oppression.

Min 00:14:20 (data 16)

Immortan Joe : "Where are they?"
Miss.Giddy : "They are not your property."
Immortan Joe : "Miss Giddy?"
Miss.Giddy : "You cannot own a human being. Sooner or later someone pushes back!"
Immortan Joe : "**Where is she taking them?**"
Miss.Giddy : "She didn't take them. They begged her to go!"
Immortan Joe : "**Where is she taking them?**"
Miss.Giddy : "A long way from you."

The data above showed how Furious was successfully represented the radical libertarian feminism in the film. This is also analyzed and proved by the character's dialogue that happened this time in the data was happened between Miss Giddy and Immortan Joe. When Joe went to check on his wives, he found that all of them are gone and the only person left in their special chamber was Miss Giddy who was assigned to take care and teach the wives. Joe asked Miss Giddy "**where is she taking them?**" which is indicated that Furious was indeed took them away from Joe. He even repeated his question with the same sentences

because Miss Giddy was not replying his question, which is also proved again and confirmed that Furiosa is not taking them but also represented the radical libertarian feminism as she “seize the means of reproduction” from Immortan Joe.

c. Radical Cultural Feminism

The researcher has found that Furiosa was using the wives as the Trump card or the key for power in the film that analyzed by using both the character’s speech and character’s dialogue, which can be seen in the data below.

Min 00:40:25 (data 17)

Max : “You can get in”

Furiosa : “**Not without them**”

Max : “So we wait”

Furiosa : “You're relying on the gratitude of a very bad man.

You've damaged one of his wives. How grateful do you think he's gonna be?”

From the character’s speech in the data above Furiosa said “**not without them**” to Max when she was trying to get them back into the war rig. Max only allowed Furiosa to get back into the war rig because she was the only person who can operate the war rig. But Furiosa said that she will not go without the wives. Because the wives are part of his power that will benefit them a lot because Joe is afraid if something happened to them.

Furiosa even added again to make Max believe that taking the wives meaning that they will be the one who held the power. Max also hurt one of his wives which definitely will not be taken lightly by Joe, that is why Furiosa said “**You've damaged one of his wives. How grateful do you think he's gonna be?**” to Max to convince him that it’s better to take the wives away from Joe and bring them along so that they can be in the winning side who hold the power and Joe be the one who will not do anything that concerns or hurt his wives.

E. CONCLUSION

The researcher drew some conclusions and answered the research questions, the researcher found out that the two kinds of radical feminism which are radical libertarian feminism and radical cultural feminism appeared in Furiosa’s character. For the libertarian the researcher found androgyny and seizing the means of reproduction appeared in Furiosa. While for the cultural feminism the researcher found that reproduction of woman as trump card to gain power appeared in Furiosa. The researcher also concluded that this film clearly illustrates about the way of Furiosa representing the radical feminism based on Griffith’s characterization, which were radical libertarian feminism and radical cultural feminism. Based on characterization theory; appearance, action, speech, dialogue. From the appearance, the researcher found the androgyny appeared in Furiosa’s character. As for the speech the researcher found radical libertarian feminism which are

androgyny and seizing the means of reproduction. Also, the radical cultural feminism which was the woman as trump card to gain power.

REFERENCES

- Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna. S. Lincoln. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications. 1998. Print.
- Freedman, Jane. *Concepts in The Social Sciences Feminism*. Open University Press Philadelphia. 2001. Print
- Griffith, Kelly. *Writing Essays About Literature A Guide and Style Sheet*. 8thed. United States: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. 2011. PDF File.
- Miles, Matthew. B and Huberman, M.A. *Data Management and Analysis*. 1994. Print.
- Reams, Jack. *Characterization in Fiction*. San Marcos, Texas. Texas State University. 2015. Print.
- Rokhmansyah, Alfian, Nita Maya Valiantien, & Nella Putri Giriani. "Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Cerpen-Cerpen Karya Oka Rusmini." *LITERA*, 17, 3 2018. Web.
- Rokhmansyah, Alfian. *Pengantar gender dan feminisme: Pemahaman awal kritik sastra feminisme*. Garudhawaca, Yogyakarta. 2016. Print.
- Tong, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought A More Comprehensive Introduction*. 3rd ed. Westview Press. 2009. Print.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today*. 2nd ed. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group New York, London. 2006. Print.