

**FEMINISM IN SUSANNAH GRANT'S FILM
"ERIN BROCKOVICH"**

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ABSTRACT

The research is about feminism in the film "*Erin Brockovich*". This study aims at identifying what the type and the principles of the feminism found in *Erin Brockovich*'s Film. This study is conducting by applying descriptive qualitative method. The source of data is taken from the film and script. The techniques for analyzing the data are descriptive qualitative research. The writer uses Tong's Theory to analyze the type of feminism and Sadli's Theory to analyze the principles of feminism. This film is based on a true story; *Erin Brockovich* describes a single mother of three children who succeed in lawsuit office that helps many people of the PG&E case in Hinkley. The role of Erin shows a super mother who can be equal both take care of her children and succeeds in her career. The results of this research show that there are 30 dialogues and scenes it refers to Liberal Feminism. Then, from 50 dialogues and scenes, it was found there are all out of four types of the principles of feminism, they are: daring to convey a different opinion, having clearer aspirations and ambitions, having a desired social status, and daring to compete.

Keywords: Feminism, Erin Brockovich, Film.

INTRODUCTION

The Background of Study

Literature is a canon which consists of those works in language by which a community defines itself through the course of its history. It includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary. The self-defining activity of the community is conducted in the light of the works, as its members have come to read them. Based on David, literature is an art form, like painting, sculpture, music, drama, and the dance. Literature is distinguished from other arts form by the medium in which it works language (David, 1971:139). In other words, literature is the art of written or it can be assumed that literature as a creative art that uses humans and all kinds of aspects of life can be used as a medium to convey ideas, theories, or systems of human thinking.

Literary works talks about human in many sides, bad and good. Through the reading activity, the readers will describe the characters in the story. The readers will find humans complex nature which can be alternative way to face the real life. Based on the four functions of literary work, it can develop human value; enrich experience through the life background of the characters in the story with various cultures, religions, races, and social status.

Film, also called movie or motion picture, is a visual art used to simulate experiences that communicate ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty or atmosphere by the means of recorded or programmed moving images along with other sensory stimulations. The word "cinema", short for cinematography, is often used to refer to film making and the film industry, and to the art form that is the result of it. Film catches people attention through the visualization of the story and the sound effects.

Feminism is a phenomenon in the society. In discussing feminism, people will talk about women. Feminism is an ideology of women's liberation, because that is inherent in all of its approach is the belief that women suffer injustice because of their gender (Humm,2002).Women are important in the society. A woman has to take care of her personal life and if she is a mother, she has to take

care also about her children's life and her husband too. Married women have lots of worries and believe it or not, they carry out a more stress life than married men.

The film of Erin Brockovich's is one of the famous films which present women's spirit. This film has been published in 2000 which was directed by Steven Soderbergh and the script writer of this film is Susannah Grant and is revised by Richard La Gravenese. This film is based on a true story which was played by Julia Robert that takes the character of Erin Brockovich as the main character of this film. The film is a dramatization of the true story of Erin Brockovich, portrayed by Julia Roberts, who fought against the energy corporation Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

The film was a box office success, and critical reaction was positive. Erin Brockovich is a single mother of three and a former Miss Wichita, defies expectations by convincing hundreds of families to sue the \$28 billion company Pacific Gas and Electric, who has poisoned the water supply of Hinkley, California with Hexavalent Chromium, and she succeeds to win the largest settlement ever pays in a direct action lawsuit, she fights against the American West Coast Energy Giant Pacific Gas and Electric Company is known as PG&E. Erin Brockovich film tells about a woman who have three children, and she must take care of her young children even though she works in the lawsuit office. She has no high education, no skill, but she has a spirit and hope she struggles to make her life better.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Literature and Film

Literature is a written communication whether in poetic shape or dramatic or fiction. It always communicates human experiences and employs devices of narrative. Film/films on the other hand mostly employ the spoken aspects of communication like sounds. Sounds are dominated in film making. Written and Spoken communication is a very important source through which human beings gain wisdom throughout their life span. Literature is written most of the time by only one. Film is not literature. Literature is not film. Literature expresses a purely personal universe. Film does not, and cannot. For it takes some 253 different

trades and professions to accomplish the move from script to screen (Ekwuazi: 2005).

2. Feminism

a. Introduction of Feminism

Historically women are the first oppressed group and the issue of oppression of women is the most widespread (Alison and Paula in Tong, 2009: 49). After a long trip of makes the world better by making new rules, inventing new things, changing ancient ideas and thoughts. Women were still struggling every moment and they were still looking for their rights. Feminism has generated an ongoing debate in all over the world, and it came to solve women's problems and to put an end to the injustice treatment for them. It was the voice of women in times they were not able to speak or to express their feelings and wishes. Woman is treated as second class and do not deserve to have the same treatment enjoyed by men (Tong, 2009:81).

b. Definition of Feminism

In feminism is for "Everybody: Passionate Politics", Bell Hooks (2000:8) shares her simple definition that is feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. Marisa Rueda (2007) said that feminism is about toward division of labor in the world that decide that only men that have a power in public domain such as in job, sport, war, government but women only as a worker without wage at home who shoulder the entire family life loads. Besides Marisa Rueda there is Asmaeny Aziz (2007) who think that feminism is an approach to see women position in public space, culture, and economy therefore feminism become a new manner to approach women's position that equal to men.

c. Types of Feminism

The feminism view of Rosemarie Tong and Tina FernandesBotts (2018) can be divided into several types as follow:

1. LiberalFeminism

Liberal feminism originated during the "first wave" of feminist activity,

roughly from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1950, came into full flower in the so-called “second wave” of feminist activity, roughly from the 1960s through the 1980s, and began to transform and restructure itself at the start of the so-called “third wave” of feminist activity, approximately from the 1990s to the present. The first wave of liberal feminism centered on women’s suffrage, the second wave concentrated on gender equity and equal opportunity for women, and the third wave shifted focus to egalitarian concerns, equality of outcome, and intersectionality theory (Tong and Botts, 2018:21).

2. Radical Feminism

Radical feminists believe that true gender or sex equality is impossible within a patriarchal system. Radical feminists introduced to women at large the practice of consciousness-raising. Women came together in small groups and shared with each other their personal experiences as women. In these groups, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many women discovered that their supposedly individual experiences were not unique but widely shared by women of various backgrounds.

3. Marxist and Socialist Feminisms

Marxists in general, Marxist and socialist feminists claim that social existence determines consciousness. Always on call, women form a conception of themselves they would not have if their roles in the family and the workplace did not keep them socially and economically subordinate to men (Tong and Botts, 2018:92). Nancy Holmstrom (2002), the socialist feminist project is more pressing than ever. The brutal economic realities of globalization impact everyone across the globe but women are affected disproportionately.

4. Women-of-Color Feminism(s) in United States

Women of color are persons who have had the female experience within this group of persons, an experience understood as consisting of oppression both as a woman and as a person of color. Operating as if every woman’s experience mirrors that of women who have benefited from birth from white privilege, mainstream feminism fails to adequately acknowledge and address the concerns of women of color (Tong and Botts, 2018:127).

5. Women of Color Feminism(s) on the World Stage : Global, Postcolonial,

and Transnational Feminisms

a. Global Feminism

Global feminism stresses the links between the various kinds of oppression women experience throughout the world. Charlotte Bunch (1993) expresses well the vantage point of many global feminists: To make global feminist consciousness a powerful force in the world demands that we make the local, global and the global, local.

b. Postcolonial Feminism

Postcolonial feminists concern themselves primarily with cautioning formerly colonized peoples against allowing their former colonizers to define, control, regulate, marginalize, stigmatize, belittle, or in any other way devalue them and their culture. Postcolonial feminists concern themselves primarily with economic and political issues, stressing that women's oppression as members of formerly colonized peoples often exceeds their oppression as women (Tong and Botts, 2018:164).

c. Transnational Feminism

Although transnational feminism shares many features with global and postcolonial feminisms, according to Parekh and Wilcox (2014), transnational feminism is insensitive to the myriad differences among women. It does not claim that a "global sisterhood" now exists that is strong enough to present "a unified front against global patriarchy." Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of transnational feminism is its preference for engaging in specific activist movements.

6. Psychoanalytic Feminism

Psychoanalytic feminists maintained that the fundamental explanation for women's way of acting stems from deep within their psyche, specifically, from their way of thinking about themselves as women. Relying on Freudian constructs such as the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal stages psychoanalytic feminists claim that gender identity, hence gender inequity, and is rooted in a series of infantile and early childhood experiences.

7. Care-Focused feminism

Like psychoanalytic feminists, care-focused feminists are interested in the

differences that distinguish the female from the male psyche. However, unlike psychoanalytic feminists, care-focused feminists do not emphasize boys and girls psychosexual development. If they stress any aspect of children's development in particular, it is their psycho moral development.

8. Ecofeminism

Ecofeminists, who include many global, postcolonial, and transnational feminists as well as mainstream, generally privileged, white feminists, focus on human beings' domination of the nonhuman world, or nature. Because women are culturally tied to nature, ecofeminists argue that there are conceptual, symbolic, and linguistic connections between feminist and ecological issues.

9. Existentialist, Poststructuralist, and Postmodern Feminisms

Existentialist, poststructuralist, and postmodern feminisms, they remain three of the most galvanizing developments in contemporary feminist thought. Despite having distinct agendas, these three kinds of feminists share certain tendencies. Moreover, they share a common desire to rethink woman/women as the relationship between sex and difference, identity, power, and meaning. Still, existentialist and postmodern feminists part ways at a deeply conceptual level. For de Beauvoir, binary and oppositional thinking is the way to go: self/other, man/woman, and transcendence/immanence.

10. Third-Wave and Queer Feminisms

a. Third-Wave Feminism

According to R. Claire Snyder, third-wave feminists made two significant "tactical moves that responded to a series of theoretical problems within the second wave of feminism." First, in response to the collapse of the essentialist concept of woman, they brought to the fore "personal narratives that illustrated an intersectional and multi perspectival version of feminism. Second, "in response to the ascendance of postmodernism, third-wave feminists embraced multi vocality over synthesis and action over theoretical justification."

b. Queer Feminism

Although the term "queer" originally had a negative connotation, as in "weird," "odd," "peculiar," it has a positive, even celebratory connotation among those who use it currently. Queer theory has in some ways displaced/replaced gay

and lesbian studies. Scholars who do queer studies interrogate gender, sexuality, and human desire strenuously, shredding to pieces old norms about heterosexuality being the only acceptable sexual behavior between human beings (Tong and Botts, 2018:311).

d. The Principles of Feminism

To examine the feminism in Susannah Grant's Film "Erin Brockovich", the writer uses the principles of feminism according to SaparinahSadli(2010).

SaparinahSadli (2010) said the principles of feminism are as follows:

1. Daring to convey a different opinion
2. Having clearer aspirations and ambitions
3. Having a desired social status
4. Daring to compete.

The selection of the principles of feminism is also as a feature of the main character in Erin Brockovich film.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method is the way or the procedure which is used to solve the research problem (HadariNawawidan Martini Hadari, 1995:66). The writer uses library research by collecting sources and the literary reviews that have the same objects of the research to get more knowledge about every part of the struggle of women as a representation of the feminism in "Erin Brockovich". In this study the authors used a descriptive qualitative method.

The research instrument of this research is taken from the script and the film directly, the writer watches and maps every parts of Erin Brockovich's film then the writer analyze the film by using FeminismTheory.

The object the research focuses on "Feminism in Susannah Grant's Film "Erin Brockovich". The writer analysis the elements of the types and the principles of feminism that are portrayed in the film especially in the major character, Erin Brockovich who fights and struggles in her careers, and take care of her children as a singlemother.

In conducting the study, the writer uses the technique in collecting the data as follows: 1) Watching the movie and reading the script of the film, 2) Reviewing from the previous researchers to get the support information about the feminism in the movie. 3) Taking notes of important part in both of the film and the script (including the dialogues, scenes and narration), and the previous researchers. 4) Bolding the important word, phrases and sentences which are related to the study. 5) Arranging the data into several parts based on its classification. 6) Drawing the conclusion of the analysis that has already been done in the former chapter and transcript it into written text.

After identifying and classifying the data, the writer notes down the data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, expressions, statements, and others related to the women's struggle as a single parent as a representation of the feminist struggle in Erin Brockovich's film. The writer explains the data in accordance with the concept of feminism which has several aspects of the data that is explained related to the contents of the story in the film.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Findings

After the writer analyzes the feminism in Susannah Grant's Film "Erin Brockovich" on the data analysis, two research findings as the following:

1. The type of feminism that found in the film "*Erin Brockovich*" only one type, namely liberal feminism. It refers to liberal feminism because Erin's role in the film shows the women's strength, hard-working, independence, never giving up, never depends on men, and how struggles she is to raise her children by herself to reach a better life, especially in financial.
2. The principles of feminism that found in the film "*Erin Brockovich*" are four principles, they are: daring to convey a different opinion, having clearer aspirations and ambitions, having a desired social status, and daring to compete. All the principles of feminism found

based on Sadli's (2010) theory and that explains in the dataanalysis.

Discussions

The data analysis shows that only one type one feminism in Erin Brockovich, namely liberal feminism. The data found after the writer analysis 30 dialogues and scenes that all of them refers to liberal feminism. The type of feminism in Erin Brockovich refers to Tong's theory. The data that the writer found that refers to principles of feminism are 50 dialogues and scenes. The principles of feminism in Erin Brockovich refer to Sadli's theory.

Generally, the uses of Tong's theory about feminism still progress because her feminist thought has always develop from 1998 to 2018 and there have been five editions of books about "a more comprehensive: feminist thought". Erin Brockovich's is one of the films that support by Tong's theory.

Nurlaila, in her research *A Main Character Analysis on The Film "Erin Brockovich" By Using Liberal Feminism Approach Thesis (2009)* find the Major problem of her study focuses on the main character of Erin Brockovich as the main character. Another researcher is ArmaidaPuspitasari (2009) from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, with her research entitled Women's Independence in Steven Soderbergh's Erin Brockovich: A Feminist Approach is to reveal how women's independence is reflected in Erin Brockovich directed by Steven Soderbergh. The writer focuses on analyzing women characters and it is focused on women's independence by applying feminist approach.

Several studies are conducted as well. The studies reveal similarity in terms of feminism aspect. The difference is prevalent in the use on theory. No one has examined the principles of feminism in Erin Brockovich by using Sadli's theory, as far as the writer knowsit.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conlusions

The goal of this study is to examine the feminism in order to find out what type of feminism and the principles of feminism in Erin Brockovich based on the

major characters. There are ten types of feminism according to Tong's theory, they are: Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, Marxism and Socialist feminism, Women of color feminism in United States, Women of color feminism on world stage, Psychoanalytic feminism, Care focused feminism, Ecofeminism, Existentialist, Post structural and Postmodern feminism, Third-Wave and Queer feminism. Based on the writer analysis the type of feminism in Erin Brockovich is only one type, namely liberal feminism. The character of Erin is a woman who loves her children very much and she will do everything to make her children happy. The woman spirit of Erin also shown by how she works so hard in the lawsuit office. Even though she has no degree expertise, but she can prove that she is successful to get free from the patriarchal system and represents liberal feminism concept.

The role of Erin is also supported by four principles of feminism, they are: daring to convey a different opinion, having clearer aspirations and ambitions, having a desired social status, and daring to compete. The writer used two theories from different authors but is still in the feminism aspects.

Suggestions

Considering the conclusion above, there are some important suggestions to be examined. They are:

1. The result of this study can be used as the reference for other researchers who will conduct research on feminism theory or combination theories.
2. The film, *Erin Brockovich* is suggested to be used by teacher in the class as the learning resources.

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