



SCOPE

Journal of English Language Teaching

| p-ISSN 2541-0326 | e-ISSN 2541-0334 |
<https://journal.lppmunindra.ac.id/index.php/SCOPE/>



Research Article

The Representation of Radical Feminism in Black Widow Movie Directed by Cate Shortland

Sri Arfani¹, Juhana², Nurul Vitria Hastutik³

^{1,3} Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Jakarta

² Universitas Terbuka, Tangerang Selatan

KEYWORDS

Literature;
 Feminism;
 Movie

A B S T R A C T

The goal of feminism is to fully establish gender equality in law and practice while combating sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. Cate Shortland is the director of the superhero science fiction film *Black Widow*. In the film, black widowed women are controlled by the Red Room Academy, a clandestine criminal organization. The primary character and former Black Widow Natasha Romanoff is depicted destroying the Red Room Academy and its male head, Dreykov. The theory of feminism and film analysis are used by the researcher to answer these research questions. There are three objectives in this research. The first objective is to describe the character value of Natasha in the movie. Next is to analyze the radical feminism shown by Natasha in the movie. Last, to analyze the moral value that the director wants to convey. This research was qualitative descriptive method by watching the movie and taking several scenes that were related to the theory. The results of this research reveal that: (1) There are three-character value from Natasha as the main character of the movie; independent, social care and perseverance. (2) The analysis reveals the radical feminism inclinations portrayed by Natasha Romanoff is the act of self-sacrifice. (3) The moral value found in *Black Widow* movie is about caring each other and women's right.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR(S):

E-mail: juhana@ecampus.ut.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

The development of literature from the first it was born has created various literary works such as novels, short stories, poetry, drama, movie, etc. The movie is a motion picture captured by the camera and then processed by adding sound effects and cinematography to make it better. People nowadays are attracted to movies because they can entertain the audience with facts, inspiration, motivation, and imagination.

A movie called "Black Widow" was released back then in 2021. *Black Widow* is a film produced by Marvel Studio. Natasha Romanoff aka Black Widow confronts the darker parts of her ledger when a dangerous conspiracy with ties to her past arises. Pursued by a force that will stop at nothing to bring her down, Natasha must deal with her history as a spy and the broken relationships left in her wake long before she became an Avenger. Feminism is a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. The fundamental belief behind feminist theory is that since the dawn of human civilization, women have been given secondary status. It

is found when the speakers mix two languages or more to achieve their purposes, predominantly masculine and Western social discourse philosophical tradition. The history of every civilization shows that women have always been subordinated to a position where they have no means of reclaiming their unique identity except until they revisit history, explore it and finally rebuild it through their own experiences and insight.

Several researchers have tried to identify female character, Darti and Kristina (2018) attempted to investigate feminist stylistics approach in the movie "The Breadwinner", that was full of portrayal of women in the setting of Afghanistan under the Taliban rule. The tragic story was beautifully wrapped under the animated movie produced to show the real picture towards the world. The data are in the form of words, sentences and discourse spoken by male and female characters that represent the depiction of women. The data obtained are examined with the view of Sara Mills theory. It is found that in the movie, the women are represented as two opposing aspects: women representation as an object of man domination, and women as the subject who is able to speak out her mind and to decide independently.

Other studies have been conducted by researchers such as Rahayu (2019) that focus on problems the main female character face related to gender role, and to analyze how the main female character struggle to gain gender equality. The theory of feminism and the film analysis are used by research to answer these research question. This researcher is descriptive qualitative applying content analysis method. The result of her study shows that one of the problems the main character faces is the need to be taken seriously especially in her career and she corrects the wrong that is in the law in order to gain gender equality

Based on the findings of the preceding study, this research attempts to delve deeper into Radical Feminism in Black Widow Movie Directed by Cate Shortland. It is essential to pay attention to works of literature, for the sake of comprehending how literature reflects society. As the theory above, Literature usually expresses the ideas and feelings of the human mind that are closely related to the time period, which indicates that something was created to enliven and inspire. Van Peer (2020) said Literature, then, is to be defined as the form of art, the functioning of which is primarily dependent on the use of natural human language as its medium. It means that language is the substantial element in literature. Without language there can be no literature. Helgeland, Yastanti, Rohati, and Akbar (2021) said "literature is imaginative work that made by the author, also the essence of literature is not only telling the holy story about the god but history about the myth from human culture. However, there is also entertaining side from literary work which can make the

audience believe and happy". It means that literature is the place that can use to express the idea from the imaginative mind that contain a human culture in society.

Barnet, Burto, and Cain (2006) stated that a work of literature is not a nut to be cracked open so that a kernel of meaning can be extracted and devoured, and the rest thrown away; the whole—a performance in words—is something to be experienced and enjoyed. Thus, a work of literature is not an ordinary work which can be discarded after reading or viewing, it will stay new after being viewed a thousand times. Steen (2011) said, "Literature is a type of discourse that is characterized by the domain value 'artistic', the content value 'fictional', and the functional value 'positively affective'". This signifies that literature is a creative work of art that reflects the author's imagination and is meant to have a beneficial impact on the audience. Conclusion: Literature is a reflection of society that has been elevated to the status of an art form by the use of aesthetically pleasing language. Smithikrai, Longthong, and Peijsel (2015) said movies are a powerful tool for enhancing positive characteristics and reducing negative ones. This is because the appropriate movies speak to the unspoiled spot that is present in all of us, where people escape from their lives into themselves and come out feeling better, stronger, and more willing to take healthy action. It means, the dialogue, camera angles, music, lighting, and sound effects of a movie synergistically influence the audience to be in a trance-like state. The movie can be a way for the audience to entertain themselves. Movie regarded as art that is penetrative and powerful. Cloete (2017) said film is attractive to people of different age groups, because it tells stories with which we could associate. Largely it also tells our personal stories, that of the community and the world we are living in. It means, watching a movie can bring the audience into an alternative world. Afterwards, watching a movie can increase the audience's imagination to participate in what main character is seeing, hearing and feeling. In other word, the quality of a movie can be seen from the technique of editing from the moviemakers. The development of specific camera techniques needs to fulfill the natural dynamics of attention and other structural features of the audience's perception.

Character is the representation of the way how someone thinks of, feels and behaves. Value is a belief that helps someone to decide right and wrong and its affect the direction of how people live in society. Combining both terms, character values can be understood as good characters that should belong to individuals in order to be able to live a desired lifestyle according to the rules that exist in society. According to Utami and Rohmatillah (2021), there are seven ways of character value in society, namely: 1) Honesty, 2) Tolerance, 3) Independent, 4) Creativity, 5) Perseverance, 6) Responsibility, and 7)

Social care. Honesty means that behavior is based on an attempt to make himself as one who can always be trusted in words, actions, and employment. Honesty is not just about telling the truth. It's about being honest with oneself and others about who we are, what we want, and what it takes to live our most authentic life. Second, tolerance deals with attitudes and actions that respect the differences of religion, race, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions of others who are different from themselves. To be tolerant means that we accept other people's opinions and preferences, even when they live in a way that we don't agree with. Moreover, independent is dealt with attitudes and behaviors that are not easy to depend on others to complete tasks. Being independent gives us the ability to care for ourselves – either emotionally, physically, or financially. Any decision that independent people take is based on what they believe and not on the expectations or judgements of society.

Furthermore, creativity is thinking and doing something to generate new method or result of something that has been owned. Creativity is the ability to transcend conventional ways of thinking and acting to come up with new and original ideas, methods, or things. Meanwhile, Perseverance is referred to continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. Perseverance requires determination, hard work, and resilience. This character value teaches us that we cannot always control what happened but we can control how we react. Finally, social care is meant of attitudes and behavior of a person to carry out the duties and obligations he should do, to himself, society, environment (natural, social, and cultural), the nation, and the Almighty God. Attitudes and actions that always want to help other people and communities in need. Being caring helps strengthen relationships and form meaningful emotional connections with others. When we allow ourselves to care for those around us, we can live a truly happier and more complete life.

Shukla and Mishra (2020) said feminism has outsourced an insight of equal opportunity, humanity and a peaceful world full of love, understanding and logical life for all kinds of people. It means the purpose of feminism is to fights for a peaceful future that considers women, other people marginalized people, and gender and help feminism will help people to have a good view of world as far as women's issues are concerned. While Karyati (2022) said feminism as a philosophy and movement in society arises an awareness, when in human history in the world shows the reality where women (feminine) feel disadvantaged in all fields and are subordinated to men (masculine) especially in a patriarchal society. It means, the presence of feminism in society caused by the unfair treatment that received by women. The purpose of feminist movement is to get a fair treatment as man in society.

220 Sri Arfani, Juhana, Nurul Vitria Hastutik

In the society, women oppression and subordination are different; consequently, different feminist groups have emerged in different times. But the main goal of every group is to achieve gender equality. In order to categories feminist theory or thought, Kumar Mohajan (2022) proposed five strands or classifications of feminism: 1) liberal feminism, 2) marxist feminism, 3) socialist feminism, 4) radical feminism, and 5) ecofeminism. Liberal feminism is a liberalism that comprises of a political and economic principle that stresses individual independence, equality of opportunity, and the protection of individual rights. It supports rule of law, civil and human rights, secularism, democracy, freedom of speech, press, religion, and property. It encourages the development of freedoms, particularly in the political and economic spheres. They stress that men and women should have equal rights and women have equal opportunities as men. Liberal feminism supports suffrages, such as equal rights to education, equal political and civil rights, right to vote for all citizens irrespective of men and women. Liberal feminists also demanded equal rights for voting, reproduction, abortion and child healthcare, and reaction against sexual harassment.

Second, marxist feminism is a political philosophy, led by left-wing people; inspired and founded by the two great German philosophers, Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), and is generally referred to as the economic theory of history. Marxist feminism is discovered in the 1970s, which focused on the dismantling of capitalism and way to liberate women that explains the roots of women's oppression from a class viewpoint. Marxist feminists indicate the secondary oppression of women with economic, social and political structures related to capitalism. It has stressed to adjust domestic labor, as well as wage work to support their position. It believes that the contribution in economic household may give women a better position in the family. In accordance, socialist feminism is a vibrant intellectual and political current that has come and gone. Socialist feminism wants to analyze the effects of fair distribution of rewards to realize the correlation between gender and classes. Socialist feminists argue that even though women are oppressed in almost all societies, the degree and character of oppression depends upon the economic realities of a given society. They stress that in the society women are considered as birth giver, child reared and socializer, caretaker of the sick people, etc. Socialist feminists find economic dependence of women on men as main cause of their subordination. For example, women from the upper classes may employ poorer women to do the domestic work for them. Therefore, they want social and economic equality and financial independence of women. For example, women from the upper classes may employ poorer women to do the domestic work for them.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v8i1.17704>

Radical feminism also highlights violence and coercion made by men through rape, sexual harassment, child sexual assault, domestic violence; abuse for women, children, and vulnerable men in patriarchy. They complained exploitation of women as housewives, mothers, and sex partners; and also see marriage a formalization of women persecution. Moreover, they believe that women are not just equal but are actually morally superior to men and patriarchy can be replaced by matriarchy. Radical feminists believe that prostitution, pornography, stripping, massage parlors, escort services are sexual exploitation industries, and men routinely buy and sell objectified female bodies for their sexual pleasure. Moreover, ecofeminism is an organic combination of feminist and ecological thoughts that are articulated through the work of women gardeners, botanists, animal welfare advocates, etc. It focuses ecology and feminism into one point, and seeks to draw parallels between the exploitation of the environment and the exploitation of women. It stresses that humans and nature must live in harmony to maintain ecological balance and sustainable development. Oppression of women and domination of nature are connected and mutually strengthening. It is much more spiritual than political or theoretical in nature. It contains two major components; ecology and feminine. It believes that women realize and love nature instinctually, and oppose oppression of women and aggression against nature under.

METHOD

Research Design

The researchers uses descriptive qualitative method to analyze the movie. Mohajan and Mohajan (2018) said qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way of people interpret, and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals. It makes the use of interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations and immersions; and open-ended questionnaires to obtain, analyze, and interpret the data content analysis of visual and textual materials, and oral history. The researchers collects the data for the thesis by taking several scenes and dialog then analyze it with supporting theories from experts. Qualitative research deals with the development of social explanations phenomenon. In other words, it's designed to help us understand the social world we live in and why things are the way they are. Qualitative research focuses on reports of experience or on data which cannot be adequately expressed numerically.

Technique of Collecting Data

Movie and dialogue transcription are as main sources and documents, such as e-book, article, journals publications, and many others as secondary sources.

Technique of Analyzing Data

1. Gathering all data
The researchers watched the movie several times and paid attention to every dialog and scene to get more understanding about the feminism that came up in the movie. As the result, the researchers was able to understand the data relevant to the research question.
2. Classifying and organizing the information into several categories
In order to support the result of the analysis, the researchers classified each scene in the movie and rewrote the dialogue and captured each scene to get the data from the movie.
3. Making a code to make it easy
To get a valid script and picture, the researchers checked the scene one by one and divide each related data on the capture scene. For instance, the researchers rewrote the dialogue and captured each scene in order to obtain the data as the evidence, then classified it by removing the discontinuing scene.
4. Connecting the data to the theories
To demonstrate how the idea can affect each other, furthermore the researchers can split the information appropriate in the study issue.
- e. Data collaboration and synchronization
By assessing alternative explanations and eliminating the proof, the researchers could only provide the most significant proof to write the result.
- f. Representing the results
The researchers explained the evidence with further explanation in order to provide more information according to the research question. The researchers gave the dialogues to make it easy for the reader to understand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the researchers find the results of research in which there are Character Values Show by Natasha in the Movie, Radical Feminism in Black Widow movie, and moral values found in the movie

Character Values Show by Natasha in the Black Widow Movie

Based on Utami and Rohmatillah (2021) about character value, there are seven ways of character values. These are honesty, tolerance, independent, creativity, love of peace, responsibility, social care. However, not all the character values appear in Black Widow movie. The character values show by Natasha in Black Widow movies are:

1. Independent

Independent is the ability of doing the things for yourself and no need help from other people to make decision. This independent thought will make someone confidence with the decisions and regardless the noises around them.

In *Black Widow* movie, Natasha portrayal as a woman who highly skilled in martial arts and mastery of complicated weapons. She can fight against the enemy who attacks her. With her martial art skills, she doesn't rely on other people when she needs help. Her martial art skills proven when she fights the Taskmaster with only a knife, while the Taskmaster equipped with smart technology weapons.

2. Social Care

Social care is the attitudes and actions that always want to provide to help others and people in need. Social care is one of character value which is grown and developed on each person in order to run their own function as social creatures in daily life. Based on the story, Dreykov is a man who operates the Red Room. He is the main target of Natasha's mission to destroy the Red Room. With Natasha's social care character, she dares herself to take a fight with Dreykov and has no fear about what happen next to her. Her social care character brings her to help and free the widows so they can feel how to live well without under pressure from someone.

3. Perseverance

Perseverance is being diligent and finishing what has start despite the obstacles and obstacles that stand in a way to achieve. Perseverance involves the voluntary continuation of purposeful action in the face of challenges, difficulties and discouragements. With Natasha perseverance character she makes decisions to takes out Alexei out of prison although she knows that she will be attack by the security forces. The prison that located in the snowy place cause the difficulties but Natasha keeps going on the mission to free Alexei to ask the detail about the Red Room. Alexei is one of the agents that work under Dreykov before he got betrayed and put in the prison for life.

Radical Feminism in Black Widow Movie

Based on the theory from Sierra and Amariles (2021), the main purpose of feminism is to have equality in the domains of law, politics, sex-related freedom and personal decision. *Black Widow* is a feminist movie from Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) which contains scenes that affirm the female experience and explore female relationships. In this research the researchers decides the kind of feminism is this movie is radical feminism, because the movie's plot shows the mistreatment that happened in women. Natasha as the main character attempts to take down the mistreatment in the movie and show women should be treated in society and remove the gender inequality.

1. Men Hold Unequal Power Over Women

The Red Room is the place that leads by Dreykov use to imprisoning, controlling and taking the free-will of women who become black widow. From the beginning of the movie, Dreykov is shown as a man who sees the women not as human but referring them as an object. Dreykov's sexism considers women's position is lower and thus he has control over them.

How Dreykov control his widow is not only limited inside the Red Room. Dreykov also designed his network of widows all over the world and put a killing chip over the widow's brain so when the widow failed to finished the mission, he can easily terminate the widow from the high-tech tab.

Yelena :” *He takes more every day. Children who don't have anyone to protect them. Just like us when we are small. Maybe one in twenty survives in the training, become a widow. The rest, he kills. To him, we are just things. Weapons with no face that he can just throw away. Because there is always more.*”
(*Black Widow*, 00:48:03 – 00:48:24)

The statement of Yelena above strengthens the fact about how Dreykov sees women no more than a business or a program. If once of the widow failed the mission, he can terminate them anytime and anywhere without being fear to lose them because he can take more children to train to be a widow.

Another scene shows that Natasha has difficulties to fight Dreykov. Even though Natasha has a long broke free from Dreykov's control, she still reacts to the pheromonal lock. By installing the pheromonal lock in every widow, Dreykov is able to do the violence and abuse them but they cannot fight back. This fact proved that he believes that men are higher than women, because in Dreykov's eyes women are equal to object that can be obtained and controlled.

2. Self-Sacrifice

This research has found the radical feminism action performed by Natasha Romanoff in order to take down the mistreatment is self-sacrifice. The need for self-sacrifice arises in the case of women who are in abusive relationships, are poor or marginalized, or in other ways disempowered. One of the situations fits the life of Dreykov's black widow who is imprisoned since young and then were raised to be weapons with no humanely identity. Since Natasha Romanoff was once a part of the 30

Red Room, she went through the same oppression. In this research study, the researchers found Natasha's self-sacrifice as another one of the feminist tools that she uses to take down the Red Room and Dreykov.

In the next scenes, Natasha is able to attack Dreykov but he then asked the widow to help him by activating the emergency warning. The widows who are in the training room suddenly ran into Dreykov's workspace. The widow expression in Figure III.10 filled with anger but soulless at the same time. This signifies how the widows have fully become emotionless weapons and only know how to fight and reacting to danger.

Moral Value in Black Widow Movie

1. Caring Each Other

Caring for each other in the Black Widow movie talks about the importance of family and explores what defines a family. The film opens with a normal-looking of family in Ohio with two young daughters playing in a suburban backyard, then the whole family is sitting down to dinner when the father suddenly announces that it's time. must go adventure. This cute little family then narrowly escaped the police and authorities when their private jet took off on a family adventure where the family was physically and mentally separated for several decades. Even though they just pretended to be a real family, still had to look out for each other. So, whether you're in the midst of a normal family unit, a team of Avengers, a miscellaneous unit with the impossible mission of saving the world from a dictatorship, a group of female assassins are freed. Liberals or citizens of the free world, you could be in a "family." Protecting your family members can then become your goal, even more important than life. At the end of the day, your real family doesn't necessarily have to be your biological family. It is the people you really love. Natasha, Elena, Alexei, and Melina aren't technically a real family, but they see and treat each other as such.

2. Women's Rights

Aside from the deep theme of family, the film's main conflict revolves around a very real issue in today's world: women's rights to their bodies and choices. Even in its fictitious world, "Black Widow" sends a universally important message to audiences about women's rights to make their own choices. Natasha as the main character in the movie proves what a skilled and powerful woman she is – both as an expert fighter and perhaps more importantly as a passionate heroine. Furthermore, the story extends to her compassion and dedication to atone for past wrongs by saving other women who have been robbed of their autonomy.

CONCLUSION

The researchers found three character-values that show by Natasha as the main character in Black Widow movie, there are: independent, social care and perseverance. These characters show while she was trying to free the women who slave as the widow. The character value that owned

by Natasha successfully brings her to free the widow and destroy the Red Room that lead by Dreykov.

The kind of feminism shown by Natasha's performance in the Black Widow movie is radical feminism. Radical feminism focuses on how society creates social assumptions about how women should be treated. The radical feminist action performed by Natasha Romanoff in order to take down the mistreatment that she and other women experienced is self-sacrifice. The purpose of the self-sacrifice performed by Natasha is to fight Dreykov and destroy the Red Room system. The result of her self-sacrifice is that she successfully breaks the pressure that cages the black widow's identity.

The moral value found in the Black Widow movie is about caring for each other and women's rights. A world family is not always described as a family that has related blood. It can be described as the person that we want to take care of for the rest of our lives. The Black Widow movie teaches us that although Natasha, Elena, Alexei, and Melina are the fake family made by Dreykov, the year that they spend together creates a connection between them. The women's rights that the Black Widow movie wants to convey are women's rights to their bodies and choices. The rights to live a life with freedom decision without pressure from someone.

REFERENCE

- Barnet, S., Burto, W., & Cain, W. E. (2006). *An Introduction to Literature: Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. Pearson - Longman.
- Cloete, A. L. (2017). Film as medium for meaning making: A practical theological reflection. *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 73(4). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4753>
- Darta, D. M. S., & Kristina, D. (2018). The representation of women characters in the movie the breadwinner. *IJHS*, 2(1), 42-50. <https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJHS/article/view/1524/1239>
- Helgeland, B., Yastanti, U., Rohati, T. D., & Akbar, J. M. (2021). *Racism of the Main Character in 42 Movie Directed*. 6(2), 203–220. <https://doi.org/10.30957/ijotl-tl.v6i2.676>
- Karyati, Z. (2022). Feminism in education management. *Pedagonal: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 6(1), 141–149. <https://doi.org/10.55215/pedagonal.v6i1.4973>
- Kumar Mohajan, H. (2022). An overview on the feminism and its categories. *Research and Advances in Education*, 1(3), 11–26. <https://doi.org/10.56397/rae.2022.09.02>
- Mohajan, H., & Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Methodology in social sciences and related subjects qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7.

- Rahayu, J. S. (2019). An Analysis of female characters struggle in the movie on The Basis of Sex. (Thesis), STIBA IEC; Jakarta.
- Shukla, S., & Mishra. (2020). *Feminism and Education*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362545089>
- Sierra, Z., & Amariles, X. (2021). Feminisms. In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of the Possible* (pp. 1–10). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98390-5_93-1
- Smithikrai, C., Longthong, N., & Peijsel, C. (2015). Effect of using movies to enhance personal responsibility of university students. *Asian Social Science*, *11*(5), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n5p1>
- Steen, G. (2011). Genres of discourse and the definition of literature. *Discourse Processes*, *28*(2), 109–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01638539909545075>
- Utami, A. I. P., & Rohmatillah, M. R. K. (2021). Character values: What are they and how they are integrated in English textbook texts? *14*(2). <https://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/ENGEDU>
- Van Peer, W. (2020). *But What Is Literature? Toward a Descriptive Definition of Literature*.