

The Struggle of Lady Eboshi on Preserving Womanhood Value with Battling the Gender Stereotypes Culture in Princess Mononoke by Hayao Miyazaki

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Abstrak

Studi ini difokuskan pada peran feminisme radikal dan pengalihan gender dalam *Princess Mononoke* oleh Hayao Miyazaki. Ini menganalisis bagaimana seorang wanita di Irontown bernama Lady Eboshi dapat membuat banyak perbedaan untuk mencapai kesetaraan gender dengan menghancurkan budaya tradisional di mana wanita tidak dapat melakukan banyak hal seperti pria. Dia mengubah stereotip dan pandangan orang-orang ketika dia membuat para wanita di Irontown menjadi berani dan tangguh seperti dia. Data diambil dari film *Princess Mononoke* oleh Hayao Miyazaki dalam bentuk dialog, kutipan, frasa, dan deskripsi. *Princess Mononoke* menunjukkan bahwa wanita dan pria sama-sama sama meskipun jenis kelamin dan sifat biologisnya diberikan kepada mereka. Pria kebanyakan mendominasi dalam banyak hal, tetapi Lady Eboshi menjadikan para wanita termasuk dirinya menjadi jenis kelamin yang lebih unggul. Feminisme radikal memengaruhi Lady Eboshi untuk menjadi pemimpin dan menghancurkan budaya tradisional Jepang.

Kata Kunci: Feminisme, Feminise Radikal, Patriarkal dan, Era Jepang.

Abstract

This study focused on radical feminism and gender switching roles in *Princess Mononoke* by Hayao Miyazaki. It analyzes how a woman in Irontown named Lady Eboshi can make many differences in order to achieve gender equality by broke the traditional culture where woman cannot do many things like men. She changed the stereotypes and the views of people when she made the women of Irontown became fearless and tough like her. The data are taken from a movie *Princess Mononoke* by Hayao Miyazaki in the form of dialogues, quotations, phrases, and description. *Princess Mononoke* showed that women and men are equally the same despite their gender and biological traits given to them. Men mostly dominate in many things, but Lady Eboshi made the women including herself became the superior gender. The radical feminism influences Lady Eboshi to become a leader and breaking the traditional culture of Japanese era.

Keywords: Feminism, Radical Feminism, Patriarchal and, Japanese Era.

I. INTRODUCTION

As literature has been around us for quite a while, it makes many people familiar with both written and unwritten work. Literary work has been made with a wide range of purposes. Additionally, the meaning of

literature is changing and varied which implies that the meaning of literature is valued from subjective view.

The reasons and definition, yet in addition the types of literary work are differed; be that as it may, it

is normally shaped in written work. Furthermore, literary is divided into two; fiction and non-fiction.

Regardless of whether the literary work is fiction or non-fiction, it tends to be recognized into major genre, for example, novel, short story, and drama. Some people called literature as the one who talks about issues, experiences, or ideas that draw to numerous individuals' interest. Literature can voice the issues, experiences, or ideas of individuals even the things that occur in the society. Not just novel, short story, or also drama, literary works has formed into film also.

As been expressed by Malgorzata Marciniak in her article *The Appeal of Literature-To-Film Adaptations* that films contextualize books in an obvious and audible atmosphere and welcome us to find the unsuspected methods for seeing and hearing things. She imagined that film takes literary text on a different level and as the new medium's specificity. It implies that film can help people to effortlessly comprehend literary works. Since film is in type of visual, it will attract people's attention. Its visuals form make people easy to know and perceive how a portrayal of every characters show as opposed to envisioning it in written form.

There are a few perspectives which can be distinguished from a literature, for example, the hypothesis which turns into the most significant viewpoint. One of the debatable aspects which is being popular these days is feminism. As indicated by Jone Johnson Lewis on her article, *Feminism: Ideas, Beliefs, and Movements*, feminism alludes to a diverse variety of beliefs, ideas, movements, and agendas for action. Subsequently, feminism is an assumption and belief that women are not able to be treated equally like men. It additionally alludes to a movement which including changes of the member in the movement

Judith Lorber (1997) on her book, *The Variety of Feminisms and their Contribution to Gender Equality* additionally upheld the thought by expressing that radical feminism is a male controlled society which barely erase because its own root which the belief that women are different and lower in their status that profoundly embedded in most men's cognition. Men are thinking that women are different and cannot do well as men do because of the fact that they are the superior gender while the truth is women also capable to do many things just

like men including doing the work that involve their physics.

Through the literature; especially film, which is used as the medium of literary work in visual form. One of the examples of the movies which has a strong feminism theory in it is *Princess Mononoke*. It is a Japanese-animated movie that demonstrated how feminism happens in the movie.

Princess Mononoke is a film which set on Japanese era where gods and demons were exist and they were living alongside people. It was released in 1997 and the movie itself is set in the late Muromachi period (around 1336 to 1573) according to Wikipedia. It tells about Ashitaka, a young prince who is cursed by a demon and the cursed will kill him, so he traveled to western lands to find the cure. On his journey, he met Lady Eboshi, the ruler and leader of Irontown, also San (Princess Wolf), a human girl who was raised by the wolves. This movie is filled with strong feminism that showed by Lady Eboshi, San and the people who live in Irontown, especially the women. In this case, the female characters showed masculinity by their strength as well as their leadership. Lady Eboshi is one of the main female characters which depicts the radical feminism in this movie along with the women of Irontown. Basically, the movie told how women being the dominant gender and hero alike. Unlike how some movies made the men being the hero who save people, the main hero was represented by the women which is also being the superior gender.

There are numerous reviews and articles which said the director of this movie, Hayao Miyazaki, always uses women as the main character which mean most of his movie is showed feminism. Shanna F. Jones said in her article, *Hayao Miyazaki: the great feminist filmmaker of his time*, that in contrast to popular culture's traditionally accepted idea which denotes the value of a female character on good looks and sex appeal – all viewed through the binoculars of the male gaze - Miyazaki's choice of strong female characters throughout his work provides an alternative portrayal of women. It is a good movie to analyze as this movie is chosen because of the radical feminism depicted quiet strong in the movie. Not only how radical feminism is depicted, but also how both gender, both male and

female, shifted their roles in certain works. The radical feminism and both gender that shifted their roles is analyzed more in this study.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A. Radical Feminism

As indicated by Judith Lorber (1997) in *The Variety of Feminisms and their Contribution to Gender Equality*, radical feminism is a male controlled society which scarcely eradicate because its own root where the belief of the women are different and lower in their status that profoundly embedded in most men's cognition. Most men believe that women are different and ought not be similarly equivalent to them. Women in men's eyes are weak and sometimes some men sees women just as an object. Men additionally feel that women cannot do numerous things like men do. This sort of thoughts has been in people's mind since long time prior.

Judith Lorber (1997) also stated this on her book, radical feminism had its start in small, leaderless, women-only consciousness-raising groups, where the intense discussion was from women's daily lives like housework, serving men's emotional and sexual needs, menstruation, pregnancy, giving birth and menopause. It is shown that women are usually has no rights in the past besides doing their job as the housewives and it is like they are being ruled by their husbands all the time.

Radical feminism is an idea which rejected that women ought to act like what has been made dependent on their biology and this is causing gender inequality. The imbalance among people is the foundation of different disparities and oppression is additionally what made radical feminism shaped. Some feminism theories are made to avert the presence of gender inequality. Radical feminism likewise endeavors to draw lines among biologically and culturally behaviour so both women and men can be freed from their previous gender roles. Biology created psychological characteristics that linked with women such as warmth, nurturance, even emotional expressiveness. Those who dependent on someone's biology isn't generally can characterize someone's personality to be the very same as

indicated by what society portrays it. Psychological characteristics is just a delineation that made by biology or people's stereotype. To radical feminism, sex is a systematic division of social power, a social rule inseparable from the gender of each person, enforced to women's detriment aince it serves the interest of the powerful, that is, men (MacKinnon, 1989). Sex is something that differ people in doing numerous things, for example, having an occupation in the field they want which make the women feel they live under men's oppression.

Radical feminists focus around the subordination of women as its fundamental concern. It is uncovering of how male power is practiced and strengthened through such practices as sexual harassment, rape, pornography, prostitution, as well as childbearing, housework, love and marriage. Men are usually the superior gender and mostly dominates between both genders. They are also mostly the one who lead something be it in politically or socially and seen as the stronger gender. Women are sometimes feel that they are oppressed because their sexuality is one of the reason. Sexuality is the thing that can not be changed because it is given biologically since birth. This is why radical feminism theory is exists, to battle against violence on women because of how women is oppressed by gender inequality treats them.

B. Gender

Gender was an achieved status: that which is built through psychological, cultural, and social methods (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is not something that can define someone's personality or character and is not given biologically. That does not mean women or men can only act based on their gender or the stereotypes and stigma which has been around among the discussion in society. Women are allowed to do things like men and men are also allowed to do things like women.

Gender is now generally known as a social status, a personal identity, and a set of relationships between women and men, and among women and men (Lorber, 1997). Women are still women although when they are seen or act masculine and men are still men even when they are seen or act feminine. It is an identity for every individual to

have and nobody can make an individual to do things simply based on their gender.

The definitions above explained that gender is not something that can define one individual to do things according to what their biological traits given to them. The stereotypes where men or women ought to do things according to their sexes are made by the society itself while the fact of the matter is each gender are capable to do numerous things that do not based on their gender. Each gender has their own rights to do things based on what they want and what they like.

III. ANALYSIS

A. The Reflection of the culture by Lady Eboshi and the women of Irontown

Princess Mononoke is a movie where female characters mostly dominate. The main character is represented by Lady Eboshi. She is a strong and independent woman who becomes the leader of a town called Irontown where she saved and freed people from their oppressive environments in the past. The women in the Irontown are used to be work as prostitutes and the men are suffered from leprosy, but she saved them then made them work for her and also the town for their new life to improve their life better than before. They called Lady Eboshi as "Milady". The people of the town adore her since she has saved the life of many people. The uniqueness of the story is that how the role of men and women are switched. They shifted their roles unlike how society usually think men as the superior gender and women as the one who is oppressed by men. Based on the biological study, women are usually excluded from doing hard work which should use their strength as like what men do, however, in this movie the women are the strong character which is really contrast to the stereotype that people made. As supported by related literature about gender, because of this, gender does not affect since the radical feminism gives more impact in it. Gender was an accomplished status which is built through psychological, cultural, and social means (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Moreover, he mentioned that gender is not something that can define someone's personality and is not given biologically.

The movie strongly shows how radical feminism was depicted in the movie regardless of the Japanese culture where women are dependent on the men and work under men's oppression. The culture back then in Japanese also has the same culture like in numerous places where women are mistreated by men. Japanese work place mostly dominated by men therefore the access for women to work in a place they want is limited. Many women are work under men and in some cases they also work to satisfy men. Unlike women who tend to work as a housewives or doing work mostly in their house, this movie indicated how women can be a leader and organized then changed the town into a town full of prosperity. The main character, Lady Eboshi, truly has a crucial role in which she becomes the leader of Irontown and she should fight for the peace of the people. Lady Eboshi has a radical feminism character since she really wants to show to the world that men cannot be the one who has greater power. Radical feminism denied the women has inequality compare to the men. At the point when the differences between gender means dominance, for women to affirm differences is to affirm the qualities and characteristics of weakness (MacKinnon, 1989). Each woman has their own rights to accomplish something they want and it has nothing to do with their gender.

Man 1 : *"But she's not afraid of ancient laws, or of curses."*

Man 2 : *"Or of gods, either. You should've seen her with Nago!"*

Ashitaka : *"Nago?"*

Man 3 : *"A huge boar-god. He ruled the forest around here. We couldn't get near the mountains. All we could do was sit here and look up at them"*

Man 4 : *"The sand down below was worked out."*

Man 3 : *"Lots of people had their eye on this place. The boars got them all."*

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Man 5 : "To get sand, we have to clear the trees. Nago got mad."

Man 3 : "Then Lady Eboshi came along with her guns."

Although Lady Eboshi does not want to work for men, she is not a bad person to some men. She brought some men to the town who is infected by leprosy. She gave them second chance by accepting them into the town so they can live their life better than before. She accepted them and not treated them like an outcast unlike how society viewed people with disgusting disease.

The people of the Irontown became so affected by Lady Eboshi, they also have job because of Lady Eboshi. They sometimes joined Lady Eboshi to fight people and demons that tried to attack the town. People of Irontown always obey what Lady Eboshi told, even the men. The men did not think that it is an offensive act or they are hurt because a woman guided them to do numerous things such as working for her. Relate this circumstance with the current circumstance, it has been somewhat normal for having gender equality among men and women, however, in that era, Hayao Miyazaki as the director of the movie, he made this unprecedented circumstance to against the gender inequality.

B. Gender Switching Roles of people in Irontown by Lady Eboshi

Irontown is a unique town because men and women are shifted their roles. In an era where usually men are the one who is doing the hard and difficult job or going to fight, in Princess Mononoke, the women are the one who is doing the hard work. Irontown is a town ruled and lead by Lady Eboshi. She is the one who transformed the town into a town full of prosperity and also made the men and the women switching their roles because she wanted the women to be the superior gender. When usually women who live in Japan of that era ought to be a geisha or work as performer, the women in Irontown work to produce iron. Not only running the bellows to produce the iron, the women are also going into

fight and war alongside Lady Eboshi in order to protect their beloved leader as well as the town.

People who lives in Irontown were once lived in bad environment. Their life in the past was not unreasonably great, but then Lady Eboshi gave them another chance to live a good life and in a good environment where they can fulfill their needs. The women there used to be prostitutes and some men there have disease that can infect other people. Lady Eboshi took them to live in Irontown then she made them work for her.

Lady Eboshi knows how the women used to live under men's oppression by worked as prostitutes. They were seen as sexual object to please men. In Irontown, they live a better happy life despite the fact that they have to do hard work. Working the bellows as the blacksmiths to make iron is better than working as prostitutes although they also got money. Women can be seen as unfeminine, yet that does not make them "unfemale" (West and Zimmerman, 1987). They are still a woman despite the fact that they are doing the work which usually done by men. They even gained a higher status than the men when they began to live there because of the gender role is shifted.

Man 1 : "Don't mind them, sir. Lady Eboshi spoils them."

Ashitaka : "A good town has happy women."

Man 2 : "But women working the bellows in an ironworks?"

Man 3 : "Their presence defiles the iron. Milady buys up the contract of every brother girl she finds!"

In radicalism, women is a collective whole and a particular thing, its differing components part of its shared trait (MacKinnon, 1989). In this movie, Lady Eboshi is different because she takes the role of being a leader and shows how she is able to use gun also able to fight. She is fighting along with the women who lives in Irontown and it showed how she is different than most of the women in that era by the

things she did. She is able to break the stereotype and stigma that women cannot be the superior gender like become a leader.

Men's reaction to women's redefinition when the women are in control or in charge is frequently to show women exactly little control they have by undermining women's material or physical survival or their physical or sexual or emotional integrity (MacKinnon, 1989). She turned the things around where men are usually in charge in doing something and really made women as the superior gender in the town.

Lady Eboshi is fearless, independent, and unafraid of many things including gods. She is renewing and made Irontown into a town with good prosperity by making iron from ore. Not to mention that she has more power than most men in her town including Ashitaka who is one of the protagonist in the movie. Every man who lives in Irontown obey Lady Eboshi and praises her so well. The responsibility she has is big from manage the town as well as including fight for the town, but she is able to do all the hard work.

The society of that era in Japan was used to have men work and being the superior gender. Not many women have the opportunity to live their life the way they would have preferred because the men mostly being the dominance gender. Sometimes because the men know that they are the superior gender, they do whatever they like to the women without thinking how the women feel with what they have done. The women are also did not feel that they are being respected by the men. Lady Eboshi also did not want to work for any men. She is an independent woman and got things done by herself. She had enough with what the men and society has done to all those poor women before she brought them to the town. She turned both gender to work not based on their biological or cultural that applied in society. She let them to do numerous of things that seem impossible to what society usually see.

As stated by David M. Schneider (1968) in his book *American Kinship: A Cultural Account on Theories of Kinship* by Riger M. Keesing (1974) that culture is a system of symbols and meanings. It is mean that culture define someone status by the "rules" applied in the society. They were used and

viewed not more than an object to satisfy men's desire in their previous job. Men mostly dominated in work places, especially when it is involved with physical work which creates a system that women are not able to do work if it is involved their physics. After Lady Eboshi brought them to Irontown, they had a better life and even fill their eating needs better. They showed the men that they able to do work where it is involves their physics. Lady Eboshi provides them with many things that made them live a better life.

Ashitaka : "It's hard work."

Toki : "Yup. We work four days' straight."

Ashitaka : "Is life hard here?"

Toki : "Yeah, but it's better than life in the towns."

Woman 4 : "We eat our fill, and the men know their place."

Ashitaka : "I see..."

The society in that era appears to force women to do work which do not involve their physics as they are viewed as the weaker gender and it is showed the oppressive culture back then. The proofs are indicated when the men in Irontown talked about how the women who used to work in brothels and Lady Eboshi when she said to the women to not trust men. Both of the proofs made an assumption that they were live with mistreatment by the men. With mostly men who are dominated in work place or even in numerous places, women do not have the chance to prove themselves that they also able to do numerous works regardless of their physics. Lady Eboshi broke all of the stereotypes and change the view of many people. The women there are able to do numerous things they want including work the bellows which involve their physical strength. Even people who live outside of Irontown also knows how Lady Eboshi and her people, especially the women, are brave, ambitious and full of courage. The society changed the women of Irontown for the better and improved.

IV. CONCLUSION

In *Princess Mononoke*, radical feminism and gender shifting roles are quiet inseparable, both are identified with one another. The women of Irontown and Lady Eboshi are the characters who showed how the theories were depicted. At the point when both theories were applied, it can be found in Princess Mononoke that women are the superior gender and even much stronger than the men. The women are able to do numerous things with denying what gender stereotype made them to be.

The radical feminism happened in the movie is because of what Lady Eboshi did. It reflected the culture in that era where showed how men tend to belittle women, but Lady Eboshi broke the social stigma. She represents how she is being the dominant one as a woman and the one who unequivocally showed that she denied the gender stereotypes as well as the stigma which basically a social construct where women seen as they cannot do numerous things, such as become a leader. She is a woman, the leader of Irontown and the one who built the town. To radical feminism, sex is a systematic division of social power, a social rule inseparable from the gender of each person, enforced to women's detriment since it serves the interest of the powerful, that is, men (MacKinnon, 1989). She is not tolerating the stereotype that built or made by the society. Not just indicating how women are competent to do things outside the house simply like men, she does not want to work for men and instead, she is being an independent woman. Knowing her people were assaulted by the demons and the gods of the forest, she protected them by fought off both the demons and the gods. She even reestablished the town financially and made the people there into a better version of themselves. The town is also full of prosperity and by selling the iron the women made, the people who lives there can fulfill their needs such as food to be consumed everyday.

The switching roles between men and women come up in the movie. When usually women are viewed as weak and fragile figures that need to be protected by men, the women here are the stronger gender that are unusual in that era. They were taught how to use the bellows to make the iron and even use the gun to protect the town. They know how to fight

for themselves as well as for the town. What caused the town had the roles of both gender switched is because the oppression which caused by the men that the women had in their previous job and environment. Lady Eboshi is the one who made both men and women to work not according to their gender.

Lady Eboshi and the women in Irontown showed that every single woman is able also able to do many things including work with the things which involve their physical just as equally as men. Women are allowed to accomplish their dreams and doing or liking things the way they want it. They are independent, strong, and also brave unlike what society describes them. Society cannot define someone's personality based on their gender and cannot let them do based on what society made them to do. Both Lady Eboshi and the women in Irontown can become the strong role models and inspirations for future generations especially women of present generations by being the characters that spoken to in something accessible for everybody. By being the characters that can spoke to for something accessible and also role models, it will make people thinking about the future they want to make and build as well as thinking about the old traditions or perspectives which sometimes are way too old fashioned for the present century that can roll out a major improvement for the benefit of the following ages. The next generations can be the agent of change by having someone that is great as their role models and motivations. The future can be changed when someone have the courage to change themselves then they can make other people including the society to change for the better as well.

In shorts, both radical feminism and gender shifting roles makes woman higher status than the men. Lady Eboshi has done numerous things for the people there. The men also respect the women and not become so questioning or complaining that women can do better than them. Despite the fact that the women are the superior gender, the men who also live in Irontown did not feel that they are oppressed by what the women do. The men did not even think that it is weird to have a woman as their leader which mostly carried them in numoreous things. They are even grateful for what Lady Eboshi has done so far

from them as well as the acceptance she gave to them while the society sometimes tend to make them as the outcast from having a disease. The women in Irontown are not characterized by their gender as well, they do the things like the men do and no one asking them that it is so unusual to have a job which typically done by men. Women does not need to adopt their certain roles based on their biology. They are allowed to accomplish something based on what they like and what they want.

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