

Fanny Lesmana_Representation of Feminism

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Representation of Feminism in the Movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022)"

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ABSTRACT

The movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" is a movie that discusses how the hero struggles to save the world and his family. This movie tells the story of the main character, Shuri, who fights against injustice and also the scenario of the destruction of Wakanda planned by her enemy from Talokan, Namor. This makes researchers want to examine how the representation of feminism is embedded in the film "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever". This research uses the semiotic method, using John Fiske's television code theory. This study shows that feminism is depicted in three forms, namely; the superiority of black women over men, the stigma of society about women being broken, the conflict of violence and power between two countries, black women who are free from colonizing power. With this research, researchers see that all aspects, elements, and the encoding process of a movie both ²ave meaning and play an important role in shaping the ideological content or message of the film. The conclusion in this movie is that the feminist figures in Shuri, Okoye, Queen Ramonda, Namor, Attuma and Riri who are depicted through women can dominate men and can even be equal to them in the movie. The feminism brought to the movie Black Panther: Wakanda Forever leads to first and second wave feminism and the support of patriotism and liberalism ideologies in this film. This proves that film can be a medium to convey a message of representation or social phenomena of equal rights between women and men in the world of heroes.

Keywords: *Representation; Semiotic; Feminism; Movie Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Miss Senegal competition was held and one of the winners talked about how the competition organization behaved. The behavior of the organization's own committee led to rape and pregnancy. The case reached the media, which led to a 16-day awareness campaign about violence against women. South African students demonstrated on campus about gender-based violence, and to condemn the structures of economic oppression (#FeesMustFall) and

the colonialism of their institutions (#RhodesMustFall). Here Sudanese women are at the center of protests demanding a more just society. Social media in Senegal has exploded with hashtags calling out sexism and gender-based violence, such as #nopiwum (Wolof: I am not silent) and #Dafaboy (Wlof: It's enough) (African Studies Centre Leiden, n.d.).

Despite the amount of feminism that exists on this continent of the world, African feminists are trying to unify and reimagine feminist principles, while recognizing the diversity and concerns of their challenges. According to Rosen, movies can be a particularly rich place to explore stereotypes about women (Hollows 2010, 15). Will Durant in his book "The Pleasure of Philosophy" explains that the event that will stand out at the beginning of the globalization era in 2000 is the change in the status of women. The change in the status of women itself can be described in various aspects, and this time the researcher focuses on the existence of female superheroes who are common in the world of movies. Karsa (2006: 296) reveals that films are works of comparison made from the reality that exists in society by filmmakers creatively.

Saras Dewi, when moderating an online discussion with the theme Philosophy and Superheroes, on Sunday, (3/14/2022) said that "People tend to appreciate superheroes or superheroes because of the values of justice brought in these films. The superhero phenomenon is not only an entertainment industry, but also if examined more deeply there are philosophical values from the characters created by the artists."

² **Centralized female characters show an alternative femininity where women are no longer considered weak.** Researchers are interested to see if there is a depiction of the dominance of women's existence given, so that it can break the stigma of women who are considered weak. This research shows the subject that leads to the movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" and objects that refer to the representation of feminism in the film.

Based on the explanation on the background of the problem, the problem to be answered from this research is "How is the representation of Feminism in the movie Black Panther: Wakanda Forever?"

METHOD

The researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach with the semiotic method in understanding the existing phenomena. Researchers used John Fiske's semiotic method in examining the representation of feminism through two characters in the movie Black Panther: Wakanda Forever, namely the characters Shuri, Okoye and Riri. Semiotics is a method of analysis used to examine signs and study how humans understand these signs. The sign itself is interpreted as something that indicates the existence of something else (Wibowo, 2011). Signs and meanings are the key link between semiotics and communication (Hutauruk, 2018).

John Fiske's semiotic theory states that an event in a media will become a media event if it has gone through the encoding process by social codes that are constructed at three levels, namely the level of reality (clothing, appearance, gestures, etc.), the level of representation (technical elements such as cameras, lighting, etc.), and the level of ideology (feminism, class, etc.) (Fiske, 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Intellectualized and Superior Feminism



Picture 1. Queen Ramonda enters the United Nation meeting

Data findings in this scene show Queen Ramonda entering the United Nation (UN) meeting which at that time was held in Switzerland. The scene shows Queen Ramonda entering the room to meet representatives of other countries. This scene depicts an intellectual and superior female figure.

Queen Ramonda expressed an opinion that at that time Vibranium was trying to be kidnapped by another country. The dialog ⁵ contains anger and assertiveness issued by Queen Ramonda towards representatives of other countries.

What researchers found in this scene is a female figure who has an intellectual and superior personality. According to Saifudin Azwar (2017), intellectual is the power of the soul in every human being, which means the power that can provide energy in an individual's mind. Superior can be interpreted as an effort to be able to achieve self-strength, Adler assumes that humans are aggressive creatures and must always be aggressive if they want to achieve success. Ratu Ramonda showed how intelligent and superior he was to the representatives of other countries. She does this to protect Wakanda's main source of Vibranium. If anyone tries to take their main source, it is not the power of vibranium that is at issue, but the potential for misuse by the country that Queen Ramonda will take issue with. This shows how Queen Ramonda is trying to prevent and reaffirm the problems that are happening, seeing how she has protected the country of Wakanda and the vibranium and how she knows the behavior of humans when they get the vibranium.

Feminism Demonstrated Through the Strong and Courageous



Picture 2. Attack on Wakanda Outreach Center by the military

Researchers found data findings where Queen Ramonda expressed her opinion before the country's representatives, despite the absence of Black Panther, they could still fight the military who tried to steal vibranium. The resistance was carried out by Okoye with Dora Milaje, where they finally managed to bring the attackers from the military to the UN building in Switzerland. This scene depicts a strong and brave female figure.

Researchers found that in this scene Queen Ramonda, Okoye and the entire Wakanda army showed strong and brave personalities. The scene shows Queen Ramonda recognizing that Black Panther's departure is an

for the military and other countries to get vibranium. But here Ramonda did not remain silent and prepared a defense scenario to guard the vibranium at the Wakanda Outreach Center and finally managed to catch the military trying to break into their defenses. This is a depiction of how a woman who wants to fight for her rights. This is shown by how the resistance of Wakanda through Dora Milaje when they were attacked by other countries' military forces to seize the vibranium. This made Queen Ramonda and Wakanda not stay silent to deal with this.

Feminism that Dares to Fight Injustice



Picture 3. Dialogue between Shuri and Namor discussing Riri's fate.

This scene explains how Shuri negotiates with Namor about the fate of Riri's life which is threatened because of her creation, namely, the vibranium detector. But Namor instead offered to help Wakanda fight the world if he wanted to save Riri. This suddenly made Shuri reject the offer.

This shows how Shuri and Namor are both adamant and there is an argument that can lead to war between Wakanda and Talokan. Shuri tried to negotiate so that Riri could return with her, but Namor offered things that could trigger a negative impact on Wakanda, thus making Shuri reject the offer. In this scene Shuri shows herself as a woman who insists on protecting Riri and also Wakanda over the will of Namor who she thinks is crazy and unreasonable.

Supporting each other (Woman Support Woman)



Picture 4. Queen Ramonda meets Nakia to ask for her help in meeting Shuri

This scene shows Queen Ramonda coming to Haiti to meet Nakia at one of the city's schools. Ramonda is seen reassuring Nakia that she is still part of Wakanda, despite her long absence and not attending King T'Challa's funeral. ¹ Ramonda also asks for Nakia's help to meet and search for the missing Shuri. This shows Ramonda and Nakia supporting each other, and also helping to solve problems.

According to Setiawan in his article entitled "The Meaning of Yellow in Personality and Health" (2019) yellow is a color that can lift a person's mood. The color has a bright nature that helps you feel positive and optimistic. Yellow balances the mind and keeps the mood upbeat throughout the day. This is shown in Ramonda's dress which gives Nakia a sense of positivity and reassurance that she is still a part of Wakanda and can find Shuri with her strength and connections.

Although Nakia does not directly answer Ramonda's statement, in the end she helps Ramonda and Wakanda in finding Shuri by doing research and visiting the Yucatan Peninsula on a mission to find the underwater kingdom of Talokan. This shows how the figures of Nakia and Ramonda who both want to help each other and show mutual support between fellow women. Women often experience discrimination and even violence. When women experience oppression, then by being in solidarity we not only provide support for fellow women but also reassure her that she is not alone. Solidarity also becomes a form of resistance (CXO Media, 2022). This shows how Nakia needs support from Ramonda which leads to reassuring her that she is still part of Wakanda and not a traitor. On the other hand, Ramonda needs Nakia's help to find Shuri as Ramonda also trusts Nakia to find her son.

Analysis and Interpretation

Black Women's Superiority over Men

What is strongly shown in this movie is how women are portrayed as dominating men. There are movies that have similarities with movies related to African customs, and warfare. An example is in the movie "The Woman King" (2022) in the movie shows how they want to fight slavery and also the resistance of black women to protect the Dahomey Kingdom in West

Africa in the 17th to 19th centuries (Luviana, 2022). However, the movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" depicts the characters Shuri, Okoye and Dora Milaje, Ramonda and Riri who want to get out of society's stigma about women.

Researchers found a connection between the second wave of feminism in this movie. The ⁴ second wave of feminism explained how the issue of women as an oppressed group and the female body as the main site of oppression. This wave emerged in the 1940s which occurred after World War II. At that time, the study and publication of women was shut down by the presence of war. The second wave was associated with intellectuals who opposed war, saw war and colonization as destroying human rights (Melati, 2020).

¹ This movie shows how women, especially black women, show their superiority over men. In the real world, black women rarely get a position in the political sphere and especially power. However, this movie depicts how the superiority of black women in both power and politics exists in it. This shows how the issues in the second wave of feminism, especially in the psychoanalyst school of feminism. This stream is shown in this film with women who go through the work of reasoning, decision-making, and what is considered fair for women who are different from the general idea of justice (Melati, 2020).

Society's Stigma on Women Broken

The researcher found that the characters Shuri, Okoye and Dora Milaje, Ramonda and Riri have a situation where they want to break the stigma of society about women. The researcher found data on how women who try to break the stigma of society about women. ⁶ According to Erving Goffman (1968), stigma is any form of physical and social attribute that reduces a person's social identity, disqualifying that person from acceptance. One example of the depiction of this is in how the cast of the movie and especially Shuri and Riri who understand technology rather than men. The man we can take as an example is M'Baku who still lives in a cave or Jabari Land and still uses ancient equipment to carry out attacks.

Shuri and Riri themselves seem to be on the same level, and they also both rely on technology to carry out attacks or research that they are carrying out.

³
The essence of feminism is gender equality. Intersectional feminism brings awareness to how people's social identities overlap and can lead to more discrimination (white cis women may not have as many opportunities as white cis men, but systemic racism and homophobia exacerbate black lesbians' experiences with discrimination) (Griew, 2022, Trans.).

Violent Conflict and Power Between Two Countries

According to Antonio Gramsci's thoughts in a book by Thomas R. Bates entitled Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony (1975), social conflict can occur due to hegemony. Hegemony itself is power exercised by violence to build an ideology and culture desired by the ruling party (Bisma, 2023). This movie illustrates how there is a conflict between two fictional countries, Wakanda and Talokan.

Researchers saw a power struggle through violence carried out by the two fictional countries. Shuri as the leader of Wakanda and Namor as the leader of Talokan who tried to show their strength in seizing power. ⁵ Wakanda and Talokan are portrayed as countries that want revenge and fight injustice.

Researchers found a conflict that occurred in Africa where there are two countries located in the Horn of Africa region, namely, Eritrea and Ethiopia. At first these two countries were in the same country, but then Eritrea became independent in 1993. The two countries formed a joint commission to determine the official status of the area that would become a common border and dispute. The relationship between the two countries did not last well, but became increasingly heated. In the 20th century the two countries were involved in the bloodiest war in the Horn of Africa region. Each side mobilized hundreds of thousands of soldiers to fight for territory. This cost hundreds of thousands of lives. The war finally ended in 2000 (Erlina, 2019).

Black Women Free from Colonizing Power

This film shows how the strength of black women who look dominant and united against the invaders who tried to take their vibranium and the colonization carried out by the Talokan kingdom. Apart from the movie Black Panther: Wakanda Forever, The Little Mermaid (2023)

is the center of attention regarding the significant changes in the cast of the character Ariel who is no longer white.

Walt Disney itself is aggressively producing films that adhere to the principle of inclusivity. Inclusivity itself is a recognition and appreciation of existence or diversity (Sitanggang, 2022). Disney is doing this to address the issue of white-washing that has hit the Hollywood film industry (The Conversation, 2023).

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever itself also wants to convey how the strength of black people and especially women who have always experienced the transfer of power and experienced things that should not be faced by them. This movie depicts something different and motivates women and especially the black race. The third wave of feminism at the time saw issues of racism and ethnocentrism. The stream that is part of the researcher's analysis is postmodern feminism, which is believed to be the belief that the 'other' or the other figure is able to criticize the dominant structure and dismantle the injustice practices that are fossilized in all of our heads (Melati, 2020). Black women also show how they can be free and have a natural right to live through liberalism. This is shown in how the people of Wakanda live away from oppression. Through liberalism, it can be seen that there is a struggle of feminism, especially black women in fighting for their rights by using their strength in fighting.

CONCLUSION

Through data findings, data analysis and interpretation, the researcher found two waves of feminism in this study. The first is in the second wave, which at that time discussed the issue of women as an oppressed group and the female body as the main site. The second wave of feminism was themed "Women's Liberation" which appeared in Simone de Beauvoir's book The Second Sex. The phrase was first used in 1966 which was considered a revolutionist collective movement (Sapa Institute, 2020).

The second wave of feminism is in the first wave which is depicted in the figure of Riri who is educated and smart in tinkering with machines and technology. Considering that the first wave of feminism had issues regarding equal education for women. And this was successfully broken by Riri who was able to learn machines and technology only through Youtube channels. And he was also targeted by Wakanda and Talokan for successfully making a vibranium detector.

After going through the data, analysis, and interpretation carried out by researchers, it can be seen that there is a representation of feminism in the film "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever". Through the code contained in this movie, it wants to convey that women can dominate men and can even be equal to them. They can also break the stigma of society that exists about women. Besides feminism, there are other ideologies such as patriotism and liberalism in this movie.

Through overall analysis, the movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" depicts feminism that occurs in the relationship between the kingdoms of Wakanda and Talokan and also personal relationships both within Wakanda and Talokan. 1 This relates to what happens in the reality of life, where women are still considered a figure who is underestimated and full of societal stigma. Women who are considered weak and unable to fight are finally broken in this movie, and women who are not good at playing with machines and technology are also broken in this movie. Through this research, it can be traced that film can be a very appropriate medium to convey messages in the form of representation or social reality, namely, feminism.

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