

FEMINISM ON BBC TV SERIES “SHERLOCK: THE FINAL PROBLEM”

Danti Eka Ardiani¹⁾
dantiardiani@gmail.com

R. R. Festi Himatu Karima²⁾
festi.karima@yahoo.com

Indri Kustantinah³⁾
indri.kustantinah@gmail.com

Corresponding Author : dantiardiani@gmail.com
Universitas PGRI Semarang

Abstract:

Women's rights and gender equality are parts of the issues that occurred in society related to literary works. One of the literary works that can be mentioned is film that combines drama and cinematology to reveal and convey both social issues and values. This research aims to reveal feminism in the United Kingdom as the setting of BBC TV Series Sherlock: The Final Problem. This research uses literature and feminism theory to make it more comprehensive. It shows that feminism is well-depicted by each female character with their struggles and stands out as the ideal feminists in the patriarchal system.

Keywords: *gender equality, feminism, literary work, film*

1. Introduction

Movie or film depicts particular roles in society that we live in through acting and dialogues. Thus, there are two aspects in a movie that cannot be separated; literary work and cinematography. Lotman states that literary work is the spoken speech represented in a written-stylized form that can be strengthened by cinematographer (Lotman, 2019: 42).

The analysis of a film can be focused on the characters which depict the roles of a story through the element of film known by characterization. Characterization can be analyzed to reveal the implicit values and social issues which fit in society.

Sherlock: The Final Problem was one of the television movies which broadcasted by BBC. This television movie was the adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock

Holmes detective stories directed by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss. This show is popular in the United Kingdom due to its storyboard, the detective things. One social issue that can be discussed in this show is about feminism since female characters is having little spotlight in every episode.

In this case, people mostly assume that women characters are just the pretty things that can be added in every movie or film. Unconsciously, people aware that women characters cannot be removed in every film or movie because they are taking important roles in society without knowing that feminism is one of the elements that must be considered. Through this study, the researcher can help people to analyze how feminism in gender roles implicitly appears in literary works through the women characters in BBC TV Series *Sherlock: The Final Problem*.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies

There is journal entitled “*Women Discrimination in Language: A Feminism Approach in Novel Anna and The King Written by Elizabeth Hand*” by Festi Himatu Karima from IKIP PGRI Semarang who writes that patriarchy system is still applied in the daily communication of men and women by the way they talk in society.

Then, a journal entitled “*An Analysis of Feminism in How to be Single Movie Directed by Christian Ditter*” by Cholijah Zamil, Tati Mardewi, and Furi Indriyani from BSI Bogor University which write about some types of feminism (liberal feminism, socialist feminism, marxist feminism, radical feminism, post-modern feminism, and anarchist feminism) and conclude that shown that women do not need the intervention of men in society to define feminism.

The third journal that used in this research is “*Identity, Cultural Representation, and Feminism in the Movie Head-On*” by Sandra Berchtel from University of Innsbruck that writes about how women face the oppression in patriarchal society as the goal of feminism.

Whereas, this study is discussing the ideal feminist by analyzing the dialogues of the characters and narrations in BBC TV Series *Sherlock: The Final Problem* that has a wider spotlight for male characters.

2.2 Characterization in Literary Work

Literary work is tied to the concept of speech art which is either written or spoken. The movie is one of the literary works that attract people easily to convey a story through acts and dialogues of the characters. The term “character” is from the Greek word *character* which means a set the typical qualities of a person (Banicki, 2017: 52).

Character in fiction has a few functions as Garcia (2015: 19) states that character as the representative of opponent of the author’s voice, the probability of certain meaning or behavior, the projection of language, particular ideology, and culture, and also the people that included in a story.

The term “character” can be addressed to “characterization” which means the way someone or something is described. Eder, Jannidis & Schneider also once spoke about the term ‘characterization’ in literary works:

“Characterisation (in the wide sense) can then be defined as the process of connecting information with a figure in a text so as to provide a character in the fictional world with a certain property, or properties, concerning body, mind, behaviour, or relations to the (social) environ-ment.”

(Jannidis, Eder & Schneider, 2010: 30)

According to the previous passages, characterization can describe the social traits of particular characters through appearances, properties which related, and actions. Elwood (1959: 6-7) also adds that everything which represents a personality, describes characteristics, or sum of traits that define people in a story that can be called as characterization.

Moving forward to the types of characterization, there are four types of characterization according to Tobler (2010: 49 – 51).

a. Direct characterization

The writer is telling the readers about the characters directly and clearly. The characters’ backgrounds such as values, motives, and hobbies are explained to define some images of the roles clearly. Characterization is also can be seen by the set carried by each character and the clear narration by the narrator about the existed characters in the roles of a story.

b. Indirect characterization

Characters in indirect characterization are different from the characters which appeared in indirect characterization. The writer only shows the details of the characters without any explicit explanation by

indirect descriptions, setting, action, speech, and thought.

c. Static characterization

Static means no movements or developments. Anything permanent which brought individually that cannot be easily moved or changed by the external factors such as name, age, gender, lineaments, habitual posture, habitual expression, setting, and occupation can be the characteristics of static characterization.

d. Dynamic characterization

It is different from the static since dynamic has more development in characters' traits, habits, or experiences in a plot of a story. Dynamic characterization also stands to build and enrich the plot.

2.3 Gender

One element of society that people know is gender. LeVay (2011: 37) states that gender is a set that differs men and women in mental and behavioral traits. Klages also states that gender is divided into two-term; male and female.

“Gender is a cultural universal; human bodies have two general forms that we label as male and female, and which all cultures associate with specific notions of what is masculine and what is feminine” (2012: 29).

Since men and women are identified as masculine and feminine, there are three roles of gender that elaborated by Wienclaw in *Sociology Reference Guide: Gender Roles & Equality* (2011: 33-36).

a. Role determinant in biology

Women and men have particular roles in which women are taking reproductive roles while men are providing strength in a family.

b. Role determinant in culture

In the aspect of culture, both men and women have their sides. Men are representing the masculine side, which is strong, dominant, and aggressive. On the other hand, the feminine side of women is likely passive, emotional, sensitive and related to pretty things or motherhood duties.

c. Role determinant in society

Society is pushing men for being strong and tough while women are taught to be soft. Men are well known for focusing on logic (emotion-less) and women are emotion-oriented.

Those roles can be elaborated to differ women and men in gender identity term. Wood (2009: 109-125) argues that gender identity refers to the self-definitions which represent human beings' personality, interests, and psychological relationships in society. It means that men and women can be labeled as feminine and masculine to define themselves. He also mentions the types of gender identity based on these three aspects.

a. Self-descriptions and personal image

The femininity and masculinity in people can be seen by their occupations, hobbies, and daily activities. Personal attributes can be everything that appears or viewed by the behaviors. People also can describe themselves by their personality traits based on two types; feminine which is full of affection, sympathy, and warmth and the masculine side that represented as forcefulness, aggressive, and self-reliant.

b. Individual differences in self-recognizing

Feminine can show closeness towards everyone while the masculine is more likely to separate from others. It can be seen by the topic they are using in a discussion due to the independence scale in both collective sides. Mostly, masculine is showing more dependency than feminine.

c. Individual differences among groups of gender

Every individual represents themselves by adopting the collective gender traits or behaviors to be defined as a part of one group. These traits or behaviors are associated with a stereotype or assumptions of characteristics towards each gender group.

2.4 Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination can be overlooked as gender inequality. Gender discrimination happens as the society differs the treatment towards men and women. Lorber (2001: 5-7) makes a list of challenges that commonly occur due to gender discrimination as below:

- a. Men are supposed to have higher education.
- b. Men are being pushed to do the dangerous work.
- c. Men are having a good perspective in career.
- d. Men have more access and receive better healthcare in some countries.
- e. Women have a higher rate as victims due to violence and exploitation.
- f. Women are being pushed to do the motherhood duties.

Gender discrimination is a social phenomenon, by preventing women from the participation of the economic, social, and political life of the society (Paksoy & Killic, 2016: 60). Men and women are expected to have the equal rights in society (gender equality), but men are still dominating every aspects of life. Women are treated in the lower states of society since patriarchy is growing up in society. Walby (1990: 64) states that patriarchy is a system which men have authority to control the social construction. Patriarchal system is the appropriate approach to elaborate this situation which men are dominating all of the aspect of life. This situation is coming as the cause of the gender discrimination which reinforced by family, culture, religion, education, and law in society.

2.5 Feminism

Feminism in society is known as an ideology to prioritize women, but these days it refers to women's rights and gender equality. Wienclaw (2011: 97) states that feminism is an ideology that is opposed gender stratification and male dominance. It clears that women have to fight gender stratification and male dominance to define women's rights in society.

Moreover, feminism has a big impact on gender equality especially in women's movement. Sprague (2011: 85-93) explains feminism has brought some successes in women's rights.

- a. Women can be involved in legislation and get voted as leaders.
- b. Women are freely allowed to own property, equal wages, and educational opportunities.
- c. Women have the rights about getting a better treatment related to health issues equally as men.

3. Research Methodology

This research was conducted using qualitative - case study approach. Non-probably sampling was used in the data collection as the method. The data collection was taken by mentioning the evidences of characterization of each character in BBC TV Series *Sherlock: The Final Problem*. The collected data were analyzed by interpreting and relating them to feminism theory.

4. Findings

4.1 Eurus Holmes

Eurus is a little sister of Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes which has the highest intelligence among them but ends up in a secret prison, Sherrinford, because of her uncontrollable attitude. Her features are embracing the tough side of hers: cold gazes; strong jaw; long-black hair; and pale skin.

She also known as a woman who has intelligence higher beyond Newton based on Mycroft's speeches.

Mycroft: I was remarkable, but Eurus was described as an era-defining genius. Beyond Newton.

(00:10:20 - 00:10:29)

Mycroft : She was different from the beginning. She knew things she should never have known. As if she was somehow aware of truths beyond the normal scope.

(00:10:46 - 00:10:57)

Sherlock: Look how brilliant you are. Your mind has created the perfect metaphor.

(01:20:23 - 01:20:28)

Due to her intelligence, she is taken to a secret prison as Mycroft's suggestion.

Mycroft: Sherrinford is more than a prison, or an asylum. It is a fortress, built to keep the rest of the world safe from what is inside it.

(00:15:16 - 00:15:24)

Mycroft: That's where our sister has been since early childhood.

(00:15:35 - 00:15:38)

Even though Eurus is a woman, she is capable to take over Sherrinford, a secret prison, using her intelligence and braveness in reflecting an ideal feminist by manipulating men around her to fight for her freedom.

The prison governor: Enslaved them. She's been capable of that since she was five.
(00:28:47 - 00:28:51)

Mycroft: Eurus doesn't just talk to people, she... reprograms them. Anyone who spends time with her is automatically compromised.
(00:30:50 - 00:30:59)

She also inviting her brothers to solve the mind games that she has made to be free.

Eurus: You're playing with me, Sherlock. We're playing the game.
(01:20:10 - 01:20:14)

Eurus: And you're going to save me.
(01:20:21 - 01:20:23)

This condition can be related to Eurus' willingness to be free psychologically as Hooks (2000: 1) states that feminism is a movement to end sexism and oppression and supported by Wienclaw (2011: 97) that feminism is used to oppose gender stratification and men dominance. Sprague's (2011: 85-93) also shown that women are freely allowed to own property, educational opportunities, and be the leaders. In this case, Eurus is wanting take revenge to men who take her to Sherrinford by controlling the system of the prison. By this chance she can prove herself that she is better than any men around her.

4.2. Mrs. Hudson

Mrs. Hudson is the landlady of Sherlock's flat who manages the house. She is represented as a middle-aged woman who is close to Sherlock and Dr. Watson. This character is also depicting a woman who is living full of joy, full of spirit, and taking the freedom in every step she's taking when doing the housework as shown in minute 00:16:50 – 00:16:57.

Sherlock: Going by her usual routine, I estimate she has another two minutes left.

Dr. Watson: She keeps the vacuum cleaner at the back of the flat.
(00:16:58 - 00:17:03)

Sherlock: She's fast when she's cleaning then we move.
(00:17:12 - 00:17:14)

The social issue that makes women take responsibility in house works is well-depicted in Mrs. Hudson's character as stated by Lorber (2001: 5-7) that women are socially pushed by having the responsibility to take motherhood duties. Although women are controlled by gender roles, they still have the rights to enjoy their life and express their freedom as Wienclaw (2011: 97) states that women need to stand by the ideology to fight gender stratification. In this case, Mrs. Hudson is the only character who is being oppressed by the housework she is doing but still enjoying every part of her life.

4.3. Molly Hooper

Molly Hooper is a young lady that related to Sherlock. As the official registrar in a hospital, Molly has no time to share any romantic relationships with men. It is shown by how she is denying her feelings for Sherlock and focus on her job.

Eurus: I'm not an experiment, Sherlock.

(01:00:29 → 01:00:31)

Sherlock: Please, just say it.

Eurus: I can't. Not to you.

(01:01:03 → 01:01:09)

This character is the depiction of a modern woman who is independent and prioritize her job which shown by the voice mail that she sets.

Molly: Hi, this is Molly at the dead centre of town. Leave a message.

(00:59:10 - 00:59:16)

Molly: Hello, Sherlock. Is this urgent? Because I'm not having a good day.

(00:59:37 - 00:59:41)

This is clear that Molly's character is stood by Hooks (2000: 1) and Sprague (2011: 85-93) who write that women have to end sexism as they freely grow their potential by focusing on education and job.

4.4. The Little Girl on the Airplane

The little girl on the airplane is the symbol of Eurus' emotion. In the end of this film, this little girl is gone and revealed as the poor Eurus who's reaching out Sherlock through the games that she has made.

Sherlock: I am lost. Help me brother. Save my life before my doom. I am lost without your love. Save my soul, seek my room.

(01:19:09 - 01:19:24)

Sherlock: I think it's time. You told me your real name.

The little girl: I'm not allowed to tell my name to strangers.

Sherlock: But I'm not a stranger, am I? I'm your brother. I'm here, Eurus.

(01:19:41 - 01:20:00)

Eurus: And you're going to save me.

(01:20:21 - 01:20:23)

Eurus: Every time I close my eyes, I'm on the plane. I'm lost, lost in the sky and...No-one can hear me.

(01:20:45 - 01:20:56)

The little girl can be seen as a self-reliant even though she is still young as Wood (2009: 109-125) has stated that people can define themselves as feminine (affection, sympathy, and warmth) or masculine (forcefulness, aggressive, and self-reliant) and still belong to one group of gender. Moreover, Hooks (2000: 1) states that women need a movement to end sexism practically and it is compliment with the little girl who is seen as a female and still allowed herself for having masculine traits to promote feminism.

5. Discussion

5.1 Eurus Holmes as a genius that fight for her freedom

As Sprague (2011: 85-93) states that women are freely allowed to own property, educational opportunities, and be the leaders, Eurus is the only female character who is fit with those terms. Eurus is a genius beyond Newton based on Mycroft's description but being put in a secret prison. By her intelligence, she could be a genius woman who is freely growing her potentials in every aspect as big as her brothers until she is seen as a threat to Mycroft, her brother. She spends her long time in prison and it raises her will to fight for her freedom using her intelligence by manipulating and controlling any men around her in Sherrinford, a secret prison. As what she wants for a long time, she finally owns Sherrinford and being the frontwoman in that secret prison without Mycroft's authority.

5.2. Mrs. Hudson who is putting her freedom above the oppression

Even though Mrs. Hudson is being socially oppressed for being a housemaid of Sherlock's flat, she is still enjoying her life without being abused by the culture. She is still having a good relationship with any man around her. This is obvious that she is unconsciously giving herself up to gender stratification as Lorber (2001: 5-7) states that women are socially pushed by taking the roles related to motherhood duties.

5.3. Molly Hooper as independent modern woman

Molly Hooper is the most relevant female character to modern women these days. This character is seen as an independent woman who has a steady job and pushes her love life aside. She puts herself to be equal to men in society by focusing on her job and having stability in her life.

5.4. The little girl who's illustrating a self-reliant girl

This character, who is not a real character, is the depiction of Eurus' emotions for being trapped in a secret prison. She is just a girl who is surviving alone in an un-remoted airplane and being saved by Sherlock, her brother. This little girl is appeared and noticed by Sherlock in Eurus' mind games since the only thing that matters for her is to keep herself safe and free. As the mind games is on, this little girl is seen as a self-reliant girl who wants to get out of the dangerous situation. This character is also reflecting Eurus' willingness to be above men around her because women likely cannot be self-reliant and lean themselves on men for help.

6. Conclusion

Based on the final analysis of this research, feminism is found in BBC TV Series *Sherlock: The Final Problem* through the characterization of each character. Each female character is bringing the various perspective of feminism by the problems they are facing. There are Eurus Holmes who is finally freeing and putting herself above men around her, Molly Hooper who is independent and puts herself equal to men, and the little girl on the airplane, the illusional character of Eurus' emotions, that depicted as self-reliant as men, meanwhile, Mrs. Hudson is the only one who is oppressed by gender stratification in BBC TV Series *Sherlock: The Final Problem* which only has a wider spotlight for male characters.

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