

The Effect of Gender Equality Reflected in ‘Birds of Prey’ Movie

Khairunnisya Lubis¹, Namiratusshofa Siregar², Siti Rahma Matondang³

¹Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

²Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

³Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

*nisyakhairu@gmail.com

Abstract.

Gender equality have been recorded in numerous spheres, with increasing social and economic gender equality predicting increased gender disparity. Due to various reference groups in more and less gender-equal societies, many of these findings have been disregarded as artifactual because they used subjective rating scales. While recent research has documented the gender-equality conundrum using an objective criterion—the pursuit of feminist discourse analysis to examine the narrative strategies. This article demonstrated that we just can find the equality gender in fiction only, rare in real life like in this movie. This article argues that the mobilisation of gender equality discourses through Birds of Prey movie uses neoliberal feminist logics, supporting pro-women messages such as equal opportunity and empowerment of political context. Conversely, the validity of this finding has been questioned hence the gender-inequality dominated the truth in social or economic fields. Feminist media studies and media industries studies use Birds of Prey as an example to show how larger gendered expectations towards woman.

Keywords: gender equality, woman emancipation, birds of prey, harley quinn

Introduction

Gender inequality is not a new issue that has only emerged recently; rather, it has grown in prominence and become a widely recognized reality. The phenomenon occurs as a result of an erroneous belief that one gender's role is inferior to the others. As is widely accepted, society's values have segregated and classified men and women into gender roles. Differences in roles and functions between men and women, collectively referred to as gender differences, do not constitute a problem in society as long as they do not result in discrimination or injustice.

Until today, women are still fighting for the rights that are due to them. Having feminism in place creates a voice-movement for women who were previously unable to express their opinions and express what they desired. According to Leicht (2008), More studies are needed to examine gender inequality in the context of broader structural changes in the labor market or at different points along the earnings distribution. This indicates that issues related to gender are still unfinished and still need to be voiced in this modern era.

As we all know, literature is one of the most effective means of expressing our aspirations in society; authors use literature to convey their messages of hope and emancipation for women, as well as messages about gender equality and woman emancipation. Semi (1989) described defined literature as a portrayal of life through the medium of writing. A close relationship exists between literature and life, because the social function of literature is the way in which it involves itself in the midst of people's daily activities.

Birds of Prey, One of the most remarkable feminism films ever made has captured the attention of thousands of viewers all over the world. According to the comic, Birds of Prey is the name of superheroes girl group but Cathy Yan (the first Asian female director to work on a superhero film) who directed this film, immersed Harley Quinn as the center of the story. In fact, the film is entirely emphasizes to her fights against men, and how the equality gender both men and woman potrayal in the scenes. Due to the original title is "Birds of Prey (and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)."

Hence, the author focuses the research into two questions:

1. What kind of woman emancipation in this movie?
2. What are the effects of gender equality as depicted in the movie?

Feminism

Women are generally viewed as interesting subjects to discuss in literary works. In recent years, feminists have argued that women are not objects and that they have the right to choose their own path free from interference from an ancient and harsh society. According to William (2008), feminism is defined as the advocacy or support for women's equality, coupled with a commitment to improving women's status in society. Women can perform men's jobs and vice versa, which is considered normal in a society with no restrictions.

Following more than a decade of hard work by women, recent developments indicate that an increasing number of Indonesian women are actively involved in a variety of fields, including government, business, and social organizations; politics; education; arts and culture; sports; and communication. According to Jackson (2018), "a much broader popularization of feminism in the media can be traced back to the 1960s growth of the young feminist in popular culture." However, a sizable portion of the population continues to believe that women's emancipation is a detrimental influence and a Westernized phenomenon.

Conway (2021) described the term "popular feminism" refers to the gendered nature of these struggles, as well as the gender consciousness that has emerged in these women's organizations, their resignification as/by feminism, and their relevance to feminism as a mass movement for social transformation. He also added that popular feminism, in its most common everyday usage at the time, denoted the emergence of gender consciousness among poor and working-class women in the popular sectors, which had taken shape over a decade of grassroots mobilizations in the context of deep economic crisis and repressive regimes, as well as in relation to the dissemination of feminist ideas and activism.

Birds of Prey

Birds of Prey tells the story of Harley Quinn, the Joker's ex-girlfriend, and her actions and struggles in the city of Gotham in order to maintain emancipation in the city. Due to the turmoil in her heart following a heartbreak, Harley Quinn spiraled out of control and wreaked havoc. This became even more apparent after the female character, who was known for dressing in flamboyant attire, encountered other criminals, like Huntress, Renee Montoya, and Black Canary, who heightened the tension. The crooks in this group then agreed to stage a disturbance. There is just one purpose, and that is the establishment of liberation within the city limits of Gotham. However, it soon becomes apparent that their business would be difficult because they will have to battle with a violent gangster leader named Roman Sionis and his guys.

The presence of women as the main characters and men as the antagonists gives the impression that the film is advocating for gender equality. Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn is an extension of the title, which appears to confirm that the film tells a story from the feminists' point of view, as opposed to the point of view of men. Harley is part of both the "bad girl" trend and the fetishization of violence against women in comic book stories. McGunnigle (2018) stated that cosplay provided some female fans with access to comic book fandom, but argued that dressing up as Harley Quinn and similarly sexualized characters can cater to the "interests of the masculine audience" and that a "female fan risks not only reinforcing gendered power structures, but also succumbing to the sway of social conformity."

As a villain, Harley doesn't fit into the same category as superheroes. When she gets hurt, even at the hands of the Joker, the violence is seen as at least partly due to her "evil" status. Her romance with a bad guy whose violence against other women is so well-known only adds to the debate about her character. She is already a "problematic fan favorite" in comics and TV fandom, where she came from. However, the increased attention and big-screen reimagining of her relationship with the Joker caused even more people to question her. Even though sight has no effect on actual verbal and quantitative abilities, it judges females to be less effective in traditionally male-dominated occupations. While equality performance levels may be evident in men and women's performance, they may also reflect their dissimilar capabilities.

Women Emancipation

People are questioning the modern concept and political rallying cry "emancipation." This is especially true for those well-established understandings of emancipation that have linked the liberation from certain social relationships to a move toward progressive goals, such as greater equality, democracy, or sustainability (Haderer M, 2021).

Harley is a multifaceted character; she is a therapist, a vigilante, an animal rights activist, and a landlord. She is also a bisexual woman who has had her skin bleached to the bone white and is required to wear cosmetics in order to pass as "white" (and hence "normal") when she resumes her professional work as a therapist. She arrives in Coney Island on a motorcycle loaded with her possessions. The motorcycle is a modified chopper that might be interpreted

as an appropriation of a traditionally male symbol of machismo. She is simultaneously exaggeratedly "feminine" in her anatomical form and defies gender expectations with her "masculine" performance and interactions with the "bad guys" who threaten her. While superheroes lend themselves to intersectional theories of identity by virtue of their dual heroic and secret identities, Harley's identity is a complex constellation of connected yet contradicting viewpoints.

Women who are powerful and smart and independent and skilled understand that working together makes them more effective and gives them a stronger sense of personal identity. This is called "woman emancipation," and it's the main theme of *Birds of Prey*. As a group, these women have different abilities, biographies, and grievances. They all work together to help each other out. This is why the author's run, then: It's not just about getting rid of the bad guys. It's also about how these differences can be turned into a feminist mindset.

Method

Feminist theory, especially ideas about neoliberal feminism, helped make this analysis easier. Neoliberal feminism, then, refers to how neoliberal ideologies show up in some forms of feminist thinking. This doesn't mean that feminism as a whole has been taken over, but that some tenets of feminism are used in a way that fits with neoliberal rationalities (Desjardins, 2021). Similarly, Rottenberg (2014: 421–422) says that when neoliberalism and feminism work together, it creates "a certain kind of feminist subject." Liberal terms like "equality," "opportunity," and "free choice" are used in this "recuperated feminism," but their meaning is changed and replaced. This feminism makes a feminist subject who is not only individual but also entrepreneurial.

This creates a paradox in which gender inequality is both acknowledged and disavowed, and gendered emancipation is stripped of its social context and reimagined in terms of the individual. Neoliberal feminism is different from other types of feminism that focus on the structural and political causes of gender inequality, like Marxist feminism's focus on how women are exploited by capitalism and critical race theory's focus on how hierarchies are built into legal structures. If you want to change the way people think about themselves, you have to change the way people think about politics. Neoliberalism makes people think about their own lives in a way that makes it easier for them to get ahead and compete. Neoliberal feminism makes women think about their own futures in the same way.

Given that this article is about how gender equality discourses are used, a lot of attention was paid to the discussion of gender. Methods like these made it easier to do a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the *Birds of Prey* movie. CDA takes a "explicit sociopolitical stance" when it comes to the study of discourse (Van Dijk, 1993: 249), which means that it looks at how language is used in and through social practices (Gee, 1999). According to Fairclough (2010), critical research, including CDA, should move away from critiquing structures to critiquing strategies. This means that critical research should focus on critiquing strategies when structures don't work out the way they're supposed to.

Feminist CDA is based on the general principles of CDA, but it focuses on gender by looking at how discourses (re)create gendered social orders, which stops people from making changes

in society (Lazar, 2017). In this article, we look at how neoliberal feminist logics used in the superhero's character allow structural issues to go unchallenged. This fits in well with CDA, which focuses on critiquing discourse. So, the relationship between gender equality discourses and the current state of gender inequality is the focus of the study.

Results

According to the story's beginning, it demonstrates the following: Harley exercised her agency for the first time by working hard in school and becoming a stellar student; she went on to earn her PhD while still in college. Men and women both exhibit a tendency to be portrayed in a hyper-traditional attitude, which can influence stereotyping of identity characteristics, aspiration, and capabilities rather than providing a realistic portrayal in the media, as evidenced by their physical appearance.

Harley Quinn believes that women should be treated the same as men in all aspects of their lives, including acting, behavior, speech, and way of thinking. Harley Quinn, speaking from her own point of view, rejects the notion that women are weak individuals who require protection from a man. Building the power that women generate is possible because power is a right that belongs to every human being and can be possessed by anyone, whether an individual or a group of people, including women.

When Ms. Harley went to the Gotham Police Department to retrieve Cassandra Cain from her cell and reclaim Roman's precious diamond, it was a much more visually appealing action scene. The only way Harley could have gotten what she wanted would have been to bring an old-fashioned gun to the precinct, but she's much more creative and fashionable than that. She was well aware that she did not need to cause any casualties in order to complete the task. As a result, Harley brought a bean bag launcher dripping with glitter to create an aesthetically pleasing moment that showcased her individuality.

That sequence is memorable because no one else on the big screen would have approached the situation the same way Harley did. She even dresses appropriately for the occasion, donning an awesome pink scarf and sunglasses before unleashing a barrage of abuse on the responding officers. And when she finally gets to Cassandra Cain's cell, the scene culminates in a grand finale in which she fights off more prisoners who have gotten on her bad side as the sprinklers come on. Of course, it isn't played to the effect of sexualizing Harley that she is walking around in the pouring rain! The heroic actions in this story appear to be conveying a message, and they contain elements of post-feminism. In essence, this film encourages women to engage in acts of self-liberation, while at the same time maintaining the ideology that has been instilled in them, which is held firmly by a woman herself.

Discussion

Gender equality is more concerned with equating women's rights with those of men, who are often regarded as the superior gender in many cultures. Additionally, feminism empowers women to choose their own paths in life, even if those paths conflict with the dominant view in society. Here some effects of gender equality movement in the society;

Women make up half of the world's population. In other words, recognize that the world's potential is also on the shoulders of women. When this potential is realized, the world as a whole can become a better place. Unfortunately, the majority of women are born into a world of gender inequality. The gap between men and women's rights also widens with age, ranging from the right to adequate health and nutrition to the right to higher education and career opportunities. Each year, nearly 15 million girls under the age of 18 marry. This figure is extremely concerning. With the gender equality movement, parents are expected to stop undervaluing higher education on the grounds that they believe a woman's ultimate goal is to marry. Indeed, women, like men, are capable of achieving any goal, with or without a life partner.

However, there are some negative consequences of gender equality today. People's attitudes toward career-oriented women vary. Some believe it is beneficial, while others believe it is detrimental. A more optimistic perspective will assume that women can also assist their husbands in improving the family economy. While the negative assumptions have arisen about the work they do, whether it is good or not, they are also deemed incapable of properly caring for their children and husband, which is frequently the subject of discussion among local residents.

In another case, most of the time, women who work all day in the office or at the company come home from work tired, so they don't have a lot of time to talk to their kids, let alone play with them. This means that the child gets less attention and love from their mom. People are afraid that children will be able to go out and have fun without a lot of supervision. While gender equality has both positive and negative consequences, it is undeniable that it has occurred in the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres in the modern era. Gender equality refers to situations in which no individual is denied these rights on the basis of their gender. Gender equality also ensures that all individuals, men and women, have equal opportunities in a variety of fields.

Conclusion

This article analyses the ways in which gender is discursively mobilised within the actress in *Birds of Prey* film. However, it is important to ensure that gender equality strategies are effective to avoid surface-level modifications that will not result in lasting change. Future study will reveal to what degree their mobilisation of gender equality was empty rhetoric as opposed to legitimate plans heralding change. Postfeminist themes are evident in the heroic actions of this story's protagonists. To sum it up, this film promotes self-liberation for women by showing them how to do so while still adhering to the philosophy that they have been taught, which is one that is firmly supported by women themselves. In this article, we use examples of the increase in female characters and female-led titles, the swapping of gender from a male character to a female one, and the increase in female writers and artists to investigate how the representation of female characters has evolved. We argue that these changes mark an

intervention on behalf of female creators in keeping with the theory and practice of feminism. The article explores the important role of intersectionality alongside themes relating to the body and sexuality, violence, solidarity and equality.

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