

# **GENDER EQUALITY REPRESENTED IN THE ANIMATED FILM “RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET” (A FEMINIST STUDY)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Feminism is an ideology or an understanding that states equal rights between men and women. The inequalities between the roles of men and women have become one of the structural barriers that cause people in society do not have equal access. This study aims to reveal the gender equality represented in the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet” by using a qualitative descriptive method. In order to be more focused, this study uses the sociology of literature approach theory. Basically, the sociology of literature approach discusses several social problems that exist in society. In the animated film Ralph Breaks the Internet, there are several findings that representing the gender equality for women. Then, several forms of gender equality are classified into three parts such as; Woman in leadership, Equality in workplace and Equality in power. From this film, we can learn that gender is not an excuse that is used to discriminate against women, but gender is a part of reality that must be maintained to provide justice to women in all aspects. Gender equality should be enforced so that women get equal treatment in social life.

**Keywords: Feminism, Gender Equality, Animated Film, Ralph Breaks the Internet**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The patriarchy system that dominates the culture of society causes gender gap and injustices between men and women. Men have a role as the main control in society, even in economically, socially, politically and psychologically. While women only have little influence on those societies because they do not have rights in general areas. The restrictions on the role of women by patriarchy system make women shackled

and often receive discrimination. Alfian (2016) said that patriarchy comes from the word patriarchate, which means a structure that places the role of men as the sole, central, and the ruler of everything.

The inequalities between the roles of men and women have become one of the structural barriers that cause people in society do not have equal access. Fakhri (2008) describes in detail some aspects of gender inequalities in his book entitled

“Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial”, there are marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and massive workload. Some of these gender inequalities are experienced by men and women, but women are the ones who get more discrimination from these gender inequality aspects. The aspect of marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, and violence, are usually experienced by women. Meanwhile, men only receive the massive workload in those kinds of gender inequality aspect.

Feminism is an ideology or an understanding that states equal rights between men and women. Various issues of discrimination against women in society have led women to make a movement known as feminism. People who adhere to the ideology of feminism are called feminists. The goal of the Feminism movement is the equal opportunities between women and men in social life. Basically, Feminism covers the equality in some various fields of life, including education, economy, social, culture and politics. Although feminism is a movement of women, there are also many men who support this movement. In fact, this movement is actually a movement that aims to get equal justice between men and women. Ratna (2014) said that the feminist movement, especially issues related to the nature of women, is generally associated with the emancipation of women, the women's movement to demand equal rights with men, both in the social, political, economic, and cultural fields in general.

Therefore, the literature field is one of the places that often used to express supportive opinions about the feminist movement.

The development of thought in the world of literature also affects the ideology of feminism, both in poetry, novels, etc. In this case, literature can be used as a place that can represent women's lives. The development of technology also makes literary works more accessible to many people. Although several literary works can be found all around us, the internet is the place for literary works that is most often accessed by many people. This allows many people to use literature as material for teaching and learning. Literature is a very interesting study to be studied further. On the other hand, many literary writers insert some education into their works. By delivering education through literary works, literary readers will be automatically educated without the need to think hard to learn it. This phenomenon also shows the concern for women through literary activities.

Film as similar to literary work has occupied an important position in people's daily lives. Films reach audiences of all ages, from children, teenagers and adults. One type of film that can be enjoyed by all ages is animated films, although animated films are often identically with films aimed to children. Through films, the audience can learn many things including gender issues. Gender roles are shown in the film will indirectly affect the audience's understanding of how the ideal role of men and women in their daily lives. Especially in

the animated film entitled “Ralph Breaks the Internet” that produced by Walt Disney Animation Studio.

Walt Disney Animation Studios often makes some identical themes of the royal princess films. In those films, the royal princess is always portrayed as a beautiful woman, weak, and needs a man to rescue her. While the king or prince described as a man who hold power and can rescue the princess from danger.

Meanwhile, there is the latest animated film from Disney in 2018 entitled “Ralph Breaks the Internet” which is quite interesting to analyze. Although this film is not set in an empire or in the chaos of a battlefield, this film contains several implicit messages about gender issues related to feminism. The gender issues that are shown in this film are also quite relevant to modern life today. This film shows that gender role injustice did not only occur in ancient times, but in modern life today. There are still many women who are considered unable to be equal to men. Therefore, this study will analyze about the gender equality represented in the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet”.

Basically, there are three kinds of the research significance, for the writer and for the reader of this research, as follows:

#### 1. Pedagogically

This research can be used by teachers for their teaching materials in teaching film or teaching feminism. Teachers will get the reference to create their lesson plan. This research will facilitate teachers to get the

references of the gender equality represented in the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet”, so the teacher will easier to teach this film to the students.

#### 2. Practically

##### a. Teachers

The results of this study are expected to provide an overview for English teachers that the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet” can be used as learning material in schools.

##### b. Students

The results of this study are expected to add insight in analyzing films for students, especially the analysis of films using the study of feminism.

##### c. Readers

The results of this study are expected to be a comparison material for other researchers who will conduct research with similar study.

#### 3. Theoretically

The result of this research hopefully will be useful for the readers who want to take similar research, so they can read this analysis to get some reference for their research especially in the feminist study.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. This qualitative research method aims to produce descriptive data in the form of sentences and paragraphs. Then the data will be described in accordance with the qualitative descriptive method which aims to explain or interpret the condition of the subject or

object of research. This qualitative descriptive method is very relevant to use for this paper, because this paper will analyze and describe the data that will be obtained from the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet”. After that, the data will be analyzed in depth to find out about the elements of feminism in the film.

The reason for using this method is based on the assumption that in the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet” contains several implicit messages about gender issues related to feminism. In order to be more focused, this study uses the sociology of literature approach theory. Basically, the sociology of literature approach discusses several social problems that exist in society. Research in the sociology of literature is carried out by giving meaning to the system and background of a society and discussing the problems that occur in it. Thus, literary work is basically a container used to insert stories about human problems. Ratna (2003) said that sociology of literature is a study of literary works and the involvement of their social structures.

However, this study uses sociology of literature feminist because in this animated film there are social problems which include the form of gender inequality. Feminist sociology is a sociological study that is based on the viewpoint and / or experience of women in questioning or discussing the dominance and influence of the patriarchy system on women's objectification (Dillon, 2020). Finally, the sociology of literature approach will be

useful to find out about the feminism problems that exist in this film.

The data source of this research is primary data obtained from the animated film "Ralph Breaks the Internet", which will be taken with screenshots on the visuals and dialogues of the film scenes related to the research. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various supporting literatures such as; research-related books, dictionaries, and internet references.

There are some steps that will be done for data collection in this study. First, re-watch several times the animated film Ralph Breaks the Internet. This step aims to get more understanding the story in the film. Next, identify the form of gender equality represented in the film as the object of research. Then, classify the research data into several forms of gender equality.

The data obtained from the research results will be analyzed qualitatively. This data will be analyzed using several steps such as; data reduction, interpreting, and making conclusions.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Gender Equality in animated film Ralph Breaks the Internet**

In the animated film Ralph Breaks the Internet, there are several findings that representing the gender equality for women. In order to make it easier to describe the findings that have been obtained, several forms of gender equality are classified into three parts, such as; Woman in leadership, Equality in workplace and Equality in power.

## 1. Woman in leadership

This category of women in leadership was taken because in real life women were almost never used as a leader option both in a job, organization, community, and so on. The option of women as leaders will only appear if there are no men in that group. Meanwhile, this film shows the existence of women who are described as great, intelligent and reliable leader.



Figure 1. Shank, the leader of slaughter race game

The female character that portrayed as a great leader is Shank. She is the leader of the game called Slaughter Race. Slaughter Race is a brutal game and doesn't seem like a feminine game. The Disney-fandom website said that this game was inspired from the Grand Theft Auto game and The Fast & Furious film. As we know, the characters that dominate both Grand Theft Auto and Fast Furious are men. Meanwhile it is different in Slaughter Race, the leader of this game is women. This confirms that Shank as a woman character can also be a leader in the environment where it seems like only men can be there. Shank also showed her wise when dealing with Van and Ralph who was caught stealing her car. She

doesn't get mad nor gives them punishment, but she gives advice and suggests a better job than stealing. As a result, Ralph and Van achieved success by following the advice from Shank.

## 2. Equality in workplace

The workplace is a place where gender inequality issues often occur. This issue is usually related to the level of position of the employee. In this case, men workers are prioritized as leaders than women workers. This is a gender gap issue that often occurs in our society but is considered as a natural thing. The habits of society itself create stereotypes that basically women are not suitable as leader.



Figure 2. Yesss, the head of algorithm of BuzzTube

Meanwhile, this film gives a portrayal of gender equality in workplace. It can be seen from this female character, she is so intelligent and reliable in leading a company. Her name is Yesss, she is the head of the algorithm on an app called BuzzTube. Even though the word “algorithm” sounds like a system in an application. In this case, the word algorithm in this film looks like a company that exists in real life such as

YouTube, Google, BuzzFeed, Facebook, etc. The use of the word “algorithm” instead of the word “company” aims to match the background of the place in this film that placed in the “Internet world”. Besides, there are several scenes that indirectly confirm this statement, such as; Yesss who acts as the head of the company who controls all decisions to raise the reputation of the BuzzTube application, she has a secretary like a company leader in general and she has hundreds of employees working for her.

On the other hand, BuzzTube is one of a social media app in this film, the disney-fandom website states that this platform is a combination word from “BuzzFeed” and “Youtube”. Indirectly, this compares with social media and websites (company) in the real life. Some of the websites and social media mentioned in this film are Youtube, Facebook, Google, Ebay, Twitter, etc. As we know, that all the founders of those big websites are men, but BuzzTube in this film is headed by a woman who is a genius and reliable to be a leader. This scene proves that woman in this film portrayed as the people who can lead a large website/company. In other hand, this film tries to declare that making woman as a leader is not a bad idea.

### 3. Equality in power

Disney animated films works often makes some identical themes of the royal princess films. In those films, the royal princess is always portrayed as a beautiful woman, weak, and needs a man to rescue

her. While the king or prince described as a man who hold power and can rescue the princess from danger. However, this film is reversed it all. The royal princesses in this film become powerful and able to rescue a man from the danger.



Figure 3. Royal princesses initiate to rescue the big man



Figure 4. Royal princesses successfully rescued the big man

This is the unexpected scene in this film, it is the scene where all Disney princess characters teaming up to rescue Ralph when he falls from the top of a building. This scene can change the perspective of the Disney film especially in the royal princesses’ story. Usually, the royal princess stories tell about the princess who is always rescued by the prince that suddenly appears without knowing where he comes from. In this scene, Ralph

accidentally falls from the top of a building after beating the enemy boss and almost rescued by a boy who he finds on the internet. Instead of being saved, the rescue attempt is actually made the things become worse. Luckily there are Disney princesses down there. They rescued Ralph just like a royal princess that being saved by the prince. This confirms that the princesses are not always weak and just waiting for a rescue from a prince. They also have the power to save a man and proving that women have the equal power just like the men.

## CONCLUSION

After the animated film “Ralph Breaks the Internet” analyzed, there are several findings that representing the gender equality for women. Then, several forms of gender equality are classified into three parts such as; Woman in leadership, Equality in workplace and Equality in power. Based on the discussion about those three forms of gender equality we can conclude that this film supports the gender equality movement. From this film, we can learn that gender is not an excuse that is used to discriminate against women, but gender is a part of reality that must be maintained to provide justice to women in all aspects. Gender equality should be enforced so that women get equal treatment in social life.

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