



Liberal Feminism Depicted by Wanda through the Dialogue in Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness Movie

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the portrayal of liberal feminism in the character of the movie. The study aims to analyze the liberal feminism of Wanda, the main character in Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness Movie. The data used for this research were taken from Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness Movie. This study uses the descriptive qualitative method to conduct a clear and well-organized description of the problems which is identified. The theory used in this research is the theory of Miles and Huberman's theory (1994), which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The findings of the study reveal that Wanda's character exemplifies liberal feminism through her assertion of agency and autonomy in pursuing her objectives, such as reuniting with her children in another universe, disregarding the repercussions for others. The study concludes that Wanda's character challenges conventional stereotypes of female villains and presents a multifaceted and intricate depiction of a woman's struggle for freedom and identity. Furthermore, the study proposes potential avenues for additional research in the field of gender and media studies.

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1. Introduction

Literature is written communication, whether in the form of poetry, fiction, or drama. It always conveys the human experience and uses narrative devices. Literature has certain points of connection because they are the narrative and impressionistic structure of reality

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(Ramrao, 2016). Literature has various meanings depending on the context that the speakers refer to, such as literary writing, which is the achievement of aesthetic and moral merit (Maharsi, 2016). Therefore, literature can be concluded as an art of writing based on the writer's context and perspective because literature makes us recognize and understand culture, characters, and social life by reading, understanding, thinking, analyzing, learning, or even valuable lessons from literary works.

Literary works sometimes represent the realities of people's lives, which can be seen by watching movies as an example. A movie is a story captured in a set of cellulose strips/film that is projected onto a screen at a certain speed to create a sense of motion (Abdullah & Rahman, 2021). The movie can make people enjoy watching. A movie is an event or story that is captured by a camera as a collection of moving images and shown on television or in a theater as a motion picture (Suryati, 2018). Film is one medium of mass communication that brings a message to be delivered to the target audience. The film is not a value-free entity because it is the result of some people's thinking process until it becomes a cultural product (Dwita & Sommaliagustina, 2018). Film studios are constantly releasing new movies, and that's because every year and even month, movie makers are always releasing new movies with a lot of advancements in technology, and people can find a variety of movies (Suryati, 2018). Movie productions never stop releasing new movies and the cause is that every year, even in a month, movie production always releases new movies with a lot of technological development in the movie itself, and people can find many kinds of movies (Tobing, 2013). As explained above, it could be seen that the movie, which had a lot of variations, also indicated several linguistic features, one of which was feminism.

Feminism is part of the linguistic feature that deals with female and woman's point of view or perspective of something. That point of view appeared based on the context of the situation, such as being happy, sad, under pressure, or other feelings. In Hooks' view (2000:1), "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression." It means feminism is mainly focused on women's issues because feminism seeks gender equality (Gumilang Afandi Putri, W., & Setyorini, A. (2015). Sometimes, the cultural system of society also has an impact on the woman, which may differ from a woman's perspective. According to Nurmelasari (2010), feminism was the equality of women to men in terms of politics, culture, society, and economy, and there were kinds of feminism such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, psychoanalysis and gender feminism, and existentialist feminism. Liberal feminism was the act of freeing women from oppressing gender; radical feminism was the act of rejecting the assumption of the relationship of the sex of the person. According to Berchtel (2011), there were 3 principles of feminism criticism: women are oppressed by patriarchy, women's experiences are different than men's, and women's perspectives are not involved in the culture. Thus, feminism can be concluded as an act of breaking injustice by creating equality between women and men. One of the movies that was worth analyzing in terms of feminism was *Dr. Strange in The Multiverse of Madness*. One film warranting feminist analysis is "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness," which involves the hero Doctor Strange,

navigating alternate universes to stop Wanda from dream-walking the multiverse to reunite with her children (Marvel Studios, 2022). This study aims to analyze linguistic features reflecting feminism in Wanda's character dialogue in this film.

2. Literature Review

In developing this study, there are four previous studies used to be reviewed. The first related study is entitled "An Analysis of Liberal Feminism Value of the Main Character in the Film Miss Potter," written by Nahdiyati (2019). That study has two aims: to find out the characterization and the liberal feminism values of the main characters. In this movie, the author of the story wants to convince the spectators about the feminist values that have to be respected. Miss Potter also depicts liberalism messages that criticize gender roles, ageism, and classism.

The second related study was written by Indriyanti (2022) entitled "The Depiction of Liberal Feminism on Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Mimi Leder's on the Basis of Sex Movie. This study aims to find out the characterizations of the main character and how liberal feminism occurs in the main character. The result of the analysis of this study was the main character is smart, critical, tough, hardworking, confident, attentive, and independent. The dialogue, appearance, and language reveal Ruth's characterization, which is smart. She speaks brilliantly, in good, arranged words and language.

The third related study is entitled "Liberal Feminism as Reflected in the Main Character of Joy Movie," written by Eidelweis (2018). That study has two aims: to analyze the character of Joy as the main character and to explain Joy's struggle, which reflects liberal feminist values. The conclusion of this research is *Joy* tells about how women reach their dreams and get their freedom. As modern women, we can make Joy our role model to be successful both in her job and family.

The last related study is entitled "Liberal Feminism 300: Rise of an Empire Movie by Noam Murro," written by Amalia. That study aims to find out how liberal feminism is portrayed in Noam Murro's movie. Researchers found that equal rights with men in the film are where Artemisia got the same footing as men by obtaining the position of the commander of Persia. Artemisia is a staunch commander and does not need a male leader because Artemisia feels she can do it herself. Artemisia considers herself more powerful and can lead the Persians in battle with the Greeks. Commander Artemisia has a lot of soldiers in Persia, but she stands alone in the battle because all soldiers cannot work properly and optimally.

Based on previous studies, the object of this research is a movie entitled *Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*. This movie is a fantasy movie that shows many superheroes in it. It is a famous movie among the young generation, and it has liberal feminism in the main character because the scope of discussion of this research is to find out the liberal feminism of the main character.

3. Method

In this study, a qualitative descriptive design was employed to investigate how the character Wanda, a powerful sorceress and mother, expresses liberal feminist perspectives through her use of language. The primary source of data for this research will be the transcript of the character dialogues from the film, directed by Sam Raimi and released in 2023. The data collection and analysis methods will be based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model of qualitative content analysis. Furthermore, the findings will be presented in a narrative format, with verbatim excerpts from the dialogues to support the identified liberal feminist themes. This paper will provide a detailed explanation of the research design, data source, data collection, data analysis, and data presentation.

The data source used for analysis is the transcript of the character dialogues from the film "Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness." In particular, the dialogues of the character Wanda, who expresses liberal feminist perspectives, are examined. This Marvel movie portrays Wanda's journey as she harnesses her magic abilities and ventures into different dimensions in order to find her children, resulting in the chaos that Dr. Strange strives to prevent.

Data collection entails the careful observation of the film, encompassing the meticulous analysis of its various aspects:

- Engaging in multiple viewings of the Dr. Strange film to thoroughly grasp the intricacies of the storyline and the nuanced contexts of the characters.
- Poring over the film script meticulously to pinpoint crucial dialogues where Wanda adeptly employs liberal feminist language.

Methodically documenting Wanda's discussions, specifically highlighting the liberal feminist linguistic elements that she artfully incorporates.

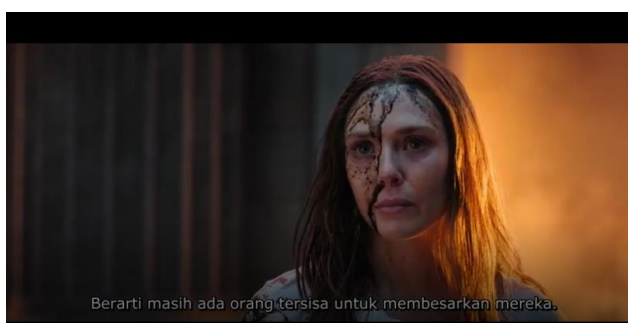
4. Results and Discussion

The finding of this study found an indication of liberal feminism in Wanda. Liberal feminism is the act of freeing women from oppressive gender. Liberal feminism can be seen in the following dialogues.

Data 1

(01.12.05 – 01.12.19)

This scene tells about the situation when Wanda from Earth-616 went to Earth-838 to possess Wanda from Earth-838 and invaded the Illuminati. In this organization, Earth's strongest heroes are gathered in one place which consists of Reed Richard, a.k.a Mr. Fantastic, Professor Charles Xavier a.k.a Professor X, Mordo, Captain Marvel, Peggy Charter a.k.a Captain America and Black Bolt. Then, a conversation between Reed and Wanda happens, which can be seen below.



Berarti masih ada orang tersisa untuk membesarkan mereka.

Figure 1. Reed is talking to Wanda

Reed : *I understand your pain*
Wanda : *Is their mother still alive?*
Reed : *Yes*
Wanda : ***Good, there will be someone left to raise them***

Based on the dialogue, it can be seen that Wanda has been threatened by Richard Reed, Mr. Fantastic from the Illuminati, to stop Wanda's invasion, but Wanda knows that no one understands her pain. Instead of accepting what Reed offers, Wanda decides to treat him back, which indicates liberal feminism because she has free will to choose. It can also be inferred that Wanda, the main antagonist character in Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, feels that only she has suffered the pain, and no one else thinks or is able to feel what she feels. In fact, the others think based on their perspective, like what Reed said, which is, "**I understand your pain.**" From Wanda's face, which is ignoring Reed and keeping calm, it seems like she does not like what Reed said because she thinks Reed does not suffer enough like he did. The utterance "**Good, there will be someone left to raise them**" is actually a reference to what Wanda suffered when her husband, in her reality, Vision, was dead because of Thanos and ended up being trash.

Data 2

(01.05.55 – 01.06.12)

The scene was about Wanda activating the true Dark Hold by activating the pattern curved in the wall made by the first evil named Chrton, and Wanda activated it while talking to Wong, the Sorcerer Supreme in Earth-616 -616, which can be seen in the conversation below.



Figure 2. Wanda is activating the true Dark Hold

Wanda : ***For Billy and Tommy, to protect them. What if they get sick? In the infinite multiverse, there's a cure for every illness. A solution to every problem. I won't lose them again***

Wong : *Try as you might, Wanda. You cannot control everything*
Wanda : ***But I can***

Based on the dialogue, it can be seen that Wanda insisted to Wong that she can control everything through learning dark hold so she can go back to her children from different universes. Her resolve to stay with her children is her thinking, which resulted in her action to reunite with her children again, and it belonged to liberal feminism. Her desire to have Billy and Tommy was a result of the reality that she created in which she created her children whose names were Billy and Tommy, but because Wanda's power is limited at that time, she cannot maintain it, so she decided to learn Dark Hold to learn about the multiverse where Billy and Tommy exist. The utterance "***For Billy and Tommy, to protect them.***" "***I won't lose them again***" symbolizes her ambition to bring her children back, which belongs to liberal feminism because what Wanda said was relevant and reflected her free will to choose.

Data 3

(22.35 – 22.42)

This scene is about Dr. Strange, who needs help from Wanda to protect Kamar Taj from evil and wants to kidnap America Chaves, who has the power to go to the multiverse. The conversation between Wanda and Dr. Strange can be seen below.



Figure 3. Dr Strange comes over Wanda for asking help

Dr. Strange : *What do you want with the Multiverse?*
Wanda : ***I'm going to leave this reality and go to one where I can be with my children***

As Halliday and Edward (as cited in Hammam, 2006) state about the situation, it can be seen that the situation stimulates Wanda to go to the multiverse through dream walking by learning dark hold. Situational context can be completely removed from what is happening around during writing or speaking, which refers to social context. Related to that statement, Wanda has undergone many pains through the loss of her children in the past, and she needs to break the rules that are not allowed because they disobey the rule of life and makes her the enemy. However, she insisted on doing that for the sake of her children and her resolve to stay alive. It is resolved by saying, "***I'm going to leave this reality and go to one where I can be with my children,***" as a result of the cruel reality that Wanda faced in Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness creates liberal feminism

around her. The occurrence of feminism in this movie was similar to that of Cholijah Zamil and Tati Mardewi (2018), who conducted a study that indicated liberal feminism, postmodern feminism, radical feminism, socialist Marxist feminism, and anarchist feminism. According to Zamil et al. (2018), the women worked and fulfilled their own lives, which is similar to the current study in Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness because Wanda, as the main antagonist, Wanda tried to fulfill her desire to live together with her children.

This study also fulfilled the feminist criticism, which was women are oppressed by patriarchy, women's experiences are different than men and woman's perspectives are not involved in the culture (Berchtel, 2011). In this case, Wanda, as the main antagonist, was oppressed by the living nature on Earth-616, which made her depressed, and she wanted to break free to live with her children in a different universe. Then, Wanda's behavior was clearly different from the men, which is the people in Kamar-Taj and Dr. Strange, in which Wanda wanted to learn dark hold to go to the multiverse when the protagonist and the team disagreed with it. Last, Wanda's perspective, which was not good for Earth-616, was not involved in the culture of Earth-616.

Data 4

(27:59-28:01)

In this scene, Wanda comes to Kamar-Taj to go against America, a girl who has a superpower; she is needed. But when she arrived, there were so many squads guarding the Kamar-Taj, including Dr. Strange. Wanda and Dr. Strange talk to each other. She wanted him to give her the girl, but he didn't allow her, and it made her mad. The conversation can be seen below.



Figure 4. Wanda and Dr Strange were arguing

Wanda : *Don't talk about sacrifice to me, Stephen Strange*

Here, Wanda is so mad at him because he doesn't want to give the girl to her. She really needs the girl because she has the power to come to another universe, and no one can do that. Wanda wanted to go to her other universe where she could stay with her kids. She wanted to sacrifice the girl because if she took her power, she would die. Dr. Strange didn't allow it and said that he couldn't sacrifice the girl, only fulfill Wanda's wish. Then, Wanda said, "***Don't talk about sacrifice to me, Stephen Strange.***" This speech is a symbol that Wanda is so serious, and Dr. Strange can't mess with her. Previously, she had sacrificed her love, and she believed that she could do it one more time because she felt she had power.

Data 5

(28:17-28:18)

In this scene, Wanda tries to negotiate with Dr. Strange; if he gives her the girl, she will send him to another universe where he can stay with her love Christine. In this universe, Christine got married to other boys, and Dr. Strange felt hurt by that. But Dr. Strange didn't agree with that negotiation and chose to save the girl. The conversation between them can be seen below.



Figure 5. Wanda did negotiation to Dr. Strange

Wanda : ***If you give me what I want, I will send you to the place that you can be with Christine***

Dr. Strange : All the strength of Kamar-Taj will against you

Wanda really wanted to go back to her universe before. She just wanted to stay with her two kids, Billy and Tommy. Actually, she didn't have a kid; it was just another universe that she had visited before. She negotiates with Dr. Strange; she says, "***If you give me what I want, I will send you to the place that you can be with Christine***". Here, Wanda wanted him to know that she could fulfill his wish, too. She felt that she had the power to control the girl named America. She promised something to Dr. Strange. The liberal feminism that occurred in this scene was Wanda is so brave and confident. She can promise something to Dr. Strange, which means that she really believes she can do that by herself.

Data 6

(35:00-35:04)

In this scene, Wanda enters Kamar-Taj and tries to find the girl. But in the middle of her way, she was confronted by Dr. Strange and Reer. They talked to each other, and Wanda tried to explain her feelings to her imaginary kids. Whatever she told Dr. Strange, it will not make him change his mind to save the girl. The conversation with Wanda can be seen below.



Figure 6. Wanda claimed herself

Wanda : *I'm not a monster Stephen, I'm a mother*
Dr. Strange : Wanda, you have no children

Wanda tried to say something to convince him that she really loved her kids. The conversation between them was not going well because they had different opinions. Wanda tried to kill the girl to feed her ego. Then, she said something to convince her that she was a good woman. She said, "*I'm not a monster Stephen, I'm a mother.*" This speech is part of liberal feminism because here she tries to tell him that she is a good mother and that she will do everything for her kids, including kill the girl. Here, she claimed that even if she wanted to kill someone, it didn't mean that she was a monster because she did it for her kids. She believed that she could do everything for her kids, including defeating him.

Data 7

(01:57:15-01:57:17)

This one is the last part of the movie. Here, she talks to another Dr. Strange from different universe. She has lost his battle with Dr. Strange and the girl called America because America can control her power right now. The conversation made by Wand can be seen below.



Figure 7. Wanda realized her mistake

Wanda : *I open the dark hold, I have to close it, no one will to open it again*

Here, Wanda talks to Dr. Strange while sitting on the circle stone where she will kill the girl before. America has taken her to the other universe where she can see her kids. But in there, she saw different things than what she expected. She saw that her kids were with another woman that has the same face as her. The kids are very scared to see Wanda, and they run away to their mother. Wanda felt disappointed with that. She cried, and the mother talked to her. The mother said that she is their mother and doesn't worry about

them because she will love them as much as Wanda loves them in that universe. Wanda realized that she was not their mother; she just came to another universe and really cared about the kids. Then, she came back to her universe; she realized that she was wrong. After that, she said, *"I open the dark hold, I have to close it, no one will to open it again"* to Dr. Strange. This speech is a symbol of the liberal feminism. Here, she is very responsible because before she opened the dark hold, it made all the things complicated. Now, after she realizes that all of them are her fault, she wants to close the dark hold as a form of responsibility for destroying the world.

This study uncovers the embodiment of liberal feminist principles in the character of Wanda through her dialogues in the movie Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness. An illustration of this is seen in her conversation with Reed Richards, where Wanda boldly asserts her agency and confrontationally threatens him when he claims to understand her pain: "Is their mother still alive? Good, there will be someone left to raise them" (Marvel Studios, 2022). Her sharp retort and indifference toward his perspective serve as a testament to her unwavering commitment to making independent decisions in line with the principles of liberal feminism (Tong, 2009).

Furthermore, in the midst of Wong's warning to Wanda about the limitations of control, she confidently asserts, "But I possess the capability" (Marvel Studios, 2022). This unwavering dedication to her objective of reuniting with her children, even if it involves morally ambiguous methods such as studying forbidden magic, showcases her relentless determination. Wanda's resolute autonomy defies societal expectations of women, showcasing the intricate dimensions of women fighting for their liberties.

Moreover, when questioned about her plans by Dr. Strange, Wanda declares her intention to "depart from this reality and enter one where I can be reunited with my children" (Marvel Studios, 2022). This bold assertion of her desires and prioritization of her role as a mother over societal expectations exemplify the principles of liberal feminism, which advocates for women's equal rights and the ability to make choices that defy traditional gender norms (Mack-Canty, 2004).

Therefore, a thorough analysis of Wanda's dialogues within their respective situations reveals the presence of liberal feminist themes such as women's agency, autonomy, and defiance of conventional gender constraints. These findings align with previous research that has emphasized the controversial representations of feminism in popular films. In a similar vein, Azizah and Fitri (2020) discovered liberal feminist themes in the dialogues of a female lead character who asserts her perspective and choices. Further examination of the intricacies of superheroines and villainesses can provide valuable insights into the portrayal of feminism in mainstream media.

5. Conclusion

Liberal feminism happens in Wanda as a result of being free without any pressure and oppressive behavior from others due to her tragic pain of losing her children and husband, and it creates a result of her decision to get her right to get what she wants which is stay alive with her children, Billy and Tommy. The liberal feminism found in the data

was that she was very brave and confident as a woman against other superheroes like Dr. Strange and Reed. She believes she can defeat them by using her power, and she does. Another liberal feminism found in that data was she really loved her kids, and it made her make many mistakes just for staying with her kids in another universe. She wanted the universe to know that a mother can do anything for her kids. Besides that, at the end of the movie, Wanda also realizes that she did something wrong in her life. Liberal feminism found that she took responsibility for the mistakes she made, such as opening the dark hold. Because she opened it, it made the universe complicated. After realizing her mistakes, she closed the dark hold again.

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