

MOTHER'S ROLE IN *MOTHERHOOD* MOVIE (2009) DIRECTED BY KATHERINE

DIECKMANN:

A FEMINIST APPROACH



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Iin Rohmatun Anita Zuliani

A320 080 311

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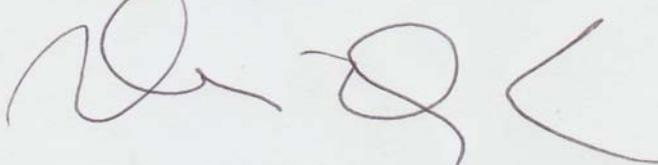
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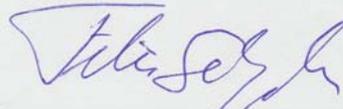
Approved to be Examined by the Consultant Team

CONSULTANT I



Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum, M. Ed.

CONSULTANT II



Titis Setyabudi S.S. M.Hum.

**MOTHER'S ROLE IN *MOTHERHOOD* MOVIE (2009) DIRECTED BY KATHERINE
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Iin Rohmatun Anita Zuliani (Student)

Dewi Candraningrum (Consultant I)

Titis Setyabudi (Consultant II)

(School of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta)

kakashe_bloe@yahoo.com

iinrohmatun@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*The study is to reveal how mother's role is reflected in *Motherhood* directed by Katherine Dieckmann published in 2009. The objective of the study is to analyze the structural elements in the movie and to analyze mother's role of the movie based on feminist approach. The researcher employs the descriptive qualitative research as a type of the research. The object of the study is a movie *Motherhood* directed by Katherine Dieckmann. The data sources divided into two, namely primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source is the events of the movie and script of *Motherhood* and the secondary data source is biography of character. The method of collecting data are watching the movie, taking note the important data, arranging the data based on category of elements of literature review and the last is looking for the supporting data. The technique of analyzing data is descriptive analysis. The result of the study is as follows. First, based on the structural analysis, Katherine Dieckmann delivers the theme is about life is full with choice, human being has freedom to choose their role and opportunity. The structural elements are related each other and form a unity. Second, based on the feminist analysis, Katherine Dieckmann which reflect woman's position, woman's role, woman's right, and woman's participation in life condition of a mother. Dieckmann considers that mother has equal opportunity and right in a family.*

Keywords: *Mother's Role, Motherhood, Feminist approach*

1. Introduction

Background of the study: *Motherhood* movie is one kind of comedy drama movies. This movie is starring Uma Thurman as Eliza Welch, Anthony Edwards as Avery and Minnie Driver as Sheila; it has many conflicts in there. The screenplay of this film is adapted from script that is written by Katherine Dieckmann. Dieckmann also works in her work shop at the Sundance Institute's Screenwriting and Directing laboratories. She also holds a BA from Vassar College and MA from New York City, and as screenplay teacher as well as Assistant Professor.

Motherhood movie tells about a mother (Eliza), she has big dreams in her life, beside to be a household and housewife. She also has blogger "Bjorn Identity", by using her blog she hopes that she can actualize her talent and her hobby. In other side she is a mother who has two child (Clara and Lucas), and a husband (Avery), her husband always disappear when Eliza needs his helps. Sometimes Eliza feels tired with her activity; in addition her husband does not helps Eliza. Until Eliza decide to leave her family and asks divorce from her husband. Mothers role in this story always appear, so she aware that her choice is wrong, she back and they are become happy family.

Motherhood is family movie. *Motherhood* was made 2008 and released in US in general October 23, 2009. This movie was taken for 25 days with starting in May 2008, which is setting of place New York City, New York USA and shot entirely on plot location in New York's West Village. Runtime in this movie is 90 minutes, released VCD and DVD distributed by Freestyle Releasing. Beside that this movie was published in Germany, UK (London), Spain, Singapore, Netherlands, Brazil with PG 13 for language. *Motherhood* gets good response from public and *Motherhood* which only had Box Office \$10 million for budget and finally gain \$726,354.

Motherhood movie is an interesting and inspiration movie such as for mother or women being a mother; there are four aspects that make this movie

really interesting. Firstly is *Motherhood* has great story: has real point of view can be real story. This story is not only happening in story movie but also can be occurring on the real life as well as a girl or a wife who becomes a mother. They have concept about how to taking care the husband, family and child. Second is the visualization and the cast of the movie. Uma Thurman makes audience feel wonder-strike with this comedy and drama movie, although this movie shows how the difficulty become a mother to take care of the family with the complicated family problem, beside that the writer explores the real role of a mother to be good mother for family.

Thirdly is motherhood feeling that appears in this movie. *Motherhood* movie tells that she ever had a crisis experience until she wants to leave her regularly as a mother. She asks divorce from her husband and leaves her family and her child. Finally, she realizes about her mistake, and absolutely she tries to change her opinion about all those time in her life and tries to share with her husband about anything else. Fourthly, this movie deals with mother's role. Dieckmann, the director, wants the audience to understand that mother's role really has big impact in a family. A mother has important role and happiness thing. She must choose bad or good thing for her family, for her child and her life.

Problem Statement of this research is “Knowing that the problem is the most important part of research, the writer proposes the problem “How is Mother's role reflected in *Motherhood* movie?”

Limitation of this Study is analyzing of mother's role in *Motherhood* movie based on a feminist approach.

Objective of this Study is to analyze *Motherhood* movie based on the structural elements of the movie and to describe the Mother's role in *Motherhood* movie based on a feminist approach.

Literature review related to the research paper is coming from Rachel Diana Davidson (Indiana University) entitled “Subversive Voice in

Contemporary Motherhood: the Rhetoric of Resistance in Independent Film Narratives”. The second researcher is article conducted by Andrea O’Reilly entitled “Twenty-first Century Motherhood: Experience, Identity, Policy, Agency”. The last is article from Ella Taylor entitled “For a Harried Mom, A Real Fairy Tale of an Ending”,

2. **Research Method**

The writer uses a library research, which employs qualitative method. The writer also applies a feminist of the main characters as a means of further research. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining object of study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis. The object of the study is the *Motherhood* movie directed by Katherine Dieckmann and published by Freestyle Rleasing in 2009. It is analyzed by using feminist approach.

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research (1) The primary data source is the film and script of *Motherhood* movie directed by Katherine Dieckmann which is related to the study. (2) Secondary Data Source, The secondary data sources are the books and other sources that support the analysis.

The method of data collection in this study is note-taking and image-capturing. The researcher views the primary data repeatedly to reach more understanding of source. Next, the writer takes, compares, quotes, and studies others data into some categories and develops them into a good unity. The technique of data analysis in this study is descriptive. It is concerns with the structural elements of the movie, the writer uses a feminist approach, and draws conclusion.

3. **Feminist Theory**

a. **Notion of Feminism**

The word of feminism has been widely spread in Western since 1950's. Feminist movement emerges because of the imbalance position between men and women. Besides that, there is also women oppression both psychologically and socially. This is the movement constitutes a social, economic and political commitment to equalize between men and women. Feminism is an ideology which stated, basically woman and man are equal and should be treated equal. The British social scientist Christ Weddon in Mandel states, "Feminism is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between woman and man in the society" (Mandell, 1995:4).

Feminism itself arises as the result of women disappointment to the evidence that for centuries women still do not have complete political, economic, and social equality with men. According to Bell hooks (in Mandell, 1995:4), "Feminism constitutes a social, economic, and political commitment to eradicating race, class and sexual domination and to reorganizing society so that individual self-development takes precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desire. The goal of feminism is to change woman's perspective of life so they realize that they are valuable persons possessing the same privileges and rights as every man (Bressler, 1999:180).

b. Major Principal in Feminism

1. Women Position

Feminists believe that women are treated as inferior (Anderson,1983:9). It is supported by Mandell in *Feminist Issues* which stated that "woman was oppressed by a special form of life called patriarchy through which man appropriates all superior social roles and keeps women in subordinated and exploited position" (Mandell, 1995:14). The position of women is established by society. Women cannot choose their position, they cannot stand like men. The position in society is dominated by men; women are isolated in limited movement room. As Anderson (1983: 9) argues "feminism begins with the premise

that women's and men's positions in society are the result of social, not natural factors".

Feminism clarify that naturally women and men have equal position in society because they live together as citizenship. In natural law, women and men are human so that they get equal place. Women can do as well as men in giving achievement for society, contribute in all aspect, and have same power (Mandell, 1995: 214).

2. Women's Role

Gender inequality is fact in society. From history and culture people know that there is diversity of women's role. It is commonalities in society. Women only get jobs in domestic area, they cannot contribute in public area like men get. In domestic area, many women also lost their jobs so that women's role is limited.

In society, there is assumption that the greatest role of women is in the family; women are the root of the morality of their children and the manager of existence of family. Stuart Mill and Taylor Mill (Anderson, 1983: 252) state "the occupation women should (and would) choose is marriage". All people believe that not all women are powerless; there are women that able to contribute in aspects of society. It shows that women's role in society cannot be differentiated by culture or custom (Anderson, 1983: 8). Feminists find assumption that the marriage as the thing that gives influence for the role of women. Although the greatest of women's role in the family, women can play a role in the society; not means that women' role only for their family.

Feminists argue that factually there is diversity for women. Role of women that as participation form women in society is viewed from various perspectives. Women's role in each society is difference; there is consideration that women are powerless but not all societies consider that

women are not useful. Every society has view itself about women's role; it depend on the culture and condition of society.

3. Women's Right

In principle, every person wants to be given equal opportunities and civil rights (Mandell, 1995:5). The category of freedom in feminism includes politic, economic, and sexual freedom. "Feminist attempt to gain democratic right, the right to have education and occupation, the right to be the Member of Parliament also the right to divorce" (Humm, 2002 :53). "Women also demand the right to choose what they attend to, including having freedom to be what they want to be" (Humm, 2002 :102).

According to Schultheiss, the earliest campaigns to improve women's legal status in the United States centered on gaining property right for women and to ensure their voting, employment, and reproductive rights (Katrin Schultheiss, 2003 Encarta Reference Library. United States. Microsoft Corporation).

4. Women's Participation

The full attainment of equality will provide women with the opportunity to show their ability and give a supportive to protest against the subordination of women. By improving their capability and capacity they can fully express their own experience in all public life because, "Feminisms is both way of thinking and a way of acting so women needs to actualize themselves as an actor in social institutions" (Humm, 2002:233).

c. Notion of Mother's Role

1. Definition of Mother's Role

A mother is someone who loves and her child. Becoming parents and not becoming a friend, mother is "a girl who has power".

2. Aspect of Mother's Role

a. A Deep Love for Her Children

A mother's love is unmatched. Whether young or old, healthy or handicapped, troublesome or obedient, the child is still beloved to the mother. This love may be displayed in various forms. The love of the mother becomes a source of happiness and peace at home. Children feel attached to the home because of the mother (Imam Zaynul `Abidin: Risalatul Huqooq)

b. Sacrifice and Dedication

A mother gives up a great deal for the sake of the child. She gives up her time, her sleep, her pleasures etc. to ensure that the child is all right. As Imam Zaynul `Abidin says in his book Risalatul Huquq, "nobody comes even close to doing what a mother does for her child. A good mother places the needs of the child, both physical and emotional needs, first. The home will always remain a woman's most valuable work and that may require all types of sacrifices. (Imam Zaynul `Abidin in Risalatul Huqooq).

c. Protection and Security

A mother always tries to safeguard the child from danger and difficulties. However some mothers tend to be over protective. It is wise for the child to learn to face some problems in life, according to his age and circumstances. A coddled child will be unable to face the realities of the world when he grows up, a world which will not be as considerate of him as his mother (Imam Zaynul `Abidin in Risalatul Huqooq).

4. Research Finding

a. Women's Position

In *Motherhood* movie, woman's position of Eliza can be seen when she feels bored with her activity, it is the representation of her position as a mother that makes her become tired and grumble person. She feels that it is not fair when a mother must do the same thing, because she never

stops cleaning the home and her husband never understands until she wants to take a rest of her daily household. It is irony and contrast with the nature of a mother. She describes that her husband cannot be a good partner to organize the family.

Eliza : I mean, it gives me a chance to explore what it really means and nobody talks about this stuff. The sleep deprivation, the funks, the non-stop cleaning, the death of lust.

(MTH, 00:12:20-00:12:32)

Eliza : You have no idea how lucky you are to be married to a consummate multitasker.

(MTH, 00:35:00-00:35:03)

b. Women's Role

By this movie, women's role generally is in domestic areas. In society, the big role of women is in the family. Mother is the first educator for their children and as manager for their family. By this assumption, the women cannot leave their role as a household. They must choose their marriage better than another because marriage gives big influence for women.

In *Motherhood* movie, Eliza cares about her child. Actually, she is a busy mother with her activity. She must organize the schedule from she wakes up until sleeps again. She makes everything become balance. She regulates her daughter party alone and preparing her requirement. A mother is always complemented and apprehensive. They must be stronger and responsible to grow up the children. A mother provides her child with inner sense of security when satisfying his physical and emotional needs.

Eliza : Motherhood is about accepting the limitations of time and energy, which stretch beyond you, even if sometimes it feels they could consume you. Search for and hold on to your own true self. what kind of mother can you be? Feel fortunate because chances are good you actually might be.

(MTH, 01:21:26-01:22:36)

c. Women's Right

Women naturally have freedoms to choose and get what they want, such as political freedoms, reproduction control, education and also occupation.

Women have right to define as autonomous in their own life. In *Motherhood*, Eliza needs to get a real job. Eliza does some efforts to reach her right. She joins competitions to write in her blog about what the meaning of being a mother is. In this case, she very emphasizes that she needs a job, so it does not make her become bad mother who rather speaks bad language. By working and spending her time she could lessen her daily activity as a mother and her bad attitude.

Eliza : I used to be fluid, I used to be, I don't know, graceful. Now my words come out, and they just sound like bad ad copy.

(MTH, 00:28:30-00:28:42)

Clara : What are you writing?

Eliza : Ooh! Just this thing. It has to be done by midnight. It's kind of important. It means mommy might get a real job.

Clara : But I don't want you to get a real job.

Eliza : Why not? It's good when mommies work. It keeps mommies happy. It keeps them from being mean, nasty, yelling mommies. What about daddies? Should daddies not work, too? Why moms and not dads, hmm? Enlighten me.

(MTH, 01:12:52-01:13:29)

d. Women's Participation

Women were subordinated to men and considered having no abilities to do something better than men. Men are socially superior while women are socially inferior to men.

Actually, Eliza is a hard working woman in her family. She always supplies what her children needs. She also fulfills her requirement herself by writing in her blog, because she likes fiction and all about literature.

Eliza : Yeah, that was my thing. That kind of fiercely lyrical fiction. I loved writing. It's just, you know when you have kids... I still write. Sort of. On more, um... everyday topics.

(MTH. 00:51:16-00:51:46)

Avery : What is Clara gonna say when she gets home and you're not there?

Eliza : What does she care? She's got her goody bags full of plastic crap bought against my better judgment. She's got her cake with the misspelled name....which I corrected myself. She's got her purple cups and plastic forks.

Eliza : What does she need me for?

Avery : Are you serious?

Eliza : I'm not only serious, I'm in Jersey.

(MTH, 01:04:25-01:04:48)

e. A Deep Love for The Children

By this movie, the one of some aspect of mother's role that is a deep love for the children is also appear. From the beginning of this movie describe that Eliza as a mother always take care of the children, she organize everything in the family. She makes the children feels comfort and always happy. Eliza toils to finish preparing Clara birthday party and she realize the gift birthday for Clara.

Clara: Mom, everybody wants cake now. And there has to be six purple candles and one number six candle.

Eliza: Okay. Come here.

Clara: Mom, for my seventh birthday, can I get a cat? Mom, can I? Mom?

Eliza: "Maybe" is the best I can do, okay?

(MTH, 01:12:41-01:13:51)

f. Sacrifice and Dedication

Motherhood shows that Eliza as a mother is very need a job to spend her time otherwise to be a mother. Her sacrifice and dedication also appears when she always wakes up more early better than the other to prepare all equipment before goes to school and breakfast too. In the other side a mother always makes sure that child is all right.

Eliza : Hey! Watch it. He's a whole lot smaller than you.

Jordan Mom: Excuse me, did you just say something? Did she say something to you, Jordan?

Eliza : Look, I'm sorry, but your son nearly crushed my kid. He's a whole lot bigger.

Jordan Mom: Are you saying my son's overweight?

Eliza : I said big. Actually, what I said was "bigger."
(MTH, 00:22:29-00:22:47)

g. Protection and Security

Eliza as a mother makes big relation between mother and children. Someday, Eliza feels angry and disappointment with her husband. Suddenly she leaves her children and asks divorce from her husband, from the good side when she gets information that her child (Lucas) swallow a lollypop. At the time she return and back to home. She wants to more pay attention about Lucas condition. A mother always tries to safeguard the child from danger and pain.

Avery: Oh, my God!

Eliza: What?

Avery I think he swallowed something. Hey, hey!

Eliza: Swallowed what? Avery! Avery, what did he swallow?

Avery: I think he's choking!

Eliza: Avery, don't push your finger in his throat! You can stick it down further!

Avery: Yeah, right! Well, what do I do?

Eliza: Yeah, well, we took that class together, don't you remember?

Avery: No, no, I don't remember. What do I...?

Eliza: You have to stay calm. Avery, please, please, just... Put him over your knee. Come on! Come on, Lucas! Spit it out, spit it out!

(MTH, 01:04:52-01:05:27)

Based on the explanation above, a mother must have some criteria or aspect to become the real mother. The writer hopes that this aspect very helpful for women and especially for mother.

5. Conclusion

Having analyzed *Motherhood* directed by Katherine Dieckmann, the writer comes into conclusion related to analyzing *Motherhood* using Feminist Approach. The writer draws two conclusions related to the result of the analysis. First, based on structural elements analysis, Dieckmann wants to deliver message that a mother who always tries to make balance between serving her family and fighting to get dreams of life. Additionally, mother and father have equal role to be a good partner for their family and keep marriage alive. In delivering the message, Dieckmann creates major character, Eliza who strives to realize her dreams. She cannot express herself to get what she wants. Finally, she toils to realize her dreams. Dieckmann successfully integrates the structural elements into good unity and makes wonderful movie.

Second, based on Feminist Approach, this movie contains many facts that are given by Katherine Dieckmann which reflect woman's position, woman's role, woman's right, and woman's participation in life condition of a mother. Dieckmann considers that mother has equal opportunity and right in a family. Mother also has important role to build a good family and keep marriage alive. In this movie, Katherine Dieckmann wants to describe that mother's role not only in domestic area to take care of the children and keep marriage alive but also in public area to find a good job. She criticizes the self-expression of mothers in public society. From those reason, it can be concluded that mother's right is not given but must be struggled. A mother always tries to make balance between her role in a family and fighting to achieve her dreams.

After analyzing and drawing the conclusion in *Motherhood* by Katherine Dieckmann, the writer realizes that the study is far from being perfect because of her limited knowledge on literature. This movie *Motherhood* offers interesting object to study, the writer suggests for the

other researcher about this movie by using the other approach such as Existentialism because the major character, Eliza Welch is a strong mother that wants to get her freedom and because human being has freedom to choose.

For teacher, this study is about the process of informal learning for women or mother to be good parents that they have important role in the family. This study explains about the real meaning to be a mother. The implementation of this study is very important for maintenance and protection of children, especially in the early days of growth. Meanwhile, this study also describes some aspects of mother's role, about their sacrifice and efforts. Additionally, a mother is also as first educator and as a window of the child to the world. Their aspects consist of a deep love for her children, sacrifice and dedication, and protection and security. Finally, the writer hopes that this study can be useful to the readers and other researchers in widening the knowledge of literary studies.

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